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A
SERMON

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

LORDS

Spiritual and Temporal,

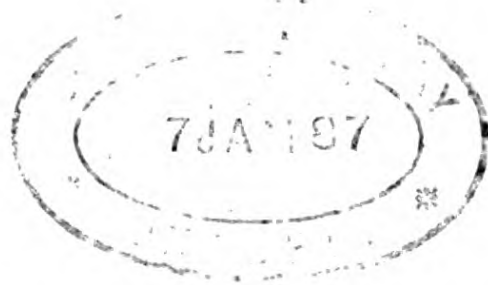
January the 30th, 17⁰⁹.

At WESTMINSTER-ABBY,

By *WILLIAM*, Lord Bishop of *St. Asaph*.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *T. H.* for *Charles Harper*, at the
Flower-de-Luce, over-against *St. Dunstan's*
Church in *Fleet-street*. 1710.



Die Martis, Jan. 31. 1709.

*Ordered by the Lords Spiritual
and Temporal in Parliament Assem-
bled, That the Thanks of this House
shall be, and are hereby given to
the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph for
his Sermon, preach'd before this
House Yesterday in the Abby-Church
at Westminster; And he is here-
by Desired to Print and Publish the
same.*

Matth. Johnson, Cler' Parl'

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the
House of LORDS,

January the 30th, 17⁰⁹₁₀.

II Kings, Chap. viii. Ver. 13.

And Hazael said, But what, is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do this great Thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me, that thou shalt be King of Syria.

THE King of Syria being sick, and hearing that a Prophet of the Lord was at *Damascus*, sent his Servant *Hazael* with a very liberal Present to him, to enquire of God, by him, whether he should recover of his Disease. To this great Messenger, the Prophet answers--- *Go say unto him--- Thou mayst certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die.* Would the Prophet here have *Hazael* tell a Lie, and say his Lord should live, when he was certain he would die, being told so by the Prophet? Or does he rather say,-- You will hardly be so ill a Courtier, as to tell the King, that

he shall die; you will leave so unwelcome a Message to any other, and rather choose to say, *Thou mayest certainly recover*, altho' I know very well he never shall recover, and tell you so, from God. This Sense is natural and easy enough; but the Words do not say it expressly enough. Or, does he bid him speak what is certainly true, if supplied with somewhat that *Elisha* knew very well? Go and say to your Prince, *Thou mayest certainly recover, i. e.* from this Disease, which in it self may not be mortal, *Howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die, i. e.* by another Hand, after another Manner. The former Part *Hazael* was to say to *Benbadad*, the latter *Elisha* said to *Hazael*: And each of them was true; for *Benbadad* might have recover'd, had not *Hazael* murder'd him. If therefore we respect the *Distemper* only, it was true that the Prophet bad him say-- *Thou mayest certainly recover*; but if we respect the *Event*, which God saw, and discover'd to the Prophet, it was also true, that *the King should certainly die*. What the Prophet said, was certainly true, in this Sense, and we ought to take the Words in any other Sense, than such a one as would make a holy Prophet the Author of a Falshood. When he had spoken these Words, the Prophet settled his Countenance so stedfastly, look'd so long and so intently upon *Hazael*, that he was perfectly confounded; and the Prophet himself burst into Tears. *Hazael* ask'd him, what it was that occasion'd such a strange Emotion, and why he wept? The Prophet told him, It was to see, and consider, what mighty Mischiefs he, in time, would bring upon *Israel*, how he would fire their Strong-holds, slay their young Men with the Sword, dash in Pieces their poor Infants, and rip up their Women with Child. To whom *Hazael* replies, in the Words of the Text,

But

But what, is thy Servant? a Dog; that he should do this great thing? How is it possible, that I, so mean and inconsiderable a Person, should ever attain to the Power of doing so great Matters, as you mention? But had I now the Power, how were it possible I should commit such barbarous and such brutish Outrages? Account me not, I pray thee, a Dog, and so inhuman. And *Elisha* answered--
The Lord hath shewed me, that thou shalt be King of Syria. Thou wilt, by that means, have the Power of doing all this Evil, and thou wilt change thy Mind with thy Condition; and then thy Will, will be the King of Syria's Will, which is to increase their Power, and to oppress their Neighbours, to the utmost: The inveterate Enmity that has long reign'd betwixt the *Syrians* and the *Jews* will be reviv'd, and carry'd by thee, to Extremity.

