

Ira V. Brown
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

PENNSYLVANIA, "IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION," AND THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

During the 1820s the focus of antislavery attention was the American Colonization Society, with its program of gradual, compensated emancipation combined with resettlement of the blacks in Africa. The whole slavery question took on a new dimension about 1830, when William Lloyd Garrison assumed the leadership of the antislavery movement. Then in his middle twenties (he was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1805), he attracted national attention in 1829 when he wrote for Benjamin Lundy's newspaper *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* a blistering personal attack on a New England slave trader. He was arrested and imprisoned for libel in Baltimore, where the slaver was operating and where Lundy's paper was then being published. Arthur Tappan, a wealthy New York merchant and philanthropist, who became the chief financial pillar of abolitionism, paid his fine and got him released from jail. While confined behind bars, Garrison busied himself writing and prepared a series of lectures for delivery on his release.¹

After vain attempts to obtain the use of an auditorium in Baltimore for these addresses, the young crusader headed for Philadelphia, where he was able to secure a lecture hall in the Franklin Institute building. There he lectured on three successive evenings, August 31 and September 1 and 2, 1830 to audiences consisting chiefly of Quakers and blacks.² There also he met several individuals who were to be his allies in the strenuous campaign against slavery he was about to inaugurate, most notably James and Lucretia Mott, who became the central figures in Pennsylvania abolitionism during the next generation.

Both members of this distinguished husband-and-wife team came of a long line of Quakers; they themselves joined the Hicksite branch after the split of 1827. James Mott was born on Long Island and lived from 1788 to 1868. Lucretia Coffin Mott was born on Nantucket and lived from 1793 to 1880. They met at a Friends' boarding school at Nine Partners, in Dutchess County, New York, and were married in 1811. After trying several different businesses, James established a cotton importing business in Philadelphia in 1822. A few years later, he decided it was immoral to deal in the products of slave labor and became a wool merchant instead. He was active in the old Pennsylvania Abolition Society during the 1820s and later served for many years as president of the new and more radical Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, established in 1837. Lucretia was at least equally important in the abolitionist movement, serving not only in the state society but also as the key figure in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which raised a large part of the funds for the operation of the state organization.³

On January 1, 1831, Garrison issued in Boston the first number of the *Liberator*. "I am in earnest," he wrote in his first editorial, "—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD!" He demanded immediate and uncompensated emancipation for all the slaves and held that they should not be sent to Africa but given equal rights in this country. The paper had only 500 subscribers at the end of the first year, but it was to be published weekly for thirty-five years, and it never missed an issue. The great majority of early *Liberator* subscribers were blacks, and of these the largest single bloc were residents of Philadelphia.⁴ A striking and important fact about radical abolitionism is that many free Negroes participated in its work. Philadelphia had a black population of about 15,000 in 1830, and a considerable number of them were articulate and concerned about the abolition of slavery and improvement in the treatment of free Negroes.⁵

One of Garrison's earliest supporters was James Forten (1766–1842), who was probably the wealthiest of Philadelphia Negroes in 1830. Born in the Pennsylvania metropolis of free Negro parentage, Forten had received a fragmentary education in Anthony Benezet's African school, gone to work at an early age, and at fifteen enlisted as a powder boy aboard the *Royal Louis*, a privateer in the American Revolution. This vessel was captured, and Forten was detained on a British prison ship for seven months. Returning to Philadelphia after the war, he took up the sailmaking trade and rose in the course of time to

be the proprietor of a large sailmaking establishment and the possessor of a fortune estimated at \$100,000.⁶

Early in 1832 Garrison organized the New England Anti-Slavery Society on the principle of immediate emancipation, and later that year he published *Thoughts on Colonization*, an attack on the program of the American Colonization Society. In this he may have been influenced by James Forten, who had presided over a mass meeting of Philadelphia blacks opposed to the colonization plan in 1817.⁷

