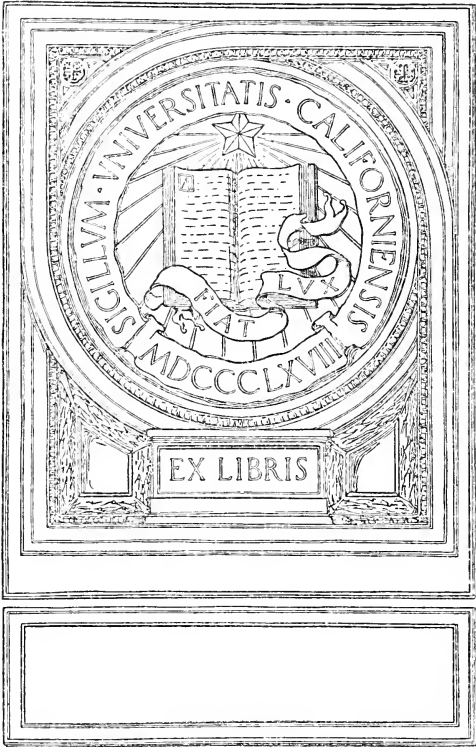


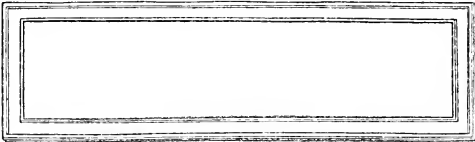
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# ADDRESS,

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AT THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS PEACE SOCIETY,

*December 25th, 1819.*

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BY JOHN GALLISON, ESQ.

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## ADDRESS.

**WHY** is it, that Christianity, a religion of peace, still dwells with violence and war? Is it, that her spirit is not, in truth, opposed to the spirit of revenge? Is it that she lays no restraint upon angry and contentious passion? Or is her influence too feeble, to restrain the enmity of men? Has she no commands of power to stay the hand of desolation, and set bounds to murderous rage?

To these questions the Christian, deeply interested in his religion, anxiously seeks an answer. He will find it, in part, in the unsearchable counsels of him, "who will bring the blind by a way, that they knew not." The world had long remained under the imperfect light of the Jewish, and the darkness of Pagan theology, before the messengers of God proclaimed, "on earth peace, good will towards men." A long series of prophecies and political events prepared the way for that brightest expression of divine goodness. And when, in the fulness of time, the Messiah came, was it to be expected, that all the blessings of his peaceful reign would at once unfold themselves? Was it to be expected, that the truths he revealed, and his sublime lessons of virtue, would, in a moment, triumph over selfishness, cruelty and pride? To us, indeed, the time may seem long, but to the Infinite Mind, "a thousand years are but as yesterday, when it is past."

A rapid glance at the history of the world will convince us, that the continuance of war, with its attendant evils, is owing to causes entirely foreign to our religion itself; to causes, which God, in his wisdom, has permitted to obstruct and counteract its progress. Let not then the Christian despair.

The influence of the gospel has already been great ; enough to justify the persuasion, that the time is not far distant, when wars shall be made to cease “unto the end of the earth.”

In the infancy of Christianity, the number of disciples was too small, compared with the rest of the world, to produce any sensible effect upon the habits of society. They were neglected and despised, or remembered only to be persecuted. They were contented to exhibit in themselves the mild virtues, which their religion taught them ; they were charitable, forgiving and patient of injuries. They sought not the honours and distinctions of the world ; the crown of martyrdom was to them far better than any earthly glory. To extend the knowledge and the blessings of the gospel was the object, which they had most at heart. To this their efforts were unceasingly directed ; for this, they cheerfully encountered danger, and endured the sharpest sufferings. But they were far from aspiring to control the counsels of princes, or to change the laws, by which states were governed. By a silent and almost imperceptible process, they gained men, one by one, from the worship of false gods to a pure and irreproachable faith ; and in this way only they wrought on the character of human institutions. But they were not all, even of those who yielded to the preaching and the miracles of the apostles, exempt from those infirmities, which so often cloud the judgment and mislead the practice, even of sincere believers. “They brought with them, into the bosom of the church, more or less of the errors of their former religions.”\* Controversies arose, and forgetting the gentle and benign spirit of their master, Christians exchanged the unity and love, which he had enjoined, for division and discord. They came from a world, that was full of errors and vices. The mighty works, which they saw ; the direct testimonies of heaven to the truths, which were declared ; compelled the assent of those, who attended to these evidences, and whose hearts were not too depraved to allow the free exercise of

