

S E R M O N.

PREACHED BEFORE THE

ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE

ARTILLERY COMPANY,

IN BOSTON, JUNE 5, 1809,

BEING

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR

ELECTION OF OFFICERS,



BY JOHN FOSTER, A.M.

Minister of Brighton.



BOSTON,

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Monday, 5th June, 1809.

At a meeting of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, Voted unanimously, that Captain Melzar Holmes, Lt. Benjamin Coates, and Ensign Dexter Dana, be a committee to wait on Reverend Mr. Foster, thank him for the eloquent and patriotick discourse this day delivered before the Company, and request a copy for the press.

Attest, T. CLARK, Clerk.

A SERMON.

PROVERBS xxiv. 6.

BY WISE COUNSEL THOU SHALT MAKE THY WAR.

SOLOMON was a great and good man. Apart from the well attested fact, that his pen was guided by the unerring Spirit of truth, his extensive information, united to his ardent piety and exemplary virtue, give a high authority to his opinions. Intimately acquainted with the windings of the human heart, and the course of human affairs, all his knowledge was applied to the purposes of utility. He was no visionary theorist. Though pre-eminently versed in the learning of his time, and capable, beyond a doubt, as most philosophers of this enlightened age, of exploring the secrets of nature and art, practical wisdom was the object of his chief attention. In this he excelled. The maxims of prudence written with his hand, and transmitted to us, in the sacred volume, are admirably adapted to the various conditions and relations of our existence. The solitary individual, the active citizen, the zealous statesman, and the intrepid warrior may here find instruction,

pertinent to their respective circumstances, and worthy, at once, to engross their study, and to govern their conduct.

On occasions, like the present, he speaks in that appropriate language, “By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war”: language which intimates, in the first place, that cases may occur to render war both justifiable and necessary; and, in the second, teaches the manner, in which war is then to be commenced and prosecuted. These points we will briefly consider in the following discourse.

I. In the first place, cases may occur to render war both justifiable and necessary.

Why, else, is it mentioned in scripture but with unequivocal disapprobation? Why were the Jews so often permitted, and even commanded to assail and discomfit their enemies? And when the kingdom of God was about to appear, under a more pacifick and mild dispensation; and the soldiers asked its precursor, “What shall we do?” why did he not require them to renounce their profession entirely, instead of giving directions which presupposed their profession lawful? “He said unto them, Do violence,” or rather outrage, “to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.”*

“God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”† To each section of the globe he has assigned its local, and other advantages, and has made it the

* Luke iii. 14.

† Acts xvii. 26.

duty, as well as the right of its inhabitants to enjoy, improve, and defend them. Whilst suffered to dwell in safety, they have no warrant to invade or molest their neighbours. "Contests for power" are equally repugnant to the dictates of reason and the injunctions of revelation. We are not, however, to impute, nor to admit the imputation of this crime, indiscriminately. When we behold a nation struggling for her very existence, and jeoparding her best blood in the field of battle, for no other purpose, than to repel the aggressions of an aspiring, insatiable, despotick tyrant, humanity and religion demand, that we decidedly condemn the one, and devoutly "bid God speed" to the other.

Such spectacles, alas ! are not unfrequently exhibited on the theatre of the world. So malignant are the passions, and so boundless the ambition, which infest our apostate race, that no region of the earth can assure itself of undisturbed repose. Eager in pursuit of aggrandizement and wealth, commercial kingdoms and states, more especially, are liable to repeated collisions ; and in perpetual danger of committing or receiving injuries, which lead to open hostility. The extent, to which the art of navigation is now carried, and the avidity, with which every chance of acquiring property, influence, and territory is seized, expose the remotest climes to depredation. "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."* In whatever country the prospect of gain or renown is discovered, to that country will the cupidity of unprincipled adventurers and heroes be directed ; and the first fav-

* Matt. xxiv. 28.

ourable opportunity to attempt its subjugation, either by intrigue or by force, will be embraced.

“ Other animals,” says Pliny, “ live in peace with those of the same description. They gather themselves in troops, and unite against a common enemy. The ferocious lion fights not against his species : The poisonous serpent is harmless to his kind : The monsters of the sea prey but upon those fishes which differ from them in nature : Man alone is foe to man.”

It hence becomes the duty of every community to provide means of protection, and to appear in the attitude of readiness, should they be driven to the painful alternative, “ to fight for their brethren, their sons and their daughters, their wives and their houses.”† To shrink from the combat, in such an exigence, were a dereliction of every principle, both of piety and patriotism. It would betray equal ingratitude to God, and perfidy to our country. To God we are indebted for “ the good land” we possess, and for all the privileges, religious, civil, and literary, which distinguish our lot. This fair inheritance, bequeathed to us by fathers, who through life, yes, and in many instances, at the expense of life, defended it for their children, is now committed to our guardianship, in trust for “ the generation to come.”* And could we innocently abandon it, without an effort for its preservation? Could we innocently deprive unborn millions of their birth-right, and subject them to hereditary vassalage and misery?

