

The CURSE of *MEROZ*;

O R,

The DANGER of NEUTRALITY, in the
CAUSE of GOD, and our COUNTRY.

A

S E R M O N,

Preached the 2d of *October*, 1757.

By SAMUEL FINLEY, *A. M.* Minister of
the Gospel, in *Nottingham, Pennsylvania.*

Published at the Desire of many.

DEUT. xxxii. 26. *Who is on the Lord's Side?*

1 KINGS, xviii. 21. *How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: But if Baal, then follow him.*

P H I L A D E L P H I A :

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P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,

HAVING had the Opportunity of seeing the following SERMON, I think it my Duty to say, that it appears to me, to be a SPECIMEN of a superior GENIUS (and what is still more noble) of a disinterested and undaunted ZEAL for GOD, his KING, and COUNTRY; I heartily wish it may be of extensive Service, and that the candid, pious, and humble Author, may live long to compose many of equal Worth.

GILBERT TENNENT.

Philadelphia, Nov.

15, 1757.

The AUTHOR'S P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,

WHEN I observed and considered the amazing Danger; which, at this Juncture, threatens our civil and religious Rights and Liberties;--the Security and Indolence of very many;--our general Unpreparedness for Defence;--that Numbers absolutely refuse to repel the Enemy,

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by Force and Arms;--and that no proper and adequate Measures, for the public Safety, are prosecuted; I could not be unconcerned: Nor could I think it my Duty to be altogether silent, while the smallest Glimmerings of Hope remained. Excited by these Considerations, though various Discouragements stood full in View, I concluded, by the following Sermon, to cast my Mite into the public Treasury.

The Discourse now appears as it was delivered, save that the Form of the latter Part of the Application is altered, and a few Sentences in some other Parts, that had a direct Reference to that Form. But the Matter is the same, and set in the same Point of Light in which I always designed it should be viewed. The Expressions also are the very same, so far as the aforesaid Alterations would permit.

I chose the Form in which it was delivered, for no other Reason, but that it appeared to me more striking, and better calculated to engage the Attention of Mankind. I have altered it, because I found by Observation, that my Meaning was misunderstood; and I chuse the Form in which it now appears, because it is less liable to be mistaken.---

May the GOD of Battle arise!--plead his own Cause!--diffuse a Spirit of public Zeal through our Nation!--distinguish with his Favour our Sovereign King GEORGE the Second!--succeed his Arms!--give a Spirit of Wisdom and Fortitude to our military Commanders!--and, in particular, bless and prosper his Excellency Lord LOUDOUN, in his loyal Endeavours to defend our Land!--Let the whole Earth be filled with the divine Glory! AMEN.



The CURSE of *MEROZ*;

A

SERMON, &c.

JUDGES v. 23. *Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.*

ALTHOUGH Duty and Inclination both conspire, to make the Publication of Gospel Blessings my ordinary Exercise; yet, whoever imagines, that my *Office*, as a Minister of CHRIST, confines me to this alone, understands it no better than they do the divine *Nature*, who fancy that GOD has no other Attributes but Kindness and Love. It is certain, that the *whole Council of God* is to be declared, † as Occasion calls: And as I have no Power to curse whom he blesses; so my blessing whom he curses, would not only be in vain, but acting out of Character. You know his Judgment of the *false Prophets*, who said *Peace to those to whom there was no Peace* †, and proclaimed Safety, when sudden and inevitable Destruction was approaching.

† *Acts* 20. 27. † *Jer.* 6. 14.

proaching. Therefore, that I may avoid their *Doom*, I must not only *not bless*, but, since the State of our Affairs require me *now to change my Voice**, I must *proclaim the Day of Vengeance of our God†*, against such as my Text characterizes and dooms.

The Words are a Part of the famous, truly poetical, and spirited Song of the Prophetess *Deborah*, composed on Occasion of the memorable Victory obtained by *Barak* over *Israel's* Enemies.

You know that the *Israelites* were God's peculiar People, and under his immediate Government, both as to their religious, and civil State. Hence, by considering how he directed them, both in Peace and in War, we may learn Lessons very important, and on which, as being infallible, we can securely depend.

He is the *God of Love*. What then may be expected from him, when Enemies invade, and threaten his Subjects with utter Destruction? Will not Love direct them to be still and quiet, and to suffer their Foes to kill, or enslave them, rather than *repel Force by Force* in their own Defence?

This would doubtless have been the divine Order, if *Love* had not been tempered with *Justice*, and directed by eternal *Wisdom*. But the Lover of Righteousness, the Pattern of Propriety, and Guardian of his People's Rights, Orders far otherwise than *some* imagine, who mistake his Perfections, and the *Genius* of his Government. Do Enemies invade, and bring *Israel* into Bondage? Their glorious Sovereign rouses them to Arms. Do Numbers, fired with a *patriot Zeal* for their civil and religious Rights, take the *Sword*, and signalize themselves in the bloody *Battle*? They are enrolled in the Records of eternal *Fame*. Are others so slothful and cowardly,

* *Gal.* 4. 20. † *Is.* 63. 2.

cowardly, so selfish, or so peaceable, as to decline the *War*, when the Deliverance of their Country requires their Aid? They are blasted with a *Curse*, and their Memory rots under an indelible *Reproach*. The former is exemplified in the preceeding and following Context, and the latter in our Text. *Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, &c.*

Meroz was most probably some City about the Lake *Merom* ||; and from the raised Expectations of Assistance from it in this *War*, it seems to have been then a considerable Place: But the *Curse* of *JEHOVAH* has blotted it out from under Heaven, so that there is no further mention of it in Scripture. It also appears to have been near the Field of Battle, and had the fairest Opportunity of joining *Barak's* Army; for none of the remoter *Tribes* are cursed for not appearing on this Occasion.

