
A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN

CHRIST-CHURCH, DUBLIN;

On TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1765.

BEING THE

Anniversary THANKSGIVING-DAY, for the happy
Deliverance from the POWDER-PLOT, 1605.

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Die Lunæ 11^o, Novembris, 1765^o.

IT is Ordered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled, That the Thanks of this House shall be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Clonfert*, for his Sermon Preached before this House, the 5th Instant *November*, at *Christ Church*; and His Lordship is hereby desired to Print and Publish the same: And that no Person do presume to Print the said Sermon, but such as his Lordship shall appoint.

Hen. Baker Sterne, Cler' Parliamentor.

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By the Right Rev. DENNISON CUMBERLAND, D.D.

Lord Bishop of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh.

D U B L I N:

Printed for SAMUEL PRICE, Bookseller, in
Dame-street.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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S E R M O N.

John 16. Ch. 2. 3. Verses.

2. *They shall put you out of the Synagogues, yea the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think, that he doeth God Service.*
3. *And these Things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

WHEN the tender Mercy of God, out of Compassion to the miserable Estate of lost Mankind, had formed that wonderful Plan of their Redemption, which must ever be the Astonishment of all created Beings, the joyful Notice of its Accomplishment was proclaimed from Heaven by an Host of Angels, who intermixed with their Hymns of *Glory to God, a Declaration of Peace on Earth, and good Will towards Men.*--This is, indeed, *the Peace of God, which passeth all human Understanding!*----The good Will of the Creator towards his Creatures, was most amazingly exemplified by the Descent of the only begotten of
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the Highest from the Throne of his Father, to take upon himself the Weakness of human Nature, and become a voluntary Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; But the great Work of Man's Salvation was not to be effected without *destroying the Works of the Devil*; and we have more than Tradition to assure us, that *for this Purpose was the Son of God manifested*.---- So long as Pride and Covetousness, Envy and Revenge, with the other diabolical Passions maintain an Empire in the Hearts of Men, they will be prompted to injure and oppress, destroy and prey upon each other: Nor can there be Room to hope, that Cruelty, Fraud, and Discord, will ever cease upon Earth, till Men have renounced the *Wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish*; to embrace that, *which descendeth from above*, and which is able to transform them into *new Creatures*.

To effect this glorious Design, *the Prince of Peace* made a *new Covenant* with Mankind, and gave them a new Law; a Law of universal Love and Charity: He makes the Love of Men to each other, the sole Proof of their Love to God; reducing all the Duties of both Tables to this single Point, which he makes the indispensable Qualification for every Blessing and Benefit, which we are to expect from Him. That we may not forget or mistake the Obligation, or Extent of this Law, He has placed a constant Monitor, or infallible Interpreter of it in every Man's Breast. That we may not complain of the Conditions, which it prescribes, our own Desires and Wishes are made the Rule and Measure of our Obedience.---

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One brief and general Direction, given by our Divine Legislator, displays a Perfection, which human Laws, could never attain to, that of providing for every Case, and extending to all Circumstances, howsoever minute and complicated: *All Things, whatsoever ye would, that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.*---Behold the Sum and Substance of all Righteousness, Justice, and Equity! the Religion of pure and uncorrupted Nature! at first engraven upon the Heart of Man by the Finger of God, but effaced by Sin; and what every Revelation of God's Will, since the Fall of our first Parents, has tended to restore and establish!

