

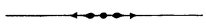
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ELEMENTS AND EVIDENCES

OF

NATIONAL DECAY.



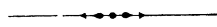
A Lecture

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY, N. J., AUG. 7, 1862,

BY THE PASTOR,

REV. JOSEPH S. VANDYKE.



PHILADELPHIA:

McLAUGHLIN BROTHERS' BOOK & JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT, 112 SOUTH THIRD ST.

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National Decay.

ONE of the great problems of our age is, how to impart to modern freedom the strength and permanency of despotism. Democratic forms of government are the result of a strong reaction from tyrannical forms. The principle that right to govern vested in a few of the noblest, ablest and best citizens of a nation, being pushed to an unwarrantable extreme, and found to possess no power of determining who were best qualified to rule and hence, ever liable to shameful abuse, a violent reactionary movement set in, and it was maintained that right to govern rested in the people governed. The germ of this principle is found in the declaration of Luther, that an individual is responsible only to truth and to his God; which declaration took the form of an act of rebellion against the authority of the Romish See. It is true, this was simply a noble assertion of the principle of individual freedom and responsibility in matters of religion, but this being of extensive application, and firmly grasped by the human mind, and animating and inspiring new energies, could not long remain unapplied to the relation existing between subject and monarch. It has been so applied, for all civil liberty is the natural outgrowth of religious liberty, which is the gift of the Reformation.

But is there no danger to be apprehended from the abuse of this principle? We conceive there is, and that Republicanism is developing the germs of decay and of death, and that no power can prevent this fearful end, unless the principle now so vigorously laid hold of and rapidly carried to its logical result, be held in check by other equally well founded, opposing principles. When pressed beyond due limits it must end in the worst form of anarchy, this is

its natural consequence. That the tendency of the present development is in this direction none can doubt; for when a nation has seized an idea it becomes a part of its life, and there is a constant evolution and application thereof to the affairs of life. Human progress is discernible in the history of every nation, and every movement is a reaction from an extreme, and a tendency toward the opposite.

In order, therefore, to determine whether we are tending toward anarchy, we have only to ask, what principle have we adopted, and is it not one which has been graven on the human heart by the sceptre of despots? There is, therefore, always a necessity of effort to arrest the extreme consequences of one pervading idea and limit it by its opposite. A failure to apprehend this necessity, and to devise means to meet it, has cost the human race much treasure and blood. In fact, it may be said, that almost all revolutions would thus have been averted, for the causes which led to them would have been arrested, and the nation possessed of a self-regulating power, a power to effect a change in the development without those violent upheavals and sweeping destruction of institutions, good and bad, which generally accompany great changes.

In illustration of this we have only to look into the history of France since the time of Louis XIV. The causes which led to the establishment of the first Republic were gradually developed during the hundred and fifty years of domestic tranquility which preceded it. During which time, the divine right of king's to rule was seldom or never questioned, and carried to its natural consequence—absolute despotism. Had it been properly limited by the Christian principle, that all men are essentially equal and equally the subjects of one king, and the value of the beggar's soul no less than that of the prince, and therefore each possessed of true freedom, the French nation would never have seen that day of humiliation on which three hundred hired assassins, with scarcely the form of a trial, shed the best blood of the empire, nor be compelled to read the record and view the monuments of its folly and its crimes. The history of these events France would now gladly bury in oblivion forever. Her failure to arrest fatal consequences, presented to the world the spectacle of a nation maddened with infidel frenzy, declaring that the sentence: "*Fear God and honor the King,*" had held sway long enough, and by one convulsive effort dethroning both from the heart

of a nation, and with the words of liberty on its lips asserting the essential equality of man—and declaring that freedom was no government. “A single day,” it was said, “has destroyed eight hundred years of prejudice and slavery.” But they awoke to find that no government, or individual liberty followed to its logical consequence, was a worse despotism than that from which they had escaped, and inaugurated a reign of terror in which life and property were at the mercy of some ignorant, bigoted, covetous and ambitious mob-leader; and to learn that planting liberty trees, and assenting to the dicta of the infidels Voltaire, Rosseau, and the encyclopedists, could, by no possibility, bestow true freedom and national prosperity. In short they had found that it was simple anarchy. The failure of a nation to remedy these evils was the cause of the overthrow of the first Republic, and founding on its ruins the throne of the first Napoleon. The events which transpired in the interval, between Louis XVI and Napoleon I, were a consequence of the rapid logical development of the idea of individual liberty, and cost the empire an untold treasure of wealth, and the lives of over a million of its best citizens. France did so much during this brief period, because she did so little before it, to check the growth of that principle which strengthens the fetters of despots, and so little during it to prevent the extreme results of an idea which inevitably leads to the disorganization of society, and the dissolution of national unity. The lesson is written in characters of blood, and nations in all time may read fearful warnings therefrom.

