

48 Beekman St

New York Dec 11. 1855

Lysander Spooner Esq.

Boston

Dear Sir \_\_\_ The Executive Committee of the American Abolition Society held their monthly meeting on Wednesday last, on which occasion I presented to them your draft of a petition to Congress. \_\_\_ It was highly approved, except the 1<sup>st</sup> item: viz "That slavery cannot be legalized, unless it be authorized by the fundamental or Constitutional law." \_\_\_ This (as I had anticipated) was objected to, as suggesting an implication that with the aid of a pro-slavery Constitution, I might be legalized, \_\_\_ I then suggested the "amendment" to which you had assented, viz \_\_\_ 1. "That Slavery - if it can be legalized at all" - canoe be legalized unless" &c. &c.

This was thought to be an improvement, but I could not satisfy them that it was sufficient. \_\_\_ Several members insisted that there must be a distinct statement of the argument from Natural law which would go to the point of slavery cannot be legalizes. \_\_\_ To the suggestion that some might not be ready to take this high ground, it was answered (1) ~~That~~ with large numbers, this would appear the strongest & most feasible ground (2) that the petitioners (by your draft which was, in this matter, approved) are not asked to say, and will not say, that the endorse any of the arguments, but only state that they are "among the many arguments in defence of these views" &c. &c. and whost "apparent truth and justice (had) strongly impressed the minds of (the) petitioners." \_\_\_ The first Chapter of M Spooner's first work, it was remarkedm in giving a definition of law had made this idea a prominent one. So that the petition should include a reference to that foundation argument, as well as to the others especially as that book was to be sent to out friends in Congress.

The subject was finally committed to a sub-committee, with powers to revise, publish, and circulate the petition, \_\_\_ In deliberation, that sub-committee have decided upon the following: viz.: to adopt M Spooner's draft, verbatim, with the following addition: \_\_\_ Immediately after the sentence, "Among many arguments present in deference of these views, are the following" \_\_\_\_\_ add

1. That since "all men are created equal, and are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" - and since - "to secure these rights governments are instituted among men"\* \_\_\_ it involves a

direct contradiction to say that government can legalize the enslavement of one man by another.

2 That "those rights which God and nature have established, and which are therefore called natural rights, such as life and liberty, need not the aid of human laws, to be more effectually vested in every man, than they are neither do they receive any additional strength, when declared by the municipal laws to be inviolable. On the contrary, no human legislation has power to abridge or destroy them, unless the owner himself shall commit some act that amounts to forfeiture." ‡ \_\_\_ it is evident ~~that~~ even upon their principle, that slavery can not be legalized, unless it be authorized by the fundamental or Constitutional law.

The closing part of the above (3) you will perceive, is coincident with yours (1) \_ and thencefore \_\_\_ [?] your draft id followed without alterations.

4. That the Colonial Charters were the Constitutional law of the land, up to 1776." \_\_\_ [?].

The only objection I could make to the addition was that it makes the petition longer than seems desirable. \_\_\_ But this objection, too, was over ruled, with the Committee & Sub Committee,

I hope you will not \_ on consideration \_ find any other, or more serious objection to this course. \_ We hope to get the petition into print and into circulation, before long. \_ I notice what you say of the manner of printing it, and shall try to get it into that shape, in my little paper, if one page will contain it.

Yours truly

Wm Goodell