

## Saint Patrick, the Missionary Hero.

Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Bond at  
Cochrane Street Centennial Church, March  
17th, 1918.

We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus, the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. I Cor. iv. 5.

Somewhere about the year of Our Lord, 389, a baby boy was born near what is now known as Dumbarton in Scotland. His father was a Christian minister, a deacon by the name of Calpurnius, and the day in time he was baptised by the Celtic name of Succat, but was also known by the Latin name of Patrick. By the latter name, shortened into Patrick, and glorified by the well deserved title of Saint, that boy is known all over the world to-day, as the apostle and patron saint of Ireland; and the seventeenth day of March, the day in which his most useful and eventful life came to a close, is known wherever Irishmen are found, and honoured as St. Patrick's Day. How that came about, I propose briefly to tell. It is a wonderful story, and good for me to tell and for you to hear.

My congregation must remember that in the year 389, England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were heathen lands, inhabited by wild tribes. But they formed part of the great Roman Empire, which by that time had become nominally Christian. So, in the scattered Roman camps and Roman towns there were to be found Christian churches and Christian clergymen. That is how at Dumbarton, "Bannarem Taberniae," St. Patrick calls it, Calpurnius lived as a humble minister of the gospel, with his wife and two children, a boy and a girl. The brother and sister thus grew up together in that best and most influential of all schools, a real Christian home, and learned in the little farm, at the feet of father and mother, those great truths about God and Christ, and sin and salvation, which, learned thus, are never forgotten.

One day when the boy Succat or Patrick was about sixteen, a strong sturdy youth, more fond of working about the farm than of giving attention to learning, a band of pirates from Ireland came over in their black ships and raided the country side, carrying off as slaves the big boys and girls. Patrick and his sister were seized by these rough strangers, and carried off despite the cries and entreaties of their parents, with many others, to Ireland. Patrick's father, poor man, fought for his children till he was so wounded that he could do no more, and he had to see the boy and girl whom he had reared so carefully, snatched away to cruel and bitter slavery in a strange land. The sister was sold into slavery in Connaught, and Patrick was bought by a sort of king named Milchu, whose territories apparently extended over a good deal of what is now included in the counties of Down and Antrim. And thus St. Patrick came to Ireland.

King Milchu had great herds of pigs, and the strong slave-boy was sent to mind them. He became a fine-looking fellow, a good training ground for saintship, was it—the bleak hillsides where the ragged slave boy, snatched from home and country, guarded his rough charges for an owner little less indifferent to his welfare than the beasts he tended. But it was there that Patrick obtained that first essential of all sainthood, a thorough conversion to God. Among the swine, like the prodigal in our Lord's parable, he "came to himself." In the quiet and loneliness of the mountain of Slieve, cold, desolate, unfriended, suffering, the teachings of his good father in the far off home in Scotland had their fruition. Patrick became a changed and happy young fellow. He tells us he used to have long talks to God as he tended his herd. A hundred times a day, he tells us, he would sometimes pray, and on cold frosty nights, and when the sleep was falling in dark winter mornings, he would be up long before daylight, to hold communion with his Heavenly Father. So God was preparing the slave boy to become a saint, and so the slave boy was preparing himself for God's high service to his fellowmen.

For six long years, Patrick continued his work as a swineherd on Slieve mountain, and in the wilds of Antrim and Down, serving his hard master faithfully, and holding his conversations with his God. One night as he lay sleeping, he dreamed that he heard a voice calling him, and telling him that God was about to bring him back to his home and his loved ones. Imagine his joy, his excitement, the kindling of his imagination, and his longing for the time to come. How his memory would go over the past, how he would wonder if father and mother were yet alive, how he would recall up the pictures of the old associations and the old friends of his boyhood. With what eagerness he would wait for the time to come. And it did come, at length. One night, the same voice called him in his dreams, and told him the ship that was to take

