

1777

God Arising and Pleading His People's Cause ; or The American War in Favor of Liberty, Against the Measures and Arms of Great Britain, Shewn to Be the Cause of God (1777)

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ABRAHAM KETELTAS (1732-98) was raised by Protestant parents in New York and New Rochelle, where he spent much of his time among the communities of Huguenots in the area. Becoming fluent in French early on, he later studied theology at Yale, where he earned his degree in 1752, followed by his preacher's license in 1756. From 1757 until his dismissal in 1760, Keteltas supplied the pulpit of the Presbyterian church in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. He then served as an itinerant preacher to the Dutch and Huguenot parishes in Jamaica and Long Island, New York, where he gained much popular support. By 1776, Keteltas was elected to the Provincial Congress and became such a vociferous defender of the American cause that he feared for reprisals when British troops landed on Long Island. During the Revolution, he served as preacher to a number of Presbyterian churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut until his retirement in 1782. He died in 1798 and was buried on Long Island.

Of his patriotic sermons, three deserve to be singled out. *The Religious Soldier* (1759), preached to American and British forces in 1759, exhorts his audience to moral conduct in warfare and patriotic service of their country. *God Arising And Pleading his People's Cause* (1777) and his *Reflections on Extortion* (1778) are bold expressions of American Independence. In the former sermon (here courtesy of the Library of Congress), Keteltas enlists Jehovah of Armies in defense of America's rights. Drawing on typological parallels from both Testaments, Keteltas demonstrates that God always supports the cause of righteousness, liberty, and self-government, especially where His people are concerned. If God is on the side of His American Israel, Keteltas prophesies, the British enemy cannot succeed for long. Religion and politics are joined in a bed of patriotism.

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GOD ARISING AND PLEADING HIS PEOPLE'S CAUSE ; OR THE AMERICAN WAR IN FAVOR OF LIBERTY, AGAINST THE MEASURES AND ARMS OF GREAT BRITAIN, SHEWN TO BE THE CAUSE OF GOD :

IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED OCTOBER 5TH, 1777

AT AN EVENING LECTURE,

IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

NEWBURY - PORT:

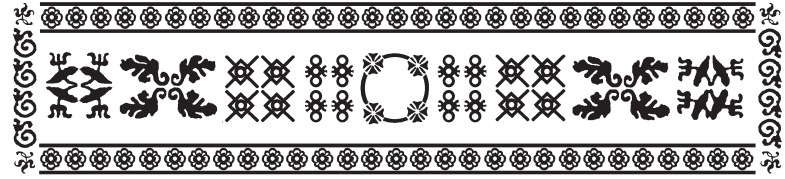
By ABRAHAM KETELTAS, A. M.

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MDCCLXXVII.



PSALM 74. Verse 22.

Arise O GOD! Plead thine own Cause.

WHEN David, the inspired Penman of this Psalm, was greatly distressed, unjustly blam'd on account of the *Amalekites* invading, spoiling, and burning *Ziklag*; and carrying away captive the women that were therein, and when the people talked of stoning him on that account, we read, that under these afflicting circumstances, he *encouraged himself in the Lord his God*. 1. Samuel 6. In this respect, the royal Psalmist exemplified by his conduct, the exercise of every believer. They turned to God for refuge in time of trouble, and expected comfort and relief from his power and grace, from his glorious perfections and precious promises. The language of their hearts, in any deep distress, is that of Asaph, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever; although the Fig tree should not blossom, though there should be no fruit on the Vine, though the labor of the Olive should fail, though the field should yield no meat, though the stock should be cut off from the fold, and though there should be no herd in the stall, the believer will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation*. If prospects should look dark, earth should shudder on

her basis, and no light nor relief should appear to the eye of sense, yet the believing heart will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay itself upon its God. Should all the powers of earth and hell combine, for the destruction of God's people, should evil tidings assault the ear from every quarter, and human understanding be at a loss for means of deliverance and safety, yet the believer's heart is fix'd, trusting in the Lord. He expects every thing from the divine power and all sufficiency; he looks up to his God in time of trouble for relief, he cries out with the royal Psalmist in my text, *Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause.*

In discoursing on these words I shall endeavor by divine assistance,

- I. To shew you what we are to understand by the cause of God.
- II. What is meant by his arising and pleading this cause; and what encouragement his people have that he will effectually do it.

1st. Then I am to shew you what we are to understand by the cause of God.

By the cause of God we are to understand the whole system of divine truth. Our blessed Lord, when he was arraigned before Pilate, declar'd, *for this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.* This also was the grand design of all the dispensations of God to men. The old and new Testament were both of them written, and have been hitherto preserv'd, that they might exhibit to men a scheme of truth. God has display'd to our view the volume of nature, that we may therein read his sublime glories and perfections, *for the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work, and from the things that are made, are clearly seen his eternal power and Godhead.* The visible things of him are discovered, by a survey of the creation.

