

1864

## Our Country and Its Cause

Samuel T. Spear

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# OUR COUNTRY AND ITS CAUSE.

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## A DISCOURSE

PREACHED OCTOBER 2D, 1864,

IN THE

SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

OF

BROOKLYN,

BY

*Rev. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, Pastor.*

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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"THE UNION" STEAM PRESSES, 10 FRONT STREET.

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BROOKLYN, October 2, 1864.

*Rev. Samuel T. Spear, D. D.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Having listened with much edification to your discourse of yesterday, from the text Romans 13, Chap., 22, and appreciating the deep importance to our country at the present time, of the principles and views therein enunciated and so ably vindicated and enforced, and convinced of the beneficial results to the cause of Christianity and patriotism, which would flow from the publication of this discourse; we respectfully solicit a copy of the same for that purpose:

WALTER S. GRIFFITH,  
J. S. T. STRANAHAN,  
GEORGE B. LINCOLN,  
GEORGE W. PARSONS,  
HUGH AIKMAN,  
GEORGE A. JARVIS,  
CZAR DUNNING,  
S. B. DUTCHER,  
G. R. DOWNING,  
JOHN WILLIAMS,  
E. C. HALLIDAY,  
A. L. VAN BUREN,  
NEHEMIAH KNIGHT,  
GEORGE P. WILEY,  
DAVID B. BAYLIS,  
WILLIAM HANNAHS,

FRANKLIN CLARK,  
S. R. HUTCHINSON,  
D. J. WHITING,  
HENRY HILL,  
W. H. BOW,  
P. S. ELY,  
J. H. JACKSON,  
WILLIAM JACKSON,  
GEORGE C. WHITE,  
E. L. SANDERSON,  
JAMES McMULLEN,  
W. M. AIKMAN,  
WALTER S. GOVE,  
WILLIAM W. ROSE,  
FORBES DUNDERDALE,  
R. F. HOWES.

BROOKLYN, October 5, 1864.

*To Messrs. Griffith and others:*

GENTLEMEN:—I have received your request for a copy of my sermon on "OUR COUNTRY AND ITS CAUSE." I herewith transmit a copy for the purpose named in your letter, hoping thereby to serve the interests of our country.

S. T. SPEAR,

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OUR COUNTRY AND ITS CAUSE.

"WHOSOEVER THEREFORE RESISTETH THE POWER, RESISTETH THE ORDINANCE OF GOD; AND THEY THAT RESIST, SHALL RECEIVE TO THEMSELVES DAMNATION."—Rom. 13 : 2.

GOD'S LAW AGAINST REBELLION.

THE theme of the sermon which I am about to preach in your hearing, I shall entitle OUR COUNTRY AND ITS CAUSE. The text, a fitting passage for this purpose, contains the law of God on the subject of rebellion. Taken in itself, and in its corollaries, it underlies and determines all my views in respect to the present war. The verse immediately precedent, commands every soul to be "subject unto the higher powers," clearly referring to the civil authorities. The reason for this subjection is given in the fact, that "the powers that be, are ordained of God." Hence the *religious* obligation of obedience to the civil authority. Hence, too, he that "resisteth the power, resisteth the *ordinance of God*;" and hence again, those who resist, are justly obnoxious to the penalty with which civil law is armed. Such is the law of God in respect to the sin of rebellion.

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, GOD'S ORDINANCE.

No one, certainly no religious man, will doubt whether the Government of these United States *is* "the ordinance of God." If this were true of the Roman power referred to by Paul, notwithstanding its heathenish and oppressive character, then it certainly must be true of the *national* authority established in this land. While this Government as to its form and method of continuance, was originally created by the people, yet being thus created, it becomes "the ordinance of God," entitled to the obedience of the subject, and divinely armed with penal power to suppress and punish all unlawful resistance to its claims.



### THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SUPREME.

Nor again, will any enlightened and candid man deny, that the Government of these United States is the *supreme* civil authority in this land, acting directly upon all the people in all the States and throughout all the Territories. It is a *Government*, and not a treaty or league between independent nations. The Constitution, and all laws passed in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made under the same, are expressly declared to be the *supreme* law of the land. Hence any effort of a State, or any portion of the people to vacate or destroy this authority, whether in the form of nullification, secession, or military resistance, is treasonable in its character, imposing upon the Supreme Government the duty of arresting the effort, and bringing its authors to justice. This it must do, or cease to be a Government. If it has not the power to do this, then it is not a Government. If having the power, the officers of law decline to wield it, then they are traitors themselves, unworthy of their trust, and enemies of the public good.

### A STATEMENT OF FACTS.

Bearing these principles in mind, we come to a grave question of fact: How happens it that this once peaceful and happy nation is now involved in all the perils and sorrows of a dreadful civil war? Who began this contest? Let a word or two of history be my answer to this question.

In the autumn of 1860, the people, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, entered upon a Presidential Canvass, whose result was the choice of ABRAHAM LINCOLN as their President for the period of four years from the 4th of March next ensuing. This election was strictly legal in its time, and legal in its majority; and hence its constitutional effect was to make Mr. Lincoln President of these United States, and as such, the Minister of God.

Was Mr. Lincoln so recognized by *all* the people? The answer of this question forms one of the darkest and most melancholy chapters of our political history. The proceedings adopted by large bodies of the people in the slave-holding States, will be



memorable alike for their unreasoning infatuation, their moral criminality, and the terrible woes to which they have given birth. It was a sad hour for them, and for us, when they broke the bond of peace, and threw down the dire gauntlet of war. Acting under the inspiration of treacherous leaders, who had been long waiting for an opportunity and maturing their plans, the Southern people refused to be governed by the legally expressed will of the majority. Though they shared in the election, they declined to abide by the choice. Under the pretended right of Secession, State after State professed to withdraw from the Union; and when seven States had thus withdrawn, they organized a Confederate Government at Montgomery, in Alabama, hostile in its character, repudiating the authority of the Constitutional President, and forcibly taking possession of the Forts, Mints, Property, and Military Stores of the United States lying within its pretended jurisdiction. In a word, these seceders made war upon this Government. These acts on their part were acts of war. All this was done during the winter of 1860 and '61, and while Mr. Buchanan yet held the office of President, surrounded, I am sorry to say, by as infamous a nest of traitors in his Cabinet and among his counsellors as ever disgraced this fallen world. That winter was one of the darkest periods in the history of this whole tragedy.

In the Spring of 1861, Mr. Lincoln was formally inaugurated into office, and became in fact President of these United States, being bound by the solemnities of an oath to support the Constitution, and execute the laws of the land. He took occasion to address the whole people, to exhort the insurgents in the most paternal manner not to pursue their mad purpose of dissolving the Union—assuring them that he had no disposition to interfere with a single one of their Constitutional rights, yet distinctly informing them that he meant to assert the supreme jurisdiction of this Government, and faithfully execute the laws. The Inaugural of the President was worthy of the man, and worthy of the hour. It inspired the nation with hope, especially when contrasted with the vacillating imbecility of Mr. Buchanan. All honest people felt that it was right. Traitors



sneered at it ; but patriots welcomed it as alike considerate and firm. As the first official utterance of the President, it was accepted as a great relief from the oppressive uncertainty which had hitherto burdened the public heart. It gave promise that all was not to be lost.

