called upon to decide the momentous question whether you possess the power, by force of arms, to compel a State to remain in the Union. I feel bound to express an opinion on that important question.

The question fairly stated is:—Has the Constitution delegated to Congress the power to coerce a State into submission which is attempting to withdraw, or has actually withdrawn from the Confederacy? If answered in the affirmative, it must be on the principle that the power has been conferred upon Congress to declare and make war against a State. After much serious reflection, I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power exists. I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power has been delegated to Congress, or to any other department of the Federal Government. It is manifest upon an inspection of the Constitution, that this is not among the specific and enumerated powers granted to Congress; and it is equally apparent that its exercise is not "necessary and proper for carrying into execution" any one of these powers. So far from this power having been delegated to Congress, it was expressly refused by the Convention which framed the Constitution.

It appears from the proceedings of that body, that on 31st May, 1787, the clause "authorizing an exertion of the force of the whole against a delinquent State," came up for consideration. Mr. Madison opposed it in a brief but powerful speech, from which I shall extract but a single sentence. He observed:—"The use of force against a State would look more like a declaration of war than like an infliction of punishment; and would probably be considered by the party attacked as a dissolution of all previous compacts by which it might be bound." Upon my previous compacts by which it might be bound." Upon this motion, the clause was unanimously postponed; and was never, I believe, again presented. Soon afterward, on the 8th June, 1787, when incidentally adverting to the subject, he said:—"Any Government, for the United States, formed on the supposed practicability of using force against the unconstitutional proceedings of the States, would prove as visionary and illlaborious as the Government of Congress, during the present, and the then existing Congress of the old Confederation."

Without descending to particulars, it may be safely asserted that the power to make war against a State is at variance with the whole spirit and intent of the Constitution. Suppose such a war should result in the conquest of a State, how are we to govern it afterward? Shall we hold it as a conquered province? In the nature of things we could not, by physical force, control the will of the people, and compel them to elect Senators and Representatives to Congress, and to perform all the other duties depending upon the free exercise of their own volition, and required from the free citizens of a free State, as a constituent member of the Confederacy.

But, if we possessed this power would it be wise to exercise it under existing circumstances? The object would doubtless be to preserve the Union. War would not only present the most effectual means of destroying it, but would banish all hope of its peaceable reconstruction. Besides, in the fraternal conflict, a vast amount of blood and treasure would be expended, rendering future reconciliation between the States impossible. In the meantime, who can foretell what would be the sufferings and privations of the people during its existence?

The fact is, that our Union rests upon public opinion, and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens shed in civil war. If it cannot live in the affections of the people, it must soon die a violent death. Congress possesses many means of preserving it by reconciliation; but the sword was not placed in their hand to preserve it by force.

But may I be permitted solemnly to invoke my countrymen to pause and deliberate before they determine to destroy this, the grandest temple which has ever been dedicated to human freedom since the world began? It has been consecrated by the blood of our fathers by the glories of the past, and by the hopes of the future. The Union has already made us the most prosperous and, ere long, will make us the most powerful nation on the face of the earth. In every favored region of the globe the title of American citizen is held in the highest respect, and wherever proclaimed in a foreign land it causes the hearts of our countrymen to swell with honest pride. Surely when we reach the brink of the yawning abyss, we shall recoil with horror from the last fatal plunge. What a scene of catastrophe would be that for the friends of freedom throughout the world to contemplate! And what a triumph for the enemies of freedom throughout the world to exult over! If our glorious Union must perish, let not the States themselves perish by the sword. Let the precedent be set by them of preserving it by reconciliation, if possible; but if not, by the peaceful exercise of the right solemnly reserved by the Constitution on the part of each State and People to alter or abolish their political institutions whenever they shall think proper to do so. This is a right inherent in sovereignty, and which has been exercised time after time, from the days of the Revolution down to the present hour. Three of the original thirteen States have been actually severed from the Confederacy, and seven new ones admitted into the Union, since the Government was established by the Constitution. Why may not this be done peacefully again, if necessary, to preserve the remainder? Above all, why may not provision be made for the settlement of the present unhappy controversy in this manner, rather than to let the sword loose its fury?

But may I be permitted to express a hope that, in the existing perilous condition of our country, no man will allow himself to be influenced by party feelings or party predilections? Our present calamities have been produced by the bitterness of party spirit, by hatred of principles, and by excitement against men, in consequence of the long continued struggle between political parties for power and patronage. Forgetful of the fact that the Constitution and the Union were the work of compromise, each party has striven for the ascendency, regardless of the evils which might result to the country from the triumph of their opponents. Hence the strength of the Democratic party in the free States has been chiefly exerted in behalf of the interests of the South, and the strength of the Republican party in behalf of the interests of the North. Both parties have violated the Constitution in favor of their sectional interests, and neither has regarded it as the sacred bond of our Union in all its parts. Hence the advantage taken by the Republican party of the general hostility to the South, in the late Presidential election, to place in power a sectional party, pledged to the support of principles and measures calculated to exclude the South from the benefits of the Government, and to destroy its equality in the Confederacy. Hence the impossibility of the Democratic party to elect a President, except by the vote of a majority of the States, or sections, which, if united, would be sufficient to defeat the election. Hence the existence of a Democratic party in the North, which, in the event of the election of a Republican President, has been able to elect a majority of the House of Representatives, and thus to defeat the consummation of the sectional purposes of the Republican party. Hence the present perilous condition of the country, which has been produced by the action of the two sections, each acting upon the principle that the other was the aggressor, and that it was only resisting aggression. Hence the necessity for mutual forbearance, and for the exercise of the spirit of conciliation and compromise, which prevailed in the Convention which framed the Constitution.

It is not to be denied that the Southern States have just cause of complaint against the North, but I will not enumerate them. Suffice it to say, that they have been deprived of many of their rights in the Territories, and that the peculiar institutions of a large portion of them are in danger of destruction. Their safety requires that they should be placed in a position of security, in which they can live in peace with their neighbors, or separate from them until time and circumstances shall enable them to reunite upon terms of justice and equality. Can any human power secure this result except the Constitution and the Union? Will the Republican party, after having destroyed the Constitution, attempt to reconstruct the Union? Will they, after having placed themselves in a position to govern the Union by virtue of a sectional majority, abandon the policy which has given them power, and thus forever destroy the vitality of the party? Will they consent to a reconstruction of the Union, except upon the basis of the Constitution, which will secure to the South forever the full enjoyment of all her rights? Will they consent to the only reconstruction which can possibly be effected? Will they consent to the only reconstruction which can possibly be effected? Will they consent to the only reconstruction which can possibly be effected