

LECTURE IV.

THE Cross had penetrated where the legions had never trod, in other regions than Britain. In the extreme East, as in the farthest West, a Church existed which had not bowed the knee to the Roman bishop. And there we find the same conditions as at home,—a clergy ignorant of papal claims and of episcopal pretensions—a Christian communion free from errors which were part and parcel of the system of the Latin Church. When, in the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese, having rounded the Cape of Storms, made their way to India, they found on the coast of Malabar a settlement of Christians, whose hundred churches had, for thirteen centuries, been ruled by a regular succession of bishops who looked to the Patriarch of Antioch as their head. They refused to acknowledge the Pope, though harried and persecuted by the invaders because of their refusal. They knew

nothing of the invocation of saints ; of Purgatory ; of seven sacraments. They held there were only two sacraments, and only two orders—those of priest and of deacon, for their bishop differed from the priest not in order but in function only.¹ Their isolation from the imperial influence had secured them from the aggression of the ecclesiastical power, which had served itself heir to the traditions of the empire. The existence of the Syrian Church on the shores of the Indian Ocean helps us to understand the causes which differentiated the Scotie Church, in Erin and Alban, from Churches which were subject to the dominion of Rome. But as the Portuguese Inquisition, which followed like a vulture in the wake of Vasco da Gama's ships, crushed the ancient independence and defaced the historic features of the Indo-Syrian community, so the Anglo-Roman policy of proselytism and spirit of aggression gradually depressed the vigour, and changed the character, of the Scotie Church. Yet the depression and the change were gradual, nor were they in any case accelerated by persecution.

The last of the great Celtic missionaries, who spent their lives in planting the Scotie Church, was the first to set the example of conformity to the

¹ Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia*, 9th ed., p. 106 *et seq.*

new usages. Cuthbert, who, as a shepherd lad on the Lammermoors, was moved by a strong and sudden religious impulse to adopt the monastic life, under Boisil, Prior of Melrose, had, at Melrose and Lindisfarne, won universal veneration by the singular sanctity of his life and his untiring devotion to the work of an evangelist. No toilsomeness of road, no perils of mountain or flood, no stress of summer's heat or winter's cold, availed to check the ardour of his apostolic energy. Along with this active self-devotion he exhibited a singular revival, in his own person, of the extremest asceticism of which the Egyptian Antony had been the type. Quitting Lindisfarne, where he was prior, he withdrew after a time to the isle of Farne on the coast near Bamborough, as in his earlier years he had withdrawn to a "desert" in the North. Here he spent some eight years in the strictest solitude, only admitting to his cell those who came to seek, in urgent need, ghostly counsel or comfort. Tales were told of his strange powers of prayer, of insight, of self-denial, of the ingenious austerities—such as reciting the whole Psalter while he stood neck-deep in icy water—with which he mortified the flesh. He was persuaded to accept a new bishopric, erected at Hexham for the province of Bernicia; but he could not bring himself to say farewell to his beloved island, and returned

to it after only two years' unwilling tenure of his episcopal office. Soon afterwards, in March 687, he passed away, in his little oratory in the isle of Farne, with his last words exhorting the monks who had come to watch by him, to "preserve always peace among themselves and divine charity"—to practise hospitality and think humbly of themselves; but, oddly enough, adding to these charges a warning to have nothing to do with those who "erred from the Catholic unity, either by keeping the wrong Easter or by a perverse life." It is strange that a man so holy and wise should have come to regard a matter of ceremonial observance of such moment, as to be named with his latest breath along with his fatherly counsels of peace, charity, and well-doing.

Owing to the civil conditions of the region in which he chiefly laboured, and which annexed that region to the Northumbrian monarchy, his name has not been so intimately identified with the history of the Church of Scotland as the names of his three predecessors—Ninian, Kentigern, and the great Columba; but it well deserves to be classed with theirs as the name of a true saint and apostle, and to be held in reverent remembrance as a symbol of exalted piety, pure self-devotion, and self-sacrificing labour in the Lord.

Cuthbert marks the transition from the old order to the new. Beginning his career as a

Columban monk, he closed it as a bishop in full communion with the Romanised Church, of which Canterbury was the metropolitan see. But the wisdom, devotion, and charity of his life are enough to prove that his conformity was dictated by no selfish ambition or easy-going indifference, but by a sincere conviction of what was best for the peace and progress of the Church to whose ministry he had dedicated himself. How widely he was known, and how affectionately remembered, is attested by the dedication to him of at least twenty-three churches, mainly in the region between the Forth and the Tyne, the chief of which is that which bears his name under the Castle Rock of Edinburgh; but there is also Kirkcudbright (Kirkcuthbert) in Galloway, another at Weem in Perthshire, and one as far north as Wick.

