

**“HOW CAN I HELP TO ABOLISH SLAVERY?”**

OR,

**COUNSELS TO THE NEWLY CONVERTED.**

**BY MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN.**

Yes, my friend, I can resolve your question. Twenty years of actual experience qualify one to reply. I have stood, as you now stand, on the threshold of this grandest undertaking of any age — this effort to elevate a whole people in the scale of moral being — with my head full of plans, and my heart of devotedness, asking the same question. I really longed for this coming of millennial glory, and therefore soon found the road on which to go forth to meet it. My disgust was unutterable, as yours, too, will be, if you desire the abolition of slavery more than the temporary triumph of sect or party; at the stupid schemes by which selfish men were the, as now, trying to make capital for themselves out of the sacred cause of human rights — seeking to sell the gift of the Holy Ghost for money. Hear them clamorously and meanly taking advantage of innocence, for the promotion of self-interest.

First, hear the agents of slavery presenting the colonization scheme as the instrument of abolition.

“Aid the Colonization Society.” Yes; to make slavery stronger by exalting prejudice as an ordination of divine Providence; to make slavery safer by eliminating that dangerous element, the free black; to make its term longer by stultifying national conscience. See that society making laws of slave States more cruel, the men of the free states more obdurate, the situation of the free men of color more difficult and insupportable, as a part of its plan. It

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could not, if it would, transport three millions of souls to Africa; the navies and revenues of the world would be insufficient. It would not, if it could; for slavery has no intention of parting with its three millions of victims; unless induced to free them out of generosity, it will keep them on speculation. Its forty years of colonization labor, and its million of gold and silver, have exiled fewer to Liberia than have escaped into Canada in spite of it — less in that period than the monthly increase of the slaves! It can do nothing for Christianizing Africa, for it sends a slaveholding gospel, which is anti-Christ. Be not deceived, then, by a tyrannical mockery like this, working to perpetuate slavery, and not to abolish it. Aid the American Anti-Slavery Society, which deals with the heart and conscience of this slaveholding nation, demanding immediate, unconditional emancipation; the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance, in conformity with all your own principles and traditions, whether religious or political.

Hear another cry, (coming, not like the first, from the enemies of abolition, but from friend, generally those of more pretension than devotedness:) “Form a political party, free soil or other, to vote down slavery.”

Yes, don't *kill* the growing monster — call to him to stop growing; merge immediatism, which always succeeds, in gradualism, which never does. Substitute a secondary object for the primary one. Strive in the first place not to abolish slavery, but to get one set of men out of office and another in, to learn by the event that the last are as incapable to turn back the whirlpool that masters the government as the first were. Make an appeal to force of numbers in a case where you know it is against you; in a case, too, where, having sworn assistance, you must lose influence by such an appeal. Spend your time and money, not in making new abolitionists, but in counting the old ones, that at every count diminish. Politics, in the common, small sense of the term, merely takes the circumstances it finds, and does its best with them. But the present circumstances are unfavorable. THEN CREATE NEW ONES. This is true politics, in the enlarged, real meaning of the word. Here is a building to be erected, and no sufficient materials. A *little* untempered mortar, a *few* unbaked bricks — that is all. Go to the deep quarries of the human heart, and make of your sons and daughters polished stones

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to build the temple of the Lord. It is this cleaving into the living rock the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY girds itself to do. Under its operations men become better and better abolitionists. Under the labors of political partisanship the necessarily grow worse and worse. They must ever ask themselves how *little* anti-slavery feeling and principle they can make serve the temporary turn; because the less of either, the greater the chance. They must always be sacrificing the end to the means. Call them to the witness box in the capacity of philosophical observers, and out of their little circumventing political characters, and themselves will tell you that the effect of electioneering on anti-slavery is most unfavorable, adding to the existing opposition to right the fury of party antagonism, throwing away the balance of power, lowering the tone of moral and religious feeling and action, and thus letting a sacred enterprise degenerate into a scramble for office. But labor with the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY *directly* to the great end, and even Franklin Pierce and Co., pro-slavery as they are, will grovel to do your bidding. The administration now *on* the throne is as good for your bidding as any other. In a republican land the power behind the throne is *the* power. Save yourself the trouble of calling caucuses, printing party journals, distributing ballots, and the like. Let men who are fit for nothing of more consequence do this little work, which is best done by mere nobodies. *More* than enough of them are always ready for it. You, who are smitten by the sacred beauty of the great cause, should serve it greatly. Don't drag the engine, like an ignoramus, but bring wood and water and flame, like an engineer. The AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY has laid the track.