Never may these United States incur the execration and ruin, denounced on ancient Meroz, “ because they

† Nehem. iv. 14.

* Ps. lxxviii. 4.

came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”* Never may they be lulled into a fatal security, by the Machiavelian policy of foreign courts, nor seduced into tame submission to a domestick soldiery, by the revival of that long exploded doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience. May they resolutely withstand encroachments of every kind, and from every source, and, under the benign influence of equal laws and pure religion, continue a free, independent, and happy people, “as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.”†

II. To this end, it is unspeakably important, that the measures resorted to for self defence, be well advised. Let us, therefore, turn our thoughts, as proposed, secondly, to the instruction before us, relative to the manner in which these measures are to be commenced and prosecuted. “By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war.”

When war is contemplated, the first questions which present themselves for solution respect its equity: Whether the motive which prompts it be guiltless; consistent with the obligations, under which we are laid to God and our fellow beings? Whether every previous step, tending to prevent a rupture, have been taken, and “the last drop in the cup of reconciliation exhausted?” Whether nothing more remain but abject prostration, or energetick repulsion? And, of course, whether an appeal to arms be unavoidable?

To solve these questions judiciously, the collected wisdom of a nation is always requisite. It is not

* Judges v. 23.

† Ps. lxxii. 5

enough that a select portion of the constituted authorities convene, in midnight conclave, to arrange schemes, leading to war ; and then propose them to their compeers, not to prove their expediency, but to vote their adoption : All parties ought to be consulted with candour ; all parties ought to be heard with patience. Light, as well as fire, may be elicited by the clash of different opinions. This is, possibly, the precise idea, which the wise king and preacher of Israel intended to convey, in the words immediately subsequent to our text : meaning a diversified, rather than a great number, when he said, “ In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” In the progress of such unrestrained discussion, it may appear that the moment of extremity has not yet arrived : that the alarm was artificially excited by minds prejudiced against one offending power, or obsequious to the will of another : And thus an immense sacrifice of blood and treasure may be prevented.

But suppose the worst : that it should be found absolutely necessary to enter the list with a formidable antagonist ; this advantage will, at least, be gained : The publick mind, set at ease by the procedure, will concur with far less reluctance, when every class of citizens have had their views and wishes fairly represented, and dispassionately canvassed.

This point being settled, the next, in order, is the process to be chosen : a point, to the righteous decision of which, a sacred regard to the unalterable rules of justice must be cherished. Injustice is not allowable toward the bitterest foe. That divine precept, “ Whatsoever ye

would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them,"* can, in no case, be violated without a crime. The modern sophism, that "the end justifies the means," is alike detestable in its nature and pernicious in its operation: It is totally opposite to the gospel of Christ, and contains a degree of turpitude, abhorrent to the moral sense of virtuous pagans.

When Themistocles had rebuilt Athens, "his wish was to make it the first city in Greece, and to secure to it that command, of which Sparta," a rival republic, "had shown too great a jealousy. The building of the harbour of Piræus; the procuring of a decree, which enabled him to add twenty ships to the fleet annually, with extraordinary privileges to encourage great numbers of labourers and sailors; were measures which bespoke his prudence, as the sea was the natural resource of Athens; but he did not stop there. One day, in a full assembly of the people, he requested that some person might be appointed to confer with him, upon a scheme of the greatest consequence, which was of such a nature as to require secrecy. The eyes of the whole assembly were instantly directed to Aristides, upon whose judgment they could depend. Themistocles communicated to him a project for burning the fleet of the allies, as an infallible means of making Athens the umpire of all Greece. The report of Aristides was such as virtue ought to dictate. He declared, that nothing could be more advantageous than the design of Themistocles; but, at the same time, nothing could be more iniqui-

* Matt. vii. 12.

“ tous. The votes were unanimously on the side of justice.

“ Whatever might be the opinion of Aristides,” continues the historian, “ the utility of the plan was much “ to be doubted. The states of Greece, most justly “ provoked, would not have hesitated to unite their “ whole power against a perjured city; the publick hatred “ must have followed, and all her glory have been forever “ annihilated. And what advantage could have com- “ pensated for the ruinous effects of such an undertak- “ ing ? If the proper end of politicks be to procure “ the happiness of nations, that end is not to be attain- “ ed but by adhering to the rules of morality : for “ every act of injustice leads to misfortune, were it on- “ ly from its being accompanied with certain infamy.”*

Compare this reasoning, or rather the determination, upon which it is founded, with sentiments often avowed, and practices sometimes adopted, “ in these last days ;” and you will find no special cause to glory in the preeminent wisdom or integrity of the present age. Instances have occurred, within our personal recollection, in which the detention and seizure of all the controllable vessels and wealth, pertaining either to the government or subjects of an obnoxious realm, have preceded every other hostile intimation. If I mistake not, propositions were once made in our national legislature to retaliate British spoliations, alleged to have been committed on our commerce, by sequestering all the debts due to individuals, belonging to that empire. But to the honour of those who then guided our councils, these proposi-

* Millot. vol. i. p. 157—8. Salem Edit. 1796

tions were rejected. We had then a greater than Aristides ; we had a Washington in the Presidential Chair.

