WILLIAM KING, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

R. Buick Knox

William King was born in Antrim in 1650; his parents were Scots from Aberdeenshire.[1] By 1650 the Irish Rebellion had been finally crushed by the forces of Cromwell and, under his plans, presbyterian ministers were once again able to become ministers in parish churches. Here, they tried to carry out their ministry on presbyterian lines. Some of them were deeply attached to the Scottish Covenants and they tried to make their people take an oath to accept the Solemn League and Covenant. Some Scots objected to the hostility shown in the Covenant to the Scottish House of Stuart and they refused to take the oath. According to William, his father refused to take the oath and the minister was so annoyed that William's baptism was delayed for six months.[2]

William recalled that he was a very slow learner and was for long unable to distinguish the letters in words or to associate them with their sound. For this, he received many whippings. He was presumably what would now be called dyslexic. In particular, he could not recognize the words in the Shorter Catechism which was the basis of instruction in presbyterian homes and which he was expected to learn. Then, a sympathetic lady teacher gave him help and, suddenly, sounds and print came together; thereafter he became a zealous reader. Looking back upon his early years, he felt that the educational methods combined the severity of teachers with their inability to teach.[3]

In his own account of his life, he indicates that his family had moved to County Tyrone and that he attended Dungannon Royal School, though the school records do not contain his name. He said that in his first year of study of Latin he was as ignorant at the end

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1 A Great Archbishop of Dublin: William King, 1650-1729 (His Autobiography, Family, and a selection from his correspondence, ed. Sir Charles Simeon King, hereafter referred to as 'King'), p. 49

2 King, 1-2

3 Ibid, 3

as at the beginning of term; it was only after three years that he began to improve.[4]

In 1667 he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He had difficulty in paying his way; his family could give him little support, but his hardships were eased when his tutor, Charles Cormas, secured his election as a scholar.[5] In Trinity he was surrounded by the Anglican ethos and he came under the influence of the worship and order of that tradition.[6] He claimed that in 1669 a new tutor, John Christian, 'imbued him with a true sense of religion'.[7]

Trinity had its attractions as a gateway to education and opportunity, just as, at a later time, Lampeter in Wales offered openings to many non-conformists and drew many of them into the ministry of the episcopal Church. Such transfers were unusual in Ireland where Presbyterians did not think of themselves as non-conformists but as offshoots of the Church of Scotland.

As a migrant into the Anglican Church, King tended to portray his times in Presbyterianism in the gloomiest colours; he said he had known nothing sacred and did not know that the duty of prayer was incumbent upon him until he entered Trinity College. He admitted that his father conducted family worship and read the Scriptures, but his prayers contained words and phrases William did not grasp; a dictionary would have been needed to define them, but he added condescendingly that all this was typical of what he now called 'the sect'.[8]

His tutor now taught him to ask God's help and 'to consider his glory and service before all things'. He 'determined with myself to examine religion from its foundation' and to study natural and revealed religion and the Christian religion in all its branches and he noted that as a result he came to a happy conclusion from which he never wavered.[9]

He took his B.A. degree in 1670 but in 1672 he failed to secure a Fellowship. In 1673 he took his M.A. degree and he was

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4 Ibid, 4-5
5 Ibid, 7
6 Ibid, 8
7 Ibid, 9
8 Ibid, 9-10
9 Ibid, 11-12

ordained deacon by Bishop Mossom of Derry. He was chosen by Archbishop Parker of Tuam to be his chaplain. Parker ordained him to the priesthood and provided him with a prebend and eight vicarages; all this gave him a stipend of £60 yearly.[10] As chaplain, he was introduced to new and strange ways of life with household comforts, a variety of wines and copious dinners with sixteen courses; by 1675 he was having the first spasms of the gout which was to trouble him for the rest of his life; he died of a sudden attack in 1729.[11]

