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The Fate of Blood-Thirsty Oppressors and
God’s Tender Care of His Distressed People

A SERMON PREACHED AT LEXINGTON, APRIL 19, 1776. To commemorate the MURDER, BLOODSHED, and Commencement of Hostilities, between Great-Britain and America, in that Town, by a Brigade of Troops of GEORGE III, under Command of Lieutenant-Colonel SMITH, on the Nineteenth of April, 1775.

• EXCERPTS •

... [One great purpose of this sermon] is to rouse and excite us to a religious acknowledgment of the hand of God, in those distressing scenes of MURDER, BLOODSHED and WAR, we are met to commemorate, upon this solemn occasion. . . .

At length, on the night of the eighteenth of April, 1775, the alarm is given of the hostile designs of the [British] troops. The militia of this town are called together, to consult and prepare for whatever might be necessary, or in their power, for their own, and the common safety; though without the least design [purpose] of commencing hostilities, upon these avowed enemies and oppressors of their country. In the mean time, under cover of the darkness, a brigade of these instruments of violence and tyranny, make their approach, and with a quick and silent march, on the morning of the nineteenth, they enter this town. And this is the place where the fatal scene begins! — They approach with the morning’s light; and more like murderers and cut-throats, than the troops of a christian king, without provocation, without warning, when no war was proclaimed, they draw the sword of violence, upon the inhabitants of this town, and with a cruelty and barbarity, which would have made the most hardened savage blush, they shed INNOCENT BLOOD! — But, O my GOD! How shall I speak! — or how describe the distress, the horror of that awful morn, that gloomy day! — Yonder field can witness the innocent blood of our brethren slain! — And from thence does their blood cry unto God for vengeance from the ground! — There the tender father bled, and there the beloved son! — There the hoary head, and there the blooming youth! And there the man in his full strength, with the man of years! They bleed — they die, not by the sword of an open enemy (with whom war is proclaimed) in the field of battle; but by the hand of those that delight in spoil, and lurk privily that they may shed innocent blood! — But they bleed, they die, not in their own cause only; but in the cause of this whole people — in the cause of God, their country and

* The field (not of battle) but of murder and bloodshed where our men were fired upon by the troops. [Footnote in original sermon, as published].

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posterity. — And they have not bled, they shall not bleed in vain. — Surely there is one that avengeth, and that will plead the cause of the injured and oppressed; and in his own way and time, will both *cleanse and avenge their innocent blood*. — And the names of Munroe, Parker, and others, that fell victims to the rage of *blood-thirsty oppressors*, on that gloomy morning, shall be had in grateful remembrance, by the people of this land, and transmitted to posterity, with honour and respect, throughout all generations.

...  

But it is not by us alone, that this day is to be noticed. — This *ever memorable day* is full of importance to all around — to this whole land and nation; and big with the fate of Great-Britain and America. — From this *remarkable day* will an important *era* begin for both America and Britain. And from the *nineteenth of April, 1775*, we may venture to predict, will be dated, in future history, **THE LIBERTY** or **SLAVERY** of the **AMERICAN WORLD**, according as a sovereign God shall see fit to smile, or frown upon the *interesting cause*, in which we are engaged.

How far the prophecy before us, may be applicable, upon this solemn occasion, and with what degree of truth, or probability, it may be predicted, in consequence of the present unjust and unnatural war, “that Great-Britain shall be a desolation, and England be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of America, because they have shed **INNOCENT BLOOD** in their land: But America shall dwell forever, and this people from generation to generation. And the **LORD** himself will *cleanse their blood, that he hath not already cleaned.*” — How far (I say) this prophecy may be applicable, in the present *interesting contest*, and how far it may be accomplished in the issue [result/ consequences] thereof, God only knows, and time only can discover. — But of this we are certain, if we “humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God upon us, we shall be exalted, in His due time;”¹ and if we rightly improve his dealings, “accept the punishment of our sins” and righteously trust in his name, we shall see his salvation.

¹ 1 Peter 5:6. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” [King James Version]