Garrison was not the first person to advocate immediate emancipation of the slaves. Even in the eighteenth century a few individuals, Anthony Benezet for example, had proposed the idea. Particularly influential on Garrison was a work written by George Bourne, *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*, printed by J. M. Sanderson & Co. of Philadelphia in 1816. Bourne attacked slavery on Biblical grounds (it was "manstealing" in the words of Exodus 21:16) and advocated immediate recognition of slaveholding as a sin and immediate action by the churches to purge their rolls of slaveholders.⁸ An English immigrant, Bourne was a Presbyterian minister who had observed slavery firsthand in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and had preached against it there. Driven out of Virginia and out of Presbyterianism, he settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania, where he completed his book. Later he held a Congregational pulpit in Quebec and a Dutch Reformed pastorate in New York City. "Next to the Bible," Garrison wrote, "we are indebted to this work [Bourne's] for our view of the system of slavery."⁹ The Pennsylvania Abolition Society approved a declaration in 1819 that "the practice of holding and selling human beings as property . . . ought to be *immediately* abandoned."¹⁰ Elizabeth Heyrick, an English Quaker, published a widely read pamphlet entitled *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition* in 1824.¹¹ Yet the idea caused a furor in the United States when Garrison began advocating it in 1831.

As early as May 28, 1831 Garrison appealed for the formation of a national antislavery society based on his principles.¹² In June of that year he attended the "First Annual Convention of the People of Colour" in Philadelphia, as did other white abolitionists such as Arthur Tappan, Benjamin Lundy, and the Reverend S. S. Jocelyn. This group participated in discussions about the need for such an organization.¹³ Shortly after this Garrison wrote: "You will be pleased to learn, that an American Anti-Slavery Society is in embryo at Philadelphia. Its objects will be various and energetic."¹⁴ However, two and a half years were to pass before this objective was achieved. During that period many new recruits came to the support of "immediate emancipation." Among these

were Arthur Tappan's brother Lewis of New York, John Greenleaf Whittier of Massachusetts, the Rev. Samuel J. May of Connecticut, and Beriah Green, Elizur Wright Jr., and Theodore Dwight Weld of Ohio.

Early in October 1833 Arthur Tappan and other New Yorkers sounded out members of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society regarding the possibility of establishing a national antislavery organization based on the principle of immediate emancipation. The Philadelphians' reply was discouraging. They questioned "the propriety & wisdom of that movement, *at this particular juncture.*" In the light of "the present tumultuous & distracted state of the political mind" and the fact that "our brethren of the South are in a state of phrensy [sic] on this subject," they considered it unwise to urge by a national convention the principles of immediate emancipation before the people at large were properly informed of "our meaning of the term." They thought that through the medium of "State and other limited bodies" information might be spread by addresses, pamphlets, tracts, and the like until public opinion came to support the project. They pointed to the mob which had tried to prevent the formation of the New York City Anti-Slavery Society a few days earlier. However, should the Tappan group decide to go ahead with a national convention regardless of their objections, the Philadelphians prayed that their efforts might receive "the Divine Sanction, & result in His praise and glory."¹⁵

Despite the Pennsylvanians' objections, the call for a convention to organize a "NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY" went out on October 29, 1833 over the signatures of three members of the New York City Anti-Slavery Society: Arthur Tappan, Joshua Leavitt, and Elizur Wright, Jr., who had recently resigned his professorship at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio, and come to New York as secretary of the New York Society and editor of its newspaper, the *Emancipator*, which had been started in the previous spring.¹⁶ The convention was to assemble in Philadelphia on December 4, 1833. Friends of immediate emancipation who wished to take part in this event were instructed to report to Evan Lewis at his home, No. 94 North Fifth Street, where they would be informed of arrangements for the convention.¹⁷ Whittier, one of the delegates, who was to become the poet of abolitionism, described Lewis as "a plain, earnest man, and life-long abolitionist, who had been largely interested in preparing the way for the Convention."¹⁸ Although the Pennsylvania Abolition Society refused to give the project its official endorsement, Lewis participated independently, as did several other members of this oldest of antislavery organizations.¹⁹

When delegates arrived in Philadelphia on December 3rd, they found that the city police had warned their hosts that their safety required that all sessions be held by daylight. Between thirty and forty persons gathered for an informal session at the home of Evan Lewis on the evening of the 3rd, with Lewis Tappan presiding. Whittier described Tappan as a "handsome, intellectual-looking man, in the prime of life," who "in a clear, well-modulated voice, the firm tones of which inspired hope and confidence" stated the objects of their preliminary meeting and the purposes which had called them together.²⁰ Someone suggested that purposes which had called them together.²⁰ Someone suggested that public hostility against them might be reduced if one of the more distinguished Philadelphia philanthropists could be persuaded to preside over their sessions. Accordingly, a delegation was dispatched to call first on Thomas Wistar and then on Roberts Vaux, "influential men of philanthropic reputation," both of whom declined "for prudential reasons" the honor serving as chairman of the antislavery convention.²¹ As the delegates left Vaux's house, one of them, Beriah Green, remarked sarcastically: "If there is not timber amongst ourselves big enough to make a president of, let us get along without one, or go home and stay there until we have grown up to be men."²²

