



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

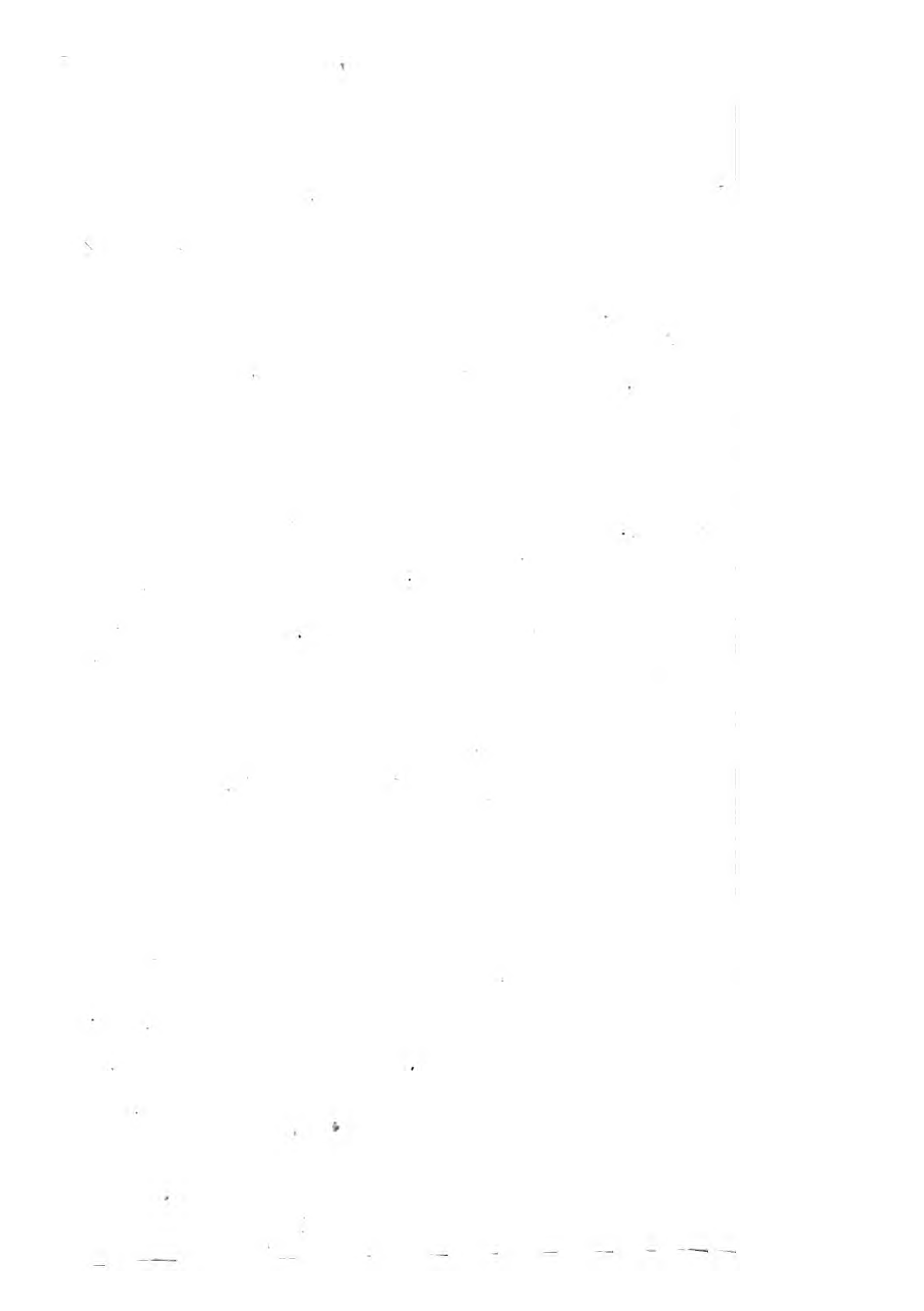
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

On Friday the fourth of February, MDCCLXXX.

T H E L A T E D A Y O F

N A T I O N A L H U M I L I A T I O N ,

T O A

Congregation of Protestant-Dissenters,

In Saint-Saviour-Gate, York,

And published at the request of the Audience,

B Y

N E W C O M E C A P P E .

Y O R K :

PRINTED BY A. WARD; AND SOLD BY J. JOHNSON,
IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND T. CADELL,
IN THE STRAND, LONDON;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS IN YORK.

MDCCLXXX.



DEUTERONOMY XXIII. 9.

*When the host goeth forth against thine enemies,
then keep thee from every wicked thing.*

IT cannot surely be necessary in this, or in any audience, to dwell on the observation that every wicked thing is at every season, and in every circumstance, unjustifiable, inexcusable, and dangerous. No wicked thing can ever become innocent or safe. In peace you are accountable to God; in war you are accountable to God. If the host were never to go forth; if no enemy should ever call them out; if all kings were wise, and all nations friendly, it would still be most strictly and indispensably your duty to keep yourselves from every wicked thing. But though no circumstances can make a wicked thing a good thing, yet peculiar circumstances may have peculiar duties, which it would be wicked to neglect. Abounding with extraordinary temptations to do evil, they may call for peculiar vigilance and resolution to abstain from it; and, creating extraordinary dangers, they may call for extraordinary diligence and seriousness in the discharge of every moral obligation.

That the armies of Israel were at liberty, till the host went forth against their enemies, to disobey the God of Israel, is an absurdity to which the text affords no countenance. Their obligations

tions to obey him did not arise out of their afflictions, their temptations, and their dangers; but their afflictions, their temptations, and their dangers, while they created some accessory duties, suggested new motives to the watchful and resolute discharge of those that were general and permanent.

