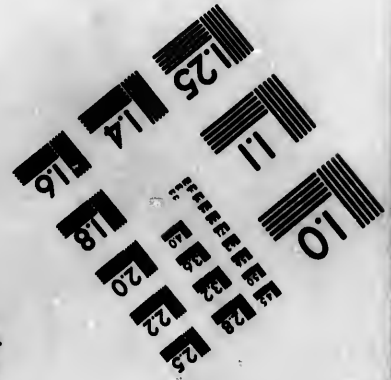
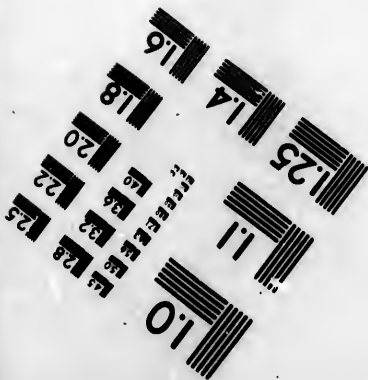
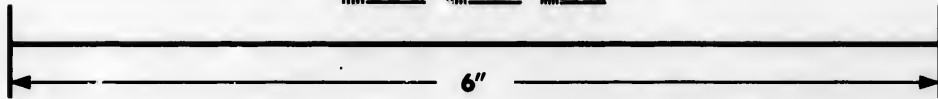
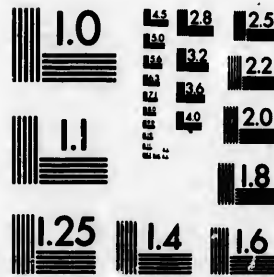


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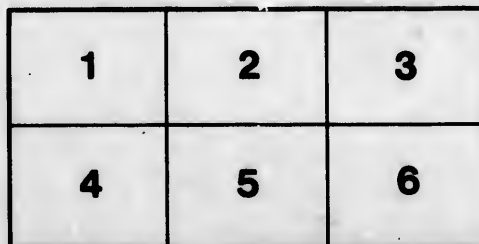
