

this long vexed and most perplexing subject can be adjusted, and to which the South can submit without dishonor.

In any action you may deem it expedient to take in this behalf, let me admonish you that a spirit of moderation should preside over and guide your councils. The language of menace and bravado is in bad taste and never accomplishes any good. We of Maryland occupying the position of a border State, dwelling upon the dividing line between the two extremes of interest and opinion upon the subject of slavery, have an especial interest in desiring the adjustment of this unhappy source of popular discontent, upon a basis which will secure permanent tranquility. While, therefore, we should express calmly and clearly our opinions as to the issues thus unfortunately forced upon us, and make no concealment of our resolution to maintain the rights of the States under the Constitution, against any infraction, we should carefully abstain from the use of language calculated to irritate and inflame those who may differ with us in opinion or to impair those fraternal ties which should bind in perpetual unity and concord the people of the respective States. Let wild and unprincipled fanatics, wherever found, endanger the continuance of the Union, if they will, by ceaseless agitation until the last vestige of friendly relationship and brotherly regard may be swept away. But let ours be the more grateful task to cast oil upon the elements of destruction, and if that dark day shall ever dawn which shall witness the downfall of this, the most glorious fabric of Government the wisdom of man has ever contrived, no share in the sin of so great a calamity to the cause of freedom throughout the world, can be laid at our door.

I have thus submitted for your consideration such measures as, in my judgement, are necessary and proper for the advancement of the public interests. Permit me, in conclusion, to express the hope, that your deliberations may be conducted in a spirit of harmony and patriotism, and may be productive of results alike honorable to yourselves and creditable to the State.

T. WATKINS LIGON.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
*January 2nd, 1856.*