

## THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Formed (in 1948) to foster an interest in the Rev. Francis Kilvert,  
his work, his diary and the countryside he loved.

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AUGUST 1982.

Dear Member,

Three events are to be reported, and the details of the Autumn Walk and Service to be announced.

The Coach Trip to Aberystwyth: - the party of nearly forty members from Hereford was joined by five more at the National Library. Met by Mr. Dafydd Ifons and Mrs. K. Hughes, we were conducted to the area set aside for the Kilvert exhibition. Our hosts spoke of the display and we were allowed to see the exhibits for ourselves. If the chief attraction was the Sandford notebook, there was much else of great interest - the superb photographs of "Kilvert" sites, the Venables Diaries and correspondence and the parish registers, all superbly mounted and annotated. Our hosts took us on a brief tour of the library, which we found most impressive, and then on our departure we conveyed to them our great appreciation, not only of the exhibition but also of their kindness in acting as our guides.

Outing on June 26th - Members were saddened to learn that Mr. Morgan had been taken to hospital, but Mrs. Morgan most ably led the party. During the morning, in bright sunshine the churches of Boughrood, Aberedw and Disserth were visited, and Mr. Grice spoke of the Kilvert links with each. The first afternoon stop was at Hysfa chapel whence we proceeded among darkening clouds to St. Harmon, where the moment we got out from our cars a torrential storm burst. The church porch was full of a bridal party - the afternoon obviously sadder for them than for us! Eventually we gained admittance, were welcomed by the Vicar and admired the beautifully kept building. Then, by narrow roads, vision almost obscured by the heaviness of the rain, we made our way to Abbey Cwmhir church. "The Happy Union" Inn still bore the sign Kilvert noted (22nd. April 1870). At Llandrindod Wells members made their several ways home. Notwithstanding the weather, there were bonuses for those who appreciate such things - pied fly catchers, great crested grebes and fresh mushrooms! But for all a most enjoyable day, and how much we are indebted to Mrs. Morgan, for on her own she had at the last minute to re-arrange our itinerary!

Service at Newbridge-on-Wye - Yet once more the Radnorshire weather improved for members. About 100 were present, and their enjoyment of the afternoon was obvious. We are very grateful to the following for that pleasure: to Archdeacon O. Jones for conducting the service and for putting the Communion vessels on display; to Rev. J.E. James who gave a loving and eloquent address on the diarist; to the readers of the lessons, Rev. D.T.W. Price and Mr. Sherard Cowper-Coles (he had brought his wife, brothers and uncle, all travelling from Kent!); to our Remembrancer, Rev. D. Lockwood; to the organist and choir, who led the hearty singing; to Mrs. Jones and her band of lady helpers who provided the most sumptuous tea; and of course to Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn who most kindly invited members to visit the gardens at Llysdyman - and in the early evening sunshine how beautiful they looked! (I gather that the collection box in the gardens in aid of N.S.P.C.C. raised nearly £15).

Future Events: (1) Walk on Saturday, Sept. 25th. Venue as usual the Baskerville Arms, Clyro at 11.00 a.m. Stout footwear, picnic lunch and tea.

(2) Autumn Service, Sept. 26th. at 3 p.m. at Glascwm. The preacher will be Rev. D.T.W. Price (Lampeter) and we hope the service will be conducted by Archdeacon O. Jones (Newbridge). The ladies of the parish will provide tea. There is ample parking near the church and village hall. Glascwm lies some 7 miles east of Builth Wells, off the A481 New Radnor road, about 9 miles west of Kington (Herefs) and can be approached from Clyro via Newchurch. I would draw members' attention to Mr. Morgan's excellent "Gleanings from Glascwm" in the newsletter for February 1980, for a background to the day. Coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 1.00 p.m. Fare approximately £1.50. Bookings to me, please.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.

BOOK REVIEWS:

The Country Divine - Michael Brander - St. Andrew Press, 121, George Street, Edinburgh. £3. 90.

Robert Francis Kilvert invites us to a reception in his pleasant rooms in Paradise, where we shall meet thirteen other clerical diarists, some of whom (had he known them on earth) might have found places in his Diary.

Acting as Kilvert's agent, Mr. Michael Brander has gathered together in a handy little volume, thumbnail sketches, and extracts from the writings of fourteen rural pastors, who ministered in England or Scotland between 1616, and the year of Kilvert's death, 1879. Members of the Kilvert Society will note with approval that their chronological order gives our own RFK the place of honour at the end of this interesting procession.

Six of the principal guests (along with their host) were clergymen of the Church of England; five were ministers of the Church of Scotland; and two were English nonconformists, one of whom (Clegg, in Derbyshire) combined a medical practice with his ministry.

They are a mixed bag, and apart from RFK, Parson Woodforde may be the only one about whom very much is known. But they rub shoulders together in easy company, telling each other, and us, of their farming and gardening interests; of their servants; their horses and stock; their brewing interests, and in the case of Woodforde, their well-furnished tables. Squarson Newton of Wath, Yorkshire, gives a pleasing account of a Confirmation (984 candidates) at Jervaulx, in August, 1817, that makes a worthy companion to Kilvert's tale of the Confirmation at Whitney in 1870.

So, in a small compass, Michael Brander has brought together 14 differing types, whose common interest was that of recording their several ways of life and goings-on for the benefit of posterity, and we may meet and converse with them all at the social party he has convened.

Canon B. Humphreys (Market Rasen)

Welsh Folk Customs. Trefor M. Owen. Welsh Folk Museum.

An indispensable volume for those who wish to explore more fully the background to Kilvert's Diary, especially his many references to Radnorshire Customs and Traditions, is Welsh Folk Customs by Mr. T.M. Owen, the Curator of the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's. Mr. Owen gives a long and most illuminating account of the extraordinary ceremony of the Mari Lwyd which Kilvert once saw in Clyro (his account appears not in the Diary but in a passage quoted by Mrs. Essex Hope in her Radnorshire Legends and Superstitions); he describes the varying styles of keeping the beautiful custom of Flowering the Graves (on Easter Eve at Clyro but often on Palm Sunday in other parts of Wales); the practice of decorating houses on May Eve with birch and wittan (mountain ash); the many customs connected with All Hallows Eve, to which Kilvert gives the Welsh name of Nos Galan Gauaf, and Mr. Owen calls Nos Galan Gaeaf; the customs of letting in the New Year and collecting milk between the two Christmases, etc. Mr. Owen's book, published first in 1957, is still in print and available from the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's at the bargain price of £2. 50. (excluding postage).

F. Grice.

Mini-Guide to Hay, Llanigon and Capel-y-ffyn.

Mini-Guide to Colva and Gladestry.

Here are the latest issues in Mr. Kenneth Clew's series of mini-guides to churches associated with Kilvert, and they well maintain the standard of his earlier publications. It is a testimony of his devotion to the series that he lives in Surrey and makes journeys to the Kilvert Country at his own expense. The five churches plus the Baptist Chapel and the Monastery at Capel-y-ffyn are all described, as are other buildings of interest and associations with Kilvert. This last affords some interesting information:- such as the Colva echo, which has puzzled many a visitor to that remote, simple little church (as the visitors' book shows); as Daisy's zeal for temperance caused the closure of the inn at Llanigon, and as the use of the Sun Inn (now a farm) as a stopping place for the Welsh drovers.

