

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 St. Andrew's Agreement for Northern Ireland

Following three days of intense negotiations between the political parties of Northern Ireland at St. Andrews in Scotland during the middle of October, the British and Irish Governments have produced a so-called "St. Andrew's Agreement" of some eighteen pages in length to restore devolved government to the Province. The previous Northern Ireland Assembly collapsed four years ago with allegations of an IRA spy-ring.

None of the political parties have agreed to the document yet, but their consent has to be given by November 10th. If everything goes according to government plans devolution should be back in place on March 26th 2007. It will take time for them to fully consider the document and for clarification to be given on potential grey areas. No doubt compromise will be required to some degree for the agreement to work. Each party will have to seek the views of its own membership and possibly even the wider electorate before coming to a final decision.

A major question for Sin Fein is whether it will support and endorse the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). A Sinn Fein party conference would be required for such a step to take place. Without such a move it is highly unlikely that the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) would endorse the agreement.

The fine detail of the agreement will also be scrutinised by the Unionist people of Northern Ireland and the leadership of Dr Ian Paisley will be tested as previous manifesto promises are compared to the new document. The DUP is the strongest Unionist party at the moment and therefore crucial if the agreement is to be successful. At the moment there appears to be no mechanism to exclude Sinn Fein if they fail to keep their promises. There is also the question of whether there have been any secret side deals negotiated as part of the package.

Time will tell if the St. Andrew's Agreement is just another attempt to sell the original Belfast Agreement of 1998 in new clothes or whether it is indeed a step forward to ensure a lasting peace for Northern Ireland where the IRA have given up their criminality and terrorist activities for good. Even though the standard of life in the Province has improved in recent years there can be no acceptable level of terrorism and criminality.

If everything goes according to plan Dr Paisley would become the First Minister with Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein becoming the Deputy First Minister. If there is no agreement the Assembly will be closed and a form of British-Irish joint rule initiated. The Agreement will be subject to either an Assembly election or a referendum; undoubtedly which ever the government thinks is most likely to succeed!

Please pray for a lasting and just political settlement for the people of Northern Ireland.

Lodge News

Grand Orange Lodge of England Sessions in Sheffield

The 2006 Sessions of the Grand Orange Lodge of England were held in Sheffield on September 15-16th. The hosts were the Sheffield based lodge John E Bingham LOL 844. John Bingham was a well-known figure in local history.

In fact Sheffield has a long Orange history dating back nearly two hundred years, and in the 1850's Sheffield District LOL 14 had four male lodges and one female lodge.

A Service of Welcome on the Thursday evening prior to the sessions was held at Owlerton Wesleyan Reform Church in Sheffield where the preacher was the Revd Brother P J Rimmer HDGC. The church was very welcoming and a good evening of worship and fellowship was enjoyed. For those present it set the tone for the following two days.

The arrangements made by LOL 844 were excellent and a magnificent venue was a highlight for many. The two days were concluded with the Grand Lodge Parade on the Saturday afternoon. The parade ended at the John E Bingham Park where a short service was held. The preacher was Pastor Brian Cocker of Owlerton Wesleyan Reform Church. It was a fine and warm afternoon and there was a good turn out for the parade.

The subject of the parade was discussed in detail on the local internet forum site – “SheffieldForum.co.uk”. In general the response was good with just the odd objection.

Ladies Grand Council

The annual meeting of the Ladies Grand Council was held in the Bootle Provincial Headquarters on Saturday September 9th. The meeting was followed by a successful social in the evening.

Bedford & Oxford Lodges jointly host Orange Service

On Sunday 24th September the members of Bedford Bible & Crown Defenders LOL 71 and Oxford Martyrs Memorial LOL 213 jointly hosted a very successful Orange Service at the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin in the hamlet of Salford near Milton Keynes. This was the first such service and it was all the more pleasing to see these two progressive Lodges working together as they are actually based within two different Provinces within the LOIE with Bedford being in the Midlands Province whilst Oxford operates within the Metropolitan Province.