Could this Law of Love and Charity be universally followed, we should want no other Guide to regulate our Conduct in this World; as the Kingdom of God would then have its visible and glorious Commencement upon Earth, preparatory to the final Completion of it in Heaven.---But alas! *Satan*, the Enemy of Souls, who *can transform himself into an Angel of Light*, will ever have his *false Apostles*---*Deceitful Workers*---who labour incessantly to counteract the gracious Designs of Heaven; and wrest the most evident Truths, to serve the Purposes of Error and Destruction.---The Doctrines of Christianity, which tend to make Men *perfect, even as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect*, were so opposite to the Maxims and Manners of a wicked World, *dead in Transgressions and Sins*, that the Apostles and first Planters of the Gospel, are exhorted *to put on the whole Armour*
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of God, that they might be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.---They are given to understand, that they were appointed to wrestle not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.--- A Darknes indeed! arising from the bottomless Pit, to extinguish every Ray both of rational and evangelical Light!---A spiritual wickedness! of all others the most abominable; as it corrupts the best Things, and makes Religion itself subservient to the vilest Purposes of Tyranny and Fraud. These are ever ready to give a Sanction to the Persecution of Virtue and Innocence; and to justify the most horrid Cruelties, such as are shocking to human Nature, under the Confident, but plausible Pretence, of a Zeal for God, and for his Service. But we know that the Church of Christ must ever be militant here on Earth; its Triumphs being reserved to that glorious Time, when *the last Enemy shall be destroyed*.---Of this, the great Captain of our Salvation warns his Followers in the Words of my Text, to the End, that they might be prepared to endure with Patience the Sufferings, which they were to undergo for his Sake, and for the Propagation of his Gospel.---*They shall put you out of the Synagogues; yea the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think, that he doeth God Service*.--- And these Things they will do, because they have not known the Father nor me. Which last Declaration we may safely interpret to signify, they are Strangers to the Obligations both of natural and revealed Religion.

From

From these Words I shall endeavour to shew

First, the manifest Injustice and Absurdity of all Attempts to force the Minds of Men by bodily Severities, to a Compliance with the Doctrines or Opinions of others; as such Practices appear repugnant to the Law and Religion of Nature, and an Usurpation upon the common Rights of Mankind.

Secondly, that all Violence and Persecution, exercised on the Account, or under the Pretence of Religion, is totally inconsistent with, and destructive of the Spirit of Christianity, and stands in direct Opposition to the plainest Precepts of the Gospel.----And shall then conclude with an Application to the particular Circumstances which we now Commemorate.

My first Proposition is, that all Attempts to force the Minds of Men by bodily Severities to a Compliance with the Doctrines or Opinions of others, are unjust and absurd; as they appear repugnant to the Religion of Nature, and an Usurpation upon the common Rights of Mankind.

Wheresoever Principles and Practices of this Kind prevail, through a Persuasion of their Lawfulness, they must proceed from an Ignorance of God, the Father of all Beings, and of the Nature of Man, whom he has distinguished from all other Creatures upon this Earth, by the Gift of Reason. This Power or Faculty bestowed upon the Lord of the inferiour Creation, is always understood to imply a Capacity of thinking and judging for himself. It may be called the Eye of the Mind, of which, if we should either be deprived by our own Act, or by Compulsion from
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others, we are, at the same Time, degraded from the Dignity of human Nature; left without Guide or Conductor, and in so much a worse Condition than *the Brute Beasts, which have no Understanding*, as they have the Impressions of an unerring Instinct, to direct them for their own Preservation, and to answer every End, for which they were created: Human Reason is not only appointed to set Bounds to our Appetites and Passions, but it is the sole Judge of Truth and Falsehood, in all matters, which lie within the Sphere of its Comprehension; and we are to observe, that every Individual is to be guided by *his own Reason*; because the Force and Conviction of it are felt and known by himself only. Indeed all Attempts to exercise Dominion over the Minds and Consciences of Men by forcible Methods, must necessarily be as absurd and fruitless, as they are cruel and unjust; for the Assent of the Mind to any Proposition, does by no Means depend upon the Will and Pleasure of him, to whom it is proposed; Many wish that true, which they cannot believe to be so; and what a Man does really believe in his Heart, he has it not in his Power to disbelieve, till superior Evidence or Demonstration shall convince him of his Error; and then the Conviction must be in his own Mind and Conscience; otherwise it is no Conviction at all.

It is not necessary to enlarge farther upon this Point, than, to clear this Doctrine from Misapprehension, or Abuse in its Consequences; to which End, I must observe, that this *freedom of Mind*, is not
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necessarily, or in all Cases, connected with *freedom of Action*. With Regard to all such Acts as affect that Community whereof we are Members, we are unquestionably bound by such Laws, and subject to such Restraints, as are calculated for the public Benefit, and enforced by the Authority of lawful Magistrates.-- Which will be very evident from that divine System of universal Peace, Love and Charity, which will fall under our Consideration in my next Head, wherein I am to shew

Secondly, that all Violence and Persecution exercised upon the Account, or under the Pretence of Religion, is totally inconsistent with, and destructive of the Spirit of Christianity, and stands in direct Opposition to the plainest Precepts of the Gospel.

