

COURAGE

IN

A GOOD CAUSE,

R32

OR

The Lawful and Courageous Use of the

SWORD,

A

SERMON,

Preached near *Shippensburgh*, in *Cumberland County*, on the 31st of *August*, 1775, — to a large Audience, in which were under Arms, several Companies of Col. MONTGOMERY'S Battalion; and Published at their request.

By the Rev. ROBERT COOPER, A. M.

JEHOVAH-NISSI, i. e. *The Lord my Banner.*
EXODUS, xvii, 15.

L A N C A S T E R.

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THE Author informs those Gentle-
men, at whose request the follow-
ing Sermon is published, That the first
Copy which was sent to the Press, was
by Accident lost; which has occasioned a
delay of the publication.

A SERMON, &c.

Deuteronomy XX. 1. *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

WHAT mankind should in any case, be voluntarily active, in taking away the lives of those of their own species, is a lamentable evidence and consequence of human depravity.—If man had retained his integrity, and continued in a state of peace with heaven, no part of this earth would ever have been a seat of war: Angels would have been his friendly guests, sensitive creatures his willing servants, and the whole human race knit together in mutual love. Apostate angels however inimicably disposed, might have envied, but could not have impaired his happiness, or disturbed his peace. But human beings, by joining with those degenerate spirits, in an impotent rebellion against God, the rightful, righteous and good sovereign of the universe, have introduced such calamity and confusion, that there is ordinarily more danger from the injurious attempts of fellow-creatures, than from all the beasts of prey. And however the
excel-

excellency of man consists, not in bodily strength, but mental endowments; yet such disputes do sometimes arise, as must be decided, not by strength of argument in deliberative assemblies, but by force of arms in the field of battle.

Human affairs, on some occasions, come to be in such a situation, that we must either submit to death, or intolerable injuries ourselves, or endeavour to inflict death on the aggressors. In a word, an equitable and honorable peace, can, at times, be obtained on no other condition, than that of engaging in a bloody war; and there arises a necessity of taking such a method as must inevitably remove some out of this world, in order that those who survive may be the more comfortable; hence making war, or shedding the blood of those of our own kind, comes to be a necessary business; and it is then as much our duty to go to the field of battle, as at ordinary times, to go to the field of labour.

And as the Jewish state was a theocracy, in which God gave them a compleat body of laws, respecting things both civil & sacred; so in our text and succeeding context, we have a part of their martial law, or divine directions respecting their militia. However different the weapons of war, whether offensive or defensive, may have been in different ages and countries; and consequently the art or manner of war, variable; yet what is recommended in our text, namely, *courage*, has always been a necessary qualification in an accomplished soldier. Intrepidity is as essential to the character of a good warrior, as a disposition for dispassionate enquiry and cool deliberation is necessarily contained in the idea of a good judge. And as all scripture has been given by inspiration of God, and is in one respect or another profitable; so the consideration of the passage which

I have now read, cannot appear in present circumstances unseasonable,—We are reduced to the necessity of a war, which will perhaps be more obstinate, and is certainly more disagreeable in its nature, and extensive in its effects, than any in which, either the whole or part of the American British colonies have heretofore been engaged.—Since then, we know not, how soon even the husbandman, however agreeable their employment is to themselves and useful to others, may be obliged to change the implements of husbandry for the weapons of war, and march forth to battle; it will certainly be comfortable for themselves, and hopeful for others, that they take the field with that temper prescribed, and having the encouragement contained in our text.—For this purpose therefore, I shall shew

I. In what cases it may not only be lawful, but duty to engage in war; and when called, go forth to battle.

I. What will afford, to a people, ground of expectation, that God will be favourably with them in a war; and especially when going out to battle.

I. How, a well-founded apprehension of God's favourable presence, tends to inspire with true courage—and lastly, conclude with some practical improvement.

I look upon it superfluous to spend much time manifesting to my present audience, the affirmative of the question—Is war in any case lawful? A defensive war, in which injurious attempts are repelled by force, is founded upon the principle of self-preservation, which the God of the universe

universe has implanted in our natures, in common with other living creatures.—That war was lawful under the Old-Testament dispensation is so evident, that none who acknowledge the authority of the Bible, can deny it.—The apprehension that Christ has under the New-Testament intirely prohibited the use of the sword, has arisen from a misunderstanding and wrong application of some of his precepts, which were evidently designed by him to injoin meekness and a forgiving temper upon his followers, and to prevent private retaliation and revenge.—I will, however, grant to those professing Christians, who declare against the use of the sword in every case; that, as Christ's kingdom is spiritual and erected for heavenly purposes;—so no coercive measures ought to be used in promoting it, under any pretence whatsoever.—The subjects of Christ's kingdom, as such, or considered in that capacity, ought to use no other means, in propagating Christianity, but such as were used by Christ himself and his apostles; the weapons of whose warfare, was not carnal but mighty.—If we consider the Christian, as such, purely with respect to his spiritual and eternal interests, his panoply or compleat armour, is described in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians; nor is he to repel injuries which only affect his spiritual good, with any other, but these spiritual weapons.—But as persons becoming Christians, does not supercede their being considered as Mathematicians, Astronomers, Mechanics or Labourers; so neither does it nullify their relations and rights as men and civil subjects. Now, although the Mathematician may not pretend to either demonstrate or illustrate the truth of Christianity, by geometrical figures, or theorems; yet no one of common sense will alledge that he may not use these, in mathematical enquiries

