

JENKINS, HERBERT (1721 - 1772), early Methodist exhorter, afterwards Independent minister

Name: Herbert Jenkins
Date of birth: 1721
Date of death: 1772
Parent: Herbert Jenkins
Gender: Male
Occupation: early Methodist exhorter, afterwards Independent minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in Mynydd-islwyn parish, Monmouthshire. According to **Bradney** (*Hist. of Mon.*, I, ii, 442), his father was Herbert Jenkins and his grandfather that William Jenkins of Aberystwith parish who was curate (and kept school) at Trevethin (Pontypool) from 1726 till 1736. It may be that the parents had 'dissented'; tradition asserts that they were attached to the church of **Edmund Jones**, and certainly young Herbert was educated by Bernard Fosket at Bristol. Attracted into the Methodist movement, he began to exhort - in 1740, as it is thought - and won fame so quickly that his name stands first on the list of 'public' (i.e. itinerant) exhorters authorized by the Methodist Association at Watford, Glamorganshire, in January 1743. No specific district in Wales was allocated to him; rather, he was to be at **Howel Harris**'s call, and also to co-operate with the English Methodists. Indeed, though he had exhorted with great acceptance in Pembrokeshire in 1741 (despite a severe 'dressing-down' by **Griffith Jones** at Llanddowror) and again in 1743 (*Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calffinaidd*, iv, 7-8), and though Welsh hymns of his were printed in 1742 and 1744, and a Welsh version of James Humphreys's pamphlet in defence of Methodism (*Atteb i bob dyn a ofynno rheswm am y gobaith sydd ynom*), in 1745, he was in effect lost to Wales from 1743 on. His work lay rather in England, and his colleagues were John Cennick and the English Methodists; he was elected member of the English Conference in March 1744 (*Tabernacle conference book* in N.L.W. - extracts printed in *Y Drysorfa*, 1936, 159-62), and he frequented its meetings.

His relations with **Harris** were not fully happy - he was bitterly opposed to Moravianism, and censured **Harris**'s leanings towards it. He was also beginning to feel disquiet about preaching without being in orders - yet he felt increasing alienation from the Established Church, having been given a not unkindly hint by the bishop of Bristol that he was unlikely to be accepted for Anglican orders. Yet, in spite of the bitter quarrels at the Tabernacle, Jenkins remained a Whitefieldian longer than did several of his fellow-labourers. The tale that he went over to Wesleyanism can hardly be right. True, he had great respect for John Wesley - true also, he appeared from time to time at Wesley's conferences, but so did **Harris**, for that matter; Jenkins was a strong Calvinist, and denounced 'Baxterianism.' Not before May 1748 did he part company with Whitefield and with Methodism. He became an Independent, and in 1749 was ordained as pastor of Maidstone, where he died 11 December 1772, aged 51. Beyond doubt, he was the ablest of the early Welsh Methodist exhorters - even the Moravian records at Haverfordwest style him 'a very solid man.' A good number of letters to and from him are to be found in the Trevecka collection at N.L.W.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

J. Morgan Jones and W. Morgan, *Y Tadau Methodistiaidd (1895-1897)*, i, 220-2

Garfield Hughes in *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calffinaidd*, xxxii, 1-8 (see also *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calffinaidd*, 26-7)

Some hold that the David Jenkins who was, with Herbert, the joint author of the 1744 *Hymnau ar Amryw Ystyriaethau* (1774), was Herbert Jenkins's brother

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