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advance of former years, yet trifling in comparison with what the cause demands; and, had there been such a system as we *must* ere-long have, I could easily have established small depositories of our publications in a number of somewhat central and important places. In a few instances I tried to do so; but it was an experiment from which I hope for little permanent benefit without a better organization of this department at the centre,—an improvement which I confidently expect to see very soon.

ARTICLE V.

REV. MR. BECKWITH'S ADDRESS,

ON THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO REMOVE THE DISGRACE BROUGHT UPON OUR RELIGION BY THE WARS OF CHRISTENDOM.

MR. PRESIDENT,—I rise with unfeigned sorrow to offer a sentiment which may seem to cast censure on the great body of Christians through the world; but duty, always paramount to every other consideration, plainly requires us to acknowledge the guilt in which the custom of war has involved the church of Christ, and to unite our best endeavors for the removal of this stain from the sacred name we bear. I stand not here a willing accuser of my brethren; but, having been ourselves more or less under a sort of military mania, having from our childhood inhaled the moral malaria of war, I deem it high time for us, along with all the disciples of the Prince of peace, to put in practice the resolution I have the honor to move in these words,—*that Christians are bound by the strongest and most sacred obligations to remove the DISGRACE which the wars of Christendom have brought upon their religion.*

You perceive, Sir, that this resolution embraces several points of vital importance,—*the fact that the wars of nations nominally Christian HAVE disgraced our religion; the ability of Christians, if they will, to remove this disgrace; and the pressure of obligation upon them to use the means requisite for this purpose.*

The stigma of war, Sir, was branded upon Christianity by human hands. Once she was entirely free from this stain, and caught it first from her unhallowed and fatal union with the state. Neither Christ, nor his apostles, nor any of his early disciples, ever lent the slightest countenance to the custom of war. So long as the gospel was received in its primitive simplicity, and the lamp of piety burnt pure and bright in the church, Christians no more thought of becoming soldiers than we should of turning pirates at the permission or command of our government; but, remaining one after another in the army after their conversion, and seduced at length into alliance with the state under Constantine the Great, the followers of the Prince of peace—a lamentable proof of their degeneracy—no longer saw the glaring inconsistency of war with their religion, and

began even to apologize for the atrocities of a practice more fit for tigers or fiends than for men.

Look at the result in centuries of guilt, disgrace and wretchedness. For fifteen hundred years, the church, lured or forced into the service of war, has been chained to its car, and dragged through its pollution and its blood; and all this time has she stood before the world in a garb that utterly belies her real character as a fraternity of saints and peace-makers.

Do you deem this complaint too severe? Then review the history of Christendom written for ages in blood, and you will find proof the most ample, decisive and humiliating. How often have the professed disciples of the Prince of peace met on the field of battle to butcher one another by thousands under the pretended sanction of heaven! Even bishops themselves once led them in person to this work of mutual slaughter! Are not Christians still compelled, wherever the church is united with the state, to repeat in time of war a stereotyped form of prayer to the God of peace and love for his smiles upon enterprises of national pillage and human butchery? Have they not sometimes gone from the very table of their common Lord to strew the earth with each others' mangled corpses? The history of Christendom has been for ages full of facts like these; and the great mass of mankind hold our religion responsible for them all.

War seems, indeed, to have been the business and the boast of nations professedly Christian. Of less than seven centuries Christian England spent more than *two hundred and sixty years*—nearly half the whole time—in waging *twenty-four* wars with Christian France alone; and *in one hundred and three years, she had only two years of peace!* Christian nations, descended from ancestors singularly warlike, have been, not in consequence, but in spite of their peaceful religion, the most notorious fighters on earth; and for twelve or fifteen hundred years, Christendom itself has been little better, I had almost said, than one vast slaughter-yard of mankind.

