

THE OFFICE OF THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN... 1500 Main Street, five doors below the Exchange Bank...

Edited and published for an association of gentlemen in Virginia and North Carolina, by REV. WM. BROWN, D. D.

TERMS.

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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

New York, Jan. 1, 1861.

To the Clergy and Laity of Christian Churches in the Southern States of the Union:

We would salute you, brethren, in the spirit of the apostolic formula: "Grace, mercy, and peace." As fellow-heirs of a kingdom that "endureth forever," we have common interests and relations superior to all political bonds...

A dispassionate view of public affairs constrains the belief that a system of gross and persistent misrepresentation has had much to do with leading the nation to the verge of revolution. The South has been slandered at the North, and the North as grossly misrepresented at the South.

If this view of the question be accepted, does it not vitally affect our relations, and the duty of good citizens North and South? Do not truth, justice, and self-respect demand extreme deliberation in the adoption of measures for the redress of grievances...

In our judgment, dear brethren, the time has come for a more calm, discriminating investigation of the causes of impending perils, and for manly, Christian effort, under God, to avert them. It is not true that intelligent, Christian patriotism has succumbed to fanaticism and demagogism.

It is our appropriate work. Besides the interests common to all citizens, we have a vital stake in the perpetuation of our Federal Union on other and higher grounds. The honor and prosperity of Protestant Christianity are involved in the issue.

self-reproaches of those who neglected any part of their duty in arresting or averting the dire catastrophe.

We cannot doubt that a spirit of candor and forbearance, such as our religion prompts and the exigencies of our times demand, would render the speedy adjustment of our difficulties possible, consistently with every constitutional right.

To this end, dear brethren, and for the sake of those spiritual gifts so imperatively needed by our American Zion, let us unceasingly implore the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the rulers and people of these United States.

Gardner Spring, pastor of Brick Presbyterian church, New York; W. W. Phillips, pastor of First Presbyterian church, New York; George Potts, University-place Presbyterian church, New York; J. McElroy, Fourteenth-street Presbyterian church, New York; John M. Krebs, Rutgers-street Presbyterian church, New York; Charles P. McIlvaine, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal church in Ohio, Cincinnati; Francis L. Hawks, Rector of Calvary Protestant Episcopal church, New York; Thomas Honse Taylor, Rector of Grace Protestant Episcopal church, New York; Wm. F. Morgan, Rector of St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal church, New York; John Cotton Smith, Rector of Church of the Ascension, New York; H. Dyer, Secretary Evangelical Knowledge Society, New York; N. Baags, N. P. Durbin, Methodist Episcopal church, New York; Joseph Holdich, Secretary American Bible Society, N. York; Abel Stevens, Methodist Episcopal church, N. Y.; Edward Lathrop, Pastor of Baptist Tabernacle, N. Y.; A. D. Gillette, Pastor of Calvary Baptist church, N. Y.; Thomas Da Witt, Senior Pastor of Collegiate Reformed Dutch church, N. Y.; George W. Bethune, Pastor of Twenty-first-street Reformed Dutch church, N. Y.; Isaac Ferris, Chancellor of New York University, Thomas H. Skinner, Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.; Joel Parker, Fourth-avenue Presbyterian church, N. Y.; N. Murray, Pastor of First Presbyterian church, Elizabeth, N. J.; David Magie, Pastor of Second Presbyterian church, Elizabeth, N. J.; Charles Hodje, Alexander T. McGill, Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.; John McLennan, President Nassau Hall College, Princeton, N. J.; Henry A. Boardman, Charles Wadsworth, Charles W. Shields, Wm. P. Breed, Robert Watts, Jas. M. Crowell, Joseph H. Jones, Philadelphia.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

To the Christian Voters of Virginia.

