

Worcester, March 15, 1850

Dear Bradburn,

Yours of the 6th was duly received, and I ought to have answered it before. The reason I have not, was, that on reading it, I thought there was in it a tone of blame, and sarcasm even—such as I thought I had noticed in one or two of your former letters—as if I had failed in some obligation of friendship—and although I felt not the slightest resentment at it, and made every apology for it, I did feel wholly unable to reply to it. So I put the letter in my pocket, and could not make up my mind to look at it again until today. On looking at it now, I have concluded that you did not intend anything of that kind, and I hasten to answer it.

I certainly thought you were "insisting" upon my condemning Robinson, and were irritated at me for supposing that the trouble could have originated in mistake, and for doubting whether he were as bad as you represented him.

And, secondly, I did not excuse myself from forming an opinion solely on the ground of his of his [sic] having done me a kindness; but I mentioned, (as I recollect) that "I had never before heard anything but good of him," from those on whom I relied. You have some reason to know how much good I had heard of him. If I had never received any kindness at his hands, it would have been wholly unjust for me to have condemned such a man, without a hearing, especially in a case where it seemed to me there had been abundant room for misconception. But in addition to this, I mentioned his kindness to me. For me to have condemned him, would have been adding ingratitude to injustice. And I do not at all agree with you, that a man should never accept a kindness, or "take a gift," ever, lest he should thereby deprive himself of the liberty of condemning a man without a hearing. Such a doctrine would go against ever accepting, and of course, against ever doing, a kindness. When a man does me a kindness, he gives me prima facie evidence that he is kind to others also—and when his character for kindness is impeached in his absence, I am bound to remember, in his favor, his kindness to me, as I should be bound to remember in his favor any kindness which I had heard of his doing to any other person. If the kindnesses which men do cannot avail at all to protect them against hasty and onesided judgments, all idea of gratitude being one of the virtues should be exploded at once.

I have not made any "effort to argue you into the wrong"—that is, into any known or intentional wrong. I have supposed it probable that, in the first instance, you had in some way misunderstood the motives, rights, or doctrines of R. and that your refusal to speak

to him—(and I supposed, perhaps erroneously, that this was before there had been any candid or friendly attempt at obtaining an explanation)—might have irritated him, as it naturally would, (if he had been conscious of no wrong)—and thus led on to other things, until the quarrel reached the height it did. But I never supposed for a moment that you had consciously done him any wrong.

If you were acquainted with the facts, it would not be strange if we should differ somewhat as to R's conduct—at least as to degree. You and I judge very differently of mankind, I think. You divide them all into two classes—angels and devils. I am a Sadducee (is it not the Sadducees?)—and believe neither in angels nor devils—but that the best and the worst are but humans—not very wide of the other either, in their intrinsic character. You expect more, both of good and evil, from mankind—or rather from particular individuals—than I do. Of course, you are often disappointed. But enough of this.

Webster had done it now, has he not? All his talk about the obligatory character of the resolution of 1845 for the future admission of new slave States to be formed out of Texas, is foolery. "New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union." But no one Congress have any power to fix the terms in which any future Congress shall admit a State—and if Webster did not think of that, it was a blunder, which, in him, would be as disgraceful almost as his crime is, if he did think of it.

Yours truly,

L. Spooner