

the rogues and felons;" which they then did and put me into the dungeon amongst thirty felons in a lousy, stinking low place in the ground without any bed. Here they kept me a close prisoner almost a half year.

George Fox: journal, ed. John L. Nickalls, 1952, pp. 64-5 (entry for 1651).



And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doeth wrong to the other, fight ye that which doeth wrong till it return unto the ordinance of Allah; then, if it return, make peace between them justly, and act equitably. Lo! Allah loveth the equitable.

The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy

Qu'ran 49:9-10



Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

Psalms 119:165, NRSV



Whoever can reconcile this, "Resist not evil", with "Resist violence by force", again, "Give also thy other cheek", with "Strike again"; also, "Love thine enemies", with "Spoil them, make a prey of them, pursue them with fire and the sword", or, "Pray for those that persecute you, and those that calumniate you", with "Persecute them by fines, imprisonments and death itself", whoever, I say, can find a means to reconcile these things may be supposed also to have found a way to reconcile God with the Devil, Christ with Antichrist, Light with Darkness, and good with evil. But if this be impossible, as indeed it is impossible, so will also the other be impossible, and men do but deceive both themselves and others, while they boldly adventure to establish such absurd and impossible things.

Robert Barclay, 1678, London YM CF&P 615



He who with Reason assists the master of mankind will not with arms strengthen the empire. His methods invite requital.

Where armies are quartered briars and thorns grow. Great wars unfailingly are followed by famines. A good man acts resolutely and then stops. He ventures not to take by force.

Be resolute but not boastful; resolute but not haughty; resolute but not arrogant; resolute because you cannot avoid it; resolute but not violent.

Things thrive and then grow old. This is called un-Reason. Un-Reason soon ceases.

Taoism, 30:1-4 BE CHARY OF WAR.



Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers." For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Psalms 122:6-9, NRSV



risen, there is no day, no night, neither existence nor non-existence, Siva (the blessed) alone is there. That is the eternal, the adorable light of Savitri, -- and the ancient wisdom proceeded thence. No one has grasped him above, or across, or in the middle. There is no image of him whose name is Great Glory. His form cannot be seen, no one perceives him with the eye. Those who through heart and mind know him thus abiding in the heart, become immortal.

Hinduism, Svetasvatra Upanishad 4:10-20



Give counsel, grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive;

Isaiah 16:3, NRSV



We have to take responsibility in our own countries for the trade in weapons, which will continue unless we intensify our actions against it. Let us do this together as an international body. Let us picture where Jesus Christ would be in this matter. What would he be saying about the trade in weapons?...

Quakers have often taken on a prophetic role in the past. We should be glad of the example of the slave abolitionists and remember their strength, their courage, their witness, and do likewise now.

Jo Vallentine, 1991, Philadelphia YM F&P, 218



'The king speaks to this effect: -- "My little child, Hû, you follow the virtue (of our ancestors), and have changed from the conduct (of your father); you are able to take heed to your ways; --I therefore appoint you to be a marquis in the east. Go to your fief, and be reverent!

"In order that you may cover the faults of your father, be loyal, be filial. Urge on your steps in your own way, diligent and never idle, and so shall you hand down an example to your descendants. Follow the constant lessons of your grandfather king Wa'n, and be not, like your father, disobedient to the royal orders.

"Great Heaven has no partial affections; -- it helps only the virtuous. The people's hearts have no unchanging attachment; -- they cherish only the kind. Acts of goodness are different, but they contribute in common to good order. Acts of evil are different, but they contribute in common to disorder. Be cautious!

"In giving heed to the beginning think of the end; -- the end will then be without distress. If you do not think of the end, it will be full of distress, even of the greatest.

"Exert yourself to achieve your proper merit. Seek to be in harmony with all your neighbours. Be a fence to the royal House. Live in amity with your brethren. Tranquillize and help the lower people.

"Follow the course of the Mean, and do not by aiming to be intelligent throw old statutes into confusion. Watch over what you see and hear, and do not for one-sided words deviate from the right rule. Then I, the One man, will praise you."

'The king says, "Oh! my little child, Hû, go, and do not idly throw away my charge."