War, commenced and prosecuted on christian principles, is not a mere "trial, which can do the other most harm." Even enemies have rights, and those rights are always to be respected. Nothing, whatever benefits it may seem to promise, is to be undertaken or achieved for their annoyance, but in subordination to the known will of God, and with the decided approbation of an unsophisticated conscience.

'But why,' some of my audience may be disposed to inquire, 'Why do you accost us in strains like these ? "Get you to the great men," who guide the car of state, 'and speak unto them ;'* for in their hands is the destiny and conduct of the nation.'

This is true in a qualified sense ; but not to such a degree as to supersede the necessity or the effects of your agency. In a government constituted like ours, no purpose can be carried into permanent execution unless "the people love to have it so."† Every citizen has his weight ; and if he throw that weight into the scale of righteousness ; if by his example, his advice, and his suffrage, he exclusively countenance men and measures propitious to the common weal, he may do much to lengthen the publick tranquillity.

Even we, my brethren, who minister in holy things, and serve at the altar, are not exempt from the duties of social and civil life, nor incapable of promoting the interests of our native land. The jewish priesthood often gave counsel, in matters intimately connected with the

* Jerem. v. 5.

† Jerem v. 31.

temporal prosperity and glory of the chosen tribes ; and were often instrumental of “ causing them to know the way wherein they should walk.” Now and then an Ahab, indeed, hated them, “ because they prophesied not good concerning him, but evil.”* This however did not dismay *them* ; nor let it terrify *us*. Possessing the same rights with others, and claiming neither emolument nor office from any administration ; destitute, therefore, of every inducement to swerve from the line of political rectitude, or to wish for a system of favouritism, I scruple not to affirm, that with *equal* honesty and information, we are entitled to *more* confidence than the generality of those around us. They are beset with temptations to partiality and selfishness in their decisions, which are, to us, unknown. Instead, then, of splitting into religious sects, and distracting ourselves or our flocks, with the dogmas of controversial divinity ; instead of harbouring suspicions and animosities towards each other, which we could hardly vindicate in contending armies, let us stand in our lot with firmness, and direct our united energies to the improvement and salvation of our beloved country. “ For our brethren and companions’ sakes, let us say, Peace be within her. Because of the house of the Lord our God, let us seek her good.”†

In the application of what has been said, we are called,

1. To lament the universal prevalence of those inordinate lusts, in which “ wars and fightings” originate.‡

Had innocence continued the inmate and ornament of our kind, nothing could have interrupted or destroyed

* 1 Kings, xxii. 28.

† Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.

‡ See James iv. 1.

our peace ; nothing could have “ separated between us and our God.”* But “ man, being in honour, abode not.”† Man perfidiously apostatized from his Maker, and exposed himself and his posterity to incalculable wretchedness.

By this deplorable catastrophe, our terrestrial abode was transformed from a paradise of bliss to a field of contest ; and “ the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now.”‡ The history of our species is fraught with details of violence and distress, of battles and “ garments rolled in blood.§”

But we need not search the records of antiquity, in quest of scenes like these. They abound, at this moment, in the world, and are visible to the most superficial observer. Europe, convulsed in every member, and bleeding at every pore, exhibits a spectacle of agony. “ The overflowing scourge” has already “ passed through” many of its fairest regions, and they are “ trodden down by it.”|| Others, seduced by the arts or invaded by the arms of a modern Attila,¶ are in imminent danger of a similar destruction.

“ O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth ;
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth ; shew thyself.

* Is. lix. 2.

† Ps. xlix. 12.

‡ Rom. viii. 22.

§ Is. ix. 5.

|| Is. xxviii. 18.

¶ The *ancient Attila* was a warlike barbarian, who, at the head of the Huns, spread devastation and terrour through the world, about the middle of the fifth century ; and who, on this account, was called “ *The scourge of God.*” His genius equalled his ambition. An artful politician and prudent general, notwithstanding his ardent courage, he had formed the most boundless plans of conquest ; had murdered his brother Bleda, that he might enjoy undivided dominion ; and subjected to his power an immense extent of country from the Baltic on one side, to the eastern ocean on the other. He had received ambassadours from China, hemmed in the Roman empire, and threatened to destroy it. Though destitute of every principle of religion,

Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth : Render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph ? How long shall they utter and speak hard things ? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves ? They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.”*