quiries; so neither is it true, that because Christians, as such, may not use the sword, in promoting Christianity, or defending themselves against injuries which only respect their spiritual interests, that therefore they may not, as men and civil subjects, use it in defence of their country.—It must also be granted, that probably the abuse of warlike instruments, by professing Christians, pretending therewith to subserve the interests of Christ's kingdom, in which case, they were indeed unhallowed weapons; and the almost infinite mischiefs thence accruing, have given occasion to running into the other extreme, and concluding that they were not to be used at all.

It is also to be admitted, that making war, merely for the purpose of enlarging an empire, kingdom or commonwealth; or for acquiring fame by conquest, is altogether unlawful.—Hence Alexander the great, rather deserves the name of an invincible murderer, and successful plunderer, than that of an illustrious hero.

It will therefore follow, that all the particular cases, in which a war can be lawful, will come under one or other of these generals, viz.—It must if it be offensive, be undertaken by special commission from God, who has a right to employ whom he pleases, as the executioners of his justice; or it must be defensive, occasioned by some injury which respects our temporal interest, either attempted or inflicted.—As to the first of these, no war since immediate revelation has ceased, can be in this respect, legitimate: Since no nation can now produce a commission from God, to invade any other nation, from whom they have received no injury.—With regard to the second, it may take place either between separate independent states, or different parts of the same state.

1. When one state invades the lives, liberty or property of another, and persists in the injurious conduct; or refuses to make reparation for injuries already committed, then is it not only lawful but duty, for the invaded nation, to go forth to battle against them; and commit the event to the Almighty God, the judge of the universe.—But here perhaps it will be queried—Since it belongs to the Supreme power, or governing part of a nation, to make war and peace; how shall all of the nation, who may be called to bear arms, be certain that there is cause sufficient to legitimate a war? To which it may be answered, That ordinarily the injuries committed are so notorious, that all may be acquainted with them: Or if this is not the case, unless it appear evident that the war is not defensive, but offensive, the subjects must confide in the integrity and equity of their rulers; and if the war be even unjust, on account of some circumstances, well known to the rulers, but concealed from the subjects, the rulers alone, in such a case, are chargeable with guilt.—As one man is not called to act in the sphere of another; so neither is he to be accountable for another's mismanagement, further than he approves of, or knowingly joins with him, in his culpable conduct.—Notwithstanding, as the avowed design of war, is the shedding of human blood: so it will tend much to the satisfaction of a conscientious soldier, to have clear evidence, in his own mind, that the war, in which he is engaged, is just and necessary.

2. A war may commence, betwixt different parts of the same state, and this is usually called, civil-war; and it may be lawful and necessary to go forth to battle against those of the same body politic, in two particular cases.

First, when part of a nation violate the original compact, break laws made agreeable to the constitution of the society, throw off their allegiance to the executive power of the state, and attempt to set up rulers of their own, or to continue in a state of anarchy. This is usually called sedition or rebellion, and when the insurgents are subdued, it is generally thought just, to treat them with greater severity, than conquered enemies, when the war is with a foreign state. And, indeed, when the attempts, of part of a state, are really rebellious, it appears equitable, not only to go to war against them, but to make such as survive, at least, the principal leaders, examples of justice, as being guilty not only of injury, but of perfidy and ingratitude.

Second, when the governing part of a nation, attempt to abuse the power committed to them, and instead of subserving the interests of the people, endeavour to subvert the constitution, employing their influence and authority, not for the good of the subjects, but to promote their own ambitious and tyrannical designs; then is it, not only lawful, but duty, to oppose them, and if they persist, -to use the sword against them. I shall not enter deeply into the proof of this position, which has not only been clearly illustrated, in theory, but was found necessary in practice, in our own nation, at that critical and memorable era, the revolution; since which time, the doctrine of unlimited passive obedience and non-resistance has been exploded by Britons.—I shall, however, observe a few things to prevent the abuse of it.—And, in the first place, agreeable to what has been before said, I think it is evident, that Christians, as such, or considered as Christ's disciples, are never to oppose civil-government, merely for the sake of its being unfavourable to the principles