The Jews were a military people. They held their lands by military tenure, of God, the sovereign proprietor of the country in which they were settled. Their armies were not the hiring instruments of blind resentment, or of wild ambition, or aspiring despotism: they were the patriotic bulwark of the state: they were the state itself: for every citizen was a proprietor in land, and every proprietor in land a soldier. There were, however, as there must be in every political community, many young men not yet of military age, and many old men beyond it, and besides these, there were women, children, infants, in whom the armies of Israel were deeply interested, and who were deeply interested in their good conduct and good fortune. The text may be considered as addressed to either of these; or more particularly to the rulers of the people; or generally and in common to them all.

The import of it may be, "Ye warriors of Israel, if ye love the just and equal constitution of your country; if ye love the fruitful and
pleasant

pleasant land into which the Lord your God has brought you ; if ye love the wives of your bosom ; if ye love the children whose opening and improving virtue honors and rewards your instruction and your cares ; if you love the infant babes who have not yet learnt to know and own their obligations to you, when ye go forth to meet the adversaries of your country, your constitution, and your families, take heed that ye have a friend in the God of battles, and keep yourselves from every wicked thing."

It may signify, " Ye people of Israel, when the host is going forth to repel the enviers of your happiness, the disturbers of your peace, the invaders of your country, if ye love that country ; if ye wish the continuance of that peace and happiness ; if in those secure and happy homes which they are leaving, ye ever wish to renew the sweet communion ye have known with the individuals that compose the host which is going forth in your cause at least as much as in their own ; if ye have any tenderness for the pledges of your mutual affection ; if the names of husband, father, brother, friend, carry with them any sentiments of endearment to your hearts, keep yourselves from every wicked thing, shield them by your prayers, prosper them by your duty, let nothing wrong in you expose them to disgrace and to destruction."

Again, the text may signify, "Ye who have authority in Israel, as ye value the honours ye enjoy, and wish well to the interests of yourselves, of your families, and of the people over whom ye rule; as ye hope to give a good account of the trust that is reposed in you, remember that ye rule for the welfare of the people, and that ye are bound to rule them by the law of God. Pursue nothing, direct nothing which that law does not authorize. It prescribes what wars ye shall wage, and to what lengths, and in what manner ye shall wage them. See that ye command not what God forbids, nor forbear what God commands. When the host goeth forth, when the passions and interests of nations are fluctuating on the events of war, take heed that ye commit no public guilt, take heed that ye allow none, lest, instead of the guardians, ye become the scourges of the people: cleanse yourselves from all private iniquity, lest, when the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, ye fall among them that fall, contributing to the calamities of your country, and partaking in its distresses and its ruin."

Such are the different particular applications of which the text is capable, and it might be meant to comprehend them all.

In this extensive view it is an admonition that may, with great propriety at this time, be addressed, to all your countrymen and you;

To

To the host that goeth forth ;
 To the power that sends them out ; and
 To the people on whose behalf they are sent.
 A time of war is a time of temptation,—and a
 time of danger,—and therefore a time of pro-
 vidential warning to them all.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, It is such to the host
 that goeth forth.

Whether they go forth to defeat or victory,
 they go forth to great trials of their fortitude
 and patience ; to great trials of their humanity
 and self-government. Their peculiar situation
 calls upon them for great vigilance and care,
 that their temptations to come short of what
 these virtues demand of them, or to violate the
 bounds which they prescribe to them, may not
 overcome them. In the justest wars the man
 that is needlessly put to death is criminally put
 to death. The man who kills under the influ-
 ence of wanton insensibility, of furious resent-
 ment, or malignant hatred, has the blood he
 sheds to answer for. The plunder of private
 property is robbery ; the voluntary waste of it
 is as criminal in war as in peace. War sancti-
 fies no crime, and to what crimes does not vic-
 tory invite ? to what does not the insolence
 that usually attends it instigate ? what, in the
 general careless opinion of mankind, is it not
 ordinarily deemed to justify ? Rapine, devasta-
 tion, lust, and cruelty, every species of brutal
 law-

lawlessness are its ordinary attendants. Temptations to such enormities, temptations so powerful to crimes so horrible, surely call for the strictest watchfulness, and the most determined resolution, to subdue them. When the host that goeth forth presses on a retreating enemy ; when its victorious banners wave upon their ruined walls, in the ear of Reason how loud is the call to every combatant that follows them, “ Now keep thyself from every wicked thing ?”

The Jewish laws, in this respect, put Christian practice out of countenance. With regard to all nations, except those which the providence of God had, not only by miraculous command but by previous prophecy, devoted to destruction, the Jews were forbidden every war that was not necessary to repel an invader, or redress an injury. The spirit of ambition and of conquest was an unhallowed and condemned spirit. They were required to reverence the rights of their captives ; and forbidden to cut down a tree that was good for food, in the country of their enemies. Such was the Jewish law. The Grenades could tell that lately even Jewish laws were not kept there by the subjects of the Most Christian King : and there is another country whose coasts will long bear witness to the violation of them ; to which, if Humanity and Generosity should direct their eye, looking at its enemies, and looking at its sufferings, it would be very natural to ask, If the
the

the temptations of power and opportunity can seduce such soldiers against such adversaries to such deeds, what need is there not to cry out, when the host is going forth, "Keep yourselves from every wicked thing?"

Again, to the host that goeth forth a time of war is a time of danger.

There is danger that, when the terrors of the battle set themselves in array against them, they should expose their country, and disgrace themselves, by timidity and flight. There is danger that, having lavished their blood in the service of their country, that service should for a long time be suspended, on the bed of pain and languishing. There is danger that, falling on the bed of honour, they should be cut off for ever from all farther interest, in the country that they fought for, in the friends that they protected, in the blessings which, at the expence of life, they perpetuated to them. These, surely, are very awful and interesting situations; what is the language that they speak to the patriotic and the christian soldier? is it not, "Keep thyself from every wicked thing. A good conscience will inspire thee with the firmest fortitude, and elate thee with the most animating hope: united with the principle of honour, which, in scenes of severe and long-continued trial, will be found without it a very feeble and ineffectual principle, it will enable

