

LIFE OF PATRICIUS

CHAPTER 1

Patricius, son of Calpornius *the* minister and decurion, son of Potitus *the* elder, lived with his father and grandfather in *the* village of Bannavem Taburniae in *Britannia*, in a little lodging there. When *Patricius* was about sixteen years old, at a time when he did not know *the* true God, *some men from Hibernia (that is, Ireland)* devastated *the* servants and handmaids of his father's house, and *Patricius* was taken captive from there to Hibernia along with thousands of *other* humans. They deserved to be taken into captivity there, because they had gone away from God, and did not keep his precepts, nor did they listen to their priests, who had advised them concerning their salvation. And *the* Lord brought his strong anger upon them, and scattered them among many nations, even to *the* ends of *the* earth, where, among foreigners, *Patricius* was able to see how little he was. And it was there that *the* Lord opened up his sense to his unbelief, in order that he might remember his sins and turn to *the* Lord God with all his heart.

But as soon as *Patricius* had arrived in Ireland, he fed cattle every day, and he frequently prayed during *the* day. More and more *the* love of God and *the* fear of *the* Lord was added to him; and his spirit was driven, so that in a single day he would make as many as a hundred prayers, and at night a similar number. Even in *the* woods and on *the* mountain, he would rise to pray before dawn, through snow, through frost, through rain. And he never felt anything bad or any slothfulness within himself. This was because *the* spirit was broiling within him.

And there, during one night, in his sleep, he heard a voice saying to him, "You have fasted well. Very soon you will depart for your fatherland."

And, again, after a very short time, he heard *the* response saying to him, "Look, your ship is ready!"

But there was not a ship nearby, rather it was about 200 hundred miles away, in a place where he had never been, and where he did not know a single human.

And shortly after this, he ran away, leaving *the* human whom he had been with for six years. And he went in *the* power of God, who was advantageously directing his route; and he was afraid of nothing until he reached that ship.

And *the* very day *Patricius* arrived, *the* ship was about to leave its place. And he spoke with *the* crew, and told them that he had enough money to set sail with them.

But *the* captain was not at all pleased. And, with indignation, he answered sharply, "Don't you dare try to come with us."

And when *Patricius* heard this, he left them and went back to *the* hut where he had been staying. And while he was on *the* road, he began to pray. And before he had even finished *the* prayer, he heard one of them shouting out loudly after him, "Come quickly! These men are calling you!"

And he immediately went back to them, and they began to say to him, "Come, we'll take you by faith. And make friends with us in any way you want."

And on that day, *Patricius* refused to suck their breasts,¹ because of *the* fear he had of God. But, nevertheless, since they were of *unbelieving* nations, he hoped that they might come to *the* faith of Jesus Christ. And this was how he continued with them, and all of them set sail at once.

And after three days, all of them reached land. And then, for 28 days, they all traveled through a wilderness, and their food ran out, and *the* famine grew stronger over them. And on another day, *the* steersman began to say, "What about this, Christian? You say that your God is great and all-powerful; why can't you pray on our behalf, since we're in danger from a famine? It's beginning to look as if we may never survive to see another human!"

Then *Patricius* said to them with confidence, "All of you, turn in faith, with your whole heart, to *the* Lord my God (because nothing is impossible for him), so that he will, on this *very* day, send food on your road until you are satisfied, because he has an abundance everywhere."

And with *the* help of God, this is what happened. Behold, a herd of pigs appeared on *the* road before all of their eyes. And *the* men remained there for two nights, and killed many of them. And they were fully restored, and were filled with *their* flesh,² because many of them had fainted, and would otherwise have been left by *the* wayside. And after this, they gave great thanks to God, and *Patricius* was honored in their eyes. And from this day onward, *the* men had food in abundance. They also found some wild honey, and offered *Patricius* a portion. And one of them said to him, "This is a sacrifice." But *Patricius* tasted none of it.

And that same night, while *Patricius* was sleeping, a spiritual-adversary tempted him violently. (It was something he would remember for as long as he remained in his body.) And, *the* spiritual-adversary fell on him, as if *this being* were an enormous rock, and none of *Patricius*' limbs had any strength left in them. But *Patricius*, being ignorant in *the* spirit, called upon Elijah.