Confucianism, Shu King Part 5, Book 17

◆──◆
O LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us.
Isaiah 26:12, NRSV

◆──◆
Despite the fact that the Society of Friends developed in an age of violent revolution and has had a witness against war for all of its history, the origin of the peace witness did not start with a concern about war. The Quaker peace witness developed from a deep faith in the essential unity of mankind and the sacredness of each individual because of that "of God" or the "Inward Light" in each person comprising that unity.

Lawrence Scott: "Non-violent action and the Quaker peace witness,"
in *No time but this present*, 1965, p. 230.

◆──◆
Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us! Among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred!

Let us live happily then, free from ailments among the ailing! Among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments!

Let us live happily then, free from greed among the greedy! Among men who are greedy let us dwell free from greed!

Let us live happily then, though we call nothing our own! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!

Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy. He who has given up both victory and defeat, he, the contented, is happy.

Dhammapada Buddhist text, 197-201

◆──◆
For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10, NRSV

◆──◆
What matters is living our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results. In doing this, the means become part of the end. Hence we lose the sense of helplessness and futility in the face of the world's crushing problems. We also lose the craving for success, always focusing on the goal to the exclusion of the way of getting there. We must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love, it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold.

Wolf Mendl: *Prophets and reconcilers: reflections on the Quaker peace testimony*, 1974, p. 102.

◆──◆
A disciplined person, enjoying sense objects with senses that are under control and free from attachments and aversions, attains tranquillity.

All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquillity. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon becomes completely steady and united with the Supreme.

There is neither Self-knowledge, nor Self-perception to those who are not united with the Supreme. Without Self-perception there is no peace, and without peace there can be no happiness.
Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita 2:64-66



Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matt 5:9, NRSV



The Quaker testimony concerning war does not set up as its standard of value the attainment of individual or national safety, neither is it based primarily on the iniquity of taking human life, profoundly important as that aspect of the question is. It is based ultimately on the conception of “that of God in every man” to which the Christian in the presence of evil is called on to make appeal, following out a line of thought and conduct which, involving suffering as it may do, is, in the long run, the most likely to reach to the inward witness and so change the evil mind into the right mind. This result is not achieved by war.

A. Neave Brayshaw (1921), London YM CF&P 606



Allah is the Protecting Guardian of those who believe. He bringeth them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein.

Qu’ran, 2:257



If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Rom 12:18, NRSV



We had been talking for an hour and a half with a clergyman neighbour, and afterwards I sat by the fire and thought. He had maintained that war has not as yet been grown out of, and that God still uses it as a means of training His children. As I thought over this, old thoughts and memories awoke from sleep. I remembered the familiar words about William Penn's sword – “Wear it as long as thou canst” and it seemed clear to me that if William Penn had given it up from self-interest or cowardice, or for any reason short of the “witness of God in his own Soul”, he would have been wrong. And then the thought extended itself from the life of one man to the life of mankind, and I remembered a sentence in the Epistle to Diognetus “What the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world”. Then I seemed to see that war cannot rightly come to an end from self-interest or cowardice or any worldly reason but only because men and women, by one and one, without waiting for the others, have become loyal to the spirit of Christ.

Marion Fox, 1914, London YM CF&P 610



Even victorious arms are unblest among tools, and people had better shun them. Therefore he who has Reason does not rely on them.

The superior man when residing at home honors the left. When using arms, he honors the right.

Arms are unblest among tools and not the superior man's tools. Only when it is unavoidable he uses them. Peace and quietude he holdeth high.

Taoism, 31:1-3 QUELLING WAR.



Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building.

Rom 14:19, NRSV



There is no security except in creating situations in which people do not want to harm you. This is a difficult truth for most people to face, but the difficulty is more emotional than rational or scientific. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," is not only Christian teaching, but it is profound wisdom, for the best way of getting rid of an enemy is to convert him into a friend. Feeding in this sense does not mean, necessarily, shipping food; it may mean applying science to create local production that he may have both subsistence and self-respect.

Whence come the qualities which enable men to tackle so hard and bold a task? We know that they are latent in all men, that they have been manifest in the pursuit of science, and that they respond to cultivation. We know too that religion, in the universal sense of human aspiration that is above sect or creed or any other dividing influence, constitutes a fertile soil in which the best that is in men may grow. It is expressed in many ways, but those who feel a deep loyalty as citizens of the Kingdom of God have an impelling reason to serve their fellow men.