This is the Meaning of the Text, as in conjunction with the History. The Uses of which, that I intend to make at present, will be these---

- First*, To observe how little we know our own selves.
- Secondly*, To consider whether this Prediction of the Prophet, *That Hazael shall be King*, will in any sort excuse the Means he used, to make himself so. And,
- Lastly*, To make what Application may be proper.

First, It is very obvious to observe from hence, how little we know our own selves. There is no reason to think, that *Hazael* was not in good earnest, when he would not have the Prophet, (nor cou'd himself) believe he should, in time, commit such Cruelties, as were foretold. But Man is a reasonable Creature, and as God has made him capable of doing it, so he has oblig'd him,

him, to consider the Consequences of his Actions, and how naturally one thing follows from another. He who breaks down the Bank of a great Water, occasions the Overflow, it may be, of a great deal of Ground, the Fall of a House, the Death of a Child, and the Drowning of many Cattle. *Who would have thought it?* is a Fool's Excuse, when things follow naturally, closely, or easily: And *I intended no such Mischief*, is as idle, where Mischief was likely to follow, tho' you should intend never so well. Men must intend well, and do well, if they would be safe, where Intentions have no immediate Influence on the Action or the Agent.

Now if a Man, who actually intends well, shall yet be answerable for the Mischief that is done, by an unreasonable and foolish choice of Means improper and unfit; we may conclude he shall be accountable for the Evil he does, without any good Intention: If therefore I intend to do no Mischief, I must not put my self in the way of doing any; I must avoid the Occasion and Temptation of entring into Evil, if I would be innocent. A Man knows his own Mind and Purpose at present, and sees how he stands determin'd by his present Circumstances; he is now innocent, and likes the being so, and finding it so full of Ease and Satisfaction, he resolves so to continue: Let him then take heed of falling into any such Courses, as will insensibly draw him off from these good Purposes, and put him, by degrees, on Practices he now abhors. He is now possess'd with a religious Fear of God, and sanctifies his Name, and reverences his Word, and will profane Neither; and should you tell him, he will be a common Swearer, an in pious execrable Man, and great Blasphemer, he would think it strange, if not impossible; his Heart abhors
such

such Thoughts, he trembles at the Mention of such wicked Things, and would account himself a *Dog*, if he should do them. But, in a little time, he falls into such Company, as make no Difficulty of these Matters, and accustom him to bear them patiently, at least in others; and he himself ventures a little, and then draws back with some Confusion, remembers the good Principles that his religious Parents at first instill'd into him, and which his good Instructors after cultivated carefully; and these Rebukes keep him, some time, in tolerable Order; he will not resolve to leave the Company, but will not be infected by it, nor be led by their Example: But these Resolves last not long, in full force, but yield by little and little, to Custom and Example; He takes, in time, the manners of his Company, and becomes the Man, whose Image frightned him not long agoe. So People stare at New Fashions, and are, at first, amaz'd to see things so fantastical and odd; but by degrees, they fall into them, and become, in a little time, *Standards* themselves. There is no trusting to Ones present Mind, and Resolution, tho' never so Reasonable and Good, unless we will take all care to avoid the Occasions, and Temptations, that will naturally change them. 'Tis no great matter, to resolve never to fall into the *greatest* Sins that Men can possibly commit; the very apprehension of those huge Enormities, is hard and painful to the Mind; but, however, a Man is not secure, who puts himself into the Way, that leads thither, tho' it be at great distance. The Present designs of Men have, it may be, no Eye or tendency, to such and such a Consequence; but however, Men must look to it; for when we are once out of the right Way, every Step we take, leads us but into farther wandrings, and we

know not whither we are going. If One had ask'd of *David*, whether he, when he first gaz'd on *Bathsheba*, in her Retirements, intended to murder the bravest Man he had in his Kingdom, in the most vile and treacherous manner, with all the Circumstances of baseness, folly, and huge Wickedness, that can attend an Action? doubtless, he would have thought it utterly impossible, that such a Villany should have ever found any place, in his great Heart. But yet we see, that that adulterous look, ended in that strange Murder, and left a lasting blemish upon his Life and Honour. In vain do People think of going just to such a pitch of Wickedness, and no farther; either their hopes of gaining some farther Security, or their fears of falling into greater Danger, engage them in new Designs, whose Consequences they attend not to; and when a Man is gone but half way, he looks back, and wonders often how he got so far; but new necessities arise, and carry him on he knows not whither. He commits a new Offence to justify a former, and this will require another to secure it self. A Man no more knows where to stop in Sin and Error, than he can ascertain his Charge, in either *Law* or *Building*; he is train'd on, by new Emergencies, beyond what he at first propos'd, or design'd, and all is lost, he thinks, if he goes not through with it; and at last he finds himself almost undone, who at first intended a little Pleasure or Convenience only, or to do himself some Justice, or his Adversary a small ill turn. We find how we are carried unaccountably from things good and innocent, to things indifferent, and from thence to things suspicious, and that want Justification, and from thence to such as will not bear it; and much more certain are these wicked Consequences, when we begin with things unlawful, the
wifest