And while these things were happening, he saw *the* sun rise into *the* heaven. And while he was crying, "Elijah! Elijah!" with all of his might, suddenly, *the* splendor of *the* sun fell on him, and immediately all of that weight was lifted from him. And though it was to Elijah that he called out, he believed that it was in fact Christ his Lord who had aided him, and that *Christ's* spirit was, even then, crying out for him.

So once again, after many years, *Patricius* was taken captive. On the first night that he was with his captors, he heard a divine response saying to him, "You will be with them for two months." This is how it came to pass: on the sixtieth night, *the* Lord freed *Patricius* from their hands.

Even on *the* road, he had provided *Patricius* and his captors with food and fire and dry weather every day until all of them met *other* humans on *the* tenth day. As previously mentioned, they all traveled through that wilderness for 28 days. But on *the* very night that they met *other* humans, they all ran out of food.

CHAPTER 2

And a few years later, *Patricius* was again with his parents in *Britannia*. They welcomed him as a son, and they begged him, that, after all *the* many tribulations which he had endured, he should give assurance to them that he would never leave them again.

And it was while he was there, that he saw, in a vision in *the* night, a man whose name was Victorius, who seemed to be coming from Hibernia, with an innumerable amount of letters. And he gave *Patricius* one of them, and *Patricius* read *the* beginning of *the* letter, 'the voice of the Hibernians'. And while he was reciting *the* beginning of *the* letter, at that very moment,

¹ in *the* sense that he refused to be nurtured or brought up by them—in this case, by their sinful way of life

² variant "dogs"

he thought he heard *the* voice of those who were beside Foclut Woods, which is near *the* western sea. And they exclaimed as if with one mouth, “We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk again among us.” And this pricked his heart deeply, and he could not read any further; and so he awoke. This was how after so many years, *the* Lord had granted *the* Hibernians what they were clamoring for.

And another night, *Patricius* heard *the* most adept words, which he could hear but not understand; except, at *the* very end of *the* prayer, *the* words became clear: “*The* one who gave his own soul for you, he is *the* one who speaks in you.” And at that, he awoke full of joy.

And again, *Patricius* saw in him one who was praying. And it seemed to *Patricius*, that he was *still* inside his *own* body. And *Patricius* heard him above him, that is, above his inner human. And this individual prayed strongly, with groanings. And *Patricius* was astonished and amazed, and pondered who it was who was praying in him. But at *the* end of *the* prayer, it was clear that it was *the* spirit. And this was *the* way in which *Patricius* experienced *him*. And he remembered *the* words of *the* emissary:

The Spirit helps us in our lack of strength; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but *the* spirit itself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

And again:

The Lord is our advocate who intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34)

Now at first, *Patricius* had not been quick to accept what was shown to him, nor what *the* spirit was suggesting. Yet *the* Lord was merciful to him, because he saw in *Patricius* that he was ready, but that he did not know what to do about his position.³ For there were many who were prohibiting this mission, even talking among themselves behind his back, and saying: “Why does he *want* to put himself in peril among hostile *people* who do not know God?” It was not that they bore any malice toward him, but they did not understand, since *Patricius* was unintelligent on account of his rusticity. And *even* he himself was not quick to recognize *the* grace which was in him at that time.

And *also* on a certain day, when *Patricius* was being tempted by some of his seniors, who had arrived and were putting his sins against his laborious oversight, at least on that day, it was such a mighty blow, that he felt that he might fall, *both* here and in eternity. But *the* Lord in his pity spared *him* for *the* sake of his name, and strongly supported him when he was trodden underfoot in this way by his seniors. Although he was put down and assailed, not much ill came to him. Yet, he prayed that God would not hold this sin against them.