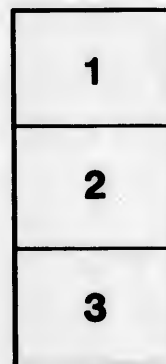
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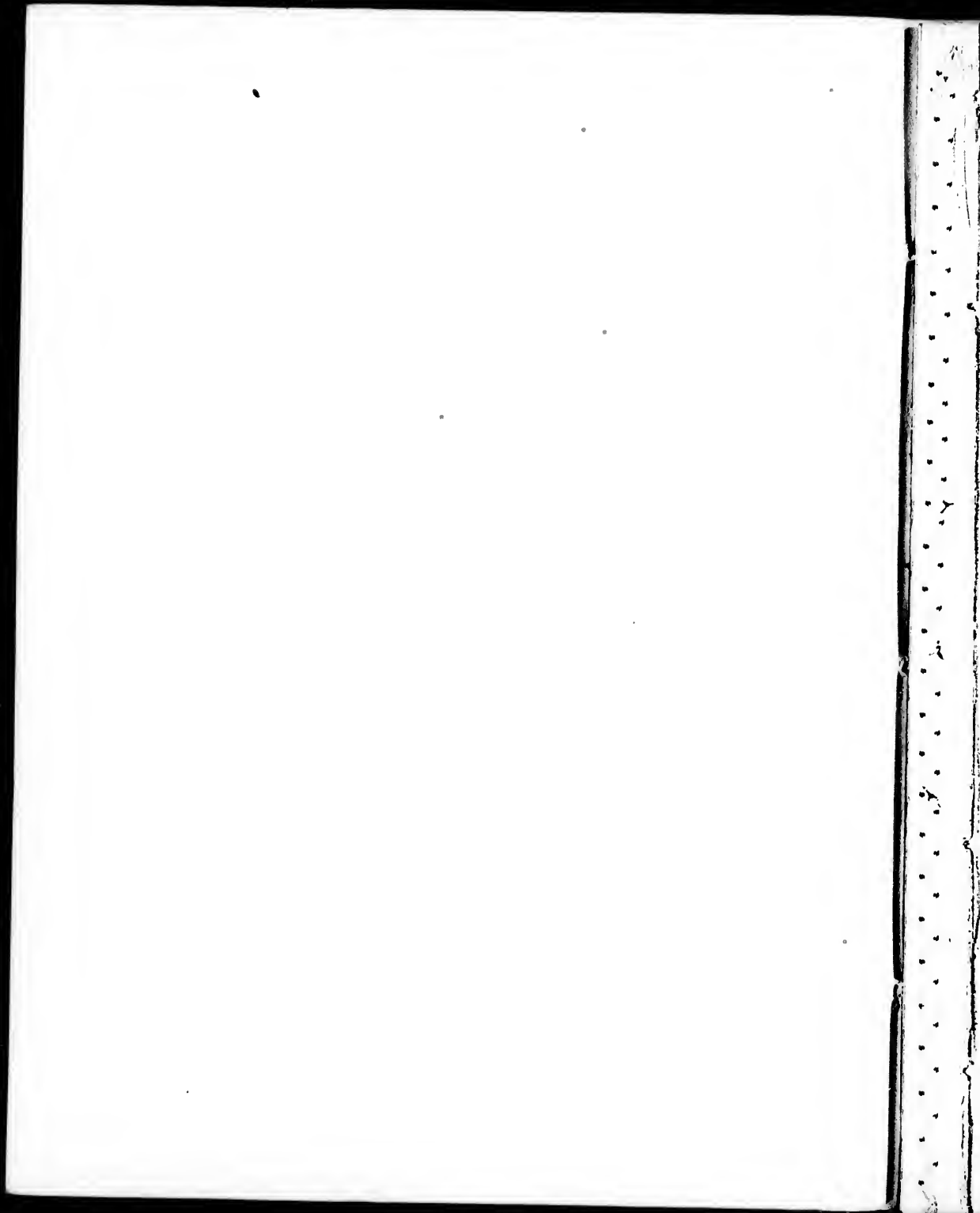
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The Causes and Effects of War.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN SALEM, AUGUST 20, 1812,

