

ALL WAR FORBIDDEN BY CHRISTIANITY.

AN

ADDRESS,

TO

THE CITIZENS OF DOVER,

DELIVERED ON

THANKSGIVING EVENING,

NOV. 25, 1847.

BY REV. W. P. TILDEN.

DOVER, N. H.:

M. D. L. STEVENS.....PRINTER.

1847.

SC
E
415
.T55
1847

DOVER, N. H. Dec. 1, 1847.

DEAR SIR:

The undersigned, gentlemen of different denominations of Christians in Dover, having listened with deep satisfaction to your discourse before our citizens, at the Town Hall, on the evening of the 25th of November, and believing that the opinions there advanced are of great value, especially at the present juncture of our public affairs; are desirous of giving them a wider circulation, and a more permanent influence than they have yet obtained. For this purpose they have ventured to request a copy for publication, hoping that your own views will not so materially differ from theirs, as to compel you to refuse what will be regarded by them as a signal obligation.

With much respect, we are, Dear Sir,

Your obliged fellow citizens,

L. EVERETT, GEO. QUINT,
O. WYATT, J. PERKINS,
A. FOLSOM, L. S. RAND,
E. WADLEIGH, H. A. FOOT.

REV. WM. P. TILDEN.

DOVER, Dec. 1847.

KIND FRIENDS:

I am happy to learn from your friendly note that you sympathize with the sentiments of the address delivered on Thanksgiving evening. As I believe those sentiments to be true and important, however imperfectly expressed, I do not feel at liberty to refuse your kind request for their publication.

As the address was not wholly written at the time it was delivered, I have taken the liberty in filling out the manuscript for the press, of adding a very few thoughts.

Hoping that even this humble word for Peace and Human Brotherhood may do something, with the Father's blessing, to prepare the way for the "Coming of the Son of man in his kingdom."

I am yours in the bonds of the Gospel,

W. P. TILDEN.

Messrs. L. EVERETT, &c.

W. P. TILDEN
DOVER, N. H.
1847

ADDRESS.

Among the many rich and abundant blessings for which we have rendered "Thanksgiving" to-day, the Gospel of Christ has, doubtless, held a prominent place. It seems not inappropriate, therefore, to spend this evening hour of our religious festival in considering the character of that Gospel in its relation to Peace, and Love, and Brotherhood, and the testimony which it bears against all war and fighting with carnal weapons.

The sad reflections of a national character that must mingle even with our glad thoughts on this thanksgiving occasion, renders the subject still more appropriate. It is not my purpose, however, to speak of Christianity in its bearing upon our present war against Mexico merely, but upon war itself; whenever, or wherever, or for whatsoever purpose declared or waged. This I conceive to be the high ground that Christianity occupies.

If Jesus may be regarded as the true teacher of the religion that bears his name, if confidence may be placed in his own expositions of truth and duty as recorded by the evangelists, if we may rely upon his own testimony concerning the nature of the Heavenly Kingdom which He lived and died to establish in the hearts of men, then it seems to me evident that all war and fighting, in its spirit and all its manifestations, are in open conflict with the eternal principles of righteousness and love on which that kingdom is based.

To take a single declaration as indicating the spirit of all his teaching upon this subject, turn to his reply to the questionings of Pilate in the judgment hall, concerning the nature of his offence. "Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence." What language could be more explicit. That heavenly kingdom which he came to establish on earth and for which he taught his disciples to pray and labor is not *of* this world—in the world but not *of* it. It is based upon higher and holier principles

than have ever yet governed the kingdoms of this world, principles forbidding his followers to fight. Such is the spirit of all his teaching.

And yet how slow of heart the world are, even that part of it we call the Christian world, to receive this vitally important truth. How little it has been regarded by the great mass of nominal Christians ever since the first two or three centuries. Who, as they read the bloody pages of human history, even among Christian nations, would ever dream, if they were not previously apprised of the fact, that the actors in those sanguinary conflicts were the professed disciples of him who taught in word and deed that evil must be overcome with good, hate subdued by love, and who so distinctly asserted, as he was about to seal his fidelity to those principles with his own blood, that his kingdom was not like the kingdoms of this world, and that his servants could never fight?