ples of Christianity.—If, in the nation, where, by the providence of God, Christians are cast, the civil rulers are even Infidels, or being professing Christians should apostatize from the faith ; yet it appears evident to me, from the nature of Christ's kingdom, and the scope of the New-Testament, that while the nation as such, acquiesce in their government, Christians, as such, are both to acknowledge their authority, in civil things, and obey them in all things, not contrary to Christ's laws ; and where conscience forbids a compliance with the precept, they must run the hazard of enduring the penalty, if that should even be a violent and ignominious death.—Christians, as such, have no king or head of their society, but Jesus, and their attempting to dethrone kings, merely for their being unfavourable to Christ's cause and kingdom, and attempting to set up others to head and protect themselves, as members of the Christian church, is high-treason against king Jesus, as well as rebellion against the state.—Christ, as Messiah, and head of his church, has no more appointed civil magistrates to be his vice-gerents, over his church, than he has appointed the pope of Rome to be Peter's successor, or his vicar.—If civil rulers, instead of professing and practising Christianity, persist in rejecting it ; by the statute law of king Jesus, they will forfeit a throne with him in heaven, and incur damnation ; and do not by this, forfeit their earthly preferments.—These will belong to them, so long as their constituents choose to continue them ; and Christians, considered in that capacity, constitute no civil rulers.—As Christ's disciples, persons are still to declare, that they have no king but Jesus, and at the same time declare, that he is so far from having exempted them from subjection to civil magistrates, that he has strictly enjoined it upon them.

In the second place, it is not every transgression or defect, in civil government, either with regard to legislation, or execution, that will warrant resistance.—That civil rulers, should universally and uninterruptedly act for the common good, is indeed, agreeable in theory and very desirable, but like Plato's republic, will no where be found, except in idea.—And here I would observe, that there is a great difference betwixt such wrong steps in government, which although they are injurious to the subjects, yet are not subversive of the constitution; and their bad effects but transient; and such as have not only hurtful, but permanent effects; and if submitted to, will entail evil upon succeeding generations, E. G. If government should order some public edifice to be erected, which might be more for the gratification of their own vanity, than any common utility, to the nation; and for this purpose, impose a heavy but constitutional tax, for one year; this would be very different from making a law, by which an equal sum should in all time coming be paid, annually, into the public treasury.—If government raise an army of 100,000, when perhaps 50,000 might suffice for the emergency; this is far from being equal to appointing a standing army of 100,000.

In the third place, even when the conduct of government is, as above stated, if the circumstances of the case will admit, moderate measures, such as representation, petition and remonstrance, ought first to be tried.—In all cases, especially with civil rulers, the sword should be the last resort.—But although I will not take it upon me to draw a line, whereby in all instances, it may be shown exactly, where submission ought to end and resistance begin, this being determined, rather by common necessity than casuistic divinity;

yet that matters in a state, have been and may be in such extremity, as to require this extraordinary remedy, is very manifest.—And to suppose that the persons of those, who are advanced to government, by the people, thereby become, together with their favourites and implicit servants, so sacred, that in all cases, it is criminal to use the sword against them, is repugnant to the great principle of self-preservation, and establishing a toleration of robbery and murder.—There are certain rights derived from the God of nature, which no man can transfer to another, even if he were willing.—He may indeed forfeit them, by his own mal-conduct; but it is absurd to suppose, that he can be deprived of them, by the bad conduct of another.—That any of our fellow-creatures, by being with our own consent, appointed to rule over us, for our and their good, thereby become licensed plunderers and murderers, is a tenet both abominable and absurd.—If it should be replied, that, however, they may abuse their power, and escape in this life, God will punish them in the world to come.—This, I grant is a certain truth, but in this case, altogether misapplied; because the sole and only end of civil government, is that the present state may be more safe and comfortable; and therefore, the remedy for its evils belongs to men in the present state.—I allow, indeed that as the great end of Christ's kingdom, is with regard to the future state; so if men violate its laws, in such a way, as does not injure the temporal enjoyments of mankind, no punishment which respects their temporal enjoyments, is to be inflicted.—If the spiritual weapons of the church prove ineffectual, with such delinquents they must be left to abide the consequences in the world to come.—I shall only add, that when civil rulers turn tyrants, and oppress their subjects
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their character is, at least, more odious than that of such foreign invaders, as by their invasion violate no league or express stipulation; because said civil rulers are guilty, not only of cruelty, but of ingratitude and perfidy.—And therefore, by the laws of nature, which never can be superseded, they deserve punishment, and it is sometimes necessary to remove them as intolerable nuisances.

•II. There will be ground for a people to expect God favourably with them in a war.