All the doctrines contained in the old and new Testament, from that system of truth, of which we are speaking, amongst these doctrines, those most essential to man, are his fall in Adam, and redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity of being regenerated and sanctified by the spirit of God, and being justified by the righteousness of his son imputed to them, and received by faith, the necessity of holiness in order to happiness, and of conformity in heart and life to the nature and will of God: These, and all the other doctrines of his word, are the cause of God. For this cause he sent prophets and apostles to preach and teach mankind, by their discourses and writings: For this cause he sent his son and spirit in the world. These doctrines have been maintained by the saints in all ages, at the peril of their lives and all they held dear: This cause, Christ, his apostles, martyrs, and confessors, have held so dear, that they have seal'd them with their blood. This is a cause that God loves and upholds, he has styl'd himself *the God of truth, Deut. 32.* 4. David declares, that *the Lord keepeth truth for ever, Ps. 146.* 6. Jeremiah cries out, *O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth, Jer. 5.* 3.

But 2dly, By the cause of God, we are to understand, the cause of universal righteousness: The moral law, or the ten commandments is the rule of this righteousness, and besides the moral law, all those duties which are incumbent upon us, as fallen creatures; such as the great duties of faith, repentance and conversion, which imply the forsaking of every sin, and the practice of every virtue. This righteousness includes whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, lovely, and of good repute. It includes a temper and conduct, entirely conforming to the truth revealed in the holy scriptures. This righteousness includes our duty to God, our fellow creatures, and ourselves; it implies that we love God supremely, that we worship him in spirit and in

truth, with reverence and godly fear, that we submit with patience and resignation to all the strokes of His rod, that we trust in his providence, rely on his mercy, goodness, truth, and other glorious perfections, that we fear to offend him, and strive to please him, always endeavoring to obey his will and commandments; it implies benevolence, justice, charity, integrity, truth, and kindness in our conduct to our fellow creatures, that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and do to others as we would they should do unto us, that we forgive our enemies, and do good to all as we have opportunity. That we be meek, sober, humble, heavenly minded, patient under injuries, contented with our condition, temperate, as to the use of earthly enjoyments, zealous for God's glory, and advancement of truth and religion in the world.—The above particulars constitute that righteousness which is God's cause, a great part of which is the image of his own nature and perfections: This is what he delighteth in, for he loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity; he gave his laws to mankind that they might be holy, as he is holy; he gave his word and spirit to sanctify the souls of men; he gave his only begotten and dearly beloved son, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. All the dispensations of divine providence, prove God's love of holiness. All the favors of his goodness to the righteous, and the awful judgments executed on the ungodly, prove how much righteousness is the cause of God. The incarnation, agonies and sufferings of Immanuel, were to magnify the law, and make it honorable, and demonstrate how much the righteous God loveth righteousness.

3dly. I add the welfare of the people, who believe and profess the above-mentioned system of divine truths, and practice the righteousness just now described, is the cause of God. They are a society of holy and regenerate souls, trusting in

the mercy of God through Christ, conforming the temper of their minds and the tenor of their lives, to the nature, will, and perfections of God; they are represented in Scripture, as a kingdom, of which Jesus Christ is the monarch, as a body, of which the son of God is the head: They are described by St. Peter, as a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, destined to shew forth the praises of him who called them from darkness to his marvellous light: They are in scripture styl'd Zion, Jerusalem, the kingdom of God, and the Church of Christ: This society are called elect, as being chose out of the world, saints as being sanctified and made holy by the spirit, and beloved of God, as being the favorites of the most high. He loves them with a distinguishing love; as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those of his servants that fear him. God loves his people, infinitely more than all the rest of the world: He loves the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Zion is represented by the prophet Isaiah, under a melancholy gloom, complaining, the Lord hath forsaken me; and my GOD hath forgotten me: to which complaint, the Father of mercies most graciously replies, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, so as to have no compassion for the son of her womb, yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee: I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me*—Thus you see the tender and inexpressible love that God bears to Zion; no affectionate parent ever loved the most amiable child, no fond enraptured bridegroom ever loved the most charming bride, as God loves his people: Listen a little longer to the voice of inspiration to be convinced of this comforting, reviving truth. God's portion is his people, and Israel the lot of his inheritance—he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye, as an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,

so the Lord alone did lead them. God so loved the church, that he redeemed it by his own blood, he spared not his Son, but gave him for his chosen people; Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, gave himself to a life of sorrows, to inexpressible agonies, and to the accursed death of the cross. Immanuel regards the injuries and favors done the church, as if done to himself: When Saul persecuted the church, he said unto him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*, and at the last day he will say to those who have fed the hungry saint, given drink to the thirsty believer, cloathed his naked disciples, visited the sick and imprisoned members of his invisible body, inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. When the true believer is injured, oppressed, persecuted, plundered, imprisoned, tormented, and murdered, he looks upon their cause as his own, *precious in his sight is the death of his saints*: he is that father of their fatherless children, the God and protector of their widows, the friend of their friends, and the enemy of their enemies. The enraptured Psalmist thus celebrates the kindness of God to his people: *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all that he bowed down, the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth, Ps. 140. 146. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he will also bear their cry and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy: Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is; who keepeth truth for ever: who executeth judgment for the oppressed, who giveth food to the hungry: The Lord looseth the prisoner: the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord loveth the righteous: the Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and the widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down: the Lord doth build up*

Jerusalem, he gathered together the outcasts of Israel: he delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man: the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. Thus you see my brethren, that the cause of truth, the cause of religion, the cause of righteousness, the cause of his church and people, is the cause of God: It is, as the Psalmist expresses it, *his own cause*.