Yet such is the melancholly fact and the saddest feature of it all is that so vast a proportion of professed Christians sanction the monstrous delusion, and contend in word and deed that war and fighting so far from being always in conflict with Christianity, becomes, under certain circumstances, a Christian duty. I say under certain circumstances, because I would state the matter just as it is, and it would be untrue to intimate even, that any class among us would sanction war and fighting in *all* cases. Nay, I think we have reason to believe that the mass of the people have come to the conclusion that war as a general thing is a poor way of settling national difficulties, and should not be resorted to except under certain circumstances, except in defence of *something*, either life, or liberty, or property, or honor. This, I suppose, is the common ground taken. I presume there is not a general in the army to-day, or a chaplain even, that would not assent to this, and tell us they deplored the evils of war as much as any one, and would never take up arms save at the call of their country in self defence. Indeed I know not as that war was ever waged for which the *plea* of self-defence was not urged in justification of it by some of the leaders in the strife, so that practically, the approbation of defensive war is the approbation of all war, for who but the war makers, and the warriors themselves shall decide when fighting is necessary, and to what extent.

But even if war in any case could be shown clearly to be defensive, it would not make it Christian, because the subject of Christ's kingdom cannot fight. If this be true, and has not Christ said it? it is obvious that there never was and never can be a Christian war.

We often hear the present war upon Mexico spoken of as unchristian because 'tis said, it is so obviously aggressive; as if that were the only reason of its being unchristian; as though, if it were not *aggressive* it would be *Christian*. I have no faith that such opposition to war will ever accom-

plish much in its removal from the earth. It is no repudiation of war itself, but only of *this* war, and even *this* with all its atrocities, becomes Christian with this view to all who think it is, on the whole, necessary under the circumstances.

If the servants of Jesus cannot fight, then a war to be *Christian*, must be carried on without fighting. Christian weapons are not carnal but spiritual—the weapons of truth and love. To speak of a “holy war,” seems to me as much a contradiction in terms (i. e. if we take Christianity as taught by Christ as a standard of holiness) as it would be to speak of righteous sin, or forgiving vengeance.

I am aware it will be said that in speaking thus I condemn even those who fought the battles of the revolution. But I condemn no one. I only state what I believe to be the plain teaching of Jesus. That teaching seems to me clearly and distinctly to repudiate *all war*. Still I cannot doubt that many a benevolent and honest man has armed himself with the death dealing weapons of war and gone out to battle, with the deep conviction that he was doing God service. Such, doubtless, was the case with many of the revolutionary fathers. Their deep sincerity was shown by the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice which they manifested, by their willingness to lay their fortunes and lives on the altar of their country's freedom. Fearlessly did they brave suffering, danger, and death, in obedience to what *seemed to them the voice of duty*. I honor them as noble, self-sacrificing but *mistaken* men. I must believe they were *mistaken* in the measures used to accomplish their object, or else I must close my eyes to the plainest teaching of Jesus. This I cannot do. I cannot permit a blind and indiscriminate reverence for the revolutionary fathers to take the place in my heart of Christ and his everlasting Gospel. I can honor them as sincere and noble hearted men, who loved liberty as every true man must, more than life. But when I feel the need of light from heaven concerning duty, and ask for a teacher of God—one who will lead me to the Father and help to open my mind and heart to His truth; then I cannot ask “What saith the heroes of the revolution,” however profoundly I may honor them for their many virtues, but “what saith Jesus?—what saith that Son of God who was born and brought into the world that he might bear witness to the truth?”

And when I open that Gospel of Peace and good will to men, I look in vain for a single commendation of the warrior. Would this be so if the terrible work of war were ever necessary? Surely if it ever be the duty of man to slay his brother, it is a most awful duty, for the command “Thou shalt not kill,” is as old as the race of man. It was written on the fleshly tablets of the human heart by the finger of God; and when through the wickedness of man that inward law was disregarded, it was re-published

on tables of stone amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai; and last of all it has been illustrated in living beauty, power and glory by Him who came "not to destroy men's lives but to save." It is a law whose solemn and eternal sanction is felt most deeply by the best of men. Hence the remark of a veteran warrior, "The worse the man the better the soldier." I say then, if it be the duty of man *ever* to violate this God given law of his moral nature, it is a duty the most awful in its character which a human being is ever called to perform, and we have a right to demand for it the explicit command of God. If the work of the warrior be christian, he above all others should be encouraged by the promised blessings of heaven. But I cannot find one benediction for him the Gospels through, whatever be the apparent necessity of the war he wages. I find rich blessings pronounced upon the meek—the merciful—the peace makers, but not one for the military hero, not one for him who seeks to overcome evil with evil. I see continually inculcated by precept and example, the duty of forbearance and forgiveness, and of love even for enemies, but not in a single solitary instance, the duty of destroying them. Those who engage in this work may receive the approbation of the *world*, but they must forfeit the approbation of the Gospel.

