

PHILLIPS, JOHN (1810 - 1867), Calvinistic Methodist minister and first principal of the Normal College, Bangor

Name: John Phillips
Date of birth: 1810
Date of death: 1867
Spouse: Eleanor Phillips (née Parry)
Parent: Mary Phillips (née Jones)
Parent: David Phillips
Gender: Male
Occupation: Calvinistic Methodist minister and first principal of the Normal College, Bangor
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: Moelwyn Idwal Williams

Born in 1810, at Pontrhydfendigaid, Cardiganshire, eldest son of David and Mary Phillips, Ty-mawr. His parents were in humble circumstances and he spent his early years with his maternal grandmother, Jane Jones, a cousin of [John Williams](#), Lledrod (1747 - 1831). He received his early education at home and in the Sunday School. When about 14 he was deeply moved by a religious revival in the neighbourhood, and for a period afterwards he attended the well known school at Ystrad Meurig. In 1829 he attended the school at Llangeitho, then in charge of [Lewis Edwards](#) (later [Dr. Lewis Edwards](#) of Bala), where he applied himself diligently to his studies. In 1831 Phillips was given charge of a mission church at Rhayader, where he preached and kept a day school. The following year, 1832, he went on a preaching tour through Merioneth and Caernarvonshire, when he won considerable popularity as a preacher. Later, after recovering from a prolonged period of sickness, he went, at his own expense, to Edinburgh University where he stayed with his friend and fellow student, [Lewis Edwards](#). Leaving Edinburgh in May 1835, Phillips accepted a call to the Welsh C.M. church at Holywell, Flintshire. In June 1837 he was ordained at Bala. During his time at Holywell he married Eleanor, daughter of Robert Parry, Brigant, Llaneluad, Anglesey, to which district he moved in 1843. In that year he was appointed representative of the British and Foreign Schools Society, for North Wales at the suggestion of [Sir Hugh Owen](#) (1804 - 1881). In 1847 he moved to Bangor, and became pastor of Tabernacle church there, from which he later resigned because of his duties with the British and Foreign Schools Society. He worked unstintingly to convince his fellow countrymen of the need to build schools and of the importance of providing competent teachers to staff them. It was mainly through him that the Teachers' Training College was established in Bangor. The building, etc., cost about £13,000, and with a grant of only £2,000 from the government, Phillips was instrumental in collecting the balance of £11,000. When the college was eventually opened in August 1863, he was elected its first principal. In 1864 he was appointed moderator of the C.M. General Assembly.

Although most of his work was in connection with the British and Foreign Schools Society, he ranked high as a preacher and lecturer, and gave three famous lectures between 1850 and 1852, which were published; they are: (1) *Dadl Bangor ... ar Anghydfurfaeth neu Eglwys Loegr ac Ymneulltuaeth* (Caernarfon, [James Rees](#), 1852); (2) *Y Ddarlith ar Babyddiaeth, Eglwys Loegr ac Ymneulltuaeth* (Liverpool, [J. Lloyd](#), 1850); (3) *Popery Better than Dissent! What!!! And Who says it!!!* (Caernarfon, [James Rees](#), 1850). Phillips died 9 October 1867 at Bryntêg, Anglesey, and was buried at Llaneluad. He left a wife and five children.

Author

Dr Moelwyn Idwal Williams

Sources

NLW MSS 5254-6, 5479-82, 7825, 7827-8, 7830-1, 12678

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Benjamin Williams (Gwynionydd), *Enwogion Ceredigion* (1869), 191

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Fowc Williams, 'The educational aims of pioneers in elementary Welsh education 1730-1870' University of Wales unpublished thesis, 1929 (in N.L.W.)

Images

NLW: Parch. J. Philips

H. J. Hughes, J. Phillips (Bangor)

John Thomas, Er cof am y diweddar Barch. J. Phillips, Bangor fu farw Hyd. 9ed. 1867 yn 57 mlwydd oed

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