Thus my brethren, I have shewn you what is meant by the cause of God.

I now proceed to explain what we are to understand by God's pleading his cause, which was the second point proposed.

The Hebrew word here translated plead, may be rendered litigate, strove, contend, fight, but being here connected with cause, it is best translated, by the English word plead, a term very familiar to most of us, which signifies an advocate, lawyer, or patron's arguing, supplicating, interceding, contending for his client, and representing his case to the best advantage, espousing or patronizing it, or taking it in his own hands and managing it. The phrase of God's pleading his people's cause, frequently occurs in scripture. Thus David, Psalm 35. 1, invokes the divine help saying, *plead my cause O Lord with them that strive with me, fight against them that fight against me*: and when Saul unjustly persecuted him and sought his life, he thus accosts the cruel tyrant, 1 Sam. 24. 15. *the Lord therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee, and see and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand*: and in the 143d Psalm he saith, *Judge me O God and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.* Solomon exhorts, Proverbs 22. 23. *Rob not the poor because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them*: And again he says in the next chapter: *Remove not the old land marks, and enter not into the field*

of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee: See also Jeremiah 50, 33-34. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them captives, held them fast, they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name, he shall strongly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.* There is a remarkable passage in the ensuing chapter, in which God speak of the injuries done to his people, as if done to himself; he makes their cause his own, and declares that he will plead it. See Jeremiah 51, 33 &c. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with his delicates, he hath cast me out. The violence done to me and to my flesh, be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say, therefore thus saith the Lord, behold I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee:* and this was by punishing Nebuchadnezzar in a most signal manner, and by destroying the inhabitants of Babylon. See the declaration of God's injured Church, Micah 7. 8, &c. *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, where is the Lord thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire in the streets.* Thus you see that God will plead his own and his people's cause, against their common enemies. But how doth God plead for his people, how doth he plead his own cause? I answer, he pleads it by his word, his spirit, and his providence.

1. He pleads his own and his people's cause by his word, both in a general and particular manner. He forbids all injustice, oppression, tyranny, murder, theft, plunder, adultery, slander, false witness, unjustly coveting our neighbour's property: he inculcates universal love, benevolence, compassion, humanity peace, and righteousness: he commands all christians to love their neighbour as themselves, and to do to others as they would that others should do unto them: he commands brethren to dwell together in unity, concord, and mutual forbearance; he declares that to subvert a man in his cause, is not right; he forbids the injuring our neighbour's name, life, or property; he pronounces a woe against them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn the needy from judgment, and to take away the right of the poor of his people; he commands that he who ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord; he commands magistrates to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.

God pled the cause of liberty with the Israelites, when they foolishly desired a king to reign over them; he told them the prejudice it would be to their freedom and happiness, in order to discourage them from it: he said, *this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; he will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots, and he will appoint him captains over hundreds, and over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest; and he will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the host of them, and he will take your men and maid servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work, and ye shall be his servants.* God commanded the Israelites, saying, *ye shall not oppress one another.* Leviticus 25, 14. 17. When the ten tribes had revolted from Re-

hoboam, because of oppression, and when Rehoboam and Judah went out to fight against them to bring them back to subjection, God sent his prophet to Rehoboam and Judah, saying, *ye shall not go up nor fight against your brethren* 1 Kings 12. 24. God declared to Abraham, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.* See also 1 Chron. 16. 22, compared with Psalm 105. 15, where Jehovah is represented, saying, *touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm:* i.e. God's anointed people, and not kings, because it is said in the preceding verse, *he suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake.* I need not multiply arguments, to prove that God by his word, pleads his own and his people's cause, what has been said is sufficient—I shall now point out some particular instances, in which God has by his word, pled his people's cause. He pled the cause of pious Abel, against cruel Cain, Gen. 4. 10. *And he said, what hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.* God pled the cause of righteous Lot, to save him as a brand out of the burning of Sodom; see Gen. 19. 17. *He said, escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.* When Laban pursued Jacob with persecuting rage, God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, *take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad,* Gen. 31. 24. Then he pled his cause. He pled for the life of Joseph by the mouth of Reuben, and he pled the cause of Israel by the mouth of Moses, to Pharaoh, saying, *thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go,* Exodus 5. 1. God pleads his people's cause by the mouth of all his faithful ministers, ad-

monishing mankind to do their duty to each other, and perpetually praying and interceding for the peace, prosperity, and enlargement of the church of Christ; their cry is, spare thy people, bless thine inheritance. He frequently raises up faithful counsellors, and able advocates, to plead his people's cause. Thus he raised up Esther and Mordecai in the court of Ahasuerus, to intercede for the people of the Jews, who were devoted to destruction. God pled for his distressed people, by the mouths of Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshac, and Abed-nego, at the courts of the kings of Babylon and Persia. See the affecting prayers made by the above eminent servants of the most High, and by the mouths of the prophets and apostles, in behalf of his people. Now as they were moved to these prayers, by the inspiration and influence of the Holy Ghost, those prayers may be regarded as God's wrestlings for his people.