\* Mosheim.

reason. But, though assent could not be refused, error and prejudice might be partially retained. Their minds were enlightened by the truth, and that truth had power to guide them into the path of wisdom and of peace ; but it was to guide, not to impel. Man was still left, by the free exercise of his powers, aided indeed but not controlled by new and sublime views of God and of his own nature, to approach nearer to his Creator, and to conform himself to that moral image, which in the character of the Saviour, was so strikingly set before him. He was exhorted to contend with his evil passions, and an immortal crown was proposed as the reward of faithful exertion. But no where was it promised him, that his mind should at once be unchained, and soar to a height of heavenly virtue ; no where, was it promised him, that the clouds of ignorance and delusion should at once be scattered, and the sun of righteousness and truth shine forth with midday brightness.

Was it wonderful, that an attempt should be made to engraft on the simple system of Christ and his apostles the elaborate and refined wisdom of those sages, who had so long and so deservedly been revered as instructors and guides ? That men, into whose minds the doctrines of Plato and Socrates had been carefully instilled, should wish to reconcile to these, their earliest teachers, a religion, with whose moral precepts their lessons were so often found in accordance ? Can it be accounted strange, that with what was best in Pagan learning ; and certainly there was much, which will not cease to be studied, till reason and truth shall cease to be esteemed ; that with what poets and philosophers had taught of the dignity and happiness of man, his duties, relations and powers, there should be received something of that fanciful speculation and misguided sentiment, in which unaided reason was lost and bewildered ? From human imperfection this was to have been expected. And has it not so happened ? Without referring to any controversies of the present day, is it not certain, that at some period the absurdities of the schools have darkened and perplexed the simplicity of Chris-

tian truth? And have the precepts of the gospel, have its moral lessons and examples, escaped without addition or perversion? Have no imaginary virtues been transferred from their shrines in Pagan temples, to claim and receive the homage due only to dispositions, which the example or the precepts of our Divine Teacher have taught us to hold in honour? Have not the humility and meekness, which should be the first ornaments of a Christian's character, been deprived of their chief rank among the virtues, to make way for the more splendid and imposing qualities, to which the world's false estimate has awarded its highest glory? Has not a bold and haughty arrogance extorted the applause, which our religion would give to patience and gentleness?

Yes, Christians to whom I speak, men have given to an empty show that praise, which should have been reserved for real greatness; they have preferred the pride, that dazzles and amazes, to the simple, unpretending, silent virtues of the disciple of Christ; they have followed with shouts the conqueror's car, while humble, suffering piety has remained neglected and obscure—"and what most merits fame, in silence hid."

And is this the fault of their religion? No; it is a remnant partly of that ancient barbarism, which lay concealed under the polish of Greek and Roman philosophy, and partly of that less disguised ferocity, which the deluge of northern conquest spread over Europe. The religion of the gospel alone has made no concessions to the pride and passions of men. Other systems, whether decked with the refinements of human wisdom, or boldly avowing their origin in the worst feelings of the heart, make their way by indulging desires, which true religion controls; by deceiving the judgment and perverting the conscience; by giving to vice the semblance of virtue, and casting contempt on that nobleness of mind, which does good without asking an earthly reward. The pure morality of the gospel rejects all alliance with these delusive systems; but men, unwilling to relinquish their depraved inclinations, have sought to unite them.