When the delegates made their way the next morning to the Adelphi Building, on Fifth Street below Walnut, where they were to meet for three days, they were jeered at by passersby, and they found police officers stationed at the entrance to the hall in anticipation of trouble.²³ It turned out that their sessions were undisturbed, unlike those of many other antislavery gatherings earlier and later. The convention was opened with prayer at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday December 4th. A committee of three was appointed to nominate officers. Beriah Green, having opened himself to election the night before, was chosen president. Born in Connecticut in 1795, Green was a graduate of Middlebury College and had studied at Andover Theological Seminary. He spent most of his life (he died in 1874) as a Congregational minister, but he also taught Bible at Western Reserve College (then located at Hudson, Ohio) along with Elizur Wright, who taught mathematics. In 1833 Green was serving as president of Oneida Institute, a manual labor school at Whitesboro, New York. Whittier described him as a "fresh-faced, sandy-haired, rather common-looking man" but one who had "the reputation of an able and eloquent speaker" and who had already won a reputation as "a resolute and self-sacrificing abolitionist."²⁴ Lewis Tappan and Whittier were chosen as secretaries. Another prominent delegate was Samuel J. May, a Unitarian minister from

Brooklyn, Connecticut, whom Whittier described as "a sunny-faced young man . . . in whom all the beatitudes seemed to find expression."²⁵

On May's motion it was resolved that all delegates from antislavery societies and "all persons present who agree in principle with them on the subject of the immediate emancipation of slaves, without expatriation," be entitled to seats in the convention.²⁶ Accordingly, sixty-four men representing ten of the twelve free states (there were no delegates from Indiana and Illinois) were entered on the roll of the convention. The most conspicuous member was William Lloyd Garrison, only twenty-eight years old, but already bald and bespectacled, who had recently returned from a trip to England, where he had undermined the work of Elliott Cresson on behalf of the American Colonization Society and had met most of the leading British abolitionists. Great Britain had just adopted a measure providing for the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies.

The largest delegation (twenty-two), not surprisingly, was from Pennsylvania. Twelve were from Philadelphia. Among these were several members of the old Pennsylvania Abolition Society, such as Evan Lewis, Dr. Edwin P. Atlee, and Thomas Shipley. Whittier described Shipley as "a slight, eager man, intensely alive in every feature and gesture" who "for thirty years had been the protector of the free colored people of Philadelphia, and whose name was whispered reverently in the slave cabins of Maryland."²⁷ Twenty-one members of the convention were Quakers.²⁸ Three members were blacks, two of them from Philadelphia—James McCrummell, a dentist at whose home Garrison stayed for the duration of the convention, and Robert Purvis, a young man of twenty-three whose skin was so light he might have passed for white but who chose to identify himself with blacks and who was destined to devote the rest of his long life to abolitionism and civil rights. "I think I have never seen a finer face and figure," Whittier wrote, "and his manner, words, and bearing were in keeping."²⁹

Several delegates came from Chester County, among them Dr. Bartholomew Fussell, a physician who opened his house to runaway slaves. From Lancaster County came Thomas Whitson, "dressed in plainest homespun, his tall form surmounted by a shock of unkempt hair, the odd obliquity of his vision contrasting strongly with the clearness and directness of his spiritual insight."³⁰ From Carlisle came James Miller McKim, a Presbyterian ministerial candidate who like Purvis was only twenty-three years old and who was to become a key figure in Pennsylvania abolitionism. McKim had been converted to the

cause by John Peck, a black barber in Carlisle at whose shop he had read the *Liberator* and Garrison's *Thoughts on Colonization*.³¹

Several Philadelphia women attended the convention—Lucretia Mott, Lydia White, Esther Moore, and Sydney Ann Lewis—and while they were not officially recognized as delegates, they took part in the discussion.³² “A beautiful and graceful woman, in the prime of life,” Whittier wrote of Mrs. Mott, “she offered some wise and valuable suggestions, in a clear, sweet voice, the charm of which I have never forgotten.”³³