In a little more than a month after this inauguration, the insurgents, by the express order of Jefferson Davis, made the attack upon Fort Sumter. Anderson and his noble band met the attack in the name of their country ; and yet after a terrible bombardment, for which the Rebels had been months preparing, these defenders of the flag were compelled to surrender. Down went the symbol of the nation's honor, and up went the flag of treason—a scene that stung every loyal heart to the very quick. Almost immediately four other States rushed into the arms of the rebellion,—States, too, in which the popular vote had been unequivocally adverse to this dreadful experiment. Against the will of the people they were dragged in by the machinations and intrigues of desperate and wicked men. Public threats were uttered, and traitorous preparations made for the capture of Washington. Some 30,000 Rebel troops were already under arms ; and the Confederate Congress at Montgomery had passed a bill for raising 100,000 more, and that too before a single soldier had been enlisted in defense of the nation. This state of things laid the basis for that wonderful uprising of public feeling in the loyal States, which swept everything before it. The people saw that the Rebels meant war, that their leaders were terribly in earnest, that the day of negotiation and compromise was past, and that nothing but the sword could save the nation. In the name of their country, in the name of the Constitution, burning too under the inspirations of a glorious history, the people of the loyal States were ready to accept the dreadful issue of war. Traitors at the North and Northern Sympathizers with treason were for the moment hurled headlong from the public regard. They dare not face the intense passion of the hour.

The President, as it was his solemn duty to do, gave *official* and *legal* form to this feeling of the national heart. He summoned the nation to arms. He did not *begin* the war, as some



affirm who ought to know better: he simply *accepted* a war already begun during the administration of his predecessor. So far as the insurgents are concerned, he found the country in a state of war. Having called for 75,000 troops to defend the Capital, he convened the Congress of the United States, to prepare for the appalling struggle thus forced upon the people. War-measures were speedily adopted; and the nation, as yet unskilled in the art of war, and with no adequate apprehension of the greatness of the work, committed her life and her fortunes to the God of battles. She resolved to put down this rebellion by military force. This is the precise thing which she announced to the world, and to which she committed herself before all mankind. For a little more than three years the Government has been actively engaged in carrying out this decree. Large sums of money have been expended, and a great many lives sacrificed; and still, the war problem has not yet reached its final solution. The work is still on hand, to be prosecuted or abandoned.

#### THE MORAL NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE.

It is then perhaps a good time to submit the following question to our consciences, and to our God: Did the nation do right, did the President do right, and did Congress do right, in accepting the military issue in the circumstances now recited? Was it right to attempt the forcible suppression of this rebellion? I thought so at the time; and I still think so. I know, that there are some so called Peace-men, who cry for peace on almost any terms, who denounce the war on the part of the Government as cruel and wicked, who have done their utmost to embarrass the Administration in its prosecution, who have used even the harp of a thousand strings with which to play all the tunes of a croaker, some of whom though gentle as lambs towards the rebellion, are very belligerent towards the Government. These persons, in my judgment, are either traitors at heart, or do not correctly apprehend the true nature of this contest. What then is its nature, considered in a moral point of view? To this question I give a two-fold answer:

First, on the part of the Rebels it is *treason*, open, malignant



treason against the National Government, repudiating its jurisdiction, and designed to destroy its territorial integrity,—treason long planned, as many of its leaders have distinctly affirmed,—treason too against a *popular* government, committed by the very class of men who for years had controlled the political councils of this nation,—treason for no cause that justifies a forcible revolution,—treason without just provocation or excuse,—treason in the supposed interests of a slaveholding aristocracy, and against the rights of the masses. No man can point to any act of this Government, any law of Congress, or any act of the President, or any principle adopted by any political party in the Northern States, or any act of State Legislatures, that before God can afford the least justification for this rebellion. The election of Abraham Lincoln was the immediate occasion of the outbreak ; but I ask in all soberness, Had not the people a right to choose whom they would for President ? Mr. Stephens, one of the ablest of Southern statesmen, told the people of Georgia, that this election furnished no just occasion for secession. You look in vain to the Constitution for any such right. The right does not exist in the plan of our national system ; and the thing itself can never be accomplished without destroying its integrity. Hence I say distinctly and strongly, that this struggle on the part of the Rebels is simply the struggle of *traitors* against the supreme authority of the land. Such it was in the outset ; and such it is to-day. It is, moreover, the most wicked treason in its principles and purposes, that was ever perpetrated in the history of man. I must call things by their right names. With me a spade is a spade ; and a traitor is a traitor. “ Our present adversaries ” are traitors ; and while occupying this attitude, and seeking to subvert the Government of my country, they are not my political brethren. I do not recognize them as such. I contemplate them only as criminals, public enemies, deadly assassins against the order and peace of society. I know full well that some people have honeyed words, soft phrases, ambiguous rhetoric in application to this issue ; some who are unsparing in their denunciations of the Government, and apply the very vilest language to the President, do not seem to know that there are any *armed* traitors in this land ; it is perhaps conven-



ient for them not to know it; yet my moral nature makes it utterly impossible for me thus to deal with this wicked thing. I call it *treason*, and its authors *traitors*—just what it is, and just what they are. This is my diction for every man, whether Northern or Southern, who knowingly and willfully puts himself in alliance with this wicked rebellion. I began the diction in the outset, and I expect to continue it to the end. I utterly scorn those political exigencies and sinister ends, by which this fact is sought to be ignored. I can have no sympathy with parties, platforms, candidates, or speakers, that fail to recognize this fact. This, let me tell you, is the vital fact in the question. Take it out; and the whole character of the struggle is at once changed.

Turning then, in the second place, to the Government, you have an effort of established authority to suppress an unhallowed rebellion. Such it was in the commencement, and such it continues to be. Some, I know, charge the Administration with adding *other* purposes to this war, especially the abolition of slavery; but the charge is not true. Mr. Lincoln in his treatment of the slavery question has repeatedly said, that as President invested with war-powers, he should deal with slavery solely and only in its relation to the question of *victory* and the preservation of the Union. He may not have always been wise, or he may have been wise; but his policy and the policy of the Government are perfectly clear. Take his own words: "My enemies pretend I am carrying on this war for the sole purpose of abolition. So long as I am President, it shall be carried on for the sole purpose of restoring the Union." All his acts agree with this statement.

The distinct and positive mission of this Government—the thing which it has been, and is still trying to do—is to put down this rebellion. To state its position differently, is to utter a glaring untruth.

Let the Rebels lay down their arms; let them do what every good citizen is bound to do, and will do; let them obey the laws of the land; and the fighting will come to an end at once, and all the questions to be adjusted thereafter, including that of slavery, will be remitted to the Courts of law and the legislation of Congress. But so long as the rebels continue to fight, the Govern-



ment has no alternative but to meet them by an armed force, doing its utmost to compel their submission. The case admits of no other course. Any other would be fatal to our nationality. Any other would have resulted in the dissolution of the Union, and proved the final death of the Great Republic. Men not having the responsibility of conducting the war, may find fault with this or that measure of the Government: yet I affirm that any Administration, be it Democratic or Republican, really in earnest, really meaning to conquer the rebellion and preserve the Union, would have been compelled to adopt substantially the very measures that have been adopted. Any Administration would have been compelled to resort to the war-powers of Government,—to raise armies, provide money, build ships, fight battles, bombard cities, blockade the Southern coast, in short, to do everything justified by the usages of civilized warfare, to weaken the enemy and strengthen its own cause. If you fight, you must fight. You must not *play* fight, but actually do the work. It is a terrible process; blood flows; men are wounded and killed; families weep; the land groans; the heart sickens at the sad necessity; but, in the presence of an armed rebellion, the *end* both justifies and demands the *means*. The question is—Shall this Government be subverted? Shall this glorious Union be dissolved? Shall this nationality die? Shall armed treason be successful, and shall posterity for ages to come be cursed with the calamities of this success? This is the question; and in comparison with it all others are insignificant. The Rebels have made the sword the only instrument of its solution. In using that sword the nation is simply defending itself, defending its own life, and defending all the interests which are committed to that life. A people that will not do this, do not deserve to be a people; and they will not be long. Disintegration, anarchy, and ruin will very soon be their fate. Civil authority that cannot be maintained is but the name without the thing.

