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THE  
Bishop of St. *DAVID*'s  
**S E R M O N**  
BEFORE THE  
House of **L O R D S**,  
*January* the 30th, 1727.



*Die Jovis, 1<sup>mo</sup> Februarij. 1727.*

**O**Rdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *St. David's*, for the Sermon by Him preached before this House on *Tuesday* last, in the Abbey-Church, *Westminster*: And he is hereby desired to cause the same to be forthwith Printed and Published.

WILL. COWPER, *Cler<sup>us</sup>*  
*Parliamentor<sup>us</sup>.*

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
Lords Spiritual and Temporal,  
In PARLIAMENT Assembled,

I N T H E  
Abbey-Church at *Westminster*,

ON TUESDAY, *January* 30. 17<sup>27</sup>.

Being the Anniversary Fast for the  
Martyrdom of King CHARLES I.

By the Right Reverend Father in G O D,  
RICHARD, Lord Bishop of St. *DAVID's*.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JAMES and JOHN KNAPTON, at  
the Crown in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1728.

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## I S A M. xxvi. 9.

--- *Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?*

**T**HESE are the merciful and compassionate Words of *David* in a very critical Juncture, namely, when a tempting Opportunity occurred of killing King *Saul*; a Person who had so entirely laid aside all Obligations of Honour, Gratitude, and Conscience, that from a Father-in-Law he was become, upon the most unjust Pretensions, his implacable Adversary. After the Providential Defeats of many barbarous Schemes formed by *Saul* to take away the Life of his Son, the enraged King was now so far possessed by his Evil Spirit, as to pursue *David* into the Wilderness, attended with a chosen Body of Troops, in order to surround and kill him. Whilst he was engaged in this unnatural attempt, *David* (as we are told) came

verf. 2.  
verf. 7.  
and

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and surprized *Saul* and the *People* with him, upon whom a deep Sleep from the Lord had fallen. On this very favourable Occasion for putting an end to the Persecution of *Saul* by one compendious Stroke, and likewise on *Abishai's* Suggestion, that God had then deliver'd his Enemy into his Hand; and that, if he were permitted, he himself would be the Executioner: *David*, we find, was so far from giving him Leave to Avenge him of his Enemy now in his Power, that in the very Moment of a safe and easy Attack he checked his officious Zeal, by saying, *Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?* And in the immediately following Verses, *David* is said to have added, *As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him*, that is, with some fatal Disease, that might put a judicial Period to his Life; or, says he, *his Day shall come to die*; that is, his natural Time of Death would soon approach; or, as he goes on, *he shall descend into Battle, and perish*, as it actually came to pass. And he concludes accordingly, *The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed!*

And this Forbearance of Revenge in *David* is the more remarkable, because some peculiar Circumstances concurred at that Time, to invite and encourage him to take away the Life of *Saul*. For Instance, *Saul* had been rejected by God from being King over *Israel*, for his Crime in sparing the *Amalekites*. And

in

verf. 12.

verf. 8.

verf. 10,  
11.Chap. xv.  
verf. 24,  
26.

in Consequence of this Rejection, *David* had been Anointed by *Samuel* as King of *Israel*, at least as such in the Designation of Providence on the Death of *Saul*. So that *David* himself was at that very Time in some sense *the Lord's Anointed*, though not yet actually advanced to the Throne. And again, a *miraculous* Sleep, which gave *David* the forementioned Opportunity, looks like a tacit Approbation of God himself. But notwithstanding these and other strong Inducements, *David* paid that Reverence to God's Authority in constituting *Saul* King over *Israel*, which he that gave it had not yet entirely annulled; that though *Saul* had very much Abused the high Authority delegated to him, and particularly in repeated Attempts on the Life of *David* himself, yet he piously resolved, that neither his own Hand, nor that of his warm Friend *Abishai*, should be employ'd in taking away the Life of his Sovereign. Even on the alluring Prospect of a Crown, the dutiful *David* restrains the Violence of his Passion, though impetuous enough on other Occasions, and is introduced as sedately saying, *Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be Guiltless?*

Chap. xvi.  
vers. 1, 13.

Having thus explained so memorable a Fact, by the Context, and other Historical Passages relating to it; I shall shew, on Occasion of the Words now read to you, and of the Humiliation of this melancholy Day,

First, That the general Reasons against the Crime of Murder, are of vastly greater strength and weight, with regard to the Murder of a *King*, than of any other Person.

Secondly, That the Murder of a King, consider'd as *the Lord's Anointed*, is a Crime of an high and aggravated nature.

Thirdly, That in the particular Instance of Murder we this Day lament, there were peculiar Circumstances of Barbarity and Guilt.