As usual, the guides are furnished with a map, on which places of interest are indicated. Mrs. Ursula Cooper has again provided delightful sketches of the churches, of which those in the Colva and Gladestry guide I found particularly attractive. But indeed the whole production is attractive, and while it may be said that the guides serve as some advertisement - indeed the only advertisement - for the Kilvert Society, the proceeds from their sale go to the churches concerned. Priced at 20p each they can be obtained as follows:-

Hay, Llanigon and Capel-y-ffyn guide - from Canon I. Davies, The Vicarage, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford.

Colva and Gladestry guide - from Mrs. V. Hobby, Colva Farm, Kington, Herefordshire.

In each case a stamped addressed envelope of at least 9" x 4" should be included.

New members might like to know that the following guides are also available, under the same conditions:-

Clyro and Bettws - from Mr. D. Harling, Penlan House, Clyro, via Hereford.

Llanbedr Painscastle group - from Rev. P. Ralph Bowman, Rhosgoch Rectory, Builth Wells, Powys.

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#### THE BIBLE IN KILVERT:

##### 1. KILVERT'S OWN SERMONS.

It is surprisingly easy to overlook the large part played by the Bible in the three volumes of Kilvert's Diary. His duties as an Anglican minister included preaching on Sundays, sometimes once, often twice, occasionally three times. He records the text or subject of no less than 58 of these sermons, often adding revealing comments. He tended to select his text either from the Gospels or from the Old Testament. "I preached about the child Samuel", he said, soon after his sister and her family had arrived from India, "and when the text was given out Sam and Emmie looked at each other and smiled". (I 141). On a May morning at Langley Burrell "I preached on the Master washing the disciples' feet" (I 330), and one afternoon, between visits to an injured girl, "I read prayers and preached from Luke 18 : 37 on Jesus of Nazareth passing by" (III 194).

In the early part of the Diary he often refers to his method of sermon preparation. Entries such as "Busy all morning writing a sermon for tomorrow" (I 153) are quite common. The most memorable of them states that "I got up soon after five and set to work on my Easter sermon, getting two hours for writing before breakfast" (I 90). And so, early one Sunday, he was able to let his father read his sermon in advance (III 242). However, when the time for preaching came, this could lead to difficulties. Thanks to a June thunderstorm at Langley Burrell "the Church was so gloomy that I could scarcely see to read my sermon" (III 45), while at Newchurch the pulpit proved to be so low that "in order to read my sermon I was obliged to crouch down in it and lie on one side of the ledge and stick one leg out behind" (II 53).

Eight times, however, he reveals that he did not read his sermon at all but preached "extempore". He enjoyed the freedom this gave him and found he needed a full half hour for such sermons. Six of them were given at Bettws, where no sophisticated people were present, a situation paralleled once at Clyro when bad weather kept "the grand people" away and "I had the happiness to have the poor people to myself, so of course I could speak much better and more freely" (II 157). One April Sunday, having read his sermon on James 5 : 11 at Clyro in the morning, he walked three miles uphill to Bettws in great discomfort from a boil on his thigh and a racking headache. "I feared I should break down in my extempore sermon on the Charge to Peter from John 21 : 15", he confessed, "but contrary to my expectations and fears I never preached with so much ease and fluency and satisfaction to myself" (I 325). And on another afternoon when he was feeling rather desperate because it was getting so dark, "I preached extempore with great satisfaction to myself, better than I have ever done before" (II 88). His only recorded extempore sermon at Clyro was also his only preaching disaster, though it was hardly his fault. Driving snow and bitter wind had reduced the congregation to two at the front and three at the back. "When I looked along the waste of empty pews, there was no more spirit left in me. The thing was a failure" (II 189).



Later on Ettie made him a beautiful sermon-case, so he had a convenient way of carrying his manuscript to and from church in his pocket (II 238), though once he almost lost it en route (III 81). He preserved these manuscripts carefully and on sixteen occasions mentions using them a second time. Indeed, he gave a talk on 'Ruth' at four different churches. However, on Whitsunday 1870 he was rather embarrassed to notice Mrs. Crichton in the afternoon congregation at Hay, for by then he was committed to give the same talk she had heard at Clyro in the morning (I 154).

The largest meeting he addressed was a Harvest Thanksgiving Service at Clifford. He estimated attendance at 500, though it is hard to believe the church could really have held so many. He spoke from Isaiah 63 : 7 (III 424). A week later there was a similar occasion at Llowes with choirs from four villages brought together. Taking the chance to make improvements to his manuscript, he again used Isaiah 63 : 7, giving "almost the same sermon I preached at Clifford" (III 426)

He was modest in evaluating the effect of his messages, but occasionally indicated that they were appreciated. When his father returned the manuscript of the sermon he had read in advance of its delivery, he said with a smile, "A beautiful subject, treated very solidly and sweetly" (III 242). After listening to him an elderly woman seized his arm enthusiastically at the door and said, "You're a very nice man" (III 295). At Newchurch the vicar told him he had "hit the farmers as hard as Moses hit the rock" (II 53). "I was very happy", observed good Miss Bynon, "to hear on Sunday that you had not lost your piety" (III 283). And one Monday morning, driving Kilvert from Clyro to Hay in the dog cart to catch a train, the coachman remarked "That was a lovely sermon you gave the Volunteers yesterday, Sir. They did all seem to give such an ear to it. Captain Williams did speak to them about it afterwards" (I 327).

## 2. SERMONS KILVERT HEARD.

When Kilvert was at Nantmel for the laying of the foundation stone of the Mission School Chapel, four people addressed the large crowd. They took little notice of the first three, "but directly the Squire of Nantmel began to speak, a man whom they knew and respected, there was instant silence and attention. And he made an admirable sensible speech, fluent withal and the right word in the right place" (I 109).

He always listened critically to other speakers. Ignoring addresses of which he preserved no details and those he only heard about second-hand, there are more than thirty sermons given by others of which he records the text, the subject, or his own reactions. To the Diary he could express his feelings without fear or favour, and in so doing he revealed the standards he acknowledged. When Mansel Gamage Church was reopened, Kilvert heard the Bishop of Hereford preach in the morning and the Archdeacon in the afternoon. "It is difficult to say which was the worse sermon. The former was a screed, the latter a rigmarole, but the rigmarole was more appropriate and more to the purpose than the screed". Though many laughed at the Archdeacon's sermons, Kilvert admitted that "the cottagers like them, for he is plain and homely and speaks of names and places that they know" (III 374). He listened to the Bishop again as he addressed a mass of people across the ha-ha at Hardwick Vicarage. "He spoke readily but not eloquently for an hour. He is not a born orator and does not excite enthusiasm. He was so engrossed in his subject that he forgot all about time, which distressed those who had to speak after him" (I 217).

