

14133

Jones, David, 1736-1820.

(Weis, Clergy of the Middle Colonies.)

Defensive War.

Philadelphia, Miller, 1775. 27 pp.

AAS copy.

50 1775

Defensive WAR in a just Cause

S I N L E S S.

A S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D

On the Day of the CONTINENTAL FAST,

A T

TREDYFFRYN, in CHESTER COUNTY,

B Y

The Revd. DAVID JONES, A. M.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Our GOD whom we serve, is able to deliver us.

DAN. iii. 17.

P H I L A D E L P H I A :

Printed by HENRY MILLER. 1775.

A S E R M O N, &c.

N E H E M I A H IV : 14.

And I looked and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: Remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.

WHEN a people become voluntary slaves to sin; when it is esteemed a reproach to reverence and serve God; when profaneness and dissolute morals become fashionable; when pride and luxury predominate, we cannot expect such a nation to be long happy.

ISRAEL, when first planted in the land of Canaan, were a brave, heroic and virtuous people, being firmly attached to the true worship of God. They were both formidable and invincible: when their armies went forth to battle, thousands and tens of thousands fell before them: thus being cloathed with the ma-

A 2

jesty

jesty of virtue and true religion, a panic seized the hearts of all their enemies around them. But when vice and immorality became prevalent ; when they forsook and rebelled against their God, they lost their martial spirit, and were soon enslaved by the king of Babylon. Yet, as God is gracious and merciful, when seventy years were expired in this furnace of affliction, he remembered their low estate, and stirred up Cyrus, king of Persia, to proclaim liberty for the Jews to return and build their temple at Jerusalem. Nevertheless some of the people still remained in Persia, of which Nehemiah was one.—He was a favourite in the days of Artaxerxes the king, therefore he obtained leave to go and build the walls of that antient city Jerusalem. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian heard that there were men come to seek the welfare of the Jews, they were filled with indignation : therefore, in scornful language, they bring a state-accusation against them, saying: “ What is this thing that ye do? will you rebel against the king*?” However, though they treated the Jews with scorn and insult, yet their labour became a subject of conversation. Sanballat once speaking on the occasion, Tobiah makes a reply to this effect, viz. “ Tush, Sanballat, it is not worth your notice, nor should you give yourself the least concern about these feeble wretches, they build indeed, but if a fox

in

* These three gentlemen were governors, and consequently pensioners. It is common for such to profess great loyalty to kings, when in reality it is their pension they love, and not their king. They speak in court language, “ Will ye rebel against the king ? ”

in his meanders was to ascend their stone wall, and only give a few scratches, it would fall down." These scornful insults were spoken that the Jews might hear them, and be discouraged; but when they saw that the work went on with rapidity, they were filled with the highest indignation, and resolved, if bitter taunts, these swords of their mouths, would not discourage them, their swords of steel should compel them to cease from their work: therefore Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabians, the Ammonites and Ashdodites all conspire together, to come with their united force against Jerusalem. Their design was made known to Nehemiah; and, as all should do, especially in distress, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, and makes his supplication to the LORD of host; nor does he think his preservation shall be effected in neglect of the use of means; therefore he sets a watch against them day and night, and addresses himself to all ranks of people in these spirited and excellent words, viz. *Be not ye afraid of them: Remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons' and your daughters, your wives and your houses.*

In the words observe,

1. A caution against cowardice, or fear of an enemy unjustly enraged. *Be not ye afraid of them.*

It is of great importance in war to be delivered from fear of the enemy; for soldiers in a panic generally fall a victim in the dispute.

2. We

2. We have an argument to excite fortitude and firmness of mind in martial engagements. *Remember the LORD, which is great and terrible.*

3! A fervent call to present duty in times of distress. *And fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.*

To improve the words suitable to the occasion of the present solemnity, the following order shall be attempted,

I. An endeavour shall be made to prove, that in some cases, when a people are oppressed, insulted and abused, and can have no other redress, it then becomes our duty as men, with our eyes to GOD, to fight for our liberties and properties; or in other words, that a defensive war is sinless before GOD, consequently to engage therein, is consistent with the purest religion. Here some texts in the New Testament, which prevent some good men from engaging in the present dispute, shall be considered.