Once the roll of the convention was completed, it was resolved on motion of Robert B. Hall of New Haven, Connecticut, to form forthwith a “National Anti-Slavery Society.” A committee of five was appointed to draft a constitution for the society, and another one was charged with the duty of nominating a slate of officers. While these committees were absent from the floor, Elizur Wright read letters from nine individuals who had been invited to attend the convention but for various reasons did not come.³⁴ Aside from Arthur Tappan, the most significant absentee was Theodore Dwight Weld, who was to become a major figure in the work of the Society. At that time he was a student at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, which was soon to be rocked by a great debate over the slavery issue. “My whole heart is with you,” Weld wrote. “But a *physical* impossibility prevents my *personal* attendance.” Nevertheless, he declared, “I am deliberately, earnestly, solemnly, with my whole heart and soul and mind and strength, for the *immediate, universal, and total abolition of slavery*.”³⁵

About mid-day on the 4th, David Thurston of Maine, chairman of the committee charged with framing a constitution, presented its report to the convention. The members decided not to take time out for a noon meal. Instead, baskets of crackers and pitchers of cold water were brought in, and deliberations continued through the afternoon.³⁶ The constitution was read, discussed, and after several amendments, adopted.

Modelled on the constitution of the recently formed New York City Anti-Slavery Society this document began with a high-minded preamble appealing to the ideals of Christianity and the Declaration of Independence. The framers quoted the well-known verse from Acts 17:26 that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men” and noted that Jesus had commanded His followers “to love their neighbours as themselves.” They quoted from Jefferson’s immortal Declaration the statement that “all men are created equal” and endowed by their Creator with “certain unalienable rights,” among which are “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” They declared that slavery was contrary to “the principles

of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion." Furthermore, they asserted, slavery was "destructive of the prosperity of the country" and dangerous to "the peace, union, and liberties of the States."³⁷

They went on to express their belief that it was "the duty and interest of the masters, immediately to emancipate their slaves" and that "no scheme of expatriation, either voluntary or by compulsion" could remove "this great and increasing evil." They expressed their faith that it was "practicable, by appeals to the consciences, hearts, and interests of the people, to awaken a public sentiment throughout the nation, that will be opposed to the continuance of slavery in any part of the republic, and by effecting the speedy abolition of slavery, prevent a general convulsion. . . ." They thought they owed it "to the oppressed, to our fellow-citizens who hold slaves, to our whole country, to posterity, and to God," to do all that was lawfully in their power to bring about the extinction of slavery. With a "prayerful reliance on the Divine aid" in the furtherance of their objective, they were forming themselves into an organization to be called (by Article I of the Constitution) "the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY."³⁸

Article II dealt somewhat more specifically with the Society's purposes. It would aim for the entire abolition of slavery throughout the United States. While admitting that each State in which slavery existed had, by the Constitution of the United States, "the exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in said State," the Society would attempt to convince all their fellow-citizens, "by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences," that slavery was "a heinous crime in the sight of God," and that "the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned" required its "*immediate abandonment*, without expatriation." The Society would endeavor, "in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic slave trade, and to abolish slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia,—and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union."³⁹

According to Article III, the Society would also try to "elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice," in order that they might, "according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges." However, the Society would never, in any way, "countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force."⁴⁰

Article IV provided that any person who consented to the principles of the Society's Constitution and contributed to its funds and was not a slaveholder could become a member entitled to vote at its meetings. Articles V, VI, and VII specified the officers of the Society and their duties. Article VIII provided for annual meetings to be held in New York City (in connection with those of other benevolent societies). Article IX provided for the organization of auxiliaries and Article X, the last one, provided for amending the Constitution.⁴¹

After adoption of the Constitution, Samuel J. May presented a slate of officers on behalf of the nominating committee. They were approved unanimously. Arthur Tappan was chosen president. Twenty-five persons were named as vice presidents. Among these were Pennsylvanians Edwin A. Atlee and Evan Lewis. Elizur Wright, Jr. was made secretary for domestic correspondence, and William Lloyd Garrison secretary for foreign correspondence. Abraham L. Cox of New York became recording secretary and William Green, Jr., also of New York, became treasurer. In addition to these officers, a board of managers was set up to include several representatives from each state. Pennsylvanians named to this body were: Edwin P. Atlee (there were two Edwin Atlees), Thomas Shipley, Robert Purvis, and James McCrummell of Philadelphia; Samuel Williams and John B. Vashon of Pittsburgh; Bartholomew Fussell of Kennett; Enoch Mack of Wilkes-Barre; Thomas Whitson and Abraham D. Shadd of Chester County; Lindley Coates of Lancaster County; and Job F. Halsey of Allegheny City.⁴²