It is supposable that some, and especially those most concerned, would surmise, that the *Prophetess* denounced this *Curse* from her own passionate *Resentment* against them: But all Suspicion of this Sort is removed, by observing, that *not she*, but the *Angel of the Lord*, commanded this *Curse*; which assures us, that our Text was dictated by the Spirit of Truth, and expresses the Mind of God. *The Angel called upon other *Israelites* to join in cursing *Meroz*; *Curse ye Meroz, curse bitterly*, that is, be zealous and earnest in the Denunciation.

But why this? What Evil had *Meroz* done? Had the devoted Inhabitants invaded the Property of others, or cruelly taken away their Lives? Did they take up

|| *Josb.* II. 5.

Arms

* " This Branch of the Song, was dictated to her by the *LORD*, by the Ministry of an *Angel*; otherwise she neither would, or durst have uttered so bitter a *Curse* against them, *viz.* *POOL*, in *Loc.* This *Curse*, saith *Henry*, on the Place, is pronounced by the *Angel of the Lord*, our Lord *Jesus*, the *Captain of the Lord's Host*, and those whom he curseth, are " cursed indeed."

Arms against their *Country*, or *abett* and vindicate the *Enemies Cause*? None of all these. Their Crime was a *bare* OMISSION: They did not assist their Brethren: They attended their *Business* at *Home*, and would not *fight*, though the *Safety* of their *Country*, and Recovery of their Liberty, called them to the *Field*. They would be esteemed among the BEST MEMBERS of the STATE, and expected to enjoy the *Benefits* of *Victory*, though they stood NEUTERS, while their *Nation* was engaged in *War*. Perhaps they thought themselves *wiser* than their *Neighbours*, and imagined they played a *sure Game*: For if the Enemy should prevail, they might expect Favour, as having done nothing to provoke their Displeasure; and their own Countrymen would not hurt them. Well, they may obtain the *Favour* of *Israel's Enemies*, but they shall have the *Curse* of *Israel's God*, who will treat them as his *Foes*: For the Cause depending between God and the *Mighty*, admits of no *Neutrality*.

We are here naturally led,

- I. To enquire what is meant by HELPING THE LORD?
- II. To shew, that there can be no MEDIUM between *not helping* and *opposing him*: Or, that his *Cause* admits of no *Neutrality* in any of his *Subjects*.
- III. In what Sense they are CURSED, who do not help him. And,
 1. We are to enquire what is meant by *helping the Lord*.

This Phrase does by no Means imply, that the Lord GOD Omnipotent, who is Self-sufficient, and All-sufficient, can ever *need* the Assistance of his indigent Creatures, for the Accomplishment of his Designs. He that spoke the World into Existence, can never be at a Loss to subdue those, whose Being and Preservation depend on

on his Pleasure. We may be certain the Scripture is perverted, if any Part of it is explained in a Sense unworthy of the divine Perfections, however the Words may found. And permit me to observe, that they who are always *literal*, or turn plain Scripture into *Allegory*, will be found *Blasphemers of God*, not Interpreters of his Word.

But positively, the Phrase of *Helping the Lord*, must be understood, 1st, As expressive of his infinite Condescension and Grace; in that he is pleased to accept what is done, agreeable to his Prescription, for his Church or People, as done to himself. *Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the Least of these my Brethren, ye did it unto me* §.

2. *To help the Lord*, is of equal Import with being *on his Side*, *Exod. 32. 26*. It is to espouse the Cause which he approves, and in which he is engaged; which we know is always just and good. It is impossible to help *him* in an unrighteous Cause, who *bates Robbery for burnt Offering* †. He is engaged for Truth against Error;--for Holiness against Sin;--and for his People's Defence against their Enemies. In order then to help him, we must search diligently for *Truth*, and having found it, must hold it fast:--*Contend earnestly*, not for a Party, but *for the Faith once delivered to the Saints* ||; we must be *exercised unto Godliness* *, mortify earthly and sensual Lusts in ourselves, and endeavour to persuade others to the same Course: And if Enemies unjustly invade us, we must bravely *hazard our Lives in the high Places of the Field*, in Defence of ourselves,--of the Tender and Helpless who are under our Care, and the Privileges with which we are entrusted. This leads me to observe,

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3. That

§ *Mat. 25. 40.* † *If. 61. 8.* || *Jude 3.* * *1 Tim. 4. 7.*

3. That Helping the Lord implies, the vigorous Use of all proper Means for obtaining every good End. To use Means is all we can do; the *Event* depends on the Lord himself, without whose effectual Concurrence, the best adapted will be used in vain: But if we use not the Means, we do nothing (for no more is in our Power) and *doing nothing* cannot be called *helping the Lord*. He ordinarily brings his Purposes to pass by a Chain of subordinate Causes; or, in other Words, by the Use of Means: Therefore, if we use them not, we cannot be said to help, for we do not work with him.

That he can accomplish his *Designs* without *Means*, is readily granted; but it cannot be inferred from thence, that he does not use them, as the Contrary is the known *Maxim* of his *Government*. Let a few Instances suffice, out of many that might be given.

The bringing of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and expelling the Nations of *Canaan*, are ascribed solely to the divine Efficiency, in *Deut.* 4. 38. and 7. 22. &c. Yet he employed *Israel's* Power and Activity for those Purposes (a.)

He set *David* on the *Throne* of *Israel*; yet obliged him to fight his Way to it. *David* owns, that God subdued the People under him; but how?—By teaching his Hands to War, and girding him with Strength, *Pf.* 18. 32, 34, 47.

God Rules the World: But he does it by Magistrates, whom he cloaths with Authority, and puts a Sword into their Hands, with strict Orders not to bear it in vain, *Rom.* 13. 4. It is therefore a Crime to let it rust in the Scabbard, when Justice commands it to be unsheathed, either for the Protection of the Injured and Oppressed, or for the Punishment of Evil-doers.

Paul was assured, that God would preserve him, and all that sailed with him; yet he was as certain, that if

a *Deut.* 7. 22.

the

the Sailors did not abide in the Ship, they could not be saved; Acts 27. 24. 31. for he knew, that according to the divine Constitution, the Means are inseparable from the End.

