# "BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS": RELIGIOUS PACIFISM AND THE CRIMEAN WAR 1854-1856

by

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the views and achievements of the British religious pacifists agitating for peace prior to and during the Crimean War, 1854-1856. Through a careful analysis of both primary and secondary documents, this study focuses on a brief overview of the state and objectives of nineteenth century British religious pacifism at the time of the Crimean War, with a particular emphasis on the Quaker-inspired and -dominated London Peace Society. Further, the attitudes and actions of the religious pacifists prior to and during the Crimean War are juxtaposed against those in the Protestant religious community who supported the war. Finally, the importance of the British religious pacifists is assessed both in terms of their immediate impact and their effect on the long-term direction of the peace movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The argument forwarded in this paper is that the religious pacifists, who condemned war as incompatible with the teachings of Christ, not only persevered in the face of passionate and hostile pro-war public opinion, but also managed to survive the defection of their political allies, and at the close of the war to emerge with several components of their mandate fulfilled.

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On March 28, 1854 Queen Victoria declared that:

It is with deep regret that Her Majesty announces the failure of her anxious and protracted endeavours to preserve for her people and for Europe the blessings of peace... Her Majesty is compelled by a sense of what is due to the honour of her crown, to the interests of her people, and to the independence of the States of Europe, to come forward in defence of an ally whose territory is invaded, and whose dignity and independence are assailed... Her Majesty humbly trusts that her efforts may be successful, and that by the blessing of Providence peace may be reestablished on safe and stable foundations.<sup>1</sup>

The solemn tone of the Queen's declaration of war against Russia reflected the significance of the Crimean War for Britain. The war not only shattered forty years of peace carefully preserved by the "Concert of Europe" established after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, but it was also the only continental war in which Britain was to be involved from Waterloo to World War One. Geographically isolated and more progressive in her institutions than the continental powers, Britain had remained aloof from the turmoil which had plagued Europe in the decades following the fall of Napoleon. Britain had spent four decades engaged in the pursuit of political and social reforms and commercial prosperity. Politically, the Reform Bill had been passed, Parliament had been opened to members of all Christian denominations, and the Corn Laws had been repealed. Socially, the humanitarian ideals of the Enlightenment and the Christian ideals of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival inspired the creation of organizations supporting and agitating for temperance, penal reform, the abolition of slavery, labour laws, franchise extension, and peace. The Industrial Revolution produced profound technological innovations in transportation, communication and machinery, all of which left Britain, by midcentury, enjoying an unrivalled level of material prosperity. In 1851 Britain invited the world to celebrate her success at the Great Exhibition in London's

### Crystal Palace.

Yet, despite this prosperity, undoubtedly fostered and enhanced by a prolonged period of peace, Britain would be at war less than three years after what Queen Victoria labelled "this peace festival, which unites the industry of all nations of the earth." More surprising than British participation in a continental conflict was the almost unanimous and vocal support for involvement in the Crimean War.

Britons of every political viewpoint rallied behind the Aberdeen coalition's decision to enter the war, albeit for different reasons; and the secular press, uncensored, mobile, sensationalist and vociferously Russophobic, inflamed public opinion to the point where Prime Minister Aberdeen virtually accused the press of forcing his fundamentally pacific cabinet into the war. He remarked: "[a]n English Minister must please the newspapers and the newspapers are always bawling for interference. They are bullies and they make the Government a bully." Even Protestant religious opinion, both Established and Dissenting, expressed almost exclusive support for the war.

There was, however, one segment of the British populace which did not celebrate Britain's entry into the Crimean War. To those who had laboured for decades furthering the cause of peace, the Crimean War was a disaster. Although anachronistic, for purposes of clarification, those individuals and groups which devoted their energies to working for peace will be referred to as pacifists. Under this general heading, two distinct types of pacifists emerge in mid-Victorian Britain - religious and political pacifists. The religious pacifists who reacted against the Crimean War did so as Christian non-resistants. They believed that war was incompatible with the teachings of Christianity and was therefore insupportable. The political or conditional pacifists, conversely,

acknowledged that war served a purpose, the resolution of disputes; yet they agitated for governmental support of alternatives to war as a means of conflict resolution. Many political or conditional pacifists accepted defensive wars yet advocated the pursuit of peaceful policies. In short, the difference between religious and political pacifists was that the former adhered to the "principle of peace" and the latter a "policy of peace". It appears that for the religious pacifists the principle and the policy of peace were not mutually exclusive. As will be demonstrated, the religious pacifists realized that their views on war were not universally supported. They therefore accepted that for lasting peace to be achieved a pacific governmental policy which included an alternative to war had to be secured.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the views and achievements of these religious pacifists who not only persevered in the face of passionate and hostile pro-war public opinion, but also managed to survive the defection of their political allies, and at the close of the war to emerge with several components of their mandate fulfilled. This study therefore entails a brief overview of the state and objectives of nineteenth-century British religious pacifism at the time of the Crimean War, with an emphasis on the Quaker-inspired and -dominated London Peace Society. Further, the actions of the religious pacifists prior to and during the Crimean War will be juxtaposed against those in the Protestant religious community who supported the war. Finally, the importance of the British religious pacifists will be assessed both in their immediate impact and in their effect on the long-term direction of the peace movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

This study will be confined to Protestant religious pacifists. Roman Catholics in Britain did not participate either in the organized peace movement

in the nineteenth century, nor do there appear to be individual Catholics who spoke out against British participation in the Crimea. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed a retreat into quietism by the Catholic Church in Britain. In the wake of The Catholic Relief Act of 1829, which broadened the civil and legal rights of British Catholics, there was a resurgence of anti-Catholic sentiment in Britain. The Maynooth Act of 1845, the Tractarian or Oxford movement, mass Irish immigration, the 1850 "Papal Aggression", and the French invasion scare following Louis-Napoleon's coup d'etat in 1852 heightened tensions and mobilized public opinion against the Catholics in Britain.<sup>5</sup> Anti-Catholic pamphlets, articles, and public lectures appeared throughout the country as did more violent manifestations of anti-Catholic sentiment such as the 1852 "Stockport Riots".6 This anti-Catholicism was to remain constant in Britain throughout the nineteenth century and helps to explain the Catholic Church's reluctance to articulate any unpopular views on the Crimean War. As historian Peter Brock asserts, Roman Catholic support of pacifism was not expressed until the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

Protestant denominations were not heterogeneous in their position on the legality of war. The Church of England, similar to the Constantinian Catholic Church, exchanged state maintenance of its privileged position as the established church for an agreement to subordinate itself to the reigning monarch.<sup>8</sup> This meant that the Church of England recognized the ecclesiastical as well as the temporal supremacy of the sovereign and in return received state protection and suffered state interference. The supportive role the Church of England played in state affairs was reflected in her position on war. Here the laws of the state were allowed to supersede the teachings of Christ. The Thirty-Seventh Article of Religion in the English Prayer Book of 1562 reads: "It is lawful

for Christian men, at the command of the Magistrates, to wear weapons and serve in wars." The Anglican Church endorsed the political necessity of the just war theory and in her stance on war placed the burden of determining the justice of the war on secular authorities.

Dissenting churches, the non-Anglican Protestant denominations, accepted, in varying degrees, the just war theory regarding a Christian's moral duty to serve in wars. Very few sects subscribed to the doctrine of absolute pacifism. One notable example was the Society of Friends. The Friends' peace testimony first appeared in 1742 as part of the eighth of eleven Queries, or articles of belief, circulated by their governing body Yearly Meeting for Sufferings. It was not until 1770, that pacifism received its own Query. The Ninth Men's Query reads: "Are Friends faithful in our testimony against the bearing of arms, and in being in any manner concerned with the militia, in privateers, or armed vessels, or dealing in prize goods?"<sup>10</sup> The Friends' peace testimony was scripturally-based, insisted on the illicitness of all war, and found the bearing of arms for any reason unconscionable. The Quakers remained faithful to their testimony even in the face of imprisonment and seizure of property. It is not surprising that when pacifism emerged as a component of the social and political agenda in Britain following the Napoleonic Wars it attracted the attention of socially-minded members of the Society of Friends.