He was not stretched by his work as chaplain. He admitted he wasted time on trifles, but, being reproved by the archbishop, he made amends by studies from before midnight until two in the morning. In his own estimate, these night hours with the Fathers were not conducted with proper diligence.[12]

In 1678, his archbishop became archbishop of Dublin and he appointed King in the following year to be rector of St Werburgh's in Dublin, to which was added the chancellorship of St Patrick's Cathedral. As rector, he became noted for his regular work, his care for the sick and his catechising of the ignorant. He continued his studies, though these were much hampered by his gout.[13] He got his first taste of controversy when he replied to a pamphlet by Peter Manby, a former dean of Derry who had become a Roman Catholic. The pamphlet, 'Considerations' set forth his reasons for his change. King replied in 'Answer to the Considerations'; this led to a reply by Manby and a counter-reply by King in which he diverged to attack the Presbyterians who were numerous in Derry. This brought a presbyterian minister in Dublin, Joseph Boyce, into the controversy.[14] King had thus shown his deep aversion to the Presbyterians and this was to remain a permanent strand in his outlook.

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10 Ibid, 13; this largesse was due to the scarcity of clergy and to the malpractice of appropriation

11 King, 14

12 He secured the degrees of B.D. and D.D. in 1688

13 King, 16-18

14 Boyse, Works, II, 48-66; A.W.G.Brown, *The Great Mr Boyse* (Presbyterian Historical Society, Ireland, 1980)

In 1683, he took the waters in Tunbridge Wells. While in England, he noted with disapproval the criticism of the monarchy but he admitted that this arose from anxiety about what would happen if the Roman Catholic James were to succeed Charles on the throne. He was therefore not surprised at the eventual turn of events leading to the flight of James from England and the landing of William of Orange to claim the throne. This caused much trouble of conscience to many who had taken the Oath of Allegiance to James. King held that this had not given James absolute power to change the constitution and repeal Acts establishing Protestantism. He therefore agreed with those who supported the accession of William.[15]

In January 1689 King was appointed to be Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. It was at this time that King James came to Ireland to make his last stand. Many rural clergy fled to Dublin. This enabled the churches in Dublin to be provided with ministers. In the deserted rural parishes, Roman Catholic priests took over the churches. This even happened in some Dublin parishes and Anglican clergy had to conduct services in private houses. The authorities in Dublin were still obedient to James and they arrested and imprisoned King as a probable supporter of William and 'a dangerous man', but eventually since no evidence of treasonable acts could be produced, he was released. He was arrested again in June 1690 but was released as soon as William was victorious at the Boyne. In a celebratory sermon in St Patrick's Cathedral he welcomed William's victory as 'our deliverance'[16] He urged that those defeated by William should not be treated inhumanely. He later felt that the failure to treat them mercifully, as the Treaty of Limerick had hoped, was a lost opportunity to win many of the Irish to the Reformed Church.[17]

As might be expected, King was soon rewarded for his support of William who nominated him to be the Bishop of Derry. This was one of the richest bishoprics in Ireland, being worth £1200 annually. He was consecrated in January 1691 and he proved himself to be an assiduous and competent bishop in an area ravaged by

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15 King, 19-20

16 Ibid, 25-28, 92, 98

17 Ibid, 29

recent battles. He was well aware of the task which awaited him; he prepared a valuable report on 'The State of the Protestants' in which he catalogued their sorry plight. Archbishop Tillotson commended this work to King William as a useful guide in forming government policy in Ireland. It was also praised by Gilbert Burnet, bishop and historian.[18] This work also repeated King's reasons for supporting William's claim to the throne. It drew criticism from the Jacobite, Charles Leslie of Glaslough, who held that support for William was a clear breach of the oath to James. King replied that an oath depended upon mutual faithfulness and James had broken his part of the bargain by breaking his promise to maintain the constitution and the Church; subjects were therefore no longer bound to him and William could be accepted. King believed that most Protestants took this position and that there were few Jacobites among them.[19]

