



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

PATRICK, THE APOSTLE OF IRELAND

The story of his life as told by himself



Slemish Mountain in Co. Antrim

Providence has preserved for us two documents written by Patrick. Both of these documents, Patrick's Confession and Patrick's Letter, are accepted as genuine by both Protestant and Roman Catholic historians. Patrick wrote in Latin, the language of the scholar of his day. Patrick's testimony was reprinted in a series of articles in the monthly magazine of Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church, "THE BURNING BUSH".

The translation used was Dr. N. J. D. White's, the 1918 edition. We have now reproduced that series of articles as a complete publication.

We are particularly anxious that Protestants learn the story of the entrance of the Gospel into our land. Roman Catholicism has long claimed Patrick as the Pope's representative sent to evangelise the heathen Irish. If that were true then Patrick's own story is strangely void of any reference to the Pope. Indeed, it is strangely void of any reference to the cardinal doctrines of Roman Catholicism. For this reason, we would also wish all Roman Catholics to study the words of Patrick and see for themselves that his message, far from being the message of the Pope or Cardinal O'Fee or Bishop Cahal Daly, is in fact the simple message of Bible-believing Protestants. The Protestant Reformation did not invent a new Gospel; it rediscovered the old Gospel, the Gospel of Patrick.

May the God of the shepherd-boy slave bless you as you read his story.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Ivan Foster

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A brief account of the work of God in Ireland over the last 1500 years

The Gospel of Christ came to Ireland over 1500 years ago. Despite many attempts by Satan and his agents God has been pleased to maintain His truth in this land. Following its first planting the Gospel was carried by men whose hearts the Lord had touched into many neighbouring countries: Scotland, England, Wales, France, Germany, Switzerland and further. God has been pleased, in some measure, to do again in these latter days what He did in those distant days. May the land, now associated with terror and strife, become known again by the title it was then given, "The land of Saints and Scholars."

Writings

The history of the Gospel in Ireland begins with the story of Patrick. There is much written about Patrick that is entirely fictitious. We can, however, be reasonably sure concerning his faith in Christ and the doctrines that he preached. There exist today two of his writings accepted by all scholars. One is his Confession. From his Confession we learn that his father was a deacon, the son of Potitus, a Gospel minister. Where Patrick was actually born is something of a mystery. England, Scotland, Wales and even France all claim to be the place of his birth. In his Confession he tells us that he came from a village called Bonavem Taberniae. Where that village was is difficult now to say. It would appear that the most likely place was somewhere in Roman Britain. Very possibly he came from a place now called Kilpatrick, that is, the 'Church of Patrick', near Dumbarten in the Firth of Clyde, in Scotland.

A real life prodigal

At the age of sixteen Patrick was taken captive by Irish raiders and sold as a slave in Ireland. Slemish mountain in Co. Antrim, in the northern part of Ireland, was where he tended the flocks of sheep of the one who became his master. Wherever he was born there is one thing we can be sure of and that is he was born again in Ireland. It was there that the wayward youth repented and sought the God of his fathers and received Christ by simple faith. After a period of slavery he managed to escape and return home. But he was not to remain there very long. For it was there, like Paul, he received a call. He had a remarkable dream in which he saw a man coming to him from Ireland, whose name was Victorious, carrying with him letters and the letters began with the heading 'The voice of the Irish' and as he began to read one of the letters he heard a voice that cried: "We entreat thee holy youth to come and walk henceforth among us." Patrick took this to be the call of God and so returned to the land where once he had been a slave, but now he came as a preacher of the gospel to set men free from the darkness that enslaved this land.

success

He had great success in the preaching of the Gospel. Many churches were started and many thousands were won to Christ. His preaching career covered a period of time in the mid-fifth century. He is believed to be buried in Downpatrick a small town in Co. Down, Northern Ireland. It is important to understand that though the Roman Catholic Church to-



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day claims him as her apostle to Ireland and his name and his statues adorn many of the great Roman Catholic mass houses in Ireland there is nothing more clear than that Patrick's theology was as far removed from Popery as Heaven is from Hell. It is a simple matter of reading his confession and one will see that Rome's claim that he came to Ireland as an emissary of the Pope is entirely false. Neither is it true to say that Patrick was responsible for organising a church in Ireland that was prelatic in its organisation. Nennius, who, it is believed, lived in the ninth century, affirms that Patrick established 365 churches in Ireland and "consecrated the same number of bishops." {Killen's Ecclesiastical History of Ireland Vol. 1 p.19}. It is clear that far from following episcopalianism Patrick followed primitive Christianity or what is commonly called today Presbyterianism.