The Quakers had a natural affinity for pacifism; however, their involvement in the organized peace movement was rather uncharacteristic. The Friends were an inward looking society, and their peace witness tended to be private and personal. For the Quakers, the eighteenth century was typified by a period of quietism and dissociation from the world. The evangelical movement

of the early nineteenth century led to a more visible and active presence for almost all Dissenting sects, and resulted in a more public witness of the Quaker faith. One manifestation of this more overt witness was the Quakers' involvement in the organized peace movement. The Friends were not only prepared to publicize their peace witness but they also demonstrated an atypical willingness to collaborate with non-Quaker Christians in the crusade against war. The Society for the Promotion of Universal and Permanent Peace, or the London Peace Society, was established in June of 1816 on the initiative of two members of the Society of Friends. Although of Quaker origin, the Peace Society was never exclusively a Quaker body. The first meeting attracted only ten people; however, amongst them were Anglicans and Non-conformists as well as Friends. 14

The creation of the London Peace Society was significant for two reasons. Firstly, it provided a channel through which those Quakers who felt a strong personal commitment to pacifism could actively work for peace. Secondly, the Peace Society furnished an outlet for other Christian pacifists whose churches did not officially subscribe to pacifism. The Peace Society was established on an absolutist stand, which stated that "all war, whether offensive or defensive, is upon Christian principles utterly indefensible." The executive positions were occupied exclusively by unconditional pacifists, although membership was extended to anyone interested in furthering the cause of peace. The only requirement for membership was that all members had to be practising Christians. 16

The history and activities of the London Peace Society prior to the Crimean War can be divided into two distinct periods. The first twenty-five years of its existence was characterized by the Peace Society's adherence to its original

mandate: "to effect a change in public opinion on the subject of war, and to persuade men to examine it in light of the Gospel..."<sup>17</sup> The Peace Society was essentially a moral tract society which confined itself to educating the public through the circulation of anti-war literature. The Peace Society also recognized the role of the press in influencing and educating public opinion. Subscribing to the philosophy that it "require[d] only the aid of its natural ally and powerful auxiliary, the Press, to evince its pretensions and ensure its success", the Peace Society began publishing a monthly journal the Herald of Peace in 1819.<sup>18</sup> Both the tracts and the Herald achieved a wide circulation, the latter reaching thirty-two thousand copies in its first year alone.<sup>19</sup> Although its principles were commendable and its objectives laudable, the Peace Society did not forward any realistic alternatives to war. Without a concrete programme for achieving lasting peace, the Peace Society attracted few converts and was largely ignored by the larger British public and political elites.<sup>20</sup>

The second phase of the Peace Society's history was marked by a broadening of its mandate. The leaders had become aware of the inadequacy of an appeal for peace on Christian grounds alone and thus slowly began to advocate political alternatives to war, such as arbitration, disarmament, an international authority to mediate disputes, and the codification of international law.<sup>21</sup> By the 1840s, the Peace Society had transformed itself "from a body, the primary purpose of which was to disseminate Christian pacifist sentiment as broadly as possible, to an organization which strove to implement clearly defined political objectives."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the Peace Society succeeded in attracting a broader base of support in the form of social and political reformers, both inside and outside Parliament, who found the Peace Society's enlarged agenda compatible with their own political programs.

The component of the Christian pacifists' agenda which attracted the support of political reformers was arbitration. The idea of arbitration was American in origin and had been imported to the London Peace Society by the British Quaker and active pacifist, Joseph Sturge. The principle of arbitration was adopted by the Peace Society in 1843 and served to attract a politically-minded group of allies who sought peace for economic reasons, namely the free traders.<sup>23</sup> The political or utilitarian pacifists opposed war as a waste of human and economic resources, and believed that a policy of non-intervention was the most productive one for Britain to pursue. These were not men who supported unconditional pacifism. Unlike the religious pacifists, they acknowledged that war did have a function to perform, that international disputes had to be resolved, and thus their objective was to find a peaceful solution to conflict, namely arbitration.<sup>24</sup>

The alliance of the religious and political pacifists was cemented in the years following the repeal of the Corn Law in 1846, when men such as Richard Cobden and John Bright began actively agitating for arbitration and a policy of non-intervention in Parliament. The most significant attempt at achieving these ends came in 1849 when Cobden tabled a bill in support of arbitration in the House of Commons. In his speech he acknowledged the two separate, but united, strains within the movement agitating for arbitration.

In the first place, I represent on this occasion, and for this specific motion alone, that influential body of Christians who repudiate war in any case whether offensive or defensive; I also represent that numerous portion of...this country...who have an abhorrence of war...and who desire that we should take some new precautions, and, if possible obtain some guarantees, against the recurrence of war in future. Those two classes have found in the motion which I am about to submit a common ground...It is not necessary that anyone in this House, or out of it, who accedes to this

motion, should be of the opinion that we are not justified, under any circumstances, in resorting to war even in self-defence. It is only necessary that you should be agreed that war is a great calamity, which it is desirable that we should avoid if possible...<sup>25</sup>

Cobden's motion to refer disputes to neutral arbitrators was defeated in the House by 176 votes to 79. However, the occasion is a significant event in the evolution of the peace movement as it marked the first time that the pacifists' platform had been raised in Parliament. Cobden's support served to remove the taint of religious fanaticism from the Peace Society and to attract respectable conditional pacifists to the cause.

Outside Parliament the Peace Society inaugurated a series of international peace congresses, beginning in 1848 in Brussels and culminating in the fourth congress during the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. The first congress was sparsely attended, and the proceeding largely religious in nature. Each session opened with a prayer and resolutions were passed condemning both defensive and offensive war. More practical resolutions, including the adoption of arbitration, were passed as well.<sup>26</sup> The final congress in London provides an indication of the extent to which the profile of the supporters of peace and their mandate had changed following the advent of political pacifists to the cause. Over four thousand people attended the meetings at Exeter Hall in July of 1851,<sup>27</sup> over ten times the number at Brussels in 1848. The delegates were overwhelmingly middle-class professionals who held important political and social positions in their communities, and included twenty-eight Members of Parliament.<sup>28</sup> The agenda was more political than religious and for the first time in the history of the peace movement, their congresses and their platform received voluminous press coverage in Britain and in Europe.<sup>29</sup> It would

appear that at the apex of the peace movement's success the absolute religious pacifists were in the minority in the movement they had created. However, in exchange for this sacrifice, by broadening their mandate and including the political pacifists in their cause, the religious pacifists managed to receive a political hearing and press attention without compromising their principle of condemning all war.

In 1851, and indeed even as late as 1853, it was socially meritorious to be a pacifist in Britain. However, as will be demonstrated, once war appeared unavoidable in late 1853 and the tide of opinion turned unconditionally in favour of war, it became socially and politically dangerous to support peace, and the vast majority of the political or conditional pacifists either defected from or ceased to support the peace movement. It was left to the absolute pacifists who were committed to the tenets of peace on religious grounds both inside and outside the Peace Society to ensure that the war against war continued and that the pacifists' mandate was fulfilled.

The historian A.J.P. Taylor called the Crimean War "the war that would not boil." Originally a Franco-Russian quarrel over religious rights to the Holy Places, the dispute had, by 1853, evolved into an European objection to Russian interference in the domestic policy of Turkey. Almost a full year elapsed between the cessation of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations in May 1853, and Britain's official entry into the war in the spring of 1854. During this period of prolonged diplomatic negotiations to try to avert open hostilities, British public opinion became progressively more anti-Russian and supportive of British involvement in the Crimea. Russophobia had been endemic in Britain since the 1820s and was revived in the aftermath of the "Year of Revolutions" during which Russian armies had helped to defeat revolutions in the Hapsburg Empire.

