

TRUTH TRIUMPHANT: CHAPTER 7

Patrick, Organizer of the Church in the Wilderness in Ireland

From all that can be learned of him (Patrick), there never was a nobler Christian missionary.... He went to Ireland from love to Christ, and love to the souls of men.... Strange that a people who owed Rome nothing in connection with their conversion to Christ, and who long struggled against her pretensions, should be now ranked among her most devoted adherents. 1

THE heroic figure of Patrick, taken captive as a boy into slavery, stands out as a creator of civilization. He was not only an architect of European society and the father of Irish Christianity, but he raised up a standard against spiritual wolves entering the fold in sheep's clothing. So much legend and fiction has been written about him that one is almost led to believe that there were two individuals - the real Patrick and the fictitious Patrick. The statement may come as a surprise to many, yet it is a fact that the actual Patrick belonged to the Church in the Wilderness. He should not be placed where certain historians seem determined to assign him. The facts presented in the following pages will no doubt be a revelation to many who, misled by wrong representations, have not realized of what church Patrick was a child and an apostle. As will be shown later, he was of that early church which was brought to Ireland from Syria. 2 He was in no way connected with the type of Christianity which developed in Italy and which was ever at war with the church organized by Patrick.

Patrick belongs to the Celtic race, of which the Britons of England, as well as the Scotch and Irish, are a part. The vivacity of the Celtic temperament is equaled by noble courage under danger and by a deep love for learning. The Celts, like the Germans, possess a profound religious fervor which makes them devoted to the faith of their choice. This race once extended all the way from Scythia to Ireland. 3 The Celts are descended from Gomer, the grandson of Noah, from whom they obtained through the centuries the name of the Cimmerians. In fact, the Welsh today call themselves Cymry.

Three countries, Britain, Ireland, and France, are claimed by different writers to be the fatherland of Patrick. The weight of evidence plainly indicates that his birthplace was in that kingdom of Strathclyde, inhabited and controlled by the ancient Britons, which lay immediately northwest of England. 4 Rome had divided the island into five provinces, and, in addition, recognized the Strathclyde kingdom. It was then customary to speak of these divisions as "the Britains." To ten of the superior cities of these Britains, the Roman senate had extended the right of citizenship. 5 As his parents resided in one of these ten cities, Patrick in all probability, like Paul, was born a Roman citizen. He was born about A.D. 360. 6

Fortunately, two of Patrick's writings, his *Confession* and the *Letter* against Coroticus, a near-by British king, survive and may be found readily. In the *Letter* Patrick tells how he surrendered his high privileges to become a slave for Christ. Of his faith and his dedication to God, he says:

I was a free man according to the flesh. I was born of a father who was a decurion. For I sold my nobility for the good of others, and I do not blush or grieve about it. Finally, I am a servant in Christ delivered to a foreign nation on account of the unspeakable glory of an everlasting life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Of the two writings, namely, the *Confession*, and the *Letter*, Sir William Betham writes:

In them will be found no arrogant presumption, no spiritual pride, no pretension to superior sanctity, no maledictions of magi, or rivers, because his followers were drowned in them, no veneration for, or adoration of, relics, no consecrated staffs, or donations of his teeth for relics, which occur so frequently in the lives and also in the collections of Tirechan, referring to Palladius, not to Patrick. 7

At the age of sixteen, Patrick was carried captive to Ireland by freebooters who evidently had sailed up the Clyde River or landed on the near-by coast. Of this he writes in this *Confession*:

I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible to great numbers, had Calpurnius for my father, a deacon, son of the late Potitus, the presbyter, who dwelt in the village of Banavan, Tiberniae, for he had a small farm at hand with the place where I was captured. I was then almost sixteen years of age. I did not know the true God; and was taken to Ireland in captivity with many thousand men in accordance with our deserts, because we walked at a distance from God and did not observe His commandments.

It can be noticed in this statement that the grandfather of Patrick was a presbyter, which indicated that he held an office in the church equal to that of bishop in the papal meaning of the term. This is one of the many proofs that celibacy was not an obligation among the early British clergy. Patrick's father was a deacon in the church, a town counselor, a farmer, and a husband. To the glory of God, it came to pass that, during his seven years of slavery in Ireland, Patrick acquired the Irish form of the Celtic language. This was of great value, because the fierce fighting disposition of the pagan Irish, at that time was a barrier to the Romans' or Britons' attempting missionary work across the channel on a large scale. However, many of those previously carried off into captivity must have been Christians who engaged themselves so earnestly in converting their captors that considerable Christianity was found in Ireland when, after his escape, Patrick dared to return to evangelize the island.

It will be further noted in the quotation above that he was taken into "captivity with many thousand men." The seagoing craft used in those days along the coasts of Ireland, called "coracles," were small vessels made by covering a wicker frame with hide or leather. The problem involved in transporting many thousands of captives by means of such small boats indicates that the raid must have been made on a near-by coast, which is further testimony that his fatherland was "the Britains."

