

that we are thinking ; of the life they lived, and the work they wrought, and of the debt we owe them in common with all English-speaking Christians, as the planters of the Gospel among our forefathers, and of their brave resistance of such as strove to supplant that Gospel by papal counterfeits and corruptions. We will not, however, yield to the romancing to which the antiquity of the place tempts us, but rather we will seek to learn the profitable lessons which are to be gathered from the career of a great missionary who chose this as the centre of his operations.

1. The foundation principle of the Gospel which he sought to propagate was sound—justification by faith. We have called him a Protestant before the Reformation. A saying which passed current in his order, and which has come down to us, is, “Not that the believer lives by righteousness, but the righteous by believing.” How much this sounds like Luther’s “We are not saved by good works, but being saved by faith we do good works”!

2. Whatever of monasticism marked his order, it was intended as a means to a higher end. He cultivated solitude only for the sake of service ; he was a monk only that he might be a greater missionary. “Farewell, Arran of my heart. Paradise is within thee. The garden of God is within sound of thy bells.” So he is reported to have exclaimed on leaving an earlier retreat to become Abbot of Iona. But of that selfish asceticism which seeks an ideal Paradise Regained in the ecstatic visions of angelic apparitions in the cloister, while leaving the real Paradise Lost—a condemned and perishing world—to take care of itself, he knew nothing. Perhaps we have something to learn of Columba at this point, if we would be better missionaries. The command to tarry precedes the command to go ; a retreat into God should prepare an advance upon the heathen. “As the Father hath sent Me into the world,” says Christ to His messengers. But before we can successfully carry out this commission, we must make real that other word of His, “Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.” And withdrawal from this present age, and entering into profound communion with the Lord by prayer and meditation, are the essential conditions of such realization.

3. Columba deeply revered and profoundly studied the Holy Scriptures. Who can tell how largely the deep root and tenacious hold which Christianity gained in Scotland may have been due to this characteristic of the earliest missionary to her shores ? If we would have an established church in the truest sense, we must have a church rooted and grounded in the Word. Columba may be said to be the *former* of that Scottish Christianity of which Knox in later times was the *reformer*. And in no land, we believe, has the religion of Christ borne such a biblical stamp and expressed its worship and its confessions in such scriptural forms as in that country which was the principal mission-field of the Ionan saint.

4. All traditions agree in ascribing to Columba a spirit of extraordinary prayerfulness. So much did he depend on communion with God, that,