The same truth might be evinced by tracing the application of the reigning idea, to social and national life, through the reign of Napoleon, to the restoration of the expelled dynasty, and again to the second expulsion of the Bourbons and the establishment of the second empire. And the same lesson may be learned from Jewish, Roman, and English history.

But it may be objected, healthy national life and rapid growth are ever the consequence of a nation's ardent attachment to one grand idea, and its earnest zeal in endeavoring to reap all the fruits which it can be made legitimately to yield, and hence an effort to combine and develop several leading principles must check progress, and impede national and individual energy. It is well known that Mohammedanism was victorious because it laid hold of *one* truth, “There is no God but God,” and, therefore, was able to surmount all ob-

stacles, and bid defiance to its foes. The one idea, of saving the sepulchre of the Lord from desecration, actuated the breasts of the thousands who, during the crusades, found a grave in Palestine. Such stupendous energies would never have been exerted, nor such efforts made, had the performers been vacillating between two or more leading objects. "No man can serve two masters." Nor can any nation follow two *master* ideas. True, they cannot both be masters. But they can both be served. A man may live for a hundred different purposes—he can live for but one master purpose. The same is true of a nation, it may be developing fifty different principles, and thereby developing one master principle. Yet, human intellect cannot grasp all truths, and see the precise value and bearing of each, and thus steadily progress without revulsion. But this does not hinder that it should make all efforts to rightly comprehend and apply as many as possible, and thus put off fatal extremes to a more distant day. By seizing one idea, *false* development may be accelerated, but progress in the right direction is delayed, for a reaction and perhaps violent revulsion sets in and destroys not only false progress, but along with it, much genuine human advance. Slow but certain growth is assuredly preferable to rapid, deformed growth. The man of one idea may possess an energy and an earnestness almost marvelous, and may speedily exhibit his pet truth in all the different phases of life of which it is capable, but this, by no means, proves that he has developed faster, or accomplished more than the man who, grasping the same principle, and a dozen more, of equal validity, has developed all and allowed each to have its due weight in modifying the others. The growth of the one is abnormal, the growth of the other symmetrical. Were human capacities capable of fully comprehending all truths and their proper relations to each other, social and civil revolutions need never occur, for their could be a constant and healthful progress of the human race. There would be a steady advance toward perfection. This is impossible to finite minds and corrupt hearts, but certainly more is attained by attempting to reach the perfection of a perfect model, than by hastening to reproduce the imperfections of a deformed one.

Protestantism is a reaction from Catholicism, and Republicanism from despotism, and without unusual care both will assuredly be pushed to dangerous extremes. And it is our purpose to show that our times present signs of the rapid development of dangerous

growths of Democracy, which, if not kept in check, will certainly ensure its overthrow, and,

First—It has engendered a false theory of liberty. The principle is already being carried beyond its due limits. Freedom is not permission to do everything, this is not liberty, but the worst form of servitude, as it always issues in the slavery of the nobler to the baser.

The individual is not rendered free by being allowed to do whatsoever the wicked heart may devise. A man is free only when passions and appetites are subject to moral restraint, to conscience, the decider of moral obligation; this to the intellect, and enlightened by it, and all actions flow from an intelligent will, and he is at perfect liberty to do whatsoever a thoroughly enlightened conscience dictates, and nothing more. One in any other situation is not free, but under the worst possible despotism. God, alone, is perfectly free, but he is not at liberty to do wrong. The same is true in national life, the baser should be subject to the nobler, the immoral should be kept under restraint by the moral and the religious. As in the life of an individual, so in the life of a nation, permission to do wrong is not essential to perfect liberty; is not only not essential but actually destroys it.

