

THE ORANGE BANNER

"The Protestant Religion and Liberties of England I will maintain"
- William III, Prince of Orange

*"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,
that it may be displayed because of the truth" - Psalm 60:4*

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The Long and Winding Road to Peace in Northern Ireland!

The scheduled peace talks in September at Leeds Castle between the political parties of Northern Ireland together with the British and Republic of Ireland governments failed to resolve the problems with regard to the suspension of devolved government in Northern Ireland in 2002. The suspension was, of course, brought about because republican spying activity was discovered at the heart of Stormont.

The Democratic Unionist Party have used these and subsequent talks to modify certain sections of the Belfast Agreement to make it more acceptable to the unionist people of the Province. Unfortunately the SDLP and Sinn Fein seem to think that it has been set in tablets of stone and, therefore, the Agreement is unchangeable. Nothing of detail with regard to the talks has yet been put in the public domain, but snippets in the press indicate some of the areas of concern such as the election of the First Minister and his deputy, and the accountability of Assembly Ministers.

The real question that has still to be answered, however, is whether the republican movement will announce that the war is over for good and that they will cease all terrorist activity. The policy of the Armalite rifle and the ballot box has run its course, and it is time for democracy alone to be used in advancement of the republican ethos. The two governments believe that there will be a positive response from the Provisional IRA, but will that be the case? The republican terrorists have had a good life on the back of terrorism and crime, it remains to be seen whether they are prepared to give it up in the name of peace.

Northern Ireland deserves a real and lasting peace, but it must be peace that is built on justice and democracy, and these two have been fudged for far too long. The long and winding road to peace continues still. Please continue to pray for true peace in Northern Ireland.

Lodge News

Ladies Grand Council

The Ladies Grand Council held their annual meeting in Winsford on Saturday 4th September and this was followed by an evening meal. The council was held in Winsford at the invitation of "Defenders of the Faith" LLOL 87 who meet in the town.

Grand Lodge Sessions

The annual Grand Lodge of England sessions, hosted by Manchester Provincial Grand Lodge, were successfully held in Blackpool on September 10th and 11th.

Orangeism has been flourishing in Blackpool in recent years and it now has a male lodge that was opened in 2001, a junior lodge and a flute band.

Unfortunately circumstances led to the late cancellation of the Grand Lodge Parade in Blackpool planned for the Saturday afternoon and this was no doubt a major disappointment to many people. Support for the parade was expected from both Scotland and Northern Ireland, and hopefully news would have reached most people before they travelled.

(The annual Manchester Provincial Parade took place on Saturday September 25th when the traditional route through the city centre was walked.)

Orange Wedding

Brother John Walsh of Victoria's Pride LOL 788 in Bolton and Sister Shelia Hargreaves of Prince William of Wales LLOL 184 also in Bolton were married at Bethel Church in Bolton on Saturday September 11th. To make it a truly Orange event the wedding ceremony part of the service was conducted by Revd Brother P.J. Rimmer HDGC.

Lodge Centenary

Rose of England LLOL 95 celebrated the centenary of the lodge on Friday October 1st at the Victoria Memorial Hall in Liverpool. There was an exhibition of photographs showing the one hundred years of the lodge and an excellent buffet was provided.

United Protestant Council

In Northern Ireland there are many places, such as Londonderry, where unionist people are not welcome and where they are actively encouraged to leave. These are called “cold places” for unionists. Sadly the United Protestant Council has become a cold place for the Loyal Orders in England where there is now open antipathy and hostility towards them from the representatives of some of the member societies. With that being the case “The Orange Banner” has resigned its membership of the United Protestant Council after a period of some seventeen years of involvement.

The United Protestant Council is meant to be an umbrella organisation for different Protestant societies, and in fact the Grand Orange Lodge of England was a founder member over a hundred years ago, but sadly it now appears to be more interested in division rather than unity. There is an old saying of who needs enemies when we keep falling out amongst ourselves!

Before supporting the following societies it is recommended that you question their support for membership of the Loyal Orders: -

Christian Watch
Church Society
Protestant Old Paths
Protestant Reformation Society
Spirit of '88
Sussex Martyrs Commemoration Committee
Walsingham Witness Committee

Protestant Alliance meeting in Bolton

An illustrated lecture will be given by Mr Chris Richards of the Protestant Alliance on the subject of “Pastors in the Desert” at Bolton Parish Church on Thursday 18th November at 7.30 pm. This public meeting has been organised by Victoria’s Pride LOL 788.