Let us not, however, presume to impeach the conduct and counsels of heaven. All these calamities are under the control of infinite wisdom and rectitude. “ Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth :”† and how majestick, how adorable does he appear, in the direction of its multifarious and complicated movements ! All the diversified springs of human action, and every source of human weal and wo are obsequious to his sovereign mandate ; constantly inspected by his omniscient eye ; and invariably guided by his resistless hand, to the accomplishment of holy and benevolent designs. “ Surely the wrath of man shall praise him, the remainder of wrath he shall restrain.”‡ Adventurous, assuming despots are “ the rod of his anger, and the staff in their hand is his indignation.” These he “ sends against hypocritical nations to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets ;” and when, by their instrumentality, he has “ performed his whole work upon the people of his wrath,” he commissions others to

he knew how to turn the vulgar superstition to his own advantage : The people believed his enterprises inspired by the god of battles, and this opinion heightened the courage and ferocity of his soldiers. The more he was courted, the more insolent he became. His pretensions increased in proportion to the proofs of cowardice which were given him, and a threat of war was often sufficient to obtain for him whatever he demanded. See Millot’s *Elem. Gen. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 346—7. Salem ed. 1796.

* Ps xciv. 1—6.

† Ps. lviii. 11.

‡ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

“punish the fruit of their stout hearts, and the glory of their high looks.”*

Such, how humiliating the melancholy truth ! such is the discipline, which, in many cases, the depravity of our fallen nature requires. Hence, my countrymen, we are admonished,

2. Of our particular exposure to the crimes and miseries of war.

“Subject to like passions,”† and prone, in common with the rest of mankind, to “emulation, wrath, and strife,”‡ by a just retribution of divine providence, “our own wickedness may correct us.”§ Infatuated by the thirst of dominion, the desire of revenge, or “the love of money which is the root of all evil,”|| we may become aggressors, and madly engage in conflicts ruinous in their tendency and result : And have we made no advances toward this fatal precipice of degeneracy, whence so many once splendid monarchies, empires, and republicks have fallen headlong ?

Scarcely had we attained to independence, adopted the federal constitution, and begun to realize the blessings anticipated from these sources, when, as the unexpected eruption of a volcano, after long confinement and accumulation, instantly darkens the air with its suffocating smoke, overspreads the earth with its burning lava, and terrifies the most distant observer with its ominous belches ; the French revolution at once disgorged the collected depravity of ages, and diffused consternation and disorder through the civilized world. The tremendous shock was felt even to this western hemisphere,

* See Is. x. 5, 6, 7, 12.

† Gal. v. 20.

§ Jerem. ii. 19.

† Acts xiv. 15.

|| 1 Tim. vi. 10.

and deplorable indeed were its effects. Taking an imprudent and needless interest in the event, we contemplated deeds of horror, till they ceased to excite our aversion, as when rarely witnessed ; and, till some among us were not ashamed to speak of them in terms of applause and gratulation ! The doctrines of disorganization and impiety so incessantly sounded in our ears, that their deformity was unperceived by many, and a baleful reaction of the demoralizing influence of the late war was produced and heightened. By exaggerated colourings of the bigotry, superstition, and tyranny of former times, on the one hand ; and of the enlightened liberty and equality of the present, on the other, a portentous sanction was given to licentious principles and manners ; and multitudes were emboldened to promise themselves peace, whilst “ they walked in the imagination of their hearts.”* Yea, the publick at large, from the obvious tendency of familiarity with examples of vice, were imperceptibly led to regard them with diminished abhorrence ; and, at length, either for want of inclination, or through a persuasion of its impracticability, seem to have abandoned all attempts to stem the torrent, and fix the stigma of disgrace on dissolute characters. Such characters, therefore, appear with boldness ; and as they are not uniformly frowned into retirement, but, in various instances caressed and promoted, they redouble their exertions to propagate opinions and customs, repugnant alike to personal virtue and social harmony. The spread of infidelity, irreligion, and rancorous party zeal is the consequence.

* Deut. xxix. 19.

“ Shall I not visit for these things ? saith the Lord : and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?* These things naturally tend to evil, and that continually. Unless repentance and amendment arrest their progress, they may betray us into alliances, or contentions, or both, of the most dreadful description : They may impel us rashly to “ help the ungodly, and to love them that hate the Lord.”†

This, though our greatest, is not our only danger. Could we challenge the most irreproachable character as a people, such may be the rapacity and injustice of surrounding nations, as to render war inevitable. Since the commotions which have so long agitated Europe, there have been periods, when numbers pronounced it expedient and proper to commence hostilities against one or another of the leading belligerents. Recently have we been alarmed by rumours, and even by proceedings tending to this issue. But blessed be God, who “ turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever he will,”‡ and “ from whom cometh our help,§ the snare is broken, and we are escaped, as a bird out of the hand of the fowler.¶ The counsel of the froward is carried headlong ; the wise are taken in their own craftiness ;”|| and the bright prospect of continued amity ; of a mutually beneficial intercourse with the land of our fathers’ sepulchres ; and of returning prosperity to thousands of our fellow citizens, who have groaned under privations without a parallel, suddenly rises to our view ; relieves our boding apprehensions ; and cheers our desponding minds.

