

Moments in Our History

(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 – 1975)

John Jones and Bishop O'Donel (Part 5)

Father O'Donel replied on 5 May 1785, apologizing for the delay occasioned by "the great hurry of business that an Assistant Clergyman and I have been crowded with these days." He goes on to reassure Mr. Jones that "I deem myself blameable, both in the eyes of God and man, were I not, as far as my influence can reach, to discountenance the smallest insult offered any denomination of Christians in their mode of worship.... for in my notion of the Christian religion, its sacred maxims must be entirely reversed before such conduct could be justifiable under any pretence whatsoever."

The future Bishop, in the course of his long and friendly letter, points out that "he who is an observant Christian of any denomination is not only a better man, but also a better neighbour, a better subject to his King, and a truer friend than he that is not." He speaks at length of prejudice "those who detest those who differ from them in Religious. Principles" and concludes that "a man's condition must be very unsafe, who deems prejudice a virtue."

The letter ends:

"from what I here advance I hope you will do me the justice to believe I bestowed more of my time those Twenty-Eight years past in the study of Philanthropy than Party and that I cannot be so foolish as to fall out with a man for not saying his prayers in the manner I do.... these are the sentiments that occurred to me on the subject of your Letter, and you may rest assured that I wish for nothing more than that we may live in such tranquility and good will towards each other in this life as may enable us to attain to every necessary qualification to enjoy the everlasting Bliss for which we have been originally created in the life to come; these are the unfeigned sentiments wherewith I remain - Your most humble and obedient Servant. James O'Donel."