THE DAY OF

NATIONAL HUMILIATION AND
PRAYER.

By BROWN EMERSON,

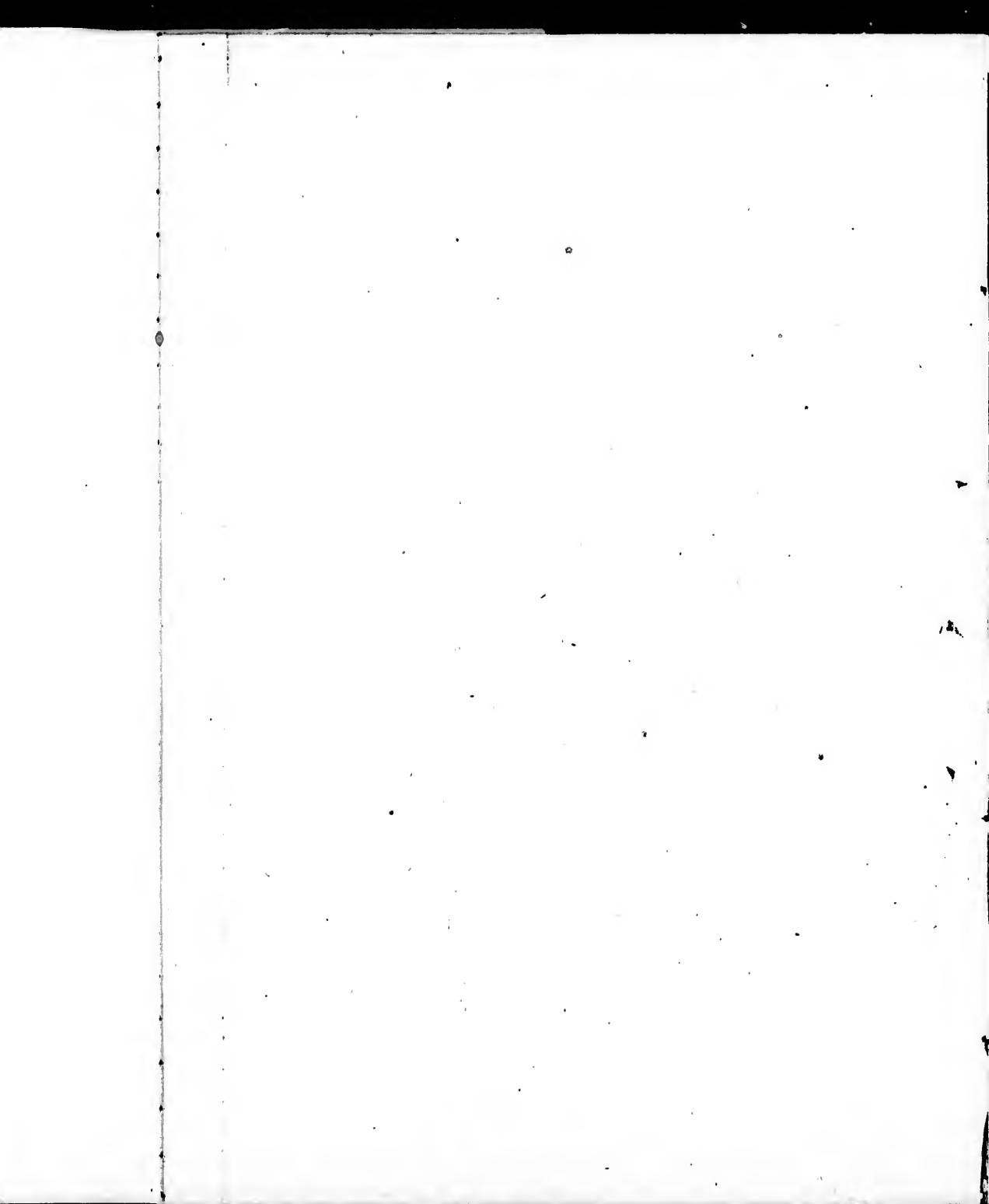
COLLEAGUE PASTOR OF THE THIRD CHURCH OF CHRIST
IN SALEM.

SALEM:

PRINTED BY JOSUUA CUSHING.

1812.

1812
(8)



A

SERMON.

JEREMIAH IV. 19.

*My bowels, my bowels ! I am pained at my very heart ;
my heart maketh a noise in me ; I cannot hold my peace,
because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trum-
pet, the alarm of war.*

THE occasion, my brethren, on which we are again assembled, is sufficiently awful and distressing to justify the adoption of these pathetic words. It is enough, indeed, to make a man of feeling and benevolence sick at the very heart, to view the unutterable miseries, which have arisen from war, in every age of the world ; and more especially within twenty years past. Those scenes of unequalled horror, wretchedness and crime, which have been rapidly unfolding in Europe, ever since the commencement of the French revolution, are enough, even in distant report, to fill our hearts with pain, and make them sink within us. Separated, however, from those scenes by the wide Atlantic, and having no part in the bloody conflicts of the eastern continent, we have rested securely in our peaceful abodes.

But at length our neutral ground is abandoned, we are enlisted in the mighty controversy, and our ears are assailed with the horrid din of war. After a peace of almost thirty years, during which we have enjoyed unparalleled prosperity, we are plunged into a disastrous conflict, gloomy in its aspect, fearful in its progress, and veiled as to its termination in dreadful uncertainty. The prospect before us is truly dark and alarming ; and every friend of peace, liberty and religion, must be pained at the very heart, and deeply regret our melancholy condition.

