

JONES, Sir HENRY (1852 - 1922), philosopher

Name: Henry Jones
Date of birth: 1852
Date of death: 1922
Spouse: Annie Jones (née Walker)
Child: Elias Henry Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: philosopher
Area of activity: Scholarship and Languages
Author: Daniel Davies

Born at Llangernyw, Denbighshire 30 November 1852, the son of a shoemaker. Apprenticed to his father at 12 years of age, he had an arduous struggle for education, but later qualified as certificated teacher at Bangor Normal College and for two years was master of an elementary school at Brynaman, Glamorganshire. He then decided to enter the Calvinistic Methodist ministry, won a Dr. Williams scholarship, and, in 1875, entered Glasgow University, where Edward Caird had a dominating influence on his thought and career. Graduating in 1878, he won the Clark fellowship, which gave him four years at Oxford and in Germany. In 1882 he married Annie Walker, of Kilbirnie.

Appointed lecturer in philosophy at Aberystwyth in 1882, he became professor at Bangor in 1884, at S. Andrews in 1891, and at Glasgow, as Caird's successor, in 1894. An outstanding teacher, his doctrine was essentially Caird's version of Hegelian idealism, but the *Bible* and the great poets also contributed to his thought and style. To him philosophy was a way of life, a faith to be taught and accepted. Moral values were the basis of his creed: he stressed man's infinitude as well as his finitude, and viewed the world-process as the progressive realization of an all-inclusive God of Love, ever moving and yet perfect. His writings were many and varied, the most important being *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher* (1891), *Lotze* (1895), and *A Faith that Enquires* (1922) - Gifford Lectures delivered at Glasgow in 1920-1.

Profoundly interested in social affairs and an ardent liberal, he founded the Glasgow Civic Society. Educational reform in Wales owes much to his unstinted effort; he was a leader in the movement which resulted in the Intermediate Education Act (1889), and after the establishment of the Welsh University he originated the plan of a 'penny rate' levied by the County Councils for higher education; he also served on various commissions and committees. Despite an operation for cancer in 1913, he actively supported the national effort during the war, and visited the U.S.A. in 1918. He died at Tighnabruaich, Argyll, 4 February 1922.

He gained many honours: hon. LL.D. (S. Andrews) 1891, F.B.A. (1904), hon. D.Litt. (Wales) 1905, knighted (1912), C.H. and Cymmrodorion medal (1922). Of his six children, two died in youth, and one son fell in the war of 1914-18. In 1934 a memorial fund was instituted to acquire and maintain his birthplace at Llangernyw, and the balance of the fund was used

to establish an annual prize in moral and political philosophy at Aberystwyth, Bangor, Coleg Harlech, S. Andrews, and Glasgow.

Author

Daniel Davies, (1893 - 1961)

Sources

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H. J. W. Hetherington, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Jones, professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow* (London 1924)

J. H. Muirhead, 'Sir Henry Jones', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, x, 1921-3

Thomas Jones, 'Sir Henry Jones, C.H.', in *A Theme with Variations* (Newtown 1933)

Thomas Jones, *The Native Never Returns* (London 1946)

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