

# DODGE DAVID LOW

WAR INCONSISTENT WITH  
THE RELIGION OF JESUS  
CHRIST

**David Dodge**  
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**Religion of Jesus Christ**

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War Inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ:*

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# David Low Dodge

## War Inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ

### INTRODUCTION

To David Low Dodge of New York belongs the high honor of having written the first pamphlets published in America directed expressly against the war system of nations, and of having founded the first peace society ever organized in America or in the world. His first pamphlet, *The Mediator's Kingdom not of this World*, was published in 1809. His second and more important pamphlet, *War Inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ*, was prepared for the press in 1812. This was two years before the publication of Noah Worcester's *Solemn Review of the Custom of War*, which was issued in Boston on Christmas Day, 1814. Early in 1812 Mr. Dodge and his friends in New York deliberated on the expediency of forming a peace society; but on account of the excitement attending the war with Great Britain this was postponed until 1815. In August of that year the New York Peace Society, the first in the world, was organized, with Mr. Dodge as its president. This was four months before the organization of the Massachusetts Peace Society (December

26, 1815) under the leadership of Noah Worcester, and nearly a year before the English Peace Society, the first in Europe, was formed (June 14, 1816) in London.

The preëminent historical interest attaching to Mr. Dodge's pioneering work in the peace cause in this country would alone justify and indeed seem to command the republication of his pamphlets at this time, when the great ideas for which he so courageously and prophetically stood are at last winning the general recognition of humane and thoughtful men. But it is not merely historical interest which warrants a revival of attention to these almost forgotten papers. Their intrinsic power and worth are such as make their reading, especially that of the second essay, *War Inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ*, which stands first in the present volume, edifying and inspiring to-day. Marked by few literary graces and cast in a theological mold which the critical thought of the present has in large measure outgrown, there is a force of thought, a moral earnestness, a persevering logic, a common sense, a hatred of inhumanity, a passion for justice, a penetration and a virtue in them, which commends them to the abiding and reverent regard of all who work for the peace and order of the world. Among such workers to-day are men of various political philosophies, and perhaps only a small minority are nonresistants of the extreme type of David L. Dodge; but to that minority, we cannot fail to remark, belongs the greatest and most influential of all the peace prophets of this time, Leo Tolstoi. None can read these old essays without

being impressed by the fact that their arguments are essentially the same as those of the great Russian. There is little indeed of the Tolstoian thunder and lightning, the pathos, wrath, and rhetoric, the poetry and prophecy, in these old-fashioned pages; but the doctrine is the same as that of *Bethink Yourselves!* and *Patriotism versus Christianity*. In his central thought and purpose, in his religious trust and reliance upon the Christian principle, the New York merchant was a Tolstoi a hundred years before his time.

David Low Dodge was born June 14, 1774, in that part of Pomfret, Connecticut, now called Brooklyn. This was the home of Israel Putnam; and David Dodge's father, a farmer and carpenter, was Putnam's neighbor and friend, – may well have been near him when in April, 1775, upon hearing of the battle of Lexington, he left his plow in the furrow and started to join the forces gathering at Cambridge. David Dodge's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather each bore the name of David Dodge. The great-grandfather was a Congregational minister, who was understood to have come from Wales, – a learned and wealthy man, who was for a while settled in the vicinity of Cape Ann in Massachusetts. The grandfather, who also received a liberal education, probably in England, came into the possession of his father's estate, for that day a large one, and we are not informed whether he followed any profession or regular business. He was a man fully six feet tall, of great muscular power, and a lover of good horses, on which he spent much time and money.

He married Ann Low, from a wealthy Massachusetts family, and settled in Beverly, where their sons David and Samuel were born, and where the family fortunes became much embarrassed. About 1757 the family removed to Pomfret, Connecticut, and the boys, whose education at the hands of their mother had been but slight, were apprenticed, David to a carpenter and Samuel to a shoemaker. Their father, obtaining at this time a commission in the army invading Canada, met his death in a bateau which attempted to descend the falls of the Oswego and was dashed to pieces on the rocks with the loss of every soul on board.

David Low Dodge's mother, when a girl, was Mary Stuart, and when she married his father, in 1768, was a widow bearing the name of Earl. The young husband hired a small farm, the wife by her industry and economy had furniture sufficient to begin housekeeping, and the little home was founded in which David Low Dodge's only sister Mary was born in 1770. Three years later the father hired a more expensive place in the same town, where the boy was born in 1774. "During that year," he writes in his autobiography, "my father became serious, and commenced family prayer. He was educated in the old semi-Arminian views of his mother and the halfway covenant. My mother was a rigid Calvinist of the Whitefield school. Neither of them ever made a public profession of religion, but they were careful to observe external ordinances, catechize their children, and give religious instruction. They were honest, industrious, temperate, kind-hearted people, universally respected and esteemed by all

who were acquainted with them.”

Such was the atmosphere in which the boy grew up. “The American Revolution at this period was convulsing the whole country, drafting and enlisting soldiers. Wagons were needed for the army, and by the advice of the Putnams, the old general and his son Israel, who was about two years younger than my father, he was induced to engage in the manufacture of continental wagons. He hired a convenient place for carpenters and blacksmiths, took several journeymen into the family, and embarked all his earnings in the business.” The boy’s half-brothers, William and Jesse Earl, entered the army at the tender ages of fourteen and sixteen, endured battles, sickness, and every privation, and both died towards the close of the war, the event almost wrecking the nervous system of the mother, a woman of acute sensibility. Thus early were the horrors of war brought personally home to the boy. He remembered hearing the distant cannonading when New London was burned by the British, and the exclamation of the man beside him, “Blood is flowing to-day.” “News came the next morning that the forts were stormed, the garrisons put to the sword, New London burnt, and the British were marching upon Norwich, and would proceed up into the country. My mother wrung her hands, and asked my father if we had not better pack up some things to secrete them.”

The boy’s education was slight and fragmentary. The summer he was six years old he attended the school of a venerable Irish maiden lady about sixty years of age, learning Watts’ *Divine*

*Songs*, texts of Scripture, and the *Shorter Catechism*. From the age of seven to fourteen – the family now living on a farm in the neighboring town of Hampton – he attended the district school for two terms each winter, having no access to any other books than the primer, spelling book, arithmetic, and Bible. “I used often, when not at work in the shop evenings, to retire to the old kitchen fireplace, put my lamp into the oven, and, sitting with my back against it, take my arithmetic, slate, and pencil, and try to cipher a little. I often think how I should have been delighted to have had one fifth part of the advantages enjoyed by most of my descendants.” Confined to the house for seven weeks a little later as the result of accidents, he turned hungrily to such books as he could secure – Dilworth’s *Arithmetic*, Webster’s *Abridged Grammar*, and Salmon’s *Universal English Geography*. “This opened a new and astonishing field to me for contemplation. I now obtained the first glimpse of the boundaries of land and water, of the lofty mountains, and of the mighty rivers which had cut their channels through the earth. I read and surveyed the maps and meditated upon them until I began to lecture to my young companions, and was considered quite learned in geography. Having an object in view, I began to thirst for knowledge, and succeeded in borrowing in succession *The Travels of Cyrus*, *Xerxes’ Expedition into Greece*, *The History of Alexander the Great*, and *Hannibal’s Invasion of Rome*.” He proposed and brought about the formation of a society of young men in the town, for the improvement of minds and manners. There were

fourteen young men, with an equal number of young women presently added, each furnishing a useful book as the beginning of a library. "We obtained some of the British classics, such as the *Spectator*, *Guardian*, etc., with a few histories; the subjects formed a foundation for conversation when we met together."