Look at their present policy. War, the work of marauders, incendiaries and murderers, they deem the most honorable of all employments! They study it as a science; they cultivate it as an art; they resort to it for a livelihood,—a livelihood from vice and crime, from tears and blood! The profession of arms is still among Christians themselves a highway to honor and office, to wealth, and fame, and power. What secured so much of these for the Buonaparte family? The sword. Who have ever been in our own country the most popular and successful candidates for office? Warriors. England lavished upon one of her favorite generals nearly a million of dollars a year for his services, and then placed him at the head of her nobility, for a time at the helm of her government. What raised such men as Nelson and Wellington to the peerage? Nothing but success in bloodshed; and war was the origin, war is still the support of aristocracy and despotism through the world.

Think not to exonerate the church from all share in this general reproach. Have not real as well as nominal Christians, age after age, lent their countenance to war? Have not ministers themselves apologized for its abominations, and returned thanks to God for its triumphs in carnage, plunder and devastation? To this day are temples of the Prince of peace profaned with its fulsome praises and

blood-stained trophies. Do not professed Christians join men of the world in idolizing the demigods of war? Do they not still train some of their own children to this work of death as the business of life, and teach the rest to admire war and the warrior?

A melancholy instance recurs to my memory. A little more than a year ago the country was shocked at the details of a duel near the city of Washington between two young men of very respectable connexions, one of whom was brought in the agonies of death to his father's house, as the first intimation the family had of the rencontre which terminated in that fatal catastrophe. Last summer, while travelling among the Green Mountains, I met with a minister of the gospel who had taught a school in the metropolis eight or ten years before, and had that very victim for one of his pupils. The father, he said, was an elder of high standing in the Presbyterian church, and had exerted himself with distinguished zeal and success to check the murderous practice of duelling; but he had reflected so little on the system of wholesale murder legalized under the name of war, as to have trained all his sons to the profession of arms, to the trade of human butchery, for a livelihood; and in the murder of this son he found the legitimate fruit of what his own hand had planted. War is only the custom of duelling extended to nations; essentially the same in its spirit, in its principles, in its general results; the very same in kind, and only worse, incomparably worse, in degree.

Will you tell us, Sir, Christians are not responsible for the wars of Christendom? But why not? Because they hold not in their hands the helm of its governments? But once they did; and, during that period, were there no wars in Christendom? Alas! that was just the bloodiest era in all modern history, when the crusades, those mad and merciless wars of religion proclaimed by the pope himself, enforced by the whole clergy, and deemed a sure passport to the highest rewards of heaven, exhausted the treasures of Europe, and drenched three continents in the blood of millions on millions. Forty millions of nominal Christians sacrificed for the recovery of Palestine from unbaptized hands! What a comment on the degeneracy of the church from the precepts and example of Him who bade Peter sheathe even the sword he had drawn in defence of his Master's life, and denounced a curse, too fearfully inflicted, on those who take the sword! "*All they that TAKE the sword, shall PERISH by the sword.*"

I appeal, Sir, to facts well known, and ask you to mark the disgrace actually brought upon Christianity by the martial character of Christendom. Its wars have been for centuries a standing libel on our religion, and made it a by-word and reproach, all over the earth, to infidels and Jews, Mohamedans and pagans. Have none of these ever read the blood-stained pages of our history? Know they not that Christendom is still a nursery of warriors? Are they unacquainted with her thousands of war-ships ready to launch their volleys of death, and her millions of soldiers on tiptoe for plunder, carnage and devastation? Have they never seen her fleets and armies, never heard the thunder of her cannon, never felt her ruthless power in plundering their property, burning their towns, and slaughtering their relatives and friends? On all these points, Sir, there is a fearful accumulation of facts; and were a tithe of these facts spread before this community, they would no longer be surprised at the

prejudices of the whole unevangelized world against the religion of the cross.