Now his seniors had dug up against *Patricius* an event, which he had already confessed, *even* before he had been made a minister. For due to *the* anxiety of his sad soul, he had mentioned to a very close friend of his some things which he had done one day, no, one hour, during his boyhood, because at that time, he had not yet prevailed over his weakness. For at that time, *Patricius* may not even have been fifteen years old, and *certainly* did not believe in *the* living God, nor *even* in his infancy. But in truth, he had remained in death and unbelief until he was

chastised strongly, and humbled by hunger and nakedness, and *this* every day.

On *the* contrary, *Patricius* had *previously* continued on in Hibernia (not of his own will, *since he had been a slave*) until he had become deficient. But it was very beneficial for him, since *the* Lord had amended him, and had prepared him for what he would be on this day. *Patricius* was far different then from what he was now, so that he *now* cared about *the* salvation of others, when at that time *when he was in slavery* he did not even have concern for himself.

Accordingly, on that day on which *Patricius* was rejected by those previously-mentioned seniors who were against him, that *same* night, he saw in a vision of *the* night, that *something* was written before his dishonored⁴ face. And in *the* midst of this, he heard an answer from God dictating to him, “We have seen with displeasure *the* face of that man who was chosen stripped of his good name.”

For that reason, he gave thanks to *God* who strengthened him in all things, so that *God* would not impede him in *the* course which he had undertaken and also from *the* works which he had learned from Christ his Lord. But he sensed in himself no little strength from *God*, and his faith was approved before God and humans, and his conscience did not reproach him *on this account*, either then nor in *the* future.

But *Patricius* was pained more on behalf of this very close friend of his, that everyone had to hear such a response – *the* man to whom *Patricius* had entrusted his *very* soul. *Patricius* did learn from some brothers before *his* case was heard, that *this* very close friend had come to his defense in his absence. (For *Patricius* was not present at *the* time, not even in Britannia, and it was not *Patricius* who initiated *the* affair.) In truth, it was this very close friend of his who had *once* said to *Patricius* with his own mouth, “Behold, you are going to be given *the* rank of overseer.” (Something which *Patricius* believed that he did not deserve.) Yet it grieved *Patricius*, that afterwards, this friend could come to dishonor him publicly before everyone, *both* good and evil, about a matter for which this friend had already freely and joyfully forgiven *Patricius* of, as indeed had God, who is greater than all.

CHAPTER 3

However, it is a long story, to tell each and every deed of *Patricius*, or even some of *the* parts. So we will briefly tell how *the* most-caring God often freed him from slavery, and from twelve dangers which endangered his soul, in addition to many snares and from things which are unable to be expressed in words.

Now *Patricius* decided to fulfill his mandate from *God* by traveling to Hibernia, even at *the* cost of losing *both* his fatherland and parents. And many were *the* gifts offered to him, along with weeping and with tears. And he offended *these* individuals, even against *the* wishes of some of his seniors. But *knowing* that *God* was piloting him, he did not consent to nor acquiesce to them in any way, and he resisted them all—so that he could come to *the* men of *the* nations of Hibernia in order to preach *the* good-message, and to tolerate insults from unbelievers; so that he could hear reproach about his travel, and suffer many persecutions, even to *the* point of chains, so that he could give up his life for *the* good of others. And after having endured all of *these* things, *Patricius* was even ready and willing to give up his soul without hesitation for *God*'s name, if *God*

³ may also be translated “state”

⁴ literally “without honor”

found him worthy. It was *in Hibernia* that he would be *the* most glad to pour out *his soul* even to *the point of death*, if *it was the will of the Lord* to grant it to him.

So *Patricius* having been established in *Hibernia* (where he professed himself *an* overseer, and lived as *a* stranger among barbarians and *an* exile for *the* love of God), was given such great grace by God, that through *Patricius*, many peoples were reborn in God and brought to completion, and allotted-ones were ordained everywhere for this community *in Hibernia* who came to believe, and whom *the* Lord took from *the* ends of *the* earth. For in *the* past, these *Scots* (*for they were dwelling in Hibernia in those days*), serving idols and unclean things, were not *God's* community, but now they were called 'sons of *the* living God', and *even* countless numbers of *the* sons and daughters of *the* royalties of *the* Scots were seen to be monks and virgins of Christ.