wisest Man alive, cannot tell where he is to end. *The Heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it?* We have therefore no Security against our falling into the very depths of Hell, but our great Care and Watchfulness to keep within the bounds of Innocence at first, and to consider well the consequence of every Action, and Undertaking, and to trust but little to our present Mind and Resolutions, which every little accident, *can* and *will* alter. One may safely say, no Wicked Man, did ever intend, to arrive to the pitch he is now at of Wickedness; but gradually and by progression, one Sin drew on another; and he has lost his first Views; the Purposes of his Heart were daily chang'd, by new and fatal Opportunities, that, from one Commission to another, drew him to the miserable point he is now at. A Man can hardly think he is capable of doing, what in a little time, he will glory in having done; and justify to Death, what he once would have chosen to dy, rather than do. So little do most People know what they are made of, or rather, what their Passions may in time make them, without the greatest Care, Jealousy, and Watchfulness over their own Hearts possible, so little do they observe (till it be too late) how they are train'd from one thing to another, till they are lost, out of their Depth, and past returning.

It cannot enter into *Hazael's* Heart, that he should ever have the *Power* of doing all these mighty Mischiefs, that the Prophet read in his bad Lines and Features with a Flood of Tears; or, that, supposing he were able, he should ever *incline* to commit such cruel and unheard of Outrages: Rip up the teeming Women, and dash against the Stones the innocent and unprovoking Children, forgetful of his Mother, and the Pledges of his Love at Home! How can such inhumane

humane Thoughts be harbour'd in a Heart of Flesh, which is the Seat of Pity? The Prophet told him, That he saw he would be King; and Home he goes and kills his Master, reigns in his stead, and is provided of the *Power*, to do the great foretold Mischiefs. Had the Prophet told him, That his Sorrows broke out at his Eyes in the violent manner he saw and was confounded at, to think how treacherously he would murder his Prince, that trusted him with the Care and Conservation of his Health and Life, 'tis probable he would have bid him look for better things from him, and not account him such a faithless Villain; and yet there were not many Days betwixt his doubting how he could attain the Power of doing so much Mischief, and his attaining it, by murdering of his King. When mounted on his Master's Throne, by these bad means, what shall he do to turn the People's Minds from considering how he came to sit there, but divert them by a War abroad, revive the ancient Enmity betwixt the *Syrians* and the *Jews*, renew their ancient Claims, and shew the greatest Zeal to recover the Honour they had lately lost, by *Benbadad*? And to this purpose, he must breath nothing but Slaughter, the total ruine of the *Jews*, the firing their strong Holds, dashing their Infants on the Ground, ripping their Women up with Child, and putting all their young Men to the Sword, to extirpate utterly the Race of *Israel*, and rid the *Syrians* of their old inveterate Enemies. And thus his *Power* inspires him with the *Will*, of doing what he could not bear to think on, when the Prophet told him, what would come to pass: And this hard *Will* is necessary now, he fancies, to maintain his *Power*. His Ambition at first dipp'd his Hands in his Master's Blood, and then to wash out that foul Stain, he must do something

thing popular ; he must be cruelly zealous against his Countries Enemies, to divert his People from inquiring after their Princes Death ; and make attonement for his Treachery, by barbarous War, and by prodigious Slaughters. Thus does one depth of Sin call for another ; and he who trusts his Heart with one unlawful Passion, will find it will make way for many other Guests ; such as he never thought of entertaining.

