


OWEN, JOHN (1698 - 1755), chancellor of Bangor

Name: John Owen
Date of birth: 1698
Date of death: 1755
Parent: Pierce Owen
Gender: Male
Occupation: chancellor of Bangor
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Llanidloes in 1698, son of Pierce Owen; according to Foster, he matriculated (as 'John Owens') from Jesus College, Oxford, on 21 March 1718/9, at 21, but Foster's conjecture that he graduated in 1722 as 'Joseph Owen' is extremely improbable. Indeed, in [A. Ivor Pryce's](#) *Diocese of Bangor during Three Centuries*, John Owen is given no degree at all in 1723, but by 1742 he is styled LL.B., and at his death LL.D. It seems likely, therefore, that he was the man who is recorded in Venn (*Alumni Cantabrigienses*), without information on age or parentage, as having incorporated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1741, as a fellow-commoner, who graduated LL.B. in 1742 (LL.D. 1751) - residence would not have been necessary, as his Oxford terms would be allowed for. John Owen became vicar of Llannor with Deneio (i.e. Pwllheli), 1 June 1723. In June 1742 he was appointed canon of Bangor, and at the end of January 1743 chancellor; at the end of December 1745 he received in addition the rectory of Llantrisant in Anglesey. He died before 8 November 1755, the day on which a new rector was appointed at Llantrisant 'because of the death of J. Owen'; he was buried at Llanidloes.

John Owen is remembered as an unremitting foe of Methodism. There is an angry letter by him in the *Account of the Welch Charity Schools* by [John Evans](#) of Eglwys Cymyn (1702 - 1782), which refers to a letter sent by Owen to [Griffith Jones](#) of Llanddowror himself, complaining bitterly of the 'Methodism' of the circulating schools. In 1741 he curtly refused [Howel Harris's](#) request for a circulating school at Llannor, and when [William Prichard](#) gave the school house-room, Owen seized upon some derogatory remarks made by [Prichard](#) in the churchyard to hale him before the ecclesiastical courts at Bangor. [Prichard](#) was there defended by the prominent lawyer John Williams of T -fry (Anglesey); the case went up to the Great Sessions, and after three years [Prichard](#) was acquitted; but he had to quit his farm. John Owen gave Methodists no respite; we know of more than one instance of his delating them to the church courts, and Gwynedd MS. 17b in U.C.N.W. library contains copies of his charges against them, and of the verdicts of excommunication which ensued. It is clear, too, that in this matter he kept a sharp eye upon his native countryside around Llanidloes, encouraging the local clerics to delate Methodists - see [Bennett](#), *Meth. Trefaldwyn Uchaf*, 41-2 and 64-5. Not unnaturally, [Robert Jones](#) of Rhos-lan, in his *Drych yr Amseroedd*  (61-2, 77-8), while recognizing Owen's ability and his eloquent preaching, has much to say against him - not that we need swallow all the old chronicler's stories of the divine punishments which fell upon the chancellor. Yet, on the other hand, we cannot ignore the judgement pronounced upon him by a fellow-cleric, John Lewis of Plas Llanfihangel (Tre'r Beirdd); when he heard of John Owen's appointment as chancellor, Lewis wrote that he was 'famous for a troublesome litigious temper, and of an obscure mean family; ... strange that the bishop was so imposed upon in appointing him' (Henllys MS. 630 at U.C.N.W.).

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Sources indicated above

Further Reading

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