enable thee not only to fight, but to suffer in thy country's cause with patience and with resignation : preparing thee for death, the fear of which, like an evil spirit, haunts an evil conscience, it will enable thee, with serenity and steadiness, to make thy life a sacrifice to thy duty, and to fall with acquiescence and with dignity." Guilt is very susceptible of dismay; it debases, contracts, enfeebles, fetters, and enslaves the mind. "The wicked flee even when no man pursueth, but the righteous is bold as the lion." The fear of man, who can kill the body only, is to be radically cured by nothing but the fear of God, who can do more. An uniform determined courage, cool to apprehend dangers, vigorous to repel them, steady to await them, is the offspring of that good character, which inspires hope and confidence in God, which sets its owners above the little interests of this temporary and precarious life, and opens on them the ennobling prospects of a life that cannot be destroyed. In scenes of terror and of suffering, one would not have the fears and anguish of a guilty conscience, to exasperate all other pains and apprehensions. To the field of death one would not wish to go with an impenitent and unprepared spirit. One would not rush upon the ministers of fate, while rushing on the pointed sword is rushing from the comforts and the hopes of this life, upon the comfortless and hopeless condemnation of another. When the sacrifice of
 life

life is to be made, or hazarded, one would wish to have the Lord both of this and of the coming world our friend. His friendship, the sure purchase of good character, qualifies for every duty, and prepares for every event. What has he to fear from the tumult of the battle, who has the God of battles on his side? What has he to fear from any weapon of war, who has the balm of good conscience and God's providence and immortal hope, to pour into his wounds? What has he to fear from an untimely death, who knows that, while he falls, the living God will hear his intercessions for the country, the family, and the friends in whose behalf he falls, and translate him from that country into heaven? Patriotism, even its criminal partialities; superstition, even false religion, have been able to accomplish miracles of courage and of patience: Religion, pure religion, should do more. The gloomy doubts of Unbelief inspire no heroism; the awful expectations of Impenitence inspire no heroism; in the path of duty Religion forbids all fear, and may well enable her disciples to obey that prohibition. "When the host goeth forth, ye champions of my country, cleanse yourselves, and keep yourselves from every wicked thing."

IN THE SECOND PLACE, A time of war, as it is a time of temptation and of danger to the host that goeth forth, so is it also a time of
 B temptation

temptation and of danger to the power by which they are sent out.

The true object of government is the welfare of the people. Where the welfare of the people is only neglected by the governing, they sin against their subjects. In that case, it can with no truth be said of them, that they keep themselves from every wicked thing. But a time of war it is obvious, is

1. A time of temptation to neglect the civil arts and interests of life. These are the immediate sources of the subsistence, of the comfort and the power of the community. In part, at least, they either are, or produce the very things in defence of which alone war is justifiable. At all times, therefore, these arts and interests of civil life ought to engage the prime attention, and to enjoy the prudent patronage of government. In war they must of necessity, perhaps, in some degree, be neglected; it is hardly possible that, in such conjunctures, they should not suffer; but the greater the temptation to neglect them, the louder is the call of Providence to keep from that evil thing. In the din of war, amidst the magnitude of its preparations, the pomp of its expeditions, the dazzling splendor of its victories, and the trepidation and astonishment of its ill successes, it often happens that the humbler yet greater interests, the less imposing but more important

tant arts of civil life are abandoned to decline and languish. It is very possible that such neglect and dereliction, like all other human follies, may justify itself to itself, and that, perhaps, from the principle of necessity, which, if it be a true plea, is a sufficient plea; perhaps, upon the less warrantable principle of facilitating the recruit of wasted armies, of opening an asylum in military service, from that poverty which the loss of other service had entailed, and of reducing growing multitudes to a more abject dependence upon power. It is by no means impossible that such short-sighted policy may encourage such inattention and neglect: but though nothing so criminal should encourage it; that necessity should compel it, is a misfortune much to be deplored; and to yield to that necessity no longer and no farther than must be, is a prudence much to be desired. All beyond that is not to be placed to the score of merit in the conduct of governors and rulers. The support of their arms, the welfare of their subjects, the duty of their station, the sacred obligations of their character, all call on them to have an eye upon their subjects, and a guard upon themselves, that they may keep from this evil thing.

2. A time of war is a time of temptation to governors and rulers, to give encouragement

few, as they are apt to make the head giddy, tend to harden the heart also, and to diminish its capability of those tender sympathies which constitute the best security of an humane, beneficent, and equitable conduct. Flattery naturally begets self-complacency; and even the manly expressions of due homage, tend to swell the minds of those to whom they are addressed, into an undue and haughty self-importance. The decorums of distance and of reverence, the ensigns of distinction, and even law itself, which in every country has planted peculiar guards about the person and the rights of majesty, and appointed punishments peculiarly severe for the infringement of them, must of necessity have the same unhappy tendency. According to the ordinary operation both of natural and moral causes, it would be nothing wonderful, and it were more to be pitied it may be than blamed, if in such personages it often happened that politeness, plausibility, the specious appearances of wisdom and of virtue, should cover much self-indulgence, self-interest, self-consideration, and self-will, much quick and inordinate resentment, much ungovernable impetuosity of temper, and much incorrigible inflexibility of spirit. In respect of moral worth, so unfavourable and compassionate are the circumstances of great hereditary princes, that blamelessness ought to be imputed to them for excellence. It is a debt that is justly due to them to count it much
merit

merit if they do little wrong. A well-disposed prince, duly sensible of his circumstances and his situation, instead of looking with an envious eye at the thrones where arbitrary will is legislator, minister, and judge, will esteem it the greatest felicity of his lot, the most pleasing jewel belonging to his crown, if he wears that crown in a country where there is law to direct, and a council to advise, and a constitution to control him.

Such, in general, is the influence of their circumstances to render princes peculiarly susceptible of the dangerous passions of which we speak, and easily seducible by a temptation to indulge them. A time of war, it is obvious, must present innumerable occasions to excite and draw them out.

