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S E R M O N,

DELIVERED IN

THE MEETING HOUSE

OF

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,

IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

AUGUST 20TH, 1812.

Being a Day recommended, by the

CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES OF THE NATION,

As a Day of

SPECIAL HUMILIATION AND PRAYER,

ON ACCOUNT OF

THE PRESENT WAR.

~~~~~  
BY WILLIAM PARKINSON, A. M.

*Pastor of said Church.*  
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“He maketh wars to cease, &c.” Psalm xlv. 9.

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A

SERMON.

I. Chron. 5. 18.—22.

18. The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the Tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and three-score, that went out to the war.

19. And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur and Nephish, and Nodab.

20. And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them; for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them, because they put their trust in him.

21. And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand.

22. For there fell down many slain, because the war *was* of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

THIS piece of sacred history records the parties and circumstances of an ancient war.

The *parties*, on the one side, the *Israelites*, who were the descendants of *Jacob*, and, on the other side the *Hagarites*, who were the posterity of *Ishmael*, but called Hagarites, after *Hagar*, *Ishmael's* mother. The branches of each family that were engage in the war are particularly named. Of the family of *Jacob*, "the sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh;" who all lived together on the East of

Jordan, and who are said to have been "valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war." v. 18. And of the family of Ishmael or the Hagarites, "*Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab,*"* that is the posterity of these men, and who were the sons of Ishmael. Gen. 25. 15.

The *Circumstances* :

1. "The War *was* of God." v. 22.
2. It was waged on the part of God's Israel : "they made war," &c. v. 19.
3. The forces engaged were very unequal ; of the Israelites, 44,760. v. 18, and of the Hagarites, probably three times that number ; for, besides 100,000 of them taken prisoners, "there fell down many slain." v. 21, 22. Yet
4. The conquest was on the side of Israel. v. 20.
5. The conquest was given them by divine interposition : "they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hands, and all that were with them ;" that is all their possessions. *Ibid.*
6. The success of Israel was in answer to prayer : "for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them, because they put their trust in him." *Ibid.*
7. What the Providence of God delivered to Israel, they took ; and which furnishes an example of what may be lawfully done in a lawful war. They took *men* ; of these 100,000, which alone was near 5,000 more than twice the whole number of the army of Israel. They took *property* ; of camels 50,000, of sheep 250,000, and of asses 2,000, v. 21. They took possession also of the enemy's *territory*, "and dwelt in their steads until the captivity." v. 22.

* *Nodab* is supposed to be the same with *Kedemah*, mentioned with *Jetur* and *Nephish* in the place referred to in *Genesis*. *Dr. Gill* in loc. Or perhaps he was the same with *Nebaioth*, *Ishmael's* eldest son. *Gen.* 25, 13. For as it is not certain that any people, in scripture, are named after him, it is probable that they who in heathen writers are called *Nabathæi* were his descendants. So *Dr. Jackson* and *Bs. Patrick*,

As the text is entirely historical, the remarks already made must serve, both for exposition and introduction.

The subject, of which the Text is a history, observe is

WAR,

and therefore, confessedly, a very extraordinary one to be discussed in the palace of the Prince of Peace. But, if the subject be extraordinary, so also the time and the Occasion:—we are assembled in a time of war, and agreeably to the recommendation of the constituted authorities of our country, for special humiliation and prayer. *Humiliation* for our sins which have contributed to the common mass of national guilt, for which our country is visited; and *prayer*, that God, the only proper object of our hope, would interpose his mercy and power in behalf of these United States. Nor is it the design of the speaker, by any means to encrease, but by all means to moderate the flame of contention which, among our citizens, already burns—nor to provoke to greater outrage, but if possible, in some measure to conciliate those parties which, to the great injury of our country, and the triumph of its enemies, already exist.

In the prosecution of this design, it is proposed to shew,

- I. That such evils accompany war, as make it always to be deprecated.
- II. That, notwithstanding these evils, a nation may be so treated by another, as to justify, on her part, a declaration of war, and that the same cannot be avoided consistently with her dignity, her safety, or even her independence.
- III. What concern God has in war: “The war *was* of God,” and
- IV. What measures, especially in a moral point of view, are proper for a nation to take in relation to war—when exempted from it—when threatened with it—and when involved in it.

I. That such evils accompany war, as make it always to be deprecated.

War, necessarily occasions an increase of taxation. This, in a free country is, to be sure, the less oppressive by being only *internal*; and under an elective and representative gov-

ernment, like ours, *still less so*, by being *voluntary*, both the ratio of the tax and the articles subject to it, being determined by men chosen by the people. Nevertheless the revenue must be collected and, of course, the burden felt.