Lessons of Kent offer hope for Ulster

Bro. Christopher Luke writes from “Kent”

The recent talks at Leeds Castle in Kent between the representatives of Northern Ireland’s political parties were aimed at re-establishing devolved government in the Province.

To many outsiders the outcome of the talks may appear of little interest until one first takes time to unravel the long list, and on-going series, of concessions made to Sinn Fein by successive British Governments (both Labour and Conservative) since 1922 – but particularly since 1969 – aimed at creating an All-Ireland Republic by stealth on one hand, and discouraging the I.R.A. from continuing its mainland terrorist campaign on the other.

Contrary to popular misconception, Northern Ireland is not some foreign country illegally occupied by the Brits, but an integral part of the United Kingdom where the greater number of people (of all faiths and none) wish to remain

British on equal terms to their fellow Britishers in England, Scotland and Wales.

From the time of its inception in 1922 until 1972, Northern Ireland was the only part of the United Kingdom to have its own devolved legislative government. Many of the arguments now being advanced by English Conservative M.P.'s against Scottish Labour M.P.'s being able to vote on English matters in the House of Commons without English M.P.'s first being able to vote on analogous Scottish matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament did (and could again) apply to the situation in Northern Ireland when Northern Ireland's M.P.'s were able to vote on matters affecting England, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster, but Westminster M.P.'s from England, Scotland and Wales could not vote on Northern Ireland matters devolved to the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont.

Nevertheless, ever since the old Europhile and crypto-socialist Ted Heath prorogued the then bicameral Northern Ireland Parliament in 1972, successive British Governments have attempted to re-establish a devolved legislative assembly in Northern Ireland with power-sharing between Irish Nationalists and Ulster Unionists being a prerequisite for devolution. In the interim, Northern Ireland has been governed directly from London in such a way befitting an imperial colony rather than an integral part of the United Kingdom. At the same time, reform of local government in Northern Ireland (which preceded the unforeseen proroguing of the Northern Ireland Parliament in 1972) passed to the then Northern Ireland Parliament many of the powers and responsibilities previously exercised by local authorities in the Province, which has left Northern Ireland's remaining borough/district councils (currently the only form of representative government in Northern Ireland in the absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly) with authority analogous to largely impotent English parish Councils. Northern Ireland's district councillors strike a "district rate" for the services they provide and civil servants in the Northern Ireland Department of Finance & Personnel (acting with the authority of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) strike a "regional rate" for other services provided by executive agencies and quangos in the absence of devolved government in Northern Ireland.

My reason for recalling this is two-fold. Firstly, the impending re-grading of council tax bands in Kent and elsewhere in England (akin to the ongoing rates revaluation and introduction of separate water charges, possibly as a prelude to privatising the water industry, in Northern Ireland) is a stark reminder to us all that no serious discussion can take place on the financing of local government without there first being a debate on the role and structure of local government and cross-party consensus on the powers and responsibilities of local authorities, let alone some attempt to reconcile conflicting opinions over geographical and political boundaries of any local authorities and/or the voting system to be used to elect members to such authorities.

Secondly, to suggest that to overcome the anomaly of Northern Ireland M.P.'s being able to vote on English matters in the United Kingdom Parliament whilst English M.P.'s are unable to vote on any Northern Ireland matters devolved to a future Northern Ireland Assembly, perhaps the emphasis should be on finding ways to devolve only the authority to administer (rather than enact) legislation to a future Northern Ireland Assembly, in order to leave the United Kingdom Parliament to legislate for England and Northern Ireland alike to maintain the Union of the United Kingdom and afford locally-elected representatives in Northern Ireland an assembly with powers analogous to Kent County Council. In this sense, New Labour – which has purportedly been keen to adopt other aspects of Thatcherism – has a ready formula it could adopt, via implementing the 1979 Conservative General Election Manifesto commitment to administrative devolution in Northern Ireland by establishing a Province-wide regional council whilst simultaneously devolving additional responsibilities to a smaller number of borough/district councils (than the existing twenty-six local authorities) in Northern Ireland to afford them analogous responsibilities to their Kent counterparts.

