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The Ulster Protestant and the Williamite wars in Ireland, Part 2

Some of the data given in this chapter is dated. The names of Government ministers and laws passed back in the '80s and '90s are obviously out of date, but the application we seek to make of the lessons from 300 years ago can easily be seen in the actions of Popery and its allies in high office today.

Introduction.

I was invited by Rev Ian Harris, minister of Carrickfergus Free Presbyterian Church, to hold a week of meetings in his church in June 1990. The theme was the events in Ireland during the Glorious Revolution. Carrickfergus, the town in which William, the Prince of Orange, landed on his way from England to the Battle of the Boyne, was to be the main venue for activities to mark the tercentenary of the Glorious Revolution. Consequently, Rev Harris and his congregation were anxious to set before the town the spiritual significance of the events of 1690.

I began the week of meetings on Lord's Day, June 3rd and continued until Friday 8th. During the activities in the town, most of which were organised by the Orange Order, the Free Presbyterian Church distributed 20,000 gospel tracts and leaflets. The messages I delivered in the church were later published in The Burning Bush, a magazine which I edit. Following their appearance in the magazine, I was asked to consider printing them as a booklet. Hence this publication.

The unchanging tricks of Popery

The Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that Satan is a creature of habit. He is bound by his own depravity. He is given over to opposing a God who never changes. God pursues His eternal purpose without interruption or disturbance. Satan's malignant nature binds him and enslaves him to doing all he can to oppose God. It is this inflexible implacability we all have observed in Romanism, one of Satan's chief agencies. It may, for a season, submerge its objectives and ambitions, waiting for a more favourable environment in which to pursue its goals, but it never abandons them.

ROME'S BLUEPRINT

History, therefore, presents us with a blueprint of Rome's present and future strategy by revealing her past activities. No period of history is more fruitful for this purpose than that of the 17th century. Tonight, in the context of the conflict in Ireland in the period leading up to the battle of the Boyne, we shall consider 'The unchanging tricks of popery.'

Last night we considered how James II, an open Romanist, made immediate efforts to undo the advances of Protestantism in Ireland. Of course, he was pursuing a parallel course in England and in Scotland but we are concentrating on our own land. Tonight, we shall go into greater detail on the exact methods he employed. Such a study will perhaps help us to judge rightly what is taking place in Ulster today. When examining the actions of someone who is apparently intent on your hurt, you take a much sterner attitude on discovering that it is not the first time that this person has plotted your downfall. Should it be disclosed that he has, despite professions of affection, repeatedly schemed such evil, and on many occasions come near to success, and on those occasions demonstrated that the objective was nothing short of the extirpation of you and all that you have, then you will quite rightly take a very stern view of him indeed. Rome today must be viewed and evaluated in light of Rome yesterday. Three hundred years ago, our fathers faced a situation where Rome was reasserting herself with the aid of the highest power in the land: King James II. Rome's effort at reasserting her dominance was launched through a number of channels all of which were controlled by the bitter Romanist, the Earl of Tyrconnel - the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland. He had been appointed by King James II to carry out the King's plan of Romanising the administration of the land. The King's plan was very simple.



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I. ALL SECULAR AND ECCLESIASTICAL POWER WAS TO BE GATHERED INTO THE HANDS OF ROMANISTS.

The elements of this particular plan were to be seen in the following:

a. The army was deprotestantised. We dealt with this matter last night. Suffice for us to say that the officer corps was purged of Protestants and to a slightly lesser degree the lower ranks were likewise purged. Protestant officers and soldiers were removed on the most frivolous pretexts, and their places filled exclusively by Roman Catholics, whose priests were advanced to military chaplaincies. (Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Volume II, page 346.)

b. Civil authority was placed in the hands of Romanists. The new deputy applied himself with vigour to the multiplied duties of his office. Having already succeeded in placing the military power of the State in the hands of the Romanist, his next attempt was to transfer to the same party the civil and corporate authority of the kingdom. A recent convert to Popery was accordingly made lord-chancellor, though wholly unfit, in point of knowledge and integrity, for this high station; and by the rapid advancement of the professors of the same faith, only three Protestants, and these of little weight, were left upon the bench. At the same time, the office of attorney-general was also transferred from a Protestant to a Roman Catholic; while the more lucrative and influential situations in the courts of law and the collection of the revenue were bestowed on the adherents of the favoured creed. Of the high-sheriffs for the year 1687, one only was a Protestant, and this person, the sheriff for Donegal, had been appointed by mistake in lieu of a Romanist of the same name.

