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Strange and Remarkable
Prophesies and Predictions

Of the Holy, Learned, and excellent

James Usher,

Late L. Arch-Bishop of *Armagh*,
and late Primate of *Ireland*.

Giving an Account of his Foretelling

- I. The Rebellion in *Ireland* Forty Years before it came to pass.
- II. The Confusions and Miseries in *England*, in Church and State.
- III. The Death of King *Charles* the First.
- IV. His own Poverty and want.
- V. The Divisions in *England* in matters of Religion.

Lastly, Of a great and Terrible Persecution which shall fall upon the Reformed Churches by the Papists wherein the then Pope should be chiefly concerned.

Written by the Person who heard it from this Excellent Persons own Mouth, and now publisht earnestly to perswade us to that Repentance and Reformation which can only prevent our Ruin and Destruction.

And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? Gen. 18. 17.

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*Strange and Remarkable Predictions of that Holy
Learned and excellent Bishop, James Usher late
Lord Primate of Ireland.*

THE Author of the Life of this excellent and Worthy Primate and Arch-Bishop, gives an Account, that among other extraordinary gifts and graces, which it pleased the Almighty to bestow upon him, he was wonderfully endued with a Spirit of Prophecy, whereby he gave out several true Predictions and Prophetesies of things a great while before they came to pass, whereof some we have seen fulfilled, and others remain yet to be accomplished. And though he was one that abhorred Enthusiastic Notions, being too Learned, Rational, and knowing, to admit of such idle Freaks and Whimsies. Yet he professed, 'That several times in 'his Life he had many things imprest upon his mind, 'concerning future Events, with so much warmness 'and importunity, that he was not able to keep them 'secret, but lay under an unavoidable necessity to 'make them known.

From which Spirit he foretold the *Irish* Rebellion Forty years before it came to pass, with the very time when it should break forth, in a Sermon Preached in *Dublin* in 1601. where from *Ezek* 4.6. discoursing concerning the Prophets bearing the iniquity of *Judah* forty days, the Lord therein appointed a day for a year: he made this direct Application in Relation to the connivance at Popery at that time. *From this year* (says he) *will I reckon the sin of Ireland, that those whom you now embrace, shall be your Ruin, and you shall bear this Iniquity.* Which Prediction proved exactly true, for from that time 1601, to the year 1641, was just Forty years, in which it is notoriously known, that the Rebellion and Destruction of *Ireland* happened, which was acted by those Popish Priests, and other Papists, which were then connived at. And of this Sermon the Bishop reserved the Notes, and put a Note thereof in the Margin of his Bible; and for 20 Years before, he still lived in the Expectation of the Fulfilling thereof: And the nearer the Time was, the more confident he was, that it was near accomplishment, though there was no visible appearance of any such thing: And (says Dr. *Bernard*) the Year before the Rebellion broke forth, the Bishop taking his leave of me, being then going from *Ireland* to *England*, he advised me to a serious Preparation; for I should see heavy Sorrows and Miseries, before I saw him

again ; which he delivered with as great Confidence, as if he had seen it with his Eyes : Which seems to verify that of the Prophet, *Amos* 3. 7. *Surely, the Lord will do nothing, but he will reveal it to his Servants, the Prophets.*

From this Spirit of Prophecy, he foresaw the Changes and Miseries of *England* in Church and State ; for having in one of his Books, (called *De Prim. Eccl. Brit.*)* given a large account of the Destruction of the Church and State of the *Britains*, by the *Saxons*, about 550 years after Christ : He gives this among other Reasons, why he insisted so largely upon it ; That he foresaw, that a like Judgment was yet behind, if timely Repentance and Reformation did not prevent it : And he would often Mourn upon the Foresight of this, long before it came.

From this Spirit he gave Mournful Intimations of the Death of our late Sovereign, *Charles* the First; of whom he would be often speaking with Fear and Trembling, even when the King had the

**Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates et Primordia. Quibus inserta est pestiferæ adversus Dei Gratiam à Pelagio Britanno in Ecclesiam inductæ Hæreseos Historia. Collectore Jacobo Usserio, Archiepiscopo Armachano, totius Hiberniæ Primate. Dublin, 1639.*

A second edition, enlarged by the author, London, 1687, with portrait.

