

THE "HOLY PLACES OF WALES."

STRIKING DISCOURSE BY THE RECTOR OF COWBRIDGE.

Rev. Dr. L. J. Hopkin James (Llanblethian Vicarage), Rector of Cowbridge and Rural Dean, is pursuing his antiquarian researches with the zeal and industry that is but second nature to one of his calibre, and in a remarkable discourse, in the ancient Church of Llanfrynach, near Cowbridge, on Sunday, he summed it all up with characteristic lucidity. For some years it has been customary to hold a service annually, about this time, at Llanfrynach, and now that the Church at Penllyn is about to be closed for renovation, services, deferred from next Sunday, and until further notice, will be held at Llanfrynach every Sunday, morning and evening alternately. Since last summer, when the Rector of Cowbridge gave the last of his addresses on this and kindred subjects, he has been busy investigating the records, and in interviewing the older inhabitants as to ancient place-names, etc., all of which, pieced together, and in their general bearing, assist the investigator, and confirm his deductions and conclusions in arriving comprehensively at the authentic history of those primitive times. On Sunday evening a large congregation gathered from surrounding villages and hamlets, walked to the venerable church, which is situated in a hollow—a somewhat isolated spot not far from Cowbridge. Amongst those present were Col. Homfray and the Mayor of Cowbridge (Mr. Wylbert Thomas), with Mrs. Thomas. In the remote past there were in the district many houses, of which now not one stone is left upon another, and the inhabitants were dispersed through historical changes and upheavals, for which the hand of time and of man are responsible. The church, falling into disrepair, has now been restored—a striking contrast to many a modern edifice that will never be so ancient as this, nor bear witness to such history as does this venerable pile, standing in one of the beauty spots of the verdant Vale, and seen at its best, as on Sunday, at the eventide of a glorious summer day. Rev. F. R. Williams (Vicar of Llan-sannor) read the service, and the singing was hearty and congregational.

The Rector, taking his text from 2 Chronicles vii., 11, said: We are standing on holy ground—the cradle of our British Christianity, where, out of the cloudy mists of antiquity, history emerges from myth, for it is with this locality that the very earliest records of our British Christianity are concerned. On the first occasion when I had the

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The Rector, taking his text from 2 Chronicles vii., 11, said: We are standing on holy ground—the cradle of our British Christianity, where, out of the cloudy mists of antiquity, history emerges from myth, for it is with this locality that the very earliest records of our British Christianity are concerned. On the first occasion when I had the honour of preaching to you in this old Celtic shrine, I dealt with its history from the earliest times to our own day. On the second occasion my subject was St. Brynach, the founder of this church, and the age in which he lived. Are the themes which this old place should suggest exhausted when I have to address you the third time on that "Which we have heard and known, and such as our fathers have told us" "That we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come, but to show the honour of the Lord, His mighty and wonderful works that He hath done." This place and this setting suggest that I should open my mouth in a parable, and declare hard sentences of old.

Let me take you for a little walk this evening—in imagination, of course to Llanblethian or Angel Hill. You will see the earth-works of the old British camp of Caer Dinne to our left between Cross Inn and Llanblethian Church, showing very plainly now that the hay has been cut and cleared; then across the fields to the Grotto at Breach, then to Llanmihangel, Sigginston, Wilton, Nash, and Llyswoerney, then back across "Seynt Burnagys-moore" to the old church where we now are. Some of the places we shall visit look common enough, but they may be full of interest to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Though the buildings of the Celtic Church have in most cases disappeared, and all visible traces of the past are in some cases gone, in others the formation of the

comes from the same root as "Land," and means, during the different stages of its evolution: (a) land set apart for any particular purpose, (b) then for a hermit's cell, (c) then for a monastery, (d) then the land and church itself become identified with the institution which exists or is built thereon, till the meaning extends so as to embrace not only the church itself, but the parish which takes its name from the old "Llan" in most cases, with certain exceptions, such as Penllyn, which takes its name from a geographical feature, or Llyswoerney from a certain Goronwy's fortified house or court. As we cross the road which leads to the Llan of Iltyd, contracted to Lantwit, we enter the parish of Llanblethian. Now Bleddian is a name which means "little wolf," and we Welsh folk when we say "little So-and-so," generally use it as a term of endearment. His real name was probably Blaidd or Wolf, or, as we say in the dialect of Glamorgan, Bledd, which the Normans wrote as Bleth, giving us Llanblethian, though the old Welsh people call it Llanlyddan corrupted into Llanddyddan following a well known phonetic law of least resistance. Now it happens that the companion of St. Germanus who came to this country in the fifth century to combat the Pelagian heresy, was also named Wolf, being known as St. Lupus, the Latin for wolf, and after reading all that has been said against their identification, I see no reason to shake my belief in the very ancient tradition that the founder of Llanblethian was St. Lupus or Wolf, the companion of St. Germanus. Indeed, there is an incident in connection with the life of St. Samson of Llantwit, afterwards Archbishop of Dol in Brittany, for which there are strong topographical affinities in the parish of Llanblethian.