Dear Brethren.—In a few weeks you will be called upon to approach the polls in the most important crisis which has ever befallen our beloved country. Under the solemn circumstances which surround you, it behooves all who love the Lord Jesus Christ to consider well the part which they are about to act. It cannot be denied that conscience has been in a great measure banished from her proper sphere in directing the public acts of many professed Christians; and to this source may be attributed partly the deplorable condition of things now existing. The fatal results of this dereliction are so manifest that it is scarcely necessary for me to do more than to remind you that the profanity, drunkenness, violence, unfaithfulness, and general want of virtue, (which from their diffusion, seem to be almost necessary elements of character for American Legislators,) are indirectly at least to be attributed to your support and countenance. You have helped to elect these men—you have sustained them oftentimes after they have shown themselves utterly bankrupt in morals; and thus you have not only connived at, but virtually supported them in a course of vice destructive of public and private faith, and inimical to every interest of a free people, whether domestic, social, civil or religious. It is impossible that professional duellists, and gamblers, and the foul mouthed, et id omne genus, should have been elevated to so many offices of high responsibility and dignity, if the Christian-people of the land had made that decided opposition to iniquity in high places, which it was their bounden duty to do. The curse of God seems to be upon us for this sad lack of fidelity to covenant obligations; and impressed with this fact, I wish to beseech you now at last, to retrace your steps, and manifest a true repentance by renewed obedience.

It is to be hoped that on the late day of national humiliation, this subject occupied your serious attention. Among many other sins, which it became you and Christians in all sections of the country to lament, this is surely one of great magnitude, that the church has been partly instrumental in raising to places of honor and power, men of corrupt imaginations, violent counsels, and selfish aims. It may be, that if our repentance was sincere, God will hear our prayers and avert impending calamities, but it seems certain that we cannot look for the Divine blessing until we turn from evil, and walk in the ways of uprightness.

In view then of the election of members to the approaching State Convention, it behooves Christians to pause, to consider, and to pray. Will you consummate the folly you deplore, or will you shun the evil you dread? There never was a time which demanded more circumspect action, more sin-

core Christian courage, or more fidelity to the principles of our blessed religion. We have arrived at the momentous epoch, when our whole future is to be decided, and if we yield this decision into the hands of ungodly men, then indeed do we deserve the utter reprobation of an indignant heaven. Remember that this Convention has plenary power to act for you in matters of the gravest importance. It is to say, what your relations to the United States shall be. It is to determine your future connections, and to define the limits of your national existence. It possesses authority in a moment of irritation and ill-considered haste to sever the ties which bind you to the Constitution, and to set you adrift possibly on the stormy billows of civil war. It must decide upon what terms your State shall be united with others in a new confederacy. In fine, this convention is to act for you on all the important issues now to be met.—How necessary that its members should be men of calm judgment, of unswerving fidelity, and of unapproachable virtue! How important that they should understand the vast problems to be solved, and be able in a spirit of meekness and firmness, to meet them with propriety!

There is one reason why it is especially desirable that this convention should be pervaded by a thorough moral and religious sentiment. Who can tell the consequences to virtue and religion, which shall ensue from the action of this body? A dissolution of the Union must result in a severance not only of political, but also of religious bonds. Our Bible, Tract and Missionary societies, and also our denominational enterprises must be sectionalized with the disruption of the government, Christian charity must be contracted, and the want of co-operation must cripple our exertions.

It may indeed be necessary to dissolve the Union notwithstanding all this. Upon this question, I express no opinion, but this thing I do assert, that the men who have to decide it, ought to be able to comprehend all the results, and especially the effect on religion.

See to it, Christians of Virginia, that so far as your votes go, they shall tend to the accomplishment of this object.

A VIRGINIAN.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

Hard Times.

Among the universal and perpetual topics of remark we find the "weather" and the "hard times." "The crises" has of late taken precedence of both; but following closely upon it, both in conversation and reality, comes the burden of "hard times."

If times are really hard with any of us, we begin at once to seek relief in the practice of rigid economy. This is certainly both our interest and duty. And when we enter upon our economical retrenchments, we try to lop off first those expenses, which we deem most superfluous, or least essential to our welfare and comfort. But whilst we are looking about us, to see where we can best begin to contract our expenditures, let us see to it, that we do not make some serious mistakes.

Some will begin by laying aside some extra article of dress in which they have been wont to indulge—some more regardless of the external, and less careful of the internal man will still don their fine clothes, and lay aside some of the luxuries of the table—some may deny themselves pieces of household furniture which they had set down amongst their memoranda, as purchases soon to be made. Then there are "other some"—where are they going to begin? Here is one who says, "I think I shall have to reduce my subscription to the pastor's salary this year—times are so hard."

"I shall not do that," says his next neighbor, "for I know that times are hard enough on your pastor already, but my donations to the Benevolent Boards of the church must be curtailed—I can't stand it to give as much as usual these hard times."

"I shall not only have to follow your example," says a third speaker, "but I must stop one of my religious newspapers. It costs me too much, these hard times, to take two religious, and three political papers." So the matter goes.