In Bath Abbey, however, he heard the Bishop of Londonderry "preach an admirable sermon, nearly an hour long" (II 381), and in London he enjoyed an address by Dr. Vaughan, Master of the Temple. The same afternoon the Dean of Norwich gave "a good sermon and very appropriate, but I like Vaughan better, he is quieter and simpler" (I 26). In Oxford he listened to Father Stanton preaching from the text, "He is altogether lovely". "The matter was not original or interesting and the manner was theatrical and overdone. I should think every eye in that great congregation was quite dry. The text was repeated constantly in a very low die-away tone. I was disappointed" (III 319). Nor was he pleased with "a roaring sermon about Abraham from a strange American clergyman" in the Isle of Wight (III 206-7). He preferred his brother-in-law at Monnington, whose talks he found original and masterly (III 166, 265).

But it was his own father who gave Kilvert most satisfaction as a preacher. He mentions eleven of his addresses. One Sunday afternoon he preached from 2 Samuel 21 : 10, a most improbable text. Kilvert described it as "an admirable sermon to mothers on driving away evil influences from their children, as Rizpah

drove away the carion birds from the dead bodies of her sons" (II 418). Just before his 72nd birthday Robert Kilvert spoke from Proverbs 1 : 20-22, "one of the best sermons I ever heard from him. It was like a spirit preaching without the body" (III 148). And when the village patriarch died he again took an unusual text, Ecclesiastes 9 : 6, "Their love and their hatred and their envy is now perished" (III 151). One summer day, after Kilvert had taught the children on the vicarage lawn, "my father preached a beautiful and touching sermon from Luke 18 : 9 on the Pharisee and the Publican. When he spoke of the Fountain of Blood over which is written for ever 'Wash and be clean' the tears were in the preacher's eyes and trembled in his voice, and I think some hearts in the Church were not unmoved nor their eyes dry" (III 216).

On January 1st. 1878, Kilvert had arranged for his father to come and preach at Bredwardine. However, he got delayed in Hereford and then his carriage broke down near Byford, so the service had already begun when he at last arrived. Kilvert had given him up and hurriedly prepared a sermon himself, but his father had a quick cup of tea and went into the church. His text for the New Year proved to be Psalm 25 : 8, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant' (III 347). Six months later "Mrs. Hancox told me her husband had been an altered man since he heard my Father preach a sermon in Bredwardine Church last January" (III 404).

### 3. KILVERT'S OTHER BIBLE TALKS

Quite apart from sermons, Kilvert was constantly giving talks from the Bible in less formal contexts. The printed Diary does not systematically follow up this aspect of his work, but sufficient clues are given for us to gain some idea of it.

#### (i) Sunday School.

At Clyro he was generally involved in teaching at the Sunday School, though this is only occasionally mentioned (I 55,120,286,339 and II 151,233). In October 1871 when Mr. Venables was away and he had to preach twice, he also "taught the first class at morning school" and later "read to the children in afternoon school from 2 to 3" (II 71-72).

At Langley Burrell he "had a class of Sunday School boys in the dining room before Morning Church" in January 1870 (I 29). There is no further reference to this until Sunday, July 25th. 1875, when twelve children came to him at 9. 30 a.m. To their delight he taught them out of doors (III 213), as he did on August 8 (III 216) and again on September 5 (III 228). With these few details we have to be content.

#### (ii) Bible Class.

At Langley Burrell he also ran a Sunday evening Bible Class in 1874. "Tonight", he wrote on May 17th. "I had my first Bible class in the dining room for this summer" (III 21). Attendance was small, and on June 7th. only three girls came, but "I spoke to them about temptation and the Temptation of Christ" (III 33). Three weeks later he again mentions "my Bible class" (III 45), but that is the last reference.

#### (iii) Lectures.

In 1873 he had begun Wednesday evening Bible lectures at Langley Burrell. "A satisfactory lecture", he reported on January 15th. "I spoke about Noah's vineyard and drunkenness, the Tower of Babel, Babylon and the confusion of tongues, the Tongue Tower, the death of the Emperor Napoleon III and the Great Cornam Street murder" (II 309). Bad weather reduced attendance on February 5th. "I spoke of heroism and self-sacrifice", of which he gave contemporary examples (II 320).

Not till November 4, 1874, are the lectures mentioned again. Then he records, "This evening I had my first Wednesday winter evening service and lecture at the school and reviewed the events of the last seven months", which included the funeral of Dr. Livingstone (III 107). "I had my lecture tonight", he wrote on January 5, 1875, "and there was a good attendance in spite of a dark evening and bad roads. With the New Year I began the history of Joseph" (III 134). Tantalisingly there is no further reference till March 1, 1876 when he says, "I held the 16th lecture and spoke on John the Baptist's text and sermon, 'Repent'. Repentance, humility, temptation and other Ash Wednesday subjects. A full attendance and the people very attentive" (III 235). A week later "I gave the 17th lecture and spoke about the Plagues of Egypt" (III 239). At the 18th lecture on March 15th "I read to the people for a change the account of John Wesley's Cornish preaching and John Nelson's conversion told by himself" (III 243), so evidently the lectures were usually Bible talks. They are not mentioned again.

#### (iv) Cottage Lectures.

At Bredwardine he embarked upon a new venture. On January 1st, 1878, "I went

up the hill to Crafta Webb and arranged with Eliza Preece to hold a cottage lecture at her cottage on winter Thursday evenings till Lent, beginning next Thursday, January 3rd" (III 345). The Diary records six of these lectures, all on Wednesdays after the first. The night ascent to Crafta Webb was formidable and on January 3rd "it was pitch dark and raining, the road very steep and bad". Soon he was streaming with perspiration, "wet without and within". His lantern failed and he had difficulty finding the house, but "the room was full of people, there was a cheerful fire and a lamp bright on the table". They sang the hymn 'Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear'. He went through some of the evening prayer and read Hebrews 11 : 8-10, which alludes to Abraham's faith. Then "I spoke of our going into the year 1878 as Abraham went out at the call of God into the strange and Promised Land" (III 350). The gathering ended when Mrs. Jenkins fainted. Next day he climbed the hill again to see how she was. "The people all seem pleased with the lecture last night and said they should come again" (III 351).

On January 16th "there were 23 people at the lecture, all very attentive, the room crowded and some standing. I spoke on 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'" (III 359-360). But on January 30 when his text was Malachi 3 : 1, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple', there were no less than 36 in the cottage and his hostess fainted (III 364). Next week he spoke about "Jesus stilling the tempest" (III 367) and on February 20 brought the series to a conclusion with a talk on the parable of the Good Shepherd (III 371). He learned indirectly that "up at Crafta Webb his lectures made an impression that will never be forgotten" (III 380).

In 1879 he decided to continue the experiment, so on January 1st "I went to Crafta Webb to begin my cottage lectures", arriving in such a blinding snowstorm that he missed the house. Not many people braved such conditions (III 445). Unfortunately the printed Diary makes no further reference to these remarkable meetings. As Dr. Plomer admits, the extracts he preserved do not give a just impression of Kilvert's "constant devotion to parochial duties" (III 8).

