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(19)

ST. PATRICK
AND THE
EARLY IRISH CHURCH.

QUESTIONS

FOR

ROMAN-CATHOLICS.



BY THE

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QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY
CATHOLICS.

DID Christianity exist in Ireland before St. Patrick?—if so—How could St. Patrick be the founder of Christianity in Ireland?

St. Chrysostom—A.D. 400—and Tertullian as A.D. 200—testify that there existed in Ireland Christian congregations, *scripturally* instructed—“Scriptural matters out of the Scriptures.” (St. Chrysostom on the advantage of reading the Scriptures.)

Where was St. Patrick himself converted? The “Confession of St. Patrick” states that “the Lord brought him to a sense of his unbelief.”

Thus so far from St. Patrick first teaching Christianity to Ireland, Ireland first taught Christianity to St. Patrick!

On St. Patrick's return to Ireland as a Missionary, had he any Commission from Rome? If so, who sent him to Ireland?

If so, Why do not the historians of that period inform us of such Commission? If St. Patrick came from Rome, why does not history tell us so?

Now, the standard Roman Catholic Historians—Prosper, Bede, Platina, &c., &c., testify that a Missionary named PALLADIUS came to Ireland, commissioned by Pope Celestine, this was about the year 431.

The mission of Palladius, the Pope's Missionary, was unsuccessful;—the Irish people rejected him and his teaching. They had already a Christian Church and Christian Bishops in Ireland. They were satisfied with their existing Church, and rejected the missionary sent by the Pope. Thus the first and unsuccessful visit to Ireland, Palladius made from that country. This is testified by all the historians of that period.

About the same year (A.D. 431) St. Patrick came to Ireland as a Missionary. He was promptly rejected, and he took this Mission, as he states in his “Confession.”

through a sense of gratitude to the Irish people, from whom he had himself first learned the Gospel of Christ.

This Mission of St. Patrick was eminently successful. Thousands obeyed the call and believed the Gospel. Yet his Mission from Rome is not even once mentioned by the Romish historians of those times. And, Why? Simply because neither Rome nor the Pope of Rome had any part in it!

Prosper, Bede, Platina, and other historians, devoted to the cause of Rome, record the *unsuccessful* Mission of Palladius, because, though abortive, it yet proceeded from *Rome*.

Would not these historians have taken even more care to record the *successful* Mission of St. Patrick, if he had come from Rome?

But they are *silent*. No record is given of such Commission. This ominous silence of such historians is an *eloquent* argument in proof that St. Patrick's Mission had nothing to do with Rome.

The argument is this, Would these learned historians and many others so devoted to Rome, and so thoroughly inclined to record, if not to magnify, the success of Rome and her Missions,—Would they indeed record the short and unsuccessful effort of Palladius—because he proceeded from the Pope—and yet thus omit to attribute to Rome so *successful* a Mission as that of St. Patrick, if *he* too had really been commissioned from Rome?

But the best way to ascertain St. Patrick's opinions, is to examine what doctrines he held. What then were St. Patrick's Doctrines? Were they those believed by ROMANISTS or those believed by PROTESTANTS? Let us see, viz. :—

I. All Roman Catholics now hold that the Pope is the UNIVERSAL BISHOP over the Church.

Now this title was quite unknown to St. Patrick, and to the times in which St. Patrick lived. It was first given by the Emperor Phocas to Pope Boniface III. in the year 606. (See Platina, in *Vit. Bonif. III.*)

Thus was this title first invented, just 175 years after St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland. How then could St. Patrick have believed in it?

At this very period too, the Church of Ireland was

St. Patrick's
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independent of Rome. Bede (Book II. c. i.) states that Laurentius, a Roman Catholic Bishop in A.D. 605, "endeavoured to exercise his pastoral care over the Scots, who inhabit the island of Ireland, which is next to Britain." (The Irish were then called

In a letter written by Laurentius, the Pope's representative (A.D. 605) he states (see Bede as above) viz.,—

"We held both the Britons and Scots [*i.e.* the Irish] in high esteem for sanctity, &c. We have been informed, however, by Bishop Daganus [an Irish Bishop] &c., that the Scots in no way differ from the Britons in their behaviour; Daganus coming to us not only refused to eat with us, but would not take his repast in the same house, where we were entertained."

Now, whether this were right or wrong, it shows the conduct of the Bishops of the ancient Irish Church—the Church of St. Patrick—the Church of St. Columba—the Church of the Island of Saints! Shewing that the ancient Irish Church was independent of Rome, and even held no communion with, ROME.

Thus neither St. Patrick, nor the ancient Irish Church acknowledged THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

II. The Roman Catholic Church enjoins the SUPREMACY OF THE CLERGY. Did St. Patrick hold to this doctrine or acknowledge this discipline?