If my Kingdom were of this world, says our blessed Lord, *then would my Servants fight :* And his Apostle has plainly told us from whence *wars and Contentions proceed*. Yet alas! Whosoever views the present State of this World will be sadly convinced, that the same sanguinary Maxims, or rather such as are more destructive, are now prevalent amongst those, who call themselves the Servants of Christ, but have cast off his Garb, and thrown away his Badge. The Saviour of Mankind, in establishing his Kingdom, did not seek to pluck the Mitre from the Head of a Jewish High Priest, nor to wrest the Scepter out of the Hand of a Roman Emperor, though a Heathen : As to the Rulers of Kingdoms, and all political Systems, he left them just as he found them; and shewed, in his own Example, a Submission to the established

established Laws of his Country: He neither authorized nor permitted Force or Contention of any Kind, save only a spiritual Warfare with the Powers of Darkness, and with the Lusts and evil Affections of Men; in order to rescue them from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and to restore them to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.---The Contest *who should be the greatest*, which will ever be the Aim of carnal Minds, was not suffered to be Matter of Debate amongst his Ministers. The Pride and Pomp of Life, which Men are so eager in the Pursuit of, were held by our blessed Lord in such low Estimation, that the saving of one Soul was by him declared to be of greater Value, than the Gain of the whole World.---This Son of Righteousness, *arose with Healing in his wings*, to drive back Discord and Rage to those infernal Regions from whence they originally sprung. His Errand upon Earth was to lay the Foundations of a Kingdom, of which it might be said, that *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.* *A new Commandment*, says our Saviour, *I give unto you, that you love one another.*---And new indeed it was, being carried to such Perfection as the World never before knew; nor was the carnal Mind of Man able to form any Idea of it.---As to the Measure and Degree of it; we are required to love one another, as He loved us, who laid down his Life for our Salvation, when we were his declared Enemies, and in open Rebellion against him. But it is clearly manifest by the Law of Christ, that no Distinction is ever to be made, between Friend and
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Enemy, as to the Exercise of Love and Charity; a Departure from which, no Provocation, or ill Treatment can ever warrant, or excuse. Our Lord's special Command is this, *Love your Enemies, bless them, that curse you, and pray for them, that despitefully use you and persecute you*; and by such Display of a heavenly Mind, are the true Disciples and Followers of Christ at all Times to be known; *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*.---Who is there then amongst us, that may not have Cause to tremble when he asks himself this Question? Do I always retain this Title, and am I constantly distinguished by the only infallible Mark of it?---The Repetitions and Enforcements of this great Evangelical Duty, and the pressing Exhortations of our Lord, and his Apostles to the Practice of it, are as much too numerous to be quoted here, as they are universally known to all, who read the Scriptures, and to our Shame, as rarely practised---But the present Question under our particular Consideration is this; whether a Zeal for the Service of God, and the Advancement of true Religion, may in any Degree justify the inflicting of corporal Punishment and Severities upon such, as refuse to give their Assent to our System of Faith; and whether it may be lawful to use Violence and employ the Power of the Sword, for the Conversion of Infidels and Hereticks.---Whatsoever the Disciples of *Mahomet* may have learn'd from their *Alchoran*; nothing was ever more contradictory to that *New Testament* of which the Apostles of Christ are the Ministers; our Saviour's

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Authority and Example having clearly determined this Point: The Samaritans would neither receive his Doctrines, nor admit him under their Roofs; yet, when his Disciples asked him, whether they might not *call for Fire from Heaven to consume them*, Jesus rebuked them, and said, *ye know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.* And the Pretence of using Force for the Propagation of Religion is wholly taken away by that decisive and perpetual Canon of the Christian Church delivered by *St. Paul to Timothy; The Servants of the Lord*, (that is, the Ministers of the Gospel) *must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those, that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.*