In secular Affairs it is well known, that Men reap as they sow (b.) And the Vineyard of the Slothful, in spite of all his good Wishes, or presumptuous Faith, will be over-grown with Thorns, Prov. 24. 31.

We are required to pray to God for our daily Bread, and to expect it only from his liberal Hand; but we shall be disappointed, if we do not labour for it: For he that gives it, has nevertheless determined, that if any will not work, neither shall he eat (c.) His promise is, thou shalt eat Bread. But by what Means shall it be obtained? In the Sweat of thy Face. Gen. 3. 19. It is indeed absurd to sacrifice to our Net (d.) But as absurd to cast it away, and say we need not use it.

In Religion it is as plain, that if Christians would obtain Grace, they must seek it earnestly, in the Use of all appointed Means. Faith comes by hearing, Rom. 10. 17. and though it be the Gift of God (e) yet they who desire it, must attend on the Word preached. If we would have the Knowledge of God, and his Will, we must employ all our reasoning Powers in searching the Scriptures (f) and dig for it as for hidden Treasure. If any Man lack Wisdom, he is directed to ask it of God, James 1. 5. Would we have a Spirit of Prayer?--We must pray for it to him, who gives the holy Spirit---To whom? To them that ask him, Luke 11. 13.

Hence it clearly follows, that they who expect divine Knowledge without studying the Scriptures;--the holy

B 2 Spirit

b 2 Cor. 9. 6. c 2 Thes. 3. 10. d Heb. 1. 16.

e Eph. 2. 8. f John 5. 39.

neglect or refuse ordinary Means.---We then say, with *Meroz*, we will not help:--Let him do it himself, or let it be undone.

For ought we know, the Inhabitants of *Meroz*, were Conscience-bound against *Fighting*, and had recourse to various *Pleas* for their *Justification*.--Nay--for their *Commendation*. They would be esteemed, forsooth, more peaceable than their *Neighbours*; and would have no cruel Hand in shedding Blood.---But all their *Pleas* are over-ruled by the supreme *Judge*; and a fearful *Curse* is denounced upon them, for their criminal Neglect.---This brings me to shew,

2. That there can be no *Medium* between not helping and opposing the Lord: Or, that his Cause admits of no *Neutrality* in any of his Subjects.

In RELIGION this is evident. We cannot serve God and Mammon, any more than one can serve two Masters (*i*) commanding contradictory Things. *Christ* and *Belial*, Righteousness and Unrighteousness, are such irreconcilable Opposites, that no Medium can be found to compromise the Difference. We are not allowed so much as to hesitate between God and *Baal* (*k*.)

In civil Policy the Matter is also evident. All who understand the Nature of *Society*, see a manifest Analogy between a *natural Body*, and a *Body politic*. Now if the natural Body be supposed in Danger of perishing, and the Hands refuse to administer proper Nourishment, or the Stomach to receive and concoct it, when administered:--If the Eyes and Feet are on contrary Sides of the Question, the former refusing to direct, and the latter to move;--is it not certain, that such recusant Members do not only hurt their respective Opponents, but the whole Body? Do they not expose it to Ruin, according to *Mat. 6. 24. & 1 Kings, 18. 21.*

Spirit, without Prayer ;--saving Blessings, without attending on Gospel Ordinances ;--or Deliverance from temporal Enemies, without Fighting against them, discover their deep *Ignorance of Scripture, of Reason, and the whole Scheme of the divine Government.* They reject the *proper appointed Means* of obtaining these *Ends* ; and when *they* are rejected, there is no Reason to think, that God will concur with Means which he has not appointed, or work Miracles to encourage Disobedience and Presumption. If they will not submit to his Wisdom, he justly gives them up to *strong Delusions, to believe a Lie, 2 Tbes. 2. 12.* To expect immediate *Direction* by *Impulses*, when *Scripture, or the Reason of Things*, afford sufficient *Light*, is not to *trust*, but to *tempt God* ; and to lay themselves open to be practised upon, by the subtle *Prince of Darknes, transformed into an ANGEL of LIGHT (g)* who will not fail to improve his Advantage.

It is true, God has some Times brought great Events to pass, without the Intervention of second Causes. This only proves that *He* is under no Necessity of using Means, but cannot prove them to be unnecessary for *us*. It would be absurd Reasoning, to infer from his feeding *Israel* in the Wilderness without their Labour, that we should neither plow nor sow :--Or, because he overthrew *Sennacherib's Army* by an *Angel*, we may not resist invading Foes, but wait for *Miracles*. We may as well argue, that seeing he preserved *Sbadraab, Mesbach, and Abednego*, from being hurt by the *Fire (b)* we may safely attempt to live like *Salamanders*.

God may work Miracles, if he pleases: But to limit him to them, would be in us, the most daring Presumption. Yet this presumptuous Thing we do, if we neglect

to their several Influence and Importance, *only by standing Neuter*, and not performing each its proper Function? And is not a *Medium*, in this Case, between *hurting* and *not helping*, absolutely impossible?

Thus far, the Case of a *Body politic* is exactly *parallel*. Let us suppose a *Nation* engaged in a *just*, but dangerous *War*, and that a Number of the professed Subjects are for being at Peace with the Enemies of the State, and therefore refuse to give the least Assistance to repel the unjust Assailant by Force, but leave others to fight it out as they can: Is it not equally certain, that these peaceable Recufants expose the Nation to ruin, in Proportion to their Number and Influence? If the Nation is able to maintain its Cause without them, no thanks to them. Let it be remembered, that *Meroz* was not the less *curfed* because *Barack* got the *Victory*.

Who can find a *Medium* between *not defending* a *Post* which is attacked, and *surrendering* it to the *Enemy*? If our Liberties are invaded, and we do not oppose the Invader, do we not give them away? There is here no third Method to be taken. We must do one or the other of these two. Therefore they who belong to a Community, and yet will not assist in defending it when attacked, are to be esteemed as *virtual Enemies*, for they deliver us into our Enemies Hands, as far as their deserting us can do it.