The London visit of Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth, who had not only witnessed the Russian atrocities first-hand but who had also been sheltered by the Turks from Russian persecution after the revolution, made the perceived contrasts between "reactionary" Russia and "progressive" Turkey even more apparent. Russian Foreign Minister Nesselrode's "Violent Interpretation" of the Vienna Note, the European powers' final attempt at a diplomatic solution to the conflict, further heightened British suspicion and antipathy towards Russia. The one event which most affected public opinion before Britain's official entry into the war and made British involvement inevitable was the "Sinope Massacre" in November 1853.

The battle at Sinope saw the Russian fleet decimate a vastly inferior Turkish squadron. Because the two nations had been at war since October, this battle and its outcome came as no surprise to the British government. However, when the press published the details of the "Sinope Massacre" on 12 December 1853, British opinion, already militant, became aroused to the point of hysteria. The "Sinope Massacre" not only reinforced the need for British involvement on behalf of Turkey in the face of hostile Russian aggression, but also added a dimension of national humiliation to the conflict. A policy of peace had been acceptable, to those who held out for it in the autumn of 1853, only as long as it seemed consistent with honour. However, as the "Sinope Massacre" had occurred virtually in sight of the British fleet stationed in the Black Sea, public opinion now felt that British honour had been compromised. Historian Kingsley Martin offers a description of British public opinion in the wake of the battle at Sinope:

The Tsar, already the incarnate soul of evil, had once more put forth his hand to torture and destroy: the Sultan, victorious here though he might

be, was hard pressed in the fight with darkness. England, pledged to his assistance had stood idly by and watched the massacre of his sailors. Our national honour was trailed in the dust and our Ministers proved to be treacherous agents of the Tsar.<sup>32</sup>

After Sinope, Russophobia in Britain had escalated to the degree that Prince Albert had been accused of Russo-Austrian complicity, members of the Cabinet were suspect, and negotiations were interpreted as a means by which Russia was stalling to gain a better position in the Principalities.<sup>33</sup> The press portrayed Turkey as the valiant underdog, the Czar as the malevolent bully, Napoleon III as Britain's faithful friend and ally, and voiced the opinion that the British humiliation at Sinope could only be remedied through war. In this atmosphere even the most committed conditional pacifists found it impossible to continue to support peace, and for the most part either joined their voices to the clamour for war or retreated into silence. Virtually all of the twenty-eight supporters of peace in parliament abandoned the cause in the months preceding British involvement in the war. When John Bright, a Quaker parliamentarian, rose in the House to condemn the declaration of war he found many of his former allies in the cause of peace either unwilling to support him or speaking out in favour of British involvement in the Crimea.<sup>34</sup> Thus, if in March 1854, Britain "drifted" into war as Foreign Minister Lord Clarendon alleged, she did so propelled on a wave of virtually united public opinion.

Throughout the period of negotiations and during the war itself, religious opinion, either in print or from the pulpit, joined the secular press in supporting British participation in the Crimea. Upper- and middle-class Victorian society was a pervasively religious. During the nineteenth century clerical prestige and, according to the census of 1851, upper- and middle-class church attendance

reached its zenith.<sup>35</sup> The census report concluded:

The middle classes have augmented rather than diminished that devotional sentiment and strictness of attention to religious services by which, for several centuries, they have so eminently been distinguished. With the upper classes, too, the subject of religion has obtained of late a marked degree of notice, and regular church-attendance is now ranked among the recognized proprieties of life.<sup>36</sup>

This religiosity was the legacy of two opposite but equally influential religious movements of the eighteenth century: the atheism of the French Revolution and the evangelical revival.

The moral, social, and political chaos which followed the French Revolution left some segments of the British population equating atheism with moral and social degeneration, and believing that the absence of faith led to misery and misfortune.<sup>37</sup> Evangelism, with its emphasis on salvation through conversion, provided a means by which unbelievers could be saved. Evangelicals rejected predestination and social determinism, believing instead that salvation began with an acceptance of personal sin and that atonement was the only means to salvation. They believed that the sinner was responsible for his or her eternal destiny and that he or she made the conscious choice whether to be saved.<sup>38</sup> Conversion also had social implications. Individual conversion was believed to be the cornerstone of social regeneration, and the evangelical revival was in part responsible for many of the nineteenth-century movements for social amelioration including the peace movement.

This emphasis on the awareness of sin and atonement, the acceptance of personal responsibility, the individual's ability to control his or her fate, and to improve his or her status in the eyes of God transcended the domain of Church and Chapel "and shaped that code of behaviour...which we still call Victorianism." A moral code based upon the evangelical creed proved to be compatible with the middle class ethos of hard work, self-improvement and self-determination. Middle-class Victorians accepted that their piety, sobriety, propriety and diligence had elicited the blessings of the Divine. Church-going Britons ascribed national greatness to the providence of God, and Britain's national confidence and optimism was based on a sense of being a divinely favoured nation, an "Elect People." Britain's entire social system, firmly anchored in Christian truth, rested "not only on divine sanction but on the particular operations of Providence." 41

As a result of the evangelical revival and the moral code it inspired, the churches became more vital and assertive. Missionary activities increased both at home and abroad, voluntary societies and agencies such as the YMCA were created, and church building accelerated to accommodate both Britain's rapid population growth and new converts. The Anglican Church alone built over five thousand new churches during the Victorian period.<sup>42</sup>

At the outbreak of the Crimean War, Christianity dictated social mores, the churches provided a constant source of information and admonition, and the clergy appeared to exercise a considerable influence over the consciences, attitudes, and opinions of Britain's educated populace. By the 1850s, each Protestant denomination ran a journal or newspaper responsible for expressing its attitudes and opinions, and by the time of the Crimean War circulations of religious weeklies rivalled those of their secular counterparts.<sup>43</sup> Sermons were also an effective means of articulating views on both religious and temporal events. Popular sermons were often published and the "Penny Pulpit", inexpensive volumes of recent sermons, enjoyed great popularity in mid-

### Victorian Britain.44

The opinions that the British public was receiving from the pulpit and the religious press were generally supportive of the war, and various denominations and religious leaders reconciled the tensions between war and the teachings of Christ by offering different views of the spiritual significance of the Crimean War. The first view advanced was the belief that the Crimean War was a providential mission, a duty to which God had called England. The war was depicted as a war of Christian men, not because it was a religious crusade but because it fulfilled the requirements of what constituted a just war. The second view forwarded was one which portrayed the war as a divine reprimand for the nation's sins. <sup>45</sup> The representation of the war as either a divine mandate or a divine chastisement was consistent with the mid-nineteenth century belief in the active providence of God and both views accommodated both evangelical and non-evangelical segments of the Protestant religious communities in Britain.

The just war theory as accepted by Protestant religious leaders was a modification of the original Catholic theory based on the principles of St. Augustine. The theory, integrated into a nineteenth-century Protestant theological framework, consisted of an adherence to two principles. Firstly, the war had to be fought only as a last resort, after all efforts at peaceful resolution had failed, and secondly, the war had to be fought in defence of the moral order. The first stipulation was easily satisfied by the long period of negotiations which preceded the hostilities. The second requirement proved more difficult to fulfil considering that Britain was fighting in defence of an Islamic and in alliance with a Roman Catholic power. To remedy this complicated situation the clergy defined the issues behind the war in secular as opposed to religious terms. The moral imperative behind the war was stated as

the maintenance of international law and the balance of power.<sup>47</sup> The Anglican church, with its symbiotic relationship to the state proved willing to support and preach a political definition of the war. Charles Kingsley, a minister, novelist, and chaplain to the Queen in the 1860s, was a typical example of how Anglicans were able to reconcile themselves to the just war theory. In his pamphlet "Brave Words to Brave Soldiers and Sailors," published anonymously in 1855, he explained to the members of the British forces that their role in the war was one of "fighting for the freedom and law of all Europe." <sup>48</sup>

The issue of Britain's seemingly incompatible military alliance was also addressed by prominent Anglicans. Lord Shaftesbury, a influential evangelical peer, denounced the formation of alliances based on religious affiliation in a speech in March 1854. Alternatively he favoured alliances based on "maintaining the cause of order", even if it meant Britain siding with a "heathen" power against a Christian aggressor. 49 Evangelicals praised the Turkish government's toleration of Christianity, specifically of Protestantism, which included the construction of a Protestant church in Jerusalem in the 1840s. 50 Russia, conversely, was condemned for the suppression of all forms of Christianity except Orthodoxy, and for her refusal to allow Protestant missionaries or the presence of the Bible in the vernacular. 51 To many evangelicals, the Crimean War was not being fought in support of Islam but of Christianity.

