

THOMAS, BENJAMIN (Myfyr Emlyn; 1836 - 1893), Baptist minister, poet, lecturer, and author

Name: Benjamin Thomas
Pseudonym: Myfyr Emlyn
Date of birth: 1836
Date of death: 1893
Spouse: Margaret Thomas (née George)
Parent: Elizabeth Thomas
Parent: David Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister, poet, lecturer, and author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born at Tŷ-rhos, Whitchurch-in-Cemais, Pembrokeshire, October 1836, seventh of the eight children of David and Elizabeth Thomas, and brother of Stephen Thomas, Baptist minister of Pantycelyn. His father was one of the founders of the local Baptist church of Bethabara in 1826, and was a deacon there until his death, while it was at his home at Tŷ-rhos that the first Baptist Sunday school in the district was held in 1823. He received his early education at the nearby school at Pen-y-groes, kept by Simon Evans, Independent minister at Hebron, and subsequently, after moving to Pant-y-garn (1849), at a school at Elim Baptist church, Eglwysrwrw. He went away to Tredegar at the age of 15 in search of work, and in 1852 was baptized and became a member of Siloh church. Returning home fairly soon afterwards, he was induced to preach, and after nine months' training at a school kept by Dr. George Rees at Fishguard, he was admitted, in 1855, to Haverfordwest College, and in 1858 to Bristol College. He was ordained at Dre-fach and Graig, Newcastle Emlyn, in 1860, as co-pastor with **Timothy Thomas**, accepted the pastorate of the English church at Penarth in 1873, and finally, in 1875, moved to Narberth, where he remained till his death 20 November 1893. He was buried at Narberth. He married (1) Margaret George, Bailey Farm, Newcastle Emlyn, a member of Graig church (died 1878), who was the subject of one of his poems. Five children were born of the marriage; (2) the widow of David Lewis (Cynfyn), Carmarthen, who survived him by a few months.

Myfyr Emlyn was a man of many parts. He was one of the most prominent preachers of his day, and sermons by him were published in Spence - Exall (ed.), *Pulpit Commentary*. He was a popular eisteddfod conductor, and was frequently invited to lecture. His poetical works, in both Welsh and English, were edited by **William Morris** (Rhosynog) under the title of *Barddoniaeth Myfyr Emlyn*, 1898, and he also published *Marwnad R. A. Rees (Rhys Dyfed) Rhydlewis*, 1868, and elegies in **E. Pan Jones**, *Cofiant Samuel Griffiths, Horeb*, 1879, and **J. P. Williams**, *Cofiant Thomas Williams, Llangunog*, 1887. But he is probably best remembered for his biographies - *Cofiant ... Owen Griffiths ... Gelli a Blaenconin*, 1889, and above all else his *Cofiant Dafydd Evans, Ffynonhenry*, 1870 (four later eds.), and *Ffraethebion Dafydd Evans, Ffynonhenry*, 1908, which contains excerpts from the biography. He was editor of *Seren Cymru* from 1887 till his death, and delivered an address on the history of the Baptists in the Cardigan district at the Union meetings there in 1888. He also helped to found the church at Cwmdud during the period 1868-9, and in the late 80's and early 90's was prominent in the controversy which arose over the proposed union of the Baptist colleges. Politically he was a fervent Liberal.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

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Works

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