In all ages of the world, God has raised up men who have by their writings and public speeches, pled his people's cause. How many able advocates in both houses of parliament, have warmly pled and espoused the cause of this much injured country. How many learned, sensible, and excellent pamphlets have been written, both in England and America, to vindicate our rights and Liberties, and prevent our destruction and blessed be God, that all true christians, in every part of the world, who plead the cause of truth, liberty, and virtue, are in effect interceding for us. How many fervent prayers are continually ascending from millions of sanctified and benevolent hearts in our behalf, to the throne of grace; and what is more important than all these, we are deeply interested in the all-powerful and all-prevailing intercession of Jesus our merciful High Priest. We have an infinitely important friend at the court of Heaven, a friend who so loved us, as to die for us; a friend who has all power in Heaven and

upon earth, and who is omnipotent to quell the rage, and subdue all the efforts of earth and hell. See the intercession of this glorious Advocate: *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that I also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word. That they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one of us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Thus we are interested in the all-prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ. But

II. God pleads his own and his people's cause by his omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent spirit: He sends home his divine word upon the hearts of men; he removes their enmity against God and his people; he convinces and converts the unconverted; he sheds abroad the love of God and man on the human soul; he melts the obdurate heart, and fills it with pity and compassion towards God's suffering servants; he opens the blind eyes, and convinces misguided souls of their errors; he makes the enemies of the righteous their friends; he alarms the guilty mind with a consciousness of its sins, and makes their knees smite together. Of stones he raises up children to Abraham—he excites in the

breasts of men, a glowing zeal for Christ, his kingdom and subjects—he is continually making intercession for them, in the hearts of the faithful, turns groanings that cannot be uttered—he turns wolves into lambs, softens the savage disposition, promotes truth and righteousness, and thus pleads the cause of God and his people. This glorious and divine spirit, has all hearts (even of kings) in his hand, and turns them as the rivers of waters, withersoever he pleases; he fills the souls of God's people with faith and courage, and those of their enemies with terror and dismay; he causes the wicked to fly when no man pursueth, but maketh the righteous bold as a Lyon—he can cause the wrath of men, their most turbulent and headstrong passions to praise God, and promote the interests of his people, and the remainder of that wrath he can restrain. How happy for the church that she has so irresistible, and omnipotent a spirit to plead her causes. No mortal upon earth can resist his all-conquering energy. It was this spirit that pled the cause of Abraham, and of Isaac, with Pharaoh and Abimelech, and prevented them from dishonoring the wives of those illustrious Patriarchs. He pled powerfully in the heart of Reuben for the life of Joseph: He even melted the hard-hearted Esau into pity and love towards his brother Jacob, against whom he had entertained the most deadly hatred. He prevail'd over the obdurate heart, stubborn disposition, and otherwise inflexible resolution of Pharaoh, and constrained him to let Israel go: He was a powerful advocate in the breast of Pharaoh's daughter, in behalf of the infant Moses: He disquieted Ahasuerus on his royal couch, and rendered him favorable to the devoted Jews: He influenced Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and other monarchs to be kind to them, and pled powerfully in their behalf, in the hearts of kings. This glorious spirit is continually convincing the

world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, and pleads the cause of universal truth and holiness in the souls of men.

Lastly: God pleads his own, and his people's cause by providence. The whole history of it, from the creation of the world, is a series of wonderful interpositions in behalf of his elect. The sacred writers scarce mention the affairs of any other nations, save those that were connected with the church, as tho' God regarded nothing in the world, save the church, and when all the elect shall be gathered in; the present earth, and all the works that are thereon, shall be burnt up. For them the sun stood still in Gebeah, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon; and the stars in their courses fought against Sisera: For them, he dried up the red sea, to make them a passage, and drowned Pharaoh and his host in a watery grave: he went before them with a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night: he fed them with manna and quails in the wilderness, and brought them water out of the flinty rock: to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, he has perform'd the most surprising prodigies, and shaken heaven and earth. God has pled for his people, by conferring the most signal favors upon their friends, and by executing the most awful judgments upon their enemies. For them he stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, turned aside the edge of the sword, of weak made them strong and valiant in battle, and put to flight and destroyed whole armies of their enemies. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them: the Lord forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved forever. God shewed favor to Potipher, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity, and he severely punished the kings and people of Egypt, Assyria, Canaan, Philistia, Babylon, and Syria, for the inju-

ries they offered to his chosen. He saved Noah and his family from the flood that drowned the old world—he preserved righteous Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. David from Saul's fury, Daniel in the Lion's den, and the three children in the burning fiery furnace—he enabled Abraham with his own servants (amounting to little more than three hundred) to defeat the combin'd army of the four kings. When Israel repented of their sins, and cried to him for deliverance, he enabled them and their Judges, with inferior numbers, to conquer and rout large armies and foes—he pled the cause of Israel, when by the hand of Gideon, with only 300 men, he defeated an host of Midianites as numerous as the grasshoppers in the fields. He pled the cause of his people against Pharaoh, by ten successive plagues, and by the death of all the first-born of the land of Egypt—he pled in favor of Asa and the children of Judah, when he enabled them (although only a handful) to defeat a vast army of the Ethiopian host most innumerable; and he sent his destroying angels into the camp of the Assyrians, who in one night killed 85,000 of the adversaries of Jerusalem and her king.