him home was being loaded two hundred miles away. Fortwith, he started, having arranged plenty of food for his charges till another herdsman could tend them. It was a long walk but the two hundred miles seemed short and easy to the strong and eager youth. Over rough hillsides and across deep bogs, with nothing but a footpath at the very best, he finally reached the end of his journey, found the ship about to sail, but to his dismay and despair was refused passage. But the divine hand was leading him, and even as he turned sadly away, his heart uplifted in prayer, a sailor's voice hailed him, "Come back, come back. These men are calling you." And so he left the shores of Erin behind him, and was soon speeding over the Irish Sea towards Bonnie Scotland and the dear old home. But it was not all smooth sailing. They were shipwrecked, and wandered without food on a desert shore for days. At last the heathen sailors turned to this devout young voyager, and begged him to pray to the Christian God for them, and Patrick said, "Turn ye in faith to my Lord God, to Whom nothing is impossible, and He will send you food, and ye shall be satisfied, for He has abundance everywhere." And so they soon found, for a herd of wild pigs came along and some of the sailors discovered honey in the woods. Ultimately they reached human help and he was restored to his family once more.

It seems likely that, while St. Patrick speaks of having rejoined his family in Britain, it really may have been somewhere in France, part of which was then included in Britain. At all events, we next find him with them, and being entreated by them to remain at home. "They earnestly besought me," he says, "that then, at least, after I had gone through so many tribulations, I would go nowhere from them." But he could not remain. God was calling him to a great work. The state of heathen Ireland weighed upon him, and he longed to be made a minister of light and mercy even to those who had so sorely tried him. He had been a slave to them but they were slaves to sin, and He prayed that he might be sent to them with the message of salvation. And sent he was. One night he had a strange dream. A man stood before him, his hands full of letters. So many there were, that Patrick could not count them, but one of them the man gave to him and he began to read it. It was called, "The Voice of the Irish," and he read that as he read it, "I thought I heard in my mind the voice of those who were near the wood of Foelut, which is by the Western Sea." He spoke to the man, and, after some time, persuaded him to let him return with him. So he went westward taking with him his fellow missionaries, not all clergymen, however, for one was a smith, another could make satchels for books, and a third was a skilful navigator, who could pilot them along the rivers and lochs. And as he went he would leave a missionary behind at each important place, and thus Ireland, little by little, became evangelized. But he kept his own face steadily toward the Western Sea, and came, by and by, to the mountain that is named after him, Croagh Patrick. It was from this mountain that, as the legend goes, he drove all the snakes and toads out of Ireland. If he did not do that literally, he did something infinitely more, he banished by his preaching of the Truth as it is in Jesus, the snakes and toads of foul, cruel superstition and heathenism in which the country was plunged. There is a beautiful story connected with his first preaching in Connaught. He and his companions were sitting beside a well in the early morning, when two young girls came from the neighboring village for water. They happened to be the daughters of that very King Leary, from whose territories the party had come, and, attracted probably by the venerable appearance of the strangers, they addressed them the wondering question, "Who are ye, and whence do ye come?" Patrick's answer was direct and characteristic. He said, "It were better that you would confess our true God, than to inquire about our race." "Who is God?" they asked, "and where is God?" and of what is God? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver?" Tell us how He loved? How is He found? And Patrick answered, "Our God is the God of all men, the God of heaven and earth, of the sea and of the rivers, the God of the sun and of the moon and of all the stars."

At that direction. But he had no sooner climbed the hill, than he saw his old master's house in flames. Milchu, it seemed, was afraid his former slave had come to punish him; and burned down his house over his own head, and Patrick had to return to Dicu, saddened and disappointed. It is good to learn, however, that two of Milchu's sons subsequently became Christians.