This can be proved by an infallible Argument. For our *Lord* accounts those his *Enemies*, who professing to be his *Followers*, were yet *Neutrals*. *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad*, Mat. 12. 30. This he speaks as an universal *Maxim*, applicable in all like Cases. And to confirm this yet more, when speaking of those who were not his professed Followers, but of another Community,

he observes, that their *not being against him*, was a Proof of their *being for him*, Mark 9. 38, 39, 40. *He that is not against us, is on our Part.* And would we not all naturally conclude, that those of an Enemy's Army were on our Side, who in Time of Battle would not fight against us? For when they do nothing to prevent our Victory, they manifest a Willingness that we should obtain it, though they are not in a Position to fight for us: And when they do nothing to make their own Army victorious, they chuse it should be vanquished; though they are not in Circumstances actually to fight against them. Thus, by not opposing us, they help us to gain our Point; and by not assisting their own, they expose them to ruin.

Suppose the two Scales of a Balance, by various Weights in each, to be *equally poised*; whatever is taken out of the one, though it be not cast into the other, yet causes the other to outweigh that Scale out of which it was taken.

Are not our *Enemies* and we direct *Contradictories*? If so, is it not impossible, that both can be served by our People? If they assist us, they oppose our Enemies; if they Neglect us, they give our Enemies an Advantage equal to their Number and Weight. In fine, if it is possible, in this Case, to find a *Medium* between not helping and hindering, I will own that *Light* and *Darkness* may be *reconciled*, and *Christ* and *Belial* may be *Friends*. Shocking Thought!--And is it not a like shocking Inconsistency, that the Members of our Community, should profess to be at Peace with the declared Enemies of the State, while we are engaged in a just War against them? But how much more like Enemies are these Members, if they think it their Duty to prevent our Defence, as far as their Influence extends?

God,

God, the Founder of *Society*, will ever be acknowledged *just*, in requiring the *Blood* of every Man at the *Hand* of his *Brother*; one of the same Community, *Gen. 9. 5.* For every Member, according to his Place, should make the Defence of his Brother's Life, against unjust Violence, his Business. How fearful, then, will their Case be, who by *Office* are the People's *Protectors* and Guardians, and yet will not do their Utmost to preserve them from *Ruin*? When God makes *Inquisition* for *Blood*, he will remember them, *Pf. 9. 12.* and it will be a *righteous Thing* with him, to divest those of *POWER*, who so abuse it, as neither to be a *Terror* to *Evil-doers*, nor a *Praise* to them that do well, *Rom. 13. 3.*

To say in excuse, that *FIGHTING* is against their *CONSCIENCE*, is only to tell us, that their *religious Principles* are such as oblige them to *betray* their Fellow-Members, by leaving them in the *Lurch*, whenever they are invaded by an *Enemy*; and most need *Assistance*:—Such, as forbid them to be *fit Members* of a *Community* in all Circumstances. And to say this, would seem sufficient to convince rational Persons, that *Principles*, chargeable with such Absurdities, however coloured, must needs be false: For none dare say, that pure *Christianity* unfits Men to be faithful Members of *Society*, either in *Peace* or *War*. Alas! how sad is their Condition, whose *religious Principles* are their *Crime*! Their Ignorance in so plain a Case, and in a Land of *Light*, is not invincible, but voluntary (in some Degree.) If Persons have sufficient *Means* of *Conviction*, but through *Party-Zeal*, shut their Eyes against the *Light*, their Persuasion of a *Falshood* is the more aggravated.

However tender we should be of the *Rights* of *Conscience*, which are indeed *sacred*, yet we must say, a deceived *Conscience* cannot change the *Nature* of Things; cannot

cannot make a sinful, to become an holy Action. Was *Paul* guiltless in persecuting the Saints, because he did it in Obedience to *Conscience*? No. Else he had no Reason to repent of it so bitterly, as he afterwards did. If *strong Delusions* lead any to believe a *Lie*, will *Conscience* make that *Lie* a *Truth*? Did the *Jews* Ignorance of the *Lord of Glory*, save them from that *Wrath*, which came upon them to the *Uttermost*? (1) If all these, and such like, must be answered in the Negative, how can we esteem those to be *innocent*, who for *Conscience*-Sake, are a *Clog* to the necessary *Defence* of the *Community* to which they belong?--Who for *Conscience* Sake, would deliver us up, and all our religious and civil Rights, into the Hands of our Enemies? No. We cannot but hold them guilty of our Blood, and all the fatal Consequences of a Defeat: And therefore cannot but denounce Evil to them, and all others, who do not act their Part, for the Support of a righteous Cause. This leads me to enquire,

3. In what Sense they are cursed who do not help the Lord.

To *Curse*, in the common Acceptation of the Word, is to wish Evil to the Person, or Thing, in View. Our Curses cannot make any one miserable, and therefore do only express Desire of his Misery, when taken in the worst Sense.

But that the Point in Hand, may be more clearly stated, it is necessary to premise some Things negatively.

1. We may not take this Text in such a Sense, as would make it inconsistent with the Christian Duties, of blessing those who curse us--praying for our Enemies--and for all Men. Nor may we take these Scriptures in a Sense inconsistent with our Text. We may not desire

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the final Evil of any ; nor cease to pity the Miserable, or to pray for pardoning Mercy to the Guilty, while there is any Hope. But as we know that Mercy is only extended to the Penitent, we should pray for their Repentance, but not that God would pardon the finally Impenitent and Unbelieving : For that would be to pray, that he would, for their Sakes, falsify his Word. So in praying for our Enemies, we can only be supposed to desire their Reformation, but not their Success in their evil Designs against us. On the Contrary, we may pray, that their injurious Attempts may be baffled, which is, in that Respect, to curse them.