I might easily shew from prophane, as well as sacred history, that God has pled his own and his people's cause; the cause of religion, liberty, and virtue. But I only mention two instances of modern history.

The first I shall relate, is the revolt of the seven united provinces of the Netherlands.

Philip the 2d, king of Spain, was on the throne of the most powerful kingdom in the world; he had not only great dominions in Europe, Spain, and Portugal, under his command: but he had the East and West Indies, and the mines of Mexico and Peru. He oppressed the Dutch, and began to abridge their civil and religious liberties; they petitioned for a redress of their grievances; but they were ignomini-

ously styled *Geux*, that is beggars, and their petitions with the greatest scorn and contempt: whereupon, relying on God, they, although but a handful of men, against a mighty monarchy, rebelled against Spain, under the conduct of the prince of Orange, and at length, after a long, and arduous struggle, were acknowledged by their tyrants, to be FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES !

The Swiss cantons, long oppressed by the mighty house of Austria, at last formed the glorious and magnanimous resolution of throwing off the abhor'd yoke of slavery and vile subjection; they fought against multitudes, a most unequal match; but what they wanted in numbers, was supplied in bravery and resolution. The goodness of their cause, and the blessing of God was in the stead of armies—they fought with unparalleled intrepidity against the slaves and instruments of mercenary power, and they gloriously triumphed, and established their liberties upon a strong foundation, which remains unshaken to the present day—they are now the freest people upon earth; nay, they are supposed to be the only free people in three quarters of the terraqueous globe.

Thus I have shewn you how God has pled his own, and his people's cause, I shall now just touch upon our Psalmist's petition, that God would arise and plead our cause. This word seems to allude to the Ark of the covenant, on which the cloud of glory, the symbol of God's presence, rested. This ark was carried by the Levites on their shoulders, when the Israelites marched to attack their enemies. When the march began, and the Levites were about to take up the ark, they sang, *Let God arise; let his enemies be scattered: let those that hate him, flee before him.* So that this custom teaches us, that the Israelites looked to, and depended entirely upon God for the success of their military enterprizes—they sought his aid, they invoked his blessing, presence, and protection; they

did as it were, cry out with Moses, *Lord if thy presence go not along with us, suffer us not to go up hence.* Arise O God, like an almighty conqueror; exert thine almighty power, make bare thine everlasting arm in our behalf: go before us, direct our way, and succeed our operations. O Lord, make speed to save us; O God make haste to help us.

Thus my brethren, I have explained the text: Let us proceed to the application of it.

From the preceding discourse, I think we have reason to conclude, that the cause of this American Continent, against the measures of a cruel, bloody, and vindictive ministry, is the cause of God. We are contending for the rights of mankind, for the welfare of millions now living, and for the happiness of millions yet unborn. If it is the indisputed duty of mankind, to do good to all as they have opportunity, especially to those who are of the household of faith, if they are bound by the commandments of the supreme lawgiver, to love their neighbor as themselves, and do to others as they would that others should do unto them; then the war carried on against us, is unjust and unwarrantable, and our cause is not only righteous, but most important: It is God's own cause: It is the grand cause of the whole human race, and what can be more interesting and glorious. If the principles on which the present civil war is carried on by the American colonies, against the British arms, were universally adopted and practiced upon by mankind, they would turn a vale of tears, into a paradise of God: whereas opposite principles, and a conduct, founded upon them, has filled the world with blood and stupor, with rapine and violence, with cruelty and injustice, with wretchedness, poverty, horror, desolation, and despair; We cannot therefore doubt, that the cause of liberty, united with that of truth & righteousness, is the cause of God. This is the glorious cause in which

Great Britain herself, has frequently and strenuously contended against tyrants and oppressors. Not to mention preceding struggles for liberty, when Charles the first invaded the rights of his people, the Lords and Commons, aided by their adherents, rose up in arms, and waged a war against him, which terminated in the loss of his crown and life: and when his infatuated son, James the second; imitating his father's fatal example, endeavoured to introduce popery and arbitrary power into his kingdom; the people of England, invited the prince of Orange to vindicate their liberties, who expel'd the tyrant from his throne, and was placed on it himself, by the votes of a free parliament. For the sake of liberty and the protestant religion, during the reign of this glorious and auspicious king, the Pretender was excluded from the throne, and the succession to it, was settled in the royal house of Hanover. Great-Britain cannot in justice blame us, for imitating her in those noble thoughts of liberty, which have been her greatest glory—she cannot condemn us, without condemning the conduct of her greatest patriots and heroes, without denying her king's right to his crown, and declaring her opposition to the spirit and interest of her own excellent constitution. I am bold to affirm, that all the surpassing glory, by which she has eclipsed other nations, has been owing to this admirable form of government, so favorable to the rights of mankind. She never has been more illustrious at home or abroad, never more remarkable for her internal glory or external splendor, her peace, plenty and prosperity at home, or her victories, achievements, & conquests abroad, than when her liberties flourished, and a patriot king sway'd the sceptre; as she never has been poorer, more miserable and inglorious, never been more impotent in herself, or made a meaner figure in the eyes of her neighbors, than when her liberties were violated, and a tyrant sat