It is said that he discovered an old castle near the Severn Sea, and asked God to show him a grotto where he could go away and hide himself in peace. His biographer says that this old castle was, according to tradition, constructed by St. Germanus. It is called a Locus, where there was an oratory, and it is said that the holy man had converse with the angels. Now come with me, and just above Stallcourt we shall see the ruins of an old castle which was a Locus; then at Breach we have a grotto, and we have also an Angel Hill. On Angel Hill, as its situation, this old castle, called Llygod and Llygodw, is in the form of a tower, and such towers, as we know from Adamnan's Life of St. Columba, were used as monasteries. Now Lloc is an old term for a monastery:

"Ni phercheist ti creirieu na lloc na llaneu" ("Thou respectedest not relics, nor monastery, nor churches")—and around the church at Llanblethian is one field called Loc Field, and another known locally as Locwydd or Locwyd. I have traced the name Angel Hill to documents of 1630 and 1724, and there is a gentleman now living—Mr. Miles, the solicitor, of Cowbridge—who remembers it being called Mount Ida for the first time in A.D. 1865 by Eddie Thomas, of Cowbridge Town Mill, on a scouting expedition. The old people who have passed away would no doubt have told you stories of how, when the saint was praying, with his hands spread out to heaven and his eyes lifted up to God, wonderful to say, a marvellous sight appeared, for holy angels, citizens of the celestial country, flying

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Less than a mile away on the way to Breach is the Grotto, with the place marked on the map as Ffynon y Grotto, or the Well of the Grotto. And now that we are on Breach we are told a very interesting tradition—that St. Paul and St. Patrick were associated with the place, and we are also told that St. Patrick as a boy worshipped on the spot, where we now stand—not then in a stone church, but in a far more primitive structure.

Always respect a tradition, for there is generally an element of truth in it, though in most cases all is not true. I believe the St. Paul and St. Patrick traditions to be partly true, for there were other St. Pauls besides the Apostle to the Gentiles, and other St. Patricks besides the Apostle of Ireland.

I believe the tradition to be true of St. Paul de Leon, otherwise known as St. Paul Aurelian, Bishop of the Cathedral City called after him, St. Paul de Leon in Brittany, for reasons which shall hereafter appear. It may be true of a St. Patrick, as there were several of them, and one or more connected with Llantwit Major. As St. Patrick comes first in the point of time, let us begin with him. He says he was born at Banawen Taberniae, contracted Banwen, being the son and the grandson of a clergyman, that his father had a small farm close by, and that he was captured

you examine it carefully you will see a figure of the bust of a woman, with a hole through one of her paps for the overflow of the water from the well. Why St. Anne's Well? The cult of St. Anne, the mother of our Lady, did not come into fashion before the fifteenth century, but the well was there all the time. Here you see an illustration of the policy of the earliest Christian missionaries in our land in transubstantiating paganism, keeping the accidents, changing the substance, taking as it were the outward significations of paganism and filling them with a new Christian meaning. The holy wells around us, St. Anne's at Llanmihangel, Booman Well at Cowbridge, and many others in the neighbourhood, take us back to pagan times and the infancy of religion in our land, when its inhabitants paid divine honours to the gods or spirits which were supposed to preside over them. The figure with the breasts is none other than that of Ane, mother of the gods, Ane meaning abundance, and from her name we have the two paps of Ana to be seen at Llanmihangel to-day. It was easy to change from Ana, the mother of the god, to St. Anna mother of St. Samson, whose connection with the district is well known—the wife of Amwn Ddu or Black Ammon of the College of Iltyd, and there is Hammon's Land as a place-name in Llantwit. The old stories connected with this Anna and her son Samson are evidently based upon the Biblical narrative of Hannah and Samuel, with some peculiar customs of the time in addition thereto. Amwn and his wife were troubled because they had no child. One day, however, when they were in church they heard of the merits of a certain learned man, and went to consult him, taking with them the customary offerings. At last they found him in the midst of those who had resorted to him—some in the hope of being healed of their sickness, some wanting his blessing on a new undertaking, and others asking him to curse their enemies after the custom of the time. They told him they longed for a son. Whereupon Amwn was advised to make a rod of silver as tall as his wife, and give it as alms for his soul, and for that of his wife. Amwn said he would make three. There is a connection here with the long sculptured stones set up for the souls of men. When you go to Llantwit don't forget to see the tall pillar of Samson, which bears the inscription, in Latin of course:—"In the name of God most high, here begins the Cross of the Saviour which Samson the Abbot prepared for his own soul and the soul of Ithael the King and of Artmael the Dean."