Surely then we may ask, where is the *Meekness* of those Instructors, who employ Fire and Faggot, the Knife and the Dagger to make Converts? Can Humility teach us to assassinate or depose Princes? Can Gentleness and Patience establish Inquisitions, or make use of Racks and Tortures for the Conviction of *those, that oppose themselves?* Can Love and Charity dictate Persecutions and Massacres? or must we wade through Seas of Blood, to build a Temple to Mercy and Peace?----God forbid!---He does indeed *forbid* it; and woe unto those, *who harden their Hearts, and will not bear his Voice.* It was this Spirit, which animated the Jews to kill the Son of God himself; and drew from his Mouth the following Question, with

with that dreadful Solution of it.---*Why do ye not understand my Speech? even because ye cannot bear my Words: Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do; he was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth.*--But,--that I may not appear to be wanting myself of that universal Benevolence and Charity to Mankind, which I mean to enforce; I shall forbear, as much as the Occasion of our present Assembly will admit of, the particular Instances of that diabolical Spirit, which, under the Pretence of Zeal for the Service of God, labours for the Destruction of Mankind: These would lay before us such Scenes, as are not only disgraceful to the Christian Profession, but shocking even to human Nature. Alas! we need not go so far as the Valleys of *Piedmont*, or *Bohemia*, *France* or *Spain* for Proofs, into what infernal Beings Ignorance and Superstition are capable of transforming Men, who dare to assume the Name of Christians and Catholicks; this Nation, has the dreadful Evidences and Memorials of it, recorded in Characters of Blood.

But perhaps the Deliverance of our neighbouring Kingdom, which we now Commemorate, considered in all its Circumstances, is the most providential of all others; as the Blow intended to be given was the most diabolical, that any Age, or History can produce.----Especially, if we consider, and reflect upon the Number, Rank and Dignity, of the intended Victims of this Day's Conspiracy; which tortures the Mind of Man to conceive that unutterable Desolation and Woe, which must have overwhelmed a State, deprived

prived in an Instant of its Sovereign, its Princes, its Senators, Judges and Counsellors; the Guardians and Protectors of its Religion and Liberties, and whatsoever is sacred, valuable, and dear to Mankind. Never was any Invention found out so compendious for Murder, so outrageously cruel, or so well concerted between the Fierceness of *Man's Wrath*, and the Malice and Cunning of *the Devil*: And so deep was it laid, and so prosperously carried on, that it was scarce capable of Discovery or Prevention; and yet from the obscurest Hint, and by the strangest Sagacity and Penetration, or rather by a heavenly Light darting into the Mind of Man, from the *Father of Lights*, the whole Complotment was detected in the very Crisis.--And may we not now venture to ask, with what View, or under what Pretence this most horrid Plan was concerted? It was (say the deluded and bigotted Instruments) with a View *to do God good Service*, to root out Heresy, and establish the Catholic Faith. Oh pious and proper Methods for the Propagation of Faith! O true and genuine Vicar of Christ, the *God of Mercy, and the Lord of Peace!* But *these Things they will do*, as our Saviour tells us in my Text, *because they have not known his Father, nor him.*

After this very short, but true Sketch of our first happy Deliverance on this Day, from the Hands of these blood-thirsty Men; it may not be improper to remind you of a Danger as great, and a Deliverance as extraordinary, in later Times, from the same Quarter; when the wicked Spirit of Popery no longer lurked and laid Plots in the Dark, but appeared in
Triumph.

Triumph, armed with all the Splendor and Power of Royalty; by an unhappy Prince, perverted in his Youth and Education in that Belief, attempting to introduce once more amongst us that Yoke of Superstition, which had so long galled the Necks of our Fathers; and, without all Doubt, armed as he was with the whole Power, he might have succeeded too well, if it had not pleased God to preserve us, by as extraordinary Means, as he had done before; by sending to our Assistance a Prince, whose Courage, Wisdom, and Virtue, saved our Liberties and Religion, which were then on the very Brink of Ruin. Who also, to carry on the same great Design more effectually, provided, as far as human Prudence could, for their Security even after his Death, by settling the Succession to the Crown on the illustrious House, which now happily reigns over us; Heirs of his Virtue as well as Sceptre; in whom Providence seems to promise a Continuance of the Blessings, they have preserved to us, by granting them a numerous Issue, the Ornament of the Throne, and the Hope of these Nations. Have not we then of these Realms, a just Cause to rejoice on this candid and joyful Day; for the double Deliverance obtained in it, the one from the Conspiracy of Popery, and the other from its Tyranny; and to celebrate the Memory of that Hero, whom God made to be the glorious Instrument of so many Blessings to us, and, I trust, to our Posterity.

