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THE ULSTER PROTESTANT AND THE WILLIAMITE WARS IN IRELAND

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 Williamite Wars did not end with the victory at the Boyne. Hostilities continued into 1691. In July 1691 there was the victory of Aghrim. The Wars ended with the defeat of the Irish forces at the siege of Limerick. The military terms that ended the siege allowed 14,000 Irish soldiers to leave Ireland with their arms and enter the service of the King of France. The civil articles of surrender, couched in the spirit of tolerance in keeping with the attitude of King William, were not ratified by Parliament though signed and agreed to by William's general, Baron van Reede-Ginkel. Instead, there was issued the first of what became known as the penal laws.

The information contained in this booklet is chiefly for young people, though I have no doubt that the older generation will also enjoy its contents. The objective of Satan, through the Ecumenical Movement in the churches and the classrooms of the State school system, is the concealing of the true significance of the glorious events of the past when the God of Heaven intervened in the affairs of our nation for the good of His people and the glory of His name. Jeremiah encountered just such a scheme of concealment. "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceits of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal." Jeremiah 23:25-27.

I hope this publication counters that objective to some degree.

I would like to thank Mrs Sharon Kirker, a member of Carrickfergus Free Presbyterian Church, for the drawing of Carrickfergus Castle which we have used on the front cover of the publication.

May the Lord be pleased to bless this testimony to the honouring of His grace and mercy to our forefathers.

I have decided to republish the articles for we all need reminding of the mercy of God to our forefathers long ago.

Here is the final article.

Chapter 6: The Protestantism of the Prince of Orange

A man's faith is not displayed by one word nor is it destroyed by one act. Otherwise we must consider Judas a true believer and David and Peter false and empty professors.

William, Prince of Orange, was not a perfect man. Faults and sins are to be found by those who study his words and actions. Yet I believe it can be truthfully said that the general spirit of William's words and life is



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

that of a Christian Statesman.

Chief Magistrate

He was born on November 14th 1650 at the Hague, the son of William II, Prince of Orange and Mary, the daughter of Charles I of England. Following the death of his father, the House of Orange fell into disfavour. It was not until 1672, when the Netherlands were attacked by France and England, that William was appointed stadholder, or chief magistrate, and captain general of the Netherlands, the position his father had held. The Netherlands suffered defeats at the hands of England and France at first. By establishing an alliance with the Emperor Leopold I and the Elector of Brandenburg and also with Spain, William very cleverly augmented his forces and eventually England and France had to sue for peace. The French King, Louis XIV, was thus frustrated by the man who was to become the Protestant champion of Europe.

In 1671 William married his cousin Mary, daughter of James, Duke of York, the future James II of England. William was, by his own birth, fourth in line to the English throne. His marriage to the heir apparent gave him added status in England. It was for this reason that the leaders of Protestantism in England began to like to him more and more and urged him to intervene when it became clear that James II was determined to establish Romanism in England once again. It is a token of the wonderful favour God has shown to these islands that at such a time of danger and crisis there was such a man as William to whom the people could look. When we see the outcome of many so-called revolutions through the centuries in which the people were delivered from the frying pan only to be catapulted into the fire, we must bless God that what happened at the time of the "Glorious Revolution" established religious freedom and social stability that have endured to our own day - 300 years later. The chief instrument of Providence in this great event was William, Prince of Orange. I believe we can see in him the evidence of God's grace. We shall endeavour to highlight these evidences of grace in William, the Protestant deliverer.

Firstly, William proves himself to have had a true affection for the Reformed faith by his stand for it in Europe.

Louis XIV, king of France, was the most powerful monarch in Europe. He was the pope's champion. He was a veritable Goliath. The United Provinces of the Netherlands were a mere pygmy, geographically, militarily and materially, in comparison to France. William was a David who just about possessed a sling and stone and yet he resisted the popish scheming of Louis diplomatically and militarily with eminent success. He did this to such a degree that he completely neutralised France's attempts to re-establish the pope's empire in continental Europe. To have undertaken such an enterprise required motivation greater than mere nationalism. Others had sought peace with France but William refused to bow his or his people's neck under Louis' papal yoke. It was his love for the Reformed Faith which brought him to England and enabled him to endure the inestimable hardships that such an enterprise entailed. William was weak of body and constitution and undoubtedly it was his labours in the interests of Protestantism that brought about his untimely death in 1702.

SECONDLY, THE PURPOSE OF WILLIAM'S INTERVENTION IN ENGLAND CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES HIS ALLEGIANCE TO PROTESTANTISM.

