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Davies, Samuel, 1723-1761.

(D. A. B.)

The Curse of Cowardice.

Woodbridge, 1759. 18 pp.

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The CURSE of COWARDICE



A

S E R M O N

PREACHED

To the MILITIA of

H A N O V E R C O U N T Y

I N

V I R G I N I A

A T

A General MUSTER, MAY 8, 1758.

With a View to raise a COMPANY, for Captain
SAMUEL MEREDITH.



By *SAMUEL DAVIES, A. M.*



L O N D O N, Printed :

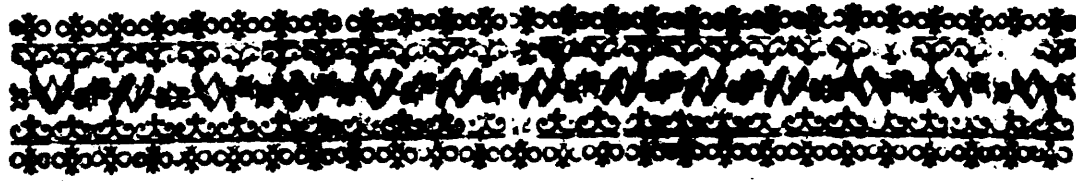
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To the RIGHT HONOURABLE the
E A R L of H A L I F A X,
 First LORD COMMISSIONER of
TRADE and PLANTATIONS,
 And one of the LORDS of
H I S M A J E S T Y'S
 Most HONOURABLE
PRIVY COUNCIL, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

AS the following Pages contain the Genuine Sentiments of a Heart full of Zeal for the Honour of his Majesty King GEORGE, and a just Indignation against a base, cowardly Neglect, to defend the civil and religious Liberties of British America, they cannot be unacceptable to your Lordship.

This Discourse having a direct Tendency to raise a noble Spirit among the Inhabitants of the Western World, whose Territories have been first insidiously curtailed, and then openly attacked by the perfidious and restless Disturber of the Peace, both of Europe and America; the Circulating thereof must necessarily be a Matter of no small Importance.

Here Courage is set upon its proper Basis, which will produce more solid, steady and persevering Vigour, than any Methods that are or can be taken, merely to inflame the Passions, for that is only to intoxicate Men with Rage, and temporary Phrensy.

The

DEDICATION.

The Author's Friendship sent the Manuscript cross the Atlantick to my Hands; and having read it, I thought it would be criminal to conceal such generous Principles, and powerful Motives to his Majesty's Service, from the Publick, either in England or America.

And should You, my Lord, think fit to introduce this American Composition to His Majesty's View, must it not give Him a real Satisfaction, to see the grateful Apprehension the Inhabitants of that Country have of His paternal Care, and that there is among them a Spirit of undissembled Loyalty to His Person, and most ardent Zeal in His Service, not altogether unworthy of His Royal Regard?

Your Lordship's just Sense of the Utility and Importance of the British Colonies in America, and constant Watchfulness over them, as myself and all others that have Connections there, know; have gain'd You, Sir, the universal Esteem of the Inhabitants of that extensive and now populous Continent.

Permit me then, with the most profound Respect, to dedicate to your Lordship, what I apprehend is so well calculated to promote His Majesty's Service, and the vigorous Defence of His Dominions in general: And if spreading these Sentiments in the Country which gave them Birth, should have that happy Effect, I shall esteem it an additional Honour to that of being permitted to subscribe myself,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most devoted,

and Obedient,

Humble Servant,

DENNYS DE BERDT.



JER. XLVIII. 10.

*Cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully;
and cursed be he that keepeth back his Sword from
Blood.*

NOTHING can be more agreeable to the God of Peace, than to see universal Harmony and Benevolence prevail among his Creatures; and He has laid them under the strongest Obligations to cultivate a pacific Temper towards one another, both as Individuals, and as Nations. *Follow Peace with all Men*, is one of the principal Precepts of our holy Religion. And the great Prince of Peace has solemnly pronounced, *Blessed are the Peace-makers*.

But when, in this corrupt disordered State of Things, where the Lufts of Men are perpetually embroiling the World with Wars and Fightings, and throwing all into Confusion; when Ambition and Avarice would rob us of our Property, for which we have toiled, and on which we subsist; when they would enslave the free-born Mind, and compel us meanly to cringe to Usurpation and arbitrary Power; when they would tear from our eager Grasp the most valuable Blessing of Heaven, I mean our RELIGION; when they invade our Country, formerly the Region of Tranquillity, ravage our Frontiers, butcher our Fellow-Subjects, or confine them in a barbarous Captivity in the Dens of Savages; when our *earthly* All is ready to be seized by rapacious Hands, and even our *Eternal* All is in Danger by the Loss of our Religion: when this is the Case, what is then the Will of God? Must Peace then be maintained? maintained with our perfidious and cruel Invaders?