And Fourthly, That we ought to make that good Use of this Day's sad Solemnity, as with the greatest Caution to avoid hereafter all Tendencies and Approaches towards the Crime we now deplore.

In the first placē, I am to shew, That the general Reasons against the Crime of Murder, are of vastly greater strength and weight, with regard to the Murder of a *King*, than of any other Person.

Nothing is more plain and obvious, than that he that takes away the Life of any Person whatsoever, not only deprives him of the most valuable Property, but subverts the very Foundation of all other Property and Enjoyment in the present State; and that, consequently, a Violent Death is the greatest Injury possible that can be done to any Person. If then the Murder of any private Person be a very heinous Crime, it is most evident that the Murder of a  
*King*

*King* is a Crime of a more aggravated nature, both as it deprives him at once of his Life and his Royal Dignity, consider'd as the two highest Properties imaginable, and likewise of all Opportunities of promoting the Glory of God, and the publick Good, in that eminent Manner which his exalted Station gives him great Advantages of doing; which indeed is the peculiar Pleasure of Power and Greatness.

But besides this personal Incapacity occasioned by Murder, it ought here to be consider'd, that tho' the Wisdom of all well-constituted Nations has thought it necessary to punish the Murder of a Private person with Death, by fixed and stated Laws, in order to Deter men from a Crime so destructive of Society, and to prevent the Loss of the Members of it; and tho' the Protection of the Lives of Subjects, and the Security of their Properties from unjust Violence, be the great Ends of Government; yet it is evident even to Demonstration, that the Publick cannot be so much affected, or in such a manner as to bear a Comparison, by the Loss of any Subject, or indeed great Numbers of them, as by the Loss of a Lawful *King*. For tho' the Loss of some private Subjects, by Murder, is very prejudicial to the Publick; yet since the Happiness of the Publick depends so much on the Safety of the *King*, the Murder of him is a Crime of a more complicated Nature, and what usually throws the whole Community into the greatest Confusion possible. And therefore, since the Publick is

presumed to suffer to so high a Degree, on such an Occasion; the Murder of a *King* is not only to be consider'd as the blackest Treason, according to Law, against himself, but likewise against the Publick and the whole Body of his Subjects, in the extensive Consequences of it. And so it actually happen'd in Consequence of the Murder this Day committed, when our Legal Constitution, both in Church and State, Expired at once with the King himself.

Gen. ix.  
6.

Again; Tho' the Murder of any private Subject is directly contrary to the positive Law of God, which in the earliest Ages of the World did expressly forbid it, under no less a Penalty than the Death of the Murderer; yet the Reason assign'd by God for the Punishment of it, holds more strongly by far of the Murder of a *King* than of a Private person; namely, that *in the Image of God he made Man*. For tho' every Man is in some respect the *Image* of God, yet a Lawful *King* is more emphatically stiled the *Image* of God, on account of his Authority and Dominion; which whoever totally destroys, most certainly defaces the liveliest Representation of God among Men, and thereby affronts the great Original; and that more especially, when the Regal Power is exercised with Wisdom and Goodness, which in Concurrence render a King most like to God. And to this Primitive Reason, we Christians ought to add the more important Consideration of another World. For, if *no Murderer* of a private Person *has eternal Life abiding in him*; certain-

John  
11. 15.

certainly the Murder of a *King*, which has been shewn to be a Crime of a more complicated and heinous Nature, will be attended with a proportionable degree of eternal Misery.

Having thus shewn, that the general Reasons against Murder hold more strongly against the Murder of a *King* than of any others, I now proceed to evince from some Reasons *peculiar* to the Character of a King,

Secondly, That the Murder of a King, consider'd as *the Lord's Anointed*, is a Crime of a very high and aggravated Nature.

The Reason why *David*, in our present Text, thought it Criminal to take away the Life of King *Saul*, appears very plainly to have been the Sacred Character of *the Lord's Anointed*, with which he was invested. This is strongly implied in his reprimanding Question, *Who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?* The meaning of which is best explained by God's own Nomination of *Saul*, and *Samuel's* subsequent Anointing of him to be King over *Israel* by God's express Command. And therefore I willingly refer you to the History of that whole Transaction in the Holy Scripture.