King resided in his diocese and sought to recover the Church's resources so as to improve the pay of the clergy. He pressed the clergy to reside in their parishes or at least to give sufficient to pay curates during their absence; in his view, absentee clergy preferred 'the clergyman's ease to the salvation of the people'.[20] He got all the neglected and ruined churches repaired and he urged the clergy to live sober lives and be diligent among the people. He said his practice was to test candidates for preferments, to look for those who had experience as curates, and to promote those who had done well in smaller parishes.[21] In his visitations of the parishes he found many Presbyterians. Mant says King set himself to counteract what Mant calls 'this evil'. King said some of them attended his visitations for business or out of curiosity and he appealed to them to conform. Some of them did. He detested the idea of non-conformity but he himself treated these people as misguided rather than as evil people. Within the diocese they were a strong body and he advised the clergy to get to know them and encourage them to conform.

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18 Ibid, 30, 78, 296-7; Mant, R., *History of the Church of Ireland* (London 1840) (hereafter 'Mant), II. 125-6, 277

19 Mant, II, 79

20 Ibid, II, 13

21 King, 282

He was annoyed with presbyterian claims to be strong champions of Scripture as the norm of Christian teaching and worship and practice. In reply, he wrote 'The Inventions of men in the worship of God.' He held there was more use of Scripture in the services of his Church than in presbyterian services. No doubt, with two lessons, at least one Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and various Scripture sentences, this was and is often the case. He held that the use of 'grave musical instruments' in worship was not an unscriptural invention, as Presbyterians asserted, but was a help to regulate voices of those that sing, especially in northern counties where, in his view, people's voices were 'generally more harsh and untuneable than in other places.' Yet, his arguments are often debatable; for example, he said that if God had intended people to sing metrical psalms, as Presbyterians did, he would have inspired the original writers to write in verse; since he did not do so, the Church of Ireland had sure warrant for singing them in prose. Boyce, who had already crossed swords with King, replied in 'Remarks on the Inventions.' He objected particularly to King's claim that, contrary to the biblical command, Presbyterians had infrequent celebrations of the Lord's Supper; he said this was due to the persecuting activity of King's denomination. King replied, repeating many of his accusations in 'An Admonition to the Dissenters in the Diocese of Derry.' He said Boyce had used all the devices the defenders of a bad case were accustomed to use. Boyce replied in 'A Vindication of the Remarks.' J.S.Reid, the presbyterian historian, says King's writings were 'a clever and plausible performance', written in 'a spirit of affected friendship' but full of 'unworthy insinuations and unfounded charges'.[22]

Writing to Archbishop Narcissus Marsh of Dublin after a round of visitations in 1701, King said he had entertained crowds of dissenters with a discourse showing there was no need for their separation; the Church of Ireland was based on the teaching of

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22 Ibid, 36, 39-40, 2889; Reid, J.S, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (ed. W.D. Killen), III, 27; Boyce, *Works*: Remarks on Inventions, II, 46-122 ; Vindication of the Remarks, 123-148. On the title page of *King* there is a quotation ascribed to King, 'Religion that leads to despise the Word destroys Salvation'.

Scripture. He made the same point in a letter to Bishop Ashe of Clogher and said it was a sin to make a needless sect. Mant holds that King's attitude to dissenters was marked by 'gentle and Christian reasoning', 'free from all bitterness of spirit' and none had been able to 'invalidate its truth'![23]

King also questioned the firmness of the attachment of the Presbyterians to their faith and practice; he claimed that from his experience they were ignorant of both and had slight acquaintance with their own Catechism and with the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments; he even asserted that only one in ten of the Scots frequented their meeting-houses. This was likely an over-gloomy picture, but presbyterian ministers often spoke of the difficulty of teaching and disciplining their people. King also admitted that many of his own people were far from being paragons of faith and practice.

