

"My own trials began soon after the War broke out."



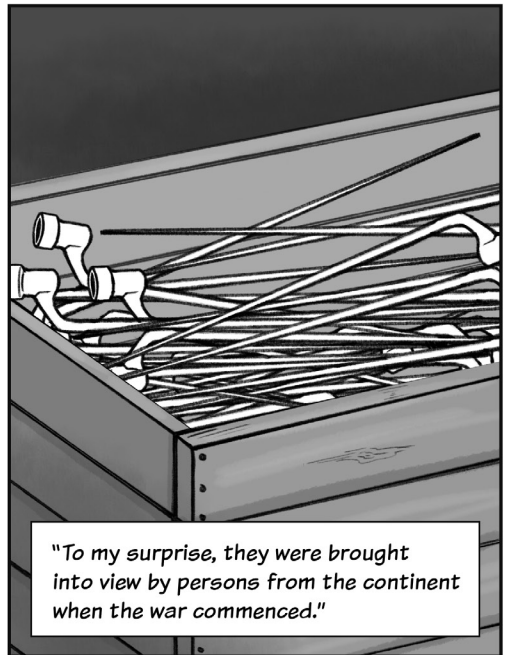
In 1764, I had acquired muskets as payment for a debt. I sold them to whalers who hunted fowl during their voyage, but I withheld the bayonets, which were only weapons of war.

So "I took that instrument from them, strenuously withheld it, and laid them all by."



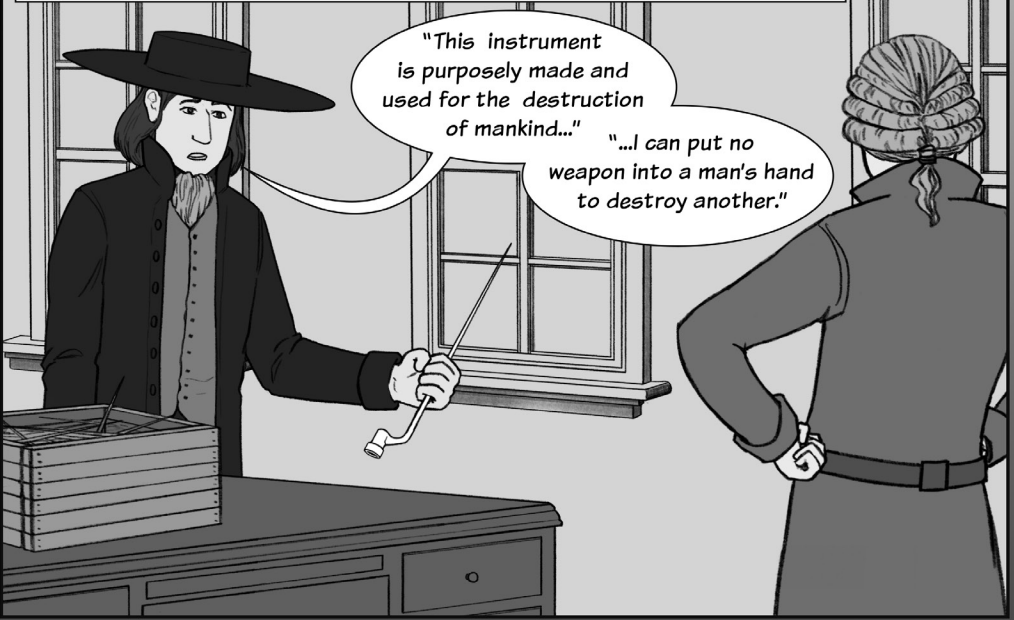
"I would have gladly have beaten them into pruning hooks" as in the scriptural verse...

...but instead, I left them to rust as "neglected and forgotten rubbish" in an old warehouse.



"To my surprise, they were brought into view by persons from the continent when the war commenced."

"The time was now come to endeavor to support our Testimony against War, or abandon it, as this very instrument was a severe test."

