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Alexander Campbell, Address on War

Alexander Campbell

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ADDRESS ON WAR.

WHEELING, VA., 1848.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :—

Has one Christian nation a right to wage war against another Christian nation?

On propounding to myself, and much more to you, my respected auditors, this momentous question, so affecting the reputation and involving the destiny of our own country and that of the Christian world, I confess that I rather shrink from its investigation than approach it with full confidence in my ability to examine it with that intelligence and composure so indispensable to a satisfactory decision. With your indulgence, however, I will attempt, if not to decide the question, at least to assist those who, like myself, have often, and with intense interest, reflected on the desolations and horrors of war, as indicated in: the sacrifice of human life, the agonies of surviving relatives, the immense expenditures of a people's wealth, and the inevitable deterioration of public morals, invariably attendant on its existence and career. If, with Dr. Dick, of Scotland, we should put down its slain victims to the minimum of 14,000,000,000, or, with Burke, of Ireland, at the maximum of 35,000,000,000, or take the mean of 24,500,000,000, what imagination could picture all the miseries and agonies inflicted upon the slain and upon their surviving relatives and friends? And who could compute the wealth expended in the support of those immense armies whose butchered millions can never be exactly computed? If Great Britain alone, from the revolution in 1688 to the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815—during her seven years' wars, occupying sixty-five years of one hundred and twenty-seven—expended the sum of £2,023,000,000 sterling—more than \$10,100,000,000—a sum much more easily expressed than comprehended by even the most accomplished financier—how can we compute the aggregate expenditures of all the battles fought and wars carried on during a period of some five thousand

years? Yet these millions slain and these millions expended are the least items in its desolations, to the mind of an enlightened Christian philanthropist. When we attempt to reflect upon one human being in the amplitude and magnitude of his whole destiny, in a world that has no limit, and also survey the capacities and susceptibilities of his nature according to the Christian revelation, how insignificant are the temporal and passing results of any course of action, compared with those which know neither measure nor end! How important, then, it is that, in investigating a subject whose bearings on society arithmetic cannot compute nor language express, we approach it with a candid and unprejudiced temper, and examine it with a profound and concentrated devotion of our minds to all that history records, philosophy teaches and religion enjoins!

But, before entering upon the proper examination of this question, it may be of much importance to a satisfactory issue that we examine the terms in which it is expressed. More than half the discussions and controversies of every age are mere logomachies, verbose wranglings about the terminology of the respective combatants; and more than half the remainder might be compressed into a very diminutive size, if, in the beginning, the parties would agree on the real issue, on the proper terms to express and define them.

As public faith or commercial credit, founded upon an equivocal currency, on its exposure suddenly shrinks into ruinous dimensions, at once blighting the hopes and annihilating the fortune of many a bold adventurer, so many a false and dangerous position, couched in ambiguous terms, when pruned of its luxuriant verbiage, divested of its captivating but delusive elocution, and presented in an intelligible, definite and familiar attitude, is at once reprobated as unworthy of our reception and regard.

On comparing the literature and science of the current age with those of former times, we readily discover how much we owe to a more rigid analysis and a more scrupulous adoption of the technical terms and phrases of the old schools, to which the whole world at one time looked up as the only fountains of wisdom and learning. When submitted to the test of a more enlightened criticism, many of their most popular and somewhat cabalistic terms and phrases have been demonstrated to be words without just or appropriate ideas, and have been "nailed to the counter" as spurious coin; others, however, like pure metal in antique forms, have been sent to the mint, recast and made to receive the impress of a more enlightened and accomplished age.

The rapid progress and advancement of modern science is, I presume,

owing to a more rational and philosophical nomenclature and to the more general use of the inductive system of reasoning, rather than to any superior talent or more aspiring genius possessed either by our contemporaries or our immediate predecessors.

Politics, morals and religion—the most deservedly engrossing themes of every age—are, in this respect, unfortunately behind the other sciences and arts cultivated at the present day. We are, however, pleased to see a growing conviction of the necessity of a more apposite, perspicuous and philosophical verbal apparatus in several departments of science, and especially to witness some recent efforts to introduce a more improved terminology in the sciences of government, morality and religion.

To apply these preliminary remarks to the question of this evening, it is important to note with particular attention the popular terms in which we have expressed it,—viz. :—

“*Has one Christian nation a right to wage war against another Christian nation?*”

We have prefixed no epithet to *war* or to *right*, while we have to the word *nation*. We have not defined the *war* as *offensive* or *defensive*. We have not defined the *right* as *human* or *divine*. But we have chosen, from the custom of the age, to prefix *Christian* to *nation*. The reasons for this selection and arrangement of terms shall appear as we proceed.

First, then, had we prefixed the word *offensive* to the word *war*, we would, on proving that a Christian nation had no right to wage an offensive war, be obliged to institute another question, and to ask, Can a Christian nation wage a defensive war against another Christian nation?—thereby implying that one Christian nation might be the aggressor and another the aggrieved. But we cannot without great difficulty imagine such a thing as a Christian nation carrying on an aggressive war. We, therefore, simplify the discussion by placing in the proposition the naked term *war*. Nor shall we spend our time in discussing the political right of one nation to wage war against another nation, and then ask whether they have a divine right. Indeed, the latter generally implies the former; for, if a nation have a divine right, it either has or may have a political or moral right to do so.

