
Pro Rege

Volume 52 | Number 1

Article 3

September 2023

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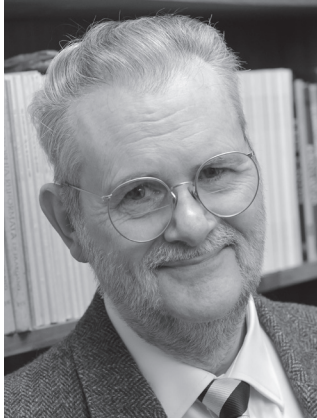
Recommended Citation

Sewell, Keith C. (2023) "The Events of 1688/89," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 52: No. 1, 14 - 27.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol52/iss1/3

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The Events of 1688/89



by Keith Sewell

I previously discussed the predicament of Oliver Cromwell as brought into focus in the writings of Edmund Burke, Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné, and Groen van Prinsterer. Cromwell endeavoured to uphold and reform the existing order in the face of revolutionary impulses emanating from the Stuart dynasty “above” and from elements in the Army “below.”¹ Cromwell achieved only a transitory time of stability. A lasting settlement that would effectively reconcile all parties eluded him. He died on September 3, 1658.

Cromwell had designated his son Richard (1626-1712) as his successor. Richard was seriously unsuited for the task. Charles II (1630-85) was restored to the throne in May 1660, in a far from simple process. Deep divisions existed within and between both Army and Parliament. The impasse was resolved by the decisive actions of General George Monck (1608-70), the commander of the Army in

Scotland. Monck was a professional soldier, who was strongly committed to parliamentary government. He was not a royalist. In early 1660, he marched south, and opposition to him collapsed.² New parliamentary elections returned a substantial royalist majority. Monck accepted this outcome and was among those who welcomed Charles II (1630-85) back to England in May 1660.³

I previously noted how in his *Unbelief and Revolution* (1847), Groen, following Burke, expressed a strong appreciation for the events of 1688 in England, rather than those of 1640-49.⁴ Abraham Kuyper (1837-1921) later endorsed Burke’s approbation of the “glorious Revolution” of 1688.⁵ This discussion will outline developments from the restoration of 1660 to the events of 1688/89. It will focus on England, but not ignore Scotland, Ireland, or Europe.

I

The Restoration did not solve the constitutional issues facing England. Edward Hyde (1609-74), now Earl of Clarendon, was the constitutional architect of the Restoration. On his advice and that of Monck, Charles issued the “Declaration of Breda” prior to his return, promising a measure of religious liberty.⁶ However, the general election of 1661 returned a parliament—the “Cavalier Parliament”—that was passionately royalist, but also repudiated liberty of conscience in favour of making Anglicanism mandatory across England and Wales.⁷ It enacted various statutes known as the “Clarendon Code,” designed to exclude and silence those labelled Puritans, who still sought the further reformation of the church.⁸

One of these, the “Act of Uniformity” (1662), required assent to, and the exclusive use of, *The Book*

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of *Common Prayer* in all public worship, a condition with which the Cavalier parliament and Anglican bishops of the “high church” variety knew that the Puritans could not comply. The “high church” party within the Church of England repudiated Catholicism *and* deeply opposed the Puritans. Those Puritans who sought a place within the national church were effectively out-manoeuvred.⁹

The result was the exclusion of many hundreds of Puritan clergy from their pulpits in the period

II’s reign were not propitious. The Great Plague of London (1665) was followed by a Great Fire of London (1666). The country drifted into a calamitous war with the Netherlands. The Dutch savaged the English fleet in the Medway (1667).¹⁴ Protestant Dissenters saw these episodes as the judgements of God on a nation that was turning its back on the gospel. That said, it would be incorrect to assume that all commitment to reformed doctrine had departed from the established church.¹⁵

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leading up to the final deadline for conformity, known as “Black Bartholomew’s Day” (August 26), 1662. Estimates vary, but Michael Watts has calculated that 2,029 ministers were effectively ejected from the Church of England in the period 1660–62.¹⁰ Those who were thus excluded from the Church of England became known as “Protestant Dissenters,” or “Protestant Nonconformists.”¹¹ In the nineteenth century, John Charles Ryle (1816–1900), an Anglican bishop who admired the Puritans, considered that “Many of them were the ablest preachers, and the most learned, holy ministers of the time.” According to Ryle, “a more impolitic and disgraceful deed never disfigured the annals of a Protestant Church.”¹²

The vast majority of Puritans were unable to conform. Their objections focused on matters of worship and polity. Yet they were not all of one mind. For example, Richard Baxter (1615–91) and John Owen (1616–83) differed at many points. Owen had served Cromwell loyally, while Baxter had distrusted him. Baxter wanted a comprehensive national church, duly reformed, while Owen was the champion of independency (congregationalism). Owen was committed to the formulas of reformed scholasticism. By contrast, Baxter sought to stay closer to the biblical texts and was committed to the cause of Christian unity.¹³

The persecution of Puritans varied from time and place. It could be severe and cruel. Men like John Bunyan (1628–88) endured imprisonment for over a decade. Moreover, the early years of Charles

Edward Hyde fell from office in the wake of the war against the Dutch. His position was taken over by a group of five known as “the Cabal.” They were: Thomas Lord Clifford (1630–73); Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington (1618–85); George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628–87); Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1621–83); and John Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale (1616–82).