In respect then to the *moral* question, I take the ground, that the Government is *right*, morally right before God, and that it will so appear on the page of impartial history, in wielding the military power of the country for the utter extinction of this



rebellion. Here I have no doubt, and never had any. I do not belong to that class of persons who are in doubt on this question, who cannot tell whether the Rebels are right, or the Government is right. For all the purposes of my own action, I assume absolutely, without hesitation or doubt, that the *rectitude* is with the Government, and that the God of that rectitude is also there. This rebellion is not the fault of the Government. It is not the fault of the Northern people. It was not gotten up by the Northern people, or by any section of them. It is not due to what some are pleased to style Northern fanaticism. It is the creature of the Southern mind, chiefly of a few leading conspirators, without any just provocation in facts, and with no possible defense in the Constitution of the United States. Deeply do I regret the necessity of asserting authority by the force of arms; but the necessity being upon us, then I say to the nation and to every man in it, to the Army and the Navy, to such distinguished apostles of peace as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Hooker, Hancock, Burnside, Meade, Farragut,—Stand to your guns, load them with canister and grape, and keep loading them and firing them into the rebel ranks till this treason bows to the demands of law. Yes, stand to your guns, and now settle once for all and forever, that the legally expressed will of the majority is, and shall be the law of the land. This is my doctrine for the men on the field and for the people at home. I propose now to plant our nationality upon solid rock, and in the conquest of this rebellion, put an end to all armed resistance to the supreme authority, for at least a long time to come. I have no sympathy with that milk-and-water theology or philanthropy, that to save *individuals*, would murder a *nation*. I go for saving the latter, let the cost in life and money be what it may. In such a crisis I want something more than general platitudes about the Union, in our public men and in candidates for the Presidency. I want to know precisely what they mean, and what they will do, in application to the great and vital issue of the present hour. If they stand on the war-platform, if they believe in suppressing this rebellion by an armed force, let them say so. If they stand on the peace-plat-



form, if they propose to cure this rebellion by the free use of rose-water, then let them say that. Let them speak out plainly, so that plain people can understand them. The man who fails to do this, can never receive my vote. As a voter, I am not to be hoodwinked by any studied strategy in the use of words.

#### THE MILITARY SITUATION.

Having thus canvassed the *moral* question, I come now to inquire into our *military* situation. Where are we, and what are our prospects for the future? Some tell us, that nothing has been gained, that no progress has been made towards the end, that the war on the part of the Government is a "failure," and hence that any farther prosecution thereof is useless. Such people are of course in favor of peace on the best terms they can get. Is this a true view of the facts past and present? Let us see.

Bear in mind, that all great wars must of necessity be somewhat *slow* in their character. With half a million of men on each side, they cannot be closed up in a day, a week, or a year; one battle does not settle the question; and especially is this true, where, as in our own case, the theatre of war is very large, and the combatants are men of the same race and the same metal, and have the same style of military training. Overlooking this view, the public enthusiasm is very apt to demand military impossibilities; and when failing to gain them, just as apt to sink into the state of discouragement. This, to some extent has been the infirmity of the American people; and it has given to those who oppose the war, or who for party purposes oppose the Administration, the needed opportunity to pronounce the war a "failure," and create dissatisfaction with the executive and military authorities of the land.

Remember too, that the war on the part of the Government, while *defensive* in its moral design, has of necessity been one of *invasion* in a military point of view. The Federal troops have been compelled to invade the territory of the rebellion, to meet the foe in intrenched positions, and encounter all the perils of fighting in an enemy's country. True, this has carried the chief desolations of war to Southern soil; yet considered in a military



light, it has given a very decided advantage to the Rebels. They have had the inner and the shorter lines, and of course the greater facility for the concentration of troops.

Add again, that, owing to the structure of Southern society, Jefferson Davis has been enabled to wield the resources of the rebellion with a despotic unity and rapidity of execution, which have not been practicable at the North. His theory has been that of making a tremendous struggle in comparatively a short time, a very good theory if successful, yet exhausting and absolutely fatal if unsuccessful. It consumes the war-power of a people very rapidly, and soon brings them to the extremest limit of possible endurance. I doubt whether any people in the whole history of the world were ever pressed into so much military service in so short a time. Certainly nothing like it has been witnessed in the loyal States.

So too, the institution of slavery enabled the Southern people to furnish a larger number of white soldiers in proportion to their population without essentially breaking up the industries of society, than could be supplied from the North. The black man remaining at home, and tilling the soil, was an element of military power; and this is one reason why the contending armies were for a time so nearly equal in numbers. It is a good reason too, why the Government should strike at slavery, and by placing the black man on the side of the Union, seek to weaken the Rebels in this direction.

Add once more, that in the outset the Rebels had a distinct, definite, and desperate policy, for which they were previously prepared. They started in their full strength. The loyal States, on the other hand, were for some time *feeling* after a policy. It took time for them to find out what they had to do, and then to prepare for doing it. The task grew upon their hands; and it was not until they were thoroughly instructed by experience, that they fairly settled down to the deliberate business of war.

It is true also, that in the commencement the Rebels had the advantage in the line of Generals. Circumstances had made them more of a military people than we were. It required time for the Government to lay its hands upon the right men to lead



our armies—the men of skill and the men of pluck—the men who were absolutely true to the flag and would fight for it. Such leaders as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Farragut, and others of like stamp, were to be *found*, and in a certain sense *made* by the actual trial and experience of war. We have found the men at last: we have laid aside the military heroes on paper; and to-day we have greatly the advantage over the Rebels in the line of skilled, able, and earnest commanders.

England and France too, though professing to be neutral, have been practically the allies of this rebellion. They have given it a powerful moral support; and England certainly has aided it very largely in the way of war-materials. They have desired its success; and this has strengthened the cause of the Rebels, and proportionately increased the labors and perils of the defenders of the Union.

I have stated these several circumstances that you may take them into the account, as I now proceed to the question of ACTUAL RESULTS. What are the facts?

We all know that when the present Administration came into power, the Federal Government was practically expelled from all the country south of the Delaware, Ohio, and Missouri Rivers. It had no Army and no Navy, at all adequate to the purposes of even a small war. A treasonable Confederacy, embracing seven States, had already been organized. North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas were just on the brink of joining themselves to the Rebel forces, as they did in a very short time. The danger was imminent that Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky would follow in the same line. Multitudes of traitors and spies swarmed in the public offices of the Government. Large quantities of war material had been transported from the North to the South, and nearly all the Southern forts had been seized by the Rebels. The people at the North were divided in opinion; they looked on with amazement; they were stricken down with a terrible paralysis; and in fact, they did not know what to do, or whither they were drifting. Such was the state of things when the Executive Administration of the Government passed into the hands of Abraham Lincoln.



Such is the terrible legacy of difficulties which Mr. Buchanan left for Mr. Lincoln to assume, and from which, if possible, to extricate the nation. The task surely was no easy one. A more mournful spectacle can scarcely be found on the page of history. Nothing like it had ever met any previous Administration when coming into power.

How do the facts now appear? Every man not willfully blind or grossly ignorant, must concede that we have made a wonderful advance towards the conquest of the rebellion, which, considering the greatness and difficulties of the work, is without parallel in the annals of the world. We have conquered and now hold full three-fourths of the territory claimed by the Rebels in the outset. We have produced an immense Navy, and with it enforced the most extensive and successful blockade known in history. Beginning at Norfolk, and reaching along the Atlantic seaboard into the Gulf of Mexico up to New Orleans, we have, with the exception of Wilmington and Charleston, captured all the forts and naval stations which the Rebels had seized. We have gained military possession of the Mississippi River, and to-day firmly hold all the fortresses on the great Father of Waters, thus bi-secting the rebellion from North to South. We have split the rebellion up into military fragments and patches, and greatly reduced its power of concentration. We have taken from the enemy more than two thousand cannon.