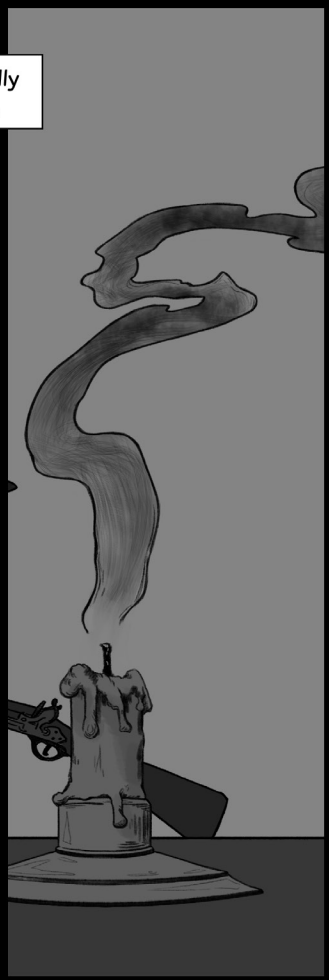
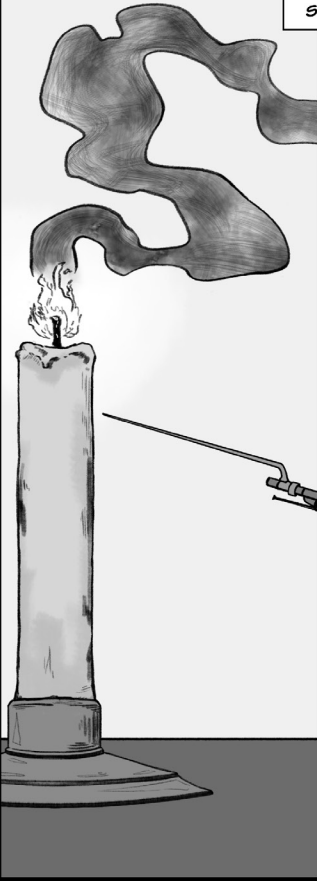


"I could not hesitate which to choose and denied the applicants."

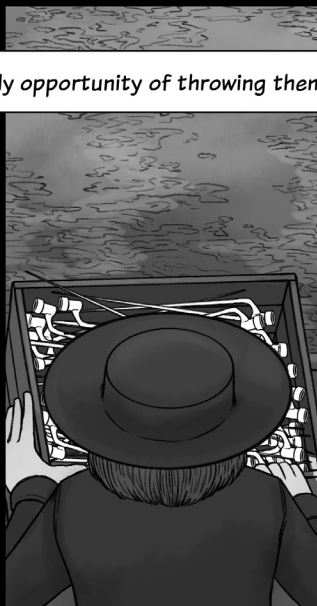


"Others came and received the same denial."

I knew the authorities would eventually seize them. I had a decision to make.



"I took an early opportunity of throwing them into the sea."



"It made a great noise in the Country, and my life was threatened."





Those in power recognized our peace principles as part of our religious expression in times of peace...

...but tolerance waned during wartime.

"I did it from principle and I have ever been glad that I had done it."

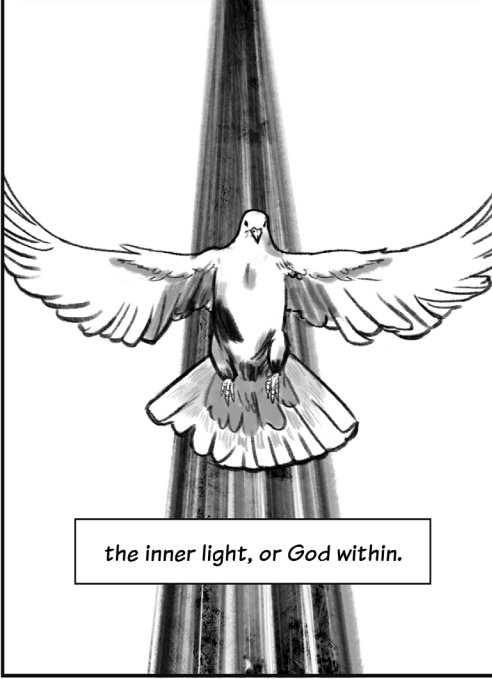
I rejected simplistic notions of our neutrality...

"Then your principles are passive obedience and non-resistance?"

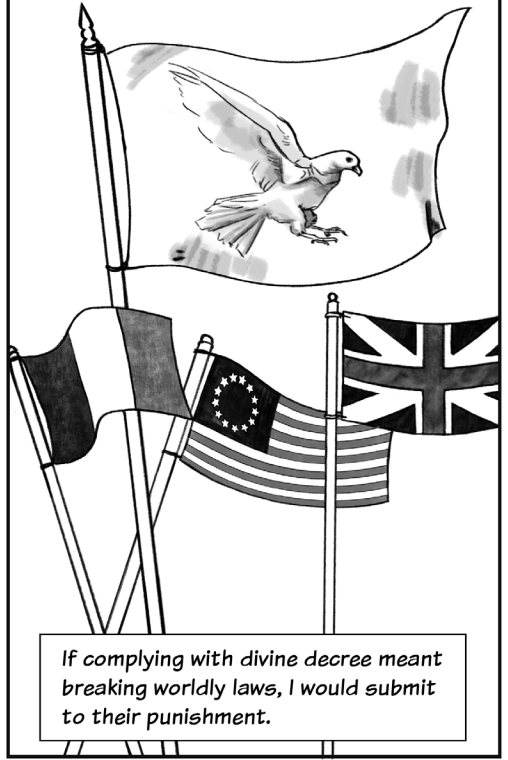
"No, my friend. Our principles are active obedience or passive suffering."