But we must inquire into the appropriateness of the term *Christian* prefixed to *nation*—for popular use has so arranged these terms; and the controversy, either expressly or impliedly, as now-a-days occasionally conducted in this country, is, *Has one Christian nation a right*

to wage war against another *Christian* nation? But, as we assume nothing, we must ask the grave and somewhat startling question—Is there a *Christian* nation in the world? or have we a definite idea of a *Christian* nation? We have, indeed, had, for many centuries past, many nations called *Christian* nations; but we must fearlessly ask, At what font were they baptized? Who were their godfathers? In what record are their sponsors registered? Ay, these, indeed, are preliminary questions that demand a grave and profound consideration. That there are many nations that have Christian communities in them is a proposition which we most cheerfully and thankfully admit. By a common figure of speech, we also give to that which contains any thing the name of the thing contained in it. Thus, rhetorically, we call one edifice a college; another, a bank; a third, a church; not because the brick and mortar, the plank and nails, constitute a college, a bank, a church, but because these buildings contain these institutions. So we have—if any one contend for the name—as many Christian nations as we have Christian communities in different nations, and as many Jewish nations as we have nations with Jewish synagogues in them, and as many Mohammedan nations as we have nations containing mosques in them. But, according to this rhetorical figure, we may have a Christian and a Jewish nation, or a Christian and a Mohammedan nation, in one and the same nation, as we sometimes find both a Jewish and a Christian synagogue in the same nation. But a rhetorical Christian nation and a proper and unfigurative Christian nation are very different entities. A proper literal Christian nation is not found in any country under the whole heavens. There is, indeed, *one* Christian nation, composed of all the Christian communities and individuals in the whole earth. The Apostle Peter, in one letter addressed to all the Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia—though “*strangers*” or *aliens* in these respective nations—calls them, collectively, “*a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people.*” In strict logical and grammatical truth, there is not, of all the nations of the earth, one properly called a Christian nation. Therefore, we have never had, as yet, one Christian nation waging war against another Christian nation. Before any one, then—no matter what his learning or talents may be—can answer the great interrogatory now in discussion, he must form a clear and well-defined conception of what constitutes a *nation* and what constitutes a *Christian*.

We have very high Roman authority for defining a *nation*—from *nascor*. Pardon me for quoting it:—*Genus hominum qui non aliunde*

venerunt, sed ibi nati sunt; which, in our vernacular, means, a race or tribe of men who have not come from abroad, but live where they were born. Being a Roman word, derived from natural birth, a Roman author has the best right to define it. Now, a Christian is not one born where he lives: he is born from above, as all Christians of all parties admit. Therefore, no nation, *as such*, as respects either its natural birth or its constitution, can with any show of truth or reason be called a Christian nation. When any one produces the annals of a nation whose constitution was given by Jesus Christ, and whose citizens are all born of God spiritually, as well as of man physically, I will at once call it, in good faith, without a figure, a true, proper and literal Christian nation.

Now, although we have this advantage, which no one can take from us, and conceded, too, by all the literary and Christian authorities in Christendom, we will not build on it alone—nor at all. We will not have it said that we carry our definition by a grammatical or rhetorical decision of the great question. We appeal to all our public documents, without regard to party. We appeal to all our elementary and most profound writers on the subject of nationality. Nay, we appeal to the common views of this whole community. Have we not a church and a state in every State in the Union, and in every European nation? Do not all belong to the state or nation, and a part only, and that often a small part, to the church? Is not the bond of political union *blood*, or *naturalization*? Is not the bond of union in the Christian kingdom faith, or the new birth? What nation is there whose citizens, or a majority of them, are Christians? Not one—even in profession.

But there is a reflex light of Christianity—a moralizing and a civilizing influence as well as a direct and soul-redeeming radiance, which imparts to those nations that have the oracles of God a higher standard of moral excellence, a more discriminating conscientiousness and a more elevated national character; which, in contrast with Pagan nations, obtains for them the honorary distinction of *Christian nation*. Still, as nations, or states, the spirit and character of the nation are *anti-Christian*. A community of Jews in New York or New Orleans, even were they naturalized citizens of the United States, would not impart to those cities an American or Gentile spirit, nor would they impart to our nation a Jewish spirit or character. They would still be Jews and we Americans.

The American nation, *as a nation*, is no more in spirit Christian than were Greece and Rome when the apostle planted churches in Corinth, Athens, or in the metropolis of the empire, with Cæsar's household in it. Roman policy, valor, bravery, gallantry, chivalry, are of as much

praise, admiration and glory, in Washington and London, as they were in the very centre of the Pagan world in the days of Julius or Augustus Cæsar. We worship our heroes because of their martial and Roman virtue. *Virtue*, in the Roman language, was only a name for bravery or courage. Such was its literal meaning. With a Roman it was queen of all the graces and of all moral excellencies. It raised from plebeian to patrician rank, and created military tribunes, decemvirs, triumvirs, dictators, consuls, kings, emperors. With us it cannot make a king, but may, perhaps, a third time make for us a President. If, indeed, it does not yet make for us a king, we shall blame the soil, not the culture. Kings cannot grow in America. But under our free and liberal institutions we can impart more than kingly power under a less offensive name.

But a Christian community is, by the highest authority, called a *kingdom*. He, however, who gave it this name said to Cæsar's representative, "*My kingdom is not of this world. Had my kingdom been of this world, my servants would have fought, and I should not have been delivered to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from hence.*" It is, then, decided—first, that we have no Christian nation or kingdom in the world, but that Christ has one grand kingdom, composed of all the Christian communities in the world, of which he is himself the proper sovereign, lawgiver and king.

Having, then, no Christian nation to wage war against another Christian nation, the question is reduced to a more rational and simple form, and I trust it will be still more intelligible and acceptable in this form—viz. *Can Christ's kingdom or church in one nation wage war against his kingdom or church in another nation?* With this simple view of the subject, where is the man so ignorant of the letter and spirit of Christianity as to answer this question in the affirmative? Is there a man of ordinary Bible education in this city or commonwealth, who will affirm that Christ's church in England may of *right* wage war against Christ's church in America?

But I will be told that this form of the question does not meet the exact state of the case, as now impinging the conscience of very many good men. While they will, with an emphatic *No*, negative the question as thus stated, they will in another form propound their peculiar difficulty:—"Suppose," say they, "England proclaims war against our nation, or that our nation proclaims war against England: have we a *right, as Christian men*, to volunteer, or enlist, or, if drafted, to fight against England? Ought our motto to be, 'Our country, right or wrong'? Or has our Government a *right* to compel us to take up arms?"