I rejoice greatly that this truth is beginning to be felt more and more. Notwithstanding the melancholly spectacle that our country now presents before God and the world, the cause of Peace, I believe, is rapidly progressing. While the surface of the stream is reddened with human blood, there is a strong under current of purifying waters. There are more already clustering around the white banner of the "Prince of Peace," than is generally known. That prophetic word of Jesus, "I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me," is beginning to be fulfilled. Many are now saying, as we are told the early Christians did when called to military duty, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight."

Still, however, the mass of Christians believe as I have said, that war and fighting under certain circumstances is proper and right. That this view is held most sincerely and conscientiously by many I have no disposition to question. It was the faith of the Fathers and it is no marvel that it should be the faith of the children. But is it a gospel faith? does it find support in Christianity? Is it sanctioned by the Word or Spirit of Jesus? This is the question for us as Christians to answer. It is a question that demands a thorough investigation, and yet it is so simple that it would not seem to require in its solution very profound thought or extensive erudition. No truths are more lucid, clear and unmistakable in their character, than those which fell from the lips of Jesus.

And if all Christians would take his word as the only true exponent of Christianity, I cannot but believe that the church would soon be of one heart, and one mind, upon this subject. But the great difficulty has been and is, that men are not willing to learn Christianity of Jesus. Strange as it may seem, those professing Christians who advocate war though they call Jesus "Lord and Master," and would be shocked at the idea of doubting his authority, still they are not willing to decide the question whether war in any case be Christian, by an appeal to Christ alone. But to each precept and doctrine of the gospel they bring some conflicting principle from the law of Moses, or the acts of Joshua, and fancying that Judaism and Christianity must be in harmony, however much they seem at variance, the sublimest truths Christ taught are reduced to a level with the principles illustrated by Samuel when he "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord at Gilgal." What though Jesus did say "All they that take the sword must perish by the sword." Did not David thank God that he made his hands to war and his fingers to fight, and was not Joshua commanded to destroy and exterminate the heathen and take possession of their fair fields at the point of the sword? Christ, they seem to suppose, could not have really meant any thing in conflict with this. 'Tis marvelous that such views could ever have obtained. But of the fact you are doubtless well aware.

How could language be more distinct and clear than that used by the Savior himself concerning the retaliatory spirit of ancient time, "Ye have heard that it hath been said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,"—quoting almost verbatim from the Mosaic code which saith, "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot," &c.—but I say unto you,—what? The same thing? Did he quote the passage only to confirm it? Hear him. "But I say unto you that ye resist (retaliate) not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also," unfolding to them the higher and nobler principle of overcoming evil with good. "I say unto you 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." And why? "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust."

Thus we learn from the Savior himself that the principle of recompensing evil with evil, by whomsoever taught, is not of God, and can never be practiced by the true "children of the Father." Why, if there be no difference between Judaism and Christianity, what do men mean when they talk about the conversion of the Jews. Conversion from what?—to what? if Christianity unfolds no higher principles than Judaism.

But Moses himself and the prophets too, saw clearly that a new and heavenly kingdom was to be established, that was to supersede all others, to be based upon eternal truth and stand forever. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me," saith Moses, "him shall ye hear in all things." If this has reference to Jesus, as is generally supposed, then Moses himself directs us to Christ as the "way, the truth, and the life, and we cannot even receive his teaching without believing that the Jewish lawgiver was in due time to give place to him whose name should be called "Emanuel."

