

any more words upon me, may I presume to request one thing of your Lordship,—to be more serious? It cannot injure your Lordship's character or your cause. Truth is great, and will prevail.

Wishing your Lordship all temporal and spiritual blessings,
I am,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's dutiful son and servant,
JOHN WESLEY.

November 26, 1762.

A

SHORT ADDRESS

TO

THE INHABITANTS OF IRELAND.

OCCASIONED BY SOME LATE OCCURRENCES.

1. THERE has lately appeared (as you cannot be ignorant) a set of men preaching up and down in several parts of this kingdom, who for ten or twelve years have been known in England by the title of Methodists. The vulgar in Ireland term them Swaddlers;—a name first given them in Dublin from one of them preaching on those words: "Ye shall find the young child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

2. Extremely various have been the reports concerning them. Some persons have spoken favourably: But the generality of men treat them in a different manner,—with utter contempt, if not detestation; and relate abundance of things in order to prove that they are not fit to live upon the earth.

3. A question, then, which you may naturally ask, is this: "In what manner ought a man of religion, a man of reason, a lover of mankind, and a lover of his country, to act on this occasion?"

4. Before we can properly answer this, it should be inquired,

concerning the persons in question, what they are; what they teach; and what are the effects which are generally observed to attend their teaching.

5. It should first be inquired, what they are. And in order to a speedy determination of this, we may set aside whatever will admit of any dispute; as, whether they are good men or bad, rich or poor, fools, madmen, and enthusiasts, or sober, rational men. Now, waving all this, one point is indisputable: It is allowed on all hands, they are men who spend all their time and strength in teaching those doctrines, the nature and consequences whereof are described in the following pages.

6. The doctrines they constantly teach are these: That religion does not consist in *negatives* only,—in not taking the name of God in vain, in not robbing or murdering our neighbour, in bare abstaining from evil of any or every kind; but is a *real, positive* thing: That it does not consist in externals only,—in attending the church and sacrament, (although all these things they approve and recommend,) in using all the means of grace, or in works of charity, (commonly so called,) superadded to works of piety; but that it is, properly and strictly, a principle within, seated in the inmost soul, and thence manifesting itself by these outward fruits, on all suitable occasions.

7. They insist, that nothing deserves the name of religion, but a virtuous heart, producing a virtuous life: A complication of justice, mercy, and truth, of every right and amiable temper, beaming forth from the deepest recesses of the mind, in a series of wise and generous actions.

*Compositum jus, fasque animo, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.**

8. These are their constant doctrines. It is true, they occasionally touch on abundance of other things. Thus they frequently maintain, that there is an inseparable connexion between virtue and happiness; that none but a virtuous (or, as they usually express it, a religious) man can be happy; and that every man is happy in the same proportion as he is truly religious; seeing a contented mind, (according to them,) a cheerful, thank-

* This quotation from Persius is thus translated by Drummond:—

“————— Let me present a mind,
Which civil and religious duties bind;
A guileless heart, which no dark secrets knows,
But with the generous love of virtue glows.”—**EDIT.**

ful, joyous acquiescence in every disposal of that Sovereign Wisdom who governs both heaven and earth, if it be not an essential branch of religion, is, at least, a necessary consequence of it. On all proper occasions they strongly recommend, on the one hand, the most intense love of our country; on the other, the firmest loyalty to our Prince, abstracted from all views of private interest. They likewise take every opportunity of enforcing the absolute necessity of sobriety and temperance; of unwearied industry in the works of our calling; of moral honesty in all its branches; and, particularly, in the discharge of all relative duties, without which, they say, religion is vain. But all these they recommend on that one single ground,—the love of God and of all mankind; declaring them to be of no avail, if they do not spring from this love, as well as terminate and centre therein.

9. Whoever is at the pains of hearing these Preachers, or of reading what they have wrote, with any degree of attention and impartiality, must perceive that these are their doctrines. And it is equally easy to discern what the effects of their preaching have been. These doctrines they spread wherever they come. They convince many in every place, that religion does not consist (as they imagined once) either in negatives or externals, in barely doing no harm or even doing good; but in the tempers of the heart, in right dispositions of mind towards God and man, producing all right words and actions.

10. And these dispositions of mind are, more or less, the continual consequence of their preaching: (That is, if we may know the tree by its fruit, which is doubtless the most rational way of judging:) The lives of many who constantly attend it show, that God has wrought a real change in their heart; and that the grand principle of love to God and man already begins to take root therein.

11. Hence those who were before of quite the opposite temper, are now generous, disinterested lovers of their country; and faithful, loyal subjects to their Prince, His sacred Majesty King George: They are now sober and temperate in all things, and punctually honest in all their dealings: They are strict in every relative duty, and laborious and diligent in their callings, notwithstanding the continual discouragement they receive from many who still cry out, “Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and serve the Lord.” They are content in every state, whether of plenty or want, and thankful to God and man.