James G. Vail, 1953, Philadelphia YM F&P, 216



The Self is present equally in all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me. But, those who worship Me with love and devotion are very close to Me, and I am also very close to them.

Even if the most sinful person resolves to worship Me with single-minded loving devotion, such a person must be regarded as a saint because of making the right resolution.

Such a person soon becomes righteous and attains everlasting peace. Be aware, O Arjuna, that My devotee shall never perish or fall down.

Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita 9:29-31



Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

II Cor 13:11, NRSV



Nationalism, sovereignty, conventional patriotism, are all breeders of war. It is the Quaker's concern to counter all these influences where he may – to help his countrymen think non-nationally on international matters, to be inventive and patient in the search for alternative procedures, and to suggest by deed and word an alternative way.

A conspicuous example has been the foreign service of Friends in recent years. Two major wars and minor ones have made the need for physical aid tragically abundant. The British Friends Service Council and the American Friends Service Committee separately and together have intervened in these situations not out of humanitarianism alone but to give expression to the positive alternative to war. Their service is not part of the war effort. In this it differs sharply from the political use of food, clothing, and technical assistance to "win friends and influence people." Its aim is to be

friends rather than to win friends. It is specially concerned to cross the frontiers of hatred, suspicion, and rivalry. Its disinterestedness is to be seen when it labors on both sides of a civil war, a world war, or a cold war. Only persevering years of such experience can establish to an incredulous enemy nation, past or potential, the distinctive character of Quaker service. Here is a language other than force that can be understood by Jew and Catholic, by Arab or Hindu, by persecutor and persecuted, by fascist and communist. In such service it is particularly true that "the gift without the giver is bare."

Henry J. Cadbury, "Peace and war" in *The Quaker approach to contemporary problems*, ed. John Kavanaugh, 1953, p. 17



Right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct are the three most essentials for attaining liberation (nirvana).

In order to acquire these, one must observe the five great vows:

1. Non-violence - Ahimsa
2. Truth - Satya
3. Non-stealing - Achaurya or Asteya
4. Celibacy/Chastity - Brahmacharya
5. Non-attachment/Non-possession - Aparigraha

Non-violence (Ahimsa):

Among these five vows, non-violence (Ahimsa) is the cardinal principle of Jainism and hence it is called the highest religious principle, or the cornerstone of Jainism. Non-violence is the supreme religion (Ahimsa parmo dharma)

It is repeatedly said by all Tirthankaras in Jain literature, "Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture, or kill any creature or living being."

According to Jainism all living beings, irrespective of their size, shape, or different spiritual developments are equal. No living being has a right to harm, injure, or kill any other living being, including animals, insects, and plants. Every living being has a right to exist and it is necessary to live with every other living being in perfect harmony and peace.

Nonviolence is based on love and kindness for all living beings. Nonviolence in Jainism is not a negative virtue. It is based upon the positive quality of universal love and compassion. One who is actuated by this ideal cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others.

Violence of every type should be completely forbidden. Mental tortures by way of harsh words, actions, and any type of bodily injuries should also be avoided. Even thinking evil of some one is considered violence in Jainism.

Practically, it is impossible to survive without killing or injuring some of the smallest living beings. Some lives are killed even when we breathe, drink water, or eat food. Therefore, Jainism says that minimum killing of the lowest form of life should be our ideal for survival.

Jainism explains that violence is not defined by actual harm, for this may be unintentional. It is the intention to harm, the absence of compassion, and the ignorance that makes an action violent. Without violent thought there can be no violent actions.

Non-violence is to be observed in action, speech, and thought. One should not be violent, ask others to do so, or approve of such an activity.

Jainism, Five Great Vows (Maha-vratas)



The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

Galatians 5:22-23, NRSV



The world is awaiting its own rebirth. With each new dawn, with each new day, the peoples of the earth have risen with the morning star, hoping that today will bring news of peace. Yet each day is a disappointment, as nations continue to arm, preparing for war, and looking upon their neighbors with hatred and suspicion....