The conduct of foreign policy was still a royal prerogative. In 1670, Charles II signed the Treaty of Dover with France. It provided for a joint attack on the Dutch and for French subsidies to the Stuart royal purse. A secret version of the text provided for Charles’ conversion to Catholicism.¹⁶ Not all members of “the Cabal” were informed. With royal approval, all five signed a *traité simulé* (a bogus treaty) when in fact the true secret treaty was kept from Shaftesbury, Buckingham, and Lauderdale.¹⁷ Charles was as duplicitous as his father.

War against the Dutch was started in 1672. For them, 1672 was “the disaster year” (*het Rampjaar*). French forces invaded a large portion of the Netherlands itself.¹⁸ In the same year, Charles issued a “Declaration of Indulgence,” which extended a degree of toleration towards Protestant Dissenters and a more limited measure to Catholics.¹⁹ However, the “Cavalier Parliament” repudiated the Declaration and passed the Test Act (1673), which further entrenched the Anglican hegemony.²⁰ The deceived members of the Cabal became aware of the actual provisions of the Treaty of Dover. Shaftesbury was furious. The Cabal

crumbled.

The rising star now was Thomas Osborne (1632-1712), whom Charles II made Earl of Danby in 1674. Danby could not end Charles' dependence on French subsidies. Danby had little time for Protestant Dissenters, and even less for Catholicism. As a strong Anglican, he worked towards a rapprochement with the Netherlands. He pulled England out of the war against the Dutch in 1674. He was a skilled manager and shrewd negotiator.

Danby adroitly arranged the marriage of Mary Stuart (1662-94), daughter (by his first marriage) of James, the king's younger brother, to William III ("William of Orange") of the Netherlands (1650-1702). The marriage took place in 1677, in the face of opposition from James and apparently without the knowledge of Louis XIV. With the aid of allies, the Dutch, now led by William as *Stadtholder*, eventually expelled the French, although at great cost. A measure of peace came to the Netherlands by the *Treaty of Nijmegen* (1678).

Yet for all his skill, Danby became ensnared in the next crisis in English politics, known as "the Popish Plot."²¹ This appalling episode helped precipitate the ensuing "Exclusion Crisis" (1678-83), which provided the context in which the "Glorious Revolution" (1688-89) was to take place.²²

II

The "Popish Plot" was the invention of one Titus Oates (1648-1705). He was a liar, deceiver, and perjurer. The panic he created was fuelled by the deep suspicions of English Protestants towards Roman Catholicism. They feared a Catholic conspiracy to take command of church and state, in which the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) would play a prominent part. The paranoia of those days was not driven by blind prejudice. The past informed the spiritual awareness of the people. Englishmen reflected on the execution of Jan Hus (1415), the burnings of Protestant bishops during the reign of "Bloody Mary" (1553-8), the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France (1571), the sack of Antwerp (1576), the Spanish Armada (1588), the Gunpowder Plot to destroy king and parliament (1605), the Reduction of Bohemia after the Battle of White Mountain (1620), the Sack of Magdeburg

in the Thirty Years' War (1631), and the massacre of Protestants in Ulster (1641).

Titus Oates played upon these fears with false accusations made in solemnly sworn statements. His accusations reached to the highest levels of the aristocracy. For a time, he deceived many. Dozens lost their lives by what amounted to judicial murder. Only in 1681 did the falsehood of his accusations become sufficiently evident so as to put a brake on the panic that he and his associates had generated.

At the height of the frenzy, Charles II was particularly vulnerable. His pro-Catholic outlook was known to a few and suspected by many. Some of his supporters went to the scaffold. He dared not come to their rescue. If the secret provisions of the Treaty of Dover had become popularly known, Charles would have been in deep peril. The secret provisions only became *public* knowledge in 1773, when published by the Scottish researcher John Dalrymple (1726-1810).²³

The febrile atmosphere generated by the "Popish Plot" provided the context in which a first-order constitutional issue was contested, namely the "Exclusion Crisis."²⁴ Charles remained to all appearances a practicing Anglican. His younger brother, James, however, had already made known his conversion to Catholicism. The "Exclusion Crisis" was about whether James ought therefore be *excluded* from the line of succession.

The question was debated ferociously within parliament, and on occasions gave rise to disturbances beyond its walls. Charles stood by his brother. The names "Whig" and "Tory" emerged at this time. Initially terms of abuse used by one side of the other, both labels eventually became badges of honour. Originally a "Tory" was an Irish highwayman, while "Whig" denoted a fanatical Scottish Presbyterian.²⁵ The Tories supported Charles and James. They were Anglicans who upheld the principles of "divine right" and "non-resistance": monarchs ruled by divine authority, and their subjects were not to oppose them in the exercise of their prerogatives. For them "the divine right of kings" was paramount.

