

War & Peace

“Let your military measures be strong enough to repel the invader and keep the peace, and not so strong as to unnecessarily harass and persecute the people.” – May 27, 1863 Letter to John M. Schofield

“It is easy to see that, under the sharp discipline of civil war, the nation is beginning a new life.” – December 8, 1863 Message to Congress

“War at the best, is terrible, and this war of ours, in its magnitude and in its duration, is one of the most terrible.” – June 16, 1864 Speech at Philadelphia

“The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am. None who would do more to preserve it.” – February 21, 1861 Address to the New Jersey General Assembly

“I have desired as sincerely as any man -- I sometimes think more than any other man -- that our present difficulties might be settled without the shedding of blood.” – April 26, 1861 Address to the Frontier Guard

“Engaged, as I am, in a great war, I fear it will be difficult for the world to understand how fully I appreciate the principles of peace, inculcated in this letter, and everywhere, by the Society of Friends.” – March 19, 1862 Letter to Samuel B. Tobey

“Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time.” – August 26, 1863 Letter to James Conkling

“Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others.” – January 27, 1838 Lyceum Address

“While we must, by all available means, prevent the overthrow of the government, we should avoid planting and cultivating too many thorns in the bosom of society.” – March 18, 1864 Letter to Edwin M. Stanton

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“In this great struggle, this form of Government and every form of human right is endangered if our enemies succeed. There is more involved in this contest than is realized by every one.” – August 18, 1864 Speech to the 164th Ohio Regiment

“If I had had my way, this war would never have been commenced; If I had been allowed my way this would have been ended before this, but we find it still continues; and we must believe that He permits it for some wise purpose of his own, mysterious and unknown to us; and though with our limited understandings we may not be able to comprehend it, yet we cannot but believe that He who made the world still governs it.” – Reply to Eliza Gurney, Oct. 26, 1862

“We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God, I hope it never will until that time.” – Speech in Philadelphia, June 16, 1864

“I have seen your despach expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog gripe, and chew & choke, as much as possible.” – Telegram to Gen. Grant, August 17, 1864

I expect to maintain this contest until successful, or till I die, or am conquered, or my term expires, or Congress or the country forsakes me...” – Letter to William H. Seward, June 28, 1862

“Much is being said about peace; and no man desires peace more ardently than I. Still I am yet unprepared to give up the Union for a peace which, so achieved, could not be of much duration.” – Letter to Isaac Schermerhorn, Sept. 12, 1864

“In stating a single condition of peace, I mean simply to say that the way will cease on the part of the government, whenever it shall have ceased on the part of those who began it.” – Annual message to Congress, Dec. 6, 1864

“Save your Army at all events.” – Telegram to Maj. Gen. McClellan, June 28, 1862

“I feel any misfortune to you and your Army quite as keenly as you feel it yourself.” – Telegram to Maj. Gen. McClellan, June 28, 1862

“Be assured the heroism and skill of yourself, officers, and men, are, and forever will be appreciated.” – Telegram to Maj. Gen. McClellan, July 5, 1862

“God bless you, and all with you. Destroy t the rebel army, if possible.” – Telegram to Gen. McClellan, Sept. 15, 1862

“I may add that in this purpose to save the country and its liberties, no classes of people seem so nearly unanimous as the soldiers in the field and the sailors afloat. Do they not have the hardest of it? Who should quail when they do not? God bless the soldiers and seamen, with all their brave commanders.” – Response to a Serenade, Oct. 19, 1864

“The colored population is the great *available* and yet *unavailed* of, force for restoring the Union. The bare sight of fifty thousand armed, and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi, would end the rebellion at once.” – Letter to Andrew Johnson, March 26, 1863

“It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.” – Gettysburg Address

“He who does something at the head of one Regiment, will eclipse him who does nothing at the head of a hundred.” – Letter to David Hunter, Dec. 31, 1861

“And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories.” – Letter to Joseph Hooker, Jan.. 26, 1863

“Gen. Sheridan says, ‘If the thing is pressed I think that Lee will surrender.’ Let the *thing* be pressed.” – Telegram to Gen. Grant, April 7, 1865