


## LACORDAIRE

EAN BAPTISTE HENRI LACORDAIRE, a French divine and orator, celebrated for his eloquence and for the openness and boldness with which, without conceding any point of the Catholic creed, he sought to meet modern rationalism on its own grounds. Born near Dijon, March 12, 1802, he was educated for the Bar. In 1824, he abandoned law for theology, and in 1827 was ordained a priest. Becoming one of the leaders of Catholic Liberalism in France, in 1830 he was associated with Montalembert in the editorship of the progressivist but ultramontane journal, "L'Avenir." Retiring from journalism through inability to please both himself and the Pontifical Court at Rome, he came into note among cultured people for his earnest, inspiring sermons at Notre Dame, and by his philosophical works, and was elected to the Academy in 1860. He died at Sorèze, Nov. 22, 1861, in his sixtieth year. As an example of his oratorical gifts, the funeral sermon he preached after the death of Daniel O'Connell, the Irish patriot, is appended.

### PANEGYRIC OF DANIEL O'CONNELL

THE FOLLOWING IS A PORTION OF THE FAMOUS ADDRESS  
DELIVERED AT NOTRE DAME, PARIS, IN 1847

**S**UDDENLY the lakes of Ireland held upon their waves the breezes which ruffled them; her forests stood still and trembling; her mountains seemed as in expectation. Ireland heard free and Christian speech, full of God and country, skilful in maintaining the rights of the weak, calling to account the abuses of authority, conscious of its strength, and imparting it to the whole people. Truly it is a happy day when a woman brings her firstborn into the world; it is a happy day when the captive sees again the full light of heaven; it is a happy day also when the exile returns to his country; but none of these delights—the greatest which man enjoys—produces or equals the thrilling of a people who, after long centuries, hears, for the first time, human and divine language in the plenitude of their liberty; and Ireland owed that unspeakable joy to this young man of five-and-twenty, whose name was Daniel O'Connell.

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In less than ten years, O'Connell foresaw that he would one day be master of his fellow citizens; and thenceforth he meditated on the plan which he should follow for their emancipation. Where should he begin? Which of the links of that heavy chain was the first to be broken? He considered that the rights of conscience passed before all others; that there, in that servitude of the soul, was the centre and cornerstone of all tyranny, and that, consequently, this was the first point to attack. The emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland and England became his daily preoccupation, the constant dream of his genius. I shall not relate to you all his efforts and disappointments. Both were innumerable. Ten more years passed in these unfruitful trials. Neither the man nor the time was ready; Providence is slow, and patience equal to his own is the gift which he accords to the men who are worthy to serve as his instruments. At last the hour struck when O'Connell knew that he was the moral chief of his nation, that he held in his hand all the minds and hearts, all the ideas and all the interests of Ireland, and that no movement would be made save under his sovereign direction. It had cost him twenty years of labor to arrive at that memorable day when he was able to say without pride: Now I am king of Ireland.

It is a great thing, gentlemen, to become the chief of a party. When a man has the right to say that he governs a party it is enough to satisfy the most immoderate ambition, so difficult is it to bring into obedience those even who share all our thoughts and designs. The creation of a party is a masterpiece of power and skill; and yet the leader of a party is nothing in comparison with the man who has become the moral leader of a whole nation, and who holds it under his laws, without army, without police, without tribunals, with-

out any other resource than his genius and devotedness. The reign of O'Connell commenced in 1823. In that year he established throughout Ireland an association which he called the Catholic Association; and as no association has any power without a constant revenue, O'Connell founded the emancipation rent, and fixed it at a penny per month.

Let us not smile, gentlemen; there was in that penny per month a great financial calculation, and a still greater calculation of the heart. Ireland was poor, and a poor people has but one means of becoming rich; it is by every hand giving to the country from the little which it possesses. The emancipation penny invited every son of Erin to share in the glorious work of emancipation; poverty, however great it was, deprived none of the hope of being rich enough by the end of the month to cast an insult at the gold of England.

The Catholic Association and the emancipation rent obtained unheard-of success, and raised the action of O'Connell to the power and dignity of a government.

Three years after, in 1826, at the time of the general elections, it was a marvel to see the Irish, who up to that time had voted at the dictation and in favor of their oppressors—it was a marvel, I say, to see them by their votes proclaiming their rights and their intentions thenceforth of defending them.

