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Rational Triumph: or the Dangers of Victory

William A. McGinley

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RATIONAL TRIUMPH: OR THE DANGERS OF VICTORY.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

Congregational Church

OF THE TOWN OF

SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS,

UPON THE OCCASION OF THE

Federal Triumphs over the Victories of February, 1862,

AND IN VIEW OF

ULTIMATE VICTORY.

BY

REV. WILLIAM A. MCGINLEY.

WORCESTER:
PRINTED BY EDWARD R. FISKE,
FRANKLIN OFFICE, FOSTER STREET.
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REV. WM. A. MCGINLEY,

DEAR SIR:—Feeling the importance of a proper adjustment of our present National difficulties, and believing that the Discourse delivered by you in the afternoon of last Sabbath, will tend to produce a healthful atmosphere, and the dissemination and growth of those principles, which, if carried out, will prove essential to the peace and prosperity of this Republic, we respectfully solicit a copy of the same, for publication and general distribution.

Yours, &c.

THOMAS W. WARD,
LEANDER FALES,
LUCIUS S. ALLEN,
HENRY E. WARREN,
THOMAS RICE,
C. O. GREEN,
JOSEPH HASTINGS.

SHREWSBURY, February 24, 1862.

SHREWSBURY, March 10, 1862.

GENTLEMEN :

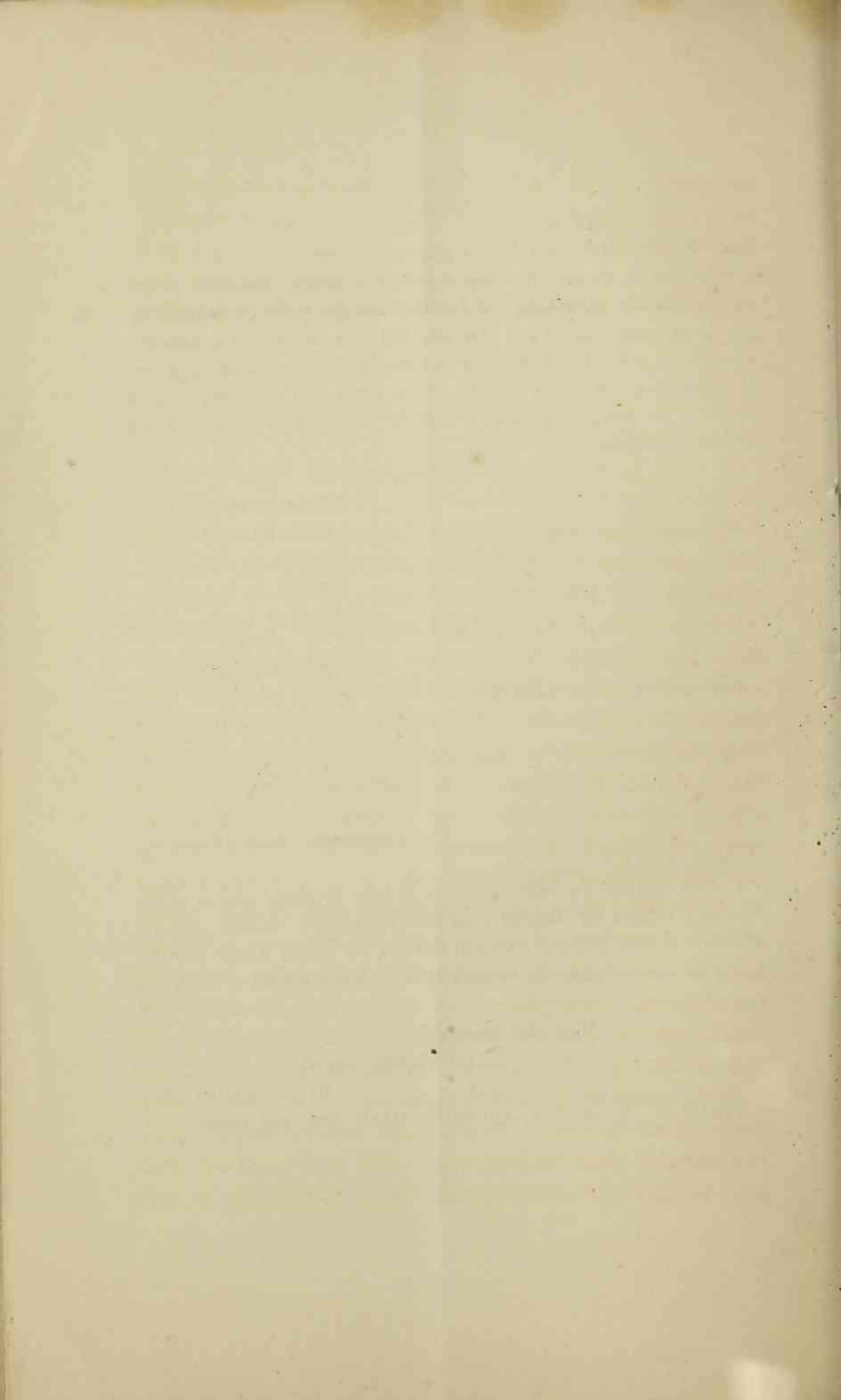
I thank you for the kind expression of your favorable opinion of the Discourse referred to. Relying upon your judgment, I herewith place the Discourse at your disposal, fearing it will not, yet hoping it may, promote, so far as our townsmen are concerned, the desirable objects to which you refer.

