

From the New York Observer, 9th March.

THE BORDER WAR.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—The dark clouds, which have so suddenly arisen on our North Eastern boundary, seem to be extending northwards and southwards; and will burst upon us with all the horrors of war, before we are aware of it. I consider war as more than probable, and almost inevitable. Nothing but the power of the Almighty can arrest it. This may appear to many as an idle fear. It was so at the commencement of the last war. Nobody would believe that it was near. I was in this city at that time, and well remember the paleness of faces, and the consternation with which its unexpected announcement was received. I shall never forget the countenance of a Frenchman, who lifted up both hands, and with astonishment exclaimed, " My God! this country is tired of being happy!" We had the commerce of the whole world in our hands; our canvass whitened every sea; but we were tired of being happy. So we went to war, and got — glory, and were satisfied! The Sabbath was profaned; intemperance stalked abroad; licentiousness revelled; revivals ceased, (1) and thousands went down, without hope, to a bloody grave; but we got praised, and we were satisfied!!

Again we are tired of being happy. We thirst for praise and will have it, reckless of temporal and eternal consequences. I see war advancing in the silly bravadoos, gross exaggeration, and the taunting and irritating language of our writers both official and unofficial. (2) These paper bullets always precede the storm of war. They are meant to sting and irritate. Take the following for a sample, supposed to be written by a senator of the State legislature of Maine and published in the Boston Atlas:

"It may appear as strong language, but I say from my heart, that I had rather see our state deluged in blood, and every field bleached with the bones of our citizens, than that we should rotrace our footsteps, and submit to British arrogance."

This is the language, and these are the men, that make war; and having trampled down all laws, human and divine, raise themselves above all moral control, by the admiration of the people, who had rather be victorious slaves, than peaceful freemen. I would not soil your pages, devoted to the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, by quoting other, and more official, language, calculated, and probably intended, to irritate, and provoke retaliation. (3) In the present excited state of the two countries, it requires only a lucifer match, to cause an explosion, which will involve us in all the horrors of war, and scatter all our civil and religious institutions to the wind, and that match, many are anxious to apply.

None but God can save us from these tremendous consequences, and nothing but a spirit of prayer and supplication can save this people from a vast amount of temporal and eternal evil, and yet with a wonderful apathy, the Church of Christ sleeps over this whole subject; and probably will sleep until the whirlwind of divine wrath comes down upon this people, and the Church is overwhelmed with ruin. My heart is pained at this apathy. (4)

I say nothing of the justice of the war. As is the case with all modern wars, both sides claim it as a war of self-defence. Whether offensive or defensive, the effect will be to send some thousands of precious souls, each worth infinitely more than all the lands in Maine, to endless misery, who otherwise might be heirs of glory. (5)

I call, therefore, on each and every Church of Christ, of every name, soon to appoint a day, or an hour, most convenient, to meet together for solemn and united prayer to Almighty God, to avert this justly deserved judgment. This I believe has already been done by some churches. And I call upon all ministers of the gospel duly to consider the necessity of inculcating the principles of peace, so plainly laid down in the gospel. Let them examine and see how far the gospel allows of any war, make their own mark and act up to it. (6) At least, let them, and every private christian, do something to abolish the heathenish custom of war.

I call upon the whole world to see the folly of trusting to individual arbitration to prevent war. Nothing but a court of judges, chosen from among the most enlightened statesmen of Christendom, supported by the public opinion of nations, and guided by a code of international law, agreed upon by a congress of ambassadors, appointed for that purpose by the most enlightened christian nations, can ever prevent war, until christian nations become nations of christians, and that can never be, so long as the church countenances war, (7) or is indifferent to it.

W. L.

New York, March 6, 1839.

REMARKS.

The above excellent letter has come to hand through the medium of the Quebec Gazette of March the 18th. To impress on the minds of all our readers the christlike sentiments it conveys, we have thought it advisable to append the following notes.

(1). *Revivals ceased.* Many examples of the blighting effects of war on the prospects of religion have been introduced into the pages of the Pearl. Here is another case in the words of John Wesley—"Wherever war breaks out God is forgotten, if he be not set at open defiance. What a glorious work of God was at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, from 1740 to 1744! But the war that followed tore up all by the roots, and left scarce any trace of it behind; insomuch that when I diligently inquired a few years after, I could not find one that retained the life of God!" And although it is so dreadfully destructive to the interests of religion, yet the churches are quite silent on the unlawfulness of war!