Sinking into darkness

Although Ireland sank down into that same darkness that engulfed the rest of Europe during that period which became known as the Dark Ages, the decline was not as rapid as it was elsewhere. The gospel light was shining still in Ireland with remarkable clarity when it had greatly dimmed in many other European countries. From Ireland there went out many great missionary preachers. Among them was Columba who centred his activities in Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland. Columbanus went to preach in France. Gallus one of the disciples of Columbanus, became a well known evangelist in Switzerland. Another preacher of the Gospel with Irish origins was Killen. He evangelised in the Warzburg area of Germany and in another part of Germany a work was carried on by a preacher called "Fridolin the Traveller".

Sadly, Ireland also succumbed to the advancing darkness of Romanism. One event that established Rome in Ireland was the invitation of Pope Adrian IV to the English King, Henry II, to invade Ireland and bring it into submission to the English crown and thus into submission to the Pope of Rome. In the light of the present political campaign in Northern Ireland, it is essential that we bear in mind that England first became politically involved in Ireland at the invitation of the Pope. It is ironic that the very system which gives birth to anti-English feelings through its schools and churches and which in turn is responsible for the fanaticism of Roman Catholic terrorism, should have been responsible for the invasion of Ireland by the English in the first place. When England served the cause of the Pope she was welcome in Ireland. But once England became Protestant she was labelled the wicked invader. Such is the lying deceit of Romanism.

From darkness to light

From the time of the English occupation to the Reformation, Ireland sank down into great darkness, a darkness that was accompanied, not unnaturally, by great want and deprivation. It became a land of misery and hardship.

The North East of Ireland, because of the very narrow channel of sea between it and Scotland, always had the closest links with that land. It was not uncommon for a movement to take place between the two lands in both directions by large numbers of people during times of hardship and famine in either country. Consequently, when the gospel was established in Scotland during the days of John Knox, the light which shone so brightly in Scot-



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land was soon carried over to Ireland. The natural movement from Scotland to Northern Ireland greatly accelerated in the early part of the seventeenth century when it became the policy of the English crown to "plant" loyal Protestant citizens from Scotland and England in North East Ireland in order to stabilise the country. This early plantation laid the foundation for the strong Protestant presence that exists still in the northern province of Ireland, commonly called Ulster. John Knox through his contacts with John Calvin in Geneva instituted a Presbyterian and Calvinistic Church in Scotland. The Scottish planters in Ulster carried over their reformed doctrines and soon Presbyterianism in Ireland, despite much opposition, took firm root. From the early seventeenth century right up until the present day God has been pleased to maintain a pure witness to the Gospel. There have been many attempts to exterminate the Church of Christ in Ulster. Anti-Presbyterian laws made life extremely difficult for our forefathers. This was one of the main factors that caused so many Ulster Protestants to leave and go to America. There they played a major role in the struggle for independence giving to George Washington his best soldiers. It is indicative of the part they played in the founding of that great nation that the man who printed the Declaration of Independence and the first man who signed it were Ulster men.

Massacre

Rome also kept up her hatred and in 1641 and again in 1688-90 and again in 1798 and on numerous other lesser occasions that hatred burst forth into massacre. In 1641 over 25,000 Protestants were slaughtered by Romanists with the full blessing of their church and priests. Legal testimonies, collected by a Government Inquiry into the massacre, still exist in the archives of Trinity College, Dublin.

There were many times, because of spiritual declension, that the light of truth grew dim, but God was pleased to send revival in great abundance. In the late 1630's, again in the 1700's and in the unparalleled outpouring of the Spirit in 1859, Ireland was visited with many tokens of Divine favour. Even in this twentieth century, in the early 1920's, many thousands of souls were saved under the revival ministry of the Rev W. P. Nicholson, a Presbyterian evangelist. There is little doubt that the early days of the Free Presbyterian Church were days of revival. In the early 50's and again in the mid 60's right up until the 70's, under the preaching of Dr Paisley and other Free Presbyterian ministers, God was pleased to advance the Gospel and many congregations were formed from amongst converts to the Gospel at that time.

Separation from apostasy

The Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster is a Secession Church. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland had gradually slipped away from an adherence to the truth and gone down into apostasy. In the 1920's and 30's the Rev W. P. Nicholson gave a warning of the increasing signs of unfaithfulness in the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church. A lecturer in the Presbyterian College, Professor J. E. Davey, was tried for heresy and despite what many saw as clear evidence of his guilt, he was exonerated. He later was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The signs of apostasy became all too clear. Dr. Ian Paisley, then a young minister in an independent evangelical Church in Bel-



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fast was invited to conduct a Gospel mission in the Presbyterian Church in Crossgar, Co Down. Other Presbyterian Churches in the district objected to this invitation because of Ian Paisley's condemnation of the modernistic trends within the Presbyterian Church. As a result of these objections, the local Presbytery of the Church met and refused to give permission for the mission to go ahead. Some elders of the Crossgar Presbyterian Church withdrew from that Church and went ahead with the mission in a local mission hall and formed themselves together into the first Free Presbyterian congregation. Since the formation of that first congregation on 17th March 1951, God has been pleased to add over 50 congregations to that work in Ulster. As well as that the work has spread into Scotland, into England, into Wales, into Australia, into the United States of America and into Canada. It has also spread into Germany.