With high regard,

Your obedient servant,

W. A. MCGINLEY.

THOMAS W. WARD, Esq., LUCIUS S. ALLEN, Esq., and others.



Rational Triumph: or the Dangers of Victory.

I. SAMUEL, 4: 6.

“WHAT MEANETH THE NOISE OF THIS GREAT SHOUT?”

This passage has not been chosen for discussion in the connection in which it stands, but as serving significantly to introduce the topic to be considered, while a decent regard is paid to the ancient and important custom of founding pulpit discourse upon scriptural texts. It is the anxious question of men jealous for the honor and safety of Philistia and her children, excited by hearing a triumphant shout in the camp of their enemies. The shout which aroused their fears was the birth of ignorance and superstition, and boded evil only to those who made it. It was the Hebrew welcome to the Ark of God, instead of God himself as their deliverer. It was a shout which speedily died away into the wail of lamentation, as in their slaughter and defeat the honor of the Supreme Ruler was vindicated; God declaring by a field strown with thirty thousand dead, and the sacred Ark itself borne in triumph to an enemy's land, that homage paid to no object, however sacred and august rendered by present worth or past history, would compensate for heart allegiance to Him and practical loyalty to virtue. As listened these barbarians to tri-

umphant acclamations in the camp of an *enemy*, as anxiously they enquired, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout?" So listen and inquire, thousands of earnest, thoughtful minds, loyal to their country and to God, as they hear the shout which goes up from the camp and country of their *friends*.

But rarely in our history has the shout of exultant joy risen from our loyal country with more of enthusiastic heartiness than upon the announcement of the recent Federal victories. Private griefs have been forgotten in public joy. Public officers have congratulated the people, and the people one another. The tongues of steeples which have been silent for years, save to call the peaceful citizens to the house of prayer, to speak the stirring tones of alarm, or the sad ones of mourning, have startled us with the victor's voice. Cannon, whose thunders have for many years spoken only of the glory of the half-forgotten dead, now proclaim the triumphs of the living generation. Telegraphs have been electric with the joy of one section hastening to swell that of another. Eyes of tender women and of strong men have alike been suffused with tears of joy. The swells of the prairie, the ridges of the Alleghanies, and the hills of New England, have echoed back the shout of twenty States. As the sounds die away over the broad ocean, to wake and echo again over the bogs of Ireland, the plains of Hungary, and the mountains of Italy, there are thousands who ask with solemn emphasis, not as *partizans*, but as *men* standing in the presence of Him in whose likeness they were made, looking to the unborn generations whose destiny they aid to decide, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout?" And now, since we have been

relieved by a burst of enthusiasm, and we are assembled upon a day and in a house pre-eminently designed to control the ebullitions of feeling and make them subservient to the establishment and growth of solid principles, let us enquire as those who know that individual happiness and true national prosperity are secured alone by adherence to God and His truth, — as those who believe that Governments are ordained of God, as an instrumentality for the protection, education, and development of men, — as *Christian* men who feel the responsibility which God has placed upon us as active agents in shaping the character and influence of that under which we live, — as those who love their country and their countrymen, who are jealous of the honor of the one and sympathetic with the sorrows of the other, as mindful of their own prosperity and careful of their children's inheritance, — uninfluenced by any consideration but a desire to know the truth, — let us ask the question which rises to our lips, to gain, if not a direct and satisfactory answer, at least such as we may: What meaneth the noise of this great shout?

