

St. Patrick's Day

Saturday is St. Patrick's Day, a celebration of the patron saint of Ireland and one of the most successful missionaries in history. Born in Britain near the end of the 4th Century, 16-year-old Patrick was carried off as a slave by Irish raiders. He served as a herdsman in Ireland for six years before escaping and returning home.

After a dream called him to return to Ireland to preach the gospel, he spent years in study and preparation before traveling back to Ireland.

For 30 years, Patrick converted the Irish people tribe by tribe, planting hundreds of churches before his death in approximately A.D. 460. Many people believe that Patrick's use of the shamrock to explain the Trinity led to its becoming the traditional symbol of Ireland.

Some people want to dismiss the concept of the Trinity, yet the three-fold nature of God is seen throughout the Bible. Genesis 1:1-2 shows that God and the Spirit were present at creation. John 1:1-3 reveals that Jesus also participated. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit took the form of a dove, while God the Father spoke from heaven (Matthew 3:16-17).

Our finite brains struggle to understand a God Who is three and one at the same time. Now we only know things incompletely (1 Corinthians 13:9). Later, we will understand completely (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Then knowledge of the Trinity will be as plain as the leaves on a shamrock.

It is sad that St. Patrick's Day, for many, has come to be a day for hard-drinking of alcoholic beverages leading to drunkenness, rather than a day devoted to contemplation of the grace and mercy of God and the spiritual commitment to which Patrick gave his life.

--Beecher Hunter