
DR. THACHER'S
ARTILLERY ELECTION
SERMON.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE

T H E

A N C I E N T A N D H O N O R A B L E

A R T I L L E R Y C O M P A N Y,

JUNE 3, 1793;

B E I N G T H E D A Y

O F T H E I R

Annual Election of Officers.

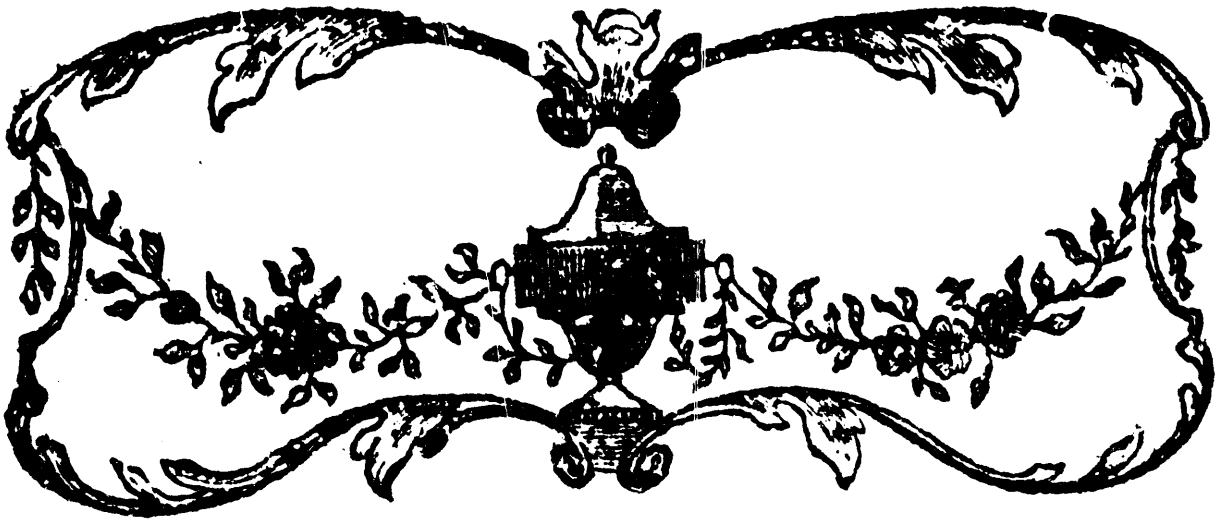


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A

S E R M O N.



JUDGES XVIII. 7.

Then the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt carelessly, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

ALL Scripture is written for our instruction. It is intended not only to reveal to us the purposes of God's mercy and the requisitions of his will, but to furnish our minds with the wisdom which is profitable to direct us in the various situations to which by Providence we are called. The history of the Bible contains a lively picture of human life and manners. It paints the various feelings which agitate the heart of man at different periods. It describes the manner in which individuals and bodies of men have conducted

conducted in different circumstances. It points out the motives of their conduct, and the consequences which resulted from it. And thus the word of God furnishes us with maxims of wisdom, and lessons of experience, without our paying the dear price at which they are sometimes purchased. From this history we find that mankind have been much the same in all ages; that the same passions and principles have actuated them all; and that the same effects have generally resulted from the same causes.

MODERN philosophers are ready to suppose that they have made great improvements in the knowledge of mankind, and in the various systems by which human governments may be formed and supported with the most happy success. But if we read the history of the Bible, we shall be ready to conclude with Solomon, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." In this history we shall find the same general principles laid down which are now considered as the basis of free and happy states, and the same methods prescribed to preserve and increase them when they are formed. It is difficult to find any situation now to which there cannot be found some parallel in the sacred volume.

THE maxim, "That it is necessary in peace to prepare for war," is now adopted by every human government. Founded in reason and good sense, this maxim will be questioned by no one who does not doubt the lawfulness of war in all cases. Experience decides positively upon its truth, and the conduct of mankind proves their conviction of its expediency.

And

And a striking example of the truth of this maxim is given us by the words of the text. The men of Laish were careless and secure ; they had no order nor government ; they considered themselves as at a distance from any enemy, and in no danger of an invasion ; and these very causes operated to incite the Danites to invade them, and rendered their conquest easy and certain.