I. There is but a single response which can be given with absolute certainty.

We know it means one thing; all else is speculation. It means that there are some additional spots of earth fertilized by human blood. It means that other "stricken fields" have been made, where the plowman of future years shall rout with the coulter's point, from their shallow graves, the skulls and bones of the fathers, husbands, brothers, and lovers of yesterday; and grandsires will tell, to listening ears, tales of the "famous victories." It means that the light and joy have gone out from hundreds of homes and thousands of

hearts, and darkness and sorrow have entered in. It means that God's moral universe has been shocked with the spectacle of new battles and carnage among a fallen race, for whose restoration God's Son died. We may answer that it certainly means this. The quality, the significance, the *morale* of the shout, is in the main problematical, and in default of certainty we are driven to vary somewhat the form of our question, and ask —

II. *What may it mean?*

It *may* mean nothing more than the conqueror's shout has always meant. Ever since men fought, they have exulted in victory. Processions and triumphs are the trappings of history. Every nation has sought, in forms of stone or brass, to perpetuate to future ages her jubilant utterances. Obelisks raise their heads above the desert, seeming to defy the very elements and ages to hush the exultant shouts of the forgotten nations which slumber beneath the drifting sands. The arch of Titus still stands to tell of Rome's joy over fallen Jerusalem. And under various names and forms, nations of more modern times have done the same. It has been of little importance what has been the cause, or the principles involved, or whether any. True, here and there stands a monument planted by man in his higher moods, which mark the progress of the race ; but all around are hosts of others, as grand and grander, which tell of nothing higher than human folly and ferocity. A victory has always been a victory. National pride, patriotism, and prejudice have and always will find in them occasions of triumph. They will inspire the poet, the orator, and the populace, though they have been for the establishment of despotic power, and for principles subversive of the most sacred rights. The

great shout we hear may mean nothing more than this. Its component parts *may* be *national pride, sectional prejudice, kindred sympathy, and warlike feeling*. Joy that our enemies have been defeated, — that the boasting Southron, who has scouted at Northern valor, has been stricken by it. It *may* be a shout no grander in its character than that which greets the plundering Arab on his return with booty to his camp; or that which of yore greeted the Highlander, as he hied him homeward from a successful foray against a hated clan; or the Indian, as he returns to his village with scalps of a hostile tribe dangling at his belt. It *may* be but the expression of selfish, savage human nature. The social impulses which lead forth men's active sympathies in behalf of kindred, neighborhood, and nation, are valuable as constituting the foundation upon which the higher social and moral fabric is built; but upon the development of the intellectual and moral nature, are to be subordinated to them. The degradation of man is in his voluntary subjection of that higher part of his nature which allies him to God, to his lower nature which allies him to the animal creation. Yielding to that animal nature, men have strong sympathies with the most debasing conflicts. The crowd around the cock-pit exult as wildly over the varied fortunes of the combat, as at the spectacle of national conflict. In the casual canine conflicts of the streets, men choose sides, and feel a keen sympathy with the yelp of a defeated cur, or the growl of his victorious antagonist. When the conflict is waged by the animal which has welcomed him home with kindly wag, and is the playmate of his children, he thrills with every struggle and exults with every advantage gained, and is rarely so just as to act upon the merits of the fight. When our brothers, neighbors, and

countrymen are engaged in battle, these *instinctive, involuntary* feelings of sympathy are apt to control all other and higher ones, and a shout will go up at their triumph, whether they are in the right or wrong, which springs from no source honorable to us as *men*, whom God holds responsible by the bond of the image we bear, to applaud the right and condemn the wrong. The shout may mean nothing more than this, — only the outburst of instinctive feelings found alike among all men. We hope it is more. We trust even in the aggregate it is more. We *know* that with thousands it is more. But let us remember that these principles are as adequate to account for the acclamations of this time, as of any gone by. These considerations suggest a change of the question to a form which admits of a more definite answer, viz. :