Now, if the three gentlemen who have just spoken, will take a little time for serious and prayerful reflection, (it being taken for granted that they are real Christians) they must come to the conclusion that their highest interests and duty are found in the service of God. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed"—both bodily and spiritually.

See then that you begin to prune in the right place. When you undertake to prune one of your fruit trees, how careful you are about the kind of branches you cut off! how careful to remove only those that are unproductive, or that drain up the fertility of the soil, without yielding fruit enough to compensate for their nourishment. So when you begin to cut down your expenses, take care not to commence cutting at those points where the richest and most abundant fruit is likely to grow, but lop off the least fruitful branches, which drain the substance of your purse.

Let us all remember, that most of our pastors and missionaries are already in straitened circumstances, and are compelled to practice the most rigid economy. They are among the men upon whom "hard times" fall most heavily. Instead, then, of applying to our consciences to find out how much they will allow us to withdraw from the support of these laboring servants of our common Master, let us examine our tables, to see if some one dish at least may not be omitted, and its price turned over to the Lord's treasury.—let us look into our wardrobes, to see if some article of dress, in which we have taken delight, may not be dispensed with in future, or so far reduced in cost as to leave a valuable surplus for some sacred use. But, by no means, let us so far contract our consciences, as to make them satisfied with any curtailing of our Christian donations. Let us never seek comfort in withholding what fairly belongs to the Lord and to his glorious cause.

Nothing is more unacceptable to God than to hold on speaking after we have left off praying.—Dr. South.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

COLUMBIA, S. C., Jan. 12th, 1861.

Rev. Wm. Brown, D. D.

My Dear Sir,—'Tis at all times pleasant, when away from home and friends, and among strangers, to meet, unexpectedly with those, who used to be of us, and have met with us around our own hearthstone, and with whom we have held pleasing converse. Such was my good fortune a few days since when on a brief visit to the thriving city of Augusta, Ga. I spent several hours with our mutual friend, Rev. Dr. W.—, and his excellent family. I need not say he expressed much gratification at meeting me and in hearing from the many friends he left in old Augusta. He is delightfully situated. Has a large, intelligent, and liberal congregation, that has more than anticipated his every wish. He has a few warm friends there who were of his congregation in Staunton. We constituted a pleasant little group, and took no note of time, but in its loss, as we recurred to the past.

Since my sojourn in this, the beautiful capital of the now seceded State of S. Carolina, I have been the eye and ear-witness of many scenes which the future historian will descant upon as of exceeding interest. I have witnessed the feeling of resistance as of one man, to the disposition of the Northern States to encroach upon the rights of the South, and expression given to that feeling in the election of delegates to a Convention. I have seen that convention constituted of the choicest men of the State, ex-Governors, ex-Chancellors, Judges, U. S. Senators, clergymen, ex-Congressmen, and large planters and merchants assembled, and with a becoming reliance upon a Divine power, and conscious of the solemn duty assumed to themselves, sever the connection with that Government framed by the noblest band of patriots the pages of history make mention of, and strengthened by nearly a century's growth. Think you that with all my veneration and love for that Union, I could be an unmoved witness of that scene? Ah! no! my dear sir, I felt a sadness that moved me almost to tears. I have witnessed the self-sacrificing and most determined spirit of this people, without respect to class, condition or sex, to sustain to the last extremity the action of this Convention. I have seen hundreds of the choicest people of this State, from the fair-haired and tender youth of fifteen, the only son of his father, and that father the prominent and talented clergyman of your branch of the church, to the grey-headed veteran, who upon the savannas of Florida and the chapparels of Mexico had braved the hardships of the camp and the death-dealing hail under the walls of Churubusco—and with his sons by his side, march at a moment's notice, to defend their own dear home from invasion. I have seen the wives, the mothers, the sisters and dearest friends of these brave men, brush away the tear, but through those tears smile their farewell—and bid them God-speed in their holy mission. I have seen the slaves, that the false philanthropy of that mistaken horde, in the North would consign to the same wretched doom, with their slavish hands, beg and entreat their master's permission to accompany the troops, in any capacity in which they could be useful—seen their exuberant joy when permission was granted, and pitted their tears when it was refused, and been moved by their heart-felt affection when pressing the hands of their young masters and sobbing, "God bless you massa!" Think you, my dear sir, these people are not in earnest, and that they can be conquered? Ah! no, when in the mistaken frenzy of those who say this Union shall not be severed, and that it can be preserved by force, and the avalanche of Black Republicanism, in the persons of their Wide Awake, shall have devastated this fair and goodly land with fire and sword—can they conquer this people? Never, no never, whilst they cherish the memory of Moultrie, or Entaw, or Ninety-Six, or Cowpens!—May kind Heaven avert so sad an alternative!