This was as yet nothing: soon O'Connell appeared before the electors of Clare and offered himself as a candidate for a seat in the Parliament of England. He was elected in spite of the oath which placed the barrier of apostacy between him and a seat in the legislative assembly; and he dared to present himself, with his election in his hand and his faith in his heart, within those walls of Westminster, which trembled before a Catholic who violated their ancient majesty and intolerance by the astounding pretension of seating and of

placing there in the person of an outlaw, a Catholic, an Irishman, the very impersonation of a whole people.

Public opinion was moved to its very foundations; all Ireland was ready; proud yet obedient, agitated yet peaceful. Sympathy, encouragement, help came to her from every part of Europe, from the shores of America, and from England herself—moved at last in some of her children by the cry of justice so eloquently claimed. Neither the English minister nor the king of Great Britain were disposed to grant Catholic emancipation; ardent prejudices still existed in the two chambers, which during thirty years had often rejected similar projects, although softened toward Protestant pride by hard conditions. But the remains of these old passions vainly opposed a barrier to the sentiments of general equity; the world was at one of those magic hours when it does not follow its own will. On the 13th of April, 1829, the emancipation of Catholics was proclaimed by a bill emanating from the minister, accepted by the legislature, and signed by the king.

Let us halt a moment, gentlemen, to reflect upon the causes of so memorable an event; for you will understand that a single man, whatever may be his genius, would not have been able to bring about this revolution if it had not been prepared beforehand and brought to maturity by the very power of the times. We must acknowledge this, under pain of falling into excess in the most just praise, and of transforming admiration into a blind rather than a generous sentiment. It was among us—for I never lose an opportunity of returning to my own country—it was among us, in France, in the eighteenth century, that the principle of liberty of conscience resumed its course, which had been so long weakened and turned aside. The philosophy of that age, although an enemy

to Christianity, borrowed from it the dogma of the liberty of souls, and upheld it with unflinching zeal—less, doubtless, from love of justice and truth, than for the purpose of undermining the reign of Jesus Christ. But, whatever its object, it founded in minds the return of just toleration, and prepared for future ages the emancipation of so many Christian nations oppressed by the iron hand of despotism and heresy. Thus God draws good from evil, and nothing is produced in the world, even against truth and justice, which will not, by a divine transformation, sooner or later serve the cause of justice and truth. That French idea of liberty of conscience had passed to England and the United States of America; and O'Connell, who met it on his glorious way, easily made it serve to further his work.

Therefore, gentlemen, before insisting upon the gratitude which we owe to him, it is just that I should invite you to honor with sincere and unanimous applause all those who have aided that great work of Catholic emancipation. This is the first time that in a French assembly, at the foot of our altars, in the presence of God and men, we have occasion to pay a tribute of gratitude to those who co-operated for the emancipation of our brethren in Ireland and England, to those diverse instruments, far or near, of that great act of the 13th of April, 1829, which so many hearts called for; which so many sovereign pontiffs, in the mysterious watchings of the Vatican, had ardently prayed for; and which will forever remain in history as a memorial of one of the brightest hours which God has vouchsafed to the conscience of the human race. Join then with me, O brethren, join with me from the depths of your hearts, and lifting our hands toward God, let us say together: Eternal praise, honor, glory, and gratitude to Sir Robert Peel, and to his Grace the Duke of Wel-

lington, who presented to the English Parliament the bill for Catholic emancipation! Eternal praise, honor, glory, and gratitude to the House of Commons and the House of Lords of England, who accepted the bill for Catholic emancipation! Eternal praise, honor, glory, and gratitude to his Majesty King George IV, who signed and sanctioned the bill for Catholic emancipation! Eternal praise, honor, glory, and gratitude to those Protestants of England and Ireland, who, with the magnanimity of a truly patriotic and Christian spirit, favored the presentation, discussion, and adoption of the bill for Catholic emancipation! But also, and above all, eternal praise, honor, glory, and gratitude to the man who drew together in his powerful hand the scattered elements of justice and deliverance, and who, pressing him to the goal with vigorous patience, which thirty years did not tire, caused at last to shine upon his country the unlooked-for day of liberty of conscience, and thus merited not only the title of Liberator of His Country, but the ecumenical title of Liberator of the Church.

For, had Ireland alone profited by emancipation, what man in the Church, since Constantine, has emancipated seven millions of souls at a single stroke! Consult your recollection; seek in history since the first and famous edict which granted liberty of conscience to Christians, and see whether there are many acts to be met with comparable by the extent of their effects to the Act of Emancipation! Here are seven millions of souls free to serve and love God to the end of time; and whenever this people, advancing in its life and liberty, shall throw back over the past an inquiring glance, it will find the name of O'Connell at the end of its bondage and the beginning of its renovation.