Visiting Brethren and Sisters from Birmingham, Corby, Luton and Rugby travelled to support the host Lodges together with visitors from Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire who are in Lodges in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Sir Knights and Brethren were also present representing the Royal Black Institution and the Apprentice Boys of Derry.

Rev Hugh Symes-Thompson, Rector of Salford and Hulcote, extended a very warm welcome to the Sisters and Brethren present stating that he was delighted to see the church virtually full for the occasion. The service took the form of Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer and during the first hymn Rev

Symes-Thompson received the LOL 71 Bannerette and the Union Standard into the chancel, with Brother Alan Crawford LOL 71 and Brother JJ Brown LOL 213 acting as the Standard Bearers.

Brother Paul Anderson, WM of LOL 213, and Brother Rob Beattie, Chaplain LOL 71, read the Scripture Lessons. Oxford resident, Bro Rt Rev Henry Richmond, Retired Bishop of Repton and a member of Colonel Saunderson LOL 391, Wattlebridge, Co Fermanagh, led the prayers.

Rev Symes-Thompson delivered the sermon, which was based on a harvest theme and he reminded everyone that we need to be nurtured in the faith and fed by Holy Scripture so that we are ripe for God's harvest.

Brother Mackey LOL 213 took up the collection and it amounted to a very creditable £244. This was divided between church funds and the Loyal Orange Orphans Society. The service concluded with the National Anthem, and afterwards everyone was treated to a splendid lunch in the nearby Agate Hall. Our most grateful thanks were extended to the ladies who prepared the fine array of food on offer.

The Officers and members of Bedford Bible & Crown Defenders and Oxford Martyrs Memorial LOL 213 would like to thank everyone who played their part in making this service such a success and it is hoped that it will become an annual event.

The Protestant Alliance

It is good to report that a number of Orange Lodges now arrange meetings of the Protestant Alliance where the speaker is Mr Chris Richards. On October 4th Mr Richards addressed the Annual Bro James Hughes Memorial Lecture organised by Bedford Bible & Crown Defenders LOL 71. Later in the month, October 19th, he spoke in Bolton under the auspices of Victoria's Pride LOL 788 on "Queen Elizabeth the First" and the following night in Liverpool under the auspices of Star of Halewood LOL 66 on the subject of "Archbishop Cranmer".

There are a wide variety of lectures available under the ministry of Mr Chris Richards. Why not arrange one for your Lodge?

UK Protestants Launch New Coalition

A number of Protestant societies and organisations across the United Kingdom have announced the formation of the **British Protestant Coalition**.

The Coalition has been formed to raise a united, positive and effective witness to the truths of the historic evangelical Protestant Faith and the constitutional benefits which the people of the United Kingdom derive from that Protestant Faith. The United Kingdom would do well to remember its Protestant history and the civil and religious liberty which flows from it to all our citizens.

For too long, the ecumenical movement and its supporters in several denominations have deceived the British people with their false message that the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are insignificant, irrelevant or non-existent. This view damages the spiritual welfare of our people, undermines the Constitutional Settlement, and is detrimental to the unity of the Kingdom.

It is to this environment that the British Protestant Coalition offers to speak with one clear and unambiguous voice on issues of spiritual relevance in the UK. The BPC is able to provide spokespersons,

both nationally and locally, to all sections of the media, to respond to any issue where a Protestant view may be desired.

Societies associated with the BPC include: - The Evangelical Protestant Society, The Loyal Orange Institution of England, The Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland, The Independent Loyal Orange Institution, Friends of the Institution (FotI), Our Inheritance Bible Ministries, The Royal Black Institution of the British Commonwealth, The Orange Banner, The Apprentice Boys of Derry, Scottish Protestant Union.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Ten

Lord's Day 17

Question 45 - How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

Answer - First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, so that He could make us share in the righteousness which He had obtained for us by His death.[1] Second, by His power we too are raised up to a new life.[2] Third, Christ's resurrection is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.[3]

[1] Rom. 4:25; I Cor. 15:16-20; I Pet. 1:3-5. [2] Rom. 6:5-11; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 3:1-4. [3] Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 15:12-23; Phil. 3:20, 21.