Against this viewpoint were the Whigs. This was a diverse grouping that coalesced under the leadership of Anthony Ashley Cooper, made the

Earl of Shaftesbury in 1672. J.R. Jones has described the groups that formed the Whig coalition as follows:

- “Presbyterians,” who were of Puritan sympathies: they would have more readily aligned with the national church after 1662 if the Act of Supremacy had been more accommodating towards them.
- The “Country Opposition,” which generally accepted the broad Protestantism of

and overall outlook of the Whigs.

In 1679, new elections produced a “post-Cavalier” parliament. In 1679 and 1680, the Whigs successfully passed an Exclusion Bill, designed to *exclude* James from the succession. Charles responded by dissolving parliament. He called the next parliament at Oxford—where the Whigs were far less able to control the debate. It was a trap. Now, in receipt of further subsidies from France, Charles yet again dissolved parliament and appealed to the

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the national church but was suspicious of its hierarchy and the politics of the Royal Court: their powerbase was their estates across the shires of England.

- The “adventurers,” who were often men who advocated extreme measures: they were regarded with suspicion by others.
- Those around James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth (1649-85), an illegitimate son of Charles II.
- And the “radicals,” a small minority of republicans looking back to the long-lost days of the Commonwealth.²⁶

It is worth paying a little more attention to the first group. As late as 1659, Baxter published his *A Holy Commonwealth*—and found himself obliged to retract it as “*non-Scriptum*” in 1670.²⁷ The “Rule of the Saints” had now become a distant dream. So what happened to political puritanism after 1662? The Doctor William’s Library is located in the fashionable London suburb of Bloomsbury.²⁸ In this venerable institution, founded in 1729, are to be found manuscript materials of considerable significance, including the *Entring Book* of Dissenting Minister Roger Morrice (1628-1702). This source records the political endeavours of those now termed by Mark Goldie as “Puritan Whigs.”²⁹ Only in this century has this important seventeenth-century document been published.³⁰ After 1662, puritanism had little political power of its own, but it had many concerns, which it conveyed to its friends in parliament, and thereby contributed to the ethos

nation. Shaftesbury and the Whigs were out-maneuvred—just as the “Popish Plot” was collapsing.

Shaftesbury had used questionable methods. He employed intimidating “brisk boys.” He was seen as intemperate and liable to bring the country to the brink of another civil war. He was a man of many parts—an effective speaker and an able organiser. He was a proprietor of the colonial project in the Carolinas. Yet he went down in history as the man excoriated by the (Catholic) poet John Dryden (1631-1700) in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681).

From 1681, the Tories, with the support of Charles, had the Whigs on the run. The Whig cause was further discredited when in the 1683 “Rye House Plot,” a small number of radical Whigs plotted to assassinate Charles and James. After a time of imprisonment, Shaftesbury fled to Amsterdam, where he died in 1683.³¹

III

Charles II died in 1685, converting to Catholicism on his deathbed. James II was now the first Catholic monarch since the Reformation. The Tories accepted his assurances that he would uphold the position of the Church of England. At this point, Monmouth mounted a rebellion, presenting himself as the true and Protestant heir to the throne. He was defeated and executed in 1685.³² The rebellion was not well supported: Englishmen were still mindful of the civil wars of 1642-51 and had no desire to repeat such sufferings. However, the decline of James II’s public reputation began

with the severity of the ensuing “Bloody Assizes,” presided over by the infamous Judge Jeffreys (1645-89). These tragic events provided the background to the novel *Lorna Doone* (1869), by Robert Blackmore (1825-1900).

James II now promptly embarked upon a series of measures designed to promote Catholicism. Although parliament was disposed to support him, it was increasingly alienated by James’ actions. He retained a large army after the defeat of Monmouth, stationed to the west of London. Its presence was intimidating. He also sought the repeal of the Test Act, so as to legitimise his appointment of Catholic officers. Unable to get his way, James prorogued parliament in November 1685. Clearly James was on a mission. The presence of Catholics at the Royal Court increased. Men of care and prudence, such as George Savile, Marquis of Halifax (1633-95),³³ were dismissed from the royal service, and opportunists ready to go over to Rome, such as Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland (1641-1702), rose in royal favour.³⁴

Halifax was exceptionally astute, and he is often referred to as a “trimmer” after his famous work *The Character of a Trimmer*, written at this time, although not published until 1688. Halifax resisted heavily doctrinaire politics, prized continuity, stressed the contingency of events, and warned that drastic changes might have unanticipated consequences. He offered maxims rather than abstract theories.³⁵ He was deeply aware of the looming threat of civil war. In some respects, his stance recalled that of the “Clubmen” of the 1640s, who had sought to keep their localities free from armed strife.³⁶

James now alienated those who were his natural allies—the Tories and the Church of England. He required unquestioning obedience. This requirement accorded well with the high Anglican teaching of “divine right” and “non-resistance.” However, the champions of this doctrine now found themselves hoisted on their own petard, because James wished to use their obedience to facilitate the legal reintroduction of Roman Catholicism—which they strongly opposed.