At that day Ireland was divided into no fewer than five principal kingdoms, these being Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster and Meath. The King of Meath was king of all Ireland, and Tara, his capital, was the capital of all Ireland. Like the wise man that he was, St. Patrick saw that if he could preach the gospel in Tara, it would be like preaching it to all Ireland. So he concluded to go thither, and arrived at a time when not only Leary, King of all Ireland, was present, but when a throng of other kings and nobles from different parts of the country had assembled for a great heathen feast. He pitched camp on the hill of Slane overlooking the city, and prepared to celebrate the festival of Easter. The Christians of those days had a custom, which is said to still exist in some places of building huge bonfires on Easter Eve to symbolize the Light of the World, the Risen and Ascended Christ; and Patrick and his companions did this on the hill top in full view of the city. King Leary saw it from the windows of his house and raged with fury at the sight, for no one was allowed to light a fire during the heathen feast he was celebrating. He and his nobles said, "If we do not put out that fire, it will put out the fires of our religion," and they hurried to put it out. But King Leary found he had to reckon on not with a handful of poor preachers, but with the King of Kings whose servants they were; and a fire was lighted that Easter Eve on the hill of Slane which did not put out the fires of heathenism only in Tara, but by and by throughout all Ireland. As St. Patrick moved about among the people of Meath, the power of the gospel laid hold upon them, and some in high places, notably a great chief named Conall, a brother of King Leary, were baptized. Then he went to Connaught, and began the work of preaching there. It is interesting to read how he came to go there. One day, as he was by a well, where he had baptized many converts, he heard two men talking. One asked the other, "Where do you come from?" "I come," replied the other, "from near the wood of Foelut." Said Patrick to himself, "Foelut? That is the very name I heard in my dream, when the man with the letters gave me one with 'The Voice of the Irish,' and I thought I heard the voice of those who were near the Wood of Foelut, which is by the Western Sea." He spoke to the man, and, after some time, persuaded him to let him return with him. So he went westward taking with him his fellow missionaries, not all clergymen, however, for one was a smith, another could make satchels for books, and a third was a skilful navigator, who could pilot them along the rivers and lochs. And as he went he would leave a missionary behind at each important place, and thus Ireland, little by little, became evangelized. But he kept his own face steadily toward the Western Sea, and came, by and by, to the mountain that is named after him, Croagh Patrick. It was from this mountain that, as the legend goes, he drove all the snakes and toads out of Ireland. If he did not do that literally, he did something infinitely more, he banished by his preaching of the Truth as it is in Jesus, the snakes and toads of foul, cruel superstition and heathenism in which the country was plunged. There is a beautiful story connected with his first preaching in Connaught. He and his companions were sitting beside a well in the early morning, when two young girls came from the neighboring village for water. They happened to be the daughters of that very King Leary, from whose territories the party had come, and, attracted probably by the venerable appearance of the strangers, they addressed them the wondering question, "Who are ye, and whence do ye come?" Patrick's answer was direct and characteristic. He said, "It were better that you would confess our true God, than to inquire about our race." "Who is God?" they asked, "and where is God?" and of what is God? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver?" Tell us how He loved? How is He found? And Patrick answered, "Our God is the God of all men, the God of heaven and earth, of the sea and of the rivers, the God of the sun and of the moon and of all the stars."

It was about the year 432 that the heroic missionary landed, with a few chosen companions, and after a long voyage, on the Irish coast, first, it would seem, at Wicklow, and then at other points farther north, among them Inispatrick and Drogheda, till finally he and his fellow workers came to Strangford Lough, and landing on its shores, set out for Antrim. But they had not gone far, when a swineherd tending pigs for Dicu, another of the petty kings of the Ireland of those days, rushed off at their approach, to warn his master that foreign raiders had landed. Dicu at once gathered his armed men to do battle with the invaders, but when he found they were not pirates but preachers, he received them with every kindness, and listened to the gospel with such humility and obedience, that he was converted and baptized, thus being, so far as is known, the first Irishman to become a Christian. The proof of a man's faith is in what he is willing to do or to give for God's cause, and this proof St. Patrick always demanded. He asked straightway for a site for a church. Very nobly did King Dicu respond to the test. He had a large barn which he gave the missionary, and this became the first Christian church in Ireland. Saul Patrick, Patrick's Barn, is the name of that place to this very day.

