

JANUARY · 1904
To Whitefield McKinlay

[Tuskegee, Ala.] Jan. 2, 1904

My dear Mr. McKinlay: In answer to your telegram, I have just sent Dr. Grimke a telegram which reads as follows: "If you cannot attend New York conference shall be glad to have you invite your brother to take your place under same conditions which you were invited."

I confess to you I have sent this telegram very much against my own personal wishes and sense of what is right and proper, because I do not feel that Archibald Grimke has ever done anything to entitle him to membership in such a body. In the second place, he represents a noisy, turbulent and unscrupulous set of men to such an extent that I cannot feel that he would enter into the serious and far-sighted deliberations of such a conference in the way that we plan to enter into it. I wish, however, directly or indirectly, you would say to Mr. Grimke that the conference is called for a serious purpose and not for the purpose of airing personal grievances or entering into a scramble, and that if he attempts to have the same kind of "nigger meeting" that was had in Washington a few days ago, it will be much wiser for him not to go to New York. Those composing this conference are determined to have a quiet, dignified and high-toned deliberation and will submit to nothing that is not in keeping with this policy. Aside from this view of the case, I have invited at the suggestion of others one or two other persons who are bitterly opposed to me, and after receiving these invitations they had such a low sense of honor that they gave the details of my letter out to the public press, this is notably true in Boston and Chicago. I have laid aside my own personal feelings in several other cases, as in the case of Mr. Grimke, and have invited him with the hope that good shall be accomplished. It should be the earnest effort of every individual attending this conference to keep the good of the race uppermost and sink everything else. I do not overlook the fact that within the last few months Mr. Grimke has c[al]led me a traitor and has applied every other epithet that he could think of to me with a view to injury, all this, however, I waive aside for the sake of the larger good that I hope will come, but I repeat I hope