And the Prophets too, what is the burden of their highest aspirations, but a kingdom in which "The lion and the lamb should lie down together, and none be left to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain." To whom do they all point the prophetic finger, but to one whose crowning title was to be the "Prince of Peace"—one whose loins were to be girded, not with a *sword* but with "righteousness"—one who would "smite the earth," not with the rod of violence but "with the breath of his lips." Hence Jesus said he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them. In repudiating what was wrong in the Jewish faith and practice, he did no violence to lawgiver or prophet, for both had "rejoiced," in prophetic vision, "to see his day." "They saw it"—with the eye of faith—"and were glad." Still the mass of Christians cling to Judaism, and insist upon living "Under the cloud and in the sea," when the Hebrew scriptures themselves point so clearly to the Sun of righteousness which was to arise upon the world with healing in his beams.

If we turn to the teaching of the apostles and early disciples, we see the same thought concerning the old order of things. It was this that raised the ire of the Jews and led them to regard the first preachers of Christianity as "blasphemers against the law." One of the solemn charges against Stephen was that he had been heard to say that Jesus of Nazareth would "change the customs of Moses." Doubtless he said it—for when the high priest asked him "if these things were so," he denied not the charge, but went on to defend himself by referring to what Moses himself had written concerning one who was to come whom the people should hear in all things.

How clear and decided the great apostle of the Gentiles was upon this point. "The law," he says, "made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." The law was but a school master to bring him to Christ, only an introduction to higher truths, for if, said he to the Hebrews who still seemed inclined to cling to the law after they had been converted to Christianity, "If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no

place been sought for the second." The idea of a new covenant he tells them "maketh the first old," a very plain case certainly, though so many seem unconscious of it, even at this late day. "Now that which waxeth old," the apostle adds, "is ready to vanish away."

We see then that both Testaments, Old and New, lawgiver, prophet and apostle, while they differ in other things, agree in giving supremacy to him who was to come filled with the spirit and breathing the love of the Father, to lay in the human heart, the foundation of the heavenly kingdom. Are we not then constrained to say as Peter did "Lord to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of Eternal life?" To whom but to Jesus can we look, to learn Christianity?

Oh, if professing Christians would only listen to that voice which is ever saying, "Learn of me," there would be little doubt, I think, concerning the incompatibility of war with Christianity. On no point of duty is the teaching of Christ more plain and unmistakable than in relation to our treatment of enemies. He gives us no counsel concerning the importance of loving our friends; there was no need of this. Such love springs up unbidden in the heart. It requires no special discipline of the affections. It is spontaneous. Hence Jesus says, "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to those that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. But love ye your *enemies*."—Yes that is the emphatic Christian word, again and again repeated in various forms; "Love ye your *enemies*," "overcome" *their* "evil, with" *your* "good." So important indeed did he regard this spirit of forgiving love—so essential to the approbation of God, as well as the highest welfare of man, that he taught his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." Who but an atheist would dare to offer that prayer while engaged in the strife of battle? And as if to remind them continually of the importance of this principle of forgiving love, he says, "when thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." What language could tell more clearly, and solemnly, that no offering can be acceptable to God while the heart is estranged from man? And is not the heart of man most fearfully estranged from his brother, when armed with implements of death he seeks that brother's life?

Alas! we are all too much inclined to think with Peter, that there must be some limit to our forgiveness somewhere, that it is not our duty to for-

give always. It was probably with this thought that Peter went to Jesus, on a certain occasion and said, "Lord how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him, till seven times?" Doubtless he thought that was a great stretch of forbearance—a great many times to forgive, and it must be acknowledged that few have yet attained even to that. But what said Jesus in reply? "I say unto thee not until seven times, but until seventy times seven,"—cherish a forgiving spirit in your heart always. That is the Christian standard. But alas!

"How hardly man this lesson learns,
 To smile and bless the hand that spurns;
 To see the blow and feel the pain,
 And render only love again:
 One had it and he came from heaven,
 Reviled, forsaken and betrayed;
 No curse he breathed, no plaint he made,
 But as in death's last pang, he sighed—
 Prayed for his murderers, and died."

