A Discourse on the War with England; Delivered in Hallowell on Public Fast, April 7, 1814

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Boston University
A DISCOURSE
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BY TIMOTHY MERRITT.

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TO THE READER.

WHEN the following discourse was delivered, it was not written, nor had the Author the most distant thought that it would ever appear in print. But a number of his friends having expressed their approbation of it, and requested a copy of the press, he did not feel himself at liberty to withhold what they thought might be of public utility. He therefore consented to give it to the public; and could wish it were more... of their approbation and patronage.
CURSE YE MEROZ, SAID THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, CURSE YE BITTERLY THE INHABITANTS THEREOF; BECAUSE THEY CAME NOT TO THE HELP OF THE LORD, TO THE HELP OF THE LORD AGAINST THE MIGHTY.

To understand these words, we must consider the context. The children of Israel had now been some years under the yoke of Jabin, king of Canaan, who kept them in awe by his military strength; “for he had nine hundred chariots of iron,” i. e. had iron scythes fixed to their sides, that, when furiously driven, they might mow down whomsoever stood in the way. “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord;” and he raised them up a deliverer in Deborah, a prophetess, who “judged Israel at that time.” This woman called upon Barak, the son of Abinoam, to collect an army and remain for the present near mount Tabor: a wise precaution, as, in case his men were afraid, the mountain would defend them from the chariots of iron. Jabin, seeing these hostile preparations, ordered Sisera, his Captain General, to go and disperse them. The result of all these movements is given in these words—“And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword, before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot and fled away on his feet.” He was not, however, able to escape the avenging hand of God; for going into the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, he fell ingloriously by the hand of a woman.

Upon this most signal overthrow of Sisera and his army, Deborah composed a triumphant song or ode, in which she acknowledges the miraculous interposition of the providence of God, and speaks of those in the highest strains of commendation who volunteered their services on the occasion. “My heart is toward the governors of Israel, who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord.” (v. 9.) She then proceeds to express her disapprobation of
those who withheld themselves from the war. In a beautiful manner she apostrophises the Reubenites, (ver. 16) whose unhappy divisions, as well as love of ease and rural occupations, kept them from joining their brethren in the common cause. “Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searching of heart.” Gilead, or the Gadites, (ver. 17) abode inactive beyond Jordan; while the tribes of Dan and Asher, situated upon the sea-shore, meanly abode by their ships, and busied in their several ports and havens, preferred their ease and the gains of “commerce,” to the glories of the field, and the recovery of their liberty.

It is sufficiently evident that Meroz was a city belonging to one of the tribes; but whether it be the Murrus mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, about twelve miles north of Sebastia, we know not. Thus much we know, the inhabitants of this city refused to join Deborah and Barak in the war against Jabin, and were on that account devoted to a curse by the angel, probably the uncreated angel of the covenant—the LORD JESUS CHRIST. See Joshua, v. 14, and vi. 2.—What was implied in this curse, or when it was executed, we are not told; but it was an execration full of the displeasure and wrath of Almighty God.

From the text thus considered, I shall take occasion to show, First, That under certain circumstances it is the indispensable duty of a nation to wage war. Second, I will apply this to the present war with Great Britain. Third, I will point out the consequences flowing from an opposition to this war. An address shall close the whole.

You can bear me witness, it is not my general practice to treat upon political subjects in this place, especially upon the Lord’s day; but I trust on this occasion I can do it without giving offence. Many, both from the pulpit and the press, are denouncing the present war as unjust; and for myself, believing it to be a righteous war, and having a desire to assist my country in the important struggle, I would raise my voice in her cause.

I. It is the indispensable duty of a nation, under certain circumstances, to wage war.

1. God himself, on some occasions, has explicitly enjoined it on his people to make war. Thus when the children of Israel were going into the land of Canaan, they were commanded to make war upon the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, &c.; and the order is contained in these words: “Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew them any mercy.” Deut. vii. 2. Equally express were the orders given to Saul, king of Israel, against the Amalekites. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go, smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.