“ LAISH,” say commentators,* “ afterwards called Cæsarea Philippi, was placed in a very pleasant situation between the rivers Jor and Dan, almost at the foot of mount Libanus. This town was the extreme border of Judea to the north, as Beersheba was to the south. The inhabitants dwelt after the manner of the Zidonians. The city of Zidon was nearly surrounded by the sea ; it was strongly fortified, and thus its citizens felt perfectly secure. The Zidonians were a very powerful people, and had little to dread from any of the nations around them. This occasioned them to feel perfectly at ease ; and the men of Laish, who were probably a colony from Zidon, caught the manners of the parent state, and without the same reason felt the same security. They were distant a day’s journey from Zidon, which was sufficient to prevent them from receiving thence immediate assistance and support, in an attack suddenly commenced and finished. When the history says that they had no business with any man, it probably means that they did not carry on trade and commerce with any people, and lived entirely by themselves ; or else, that they had so little care of their safety, and so high an opinion of their own abilities, as to form no league or alliance with any other people ”

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* Pool’s Synopsis.

THE history to which the text relates is briefly this : The tribe of Dan had not conquered the whole portion of land assigned to them in Canaan ; and being straitened for room, they determined, by a vigorous exertion, to procure to themselves the accommodation which they needed. They acted prudently and wisely in the prosecution of this design ; for, they did not at once commence an emigration without having any certain object before them, but detached a small party to find out a place adapted to their views, and a people that could be easily conquered. Laish presented itself to them as calculated to answer both these purposes. The motives which induced the children of Dan to attack the place, and the reasons which made the conquest so easy, are briefly recounted in the report of the spies :—“ Arise, that ye may go up against them ; for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good : And are ye still ? Be not slothful to go and to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land ; for God hath given it into your hands—a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.” The fertility of the soil, and the pleasantness of the situation, animated their wishes to possess the land. The perfect security in which the people dwelt, and their total unpreparedness to defend themselves, calmed their fears of any formidable resistance. They came, they saw, they conquered. And the people of Laish fell, a melancholy proof of the danger of security, and a striking demonstration of the necessity of preparing against violence and invasion, even in a time of the most profound peace, and at the greatest distance from any enemy.

THIS lesson, so strikingly delineated in the history before us, is the lesson of the day. We are now met in the house of GOD to assist the devotions of an ancient and respectable military Corps, founded by our ancestors, to guard against the very error which proved fatal to the existence and independence of Laish. This Corps was intended as a nursery for the officers who should command the militia of the colony, and who might thus train them up to “fight for their brethren, their sons and their daughters, their wives and their houses.” Deeply as these good men were impressed with the peaceful religion of JESUS CHRIST, they still believed the lawfulness and necessity of defending the liberty and property which GOD had given them. Brave and hardy, like the wilderness which they subdued, they could not endure the idea of yielding their independence even to the boldest invader; and therefore by vigilance and exertion, by order and discipline, they guarded against the danger, or prepared themselves to repel it. They founded therefore this Company, in which the principal men among them cheerfully enrolled themselves, and where the man who had commanded armies did not feel his honor injured, or his dignity impaired, by being commanded in his turn.

THE occasion therefore, and the sentiment of the text, lead me,

IN the first place, to remark upon the folly which a people discover, and the danger to which they expose themselves, when they live in a state of security, unprepared to resist an invasion, or defend themselves against the attacks of an enemy.

BUT how are we to defend ourselves when our country is invaded, and we are threatened with the loss of

every thing we hold dear, by the violence and fury of an enemy? By declaring, with the honest Quaker, that we will not resist any force which may come against us, because our holy religion forbids us to fight? By long and learned and critical orations upon the injustice and cruelty of invasion, and its inconsistency with the rights of man? Shall we send the ministers of religion to meet an army of invaders, and to tell them that they are not doing as they would be done by; that they act inconsistently with the religion of CHRIST, and that GOD will punish them for their injustice? Or, shall we spread out our supplicating hands to them, and beg them not to shed brethren's blood, nor deprive us of the liberty, the property and independence which GOD has bestowed upon us, and which we desire to transmit to our children?