But there are other peculiarities in the situation of princes and rulers, which tend, at all seasons, and in such a season more especially, to enliven these dangerous passions, to invigorate their operations, and to assist them in the justification of themselves, by placing them even in a flattering and honorable light. The first object of political association is security; but communities, after they have acquired existence and stability, grow up into many of the passions which, in the progress of life, unfold themselves in the individuals of the human species. They extend their views beyond ex-
istence

istence and security, to convenience, to affluence, to luxury, to state, to grandeur, to power, to dominion; to distinction, superiority, and supremacy in all these things. The passions of avarice and ambition, and of consequence, when these passions meet with obstacles and opposition, the passions of resentment and revenge arise in them, none of which are very patient of control, or very nice in the means that they employ to obtain the objects which they aim at. Where the power of a state is lodged, there chiefly do its passions lie: so far especially as other nations are the objects of them, they reside principally in their hearts to whom the conduct of its operations and the transaction of its affairs have been committed. The chief magistracy, whether it exist in one or several, is more directly and immediately the Person of the state, in which its powers, its projects and pursuits subsist, and which is conceived more directly and immediately to receive both the favours and the injuries that are done to it. Its passions therefore will naturally be thought by it to be public passions; and so far as the public rights and the public good are the source, the object and the measure of them, they will adorn and dignify the thrones on which they sit. But there is danger that in the hearts of governors and rulers, other passions also which have no such honorable object, and whose sources are in perverted views and corrupted sentiments, may assume the like honorable

norable appearances, and thence urge their claim to an unlimited indulgence. The gilded dreams, the unjust and destructive projects of ambition may ascribe themselves, and on that principle applaud themselves, to a zeal for the glory and prosperity of the people. The hopeless, needless, lawless, sanguinary dictates of revenge, may ascribe themselves, and on that principle applaud themselves, to a just and necessary vindication of the people's rights. An incorrigible adherence to ambitious, vindictive, ruinous pursuits, may ascribe itself, and on that principle applaud itself, to an invincible fidelity to the people's interests. These things are as obvious as they are true; and it is equally true and obvious, that a time of war is a time of temptation to such ambitious projects, to such sanguinary vengeance, and such pernicious perseverance. In the history of your own country, you may read how flattering the attempts of subjugation and of conquest are, even though it be to the detriment both of conquering and conquered. In the history of your own country, you may read how easy it is to project and to protract devastation and distress, in order to compel, though equity allowed it not, though the most important interests forbid it, what prudence and lenity might have commanded and retained. When the sword is drawn, how serious is the call of Providence to guide it equitably and to sheathe it soon! Since so susceptible of ambition and revenge are the hearts

of all men; since so specious are the appearances which, in the hearts of governors and rulers, these passions may put on, how necessary are their cares, and their people's admonitions and intercessions, too, that when the host goeth forth they may keep themselves from every wicked thing?

3. A time of war is a time of temptation to governors and rulers, in the pursuit even of a lawful object, to employ dishonorable and unlawful means. So seducible is human nature, that, both in public and private life, a very great and important object is apt to turn away the attention from any baseness or deformity of the means by which it is pursued, and even sometimes seems to shed a lustre on them. If the means themselves, by which any object is pursued, have in them any thing of magnificence and solemnity, the inexpediency and injustice of them is often lost in their pomp and splendor. Hence it has come to pass, that many characters, which, in common life, that many practices, which, on a smaller scale, are universally the objects of contempt, of indignation, and abhorrence; on a larger scale, in higher life, in public war, are dignified with names of admiration and of honor. What, on less occasions, and in less extent, would be deemed cowardice, piracy, and plunder, is honorable reprisal, though it be committed on private subjects unarmed and unsuspecting, not for

for the indemnification of public wrongs, not for the pledges of such indemnification, but with respect to those *on* whom they are committed, for pure annoyance sake; and with respect to those *by* whom they are committed, to the encouragement of avarice and violence, of every evil sentiment and every wicked work. Whatever countenance such practices may derive from the received law of nations, they are totally incompatible, not only with the principles of christian casuistry, but with the dictates of sober reason too, and therefore with the law of God. How powerful the temptation is, to authorize such practices, appears in this single circumstance, that, in fact, on all hands, they always prove invincible.

There is justice due to the character, as well as to the property of an enemy, and every general and national reflection is not only illiberal but iniquitous. Yet how seducing is the temptation to connect, even with the national denomination of an enemy, every idea that can steel the heart against the sentiments of equity, that can dispose it for the commission of every outrage, and prepare it to be easy in the commission of them. How illiberal, how iniquitous, how irreligious, yet, in every country, how general, even in deliberate speeches, in solemn manifestos, in proclamations and in forms of penitential devotion, customarily and of course to pronounce foreign nations, when they happen to be enemies, perfidious; and subjects,

when they think not as others think of their rights, and the nature of their rights, rebellious?

In a time of war how great is the temptation to those by whom its operations are directed, to make fraud supply what power is unable to effect, and to seek the accomplishment of their aims, even by the subornation of infidelity and treason? Can the compulsion of captive enemies to levy war against their country and their consciences; can expeditions of needless and of fruitless devastation, undertaken for the purpose, and defended on the principle of shewing that the humanity and the magnanimity of a mighty nation are not to be trusted to; can the approbation, and the recompense of those who undertake with a ready mind, who execute with an unrelenting hand, who narrate with an unfeeling, or perhaps with a boasting heart, such enterprizes; can burning villages, can desolated plains, can manumitted slaves, can the services of barbarian auxiliaries, trained to slaughter, to undistinguishing slaughter, and delighting in it; can the approbation, the procurement, the authorizing of these things merit praise? If a time of war can tempt to such things as these, what urgent reason is there not, that governors and rulers, when the host goeth forth, should guard their hearts, and implore the people's intercessions, and join the intercessions of the people, that they may keep themselves from every wicked thing?