James sought to legitimise Catholicism by issuing a “Declaration of Indulgence” in April 1687.³⁷ This provided Catholics and Dissenters with relief

from the strictures of the Uniformity and Test Acts. James claimed that he could do this by using the “dispensing power.” This exercise of the royal prerogative had generally been used to set aside judgments in particular cases considered anomalous or unacceptable. Now James endeavoured to expand the use of the “dispensing power” to set aside legislation previously passed by parliament. He sought to reconstruct corporations and influence future parliamentary elections. He also imposed Catholics on Magdalen College, Oxford, an Anglican bastion. All ranks of society grew apprehensive as these plans and policies unfolded. Fears increased that the country could face a policy of forced Catholicism and be plunged again into civil war.

The 1687 Declaration of Indulgence placed the Protestant Dissenters in a dilemma: Were they to accept it and gain some much-needed relief from the restrictions of the Clarendon Code, even if it opened the door to “Popery”? In his *A Letter to a Dissenter* (1687), Halifax counselled the Dissenters to be cautious and to avoid becoming accomplices to a policy designed to undermine the Church of England in favour of Catholicism.³⁸

The Declaration of Indulgence also placed the episcopal leadership of the Church of England in a dilemma. If they were obedient to their own precept of “non-resistance,” they would undermine the Church that they were sworn to uphold. Many clergy abandoned non-resistance in order to preserve the Church of England. James reissued the Declaration of Indulgence in April 1688.³⁹ Seven leading bishops rejected the requirement that the Declaration be read aloud in parish churches. Led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, six bishops petitioned the Crown for relief from this requirement.⁴⁰

If this was a “revolt,” it was a conspicuously Anglican one. These bishops are hardly remembered today, but they were equal to the challenge of the hour. The most remembered today is Thomas Ken (1637-1711), whose “hymns of the day” end with words familiar the world over:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all Creatures here below,
Praise Him above ye Heavenly Host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

James angrily rejected the petition, and the seven churchmen were charged with seditious libel. The bishops were then imprisoned in the Tower of London. There now followed scenes unprecedented in English history. Amid public acclaim, the bishops emerged as the champions of the protestant cause. They received increasing support from the Protestant Dissenters.⁴¹ The tower garrison received their episcopal prisoners on bended knee. “Crowds of people,” in Ryle’s words,

Others, such as Halifax, stood aside, deciding to wait upon events. Significantly, the seven did not offer William the Crown. They had no authority to do so: their request was as yet for his aid and assistance. The author of the letter was Henry Sidney, brother of Algernon Sidney (1623-83), who had been executed for his part in the Rye House plot.⁴⁴

William was well informed and ably served. He was used to facing and surmounting formidable difficulties. His preparations were advancing in

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went to the Tower every day to pay their respects to the venerable prisoners. Among them a deputation of ten leading Nonconformist ministers went to express their sympathy, and when the King ... upbraided them, they boldly replied that they “thought it a solemn duty to forget past quarrels and stand by the men who stood for the protestant cause.” Even the Scotch [sic] Presbyterians ... sent messages of sympathy and encouragement. From every part of England came daily words of kindness and approbation.⁴²

The trial was no less sensational. The jury verdict of “Not Guilty” led to scenes of ecstatic jubilation, first in the courtroom and soon across the entire capital.

At this very juncture, James II’s second wife, on June 10, 1688, gave birth to a male heir—James Stuart (1688-1766). There was now a clear Catholic line of succession to the throne of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Some suspected fraud.

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, William was observing English affairs with the keenest interest. He had long contemplated some form of intervention in English affairs. Now the birth of a male heir injected a new urgency.

On June 30, 1688, seven English leaders, later known as the “immortal seven,” addressed a letter to William of Orange in the Netherlands.⁴³

spite of challenges. He could be shrewd and adroit, able to judge when to wait and when to act. He had been concentrating his military and naval forces. Yet James II to all appearances remained unconcerned, notwithstanding mounting rumours of William’s intentions.

William’s impressively large fleet set sail in mid-October. William’s frigate displayed a banner proclaiming “The Liberties of England and the Protestant Religion” above the long-standing motto of the House of Orange: *Je maintiendrai* (“I will maintain”).⁴⁵ It was not plain sailing. There were navigational and supply difficulties before a “Protestant Wind” finally carried William’s fleet down the English Channel, even as the English fleet was confined to the Thames estuary.

William landed at Torbay in the west of England on November 15, 1688. Unable to ignore the mounting threat, James now sought to recover his position with the bishops, but he was unable to recover the trust he had lost. On shore, William’s progress was slow but sure. He persevered while James dithered. James resisted calling a parliament because that would have obliged him to negotiate. At one point, he seems to have contemplated confronting William on the battlefield, but he withdrew back to London. As William advanced eastwards, he was welcomed by nobility, gentry, and others—at first slowly but then with increas-

ing momentum. James' decision not to fight is at least partly attributable to the defection of his own military commanders. His power had wasted away.

By December 1688, James had lost all initiative. His second daughter, Anne, had escaped to join pro-William forces in the north. James resolved to flee the jurisdiction. William was at Abingdon outside of Oxford when he heard the news of James' flight. However, James was discovered and brought back to London, so that William, now at Windsor, was obliged to facilitate James' further (and final) departure from the capital to take refuge in France.