Yet, not only have I seen South Carolina dissolved the bands that circled here, as one of the stars in the bright galaxy of the thirty-three, but one by one, has Florida and Mississippi and Alabama shot from their spheres, and the booming cannon and ringing bells, have testified to me this people's joy at the sympathy with them in this great movement. Georgia, Louisiana and Texas, will soon follow. Will the misguided North give the South credit then for being in earnest? I hope most sincerely it will, and that a speedy reaction will take place. We see the retelings and some indications of the rousing up of the conservative element of the North.

The conservative element there, a large and highly respectable one, but unfortunately for us, hitherto a perfectly torpid one, could never have been aroused to a sense of their danger, but by the burning of the house over their heads. They may arouse in time to aid in extinguishing the flames, ere they spread too far. This view alone, reconciles me to our present unhappy condition. Could the South have acted in concert in demanding their rights, or in case of refusal, then agreed to a fair arrangement of the debts and property belonging in common to all the States, it would have been better. I yet hope for a reconstruction of the Union, and that it is yet destined in the hands of Providence to go on in a career of glory and in the future as in the past be the hope of the world.

Virginia's course is looked to by South Carolina with deep interest. The large mass of her people entertain for her profound respect, the ill-timed remarks of Gov. Gist's message, and the taunts and jibes and sneers of the Mercury, to the contrary notwithstanding. Permit me to remove an impression entertained by our people, prejudicial to the integrity, may I say of South Carolina, in regard to the desire on her part to re-open the African slave trade. Except one or two well-to-do great men, such as S— of Charleston who introduced the subject in the Commercial Convention at Savannah some years since, the idea is not entertained by one man out of one hundred in the State. I know what I assert, to be so, for I have taken much pains to learn public sentiment among all classes, from the Governor to the humblest mechanic. The Northern

press industriously cultivated this impression, and swelled Lincoln's vote thereby, by thousands. "The idea of such a traffic, apart from all views of policy, would shock the Christian sensibility of the South. The pharisaic spirit of the Abolition-tainted portion of the North believes the South is semi-barbarian, but in all the characteristics of true and genuine Christianity she is more than equal to the North. Her slave population will compare most favorably, in their moral and religious culture, with the class in society in the North that occupy the same place. The number of church members among the slaves, shews the attention paid by all religious denominations to that class.

The Sabbath preceding my visit to Augusta, witnessed a scene in that beautiful city, that Henry Ward Beecher or his sister, Harriet B. Stowe, would not believe did occur, unless themselves were eye-witnesses. That remarkable man "Kelly Lowe" the colored preacher of that city was buried on that day. A friend informed me, he noted carefully the procession, and counted a large portion of it, and he did not hesitate to say there were near five thousand persons in it, mostly slaves. The choir of the church, about fifty in number, chanted appropriate pieces on the way, and the scene was touching in the extreme. He had been a slave, and his master says that from infancy up to the period at which he sold him to himself, he regarded him as the most perfect character he ever knew. He never had reprimanded him. The price he paid for himself was nominal. His congregation paid him a salary of one thousand dollars a year. His influence was extraordinary, and he was an excellent and most interesting preacher.