King was irritated by the encouragement given to the Presbyterians by bodies who ought to have sapped their strength. The London Society owned large tracts of land and had many Scots settled thereon. King went to London to urge the Society to give more support to his Church, but he found the Society firm in its support of the Scots as diligent and stable tenants.[24]

King was also dissatisfied with the grant, the Regium Donum, given by William to the Scots for the stipends of their ministers, but, 'if it is thought fit to continue the Fund to them', it should be allocated by the government to each qualifying minister and not given as a lump to be distributed as the Synod's agent decided; this method put each minister at the mercy of the trustees who allocated the Fund to favour the founding of new churches and placing ministers therein. [25] In later years many ministers did feel they were at the mercy of the agent who administered the Fund.

King was opposed to including in any Toleration Act a clause giving dissenters the right to be appointed to any 'offices of Power'. Presbyterians complained against their exclusion from appointment as magistrates but King consistently voted in the Irish

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23 Mant, II. 14-16

24 King, 35. 276

25 Mant, II. 125-6

Parliament against any concession; this was something to which he said no Churchman could consent.

King held there was a place for the Irish language; he thus revived the policy of Bishop Bedell who in the previous century, in opposition to Archbishop Ussher, had sought to provide Irish Bibles and Irish Books of Common Prayer for the use of those whose first language was Irish. The government in Dublin feared that encouragement of the Irish Language would weaken the English interest. Nevertheless, when Highland Scots settled in Donegal, he appointed two Irish-speaking ministers, one to a benefice and one supported by himself. Some of the native Irish attended the services and he held that they were more likely to be won to Protestantism by such methods.[26] He also encouraged the study of Irish in Trinity College. However, this did not win wide support.

According to Mant, he found that many did not want Roman Catholics brought into the Church of Ireland as instructed and willing members but as members like themselves with little sense of religion![27] 27 Nor was he moved by arguments that the native Roman Catholics were so alienated by the Penal Laws that no overtures were likely to win a response and that there was no way forward until there was a measure of toleration. He held that they could not be given the full benefits of citizenship because, due to their relationship with the Pope, they could not give a guarantee of loyalty to the Crown. Yet, in practice, King held they were not to be, and were not, oppressed; despite the Penal Laws, King could claim that they 'lived happily'; there was liberty of conscience by 'connivance, though not by law'.

In 1702, William died and was succeeded by Anne. King hoped she would keep the law; if she did, she would be as happy as any of her predecessors; 'we universally loved William as our deliverer', but Anne was still an unknown figure. As James II's daughter, she would have to walk carefully.

In 1703 King was translated to the archbishopric of Dublin. When he left Derry, an Irish member of Parliament, according to Swift, said King left a people who acknowledged his wisdom,

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26 Ibid, II, 228-9; King, 291-5, 297

27 Mant, II, 17

hospitality and charity, his diligence in building churches, and his preferring of persons worthy of preferment on their own merits. Swift said that even the Presbyterians regretted his departure, for, though firm in his principles, he had treated them with indulgence, wisdom and goodness, but it may be granted that here Swift was writing with the latitude of the obituarist.[28]

In Dublin, he was much afflicted by attacks of gout. He went to London in 1704 for treatment and on Church business. He went again in 1705 and had much trouble in deciding whether he should hire a Sedan chair or a coach with a coachman and two horses; the coach would not be much dearer and would be more creditable to an archbishop. He had been at Tunbridge without any great advantage from the waters. He intended to go to Bath. He felt he could not be back in Ireland until January 1706. Before returning, he decided to buy four horses, though he thought he might need seven; in fact he bought eight. He postponed the purchase of a carriage until his return to Dublin. He seems by times to have continued to ride on horseback but in 1713 he had a fall and his Dean, by now Jonathan Swift, advised him to cease; 'it is', said Swift, 'one of the chief advantages of a great station that one is exempt from common accidents of this kind; the late King indeed got a fall, but his Majesty was a fox-hunter; I question whether you can plead any pretext to excuse you'[29]