Now the young man's ambition turned from farming to school-teaching. He began with district schools, becoming a successful teacher from the start, prosecuting his own studies assiduously in every leisure hour, fired with a desire to improve the schools, which were everywhere as wretched as can well be imagined. For some months in 1795 he left teaching to join other young men in building a bridge at Tiverton, Rhode Island. Then he attended the academy at North Canterbury, Connecticut, under the charge of the eminent teacher, John Adams. "This was the only opportunity I ever enjoyed of attending a good school, and this was abridged to fulfill my engagement to teach the town school in Mansfield." In 1796 he opened a private school in Norwich, adding the next year a morning school for young ladies and an evening school for apprentices and clerks, all of which flourished. During this time he was profoundly interested in religious matters, attending many revivals and becoming more and more concerned with moral and social problems. Now, too, he married, his wife being a daughter of Aaron Cleveland of Norwich, a strong character, afterwards a clergyman, "whose name you will find enrolled among the poets of Connecticut," and who as early as 1775 published a poem on slavery, which,

condemning slavery as wholly antichristian, attracted a good deal of notice. He was the first man in Connecticut to arraign slavery publicly. Elected to the General Assembly from Norwich on that issue, he introduced a bill in behalf of emancipation.

With health somewhat impaired and with family cares increasing, David Dodge now turned from teaching to trade. First it was as a clerk in Norwich, then as a partner in a general store, then as head of various dry goods establishments in Hartford and other Connecticut towns, always and everywhere successful. In 1805 Messrs. S. and H. Higginson of Boston, cousins of his wife, a firm of high standing and large capital, made him a proposition to enter into a copartnership with a view to establishing an extensive importing and jobbing store in the city of New York; and he accepted the proposition, going to New York the next year to take charge of the concern in that city. He took a store in Pearl Street, and the year afterwards the family took possession of the house connected with the store, still reserving the house in Hartford as a retreat in case of yellow fever in New York. From this time until his death, April 23, 1852, New York was, with occasional interruptions, his home and the center of his varied and ever enlarging activities. Just before the outbreak of the war with England his partners became bankrupt through losses in extensive shipping of American produce to Europe. "Bonaparte sprung his trap upon more than a million dollars of their property." Mr. Dodge now established cotton factories in Connecticut, and later commenced anew the dry goods business

in New York, his home for years alternating between New York and the Norwich neighborhood; and for the nine years following 1835 he occupied a large farm in Plainfield, New Jersey.

Active as was his business life, and faithful his devotion to his large business affairs, – and he came to rank with the most prominent mercantile men of his day, – his mind was always intent upon social and religious subjects. “During the years of 1808 to 1811 our business became extensive and demanded much thought and attention; yet I think my affections were on the subject of religion.” Revivals of religion, the interests of his church in Norwich or New York, the improvement of the lives of his factory operatives, the organization in New York of the Christian Friendly Society for the Promotion of Morals and Religion, – such were the objects which commanded him. Throughout his long residence in New York he was a prominent worker in the Presbyterian church, for many years an elder in the church. He took a leading part in organizing the New York Bible Society and the New York Tract Society, was much engaged in the early missionary movements in New York, and in promoting the education of young men for the ministry. He was a lover of knowledge, a great reader, and one who thought and wrote as he read. Deeply interested in history, ancient and modern, his chief interest was in theological discussion. He was familiar with the chief theological controversies of the day, and upon many of them committed his views to writing. His knowledge of the Bible was remarkable; he read it through critically in course forty-two

times. He held firmly the Calvinistic system of doctrine, and he addressed to his children a series of letters, characterized by great ability and logical force, in defense of the faith, and constituting together a compendious system of theology.

Several of these letters are included in the memorial volume published for the family in 1854 under the editorial supervision of Rev. Matson M. Smith. This volume contains, besides the two essays on war here reprinted, and various verses and letters, the interesting autobiography which he prepared, at the request of his children, a few years before his death, and a supplementary biographical sketch by his pastor, Rev. Asa D. Smith. In the mass of manuscripts which he left behind was an essay upon "The Relation of the Church to the World," and one upon "Retributive Judgment and Capital Punishment," – to which he was sharply opposed. He was opposed indeed to so much in human governments as now constituted, – "whose ultimate reliance," he said, "is the sword," and whose laws he felt to be so often contrary to the laws of Christ to which he gave his sole allegiance, – that he would neither vote nor hold office. Strict and inflexible as he was in his views of political and religious duty, he was one of the most genial and delightful of men, a Christian in whom there was no guile, fond of the young, affectionate, courteous, "given to hospitality," "careful habitually to make even the conventionalities of life a fitting accompaniment and expression of the inward principle of kindness." A face as strong as it is gentle, and as gentle as it is strong, is that which looks at

us in the beautiful portrait preserved in the family treasures, and a copy of which forms the frontispiece of the present volume.

The character and influence of the family which he founded in New York, during the three generations which have followed, constitute an impressive witness to David Dodge's force and worth, his religious consecration, and high public spirit. At the junction of Broadway and Sixth Avenue stands the statue of his son, William Earl Dodge, whose life of almost fourscore years ended in 1883. For long years the head of the great house of Phelps, Dodge & Co., the manager of immense railway, lumber, and mining interests, the president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, a representative of New York in Congress, a leader in large work for temperance, for the freedmen, for the Indians, for theological education, for a score of high patriotic and philanthropic interests, New York had in his time no more representative, more useful, or more honored citizen. And what is said of him may be said in almost the same words of William Earl Dodge, his son, who died but yesterday, and who combined broad business and philanthropic activities in the same strong and influential way as his father and grandfather before him. President of many religious and benevolent associations, he was pre-eminently a patriot and an international man. The logic of his life and of his heritage placed him naturally at the head of the National Arbitration Committee, which was appointed at the great conference on international arbitration held at Washington in the spring of 1896, following the anxiety

attendant upon President Cleveland's Venezuelan message, – a committee which, under his chairmanship, and since his death that of Hon. John W. Foster, has during the decade rendered such great service to the peace and arbitration cause in this country. It is to be noted also that the names of his son and daughter, Cleveland H. Dodge and Grace H. Dodge, names so conspicuously associated to-day with charitable, religious, and educational efforts in New York, are associated, too, like his with the commanding cause of the world's peace and better organization; both names stand upon the American Committee of the Thirteenth International Peace Congress, which met in Boston in 1904. Thus have the generations which have followed him well learned and strongly emphasized the lesson taught by David Dodge almost a century ago, that war is "inhuman, unwise, and criminal," and "inconsistent with the religion of Jesus Christ."