The death of Cuthbert was followed by a period in which the civil and the ecclesiastical history of our country is but obscurely traceable. Constant warfare between Picts, Scots, and Angles, and invasions and ravages of Danes and Norwegians, fill up the confused picture, until we reach the one vital fact (amid all the turmoil) of the union of the Scots of Dalriada and the Pictish tribes, under the sceptre of Kenneth Macalpine, in 844. We have no clear light as to the causes out of which this union sprang,

beyond the facts that Kenneth was the representative of the royal house of Dalriada, while his mother was of Pictish descent, and he thus combined the claims of both branches of the Celtic race. Further, the Danish incursions, from which Scots and Picts alike suffered, served to draw both into a common league for mutual defence; and the transference of the Columban primacy from the Scotie Iona to the Pictish Dunkeld formed a bond of ecclesiastical union. As we know, the Pictish territory had been evangelised from Iona; but in the year 717, Nectan, the King of the Picts, influenced by the arguments of certain Anglic or Roman emissaries, placed his kingdom under the guardianship of S. Peter, and drove all the Columban monks and missionaries out of it. Many of these retreated to Ireland; others to Iona, where they helped to strengthen what might be called the "national party." The conflict between the Columban and the Roman tradition and usage had penetrated to the sacred island; and even in Columba's monastery some were found to favour the innovations of Whitby. Even there the general tendency was towards the adoption of what was now represented to be Catholic, as opposed to local or national, custom. In 767 the succession of abbats of the family of Columba—his "coarbs," as they were called—came to an end: in the

first years of the ninth century the monastery was burnt; the whole community, with the exception of the abbat, was slaughtered by the Danes; and the relics of the great founder were removed, for better security, to Ireland. It was some time after this downfall of the ancient settlement that Kenneth, King of the Picts, moved either by reverence for the memory of Columba, to whom his people had owed their faith, or in pursuance of the policy of union which gained for him the sole monarchy, built a church at Dunkeld, in which he enshrined a part of the Columban relics that had been recovered from Ireland; and this church, in virtue of its possession of these, became the mother, or metropolitan, church of his dominions. The primacy of the monasteries in Ireland, which owed allegiance to Columba and his successors, had already, during the Danish inroads, been transferred to the Irish abbat of Kells. The primacy of the monasteries in Scotland was now vested in the abbat of Dunkeld.

Kenneth desired to reverse the policy of Nectan (who had striven to create a religious division between Pict and Scot by the expulsion of the Scotie clergy, and the erection of a bishopric at his royal town of Abernethy on the Tay), and to restore the Columbans to their old position in his extended and united kingdom. At the same time

the Romanising policy of Nectan had so far left its mark upon the ecclesiastical organisation, that we now find for the first time the episcopal office formally associated with that of the Columban abbat. The Abbat of Dunkeld bore the title which Nectan had given his bishop at Abernethy, and was the Bishop of FORTRENN—the name of the kingdom of the Southern Picts. The title and office were significant of the impending change, which was to strip the abbacy of its old prerogative and prestige, and finally to transfer the ecclesiastical primacy from the abbat to the bishop—the title and the revenues of the abbat being ultimately transferred to a lay holder. The primacy, however, still retained so much of its Celtic character that it was national and not territorial. Its seat was a movable one; and the primate was not the bishop of a diocese, but of a people. The seat was, towards the close of the ninth century, again removed to Abernethy, and early in the tenth to St Andrews, from which it was never afterwards shifted.

But at none of these seats did the bishop bear a diocesan title. His diocese, in fact, was co-extensive with the realm. At Dunkeld and Abernethy he was the Bishop of Fortrenn; at St Andrews he was the Bishop of Alban, which was now the name given to the whole region lying between the Forth and the Spey, and which formed the

real nucleus and centre of that kingdom of Scotland to which Edgar of England by-and-by ceded the Lothians, and with which the Britons of Galloway and of Cumbria, of whom Kentigern had been the apostle, became incorporated in the end of the tenth century.

It is in the beginning of that century that we have the first record of what we may call a "mixed council" of the Scottish Church and nation.¹ It was in the reign of Constantine the king, and the episcopate of Kellach the bishop, and probably in the year 906. The place was Scone, a place held in deep veneration by the Scots. The assemblage which met there in 906 is the first symbol of that union of Church and State which has lasted in this country ever since. There had before that been alliance between the two, and endowment of the Church with the benefactions of the monarch; but here for the first time we find the official representatives of both meeting in solemn council, in the presence of the people, and along with them entering into common engagements and covenants, civil and religious. The record of the council is brief, but it shows us thus much. It tells us that Constantine the king and Kellach

¹ A "mixed council" was the name for one in which both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities were represented and took part.