War is a dreadful calamity, even in its most favorable circumstances. It is always a scourge to a nation, justly merited from the hand of the Almighty, as a recompence for the crying sins of the land. As such it loudly calls, not for *joy* and *feasting*, but for weeping, for fasting, for fervent prayer. To make the commencement of a serious war, especially in the present situation of the world, and of our own country, an occasion of *rejoicing*, as if some special favor were just received, indicates a perverse, cruel, ferocious spirit. What! rejoice at the most terrible of all divine judgments! Rejoice when Jehovah's hand is raised to scourge us for our sins! Rejoice at the effusion of human blood, and the spread of confusion, misery and crimes through the whole body of the people;—evils, which will be felt by children's children! This outrages the hardness and presumption even of wicked Pharaoh. The king of Egypt himself was not so utterly lost to the fear of God and a sense of sin; for when the judgments of Heaven were upon his land, he trembled, relented, confessed, and promised to reform. We do not find the prophet Jeremiah rejoicing at the idea of war. Far from it. Though he delivered the prophecy, with which my text is connected, of the war of the Jews with the king of Babylon, twenty years before that war took place; yet, in prophetic view of it, he uttered himself in terms of such deep lamentation and distress: *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart: I cannot hold my peace: because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*

In discoursing on this tender and striking passage, I shall attempt to show *what circumstances attend a state of war, which render it peculiarly distressing to every enlightened and benevolent mind.*

These circumstances we may discover, if we consider the *causes* and the *effects* of war.

I. Let us consider what there is distressing and lamentable in the *causes* of war.

The world in which we live is an acedema, a vast field of blood. The history of nations, from their first rise to the present day, describes an awful tragedy ; a series of battles and sieges, of revolutions and conquests, of ravages and massacres. Millions, hundreds of millions, nay, many thousands of millions, on a fair computation, have been devoured by the sword. This is Jehovah's strange work, his most tremendous scourge. The nations of the earth resemble the ocean, angry and tumultuous by winds and tempests, when its waters cast up mire and dirt.

Now what is the cause of this confusion and misery ? What sets the sons of men, like so many savages and tigers, to biting and devouring one another ? Whence is it, that nations are perpetually dashing against each other with such fearful violence, and tearing each other to pieces with the ferocity of hungry bears and the malignity of demons ? What is the infernal cause, which makes the most successful butcher of men the most honorable and celebrated character ? which places the most bloody murderer upon the pinnacle of fame, and makes the instruments of destruction the necessary furniture of kingdoms ? The apostle James has propounded and answered the same inquiry. *From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ?* The lusts of men, their carnal appetites and passions, which are in endless ferment and broil,—these are the cause, the fruitful source, of all the schism, strife and violence, which blacken the history of families, churches, states, kingdoms and empires. These lusts are especially the turbulent source of all the wars and fightings, which have destroyed unnumbered millions of our guilty race. The lust of *power*, the lust of *wealth*, the lust of *praise*, and the lust of *revenge*, have kept the world in arms from age to age. Proud man is ambitious to exercise dominion over his fellow. *Power* enables him to gratify the vile passions of his depraved and selfish heart. It brings a thousand things into subserviency

to his will; and when raised to a certain pitch, he looks down from his throne upon the minions below him, and the language of his heart and conduct is, *I am, and none else beside me.* What but an insatiable lust of power could prompt a man to pillage cities, desolate countries, and murder thousands of every age, sex and condition, for the sake of wielding the scourge of despotism over the miserable beings, whom he reduces under his authority?

What but an idolatrous thirst for *wealth* prompts one nation to invade and seize the property of another? What makes victorious armies so eager to plunder cities and churches, and sometimes even to rake open the ashes of the dead?

The lust of *praise* will carry a man through indescribable scenes of danger and toil. For the sake of a great name, he will sacrifice the lives of millions, rush into the cannon's mouth, and, in defiance of death, wade to the temple of fame through fields and rivers of blood.