War occasions, inevitably, an interruption of commerce ; and thus while it increases expense, both public and private, it also lessens the means of defraying it. In times of war, the produce of the country has chiefly, if not wholly, but an internal consumption, and consequently the harvests of the husbandman either remain in his grainaries, or are vendued at a price not equivalent, either to his toils or his expenses. The ships of the merchant, if not appropriated to the purposes of war, are in a state, either of perpetual hazard abroad, or of decay at home. And the honest mechanick, with perhaps a numerous as well as dependant family is without employ, or employed at wages, not adequate to the support of himself, and those dependant on him.

These evils, though considerable, are nevertheless small when compared with others arising from the same source.

A separation of the nearest relatives, and loss of the choicest comforts of natural, civil and sociable life, are among the invariable concomitants of *war*. Think for a moment of such a number of our valuable citizens, of different ranks and ages, and from all parts of the union, as would be requisite to constitute an army and a navy sufficient to contend with a potent enemy—think of these taking leave of their homes and connexions for the place of danger. How affecting the objects that are presented to view!—Whole families bathed in tears and overwhelmed in grief!—Nor dare we disapprove :—the occasion demands it—at least the sensibility and sympathy of parents, wives and sisters, sufficiently account for it—and even the brave soldier, or the valiant officer must be excused should he drop a tear.

This still is but as the “beginning of sorrows.” For leaving their families to the inconveniencies, griefs and anxieties, naturally resulting from their bereavement, we must now spend a thought on the toils, the dangers and the apprehensions of our beloved fellow-citizens, gone, as with their lives in their hands, to fight our battles and maintain our

rights.—See them encountering either the hazards of the conflicting elements upon the mighty ocean, or the rigours of the various seasons, in long and fatiguing marches by land! Or view them actually engaged in battle, and facing ten thousand shafts of death! How eventful the hour! Ah! ye fond connexions left behind, could ye witness the bloody conflict, how would your hearts beat with painful expectation! The sanguinary scene is past;—and perhaps thousands of immortal souls are hurried to the bar of God, to give an account for “the deeds done in the body.” This, were it but once to occur, would be important;—but probably it must be often, very often repeated, before the balance of national power be decided, the murderous process terminated, and the instruments of death again immured.

War, especially when, like that of the American revolution and most of the modern wars in Europe, it inundates the country, always becomes an interruption of public worship, and an obstacle to learning and science, and the cultivation and improvement of all the useful arts. Houses of worship and seminaries of learning, are, under such circumstances, commonly closed and abandoned; and if taken by the enemy, usually converted into barracks for soldiers, or perhaps stables for horses. That such was the fate of public buildings in this and other cities on our continent, during the revolutionary war, is well recollected by many in this assembly.

War, moreover, is a fruitful source of almost all manner of wickedness. Not to speak of that flood of immorality which commonly attends an army, and which more or less disseminates its baneful influence among all classes of society, war has its very origin in wickedness: “Whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts?” Jas. 5. 1 As between individuals or families, so between nations, whenever war occurs, there must be, on one side at least, an egregious departure from equity and justice, and which can only proceed from the lusts of the human heart; such as resentment, envy and jealousy; restless ambition, false glory, wantonness of power, or perhaps a mere thirst for dominion. When these lusts predominate, right is forgotten, national charters are disregarded, and the most so-

lemn treaties wantonly violated. Yes, to gratify these detestable passions, armies, consisting of thousands, have been deliberately sacrificed, and multitudes, which no man can number, have been precipitately launched into the world of spirits. Alas, how many into the world of misery!

When these, and many other evils that might be mentioned, as accompanying war, are duly considered, surely no one can doubt that war is always to be deprecated. Nevertheless, I proceed to shew,

II. That a nation may be so treated by another, as to justify, on her part, a declaration of war, and that the same cannot be avoided, consistently with her dignity, her safety and even her independence.

In this dilemma a nation is involved when another, in reference to her, violates,—perseveringly violates the law of nations. This law I define thus:—*It is the common consent of civil authorities, for time immemorial, that all free and independent nations possess equal rights and are entitled to equal privileges.* By this consent nations are constituted a society, differing only as to magnitude, from that which obtains among individual free men. Hence, as among individuals, so among nations equally free and sovereign, no one can claim the right of dictating another; nor do it, without violating, as in the one case the law of civil society, so in the other that of national usage.

