

## ARTICLE IV.

## QUESTIONS ON PEACE.

THE grand obstacle to the cause of peace is apathy. It needs only a fair and full hearing; for no candid mind, possessed of all its facts and arguments, could escape from its conclusions, or resist its claims. Let the public attention be properly turned to the subject; let the whole community be roused to a thorough examination of its main points in the light of revelation or of history; and the cause would soon gain a glorious triumph. /

We wish to enlist leading minds; and I am glad to find the subject taking so strong a hold of students in some of our higher seminaries, and working its way more and more into the heart of the community. It is introduced as a theme for lectures, compositions and dispute, not only in colleges and theological seminaries, but in many of our lyceums. This augurs well for the cause. Let it come fully before the great mass of minds in these nurseries of intellect and knowledge, these laboratories of national character and public opinion; and we shall soon find the leaven of pacific sentiments pervading the land, and a generation of peace-makers rising to frown from Christendom this worst of all the scourges that ever afflicted our race.

I would suggest to the friends of peace in our seminaries the importance of discussing the subject at the present time. Not a few students will soon go forth from our colleges and high schools to teach during the winter in places where they might, if disposed, do much for our cause, by distributing peace publications, and introducing the subject for conversation or debate into those social and literary circles in which they will move. Deeply interest them in the cause, and they will find many ways of promoting it without cost or hindrance to themselves. Every teacher may and should make his school a nursery of peace; and even students who spend their vacations in leisure among friends, would be able, moving in the higher walks of society, and touching some of the most important chords of influence, to do much for us with little effort.

Many other considerations might be suggested to urge upon our friends in seminaries of learning to bring up this great subject for discussion among their associates; and I may per-

haps assist them by submitting a few questions proper for debate, which will be likely to call forth the most important facts and principles involved in this enterprise :

1. Is there in nature, reason or revelation any thing to justify the custom of war?—I refer to the *general custom*, without starting any inquiry concerning different *kinds* of war, or the propriety of preparations for defence.

2. Will the *moral precepts* of the Old Testament sanction war?—These precepts should be carefully distinguished from the *political and ceremonial code of the Israelites*, and from their somewhat mysterious history. When we set aside all those parts of the Old Testament which have been superseded by the Christian dispensation, it may well be doubted whether we shall find, even in the Jewish Scriptures, any thing to sanction war.

3. Will the gospel justify war in any case?—I mean war between nations; and the question excludes all arguments not furnished or clearly sanctioned by the New Testament. It is well nigh impossible to get the question argued on *strictly* evangelical grounds; but the gospel is, in fact, the only judge that is competent to decide, whether any species of war is allowed by their religion to the followers of the Prince of peace.

4. Is war necessary?—It is, indeed, necessary for the gratification of wicked desires, for the accomplishment of such selfish and nefarious ends as warriors have been wont to pursue; but is it essential to the safety, the rights, or the welfare of the world, or of individual nations? Is there any real need of the *war-system*?

5. Was our revolutionary war justifiable on Christian principles?—This question involves all the facts in the case,—the assumed *right of revolution* with which it started; the principle of armed resistance against government; the motives, the spirit, all the necessary proceedings of the Revolution. I do not wish to inquire, whether the leading patriots of that day were worthy of high praise, or whether the Revolution has been a blessing to us and the world; for, such points being conceded, it may still be inquired, whether the war itself was not contrary to the letter and spirit of the gospel.

6. Would it be safe for a nation in *Christendom* to act on the principle of not defending themselves by *the sword* against foreign aggression?—The question is not whether they should defend themselves at all, but whether they should use the *sword* for this purpose; not whether they would experience *no* evil, but

whether they would not receive *less* than armed resistance would bring upon them; the experiment to be tried not for a single time, but for a course of ages.

7. Is it possible to abolish the custom of war?

8. Ought direct efforts to be made for this purpose?

9. Is war subservient to the cause of liberty?—Not whether liberty has ever been gained by war; but whether the custom itself is friendly, or inimical to liberty, and whether the abolition of war would hasten the spread and triumph of freedom.

10. Ought our militia system to be sustained?—As a means, not of enforcing the laws at home, but of waging war against other nations.

11. Are military academies in this country right or expedient?

12. Is preparation for war the best way to prevent it?

13. Are preparations for war right?

14. Is it consistent for Christians to support the custom of war by training, paying military fines, or in any other way?

15. Is it right or expedient for ministers of the gospel to act as chaplains in the army or navy?

16. Are all persons, believing in the unlawfulness of war, entitled to the same exemption with the Quakers?

17. Ought peace societies, separate from Christian churches and congregations, to be formed?

18. Is it necessary or desirable, in promoting the cause of peace, to require of its friends a pledge of total abstinence from war, or a promise of opposition to wars strictly defensive as forbidden in the gospel?

19. Is the success of the peace cause, or the spread of peace coextensive with Christianity, indispensable in preparing the way for the Millennium?

I might easily extend this list; but here are questions enough to engross the public mind for years. Let these be fully discussed, and they will suggest all the other points necessary or desirable to be considered. And I own I see not how *Christians* can refuse or delay to examine subjects so intimately connected with their religion, involving so many questions of duty, and so vital to the present and everlasting welfare of mankind.

PACIFICUS.