“Buy the slaves and set them free.” Yes; lop the branches and strengthen the root; make the destruction of the system more difficult by practicing upon it; create a demand for the slave breeder to supply; compromise with crime; raise the market price, when you ought to stop the market; put a philanthropic mark upon the slave trade; spend money enough in buying one man to free fifty gratis, and convert a thousand. But there is a *wholesale* way, cries one. “Sell the public lands, and set every means in motion, from the merely mercantile donation of a million to the infant cent society, and thus raise two thousand millions of dollars, and beg the slaveholders to take it (not as compensation, but as a token of good will,) and

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let their bondmen go.” I marvel at this insufficient notion of the heart of a slaveholder. I wonder exceedingly at such a want of imagination. “Not as compensation” is well put; for what sum can compensate a monarch for his throne? This system of slavery makes the south the parent of long lines of princes. It gives to her diabolical dominions

“Kingdoms, and sway, and strength, and length of days.”

I am strangely divided in sympathy. I feel at once the generosity of the proposal, and have the feeling of contempt with which its insufficient inappropriateness is received.

“Organize vigilance committees, and establish underground railroads.” Yes; hide from tyranny, instead of defying it: *whisper* a testimony; form a bad habit of mind in regard to despotism; try to keep out the sea with a mop, when you ought to build a dike; flatter your sense of compassion by taking private retail measures to have suffering ameliorated, when you might, with the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, be taking public wholesale measures to have the *wrong* (the cause of suffering) *righted*. You may safely leave with the half and quarter converted, with the slaveholders, nay, even with the Curtises, the charge of all these things, which with the American Anti-Slavery Society are but as hydrogen and nitrogen without oxygen, however good with it, as the natural fruits of its labors. What I would discourage is, not mercy and compassion in an individual case, but a disgraceful mistake in the economy of well doing; spending in salving a sore finger what would buy the elixir vitae; preferring the less, which *excludes* the greater, to the greater, which *includes* the less. Slavery can only be abolished by raising the character of the people who compose the nation; and *that* can be done only by showing them a higher one. Now, there is one thing that can’t be done in *secret*: *you can’t set a good example under a bushel*.

“But instruction! instruction! found schools and churches for the blacks, and thus *prepare* for the abolition of slavery.” O, shallow and shortsighted! The *demand* is the *preparation*; nothing can supply the place of *that*. And exclusive instruction, teaching for *blacks*, a school founded on color, a church in which men are herded ignominiously, apart from the refining influence of association with

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the more highly education and accomplished, — what are they? A direct way of fitting white men for tyrants, and black men for slaves. No; if you would teach and Christianize the nation, strengthen the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, the *only* American institution founded on the Christian and republican idea of the equal brotherhood of man, and in opposition to a church and state which deny human brotherhood by sanctioning slavery, and pull down Christ to their own level. The American Anti-Slavery Society is church and university, high school and common school to all who need real instruction and true religion. Of it what a throng of authors, editors, lawyers, orators, and accomplished gentlemen of color have taken their degree! It has equally implanted hopes and aspirations, noble thoughts and sublime purposes in the hearts of both races. It has prepared the white man for the freedom of the black man, and it has made the black man scorn the thought of enslavement, as does a white man, as far as its influence has extended. *Strengthen that noble influence.* Before its organization, the country only saw here and there in slavery some “faithful Cudjoe or Dinah,” whose strong natures blossomed even in bondage, like a fine plant beneath a heavy stone. Now, under the elevating and cherishing influence of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the colored race, like the white, furnishes Corinthian capitals for the noblest temples. Aroused by the American Anti-Slavery Society, the very white men who had forgotten and denied the claim of the black man to the rights of humanity now thunder that claim at every gate, from cottage to capitol, from school house to university, from the railroad carriage to the house of God. He has a place at their firesides, a place in their hearts — the man whom they once cruelly hated for his color. So feeling, they *cannot* send him to Coventry with a hornbook in his hand, and call it *instruction!* They inspire him to climb to their side by a visible acted gospel of freedom. Thus, instead of bowing the prejudice, they conquer it.