What the infernal passion of *revenge*, when armed with power, will prompt a man to do, I shall not, at present, attempt to describe.

Alas! what havoc has been made in the world by the lusts of men! They *set on fire the course of nature, and are set on fire of hell.* These are the appetites and passions whence wars proceed. Here is the criminal source of *all wars.* In every war there is an aggressor; and if the invaded power act strictly on the defensive, the invader is answerable for all the evil that may ensue. If war proceeds from such a source, must it not be distressing and lamentable to the benevolent mind?

But this is not a view of the whole cause of war.

These lusts of men *rear in their members.* They give rise to those innumerable sins in a nation, which provoke the Almighty, and are the cause, or *reason*, of his sending so heavy a judgment. What iniquity, what vice, what form or description of impiety and wickedness existing in the land, cannot be traced to

some of the evil dispositions and passions, or to all of them combined?

If we search for the causes why we are visited with this forest of calamities, we shall find enough to fill us with alarm, and to pain us at the very heart. We have departed from God. Our sins have exhausted his patience, and separated between him and us. For these it is that we are visited in anger. We are a *people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge.*

If we survey the moral state of our country, a dismal scene opens before our eyes. Where on our guilty globe can we find a more sinful spot, than this land, which boasts of her liberty and religion? If we have not equalled some other nations in the enormity of outward crimes, we exceed them in guiltiness before God: for, with reference to the people at large, we are the most enlightened and the most exalted by civil and religious privileges, of every nation under heaven.

Of all people, we are guilty of the *blackest ingratitude.* The various blessings, which God has been pleased for many years to pour into our cup, we have wickedly perverted to nourish those vile dispositions and passions, whence impiety and every evil work proceed. What a torrent of vice and irreligion overspreads our land! What ignorance of God and divine things! What carelessness in regard to the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, and the eternal interest of the soul!

Infidelity, and those *errors in religion* which are but a step from that fatal vortex, have gained an astonishing influence in our land, within a few years, and seem still to spread. It is an age of unbelief and impious scoffing, which indicate that the *last perilous times*, foretold in the prophetic oracles, are come.

Family government and religion, the basis of all good order in society, is extremely degenerated, and, to a great extent, is entirely lost. The days of our fathers are no

more. Hundreds of children and youth in this single town, and hundreds of thousands in the country, are left to themselves, without restraint, without instruction, without discipline, without virtuous example, to grow up in the worst of habits, unprincipled and lawless, prepared to become instruments of violence and rapine.

How are the *sabbaths* of the Lord disregarded and profaned! In regard to the observance of the sabbath, God has always shown a peculiar jealousy. And the profanation of that holy day is often mentioned by the prophets, as one of the crying sins of the Jews, for which he repeatedly scourged and finally destroyed them. It is lamentable to see our wharves and public corners thronged with men and youth, on the Lord's day, to converse on their secular concerns, when God has expressly forbidden us *to find our own pleasures, or speak our own words, on that day.**

Multitudes are destroying themselves and their children, both for this world and the next, by *an excessive use of ardent spirits*. In no way can a person effect his temporal and eternal ruin more completely and certainly, than by contracting this odious and fatal habit. No vice so effectually prostrates and besots every faculty of the man, and so utterly defaces every feature, which distinguishes the child of Adam from the filthy brute. Sunk in this polluted mire, heaven cannot allure, nor hell deter him from the practice. It is a deadly snare of the devil, from which few are recovered. Yet the black list of victims to this dreadful vice appears to be daily increasing.

