

## The Sad Story of Lemuel Smith of Pentyrch

A volume published in Cardiff in 1904 as a souvenir of the visit by the Glamorgan Congregational Association to Caerphilly contains a lot of interesting material on the various personalities involved in the origins and early development of Congregationalism in this district. Mainly in Welsh, the volume covers Watford, Groes Wen, Tonyfelin, Rhydri (Rudry), Glandwr Taf, Senghenydd, Llanbradach and Abertridwr, but on page 53 there is a short note by the Rev. R. G. Berry of Gwaelod-y-Garth, recording the short career and sad death of Lemuel Smith, Congregational Minister at Pentyrch. The following account has been translated from the original Welsh by Bill Linnard (of Radyr), especially for 'The Garth Domain':

### Lemuel Smith.

He was born in 1815, and when still very young he was received as a member in Rehoboth, Brynmawr, where he also started preaching. He moved with his father to work in Dowlais, and became a member in Bethania. At age twenty-five he accepted a call from Taihirion and Bethlehem, Pentyrch, and he was the fourth minister at these churches. His ordination meeting was held in Taihirion, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1840, with the Rev. Lewis Powell (Cardiff), W. Jones (Bridgend) and others taking part.

In the early months [at Pentyrch] the young minister felt that his labour was not successful, and one Sunday morning on his way to Taihirion he knelt down beside a stile to ask God what he should do: go back to his old work as a miner, or carry on? To his dying day he believed that he heard a voice telling him not to despise a day of 'little things' [i.e. small accomplishments]. He was encouraged by the answer, and though his life was short, he did live to see God succeeding in his work.

He was a short man, slim, of fair complexion, and a fluent speaker with a melodious voice; and doubtless, as is noted in *Hanes Eglwysi Annibynol Cymru* [History of the Independent Churches in Wales] if he had health and life, he would have become very popular as a preacher but

*Ei seren deg fachludodd cyn i'w dydd  
Braidd gyraedd y cyhededd*

[His fair star set prematurely,  
Barely reaching the zenith]

Under his ministry and through his support, the Congregational cause was established at Efail-isaf, but he did not see the chapel completed. He was preaching in a room there, when a blood vessel burst in his chest. 'A candle burning at both ends' was how the Rev. W. Griffith (Llanharan) described him. He died on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1842, aged 27 years, and on his small gravestone is the following verse:

*Na wylwch ddim, na fyddwch drist,  
Am neb sydd wedi humo'n Nghrist;  
'Does yma ond y corph o glai,  
Mae'r enaid fry yn llawenhau.*

[Do not weep, do not be sad,  
For one who has fallen asleep in Christ  
Here is just the body of clay  
The soul above is rejoicing]



Taihirion



Bethlehem



Bronllwyn

### Capeli'r Cylch



Tabernacl