

## Transcription

### **"You must choose sides"**

Let us not deceive ourselves; we are on the eve of a most sanguinary and relentless civil war, and shall be compelled to take sides either for the General Government or against it. The time has come when you must choose sides, and this state of things has been precipitated by the action of your own convention.

You may shut your eyes and stop your ears, and cry peace; but there is no peace. The clangor of arms and the tramp of armed legions is all around you, and may shortly be at your doors. You will be called upon to make sacrifices—pecuniary sacrifices, and it may be the sacrifice of life. War is an evil—a tremendous evil, but there is an evil a thousand fold greater, and that is the iron heel of despotism, a cruel, heartless, relentless despotism that would supercede the ballot-box by the cartridge-box; a despotism that would plunder our property, peril our lives, and rob us of that without which life would be a curse, our liberty. Let us now and here count the cost and ascertain whether our country and its institutions are worthy the sacrifices we may be called upon to make.

Have we a country, fellow citizens?— Have we a country known at home and abroad as the United States of America, that has risen in eighty years from the thirteen feeble, dependent colonies to the rank of one of the mightiest nations of the earth? A country whose Constitution has been the wonder of the world, and whose glorious flag has been borne over land and ocean, and has been the shield of the citizen wherever it floated in the breeze of heaven, without inquiring whether he was native or foreign born, or whether he lived in Massachusetts or South Carolina.

Had the God of Providence any hand in founding and watching over the young giant empire? Has he any designs to be accomplished through its instrumentality in the civil and moral regeneration of the world? Did the noble patriots who erected this glorious temple of liberty, cementing it with their blood, and sanctifying it with their prayers; I say did they design it should, in less than a century, be torn to pieces by the Vandal hands of those who had enjoyed the largest share of its benefits; or did they dig deep and lay its foundations on the rock of immutable truths, so that, though the rains might descend, and the floods come, and the winds of treason and perjury, falsehood and tyrannies might beat upon it, it should not fall, being founded



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upon a rock? Did they design that this nation should remain one united nation, under one Constitution and one government, till time shall be no more?

I shall now prove to you by the most conclusive evidence, that the framers of the Constitution and government of these United States did intend that the union of these States should be perpetual. And that they did believe that a division of the same would be their destruction.

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