In the second century of our era, the double morality of the Platonic philosophy was introduced among Christians; that unhappy distinction was adopted between precepts and counsels, which prescribed one rule of conduct for those, who dedicated themselves to retirement and religious meditation, and another, more indulgent and complying, for the busy and active;\* which banished religion from the common concerns of life, and allowed many things to the secular man, which were forbidden to the sage. Thus all the glowing declamations of heathen writers, which placed valour in the first rank of virtues, and admitted no obligation so strong as the love of country, became authorized codes of morals to common Christians. Thus all the praises, which poetry and history had lavished on real or fabulous heroes; the imperishable glory awarded by them to actions inspired by cruelty and revenge; the brilliant light, which fancy had shed about the head of the warrior, and the promises of participation in the honours and happiness of the gods, which were held out to lawless courage, were permitted still to warm the imaginations and deceive the understandings of the disciples of a crucified Master, and to close their hearts against the influence of his instructions. But for this cause, perhaps, there had not been in the Roman army those Christian soldiers, who at an early period appear to have served in it.†

The disorders, to which the Roman empire soon became subject, the frequent changes of the emperor at the will of the soldiery, the convulsions arising from the contests of rival claimants, and the persecutions, to which, under almost every change, the Christians were exposed, were circumstances adverse to the reception of the gospel, as a message of peace. And when persecution had ceased; when, in the beginning of the fourth century, the throne was filled by a Christian emperor, was there not something in this very prosperity unfriendly to peace? Constantine himself, according to a

\* Mosheim, Cent. 2, part II. ch. iii.

† See the well known fable of the Thundering Legion. *Mosheim*, vol. i. p. 152.

prevailing custom, deferred his baptism to the last hours of his life ; he believed the Roman religion to be also true and useful to mankind ; and was far from living in strict conformity to the precepts of the gospel. Multitudes, without doubt, embraced the new religion, took the name of Christians, and became confounded with true believers, who were little disposed to submit to its rules, or to understand its spirit. The example of the emperor and his court would go far to keep alive the prejudice in favour of military prowess, and the inroads of the barbarians soon furnished an occasion for calling on all, who valued their own safety, or that of their country, to take up defensive arms. In the struggles, which followed, and were continued at intervals until the overthrow of Roman power, can we wonder that the voice of peace was not heard ? That every thing was forgotten, but the cruelty of the foe, and the increasing dangers of the state ?

From the seventh century to the age of Charlemagne there were no important wars.\* But the feudal system now prevailed over Europe ; and need I speak of its unceasing jealousies, its jarring interests, and the license, which it gave to private wars ? Need I speak of those long and bloody hostilities, waged by petty tyrants against each other, with a more obstinate and vindictive temper, than ever appeared in national conflicts ? The spirit of feudalism was essentially warlike. It attempted no concealment of blood-thirsty rage, or malicious cruelty. It professed none of that softening and refinement, which in Greece and Rome covered equal injustice and rapacity. It acknowledged no right, but the right of the strongest ; no tie, but fellowship in arms ; no title to praise, but what was founded in the number of slaughtered foes, and the trophies of murderous victory. True, indeed, these barbarians became converts to Christianity, and a work of reformation commenced, which is not yet completed. But could they, ignorant and savage as they were, submit at once to tame and peaceful industry ? Could they, at once, abandon the wars, and warlike sports, which alone could

\* Robertson.

gratify their pride and fill their desire of action? Of this they were no more capable of themselves, than were the first pagan converts of forgetting the moral systems, in which they had been educated.