This form of the question makes it important that we should have as clear and definite conceptions of the word *right* as of any other word in the question before us. We must, then, have a little more definition. For the doctrine of right and wrong, so frequently spoken of by elementary political writers, I cannot say that I entertain a very high regard. Men without religious faith, being without an infallible guide, are peculiarly fond of abstractions. Led by imagination more than by reason, authority or experience, they pride themselves in striking out for themselves and others a new path, rather than to walk in the old and long-frequented ways. They have a theory of man in society with political rights, and of man out of society with natural rights; but as they cannot agree as to the word *natural* prefixed to *right*—whether nature be a divinity or the cause of things—I will not now debate with them the question of *natural* rights, but will take the surer and well-established ground of a divine warrant, or a right founded on a *divine* annunciation.

Much, in all cases of any importance, depends on beginning right; and in a question upon *right* itself, every thing depends upon that ultimate tribunal to which we make our appeal. In all questions involving the moral destinies of the world, we require more than hypothetical or abstract reasoning from principles merely assumed or conceded. We need demonstration, or, what in this case of moral reasoning is the only substitute for it, *oracular authority*. All questions on morals and religion, all questions on the origin, relations, obligations and destiny of man, can be satisfactorily decided only by an appeal to an infallible standard. I need not say that we all, I mean the civilized world, the great, the wise, the good of human kind, concede to the Bible this oracular authority; and, therefore, constitute it the ultimate reason and authority for each and every question of this sort? *What, then, says the Bible on the subject of war?*

It certainly commanded and authorized war amongst the Jews. God had given to man, ever since the flood, the right of taking away the life of man for one specified cause. Hence murderers, ever since the flood, were put to death by express Divine authority. "He that sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." He gave authority only, however, to one family or nation, whose God and King he assumed to be. As soon as that family was developed into a nation, he placed it under his own special direction and authority. Its government has been properly called by Josephus, a distinguished Jew, a *THEOCRACY*. It was not a republican, an aristocratical or monarchical, but a *theocratical* government, and that, indeed, of the most absolute character,

for certain high ends and purposes in the destinies of mankind—temporal, spiritual and eternal. God was, therefore, in person the King, Lawgiver and Judge of the Jewish nation.

It was not simply for desiring a king that God was at one time displeased with them. It was for asking a king *like those of other nations*, and thereby refusing God himself and God alone as their king. Still, he never made their kings any more than viceroys. He, for many centuries, down to the end of Old Testament history, held in his own hand the sovereignty of the nation. Hence the kings ruled *for him*, and the high-priest, or some special prophet, was the Lord's mouth to them. Their kings were, therefore, unlike other kings. They truly, and only they, of all the kings on earth, were "THE LORD'S ANOINTED." The Jewish kingdom was emphatically a typical institution, prospective of a kingdom not of this world, to be instituted in future times and to be placed under the special government of his only Son and Heir. Hence it came to pass that the enemies of Israel became typical of the enemies of Jesus Christ; and hence the temporal judgments inflicted on them were but shadows through which to set forth the spiritual and eternal judgments to be inflicted on the enemies of the Messiah's reign and kingdom. Whether, therefore, the enemies of the Jews fell in battle, or by any of the angels of death, it was God that slew them. Hence their kings and God's angels were but mere sheriffs, executing, as it were, the mandates of high heaven.

It is, however, important to reiterate that God gave to Noah, and through him to all his sons and successors in government, a right to take away, in civil justice, the life of a murderer. As the world of the ungodly, antecedent to the deluge, during the first five hundred years of Noah's life, was given to violence and outrage against each other, it became expedient to prevent the same violence and bloodshed after the flood; and for this purpose God gave to man, or the human race in Noah's family, the right to exact blood for blood from him who had deliberately and maliciously taken away the life of his fellow. Had not this been first ordained, no war, without a special divine commission, could have been sanctioned as lawful and right even under the Old Testament institution. Hence we may say that wars were first allowed by God against those who had first waged war against their fellows, and consequently, as viewed by God himself, they were murderers. The first and second wars reported in the annals of the world were begun by the enemies of God and his people, and hence the reprisals made by Abraham and Moses are distinctly stated to **have been occasioned** by the enemies of God and his people.

But what is most important here and apposite to the occasion, is, that these wars waged by God's people in their typical character were waged under and in pursuance of a special divine commission. They were, therefore, right. For a divine precept authorizing any thing to be done, makes it right absolutely and forever. The Judge of all the earth can do only that, or command that to be done, which is right. Let those, then, who now plead a *jus divinum*, a special divine warrant or right for carrying on war by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, produce a warrant from the present Monarch of the universe. What the God of Abraham did by Abraham, by Jacob, or by any of his sons, as the moral governor of the world, before he gave up the sceptre and the crown to his Son Jesus Christ, is of no binding authority now. This is a point of much more importance than we can at present develop, and one which has been, so far as known to me, wholly slurred over in this great investigation. The very basis of the Christian religion is that Jesus Christ is now the Lord and King of both earth and heaven, and that his Father and our God no longer assumes to be either the Lawgiver, Judge or King of the world. It is positively declared by him that all legislative, judiciary and executive power is now committed into the hands of one who is both our kinsman and God's only-begotten Son. Two grand declarations that ought to revolutionize our whole views of civil government as respects its ultimate authority, and change some of our forms of legal justice, are wholly overlooked so far as they are of any practical value and importance. The first was announced by the Messiah immediately before his ascension into heaven; the other was publicly propounded by an embassy from heaven immediately after his ascension. The former declares that "all authority," (*exousia*,) all legislative, judiciary and regal authority in heaven and earth, is given to Jesus Christ; the other affirms that God has made Jesus, Lord and Christ, or anointed him Sovereign of the universe. Kings of the earth and courts of high judicature are all under him, but they do not really acknowledge it; few of them, perhaps, know or believe the fact, that Jesus Christ has been on the throne of the universe for more than eighteen hundred years. Hence, the courts of England and America, the two most enlightened nations in the world, are yet deistical in form, rather than Christian. In every place where they have the phrase "*In the name of God*," they ought to have *In the name of the Lord*. This is the gist of the whole controversy between the friends and the enemies of war, on the part of the subjects of Christ's kingdom. The coronation of Jesus Christ in heaven as LORD OF ALL, his investiture with *all*

authority in heaven and earth, legislative, judiciary and executive, is the annunciation, on the belief and public acknowledgment of which the first Christian church was founded in Jerusalem, where the throne of David was, in the month of June, eighteen hundred and fourteen years ago, Anno Domini 34.