(2). *Irritating language of our writers.* We are sorry that this reproof applies also to our writers. It has grieved us not a little to see the many bitter, taunting, provoking things which have been penned on this side of the American line. We'll speak daggers to them appears to have been the determination of both parties. We pray God may forgive them. "Be assured," says Jesus Christ, "that of every pernicious word which men shall utter, they shall give an account in the day of judgment." How

many pernicious words have been spoken in America within the last month God only knows!

(3.) *Language calculated to provoke retaliation.* Alas! it has too well answered its design. To a fearful extent it has inflamed the people with rage, and prepared them for the horrible work of human butchery. We quote two or three specimens of the vindictive spirit which is now rampant. The first is a prayer to Almighty God to avert PEACE!! "A letter from an American officer at Houlton states that the troops are in the best possible temper, [i. e. diabolical temper] for action, [i. e. murder] and utters the following brutal sentiment, 'God grant that no pacific measures may retard us'!!!! The second is concerning a female whom the war-spirit has so far unsexed that she grieves that she has not more sons to imbrue their hands in human blood! "Among the troops now in town from Oxford county," says the Kennebec Journal, "are four sons of a widow. As they were preparing to march last week, and taking leave of their mother, one of them asked her how she felt about it. She replied, 'I feel my sons that I wish I had half a dozen more to go.'!!! The third case is that of a Baptist minister, who was so desirous to witness the licentious scenes of a camp, that he requested to be allowed to act as a *Gospel* preacher to the troops. The 'Gospel Banner,' Augusta, says that "the Rev. Mr. Blanchard, a Baptist clergyman, and an excellent man, was anxious to go with the troops to the Aroostook river, and accordingly was appointed as Chaplain of the expedition." A professed servant of the Prince of Peace—desirous of accompanying men of strife! A follower of him "who resisted unto blood, striving against sin," united with men of blood, rushing into all manner of transgression! But the poet, Dr. Southey, shall hold up to execration such inconsistent conduct:—

"It is not strange that simple men should rear
The grassy altar to the glorious sun—
But that the Priest with solemn mockery
Or monstrous faith, should call on God to lead
His armies forth, and desolate, and kill,
And over the red banners of the war,
Even in the blessed name of Jesus, pour
Prayers of bloodier hate than ever rose
At Odin's altar or the Mexican,
The victim's heart still quivering in his grasp,
Rais'd at Mexillis' shrine.—This is most foul,
Most rank, most blasphemous idolatry!
And better were it for these wretched men
With infat victims to have fed the fire
Of Moloch; in that hour when they shall call,
Upon the hills and rocks to cover them,
For the judgment day is come."

But let us for a moment suppose this *Gospel* preacher, addressing the troops in the very words of our adorable Saviour: thus, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you." Would not many a lip of scorn be curled at his weakness and folly? Would he not be told that such doctrine would do for the church, not for the battle-field,—for cravens, not men,—for pietists, not heroes? And would not the leader of the expedition order him to be seized for preaching treachery to his troops?

(4). *Apathy of the churches.* It has astonished us beyond measure that in the late excitement the churches of America have done so little to avert the horrors of war. And so of the religious papers, how few have protested against the iniquity of the practice of national bloodshedding, or have earnestly exhorted their readers to lift up their voice in defence of peace!

(5). *Both sides claim it as a war of self-defence.* The plea of defensive war is a grand artifice of the devil. Even on his death-bed Bonaparte consoled himself by saying, that though he had shed much blood, he had never been the aggressor! Bonaparte invaded Egypt to defend himself against British aggression. And Britain bombarded Copenhagen, to defend herself against French invasion. Now does not a child know that the distinction between offensive and defensive war, vanishes the moment they quit the threshold of the cause. The individuals acting on offensive war must exert themselves to kill, burn, and destroy—to inflict injury unspeakable upon life and property. Those who carry on defensive war must act in the same manner, inflict the same injuries, and with the same zeal and ardor, in order to bring the conflict to a decided close.