St. Patrick was very anxious to get to Mount Slieve, where he had been converted, and to preach the gospel to King Milchu, his former master, and to his old associates in that wild country, and he next bent his steps

in that direction. But he had no sooner climbed the hill, than he saw his old master's house in flames. Milchu, it seemed, was afraid his former slave had come to punish him; and burned down his house over his own head, and Patrick had to return to Dicu, saddened and disappointed. It is good to learn, however, that two of Milchu's sons subsequently became Christians.

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He has a Son co-eternal with Himself, and like Himself. . . . But I desire to unite you to the Heavenly King, forasmuch as ye are daughters of an earthly king. Believe on Him." The maidens answered, "How can we believe on the Heavenly King. Tell us most diligently so that we may see Him face to face. Point out to us and we will do whatsoever thou wilt say unto us." Then to these frank and simple hearted princesses of Old Ireland, he preached the gospel so clearly and earnestly that they were baptized. And their loving desire to see the King of Heaven was granted for in a short time they sickened and died together, and were laid together in the tomb. And doubtless they saw the King of Heaven face to face.

Several years St. Patrick spent in Connaught, preaching Christ among the people, high and low, with considerable success.

Many of you have doubtless heard the lovely story of how the shamrock came to be Ireland's national emblem. It is related that St. Patrick in the course of his teaching, one day, was unfolding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. An influential man among his hearers, possibly a chief, refused to accept the missionary's instruction, and strongly averred the impossibility of it. Trinity in Unity—the Three Persons in One God. In the midst of his argument with his incredulous opponent, St. Patrick stooped down, and plucking a shamrock from the grass on which he stood, raised the lovely trefol—the three leaves in one leaf—to show how, even in nature, the doubted possibility was everywhere manifest. In the very shamrock that carpeted the hillsides, there was one in three and there were three in one.

It was his wise custom to make much of the boys. He would often get the chiefs to give him one of their sons to be brought up a Christian; and many of these fine lads became missionaries. Of one of these boys named Oran, a splendid story is told. A chief became very angry with Patrick for overturning one of the idol stones which the people worshipped, and he vowed to kill him when he got the chance. The boy Oran heard somehow of the plot, and one day, as he was driving the missionary past the chief's house, induced his master to change seats with him. The chief hurried his lance at the figure he supposed to be Patrick's and slew instead his devoted pupil. Thus the boy gave his life for his teacher.

From Connaught St. Patrick went to Ulster and preached there obtaining from the chief the great hill on which the cathedral of Armagh now stands. Daire, the chief at first refused it, and Patrick and his companions dwelt on the lowlands at its foot. Here one day the chief sent him a beautiful cauldron as a present, and supposed he would have been profuse in his thanks. "What did he say?" the chief asked the servants by whom he had sent it. "Only Gratzacham—Thanks be to God"—was the reply. So Daire sent and demanded his present back. When it was brought back, the chief again asked, "What did he say?" "Gratzacham" was the answer. Daire exclaimed, "Gratzacham" when I take away. His answer is so good that with these "Gratzachams" his cauldron shall be sent back to him." And so the patient missionary got not only the cauldron but the hill that had been hitherto refused him.