WERE all mankind actuated by the peaceful religion of JESUS CHRIST (as they will be at some future period) then these methods would be effectual; but under the present circumstances of human nature they would be the subject only of derision. So deeply is the human heart depraved, so strongly do ferocious passions operate upon mankind, as that the still small voice of reason and religion cannot be heard. The loud calls of ambition and avarice drown their feeble whispers, and a torrent of violence and oppression sweep away their warmest advocates.

IN these circumstances, our only method is to resist force with force, to repress the violence which we do not provoke, and to let men know that we will defend with our lives the liberty and the happiness which GOD has given us.

BUT it is strange, some will observe, that doctrines of this nature should be preached by a minister of peace,

peace, who professes a religion which breathes the warmest benevolence, and teaches mankind to live and love as brethren! Our master, will they say, "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" he strictly prohibits every degree of wrath and envy, and enjoins us to follow peace with all men."

THE lawfulness of defensive war has been so often proved from this place, upon these occasions, as that many observations upon the subject will be needless. We must take mankind as they are, because they will not be what they ought. We know that there are men, and many men, who are totally destitute of moral principle, and care not whom they wound or destroy, if they can enrich and aggrandize themselves. We know that there are nations who wish to assume universal authority, and subjugate their neighbours to their will. Can any man, in the exercise of common sense and reason, suppose that the Gospel prohibits us to resist such violence? Am I obliged to deliver my purse to an highwayman, or my life to a murderer, when I am able to defend myself? Does the religion of CHRIST enjoin its votaries to submit to the violence of the first ruffian nation which will attack them; to give up their liberty, and the liberty of their children, to those who would make them "hewers of wood and drawers of water?" If my brother, agitated with a delirium, attempts to injure me, or take away my life, am I to yield myself a quiet victim to his distraction? These questions carry their own answer with them, and must strike conviction to every unprejudiced mind; for to act in this manner will be to present our throats to the butcher, and to court our own destruction.

WARS undertaken to gratify the lust of power, differences excited by those “lusts from whence come wars and fightings among men,” are decidedly contrary to the law of GOD. Every good man mourns over those fatal contentions where kindred blood is shed; and where brethren of the same family, children of the same father “bite and devour one another.” But where a people contend not for glory or conquest; where they take every method to avoid an alternative so disagreeable; yet where they cannot preserve their lives, their liberties, their estates and their religion, without “resisting unto blood,” they are to do so. If they do it not, they offend against GOD, and voluntarily sacrifice the birthright which he has given them. GOD of old commanded his people to resist such attempts, and to make war upon those who attacked them; and would he have done this had war been unlawful in all cases, and directly contrary to the nature and reason of things? I am aware that he permitted many things under former dispensations “because of the hardness of men’s hearts,” because the state of human nature would not permit them to be different; but then he never expressly *enjoined* men to do what was morally wrong? War he has enjoined; and Meroz was cursed by divine command, because they “came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.”

IF it is lawful thus to defend ourselves, and if we have reason to expect the divine protection and support only in the use of proper means, then it is certainly wrong to neglect these means, and to live in a state of supineness and security; because discipline and military knowledge are absolutely necessary to successful war; and such discipline cannot be attained at once.

once. All knowledge is progressive, and military skill is to be acquired in the same way, by the same exertions and perseverance which make us eminent in any other science. True it is, that native bravery and ardent enthusiasm will do much to animate men to heroic deeds in defence of their country; but with how much greater advantage do these principles operate, when they are tempered with discretion, and guided by experience! The first is the courage of a mastiff, who shuts his eyes, and runs into the very jaws of destruction, but who sometimes bears all before him; the second is the fortitude of a man, who knows the nature of his object, and the means by which it may be accomplished. A nation free and brave cannot be conquered; but its defence must cost more dearly, and its distresses must be greatly protracted, if its subjects are not acquainted with the art of war. Absurd and foolish then it is, for any people to live in security, to flatter themselves that their tranquillity shall not be interrupted, and to remain ignorant of military discipline! They act unwisely when they do not learn the art of defending themselves, until that defence is immediately necessary; and when they trust to their enemy's beating them into skill, and instructing them to be soldiers, as the "men of Succoth were taught with briars and thorns."