Patrick, like his Master of Galilee, was to learn obedience through suffering. A great task awaited him. The apostolic church had won a comparatively easy victory in her struggle with a pagan world for three centuries. But an almost impossible task awaited her when a compromising Christianity, enforcing its doctrines at the point of the sword, had become the state religion of the Roman Empire. It was an hour when a new line of leaders was needed. As the struggle of free churches to live their lives without the domination of a state clergy began, God was training Patrick.

While considering the early life of this Christian leader, it is most interesting to note what was happening in contemporary history. Vigilantius was doing his work in southern France and in northern Italy, or among the Latin peoples. Shortly before Patrick's time the empire at Constantinople had been under the rule of Constantine II, who recoiled from accepting the extreme views on the Godhead, which had won the vote under his father, Constantine the Great, in the first Council of Nicaea. As will be related later, similar opposition to those extreme views prevailed all over Europe. Patrick's belief was that of the opposition. Dr. Stokes writes: "The British churches of the fourth century took the keenest interest in church controversies. They opposed Arianism, but hesitated, like

many others, about the use of the word 'homoousion.'"⁹ (This word means "identity of substance.") Thus Celtic Christianity in the years of Patrick refused to accept this test term and the conclusions to which the radical speculations were leading.

It is remarkable that in the time of Patrick, as later testimony from Alphonse Mingana will point out, there were large groups of Christians stretching all the way from the Euphrates to northwestern India. Furthermore, in 411, when Patrick was at the height of his work, the recognized head over the Church of the East at Seleucia, Persia, consecrated a metropolitan administrator for China who must have had many provincial directors under him. This indicates many Christian churches in China in that age. Ambrose reported in 396 that Musaeus, an Abyssinian church leader, had "traveled almost everywhere in the country of the Seres." Seres was the name for the Chinese. ¹⁰ Truly, the age in which Patrick labored saw stirring scenes throughout the world.

Both Isaac, supreme director, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, author and theologian, were powerful leaders in the great Church of the East during the period of Patrick's ministry. The influence of the writings of Theodore in molding Oriental Christianity for centuries and his signal work in refuting the doctrines of Mithraism in the East, while Patrick was winning his victories in the West, is of importance.

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Christianity in Ireland Before Patrick

Celtic Christianity embraced more than Irish and British Christianity. There was a Gallic (French) Celtic Christianity and a Galatian Celtic Christianity, as well as a British Celtic Christianity. So great were the migrations of peoples in ancient times that not only the Greeks, but also the Assyrians settled in large numbers in the land now called France. Thus for almost a thousand years after Christ there was in southern France a strong Greek and Oriental population. As late as 600, there were people in France who spoke the language of Assyria. ¹²

Surely no one could claim that that branch of Celtic Christianity in Asia Minor, whose churches arose as the result of the labors of the apostle Paul, received their gospel from the bishop of Rome. On the other hand, it is evident that Gaul received her knowledge of the gospel from missionaries who traveled from Asia Minor. It was the Celtic, or Galatian type of the New Testament church which evangelized Great Britain. ¹³ Thus Thomas Yeates writes:

A large number of this Keltic community (Lyons, A.D. 177) - colonists from Asia Minor - who escaped, migrated to Ireland (Erin) and laid the foundations of the pre-Patrick church. ¹⁴

The Roman Catholic Church throughout the centuries was able to secure a large following in France; but until after the French Revolution she never succeeded in eliminating the spirit of independence in the French hierarchy. This is due largely to the background of the Celtic race. As H. J. Warner writes:

Such an independence France had constantly shown, and it may be traced not only to the racial antipathy between Gaul and Pelagian, but to the fact that western Gaul had never lost touch with its eastern kin. ¹⁵

Patrick's Work in Ireland

Two centuries elapsed after Patrick's death before any writer attempted to connect Patrick's work with a papal commission. No pope ever mentioned him, neither is there anything in the ecclesiastical

records of Rome concerning him. Nevertheless, by examining the two writings which he left, historical statements are found which locate quite definitely the period in which he labored.

When Patrick speaks of the island from which he was carried captive, he calls it "the Britains." This was the title given the island by the Romans many years before they left it. After the Goths sacked the city of Rome in 410, the imperial legions were recalled from England in order to protect territory nearer home. Upon their departure, savage invaders from the north and from the Continent, sweeping in upon the island, devastated it and erased its diversified features, so that it could no longer be called "the Britains." Following the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410, the title "the Britains" ceased to be used. Therefore from this evidence it would seem logical to reach the conclusion that Patrick wrote his letters and documents before that date.

This date agrees with the time when Columba, the renowned graduate of Patrick's school who brought Christianity to Scotland, began his ministry. Columba graduated when the schools founded by Patrick had grown to sizable proportions. The time which elapsed between the founding of the schools by Patrick and their growth in the days of Columba would indicate that Patrick began his ministry in Ireland about 390.