the bishop swore, together with the Scots, on the "Mount of Belief," beside the royal city of Scone, to keep "the laws and customs of the faith, and the rights of the churches and the Gospels." What was involved in either branch of this engagement we have no means of exactly determining. What were the particular laws and customs of the faith, and rights of the churches and the Gospels, does not appear. But obviously there was a covenant made between king, bishop, and people, to maintain, in their respective places and relations, the purity of the faith and worship of the Church on the one hand, and its rights as an evangelical corporation on the other. The object and the method are alike significant, and are specially interesting as giving us an early example of that tenacity of religious conviction, of that firm hold of corporate rights, and of that resolution to defend these, and to compel each member of the body politic to do his duty by them, which have distinguished the Scottish people in much later periods of their history, and most notably in their conflicts with ecclesiastical and monarchical misrule, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Here also for the first time we find the Church assuming a distinctively national character, not merely in sentiment and mode of government, but in extent and comprehensiveness of jurisdic-

tion. Hitherto we have seen it marked by those Celtic traits which Columba brought from Ireland, and imprinted on the Church he founded in the Western Isles. We have noted its abbatial government; its sparse, undiocesan episcopate; its special points of usage in which it differed from Rome. And all these have stamped on it a certain signet of Celtic nationality; but never till now have we seen the Church, not any longer as the Church of a set of separate or loosely connected clans, but as the Church of a united kingdom of Scots and Picts, represented—as one corporation—by one high official, and through this representative entering, like a co-ordinate power, into formal covenant with the head of the State, and with the people under his sceptre. It is a distinct step towards the realisation of the idea of a NATIONAL CHURCH.

We shall presently see a great change accomplished in the constitution and character of this Church: let us, ere we reach the period of vicissitude, try to obtain as distinct a view as we can of the old order, the old ministry, the old life with its usages, its worship, its Celtic romance and enthusiasm.¹

¹ For the particulars which follow in this lecture I am largely indebted, not only to the published works of the Rev. Duncan MacGregor, minister of Inverallochy, but to much valuable information imparted in his correspondence with myself, for which I take this public opportunity of thanking him.

We have not found that in Scotland there was the same multiplicity of bishops as in Ireland, and in the early sub-apostolic Churches. If the bishops were still numerous, though some were devoted evangelists, they were not conspicuous as rulers of churches. Their special distinction was the possession of that right of ordination which the original presbyterate had come to intrust to one of its senior members, selected mainly with a view to the orderly continuance of the apostolic commission; but this right of ordination they exercised in strict subjection, as I have already said, to the authority of the abbat, the head of the ecclesiastical community. The abbat was the choice of the brethren, according to the primitive usage; and although his power was absolute, it is evident, as in the case of the mission of Aidan to Northumbria, that after the example of Jerusalem and Antioch, the action of the Church, in all important crises, was resolved upon in the council of the elders, or general fraternity. As the Church extended itself throughout the land, the missionary monk, settling down amongst his converts, became, at one point after another, the head and centre of a new community, whose bond of union was their acceptance of the Christian faith. Thus in district after district, in glen and island and strath, the Church was founded, and the nucleus of a future parish formed.

But the evangelist-monk and the bishop-monk were not the only representatives of the Christian ministry, under the primacy of the abbat. There were, as in apostolic times, diversities of ministration; and these were founded not on the mechanical idea of the restriction of grace and spiritual influence to a threefold order, secured by a carnal succession professing to trace its origin to the apostles, but on a rarely exalted conception of the essential character of the Christian ministry. That ministry, according to the Celtic idea of it, was the reproduction on earth of the living energy of the Church's head in heaven. Christ on high, through His Spirit, raised up men who were His witnesses in the lower world. He that would be a true minister of the Gospel must be filled with the Spirit, must understand the apostles' doctrine, must follow their way of life. The Celt believed the minister should live by the work of his own hands, because the apostle did so. Having food and raiment, he was to be therewith content, like those whose leader told them to provide no purse nor wallet for their journeys; and like them he was to travel on foot, and preach the Gospel as he went. He was to own no property, like the great Master who had not where to lay His head; and he was to fast and pray, and withdraw into lonely places, after the same divine exemplar. By all available means he was to wean himself from

the world, and to conform to the model of the life which was "the light of men." The aspirant to the ministry had, above every other preparation, to inure himself to a mode of living whose root was hidden in Christ,—to subdue the flesh, and to come into conscious relation to a life which, in its essence and its principles, was supermundane. He who could not or would not do this, was not apostolical. He who achieved it, approved of His Master, received from Him a gift of divine knowledge and of supernatural grace, in some degree corresponding to the measure of his triumph over human weakness and concern in the things that perish in the using. Those who endured the trial and gained the victory of the agonistic life, gained too a victory over the minds of men, which invested their persons and their office with a sanctity no formal consecration could impart. "Their mysterious times of seclusion, their constantly praying to an invisible Being, their total lack of interest in mundane things, their habits of silence except to speak in God's name, struck the people with awe, and even fear, and produced an ideal of a minister in the Scottish mind which is far from having yet evaporated."¹

¹The Celtic Inheritance of the Scottish Church, by the Rev. D. MacGregor, in "The Scottish Church Society Conferences"; 2d series, vol. ii.

“Who lives by rule then keeps good company,” says George Herbert; but this high life was not prescribed in any mere rule of the Columban brotherhood: it was the product of the noble and unworldly ideal of the apostolic character and career, which inspired their founder and his brethren. The ministries which occupied those who held this ideal before them were various.