Let his Example therefore, instruct us, to look to our Selves, whilst we are Innocent ; never so to trust the Resolutions of our Mind, tho' Reasonable, and Calm, as to neglect the natural and the necessary means of preserving our Selves in that good Temper : Never to think our Opinions will not alter with our Circumstances, believing our Selves Temptation-proof, only because we know we should be so, and intend to be so ; but carefully avoiding all such Opportunities as may betray us into those Commissions, which we now abhor ; and never to believe it is within our Power, to stop at this Offence, or this degree of Sin, and go no farther. If we will make this use of *Hazaels* Example, we may go on to consider, in the *Second Place*, whether this Prediction of the Prophet, that *Hazael* should be King, and should commit these Cruelties, will in any sort excuse the means he took to become King, or the Cruelties he committed when he was so.

There is reason enough to think, that his having been anointed by *Elijah*, (or design'd for King by God's appointment, with that Ceremony) and his being now told by *Elisha* that he would, one day, be the King of *Syria* ; there is reason enough to think, that this preparatory Unction, and this Prediction, did indeed occasion *Hazael* to dispatch his Master. Ambitious
Minds,

Minds, void of the fear of God, are forward enough, of themselves, to undertake the greatest Wickedness, to attain their Ends; but when they have the countenance of *Inspiration* on their sides, then nothing can discourage or restrain them; they look upon themselves as call'd by God, to execute his Purpose and Decree, and Negligence is Disobedience, and Delay is Sinful; they do not think they are to wait for God's time, or expect that He should bring his Purposes to pass, by means and methods of his own; but will precipitate Events, and fancy every thing is lawful, that conduces to the End declar'd by God. *Jehu* was thus anointed by a Prophet, and told by him, what he should do, to all the House of *Abab*; but this was all, not by the way of *foretelling* what *Jehu* would incline to do, and do, when he was King; but by the way of *Command*, to inform him what God exacted of him, and expected from him. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee King, over the People of the Lord, even over Israel; and thou shalt smite the House of Abab thy Master, that I may avenge the Blood of my Servants the Prophets, and the Blood of all the Servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel.* There's no reading this, without the seeing a Commission from God, to put his Orders in Execution; and he accordingly destroyed the House of *Abab*, and became King in his stead. And tho' he was not, himself a good Man. yet he was God's Instrument, to avenge the Blood of God's Prophets, and since he receiv'd so positive and express Orders to do what he did, I do not see, but he was so far blameless, as he perform'd the Will of God, without going beyond his Commission; if he exceeded *that*, and indulged any thing to his Ambition, cruel Inclinations, or particular Revenge, he will want to be justified, tho' what he did might also tend to

to the bringing about the purpose of God, in rooting up the House of *Abab*; as Men may certainly be guilty of cruel and revengeful Purposes, known to their own Hearts, tho' they are prosecuting a just Cause, by just and legal Methods. But this, I imagine, was not *Hazaels* Case; the Prophet had anointed him for King, or he was told by him, that he should certainly be King of *Syria*; the meaning of which, was one of these two things; either that God had positively design'd he should be King, or foresaw what Courses he would take to make himself so, and foretold the *Event*, that so it would be, without declaring the *Means*. If the Prophet anointed him King, and design'd he should be so, yet he did not bid him take the Courses he took, to become King; he anointed him beforehand, but he was to expect God's time, and to wait till it could innocently come to pass. But, if God only shew'd the Prophet that *Hazael* would be King of *Syria* (which the Prophet also told to *Hazael*) then can we only conclude safely, that God well knew, and foresaw that *Hazael* would take the Courses to become King, which he after took, without directing, or approving them. And as Gods prescience did not, by any means necessitate or constrain him to such murder of his Master, so neither will the prediction of the Prophet justify his coming to the Crown, by any such means: Any more, than Christs foretelling *Peters* denial, and *Judas's* treachery, either compell'd them to it, or will excuse them for it. God, (who sees whatever motives can occur to our Minds, and sees how they will influence and move) gives us our liberty to choose, and knows which way we shall incline, and what our choice will be, and can communicate the Event without constraining, or having constrain'd, our Wills, to make
such

such choice ; and having this foreknowledge, can determine these Events to serve such and such Purposes, as he sees fit; and yet the blame shall lie upon the Instruments, if they either propose a wicked *End*, or pitch on wicked *Means* to compass a good *End* by. We know that God intended to punish the Revolts, and Apostacies of his People, and that by the hand of *Hazael*, who, when King of *Syria*, would commit unheard of Cruelties, and execute the severest vengeance on the *Jews*. How easily may this be turn'd? That God foreseeing what courses *Hazael* would take, to become King; and when so, would turn his Arms on *Judab* with the greatest Violence; whose Sins and Provocations were so high, that he would suffer them to fall into his Hands, and let them see and know he us'd him as an Instrument to punish their Offences. This he might justly do, yet *Hazael* be exceeding faulty, as well in the Courses He took to become King, as in the Cruelties he would exercise against the *Jews*, when he was so. 'Tis worth our while to observe what God says, Isa. 10. 5. *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand is mine Indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, and against the People of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the Spoil, and take the Prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the Streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off Nations, not a few. And in Ver. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole Work, upon Mount Zion, and Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout Heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high Looks.* From whence we may conclude, that God sometimes makes use of Instruments to bring his purpose to effect, who yet know nothing of it, but are guided