God the Father, *in propria persona*, now neither judges nor punishes any person or nation, but has committed all judgment to his Son, now constituted Head of the universe and Judge of the living and the dead. This simplifies the question and levels it to the judgment of all. It is this:—Has the Author and Founder of the Christian religion enacted war, or has he made it lawful and right for the subjects of his government to go to war against one another? Or, has he made it right for them to go to war against any nation, or for any national object, at the bidding of the present existent political authorities of any nation in Christendom?

The question is not, Whether, under the new administration of the universe, Christian communities have a right to wage war, in its common technical sense, against other communities—as the house of Judah against the house of Israel, both of the same religion, language and blood. This is already, by almost universal consent, decided in the negative, probably only one society of professed Christians excepted. But the question is, May a Christian community, or the members of it, in their individual capacities, take up arms at all, whether aggressively or defensively, in any national conflict? We might, as before alleged, dispense with the words *aggressive* and *defensive*; for a mere grammatical, logical or legal quibble will make any war either aggressive or defensive, just as the whim, caprice or interest of an individual pleases. Napoleon, on his death-bed, declared that he had never engaged, during his whole career, in an aggressive war—that all his wars were defensive. Yet all Europe regarded him as the most aggressive warrior of any age.

But the great question is, *Can an individual, not a public functionary, morally do that in obedience to his Government which he cannot do in his own case?* Suppose the master of apprenticed youth, or the master of a number of hired or even bond servants, should fall out with one of his neighbors about one of the lines of his plantation, because, as he imagined, his neighbor had trespassed upon his freehold in clearing or cultivating his lands. His neighbor refuses to retire within the precincts insisted on by the complainant; in consequence of which the master calls together his servants, and proceeds to avenge himself, or, as he alleges, to defend his property. As the controversy

waxes hot, he commands his servants not only to burn and destroy the improvements made on the disputed territory, but to fire upon his neighbor, his sons and servants. They obey orders, and kill several of them. They are, however, finally taken into custody and brought to trial. An attorney for the servants pleads that these servants were bound to obey their master, and quotes these words from the Good Book:—"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." But, on the other side, it is shown that the "*all things*" enjoined are only "*all things lawful.*" For this obedience is to be rendered "as to Christ;" and again, "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." No judge or jury could do otherwise than condemn as guilty of murder servants thus acting. Now, as we all, in our political relations to the government of our country, occupy positions at least inferior to that which a bond-servant holds towards his master, we cannot of right, as Christian men, obey the POWERS THAT BE in any thing not in itself justifiable by the written law of the Great King—our liege Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Indeed, we may advance in all safety one step further, if it were necessary, and affirm that a Christian man can never, of right, be compelled to do that for the state, in defence of state rights, which he cannot of right do for himself in defence of his personal rights. No Christian man is commanded to love or serve his neighbor, his king or sovereign more than he loves or serves himself. If this is conceded, unless a Christian man can go to war for himself, he cannot for the state.

We have already observed that the Jews were placed under a theocracy, that their kings were only vicegerents, and that they were a symbolic or typical nation adumbrative of a new relation and institution to be set up in "the fulness of time" under an administration of grace. In consequence of this arrangement, God was first revealed as the GOD OF ABRAHAM; and afterwards, when he was about to make himself known in all the earth, in contrast with the idols of the nations, he chose, by Moses, to call himself THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS. As the custom then was, all nations had their gods, and by their wars judged and decided the claims and pretensions of their respective divinities. Esteeming the reputation and pretensions of their gods according to their success in war, that nation's god was the greatest and most to be venerated whose people were most successful and triumphant in battle. God, therefore, chose this method to reveal himself as the God of the Hebrews. Hence he first poured out ten plagues upon the *gods* of Egypt. The Egyptians worshipped every thing, from the Nile and its tenantry to the meanest insect in the land. He first,

then, plagued their gods. Afterwards, by causing the Jews to fight and destroy many nations, in a miraculous manner, from the victory over Amalek to the fall of the cities and kings of ancient Palestine, he established his claims as supreme over all. Proceeding in this way, he fully manifested the folly of their idolatries, and the omnipotence, greatness and majesty of the God of the Jews.

The wars of Pagan nations were, indeed, much more rational than those of our miscalled Christian nations. No two of these nations acknowledged the same dynasties of gods; and, therefore, having different gods, they could with much propriety test their claims by invoking them in battle. But two Christian nations both pray to one and the same God to decide their respective quarrels, and yet will not abide by the decision; for success in war is not by any of them regarded as an end of all strife as to the right or justice of the demands of the victorious party. Did our present belligerent nations regard victory and triumph as a proof of the justice of their respective claims, they would in the manner of carrying on their wars prove themselves to be very great simpletons indeed; for why sacrifice their hundred millions of dollars and their fifty thousand lives in one or two years, when they could save these millions of men and money, by selecting, each, one of their genuine Simon Pure *patriots* and *heroes*, and having them voluntarily to meet in single combat, before a competent number of witnesses, and encounter each other till one of them triumphed—and thus award, from Heaven's own court of infallible rectitude, to the nation of the survivor, the glory of a great national triumph, both in heroism and justice? But this they dare not do; for these Christian nations are quite skeptical so far as faith in the justice of their own cause, or in the right decision of their claims in the providence and moral government of God, is concerned. To what purpose, we therefore ask, do they both appeal to the same God, when neither of them feels any obligation to abide his decision?

But as we are neither under a Jewish nor a Pagan government, but professedly, at least, under a Christian dispensation, we ought to hear what the present King of the universe has enacted on this subject. The maxims of the Great Teacher and Supreme Philanthropist are, one would think, to be final and decisive on this great question. The Great Lawgiver addresses his followers in two very distinct respects: first, in reference to their duties to him and their own profession, and then in reference to their civil rights, duties and obligations.