What Patrick did between the time of his escape from slavery in Ireland and his return as a missionary to that land is not known. Every effort has been made by pro-papal writers to place him in this interval, at Rome. On one such fictitious visit it is said that Patrick with the help of an angel performed the questionable feat of stealing many relics from the pope among which was supposed to have been the bloodstained towel of our Savior and some hair from the Virgin Mary. One writer exclaims: "O wondrous deed! O rare theft of a vast treasure of holy things, committed without sacrilege, the plunder of the most holy place in the world!" 16

The words of Patrick himself reveal his unrest of soul after his escape from slavery until he submitted to the call of God to proclaim the news of salvation to the Irish. He had continually heard voices from the woods of Hibernia, begging him, as did the man in the night vision of Paul, "Come over...and help us." Neither the tears of his parents nor the reasonings of his friends could restrain him. He determined, whatever the cost, to turn his back upon the allurements of home and friends and to give his life for the Emerald Isle.

His Authority - The Bible

Patrick preached the Bible. He appealed to it as the sole authority for founding the Irish Church. He gave credit to no other worldly authority; he recited no creed. Several official creeds of the church at Rome had by that time been ratified and commanded, but Patrick mentions none. In his *Confession* he makes a brief statement of his beliefs, but he does not refer to any church council or creed as authority. The training centers he founded, which later grew into colleges and large universities, were all Bible schools. Famous students of these schools - Columba, who brought Scotland to Christ, Aidan, who won pagan England to the gospel, and Columbanus with his successors, who brought Christianity to Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy - took the Bible as their only authority, and founded renowned Bible training centers for the Christian believers. One authority, describing the handwritten Bibles produced at these schools, says, "In delicacy of handling and minute but faultless execution, the whole range of paleography offers nothing comparable to these early Irish manuscripts." 17

In the closing words of his *Letter*, Patrick writes: "I testify before God and His angels that it shall be so as He has intimated to my ignorance. These are not my words, but (the words) of God, and of the apostles and prophets, which I have written in Latin, who have never lied."

Patrick, like his example, Jesus, put the words of Scripture above the teachings of men. He differed from the Papacy, which puts church tradition above the Bible. In his writings he nowhere appeals to the church at Rome for the authorization of his mission. Whenever he speaks in defense of his mission, he refers to God alone, and declares that he received his call direct from heaven. Sir William Betham states that the more recent Latin version of Jerome was not publicly read in Patrick's day. Evidently the earlier Latin version of the Bible, known as the *Itala*, was publicly used. It is interesting to note that it was approximately nine hundred years before Jerome's *Vulgate* could make headway in the West against the *Itala*. 18

Wherever this Christian leader sowed, he also reaped. Ireland was set on fire for God by the fervor of Patrick's missionary spirit. Leaving England again with a few companions, according to the record in the *Book of Armagh*, he landed at Wicklow Head on the southeastern coast of Ireland. Legendary and fabulous is *The Tripartite Life of Patrick*. It cannot be credited, yet doubtless it was built around certain facts of his life. At least from these records can be traced his steps for a quarter of a century through the isle.

Patrick believed that Christianity should be founded with the home and the family as its strength. Too often the Christian organizations of that age were centered in celibacy. This was not true of the Irish Church and its Celtic daughters in Great Britain, Scotland, and on the Continent. The Celtic Church, as organized and developed under Patrick, permitted its clergy to marry.¹⁹

The absence of celibacy in the Celtic Church gives added proof to the fact that the believers had no connection with the church at Rome. Thus Dr. J. H. Todd writes: "He [Patrick] says nothing of Rome, or of having been commissioned by Pope Celestine. He attributed his Irish apostleship altogether to an inward call, which he regarded as a divine command." 20

One of the strongest proofs that Patrick did not belong to papal Christianity is found in the historical fact that for centuries Rome made every effort to destroy the church Patrick had founded. Jules Michelet writes of Boniface, who was the pope's apostle to the Germans about two hundred years after Patrick: "His chief hatred is to the Scots [the name equally given to the Scotch and Irish], and he especially condemns their allowing priests to marry." 21

Patrick sought two goals in his effort to make truth triumphant. First, he sought the conversion of those among whom he had been a slave, and, secondly, he longed to capture Tara, the central capital of Ireland, for Christ. Therefore he proceeded immediately to County Antrim in the northwest, where he had endured slavery. While he failed to win his former slave master, he was successful in converting the master's household. This threw open a door to further missionary labors not only to this region but also across the adjacent waters into near-by Scotland.

History loves to linger upon the legend of Patrick's attack on Tara, the central capital. The Irish, like other branches of the Celtic race, had local chieftains who were practically independent. They also had, by their own election, an overlord, who might be referred to as a king and who could summon all the people when needed for the defense of the nation. For many years Tara had been the renowned capital of Ireland to which were called the Irish chieftains to conduct the general affairs of the realm.

These conventions were given over not only to business, but also to festivals emblazoned with bright scenes and stirring events. As Thomas Moore wrote:

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled. -
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er;
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more. 22

It was at the time of one of these assemblies, so the story goes, that Patrick personally appeared to proclaim the message of Christ. The event is so surrounded by legends, many of them too fabulous to be considered, that many details cannot be presented as facts. His success did not come up to his expectations, however; but by faithful efforts he placed the banner of Christianity in the political center of the national life.