III. *What ought it to mean ?*

1. *In general, it ought to indicate the intelligent joy of moral beings over events which promise to aid the advance of God's truth among men.*

Inasmuch as it does not, it is meaningless for good. Inasmuch as it is the expression of irrational feeling, stimulated by prejudice and passion, it is the harbinger of evil. War, considered as war, is an unmitigated curse. It is a state of things constituting the very antitheton, of heaven. It stands the most complete exponent of man's moral degradation. The glory of war in itself is the glory of man's brutal nature, and the measure of his fall from the image of God. Wars — whatever be their pretence — which have their origin in national hatred, lust of power, rivalry for glory, tend only to ruin. And whatever halo eloquence and song may have thrown

around warlike achievements, irrespective of the truth involved, Cowper's estimate is strictly true :

“ War followed for revenge, or to supplant
 The envied tenants of some happier spot,
 * * * * *
 Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
 Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
 Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
 Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.”

Yet, notwithstanding this intrinsically evil nature of war, in man's fallen state it is often the just condition of national existence, and the stern, but righteous means of the highest social good. It is sometimes the sword with which God smites to earth oppression and wrong, and makes way for the march of truth. War is justified and dignified only by the *truth* in defence of which it is waged. It is useful only when it defends and renders sacred *principles*. The shout, therefore, which goes up for a victory, whatever natural feelings of triumph may of necessity mingle with and stimulate it, should always primarily express the joy of *moral beings*, that it has made some real or possible advance for the truth of God. Apart from this, there is nothing in a battle for which it becometh *men* to shout. Apart from this, there is little save sorrow, suffering, and degradation. Nothing but the triumph of man's savage nature for which to shout. The shout which means nothing more than joy in the material aggrandizement of the State, and sympathy with the prowess of kindred and countrymen, is the spirit which overturns the institutions of religion, prostrates civilization, lays waste continents, and establishes tyranny. It is the spirit, the avowed enemy to mental and moral

advancement, and which builds up military despotisms. It establishes the God-abhorred principle that "might makes right," and returns man to barbarism. In no war is this tendency so favored as in *civil war*. It has been well said, that there is no quarrel like that of brothers. Burke has said, "War suspends the rules of moral obligation, and what is long suspended is in danger of being totally abrogated. Civil wars strike deepest of all into the manners of a people. They vitiate their politics; they corrupt their morals; they pervert even the natural taste of equity and justice. By teaching us to consider our fellow beings in a hostile light, the whole body of our nation becomes less dear to us. The very names of affection and kindred, which were the bond of charity whilst we agreed, become new incentives to hatred and rage, when the communion of our country is dissolved." These truths as to the nature and tendency of all war, and especially of that in which our nation is involved, should be kept before the minds of our people, in these times, when we are all so ready to forget them and to foster in our own minds and the minds of others, the *spirit of war*, by indiscriminate acclamation of joy, based upon no recognized relation of warlike achievements to the promotion of truth. We are not the unthinking subjects of a despotic dynasty, or blind adherents to the fortunes of a noble family, that we should "strain our throats" at the bare sight of a particular flag floating over a conquered field. When we shout it should be the shout of *rulers*, of those who make laws and value them. When we feel the voice of exultation rising in our throats, it becomes us as those whose shoulders bear a *government*, whose impulses and thoughts mould national character and law,

to enquire "What meaneth it?" But more *specifically*, the triumph of Americans over victories which have rolled back national dangers, should express,

Secondly, *The intelligent appreciation of the value of the government and institutions in defence of which they have been gained.*

