

We claim the protection of our institutions, as guaranteed by the Constitution, let us not render this protection impossible by tearing the Constitution to fragments.

I have extensive means of information as to the wishes of the people, not possessed by those who urge the measure upon me; and I am fully convinced that an immense majority of them, throughout the whole State, are firmly opposed to such action.

The business and agricultural classes, the planters, merchants, mechanics and laboring men - those who have a real stake in the community, who would be forced to pay the taxes and do the fighting - are the persons that should be heard, in preference to excited politicians, many of whom, having nothing to lose from the destruction of the government, may hope to derive some gain from the ruin of the State.

Such men will naturally urge you to "pull down the pillars of this accursed Union," with their allies at the North having termed "a covenant with Hell."

These extremists, North and South, agree in their hatred of the Constitution, which condemns the fanaticism of both. And leaders in South Carolina and Massachusetts agree in denouncing the fugitive slave law as unconstitutional, in the face of repeated decisions of the courts of the country.

Know that the masses of the people are opposed to the assembling of the Legislature at this time, and approve of my course; and it is a source of gratification to me to know that many of the most distinguished citizens of Maryland, and other border slave States, without distinction of party have endorsed it.

I have thought this matter conscientiously and honestly endeavored to perform my duty, and I solemnly protest that all other considerations, but those of duty, have been banished from my mind.

The men who have ascribed lower motives to me, have done me great injustice, and have shown that they cannot rise to the comprehension that an honest man feels compelled to discard all party ties when he is placed in a position where he must account, at each moment, to his conscience for any departure from duty. I, your fellow-citizen, necessarily injure myself by every act or omission which can injure you, and without a single motive of personal ambition to lead me aside from the plain path of duty. In the course of nature I cannot have long to live, and frequently yours to be allowed to end my days a citizen of this glorious Union.

But should I be compelled