When King became Archbishop, Swift was one of the clergy of the diocese. He was known as a brilliant and caustic writer who alienated many by his words. He was the rector of the small living of Laracor to which was added a prebend in St Patrick's Cathedral. At Laracor, he rebuilt the rectory, planted trees and formed a garden. He made various visits to London and importuned many in the hope of preferment to a higher office for which he rightly believed he was qualified. He became ever more bitter as people whom he believed had good cause to help him failed to do so. He besought favour from King. He and King had some affinity as men of learning and a shared aversion to the devices of politicians. Yet, there were grounds for tension. Swift resented the Archbishop's claim to have a right to visit

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28 Mant, II, 498; King, 277.

29 King, 114, 165

the Cathedral as Visitor and to oversee its ways. King frowned upon Swift's use of his gifts to ridicule people in high office; if nothing else, this blocked his hopes of preferment.

Swift wanted an English bishopric, but his writings, especially his 'Tale of a Tub', seemed to ridicule religion and led some to think he was an infidel. When discussing episcopal appointments with the Queen, her favourite archbishop, Sharp of York, advised her that in appointing a bishop she should be sure the man was a Christian. King was not against Swift-elevation. He told him to push his own case before he was too old; he should produce some serious work which would be 'profitable and agreeable above most things that pass the press'. He was sure Swift had 'the learning and happy turn of mind' to do so. Swift was irritated by this advice: King should have given him 'some hopes and promises'.[30] After a visit to Windsor, Swift wrote to King expressing his disappointment that many who had it in their power to help him had not done so; he knew there were men of transcendent merit who would rise to the top in any situation; the annoyance was that at lower levels men with second and third rate abilities were overtaken by knaves and dunces who had impudence and flattery. King again urged Swift to waste no time on his bitter thoughts but to produce a work useful to himself and the Church; he should make haste since 'after fifty both body and mind decay'; 'let the world see what your genius can do'.[31] He advised against attacks on Harley and the Tory government; it made people in England think the gentlemen of Ireland were 'a pack of desperate Whigs' ready to rise against the Queen.[32] He took particular exception to a pamphlet attacking a recent governor, the Earl of Wharton; Swift may have been the author, though King was probably unaware of this; he thought Parliament should curb such licentious criticism.

King, however, was no uncritical observer of rulers. He admitted that Wharton, who was indeed a cruel expander of the Penal Laws, may have been guilty of ill behaviour for which, if

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30 Ibid. 141-3

31 King, 147; Jonathan Swift, *Correspondence* (ed. Harold Williams, O.U.P. 1963) I., 254, 267-8

32 King, 126

proved true, he should be punished rather than be assailed in anonymous tracts. King held that the Earl of Anglesey should have been impeached. He confessed to Swift, 'I reckon that any chief governor who is sent here comes with a design to serve first those who sent him, and our good only must be considered as it is subservient to the main design'.[33] Lord-Lieutenants were often birds of passage who, in King's view, brought their English chaplains who during their brief stay they pushed into bishoprics and the best preferments; this gave little encouragement to clergy educated in Ireland. Swift agreed with this assessment; clergy without interest, property or acquaintance save that of being chaplains to governors were appointed to the chief offices; this also applied in the civil sphere. In the hunt for positions, King said 'ill men would engross the best places by their assiduity'.[34] There were, however, some governors who recognized King's quality. The Duke of Grafton, writing in 1723, said King was 'an uncommon mixture', at times indiscreet in action and expression with wild notions that sometimes make him impracticable in business, but 'usually well-affected to the King and an utter enemy of the Pretender and his cause; he is charitable, hospitable, a despiser of riches and an excellent bishop, for which reason he has generally the love of the country and a great influence and sway over the clergy and bishops who are natives'.[35]