In the course of these events, Halifax found himself to be initially an ambassador from James to William, but then an emissary from William to James. William entered London in late December. On December 23, Gilbert (1643-1715), long-term Anglican supporter of William, preached before him at St. James's Chapel, using the text "It is the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our Eyes" (Ps. 118:23).⁴⁶ The term "Glorious Revolution" may well have originated with Burnet himself.⁴⁷ In England, there had been only minor bloodshed and minimal civil disorder. Scotland and Ireland were to be different.

IV

William was publicity-conscious. He repeatedly issued declarations explaining his principles and intentions. By the end of 1688, he had brilliantly out-manoeuvred James, but now he had to deal with a deeply divided parliament. Concord between Lords and Commons could not be taken for granted. Whigs and Tories viewed each other with deep suspicion, yet they were well aware of the pressures and perils of the moment. Sooner or later, James might return with French backing. Time was of the essence.

A "Convention Parliament" commenced on January 22, 1689.⁴⁸ The Whigs were now much more fully represented than previously. The ensuing debates were tense, at points interspersed with pregnant pauses.⁴⁹ Finally, the Commons passed the following resolution on January 28, 1689:

That King *James* the Second, having endeavoured to subvert the Constitution of the Kingdom, by breaking the Original Contract between the King and the People; and, by the

Advice of Jesuits, and other wicked Persons, having violated the fundamental Laws, and having withdrawn himself out of the Kingdom; has abdicated the Government; and that the Throne is thereby vacant.⁵⁰

This wording met the requirements of Whigs and Tories.⁵¹ Another resolution was passed the following day:

That it hath been found by Experience to be inconsistent with the Safety and Welfare of this Protestant Kingdom, to be governed by a Popish Prince.⁵²

The key issue was this: What was the status of William to be? For a while, the upper house prevaricated. Eventually, William intervened, forcing the issue. The lords gave way, and a broad-based consensus emerged that Prince William and his wife Princess Mary be declared *joint monarchs* as King and Queen of England and Wales. For a brief moment, Whigs and Tories put on hold their mutual animosities and recriminations and achieved a finely balanced compromise.

Henry Compton, the Bishop of London and one of the "immortal seven," crowned William and Mary in Westminster Abbey on April 11, 1689.⁵³ There was no legal or social revolution. Theodore Plucknett (1897-1965), an authority on the history of the common law, was clear that the events of 1688/89 produced no new legal system, but they amounted to a reassertion of actual rights previously recognised.⁵⁴ Historians whose model of "Revolution" is based on the events of 1789 or 1917 find it hard to see in the events of 1688/89 a revolution at all: it fails their expectations. Attempts to find in 1688/89 a modern or modernising revolution can easily trap historians in the quagmires of anachronism.⁵⁵

The legislation arising from 1688/89 was minimal, yet significant. The *Bill of Rights* (1689) was a reassertion and affirmation of traditional liberties.⁵⁶ The *Toleration Act* (1689) gave Protestant Dissenters, in England and Wales, freedom to assemble and engage in public worship.⁵⁷ However, this was not full "freedom of religion." The Test Act legislation was retained: Protestant Dissenters were still not able to enter the universities or participate

fully in public life. These restrictions were not rescinded until the nineteenth century. The parliamentary disposition was to make changes with a calculated minimalism. Ideas of “popular sovereignty” did not prevail. Change was to be minimal and smooth rather than violent and drastic. As George Chalmers (1742-1825) wrote later,

I consider the *Revolution* as *glorious*; not because much was done; but because little was done; because none of the *old foundations* of our government were weakened, and none of the landmarks of the law were removed [58]...; because

The legislation arising from 1688/89 was minimal, yet significant.

the Parliament sat quietly and voted independently, what necessity demanded, and wisdom approved; because, when a mob presumed to interpose with premature tumult, [William stated] that he would not accept a sceptre from such mean hands.⁵⁹

Yet this reaffirmation of ancient liberties did have long-term consequences. Although a precise calculation of consequences is impossible, it would probably be safe to say that by reconnecting with ancient liberties, England was better able to face and absorb a whole array of challenges and changes in the coming decades.⁶⁰

Some will ask, “What part did John Locke (1632-1704) take in these proceedings?” The answer is, “not much”—at least not immediately. The great transactions of 1688/89 were almost entirely brought about by William and a select cross-party consortium of Whig and Tory aristocrats.⁶¹ It is now understood that although Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) came to be viewed as a justification of the “Glorious Revolution,” the text itself mainly dates from and reflects the time of the Exclusion Crisis.⁶²

The removal of pro-Catholic Stuarts from the succession opened the way to the *Act of Union* (1707),⁶³ which brought about the present union of England and Scotland, and the *Act of Settlement* (1701),⁶⁴ which provided for the Hanoverian succession upon the death of Queen Anne (1665-

1714). After 1689, party conflict resumed and could reach a furious intensity.⁶⁵ Some “high church” Anglicans scrupled at swearing allegiance to William and became known as “non-jurors.” Upstaged, the Tories remained restive.⁶⁶ The cause of the “Jacobites”—the restoration of the “true” Stuart line—faded slowly.