More orthodox High Churchmen also attempted to justify Britain's support of Muslim Turkey against Christian Russia. The Bishop of London, C.J. Blomfield, outlined the benefits to Christianity that would be realized by siding with Turkey against Russia. Blomfield believed that:

the progress of Christianity would be most surely, though more silently, advanced by leaving the Mahomedan empire to be gradually enlightened and civilized...by free foreign intercourse with Christian nations, especially with those who are united for its security...The followers of Islamism, it might be hoped, would not long resist the progress of the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>

Within some millenarian sects the belief surfaced that Turkey was to be the last great convert to Christianity before the Second Coming of Christ. These evangelicals believed that England had replaced Israel as God's chosen people. This belief was consistent with the mid-nineteenth century conviction that Britain, with her material prosperity, and political and social freedoms, was uniquely blessed by God and destined to lead the world. Many evangelicals were convinced that the Crimean War was England's divinely ordained national mission. They believed that England, as the ally and protector of the Turk, was being offered not only the opportunity of spreading Protestantism and the Scriptures in the East, but also the ability to be, as one vicar believed, "a great instrument for preparing the world" for the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the combination of the belief in Britain as a chosen nation acting in concert with a country whose toleration was lauded in religious circles, and in support of a moral order which was being challenged by an evil aggressor, was responsible for the acceptance of the Crimean War as a just and necessary war.

The second view through which the members of religious communities justified British involvement in the Crimean War was that the war was a divine judgement for national sin which could only be remedied by humiliation, repentance and prayer.<sup>54</sup> This interpretation was popular particularly with Dissenting denominations who subscribed to a Calvinist theology such as Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians.<sup>55</sup> The Anglican Church, however,

also accepted this view and it was preached by the Bishop of Lichfield, John Lonsdale, in the Chapel Royal of St. James, in April, 1854. Lonsdale accepted the justice and necessity of the war, but he also cast blame on the nation for this obvious visitation of the wrath of God. Listing the sins of drunkenness, covetousness and indifference to religion, the bishop admonished his congregation that "it was from individual sin that the aggregate amount of national guilt was formed." Reminding his congregation that God was "the only Giver of Victory," he beseeched them to repent "each of us, collectively and individually, in the way of devout reverence for His name, and of faithful obedience to His laws..." 56

That both the Anglican and Dissenting churches promoted an active and retributive Providence, the efficacy of prayer, and of sin as a crime complete with penalties from God in this life offers insight into the pervasive nature of these beliefs in mid-Victorian consciousness.<sup>57</sup> Even those religious groups who supported the just war theory and the idea of war as a divine duty, accepted the events of the war, particularly the military defeats and disasters, as divine judgement on national sin, although they did not believe the war itself to have been the result of such a judgement.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps the most blatant and officially sanctioned manifestation of the extent to which this theory was accepted was the proclamation of "A Day of Solemn Fast, Humiliation, and Prayer" at the outbreak of the war, a practice established by Henry VIII upon the commencement of hostilities against France in 1544. Queen Victoria objected to the Day on the grounds that it was the ambition of the Czar and not British sins which had led to war. The Queen was, however, forced to acquiesce to public pressure and Prime Minister Aberdeen's insistence on historical precedent. <sup>59</sup> The Queen appeared alone in her objection

as the Fast Day was a phenomenal success. One witness reported that "the streets were quieter than on a Sunday" and the churches were filled to capacity. Only the Roman Catholics chose not to observe the Day.60

In the aftermath of the Sinope disaster as preparations for war accelerated both religious and secular opinion inside and outside Parliament sanctioned active British involvement in the Crimea. The crusade for peace had been debilitated by the defection of the conditional pacifists and for the most part British pacifists had been condemned as being anti-British, and most appeared willing to concede defeat. However, there was a minority of religious pacifists who continued to pursue actively and vocally the cause of peace before and during the Crimean War. The Protestant religious pacifists who spoke out against the Crimean War can be categorized into three groups: the Quakers, who were the only religious group to undertake concerted action before the war and to articulate anti-war sentiments during the war; those individuals who were members of Protestant denominations which supported the war but who refused for religious reasons, either publicly or anonymously, to support the war; and finally the members of the London Peace Society who remained faithful to pacifism and spent the war labouring for the cause of peace through the channels of the Peace Society.

In late 1853 with Britain not yet involved in the Russo-Turkish war, the Society of Friends proved unwilling to accept the inevitability of war. They acknowledged the impossibility of swaying the British populace from its prowar stance and therefore placed their hopes for peace in the Czar of Russia. Believing that they had a better chance of changing the mind of the autocrat who dictated the destiny of his country than the millions which controlled that of Britain, the Quakers sent a deputation to meet with Czar Nicholas in early 1854.

The idea for the mission originated with Joseph Sturge, an active member of the Peace Society. Sturge brought his idea before the Meeting for Sufferings, the executive committee which represented the Society in the intervals between the Yearly Meetings, in January 1854.<sup>61</sup> Sturge's concern was passed through the official channels of the Society, recognized by the meeting on 6 January, and a committee was created to draft an address to the Czar. Ten days later Sturge's travelling companions were appointed, Henry Pease a merchant from Darlington and Robert Charleton a land surveyor from Bristol, and the draft of the address was accepted. The minutes of the Meeting outlined the agenda of the deputation and accorded it official sanction.<sup>62</sup> It should be noted that the Quakers did not have any naive expectations concerning the potential success of their deputation. They did, however, believe that it was their duty as practising Christians to undertake any endeavour which offered even the most remote chance for peace.<sup>63</sup>

The three Quakers left England on 20 January, arrived in Russia on 2 February, and were received by the Czar in the Winter palace on 10 February.<sup>64</sup> The Friends were warmly received by the Czar who agreed with the Quakers' sentiments on war, but ultimately he replied to their address as a monarch: "I have a duty to perform as a Sovereign. As a Christian I am ready to comply with the precepts of religion. On the present occasion my great duty is to attend to the interests and honour of my country."<sup>65</sup> Despite the sincerity of the Czar's religious faith, he refused to subordinate secular interests to the precepts of Christianity. The three Friends remained in Russia until receiving a written reply to their address and their departure on 14 February coincided with the suspension of Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations.<sup>66</sup>

The Quaker deputation, as a peace mission, was a failure. However, it is

important for a number of reasons. Based on the reaction it caused in Britain, it provides insight into both the power of pro-war opinion and reveals the depth of the fissure between the religious and political pacifists in Britain.