He did not enter the capital because he felt that God's work needed the help of the state. Patrick rejected the union of church and state. More than one hundred years had passed since the first world council at Nicaea had united the church with the empire. Patrick rejected this model. He followed the lesson taught in John's Gospel when Christ refused to be made a king. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36.) Not only the Irish apostle but his famous successors, Columba in Scotland, and Columbanus on the Continent, ignored the supremacy of the papal pontiff. They never would have agreed to making the pope a king. Although the Roman Empire after the fourth century had favored that supremacy, there was still great discontent throughout Europe against this encroachment of civil power into the church.

While Patrick was laboring in Ireland, the bishop of north Africa in 418 had excommunicated Apiarius, a clergyman, for grave offenses. The offender appealed to the pope, who acquitted him over the heads of his superiors. The bishops retaliated by assembling in council and passing a protest forbidding an appeal of lower clergy against their bishops to an authority beyond the sea. The pope replied with resolutions which he claimed had been passed by the Council of Nicaea. Their illegality was exposed by the African prelates. 23

Yet it must not be thought, as some writers antagonistic to the Celtic Church claim, that Patrick and his successors lacked church organization. Dr. Benedict Fitzpatrick, a Catholic scholar, resents any such position. He adduces satisfactory proof to show that the Irish founders of Celtic Christianity created a splendid organization. 24

The Fictitious Patrick

Many miracles have been ascribed to Patrick by the traditional stories which grew up. Two or three will suffice to show the difference between the miraculous hero of the fanatical fiction and the real Patrick. The Celtic Patrick reached Ireland in an ordinary way. The fictitious Patrick, in order to provide passage for a leper when there was no place on the boat, threw his portable stone altar into the sea. The stone did not go to the bottom, nor was it outdistanced by the boat, but it floated around the boat with the leper on it until it reached Ireland. 25

In order to connect this great man with the papal see, it was related: "Sleep came over the inhabitants of Rome, so that Patrick brought away as much as he wanted of the relics. Afterward those relics were taken to Armagh by the counsel of God and the counsel of the men of Ireland. What was brought then was three hundred and threescore and five relics, together with the relics of Paul and Peter and Lawrence and Stephen, and many others. And a sheet was there with Christ's blood [thereon] and with the hair of Mary the Virgin. 26 But Dr. Killen refutes this story by declaring:

He (Patrick) never mentions either Rome or the pope or hints that he was in any way connected with the ecclesiastical capital of Italy. He recognizes no other authority but that of the word of God. .. When Palladius arrived in the country, it was not to be expected that he would receive a very hearty welcome from the Irish apostle. If he was sent by [Pope] Celestine to the native Christians to be their primate or archbishop, no wonder that stout-hearted Patrick refused to bow his neck to any such yoke of bondage. 27

About two hundred years after Patrick, papal authors began to tell of a certain Palladius, who was sent in 430 by this same Pope Celestine as a bishop to the Irish. They all admit, however, that he stayed only a short time in Ireland and was compelled to withdraw because of the disrespect which was shown him.

One more of the many legendary miracles which sprang from the credulity and tradition of Rome is here repeated. "He went to Rome to have [ecclesiastical] orders given him; and Caelestinus, abbot of Rome, he it is that read orders over him, Gemanus and Amatho, king of the Romans, being present with them. .. And when the orders were a reading out, the three choirs mutually responded, namely the choir of the household of heaven, and the choir of the Romans, and the choir of the children from the wood of Fochlad. This is what all sang: 'All we Irish beseech thee, holy Patrick, to come and walk among us and to free us.'" 28 It is doubtful whether the choirs in heaven would accept this representation that they were Irish.

War on the Celtic Church

The growing coldness between the Celtic and the Roman Churches as noted in the foregoing paragraphs did not originate in a hostile attitude of mind in the Celtic clergy. It arose because they considered that the Papacy was moving farther and farther away from the apostolic system of the New Testament. No pope ever passed on to the leading bishops of the church the news of the great transformation from heathenism to Christianity wrought by Patrick. This they certainly would have done, as was done in other cases, had he been an agent of the Roman pontiff.

One is struck by the absence of any reference to Patrick in the *Ecclesiastical History of England* written by that fervent follower of the Vatican, the Englishman Bede, who lived about two hundred years after the death of the apostle to Ireland. That history remains today the well from which many draw who would write on Anglo-Saxon England. Bede had access to the archives of Rome. He was well acquainted with the renowned Celtic missionaries who were the products of the schools of Patrick. He also emphasizes the profound differences between the Celtic and Roman Churches which brought about bitter controversies between kings and bishops. Though a great collector of facts, Bede makes no reference whatever to Patrick. The reason apparently is that, when this historian wrote, the Papacy had not yet made up its mind to claim Patrick.

