

these natural evils, or His love, that He would suffer us to be afflicted without a purpose. They are, it is true, the consequence of sin; but be assured they are designed also to be its remedy. They are designed to be the faint images, as it were, and to shadow forth more fearful vengeance, more extreme sufferings, more grievous punishment. They are designed especially to remind the waverers, the doubting, the hesitating, that, "verily there is a God which judgeth the earth."

But why need I dwell upon these limited warnings? The very purpose of our being here assembled appeals more powerfully still to the same truth. Carry yourselves back in imagination but a few months. Little more than a year ago, and peace smiled over all the earth. A glorious vision of universal brotherhood dawned upon the minds of men; the gentle bonds of common interests and common wants seemed to draw nations together; and the only occupation of their rulers was to develop their resources, to encourage their peaceful pursuits, to foster the arts and sciences, and to elevate the minds of the people by the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the ordinances of religion. Then arose the small cloud in the East, no larger than a man's hand, which quickly spread over and darkened the whole horizon. And now four of the mightiest nations of the world are arrayed in arms; the fate of Europe is trembling in the balance; and even at this moment, it may be, the torch of war has been lighted afresh; that torch which, once kindled, will not be extinguished until it has been quenched in the blood of millions of our fellow creatures. Who does not remember the strong feelings of enthusiasm and confidence with which England entered upon the war? Who does not recall the sailing of that matchless fleet beneath whose fire the granite fortresses of the Baltic were to crumble into dust? Who did not dwell upon the details of the departure of our gallant troops, in all the flush of health and strength, in all the pride and pomp of martial array? Not a doubt overshadowed the general exultation; not a passing cloud obscured the nation's confidence. But, my brethren, was this entirely the right spirit in which a Christian nation ought to enter upon a great, though just and necessary war? Was there not too much reliance on the arm of flesh? Did we not trust too much in our own strength, and think too little of that Almighty Being, who ruleth in the