2. The most illustrious personages and eminent saints of antiquity, have been the greatest warriors. When Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, with three other kings, came against the cities of the plain and took Lot, who dwelt in Sodom; Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, pursued them with three hundred and eighteen men, his own servants, and as the sacred historian relates, “smote” them, and “brought back all.” Gen. xiv. And that he was justified in the sight of Heaven, we learn from Melchizedek’s meeting him on his return, and blessing him in the name of “the Most High God.” Yet this was an offensive war on the part of Abraham.

Moses had many wars in the wilderness. He discomfited the Amalekites. God commanded him to: “contend with Sihon, king of Heshbon, in battle;” and Moses gives us this account of the war: “And the Lord our God delivered him before us, and we smote him and his sons, and all his people.” Deut. ii. 24, 33. Og, the king of Bashan, was served in a similar way. It is recorded of Joshua, that he “fully followed the Lord;” and yet he made more wars, and subdued more kingdoms than almost any other man. David was a man “after God’s own heart;” and yet he was a man of war during nearly his whole life. Most of his wars were offensive. His kingdom originally was about one hundred and sixty miles in length, from north to south, and from east to west about eighty. But by conquest he extended it from the river Euphrates on the north east, to the Nile on the south west. To these might be added a long list of judges, kings, and maccabees, who in obedience to the command of God, and under the auspices of his throne, waged successful wars. War, when it is just, is so far from being incompatible with religion, that the priests, served officers in the church, were required to assist in their wars; in many of their wars they
carried the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the Divine Presence; and on all occasions consulted God, who condescended to give them the most minute instructions as to the time and means of destroying their enemies. And hence their victories seem far less the effects of their skill and military strength, than of his almighty interposition in their favor.

3. God has at many different times expressed his disapproval of the too great lenity shown to the enemies of his people. Thus when Ahab had slain an hundred thousand Syrians in one day, and Benhadad their king, was fallen into his hands, he formed a treaty of peace and friendship with the heathen king, and dismissed him. But God was displeased, and said, "because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction; therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." 1 Kings, xx. 42. And when Saul returned from the war against Amalek, bringing sheep and oxen, and Agag the king; God was displeased, and sent Samuel to say to him, "hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. "And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord, in Gilgal." ver. 33.

Objection. "These things belong to the Mosaic dispensation; but war is inconsistent with the spirit and temper of christianity."

To this I answer: If the objection be confined to the mode of carrying on war in ancient times, and the severity with which prisoners of war were treated, I acknowledge the justness of it; but if it mean any thing more, it cannot be supported. The Jews were the only nation who had the true knowledge and worship of God among them; and were surrounded by atheists and idolators. In these circumstances they were not only hated by the surrounding nations, but were continually exposed to be drawn away from God and his law. They were, therefore, permitted to exercise a degree of severity towards their enemies, which could not be justified in christian nations under different circumstances.

Has Jesus Christ ever told us that all wars under the gospel dispensation, are unjust? He certainly has not; and what was once just and lawful must remain so still, unless made void by the same authority which at first established it. We are indeed told that "wars and fightings come from our lusts that war in our members;" (James iv. 1.) and if we understand the apostle to speak of "wars" in the common acceptance of the term, his words imply that there is always one wrong side in all wars. But it is much more likely that the apostle here speaks of the private quarrels and disputes of individuals. The writers of the New Testament recognize the "powers that be," and enjoin it upon christians to "submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;" 1 Pet. ii. 13. St. Paul's words are much to the purpose—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Rom. xiii. 1—4. John the Baptist had the most inviting occasion to disapprove of war, if all wars be wrong, when the soldiers came to him and said, "and what shall we do?" But instead of that he evidently approves their profession in his answer, "be content with your wages, and do violence to no man." Luke iii. 14. And I might add, that all christians, in every age, with the exception of a single, small denomination of recent origin, have held the lawfulness of war in the sense I now contend for.