It was in 1805 that a startling personal experience prompted the train of thought which soon and forever made David L. Dodge the advocate of the thorough-going peace principles with which his name is chiefly identified, and led him to condemn all violence, even in self-defense, in dealings between men, as between nations. Accustomed to carry pistols when traveling with large sums of money, he was almost led to shoot his landlord in a tavern at Providence, Rhode Island, who by some blunder had come into his room at night and suddenly waked him. The thought of what his situation and feelings would have been had he

taken the man's life shocked him into most searching thinking. For two or three years his mind dwelt on the question. He turned to the teaching and example of Christ, and became persuaded that these were inconsistent with violence and the carrying of deadly weapons, and with war. The common churchman sanctioned such things, but not the early Christians; and he found strong words condemning war in Luther and Erasmus, the Moravians and Quakers. Discussing the matter with many pious and Christian men, he found them generally avoiding the gospel standard. He was shocked by the "general want of faith in the promises"; but he himself laid aside at once his pistols and the fear of robbers. He became absolutely convinced that fighting and warfare were "unlawful for the followers of Christ"; and from now on he began to bear public testimony against the war spirit.

Early in the spring of 1809 he published his essay, *The Mediator's Kingdom not of this World*, which attracted so much attention that in two weeks nearly a thousand copies were sold. Three literary men joined in preparing a spirited and sarcastic criticism of it; and he immediately published a rejoinder. *The Mediator's Kingdom* was republished in Philadelphia and in Providence, and Mr. Dodge writes truly: "These publications gave the first impulse in America, if we except the uniform influence of the Friends, to inquiry into the lawfulness of war by Christians. Some who were favorable to the doctrines of peace judged that, with a bold hand, I had carried the subject too far; and doubtless, as it was new and had not been much discussed, I

wrote too unguardedly, not sufficiently defining my terms. The Rev. Dr. Noah Worcester was one who so judged, and a few years after he published his very spirited and able essay, *The Solemn Review of War.*” This famous essay of Worcester’s represents the platform of the great body of American peace workers for a century, the position of men like Channing and Ladd and Jay and Sumner; but to a nonresistant and opponent even of self-defense, like David Dodge, these seemed the exponents of a halfway covenant.

Mr. Dodge entered into private correspondence on the lawfulness of war with Rev. Lyman Beecher, Rev. Aaron Cleveland, his father-in-law, Rev. John B. Romeyn, and Rev. Walter King. He preserved among his manuscripts letters of twenty-five pages from Dr. Romeyn and Mr. Cleveland, and copies of his reply to Dr. Romeyn (one hundred and thirty-two pages) and to Dr. Beecher (forty-four pages). Important letters from Dr. Beecher and Governor Jay he had lost. All these took the position of Dr. Worcester, sanctioning strictly defensive war in extreme cases, – all except Mr. Cleveland, who finally came into complete accord with Mr. Dodge, and published two able sermons on “The Life of Man Inviolable by the Laws of Christ.”

Early in 1812 the friends of peace whom Mr. Dodge had gathered about him in New York conferred upon the forming of a peace society, “wholly confined to decided evangelical Christians, with a view to diffusing peace principles in the churches, avoiding all party questions.” There being at this

juncture, however, intense political feeling over the threatened war with Great Britain, they feared their motives would be misapprehended, and decided for the moment simply to act individually in diffusing information. Mr. Dodge was appointed to prepare an essay on the subject of war, stating and answering objections; and, removing at this time to Norwich, he there, in a period of great business perplexity, completed his remarkable paper on "War Inconsistent with the Christian Religion," which was published in the very midst of the war with England.

Upon his return to New York, the friends of peace there had two or three meetings relative to the organization of a society; and in August, 1815, they formed the New York Peace Society, of between thirty and forty members, their strict articles of association condemning all war, offensive and defensive, as wholly opposed to the example and spirit and precepts of Christ. The peace societies formed immediately afterwards in Massachusetts, Ohio, Rhode Island, and London were organized, according to Mr. Dodge, without any knowledge of each other, the movements being the simultaneous separate results of a common impulse. Of the New York society Mr. Dodge was unanimously elected president. Monthly meetings were arranged, and at the first of these Mr. Dodge read an address upon "The Kingdom of Peace under the Benign Reign of Messiah," of which a thousand copies were at once printed and circulated. Within two years the society had increased to sixty members, men active not only against war – which

the society regarded as “the greatest temporal evil, as almost every immorality is generated in its prosecution, and poverty, distress, famine, and pestilence follow in its train” – but in all the benevolent enterprises of that day. “Several respectable clergymen united with the society, – Rev. Drs. E. D. Griffin and M. L. Parvine, Rev. E. W. Baldwin (to whose pen we were much indebted), Rev. Samuel Whelpley, and his son, Rev. Melancthon Whelpley, Rev. H. G. Ufford, and Rev. S. H. Cox. Dr. Cox, however, afterwards entertained different views on the subject.”

The New York Peace Society had friendly correspondence with all the other peace societies, and for several years took two hundred copies of Dr. Worcester’s *Friend of Peace*. This seems finally to have contributed to divide the society, some relinquishing the nonresistant views of Mr. Dodge and adopting Worcester’s less extreme position. But our brave Tolstoian was a “thorough,” and never wavered. “If it was morally wrong for individuals to quarrel and fight, instead of returning good for evil,” – these are his last words on the subject in his autobiography, – “it was much more criminal for communities and nations to return evil for evil, and not strive to overcome evil with good. In fact, the great barrier to our progress was the example of our fathers in the American Revolution. That they were generally true patriots, in the political sense of the term, and many hopefully pious, I would not call in question, while I consider them as ill directed by education as St. Paul was when on his way to Damascus.”

The New York Peace Society maintained its existence and work for many years. In 1828 it united with other societies in the creation of the American Peace Society, which was organized in New York on May 8 of that year on the initiative of William Ladd. After this the New York society seems to have done little separate work, and finally its independent existence ceased. Mr. Dodge assisted in the organization of the new national society, and presided at its first annual meeting, May 13, 1829. He was chosen a member of its board of directors, and later became a life director, maintaining his connection with the society until his death in 1852, faithful to the end to the radical views by which he had become so powerfully possessed almost half a century before.