ded by Motives of their own, and shall be punished for so doing: They shall account to God for the means they chose, to attain their End, tho' both the Means and End, were effectual to bring about his Will. The Prescience then of God, and the Prediction of the Prophet will not excuse *Hazael* from murdering his Master, to become King; nor the Cruelties he committed, when so, although those Cruelties were the Executions of God's just Anger. Let us call to mind the Example of a much better Man, than either *Hazael*, or *Jebu*, and that is *David*. This Man had also been anointed King by *Samuel*, the standing Prophet of his time; and that, before a great Company, and *Saul* was known to be rejected of the Lord: And yet he would not put his Hand, to forward his Advancement, to any thing unlawful; tho' he had all the Advantages, and favourable Opportunities, that any Man could wish for, to put him in possession of God's Promises: *Saul* was his declar'd Enemy, and fought his Life, on all occasions, by ways unworthy of him, and such as would, if any thing could, have justified Revenge; and God had twice delivered *Saul* into his Hands; But *David* still neglected all his Opportunities, and would not become a King, by any means that were not strictly Justifiable. He left it to God, to fulfil his own Promises, by his own Methods, and at his own appointed Time. If God design'd him for a Crown (as by his Unction, certainly, he did,) let him so place it on his Head, as it shall fit secure and easy. He will be instrumental to fulfil the Will of God, in making him a King, no otherwise, than by doing what was fit to do, had there been no such Promise. *The Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come to die, or he shall descend into Battle, and perish--- but God forbid*

forbid that I should smite the Lord's Anointed. See how a Man of God fulfils a Prophecy! The Words and Anointing of *Samuel* were as certain, positive, and determinate to *David*, as the Uction of *Elijah*, and the Prediction of *Elisha*, were to *Hazael*, That he should be King. But the different Heart makes different Application: The Grace and Fear of God, and Sense of Duty and of Honour, suggests to *David*, he must stay for God's appointed Season, who best knows how, and when to accomplish his own Promises; whereas the *Other* takes the Word just from the Prophet's Mouth, and gives it to his own ambitious Heart, to read and explain; that Heart replies immediately, The God that gave this Oracle, had given him now the Opportunity of making it good. He shall be King of *Syria*--- How can that be whilst his Master lives? When is his Master nearer Death, than when exceeding sick? And how much less of Life could he ever loose than now? He must not now be wanting to himself. Go tell your Master, the Prophet says, from God, that *He shall live*; but then remember, that he says, *You shall be King*, i. e. He is to live, as long as you please. Is not this to fulfil the Will of God, since 'tis impossible you should be King, whilst your Master lives? Let any Passion that we have, pretend to explain God's Promises, and it shall certainly give them its own Turn: It will fulfil the Will of *God*, according to its *own*. A promise therefore of something to come, without a positive Command of God, to execute it, in such a certain manner, as is express'd, will never justify a Man, fulfilling it by any other Methods than what are strictly lawful, and justifiable of themselves. Which brings me again to this Conclusion, That the Prediction of *Elisha*, that *Hazael* should be King of *Syria*, will not justify

justify the wicked Courses he took to become King ; nor the being foretold what Cruelties he should afterwards commit when King, justify those Cruelties.