Doctrine

The doctrines of our Church, the government of our Church are based upon the Word of God. It can be traced back through our revivalist forefathers and our reforming forefathers to the days of Patrick and his evangelism, back to the days of the Apostles, back to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head and King of the Church. As we remain faithful to these truths we can expect to see the great blessings poured out in the past poured out upon us today.

When Patrick came to Ireland as a missionary is rather uncertain. It is believed he died in the year 465 or 493 and is supposed to be buried at Downpatrick. It must be acknowledged with Rev. Thomas Hamilton, a renowned Presbyterian historian, that Patrick's Confession is conspicuously 'Protestant', distinctly Trinitarian and thoroughly evangelical. Patrick's message preserved Ireland from the darkness that was descending upon the rest of Europe well into the second millenium of this age. Professor Killen in his 'Ecclesiastical History of Ireland' gives ample proof of the resistance within this island to the innovations of Romanism and the claims of universal power by the bishop of Rome. Indeed it was this resistance to the pope's claims that brought about the granting of Ireland to the English king Henry II by the only English pope, Adrian IV. It was that grant of Ireland to England and the subsequent invasion and conquest that issued in the age of darkness and vice. It was not so much the nationality of the invader but the religion of the invader that accounts for this decline. Whether Irish Roman Catholic writers like it or not Ireland received its Romanism from England. The religion that Irish Roman Catholics have been so earnestly urged to reject as the religion of England, namely Protestantism, is in fact the old religion of Patrick expelled by the English sword at the pope's behest in the 12th century. Nowhere do life's ironies manifest themselves more exquisitely than in this land of ours!

PATRICK'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

FROM SLAVERY TO SALVATION.

1. I, Patrick the sinner, am the most clownish and the least of all the faithful, and con-



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temptible in the eyes of very many.

My father was Calpornus, a deacon, one of the sons of Potitus, a presbyter, who belonged to the village of Banavem Taberniae. Now he had a small farm hard by, where I was taken captive.

I was about sixteen years of age. I knew not the true God; and I went into captivity to Ireland with many thousands of persons, according to our just deserts, because we departed away from God, and kept not his commandments, and were not obedient to our priests, who used to admonish us for our salvation. And the Lord poured upon us the fury of his anger, and scattered us amongst many heathen, even unto the ends of the earth, where now my littleness may be seen amongst men of another nation.

2. And there the Lord opened the understanding of my unbelief that, even though late, I might call my faults to remembrance, and that I might turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, and pitied the youth of my ignorance, and kept me before I knew him, and before I had discernment or could distinguish between good and evil, and protected me and comforted me as a father does his son.

3. Wherefore then I cannot keep silence - nor would it be fitting - concerning such great benefits and such great grace as the Lord hath vouchsafed to bestow on me in the land of my captivity; because this is what we can render unto him, namely, that after we have been chastened, and come to the knowledge of God, we shall exalt and praise his wondrous works before every nation which is under the whole heaven.

4. Because there is no other God, nor was there ever any in times past, nor shall there be hereafter, except God the Father unbegotten, without beginning, holding all things (i.e., Almighty), as we say, and his Son Jesus Christ, whom we affirm verily to have existed with the Father before the creation of the world, with the Father after the manner of a spiritual existence, begotten ineffably, before the beginning of anything. And by him were made things visible and invisible. He was made man; and, having overcome death, he was received up into heaven to the Father. And he gave to him all power above every name of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and let every tongue confess to him that Jesus Christ is Lord and God in whom we believe. And we look for his coming soon to be; he the Judge of the quick and the dead, who will render to every man according to his deeds. And he shed on us abundantly the Holy Ghost, the gift and earnest of immortality, who makes those who believe and obey to become children of God the Father and joint heirs with Christ, whom we confess and adore as one God in the Trinity of the Holy Name.

5. For he himself hath said through the prophet, Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. And again he saith, It is honourable to reveal and confess the works of God.

6. Nevertheless, although I am faulty in many things, I wish my brethren and kinsfolk to know what manner of man I am, and that they may be able to understand the desire of my soul.

7. I am not ignorant of the testimony of my Lord, who witnesseth in the Psalm, Thou shalt destroy them that speak a lie. And again he saith, The mouth that believeth killeth the soul. And the same Lord saith in the Gospel, The idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

8. Wherefore then I ought exceedingly, with fear and trembling, to dread this sentence in that day when no one will be able to absent himself or hide, but when all of us, without



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exception, shall have to give account of even the smallest sins before the judgement seat of the Lord Christ.