Suppose, for the sake of illustration,* that one man, though free, should presume to enjoin his will upon another equally free,—suppose he should say to him, You shall neither buy nor sell at such or such a market;—or finding him on the highway, going to or returning from market, he should forcibly take away his property and injure his person:—Or suppose that, seeing him in the pursuit of some profitable business, he should tell him, You shall pursue that business no longer; perhaps because he is in it himself and wishes to monopolize the profits; or possibly, because he is so circum-

* This mode of illustration, it is hoped, will be excused by those who do not need it

stanced as not to be able to engage in it, and therefore grudges his neighbour the advantage. Again, suppose he should fancy it to be the duty of this man whom he has undertaken to controul, to be the enemy of every man to whom *he* is an enemy, and should treat the man himself as an enemy when he thinks and acts otherwise :—or, supposing that, envying the peace and prosperity of this certain man, he should employ his influence, by secret missions, bribery, &c. to move his neighbours to commit depredations upon his property, or to excite his own family to mutiny ;—in fine, suppose him to demand of this man, as a matter of superiour right, any act whatever, as a token of inferiority or submission ;—suppose, I say, any one of the things mentioned, and you suppose what is a violation of the common rights of free men. Can you then for a moment hesitate as to the duty of the citizen thus insulted !—thus injured !—If, indeed, he possess no means of self-defence—no means of teaching his insolent neighbour his duty, and of shewing to others that he is a free man, then, to be sure, he must peaceably submit. And if so, where his dignity, his safety, and his freedom ? They no longer exist. But, if the requisite means be at his command, then say you, and I believe with united voice, let him avail himself of them—let him, without a moment's delay, repel the attacks of the lawless usurper, and assert and maintain his own rights.

The application to nations is perfectly convenient. If among the society of nations equally free and sovereign, any one presume to make her will the rule of another's conduct ; if, for instance, she prohibit, or attempt to prohibit a free and neutral sister, the right of trade, at any port not legally blockaded and in articles not contraband ;—if she authorise, or (unremunerated) permit her armed vessels to molest the merchant ships of her peaceable sister,—especially to plunder her property, and either to kill or to impress her seamen ;—if she attempt any monopoly, or even any superior right upon the high seas, which, not only by the law of nations, but also

of nature and of nature's God, are equally free to all ;—if she use her influence by any means to excite the neighbours of a sister nation to acts of aggression against her, or to promote among her own people, disaffection to her government, and disunion of her members ;—if, I say, a nation do these things, then is she guilty of conduct similar to that supposed of a wicked, haughty, and domineering individual, and is worthy of the same treatment to which, in your minds, that individual hath been already adjudged.

Now, how far the conduct of Great Britain toward this country, for at least five years past, hath assimilated her to such an individual, I leave you, my fellow-citizens, to think for yourselves, claiming to myself, as a free man, the right of doing the same. But supposing the similitude to be appropriate, and that the acts *supposed*, have been really *committed* :—can there, under such a supposition, a single doubt remain as to the course which this country, in return, ought to have pursued? If, indeed, these insults and depredations had not been repeated—had they not been often repeated,—and had not a disposition been manifested, still to repeat them, it might have been well, on the part of this country, to have forborne. But having given no provocation to such treatment, having used, in vain, all honourable means to prevent it, and having already sustained considerable loss, not only of property and reputation, but even of blood ; and this, all this, having been wantonly continued, until hope had become folly, and delay subjection ; there remained, of course, for our insulted, injured country but two objects of choice :—Either she must tamely and dastardly submit to the dictates and oppressions of imperious Britain, and so make, at once, a surrender of her rights, and an acknowledgment that she is no longer free ; or, in the noble spirit of '76, call together her patriotic sons—vest them with authority—furnish them with arms, and say to them Go,—Go by sea and land,—Go vindicate my rights, avenge my wrongs, and maintain my LIBERTY, the bounteous gift of Heaven, and the invaluable price of your father's blood. The former she has nobly disdained,—the

atter, by her constituted authorities, she has honourably, solemnly and seasonably done.—Nor was ever a mother's mandate more promptly obeyed. No sooner had it reached the ears of her free-born sons, than her flag was seen waving from every principal port on her meandering coast, and her standard planted, with her banner unfurled, at many of the principal avenues to the enemy, on her extensive frontier. And for what purpose? Not to invade the rights of others, but to protect her own: and to do which, we are taught, not only by the impulse of nature and the dictate of reason, but by the voice of Revelation itself:—yea, not to do it, were to sanction the vices of a rapacious foe, and to pour contempt on the favours of God.—This, however, will become more evident, while I attempt to shew

III. What concern God has in war. “The war was of God.” Text.

His concern in this, as in all human affairs, though not always manifest, at least not in the same degree, yet always exists. And that not merely “as in him we live, and move, and have our being;”† but also, as by him all our changes are meted:—“God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”‡ “I” saith he, “form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things.”§ However strange, it is nevertheless evident, that God, for reasons *certainly* known, *only* to himself, did, at an early period of the world, discover that his secret arrangements, in relation to the human family, provided for war: hence the remarkable government which he gave to the ancient Hebrews,—a government in which all the males of Israel, able to bear arms, were, by divine command, divided, under several captains, into companies of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens; ready for the field, whenever the circumstances of the nation rendered it necessary. Shall this be

* 2 Chron. xx. 15.

