

PHILLIPS, DANIEL MYDRIM (1863-1944), minister (CM), teacher and author

Name: Daniel Mydrim Phillips

Date of birth: 1863

Date of death: 1944

Gender: Male

Occupation: minister (CM), teacher and author

Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Religion

Author: John Gwynfor Jones

D. M. Phillips was born in 1863 at Pant-y-gwin, Llan-y-crwys, between Mynydd Cellan and Afon Twrch, Carmarthenshire, the son of Rees and Elizabeth Phillips. The family moved to Ystradfellte where he worked as a smith in Pontsyll smithy, near Brecon.

He began to preach and was educated in Trecynon, Aberdare, by the Unitarian **Rhys Jenkin Jones** and at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, Cardiff, where he studied philosophy and was tutored by Dr W. R. Sorley and Professor J. S. Mackenzie.

While at college he accepted a call to Libanus church, Tylorstown, in the Rhondda Fach, and he was ordained at Maesteg in 1892. He served his church for over fifty years devoting himself diligently as pastor, teacher and author. He held biblical classes and joined R. B. Jones's Biblical Institute at Porth where he lectured in philosophy, logic, theology, ethics and natural sciences. In 1933 he was elected Moderator of the Association in the South and in 1941 Moderator of East Glamorgan Presbytery. He also became twice examiner for Sunday Schools and Cherra Theological College in India. After R. B. Jones's death in 1936 he became Principal of the Porth college and divided his time as teacher and pastor.

D. M. Phillips came to the Rhondda in a period of great social, industrial and theological change in Wales when humanistic liberalism and modernity, based on eighteenth-century rationalism, developed, linked to scientific and technological studies. The growth of socialism and higher criticism also seriously affected Biblical studies, church worship and the size of congregations. As pastor and author he strove to defend orthodox Calvinism - the basis of his prolific output - in a period when theological liberalism threatened it in the churches.

Together with **Thomas Rees** of Merthyr he published *Cofiant a Phregethau y diweddar Barch David James, Llneurwg* (1895), followed by *Hau a Medi* (1910), a collection of sermons by **W. E. Prytherch** of Swansea, and **Rev. Edward Matthews** of Ewenni (1927). In 1901 *Athrawiaeth y Meddwl* was published, a substantial volume and the first to discuss psychology in Welsh, a study which Dr Sorley said of its author 'He has taught psychology to speak Welsh!' In 1903 he published an exposition of the Ten Commandments, and presented it to his theological class at Tylorstown. He was influenced by the Revival (1904-5) and contributed lengthy reports in *Y Goleuad* on revival meetings in north and south Wales. In 1906 *Evan Roberts, the Great Welsh Revivalist and his Work* was published, a volume translated into three languages, the Welsh version *Evan Roberts a'i Waith* appearing in 1912. In 1908 *Athroniaeth Anfarwoldeb* was published, another weighty volume on the experience of the soul's immortality. Together with *Dynanic Preaching* (1935) most of his volumes were written to defend orthodoxy.

It was his interest in Biblical studies that led him to publish *Damhegion Crist* (1914) and twelve expositions on the gospels and epistles (1903-23). He edited *Y Deonglwr*, and with **Evan Davies** of Trefriw *Y Lladmerydd*, and contributed essays on theological matters in several journals. He travelled often to the Middle East, Italy, France and North America, and in 1925 he was presented with an Address in the form of an Album by American-Welsh community. In 1902 he obtained a doctorate at the University of Wooster, Ohio, for a study of **Richard Price's** moral philosophy. His energy and commitment to his flock were such that it is amazing that he was able to publish so many volumes and essays.

He married twice: (i) Louisa Mary David, Bridgend (1895), and (ii) Margaret Williams, Bryncoch, Llanwrda (1912). He retired from his pastorate in May 1940 and died unexpectedly in a society meeting at Seion, Pont-y-gwaith, not far from his home, on 20 June 1944. He was buried at Lledr Ddu Public Cemetery, Trealaw.

Author

John Gwynfor Jones

Sources

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Blwyddiadur y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd, 1945

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