“Establish free-labor warehouses.” Indeed! is that a good business calculation that leads to expend in search of the products of free labor the time and money that would make all labor free? While wrong exists in the world, you cannot (short of suicide) but draw your every life breath in involuntary connection with it; nor is conscience to be satisfied with any thing short of a complete devotion to the anti-slavery cause of the life that is sustained by sla-

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very. We *may* draw good out of evil: we *must not* do evil, that good may come. Yet I counsel you to honor those who eat no sugar, as *you* ask no questions for conscience's sake; while you despise those who thrust forward such a call upon conscience, *impossible*, in the nature of things, to be obeyed, and therefore not binding, as if it were the end of the law for righteousness, in order to injure Garrison, the great and good founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society. I have seen men drawing bills of exchange between England and the United States, while uttering maledictions against the American Anti-Slavery Society, because it does not, as such, occupy itself with the free produce question. This I brand as pro-slavery in disguise — sheer hypocrisy.

You see, my friend, that I have replied to your question in the conviction that you desire the abolition of slavery above all other things in this world; as one assured that it is the great work of Christianity in our age and country, as the conflict with idolatry was in other times and climes. Thus you see the salvation of the souls, the maintenance of the rights, the fulfillment of the duties, and the preservation of the free institutions of Americans to depend upon the extirpation of this accursed and disgraceful disease which in destroying them. If I had reason to think you merely desirous to make sectarian and political capital out of a holy thought and a sacred purpose originated by others — if you were merely contriving defences for what is indefensible, and trying to save the credit of what is disgraceful, trying to throw dust, and change the issue, and pay tithes of cumin to delay justice, in order to spare your own insignificant self in this greatest conflict of light and darkness, good and evil, which the world has now to show — if you had been trying how to *seem* creditably interested in what ought to be an American's first business, and calculating *how little* instead of *how much* you might sacrifice to the soul-exalting cause of freedom — if you were the hired agent of some demisemiquaver of a movement which tacked anti-slavery to its other titles, in order to establish a claim on the purses of abolitionists — in any of these cases I would not have stopped to talk with you. Your interest being the thing you had at heart, I should not *counsel*; I should be called, in name of all that is

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holy, to *condemn* you, in order that blame might awake conscience. But the case, I trust, is different. I may, then, say to you, with all the confidence, nay, certainty, which is inseparable from experience, knowledge, and utter self-abnegation in the matter, WORK WITH THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY. Lavish your time, your money, your labors, your prayers, in that field, which is the world, and you will reap a thousand fold, now and hereafter. This movement *moves*. It is alive. Hear how every thing mean and selfish struggles, hisses, and dies under its influence. Never, since the world was, has any effort been so clear, so strong, so uncompromising, so ennobling, so holy, and, let me add, so successful. It is “the bright consummate flower” of the Christianity of the nineteenth century. Look at those who “have not resisted the heavenly vision” it presented them of a nation overcoming its evil propensities, and doing right at all risks; ask *them* whether it has not saved their souls alive; ask *them* if it has not made them worshippers of the beauty and sublimity of high character, till they are ready to “know nothing on earth but Jesus Christ and him crucified.” For this they give all — wealth, youth, health, strength, life. Worldly success, obtained by slackening their labors against slavery, (and it is easy to have it on those terms at any moment, so placable a monster is the world.) strikes them like failure and disgrace. They have “scorned delights, and lived laborious days,” till at length they feel it no sacrifice, but the highest joy. All this the American Anti-Slavery Society demands of *you*. DO IT! and be most grateful for the opportunity of fulfilling a work which is its own exceeding great reward. DO IT, and find yourself the chosen of God, to keep alive in this nation, degraded and corrupted by slavery, the noble flame of Christian faith, the sentiment of honor and fidelity, the instinct of high-mindedness, the sense of absolute, immutable duty, the charm of chivalrous and poetic feeling, which would make of the poorest Americans the Christian gentlemen of the world.