II. Some particulars shall be presented to our consideration, to demonstrate the alarming call, which we now have to take up arms in our own defence.

III. A few arguments shall be advanced to excite fortitude in martial engagements.

And lastly, Some inferences shall be drawn.

The

The subject before us is of great importance. — It is to be lamented that we have the present occasion to consider it.—It is very copious, and as it is new to me, brevity and great accuracy can scarcely be expected. If G O D shall enable us to consider each proposition consistent with his honour, and worthy of his majesty, we may rest satisfied. Your attention, my Brethren and Countrymen is begged, while an endeavour is made,

I. To prove, that in some cases, when a people are oppressed, insulted and abused, and can have no other redress, it then becomes our duty as men, with our eyes to G O D, to fight for our liberties and properties; or in other words, that *a defensive war is sinless before G O D*; consequently to engage therein, is consistent with the purest religion.

If antiquity, if the united voice of all kingdoms, that now or ever have existed, could be admitted as a proof, the point would easily be determined; for there has been no kingdom, whether composed of Jews or Gentiles, Barbarians or Christians, but have embraced it as their common creed, that a defensive war is innocent. But though this is a presumptive argument, yet it must be confessed, that it is not a decisive proof: for antient mistakes are mistakes, and a multitude may be wrong.

But if this proposition can be made appear from the
holy

holy scriptures, as we profess them to be our only rule of faith and practice, then it must be acknowledged that a defensive war is sinless, and consistent with the purest religion. To them let us repair with attentive ears, to hear what the lively oracles of God will say on this point.

Among all the antient servants of God none is more famous for true piety and pure religion than the patriarch Abraham—to him the highest epithets are given—he is more than once called the friend of God—in his steps the righteous are to walk—to him were many great and precious promises made, and yet we find this great, this holy man firmly of the faith that a defensive war is sinless. He makes a bright display of his faith, when the four kings took Lot, his brother's son, captive. Doth his religion prevent his pursuit of the enemy? No, verily. With a heart depending on the most high God, he collects his servants and some confederates; with martial weapons in his hands, he pursues the foes, and utterly discomfits the four kings, and triumphantly brings back the captives, with all the spoil. This was the very time that Melchizedeck, the priest of the most high God, met him. And did he reprove or curse him? No, says the text, “he brought forth bread and wine,”—giving him the highest expressions of approbation, he thus addressed him, viz. “Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, which hath

“hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.” *Gen.* xiv: 18. 19. 20. This passage proves not only that this was Abram’s belief, but also that Melchizedek, priest of the most high God, Melchizedek, the brightest type of CHRIST, was fully of the same opinion, and therefore may be admitted as an evidence in favour of a defensive war. For any of us to presume that we have a better conscience than Melchizedek, would argue either pride or ignorance.

If we trace the sacred history, and descend to succeeding ages, we shall find that Moses is of the same faith. Among all the children of men none was more meek, and admitted to greater familiarity with God, than Moses. He is often called, by way of eminence, “Moses, the servant of God.” By his hands we received the lively oracles of God, and the apostle bears him witness, that “he was faithful in all things;” yet we find him often engaged in bloody battles. One instance may suffice at present, out of many that might be produced, and that is, when, on the most reasonable terms, he requests to pass through the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, pledging his honour that no damage should be done; *Num.* xxi: 22. but Sihon, instead of granting the small privilege of passing along the highway, advances with all his armies against Israel. Doth Moses think it his duty to make no defence? Let us view his conduct. Israel advances with sword in hand, and utterly discomfits the Amorites.—If we read the book of Joshua, his immediate