Lying and slander are crying sins of the present day. A lying spirit seems to have pervaded all ranks of society. This is inseparably connected with that *violent party spirit, which rages through the head and members of the political body*. Whatever one affirms, which has any bearing upon political opinions and public measures, another is almost sure to deny. We scarcely

* Isaiah lviii. 13.

know what to believe. Lying and detraction have infected the vehicles of general information. Every thing is sent abroad under a coloring, which suits the views and designs of him who sends it. There is an awful infatuation in the minds of men. It seems to be a portentous, judicial blindness. I cannot but view this division and bitterness of party spirit, as threatening to our liberties, and even our existence. It grows into settled hatred and enmity, and prepares the minds of men for the work of destruction. It alienates the social feelings, poisons the very vitals of community, annihilates domestic order and tranquillity, sets brother at variance with brother, the father with the son, and paves the way for civil war and final ruin. Internal dissention and discord in a republican government, when they rise to a high degree and become inveterate, are harbingers, which proclaim the approaching death of liberty. *Every kingdom divided against itself, said a divine Teacher, is brought to desolation.*

Such, my brethren, are the *causes* of war. Such, in brief, are the reasons why the Lord is visiting us with the sword. In these causes, does not every one, who regards the honor of God and the good of men, see enough to pain him at the very heart, and fill his soul with grief and lamentation? Not to be affected in this way by a view of the sins and miseries of our race, and especially of our guilty land, indicates a deplorable blindness of mind and depravity of heart, and evinces a most criminal indifference to the honor of God and the true interests of men.

Let us now,

II. Consider what there is distressing and lamentable in the *effects* of a bloody warfare.

War is dreadful, whether viewed in its causes or its effects. The effects of war, though it be carried on in the mildest manner, are very disastrous and distressing.

The war, in which we are engaged, has hitherto been conducted with uncommon mildness and humanity.

For this we have great reason for thankfulness. It is most devoutly to be wished, that the same character may be preserved, till the unhappy controversy shall be amicably closed. But this is not the general character of modern warfare. Its progress, of late years, has been marked with the cruelty and rapine of ancient barbarity. And whether the war in which we are involved, is soon to assume this bloody and ferocious character, who can predict?

But to reduce our remarks on the distressing effects of war to more order and precision, it may be observed, that war is attended with distressing effects on the *property*, the *religion and morals*, the *happiness and lives*, of the nation.

It is attended with ruinous effects on the *property* of the nation.

When the object of war is plunder and conquest, the nation, if successful, may, for a time, indeed, enhance its treasures. But such cannot be the object of the present war. We have nothing of any value to gain.

What is there to be gained upon the *land*?

The British provinces in America are of importance to that nation in relation to their extensive commerce. But to us they would be of no use, especially after the annihilation of our commerce. Should our armies, when powerful ones can be raised, attempt to seize on those provinces, and succeed in the enterprise, it would not be effected but with the expense of immense treasure and blood. The navigation of the St. Lawrence is not easily obstructed, and the city of Quebec is one of the most impregnable fortresses in the world. Many thousands of lives, and perhaps millions of money, would be sacrificed before the conquest could be completed. And when completed, the provinces must be kept at a vast expense, without yielding the least profit to the nation; and after all must probably be given up to their present owners, before a peace could be obtained. Such is our prospect of gain by land.

What is our hope of success and profit upon the *ocean*? Will the thunder of our navy silence the roar of the British lion? Will the American eagle tear out the lion's eyes, and eat his flesh? Will our mighty fleets sweep from the ocean a thousand ships of war? Where are the fleets and navies of those nations of Europe, which joined the despot of the continent against Great-Britain, in a war of extermination? In their fate we may read an instructive lesson.

What is the prospect before us in regard to our commerce? Will God work for us a constant miracle, that we may pursue a lucrative trade to all quarters of the world, in spite of our enemies, whose cruisers cover the ocean? Or shall we send out cruisers so many and so strong as to be able to take "two prizes to our enemies' one," and gain twice as much as we shall lose? Instructed by sad experience, if, indeed, we receive the instructions of this teacher, we must say, the prospect promises nothing;—the hope is forlorn. Hitherto the balance of gain and loss is immensely against us. Our gain bears but a small proportion to our loss. And if this war be long protracted, I believe we shall be compelled to abandon the ocean. Will not the war then be destructive to the property of the nation? Yes: excessive burdens must be imposed upon innocent people. Money, the great sinew of war, must be obtained, or we must quit the contest. But where will be our resources, except in the people themselves? On them the whole burden must ultimately be laid. Men, who have acquired handsome estates by lawful enterprise and laborious industry, must give up their pursuits, and thousands of them be reduced to penury and want.