Now, ours is not a nation of thieves, of murderers, of Sabbath-breakers, of Romanists, or of infidels; but a christian nation, inasmuch as it was founded by Protestant christians, and received the impress of their character. As the germ was christian, the growth should be. And the prevailing influence from that day to the present has been in favor of a pure christianity, for the majority of its people have been thoroughly imbued with such principles, and the controlling power has been in the hands of those at least nominally of this class. Can any one, therefore, deny to our country the right of being ruled as a christian nation? Can any claim the right to rob us of this, our priceless inheritance? Are we not entitled to the highest and only permanent form of liberty—christian liberty? And that such alone is either worthy or capable of permanency, is clearly written in the sad histories of the republics of Rome and of France. Yet we constantly hear the cry for more liberty—that is, greater license in the commission of those acts which are expressly prohibited in God's word, or contrary to the spirit of christianity. And these demands for the subjection of all that is good to all that is bad, are made in the holy name of liberty. Ask for more free-

dom? Why we have drank at that fountain until we have become intoxicated, and nought but the power of heaven can save our country in future from fearful destruction.

And can any say there is no cause for apprehension—when the American citizen may claim, as a part of his birthright, the privilege of pouring into the minds of youth, the deadly poison of Atheism, of teaching that there is no Creator, no judge, and no future retribution, and admonishing by the gratification of sense to quench all aspirations of the soul after a better existence, and stand in “fancied security for one cheerless moment between two blank eternities?” Is there no cause for fear when the Atheist claims the right of expelling, by law, from our Public Schools, “*God’s word*,” the source of all our prosperity, and the only safeguard of all our liberties, civil and religious? And the infidel meets not the slightest obstacle in presenting, in more covert form, principles alike subversive of all christianity and all government.

Sabbath-breakers claim the privilege of ridiculing the holy institution of the Lord’s day, and desecrating it at pleasure. The advocates of phalansterianism boldly inculcate the necessity of an entire demolition of the present social fabric, and a reorganization of society on principles, not only untried, but clearly impracticable in the present lapsed condition of mankind. And Mormonism seeks the protection of a Christian nation for its anti-christian doctrines and institutions. If liberty thus means complete exemption of the individual from all restraint, what may not be perpetrated in its name? And what has not been done? Under the banner inscribed to this goddess, but borne by libertines, have been committed many of the most hideous crimes that blacken the pages of history.

Even now there are not wanting those who consider the suppression of treasonable papers, and the apprehension of those who aid, abet and inculcate treason, an infringement of the rights of private judgment and individual freedom. They must be permitted to advocate robbery, theft, murder, to concoct treason, to give sympathy and encouragement to those who have rebelled against a government which, for the sake of peace, has ever treated the present disaffected section with the greatest possible leniency; which has yielded the wishes of twenty millions of freemen to the wish of two millions in the interest of slavery; which has given into the hands of the latter class, during the last twenty years, more than two-thirds of all its highest

salaried, most honorable and responsible offices, allowing them to determine our domestic and foreign policy, to represent us at the courts of other nations, to control our commercial relations, and to make, interpret and enforce the laws of the Supreme Court. Yes, they must be permitted not only to give aid and comfort to those who have inaugurated an entirely uncalled for rebellion, but, who, in attempting to accomplish their purposes, have been guilty of crimes, at the contemplation of which, the mind of man is appalled.

And what are some of the crimes committed and the evils brought about by those whom the advocates of free speech and free opinion desire so ardently to encourage? They took from our treasury millions of dollars, stole all United States property in the South, forts, arms, navy yards, public buildings, revenues and mints. They managed to obtain control of nearly all the fire arms in possession of the government, and all the regular soldiers of the army, except one thousand. They ordered our navy to the farthest parts of the earth, so that when the blow was struck, by attacking three hundred half fed soldiers, whose commander had declared that within three days they would be starved into a surrender—not one man of war was available. And their public men were guilty of the worst perjury; under oath to obey and defend the Constitution and the laws, beneath the very dome of the Capitol, while drawing the pay of the government, they were plotting its overthrow, and from the Capitol, telegraphing to all parts of the South, an infamous falsehood, hoping to fire the Southern heart to rebellion—declaring that war was inevitable, and the object of that war would be the abolition of slavery, and the reward offered to a brutal soldiery, plunder and lust. Not only did officials perjure themselves, but all their dupes, although not to the same extent, were yet guilty of the same sin. They refused to be “subject unto the higher powers,” and thus “resisted the ordinance of God.” And few “put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates,” so that almost the entire population stand in the sight of God, guilty of this great sin. And what stupendous results have followed: it has cost untold millions, ruined an immense amount of public property, burned cities and villages, beggered thousands, brought twelve hundred thousand from their homes, and exposed them to the great temptations and hardships of camp life, rendered at least two-thirds of them unfit to be peaceable and valuable citizens hereafter, and has probably sent fifty

thousand into eternity, unprepared to meet their Judge; and all this has been done for the avowed purposes of "conserving, perpetuating and extending the system of domestic slavery." Are we not running the principle of liberty over the precipice of anarchy, when any, for the justification and advocacy of such conduct, dare to seek protection under the folds of the sacred flag of freedom?