4. A time of war is a time of temptation to governors and rulers, to pursue the object that excited it to an inordinate and unwarrantable length. When passions, even the justest, and the best, and the most necessary, are up, with the means of gratification in their hands, and occasion inviting to the use of them, it often happens that the lengths they go are inordinate and unwarrantable. In the career of victory, it is not easy to stop at that precise point of humiliation to which an enemy might equitably be reduced. In the hope and the desire to repair miscarriages and misfortunes, it is not easy to sit down, submissive and content, at that point of humiliation in which prudence might require us to acquiesce.

Whatever be the immediate and subordinate object of it, the general and ultimate object of war is peace. It is by this only that it can, in any circumstances, be justified. When in the struggle of contending nations, the particular subject of contention is forgotten; when, instead of an assertion of rights, it is gone out into a strife of hatred, into a contest for superiority or interest; when the sacrifices that are made for the maintenance or recovery of it have surpassed the value of the object they respect; when war becomes so enfeebling and impoverishing as to be grievous, oppressive, and injurious to the people, entailing danger and misery on themselves and their posterity; when

when it is prolonged beyond the acquisition of the object that it sought, or beyond all reasonable hope of making the acquisition; when the extension or continuance of war is preferred to peace, after reasonable terms of accommodation have been tendered, or might have been commanded, that war, surely, in the eye of prudence, of equity, of reason, whatever it might have been originally, is become inordinate and unwarrantable. It is not the war of patriotism, or of humanity. Yet to such war, it is obvious beyond a doubt, that the temptation must be great. He is much a stranger to the history of his kind, to the history of his country, to the history of his own times, who knows not that some or other of these characters, if not all, have been, in the progress, if not in the commencement of them, pretty generally the characters of the wars that have prevailed in every age, and in every region of the world. To say nothing of other countries, let us look into our own; to say nothing of former ages, let us look at this; to say nothing of the idea, which other nations do at present, and which our impartial posterity will hereafter form, to say nothing of what many of the firmest and most enlightened friends to the common rights and liberties of mankind, to the constitution and the interests of their native country, already think, of the prosecution, if not of the principle, of the progress and continuance,

tinuance, if not of the commencement of those hostilities, by which, at the price of much blood and more treasure, to the great detriment of commerce and commercial arts, with the annihilation of a very large proportion of private property, and an alarming accumulation of public debt, we have purchased, first the alienation of America, next her declaration of independence, after that a preclusion from her alliance, and then a second, and a third war; and besides all these things, the privilege of prosecuting still the same schemes, with like consequences, and like hopes; to say no more of the present times, a retrospect, of no great extent, would bring to the remembrance of several in this audience an object that lighted up a nine years war, which nevertheless, in the subsequent pacification, was most significantly pronounced to have been totally unworthy to have created such a flame, for the war left it as it found it; in the pacification it was not even mentioned. A retrospect not much farther, to a point but a very little way beyond the beginning of this century, would enable a sober and intelligent observer to count, at different periods, but all within about half a century from that point, no less than fourteen long years of unnecessary and unwarrantable war. Unwarrantable because unnecessary, and unnecessary because the very terms of peace, or even better than those which were at last given or accepted, would have been submitted to, or had

had been tendered sooner. The lives that were lost in that superfluous war, the millions that were expended in it, the various miseries that it created, infer they no criminality in its advisers, its abettors, and its authors? With that my subject has not much to do; my object was to show you, first, from the reason of the thing, and next from fact, how great, to governors and rulers, the temptation is, when the sword is drawn, to keep it drawn, unprofitably, unnecessarily, criminally; and, therefore, how needful it is that they should think, that if they will not think they should be admonished, that they should pray, and that they should be prayed for, when the host goeth forth, that they may keep themselves from every wicked thing.

5. A time of war is a time of temptation to governors and rulers, to encroach upon the rights and privileges of their own subjects. In every superior relation and superior rank of life, power is a very great, and commonly a very effectual temptation to tyrannize and oppress. War necessarily puts under the direction of governors and rulers, and therefore very naturally recommends it to the attention and vigilance of the people, a more than usual proportion of the national wealth and strength. A time of war, being a time of danger, furnishes the most plausible pretences to call upon the people for their most powerful and vigorous exertions.

Means

Means may easily be found to convert occasional grants, made upon extraordinary emergencies, for the public deliverance, or the common safety, into irrevocable and perpetual establishments, not for the freedom, but the oppression, not for the security and prosperity, but for the corruption and betrayal of the people. With the increase of public burdens, in whatever form, it is almost unavoidable that dependance and servility should increase. Who, that is at all conversant in the history of mankind, knows not that the very armies which have repelled the approaches of tyranny from abroad, have been the instruments of establishing tyranny at home? Who knows not that the victorious armies which have successfully, and righteously fought the battles of their country, have afterwards, with equal iniquity, and with like success, enslaved it? To be able to do, to have the probable prospect of being able to do what it is flattering to do, is always a great temptation to do it. When the host therefore goeth forth, if it go to success and victory, there is much reason to the power which sends them out, to be jealous of itself, lest they should come back to excite, to capacitate, and encourage it to less glorious and less equitable triumphs. If the success is great, if there is any considerable accession of territory to a state, even though the sword be sheathed as soon as the battle is won, the people may have long cause to bewail such suc-

cesses; and the prince who knows that he ought to reign, not for his own splendor, but for his people's good, has great need to cultivate a watchful jealousy of his own frailty, a reverent respect for the rights of his subjects, and a cordial interest in their welfare. Pray ye, therefore, that when the host goeth forth, your counsellors and rulers may be apprized of the temptations into which they may be led, and may keep themselves from every wicked thing.

Under this division of the discourse it remains to be added, that a time of war is not only a time of temptation, to governors and rulers, but also a time of danger.

