

Lawless occurrences will be repeated, I fear, unless prompt action be taken by you.

It is my duty to advise you of my own convictions of the proper course to be pursued by Maryland in the emergency which is upon us. It is of no consequence now to discuss the causes which have induced our troubles. Let us look to our distressing present, and to our portentous future. The fate of Maryland, and perhaps of her sister Border Slave States, will undoubtedly be seriously affected by the action of your Honorable Body. Therefore should every good citizen bend all his energies to the task before us; and therefore should the animosities and bickerings of the past be forgotten, and all strike hands in the holy cause of restoring peace to our beloved State and to our common country. I honestly and most earnestly entertain the conviction that the only safety of Maryland lies in preserving a neutral position between our brethren of the North and of the South. We have violated no rights of either section. We have been loyal to the Union. The unhappy contest between the two sections has not been fomented or encouraged by us, although we have suffered from it in the past. The impending war has not come by any act or any wish of ours. We have done all we could to avert it. We have hoped that Maryland, and the other Border Slave States, by their conservative position and love for the Union, might have acted as mediators between the extremes of both sections, and thus have prevented the terrible evils of a prolonged civil war. Entertaining these views, I cannot counsel Maryland to take sides against the General Government, until it shall commit outrages upon us which would justify us in resisting its authority. As a consequence, I can give no other counsel than that we shall array ourselves for Union and Peace, and thus preserve our soil from being polluted with the blood of brethren. Thus, if war must be between the North and the South, we may force the contending parties to transfer the field of battle from our soil, so that our lives and property may be secure. It seems to me that, independently of all other considerations, our geographical position forces us to this, unless we are willing to see our State the theatre of a long and bloody civil war, and the consequent utter destruction of every material interest of our people, to say nothing of the blood of brave men and innocent women and children which will cry out from our soil for vengeance upon us if we fail to do all that in us lies to avert the impending calamity.

The course I suggest has all the while been the sole ground-