Ten of his principal cities, three of them Capitals of States, have fallen into our possession. General Sherman, by one of the most splendid campaigns of any age, has pressed his way into the very heart of Georgia, and captured Atlanta, inflicting an irreparable loss upon the Rebels, and securing an immense advantage to the Union. General Sheridan has recently given them another deadly blow; and General Grant will in due season, as we doubt not, do the same thing at Richmond. Every sign, too, abundantly shows, and the statistics of population conclusively prove, that the rebellion has been brought to the very last stages of military life by sheer exhaustion in the way of fighting men. So say the eminent Generals in the field; so say those who have been prisoners in the hands of the Rebels; and



so says the merciless conscription with which Jefferson Davis has filled up his wasted ranks, robbing alike the cradle and the grave. The hopes of the Rebels from foreign intervention are at an end. Their finances are ruined, and their country almost ruined. They are weak, and we are strong. The cause of the Government and the Country was never more hopeful, and that of the rebellion never more desperate, so far as the military question is concerned.

These facts tell their own story. Contrast the rebellion in its present *status* with the outset; and where is it, and what is it? A *military* failure. It has not succeeded; and if the people remain faithful to the Government, it *cannot* succeed. The end is near, unless the American people shall now perpetrate upon themselves the enormous folly of deserting their own cause. We can now sooner conquer a peace than we can possibly procure it by any other means. The last hope of the Rebels is in a divided opinion at the North, that shall in some way palsy the military arm of the Government. They want a change of policy; and hence they feel a deep interest in the coming Presidential election. This interest, alike in the fact, the character, and the motive, conveys its own lesson to a truly loyal mind. I exceedingly doubt the wisdom of doing that which would most gratify our enemies and best serve their purposes.

And now, my friends, and fellow-countrymen, I ask in all soberness and candor, whether in view of these facts you call this war a *failure* on the part of the Government? Is it a failure? Is this the proper title? Is it wise, is it true, is it just, is it patriotic, thus to misrepresent and belittle our successes? Is it generous to charge an Administration through whose agency these results have been gained, with imbecility, stupidity, ignorance, want of energy and skill in the method of conducting the war? Is this the way to speak of the achievements of those noble men who have fallen on the field, and moistened the soil of their country with their blood? Is this a suitable homage to those gallant commanders whose deeds of valor will give them a place in history as long as history has a being? Is this indeed the tribute which the American people have it in their heart



to pay to the Army and the Navy? Shall we march back our soldiers, and taunt them with the bitter scorn of military failure? Shall we look up into Heaven with no gratitude for that overruling providence which has so wonderfully fostered our cause? Have we no candor? Can we not admit facts to be facts? Must we distort them for sinister purposes? Shall we sit down with craven souls, and do nothing but mutter complaints, when the military skies bid us to be cheerful? What shall be thought of those whose highest hopes lie in the failure of their country's cause, who are sad when our armies win, and jubilant when they are defeated? Such men may be very zealous partisans, but surely they are not patriots. When I look at the facts, I feel proud of my country, proud of its Government, proud of those who have administered that Government, proud of the Navy and the Army. In the name of our glorious nationality, I accept the record, and bless God for it with all my soul. Never since sin and sorrow entered this fallen world, has so much been done in an equal period of time, and amid equal difficulties. Failure! That, let me tell you, is not the right word. It is a sin against the facts—a burning shame—a vile slander upon the truth. My hearers, you know better; the country knows better; the world knows better; and even the Rebels know better. Our excellent President, with his plain but comprehensive common sense, with his tried integrity, with his careful but firm judgment, with his true devotion to the flag of his country, with his love of liberty and equal rights, born of the people, and trusting the people, thoughtfully watching and following the providence of God, is no failure, whatever the politicians may say. His name will be honorably mentioned when they are forgotten. The country has had but few such men. Grant, with his tenacity of purpose and versatility of genius, content to do the military work committed to his hands,—Sherman flanking the Rebels at a dozen points, and driving them out of Atlanta,—Sheridan “whirling” them through Winchester at more than double quick, pursuing them to Fisher’s Hill, and there giving them a second defeat,—Farragut fastened to the mast of his ship, and sailing by the forts in the Bay of Mobile,—Butler bringing order out of confusion in New



Orleans,—the Secretary of State keeping us at peace with the other nations of the Earth,—the Secretaries of the Treasury, the Navy, and the Army, working night and day to supply the means,—the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives giving their best thoughts to the legislation of the country,—the bankers and banking-houses loaning millions upon millions of money to the Government,—the Sanitary and Christian Commissions that have sprung up, as if by magic,—the people that have pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to this cause,—the women whose handy needle-work has known no weariness when devoted to the comfort of the soldier,—the wounded and the war-worn veterans that have suffered, and are willing to suffer:—these persons and these agencies are no failure. The men and women who have given themselves to this service, have not failed; and they will not. The Stars and the Stripes, the emblem of a nation's life and honor, are, and will be, safe in their keeping. The flag floats, and float it will, till not a traitor shall be left to question its supremacy; and then, I trust, it will continue to float over a peaceful land, the symbol of a happy and a strong people, till the trump of Gabriel sounds the knell of time, and brings Earth's mighty drama to its final pause.

#### THE QUESTION OF PEACE.

Turning now to the question of peace, I take it for granted, that every man in this audience and all just persons throughout the country desire peace. In this general sense we are all Peace-men. What then is the surest and safest road to this end? Two plans are proposed for the consideration of the American people,—the one consisting in a continuous and vigorous prosecution of the war till the Rebels lay down their arms,—the other, in a suspension of hostilities on the part of the Government and a convention of the States. Which of these plans shall we adopt? I am in favor of the first, and entirely opposed to the second, and for the following reasons:

IN THE FIRST PLACE, I SAY FRANKLY THAT I DO NOT WANT ANY PEACE WITH THIS REBELLION SO LONG AS IT MAINTAINS THE ATTITUDE



OF ARMED HOSTILITY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. I propose, for one, fairly and squarely to meet the question, whether when the people elect their President by a constitutional majority, he shall be peaceably accepted and obeyed by the defeated minority. I do not wish to dodge this issue, or make a compromise in regard to it. I go now for establishing the principle of national sovereignty as inherent in the people. The man who has the credentials of the popular will legally written for his authority to rule, *shall* rule, so far as I can make this a fact; and all traitorous resistance thereto, come whence it may, East, West, North, or South, in what form it may, whether as nullification or secession, shall be met, not by surrender, compromise, or negotiation, but by a forcible and triumphant suppression. This is my plank, and my platform. I stand here; and as a true man, I can stand nowhere else. On this plank rests the life of the nation, and also the future safety of the people. I bow to the Government by whomsoever administered; and I mean for one that every other citizen shall do the same thing. If it be necessary to fight for this doctrine, then I will fight for it, and keep up the fight till I absolutely conquer treason, or am conquered by it. I believe in *coercing* rebellion. I recognize no rights in the States, and none in the people, adverse to the coercive power of the supreme authority as organized under the Constitution.