It is certainly unwise, again, for a people to live in security, without preparing against invasion until that invasion takes place, because exertions for defence suddenly made will not be so effectual, nor answer the same purpose with those which are made coolly and with time. If fortresses are suddenly erected, they will want strength and firmness. If an army is raised, and they are called to fight before they have been instructed

structed in the first rudiments of war, they will probably be defeated. Haste is no friend to wise counsels or to effectual defence. The spur of the occasion may animate to vigorous exertions for a short time, and despair may lead a rude and undisciplined multitude to do wonderful things ; but their violence will soon put them out of breath, and a cool and wary enemy will be able gradually to defeat and disperse them. In these cases, as in all others, skill and knowledge will make hard things easy, and will save much labour and pains. By a wise and judicious mode of defence, not hastily adopted, but carefully adjusted in all its various parts, much damage may be prevented, and many valuable lives may be saved. What wise people then will neglect, even in the bosom of tranquillity, to guard against every surprise, and prepare themselves to resist the first bold intruder who may attack them !

No people can have any ground for security while they are destitute of the means of defence. They lie open to every danger, and are liable to be insulted, abused and conquered, by any nation which may think them worthy of their attention. Such a state ought to excite alarm, and no people should be easy while they are exposed to danger so imminent. But their listlessness, like that of a man in a lethargy, commonly increases with their disease, and generally terminates in the death of their liberty.

But, preparations made in peace, and an ability to resist invasion are, thirdly, the most effectual means to prevent it. Their neighbours will esteem it madness and folly to expose themselves to such a formidable resistance ; and a people thus prepared and disciplined will

will be an object, not only of veneration, but of fear. Marauders, tyrants who wish to carry their despotism into foreign countries, or to fatten on their spoils, will not choose for their objects those hardy and skilful nations, who stand ready to defend themselves and their country. Such men will look, as did the tribe of Dan, for some people who dwell quiet and secure, without vigilance, without discipline or the means of resistance. Such a people court invasion, they invite an attack, and beckon to those who delight in spoil to “come and take away their place and nation.” Wary and prudent commanders will consider long before they attack a fortress strongly fortified and well garrisoned; and they will count the cost before they invade a country whose inhabitants are all trained to discipline, and “know how to use the sword and the bow.” But the weakness of a fortress, the ignorance or security of a people, mark them as proper subjects to be attacked and conquered.

RESPECTABILITY always attends the vigilance and discipline which I am recommending. It is a proof of wisdom to look forward and prepare for futurity, to guard against any danger which may arise, and to provide remedies for every disaster which may happen. Such conduct is a proof of a healthy and vigorous state; it discovers energy in council, and an elastic well braced government. This people will stand high in the estimation of the world. Their alliance will be courted, and this will give them new strength and new defences. The saying of our Lord, alluding however to a more important circumstance, will in this case be fully accomplished—“Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

THE history of mankind will furnish us with numberless instances wherein the truth of these observations has been exemplified. Scarcely a page of this history can be opened which does not contain full conviction of it. But we need not go from our own age or our own times to find this conviction. The people of America have proved it to the world, and have reaped the happy consequences of vigilance and discipline, as well as of personal bravery. At the commencement of our late controversy with one of the most formidable nations upon earth, we had not the means of defence which other nations enjoy. We were without ammunition, without money, and without allies; but we had an hardy yeomanry, zealous in the cause of liberty, and versed from their infancy in the use of arms. Every man had been more or less trained and disciplined; and we had a general acquaintance with military science. We proved the benefit of this preparation, when we met the embattled legions of Britain, and spread terror through hosts commanded by their ablest Generals. The heights of Charlestown witnessed the bravery of our citizens, and furnished a convincing evidence of the wisdom of those institutions which made the people of New England soldiers from their cradle. Superior as were our foes in equipments, "in all the pomp and circumstance of war," yet still they paid so dearly for their victory as that the acquisition of one or two more such victories would have ruined them.

AND how deplorable would have been our situation, had we not been thus instructed and prepared for defence! Attacked by an enemy who claimed a right to "bind us in all cases whatsoever," and whose high toned spirits were exasperated at the idea of resistance,

sistance, we must have fallen a prey to their violence, and bidden an everlasting farewell to liberty and its blessings. Taskmasters, worse than Egyptian, would have been set over us, and our children must have toiled to support the luxury of their oppressors.