When the pope had sent Augustine with his forty monks to convert the heathen Anglo-Saxons, Augustine, with the help of Bertha, the Catholic wife of King Ethelbert of Kent, immediately began war on the Celtic Church of Wales. He demanded submission of the Christian society of nearly three thousand members at Bangor in north Wales. 29 Augustine addressed the president of this society in these words: "Acknowledge the authority of Rome." He promptly received the answer that the pope was not entitled to be called the "Father of fathers" and the only submission that they would render to him, would be that which they owed to every Christian. Augustine threatened them with the sword, and, as will be noted later, twelve hundred of these British Christians were slaughtered by a pagan army. 30

As further evidence of the gulf between the Roman and the Celtic Church, another episode occurred in England in 664 when the Papacy by state force inflicted a severe wound at the well-known Synod of Whitby in northern England. The king of that region had married a Roman Catholic princess, who, with the help of her priestly confessor, laid the trap for the pastors who were graduates from Patrick's schools. The king, wearied with the strife between the two communions, became a tool to the plan. That conference with its unjust decisions drove the leaders of the Celtic Church out of northern England. 31 About fifty years after this, or in 715, the growing influence of the Roman Catholic Church backed by the papal monarchs of Europe, brought about an attack upon Scotland's center of Celtic Christianity at Iona. Founded by Columba and celebrated in song and story, this was attacked, and the clergy of the Irish Church were expelled from the place.

The Character of Patrick

Patrick, while manifesting all the graces of an apostolic character, also possessed the sterner virtues. Like Moses, he was one of the humblest of men. He revealed that steadfastness of purpose required to accomplish a great task. His splendid ability to organize and execute his Christian enterprises revealed his successful ability to lead. He was frank and honest. He drew men to him, and he was surrounded by a band of men whose hearts God had touched. Such a leader was needed to revive the flickering flames of New Testament faith in the West, to raise up old foundations, and to lay the groundwork for a mighty Christian future.

To guide new converts, Patrick ordained overseers or bishops in charge of the local churches. Wherever he went, new churches sprang up, and to strengthen them he also founded schools. These two organizations were so closely united that some writers have mistakenly called them monasteries. The scholarly and missionary groups created by Patrick were very different from those ascetic and celibate centers which the Papacy strove to multiply. 32 According to Sir William Betham, monastic life was considered disgraceful by the Scots and the Goths during the first four centuries of the Christian Era. 33

Among the most famous training colleges which Patrick established were Bangor, Clonmacnoise, Clonard, and Armagh. In Armagh, the most renowned center of Ireland, are located today the palaces of both the Church of England primate and the Roman Catholic primate. Two magnificent cathedrals are there which command attention between them. 34 One is the cathedral for relics of the Church of Rome, the other for the Church of England. Armagh grew from a small school to a college, then to a university. It is said to have had as many as seven thousand students in attendance at one time. As Ireland became famous for its training centers it acquired the name "Land of saints and scholars." 35 In

these schools the Scriptures were diligently read, and ancient books were eagerly collected and studied.

There are historians who see clearly that the Benedictine order of monks was built upon the foundations so wonderfully laid by the Irish system of education. C. W. Bispham raises the question as to why the Benedictine Rule, a gift of one of the sons of the Papacy, was favored by her, and furthermore, she was jealous of the Celtic Church and crowded out the Bangor Rule. 36 Benedict, the founder of the order, despised learning and took no care for it in his order, and his schools never took it up until they were forced to do so about 900, after Charles the Great had set the pace. 37

The marvelous educational system of the Celtic Church, revised and better organized by Patrick, spread successfully over Europe until the Benedictine system, favored by the Papacy and reinforced by the state, robbed the Celtic Church of its renown and sought to destroy all the records of its educational system. 38

The Beliefs and Teachings of Patrick

In the years preceding the birth of Patrick, new and strange doctrines flooded Europe like the billows of the ocean. Gospel truths, stimulating the minds of men, had opened up so many areas of influence that counterfeiting doctrines had been brought in by designing clergy who strove for the crown while shunning the cross. Patrick was obliged to take his stand against these teachings.

The Council of Nicaea, convened in 325 by Emperor Constantine, started the religious controversy which has never ceased. Assembling under the sanction of a united church and state, that famous gathering commanded the submission of believers to new doctrines. During the youth of Patrick and for half a century preceding, forty-five church councils and synods had assembled in various parts of Europe. Of these Samuel Edgar says:

The boasted unity of Romanism was gloriously displayed, by the diversified councils and confessions of the fourth century. Popery, on that as on every other occasion, eclipsed Protestantism in the manufacture of creeds. Forty-five councils, says Jortin, were held in the fourth century. Of these, thirteen were against Arianism, fifteen for that heresy, and seventeen for Semi-Arianism. The roads were crowded with bishops thronging to synods, and the traveling expenses, which were defrayed by the emperor, exhausted the public funds. These exhibitions became the sneer of the heathen, who were amused to behold men, who, from infancy, had been educated in Christianity, and appointed to instruct others in that religion, hastening, in this manner, to distant places and conventions for the purpose of ascertaining their belief. 39

The burning question of the decades succeeding the Council of Nicaea was how to state the relations of the Three Persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The council had decided, and the Papacy had appropriated the decision as its own. The personalities of the Trinity were not confounded, and the substance was not divided. The Roman clergy claimed that Christianity had found in the Greek word *homoousios* (in English, "consubstantiality") an appropriate term to express this relationship. 40

Then the papal party proceeded to call those who would not subscribe to this teaching, Arians, while they took to themselves the title of Trinitarians. An erroneous charge was circulated that all who were called Arians believed that Christ was a created being. 41 This stirred up the indignation of those who were not guilty of the charge.