2. We may not wish Evil to any, from personal Hatred, or to gratify *private Revenge*. This would be contrary to that Love which we are commanded to exercise towards others ; and to that Forgiveness, without which we are not to expect the Pardon of our Trespases from God. We are certain, that the Angel of the Lord did not intend, that we might indulge *Malice*, or even vent our own *Spleen*, under Pretence of *public Zeal*.

But the Curse denounced in our Text, will appear perfectly consistent with those Things, when limited to the following Significations.

1. Consider it as *declaring a Perswasion, that the Persons characterised, WILL BE CURSED of God.*

That this is not a straining of the Word, is evident to all who know, that the *Hebrews* often use the Imperative, for the future Time. Or, the certain Futurity of an Event, is expressed by Way of Desire, or Command. Thus the Prophets are said to *do* these Things, which they only *predict*, as *Jer. 1. 10. I have set thee to root out, to pull down, to destroy, to throw down ; to build, and to plant.* In like Manner, *curse ye Meroz,* is, “ pronounce her accursed, and be assured it will so come

come to pass." For God has said it, and his Curses are not impotent Wishes, but *make* the Objects of them miserable.

And certainly they who are guilty of the like Crime, deserve the like Curse, and have Reason to fear it, since divine Justice is still the same. The Guilty may despise it, and put it far from them, if they will; but no *Colourings*, *Quibbles*, or *Sophisms*, nor any Thing but their Reformation, will secure them from the Danger. They have not to deal with Men, but with that God who judges according to *Truth*, and cannot be imposed on by false Pretences.

2. To curse Meroz, is to *acknowledge that the Curse is just*. For Meroz would not regard her Country's Call, nor obey the Orders of her Sovereign: It is therefore meet, and becoming, that he should call her Inhabitants to account, and punish them as Enemies to his Government. And their injured Country, having nothing to plead in their Favour, will own they have deserved all the Misery he inflicts. In such a Sense we are to understand the Scriptures, which assert that *the Saints shall judge the World (m.)* For Christ as the supreme Judge, will pronounce the Sentence; and the Saints concur, and declare it to be equitable and fit.

3. To curse Meroz, is not only to own the Justice of the Sentence, but also to *acquiesce in it, because just*; though it be attended with the Misery of Delinquents. In this View, the *Psalmist's Imprecations* are not shocking; and this is the strongest Point of Light, in which they can truly be set.

It is a dreadful Doom which the righteous Lord pronounces, and will execute on spiritual *Babylon*: Yet the *Heavens, Saints, Prophets, and Apostles*, are all called upon

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m Mat. 19. 28. and 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3.

upon to rejoice in it, Rev. 18. 20. And what Pleas'd-ness appears in those Acclamations, in Rev. 16. 5, 6, 7. Righteous art thou, O Lord, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast judged thus.---For they have shed the Blood of thy Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them Blood to drink, for they are worthy.---Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy Judgments.--- Yet these, who are so highly delighted with the dreadful Executions of divine JUSTICE, are not turbulent, cruel, and revengeful Spirits, but Saints and Angels, full of Love to God and Men. But Justice has an inexpressible Excellency, and a most charming Beauty, to upright Minds. To be pleas'd with its Execution, is only to be pleas'd, that Things are as they ought to be. Fitness and Propriety, can never fail of the highest Approbation, when they are observed. But distemper'd Eyes cannot bear the dazzling Light of the Sun; nor can blind and guilty Minds behold the Brightness of moral Beauty.

The Souls under the Altar (Rev. 6. 10.) are not chargeable with the Want of such Love, as they ought to have, who yet earnestly desire, that their Blood may be avenged on those that dwell on the Earth: Not because they are malicious and revengeful, but because they are pleas'd with the Will of God, and as perfect Spirits, triumph in the Displays of governing Righteousness. To Delight in the Misery of any, for its own Sake, is the Part of infernal Malice: But to delight in the Execution of pure Justice, though Misery to the Guilty attends it, appears plainly to be the Part of a pure and heavenly Mind.

Ezekiel, and the pious Captives with him, were tenderly touch'd, and even inconsolable, because of Jerusalem's approaching Misery. In order to comfort them, God proposes to their Consideration, the Justice of the Thing,

Thing, Ezek. 14. 22, 23. *And ye shall see their Way, and their Doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the Evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning ALL that I have brought upon it, how dreadful soever. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their Ways and their Doings; and ye shall know, that I have not done WITHOUT CAUSE, all that I have done in it, saith the Lord.* The Sum of the Argument is, "though the Ruin of your Country is so very insupportable to you; yet when you see plainly, that pure Justice required it, you will be satisfied, because you love Righteousness; notwithstanding that you still retain the same compassionate Temper."

O! it is dreadful to behold the Havock of the human Race!--to see Scourging, Hanging, Torturing, Burning!--to see Fields of Blood, mangled Bodies!--the Earth gorged with the Gore of its Inhabitants!--populous Cities in Heaps! and a joyful and prosperous Country an horrid Waste! But let a true Christian see the Sins that procured all this, and his Mind will be at Rest, because he sees it to be a fit and righteous Thing. And to such a one, Injustice and Impropriety alone, would have a more shocking Aspect than all these Horrors.

What *honest Man* but is pleased, that a *Robber*, or *Murderer*, is discovered and *punished*? He is sorry for the Guilt, and pities the miserable Case, of the suffering Criminal: But should the Course of Justice be stopped, and such Miscreants be carressed, or winked at, his Sorrow would be unspeakably greater. A just Judge will condemn a Malefactor to a cruel Death; yet none charges him with Want of Love, Humanity, or Inconsistency, on that Account.

