

THOMAS, OLIVER (1598 - 1653?), Puritan cleric, and author

Name: Oliver Thomas
Date of birth: 1598
Date of death: 1653?
Gender: Male
Occupation: Puritan cleric, and author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

There were two near-contemporaries of this name, both Oxford graduates and both hailing from Montgomeryshire, but there is little doubt that the man with whom we have to deal here was the 'gent.' who matriculated from Hart Hall (now Hertford College) in November 1616, aged 18, and was B.A. in 1620 and M.A. in 1628 - the other man held benefices in Pembrokeshire, while the subject of the present notice was throughout his career associated with the north-eastern borders of Wales. The scanty details known of his career will be found in **Thomas Richards's** *Puritan Movement in Wales and Religious Developments in Wales*. In 1629 he was at Wrexham, where **Arise Evans** heard him preach. In 1647 Oliver Thomas 'of Oswestry' is found assisting Rowland Nevett in Shropshire, and is deemed 'fit to be in Second Classis in Salop.' He became an 'approver' under the February 1649/50 Act for Propagating the Gospel in Wales; and at some date before 14 May 1650 was given the living of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. He was there down to 1653; **Dr. Richards** says that he 'most probably died' in that year - 'quite certainly before April 1657.' Anthony Wood says that he died at Felton, Salop.

Thomas was the author of *Catechism* (with **Evan Roberts**, 1640, and of *Drych i dri math o bobl*, c. 1647 (reprinted by **Stephen Hughes**, in the composite volume, *Tryssor i'r Cymru*, 1677). The anonymous *Car-wr y Cymru*, 1630 (several reprints down to 1766), a 12-page catechism for children, and the much larger *Car-wr y Cymru* of 1631 (reprinted by **Stephen Hughes** in his *Cyfarwydd-deb i'r Anghyfarwydd*, 1677), which the University of Wales reprinted in 1930, may also be confidently ascribed to him; it is so ascribed by Anthony Wood (*Athenae Oxonienses*, 1691 edn., i, 860) on the authority of Thomas's contemporary, **Michael Roberts** (died 1679), by **Stephen Hughes** in *Tryssor* (1677), and by **Moses Williams** in his list of Welsh printed books (1717). Oliver Thomas's Welsh prose is excellent.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (1813&€"20)

T. Richards, op. cit. (indexed)

J. Ballinger, preface to the 1930 edition of *Car-wr y Cymru*. *Yn annog ei genedl annwyl a'i gyd-wladwyr er mwyn Crist a'u heneidiau i chwilio yr Ysgrythyrau yn ol gorchymyn Crist* (Llundain 1631) - but note the criticisms by G. J. Williams in *Y Llenor: cylchgrawn chwarterol dan nawdd cymdeithasau Cymraeg y colegau cenedlaethol*, 1930, 251-2
Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society, iv, 262-5

Works

William Perkins, Vavasor Powell, Oliver Thomas, *Cyfarwydd-deb i'r anghyfarwydd, sef, Llyfr yn cynnwys, 1 Agoriad byrr ar Weddi'r Arglwydd: 2 Ymddidanion rhwng y Carwr a'r Cymro: 3 Ymddidanion rhwng Crist a'r Publican, rhwng Crist a'r Pharisead, a rhwng Crist a'r Credadyn ammheus, sef canwyll Crist. 4 Amryw reolau duwiol* (Llundain 1677)

Oliver Thomas, Vavasor Powell, *Drych, y Cristion: neu Gadwedigol Ffydd, wedi ei Datgyddio mewn Ymddidanion. I. Rhwng y Carwr a'r Cymro: Iw Gymell i Addoli Duw yn ei Dy. II. Rhwng Iesu a'r Publican. I Gyfarwyddo y Pechadur sy'n gweled ei Anheilyngdod. III. Rhwng Iesu a'r Pharisaeaid. I Argyhoeddi y Rhagrithiwr, sy'n pwysu ar waith ei hun. IV. Rhwng Iesu a'r Credadyn Ammheus. I Gysuro y Gwir Gristion* (Dublin 1766)

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