* Jerem. v. 9.
§ Ps. cxxi. 1.

† 2 Chron. ii. 19. 2.
¶ Ps. cxxiv. 7.

‡ Prov. xxi. 1.
|| Job v. 13.

Whether war, on our part, would have been justifiable at any of the periods to which I have now alluded, is not a question for me to decide : That it was not necessary, and would, therefore, have been impolitick, facts have proved. Hitherto a gracious providence has intelligibly addressed us, in the language of the inspired levite to Jehosaphat of old : “ Ye shall not need to fight in this battle ; set yourselves, stand ye, and see the salvation of the Lord.”* Jehosaphat accordingly placed himself in a posture of defence, and awaited the event ; in which the nations, by whom his kingdom was threatened, fell upon each other with such violence, that he had no other task to perform than to “ take away the spoil.”†

Instructed by this record, and in the hope of a similar result, is it not our wisdom as well as our duty to occupy neutral ground ? It is not to be dissembled that the most impartial and equitable course, of which we are capable, may fail of correspondent returns. Our commerce may still be obstructed. The magnanimous policy of England may not be readily adopted by France ; where the evil first originated, and where, it seems, we are last to look for reparation. We may again be insolently required to act either as friends or enemies to “ the terrible nation ;” and notwithstanding all our endeavours to the contrary, we may be compelled, by these, or by other causes, within, and even beyond the limits of our present apprehensions, to unsheath the sword and assert our violated rights. I, therefore, remark.

* 2. Chron. xx. 17.

† Ib. ver. 25

3. The obligation, inferred on us, to be habitually prepared for war.

I do not mean to insinuate the propriety of a standing army in time of peace, for any purpose ; and least of all for the purpose of enforcing oppressive laws, at the point of the bayonet. What I intend is, that all governments ought, as far as in them lies, to provide resources to meet every exigence, and to repulse every invader.

It has long been the opinion of our greatest men, that armed vessels, constructed not for *shoal water*, but to live at sea, are indispensable to the protection and glory of our country. Mr. Jefferson, late President of the United States, once reasoned upon this subject, in the following manner : “ Wars must sometimes be our lot ;
“ and all the wise man can do, will be to avoid that half
“ of them which would be produced by our own follies
“ and our own acts of injustice ; and to make for the
“ other half the best preparations we can. Of what nature should these be ? A land army would be useless
“ for offence, and not the best nor safest instrument of
“ defence. For either of these purposes, the sea is the
“ field on which we should meet an European nation.
“ On that element it is necessary we should possess
“ some power.”*

In exact accordance with this reasoning, when “ in the full tide of successful experiment,” we had an infant navy ; and nothing contributed more to swell and dignify the flood. Why was it destroyed in the cradle ?... At a season equally perilous with any which has since arrived, it enabled us to maintain our rights on the

* Notes on Virginia by Thomas Jefferson. p. 239, 240. Boston Ed. 1802.

ocean, and to preserve the honour of our flag in every clime.

Can it admit of a question whether the same cause might have produced the same effect, and saved us from the accumulated distresses of the late embargo? It would have been far less expensive; and who will venture to affirm, that it could have been more degrading?

Beside a naval force for the security of trade, military arrangements to defend the coast and territory are apparently requisite; and the politician, who is more solicitous to improve roads, than to fortify harbours, will seldom meet the approbation, or advance the prosperity of a commercial people. It is desirable, nevertheless, that these military arrangements should be of a nature, as far as possible, to combine the citizen with the soldier.

Here we are constrained to recognise the wisdom and patriotism of our pious ancestors. Tenacious of the liberty, in quest of which they had bid adieu to their native soil; committed themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves, or rather to the guidance of Him, whom the winds and waves obey;* and sought an asylum in a newly discovered and unfrequented wilderness; among the earliest of their institutions was a martial academy,† which, pursuant to its original design, has been productive of numerous benefits to their descendants. From this academy, have successively gone forth men, expert in tactics, and disseminated the same useful science among their brethren, in different quarters of their own, and the adjoining states. Hence,

* See Matt. viii. 27. Mark iv. 41. and Luke viii. 25.

† The Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company was incorporated A.D. 1638, only two years after the founding of Harvard College.

the decided superiority of our militia, in discipline and evolution, to that of any part of the Union, or even of the world. Many of our ablest revolutionary officers have graced the rolls and ranks of this select fraternity.

How important, then, is the station, and how responsible the trust, assigned to you, gentlemen, who compose the chosen band, so justly styled “The Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company !”