It is well it is so, for the dangers help to check and counterbalance the temptations. If they be clearly seen and duly weighed, their tendency is to give prudence to the counsels, and temperance to the operations of government. In prosecuting the dictates of ambition and resentment, there are bounds which princes cannot pass but to their disgrace and ruin. In such pursuits how often has it happened that they have lost the zeal, the affection, the fidelity of their subjects; their dominions, their thrones, their lives? Under the weight of public burdens there are degrees to which the patience of mankind may be born down; and there are degrees too, to which, if their power
be

be not born down along with it, their patience will not always sink. But even to the best of princes, with the best of purposes, in the best of causes, a time of war is a time of danger. They may be endangered, if not by hostile armies, yet by the cowardice or rashness of their own: they may be endangered by evil counsellors; by treacherous friends; or though none of these things endanger them, the very cares of government, their fidelity to their people's interests may overpower them. The diminution of their empire may be for the trial of their virtue; for the good, or for the chastisement of their subjects; or for a general benefit to mankind. The abbreviation of their lives may be for good to them, to take them away from the evil to come; for the immediate punishment and subsequent reformation of their subjects, for whom God may be preparing a king in his wrath. The events of war may be the means which God hath chosen, to accomplish these, with a thousand other unknown purposes. His counsels are unsearchable; from what is present you cannot predict what is coming. Who knows not what a mighty conflagration a little spark may kindle? Since such, then, when war is deluging the world, is the situation of governors and rulers, should they not regard it as a serious and urgent call of Providence to live mindful of their dependence upon God, who can give the race to those who are not swift, and the battle to

those who are not strong; as a serious and urgent call to prepare themselves for his pleasure, to commend themselves to his friendship, and therefore to watch against the temptations to which they are exposed, and to keep themselves from every wicked thing?

IN THE THIRD PLACE, A time of war is a time of temptation and of danger, not only to the host, and to the power that sends it out, but also to the people in behalf of whom it goeth forth, and therefore is a call of Providence on them, to keep themselves from every wicked thing.

It is a time of temptation to the people. It will try their patriotism, their humanity, their self-command, their piety.

I. A time of war will try the patriotism of the people. Attachments are felt most sensibly when the objects of them are injur'd or endanger'd. These are the circumstances that reveal their strength, and these the circumstances also, when, if our attachments are not firm and lively, they will be most apt to withdraw themselves and to die away. When we are called to sympathize with them in their sufferings, or to defend them in their dangers, then it is, that we are liable to regret our connections, to repent of our attachment, and, as far as may be, to subdue its impulses and restrain its dictates.

But,

But, surely, that patriotism is not what it ought to be; that respect to the constitution of our country, that reciprocal attachment of fellow-subjects is not what it ought to be, which shrinks from its proper share of public burdens, public labors, or even public dangers. In the partial imposition of public duty, in the wanton profusion or perversion of public treasure, government ought not to be supported; it is the right, the prudence, the duty of the people to restrain them. They owe it to themselves, to the constitution, to posterity. But, certainly, if there be a political obligation, if there be any thing incumbent on us in the character of citizens, nothing can be more evident, in the general, than that, in proportion to the respective interests we have in the security and well-being of the community, we ought to take our share in its support and its defence. It is the undoubted right of government to exact this, and in correspondence with that right, it is the indispensable obligation of the people cheerfully to acquiesce in it. A time of war may multiply and aggravate these demands, may expose the state to alarming dangers, and even to grievous sufferings: but the patriotism that is extinguished by such sufferings and dangers, that feels not for the present or impending calamities of the community, that will take no share, or not its own share, in averting, or repelling, or relieving them, what is it? It is a cold, ignominious insensibility; it is a base
ill-

ill-deserving selfishness ; it is unwise, unrighteous and cruel. Keep yourselves from that wicked thing. When the host goeth forth, consider the demands which Providence may make of you, and prepare yourselves and dispose yourselves to conform to them. The laws, the liberties, the religion of his country, the purity and integrity of its constitution, the interests of his countrymen, his own interest in their security and welfare, are objects that should engage a British heart. In days of old they did. The friends of these, by whatever oceans they are separated, ought to be the objects of its esteem and its good wishes. The enemies of these, by whatever name they are called, in whatever region they may live, whether on the Tagus or the Seine, whether on the Tweed or Thames, ought, at all times, and more especially when the host goeth forth, when the interests of nations are afloat, to be the objects of its watchful jealousy, of its wise, and just, and steady opposition.

2. A time of war is a season that will try the humanity, as well as the patriotism of the people. It is easy to believe all ill of those concerning whom we must believe some ; and it is not easy to stop either in the inflicting, or in justifying the infliction, of what a righteous resentment and necessary self-defence demand, at the point beyond which that righteousness and necessity extend not. A time of war, especially
if

if it be protracted long, is a season very dangerous to the interests of equity and benevolence in the human heart. The mere suspension of intercourse and communion is sufficient to create coldness and indifference of affection. The operations of war, whatever be their success, are sufficient to increase that coldness and indifference into keen, incurable, and hereditary enmity; into such sentiments of ill-will as ought not to subsist among partakers of the same nature, and children of the same family, by whatever differences of name, of language, of residence, of government, of religion, or of interests, they may be distinguished. The disappointments of war and its ill-successes, are too apt to create those vindictive sentiments, which if, in the sequel, they are not fully gratified, even to an unjust and cruel length, are very prone to settle into cool and habitual malignity; and on the other hand, the triumphant exultations of good success and victory, are equally apt to beget and to confirm those sentiments of contempt and insolence, which have a like fatal influence on the sympathetic feelings, and the generous affections of the human heart. Thus it may happen that while their warriors are acquiring intrepidity and inhumanity, in scenes of devastation and of death, those in whose behalf they are sent out may be acquiring a similar obduracy at home. Perpetual war can hardly fail to issue, in fact, so far as the history of mankind is known to us,
it