For two generations New York has been without a local peace society. The services of eminent individual citizens of the city and state of New York for the peace cause during that period, however, have been signal. Judge William Jay of New York was for a decade president of the American Peace Society, – the important decade covering the great peace congresses in Europe at the middle of the last century; and it was his proposal that an arbitration clause should be attached to all future commercial treaties which furnished the basis for the most constructive debates of the first congress, that at London in 1843. The three really important members of the American delegation at The Hague Conference were citizens of New York, – Andrew D. White, Seth Low, and Frederick W.

Holls. A remarkable plan adopted by the New York State Bar Association suggested important features of The Hague Court as finally constituted. It is a citizen of New York, Andrew Carnegie, who has given \$1,500,000 for a worthy building for the court at The Hague, – a temple of peace. Mr. Carnegie, whose influence in behalf of international fraternity is perhaps second to that of no other to-day, has also given \$5,000,000 to establish a pension fund for “heroes of peace,” whose heroism, too long comparatively neglected, he rightly sees to be not less than the heroism of the soldier. The most important series of arbitration conferences in recent times have been those at Lake Mohonk, in the state of New York, arranged by Albert K. Smiley, – conferences of growing size and importance, commanding world-wide attention, and performing for this country almost the same service performed for France and England by their national peace congresses. Finally, it must not be forgotten that Theodore Roosevelt, the President of the United States, through whose initiative the second Hague Conference will presently meet, is also a citizen of New York.

At this very time a promising movement is gaining head to organize once more in David Dodge’s city a New York Peace Society. At one of the recent Mohonk conferences a large committee of New York men, under the chairmanship of Mr. Warner Van Norden, was formed for conference with this end in view. Upon the American committee of the International Peace Congress which met in Boston in 1904 were no less than sixteen

residents of the city of New York, – Andrew Carnegie, Hon. Oscar S. Straus, Hon. George F. Seward, Walter S. Logan, Felix Adler, William D. Howells, Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell, Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, Miss Grace H. Dodge, Rev. Josiah Strong, Rev. Charles E. Jefferson, Cleveland H. Dodge, George Foster Peabody, Professor John B. Clark, Leander T. Chamberlain, and J. G. Phelps Stokes. In the week following the Boston congress a series of great peace meetings was held in New York, at the Cooper Union and elsewhere, arranged by members of this committee; and out of all this a new impulse has come to plans for local organization in New York. As one result a strong society was formed by the Germans of the city, and a large Women's Peace Circle has since been organized and begun important educational work. The larger New York Peace Society is now certainly a thing of the near future. To the men and women who will constitute that society, the noble body of those now working in their various ways in the great city for the cause of peace, is dedicated especially this republication of the old essays of David Dodge, the founder of the first peace society in the world, who by his pioneering and prophetic service gave to New York a place so significant in the history of what is to-day the world's most commanding cause.

*September, 1905*

*EDWIN D. MEAD*

# WAR INCONSISTENT WITH THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST

Humanity, wisdom, and goodness at once combine all that can be great and lovely in man. Inhumanity, folly, and wickedness reverse the picture, and at once represent all that can be odious and hateful. The former is the spirit of Heaven, and the latter the offspring of hell. The spirit of the gospel not only breathes “glory to God in the highest, but on earth peace, and good will to men.” The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated; but the wisdom from beneath is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

It is exceedingly strange that any one under the light of the gospel, professing to be guided by its blessed precepts, with the Bible in his hand, while the whole creation around him is so often groaning under the weight and terrors of war, should have doubts whether any kind of wars under the gospel dispensation, except spiritual warfare, can be the dictate of any kind of wisdom except that from beneath; and much more so, to believe that they are the fruit of the Divine Spirit, which is love, joy, and peace.

An inspired apostle has informed us from whence come wars and fightings. They come from the lusts of men that war in their members. Ever since the fall, mankind have had naturally within them a spirit of pride, avarice, and revenge. The gospel

is directly opposed to this spirit. It teaches humility, it inculcates love, it breathes pity and forgiveness even to enemies, and forbids rendering evil for evil to any man.

Believing as I do, after much reflection and, as I trust, prayerful investigation of the subject, that all kinds of carnal warfare are unlawful upon gospel principles, I shall now endeavor to prove that WAR is INHUMAN, UNWISE, and CRIMINAL, and then make some general remarks, and state and answer several objections. In attempting to do this I shall not always confine myself strictly to this order of the subject, but shall occasionally make such remarks as may occur, directly or indirectly, to show that the whole genius of war is contrary to the spirit and precepts of the gospel.

# WAR IS INHUMAN

## I. BECAUSE IT HARDENS THE HEART AND BLUNTS THE TENDER FEELINGS OF MANKIND

That it is the duty of mankind to be tender-hearted, feeling for the distress of others, and to do all in their power to prevent and alleviate their misery, is evident not only from the example of the Son of God but the precepts of the gospel.

When the Saviour of sinners visited this dark and cruel world he became a man of sorrow and was acquainted with grief, so that he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He went about continually healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, raising the dead, as well as preaching the gospel of peace to the poor. He visited the houses of affliction and poured the balm of consolation into the wounded heart. He mourned with those who mourned, and wept with those that wept. Love to God and man flowed from his soul pure as the river of life, refreshing the thirsty desert around him. He was not only affectionate to his friends but kind to his enemies. He returned love for their hatred, and blessing for their cursing. When he was surrounded by all the powers of darkness

and resigned himself into the hands of sinners to expiate their guilt, and they smote him on the cheek and plucked off the hair, he “was dumb and opened not his mouth.” While suffering all the contempt and torture which men and devils could invent, instead of returning evil for evil he prayed for his murderers and apologized for his persecutors, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

The apostle exhorts Christians, saying, “Be ye kind and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Authority in abundance might be quoted to show that the spirit of the gospel absolutely requires the exercise of love, pity, and forgiveness, even to enemies.

But who will undertake to prove that soldiers are usually kind and tender-hearted, and that their employment has a natural tendency to promote active benevolence, while it requires all their study of mind and strength of body to injure their enemies to the greatest extent?

Though we often hear of the generosity and attention of soldiers to prisoners, and notwithstanding I am willing to allow that feelings of humanity are not altogether obliterated from every soldier, yet much of this apparent kindness may flow from a desire of better treatment themselves should circumstances be reversed, or from a hope of the applause of mankind. My object, however, is not to prove that all soldiers are destitute of humanity, but that their occupation has a natural tendency and

actually does weaken their kind and tender feelings, and harden their hearts.

Is it not a fact that those who are engaged in the spirit of war, either in the council or in the field, are not usually so meek, lowly, kind, and tender-hearted as other men? Does the soldier usually become kind and tender-hearted while trained to the art of killing his fellow-man, or more so when engaged in the heat of the battle, stepping forward over the wounded and hearing the groans of the expiring? Does he actually put on bowels of tenderness, mercy, and forgiveness, while he bathes his sword in the blood of his brother? Do these scenes generally change the lion into the lamb? On the contrary, do not the history of ages and the voice of millions bear testimony that the whole trade of war has a natural tendency to blunt the tender edge of mercy and chill all the sympathizing feelings of the human heart? Who that is a parent, having an uncommonly hard-hearted and unfeeling son, would send him into the camp to subdue his inhumanity and to stamp upon him kind and tender feelings? If war has not a natural tendency to harden the heart, permit me to inquire why mankind do not usually feel as much at the distress occasioned by war as by other calamities?