THE HUMBLE HISTORIAN.

9. On this account I had long since thought of writing; but I hesitated until now; for I feared lest I should fall under the censure of men's tongues, and because I have not studied as have others, who in the most approved fashion have drunk in both law and the Holy Scriptures alike, and have never changed their speech from their infancy, but rather have been always rendering it more perfect.

For my speech and language is translated into a tongue not my own, as can be easily proved from the savour of my writing, in what fashion I have been taught and am learned in speech; for, saith the wise man, By the tongue will be discovered understanding and knowledge and the teaching of truth.

10. But what avails an excuse, no matter how true, especially when accompanied by presumption? Since now myself, in mine old age, earnestly desire that which in youth I did not acquire; because my sins prevented me from mastering what I had read through before. But who gives me credence even if I should repeat the statement that I made at the outset?

When a youth, nay, almost a boy, I went into captivity in language (as well as in person) before I knew what I should earnestly desire, or what I ought to shun. And so to-day I blush and am exceedingly afraid to lay bare my lack of education; because I am unable to make my meaning plain in a few words to the learned; for as the spirit yearns, the (human) disposition displays the souls of men and their understandings.

11. But if I had (only) the same privileges as others, nevertheless I would not keep silent on account of the reward. And if perchance it seems to not a few that I am thrusting myself forward in this matter with my want of knowledge and my slow tongue, yet it is written, The tongue of the stammerers shall quickly learn to speak peace. How much rather should we earnestly desire so to do, who are, he saith, the epistle of Christ for salvation unto the ends of the earth, although not a learned one, yet ministered most powerfully, written in your hearts not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God. And again the Spirit witnesseth, And husbandry (lit. rusticity) was ordained by the Most High.

12. Whence I who was at first a clown, an exile, unlearned verily, who know not how to provide for the future - but this I do know most surely, that before I was afflicted I was like a stone lying in the deep mire; and he that is mighty came, and his mercy lifted me up, and verily raised me aloft and placed me on the top of the wall. And therefore I ought to cry aloud that I may also render somewhat to the Lord for his benefits which are so great here and in eternity, the value of which the mind of men cannot estimate.

13. Wherefore then be ye astonished, ye that fear God, both small and great, and ye clever sirs, ye rhetoricians, hear therefore and search it out. Who was it that called me up, fool though I be, out of the midst of those that seem to be wise and skilled in the law, and powerful in word and in everything? And me, moreover, the abhorred of this world, did he inspire beyond others - if such I were - only that with reverence and godly fear and unblameably I should faithfully be of service to the nation to whom the love of Christ conveyed me, and presented me, as long as I live, if I should be worthy; in fine, that I should with humility and in truth diligently do them service.

14. And so it is proper that according to the proportion of faith in the Trinity, I should de-



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fine doctrine, and make known the gift of God and everlasting consolation, without being held back by danger, and spread everywhere the name of God without fear, confidently; so that even after my decease I may leave a legacy to my brethren and sons whom I baptized in the Lord, many thousands of persons.

15 . And I was not worthy, nor such an one, as that the Lord should grant this to his poor servant, after such calamities and such great difficulties, after a life of slavery, after many years; that he should bestow on me so great grace towards that nation, a thing formerly, in my youth, I never hoped for nor thought of.

16. Now, after I came to Ireland, tending flocks was my daily occupation; and constantly I used to pray in the day time. Love of God and the fear of Him increased more and more, and faith grew, and the spirit was moved, so that in one day [I would say] as many as a hundred prayers, and at night nearly as many, so that I used to stay even in the woods and on the mountain [to this end]. And before daybreak I used to be roused to prayer, in snow, in frost, in rain; and I felt no hurt; nor was there any sluggishness in me - as I now see, because then the spirit was fervent within me.

17. And there verily one night I heard in my sleep a voice saying to me, "Thou fastest to good purpose, thou who art soon to go to thy fatherland. " And again, after a very short time, I heard the answer [of God] saying to me, "Lo, thy ship is ready." And it was not near at hand, but was perhaps two hundred miles. And I had never been there, nor did I know anyone there. And thereupon I shortly took to flight, and left the man with whom I had been for six years, and I came in the strength of God who prospered my ways for good, and I met with nothing to alarm me until I reached that ship.

18. And on the very day that I arrived, the ship left its moorings, and I said that I had to [or must] sail thence with them; but the shipmaster was annoyed and replied roughly and angrily, "On no account seek to go with us."

When I heard this, I parted from them to go to the hut where I was lodging, and on the way I began to pray, and before I had finished my prayer, I heard one of them shouting loudly after me, "Come quickly, for these men are calling thee;" and straightway I returned to them.