B

successor,

successor, we shall find him of the same mind. Israel are called the peculiar people of GOD, to whom his mind was revealed, and this is the faith of the whole house of Israel.—If it was a sin to engage in a defensive war, can we suppose that Israel should be ignorant of it? Seeing therefore that it is sinless, it is meet that we should tread in the footsteps of this flock, which is gone before us.—And were we further to attend to the sacred history, we shall find, that after the death of Joshuah and the elders, which saw the mighty works of GOD, that Israel first being enslaved by sin, were oppressed by various nations; but when they cried unto the LORD, he raised up deliverers, among whom were Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephtha, and many others, which performed glorious exploits, and were blessed instruments under GOD to deliver Israel from oppression and bondage. Some of these, you know, are spoken of as the worthies of Israel and have much recorded in their praise; and yet all these died in the faith, that a defensive war is sinless before GOD. Still were we to descend and pursue the chain of history, we shall find all the kings of Israel of the same faith. Among many that might be mentioned, we shall at present take notice only of one. David, a man eminent for pure religion, the sweet psalmist of Israel, David, a man after GOD's own heart, yet all his life is a scene of war. When he was even a youth, he began his martial exploits, and delivered Israel by slaying great Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistines.

Philistines. And what shall I say more? The time would fail me to enumerate all who were avouchers of this proposition: It is therefore a clear point, that a defensive war is sinless, and consistent with the purest religion.

This indeed is generally acknowledged, when our dispute is with a foreign enemy, but at present it seems like a house divided against itself; our dispute is with administration. This is cause of great sorrow, that such a heavy judgment has befallen the kingdom; and yet we are not without some instances in scripture of people refusing obedience to kings, when they became arbitrary and oppressive. When Rehoboam threatened Israel with nothing but tyranny, they did not long hesitate till they gave the king this answer, “What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: To your tents, oh Israel! Now see to thine own house David.”
1 Kings xii: 16.

And this certainly has been the faith of Great-Britain, as might be made appear by many instances, one of which I shall at present just mention. When king James II. departed from the constitution, and became arbitrary, by dispensing with acts of Parliament by proclamation, issuing *quo warrantos* against charters, and endeavouring to introduce popery, the people esteemed it no sin to invite William, the prince of Orange, to invade England, and obliged James to

abdicate a kingdom he had forfeited his right to govern.

But there are some texts of scripture urged on this occasion, which were to be considered. The following are thought to enjoin non-resistance in the strongest terms, viz. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: For there is no power but of GOD; the powers that be, are ordained of GOD. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of GOD: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves condemnation.* Rom. xiii: 1. 2, &c. The apostle is no friend to anarchy, for he well knew the corruption and depravity of man would oppress the innocent, if there were no legal restraints. But, in order rightly to understand these words, it is of great importance to determine first, what is meant by the *higher powers*: For this is what every soul is to be subject unto. We shall find no exposition liable to less exception, than to understand by the higher powers the just, the good, the wholesome and constitutional laws of a land, merely respecting civil government. The very design of these higher powers is to secure the property and promote the happiness of the whole community.—These higher powers therefore appear as binding on princes as people. And as GOD has ordained these powers for the good of the whole, whosoever resisteth the same, resisteth the ordinance of GOD, and receiveth finally condemnation, and that justly; for anarchy and tyranny are essentially the same, and equally to be dreaded, as each resists the
higher

higher powers. We cannot suppose, either that this text enjoins absolute submission to all laws, which may be made in a land; for some are so wicked, oppressive and unjust in their nature and tendency, that the best of men have thought it their indispensable duty to disobey them. You may well remember, that Nebuchadnezzar made it a certain law, that all nations in his empire should, on pain of death, worship his golden image. Was it the duty of his subject to obey or not? The conduct of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will determine the point, who, refusing to comply, were cast into a fiery furnace. Remember also, when Darius, king of Persia, made a statute, that no man should petition either God or man, save himself, for thirty days, Daniel refused obedience unto the decree, because it was unrighteous. Call to mind also, that in the days of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, he enjoined it as a law to all the midwives, that they should kill all the male-children of the Jews. Did they obey or not? The text informs us that the fear of God prevented them, believing that no law can make that just, which in its own nature is unrighteous. The higher powers, of which Paul speaks, are ordained of God, and if ordained of him, they must be like unto him, who is a God of unspotted justice and truth. Certain it is, that the people must be the judges whether the laws are good or not;—and I think it must be acknowledged by all, that laws are not good, except they secure every man's liberty and property, and defend the subject

against

against the arbitrary power of kings, or any body of men whatsoever.