upon the throne. The attentive reader of English history, who compares the auspicious reigns of William, George the first and second, and part of Queen Ann's, with the fatal administration of the former and latter James and Charles, will see the striking contrast, & be fully convinced of the truth of this remark. England, during the last war, happy in a king that lov'd his people, and favored their rights, happy in a people that lov'd their king, and were zealous for his honor, triumph, gloriously triumph'd over the united fleets of France and Spain, and the confederate powers of tyranny. England I am bold to say, has prospered, as her liberty prospered, and declined, as despotism has prevailed. When principles of liberty, and a ministry and parliament under their influence have governed Great-Britain, how happy have her subjects been? how formidable to her enemies? but when opposite principles and rulers have been predominant. What misery has overwhelmed her inhabitants? and what a contemptible appearance did she make in the sight of other nations? How has she been torn to pieces by civil broils, and been covered with her own blood? How evident is this from the present unnatural war, waged against her own children, to establish arbitrary power? How have her once victorious troops fled ignominiously, before an army of undisciplined peasants, commanded by officers, most of them utterly inexperienced in war! How have her sturdy veterans been led captive by country boys, and her transports, merchantmen and military stores, been taken by our privateers? What insults doth she not continually meet with from her enemies, without daring to resent them? And unhappily divided against herself, doth she not totter on the brink of destruction, and owe her present precarious respite from ruin, to the policy and forbearance of her foes? O England! thou once beloved, happy, and glorious country! Thou land of freedom

and delight! How is thy gold become dim, and thy fine gold changed! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Thy rulers are companions of thieves, every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

You see my brethren, from the preceding observations, the unspeakable advantages of liberty, to Great-Britain, and how fatal to her have been the invasion and decline of this inestimable blessing. How absurd then! how inglorious! how cruel and unjust in her conduct, in carrying on this bloody war, to ruin and enslave us—Liberty is the grand fountain, under God, of every temporal blessing, and what is infinitely more important, it is favorable to the propagation of unadulterated christianity. Liberty is the parent of truth, justice, virtue, patriotism, benevolence, and every generous and noble purpose of the soul. Under the influence of liberty, the arts and sciences, trade, commerce, and husbandry flourish, and the wilderness blossoms like the rose.

*Liberty, thou Object heav'nly bright
Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight.
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling Plenty leads thy joyful Train.
Eas'd of her load, subjection grows more light,
And Poverty looks chearful in thy sight.
Thou mak'st the gloomy Face of Nature gay,
Giv'st Beauty to the Sun, and Pleasure to the Days*

ADDISON.

Under the auspicious smiles of Liberty, riches increase, industry strains every nerve, secure of property, and joy and plenty smile on every side. How inestimable a blessing then must liberty be, and how inconceivable great its loss!

But if liberty is thus friendly to the happiness of mankind, and is the cause of the kind parent of the universe; certainly tyranny & oppression are the cause of the devil, the cause which God's souls hates. The holy scriptures abound with instances and prophecies of his judgments against tyrants and oppressors; and not only sacred, but prophane history, prove the fulfilment of those prophecies.

You have seen the truth of this observation, from the preceding discourse, how extremely odious and detestable tyranny and oppression are in his sight. How signal was the divine vengeance against king Ahab and his Queen, for falsely accusing Naboth, murdering him upon groundless pretences, and unjustly seizing upon his property? Hear the tremendous judgments denounced by the Lord against those vile oppressors; and O that it might ring in the ears and consciences, of all the authors, abettors, and voluntary executioners of this unnatural, unprovoked, iniquitous, felonious war. *Arise* said the Lord, to Elijah the Tishbite, *Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria: behold he is in the vineyard of Naboth, wither he is gone down to possess it, and thus shalt thou speak unto him saying: Thus saith the Lord, in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. Behold I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab his male children. And of Jezebel (by whose advice Ahab slew Naboth, and took possession of his vineyard) spake the Lord also, saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields, shall the birds of the air eat.* This curse was awfully and punctually executed, and stands recorded on the Bible, as a tremendous warning against tyranny and oppression. God has shewn his vehement abhorrence of these atrocious crimes, by smiting the perpetrators of them with loathsome diseases, and has commissioned lice, worms, and vermine to

crawl within and upon them, to devour them alive, to render them a living carrion, spectacles of horror and deformity, and insufferable stench and abomination to all about them. Thus has God, in the most lively characters, written his hatred and detestation of tyranny and oppression, upon the bodies of those who have been guilty of those heaven daring offences—thus hath he shewn how much he detests, and how severely he will punish cruelty and injustice, the murder of the innocent, and the invasion of their rights and property. And now are there any who call themselves christians, who dare avow, espouse and support, the invasion of liberty, and the murder of those who rise up in its vindication? Yes, to the disgrace of human nature be it spoken, there are such inveterate foes to mankind: and who are They? they are the military and parliament of Great-Britain, with their adherents and abettors. The ground work of their present destructive measures, is this most iniquitous decree—That the parliament of Great-Britain, hath power, and of right ought to have power, to make laws and statutes to bind these colonies in all cases whatsoever. This decree is contrary to the laws of God and man, to the British constitution, Magna Charta, and bill of rights, the Charters of the Colonies, and even the express stipulations of preceding kings and their representatives; and as the cause is iniquitous in itself, so the war to support it, has been carried on, in the most inhuman, cruel, and injurious manner. The houses and possessions of the friends to the country, have been seiz'd and plundered, rich and valuable furniture has been wantonly destroyed, or meanly seized and carried away: Our negroes, who have been nourished and brought up by us, and the savages of the wilderness, for whose temporal and eternal welfare we have labored, have been instigated to mangle, scalp, and murder us. Every engine has been employed to ruin our commerce,