Because of the incomparable evil presented by the threat of nuclear war, we are moved to bear a passionate witness for life and peace. As Christians, we believe that the example of Christ's life, death and rebirth requires among us and all peoples a rebirth of love and peace. So, with humility and hope, we seek to confront and overcome the evil of nuclear weaponry. We believe the presence of nuclear weapons in our midst threatens all of humanity and is incompatible with the life and living spirit of Christ.

Syracuse Monthly Meeting, February 1980.



Many experiences in the post-war period gave me ever increasing certainty that hostility can at least be modified, even if not dissolved, in spite of the greatest conflicts in men's ideas, interests, even moral principles. There is an approachability in people, even in individuals in power, which in our weaker moments fear often prevents us from believing in. I repeatedly found confirmation of this during the Occupation, and often also still later, in transactions between East and West. The Soviet officers were of an age to have grown up in the thought world of communism, so that there were no points of contact in Christian terms. But it was my experience again and again that when one approached them honestly, naturally, without aggression or fear, they reacted no differently than people brought up as Christians. It confirmed my faith that God is at work in every human being, as Quakerism teaches, even in a person who outwardly shows no hesitation in being hard or doing evil.

Margarethe Lachmund: With thine adversary in the way
(Pendle Hill pamphlet, no. 228), 1979, p. 23.



I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 4:1-3, NRSV



In a world which desires the fruit but does not understand the root of the peace testimony, we who would live this witness must take care not to succumb to the notion that the fruit can exist independent of the root.

Sandra Cronk, c.1983, Philadelphia YM F&P, 222



This meeting fervently recommends to the deep attention of all our members, that they be religiously guarded against approving or showing the least connivance at war, either by attending at or viewing military operations, or in any wise encouraging the unstable deceitful spirit of party, by joining with political devices or associations, however speciously disguised under the ensnaring subtleties commonly attendant thereon; but that they sincerely labour to experience a settlement on the alone sure foundation of the pure unchangeable truth, whereby, through the prevalence of unfeigned Christian love and good will to men, we may convincingly demonstrate that the kingdom we seek is not of this world: A kingdom and government whose subjects are free indeed, redeemed from those captivating lusts from whence come wars and fightings.

As we are called out of wars and fightings, so let them be as seldom as possible the subjects of our conversations; but let an holy care rest upon us, to abide in that power which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, which tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen the trust on that rock which is immovable.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1806, Philadelphia YM F&P, 223



Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you.

II Thess. 3:16, NRSV



In the present situation persuasive methods and peaceful adjustment should be tried as sincerely and consistently as possible. What if they fail, as well they may, and aggression is imminent? A tragic moral dilemma seems to arise: shall we set violence against violence and defend the society to which we feel bound by duty and affection, the lives and the future of those we love – or shall we reject violence and allow the aggressor to do his worst? This looks like the choice between two equally monstrous evils. But essentially they are not equal. According to all moral standards, and seen in the light both of love and justice, the bearing of evil is diametrically opposed to the inflicting of evil. “It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing” (I Peter 3: 17). By fighting for civilisation and precious lives we may not save but destroy them, and would most probably destroy all moral and spiritual standards of our world through the use of the weapons of mass-destruction. And on the other hand refusal to fight need not be surrender. Nevertheless, nothing can be harder than that choice.

Those who proclaim non-violence as a political technique often suggest that, if carried through with utter self-denial and self-control, it may force the hand of an aggressor. We must be prepared for the possibility of it having no such positive effect and of it leading to outward defeat. Whether successful or not it will bring suffering, martyrdom and death to many. And we must accept the way of the Cross not only for ourselves. If we believe in non-violence as the true way of peace and love, we must make it a principle not only of individual but of national and universal conduct. It would be too easy to take the position of people who are specially called for an absolute obedience to the law of love and to be content with remaining a small and ineffective group, while the majority of our fellow men defend themselves and, in fact, us too. Whilst respecting those who decide to fight, because they equally follow the voice of their conscience, we must endeavour to win them, or as many of them as possible, to the way of non-violence, whatever the consequences. Certainly we shall try to do so without any feeling of moral superiority. For not by proclaiming the way of love can we prove it to be right and applicable, but only by following it to the bitter end and we know how soon we may stumble when put to the test.