But

But why need I add more?--The GOD of LOVE, of *Mercy*, and *Kindness*, dooms impenitent Sinners to *eternal Woes*.--This he does, not because he delights in their Destruction, but because he regards *Righteousness*, above *Worlds*. What shall we think, then, of partial, selfish, and ignorant Professors of Religion, who would let *Justice*, *Truth*, and all go, rather than exercise due *Severity*? They would, forsooth, appear more merciful than God himself. Saints, Prophets, Apostles, and holy Angels, are cruel, compared with them, and far from their meek and peaceful Dispositions. But unhappily, these Men, thus hyperbolically Merciful, who profess more Love to Peace, than to Justice, Propriety, and Fitness, do, by that very Thing, break the Harmony of the divine Attributes, and prove themselves unlike to God;--to Saints on Earth, and in Heaven;--to Saints under the old Testament, and the New. Love and Mercy are false, when partial: We should love and pity our Enemies; but ourselves too, and that in the first Place: For Self-Defence is our original Law. Wherefore if an Enemy seeks to kill us, our killing him to save ourselves, is no Violation of the Law of Love, but rather a Fulfilling it: Whereas, if in such a Case we are passive, we practically approve and promote all that Iniquity and Barbarity, we pretend to dread and detest; and are consequentially guilty of Self-Murder.

On the whole, you see, that *cursing Meroz*, obliged them to indulge no Temper of Spirit, contrary to the Gospel of Peace: No, nor yet different from that Temper they would have, had they been in Heaven.

The principal *Inference*, which I intend to prosecute, is this,

That *British Subjects*, who refuse to assist their labouring Country, in the present *War*, are obnoxious to the *Curse* of *Meroz*.

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This will be evident, by shewing, that we are engaged in a *good CAUSE*, and so are *on the Lord's Side*: Consequently, *they* who do not *help to support this Cause*, do not *help the Lord*.

If our *Enemies* were the *Aggressors*, and like *Robbers*, invaded our Property in Time of Peace, it is lawful and right for us to defend it, by repelling them: For we are accountable to God for the Gifts of his Providence, and may not give them up to an unjust Invader, at his Pleasure. If it is just, and our Duty, to defend ourselves against domestic Robbers, it cannot be the Contrary, when we have to deal with foreign Ones. Now it is well known, that the *French* had seized on the Lands of OHIO, and were fortifying themselves within the *British Territories*, before a Sword was drawn against them.

Should any suggest, "that said Lands are the Property of the *Indians*; and since neither of the contending Parties had any Right to them without Purchase, it cannot be said that we had a *better Right* than the *French*; for both are on an equal Footing." To this it may be answered, that though neither Party had a Right to those Regions without Purchase; yet if the *Natives* gave the first Grant of them to *Britons*, our Cause is just and good. Now such a *Grant* seems to follow of Course, when we consider, that the *Indian Nations*, who have Dominion over them, are the *Allies*, and perhaps I may say, in some Respects, the Subjects of *Great-Britain*; that they have still sold their Right, as we had Occasion to purchase; and encouraged the extending of our Settlements.

If, as the Objection supposes, the Lands in Question, lay *in common* as to *Europeans* among themselves; then, according to Principles of natural *Equity*, the first *Occu-*
pant

part secured the Right to them, in respect of all other Claimants, besides the Natives. And it is on this Principle, so far as I can discover, that several Nations of Europe claim a special Right to those American Regions they respectively possess. But it is evident from ancient Charters, that Britons were the first Occupants of the Lands aforesaid, in respect of their European Neighbours.

Besides, former Treaties have been produced, that shew, the French were circumscribed in such Bounds as do not reach near the Ohio. Thus our Claim appears to be better founded, and consequently the War, on our Part, is just.

But though this Matter gave the first Occasion to the War, yet, considering the Enemies we have to deal with, far greater Things are at Stake. We contend for a large and fertile Country; but our civil Rights and Liberties, and our RELIGION too, are interested in the EVENT. If our Enemies prevail, they will think themselves licensed to oppress and afflict us always: It will appear to them good Policy, to lessen our Numbers by any violent Measures, that we may be disabled from attempting the Recovery of our Liberty; and doubtless they will destroy those, whose Influence they would have most Cause to dread.

In this Case, no Man could call any Thing he possesses his own; no, not his Life. All his Labour will be at the Disposal of his Enemy. And what can be expected from such? Tyranny is the Genius of their Government, and bloody Cruelty of their Religion; by both which, their Tempers are so formed, as to be more fit for the Rule of Beasts, than of Men. They are as justly characterized, a bitter and basty Nation, as ever the Chaldeans were, Hab. i. 6. if we can depend on historical Facts.

If they prevail, they will suppress *Truth* and *Righteousness*. The popish MASS-BOOK will be imposed, instead of *sacred Writ*; and instead of *pure Ordinances* of divine Institution, an endless Round of *Pagan Ceremonies*, new vamped:--*Rites* so whimsical and phantastic, that they manifest themselves to have been the Figments of crazy Brains, or deluded Imaginations. They will require us, on our highest Peril, to believe the infallible Truth of unproved *Traditions*, foolish *Legends*, and *Impossibilities*, instead of a *rational System* of divine Truth. Instead of an orthodox, evangelical Ministry, we shall have a Swarm of hypocritical Monks, Friars, Priests, and Jesuits; whose Deceit, Pride, Lust, Cruelty, and Avarice, will, when they have got the Ascendant, make it seem, as though *the Mouth of the bottomless Pit was indeed opened* (n) if the Representations of credible Persons, who well knew them, can be believed. The Right of educating our *Children* will be taken from us, and they *taught to forsake the God of their Fathers*;--to mutter Words which they do not understand, and count Beads, instead of Prayers;--to adore a consecrated Wafer, and trust in the Intercession of departed Saints, instead of depending on the one only Mediator, *Christ Jesus*. In short, Ignorance and Error will break in as a Flood, and involve a Land of Light in worse than *Egyptian* Darkness. Then will those who dare not die for true Religion, be forced to redeem a wretched Life, by professing to believe the Truth of those Positions, which they know to be false. O! what Numbers of sensual, secure, and careless Protestants, will be *ensnared in that evil Time!* Their Consciences counteracted and defiled, will Torture them with deadly Gripes; and it is Ten to One, but they will die under the fearful and certain Prospect of future Torments: To these dismal Straits

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they

they expose themselves, and their Fellow-Subjects, who will not oppose the present Enemy by Force.