maintained at the Expence of Property, Liberty, Life, and every Thing dear and valuable? maintained, when it is in our Power to vindicate our Right, and do ourselves Justice? Is the Work of Peace then our only Business? No; in such a Time even the God of Peace proclaims by his Providence, **TO ARMS!** Then the *Sword* is, as it were, *consecrated to God*; and the Art of WAR becomes a Part of our Religion. Then happy is he that shall reward our Enemies as they have served us. * Blessed is the brave Soldier; blessed is the Defender of his Country, and the Destroyer of its Enemies. Blessed are they who offer themselves willingly in this Service, and who faithfully discharge it. But on the other Hand, *Cursed is he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully; and cursed is he that keepeth back his Sword from Blood.*

As to the original Reference and Meaning of these Words, it is sufficient to my Purpose to observe, That the *Moabites*, against whom this Prophecy was immediately denounced, were a troublesome and restless Nation in the Neighbourhood of the *Jews*, who, tho' often subdued by them, as *France* has been by *England*, yet upon every Occasion struggled to recover their Power, and renewed their Hostilities. By this, and various other Steps, they were arrived to the highest Pitch of national Guilt, and ripe for Execution. The *Babylonians* were commissioned for this Work of Vengeance; and they were bound to execute the Commission faithfully, under the Penalty of a Curse. To them this Denunciation was immediately directed, *Cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully, or negligently; and cursed be he that keepeth back his Sword from Blood.* This is expressed in the Form of an Imprecation, or an authoritative Denunciation of a Curse: And in this Form it might be used, consistently with Benevolence, by a Prophet speaking as the Mouth of God. But this is not a Pattern for our Imitation, who are peculiarly obliged under the Gospel, to *Bless, and curse not, and to pray for all Men.* However, it may be pronounced even by our Lips as a Declaration of the righteous Curse of God against a dastardly Refusal to engage in War, when it is our Duty; or

* *Psal.* cxxxvii. 8.

a deceitful negligent Discharge of that Duty, after we have engaged in it. These are the Crimes that seem intended in my Text; and against each of these the tremendous Curse of JEHOVAH is still in full Force in all Ages, even under the mild and gentle Dispensation of the Gospel. Cowardice and Treachery are now as execrable as ever.

Cursed be he that keepeth back his Sword from Blood. --- This Denunciation, like the Artillery of Heaven, is leveled against the mean, sneaking Coward, who, when God, in the Course of his Providence, calls him to Arms, refuses to obey, and consults his own Ease and Safety, more than his Duty to God and his Country.

Cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully. --- This seems to be leveled against another Species of Cowards; sly, hypocritical Cowards, who undertake the Work of the Lord, that is, take up Arms; but they do the Work of the Lord *deceitfully*, that is, they do not faithfully use their Arms for the Purposes they were taken up. They commence Soldiers, not that they may serve their Country, and do their Duty to God, but that they may live in Ease, Idleness and Pleasure, and enrich themselves at the public Expence. *Cursed is he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully.* and serves himself under Pretence of serving his Country.

You, Gentlemen and others, whom I this Day behold with peculiar Pleasure, engaged in the Cause of your neglected Country, and who have done me the Honour of inviting me to this Service; a Service which I am sure I should perform to your Satisfaction, if my Preparations and Abilities were proportioned to my Benevolence for you, and my Concern for your Success: You are peculiarly interested in the Remarks I have made upon the Text. And that I may contribute all in my Power both to increase your Number, and direct you to a proper Conduct in the honourable Character you sustain, I shall lay before you a brief View of the present Circumstances of our Country, from which it will appear, that the War in which we are engaged is a Duty, or THE WORK OF THE LORD;

and

and consequently, that we are all obliged, according to our respective Characters, to carry it on with Vigour, under Penalty of falling under the Curse of God. And then I shall shew you what is the deceitful Performance of the Lord's Work, or unseasonably keeping back of the Sword from Blood, which exposes to the Curse.

I. I am to lay before you a brief View of the present Circumstances of our Country, which render the War in which we are engaged the Work of the Lord, which consecrate Swords as Instruments of Righteousness, and call us to the dreadful but important Duty of shedding of human Blood, upon Penalty of falling under the tremendous Curse of God.

Need I inform you what Barbarities and Depredations a mongrel Race of Indian Savages and French Papists have perpetrated upon our Frontiers? How many deserted or demolished Houses and Plantations! How wide an Extent of Country abandoned! How many poor Families obliged to fly in Consternation, and leave their All behind them! What Breaches and Separations between the nearest Relations! What painful Ruptures of Heart from Heart! What shocking Dispersions of those once united by the strongest and most endearing Ties! Some lie dead, mangled with savage Wounds, consumed to Ashes with outrageous Flames, or torn and devoured by the Beasts of the Wilderness, while their Bones lie whitening in the Sun, and serve as tragical Memorials of the fatal Spot where they fell. Others have been dragged away Captives, and made the Slaves of imperious and cruel Savages. Others have made their Escape, and live to lament their butchered or captivated Friends and Relations. In short, our Frontiers have been drenched with the Blood of our Fellow-Subjects, through the Length of a thousand Miles; and new Wounds are still opening. We, in these inland Parts of the Country, are as yet unmolested, through the immerited Mercy of Heaven. But let us glance a Thought to the Western Extremities of our Body Politick; and what