There was the ministry of the *DISEARTACH*—the man of the desert,¹ who, after the fashion of the Egyptian hermit, withdrew from the world to exercise himself in spiritual communion with God and conflict with evil; not to win for himself the name of saint, but to gather those around him whom he might teach and influence for good. If a man thus devoted himself, even in the most secluded spot, it was believed God would honour him, by making his gifts so well known that disciples would rally to his call and learn the secrets of the higher life.

Another of these ministers, and friends of God, was the *SOSCELAIGHTE*, or gosseller. He was an itinerant evangelist. He who dwelt in the desert was regarded as in a peculiar sense the imitator of Christ; but the way-faring preacher was rather the imitator of the apostles, who did not wait till hearers were attracted by the bruit of their powers, but

¹ Hence *Dysart* among Scottish place-names.

went everywhere preaching the Word. So he witnessed for Christ wherever he could make his voice heard, devising no provision for his wants, but trusting to the hospitality of those whose hearts God opened to show him kindness. We find these two types of ministry occasionally combined in a single individual: as in two notable cases—those of Comgall and of Cuthbert. Comgall was a student monk for many years; then he became a “disertach,” retiring from the world for uninterrupted devotion, as the necessary means of attaining great spiritual power. After this he emerged from the desert and went about as an itinerant preacher; and finally he was the founder and president of a great monastic seminary, the Irish Bangor. So with the holy Cuthbert. He is said to have spent ten years in a desert in Strathtay, before he itinerated through Lothian, Cumbria, and Galloway; and when a bishop he reverted, in the end, to the hermit life, as we have seen, in the isle of Farne. Columba was the most conspicuous example of the itinerant. In the ‘Book of Deer,’ says Mr MacGregor, there is a glimpse of his mode of operations, which I take as an illustration. “He came to the Forest of Buchan, laboured, crushed resistance, planted his church and seminary at Deer, left his nephew and others in charge, and then

passed away to some other place." Such was the method of the wandering evangelists—to convert the heathen, plant a church among them, provide for the maintenance of its services, and then go on to install the faith and the ministry elsewhere,—travelling, in the strength of the Lord, through savage fastnesses and among savage tribes—in perils oft from the wolf and wild boar, from the roving cateran, from the swamp and the torrent and the stormy sea. Nor were they content with merely planting the church and leaving it in another's charge. They would, like S. Paul, return time after time to visit and confirm the disciples, and to revive their spiritual life by renewed instruction and united acts of worship.

Again, there was the CLEIRICH MAINISTRICH, or the monastic clergy—*i.e.*, those who formed the permanent staff of the monastery, and remained at its headquarters. These men, according to their several gifts, had their respective functions assigned to them. Some acted as the pastors of the monastic community; some conducted the education of the sons of the nobles, the chiefs, and the people of the vicinity; some prepared students who aspired to the ministry; some were intrusted with the fitting out and direction of missionary expeditions; some gave themselves assiduously

to special offices of devotion. Among the various functions discharged by these monastic clergy, in the monastery itself, were those of the preceptor or preacher; the chaplain; the mass-priest; the chancellor; and the scribe, a man of much importance. Among the teachers of the candidates for the ministry were the expounders of "the three fifties" — *i.e.*, the Psalter; the "man of lore," who taught "the ten books of science"; and the "disciple," who taught "the twelve books of science"; the historian; the lecturer, whose province was grammar, with orthography, criticism, arithmetic, and astronomy; the "doctor of the Canon," who lectured on the New Testament; the "lector," who gave instruction in the classical languages.

The highest degree in this educational institute (for such, in one aspect, the great monastery was) was that of the DRUIMELI, which implied "perfect knowledge of all wisdom, from the smallest book called the 'Ten Words,' to the greatest book called 'Cuilmen'" — the meaning of which, alas! is, according to Mr MacGregor, unknown. Who shall unravel its more than Delphic mystery? Among the Druimeli the chiefest rank was that of the OLLAMH, — a word which, with a gratifying appreciation of the value of modern academic

distinctions, is now applied to a Doctor of Laws, and even to a Doctor of Divinity.

There was yet another grade of clergy—the SECULARS, or “priests of the order of the laity.” Their special work lay apart from the monasteries, and was to minister to the chiefs and their clans; and they were subject to the chiefs, and apparently under very slight, if any, ecclesiastical supervision.

Last of all, and not properly of the clergy, there were the SCOLLOGS, or crofters,¹ who rendered services in the choir as equivalent to their rent.² They existed at Kirkcudbright as late as the twelfth century, and at North Berwick even later.

These functions of the ministry appertained to the priesthood. The one source of the priesthood was Christ, the Head of the Church. What may be meant by it is quite uncertain; but of several Irish saints it is recorded that they were ordained by Christ Himself. I should suppose the idea was that they had some such direct conviction of an immediate and personal call, superseding the necessity of any formal ordination, as that which changed S. Paul from the persecutor to the apostle. A priesthood so full of spiritual freshness and freedom, so rich in variety of function and in buoyant vigour of

¹ See ‘Celtic Scotland,’ vol. ii. pp. 446-448 and notes.

