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TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE—No. XXVI.

AN ADDRESS ON WAR.

[CORRESPONDENCE.]

WHEELING, May 13th, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir—At a meeting of the Wheeling Lyceum, held this day, upon motion it was unanimously resolved—

“That the thanks of the Wheeling Lyceum be tendered to the Rev. Alexander Campbell for his very able, appropriate, and eloquent address on the evening of the 11th instant.”

It was further resolved—“That Messrs. James Paull, S. Clemens, and J. G. McClellan, be a committee to communicate the foregoing resolution of thanks to the Rev. A. Campbell; and also, on behalf of the Lyceum, respectfully to request a copy of his address for publication.”

Having thus been honored by the body we represent as the medium of the communication of the preceding resolves, we deem it, dear sir, not superfluous to add to the one the assurances of our own personal gratification; and to the other, our hopes that the request it embodies may meet a favorable response.

With sentiments of high esteem, we have the honor to be, reverend and dear sir, yours, &c.

JAS. PAULL,  
S. CLEMENS,  
J. G. McCLELLAN.

Rev. A. CAMPBELL.

BETHANY, VA., May 20th, 1848.

Gentlemen—On my return from Pittsburg to-day, I had the honor of receiving from you, as the committee of the Wheeling Lyceum, expressed indeed in very flattering terms, a request for a copy of the Address I had the honor to deliver to your Lyceum on the 11th instant. I cannot, gentlemen, but yield to the request of the Lyceum; regretting, however, that I had not time to give that concentration of mind due to a subject of such absorbing importance to us—only wishing that I had had both more leisure and ability to have executed it in a style more worthy of your acceptance.

With much respect, I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

A. CAMPBELL.

Messrs. J. PAULL, S. CLEMENS, and J. G. McCLELLAN.

AN ADDRESS ON WAR.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

HAS one Christian nation a right to wage war against another Christian nation?

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On propounding to myself, and much more to you, my respected auditors, this momentous question, so affecting the reputation and so involving the destiny of our own country and that of the Christian world; I confess that I rather shrink from its investigation than approach it with full confidence in my ability to examine it with that intelligence and composure so indispensable to a satisfactory decision. With your indulgence, however, I will attempt, if not to decide the question, at least to assist those, who, like myself, have often, and with intense interest, reflected on the desolations and horrors of war, as indicated in the sacrifice of human life, the agonies of surviving relatives, the immense expenditures of a people's wealth, and the inevitable deterioration of public morals, invariably attendant on its existence and career. If, with Dr. Dick, of Scotland, we should put down its slain victims to the minimum of 14,000,000,000; or, with Burke, of Ireland, at the maximum of 35,000,000,000; or take the mean of 24,500,000,000, what imagination could reach all the miseries and agonies inflicted upon the slain and upon their surviving relatives and friends? And who could compute the millions and millions of wealth expended in the support of those immense armies whose butchered millions can never be exactly computed? If Great Britain alone, from the revolution in 1688, to the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815—during her seven years' wars, occupying sixty-five years of 127, expended the sum of £2023,000,000 sterling—more than \$10,100,000,000, a sum much more easily expressed than comprehended by even the most accomplished financier; how can we compute the aggregate expenditures of all the battles fought and wars carried on during a period of some 5000 years! Yet these millions slain and these millions expended are the least items in its desolations, in the optics of an enlightened Christian philanthropist. When we attempt to reflect upon one human being in the amplitude and magnitude of his whole destiny, in a world that has no limit; and also survey the capacities and susceptibilities of his nature, according to the Christian revelation, how insignificant are the temporal and passing results of any course of action, compared with those which know neither measure nor end! How important, then, it is, that, in investigating a subject whose bearings on society arithmetic cannot compute, nor language express, we approach it with a candid and unprejudiced temper, and examine it with a profound and concentrated devotion of our minds to all that history records, philosophy teaches, and religion enjoins!