Nor is this loose theory of liberty adopted merely by those who are openly opposed to our government, and by those who are avowedly irreligious—but even by Christian statesmen. Hence the care with which all the visionary reforms, absurd social theories and infidelities of the world are fostered. Yet, when did they ever confer upon a people the blessings of freedom and prosperity. God may load with many benefits a people who are unworthy of his favor, and utterly forget him, but the great gift of liberty seems given alone to those in whose heart is a firm belief in the existence of an Omnipotent Ruler, to whom all are responsible, and a high regard for the principles of His revealed will. Does not our conduct, therefore, appear like warming into vigorous life the venomous reptile, that he may fix his deadly fangs the deeper?

Let us not forget that a nation destroys not her freedom in resolving to impose upon herself necessary restraint, but, on the contrary, secures thereby true and permanent freedom.

Second—It has led to the almost universal belief that it is not the business of governors to govern, but to be mere holders of office. According to this theory officials are dependent on the will of the people not only for the tenure of their office, but for their right to rule, and are responsible to them, and to them alone, and may be required to exercise all ministerial powers for their benefit. And the latter are the sole judges of what will conduce to their best interests, material, social, moral and religious, while the former are simply servants, robbed of right to think, or have conscientious convictions respecting the duties and the requirements of office. This sets the short sighted and fickle multitude, who are ever liable to be swayed from right by self interest, in the place of the educated, liberal, disinterested and conscientious executor of law.

But this theory ignores the heaven-born origin of justice, and denies that government is an ordinance of God, a necessary institution, to which the multitude are enjoined loyally to submit. Not that God's word sanctions what has been denominated the divine right of kings,

but it does teach that right to govern emanates from God—and that those in authority are directly accountable to him. To the people belongs the right of expressing an opinion as to whom they deem best fitted to rule—and thus deciding who shall actually possess authority, and for the proper use of this privilege they are accountable to the Giver. But, in claiming a right to the disposal of office, we are falling into the fatal error of claiming the power to confer *right to rule*. This is the practical belief of nearly all classes in our land, as is seen from the fact that we are so rapidly realizing the logical consequences thereof in assuming to instruct those appointed to office, to complain of, threaten with rebuke—and dishonorably remove those who refuse to bow to the Moloch of public opinion. But, when once they have entered office, they have higher obligations than those they are under to the party electing—they should govern in the fear of God, and may, therefore, be morally bound to exert their influence against measures dearly cherished by their constituents. As in the sight of God they are required to enforce the constitution and the laws, and advocate measures right and just in themselves, without regard to pecuniary advantages, and not yield to the dictation of a multitude. For the ideas of such cannot rise above the petty interests of the present. They are incompetent to touch the delicate mechanism of a national and social organization, which has so many bearings and intertwinings. One of the evils attending this state of things has been a growing unwillingness on the part of conscientious and christian men to hold offices of public trust. And what has been the result? We behold now the anomaly of a great christian nation, governed almost exclusively by the irreligious. Is not this a violent separation of christianity from government? Is not the individual believer required to carry his religion with him into all the relations of life, and is less demanded of a nation? Is there not such a thing as national responsibility? And shall we be permitted to speak to the world as a military, a commercial, a civilized nation, but although professedly and really a christian people—not be required to utter our voice in behalf of a pure religion? Can we be thus exempted from the duty of glorifying God?

But we cannot more clearly set forth the evils resulting from this false principle, and the sin of those rulers who yield to the clamors of the multitude, than by quoting from a recent address of Lord Brougham, on the American war—and simply because this is

English in its origin. Surely we will not disregard the lessons of the past, and treat with contempt the matured opinions of perhaps the ablest statesman of our own and a former generation :

