

Boston, Oct 4, 1847

Dear Bradburn,

I had hoped to be able, before this, to send you a copy of my book. It will not be out until next week. I may be able to send you the unbound sheets the last of this week. It will probably be on sale at the Buffalo convention. But I am very anxious you should have time to read it before, in the hope that it will induce you to make some move in regard to the constitution.

I presume there will be great division in the convention. 1<sup>st</sup> in regard to postponing the nomination, 2, in regard to the Liberty League.

Let me suggest that you forestall discussion on both those points by presenting, at the outset, resolutions somewhat like these.

Resolved. That this convention will nominate no candidates, who do not avow the opinion that all slavery in this country is unconstitutional.

Resolved. That this convention will nominate no candidates who do not avow the opinions that it is within the constitutional power, and is the constitutional duty, of Congress to establish courts throughout the slaveholding states, and to take all other measures necessary for liberating the slaves on habeas corpus.

It seems to me it would be an infamous violation of principles, and a most stupid piece of policy[?], for the party to nominate men, who believe slavery constitutional, and believing it constitutional, will yet swear to support the constitution. It was this that killed Birney, I think—and I think that politically it ought to kill any man—although I presume those who do it, reconcile their consciences to it in some manner. But it must be by a process, the correctness of which is invisible to the world at large.

There is no necessity for nominating such men—for there are enough, who believe slavery unconstitutional. Gerrit Smith says that if he should be elected, he should "construe the constitution as a deadly hostility to slavery," as I recollect his words. Fessenden [?] told me, as long ago as Jerry's [?] funeral, that "he did not believe my argument could be refuted." Lewis I understand believes my argument.

Leavitt thinks that Hale has probably either never examined the question, or does not agree to my argument. Chase, of course, is not convinced. I hope however that the "second part" will convince him.

If Hale and Chase were to take true ground on the constitution, they would perhaps be the most available candidates—although I have some doubts about it. But it would be suicide for the party to put up candidates, who, during the canvass, will be asserting that slavery is constitutional. The constitutional question, I trust, will be agitated more this winter than it has been, and yet, if the candidates hold the old doctrine, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the party, at the very time when they should speak out loudest, will all be gagged by the position of their candidates. I think rather than submit to any such gag, all the papers, that hold slavery unconstitutional, will be bound to desert their candidates, and go for Gerrit Smith.

If the nomination should be postponed, as I suppose it probably will be, would it not be very important to establish, or attempt to establish, at this convention, the test before named, that no one shall be nominated in the spring, who does not hold slavery unconstitutional? Such a test will compel discussion during this winter, and in the spring you will know who are with you, and who are not. If you do not establish this test now, I do not see but you will wrangle as much in the spring as now. The fact is, those who believe slavery unconstitutional ought to separate from those who do not, and these latter should join the conscience Whigs and Independent Democrats. As long as a part believe slavery constitutional, and another part believe it unconstitutional, they have no right to vote for the same candidates. It is a palpable violation of principle on the part of one or the other, and the sooner they separate the better. Besides, anti-slavery men have no right to call themselves a constitutional party, unless they hold slavery unconstitutional—for a constitutional party, of but one idea, and that idea an unconstitutional one, is an absurdity, a contradiction, and deserves only to be despised and detested for its inconsistency and insincerity. Such a party is necessarily traitorous either to the constitution, or to freedom. It cannot serve two antagonist masters, and has no right to pretend that it will. But enough of this.

Let me know how you like my book. I am not satisfied with its literary execution. I fear it is verbose, obscure, and has some repetitions that might have been avoided. If I could have had more time, I could have improved it, but the demands of the cause, and the emptiness of my pocket, compelled me to publish now. I have said in it hardly half what I wished to say. If I can get any thing to eat, I intend to commence another book at once. I want to close up the subject now that I am about it.

Hildreth and wife well—Dr. Hoyt and family well at last accounts—also Mrs. Sargeant.

Yours truly,

L. Spooner

I send you a copy of the appendix to my book—