It should mean that we understand the *worth* of the foundation upon which civil, political, and religious liberty rests, its value to ourselves and to mankind, — that we have a government worthy of the greatest sacrifices of the nation, one esteemed above considerations of quiet, wealth, or blood. It ought to mean that whilst we abhor war and all its doings, that whilst every heart aches for the suffering of the wounded on the field of battle, for the bleeding hearts of widows and orphans all over the land, for the loss of the brave, "unshrouded dead," whose bodies lie in informal graves, but whose memories are placed within the inner sanctuary of the nation's heart, its pride and treasure; yet that such is the nation's estimate of the main principles of their government, that over all this a shout of gladness may ring at every well-struck blow for its preservation. It should be joy in the hope of the preservation of an organic body of truth which contains a priceless legacy for our posterity; and not for ours only, but for all the race. When we see our standard planted on the ramparts of rebellion, and traitors fleeing from its shadow, we should shout because the *great thought* it symbolizes has risen somewhat to the view of the skeptical yet hoping nations. Each time we see the starry emblem of free speech, free press, free labor, and free conscience, borne on high by the hands of *masterless* men, above new fields of victory, we should shout as though beholding the faces of the unborn millions

turned pleadingly upon us from the depths of the future, as sways in our hands the balance of their destinies. However lively upon such an occasion be our joy, springing from private, social, or political sympathies, it should be overshadowed by that arising from the higher considerations of the intrinsic, paramount value of free principles to the world. It becomes every American citizen to rise above the sphere of irrational impulse, in which the great herd of mankind, obeying the nod of their masters, have in all ages, under such circumstances, acted, and to think, act, and applaud, as those in whose acts the world is interested. It should mean —

Thirdly, *The joy of the people in the vindication of the laws.*

The laws are the common property of the nation. Every man has a personal interest in their preservation, and a right to demand that they shall be honored. The very existence of free government, as well as the enjoyment of the benefits it is designed to confer, depends upon the sacredness in which the laws are held in their making and execution. The stability of God's moral government in the Universe rests upon the sanctity with which the moral law is held in the mind of the lawgiver. All observation indicates that in proportion as men entertain the idea that God holds but lightly the laws he has promulgated, in that proportion does the authority of his law sink in their esteem. The estimate in which a ruler holds his laws can be known only by his faithfulness in their execution, and when violated and punishment fails to be inflicted, the logic of the subject is, "the lawgiver treats his laws as unworthy of execution, and why should I hold them worthy of obedience." And as in the moral government of God, his authority depends upon the views

the subject takes of God's adherence and valuation of his own laws ; so in human governments the authority of the laws rests mainly upon the estimate the people see the government itself places upon the laws it enacts for their direction, manifested in the faithfulness of their execution. This is especially true of the great mass of men who habitually press to the utmost verge of impunity and are restrained from committing outrage upon the rights of others mainly by the sanctions of human laws. And however men may reason upon the theory of our own government, that public officers, or in other words, the active power of the government, are but the agents of the intelligent minds of the nation, still there are no minds so pure, so much in unison with the spirit of law, but that when they look to the enactments of their own agents, though their laws should be clipt from the statute book of the One Lawgiver, they feel something of the restraints of law, and something of the feeling of antagonism, which springs from hearts at variance in some degree with the spirit of the enactments, and in proportion as they do they are capable of being injured by the example of their own agents. Because men may enact laws by themselves or agents, which are just and good, it by no means follows that they will either properly obey or execute them. Men make laws with their heads, but obey them with their hearts. Republicans make a government purporting to be the expression of their wisdom and justice ; the officers are elected as exponents of these, and their actions operate upon the people with a double influence, from the fact that *they* have chosen them as worthy, and they are apt to sanction and applaud what the government is *in fact* for what it *ought to be*. If it disregards the obligation and value of law, law will sink

in the minds of the people. If it holds the integrity of the laws as the bond of its security, executing them with rigorous impartiality, the law will be magnified in the eyes of every citizen. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. A free government can loose anything better than the sanctity of law in the popular mind. It is the very frame of its being. The devastations of war, in the destruction of commerce, the interruptions of trade and agriculture, the desolation of towns and cities, may be repaired by the well directed energies of a law-abiding people. The taint of treason may be removed; but let the *authority of law* be prostrated in the mind of a nation, and history points to but one remedy, but one hand with power to raise it up again, and that the *tyrant's hand*. Lawless power is the restorer of the power of law. Too low already has inefficient government brought the authority of law in the minds of our people. In many sections, the laws which are meant to protect reputation, personal liberty, and even life, are mere names, whilst the inflamed passions of the mob are the real law. In our best regulated States, we pass laws which are openly set at defiance and trampled under foot by the mob, thus bringing into disrepute the name and authority of all law. Law should be enforced at the point of the bayonet, and the people would be careful for what they asked and legislators what they enacted, and the rights of every man be more secure. When a just law is defied, every American citizen should feel his rights invaded, and demand its execution in the name of his personal safety. No sacrifice can be too great on the part of a people to insure the supremacy of law. Human governments may well pattern by the Divine, where the dying agonies of the Son of God, and the flames of an eternal hell, are the

everlasting testimony of the Almighty to the value of law. When we shout, therefore, at a victory gained over rebels to the government, it should mean joy that the authority of the laws is being vindicated. Every victory gained in their defence deepens the foundations of individual happiness and national security.