“But a solemn and practical lesson is taught by these sad events, and the conduct of the Government on both sides is plainly to be deduced from its structure. The influence of the multitude is supreme, though sometimes disguised and occasionally overcome by the exertions, most rarely by the counsels, of the wealthier and more intelligent portions of the community. But the conduct of the operations of war, as well as engaging in that evil course, is, to a great degree, in the hands of the multitude, when their voice prevails in the counsels of the State ; that is to say, those who are wholly ignorant and unfit to advise are predominant over the skillful and well-informed. Does a General displease them, they require his removal—it may be his punishment. It is in vain that the chiefs of the State resist the demand ; they are compelled to obey. This obedience, this yielding their own opinion to the pressure of the multitude, is the gravest offence that rulers can commit. Thus Generals who had gained victories again and again, like Luckner and Custine, were sent to the scaffold, when a partial reverse, or an alledged slowness to carry on operations dictated by the Paris clubs, raised a clamor against them. Thus a prince, the most accomplished warrior and statesman of his age, Bedford, tarnished his great reputation by yielding to the multitude, and sacrificing the Maid of Orleans to their fury, well aware that she had committed no offence, and was a prisoner of war, after rendering services beyond all price to her sovereign, the duke’s ally. But a yet more memorable instance of this heinous crime, vainly sought to be disguised under the name of weakness, is the Great Sacrifice, suffered, nay, designed by Providence, acting as ever through second causes—the giving up of our Saviour by a Governor, who thrice over declared his belief in the innocence, nay, in the divine mission of Jesus, but unable to resist the clamor of the mob, referring to Cæsar, and using his name as well as the high priests—a church and king mob ; and when we hear sceptics, or rather unbelievers, commending Pilate for his fairness in declaring the mob’s victim guiltless, and his courage in standing up against the priests, their leaders, it is exactly that which works his condemnation, and of which he, himself, distinctly expressed his shame, ascribing it to his blameable weakness, as all do

who have acted this atrocious part when the danger is over which they have escaped by their baseness. He, in truth, confessed himself guilty of murder. He fell into universal and merited contempt, and, being removed from his Government, died by his own hands. And let it not be supposed that such extreme and rare instances as we have been contemplating are the only ones of criminal submission to the influence of the multitude. The tyrant of many heads, like the single and ordinary one, does not always rule his slaves with a rod of iron—does not constantly exact enormous sacrifice. But, if this first submission be not stoutly resisted, the tyrannical power despises all bounds; caprice is added to domination, while submission becomes a habit, and the reign of reason and knowledge is at an end. Unbounded calamities overwhelm the State, bent under the yoke of the multitude, and that yoke cannot be shaken off without a dreadful struggle, involving new and more painful sufferings. And these claims on the part of the people, of power to confer right to rule, to remove from office at pleasure and to hold public men alone accountable to themselves, have led to the confounding of administration and government—so that these terms and the ideas expressed thereby, have come to be looked upon as almost or altogether synonymous. The constant tendency is for government to give place to administration. The people would not be governed but accommodated. None would be ruled, all would rule. Those who have the right to govern are viewed merely as servants; and of course submission to them cannot be rightfully required. Thus we have taught and fostered, and reared up a gigantic spirit of insubordination, which is in direct opposition to the teachings of God's word. This spirit manifests itself in a feverish desire to cast off all restraint, to acknowledge subjection to no power, to be under no law. It is seen throughout our whole land in the utter want of parental authority, and in the youthful spirit of contempt for age, and law, and order. Children rebel against parents, criminals despise law and evade its penalties, state officials rebel at being subject to a higher power, and from the lowest to the highest incline to the acknowledgment of no other law than the decisions of their own judgment. Why wonder that such training should issue in a sectional rebellion—the most uncalled for, most wicked, most atrocious, and most murderous, which has ever blackened the history of any nation. It is a rebellion against all government. Each state would be sovereign, each

district would be sovereign; every man deems himself a monarch, and his countrymen servants. He claims the right to decide all social and political questions, and that in utter disregard of the momentous lessons of the past. The principle which solves all difficulties is that the individual is perfectly free. He lives for the realization of an ideal republic, in which liberty shall mean exemption from all restraint.

