

THOMAS, MORRIS (1874 - 1959), minister (Calvinistic Methodist), writer and historian

Name: Morris Thomas
Date of birth: 1874
Date of death: 1959
Spouse: L.M. Thomas (née Morris)
Parent: Robert Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (Calvinistic Methodist), writer and historian
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Derwyn Jones

Born 8 July 1874, in Talysarn, Dyffryn Nantlle, Caernarfonshire, the son of Robert Thomas, quarryman, and his wife. The father died when the Nantlle lake burst its banks, and 8 workmen were killed. Morris Thomas was only 12 years old, but at that age the boy had to go to work in the quarry. His minister, William Williams, saw that he was exceptionally able and gave him encouragement and instruction. He went to the college in Clynnog, and from there to the 'department' in the college in Bala. In October 1901 he went to the University College of North Wales in Bangor and gained a 2nd-class degree in English, and a third class in Philosophy in 1905. He came under the influence of the 1904-05 Revival, and instead of completing the B.D. course, decided to become the minister of a congregation, though he was in Bala from 1905-07. He was ordained in 1908, and his first pastorate was at Aber and Y Gatws near Bangor. Later, he became a minister in Penmorfa, near Porthmadog, Trefeglwys and Llawr-y-glyn, Montgomeryshire, and then Dolwyddelan.

He wrote extensively for the publications of his denomination. He won a prize in the national eisteddfod at Abergavenny in 1913, for a translation into Welsh of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*, and for a critical Essay on the ' Works and art of Islwyn '. In the national eisteddfod in Pwllheli, 1925, he shared a prize for his novel *Toriad y Wawr*, published in 1928 by Hugh Evans and Sons, Liverpool. The other winner was [Lewis Davies](#), Cymer, for his novel, *Wat Emwnt*, published by the same company in the same year. In the Bangor national eisteddfod of 1931, Morris Thomas won first prize with his novel *Pen yr Yrfa*, published in the office of the *Goleuad* in Caernarfon in 1932.

He was considered to be a good historian, and he was appointed to write the history of the Llŷn and Eifionydd Presbytery, left unfinished by [Henry Hughes](#), Bryncir. According to his own account, he tired of the work and the task of trying to make sense of [Henry Hughes](#)' notes, and he turned the work into a novel. *Toriad y Wawr* is a story of the early days of Methodism in the Llŷn peninsula in the days of ' [Morgan y Gogrw'r](#) ' (Morgan Gruffydd. He wrote another novel, *Y Clogwyn Melyn*, which was never published. He used also to publish a short story in the Christmas number of the *Goleuad*.

His wife, L.M. Thomas, a native of Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, was a sister of Prof. Richard Morris of the college in Bala. She too wrote extensively for children, and contributed regularly to the periodicals *Trysorfa'r Plant* and *Y Gymraes*. Morris Thomas retired in 1945, and went to live in Tal-y-bont, in the Conwy Valley. He died there in 1959.

Author

Derwyn Jones

Sources

Bangor Manuscripts at University College North Wales Library, Bangor 15135-15206, in the library of the University College, Bangor

Y Goleuad, 7 October 1959

Blwyddiadur y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd, 1960

Y Gymraes, 37, 10, October 1933

O. E. Williams, *Dringwn fel ein tadau hanes eglwysi (M.C.) Moriah, Dolwyddelan*(1980)

personal knowledge

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