Again, another text, used to enforce the doctrine of non-resistance in the present dispute, is, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the LORD's sake, whether unto the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.* 1 Pet. ii: 13. 14. This text is to be understood in a restricted and limited sense as above. We cannot suppose, that the apostle meant obedience to all despotic ordinances of tyrants; for this would condemn the conduct of the midwives, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The ordinances here can be none other than such as are good, and ordained of GOD, for whose sake we are to submit unto them; for these higher powers, or ordinances, are the provision of GOD, which he has ordained for the Safety of the people, to defend them against oppression and arbitrary power. There is none, but GOD, suitably qualified to rule according to his own will and pleasure, so that when man assumes to rule arbitrarily, he sets himself in the temple of GOD, shewing himself that he is God; for none is qualified for that seat, but him that is infinitely wise, just and holy. We see, when these words are taken in a limited sense, there is no evil consequence follows, but if we understand them to bind us to obey all that task-masters require, then it is plain that we condemn king Henry VIII. for refusing obedience to the pope of Rome.

Rome. Many *bulls* were thundered out against him, but he and the parliament resolved that they were a complete legislative body in themselves, paying no regard to the threats of Rome. If we were to embrace any other exposition of these passages of scripture, we should absolutely condemn the Reformation; nay, we would condemn all England, who refused obedience to king James II. because he would not be subject to the higher powers, but endeavoured to subvert the constitution, and to reign arbitrarily. Such a sentiment, if pursued, would lead back to all the horrors of popery and despotism; nay, it would even condemn the blessed martyrs, who refused obedience to arbitrary and wicked laws.

Some will object, that these laws respected religion, which makes an essential difference; for when religion is affected, one may withstand a kingdom. Calvin and Luther were of this faith. It is granted, that there is great difference between state affairs and religion; for Christ says, “his kingdom is not of this world;” none dare impose laws in matters of religion on his subjects, without being guilty of a daring insult: but the instances above do not all respect religion, therefore are suitable on the present occasion; and those that do respect religion, were brought to prove that the words are to be taken in a restricted sense. I have met with none, but acknowledge these texts must be so understood, as to justify opposition to popish tyranny. And pray, my countrymen, what better is protestant

testant tyranny than popish? Is there any essential difference between being robbed by a *protestant* or a *papist*? Is it not the very same thing? Tyranny is tyranny, slavery is slavery, by whomsoever it is imposed. Names change not the nature of things. If despotism is bad in a *papist*, it cannot be good in a *protestant*. If it may be resisted in one, it ought to be in the other.

But to proceed: There is another objection, which good people make against war of any kind, viz. “That
 “ war is not agreeable to the disposition of souls
 “ newly converted to the knowledge of CHRIST:
 “ Then we long for the salvation of souls, and have
 “ a tender regard for all men: Surely martial en-
 “ gagements do not suit a meek and loving disciple
 “ of JESUS.” I confess, no objection to me is of equal importance to this. It is a solemn consideration:—
 Alas! alas! that ever there was occasion of even a defensive war: but occasion there has been, and occasion there now is.—The reason why a defensive war seems so awful to good people, is, they esteem it to be some kind of murder: but this is a very great mistake; for it is no more murder than a legal process against a criminal. The end is the same, the mode is different. In some cases it is the only mode left to obtain justice. And surely that religion is not from heaven, which is against justice on earth. Remember all men are not converted; if they were, there could be no necessity of war in any sense. For, says the scripture, “they shall
 “ not

“not hurt nor destroy.” But remember, this is when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD. Alas! this is not the case now; for darkness, gloomy darkness, prevails throughout the kingdoms of this world. Oh! that the kingdom of JESUS was come, when we should have occasion to learn war no more. But to give a more particular answer to the objection, consider that the design of laws is to punish evil-doers,—to bring to justice offenders, and to secure the innocent in the peaceable possession of their properties: for this end GOD has ordained these higher powers; but it some times has been the case, that those, in whose hands these powers are entrusted, become tyrannical, and the greatest offenders, and shall they live with impunity? GOD forbid! how shall justice be obtained? every mode is evaded. The case is similar with a foreign enemy, we cannot have redress any other way, no other method is left to obtain justice; and though the mode is different, the issue is the same as when we execute a criminal condemned by a jury. Suppose, a villain was to rob you of a valuable sum of money, and thereby expose you and your family to distress and poverty, would you not think it your duty to prosecute such a public offender? yes, without doubt, or else you could not be a friend to the innocent part of mankind. But suppose, he not only robs you, but in a daring manner, in your presence, murders your only son, will you not think that blood calls aloud for punishment? Surely both reason and revelation will justify you in seeking for justice in