The banner William unfurled at Torbay in Devon, on 5th November 1688, declared, "The Protestant Religion and the liberties of England I will maintain". From the very first, he was motivated by a desire to consolidate Protestantism in Europe, with the English throne as its power base. In response to the cheers of the populace who greeted him as he marched to London, he doffed his plumed hat and said, "Thank you, good people; I am come to secure the Protestant religion, and to free you from popery". His reply to the greetings of some dissenting ministers upon his arrival in London is also worth noting. "My great end was the preservation of the Protestant religion; and with the Almighty's assistance and permission, so to defend and support the same, as may give it strength and reputation throughout the world, sufficient to preserve it from the insults and oppression of its most implacable enemies; and that more immediately in these kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and I will use my utmost endeavours, so to settle and cement all different persuasions of Protestants in such a bond of love and community, as may contribute to the lasting security



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

and enjoyment of spirituals and temporals to all sincere professors of that holy religion." {Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. III, page 312.}

If ever a King kept his promise to his people it was William, Prince of Orange. He was a man guided by the Word of God. "It is an abomination to Kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of Kings; and they love him that speaketh right," Proverbs 16:12-13.

THIRDLY, THE EXPECTATIONS THAT WILLIAM RAISED IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF GODLY MEN AND WOMEN IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND AND THE SUCCESS OF HIS ENTERPRISE TO SAVE THE KINGDOM FROM POPERY, SHOWS THAT HE WAS VIEWED AS A MAN OF GOD BY THOSE WHO HAD BEEN LONG CRYING FOR DELIVERANCE AND A MAN SENT OF GOD TO ACCOMPLISH THAT DELIVERANCE.

The truly liberal attitudes of the Prince and Princess of Orange are to be found in their response to correspondence addressed to them from the court of James II. We quote again from Neal's history of the period. "The princess answered the King's letter with great respect; she affirmed the right of private judgment, according to the apostle's rule, of proving all things, and holding fast that which is good. She saw clearly from the Scriptures that she must not believe by the faith of another, but according as things appeared to herself. She confessed, if there was an infallibility in the church, all other controversies must fall before it, but that it was not yet agreed where it was lodged, whether in a pope, or a general council, or both; and she desired to know in whom the infallibility rested when there were two or three popes at a time, acting one against another; for certainly the succession must then be disordered. She maintained the lawfulness and necessity of reading the Holy Scriptures; for, though faith was above reason, it proposed nothing contradictory to it. St. Paul ordered his epistles to be read in all the churches; and he says in one place, 'I write as to wise men, judge ye what I say:' and if they might judge an apostle, much more any other teacher."

A further reply to correspondence sent to them augments this point.

"No Christian ought to be persecuted for his conscience, or be ill used because he differs from the established religion; and therefore they agreed that the Papists in Scotland and Ireland should have the free exercise of their religion in private as they had in Holland; and as to Protestant dissenters, they heartily approved of their having an entire liberty of their religion, without any trouble or hindrance; and their highnesses were ready to concur in the settling it, and giving their guarantee to protect and defend it. If his majesty desired their concurrence in repealing the penal laws, they were ready to give it, provided the laws by which Roman Catholics were excluded from sitting in both houses of parliament, and from all employments, ecclesiastical, civil, and military, remained in force; and likewise those other laws which secure the Protestant religion against all attempts of the Roman Catholics; but they could not consent to the repeal of those laws which tended only to secure the Protestant religion, such as the tests, because they imported no more than a deprivation from public employments, which could do them no great harm. If the number of the Papists were inconsiderable, it was not reasonable to insist upon it; and if those few that pretend to public employments would do their party so much injury as not to be content with the repeal of the penal laws, unless they could get into offices of trust, their ambition only was to be blamed." {Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. III, pages 296-7.}

This correspondence was an attempt by James II to win over William and his wife to popery and so remove the threat of a Protestant successor to the throne of England. A great deal of this correspondence was made known to the people of England in the form of leaflets. It did much to centre the people's hopes on William and Mary.

Dissenters

When William arrived in London he was addressed on behalf of dissenting ministers by Dr. Bates. Dr. Bates' address reads as follows: "The series of successful events which have attended your glorious enterprise for the saving of these kingdoms from so imminent and destructive evils, has been so eminent and extraordi-



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

nary, that it may force an acknowledgment of the divine providence from those who deny it, and cause admiration in all who believe and reverence it. The beauty and speed of this happy work are the bright signatures of His hand, who creates deliverance for his people: the less of human power, the more of divine wisdom and goodness has been conspicuous in it. If the deliverance had been obtained by fierce and bloody battles, victory itself had been dejected and sad, and our joy had been mixed with afflicting bitterness; but as the sun, ascending the horizon, dispels without noise the darkness of the night, so your serene presence has, without tumults and disorders, chased away the darkness that invaded us. In the sense of this astonishing deliverance, we desire with all possible ardency of affection to magnify the glorious name of God, the author of it, by whose entire efficacy the means have been successful; and we cannot without a warm rapture of thankfulness recount our obligations to your majesty, the happy instrument of it. Your illustrious greatness of mind, in an undertaking of such vast expense, your heroic zeal in exposing your most precious life in such an adventurous expedition, your wise conduct and unshaken resolution in prosecuting your great ends, are above the loftiest flights of language, exceed all praise." (Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. III, page 314.)