So far as any indignity was offered to them or any punishment

inflicted upon them as his followers, or for his *name's sake*, they were in no way to resent it. But in their civil rights he allows them the advantages of the protection of civil law, and for this cause enjoins upon them the payment of all their political dues, and to be subject to every ordinance of man of a purely civil nature, not interfering with their obligations to him.

"If a heathen man, or persecutor, smite you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If he compel you to go with him one mile, go two. If he sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy mantle also," &c. &c. These and whatever else of evil treatment they might receive, as *disciples* of Christ, they must, for his sake, endure without resistance or resentment! But if in their *citizen* character or civil relations they are defrauded, maligned or prosecuted, they might, and they did, appeal to Cæsar. They paid *tribute* to civil magistrates that they might protect them; and therefore they might rightfully claim their protection. In this view of the matter, civil magistrates were God's ministers to the Christian "FOR GOOD." And also as God's ministers they were revengers to *execute wrath* on those who did evil. Therefore, Christians are in duty bound to render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God what is God's—to reverence, honor and support the civil magistrate, and, when necessary, to claim his protection.

But as respects the life peculiar to a soldier, or the prosecution of a political war, they had no commandment. On the contrary, they were to live peaceably with all men to the full extent of their power. Their sovereign Lord, the King of nations, is called "THE PRINCE OF PEACE." How, then, could a Christian soldier, whose "*shield*" was faith, whose "*helmet*" was the hope of salvation, whose "*breastplate*" was righteousness, whose "*girdle*" was truth, whose "*feet were shod* with the preparation of the gospel of peace," and whose "*sword*" was that fabricated by the Holy Spirit, even "*the Word of God*,"—I say, how could such a one enlist to fight the battles of a Cæsar, a Hannibal, a Tamerlane, a Napoleon, or even a Victoria?

Jesus said, "All that take the sword shall perish by the sword." An awful warning! All that take it to support religion, it is confessed, have fallen by it; but it may be feared that it is not simply confined to that; for may I not ask the pages of universal history, have not all the nations created by the sword finally fallen by it? Should any one say, "Some few of them yet stand," we respond, All that have fallen also stood for a time; and are not those that now stand tottering just at this moment to their overthrow? We have no

doubt, it will prove in the end that nations and states founded by the sword shall fall by the sword.

When the Saviour, in his sententious and figurative style, indicating the trials just coming upon his friends, said, "You had better sell your outside garments and buy a sword," one present, understanding him literally, as some of the friends of war still do, immediately responded, "Lord, here are two swords." What did he say? "It is enough." Two swords for twelve apostles! Truly, they are dull scholars who thence infer that he meant they should literally use two swords to fight with! When asked by Pilate whether he was a king, he responded that he was born to be a king, but not a king of worldly type or character. Had he been such a king, his servants would, indeed, have used the sword. But his kingdom neither came nor stands by the sword. When first announced as a king by the Jewish prophets, more than seven centuries before he was born, the Spirit said of his reign, "He shall judge among the nations, and decide among many people. And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. ii. 2-4.) Two prophets describe it in almost the same words. Micah, as well as Isaiah, says—

"Out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem;
And he shall judge among many people,
And decide among strong nations afar off;
And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Neither shall they any longer learn war:
But they shall sit every man under his vine
And under his fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid;
For the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it."

Such was, according to prophecy, such is, according to fact, the native influence and tendency of the Christian institution. The spirit of Christianity, then, is essentially pacific.

There is often a multiplication of testimony for display rather than for effect. And, indeed, the accumulation of evidence does not always increase its moral momentum. Nor is it very expedient on other considerations to labor a point which is generally, if not universally, admitted. That the genius and spirit of Christianity, as well as the letter of it, are admitted, on all hands, to be decidedly "peace on earth, and good will among men," needs no proof to any one that has ever read the volume that contains it.

But if any one desires to place in contrast the gospel of Christ and

the genius of war, let him suppose the chaplain of an army addressing the soldiers on the eve of a great battle, on performing faithfully their duty, from such passages as the following:—"Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you: that you may be the children of your Father in heaven, who makes his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends his rain upon the just and the unjust." Again, in our civil relations:—"Recompense to no man evil for evil." "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place to wrath." "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." "Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good." Would any one suppose that he had selected a text suitable to the occasion? How would the commander-in-chief have listened to him? With what spirit would his audience have immediately entered upon an engagement? These are questions which every man must answer for himself, and which every one can feel much better than express.

But a Christian man cannot conscientiously enter upon any business, nor lend his energies to any cause, which he does not approve; and, in order to approve, he must understand the nature and object of the undertaking. Now, how does this dictate of discretion, religion and morality bear upon the case before us?

Nothing, it is alleged, more tends to weaken the courage of a conscientious soldier than to reflect upon the originating causes of wars and the objects for which they are prosecuted. These, indeed, are not always easily comprehended. Many wars have been prosecuted, and some have been terminated after long and protracted efforts, before the great majority of the soldiers themselves, on either side, distinctly understood what they were fighting for. Even in our country, a case of this sort has, it is alleged, very recently occurred. If, it is presumed, the true and proper causes of most wars were clearly understood, and the real design for which they are prosecuted could be clearly and distinctly apprehended, they would, in most instances, miscarry for the want of efficient means of a successful prosecution.

A conviction of this sort, some years ago, occasioned an elaborate investigation of the real causes for which the wars of Christendom had been undertaken from the time of Constantine the Great down to the present century. From the results furnished the Peace Society of Massachusetts, it appeared, that, after subtracting a number of petty wars, long since carried on, and those waged by Christian nations with tribes of savages, the wars of real magnitude amounted in all to two

hundred and eighty-six. The origin of these wars, on a severe analysis, appeared to have been as follows:—Twenty-two for plunder and tribute; forty-four for the extension of territory; twenty-four for revenge or retaliation; six for disputed boundaries; eight respecting points of honor, or prerogative; six for the protection or extension of commerce; fifty-five civil wars; forty-one about contested titles to crowns; thirty under pretence of assisting allies; twenty-three for mere jealousy of rival greatness; twenty-eight religious wars, including the Crusades—*not one for defence alone*; and certainly not one that an enlightened Christian man could have given one cent for, in a voluntary way, much less have volunteered his services or enlisted into its ranks.

