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John D. Ramsbottom

Butler University, jramshot@butler.edu

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Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Fogg, Laurence (c.1630–1718), *dean of
Chester*

by John D. Ramsbottom

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Fogg, Laurence (c.1630–1718), dean of Chester, was born at Darcy Lever, Lancashire, the son of Robert Fogg (*d.* 1676), who was ejected from the rectory of Bangor Is-coed, Flintshire, in 1661. Educated at Bolton grammar school, Laurence Fogg was admitted to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, on 28 September 1644 and migrated to St John's College on 2 August 1645. He matriculated in 1645, graduating BA in 1649 and proceeding MA in 1652; in 1650 he was made a fellow of St John's. He was created BD in 1659 and DD in 1679. While at St John's he held the office of 'taxor', in which he acted for the university in legal matters. On 30 October 1657 he was admitted to the rectory of Hawarden, Flintshire. He was ordained first by the Cambridgeshire Association in 1658, but on 28 February 1661, like his brother, he took Anglican orders. In the interval, he was married to Mary Harrison (1630/31–1718) of Merstham, Surrey. Although he resigned his living in July 1662 he subsequently conformed and resumed his career in the church. He was curate of Prestwich, Lancashire, in 1666 and later obtained the curacy of Plemondstall, worth some £80 per annum, which was in the gift of the chief justice, Sir Orlando Bridgeman. He held this living for fifty years. In 1672, the same year that his father was licensed to keep a presbyterian meeting-house, Fogg was presented as vicar of St Oswald's, Chester, and served there until 1699. He evidently attracted attention for his capacities as an administrator—for instance, in 1680 Bishop Wilkins wrote that Dr Fogg 'hath bin most acquainted with the business' of the disputed rectory of Bradeley, Staffordshire (MS Tanner 144, fol. 9)—and on 2 November 1692 he was instituted dean of Chester, remaining in this office until his death there on 27 February 1718. He was buried in St Mary's Chapel, Chester Cathedral.

Fogg gained respect on both sides of the divide between conformity and dissent. Writing to Edmund Calamy, he sought to correct the impression that he was ever a nonconformist, stating that he had been among the first to restore the public use of the prayer book in 1660. Instead he had refused to take the oath against resistance to the government required by the Act of Uniformity, and left the ministry until 1665, when Justice Bridgeman interpreted the Oxford oath in terms acceptable to him. One of his sermons, given about 1698, found favour with the nonconformist Matthew Henry, who described it as 'very much to the purpose, pressing home the necessary duty of beating down sin and wickedness'. Henry declared that such preaching would 'heal differences among those who fear God' and forgave 'all that the Dean has at any time said against Dissenters, and against me in particular' (Gastrell, 1.136). In later years Fogg engaged in controversy over Calvinist doctrine, publishing *Theologiae speculativae schema* (1712) and *God's Infinite Grace in Election and Impartial Equity in Preterition Vindicated* (1713). After old age left him 'disabled for Publick Performances', he expressed his concern for the spiritual welfare of his flock at Plemondstall in two introductory treatises on the Christian

faith 'adapted to Vulgar Capacity', *Two treatises: a general view of the Christian religion ... [and] An entrance into the doctrine of Christianity* (1714) .

JOHN D. RAMSBOTTOM

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Likenesses portrait, St John Cam.

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