

2. From the occasion and the subject arise reasons for preserving peace, as much as lieth in us, as much and as long as possible. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

I intended to make this argument a long one; but I have spoken long enough, and must make it a short one.

All that has been said; and all that can be said, of the evils of war, and of the blessings of peace, of the spirit of religion, and of the happiness of man, are arguments for preserving peace to the utmost point of reason, and of forbearance. We have had forcible, and pressing, and convincing arguments in the war, which is now ended; and, I presume, we are sufficiently disposed to listen to the doctrine and the duty of peace. Why are we here assembled this day? Why is the nation assembled this day? To give thanks for the blessing of peace. If it were not esteemed a blessing, if it were not esteemed preferable to war, or if it were accounted less eligible, we ought either to keep silence, or to keep a day of fasting and humiliation. We are not giving thanks for any thing, that we have gained; but simply for the blessing of peace. This act, this publick act speaks a language, which should be remembered, when our hostile passions are again excited. A great part of mankind seem eager to rush into war, and when they have tried it, they are as eager to escape from it; and peace on almost any terms is received as an occasion of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Thus do they bear the testimony of their own experience against the errors of their own opinions and passions. But I will suppose, that the greater part of civilized people, in their sober thought, when their passions are not roused, are convinced, that war is one of the most severe calamities, which afflict the human race. If they are not so convinced, I will hold the position, for my part, as certain and proved.

The question then is, How to avoid or avert this deadly evil?

* Rom. 12, 18.