

MR. BOWLES,

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I have seen a notice of an Anti-Slavery Convention to be held at Northampton on the 13th, and understand that exertions have been made for some time past in the Counties of Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin, to procure a general meeting, and at least the sanction of respectable names. One of the gentlemen whose names are given to the public as approving the call, says in a communication to the Editor of the Gazette, that "he cannot foretell what will be the character of the Convention." Will gentlemen take the trouble to attend the convention for the mere purpose of giving it a character?— If the meeting is to "disavow all connexion with any of the societies that have produced so much excitement in the community," will that be satisfactory to those who have taken the lead in this agitating and fearful question? If it shall be determined not to discuss the question, and "to let it alone," will that satisfy the persons who have called this meeting, and will they not secede and organize a new convention, as is usually the case under such circumstances? The very design and object of the convention is to *discuss* the question, and can it be doubted, from the manner of getting up the meeting, *how* it will be *discussed*? There is no man who will at this day in New England, in any convention, or elsewhere, advocate the doctrine that Slavery is a blessing. We all acknowledge it to be an evil, and no convention or excitement is needed to establish or strengthen the position. What then is to be done? Some proposition will be made, and it will come from those who projected the meeting. Will they propose immediate emancipation by addressing the slaves and

stirring them up to blood and rapine? The mind recoils with horror at the thought.—
We shall be told that the only way is to produce an effect upon the masters, and how this is to be done, is a matter too delicate and refined for meetings, which are looked upon with jealousy by the South, already too sensitive, and over excited on the subject.

The question of Emancipation in any way, is one deeply affecting the political and social system, and ought not to be approached rashly, nor handled roughly. It requires a steady and deliberate reflection, which an excited convention will not be apt to give it. Associated action, and excitement are the characteristics of the age, and there are some men to whom the path of *private* duty, seems too narrow for their desires to do good, and who must necessarily set themselves up as Reformers. But we are not bound to follow them. We need to keep the mind cool and well balanced to judge correctly upon any question, and especially so in regard to one of so much importance. Can it be, that a convention of the kind proposed, can determine whether or not "*it is the will of God that we should let the sin of Slavery entirely alone?*" Or if it should presumptuously *proclaim* it to be the will of God that we should do nothing, "will any perplexed mind be put to rest" by the proclamation of such an assembly?

But it is suggested that we are *bound* to discuss the question and to act! Why is it our duty at this particular time more than at former times, when the quality of the evil was the same as it is now? Slavery is a *national* calamity, and as such, affects us only as we have formed a political alliance

with the Slave-holding States, and it was one of the terms of the compact that the domestic relations of the several States should not be interfered with, by the national Government, or the other members of the Union. We are also in a political alliance with the Emperor of Russia whose serfs are in severe bondage—with Spain and Portugal, the degraded condition of whose subjects demand the sympathy and aid of all free and enlightened nations.

I see no occasion for a movement any way upon the question by a convention, and to attempt to dragoon men into action, against the convictions of their own judgment, would betray a wish to subject them to the worst species of Slavery. Shall I be denounced because I cannot *think* or *act* according to a given pattern? Will any man be charged with a want of moral sense—of a regard to his religious duty because he will

not join in every philanthropic expedition that
“zeal without knowledge” may project?
It would be as absurd as to deny the name
of Christians to those who preferred the
private duties of religion and life, to enga-
ging in the crusade, and marching to the
field of blood and death at the preaching of
Peter the Hermit.

Before any man acts in this matter, let
him first allay the impulse that springs from
a desire to do a great good, by immediate
action, and be persuaded in his own mind
that he is in the way of duty. Let him look
carefully at all the relations of the subject,
and not merely upon the object that his be-
nevolent eye has singled out. Let him con-
sider whether he will not destroy the body,
by the means that he would employ only
for eradicating a disease. And especially
let him remember, that every man is a *Slave*
of passion, which is the greatest of evils,
and a sin which “it is the *revealed* will of
God” we should put away, and which can
furnish full scope for the exercise of his re-
forming spirit.

This convention is not necessary to ena-
ble us to learn “what is our duty in relation
to this subject.” There are higher and pur-
er sources, and I cannot but indulge regret
for a movement which will tend, I fear, to
increase the excitement, rather than to still
the agitated waters.

X. Y.