"An everlasting monument of the author's good services to the Church of Ireland."—*Nicholson's Irish Hist. Lib.* chap. iii.

For a Notice of an English Translation of this Work, made in Usher's time or a little later, but imperfect, see "Notes and Queries," vol. vii, p. 121.

greatest Success : And would therefore constantly pray, and gave all advice possible, to prevent any such thing.

From this Spirit he foresaw his own Poverty in worldly things ; and this he would often speak of, with admiration to the Hearers, when he was in his greatest Prosperity ; which the Event did most certainly verify.

From this Spirit he Predicted the Divisions and Confusions in *England* in Matters of Religion, and the sad consequences thereof ; some of which we have seen fulfilled : and I pray God, the rest which he feared, may not also be accomplished upon us.

Lastly, From this Spirit he foretold, That the greatest stroke upon the Reformed Churches was yet to come ; and that the time of the utter Ruin of the See of *Rome*, should be when she thought herself most secure : And as to this Last, I shall add a brief Account from the persons own hand, who was concerned therein ; which followeth in these words ;

The Year before this Learned and Holy Primate, A. Bishop *Usher* died, I went to him, and earnestly desired him, to give me in Writing his Apprehensions concerning Justification, and Sanctification by Christ ; because I had formerly heard him Preach upon those Points, wherein he seemed to make those great Mysteries more intelligible to my mean Capacity, than anything which I had ever

heard from any other; But because I had but an imperfect and confused Remembrance of the Particulars, I took the boldness to importune him, that he would please to give a brief account of them in Writing; whereby I might the better imprint them in my Memory; of which he would willingly have excused himself, by declaring his intentions of not writing any more; Adding, That if he did write any thing, it should not exceed above a Sheet or two: But upon my continued Importunity, I at last obtained his Promise.

He coming to Town some time after, was pleased to give me a Visit at my own House; where I failed not to challenge the Benefit of the Promise he had made me: He replied; *That he had not writ and yet he could not charge himself with any Breach of Promise: For (said he) I did begin to write; but when I came to write of Sanctification, that is, of the New Creature, which God formeth by his Spirit in every Soul, which he doth truly Regenerate, I found so little of it wrought in myself, that I could speak of it only as Parrots by Rote, and without the knowledge and understanding of what I might have expressed; and therefore, I durst not presume to proceed any further upon it.*

And when I seemed to stand amazed, to hear such an Humble Confession from so great and experienced a Christian, He added; *I must tell you,*

We do not well understand what Sanctification and the New Creature are ; It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire Resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the Offering up of his Soul continually in the flames of Love, as a whole burnt Offering to Christ, and how little (says he) are many of those who profess Christianity experimentally acquainted with this work on their Souls.

By this Discourse, I conceived he had very excellently and clearly discovered to me that part of Sanctification which he was unwilling to write.

I then presumed to enquire of him what his present apprehensions were concerning a very great Persecution which should fall upon the Church of God in these Nations of *England, Scotland, and Ireland*, of which this Reverend Primate had spoken with great confidence many years before, when we were in the highest and fullest state of outward Peace and Settlement. I asked him whether he did believe those sad times to be past, or that they were yet to come, To which he answered, *that they were yet to come, and that he did as confidently expect it, as ever he had done*, adding, *that This sad Persecution would fall upon all the Protestant Churches of Europe* ; I replied, That I did hope it might have been past as to these Nations of ours, since I thought, that though we, who are the People thereof, have been punished much less than our sins have deserved, and that our

late wars had made far less devastations, than War commonly brings upon those Countries where it pleaseth God in Judgment to suffer it ; yet we must needs acknowledge, that many great Houses had been Burnt, Ruined, and left without Inhabitants, many great Families impoverished and undone, and many Thousand Lives also had been lost in that bloody War, and that *Ireland* and *Scotland*, as well as *England*, had drunk very deep of the Cup of Gods Anger, even to the overthrow of the Government, and the utter Desolation almost of a very great part of those Countries.

But this Holy man, turning to me, and fixing his Eyes upon me with that serious and ireful look which he usually had when he spake Gods word and not his own; and when the Power of God seemed to be upon him, and to constrain him to speak, which I could easily discern much to differ from the countenance wherewith he usually spake to me ; He said thus.

