MORRIS, EBENEZER (1790 - 1867), cleric

Name: Ebenezer Morris
Date of birth: 1790
Date of death: 1867
Spouse: Sarah Morris (née Williams)
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1790 at Llandyfrïog, Cardiganshire; no information is available about his youth and education.

He was ordained in 1813 and was licensed to the curacy of Llandeilo Tal-y-bont, becoming curate of Llanedy in 1815. Earlier in 1815 he had become perpetual curate of Llan-nonn, Carmarthenshire. In 1818 he was made perpetual curate of Llanddarog and, in December 1820, vicar of Llanelly, where he was already curate - the patron both of Llan-nonn and Llanelly was Rees Goring Thomas, one of the promoters of the Society of National Schools (*A History of Carmarthenshire*, ii, index). He married (at Llandyfaelog, 2 September 1813), Sarah, daughter of John Williams of Carmarthen, fifth son of the commentator, Peter Williams; there were two daughters of the marriage, and the daughter of one of these became the wife of A. J. M. Green (who was at one time Morris's curate), the father of archbishop Charles A. H. Green - see G. M. Roberts , *Bywyd a Gwaith Peter Williams*, 164, 167.

Morris married again in 1839.

Morris was unquestionably a 'character.' He was a handsome, powerfully built man, a strong Protestant, and an exceedingly popular preacher in his prime - so much so that, on one occasion, the gallery of his church cracked under the weight of his congregation (Innes, *Old Llanelly*, 21). He started the National school in 1837 and was a great supporter of the Mechanics' Institute in the town. He was a zealous Churchman and resumed possession of 'Capel Ifan,' the chapel of ease which had been used by the Methodists since 1743 (*Hist. Carms*, ii, 196). In the circumstances, it was inevitable that he and his Independent neighbour, David Rees (1801 - 1869), should be in a perpetual state of war, and each of them must bear his share of the responsibility for the unfortunate results of their skirmishes about the 'church rates' at Llanelly and Llan-nonn, 1838-40 (Innes, 28-3; Jenkins, *Cymru yn y 19eg ganrif*, 107-8). But Morris had such an ungovernable temper that it amounted almost to madness; it was nothing for him to pummel and kick a person who disagreed with him on some perfectly insignificant matter. The fact that his victim [e.g. William Chambers] might be an eminently respectable justice of the peace made not the slightest difference to him (Innes, 129-30; cf. *Carmarthen Antiquary*, 1943-4, 63). Moreover, he got into money difficulties and in 1843 (and later) his stipend was attached to pay a debt of £5,000 to his patron Rees Goring Thomas and another debt of £500.

It appears that in his later years he was paralysed (Innes, 22); during this period his parishioners were looked after by his curate, A. J. M. Green. He died 18 April 1867 at the age of 77. In 1818 he published two impressions of a pamphlet, *Ymddiddan rhwng Senex a Juvenis*, directed against David Davies of Pant-teg (1791 - 1864).

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

John Innes, *Old Llanelly* (Cardiff 1902)

Catalogue of Printed Literature in the Welsh Department, Cardiff Free Libraries (1898)

information supplied by Mr. E. D. Jones of the N.L.W.

and other references given above

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