You hence see, that I cannot accept, and I do not believe that the American people will accept, the theory of an armistice and a convention of the States as the true remedy at this moment. It surrenders the principle in the interests of rebellion, and withal creates a very dangerous precedent. It virtually confesses that the Government is beaten in this struggle, that it cannot maintain its authority, and that too at the very moment when the military situation proves exactly the reverse. "The resources of wise statesmanship" are very well in their place; but their *proper* place is *after*, and not *before* "The Unconditional Submission of the Rebels." Then I shall be prepared for these "resources;" but till then I am not. Till then I have much more faith in the *military* arm of the Government. Let that do its work first, and then have the *talk* afterwards. This, I



know, is not the doctrine of the so-called Peace-men; yet it is mine, and hence I take issue with them on this question. If, however, the majority of the people shall adopt the theory of the Peace-men, then, in accordance with my own principal, I shall bow to that decision, whatever may be my private opinions as to its wisdom.

I AM INFLUENCED, IN THE SECOND PLACE, IN MY JUDGMENT ON THIS QUESTION BY THE PUBLISHED VIEWS OF THE EMINENT GENERALS TO WHOM WE HAVE COMMITTED THE MILITARY CUSTODY OF OUR CAUSE. What do they say? Let me give you a few examples.

General Grant says:—"I state, to all citizens who visit me, that all we want now to insure an early restoration of the Union, is a determined unity of sentiment North. The Rebels have now in their ranks their last man. They have robbed the cradle and the grave equally to get their present force. The end is not far distant, if we will only be true to ourselves. I have no doubt but the enemy are exceedingly anxious to hold out until after the Presidential election. They have many hopes from its effects. They hope a counter-revolution. They hope the election of the Peace candidate." So writes General Grant—a soldier and a hero who has made himself well known to the American people.

General Sherman, in his recent letter to the Mayor of Atlanta, remarks:—"We must have *Peace*, not only in Atlanta, but in all America. To secure this we must stop the war that now desolates our once happy and favored country. To stop the war we must defeat the Rebel armies that are arrayed against the laws and Constitution which all must respect." "We do want, and will have a just obedience to the laws of the United States."

General Hooker tells us, that "we must treat this rebellion as a wise parent would a vicious child,—we must whip him into subjection—no milder discipline will answer the purpose. Some are crying peace, but there can be no peace as long as a Rebel can be found with arms in his hands." "This Union must be preserved; and there is no way of preserving it but by the power of our armies,—by fighting the conspiracy to death."



General Burnside, says: "There can be no such thing as laying down of arms, or cessation of hostilities, until the entire authority of this Government is acknowledged by every citizen of our country." "Would it not be cowardly for us to say that this rebellion cannot be crushed, and the authority of the Government sustained? There is in my mind no question of it."

General Dix declares his earnest desire to do all in his power "to sustain the Government in its efforts to put down the rebellion,—an object to be effected, in my judgment, by a steady and unwavering prosecution of the war." He said, in a recent speech at Sandusky, Ohio: "It has been my conviction from the beginning, that we can have no honorable peace until the insurgent armies are dispersed, and the leaders of the rebellion expelled from the country. I believe that a cessation of hostilities would lead inevitably and directly to a recognition of the insurgent States; and when I say this, I need hardly add that I can have no part in any political movement of which the Chicago platform is the basis. No, fellow-citizens, the only hope of securing an honorable peace—a peace which shall restore the Union and the Constitution—lies in a steady, persistent, and unremitting prosecution of the war; and I believe the judgment of every right-thinking man will soon bring him to this conclusion."

General Meade tells us, that this war "can only be terminated by hard fighting, and by determined efforts to overcome the armed enemies of the Government."

Other Generals have spoken to the same effect. The soldiers are speaking. These men of valor and of deeds evince no disposition to show the white feather. They do not spend their time in croaking and finding fault. They have met the foe and they know his temper. They exhort the people at home to be firm, to replenish their wasted ranks, and supply the means, and express the strongest confidence that soon they will give the country peace as the fruit of victory. I have a profound respect for their opinions, and hence offer them to you as guides to duty in this hour of trial. It is to be lamented that we could not postpone the question of mere *party* politics, until we had first, as a united people, saved the Union. The soldiers can do it, and why



cannot the politicians at home imitate their good example? For mere party I care nothing at this time, but for the maintenance of the right *principles* I go to all lengths. Principles viewed in their relation to policy are now everything with me.

IN THE THIRD PLACE, THE REBEL AUTHORITIES DECLARE IN THE MOST UNEQUIVOCAL MANNER, THAT THEY WILL CONSENT TO NO ARRANGEMENT NOT BASED ON THE RECOGNITION OF THE CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT, AND OF COURSE THE DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION.—“Say to Mr. Lincoln from me,” says Jefferson Davis, “that I shall at any time be pleased to receive proposals for peace on the basis of our *independence*. It will be useless to approach me with any other.” So says the Southern press. The Rebel chiefs, the men in power, the men who control the armies of the rebellion, tell you distinctly that they mean to fight this thing through to victory or military failure, unless you yield to *their* terms of peace. The only interest they feel in our approaching Presidential election arises from the hope, that it may in some way change the policy of the country, and thus the more certainly facilitate their end. Is it then your purpose to preserve *this* Union, not *a* Union, but *this* Union as it is under the Constitution—this Government with its full, untarnished, and undiminished complement of national authority—is this your purpose? Then, in the premises existing, you must *fight* for it. You are shut right squarely up to this necessity. You cannot do it by negotiation. You cannot persuade these Rebel chiefs to alter their position by conciliating talk. No party can do it, whether in power or out of it. It is, on the one hand, *Victory, Union, and Peace*, or on the other, *Submission, Disunion, and Peace*; and between these you must make your choice. I have already made mine: I go for the first; and hence I go for fighting the battle through to the end, seeing nothing to be gained, but very much that may be lost, by consenting to “a cessation of hostilities.”

IN THE FOURTH PLACE, AS MATTERS NOW STAND, WE CAN IN A SHORT TIME, IF WE WILL, HAVE PEACE, AND ALSO DICTATE ITS TERMS AS THE FRUIT OF VICTORY. The past success of our arms and the present state of the rebellion make this proposition certain. A few more



heavy blows such as our armies can give, and if we properly support them, will give, will finish up the Confederate Government of Jefferson Davis and his associate conspirators, and sweep it from the earth as an organized military power; and then we shall be in a position to speak directly to the people of the several States, and propose to them, and not to Jefferson Davis, suitable measures for an honorable and Constitutional re-union. We have nothing to do with this arch-traitor but to conquer him, and nothing to do with his Congress but to annihilate it. This I am fully persuaded, is the shortest and surest road to any peace to which a true Union man can ever give his consent. I doubt whether, after the trial of three years, especially when we are so near the final result, and when we can grasp that result if we will, it is wise to change our policy or its agency for any new experiments. All the reasons which dictated this policy in the outset, apply with augmented force at the present time. In my judgment the best peace-commission is a strong army well commanded. The best peace-commissioners are the very men we now have in the field. They will conquer a peace soon if we do not call them off from the task; and then Jefferson Davis will be no longer Jefferson Davis the President of the Confederate States of America, but Jefferson Davis the indicted criminal, and if convicted, a candidate for the gallows.

IN THE FIFTH PLACE, THE PROPOSITION FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES WITH A VIEW TO "AN ULTIMATE CONVENTION" OF THE STATES, IS, I THINK, SURROUNDED WITH THE MOST FEARFUL UNCERTAINTIES AND PERILS. It is a dark and dangerous road for the nation to travel in. Let us see.

*To whom* is this proposition to be submitted? Of course to the Confederate Authorities at Richmond,—the men who are now conducting hostilities on the Rebel side, and who expressly tell us that they will never consent to a convention for any such purpose as the one we have in view.

*From whom* is this proposition to come in the first instance? Of course from the Government of these United States. This is the theory now put before the American people for their consideration.