In the ages of ignorance and barbarism, which succeeded the overthrow of Roman greatness, every thing in the west was unfavourable to the growth of Christian benevolence, and in the east, the alarm and danger of the state, added to the dissensions in the bosom of the church, forbade all hope of improving the condition or restraining the passions of men. The temporal power and dominion of the Pope, and the union in every country of the civil with ecclesiastical authority counteracted the pacific influence of religion. In the reign of Charlemagne, the discordant materials seemed first to gather into a regular and powerful empire. But the invasion of Saracens and Turks kept christendom in a state of continual tumult. And here we discover a new principle of wars. Whatever might be the obligations of the Christian towards other Christians, he believed that the infidel, an enemy of religion, had no claim to compassion, or even to common faith. Against him it was thought piety to be animated with the most deadly hostility. Unsparing cruelty was deemed acceptable to heaven, and the warrior, in taking up arms, believed that he fulfilled a sacred duty. It was then that chivalry arose; chivalry, that mysterious product of barbarian fierceness, and superstitious zeal; that powerful agent, which gave a new form to the manners of Europe, new events to history, new themes for the fancy of the poet and the study of the philosopher; which pervaded all ranks, and changed the thoughts, the feelings and the habits of men; proud, and insolent, and fierce, yet brave, and generous, and humane; jealous of dignity, and quick to resent the smallest affront, yet cherishing no hatred, boasting of courtesy, sparing, but despising whom it spared; prodigal of life and greedy of adventure, yet asking no reward but praise; trained from infancy to the endurance of hardship, yet gay, voluptuous and soft; governed more by the sense of

shame, than by the love of right, yet of unshaken truth, and scrupulous fidelity; frivolous, almost to childishness, yet in the pursuit of trifles displaying a hardihood and patience, which we cannot refuse to admire. It dealt in abstractions, but imagination gave to those abstractions an importance beyond the most serious realities. It mingled religion with every thing; but it was a religion, superstitious, sensual and gross. It was the attempt of chivalry to supply the want of a purer religion for restraining the passions of men, and moving them to acts of kindness, by a romantic feeling of honour, and an extreme sensibility to censure and applause. The effect was a character extravagant, unnatural and inconsistent; practising some duties with enthusiastic devotion, while others were violated without remorse.

We owe to chivalry much of that refinement, which has given occasion to say of modern times, that unlike the ruder ages, "they give their applause only to intellectual power, and to those virtues, which, raising man above his condition, make him conqueror over his passions, and teach him to be beneficent, generous and humane."\* Though this praise is far too unqualified, it is still true, that the institutions of chivalry have in some degree softened the character of wars. But we may trace to the same source many errors in opinion and practice, which the world has had cause to lament. Of these, the unnatural union between religion and war is not among the least. The youth, whose education destined him to the honour of chivalry, received his first armour, after many solemn and imposing rites, at the altar dedicated to God; and the sword, which he was to wield in battle, came to his hands consecrated and blessed by the priest of religion. How powerful must have been the association, which the imagination thus formed between valour and piety! How long must its effects have continued! And may we not, among the effects of chivalry, which are still apparent, discover some remains of this fatal delusion?†

\* Works of Frederick III, vol. i, p. 14.

† "Severe fastings; whole nights spent in prayer, attended by a priest and sponsors, in some church or chapel; a devout reception of the



We may besides accuse chivalry of having nourished and kept alive the military passion; concealed its true nature under gorgeous ceremonies, and caused the blood of thousands to flow in private duels. The *point of honour*, that phantom unknown to ancient times, is the offspring of chivalry, and who can number the battles, of which it has been the cause?

The wars of Edward III and his son, and of several succeeding kings, exhibit the influence of chivalry in kindling martial ardor and adding dignity and splendour to the profession of arms. In the lofty and imposing mien, which knighthood then assumed, its tendency to broils and bloodshed was forgotten. The fields of Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt, awakened an emulation, of which the effects are visible in every page of succeeding history. Learning, commerce and the arts, were too much depressed and neglected to hold any competition with martial glory; and a state of things arose, not unlike that of ancient Rome, when the profession of arms was the only one, that was thought worthy of a freeman. The revival of commerce and the gradual rise of the industrious and trading classes to opulence and power, may be considered as that change in the circumstances of mankind, which has most powerfully favoured the influence

sacraments of penitence and the eucharist; baths, indicative of the purity, which was required in the character of a knight; white garments, worn, in imitation of new converts, as a symbol of the same purity; a full confession of all the faults of his life; a serious attention to discourses explaining the chief articles of Christian faith and morals; these were the preparation for that ceremony, which was to invest the novice with the sword of knighthood. These rites duly performed, he entered the church, and advanced towards the altar, the sword being suspended from his neck. He there presented it to the officiating priest, who pronounced over it his blessing, in the same manner as it is now usual to bless the standards of our regiments. The priest then restored the sword to the neck of the novice, who proceeded, in the most simple dress, to fall on his knees at the feet of the person, of either sex, by whom he was to be armed. This imposing scene passed commonly in some sacred edifice; but often too in the hall or court of a palace or chateau; and sometimes in the open field."

of christian and pacific principles. Nor does there seem to be any limit, but in the absolute cessation of wars, to the hopes, which this change, still advancing, holds out to the benevolent.

