

**THE LIFE OF JOHN
OWEN &
JOHN JANEWAY**

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The life of John Owen & John Janeway by Various

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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. JOHN OWEN, D.D.

ABRIDGED FROM ORME'S LIFE OF OWEN.

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IN making this abridgement, no change has been made in the facts, as stated by the original author, but often in the reflexions and inferences from the facts, others have been substituted in the place of those made by Mr. Orme, and many of his have been entirely omitted. When his language is used to any extent, notice is given of it to the reader, and marks of quotation prefixed; but often in condensing the narrative his words are retained without any particular acknowledgment.

LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D. D.

Dr. OWEN was descended from a Welsh family of great respectability. His father was a nonconforming clergyman, who had been educated at Oxford, and was reckoned a strict puritan.

John, his second son, was born in the year 1616, and after receiving the rudiments of his education, probably in his father's house, he was initiated into the principles of classical learning, by Edward Sylvester, master of a private academy at Oxford. This respectable tutor, not only taught Greek and Latin, but was employed to make, or correct Latin discourses for the members of the university. He lived to see a number of his pupils make a distinguished figure in the world, among whom, beside Owen, were Dr. John Wilkins, Dr. Henry Wilkinson, and William Chillingworth.

Owen must have made rapid progress in his studies, for at the early age of twelve, he

was prepared to enter the university, and was admitted a student of Queen's college, Oxford. He knew that he must depend on his learning to make his way through the world, as his father had nothing to give him. Nothing is commonly more unfavourable to genius and industry, than being born heir to a rich estate. It destroys that excitement which is absolutely necessary to counteract natural indolence; while it cherishes those feelings of pride and self importance, which are destructive of application and success.

When Owen joined the university, and while he continued at it, the leading members were not greatly distinguished for their learning and talents. Barlow is almost the only name which is now associated with learning; the others are either forgotten or unknown. Owen had Barlow for his instructor, in mathematics and philosophy. Barlow afterwards was chosen provost of his college, and in 1676, was made a bishop. He was in doctrine a Calvinist, in philosophy an Aristotelian, and in church government an Episcopalian. He was a man of eminent talents, and as great a master of the learned languages, and of the celebrated authors who have written in them, as any man of the age. Owen studied music, as a recreation from his severer studies, under Dr. Thomas Wilson, a celebrated performer on the flute, whom he afterwards made Professor of Music, in Oxford, when he rose to be Vice-chancellor of that university.

Owen's high attainments in learning, will not be any matter of surprise, when it is known, that during his whole literary course, he pursued his studies with incredible industry; allowing himself only four hours sleep out of the twenty-four. Every hour redeemed from sleep and other indulgences, is so much clear gain; but it is not every constitution which will bear such a rigid economy of time, and many by attempting it, have done irreparable injury to their health and comfort, and have ruined all their prospects of eminent usefulness in future life. Owen was blessed with a sound and vigorous constitution. He was fond of violent and robust exertion, and took frequent exercise of this kind, which is so far from being unbecoming in a grave student, it ought to be considered a part of that duty which he owes to himself.

On the 11th of June, 1632, Owen took his first degree, and in April 1635, at the age of nineteen, he took his master's degree. Literary degrees, when they prove a spur to industry and are conferred only on such as merit them, may be useful, but when they are indiscriminately bestowed, they lose their value, and are despised by the genuine scholar, and are sought after only by those on whom they can bestow no honour or distinction.

During his course in the university, the mind of Owen seems to have been little, if at all under the influence of religious principle.

Ambition to raise himself to some station of eminence in church or state, was the motive by which he was actuated, and which stimulated him to such laborious exertion in the acquisition of learning; but although he thought of no such thing, Providence was preparing him for extensive usefulness in the church; especially by his writings, which can never lose their value as long as evangelical truth shall be in esteem. The deficiency of supplies from his father, who was himself poor, was amply made up by an uncle, the proprietor of a considerable estate in Wales, who had no children of his own, and intended to make his nephew his heir, which design, however, was never carried into effect.

Previously to his leaving the university, which event occurred in his twenty-first year, he became the subject of serious religious impressions, but how they were produced, no means of ascertaining now remains. He had received a religious education in his father's house, and impressions then made, were probably now revived. But, however this may be, the convictions which now seized him were deep and pungent, so as not only to produce great seriousness of mind, but even to affect the health of his body. The spiritual conflicts, through which he now passed, appear to have been intended to fit him for the work which he was destined to perform at a future period; and probably communicated to his writings that tone of spiritual feel-