Now, if the Security of invaluable Rights and Privileges, the Preservation of pure Religion, the Glory of God, and Happiness of Posterity, are all concerned in the *Quarrel*, it is evident we have a good *Cause*, and are on *the Lord's Side*. And if so great Matters depend on our Exertion, who can be so insatuated, as not to bestir himself? Who so deluded by the Enemy of God and Men, as to think it his Duty to stand *Neuter*? Who dares pretend to be more peaceable than *the Man after God's own Heart*, and other approved Saints?--Nay, more peaceable than the *Angel of the Lord*, and the Lord of Angels.

It is vain to object, that "these are old Testament Instances; but that we are under a different Dispensation, which admits of no Violence in any Case:." For whatever Differences there are between the two Dispensations, they cannot be such as change the Nature and Reason of Things. If there can be a *Cause now depending* between God and the *Mighty*, it will be as criminal not to appear on his Side now, as it was formerly.--- What false Conceptions of the Gospel Dispensation have they, who imagine it prohibits our *defending*, even by Force, the *Cause of the Lord*? Is the *Gospel* built on the *Ruins of human Nature*? When we become *Christians*, must we cease to be *Men*? Does it eradicate the *original Impression of Self-Preservation*? Does it cancel our *Obligations* to our *King*, and our *Country*?--Or rather, do they not wrest every Text, which they force to speak what is contrary to the eternal *Reason of Things*, and to many other *Scriptures*? Be not deceived: God has the same Regard to *Truth*, *Justice*, and *Propriety*, that he ever had; and he will always act according to his *Word*, in its true Intent and Meaning, and not according to the erroneous Conceptions of those who mistake

mistake it. Delusive Notions aside; let those who have not *perverted original Nature* itself, *speak* what they *feel*.

Who, that has been used to walk at *Liberty*, can bear to go in *Shackles*? Who, that has enjoyed the Fruit of his Labours, and had as firm Security for his small Possessions, as the *King* for his *Throne*, can endure, that all should be precarious, and at the Disposal of a *Tyrant*? Who, that can relish the Sweets of domestic Society, and rejoices in a *chaste*, beloved *Wife*, can bear the Thoughts of seeing her forcibly *debauched*, and his *Virgin Daughters*, *desflowered*, by abandoned *Russians*?-- His *Sons* the *Hope* of his *Family*, *slain*, or enslaved?-- All his pleasing *Prospects* of their Happiness in the World, quite *vanished*, and his *Hopes* sunk in utter *Despair*?-- All the *Provision*, that his Industry and Care had laid up for them, now seized, and distributed among his and their Enemies, and the whole preceeding Time of his Life entirely lost? Who, that has lived in affluent Circumstances, can endure the Thoughts of *Beggary*, when he has none to supplicate for Relief, but an insulting *Foe*? In a Word, who, that desires to transmit the Blessings he has enjoyed to his Posterity, can bear to see them deprived of the Greatest?-- Of All?-- Robbed of *Liberty*, *Property*, and *Religion*, at once?

Our *Fathers* purchased this goodly *HERITAGE* for us, at the *Price* of great *Labour*, and much *Blood*; nor thought the *Purchase* too dear, provided they might entail it on their *Posterity* for ever: And shall we, O degenerate! shall we, through Sloth, Cowardice, or Delusion, break the *Entail*? Shall we leave our *Children*, *Slavery* for *Liberty*, *arbitrary Government*, for *Law* and *Equity*, and *Papery*, for the pure *Christian Religion*? O, cruel *Parents*! false and treacherous *Friends*! unworthy, utterly unworthy, of those tender and endearing Names! unworthy to whom such precious Privileges should have been entrusted! it was like *putting a Price into the Hands*

of a Fool, who knew not its Use or Value, and therefore squandered it away. Unworthy of Society, who betray its best Interests; and when Assistance was most needed, instead of defending, have delivered them up to our Enemies!

Could our *pious* and *valiant* Forefathers rise from their Graves, and see the *dastardly*, *sordid*, and *selfish* Dispositions of many of their Offspring; their *Effeminacy*, *Luxury*, *false Notions*, *Confinement* to little *Party-Interests*, and absolute *Want* of *public Spirit*, what would they think? or what say? They would disown such degenerate Minds and Manners; and *blushing* at the Sight, would hasten back to their Graves, now more *beloved*, because they hid from their Eyes a Scene so *shocking* and *despicable*!

When, therefore, our Honour and Safety are at Stake; when the Interests of Religion and Liberty,--when our King (the Darling of every faithful British Subject)--when our Country, our Wives, Mothers, Sisters, tender Infants, and Children not yet born, all, with one Voice, cry to us for Help, shall we refuse to exert ourselves? Are our Hearts made of Steel or Adamant, that they can resist the persuasive Oratory of such Supplicants? Shall such a loud, united Call, not awaken us from a lethargic Sleep? Are our Spirits so stupified and benumbed by Errors, or false Pleasures, that no Prospects can entice; no Dangers alarm? And will nothing but Destruction itself make us sensible? Then, it is high Time we go off the Stage, and give Place to others who will act a better Part.

But some of you are ready to interrupt me, and say,
 “ To what Purpose are all these moving Considerations
 “ proposed to us? Is there any Need to inflame the
 “ Breasts that have long ago glow'd to be in Action?
 “ But what can we do? In what Case can we afford
 “ Help? You know, SIR, that the Hands of the Valiant
 “ them-

“ themselves are tied up, by the unhappy, the ominous
 “ *Disputes* of our LEGISLATURE, respecting a MILITIA
 “ LAW. Let Matters be oncè set on such a Footing,
 “ as will enable us unitedly to contend for our Country,
 “ without being exposèd to the *Insolence* and *Tyranny*
 “ of a *Party*, who would impose *unequal Burdens* upon
 “ us, and then *accuse us* if we refuse to exert ourselves.
 “ But at present, there is no proper Law made, to an-
 “ swer the aforesaid Purpose.”