Patrick was a spectator to many of these conflicting assemblies. It will be interesting, in order to grasp properly his situation, to examine for a moment this word, this term, which has split many a church and has caused many a sincere Christian to be burned at the stake. In English the word is "consubstantial," connoting that more than one person inhabit the same substance without division or separation. The original term in Greek is *homoousios*, from *homos*, meaning "identical," and *ousia*, the word for "being."

However, a great trouble arose, since there are two terms in Greek of historical fame. The first, *homos*, meaning "identical," and the second, *homoios*, meaning "similar" or "like unto," had both of them a stormy history. The spelling of these words is much alike. The difference in meaning, when applied to the Godhead, is bewildering to simplehearted believers. Nevertheless, those who would think in terms of *homoiousian*, or "similar," instead of *homoousian*, or "identical," were promptly labeled as heretics and Arians by the clergy. Yet when the emperor, Constantine, in full assembly of the Council of Nicaea, asked Hosius, the presiding bishop, what the difference was between the two terms, Hosius replied that they were both alike. At this all but a few bishops broke out into laughter and teased the chairman with heresy. 42

As volumes have been written in centuries past upon this problem, it would be out of place to discuss it here. It had, however, such profound effect upon other doctrines relating to the plan of salvation and upon outward acts of worship that a gulf was created between the Papacy and the institutions of the church which Patrick had founded in Ireland.

While Patrick was anything but an Arian, nevertheless he declined to concur in the idea of "sameness" found in that compelling word "consubstantial" or *homoousian*. Usually when violent controversy rages, there are three parties. In this instance there were the two extremes, one of which was led by the Papacy, the second by the Arians, and the third party was the middle-of-the-road believers whose viewpoint was the same as Patrick's. 43 As Dr. J. H. Todd says of *homoousian*, the test word of the papal hierarchy, when commenting on Patrick's beliefs, "This confession of faith is certainly not *homoousian*." 44 Another fact verifying this opposition of the British churches to the extreme speculations of the Council of Nicaea respecting the Trinity is the story of the Council of Rimini in 359, held approximately at the time of Patrick's birth. This, it seems, was the last church council to be attended by Celtic delegates from the British Church before the withdrawal of Rome's legions in 410, and it was followed by the overrunning of England by the pagan Anglo-Saxons. This Council of Rimini passed decrees denouncing and rejecting the conclusions of Nicaea respecting the Trinity. The pope of Rome had recently signed similar decrees in the Council of Sirmium. No one will blame the evangelicals for recoiling from the papal view of the Trinity, when history shows that their views were strong enough to cause two popes to sign decrees contrary to the policy of the Papacy respecting Nicaea.

One of the reasons, no doubt, why the Papacy for many years did not mention Patrick's name or his success was the position of the Irish Church respecting the decrees of Nicaea. Centuries were to pass before the Papacy discovered that his merits were too firmly established to be overlooked. It labored to gather Patrick into its fold by inventing all kinds of history and fables to make him a papal hero. It surrounded with a halo of glory a certain Palladius, apparently sent by Rome to Ireland in the midst of Patrick's success. He also has been called Patrick. 45

Patrick beheld Jesus as his substitute on the cross. He took his stand for the Ten Commandments. He says in his Confession: "I was taken to Ireland in captivity with many thousand men, in accordance with

our deserts because we walked at a distance from God, and did not observe His commandments." Those who recoiled from the extreme speculations and conclusions of the so-called Trinitarians believed Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever."

The binding obligation of the Decalogue was a burning issue in Patrick's age. In theory, all the parties in disagreement upon the Trinity recognized the Ten Commandments as the moral law of God, perfect eternal, and unchangeable. It could easily be seen that in the judgment, the Lord could not have one standard for angels and another for men. There was not one law for the Jews and a different one for the Gentiles. The rebellion of Satan in heaven had initiated the great revolt against the eternal moral law. All the disputants over the Trinity recognized that when God made man in His image it was the equivalent of writing the Ten Commandments in his heart by creating man with a flawless moral nature. All parties went a step further. They confessed and denied not that in all the universe there was found no one, neither angel, cherubim, seraphim, man, nor any other creature, except Christ, whose death could atone for the broken law.

Then the schism came. Those who rejected the intense, exacting definition of three Divine Persons in one body, as laid down by the Council of Nicaea, believed that Calvary had made Christ a divine sacrifice, the sinner's substitute. The Papacy repudiated the teaching that Jesus died as man's substitute upon the cross. Consequently it ignored the exalted place given the Decalogue by the crucifixion of Christ. Those who saw the eternal necessity of magnifying the law, and making it honorable, main-tamed that death claimed the Son of God, but had left untouched the Father and Holy Spirit. This was the teaching of Patrick and his successor.