² See The Tenure of the Scollogs—Appendix I.

development, neither could nor would trace its principle and inspiration to any lesser source than that which had given to the primitive Church every gift needed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Through what outward arrangements appointment to these functions was regulated does not appear with any distinctness. In Ireland the numerous (undiocesan) bishops ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood. That they frequently discharged the same function in Scotland is evident, but that they did so uniformly and always is not clear. That they did not, is argued with considerable force in Dr Jamieson's erudite and elaborate work on the Culdees.¹ That they in any way controlled the assignation to, or the selection of, special offices for special men, is never suggested; nor can careful scrutiny detect in the Celtic literature of the Church any recognition of the necessity of apostolical succession, in the Roman sense.

Yet where in Christendom could a Church be found, bearing more plainly in its character and constitution the stamp of apostolicity, bringing forth richer fruits of the Spirit, recalling more brightly in its force, its freedom, its

¹ An Historical Account of the Ancient Culdees of Iona. By John Jamieson, D.D., F.R.S. Edinburgh, 1811.

versatility, its devotion, the era of the apostles? In the annals of what branch of the Holy Catholic Church shall you read names more worthy to be enrolled along with those of "the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs," than the names of Columba, Kentigern, and Cuthbert; of Donan, massacred with fifty companions before their altar by the heathen Picts; of Kessog, who, after evangelising the Lennox, went over seas in his irrepressible desire to win souls for Christ, and was slain in a foreign land; of Maelrubha, whose labours far and wide in north-western Scotland, from Ardnamurchan to Applecross, left so deep an impress on the people's memory, that even years after the Reformation they came to worship at his shrine; of Odran, the hermit of the Isle of May, slaughtered, with the disciples who had gathered around his cell, by the fierce Danes; of Mun, who left his followers the Rule: "Always preserve a pure heart burning with love to God. Be in life and discourse what worldlings expect religious men to be. Never speak except for necessity or utility. Do nothing but what you are willing God and all men should see. Love one another, and drive instantly from your mind whatever is calculated to rend mutual and fraternal charity"? What better proof of a divine

commission, and of a consecrated ministry, could be given than was given by these men, and others of like spirit and power, whose names are now forgotten, or survive only in dim tradition, or as marking the crumbling ruin where ages ago they worshipped God, and taught some wild clan—long since broken and scattered—to love God and their brethren, and to forego their evil ways for those of peace, righteousness, and purity?

Wherever there was a congregation, whether in the monastic community, or in the church founded by the itinerant evangelist, or in any other way, there was a canon of worship, the original manuscripts of which no longer exist. Still there are materials, in the remnants of the Celtic religious literature, from which the diligent investigator can deduce a general idea, at least, of the principles and details of the divine offices of the Church of our fathers, in its pristine days. The latest, and a full, exposition of these principles and details is to be found in the "Lee Lecture" for 1895 by the Rev. Duncan MacGregor, which every churchman interested—as all ought to be—in the history of the Church should carefully study. At the root of the Church's worship, says this author, lay "the sublime conception of the Church herself as the living temple of the living God, with its various

courts in heaven and on earth—the mystical body of Christ with its divine Head and its variously gifted members—the vast whole shining with heavenly grace, glowing with the presence of the Holy Ghost, pulsating with supernatural life, and armed with thaumaturgic powers.”

The common worship of the members of this Church was rendered after two distinct types—the “*Celebrad*” (*celebratio*) and the “*Oiffrenn*” (*offerendum*). The first consisted mainly in psalmody, with prayers and lessons of Scripture,—the constant reading of the Scriptures being a marked feature of the education, and the worship, of the early Scottish Church. The second was the eucharist or mystic offering, always kept apart from the other, and consisted essentially of the supreme thank-offering and act of communion, with appropriate prayers, lessons, and anthems.

The *Celebrad* was a daily service offered at morning and evening, when all were expected to attend; and also at midnight and the third, sixth, and ninth hours, when attendance was of course impossible to many. But the presence of a congregation was not considered a necessary condition of the performance of the sacred offices. “On all occasions the body and soul of celebration was the singing of psalms. To render the work at once easy and more effective,

the choir, or, what was often the same thing, the congregation, was invariably divided into two half choirs. These, arranged in lines on either side of the church, stood facing each other. The chief singers of each choir formed the front ranks, and the presiding presbyter at the altar appeared as standing between the two choirs. Each choir sang the successive verses alternately—a custom alluded to in a verse of Cuchimne's hymn where the Church's praise is said to alternate—

‘Bis per chorum hinc et inde’;

and the purpose of this custom is stated—

‘Ut vox pulset omnem aurem
Per laudem vicariam.’

The antiphons, on the other hand, were sung by both choirs combined. The canonical posture during psalmody was standing, but when many psalms were sung the rule was to stand at one psalm and sit at the next, and so on alternately. The Prose Rule of the Culdees gives the reason—because continual standing tends to weariness, but continual sitting tends to sleep.” On week-days the worshippers knelt in prayer, but on Sundays, in obedience to the Canon of the Nicene Council, they stood erect with bowed head.