† Acts 17. 28. ‡ Psalm 75. 7 § Isai. 45. 7.

urged as furnishing an example of a standing army? Certainly not, without either much ignorance or much sophistry. For the Israelites were not, like a standing army, a *standing expense*, and a *standing nuisance* to the nation; nor, like that, an *engine* at the command of a lawless tyrant, to impose *his will* upon the people. No; but rather like an enrolled and well regulated *militia*,—in peace, pursuing their civil employments and defraying their own expenses, and yet bestowing so much attention on the cultivation of military skill, as to be ready, on any emergency, to repair to the theatre of action. I am aware that it may be said, that God, in the arrangements made for war among the ancient Hebrews, had a mystical design;—that the warlike state of the Hebrews was to prefigure that of the Gospel Church; and that the wars they were commanded to wage, and the conquests they were enabled to gain, were typical of the wars which we are commanded to wage with our spiritual enemies, and the conquests which, through grace, we are encouraged to expect. All this is readily granted. But were the Hebrews influenced by these considerations? Or did they not rather act from the common motives which influence soldiers? or, at most, from a sense of present duty;—while the mystical design remained to be understood by the Gospel Church, under the superior light of the Gospel dispensation.* So, no doubt, God has had a design no less important and no less worthy of himself, in all the wars, both ancient and modern, since the commencement of this dispensation: nevertheless that design remains to be understood by the Church in the greater light of her millennial glory, or perhaps not fully until she arrives in heaven.†

That God has a concern in war, appears in its commencement, its progress, and its termination.

In its *commencement*. That he had such a concern in that war of which our Text is a record, is plainly asserted: “The

* *Eph.* 6. 11--17. † *Matt.* 24. 6, 7. *Rev.* 19. 17, 18.—
Isa. 30. 26. *John* 13. 7.

war *was* of God." In this, however, as in all other events which give occasion for the exercise of human corruptions, we must always distinguish between these corruptions and God's control of them. War, as already noticed, proceeds, on the part of men from their lusts; nevertheless, even these, in their propensity to war, as to every other outrage, are subject, to the overruling power of God. as much as the elements of nature; and his address to the raging ocean, is no less applicable to depraved man: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;—here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* The king's heart, "and so the heart of every human ruler and of every human being, is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will."† Hence,

Sometimes when men determine *war*, God prevents it; either by checking their lusts. or frustrating their designs.‡

At other times. he not only permits in his holy providence, circumstances to occur, which call those corruptions into exercise, but also leaves men to pursue their dictates. either to conquest, or to ruin, as he, in his righteous sovereignty may have determined.§

And there are also instances in which, either by a strange concurrence of providences. or by some mysterious, ineffable and inconceivable impulse upon the minds of men. God manifests his concern in *war*, by actually stimulating to it:— "The God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, kings of Assyria," to make *war* against Israel. 1 Chron. 5. 26. Do we find our hearts rising in opposition to such sovereignty? Let it remind us that we are depraved, and are not yet in due submission to HIM, who is saying "Be still. and know that I am God." Psalm 46. 10.

As God has a concern in the commencement, so also in the *progress* of *war*; which is long or short, severe or moderate, according to his sovereign control.

* Job 38. 11. † Prov. 21. 1. ‡ 1 Sam. 23. 7—17. & 25, 26, 34. & 1 Kings 12. 22—24. § 1 Sam. 4. 9, 10. 2 Chron. 35. 20—24. Deut. 1. 42—44.

As the hearts of all are in his hand, he imboldens or intimidates them at pleasure.*

As "unto" him "belong the issues from death" Psalm 68. 20. it cannot be reasonably doubted that the shafts of battle, as well as of disease, are all directed by his sovereign hand. Witness the stone from David's sling, which prostrated the vaunting Philistine, and the arrow from the "bow, which a certain man drew at a venture," but which, divinely directed, penetrated,—fatally penetrated "the king of Israel between the joints of the harness. † Yea, if not a sparrow, much less a man, can fall to the ground without his will. Matt. 10. 29.

Besides; as at all times and places in common, the destinies of all men and of all nations are in his power. ‡ so undoubtedly, in times of war and at the place of battle. If not, why the exhortation, "Trust ye in him at all times," Psalm 62. 8.—or why did God himself say to Israel, "The battle is not yours, but God's. 2 Chron. 20. 15.

Nor is the concern which God has in the war, any less manifest in its *termination*: "He maketh wars to cease." Psalm 46. 9. And, as of him is the decision of the contest, so also the disposal of the conquest. "The battle is the Lord's." 1 Sam. 17. 47. Men, indeed, commonly view these events as depending wholly on the comparative numbers and military skill of the forces engaged; or, if any thing extraordinary occur they attribute it, usually to mere chance; but, in reality they are like the lot, "The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Prov. 16. 33. That "the battle" as remarked by the wise man, "is not to the strong," *i. e.* not always, or not merely because strong, is evident from our Text; for the Israelites, compared with the Hagarites, were but few; yet, being "helped," divinely helped "against them, the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with

* 2 Chron. 20. 29. & 2 Kings 7. 6.

