MORGAN, JOHN (' John Morgan of Matchin ', 1688? - 1734?), cleric, scholar, and author

Name: John Morgan
Date of birth: 1688?
Date of death: 1734?
Parent: Edward Morgan
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric, scholar, and author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1688 or 1689 - he was 16 at his matriculation from Jesus College, Oxford, on 16 March 1704/5. His father was Edward Morgan(s) (son of John Morgans, ' gent,' of Llan-ym-Mawddwy), perpetual curate of Llangelynnin, Meironnydd, from 1672 till 1701; and he had a brother, EDWARD MORGAN, who matriculated with him, although two years older. Edward Morgan the younger was vicar of Towyn, Meironnydd, from 1717 till 1726, and then rector of Llanaber (Barmouth) till his death on 18 June 1749, aged 63. He took an interest in Welsh literature, and had some old manuscripts - Lewis Morris in 1747 speaks of one of them (*Cambrian Register*, ii, 540).

John Morgan, like his brother, graduated in 1708; he was curate of Llandegfan in 1709-10, and afterwards of Llanfyllin, a place which he regarded with affection. In 1713 he obtained the curacy of Matchin(g), Essex, and 'incorporated' as M.A. at S. Catherine Hall (S. Catherine's College today), Cambridge. He preached the S. David's Day sermon of 1728 before the London 'Antient Britons,' and in the same year begins to sign his church records as ' vicar ' - the incumbents of Matching are variously styled rectors and vicars; at present it is a vicariate. Various small improvements carried out by him there are recorded: planting a yew-tree (1729), tuning the bells (1730), levelling the churchyard paths (1732), etc. He died at Matching, and was buried there on 2 March 1733-perhaps 1734 in our reckoning.

John Morgan was a good Welsh scholar. Besides the poetry collected by him (and some of his own) in Llanstephan MS 15 in N.L.W., there is a collection (Llanstephan MS 20) of Welsh proverbs made by him in 1714. He was a friend of Moses Williams, and corresponded with him about Williams's project of enlarging John Davies of Mallwyd's *Dictionarium*; one of his letters was printed in the *Cambrian Register*, ii, 536-in it, in addition to advice to Williams, there are scathing remarks on the idleness of the Fellows of Jesus (Oxford), and on the folly of planting English charity-schools in Welsh -speaking Wales. The letters to Moses Williams came later into the hands of William Jones (1675? - 1749); thus it came about that Richard Morris came to see and to copy them (*Morris Letters*, i, 97, 106) - today they form Add. MS. 17 at N.L.W. Richard also got hold of John Morgan's annotated copy of Davies's *Dictionarium* (*Morris Letters*, i, 180). John Morgan in all probability made the anonymous 1716 Welsh translation of portions of Tertullian and Cyprian - it is certainly ascribed to him by Moses Williams in his register of Welsh printed books (pp. 14,24, 31 of the Welsh Bibliog. Soc.'s 1912 reprint). It is not clear what William Morris (*Morris Letters*, i, 115) means when he speaks of the 'abridgement' which he says was Morgan's work - if he refers to *Egwyddorion ... wedi eu crynhoi allan o'r Catecism*, then we have here a very early instance of the frequent confusion between John Morgan of Matching and John Morgan of Aberconwy, the subject of the article preceding this. For the only other book which we know for certain was the work of the vicar of Matching is that Welsh prose classic *Myfyrdodau Bucheddol ar y Pedwar Peth Diweddaf*, 1714 (preface dated 6 May, dedication to his former parishioners at Llanfyllin, and *englynion* to the memory of Edward Lhuyd); this deservedly became a popular book, and went to five subsequent editions. [Compare also the article on Griffith Hughes (1707 - ?)].

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Saunders Lewis in *Y Llenor: cylchgrawn chwarterol dan nawdd cymdeithasau Cymraeg y colegau cenedlaethol*, i

information from the vicar of Matching

other references given above

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: John Morgan

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