“Cherish all these high feelings that become  
A giver of the gift of liberty.”

You will find yourself under the necessity of doing it in *this* noble company, or *alone*. Try it. Strive to be perfect, as God is perfect — to act up to your own highest idea, in connection with church or state in this land corrupted by slavery, and see if you are helped or

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hindered. Be not dragged along by them protesting. It is gracing as a slave the chariot wheels of a triumph. But flee from them, as one flees out of Babylon. Secure the blessing of union for good, and be delivered from the curse of union in evil, by acting with the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, its members and friends.

I used this mode of expression advisedly, for I am not speaking of a mere form of association. Many are in harmonious coöperation with it who have neither signed the constitution nor subscribed the annual half dollar. Hence it is neither a formality nor a ceremony, but a united, onward-flowing current of noble lives.

If, then, you feel that devotedness of heart which I verily thin your question indicates, I feel free to counsel you to go *immediately* to the nearest office of the American Anti-Slavery Society,\* by letter, if not in person, subscribe what money you can afford — the first fruits of a life-long liberality, and *study* the cause like a science, while promoting it like a gospel, under the cheering and helpful sympathy of some of the best company on earth: *but not unless*; for *this* company despises what politicians, ecclesiastical and other, call “getting people committed.” They have a horror of this selfish invasion of another’s freedom, as of the encumbrance of selfish help. They warn you not to touch the ark with unhallowed hands.

One consideration more — the thought of what you owe to your forerunners in what you feel to be the truth. It is, to follow meekly after, and be baptized with the baptism that they are baptized with. “Thus it *becometh* us to fulfil all righteousness:” and the more your talents, gifts, and graces may, in your judgment, be superior to theirs, the more *becoming* it will be to seek their fellowship: for in the whole land they, and *they alone, are right*. It is not eulogy, but fact, that theirs is the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day — denied only by the besotted with injustice, the committed to crime. Consider, then, not only what you owe to your slavery-encursed country, your enslaving as well as enslaved countrymen, your fathers’ memory, your remotest posterity, the Christian religion, which forbids the sacrifice of one man’s rights to another man’s interests, and which knows no distinction of caste, color, or condition, — but consider, also, what you owe to those individuals and to that brotherhood who have battled twenty years in the breach for *your* freedom, involved with that of the meanest slave.

\* For local offices, see bottom of page 12.

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Imagine how the case stood with those who perished by suffocation in the Black Hole at Calcutta. Suppose that some of their number had felt the sublime impulse to place their bodies in the door, and the high devoted hearts to stand the crushing till dawn awoke the tyrant; the *rest* of that doomed band might have passed out alive. This is what the American Anti-Slavery Society has been unflinchingly doing for you, and for the rest of the nation, amid torture, insult, and curses, through a long night of terror and despair. The life of the land, its precious moral sense, has been thus kept from suffocation. The free agitating air of faithful speech has saved it. The soul of the United States is not dead, thanks, under Providence, to that noble fellowship of resolute souls, to find whom the nation has been winnowed. Do your duty by them, in the name of self-respect. Such companionship is an honor accorded to but few, and of that worthy few I would fain count you one. Strike, then, with them at the existence of slavery, and you will see individual slaves made free, anti-slavery leaven introduced into parties and churches, instruction diffused, the products of free labor multiplied, and fugitives protected, in exact proportion to the energy of the grand onset against the civil system.