If the end alone justifies the means, what shall we think of the wisdom or the justice of war, or of the authors and prominent actors of these scenes? A conscientious mind will ask, Did these two hundred and eighty-six wars redress the wrongs, real or feigned, complained of? Did they in all cases, in a majority of the cases, or in a single case, necessarily determine the right side of the controversy? Did they punish the guilty, or the more guilty, in the ratio of their respective demerits? No one can, indeed, no one will, contend that the decision or termination of these wars naturally, necessarily, or even probably, decided the controversy so justly, so rationally, so satisfactorily as it could have been settled in any one case of the two hundred and eighty-six, by a third or neutral party.

War is not now, nor was it ever, a process of justice. It never was a test of truth—a criterion of right. It is either a mere game of chance, or a violent outrage of the strong upon the weak. Need we any other proof that a Christian people can in no way whatever countenance a war as a proper means of redressing wrongs, of deciding justice, or of settling controversies among nations? On the common conception of the most superficial thinkers on this subject, not one of the two hundred and eighty-six wars which have been carried on among the “Christian nations” during fifteen hundred years was such as that an enlightened Christian man could have taken any part in it—because, as admitted, not one of them was for defence alone: in other words, they were all aggressive wars.

But to the common mind, as it seems to me, the most convincing argument against a Christian becoming a soldier may be drawn from the fact that he fights against an innocent person—I say an innocent person, so far as the cause of the war is contemplated. The men that fight are not the men that make the war. Politicians, merchants, knaves and princes cause or make the war, declare the war, and hire

men to kill for them those that may be hired on the other side to thwart their schemes of personal and family aggrandizement. The soldiers on either side have no enmity against the soldiers on the other side, because with them they have no quarrel. Had they met in any other field, in their citizen dress, other than in battle-array, they would, most probably, have not only inquired after the welfare of each other, but would have tendered to each other their assistance if called for. But a red coat or a blue coat, a tri-colored or a two-colored cockade, is their only introduction to each other, and the signal that they must kill or be killed! If they think at all, they must feel that there is no personal alienation, or wrong, or variance between them. But they are paid so much for the job; and they go to work, as the day-laborer to earn his shilling. Need I ask, how could a Christian man thus volunteer his services, or hire himself out for so paltry a sum, or for any sum, to kill to order his brother man who never offended him in word or deed? What infatuation! What consummate folly and wickedness! Well did Napoleon say, "War is the trade of barbarians;" and his conqueror, Wellington, "Men of nice scruples about religion have no business in the army or navy." The horrors of war only enhance the guilt of it; and these, alas! no one can depict in all their hideous forms.

By the "horrors of war" I do not mean the lightning and the thunder of the battle-field—the blackness and darkness of those dismal clouds of smoke which, like death's own pall, shroud the encounter; it is not the continual roar of its cannon, nor the agonizing shrieks and groans of fallen battalions—of wounded and dying legions; nor is it, at the close of the day, the battle-field itself, covered with the gore and scattered limbs of butchered myriads, with here and there a pile, a mountain heap of slain heroes in the fatal pass, mingled with the wreck of broken arms, lances, helmets, swords, and shattered firearms, amidst the pavement of fallen balls that have completed the work of destruction, numerous as hailstones after the fury of the storm; nor, amidst these, the sight of the wounded lying upon one another, weltering in their blood, imploring assistance, importuning an end of their woes by the hand of a surviving soldier, invoking death as the only respite from excruciating torments. But this is not all; for the tidings are at length carried to their respective homes. Then come the bitter wail of widows and orphans—the screams and the anguish of mothers and sisters deprived forever of the consolations and hopes that clustered round the anticipated return of those so dear to them, that have perished in the conflict.

But even these are not the most fearful desolations of war. Where now are the two hundred thousand lost by England in our Revolutionary War?—the seventy thousand who fell at Waterloo and Quatre-Bras?—the eighty thousand at Borodino?—the three hundred thousand at Arbela?—or where the fifteen million Goths destroyed by Justinian in twenty years?—the thirty-two millions by Jenghis Khan in forty-one years?—the sixty millions slain by the Turks?—the eighty millions by the Tartars, hurried away to judgment in a paroxysm of wrath, amid the fury of the passions? What can we think of their eternal destiny?* Besides all these, how many have died in captivity! How many an unfortunate exile or captive might, with a French prisoner, sing of woes like these, or even greater!—

“I dwelt upon the willowy banks of Loire;
 I married one who from my boyish days
 Had been my playmate. One morn,—I’ll ne’er forget,—
 While choosing out the fairest twigs
 To warp a cradle for our child unborn,
 We heard the tidings that the conscript-lot
 Had fallen on me. It came like a death-knell!
 The mother perish’d; but the babe survived;
 And, ere my parting day, his rocking couch
 I made complete, and saw him, sleeping, smile,—
 The smile that play’d erst on the cheek of her
 Who lay clay-cold. Alas! the hour soon came
 That forced my fetter’d arms to quit my child!
 And whether now he lives to deck with flowers
 The sod upon his mother’s grave, or lies
 Beneath it by her side, I ne’er could learn.
 I think he’s gone, and now I only wish
 For liberty and home, that I may see,
 And stretch myself and die upon, their grave!”

But these, multiplied by myriads, are but specimens of the countless millions slain, the solitary exiles, the lonely captives. They tell the least portion of the miseries of war. Yet even these say to the Christian, How can you become a soldier? How countenance and aid this horrible work of death?