Yet, let us not be too sanguine of that Happiness, nor trust these Men too far; since we may be assured, that the same Antichristian Spirit, will ever produce

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the same Effects; nor can we flatter ourselves, that in these our Days it is either extinct, or much abated; The empoisoned Bowl, the Pistol, Sword and Dagger in *Europe*, and the Scalping Knife in *America*, have been often employed to answer the same abominable Ends. So long as the World endures, Pride and Ignorance, Bigottry and Cruelty, Enthusiasm and Frenzy will be Concomitants, and *by their Fruits, shall ye know them.*

Where these prevail, sad Experience shews us, that no System of Peace or Order, no Government or Establishment, Ecclesiastical or Civil can be secure. Not even the joining in the same Creed or Communion will be of any Avail; nor can the anointed Head, or the revered Titles of *most Christian*, and *most Faithful* afford a Protection to the greatest Princes, whensoever Revenge, Avarice and Fraud, disguised under the Mask of Religion, think they can find their Account in Assassinations and Murders. He alone, who ruleth the raging of the Sea, can say to every Minister of Darkness, *hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther.*

For, do we not see, that the very Powers themselves, who, thro' a mistaken worldly Policy, were once the Abettors and Encouragers of this blind and furious Zeal, now find it necessary for their own Security, to repress the Violence, and curb the Rage of it; by providing, that the *Wicked may be driven away in their Wickedness*, and banished their Kingdoms? And tho' I neither mean, or wish, by these Hints, to see the same Austerities used in these Realms of Liberty; yet surely it may behove us (especially of this Kingdom) to be vigilant in observing their lurking Places; and as far

far as it is possible, to prevent their herding, and practising the like amongst us.

But to conclude, and trespass no farther---

Let us of this Church give signal Proofs, that *we have not so learned Christ*, and let us labour, that *our Conversation may ever be as becometh his Gospel*; always mindful of his capital Precept; that Love and Charity, and universal Benevolence may fill our Hearts, and appear in every Act, whereby we may do Good to the Souls and Bodies of our Brethren. And when, as the Ministers of Christ's Gospel, we are obliged *to contend for the pure Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints*, let it ever be *with Meekness, having Compassion one of another; not rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing*. Especially, let us shew the utmost Abhorrence of those Tenets, which tend to promote a vindictive and persecuting Spirit, or justify bodily Severities, under a Pretence of promoting the Honour of God, and serving the Cause of Religion; which our Lord expressly tells us, are the Practice of those only, *who know neither the Father, nor him*.

To sum up the Whole,--As we know, that *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People*; Let our first Attention be to promote the Glory of God, by exerting ourselves, each in our respective Station, *for the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and the Maintainance of true Religion and Virtue*; Let us ever be mindful, that not only our Well-being, but our very *Being* does greatly depend upon our Con-
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cord and Unity: Therefore, as all the essential Duties of our holy Profession, are so plainly set forth in the Word of God, *that he who runs may read*, let us beseech God to give us his Grace, that we may (as *St. Paul* exhorts us) *follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity and Peace with them that call upon the Lord with a pure Heart* :-- Thus giving Proofs of the sincerest Love to God, and Man ---Of Loyalty to the best of Sovereign's--Of Obedience to the Laws of our Country ----Of Reverence and Submission to those, who are invested with the Authority of the due Execution of them.--- We may then hope for the Favour and Protection of the Almighty, in continuing to us that happy Constitution in Church and State, and those many invaluable Blessings, for the Preservation of which, his Providence has so often, and so signally interposed; And that *we may so pass thro' Things temporal, that we lose not the Things eternal.*

This may his infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits, and for the Sake of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.