

the deposit and disposal of money. If, therefore, would find it difficult to embark a capital upon his five per cent. scheme.

Your correspondent insists, that "land rises in value as interest of money falls," and very oddly misapplies a passage which he quotes from Adam Smith. "When interest was ten per cent. (says Smith) land was commonly sold for 10 or 12 years purchase. As interest sunk to 6, 5, and 4 per cent. the price of land rose to 20, 25, and 30 years purchase." Now, gentlemen, it appears very plainly to me, that this quotation does not prove that land rose in value according to the diminution of interest. On the contrary, it proves, very distinctly, that the value of land remained, relatively the same, and that the value of money only underwent a change; for 12 years purchase at ten per cent. interest is 120; and 30 years purchase, at 4 per cent. interest, is 120 also; which is exactly the same thing. "Homer" can find the *nominal price* of land with the *increase* of it.

The value of land depends, in truth, very little, if at all, on the rate of interest. It depends, more particularly, on the general condition of society; and as to high or low interest for money, it is a circumstance that is governed not by the *dictum* of a banking institution, but by the comparative industry or idleness, and the pursuits of the different classes of the community.

COMMON SENSE.  
November 10, 1814.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.  
PLAIN QUESTIONS FOR PLAIN PEOPLE.

Friends! By this title, this endearing epithet, ye address not only the members of your own society, but all others; and ye call your religious community *The Society of Friends*. But what is thereby meant—friends of each other or of the human race? Taken in either sense, this seems but another instance, where, in well-meaning people deceive themselves and others by specious terms—How can ye really be friendly to the individuals who compose the civil community, if ye are inimical to the interests and safety of your country?

The duties of man, in his social state, are civil, moral, and religious. According to the good old maxim, "charity begins at home;"—as hath elsewhere been beautifully said, "our duties move in circles"—beginning at the domestic fire-side, and ending with the circumference of the world; and our obligations within the larger circles, are only limited by the greater force of those within the lesser ones. Moreover, so help it be, we are a great moral constitution, that all those duties of man, co-exist and harmonize together; so that he who is *truly* pious, is a moral man and a good citizen.

What are the duties of a citizen when his country is engaged in war? a question of no ordinary magnitude at the present crisis—When men, otherwise respectable for understanding and deportment, are so warped by *sectarian* or party spirit, as not to acknowledge truths as plain as axioms.

Who has ever questioned the right of a man to defend himself, his family, his flock and herd, against the wild beasts of the forest, the savage of the wilderness, or the mid-night robber? And how can this be effectually done, but by means and weapons which, in many cases, must endanger the life of the intruder? Who would ever so *thoroughly* and refine away this natural right of man as to put the lives and safety of his family in competition with those of the savage, the thief, or the robber? You are, my friends, acute and sagacious in the common business of life. Should a person offer to your attention a plausible scheme for making money, would you not always enquire, "is it practicable? will it suit our situation and our means?" Why will ye, then, pretend to adopt, politically, a system of conduct only calculated for man as he ought to be—not as he is? Let us suppose the case of a Quaker family settled upon the frontiers of one of our western states on territory lately purchased of the Indians—of what avail would be the pacific temper of such a family against its savage neighbors, instigated to war against us by the machinations of our European enemies, or prompted by their own love of blood and plunder? Would not this family feel and act upon the necessity of the case, by uniting with other families, militarily situated, and preparing vigorously to defend themselves against a probable attack? And are civilized nations much more likely to be actuated by the pure principles of justice or generosity? Let history declare the past experience of the world. Are not the habits of peace, and the possession of prosperity and wealth, rather apt to invite than to avert aggression from the ambitious and avaricious, who compose, by far, the greater part of the rulers of nations?