The militant state of public opinion in Britain made a condemnation of the deputation inevitable. On 21 January the <u>Times</u> called the deputation a "piece of enthusiastic folly", and two days later openly and viciously condemned it.<sup>67</sup> Some papers accepted the good intentions behind the deputation while simultaneously acknowledging the futility of the plea to the Czar. The Birmingham <u>Mercury</u> commented on Joseph Sturge in the 28 January issue: "his mission, though a mistake is a most amiable one. His benevolence, though pure waste, is still benevolence."<sup>68</sup> For the most part, the Quaker mission was ridiculed. <u>Punch</u> ran articles under headlines such as "Save Us From Our Friends" and "Feathers in Broadbrim," and <u>John Bull</u> questioned the Friends' motives behind the deputation: "was it to parade themselves before the world as more righteous than the rest of mankind? or simply to gratify their sectarian vanity by showing what consequential people they are with whom even such a man as Czar Nicholas will shake hands?"<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps the most curious piece of criticism came from within the Society of Friends itself. In an article published in May 1854 in the British Friend, the Quakers' official press organ, an anonymous but regular contributor called "X" admonished the Friends for their appeal to the Czar. Using language typical of the pro-war press, X launched into a tirade on the Czar, whom he accused of being, "[a]mbitious, designing, and exhibiting the most consummate duplicity regardless of human life, and inaccessible to the appeals of reason and justice in the prosecution of his selfish desires..." X's article echoed many of the arguments used by the secular and religious press and their leaders to justify a

condemnation of the Czar and his policies, including a contrast of Turkey's policy of toleration with the despotism of Russia which "never ceases, with the inexorable yoke, to gall the necks of the unhappy nations subject to her control." Although the anonymous Quaker critic did not extend his criticism of the deputation to include a justification for hostilities or a call to arms, the content is indicative of the intensity and pervasiveness of pro-war sentiment on the eve of the Crimean War. X's disapproval of the deputation appears to be an isolated occurrence, although it is impossible to determine the private feelings of members of the Society who may have shared X's beliefs but chose to remain silent. Generally, the Friends supported the deputation, remained united in their denunciation of the war, and continued to speak out as a group against the war.

The open hostility or ridicule articulated by the press was predictable. What was remarkable was the noticeable silence of one publication, the Peace Society's Herald of Peace. The Herald did not publish an article on the deputation until after the Friends' return, and the only time that the Peace Society devoted any press coverage to the mission was when Herald editor and Peace Society secretary Henry Richard issued a disclaimer dissociating the Peace Society from the deputation. The Times article of 21 January had published incorrectly that the Friends were travelling as representatives of the Peace Society. Richard's letter published 23 January denied any involvement with the mission and professed ignorance of the content of the Quaker plea. It is highly improbable that Richard or the Peace Society were unaware of the activities of the Quakers, particularly given Joseph Sturge's connection to the Peace Society and also in light of Richard's comments about the deputation in his memoir of Sturge published in 1864. In the biography Richard writes, "...the Peace Society had nothing to do with the appointment except cordially to wish God speed to the

good and brave men that had undertaken it."<sup>72</sup> The <u>Times</u> disclaimer and the fact that the <u>Herald</u> did not defend the Quaker deputation against the criticism and ridicule in the press offers an accurate estimation not only of the tenor of pre-war opinion against which the pacifists were to fight during the war, but also the degree to which the pacifist cause had suffered from the defection of their political allies - to the point of being intimidated and effectively silenced before British involvement in the Crimean War.

The reaction to the deputation also exposed the depth of the fissure between religious and political pacifists in Britain. Richard Cobden, the spokesman for arbitration and the man who once referred to the Quakers as "[t]he soul of the peace movement,"73 questioned the deputation and the motives behind it in terms which presaged the criticism of such pro-war papers as John Bull. Cobden, upon hearing of Sturge's idea to submit a plea for peace before the Czar wrote pessimistically to Sturge, "I rather think you overrate the effect of deputing crowned heads...If a party of Friends were now to set off on a visit to Nicholas, it, might, I think, expose them to a charge of seeking their own glorification."<sup>74</sup> This was Cobden's only private comment on the deputation, and there is no record of him having made any type of public defence or statement on the mission. Cobden's contemporary in Parliament, John Bright, a Quaker and once an active yet conditional pacifist, also remained silent. Bright's lack of support is notable in light of his ties to the Friends and to Sturge, with whom he maintained regular correspondence.75 Cobden's pessimistic attitude concerning the utility of the deputation, and Bright's silence on the mission sent by a sect of which he considered himself a member, are representative of the attitude of the political pacifists in Britain who had, in the weeks before the war, essentially abandoned the cause of peace to their religious counterparts.

It should, however, be noted that the mission to Russia was undertaken strictly on religious grounds and was not a political manoeuvre. The Quakers who went to Russia did so as a religious organization appealing to the Christian sentiments of the Czar, and to ensure clarity of their motives did not contact the British ambassador in Russia until after their audience with the Czar. They did not attempt to remedy the diplomatic situation or to cast blame on any of the belligerents. As religious pacifists, The Friends approached the Czar imploring him as a Christian to subordinate all other interests to the pacific teachings of Christ; the tenets upon which the religious pacifists' condemnation of war was based. The Friends' intention, as their written appeal indicates was to "venture to approach the Imperial presence, under a deep conviction of religious duty, and in the constraining love of Christ our saviour," in the hope of avoiding "the unspeakable horrors of war, with all its attendant moral evil and suffering."76 The Society's peace testimony thus remained firmly based in religion; however, as Quaker historian Peter Brock explains, "the division between religion and politics had become less inflexible."77

It is not surprising that the final plea for peace was undertaken by the Society of Friends and not the Peace society. The Friends were accustomed to persecution for their beliefs whereas the Peace Society was a peacetime organization with a largely political base of support, whose main concerns for social respectability or political power overrode their commitment to peace. The Quakers, however, placed faith above politics and conformity and proved once again unafraid of condemnation and mockery.

The failure of the deputation to Russia did not serve to terminate the Quakers' pacific activities. In January 1855, the Friends' undertook their second and final concerted action against the war in the form of an appeal to the very

group they had abandoned in favour of a plea to the Czar, the British people.

Once Britain had entered the war in March 1854, the Quakers continued to voice their opposition to the war even though virtually the entire Protestant religious community approved of the war, and the supporters of the peace movement had fallen silent. The Quakers, however, proved uneasy about engaging in any anti-war activities in the immediate wake of the British declaration of war. The topic of the war does not appear on the agenda of the Meeting for Sufferings until 3 November 1854.<sup>78</sup> The delay between Britain's entry into the war in March and mass action on the part of the Quakers is indicative of effects of the hostility British public towards pacifists who were no longer merely considered cowards but traitors. The appearance of a concern about the war as the leading item on the 3 November agenda does permit an inference, as historian Stephen Frick suggests, that the war was being discussed outside the formal bodies of the Society.<sup>79</sup> The 3 November Meeting acknowledged the necessity for concerted action; however, it was not until 1 December that the Meeting decided to bring their concerns about the war to public notice.80 A committee was appointed to draw up a statement of the Society's position on the war, a week later the statement was approved and in January 1855, A Christian Appeal From the Society of Friends to Their Fellow-Countrymen on the Present War appeared in print.

The <u>Christian Appeal</u> was directed at secular and religious leaders as well as to the British populace in general. It did not attack the war on political but rather on religious grounds, emphasizing that the conflict was one of Christian against Christian and that Britain had allied herself with a Muslim power. The theme of the appeal was a reiteration of Quaker unconditional pacifism "that all war, on whatever plea of political necessity, is unlawful under the gospel

dispensation," $^{81}$  and a reminder to the British that the precepts of Christ "can surely be no less binding upon a nation professing allegiance to Christ the Supreme Ruler, than upon the individuals of whom it is composed." $^{82}$ 

In their appeal to the political leaders, the Friends recognized that the government was essentially engaged in a two-front war "having to deal with a powerful enemy and, at the same time, to stem the mighty torrent of martial excitement in the pubic mind." B3 The Quakers implored the government to "use every Christian effort for the restoration of peace," cautioning tt "to remember that that which is morally or religiously wrong cannot be politically right." The plea to the clergy included an admonition against "stirring up the martial spirit of the nation, or innerving the arm of war," and enjoined "the ministers of the gospel of peace, to use that authority of which they are stewards,...in promoting peace on earth and good-will towards men, even towards their enemies." The Friends addressed the British populace as fellow Christians and countrymen and requested that they not be swayed by the "vindictive excitement" sweeping the country, asking them instead to recognize instead that their material interests were best served by peace as were the "still more enduring interests of eternity."