It would be truly astonishing, were it not so common, to see with what composure the generality of mankind hear the account of barbarous and destructive battles. They may have some little excitement when they hear of savages – whose religion teaches them revenge – using the tomahawk and scalping knife;

but when thousands are torn to pieces with shot and shells and butchered with polished steels, then it becomes a very polite and civil business, and those who perish are contemplated as only reclining on a bed of honor. If an individual in common life breaks a bone or fractures a limb, all around him not only sympathize but are ready to aid in alleviating his distress; but when thousands are slain and ten thousand wounded in the field of battle, the shock is but trifling, and the feelings are soon lost in admiring the gallantry of this hero and the prowess of that veteran. And why all this sensibility at the pains of an individual, and all this indifference at the sufferings of thousands, if war has not a natural tendency to harden the heart and destroy the tender feelings of mankind?

It is a fact, however, so notorious that the spirit and practice of war do actually harden the heart and chill the kind and tender feelings of mankind, that I think few will be found to deny it, and none who have ever known or felt the spirit of Christ.

The spirit of war must be very unlike the spirit of the gospel, for the gospel enforces no duty the practice of which has a natural tendency to harden men's hearts, but in proportion as they are influenced by its spirit and actuated by its principles they will be humane; therefore, if war hardens men's hearts it is not a Christian duty, and of course it cannot be right for Christians to engage in it.

## **II. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IN ITS NATURE AND TENDENCY IT ABUSES GOD'S ANIMAL CREATION**

When God at first created man, he gave him authority over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the deep. After he had swept away the old ungodly world of mankind for their violence with all the animal creation, except those in the ark, he was pleased to renew to Noah the same privilege of being lord over the animal world.

It may not perhaps be improper here to digress a little and remark that this appears to have been the original bounds of man's authority, – that of having dominion only over the animal world and not over his fellow-man. It appears that God reserved to himself the government of man, whom he originally created in his own image; from which it may be inferred that man has no lawful authority for governing his fellow-man except as the special executor of divine command, and that no government can be morally right except that which acknowledges and looks up to God as the supreme head and governor.

But to return: although the animal world is put under the dominion of man for his use, yet he has no authority to exercise cruelty towards it. "For the merciful man regardeth the life of his beast." God is very merciful to his creatures; he not only hears the young ravens when they cry but he opens his hand and supplies

the wants of the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Though God has decorated the earth with beauty and richly clothed it with food for man and beast, yet where an all-devouring army passes, notwithstanding the earth before them is like the garden of Eden, it is behind them a desolate wilderness; the lowing ox and bleating sheep may cry for food, but, alas! the destroyer hath destroyed it.

The noble horse, which God has made for the use and pleasure of man, shares largely in this desolating evil. He is often taken, without his customary food, to run with an express, until, exhausted by fatigue, he falls lifeless beneath his rider. Multitudes of them are chained to the harness with scanty food, and goaded forward to drag the baggage of an army and the thundering engines of death, until their strength has failed, their breath exhausted, and the kindness they then receive is the lash of the whip or the point of a spear. In such scenes the comfort of beasts is not thought of, except by a selfish owner who fears the loss of his property.

But all this is trifling compared with what these noble animals, who tamely bow to the yoke of man, suffer in the charge of the battle; the horse rushes into the combat not knowing that torture and death are before him. His sides are often perforated with the spur of his rider, notwithstanding he exerts all his strength to rush into the heat of the battle, while the strokes of the sabers and the wounds of the bullets lacerate his body, and instead of having God's pure air to breathe to alleviate his pains, he can only snuff

up the dust of his feet and the sulphurous smoke of the cannon, emblem of the infernal abode. Thus he has no ease for his pains unless God commissions the bayonet or the bullet to take away his life.

But if such is the cruelty to beasts in prosecuting war, what is the cruelty to man, born for immortality?

No wonder that those who feel so little for their fellow-men should feel less for beasts.

If war is an inhuman and cruel employment, it must be wrong for Christians to engage in it.

### **III. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IT OPPRESSES THE POOR**

To oppress the poor is everywhere in the Scriptures considered as a great sin: “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord”; “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself and not be heard”; “What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts.”

The threatenings against those who oppress the poor, and the blessings pronounced upon those who plead their cause, are very numerous in the Scriptures. The threatenings are so tremendous and awful that all men ought to consider well before they are active in any step which has a natural tendency to oppress the

poor and needy.

That war actually does oppress the poor may be heard from ten thousand wretched tongues who have felt its woe. Very few, comparatively, who are instigators of war actually take the field of battle, and are seldom seen in the front of the fire. It is usually those who are rioting on the labors of the poor that fan up the flame of war. The great mass of soldiers are generally from the poor of a country. They must gird on the harness and for a few cents per day endure all the hardships of a camp and be led forward like sheep to the slaughter. Though multitudes are fascinated to enlist by the intoxicating cup, the glitter of arms, the vainglory of heroes, and the empty sound of patriotism, yet many more are called away contrary to their wishes by the iron hand of despotic laws. Perhaps a parent is enrolled whose daily labor was hardly sufficient to supply a scanty pittance for a numerous offspring, who are in his absence crying for bread. And why all this sorrow in this poor and needy family? Because the husband and father is gone, and probably gone forever, most likely to gratify the wishes of some ambitious men who care as little as they think of his anxious family. Perhaps an only son is taken from old, decrepit parents, the only earthly prop of their declining years; and with cold poverty and sorrow their gray hairs are brought down to the dust.

War cannot be prosecuted without enormous expenses. The money that has been expended the last twenty years in war would doubtless have been sufficient not only to have rendered

every poor person on earth comfortable – so far as money could do it – during the same period, but, if the residue had been applied to cultivate the earth, it would have literally turned the desert into a fruitful field. Only the interest of the money that has been expended in a few years by the European nations in prosecuting war would have been sufficient, under proper direction, to educate every poor child on earth in the common rudiments of learning, and to support missionaries in abundance to convey the gospel of peace to every creature. What a noble employment if those nations had exerted their powers for these objects as much as they have for injuring each other! And what a difference would have appeared in the world! Blessings would have fallen on millions ready to perish, instead of desolation, terror, and death.