The Bible, and especially the Gospel, was emphatically to the Columban the rule of faith,

Their reverence for, and implicit obedience to, the Word of God in the Gospel, which was sometimes called the "co-arb or vicar of Christ," was inherited by them from their forerunner S. Patrick. This saint would close an argument with a Scriptural quotation, adding in the same words and in the same unquestioning sense in which Luther employed them in the Marburg Conference, "God hath spoken." But the Psalter was the portion of holy Scripture most constantly used and most affectionately valued alike by clergy and laity. "Their enthusiastic but beautiful idea was to set their lives to music, so that all the actions of the members of the church should be, as it were, the rhythmic movements of a great oratorio. The moment they awoke the Song of the Lord began. Long before daylight they were in church, replenishing the fire in their hearts with coals from the altar of God. When they worked in the fields, they made the rocks and valleys ring with their sacred melodies. When they journeyed, the unutterable joy of their hearts burst into David's triumphant strains."¹

This extraordinary delight in the exercise of psalmody and the prominence of music in the Celtic services were, no doubt, the origin of the "sang schools" established by the Church after it was Romanised; and possibly also of the deep-

¹ Lee Lecture, p. 21.

rooted prejudice, which still lingers in the Highlands, against the singing of what the Highlander calls "human hymns." Yet a dislike of hymns was no feature of this early Church. Subordinate to the Psalms they were freely used; and the "Altus" is only one specimen of many which Columba himself composed for public worship. The service also included what may be called Responsories—apparently a kind of short anthem, of a few verses of a psalm or passage of Scripture, in which one of the verses recurred as a refrain. The Lord's Prayer, the Trisagion, the Gloria in Excelsis, and the Amen, were sung by all the people. The Lessons of Scripture were read at the principal services, the first from the Old and the second from the New Testament on week-days; the first from the Epistles and the second from the Gospels on Sundays. The version from which these lessons were read would appear to have been one which, judging from the Scriptural quotations found in early Gaelic literature, can be identified neither with the "Vetus Itala" nor the Vulgate, but which must have been in current use throughout the native British churches.

In their liberal use of the Bible, as in the congregational psalmody, and also in the free introduction of extempore prayer, the Celtic ritual stood quite apart from the Roman. Although there were prayers and collects proper to the day and

hour—most of them addressed to Christ Himself, the risen and exalted Lord—the worship was not confined to these forms. The utmost reverence of demeanour was rigidly observed. “Yawning, sleeping, smiling, and all offensive sounds, especially during prayer, were severely punished. In a church founded by Finan the Leper, the apostle of Deeside, any one who became drowsy was ducked in the waters of the neighbouring lake, because Finan said his church was built for prayer, not for sleep.”¹ Somnolency was all the more inexcusable, because the lively variety of the worship, the brevity of the several acts, and the interspersion of singing, praying, and reading, were calculated to keep up a constantly invigorated attention. One of the principal prayers was the Intercession, in which it is noteworthy that in no known example is there a prayer for the Pope, or for the dead in such terms as to imply belief in the doctrine of Purgatory. A sign of the absence of the Mariolatry common in the Roman Church is that the Ave Maria has no place in the Celtic ritual, except as the Antiphon to the Magnificat.²

In the early Scottish Church, as in all the apostolic Churches, the Eucharist was the highest religious solemnity. It was commonly called the *Oiffrenn* or Offering, but also the Spiritual or

¹ Lee Lecture, p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Mystic Sacrifice, the Holy Oblation, or the Mass. It was usually celebrated every Sunday, but in great churches daily, and followed the ordinary Celebrad of the third hour. The ideas of oblation and of communion appear to have been combined in it. The word sacrifice was equally applied to that offering of the elements which was made to God, and that which was received by the communicant. The sacrament was administered in both kinds; the bread was unleavened. There is no suggestion in the liturgical language, or in the mode of administration, of any belief in a corporeal presence, or a miraculous transubstantiation. The officiating clergy and their assistants entered the church processionally, bringing in the sacred vessels, the elements, and the books, with grave ceremonial. The holy table, or altar, as it was called, covered with a white linen cloth, stood at the east end of the church, and the priest beside it.¹ The liturgy of the Oiffrenn began with the Confession and a prayer for par-

¹ "The position of the celebrant was before the altar (*ante altare*)—that is to say, facing the altar, and with his back to the congregation." So says Warren, p. 3, and I own this was my own impression; but I am shaken in it by Mr MacGregor's assertion that "the eastern side of the altar was reckoned its front, and there the priest stood during the service." He adduces reasons for this conclusion stronger than Mr Warren's for the opposite. If Mr MacGregor is right, then the Celtic celebrant and the Bishop of Rome were at this point in accordance. In S. Peter's the Pope celebrates standing behind the altar and looking down the nave.

don and peace, followed by the Introit from the choir, while the elements were arranged on the altar. After this the priest recited the preface and collect proper to the day and the "Commemoration." Then followed the epistle; an anthem; the "Half-Uncovering," or lifting of the outer of two veils which had been laid over the elements on the altar; the Gospel, read by the deacon; and the offertory; and on special occasions a sermon from one of the priests, which concluded with a prayer, "conceived" (to use a phrase familiar at a much more recent date) by the preacher. Next came the singing of the Nicene Creed. During the offertory the deacon removed the inner veil ("the Full-Uncovering") from the elements, and after sundry other observances the Immolation or Action Prayer was repeated, amid the deepest stillness and display of profound reverence on the part of the congregation. The details at this point are so singular that I must quote them in full from Mr MacGregor's narrative.