that mode by which it can be obtained. The present case is only too similar:—by an arbitrary act all the families that depended on the Newfoundland fishery are abandoned to distress and poverty, and the blood of numbers spilt already without a cause. Surely it is consistent with the purest religion to seek for justice. Consider the case in this point of view, and he that is not clear in conscience to gird on his sword, if he would act consistently, must never sit on a jury to condemn a criminal.

II. This brings me to the second thing proposed, which was to present a few particulars to your consideration, which will demonstrate the alarming call, which we now have, to take up arms, and fight in our own defence.—

We have no choice left to us, but to submit to absolute slavery and despotism, or as free-men to stand in our own defence, and endeavour a noble resistance. Matters are at last brought to this deplorable extremity;—every reasonable method of reconciliation has been tried in vain;—our addresses to our king have been treated with neglect or contempt. It is true that a plan of accommodation has been proposed by administration; but they are men of more sense than to think it could be accepted. It could be proposed for no other purpose than to deceive England into an opinion, that we did not desire reconciliation. What was the substance of this pretended plan? In short this,

this, that we should give them as much money as they were pleased to ask, and we might raise it in our own mode.—Slaves therefore we must be, only we shall be indulged to put on our fetters, to suit ourselves.—This plan is no better than that clause, which says, “That the parliament have a right to make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever.” For if they may fix the sum, and we must raise it, the case is the same, we have nothing left, but what they have no use for;—all is at their disposal, and we shall have no voice in the application of our own money. They may apply it to raise forces in Canada, to cut our throats. The call therefore is alarming—we cannot submit to be slaves — we were born free, and we can die free. Only attend to the voice of parliament, viz. “That they have a right to make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever.”—Even our religion is not excepted—they assume a right to bind us in all cases.—Agreeable to this proposition, they may oblige us to support popish priests, on pain of death:—they have already given us a specimen of the good effects of their assumed power, in establishing popery in near one half of North-America. Is not this the loudest call to arms? All is at stake—we can appeal to God, that we believe our cause is just and good. But to attend to our text, “and fight for your brethren,” our brethren in the Massachusetts are already declared *rebels*;—they are treated as such, and we as abettors are involved in the same circumstances;—nothing can be more unjust than such a proclamation. Rebels are men disaffected with their

sovereign in favour of some other person. This is not the case of America; for if Jacobites were not more common in England than with us, we should not have had occasion of the present dispute. We very well know what follows this proclamation, all our estates are confiscated, and were we even to submit, we should be hanged as dogs.—Now therefore let us join, and fight for our brethren. Remember our Congress is in eminent danger. It is composed of men of equal characters and fortunes of most, if not superior to any in North-America.—These worthy gentlemen have ventured all in the cause of liberty for our sakes;—if we were to forsake them, they must be abandoned to the rage of a relentless ministry. Some of them are already proscribed, and no doubt this would be the fate of the rest:—How could we bear to see these worthy patriots hanged as criminals of the deepest dye? their families plundered of all that they possess, and abandoned to distress and poverty? This, my countrymen, must be the case, if you will not now as men fight for your brethren: Therefore if we do not stand by them, even unto death, we should be guilty of the basest ingratitude, and entail on ourselves everlasting infamy. But if the case of our brethren is not so near as suitably to affect us, let us consider the condition of our sons and daughters. Your sons are engaged in the present dispute, and therefore subject to all the consequences: Oh! remember if you submit to arbitrary measures, you will entail on your sons despotic power. Your sons and your daughters must be strangers to the comforts

