WILLIAM, THOMAS (1761 - 1844), Independent minister, and hymn-writer

Name: Thomas William
Date of birth: 1761
Date of death: 1844
Spouse: Jane William (née Morgan)
Parent: Margaret William
Parent: Richard William
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister, and hymn-writer
Area of activity: Poetry; Religion
Author: Gomer Morgan Roberts

Born 1 March 1761 at Trerhedyn, Pendeulwyn, Glamorganshire, son of Richard and Margaret William. As a young man he joined the Methodists at Tre-hyl and came under the influence of David Jones of Llan-gan (1736 - 1810). After the expulsion of Peter Williams (1723 - 1796) in 1791 he left the Methodists, and he and others got together a congregation at the ' Briton ', near Aberthaw. He was ordained minister in the same manner as David Williams of Aberthyn (1717 - 1792) and Morgan John Lewis, and in 1806 Bethesda chapel was built by him and his flock at Llantwit Major. The church was recognised by the regional association of the Independents in 1814 and he was its minister for the rest of his life. In 1790 he married Jane Morgan of Eglwys Brewis, and they went to live at Fonmon and later at Flemingston. He died 23 November 1844, and was buried near the wall of Bethesda chapel.

His reputation as a hymn-writer is assured and his melancholy hymns are sung by all the denominations. His first publications were *Elegia* (Trevecka, 1785), which contains elegies and hymns, and two small collections, *Llais y Durtur yn y Wlad* (Merthyr, 1812), and *Perl mewn Adfyd* (Merthyr, 1814). Most of their contents are included in his larger collection, *Dyfroedd Bethesda* (Cardiff, 1824; 2nd ed. Merthyr, 1841). A few of his hymns are also found in *The Tear of Friendship* (Cardiff, 1817), which is an elegy upon Jones of Llan-gan. He also wrote a number of other elegies such as that upon Peter Williams (Carmarthen, 1796), and upon his wife, *Cwyn yr Unig* (Cardiff, 1828). His famous memorial verses upon John Williams of Saint Athan are to be found in *Dyfroedd Bethesda*. A collected edition of his works, together with a memoir, was published by Thomas Rees of Swansea in 1882.

Author

Reverend Gomer Morgan Roberts, (1904 - 1993)

Sources

Thomas Williams, T. Rees (ed.), *Gweithiau prydyddol y Parch. Thomas Williams, Bethesda, y Fro yn nghyd a hanes ei fywyd* (Swansea 1882)

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