Passing to the period of the Reformation, we find religion itself, by mistaken zeal and bigotry, made a pretext for wars. The sword is employed as the test of religious truth; and princes, feeling or feigning a sacred ardor, march their squadrons to the aid of contending parties. This is indeed a painful scene. But let not religion be charged with its horrors. The battles, that are waged in her name, are not the less condemned by her spirit. Superstition, used by ambition as its instrument, kindles the flame of religious war. Christianity rejects with abhorrence these polluted offerings. She bestows no smile upon persecuting rage, and, as if to teach mankind how far she is from asking such support, she makes her truths triumphant, not by the aid of human power nor by announcing them with imposing splendour; but feeble and struggling, at first; opposed by the vices and passions of men; resisted by all that the world relies on for success; they prevail and vanquish by means that escape our limited perception. Was it religion, that suggested to Charles V, and to his bigotted son, the cruelties, which they practised in the Netherlands? Was it religion, that instigated the wars of the League, and inspired Catharine de Medicis with the perfidious and horrible design of St. Barthelemi? Was it religion, that excited among the princes of Germany those bitter contentions, which at different times have distracted that unhappy empire? No! religion may indeed have supplied a convenient pretence, and fanaticism, assuming her name, may have been a useful ally to ambition; but pride and the love of power were the true sources of these contests.

It has belonged to modern times to bring to perfection a custom, which, perhaps more than any other, has contributed to the frequency of wars; I mean the establishment of standing armies. Upon the nature and effects of these institutions I need not remark. They have been thought dangerous to

liberty, and doubtless they are so. But they are more dangerous to peace. With these has been introduced a maxim of state policy, which may be made the ready resort of every ambitious prince, desirous of extending his fame or his dominions. It is said that a state, like an individual, is bound by the duty of self-preservation, and ought, by all possible means, to maintain its relative rank and importance in the system of nations. If one nation increases so rapidly in power and means of annoyance, as to threaten others in its neighborhood with the loss of their present influence and comparative greatness, it is justifiable, say these political moralists, for the states so situated to make war upon their growing neighbour, and thus prevent the anticipated evil. This is called, restoring the "balance of power." A complicated system of states, jealous and watchful of each other's motions, penetrating by spies and secret correspondence the arcana of each other's cabinets, and carrying on a vast machinery of intrigue and fraud, has been the result of this principle. Good faith and direct dealing are banished from the intercourse of states. The science of politics has become a science of chicane. Suspicion and distrust are kept in ever wakeful activity. Public negotiators seem, by a general consent, absolved from the observance of those rules of truth and honesty, which are the bond of confidence in private life. And what has been gained by all this expense of art and contrivance? What has all the boasted ingenuity of diplomatists effected? Hollow alliances have ended in destructive wars. The state, which has been the object of jealousy, has been accelerated in its progress to inordinate power, by the attempts made to restrain it; and if overthrown, is there not always reason to fear, that it will be but to erect a more formidable dominion upon its ruins? To this, we would willingly hope, the present age has furnished an exception. The league, which overthrew the French despotism, seems to have been at last formed and conducted with a sincerity inspired by a common alarm. But it was not until after many feeble alliances, dissolved by their own weakness, had added to the triumphs of the conqueror, that

the nations of Europe gathered all their heart and energy to strike one united and decisive blow. May this be the last!

