

THIRLWALL, CONNOP (1797 - 1875), bishop of S. Davids

Name: Connop Thirlwall
Date of birth: 1797
Date of death: 1875
Gender: Male
Occupation: bishop of S. Davids
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born 11 February 1797. The present article deals only with the Welsh activities of this distinguished man and great scholar; the other aspects of his career are fully dealt with in the *D.N.B.* He was appointed bishop of S. Davids in 1840 and the appointment met with considerable opposition: in England, because he was regarded as too broadminded in religious and political matters; in Wales, because he was not a Welshman - *Yr Haul* attacked the appointment, and **Dewi o Ddyfed** (David James, 1803 - 1871) wrote a strongly worded letter to Thirlwall begging him to decline the see, on the ground that no bishop in Wales should be ignorant of the Welsh language - the letter is reproduced in **James**' biography, 32-9. Not only did Thirlwall bear no malice towards **James** (to whom he offered an archdeaconry in 1860), but he set to work to learn Welsh, and within a year was able to preach in Welsh; a volume of his Welsh sermons was published under the editorship of **E. O. Phillips** in 1877, although it must be confessed that his Welsh was stiff and largely unintelligible to the masses. He was a vigorous and generous bishop. He is said to have distributed £40,000 in charity, including the amounts contributed to the raising of the stipends of the poorest of his clergy; he encouraged the building of schools, and the establishment of a training college at Carmarthen; he repaired more than 180 churches; and he visited every part of his wide and scattered diocese. In spite of this, he was never popular. He was cold, academic, and severe, and he and his Welsh clergy never really got to understand each other. On the other hand, remembering his liberal views, Thirlwall's attitude was disappointing when **Rowland Williams** (1817 - 1870) got into trouble - see *Life of Rowland Williams*, i, 333-7. What with one thing and another, he gradually became estranged from his parish clergy and came to rely increasingly on his archdeacons. He lost his sight, and had a stroke; he resigned his see in 1874, and died at Bath, 27 July 1875; he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

John Morgan, *Four Biographical Sketches Bishop Ollivant, Bishop Thirlwall, Rev. Griffith Jones, Vicar of Llanddowror, and Sir Thomas Phillips, Q.C.; with a chapter on 'The Church in Wales'* (London 1892)

and the other references given above

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Connop Thirlwall](#)

Images

NLW: Bishop of St. David's C. N. Thirlwall

R. T., Bishop Thirlwall

T. S., The Right Reverend Connop Thirlwall, D.D Lord Bishop of St. David's

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