

Athol, Decr. 26, 1845

Dear Bradburn,

I ought to have written you before, and should have done so, had I anything to tell you, that was worthy of being either read or written. Life here is a lifeless affair, externally and my internal life has been extended upon matters of political economy, which could not be made interesting to you in a letter, although I shall of course be glad to show them to you when you come here---

The Dr. and his wife are very anxious to see you, and continually inquire of me whether I do not think you will be here in a few days? Sometimes I feel obliged to tell them that I am afraid it is quite uncertain when you will come—but they have been insisting that you would come at Christmas, if not before. They are well as usual, but in rather low spirits, on account of some damage done by the water a few days since, from which there is danger that he will lose some three, four, or five hundred dollars. In fact he must lose it unless he can induce another man to bear a part of the loss—which I am afraid he cannot do. I saw them last evening—they are very anxious to see you. I think your presence, if any thing, will make them forget the misfortune.

Will you mention to Hildreth that the Rev. Mr. Barlow, formerly of Lynn, now preaching at Warwick[?], and living at Northfield, at my suggestion, offered to contribute something for the Progressive Review, on the terms proposed to the other contributors. I think he would be an acquisition to it, considering that he is one of the cloth, he is one of the most radical men I have seen. He has delivered some lectures before our Lyceum. Hildreth probably knows all about him.

I regret that "The Constitutionalist" does not make its appearance. It is the one thing needful. I am tired of reading in the Emancipator those eternal dissertations from doctors of any thing but divinity. Where is Leavitt? Is he still sick? If he do [sic] not get well, all the readers of the Emancipator will soon be sick too.

Slavery is rampant, isn't it? Will the forcing[?] in Texas, under the gag[?] of the previous question, be sufficient to excite any northern indignation? Or are we sold soul and body to be spit upon by slaveholders? I doubt if there is stuff enough in the leaders of the Whig party to utter a single honest word of resentment. What a craven speech Webster uttered. It would have been altogether better for him to have said nothing. Silence might have indicated some appropriate feeling. But such tame[?] unresisting words indicated nothing but _____ and degradation. He might at

least—the great expounder—have told them that a constitution, that made it impossible for the state to abolish slavery, was not “republican,” and therefore unconstitutional. But he save all his constitutional thunder for the defense of banks and tariffs—he can spare more for the defense of liberty—the dastard.

Now that it is too late to do any good by sending my book to Congress, do you think there are any, who will take the expense of sending it to the members of the United States Supreme Court? If there are not, I intend to see what I can do about it myself—although I am unable to do it--But it must be done by somebody.

Do the Abolition papers stir the constitutional question any? I see none but the Emancipator—and that has not mentioned the thing since I left Boston, so far as I recollect. The Liberator and Standard, by their attacks upon my book, may perhaps save the subject from oblivion. But it seems to me that the other papers might with quite as much propriety do something to keep the question before the people.

I really regret that I cannot be present at the fair—the Garrison fair—I should like very much to see the fair sex, as well as all the other fair things. I suppose they are really “doing the fair thing”. I begin to think the women are the only real anti-slavery men after all—No, I take that back. Not the only ones. There are some others—though their names are not legion. Most of them have their minds occupied by profound inquiries as to the true interpretation of texts and verses. No wonder that slaveholders despise them. You must trim[?] this letter—it is altogether too cynical, as you see, to be left whether it may ever come to any eyes but your own. I do not always feel so savage—and I do not know that I have any reason for it. But it sometimes seems to me as if there were a great many fools in this world. I wish you and Whittier would start the Constitutionalist—make an onslaught upon slavery—carry the war into Africa—and find out whether there is any spirit in these northern states that can be aroused. Now is the time. Slavery is ~~growing~~ making new demonstrations of its power. It has got the whole government in its hands, and is determined to use it to fortify itself for the future. The Whig party are routed[?]. After the destruction of the tariff, which is close at hand, I hope, the Whig party will become “an obsolete idea”. Now then is the time to make converts to the cause of liberty. The Liberty Party ought to take the name of ~~the~~ Constitutionalist. The name would be the most acceptable name to all who wish to leave the old parties. It would also challenge attention, and compel attention to your constitutional principles. It would compel the advocates of slavery, and the courts of law, (which is of more consequence than everything else), to meet or yield to your legal arguments. Now they have to meet nothing but what they call your sympathy for the niggers. By taking that name, the party would be appealing to a standard, which all acknowledge to be imperative both upon legislatures and courts.

Now you will ask whether I should join the constitutional party, and vote with them? Probably I should not vote with them—that is for the candidates. The party probably would not vote according to my theory of voting. If they did, I should unite with them. If I had time, and it were of sufficient practical consequence, I would write a dissertations on voting. But few probably would concur in my theory, and therefore I do not care to make any noise about it. Nevertheless I am anxious that those who vote on a different theory from mine, should make their vote effective for some practical purpose. But enough of this for the present. I hope you will be here soon, bringing Mrs. Sargeant with you if possible. Remember me to her and Mrs. Hildreth, and any others that inquir after me. If you do not come, you will certainly write me.

Yours Sincerely,

Lysander Spooner.