1 Sam. viii.  
22.  
ix. 16.  
x. 1, &c.

It must indeed be confessed, that Princes, in the present State of the World, cannot be stiled *the Lord's Anointed* in the very same strict and exalted Sense as *Saul* was said to be so; since they now ascend their Thrones by

the ordinary Methods of God's universal Providence, and agreeably to the Laws and Constitutions of the Kingdoms that they are called to Govern. Though, I say, they are not now immediately Chose, and expressly Appointed by God himself for governing particular Kingdoms, as *Saul* actually was for the Government of God's own People; yet, in the inferiour Sense of those Words, all lawful Kings are still *the Lord's Anointed*. They may justly still demand the Reverence of their Subjects, and Obedience to their lawful Injunctions, as they derive their Authority in the last Resort from God, who has founded the Necessity and Benefits of Government in the Wants and Exigencies of human Nature, and has likewise Providentially called to the Throne particular Persons, according to the Laws and Constitution of every Kingdom. And when such Persons have been Inaugurated by a solemn Uction, and Recognized by the Estates of their respective Realms, as those to whom the Fealty of Liege-Subjects is due, no good Reason can be assigned why they should not still be distinguished by the Character of *the Lord's Anointed*. And in order to be convinced that this Phrase, *the Lord's Anointed*, may justly still be understood in a *lower* Sense, we need only to recollect, that it has been actually applied in Holy Scripture to Kings that were not immediately Chose and expressly Appointed by God. Such, for Instance, was the King, most probably *Zedechiab*, of whom *Jeremiah* thus writes,  
*The*



*The Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of* Lam. iv. 20.  
*the Lord, was taken in their Pits, of whom*  
*we said, Under his Shadow we shall live among*  
*the Heathen; that is, during the Babylonian*  
Captivity; and that too, after many Convulsi-  
ons of Government, from the Time of the  
Divine Appointment of a King. And indeed  
the same Expressions of *the Lord's Anointed*  
was applied by God himself to *Cyrus*, the ce-  
lebrated Heathen King of *Persia*: Namely,  
*Thus saith the Lord to his Anointed, to Cyrus;* Isa. xlv. 1.  
as the Prophet assures us. Whence it clearly  
appears, that this Phrase, *the Lord's Anointed*,  
is so far from being only applicable to a Person  
Anointed to be King by God's immediate Com-  
mand, that it is not confined to the *Peculium*,  
but is indeed applicable to all lawful Sovereign  
Powers under all Constitutions in the World.  
And it is certain, that the Christian Religion  
has made no Alteration in this Matter, but has  
only prescribed Obedience in general to the  
Higher Powers every where, agreeably to the  
true Original and great End of all Govern-  
ment, and the particular Laws and Constitu-  
tion of every Country.

Now though that Prince, whose unhappy  
Fate we this Day Lament, cannot be called *the*  
*Lord's Anointed*, in the highest Sense of those  
Words; yet he may be truly stiled so, as he  
derived his Power ultimately from God, was  
Consecrated with a Solemn Unction to his  
great Office, and invested with lawful Autho-  
rity, according to our particular Constitution  
of

of Government. It is evident then, that they that *stretched out their Hands against the Lord's Anointed*, their lawful Sovereign, could not be *guiltless*. And indeed they were guilty of an execrable Crime, according to our own particular Laws and Civil Constitution. For whatever just Provision may have been made in them for the Preservation of the Liberties of the People from exorbitant lawless Power, whatever mutual Checks may have been wisely contrived by our Ancestors, in the several Parts of our Constitution; yet it is most certain, that according to our Laws and Constitution, the Lives of our Kings are Sacred and Inviolable; and that it is by no means a Part of the Liberties of Subjects, expressed in the Great Charter, or any ancient Laws, to take away the Life of their lawful King.

If it be said by way of Extenuation of the Crime committed this Day, that some Political Errours, not very consistent with the Pretensions of a Free People, had been made by the King, whose Violent Death we deplore; it is easily replied, that as some of those Errours are confessed by the Noble Historian of those Times, to have been committed in the more Unexperienced Years of that King, and others of them by the Advice of some Persons round the Throne, that seem neither to have understood our own Constitution, nor the Genius of their own Times; so it is equally certain, that those unhappy Mistakes in Policy,

licy were acknowledged and reformed by the King, and guarded against for the future by good and wholesome Decisions of Law. Such a Correction therefore of some Mistakes in Government, ought to have been gladly Accepted, by all dutiful and well-meaning Subjects. For though our Kings are Sacred Persons, they are Fallible Men, and are not exempted from those Infirmities and Errours that are incidental to the rest of Mankind: Which, therefore, when they do not extend to a total Subversion of the Constitution, (as was notoriously the Case antecedently to the happy *Revolution*) and are likewise timely Reformed, ought to be cover'd with the decent Veil of human Infirmary. And more especially some Allowance for Mistakes is reasonably to be made, when we impartially recollect the great Difficulties of Government in Critical Junctures, and the numerous Temptations that are peculiar to those that are placed in so elevated a Station. If therefore the Bulk of Mankind is indulged the Privilege of correcting Mistakes by all Persons of Candour and Humanity, surely the Higher Powers, that must be presumed to see sometimes with other Persons Eyes, have a just Title to that Privilege, upon a Reformation of their Mistakes in Policy.