In the event of hostilities between the North and South, the idea is entertained generally at the North that it would, to a great extent, be a servile war, and that the slaves would gladly aid them of an opportunity to exterminate the whites. I take pleasure in conceiving that it would be found a great mistake. Isolated instances there would doubtless be, of individual harshness, or it may be cruelty on the part of masters or overseers, that would prompt individuals or families to avenge such wrongs, should the opportunity occur.—These would form the exception. I venture to predict that the large mass would sympathize with their masters, and remain faithful to them, and that many instances would occur, as that of the gallant son of this State, during the Revolution, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. It was in 1782, when with his brave and devoted friend, Gen. Moultrie, after being confined as prisoners of war in Christ's Church Parish, for nearly a year, that they were permitted to go to Philadelphia on parole. In April he left Philadelphia, and arrived at Gen. Marion's camp. He remained until September, when he paid a visit to General Greene. He says—"on my way from Marion to Greene's camp, my plantation was in the direct road, where I called and staid all night. On my entering the place, as soon as the negroes discovered that I was of the party, there was immediately a general alarm and outcry through the plantation that "Massa was come, Massa was come," and they were running from every part to see me. I stood in the piazza to receive them; they gazed at me with astonishment, and every one came and took me by the hand, saying: 'God bless you massa! we glad for see you massa!' and every now and then some one would come out with a 'Ky,' and the old Africans joined in a war-song in their own language to welcome the warrior home." The good old General remarks: "it was an affecting meeting between the slaves and the master. The tears stole from my eyes, and ran down my cheeks." He says: "I have possessed about two hundred slaves, and not one of them left me during the war, although they had great offers; nay some were carried down to work on the British lines, yet they always continued to make their escape and return home." The biographer justly says, "I intend this last remark more for the contemplation of the Abolitionists, and would say to them, 'read, and at least know the sacred tie which binds the slave to his master.'"

But I fear I have trenchoned on your patience and will close with a renewal of my best wishes for your success.

Sincerely yours, J. M. McC.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

Address,

To the Clergy and Laity of the Christian Churches of the Country.

Dear Brethren,—When evils so great impend over our beloved country, every citizen should do his utmost to avert them; and especially should Christians seek the good of their native land, because of the house of the Lord their God which is in it. We have therefore presumed, humbly, but earnestly, to beseech your favorable attention to the following views touching the duties appropriate to the people of God in this day of rebuke.

The great sectional questions which divide the opinions of the North and the South, seem at length to have reached their crisis. One State has formally retracted its allegiance to the Union, others are preparing to follow, and a tempest of excitement shakes the nation. "We are in the midst of a revolution, only bloodless as yet." But every day the complications assume a more angry aspect; a fatal current seems drifting all parties with frightful rapidity towards the bloody arbitrament of the sword. Daily the public heart stands still, expecting lest the next breeze which sweeps from the South come freighted with the resounding crash of civil war, which may soon be re-echoed from all other quarters. The counsels of our rulers seem to be turned into disappointments, and the lover of his country knows not whither to look for refuge, except to God. But in this extremity a cheering voice reaches us from the great city of New York, in the form of a Christian appeal to the people of God in the South, and signed by twenty-six of the most beloved and venerable names among the clergy of various Christian denominations. A similar appeal is also issued by most revered and influential Christians from Chicago, in the great Northwest. The object of both is to summon God's people to the rescue of their

country, and to the blessed work of peacemakers; to hold out to us the right hand of love and sympathy across the chasm which threatens to divide our country; to give us their solemn assurances that sectionalism and fanaticism are not dominant at the North; and to pledge themselves to the noble work of breaking the rising power, and restoring to us our rights in the Union. Stating the solemn conviction that the victory of truth and right over error can yet be secured, if time and favorable auspices are allowed for the discussion there, they implore the South not to precipitate the rupture of the confederation before they are allowed to go behind the heated or interested partisans who have misdirected public opinion, and make the appeal to the honest and patriotic people. Every Christian at the South will concur in meeting these fraternal and generous advances in the spirit in which they are made. We know that we may bid our Northern brethren God-speed in their work, in the behalf of Southern Christians. We joyfully reciprocate their affectionate greeting, and pray God that they may be successful in moderating animosities, in removing misconceptions, in dispelling fanatical errors, and in effecting the union of us in a work so urgently needed to allay the just apprehensions of our people. But now, does it not become us, Christian brethren of the South, to co-operate in our sphere in the same peaceful work? Have we no animosities to moderate, no misconceptions to repudiate, no exaggerations of feeling and language to confess, and no advances to make towards a renewed fraternity?