But, before entering upon the proper examination of this trans-

cent question, expressed in the popular currency of the age, it may be of much importance to a satisfactory issue, that we examine the terms in which it is expressed. More than half the discussions and controversions of every age are mere logomachies, verbose wranglings about the terminology of the respective combatants; and more than half the remainder might be compressed into a very diminutive size, if, in the beginning, the parties would agree on the real issue, on the proper terms to express it, and the proper definition of them.

As public faith or commercial credit, founded upon an equivocal currency, on its exposure suddenly shrinks into ruinous dimensions, at once blighting the hopes and annihilating the fortune of many a bold adventurer; so many a false and dangerous position, couched in ambiguous terms, though magniloquent and fascinating, when pruned of its luxuriant verbiage, divested of its captivating but delusive elocution, and presented in an intelligible, definite, and familiar attitude, is at once reprobated as unworthy of our reception and regard.

On comparing the literature and science of the current age with those of former times, we readily discover how much we owe to a more rigid analysis and a more scrupulous adoption of the technical terms and phrases of the old Schools, to which the whole world at one time looked up as the only fountains of wisdom and learning. When submitted to the test of a more enlightened criticism, many of their most popular and somewhat cabalistic terms and phrases, have been demonstrated to be words without just or appropriate ideas, and have been "nailed to the counter" as spurious coin: others, however, like pure metal in antique forms, have been sent to the mint, recast, and made to receive the impress of a more enlightened and accomplished age.

The rapid progress and advancement of modern science is, I presume, rather owing to a more rational and philosophical nomenclature and to the more general use of the inductive system of reasoning, than to any superior talent or more aspiring genius possessed either by our contemporaries or our immediate predecessors.

Politics, morals, and religion, the most deservedly engrossing themes of every age, are, in this respect, unfortunately behind the other sciences and arts cultivated at the present day. We are, however, pleased to see a growing conviction of the necessity of a more apposite, perspicuous, and philosophical verbal apparatus in several departments of science, and especially to witness some re-

cent efforts to introduce a more improved terminology in the sciences of government, morality, and religion.

To apply these preliminary remarks to the question of this evening, it is important to note with particular attention the popular terms in which we have expressed it, viz:—

*'Has one Christian nation a right to wage war against another Christian nation?'*

We have prefixed no epithet to *war*, or to *right*, while we have to the word *nation*. We have not defined the *war* as *offensive* or *defensive*. We have not defined the *right* as *human* or *divine*. But we have chosen from the currency of the age to prefix *Christian* to *nation*. The reasons for this selection and arrangement of terms shall appear as we proceed.

First, then, had we prefixed the word *offensive* to the word *war*, we would, on proving that a Christian nation had no right to wage an offensive war, be obliged to institute another question, and to have asked, Can a Christian nation wage a defensive war against another Christian nation?—thereby implying that one Christian nation might be the aggressor and another the aggrieved. But we can with difficulty imagine such a thing as a Christian nation carrying on an aggressive war. We, therefore, simplify the discussion by placing in the proposition the naked term *war*. Nor are we to spend our time in discussing the political *right* of one nation to wage war against another nation; and then to ask whether they have a divine right. Indeed, the latter generally implies the former; for if a nation have a divine right, it either has or may have a political or moral right to do so.

But we must inquire into the appropriateness of the term *Christian* prefixed to *nation*, for popular use has so arranged these terms; and the controversy, either expressly or impliedly, as now-a-days; occasionally conducted in this country, is,—Has one *Christian* nation a right to wage war against another *Christian* nation? But as we assume nothing, we must ask the grave and somewhat startling question,—Is there a *Christian* nation in the world? Or have we a definite idea of a *Christian* nation? We have, indeed, had, for many centuries past, many nations called *Christian* nations; but we must fearlessly ask,—At what font were they baptized! Who were their god-fathers? In what record are their sponsors registered! Ay; these, indeed, are preliminary questions that demand a grave and profound consideration. That there are many nations that have Christian communities in them, is a proposition which we most cheerfully and thankfully admit. By a common figure of