And did time permit, we might show that republicanism has fostered selfishness, supreme arrogance, unbounded self-confidence and intense individualism, which has subordinated the common interests of society to the interests of individuals, exalted party spirit above patriotism, and developed the most astounding political corruption. The welfare, nay, the very life of the nation must be sacrificed to party and personal aggrandizement. And sooner than yield this power and the spoils of office to others, they would tear down the glorious fabric, reared by the wisdom and consecrated by the blood of our forefathers. Party and personal ends must be accomplished, if, in the effort, thousands of lives are sacrificed, millions are impoverished, and the hopes of centuries buried forever beneath the ruins of the temple of constitutional freedom. They bid us hold our peace, and stand in stolid indifference, or sit in breathless suspense while the ship of state is swiftly borne over the troubled waves of faction and anarchy, to utter and irremediable destruction. Such has been the syren voice which has lured us to the very brink of ruin. And is there no power to break the fetters of party spirit and arouse patriotism? Is love of country buried by love of self?—then has sounded already the death knell of freedom. But do any doubt that these evils are natural subgrowths of the principle of individual liberty and responsibility? Do any doubt that it has led to a false theory of liberty, and a false theory of government? Do any deny that its teachings have been that all right to govern is derived from the consent of the governed, and ceases when this consent is withdrawn? Where else is found the fruitful source of our errors in theory and in practice? What else has been the germ? We may assert, without fear of contradiction, that American democracy has, by a logical process, developed these dangerous tendencies. If considerations already presented have not proved this, convincing proof may be found in an examination of the numerous pamphlets, papers, books, and periodicals, which, avowedly setting out with the principle, “Every

man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal rights of any other man," profess by logical deduction to establish these errors. From it they conclude that parents and children, men and women, adults and infants, are perfectly equal in all their rights; that the rights of the child are "co-extensive with those of the adult;" that "each is free to exercise the same authority in legislation as his fellows;" that "government is simply an agent employed in common by a number of individuals to secure to them certain advantages, and can coerce no one;" that "every State may secede from the general government, and any person may secede from the State at his pleasure, and yet continue to live in its boundaries." That is, there is no government, the individual is supreme, and there is no power to which he can owe allegiance.

It is unnecessary for us to assert that every nation needs the actual exercise of authority. And this has been delegated to it by the sovereign Ruler of the Universe. Governors are not mere agents of the people; they are the ministers of God to their subjects for good; but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for they bear not the sword in vain; but they are the ministers of God, revengers to execute wrath upon those who do evil. "Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."*

A given amount of authority is, therefore, absolutely necessary, and, if more than this be exercised, a reaction will eventually set in, and there will be partial anarchy; if less be exercised a similar revulsion will occur, and little less than despotism will be required to correct existing evils.

We are doing so much now because we have done so little during the last twenty years, to arrest dangerous tendencies. There has been no power, and almost no effort, to check the rapid development of doctrines alike subversive of all truth, peace and godliness; that the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, sinful, and that slavery is a divine institution, its preservation a religious duty, and its abolishment, whether gradual or immediate, a sin against God. Had the true theory, which lies between these two extremes, been carefully inculcated and received, this fratricidal war might have been averted. But we are so madly carrying out one principle, that had the attempt

* Romans, 13, 1—7.

been made, the cry would have been well nigh universal, "You are infringing the sacred rights of freemen!"

This is not intended as a denunciation of democracy. For we have not abandoned the hope of uniting strength and permanency with freedom. If passed despotisms have possessed energy, unity and permanence, we do not, on that account, wish to see them reproduced in the future. For we do not believe that all the struggles of nations after liberty are to end in an intense desire to submit once more to one absolute will. The aspirations of freemen are not to be repressed by the bloody sceptres of despots, seen in the dim distance. No! the evil tendencies of republican forms of government can be more easily held in check than the evil tendencies of absolute monarchy. Yet this is a stern task for a nation. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the simple runneth on and is punished." Such cry peace, peace, when nearing the vortex of destruction. If he, who governs his own spirit, is greater than he who takes a city, great, indeed, is that people who govern themselves.

The rapid growth of many of these dangerous tendencies has been suddenly checked, by the war in which we are now engaged. Let us hope, as we have good reason to do, that we will emerge from the fiery trial purified, stronger and possessing all the elements of national permanence and greatness. The cause for which we are exerting every nerve is worthy of all our efforts, We are fighting for all we hold dear; for that Constitution which was given us as a sacred deposit by our revered ancestors, for the Union, which has been the source of all our prosperity at home and our honor abroad, for the principles of republican government; we are fighting for law, for authority, for order, for one of the corner stones in the political edifice of our enemies is the inalienable right of each State to secede at will. Thus they incorporate into the organic life of their nation the seeds of innumerable difficulties, and its own destruction. This principle is a sledge hammer which must inevitably disintegrate society, and end in utter anarchy. We are fighting for our very existence as a nation, and must solve the question whether republican forms of government possess the power of self-preservation, and whether mankind, in all succeeding ages, are to abandon the hope of enjoying the blessings of well regulated freedom.