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EMANCIPATION IN THE WEST INDIES:
THOME AND KIMBALL'S INTERPRETATION AND THE
SHIFT IN AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY DISCOURSE,
1834-1840

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Spring 2007

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Introduction

Will the brethren of the South *listen* to the expostulation of a West Indian Planter, which comes across the sea and mingles with the appeal of their imploring slaves ‘am I not a *man* and a *brother*?’ O what a day of insufferable light and blazing conviction and burning shame to slave holders will *that* be which shall write on their walls and flash on their Souls the truth ‘*your Slaves are men!*’ Yet inconceivably happy it *may* be for them, if they heed not these words for the first time in the lurid fires of hell!¹

James A. Thome’s impassioned appeal to the “brethren of the South” came at a moment of transition in American antislavery discourse. It was edited out of his manuscript and never made it into the publication of *Emancipation in the West Indies*. In 1837, he and J. Horace Kimball traveled to the British West Indian colonies on commission by the American Anti-Slavery Society to report on the transition from slavery to freedom and advocate for immediate emancipation in the United States. Their object was to gather “facts and testimony” which would further the abolitionist cause. For Thome and the early agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, their commitment to the doctrine of immediatism was forged through a moral conversion experience in the early 1830s. The racial egalitarian sentiment and inflammatory rhetoric of the early immediatist discourse decried the *sin* of slaveholding and dismissed practicality and expediency as deleterious compromise. But the American abolitionists’ first hand experiences in Antigua and Jamaica, and the work of their editor Theodore Dwight Weld, profoundly changed the balance between the language of moral outrage and that of political economy in their resulting work.

The publication of *Emancipation in the West Indies* in 1838 marked a critical shift in antislavery discourse which came to privilege practical and economic arguments. In concentrating on the effects of emancipation in the British West Indies on the development of the doctrine of immediatism in the American antislavery movement, I hope to contribute

¹ James A. Thome, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Six Months’ Tour in Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in the Year 1837*, Manuscript, (O.C. Special Collections), p.14. The italicized words were underlined in the handwritten manuscript. Hereafter Thome’s manuscript will be cited using the abbreviation “Thome, *Emancipation*...MS.”

to our understanding of how the oft-cited “British precedent” came to influence abolitionism and highlight one aspect of the transatlantic exchange. The fact that emancipation in the West Indies had a major impact on antislavery in the United States is acknowledged in works on American abolition, but the specific ways in which that influence unfolded has received considerably less attention. In this study I will focus on Thome and Kimball’s formative experiences in the West Indies and on the reception of their work in the American context. In examining the role of Thome and Kimball’s voyage and West Indian emancipation my aim is also to situate Thome, Kimball, and Weld more fully in the “Atlantic World.” I claim that some American abolitionists learned to integrate the language of political economy into antislavery discourse in a way that was specifically influenced by the British arguments over, and experience with, the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and emancipation in the West Indies in 1833.

In historicizing the life of the *Emancipation in the West Indies* text I have concentrated on a close reading of the un-researched manuscript in comparison to the printed version. I have undertaken this study in part to fill the need for a critical analysis of Thome and Kimball’s *Emancipation in the West Indies* publication, which is usually cited simply as a factual source when substantiating claims about the British West Indies in the 1830s. Thome’s manuscript was edited substantially before publication and distinct patterns in the changes and omissions of his editor, Theodore D. Weld, are particularly illustrative of a broader shift within the American Anti-Slavery Society, and in the antislavery movement more generally. The epigram featuring Thome’s pronouncement is an example of a tone of argument that was common in the early 1830s, but was utterly edited out of antislavery discourse by the end of the decade. I have taken up a critical analysis of the practical and economic arguments that, for at least one critical wing of the antislavery movement, came to replace it

and of the ways in which the example of West Indian emancipation pushed some segments toward an embrace of politics in the years directly preceding the schism of 1840.

Analyzing the *Emancipation in the West Indies* text also illustrates countervailing forces at work within antislavery discourse itself, and provides an example of the complexities and ironies of history. Its publication was said to have revolutionized the doctrine of immediatism within the American Anti-Slavery Society by causing the rejection of the so-called “New York doctrine” and the acceptance of outright immediate emancipation (what the general public had assumed the doctrine to have been all along). Ironically, even as the *doctrine* became more radical, the *arguments* embraced compromise, practicality, and economic expediency, and tactics became more political. Thome and Kimball set sail with an agenda to advocate immediatism, their perception and representation of what they observed was influenced by certain ideological commitments, and they experienced what can be seen as a second conversion experience: one that revealed the economic inducements of freedom.

Emancipation in the West Indies provided specific lessons for the transition from slavery to freedom. To Thome and Kimball it showed the safety and profitability for the masters and new mechanisms of discipline focused on inculcating inward self-control and industriousness. As they reported on the new “harmony of interests” that brought economic prosperity to Antigua (and their editor emphasized the “facts”), they began articulating a vision of immediatism in the language of practicality and political economy. To what extent did a shift in antislavery discourse which increasingly privileged economic rationality represent an emergent mindset, as opposed simply to a change in antislavery strategy and tactics? This is a central question that will remain with us throughout.

This study is divided in four major sections. The first chapter begins with the conversions at Lane Seminary and examines the early activities and rhetoric of the agents of

the American Anti-Slavery Society, concentrating specifically on the “moral suasion” approach and the role of James A. Thome. I will examine his letters and speeches and analyze evidence of his early immediatist stance. Chapter Two describes Thome and Kimball’s visit to Antigua, and provides a close reading and comparison of the hand-written manuscript and the printed versions of the *Emancipation in the West Indies* text. The next chapter deals with their visit to Jamaica and focuses in on mechanisms of discipline and control employed by British operatives, planters and managers. Whereas their chapter on Antigua served to present immediatism in its best light, Jamaica served to critique the half-fulfilled attempt at qualified emancipation through exposing the failures of apprenticeship. In the fourth chapter, Antigua and Jamaica are considered together and I examine the impact of the text in the American context, positioning it within the changing terrain of abolitionism. Specifically, this chapter aims to appraise the way in which *Emancipation in the West Indies* influenced antislavery politics, and to begin to suggest both results and consequences that the practical and economic arguments might have had.

My understanding of the American antislavery context in the 1830s comes both from primary and secondary sources. I read widely in the literature from the period: examining specifically James Thome’s letters and speeches, Theodore Weld’s letters, the minutes of the American Anti-Slavery Society, James G. Birney’s letters, and a variety of antislavery publications. Given the nature of the project, I needed a foundation in the American antislavery context, the British West Indian context, and the historiography that surrounds complex and often hotly-contested questions of historical interpretation. Historian Gilbert Hobbs Barnes’ 1933 work on the American Anti-Slavery Society proved an indispensable guide, providing insight into Theodore Weld’s involvement and the evangelicalism which

inspired the crusade.² Although he has been criticized for his uncharitable treatment of William Lloyd Garrison, his work has been widely acknowledged for bringing the role of Finneyite revivalism, Weld and the Lane Rebels, and the band of seventy agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, to the fore. Similarly, James Brewer Stewart's book, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery*, provided a compelling overview of the American movement, and helped me to situate the shift from moral suasion to political approaches within the American antislavery movement.³ I have located the introduction of practicality in the discourse of the American Anti-Slavery Society slightly earlier than these historians, however, and concentrated on the changing understanding of the doctrine of immediatism.⁴ Although I consulted many works on American antislavery, these works in particular provided an initial background against which I conducted my study.⁵

² Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York: American Historical Association, 1933, reprint by Harbinger Books, 1964).

³ James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); Stewart, "Reconsidering the Abolitionists in an Age of Fundamentalist Politics" (*Journal of the Early Republic*, vol.26, Spring 2006); Stewart, "The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North," (*Journal of the Early Republic*, vol.18, Summer 1998). Robert Abzug's biography on Weld as well as his work on religion and social reform also helped me both to contextualize the role of Weld and Thome and better to understand the religious motivations. See, Robert Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴ In *Holy Warriors*, for example, Stewart does an admirable job of charting the shift from "moral suasion" to political antislavery, but does less to interrogate the ways in which immediatism changed over time. Abolitionists he groups as immediatist retain this label and he does not differentiate between differing interpretations of the doctrine. On the earlier development of the doctrine of immediatism see, David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 2, Spring 1962, pp.209-230).

⁵ See also, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland: Case Western University Press, 1969); Wyatt-Brown, *Yankee Saints and Southern Sinners* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1985); Douglass M. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Bruce Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lawrence Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980); Louis Filler, *Crusade Against Slavery: Friends, Foes, and Reformers, 1820-1860* (Algoma, MI: Reference Publications, Inc., 1986); John R. McKivigan and Stanley Harrold, eds., *Antislavery Violence: Sectional, Racial, and Cultural Conflict in Antebellum America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999); McKivigan and Mitchell Snay, eds., *Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995); Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Magdol, Edward, *The Antislavery Rank and File: A Social Profile of the Abolitionists' Constituency* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); Lawrence B. Goodheart, *Abolitionist,*

For the history of the British Caribbean during the 1830s I relied heavily on Thomas Holt's comparative history of "race, labor, and politics in Jamaica and Britain."⁶ By way of context, I have consulted numerous secondary works on the West Indian islands as well as contemporaneous accounts (such as British abolitionists Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey's 1838 report on the colonies).⁷ Examining the history of Antigua and Jamaica during this period also placed me within post-emancipation studies historiography which takes up interpretative questions inherent in analyzing the transition from slavery to freedom and the particular forms of the economic and social organization which were developed. I was initially fascinated by Thome and Kimball's observations of the transition to a wage labor economy and planned to address the role of American antislavery literature in advancing a specific and coercive vision of freedom in the post-bellum United States. Historians have taken up the parallels between post-slavery societies in the West Indies and America, but this historiography falls beyond the scope of this present study.⁸

Post-emancipation historiography often refers back to abolitionist discourse in order to understand the ideational context in which freedom emerged. The connections between

Actuary, Atheist: Elizur Wright and the Reform Impulse (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990); Hugh Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1990).

⁶ Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

⁷ Barry W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2005); Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1988); Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1995); Craton, Michael, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1997); Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Carton, James Walvin and David Wright, eds., *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire* (London: Longman Group, 1976); Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1974); Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930: A Study in Economic Growth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961). See also, Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837; Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and Jamaica; Undertaken for the purpose of Ascertaining the Actual Condition of the Negro Population of those Islands* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1838).

⁸ Demetrius Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Thomas Holt, "An Empire over the Mind: Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp.283-316).

the rise of industrial capitalism and the abolition of the international slave trade and emancipation in the British West Indies, sparked by Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery*, have remained especially pertinent in antislavery historiography.⁹ Scholars have studied and debated whether the plantation system was in decline and argued the specifics of Williams' thesis, but the legacy of his work has prompted continued discussion over the relationship between capitalism and antislavery more generally.¹⁰ I became more interested in what the abolitionists themselves believed the economics of emancipation to be, and less with what scholars have now determined. David Brion Davis' defining work, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, reformulated some of the underlying questions of interpretation, and continued the debate over theoretical concepts as much as historical evidence.¹¹

This study, in short, examines the impact of Thome and Kimball's *Emancipation in the West Indies* text on the changing understanding of immediatism and on the concomitant shifts in American antislavery discourse and tactics leading up to 1840. I take up the question of how new forms of discipline and labor exploitation which were pioneered in the British Caribbean came to influence abolitionists' vision of freedom and discuss possible consequences only briefly in the conclusion as I point to further directions in which a study such as this could be taken.

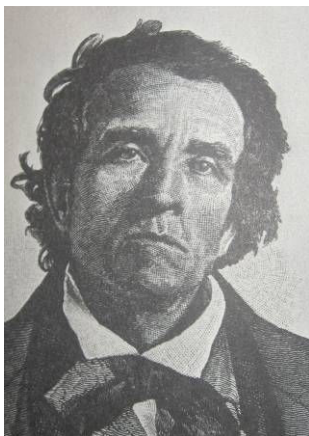
⁹ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

¹⁰ Key examples of works directly related to the economic aspects and specifics of Williams thesis include, David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1977); Roger Anstey, "Capitalism and Slavery: A Critique," (*The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 21, No. 2, August 1968, pp.307-320), and, "A Re-Interpretation of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade, 1806-1807," (*The English Historical Review*, Vol. 87, No. 343, April 1972, pp.304-332); Barbara Solow and Stanley Engerman, eds., *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Christina Bolt and Seymour Drescher, eds., *Antislavery, Religion and Reform Lectures in Memory of Roger Anstey* (Folkstone, Eng., 1980).

¹¹ Davis Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*; David, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966). The debate between Davis, John Ashworth and Thomas Haskell in *The American Historical Review* is reprinted in, Thomas Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Chapter One: Conversion and Moral Suasion 1834-1837

The Lane Debates



Theodore D. Weld.



James A. Thome.¹²

On 10 January 1835, William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist newspaper published a defense of the students who had seceded from Lane Seminary in Cincinnati. As the instigator and leader of the “Lane Debates” on African colonization and immediatism, Theodore Dwight Weld naturally wrote the statement. “With the same spirit of free inquiry,” he explained, the students had “discussed the question of slavery.” After eighteen days of praying, lecturing, and considering the issue, “we decided that slavery was a sin, and as such, ought to be immediately renounced.”¹³ The Lane Debates have been widely treated by historians, and the eighteen nights of discussion – on questions such as “ought the people of the slaveholding states to abolish slavery immediately?” – need not be again rehearsed at length.¹⁴

¹² Weld photo from Robert Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, front matter; Thome photo from Electronic Oberlin Group, <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/LaneDebates/RebelBios/JamesThome.html>.

¹³ Theodore Dwight Weld, “Lane Seminary Defense of the Students,” (*Liberator*, Vol.5, No.2, Jan. 10 1835, pp.5-6). The Statement of the Lane Seminary Students was also published in the *Emancipator* on Jan. 6 1834. See also the draft written in Weld’s hand, O.C. Archive, (group 16, series V/3, folder “Lane Seminary,” Box 2).

¹⁴ See most notably, Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844*; Dumond, *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961); James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors*; Robert Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* and *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*; Lawrence Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*. Other important

The event, which historian Gilbert Hobbes Barnes described as “a revival in benevolence,” was a profound conversion experience for James A. Thome, a twenty-one year old seminary student and son of a Kentucky slaveholder. Thome had titled his speech in support of immediatism given at the debates “The Southern Slave Kitchen, the Sodom of the Nation,” and his indictment of slavery detailed its moral corruption. In the most comprehensive contemporary account of the proceedings at Lane, Henry B. Stanton made sure to lend credence to the authenticity of the moral conversion experience. “But we entered upon the debate not like blind partizans [sic], but like men whose polar star was facts and truth, whose needle was conscience, whose chart the Bible.”¹⁵ Through the power of conversion, he argued, they came to see the *sin* of slavery and to recognize the inevitable truth in the necessity of immediate abolition. “Immediatism” in this case was explicitly defined against African colonization schemes which were seen as the strongest articulation of a gradualist doctrine. For the students at Lane, antislavery principles commended themselves to conscience and were invigorated by religious faith.

Thome, serving as poster-boy for the conversions which took place at Lane, affirmed the “spirit which [antislavery] principles inspire” at the first anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York. “I know of no subject which takes such strong hold of the man as does abolition,” he told the delegates, “it seizes the conscience with an authoritative grasp; it runs across every path of the guilty; haunts him, goads him, and rings

works that treat the events at Lane more concisely include, David Brion Davis, *Inhumane Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, pp.253-54. For primary source accounts see, Henry B. Stanton, *Debate at the Lane Seminary, Cincinnati. Speech of James A. Thome, of Kentucky, Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, May 6, 1834. Letter of the Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Cox, Against the American Colonization Society*, (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834); and Weld’s letters regarding the events at Lane in Gilbert Hobbs Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*, 2 vols., (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), v.I, pp.42, 71, 78-87, 131-32, 138, 181, 194, 241, 272, and 392.

¹⁵ Henry B. Stanton, *Debate at the Lane Seminary, Cincinnati. Speech of James A. Thome, of Kentucky, Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, May 6, 1834. Letter of the Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Cox, Against the American Colonization Society*, p.5.

in his ear the cry of blood.” To the sting of conscience which occupied the moral and sensory faculties, Thome then added the supreme mandate: the system of slavery “builds a wall up to heaven before [the slaveholder]; it goes with the eye of God, and searches his heart with a scrutiny too strict to be eluded. It writes ‘thou art the man,’ upon the forehead of every oppressor.”¹⁶ Renouncing the sin of slaveholding, he argued, must be immediately begun through Christian conversion of southern slaveholders (and through mobilizing public opinion in the North).

The 1834 tract containing Stanton’s description of the debate at Lane Seminary, Thome’s speech delivered at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and a letter by Rev. Dr. Samuel Cox decrying the American Colonization Society, brought together three key aspects of the newly consolidated and reinvigorated antislavery work. It represented the combination of forces that greatly influenced the early activities of the American Anti-Slavery Society specifically, and the American antislavery movement more generally: (i) The “Lane Debates” had launched influential antislavery figures, Theodore D. Weld foremost among them, many of whom came to form the initial group of antislavery field agents for the American Anti-Slavery Society; (ii) the pride of place given Thome’s speech marked the value given to testimony of converted southerners and bolstered the conviction that southerner slaveholders could be redeemed; (iii) the attack on colonization served as the focal point for articulating immediatist antislavery rhetoric in the early 1830s.

The moral intensity espoused in the antislavery discourse of the Lane Rebels incorporated racially egalitarian claims. The students’ declaration of sentiments, the constitution of the Lane Anti-Slavery Society, and that of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society

¹⁶ James A. Thome, “Speech of Mr. James A. Thome, of Kentucky...,” in Stanton, *Debate at the Lane Seminary, Cincinnati...*, p.7.

(which was identical), asserted not only the imperative of immediate abolition but also called for the elevation of “free colored people.” The stated object was:

The immediate emancipation of the whole colored race within the United States: the emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites.¹⁷

The Lane Rebels shared a common definition of immediatism, and as agents for the American Anti-Slavery Society, they preached the “New York Doctrine.” From the Society’s creation, however, there were slightly different interpretations and caused confusion among the general public.

Weld enjoyed the patronage of wealthy Arthur and Lewis Tappan who had encouraged him to lead the Lane Debates and were among the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society.¹⁸ William Lloyd Garrison had provided an early definition of the “immediatist” doctrine in his 1831 publication of *Thoughts on African Colonization*, and had drafted the declaration of sentiments for the new organization which espoused its commitment to immediatism. Borrowing from the language of the Declaration of Independence, the charter declared that all men were created equal and was both deeply religious and egalitarian.¹⁹ The moral tone defined the rhetoric and discourse of the American Anti-Slavery Society in the early 1830s, and its first field agents agitated in a revival style, aiming to convert the hearts and minds of the American public. These abolitionists “realized from the outset,” historian James Brewer Stewart writes, “that to be effective, their

¹⁷ Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society, “Constitution of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society,” (O.C. Archive, 1835) p.1.

¹⁸ James Brewer Stewart describes the sixty-two delegates present at the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society on December 6th of 1833 as providing a representative cross-section of those who were to lead the abolitionist crusade: the Tappan brothers spoke for socially respectable New York Abolitionists; Theodore Weld, James G. Birney, and other evangelicals based in northeastern Ohio and upstate New York identified with the Tappans; and William Lloyd Garrison headed a delegation of New England Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers like John Greenleaf Whittier. See Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, pp.50-51.

¹⁹ American Anti-Slavery Society, “Declaration of Sentiments,” in Louis Ruchmaes, ed. *The Abolitionists: A Collection of Their Writings*, (New York: G.P. Putman’s Sons, 1963), pp.78-83.

demand for immediate emancipation had to be free of equivocation.” They resisted all challenges to put forward “practical” schemes for easing the slaves’ transition to freedom. “‘Practicality’ thus dictated compromise, and the abolitionists rejected it in all forms, especially that of colonization.” Indeed, “digressions on practical alternatives to immediatism would only reinforce prejudice and encourage complacency.”²⁰

While Weld and the evangelical band who emerged from Lane Seminary were not wholly convinced by Garrison’s radicalism, they were all nonetheless committed to an interpretation of the antislavery doctrine of immediatism which was explicitly framed in opposition to practicality and expediency.²¹ Following the establishment of the national society, local and state antislavery societies were formed, and the field agents worked to spread the doctrine. Commissioned by the American Anti-Slavery Society on the sixteenth of May 1834, James Thome and fellow Lane seceder Rev. Amos Phelps became two of the earliest agents.²² Affixed to Thome and Phelps’s commission were “particular instructions” expressing the “principles they wish you to inculcate, and the course of conduct” they wished Thome and the others to pursue. The overarching principle was that the sin of slaveholding be immediately renounced. Their understanding of immediatism came through the conversion experience; as Phelps explained: “All that follows is the carrying out of the new principle of action, [which] is to emancipation just what sanctification is to

²⁰ Stewart, p.55. See also, Gilbert Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, pp.1-129. David Brion Davis also affirms that the version of immediatism which animated the Anti-Slavery Society “dismissed all considerations of economic and political questions. When the issue was reduced to what individual men should do as moral and accountable beings, there was no possibility of compromise.” Davis, “The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought,” (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol.49, No.2, 1962), p.220.