† 1 Sam. 17. 49. 1 Kings 22. 34. ‡ 2 Chron. 20. 6. Psalm 31. 17.

them," *i. e.* all their possessions. That these events, however, depend on divine interposition, no one surely can doubt, who for a moment reviews them in relation to the revolutionary war in this country: for then, to use the language of scripture, "One chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;" and why? Because the war, like that recorded in the Text, *was of God*. He moved our fathers to engage in it—he conducted them through the whole process, and he crowned them with victory and triumph.

From the consideration of the concern which God has in war, I proceed to shew.

IV. What measures, especially in a moral point of view, are proper for a nation to take in relation to war,—when exempted from it—when threatened with it, and when involved in it.

First. When exempted from it.

During such times, the greatest care should be taken to preserve neutrality. To this the situation of the United States is peculiarly favourable; being so widely separated by water, from every other nation, from which a war of any consequence could be apprehended. The principles of neutrality are often violated by presumptuous individuals: but this evil it is in the power of government easily to remedy, by chastisement and remuneration. O that proud England had done this! Then had not our government, at this time, been driven to the last, the lamentable resort of injured nations.

While exempt from war, it is of primary importance in preserving the blessings of peace, that the people preserve unity of sentiment on the principal measures of government; strict adherence to the constitution, *the great charter of national rights*, and a proper submission to "the powers that be"* It may indeed, often occur, that men in office act unworthily the trust reposed in them; but, in such cases, the remedy lies, not in faction, riot and defamation, but in elec-

* *Romans 13. 1.*

tions. When these return, it is the privilege of the sovereign people to withhold their suffrages from those who have abused their confidence, and to give them to other and better men.

But above all, a nation, while exempt from the evils of war, should habitually acknowledge God as the author and preserver of the blessings of peace. When he is forgotten, and the blessings enjoyed are ascribed to the merit of the people—the management of rulers—military power—or, indeed to any cause whatever, short of divine goodness, there is reason to expect public trouble *at least*, and, without national reformation, the scourge of war.—“If,” said God to the people of Israel, and which is not inapplicable to the people of these United States—“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”* To this means of advancing either the prosperity, or the ruin of the nation, every individual may contribute, as he may contribute either to that morality, that “righteousness which exalteth a nation,” or to that immorality, that “sin which is the disgrace of any people.”† However, when the moral character of a nation is taken into view, there are two classes in the community which require a more than ordinary attention.

The *one* class intended, unites those who, in the providence of God, are called by the voice of the people, to transact the civil affairs of the nation; whether by enacting laws or administering government. And as the moral qualifications requisite in these men, are so much the topick of popular clamour, it may be proper, on this occasion, in some measure, to investigate that subject.

It is contended by many, that they ought to be *religious* men. If by *religious* be meant *regenerate*, then is it indeed essential that they be religious men. Not, however, to qualify them to be statesmen; for as their work, in that capacity,

* *Isai.* 1. 19, 20

+ *Prov.* 14. 31.

is wholly of a natural and civil kind, so also the qualifications, requisite to perform it: but, in order to their *own eternal salvation*; for God respects no man's person;—and “Except a man” whether great or small, “be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3. 3.