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**NOTE.** The work of the American Anti-Slavery Society is carried on by newspapers, books, tracts, agents, meetings, and conventions. The donor is requested to specify what department, and in what section of country, he wishes his contribution to be applied.

**CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-  
SLAVERY SOCIETY.**

**FORMED IN PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 4, 1833.**

Whereas the Most High God “hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,” and hath commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves: and whereas our national existence is based upon this principle, as recognized in the Declaration of Independence, “that all mankind are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. :” and whereas, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, since the faith and honor of the American people were pledged to this avowal before Almighty God and the world, nearly one sixth part of the nation are held in bondage by their fellow-citizens; and whereas slavery is contrary to the principles of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion, and is destructive to the prosperity of the country, while it is endangering the peace, union, and liberties of the States: and whereas we believe it the duty and interest of the masters immediately to emancipate their slaves, and that no scheme of expatriation, either voluntary or by compulsion, can remove this great and increasing evil; and whereas we believe that it is 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; and whereas we believe we owe it to the oppressed, to our fellow-citizens who hold slaves, to our whole country, to posterity, and to God, to do all that is lawfully in our power to bring about the extinction of slavery, we do hereby agree, with a prayerful reliance on the divine aid, to form ourselves into a society to be governed by the following constitution: —

**ARTICLE I.** — This society shall be called the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

**ARTICLE II.** — The objects of this society are the entire abolition of slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State in which slavery exists has, by the constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in said State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned require its *immediate abandonment*, without expatriation. The society will also 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.

**ARTICLE III.** — This society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice, that thus they may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites of civil and religious privileges; but this society will never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.

**ARTICLE IV.** — Any person who consents to the principles of this constitution, who contributes to the funds of this society, and is not a slaveholder, may be a member of this society, and shall be entitled to vote at the meetings.

**ARTICLE V.** — The officers of this society shall be a president, vice-presidents, a recording secretary, corresponding secretaries, a treasurer, and an executive committee of not less than five nor more than twelve members.

**ARTICLE VI.** — The executive committee shall have power to enact their own by-laws, fill any vacancy in their body, and in the offices of secretary and treasurer, employ agents, determine what compensation shall be paid to agents and to the corresponding secretaries, direct the treasurer in the application of all moneys, and call special meetings of the society. They shall make arrangements for all meetings of the society; make an annual written report of their doings, the expenditures and funds of the society, and shall hold stated meetings, and adopt the most energetic meas-

ures in their power to advance the objects of the society. They may, if they shall see fit, appoint a board of assistant managers, composed of not less than three nor more than seven persons residing in New York city, or its vicinity, whose duty it shall be to render such assistance to the committee in conducting the affairs of the society as the exigencies of the cause may require. To this board they may from time to time confide such of their own powers as they may deem necessary to the efficient conduct of the society's business. The board shall keep a record of its proceedings, and furnish a copy of the same for the information of the committee, as often as may be required.

**ARTICLE VII.** — The president shall preside at all meetings of the society, or, in his absence, one of the vice-presidents, or, in their absence, a president pro tem. The corresponding secretaries shall conduct the correspondence of the society. The recording secretary shall notify all meetings of the society and of the society and of the executive committee, and shall keep records of the same in separate books. The treasurer shall collect the subscriptions, make payments at the direction of the executive committee, and present a written and audited account to accompany the annual report.

**ARTICLE VIII.** — The annual meeting of the society shall be held each year at such time and place as the executive committee may direct, when the accounts of the treasurer shall be presented, the annual report read, appropriate addresses delivered, the officers chosen, and such other business transacted as shall be deemed expedient.

**ARTICLE IX.** — Any anti-slavery society or association founded on the same principles may become auxiliary to this society. The officers of each auxiliary society shall be ex officio members of the parent institution, and shall be entitled to deliberate and vote in the transactions of its concerns.

**ARTICLE X.** — This constitution may be amended, at any annual meeting of the society, by a vote of two thirds of the members present, providing the amendments proposed have been previously submitted, in writing, to the executive committee.

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