The <u>Christian Appeal</u>, as it appeared in the issue of First Month (January) 1855, included a copy of a letter drafted at the Meeting for Sufferings on 13 December requesting the community's aid in achieving the widest possible circulation of the tract.<sup>87</sup> One hundred and twenty-five thousand copies of the leaflet were sent from London to the local Monthly meetings, and many Friends went beyond merely circulating the tracts. In several areas individual Quakers paid to have the <u>Christian Appeal</u> reproduced in local newspapers, or had more copies printed at their own expense. It is estimated that over two hundred

thousand copies were circulated in Britain alone, and the tract was also translated into French and German.<sup>88</sup> The <u>Christian Appeal</u>, by appearing in the press and being translated and actively circulated, reached a much broader audience than would otherwise have read the leaflet, and speaks to the strength of the Quakers' pacific convictions and of their determination to speak out against the Crimean war.

The impact of the Christian Appeal is difficult to assess. At the time of its distribution, anti-war sentiments of any kind were extremely unpopular. The most vocal criticism of the Friends' effort came from the Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth. In a letter to the <u>Times</u> on 15 January he accused the Quakers of pursuing peace at any price, and reiterated his position that not all wars were un-Christian particularly if, like the Crimean War, their aim was the overthrow of tyranny.<sup>89</sup> This criticism appears to have had as little effect on the Quakers as their pacific advice had had on the British populace. War fever continued to rage in Britain and the Friends, having stated their beliefs and made their appeal, now discontinued speaking out as a group against the war. The only other activity which the Quakers undertook against the war was to refuse to contribute to the Patriotic Fund established for widows and orphans of soldiers in the Crimea, as they felt it was inconsistent with their rather comprehensive testimony against war. 90 The Friends believed that abstinence from contribution was merely a means of ensuring that their conduct was consistent with their principles. The Quakers were prepared to assist war victims on an individual basis but refused to participate in a national effort.<sup>91</sup>

The significance of the <u>Christian Appeal</u> is more easily identifiable than its impact. The appearance of the appeal marked the first public explanation of Quaker opposition to a specific war. The united and effective response of the

Society to a call for widespread dissemination of the tract was impressive and demonstrates the desire of the entire sect to ensure the success of the endeavour. While this was to be the last public initiative of the Society of Friends during the Crimean War, the drafting, and wide circulation of the leaflet at a time when anti-war expression was dangerous made the <u>Christian Appeal</u> quite possibly the most useful and successful piece of pacifist propaganda of the Crimean War.92

Although the Quakers were the only sect to vocalize their opposition to the Crimean War, some individual members of other Protestant denominations did speak out against the war. Two of the more well known of these pacific apostates preached or published their views in the spring of 1855. The timing of these two pamphlets does not appear to be either random or coincidental. There is evidence that early 1855 was an auspicious time for peace. Despite the ascension of Lord Palmerston and a war Cabinet to power in February following the defeat of the more pacific Aberdeen coalition, there were several indications that a resolution of the conflict was possible. In March negotiations for peace began in Vienna, and Czar Nicholas died of pulmonary apoplexy.<sup>93</sup> There was a tendency in Britain to equate Russian aggression in Turkey with the Czar rather than the Russian people, and many felt hopeful that the death of the Czar meant that peace was feasible. The failure of the efforts at Vienna and Palmerston's declaration of his intention to continue the war until the fall of Sebastopol left some members of the general population disillusioned and perhaps more willing to voice, or at least listen to, an opinion against the war. Two of the pamphlets which appeared in early 1855 were composed by members of the Church of England. One was a reprint of a sermon given by A.B. Evans the curate of St. Andrew's and the second was an anonymous leaflet

entitled "The Soldier and the Christian."

The sermon by Evans was preached on the second day of National Fast and Humiliation in March 1855. This second fast day was proclaimed amid reports of the disastrous state of the British army during the seige of Sebastopol. Evans' sermon was entitled "War: its Theology; its Anomalies, its Incidents and its Humiliations." Under the four headings Evans systematically refuted the political and religious arguments advanced in support of the war. He began with a condemnation of all wars on Christian grounds in an argument reminiscent of the theological outlook of the Society of Friends. Evans modified his argument to include a discussion of the Thirty-Seventh Article which he stated "does not contravene the Gospel, either in letter or spirit, but it is evident we may contravene both, if we attribute infallibility of judgement to a fallible tribunal." He asked his audience to consider how any side in a dispute could be sure of the justice of its cause given that the allocation of justice was made by mortals rather than the Divine. Evans concluded by proposing "[i]s it not more probable that all War is unjust, than any particular War the reverse?" 96

In terms of the arguments justifying the war on religious grounds, Evans reminded his audience that the majority of pro-war arguments were supported by evidence from the Old Testament, and were no longer valid under the Christian dispensation. He denounced the assertion that the Crimean War was a religious war, asserting that Turkey and Russia were indeed fighting for their religion, France was fighting for the Pope, while the British, "who made friends with the last and the first against the second, profess contempt for the religions of all three. While by war we put ourselves on their level, can we have much more respect for our own?" Finally, Evans denied the validity of the claim that the war was a divine judgement upon the nations' sins, believing instead that

war was the sin.

Politically, Evans condemned both the alliance with Napoleon III whom he called, "a despot of yesterday, the steps to whose throne were the dead bodies of his subjects," and the negotiations with Austria, a country he accused of having been "prolific of evil examples to the nations of the earth." Evans admonished Britain for condemning Russian demands in Turkey, reminding the congregation of similar demands concerning Protestants in Turkey which Britain had pursued with Prussia in 1841. Equating the British demands with those of the Russians, Evans remarked, "we threatened the Turkish government and it was then yielded otherwise we might now have been at war with the Sultan, instead of taking his part."

Evans concluded his sermon with a list of the reasons the British people should be humiliated for sanctioning the war. Evans cited the mismanagement of the army, the alliance with Turkey who entered the war with a legacy of mistreating he Christian subjects, the displacement of funds, which could have been used for social amelioration, and the waste of human life. He ended not by condemning the war for its inconsistency with Christian teachings, but by asking his parishioners to give his arguments serious attention. 100

The significance of Evans' sermon is that it appears to be one of the few preached against the war in early 1855. Further, the sermon is particularly important because it was preached on a day when Evans must have expected a large and attentive audience. There are indications that Evans' sermon reached a wide audience, particularly in its printed form, and evidence that it was an influential document for those in the religious community who were receptive to Christian anti-war sentiments, including an anonymous pamphleteer.

Another voice raised in a condemnation of the Crimean War in the spring of

1855 came from the pages of an anonymous pamphlet circulated after Evans' sermon. Entitled "The Soldier and the Christian," the pamphlet is reminiscent in its structure of a morality play. The Soldier and the Christian are characters representing pro-war and anti-war sentiment in Britain. In his introduction the author explained that the position of the Soldier, his arguments and scriptural references, were those which had been voiced by five pro-war clergymen supposedly during an actual discussion on the Crimean War. 101 It would appear that the verbal sparring which occurs between the two characters is representative of the author's voice and the voice of his pro-war contemporaries. By juxtaposing the Soldier and the Christian, the author was emphasizing what proved to be the central theme of his work, that Christianity and war were entirely incompatible.

The leaflet began with a meeting between the Soldier and the Christian a week before the Soldier is to leave for the Crimea. The Soldier is asking for the Christian's prayers. The Christian refuses, and when questioned by the Soldier as to why, the Christian explains that he, as a Christian could not support the war. The Soldier is outraged, and the Christian proceeds to outline his position on the illegality of war. After a series of Biblical and non-Scriptural arguments, the Christian persuades the Soldier to reconsider his position on the legitimacy of war.

The pamphlet's message is similar to that of Evans' sermon. The Christian is asking the Soldier to reflect upon the issues and make an informed decision. The Christians remarks, "It seems to me that those who believe war not to be contrary to Christianity must be persons who do not think." 102 Undoubtedly, the Christian is referring to the pro-war literature and sermons which allowed the British public the luxury of not having to formulate an opinion of their own.

