

KITCHIN, ANTHONY (alias Dunstan before his consecration), 1477 - 1563; bishop of Llandaff, 1545-63

Name: Anthony Kitchin
Date of birth: 1477
Date of death: 1563
Gender: Male
Occupation: bishop of Llandaff
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Lawrence Thomas

A Benedictine monk who studied at Gloucester (now Worcester) College, Oxford; B.D. 1525, D.D. 1538. He became prior of his college in 1526, leaving in 1530 to become abbot of Eynsham. He surrendered his abbey in 1539, receiving a pension of £133 6s. 8d. and soon became a royal chaplain and in 1545, bishop of Llandaff. He resided in, and organised his diocese from, the episcopal palace at Mathern. He held the bishopric under four Tudors, Henry VIII to Elizabeth, and thereby, and through a further charge of spoliation, had acquired an odious reputation. Confused by the ecclesiastic wranglings of his day, he adopted a *cui bono* policy and allowed the same latitude to other men. He strove hard and patiently to save **Rawlins White**, the Cardiff fisherman, from a martyr's death. He was not a persecutor as one eminent cleric has alleged. He was the only Marian bishop who refused to apply to the pope for absolution from schism.

Kitchin has been accused of despoiling the see of Llandaff. The earliest charge, by **Rice Merrick**, in 1578, merely convicted him of leasing 'at the accustomed Rent only.' **Bishop Godwin**, 1603, went further, condemning him for selling episcopal farms and leasing others for 'extremely small payments.' He took one lease to London and lost it. Lack of business capacity rather than greed seems to have been his failing. He was surrounded by men hungry for land, while some of his officials gave rise to suspicion. The confiscation of the chantries (1548) and of church goods (1552-3) was the work of the laymen on the royal commission, and devastated the diocese. His organisation and knowledge of his diocese seem to have been thorough - he was able to make a detailed return of parishes and clergy, etc., to archbishop Parker in less than three weeks. His returns made in 1561 and 1563 to Parker indicate an improvement taking place in the diocese - an increase in the number of parochial clergy; clerical non-residence was on the decline and pluralist incumbents employed curates. He died 31 October 1563 and was buried at Mathern.

Author

Archdeacon Lawrence Thomas, (1889 - 1960)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Lawrence Thomas, *The Reformation in the Old Diocese of Llandaff* (1930)

Cardiff Records (1898&€"1911)

W. de Gray Birch, *Memorials of the see and cathedral of Llandaff derived from the Liber landavensis, original documents in the British museum, H. M. record office, the Margam muniments* (Neath 1912)

Further Reading

Madeline Gray, 'The Disaster of our Estate': Anthony Kitchin and the diocese of Llandaff

Wikipedia Article: [Anthony Kitchin](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q4772886](#)

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