#### 4. KILVERT'S HABIT OF READING THE BIBLE TO PEOPLE

The Diary records some forty occasions when Kilvert visited people in their homes and read the Bible to them. Sometimes, when it is not stated what he read, it was probably the Bible. He must often have carried a small copy with him, or an edition of the New Testament and Psalms. If there was a Bible in the house, he would use that instead. Now and then he read from other books.

At the Bronith the old soldier, John Morgan, was in his nineties. "I dug up the half row of potatoes for him" says Kilvert, "then we went indoors and I read to the old man the story of Philip and the Eunuch" (I 233). He often called on the veteran, chatting with him, listening to his stories of the Peninsular War and reading to him from the Gospels or from other books he valued. When Edward Williams got rheumatic fever at the Swan Inn, across the road from Kilvert's lodgings in Clyro, he read to him from 6 to 7 one winter evening (II 124). Finding Sarah Probert groaning in bed, "I read to her Mark 6 and made sure she knew the Lord's Prayer, making her repeat it" (I 32). Eight months later, when he was reading to her about the raising of Lazarus, "Hannah came in and sat by the fire, listening with grunts of assent between the whiffs of her short pipe" (I 253). Hearing that Mrs. George Davies at Benfield Farm had jaundice and cramp in the stomach, "I read and talked to her and prayed with her" (III 375).

He did not read in every home he visited but just when he sensed it would be appreciated and only in the homes of cottagers and farmers. There seems to be no example of him reading the Bible to the gentry. But, after he had "climbed the ladder to see old Jones in bed", he proceeded to read the second chapter of the Gospel of Mark "out of his old-fashioned Bible" (I 55). Then he went to read to old Jones' blind neighbour (I 55). On his memorable visit to the 19-year-old bride at Cwmpelved Green he found her ironing but "when I began to read to old Clark, she took her work and sat down quietly to sew" (I 379). Caroline Farmer entered so thoroughly into his reading of the Parable of the Lost Sheep that she interrupted to tell him about the sheep she once lost herself (II 18-19).

It was not very pleasant visiting William Price, "gray like a wild beast", in his filthy den, but Kilvert persisted. "Visited old Price as usual. He was lying on his bed which had been moved downstairs. He invited me to sit down. I was afraid to because of the lice. I read to him Psalms 121 and 130" (II 194).

One Good Friday he had a heart to heart talk with Emma Griffiths in the Chapel Dingle at Bettws. "She had forgotten why we kept the day holy. I read to her some hymns and Luke 23", which tells about the crucifixion of Christ (II 165). In less favourable circumstances, at a hovel on Clyro Hill, "three women sat



silent while I read to them the 23rd, the 40th and the 103rd Psalms" (II 130). Even those who had lost their reason knew what to expect from him. "She was in bed, very quiet. 'Read to me about God and Jesus, please dear', she said" (II 145) and he did his best to comply. "At the cottage", he wrote, referring to an unusual incident about which he gives no details, "I read to the washerwomen busy over their ironing" (III 374).

He often visited John Hatherell during his time at Langley Burrell. One day as he was reading the tenth chapter of Ecclesiastes to him and his wife and son, the fourth verse came to Kilvert himself like a message from God, "a word in season to warn, to soothe and comfort me" (III 52). Some months later, when he was reading them the story of King Hezekiah's illness, Mrs. Hatherell interrupted with an account of how their daughter "were converted from her sins" (III 142).

On the first of many visits to the home of Priscilla Price and her strange step-daughter, she asked him to read and pray. "I read a passage from Matthew 17, the idiot having brought me a fine large-print Prayer Book and Testament" (III 353). After young Hannah Williams had slipped carrying a bucket of water and badly injured her spine, "I sat awhile by her bedside repeating the Evening Hymn 'Sun of my soul'" (III 126). He visited her three times that Saturday and twice next day, trying to read her to sleep and turning her over in bed every fifteen minutes (III 126). The following afternoon "I talked to her very seriously about her past wild conduct since her Confirmation and prayed with her". Then he tried in vain to get her to sleep by reading Keats and other poets (III 127).

After preaching twice, walking six miles and getting caught in heavy rain, he went out again one autumn Sunday night to visit Katie Whitney, who was nine. "I saw the child was dying and I knew she would not live to see the morning light of this world. I said to her 'Jesus loves little children. He said, Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'. I repeated the verse 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild'. She said the Lord's Prayer after me. She knew me perfectly but her words came with difficulty" (II 48-49).

#### 5. THE BIBLE IN KILVERT'S CONVERSATION

Before Easter in 1870 Kilvert read to the Clyro children the account of Christ's last week in Jerusalem, "taken day by day" (I 86). He told Mrs. Venables that if ever he had children of his own "I should teach them to believe all the dear old Bible stories" (I 263). When he "brought home old John Bryant's great Bible to be repaired and to have the loose leaves pasted in" (III 90) he unconsciously acted out a parable of what he was constantly doing to bring the Bible into contemporary life.

He warmly encouraged the Painscastle shoemaker who told him, a little apprehensively, that he went every Sunday morning to read the Bible to Mrs. Williams (I 128). Meeting some women toiling uphill from Hay market, he carried their heavy baskets for a while. When they protested, the words of Galatians 6 : 2 sprang quickly to his mind as he answered, "Why, we are told in the scripture to bear one another's burdens" (II 342).

At the New Inn he found John Morgan troubled "about the sin against the Holy Ghost and could not reconcile that statement with other passages of Scripture, thinking the Bible contradicted itself. I tried to explain but he would not be comforted" (I 81). Some months later Kilvert asked him if he trusted he was forgiven by God. "I cannot answer you fully", Morgan replied, "I make my appeals to Him" (I 264).

His own reading of the Bible impelled him to pray with people whenever their situation and their frame of mind suggested that this was desirable, so the Diary contains many snapshots of informal prayer. "I climbed the ladder to the bedroom above. Everything that could be done for her had been done. We knelt and prayed round the bed" (III 365). Sometimes it was made easy for him. "The old soldier asked me to pray, so we knelt together in the dusk and when I had finished praying he whispered aloud, 'O Lord, please to hear us this night'" (II 79). And when he was visiting Jane Dew at Whitney Rectory she had tea brought up to her bedside. Then "she said gently, 'Will you say a prayer for me before you go?'" (III 282). But it was not always so. At the Old Weston, Little Davie's mother took Kilvert upstairs "into the room where the dead child was lying on the bed and turned down the sheet from his face". He knelt with her there "while I prayed for them all" (III 441-2). Two weeks later he came across the child's father at sunset, carrying a truss of hay in deep snow. "The sheep came running eagerly to him and as he fed them I spoke to him of the Good Shepherd who had gathered His lamb with His arm and carried him to His bosom" (III 448). He was quoting Isaiah 40 : 11, the text which can still be seen on Little Davie's grave at Bredwardine. No doubt it was he who suggested it to the parents.