Permit me, in conclusion, while I congratulate you on the anniversary occasion of your assembling, and cordially wish you “a blessing out of the house of the Lord,”* to recommend a conduct becoming those, who “ask of him the ordinances of justice, and take delight in approaching to God.”†

Few corporate bodies are under better advantages for extensive usefulness. The rank you hold, is accompanied with power and opportunity to contribute much to the real dignity and welfare of society, and to the correction of certain erroneous sentiments and customs which prevail in “this untoward generation.”‡ Ought you not, therefore, at the same time that you “lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty,”§ to frown upon every practice which tends to induce or confirm a persuasion, that the christian and military character are incompatible? Ought you not, especially, to bear your joint testimony against the atrocious crime of duelling? A crime, more frequent, perhaps, in our country, than in any other civilized or barbarous region of the globe ! a crime, not confined, as elsewhere, to

* Ps. cxviii. 26.

† Acts ii. 40.

‡ Is. lviii. 2.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

camp; but perpetrated by statesmen, merchants, planters, and even slaves !‡

The awful idea of blending, in one rash act, the daring guilt of suicide and murder ; of rushing himself, or of precipitating another into an endless eternity, unprepared, might be sufficient, it should seem, to stay the most vengeful hand from blood ! But, unfortunately, it is not the morality of the deed, nor its future recompence, but the estimation of sinful dust and ashes, by which combatants of this sort are governed. They recoil from the imputation of a spiritless pusillanimity !... Is it then demonstrative of a noble mind, in defiance of that dread Being “ who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,”* to engage in a contest, which the laws of the realm have denounced as a capital offence ; and which, without the most cautious artifice to evade those laws, must subject the survivor to the pangs of an ignominious death ? To put every thing dear to humanity at hazard, for the sake of escaping the breath of popular reproach.... Is it bold and valorous, like a rational creature ? or is it cowardly and timid, like “ the horse or the mule, which having no understanding,”† leaps the rocky precipice at the rustling of fallen, corrupted leaves,

‡ Few, who are at the pains to peruse these pages, will fail to recollect, that, among the many other accounts of duels, recorded in our publick papers, one, at least, has appeared, of two *negroes* at the southward, who proved themselves capable of all the *sensibility and courage* necessary to deliberate single combat. True, indeed, instead of *swords and pistols*, they fought with *sithes*, weapons previously agreed upon in arranging the *affair of honour*. But had they possessed the means, it can hardly be made a question, whether they would *gladly* have been *as fashionably equipped, as fashionably attended, and as fashionably dressed too*, as any of their *bettors*, on like honourable occasions. Be this, however, as it may : in the *main point* they were not *deficient*. They assailed each other with as much obstinacy, and the successful *hero* killed his antagonist as *completely dead*, as the *gentlees* : *duellist* of the age could possibly have done.

* Matt. x. 28

† Ps. xxxii. 9.

whirled in the wind? Is it patriotick, is it generous, is it even manly, for a personal insult or abuse, to demand the sacrifice of a life due to the publick, and necessary to the subsistence and comfort of a rising family; and to insist on piercing the victim, through the heart of a doting parent, an affectionate wife, or a defenceless offspring?

“O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united! for in their anger they slay men, and in their self will they dig down” the barriers of domestick and social peace. “Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel.”*

Is it not devoutly to be wished, that all classes of the community would combine their efforts to discountenance and punish this nefarious usage? May it not be expected that our civil fathers, among their other deliberations for the general good, will turn their serious attention to the subject? God, in mercy, lead them to the discovery and application of a prompt and efficacious remedy.

Some instances of a magnanimous superiority to this impious and absurd practice have appeared in our land. The venerable Pinckney,† famed alike as a brave general, an able ambassadour, and an enlightened statesman, a few years since,‡ proposed a resolution to the Cincinnati, the object of which was to encourage and bind the members of that association, on no pretence

* Gen. xlix. 6, 7.

† It can hardly be necessary to inform the reader that the Honourable Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, esq. the late federal candidate for the Presidential chair is intended.

‡ In 1804

whatever, to give or accept a challenge. In perfect coincidence with the virtuous principle, thus publicly avowed by this great man, a distinguished national legislator, from Massachusetts, has lately honoured himself and his constituents, by withstanding every provocation to single combat.

Give your sanction, Gentlemen, to this laudable example, and save your own, and the bosom companions of your brethren, both in arms and arts, from the dread and danger of untimely widowhood. Your history, so far at least as it is known to me, is yet free from the stain of fraternal slaughter. Continue, I beseech you, to preserve this distinction ; and cultivate every other virtue, which adorned your founders. Seek your individual glory, in the blessings, procured by your prowess for the nation ; and voluntarily hold your swords on the terms prescribed by Washington, in the bequest of his :†
 “Not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding
 “blood, except in your own defence, or in defence of
 “your country’s rights ; and in the latter case to keep
 “them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in your
 “hands, to the relinquishment thereof.”

Never “set up your banners, but, in the name of the Lord : Through him alone you can do valiantly ; for he it is that shall tread down your enemies.”* Attend his call therefore ; and, at his call “Be courageous, and play the men for your people, and for the cities of your God : and the Lord do what seemeth him good.”†

† See Washington’s last will.