We have all, from our youth up, heard the "love of country" extolled as among the chief virtues. Poets and historians have lifted to the skies the fame of those, whose sufferings or achievements have been thought to prove, that their "love of country" was stronger than that of life. When we read the lives of heroes and statesmen, we find them praised for acts, done for the supposed advantage of their country, which justice and humanity condemn. The Byzantine, tried at Sparta on a charge of treason, defended himself by alleging the example of "the worthiest men among the Lacedemonians, who had no other rule of justice and honor, but by all possible means to serve their country."\* So strong indeed and overruling was this principle, that the obligations of benevolence and justice were supposed not to extend beyond the limits of one's county, or at most only to those, who were united to it by some especial compact. To be a stranger was to be an enemy. Some heathen philosophers and moralists, it is true, inculcated a better lesson. But history will attest how little was the influence of their instructions, when it has recorded, as a wonderful instance of justice in Aristides, that he rejected the treacherous proposal of his less scrupulous rival. It was one of the purposes of Christianity to teach that enlarged benevolence, which embraces all mankind as brethren. The "love of country" henceforth assumed a subordinate place among the virtues. We might, indeed, bear a peculiar affection to our countrymen, to those of our own household; but in its exercise it must be consistent with the stronger obligations, which belong to us as members of the human family. †

\* Plut. by Lang. Alcibiad. p. 68.

† It is peculiarly important, that the "love of country" should be subjected to proper restraints; for men are apt to forget, that while attempting to serve their country, they may violate the rights of others. No one, who attends to the whole course of moral instruction in the Gospel, can wonder that patriotism is not there inculcated and commended. The

There has been a sacredness attached to the name of "country," which has caused men to overlook the injustice of actions in their supposed disinterestedness. Patriotism has been esteemed a social virtue. That, which would be wrong and disgraceful, if done for private good, has been thought praiseworthy, when the actor has gone out of himself, and through suffering and danger has achieved some public advantage. But, in truth, does not patriotism, even in its purest form, include a large mixture of *self-love*? We love our country, because we connect with it our past enjoyments and our future hopes; all that can give animation to our joys and solace to our griefs; the scenes, that our morning sun brightened, and on which we have trusted, that its evening beams would linger. When we name our country, we name ourselves, our friends, the schools of our instruction, the temples of our worship, the tombs, where our ancestors repose. All that we love, and all that we venerate; all that affection values, and all that memory regrets, is included in that one word. How then can we refuse to love our country? And

truth is, that men needed to be checked rather than encouraged, in respect to this feeling. It was a Jewish and a Pagan feeling, so natural and universal, that it would have been as absurd to direct men to love their country, as it would have been to preach to them the duty of loving themselves. "Many pagans," says Jortin, "of great renown had carried the love of their country to a vicious excess, and had not scrupled to injure and oppress other nations, that they might advance the power and glory of their own. The Romans had not been free from this fault; the Lacedemonians had been scandalously guilty of it." [*Disc. 4. vol. i. p. 97.*]

The same writer quotes a passage from Lactantius, [*Inst. Div. vi. 6.*] of which I shall here add a translation.—"What are the advantages of our country, but the disadvantages of other cities or nations? That is, to extend our limits by the violent ejection of others; to increase our empire, and add to our revenues. Now all these things are not simply the overthrow of one virtue, but of all virtues. For, in the first place, the union of men in society is destroyed, respect for the property of others is destroyed, in short, justice itself is destroyed; for justice cannot endure divisions among men, and from the place where arms glitter, she must necessarily be driven and expelled. For how can that man be just, who injures, hates, robs, kills? But those, who strive for their country's profit, are guilty of all these things."