Konrad Braun (1950), London YM CF&P 611

Quaker pacifism is an obligation, not a promise. We are not guaranteed that it will be safe. We are sure that it is right. We desire to make our individual decisions in harmony with it, and to help our fellows to do so.

Friends Peace Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Race Street), 1940,
Philadelphia YM F&P, 217

A Call for Peacemaking must also be a call for promoting worldwide economic and social justice, including respect for human rights. Violence, we know, can exist even in the absence of war. Poverty-ridden, oppressed peoples are victims of economic violence. Peace is hollow without more equal sharing of the world's wealth and power.

Maynard Shelly: New call for peacemakers, 1979, p. 99.

Believing in the law of love, and striving to live "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars," we in the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends are deeply opposed to war and the preparation for war, including military conscription and registration for conscription.

We know that many young people who are legally required to register for the draft hold strong moral scruples against war. We reaffirm our long-standing support for those, both Friends and non-Friends, whose consciences lead them to reject participation in the armed forces. We encourage them to follow their consciences, and we stand ready to help, to the best of our ability, with information, counselling, and spiritual and practical support.

New England Y. M., Minutes, 1980, p. 33.

For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.

I Peter 3:10-11, NRSV

We declare our faith in those abiding truths taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ-that every individual of every race and nation, is of supreme worth; that love is the highest law of life, and that evil is to be overcome, not by further evil, but by good. The relationship of nation to nation, of race to race, of class to class, must be based on this divine law of love, if peace and progress are to be achieved. We believe in those principles, not as mere ideals for some future time, but as part of the eternal moral order and as a way of life to be lived here and now. War is a colossal violation of this way of life. If we are true to our faith we can have no part in it.

We affirm the supremacy of conscience. We recognize the privileges and obligations of citizenship; but we reject as false that philosophy which sets the state above the moral law and demands from the individual unquestioning obedience to every state command. On the contrary, we assert that every individual, while owing loyalty to the state, owes a more binding loyalty to a higher authority – the authority of God and conscience.

Philadelphia Y. M.: Faith and practice, 1961, pp. 38-9. Statement adopted 1934.

We totally oppose all wars, all preparation for war, all use of weapons and coercion by force, and all military alliances: no end could ever justify such means.

We equally and actively oppose all that leads to violence among people and nations, and violence to other species and to our planet. This has been our testimony to the whole world for over three centuries.

We are not naive or ignorant about the complexity of our modern world and the impact of sophisticated technologies – but we see no reason whatsoever to change or weaken our vision of the peace that everyone needs in order to survive and flourish on a healthy, abundant earth.

The primary reason for this stand is our conviction that there is that of God in every one which makes each person too precious to damage or destroy.

While someone lives, there is always the hope of reaching that of God within them: such hope motivates our search to find nonviolent resolution of conflict.... There is no guarantee that our resistance will be any more successful or any less risky than military tactics. At least our means will be suited to our end.

If we seemed to fail finally, we would still rather suffer and die than inflict evil in order to save ourselves and what we hold dear.

If we succeed, there is no loser or winner, for the problem that led to conflict will have been resolved in a spirit of justice and tolerance.

Such a resolution is the only guarantee that there will be no further outbreak of war when each side has regained strength....

The places to begin acquiring the skills and maturity and generosity to avoid or to resolve conflicts are in our own homes, our personal relationships, our schools, our workplaces, and wherever decisions are made.

We must relinquish the desire to own other people, to have power over them, and to force our views on to them. We must own up to our own negative side and not look for scapegoats to blame, punish, or exclude. We must resist the urge towards waste and the accumulation of possessions.

Conflicts are inevitable and must not be repressed or ignored but worked through painfully and carefully. We must develop the skills of being sensitive to oppression and grievances, sharing power in decision making, creating consensus, and making reparation.

In speaking out, we acknowledge that we ourselves are as limited and as erring as anyone else. When put to the test, we each may fall short.

We do not have a blueprint for peace.... In any particular situation, a variety of personal decisions could be made with integrity.

We may disagree with the views and actions of the politician or the soldier who opts for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish that person.

What we call for in this statement is a commitment to make the building of peace a priority and to make opposition to war absolute.