it has not failed to issue in a savage ferociousness of manners. If their military talents are continually employed, this is the natural character of a military nation : and in every nation, according to their duration and degree, the like causes will produce the like effects. A time of war is necessarily and unavoidably, in many instances, with respect to moral character, a time of national deterioration and corruption. It does much evil, and prepares for more. Private enemies easily become the objects of such sentiments as have been indulged against the enemies of the public ; and the passions which have done, or wished to do, or rejoiced in the doing of, much mischief abroad, are not likely to be entirely without mischief at home. They are bad conservators of domestic rights, they are bad conciliators of civil harmony and friendship. A time of war may tempt you to forget that your enemies are men, and brethren ; may tempt you to entertain and to indulge those sentiments of hatred and revenge, or of pride and insolence, that will steel your hearts against the sweet impressions of humanity. Keep yourselves from that wicked thing : when the host goeth forth, guard your hearts against such temptations. In your ill successes, let the spirit of revenge be chastised and moderated, by the consideration that you have suffered only that which you intended to inflict ; and let the triumph of your victories be corrected and restrained, by the consideration that though you are
are

are conquerors, there are who have fallen in your cause, and there are who have been conquered and captived by your arms. Men, and brethren they are, by whomsoever your hosts have been discomfited. Men, and brethren they are, whomsoever your armies have laid low; creatures of the same God, partakers of the same nature, heirs of the same hopes with you. By such considerations, amidst the various passions, and the alternations of the various passions which a time of war excites, exert yourselves to preserve unhurt within your hearts the sentiments of generosity, of humanity, of universal sympathy and goodwill. In all circumstances you owe them to all men. They are essential to the christian character, they are ornamental to the human nature, they are friendly not to their objects only, but to the heart that wears them too. They are a sacrifice much too precious to be made, either to the dejections or the elevations that proceed from the various fortune and events of war; and the greater the temptation which such vicissitudes present to you to make such a sacrifice, the greater care do they demand of you to keep yourselves from that wicked thing.

3. A time of war is a season the events of which may try not only the patriotism, and the humanity, but also the self-command of the people. Unfeeling levity, profuse expence, and luxurious self-indulgence, are at no time

E blameless;

blameless; but there are seasons when they are peculiarly unbecoming, and unusually censurable. There are circumstances that may convert even those degrees of them, which ordinarily consist very well both with innocence and honor, into great criminality and ignominy. War is a conjuncture that may produce such circumstances. When their friends are called, or liable to be called, to the extremest sufferings and dangers in their behalf, to the loss of ease, and limbs, and life; when their champions, their countrymen, their parents, their brethren, their companions, are embarking on an hostile ocean, or marching to the fields of death, is this a season that inspires unfeeling levity? is this a circumstance which unfeeling levity would adorn? When poverty is coming on the public like an armed man, is this a circumstance that will exculpate the profuse expence of individuals? When thousands of your fellow-citizens, who have no greater interest in the safety and welfare of the community than you, are, at the moment, suffering hard things for its sake, is this a circumstance that can keep luxurious self-indulgences in countenance? What degrees of self-indulgence would you prescribe as a preparative for the dubious events of war; which, if already they have not done it, by and by may put every deed of liberality out of your power, may take away your dearest friends from beside you, may compel the man who has no sword to sell his garment
and

and buy one, and may lodge that man a miserable captive in the dungeon, or a mangled carcase in the grave? To what lengths would you extend your superfluous expences, when the public demands for the defence, of what may afterwards be remaining to you, of your liberty, and of your lives, may increase upon you to such degrees, as to make that remainder nothing more than what you now think absolutely necessary for yourselves and your dependents? When hostile depredations may conspire with the demands of the community to impoverish you, is this a time to incapacitate yourselves, by too lavish an expediture, to obey the dictates of benevolence, and to answer the demands of your country? is this a time to disqualify yourselves, by too much indulgence, to support the pressure of straiter, perhaps of needy circumstances? When every effort to disturb your peace, to hurt your interests, to invade your territories, is in preparation or in act; when you know not how soon an hostile navy may be hovering on your coasts, or an hostile standard planted in your land; when you know not how soon the flames of war may extend themselves to you, to convert your joy into mourning, and your laughter into heaviness, is this a seemly season to go every length, are there not some to which it is not seemly to go, in dissipation and gaiety of spirit? There are many instances of chearful, lively, pleasurable self-gratification, in times of peace

and of prosperity, innocent at least, which, in seasons of public or of private danger and calamity, would deserve a much less honorable name; which would indispose and incapacitate us both to discharge and to perceive the duties of such circumstances, which would very justly be considered as the tokens of an inordinate and unwise indulgence of ourselves, of an unamiable and unjustifiable insensibility to the circumstances, the interests, and the rights of others. To such imputations you, my friends, will not expose yourselves. If, when the host goeth forth, any thing in which, till then, you had innocently and prudently allowed yourselves, should, through the events of war, become neither prudent nor innocent; you will change your conduct with your circumstances, and will keep yourselves from such evil things. War, it is true, is not directly the temptation to them, but the consequences and concomitants of war ordinarily contract the limits within which the usual motives to self-indulgence may irreproachably act; it is therefore not improperly considered as a call of Providence to the trial and the exercise of our self-command. The word of God counts the sword, as well as pestilence and famine, among his judgments. When the judgments of God hang over us, one would think that solemn expectation, manly seriousness, and penitential humiliation were the proper temper. Who will presume to say that frivolism and levity, that extravagance

travagance and prodigality, that luxurious and licentious self-indulgence, will prove the means either of averting or alleviating them ?