let it not be thought, that I would exclude that love. It is just and rational in itself ; but, like other passions, which have our own good, in whole or in part, for their object, it is prone to pass the bounds of justice, while its connexion with our country too often procures pardon to its excesses. A Christian, whose moral views are enlightened and pure, governs his affection to his country by the same rules, which restrain him in the gratification of every passion, that seeks principally his own benefit or pleasure. He loves his country much, but virtue more. He desires her prosperity, but desires more fervently, that she should ever be found in the path of honor and uprightness. Her misfortunes give him pain, but he would be more deeply grieved, if her riches or territory were increased by rapine or unjust war. His wisdom, his talents, his best services are ever at her disposal, to promote her welfare, and to secure her peace. But to a national enterprize, which his conscience condemns as unjust or oppressive, he will no more lend his aid, than he will sully his private reputation by injustice or fraud. He loves his country's glory ; but it is a glory not consisting in splendid victories, nor in giving the law to conquered provinces. It is that true and only glory, which springs from moral and intellectual worth. He is the same in neglect and obscurity, as in the brightest sunshine of popular favour. Nay ! he hesitates not to do good to his country, though he foresee from his countrymen, misled by passion or prejudice, no reward but suspicion, no distinction but the miserable one of being hated, accursed, persecuted.

It would be difficult to speak of exalted public and private virtue, and not recal to your memory one, who so recently has been a living and venerable example of both. We may view the character of a patriot sincere and without reproach, in him, who, unmoved by applause or censure, never swerved from the path, which religion and duty pointed out ; who, in the hour of our utmost peril, when our political bark seemed buffeted by adverse currents, and the way was dark and difficult, feared not to direct her course through surround-

ing dangers ; who sought not honors and offices, but gave himself to them ; to whom public stations were not the means of increasing wealth or fame or power, but calls to laborious duty and perilous responsibility ; who left the retirement and the domestic enjoyments, which he most loved, at a time, when the eminence to which he was raised offered him no prospect, but that of perplexing cares. Would we fill our souls with the admiration of true greatness, would we be improved by the contemplation of true wisdom, would we acquire strength from an example of true courage, let us seek instruction from his life, and like him make religion the governing principle of our conduct, both as men and as citizens.