But the Act of Emancipation did not touch Ireland alone;

it embraced in its plenitude the whole British empire, that is to say, besides Ireland, Scotland, and Great Britain, those islands, those peninsulas, and those continents to which England before extended with her domination the intolerance of her laws. Behold, then, a hundred millions of men, behold shores washed by twenty seas, and the seas themselves delivered from spiritual bondage. The ships of England sail henceforth under the flag of liberty of conscience, and the innumerable nations which they touch with their prow can no longer separate in their thought power, civilization, and the liberty of the soul—those three things born of Christ and left as his terrestrial heritage to the nations which embrace the emancipating mystery of his cross. What consequences, gentlemen, from one single act! What a boundless horizon opened to the hopes of the Church! Need I say more that you may not regret the boldness with which I pronounced the name of O'Connell after the names of Moses, Cyrus, Judas Maccabæus, Constantine, Charlemagne, and Gregory VII, all acting with the force of regular sovereignty, whilst O'Connell had but the force of a citizen and the sovereignty of genius?

And yet I have not said all. There is a peril to which modern society is exposed—and it is the greatest of all—I mean the alliance of spiritual servitude with civil liberty. Circumstances, which it would require too much time to demonstrate to you, impel the destinies of more than one nation upon that fatal incline; and England was there to encourage them by her example, possessing on the one hand liberal institutions, which she guards with supreme jealousy, and on the other overwhelming a portion of her subjects under the sceptre of an autocratic and intolerant fanaticism. O'Connell has undone that terrible teaching given by Eng-

land to the European continent. Nations yet young in civil liberty will no longer see their elder brother urging them into the road of religious servitude by the spectacle of an adulterous contradiction. Henceforth all liberties are sisters; they will enter or depart at the same time and together, a family indeed inseparable and sacred, of which no member can die without the death of all.

In fine, consider this: the principle of liberty of conscience, upon which depends the future of truth in the world, was already supported in Europe by the power of opinion and by the power of Catholicity; for wherever opinion could speak it demanded liberty of conscience, and in most of the great Catholic States it is already established in fact and of right. Protestantism alone had not yet given its adhesion to that solemn treaty of souls; notwithstanding its principle—in appearance liberal—it practised the native intolerance of heresy. Thanks to O'Connell, opinion, Catholicity, and Protestantism, that is to say all the intellectual and religious forces of Europe, are agreed to base the work of the future upon the equitable transaction of liberty of conscience.

And when its results are produced in the world, when not ourselves but our descendants shall see all religious errors vanquished by the peaceful spread of Christianity; when Islamism, already dying, shall be finally extinguished; when Brahminism and Buddhism, already warned, shall have accomplished their transitory cycle; when in presence of each other nothing but the total affirmation of truth and the total nothingness of error shall remain, and the combat of minds shall thus touch this supreme moment of its consummation, then posterity will know O'Connell fully; it will judge what was the mission and what the life of the man who was able to emancipate in the sanctuary of conscience all

the kingdoms of England, her colonies, her fleets, her power; and throughout the world, directly or indirectly, place them to the service of the cause of God, his Christ, and his Church. It will judge whether he has not merited in the Christian and universal sense that title of Liberator which we give to him from this hour.

But he was a liberator also in another manner which it remains for me to show you.

Not alone is the Church persecuted here below, mankind is also persecuted. Mankind, like the Church, is turn by turn persecuted and delivered, and for the same reason. The Church is persecuted because she possesses rights and imposes duties; mankind is persecuted because it has rights and duties also in its domain. Justice weighs upon us, no matter upon what head it dwell, and we seek to escape from it, not only to the detriment of God, but to the detriment of man. We deny the rights of man as we deny the rights of God; and it is a great error to believe that there is but one combat here below, and that were the Church to sacrifice her eternal interests, there would not remain other interests for which it would be necessary to draw the sword. No, gentlemen, let us not deceive ourselves, the rights of God and the rights of mankind are conjoined; the duties toward God and duties toward mankind were combined in the evangelical law as well as in the law of Sinai; all that is done for or against God is done for or against man; as God is persecuted we are persecuted also; as God is delivered we are alike delivered. The history of the world as well as the history of the Church has its persecutors and its liberators; I could name them to you; but time presses upon us; let us leave the past and return to that dear and glorious O'Connell, to see him as a son of man after having seen him as a son of God.