forts of liberty;—they will be considered like beasts of burden, only made for their *masters use*. If the groans and cries of posterity in oppression can be any argument, come now, my noble countrymen, fight for your sons and your daughters. But if this will not alarm you, consider what will be the case of your wives, if a noble resistance is not made: all your estates confiscated, and distributed to the favourites of arbitrary power, your wives must be left to distress and poverty. This might be the better endured, only the most worthy and flower of all the land shall be hanged, and widowhood and poverty both come in one day. The call to arms is therefore alarming, especially when we consider the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, we can expect no favour from administration. They seem to be callous, so as to have no feeling of human distress. What can be a greater demonstration than to excite the barbarous savages against us? * These, instead of coming against our armed men, will beset our defenceless frontiers, and barbarously murder with savage cruelty poor helpless women and children. Oh, did ever mortal hear of such inhuman barbarity! † Come then, my countrymen, we have no other remedy, but, under God, to fight for our brethren, our sons and our daughters, our wives and our houses.

III. It

* It is beyond dispute, that Guy Johnson is using his influence with the Mohawks against us, as well as the Superintendant of South-Carolina. These must be bribed by Administration, whose tools and pensioners they are.

† It is a received maxim, that he that employs an assassin is as bad as himself.

III. It is probable that the most will acknowledge, that the call to arms is alarming, but we are comparatively weak to Great Britain; an answer to this will bring us to the third thing under consideration, which was, to advance a few arguments to excite fortitude in martial engagements. And no argument is greater than our text, viz. “Remember the LORD is great and terrible.” All human aid is subject to disappointment, but when our dependance is on the almighty GOD, we may hope for success, for the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. *2 Chron. xvi: 9.* He gives us a glorious display of his assistance in the case of Abraham, who lifted up his hand to the most high GOD, and pursued the four kings with their numerous armies, and GOD delivered them into his hand, for he is great, and doth great and marvellous things in behalf of them that trust in him. Remember what the LORD has done in ages past: Israel were in the days of Saul sorely beset by the Philistines,—their hearts trembled at the formidable aspect of great Goliath of Gath; but GOD sends forth a youth, even a stripling, against this man of war, and soon we see the insulting foe lie prostrate at the feet of David. Call to mind what he did to the Assyrian host in the days of Hezekiah: with bitter taunts Rabshakeh reproaches Israel, threatening, that if they did not soon surrender, that he would oblige them to eat their own excrements and drink their own urine.—But behold the hand of the

LORD

LORD is with Israel, therefore an angel of death is sent, who smote the Assyrian camp, so that an hundred four score and five thousand were dead corps in the morning light. Kings and captains may boast great things, but **GOD** alone is truly great, and greatly to be feared; he doth his pleasure in the heavens above, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and all nations are as nothing in his sight. **GOD** is not only great, but terrible in his judgments; an instance we have in Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who was resolved to keep Israel in bondage, but was fatally disappointed in the red sea. His judgments are both great and various; how easy is it for **GOD** to baffle all the counsels of our enemies? how easily can he divide them, or raise up enemies that shall give them employment enough at home? So he delivered David in the wilderness of Maon. Our **GOD** is able to give us pity in the eyes of the nations around us, so that they will afford their aid, if required. If **GOD** be for us, who can be against us? We have great reason to bewail the sins of the land, yet the **LORD** has a people in it reserved for himself, and if this had been the case with Sodom, it would have been saved.—Our present dispute is just, our cause is good.—We have been as loyal subjects as any on earth;—at all times, when occasion called, we have contributed towards the expence of war, with liberal hands, beyond our power, even in their estimation. When we have been called to venture our lives in defence of our king and country, have we refused? No, verily; we have been willing to spill our precious blood.