V

For many years the dominant account of the years 1685-91 was that offered by Thomas Babington Macaulay in his *History of England*

(1849 onwards).⁶⁷ In an introductory passage Macaulay declared that

It would not be difficult to compose a lampoon or a panegyric on either of these renowned factions [Whigs and Tories]. For no man not utterly destitute of judgment and candour will deny that there are many deep stains on the fame of the party to which he belongs, or that the party to which he is opposed may justly boast of many illustrious names, of many heroic actions, and of many great services rendered to the state. The truth is that, though both parties have often seriously erred, England could have spared neither. If, in her institutions, freedom and order, the advantages arising from innovation and the advantages arising from prescription, have been combined to an extent elsewhere unknown, we may attribute this happy peculiarity to the strenuous conflicts and alternate victories of two rival confederacies of statesmen, a confederacy zealous for authority and antiquity, and a confederacy zealous for liberty and progress.⁶⁸

Macaulay also pointed out that this interaction between the two parties had had a deep impact on the history of the writing of English history itself.⁶⁹ In spite of his actual position, it became a commonplace to regard Macaulay as the epitome of a Whig historian.

However, in 1976, the Yale scholar Joseph Hamburger (1922-97) published an incisive study

of Macaulay's work, in which he demonstrated that his historiographical posture was that of a "trimmer" and not a partisan Whig.⁷⁰ Hamburger also made clear Macaulay's immense respect for Edmund Burke.⁷¹ By contrast, Macaulay was well aware of the work of the Whig historian Henry Hallam (1777-1859), who really did offer a decidedly Whig interpretation.⁷²

It is possible to argue that the historiographical roots of Macaulay's "trimming" historiography lay appreciably earlier. Among the many who accompanied William to England in 1688 was the French Huguenot cavalryman and man of letters Paul Rapin Thoyras (1661-1725). Rapin eventually published a comprehensive *History of England* in both French⁷³ and English.⁷⁴ The representation of Rapin as yet another Whig historian by Hugh Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) is at best highly misleading.⁷⁵ In truth, like Halifax before him, and Macaulay after him, Rapin adopted a "trimming" posture, as is well exhibited in his *Dissertation on Whigs and Tories* (1717).⁷⁶

Rapin's work was eventually displaced by the *History of England*, commenced by David Hume (1711-76) in 1754. Hume, a Scotsman, took a pro-Tory view that favoured the Stuart monarchs.⁷⁷ In this respect, Hume increasingly distanced himself from Rapin.⁷⁸ Both Rapin and Macaulay did have their Whig sympathies, and in that respect they might be described as "Whig-inclined Trimmers." This interpretative tradition has been exceedingly influential in English historiography, although strongly opposed by those of a Marxian or neo-Marxist standpoint. Furthermore, arguably the Whig-Trimmer historiographical tradition has, via Rapin, roots in the French Calvinistic reformation, specifically in the example set by the Huguenot François Hotman (1524-90) in his *Francogallia* (1573).⁷⁹

In 1938, Macaulay's great-nephew, George Macaulay Trevelyan (1876-1962), published his *The English Revolution, 1688-9*.⁸⁰ In some respects it was an abridged update of his forbear's great work. Neither Macaulay nor Trevelyan would today be regarded as academic historians. In 1938, Charles Firth published his *Commentary on Macaulay*, which contained many corrective observations on Scotland and Ireland, James II, and William and Mary.⁸¹

Much later, John Morrill in turn published his appraisal of Trevelyan's account. He found that Trevelyan made some assumptions that would not now be made, while at other points he anticipated the path that later historians were to take. For Morrill, the events of 1688/89 in England were "sensible" and "conservative."⁸²

VI

Macaulay or Trevelyan told the story of 1688/89 primarily from the English standpoint. It would be wrong to suggest that they ignored the European or Scots-Irish side of events, but these now receive much fuller treatment. For example, John Carswell (1918-97) placed William's 1688 expedition in its continental European context, including William's rivalry with Louis XIV and the opportunity presented in late 1688 by French military concentrations on the middle Rhine. In addition, there were William's alignments with the Catholic Habsburgs and the support he received from the Papacy. The picture of William as a "Protestant Champion" is relativised by these wider contexts.⁸³

It is also true that continental influences on England grew at this time. English trade and culture benefitted massively from the influx of Huguenots—French Calvinists fleeing the persecutions of Louis XIV after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). Also, the latter part of the seventeenth century saw an increasing English emulation of Dutch techniques in almost every sphere of human endeavour. The events of 1688/89 did not cause these developments but served to give them added impetus.⁸⁴

The revolution was not bloodless in Scotland. Stuart supporters, led by John Graham of Claverhouse (1647-89), rose in arms against the pro-William forces that had taken charge in Edinburgh. Claverhouse was already notorious for his vicious persecution of the Presbyterian Covenanters. He perished in battle. Under the adroit leadership of William Carstares (1649-1715), the Presbyterian polity was restored to the Church of Scotland.⁸⁵ These events provided the background to the novel *Old Mortality* (1816), by Walter Scott (1771-1832).

