

Speech to Sir William Jones upon his being called to be Lord Chief Justice of Ireland (1617)

Francis Bacon

Transcript

British Library, Sloane MS 3522, ff. 28v–31r

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Sir Frauncis Bacon Lord keeper of the great Seale of England his Speech to S[i]r William Ioanes Cheef Iustice of the kinges Bench in Ireland./.

S[i]r William Iones, the kinges most Exelent Ma[jes]tie beinge duely Informed of yo[u]r sufficiencie euery way, hath Called you lb by his writt, now retourned to the State and degree of Serieant att lawe, But not to staie there beinge soe qualified to serue him as his cheef Iustice of his kinges Bench in his Realme of Ireland, And therefore

that that

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that that I shall saie to you must be applyed, not to your Serieantes place which you take out in passage, But to that great place where you are to settle; And because I will not spend tyme to the delaie of the Businesses of Causes, and hearinges, I will leade you the shorte Iourney by Examples, and not the longe by preceptes./.

The place that you shall serue in, hath bin fortunate, to be well serued in fower successions before you; doe but take unto you the Constancye, and Integritie of S[i]r Rob[er]te Gardner, The grauitie temper, and discretion of S[i]r Iames Lee, The quicknes, Industry, and dispatch of S[i]r Humphrey Winche; The Care, and Affecc[i]on to the Comon weale, And the prudent, and politike Administrac[i]on of S[i]r Iohn Denham; And you shall neede noe other lessons, They were all Lincolnes Inne men, as you are, you may haue knowne them as well in their beginings, as their Aduancementes; But because

you are

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you are not to be there onelie Cheef Iustice, But a Councello[u]r of Estate, I will put you in minde of the great worke now in hande that you may doe accordingelie unto it; Ireland is that last Ex filijs Europiæ which hath come in, and hath bin reclaymed from desolation, and a desarte in many places to populac[i]on and plantac[i]on, And from Saluadge, and Barbarous Customes to humanitie, and Ciuillitie; This is the kings worke in cheef, It is the garland of heroicall virtue, and Felicitie, denyed to his Progenitors, and reserued to his times; The worke is not yet conducted to perfecc[i]on, But it is fayer Aduanced, And this I will saie Confidentlie That If God blesse that kingdome with Peace and Iustice, noe usurer is soe sure in 7. yeares space to double his principall with Interest, and Interest, upon Interest as that kingdome is within the same tyme to double the Rest, and Principall thereof,

yea, and

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yea, and perhapps to treble it, soe as that kingdome with w[hi]ch once within theis xxtie yeares wise men were wont to doubte whether they should wishe it to be in/ a Poole, is like now almost to become a Garden, and a younger sister to great Brittain, And therefore you must sett downe with yo[u]r self to be not onely a Iust Gouverner, and a good cheef Iustice (as If it were in England, But under the kinge and the Deputie you are to be a Master Builder, and M[aster]r Planter, and Reducer of Ireland, To w[hi]ch end I will trouble you att this tyme but with three directions./.

[*Right margin*:(1)] The first is that you haue an Especiall Care of the three Plantac[i]ons that of the North w[hi]ch is in parte acted, that of Wexford which is now in destruction, and that of Longe Ford, and Retrum which is now in suruay; And take this from me that the Bane of a Plantac[i]on is when the vndertakers, or Planters make such hast to a little Mechanicall present profit, as disturbeth the whole Frame, and noblenes of the worke for the time to come; Therefore

hold them

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hold them to their Couenauntes, and the true Ordinances of a Plantac[i]on./.

[*Left margin*:.2.] The second is that you be Carefull of the kings Reuenewe, and by little, and little Constitute him a good demeanour w[hi]ch hetherto is little or none, And the kings Cause wilbe hardiest when as euery mans land shalbe Improued in valew with encrease Mannifold, the kinge shalbe tryed to his drye Rent./.

[*Left margin*:.3.] My last direction (though first in weight) is that you doe all good Endeauo[u]rs to proceede resolutely, and Constantly, and yet with due Temperance, and equalitie.) in matters of Religion, least Ireland Ciuill be worsse to vs then Ireland Saluadge./.

After S[i]r William Jones his speech my lord sayed./.

I had forgott one thinge w[hi]ch is this, you may take exceeding great Comfort that you shall serue with such a deputie One I thinke that is a man ordayned of god to doe great good to that kingdome, And this I thinke good to speake vnto you that the lb

true

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true temper of a cheef Iustice towards a deputie is neither seruilely to second him nor Factiously to oppose him./.

Other manuscript witnesses

- Alnwick Castle, MS 526, ff. 5r–7v
- British Library, Additional MS 22591, ff. 259v–260r
- British Library, Harley MS 1576, ff. 81r–v
- British Library, Harley MS 39, ff. 282r–283r
- Beinecke Library, Osborn Shelves Gordounstoun Box 5, ff. 62r–64r
- Beinecke Library, Osborn fb59
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.206, ff. 23r–24v
- Norfolk Record Office, RYE 20, no. 3
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH83, ff. 7v–9v

- Senate House, University of London, MS 20, ff. 193v–195v
- Senate House, University of London, MS 300, ff. 65x–79x
- Woburn Abbey, MS 192, pp133–136

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BaconSpeechJonesv1.html>