

# The War—Its Cause and Cure

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Eighty-five years ago, the war-cry of "INDEPENDENCE" rang throughout all the American Colonies, and a united people took up arms to sunder their connection forever with the mother country. The latter had been guilty of a long series of aggressions and usurpations toward the former, indicating "a design to reduce them under absolute bondage," and had haughtily disregarded all appeals to her sense of justice. As between the parties, they were in the right, and she flagrantly in the wrong. On the 4th of July, 1776, in justification of their course, they published their world-famous Declaration of Independence, in which they held "these truths to be self-evident:— that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." At that time, they held in the galling chains of chattel servitude half a million of slaves! By the standard which they had erected, and by the eternal law of justice, their first duty obviously was to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof." Instead of doing this, they went through their seven years' struggle, mingling the clanking of fetters, and the crack of the slave whip, and the groans of their imbruted victims with their cries for liberty and their shouts of victory! It was a revolting spectacle, and a horrible paradox, admitting of no justification, or even apology. When their independence was achieved, and it became necessary for them to crystallize their several powers into one general government, instead of abolishing what Mr. Madison' justly characterized as "the most oppressive dominion ever exercised by man over man," they proceeded to make that oppression organic, by granting to it certain constitutional guaranties, whereby it should derive nourishment, defence and security from the whole body politic. This was the result of a compromise, in order to make the Union complete and enduring....

What shall be said, then, of those who insist upon ignoring the question of slavery as not involved in this deadly feud, and maintain that the only issue is, the support of the government and the preservation of the Union? Surely, they are "fools and blind"; for it is slaveholders alone who have conspired to seize the one, and overturn the other. As long as the enslavement of a single human being is sanctioned in the land, the curse of God will rest upon it. That it may go well with us, let us break every yoke!

It alters nothing to say, that the South is guilty of unparalleled perfidy and treason. Granted! But why overlook *the cause of all this*? That cause is SLAVERY! If that be not removed, how is it possible to escape the consequences? Suppose we succeed in "conquering a peace," leaving things as they were; in due time, a still more fearful volcanic explosion will follow.

As between the North and the South, the conflict cannot long be doubtful; for, in point of numbers, resources, energy, courage, and valor, the latter can bear no comparison with the former. But, after the subjugation of the South, what then? Will that bring reconciliation? Is the old "covenant with death" to be renewed, and the "agreement with hell" to stand as hitherto? Is a slave representation still to be allowed on the floor of Congress? Are fugitive slaves still to be hunted as freely in the old Bay State as in Carolina? Are slave insurrections still to be quelled by the strong arm of the general government, if required? Are the "stars and stripes" still to represent fifteen slave as well as nineteen free States, and still to wave over four millions of crouching, marketable human chattels? Is lynch law still to be administered to all Northern men at the South who prefer freedom to slavery? Is freedom of speech still to be mobbed afresh, and the moral agitation for the overthrow of slavery again branded as fanaticism, and forcibly suppressed if possible? If so, then better that the flag be forever furled! If so, then accursed be such a political structure, from foundation to top-stone! If so, then hundreds of millions of dollars will have been spent, and rivers of blood shed, to none other than an evil purpose!

It is true, Mr. Stephen A. Douglas says, in a recent speech delivered at Columbus, Ohio—"The issue is not the negro; this question is above all the negroes in Christendom; it involves the freedom and independence of the ten millions, soon to be a hundred millions, of free white men in this valley." Other prominent men have uttered the same heartless and absurd declaration. As rationally might Pharaoh and the Egyptians have averred, while

tormented with the lice, blains, murrain, and other judgments sent upon them for their cruel oppression of the children of Israel, "The issue is *not the Jew*!" It was the Jew then, and it is the negro now—involving in his enslavement the most tremendous consequences to his enslavers, and a direful visitation to the whole country. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. " Ours should be the penitent confession of the brethren of Joseph: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, *and we would not hear*; THEREFORE IS THIS DISTRESS COME UPON US."

Now, we solemnly maintain, that it is the most deplorable infatuation to aim to restore the old order of things. No blessing can attend it. God has frowned upon it, and, *through judgment, provided a way of escape*. Nothing is more clear than that an "irrepressible conflict" between slavery and freedom must continue. It is useless to deny that the Union is dissolved, and every slave State virtually in rebellion against the government. Let there be no more compromise. In humbling the Southern conspirators, let the government, UNDER THE WAR POWER, either *proclaim emancipation to all in bondage*, or else take measures for *a final and complete separation between the free and slave States*. Unquestionably, the former course would be justified by the exigencies of the country, and be the readiest way to bring the war to a close, and the traitors to terms. It would also be the greatest boon that could possibly be bestowed upon the South. But if this measure be deemed questionable, then for a free, independent Northern republic, leaving the South to her fate!

*Out of the slave system comes this terrible civil war*, with whatever ghastly horrors may follow in its train. So Divine Justice has ordered it, that both North and South may be scourged for their transcendent [*sic*] iniquity in tolerating such a system in the land. Is it not so, Mr. Edward Everett, Mr. Millard Fillmore, Mr. Franklin Pierce, Mr. Stephen Arnold Douglas—Democrats and Republicans all? Say, are they freemen or slaveholders who have perfidiously captured forts, arsenals, magazines, mints, revenue cutters, steamships, and custom-houses, and are now plotting the seizure of the Capital? Men of the North! is it not your mission, in this campaign, to make it possible for a free government and a glorious Union to exist, *by decreeing the extinction of slavery as utterly antagonistical to both*? No class of human beings living have such claims upon your sympathy, justice, and benevolent intervention, as the slaves of the South. No cause *is* so sacred as theirs. In Heaven's name, do nothing to keep them longer *in* their chains! Do everything rightfully in your power those chains to sunder!

If this war shall put an end to that execrable system, it will be more glorious in history than that of the Revolution. If it shall leave it unscathed, and in full operation, —even though Southern treason may for a time be "crushed out,"—there will be nothing to look for but heavier judgments and an irrevocable doom! "For the sword of the Lord shall devour from the one end of the land to the other: no flesh shall have peace. . . . O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, BECAUSE OF THE EVIL OF YOUR DOINGS. . . . Undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free; then shalt thou be like a watered garden, and like a fountain whose waters fail not; and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt be called, THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH, THE RESTORER OF PATHS TO DWELL IN."

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