What we advocate is not uniquely Quaker but human and, we believe, the will of God. Our stand does not belong to Friends alone – it is yours by birthright....

[L]et us reject the clamour of fear and listen to the whisperings of hope.

Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting, 1987, Philadelphia YM F&P, 224



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1744, during the War of the Austrian Succession: We entreat all who profess themselves members of our Society to be faithful to that ancient testimony, borne by us ever since we were a people, against bearing arms and fighting, that by a conduct agreeable to our profession we may demonstrate ourselves to be real followers of the Messiah, the peaceable Saviour, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.

London YM CF&P 616



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1804, 1805, during the Napoleonic Wars: Most, if not all, people admit the transcendent excellency of peace. All who adopt the petition, "Thy kingdom come", pray for its universal establishment. Some people then must begin to fulfill the evangelical promise, and cease to learn war any more. Now, friends, seeing these things cannot be controverted, how do we long that your whole conversation be as becometh the Gospel; and that while any of us are professing to scruple war, they may not in some parts of their conduct be inconsistent with that profession!... Friends it is an awful thing to stand forth to the nation as the advocates of inviolable peace; and our testimony loses its efficacy in proportion to the want of consistency in any ... And we can serve our country in no way more availingly, nor more acceptably to him who holds its prosperity at his disposal, than by contributing, all that in us lies, to increase the number of meek, humble, and self-denying Christians. Guard against placing your dependence on fleets and armies; be peaceable yourselves, in words and actions, and pray to the Father of the Universe that he would breathe the spirit of reconciliation into the hearts of his erring and contending creatures.

London YM CF&P 617



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1854, during the Crimean War: We feel bound explicitly to avow our continued unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our Divine Lord and Lawgiver, and with the whole spirit and tenor of His Gospel; and that no plea of necessity or of policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe unto Him who hath said "Love your enemies".

London YM CF&P 618



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1900, during the South African War: We believe that the Spirit of Christ will ultimately redeem national as well as individual life. We believe further that, as all church history shows, the human means will be the faithful witness borne by Christ's disciples. It has been well said "It seems to be the will of Him, who is infinite in wisdom, that light upon great subjects should first arise and be gradually spread through the faithfulness of individuals in acting up to their own convictions". This was the secret of the power of the early Church. The blood of the Christians proved a fruitful seed. In like manner the staunchness of early Friends and others to their conscientious convictions in the seventeenth century won the battle of religious freedom for England. We covet a like faithful witness against war from Christians today.

London YM CF&P 619



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1915, during the First World War: Meeting at a time when the nations of Europe are engaged in a war of unparalleled magnitude, we have been led to recall the basis of the peace testimony of our Religious Society. It is not enough to be satisfied with a barren negative witness, a mere proclamation of non-resistance. We must search for a positive, vital, constructive message. Such a message, a message of supreme love, we find in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find it in the doctrine of the indwelling Christ, that re-discovery of the early Friends, leading as it does to a recognition of the brotherhood of all men. Of this doctrine our testimony as to war and peace is a necessary outcome, and if we understand the doctrine aright, and follow it in its wide implications, we shall find that it calls to the peaceable spirit and the rule of love in all the broad and manifold relations of life.

Thus while love, joy, peace, gentleness and holiness are the teaching of the life and death of our Lord, it is to these that we are also impelled by the indwelling of the Divine in men. As this spirit grows within us, we shall realise increasingly what it is to live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars.

London YM CF&P 620



Issued by Yearly Meeting 1943, during the Second World War: All thoughtful men and women are torn at heart by the present situation. The savage momentum of war drags us all in its wake. We desire a righteous peace. Yet to attain peace it is claimed that, as Chungking, Rotterdam and Coventry were devastated, so the Eder and Moehne dams must needs be destroyed and whole districts of Hamburg obliterated. The people of Milan and Turin demonstrate for peace but the bombing continues. War is hardening our hearts. To preserve our sanity, we become apathetic. In such an atmosphere no true peace can be framed; yet before us we see months of increasing terror. Can those who pay heed to moral laws, can those who follow Christ submit to the plea that the only way is that demanded by military necessity?

