

## Appendix 3

### The 1660 Declaration to Charles II

From *The Journal of George Fox*, John L. Nickals, ed. (London Yearly Meeting, 1975). pp. 398–403.

This declaration was given unto the King upon the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month, 1660 [January, 1661].

*A Declaration from the harmless and innocent people of God, called Quakers, against all plotters and fighters in the world:* for removing the ground of jealousy and suspicion from both magistrates and people in the kingdom, concerning wars and fightings. And also something in answer to that clause of the King's late Proclamation which mentions the Quakers, to clear them from the plot and fighting which therein is mentioned and for the clearing their innocency.

Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace and ensue it and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and welfare and doing that which tends to the peace of all. We know that wars and fightings proceed from the lusts of men, (as James iv. 1–3), out of which lusts the Lord hath redeemed us, and so out of the occasion of war. The occasion of war, and war itself (wherein envious men, who are lovers of themselves more than lovers of God, lust, kill, and desire to have men's lives or estates) ariseth from lust. All bloody principles and practices, we, as to our own particulars, do utterly deny; with all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under an pretense whatsoever And this is our testimony to the whole world.

And whereas it is objected:

“But although you now say that you cannot fight nor take up arms at all, yet if the spirit move you, then you will change your principle, and you will sell your coat buy a sword and fight for the kingdom of Christ.”

Answer:

As for this we say to you that Christ said to Peter, “Put up thy sword in his place”; though he had said before, he that had no sword might sell his coat and buy one (to the fulfilling of the law and Scripture), yet after, when he had bid him put it up, he said, “He that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword.” And further, Christ said to Peter, “Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” And this might satisfy Peter, after he had put up his sword, when he said to him he that took it, should perish by it; which satisfieth us (Luke xxii. 36; Matt. xxvi. 51–53). And in the Revelation, it's said, “He that kills with the sword, shall perish with the sword: and here is the faith and the patience of the saints” (Rev. xiii. 10). And so Christ's kingdom is not of this world, therefore do not his servants fight, as he told Pilate, the magistrate who crucified him. And did they not look upon Christ as a raiser of sedition? And did not he say, “Forgive them”? But thus it is that we are numbered amongst transgressors, and numbered amongst fighters, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

That the Spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

First:

Because the kingdom of Christ God will exalt, according to his promise, and cause it to grow and flourish in righteousness; “not by might, nor by power [of outward sword], but by my Spirit, saith the Lord” (Zech. iv. 6). So those that use any weapon to fight for Christ, or for the establishing of his kingdom or government, both the spirit, principle, and practice in that we deny.

Secondly:

And as for the kingdoms of this world, we cannot covet them, much less can we fight for them, but we do earnestly desire and wait, that by the Word of God's power, and its effectual operation in the hearts of men, the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; that he may rule and reign in men by his spirit and truth; that thereby all people, out of all different judgements and professions may be brought into love and unity with God, and one with another; and that they may all come to witness the prophet's words, who said, “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3).

So, we whom the Lord hath called into the obedience of his Truth have denied wars and fightings and cannot again anymore learn it. This is a certain testimony unto all the world of the truth of our hearts in this particular, that as God persuadeth every man's heart to believe, so they may receive it. For we have not, as some others, gone about cunningly with devised fables, nor have we ever denied in practice what we have professed in principle; but in sincerity and truth, and by the word of God, have we laboured to be made manifest unto all men, that both we and our ways might be witnessed in the hearts of all.

And whereas all manner of evil hath been falsely spoken of us, we hereby speak forth the plain truth of our hearts, to take away the occasion of that offense; that so we being innocent may not suffer for other men's offenses, nor be made a prey upon by the wills of men for that of which we were never guilty; but in the uprightness of our hearts we may, under the power ordained of God for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well, live a peaceable and godly life in all godliness and honesty. For although we have always suffered, and do now more abundantly suffer, yet we know that it's for righteousness' sake; "for our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world" (2 Cor. i. 12), which for us is a witness for the convincing of our enemies. For this we can say to all the world, we have wronged no man's person or possessions, we have used no force nor violence against any man, we have been found in no plots, nor guilty of sedition. When we have been wronged, we have not sought to revenge ourselves, we have not made resistance against authority, but wherein we could not obey for conscience' sake, we have suffered even the most of any people in the nation. We have been counted as sheep for the slaughter, persecuted and despised, beaten, stoned, wounded, stocked, whipped, imprisoned, haled out of synagogues, cast into dungeons and noisome vaults where many have died in bonds, shut up from our friends, denied needful sustenance for many days together, with other the like cruelties.

And the cause of all these sufferings is not for any evil, but for things relating to the worship of our God and in obedience to his requirings of us. For which cause we shall freely give up our bodies a sacrifice, rather than disobey the Lord. For we know, as the Lord hath kept us innocent, so he will plead our cause, when there is none in the earth to plead it. So we, in obedience unto his Truth, do not love our lives unto the death, that we may do his will, and wrong no man in our generation, but seek the good and peace of all men. And he that hath commanded us that we shall not swear at all (Matt. v. 34), hath also commanded us that we shall not kill (Matt. v. 21), so that we can neither kill men, nor swear for or against them. And this is both our principle and practice, and hath been from the beginning; so that if we suffer, as suspected to take up arms or make war against any, it is without any ground from us; for it neither is, nor ever was in our hearts, since we owned the truth of God; neither shall we ever do it, because it is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, his doctrine, and the practices of his apostles, even contrary to him, for whom we suffer all things, and endure all things.