Finally, *It ought to mean the reinforcement of the moral power of the government to a degree which will render it positive and renovating in its character.*

It needs all the support it can get. Not too deeply versed in the ethics of government, nor prone to radicalism in that direction, it needs every enlightening, stimulating influence which the nation can bring to bear upon it. As a nation we have been atheistical. For years, laws of God have been set aside, and His venerated word made the endorser of national crimes. Moses, Paul, and Christ, have been employed to forge manacles for the slave. The highest use government has had for revelation, has been to quiet the public conscience with a perverted interpretation of a book which was venerated by the vulgar, and therefore to be regarded. The present government was born in the *awakening* of the people, and truly represents the *peculiarly national condition* to which it owes its birth. It should be *awake*, and nothing but the voice of the people can awake it. It should be aroused to an activity such as the stern demands of the times require, and nothing but the thunder of the popular voice can arouse it. The shout of the people should mean, that the institutions they venerate, and the body of laws they revere, shall be *cleansed* and *renovated*. It should express that arousing of the principle of life in the body which will throw off disease and its corruptions. It is the natural result of progress, that each succeeding

age should be fettered by the half-enlightened doings of the former. Institutions and laws will always spring from the half-developed ideas and half-learned lessons of every generation, which are either entirely erroneous or insufficient and imperfect, which must be destroyed or corrected by the generation following. The mere literalist who clings to the dead letter of legal statement, will never accomplish this. He must grasp the spirit of the law, and execute with enlarged wisdom and expanding power the spirit and intent of the law, which lies half-uttered upon the old statute book. Thus alone can the world make progress, — by the repeal of the wrong, and liberal construction of the narrow laws. It is a respect we owe to the dead, as well as a duty to the living, to bring to maturity, in our construction of the constitution and laws, the well-meant, but half-developed, thoughts of our fathers; and instead of being injured, law will be magnified in the minds of the people, when they behold its *spirit* ruling with positive power in the hearts of the rulers. It is one of our chief hindrances in the midst of existing difficulties, that part of our constitution and some of our laws exhibit maxims and principles as half understood and half believed, which are to-day axioms in the minds of intelligent republicans; or, rather, they indicate the *modifying power of popular demands* upon the action of a government which meant far more perfect things. The constitution and fundamental laws of the land contemplate no such thing as the perpetuity of slavery; on the contrary, the Fathers of the Republic, jealous of their honor in the eyes of their children, as well as jealous for their welfare, as they looked into the clouds of popular prejudice and ignorance which they were unable at once to dispel, and whose shadows must fall upon their doings,

saw with the eyes of their faith, in the distance, the *realization* of that glorious vision of *universal liberty* which had blessed their souls, bowing to the weight of a popular sentiment they could not withstand, yet venerating the truth which must triumph in the end, did not write the name of *slave*. That time, we trust, is near at hand. Once more government should feel the *pressure* of popular opinion ; not to hinder its movements, but to urge it onward ; not to bind its steps with legal technicalities, but to liberate it from the bondage of the past, and compel it to action commensurate with the spirit of the law and the high demands of the time. In such times as these, every citizen should rise up to the full theory of democracy, and make the men they have placed in power their agents in fact. The government is the creature of the people, and *when they will it must obey*. It is now waiting their voice. Already has a message of the President to Congress substantially asked the nation what it means to do with traitors and slavery. Now is the time to answer that question. Now is the day of salvation. Every man should feel the responsibility which God has placed upon him, to add his mite to that weight of popular thought which shall make this administration the sword which shall cleave asunder the nation from its sins. The mind, thought, purpose, and moral sentiment of the *people* should flow in upon the government with a volume and power which should not only sustain it, but raise it to a position unknown in its history, and impel it to the performance of deeds which shall make its memory a blessed legacy to future generations. In this crisis, government will not act beyond the expressed demand of the ruling part of the nation. As it prosecutes the war, a light is beginning to dawn upon the future. As grave

responsibilities resultant upon ultimate victory become strong probabilities, it is asking the people what they want. And now is the time they should make themselves heard, from mountain and valley, from one end of the land to the other, through every channel by which a nation speaks -- to demand the doing of things which, if left now, may be left undone, to our eternal undoing.