BUT when resistance had taken place, and we had declared ourselves independent, what miseries, what exquisite distresses would have been the probable consequences of our subjugation! An incensed soldiery would have given way to their unhallowed lusts, and disregarded the laws of God and man to gratify their cravings! Alas!—what sound is this which pierces my heart? It is the shrieks of a tender wife, wrested from the arms of a beloved husband, to gratify the appetite of a lordly master!—But whence are those soft complainings, those deep drawn sighs? They are the lamentations of injured innocence, of violated virtue, of the defiled virgin, who has fallen a victim to brutal force!—But why does busy imagination transport me to a scene still more painful? Why does it hurry me to the field of blood, the place of execution for the friends of American liberty? Whom does it there call me to see led to the scaffold with the dignity of Cato, the fortitude of Brutus, and the gentleness of Cicero marked deeply on his countenance? It is the gallant WASHINGTON, deserted by his countrymen, and sacrificed because he fought in their defence!—Of whom consists yonder group of heroes? It is an HANCOCK, an ADAMS one and the other, a FRANKLIN, a RUTLEDGE!——but I repress the bursting sentiment—the bare imagination bows my soul with unutterable grief!

THANKS to the GOD of armies, and to the vigilance and bravery of our countrymen—these distressing scenes were never realized! Freedom, peace and independence have blessed our land; and the very nation whom we opposed, laying aside the bitterness of civil contention, has extended to us a friendly hand, and now declares herself happy in our alliance. A recurrence to past scenes should not therefore excite our resentment; it should only animate us to the vigilance, the bravery, and the active preparation which proved, under GOD, the means of our deliverance.

I PROCEED to remark, fourthly, on the necessity of government to the existence and defence of any people.

ONE reason assigned for the easy conquest of Laish is, “that there was no magistrate in the land, who might put them to shame in any thing,”—who could punish them for doing wrong, or make any man ashamed of his want of virtue or patriotism. Such a people must fall an easy prey to an invader; for without government no people can remain in security, nor can any nation be defended from its enemies.

By restraining vice, the magistrate prevents men from contracting habits of effeminacy. He guards them from weakness of mind, and excites them to hardihood and patriotism. The great and noble principles of love to our country, of sacrificing private interest to public happiness, of guarding the rights of posterity, and disseminating universal felicity, cannot subsist in a mind narrowed and depraved by criminal indulgence. Vice makes cowards of mankind. It contracts and stifles the noblest principles of human action, and renders men abject in their sentiments and conduct. As far as vice is discountenanced, as far as

men are made ashamed of doing base and unworthy actions,—so far general security is increased, and the aggregate of national strength is enlarged.

THE design of good government is to form a focus to which all the diverging rays of power in a community may be collected, and which may enable a people to bring the force of the whole to one point. This accumulated power protects every individual in his rights; it guards the weak from the violence of the strong, and the few from the oppression of the many. The same power is competent to defend the whole from invasion or other injury. Nothing can be done by way of defence where there is no government. Money cannot be raised. Men cannot be disciplined—nor can any great object be steadily pursued. When a people without government are invaded, every man will propose and pursue his own mode of defence. A thousand different schemes will be thrown out. The people will be distracted in their views; and before this distraction can be calmed, a final conquest may save them the trouble of defending themselves for the future. A nation rent with divisions, destitute of law, of subordination and rulers, presents a proper object for an attack, because it promises an easy if not a valuable conquest. The very people themselves who have been agitated by different scenes, who have no rest for the soles of their feet, who find their lives, their liberties and estates afloat, and exposed to the lawless violence of any who may be pleased to seize them,—this people themselves will join an invading army, and prefer any security, any protection to none at all. Without government, indeed, without law and order, there is no liberty, no security, no peace nor prosperity. Men ought to guard their rights; they

they ought to resist arbitrary power of every kind ; they ought to establish a free government ;—but no people can be safe, no nation can be happy where “ every man does what is right in his own eyes,” and the people are driven about by the whirlwind of their passions.