And they began to say to me, "Come, for we receive thee in good faith; make friends with us in any way thou desirest." and so on that day I refused to be intimate with them, because of the fear of God; but nevertheless I hoped that some of them would come into the faith of Jesus Christ, for they were heathen; and on this account I continued with them; and forthwith we set sail.

19. And after three days we reached land, and journeyed for twenty-eight days through a desert; and food failed them, and hunger overcame them. And one day the shipmaster began to say to me, "How is this, O Christian? thou sayest that thy God is great and almighty; wherefore then canst thou not pray for us, for we are in danger of starvation? Hardly shall we ever see a human being again."

Then said I plainly to them, "Turn in good faith and with all your heart to the Lord my God, to whom nothing is impossible, that this day he may send you food in your journey until ye be satisfied, for he has abundance everywhere,"

And, by the help of God, so it came to pass. Lo, a herd of swine appeared in the way before our eyes, and they killed many of them; and in that place they remained two nights; and they were well refreshed, and their dogs were sated, for many of them had fainted and were left half dead by the way.



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And after this they rendered hearty thanks to God, and I became honourable in their eyes; and from that day on they had food in abundance. Moreover, they found wild honey, and gave me a piece of it. And one of them said, "This is offered in sacrifice." Thanks be to God, I tasted none of it.

20. Now on that same night, when I was sleeping, Satan tempted me mightily in such sort as I shall remember as long as I am in this body. And there fell upon me as it were a huge rock, and I had no power over my limbs. But whence did it occur to me - to my ignorant mind - to call upon Helias? And on this I saw the sun rise in the heaven, and while I was shouting 'Helias' with all my might. Lo, the splendour of that sun fell upon me, and straightway shook all weight from off me. And I believe I was helped by Christ my Lord, and that his Spirit was even then calling aloud on my behalf. And I trust that it will be so in the day of my trouble, as he saith in the Gospel, In that day, the Lord testifieth, it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

HIS CALL TO IRELAND

21. And, again, after many years, I went into captivity once more. And so on that first night I remained with them. Now I heard the answer of God saying to me, "For two months thou shalt be with them." And so it came to pass. On the sixtieth night after, the Lord delivered me out of their hands.

22. Moreover, he provided for us on our journey food and fire and dry quarters every day, until on the fourteenth day we reached human habitations. As I stated above, for twenty-eight days we journeyed through a desert; and on the night on which we reached human habitations, we had in truth no food left.

23. And again, after a few years, I was in Britain with my kindred, who received me as a son, and in good faith besought me that at all events now, after the great tribulations which I had undergone, I would not depart from them anywhither.

And there verily I saw in the night visions a man whose name was Victoricus coming as it were from Ireland with countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of the letter, which was entitled, "The Voice of the Irish"; and while I was reading aloud the beginning of the letter, I thought that at that very moment I heard the voice of them who lived beside the wood of Foclut which is nigh unto the western sea. And thus they cried, as with one mouth, "We beseech thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more."

And I was exceedingly broken in heart, and could read no further. And so I awoke. Thanks be to God that after very many years the Lord granted to them according to their cry.

24. And another night, whether within me or beside me, I cannot tell, God knoweth, in most admirable words which I heard and could not understand, except at the end of the prayer he thus affirmed, "He who laid down his life for thee, he it is who speaketh to thee." And so I awoke, rejoicing.

25. And another time I saw him praying with me, and I was as it were within my body; and I heard [One praying] over me, that is, over the inner man, and there he was praying mightily with groanings. And meanwhile I was astonished, and was marvelling and thinking who it could be that was praying within me; but at the end of the prayer he affirmed that he was the spirit. And so I awoke, and I remembered how the apostle saith, The Spirit helpeth the infirmities of our prayer, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be ut-



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tered which cannot be expressed in words. And again, The Lord our Advocate maketh intercession for us.

SLANDERED AND ATTACKED

26. And when I was tempted by not a few of my elders, who came and [urged] my sins against my laborious episcopate - certainly on that day I was sore thrust at that I might fall both here and in eternity. But the Lord graciously spared the stranger and sojourner for his name's sake; and he helped me exceedingly when I was thus trampled upon, so that I did not come badly into disgrace and reproach. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge as sin.

27. After the lapse of thirty years they found, as an occasion against me, a matter which I had confessed before I was a deacon. Because of anxiety, with sorrowful mind, I disclosed to my dearest friend things that I had done in my youth one day, nay, in one hour, because I had not yet overcome. I cannot tell, God knoweth, if I was then fifteen years old; and I did not believe in the living God, nor had I since my infancy; but I remained in death and in unbelief until I had been chastened exceedingly, and humbled in truth by hunger and nakedness, and that daily.

28. Contrariwise, I did not proceed to Ireland of my own accord until I was nearly worn out. But this was rather well for me, because thus I was amended by the Lord. And he fitted me, so that I should today be something which was once far from me, that I should care for or be busy about, the salvation of others, whereas then I did not even think about myself.