In 1713, Swift informed King of his election to be the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral. His ambitions had been set on higher office; he referred to his new position as 'the small station in which I am placed'; he hoped he would have King's support. King told the Archbishop of Canterbury that Swift's friends were agreed that the deanery was a position better suited to Swift's temperament than a bishopric; 'a Dean could do less mischief than a Bishop'. He told Swift that while he was sorry to see his old friend, Sterne, so far removed, he would welcome Swift as a friend. Henceforth their lives were even more closely thrown together in smooth and rough times.[36]

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33 Ibid. 139

34 King, 283; Mant. II. 67; Swift. *Correspondence*. I. 259ff

35 King, 276

36 Ibid. 151-2. 195-6; Swift. *Correspondence*. I. 353.

King now went to Bath for treatment. He told Swift he hoped to visit London before returning but so many Irish bishops and clergy were already there hunting for preferments, especially to four vacant bishoprics, that he was ashamed to be seen among them. It would be a shame if those who stayed at home and attended to their cures were passed over for those who attended the Court and neglected their duties. He was much disturbed by the state of some dioceses in his province. In the one hundred and thirty one parishes in the diocese of Ferns there were only thirteen beneficed clergy and nine poor curates.[37]

A further change in circumstances was the death of Anne and the accession of the Hanoverian George. This disturbed some clergy who regretted the fading of the Stuart star and the rising of George's Lutheran star. King had no such qualms. He held that the Lutheran Augsburg Confession laid less stress upon the doctrine of election and predestination than did the Calvinist tradition; the Lutherans had a good liturgy, sometimes called the Mass and also akin to the order in the Book of Common Prayer. King was sure George would have no scruple about conforming to the ways of the Church of England.[38]

King's loyalty to the new regime was recognised by his appointment to be a Lord-Justice during absences of the Lord-Lieutenant in England. He did not relish the appointment; it diverted him from his episcopal duties; moreover, the Lord-Justices could not initiate new policies but they got the blame for the evil they could not prevent. However, the appointment did let him see the ill results of appointments in both Church and State without due consideration of local needs.[39] He submitted to the Archbishop of Canterbury lists of native clergy whom he considered fit for promotion, but he had little hope they would be appointed. In July 1716 he was again in Bath for treatment; he was there until September and then went to London in an attempt to influence episcopal appointments. He was still there in January 1717 and lamented that appointments were following the

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37 King, 148, 161; W.E.H. Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, I, 202.

38 King, 162, 165-

39 Ibid, 170-1

same line as under Anne. In her reign the Primacy and four bishoprics had all gone to Oxonians, and now, under George, out of six appointed only two had been educated in Ireland.[40] He lamented that in spite of all his efforts he had met hostility from the government, the House of Lords, the Courts of Law, and even his own clergy; he had been opposed by those who 'should in reason be most forward to promote my intentions'. Yet, he asked, why should he be surprised? 'Ingratitude is warranted by modern and ancient custom'. Some were, in his view, very dexterous at doing nothing; that was not his way; he had no wish 'to be out of a world so shocking, but to use our efforts to reform it'.[41]

However, he was glad that he had secured the appointment of one zealous bishop, Theophilus Bolton, his Vicar-General. He was appointed to Clonfert which was in sore need of an effective bishop. The tenure of two preceding bishops had spanned fifty-seven years. Fitzgerald, the immediate predecessor had just died at the age of eighty-eight, having hardly had his reason for several years and having twelve years ago married a young woman of twenty 'who had ruled both him and the diocese in a wretched manner'. King told Bolton to be firm in his rule, not fearing the frowns of the great and the clamour of the mob, and having confidence that 'the world is not yet so bad but truth, honesty and good sense are still able to support themselves'.[42]