The Immolation, which was preceded by the *Sursum Corda*, "consisted," he says, "of three great parts and acts—viz., 1, the *Actio gratiarum* or Thanksgiving; 2, the Consecration; 3, the Great Oblation. It was invested with awful solemnity, and all present were bound to concentrate upon it all their attention, and to take

part in it with the most profound reverence. Especially at the words of institution, every person present was obliged to preserve deathlike stillness under heavy penalties, so as not to disturb the priest, for it was reckoned essential to his office to recite these words with his mind wholly fixed upon God. If he stammered, or altered even unintentionally the traditional arrangements of the sacred words, his punishment was for the first offence fifty lashes, for the second a hundred, and for the third imprisonment on bread and water for a certain period. Our forefathers were stern men, and for carelessness or presumption on the part of a clergyman their first remedy was the lash. Opposite the sacred words on the margin of the Service-Book there was written, in bold characters, the ominous word PERIL; hence the formula was often called the Perilous Prayer (*Oratio Periculosa*). If the Church's regulations, however, were observed, as they probably always were, the Immolation, united as it was supposed to be with the most exalted worship of the angelic armies and the whole Church in heaven and earth, flowed forcefully on like the roll of a mighty anthem, swelling and swelling till it reached its climax in the Great Oblation."¹

The service proceeded, in a combination of

¹ Lee Lecture, p. 49.

prayer, versicles, anthem, words and acts of adoration, full of devout symbolism (as when after a brief paraphrase of our Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of Me," the people bowed the knee while the priest "took three steps backwards, bowed thrice in token of sorrow for the sins of mankind, and then, by three steps forward, returned to his place at the altar"), till, lifting the paten and chalice, the priest in "the Great Oblation" offered the elements to God the Father, with an appropriate prayer. Then followed the Fraction, with much symbolic detail; the Collect, and the Pater Noster, sung by the people, without the doxology and Amen; the Sacramental Benediction, and finally the Act of Communion. The celebrant himself first partook in both kinds; and next administered to the other clergy, while a hymn beginning, "Come, ye saints, receive the body of Christ, and drink the blood by which ye have been redeemed," was sung, during which the rest of the communicants drew near to the altar, where, standing, they received the bread from the priest, or the bishop if he was present, and the cup from the deacon—to whom the charge of the cup was specially assigned. When all had received, the celebrant delivered a brief exhortation and a short prayer of thanksgiving, and then dismissed the congrega-

tion with the words, "Mass is ended: depart in peace."¹

The sermon, which accompanied the eucharistic service, or which, on occasion, formed by itself the body of a non-eucharistic service, was sometimes read, sometimes delivered without notes. The Gaelic preacher, like Origen, was not content to extract a onefold lesson from his text. He was expected to expound its literal, its spiritual, and its moral, meaning; and the value of the discourse depended on the skill and unction with which it was treated under the second of these heads.² It is evident that the Columban preachers—like their Gaelic successors in modern times—dealt much in warnings and appeals, addressed to the excitable temperaments and warm imaginations of their hearers. "Some preachers first enlarged in terrifying accents on the necessity of repentance, and then encouraged their hearers by the promises of God. Some, giving scope to their perfervid imaginations, enlarged the sayings of Scripture into vivid pictures of the judgment, the glories of heaven, and the terrors of hell. Subjected to these floods of fiery eloquence, even the stolid and haughty Picts often wept and

¹ All these particulars are to be found in the Gaelic Tract published, with a translation, in the 'Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society' for 1896.

² Lee Lecture, p. 45.

wailed aloud, and beat their breasts, and sang for joy." ¹

We have not sufficient information to warrant a description of the mode of administering the sacrament of baptism; or an exact estimate of the extent to which the doctrine of baptismal regeneration had affected the Scottish theology. The administration so differed from the Roman rite that it was not only regarded as irregular; but of doubtful validity, by Theodore, the Roman Archbishop of Canterbury towards the end of the seventh century. The Stowe Missal (the earliest surviving missal of the Irish Church) contains an "Ordo Baptismi," which, presumably, is at least akin to the type generally adopted among the Scots not only of Erin but of Alban. It is obviously appropriate for use only in the case of adult baptism, which no doubt was generally that of a convert from paganism, and may not have been employed in other circumstances. It includes an office for the admission of the catechumen and his post-baptismal communion, as well as for baptism proper. The whole is marked with an admixture of more or less superstitious or unreasonably symbolical matter, as in the prayer for the consecration of