II. I will apply this doctrine to the present war with Great Britain.

1. An unjust seizure of persons and property has ever been considered a just cause for war. Suppose a foreign nation should send an armed force to some accessible point in our country, and should carry off our cattle, pillage our houses, and kidnap our children and friends, and this practice should be persisted in, would not every one believe it a just cause for war? And where is the mighty difference when these depredations are committed upon the high seas? The seas are the high-way of nations, and every one has an equal right. A vessel owned in this country and sailing under the flag of the United States, must be considered in some sense, as under the jurisdiction and with-
in the territory of the United States. The reason is evident. The laws of the country extend to her, and she is bound to obey them. Therefore, the seizure of persons or property on the sea is as criminal as on the land.

2. The principle in this business is what we chiefly look at, and that is the same whether the instances of spoliation and impressment be many or few. Suppose there had been but two instances of impressment. The government which had it in its power to prevent the second and did it not, is accessory to the crime, and shares in the guilt.

But the practice of impressment has been dreadfully aggravated. The forbearance of this government seems only to have provoked aggression. At an early period of our national existence the practice of impressment became the subject of complaint; and although it has been the subject of constant remonstrance and negotiation, and our government have made all the reasonable overtures in their power, for an adjustment, it has been persevered in to the present day.

The number of real Americans impressed amounts to many thousands. Seamen in many instances have been impressed who had protections, and their protections torn to pieces before their eyes, that they might not be produced, afterwards, as evidence of the guilt of the impressing officer, and to show their contempt for our government. When taken on board his Majesty’s ships they have been compelled to enter his service. Some, more unyielding, have been put into confinement, kept on allowance of bread and water, and at certain stated periods have been brought to the gang-way and abused and otherwise shamefully treated. It is a common thing to hand them from ship to ship, and send them to foreign stations, to prevent all communication between them and their friends, and that the officers of this government might not have it in their power to represent their cases. In some instances they have impressed Swedes, Danes, Portuguese and even Frenchmen. The impressment of foreigners is in some respects a greater insult than the impressment of our own subjects; as in such cases they could not even pretend that we had given protections to their men.

And are not these things a sufficient cause for war? What nation under heaven ever bore so much without declaring war? And if, as I think all are agreed, allegiance and protection are reciprocal obligations of government and subject, this government, having tried all other means in vain, ought to have declared war for the protection of its subjects.

3. Whatever some may think, we have the best precedents for this war. The illustrious patriarch Abraham made war upon four kings for the recovery of Lot, his family and effects; and that too when there was no such obligation subsisting between him and Lot, as that between government and subject. God gave his blessing to the arms of Abraham, and he “brought back all;” and I have no doubt that he approves of this war, and will also give it his blessing. Another example we have in David. He certainly believed that the unjust seizure of persons and property was a cause that would not justify war. The Amalekites came upon Ziklag, burnt the city, took the people captive, and carried off their goods. David was greatly distressed, and “inquired of the Lord,” saying, “Shall I pursue after this troop?”—shall I go to war with them? “Shall I overtake them?” And he answered him “pursue”—declare war; “for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.” David obeyed, and “smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men which rode upon camels and fled.”

1 Sam. xxx. 8, 17. Here we have the will and approbation of God as clearly expressed as we could desire; and as our case is similar, and full as just, we have no reason to doubt his approbation and blessing.

4. As this subject, though clear in itself, has been involved in doubt and uncertainty by the disputes among ourselves, it may be edifying to some to know what was the doctrine held upon this subject by the first administration under the federal constitution.

In 1792 our great and beloved Washington said, by his secretary, “No law forbids the seamen of any country to engage in time of peace, on board a foreign vessel; no law authorises such seamen to break their contract, or the armed vessels of their nation to interpose force for their rescue.”—His sentiments are more fully expressed in the following words of the same year. “We entirely reject the proposed mode of certificating our seamen: this is a condition never yet submitted to by any nation: one with which seamen would never have the precaution to comply: the casualties of their calling would expose them to the constant destruction or loss of this paper evidence, and thus the British government would be armed with legal authority to impress the whole of our seamen.” Once more, 1796. “It will be an important point gained if, on the high seas, our flag can protect all
of whatever nation, who sail under it. And for this humanity, as well as interest, powerfully pleads.”

