

Article 2: Living and Powerful

And these clerks began their preaching, and they had fair Latin books with them, and they recited their reading clearly, and praised the Creator fervently. And it was recreation of mind and heart to the hosts to listen to them. And those who had never thought of God before, turned their thoughts to Him now.

- Anonymous, *Life of Colman Ela* (Irish, 17th century, from an earlier ms.)

For the word of God is living and powerful..

- Hebrews 4.12

I try to reconstruct in my mind what the preaching of those enthusiastic “clerks” (clerics) must have been like, there on the Irish countryside in the middle of the seventh century.

They had Latin books of the Bible which they read, but which to those hearing them would have meant nothing at all. Just so for many people today, the Bible, though available in so many different English versions, is an unknown book in an unfamiliar tongue.

As they read they must have paused to translate and give the interpretation, following the example of the priests and Levites in Nehemiah’s day (Neh. 8.1-8). Progressing little by little, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little (Is. 28.9-13), their passion must have built and built as they pressed the claims of Christ and Scripture on their hearers.

Their preaching appears to have been interspersed with words of praise. In this way they brought their hearers into the presence of God, and God into their very midst. It appears they worked together, perhaps two or more of them playing off one another, adding insight and urgency to one another as they moved from point to point to point.

The people who heard them got it. Their hearts and minds became engaged, and they thought about God in ways they never had before. Many gave themselves to the Lord during such times of preaching and testifying and praying and exhorting as is briefly recorded for us here.

The Word of God is living and active, alive and powerful. The Word can speak for itself. We just need to open up our minds and hearts before the Word, and to let the Spirit take it from the pages of our Bibles through the corridors of our souls into the everyday experiences of our lives.

The Celtic Revival surged on the strength of the Word of God, as it flowed from and through the lives of men who were ready to die, if need be, for the sake of the Gospel. Is this the way we strike the people around us? Do we seem fervent about the things of the Lord? Is it clear that His Word has brought *re-creation* to our souls and revitalization to our lives?

Or do we look pretty much just like everyone else around us?

If the living and active Word is alive and powerful in you, you'll know it.

And so will the people around you. And many of them – many – will think about God in ways they never have before.