²¹ For examples of their immediatist discourse see, “The Constitution of the Lane Antislavery Society,” which is the same as the “Constitution of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society,” founded 1835, (O.C. Archive). See also, the letters between Weld and the early agents contained in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke*, 2 vols., covering the period 1834-1837.

²² American Anti-Slavery Society, “Commission to James A. Thome,” (O.C. Archive, Group 16/5, Series V/3, Folder American Anti-Slavery Society 6, Box 1, 1834). The commission was signed by Elizur Wright and Lewis Tappan signed for his brother Arthur (chairman of the Executive Committee). See also, his renewed commission the following year.

conversion.”²³ This conversion was akin to that of religious revivalism and they employed “moral suasion” approach.

Under Weld’s influence antislavery agitation gathered considerable momentum and enthralled Thome and the other Lane Rebels. In describing Weld’s early work for the national society, historian Gilbert Hobbs Barnes writes that he brought together thirteen young men in Cleveland and drilled them for two weeks on antislavery lore and sent them out to convert Ohio.²⁴ As an agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Thome traveled the western states lecturing, evangelizing, working to convert people to abolition, and forming societies wherever he could. They preached the “New York doctrine” of immediate emancipation. Lecturing to an Akron audience, Thome emphasized that the work must be promptly begun but advocated for a more moderate definition of the doctrine than was often assumed by the general public. “We did not wish the slaves to be turned loose,” he explained. For the agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society the emancipatory processes were to be started at once even if the results would be gradually accomplished.²⁵ Thome adhered to the definition of immediatism set forth in the Constitution of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society. As he had informed his audience in Akron, so the Constitution stated: “By immediate emancipation, we do not mean that the slaves shall be turned loose upon the nation to roam as vagabonds and aliens.” “Nor, that they shall be expelled from their native

²³ Amos A. Phelps, *Lectures on Slavery and its Remedy* (Boston: New England Anti-Slavery Society, 1834), quoted in David B. Davis, “The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought,” p.229. Davis writes that, “to the extent that slavery became a concrete symbol of sin, and support of the antislavery cause a sign of Christian virtue, participation in the reform became a supplement or even alternative to traditional religion.” (In substantiating this claim, he cites Barnes’ *Antislavery Impulse*, pp.104-7.)

²⁴ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.77. Barnes added that, “until Weld’s Seventy were chosen in 1837, the Lane rebels formed the bulk of the antislavery staff in the field... the best of the Lane rebel agents were Thome, Stanton, Whipple, Lyman, Gould, Weed, Streeter, Allan, Alvord, and Robinson, a roll of heroes.” *Ibid.*, p.233.

²⁵ Thome to Weld, February 9, 1836, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*, 2 vols., (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1934), v.I, p.256. Barnes defined the term “New York Doctrine” as emancipation immediately begun but gradually accomplished, (the New York part in reference to the New York Committee’s definition under the influence of the wealthy Tappan brothers). See, Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.49 and p.77.

land to a foreign clime, as the price or condition of their freedom,” it continued, consciously drawing the clear line between their definition of immediatism and gradualist colonization programs. The motivating principle, that the sin of slaveholding must be immediately renounced, was unambiguous. The early definition of the doctrine of immediatism, however, was subject to varied interpretation, caused some confusion, and many of the agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society qualified their advocacy of direct immediate emancipation.²⁶

After lecturing and preaching in various towns for more than a year, Thome honed his articulate denunciation of the ultimate sin. In April of 1836, he delivered an “Address to the Ladies of Ohio” who expressed interest in forming their own society.²⁷ He began his appeal to the “sisters of Ohio” with a radical indictment of gender prejudice, challenging the “fallacy” of “separate spheres” which was so widely and “arrogantly assigned to women” and which attempted to dictate the “primary responsibilities of woman.” “It is boldly declared – by those in high places, and echoed in the press – that woman has no duties of a public nature – no part to act in the great moral movements of the day,” he told his audience. They must break free from the repugnant “insignificancy in which Despotism has always held her” in order that men and women might work together in the “spirit of liberty” toward the “chief end of woman as well as of man [which is] to glorify God.”²⁸ The broad dichotomy Thome created, between sin and despotism on the one hand and moral enterprise and general happiness on the other, framed his early antislavery crusade. Immediate repentance

²⁶ As Weld instructed the early agents, insight into these disclaimers can be found in the constitutions of the Lane and Oberlin Anti-Slavery Societies which he wrote. The “mode of operation” described in Oberlin’s antislavery constitution was carefully defined by not advocating incendiarism: “1. Not by instigating the slaves to rebellion... 2. Not by advocating an interposition of force on the part of the free States... [and] 3. Not by advocating congressional interference with the constitutional powers of the States.” Weld wrote that “our principles show us a better way.” They would, “approach the minds of the slave holders with the truth, in the spirit of the Gospel.” See, the Constitution of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society,” (O.C. Archive, 1835), pp.3-4.

²⁷ James A. Thome, “Address to the Females of Ohio Delivered at the State Anti-Slavery Anniversary,” (Cincinnati: Published by the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1836).

²⁸ Thome, “Address to the Females of Ohio,” pp.1-2.

and the “obligation to oppose that sin” of slavery had awakened the students at Lane, inspired the agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and as they converted men in the North, Thome asserted they should also convert Northern women.

His approach was explicitly non-political. “Again: you have been accustomed, in common with most others, to view slavery as a *political* subject, which you could not, with any degree of propriety, meddle with.” This attitude had led to silence on the subject and complacency in the Free States, Thome declared. Slavery was no longer to be considered a political question to be left to the individual states, in his view, and he set out to convince the women of Ohio that “... slavery has other bearings besides those that are political – bearings which commend it particularly to your attention.”²⁹ First, he described the “*anful sense of insecurity* which pervades slave-holding families” and used the description of the recent massacre at Southampton to bring home his message, evoking the “*suspicion* that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed could be acted over *at any time* and *at any place*.”³⁰ Next, he informed his audience of the horrid and corrupting influence that slavery caused on the general character of those who maintain the system: “habitual exercise of arbitrary power begets a ferocious temper, and converts even the most amiable into monsters of ungovernable passion.” Thirdly, slavery ruined “family relations among slaves” denying them the moral sanction of the home.³¹

His broad conception of sin and, more specifically, of the evil “spirit of oppression” which emanated from that peculiar institution but corrupted all else, allowed him to deemphasize race:

²⁹ Ibid., p.3.

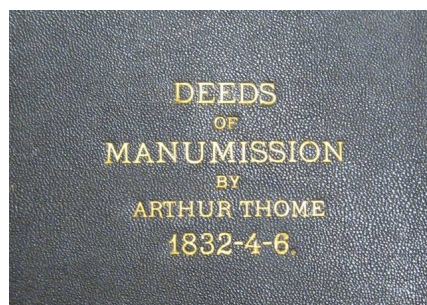
³⁰ Ibid., pp.5-6. Perhaps tellingly, his examples of characters corrupted were not from his own experience in Kentucky, but from the West Indies. Already, it is evident, the British colonies were within his cognitive frame in thinking about the evils of slavery.

³¹ Ibid., pp.9-10.

Furthermore: this is a question of vital interest to you, because slavery itself must extend beyond the colored race. A spirit so ferocious as that of slavery, will not long be satisfied with making the black man its prey. *Color* is but a feeble barrier, and who can tell how long ere it will be broken down?³²

While this statement can be read as bearing testament to the ferocity of the slave system rather than an explicitly egalitarian appeal, it also serves to illustrate Thome's particular stance. Although he implicitly advocated for slaves to be recognized as human beings (thus necessarily deserving the same quality of life as free people), here was a different kind of challenge to racism. In a time in which racism (more strictly defined as a concentration on difference based on race) was rampant, Thome had made a bold assertion. Contained in this one remark was the idea that color was not the all-important criterion upon which slavery and prejudice rested. Effectively, this statement served to deemphasize race as such. Before proceeding to list the actions women could take, which were firmly based in a moral suasion approach, Thome reiterated the non-political nature of antislavery work. He emphasized that the cause of antislavery was "pre-eminently a cause of benevolence and mercy. It is *not* a political question – it is a religious question."³³

One Transition from Slavery to Freedom



Cover of Thome Manumission papers.³⁴

³² Ibid., p.12.

³³ Ibid. The actions that would further the cause of immediate emancipation he advocated were: exerting an influence over all who belong to their own families and over slave-holders visiting their families; laboring among their female friends; contributing to the encouragement of colored schools; writing on behalf of the oppressed; petitioning Congress; aiding in the dissemination of truth; and praying to sustain those involved in the battle. (Ibid., pp.13-15).

³⁴ Photo taken by author. See, the "Deeds of Manumission by Arthur Thome, 1832-4-6," (O.C. Archive Display).

Thome's personal story was intimately wrapped up in his antislavery work from the outset, and convincing his father to finalize a process of manumitting his slaves in 1836 provided another occasion to use his example publicly. The *New York Evangelist* posed the question: "Will Slaves when emancipated turn round and cut their master's throats?" By way of an answer, the editor published an account by James of his father, Arthur Thome's, recent emancipation of his fourteen slaves. James Thome quoted a letter from home to describe the event:

... 'On new-year's day father went to Ruben, one of his colored men, and said, 'Ruben, are you going to work today?' Ruben replied, 'It is just as *you* please master.' 'No, it's just as *you* please, Ruben, for you are *free*, and in a day or two when the court sits, I am going to get free papers for you all. Then if you wish to remain in my service I will pay you wages.' Ruben went to communicate the glad news to the rest, and it ran around the little circle like fire. *They were all full of joy!* After this moment of ecstasy what was the first impulse that seized their breast? Was it revenge? Did they cry *Blood*, and spring at the necks of their master and his family? Hear one of them saying 'O, I wish master Jimmy (*myself* – one of their former oppressors,) was here to be wid us when we go up to the court house, to get our free papers, singing, 'Hail Columbia – happy land!,' Hah! This is the voice of nature – the voice of God – out of the deep places of the human heart.'³⁵

This example lent considerable weight to the principle of moral suasion, that by exposing the sin of slavery, southerners might be converted. Fellow southerner James G. Birney, in speaking of Mr. Thome the elder, emphasized the inevitability of principle: "The truth bore on the mind of Mr. T. till it produced its proper fruit – and he says now, that he is confident no other doctrine but that of the SIN of slave-holding connecting with an *immediate* breaking off from it, will influence the slave-holder to do justice."³⁶

The antislavery editor of the newspaper underscored the need for, and safety of, immediatism: "We say that slavery is a sin and should be abandoned... and this work should be immediately begun... Emancipation may *virtually* take place universally and immediately,

³⁵ "The Slavery Question at the North," *The Religious Intelligencer*, November 26, 1836 (reprinting the article from the *N.Y. Evangelist*). Arthur Thome kept his promise to give them all official papers, a process he had started in 1832. See, the "Deeds of Manumission by Arthur Thome, 1832-4-6," (O.C. Archive Display).

³⁶ "The Slavery Question...", p.2.

with safety.” By that he meant, as he went on to explain, the “masters may and should feel their slaves are men, and have the rights of men... In the case of Mr. Thome, and probably in a great many other instances, emancipation might take place *formally*, at once, with safety both to the masters and the slaves.”³⁷ For Thome the younger, this microcosmic vision of the peaceful transition from slavery to freedom was truly inspiring and provided him with a model for the larger undertaking of the abolitionist project.

Looking to the British West Indies

In his first speech to the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1834, Thome had declared southern slaveholders ignorant of the “safety of emancipation,” stating that the majority “point to St. Domingo, and exultantly say, ‘Behold the consequences of your measures.’ ” Given that as early as 1834 Thome was concerned about how the West Indies represented contested terrain for the interpretation of slavery’s aftermath in America, he sought to construct a new and more optimistic narrative. Couching his argument firmly within a “moral suasion” approach, he followed his mention of the West Indian island with an appeal to a tactic of conversion, testifying that “slaveholders are not so inaccessible as they are thought to be in the North.” While acknowledging a “degree of excitability” in their character, he affirmed that there was “reason too, and common sense, and conscience.”³⁸ The call from the South is urgent, he declared, “we want light... send us facts; send us kind remonstrance and manly reasoning. We are perishing for lack of truth.”³⁹ Thome’s approach, along with that of the American Anti-Slavery Society, was to convert the hearts and minds of Southerners through marshalling facts and testimony and working in the spirit of the Gospel.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Thome, “Speech of Mr. James A. Thome, of Kentucky...” p.9.

³⁹ Ibid., p.11.

By 1837, the American Anti-Slavery Society decided that their antislavery efforts required their own detailed and authoritative account of the emancipatory processes in the British West Indies. Thome had his opportunity. He was commissioned together with J. Horace Kimball, the antislavery editor from New England, to travel to the islands and prepare a report. The purpose of their voyage was to gather “facts and testimony” to prove the safety, efficiency, and profitability of immediate emancipation, through exposing the “*truth*.” The intention was, as the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society later affirmed, to “present the work to our countrymen who yet hold slaves, with the utmost confidence that its perusal will not leave in their minds a doubt, either of the duty or perfect safety of *immediate emancipation*.”⁴⁰

The groundwork for Theodore Weld’s involvement in shaping their manuscript for publication was already established. His interest in the British West Indies was formed through Captain Charles Stuart, who had converted him to antislavery as a young man and maintained both friendship and influence.⁴¹ Over the years Stuart continuously sent Weld his antislavery writings. Stuart was a truly transatlantic abolitionist. West-Indian born to Scottish Presbyterian Calvinist parents, he had been in the army of the British East India Company serving in India, had opposed the American Colonization Society in England, migrated to western New York, served in Finney’s “Glorious Band” during the second Great Awakening

⁴⁰ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Sixth Months’ Tour in Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in the Year 1837* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), p.vi.

⁴¹ See, Anthony J. Barker, *Captain Charles Stuart: Anglo-American Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); for Stuart’s influence on Weld see especially, pp.2, 4-5, 65-66, 95-98, 106, 123-24, 137. In his biographical work on Weld, Robert Abzug describes Stuart as “the man who had first opened Theodore’s eyes to antislavery.” See, Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Weld and the Dilemma of Reform*, p.140. Robert Fletcher writes, “Weld’s zeal for anti-slavery may be traced to the influence of the eccentric Scotchman, Charles Stuart.” See, Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College* (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1943), p.151. See also, Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick, 1950); and the letters between Weld and Stuart in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*.

in the 1820s, and became an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society.⁴² His 1832 publication on the “West India Question” may well have prepared Weld for his reading of Thome and Kimball’s 1837 report.

Stuart’s extended title for this antislavery tract identified a series of issues that persisted for American abolitionists:

The West India Question. Immediate Emancipation would be safe for the masters; profitable for the masters; happy for the slaves; right in the government; advantageous to the nation; would be interference with no feelings but such are disgraceful and destructive; cannot be postponed without continually increasing danger. An outline for immediate emancipation and remarks on compensation.⁴³

In his tract he advanced both moral and economic arguments and evinced an overarching concern for the safety of the transition. The influence of the British interpretation of immediatism is also clear: not only did he advocate immediate emancipation in the language of political economy – claiming, for example, that it would be economically “advantageous to the nation” – but he did so more directly and unequivocally than his American counterparts.⁴⁴

⁴² Barker, *Captain Charles Stuart*, p.37. For more on Stuart see also, Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Co-operation* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp.197, 200, 212-216, 219, 221, 225-26, 276, 280; Barnes’ entry for Stuart in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIX, pp.625-27; and Barker’s entry for Stuart in the American National Biography online. On his influence on Weld see, Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick, 1950).

⁴³ Charles Stuart, “The West India Question...,” Reprinted from the *Quarterly Magazine and Review* of April, 1832, (London: Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers, 1832). Interestingly, this 1832 publication was republished in the United States in 1838 (the same year as the Thome and Kimball text) under the shortened title *Immediate Emancipation*. Although here is not the place to expand further upon the many interconnections, it is interesting to note that Stuart again traveled together with John Scoble and A.L. Palmer to the West Indies (shortly after Thome returned) to make their report to the Central Negro Emancipation Committee in Britain. Their object, declared the *British Emancipator*, was to “acquire full, accurate, and authentic information, upon all points affecting the permanent welfare of the coloured classes.” *British Emancipator*, October 17, 1838. Quoted in, Barker, *Captain Charles Stuart*, p.161. For more information regarding their trip, see Barker’s chapter “West Indian Commentaries,” pp.159-187.

⁴⁴ The most articulate early definition of immediatism in the British context argued primarily in the language of political economy. See, Elizabeth Heyrick’s *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition; or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest, and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery* (London, 1824). Although David Brion Davis writes that the central theme of her piece was “the supremacy of individual conscience over social and political institutions,” her rhetoric is decidedly imbued with rational and economic arguments in contrast to the New York Doctrine. See, David Brion Davis, “The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v.49, no.2, (September, 1962, pp.209-230), p.220.

In 1836, when Charles Stuart acted as chair and opened its meeting, the American Anti-Slavery Society resolved formally to acknowledge the work of British immediatists, particularly with respect to the West Indies:

On motion of Wil. Lloyd Garrison, Resolved, That in the name and on behalf of more than two millions of helpless, crushed, and guiltless slaves in this, to them, land of religious despotism and home of republican injustice, we honor and bless the philanthropists and Christians of Great Britain, for the noble example they have set in the emancipation of eight hundred thousand slaves in the British colonies, and for their untiring, faithful, and Christian efforts to abolish slavery and the slave trade through-out the world.⁴⁵

Henry B. Stanton then reaffirmed the American's moral suasion approach, resolving to "rely mainly for the removal of slavery upon the faithful testimony of the Christian Church." The Society, he was convinced, should "earnestly invite individual Christians and churches of all denominations immediately to petition their ecclesiastical judicatories and associations, to pass resolutions condemning slavery as a sin." After this was resolved, the attention turned once again to the West Indies.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Executive Committee of this Society to employ two or more agents to visit the British West India Islands and Hayti, during the present year, to collect and transmit to this country facts from official and unofficial sources relative to the condition of the colored population of those islands, and the effect of the various systems of emancipation there adopted, upon the physical, agricultural, commercial, educational, and religious prosperity of the inhabitants.⁴⁶

The Executive Committee chose Thome and Kimball and dispatched them on this mission at the end of November, 1837. Their instructions were, "to gather all the facts within their reach, which go to illustrate the working of the British abolition act of 1834, both in regard to the unqualified immediate emancipation of Antigua, and the apprenticeship of the other islands."⁴⁷ Their agenda was broad but also clear. Thome and Kimball regularly sent reports

⁴⁵ American Anti-Slavery Society, *Third annual report of the American Anti-Slavery Society : with the speeches delivered at the anniversary meeting, held in the city of New-York, on the 10th May, 1836, and the minutes of the meetings of the society for business* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), p.27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁴⁷ American Anti-Slavery Society, *Fourth annual report of the American Anti-Slavery Society: with the speeches delivered at the anniversary meeting held in the city of New York, on the 9th May, 1837: and the minutes of the meetings of the society for business*, (New York: William S. Dorr, 1837), p.36.

back to the Society, while also taking extensive notes and writing a manuscript version of their final report that would set “the expediency of immediate, in preference to gradual, or partial, or qualified emancipation, in the clearest possible certainty.”⁴⁸

As Thome and Kimball embarked on their journey, the American Anti-Slavery Society became increasingly attentive to the transatlantic connections at work with the movement. The departure of their agents corresponded with the arrival of the esteemed British abolitionist George Thompson. He and other British abolitionists had worked to advocate the American cause in the British context; “consequently,” the Society happily reported, “memorials and remonstrances have been borne across the Atlantic by every breeze.”⁴⁹ That breeze would carry the two agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society into the British Caribbean, and the Executive Committee resolved that Thome and Kimball “be advised to sail in the first vessel to St. Thomas provided she does not sail on the Sabbath,”⁵⁰

As we move from the American context from which Thome and Kimball departed to an analysis of their experiences in Antigua, the analytical focus will shift to a close comparison of Thome’s hand-written manuscript and the printed version of the *Emancipation in the West Indies* text, which was shaped for publication by Weld and appeared in the United States in 1838. Methodologically, the following chapter has a dual focus: on what Thome and Kimball first observed and recorded as written in Thome’s manuscript, and on the ways in which the text was edited for presentation to the American audience. Throughout the chapter on Antigua, I integrate the manuscript and the printed text, reading them with and against each other, and present the changes and omissions. I begin with the opening

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Agency Committee, November 17, 1836.

narrative section written in the style of a travelogue and examine the testimony provided by their numerous interviewees. Next, I briefly treat their “General Results” section before turning to the “Pros and Cons” that Thome set up for evaluating the operation of immediate emancipation. Finally, I turn to the “Facts and Testimony” that were marshaled in support of over twenty propositions which Thome, Kimball, and Weld established as bearing directly on the question of slavery in the United States.