Matters were much worse in Ireland.⁸⁶ James attempted his military come-back in Ireland and was defeated by William at the Battle of the

Boyne (July 1, 1690). The Treaty of Limerick (1691) made provision for the retention of Catholic practice (1691).⁸⁷ However, under the ensuing “Protestant Ascendancy,” Irish Catholics endured a wide array of legally imposed disabilities. Although Irish Protestants could view themselves as delivered from popery and tyranny, the Catholic majority in Ireland experienced the defeat of 1690 and its consequences, as further imposing on them a systematic oppression of their religion and culture.⁸⁸

The Irish tragedy will be discussed further in the next and final article in this series. We will then consider the Irish policy developed by a British Prime Minister who was described by Kuyper as a true “Christian statesman” and as “politically a Calvinist to the very core.”⁸⁹

Endnotes

- Keith C. Sewell, “The Soldier, the Parliamentarian, the Statesman, and the Historian” in *Pro Rege* 51/3 (March 2023), 7-19.
- See J.D. Griffith Davies, *Honest George Monck* (London: Bodley Head, 1936).
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- Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, *Unbelief and Revolution*, edited and translated by Harry Van Dyke (Bellingham WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 64.
- Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1931), 85-86.
- English Historical Documents*, Volume VIII, 1660-1714 [hereafter *EHD VIII*], edited by Andrew Browning (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), 57-58.
- See Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661-1667* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), esp. 36-70, 162-195.
- Specifically, *The Corporation Act* (1661), *The Act of Uniformity* (1662), *The Conventicle Acts* (1664, 1670), and *The Five Mile Act* (1665), *EHD VIII*, 375-386.
- Robert S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement* (London: Black, 1957), 143-218, cf. I.M. Green, *The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663* (Oxford University Press, 1978), esp. 179-204.
- Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1978), 219. See also David J. Appleby, *Black Bartholomew’s Day* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 30-37, 211-6.
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- J. C. Ryle, *Light from Old Times* (London: Charles Thynne, 1903), xix, 316.
- Crawford Gribben, *John Owen and English Puritanism: Experiences of Defeat* (Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. 151-273, and Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter* (London: Nelson, 1965), esp. 24-113. Tim Cooper compares the two men in *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Farnham UK: Ashgate, 2011), esp. 133-195, 259-311.
- It is pleasing to note that on the tercentenary of this disaster, in June 1967, a “River Medway Dutch Week” was held in Chatham, and there the Royal Navy hosted three visiting Dutch warships. Celebrations and ceremonies took place, and a good time appears to have been had by one and all. See P.G. Rogers, *The Dutch in the Medway* (Oxford University Press, 1970), 173-5.
- See Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 1-38 and 266-74, and Dewey D. Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 13-27.
- EHD VIII*, 863-867.

17. K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford University Press, 1968), 285. For a detailed discussion see Ronald Hutton, "The Making of the Secret Treaty of Dover, 1668-1670," *Historical Journal* 29/2 (1986), 297-318.
18. The classic English account is Mary Caroline Trevelyan, *William the Third and The Defence of Holland, 1672-4* (London, Longmans, Green, 1934), esp. 146-318.
19. *EHD* VIII, 387-88.
20. *EHD* VIII, 389-91.
21. Ably described by John Kenyon in *The Popish Plot* (London: Heinemann, 1972).
22. See for example the recent work by Tim Harris: *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660-1685* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), in this context esp. 136-259, and *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), esp. 239-363.
23. John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland: From the Dissolution of the Last Parliament of Charles II Until the Sea Battle of La Hogue*, Volume II (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1773), Appendix, 47, 59-60.
24. See Francis S. Ronalds, *The Attempted Whig Revolution of 1678-1681* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1937), and J.R. Jones, *The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-1683* (Oxford University Press, 1961).
25. Robert Willman, "The Origins of 'Whig' and 'Tory' in English Political Language," *Historical Journal* 17/2 (1974), 247-264.
26. J.R. Jones, *The First Whigs* (1961), 10-16.
27. Richard Baxter, *A Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms, Opening the True Principles of Government* (London: Underhill and Tyton, 1659). See also as edited by William Lamont (Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 251-2.
28. See Ernest Payne, *A Venerable Dissenting Institution: Dr. Williams's Library* (London: William's Trust, 1979), and Alan Argent, *The Dr Williams's Trust and Library: A History* (Woodbridge UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2022).
29. Mark Goldie, "The Roots of True Whiggism, 1688-94," *History of Political Thought* 1/2 (1980), 195-236, "Roger Morrice and the Entering Book," *History Today* 51/11 (November 2001), 31-44, and *Roger Morrice and the Puritan Whigs* (Woodbridge UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), esp. 87-193. Also Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689* (Rutgers University Press, 1969), 29-208.
30. Mark Goldie (editor), *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice, 1677-1691*, 7 volumes (Woodbridge UK: Boydell and Brewer 2007-09).
31. K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford University Press, 1968), esp. 285-286, 560-732.
32. See: Anna Keay, *The Last Royal Rebel: The Life and Death of James Duke of Monmouth* (London, Bloomsbury, 2016).
33. For Halifax, see H.C. Foxcroft, *A Character of The Trimmer: Being a Short Life of the First Marquis of Halifax* (Cambridge University Press, 1946), esp. 211-77.
34. For Sutherland, see John P. Kenyon, *Robert Spencer, Second Earl of Sutherland* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958).
35. The Marquis of Halifax, *The Character of a Trimmer: His Opinion of / I the Laws and Government / II Protestant Religion / III The Papists / IV Foreign Affairs* (London, 1688), reprinted in *The Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, edited by Mark N. Brown (Oxford University Press, 1989), Volume I: 178-243.
36. John S. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976), 88, 98-114.
37. *EHD* VIII, 395-397.
38. Marquis of Halifax, *A Letter to a Dissenter, Upon the Occasion of His Majesties Late Gracious Declaration of Indulgence* (London: G[eorge] H[alifax], 1687), reprinted in *The Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, edited by Mark N. Brown (Oxford University Press, 1989), Volume I: 250-264.
39. *EHD* VIII, 399-400.
40. *EHD* VIII, 84. The seven original signatories were as follows: William Sancroft (the Archbishop of Canterbury) and bishops John Trelawney (Exeter and Winchester), Thomas White (Peterborough), Thomas Ken (Bath and Wells), John Lake (Chichester), William Lloyd (Worcester), and Francis Turner (Ely). *EHD* VIII, 84. Six other bishops later added their names to the petition.