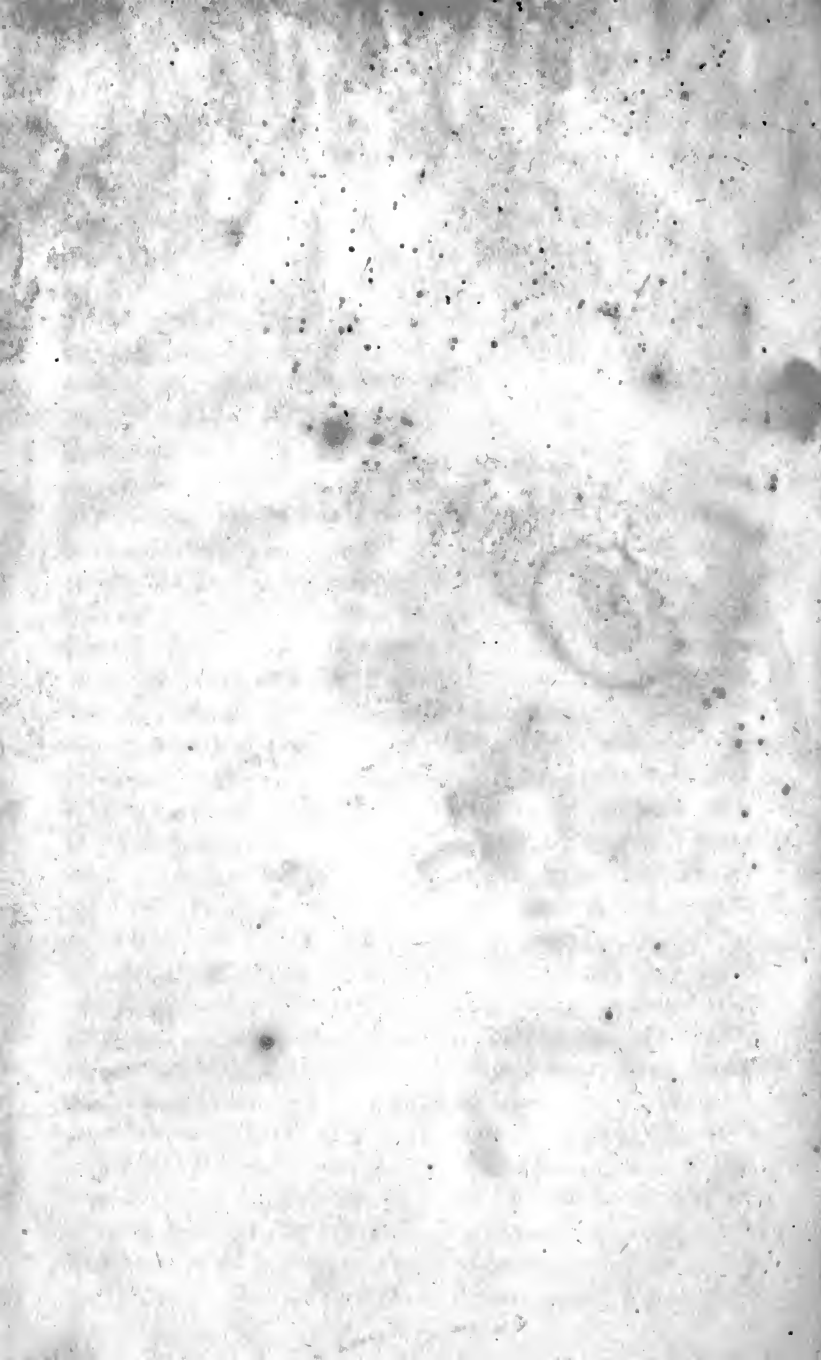
But the patriotism, which the world applauds is far different from that, which I have now endeavoured to describe. It is loud and boasting, arrogant, obtrusive, bold. It allows neither justice, humanity, nor truth, to stand in competition with the interests of our country. Is a neighbouring territory wanted for the convenience of our trade, or the security of our frontier, the fashionable language is, that it must be ours. It must be obtained by force, if it cannot be by treaty. And men, who would be shocked if they heard such an intention imputed to their friend, whose field might be conveniently enlarged by a small addition from a neighbour's grounds, seem not to be aware that they suppose any thing dishonourable of their country, when they express such anticipations. If the fleets and armies of our country are successful, such patriotism requires of us to rejoice, whether her cause be right or wrong. Nay, more, we must be ready to raise our arm and aid in the slaughter of her enemies, though it be manifest, that those enemies only use the right of self-defence in resisting unjust oppression. And need I speak of the gross exaggerations, concealments, misstatements and falsehoods of every sort, which are used, not only with impunity, but with approbation, to hide the defeats or to swell the victories of a nation? Strange, that the honour, which is so quick to resent, even to blood, the accusation of a falsehood, should be so dead and palsied to the shame of the crime itself !

It has not been my intention to apply these remarks to any circumstances of our own history, or to speak of these errors as peculiar to this country. Perhaps they exist no where in a less degree. It will not be denied, that false ideas of patriotism, and a false national pride, have had great effect in producing and prolonging wars. How important then is it, to instil into the minds of youth, sentiments better agreeing with Christian charity ! How important, that while they are made to glow with patriotic fervour ; while their imaginations are warmed by the applauses bestowed by poets and historians on deeds of valour, they should be taught to love and admire the peaceful virtues of the Christian !

I have thus attempted to point out some of the causes, which have made the pacific influence of Christianity partial and incomplete. Are they such, as must continue to operate ? Are they such, as forbid us to hope for the attainment of that moral purity, which the principles of our religion, rightly understood, and faithfully practised upon, are fitted to produce ? Are they such, that our consciences can justify us in slumbering, effortless acquiescence ? That Christians may look idly upon prevailing corruption, and yet hope to be accounted faithful servants in that day, which infinitely concerns us all ? Our own hearts, the good, which Christianity has already done, and the gospel itself, which we profess to follow, answer, No ! Let us then, at last, dare to be wise, and to make use of the light, which has shone upon us. Let us no longer be satisfied with the erring wisdom of ages, which that light visited not. Let us learn to call him great, who is just, and moderate, and wise, who seeks not his own glory, and to whom riches, and honours, and power, are but the instruments of doing good.













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