He did not. For in his "Confession" he states that he was himself "the son of one Calpurnius a Decurio" who was the Son of one Potitus a Priest!"

In another part of St. Patrick's writings he mentions his father as a *Decurio*. Now a *Decurio* was a *civil* officer as some have asserted, but a *civic* officer, an office which might be filled by a Clergyman. *Decurio* means an adviser, &c. (Du Cange, Glossary.)

This is of itself sufficient to shew that the Church of Rome had not as yet assumed the practice of CELIBACY was not practised in St. Patrick's day. The Church of Rome had not as yet assumed the practice of celibacy of the apostacy spoken of by St. Paul, "forbid them to marry," (1 Tim. iv. 1—3.)

III. The Roman Catholic Church WITHHELD THE CUP FROM THE LAITY in the administration of the Holy Communion. Did St. Patrick practise HALF COMMUNION?

He did not—he could not—for such a practice was then unknown. The cup was not withdrawn from the Laity until the Council of Constance, in the year 1415. Just 974 years after St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland.

IV. The Church of Rome prohibits the use of the HOLY SCRIPTURES. Now, what was St. Patrick's teaching on this point? Was it Romish?

It was not—for St. Patrick emphatically declares in a work "On the Abuses of the age," viz. :—

"Chap. XII. The twelfth kind of abuse is, that the people are without Law,—who, while they despise *the word of God* and the precepts of His Law, run by diverse modes of error, into the same snare of destruction. * * * They indeed travel along these paths of perdition, whereas *the one royal road*, namely, *the Law of God*, which turns neither to the right hand nor the left—is *by disuse* deserted."

The Bible, then, which St. Patrick thus—and so unlike a Roman Catholic—extolled, was St. Patrick's only RULE OF FAITH. That which caused various kinds of error, was not indeed the Bible—but the *neglect* of the Bible!

V. The Church of Rome practises THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS, and especially of the Blessed Virgin. Was this doctrine held by St. Patrick?

It was not. The "Hail Mary," the common daily Prayer of Romanists, was not known *as a Prayer* at the time of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland. The "Third Part of the Hail Mary" had not then been "added by the Church," and, at all events, was unknown to St. Patrick and the *Irish Church*.

Roman Catholics, however, quote a passage from St. Patrick's "Confession," in which he states that "once, while troubled by Satan, he called on HELIAS, and immediately he saw *the Sun* rise in the heavens, which dispelled his heaviness," &c.

From this, Roman Catholics would endeavour to prove that St. Patrick invoked ELIJAH. But not so!

For "out of their own mouth will I judge them" in this respect. I shall now quote from a *Roman Catholic* writer, called FATHER COLGAN.

In the Lives of St. Patrick, compiled by Colgan, we obtain the following information regarding this incident, viz. :—

1. The First Biography :—The Hymn of Fiech omits this incident altogether.

2. The Second Life says that "He invoked ELI." (c. xxv.) The word "ELI" means "my GOD;" as expressed by our Blessed Lord upon the cross. (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.)

3. In like manner the Third Life states, "T
trick twice invoked the aid of ELI, and ELI
rescued him." (c. xvii.)

4. The Fourth Life quotes the passage as
"Confession." (c. xxiv.)

5. The Fifth Life states distinctly that "V
had thrice invoked *Christ, the true Sun*, immedi
sun arose upon him," &c. (lib. i. c. viii.) see Mala

6 and 7. The Sixth and Seventh Lives, mor
Biographies, state that he invoked the Proph
But these two Lives are even on Roman Cath
dence unworthy of credit. Dr. Lanigan, I. 1
them, "those two compilations of all *stories*," &

Thus the earlier and more authentic Biographe
Patrick interpret this incident as an invocation of
Jesus Christ:—he invoked ELI, that is, "*my G*

And our more modern Roman Catholics, wh
thus falsely accuse St. Patrick of this *one* Romish
act as did once the unbelieving Jews; for whe
from the cross invoked His Father, saying, "EL
(i.e. "my God, my God") the Jews "that sto
said, This man *calleth for Elias*." (St. Matt. xxv

Thus did St. Patrick, even on Romish evid
voke his GOD, whereupon Roman Catholics
him of calling on ELIAS.

To call on Elijah would be, under any circum
quite useless. That holy Prophet, when abou
cend to heaven in a chariot of fire, and while
farewell to his servant Elisha, thus addressed him
what I shall do for thee, *before I be taken aw*
thee," (2 Kings ii. 9; 4 Kings ii. 9, in Douay
that is to say, if you ask *after* "I am taken aw
thee," it will be useless.

That St. Patrick had no need of Elijah, or an
is evident from the following beautiful passage,

ST. PATRICK'S HYMN.