* Ps. xx. 5. and lx. 12.

† 2. Sam. x. 12

APPENDIX.



A list of those, who have preached on this anniversary, collected, principally, from the records of the Company ; and added by desire of the Historical Society.

	<i>By whom.</i>	<i>Of what place.</i>	<i>Text.</i>
1638			
9			
1640			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
1650			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9	Rev. John Norton,	Boston.	
1660	Whiting, sen.	Lynn.	
1	Samuel Ward,	Ipswich.	
2	[John] Higginson,	[Salem.]	
3			
4			
5			
6	Edmund Brown,		
7	Samuel Danforth,	Roxbury.	
8	John Wilson,	Boston.	
9	Samuel Torrey,	Weymouth.	
1670	John Oxenbridge,	Boston.	
1	Thomas Thacher,	Do.	
2	Urian Oakes,	Cambridge.	Romans viii. 37.
3	Seaborn Cotton,	[Hampton.]	
4	Joshua Moodey,	[Portsmouth.]	
5	Samuel Phillips,		
6	Samuel Willard,	Boston.	Proverbs iv. 23.
7	Josiah Flynt,	Dorchester.	
8	Samuel Nowell,		Gen. iv. 14.
9	Bulkley,		
1680	William Adams,	[Dedham.]	
1	John Richardson,		Luke iii. 14.
2	Samuel Whiting.		

	<i>By whom.</i>	<i>Of what place.</i>	<i>Text.</i>
3	John Hales,		
4	Samuel Cheever,	Marblehead.	Hebrews ii. 10.
5	Joshua Moody,	[Boston.]	Proverbs xvi. 32.
☞ <i>An intermission of five years, under Sir Edmond Andross, Governor</i>			
1691	Cotton Mather,	Boston.	
2	John Bailey,	Watertown.	
3	John Danforth,	Dorchester.	
4	Moses Fiske,	Braintree.	
5	Peter Thacher,	Milton.	
6	Michael Wigglesworth,	Malden.	
7	Nehemiah Walter,	Roxbury.	
8	Joseph Belcher,	Dedham.	1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.
9	Samuel Willard,	Boston.	1 Kings ix. 22.
1700	Benjamin Wadsworth,	Do.	Isaiah iii. 2.
1	Ebenezer Pemberton,	Do.	
2	Benjamin Colman,	Do.	
3	Grindall Rawson,	Mendon.	
4	Henry Gibbs,	Watertown.	
5	Thomas Bridge,	Boston.	
6	Rowland Cotton,	[Sandwich.]	
7	Cotton Mather,	Boston.	
8	Samuel Danforth,	Taunton.	
9	Ebenezer Pemberton,	Boston.	
1710	Increase Mather,	Do.	
1	Nehemiah Walter,	Roxbury.	
2	Peter Thacher,	Weymouth.	
3	Samson Stoddard,	Chelmsford.	
4	Joseph Sewall, D. D.	Boston.	
5	Joseph Stevens,	Charlestown.	
6	Joseph Baxter,	Medfield.	
7	Thomas Blowers,	Beverly.	
8	John Barnard,	Marblehead.	
9	John Webb,	Boston.	Eccles. viii. 8.
1720	Thomas Symmes,	Bradford.	1 Chron. xii. 33.
1	Thomas Prince,	Boston.	Psalms cxxii. 6.
2	William Cooper,	Do.	Psalms xlv. 3, 4, 5.
3	Thomas Foxcraft,	Do.	1 Chron. v. 18, 19, 20.
4	Ebenezer Thayer,	Roxbury.	1 Timothy vi. 12.
5	Samuel Checkley,	Boston.	2 Samuel xxii. 35.
6	John Swift,	Framingham.	Acts x. 7.
7	William Waldron,	Boston.	2 Samuel x. 12.
8	Ebenezer Gay,	Hingham.	Zechariah i. 8.
9	William Welstead,	Boston.	Isaiah lv. 4.
1730	John Hancock,	Lexington.	Proverbs xxi. 31.
1	James Allin,	Brookline.	Ephes. vi. 12, 13.
2	Oliver Peabody,	Natick.	2 Samuel i. 18.
3	Nathaniel Appleton,	Cambridge.	James iv. 1.
4	Charles Chauncy, D. D.	Boston.	Judges xviii. 27, 28.
5	Hull Abbot,	Charlestown.	Exodus xv. 3.
6	Peter Clark,	Salem village.	1 Cor. xvi. 13.
7	Wm. Williams,	Weston.	Eccles. ix. 18.
8	Benjamin Colman,	Boston.	Isaiah xi. 10.
9	Samuel Mather,	Do.	1 Samuel xvii. 39.
1740	Mather Byles,	Do.	1 Samuel xvii. 45.
1	Samuel Phillips,	Andover.	Judges v. 18.
2	John Taylor,	Milton.	Proverbs xvi. 32.