On many occasions, however, it was not Kilvert but the other person who referred to the Bible. The policeman's wife told him that one night, when her husband was out on the beat, "he knelt down on the grass and prayed to be forgiven and he felt so happy afterwards" (II 396). Shortly before Jane Hatherell died, she dreamed she heard a voice saying 'Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow'" (I 331), which comes from the first chapter of Isaiah. When Ann Grimshaw was brokenhearted at the death of her little girl, she told Kilvert, "I was reading in the Book this morning" and proceeded to quote five different sayings of Christ which had given her hope (III 175-6). On the hillside above the hamlet of Archenfield, white-bearded old David Price lay in his cottage with his head propped up by a large Bible underneath his pillow. "I always like to see any of the Lord's Ministers", he remarked to Kilvert, "and anyone who names the Name of Jesus", (I 281) quoting Philippians 2 : 10. Seeing a light in a widower's home one night, Kilvert knocked at the door and found him reading a book of sermons. He suggested God had made his wife a doorkeeper and that when he died she would open the door to him. "'You have beautiful thoughts, Benjamin', I said, 'I think God must put them into your mind'. 'I know Satan does not put them there', said the old man'" (II 401). And the Clyro Court coachman prepared himself for confirmation by reading not only the book of Revelation but Paul's Epistles to Timothy as well (I 173).

#### 6. KILVERT'S PRIVATE ALLUSIONS TO THE BIBLE

At the day's end, or on waking, Kilvert wrote his Diary, confiding to its pages biblical reflections no one else knew about. Leaving aside brief echoes of Bible phrases too numerous to mention, I find more than sixty significant references of this kind, some of them among the most impressive passages he ever wrote.

Near the Bronith one beautiful May morning he came across a dead blackbird, its legs crushed in a trap. "I felt sick and sorrowful as I went on. 'The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now'", he wrote, quoting Romans 8 : 22 to himself. "Somehow the suffering creature reminded me of the Saviour upon the cross. I felt as if some sin of mine had brought him there" (II 195).

What must surely be the finest eulogy of the snowdrop in the whole of English literature ends with the words, "I love the snowdrop. To me it always seems to be 'the penitent absolved'. Oh that all our sins might thus be washed away and we be presented spotless through the Saviour's atoning blood" (II 127-129). This conclusion, referring to 1 John 1 : 7, is extraordinarily effective partly because it is so unexpected. In much the same way his description of the Moccas oaks, "those grey old men of Moccas", comes to a biblical climax. "No human hand set those oaks. They are 'the trees which the Lord hath planted'. They look as though they had been at the beginning and making of the world and they will probably see its end" (III 264). He is not prepared to separate nature either from its Creator or from the actual statements of the Bible, in this case Numbers 24 : 6.

He was delightfully responsive to birds. "Perhaps the cuckoo is the angel of the spring to remind us of the Resurrection", he suggested (I 125). He was reminded of it again as he walked in the churchyard at Bredwardine and marvelled at the compact mass of tombstones. "Facing the morning sun they looked like a crowd of men and it seemed as if the morning of the Resurrection had come and the sleepers had risen from their graves and were standing upon their feet" (III 377), like the great army mentioned in Ezekiel 37. One summer's day his ear picked out a sound which his instinct for suitable words described as "A dove pleading in the elm" (II 354). At once his mind ran to Romans 8 : 26 and he suggested the dove was "making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered".

He winds up his account of an April dawn with "The time of the singing of birds had come" (II 181-2), lifted straight from the Song of Solomon 2 : 12, and he distinguished four of them calling and trilling "as I sat in my bedroom window seat with the window open towards Jerusalem" (II 201), exactly as at Daniel 6 : 10, his thought being irresistibly carried forward once he had mentioned the open window.

Occasionally a Bible reference highlights his own temptations. "The madness, cloud and delirium I trust has passed away at length. 'And it came to pass that when the devil was gone out the dumb spake'. I can write again now" (II 339). The quotation is from Matthew 9 : 33. "As I sat there my mind went through a fierce struggle", he recorded four months later in similar tension. "Right or wrong? The right conquered, the sin was repented and put away. I thought I heard the harps of the angels rejoicing in heaven over a sinner that had repented" (II 356), which comes from Luke 15 : 7.



Meeting Herriman the porter returning from his night shift, he reflected on "How differently we both spent last night, but how much better he spent it than I did. Surely there will be a compensation made for these things hereafter, if not here" (II 375), a line of thought encouraged by the Bible, which unbelief can scarcely entertain. And as he ate a bun in a shop in Bristol he noticed a ragged little girl at the door. With his usual extraordinary attention to detail he drew her portrait, the fair hair tossed and tangled, the wild eyes large and grey, the feet tiny delicate and stained. "It was irresistible. Christ seemed to be looking at me through the beautiful wistful imploring eyes. I took her out a bun" (III 31).

As he passed "the enchanted gorge" at Aberedw, he optimistically felt that for a moment he was gazing through the gate of Paradise. "But there stands the angel with the flaming sword", he reminded himself, thinking of Genesis 3 : 24, "and I may not enter, and only look in as I pass". Many of his descriptions of the Black Mountains are crowned with similar allusions. "I don't wonder that our Saviour went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in praying to God there" (I 350), he wrote, with Luke 6 : 12 in mind. "The mountains stood up in the clear blue heaven, a long rampart line of glittering snow as no fuller on earth can whiten them" (I 308-9), referring to the transfiguration of Christ on a mountain top recorded in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

Some of his emotional experiences also found expression in terms borrowed from the Bible. "I knew a man", he cried out after meeting 'the angel child' on a train, "Such an one caught up to the third heaven and saw and felt unspeakable things" (II 345), echoing 2 Corinthians 12 : 2-4, though St. Paul might have raised his eyebrows at such an application of his words. During a Church Congress in Bath he noticed a girl at the door. "As she bowed her fair head and knee at the Name of Names she assumed exactly the attitude and appearance of the angels that overshadowed with their wings the ark and Mercy seat" (II 383), as described at Exodus 25 : 17-21. The very thought of Gipsy Lizzie caused him to write out in full the famous blessing in Numbers 6 : 24-26 beginning 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee' (I 168-9). He did it again on the last night of 1874, thinking of Kathleen Mavourneen (III 131), while flowers she had sent to someone else turned his mind to Matthew 5 : 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (III 190). After his memorable walk to the Upper Noyadd with Florence Hill he found her "So pure, so heavenly, so perfect in her beauty. I saw her face as it had been the face of an angel" (III 286), as was said of Stephen at Acts 6 : 15. And one evening two months after his breach with Ettie he observed some roses "of a rich deep red fit to twine round Ettie's lovely brow or wreath in her dark clustering curls", but he had to add "alas, it would have been a crown of thorns" (III 332).

In earlier days at Clyro, when time was still on his side, he was striding up the hill one day when two things caught his attention. "Below Tybella a bird singing unseen reminded me how the words of a good man live after he is silent and out of sight. 'He, being dead, yet speaketh'" (I 56). The quotation, from Hebrews 11 : 4, was destined to stand eventually on his own gravestone.

David Bentley-Taylor (Eardisland).