29. And so on that day on which I was disapproved of by the aforesaid persons whom I have mentioned, in that night I saw in the night visions: - There was a writing void of honour against my face. And meanwhile I heard the answer of God saying to me, "We have seen with anger the face of the person designated (the name being expressed)." Nor did he say thus, "Thou hast seen with anger," but, "We have seen with anger," as if in that matter he had joined himself (with me). As he said, He that toucheth you is as he that toucheth the apple of mine eye.

30. Therefore I thank him who hast enabled me in all things, because he did not hinder me from the journey on which I had resolved, and from my labour which I had learnt from Christ my Lord; but rather I felt in myself no little virtue proceeding from him, and my faith has been approved in the sight of God and men.

31. Wherefore then I say boldly that my conscience does not blame me either here or hereafter. God is my witness that I have not lied in the matter that I have stated to you.

32. But rather I am grieved for my dearest friend that we should have deserved to hear such an answer as that; a man to whom I had even entrusted my soul! And I ascertained from not a few of the brethren before that contention - it was at a time when I was not present, nor was I in Britain, nor will the story originate with me - that he too had fought for me in my absence. Even he himself had said to me with his own lips, "Lo, thou art to be raised to the rank of bishop;" of which I was not worthy. But how did it occur to him afterwards to put me to shame publicly before everyone, good and bad, in respect of an (office) which before that he had of his own accord and gladly conceded (to me), and the Lord too, who is greater than all?



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THE HEATHEN IRISH HEAR THE GOSPEL

33. I have said enough. Nevertheless I ought not to hide the gift of God which he bestowed upon us in the land of my captivity; because then I earnestly sought him, and there I found him, and he kept me from all iniquities - this is my belief - because of his indwelling Spirit who hath worked in me until this day. Boldly again [am I speaking]. But God knoweth if man had said this to me - perchance I would have held my peace for the love of Christ.

34. Hence therefore, I render unwearied thanks to my God who kept me faithful in the day of my temptation, so that to-day I can confidently offer to him a sacrifice, as a living victim, my soul to Christ my Lord who saved me out of all my troubles, so that I may say, Who am I, O Lord, or what is my calling, that thou hast worked together with me with such divine power? so that to-day among the heathen I should steadfastly exult, and magnify thy name wherever I may be; and that not only in prosperity, but also in troubles, so that whatever may happen to me, whether good or bad, I ought to receive it with an equal mind, and ever render thanks to God who shewed me that I might trust him endlessly, as one that cannot be doubted; and who heard me, so that I, ignorant as I am, and in the last days, should be bold to undertake this work so holy and so wonderful; so that I might imitate, in some degree, those of whom the Lord long ago foretold when foreshowing that his Gospel would be for a witness unto all nations before the end of the world. And accordingly, as we see, this has been so fulfilled. Behold, we are witnesses that the gospel has been preached to the limit beyond which no man dwells.

35. Now it were a tedious task to declare particularly the whole of my toil, or even partially [or, and in all its parts]. I shall briefly say in what manner the most righteous God often delivered me from slavery and from twelve perils whereby my soul was endangered, besides many plots and things which I am not able to express in words. Nor shall I weary my readers. But I have as my voucher God who knoweth all things even before they come to pass, as the answer of God frequently warned me, the poor, unlearned orphan.

36. Whence came to me this wisdom, which was not in me, I who neither knew the number of my days, nor cared for God? Whence afterwards came to me that gift so great, so salutary, the knowledge and love of God, but only that I might part with fatherland and kindred?

37. And many gifts were proffered me with weeping and tears. And I displeased them, and also, against my wish, not a few of my elders; but, God being my guide, in no way did I consent or yield to them. It was not any grace in me, but God who overcometh in me: and he withstood them all, so that I came to the heathen Irish to preach the Gospel, and to endure insults from unbelievers, so as to hear my reproach of my going abroad, and [endure] many persecutions even unto bonds, and that I should give up my free condition for the profit of others. And if I should be worthy, I am ready [to give] even my life for his name's sake unhesitatingly and very gladly; and there I desire to spend it even unto death, if the Lord would grant it to me.

TURNING FROM IDOLS

38. Because I am a debtor exceedingly to God, who granted me such great grace that many peoples through me should be regenerated to God and afterwards confirmed, and



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that clergy should everywhere be ordained for them, for a people newly come to belief, which the Lord took from the ends of the earth, as he had in times past promised through his prophets: The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, As our fathers have got for themselves false idols and there is no profit in them. And again, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

39. And there I wish to wait for his promise who verily never disappoints. As he promises in the Gospel, they shall come from the east and west and from the south and from the north, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; as we believe that believers will come from all parts of the world.

