

✓ Rev. J. R. Barbour.

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Charlton Nov. 18, 1837-

PHELPS
MSS.

My Dear Brother Phelps,

In reply to yours of the 14. I would express my gratification that you have undertaken to collect the information you propose. I shall be ready to aid you all I can. The result I am satisfied will astonish you & every body else - first in regard to the almost universal prevalence of anti Slavery doctrine among ministers, & second in regard to the comparatively few who have attacked themselves to any Society. I know not why our Association (Bankfield) may not fairly represent the ministry in the entire state. in these respects. And at our last meeting we had the subject up. We have I believe 18 members only 3 of whom ever joined any Society. I got the entire body, ^{declared} unanimously in favor of the three great points on which the Anti Slavery movement is based viz. Slavery a sin - its immediate abolition supr & the North bound to take up the subject. Perhaps two or three may have still some lingering confidence in the Colonization scheme - several that ^{probably} would not publicly denounce it. And yet I don't believe there is one that would think it wise to preach and take up a collection for that cause -

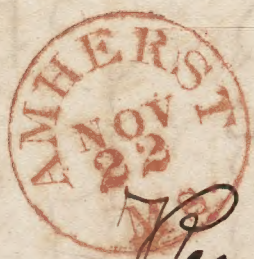
It was in this discussion that the pro-
ject of a county Clerical Convention
was started, which is now under
way - is to be held on the first Tuesday
in Dec. as you probably may have seen
My expectation is that we shall have
a meeting composed of nearly all the
ministers of the county, & carry through
a series of ~~resolutions~~ ~~through~~ going
absolute resolutions with great uni-
mity. If so that convention will bring
out some of the facts that you want.

Of course I do not design this as
an answer to your questions, but
merely as showing somewhat the
complexion of what the answer
may be expected to be.

As to the reasons why these brethren do
not attach themselves to the anti-slavery
society I might say much, but prefer
just to say in one word it is opposition
to Garrison. The feeling is broad & deep I
apprehend that he is a dangerous man
that he is & has been from the first a per-
fect Jacobin - that at present if not from
the first the abolition of slavery is only
a secondary object with him - that he
is wielding the tremendous power that
he has gained over the popular mind
to the prostration of the ministry, the
Sabbath, the ^{divine} Law &c. that although the
Liberator may cease to be the official or-
gan of the Society, yet that will make ^{little or} no

essential difference - the mischief is already
done - he has already diffused his sentiments
& perhaps so widely - has already such ex-
cellent ones all the local societies
that he will remain captain general
commander in chief of Mass. abolition
ism, under the existing organization. Then
perhaps I know an quite general. And I am
frank to say they are very wrong fully. But
what shall be done? The do nothing policy on
this subject I abhor. I joined the Ameri-
can Society two years ago - have never
joined the Mass. society, & with my pres-
ent views cannot. The idea
of controlling the whirlwind
is perfectly visionary. If there
had been in the Worcester meet-
ing some fifty or a hundred
ministers, & if they had attempted to con-
trol the jeremiad spirit of the meeting we
should have had a real genuine row.
Besides it is utterly impossible to bring into the
Mass society men of the right stamp in
sufficient numbers to constitute the majori-
ty. I do not, therefore, see but there must
be a new organization, & if such a
thing is attempted I hope you, dear brother
will not oppose it. Garrison of course and
some others will, but do you be still.

Very truly & affectionately
Yours for the enslaved
J. R. Barlow



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