The Dissenters had suffered much under the Stuart kings and had long prayed for a deliverer. They saw in William an answer to their prayers. They also saw in the series of successful events which attended the King's enterprise, divine confirmation of him as God's man.

FOURTHLY, THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE SHOWS THAT THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE REVOLUTION WAS A MAN UNDER THE RESTRAINING INFLUENCE OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

Civil and religious liberty is the hallmark of Bible Christianity. It was also the motto of William and the prevailing mark of the revolution he led. Not one Roman Catholic civilian was killed in England during the revolution. Even when London erupted into anti-papist riots following the flight of James and popish premises were plundered and burned, no papist lost his life. What a contrast with the events in Ireland in 1641 during the attempted Roman Catholic revolution there or with the revolution that took place in France in 1798, when tens of thousands were slaughtered! What a contrast with the persecution suffered by Protestants in the days of Mary, Charles II and James II! When William addressed parliament for the first time on March 16th 1689 it was for tolerance he pleaded. "Now I have occasion of coming hither to pass these bills, I shall put you in mind of one thing which will conduce much to our settlement, as a settlement will to the disappointment of our enemies. I am, with all the expedition I can, filling up the vacancies that are in the offices and places of trust by this late revolution. I hope you are sensible there is a necessity of some law to settle the oaths to be taken by all persons to be admitted to such places. I recommend it to your care to make a speedy provision for it; and as I doubt not but you will sufficiently provide against Papists, so I hope you will leave room for the admission of all Protestants that are willing and able to serve. This conjunction in my service will tend to the better uniting you among yourselves, and the strengthening you against your common enemies." William should be honoured for the display of true grace to be found in the following words of his: "We never could be of that mind that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion; nor do we intend that our authority shall ever be a tool to the irregular passions of any party." (Green's Short History of the English People.)

FIFTHLY, THE KINGDOM WILLIAM LEFT BEHIND DECLARES HIM TO HAVE BEEN A TRUE CHILD OF GOD.

If seeking first the welfare and advancement of the Kingdom of God is the chief objective of a Christian does not William deserve that title? If aiding the suffering people of God at the jeopardising of one's own life is the mark of a true believer, then ought we not to view William as one? William died in 1702 on March 19th. He died a man worn out by his labours. He had been at the forefront of the battle against popery in Europe since 1671 when as a mere stripling of 21 he assumed the leadership of his beleaguered country, the Netherlands. When he died at 52 he left behind a Europe secured from Rome's intrigues with the United Kingdom established as the guardian of Protestant liberty. Civil and religious liberty for all, a Protestant monarchy reigning in a land ruled by a constitutional government. This was the kingdom William left as a legacy to future generations of British citizens.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights is the diamond tiara of the constitutional government established by William. The ninth article of that Bill of Rights states: "And whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant kingdom to be governed by a popish prince, or by any king or queen marrying a papist; the said Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons do further pray that it may be enacted, that all and every person and persons that is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the see or Church of Rome, or shall profess the popish religion, or shall marry a papist, shall be excluded, and be forever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the crown and government of this realm, and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, or any part of the same, or to have, use, or exercise any regal power, authority, or jurisdiction within the same; and in all and every such case or cases the people of these realms shall be and are hereby absolved of their allegiance; and the said crown and government shall from time to time descend to and be enjoyed by such person or persons, being Protestants, as should have inherited and enjoyed the same, in case the said person or persons so reconciled, holding communion, or marrying as aforesaid, were naturally dead."

This article gives every free-born British citizen the right to scrutinise the actions of the monarch and the royal family. It also gives us the right to remind Prince Charles that his dalliance with the Vatican and his endeavours to kneel before the papal antichrist and receive the wafer-god, as was the case when he visited the pope in 1988, from his hand are entirely contrary to the spirit of the Revolution Settlement. Such actions by the heir to the throne threaten the stability and peace of the kingdom and should put every freedom-loving Christian on his guard. Rome suffered defeat at the hands of the Prince of Orange. It did not, however, suffer annihilation!

When the crown was tendered to William and Mary, William replied, "My Lords and Gentlemen, this is certainly the greatest proof of the trust you have in us that can be given, which is the thing that makes us value it the more; and we thankfully accept what you have offered to us. And as I had no other intention in coming hither than to preserve your religion, laws and liberties, so you may be sure that I shall endeavour to support them, and shall be willing to concur in anything that shall be for the good of the kingdom, and to do all that is in my power to advance the welfare and glory of the Nation."

Are not these the words of a man who should be honoured as a true son of the Reformation - a Protestant indeed?