Chapter Two: Antigua

Exemplifying the Fulfillment of Immediatism

Antigua featured prominently as the subject of the first and longest chapter of Thome and Kimball's *Emancipation in the West Indies* text. The introduction declared that "among the points established in this work, beyond the power of dispute or cavil," were the following: "1. That the act of IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION in Antigua, was not attended with any disorder whatsoever... [and], 2. That the emancipated slaves have readily, faithfully, and efficiently worked for wages from the first."⁵¹ The time on the island was formative for Thome as he struggled to recognize the practical and economic inducements of freedom which were continually reiterated by his various interviewees. Here was a form of argumentation which came in stark contrast to the moral rhetoric and the primacy of sin in indictments of slavery. British colonial officials, proprietors, managers, and even missionaries all lauded the new system specifically in terms of its profitability for the former masters and superior performance evaluated in terms of their own self-interest. As it developed, Weld edited Thome's manuscript specifically to highlight these new economic and practical arguments and reined in Thome's moralizing in favor of a seemingly more objective presentation of facts.

Thome and Kimball expressed anxiety before reaching the island of Antigua; "Charged with a mission so nearly concerning the political and domestic institutions of the colony," they reported, "we might well be doubtful as to the manner of our reception." Although they were quick to point out that Antigua had rejected the apprenticeship, adopted full emancipation, and that "the free system had surpassed the hopes [even] of its advocates," they still feared their white informants had been corrupted by "habits and

⁵¹ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.vi.

sentiments formed in the midst of slavery.” They dared not hope for aid from men who had so recently been slaveholders and who had resisted emancipation.⁵² Once ashore, however, their fears were quickly assuaged as they met with missionaries, called on the Governor, and dined with members of the assembly and proprietors and managers of various estates. Indeed, they were not again to express any distrust of their acquaintances and interviewees nor mention any ill-will shown by them. While occasionally commenting on a person’s character as “retaining some old prejudices of slavery,” their customary first impressions expressed an overwhelmingly contrary view: the men they met were, on the whole, “affable,” “courteous,” “well-respected,” and many were “liberal-minded” or “intelligent” planters and managers.

The transatlantic abolitionists were reassured by their initial acquaintance Rev. James Cox, the superintendent of the Wesleyan mission on the island, that they would have no trouble gaining information. “We are all free here now,” he told them, “we have nothing to conceal in our present system...” This was a common sentiment that a parade of missionaries, merchants, managers, agents for estates, and proprietors would reiterate, sometimes adding their sympathy for the visitor’s object. Enjoying his new-found moral high ground, the Governor remarked that he “entertained a high respect for [their] country, but that slavery was a stain upon the whole nation.” He went on to affirm that “the planters all conceded that emancipation had been a great blessing to the island, and he did not know of a single individual who wished to return to the old system.”⁵³

The first estate they visited was Millar’s, four miles east of the town of St. John. It was one of the earliest estates on the island and had made the largest sugar crop the previous

⁵² Ibid., p.7. This uncertainty is also expressed in the opening sentence of the chapter on Antigua of the manuscript.

⁵³ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.7.

year. They were “kindly received” by Mr. Bourne, the manager who promptly remarked on the drought. Thome and Kimball reported the politeness and industriousness of the freed people. Well aware of his guests’ object, Mr. Bourne turned it to his advantage in urging his workers to be diligent:

He told them of the great number of slaves in America, and appealed to them to know whether they would not be sober, industrious, and diligent, so as to prove to American slaveholders the benefit of freeing all their slaves. At the close of each sentence, they all responded, ‘Yes, massa,’ or ‘God bless de massa,’ and at the conclusion, they answered the appeal, with much feeling, ‘Yes, massa; please God massa, we will all do so.’⁵⁴

The values of sobriety and industriousness were important features of a productive labor force, and demonstrating them was seen as important in convincing slaveholders in the United States of the benefits of the new system. Thome and Kimball protested that “it looked very much like slavery to see females working in the field... [but] the manager said they chose it generally, ‘for the sake of the wages.’”⁵⁵ Leaving the fields, they sat down to breakfast with Mr. Bourne and Mr. Watkins, another planter.

Although the printed *Emancipation in the West Indies* text ended their visit to Millar’s there, commenting simply that they gained information from these planters on a number of points, Thome had originally written two more pages in his manuscript describing the conversation with the overseer in some depth. Over breakfast they discussed the system of wage labor in Antigua and slavery in the American South. Displaying his “liberal” outlook, “Mr. B. frequently repeated the sentiment that ‘the impression should first be made on the minds of Americans *that the slaves are men!* If they admit that, they cannot avoid the conclusion that they ought to be free.”

Although precisely what followed this statement was so completely crossed out of the manuscript it was impossible to discern, Thome then wrote his emphatic appeal to his

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.9.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

prospective southern readers (also crossed out): “Will the brethren of the South *listen* to the expostulation of a West Indian Planter, which comes across the sea and mingles with the appeal of their imploring slaves ‘am I not a *man* and a *brother?*,’ ” he began.

O what a day of insufferable light and blazing conviction and burning shame to slave holders will *that* be which shall write on their walls and flash on their Souls the truth ‘*your Slaves are men!*’ Yet inconceivably happy it *may* be for them, if they heed not these words for the first time in the lurid fires of hell!⁵⁶

This stricken passage evinced a religious intensity more akin to the early pronouncements of the conversion experience, and clearly illustrated an approach aimed at converting the hearts of slaveholders, not a demonstration of practicality. Perhaps this passage was cut for lack of space; more likely, however, this passage was specifically taken out. This omission establishes a pattern that was repeated throughout the editorial process, as Weld displayed a preference for rational arguments which appealed to the mind, not the heart, of slaveholders and Northern whites in the United States.⁵⁷

Back in Antigua, Thome and Kimball proceeded from Millar’s to Fitch’s Creek Estate where they were welcomed by Mr. H. Armstrong, an “intelligent manager” and local preacher. When a stranger visits an estate, they noticed, almost the first thing offered was a tour of the sugar works.⁵⁸ While touring the boiling house, Mr. Armstrong described his plan for a new village for the freed people, including a church and school. “It has become the interest of the planter,” he explained, “to make it *for the interest of the people* to remain on his estate. This *mutual interest* is the only sure basis of prosperity on the one hand and of industry on the other.” Mr. A. said that “the spirit of enterprise, before dormant, had been roused since emancipation,” and that the best modes of cultivation were now being pursued. One

⁵⁶ Thome, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, MS, p.14. This is, as the reader will recall, the pronouncement with which this study began.

⁵⁷ On the manuscript the entire page is marked with large diagonal lines marking its deletion. This passage specifically, however, was also crossed out in Weld’s thick black pen with vertical lines (suggesting that it was specifically taken out).

⁵⁸ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.9.

such mode included the establishment of “*free villages* in which the laborers might dwell by paying a small rent.” Thome and Kimball then reiterated a major trope:

The whole company heartily joined in assuring us that a knowledge of the actual working of abolition in Antigua, would be altogether favorable to the cause of freedom, *and that the more thorough our knowledge of the facts in the case, the more perfect would be our confidence in the safety of IMMEDIATE emancipation.*⁵⁹

Almost all of Thome’s report on Fitch’s estate appeared in publication. One paragraph that was crossed out, however, pointed to a way through which field workers were kept on the estates. “We gathered some information from Mr. A. respecting the provisions of the local, or island, Emancipation Act, by which the administration of the English Abolition Act is regulated,” Thome commented. One “provision limits the number of persons who may be porters, cartmen, boatmen... with a view of preventing a gradual resort to these occupations and a desertion of field labor.”⁶⁰ Such limits highlighted a coercive mechanism through which planters tried to maintain control of a labor force, not the unencumbered “spirit of enterprise” and “harmony of interests.” Antiguan proprietors and planters had restricted the former slaves’ options other than field labor through law, but Weld chose not to communicate this to the American audience.

Dinner at the Governor’s house the next evening provided Thome and Kimball with more conversation on the subject of emancipation, all of which “served to show that the prevailing sentiment was decidedly in favor of the free system.” There they met the Honorable Paul Horsford, member of the council, Colonel Jarvis, member of the Privy Council and proprietor of several estates, Colonel Edwards, also a member of the Council and a barrister, the Attorney General Mr. Shiel, and Assemblyman Dr. Musgrave. A few days after they took dinner at the Governor’s Thome and Kimball again dined with Mr. Watkins,

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.10

⁶⁰ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.17.

this time at Donovan's estate. The following day, they were called on by Dr. Ferguson, a member of the assembly. He and Mr. Watkins extolled the benefits of freedom, and Dr. Ferguson added, "that a general spirit of improvement was pervading the island." Thome and Kimball had no shortage of interested parties offering their opinions; those opinions, however, all seemed conveniently to converge on the same major themes.⁶¹

Saturday was market day in Antigua, and the freed people from all parts of the island came to St. John. "We passed our way through a dense mass of all hues, which crowded the market... there could not have been less than fifteen hundred people congregated in that street – all, or nearly all, emancipated slaves." The uses of dramatic framing were not lost on Thome (future Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Letters) and he juxtaposed the scene of bustling freedom with the symbols of slavery. Writing that the "appendages of slavery" had gone into disuse, he nevertheless brought them to the attention of the reader. "At the other end of the market place stood the *Lock-up House*, the *Cage*, and the *Whipping Post*, with stocks for feet and wrists. These are almost the sole relics of slavery which still linger in the town."⁶² In the manuscript Thome had continued to display his fascination with these appendages of slavery, and asked rhetorically, "why did not those planters and citizens, who felt themselves emancipated by the act which brought freedom to their slaves – why, it might be asked, did they not on the moment [of the] First of August 1834, gather up all their chains, handcuffs, and whips, and throwing them into their prisons, make a bonfire of them as a whole?"⁶³ This sentence was crossed out, however, perhaps because it strayed from their object or perhaps because it seemed to be passing judgment and not simply presenting the "facts."

⁶¹ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, pp.10-11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁶³ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.4. After p.23 of the manuscript, the pages are labeled beginning with p.1 again. It still progresses in much the same order as the printed version, and following dinner at the governors (ending on p.23) it begins "Chapter III – Antigua – Market" with p.1. I have stuck with citing the pages as they are actually marked on the manuscript (but the reader may add 23 pages to the subsequent citations in order to get a sense of how far into the manuscript we have progressed).

“During the reign of slavery the Christmas holidays brought with them general alarm.” In contrasting the scenes of disorder anticipated by fearful whites with the perfect safety and neatness which actually prevailed, Thome and Kimball implicitly yet poignantly drew the parallel to fearful southern anticipations and the differences between their projected version and the actuality. Prior to emancipation the militia had to be called out to prevent insurrection. That Christmas of 1837, however, Thome and Kimball described the calm and religious tone of the celebrations and quoted the Governor stating that “he had never found such a *peaceable, orderly, and law-abiding people as those of Antigua.*”⁶⁴

After the Christmas holidays, Thome and Kimball resumed their visits to the country. Arriving with a letter of introduction they called on Mr. James Howell, the manager of Thibou Jarvis’ estate. He had been on the island six years and managed two estates with over five hundred laborers. While they alluded to his testimony as being of great interest, they noted that it was recorded elsewhere and simply recounted the highlights: his mention of the severity of the drought, the deficient religious condition of the negroes during slavery, a change in the use of rum since emancipation (of especial interest to the American temperance men), and the fact that there were far fewer instances of “pretend sickness” among his workers since freedom.⁶⁵ Thus assured that freed laborers worked more readily and efficiently than slaves, they toured some of the dwellings in the “new village” (presumably those the former slaves now rented). Upon meeting a “gang” of workers, Mr. Howell announced that his visitors had come to Antigua to see how freedom was working, and Thome told them of the “great many slaves still in America.” The laborers unanimously

⁶⁴ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.12. The contrast between expected chaos and disorder, on the one hand, and actual calm and peace, on the other, was undoubtedly sharpened in the minds of their readership by the past bloody revolt in neighboring Jamaica: the “Christmas Rebellion” of 1831-1832. Here is not the place, however, to digress on this ironic point.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12. “Recorded elsewhere” refers to the “Facts and Testimony” section at the end of the published text (pp.34-52). The drought was a recurring topic of conversation, emphasized by Thome and Kimball perhaps in part to preempt any allegations of declined production as a consequence of freedom.

replied, “Yes, massa, we hope dem will gib um free,” and repeatedly promised Thome and Kimball that they would pray for the poor slaves in America.⁶⁶

What from their visit to ‘Thibou Jarvis’ estate was not published upon their return? The description of the new village highlighting how poorly built it was, for one, did not put the best face on freedom. “The village itself is badly situated, being too confined, and too low. The houses, or huts as they may well be called, look as if they had been built for slaves.”⁶⁷ The motivation for free villages was to keep labor on the plantation. In his edits, Weld sanitized the shortcomings of emancipation. He once again cut Thome’s narrative voice in favor of a more direct presentation of facts.

Riding in an assemblyman’s carriage, Thome and Kimball looked over the nine-hundred and forty acres of sugar cane on their way to Green Castle three miles south-east of St. John. Samuel Bernard, Esq. received them kindly. Mr. Bernard had been on the island forty-four years and managed estates most of that time; he was “an aged man, grown old in the practice of slave holding. He has survived the wreck of slavery, and now stripped of a tyrant’s power he still lives among the people who were lately his slaves and manages an estate which was once his empire.” He informed them that the freed people were very peaceable when they received their freedom and that he had no difficulty getting his people to work after emancipation. To this he added his indictment of his apprenticeship system on neighboring islands, introducing a theme that became, in the published volume, a counterpoint against which to sharpen the abolitionists’ case for immediatism.

Mr. Bernard said he thought the assembly had acted wisely in rejecting the apprenticeship, a system which he considered absurd: “It took the chains partly off the slave and fastened them on the master, *and enslaved them both*. It withdrew from the latter the power

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.18.

of compelling labor, and it supplied to the former no incentive to industry.”⁶⁸ Mr. Bernard, who was described by other managers as having a reputation for brutality, was perhaps angry at British imperial authority exerted through the apprenticeship rather than convinced by the new economic rationale of free labors’ inducements to industry. “Mr. Bernard made some remarks which reminded us that he has been a slaveholder, and showed us he still retained some of his former prejudices,” Thome had written in his manuscript, “after having been a half century the absolute ruler of more than three hundred slaves, nothing but a miracle of Grace could have enabled him to meet the sudden and total loss of his power, without giving way to strong opinion and finally setting down in a permanent disaffection.”⁶⁹ While maintaining Mr. Bernard’s critique of the apprenticeship, Weld may have been concerned that his conservative sentiments could undermine the credibility of his denunciation of the system. Seeing the failures of the apprenticeship as lying in its artificially encumbering the incentives to industry provided by immediate emancipation was more characteristic of the emergent abolitionist argument than that of aging managers.

At Weatherill estate Thome and Kimball met Dr. Daniell, another manager who (unsurprisingly) testified that immediate emancipation was a better policy than a temporary apprenticeship. “The fact that such men as Dr. Daniell, but yesterday a large slaveholder, and still holding high civil and political stations, should most cheerfully facilitate our anti-slavery investigations, manifesting a solicitude to furnish us with all the information in their power, is itself the highest eulogy to the new system.” Indeed, former slaveholders converted by the irresistible force of progress and the practical benefits of free labor, if not by moral arguments, were themselves articulating the points which Thome, Kimball, and Weld hoped would persuade Southern slaveholders back in the United States. Dr. Daniell had also

⁶⁸ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.14.

⁶⁹ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, pp.32-33.

informed them of how the planters were “anxious to *retain* the services of the negro population,” but any suggestion that this was not perfectly easy to achieve or the natural result of emancipation was removed before the text went to print.⁷⁰ Thome reported in his manuscript, for example,

The unsettled state which they were in immediately after emancipation when for a time they were seeking employment and ways to better their condition, had gradually disappeared, and every succeeding year the negroes were perceptibly improving in regularity. They were contented to remain in one place. They had tried the experiment of changing employments and they had discovered that it was for their interest to be contented already.⁷¹

While this entire paragraph was crossed out, one sentence – “*seeking* employment and ways to better their condition” – had been rewritten by Weld to read: “*seeing* places where they might better their condition.” This edit appears minor, but a subtle reading comparing the two sentences reveals that the action has been removed from the second. Uncrossed out, but not making it to print, was an acknowledgement that not all freed people relished field work as being in their natural interest and resisted even the “inducement of wages” meant automatically to produce industry. Dr. Daniell informed them that “the negroes on the estate were frequently disposed to have their children learn some trade. They did not wish to have them work in the fields. They had a strong aversion to sugar cultivation, because it always was associated it with degradations – *with slavery*.”⁷²

In a short section entitled “conversation with a negro,” Thome and Kimball illustrated the respect for the law to be found in freed people. The account in the published text was greatly truncated from its original version. The unnamed man’s remark that “he had never lived on an Estate – always lived in town” was crossed out, perhaps because it was deemed a superfluous detail. Far from irrelevant, however, this highlighted a side of a tension in Antigua’s free society. Laborers who were actively seeking to leave the estates and

⁷⁰ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, pp.14-15.

⁷¹ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, pp.40-41.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.41.

find employment as cart and boatmen, for example, had been prevented from doing so by law. This fact did not make it into the pages of the printed text, nor did other remarks which contradicted the impression that a natural harmony of interest kept laborers on the estates.⁷³ Evidence of another trend in the edits, Thome's term – "negro philosopher" – for the man was also crossed out. Apparently, this was not the place for hints of racial egalitarianism, it was the place for facts and testimony to convince the rational faculties and appeal to economic interests.

Eight miles from St. John's was a Moravian mission and school with two thousand people under its charge. Initially received by the Rev. Mr. Morrish, that very afternoon another manager called on Thome and Kimball to add his piece on the benefits of freedom. Being asked to specify the chief advantages of the new system over slavery, he stated at once the following: "1st. It (free labor) is less *expensive*. 2d. It costs a planter far less *trouble* to manage free laborers, than it did to manage slaves. 3d. It had *removed all danger of insurrection, conflagration, and conspiracies.*"⁷⁴ Interestingly, Mr. Favey had had some trouble managing his workers, but Weld edited out this evidence. "Many of his people left him on the 1st of August 1834, and went to other estates... we learned the reason for this from Mr. Morrish, who told us that Mr. Favey had been somewhat noted as a severe master during slavery."⁷⁵ Thome noted further, that they had later obtained some facts corroborating Mr. Morrish's remarks concerning Mr. Favey's reputation for brutality. This too was deleted.

At the Moravian mission Thome and Kimball witnessed the custom of "speaking," in which members of the congregation came to communicate ceremoniously with their preacher. "We asked one old man what he did on the First of August? His reply was, 'Massa,

⁷³ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.15; Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, pp.42-43.

⁷⁴ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.15.

⁷⁵ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.44.

we went to church and tank de Lord for making we all free.” They then asked two masons from the neighboring estate: “if they would not be willing to sell themselves to a man who would treat them well.”

They replied immediately that they would be very willing to *serve* such a man, but they would not *sell themselves* to the best person in the world! What fine logicians a slave’s experience had made these men! Without any effort they struck out a distinction, which has puzzled learned men in church and state, the difference between *servng* a man and *being his property*.⁷⁶

Thome and Kimball well understood this important distinction between slavery and freedom. For Thome the difference was very personal, as his own father’s freed slaves had stayed on as servants following their manumission.

Returning to the issue of retaining a productive labor force, Thome and Kimball “asked them if they did not fear that their children would be lazy if they went to school all the time. One said, shrewdly, ‘Eh! Nebber mind – dey *come* to by’m by – *belly bilge* ‘em to work.’ ”⁷⁷ In the manuscript, Thome later recorded Dr. Nugent, the speaker of the House of Assembly’s, opinion on the same subject. “He did not agree with those who thought that the negro children would be unfitted for work by spending their early years at school,” Thome wrote. “They might go to school until they were twelve years old without injury, if they were put to work [‘by their parents’ Thome inserted above] in the fields.” Besides, Dr. Nugent continued, “Children are of no service in our work. We want *men* to labor, not *lilpersons*.”⁷⁸ Although these particular sentiments of Dr. Nugent’s were never published, Thome had thought to add “by their parents” into the sentence. Had Dr. Nugent said it initially? Or, was Thome taking liberty with his interviewees meaning, trying to make their sentiments appear less coercive and show that men like Dr. Nugent no longer *owned* the children of Antigua? It

⁷⁶ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.16.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, pp.49-50. I add with confidence that Thome inserted the “by their parents” qualifier because, unlike many of the other edits, this was written in Thome’s handwriting.

would seem that Thome was less concerned over their being put to work than he was over the issue of *who* was putting them to work. There was a big difference between serving a man and being his property, as he had just affirmed.

Dr. Nugent, the manager of Lyon's estate and the proprietor of another, was a man of great influence. He had long been Speaker of the House of Assembly and was known in Europe as a man of science. After commenting on the drought, Thome and Kimball wasted no time in progressing with their interview. "In allusion to the motives which prompted the legislature to reject apprenticeship and adopt immediate emancipation," Dr. Nugent said, "when we saw that abolition was *inevitable*, we began to inquire what would be the safest course for getting rid of slavery. *We wished to let ourselves down in the easiest manner possible – THEREFORE WE CHOSE IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION!*" These were his words."⁷⁹ Dr. Nugent's testimony was important to the text, and this was not the last time Thome and Kimball reported his testimony.