Let us see, *in the last Place*, what use may be made, by the way of Application, of what hath been said, on these Heads. *This Day* reminds us of the huge and numberless Calamities, the People of this Kingdom underwent from a long unnatural War amongst our selves ; and it reminds us of an everlasting Stain laid on the Honour of the *English Nation*, by adjudging their King to Death, against all Reason, all Law, and all Example of our Ancestors. Nor did our Miseries end here ; that execrable Day concluded only the Misfortunes of that Prince ; neither his Friends nor Enemies ceased to suffer with him. Such an atrocious, impious Fact, must (as it did) call for a world of Lives, and Liberties, and Confiscations of Estates, and other cruel and vexatious Oppressions of our Country-men, and laid the Foundation of such an Enmity, as is, I fear, to last for ever. Had any one foretold what Miseries these unhappy People would bring upon their Nation, I make no doubt, they would have soon return'd, with *Hazael*, *But what, is thy Servant ? a Dog ; that he should do these great things ?* Yet many now alive remember well they did 'em. I see no reason to believe, that any single Man, or Party whatever, could intend, at first, the Evils, they afterwards effected ; but I do not see that this is so much an Excuse for *Them*, as a great matter of Caution to *Others*, how they at first embroil Publick Affairs, and enter on the weighty Matters of Reforming Church or State, though with a good design enough, but yet by Methods illegal and untried. 'Tis only God can say to the Waves, *hitherto shall ye go, and no farther,* and so

it is with *the madness of the People*; a little matter will enflame a Multitude, when a hundred Men that can render a Reason, shall not be able to dismiss it peaceably: small are the beginnings of the greatest Mischiefs. But Men are at their liberty to Act, and shall answer for their Actions; and they are capable of Seeing, and considering Consequences, and therefore are accountable for the neglect of doing so, when Mischiefs follow probably, and easily, and commonly. The good Intentions of the *Heart* will secure the *Heart*; but I am not able to say, with certainty enough, how far they will authorize the Executions of the *Hand*; even those that follow immediately, and are in Nature and Reason fitted to obtain the end of those Intentions. But in this I will be confident, that the first good Intentions will not reach all Subsequent Acts, that are not good. Let some, of all Conditions, be presumed to enter on our Wars with good Intentions, and others with no bad ones; (and I think he must be much a Stranger to our Story, that will not allow of this.) Though we may see, perhaps, that the Virtue and Innocence of these Peoples Intentions may go far to justify those Actions that were immediately influenced and govern'd by those Intentions, (altho' those People should have been mistaken;) yet who can see, that those *prime* Intentions are to justify all the Actions that followed, with all their several Consequences? I hope, with my whole Heart, that all who had occasion to reconsider the share they had in bringing so many dreadful Mischiefs on their Country, when they thought of Repenting, sought not for Justification, from their first honourable and good Intention, but had Recourse to the sure Sanctuary, the Mercies of God, in Jesus Christ. I own it, I would rather cover if I could, than exaggerate, the Offences of our Fathers,

thers, with Respect to the Wars, that occasioned so much Misery to this Nation, and laid the Foundation of that fatal Tragedy, that makes *this Day* so hard to be forgotten, and so hard to be remembered. But I would not, that any one should think he came off Innocent; because he entred on at first, with laudable Designs, and good Intentions; without considering how many intervening Acts were Cruel, and Outrageous; and how he was train'd on, by slow, insensible Degrees, to be Instrumental in abundance of barbarous, and brutal Facts, to embrue his Hands, at last, in Innocent, and Sacred Blood, and to the enslaving of his Country. Who so should then have said —

‘ You are now angry with some needless Ceremo-
 ‘ nies, which yet are fewer, and more decent, than
 ‘ ever were in use in any Christian Church, pro-
 ‘ tected by the State, for 1300 Years, and with-
 ‘ out which no Christian Church did ever yet serve
 ‘ God, in publick, that we know of: Angry to
 ‘ have a *Form of Publick Prayer* prescribed, proper
 ‘ and suited to the wants of all Christians, tho’
 ‘ you may use what Liberty you will, in your
 ‘ Retired and *Family-Devotions*, betwixt God and
 ‘ you: And to get rid of these so easy Imposi-
 ‘ ons, you will pull down, all the Fences, that se-
 ‘ cure the Christian *Faith* and *Discipline*, and let in
 ‘ Wolves and Foxes, that will prey upon the Chri-
 ‘ stian Flock, and bring in Heresies, and all licen-
 ‘ tious Errors, and drive away the Shepherds, that
 ‘ should feed them, and secure them; Extir-
 ‘ pate an *Order* that is as old as Christianity within
 ‘ this Kingdom, and put a thousand, and a thou-
 ‘ sand Families, to seek their Bread, in desolate
 ‘ Places. You are now jealous and tenacious of
 ‘ your *Liberties*; but, by the Courses you are
 ‘ taking to secure them, and enlarge them, you,
 ‘ in time, will come, to take them away from e-