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These are plain, glaring, undeniable facts, whereof, if any Magistrate will be at the trouble to take them, numerous affidavits may be made, in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and many other places.

But if these things are so, it is easy to conceive in what manner every man of religion, every man of reason, every lover of mankind, every lover of his country, ought to act on this occasion.

12. For, First, ought not every man of religion, with all the earnestness of his soul, to praise God, who, after so long a night of ignorance and error had overspread our country, has poured light on so many of those that sat in darkness and the shadow of death? has shown such numbers even of the lowest and most brutish of men, wherein true religion lies; has taught them both to lay the right foundation, and to build the whole fabric thereon; has convinced them, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ;" and, "The end of the commandment is love," of the whole commandment or law of Christ; love, the life, the soul, the spirit of religion, the river that makes glad the city of God, the living water continually springing up into everlasting life?

13. Admit that they do not exactly judge right as to some of the appendages of religion; that you have a clearer and juster conception than they of several things pertaining to the beauty of holiness; yet ought you not to bless God for giving these outcasts of men to see at least the essence of it? nay, to be living witnesses of the substance of religion, though they may still mistake as to some of the circumstances of it.

14. Ought not every man of reason (whether he assents, or no, to that system of opinions commonly called Christianity) sincerely and heartily to rejoice in the advancement of solid, rational virtue? in the propagation, not of this or that set of opinions, but of genuine pure morality? of disinterested benevolence, of tender affections, to the whole of human race? Ought you not to be glad, that there are any instruments found, till others appear who are more equal to the task, whose one employment it is (from whatever motive) to diffuse generous honesty throughout the land?

15. Allow that, in doing this, they have some particularities of opinion, (for *humanum est errare et nescire*,*) or some little, odd customs, which you do not conceive to be grounded upon

* It is the lot of humanity to be ignorant of many things, and liable to error.—EDIT.

strict reason, yet so long as neither those customs nor those opinions prevent the advancement of that great end, ought you not, as a reasonable man, to rejoice in the increase of solid virtue? especially when you consider, that they do not impose their own opinions on other men; that (whatever they are) they think and let think, and condemn no man barely for his opinion; neither blame you for not regarding those little prudential rules which many observe by their own full and free consent.

16. Ought not every lover of mankind to have something more than a common regard for those who both labour and suffer reproach, in order to promote that love in every place; and to remove every method of speaking or acting, every temper, contrary to love? Ought not you who are truly moral men, (a lovely and venerable character,) to have some value for those who spend and are spent to advance genuine morality? who spare no pains, if by any means they may induce any of their countrymen, in any part of the nation, to practise justice, mercy, and truth, in all their intercourse with each other? to behave in every circumstance and relation according to those eternal rules, invariably observing the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them."

17. If you are a lover of mankind, must you not sympathize with those who suffer evil in various kinds, for this very thing, because they do good to mankind, looking for no reward on this side heaven? As to the idle tale of their laying up treasures on earth, it neither agrees with fact nor reason. *Not with fact*; for it is notorious, that those who before piqued themselves on owing no man anything, are now indebted in larger sums, than, humanly speaking, they can ever pay. *Not with reason*; for if riches had been their aim, they would have sought out the rich, not the poor; not the tanners in Cornwall, the colliers of Kingswood, the keelmen in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At the same time, they showed they were not afraid or ashamed to appear before the greatest or wisest of men: Witness their appearing in the most public manner, both at Dublin, Bristol, Oxford, and London.

18. Ought not every lover of his country, not only not to oppose, but to assist with all the power and interest he has, those who continually, and not without success, recommend the love of our country, and, what is so closely connected therewith,

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duty and loyalty to the best of Princes? Ought you not to forward, so far as ever your influence will go, sobriety and temperance among your countrymen? What can be more for the interest of this poor nation, and for the good of all, whether rich or poor? You do well to promote that excellent design of spreading the linen manufacture among us. None can doubt but this is admirably well calculated for the good of the whole kingdom: But are not temperance and honesty still more conducive to the good of this and of every kingdom? Nay, and how directly conducive are these virtues to that very end,—the flourishing of our manufactures!

19. And what can conduce more to the general good of all the inhabitants of this land, than industry joined to content? to peace with God, peace with yourselves, peace with one another? O how needful in this, above all lands! For, what a stranger has it been in our coasts! Ye men of Ireland, help! Come all, as one man, all men of religion and reason, all lovers of God and of mankind, all lovers of your country. O suffer not yourselves to be thus grossly abused, thus miserably imposed upon, any longer! Open your eyes; look around and judge for yourselves; see plain and undeniable facts; be convinced by the force of truth and love, that the work is indeed of God. Rejoice in the good of your country, in peace and good-will continually advanced among men. Beware you do not oppose, or speak or think evil of, what God hath done in the earth. Rather, each in the station wherein he is placed, join hearts and hands in the work, till holiness and happiness cover our land as the waters cover the sea.

JOHN WESLEY.

DUBLIN, July 6, 1749.