1. When they have clear evidence, that the war on their side is lawful and necessary—when it is not with ambitious, or avaricious views, of acquiring honour, or wealth, by the destruction or poverty of others, who have not injured them; but only to repel injurious attempts, or obtain reparation for injuries received. This is absolutely necessary, in order to having any ground of encouragement from God. For if any interprize be a violation of the rights of our fellow-creatures, and consequently a breach of God's law, as it would be vain to expect his approbation and assistance, in such a case; so it would be daring presumption, if not blasphemy, to ask his presence. If we would expect the Lord graciously to accompany us, we must carefully observe not to turn aside from what his holy law prescribes. If in any undertaking we deviate from this, we have just reason to expect, that God, in that affair, will forsake us; nay set himself against us. If the Israelites, contrary to the express command of God, will ascend the hill, to fight with the Amalekites and Canaanites, they shall return shamefully beaten; as may be seen Numb. 14th chap. latter part.

2. When those who in a lawful and necessary war go out to battle, are themselves engaged in earnestly

earnestly soliciting the divine presence. However prayer is neither to be supposed to produce any change in God, nor to have any thing in it meritorious of the favours asked, nor to convey information to God of things with which he was unacquainted; yet it is a powerful medium, for the obtaining of blessings, both temporal and spiritual. There is little reason to conclude, that God will give, what persons don't think worth while humbly and importunately to ask; and we are not only unworthy of, but also unfit for, the enjoyment of those special favours, which we neglect to seek to God for. It is indeed an awful and mournful reflection, that even in the British armies, whether land or sea forces, in which, perhaps, few would be found who have not by baptism been enlisted under Christ; yet few of either officers or soldiers, but what are more remarkable for cursing and swearing than praying.—God forbid that our American armies, who have at this day to be their opposers, should, in this thing, be their imitators!

It would be impossible, in the time proper for this part of the discourse, to produce all the instances, in which God in answer to prayer, has manifested his presence in deciding battles.—You have two remarkable instances, recorded in 1 Sam. vii. chap. and 2 Chron. xx. chap.—In the first of these, you have an account of a monumental pillar, raised in the field of battle and victory, and inscribed to the honour of a prayer-hearing God, and for the encouragement of future officers and soldiers.

In the second, you find that God was so interested, by a powerful prayer, that he did not merely grant auxiliary aid, but was the sole efficient, leaving nothing for Jehosaphat and his army to do, but to carry away the spoil. Allow me
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to add, the instance of David, who trusting more to a prayer-hearing God, than to Saul's coat of mail, went out with a sling and stone; but returned with Goliath's head, and thereby obtained a general victory. In short, those are most likely to be successful combatants in battle, who are the most importunate wrestlers in prayer.

3. When an army maintains a reverence of a holy God, and are afraid to venture on any of the ways of known sin. Those may expect the presence of God when fighting against the enemies of their bodies, who are irreconcilable, in their war, against the enemies of God and their own souls. And without this, the foregoing will be nothing but solemn mockery of God; in words soliciting his presence, and by our actions telling him to depart from us. It may, perhaps, seem unsuitable to speak of a soldier being afraid of any thing; but I would say, wo to the man, who is above the fear of sin, and does not tremble at the word of God.—Shocking to think that any should value themselves for their fighting against God! Let the potsheards of the earth, strive with the potsheards of the earth; but wo to him, that striveth with his Maker. You have an example of this, in the above-mentioned 7th of 1 Sam. from the 3d verse. *And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange Gods, and Astaroth, from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Astaroth, and served the Lord only.* But it is needless to multiply quotations on this head, since it is evident from reason, and the whole tenor of revelation, that sin is the very cause, why God permits enemies to invade a people; there is therefore

fore no encouragement, to expect that God will appear for us, unless we abandon our sins, which have provoked him to send war upon our country. And however wicked soldiers may, indeed, be instrumental of gaining a victory; yet unless repentance prevent, they shall at last find, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, when their opposition, will only increase their misery.

4. When those who go out to battle manifest an humble temper, neither boasting of their number and abilities; nor scornfully despising their enemies, but committing the event to God. God declares that he resists the proud, but shews favour to the humble. It has ordinarily been found, that those who went to the field of battle, magnifying their own strength and warlike-accomplishments; and contemning their enemies; thus as it were anticipating the victory, have either fallen by these same despised enemies, or returned with a different tone, and instead of their laurels, could only bring the news of a shameful defeat. Many instances, from sacred and common history, might be adduced for the illustration and confirmation of this, were it necessary and would time admit. The fates of a proud Pharaoh, an insolent Goliath, and a boasting Sennacherib are familiar to all. Let none think, that humility is inconsistent with the character of a soldier. Humility belongs to us as creatures, and is a dress that becomes persons in every station and condition. There is a great difference betwixt ostentatious bragging and couragious fighting. Pride is a concomitant of pusillanimity, and is opposed to true magnanimity. Those who vainly and proudly vaunt, of their own skill and prowess, do thereby preclude the divine presence and assistance; since they hereby manifest, that they look upon it as superfluous, for a God to interpose.