IF, again, a government is free and just, they will be cheerfully supported by the people in defending their country. Wars too often arise from the ambition or other passions of princes and great men, and the justice of them may be properly doubted. Where an interest exists in the government separate from that of the people, the latter will always feel a jealousy, and will not be ready to give them effectual support. But where “ our rulers are from among ourselves, and our governors proceed from the midst of us ;” where every man, elevated as his station may be, returns at stated periods to the mass of the people ; where our rulers cannot injure us without hurting themselves,—we may cheerfully acquiesce in their calls to defend ourselves, and may be sure that they will not wantonly engage in a war, which exposes them as well as us to heavy expense and grievous misfortune. The conscientious soldier, who will not support a war which he does not believe to be lawful, may here feel his mind perfectly at ease, and may discover his skill and his fortitude in defending his injured country, or supporting its just claims. Happy people, who are blessed with such a government ! Happy land, shadowed all around with the tree of liberty, and yet strengthened and united by a firm and vigorous government ! No wonder that thou art envied by other nations, who are either crushed by arbitrary power, or distressed by confusion and anarchy !

THE reasons against indulging to security, and neglecting to provide for defence, I observe once more, operate with peculiar force upon a people whose distant situation prevents their receiving assistance from their allies. The people of Laish were far from the Zidonians, and had no business or connexion with any man. The sacred historian informs us also, that the Danites came “unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire, and there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon.” If a people dwelling thus remotely do not defend and help themselves, no one can help them. Before their friends and allies can hear of their distress, it may be complete; and they may be subdued and ruined before the least assistance can be given them. This consideration should operate strongly upon a nation thus situated, and induce them to keep themselves in a constant state of defence; to cultivate military skill and discipline among the inhabitants; to be provided with all the means of defence; to keep a vigilant eye upon the state of all nations, so that they may not be surprised on a sudden; and to put all their fortresses into such a condition, as that they may be able to check a sudden attack, and give time for the people, the natural bulwarks of the State, to assemble and resist their daring invaders.

THE past discourse, you must be sensible, hath had a respect to the situation of this country, and the duty of this day. We, my fellow citizens, dwell in a distant part of the world, far removed from any allies, and very little interested in the politics of Europe. This circumstance should not only operate to excite us to pay a close attention to the state of our militia, and

and the means of our defence, but it should prevent us from engaging in their quarrels, or adopting their wars. Our assistance can be of very little benefit to them, but it may essentially injure us. Our country is young, and cannot bear the loss of men, which is the certain consequence of war. It is free, and does not wish its citizens to mix with the slaves of Europe, and catch their servile manners. It venerates religion, and will find no advantage, should its people associate with those who despise religion, and trample upon every divine law. In case of a war, we cannot be supported or assisted by any European power as they can support one another; and America may be essentially injured before our allies in Europe can know that an enemy has attacked us. God in his providence has placed us in a remote part of the world, and if our brethren in other countries "fall out by the way," we will endeavour to reconcile them, but we will not become partners in their quarrels. They have a right to choose their own governments, and manage their own affairs, without our interference. God does not call us to war. We are not attacked nor endangered; until we are, we have no right to spill our own blood, or that of our children. Let us then "study the things that make for peace." Let us unite in repressing those restless spirits who cannot see a quarrel going on without inserting themselves in it. Let us be ready constantly to exert our good offices in bringing about peace; and let us devoutly pray that God would hasten the time when "wars shall cease from the earth," and the peaceful kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, which breathes nothing but good will to men, shall universally prevail.

THROUGH the goodness of GOD, America now enjoys a great degree of peace. She has passed through an arduous contest, and having struggled long with formidable distresses, she is effectually relieved; and while she breathes the pure and fragrant air of liberty, her prosperity rapidly increases, and her branches extend far and wide. On our frontiers indeed a cloud, not bigger than a man's hand, has arisen, and has extended to a formidable and distressing degree. Our armies have been defeated, and we mourn the brave men who have fallen in the wilderness, and whose bones are now whitening in the sun. It is not for me to determine upon the necessity or expedience of this war. As a minister of religion, I can only wish and pray for peace, and anticipate the time when "the sword of the wilderness" shall destroy no more.

If, my brethren, we mean to guard ourselves from invasion, and to lengthen out our tranquillity, we must cultivate a good government; we must reverence the laws, and support the magistrate in "putting to shame those that do evil." It is a duty enjoined by our holy religion to submit to such government, and it is a maxim founded in eternal truth, that no people can be conquered or destroyed who are united in supporting a free and good constitution. A consciousness of being freemen, of being protected in the enjoyment of life and property, by laws which know not the rich from the poor, or the great from the small; this consciousness will give men elevation of sentiment; it will inspire them with fortitude and perseverance, and make them superior to all the slaves and sycophants upon earth.