Thus, the Celtic Church upheld the sacredness of the Ten Commandments. They accepted the prophecy of Isaiah that Christ came to magnify the law and make it honorable. They preached, as Jeremiah and Paul did, that the purpose of the new covenant was to write God's law in the heart. God could be just and justify the sinner who had fled to Christ. No wonder that the Celtic, the Gothic, the Waldensian, the Armenian Churches, and the great Church of the East, as well as other bodies, differed profoundly from the Papacy in its metaphysical conceptions of the Trinity and consequently in the importance of the Ten Commandments.

Not overlooking the adoption of images by the Roman Catholic Church - contrary to the second commandment - and other violations of the moral law which the other bodies refused to condone, one of the principal causes of separation was the observance of the Sabbath. As will be presented in other chapters, the Gothic, Waldensian, Armenian, and Syrian Churches, and the Church of the East, as well as the church organization which Patrick founded, largely sanctified Saturday, the seventh day of the week, as the sacred twenty-four-hour period on which God rested after creation. Many also had sacred assemblies on Sunday, even as many churches today have prayer meeting on Wednesday.

Treating of the Celtic Church, the historian A. C. Flick writes, "The Celts used a Latin Bible unlike the Vulgate, and kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday." 46

T. Ratcliffe Barnett, in his book on the fervent Catholic queen of Scotland, who in 1060 was first to attempt the ruin of Columba's brethren, writes, "In this matter the Scots had perhaps kept up the traditional usage of the ancient Irish Church which observed Saturday instead of Sunday as the day of rest." 47 Also it may be stated that Columba, who converted Scotland to Christianity, taught his

followers that they should practice such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolic writings. 48 This reveals how Patrick and his colleges made the Bible the origin and center of all education.

Enemies of the Celtic Church in Ireland

An obscurity falls upon the history of the Celtic Church in Ireland, beginning before the coming of the Danes in the ninth century and continuing for two centuries and a half during their supremacy in the Emerald Isle. It continued to deepen until King Henry II waged war against that church in 1171 in response to a papal bull. The reason for this confusion of history is that when Henry II mined both the political and the ecclesiastical independence of Ireland he also destroyed the valuable records which would clarify what the inner spiritual life and evangelical setup of the Celtic Church was in the days of Patrick. Even this, however, did not have force enough to blur or obscure the glorious outburst of evangelical revival and learning which followed the work of Patrick.

Why did the Danes invade England and Ireland? The answer is found in the terrible wars prompted by the Papacy and waged by Charlemagne, whose campaigns did vast damage to the Danes on the Continent. Every student knows of that Christmas Day, 800, when the pope, in the great cathedral at Rome, placed upon the head of Charlemagne the crown to indicate that he was emperor of the newly created Holy Roman Empire. With battle-ax in hand, Charlemagne continuously waged war to bring the Scandinavians into the church. This embittered the Danes. As they fled before him, they swore that they would take vengeance by mining Christian churches wherever possible, and by slaying the clergy. This is the reason for the fanatical invasion by these Scandinavian warriors of both England and Ireland.

49

Ravaging expeditions grew into organized dominations under famous Danish leaders. Turgesius landed with his fleet of war vessels on the coast of Ireland about the year 832. He sailed inland so that he dominated the east, west, and north of the country. His fleets sacked its centers of learning and mined the churches.

How did the Danes succeed in overthrowing the Celtic Church? It was by first enduring, and then embracing the Papacy. It must not be thought that these invaders, because they were pagans, were also ignorant and illiterate. This is far from the truth. They excelled in many lines of learning and culture.

As the years passed and bitterness toward Christianity decreased on the part of the Danes, many became nominal Christians. Being in constant conflict with centers of the Celtic Church, hostility to it was inbred in the invaders. On the other hand, the semipagan Christianity of the Danes was more powerfully impressed by the magnificent cathedrals, the colorful hierarchy, and the alluring rites and ceremonies of the Papacy. It is only natural, therefore, that they should seek ordination for their clergy at the hands of Latin bishops. As the theme proceeds, the force of the following quotation from Dr. George T. Stokes will be seen: "The Danes formed one principal channel through which the papal see renewed and accomplished its designs upon the independence of the Irish Church in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries." 50 When the Danish bishops of Waterford were consecrated by the see of Canterbury, they ignored the Irish Church and the successors of Patrick, so that from that time on there were two churches in Ireland. 51

Turgesius was the first to recognize the military advantages and the desirable contour of the land on which the city of Dublin now stands. With him began the founding of the city which expanded into the kingdom of Dublin. Later on, a bishopric was established in this new capital, modeled after the papal ideal. When the day came that the Irish wished to expel their foreign conquerors, they were unable to extricate themselves from the net of papal religion which the invaders had begun to weave. This leads to the story of Brian Boru.