The business of the first day concluded with the selection of a committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Edwin P. Atlee of Philadelphia, to draft a declaration of the principles of the Society to be signed by all members of the convention and to be published. The session ended at 5:00 p.m.⁴³

Members of the committee on a declaration met at Dr. Atlee's house that evening. After an exchange of ideas lasting about two hours, the group decided to appoint a subcommittee of three to prepare a draft of the proposed public statement to be presented to the whole committee the next morning at 9:00 o'clock. Garrison, May, and Whittier composed this subcommittee. They repaired to the home of James McCrummell, where Garrison was staying, and after a half-hour's discussion decided that Garrison should write the document. May and Whittier left him about 10:00 o'clock, agreeing to come back the next morning at 8:00. Returning at that time, the two men found him, "with shutters closed and lamps burning," just writing the last paragraph of his draft. They read it over two or three times and made a few minor changes before presenting it to the whole committee at 9:00. This

committee spent most of the morning of December 5th going over Garrison's draft and made a few more alterations, the most important of which was to delete a long passage attacking the American Colonization Society.⁴⁴

While the committee was debating what came to be called the "Declaration of Sentiments," other members of the convention passed several resolutions on a variety of subjects. One provided for the appointment of a committee to determine how many preachers in the United States were slaveholders. Another promised support for antislavery newspapers. A third offered special thanks to William Lloyd Garrison for his devotion to the cause of "immediate and unconditional emancipation of the slaves in this country." A final one expressed gratitude to Benjamin Lundy for his "early, disinterested and persevering labors . . . in the cause of Emancipation."⁴⁵

The proposed Declaration of Sentiments was presented to the whole convention about noon. Members spent the afternoon discussing it, again making a few changes before adopting it unanimously. At the end of the day Dr. Abraham L. Cox was delegated to procure a sheet of parchment and to engross thereon "our magna charta" before the next morning (December 6th), at which time it was signed by sixty-three members of the convention. The honor of being the first to sign went to Thomas Whitson of Chester County, who had to leave the city immediately on personal business.⁴⁶ Among the other Pennsylvanians who signed the document was James Mott, whose name did not appear on the original roll of delegates.⁴⁷

In their Declaration of Sentiments, as in their Constitution, the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society appealed to the example of the patriots who had signed the U.S. Declaration of Independence and fought to free the colonies from British tyranny. The nation's slaves, estimated to include about one-sixth of the American population in 1833, were entitled to the same promises of liberty and equality as were free persons. But there was a difference: the men of 1776 had resorted to force to achieve freedom, while the abolitionists appealed only to moral suasion—"the spirit of repentance." They charged that slaves were "plundered daily of the fruits of their toil," subjected to "licentious and murderous outrages upon their persons," and had their families "ruthlessly torn asunder." The United States had an obligation "to repent instantly, to undo the heavy burden, to break every yoke, and to let the oppressed go free."⁴⁸

The abolitionists charged that every American citizen who retained a person in bondage was, "according to Scripture (Ex.xxi.16) a MAN-

STEALER,” and that the slaves ought “instantly to be set free, and brought under the protection of law.” Legislation which permitted the holding of persons as property was, “before God, utterly null and void.” The abolitionists also asserted that colored persons ought to be guaranteed the same rights and opportunities as whites. (However, they did not mention the right to vote.) They maintained that no compensation should be paid to the owners when the slaves were emancipated. They opposed any and all schemes for removing blacks from their American homeland. While admitting that Congress had no right to interfere with slavery in the States where it already existed, they asserted that it had a right and a duty to prohibit the domestic slave trade and to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and other territories under its exclusive jurisdiction.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the people of the free states were obligated to “remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States.” Presumably that meant by constitutional amendment. Northern people were recognizing and guaranteeing slavery by their commitment under the Constitution to suppress insurrections and by supporting “a standing army at the South for its protection.” They had given slaveholders extra representation in Congress through the Three-fifths Compromise. They had promised to return fugitive slaves to their owners. “This relation to slavery is criminal and full of danger,” the abolitionists declared: “IT MUST BE BROKEN UP.”⁵⁰