But Thirdly, I am to shew, that in the particular Instance of *Murder* we this  
Day

Day lament, there were peculiar Circumstances of Barbarity and Guilt.

Without entring, in a previous manner, into the Particulars of that Unnatural War, which had been too long carried on between the King and some Part of his Subjects, that are justly presumed to be well known to all this Audience; I think it is sufficient to make a few Observations on those Circumstances of Barbarity, that attended the Murder of the Unhappy King, and aggravated its Guilt to an high Degree. When, after various Turns of Success, the King's Arms visibly declined, and such Concessions were made by him, as were Voted by his very Enemies to be a sufficient Ground of Peace; this certainly was not only a most proper Juncture for a Publick Reconciliation, and one Universal Act of Oblivion of what had pass'd between both Parties, but it was the Duty of all that had made Opposition, to Submit, and Accept of the Legal Redress of their respective Grievances, that was offer'd them by their Condescending King. Since therefore Arms were Originally taken up, as was pretended, merely on the Account of some Political Errours that were now Corrected, it was the wild Fury of a Party-Zeal that Obstructed their Acquiescing in those Remedies, which were Acknowledged by themselves to be a Solid Foundation of future Peace on both Sides,  
by

by the Security of Clear and Express Laws, as the Eternal Boundaries of Liberty and Prerogative. But instead of such an Amicable Composition, we cannot but reflect with Indignation, that the King's Person was seized during the Treaty, and all further Proceedings of Accommodation were interrupted by the wicked Artifices or Military Power of those Persons, whose Ambitious Views had been long Disguised by fair Pretences of the Publick Service; but that now effectually exerted themselves in a Manner preparatory to the Murder of that very King, who had granted them even more than was demanded by their Own Original Petitions.

Again; When Affairs were ripe for the Murder of the King, could there be a greater Instance of barbarous Fury, than the solemn Arraigning of him in a new and unheard-of Court, and of Condemning Him with all the Forms of Justice, who himself was the great Fountain of it? Could any thing be more Inhumane, than those Outragious men, that thought it not enough to take off the Crown from the Head of their Lawful King, but gloried in Trampling on it too, and treating it with the greatest Indignity and Scorn; who to the heinous Circumstances of his Murder added the most shameful Ridicule of Justice, and the invidious Pomp of a ludicrous Tribunal?

Once more ; It adds very much to the Barbarity of Murdering the King, that the Actors, on that Occasion, murder'd a Person that was Confessedly so good a Christian. The whole Course of his Life could not but be Acknowledged by his most malicious Enemies to have shone brightly with the Character of Virtue and Religion ; and that if he were not the Greatest of Monarchs in some Secular Respects, he was eminently such in Goodness and Piety. Even Men of the most implacable Temper could not certainly but Admire that Meekness, Charity, and Resignation to the Will of God, that the latter Unfortunate Scene of his Life, and more especially his Preparation for Death, and Christian Behaviour upon the nearest Approaches of it, gave him peculiar Opportunities to exert with great Advantage, and to gain him the Title of a Saint and Martyr by the Loss of that of a King. Indeed such Cruelty, exercised on a truly Good and Religious Person, did unavoidably render the Cause of those that put him to Death the more Odious and Horrid in the Eyes of the rest of the World. Impartial Posterity cannot but Confess, that those very Persons that Condemned him for Transgressing the Laws, did themselves really Overturn the Constitution of the Church, and effectually Subvert the most Essential Liberties of their Country. And I do not  
think

think it unbecoming me in my present Station to observe, that as the King in great Measure sacrificed his Life to his firm Adherence to the *Episcopal* Cause, which (as is evident from his extemporary Vindication of it in repeated Conferences with its Adversaries) he thoroughly understood, and therefore Valued and Defended; so his Enemies may justly be stiled Barbarous, for taking away the Life of a King, that refused to betray the Episcopal Constitution of this Church, with which he was entrusted, and which is as Ancient as the earliest Christianity in this Nation. And as his Preference of it to the Preservation of his own Life and Dignity, adorns and exalts his Glory of a Martyr, so it proportionably sinks the Character of those, that very probably would have restored his Regal Dignity to him, on so unworthy a Condition as his Breach of so Sacred a Trust.