Ask the missionary. "Go back," the pagan scornfully tells him, "go back to your countrymen, to the brethren of your own faith, and teach *them* how to live, before you come to instruct us." "We come," say the heralds of the cross, "as ambassadors of the Prince of peace, to publish in his name peace on earth and good-will to all mankind." "Peace!" exclaims the astonished pagan; "peace from Christendom, from the very hotbed of war, from realms drenched, age after age, in Christian blood, and still bleaching with the bones of slaughtered millions!" Well did the emperor of China, as he banished the Jesuits from his empire, complain, that "*Christians, wherever they go, whiten the soil with human bones.*"

Frequent and bitter, also, have been the reproaches cast upon us by the followers of the false prophet. "Why," said a Turk to the missionary Wolff when at Jerusalem, "why do you come to us?" "To bring you peace." "Peace!" retorted the indignant Mussulman, "peace!! Look yonder," pointing to Calvary. "There, Sir, on the very spot where your own Lord poured out his blood, has the Mohamedan been obliged to interfere to keep Christians from butchering one another." It was literally true that Mohamedans had been obliged thus to restrain *nominal* Christians; and the poor Turk, like six hundred millions of our race, knew no difference between any dwellers in Christendom, but looked upon them all as alike the accredited representatives of our religion.

Nor is infidelity less severe upon us. "Ye bungling soul-physicians!" exclaims Voltaire in bitter sarcasm, "to bellow for an hour or more against a few flea-bites, and not say a word about that horrid distemper which tears us to pieces! Burn your books, ye moralizing philosophers! Of what avail is humanity, benevolence, meekness, temperance, piety, when half a pound of lead shatters my body; when I expire, at the age of twenty, under pains unspeakable; when my eyes, at their last opening, see my native town all in a blaze, and the last sounds I hear are the shrieks and groans of women and children expiring amidst the ruins?"

The Jew, too, spurns our religion as utterly unlike that which the Messiah, promised in the Old Testament as the Prince of peace, would be expected to introduce. This objection has been repeated a thousand times, but rarely with more force than at Falmouth in England, where a Jew, when a celebrated advocate of Foreign Missions was announced to preach, posted on the door of the church this notice: "Our Messiah, when he comes, will establish a system of mercy, peace and kindness upon earth, while among you Christians, only disputes, animosities and cruelties mark your passage through the world. Possibly *your* religion sanctions these things; *ours* does not. With us the goodness and beneficence alone of the Mosaic laws constitute their grand authority, and proclaim aloud their emanation from a God of love. We want no better, we expect no better, till Messiah shall indeed come. Then will every man sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree; nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and a little child shall lead them. Has this golden era of peace and love ever yet been witnessed? Speak,

Christian, speak candidly; has it been once seen through the last eighteen hundred years?"

On this point, then, there is surely no need of my saying more. History teems with proof that the wars of Christendom have deeply disgraced our religion before the whole world; and the only question is, whether the disciples of the Prince of peace *can*, and *should*, and *will* wipe out this foulest of all stains from the hallowed name they bear. Tell us not, they have no power to exculpate their religion from the sin and shame of war among nations professedly Christian. I know they cannot put an *immediate* end to the custom; but can they not wash their own hands from all share in its guilt? Can they not cease to patronize it, or talk of its glory, or pray for its success, or train their own children for its service, or connive at any of its foul and bloody deeds? Can they not bear their public and decided testimony against its manifold abominations?

This, Sir, Christians could do with perfect ease; and this alone would relieve their religion from all responsibility for the wars of Christendom. Let them proclaim to the world their purpose of having nothing whatever to do with such a system of legalized crime and mischief; let them pour down upon its mass of pollution and misery the full blaze of heaven's own light; let them bring against it all the moral influences which the God of peace has put within their reach, and resolve never to cease from the right use of such means, until swords are every where beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks. Let them suit their actions to their words; and, catching the spirit of that blessed era when a stain upon conscience was to the Christian more dreadful than the stake, let them say to war-making rulers, 'We *cannot*, we *dare not*, lend the least countenance to this wholesale butchery of mankind. We believe it to be the climax of human wickedness, and can have no share in its sins; but must in conscience teach all under our care or influence to hold it in deepest abhorrence. We'll write against it; we'll preach against it; we'll talk against it; we'll pray against it; through life and in death will we bear our testimony against it. No demands, no threats, no tortures, shall turn us from this purpose. Martyrs to our faith, ye may make us; recreants, traitors, never! Seize, if ye will, our property, load us with chains, drag us to the prison or the gallows. We'll offer our necks to the halter, we'll bare our bosoms to your steel; but never, never will we stain our consciences, and peril our souls by aiding in this work of pillage, murder and conflagration.'