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5. When those on whose behalf the army marches to the field of battle, are also employed in earnest prayer to God, in confessing their sins and casting away every abomination; not boasting of, nor confiding in, the number, prowess, discipline and armour of their troops; but humbly committing the event to God, who can save, by many or by few.—Doubtless we may venture to say, however to some it might appear a paradox, that those who remain at home, and never go out to battle, have notwithstanding, a great hand in the victory or defeat. If we fight against the Lord at home, how can we expect that he will fight for our armies abroad? There may be Achans in the city and country, as well as in the soldiery; by whom God may be so provoked, as to refuse to go forth with our armies; on the other hand, persons may as truly be instrumental of an happy campaign in their fields and closets, as those who charge upon the enemy in the line of battle. When Israel fought with Amalek, as recorded in the 17th of Exodus, neither Moses, Aaron, nor Hur, were either field-m Marshals or common soldiers, but were at a distance upon the top of an hill; yet none who read this part of sacred history, can exclude them from a share in obtaining the victory. Those whose lives are a counter-part to their prayers, and are employed in storming heaven with their importunate supplications, may be as useful to their country, when a seat of war, as those who bombard castles and scale walls!

In a lawful war, when any of these things is found, it is so far a good symptom, when they are all found, there is full evidence of God's favourable presence.—But I am now to proceed to shew how this inspires with true courage.

III. True courage is a temper or disposition, by which a man, with firm resolution and boldness

encounters the dangers, which occur in the path of his duty, repelling or resisting to his utmost, all intervening difficulties.—As this temper respects the character of a soldier, it is opposed to what is commonly called cowardice; which either influences a man to shrink and flee from, even those dangers, which lie in the way of his duty; or causes him to make but a feeble and ineffectual resistance.—And I might observe, that an apprehension of the favour and assistance of even false gods, had a tendency, in heathenish armies, to produce something which had fundry of the ingredients and much resembled true courage; and this however ill-founded, had after a great influence in procuring victory.—When the soldiers were animated, with what they counted a lucky omen, or by a favourable answer from an oracle, they would ordinarily exert themselves, with the utmost vigor.—It has also been often found, that a false apprehension, of the favourable presence of the true God, has produced such effects, as in several respects were similar to true heroism.—With what irresistible violence and rapidity, did the followers of Mahomet over-run many of the eastern countries, when possessed with the notion that they were fighting the Lord's battles?—With what enthusiastic fortitude, did hundreds of thousands exert themselves in the crusades, or the wild project of recovering the Holy Land from the Infidels? In which enterprize, they thought that God was undoubtedly upon their side, and therefore were fearless of danger. None can therefore doubt concerning the powerful operation of a well-grounded apprehension, of the favourable presence of the true God. But I am to shew how this inspires with true courage.

1. There is contained in it, an evidence of the divine approbation in the undertaking, which affords

affords peace of mind, let the issue be as it will; without this there can be no rational, manly courage; because a view of the unlawfulness of the enterprize, whensoever it occurs must make the man quake, lest God himself should meet him as a bear robbed of her whelps.

2. It contains divine assistance and protection; and if God be for us, who can prevail against us? What general or army shall be able to circumvent in counsel, one who is omniscient and infinitely wise; or exceed in strength and prowess, one who is Almighty? Who has an arm like God, or can thunder with a voice like him? All the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers before him; yea all the squadrons of hell quake before him; and shrink into the burning pit, to hide from his majestic and terrible countenance.

3. A sense of the divine presence, in a war gives occasion to consider all the deliverances God has wrought for his people, in former times; and to improve these as an encouragement to expect his interposition at that time; for he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.—Thus the people of Israel, when invironed with new difficulties, usually recount old deliverances, and particularly the wonderful deliverance mentioned in our text, *viz.* bringing them up out of the land of Egypt. In respect of that colony which is at present the seat of war, it may be also said, that God did great things for their ancestors, which I cannot but think affords encouragement to hope, that he will not now forsake that people.—They were brought from a land, then groaning under oppression in regard of religious liberty, and stained with the blood of persecution, not through the Red-sea, but across the Atlantic; and preserved through all the difficulties and dangers attending a settlement among wild beasts and savages.—A
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who read the history of the planting and progress of the colony of Massachusetts-Bay, may find great instances of God's goodness, to that people in former times, of which I cannot at present give even a general account.