But is it not awfully to be feared, that the greater part of those who make such an outcry against statesmen whom they deem irreligious, are themselves strangers to experimental religion; and that their ideas of religious men, extend no further than to men who, by education or otherwise are connected with some religious sect, attend public worship and approach the Lord's table. But who does not discover that all this may be true of men, strangers to a work of grace upon the heart, and even of Deists? That it is the duty of those who possess religion, to profess it and the privilege of those who have been enabled to rely on the merits of Christ for salvation, to commemorate his sufferings in the ordinance of the supper, is heartily admitted; but to make a profession of religion, especially a partaking at the Lord's table, a test of qualification for civil office, is to hold out a strong— if not the strongest inducement to *hypocrisy* and *impicty*. Should it be said, *they ought to believe*; as well might it be said, *they ought to keep the whole moral law*, and so to be *perfect*.* But duty and ability are two things. And whoever makes such an observation proves, to me, that he is an utter stranger to living faith, or he would know it to be, not at the command of the creature, but the *gift of God*, and a fruit of the Holy Ghost.† If it be said, that it is the duty of men in public life, to observe, and treat with respect, the externals of religion,‡ it is only saying what I admit and contend is the

* *Matt. 22. 37—40.* † *Eph. 2. 8. and Gal. 5. 22.*

‡ *Neglect of this duty hath been attributed to our Chief Magistrate, and to his worthy predecessor; and on which account they have been stigmatized as Deists. The charge is not true; and if it were, it could no more prove them to be Deists, than neglect of the same duty proves many others to*

duty of men in common. For the command of Christ, "Search the scriptures,"* is binding on all, and the injunction on his ministers "Preach the Gospel to every creature,† plainly implies the duty of every creature to attend where it is preached. But to contend, as many seem to do, that it is the duty of statesmen‡ to profess experimental religion, and to partake at the Lord's table, to set an example to others, is to contend that it is their duty to be hypocrites, in order to influence others to be so, and to "eat and drink *damnation*," that is, *condemnation, or judgment, or guilt*,§ to themselves, that, by their example, they may teach others to do the same. From such hypocrisy and wickedness "good Lord deliver us!" That it is not the object of those who reason in that way, to induce the men now in office, in the United States, to become guilty of such crimes, that so they might peaceably retain their several stations, is readily admitted; for their object, on the contrary, is to have them removed: and why? Not, surely, because they refuse to be guilty of *hypocrisy and impiety*! No; but that they might fill the offices they hold with men of different politicks. Should they succeed, I pray God that they may not be permitted to substitute men already guilty, or who are capable of becoming guilty of such deception and iniquity, in order to secure their favor! For of all men that might be put into power, such are the most dangerous.|| Nor does *that*, in my humble opinion,

be so, who nevertheless stand high with their calumniators. Whether those great men thus abused, are subjects of grace or not, is known only to God; but of their being Deists, I am bound to believe that there is no more evidence, than of moral men in common being so, who make no profession of experimental religion.

* John 5. 39. † Mark 16. 15. ‡ That is, because statesmen; though they should be unregenerate—

§ 1 Cor. 11. 27—29. From *which scripture it is evident that faith is essential to an evangelical participation in that sacred ordinance, as without it none can discern the Lord's body.*

|| Even Gallio, who "cared for none of these things," better understood civil authority, and civil rights, and was more

necessarily follow, in the event of such a change ; for although our citizens have been, unhappily, long divided and distinguished by the appellations of *Federalist and Republican*, I have always thought, and now think, that there are men of equal integrity, abilities and patriotism on both sides. And indeed the distinction itself is as unfounded as it is impolitic ; for, under our government, no man can be a Federalist without being a Republican, nor a Republican, without being a Federalist ; the one having respect to the confederacy of the states, the other to the sovereignty of the people ; and both being comprehended in our excellent constitution.

After begging forgiveness for so lengthy a digression, I come to offer my own opinion as to the moral qualifications that are desirable in statesmen, and the manner in which, *as such*, they ought to acknowledge God.

Their *moral qualifications* : They ought to be

1. Men of good morals, and
2. Men of liberal sentiments ;—men rightly understanding and duly appreciating the natural and unalienable rights of conscience ;—men who, though entitled, in common with other men, to the right of religious opinion, and the choice of religious society, yet claim no right to control the consciences of others, nor to dictate, in matters of religion, to their fellow men.

The manner in which they, in their official capacity, ought to acknowledge God. This they should do

1. By submitting to him *alone*, the rights of conscience, and consequently, leaving all sects and all individuals to worship him, in that way and manner which, to them shall appear to be most acceptable unto him ; provided, however, that nothing in their customs and manners shall interfere with the

favourable to the Apostles than the Jews, especially the priests, who were great religionists. Acts 18. 12—17. And if some, in our country, who are called Christian ministers, or others who adhere to them, were in power, how soon, alas ! would the people be shackled with a religious, or rather, an irreligious establishment !

rights of others, nor with the peace and good order of civil society

2. By discharging their official duties with an integrity becoming the solemnities under which they entered into office, and in which they called upon him to witness their obligations.

3. By acknowledging, at times of special emergency, their need of his special direction, and requesting their constituents to unite with them in imploring it.

The *other* class of the community deserving special consideration, are professors of the Christian religion. And our duties, my brethren, in relation to the subject before us, are concisely and specifically stated in these words of our blessed master: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's. Matt. 22. 21. That is, unto *civil authority*, render obedience in *civil things*, and unto God, *and to him only*, render obedience in *spiritual things*; that so while they attend to the duties of the one, they may not neglect those of the other. Christians should recollect that, as they "are the salt of the earth," in common, so in particular of the nations in which they respectively dwell; and therefore that, as it is their duty to use all means to preserve peace and good order in the churches, with which they are connected, so also in the nations to which they belong. Especially they should be in the habit of returning thanks to God, as for all other blessings, so for the peace and prosperity of their nation, and of praying for "all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1. Tim. 2. 2.