Amidst the arguments for and against the Democratic Unionist Party's proposals for a Corporate Assembly and the

ongoing Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, it is equally essential that the ordinary voter in the street is not left bereft of holding a stake in the democratic process and helping to determine (i) the future structure of local government in Northern Ireland, (ii) the powers and responsibilities to be afforded to any revised local authorities and restored assembly, (iii) the geographical and political boundaries of any local authorities, (iv) how the assembly and any local authorities are to raise and expend their revenue, and (v) the voting system to be used for electing members of, and to, a future assembly and local authorities.

Ultimately then, whilst welcoming all visitors from Northern Ireland to Kent, one feels that the representatives of Northern Ireland's political parties would have made better use of their time visiting Kent County Council Headquarters at Springfield and the local offices of borough/district councils throughout Kent than attending talks at Leeds Castle nearby in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of local government in England and perhaps find common ground on the level and range of functions which could be devolved from central government to locally elected representatives in Northern Ireland.

(Christopher Luke is the Founder/Editor of UNIONIST, a bi-monthly newsletter written from a traditional unionist perspective and Member of William Alexander Memorial L.O.L. 1689 in London)

Tony Blair on the road to Rome?

Recent media reports have again speculated that the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, will officially convert to Roman Catholicism when he stands down from Number 10. He already frequently attends mass both on holiday in Italy and at home in London. His wife is a Roman Catholic and his children are being educated at a Roman Catholic school.

His political appointments in Ulster have also reflected his Romeward trend. The current Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Paul Murphy, is a fervent Roman Catholic who has received Papal honours, and his predecessor, John Reid, is another Roman Catholic who when Secretary of State for Scotland met the Pope in Rome.

One wonders what his grandfather would have made of all this. It has recently emerged that his grandfather was Bro George Corscaden of Carricknahorna LOL 147 from County Donegal.

(Contributed by Brother Jack Greenald)

Book Review

'Not By Might - A journey in faith and politics'

The authorised biography of Jeffrey Donaldson by Noel Davidson, published by Ambassador.

This book examines the political career and Christian faith of the Lagan Valley MP, Jeffrey Donaldson. It recounts his upbringing in the County Down town of Kilkeel and the impact on his life of the murder of a number of relations and friends at the hands of the Provisional IRA. His twenty-three year old cousin, Samuel Donaldson, a serving RUC man was murdered by an IRA bomb in August 1970, and another cousin, Chief Inspector Alexander Donaldson of the RUC was murdered by the IRA in February 1985. His close friend Alan Johnston, who was a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment was murdered by the IRA in February 1988.

His political career was moulded by his work for Enoch Powell and James Molyneaux and again he was influenced by the example of two Unionist politicians who were murdered by the IRA: Rev Robert Bradford MP for South Belfast and Edgar Graham. The book traces his rise in Unionism from joining the Young Unionist Movement to becoming MP for Lagan Valley with one of the largest majorities in Northern Ireland. The divisions within Ulster Unionism caused by the Good Friday Agreement are also looked at which led to Jeffrey Donaldson eventually joining Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party.

Another chapter of the book looks at his career in the Orange Institution, from joining Orangefield LOL 564 in Kilkeel when he was sixteen to becoming an Assistant Grand Master to Rev Martin Smyth, and his role in the parades dispute at Drumcree.

An interesting read about the career to date of one of Ulster's leading Protestant and Unionist spokesmen.

(Contributed by Brother Jack Greenald)

Footnote - A five part series of articles entitled "English Orangeism and the Great War" by Brother Jack Greenald will commence (D.V.) in the next issue of The Orange Banner.

Lodge Cards

NORTH ESSEX MARTYRS MEMORIAL L.O.L. 45 meets on the third Saturday each month in Harlow. Membership enquiries and visiting Brethren warmly welcomed.

STAR OF HALEWOOD BISHOP J.C. RYLE MEMORIAL L.O.L. 66 meets the first Thursday of every month at 8pm from February to December at the Orange Hall, Heald Street, Garston, Liverpool. Further details can be obtained via e-mail: -
ianthompson@orangenet.org.

THE IVY L.O.L. 783 meets at 6:30pm on the second Saturday in each month at the Provincial Headquarters, Everton Road, Liverpool. New members welcome.