In due time Anna was delivered of a son, whom they named Samson, and eventually dedicated to the service of the Lord at Llantwit Major, under the care of St. Iltyd. All Samson's family, who were rich and powerful people, were converted, and devoted themselves to founding churches, especially his mother St. Anna. "Not only do I desire," said she, "and lovingly embrace the charge laid upon me, but I require by Almighty God, to whom you have dedicated me, that you shall consecrate the monasteries and churches you bid me construct." Most probably the church of Hanaduna was one of them.

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There is a little wood at Wilton called "Chapel Wood," and a tradition that there was an old church there in front of the farm, and a sacred spot like a grave, near a tree, over which the children, even in living memory, were forbidden to play, and tons of stones have been carted from the spot.

In the valuation of the Manors of Llantwit and Lysworney, taken apparently in A.D. 1262, by the oaths of Hugh Sygin and others, we find Coedlan—or, as we should say nowadays, Llan-goed; and again in 1295, together with Wildmore and Coedlan is interpreted in the Life of St. Gildas as "the monastery of the wood."

Local traditions all seem to point to the conclusion that in the case of almost every church around us, its beginning is to be sought in the hermit's solitary cell, where the term "monastery" has its first and literal meaning.

Where are the remains of this monastery of Segan? We must note in our endeavour to find it, that Villa Segan was a possession of the Bishop of Llandaff. We have then to look for some place in the neighbourhood which has a tradition of being a monastery, and which was also a possession of the See of Llandaff. We have such a place as Nash, which lies between or in the centre of the several places bearing the name of Segan in various forms. The Ordnance map shows at Nash Manor "Monastery (Remains) Chapel." The chapel is there to-day, and the name Monastery is in living use there now, and the place itself is derived from Llanash Osmundi. There does not appear to be any record of a grant of Nash or of Lysworney to the See of Llandaff apart from the grant of the

Celtic saint Cwian, who gives his name to a large portion of the parish to-day, corrupted Cwian's Acre into Queen's Acre, which was the place of his burial just as we speak of a burial-ground to-day as "God's Acre," and Cwian (the letter "w" being pronounced as "e" in Welsh), according to the pedigrees of the Saints, was slain by the pagan Saxons.

Another boundary is "To the Long Stone." In the garden at Nash you will find an old inscribed Cross answering this description, being some nine feet high, and about eighteen inches wide. Then there is a Black Moor, whether Moorshead way of towards the place where we now are, anciently called St. Bernagysmore, I know not.

All these places around us were at one time trodden by the feet of men of whom a whole colony emigrated to Brittany owing to the sufferings due to the ravages of the Picts and Scots, Saxons, together with the great pestilence, and the religious motive of zeal for the conversion of unbelievers. Perhaps it is from this time of the great plague that we can date the tradition that the ancient village of Llyswoerney was not where it now stands, but further to the North. Wales and Brittany were at that time of one language and one nation, and the Celtic saints of these parts were continually coming and going from and to Ireland. The second order of the saints of Ireland consists of our own David and Gildas and Docus, the founder of Llandough, and all of them associated with this locality, while St. Brynach, the founder of this church, was an Irishman. St. Illtyd was in various ways connected with Gaul. He was described as the refined teacher of almost the whole of Britain, and at Llantwit there gathered round him men who became "lights to lighten every land"—St. David, St. Samson, St. Paul de Leon, and St. Gildas. One of these we claim as a native of Llanblethian, viz., St. Paul de Leon, and here to my mind is the element of truth in the tradition that "St. Paul was connected with Breach." His life, written by Warmonoc in A.D. 884, from older materials, tells us that his surname was Aurelianus from the fact that his father Porphirius was a Roman official, or a descendant of one, and a man of excellent social position, who lived in that part of the Province called Pen Ychen or "Oxen End," which is this part, and of which Cowbridge is about the centre. It goes on to say that he was one of eight brothers born in a place which in their language was called Brehant (Brechant) Dincat (Dincad), which the writer interprets to mean Guttur Receptaculi Pugnae. Now what are we to make of Breach as a place-name? Is it English or Welsh?

As the Welshman calls it "Brêch," I think it is English. You know what a "breach" means—a gap, a broken place, an interruption of continuity. The Latin Guttur, which means throat, would give somewhat the same idea. A literal translation would perhaps be "the throat of the receptacle of battle," which I would put into English as "the way into the harbour of refuge in case of battle." Now examine the ground. Opposite the gate of Breach you see a field on which are some four tumuli or mounds, which mounds are known as Barrows or Boroughs, derived from a word which means "to shelter." Our greatest authority on place-names says that these words denote two things: the

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The local tradition seems to be that Nash and Breach and Marlborough were resting places for the monks and pilgrims in their coming and going, and these traditions appear to take us back to the days of the hermits with their cells and caves and grottoes before the rise of such great monasteries as Mar-