every One besides, and lose them your selves, at
 last: You will raise *Armies*, and become their
 Subjects; make to your selves Captains of
 thousands, and ten thousands, and submit
 your Necks to their imperious Orders; involve
 your Country in Desolation, and much Blood;
 trample down Ancient *Honour* and *Nobility*; di-
 sperse your *Princes* into Foreign Countries, where
 they shall take up Manners that you hate, Max-
 ims destructive of your Liberty, and a Religion
 you abhor: Vanquish your *King*, deprive him of
 his Friends and Servants; distress him to Di-
 straction; force him to fly into the very Arms of
 Mischief, from whence you will redeem him,
 like a Slave, to cast him into Fetters of your
 own; despoil him of his Regal Honours; strait-
 ly imprison him; and put him to the Sword at
 last, (Horror to think upon!) with all the Cir-
 stances of Scorn and Ignominy possible. These
 are the Things that you will do, to secure your
Christian, and your *Civil Liberties*. Whoso
 should thus have prophesied, should certainly have
 had my Text return'd upon him--- *What, is thy*
Servant a Dog, that he should do these great Things?
 Yet these great Things were done; and in a
 manner worse than I express them. These great
 Things are past and gone; and I have no worse
 Purpose in remembering them, than to advise,
 That all who had no hand therein, should be
 as careful to avoid all manner of Occasions of
 Evil, as they, we think, ought to have been, who
 were the most concern'd in them. I apprehend
 no Cause of *Fear*, and therefore know not how to
 give any *Caution*, of falling into those enormous
 Crimes, that make *this Day* the blackest in our *Ka-*
lendar, excepting *One*, with which I never dare
 compare it. But there is need of all imaginable
 Caution, that People do not readily engage in
 Mat-

Matters of Importance, especially relating to the Publick, trusting to good Intentions only, and to the Mind, they are, at present, in, without considering what may follow. Mens Heats are Heats of Zeal at first, benign and gentle; but little Accidents may raise them to a hot consuming Fire, that may, in time, destroy their Neighbours and themselves. It was the turbulent and restless Humour of private People, and the Conceit of their Abilities, thrusting themselves into Publick Matters, and stirring up their Neighbours to complain, and shew themselves uneasy, that contributed a great deal, to the Misfortune of those Days, that brought this *Anniversary* amongst us, so grievous both to Friends and Enemies. And can we do a better thing, upon it, than advise all Men, to study to be quiet, and do their own Business; to keep within their proper Compass; reform themselves, and all that are within their Care; but leave the Publick Matters to the Hands to which they are entrusted; give no Disturbance to their Management, nor distract them from attending to the great Affairs, on which depends our very Civil Life and Being, by little private Differences, and poor Debates, that may be very safely laid aside for ever; or, at the least, suspended for a while, and easily resum'd again (if there be need) when the great Struggle of the World is over, and the Fortune of Us and our Posterity decided.

The Application of the Latter-part of the *Text*, to the Business of this Day, would carry me farther, than I have either Time, or Will, to go. Those wicked Men had no Prophet sent to them from God, to tell them what *great Things* would befall them; but yet there were not wanting Men that undertook to lead them, *by the Word of God*. So all the mischievous Designs imaginable. They were

were not tempted to engage in these Affairs, by any such Prediction as *Elisba* uttered to *Hazael*; but they found Men, in *Prophets Cloathing*, that both excited them, and promised them Success, in the Name of the Lord. The word of God, I own, was never worser used, by furious, ignorant, misguided (but still I hope, not profane) Spirits. The Word of God, can never contradict his Will, which is, that Peace, and Righteousness, Truth and Goodness should for ever flourish on the Earth, and that Men should live in Quiet, Order, and good Government, and enjoy the happy Fruits of that good Stock. And whenever you find the Scriptures leading Men into any Evil, or doing any Mischief to Mankind, especially to Government, you may be sure they are misapplied, perverted and abused.