	<i>By whom.</i>	<i>Of what place.</i>	<i>Text</i>
1743	William Hooper,	Boston.	Galatians vi. 4.
4	Joseph Parsons,	Bradford.	2 Samuel xvii. 8.
5	Thomas Prentice,	Charlestown.	Isaiah lxiii. 1.
6	Nathaniel Walter,	Roxbury.	2 Timothy iv. 7, 8.
7	William Hobbs,	Reading.	Psalms lxxviii. 9, 10.
8	Samuel Dunbar,	Stoughton.	Hebrews xi. 32, 33, 34.
9	Ellis Gray,	Boston.	Micah iv. 34.
1750	Andrew Eliot, D. D.	Do.	2 Chron. vi. 7, 8.
1	Samuel Cooper,	Do.	2 Kings v. 1.
2	Ebenezer Bridge,	Chelmsford.	Acts x. 1, 2.
3	Samuel Cooke,	Cambridge.	1 Samuel xvii. 38, 39.
4	Samuel Porter,	Sherburne.	Romans xii. 18.
5	Thaddeus Maccarty,	Worcester.	Psalms lxxviii. 30.
6	Ebenezer Pemberton,	Boston.	Hebrews xi. 34.
7	Samuel Checkley, jun.	Do.	Isaiah lxiii. 4, 5.
8	Thomas Barnard,	Salem.	Isaiah liv. 16, 17.
9	Amos Adams,	Roxbury.	Matthew x. 34.
1760	Josiah Sherman,	Woburn.	Psalms cxlix. 6.
1	Jason Haven,	Dedham.	Proverbs xvi. 33.
2	Samuel Locke,	Sherburne.	
3	Thomas Balch,	Dedham.	Daniel iv. 35.
4	Samuel Woodward,	Weston.	
5	Gad Hitchcock,	Pembroke.	
6	John Brown,	Hingham.	
7	Daniel Shute,	Do.	Eccles. ix. 18.
8	Jonas Clark,	Lexington.	2 Chron. xvii. 16.
9	Phillips Payson,	Chelsea.	Psalms cxliv. 1.
1770	Samuel Stillman,	Boston.	2 Timothy ii. 3.
1	Eli Forbes,	Brookfield.	Exodus xv. 3.
2	Nathaniel Robbins,	Milton.	Psalms cxxii. 8.
3	Simeon Howard,	Boston.	Gal. v. 1.
4	John Lathrop, D. D.	Do.	Romans xii. 48.
☞ No sermon preached from 1775 to 1786, inclusively.			
1787	John Clarke,	Boston.	Isaiah iv. 5.
8	David Osgood,	Medford.	
9	Thomas Barnard,	Salem.	Isaiah xi. 13.
1790	Jonathan Homer,	Newton.	1 Chron. xii. 33.
1	Samuel Parker,	Boston.	
2	Joseph Eckley,	Do.	Psalms lxxxv. 11.
3	Peter Thacher, D. D.	Do.	Judges xviii. 7.
4	Samuel West,	Do.	2 Timothy ii. 2.
5	John T. Kirkland,	Do.	Psalms lxxvi. 10.
6	William Bentley,	Salem.	Proverbs xxx. 5, 6.
7	Henry Ware,	Hingham.	1 Cor. xii. 25.
8	Nathaniel Thayer,	Lancaster.	Proverbs xvi. 32.
9	William Emerson,	Harvard.	Psalms cxlix. 6.
1800	David Kellogg,	Framingham.	Judges vii. 18.
1	John S. Popkin,	Boston.	Nehemiah iv. 17.
2	Abiel Abbot,	Haverhill.	Eph. v. 29.
3	Jedidiah Morse,	Charlestown.	Psalms lxxvii. 5.
4	Joseph Tuckerman,	Chelsea.	Matthew xi. 19.
5	Thaddeus M. Harris,	Dorchester.	1 Peter i. 10, 11.
6	James Kendall,	Plymouth.	2 Chron. xxxii. 5, 6, 7, 8.
7	Thomas Baldwin,	Boston.	Mark xiii. 7.
8	Leonard Woods,	Newbury.	Hebrews ii. 10.
9	John Foster,	Brighton.	Proverbs xxiv. 6.

OFFICERS, 1808—1809.

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Mr. BENJAMIN COATES, *Lieutenant*.
Mr. DEXTER DANA, *Ensign*.
General JOHN WINSLOW, *Treasurer*.
Captain THOMAS CLARK, *Clerk*.

OFFICERS, 1809—1810.

Major PETER OSGOOD, *Captain*.
Mr. JEREMIAH GARDNER, *Lieutenant*.
Mr. ISAAC P. SIMPSON, *Ensign*.
General JOHN WINSLOW, *Treasurer*.
Captain THOMAS CLARK, *Clerk*.