trade, husbandry and religion: Every method has been contrived and executed, to deprive us of the necessaries of life, and cause us to perish for the want of food, cloathing, and the means of defence. Our ships have been seized and confiscated, our poor brethren, taken in them, compelled to fight against us: our prisoners starved to death; our wives and daughters have been ravished: numerous families of little ones compelled to leave their own habitations and provisions, wander about in a strange land, beg their bread, and expose themselves to all the severity of the season.

Ye cruel and bloody authors of this unjust, unnatural war! what desolation, what misery have ye not brought on this once happy land? How many old men's sighs, and widows moans! how many orphans water standing eyes; men for their sons, wives for their Husbands fate, and Children for their Parents timeless death, shall rue the hour that ever ye were born, how many tens of affliction? how many weeping Rachels have ye made? how many disconsolate mothers, bewailing the death of their children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not? how many bleeding bosoms reproach you with the murder of their beloved? what distressed multitudes upbraid you with the loss of their dwellings, their comforts, and the means of their subsistence? Go to Charlestown my brethren, go to Norfolk, go to New York, go to Danbury, and to other places, and let the smoaking ruins of well finished and valuable houses, by their speechless, but flaming oratory, melt you into tears, over your country's ruin, and enkindle your indignation against her barbarous, unrelenting foes. Behold your ministers mocked, insulted, buffeted, mark'd out for destruction, for their attachment to religion and liberty, and their zeal against illegal and oppressive measures. Behold numbers of the most pious and respectable characters and families, compelled to

fly from their habitations and churches, and seek for refuge in the uninhabited parts of the land. Behold those houses of God, where the great Father of the universe, was worshipped without superstition, in spirit and in truth, where the glad tidings of great joy were published to the adoring throng—where Jesus Christ was held forth crucified, and the whole counsel of God was faithfully declared—behold those sacred, magnificent, and costly structures, destroyed by fire, and levelled with the ground, or converted into magazines for warlike stores, receptacles for rapine and plunder, riding schools, for the exercise of horsemanship, theatres, for profane and wanton plays, or prisons, for starving, groaning, expiring captives. See our unnatural foes, exulting over the ruins they have made, soliciting foreign aid, and hiring at an expensive rate, German mercenaries, to butcher their own best friends, and ‘till cruelly and unjustly invaded and slain, their most affectionate children. Hear the shrieks of ravished women, the cries of helpless orphans, and the groans of murdered patriots. Are these things right? is a cause, that stands in need of, and encourages such measures, the cause of God? is it not glaringly the cause of the devil? can God give a privilege to any man, or number of men, to violate his own sacred and immutable laws? Reason, conscience, humanity, recoil at the horrid thought!

Can any man yet think, that the measures of the British ministry, in invading the lives, liberties, and properties of the inhabitants of these colonies, are right; let him then read the protests of Lords and Commons, the petitions, addresses, and remonstrances of whole islands, and the most respectable corporations in England, against those measures—let him read and attentively reflect upon the excellent pamphlets and speeches, made in England itself in our behalf; hear the worthy Bishop of St. Asaph; “My Lords”

(says he) “we seem not to be sensible of the high, & important trust, which providence has committed to our charge. The most precious remains of civil liberty the world can now boast of, are lodged in our hands; and God forbid that we should violate so sacred a deposit! By enslaving your colonies, you ruin, not only the peace, the commerce, and the fortunes of both countries; but you extinguish the fairest hopes, shut up the last asylum of mankind. I think my lords, without being weakly superstitious, that a good man may hope, that heaven will take part, against the execution of a plan, which seems big, not only with mischief, but impiety.”

The time would fail me, if I should produce extracts from the speeches, and addresses, of some of the wisest and best men in England, and in both houses of parliament, who have, with indignation, reprobated the measures of the ministry, and warmly espous’d the cause of America.

The right honorable the Earl of Chatham, the ablest and best friend of Great-Britain now living: a man, to whose great endowments, vast attainments, wise, faithful, and glorious administration, she was under God, indebted, for all the great and important conquests she made the last war. This illustrious Statesman, distinguished Patriot, and unrivall’d benefactor of his country, has been, from the beginning, a warm advocate for America. Lord Camden, that celebrated chancellor, that great oracle of the law, that unshaken Patron of the rights of mankind, that counsellor of unsullied honor, and incorruptible integrity, who sacrificed a most lucrative, and highly dignified office, to the love of truth and justice: this excellent man has, with the irresistible force of demonstration, pled and justified our case. Many noble lords, and distinguished gentlemen, whose eloquence, virtue, genius, and learning, are the greatest orna-

ments of their country, have been zealous in our behalf, and approved our resistance to the infringement of our rights. Is not then the cause good, which is applauded, patronized, and defended, by such consummate politicians, and exalted worthies.

