

## Context to Friends 1660 commitment to peace principles, and Fruits

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### TO KING CHARLES 2ND [Charles Stuart]

“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 the welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. **All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world.**

**That 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 do 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.....”**

### It was not new among Friends

*William Drewsbury wrote that in 1642 his “mind was turned within by the power of the Lord, to wait in his counsel, the light in my conscience, to hear what the Lord would say, And the word of the Lord came to me, and said, “Put up your sword into its scabbard; if my kingdom were of this world then would my children fight: know thou not if I needed, I could have 12 legions of angels from my Father? Which word enlightened my heart, and discovered the mystery of iniquity; it showed the kingdom of Christ to be within, and that its enemies being within and spiritual, my weapons against them should also be spiritual, -- the power of God.”*

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In Ireland in the year 1795 Leinster Quarterly Meeting and afterwards Ireland Yearly Meeting, were engaged in a concern that all Friends who had guns in their houses, or any other weapons, for domestic purposes, might have them destroyed, in order to prevent their being made use of to the destruction or injury of our fellow-creatures. It was, at that time, a frequent practice for parties of men to assail houses in search of arms.

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“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 the welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. **All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world.**

**That 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 do 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.....”**

### It was not new among Friends

*William Drewsbury wrote that in 1642 his “mind was turned within by the power of the Lord, to wait in his counsel, the light in my conscience, to hear what the Lord would say, And the word of the Lord came to me, and said, “Put up your sword into its scabbard; if my kingdom were of this world then would my children fight: know thou not if I needed, I could have 12 legions of angels from my Father? Which word enlightened my heart, and discovered the mystery of iniquity; it showed the kingdom of Christ to be within, and that its enemies being within and spiritual, my weapons against them should also be spiritual, -- the power of God.”*

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*took away the occasion of all wars.” Fox was put in a lousy stinking place in Derby Prison without a bed among 30 felons where he was kept for nearly six months for his refusal to join the army. People said he would never come out. <sup>2</sup>*

*This letter to the King was too late to provide Friends protection at that time, particularly because of Friends refusal to swear oath of allegiance to King*

In Ireland in the year 1795 Leinster Quarterly Meeting and afterwards Ireland Yearly Meeting, were engaged in a concern that all Friends who had guns in their houses, or any other weapons, for domestic purposes, might have them destroyed, in order to prevent their being made use of to the destruction or injury of our fellow-creatures. It was, at that time, a frequent practice for parties of men to assail houses in search of arms.

**Wexford Monthly Meeting appointed a number of its members as a Committee to go from family to family amongst Friends, to endeavour to prevail on them to comply with the concern of the Society. Joseph Haughton of Ferns was one of this Committee. He felt his mind nearly interested, but saw the necessity of first cleansing his own hands, so he took a fowling piece which he had in his possession and broke it in the street<sup>3</sup> opposite his own house, which was a matter of wonder amongst his neighbours. Joseph Haughton recorded that It was a time of serious thoughtfulness, and in many families this committee had little more to do than to communicate their business, for the concern**

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<sup>2</sup> George Fox was not alone in what he was saying. In Europe there were Mennonite Anabaptists who for a 100 years had been choosing to forgive and refusing to

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A short time after this when the Government ordered all arms to be given up to the magistrates, it was a comfortable reflection and circumstance that in a general way Friends were found clear of having any such things in their possession. Joseph Haughton wrote **Some of the neighbouring magistrates with the clergyman came to my house and expostulated with my wife (I being from home) on the supposed impropriety of having destroyed my gun instead of delivering it up to the Royalists for the purpose of defending the Royalists against the fermenters and plotters of rebellion, and for the preservation of myself and family ; to which the clergyman made this voluntary reply, that he believed I put my trust in a higher Power.**

Joseph Haughton's account of that time records how Friends were spared because of their faith. Friends in Ireland still have a peace testimony.

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#### LARGER CONTEXT<sup>4</sup>

To put this in larger context: For 300 years from Jesus till Constantine's vision of putting a cross on his military banner, most followers of Jesus Christ had refused to fight saying, "I am a Christian and cannot fight". Some years after Constantine, those choosing the Cannon of Scripture left out the following words of Clement, disciple of Peter and afterwards Bishop of Rome. "For it is not an ordinary harm that we do ourselves, but rather great danger that we shall run, if we shall rashly give up ourselves to the wills of men who promote strife and seditions, to turn us aside from what is fitting. But let us be kind to one another, according to the compassion and sweetness of him who made us. For it is written, 'the merciful shall inherit the earth and they that are without evil shall be left upon it: but the transgressor shall perish from the face of it'. Clement 7:8-1<sup>5</sup>"

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## Context to Friends 1660 commitment to peace principles, and Fruits

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