Lastly, If we have the presence of God when going to battle, and are interested in his favour, then we may rest assured, that whether we survive the engagement, or die in the field, all shall be well. If our souls are possessed of the fear of the Lord, we need not fear them, who can only kill the body. A soul prepared for Heaven, will as easily and joyfully (perhaps I may say more so) find its way thither, from a field of battle, as from a bed of down; will as chearfully ascend from amidst roaring cannon, as weeping friends. As God is with his people in danger, so also in death, which is to them an end of all danger. Can then, any thing so effectually inspire a soldier with true courage, as that which raises him above the fear of death; nay makes death itself appear a desirable event? *For blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, since they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* I now proceed to make some practical improvement.

1. As, agreeable to what was said in the introduction, we are at present in a state of war, it will be very proper to enquire, whether, agreeable to the doctrine, it be on our side a lawful and necessary war, *i. e.* whether it be, indeed, defensive. As time will not admit of prolixity, I shall only attempt a brief view of the matter, which I hope, notwithstanding, will contain evidence sufficient to satisfy every competent enquirer, who is free from invincible prejudice.

I therefore observe, that all the late acts of the British Parliament, which by their united operation have at length brought on a civil war, have
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flowed from a declaratory statute, made some years ago; or at least are built upon it, as their true foundation. In which statute, there is this remarkable clause, *viz.* "That all his Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America have been, are and of right ought to be, subordinate to and dependent upon the Imperial Crown and Parliament of Great-Britain; who have full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient validity to bind the Colonies and people of America, subjects of the Crown of Great-Britain, in all cases whatsoever."

Now this is a basis, not only broad enough to support all the late acts complained of and remonstrated against by the Colonies, but is a sufficient foundation for a system of tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastic. Since the time may come, when the whole of Great-Britain, may bear no greater proportion to the British Colonies, either with regard to circuit or number of inhabitants, than one of our counties now do to a province; and yet this vast extent of country shall have no other security against tyranny and oppression, but the complexion of the British Parliament, the evils incident to which we can neither prevent nor remedy. As we have no hand in chusing any of the Members of Parliament, so we must according to said statute, be, not merely the subjects of the Imperial Crown of Great-Britain, but the slaves of the Parliament of Great-Britain. As they may drain away our property by heavy taxes, to be absorbed in discharging the almost immense national debt, or consumed in court luxury; so they may send pensioners and placemen to devour the fruits of our industry among ourselves.

Now, in defence of this act, it is alledged, that, according to a theorem in politics, there must, in every civil state, be a supreme power lodged somewhere,

where, that it essentially belongs to those, who have this supreme power, to give laws, in all cases, to the whole body politic.—That in the empire of Great-Britain, this power is lodged in the Parliament, and that it must be so in order that these Colonies may be a part of the British empire.

To which it may be replied, that it is vain to urge any kind of hypothetical maxims against plain matter of fact. Tacitus, who was in his day no mean politician, allowed that a mixture of the three simple kinds of civil government, had indeed a specious appearance in theory; but was not reducible to practice, or at least alledged that no such government could be lasting.—But in contradiction of this supposition, it is now a well known fact, that the British constitution, which is such a mixture, has existed for hundreds of years. It is as well known, that the Colonies and Great-Britain have existed as one state, for above 100 years, with mutual concord and prosperity, and with the great augmentation of the wealth and glory of the British nation, without the exercise of such unlimited power in the British Parliament. And it is too likely, that if the Ministry of Great-Britain persist in not only claiming but attempting to exercise such a power, this will be the very thing that will effect her ruin. Now if such an unlimited power has lain dormant for above a century, and yet every thing as comfortable in the whole body politic as could be wished, what avails it to alledge a metaphysical axiom against evident fact. The reducing this political principle to practice, in our nation, if effected, is likely to be a growing rod of iron to the Colonies whereas it might, for any thing that appeared respecting these Colonies, have been consumed by rust, without any detriment to the nation. However if British politicians, have found such a gordian

dian knot in politics, as admits of no alternative, but subjecting the Colonies, in all respects, to the mercy of a Parliament, about which they have no more agency, than they have about the Court of Spain, it is evidently of their own tying; and it is the interest and duty of these Colonies, rather than be thus entangled, Alexander-like, to cut it with the sword. The present war is therefore on our side manifestly in defence of property and liberty, and I may add of life too. It is also notorious, that neither before nor since the attempts upon our liberty, have we thrown off allegiance to King George the Third, nor attempted to set up any form of government, as an independent state; but on the contrary, in an humble manner, been representing grievances, petitioning and remonstrating. Besides the penalties annexed to the injurious laws, armies have been sent to enforce obedience, who have already proceeded to shed the blood of our brethren. The alternative, in short, now is either to wear the chain or the sword.

