

LEEKE, SAMUEL JAMES (1888 - 1966), Baptist minister

Name: Samuel James Leeke
Date of birth: 1888
Date of death: 1966
Spouse: Amy Gertrude Leeke (née Bryant)
Parent: Anne Leeke (née Williams)
Parent: Samuel Leeke
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born 28 March 1888 at Tal-y-bont, Cardiganshire, son of Samuel Leeke (died 14 February 1943, aged 81) and Anne Leeke (née Williams, died 31 December 1937 aged 74). His parents married in Bristol on 20 November 1884. His father was a carpenter by profession, a trade which he practised at sea, having sailed many times 'round the Horn'. The son's career started in the service of the Post Office, but as a consequence of the religious revival of 1904-05, he was persuaded in 1907 by his mother church, Tabernacl, Tal-y-bont, to begin preaching. After a preparatory course at the Old College School at Carmarthen, he was accepted in 1909 into the University College and Baptist College at Cardiff. In spite of his early disadvantages, he succeeded in obtaining the degrees of B.A. in 1912 and B.D. in 1915. He was ordained on 14 February 1916 as the minister of Seion, Cwmaman, Aberdare, and he was subsequently installed as minister, on 16 February 1925, at Siloam, Brynaman and on 5 October 1931 at Bethesda, Swansea (on the occasion of the centenary of the re-location there of the church from Back Road). His preaching combined the passion of evangelism with breadth of learning. One of the notable features of his ministry was his unstinting care of his dispersed church during World War II, in spite of his own terrible suffering during the bombing raids on Swansea and the complete destruction of his home at 12 Brooklands Terrace on Monday night, 17 February 1941. He was married at Bethesda, Swansea, on 22 September 1931 to Amy Gertrude Bryant, a member at Seion, Cwmaman, the daughter of William Bryant (who was killed in the colliery at Cwmaman in 1911) and Emily Bryant (who for half a century managed the Post Office at 4 Alexandra Terrace, Cwmaman). He died on 31 December 1966 and was buried on 4 January 1967 at Oystermouth public cemetery.

His name was legendary among his acquaintances as a collector of books of every kind, among them many first editions, and he will be remembered for his mastery of many languages, especially Hebrew. He contributed regularly to the denomination's literature, e.g. as early as 1917 to *Yr Hauwr* and especially in the 1930s to *Yr Arweinydd Newydd*, which dealt with the Sunday school syllabus. His most important work, *Llyfr y Proffwyd Eseia: detholion* has a similar context. This was published in 1929 by the Sunday School Union of the Baptist Union of Wales.

In 1929 he played a prominent part, with others, in the founding of Urdd y Seren Fore for the children of the denomination. He served that movement in more than one post including its presidency in the year 1939-40. He was also prominent as a member of the first committee and a lecturer at Ilston School, a preparatory school for theological students that was opened in Swansea on 8 Sep. 1934. He was the president of the Ystalyfera area District Meeting at the time of his move to Swansea. He was thereafter elevated to become president of the West Glamorgan County Association in 1949-50 (the subject of his presidential address was 'Looking back') and to the presidency of the Welsh section of the Baptist Union of Wales in 1961-62. (His address in Holyhead in 1961 was 'A call for new confidence and hope in the Gospel'.) He served for almost fifteen years as the Free Church chaplain at the general hospital in St Helen's Road, Swansea.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

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Further Reading

Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru: [Leeke – Samuel James \(1888–1966\)](#)

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