In what position is the Government then placed, and the cause it represents? After having attempted to crush the rebellion, and spent millions of money, and sacrificed thousands of lives, and almost gained the point, the Government, according to this theory, backs down, and the people back down, and both virtually confess their inability to *complete* the work, and hence sue for terms of peace with armed traitors. The treason is triumphant, and the Governmental authority vanquished and defeated. Gracious Heaven! Shades of the honored and heroic dead! Ellsworth, Lyon, Kearny, Wadsworth, Sedgwick, McPherson! brave and noble men, mouldering in the patriot's grave—fortunate in having fallen too soon to witness the disgrace of your arms! Has it come to this! Have you given your lives for a nation of braggarts, and a nation of cowards and poltroons? Have you fought for a principle and a cause, and fought them almost into victory, only to have both betrayed and dishonored at last? In the name of the Army and the Navy, and by all the sacred memories that cluster around their deeds immortal, I ask more than twenty millions of people whether they will consent to such an infamy? Better, yes, infinitely better, not to have began the contest *at all* than to pause now before you finish it. "We beseech you," say the officers and soldiers at Nashville in their recent address to the American people, "beware of any man, or any body of men, who, when success is so near, urges a suspension of hostilities. Such a proposition is either the height of folly or the height of treason,—treason all the more hateful, because the more cowardly than the treason of those we fight." "We have victory in our hands. If we fail to clutch it and retain it now, we are criminal, false to our past history, false to our nation, false to the age, false to humanity, false to God." These ringing words speak the soldier's heart.

Mark well the fact, that this proposed "cessation of hostilities" is to be either *temporary* or *final*. If the former, then you must resume fighting in the event of failure to agree upon terms of peace; and if so, I do not see what you gain provided the belligerent parties fail to agree, which, let me tell you, is the overwhelming probability in the case. You will have to sup-



port the Army and the Navy during this armistice; you will give the rebellion time to recover itself; you will demoralize and disgrace your own soldiery; and then you will return to hostilities under the absolute necessity of fighting it out at last, or consenting to a dissolution of the Union. If, however, the armistice be *final*, then, in the event of failure to agree upon the terms of peace under the same government, the Union is dissolved, and the Southern Confederacy established as an independant nation. It is hence obvious, that, in either aspect of the case, this doctrine of an armistice promises nothing for the national cause, and threatens much against it. I am afraid of it. I think it much safer to *conquer* a peace first, and apply "the resources of wise statesmanship" afterwards.

Suppose, however, that, by resorting to an armistice, you could bring the Rebels back into the Union; let this be granted for the sake of the argument; and what then are likely to be their demands as the conditions of peace, if you go before them in this attitude? Have you thought of this question? They will virtually dictate the terms of peace. Practically they will be the conquerors. They will have fought you till you cannot or dare not fight them any longer. Elated with their own success, as well they might be, they will demand new guaranties for slavery. They will demand such modifications of our political system as will forever protect them against the growth of the true democratic principle. They will demand the recognition of their favorite doctrine of State Rights, always involving the right of Secession. They will demand a new style of Union. They will demand too, that the nation shall assume the enormous war debt which they have contracted, thus paying the expenses of the rebellion. The men with whom you will conduct this negotiation, if at all, are very desperate men; they constitute the bone and sinew of the slaveholding oligarchy; their political necessities as public men commit them to the success of the rebellion, or to something that in their judgment shall be nearly its equivalent; in the bargain to be made they must come off with flying colors; and now the very moment that you release these men from the deadly pressure of the military



power, you can come to no agreement with them without such concessions and guaranties, as, I am persuaded, the Northern people never will make, certainly not unless they become traitors to the sanctity of law and the very first principles of civil liberty. You may as well meet this question first as last. There is a fundamental antagonism between Northern civilization and the theories and purposes of these Rebel leaders; and you can do nothing with them in the line of negotiation that you will consent to do, until you have first *conquered* them; and then you may propose honorable terms of peace and reunion to the *masses* of the people in the respective States with some hopes of success. If you allow yourselves to be cheated on this point, you will be sadly cheated, and lay the basis for terrible difficulties in the future. There is no process or compromise under heaven, by which the moral, political, and religious drift of Northern civilization can be arrested in this land. It is the drift of the age, the drift of freedom, the drift of enlightened thought, the drift of God's providence; and those who oppose it, will be swept away before it. If for the sake of a false and treacherous peace you attempt to stop this current by a bargain, such as will be agreeable to slaveholders and traitors, the current itself will soon split your bargain into a thousand fragments. You had better not hand this question over to posterity; you had better take care of it yourselves, and now settle it upon the right basis.

And yet, once more, Have you well considered the *foreign* perils incident to this doctrine of an armistice? The moment you pause in this contest and virtually give up the question of victory, the overwhelming probability is that England and France will at once step in, and recognize the nationality and independence of the Confederate Government. They would be glad to do so; and if you give them the needed occasion, they will do it. You will go more than half way towards the result yourselves; and what you leave unfinished England and France will complete. They have shown a clear and unequivocal desire to have this Union dissolved, and this great nationality broken in its power; and such an opportunity they would be very likely



to improve. Moreover, during the armistice all the neutral nations of the earth would, according to the rules of international law, be at perfect liberty to supply the Rebels with the means of further fighting, provided hostilities should be resumed. As it respects these nations the blockade would come to an end; the Southern ports would be open to trade; and the Southern people aided by foreign nations would be in a better position to resume the contest if necessary. There would be no little danger, that we should get into a foreign war on this question of trade with the Southern ports.

Now taking all these points together, I ask the question :—Is not this doctrine of an armistice and an ultimate convention a very uncertain and dangerous expedient? So it seems to me. I would not even dream of it until driven thereto by the sternest military necessity, such as does not now exist at all. It is in my judgment as foolish as it is cowardly, and contemptible. It can have no other effect but to complicate our difficulties, endanger our cause, and prolong the struggle. I speak thus freely of it because the interests of my country are at stake. The fact that this doctrine has been made a political plank, does not exempt it from the searching scrutiny of truth. At such a time I can be chained to no political party. I will do my own thinking and my own voting. I go for the salvation of the country, whatever may be the fate of parties.

I NOW OBSERVE FINALLY, THAT THIS DOCTRINE, FOR THE PURPOSE ALLEGED, IS BOTH ABSURD AND IMPRACTICABLE UNDER THE CONSTITUTION. The object is to get the Rebels back into the Union, peaceably, without conquering them. For this purpose you are asked to propose an armistice to be followed by a Convention of the States. Those who proclaim this theory, mean of course a convention called in agreement with the provisions of the Constitution, since no other would have any legal character. Any other convention would be revolutionary. They must also mean a convention to which the Rebel States would be parties, and in which represented. No other would be binding upon them, or at all answer the purpose. The proposition then is to seek an armistice with Jefferson Davis and his army, that in the mean-



time the Rebel and the loyal States may come together in a national convention, and settle our difficulties. How will this thing work? Let us see.

As my first method of shedding light upon the point, I will read to you that clause of the Constitution which prescribes the method of calling a convention of the States. "Congress \* \* \* on application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which \* \* \* shall be valid to all intents and purposes as parts of this Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode may be proposed by Congress." This is the law for a convention of the States. You must first have the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of these States, asking for it; you must next have the action of Congress calling the convention; and finally the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States or conventions in three-fourths thereof, must ratify amendments before they can be a part of the fundamental law of the land. How then will you get the Rebel States into such a convention, and what will you do with them when they are there? They must be parties to the application for a convention, and then they must be parties *in* it. What a strange muddle you will have! Think of it. Jefferson Davis and his army held still by an armistice! Legislatures of *Rebel* States applying for a convention under the Constitution which they utterly ignore and repudiate! Delegates from these *Rebel* States members of that convention! Two conflicting allegiances there represented—one to the Confederate Government of which Jefferson Davis claims to be the Executive head, and the other to this Government! Alas! alas! and is this what wise men submit as a platform for a candidate to stand upon, and the people to accept. If the Rebel States appear in this proposed convention, the very act concedes that they are already in the Union; and if so, why have a convention to bring them in? If they do not thus appear, of what use is a convention as the means of negotiating a peace?