I wanted my accusers to understand I did actively obey authority, just not theirs.

I destroyed the bayonets because I was following different directives:

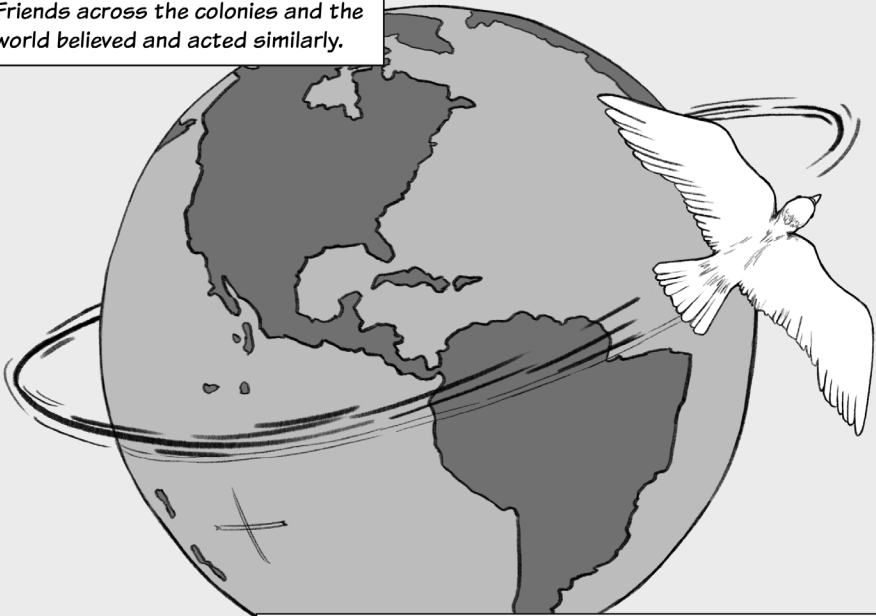


the inner light, or God within.



If complying with divine decree meant breaking worldly laws, I would submit to their punishment.

Friends across the colonies and the world believed and acted similarly.



We were neither patriots nor loyalists, Americans nor British – we belonged to a holy nation, a community united by a shared commitment to peace and bound by divine law.

I lived by these principles telling people:

"I am a hearty well-wisher to both America and Britain, a subject under whatever form civil and religious liberty may be administered."

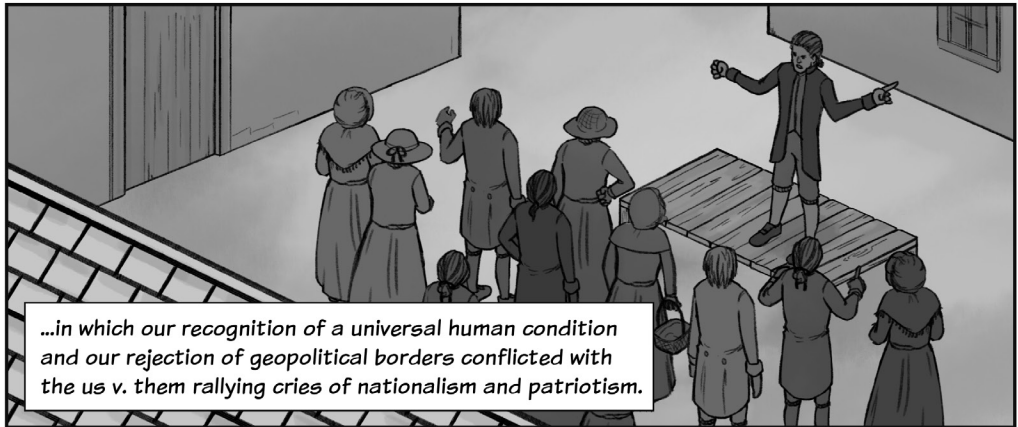


"I feel a universal love which reaches the whole human race, I feel part of nations kindred, tongues & people, the world over who work for the promotion of the cause of righteousness in the earth."

But neighbors and those in power heard these religious sentiments as evidence of disloyalty.



War had created a with-us-or-against-us world...



...in which our recognition of a universal human condition and our rejection of geopolitical borders conflicted with the us v. them rallying cries of nationalism and patriotism.

As punishment for not conforming,
those in power charged us as...

"...persons dangerous, and
inimical to the freedom and independence of
the United States of America, as encouragers,
aiders and abettors of the enemy."



They fined and imprisoned us.

Harassed and threatened us.



Shot at us.



Destroyed our property and businesses.



Even exiled and executed us.