All Southern Christians would deplore an unnecessary rupture of the federal Union bequeathed to us by our heroic sires, as marred their glorious work, and showing ourselves unworthy of their inheritance; as bringing the gorgeous promise of the "Empire Republic" to an early and ignominious close; as plunging the country into the inevitable evils of financial distress, and but too probably into the horrors of frequent wars; as inaugurating on this hitherto peaceful continent the jealous political system of Europe, with its balance of power, its enormous standing armies, its crushing taxation, and, ultimately, its despotic governments; as covering the claims of American Christianity and Republicanism with failure and disgrace before the world; as destroying our national weight and glory, and thus our personal security abroad; as disappointing the hopes of self-government throughout the nations, and justifying the claims of tyranny; as bringing innumerable confusions, disruptions and disasters upon the churches of Christ; and as arresting the beneficent labors of one-third of the missionaries and teachers, and drying up a similar portion of the charities which now carry life to the perishing souls of the Heathen. Surely he who would risk even the possibility of a result so dire, unless impelled to it by causes absolute and inexorable, hath not the heart of a Christian, nor even of a man. Do those causes then exist? We would distinctly say, to avoid creating a mischievous mistake, that if the Southern States of the Union are persistently refused their full rights in the confederation and its common territories, and the protection granted by the Constitution to their peculiar property, then, in our opinion, the Southern people must conclude that these causes do exist, and that the catastrophe, however lamentable, must be met, sorrowfully indeed, and yet with the resolution of freemen. But on the other hand, we cordially appreciate the honorable sincerity of the revered Brethren at the North, who assure us that, in their opinion, the necessity for this ultimate resort does not yet exist; and assuredly every motive should prompt us to hope, till hope becomes impossible, that they judge correctly. We rejoice to see grounds for such a hope in the large and patriotic minority, approaching so nearly to half the Northern community, who in the late Presidential election, cast their suffrages with so much manliness in favor of our rights; in the extensive reaction which has since appeared in public sentiment there; in the persevering hopes and efforts of our wisest and most patriotic legislators to conciliate; and in the force of truth and right when fairly presented. Nor can we permit this hope to be extinguished by the pertinacity of the leaders of that misguided party which assails our rights; when their conduct may be so fully explained by the personal exasperations of former political collisions, by their confident expectation that the imprudent haste of some part of the Southern people would compromise the justice of their cause before the nation, and by their full consciousness that the peaceful triumph of constitutional right would be the final down-fall of their selfish ambition.

We can easily believe that these considerations may prompt them to deny us justice; and yet that their constituents would be more just to us than these leaders who misrepresent them. Moreover, if sectional differences, so long and so keenly contested, had not produced many misconceptions on both sides, we should have been more or less than human, and our party history would be different from that of all other free nations. May not patience and serious discussion in the presence of interests so solemn and tremendous, dissipate those misconceptions? Is there not still ground to hope that if the Southern People would carefully avoid complicating their righteous cause by any undue haste, or by impugning against existing laws, or even prejudices, more than the absolute necessities of self-defence require; if the great issue were carried back from embittered party leaders to the body of the citizens, dismembered by all other questions of a change of administration and of public wealth which were recently mixed with it; if the North were asked whether she would yield to us a generous and fair construction of our equal rights and in the future punctually observe it, or whether she would force us to an unwilling but necessary self-defence outside the Union, the answer would be one which would restore peace to an anxious country?

Now we would humbly urge upon you, dear Brethren of the South, whether it is not due to our country, to our race, to our God, and due especially to the noble men who are entreating us to give them one more opportunity to achieve our rights and our peace for us by the weapons of argument, that we should withhold the irrepara-

ble step as long as there is a spark of hope? And to our Brethren of the North and South alike we would say, when that final step is so solemn and may be so awful, should not every honorable means for a avoiding it necessarily be exhausted by the good man before he takes it? Yes, even though we were uncertain whether the glimmer of hope were a true, living spark, or only an illusion, would it not be better to wait till that uncertainty is decided than to incur the calamities of the extreme remedy, and afterwards be haunted perhaps by the remorseful discovery that we had precipitated that which we had delayed a single day; but we would respectfully plead that it would be eminently worthy of you as Christian citizens to seek the suspension of all such measures as would cut off or embarrass the appeal from the rulers to the people of the North, as would causelessly embitter or complicate the existing differences; and, above all, such measures as would set on fire the destroying passions of civil war. It becomes us, even while we prepare for the worst to look diligently on all such measures as would cut off or embarrass the appeal from the rulers to the people of the North, as would causelessly embitter or complicate the existing differences; and, above all, such measures as would set on fire the destroying passions of civil war. It becomes us, even while we prepare for the worst to look diligently on all such measures as would cut off or embarrass the appeal from the rulers to the people of the North, as would causelessly embitter or complicate the existing differences; and, above all, such measures as would set on fire the destroying passions of civil war. 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