By these extracts from public documents it appears, 1. That our government are contending for nothing but what was claimed as our right, at the beginning of the federal government. And 2. That it would have been better for this country if Congress had never agreed to “certificate” our seamen; because that measure did “arm the British government with legal authority to impress all” our seamen who had not certificates of citizenship, and seemed to concede that they had a right to search our vessels for men. 3. But notwithstanding, it affords us some consolation at the present day, as it is full proof of the earnest desire of this government for an adjustment upon the head of imprisonment, and that no concession which comes short of the whole iniquitous pretensions of Great Britain, will ever satisfy that government.

I will now attend to the objections which are made to this war, and if they can be fairly answered, an important step will be taken towards a union in support of it.

1. It is objected that “we ought not to have declared war.” This objection means one of two things: either that we ought to have borne the insults and aggressions of England without resistance; or that we should have resisted without declaring war. But can any candid person suppose we ought to have borne any longer? Did not our country bear the grievance heaped upon us by our enemy, “till the last drop of the cup of conciliation was exhausted”? Did not our country “hold fast the olive branch ’till it withered in her hand”? Did not this country bear the wrongs of Britain more than twenty years? And what good could possibly arise from submission as many more? Did submission ever set bounds to encroachment? Besides, the sufferings of thousands of our fellow citizens called for relief, and their blood cried from the sea. The tears of many widows and bereaved parents remained upon their faces, and their groans pierced our hearts. If the whole scene of distress and wretchedness occasioned by the imprisonment of seamen could be presented at one view, it would be a weight insupportable! Under these circumstances, if the government did not employ more vigorous means to protect their seamen, the blood of the slain, and the sufferings of surviving relations would be required at their hands. To use the language of the good Washington, “humanity, as well as interest, powerfully pleads for this” war.

Well, if longer forbearance would have been a fault, ought we not to have made resistance without declaring war? Or in other words, ought we not to have guarded our coasts, armed and defended our merchantmen, without a declaration of war? I conceive not. It had been war on the part of Great Britain for many years; and had we armed merely to defend our trade and protect our coasts, we should have been at war without being able to accomplish our objects, and the case of seamen would have been out of sight and out of dispute. In such a case we should have spoken this disgraceful language to the world, “we value commerce more than the lives of our citizens.” Besides, who can suppose that such a measure would have conciliated those men who have denounced every principal measure of the government for more than twelve years past? Would it not rather have furnished them with just ground of complaint? They would doubtless have said, “The government have involved the country in war without a declaration, merely because their reasons and motives for doing so would not bear the light.” They therefore chose the wiser course, and made their appeal to the world.

2. It is said, “we ought not to carry the war into Canada against our brethren.” This language is employed to make an impression on the minds of the public, as though to carry the war into Canada were unnatural and cruel; either on account of some relation subsisting between us and the Canadians, or because it is wrong to take from her the colonies of our enemy. I acknowledge the same relation to the Canadians that I do to other descendants of Adam; and on account of their neighborhood to us, and a few emigrations from the United States, especially into the upper province, I readily allow them a peculiar share in our affectionate regards: and if they be not found in arms against us, they will be treated as brethren. The object of the war is the subversion of the British government in that quarter, and not the destruction of individuals or their property. If these suffer, their sufferings flow from accidental causes, and not from any enmity in the government towards them.

As to the other part of the objection it is scarcely worthy of the least notice. If it be wrong to carry the war into the colonies of our enemy, it must be wrong to fight her ships at sea, and for the same reason: because neither “have done us any harm.” Or if they have, they have only executed the orders of their government. They are not the authors of our sufferings. So then we must have war, but we must not fight.
Nay, but in every age of the world it has been accounted lawful to strike the enemy where he shall feel the most pain, and the soonest be compelled to cease his aggressions.

To these objections one argument is added. "The war is unjust because it has been unsuccessful." This argument is so manifestly absurd that it is surprising it should ever be used. If success, or the want of it, be the test of a righteous or unrighteous cause, we can easily prove that the same cause has been righteous one day and unrighteous the next. The cause of the Israelites was good when they went against Jericho, but unjust when they went against Ai: because they destroyed Jericho, but fled before the men of Ai. This is not the age to look for consistency in the conduct of men. The very people who make use of this argument have always denounced, as most unjust, the wars of the "Corsican usurper," as the French Emperor is called, though he has been successful until within a few months; and they have considered the cause of his enemies just, though unsuccessful. There were times in the revolutionary war in this country when our cause appeared desperate. Men and money were hard to be obtained. We gained some victories, experienced some defeats and lost many posts; yet we persevered, and obtained our object at last.

