JOHNS, WILLIAM (1771 - 1845), Unitarian minister, tutor, and writer

Name: William Johns
Date of birth: 1771
Date of death: 1845
Gender: Male
Occupation: Unitarian minister, tutor, and writer
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1771 in Cilmaenllwyd parish on the Pembrokeshire border of Carmarthenshire. Nothing is known of his family, but it may be noted that the surname John(s) recurs frequently in the records of the Independent congregation of Glandŵr, Pembrokeshire (see J. Lloyd James, *Hanes Eglwys Glandŵr*, 141-3), which had charge of the Independents of Cilmaenllwyd. The accounts of his early years are conflicting: he is said to have worked on his father's homestead up to the age of 16, and to have known no English - yet, it is also said that at that very age he became assistant-tutor in classics under Dr. Edward Williams (1750 - 1813) in the Oswestry Academy. We may conjecture that he was at the well-known school kept by John Griffiths (1731 - 1811) at Glandŵr. And it is certain that he was helped by the Congregational Fund Board from 1789 till 1793. It may be, therefore, that he was a student at Oswestry, 1789-90; but from 1790 till 1793 he was at Northampton Academy, where he forsook not only Calvinism but also Trinitarianism. After ministering at Gloucester and at Totnes he was, in 1799, appointed classical tutor in the Manchester Academy, but in 1800 he established a grammar school at Wrexham, transferring it within a few months to Nantwich, where he also took charge of the Unitarian congregation, 1801-3. He moved his school to Manchester in 1804, combining it for a time with the pastorate of Partington, Cheshire, and then, from 1805 till shortly before his death, with that of Sale. From 1803 till 1830 the famous physicist John Dalton (at the time tutor in the Manchester Unitarian Academy) lodged in Johns's house, and the two friends were joint secretaries of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Johns was a frequent contributor to the *Monthly Repository*, and published nine books - on grammar, botany, theology, and Biblical criticism (list in *D.N.B.*). He died 27 November 1845 at Higher Broughton.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

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