

DARE TO DISARM!

BY F. N. JAMES.

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DARE TO DISARM!

IF we could never trust our fellow men, the butcher, the baker and the grocer, to be honest, we could never live together. Life would become too complicated and quarrelsome. Mutual trust is the basis of civic peace.

So, too, peace amongst the nations of the world depends upon how far they can dare to trust one another. Nations must be willing to believe in the goodwill of their neighbours, in spite of every rumour and provocation, before there can ever be real peace amongst them.

If every time you answered the door you carried a revolver in your hand, your neighbours would laugh at you. The revolver would be a sign of distrust. International armaments are the same. And so long as the nations of the world go on building up armies and navies and keeping weapons of defence in reserve, goodwill and real peace will be impossible.

Armaments are not only a sign of distrust in us: they provoke distrust also in other people. It is not good enough to say, "It's all right. This is *only in case* you are a nuisance." By being prepared to fight you make people suspicious of you and provoke them in turn to get ready for a fight.

There will always be rumours of evil. When nations are armed, even if it is "only in case" of difficulty, there will always be the temptation to use the armaments when anger and suspicion are aroused.

Nations will go on being suspicious of one another until one of them takes the lead and dares to trust enough to disarm completely. We shall never get anywhere so long as we wait for everyone else to begin. Before there can be real peace one nation must be willing to believe in the fundamental goodwill of its neighbours, in spite of every rumour and provocation.

We must disarm the world by the example of one nation.

Men fear that if a country disarmed others would take advantage of it. Whatever it may involve, disarmament is the only right way; and though it may mean suffering there is no excuse for not taking it. In the end it must create peace in the world. As hate provokes hatred, so trust provokes trust.

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To be armed is to confess failure in the most elementary of human relations. To talk of peace and trust and yet to be always prepared to go another way, in case of difficulty, is a most abject failure. In so far as the peace-professing nations maintain armaments they openly confess that they cannot and do not intend to be peaceful and peacemaking. You cannot make peace while you are preparing for war, however keen you may be about peace.

For the Christians it is an even worse failure than for the non-Christians. The way of Christ is by love, whatever the other person or nation may do. Christ dared to go that way even to death. Every provocation to violence and hatred was thrust at Him and He refused to be provoked; but went on giving the utmost of His love to His enemies.

There is no other way for His disciples, however often they fail Him. There is no other way but to dare to trust and love always. For them the way of war is never open because they have chosen another way. They can therefore never have any willing part in the preparation for war.

Therefore the Christian must make a personal decision never to rely on arms or violence, but always to try to create peace. Partly by the power of love in him and partly by the daring nature of his example, he will help others to go in the same way.

It is further the task of every Christian to endeavour, by his own personal decision and influence, to bring his nation for ever to repudiate the method of war and choose the way of trust. The individual Christian, the Christian group, and finally the Christian nation, will prepare permanent peace by daring to disarm.