I fear I have already been too long, but yet must ask the patience of two or three Minutes more, to say two things, which, if the *Text* should not, the *Day* will certainly bear me out in. The first is this — This Day is, through the excessive partiality of some of both sides, become a Day of great Trial to the Preachers; Talk of the *Duty*, *Honour*, and *Obedience* of the *Subject* to the *Prince*, and you are thought, by some, to preach away the Peoples Liberties, and make them Slaves; Talk of the *Peoples Liberties*, and you are opening, presently, a Door to Muriny, Disloyalty, and flat Rebellion, with some Others. They are both of them, God be thanked, in the Wrong; and the Truth, is (like our happy *Constitution*) betwixt them. The *Crown* has many, and excellent *Prerogatives*, and will, I hope in God, never have less, or fewer. The *People* have great *Liberties*, and will, I hope, deserve them, and enjoy them, whilst they are a *People*. Who are these *People*, but our Selves? All but the *Prince* are comprehended

ded in that Word. The Priests must preach up, *Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Fear to whom Fear, and Honour to whom Honour*; and must affirm all that *S. Peter, and S. Paul* have said, of Peoples *being subject to the Powers that are set over them, for good*. They cannot else discharge their Duty; nor the People else enjoy the Benefits of a good Government. But may it not be lawful also for the Priests, to tell the People, in proper Season, of their Liberties; and shew them wherein they are so happy, above all the People of the Earth besides? That they may understand, know how to value, be careful to preserve, and to continue to Posterity, and thank God for, these singular inestimable Blessings, May not these things be said, without incurring the odious Brand, of *stirring up Sedition and Rebellion*? I know not where these things will end; but 'tis plain, they make it harder, than it need to be, for honest and sincere Men, to do their Duty, on these Occasions.

The other thing that I would say, is this --- that the Observation of *this Day* is become (like the Vth of Nov. to the *Papists*) exceedingly grievous and distastful to all *Dissenters*; as well for the License that (they say) is taken, upon it, of inveighing against them; as for the Praises that are so liberally bestowed upon *K. Charles*, which look, to some of them, as so many *Exprobrations and Reproaches*. As for the License that is taken upon this Day, of inveighing against *Dissenters*, let them who do it, justify themselves; I am no Advocate for any of them: It was not, certainly, appointed to become a Day of *Wrath, and Provocation* of our *Fellow-Subjects*; And, I dare say, those Liberties have done no Service; nor are they fitted to do any; but, considering humane Nature, they must needs have done some Mischief, by Irritation, and the hardning of Mens Hearts. And, tho' we do not see such Courses have been taken, by those who were most concern'd and touch'd, as wise and good Men might have taken, to silence these *Reproaches*, and to cause these *Provocations*, in great part, to cease, yet still these furious, bitter Spirits will not be excusable. I verily believe (and so do all of you) that more Men have been *shamed* by gentle usage, than *revil'd* into Repentance, by those they thought their Enemies. As for the *Praises* that are bestow'd upon *King Charles*, I know not who should envy them; nor how a *Church of England-Minister* can honestly decline them: He must know nothing of that Prince's History; he must have
little

little Sense of Justice, Gratitude, or Honour, by whom his Memory is not held most precious. 'Twere a small thing, to say, No Prince (altho' his Father was a very Learned One;) but I will say, no Private Gentleman did ever understand the Constitution of our Church better, defend it with stronger Arguments, adhere to it with more Judgment, adorn it with better Manners, live up to its good Principles with more Virtue, nor, in Performance of its Offices, shew more devout, and exemplary good Behaviour (I will not, in these things, except the QUEEN upon the Throne, nor that bless'd Saint in Heaven, her Sister) than did King Charles the First. No Prince did ever shew more Personal Favour to its Ministers, nor give more Countenance and Credit to its Discipline and Orders. And must I say, No Prince, But He, did ever Die in its Defence, to justify the high Esteem we have Him in? I may, because it is so true, that they who envy him the Glory of that Title, upon all Accounts besides, will yet allow he fell a Martyr for the Church of England. Would not that Church be, most deservedly, the Hatred and Reproach of all the World, that should be sparing of her Praises, and best Incense (but let it ever be unhallo'd Incense) to his Memory? Let them (to make an End) take heed, lest some degree of Guilt be thought to make those People over-tender, who are soon offended with the Praises of King Charles the First. And let even Us our selves take heed, that such our Praises may appear so well design'd, and be managed with that good Temper, Sobriety, and modest Truth, that they provoke those Men to nothing, but Compunction, and Relentings, and Repentance, where these things are wanting; and both our selves and them, to the Imitation of all those excellent good Qualities, those Civil Virtues, and those Religious Christian Graces, that made him appear so highly Exemplary, both in Life and Death.

F I N I S.

THE Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, consider'd; in Sixteen Sermons: With Three more upon the Case of Self-Murder. By William Fleetwood, now Lord Bishop of St. Asaph, in 3vo. Printed for Charles Harper, at the Flower-de-Luce, over-against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street. Price 5 s.