VICTORIA'S PRIDE L.O.L. 788 meets the third Thursday of each month in the centre of Bolton. New members and visitors most welcome.

BLACKPOOL FAITH DEFENDERS L.O.L. 2001 meets the first Tuesday of every month in Blackpool. Telephone 01253 622994 for further details.

QUEEN ELIZABETH L.L.O.L. 2001 meet on the third Saturday of the month in Corby. Visitors are always welcome. Any new member enquiries please contact by phone 01536 205450 or by e-mail to Secll012001corby@aol.com.

There are Loyal Orange Lodges in many parts of the country. For further details of membership and the Biblical principles of Orangeism please contact the editor of The Orange Banner.

Banner Pulpit: -

Romans 1:16

Part Two

Verses sixteen and seventeen of the opening chapter of the epistle give us the reasons why Paul was so ready to preach the gospel in Rome when God, in his sovereign providence, would open the door of evangelistic opportunity for him. The apostle was here as always submissive to the will of the God of his salvation.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

In the last issue we began to look at verse sixteen and in particular the opening phrase, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”. To the worldly wise the gospel is just plain foolishness, and to the Jew the gospel is a stumbling block because they are looking for the wrong kind of Messiah. They were sadly looking for an earthly king and an earthly kingdom, and not a spiritual one. The Messiah is indeed portrayed in the Old Testament as a king, but he is also depicted as a suffering Messiah, and it is this aspect that is ignored by the Jews to their loss.

Is the gospel preached just foolishness in your ears or is it the word of God speaking to your soul?

The apostle Paul was not interested in what the world thought about the gospel and so he was not ashamed of what he preached so faithfully during his ministry.

Being ashamed of the gospel is a temptation that believers have to face and a sin that they unfortunately so often fall into. How easy it is to say nothing when we should be standing up for the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ and his church. How easy, for example, it is to say nothing when we should be giving a word in season to an unbeliever. How easy it is to be ashamed of the gospel when in fact the opposite should be true.

Now the second half of verse sixteen gives us the thinking and judgment behind why the apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. The epistle is now unfolding doctrinally verse by verse as Paul slowly but surely develops and explains his reasoning to us.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ can indeed be simple enough for a child to understand and to believe, but it is in itself a great mystery that is far beyond our finite human understanding in many respects because it is the effective or effectual means by which the LORD God saves men, women and children from sin and misery, and gives them eternal life. In other words the gospel is the instrument or the divine channel of Almighty God where he triumphs in the hearts of his people and destroys in them the dominion of our great adversary Satan and sin.

In this respect please read James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 Peter 1:5, and 1 Corinthians 1:21.

The gospel and we read and hear preached is the power of God unto salvation. This gospel message of Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation. God in his infinite wisdom saves people through the message of the gospel. The power of Almighty God is at work to bring salvation through the gospel, and it is through the gospel alone. It is a message of God’s word to lost sinners and this word of God is indeed powerful see Hebrews 4:12.

This phrase “power of God” shows us that it is a power that belongs to God, and therefore it is a divine power. The power of God speaks to us then of his omnipotence, that God is all powerful, and therefore the gospel is the omnipotence of God operative or working unto salvation in the lives of people.

This salvation of which the apostle speaks is, of course, a salvation from sin and eternal death as its just reward, and these are aspects of salvation that Paul develops further in this epistle for our edification. Now to be saved means to be freed from the greatest evil in the world and to be given the greatest blessings that can be had in the world and in the world hereafter. It is being reconciled to a holy and just God and knowing the forgiveness of your sins.

What a joy it is to know the salvation of God and to be saved, but is this experience your experience?

So being in the state of salvation is then the opposite of being in a state of perishing or being lost in sin, and you are in one of these two states today, and I will leave you to answer before God to which one you belong. Are you in Christ and saved or outside of Christ and lost?

We find then that the gospel is powerful and that is from God, and that the gospel is effective in bringing about salvation to people because the sovereign God works in it and by it. It is the means whereby God brings us deliverance from sin and its just punishment, and entrance into eternal life and blessedness from a merciful and gracious God.