In the administration of his own diocese he rightly claimed that he had achieved notable results. He had raised £70,000 for the building of churches, poor-houses, schools, hospitals and other pious uses. There were now more charity schools in Dublin than in the rest of the kingdom. He had urged clergy to attend to their duties, a call 'which does not please all'. He gave special attention to the spreading housing areas around Dublin. He claimed that Glasnevin had been an area filled with rogues, but had now become civilized since the building of a new church. A benefaction from Dawson, a Dublin landowner, was used to build St Anne's Church in the street which still bears his name. After twenty years of his rule he said he

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40 Ibid. 195. 202

41 Mant. II. 71. 132. 179. 323

42 Ibid. II. 374. 380

still needed funds for twelve more churches. By 1725 he had built or rebuilt twenty-eight churches.[43]

He had uneasy encounters with the authorities in the two cathedrals in his diocese. He insisted, contrary to the wishes of the dean and chapter, on being enthroned in Christ Church Cathedral as the cathedral of the diocese. The chapter had become an almost autonomous body; among other abuses, it had set up a toy-shop and a wine store in the crypt. King announced a Visitation of the cathedral; the dean and chapter absented themselves; King declared them guilty of contumacy and took them to the Court of Chancery in London to enforce their obedience. The court's decision went against King but this was reversed on appeal to the House of Lords in 1724. The dean and chapter were now compelled to do their duty and provide clergy for their twenty-seven appropriated parishes.[44]

King announced a Visitation of St Patrick's Cathedral where Swift was the dean. Swift was away in England; King demanded evidence in writing that Swift had appointed a proxy to receive him. Swift said this was unnecessary since it should be understood that the chapter was in charge and the sub-dean their spokesman. King was also irritated by Swift's prolonged absence in England. Swift claimed he was away no more than the cathedral statutes allowed. He expected King to concur in what was his right; 'I have lived and, by the grace of God, will die an enemy to servitude and slavery of all kinds'. He had been in London for the benefit of Ireland, the good of his health and the transaction of business and so 'I shall not concern myself upon the proceedings of your lordship'. King rebuked him for his prolonged absence but Swift threatened to appeal to the Crown: 'I will spend a hundred or two pounds rather than be enslaved or betray a right'. However, King took no further action when Swift added that he would return in a month's time at Michaelmas.[45]

The issue of relief for dissenters recurred during King's life. He was a consistent opponent of any relief. The Crown pressed for an easing of the Test Act which kept dissenters out of any public office. Both Houses of the Irish Parliament took the same line for

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43 King, 214, 304, 314; Lecky, op.cit., I, 204

44 King, 239, 246; Mant, II, 400-405

45 King, 256-8; Swift, *Correspondence*, III, 209

many years and voted for the continuation of the law requiring subscription to some of the Thirty-nine Articles as a condition of full citizenship. Eventually, the wall of resistance began to crumble when the House of Lords voted with the government. King lamented that this result came when five English-born bishops voted with the majority. King lamented even this modest relief. He held it was now possible for Jews, Turks, Deists and Pagans and others to set up as teachers if they simply took the oath of allegiance. He said bishops would now have to inform the clergy that the Acts gave 'a full liberty to all sects to set up their meetings and propagate what doctrines they please'. Nothing could now prevent this; the Church would have to 'depend on God's care and providence over his Church, and the means and methods Christ has left us to support religion' With unusual realism he confessed this would be more effective than all temporal motives and assistance.[46]

The Primate, Lindsay of Armagh, died in 1724. King was not appointed to succeed him. He recognized he was lame and aged and without sufficient vigour. He knew he had aroused many enemies by his probing into abuses in Church and State, but he claimed he had brought the Dublin diocese to 'a pretty good regularity'; if he left for Armagh, he would be sorry to see Dublin turned 'topsy-turvey' as had happened after he left Derry for Dublin. Swift hoped King would be offered the office, probably because he knew the worth of King, but also probably in part because the appointment would remove his claim to visit the Cathedral. King said that, if offered, he would accept but he could not now begin to do what he had done in Dublin. It was not to be.[47]