Such a stand, taken by the whole church, would surely and speedily remove the disgrace of war from our religion, and ere-long sweep the custom itself from every land where the influence of Christianity is predominant. I admit the difficulty of such a work; but Christians can, if they will, accomplish it before the lapse of another generation. They have the means, all the moral power requisite for this purpose; and God will hold them responsible for the consequences of their neglect to exert this power, and use those means. The path of their duty seems to me plain as noonday; and, if they will just walk straight forward in it, God will bring them to the result desired. Let them only do what they ought to have done centuries ago; let them set themselves in solemn earnest against the whole war-system as utterly incompatible with their religion of uni-

versal peace and love; let them all come up to the work as one man, and concentrate upon it their utmost energies; let them never cease from the use of any means that God has put within their reach; let them educate their children to a deep, settled abhorrence of war, and make every pious fireside, and every seminary of learning in Christendom, a nursery of peace to train up an entire generation of peace-makers; let the pulpit, the press, all the main organs of communication with the public mind, be fully enlisted in this cause of God and bleeding humanity; let one tenth, one thousandth part of the money, time and talents now wasted for war-purposes even in peace, be devoted to the spread of pacific principles; give us only the treasure, blood and mind thrown away in one war, in a single campaign, in a solitary battle; and we should have means amply sufficient under God to revolutionize the war-sentiments of Christendom, and to set a-going a train of instrumentalities that would banish this custom ere-long from every country blest with the light of the gospel.

Do you doubt, Sir, the duty of Christians to do all this? To me it seems so plain that I will not stop to prove it. Is not war contrary to the spirit of the gospel? Is it not utterly incompatible with the precepts, aims and tendencies of Christianity? Did not the example of Christ, his apostles, and all his early disciples, condemn it? Was there ever a war,—can there be one, without multiplying to a fearful extent almost every species of vice, and crime, and misery? Is it not a tissue of guilt, a mighty engine of mischief, an ocean of impurity, blood and tears?

It is superfluous, then, to ask whether the sons and daughters of the God of peace are under strong and sacred obligations to do every thing in their power for the abolition of such a custom. You might as well inquire whether Christians ought to obey the gospel by loving God with all their hearts, and blessing mankind to the utmost extent of their ability. Why do you seek to remove or diminish ignorance, sin and misery in any of their forms? The very same motives require you to labor in the cause of peace as a handmaid to the improvement, the present and everlasting welfare of mankind. Why did you, Sir, strive, upon another continent, to enlighten the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious in the great emporium of fashion? War is a nurse of ignorance and vice. Why do you still toil for the removal of intemperance? War is a vast hotbed of intemperance. Why do you seek to rescue the Sabbath from desecration? War scorns to acknowledge any Sabbath, and absolutely requires the three or four millions of standing soldiers in Christendom to trample it under foot. Why would you vainly raise your moral dykes against the waves of licentiousness that threaten to inundate every city and village in the land? War has been a very Sodom the world over. Do you denounce the traffic in the bodies and souls of men? War originated that system of abominations; and, but for its spirit, and omnipresent protection, every species of legalized oppression in Christendom would soon come to an end. Would you give the Bible and the Sabbath, the sanctuary and the Christian ministry, to every dweller on the globe? All these war withholds from its own agents, and does much to prevent their being given to the rest of mankind. Would you banish superstition and idolatry from the earth? War is itself the relic of a barbarous paganism, and almost

as hostile as any form of error to the spiritual interests of men. Why do you seek the salvation of souls? War destroys them by wholesale.

Such views must, if any thing can, rivet the obligations of this cause upon the conscience of every Christian. I might, but will not speak of its claims upon the patriot and the philanthropist. I might allude to hearts crushed in the anguish of bereavement; to families broken up for ever; to widows with their fatherless children, thrown upon the charities of a cold world; to villages laid in ruins, and cities reduced to ashes, and provinces swept with the besom of desolation, and a deluge of crimes and calamities poured over empires. I might tell of property wasted, and life sacrificed, and happiness destroyed, and miseries entailed, and liberty cloven down, and every species of vice and crime multiplied, and whole communities demoralized, and the dearest interests of mankind for two worlds blasted by the simoom of war.

