

The publick sentiment must, if possible, and as far as possible, be set against it. We must accustom ourselves to think and to speak of peace, as one of the greatest of temporal blessings; of war as one of the greatest evils and scourges in this evil and sinful world; to which we should not resort but in unavoidable necessity. If we enjoy any freedom, the publick sentiment and publick voice, the prevalent voice, will produce its effect upon the acts and the character of the government.

It may be alleged, that wars are frequently necessary and unavoidable. If they are unavoidable, they cannot be avoided. But the necessity, that would justify them, should be an inevitable, or an indispensable necessity. Were this the rule of war, it would be much less frequent. We should not imagine, that our honor or interest requires us to revenge every offence with the whole body and blood of the nation. If such be the law of honor, we must always be fighting, all nations, and all men. As in private life, so in publick affairs, a more pacifick spirit would be more honorable and magnanimous; and very probably would be more happily successful in saving both our honor and prosperity. The wrathful Potentates of the earth, when they are hastening to war, often preface their declarations with praises of their forbearance, which they decorate with the style of magnanimity. We are not obliged to believe all their declarations; but we may see in them a concession to the sentiment and the truth, that forbearance may be magnanimous. If it be unwise to allow ourselves to be driven to madness by every offence; it is not less, but still more unwise, to suffer ourselves to be carried away with false or unreasonable pretences, commonly tricked out to cover other designs and motives, which will not bear a disclosure. For this reason it is most conducive and even necessary to our peace, and every other good of society, that we should endeavor to acquire as much knowledge, as we can attain, and to