41. Roger Thomas, "The Seven Bishops and their Petition, 18 May 1688." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 12 (1961), 56-71.
42. Ryle, *Light from Old Times* (1903), 446.
43. Namely, Henry Compton, Bishop of London (1632-1713) and Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby (1632-1712), Tories, and the following Whigs: William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire (1641-1707), Baron Richard Lumley (1650-1721), Edward Russell (1653-1727), Henry Sidney (1641-1704), and Charles Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (1660-1718). For the letter see *EHD* VIII, 120-22.
44. W.A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries* (1988), 218-220. See also Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sydney and the Exclusion Crisis, 1677-1683* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).
45. When William became King of England and Wales, this motto was part of his Royal coat-of-arms.
46. Gilbert Burnet, *A Sermon Preached in the Chapel of St. James's, before His Highness the Prince of Orange, the 23rd of December 1688* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1689).
47. James R. Hertzler, "Who Dubbed It 'The Glorious Revolution'," *Albion* 19/4 (1987), 579-585.
48. See Jack H. Plumb, "The Elections to the Convention Parliament of 1689," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 5/3 (1937), 235-254, and Howard A. Nenner, "The Convention of 1689: A Triumph of Constitutional Form," *American Journal of Legal History* 10/4 (1966), 282-296.
49. For an account see W.A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 96-104.
50. *Journal of the House of Commons*: Volume X, 1688-93 (London: HMSO, 1802), entry for January 28, 1689, at 14. Cf. William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (London: Bagshaw, et al, 1809), Volume V: col. 50.
51. Thomas Slaughter, "'Abdicate' and 'Contract' in the Glorious Revolution," *Historical Journal* 24/2 (1981), 323-337, and John Miller, "The Glorious Revolution: 'Contract' and 'Abdication' Reconsidered," *Historical Journal* 25/3 (1982), 541-555.
52. *Journal of the House of Commons*: Volume X, 1688-93 (1802), entry for January 29, 1689, at 15. Cf. William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (1809), Volume V: col. 51.
53. See David Hosford, "Bishop Compton and the Revolution of 1688," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23/3 (1972), 209-218, and Lois G. Schworer, "The Coronation of William and Mary, April 11, 1689," in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives* edited by herself (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 107-130.
54. Theodore F.T. Plucknett, *A Concise History of the Common Law* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1956), 59-61.
55. For example, see Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (Yale University Press, 2009), esp. 32-45, and as reviewed by Warren Johnston, *English Historical Review* 125/515 (2010), 994-997.
56. *EHD* VIII, 122-128.
57. *EHD* VIII, 400-403.
58. The allusion is to the precept: "remove not the ancient landmarks," Deut. 19:14; 27:14, Prov. 22:28; 23:10.
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61. John P. Kenyon, *The Nobility in the Revolution of 1688* (University of Hull Publications, 1963).
62. Peter Laslett, (editor), *Locke's Two Treatises of Government: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge University Press, 1960, amended, 1970), and "The English Revolution and Locke's 'Two Treatises on Government,'" *Cambridge Historical Journal* 12/1 (1956), 40-55.
63. *EHD* VIII, 680-695.
64. *EHD* VIII, 129-135.
65. See J.P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles: The Politics of Party, 1689-1720* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), and Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
66. See, for example, Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), and G.V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688-1730* (Oxford University Press, 1975), esp. 3-22, 223-275.

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69. *Ibid.*, Volume I, 21-22.
70. Joseph Hamburger, *Macaulay and the Whig Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), esp. 21-165.
71. *Ibid.*, on Burke and Halifax: 181-190.
72. See Henry Hallam, *The Constitutional History of England* (London: John Murray, 1827), esp. tenth edition, [1860], Volume III, 48-197.
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