There is still another difficulty in the case. The Constitution requires, that "the members of the several State Legislatures



shall be bound by oath or affirmation [to support this Constitution." You hence see, that before the members of the Legislatures in these Rebel States can take any action looking towards a national convention, or any other action which this Government can recognize as valid, they must first be qualified by a solemn oath of allegiance. Will they take this oath? If so, then all the ends of a convention are already gained. Will they decline the oath? If so, then you can have no convention to which they can be parties.

Thus, as you see, this plan breaks down on all sides. It is practicable only under circumstances which render it absolutely needless. It is a mere illusion. The gentlemen who presented it as the chief plank in a political platform, either sadly deceived themselves, or calculated far too largely upon popular ignorance.

But making no account of these serious, I think, fatal objections, let me in all soberness ask,—What is this convention to do, provided you have secured it? If it does anything towards making peace, it must of course propose such amendments to the Constitution as will be acceptable to those who are in arms against the Government. To do this it must very essentially remodel the fundamental law of the land, perhaps dividing up the nation into a confederacy of four or five Republics. The Constitution *as it is*, and the Union *as it was*, will be very likely to disappear under the operations of this theory. Very well; the convention, we will suppose, has agreed upon these amendments; and now comes the question of their adoption by the people. Is there any prospect that the people of three-fourths of the States will adopt any amendments that Jefferson Davis and his co-conspirators will accept as a satisfactory basis of peace? Not the least in the world. There is but a bare possibility of any such agreement in the convention; and then when the matter comes before the people, there is not the slightest chance of securing a constitutional majority in its favor. Very well; where are you now? Your convention has failed; and you come back to the position of fighting out this question to ultimate victory, or giving up the Union as dead and gone with a hostile Government upon your very borders. You come back to your present position at last, with all the dangers incident to this circuitous route.



I cannot therefore accept this doctrine of an armistice and a convention of the States as a remedy for our national difficulties. I have serious objections to the very idea of any convention of the States at this time to tinker with the organic law of the land, not to act upon specific amendments, but to take up the whole structure of our political system for revision; and I must add that the idea seems to me very strange as the proposition of those who profess great zeal for the Constitution *as it is* and the Union *as it was*. Pray, what do these men want of a convention? It will be of no use simply to *expound* this instrument,—this is the business of the Courts. It will be of no use simply to *read* it—any man can do this. If it has any practical character, it must take up the Constitution for revision and alteration; and this surely will not give us the Constitution *as it is*, or the Union *as it was*, but something else, perhaps a mere league or confederation of States, as the basis of peace. Oh, no, my friends:—this will not do. I see no relief in this idea; and since I will never concede the theory of Secession, or consent to a dissolution of the Union, I am in favor of war to compel *submission* to the national authority, and not an armistice or a convention to *negotiate* with armed traitors. This I deem the only course that is safe for the nation.

#### THE SEQUEL OF VICTORY.

What shall be the sequel of this victory if we gain it? I shall not go very largely into this question; yet it is more or less before the public mind, and hence a word or two in regard to it may not be out of place.

The *immediate* sequel will of course be the absolute annihilation of the Confederate Government, and all that pertains to it. It is an usurped authority now; and if we conquer and break up its armies, then this common cause of the country will be out of the way. Let it go to the shades of eternal infamy. Having been the great criminal and cause of this generation, let it be remembered as a warning to posterity. History will write its bloody record, and future ages gaze with astonishment.

In respect to the Rebel States themselves, immediate efforts should, and as I doubt not, will be made to re-establish them



upon the basis of allegiance to this Government. Considered as political communities, they still exist. They still exist. True, their public officers have been traitors; yet the *people* remain, and the State-boundaries remain. Now, to the people of these States I would propose, or from them accept, just and honorable measures for their early return to the Union under loyal Governors, loyal Legislatures, and by loyal Representatives in both Houses of Congress, in the meantime giving them distinctly to understand that they must respect the national authority, either willingly or unwillingly. All resistance I would put down by force of arms, and administer a military government in the name of the nation, until the people supersede its necessity by the creation of loyal State Governments. I would deal wisely, carefully, generously, with these State organizations, in the true spirit of conciliation: I would not displace State Legislation by Federal, or in any way invade the real rights of the States: I would do nothing to add to the mortification of defeat; yet I would insist upon the full recognition of the national authority, not as a gratuity to be bargained for, but as a right to be maintained. It should be this, or military subjection. I hence admire the recent conduct of General Sherman. He has planted himself in the very heart of Georgia; he has turned Atlanta into a great military post for war-purposes; and thus virtually said to the people of Georgia, that the United States Government is here, and means to stay here, and means to exert all the force necessary to have its flag respected here. This, while wise as a military measure, has also the ring of the true doctrine.

Looking at the people considered as *individuals*, I would meet the *masses* with a general amnesty for offenses past, provided they would desist from the rebellion, and accept the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. This must be done, unless you inflict the penalty for treason upon nine-tenths of the people in the Rebel States. If the system of *guerilla* war-fare be kept up by wandering hordes of banditti, I would dispose of that in a way to make its career very short. And in respect to the prominent *leaders* of this rebellion, I take the ground that no amnesty should ever be extended to them. A goodly number of



them, sufficient to vindicate the nation's justice, if arrested, should be indicted, tried, convicted, and hung for treason. The remainder should be either driven from the country into exile, or if permitted to remain, forever disqualified from holding any office of profit or trust under the Government of the United States. It is not my province to sketch the legislation suitable to meet these ends ; but something like these ends I would gain. Justice cries for it ; the law of God cries for it ; and the future safety of the nation cries for it. These men have fought you desperately, and they will continue to fight you till they can fight you no longer ; they have ruined their own section of the country, and it is not their fault that they have not ruined the whole nation ; and now when you have been compelled to conquer them to save the life of the nation, and have actually done the work, then I plead for such an exercise of justice as will make their fate an instructive example to all ages. Would it not be pusillanimous, yea, absolutely ridiculous, to fight treason to the very death, to march large armies against it, to spend millions of money, and bathe the land in blood ; and then when at this costly sacrifice you have blasted its power, to turn round and welcome the *traitor* to your bosom as if he had committed no crime ? This nation, I trust, will never be guilty of such an enormous fatuity. It would be a moral anachronism, for which Heaven would condemn us, and all the nations of the earth despise us.

In respect to the slavery-question,—that sad knot of all knots in our political history—I take the following grounds : first, that all those slaves who have actually acquired their freedom during the war, especially those who have served in the Army and Navy, should retain that freedom, and by the Government be defended in its possession : secondly, that as a question of law, the Emancipation Proclamation of the President covering the Rebel States, and by him adopted as a military measure for the conquest of this rebellion, should work out the freedom of all the slaves not having actually acquired it in those States, provided the Judiciary of the United States shall not reverse this as the true *legal* effect of that Proclamation : thirdly, that at an



early period the whole people should, by an amendment to the Constitution, forever prohibit the existence of slavery and Slave-laws in any part of this land. These three points state the doctrine which I hold on this subject. I cannot stop to discuss them; yet I believe the removal of slavery necessary to anything like a permanent peace. Slavery in having sought to rend this nation into fragments, has in my judgment committed the unpardonable sin, for which it ought to die.