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#### CLERICAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE GOWER:

If inspiration is usually associated with the pen, in the case of Francis Kilvert we may for a change associate it with the eye. Few - plain men, mystics, or poets - have seen so much in their encounters with nature and have been, at the same time, so endowed with the spontaneity to catch it in a word picture. It is these pictures in a gallery, rather than continually lofty prose, that characterise the Diary. But Kilvert is not consistently open to this impact of beauty (and other qualities), for in the Gower Peninsular he visited places of entrancing loveliness - but hasn't a word to say about them. Nothing of the Ilston Cwm, for instance, on the very edge of which he stayed with the Reverent Westorp; Almost nothing of the lovely glades of Parc le Braose beyond that he went there to see the 'Graves of the Unknown'. I am not saying there are no fine descriptive passages in the Gower entries - a grand seascape from the Mumbles and a delicate meditation on the cliffs above Oxwich Bay, but the particular interest of the Gower visits in 1872 and 1878 lies in his contact with three fellow clerics : the Rev. Sterling Brown Westorp, his host at Ilston, the Rev. John David Davies, Rector (Kilvert calls him Vicar) at Llanmadoc and Cheriton, a High Church pioneer and an original in several ways, and the Rev. Edward William Bolney, Vicar of the newly built church of St. Paul at Sketty, who was born Brown and inducted under that name. Of these the most interesting is J.D. Davies, an anecdote or two adds a little colour to Bolney/Brown, but till a few days ago Mr. Westorp eluded me entirely. Of course he has a firm place in Kilvert's Who's Who. His wife Henrietta was Mrs. Venables' sister-in-law.

There is no record of their visiting Clyro, but Mrs. Venables may have sent deserving cases down to Ilston. Louisa Sheldon, from Llowes, the next village west of Clyro, had found employment with the Westhrops as a true maid-of-all-work, for Kilvert describes her as 'housemaid, parlourmaid, butler, footman, valet, and the mainstay of the family'.

It seemed necessary to dismiss Mr. Westthrop with a summary of the Diary. I was about to do this when I had a phone call from a Miss Caroline Colville-Mansel of Ross-on-Wye asking me to find her overnight accommodation at Llandoverly. This I did, but I was absent when Miss Colville-Mansel came. However, returning from Haverfordwest a fortnight later she stayed again and I was invited to dinner. Midway through the second course I stopped short to hear my hostess mentioning the name Westthrop. 'What do you know about Mr. Westthrop?' I asked. "Well - she is his grand-daughter". And, note, that makes the powerful Mrs. Venables her great aunt Agnes.

So I am able to give at least an outline of Mr. Westthrop. He was Norfolk born, and his first curacy was in that county. When he was looking for a parish of his own he was somehow in touch with Charles Kingsley, author of 'The Sands of Dee' and 'Westward Ho', an Evangelical sort of clergyman, a socialist, and the well-known protagonist of John Henry Newman, whose memory was so revered by Kilvert's father. In some way Kingsley was able to offer, or recommend Westthrop to a living. At the same time came a letter from Mr. Penrice of Kilvrough in the Gower offering Ilston, and Sterling Westthrop accepted. He died suddenly at the Rectory on All Saints Day 1885 and is buried behind the east end of the church, by the footpath leading up to the former Rectory garden. His wife survived and she is said to be buried beside him, but I could not trace her grave. In the mid-afternoon light it was with difficulty that I traced this inscription:

I believe in the Communion of Saints  
Rev. Sterling Westthrop, B.A.  
for fifteen years Rector of this Parish  
born January 4th 1830, died November 1st. 1885.

Mrs. Westthrop - Henrietta - has a history too. She was born at Pau in the French Pyrenees and lived there till the age of twelve, brought up French speaking. At nine she eloped, very briefly, with a hotel page boy. After Sterling's death she lived at Gnoll, near Neath. Their daughter, Agnes Katharine, married an estate manager, Spencer Christleton Colville (said to be related to the present Princess of Wales) who, on inheriting some small properties in South Wales, was required to take the name Mansel. Their daughter, Caroline Colville-Mansel, is my informant.

Caroline recalls the appearance of Mrs. Venables with some feeling: 'Aunt Agnes was a most alarming old lady, very large here, dressed in black, with sequins and a white cap (or black and white). Uncle Lister I never saw'.

Caroline Colville-Mansel was till recently the owner of an interesting relic of Mrs. Venables. Aunt Agnes had given Henrietta a kneeling desk (at which Caroline learned her prayers). It was understood that Mrs. Venables had carved a little foliated cross on it with her own hands. This ties up with a Diary entry of 21st. February 1870, at Llysdyman: 'One of the drainers, a fine intelligent fellow, had found some bog oak in cutting the drains and had taken it down to the house for Mrs. V. to carve'. This kneeling desk was given to the Carmelite Convent at Bridell near Cardigan just before the community dispersed a few years ago: it is now at the Monastery of Enclosed Carmelite Nuns at Dolgellau.

Sterling was a concerned host, even if he failed on one occasion to meet Francis Kilvert off the right train at Killay. He took the Diarist in his 'pretty new waggonette' on a round tour of the peninsular, on a trip to Oystermouth and Mumbles, and on walks to attractive places like Oxwich Bay.

One evening the Rectory was the scene of a discussion on the Athanasian Creed. Most readers will be familiar with the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Both are statements of Christian faith set out in Trinitarian terms - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed, named after the Council of Nicaea in 325, though in fact finalised by the Council of Constantinople in 381, is a longer and more explicit version of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Creed that Kilvert was prone to discuss is named after Athanasius, fourth century Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt; but it is accepted that it is a somewhat later composition, probably drawn up in the West. It elaborates doctrine in the language of contemporary philosophy; the result some admire as a religious masterpiece and others find a maze. It doesn't end at that. There is also a condemnatory element in the articles of this Creed. Till recently, it was prescribed for public use in both Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches on relatively few occasions in the year (in the Catholic case at services seldom attended by the public outside monasteries). Today it is no longer a part of Roman Catholic worship and in the Anglican Church it seems to have slipped into disuse.



Kilvert's interest, or disinterest, in the Athanasian Creed is not so casual a feature of the Diary as you may suppose. It is an episode in the mutation of Christian worship and, I suppose, thought (not belief). In the 1860s the Broad or liberal section of the Anglican Church set up an opposition to its public use. There was nothing conclusive to the campaign but it obviously marked the beginning of a trend that has led quietly to its shelving. Kilvert's discussions are a tailpiece to the Debate of the sixties.

On Ascension Day 1877 the Diary finds Kilvert at Oxford staying with his friend the Rev. Anthony Lawson Mayhew. They were looking for somewhere to attend service and slipped into Merton because they heard the organ playing - 'the first words that struck upon our ears were the opening sentences of that fearful Athanasian Creed'.

In May 1874 Kilvert drove from Langley Burrell to Seagry - apparently with the Rev. Charles Awdrey to visit his brother the Rev. Christian Awdrey, Vicar of Seagry - and there they had 'a dispute about the Athanasian Creed which I abhor'. Kilvert would have preferred the 'brilliant pink campion' along the lanes.