Such was the spirit of Jesus. He was the living illustration of what he taught. In him the "word was made flesh"—illustrated in life, made tangible, something as John says "That men could look upon with their eyes, that their hands could handle of the word of life." O that our own spirits might be penetrated and quickened by the holy light of that pure life at one with God; we could no longer doubt in relation to the Christian's duty concerning the spirit of war in all its manifestations. Look at that life. Follow that "well beloved" of the Father from his manger cradle over which God's angels chanted their songs of Peace and good will, to the hour when with his dying breath he prayed, "Father forgive them;" call to mind his teaching from his first benediction upon the "Peace makers" at the beginning of his ministry, to that closing scene in his divine life when he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight;" remember how the principles of forgiving love and human brotherhood penetrate and color all his teaching with the very radiance of heaven; and then say what there is in the word, or spirit, or life of that God-living and man-loving Jesus, that can give the slightest countenance to that foul system of cold-blooded, premeditated, church-sanctioned destruction of human life, which in this nineteenth century is not only feasting on the lives, but blasting the morals of the Christian world. Why, the very thought of Jesus as the commander in chief of an army, shocks the moral sense and confounds all our notions of consistency of character. Whence is this, but from the almost instinctive perception we have of the utter irreconcilable antagonism there is between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of war?

And yet in view of all this, the great mass of professing Christians still say, "We must except defensive war." I would simply ask, in reply, if any such exceptions can be found in the Gospel. Did Jesus say, love your enemies except when they attempt to injure you, and then stab them, shoot them, burn their dwellings, destroy them with a double destruction? The question answers itself. We see that the Christian has a fixed and settled guide for his conduct. When called to fight the battles of his country, he has not got first to enquire which party is in the right, for his religion teaches most emphatically that both are in the *wrong*, if they fight with each other.

What if I should say to you to-night, "My friends, lying is most obviously contrary to the letter and spirit of Christianity, therefore, it is never justifiable for a Christian to lie except in defending his character from reproach," you would certainly think I had very loose notions of morality, and would be likely to say "I know of no such exception to lying in the Gospel." Well, do you know of any exception in the Gospel to that plain rule in relation to our treatment of enemies? And yet we hear it boldly declared from the pulpit, and read it in our religious prints, that the attempt of a nation to murder invading enemies, is perfectly justifiable and right when they do it for their own good, in self defence. The morality of that view amounts in practice to just this. It is very wrong for individuals or nations to fight, except when they deem it necessary; i. e. it is very wrong to fight when there is no motive for fighting. Or, to be still more definite: It is very wrong for people to fight except when they do fight. Does this looseness of principle belong to the Gospel? Let us see how it looks in its application. When our nation declared the last war with Great Britain, the Christians here felt themselves perfectly justified because it was defensive. It was in defence of our oppressed seamen. But the Christians in Great Britain thought that they were justified too. They, also, fought in self defence. We declared the war and were invading their colonies and taking their ships. Surely it was a war of necessity. And thus the two nations came together, both fighting in self defence, and both—horrible thought—both praying to a God of Love in the name of the Prince of Peace, for strength to slaughter those whom both the Father and the Son had bidden them to bless.

But there are a few passages in the Gospel, even, that are so often quoted by those who attempt to harmonize war with Christianity, that not to mention them might look like an unwillingness to meet fairly, all the objections of honest opponents. Let us look a moment, therefore, at the most prominent of these passages; for although the objections based upon them have been frequently answered, it seems necessary in this connection

just to glance at them that we may see how much support they give to the atrocities of war.

It is said that when some soldiers came, on a certain occasion, to John the baptist, asking what they should do, he did not tell them to abandon their profession, but to be content with their wages. Well, suppose John had even gone farther than this, and exhorted them with all the zeal of a modern chaplain to fight to the death, at the command of their officers, still it would prove nothing concerning Christianity. John was a Jew, enlightened, doubtless, far above his brethren, but still at this time a disciple of Moses, not of Jesus. He was the forerunner of Jesus. He saw in prophetic vision, that the heavenly kingdom was at hand. He exhorted the people to repent and prepare for it. Yet, although as a Jew, none greater than he had arisen, Jesus himself says that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; i. e. The humblest receiver of his teaching was farther advanced in heavenly truth than he. But even allowing John to speak with authority as a Christian teacher, still his words could hardly be twisted into a justification of war, for although he does not rebuke the profession of the soldier, he does rebuke his practice most pointedly, for he says, "Do violence to no man." Can men fight without using violence? Would a military chieftain be likely to give such a charge to his men on the eve of battle, "Do violence to no man?" What mean those guns, and swords, and cannons, and all the terrible enginery of death and destruction, if no violence is to be done?