Trusting in God, following his providence, walking in the light of that providence, and firmly doing our duty, we shall then gain these results as the fruits of victory. They hang in the first place upon the *fact* of victory, and in the second place upon a good *use* of that victory. Nationality *fixed*, and universal *freedom* accomplished, are the two great blessings to grow out of this war, dearly bought I am aware, yet worth the cost if no cheaper price could purchase them.

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

And now, my friends, I behold a sublime spectacle. The American people are about to arise in their majesty, and *vote* upon some of the questions which I have been discussing in your hearing. By a provision of the Constitution the executive headships of this Government, once in every four years, comes back to the people for renewal and instruction according to the demands of public sentiment. That important period finds us now in the midst of a deadly civil war. In many respects it seems unfortunate that the country should be launched into a political campaign at such a moment; yet the task is upon us, and we must meet it like men.

Two great political organizations are already in the field with their respective platforms and candidates; the one approving and proposing to continue the Administration now in power, and the other severely censuring that Administration, and asking the people to change it; the one adopting the war-policy for the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of the Union, and the other repudiating this policy and substituting therefor a cessation of hostilities and a Convention of the States; the one declaring that the war is, has been, and if vigorously pursued,



will be a glorious success, and the other pronouncing it a failure for the end had in view; the one basing the war-policy upon the rightful authority of this Government to suppress a rebellion and enforce obedience to its laws, and the other strangely passing this moral and political question in total silence; the one referring to the institution of slavery as the cause and largely the strength of the rebellion and proposing that at an early period the Constitution should be so amended as to remove this gigantic evil from the land, while the other makes no reference whatever to this subject. These are the leading contrasts between the two platforms, on which the American people are invited to express their judgment at the coming election. They are entirely clear; any one who understands the English language, can see them; and hence they need no expositor.

I need not say to you, that, between these platforms with their respective candidates, you are to make your choice. One or the other will receive the approval of the popular will, and hence regulate the future policy of this Government. So it ought to be, since both are fairly and squarely before the American people. There should be no factious minority resisting the will of the majority.

Let me add, that for all the purposes of my own judgment as a citizen and a voter, I regard each political organization with its platform and candidates as substantially *one thing*. You must vote either for or against the *whole* together. You cannot separate them if you would. You cannot vote for the candidate, and reject the platform, or for the platform and reject the candidate. The truth is, the candidate stands upon the platform, if he stands upon anything. If he accepts the nomination, he must accept the platform of *principles* upon which it is presented to him, and if elected, he must carry out those principles, or be a traitor to the party nominating him. He is the platform in a personal embodiment, and the platform is the candidate in the theory upon which he comes into power. There is no escape from this conclusion; and there should be no effort to mystify it. To practice a dodge-game here is evasion and trickery. True, the candidate may decline the nomination,—this is his



privilege, and it may be his duty; but in so doing he either ceases to be the nominee, or virtually becomes what is called a *stump*-candidate.

Now, as between these two platforms with their respective candidates, I have expressed no opinion, except as such an opinion may be involved in the discussion of *principles*. I have an opinion, and I expect to act upon it. You have an opinion, and as I doubt not, you will express it by a ballot. You will do what I shall do—what in part I have already done: you will compare the candidates in reference to their *capacities* as men, their experience and antecedents, their qualifications to guide the Ship of State in this stormy hour, and also the platforms on which they respectively stand, and to which they are honorably committed before the country; I say you will do this; I advise you to do it, for in no other way can you make up a sound judgment; and then having done this, you will, as I trust, vote according to your sense of duty. Is it at all probable, as the question is now submitted to them, that the American people can change their policy, or change its agency, for the better? If this be so, and a majority of the people so affirm through the ballot-box, then General McClellan will, if he lives, be the next President; and in that event I shall yield to him all due obedience, reverence, and support as the supreme executive magistrate of this great nation. But if this be not so, and the people so adjudge in the legal way, then the present incumbent in the Presidential office will be continued for another term; and in that event I shall render to him the obedience and support to which he is entitled by the Constitution and Laws of the land. Between these two individuals as *candidates*, I have my choice, and I have my weighty reasons for that choice; but when they cease to be candidates, and one of them becomes President, then the relation of the latter to the whole country is most essentially changed. Then he becomes the minister of God. Then the religious obligation of obedience exists. Then resistance to his authority is treason. Then a defeated minority must bow to the sovereign will of the majority. I stand firmly by this principle. I see no other that does not involve the ruin of popular government.



Let me say farther, that in my judgment the nation is now passing through a very solemn and important crisis of its history. If I had not thought so, I should not have devoted so much time, in this place, to the consideration of this subject. The questions upon which the people are soon to vote, are the gravest upon which any people ever did vote. The circumstances are peculiar, and the interests immense. That the public mind should be deeply moved, is not wonderful. The banner of the nation has been steadily waving in military triumph; fathers, and sons, and husbands, by thousands and tens of thousands, have gone to the field of deadly conflict; braver or better soldiers never trod any soil; some of the choicest blood of the land has been poured upon the national altar; history contains no example of such a rebellion, and no example of such devotion on the part of the loyal people to the flag of their country; the recent successes of our arms have made the nation jubilant with hope; the soldiers are still in the field, and hundreds and thousands are rapidly rushing thither, ready to maintain our cause, and fight for victory to the very death, ready to charge home upon the common foe; the rebellion is rapidly waning, it is drawing its last gasps, and under the peace-commission of strong hands and heroic hearts it will soon be no more; and now, O ye sons of men, ye citizens of this great Republic, ye sovereigns of a nation's destiny, will you, in these circumstances, command your Army and your Navy to pause before this armed treason is absolutely annihilated? Will you by your decision at the ballot-box flank all the men in the field? This is really the great gist of the question, as matters have been presented to the public mind. The issue has been clearly and plainly put before the American people. There is no disguise about it. The platforms speak for themselves. Not to vote at such a time, is a crime. Not to vote correctly, is a very great mistake. The question is not what *party*, or what particular *individual* shall come into power, but what *principles* shall come into power; and on this question I feel as deep an interest as I ever felt on any subject in all my life.

Let me say once more, that while I have spoken plainly, perhaps in a way that may seem indiscreet to some ears, I ask no



living mortal to share with me the responsibility of this utterance, or accept my views contrary to his own judgment. I have well considered my words. I know their meaning. I have not knowingly misstated any facts. I stand by the principles laid down in this sermon, believing them to be true. Here I stand in this place and in every other. I am aware of the intensity of men's feelings at such a time; and I certainly do not wish to offend those feelings. I plead for no party as such; I do not wish to appear before you as a partisan—such I am not; I do not wish in this place to transcend the legitimate functions of the Christian pulpit—in my judgment I have not done so; I do not wish to invoke at your hands any special indulgence—you may criticise this sermon as much as you please, and I shall take no offence; but in such an hour as this, when the dearest interests of this great nation are at stake, when the long future is providentially hanging upon the mighty present, I should deserve the scorn of all honest men, and merit and meet my own, if as a preacher having a text that covers this whole subject, and as a citizen having the rights, interests and hopes which are common to my fellow-countrymen, I closed my mouth, and studied the artful ambiguities of a sinister and truckling policy. No, my hearers; God is my witness, and you are my witnesses, that I have not done this. What I have said, I have said; and I now close by thanking you for your patience in hearing me, and asking the blessing of the Supreme Majesty of heaven and earth upon the utterance. May the God of our fathers carry the nation safely through this perilous hour, rebuking treason, establishing law, ordaining justice, and giving us for our next President a man who will, in his hands be a fitting agent for the execution of these ends!