It appears that the author did not expect to convert every soldier. Instead, using the character of the Soldier to represent pro-war opinion, and that of the Christian to represent that of a less popular but equally valid opinion on war, the author was imploring the British public to think about the war and, he hoped, to share his conclusions. The pamphlet concludes with the soldier agreeing "that war and Christianity are in principle essential opposites." The two characters part with the Soldier refusing to partake in the Crimean campaign. He remarks, "I will not go to Sebastopol, come what may, nor draw my sword against any poor child of mortality more." 104

This pamphlet is important not so much for its arguments, which are essentially a reiteration of both the Quaker testimony against war and Evans' political and religious refutation of the pro-war arguments espoused by Britain's religious community, but rather for what it indicates about the efficacy of anti-war propaganda. There is evidence that the anonymous pamphleteer, identified only as "A Clergyman of the Church of England", came into contact with the Friends' Christian Appeal. In his introduction to the pamphlet, he reiterates, almost verbatim, the central tenet of the Quaker appeal. The pamphleteer remarks "the laws of Christ ought to take precedence over the laws of men, that which is contrary to the spirit of those laws can never be politically right."(emphasis mine)<sup>105</sup> Further, when the Christian is questioning the legitimacy of the Thirty-Seventh Article he refers to the arguments Evans advanced in his sermon to substantiate his claims. <sup>106</sup>

It is not surprising that a member of the British religious community should have come into contact with either of these works. It is possible however, although unprovable, that the appearance of other anti-war statements may have motivated the publication of the pamphlet. The fact that this pamphlet

was published anonymously indicates a concern on the part of the author of a reactionary backlash against his views and himself. It is therefore conceivable that had the Quakers and Evans not spoken out against the war this Christian pacifist may have remained silent.

It is difficult to assess the impact of these anti-war leaflets. Evans' sermon may have influenced the anonymous pamphleteer, and the pamphlet itself underwent two printings. 107 There is evidence that these two voices were not raised alone. Evans explains in his sermon that "opinion is gaining ground that war is utterly indefensible," and explains that within the Anglican Church there was, "a movement on this subject in the right direction." 108 Due to the paucity of surviving documents from the period it is impossible to know if any of these clergymen voiced their anti-war views, or if the anonymous pamphleteer was part of this group. The appearance of Evans' sermon and of the anonymous pamphlet does indicate that, by the spring of 1855, there were members of the Protestant community, which may have included a larger but silent contingent within the Anglican Church, who were willing to follow the lead of the Quakers, and implore the British public to consider the message of the "Prince of Peace" and rethink their position on the war.

The achievement of more concrete results was left to the third group of religious pacifists in Britain, the members of the London Peace Society. The Peace Society was relatively inactive during the Crimean War. Once Britain entered the war Richard Cobden believed that rational debate on the issue had ceased, making it futile for the Peace Society to "set up our standards for peace when the bells are ringing for war," and Cobden remained politically silent for the duration of the war. <sup>109</sup> John Bright echoed Cobden when he remarked to Joseph Sturge in September 1854, "that it may be best to rest quiet at present." <sup>110</sup>

Bright did continue to speak out in Parliament against the war until early 1855; however, he was burnt in effigy in his constituency of Manchester and suffered a nervous breakdown for his efforts. 111 It appears that the majority of the members of the Peace Society took Cobden's and Bright's advice and remained silent, neither supporting the war nor condemning it. Annual meetings of the Peace Society continued; however, in 1854 only twenty-three members participated and equally few attended the 1855 meeting . 112 The cause of peace had thus been relegated to the few dedicated pacifists within the Peace Society willing to brave the storm of hostile feeling to labour for the cause.

Two key individuals in this crusade were both unconditional pacifists, Welsh Non-Conformist Henry Richard and Quaker Joseph Sturge. Henry Richard, the "Welsh apostle of Peace" was the secretary of the Peace Society from 1848 until 1885 and the editor of the Herald of Peace prior to and during the Crimean War. Richard spent most of the war engaged in writing and editing articles condemning the war on political grounds. Although an unconditional pacifist, Richard differentiated between the "principle of peace" and the "policy of peace". He recognized that not all pacifists shared his dedication to Christian pacific principles and proved willing to accommodate other views when making a plea for peace. 113 Richard's greatest statement in the Herald condemning the war on political grounds occurred in January 1855, simultaneously with the Quaker Christian Appeal. The article, entitled "History of the Origins of the War with Russia Drawn up from Parliamentary Documents," was later circulated as a pamphlet. Based entirely on Parliamentary Blue Books, the goal of the article was to offer the British public a chance "to compare the simple facts of the case with the wild exaggerations which were employed to inflame the popular imagination." 114 Richard

assessed the causes of the war and cast blame on every participant in the conflict except Russia. The tone was critical of Turkey, praised the Czar for his patience and willingness to work for peace, and accused the British public of forcing her pacific government into war.<sup>115</sup>

The majority of the articles in the <u>Herald</u> remained consistent with the religious principles upon which both the Peace Society and its journal were founded. More than twice as much space was devoted to a condemnation of the war on Christian grounds than on political ones. Originally, the Herald believed the best hopes for peace rested with the clergy's influence from the pulpit. However, when it became apparent that the majority of the Protestant religious denominations and their press had chosen to support the war, the Herald responded to what Richard believed was a betrayal of Christian principles by relentlessly attacking pro-war sermons. The Herald also printed articles on sermons and literature which spoke out against the war, and both the anonymous pamphleteer and Evans' sermon received enthusiastic and supportive reviews.  $^{116}$  The  $\underline{\text{Herald}}$  thus became the voice for a religious critique of the war. However, as one historian asserts, the Herald's "main concern was, by presenting the war in as adverse a light as possible, to counteract the pro-war propaganda of the popular press." 117 In this task the Herald failed, and in response to this inability to sway public opinion, several members of the Peace Society attempted to remedy the situation by creating a daily newspaper dedicated to the cause of peace.

The idea for a daily paper originated with Richard Cobden. In a letter to Joseph Sturge in 1853, Cobden remarked, "...what an advantage it would be if...we could have a daily paper advocating peace and constantly having before the public the evils of wars...It is only by a <u>daily</u> paper that we can really

influence public opinion."<sup>118</sup> Sturge did not act upon Cobden's suggestion until mid-1855, as he had been occupied with the activities of the Quakers and the Peace Society. However, in the spring of 1855 the Quakers had retired from actively pursuing peace, and with peace negotiations underway at Vienna Sturge perhaps felt it a more propitious time to pursue the idea.

Henry Richard joined Sturge in his commitment to the creation of the daily. Cobden and Bright also supported the paper, yet chose to remain in the background during its creation. Bright defined his and Cobden's roles as acting as "referees in case of a difference of opinion among the proprietors and managers." In other words, both men wanted to influence the content of the paper yet remain aloof from public association with a pacifist paper. The paper was not to be established on the absolute pacifist principle. Its mandate was to oppose the Crimean War and to advocate arbitration, regular peace congresses, and a policy of non-intervention. In the adoption of an overtly political agenda reflected Bright's and Cobden's fears of the new daily becoming a daily Herald of Peace which, in light of its pronounced religious tone, they believed would reduce the influence the paper would exert on public opinion. Sturge and Richard acquiesced to Bright's and Cobden's demands, and Sturge began to raise the capital for the venture.

By early 1856, the editor, William Haly, a London author and conditional pacifist, had been selected, and the funds acquired. The only problem plaguing the venture at this point was that the war appeared to be over. On 1 February the protocol on the preliminaries of peace had been signed at Vienna, and the Paris Peace Conference had opened on 25 February. Thus part of the purpose for the creation of the paper had been nullified. Sturge believed that the cessation of hostilities would not adversely affect the paper, and asserted that circulation

might increase in the face of a more pacific public opinion.<sup>123</sup> On 17 March 1856 the first editions of the Morning Star and the later edition the Evening Star were printed. Having ensured the financing and witnessed the launching of the new daily, Sturge and Richard left the mechanics of the paper to Haly and its politics to Bright and Cobden, and turned their attention to fulfilling the other mandate of the Peace Society, securing lasting peace through arbitration.

