

"THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT."

A SOUTHERN VIEW.

We cheerfully insert the following article from an esteemed minister at the South, whose name has become a sort of synonym for kindness of spirit and wisdom of counsel. His views diverge from ours almost as widely as the Poles, but it is only by temperate discussion in a Christian spirit that differences of opinion can be reconciled. We wish that our southern brethren would oftener use the columns of northern journals for the frank and manly utterance of their sentiments. It might remove our misapprehensions; it might be a safety-valve for the escape of their irritation. We hope our readers will give the article a careful examination, as embodying the sentiments of a large body of southern Christians. Some further comments may be found in our editorial columns.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—It has been my pleasure often to allude to the ability with which your paper is conducted, and to believe that it is contributing, in many respects, to promote the cause and kingdom of our blessed Redeemer. That it should coincide with us at the South, in the views it furnishes of the question of slavery, is perhaps not to be expected, and yet we might naturally suppose that those views would more fully accord with the facts of the case. As our brethren at the North are, in reference to this question, our assailants, it may be expected that occasionally a word of defence may receive attention. If you will not object, I conclude to say a few things on the subject.

Our brethren at the North mistake, in supposing, that, according to a long article of yours, published a little time since, an irrepressible conflict is going on at the South, between *free and slave labor*. So far as I have been able to perceive, *no such conflict exists*. Our country being largely, I may say principally, agricultural, the cultivation of the soil is mostly performed by slave labor. But other spheres of toil are open, and occupied by free laborers. Nor is there any collision between these two distinct classes. Thousands of German, Irish, English, Welsh and New England citizens, are here, conducting mercantile, mechanical and manufacturing operations, and never coming in conflict with slave labor, or suffering any interference from it. These are regarded with respect and esteem in proportion to the character they sustain, as industrious, truth-loving, law-abiding people. If any violate law, they may not expect to escape the penalty, whether they be slave or non slave-holders, bond or free. The collisions to which you allude are of this class; they result from the violation of equitable law. In some instances, when public opinion and the peace of society are outraged, a community may adopt a summary method of disposing of the case, and an improper violence may be allowed. But these are of very rare occurrence at the South. I doubt whether a comparison of the North and South, in these respects, would not be in favor of the latter. I may say, too, that if you knew of the many instances in which the confidence of the South has been abused by northern men, you would only be surprised that distrust and collision were not more frequent. John Brown himself passed through our State, ostensibly for business purposes, assuming the character of a Christian, and professing to regard Spurgeon as unworthy of respect, on account of his abolition views. He was kindly entertained in the homes of many of our brethren, and listened to me in one of my discourses, not thirty miles from this place. Cases of this sort are of frequent occurrence. But, as I have said, this irrepressible conflict between free and slave labor does not exist at the South. But I can tell you where it is found. This conflict is going on at the North, between *the white and black man*. Who that looks at things as they are, does not see this? In the Providence of God, it has been made my duty to travel much at the North and South, within the last fifteen years, and I am greatly mistaken, if the black man at the South is not, physically, intellectually, socially and religiously, elevated many degrees above his brother at the North. At the North it is a perpetual struggle, an irrepressible conflict of the colored race with the more favored classes. My opinion has been distinctly and maturely made up, that the truest friends of the blacks are found in the southern countries, and a more fearful evil could not befall them, than the immediate abolition of slavery, scattering the emancipated ones among the whites of the North.

There is another respect in which a fearful conflict is being waged—a conflict of sections. An unnatural, fratricidal war is taking place, between the North and the South. What is to be the issue, no mortal can tell. How soon this land is to be deluged in blood, no one can foresee. This war was commenced at the North. The John Brown raid, enkindled and fanned by northern presses, even by *some that call themselves conservative*—the long-continued silence of those presses after its occurrence, or their faint condemnation of the man and

his measures—the *Helper* book, written by a man, who, when he resided in this city, was so strongly pro-slavery, and so vindictive as to find few sympathizers—and whose scheme, if carried out, would drench our land in blood—the countenance given to this book by wealthy men, and men of official distinction in different parts of the North; all these things have awakened a distrust and indignation which may be said to be universal at the South.

This irrepressible sectional conflict is one which the South have not sought. It has been forced upon them. The interests of the North and South are intimately related. The two sections ought to be one, commercially, politically and religiously. This glorious Union ought never to be rent in twain. The South have not desired it. They have been willing to stand upon the same platform with their northern brethren, but they would not consent to occupy an inferior position. What are the facts of the case? First, the war began religiously. The North insisted that the South should not occupy the same ground of Christian equality. Thirty years ago I attended, for the first time, in a northern city, the triennial meeting of the Baptist Convention. I saw Johnson, Manly, Semple, Crane, Staughton, Cone, Knowles, Lincoln and others, in warm Christian love, deliberating on the best means of sending abroad the glorious Gospel. It was a sight which made my young heart beat with unwonted emotions. I afterwards attended nearly, if not all the meetings that occurred. In a few years, this question was introduced by northern men. The South said, we have not come together for this purpose. We meet as a missionary body; let us attend to our proper business. But the North insisted on seizing these occasions to agitate the subject. Then, the Boards at the North began to legislate in reference to it, refusing to appoint slaveholders as missionaries. The compact was broken. The South peaceably retired, to attend to their own work in their own way. What has occurred with the Baptists, is history with respect to other denominations. The bonds of religious brotherhood are rent asunder. But a little while ago, and hundreds of southern ministers and private brethren spent their summers at the North, while our northern brethren were willing to escape the rigors of a northern winter, by coming South. This association was pleasant and profitable. But the intercourse is now seriously interrupted, if not destroyed. The same process is going on in the commercial world. It may require a longer time to bring about a separation, but things are tending in that direction. And what shall I say on the political question. More than sixty members of Congress unite in commending a book which urges that northern men shall go South, as ministers, merchants, teachers, &c., for the purpose of freeing the slaves, peaceably if they can, but forcibly if they must. Northern and southern Representatives in Congress are ranged on different sides of the house in which they sit. The South desire not disunion, not one man in ten thousand pleads for it, but I ask how long can such a state of things continue, and the Union remain unbroken? What, indeed, will the Union be worth, if distrust, alienation and hatred become the characteristics, North and South?