But 'tis said that Jesus himself did not rebuke the profession of that Centurion "having soldiers under him" who came seeking in humility and trusting faith that his servant might be healed, but said on the contrary that he had not found so great faith in all Israel. True, neither did he condemn the religion of the Syro-phenician woman that came pleading for the restoration of her daughter, but said to her "O woman, great is thy faith." Does that sanction Idolatry? He did not condemn the practice of the woman of Samaria with whom he held that most impressive conversation at the great well in Sychar, but simply told her of her true character. Does that prove that Christianity sanctions her gross immorality? He does not say in so many words that intemperance, or slavery, or piracy is wrong and wicked, though they all existed in his day. Does that sanction these gross abominations? certainly not, for the Gospel does condemn what constitutes all these evils. It does unfold principles of truth which when applied to life, will eradicate them all from the world. To unfold the eternal principles of truth was the great object of Christ. For this end he was born and brought into the world and he left it to those who should

come after him to apply those principles to the specific sins of their own time.

But it is further said, that Jesus told those of his disciples that had no swords, they must sell their garments and buy one. Now whatever construction we may put upon this oft quoted passage, we cannot harmonize it at all with the idea that he really meant it as an exhortation to self-defence by physical violence, for when it was said in reply, "Lord here are two swords," he said, "It is enough." Enough for what? not, surely, enough for eleven men if he had designed they should be used as weapons of defence. Beside, the moment even *one* of them was used, the act was rebuked with, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." So that if Jesus really thought it necessary that the disciples should have swords on that occasion, it was not for the purpose of self-defence, since two were sufficient, but only that he might give them a practical illustration of that great truth so hard for them to learn, that never, under any circumstances, not even in self-defence, could a Christian use that instrument of death against his brother man. And we may well conceive that that single practical illustration of the true spirit of the Gospel in that most trying hour, would be more likely to make a deep and lasting impression on their hearts, than any verbal statement of duty could have done. This was, doubtless, the case; for never after this do we hear of their using carnal weapons in self-defence; never; though they were driven from city to city, stoned, beaten with stripes, scourged, imprisoned, and at last crucified, yet we hear of no resistance by physical violence; for they remembered the solemn word of Jesus on that night of darkness and peril;—they remembered his own example and spirit too—remembered that "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when persecuted, he threatened not, but submitted himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Thus this passage, so often urged in support of the war spirit, is in fact, when taken in its connection, the most impressive condemnation of the use of weapons of death, even in extremest cases.

And this, we are assured, was the deep conviction of the early Christians, for more than two hundred years after Christ. From the testimony others have collected upon this point, I select a few examples. "It is as easy," says a writer of the 17th century, "to obscure the sun at mid day, as to deny that the primitive Christians renounced all revenge and war." When a Christian by the name of Maximilian was brought before the tribunal to be enrolled as a soldier, on being asked his name that it might be put on the roll, his noble reply was, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight." His name was put down, notwithstanding, but he refused to serve,

still affirming that he was a Christian, as if that were enough to show that he could not fight. But he was told there was no alternative between bearing arms and being put to death. His fidelity was not to be shaken. "I cannot fight," said he, "if I die." And he *did* die at the hand of the executioner. One Marcellus, we are told, was an officer in the Roman army, who became converted to Christianity; and believing, in common with his fellow Christians, that war was no longer permitted to him, that his fight henceforth must be the "fight of faith," with the "sword of the spirit," he threw down his belt at the head of the legion to which he belonged, declaring that he had become a Christian and could serve no longer. He was committed to prison, but was still faithful unto death, declaring "It was not lawful for a Christian to bear arms for any earthly consideration." About the same time, or soon after, another convert to Christianity, from the same legion, by the name of Casisan, gave up his office and chose, like his heroic compeers, to die at the hand of the executioner, rather than continue in his work of death.