The process towards obtaining the inclusion of arbitration in the peace settlement preceded the publication of the Morning Star. On 14 March a group of pacifists representing the newly established Peace Congress Committee, amongst them twenty MPs, approached Lord Palmerston with a memorial urging "the importance of proposing at the Conferences then sitting, some system of international arbitration which may bring the great interests of nations within the cognisance of certain fixed rules of justice and right."  $^{124}$  Palmerston received the memorial but refused to take further action. It is noteworthy that many of the memorialists were members of the Peace Society who had deserted it during the Crimean War. When Palmerston refused to pursue the memorialists' request, these same men abandoned the memorial, leaving the task of promoting arbitration to the same members of the Peace Society who had fought for the cause during the war, Joseph Sturge and Henry Richard. Further when Richard proposed taking the memorial to Paris to convince the other governments of the validity and necessity of arbitration, these gentlemen cautioned Richard against pursuing arbitration any further for fear that such a mission might subject the Peace Society to ridicule and weaken the legitimacy of their cause. 125 Richard, however, was immune to ridicule and hostility and when he approached Sturge with the idea of going to Paris, Sturge responded with a vehemence typical of his dedication to the cause of peace:

If no one will go with thee, I will; and I am prepared to go not only to Paris, but if necessary to Berlin, Vienna and Turin, and even to St. Petersburg should there be time, and see if we can't get access to the sovereigns whose plenipotentiaries are sitting at Paris. 126

The delegation consisting of Richard, Sturge and Charles Hindley, the president of the Peace Society, left for Paris on 20 March.<sup>127</sup> The three men went to Paris hoping to secure binding arbitration, and approached the British representative Lord Clarendon with their memorial. Clarendon proved receptive to their proposal; however, he voiced concern over the feasibility of having binding arbitration accepted by the plenipotentiaries.<sup>128</sup> Richard proposed a stipulated arbitration clause under which disputes would be subjected to an impartial third party before the issue could escalate to open hostilities and before public opinion could become inflamed.<sup>129</sup> Essentially, Richard's and Sturge's request for binding arbitration had been reduced to a committment to mediation. Clarendon accepted a copy of the memorial, dismissing the representatives from the Peace Society with the remark, "I will do what I can."<sup>130</sup> On April 14 Protocol 23 was accepted by the delegates at the peace conference. It read:

The plenipotentiaries do not hesitate to express, in the name of their Governments, the wish that States between which any serious misunderstandings may arise, should before appealing to arms, have recourse, so far as circumstances might allow, to the good offices of a friendly power. The plenipotentiaries hope that the Governments not represented at the Congress will unite in the sentiment which has inspired the wish recorded in the present protocol.<sup>131</sup>

The appearance of this emasculated form of Richard's and Sturge's proposal in the Treaty of Paris was a triumph for the pacifists. It was the first arbitration clause included in a multilateral treaty. Sturge and Richard had succeeded in realizing their objective of achieving some acknowledgement from the powers at the Congress of the necessity that potential combatants should have recourse to outside mediation before settling disputes through a resort to arms.

The members of the Peace Society who had subscribed to the principle of absolute pacifism based on Christian teachings had, by the formal conclusion of the hostilities in the Crimea, fulfilled the two major components of their mandate. First, they had agitated successfully for the incorporation of an arbitration clause in the Treaty of Paris and, secondly, they had strengthened their propaganda machine by creating a daily newspaper dedicated to the cause and preservation of peace. These two achievements represent an amalgamation of the objectives of the Peace Society. The original desire to disseminate propaganda and educate people about the illicitness and evils of war and the more political objective of utilizing arbitration to secure a lasting peace had both been fulfilled through the activities and dedication of the religious pacifists within the London Peace Society, notably Joseph Sturge and Henry Richard.

The immediate significance and impact of the religious pacifists prior to and during the Crimean War, both inside and outside the Peace Society, is readily discernible. For the Quakers the Crimean War witnessed the broadening of their peace testimony from a private to a public and political witness. Their testimony against all war, although rooted in religion, went beyond a mere refusal to fight and a delineation of their rationale behind such a refusal, and extended into the realm of diplomacy and proposals for alternatives to war. The Quakers were the only Protestant sect in Britain to speak out as a group against the war. That their dedication to pacifism was rooted in two hundred years of private witness does not lessen their contribution to the cause of Christian pacifism during the hostilities. Further, the Friends put a combination of their

humanitarian and antimilitarist views into practice, and in the aftermath of the Crimean War broadened their work against war to include relief efforts for the non-combatant victims of the war. The Quaker relief work in Finland after the war initiated a history of Friends' active contribution to alleviating the suffering of victims of war which has included the establishment of the Friends' Ambulance Service in World War One and Quaker relief work in France after World War Two. 132

The presence of a dissenting voice within pro-war Protestant denominations is also important. It represented a challenge to the accepted justification of the war advanced by the organized religions of the day. Although the effects of these voices were more limited than the Quakers, the pamphleteers were at least able to provide an alternative opinion to the norm, and by encouraging the citizens of Britain to think for themselves, hoped that Christianity would no longer be used as a sanction for war.

The religious absolutist wing of the Peace Society achieved perhaps the most lasting and tangible victories of all of the religious pacifists who opposed the Crimean War. The creation of the Morning Star and the inclusion of the arbitration clause in the Peace of Paris managed to satisfy both the original and broader political mandates of the peace Society. The Morning Star and Protocol 23 were not merely nominal achievements. The daily survived until 1869 and the arbitration clause was appealed to in three instances during the final decades of the nineteenth century. These achievements are all the more significant as they were accomplished after the defection of the most numerous contingent of pacifists from the Peace Society, in the face of a menacing and antagonistic public opinion, and essentially through the endeavours of two dedicated men.

In the broader context of the future of the British peace movement, the Crimean War had a devastating effect on pacifism in general. Despite the achievements of the religious pacifists, in the aftermath of the Crimean War peace remained an unpopular cause. In the 1857 election both Cobden and Bright lost their constituencies, and when the founders of the peace movement died there was no one to replace them. When pacifism underwent a revival in the 1870s, its supporters were drawn from a distinctly different social context than the early nineteenth century pacifists. Pacifism was no longer the domain of middle-class religious Victorians. Late nineteenth century pacifism was instead embraced by the working classes who opposed war for reasons other than those of their middle class predecessors. The new organizations such as Randal Cremer's Workmen's Peace Committee, later the International Arbitration League, and the International Arbitration and Peace Association were decidedly secular, internationalist, and class-conscious. 134 Their objectives were similar to those of the London Peace Society and thus they attracted financial and human resources from the latter. Uninterested in moral arguments on the illicitness of war the new organizations concentrated instead on speaking out against the material devastation suffered by the working classes when Britain was involved in foreign disputes. As a result, these new organizations siphoned off support which might have gone to the Peace Society and contributed to the steady decline in support and resources of the London Peace Society. 135 By the end of the nineteenth century, the Peace Society had lost not only its supremacy in Britain, but also its usefulness as a representative of pacific sentiment in Britain.

Ironically, it would appear that the greatest achievements of the religious pacifists came at a time when their support was at its lowest ebb. This fact

underscores the achievements of the religious pacifists in Britain. Historian A.J.P. Taylor has asserted that often groups which dissent from the norm over foreign policy are ultimately vindicated by posterity. 136 The Christian pacifists who refused to sanction the Crimean War merit inclusion in Taylor's assessment. In 1861 the Times, which was relentless in its antagonism towards the activities of the religious pacifists, acknowledged the futility of the Crimean War: "Never was so great an effort made for so worthless an object...It is with no small reluctance we admit a gigantic effort, and an infinite sacrifice to have been made in vain." The religious pacifists had no way of knowing that their country would eventually come to vindicate their position. It is indeed doubtful that such a vindication would have affected them. The validation of their position came from a higher source. Their faith in the moral righteousness of their cause placed them above the social and political considerations which caused the defection of their political and conditional allies, and enabled them both to persevere and to succeed in fulfilling their mandate in the face of national censure. The ability to continue their crusade in wartime and in the face of a hostile public opinion makes the achievements of these few dedicated religious pacifists all the more significant and their faith all the more impressive.

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