Lord's Day 18

Question 46 - What do you confess when you say, He ascended into heaven?

Answer - That Christ, before the eyes of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven,[1] and that He is there for our benefit[2] until He comes again to judge the living and the dead.[3]

[1] Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11. [2] Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:14; 7:23-25; 9:24. [3] Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:11.

Question 47 - Is Christ, then, not with us until the end of the world, as He has promised us?[1] A. Christ is true man and true God. With respect to His human nature He is no longer on earth,[2] but with respect to His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit He is never absent from us.[3]

[1] Matt. 28:20. [2] Matt. 26:11; John 16:28; 17:11; Acts 3:19-21; Heb. 8:4. [3] Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:16-19; 16:13.

Question 48 - But are the two natures in Christ not separated from each other if His human nature is not present wherever His divinity is?

Answer - Not at all, for His divinity has no limits and is present everywhere.[1] So it must follow that His divinity is indeed beyond the human nature which He has taken on and nevertheless is within this human nature and remains personally united with it.[2]

[1] Jer. 23:23, 24; Acts 7:48, 49. [2] John 1:14; 3:13; Col. 2:9.

Question 49 - How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

Answer - First, He is our Advocate in heaven before His Father.[1] Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, our Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself.[2] Third, He sends us His Spirit as a counter-pledge,[3] by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth.[4]

[1] Rom. 8:34; I John 2:1. [2] John 14:2; 17:24; Eph. 2:4-6. [3] John 14:16; Acts 2:33; II Cor. 1:21, 22; 5:5. [4] Col. 3:1-4.

Lodge Cards

LORD CARSON MEMORIAL LOL 20 meets at the Ash Centre, Ash Hill Road, Ash, Surrey, at 2.30pm on the third Saturday of each month (DV). New members and visitors are most welcome. For further details contact the Lodge Secretary Rory Mackay at ruairidh57@hotmail.com.

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.

CITY OF CHESTER L.O.L. 375 meets second Monday of each month in the centre of Chester. Visiting Brethren always welcome. Membership enquires from Cheshire and North Wales please phone Dave Reynolds on 0151 3563358.

BLACKPOOL FAITH DEFENDERS L.O.L. 2001 meets the first Tuesday of every month in Blackpool. Telephone 07787858614 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 Secllol2001corby@aol.com.

Wm ALEXANDER MEMORIAL L.O.L. 1689 London meet on the second Saturday in central London. New members and visitors welcome. For more details contact T. Parkinson on 078 1581 0763 or tomparkinsonuk@yahoo.co.uk.

BLACKPOOL FIRST FLUTE BAND – for further details see www.freewebs.com/blackpoolfirstflute.

LONDON PROTESTANT FLUTE BAND requires new and experienced musicians. Practice regularly in central London. For more details contact T. Parkinson on 078 1581 0763 or tomparkinsonuk@yahoo.co.uk.

Imperial Orange Council Summary Toronto – 2006

The 42nd Session of the Imperial Orange Council began on Saturday 15th of July with the County Orange Lodge of Toronto 186th Annual Orange Parade. The parade travelled through the centre of Toronto to the Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place. The parade was well received by the public on an intensely hot day.

On Sunday the delegates departed early to travel to the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Upon arrival at the Mohawk Lodge we were greeted by several Mohawks and their Chief and this provided photo opportunity for many. A short parade was held to Christ Church, Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks where the service of Evensong took place. The church was built in 1843 and the Mohawks have received a number of gifts from the Royal Family to commemorate the political and military alliance between the Mohawks and the British Crown. The service was conducted by The Rev. Bradley Smith of Christ Church

On Tuesday the delegates visited Niagara Falls and some took the opportunity to travel on the Maid of the Mist boat to the foot of the falls before dinner in the Fallsview Hotel. This was hosted by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario East.

Thursday afternoon all the delegates travelled into Toronto for a conducted tour of Metro Toronto House of Orange. This modern building replaced the original House of Orange and has been furnished with much of the original furniture. As the historic mural could not be transported copies were made and are on display. In the evening dinner was provided courtesy of the County Grand Lodge of Toronto aboard a cruise ship in Toronto Harbour.