That these were not the sentiments of a few "come outers" merely as some might be disposed to think, is evident from the fact stated by Tertullian, who lived in the latter part of the second century, and the first of the third, and who, speaking of a part of the Roman army, including more than one third of the standing legion of Rome, asserts that not one Christian could be found among them. Celsus, an early writer who opposed Christianity, and whose testimony, therefore, is free at least from the charge of partiality, brings against Christians this solemn charge, that "They refused to fight even in cases of necessity." Alas! if he had lived in our day, all his objections to Christians on that score would have been removed. Irenæus, who lived about 180 years after Christ, affirms that the prophecy of Isaiah, which declared that men should beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning hooks," was literally fulfilled in his time, "For the Christians," said he, "have turned their swords and lances into instruments of Peace and they *know not how to fight.*"

This was primitive Christianity. Oh, for a revival of it in our day. What Christian here, would not pray and labor for such a "Revival of the work of the Lord," a revival of *practical Christianity*, that not only cries Lord, Lord, but doeth the Father's will. A revival of that spirit that fills the heart with love for God as a Father, and for man as a brother, which quenches the fires of unhallowed passion, gives a blessing for a curse, a prayer for a blow, and seeks always to overcome evil with good. How such a revival would sweep by the board the cavils of infidelity. Even the poor Jew might be brought home by such an illustration of the

fact that the "Prince of Peace" had indeed come; for one of the objections which they have urged against Christianity, is, that the Prince of Peace so clearly prophesied has not yet come. "Our wars," they say, "are evidence of it." Some years since, when it was advertised that a Christian sermon would be preached in favor of peace, a paper was found affixed to the church by a Jew which contained words to this effect: "Our Messiah when he comes will establish a system of mercy, peace, and kindness upon earth, while among you Christians, nothing but disputes, animosities and cruelties mark your passage through the world." Then, too, the foreign missionary of the cross, might labor free from the reproach of a fighting church at home, which now does so much to paralyze his self-sacrificing efforts. It is said that the Emperor of China gave this as a reason for excluding the Christian religion from his Empire, "That wherever Christians go, they whiten the soil with human bones."

The distinguished missionary, Wolf, who traversed three continents, said he once gave a Turk the Gospel to read, and pointed him to the fifth chapter of Matt. as showing the beauty of its doctrine. "But," said the Turk, "You Christians are the greatest hypocrites in the world." "How so?" "Why, here it is said, 'Blessed are the peace makers;' and yet you, more than any others, teach us to make war, and are yourselves the greatest warriors on earth. How can you be so shameless?" Would that the just rebuke of that Mahomedan might be echoed from church to church, and from heart to heart, all Christendom through, "*How can you be so shameless?*"

Do we love our religion, and would we help redeem it from such reproach? Then let us resolve in the strength of God that we will be true to its divine principles of love and brotherhood. To do this, we must embrace *Christ* rather than what passes current for Christianity. We must take up our cross and follow Him if we would see his kingdom advance. We must tell the world in *living* language that so far as they consent to violate the Christian law of love and brotherhood, we are not *of* them, that we belong to a higher kingdom, whose subjects cannot fight.

My friends; let us pause. Let us reflect. Let us, as Christians, ask ourselves, what God and Christ would have us do in this crisis of our country's history. We are cast upon eventful times; times that will try us as by fire, and reveal what manner of spirit we are of. I appeal to you as believers in Christ; not as politicians, but as Christians. The hour cometh, and now is, whom you are called to decide whom you will serve. You cannot serve two masters. "He that is not for me," says Jesus, "is

against me." We cannot be neutral in a crisis like this. Our nation is engaged in a bloody war in which we know the Savior could have no part, which tramples all his pure principles, and his spirit too, in the dust, as ruthlessly as it does the bodies of the slain and wounded enemy. Will you give your voices and your influence for, or against it? It is no question of party politics, but of Christian duty. I have no faith in mere partizan opposition to war. I make my appeal only as a Christian brother, to me brothers and sisters of a common faith. I think it has been clearly shown that the kingdom that we pray may come, is not like the kingdom of this world, that it is based upon principles that have no fellowship with the bloody spirit of war that has hitherto been incorporated into all the grosser forms of human government. And it is as Christian believers that I address you. The blast of the war trumpet calls to battle. The voice of Jesus calls to peace. Which will you follow? Whom will you serve? the Prince of war or the Prince of peace? Let us look at this question calmly, seriously, prayerfully, free from party feeling, and then say whether we will go for Christ or against Him—whether we will follow the war whoop and the recruiting drum to human slaughter, or the voice of Jesus to Peace, and Love, and Brotherhood. The choice is ours. God grant that it may be made wisely and well.