Planting themselves “upon the Declaration of Independence and the truths of Divine Revelation, as upon the EVERLASTING ROCK,” the reformers outlined their plan of action. They would organize antislavery societies “if possible, in every city, town, and village in our land.” They would send forth agents “to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and of rebuke.” They would circulate, “unsparingly and extensively,” antislavery tracts and periodicals. They would enlist the pulpit and the press in their cause. They would aim toward “a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.” They would give preference to the produce of free labor rather than that of slaves. They would “spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance.”⁵¹

“Our trust for victory,” they declared, “is solely in God.” Under His guidance and with His help, they would do all that in them lay, consistent with their Declaration to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth; to deliver our land from its deadliest curse; to wipe out the foulest stain which rests upon our national escutcheon; and to secure to the colored population of

the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men, and as Americans—come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputations—whether we live to witness the triumph of LIBERTY, JUSTICE, and HUMANITY, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause.⁵² With this peroration the antislavery Declaration concluded.

On Friday, December 6th, the third and last day of the convention, after signing the Declaration of Sentiments, the members passed a considerable number of resolutions designed to advance the antislavery cause. Several of these concerned the relationship of the slavery problem to the churches. The abolitionists “affectionately and earnestly” recommended to “the Christian Church throughout the land to observe the last Monday evening of each month as a Concert of Prayer on behalf of the enslaved, and of the people of color.” They promised to exert themselves to procure from the several denominations to which they belonged “solemn and earnest addresses” to their members “to awaken them to a sense of their duty in view of the sufferings and degradation of our colored brethren.” Ministers who did not speak out against slavery were charged with not presenting “the whole counsel of God” to their parishioners. The convention also expressed its disapproval of laws and customs which deprived slaves of access to the Bible.⁵³

Several resolutions concerned the enlistment of women in the antislavery crusade. Women were urged to form auxiliary antislavery societies. Those women who had attended the convention were thanked for the interest they had manifested in the cause “during the long and fatiguing sessions of the Convention.” Prudence Crandall was praised for her efforts to provide education for black girls in Connecticut.⁵⁴

Another resolution charged the executive committee of the Society with the responsibility of determining the best means to promote the substitution of the produce of free labor in place of that of slaves. Citizens were urged to contribute as God prospered them a fixed portion of their income each month to “the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the colored race.” Members of the convention were urged to collect signatures for petitions to Congress on behalf of abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.⁵⁵

Several resolutions concerned the education of blacks. Laws which prevented or restricted schooling of blacks were denounced as “cruel, impious, and disgraceful to a Christian state or nation.” Schools which had opened their doors to Negroes received the convention’s praise. Plans for the establishment of a biracial manual labor school in

Pittsburgh were endorsed. The literary and moral reform societies which blacks were beginning to form received the convention's praise, as did the annual conventions of free blacks which had been held in Philadelphia since 1830.⁵⁶

Resolutions were passed thanking the convention's officers and "our friends in the city of Philadelphia for the kind and hospitable reception they have given us."⁵⁷ The sessions had been completed without the kind of mob attack that had been feared and that had actually accompanied the formation of the New York Anti-Slavery Society two months earlier. Arrangements were made for the publication of the convention's proceedings.

Two members of the convention had given speeches praising William Lloyd Garrison for his part in originating the movement for "immediate emancipation." "Some men, Mr. President," said Lewis Tappan, "are frightened at a name. There is good evidence to believe that many professed friends of abolition would have been here, had they not been *afraid* that the name of WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON would be inserted prominently in our proceedings. Sir, I am ashamed of such friends. We ought to place that honored name in the forefront of our ranks."⁵⁸ Robert Purvis noted that Garrison had awakened a sleeping nation to the evils of slavery.⁵⁹

President Beriah Green made the closing address. He reminded the delegates that they might face persecution. "Let us be prepared for the worst. Let us fasten ourselves to the throne of God as with hooks of steel." He urged the abolitionists not to engage in "vain boasting" and not to court applause. "Let us fix our gaze on God, and walk in the light of His countenance. If our cause is just—and we know it is—His omnipotence is pledged to its triumph."⁶⁰ Green ended the convention with a fervent prayer for Divine support.