I know, Sir, where I stand; and, could old Time roll back his car some sixty years, and again convert this city of our annual solemnities into the head-quarters of a foreign invader, we should soon learn what war is and does. Look across yon stream, and imagine you see moored there the old Jersey man-of-war, a floating dungeon of disease and death, where no less than eleven thousand of our countrymen perished during the revolutionary war, like the plague-smitten wretches in the holds of a slave-ship. Turn your eye across the Hudson to the American camp, where the savage laws of war were supposed to demand of the mild and generous Washington himself, retaliation for the murder of an American officer by the sacrifice of the young, the accomplished, the nobly descended Asgill. For a time, the sword hangs over his head in suspense; and meanwhile the tidings of his threatened doom reach Europe, and interest in his behalf a wide circle of friends beside his agonized mother. She intercedes in person with the king and queen. She writes to beg the interference of the French minister, and pleads as only a mother could plead. "The subject on which I implore your assistance," she says to him, "is too heart-rending to be dwelt on. My son, my only son, dear to me as he is brave, amiable as he is beloved, only nineteen years of age, a prisoner of war in consequence of the capitulation of Yorktown, is at present confined in America as an object of reprisal. Figure to yourself, Sir, the situation of a family in these circumstances. Surrounded, as I am, with objects of distress, bowed down by fear and grief, words are wanting to express what I feel, and to paint such a scene of misery;—my husband, given over by his physicians some hours before the arrival of this news, not in a condition to be informed of it; and my daughter attacked by a fever accompanied with delirium, speaking of her brother in tones of wildness, and without an interval of reason, except it be to listen to some circumstances concerning him which may console her heart. Let your sensibility, Sir, conceive my inexpressible misery, and plead in my favor for a son born to abundance, to independence, and the happiest prospects. Permit me once more to entreat your interference in behalf of innocence, in the cause of justice and humanity; but whether my request be granted or not, I feel confident you will pity the distress by which it is prompted, and your humanity will drop a tear on my fault, and blot it out for ever."

So it must; and God hasten the day when a custom, requiring such a deed from such a man, shall no longer pollute any spot upon which the gospel of peace sheds its celestial beams. Will patriots, *can* philanthropists, *DARE* Christians, any longer bear in silence this mighty incubus of guilt and blood on the bosom of crushed humanity? If they do, God will hold them responsible for the consequences; and wo to the church, wo to the world, if Christians persist in their cruel slumbers over this crying sin, and shame, and curse of Christendom.

ARTICLE VI.

LITERARY NOTICES.

1. *The Little Soldier; a Plea for Peace.* Published by the Massachusetts S. S. Society. Boston. 1837. pp. 122.

THIS is one of the best books for the young on the subject of peace that we have ever seen; and we thank the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society for its labors in this as well as other departments of *evangelical* instruction, and think their example worthy of being imitated by all those who are charged with providing mental aliment for the rising generation. The style, the facts, the arguments, the spirit, all are very much as we could wish; and, if every book put into the hands of children throughout Christendom were fitted to exert a similar influence, wars would cease, with the very next generation, from every land blest with the light of the gospel. We commend the book to our young readers, and to all that would aid in educating a generation of peace-makers. It is *multum in parvo*, a little *manual of peace*.

2. *Dissertation on the Subject of a Congress of Nations.* By a Friend of Peace. New York. 1837. pp. 156. 12mo.

It is well known, that a few individuals, several years ago, offered, through the American Peace Society, a premium of *one thousand dollars* for the best dissertation on a Congress of Nations. The first committee of arbitration virtually made no decision at all, by proposing to divide the premium between some half dozen competitors; and the last committee, having selected each a different essay, succeeded no better, and gave back the manuscripts to their respective writers.

One of these has recently been published by the author, on his own responsibility, under the title copied at the head of