40. For that reason therefore, we ought to fish well and diligently, as the Lord forewarns and teaches, saying, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And again, he saith through the prophets, Behold I send fishers and many hunters, saith God, and so forth.

Wherefore then, it was exceeding necessary that we should spread our nets so that a great multitude and a throng should be taken for God, and that everywhere there should be clergy to baptize and exhort a people poor and needy, as the Lord in the Gospel warns and teaches, saying, Go ye therefore now and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. And again he saith, Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And again, This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come.

And in like manner the Lord, foreshowing by the prophet, saith, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And Osee saith, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her one that hath obtained mercy which had not obtained mercy. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

41. Wherefore then in Ireland they who never had the knowledge of God, but until now only worshipped idols and abominations - how has there been lately prepared a people of the Lord, and they are called children of God? Sons and daughters of Scottic chieftains are seen to become monks and virgins of Christ.

42. In especial there was one blessed lady of Scottic birth, of noble rank, most beautiful, grown up, whom I baptized; and after a few days she came to us for a certain cause. She disclosed to us that she had been warned by an angel of God, and that he counselled her to become a virgin of Christ, and live closer to God. Thanks be to God, six days after, most admirably and eagerly she seized on that which all virgins of God do in like manner; not with the consent of their fathers; but they endure persecution and lying reproaches from their kindred; and nevertheless their number increases more and more - and as for those of our race who are born there, we know not the number of them - besides widows and continent persons.

But the women who are kept in slavery suffer especially; they constantly endure even unto



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terrors and threats. But the Lord gave grace to many of his handmaidens, for although they are forbidden, they earnestly follow the example [set them].

DANGER AMONG HOSTILE PEOPLE

43. Wherefore then, even if I should wish to part with them, thus proceeding to Britain - and glad and ready I was to do so - as to my fatherland and kindred, and not that only, but to go as far as Gaul in order to visit the brethren and to behold the face of the saints of my Lord - God knoweth that I used to desire it exceedingly - yet I am bound in the Spirit, who witnesseth to me that if I should do this, he would note me as guilty; and I fear to lose the labour which I began, and yet not I, but Christ the Lord who commanded me to come and be with them for the remainder of my life, if the Lord will, and if he should keep me from every evil way, so that I may not sin in his sight.

44. Now I hope that I ought to do this; but I do not trust myself as long as I am in the body of this death, because he is strong who daily endeavours to turn me away from the faith, and from that chastity of unfeigned religion which I have purposed to keep to the end of my life for Christ my Lord. But the flesh, the enemy, is ever dragging us unto death, that is, to enticements to do that which is forbidden. And I know in part wherein I have not led a perfect life as have other believers; but I do confess to my Lord, and I do not blush in his presence, for I lie not. From the time that I knew him, from my youth, there grew in me the love of God and the fear of him; and unto this hour, the Lord being gracious to me, I have kept the faith.

45. Let who will laugh and insult, I shall not be silent nor conceal the signs and wonders which were shewn to me by the Lord many years before they came to pass; since he knoweth all things even before the world began.

46. Wherefore then I ought without ceasing to render thanks to God who oftentimes pardoned my folly and carelessness - and that not in one place only - so that he be not exceeding wroth with me, to whom I have been given as a fellow-labourer; and yet I did not quickly yield in accordance with what had been shewn to me, and as the Spirit brought to my remembrance. And the Lord shewed mercy upon me thousands of times, because he saw in me that I was ready, but that I did not know through these [revelations] what I should do about my position, because many were forbidding this embassy. Moreover they used to talk amongst themselves behind my back and say, "Why does this fellow thrust himself into danger amongst hostile people who know not God?" They did not say this out of malice; but it did not seem meet in their eyes, on account of my clownishness, as I myself witness that I have understood. And I did not quickly recognise the grace that was then in me. Now that seems meet in mine eyes which I ought to have done before.

47. Now therefore, I have frankly disclosed to my brethren and fellow-servants who have believed me, for what reason I told you before, and foretell you to strengthen and confirm your faith. Would that you, too, would imitate greater things, and do things of more consequence. This will be my glory, for a wise son is the glory of his father.

48. You know, and God also, in what manner I have lived from my youth with you, in the faith of truth and in sincerity of heart. Moreover as regards those heathen amongst whom I dwell, I have kept faith with them, and will keep it. God knoweth I have defrauded none of them, nor do I think of doing it, for the sake of God and his Church, lest I should raise persecution against them and all of us, and lest through me the name of the Lord should be



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blasphemed; for it is written, Woe to the man through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed.

49. But though I be rude in all things, nevertheless I have endeavoured in some sort to keep myself, both for the Christian brethren, and the virgins of Christ, and the devout women who used of their own accord to present me with their little gifts, and would cast off their ornaments upon the altar; and I returned them again to them. And they were scandalized at my doing so. But I did it on account of the hope of immortality, so as to keep myself warily in all things; for this reason, namely, that the heathen might receive me and the ministry of my service on any grounds, and that I should not, even in the smallest matter, give occasion to the unbelievers to defame or disparage.