The vast expenses of war must be met by corresponding taxes, whether by duties on merchandise or direct taxes on real estate; yet they fall most heavily on the poor. Whatever duty the merchant pays to the customhouse, he adds the amount to the price of his goods, so that the consumer actually pays the tax. If a tax is levied on real estate, the product of that estate is raised to meet it, and whoever consumes the product pays the tax. In times of war the prices of the necessaries of life are generally very much increased, but the prices of the labor of the poor do not usually rise in the same proportion, therefore it falls very heavily on them. When the honest laborers are suddenly called from the plow to take the sword and leave the

tilling of the ground, either its seed is but sparingly sown or its fruit but partially gathered, scarcity ensues, high prices are the consequence, and the difficulty greatly increased for the poor to obtain the necessaries of life, especially if they were dependent on the product of a scanty farm which they are now deprived of cultivating. Many a poor widow, who has been able in times of peace to support her fatherless children, has been obliged in times of war in a great measure to depend on the cold hand of charity to supply their wants.

The calamities of war necessarily fall more on the poor than on the rich, because the poor of a country are generally a large majority of its inhabitants.

These are some of the evils of war at a distance, but when it comes to their doors, if they are favored personally to escape the ferocity of the soldiers, they fly from their habitations, leaving their little all to the fire and pillage, glad to escape with their lives, though destitute and dependent; and when they cast round their eyes for relief, they only meet a fellow-sufferer, who can sympathize with them but not supply their wants. Thus does war not only oppress the poor but adds multitudes to their number who before were comfortable.

If war actually does oppress the poor, then we may infer that in its nature and tendency it is very unlike the genius of the gospel, and not right for Christians to engage in it.

## **IV. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IT SPREADS TERROR AND DISTRESS AMONG MANKIND**

In the benign reign of Messiah the earth will be filled with the abundance of peace; there will be nothing to hurt or destroy; every one will sit quietly under his own vine and fig tree, having nothing to molest or make him afraid. But in times of war, mankind are usually full of anxiety, their hearts failing them for fear, looking for those things which are coming upon our wicked world.

One of the most delightful scenes on earth is a happy family where all the members dwell together in love, being influenced by the blessed precepts of the gospel of peace. But how soon does the sound of war disturb and distress the happy circle! If it is only the distant thunder of the cannon that salutes the ear, the mother starts from her repose, and all the children gather round her with looks full of anxiety to know the cause. Few women can so command their feelings as to hide the cause; and let it be said to the honor of the female sex that they have generally tender feelings, which cannot easily be disguised at the distress of their fellow-beings. Perhaps a mother's heart is now wrung with anguish in the prospect that either the partner of her life or the sons of her care and sorrow, or both, are about to be called into the bloody field of battle. Perhaps the decrepit parent views his darling son leaving his peaceful abode to enter the

ensanguined field, never more to return. How soon are these joyful little circles turned into mourning and sorrow!

Who can describe the distress of a happy village suddenly encompassed by two contending armies – perhaps so early and suddenly that its inhabitants are aroused from their peaceful slumbers by the confused noise of the warriors more ferocious than the beasts that prowl in the forest? Were it not for the tumult of the battle, shrieks of distress from innocent women and children might be heard from almost every abode. Children run to the arms of their distracted mothers, who are as unable to find a refuge for themselves as for their offspring. If they fly to the streets they are in the midst of death: hundreds of cannon are vomiting destruction in every quarter; the hoofs of horses trampling down everything in their way; bullets, stones, bricks, and splinters flying in every direction; houses pierced with cannon shot and shells which carry desolation in their course; without, multitudes of men rushing with deadly weapons upon each other with all the rage of tigers, plunging each other into eternity, until the streets are literally drenched with the blood of men. To increase the distress, the village is taken and retaken several times at the point of the bayonet. If the inhabitants fly to their cellars to escape the fury of the storm, their buildings may soon be wrapt in flames over their heads.

And for what, it may be asked, is all this inhuman sacrifice made? Probably to gain the empty bubble called honor, – a standard of right and wrong without form or dimensions. Let no

one say that the writer's imagination is heated while it is not in the power of his feeble pen to half describe the horror and distress of the scenes which are by no means uncommon in a state of war.

If such are some of the effects of war, then it must be a very inhuman employment, and wrong for Christians to engage in it.

## **V. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IT INVOLVES MEN IN FATIGUE, FAMINE, AND ALL THE PAINS OF MUTILATED BODIES**

To describe the fatigues and hardships of a soldier's life would require the experience of a soldier, so that only some of their common sufferings can be touched upon by a person who is a stranger to the miseries of a camp.

A great majority of those who enter the ranks of an army are persons unaccustomed to great privations and severe fatigues; hence the great proportion of mortality among fresh recruits. Their habits and strength are unable to endure the hard fare, rapid and constant marches generally imposed upon them in active service.

The young soldier commonly exchanges a wholesome table, a comfortable dwelling, an easy bed, for bad food, the field for his house, the cold earth for his bed, and the heavens over him for his covering. He must stand at his post day and night, summer and winter; face the scorching sun, the chilling tempest, and be exposed to all the storms of the season, without any

comfortable repose; perhaps during most of the time with a scanty allowance of the coarsest food, and often destitute of any, except the miserable supply he may have chance to plunder, – not enough to satisfy but only to keep alive the craving demands of nature; often compelled to march and countermarch several days and nights in succession, without a moment to prepare his provisions to nourish him and glad to get a little raw to sustain his life. Frequently this hardship is endured in the cold and inclement season, while his tattered clothing is only the remains of his summer dress. Barefooted and half naked, fatigued and chilled, he becomes a prey to disease, and is often left to perish without a human being to administer to him the least comfort. If he is carried to a hospital, he is there surrounded by the pestilential breath of hundreds of his poor fellow-sufferers, where the best comforts that can be afforded are but scanty and dismal.

But all this is comparatively trifling to the sufferings of the wounded on the field of battle. There thousands of mangled bodies lie on the cold ground hours, and sometimes days, without a friendly hand to bind up a wound; not a voice is heard except the dying groans of their fellow-sufferers around them. No one can describe the horrors of the scene: here lies one with a fractured skull, there another with a severed limb, and a third with a lacerated body; some fainting with the loss of blood, others distracted, and others again crying for help.

If such are some of the faint outlines of the fatigues and sufferings of soldiers, then their occupation must be an inhuman

employment, for they are instrumental in bringing the same calamities on others which they suffer themselves; and of course it is unfriendly to the spirit of the gospel, and wrong for Christians to engage in it.

## **VI. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IT DESTROYS THE YOUTH AND CUTS OFF THE HOPE OF GRAY HAIRS**

Mankind are speedily hastening into eternity, and it might be supposed sufficiently fast without the aid of all the ingenuity and strength of man to hurry them forward; yet it is a melancholy truth that a great proportion of the wealth, talents, and labors of men are actually employed in inventing and using means for the premature destruction of their fellow-beings.

One generation passes away, and another follows in quick succession. The young are always the stay and hope of the aged; parents labor and toil for their children to supply their wants and to educate them to be happy, respectable, and useful, and then depend upon them to be their stay and comfort in their declining years. Alas, how many expectations of fond parents are blasted! Their sons are taken away from them and hurried into the field of slaughter.