But it is not true that this war has been unsuccessful. We have done more with the mere remnant of a navy, than Great Britain has done, in the same time, with her "thousand" ships of war. We have taken from the enemy several of his strong posts, one entire fleet, and nearly the whole of one army. These, with other successes, and some defeats, are certainly more than we had any reason to expect in so short a time, when war was declared. For many years the people of this country had turned their attention wholly to the arts of peace, and neglected those of war. We had, therefore, to begin our preparation after war was declared. The want of preparation has often been made an objection to the war; but it results from the very nature of our government, and could not be otherwise. The people of this country will never go to the expense of preparing for war until their enemy is designated, and war becomes unavoidable.

III. I come now in the third place to consider what may be the consequences of refusing to take a part in this war, and of opposing our own government. I say consequences; because I would not apply the strong imprecatory language of the text to my countrymen. I dare not curse any man, body of men. I leave that part to inspired, infallible prophets and apostles. A curse is not the object of my wishes, but I must confess it is the subject of my fears.

1. Our divisions and the opposition among ourselves have a natural tendency to prolong our difficulties. What good can possibly arise from the opposition to this war? It appears to have for its object to enforce the government into a peace upon the conditions of our enemy. But would that be right in the sight of God? It is as manifestly wrong as it would be for the minority in any corporation whatever, to undertake to force the majority into their own views, from any legal measures they had taken. Besides, it ought to be considered that our rulers are men—men of like passions with ourselves; and therefore such indiscreet opposition is more likely to excite revenge than produce peace.

But what effect is this opposition likely to have upon our enemy? If we advocate his doctrine, justify his conduct, and condemn our own government, is it likely to abate any thing of his iniquitous claims and pretensions, or dispose him to a peace upon just and reasonable terms?

2. It has a tendency to paralyze the energies of the nation, and therefore weaken and exhaust our resources. Humanity and interest require that every war should be brought to as speedy a conclusion as possible; because the longer any war is protracted the more lives and property are destroyed, and the greater the amount of the necessary expences.

3. Our opposition will bring us into disgrace in the eyes of foreign nations. History, both ancient and modern, informs us of the fall of states and empires, and their causes; and shall we be so stupid as to avoid the danger when it is placed before our eyes? It is as true now, as it ever was, that a "kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand."

Ours is not only the best attempered republic that ever existed, but the only one remaining upon earth; and can we wish to see the last blotted out from under heaven! The great objection to republican governments is, that "they are destitute of energy." But we know that they may possess as much energy as is consistent with rational liberty. It's not surprising that those whose interest it is should plead for despotick governments; but is it not singular that we should say to the world, "we are tired of a free government, and liberty, and sigh to return to the prison-house of despotism and bondage."
4. We may defeat the object of the war and bring upon ourselves the curses of future ages. Those who oppose the present war take upon themselves a responsibility which may become very inconvenient to them in a future day. Should this government be compelled to settle a peace, without obtaining security for our seamen, (which I pray God they may not do) what will be the consequences? Why, certainly, that impressions will be multiplied with reiterated and increased aggravations. The haughty Britons will become more insolent; and we may expect that hundreds for tens, and thousands for hundreds of native Americans will be impressed and forced into their “sea service,” a condition beyond all comparison worse than Egyptian bondage. And in such an event, where will the guilt fall? On whose heads will the curses of the miserable sufferers “come down”? Certainly not on the government; they have done all in their power to obtain security for this class of men. The responsibility rests on those who have opposed the war, and defeated its end. This reminds me of those Jews who clamored against the life of our Saviour, and said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” —“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Lastly, we shall provoke Heaven by lightly esteeming real national character and blessings. These are the gifts of God, though we obtained them by a long and distressing war. This consideration alone should make them dear to us. They cost us much blood and treasure. The ingratitude of the Israelites is recorded to their eternal disgrace. “In their hearts they turned back to Egypt,” and would have parted with their independence and liberty, rather than encounter the dangers of war, and the hardships of a march through the wilderness. And shall we do worse than they? We have given up, and prohibited the African slave trade; and shall we sit down quietly and see our citizens, our sons and our brothers, treated worse than African slaves? God has given us independence, and vested us with the attribute of sovereignty—and for what? No doubt that we might contend for the blessings of his grace, and hand them, unimpaired, to our children. If then we prefer our ease, and the “filthy lucre” of commerce, to the lives and liberty of our citizens, will He look down well-pleased?