50. Perchance then, when I baptized so many thousands of men, I hoped from any one of them even as much as the half of a scruple. Tell me and I shall restore it to you. Or when the Lord ordained clergy everywhere by means of my mediocrity, and I imparted my service to them for nothing, if I demanded from one of them even the price of my shoe; tell it against me and I shall restore you more.

51. I spent for you that they might receive me; and both amongst you and wherever I journeyed for your sake, through many perils, even to outlying regions beyond which no man dwelt, and where never had anyone come to baptize, or ordain clergy, or confirm the people. I have, by the bounty of the Lord, initiated everything, carefully and very gladly, for your salvation.

52. On occasion, I used to give presents to the kings, besides the hire that I gave to their sons who accompany me; and nevertheless they seized me with my companions. And on that day they most eagerly desired to kill me, but my time had not yet come. And everything they found with us they plundered, and me myself they bound with irons. And on the fourteenth day the Lord delivered me from their power, and whatever was ours was restored to us for the sake of God and the near friends whom we had provided beforehand.

The Conclusion of his story

53. Moreover, ye know by proof how much I paid to those who were judges throughout all the districts which I more frequently visited; for I reckon that I distributed to them not less than the price of fifteen men, so that ye might enjoy me, and I might ever enjoy you in God. I do not regret it, nor is it enough for me. Still I spend and will spend more. The Lord is mighty to grant to me afterwards to be myself spent for your souls.

54. Behold, I call God for a record upon my soul that I lie not; nor would I write to you that there may be an occasion for flattering words or covetousness, nor that I hope for honour from any of you. Sufficient to me is the honour which is not seen as yet, but is believed on in the heart. And faithful is he that promised; never does he lie.

55. But I see that already in this present world I am exalted above measure by the Lord. And I was not worthy nor such an one as that he should grant this to me; since I know most surely that poverty and affliction become me better than delights and riches. But Christ the Lord, too, was poor for our sakes; I indeed am wretched and unfortunate, and though I should wish for wealth, now I have it not, nor do I judge mine own self; for daily I expect either slaughter, or to be defrauded, or reduced to slavery, or an unfair attack of some kind. But none of these things move me, on account of the promises of heaven, because I have cast myself into the hands of God Almighty, for he rules everywhere, as saith



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the prophet, Cast thy care upon God, and he shall sustain thee.

56. Behold now I commit the keeping of my soul to my most faithful God, for whom I am an ambassador in my ignoble state, only because he accepteth no man's person and chose me for this duty that I should be one of his least ministers.

57. Wherefore then, I shall render unto him for all his benefits towards me. But what shall I say, or what shall I promise to my Lord? For I am only worth what he himself has given to me. But he trieth the hearts and reins, [and knoweth] that enough, and more than enough, do I desire, and was ready, that he should grant me to drink of his cup, as he granted to others also who love him.

58. On which account let it not happen to me from my God that I should ever part with his people which he purchased in the ends of the earth. I pray God to give me perseverance, and to vouchsafe that I bear to him faithful witness, until my passing hence, for the sake of my God.

59. And if I ever imitated anything good for the sake of my God whom I love, I pray him to grant to me that I may shed my blood with those strangers and captives for his name's sake, even though I should lack burial itself, or that in most wretched fashion my corpse be divided limb by limb to dogs and wild beasts, or that the fowls of the air eat it. Most surely I deem that if this should happen to me, I have gained my soul as well as my body, because without any doubt we shall rise on that day in the clear shining of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of the living God and joint heirs with Christ, and conformed to his image that will be, since of him and through him and in him we shall reign.

60. For that sun which we behold, by the command of God rises daily for our sakes; but it will never reign, nor will its splendour endure; but all those who worship it shall - wretched men - come badly to punishment. We, on the other hand, who believe in and worship the true sun, Christ - who will never perish, nor will anyone who doeth his will; but he will abide for ever, as Christ will abide for ever, who reigneth with God the Father Almighty and with the Holy Spirit, before the worlds, and now, for ever and ever. Amen.

61. Lo, again and again I shall briefly set forth the words of my confession: I testify in truth and in exultation of heart before God and his holy angels, that I never had any cause except the Gospel and his promises for ever returning to that nation from whence previously I scarcely escaped.

62. But I pray those who believe in and fear God, whosoever shall have vouchsafed to look upon and receive this writing which Patrick the sinner, unlearned verily, composed in Ireland, that no one ever say it was my ignorance that did whatever trifling matter I did, or proved, in accordance with God's good pleasure; but judge ye, and let it be most truly believed that it was the gift of God. And this is my confession before I die.