I propose to notice another point. It is assumed by our northern friends, that the change which has taken place in public sentiment at the South, on the subject of slavery, is traceable to the unfaithfulness of northern men—that if northern men had been more decided in their testimony, the South would not now be found the apologists and defenders of the system. A great change has indeed taken place. Thirty years ago many cases of emancipation were occurring, and slaveholders were often heard to express doubts of the lawfulness of the relation. Such cases are now exceedingly rare. The general sentiment now is, that God does not disapprove of this relation, but that it is recognized by His holy Word. Indeed, many of our most consistently pious men would regard it as a wrong inflicted on their slaves, and on society at large, to carry out the views of abolitionists. I see that some northern men are beginning to blame themselves for this change of popular sentiment at the South. Dr. Wayland is of this number. He, who a few years ago seemed mortified and distressed at the conduct of the abolitionists, clamorous as they were for a separation from southern Christians, is now lamenting that the North had not been more faithful. But Dr. Wayland, and those who think with him, are mistaken. The North have surely been sufficiently clamorous on the subject. The South also have been looking into it. The whole body of the North may become intensified in their hatred of slavery, and may renounce and denounce slaveholders. But southern Christians will examine this subject for themselves. They read the Bible, and desire to be governed in all their relations by its principles and commands. With them it is a small matter that they are judged of men—He that judgeth them is the Lord. The North may shamefully caricature them, as you have done, by an article published in your columns not long since, from the *New York Tribune*. All sorts of misstatements and misconstructions may circulate in their papers, and thus popular sentiment at the North be imbued and embittered by the influence, but the South will not be terrified or ridiculed into measures. It is probable that at the South many may be driven to an extreme position, may say and do foolish things, but the great body of Christian people here will endeavor to know, and will do their duty. They will not lose their self-respect, nor less regard themselves as approved of God, because of this relation. They may be in danger, by this outside pressure, of an extreme in the other direction, but if I do not greatly mistake, they will, by the grace of God, resist this danger. There are evils among them, as there are evils at the North. These they will endeavor to rectify, notwithstanding the increased difficulty produced by this outside pressure.

This leads me to refer to the position taken by Mr. Spurgeon on this subject, induced manifestly by some appeal from this side of the water. There is, it seems to me, a vindictiveness approaching to malignity, in his allusion to slaveholders, so little in keeping with the genius of the Gospel, that it will send a pang to the heart of many a lover of Jesus, at the North and the South. He can take John Brown into his heart, where, as he says, "he lives;" but if Richard Fuller were to appear in his "neighborhood, he would get a mark which he would carry to his grave, if it did not carry him there." And who is John Brown, whom he loves with such a tender, enduring affection? An infidel! who could say, "Christ was a pretty good teacher—plenty of others like him—I don't believe in him as a Saviour—I do not want any body else to bear my sins—I am not such an extra sinner," &c. Who was John Brown? A traitor to his country!—who had prepared the plan of a provisional government, to be adopted when he should have overturned and trampled under foot the authority of the land, a premeditated, as well as an actual murderer! who had provided weapons to put into the hands of the evil slaves, and who seized a United States Arsenal, to carry out more fully his diabolical schemes; and, when he had failed in his plans, he passed away from the earth with all the unconcern of a hardened desperado, ridiculing and scoffing at the name of a Divine, atoning Saviour; this is the man that Mr. Spurgeon would receive into his heart, to "live" there as a welcome, cherished guest. Alas! alas!

I have written much more than I intended. I have written not in anger, but with grief. And what I have written would find a concurrence in the sentiment of the more than one hundred thousand Baptists of Virginia, nay more, of the five hundred thousand Baptists of the South. Many of these Baptists are slaves, recognized as our brethren

whom we love in the Lord. Even they, as they become acquainted with the subject, are annoyed by these outside influences. These, who for the most part are hardy, healthy, happy sons and daughters of toil, when properly informed, would not exchange positions with those at the North, who are engaged in similar employments.

After all, you will still say, the conflict is irrepressible. Well, my consolation in all is, that Jehovah reigns. May He still the tumult of the people, and preserve this American people, *one and indivisible.*

JAS. B. TAYLOR.

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