

A Good Example¹



John Jenkins, D.D. (1779-1853) was born in a little village² in Wales on November 28th. Do you know what D.D. Means? This story will tell you.

John Jenkins's father was a farm worker. He was very poor. He had a family of seven children. They children did not go to school. It cost money to go to school and there was none to spare. No one at home could teach them either.

John Jenkins became a farm worker himself. His master could read well. He often listened to Baptist preachers who came to preach in the village. Then a man came to the village who had written reading books. He told the people in the village to set up schools in the evening and Sunday schools. The poor people could come to these schools and learn to read. John Jenkins bought one of the man's reading books. It was very, very cheap. Then he went to the evening school for a few lessons. Soon he could read. He could read the Welsh Bible. He was 15 years old.

When was John Jenkins converted? We do not know. But it must have been around this time. Soon he joined a Church³ in a village about 8 miles away. At the age of 21 he began to preach. Now he was working in an iron ore mine. It was hard and dangerous work. While at work his leg got hurt. He had to rest until it was better. He asked someone to write out the alphabet for him. He got hold of a pen and some ink. He taught himself to write while he was too poorly to work in the mine. Soon he was back at work in the mine. But now he could read and he could write as well.



The next year John Jenkins got married. His new wife was a widow. Her first husband had died. She already had a family. John Jenkins had to work hard to feed them all. As well as his hard work in the mine he preached on Sundays now. He preached in different places. He would walk 15 or 20 miles to and from the chapels where he

¹ Adapted from Thomas Rees *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales* (1861)

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preached.

Then a Baptist church started in his home village. John Jenkins became the pastor. The people were all very poor. They could not pay him much money. He had to keep on working to earn a living.



In 1808 he became the minister of the church in Hengoed⁴ over twenty miles away. Here he stayed for the rest of his life. The people could pay him a little more but he still had to work to feed his family.

And now John Jenkins began to write. In 1811 he published *The Vision of the Silver Palace*. It was a small book. It was in Welsh. It was about the teaching of the Bible. Next he began work on a big book. It was a Bible Commentary in Welsh. A Bible Commentary looks at each verse in the Bible. It helps the reader understand the Bible. He wrote essays too and a Catechism in Welsh. A Catechism is a set of questions and answers that teach about the Bible.

John Jenkins always wrote in Welsh. It was his language. His books were very useful to Welsh people. Many could not read English. Many who could speak English preferred to read in their own language. In 1852, the year before his death, he was given an award. A university in America had found out about his Welsh books. The university recognised he was very learned. He had studied and studied and studied the Bible. They sent him a degree. That meant he was a Doctor of Divinity, a learned teacher. D.D. Is short for Doctor of Divinity. Now he was John Jenkins, D.D.

John Jenkins had no education. But God can educate his servants!

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