

Bedford 24 June 1833

Dear Sir,

Accept my thanks for the very interesting pamphlets you have had the goodness to send me, & also for your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> June which accompanied them. You request my opinion on the expediency of establishing Now an American Anti-Slavery Society. My information of the number influence & local situation of the friends of abolition is too limited to permit me to form a safe (illegible) on the subject. Such a society ought to be the result of much consultation inquiry, the consent of prominent individuals in different parts of the Union to form it. & to accept officers in it should I think be first obtained.

I am inclined to believe that it would be more expedient to encourage the formation of local societies, to let the general institution proceed from a convention of their delegates. Probably it would be advisable to form immediately a New York Society. The constitution & proceedings of such Societies should be marked with great caution & prudence. Our savior when sending out his disciples advised(?) them to be not merely harmless as doves, but also wise as serpents. It seems to me that the New England Soc. would have acted more prudently had they kindly & privately discountenanced the application of the Massachusetts general colored association, instead of spreading it upon their minutes, & admitting a delegate from that body to their annual meeting. Whatever duty requires is always expedient, but are caught by an (illegible), that things lawful in themselves are not of course expedient.

The Southern people affect to apprehend an unconstitutional interference with their property (as they call it) by the Northern abolitionists. Such an interference has never been desired or intended, yet it would be well, in the constitutions of our A.S. Societies to remove all

grounds for this intended fear. Should it be proposed to form a N.Y. Society permit me to take the liberty of suggesting for your consideration, the propriety of incorporating into its constitution something like the following.

“The object of this Society is to promote the abolition of slavery in the United States. As all legislation relative to slavery in the several states in which it exists can be constitutionally exercised only by their respective legislatures. This Society will endeavor to effect its object so far as it relates to their states. Solely by arguments addressed to the understanding & conscience of their citizens, but is as much as the federal constitution confers upon congress the exclusive right to legislate for the District of Columbia. This Society will use all such lawful & constitutional means as may be deemed advisable, to induce congress to abolish slavery in the District without delay.”

There are two subjects which in my opinion should be carefully avoided in the constitution. They are, the colonization society, the political condition of the free blacks as individuals, we may entertain & express our own opinions on these subjects, but as a Society the more simple & single our object is, the less likely we shall be to excite prejudice & opposition. Many members of the Colonization Soc. flatter themselves that they are promoting abolition. If so, they may consistently join us\_ let us not reject them. It will be no compromise of our principles to meet all (illegible) of that Soc. in our constitution. As to the free blacks, their interests will be effectually promoted by the abolition of slavery. It does not follow, that because they are entitled to (illegible) & humanity, they are also entitled to political privileges. Their privileges in regard to both whites & blacks, are matters of political expediency, & not of natural right. Duty & policy in my opinion demand the emancipation of our slaves, but they do not demand that immediately on their emancipation they shall be invested with the right of suffrage.

The last clause of the 2<sup>nd</sup> act of the constitution of the N. Eng. Soc. appears to me to be in cautions & I wish it may not be copied by other societies.

I remain sir with great respect

Your obd't Servt.

William Jay

Arthur Tappan Esq.