Sir Knight William Logan the Imperial Grand Master of the Royal Black Institution, invited all the Sisters to attend a Royal Black Institution meeting on Friday afternoon. This was a wonderful experience. We were admitted after the opening ceremonies and each Grand Mistress was invited to speak and then presented with a small gift. We then stayed for the duration of the meeting which provided an interesting insight into the work of the Royal Black Institution.

The farewell dinner was hosted in the hotel by the Grand Orange Lodge of Canada.

It was a very busy week providing lively discussions with much food for thought and also the opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.

Sister G. Rimmer (Ladies Grand Secretary).

Banner Pulpit: -

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

(The sermon notes of Revd Brother P.J. Rimmer H.D.G.C. for the Grand Orange Lodge of England Service of Welcome held at Owlerton Wesleyan Reform Church, Sheffield on Thursday 14th September 2006.)

The early Christian church in the city of Corinth was founded in about AD 51-52 whilst the apostle Paul stayed there for a period of some eighteen months. It unfortunately showed all the problems, and the pressures and the struggles of a church that had just been called out of a pagan society. In fact the city was well-known in those times as a place of many pagan temples and also as a place of great immorality.

It is thought that the first epistle to the Corinthian church was written in approximately AD 56 or 57 whilst the apostle Paul was on the third of his missionary journeys. In the epistle Paul addresses a number of problem areas in the lifestyle of these particular people of God. He looks at divisions in the church, disorder in the church, and difficulties within the church. With hindsight it is very easy to find fault with the Corinthian church, but one needs to remember that there is no such a thing as a perfect church, and a church is to be both reformed and continually reforming in conforming itself to the teaching of holy scripture in its own day and generation. Perfection in the church and perfection in daily life are not to be found in this life.

The divisions within the Corinthian church were caused by misunderstanding – a misunderstanding of the message of the gospel, a misunderstanding of the messenger of the gospel, and a misunderstanding of the ministry of the apostle Paul, and these sad divisions gave great concern to Paul.

The disorder in the church at Corinth was about incest, litigation between fellow believers, and sexual immorality, and these were rightly condemned by Paul as being wrong and contrary to the teaching of the word of God.

The difficulties to be found in the church were about marriage, offerings to idols, public worship, the resurrection and a collection for the believers in need living in Jerusalem, and in these matters the apostle Paul gave the Corinthians counsel and guidance.

In his conclusion to the epistle the apostle Paul wrote these words in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14,

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.”

Now the Orange Order is no different to that of a church for no religious body will ever be perfect as it is always made up of individual sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God. The exhortation given by the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth is also applicable to the Orange Institution because at times it may also suffer from divisions and disorder and difficulties. Therefore, as we approach our annual Grand Lodge Sessions over the next two days may the God of all grace give us wisdom and discernment so that we may do all things to his honour and glory.

So initially you and I are exhorted or encouraged to watch – “Watch ye” says the apostle. The people of God are meant to be of all people a watchful people. You have to be watchful about your daily life as you face the many and varied temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. It is such an evil world in which we live, and you have to be watchful in the thoughts of your mind, in the words which you speak and the deeds that you do. The unbelieving world watches the people of God very closely hoping to find hypocrisy in their religion. To be watchful over your weaknesses and to avoid the places and situations where you are most vulnerable to sin is always the best advice to follow.

In the gospels we are told by the Lord Jesus Christ to watch and pray, and this is a reminder to us that we cannot walk in the paths of righteousness without the grace of God. We simply do not have the inner strength to resist and to fight against evil on our own. Spiritual warfare needs spiritual armaments and the Holy Spirit is our ally in our daily fight against sin.

How we need to pray so that we are not overcome by temptation and drawn into sin!

How we need to pray for the Holy Spirit in our lives!

The people of God are also meant to be watchful over the affairs of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ at large. It is so easy for false doctrine and error and unbelief to enter into the church and into peoples thinking. Whatever church you belong to make yourself acquainted with its confession of faith or doctrinal standards and this will help you not to be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine”. Many churches that trace their history back to the Reformation sadly do not today follow reformed doctrine. Read good Christian periodicals and magazines and be aware of what is happening in the church around you.