At Frey's estate Thome and Kimball made the acquaintance of Mr. Hatley who expressed his "enthusiastic admiration for the new system." Although they reserved this interview to go in a later chapter, Thome and Kimball did report that "it was delightful to witness the change which had been wrought in this planter by the abolition of slavery."⁸⁰ The advantage he named "above all others" was "*the abolition of flogging*. Formerly, he said, 'it was *whip – whip – whip – incessantly*,' but now we are relieved of this disagreeable task."⁸¹ Commenting in the manuscript on the parallels between Antigua and America and on Mr. Hatley's relinquishing of power (of "absolute authority"), Thome exhibited his commitment

⁷⁹ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.17. The later section to which I refer is chapter three of the printed version entitled "Facts and Testimony" in which they quote their interviewees on subjects bearing immediately on slavery in America in a more condensed form.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

to moral suasion. “But if it can be effected, as it certainly has been in Antigua, by a forcible withdrawal of power – by compulsory abolition – is it not more likely to follow in the train of an emancipation which is brought about by moral influences?”⁸² This and similar appeals to moral suasion were taken out before publication.

Along their way to the Moravian missionary station at Grace Bay, Thome and Kimball met freed people and stopped to interview them. One man, who lived on Harvey’s estate, told them of how they thanked God when their freedom came. A group of former slaves they met “declared that they worked a great deal better since emancipation, because they were *paid for it*. To be sure, said they, we get very little wages, but it is better than none. They repeated it again and again, that men could not be made to work well by *flogging* them.”⁸³ This was a basic and seemingly self-evident principle which Thome and Kimball reiterated almost continuously.

Missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Mohne welcomed Thome and Kimball to Grace Bay. “Engaged in a labor of love” among the former slaves, they did not have many white visitors. Their conversation quickly came to rest on the topic of the missionaries’ influence over the slaves. Mr. Mohne proudly told them what was to him an illustrative story of success.

Some time ago the laborers on a certain estate became dissatisfied with the wages they were receiving, and refused to work unless they were increased. The manager tried in vain to reconcile his people to the grievance of which they complained, and then sent to Mr. M., requesting him to visit the estate, and use his influence to persuade the negroes, most of whom belonged to his church, to work at the usual terms.⁸⁴

⁸² Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.7. After p.51 of the manuscript, the numbering again reverts to start at p.1. Here again I have stuck with the numbering as it is actually written on the manuscript. (The reader can add the 23 pages from the last time in addition to these 51 pages to get a sense of how far into the manuscript we have progressed).

⁸³ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.18.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.19. The name of the estate not specified in the printed version of the text is recorded as “Rupels” in the manuscript (but was crossed out). Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.19.

Mr. Mohne had informed the manager that he would speak to each one individually when they came “speak” at the Moravian mission. That he did, “advising him to return to his work, and live as formerly. In a short time peace and confidence were restored, and the whole gang to a man were in the field.”⁸⁵ This account not only showed the influence that missionaries could exert over some of the members in their congregation, but also illustrated the interaction of religion and social order in what can be seen as one emergent mechanism of control. Overt and obvious ways in which to coerce a population, symbolized by the whip, came to be replaced by new, more subtle and complex ways of maintaining order and providing the necessary labor to assure the continued (and morally vindicated) prosperity of the plantation economy.

As Thome and Kimball had already encountered, planters, managers, and religious men in Antigua were well aware of the role of their island as example to the slaveholding world, and so were Antigua’s freed people. At a meeting of Wesleyan missionaries, for example, Thome and Kimball joined in telling the vast congregation of former slaves that the freed people of Antigua were to set an example to the United States. Rev. Horne “spoke pointedly on the subject of slavery.”

He said that the peace and prosperity of these colonies is a matter of great moment in itself considered, but, it was only when viewed as an example to the rest of the slaveholding world that its real magnitude and importance was perceived. The influence of abolition, and especially of entire emancipation in Antigua, must be very great. The eyes of the world were fixed upon her. The great nation of America must now soon *toll the knell* of slavery, and this event will be hastened by the happy operation of freedom here.⁸⁶

This was the object of Thome and Kimball’s visit; preaching thus to a congregation of recently freed people, however, they perhaps participated in the construction of another

⁸⁵ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.19.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23.

form of control by which Antiguan laborers were urged to be industrious and orderly so that their example might bring freedom to others less fortunate.

General Results and Pros and Cons

Following the narrative section of their piece in the manuscript Thome wrote a detailed section specifying “general results” and another evaluating the “pros and cons.” While Weld severely truncated the “general results” section from its original version, the “pros and cons” did not make it into the printed text at all. Topics such as religion, morality, Bible and temperance societies, and education were all given short shrift by Weld as the general results were perhaps deemed subsidiary to the foregoing narrative section describing the visits to the plantations. Thome had also written frequently in the first person, adding his own opinion and passing judgment. In short, the pros and cons section was not consistent with a straight-forward presentation of facts.

The nine-page pros and cons section, which was framed as a direct comparison to prospective emancipation in the U.S. South, was marked with large diagonal crosses in red pencil from top to bottom of each page.⁸⁷ This section featured both Thome’s commitment to more religious and moral arguments and his attempts to incorporate the language of practicality and economy. Thome’s very first proposition regarding the favorable circumstances provided for immediate emancipation in Antigua was “*The prevalence of religious instruction previous to Emancipation.*” His second condition was the presence of certain humane and enlightened planters. Both of these “pros” implicitly argued for a kind of religious revival in the U.S. South, or at least established Christian conversion as important preconditions to the smooth functioning transition from slavery to freedom.⁸⁸ This section was not solely occupied with religious arguments, however, and Thome sought to

⁸⁷ See Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, pp.27-36.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.27.

incorporate the form of argumentation so commonly articulated by his interviewees. Among his other propositions was the “*small inducements to withdraw from agricultural labor*,” to which he added that there “was but little land for the emancipated negroes to purchase,” that the several trades could give employment but to very few, and “thus they had to submit to the customary field labor.” Few local facilities for carrying out rebellion and the comparatively small number of slaves were also among the “favorable circumstances” Thome attributed to the safety of the transition.⁸⁹

The negative conditions in Antigua, Thome wrote, were, first, that “the measure of abolition was forced upon the proprietors by a foreign power in opposition to [local proprietors] wishes;” second, “the vast disproportion between whites and the negroes;” third, the “great facility for conspiracy;” fourth and fifth were the “pittances allowed for negroes” and “the want of concert between the planters.” These he saw as obstacles to the successful operation of the free system.⁹⁰ He went into detail comparing voluntary and forced manumission, perhaps still committed to a form of moral suasion approach through which, it was hoped, Southern slaveholders would voluntarily free their slaves and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The third was a clear reference to the preoccupation with the issue of safety and fear of insurrection.

With the fourth negative condition, Thome took the economic issue of wages head on; for him, a shilling a day was too low because the laborers would, he asserted, look at the fields and at the mansions, “and say hey, all that could be ours.” Here the issue of calculating the correct “inducement to industry” was made most explicit: “How could it have been expected that a people – said to be previously indolent and absolutely requiring the lash to goad them to labor – would be stimulated to work at the *most laborious of all employments* by a

⁸⁹ Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS., p.28-29.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.30-34.

sum really inadequate to the supply of the simplest wants?" Thome asked.⁹¹ The absence of coordination between planters and managers resulted in his estimation from their having been "all their lives long, habituated to the driving system a faithless mode of agriculture – ignorant of the thousand expedients which abound in a free community for inspiring labor, and improving cultivation – neglecting all inquiry and concert by which they might have been enlightened in these things." The consequence: "the planters of Antigua were wholly unfit for managing a system of free labor to the best advantage."⁹² Given proper understanding of the expedients provided by freedom for inspiring labor productivity, perhaps the American transition to wage labor could be the smooth-functioning result of immediate emancipation.

Facts and Testimony

At the end of their chapter on Antigua Thome, Kimball, and Weld presented testimony in support of over twenty propositions. "We have reserved a mass of facts and testimony, bearing immediately upon slavery in America, in order that we might present them together in a condensed form, under distinct headings," They announced. "These heads, it will be perceived, consist chiefly of propositions which are warmly contested in our own country. Will the reader examine these principles in light of the facts?"⁹³ The propositions, and the major thrust of the facts and testimony marshaled in support of them, showed overwhelmingly that the abolitionists were willing to argue that emancipation should

⁹¹ Ibid., p.33.

⁹² Ibid., p.34. Thome wrote five further "cons" which included: the remoteness of Antigua from all other free labor countries; the indolence naturally induced by a tropical climate; the exceedingly limited wants or real necessities of a provincial country; the droughts which followed emancipation; and the bitter curse of the West India Colonies – absenteeism, or the non-residence of the proprietors. Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, p.34-35.

⁹³ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.34. This section may have been written upon their return and in consultation with Weld as there are no deletions and few differences between the manuscript and printed versions.

be pursued because it was in the pecuniary interest of the slaveholders: it was safe, expedient, efficient, and profitable.

Their first proposition stated that, “the transition from slavery to freedom is represented as a great revolution, by which prodigious change was effected in *the condition of the negroes*.”⁹⁴ The planters spoke often of the greatness and suddenness of the change. Mr. Bernard, R. Eldridge, and N. Nugent (Speaker of House Assembly) were all quoted in support of this first pronouncement. “It is exceedingly difficult to make slaveholders see that there is any material difference between slavery and freedom; but when they have once renounced slavery, they *will magnify this distinction* more than any other class of men.”⁹⁵ This proposition was presented in a straightforward manner free from equivocation.

The second proposition, however, exhibited a persistent tension and remarked on the distinction between religion and politics. “Emancipation in Antigua was the result of political and pecuniary considerations merely,” it declared.

Abolition was seen to be inevitable, and there were but two courses left for colonists – to adopt the apprenticeship system, or immediate emancipation. Motives of convenience led them to choose the latter. Considerations of general philanthropy, of human rights, and of the sinfulness of slavery, were scarcely so much as thought of.⁹⁶

Here again, the American abolitionists reported on the practical, profitable, and expedient reasons for abolition. “We did not hear, excepting occasionally among the missionaries and clergy,” Thome wrote, “the slightest insinuation thrown out that *slavery was sinful*; that slaves had a right to freedom, or that it would have been wrong to continue them in bondage.”⁹⁷ This made Thome somewhat uneasy as it marked not just a shift, but a clean break from the moral claims he knew in the American context.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.35.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.36.

The *politics* of anti-slavery the Antiguans are exceedingly well versed in, but of its *religion*, they seem to feel but little. They seem never to have examined slavery in its moral relations; never to have perceived its monstrous violations of right and its impious trappings upon God and man. The Antiguan planters, it would appear, have *yet* to repent the sin of slaveholding.⁹⁸

Immediate emancipation had been achieved even without the repentance of slaveholders. Given the trends in Weld's edits, this little passage sticks out quite remarkably. Similar statements that Thome had made were systematically left out before publication and the thrust of the arguments made in the printed text certainly did not contain any moral rebuke. Thome here experimented as he tried to reconcile the new language of economic expediency with his religious sensibilities.⁹⁹

In substantiating this second proposition, Thome and Kimball described a meeting of the influential men of the island in St Johns to memorialize Parliament against the measure of abolition back in 1833. On this occasion, the Hon. S. Bijer (champion of the opposition to abolition) proclaimed that his sentiments had changed. "I have been making calculations with regard to the probable results of emancipation, and *I have ascertained beyond a doubt, that I can cultivate my estate at least one third cheaper by free labor than by slave labor.*"¹⁰⁰ Rational calculation, not moral conversion, had persuaded this slaveholder. Other members of the assembly had concurred. Further confirming the pecuniary motive, Mr. Shands added that he felt the exact same way, but thought it unwise to utter these sentiments in such a public manner because it might induce Parliament to withhold compensation if they heard them. When the question had come before the colonial assembly, immediate emancipation passed unanimously. Self-interested expediency had proven a powerful motivating force. "The

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ We will return to Thome's inward struggle as he expressed his concerns about the propriety of conducting antislavery work in any capacity distinct from the Church upon his return from the West Indies.

¹⁰⁰ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.35.

verbal and written statements of numerous planters also confirm the declaration that emancipation was a measure solely of selfish policy.”¹⁰¹

Thome did find opportunity to display his religious feeling, at least in describing the reception of freedom as safe and peaceful in its initial moment. The third, fourth, and fifth propositions reiterated these two characteristics. “The *event* of emancipation passed PEACEBLY,” he affirmed.¹⁰² According to all accounts, the first of August 1834 was a “sublime moral spectacle.” The Wesleyan missionaries kept “watch-night” on 31st of July, and Thome was greatly moved by the account of the scene:

A mighty chorus of voices swelled the song of expectation and joy, and as they united in prayer the voice of the leader was drowned out in the universal acclamations of thanksgiving and praise, and blessing, and honor, and glory, to God, who had come down for their deliverance. In such exercises the evening was spent until the hour of twelve approached. The missionary then proposed that when the clock on the cathedral should begin to strike, the whole congregation should fall upon their knees and receive the boon of freedom in silence...¹⁰³

After a moment of profoundest quiet, Thome reported gratitude as the absorbing emotion, and recounted the missionaries’ words of advice “exhorting the free people to be industrious, steady, obedient to the laws, and to show themselves in all things worthy of the high boon which God had conferred upon them.”¹⁰⁴ The fourth and fifth propositions marshaled testimony affirming that there had been no rebellion or fear of it since emancipation, and the sixth repeated that freedom had been seen as a blessing by all classes of the island.¹⁰⁵

With the seventh proposition, Thome returned to economic arguments: “*free labor* is decidedly LESS EXPENSIVE than *slave labor*.” Mr. Bourne of Millars estate, Mr. Bernard of Green Castle, Mr. Favey of Lavicount’s estate, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Hatley of Fry’s estate, and

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.36.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp.38-39.

D. Cranstoun all testified that the cost of wages was less than that of maintaining slaves. Mr. Nugent remarked, “the expenses of cultivating sugar estates have in no instances, I believe, been found *greater* than before... in some cases the present cost is less by *one third*.”¹⁰⁶ Next Thome wrote that “the negroes work *more cheerfully*, and *do their work better* than they did during slavery. Wages are found to be an ample substitute for the lash – they never fail to secure the amount of labor desired.”¹⁰⁷ An extract from the superintendent’s report to the commander in chief (1836) augmented the testimony from the planters on precisely this point. Not only was it more economically efficient, they argued, but freemen were much more “easily managed.” Missionaries added their testimony concerning the influence they enjoyed over the freed peoples.

The ninth proposition also exhibited one way in which a specific model of freedom was projected onto the former slaves and a mode through which religion could serve as a mechanism for inculcating the required “virtues.” Mr. Bourne reported “that it was the prevailing practice during slavery for the slaves to have a dance soon after they had finished gathering the crop.”¹⁰⁸ He had informed them that dancing was a bad practice – and “a very childish, barbarous amusement, and he thought was wholly unbecoming of *freemen*.” They had not agreed with their manager – and said they would not relinquish the practice.

Mr. B. finally proposed to them that he would get the Moravian minister, Rev. Mr. Harvey, to rise out and preach to them on the appointed evening. The people agreed to this. Accordingly, Mr. Harvey preached, and they said no more about the dance – nor have they ever attempted to get up and dance since.¹⁰⁹

“We observed on all estates which we visited,” Thome added, “that the planters, when they wished to influence their people, are in the habit of appealing to them as *freemen*, and that

¹⁰⁶ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.40.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42.

now better things are expected of them.”¹¹⁰ What *was* expected of freedmen was that they would continue to uphold the plantation economy with their labor and that they develop inward controls of industriousness. Certain qualities expected of freedmen would require a concerted project of resocialization, while others Thome and Weld proposed naturally resulted from dismantling the slave system. Thome and Kimball’s next six propositions, ten through sixteen, enumerated precisely these “virtues” of free men which were the presumed natural result: the former slaves were more “trustworthy,” they took a “deeper interest in their employers affairs,” they exhibited greater respect for law, they were “placable to the hand of legislation,” they “showed no disposition to roam from place to place,” and were more “grateful.” The “gift of freedom” had made them “less insolent.”¹¹¹

Returning to the economic aspects of emancipation, Thome reported that the real estate had risen in value and that “mercantile and mechanical occupations have received fresh impulse; and the general condition of the colony is decidedly more flourishing than at any former period.” The nineteenth proposition remarked on the introduction of “labor-saving machinery,” and the subsequent two propositions testified to the change in the planters’ views.¹¹² The twenty-second and final proposition was clearly aimed at alleviating tensions in the American context and at countering antiabolitionist accusations: “the progress of the anti-slavery discussion in England did not cause the masters to treat their slaves worse, but on the contrary restrained them from outrage.”¹¹³

Although there was a hint of moral tone in various sections of their work on Antigua, it is clear that the major thrust of this section advanced a new form of discourse

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, pp.43-48.

¹¹² Ibid., p.49.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.52.

aimed not at converting the hearts of southerners through moral suasion, but at marshalling practical arguments couched firmly in the language of political economy.¹¹⁴

As we move to examine Thome and Kimball's experiences in Jamaica, the focus of the study will shift to concentrate on the modes of discipline and control they observed and reported. The whip had taken on symbolic meaning for abolitionists, representing the material manifestation of slavery's vile form of labor coercion, and punishment more generally became the central focus of many indictments of the apprenticeship. Maintaining cheap labor in post-slavery societies was an overarching concern for British policymakers and the plantocratic elite. American antislavery discourse already exhibited a certain preoccupation with the safety of the transition from slavery to freedom and Thome and Kimball brought issues of discipline and industriousness to the fore along with the more practical and economic arguments. For abolitionists, "rationalizing" systems of punishment was essential in dismantling the slaveholder's impassioned and arbitrary power. In pressing for immediate emancipation, American abolitionists were careful to demonstrate that discipline would not disappear entirely.

¹¹⁴ British immediatists Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey also traveled to Antigua and the other West Indian islands in 1837 to make their report. They found Antigua and Jamaica to be the most important, and portrayed Antigua as an example of the successful operation of immediate emancipation and Jamaica as the worst situation following emancipation. "The first of these two important islands [Antigua] is now a scene of new and distinct interest; as affording practical evidence of the safety and rising prosperity, consequent on immediate and complete emancipation," they wrote in the preface. Although it would prove too great a digression to treat the comparison between the Sturge and Harvey text and the Thome and Kimball text in greater detail here, the degree to which the findings, arguments, and rhetoric aligned and were articulated in the language of political economy is indeed striking. See, Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837; Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and JAMAICA; Undertaken for the Purpose of Ascertaining the Actual Condition of the Negro Population of those Islands*, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1838).

Chapter Three: Jamaica

The “Half-Way House” Between Slavery and Freedom

Unlike Antigua, Jamaica’s recent past had seen radical unrest, various insurrections, and slave revolt.¹¹⁵ In 1834, the Jamaican Assembly had the apprenticeship forced upon them by the home government in Britain, and the transition from slavery to freedom had taken on decidedly different characteristics. Mindful of their mission to advocate immediate emancipation in the United States, and of the various proslavery interpretations of violence in the West Indies, Thome and Kimball focused primarily on the failures of the apprenticeship system in comparison to the perceived success of complete and immediate freedom (as in Antigua). Revealing the “horrors of slavery” was a major and consistent part of the abolitionists’ project. Demonstrating the short-comings of the apprenticeship system – that “half-way house between slavery and freedom” – was a complicated process. On the one hand, Thome and Kimball sought to describe the improvements resulting from the partial dismantling of the slave system (particularly the “unshackling of labor”). On the other, they sought to show the persistent cruelties of the yet unfinished emancipatory processes. This dual agenda was informed by the more fundamental precariousness of the context itself; Thome and Kimball could have hardly ignored the consistent pressure from below and the inherent instability of Jamaican society.

Descriptions of punishment featured prominently in Thome and Kimball’s section on Jamaica. The prison system served as a testing point for this new society; as slaves became freed men and women, the absolute power of the master was transferred to moderated forms of discipline deemed appropriate for the transition. Thome observed the

¹¹⁵ On the role of bottom-up movements of resistance, see for example, Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins. Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963); Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll. The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

vestiges of more barbarous forms of coercion left from slavery as well as new mechanisms introduced by British colonial officers. Reporting on the the spectacle of torture served a distinct purpose in shocking uninformed or unsympathetic audiences. Concentrating on forms of punishment at once revealed authentic concern for the condition of oppressed peoples and a kind of voyeuristic interest in pain and suffering.¹¹⁶ But it also resonated with reformers in Britain and America who were concerned about the state of prisons and workhouses. Indeed, John Watson Pringles conducted his famous two-volume Parliamentary report on prisons in the West Indies in 1837.¹¹⁷ The London Anti-Slavery Society published their pamphlet on “Punishments inflicted under the Apprenticeship System” the following year.¹¹⁸ In this climate, informed by ever-growing concern over appropriate forms of discipline and punishment, Thome and Kimball made their report. Their focus was not solely prisons, however, and they also (albeit somewhat hurriedly) reported on the agricultural, religious, educational, and political aspects of the island and made their “tour of the countryside” collecting facts and testimony from planters and managers. They began their stay in Kingston where Kimball, too sick to travel the countryside, remained for the duration of their visit.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Professor Carol Lasser’s “Voyeuristic Abolitionism and the Transformation of Antislavery Discourse” (forthcoming, *Journal of the Early Republic*) has been a tremendous influence on my thinking about these issues. See also, Elizabeth B. Clark, “‘The Sacred Rights of the Weak:’ Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America,” (*Journal of American History*, 82 September 1995, pp.463-493); Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” (*The American Historical Review*, V.100, no.2, April 1995, pp.303-334). These pieces certainly raise questions of where to draw the line between expressions of authentic concern and a fascination with the perverse.