2. As different conduct comes to be duty at different times; so it is now the duty of all, who are able, to be in readiness for going out to battle, and therefore to be making every necessary preparation for that purpose. It is now as proper to be diligent in learning the business of war, as at ordinary times to learn the common businesses of life. And for persons to say, they are so hurried with ordinary affairs, that they have no time to spare that way, is as if a man should say, though his house was on fire, he had no time to put it out. All capable of going to battle should endeavour to be furnished with the weapons of war. If the exigency of the case required it, we should now, beat our plow-shares into swords, and our pruning-hooks into spears. This is by no means repug-

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nant to, nay it is necessarily contained in, trusting in the Lord and expecting his favourable presence. To trust in means alone, and neglect seeking to God, is pride and atheism; to pretend to trust in God, and at the same time to neglect the use of proper means, is foolish presumption and wild enthusiasm. Nor are any to look upon themselves above the business necessary to prepare them for war; the most reputable citizens, and those who have endeavoured to maintain a character for piety, ought now to endeavour to distinguish themselves as brave soldiers. How shameful, if the licentious and profane, should manifest more forwardness and alacrity this way, than those who formerly were of apparent pious deportment? Does it not give occasion to the wicked, for saying, either these regular professors, have not that religion they pretend to; or with it all they are but dastardly cowards? Shall (says Nehemiah) such a man as I flee?

3. Permit me to address those who design to go out to battle in defence of themselves and country, whensoever there may be a call for that purpose; and to this end have associated themselves and taken up arms. You see the business is not only lawful, but necessary, I may add honourable.— Even if you die in the conflict, it will be in a good cause. Since therefore, besides the obligation which lay upon you in common with others, to stand forth in the face of danger and death, in a good cause, you have added your own consent and engagement; to draw back, if you were even before the cannon's mouth, would fix both awful guilt and indelible disgrace upon you. Would brand you with perpetual infamy. If then you would escape deep guilt before God, and lasting contempt among men, forward you must go, whenever the drum shall beat, and the trumpet sound.

for battle. You have, in a word, no alternative, but either to venture your lives bravely, or attempt to save them ignominiously; to run the hazard of dying like heroes, or be certain of living like cowards. And here, let me exhort soldiers to preserve the strictest regard to the authority of their officers, in all their gradations. The more you duly honour and obey them, the more honourable will you thereby be, yourselves; and the more fit for, and worthy of, preferment.—None more fit to be advanced to command others, than those who have been eminent for their dutiful obedience. A family cannot exist without government and discipline, much less an army. And surely if a house divided against itself cannot stand, a rebellious and mutinous soldiery must go to destruction. This way they will do the work of the enemy, themselves. It will avail nothing to say your officers were formerly your equals, they are now by your own consent your superiors. As little to the purpose, will it be to say, you will not obey these, for though they were appointed by a majority, yet you voted against them, and for others. Were they not chosen agreeable to the mode agreed upon, and to which you consented, or at least, should have consented, as being generally approved, by your countrymen? Your refusing submission, on this supposition, proceeds from a principle, which might lead to as great evils, or worse, than those which might give occasion to the distinction of soldiers and officers at this day; for if it does not lead to tyranny, it will certainly end in anarchy. You might as well say, you would not submit to the Sheriff of the county, because at the general election you voted against him. Permit me also, in a few words, to exhort you of all ranks. As your country have advanced you to distinguished places, endeavour to distinguish

distinguish yourselves by a conduct in all respects becoming your stations. Let them not have reason to say, that they were mistaken in their choice. Exercise the authority committed to you with mildness and equity; but at the same time with inflexible strictness. A due mixture of these, produces the perfection of any kind of government.

And, as a matter of the utmost moment, let me exhort and beseech all, both officers and soldiers, to conduct in such a manner as will afford encouragement to expect the favourite presence of God with us, when we go out to battle.—If we make the Almighty God our enemy, can we expect to stand before our enemies? Oh! how monstrous to hear soldiers when about to face death, profaning the name of God.—This is, perhaps a more than infernal bravery; for the devils believe there is a God and tremble.—Shocking intrepidity—to set their mouths against the heavens, and challenge Omnipotence itself.—And how sordid and shameful for a soldiery to indulge themselves in drunkenness, and debauchery? Are these like to be champions in battle, who are enervated, emaciated and inflaved by their lusts? When Hannibal, the great Carthagenian General, had led an army over the Alps, penetrated Italy itself, and after sundry successful battles had given the Romans such a severe stroke at Cannæ, that there appeared scarce any thing to obstruct his making himself master of their metropolis, Rome; yet he delayed at Capua, and indulged himself and soldiers in luxury and drunkenness, after which, it is said, his army became enervated and disobedient, and he never after was successful in Italy, nor indeed any where else. This gave occasion to the proverbial saying, that Capua was to the Carthagenians, what Cannæ had been to the Romans; and to that shame,

ful distich, which in a play is ascribed to him, viz:

At Capua I in pleasures lay,
And for a woman gave the world away.