The iniquity of our enemies, in striving to crush this cause, will appear highly aggravated, if we consider the ingratitude with which their military operations in this country, are attended. Against whom doth Great-Britain wage war? Against those who were once her most affectionate children, her most faithful and hearty friends, and who still, notwithstanding the unparalleled injuries, suffered from her, earnestly deprecate her ruin, and pray for her peace and prosperity.

But once more. Whom doth Great-Britain destroy, whose blood doth she shed, whose house doth she burn, whose Temples doth she demolish, whose lands doth she desolate, whose ruin doth she seek? Why of those who have rejoiced in her happiness, bewailed her calamities, earnestly prayed for her welfare, implored the greatest earthly blessings, and the unspeakable joys of immortality, in behalf of her sovereign, and his royal house—who have rendered her the most signal, and important services, enabled her to make the most glorious, and extensive conquests; caressed, and honored her officers and soldiers, treated them with distinguished hospitality, kindness, and respect; fought, and bled at her side, and assisted her in the last war, with so liberal a generosity, that she frankly acknowledged, we had gone vastly beyond the bare line of duty, and our exact proportion of service.

Besides all this, the principles of liberty, upon which we act, are the same, which expell'd James the second, from the British throne, and seated his present majesty, and his royal ancestors upon it; and if those principles and measures, ac-

ording to which the present ministry conduct themselves, had prevailed, at the time of the revolution, they would effectually have prevented their accession to it. How hard! how cruel! how painful the thought; that the best friends to the principles upon which this throne was erected and established, should suffer from it, all the horrors of war, at the instigation of its worst enemies!

We have this further consolation to support us under our present affliction; that all our assemblies on the continent, and the Congress at two several times, have endeavored, by the most humble and earnest petitions to the throne, to prevent the fatal war, which now rages and desolates our land. Every expedient, that human sagacity could dictate, to divert the gathering storm has been tried: both houses of parliament, and the people of England and Ireland, have been most affectionately addressed and supplicated, to pity and relieve us, and suffer us to enjoy our ancient privileges; and it was not until every pacific measure failed, and our petitions were scornfully treated, and rejected, and a powerful fleet and army had actually invaded us and shed our blood; that we took up arms, in behalf of our lives and liberties. Our cause therefore, my dear brethren, is not only good, but it has been prudently conducted: Be therefore of good courage; it is a glorious cause: It is the cause of truth, against error and falsehood; the cause of righteousness against iniquity; the cause of the oppressed against the oppressor; the cause of pure and undefiled religion, against bigotry, superstition, & human inventions. It is the cause of the reformation, against popery; of liberty, against arbitrary power; of benevolence, against barbarity, and of virtue against vice. It is the cause of justice and integrity, against bribery, venality, and corruption. In short, it is the cause of heaven against hell—of the kind Parent of the universe, against the prince of dark-

ness, and the destroyer of the human race. It is the cause, for which heroes have fought, patriots have bled, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and righteous men have died. Nay, it is a cause for which the Son of God came down from his celestial throne, and expired on a cross—it is the cause, for the sake of which, your pious ancestors forsook all the delights and enjoyments of England, that land of wealth and plenty, and came to this our howling wilderness, destitute of houses, cultivation, fields, the comforts and conveniences of life. This is a cause, for the prosperity of which, millions of fathers are praying, and our gracious High Priest is interceding: it is a cause, which thousands, and ten thousands of our friends in England and Ireland, are patronizing, and for which, even the consciences of our very enemies are pleading: therefore do not despond, my dear brethren, at the present gloomy prospects.

The cause of God—his own cause, must prosper, in spite of earth and hell—God will effectually plead it; he will plead it by his almighty word, his all conquering spirit, and his over ruling providence. No weapon formed against Zion, shall prosper: every tongue that riseth up against her, shall be condemned: God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God will help her, and that right early: Trust ye therefore in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. Cast all your burdens and cares upon the Lord, and he will sustain you—he will never suffer the righteous to be moved. Eminent Divines & celebrated poets, have given it as their opinion, that America will be a glorious land of freedom, knowledge, and religion,—an asylum for distressed, oppressed, and persecuted virtue. Let this exhilarating thought, fill your souls, and give new ardor and encouragement to your hopes—you contend not only for your own happiness, for your dear relations; for the hap-

piness of the present inhabitants of America; but you contend for the happiness of millions yet unborn. Exert therefore, your utmost efforts, strain every nerve, do all you can to promote this cause—plead earnestly with God, in its behalf, by continual prayer and supplication, by repentance and reformation, by forsaking every vice, & the practice of universal virtue. Be ready to fight for it, and maintain it to the last drop of your blood. *Herein was the love of God manifested, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Pray for the happy period when tyranny, oppression, and wretchedness shall be banished from the earth; when universal love and liberty, peace & righteousness, shall prevail; when angry contentions shall be no more, and wars shall cease, even unto the ends of the earth. When the Jews shall be brought into the christian church, with the fulness of the Gentiles, and all Israel shall be saved. When the celestial country and the heaven of heavens shall resound with joyful acclamations, because the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of our Christ. *Hasten this blessed, this long wish'd for period, O Father of mercies, for thy dear Son's sake.* AMEN, and AMEN.



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