The chief dangers to which we will be exposed, in case of ultimate victory -- which is now placed beyond reasonable doubt, although some reverses may yet be experienced, and much fighting may yet be done -- *are those which arise from victory itself.* In the hour of triumph, if men are not *cruel*, they are apt to be *foolishly magnanimous*. Ever prone to extremes, if the hour of victory is not dishonored by the glutting of vengeance, its glory is apt to be diminished by the effeminate doings of a false and ostentatious magnanimity, more regardful of the light in which they stand in the eyes of a vanquished foe, than how they appear in the sight of justice and of God. As Ahab when he rode a conqueror, with the acclamations of a victorious army in his ears, when he meets the vanquished king, God appointed to destruction, bowing before him in abject submission, with a rope around his neck, he hails him as "brother," seats him in his chariot, and ratifies a treaty with him, and remembers no more the God who gave him the victory, or the interests of that kingdom and that truth in consideration of which it was given, and God passed the sentence, "thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." To us in case of ultimate victory this danger is peculiarly imminent. Whilst it is true that the great mass of men in the free states are loyal to the national flag, it is not true that a large majority are loyal to the great principles it

means. There is not a numerical majority to-day of the men who uphold the present war, who have a thought beyond the maintenance of the mere unity of the nation. The great truths which lie at the root of the conflict are unfelt and unacknowledged. The Middle and Western states are still plethoric with old prejudices — Illinois is voting the black man from her borders. The Democracy of Michigan, in their recent convention, have proclaimed as their brightest hope, the speedy overthrow of *Secession* of *Abolitionism* — and this is the principle, or rather *lack of principle*, which represents hundreds of thousands from the Delaware to the Missouri. Millions have no higher thought. That they rush to the battle field by thousands, indicates no reinforcement of the idea striving on the side of freedom. Among them are thousands of brave, truth loving, God fearing men; but the mass are oblivious to the meaning of the war. The darkness of oppression and the light of freedom are one to them — hating alike abolitionist and rebel — fighting for the opinions of forty years ago — believing it possible for Sumner and Davis to rush into each other's arms, apologize and be friends, and for right and wrong to fuse into a fugitive slave bill. Through all that vast section there is a ponderous mass of inert mind which can only be moved on emergency, by a determined, concentrated, mighty effort of the enlightened thought of the north. By degrees the light is dawning upon it. Here and there start forth from doubtful company, strong, manly defenders of the true liberty, who come to the work with the zeal of new converts, and in many cases, with about as much knowledge, who need direction and encouragement. In Boston, Providence, New York and Philadelphia, are thousands of merchants who stand waiting for any kind of a peace, that a south-

ern market may be opened, — whose sole principle is money — who would be bosom friends with the most malignant traitors in a week. Ministers are waiting to come north and go south to convince the respective parties how much in the wrong they have both been. Congressmen are waiting for that “good time coming,” when again the shrewd politician may ride to power on the necks of Massachusetts and South Carolina; and thus far at the hands of government it has been a *goodly thing to be a rebel*, and a *bad thing* to have known sympathy with the unwilling hands which support rebellion. Halleck is in Missouri using Fremont’s labor to support the action of the Illinois legislature in erecting a wall against the flying slave. Fremont, with a patient patriotism which future times will applaud, stands by waiting till the hand be taken from the throat from which issued the people’s voice, and the voice of liberty. Butler for months has been suspended from the peg of delay. Now paper war is at a close; blood has been shed, homes have been desolated, — the bereaved ask for what? Mothers, sisters, wives, brothers, fathers ask with peculiar emphasis as they cover up their dead, “why have they died?” The voice of the free people is rising — taxation is coming — patriots in congress are asking questions solemn and hard, — Butler has been started off, and Fremont begins to be spoken of for a new command, and the President asks the nation what it wants. Now is the time for the very stones to cry out, *Liberty! Justice!* We long and fear for the hour of victory. * If it is the weakness of the generous conqueror to loose sight of truth and justice in the moment of triumph, how great is our danger, when throughout the whole body such a mass of matter is gravitating to the side of wrong.