¹¹⁷ J.W. Pringle, *Report on the prisons of the West Indies*, (London: Commons Report, 1838).

¹¹⁸ London Anti-Slavery Society, *Punishments inflicted under the Apprenticeship System; Extracted from the Appendix to a Report recently Published by the Committee of the London Anti-Slavery Society on Negro Apprenticeship in the British Colonies*, (London: Office of the London Anti-Slavery Soc., 1838).

¹¹⁹ According to the letters between Thome and Weld, the section on Kingston was primarily written by Kimball (See, Thome to Weld, November 30, 1837, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.I, p.484). Barnes also writes that Kimball was too sick to travel and stayed in Kingston (See, Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.138). Because the focus of this study is on Thome’s manuscript and Weld’s edits, I have chosen only briefly to treat this section on Kingston before turning to Thome’s reporting on torture and modes of discipline, the primary thrust of this chapter.

Kingston

Thome and Kimball began their trip to Jamaica in the port city of Kingston. This island was the last stop on their West Indian itinerary, and they began the last chapter of their work by stating, “we shall spare the reader a protracted account of Jamaica.” “The importance of that colony, and the fact that greater dissatisfaction on account of the abolition of slavery has prevailed there than in all the other colonies together,” they continued, did “demand a careful statement of facts.”¹²⁰ During the first week they spent in Kingston they interviewed the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, newspaper editors, Baptist and Wesleyan missionaries, and several merchants. They also visited public schools, a house of correction, penitentiary hospitals, and other public institutions. Thome and Kimball described the Attorney-General, Mr. O’Reily, as “entirely free from prejudice; with all his family rank and official ranking he identifies himself with the colored people as far as extensive professional engagements will allow.”¹²¹ He furnished them with letters of introduction to influential planters, and contributed the first interviewee’s evaluation of the apprenticeship: “He declared that the apprenticeship was in no manner preparing the negroes for freedom, but was operating in a contrary way, especially in Jamaica, where it had been made the instrument of greater cruelties in some cases, than slavery.”¹²²

William H. Anderson, the Solicitor General, added his dissatisfaction, exposing “the corruptions and abominations of the apprenticeship system without reserve.” He chose to provide them with a written statement of his views, from which they extracted at length. First, he listed material change for the better and in the sentiments of the community since slavery abolished; second, he wrote that “ ‘religion and education were formerly opposed as

¹²⁰ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.85.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

subversive of the security of property; now they are in the most direct manner encouraged as the best support.’ ” Prejudice was rapidly vanishing, in his view, and, “ ‘the apprentices are improving, not, however, in consequence of the apprenticeship, but in spite of it, and in consequence of the great act of abolition!... The negroes will work if moderately compensated,’ ” he concluded.¹²³

In Kingston they also met the American Consul, Colonel Harrison, who had been in Jamaica ten years, but was a “true hearted Virginian, both in his generosity and in his prejudices in favor of slavery.” He informed them that things were going ruinously on the island. He described the former slaves as “the most ignorant, ungrateful, faithless set he ever saw and made many charges against the ‘negro character.’ ” Town negroes, he said, were too lazy to work. They were rearing their children in perfect idleness. Too proud to make their offspring labor the parents sent them to school all the time; consequently, Colonel Harrison said in disgust, the “streets were filled with the ‘half-naked little black devils’ singing the song ‘O that will be joyful,’ ” (which Thome described as “a new song this, well befitting the times and the prospects, but provoking enough to oppressors”). Revealing a tension between white Jamaicans and the British Colonial officers, the Consul denounced the Special Magistrates, who had been sent from Britain to manage the transition. “They were an insolent set of fellows, they would fine a white man as quick as they would flog a *nigger*.” Thome modified his statement with an asterisk which editorialized, “we fear there is too little truth in this representation.”¹²⁴ This was one of the very few times Thome and Kimball had ventured to correct an interviewee or to cast doubt on the accuracy of their testimony.

Rev. Jonathan Edmonson, the superintendent of the Wesleyan missions in Jamaica, chose the planters, rather than British officials, as the object of his resentment. “He stated

¹²³ Ibid., pp.85-86.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.86.

that the planters were doing comparatively nothing to prepare the negroes for freedom. *'Their whole object was to get as much sugar out of them as they possible could.'* ” One of the Independent missionaries, Rev. Woodward, described the conduct of planters as “tending to make the apprentices their bitter enemies.” The system of appeasement, he asserted, had placed “a premium on all of the bad qualities of the negro and a tax on all the good ones.” Baptists were the most numerous body of Christians on the island, and Thome and Kimball attended Sabbath services in the Baptist church of Rev. Mr. Gardiner and Rev. Mr. Tinson. The great mass of the congregation were apprentices, they reported, “mostly rural negroes from the estates adjacent to Kingston.” The Baptists, “have been most distinguished for the opposition to slavery. They incurred the wrath of the oppressor before and had their chapels torn down and were hunted.”¹²⁵ With these initial interviews, Jamaica and the apprenticeship became the model of the transition from slavery to freedom *not* to follow, in many ways the opposite of immediate emancipation.

The missionaries were primarily responsible for providing education to the former slaves, and the British government did not attempt to establish independent state-run schools. Thome and Kimball visited several schools in Kingston and took the opportunity to articulate a more egalitarian agenda, remarking on Black pupils' ability to learn and on their natural intelligence. At the Wolmer Free School (the largest and oldest on the island) they described the “gradations of skin color” in detail and observed that “all colors are mingled in it promiscuously.” They obtained statistics from the head master, Mr. Reid, and enquired whether the students were as easy to govern as white children. He answered that they were

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.87.

“much easier.”¹²⁶ With regard to the “comparative intellect of the white and colored children,” Mr. R. gave the following statement: “I have no hesitation in saying that children of color are equal both in conduct and in ability to the white.”¹²⁷ Thome and Kimball were fascinated with skin tone and at the all-black union school which they visited next, they examined a “jet black boy” in science and math and he “passed with flying colors.”¹²⁸ In their section on education they did not explicitly remark on its role as a form of socialization, nor its effects on attitudes toward work.

At first, the Thome and Kimball wanted to document only that apprenticeship had placed artificial shackles on the transition from slavery to freedom. American abolitionists clearly had an interest in advocating emancipation, yet they walked a fine line between denouncing the gradual emancipation of the apprenticeship outright and revealing the benefits the “spirit of enterprise” unleashed despite the compromised system. “A spirit of competition is awakened,” Thome and Kimball wrote, “banks have been established, steam navigation introduced, railroads projected, old highways repaired, and new ones opened.”¹²⁹ Passages such as this, however, are rare in the chapter on Jamaica and the major theme, returned to again and again, was clearly the failures of apprenticeship, particularly as illustrated in its system of punishment.

The Role of Punishment in Antislavery Discourse

Once in the countryside Thome was by himself, (due to the progress of his illness, Kimball had remained in Kingston). Thome visited a house of correction in the parish of St. Andrews. “The superintendent received us with the iron-hearted courtesy of a Newgate

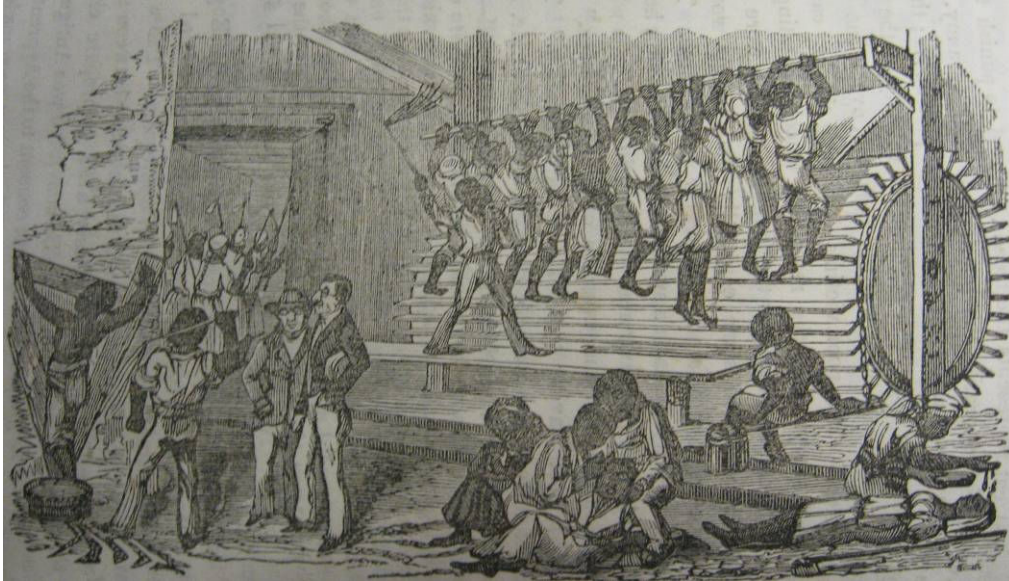
¹²⁶ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.87. The table listing the average number of white and “colored” students who attended Wolmer between 1815 and 1837 revealed an increase in colored students over time (from 3 to 430) and a decrease in white (from 111 to 72).

¹²⁷ Ibid. Indeed, 64 out of 70 prizes for the last examinations, they reported, went to students of color.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.88.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.90.

turnkey,” he reported. Thome was clearly unwelcome. Here he observed the treadmill, run by the state, employers sent misbehaving and deviant laborers for reform and violent chastisement.



The Treadmill.¹³⁰

This mechanism of punishment, a hold-over from slavery, was recommended by Governor Sligo – who considered it a prime example of a “more rational system of discipline” – shortly after his arrival in Jamaica.¹³¹ Inside, Thome witnessed a torture scene that disgusted and horrified him:

The sound that greeted us was the piercing outcry of the treadmill. On going to it, we saw a youth of about eighteen hanging in the air by a strap bound to his wrist, and dangling against the wheel in such a manner that every revolution of it scraped the body from the breast to the ankles. He had fallen off from weakness and fatigue, and was struggling and crying in the greatest distress, which the strap, which extended to the pole above and stretched his arm high above his head, held fast. The superintendent, in a harsh voice, ordered him to be lifted up, and his feet again placed on the wheel. But before he had taken five steps, he again fell off, and was suspended as before. At the same instant, a woman also fell off, and without a sigh or the motion of a muscle, for she was too much exhausted for either, but with a shocking wildness of the eye, hung by her half-dislocated arms against the wheel. As the allotted time (fifteen minutes) had expired, the persons on the wheel were released and

¹³⁰ Photo from, E. Wooley, “Land of the Free or, A Brief View of Emancipation in the West Indies,” (Cincinnati: Caleb Clark, 1847). The picture is dated 1834.

¹³¹ On the role of British policy makers and colonial officers in engineering novel systems of “resocialization,” see, Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom. Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). The reference to Sligo is from Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, p.107.

permitted to rest. The boy could hardly stand on the ground. He had a large ulcer on one of his feet, which was much swollen and inflamed, and his legs and body were greatly bruised and peeled by the revolving of the wheel...¹³²

Thome's graphic and detailed description of the treadmill was printed in full in the published text. The woman who had fallen off was completely exhausted. "She tottered to the wall near by, and took up a little babe which we had not observed before. It appeared to be not more than two or three months old, and the little thing stretched out its arms and welcomed its mother." On inquiry, Thome was informed that the woman's offence was absence from the field an hour after the required time; besides the infant, he learned, she had two or three other children. For Thome, the intended audience for his observation was explicitly gendered: "whether the care of them was any excuse for her, we leave American mothers to judge."¹³³ He saw this as an emotional appeal directed less at rational faculties and targeted more to the human sympathies, especially attuned to sway female sensibilities.

Continuing their tour, the superintendent next took Thome to the solitary cells. "They were dirty, and badly ventilated, and unfit to keep beasts in. On opening the doors, such a stench rushed forth, that we could not remain. There was a poor old woman in one of them, who appeared, as the light of day and the fresh air burst in upon her, like a despairing maniac."¹³⁴ Before emancipation, disobedient slaves were placed in plantation "gaols" and dungeons, now solitary confinement was incorporated into state-sanctioned imprisonment as part of the transition from slavery to freedom. While slavery's modes of coercion and punishment had been concentrated more overtly on the body, solitary

¹³² Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.91.

¹³³ Ibid. This is a rare reference to audience and other statements in which Thome had explicitly named his intended readers, as in the appeal to the "Brethren of the South," were omitted by Weld. Perhaps specifying audience would have given the piece a less impartial feel; the line between advocacy and simply reporting of facts and testimony was tenuous at best. Although this is a topic well beyond the scope of this present study, it is important to note that the shift toward practicality and political economy in the discourse of the American Anti-Slavery Society in the years leading up to 1840 ran parallel to the increasingly divisive issue of women's involvement in the antislavery movement.

¹³⁴ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.91.

confinement, workhouse discipline, and prison gangs were intended to act on what can be described as the non-physical human capacities.¹³⁵ This distinction is also useful in thinking about the abolitionists' conception of labor and the dichotomy between coerced physical force and the development of inward self-controls.

The treadmill in the workhouse was strangely incongruous and can be seen as a transitional mechanism. For Thome, the house of correction in St. Andrews was a disgrace to the island. A large whip by the treadmill and sundry iron collars hanging in several of the rooms fueled his suspicion of ill-treatment. The house of correction had, he recorded, forty-eight total inmates, eleven of whom were female. Twenty were on the treadmill and in solitary confinement, and the remainder worked on the public road at a little distance (many of them in irons).¹³⁶ Thome's visit featured the most graphic description of punishment contained in *Emancipation in the West Indies*, but was by no means the only time Thome reported on "appendages of torture" and new correctional facilities.

Just one year prior, Thome had critiqued the unbridled and irrational passions unleashed by slavery in his speech to the Ladies of Ohio: "habitual exercise of arbitrary power begets a ferocious temper, and converts even the most amiable into monsters of ungovernable passion."¹³⁷ While Thome had a clear sense of the evils of slavery's form of discipline and coercion, in Jamaica he witnessed new forms of maintaining order in post-slavery societies. The intention behind rationalizing systems of discipline during the apprenticeship was to dismantle the arbitrary power of the slaveholder and resocialize the former slaves into a free and productive labor force. "In the view of English liberals, free

¹³⁵ While many scholars have made this distinction, Michel Foucault's analysis of the body/soul relationship in *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, (trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin Books, 1977) has been particularly thought provoking.

¹³⁶ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.92.

¹³⁷ Thome, "Speech to the Ladies of Ohio," p.10.

men exercising their rational choice did not require direct external coercion,” writes historian Thomas Holt, and abolitionists who also shared this view articulated the values of self-restraint and industriousness.¹³⁸

British and American abolitionists, like Thome, decried the inhumane abuses of the prison system during the apprenticeship period, in part as an affront to an emergent ideal of more humane and rationalized discipline. Although Governor Sligo thought the treadmill a more rational system of discipline, yet it still blatantly targeted the physical body. Thome had displayed his faith in the power of individual moral conversion. Violent coercion of the physical body ran counter to his belief that individuals could learn the inward controls of discipline and self-betterment, skills Thome saw as especially critical for the success of newly emancipated peoples. More humane and rational forms of punishment would ideally act on the non-corporeal human capacities and not resemble the barbarities of slavery.

Antislavery reformers were not the only ones to advocate for change in the prison system, and scholars have studied the changing notions of punishment in Europe and America during this period. As Michel Foucault has argued, new mechanisms of social discipline and control emerged with the major reforms in Europe, beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century and culminating in the 1820s and 1830s.¹³⁹ These ostensibly humanitarian reforms ushered in a transition, broadly defined, from punishment primarily acting upon the body to punishment primarily acting upon the soul. Central to Foucault’s thesis is the assertion that these emergent mechanisms of discipline and control were pioneered in obscure prisons, hospitals, and asylums. In this regard, the British West Indies

¹³⁸ Holt explains that, “persons who deviated from that norm, because of lack of education or improper socialization, could be confined to special institutions designed to reform them – prisons, workhouses, asylums. Here they would be disciplined and taught self-restraint. But that discipline would be deliberative, impersonal, and rational as opposed to the arbitrary, impassioned lashes of the driver’s whip.” Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, pp.105-6.

¹³⁹ See, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

(although not included in his study) came to occupy a unique position: as a colonized periphery it fit the description of obscurity almost by definition, at least in relation to the imperial metropole. But in other ways, forms of punishment observed by Thome in the West Indian islands departed significantly from Foucault's historical model.

The processes of transition from slavery to freedom in Jamaica, in this case coalesced in the prison system of discipline, can be seen as motivated by forces pulling in opposite directions. The Colonial Assembly, headed by resident and absentee proprietors, represented for the most part old aristocratic wealth and displayed marked opposition to the policies drafted by liberal statesmen. This contradictory, or countervailing, motion helps explain the inherent precariousness caused not only by tensions between established plantocratic elite and liberal policy makers and reformers, but also, more profoundly, by the unrest of the former slaves themselves. For Thome and those focused on preparing the former slaves for lives as free peoples, new modes of punishment designed to act on the newly- (and still only partially) acknowledged soul of the former slave, both represented and shaped forms of knowledge vested with new relations of power.

The apprenticeship system in Jamaica was thus simultaneously the site of resistance to change and of experimentation with novel forms of resocialization. To punish, however, implies the transgression of a commonly understood, and legally codified, wrong. In the case of the apprentices, "punishment" was not necessarily the perfectly suited term as forms of abuse were employed as a means to establish the very meaning of the wrong itself. The slaves, and then apprentices, were terrorized with torture as a way of constructing the morality which was a central part of any definition of freedom. On the treadmill, one victim's offense was that she had been late to work. "Punishment" had evolved in the context of slavery not as a means to correct deviance from an established societal norm, but

as a means by which to define the meaning of certain wrongs and to inculcate a form of morality established by terror. In this way “punishment” was linked to non-corporeal projects of violence and physic trauma.

At the end of the section on Jamaica, Thome reiterated central themes and attempted to connect his experiences on the island with his reporting on Antigua. In describing the “Facts of Abolition,” Thome was careful to articulate the safety of emancipation, even given the failures of the apprenticeship. “There has been nothing of an *insurrectionary* character since the abolition of slavery,” Thome reported. Further, he observed that there had been no increase in crime, while there had been an increase in marriages. The apprentices had not displayed any “particular defiance of law,” and the causes for difficulties in the functioning of the apprenticeship “rest chiefly with the planters,” Thome concluded. Returning to the theme of labor productivity, Thome maintained that the impediments lay with the proprietors and managers and not with the apprentices.

From his interviews and collected testimony, Thome wrote, “as it respects the *industry* of the apprentices, there are different opinions among the *planters* themselves. Some admitted that they were as industrious as before, and did as much work *in proportion to the time they were employed.*” Other planters, however, complained that “they lacked the power to compel industry,” and the chief concerns they reported was absconding from work and insolence to masters.¹⁴⁰ Thome thought insolence to be the natural result of the half-accomplished emancipation process, “which holds out to the apprentice, that he posses the rights of a man, and still authorizes the master to treat him though he were a dog.” The “rights of a man,” he went on to explain, included being fairly compensated in his earnings. Insolence “will continue to exist until either the former system of *absolute force* is restored, or

¹⁴⁰ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.108.

a system of free compensated labor, with its powerful checks and balances on both parties, is substituted.”¹⁴¹ Thome articulated the idea that the successful operation of freedom was insured by the working of the free market’s labor relations.

Economic Prosperity Brought by Complete Emancipation: Jamaica in 1840

While Thome and Kimball had the impression that Jamaica in 1837 represented the negative consequences incurred by *not* adopting immediate emancipation, the end of apprenticeship in 1838, they believed, would help to bring this island onto equal ground with Antigua in American antislavery argumentation. In his own publication on the matter, fellow Lane Rebel David Ingraham, who had been a missionary to Jamaica and pastor of a church near Kingston, reported six “Effects of Emancipation in Jamaica” looking back from 1840. Points one through five reiterated the major claims of profitability, safety, industriousness, and improvement and were heavily inflected with the language of political economy. “1st. *It has greatly increased the value of all kinds of property,*” he wrote for the American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1841. “2d. *It has promoted the peace and safety of the Island...*” and “3d. *It has diminished crime.*” The fourth and fifth effects of emancipation he substantiated with testimony from prominent planters, assuring his American audience that “*It has made the laboring population far more industrious... [and] It has called forth a spirit of invention and improvement.*”¹⁴² This “spirit of invention” brought with it advances in agricultural technology and claims of increased production.

