

A strong party in England, seeing the breakers ahead, entered into negotiations with William, Prince of Orange, an undoubted Protestant, regarding the future disposition of the throne of Great Britain. As William was married to the Princess Mary, the elder daughter of King James, it was thought that the royal father might be deprived in favor of her who was in reality the next heir to the throne. While negotiations of this kind were going on, James continued a policy so utterly Romish and inimical to the religious feeling of the great bulk of the British people that a result disastrous to himself seemed inevitable. He informed his Parliament in November, 1685, that he had appointed some officers in the army who had not qualified according to the Test Act, *i.e.*, who had not received the Holy Communion in the Anglican Church. Somewhat to his surprise, this was resented in both Houses of Parliament. The king then prorogued Parliament, and endeavored to win the bishops and leading men of England over to his side by a series of private meetings called closetings, but only a few were found willing to side with his views.

He then had recourse to law. The fatal spirit of the Stuarts came upon him. He would crush his people, and rule by absolute power. A few of the judges were found who declared that the king, by virtue of his royal prerogative, was supreme over all laws. In other words, all law could be set aside by the exercise of his own will.

Acting immediately upon this, the foolish king began to fill vacant offices by the appointment of rampant Papists and to place Jesuit fathers in ecclesiastical positions in and about the court. In fact, an air of Romanism prevailed everywhere. Romish worship was established for the king's household, Romish buildings were founded and Romish processions were seen in the streets. This aroused the feeling of the nation. The bishops and clergy in many places preached strongly against Romanism, and made strenuous appeals against this unworthy attempt to undo the great work of the Reformation; foremost among these was Thomas Ken (Bishop of Winchester), whose eloquence attracted crowds of people eager to show their zeal for the Church which they had been taught to love.

The action of Archbishop Sancroft at this juncture is disappointing. He had yielded too much to the commands and wishes of the king, and even when James desired "all controversial preaching" to be stopped, with a view to silencing Ken and all the other denouncers of Romanism, the servile Archbishop complied. He found, however, that his orders were but little regarded. The great bulk of the clergy resented earnestly the attempts of the king to subvert the faith of the nation. Some of the best sermons ever preached against Romish

doctrines were delivered in England at this time.

The king, however, pursued his mad policy. He appointed a tribunal to manage ecclesiastical affairs, and chiefly to try those who should be found opposing his will. Sancroft was appointed the head of this commission, but he refused to act. This displeased the king, who forbade the Archbishop to appear any more at court; but he, as Primate, should have gone further than this. He should have resented the establishment of any such illegal court of commissioners. Before this court Dr. Compton, Bishop of London, was cited for a sermon he had preached. He was tried and deprived, to the great indignation of the people.

The king, in order to crush the Church, made common cause with the Nonconformists, and with a view to getting their good-will, published his famous "Declaration for Liberty of Conscience." This document expressed the wish that all people might be (Roman) Catholics, but inasmuch as this could not be, liberty was granted to all denominations of Christians to worship as they might see fit. This gave liberty to Romanists and Dissenters alike, and many of the wisest among Nonconformists saw that privileges accorded them on such terms could not be in the end beneficial to the religion of the nation. It therefore greatly failed in the result anticipated. Churchmen and Dissenters were drawn more closely together in their common contention against Rome. But, at the same time, Churchmen saw to their great grief that Romish chapels and dissenting conventicles, under the cover of this declaration, were springing up all over England. Their consternation, therefore, was great when a royal command was given that it should be read in all the churches. This order was given on the fourth of May, 1688. It immediately aroused Archbishop Sancroft. He could stand the king's tyranny no longer. His intense loyalty to the king had led him, so far, to be passive, almost culpably so. He had a very high idea of the allegiance due to a king. He almost doubted whether a king should be disobeyed in anything. But this order conflicted with his allegiance to the Church whose chief officer he was. He therefore held a consultation with some of the bishops, the result of which was that they resolved to disobey the king's command. There were seven of them, *viz.* Sancroft, Lloyd, Turner, Lake, Ken, White and Trelawney. The king was exasperated. The next day was Sunday, the day on which the declaration was to be read. The churches were thronged everywhere by an excited people. In only a very few places was the declaration read. The action of "the seven bishops" exerted great influence over the whole of England. The king knew not what to do, but he was an obstinate and resolute man, who could