True peace involves freedom from tyranny and a generous tolerance; conditions that are denied over a large part of Europe and are not fulfilled in other parts of the world. But true Peace cannot be dictated, it can only be built in co-operation between all peoples. None of us, no nation, no citizen, is free from some responsibility for this situation with its conflicting difficulties.

To the world in its confusion Christ came. Through him we know that God dwells with men and that by turning from evil and living in his spirit we may be led into his way of peace. That way of peace is not to be found in any policy of “unconditional surrender” by whomsoever demanded. It requires that men and nations should recognise their common brotherhood, using the weapons of integrity, reason, patience and love, never acquiescing in the ways of the oppressor, always ready to suffer with the oppressed. In every country there is a longing for freedom from domination and war which men are striving to express. Now is the time to issue an open invitation to co-operate in creative peacemaking, to declare our willingness to make sacrifices of national prestige, wealth and standards of living for the common good of men.

The way of Christ is followed not by those who would be mighty and powerful, but by those who would serve. His peace for the world will be won by those who follow him in repentance and willingness to forgive.

London YM CF&P 621



We are deeply convinced that the testimony for Peace, which we believe has been entrusted to us as a Society, is not an artificial appendage to our faith, which can be dropped without injuring

the whole, but rather an organic out-growth of our belief as Christians and as Friends, which cannot be abandoned without mutilating our whole message for the world.

We believe in common with other Christians, that in Jesus Christ, the Divine Word, which in all ages had been the “Light” of men, took human form. We have seen in him the revelation of the priceless worth of manhood in the sight of God, and know that in virtue of his “Light” shed abroad in every human soul, all men, of whatever race or nation, are brothers. Upon this sacred human personality, war rudely tramples, virtually regarding men as things, as obstacles to be got rid of, if they are enemies; or, if they are our own soldiers, as military instruments whose consciences may be disregarded. As Christians we cannot be parties to putting ourselves or others in such a position. Further, since the Divine Light within us is the Light of Christ, we cannot separate it from the spirit of his teaching, when he was here on earth. We cannot claim his authority for impulses within us which lead us to act in opposition to that teaching, which he summed up in love to God and love to all men.

In so far as we have grasped – and been obedient to these leadings, we have been enabled to see a splendid vision of what human unity is, and of what human fellowship may be, and have of necessity been filled with a profound sense of the evil of violating this fellowship. This vision has brought us a renewed faith in the power of spiritual forces to build the structure of humanity, and to redeem it from error and wrong. It is only spiritual forces that can do this, the powers that touch men’s hearts, that convince their minds and win their loyalty and set free the uniting forces of humanity. The very refusal of all violence, if it springs evidently and sincerely from a deep reverence and love for “that of God” in an opponent’s nature, will be potent to reach and win his soul. Those who see this, even if dimly and amid much perplexity, must hold it fast.

We have so valued this vision and recognised its authority that way “the arbitrament of self-assertion and passion”, with all its abrogation of moral restraint, its denial of discriminating justice, its responsibility for atrocities, its destruction of all the divine possibilities of human life – is for us an impossibility.

Backed by these convictions, we hold the moral law of gentleness and forgiveness and love to be unconditionally binding upon us now. It seems a poor and pitiful thing to believe in principles except when they may have to be applied, in forgiveness only when there is nothing to forgive, in love only for those who love us. It is our present sinning and stricken world that needs these redeeming messages in word and life. May we be faithful to the vision! It bears with it a grave but splendid responsibility.

Yearly Meeting, 1912; 1925, London YM CF&P 623



Our peace testimony is much more than our special attitude to world affairs; it expresses our vision of the whole Christian way of life; it is our way of living in this world, of looking at this world and of changing this world. Only when the seeds of war-pride, prestige, and lust for power and possessions – have been purged from our personal and corporate ways of living; only when we can meet all men as friends in a spirit of sharing and caring, can we call upon others to tread the same path.

Our Christian Pacifism, expressed in lives dedicated to the service of God and all his family, should be an experience from which we may speak to peoples and rulers and which transforms a negative refusal to take part in war into a positive witness to the better way. We must by study, by group discussion, and by experience of active peace work equip ourselves with reliable knowledge to enable us not only to expound but also to apply our peace testimony.

Friends World Conference, 1952, London YM CF&P 624