But the evils in regard to property are among the least of the distressing effects of this disastrous war.

It will have a ruinous influence upon the *religion* and *morals* of the country.

War never reforms, but always demoralizes, a people. It opens all the flood gates of impiety and licen-

tioufness. In time of war the wicked become bold and impudent in sin. It opens a wide field for the exercise and display of all the angry, vile and malignant passions. When men are accustomed to rapine and blood, and are constantly in the midst of all the profaneness, blasphemy, debauchery, and every contagious evil, which abound in an army, they lose every spark of kindness and mercy, and become ferocious beasts, fitted for the work of cruelty and death. The injury done in a public body by a bloody war, cannot be repaired for many generations. Perhaps it is never repaired. War is at once the cause and the effect of great corruption in the principles and manners of the people. God is a being of perfect goodness and equity. He does not forsake and punish a nation, till they first forsake him and cast off his authority.

The war in which we are involved has an alarming aspect in regard to the cause of religion and virtue. It will swell the tide of vice and irreligion, which has already risen to an enormous degree. If it continue and rage, we shall see the abounding of infidelity and every species of crime. The holy name of God and Christ, so precious to the believer, will be more openly and audaciously blasphemed. We shall see the worship of God deserted by many, and his holy day and sacred institutions profaned with more unblushing impiety. Our sons and daughters will grow up with those feelings and habits, which will prepare them to cast off the fear of God and man, and to rush headlong in the broad road to destruction. Our sons will be educated to the bloody trade of butchering their fellow men. Indeed, there is no evil that can befall us in a religious and moral sense, which is not the production of war.

Besides; as those who are contending with a common enemy, are engaged in a common cause, which involves a common interest, they are very naturally led to unite in their counsels and measures. They are natural allies. Should such a connexion be form-

ed, which God forbid! with that gigantic power, which is prostrating the liberties of the world, it would be a death blow to our freedom, and perhaps to our religion.

Those, who view the signs of the times in the light of prophecy, who have made the most diligent research, and are the most competent to understand these deep things of God, are more and more convinced, that that terrific power is to make war upon the church, in the final approaching struggle, and is to be overcome and destroyed by the wrath of the Lamb. Those, who shall be in alliance with that power, will be found fighting against God, and must share in the fate of his enemies.

Another distressing effect of a bloody war, is, the influence it has upon the *happiness* and *lives* of the people.

The confusion and dismay, which pervade all ranks of society, in those places, which are near the scenes of warfare, or are imminently exposed to the attacks of the enemy, cannot be realized, but by those, who have experienced such shocking alarms. In Salem we hardly seem to feel as if a war did actually exist between us and Great-Britain. But had we been on the frontiers, when the declaration of war reached them, we should have witnessed a scene of confusion and dismay, which would have pained us at the very heart. Families, quietly pursuing their lawful callings, are suddenly thrown into consternation, and know not what to do. Men, women and children instantly drop the utensils of industry from their hands, forsake their business, and run together for fear of what may come upon them, and to take measures for their safety. Various and contradictory reports are flying, and they know not what to believe. At night they bar their doors with the utmost care, and scarcely dare to close their eyes in sleep. Families, that were happily settled, collect such of their effects as they can carry, and leaving the rest, hurry from the scene of danger and distress. Churches and congregations are broken up, the sanc-

tuaries of the Lord are forsaken, pastors and their flocks are separated and scattered abroad. I have seen a pious clergyman, who was settled on our western frontier, and witnessed the distressing scene, when they first heard the declaration of the present war. He was one, who forsook his habitation.