Ingraham’s sixth point was that “*Emancipation has created an universal desire for knowledge.*”¹⁴³ Here was argumentation more akin to the antislavery rhetoric of the early 1830s, this was a moral claim with an egalitarian agenda. It is telling, however, that by the

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² David S. Ingraham, “Effects of Emancipation in Jamaica,” in *The American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1841*, (New York: S.W. Benedict, 1841), p.34.

¹⁴³ Ingraham, “Effects of Emancipation,” in *The American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1841*, p.35.

1840s the majority of the argumentation had shifted. As with five-sixths of Ingraham's report on the effects of emancipation in Jamaica, the publications of the American Anti-Slavery Society were increasingly infused with the rationale of political economy. More specifically, it appears that representation of "the great experiment in freedom" in the British West Indies was particularly the site for practical and economic considerations to be given voice. The rational regime Thome glimpsed in the transitional discipline under the apprenticeship seemed to have triumphed.

The American Anti-Slavery Society was in disarray by 1840. Thome and Weld embraced the new organization formed by the Tappans, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which led the way in the shift in antislavery ideology and tactics toward more rational and practical means. Two years after the publication of *Emancipation in the West Indies*, the shift in antislavery discourse was unmistakable. As we turn to examine how Weld shaped the manuscript for publication, the focus will return to the American context in which the text was received. *Emancipation in the West Indies* helped to change the definition of immediatism for many abolitionists. As Thome struggled to reconcile his understanding of immediatism by which the American public would immediately renounce the sin of slaveholding with a more direct immediatism by which emancipation would be immediately accomplished, and free laborers would take the place of slaves, he saw the expediency of embracing practical arguments. Theodore Weld was evidently more comfortable with marshalling facts and taking up the political and economic questions. 1838 was a critical moment for the American antislavery movement, and the publication of Thome and Kimball's text had an important role to play.

Chapter Four: The West Indies as Contested Terrain of Interpretation

Moral Intensity and Practical Expediency: Shaping the Manuscript

After Thome returned from the West Indies, he and Weld corresponded as the manuscript was prepared for publication. In November of 1837, Thome wrote to inform Weld that he had “written to Bro. Kimball about the manuscript chapter. I think he will surely forward it soon. If it does not come please see that the chapters in Jamaica are numbered rightly.”¹⁴⁴ Kimball, who died of consumption shortly after their return, could not contribute to the process. In the months following their return Weld had possession of the manuscript and worked to craft it in ways described in the preceding sections. Historian Gilbert Hobbs Barnes wrote that “Thome’s original manuscript would have filled a thousand pages” and that “ultimately Weld wrote it down to 128.” Further, he claimed that “it bears little trace of Thome’s diffuse style,” and cites Weld’s letters to the Grimke sisters from October of 1837 to January 1838 and Thome’s letters to Weld covering the same period as evidence.¹⁴⁵ A close comparison of the handwriting and of the manuscript to the printed version, however, clearly reveals Weld’s influence but also suggests that Thome was still the primary author.¹⁴⁶ The offhanded reference to “Thome’s diffuse style” perhaps denotes Thome’s moralizing tone and suggests the degree to which Weld reigned in his religious rhetoric, displaying a preference for the more rational arguments of political economy.

The journey had been formative for Thome. As he sought to interpret and report the arguments of practicality and economic expediency which were articulated by British

¹⁴⁴ Thome to Weld, November 30, 1837, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.I, p.484. The editors of the letters add in a footnote that “Joseph Horace Kimball... stricken with consumption, he went to the West Indies with Thome to observe the results of emancipation; but he was unable to travel about the islands. He wrote a part of the introductory chapter to their joint work on Jamaica, where he stayed.”

¹⁴⁵ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.263. These assertions come in a discursive endnote and Barnes does not cite the manuscript itself as evidence, presumably because he did not have access to it when writing his book.

¹⁴⁶ See the methodological note in the appendix of this study. See also, Thome, *Emancipation...* MS, (O.C. Special Collections).

government officials and the proprietors and managers of estates, he also sought inwardly to reconcile the implications this discourse had on antislavery tactics. He had shown reluctance to any form of agitation distinct from preaching the abolitionist gospel and converting hearts and minds to the inevitable recognition of the abhorrent *sin* of slavery. Indeed, he had struggled greatly with the question of whether antislavery work could be carried out in a fashion that relied on morally corrupt institutions.¹⁴⁷ Writing to Weld after the publication of *Emancipation in the West Indies*, he explained his frame of mind during that period. “Some two years ago I did entertain doubts as to the propriety of prosecuting the cause in any *associated capacity* distinct from that of the church. You will remember,” he added, “that my difficulties on that point, were freely expressed to you, both before and after my return from the W. Indies.”¹⁴⁸

Clearly, for Thome, his earlier moral commitment to immediately renouncing the sin of slavery was difficult to incorporate into the practicality and the increasingly political approach of the American Anti-Slavery Society. After 1837, political tactics and practical arguments began to replace the moral suasion tactics of the early 1830s.¹⁴⁹ Thome’s conversion experience forged his commitment to the cause and he maintained his affinity for Finnyite revivalism (which had aligned with Garrisonian “come-outerism” and its condemnation of compromise and corrupt institutions).¹⁵⁰ In his letter to Weld, Thome tried

¹⁴⁷ His opinions on this subject are best expressed in his letters to Weld, and particularly in, Thome to Weld, Augusta Ky., February 7, 1839, Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.II, p.750-51.

¹⁴⁸ Thome, “Thome to Weld, Augusta Ky., February 7, 1839,” Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.II, p.750.

¹⁴⁹ For the shift in the movement more generally see the minutes of the American Antislavery Society from 1836, 1837, and 1838. See also, Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, and Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*.

¹⁵⁰ Thome stayed more in Charles Finney’s orbit as he returned to Oberlin where he took up a professorship in 1838. Finney had taught Thome from the beginning that abolition was to be carried out through Christian conversion and the revivalism of the “Second Great Awakening” was the absolute foundation of the antislavery agitation of Thome and the many of the other early agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison, becoming increasingly incendiary over the years, included the United States government in his taxonomy of corrupt institutions, calling it a “covenant with death and an agreement with hell” in 1840.

to explain away his earlier unease with the perceived secularization of the movement. “Since that time my views have undergone a change, favorable for the most part to the present mode of operations.”¹⁵¹ At this point, however, Thome still harbored some reservations. He had not been able to reconcile completely his austere Christian beliefs with more practical and economic commitments:

It is likely however, that I still differ, in some respects, from yourself, and other prominent abolitionists. For example, I am of the opinion that if ministers and professing Christians generally were as holy in heart and as strong in faith, as they should be, they would further the interests of the oppressed more effectually by preaching the Cross – the *whole Cross* I mean – than by forming Anti Slavery Societies composed indiscriminately of Christians, worldlings and infidels. The Church *ought* to be an anti slavery Society (for certainly its charter is both an Anti Slavery Constitution and Declaration of Sentiments), and if it were there would be no need for other organizations for the same object. Every minister of the gospel is bound by his divine commission, to be an Anti Slavery Lecturer, and if he were, there would be little work left for agents. Every religious periodical, from the Biblical Repertory to the Southern Watchman, *ought* to be anti Slavery, and if they were there would be, I apprehend, no occasion for ‘Liberators,’ ‘Emancipators,’ ‘Human Rights,’ and ‘Friends of Man.’¹⁵²

Given the state of the church, the ministry, and the religious press, he continued, “I am satisfied that direct anti-slavery efforts, such in main as are now being made, are proper and necessary.”¹⁵³ Thome’s letter provides insight into this particular transition in within the American Anti-Slavery Society but also suggests the degree to which his editor had influenced the shaping of the manuscript before publication. If Thome had expressed his feelings concerning antislavery operations to Weld before and after his trip to the British West Indies, he certainly must have hoped his text to retain a stronger moral tone. It seems, however, his editor had other intentions. Still, it would be a mistake to overemphasize Weld’s role in bringing the pragmatist and economic rhetoric to the fore. Weld did not have to add substantial sections or necessarily rewrite the majority of the text. Much of the language of political economy was provided by the British officials, proprietors, and

¹⁵¹ Thome to Weld, February 7, 1839, in *Ibid.*, p.751.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

managers, whom Thome and Kimball had interviewed. Thome's experience in the British colonial context, moreover, had been influential in terms of his own understanding and use of economic argumentation.

The Executive Committee had resolved "that Emancipation in the West Indies be revised by T.D. Weld and Elizur Wright, Jr... with a view to publishing a hundred thousand copies if the funds can be obtained," Weld informed Thome. Weld and the Executive Committee had high hopes for the Thome and Kimball text from the beginning. As the manuscript was sent back and forth between Thome's father's home in Augusta, Kentucky and Weld in New York City, Weld expressed his sense of urgency. "I suppose you have received before this your book in *sheets*," Weld wrote to Thome in April of 1838. Weld had already put together the text using Thome's manuscript, and the sheets to which he referred were prepared for publication. "The object of hastening it to you was that you might look it over carefully and make alterations, additions, subtractions, improvements, and so on." In order to examine Weld's version, Thome needed his original manuscript; Weld, who was well aware of this, wrote, "I send you by brother Lovejoy your *Manuscript*, which you will of course wish to look over in your revisal... You will find dear brother that I have taken great liberty with your manuscript, cutting and slashing with an unsparing hand."¹⁵⁴

While the object of the Executive Committee was to "scatter [the work] broad cast over the land," Weld was in a hurry to publish more copies in time for the antislavery Anniversaries and urged Thome to move with haste. "Can't you sit right down and make your criticisms, etc., and send the book in sheets by mail to me here *as soon as possible*? 143 Nassau Street. Can't you do it in three or four days? I mean *finish*, for I suppose you have done a good deal already." Apparently not willing to wait, Weld broke open his letter to add

¹⁵⁴ Weld to Thome, April 5, 1838, in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.II, p.621-23.

that the sub committee had resolved to move “*instanter* to stereotyping,” unable to hold out for Thome’s edits.¹⁵⁵ The manuscript had not appeared, Thome wrote back, and he “felt the want of it exceedingly in revising.” Responding to Weld’s criticisms, he declared, “I am not a little surprised that you should have found so many inaccuracies *in statistics*; for though I must confess that those are the *very things* in which I should be most likely to blunder... I expect always to blunder in statistics.” Thome was evidently less concerned with the practical details than was his editor. Thome did send his edits to New York, but he acknowledged that they undoubtedly would arrive too late and added that they had been but superficial in consequence of the absent manuscript.¹⁵⁶

Further expressing his lack of concern over the details, Thome wrote Weld four days later: “I feel very little concern about the polish or completeness of the book, for after all it is the *facts and testimony* which will do all that is done.” Despite his inattention to the practical details of publication, however, he was coming to embrace the practical arguments marshaled in his work. “Lately had a letter from a talented young man now residing in Ky. (a student of law and eq[uity], Martin P. Marshall Esq. of Mason Co.) making several inquiries respecting the *practicability* of Abolition measure,” Thome wrote to Weld. “I have answered his queries at length,” he proudly affirmed.¹⁵⁷ He did not see this wholly as a retreat from the earlier moral intensity of antislavery discourse, and concluded his letter by stating: “Let me assure you of my *firm belief* in the doctrine of present holiness – freedom from sin, as a *gift from God* to be received by *simple faith*. Theodore – ‘among all your greetings get’ – *this!*”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Thome to Weld, April 17 1838, in Ibid., p.643-44.

¹⁵⁷ Thome to Weld, April 23 1838, in Ibid., pp.645.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.646.

In the summer of 1839, Thome published an open letter to his abolitionist brethren in the *Philanthropist*, intending to explain his absence from the upcoming anniversary of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society.¹⁵⁹ Making an early reference to antislavery conversions – “perhaps among those I might recognize some who four years ago were the avowed oppressors or at least the indifferent hearers of an unworthy laborer” – he then reflected on the “progress of our cause.” He warned that “Ohio laws have enslaved Ohio citizens. The Representatives, creatures of a day, have yoked their own constituents to the ear of power and party.” The “Black Laws” were, in Thome’s view, a disgrace to the Constitution and had created “a system of the basest espionage... among neighbors and fellow citizens, which converts every man’s own household into spies and informers.”¹⁶⁰ The fear of the organized power of slaveholders and the reactionary forces of the “slave-power” played well to a white Northern audience increasingly concerned about violence and the loss of their civil liberties. It was also an early manifestation of a form of argument that exacerbated sectional tensions in later years.

For now, Thome expressed his hope that his brethren would find a way successfully to repeal the Black Laws. “Shall we be willing to walk under the whip, because it may not for a time descend upon us in stripes!” he asked rhetorically, carefully exploiting the analogy to slavery. “Shall we consent to have manacles made in the chambers of our Capitals, and stored up in the public vaults, and remain at ease because they are not already fitted to our wrists?” Endeavoring to answer his own question, Thome appealed to those concerned for their liberty: “No. Let us be resolved upon undoing what has been done as the only means of redeeming our state from reproach and our necks from the yoke.”¹⁶¹ In this open letter as

¹⁵⁹ Thome, James A. “Communications,” *Philanthropist*, June 25, 1839.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

in his letters to Weld, Thome reluctantly acknowledged that antislavery agitation might necessitate a certain involvement in politics.

Impact of the Text

When the Anti-Slavery Examiner published *Emancipation in the West Indies* in 1838, it had a marked impact on the mode of operations within the American Anti-Slavery Society. The historical event, emancipation in the British West Indies, became a touchstone in abolitionist circles, with continuing interpretations and reinterpretations published with frequency up to the start of the Civil War.¹⁶² Thome and Kimball's report was an early and authoritative contribution, heralded by the American Anti-Slavery Society as providing decisive facts.

When examining all publications of the antislavery press from the year 1838, the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society proudly declared:

Of these publications the Committee cannot forbear to characterize two as marking an era in the Anti-Slavery cause. The work on emancipation in the West Indies, the joint production of REV. JAMES A. THOME OF KENTUCKY, and the late JOESPH HORACE KIMBALL, Esq. of New Hampshire, (over whose grave the friends of humanity have good cause to weep,) leaves nothing to be wished for in way of testimony and experience in favor of the safety and profitableness of *immediate emancipation*, and its superiority on all points of expediency over any *gradual* method, in any possible condition of the slave. We have too much confidence in the candor of our countrymen at large, to believe that they can withstand such statement of facts, or withhold their cooperation from an enterprise which is borne out by the now settled results of sufficiently large and varied experiments, while it is opposed only by unsubstantial hypothesis or the fantastic products of imagination.¹⁶³

¹⁶² For a sample of diverse (yet all antislavery) interpretations, see among others: William Ellery Channing, *Dr. Channing's last address : delivered at Lenox, on the first of August, 1842, the anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies*, (Boston: Oliver Johnson, 1842); Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Address Delivered in the court-house in Concord. Massachusetts, on 1st August, 1844, on the Anniversary of the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies*, (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1844); Samuel J. May, *Emancipation in the British West Indies, August 1, 1834: An Address delivered at the First Presbyterian Church in Syracuse, on the First of August, 1845*, (Syracuse: J. Barber, Liberty intelligence officer, 1845); David A. Christy, *Lecture on the present relations of free labor to slave labor, in tropical and semi-tropical countries: presenting an outline of the commercial failure of West India emancipation... Addressed to the Constitutional Convention of the State of Ohio, 1850*, (Cincinnati: Printed by J. A. and U. P. James, stereotyped by A. C. James, 1850); George S. Boutwell, *Emancipation: its justice, expediency and necessity, as the means of securing a speedy and permanent peace...*, (Boston, Wright & Potter, printers, 1861); Lydia Maria Francis Child, *Right way the safe way, proved by emancipation in the British West Indies, and elsewhere*, (New York, 1862); Franklin B. Sanborn, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, (Concord, Mass: March, 1862).

¹⁶³ American Anti-Slavery Society, *Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the Minutes of the Meetings of the Society for Business and the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting on the*

While the Executive Committee had spoken with a unitary voice in proclaiming the importance of the text, its members were divided on the substantive questions upon which it was premised: namely the articulation of practical arguments and political tactics.¹⁶⁴ By late 1838 and early 1839 the American Anti-Slavery Society was in dire financial straits and while members had differed over the “woman question,” involvement in politics was a central issue.

In 1839, Theodore Weld had published his best-selling *Slavery As It Is* and was working as researcher for Congressman John Quincy Adams. He hoped to gather information urging the North to discontinue all support of slavery. Barnes wrote that “Weld wanted facts.” Although the pamphlet was never printed, Barnes maintained that “its doctrine and its facts were to have momentous results in Washington.”¹⁶⁵ Given the impending collapse of the American Anti-Slavery Society, James G. Birney proposed a new movement to William Ellery Channing, but John Quincy Adams took the lead. His advocacy in Congress, however, departed significantly from immediatist doctrine. “‘Let me ask those of you, my friends,’ he said, ‘who believe the *immediate* emancipation of the slaves of this country to be a practical thing, [and] whether the success of your moral suasion upon the minds of the slaveholders hitherto has been encouraging to your hopes or expectations.’”¹⁶⁶ Although his remarks were not well received among the abolitionist ranks, his call for practicality did register for many. Garrison, however, called for Adams’ impeachment and the split between him and the Tappans was duly exacerbated.¹⁶⁷

8th of May, 1838, New York: Printed by William S. Dorr, 1838 (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1972), p.46. The other text to which they referred was “The Power of Congress over Slavery in the District of Columbia” which they described as “annihilating the position of Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Clay.”

¹⁶⁴ See the account of the schism of 1840 in Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, pp.153-190.

¹⁶⁵ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.163.

¹⁶⁶ Adams’ opinions were printed in *The Emancipator*, September 26 1839, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp.165-66.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.168-176.

After the schism at the May 1840 anniversary when Garrison had taken control of the American Anti-Slavery Society, he wrote that “to be without a plan is the true genius and glory of the Anti-Slavery enterprise!”¹⁶⁸ He, for one, had rejected practicality outright. The Tappans, Weld, James G. Birney and other antislavery men, however, were more willing to embrace the need for changing tactics. Thome and Kimball’s text provided both practical arguments and a kind of plan for emancipation modeled after the Antiguan experience. It remained within the immediatist discourse broadly defined, although clearly this doctrine changed substantially in these years.

Thome and Kimball’s work on the West Indies was taken up and widely cited by antislavery publications in order to refute basic objections against immediate emancipation.¹⁶⁹ Its contents were quickly incorporated into antislavery discourse, and abolitionists used its arguments regardless of their understanding of immediatism. William Lloyd Garrison, for example, relied heavily on the testimony provided by Thome and Kimball in his speeches the following year.¹⁷⁰ In an address in New York City, for example, he quoted extensively from *Emancipation in the West Indies*, using the case of Antigua to counter proslavery accusations and defend immediatism.

Garrison’s focus was less on practical arguments, however, and he privileged the description of the slaves’ reception of freedom in 1834. He described the “extract from Thome and Kimball’s journal” as “contain[ing] an Alexandrian library of pathos and sublimity in a single paragraph,” and went on to quote the scene of the slaves rejoicing in

¹⁶⁸ Garrison quoted in *Ibid.*, p.174.

¹⁶⁹ For publications that very same year, see for example, Association of Friends for Advocating the Cause of the Slave and Improving the Condition of the Free People of Color, *Address to the citizens of the United States, on the subject of slavery*, (Philadelphia: Neall and Shann Printers, 1838); Wiggins, *Review of an anti-abolition sermon...*; A. Tennessean, *Abolitionism Exposed Corrected*; Anonymous, *Free and friendly remarks on a speech lately delivered*.