We are coming to a time when the moral power of the nation will be tried as it has never been, when every muscle will be strained, — a time in which, if we conquer in this strife, questions are to be decided as grave as ever agitated the mind of patriot or statesman. The question of the rights of States, of what is the cement of the nation, is to be forever settled; the question who are to be citizens when rebellion owns loyalty, who are to pay the bills, and who to be punished. *Then* will be the time of our danger; then will the integrity of the nation be tried. We will have orations based upon the one feeling of generosity to the vanquished, and the reestablishment of fraternal sympathy. Homes desolated, towns burnt, beggared aristocrats, ruined States, will be strong arguments with which to hush the demands of justice. There will be property to be confiscated, traitors to be hung, men to be freed, law to be honored, — all under the sun of peace, and in the pride of conquest. Then will be the danger that the principles of truth, the value of law, and the honor of God, will be prostrated in the path of folly. The sentiment of retributive justice is rising up in the hearts of the thinking nation, and demands to be regarded. There is a certain trembling in the hearts of true men, for fear that treason will be treated in the property and persons of its chief supporters and instigators, in a manner which will make them light things in the minds of the people — rather as a freak of conscience than as a death-meriting villainy. There is a fear, that prejudice against the black man and sympathy with his master will outweigh the principles of justice upon which the safety of our nation depends; that slavery will be left with its old rights, too sacred a thing for the touch of Liberty; that Northern blood

and money shall be used to reconstruct a dishonored Union ; that such men as Davis, Toombs, Rhett, Stephens, Breckenridge, and Floyd, shall go *unhung*, if caught ; that we may again behold the spectacle of Southern arrogance domineering in the halls of Congress over Northern men, robbed of dignity and honor by base compromises ; that the action of the government will degrade law, until statutes are as worthless as Confederate notes ; that the security of property, life, reputation, and government, will be lessened. Such fears as these start a thrill through the healthful soul of the nation. The dangers of victory and peace are more to be dreaded than all the armies of the South. They can be met only by agitation, by rousing the moral sentiment of loyal men and pouring it in upon the government with united energy. Every man should be made to feel the value of our government, of law, of virtue, and to hear the voices which speak to him from idle factions ; from the magnificent sacrifices of the rich, and the hard earned, generously given mites of the poor ; from desolate homes, with their tears and cries ; from new made graves, with their bloody occupants ; from the scornful questions of the nations, who ask us what we mean ; from the providence of the eternal God which scathes the land, and His Word which curses the unrighteous nation, — all say but one thing : “Arise in this hour of opportunity and proclaim *universal liberty* and *execute stern justice!*” Till the principle of liberty in the minds of the people shall be dearer than life, and outraged law shall rise from the ashes with a majesty that the trader of New Mexico and the trapper of the Yellowstone shall feel her power, and “walk softly” in her presence. It is not my purpose to endorse or recommend any particular scheme of emancipation or pun-

ishment, but simply to urge upon every citizen to demand of those in power that *slaves shall be freed, and traitors shall be punished, in a manner which shall exalt liberty and honor law*. To point out the significance which the triumph of law-making Americans should have, that it should mean the *true honor of men* and the *true glory of God*. In the midst of momentary reverses, let the people not forget to ply still the victor's demand. In the midst of the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon, let the solemn responsibilities of the future have consideration, — let the voice of the people ring out so clearly that Europe as she listens may not need to ask of our shout as she has asked of our doings, “what meaneth it?” Let the action of the nation be such that when the last manacle has been knocked from the slave, when the last traitor has fallen, when the last act of justice shall be rendered, when the last shout of triumph shall go abroad into the ears of the race, the world shall know it is the voice of a people rising from her sorrows, cleansed from her sins, to walk in white among the nations, reflecting to mankind the smile of a reconciled God.