4. A time of war is a season that will try the piety of the people. Men are at all times too apt to confine their views to second causes, instead of looking through them to the great inspirer, mover, and controller of the universe. When these causes are of great magnitude, or of great preparation, men are peculiarly apt to stop their views there. The strong fortresses, the mighty navy, the numerous army, a gallant soldiery, a prudent, experienced, and popular commander, for the operations of war how prone is the people's confidence to rest in these things? for the preparation of the means, for the direction of the operations, for the conduct of the negotiations of war how prone is the confidence of the people to repose itself on the circumspection, the activity, the fidelity, and the wisdom of their rulers? Yet all these things, times without number, have betrayed the confidence of those who trusted in them. Though it is the undoubted language of reason and philosophy that without the application of means the end is not to be obtained; yet, in every scene of life, it is the language of continual experience, that the end does not always follow the application even of the means that have been trusted in, and boasted of. It is the language of history that the most awful preparations, and
the

the proudest means, have often failed of success. In times past, it has been verified in the history of your enemies; in present times it is verified in the history of yourselves. If the counsels of your country have been wise and faithful, the circumstances of it are not what might have been expected from their fidelity and wisdom. If the negotiations of your country have been prudent, the circumstances of it have not answered to that prudence. Your navies have been great, your armies have been great, the profusion of public treasure has been great, but in the circumstances of our country, who can read the magnitude and success of these things? In the disruption of the empire; in the decline of manufactures; in the decay of property; in the fewness, diffidence, and reluctance of allies; in the number, union, and prosperity of enemies, our wisdom and our power appear not. These things pronounce no elogiums, either on our counsels or our arms. The success has not corresponded to the effort. The most sanguine zealots of the measures which have been pursued, and of the exertions which have been put forth, the advisers and the executors of them, have themselves acknowledged that, through unfavourable conjunctures, the issues have not answered to the outsets. If all is to be charged on them, whence came these unfavourable conjunctures? Or if, with unfavourable conjunctures, perverseness, unfaithfulness, or inability, must take a share of the imputation;

imputation; in whose hands are men, their stations, characters, and influence? Whatever have been the obstacles that have stood between the exertions of your power and the proportionate success of them, the fact, that some obstacles have stood there, concurs with a thousand other instances to reprove the confidence that puts its trust in princes and reposes itself upon an arm of flesh. It is not always that the race is to the swift, or the battle to the strong, or bread to the wise, or riches to men of understanding, or favor to men of skill; time and chance, unexpected, and to us perhaps unaccountable events, happen to them all. The secret agent who supports, disposes, actuates, and over-rules all things, has every scourge, and every blessing, in his power; can deliver out of the most pressing difficulties; can frustrate the most vigorous exertions; can put the affairs of men into whatever train, and into whatever hands he pleaseth; can employ wisdom and virtue as well as every external thing, to prosper and exalt a nation; can employ folly and wickedness as well as sword, and pestilence, and famine, to depress and to chastise them. It is this great God to whom your thanks are due, for the security and comfort you enjoy. It is this great God to whom your submission and humiliations are due, under so many tokens of his righteous displeasure. It is this great God to whom you should betake yourselves by penitence, to whom you should commend yourselves

by

by obedience, amidst the various dangers and calamities which threaten you : for, says he, “ at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil which I thought to do unto them.” If the successes of war tempt you, forgetting him who maketh light and peace, to idolize your counsellors or warriors ; if the disasters of it tempt you, forgetting him who maketh darkness and createth evil, to vent your hearts only in vindictive sentiments against the misdeeds of others ; if, amidst the evils that ye fear, forgetting God, the arbiter of events, the King of kings, who doth according to his pleasure, and dispenses the fates of empires as well as of individuals, your trust is only in your own strength, in the counsels or the arms of weak and perhaps wicked men, you have no title to their hopes who honor God ; you have too deep an interest in their expectations who despise him. It would be nothing in itself unrighteous ; it would be nothing in its monitions unfriendly to the interests of mankind ; it would be nothing inconsistent with the purity and rectitude of his character ; nothing unexampled in the conduct of his providence, if he should leave you to sink from affliction to affliction, till despair and wretchedness have taught you to cry out, “ Lord give us help from trouble, for vain is the
the

the help of man." It is a circumstance in which you do not wish to stand; it is a prayer which in that circumstance you do not wish to utter; adopt it before despair compels it. Duly sensible of the absolute dependence of you, and of all that is valuable to you, upon God, let no impious presumption, let no vain self-confidence alienate his blessing from you. When the host goeth forth, remember to what little purpose they go forth unless God go with them, and keep yourselves from every wicked thing.

Under this last division of the discourse, it yet remains to be observed, that a time of war is a time not of temptation only, but of danger also to the people.

It is a time of danger to their property. The violence of enemies, the peculation of friends, may diminish it. The pertinacity of governors may consume it.

It is a time of danger to their liberty. To say nothing of the captivity to which an enemy may reduce them; it is a season which, both in its immediate and remoter consequences, necessarily augments the regal power, and extends the regal influence. It is a season which accustoms a large body of the people to despotic rule, to implicit and unlimited obedience. New conquests have been the means of humili-
F
liating

liating old subjects. The armies that have been levied, and sent out, to chastise the usurpations of an enemy, have returned to trample under foot the rights and liberties of their country.

It is a time of danger not to their property and their liberty alone, but also to their lives. The lives of many must be sacrificed in the camp, the fortrefs, and the field; and many that are not exposed to the ravages of fatigue, of hardship and the sword, will fall by the secret hand of apprehension, anxiety and grief. In extreme emergencies of the state, there is no man, of whatever age or character, able to assist in its defence, that may not equitably, that may not honorably, be called out upon that service; and when the flames of war are once kindled, who can prescribe the limits which they will observe, or define the emergencies which they shall not create? Your sons, yourselves, may fall in the defence of your country and its liberties. Whatever be the origin of the war, this, notwithstanding all you boast of your insular security, to you, this may, in some form or other, be its issue. Even the best issues of every war must comprehend in them the death of many valuable citizens, the deep and lasting affliction of many worthy families, the accumulation of public debt, the diminution of private wealth, and the dispersion of thousands through the community, trained for robbery

robbery and murder, who having been accustomed to sport with property and life, in the territories and the persons of their enemies, are prepared, at least, to think lightly of these rights, and to deal freely with them, in the territories and the persons of their friends.

The fear of man points to the aid of God. Dangers prompt to prayers. They prompt to more than prayers, for "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Danger then prompts to duty. Duty done, is good conscience, is good courage, is good comfort, is good hope, the best preparative for the futurities of this life, whatever they may be, and a certain title also to the security and felicities of life eternal.

When the host goeth forth, then, and when the host returneth too, in every time of temptation and of danger, keep yourselves from every evil thing, and assure yourselves that good will come of it.

T H E E N D.