But I proceed to the Fourth and Last Thing I proposed to speak to, namely, That we ought to make that good Use of this Day's sad Solemnity, as with the greatest Caution to avoid hereafter all Approaches and Tendencies towards the Crime we now Deplore.

Though, God be thanked, the Enthusiastical Rage that exerted it self in the Days of our Forefathers has spent its Force, and

is succeeded by calm Reason and a better Temper; and though the Principles of Killing of Kings, which came Originally from the *Jesuitical* Faction in the Church of *Rome* (who no doubt contributed to the Tragedy of this Day) have been for some time Disowned by that Church, and indeed have not been openly espoused of late even by that bold *Society*; yet as it must be acknowledged that there are more Artful, and less Bloody Methods in Vogue, to Prejudice Subjects against their lawful Superiours, and in the Result of things to subvert the Government; so it is necessary to observe, that they are consequentially guilty of so high a Crime, that Vilify and speak Evil of the Higher Powers, that propagate scandalous Reflections on them, and that *Slander the Footsteps of the Lord's Anointed*. All such licentious Persons, therefore, as labour by such base Methods to alienate the Affections of Subjects from their lawful King, ought really to be consider'd as Traytors in some Measure to their King and Country; and as Incendiaries, that lay the Foundation of *stretching out the Hands* of themselves and others *against the Lord's Anointed*. For such false Representations of the Higher Powers, as they diminish the Reverence due to Crowned Heads, and too often inflame whole Multitudes into a Seditious Disposition, are, in the Nature of the Thing, previous to the  
open



open Resistance of them, and indeed prepare the way for the last Act of Violence. The lamented Crime of this Day ought then to engage us to recollect, with a Seriousness suited to the Occasion, that though Liberty be an excellent Cause, yet it has been in Fact carried on to Licentiousness; and that some Persons that made the loudest Pretensions to its Service, were actually the greatest Violaters of it. And again, as no Argument of Weight can be drawn against so good and Valuable a thing as Publick Liberty from any Abuses of it; and as the Power and Prerogative of Kings, in our Constitution, is a Legal thing; so it is necessary to support that legal Authority, in order to preserve the Liberty of the Subject. And indeed it is most evident from Experience as well as Reason, that in Case of an unjust Attack upon either of them, the other is in the greatest Danger; and consequently, that the Publick Tranquillity can only be preserved by a just Balance of them both.

And as by the good Providence of God we are now blessed with a King, that makes our Laws and Constitution the Rule of his Political Conduct, and therefore Reigns in the Hearts of a willing People; so ought we to be upon our strictest Guard, that none of those vile Arts of spreading Libels and defamatory Pamphlets, that were formerly introductory to a Civil War, may ever again prevail

prevail against our established Government. For is not Obedience to all lawful Power still a Gospel-Duty, though most truly explained by the legal Constitution of every Country? Or is that Doctrine for ever to be prostituted to the private Resentments of men Disappointed in secular Views, or to the Party-Animosities of those that are engaged in an Interest inconsistent with that of the Publick, and that too with a very ill Grace by the professed Patrons of Obedience without Reserve, or legal Limitation? If some Scars still remain of those deep Wounds that were given to our Ecclesiastical and Civil Constitution, in Consequence of the Calumnies that were industriously diffused among the People, to give them Prejudices against their King; how are we Admonished to beware of any artful Insinuations, of the like Nature with those that opened the way to Confusions, which ended in the Ruine both of Church and State? And as we are now Assembled, in order to Deprecate those Judicial Effects of the Sin of our Forefathers, which have in some measure descended even to our own Times; so let us Resolve to take the greatest Care, that by no Act of ours *the Clouds* may any more *return after the Rain*; and that though *our Fathers have eaten sowre Grapes*, *their Childrens Teeth* may no longer be *set on Edge*. And therefore to our solemn Addresses to Heaven, let us add an  
hearty

heartly Zeal to give to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, and to God the things that are *God's*; and in Memory of this fatal Day, to pay to his Present most Excellent Majesty, with whose Interest that of the Publick is inseparably united, all that just Obedience and genuine Reverence, which the Gospel commands in General, and our own Constitution prescribes in Particular. Let us be instructed by the Experience of former Times; and be so wise, at the Expence of our Ancestors, as to learn effectually, that as *we are called unto Liberty*, it is equally our Duty and Interest *not to use that Liberty for a Cloke of Maliciousness, or for an Occasion to the Flesh*, but to be excited by it with greater Chearfulness and Unanimity to *Fear God, and Honour the King*.

*Which may God grant, &c.*

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F I N I S.

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