As there are certain measures in relation to war, proper to be taken by a nation when exempted from it, so

Secondly. When threatened with it. Here much might be said as to erecting fortifications, preparing military stores, raising and arranging forces, &c. &c. but these I leave to statesmen, confining myself to what is of a moral nature, and which therefore, comes more immediately within my providence.

As war, like every other judgement is procured by sin, the first act of a nation when threatened with it, should be

public humiliation. And this, as all are equally concerned, ought to be as general as possible; and therefore it is proper that a day or days for that purpose be recommended by the national government. Not indeed to make it the duty of the people to fast and pray; for that is already done by the authority of God himself, and by the example of his ancient servants; * and if it were not, no human authority could make it so; † but to secure the object just mentioned, *unanimity*: that so, from all the worshipping assemblies in the nation, the cries of the saints may ascend in one common and united prayer to the throne of mercy, for pardon of accumulated guilt, and preservation from threatened evil. Such was the counsel of king Jehoshaphat, and such the conduct of all Judea. 2. Chron. 20. 3—4.

But suppose the cloud should still thicken, and either submission or war become inevitable; it is then the duty of the constituted authorities of the nation to act as recommended in the case supposed by Christ, Luke 14. 31—32, that is, *to consult* whether they possess a sufficient power to afford a reasonable probability of success, should they engage in war; if not, let them propose peace, which is to be preferred on almost any terms, rather than a wanton and unsuccessful effusion of blood; but if a sufficient force be at command to defend the rights, and preserve the property of themselves and their constituents, let them recommend an immediate appeal to arms, and let all the people heartily acquiesce. ‡ Hence

Thirdly. The measures which, in relation to war, are proper for a nation to take, when involved in it. This, at least, as

* Zech. 8. 19. Luke 5. 35. Ezra 8. 21—23. Jer. 36. 9. Joel 2. 15—18. *This indeed, like all other external acts of religion, may be enjoined and observed both by public and private persons, as a mere specious show of piety, and then it is an abomination to God. See 1. Kings, 21. 7—13. Isai. 58. 2—7. Matt. 6. 16. But the abuse of a duty can never nullify it.*

† Matt. 15. 9.

‡ This is plainly implied in the supposed case already alluded to.

to form, is the present condition of these United States. And although I make no pretensions to special discernment, and much less to a spirit of prophecy, yet as I have uniformly said for seven years past, I still say, that, of war in this country, there will be little more than the form. This opinion is founded in a firm persuasion that all the modern wars that have occurred among the nations of the earth, are procured by that Antichristian abomination, a *union of church and state*; and as this abomination does not exist in our country, and is not provided for in our national constitution, so neither shall we share in the "overflowing scourge" which is designed to remove it. At Cannada indeed it exists, and British squadrons under the sanction of it, are cruizing on our coasts; and therefore, it is within the limits of my opinion already expressed, that it may in those situations, occasion distress and bloodshed. And as it hath been attempted in some of our Eastern states, what degree of trouble they may experience on account of it, I will not pretend to determine. Of this however, I have no doubt, that all governments under heaven, in which that abomination has a being, must be shaken to their centre, and so changed in their forms, as to be no longer, as they now are, obstacles to the "free course" of the gospel, and the equal enjoyment of civil and religious liberty. The government of the Jews which was originally a theocracy, became indeed by divine permission,* a monarchy; and the Jewish nation with their two fold officers of kings and priests was, it is admitted, a figure of the gospel church; but then, as the antitype of their offerings was found in the *sacrifice*,† so that of their kings and priests in the *person* of the MESSIAH, † who is not only the substance of preceeding shadows, but also at once "king in Zion," and the great high priest of our profession. Hence, as at his *death*, the Aaronic order and ceremonial service of *right* forever ceased,‡ so at

* 1. *Sam.* 8. 7.

† *Heb.* 9. 11—14. ‡ *Heb.* 4. 14. *Rev.* 17. 14.

§ *Daniel* 9. 24—29. *Col.* 2. 14—17.

*his resurrection,** the power and authority of all human kings. Nevertheless, as the ceremonies of the law were presumptuously persisted in by the Jews, until the destruction of Jerusalem, when it was no longer possible, the Temple and its furniture being destroyed; so have the nations of the earth presumptuously persisted, and will continue so to persist, in the support of kings and kingly governments, until the effectual destruction of Antichristian power, both civil and ecclesiastical; and then shall be taken up that doleful lamentation, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, &c.—For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her," &c. &c. Rev. 18. 2—3.†

But to return: However confident I feel that the present war will not prove an *overflowing scourge* to our country, I do not, on this account wish any relaxation in the use of means; for it is by these, I believe, that God will preserve us. And therefore, as Paul, although he had a vision from heaven assuring him that there should be no loss of the crew, nevertheless said to the mariners, concerning means, "except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" :‡ so much more may I, having but a general view of the scriptures in support of my opinion, and being like men in common, liable to err, say to the rulers and people of our nation, *without the means of defence, ye cannot be secured from the evils threatened*: Yea, to expect it would be presumption. As to the means proper to be used, there can be no reasonable doubt.