¹⁷⁰ William Lloyd Garrison, *Address delivered at the Broadway Tabernacle, N.Y. August 1, 1838: by request of the people of color of that city, in commemoration of the complete emancipation of 600,000 slaves on that day, in the British West Indies*, (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838).

their new freedom.¹⁷¹ He spoke of the effect emancipation had had on prejudice and in popularizing antislavery doctrine among all classes of people. He chose Grandfather Jacob, a black Antiguan interviewee, as his mouthpiece for articulating the prophesy he saw for the United States, and he did not shy from inflammatory rhetoric. Jacob had said the Savior had brought freedom to Antigua and would be in America soon.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith [sic]. HE WILL BE IN AMERICA SOON! Amen! Be warned, O ye oppressors, and repent! Come, O Father of mercies, and break the rod of oppression! Come, O Holy Spirit, and melt the heart of the master, and the fetters of his slaves! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and bind up the broken hearted, and set the captive free! Brethren, the slaveholders of the South have done us all cruel injustice those who plead your cause, as well as yourselves. They have impeached our motives, libelled [sic] our characters, and threatened our lives.¹⁷²

“We will repay him,” Garrison continued referring to the slaveholder, “with the rich blessings that abound in Antigua.” While Garrison’s rhetoric, unsurprisingly, was more incendiary and concentrated less on the practical motivations of economic expediency, he too affirmed the rational arguments Thome and Kimball had marshaled. His vision of the coming of freedom to America was not without its own distinctly economic overtones predicting the new order. The “revenge” on the slaveholders he described was decidedly Christian and he advocated thorough-going, but non-violent, revolution:

We will remove from them all source of alarm, and the cause of all insurrection, increase the value of their estates ten fold, give an Eden-like fertility to their perishing soil, build up the old waste places, and repair all breaches, make their laborers contented, grateful and happy, wake up the entombed genius of invention, and the dormant spirit of enterprise, open to them new sources of affluence, multiply their branches of industry, erect manufactories, build railroads, dig canals, establish schools, academies, colleges, and all beneficent institutions, extend their commerce to the ends of the earth, and to an unimagined amount, turn the tide of western adventure and of northern capital into the southern channels, unite the North and the South by indissoluble ties, change the entire moral aspect of society, catise [sic] pure and undefiled religion to flourish, avert impending judgments, secure heavenly blessings, and fill the whole land with abundant peace, ever-increasing prosperity, and all-attainable happiness.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Garrison, *Address delivered at the Broadway Tabernacle*, p.29.

¹⁷² Garrison, *An Address*, p.45. Thome had initially described Grandfather Jacob as a “Negro Philosopher,” but Weld had removed this with his edits. The tone of this impassioned denunciation of oppressors is also strikingly similar to passages in Thome’s manuscript which never made it to print.

¹⁷³ Garrison, *An Address*, pp.45-46.

Immediate emancipation would, in Garrison's view espoused above, free the genius of invention and the spirit of enterprise and extend commerce to the end of the earth. Apparently, even Garrison with his staunch anti-compromise stance was attuned to the arguments of economic theory and the vision of social and economic organization they inspired.

As intended from the outset, *Emancipation in the West Indies* was making some converts in the South. "A. Tennessean," describing himself as "a physician formerly resident of the South," for example, took it upon himself to reply to Dr. Sleight's antiabolitionist tract *Abolitionism Exposed*. He quoted extensively from Thome and Kimball's publication, juxtaposing the "facts of the matter" against the erroneous myths perpetuated by pro-slavery men.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, "a St. Louis paper, and the Arkansas State Gazette, published *Emancipation in the West Indies*." John Wiggins, describing its impact in the South, remarked that the journal of Thome and Kimball is eagerly sought after, and read with interest."¹⁷⁵ Citing case studies of post-emancipation economic improvement from the Thome and Kimball's West Indian observations, a critic of Kentucky Senator Henry Clay's proposed compensation for slaveholders also made use of their work.¹⁷⁶ The specific influence the text had over readers in the general public in the South, however, is somewhat difficult to ascertain.

Most assuredly, however, it made a very significant impact on Southern antislavery men like James G. Birney, who then worked to spread its influence to delegates in

¹⁷⁴ A. Tennessean, *Abolitionism Exposed Corrected*, (Philadelphia: J. Sharp, 1838).

¹⁷⁵ John H. Wiggins, *Review of an anti-abolition sermon: preached at Pleasant Valley, N.Y. by Rev. Benjamin F. Wile, August, 1838*, (Whitesboro, N.Y: Press of the Oneida Institute, 1838), p.24.

¹⁷⁶ Anonymous, *Free and friendly remarks on a speech lately delivered to the Senate of the United States, by Henry Clay, of Kentucky, on the subject of the abolition of North American slavery*, (New York: M. Day and Co., 1839), p.16.

Congress.¹⁷⁷ Some politicians, like James M. Buchanan, had requested to see Thome in person, while others were content to read his text.¹⁷⁸ Birney believed that the antiabolitionist actions which were taken in an effort to “secure slavery from the scrutiny of the intelligent world” – “the murder of Mr. Lovejoy, the assaults on Freedom of speech and of the press, the prostration of the Right of petition in Congress,” for example – actually had the opposite effect. Writing early in 1838, Birney reminded Congressman Franklin H. Elmore of the story of Lane seminary as political allegory and example of antislavery resiliency. These “diligent, intelligent, and religious students” had refused to submit to the suppression attempted by the trustees and faculty, resisted the scorn of the Cincinnati public, and had gone out all over the country to advocate the cause of humanity and liberty.

One of these dismissed students, the son of a slaveholder, brought up in the midst of slavery, and well acquainted with its peculiarities, succeeded in persuading a pious father to emancipate his fourteen slaves. After lecturing ~ long time ~ with signal success [...] he visited the West Indies, eighteen months ago, [...] to note the operation of the British emancipation act. [He] collected a mass of facts now in a course of publication that will astonish, as it ought to delight, the whole south; for it shows, conclusively, that IMMEDIATE emancipation is the best, the safest; the most profitable, as it is the most just and honorable, of all emancipations.¹⁷⁹

Birney included a copy of *Emancipation in the West Indies* with his letter. Birney widely recommended the text to southern readers, declaring, “I regard it as the most important work which has appeared among us for years. No man, without reading it, should undertake

¹⁷⁷ James G. Birney, *Correspondence, between the Hon. F. H. Elmore, one of the South Carolina delegation in Congress, and James G. Birney, one of the secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, (New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838). For his use of the emancipation in the West Indies in arguing for abolition in the United States, see particularly pages 10, 39, and 53-56. See also, Birney, *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857*, Dwight L. Dumond, ed., (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938). James G. Birney had political connections and would be the 1840 Liberty Party candidate for President. Thus, he was positioned particularly well to provide insight into antislavery developments in politics.

¹⁷⁸ Buchanan wrote to James G. Birney in August of 1837, for example, specifically “to apply through [him] for the presence of Mr. J.A. Thome, mainly in consequence of his visit to the W. Indies.” Buchanan requested that Thome write to him confirming his attendance, and informed Birney that he had “suggested this to Mr. Lovejoy and he is very desirous that Mr. Thome should be here.” James M. Buchanan to Birney, Carlinville, Illinois, August 18 1837, in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James G. Birney*, p.416.

¹⁷⁹ Birney, *Correspondence, between the Hon. F. H. Elmore, one of the South Carolina delegation in Congress, and James G. Birney, one of the secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, p.10.

to pass judgment on Emancipation.”¹⁸⁰ He went to great lengths to summarize Thome and Kimball’s work and to reiterate its main points. Antigua was the example for immediate unqualified emancipation, and the account of the “transition from slavery to freedom, can hardly be read by a man of ordinary sensibility without the thrill of tender and holy joy.” Perhaps indicative of Birney’s process of reconciling the moral and the political, here economic rationale produced religious feelings. The results of emancipation in Antigua had produced only “good fruit:” “Greater security, the removal of fears which accompany slavery, better and cheaper cultivation of the soil, increased value of real estate.” Not only had it produced such perceived economic benefits, it had also created practical arguments that would appeal to the minds of rational men. Birney viewed the results of emancipatory processes in Jamaica as remarkable in their ability to overcome the vehement opposition of the planters and the misguided apprenticeship policies of the British government.¹⁸¹ The apprenticeship was absurd, according to Birney, and “betray[ed] such ignorance in the principles of human nature.”¹⁸² Like Thome, Kimball, and Weld, he considered the natural impetus to industriousness provided by free wage labor and unleashed by immediate emancipation as more perfectly suited to the principles of human nature.

Other politicians also became interested in *Emancipation in the West Indies* and wrote to one another of the practicality of its arguments. Governor Everett of Massachusetts wrote to Edmund Quincy to thank him for sending a copy. “I have perused this highly interesting narrative with the greatest satisfaction. From the moment of the passage of the law, making provision for the immediate or prospective abolition of slavery in the British colonial possessions, I have looked with the deepest solicitude for tidings of its operation.” The

¹⁸⁰ Birney, *Correspondence between the Hon. F.H. Elmore*, p.53.

¹⁸¹ Birney, *Correspondence*, p.54.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.53.

success of the measure afforded better hope for abolition in the South than before existed, he reported:

The passage of a law providing for the emancipation of nearly a million of slaves in the British colonies, seemed to afford full opportunity of bringing this momentous question to the decisive test of experience. If the result proved satisfactory, I have never doubted that it would seal the fate of slavery throughout the civilized world. As far as the observations of Messrs. Thome and Kimball extended, the result is of the most gratifying character. It appears to place beyond a doubt, that the experiment of immediate emancipation, adopted by the colonial Legislature of Antigua, has fully succeeded in that island; and the plan of apprenticeship in other portions of the West Indies, as well as could have been expected from the obvious inherent vices of that measure. It has given me new views of the practicability of emancipation. It has been effected in Antigua, as appears from unquestionable authorities contained in the work of Messrs. Thome and Kimball, not merely without danger to the master, but without any sacrifice of his interest.¹⁸³

The economics of emancipation were not lost on men in politics. Governor Ellsworth of Connecticut wrote to A.F. Williams, Esq. in May of 1838 to communicate his opinion of the work. "I received from you the Journal of Thome and Kimball, for which token of friendship I intended to have made you my acknowledgments before this; but I wished first to read the book," he told Williams. "Let me assure you, it is justly calculated to produce great effects, provided you can once get it into the hands of the planters. *Convince them that their interests, as well as their security, will be advanced by employing free blacks, and emancipation will be accomplished without difficulty or delay.*"¹⁸⁴

The Connecticut Governor found Antigua particularly impressive, especially the "accumulated testimony from all classes, that the real estate of the island have advanced, by reason of the emancipation, one fourth, at least, in value; personal security, without military force, is felt by the former masters, and contentment, industry, and gratitude, are seen in those who were slaves."¹⁸⁵ Thome and Weld had succeeded, at the very least, in conveying

¹⁸³ Governor Everett to Edmund Quincy, Esq., Boston, April 29, 1838, quoted in, Birney, *Correspondence*, p.55.

¹⁸⁴ Governor Ellsworth to A.F. Williams, Esq., New Haven, May 19, 1838, quoted in Birney, *Correspondence*, p.55-56. (My Italics).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.56.

the thrust of their argument. Readers had noticed the practical expedients to immediate emancipation as well as the presumed natural results which market-regulated labor relations produced; namely, the development of inward controls, motivation for increased industry, and the economic efficiency of the freed people. The shift in antislavery discourse was clear.

Conclusion

This study began with the American context from which James Thome and Theodore Weld and their antislavery efforts emerged. The commitment to immediatism was profoundly religious in nature and the efforts of the early agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society were informed by a renunciation of gradualism, as typified by the African colonization movement, and a rejection of practicality. Between 1834 and 1837, Weld, Thome, and many of the other agents for the American Anti-Slavery Society, employing a moral suasion approach, attempted to convert public sentiment to antislavery principles through preaching the New York Doctrine of immediatism, lecturing, evangelizing, and forming antislavery societies. Thome and Kimball's voyage to the British West Indies came at a critical moment of transition and helped to propel the efforts of the American Anti-Slavery Society toward more direct immediatism. Their published report, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, articulated practical arguments and brought the language of political economy to the fore in American antislavery discourse. "Wages were the ample substitute for the lash," they had observed, "never failing to secure the labor desired."¹⁸⁶

Thome and Kimball's text made an important impact on the doctrine of immediatism in the United States; indeed, historian Gilbert Hobbs Barnes wrote that, "this pamphlet effected a revolution in antislavery doctrine." It is therefore surprising that no critical analysis of the text and its effects on the American movement had been undertaken before now. "To such as were anxious to believe," Barnes wrote of *Emancipation in the West Indies*,

It proved by example that immediate emancipation was safe, practicable, and efficient. Word went out from headquarters that the New York doctrine, with all its difficult subtleties of 'immediate emancipation, gradually accomplished,' need no longer be believed. The official plan became an immediatism by which 'slavery is abolished; free laborers take the place of

¹⁸⁶ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, p.40.

slaves; and all the difficulties involved in the perplexing process of gradualism... are avoided.¹⁸⁷

Making official what the general public had long assumed immediatism to be was certainly part of this text's influence. It also provided practicality which marked a departure from a form of immediatism which condemned the sin of slavery and focused solely on accomplishing its renunciation. Having a plan and working politically was the direction which John Quincy Adams advocated in explicit opposition to the earlier immediatist moral suasion approach. *Emancipation in the West Indies* did away with the "perplexing process of gradualism" for some believers. It also bolstered the conviction in the propriety of working outside the moral terrain, and exemplified the expediency of rational economic arguments.

According to David Brion Davis, immediatism was a dangerously radical concept in the early 1830s, and gradualism "was the logical consequence of fundamental attitudes toward progress, natural law, property, and individual rights." The broad dualism between gradualist and immediatist usefully frames the development of antislavery doctrine, but can also lead to a form of reductionism. The gradualist mindset that dominated antislavery thought up until 1830, according to Davis' early work, was the counterpoint against which immediatism was defined. "The gradualist, having faith in the certainty of economic and social laws, and fearing the dangers of a sudden collapse of social controls, was content to wait until a legal and rational system of external discipline replaced the arbitrary power of the slaveholder," he writes. The immediatist, on the other hand, "put his faith in the innate moral capacities of the individual."¹⁸⁸

Thome, Kimball, and Weld certainly evinced a profound belief in the moral capacities of the individual, but with the publication of *Emancipation in the West Indies* they

¹⁸⁷ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, pp.138-139. The last quotation is from the editor of the *Philanthropist*, April 24, 1838.

¹⁸⁸ Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Anti-Slavery Thought," p.229.

also displayed an attunement to economic and social laws. Perhaps their faith lay less in the economic and social laws which had characterized the society in which they grew to adulthood, and more in the new forms of social and economic organization which they saw emerging around them. While Thome struggled to accept the propriety of integrating practical arguments and “prosecuting the cause in any capacity distinct from that of the church” (i.e. entering politics), the belief in individual’s moral capacity interacted with a belief in economic individualism. For Weld, it seemed that embracing economic rationality came easier, at least in shaping the work of others for publication.

Thome, Kimball, and Weld’s representation of freedom in Antigua clearly marshaled arguments which displayed faith in individual agency, both moral and economic. In Jamaica they reported on the failures of the apprenticeship and the conflicted nature of the prison system; new forms of discipline, punishment, and coercion emerged and were replaced by more rational systems, but the transition was neither smooth nor continuously unidirectional. The model of the transition from slavery to freedom they exemplified to the American audience can be seen as advancing a vision of economic and social order which relied on a “natural harmony of interest” in which free laborers enter into contracts for their labor, work more productively, and are protected in their earnings by law. In this way, these abolitionists participated in ushering in a concept of freedom that supported *laissez faire* values. Simply describing them as harbingers of an advancing capitalist order, however, neglects a certain degree of complexity and nuance.

Questions of historical interpretation that surround the abolitionists’ articulation of bourgeois, or capitalist, values – also frequently framed in terms of a social force somewhat problematically termed “hegemony” – are persistent and often divisive. Tying “immediatism” to a form of economic interpretation, historian James Brewer Stewart, for

example, writes that, “the call for immediate emancipation reflected a fervent desire to extend the tenets of economic self-reliance which, especially in the North, were already transforming America into a nation devoted to individualistic capitalism.” Immediatism contained a vision of a competitive society, he maintains, and the “trumpet call of immediate emancipation thus portended the eventual emergence of America’s modern capitalist order. “In this most fundamental sense,” he concludes, “abolitionists were indeed what they saw themselves to be – the prophets of a new age.”¹⁸⁹

The transformation of the doctrine of immediatism within the American Anti-Slavery Society was connected to the concomitant shift in antislavery strategy and tactics: from moral suasion to political antislavery. Examining the specific ways in which new language and forms of argumentation entered into American antislavery discourse and helped to cause these two interwoven transitions, as with an analysis of Thome and Kimball’s text, highlights the nature of the shift. Properly understanding the latter shift, to political antislavery, however, is no simple task. In his recent work on antislavery and social reform historian Bruce Laurie, for example, challenges the notion that the shift from moral suasion to political antislavery was somehow “a retreat from high-minded egalitarianism to the opportunism of the Liberty Party” by 1840. Defining his thesis in opposition to the claim that “the Liberty Party sacrificed racial idealism on the altar of electoral politics,” he focuses specifically on antislavery agitation in Massachusetts.¹⁹⁰

The sentiment expressed by Stewart, against which Laurie’s thesis is defined, however, retains considerable purchase and is borne out to some extent by the evidence presented in this study. Practical arguments demonstrating the economic inducements of

¹⁸⁹ Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, pp.52-54.

¹⁹⁰ Bruce Laurie, *Beyond Garrison*, p.3 and p.5, respectively. He ascribes the position he summarizes to James Brewer Stewart. See Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, p.105.

free labor, in the case of the Thome and Kimball text, did replace some of the more explicit racially egalitarian claims of the early 1830s. While this thesis ends by examining the influence of the text on antislavery politics from 1838 to 1840, it is quite plausible that a shift away from moral and egalitarian agenda had the, perhaps unintended, consequence of contributing to what Stewart terms “a white supremacist’s antislavery.”¹⁹¹ Acknowledging that individual Liberty men such as James G. Birney and Lewis Tappan retained their deep commitment to emancipation and race equality and that the “initial idealism on matters of race was never to be wholly absent from antislavery politics,” Stewart nonetheless maintains that,

Embedded in this sensitivity to ‘Northern Rights’ were also the makings of a white supremacist’s antislavery, an ideology in which racism and sectionalism could easily reinforce one another... after 1848 [the Liberty Party’s] successors, first in the Free-Soil Party and then in the Republican Party, would be far more inclined to view slavery as a menace to white society, while expressing contempt for black-skinned people.¹⁹²

Thome and Weld were not necessarily expressing a white supremacist view of economic and social relations. Indeed, their “desire to extend the tenets of economic self-reliance” to slaves in the United States can be seen as retaining an egalitarian impetus. Ironically then, the shift which privileged economic over moral arguments and tactics which became more political may not have betrayed their egalitarian commitments in their own minds but may have nonetheless contributed to a process by which antislavery discourse was appropriated in a less than egalitarian project.

¹⁹¹ The issue of “unintended consequences” has been consistently raised in antislavery historiography. See for example, Thomas Haskell’s “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility” in Thomas Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp.107-160. In critiquing David Brion Davis’ claim separating “conscious intentions” from the “social functions of ideology” (Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, pp.266, and 350), Haskell writes that Davis opened up a crucially important space between reformer’s intentions and the long-run consequences of their ideas and activities: “the category of unintended consequences is too loose to supply either the ethical or the causal quality that Davis’ explanation requires,” he claims. See, Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate*, p.116. See also Davis’ reply to Haskell, “Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony,” in *Ibid.*, pp.161-179.

¹⁹² Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, p.105. See also, Stewart, “The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North, 1790-1840,” (*Journal of the Early Republic*, v.18, no.2, Summer 1998, pp.181-217).

In researching Thome and Kimball's *Emancipation in the West Indies* text I was struck not only by the role it played in advocating immediatism in the language of political economy in the American antislavery movement, but also by the specific vision of freedom it provided. Historians have examined the ways in which British precedent – in terms of Americans learning from the British reform model, building international coalitions, and so forth – influenced American antislavery. Tracts like Thome and Kimball's, however, show that the Americans also learned from a certain precedent for post-emancipation societies. Appreciating this fact requires a slightly different focus, extending the chronology to look not just at abolition as a social movement leading to emancipation, but also to incorporate elements of post-emancipation studies.

Originally, I had become interested in the way in which antislavery literature helped to constitute the ideational context for the transition from slavery to freedom. Scholars have examined the possible – both intended and unintended – consequences of the abolition movement in terms of its connection to the rise of capitalist social and economic organization.¹⁹³ Indeed, many studies of antislavery as a social movement suggest in one form or another that the abolitionists were on the front lines of an advancing capitalism, or at least articulated some of its defining values in their discourses. Historians of the post-emancipation period, both in the British West Indies and in the U.S. South, also refer to the abolitionists as contributing to a process which defined a specific model of freedom.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ See most notably, Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*; and Thomas Bender, ed. *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

¹⁹⁴ See, Thomas Holt, “‘An Empire over the Mind’: Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South,” in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Demetrius Eudall, *Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Amy Dry Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in*

Thomas Holt, for example, writes that “early social reformers had posed the problem of slavery in a way that justified a particular concept of freedom in the emerging capitalist social order.”¹⁹⁵ The problem of defining freedom using slavery as a negative referent, Holt writes, caused the “paradoxical situation of having to compel people to be ‘free’ ” and was “rooted in the character of the ‘freedom’ espoused.”¹⁹⁶

For some abolitionists, the shift from moral rhetoric to the language of political economy in articulating the doctrine of immediatism in the American antislavery movement can be seen to have changed the understanding of freedom contained in the emancipatory project. While it eventually proved beyond the evidence presented in this study, I had initially hoped to examine the ways in which the arguments of economic rationality, practicality, and expediency presented in Thome and Kimball’s text became used, and perhaps appropriated, by the Liberty, Free Soil, and Republican parties and by those who engineered the transition from slavery to freedom in the United States (namely the Freedman’s Bureau operatives). One avenue toward this end was provided by examining an incipient form of “free labor ideology” espoused in the antislavery literature of Thome, Kimball, and Theodore Weld. The connections between a commitment to a manual labor philosophy and free labor ideology are indeed ripe for analysis as both extol the virtues of industriousness and hard work and valorize physical labor.¹⁹⁷

the Age of Slave Emancipation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Fredrick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, eds., *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Mary Turner, ed. *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995).