But let us bring the case nearer home, by supposing (what every sincere Quaker must think desirable) a civil community wholly composed and governed by *The Friends*—A foreign nation makes war upon them—from some pretext easily created or feigned—Would it not be the duty of the government to defend the country against its enemy? Or, even

suppose, that, for a *just cause* that enemy had commenced the war; but that a concession, by this Quaker government, of the subject of contention, *would not restore peace*; ought they not still to defend themselves? If any amongst you, more zealous to maintain consistency than willing to acknowledge truth, should answer no; let the obvious consequences of non-resistance refute him. For, if you resist not, the enemy prevails—the country is overrun—the government is changed or controlled by foreign power—its revenues seized—the property of individuals alienated, and their personal rights infringed; but, above all other considerations, the history of the true faith is violated, (for the aggressors of course are not Friends) and *the cause of religion suffers*. Self-defence is then one of the first laws of nature, both for individuals and communities; and it is lawful to punish the aggressor, to redress the injury. It is for man, in every situation of his life, to enquire only what is his duty; never to attempt the suppression of even his best views, at the expense of that duty; but to leave the event to God, whose province alone it is to chase good out of evil, and "in the fulness of time" to accomplish *his purposes*; whether they be to humble the pride of man, to chastise the wicked, to chasten the righteous, or to hasten the time when nations shall learn war no more.

But, friends, there may still be those who, admitting the correctness of the above principles, are yet disposed to deny their application to the present contest in which this nation is engaged. The justice of this war, and how peace shall be restored, are questions essentially between our government and that of Great Britain; nor is any individual citizen responsible for either; but he is answerable to God and his country, that he do nothing which can *lead to strengthening the hands of the enemy*—and I hazard nothing in asserting, that neutrality, in such a case, is a thing absurd and inadmissible. No one denies, that each member of the community owes allegiance to the government and is bound to support the constitution, whether he approved of its adoption or not; or that he is bound to support every law made under the same. I assert that he is equally bound, as a citizen, to support a war declared by the competent authority. The essential principle of all our situations is, that the majority govern. Does this mean, that, when a law exists creating active duties, the citizen may remain inactive? Now, a declaration of war is a law for this nation, imposing on each citizen certain beneficial obligations or duties peculiar to a state of war. How can he evade them rightfully, any more than he could refuse to support the constitution? This is true of a war that is even unjust in its origin. The private citizen is not responsible for its injustice, as this responsibility rests with the government; but he is positively bound by his duty to support every constitutional act of his government.

But was not the present war in its origin just on our part? Does it not involve our most essential rights? And is it not therefore necessary? Nay, hath it not become essential, for the preservation of all, which, as a people, a free and religious people, we ought to value—civil and religious liberty, and the right of self-government, over the territory which we rightfully own? If it is, then, such a contest, as a good citizen may engage in, not only from a sense of civil obligation, but from hearty consent and approbation. Yet we find your society so generally opposed to it, that I know of no instance in which you have aided this righteous cause of your country; though I have heard of many, in which, by speech and writing, you have discouraged it. On a late call upon the citizens of a neighboring town for voluntary aid in hastening the construction of Fort Washington, you have, almost to a man, *refused to contribute either labor or money*. This, but as a bar upon the slope window to prevent the intrusion of the robber, the fort was a *military object*, and that was enough. Your society, in that place, have also refused to concur in a loan to the government at the moment when they are earnestly seeking a charter for their new Bank! Is war the only object to which government can apply its money? And will good citizens refuse all aid when their country most needs it? Recollecting what improper uses were made (in some parts of the U. States) of the privileges which you claim, in our former contest with Britain, when many of those who refused to aid their country, *actually assisted the enemy*, ought you not, my Friends, to be very cautious how you seem to justify those who are apt to resolve your conscientious refusal of service and of money into mere noivies of *selfish interest*?

PHILO.  
NEW ORLEANS SUGAR.  
NEW Orleans sugar, of the first quality, just received and for sale by  
HENRY HERFORD,  
Ponchartraine Avenue.  
As whose store, may be had fine buckwheat flour, in barrels or small quantities—Cinnamon—mould and doppel candles—coarse and fine salt—sawing cotton, &c. His stock of groceries will be disposed of for cash, on as reasonable terms as the state of commerce will admit of.  
November 11—21.

**Plain Questions for Plain People.**

Philo.

*Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, District Of Columbia, Friday, November 11, 1814; Issue 578. (1667 words)

**Category:** News

**Gale Document Number:**GT3017469883