From Ulster St. Patrick went to Leinster, and preached all over that kingdom, including the present site of Dublin, and Naas, the capital and palace of the king. Thence he went to Munster, thus having carried the gospel to all the five kingdoms of Ireland and sent out missionaries all over the land. He had proved himself, indeed, the apostle of Ireland. At last, when the time had come for him to die, he turned once more to the place where he had been a slave boy, where he had found the Saviour, where he had won his first convert and obtained his first church. And there, on the seventeenth of March, about the year 463, he died at Saul, Patrick, when the shamrocks covered the hillsides and the breath of Spring was coming over the land. And there they buried him, full of years and of labors, and the Cathedral of Downpatrick was raised in after times as his memorial. But a greater and more lasting memorial is the wonderful work he did in carrying the message of the gospel through Ireland and winning his people from heathenism to Christianity. "If I have done anything," he said, "according to the will of God, however little, let it be most truly believed that it was the gift of God." It was the spirit of the true missionary, the spirit of the missionary through all time: "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the glory."

Saint Patrick was one of the great servants of God, great in holiness, great in sagacity, great in consecration, great in service. He belongs to the universal Church, and being dead he yet speaketh to stimulate and strengthen you and me to similar all conquering faith; to similar all suffering love and service to God and our fellow men. It is fourteen hundred and fifty-five years this very day, since having served his generation by the will of God, he fell asleep, but his memory will be green through all time as the shamrock that covers the side of Mount Slieve.

Let me close this necessarily brief,

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fragmentary, and inadequate sketch of his life and work, by quoting two verses of St. Patrick's Hymn, composed by him, as many think when he was in danger from King Leary:

I bind myself to-day  
To the Power of God to guide me,  
The might of God to uphold me,  
The Wisdom of God to teach me,  
The eye of God to watch over me,  
The ear of God to hear me,  
The word of God to speak to me,  
The hand of God to protect me,  
The way of God to lead me,  
The shield of God to shelter me,  
The host of God to defend me,  
Against the snares of demons,  
Against the temptations of vices,  
Against the lusts of nature,  
Against every man who meditates  
injury to me,  
Whether far or near,  
Alone or in a multitude.

Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ within me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,  
Christ in breadth, Christ in length,  
Christ in thought,  
Christ in the heart of every man  
who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man  
who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye of every man that  
sees me,  
Christ in the ear of every man that  
hears me.  
Salvation is the Lord's!  
Salvation is the Lord's!  
Let thy salvation, O Lord, be ever  
with us.

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Fish by M. R. Renchard, \$1.00.  
The Girl Philippa by R. W. Chambers, \$1.25.  
A Man of the Moors by H. Sutcliffe, \$1.00.  
The Safety Curtain and Other Stories by Ethel M. Dell, \$1.00 and 75c.  
A Certain Star by P. Boltome, \$1.00.  
The Kingdom of Waste Lands by S. Grier, \$1.00.  
Flames in the Wind by Helen Huelson, 75c.  
In a Strange Land by DeWitt Lyall, 70c.  
The Path of Glory by Joseph Hocking, 90c.  
Tommy and the Maid of Athens by Joseph Hocking, 55c.  
Fool Divine by G. B. Lancaster, \$1.00.  
My Four Years in Germany by Gerard, \$2.25.  
A Secret Service Woman by Henry de Hallsale, 70c.  
The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli by Major Bryan Cooper, \$1.00.  
The First Seven Divisions by Lord Ernest Hamilton, \$1.75.  
The White Lady of Worcester by Florence Barclay, \$1.50.  
Ginger and McClusky by A. G. Hale, \$1.00.

The Major by R. Connor, \$1.10 and 75c.

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MARA,

REET.

Weather Report.

The following messages have been received since yesterday:

Terrington—Wind N.W., light, clear and mild; bay all clear outside; no rain; no seals seen.

St. Anthony—Slight northerly wind; dull and cold; shore blocked with ice.

St. John's—Moderate W. wind; calm; fine and warm; bay still full of ice; no seals.

St. Anthony—Moderate westerly wind; dull and mild; ice off shore; no seals.

DIED.

At Rockton, Mass., on March 17th, Thomas, short illness, Louis, widow of John Madden, aged 79 years, at home, three daughters and one son residing in Boston, U.S.A., and two brothers in St. John's, Nfld., and a large circle of friends to mourn their sad loss.

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