In times of war the youth – the flower, strength, and beauty of the country – are called from their sober, honest, and useful employments, to the field of battle; and if they do not lose

their lives or limbs, they generally lose their habits of morality and industry. Alas! few ever return again to the bosom of their friends. Though from their mistaken and fascinating views of a soldier's life and honor they may be delighted in enlisting, and merry in their departure from their peaceful homes, yet their joy is soon turned into pain and sorrow. Unthinking youth, like the horse, rushes thoughtlessly into the battle. Repentance is then too late; to shrink back is death, and to go forward is only a faint hope of life. Here on the dreadful field are thousands and hundreds of thousands driven together to slaughter each other by a few ambitious men, perhaps none of whom are present. A large proportion are probably the youth of their country, the delight and comfort of their parents. All these opposing numbers are most likely persons who never knew or heard of each other, having no personal ill-will, most of whom would in any other circumstances not only not injure each other but be ready to aid in any kind office; yet by the act of war they are ranged against each other in all the hellish rage of revenge and slaughter.

No pen, much less that of the writer's, can describe the inhumanity and horrors of a battle. All is confusion and dismay, dust and smoke arising, horses running, trumpets blasting, cannon roaring, bullets whistling, and the shrieks of the wounded and dying vibrating from every quarter. Column after column of men charge upon each other in furious onset, with the awful crash of bayonets and sabers, with eyes flashing and visages frightfully distorted with rage, rushing upon each other with the violence

of brutish monsters; and when these are literally cut to pieces others march in quick succession, only to share the same cruel and bloody tragedy. Hundreds are parrying the blows; hundreds more are thrusting their bayonets into the bowels of their fellow-mortals, and many, while extricating them, have their own heads cleft asunder by swords and sabers; and all are hurried together before the tribunal of their Judge, with hearts full of rage and hands dyed in the blood of their brethren.

O horrid and debasing scene! my heart melts at the contemplation, and I forbear to dwell upon the inhuman employment.

## **VII. WAR IS INHUMAN, AS IT MULTIPLIES WIDOWS AND ORPHANS, AND CLOTHES THE LAND IN MOURNING**

The widow and fatherless are special objects of divine compassion, and Christianity binds men under the strongest obligation to be kind and merciful towards them, as their situation is peculiarly tender and afflicting.

“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation.” “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

To be active in any measure which has a natural tendency to wantonly multiply widows and orphans in a land is the height of

inhumanity as well as daring impiety.

I will venture to say that no one circumstance in our world has so greatly multiplied widows and fatherless children as that of war. What has humanity ever gained by war to counterbalance simply the afflictions of the widow and fatherless? I verily believe nothing comparatively. I am well aware that a very popular plea for war is to defend, as it is styled, “our firesides, our wives and children”; but this generally is only a specious address to the feelings, to rouse up a martial spirit which makes thousands of women and children wretched where one is made happy. I am sensible that those will sneer at my opinion who regard more the honor that comes from men than they do the consolation of the widow and the fatherless.

In times of war thousands of virtuous women are deprived of their husbands and ten thousands of helpless children of their fathers. The little tender children may now gather round their disconsolate mothers, anxiously inquiring about their fathers, remembering their kind visages, recollecting how they used fondly to dandle them on their knees and affectionately instruct them; but now they are torn from their embraces by the cruelty of war, and they have no fathers left them but their Father in heaven.

It is probably no exaggeration to suppose that in Europe there are now two hundred thousand widows and a million fatherless children occasioned by war. What a mass of affliction! humanity bleeds at the thought! These children must now roam about without a father to provide for, protect, or instruct them. They

now become an easy prey to all kinds of vice; many probably will be trained up for ignominious death, and most of them fit only for a soldier's life, to slaughter and to be slaughtered, unless some humane hand kindly takes them under its protection.

And here I cannot help admiring the spirit of Christianity. It is owing to the blessed spirit and temper of the gospel of peace that many of the evils of war are so much ameliorated at the present day as well as the inhuman slavery of men.

The numerous asylums that now exist for the relief of the needy, the widow, and the fatherless are some of the precious fruits of Christianity; and if this spirit were universal the bow would soon be broken to pieces, the spear cut asunder, and the chariots of war burnt with fire, and wars would cease to the ends of the earth.

And is it not the duty of all who name the name of Christ to do all in their power to counteract this destroying evil?

War not only multiplies widows and orphans but clothes the land in mourning. In times of war multitudes of people are clothed with ensigns of mourning. Here are gray-headed parents shrouded in blackness, weeping for the loss of darling sons; there are widows covered with veils mourning the loss of husbands, and refusing to be comforted; children crying because their fathers are no more. Cities and villages are covered in darkness and desolation; weeping and mourning arise from almost every abode.

And it may be asked, What inhuman hand is the cause of all

this sorrow? Perhaps some rash man, in the impetuosity of his spirit, has taken some unjust, high ground, and is too proud to retrace a step, and had rather see millions wretched than to nobly confess that he had been in the wrong.

Surely Christians cannot be active in such measures without incurring the displeasure of God, who styles himself the father of the fatherless and the judge and avenger of the widow.

Thus I have shown that war is inhuman and therefore wholly inconsistent with Christianity, by proving that it tends to destroy humane dispositions; that it hardens the hearts and blunts the tender feelings of men; that it involves the abuse of God's animal creation; that it oppresses the poor; that it spreads terror and distress among mankind; that it subjects soldiers to cruel privations and sufferings; that it destroys the youth and cuts off the hope of the aged; and that it multiplies widows and orphans and occasions mourning and sorrow.

The fact that war is inhuman is indeed one of those obvious truths which it is difficult to render more plain by argument; those who know in what war consists cannot help knowing that it is inhuman.

What Mr. Windham said with reference to the inhumanity of slavery may be said of the inhumanity of war. In one of his speeches in the House of Commons against the slave trade he stated his difficulty in arguing against such a trade to be of that kind which is felt in arguing in favor of a self-evident proposition. "If it were denied that two and two made four, it would not

be a very easy task," he said, "to find arguments to support the affirmative side of the question. Precisely similar was his embarrassment in having to prove that the slave trade was unjust and inhuman."

Whoever admits that the slave trade is inhuman must admit that war is inhuman in a greater variety of ways and on a much larger scale.

The inhumanity of the slave trade was the great and, finally, triumphant argument by which it was proved to be inconsistent with Christianity.

The advocates of slavery, like the advocates of war, resorted to the Old Testament for support; but it appeared that slavery, as it appears that war, was permitted and approved of for reasons and on principles peculiar to the ancient economy. This is apparent as well from the difference between the general design of the old and new dispensations as from the whole genius and spirit of the gospel. Hence those who opposed the slave trade argued from the general nature and spirit of Christianity as the strongest ground which could be taken. If slavery was inconsistent with this, it ought not to be tolerated; but slavery is inhuman and is therefore inconsistent with Christianity. Exactly the same is true of war, nor can anything short of an express revelation from God, commanding war or slavery, render either of them justifiable.