Salvation is not the work of man’s devising and no effort of human power or wisdom can ever produce or earn salvation and everlasting life for anybody. The gospel alone is the power of God to overcome our natural inability to obtain or deserve salvation by anything that we do - see Romans 8:3.

The gospel is the power that God uses as the means to bring salvation to his people, and therefore all other ways of salvation are excluded because they simply cannot achieve or bring eternal life.

This inability of man is to be for example in John 6:44 where the word “can” means ability, and it is a word that is sadly misused today to obscure its true meaning.

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44)

Now this power of Almighty God of which the gospel is the embodiment is not unconditional or universal in its application, it does not bring salvation to everybody. It is a salvation to every one that believeth, and so from this we are told that salvation from sin is not accomplished without faith, and this is a scriptural emphasis that is found throughout the epistle.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

The salvation of God is to all that believe the gospel, to those who believe the good news of Christ crucified, and it is regardless of their age, their sex, their race, their nationality, their social rank or their degree of education or their culture. It is a salvation for all who believe and this is setting before us the biblical doctrine that salvation is always received by faith alone.

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism,

“Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.”

This faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or the believing of the gospel of Christ, includes in it an expression of having or receiving some knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and how he purchased our redemption through his atonement for our sin when he died on the cross at Calvary. Saving faith also includes a resting or trusting on the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work for sinners. It is having confidence in him alone and leaning on him alone for salvation, and not trusting in one self. Through him alone and his atonement for sin where he died the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us back to God, we can know that our sins have been forgiven and that our debt to sin has been cancelled and that one has been adopted to be a child of God.

Having this saving faith is therefore an exercise or state of the mind; it is not just the assent or the trust in certain biblical statements about Christ and salvation. It is not just a nodding of your head in agreement with a few Bible facts, but rather the intelligent perception and reception and reliance on that truth for salvation and eternal life as it is revealed to us in the pages of the gospel.

When Almighty God justifies a sinner he gives grace so that they will believe. Saving faith is always the gift of God.

“For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

The gospel is the power of God to every one that believes and this shows the extent of the gospel power. It is a salvation to every age of mankind and to every type of person of mankind, it is to all who believe and have faith.

The power of God displayed in the gospel of Christ is applied through faith and without this faith God will not justify or save you. Faith is the appointed way or means of receiving the redemption purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith people accept the promise of God for salvation and faith embraces the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for sin and that is the foundation of our salvation. Without faith salvation could simply not be received. By faith we give ourselves to Christ to be our Lord as well as our Saviour.

How then can you ascertain whether you have this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or not? The answer is whether you have the fruit of salvation in your life. Are you a studious reader and doer of the word of God? Are you often in prayer at the throne of grace in having a close communion with the God of your salvation? Do you receive the sacraments and your faith is increased? Simple and straightforward tests to see whether you are right with God in Christ or still lost in your trespasses and sins.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Now this gospel of Christ that is the power of God to every one that believeth, and this gospel was first preached to the Jews and then also to the Greeks, that is the rest of the world. The Jews thought that salvation was only for them, but that was not the case. The gospel was first sent to the Jews in the times of the Old Testament and in that they were a privileged and distinguished people in receiving the oracles of God. The gospel was not as clear as in the New Testament with it being in types and pictures and shadows, but it was still the gospel that was the power of God to every one that believed. The gospel was always promised to the Gentiles in the Old Testament and so we now today receive as the power of God to salvation for all who will believe it.

In closing I will remind you of the two major doctrines of the Christian faith that are taught in this verse of scripture.

The first doctrine is that salvation is always received by faith and secondly it is a salvation to all who believe.

Has the power of the gospel of Christ been felt in your life?

Have you that saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

On these two questions hangs your eternal destiny. Amen.

An Orange Ballad

In this famed Orange Lodge, merry Comus shall see
That none are so happy, so pleasant as we,
Our meeting's instructive, religious and wise,
For this glorious cause should all Protestants arise.

And while thus employed in so glorious a cause,
To support our religion and established laws
With which our blest country so long has been free
And shall be supported by our famed Orangery.

Yet fools may with wonder upon us still gaze
But while friendship's altar continues to blaze
We may laugh at their spite, it shall never offend,
For upon our bright system we e'er can depend.

(A ballad to commemorate the founding of Rotherham Loyal Orange Lodge, January 1st 1816.)