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A letter was received from the Clerk of Iowa Meeting for Sufferings, stating that that Meeting could not be convened in time to send Delegates to this Conference.

After a free and full interchange of views we are united in adopting the following minute as expressive of our judgment:

The Conference assembles under a deep sense of its responsibility to the Head of the Church, and to the members of our religious Society, especially to our young men, who are particularly interested in the cause that has brought us together—and as faithful representatives of those who have appointed us, we believe it right for us first to record our united sense and judgment, that Friends continue to be solemnly bound unswervingly to maintain our ancient faith and belief, that War is forbidden in the Gospel, and that as followers of the Prince of Peace, we cannot contribute to its support, or in any way participate in its spirit. That to render other service as an equivalent for or in lieu of requisitions for military purposes is a compromise of a vital principle which we feel conscientiously bound to support, under all circumstances, and notwithstanding any trials to which we may be subjected.

But while thus recording our sense of obligation to maintain, in all its fulness and purity, this testimony to our belief of the imperative duty of abstaining from all wars, and of regarding sacredly the rights of conscience, we have been introduced afresh into sympathy with those now in authority in the General Government in the peculiar difficulties and trials in which they are involved. We gratefully appreciate the kindness evidenced, at all times, by the President and Secretary of War, when we have applied to them for relief from suffering for conscience sake, and honor them for their clearly manifested regard for religious liberty.

We have ever believed, and do, without any reservation, believe in the necessity of civil Government, that it is a Divine ordinance, and that it is our duty to sustain it by all the influence we may be able to exert, both by word and deed, subject to the paramount law of Christ; and in this day of fearful strife, when so many of our fellow citizens are brought into suffering, we have no desire to shrink from the discharge of all our duty, nor from contributing to the relief of distress by every means in our power. To feed the hungry, to cloth the naked, to visit the sick and distressed, now so numerous in our country, are among the prominent commands of Christ. In especial manner Friends have long believed it their duty to labor for the relief and freedom of the bondmen, and now when so many are becoming free from bondage, in the progress of passing events, and need abundant ministration, both to their physical and mental necessities, we rejoice to find that Friends generally are engaged in their behalf, and we desire to encourage our fellow members in every part of our land to continued and increased efforts in this way, thus relieving the Government of a portion of the heavy burden now resting upon it. In this way, and by many other means, Friends can discharge the duties of good citizenship without infringing upon our principles of peace, and we desire to impress upon them the duty of embracing every right opening for the exercise of Christian benevolence toward their suffering fellow creatures.

Then adjourned to 4 o'clock, this afternoon.

Friends met according to adjournment.

Upon further consideration of the general subject which brought us together, it was the judgment of the Conference, that a small Committee should be appointed to proceed to Washington, without delay, to have an interview with the Secretary of War, in consequence of the communication embraced in the minute of Baltimore Meeting for Sufferings. Samuel Boyd Tobey, William

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Wood, James Carey, Jonathan Binns, Levi Jessup and Jeremiah A. Grennell, were appointed to name a Committee to the Conference, for that purpose, and after retiring for consultation, they proposed Francis T. King, Charles F. Coffin and Samuel Boyd Tobey, which was united with by the Meeting.

Then adjourned to 7½ o'clock, to-morrow evening.

3d of the week and 8th of the Month. The Conference met at 7½ P. M., pursuant to adjournment.

The following Report was received from the Committee, appointed yesterday, to obtain an interview with the Secretary of War, and their action was approved of by this Conference.

To the Conference assembled:—

The Committee appointed, yesterday, to visit Washington City, to have an interview with Secretary Stanton,

REPORT, that the interview was readily obtained, and the Committee stated to him, at length, the views of Friends in regard to the Draft, and that we could not directly or indirectly pay money in lieu of military service, but that we were both willing and desirous to do all we could, conscientiously, to aid the Government, that we had already done much for the Freedmen, and were proposing to extend our field of labor in their behalf, and that we had, also, assisted in caring for the sick and wounded, that we did these things as a matter of Christian duty, and should do them whether relieved from military service or not. We, also, expressed to Secretary Stanton, the thanks of Friends for the great kindness he had shown them in repeated instances, and our high appreciation of the feeling of favor towards Friends, which he had uniformly shown, and that we felt desirous, if possible, that some understanding should be had by which he would be relieved from being so often called on by Friends for relief.

Secretary Stanton listened with earnest attention to the remarks, and at the close enquired whether we had any proposition to make—that he was fully aware of the liberality of Friends, and knew that they had done much for the Freedmen, and that he fully appreciated it; but that he could not, on this ground, release them from a compliance with the laws of the land—that he stood only as an officer to execute the laws, and had nothing to do with making them—that if their liberality released them from the Draft, the same cause would release nearly every one, and no soldiers could be found—that all sects and denominations and people of every class had shown an extended liberality, and that if Friends had done more than others it was because they were better able to do it.

He had great respect for their conscientious scruples, and should be very sorry to oppress them, and with that view had made a proposition—the only one he could make. Being asked to restate this, he said it was, that every Friend should, when drafted, appear before the Provost Marshal, and state that he is a member of the Society of Friends, and has conscientious objections to perform military service. He would instruct the Provost Marshals not to proceed against such until after they had notified him. That such Friends should immediately inform Secretary Stanton, by letter, marked "on business connected with the Draft," and that upon the payment to the Provost Marshal General, at Washington, of \$500, each, they shall be released. The money should not go into the general fund, but, he would pledge himself, should be used to aid the destitute and suffering contrabands—that in this war there were two duties to perform by the Government—one to ~~release the~~ X the other to feed the hungry and clothe the naked Freedmen. That the last being a work of mercy and not of destruction, might be done by Friends. When asked in reference to the disposition of the funds, thus raised, he said he would have to review his former promise, it probably would be handed over to the Society to be disbursed by it, but of this he would not say certainly until he had further examined the law—it might require its disbursement by Government officers, but if by them it should be faithfully and judiciously used. When told that such payment would be considered as infringing on the rights of conscience, he said he could understand no such abstraction as that—that it was a work of mercy and in accordance with the commands of Christ, and that if our members did not choose to accept so liberal an offer, he could do no more for them, and the law would have to take its effect. He said that if any meeting or body of Friends chose to place funds in his hands, in advance, to a greater amount than would be requisite to cover all their members who would be likely to be drafted, he would receive their funds and release all such as should be drafted, and apply the funds as previously proposed. He voluntarily observed that he would hold this plan open, and that the Society in general, or any Meeting or

x destroy the rebellion x