After adjournment the board of managers chose an executive committee for the coming year to be headed by Arthur Tappan. Soon thereafter an office for the Society was established at No. 130 Nassau Street in New York City. Communications were to be addressed to Elizur Wright, Jr., Corresponding Secretary.⁶¹

The idea that northern abolitionists could persuade southern slaveholders to repent of their "sin" and immediately free their slaves was, of course, a chimerical one. Indeed, the fledgling American Anti-Slavery Society soon found it had a Herculean task to persuade *northern* people that slavery should be abolished. "Urge immediate abolition as earnestly as we may," Garrison himself admitted, "it will, alas! be grad-

ual abolition in the end. We have never said, that slavery would be overthrown by a single blow: that it ought to be, we shall always contend!"⁶²

NOTES

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Michael Bezilla of the Office of University Development at Penn State for some helpful bibliographical leads in the research for this article.

1. Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879: The Story of His Life Told by His Children* (4 vols., New York, 1885-1889; reprinted New York, 1969), 1: 165-202.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
3. The basic source is Anna Davis Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters* (Boston, 1884), but see also Margaret Hope Bacon, *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott* (New York, 1980).
4. Walter M. Merrill, *Against Wind and Tide: A Biography of William Lloyd Garrison* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 44-45.
5. Julie Patricia Winch, "The Leaders of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1787-1848" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1982).
6. Robert Purvis, *Remarks on the Life and Character of James Forten, Delivered at Bethel Church, March 30, 1842* (Philadelphia, 1842) is the basic source, but see also the introduction to Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Journal of Charlotte Forten: A Free Negro in the Slave Era* (New York, 1961), pp. 12-19.
7. Billington, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.
8. John W. Christie and Dwight L. Dumond, *George Bourne and "The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable"* (Wilmington, 1969). See esp. p. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
10. Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania: Slavery—Servitude—Freedom, 1639-1861* (Washington, 1911), p. 216.
11. David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 49 (September 1962): 220.
12. Merrill, *Against Wind and Tide*, pp. 76, 344.
13. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* (Cleveland, 1969), p. 88.
14. William Lloyd Garrison to Ebenezer Dole, July 11, 1831, in Walter M. Merrill, ed., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. 1—I Will Be Heard: 1822-1835* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), p. 123.
15. Edwin P. Atlee, D. Mandeville, Thomas Shipley, and George Griscom to Arthur Tappan "and other Abolitionists of New York," October 7, 1833, copy in Papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
16. The text of this circular may be found in Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844* (2 vols., New York, 1934), 1: 117-119. On Wright see Philip Green Wright and Elizabeth Q. Wright, *Elizur Wright, the Father of Life Insurance* (Chicago, 1937).
17. *Weld-Grimké Letters*, 1: 118.

18. John G. Whittier, "The Antislavery Convention of 1833," *Atlantic Monthly*, 33 (February 1874): 167.
19. *Weld-Grimké Letters*, 1: 118.
20. Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 167.
21. Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, p. 115.
22. Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869), pp. 82–83. Apart from what appears in the official *Proceedings*, this is the best source for what went on at the convention.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.
24. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s. v., "Green, Beriah." Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 167.
25. Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 168.
26. *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention, Assembled at Philadelphia, December 4, 5, and 6, 1833* (New York, 1833), p. 3.
27. Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 168.
28. Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, 1950; reprinted Gloucester, Mass., 1965), p. 140.
29. Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 169.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 168. For a sketch of Whitson's life see R. C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1883), pp. 67–70.
31. *Proceedings of the American Anti-Slavery Society at its Third Decade, Held in the City of Philadelphia, Dec. 3d and 4th, 1863* (New York, 1864), pp. 31–33.
32. Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, p. 114.
33. Whittier, "Antislavery Convention," p. 171.
34. *Proceedings* (1833), p. 5.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
36. May, *Some Recollections*, pp. 84–95.
37. *Proceedings* (1833), pp. 5–6.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
44. May, *Some Recollections*, pp. 85–87.
45. *Proceedings* (1833), p. 11.
46. May, *Some Recollections*, pp. 88–89.
47. *The Emancipator* (New York), Dec. 14, 1833, p. 131.
48. *Proceedings* (1833), p. 13.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
51. *Ibid.*

52. Ibid., p. 16.
53. Ibid., pp. 16–18.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 17.
56. Ibid., pp. 18–19.
57. Ibid., p. 19.
58. *The Abolitionist* (Boston), 1 (December 1833): 181.
59. Ibid., p. 183.
60. Oliver Johnson, *William Lloyd Garrison and His Times* (Boston, 1880), pp. 154–155.
61. *Proceedings* (1833), p. 20.
62. *The Liberator* (Boston), August 13, 1831, p. 129.