

ability to gain the verdict from any honest and competent jury.

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In the particular discussion as carried on in the *Register*, the Anglican controversialist appeared to insist that a direct mission for St. Patrick from Pope Celestine must be proved, and proved exclusively from the scanty and casual writings of the saint himself. This is unscholarly and absurd (1) Because it proceeds on the ignorant assumption that his mission would be non-Roman, or anti-Roman, or at least independent of Rome, unless St. Patrick were sent directly by the Pope or by special papal mandate. No well-informed person would hold such a supposition. The discipline of the Church in St. Patrick's day neither required his presence nor his consecration in Rome. The need of spreading the Gospel was great, and communication with the Pope was a slow and difficult, and often perilous, undertaking. Hence the Churches of Gaul, Italy, Africa, and Spain, which received the faith from Roman missionaries, had generally the privilege, down to St. Patrick's day, of appointing their own archbishops and bishops. There is evidence that the saint's mission had the direct sanction of the Holy See. That it had at least an indirect Roman sanction is as certain as that the saint lived. (2) Because it takes no account of the light thrown upon St. Patrick's writings by (a) subsequent documents; (b) by the known Catholic character of the Christianity that flourished in Ireland soon after St. Patrick's day, and which, in the absence of absolute proof to the contrary, we are entitled to assume was the faith planted by the Apostle of Ireland; and (c) by the known Catholic and Roman character of the Christianity that prevailed in Wales, Gaul, etc.—countries with which the Irish before, in, and after St. Patrick's days, had free and frequent intercourse. In any honest attempt to get at the facts these considerations cannot be excluded.

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Another important element in any discussion on this subject is the character and standing and critical value of the authorities quoted. The Rev. W. H. Winter, for example, appeared to pin his faith largely to Dr. Todd, whose *Life of St. Patrick* he declared to be 'one of the most learned ever written.' The learning is admitted; but the work is so biassed and one-sided and is so obviously written to support a theory that it is of little value on controverted points. As Morris points out, Dr. Todd's book 'was written for controversial purposes during the excitement of the agitation on the question of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and the dignitary of the Establishment fell into the snare of using a great historic question in the interests of his party.' Professor Bury is still more emphatic. The work of Todd, he says, 'left me doubtful about every fact connected with Patrick's life. The radical vice of the book is that the indispensable substructure is lacking. The preliminary task of criticising the sources methodically had never been performed. . . . It is clear that he was anxious to establish a particular thesis. . . . In other words, he approached a historical problem, with a distinct preference for one solution rather than another; and this preference was due to an interest totally irrelevant to mere historical truth' (Preface to *Life of St. Patrick*, 1905, pages vi., vii.). Partly owing to this lack of critical method, and partly through the polemical spirit in which he wrote, Dr. Todd falls into many errors in his book. Out of many such instances which might be mentioned we merely refer at the present moment to his error in reference to the invocation of saints in the early Irish Church. He sought to uphold this error by changing the word 'Helias' to 'Eli,' and thus positively corrupting a true reading in the *Confession* of St. Patrick, where the saint calls upon St. Helias to help him.

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The evidence, if so it can be called, which is advanced against the Roman mission and teaching of St. Patrick rests mainly on the purely negative argument drawn from the silence of certain writers, and on one or two alleged verbal difficulties in respect to the

genuineness of the canons and sayings attributed to the saint. Taking the last point first, it may with confidence be said that the verbal difficulties are far from being sufficient to bear the strain of the sweeping and far-reaching conclusions which have been based upon them. The Rev. W. H. Winter, for example, referring to the famous canon of St. Patrick ordering disputed points to be referred to Rome, declared with his customary assertiveness that the presence of the word 'archbishop' in the text as given in the *Book of Armagh* 'betrayed a clumsy forger's hand' and 'stamped the canon as a forgery.' Dr. Todd himself, however, disposes of this contention. The word used in the early records of the Irish Church, as he shows, was *Ard-episcop*, meaning a chief or eminent bishop. These documents were written by Irishmen to whom the vernacular word was familiar; and 'it is most natural,' says Todd, 'that the authors, if they wrote in Latin, or the translators, if the original were in Irish, should have rendered the word *Ard-episcop* by the seemingly equivalent *Archbishop*' (*St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland*, p. 16). The exact meaning of the original is not, according to Todd, correctly conveyed by the term 'archbishop'; but the theory that the mere presence of the word is proof of forgery or is an argument against the genuineness of the passage in which it occurs falls to the ground. In the canon as it appears in the *Hibernensis* the word 'archbishop' does not occur at all; and the *Hibernensis* is the more ancient authority of the two. And while denying St. Patrick's direct commission from Pope Celestine, Todd makes no such objection to a real Roman mission for the saint. 'If we acknowledge, as we must do,' he says, 'the Roman mission of Palladius, as well as the Roman mission of Augustine of Canterbury, it is difficult to see what is to be gained by denying the Roman mission of Patrick' (*Op. Cit. Preface*, p. vi.). A similar instance of the break-down of an argument based on a supposed verbal difficulty in the text is furnished in the case of the objection which has sometimes been urged against the use of the words 'Roman' and 'Romans' in the third *Dictum* (or 'Saying') of St. Patrick, which is now generally recognised as genuine. The *Dictum* runs thus: 'The Church of the Scots (i.e., Irish) is a Church of the Romans. Be Christians, but in such wise as to be Romans also.' It has been said that St. Patrick could never have used '*Romanorum*' and '*Romani*' in this sense; but, as Professor MacCaffrey (*Catholic Bulletin*, March, 1911) points out, a reference to his letter to Coroticus—one of the admittedly genuine writings of St. Patrick—puts it beyond doubt that he did actually use those words in the sense for which Catholic writers contend. We have turned up the passage and give it herewith: '*Non dico ciuibus meis, ciuibus sanctorum Romanorum*'—'I do not say to my fellow-citizens or to the fellow citizens of the holy Romans.' Thus the strongest—if not the only—argument against the genuineness of this 'saying' of the saint disappears. We have already dealt sufficiently with the argument from silence. 'An argument from silence,' says Professor Stokes, of Trinity College, in his article on St. Patrick (*Dict. of Ch. Biog.*), 'is notoriously an unsafe one; there are so many reasons which may lead a writer to pass over even a burning topic in his day.' The saying of Stokes is of itself a sufficient refutation of this purely negative argument.

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We had hoped to quote, from the mass of material available, a number of other testimonies, in addition to those we have already cited, to the unmistakably Roman character of the teaching of St. Patrick and the early Irish Church; but our space has run out. Nor is further elaboration on this point necessary. The recognised usage of the Christian Church at the time, more especially of those churches with which we know that St. Patrick was in connection, the actions and writings of the sixth and seventh century Irish saints, the testimony of each and all of St. Patrick's biographers, and of his own canons and exhortations, furnish a chain of evidence the cumulative force of which is irresistible.

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