Though the way had been already opened for the admission of Roman Catholics to corporations, by proclamations in defiance of the law, this measure was found inadequate to subject these bodies, as speedily as was desired, to the control of that party. A further encroachment on corporate rights was the necessary result. Intimidation and flattery induced a few of the less considerable towns to surrender their charters; but the refractory cities, which dared to be independent, were harassed by proceedings at law. The obsequious and servile judges uniformly pronounced judgment against their rights. Their charters were recalled, new corporations were constituted, consisting either altogether of Romanists, or with a few Protestants intermixed merely to save appearances, and in a short time the corporate property and jurisdiction throughout Ireland were exclusively vested in the ascendant party. The first corporation in Ulster which was reconstructed in this arbitrary manner was Dungannon; its municipal officers were appointed in March, 1688. In the month of August, Strabane and Derry, in the following month, Armagh and Belfast, were placed under the exclusive control of Roman Catholics. To other corporations in Ulster no charters were in the meantime granted. (Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Volume II, page 347-8.)

c. Ecclesiastical power began to pass from the Established church into Rome's hands. Tyrconnel was a little more cautious in this area but the trend was manifestly clear. To the Roman Catholic prelates liberal pensions were allocated out of the revenues of the vacant sees, to which that of Clogher was now added. The Popish clergy wore with ostentation their clerical habits, and in many parishes the priests sought to dispossess the legal incumbents of their tithes, and appropriate them to their own use. To encourage the Protestant ministers to conform to the favoured Church, dispensations were granted to the few who apostasised, empowering them to continue in possession of their benefices, notwithstanding their renunciation of the established religion - an exercise of the prerogative hitherto unprecedented. The most noted of these converts was Dr. Peter Manby. He was educated in Trinity College, Dublin, obtained a scholarship in 1667, and in September, 1672, was preferred to the deanery of Derry. Soon after Tyrconnel's arrival as lord-deputy, an accession of light burst on his mind; he very seasonably discovered, at one and the same time, the errors, as well as the inconveniences, of Protestantism; he made formal profession of the Romish faith, and in July, 1687, a dispensation was issued, continuing him in the undisturbed enjoyment of the temporalities annexed to the deanery. (Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vol. II, pages 348-9.)

II. THIS TRANSFER OF POWER WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY MEANS THAT ARE EMBRYONIC OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TODAY.



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Solomon said, "There is no new thing under the sun". I think that this is demonstrated very clearly in the affairs of nations. James' plan to Romanise Ireland included of necessity a stripping of Protestants of their rights and status. This he sought to accomplish by:

a. The violating of the education rights of Protestants and endowing Rome with the benefits of that violation. Funds intended to provide a sound Protestant education were employed in supporting popish seminaries; and in one remarkable case a teacher, who had conducted with great efficiency a school founded at Kilkenny by the Duke of Ormonde, was driven from the place; and the building converted into a military hospital. A Jesuits' school was established in the same town; and a charter provided for a college. The University of Dublin did not escape the injurious interference of the Government. Even during the administration of the Earl of Clarendon, the King's mandate, addressed to the Provost and Fellows, required them to admit a Romanist, named Green, to the Professorship of the Irish language with all its emoluments and arrears of salary; but, as no such office existed, the attempt proved abortive. At a subsequent period James proposed completely to alter the constitution of the College, and to fill the Fellowships with the adherents of his own religion. The policy pursued by this infatuated monarch and his agents indicated a determination to root Protestantism out of Ireland. (Killen's Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, Vol. II, page 164.)

b. The business and property rights of Protestants were scrutinised in order to discover any possible defects in their title deeds and laws passed whereby they could be 'legally' plundered. Lawyers were employed to discover defects in the title-deeds of their lands. (Killen's Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, Vol. II, page 165.) These methods were not productive enough and so in 1688, the King summoned the Irish Parliament, almost exclusively Romanist, and the Acts of Settlement and Explanation were repealed. This was done in direct contradiction of the King's repeated promises given at the start of his reign. This stripped Protestant land owners of land given to them and purchased by them in earlier times following the 1641 rebellion. Another Act passed by this Parliament declared approximately 2,400 persons of standing and influence guilty of treason. This was based on their absence from Ireland and the assumption that they had joined the forces of William. These persons were to suffer death unless they surrendered before a certain date. That condition was deliberately concealed so that no one had an opportunity of making a proper defence of himself. A further clause prevented even the King from pardoning anyone after an appointed date had been passed.

