

archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. Latimer's words to Ridley as they stood at the stake express the certainty of ultimate victory all the martyrs felt: "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

Nor was it ever put out. Indeed, in the years following it burned more brightly than ever, despite many a threat from monarchs and venal churchmen. The seventeenth century saw the production of the greatest of all English translations of the Scriptures, the Authorised Version, known in America as the King James Version. In many ways, this is the most enduring legacy of the Protestant Reformation. Out of it grew the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the great body of English Puritan literature that still speaks with power to all who read it.

The seventeenth century saw the Pilgrim Fathers sail off to the New World in the *Mayflower* (1620) in search of religious freedom. Their influence in England and America was profound. The persecution that drove them to America drove many of their fellow countrymen to revolution against the crown. For a brief period under Oliver Cromwell, England had an opportunity to establish godly rule. With the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 a new era of persecution commenced. In Scotland, James II pursued the Covenanters with vicious tenacity. "The Killing Times" of the 1680s were ended only by the arrival in November 1688 of William, Prince of Orange, whose accession saved both England and Scotland from Romanism.

The Light Spreads

The spiritual decline in Europe during the eighteenth century resulted in a "bloody revolution" in France, which threatened to spill over into England. God mercifully saved England from such a fate by sending a spiritual revival through the powerful preaching of George Whitefield and John

Wesley. Whitefield was probably the greatest preacher England has ever known. His evangelical and Calvinistic preaching shook the nation as tens of thousands flocked to hear him. His ministry lasted for thirty-five years and it included seven visits to America. C. H. Spurgeon commented, "He *lived*. Other men seem to be only half alive; but Whitefield was all life, fire, wing, force." Another feature of the eighteenth century revivals was the abundance of great hymns from men such as Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, John Newton, and Charles Wesley. This was the century of repeated revivals both in Britain and in



North America, where Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, William and Gilbert Tennent, and many others exercised a powerful ministry. These revivals, known generally as the Great Awakening, were followed at the end of the century by the Second Great Awakening in America, a movement of God that lasted from the late 1790s until the 1830s.

After such experiences of revival, it is not surprising that the nineteenth century was a period of great missionary enterprise. William Carey went to work in India despite the opposition of many Christians to the whole idea of such labours. An older minister rebuked him for his zeal, saying, "When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your help or mine." Undeterred, Carey arrived in Calcutta in 1793 and remained in India until his death

in 1834. His motto was, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." Henry Martyn followed Carey to India, Adoniram Judson became the apostle to Burma, and David Livingstone the trailblazer of Africa. Hudson Taylor pioneered in China, while John Paton laboured in the Pacific Islands. It was said that when Paton landed in the New Hebrides "there were no Christians; when he left in 1872 there were no heathens." Such are the wonders of God's grace!

Further revivals stirred God's people both in the United States and Britain. The Prayer Meeting Revival that started in New York in 1857 was followed by similar movements of the Holy Spirit in Ulster, Wales, and England in 1859.

The Light Dims

The apostasy of the twentieth century has produced a great departure from the word of God. Weakened by rationalism and liberalism, and now caught up in the ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches founded in 1948 with the aim of reversing the Reformation, once-great Protestant churches have gone a long way toward reunion with the Church of Rome. The Roman Catholic Church has opposed the Reformation for centuries. In doing so it has butchered many of the Lord's choicest saints. Now through cooperation with the erstwhile Protestant churches of the World Council of Churches, she has her ancient goal of overthrowing the Reformation within her reach. However, the Lord has not forsaken His people. He has preserved His truth throughout history and will continue to do so. His truth is still marching on and must prevail. The knowledge of what He has done gives us confidence that He will yet do great things to further the cause of Christ, whatever the opposition from apostate religion. ■

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