It deserves to be distinctly considered that the gospel contains little or nothing directly by way of precept against slavery; but slavery is inconsistent with its general requirements and

inculcations and is therefore wrong. But war, besides being inconsistent with the genius and spirit of the gospel, is prohibited by those precepts which forbid retaliation and revenge and those which require forgiveness and good will.

It is plain, then, that he who does not advocate and defend the slave trade, to be consistent, must grant that war is incompatible with Christianity, and that it is a violation of the gospel to countenance it.

# WAR IS UNWISE

That the principles and practice of war are unwise I argue:

## **I. BECAUSE, INSTEAD OF PREVENTING, THEY PROVOKE INSULT AND MISCHIEF**

The maxim, that in order to preserve peace, mankind must be prepared for war, has become so common, and sanctioned by such high authority, that few question its wisdom or policy; but if stripped of its specious garb, it may appear to proceed not from that wisdom which came down from above, which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”; and if it is not the wisdom from above, then it must be the wisdom from beneath.

Are not pride, avarice, and revenge the seeds of all kinds of carnal warfare? From these grow all the quarreling among children, the discord among families, the bickerings, law suits, and broils among neighbors, the boxing among bullies, the dueling among modern gentlemen, and wars among nations. They all originate from one and the same spirit.

Now, is the mild, meek, and peaceable man, unarmed, more liable to inspire jealousy in others that he is about to insult and abuse them than the high-toned duelist who constantly carries

with him deathly weapons? Does he, in fact, so often get into difficulty, quarreling and fighting? The respectable Society of Friends stands a living monument to answer the question.

On the principles of self-defense, as they are styled, if one man suspects an injury from another, unless he is naturally a more powerful man, he must take a cane, as the principles of self-defense require a superior power in your own hand, either by art or muscular strength. When the other learns the suspicions and sees the preparation, he in his turn must take a bludgeon to preserve the balance of power and proclaim a threatening to awe his antagonist, who must now take a sword and return a threatening in order to maintain his dignity; for it will not do for men of honor to retract, however much they may be in the wrong. The other, again, must take a deathly weapon for his defense, and nothing is now wanting but an unhappy meeting to set each other's blood a flowing.

Much in the same way do nations often get into desperate warfare. One nation is busily increasing its military strength on the plausible maxim of preserving peace and maintaining its rights. Another nation views the preparations with a jealous eye, and also goes to work on the same principle to make formidable preparations. All the nations around take the alarm, and on the same principle begin active preparations, all vying with each other to become the most formidable. If one sends an ambassador to inquire the cause of the great preparations, the answer always is, let the motive be what it may, *For their*

*own defense*. Then the other makes new exertions and begins to fortify towns on the confines of his neighbor, who must not only do the same but march a large army for the defense of his frontier; and the other must do likewise. By this time, if no old quarrel remained unsettled, perhaps one charges the other with encroachment on territory; the other denies the charge, and contends sharply for his pretended rights. Ministers may be interchanged, and while negotiations are pending a high tone must be taken by both parties, for this is an essential principle in the doctrine of self-defense; the contrary would betray weakness and fear. Newspapers must be ushered forth with flaming pieces to rouse, as it is called, the spirit of the countries, so as to impress upon the populace the idea that the approaching war is just and necessary, for all wars must be just and necessary on both sides. In the meantime envoys extraordinary may be sent to other powers by each party to enlist their aid, – most of whom are already prepared for war, – and each one selects his side according to his interests and feelings. At length the *ultimatum* is given and refused, and the dreadful conflict commences. Few wars, however, begin in this slow and progressive mode; a trifling aggression is sufficient to blow up the flame with nations already prepared.

Thus, we see, nations resemble bulldogs who happen to meet. They will first raise their hairs, show their teeth, then growl, and then seize upon each other with all their strength and fury; and bulldogs have something of the same kind of honor, for they

scorn to retreat.

Hence we see that the acknowledged principles of defensive war are the vital springs of most of the wars that agitate and desolate our world. The pretended distinction between offensive and defensive war is but a name. All parties engaged in war proclaim to the world that they only are fighting in defense of their rights, and that their enemies are the aggressors; while it may be impossible for man to decide which are most in the wrong.

The popular maxim of being prepared for war in order to be at peace may be seen to be erroneous in fact, for the history of nations abundantly shows that few nations ever made great preparations for war and remained long in peace. When nations prepare for war they actually go to war, and tell the world that their preparations were not a mere show.

Thus we may see that the principles and preparations of war actually engender war instead of promoting peace; and of course they are unwise, and, if unwise, then it is folly for Christians to engage in them.

## **II. WAR IS UNWISE, FOR INSTEAD OF DIMINISHING, IT INCREASES DIFFICULTIES**

As the principles and preparations of war have a natural tendency to generate war and are actually the cause of a great proportion of the wars which do exist, so actual hostilities have

a natural tendency to increase difficulties and to spread abroad the destroying evil.

It is almost impossible for any two nations to be long engaged in war without interfering with the rights and privileges of other nations, which generally awakes their jealousy and resentment, so that most of the surrounding nations are drawn into the destructive vortex, which is the more easily done, as war inflames the martial spirit in other nations not engaged, and rouses up the desperate passions of men. Besides, the belligerent nations are not content with suffering themselves, but use every art and persuasion to get the neighboring nations to join them; and they are generally too successful, for it seldom happens that two nations engage in war for a length of time and conclude a peace before they have involved other nations in their difficulties and distresses, and often a great proportion of the world is in arms.

Moreover, the nations who first engage in the contest always widen the breach between themselves by war.

It is much easier settling difficulties between individuals or nations before actual hostilities commence than afterwards. Mankind are not apt to be any more mild and accommodating in a state of actual warfare. Besides, new difficulties constantly arise. The passions become inflamed, and charges are often made of violating the established laws of civilized warfare, which laws, however, are generally bounded only by the strength of power. If one party makes an incursion into the other's territory and storms a fortified place and burns the town, the other party

must then make a desperate effort to retaliate the same kind of destruction, to a double degree, on the towns of their enemy. Retaliation, or “rendering evil for evil,” is not only allowed by Mahometans and pagans, but is an open and avowed principle in the doctrine of self-defense among professed Christian nations, not only is it sanctioned by the laity, but too often by the priests who minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

Both of the contending parties generally seize on each other’s possessions wherever they can get hold of them, whether on the seas or on the land. The barbarous spoliations on each other stir up the passions of the great mass of their inhabitants, until they esteem it a virtue to view each other as natural and perpetual enemies, and then their rulers can prosecute the war with what they call vigor.

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