And there was also *a* blessed Scottish woman of noble birth, *a* most beautiful adult whom *Patricius* immersed. And after *a* few days, she came to them for this reason: She told them that she had received *a* response from *a* messenger of God, who advised her to become *a* virgin of Christ, and to draw nearer to God. So six days after this, she, enthusiastically and well, took on *the* life that all virgins of God do.

Not that their fathers were in accord with this *decision*. But these *women* also suffered persecution and false accusations from their parents, and yet their number grew *even* more! And in addition, there were *also* *the* widows and *the* continent. But of all these, those held in slavery worked *the* hardest – they constantly bore terrors and threats, but *the* Lord was giving grace to so many of *these* maidservants. Even if it was forbidden *for them to become virgins*, they nevertheless imitated *Jesus'* example with fortitude.

However, *throughout all of these things*, *Patricius* could have wished to leave them and return to Britannia, *something* which he would have been most willing *and* ready to do, in order to visit his fatherland and his parents, and also to go to Gallia to visit *the* brothers and to see *the* faces of *the* holy-ones of *the* Lord. But he was bound by *the* spirit, who was witnessing to him, that if he were to do this, he would be designated as guilty. And *besides this*, *Patricius* feared to lose *the* labor which he had *already* begun, and not him, but Christ *the* Lord, who ordered him to come *to Hibernia* to be with them for *the* rest of his life.

And if it was *the* Lord's will, *he prayed* that *the* Lord would guard him from every evil way, so that he might not sin before him. For every day his flesh warred against him in *an* attempt to drag him to death by indulging in illicit pleasures. But, with *the* love and fear of God growing in him, and with *the* Lord's help, *he fought against its desires* and kept *the* faith.

CHAPTER 4

Now in the same way that Patricius lived among *his* brothers, in true faith and in sincerity of heart, he also lived in good faith toward *the* nations among which he was living. He was not crooked with even one of them, nor did he ever think of doing so, lest he would arouse persecution of them and of all of *the* Christians, and lest *the* Lord's name would be reviled on account of him.

For though *Patricius* was inexperienced in most things, however, he tried to preserve himself, even from *the* brothers, *the* Christians, and *the* virgins of Christ and *the* religious women who were giving small gifts to him which he never asked for. And they would cast some of their ornaments on *the* altar, and he

would return them. And they were offended at him because he would do this. But it was because of *the* hope of eternity that he was acting cautiously in everything, in case *an* unbeliever would entrap him or his ministry⁵ of service. Nor did he want to give to those who were incredulous even *the* most minute *reason* for defaming or belittling him. However, *even* when he immersed so many thousands of humans, he did not hope to receive even *a* half *a* cent⁶ from them. Or when *the* Lord ordained allotted-ones everywhere through his humble *efforts*, and *Patricius* freely gave them this ministry,⁷ he did not ask from them even for *the* price of his shoes.

Instead, he spent himself on their behalf. And he traveled everywhere among them for their own sake, in many dangers, *enduring* many perils *even* to extreme parts of *the* world where no one had ever went further and where no one had ever reached, in order to immerse *and* to ordain allotted-ones *and* to bring people to completion. It was by *the* Lord's gift that he diligently and most willingly did everything for their salvation.

At this time, *Patricius* gave gifts to kings, in addition to *the* wages which he gave to their sons who traveled with him. And nevertheless, they seized him and his companions, and on one day desired to kill him, but *the* time had not yet come. And *these men* stole everything which they found on *Patricius* and *his* companions, and they put him in iron chains. And on *the* fourteenth day, *the* Lord freed *Patricius* from their power, and *the* things which were theirs were given back to them because of God and because of *the* friends which they had previously made.