I confess, BRETHREN, I know not how to answer this Objection. How our *Legislative Body* can solve it, and acquit themselves of *Blame*, they best know. But however willing I am to hope the best, I dare not venture to defend any Measures, that so much as seem to prevent the *Help of the Lord against the Mighty*.

What shall we say? The State of our Affairs is truly distressing: at present, and no encouraging Prospects are yet opening to us. Nay, the Heavens seem rather to be gathering Blackness, and threaten us with an awful Storm. And though we *have not desired the woeful Day*, yet we cannot but apprehend it is approaching, and so much the faster, as divine Judgments, already inflicted, do not engage *the Inhabitants of the World to learn Righteousness*; but on the Contrary, Impiety appears more triumphant. Multitudes dare to trample on the inviolable Authority, and transgress the sacred Laws of God. By Drunkenness, Whoredom, Blasphemy, profane Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, Contempt of the Gospel, and holy Ordinances; they increase the national Guilt, and draw down divine Vengeance on the Land.

Many, in the Pride of their Hearts, assume to correct infinite Wisdom; refuse to humble themselves, to fast, and make Supplication to their Judge, on Account of their own Sins, and those of the Nation. God will certainly *visit for these Things*; and such Persons may dread all the Effects of his Displeasure, according to the

Current of Scripture: But our present Text bears a fearful Aspect, more especially on those of the following Characters.

Those who prefer private, or party Interest, or Revenge, to the public Weal;--to the Cause of Justice and Truth: Or, through mere Indolence, Covetousness, or other false Principles, refuse to exert themselves for the Defence of their Country, and by Force and Arms to repel the Enemies of our Religion and Liberty:---

Who, being Members of the Legislature, will not consent to just and impartial Laws, necessary for our Defence; and this, that they may secure the Favour of a Party:---

Who traiterously conspire with the Enemies of their Country, abett their unrighteous Cause, and *bid them God-speed*:---

Who, being supported and employed by their Country for its Defence, yet by an effeminate Delicacy, or enervating Pleasures, unfit their Bodies, and indispose their Minds, for military Fatigues; and when the Enemy assaults, act the Coward, and *keep back their Swords from Blood*:---

Or, being Ministers of State, indulge themselves in Luxury; revel and debauch at their Country's Expence, and neglect to consult the best Measures for its Safety, nor watch for Advantages, and Opportunities of serving its true Interests:---

And, in fine, all who are not fired with an honest Zeal in the Cause of their God, of their King, and Country; and cannot assent to the Justice of the *Doom*, passed on the foregoing Characters, without condemning themselves.

These Characters are not condemned from Passion, or party Zeal, but from a full Conviction that the Application is just. And I cannot but judge, that all, whose
Hearts

Hearts are loyal, and whose Religion is scriptural, will readily and fully acknowledge the Justice of it.

But I do not chuse to conclude with a Curse: And though my Text mentions nothing else, yet, by a Parity of Reason, it is not impertinent to pronounce Blessings on those of a contrary Character. For if they who help not the Lord, are cursed; it follows, that they who do are blessed. Were they blessed, who were the active Instruments of God's Vengeance on antient *Babylon*? So, and much more, will they, who in their own necessary Defence, are the Instruments of his Vengeance on spiritual *Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.*

Now, whoever could assent to the Justice of the Curse in the preceding Cases, will with great Pleasure, concur in the following Blessings on those,

Who revere the awful Authority of the most High, and from pious Principles obey his Precepts, sanctify his Sabbaths, attend his Ordinances, and live soberly and righteously:-- Who submit to the Instructions of his Word, and conform to his providential Dispensations; confess their Guilt, and humble themselves by fasting, according to his Prescription, in this Day of Rebuke; who stand in the Gap before him, to plead for the Land (o) and sigh, and mourn, for all the Abominations that are done in it:--And blessed be they,

Who, unbiaffed by the Frowns or Smiles of a Party, or any private, selfish Considerations, disinterestedly seek the public Welfare, and faithfully exert themselves to the Uttermost, according to their several Places and Stations, for the Defence of their Country, Religion, and Liberty:--

Who cheerfully take the Sword when Necessity calls, and despising an unmanly Delicacy, endure Hardness as becomes good Soldiers, and stand prepared to face Dangers, and encounter Difficulties:--Who, when the Enemy breaks

in as a Flood, bravely oppose themselves to the Torrent, play the Hero, and hazard their Lives in the high Places of the Field;--nor do their Swords return empty, but are died with the Blood of the guilty Slain :--

Blessed be the Members of the Legislative Body, who are of a candid and impartial Spirit; who endeavour to promote equitable and necessary Laws, and whose firm Resolution, in what is right, cannot be shaken by Opposition :--

Blessed be the Ministers of State, who spend their Time and Strength, and exert their Abilities, for the good of the Nation; whose watchful Eyes discover Dangers, while at a Distance, and prudently avert them; observe Advantages, and vigorously improve them.

And blessed be all loyal Subjects, who had rather die, than give up their Country to ruin; whose sympathizing Hearts feel all her Calamities, rejoice in her Successes, and kindle with an upright Zeal for her Safety; who love and honour his present Majesty King GEORGE, our rightful Sovereign, and pray for the Continuance of his important Life, and the Prosperity of his Reign: And in a Word, can joyfully say *Amen* to all these Blessings, from a well grounded Consciousness of an Interest in them, so far as they respect the several Stations in which they are placed.

These be the Persons whom *God* himself delights to Honour. Future Ages will rise up, and call them blessed; and the Blessing of those who were ready to perish, will come upon them.---*Blessed shall they be in the City, and blessed in the Field: Blessed when they come in, and blessed when they go out.*---Blessed in Life, and more abundantly in Death, and blessed to all Eternity.---And let all the People say, AMEN.