And whereas men come against us with clubs, staves, drawn swords, pistols cocked, and do beat, cut, and abuse us, yet we never resisted them; but to them our hair, backs, and cheeks have been ready. It is not an honour to manhood nor to nobility to run upon harmless people who lift not up a hand against them, with arms and weapons.

Therefore consider these things, ye men of understanding: for plotters, raisers of insurrections, tumultuous ones, and fighters, running with swords, clubs, staves, and pistols, one against another; these, we say, these are of the world, and this hath its foundation from this unrighteous world, from the foundation of which the Lamb hath been slain, which Lamb hath redeemed us from the unrighteous world, and we are not of it, but are heirs of a world of which there is no end and of a kingdom where no corruptible thing enters. And our weapons are spiritual and not carnal, yet mighty through God to the plucking down of the strongholds of Satan, who is the author of wars, fighting, murder, and plots. And our swords are broken into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks, as prophesied of in Micah iv. Therefore we cannot learn war any more, neither rise up against nation or kingdom with outward weapons, though you have numbered us amongst the transgressors and plotters. The Lord knows our innocency herein, and will plead our cause with all people upon earth at the day of their judgment, when all men shall have a reward according to their works.

[Therefore in love we warn you for your soul's good, not to wrong the innocent, nor the babes of Christ, which he hath in his hand, which he cares for as the apple of his eye; neither seek to destroy the heritage of God, nor turn your swords backward upon such as the law was not made for, i.e., the righteous; but for sinners and transgressors, to keep them down. For those are not peacemakers, nor

lovers of enemies, neither can they overcome evil with good, who wrong them that are friends to you and all men, and wish your good, and the good of all people on the earth. If you oppress us, as they did the children of Israel in Egypt, and if you oppress us as they did when Christ was born, and as they did the Christians in the primitive times; we can say, "The Lord forgive you"; and leave the Lord to deal with you, and not revenge ourselves. If you say, as the council said to Peter and John, 'speak no more in that name'; and if you serve us, as they served the three children spoken of in Daniel, God is the same that ever he was, that lives for ever and ever, who hath the innocent in his arms.]<sup>1</sup>

O friends offend not the Lord and his little ones, neither afflict his people; but consider and be moderate, and do not run hastily into things, but mind and consider mercy, justice, and judgment; that is the way for you to prosper and get the favour of the Lord. Our meetings were stopped and broken up in the days of Oliver, in pretense of plotting against him; and in the days of the Parliament and Committee of Safety we were looked upon as plotters to bring in King Charles; and now we are called plotters against King Charles. Oh, that men should lose their reason, and go contrary to their own conscience; knowing that we have suffered all things and have been accounted plotters all along, though we have declared against them both by word of mouth and printing, and are clear from any such things. We have suffered all along because we would not take up carnal weapons to fight withal against any, and are thus made a prey upon because we are the innocent lambs of Christ and cannot avenge ourselves. These things are left on your hearts to consider; but we are out of all those things, in the patience of the saints; and we know that as Christ said, "He that takes the sword, shall perish with the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52; Rev. xiii. 10).

This is given forth from the people called Quakers to satisfy the King and his Council, and all those that have any jealousy concerning us, that all occasion of suspicion may be taken away, and our innocency cleared.

Given forth under our names, and in behalf of the whole body of the Elect People of God who are called

George Fox	Gerrard Roberts	Henry	Fell
Richard Hubberthorne	Johne Bolton	John	Hinde
John Stubbs	Leonard Fell	John	Furley Junr.
Francis Howgill	Samuel Fisher	Thomas Moore.	

*Postscript.* Though we are numbered with plotters in this late Proclamation and put in the midst of them and numbered amongst transgressors and so have been given up to all rude, merciless men, by which our meetings are broken up, in which we edified one another in our holy faith and prayed together to the Lord that lives for ever, yet he is our pleader for us in this day. The Lord saith, "They that feared his name spoke often together," as in Malachi, which were as his jewels. And for this cause and no evil-doing, are we cast into holes, dungeons, houses of correction, prisons they sparing neither old nor young, men or women, and just sold to all nations and made a prey to all nations under pretense of being plotters, so that all rude people run upon us to take possession. For which we say, "The Lord forgive them that have thus done to us," who doth and will enable us to suffer. And never shall we lift up a hand against any that doth thus use us, but that the Lord may have mercy upon them, that they may consider what they have done. For how is it possible for them to requite us for the wrong they have done to us, who to all nations have sounded us abroad as plotters? We who were never found plotters against any power or man upon the earth since we knew the life and power of Jesus Christ manifested in us, who hath redeemed us from the world, and all works of darkness, and plotters that be in it, by which we know our election, before the world began. So we say, the Lord have mercy upon our enemies and forgive them, for that they have done unto us. Oh, do as you would be done by. And do unto all men as you would have them do unto you, for this is but the law and the prophets.

And all plots, insurrections, and riotous meetings we do deny, knowing them to be of the devil, the murderer, which we in Christ, who was before they were, triumph over. And all wars and fightings with carnal weapons we do deny, who have the sword of the spirit; and all that wrong us we leave them to the Lord. And this is to clear our innocency from that aspersion cast upon us, that we are plotters.

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<sup>1</sup> Inserted from the 2 Volume 8th and Bicentenary Edition of *Journal of George Fox*, London: Friends' Tract Association, 1891, <http://www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/qwhp/dec1660.htm>.

