

SAUNDERS, ERASMUS (1670 - 1724), divine

Name: Erasmus Saunders
Date of birth: 1670
Date of death: 1724
Spouse: Dorothy Saunders (née Lloyd)
Child: Erasmus Saunders
Parent: Lettice Saunders (née Phillips)
Parent: Tobias Saunders
Gender: Male
Occupation: divine
Area of activity: Religion
Author: David Williams

Born in the parish of Clydey, north Pembrokeshire, the son of Tobias Saunders of Cilrhedyn, Pembrokeshire, and Lettice Phillips of Penboyr, Carmarthenshire. He matriculated from Jesus College, Oxford, 20 March 1690 (graduated B.A. 1693, M.A. 1696, B.D. 1705, and D.D. 1712. As a student he aided **Edward Lhuyd** in the collection of archaeological information regarding Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. (Letters in *Inv. Pembrokeshire*, xxxvi and xxxvii, and *Inv. Carmarthenshire*, 266.)

He was a protégé of **bishop William Lloyd**, one of the 'Seven Bishops,' who was translated to Worcester in 1700. From that year the bishop's son (also named William Lloyd) held the living of Blockley in the diocese of Worcester, but surrendered it in 1705, when Saunders, who had been his curate since 1702, became vicar (13 August). Five months later (18 January 1706) he was instituted rector of Helmdon, Northamptonshire (not north Hampshire, as in *D.N.B.*) by the bishop of Peterborough, and held this living as an absentee pluralist until 1721. (He was not rector of Moreton-in-the-Marsh, as stated in *D.N.B.*). In 1709 he was further preferred by bishop George Bull of S. Davids to a prebendary stall in the collegiate Church of Christ, Brecon.

Saunders was married at Blockley in 1714 to Dorothy, daughter of Humphrey Lloyd of Aberbechan, near Newtown, Montgomeryshire, by whom he had seven children. He died of apoplexy at Aberbechan, 1 June 1724, and was buried in S. Mary's, Shrewsbury, on 5 June. There is a lengthy inscription on his tomb in this church, and, in the church at Blockley, there is a mural tablet with his arms (sable, a chevron ermine between three bull's heads, caboshed argent) erected by his eldest son, Dr. Erasmus Saunders (canon of Windsor, vicar of S. Martin-in-the-Fields, and prebendary of Rochester, died 1775).

Although a pluralist, Saunders was an active parish priest. In 1713, with the aid of local gentry, he obtained the erection at Blockley of a school on which he placed an inscription in Welsh : ' Aros a Llwydda.' He supported the S.P.C.K. and helped financially (through paying for fifty copies) and in other ways in the publication of its edition of the *Welsh Bible*. He published several sermons, one of which, on ' Household Government,' was translated into Welsh by **Samuel Williams**. His chief importance derives from his book *A View of the State of Religion in the Diocese of S. Davids* (London, 1721; reprinted by University of Wales Press, 1949). In this he dealt faithfully with what he called 'the melancholy state' of the diocese, which he attributed mainly to the lay impropriation of the tithes.

Author

Emeritus Professor David Williams, (1900 - 1978)

Sources

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Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford

Archaeologia Cambrensis, 1873 (384), 1879 (72-3)

West Wales Historical Records (1910-29), ii, 161-88

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Erasmus Saunders](#)

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