You now have a setting for the evening at Ilston in April 1872: 'The Vicar of Sketty, Mr. Bonley, and his sister Miss Brown walked over to dine and sleep. We sat up till 1 o'clock disputing about the Athanasian Creed, Bonley taking the High Church ground and Westhorp and I the liberal view. Of course we left off exactly where we began, and no one was convinced. I hate arguing'.

We can leave the Athanasian Creed and have arrived at Mr. Bonley née Brown, as one might say. Kilvert speculates that he changed his name because he disliked Brown, and he thought Bonley no improvement. Bonley was Vicar of St. Paul's in the village of Sketty overlooking Swansea Bay and even then almost a suburb. The new church had been dedicated in 1850. When the Westhorps took Kilvert and Miss Brown on a drive to the Mumbles they stopped at Sketty to see the Church, which Kilvert calls 'nice'. He adds that 'the lychgate is desecrated by the names of all the snobs of Swansea'. At first reading I thought this referred to an outside notice inscribed with the names of all the well-to-do, who had contributed to the building of St. Paul's, although in fact it was built by the munificence of the Vivians. There is no such notice, but on the other hand the timber of the gate is covered with rudely cut initials. The solution lies in the OED, which gives as first meaning for 'snob' : 'Man of low birth or breeding or social position'.

Mr. Bonley has been described as St. Paul's most noted Vicar - 'a much loved person, almost a legend in Sketty with his long beard, white at fifty, his stick, and his habit of intoning the notices in church'. The change of name to Bonley was to secure an inheritance from an aunt.

Kilvert observes of St. Paul's that it was 'where Welby was Vicar for 14 years'. Mr. Welby and his wife make several appearances in the Diary, first when he was Vicar of Hay-on-Wye and in 1873 when he was incumbent of the ruined church of Llanleonfel. This was the church of the lace handkerchief anecdote. On a visit to Garth, Kilvert found Mrs. Welby holding a bazaar for restoration work.

At Hay Mr. Welby had shown an interest in the possibility of Francis Kilvert obtaining the living at Glasbury. He is not really our subject, but Kilvert's description of him is one of the best clerical sketches in the Diary and too good to miss:

'He is a pleasant looking, pleasant mannered man with good features but with a light lackadaisical inconsequent unstable air'. This generosity with adjectives is usually reserved for trees and suchlike. He was also given to 'light clerical slang'. In the Vicarage at Clyro, on an occasion when the Venables were apparently away, Mr. Welby passed the cider round so freely that the company became slightly tipsy. Kilvert thought he had a bad voice for preaching, but this did not hinder a report that a lady had been carried out of Hay Church in a faint under the influence of one of his sermons.

The day after Kilvert's arrival in Spring 1872 he was driven in the waggonette to Llanmadoc at the northwestern tip of the Gower. The Westhorps went into the 'unfinished ugly barrack' of a Rectory. I'm afraid that was a fair description. It has lowpitched gables and broad overhanging eaves like a Swiss chalet, but is neither attractive in itself nor suited to the environment - a curious lapse on Mr. Davies's part. When I first saw it, it was in scaffolding for repairs - perhaps much as Kilvert describes.

Out came the 'Vicar' looking 'like a Roman priest, close shaven and shorn, dressed in seedy black, a long coat and broad shovel hat'. One is reminded of Kilvert's first encounter with Father Ignatius of 'New Llanthony' - an almost sinister description followed quickly by the impact of a warm and attractive personality. If Kilvert had prejudices I think they were easily overcome. J.D.



Davies had made his ancient church beautiful (if 'High'). He invited his guests to lunch and let them add their picnic to the board. His house was 'untidy and bachelor-like and full of quaint odds and ends'. He was building a boat in the hall, and making all sorts of other things of fretwork and carved wood for his Cheriton Church Restoration Fund. (Cheriton is a bare mile away). Besides all this 'he seemed an uncommonly kind good fellow, a truly simple-minded, single-hearted man'. He showed his 'newest toy' - a mechanical fretsaw, and promised to make Kilvert a little 10/- bookcase.

To take the last thing first - I wonder if he did. Caroline Colville-Mansel said that according to her father nearly every house in the Gower had something made by the Rev. Davies. In fact she herself still has two little three-legged stools. His woodcarving enriches several Gower churches, Llanmadoc and Cheriton obviously, but also Llanrhidian and Oxwich. I believe a careful study of his style might enable other pieces to be identified. I had imagined his work might be hackneyed 'Gothicry'. It is in the mediaeval tradition - repeated conventional patterns, some from the Tudor and Jacobean repertoire: linenfold, rosettes and strapwork - or foliage in shallow relief, very competently done. There is no assertive purpose of being ecclesiastical or sacred. Stylistically he is original even when using a traditional motif, like a vine leaf. I feel he belongs more to the burgeoning art nouveau than to the Victorian Gothic revival.

His work at Cheriton is good (the verger's house with the key is a distance up the lane, west - stalls, altar rail and altar, ceiling bosses and other features. The floral work here is delightful. At Llanmadoc (key at a very small cottage on the left as you enter the village) his reredos - or rather dossal, it is so simple - had been removed from the altar and dumped unceremoniously behind the stalls. Llanrhidian's work is less interesting and at Oxwich I have not managed to enter the church. Readers are advised not to judge the quality from illustrations in 'The Gower Churches' (Geoffrey R. Orrin, 1979).

Mr. Orrin states that at Cheriton the cost of restoration amounted to £1200, and that the total cost was paid for by the Rector out of his own pocket probably from money he had recently inherited on the death of his parents. I think Kilvert must be correct in stating that he also sold the products of his workshop to augment the fund.

In the vestry at Cheriton there is a framed photograph of John David Davies, wearing biretta and cassock, with some buttons undone. He is shorter and plumper than I imagined him. You would not expect so much genius. His mind was as keen as his hands. His magnum opus was his Four Volume History of West Gower. I can well imagine that boat-building priest was a man who loved islands; he had to be content with a semi-island, a peninsular. With so small an area, limited by sea on three sides, it is odd that he should have cut it down by confining his researches to West Gower. He had access to historical documents and charters at Penrice Castle, painstakingly transcribing many. Collaborators provided illustrations but many sketches are his own, though they seem to be unidentifiable.

Few small areas in Britain can be so well documented. The peninsular character of Gower had a disadvantage in providing fewer neighbours as a dependable market. Doubtless his labours brought him pleasure and a reputation in libraries, but not much financial return. I have consulted copies in the Reference Libraries at Carmarthen and Swansea. Pasted inside covers at Carmarthen are two postcards in J.D. Davies's scholarly hand, stamped 'Llanmadoc Rectory', Reynoldstown R.S.O. Glamorgan.

The first, dated March 14th. 08, reads:

My Dear Sir,

I have sent you by this post a copy of part iii of my history of West Gower, price 10/-

I fear I shall not publish another vol. having lost so much money by this work. I have plenty of matter, but not plenty of means.

Yours truly,

J.D. Davies.

The second is dated August 8th. 05.