WHILE we support our various constitutions of government, and guard against intestine divisions, we ought

ought to pay a strict attention to the state of our militia, and the other means of defence. Americans will never suffer a standing army among them in time of peace. The militia are the natural defenders of this country. They have a stake in it. They have a share in its sovereignty; and they fight for their wives, their children, their liberty, and their all. Such men cannot be cowards; they must be brave and determined; and when any of these blessings are taken from them, or threatened to be done away, they will be "like a bear robbed of her whelps," and will determine to conquer or die.

BUT this very ardor and impetuosity may be fatal to them, unless they are under the direction of judgment and discipline. These are necessary to check their effervescences, and lead their efforts to such points as may be most beneficial. Our militia then should be disciplined. Our young men should be early instructed in the art of war, and every one should hold himself in readiness to "play the man for his people, and the cities of his God." Let us have our fortresses in good repair, and be ready at all points to resist an invasion; and this is the most likely method to prevent it.

YOUR institution, Gentlemen of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, is designed to answer this important purpose, and is a striking proof of the wisdom and foresight of our ancestors. Venerable men! My heart warms when I view the schools, the colleges, the churches which they founded; and when I see this Company assembled, so admirably adapted "upon all our glory to create a defence." Methinks I see them looking down from the seats of bliss, smiling

ing to behold this favourite institution flourishing and increasing ; delighting themselves in the good of which they thus laid the foundation, and charging us to transmit the freedom and happiness which they have given us, a fair and a large inheritance to the latest posterity !

You are citizens, Gentlemen, as well as soldiers, and you know the necessity of order and government. These you will feel it your duty to support and preserve, while you value and defend the liberty of your country. You know that these duties do not interfere. You know that without government freedom cannot subsist, because government alone can protect the helpless individual, or restrain the lordly tyrant. You know also that a free government is necessary to animate and direct the efforts of a people in their own defence, and that the tree of liberty never flourishes, unless it is preserved from rude violence by the sacred barriers of law and justice.

COUNTENANCED by the Commander in chief, who himself formerly led a corps in some respects similar to your own, and encouraged by the good wishes and plaudits of your fellow citizens, you are becoming every year more useful and respectable. The choice which you have made of men to command you, who have known not only the parade, but the reality of war, and have bravely defended the liberties of America, has done you and your country honor. Men of the first abilities have been heretofore the objects of your choice ; and I hope that the elections of this day will prove, that you are still governed by the same wisdom and prudence, which in this respect have heretofore marked your conduct.

SHOULD you be called to defend your country, or protect its rights, I have no doubt but that you would prove your military skill to be no impediment to brave and valorous exertions. Sure I am, that you would never turn your backs to an enemy, or suffer yourselves to be defeated. You are Americans. You are descendants of men, who sacrificed every thing to assert their liberty. Many of you have "jeopardied your lives on the high places of the field," and your bosoms glow with genuine patriotism. Such men are invincible. Nothing can subdue them but the power of that Being who hath declared, "that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

Go on, Gentlemen, and prosper. In peace prepare for war. Cultivate in your own breasts, and impress upon your children, an ardent love to civil and religious liberty. And while you discharge your duty to society, forget not the Being who has made you what you are, at whose tribunal you must all stand, and whose "favour is better than life." If you submit to his Gospel, and are governed in heart and in life by its precepts, you shall be made "more than conquerors;" your brows shall be adorned with unfading laurels, and your triumphs shall be complete and eternal!

WE live, my brethren of this assembly, in a day when grand and important scenes are acting upon the theatre of the world. We have seen "kings led in chains, and nobles in fetters of iron." We have seen the towers of despotism, erected in dark ages, and sacred to the uses of tyranny and oppression, tumbling to the ground, and razed to their foundations. We hear "of wars and rumours of wars." Mankind "bite and devour one another." "Brother is pursuing brother

unto

unto death," and the earth is crimsoned, deeply crimsoned, with Christian blood. Humanity sheds a tear over the folly of her sons, but faith lifts her keen and humble eye from earth to heaven, and anticipates the good which shall come out of this evil: She expects the fulfilment of those precious promises which speak of the future peace and happiness of man; and teaches us to exclaim, "amidst the wreck of nature and the crush of worlds," ALLELUIA, THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH."

AMEN.