A more fatal error was never perhaps adopted by a rational being, than that which supposes all the guilt and bloodshed of a war is to be imputed to the party which was first in offending; an error which is announced in every war manifesto, and resounded through every land, as though it were the most unquestionable truth. Yet on a moment's reflection, this doctrine appears so obviously false that it seems wonderful that it was ever adopted by any man who had the least pretensions to a christian character, or even a sound mind. If this doctrine were true, it would be applicable to all the contentions which exist among men; and in every case all the blame would be on the side of him who was first in offending. But where is the man of common sense so ignorant as not to know, that the doctrine is false when thus applied. It is very common, in the course of a contention, that the first offender is on the whole less guilty than his antagonist. Our laws admit that there is such a thing as justifiable homicide in self-defence. But how often has the plea of self-defence been urged in vain before a court of justice. How often has it appeared that he who made the

plea was in fact a malicious murderer! Suppose A. indicted for the murder of B., to which indictment he pleads *not guilty*. On examining the witnesses, the following facts are supported:—That for several years there had been frequent bickerings between the accused and the deceased—that a little before the death of B. he met A. at a tavern, where much irritating language passed between them—that B. had been drinking too freely of ardent spirits to have a proper command of his passions, and that in the heat of debate, he aimed a blow at A. which, however, was easily evaded—that after having attempted to strike, B. immediately retreated and ran, but was pursued by A. several miles, then overtaken and stabbed to the heart—that A. not being satisfied with this act of revenge, went immediately to the dwelling house of B. and set it on fire. A. being allowed to plead his own cause, admitted the principal facts which had been proved against him; but alleged that he had acted on "the strictest principles of self-defence," and had done nothing more than was necessary to self-preservation; that B. was the aggressor in first attempting to injure him; that his blood must therefore be required at his own hands. What would an enlightened Court and Jury say to such a plea in such a case? Would they hesitate to pronounce A. as guilty of murder. This, however, is but a faint picture of the enormous crimes and horrors of what in our times is called defensive war.

(6). *Let ministers examine how far the gospel allows of any war.* We wish they would. We can say for ourselves that when we sat down to the close examination of this question, all our prejudices were in favour of war in some cases; but we found the more we read and pondered on the subject, that we could not make any war—even that which men had been in the habit of deeming the most justifiable and necessary—compatible with the genius and principle of the Gospel. Defensive war we ascertained could not be carried on without vengeance, ferocity, hatred, deceit, robbery, desecration of the Lord's day, and especially the slaughter of innocent and unoffending persons, and accordingly we renounced it on christian principles.

(7). *The church countenances war.* Alas! it is a melancholy fact, that thousands of professing christians, familiar from their childhood with the Holy Scriptures, and uniform in the practice of virtue, not only hesitate to admit the unlawfulness, but even venture to defend the necessity, if not the lawfulness of war. Can there be a more powerful proof afforded that a delusion exists capable of warping the judgment, and of obscuring the letter of Holy Writ. Persons may be found who are willing to admit that all sin is unlawful, and yet that war, which includes almost every sin, is excepted! Surely the churches do not well to be indifferent to a practice that has engendered more sin, and brought more wretchedness and woe upon infatuated man, than the indulgence of nearly every other depravity—that has ensanguined the bosom of the earth with the blood of humanity; converting the peaceful vale into a theatre of vindictive contest, and reducing the labours of art and industry to the ruin and desolation of a Tophet.

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 5, 1839.

TRUE GLORY.

"They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault:—
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance.

Milton's Paradise Regained.

Our contemporaries, we are glad to perceive, all deprecate war, sincerely, we have no doubt. With scarcely a dissentient voice, all are for the avoidance of a ruthless conflict, if it can be done consistently with national honor. They are willing, however, to sacrifice peace to uphold our national character. The British name must be respected at all hazards. We are not insensible to those warm, patriotic feelings which originate such sentiments, and we should be sorry to indite a single remark tending to obstruct the fair, legitimate operation of a generous and christian love of country. But do we in our advocacy of total abstinence from war, love our country the less? Do we then undervalue the true glory of England? God forbid! No, we would cherish her as the dearest gift of heaven, and at her altar we would cheerfully sacrifice all the treasure we possess; all but the treasure of a pure conscience and an unspotted life. But can it be shewn that the glory of a nation is based upon the elements, capabilities, and spirit of war—that it depends upon her barracks, and not upon her hospitals and benevolent institutions—that it is built up by her warriors and heroes, and not by her philanthropists and philosophers? We put it to our brethren, Whether the existence of national honor and glory, in the truest and best sense of those expressions, is not realized in the diffusion of knowledge, in common schools, in Sabbath schools, in the spread