Such confusion and distress did the news spread through our frontier settlements, stretching the distance of fifteen hundred miles. And the same confusion and distress spread through the British frontier to the same extent.

But what is this bloodless misery and alarm, compared with the thousands and hundreds of thousands, by sea and land, who will perish in this war, if it come not to a speedy close? Ah, how painful to the benevolent heart, to view hundreds of thousands of immortal souls, plunged into eternity in all their unpardoned guilt, and hurried in despair to the tribunal of a righteous God!

Should our government and Great-Britain adopt the common practice of belligerent nations, to do to each other all the injury in their power, no tongue can express the scenes of blood and wretchedness, which we should shortly behold.

Our defenceless sea coast, for fifteen hundred miles, is exposed to the floating batteries of the British navy. Our most populous and flourishing towns and cities they might quickly lay in ashes. On our extensive frontiers, we are exposed not only to her regular armies, but to the lawless savages, who may be excited to arms and let loose upon us with relentless cruelty and unbridled carnage. The savages of the wilderness are still numerous, revengeful and terrible. We hope and pray, that such horrid deeds may not be permitted: that God would restrain the wrath of man.

To these circumstances we may add, that there are nearly twelve hundred thousand slaves in the United States, who are restless in their bondage, and might be easily excited to arms. Agents may not, perhaps, be wanting to engage in this nefarious work. We

hope better things, however, even of our enemies. But on these accounts, considering our situation, and the usual maxims of warfare, have we not reasons for serious apprehension ?

Of these twelve hundred thousand slaves, more than eleven hundred thousand are owned in the southern section of the Union. One third of the whole population of the Southern States are slaves ! For many generations, their blood and their stripes have been crying to heaven for vengeance. And from the general method of providence in administering distributive justice, have we not reason to conclude, that God will ere long avenge them of their cruel oppressors ? Doubtless they will be avenged. And who knows but the time is just at hand ; and that the present war may afford an opportunity, when a righteous God will permit them to rise and shake off their yoke ? Most horrible would be the scenes of rapine and carnage. I shudder at the thought.

Such, my brethren, are some of the circumstances, which render a bloody warfare, and the present in particular, peculiarly distressing to every enlightened and benevolent mind. The evils are very imperfectly depicted. But in view even of *this* portraiture, is not every one who has proper feelings on the solemn subject, ready to exclaim with the prophet in the text, *My bowels, my bowels ! I am pained at my very heart ; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*

FROM our subject it clearly appears, that no nation ought ever to wage war with another nation, without the most absolute necessity, and after the failure of every other means for obtaining justice and preserving peace, which equity and religion dictate.

A war must be *just*, and it must be *necessary*, or all the blood that is spilt in it, and all the tremendous evils which attend and follow it, will be chargeable upon its authors and abettors ; and at their hands a

righteous God will require them. Did it appear, that the present war is just, necessary and expedient, however much we might deplore the evils attending it, every patriot would heartily contribute his influence to give it vigor and success. But no war, which is not strictly defensive, can ever be waged on principles of rectitude. In their treatment of each other, nations, no less than individuals, are bound by the law of God, as explained by an unerring Expositor. Revenge, or rendering evil for evil, is totally repugnant to christianity. On christian principles, the practice of duelling, or retaliating injuries in any form, can as easily be justified, as an offensive war.

Again. If such are the distress and pernicious effects of war, how critical and solemn is the situation of the rulers of nations! By a single act, they may occasion the temporal and eternal ruin of thousands or millions. If they plunge the nation into an unnecessary and unrighteous war, they are accountable for all the blood and misery the war may occasion. They need your prayers.

In view of the whole subject, who can doubt, that we have abundant reason, this day, for humiliation and prayer? God is angry. The cry of our iniquities has reached to heaven, and the Almighty has come down to punish our ingratitude and rebellion. But if we penitently return unto him, he will graciously return unto us.