For my own part, and I am not alone in this opinion, I think that the moral desolations of war surpass even its horrors. And amongst these, I do not assign the highest place to the vulgar profanity, brutality and debauchery of the mere soldier, the professional and licensed butcher of mankind, who, for his eight dollars a month, or his ten

* “War a Destroyer of Souls,”—(a tract of the Peace Society.)

sous per day, hires himself to lay waste a country, to pillage, burn and destroy the peaceful hamlet, the cheerful village or the magnificent city, and to harass, wound and destroy his fellow-man, for no other consideration than his paltry wages, his daily rations, and the infernal pleasure of doing it, anticipating hereafter "the stupid stares and loud huzzas" of monsters as inhuman and heartless as himself. And were it not for the infatuation of public opinion and popular applause, I would place him, as no less to be condemned, beside the vain and pompous volunteer, who for his country, "right or wrong," hastens to the theatre of war for the mere plaudits of admiring multitudes, ready to cover himself with glory, because he has aided an aspirant to a throne or paved the way to his own election to reign over an humbled and degraded people.

I make great allowance for false education, for bad taste, for the contagion of vicious example: still, I cannot view those deluded by such sophistry, however good their motives, as deserving any thing from contemporaries or posterity except compassion and forgiveness. Yet behold its influence on mothers, sisters, and relatives: note its contagion, its corruption of public taste. See the softer sex allured, fascinated by the halo of false glory thrown around these worshipped heroes! See them gazing with admiration on the "tinselled trappings," the "embroidered ensigns," of him whose profession it is to make widows and orphans by wholesale! Sometimes their hands are withdrawn from works of charity to decorate the warrior's banners and to cater to these false notions of human glory! Behold, too, the young mother arraying her proud boy "with cap and feather, toyed with a drum and sword, training him for the admired profession of a man-killer!"

This is not all. It is not only at home, in the nursery and infant school, that this false spirit is inspired. Our schools, our academies, our colleges, echo and re-echo with the fame of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Napoleon, a Wellington. Forensic eloquence is full of the fame of great heroes, of military chieftains, of patriotic deliverers, whose memory must be kept forever verdant in the affections of a grateful posterity, redeemed by their patriotism, or rescued from oppression by their valor.

The pulpit, too, must lend its aid in cherishing the delusion. There is not unfrequently heard a eulogium on some fallen hero—some church-service for the mighty dead; thus desecrating the religion of the Prince of Peace, by causing it to minister as the handmaid of war. Not only are prayers offered up by pensioned chaplains on both sides

of the field, even amid the din of arms, but, Sabbath after Sabbath, for years and years, have the pulpits on one side of a sea or river, and those on the other side, resounded with prayers for the success of rival armies, as if God could hear them both, and make each triumphant over the other, guiding and commissioning swords and bullets to the heads and hearts of their respective enemies!

And not only this, but even the churches in the Old World, and sometimes in the New, are ornamented with the sculptured representations of more military heroes than of saints—generals, admirals and captains, who “gallantly fought” and “gloriously fell” in the service of their country. It is not only in Westminster Abbey or in St. Paul’s that we read their eulogiums and see their statues, but even in some of our own cities we find St. Paul driven out of the church to make room for generals and commodores renowned in fight. And last of all, in consummation of the moral desolation of war, we sometimes have an illumination—even a thanksgiving—rejoicing that God has caused ten or twenty thousand of our enemies to be sent down to Tartarus, and has permitted myriads of widows and orphans to be made at the bidding of some chieftain or of some aspirant to a throne!

But it would exhaust too much time to speak of the inconsistencies of the Christian world on this single subject of war, or to trace to their proper fountains the general misconceptions of the people on their political duties and that of their Governments. This would be the work of volumes—not of a single address. The most enlightened of our ecclesiastic leaders seem to think that Jesus Christ governs the nations as God governed the Jews. They cannot separate, even in this land, the church and state. They still ask for a Christian national code.

If the world were under a politico-ecclesiastic king or president, it would, indeed, be hard to find a model for him in the New Testament. Suffice it to say that the church, and the church only, is under the special government and guardianship of our Christian King. The nations, not owning Jesus Christ, are disowned by him; he leaves them to themselves, to make their own institutions, as God anciently did all nations but the Jews. He holds them in abeyance, and as in providence, so in government, he makes all things work together for the good of his people, restrains the wrath of their enemies, turns the counsels and wishes of kings as he turns the rivers, but never condescends to legislate for the bodies of men, or their goods or chattels, who withhold from him their consciences and their hearts. He announces the fact that it is by his permission, not always with his

approbation, that kings reign and that princes decree justice, and commands his people politically to obey their rulers and to respect the ordinances of kings, that "they may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty." And where the gospel of Christ comes to kings and rulers, it addresses them as men in common with other men, commanding them to repent of their sins, to submit to his government, and to discharge their relative duties according to the morality and piety inculcated in his code. If they do this, they are a blessing to his people as well as an honor to themselves. If they do not, he will hold them to a reckoning, as other men, from which there is neither escape nor appeal. What Shakspeare says is as true of kings as of their subjects:—

"War is a game that, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at."

For, were both kings and people wise, wars would cease, and nations would learn war no more.

But how are all national disputes to be settled? Philosophy, history, the Bible, teach that all disputes, misunderstandings, alienations are to be settled, heard, tried, adjudicated by impartial, that is, by disinterested, umpires. No man is admitted to be a proper judge in his own case. Wars never make amicable settlements, and seldom, if ever, just decisions of points at issue. We are obliged to offer preliminaries of peace at last. Nations must meet by their representatives, stipulate and restipulate, hear and answer, compare and decide.

In modern times we terminate hostilities by a treaty of peace. We do not make peace with powder and lead. It is done by reason, reflection and negotiation. Why not employ these at first? But it is alleged that war has long been, and must always be, the *ultima ratio regum*—the last argument of those in power. For ages a father Inquisitor was the strong argument for orthodoxy; but light has gone abroad, and he has lost his power. Illuminate the human mind on this subject also, create a more rational and humane public opinion, and wars will cease.

But, it is alleged, all will not yield to reason or justice. There must be compulsion. Is war, then, the only compulsory measure? Is there no legal compulsion? Must all personal misunderstandings be settled by the sword?

Why not have a *by-law-established umpire*? Could not a united national court be made as feasible and as practicable as a United States court? Why not, as often proposed, and as eloquently, ably and humanely argued, by the advocates of peace, have a congress of

nations and a high court of nations for adjudicating and terminating all international misunderstandings and complaints, redressing and remedying all wrongs and grievances?

