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imminent danger of occasioning a vast destruction of human life, a prodigious waste of treasure, a total interruption of trade and social intercourse, and an incalculable amount of moral evil; whilst it is just as impossible, in the nature of things, for the question of right or wrong to be really cleared up by such an appeal to the sword, as it was for the guilt or innocence of the accused, in mediæval times, to be settled by the wager of battle or the passage over burning ploughshares.

Under these circumstances, we look with confidence to the Government and legal advisers of our beloved Queen, fully believing that it is their honest desire that so awful and so unnecessary a calamity—we might say so great a national sin—as a war with America should be averted. In this confidence we are emboldened respectfully to ask, whether it is not possible to use the interval which must necessarily elapse between the transmission of the views of the British Cabinet to Washington and the arrival of the reply, in preparing so to meet that reply (whatever it may be) that the next step may not be a declaration of war, but the putting of the remaining issue, if any, between the two countries in train for a pacific decision.

We rejoice to see the principle of Arbitration strongly recommended by the Plenipotentiaries of the European Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Paris. Where a prospective provision of this kind exists in international Treaties, any difficulty which may arise would naturally take the course thus prescribed for its settlement before the question of right becomes merged in the storm of passion. And though there may be no such prospective provision applicable to the present difficulty, we would respectfully submit that it may not be too late for our Government, strong in the consciousness of right, to propose such a reference, should the reply from Washington not effect the happy and peaceful termination of the dispute.

There are many circumstances in the present position of England which enable her to maintain a perfectly temperate and conciliatory attitude; and would it not seem ungenerous to drive matters to extremities with the United States at the time when they are engaged in a struggle for their national integrity, if not for their national existence? May we then as Christians appeal to the enlightened rulers of this highly professing Christian country; imploring them, whilst commendably vigilant for the interests and the character of England, to endeavour to follow out the Gospel rule of doing as they would be done by,—a rule not less binding on nations than on individuals. But though we thus address those whose counsels direct the State, and with whom may rest the final decision for Peace or for War, we are well aware that much depends upon the avoidance of all exasperated feeling on the part of the public at large, often too ready to encourage a war at the first outbreak of difficulties; and we greatly desire that a thoroughly pacific temper may be maintained and increase amongst us as a nation, and especially that it may be promoted by all those who profess to preach the Gospel of Peace. There may have been words as well as deeds on the part of the Government or the people of the United States which have tried the temper and the patience

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both of our Statesmen and of our fellow-countrymen generally, but it is surely more truly dignified, as well as more truly Christian, to meet provocation with a calm reference to law than to exhibit a retaliatory spirit.

We would further suggest that after the vast sacrifices which England has made for the abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in our own possessions and by other countries, which has been an object so consistently promoted through life by the Statesmen whom we are now addressing, it would be deeply humiliating if, by being involved in this War, our country should ultimately find itself in active co-operation with the South and Slavery against the North and Freedom; though in saying this we do not intend to express our approval, in all respects, of the course pursued by the North in reference to Slavery.

We may perhaps be permitted to mention, as an additional reason for our strong advocacy of the preservation of Peace with America, that as the principal Founders of two of its states, and many of the original settlers of other states, were our brethren in religious profession, between whom and ourselves a cordial correspondence has been maintained for nearly two centuries, we have a special religious as well as national interest in the question. And though the Government of those States has long passed into less pacific hands, yet our brethren there still have a considerable influence on their State Legislatures, and their voice has often been heard with effect at Washington. We shall therefore at once apprise our American Friends of the step which we have now taken, and shall urge them also to use their influence in furtherance of the cause of Peace.

May He who still ruleth in the Earth, by his providence as well as by his grace, grant that the Wisdom which is from above, and which is pure, peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, may so prevail in the councils of the two Governments and in the hearts of the people, that the impending scourge of War may be averted from the kindred nations on each side of the Atlantic, and from the waters of that ocean which should unite rather than divide them!

London, the 9th of Twelfth Month, 1861.

(Here follow the Signatures.)