Hugh Boulter, an Englishman, was appointed. Though not personally an unworthy man, he was totally committed to advancing the English control of the Church. He pointed out to the Duke of Newcastle the importance of getting an English bishop to succeed King whenever his position became vacant; it was 'vital to break the present Dublin faction on the Bench of bishops.'[48] When

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46 Mant. II. 342, 357; Swift. *Correspondence*. I. III

47 King, 247-9; Lecky, op.cit., I. 445; Swift. *Correspondence*. III. 20

48 Mant. II. 419

Archbishop Palliser of Tuam died in 1726 Boulter strongly opposed the candidature of Bolton who was in King's circle and had been translated from Clonfert to Elphin. Bolton was supported by the King and by Lord Carteret, the Lord-Lieutenant, and by Connolly, the influential Speaker of the House of Commons, but Boulter said he was 'a dangerous Irishman' Eventually, the English Godwin, Bishop of Kilmore, was appointed. His brief tenure ended with his death in 1729 and King lived just long enough to see Bolton appointed.[49]

King's oversight of his diocese remained keen to the end. In 1728, he was still making plans for four new churches in Dublin. His increasing weakness made him realize his work was almost done. Yet, he sensed there would be twenty English contenders for his position and it was therefore his duty to look after his health and stay alive as long as possible. In 1728 he had a severe attack of gout which affected his hand and he had to have an amanuensis. He was in his seventy-ninth year and he was very weak. He wrote movingly to Bishop Maule of Cloyne about suggestions that the time had come for him to retire: 'I can by no means be of the opinion that I have done my work or that I should rest from my labours. Saint Paul has set me a better example who, after he had laboured a thousand times better than I and to much better purpose, yet did not reckon upon what was past but pressed forward to the obtaining of the prize for which he laboured. There is no stopping in this course till God calls us from it by death. I would have you propose no other example but Saint Paul himself and compare the progress you make to his'.[50]

Writing to Bishop Howard of Killaloe, he said he was beginning to creep about after the attack of gout but he had to seek help in fulfilling his duties and people did not comply so readily with his helpers as they had with himself. The diocese was in reasonable order but he sensed it was far from what it ought to be.

Through the years of his episcopate he had kept up his studies . He would have liked to produce something of lasting value, as he had advised Swift to do. His most impressive work was a Latin treatise, *De Origine Mali*, published in 1701. Here he dealt with the

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49 King, 256; Mant, II, 450-463

50 King, 265; Mant, II, 497

age-long issues of freewill, election and predestination; he wrestled with the difficulty of reconciling the existence of evil with belief in an omnipotent and beneficent Deity. The book caught the attention of Bayle, Leibnitz and Wolff; they gave it serious and critical attention. It was translated into English by Bishop Law of Carlisle. Peter Browne, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, told King he thought the work could have been abbreviated. He thought King had reversed the proper order of his argument; he said the idea of liberty had arisen after evil was done, but, in Browne's view, evil was what was done by people with the freewill which as intelligent creatures they already possessed; they chose to do evil.[51]

King also contributed papers to the Dublin Philosophical Society and to the Dublin Society of which he was a Fellow. He encouraged the clergy to continue their studies. He inaugurated a Lecturership in Divinity in Trinity College and strengthened it by a further bequest in his will. The Archbishop King's Professorship continued until recent times. King was classed as the most notable Irish episcopal scholar since Ussher.[52]

When he died in 1729, there were many tributes to his life and work. The 'Dublin Gazette' saluted him as a patriot and friend of his country.[53] He died as he lived, giving his possessions mostly for charitable purposes, reserving only his worldly chattels to cover the expense of his funeral. He asked that nothing be spent on any monument. His bequests to charities amounted to £17,000.

R. Buick Knox

Rev. Professor Buick Knox is retired Professor of Church History, Westminster Theological College, Cambridge.

51 King, 40, 90, 120

52 Ibid, 45, 303

53 Ibid, 313