

# DECLARATION OF WAR ON FRANCE

William III

1689

It having pleased God to make Us the happy instrument of rescuing these nations from great and imminent dangers, and to place Us upon the Throne of these Kingdoms, We think Ourselves obliged to endeavour to the uttermost to promote the welfare of Our people, which can never be effectually secured but by preventing the miseries that threaten them from abroad.

When We consider the many unjust methods the *French* King has of late years taken to gratify his ambition, that he has not only invaded the territories of the Emperor and of the Empire, now in amity with us, laying waste whole countries and destroying the inhabitants by his armies, but declared war against Our allies without any provocation, in manifest violation of the treaties confirmed by the guaranty of the Crown of *England*, We can do no less than join with Our allies in opposing the designs of the *French* King as the disturber of the peace and the common enemy of the Christian world.

And besides the obligations We lie under by treaties with Our allies (which are a sufficient justification of Us for taking up arms at this time, since they have called upon Us so to do), the many injuries done to Us and to Our subjects, without any reparation, by the *French* King, are such that (however of late years they were not taken notice of, for reasons well known to the world) nevertheless We will not pass them over without a public and just resentment of such outrages.

It is not long since the *French* took licenses from the *English* government of *Newfound-land* to fish in the seas upon that coast and pay a tribute for such licenses, as an acknowledgment of the sole right of the Crown of *England* to that island; and yet of late the encroachments of the *French* upon Our said island, and Our subjects' trade and fishery, have been more like the invasions of an enemy than becoming friends who enjoy'd the advantages of that trade only by permission.

But that the *French* King should invade Our *Charibbee* islands, and possess himself of Our territories of the province of *New York* and of *Hudson's Bay* in a hostile manner, seizing Our forts, burning Our subjects' houses, and enriching his people with the spoil of their goods and merchandizes, detaining some of Our subjects under the hardship of imprisonment, causing others to be inhumanely kill'd, and driving the rest to sea in a small vessel, without food or necessaries to support them, are actions not becoming even an enemy; and yet he was so far from declaring himself so that at that very time he was negotiating here in *England* by his ministers a treaty of neutrality and good correspondence in *America*.

The proceedings of the *French* King against Our subjects in *Europe* are so notorious that We shall not need to enlarge upon them; his countenancing the seizure of *English* ships by *French* privateers, forbidding the importation of a great part of the product and manufactures of Our kingdom, and imposing exorbitant customs upon the rest, notwithstanding the vast advantages he and the *French* nation reap by their commerce with *England*, are sufficient evidences of his designs to destroy the trade, and consequently to ruin the navigation, upon which the wealth and safety of this nation very much depends....

But that which most nearly touches Us is his un-Christian prosecution of many of Our *English* Protestant subjects in France for matters of religion, contrary to the law of nations and express treaties, forcing them to abjure their religion by strange and unusual cruelties, and imprisoning some of the masters and seamen of Our merchant ships, and condemning others to the galleys upon pretence of having on board either some of his own miserable Protestant subjects or their effects. And lastly, as he has for some years last past endeavoured by insinuations and promises of assistance to overthrow the government of *England*; so now by open and violent methods, and the actual invasion of Our Kingdom in *Ireland*, in support of Our subjects in arms and in rebellion against Us, he is promoting the utter extirpation of Our good and loyal subjects in that Our Kingdom.