We have felt the tokens of the divine displeasure, and do actually now labor under them; and shall we say that the President and Congress, and the friends of the war, have alone procured these? Have our ingratitude and love of the world had no share in them? Have our disputes, and our contempt for the cause and authority of our country had no hand in procuring them? Are we then innocent when we misrepresent every measure of our own government, and without the least shadow of evidence ascribe to our rulers the influence of motives the most unworthy? Is it well done when we exaggerate the errors and faults of our own government, and palliate, or justify, the wrongs and injustice of our enemy? These are questions, the candid consideration of which, would humble us unto the dust, wring our hearts with sorrow for our unhappy divisions, unite us all in the common cause, and dissipate the portentous cloud that has so long hung over our heads. And how infinitely desirable is such an event!

The subject of the foregoing discourse is susceptible of the most easy application to those who have just entered into the service of their country—a number of whom are present.* Your cause is just. Of this you can have no doubt, after attending to what has been said. It is necessary you should be satisfied of this; for this will give firmness to your nerves, and fortitude to your minds, in the day of battle. When you come to the fight you will remember that Abraham and David, Moses and Joshua, fought before you. Did they contend for national character and independence? So do you, Did they contend for the lives and liberty of their brethren? So do you. Did they contend under the favor and approbation of God? They certainly did, and so I believe do you. Did they return victorious from the sanguinary field? They generally did, and so I believe will you. Let your trust, therefore, be in the God of battles, and fear not.

I would not flatter you, as though you had a life of ease and pleasure before you. No; the soldier “must endure hardships,” and I trust you have laid your account with them. The glory of the soldier consisteth not in shunning danger and hardship, but in defying, enduring and overcoming them. But if you want anything more to support your fortitude, call to mind the condition of your captive countrymen who have been impressed by the enemy. How many sleepless nights and days of anxiety have many of them endured! How many have “sunk in death, or had their limbs lopp’d away in battle.” How many of them are now held as prisoners of war, though impressed in time of peace! You will not, therefore, turn from the path of duty and glory because it is set with

*A body of new Recruits for Col. Loring’s Regiment.
hardship and privation. Having drawn the sword, you will not sheath it until you have avenged the wrongs of your country, and obtained security for your brethren who travel the seas.

Let me also enjoin it upon you, wherever you go, to respect the duties of morality and religion. It has frequently been said that the camp is unfriendly to these great interests of men. And it must be acknowledged that you have not the means of moral improvement and spiritual instruction which you might have under other circumstances. But you cannot be deprived of the presence of God, nor of the privilege of approaching him by prayer. And as you cannot go where morality and piety will cease to be your duties; so you cannot go where you shall be deprived of the means necessary to the performance of those duties. Shun those vices which are so common among men of your profession, especially profaneness and intemperance; and let it never be said that the honor of the country is committed into the hands of those “who fear not God, nor regard man.”

Finally. Be assured that you carry with you the affectionate regards and best wishes of your friends. I speak not merely of wives, which some of you may have left behind; nor of the parents and sisters from whom others of you are separated for a while: but I speak of the great body of the people who know the cause to be just, and wish you success. Whole congregations will commend you to the great, all-wise and powerful Preserver and Saviour of men. The ministers of the gospel will publicly bear you to the throne of grace, while thousands of pious souls will daily implore the protection and favor of Almighty God for you. Therefore, go forth trusting in the LORD. And may you soon return, with honor and victory, to receive the praises, and share in the gratitude of your insulted and injured country; and at last hear the Judge of all the earth say, “Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

AMEN.