Brian Boru Overthrows the Danish Supremacy

The guerilla fights, waged for decades between the native Irish and their foreign overlords, took on the form of a national warfare when Brian Boru emerged as one of Hibernia's greatest heroes. First, he fought valiantly along with his brother Mahon, king of Munster, and after his brother's death, alone as successor to the kingdom. Step by step he subdued one after another of the Danish kingdoms. The two great battles which climaxed his career were those of Glen Mama and Clontarf, both near Dublin. In the first he made himself master of all Ireland, up to the gates of Dublin. In the second, Dublin was brought under the rule of a native Irish king, though he, his son, and his grandson lost their lives in the conflict.

It must not be thought that with the victories of Brian, the Danes were entirely expelled from Irish soil. They continued for some years with varying fortunes, now weak, now strong, but never again in the ascendancy. The power of the Danes grew weaker and weaker, but the Papacy, whose entrance among the Irish the Danes had facilitated, grew stronger and stronger. The great victory of Brian, 1014, in the battle of Clontarf, was only some fifty years before the time when William the Conqueror, under the guidance of the pope, led his Normans to the conquest of England. The Latin clergy in Ireland, seeking the ruin of the Celtic Church, gained a formidable ally in the papal Norman kings of England. It was an easy task, upon the death of a Celtic Church leader in Ireland, to substitute a Roman bishop from time to time as his successor. Finally, a traitor to the Celtic Church was found in Celsus, the Celtic archbishop of Armagh, who contrived to make Malachy, a youth instructed in the continental school of Bernard of Clairvaux deeply permeated by papal teaching, his successor. This Malachy "Finally reduced Ireland beneath the supremacy of Rome and introduced Roman discipline." Therefore when, a little later, Henry II, under authorization of the Papacy, brought Ireland under English rule, the subjection of the Celtic Church was complete.

The Ruin of Patrick's Church

Showing that the introduction of the Papacy into England under the monk Augustine was religious and that full power was not secured by Rome until William the Conqueror (A.D. 1066), Blackstone says:

This naturally introduced some few of the papal corruptions in point of faith and doctrines; but we read of no civil authority claimed by the pope in these kingdoms until the era of the Norman conquests, when the then reigning pontiff having favored Duke William in his projected invasion by blessing his host and consecrating his banners, he took that opportunity also of establishing his spiritual encroachments, and was even permitted so to do by the policy of the conqueror, in order more effectually to humble the Saxon clergy and aggrandize his Norman prelates; prelates who, being bred abroad in the doctrine and practice of slavery, had contracted a reverence and regard for it, and took a pleasure in riveting the chains of a freeborn people." 52

The bull of Pope Adrian IV issued to King Henry II of England, 1156, authorized him to invade Ireland. A part of the bull reads thus: "Your highness's desire of esteeming the glory of your name on earth, and obtaining the record of eternal happiness in heaven, is laudable and beneficial; inasmuch as your intent is, as a Catholic prince, to enlarge the limits of the church, to decree the truth of the Christian faith to untaught and rude nations, and to eradicate vice from the field of the Lord."

Several things are clear from this bull. First, in specifying Ireland as an untaught and rude nation, it is evident that papal doctrines, rites, and clergy had not been dominant there. Second, in urging the king "to enlarge the limits of the church," the pope confesses that Ireland and its Christian inhabitants had not been under the dominant supremacy of the Papacy. Third, in praising Henry's intent to decree the Christian faith of the Irish nation, Pope Adrian admits that papal missionaries had not carried the Romish faith to Ireland before this. In laying upon Henry II the command that he should annex the crown of Ireland upon condition that he secure a penny from every home in Ireland as the pope's revenue,⁵³ it is clear that the Papacy was not the ancient religion of Ireland and that no Roman ties had bound that land to it before the middle of the twelfth century.

W. C. Taylor, in his *History of Ireland*, speaking of the synod of Irish princes and prelates which Henry II summoned to Cashel, says, "The bull of Pope Adrian, and its confirmation by [Pope] Alexander, were read in the assembly; the sovereignty of Ireland granted to Henry by acclamation; and several regulations made for increasing the power and privileges of the clergy, and assimilating the discipline of the Irish Church to that which the Romish see had established in Western Europe." ⁵⁴

From that time to the Reformation, the Celtic Church in Ireland was in the wilderness experience along with all the other evangelical believers in Europe. Throughout the dreadful years of the Dark Ages many individuals, in churches or groups of churches, struggled to re-establish and to maintain the original purity of the apostolic teachings. No doubt under the fury of the dominion exercised by combined religious and political power, the greater number surrendered wholly or in part. Even as, during the 1260 years, the Church in the Wilderness in Mohanunedan and far-off heathen lands lapsed into barbarian rites and ceremonies, so the Celtic Church in Ireland succumbed more or less to papal practices. Nevertheless, the glorious substratum endured, and when God in His mercy shed upon the world the spiritual splendor of the Reformation, many of these oppressed Christians revived and substituted the supremacy of the Bible for the domination of the hierarchy.