A primary object with every citizen, public and private, in church and state, should be to promote union, and firmness in the support of government. "A house," a family—a nation "divided against itself cannot stand."§ On a disunion of the states and disaffection to the general government, the ene-

* *This is probably the true sense of Rom. 1. 4. power, meaning authority. See also Acts, 2. 22—36. Here he is at once made Lord and Christ, the ruler and the priest.*

† *See also Ezekiel, 21. 27. Daniel 7. 9. Psa. 72. 10.*

‡ *Acts 27. 31. § Mark 3. 25.*

inv chiefly relies. Whoever therefore contributes to these, contributes to the interest and encouragement of the common foe of our beloved country ; and is therefore no longer worthy the honourable distinction of an American citizen.

Means, though to be used, are not to be trusted in. God alone should be the object of our trust : so of Israel it is said in the text, “ they trusted in him.” Let us do likewise. He only can give that wisdom to our rulers, and that success to our forces, which are necessary to conquest.

And as he is to be trusted in so also to be called upon ; and that not only in common, nor only in common *during war*, but even in the time of battle : “ they cried to God in the battle ”—nor did they cry in vain ; “ he was entreated of them ;” because they trusted in him.” Prayer then for success of arms, is evidently lawful, and availing. It hath been offered by God’s Israel, and answered by Israel’s God. May we, and may all God’s people in these United States abound in it ! Then may we hope for a short war, and an advantageous peace.

To the declaration of war lately made, on the part of our government, we all know there are many objections. But when we consider whence they come ;—that from the same quarter, eleven years ago, the chambers of the Capitol rang with arguments in favor of an appeal to arms for taking Louisiana ; which, in the wisdom of our then chief magistrate was, to much greater advantage, honourably purchased ; and that the same men who accuse the present administration of *madness*, for going to war, when, in fact, there was no other resort no less accused the former administration of *pusillanimity*, for pursuing milder measures, notwithstanding there certainly did then remain grounds of hope that a reconciliation might be effected ;—when, I say, these things are considered, we are tempted, strongly tempted to doubt, in this particular, their sincerity, and to conclude that all the outcry is intended only to answer electioneering purposes, and to put the administration into other hands.

It is urged that, had it been proper for our government to declare *war*, it should have been declared against France, as well as England. That the conduct of France, toward this

country, has been very unwarrantable, is not denied; nor yet that a national adjustment with her may hereafter be necessary. It must be obvious, however, that the principal provocations to war have been only on the part of England: France has indeed robbed us on the highway of nations, and even burnt our vessels; nevertheless she has not, like England, impressed our citizens, blockaded our harbours, and crimsoned our waters with American blood.

It is contended that the declaration of war at all was impolitick. I cannot think so; but believe that this declaration and correspondent arrangements, were, of all means, the most likely to procure peace—lasting and honourable peace.

The present, however, is not the time to contest that point. When the flames are raging, it is too late for firemen to stand disputing whether, by certain means, they might not have been prevented from kindling; their duty then is to unite in quenching them. The flames of war are already kindled—they are gathering along our coast and threatening upon our frontiers; the duty—the common duty, therefore, of American citizens is, to use all means in their power, to bring the contest to the most speedy and most favourable issue.

Yes, my friends. the time for idle and speculative debate is, with us, at an end. We, in holy providence, are placed in a situation which demands the greatest national unity and exertion; and which, in its result, must necessarily furnish occasion for the greatest national triumph or lamentation. From the latter may we be mercifully preserved! In the former may we soon participate! And all the glory shall redound to God. AMEN.



H Y M N,

*Sung at the close of Public Worship, when the
preceding Sermon was delivered.*



1. Great God of all ! thy matchless power
Should every nation still adore ;
Thee, our sovereign, we would own,
And bow before thy gracious throne.
2. May peace her balmy wing extend,
From age to age upon this land !
Grant FREEDOM and the GOSPEL'S sound !
Make every blessing here abound !
3. Our *President* with wisdom crown,
His soul with thy rich grace adorn ;
Resolve his heart, 'midst all his foes,
" To launch the stream which duty shows."
4. Over our *capitol* diffuse,
From hills divine, thy welcome dews ;
While *Congress*, in one patriot band,
Prove the firm fortress of our land.}
5. Our *Magistrates*, O Lord, sustain,
Nor let them bear the sword in vain ;
Long as they fill their awful seat,
Be *Vice* seen dying at their feet.
6. For ever from the western sky,
Bid the destroying angel fly ;
With grateful songs our hearts inspire,
And round us blaze " a wall of fire."

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