When Belshazzar and his nobles, with others in Babylon were feasting and drinking, the city was surprized, taken, and the King slain.

Count it not only your safety but your honour to fear God. It is a rational manly fear to reverence Jehovah, and be afraid of guilt.—Manly, did I say? It is angelic, in proportion as the Angels rise in dignity, they descend in humble reverence of God. Can you venture to go to the field of battle, in such a manner, as will not only endanger your bodies, but your souls? Will any less hardy, as by their open wickedness, to tell their fellow soldiers and others, that they neither fear God nor man, death nor damnation? Will any be Achans, in the camp, and thereby damn their own souls, and destroy their country, by provoking God to deliver us into the hands of our enemies?

But however I thus warn and charge you in respect of fearing God, and being afraid of guilt, yet in respect of your enemies, I would say, in the words of our text, *be not afraid of them.* We fight not for conquest or fame, with a design of cruelly and prodigally shedding human blood; but merely in defence of those rights, which belong to us as men and Britons. Go forth then, and while our invaders boast of their armour, artillery, discipline and naval force; let us be encouraged from the justness of our cause, and humbly confide in the Lord of hosts; saying "the sword of the Lord, and of Liberty." Declare upon the one hand, that if you may enjoy unmolested, those rights, which are derived from God alone; you are ready to lay down the arms which you have been constrained, as the last resort, to take up;
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on the other hand, with drawn sword, assert, that rather than surrender that sacred depositum of liberty, which we received from our ancestors, and are bound to transmit to our posterity, you will sign the remonstrance with your own blood. I shall only add the words of a great General: *Be of good courage, and let us play the men, for our people and the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.*

4. You, who are either unfit for bearing arms, or on any other account, may be reasonably exempted from going out to battle; yet much (as you have heard) may depend upon you, with respect to the success of those who appear in the field. And O! how hopeful, if you are engaged in fighting against your own and others sins which are the cause why God sends upon us the calamity of war. On the other hand, how discouraging, if many of you, while others are abroad, endeavouring to cut the bands of slavery, and open a way to liberty with the sword, should, at home, be serving your lusts and ratifying a league with hell? While others are opposing the wrath of our enemies; will any of you venture on such conduct as will draw down the wrath of God? You may, (as has been said) be Achans at home and troublers of your country, as well as in the camp. And promise not yourselves security in sin, because you do not expect to face death in battle. If God be your enemy, he'll find you out and punish you, though you were hid in the bottom of the sea. You may fall into hell, by the hand of a sin-avenging God, at home, while your brethren may stand in battle and return victorious. But O! how hopeful if the aged and females, who are not called to march forth with sword and musket, should, while others are marching or fighting, be much in praying. This way they may serve and help

help to save their country, in their houses and closets, as truly as if they were able to appear in the field of battle. Jacob singly, conquered an enraged enemy, with 400 at his back, not by fighting with them, but wrestling with God.

Lastly, let me conclude with an address, which equally concerns you all, whether you are to go to the field or abide by the staff. We are at this day treated as guilty of rebellion against man, blessed be God this is a false charge: But let none of us venture to live under the just imputation of a rebellion, far more atrocious in its nature and dreadful in its consequences. I mean an obstinate rebellion against God, by violating his laws and despising his Gospel. O sinners, permit me to use, with a little variation, language which, according to its common acceptation, is justly hateful, but in this case proper and emphatical: Let me in respect of God charge you to non-resistance, and the most unlimited and chearful obedience.— Lay aside your armour, confess your crimes, and submit yourselves wholly to the mercy of the offended King of Heaven and earth. Insist upon no terms of capitulation, but those of his own prescribing, which are indeed worthy of a God to propose; salutary and honourable for you to accept. Plead guilty, accept of the righteousness of Christ, and this merciful King will pass a sentence of oblivion upon your iniquities, and of indemnity on your persons. Come inlist under Christ, and you shall be more than conquerors over your enemies, whether terrestrial or infernal. Do you ask what bounty he gives? It is beneath his dignity to encourage you with worldly wealth and honour; these he throws out to slaves, even to the devil's soldiers. What think you of pardon, of sin, of having the honour to be conformed to himself by sufferings in this world, and afterwards through

through eternity reigning with him in glory? Give up thy name to be inserted in his muster-roll; if you have been baptised, you are already under military oath to be faithful to him; be so to the death, and thou shalt be an illustrious victor by the blood of the Lamb, and shalt receive an eternal crown of life. Become, this day, a voluntary soldier of Christ, and this will, above any thing, fit thee for defending thy country courageously; for if in the conflict thou lovest thy country, nay thy life, he will give thee a better country and life, even the heavenly. AMEN.

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F I N I S

J. Little