He was fifty-four years old when Catholic emancipation was gained. Fifty-four, gentlemen, is a terrible age, not because it approaches old age but because it possesses force enough to be ambitious with sufficient lassitude to be contented with the past and to dream of the repose of glory. There are few men who, having by thirty years of labor obtained a marked, and above all an august triumph like that of a Catholic emancipation, have the courage to begin a second career and expose their fame to the shock of fortune when they might enjoy happy and honored repose in their old age.

O'Connell, gentlemen, knew how to avoid each of these shoals; he remained young and unmindful of his years until the close of his life. I see young men in this auditory. O'Connell, gentlemen, was of your age until he disappeared from among us; he lived, he died in the sincerity of unchangeable youth. Hardly had he given himself time to see his triumph, hardly had he forced open the doors of Parliament by a second election before he quitted his seat, and to the astonishment of all England he hastened to Ireland. What goes he to seek there? He goes to tell his beloved Erin that it is not enough to have emancipated conscience, that God and man are inseparable, and that after having served the country of heaven, if something still remains to do for the country of earth, the first commandment alone is kept and not the second; and as the two form but one, not to have kept the second is not even to have kept the first. He declares to her that, although aged and covered with glory, it is his intention to recommence his life and not to rest a single day until he has obtained equality of rights between England and Ireland. For such, in regard to human right, was the state of the two countries that the one hardly appeared to be a

satellite to the other. England had diminished the property, the commerce, the enterprise, all the rights of Ireland, in order to increase her own; and that odious policy placed Ireland in a state of inferiority which reached even to the impossibility of existence. Such is despotism, gentlemen; and we are all guilty of it in some degree; all of us more or less diminish the rights of others in order to increase our own, and the man who is exempt from that stubborn stain of our species may believe that he has attained the very highest point of the perfection of human nature.

O'Connell kept his word; he did not cease for a single day to claim equality of rights between England and Ireland; and in that second work he spent the seventeen last years of his life. He obtained from the government the introduction of several bills in the sense of equality of rights; the Parliament constantly rejected them. The Liberator was not discouraged; he had the gratification of seeing the municipal corporations of Ireland, composed exclusively of Protestants, fall under his attacks; and, the first Catholic for two centuries, he himself wore the insignia of lord mayor of Dublin.

"The claiming of rights" was for O'Connell the principle of force against tyranny. In fact, there is in right, as in all that is true, a real, an eternal, and an indestructible power, which can only disappear when right is no longer even named. Tyranny would be invincible were it to succeed in destroying with its name the idea of right, in creating silence in the world in regard to right. It endeavors at least to approach that absolute term, and to lessen, by all the means of violence and corruption, the expression of justice. As long as a just soul remains, with boldness of speech, despotism is restless, troubled, fearing that eternity is conspiring against

it. The rest is indifferent, or at least alarms it but little. Do you appeal to arms against it? It is but a battle. To a riot? It is but a matter of police. Violence is of time, right is heaven-born. What dignity, what force, there is in the right which speaks with calmness, with candor, with sincerity, from the heart of a good man! Its nature is contagious; as soon as it is heard, the soul recognizes and embraces it; a moment sometimes suffices for a whole people to proclaim it and bend before it. It is said, no doubt, that the claiming of right is not always possible, and that there are times and places when oppression has become so inveterate that the language of right is as chimerical as its reality. It may be so; but this was not the position of O'Connell and of his country. O'Connell and Ireland could speak, write, petition, associate, elect magistrates and representatives. The rights of Ireland were despised, but not disarmed; and in this condition the doctrine of O'Connell was that of Christianity and reason. Liberty is a work of virtue, a holy work, and consequently an intellectual work.

But "rights must be claimed with perseverance." The emancipation of a people is not the work of a day; it infallibly encounters in the ideas, the passions, the interests, and the ever-intricate interweaving of human things, a thousand obstacles accumulated by time and which time alone is able to remove, provided that its course be aided by a parallel and an interrupted action. We must not, said O'Connell, simply speak to-day and to-morrow; write, petition, assemble to-day and to-morrow; we must continue to speak, write, petition, assemble, until the object is attained and right is satisfied. We must exhaust the patience of injustice and force the hand of Providence. You hear, gen-