"At Tara to day! The strength of God pilot me; the
God preserve me; the wisdom of God instruct me; the ey
watch over me; the ear of God hear me; the word of God
weet talk; the hand of God defend me; the way of God
e. Christ be with me; Christ before me; Christ after m
me; Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ on
and; Christ on my left hand; Christ on this side; Chris
de; Christ at my back; Christ in the heart of every

whom I speak; Christ in the mouth of every person who speaks to me; Christ in the eye of every person who looks upon me; Christ in the ear of every person who hears me. At Tara to day I invoke the mighty power of the Trinity. Salvation is the Lord's, Salvation is the Lord's—Salvation is CHRIST'S. May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always with us."

This was the prayer of St. Patrick, addressed to GOD ALONE. CHRIST and His atonement are the grand subjects of the prayer, "the beginning and the end" thereof. His help was not in the creature, but to him CHRIST was "all and in all." (Col. iii. 11.)

VI. The Church of Rome enjoins the belief in a place called PURGATORY. Did St. Patrick hold this doctrine?

He did not. St. Patrick has left on record a most valuable document, whereby it is most clearly established that any such doctrine was wholly unknown to him.

This document is entitled "*De tribus habitaculis*,"—"Concerning the three habitations." He therein writes, viz. :—

"There are three habitations under the eye of Almighty God; the highest, the lowest, and the middle. Of these, the highest is called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven; the lowest is called Hell; THE MIDDLE PLACE is called THIS PRESENT WORLD. * * In the Kingdom of God there are no bad people, but all are good; but in Hell there are no good people, but all are bad; and each of these places [Heaven and Hell] is supplied from the middle place [the present world]."

He then speaks of the *two roads*, viz. :—

"The *broad road* of life is to be avoided, which leads to death; but by every desire of the heart, the *narrow road*, which leads to life, must be sought and entered on."

Thus St. Patrick knew of no *third road*, nor of any *third place* beyond the grave. St. Patrick therefore did not believe in the Romish doctrine of PURGATORY.

VII. The Church of Rome professes belief in THE CREED OF POPE PIUS IV. Did St. Patrick know anything of this Creed?

Certainly not. He professes very largely the Articles of his Faith in his "Confession." They are almost word for word as the Apostles' Creed, which is believed by all Protestants. But in this Creed of St. Patrick, he never professes to believe in Transubstantiation or Purgatory, or Seven Sacraments, or the Invocation of Saints, or such like. Nor were these Doctrines included in any creed, until they were *added* to the Nicene Creed, in

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the twelve novel Articles of Pope Pius IV., on the day of December, A.D. 1564; that is just 113 years *after* the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland!

Such was the Ancient Church of Ireland! the Church of St. Patrick! the Church of the Island of Ireland, and such did it continue in Doctrine and Discipline—**INDEPENDENT OF THE CHURCH OF ROME**—until Henry II. urged on by *Pope Adrian IV.* invaded Ireland, A.D. 1172, and reduced its ancient Christian Church to subjection to the Church of Rome.

Thus 741 years *after* the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland did the ancient and independent Church of Ireland,—which produced its Saints and its Martyrs, which honored God's Holy Word, which taught the pure Gospel of Christ—become a people and her clergy subservient to the power of Rome.

Well may we conclude with the plaintive language of a recent Roman Catholic historian, O'DRISCOLL, in "*Views of Ireland*," vol. ii. p. 84.

"There is something very singular in the Ecclesiastical History of Ireland. The Christian Church of that country, as far as the time of St. Patrick and *his predecessors* existed for many ages *unshackled*. For about *Seven Hundred Years* this Church retained its *independence*. It had no connexion with England, and differed upon points of *importance* from Rome.

"The first work of Henry II. was to reduce the Kingdom of Ireland into *obedience to the Roman Pontiff*. Accordingly he caused a Council of the Irish Clergy to be held at Cashel, and the combined influence and *intrigues* of Henry and his advisers prevailed. *This Council put an end to the Ancient Church of Ireland, and submitted to the yoke of Rome.* This ominous event has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be paralleled in the world. *From the days of Patrick to the Council of Cashel, was a bright and glorious career for Ireland.* From the sitting of that Council to our times, the lot of Ireland has been *unmixedly all her History a tale of woe*!"

Such has the "Island of Saints" become under the dominion of Rome!

Well may we say to the People of Ireland, "Ye are in the ways, and see, and ask for *the old path*, which is *the good way*, and walk therein, and ye shall find life for your souls." Jeremiah vi. 16.

I am prepared to defend the statements of this tract, in open discussion, with any Roman Catholic Priest in London or elsewhere.

(Signed) ROBERT MAGUIRE,
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