blood. We have been charged with designs of independency: This possibly may be the event, but surely against our wills; the decent addresses to his Majesty, as well as all other prudential measures, are arguments in our favour. But all our measures are disregarded, the terms offered us are but a few degrees milder than what the Ammonites offered to Jabesh-Gilead. These poor men offered more than reason could ask, but nothing would serve, only for each to have his right eye put out—the terms were bad—tears flowed from every eye—wailings reached the ears of Saul, and the spirit of the LORD came on him. *1 Sam. xi: 6.* By the spirit of GOD here we may understand a martial spirit stirred up in Saul. He assembles all Israel, and makes a noble resistance, attended with a glorious victory over the enemy.—The spirit of GOD coming on him was a presage of success. And has not the same spirit come on us? A martial spirit from GOD has spread throughout the land. Surely, if this is not a heavy judgment, it is a presage of success. We are fully persuaded, that this spirit is not a judgment, because our cause is good, even in the sight of other States. To the Most High we can appeal, and submit the event to his pleasure. It is more than probable that we may meet with some defeats, and have much blood shed; but even if this should be the case, let us not be discouraged; for so it was with Israel in their first battles with Benjamin, but in the third battle the whole tribe of Benjamin is cut off, save six hundred men.

There

There is only one consideration that is very discouraging, and that is the great and many sins that prevail in our land. “Unfeignedly to confess and deplore “our many sins,” is recommended by our Congress as one duty of this day. And, alas! we have many great sins abounding in our land, for which we may justly bewail our case before GOD, some of which, it may not be amiss to mention here: but where shall I begin? There is one heaven daring and God provoking sin, which prevails even among many who otherwise are gentlemen, that is profaneness of language, in taking the tremendous name of GOD in vain. This is a sin of the first magnitude—men have the least excuse for it—no sense is gratified—it is attended with no profit—yet how common is it in almost every town and province! Remember that it is him, who is great and terrible, that says, he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Add to this, the dissolute debauchery, drunkenness, pride and excess which prevails in our land, and we shall not wonder that the LORD has a controversy with the kingdom. These and many other sins we have reason to bewail before GOD, and are the only discouragements in the present dispute. And if we are successful in our present struggle for liberty, we cannot expect to enjoy any lasting happiness without a reformation, and a life worthy of the glorious gospel.—Was the fear of GOD suitably in our hearts, we should be invincible; for if GOD be for us, who can be against us? But, alas! there seems but little concern about forsaking sin and

a saving acquaintance with GOD, though our present state is so alarming: All the horrors of a war is at hand—death is ready to triumph over his thousands, and are we still asleep in sin?—We are called to fight for our brethren, our sons and our daughters, our wives and our houses; and if GOD forsakes us, our slavery is sure.—Many trust too much on the arm of flesh; but let us place all our confidence in GOD, and use every prudential step. Nehemiah prays, but omits not the use of means, he sets a watch night and day to guard against the enemy, and every man is equipped for battle.

Thus, my hearers, I have considered every point which demanded our present attention. I hope that it has been made evident, that a defensive war is sinless, and consistent with the purest religion. This I can say, these arguments have removed all difficulties from my own breast. Seeing therefore, that it is sinless, and we are called to take the bloody weapons of death in hand, let not the expence of war discourage us. This indeed must be very great, but be it so; we fight not for present profit, no, our noble struggle is for liberty ~~itself~~, without which even life would be miserable—what though the half, nay the three parts, of our estates be lost, we shall have the fourth remaining;—our land is good, we can live. Providence can easily compensate our loss. And remember the LORD is great, matters may have a speedy issue; he can raise the spirit of the inhabitants of Great-Britain in our favour;—their
voice

voice shall reach the throne;—he is able to open the eyes of administration, or remove our enemies from about his Majesty, so that there may yet be a happy reconciliation with Great-Britain. We have considered the alarming call, which we have to take up arms;—let us unite as men possessed of a true sense of liberty. If any are not clear in conscience, let us not despise them I confess some are provoking, but mildness is our duty; that with well-doing we may silence the obstinacy of evil men.—On the whole, we are come to the unhappy state of a civil war, and I remember Bishop Burnet makes a remark to this effect, viz. “Of all calamities it is the greatest, for though we know where it begins, we know not where it shall end.”—If ever there was one time that called for more religion than another, this is the very time. And yet, alas! alas! how few are seeking God! how few are seeking their salvation, when death is even at the door, and all at stake! Let me therefore entreat you seriously to lay to heart the present state, and “remember the LORD, which is great and terrible.” *Amen.*

"