c. While the scheme to Romanise Ireland was advancing, an attempt was made to conceal what was happening behind the show of charity. In April 1687 and again in 1688, James II, on his own authority, published his Declaration of Indulgence. It suspended the penal laws against Roman Catholics and Non-conformists alike. When these restrictions were lifted Presbyterians were glad but not grateful to the King. They considered him insincere and suspected his motives. Their attitude is manifested in that no formal expression of gratitude was offered. They were of course right in their judgment. Under the guise of assisting Nonconformists, he was intent on advancing Romanists. The Presbyterians had the Regium Donum, an annual grant begun by Charles II in 1672, withdrawn. The ministers of the Episcopal Church were forbidden to discuss controversial topics in the pulpit while no such restriction was placed upon priests. Vacant parishes, where the appointment of ministers lay with the crown, were permitted to remain without a pastor and so decline. Worse still, sometimes men of ill-repute were appointed. A policy ensued whereby Protestants were harassed on every hand. Popish magistrates turned a deaf ear to their complaints. Robbers, who infested the country, were given a free hand to spoil them.

Today's parallel

The parallel with today's events is clear. Democracy based upon majority rule has been deliberately destroyed in Ulster. Edward Heath, the Conservative Prime Minister, destroyed Stormont in 1972 and with it democracy. Since then direct rule from London has had to be endured. We see the Roman Catholic community invested with a political veto on all that takes place in Ulster. Dublin, the voice of political Romanism, must give her approval to London's plans before they can be enacted. If Dublin demurs, irrespective of what the majority says in Ulster, then the plans of London are scrapped. Today, Protestant businesses are plundered by The Fair Employment Commission. A policy of employing members of the Roman Catholic community,



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irrespective of ability is, in effect, in operation in Ulster. The Fair Employment laws are applied one-sidedly. Little notice seems to be taken of the firms where no Protestants are employed at all. While this goes on, Protestant firms which work for security forces have their employees murdered. They must capitulate and withdraw from such contracts and so oftentimes face financial ruin or else face the prospect of their employees being murdered with impunity.

Education in Ulster is another field of activity where every effort is being made to undermine Protestantism. The Government-sponsored Education for Mutual Understanding under the guidance of Education Minister, Dr. Brian Mawhinney, has been rightly called an Exercise in Mutilating and Undermining Protestantism. Priests are being brought in to teach children about popery under the guise of history and other subjects on the compulsory curriculum. These being compulsory, parents have no right under the law to withdraw their children from such instruction.

A gag

The Government has prepared a gag for our Protestant ministers just like the one James II attempted to use. The Public Order 1987 (Order) was passed at Dublin's insistence. Its powers are extensive.

For the first time in Northern Ireland the R.U.C. is given the power to impose conditions on open-air meetings. They can now bring such meetings to an abrupt end, prevent people attending or order those present to leave, and change the place of the meetings. The Secretary of State is also given the new power to ban such meetings. There is no limit on the type of meeting being held so that even religious services come within the scope of the Order. And, unlike the English Act, it applies to all meetings no matter how small. In all cases the English Act draws a distinction between organisers of parades and meetings on the one hand and participants on the other. The Northern Ireland Order draws no such distinction and in all cases the penalties are much more severe. (Ulster in Chains — a leaflet by Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley.)

Open house

The I.R.A. has been given the freedom to maintain its crushing grip upon the Protestant community with the aim of driving them out of Ulster or of making them amenable to a United Ireland under Rome. Dublin will not extradite those terrorists who seek refuge within her territory. That territory has been described by the chairman of the N.I. Police Federation, Mr. Sam Beattie, as "an open house to murderers, bombers and gunmen" and the Irish Government as "lacking in political guts". It has to be said that the Police Federation chairman has little room to talk since he is a member of a police force led by officers who are prepared to accept a high level of humiliation at the hands of the IRA. The RUC's failure to apprehend anyone for the murder of eleven Protestants in Enniskillen on November 8th 1987, (and many others before and since) will stand for ever as a shameful blot on its name.

Over and above all these matters is the betrayal of Protestantism by the ecumenical churches. It is they, by their siren song of Peace Peace, who have lulled the Protestant people into a stupor. Thus stupefied they fall easy victims to Rome's craft and guile. Ulster Protestants today face the same fate as did our forefathers 300 years ago - annihilation of our faith, freedom and future. Unless, and here we must look to God to intervene, the Protestant people of Ulster awaken and discover the treachery that is being employed against them by their ancient foe - Romanism, then the scheme of James II will succeed, though long hindered by the Providence of God.

To be continued.