There is not, it appears to me, a physical or a rational difficulty in the way. But I do not now argue the case: I merely suggest this expedient, and will always vote correspondingly, for reasons as good and as relevant as I conceive them to be humane and beneficial.

To sum up the whole, we argue—

1. The right to take away the life of the murderer does not of itself warrant war, inasmuch as in that case none but the guilty suffer, whereas in war the innocent suffer not only with, but often without, the guilty. The guilty generally make war, and the innocent suffer from its consequences.

2. The right given to the Jews to wage war is not vouchsafed to any other nation, for they were under a theocracy, and were God's sheriff to punish nations: consequently no Christian can argue from the wars of the Jews in justification or in extenuation of the wars of Christendom. The Jews had a Divine precept and authority: no existing nation can produce such a warrant.

3. The prophecies clearly indicate that the Messiah himself would be "THE PRINCE OF PEACE," and that under his reign "wars should cease," and "nations study it no more."

4. The gospel, as first announced by the angels, is a message which results in producing "peace on earth and good will among men."

5. The precepts of Christianity positively inhibit war—by showing that "wars and fightings come from men's lusts" and evil passions, and by commanding Christians to "follow peace with all men."

6. The beatitudes of Christ are not pronounced on patriots, heroes and conquerors, but on "peace-makers," on whom is conferred the highest rank and title in the universe:—"Blessed are the PEACE-MAKERS, for they shall be called THE SONS OF GOD."

7. The folly of war is manifest in the following particulars:—

1st. It can never be the criterion of justice or a proof of right.

2d. It can never be a satisfactory end of the controversy.

3d. Peace is always the result of negotiation, and treaties are its guarantee and pledge.

8. The wickedness of war is demonstrated in the following particulars:—

1st. Those who are engaged in killing their brethren, for the most part, have no personal cause of provocation whatever.

2d. They seldom, or never, comprehend the right or the wrong

of the war. They, therefore, act without the approbation of conscience.

3d. In all wars the innocent are punished with the guilty.

4th. They constrain the soldier to do for the state that which, were he to do it for himself, would, by the law of the state, involve forfeiture of his life.

5th. They are the pioneers of all other evils to society, both moral and physical. In the language of Lord Brougham, "Peace, *peace*, PEACE! I abominate war as unchristian. I hold it the greatest of human curses. I deem it to include all others—violence, blood, rapine, fraud, every thing that can deform the character, alter the nature and debase the name of man." Or with Joseph Bonaparte, "War is but organized barbarism—an inheritance of the savage state." With Franklin I, therefore, conclude, "There never was a *good* war, or a *bad* peace."

No wonder, then, that for two or three centuries after Christ all Christians refused to bear arms. So depose Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, &c.

In addition to all these considerations, I further say, were I not a Christian, as a political economist, even, I would plead this cause. Apart from the mere claims of humanity, I would urge it on the ground of sound national policy.

Give me the money that has been spent in wars, and I will clear up every acre of land in the world that ought to be cleared—drain every marsh—subdue every desert—fertilize every mountain and hill—and convert the whole earth into a continuous series of fruitful fields, verdant meadows, beautiful villas, hamlets, towns, cities, standing along smooth and comfortable highways and canals, or in the midst of luxuriant and fruitful orchards, vineyards and gardens, full of fruits and flowers, redolent with all that pleases the eye and regales the senses of man. I would found, furnish and endow as many schools, academies and colleges, as would educate the whole human race,—would build meeting-houses, public halls, lyceums, and furnish them with libraries adequate to the wants of a thousand millions of human beings.

Beat your swords into ploughshares, your spears into pruning-hooks; convert your war-ships into missionary packets, your arsenals and munitions of war into Bibles, school-books, and all the appliances of literature, science and art; and then ask, What would be wanting on the part of man to "make the wilderness and solitary place glad;" to cause "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose;" to make our

hills "like Carmel and Sharon," and our valleys as "the garden of God"? All this being done, I would doubtless have a surplus for some new enterprise.

On reviewing the subject in the few points only that I have made and with the comparatively few facts I have collected, I must confess that I both wonder at myself and am ashamed to think that I have never before spoken out my views, nor even written an essay on this subject. True, I had, indeed, no apprehension of ever again seeing or even hearing of a war in the United States. It came upon me so suddenly, and it so soon became a party question, that, preserving, as I do, a strict neutrality between party politics, both in my oral and written addresses on all subjects, I could not for a time decide whether to speak out or be silent. I finally determined not to touch the subject till the war was over. Presuming that time to have arrived, and having resolved that my first essay from my regular course, at any foreign point, should be on this subject, I feel that I need offer no excuse, ladies and gentlemen, *for* having called your attention to the matter in hand. I am sorry to think—very sorry indeed to be only of the opinion—that probably even this much published by me some three years or even two years ago, might have saved some lives that have since been thrown away in the desert—some hot-brained youths

" Whose limbs, unburied on the shore,
Devouring dogs or hungry vultures tore."

We have all a deep interest in the question; we can all do something to solve it; and it is every one's duty to do all the good he can. We must create a public opinion on this subject. We should inspire a pacific spirit, and urge on all proper occasions the chief objections to war. In the language of the eloquent Grimké, we must show that "the great objection to war is not so much the number of lives and the amount of property it destroys, as its moral influence on nations and individuals. It creates and perpetuates national jealousy, fear, hatred and envy. It arrogates to itself the prerogative of the Creator alone, to involve the innocent multitude in the punishment of the guilty few. It corrupts the moral taste and hardens the heart; cherishes and strengthens the base and violent passions; destroys the distinguishing features of Christian charity—its *universality* and its *love of enemies*; turns into mockery and contempt the best virtue of Christians—*humility*; weakens the sense of moral obligation; banishes the spirit of improvement, usefulness and benevolence; and incul-

cates the horrible maxim that murder and robbery are matters of state expediency."

Let every one, then, who fears God and loves man, put his hand to the work; and the time will not be far distant when

"No longer hosts encountering hosts
Shall crowds of slain deplore:
They'll hang the trumpet in the hall,
And study war no more."