

IONA lies about nine miles to the south of Staffa. It is separated from the island of Mull by a narrow sound, and is consequently easy of access. In almost every respect it differs from its sister island, which is uninhabited, and whose interest centres in that wonderful Hall of basaltic columns. Iona, on the contrary, is still the abode of living men, and claims our veneration from its historic associations as the early seat of Christianity in the North of Scotland. Here Columba built his cell in the year 563. At the age of forty-two he had emigrated from Ireland with his twelve disciples, and on this island, sufficiently remote from his native land to be out of sight of it, and where he might, without distracting thoughts about home and kindred, enter upon his great missionary work, he lived for thirty-four years, training men for the ministry. It is the recollection of the pious life and labours of this truly great man that makes one feel as he lands on this island that he is indeed on consecrated ground.

Thanks to the Duke of Argyll, "the ruins" have been rescued from desecration and are now preserved with great care. They consist of the remains of an extensive nunnery, of the Cathedral of St. Mary, founded about the year 1203, and of St. Oran's Chapel, supposed to have been built by Queen Margaret, A.D. 1000—in memory of Saint Columba. Of higher antiquity than any of these are the runic crosses, in wonderful preservation, which have not yet revealed their origin to the most learned investigations of the antiquarian. And there is the old grave yard—the burial place of Kings, and Prelates, and Scottish Chieftains, for a thousand years. There are now some 500 inhabitants on Iona. They have two Churches, Established and Free, with ample means of education, so that their condition is much improved since the time of Dr. Johnson's visit, who said that in his day there was but one house on the island that had a chimney in it, but which was of little value, "for the fire was made on the floor, in the middle of the room, and, notwith-

standing the dignity of the mansion, its owners rejoiced like their neighbours in the comforts of smoke;" and that "not one of the people could read or write." However that may have been, the record of the homage which he paid at the shrine of Columba, will be read and admired as long as the English language is spoken. "At last we came to Icolmkill. We are now trading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

The Sabbath School

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY REV. WILLIAM RICE, D. D.

Dec 9th.]

[Acts 28 : 1-10.]

PAUL AT MELITA.

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise."—Rom. 1 : 14.

V. 1. *They knew*—ascertained, either by further observation or from the natives. *Melita*—now Malta, an island fifty eight miles south of Sicily. V. 2. *Barbarous people*—the Greeks first, and afterward the Romans, accounted all other nations barbarous, without reference to their civilization, but their language. V. 3. *Sticks*—perhaps the driftwood found along the rocky shore. *Viper*—a venomous serpent taken up in a torpid state among the sticks, and restored to activity by the heat. *Fastened on his hand*—either by coiling round it, or by its fangs. V. 4. *Murderer*—they saw that he was a prisoner, and looked upon this event as a punishment for crime. *Vengeance*—justice. *Felt no harm*—a fulfillment of our Lord's promise, Luke 10 : 19 ; Mark 16 : 18. V. 6. *Fallen down dead*—as is sometimes the case from the bite of a viper or an asp. *Said that he was a god*—because he had escaped the usual effect of the poison. V. 7. *In the same quarter*—literally, about that place, the place of the shipwreck. *Chief man*—literally the first man in official rank, probably the governor. *Lodged*—entertained as guests. *Us*—Paul