Dear Sir,

It is very difficult to get a complete set of my Hist. of West Gower.

I am sorry to say, that owing to a diminishing income, and other causes I cannot afford to become a subscriber to your work.

Yours truly,  
J.D. Davies.

In his Preface he records a tradition new to me: 'I may here mention that it (the Gower) is one of those places that claim the honour of being the birthplace of the great St. Patrick, for an old Welsh tradition states that he was son of Mawon, a native of the county of Gwyr - Gower in Glamorganshire'.

Mr. Davies's third claim to fame was as pioneer of the High Church movement in South Wales. For this I quote from the Church Times obituary of 20 Oct 1911:

'Through the late Mr. Theodore Talbot of Margam and Penrice Castle, Mr. Davies had become imbued with the principles of the Catholic Revival, and from the date of its reopening the services at Llanmadoc Church were rendered with simple dignity, the six points being in use. He was thus a pioneer of Catholic ritual in Wales, and numbers were attracted from far and near to learn about these new developments. Regardless of the many experiments made elsewhere with Morning Service, Mr. Davies steadfastly clung to the old order, Morning Prayer, Litany, and choral Celebration every Sunday. He was in close touch with St. Alban's, Holborn, from the first, and Mr. Stanton, when a young man, frequently visited him and preached. He built a school and rectory house, in addition to restoring his two churches, almost entirely at his own cost'.

Today the link with these traditions is the surviving nave of the Cistercian Abbey of Margam, near Port Talbot, in its furnishing a beautiful expression of the Catholic type of worship in the Anglican Communion, with the tomb, like a saint's shrine, of Theodore Talbot, Davies's mentor. I believe this church still possesses vestments given by Fr. Stanton, who visited Llanmadoc, and here is another link with Kilvert.

On that Oxford visit with Mayhew in 1876, the same Ascension Day, Kilvert went to Evensong at St. Barnabas - a service with all the extras that ritualism could think up, and Kilvert did not like it. Nor did he think much of Stanton's sermon, on a text from canticles: 'He is altogether lovely'. 'The matter was not original or interesting, and the manner was theatrical and overdone'. Fr. Stanton looked exhausted.

There are local people who still remember Mr. Davies, or at least that they were baptized by him, in one case with Jordan water that he is presumed to have brought from the Holy Land. In Cheriton Church there is a beautiful crucifix set high up on a ledge in a bad light, that was once on the altar, and I conjecture that it had been his. There are lanterns over the churchyard gates at Cheriton and Llanmadoc erected to celebrate his fifty years as pastor, at Llanmadoc a memorial plaque in the chancel, and in the churchyard at Cheriton, near the porch, he lies buried.

J.D. Davies was the son of a Gower clergyman, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and he never married.

Fr. S.G.A. Luff (Llandovery)

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AN "IN MEMORIAM"

Mrs. Teresa Williams has found the following touching little entry from the "Hereford Times" for October 4th. 1879.

The Reverend R.F. Kilvert, obit 23 September 1879

IN MEMORIAM

The Marriage Feast was spread, with his fair young wife  
The joyous bridegroom sat, while each young heart  
Look'd forward to a long and happy life  
To which true love should fragrant bloom impart.

The Marriage Feast was spread in courts above.  
"Let him I love be with Me where I am",  
The Saviour said. He passed from human love  
To share the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

October 1st.1879

Sympathy

Mrs. Williams guesses the author to have been Frances, Mr. Grice thinks it might have been Miss Newton, and Mrs. Venables occurs to my mind. But will we ever know?

FROM THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT:

Mrs. Teresa Williams has discovered a report of Kilvert's speech when he gave thanks for the presents he received on leaving Langley Burrell for St. Harmon. In it occurs this passage -

'He said he received it (the present) at a happy time when a friend of his who was dearer to him than his own life, was staying at Langley, and one whom he hoped would shortly halve his troubles and double his joys.....'

It seems then that at this time Kilvert was officially engaged. The young lady in question cannot have been Daisy or Ettie. It must, I think, have been Katharine Heanley, to whom we know he was at one time engaged. Before Mrs. Williams sent me this report, Mrs. Fleming, a K.S. member living at Broadway, had already sent me a very persuasive and well documented letter suggesting that the woman in question, mentioned in Frances Kilvert's letter (published in last newsletter) as having inflicted unpardonable grief on Kilvert, was Katharine. Now it looks as if her supposition was justified, and that Miss Heanley played a far greater role in Kilvert's life than we have hitherto suspected.

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During the course of a short holiday in Devon, I came across two reminders of Kilvert. In the charming old Post Office at Tintagel hangs a good water colour of the house by Augustus Hare. And a note in Killerton House mentions that a founder member with Sir Thomas Acland of the famous Grillions' Club, a London dining club instituted for the purpose of gathering together men of opposite opinions in a convivial atmosphere was Sir Robert Harry Inglis, from whose house Francis Kilvert of Claverton and Miss de Chièvre were married.

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The Garden Girls

On Tuesday November Eve 1871 Hannah Whitney told Kilvert that when she lived by Whitney's Brook three Cardiganshire women used to pass by the house every March walking to London to weed gardens. Mr. Dafydd Ifans has pointed out to me that there is a most interesting article on these garden girls in the periodical Folk Life for 1977 (Vol. 15).

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Kilvert and Lewis Carroll

Up to now no one has been able to find any evidence for William Plomer's claim that Kilvert had met Lewis Carroll at Oxford, but at last a possible link has appeared. Mr. Le Quesne, author of After Kilvert has drawn my attention to an article in the Times (Saturday Review 23 Jan. 1982) in which Professor Morton Cohen of New York states that in June 1879 Carroll was taking photographs of the daughters of Anthony Lawson Mayhew. Carroll and Mayhew were clearly friends as well as being academic colleagues, but the friendship came to an end when Carroll sought permission to take a nude photograph of Mayhew's youngest daughter. Mrs. Mayhew objected strongly, an acrimonious exchange of letters followed, and the friendship between Kilvert's friend and the author of Alice came to an end. Kilvert is not mentioned, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he and Carroll met in Mayhew's house.

F. Grice.

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OBITUARY: We regret to record the death of the following members:-

Miss M.J. Smith (Berkhamsted) a Life Member, Miss E.G. Porter (Oxbridge) a Life Member and Mr. C.E. Turner (Isle of Wight) a member since 1967.

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FROM SOCIETY CORRESPONDENCE:

Professor Doughty (Montreal) writes in reference to Mr. Hodkin's article on Bishop Atlay in our last newsletter. The writer J.B.A. he identifies as James Beresford Atlay, eldest son of the Bishop and Registrar of the Diocese of Hereford. Professor Doughty remarks "It is just possible that filial devotion clouded his objective judgement when it came to writing the article on his own father....!" but adds, "another laudatory article is to be found in 'Men of Mark' Vol. III by Thomson Cooper 1876"

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Dr. Phil Williams (Aberystwyth) has written to Mr. Dearlove apologising for lapse in subscription dues. He has been working in the Arctic and "during the dark winters I had time to re-read the Kilvert diaries".

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