

even under aggravating provocations, departed from the strictest requirements of the Federal Constitution. I cannot see how while the constitutional prohibition stands against compacts or agreements between any of the States, any "mutual league" can be had, even between those whose hopes and hazards are alike, and if this prohibition has been prejudicially declared to include "every agreement, written or verbal, formal or informal, positive or implied, by the mutual understanding of parties," then I am unable to imagine how any league or covenant or understanding, whatever, unauthorized or unapproved by Congress, even though it should be in furtherance of the laws and for strengthening the confederacy, can be otherwise than in plain violation of the clearest provisions of the Supreme Law of the Land.

If this be so, then Maryland is now invited to take part in such league, covenant, engagement or understanding, not authorized by the Congress of the United States, with a view, not of maintaining the law or upholding the Constitution, but of disregarding the one and breaking down the other; of denying her obligations, of giving up her rights under the Constitution, and of deserting the Union of the States. Her people will never consent to such a step. Their devotion to that Union and the Constitution is unalterable; and if there must be secession or desertion from this Union, the people of Maryland think that those alone who refuse to comply with its duties should be deprived of its benefits.

The people of this State, who acknowledge their obligations and comply with them, are disposed to remain in the Union, and there, and by its power to exact such compliance, on the part of others; rather than by deserting their places, surrender those rights and privileges. They have seen therefore, with mortification and regret, the action of one of those States, with whose social institutions and people, they have the closest sympathy, tending, as they think, not to the security of our rights, but to their injury, and to the final and speedy destruction of those very interests in whose behalf such precipitate action was begun.

The action of South Carolina already taken and the action which it is supposed and feared, other States, bordering on the Gulf, will take, in declaring themselves no longer members of this Union, is in my judgment the worst possible means of remedying the evils of which they complain, or of preventing the injury they say is imminent.

Now perfect political equality of the States, among themselves, is secured — only by the Constitution. It is by force of the Union alone, and because of the Constitution, that the citizens of each State are entitled to equality with the