Fool not yourself with such hopes, for I tell you, all you have yet seen, hath been but the beginning of sorrows to what is yet to come upon the Protestant Churches of Christ, who will ere long fall under a sharper Persecution than ever yet has upon them ; and therefore (said he to me) look you be not found in the Outward Court, but a worshipper in the Temple before the Altar, for Christ will measure all

those that profess his Name, and call themselves his People ; and the Outward worshippers he will leave out, to be trodden down by the Gentiles. The Outward Court (says he) is the formal Christian, whose Religion lies in performing the out side duties of Christianity, without having an inward Life and Power of Faith and love, uniting them to Christ, and these God will leave to be trodden down, and swept away by the Gentiles ; But the worshippers within the Temple and before the Altar, are those who do indeed worship God in spirit and in Truth, whose Souls are made his Temples, and he is honoured and adored in the most inward thoughts of their hearts, and they Sacrifice their Lusts and vile affections, yea, and their own wills to him ; and these God will hide in the hollow of his Hand, and under the shadow of his wings ; and this shall be one great difference between this last, and all the other preceding Persecutions. For in the former, the most eminent and spiritual Ministers and Christians did generally suffer most, and were most violently fallen upon, but in this last Persecution these shall be preserved by God as a Seed to partake of that Glory which shall immediately follow and come upon the Church, as soon as ever this storm shall be over ; for as it shall be the sharpest, so it shall be the shortest Persecution of them all ; and shall only take away the gross Hypocrites and formal Professors, but

the true Spiritual Believers shall be preserved till the Calamity be over-past.

I then asked him by what means or Instruments this great Trial should be brought on. He answered, By *the Paptists* ; I replied, that it seemed to me very improbable they should be able to do it, since they were now little countenanced, and but few in these Nations, and that the hearts of the People were more set against them than ever since the Reformation. He answered again, 'That it would be by the hands of *Papists*, and in the way of a sudden Massacre ; and that the then Pope should be the chief Instrument of it.'

All this he Spake with so great Assurance, and with the same serious, and concerned Countenance, which I have before observed him to have, when I heard him foretell some things which in all human appearance were very unlikely to come to pass, which yet I myself have lived to see happen according to his prediction, and this made me give the more earnest attention to what he then uttered.

He then added, 'That the Papists were in his Opinion the *Gentiles* spoken of in the 11th of the *Revelations*, to whom the outward Court should be left, that they might tread it underfoot ; They having received the *Gentiles* worship in their adoring Images, and Saints departed, and in taking to themselves many Mediators ; And this (said he)

‘the *Papists* are now designing among themselves, and therefore be sure you be ready.

This was the Substance, and I think (for the greatest part) the very same words which this Holy man spake to me at the time before mentioned not long before his death, and which I writ down, that so great and notable a Prediction might not be lost and forgotten by myself nor others.

This gracious Man repeated the same things in Substance to his only daughter the Lady *Tyrril*, and that with many tears, and much about the same time that he had exprest what is aforesaid to me, and which the Lady *Tyrril* assured me of with her own mouth, to this purpose.

That opening the Door of his Chamber, she found him with his Eyes lift up to Heaven, and the tears running a pace down his Cheeks, and that he seemed to be in an Ecstasy, wherein he continued for about half an hour, not taking the least notice of her, though she came into the Room, but at last turning to her, he told her, That his thoughts had been taken up about the Miseries and Persecutions that were coming upon the Churches of Christ, which would be so sharp and bitter, that the contemplation of them had fetched those Tears from his Eyes, and that he hoped he should not live to see it, but possibly she might, for

it was even at the door ; *Therefore take heed* (says he) *that you be not found sleeping.*

The same things he also Repeated to the Lady *Bysse*, Wife to the present Lord Chief Baron of *Ireland*, But with adding this circumstance, That if they brought back the King, it might be delayed a little longer, but (said he) *It will surely come, therefore be sure to look that you be not found unprepared for it.*

To conclude in the words of Dr. *Bernard*, speaking of this Excellent Person. ‘ Now howsoever ‘ I am as far from heeding of Prophecies this way as ‘ any, yet with me it is not Improbable, that so great ‘ a Prophet, so sanctified from his youth, so knowing ‘ and eminent throughout the Universal Church, ‘ might have at some special times more than Ordinary ‘ Motions and Impulses in doing the watchmans part, ‘ of giving warning of Judgments approaching.’

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