¹ Celtic Inheritance, &c., p. 40. I demur to the epithet "stolid"; and the alleged effects of the preaching contradict the idea that it is applicable here.

the water and the salt; for the expulsion of the demons (like the exorcism, a relic of the pestilent dualism of the East); the anointing of sundry parts of the body with oil; the signing with the cross not only on the forehead, but on the right hand; the feet-washing, &c. The phrase "the water of regeneration," and the prayer that, "renewed of water and the Holy Spirit," the baptised, having put off the old man, may put on the new, no doubt suggest the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, but in a sense not objectionable when applied to the baptism of an adult; and the impressive elaboration of the whole service may have been carefully designed to intensify the sentiments of awe and solemn responsibility with which the catechumen presented himself for his formal reception into the Church. Throughout it gives evidence of being drawn from other than Roman sources. And in this connection we may note that no trace exists proving the use of incense in the Celtic ritual; and that although confession was practised, it was not made in private, nor required as a necessary preparative for the Communion.¹

The question inevitably suggests itself, In what language were these services conducted? This, no

¹ The *anamchara* or soul-friend—the relation in which Molassius of Inismurray stood to Columba ere he crossed to Iona—was, in point of fact, the "confessor."

doubt, was mainly Latin. "Whatever may have been done by 'seculars,'" Mr MacGregor writes, "in monasteries most of the services were in Latin. This does not mean that they believed in saying their services in a dead language. Latin at that time was very much alive. It was a vernacular, as much as English is in Scotland to-day. It was the vernacular of North Italy, France, Spain, and North Africa; and it was the recognised language of South Britain. It was a spoken, living, fireside language. Whoever did not understand it was really uncivilised. . . . No mortal man would have thought of writing or using a mass in Punic, or Celtic, or Belgic, or Aquitanian, or Allemanian, or Frisian, or Saxon. No man *thought* in these languages regarding religion. Of course the Scots adopted Latin as the religious language. They said mass in it, and sang the Psalms in it. They talked of religion in it. It was taught and used in the schools, &c., not as an ancient tongue, but as a then modern language. It was found very convenient to have a common language, for while there were many different languages in the British Isles, each had its very various dialects. Even now the Gaelic of Cork is scarcely intelligible in the north of Ireland; and although almost the same orthography is used, is altogether a foreign language in Sutherland.

The very reason why so many Irish Picts came as missionaries to Scotland (more correctly Pictland) was doubtless to be found in the linguistic difficulty, for the Irish Dalriadic or Pictish Gaelic was practically the same as the Albanian. . . . Such institutions as Columba's were attended by a heterogeneous mass of men speaking mutually unintelligible tongues, but all more or less accustomed from infancy to speak the Latin language." My correspondent goes on to point out that the existence of numerous Gaelic hymns, of prayers adapted to public worship, and of several litanies—such as that of Aireran the Wise in the eighth century—proves that in the services of the Church "the vernacular was mixed with Latin in a way not known to Continentals of that period. . . . The plan followed was to use the Latin prayers, psalms, &c., and to teach their meaning to the people, that they might understand them, while they freely and readily added vernacular hymns." This use of the mother tongue of the people in their religious offices, in conjunction with the canonical Latin, wise and rational as it was, may probably have been one of the "barbarous rites" which incurred the disapproval of Queen Margaret, whose enthusiasm for "Catholic" uniformity warped her judgment as to what was best for the edification of the people, and for enabling

them to offer to God an intelligent as well as a devout worship.

From the sketch I have given you will gain some idea of the character of the worship of our forefathers, ere the ancient Scottish Church succumbed to the influence of Rome. Of their doctrinal convictions, as formulated in a theological system, we have little means of judging, as I have already indicated. Their most distinctive characteristic was their familiar knowledge of their Bible, and their intense deference to holy Scripture, as the supreme standard of authority in all that concerned the Christian faith. The bent of their divines was practical rather than dogmatic. Of their discipline, except in the indications of its unwarrantable severity and repulsive harshness in visiting any dereliction in ritual, we have no distinct report. But of their worship we can form a picture on which the mental eye can rest. Its offices, in their congregational character; their abundance of purely Scriptural material; their musical richness in psalmody, rhythmical canticles, and responses; their tone of fervent adoration; their imaginative symbolism; their pervading reverence, and rejoicing belief in the presence with the Church of her living Head; their rubrical precision, yet their freedom of prayer and exhortation, offer an example of a high type of Chris-

tian culture and profound devotional sentiment, but little contaminated by sacerdotal superstition or speculative error, and of singular adaptability to the spiritual needs and the religious genius of the race among whom the Church was planted by Columba, and nurtured by his successors. How far our worship has fallen below that high standard, in the lapse of centuries and amid the disastrous vicissitudes of its later developments, I do not need to point out. But it is something for the churchmen of our day that they have so goodly a standard to look back to, that, amid the bareness of our ritual and the dulness of our devotions, they may endeavour to regain its principles, and to revive some, at least, of the old Church's manifold modes of service and varieties of ministry.