The church at Corinth was urged to watch and so are you and me.

If you are watching your own life and also that of the church, then you are next exhorted to stand fast in the faith. The Orange Institution is unashamedly a defender of the Protestant faith and in this you and I are to stand fast.

You are to stand fast in the truth of the gospel. To many people the preaching of the cross is pure foolishness and they consider that their human reasoning in this matter to be wisdom, when in reality they are but fools who are bound for a lost eternity.

In the days of the Lord Jesus Christ the Jewish spiritual leaders were always demanding signs from the Saviour to show that he was the promised Messiah. The signs were actually there, but they couldn't see them. They were looking for an all conquering king to overthrow the Roman army of occupation, and the healing miracles which testified that he was the Messiah were overlooked. Indeed it was the blind leading the blind, and so the simple preaching of Christ and him crucified was a stumbling block to them. Sadly it is still the same to this very day.

The Greeks or the Gentiles were more interested in philosophy and human wisdom. If you remember this is what the apostle Paul himself encountered when he visited the Greek city of Athens. They had many gods, but they were all the imagination of their own minds. They thought they were wise, but they did not know the living and true God, and so the gospel of Christ crucified was foolishness to them.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

What does the preaching of the cross mean to you?

And has it been the power of God unto salvation?

There are so many people in the world who think that they deserve salvation because they have lived a good life. No doubt there are some people in the Orange Institution who believe that they will go to heaven because they wear an orange sash. The reality, however, is very different for salvation is always by the grace of God.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should

boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The law of God demands perfection to earn salvation, but no mere human being can ever achieve it. There are none righteous, no, not one. And to sin against a holy and just God brings us into condemnation and into eternal ruin. Left to own devices we are justly condemned as guilty sinners and there is absolutely nothing at all that we can do about it.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ who has purchased redemption for all who truly believe on him alone for salvation. The eternal Son of God became man and as a man he perfectly fulfilled the law of God for his people. He lived a life of perfection in fulfilling all of the law of God. And then on the cross at Calvary he took upon himself the punishment of his people. He made an atonement for their sin and so the people of God may know the pardon and the forgiveness of their sins because the divine justice of God has been fully satisfied. The Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself the wrath of God against sin for his people.

This is the simplicity of the gospel message of salvation to lost sinners and it is the power of God to all that believe it, to all that put their trust and their hope for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:21)

Where do you stand in relationship to this gospel salvation?

In standing fast in the faith you are to act like men; that is to discharge this Christian duty as adults with understanding and faith, and not as children who may be weak in the faith. It takes strength and wisdom and discernment to fight against doctrinal error and to stand fast for the gospel of saving grace. “Dare to be a Daniel” is a hymn often sung at orange services, but it is to be seen in our witness for the truth of God’s abiding word of truth.

In season and out of season you are to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. As individuals and as members of the Orange Institution there are battles to be fought and won in the work of the Lord.

In all of these activities we are finally told to do it with charity, and this is often the hardest thing to do, isn’t it? So easily Christians fall out and divide over issues which should be considered secondary and of least importance. How the enemies of the church must laugh at the divisions that have occurred over the years. Faith and hope are great spiritual gifts, but charity is the greatest of them all.

Love to God and love to your neighbour will enable you to stand fast in the faith; it will help you to put things into context of what is important and what are matters of indifference. So often pride enters into arguments and discussions, and before long people are falling out over things that are of just a secondary nature. The Orange Institution in England knows this full well in recent years in relationship to the United Protestant Council where no charity was evident in its dealing with the Loyal Orders and the result was our separation from that body. In discussion you need to develop the attitude of love and toleration where it doesn’t really matter, but standing firm and steady on the essentials of evangelical and reformed truth..

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.” (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

So as we meet in the forthcoming Grand Lodge sessions let these lessons be written upon our hearts, so that any possible divisions, disorder and difficulties may be overcome in charity, and that God may be glorified in all our deliberations. Amen.