However, they themselves experienced how much *Patricius* spent on those who were judges over⁸ all of *the* regions which he frequently visited. He calculated that he gave out not less than *the* price of fifteen humans, so that they might enjoy him, and that he might always enjoy them in God. He did not regret *this* action, nor was it sufficient for him, *for* he still spent, and *was willing to spend even* more. *And since* *the* Lord is powerful, *Patricius* knew that *God* was still able to grant him *the* grace to spend *even* his very self for *the* sake of their souls. *And although* every day he expected that he would be killed, or defrauded, or enslaved, or have any other such thing happen to him, he was not afraid of any of these things, because of *the* promises of *the* heavens, which *were causing him* to cast himself into the hands of Almighty God.

For this reason, *Patricius* prayed, "May God never let it happen that I might lose his community which he has purchased in *the* ends of *the* earth. I pray that God may give to me perseverance, and that he would allow me to be *a* faithful testifier to him until *the* time of my passing from *this* life, for *the* sake of my God. And if I have ever imitated anything good for *the* sake of my God whom I love, I ask that he grant me to be able to shed my blood with these converts and captives – even if I were to lack *a* burial-place, or my cadaver were to be miserably torn apart limb from limb by dogs or beasts, or *the* birds of *the* heaven were to devour it. I declare with certainty that if this were to happen, I would have gained both my soul along with my body—because, without any doubt *at all*, on that *final* day, we will rise-again in *the* splendor of *the* sun, that is, in *the* glory of Christ Jesus our redeemer, like sons of *the* living God and joint-heirs of Christ and

⁵ Latin "ministerium" (a word not related to "diaconum", which is translated to "minister")

⁶ literally "screppall"

⁷ Latin "ministerium" (a word not related to "diaconum", which is translated to "minister")

⁸ literally "who judged"

to be fashioned in his image, since it is from him and through him and in him that we are to reign.”

CHAPTER 5

Now on one occasion, some soldiers, rather robbers, of the hostile-minded Coroticus (men who had been called brothers, but on account of their evil works were far from the love of God and were now fellow-citizens of demons and allies of the apostate Scots and Picts), stained themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, whose numbers *Patricius* had begotten in God and confirmed in Christ. For on the very next day after the new-converts were anointed with chrism and were in white clothing—the fragrance still on their foreheads—they were cruelly butchered and slaughtered by the sword of these soldiers, and any Christian survivors were betrayed into the hands of the Scots and Picts, being sold to a foreign nation which had no knowledge of God. And the soldiers filled their houses with the spoils of the dead Christians, living on these acts of plundering.

At once, *Patricius* sent a letter to the soldiers of Coroticus by a holy elder (whom he had taught from his infancy), together with allotted-ones, to ask that the soldiers return to them some of the plunder or the immersed captives whom they had seized. But the soldiers only made jeerings at them.

For this reason, *Patricius* did not know whether to grieve more for those who had been killed, or for those who were seized; or for those patricides, fratricides, whom the Slanderer had so deeply ensnared, who, together with him, will be enslaved in the perennial punishment of Gehenna; because whoever commits a sin is a slave and is called a son of the Slanderer.

Yet, there was nothing *Patricius* could do for the sons of God who died by the sword; instead, all he could do was weep for its sons and daughters, who were not yet killed by the sword but who were exported to distant lands, crying aloud with sadness and grief. But yet he rejoiced within himself, for he had not labored in vain—for being immersed believers, those who died, having left this present age, have gone to the Garden.

Therefore, because of this wicked deed, *Patricius* sent forth a letter, composed and written by his own hand, to be given to the soldiers of Coroticus. First of all, he asked that every man who was holy and humble of heart would not flatter such evil men, nor even share food or drink with them, nor receive their alms, until the time might come that they would change-their-minds severely, pouring out all their tears to God, and that they free the servants of God and the immersed handmaids of Christ, for whom he died and was crucified. And secondly, *Patricius*, through the words of the holy writings, rebuked Coroticus along with his criminals, rebels against Christ, for their wickedness, who had gone so far as to distribute immersed women as prizes for a miserable temporal kingdom which passes away in a moment.

Now following the death of *Patricius*, all sorts of fabricated and fantastical fictions regarding his life arose, to which there is no authenticity, including using a shamrock to illustrate a certain theory of the nature of God, and the banishing of all snakes from Ireland, and many other ridiculous tales, along with various relics of falsity.