¹⁹⁵ Holt, “‘An Empire over the Mind,’” p.284.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.286.

¹⁹⁷ Theodore Weld was the preceptor at a manual labor school. Before becoming involved in antislavery agitation he was employed by the Tappan brothers to find a site for their proposed National Manual Labor Seminary and to travel lecturing on behalf of their manual labor society. See Robert Abzug, *Passionate Liberator*, pp.66-67; and Weld’s letters from March 1831 to November 1832 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld*, volume I, pp.36-60. One study which explicitly address the connection between the manual labor movement and antislavery is, Paul Goodman, “The Manual Labor Movement and the Origins of Abolitionism,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, v.13, no.3, (Autumn, 1993), pp.355-388.

In 1847, ten years after his voyage to the West Indies, Thome gave an address to the Oberlin Agricultural Society in which he went to great lengths to explain the connection between liberty and labor and advanced an intriguing variant of a free labor ideology.¹⁹⁸ His conception of free labor has distinct connections to the political rhetoric of the Free Soilers and to the ideology of the Republican Party in the antebellum North.¹⁹⁹ Understanding the shift in antislavery discourse involves questions of ideological commitments on the part of the abolitionists as well as issues of strategy and tactics. Did they assume a more political approach because they saw it as a more effectual means of achieving their desired end? Or did the shift reveal changing ideological commitments as they attempted to reconcile economic rationale and political tactics with their moral and egalitarian sentiments? Thome's 1847 speech illustrates that for him, at least, adopting economic argumentation and forming a conception of free labor was more than a tactical decision. Throughout his lengthy address he returned to the central theme of free labor: "let it be the watch-cry on every inch of free American soil... Let its thunder-call roll over the slave cursed South, till labor there, crushed degraded, manacled and brutalized, shall leap up unfettered, and claim its birth right, liberty."²⁰⁰

His speech contained a comprehensive picture of social and economic change. The national interest, thought Thome, was perfectly analogous to individual interest and the pursuit of these aggregate of individual "wants" was to promote the prosperity of the nation and secure liberty. He was careful to define his terms, and his conception of liberty was two-

¹⁹⁸ James A. Thome, "Address at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Oberlin Agricultural Society," (J.M. Fitch, 1847).

¹⁹⁹ On the ideology of the Republican Party see, Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). On the question of labor see, Jonathan Glickstein, *Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1988); and Robert Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English and American Law and Culture, 1350-1870*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

²⁰⁰ Thome, "Address at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Oberlin Agricultural Society," p.8.

fold, “It may be also considered as objectively as the power, the personified principle, the superintending presence by which man is *preserved* in the unmolested use of his natural and acquired possessions... the *guardian of rights and interests*.”²⁰¹ In this sense, it is “a plain matter of fact utilitarian principle.” What then were interests in his view? “Interests are the correlative of wants,” he explained. Thus, to bring liberty and labor together: “the province of the former is to protect man in the lawful *acquisition of his wants*. The province of the latter is to *acquire these wants*. – Liberty and Labor have a *joint mission*.”²⁰²

Historians of the post-emancipation period both in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South often refer to the discourse of abolitionists, social reformers, and politicians. The emphasis, however, is typically on those who implemented post-emancipation policies and not on the ways in which antislavery literature informed their project. In various ways, the work of historians Thomas Holt, Rebecca Scott, Amy Dru Stanley, and Demetrius Eudell all illustrate how different visions of freedom came to define the approach to transitioning from slave societies. The question, with regard to the Thome and Kimball text, is to what degree did ostensibly humanitarian antislavery discourse contribute to this process. “Abolitionists and [self-proclaimed] emancipators in the United States and the British Empire,” writes Eudell, “could not undo the problem of racial hierarchy, for in a paradoxical manner the political languages espoused by these groups, occasionally beyond their conscious intentions,

²⁰¹ Thome, “Address,” p.9.

²⁰² Ibid., p.11. I had written a fifth chapter to this study entitled “Politics and Economy: Manual Labor, Free Labor, and Antislavery Discourse,” which analyzed Thome’s speech at some length. I discovered, however, that properly addressing this topic would have to be the subject of a subsequent study. Thank you to Professor Gary Kornblith who helped me realize the magnitude of this undertaking. His criticisms of my more polemical interpretations were especially thoughtful. After quoting Thome’s understanding of the connection between liberty and labor I had written, for example, that: “Apparently God and Adam Smith had agreed on one very important tenet governing economic as well as social organization: the natural order of things required nominal liberty in order that men might enter into contracts for their labor.” See, Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (New York: Random House, Modern Library edition, 1937); on “liberty, perfect, necessary for correspondence of market and natural price,” see pp.56 and 62; on “labor of freemen being cheaper to the employers than that of slaves,” see p.80; on “industry increased by liberal reward of labor,” see p.81; that “the free exercise of industry ought to be extended to all,” see p.437; and that “natural effort of every individual to better his condition, will, if unrestrained, result in the prosperity of society,” see p.508.

helped give rise to another form of it.”²⁰³ Stanley treats contract as a form of worldview through which the meaning of slavery and emancipation were interpreted.²⁰⁴ Gerteis has also elaborated on the basic idea that the middle class was instrumental in the overthrow of slavery in the United States.²⁰⁵ Holt and Eudell have examined the parallel functions of the British Special Magistrates in the West Indian colonies and the Freedmen’s Bureau operatives in the U.S. South.²⁰⁶ Surprisingly little scholarship, however, has developed the link between this and similar analyses of post-slavery social relations and the earlier discourses of the abolitionists. The way in which, as Stanley puts it, the “market was consecrated” in this later period was foreshadowed in the antislavery rhetoric of men like James Thome and Theodore Weld.

Analyzing the administrators in the Freedmen’s Bureau in South Carolina and the Special Magistrates in Jamaica, Eudell persuasively shows the ways in which the system of

²⁰³ Eudall, *Political Languages*, p.20.

²⁰⁴ Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*. She traces the legal basis of formal equality to the Enlightenment tradition of Anglo-American classical liberal thought, highlighting the “concrete embodiment” of this intellectual history as born out in wage and marriage contracts. “Through the lens of contract,” she writes, “many Americans conceptualized the transition from slavery to freedom and pondered the ambiguities of a culture that deplored the traffic in slaves while pushing nearly all else to sale in the free market.” The dominant interpretation after the Civil War, she argues, privileged the notion that the negation of chattel status lay in owning oneself, in selling one’s labor as a free market commodity, and in marrying and maintaining a home.” Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*, pp.x-xi.

²⁰⁵ Using the concepts of “morality” and “utility,” Luis Gerteis has elaborated on the basic interpretation that the middle class was instrumental in the overthrow of slavery in the United States, just as their British counterparts had been thirty years prior. His nuanced analysis does not treat this consciousness as unitary or assume that it emerged fully formed, but draws an illustrative connection between the “meaning of liberty and the nature of virtue” which had been redefined by antislavery reformers who “rejected conservative definitions of republican virtue and identified liberty with free labor.” See, Gerteis, *Morality and Utility in American Antislavery Reform*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp.21-22. While he does not make a distinction between the early and later 1830s, he clearly locates this decade as instrumental in preparing the way ideologically for emancipation and the specific form it would take. A critical shift appears to have taken place around 1837, however, and antislavery discourse increasingly lauded the virtues of free labor. To what extent was this influenced by the unfolding of the “great experiment in freedom” in the West Indies?

²⁰⁶ Thomas Holt, “‘An Empire over the Mind’: Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South;” Demetrius Eudall, *Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South*. Eudell’s stated project is, “comparing the intellectual foundations and the general ideological context in which emancipation of Black slaves unfolded in the British Caribbean during the 1830s and in the U.S South during the 1860s and 1870s” in order to see how emancipation was “conceptualized and implemented and to highlight similarities in terms of the oppression of freed peoples in post-slavery societies.” See, Eudall, *Political Languages*, p.7.

racial hierarchy was preserved. While the specific articulation of “political languages” of emancipation (read also oppression) changed form, he maintains that a paternalistic, racist, and coercive project to “reconstruct” freed peoples took place (“inculcating discipline for wage labor, a nuclear-family life-style, and the tenets of Christian education”). The “political language of ‘free labor’ ” that had been employed by the earlier antislavery crusade was central to this process of cultural reconstruction.²⁰⁷ His substantiating examples convincingly illustrate ways in which “political languages” become expressed in institutions; what he perhaps fails adequately to demonstrate, however, are the specific political discourses of the abolitionists that helped to conceptualize and define a meaning of freedom that was born out in these later manifestations.

This is precisely what a critical study of Thome and Kimball’s *Emancipation in the West Indies* and other similar texts could help to rectify. Motivated by the insight that there are important continuities between the abolition process and post-emancipation systems of social and economic organization, the analysis could concentrate on the ways in which certain American abolitionists interpreted and represented emancipation in the British West Indies and came to espouse practical arguments that championed economic rationality which helped to constitute a narrow and coercive vision of freedom: a conception that valorized physical labor and evinced distinct attitudes concerning proper labor relations and modes of behavior.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. One criticism that has been made of his analysis is that “the degree to which abolitionists vision for the “resocialization” of freedmen and women and reformer’s free labor values ultimately shaped daily experience in the era of emancipation remains murky in Eudell’s account.” Bridget Ford, “Parsing the History of Emancipation,” (*Reviews in American History*, Vol. 31, 2003, pp.228-235), p.232.

Appendix

A Methodological Note



Thome's Manuscript.¹

Because this study relies heavily on a close comparison of the unpublished handwritten manuscript and the printed version of the *Emancipation in the West Indies* text, it is necessary to provide a brief note on methodology. I have compared Thome's manuscript with the first edition of the published text which was printed in the *Anti-Slavery Examiner*, No.7, 1838.² This publication was made, in typical antislavery tract fashion, to reach a broad audience and a more expensive edition in book form was also available from the office of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York.³ Although not the focus of this study, a comparison of the version printed in the *American Anti-Slavery Examiner* (128 pages) and the bound book (489 pages) reveals little difference except for the typeface and layout and the obvious difference in the total length. There was discussion of a second edition, both in

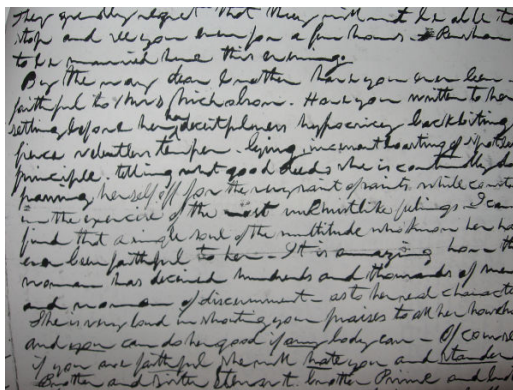
¹ Photo by author. James A. Thome, *Emancipation in the West Indies* MS (O.C. Special Collections 378.771.1TZ 1836T 36E).

² Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Sixth Month's Tour of Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in 1837*, in *The American Anti-Slavery Examiner*, No.7, 1838 (New York: S.W. Benedict, 1838). This particular copy comes from Rhodes House Library, Oxford and is printed in small type face with two full pages of text on each 8.5/11 sheet of paper. This edition is 128 total pages. (O.C. Special Collections also holds a copy of this particular edition, 326.5An87 no.7).

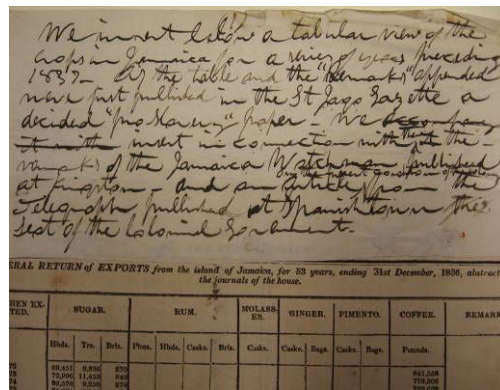
³ In the frontispiece of the above edition a note reads: "This work, as originally published, can be had at the depository at the American Anti-Slavery Society, No.143 Nassau Street, New York, on fine paper, handsomely bound, in a volume of 480 pages, price one dollar per copy, \$75 per hundred." See Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Sixth Month's Tour of Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in 1837*, (New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, 143 Nassau St. by S.W. Benedict, 1838), pp.iv-489 (O.C. Special Collections, 324.1 Y2).

letters between Weld and Thome and in the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, but a comparison of the first and second editions was well beyond the scope of this present study.⁴

I have been especially attentive to handwriting. I compared Thome's signed letters to the manuscript and Weld's letters to edits on the manuscript.⁵ I have rejected historian Gilbert Hobbs Barnes' claim that Theodore Dwight Weld essentially re-wrote the entire manuscript; I have, however, paid very close attention to the edits, additions, and omissions that took place before publication.⁶ It is very unlikely that Barnes saw the actual manuscript during his research (as he undoubtedly would have cited it as evidence if he had). Fortunately, Theodore D. Weld's handwriting is quite distinct.



Theodore Weld handwriting sample.



Weld's note attached to Thome MS.⁷

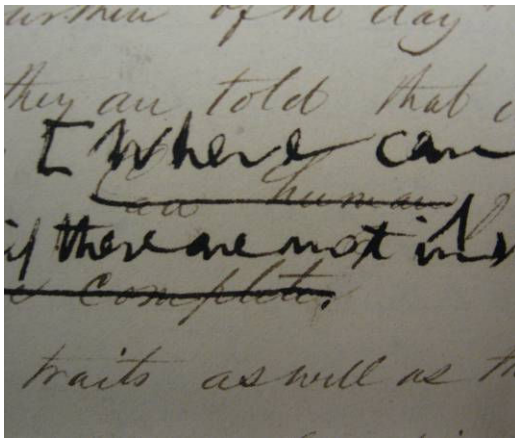
⁴ See particularly, Thome to Weld, November 30, 1837 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimke Letters*, v.I, p.484; Weld to Thome, April 5, 1838 in *Ibid.*, v.II, pp.621-623; Thome to Weld, April 17, 1838, in *Ibid.*, v.II, pp.643-44; Thome to Weld, April 23rd, 1838, in *Ibid.*, v.II, p.645. See also, Weld's letters to the Grimke sisters during 1837-1838 in *Ibid.*; and American Anti-Slavery Society, *Fifth annual report of the executive committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society: with the minutes of the meetings of the society for business, and the speeches delivered at the anniversary meeting on the 8th May, 1838*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1838. There are also clues on the manuscript itself, for example, on p.44 of Jamaica Thome wrote "Mr. Weld, 143 Nassau St" upside down like it had been folded and mailed. Unfortunately, I was also unable to locate a copy of the second edition.

⁵ Examples of Thome's handwriting can be found in his signed letters contained in the Oberlin College Archive. See for example, "Thome to Mr. Burnell, September 2, 1839," (O.C. Archive). Examples of Weld's handwriting can also be found in his signed letters contained in the O.C. Archive. See for example, "Weld to James A. Thome, April 15, 1838," (O.C. Archive).

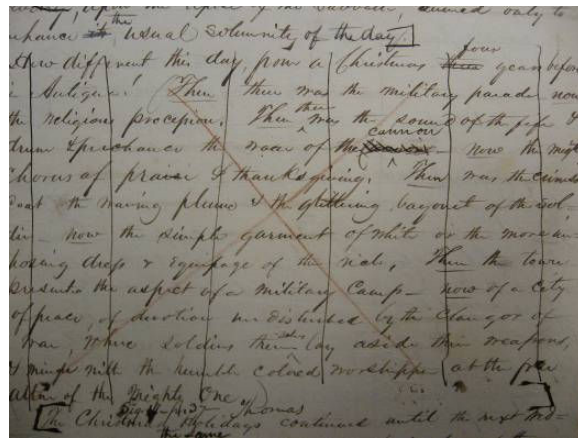
⁶ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes writes, "Thome's original manuscript would have filled a thousand pages. Ultimately Weld wrote it down to 128 pages. It bears little trace of Thome's diffuse style." Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse*, p.263.

⁷ Photos by author. Weld's handwriting is from, Weld to Thome, 1838 (O.C. Archive); Weld's note is from Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS (O.C. Special Collections).

Weld's edits on the Thome manuscript are usually very obvious to discern, although some of the markings are more difficult to assign authorship. The strokes that are in the same thicker dark black pen I have assumed to be Weld's, where as the markings in the same thinner, lighter pen that the bulk of the text is written in I have generally assumed to be Thome's. There are also markings in grey and red pencil; I was unsure about these and thus have not made claims as to who took the passages out (although the red pencil is probably Weld's).

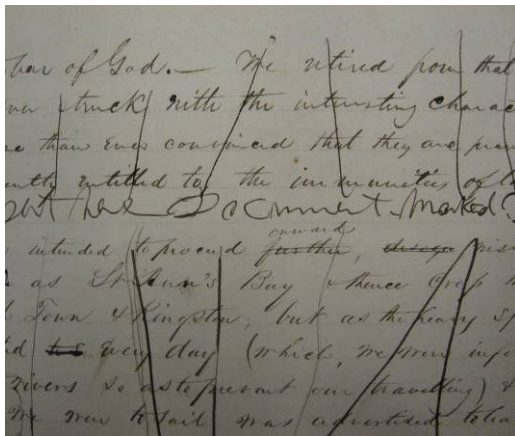


Weld's edits on Thome MS.

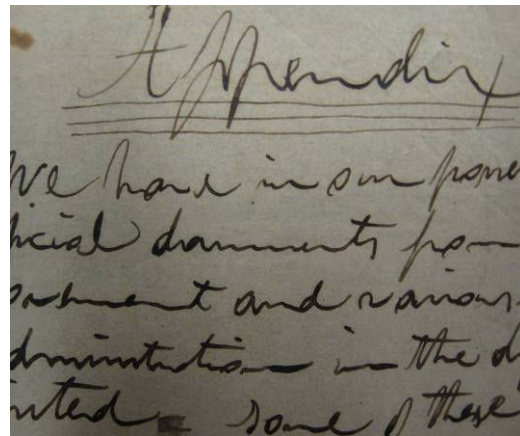


Thome MS, difficult to discern author of edits.⁸

Although the clearest examples of Weld's edits are in the dark black pen, shown above, there are also places where his ink is less thick yet his handwriting is unmistakable.



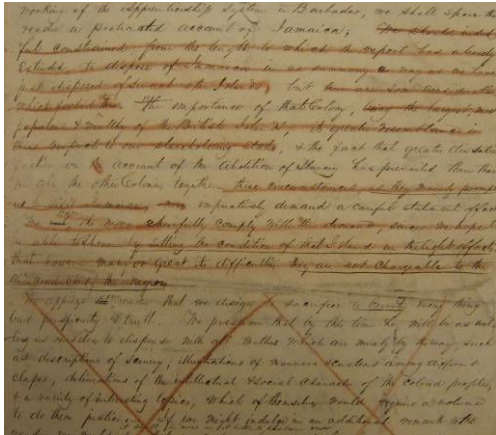
Weld's edit "Insert here Document"



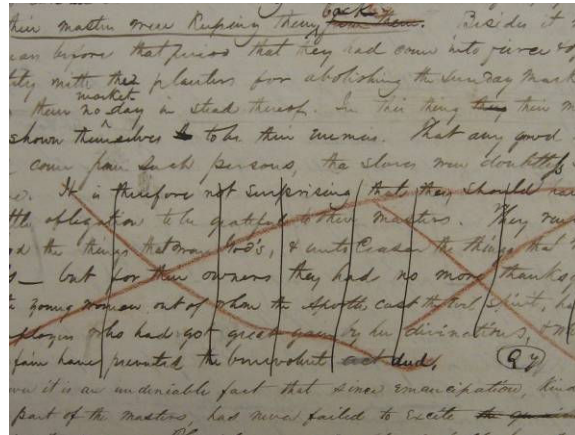
Appendix written in Weld's hand.⁹

⁸ Photos by author. Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS (O.C. Special Collections). The sample on the left shows Weld's hand editing Thome's manuscript; the example on the right illustrates a case in which it is more difficult to ascribe authorship.

Working to identify trends in the edits allows for some interpretative leeway, assigning authorship of an edit to Weld, for example, when the handwriting does not explicitly indicate this to be the case.



Edits on page one of Jamaica.



Edits on Antigua "Facts and Testimony."¹⁰

Overall, I have tried to stay as true to the markings on the actual manuscript as I could. A longer and more detailed comparison certainly awaits.

⁹ Photos by author. Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, (O.C. Special Collections). The image on the left shows that Weld wrote "Insert here Document marked D" with a thinner pen stroke; the image on the right shows the same thin pen stroke in the Appendix.

¹⁰ Photos by Author. Thome, *Emancipation...*, MS, (O.C. Special Collections).

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