


2013

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Ben, Zachary W. Dresser, and Robert Nelson. "Spirit Politics: Radical Abolitionists and the Dead End of Spiritualism." Essay. In *Apocalypse and the Millennium in the American Civil War Era*, 31–51. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/26517>

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Spirit Politics

Radical Abolitionists and the Dead End of Spiritualism

Robert K. Nelson^A

On June 30, 1858, abolitionist Parker Pillsbury wrote William Lloyd Garrison and readers of the Liberator that he had “just returned from attending one of the largest and most important Reformatory Conventions ever held in this or any other country.” In his report on the “Free Convention” held at Rutland, Vermont, Parker praised the “character and quality” and the “large brains and full hearts” of the convention participants. “The most numerous class” among these participants, he noted, were Spiritualists. Spiritualism had burst on the American scene a decade earlier, quickly attracting thousands of adherents who believed that communication and communion with the spirits of the dead was now possible. Devotees of the new religion had organized the convention to explore what they considered the pivotal role that it was playing in the various radical, perfectionist reform efforts of the day. All of the major efforts received attention during the convention: abolitionism, marriage reform, land reform, free trade, temperance, phrenology. In his letter to Garrison, Pillsbury praised the convention and the Spiritualists’ perfectionist ambitions, declaring that “no convention ever held in America could have had more Millennial hope and promise in it than this,” and he expressed confidence that that “hope

^A In *Chicago* style and LSU Press house style, note callouts aren’t used after the title or author’s name. At the request of LSU editorial, I’ve removed the note callout and set the associated note as an unnumbered note at the head of the numbered notes. I’ve renumbered subsequent notes and superscript callouts.

and promise” would translate into real change: the “Convention will have a signal effect, not only upon Vermont, but also upon the whole nation.”¹

This upbeat public report on the Rutland convention^B was very much at odds with the frustration Pillsbury vented during the convention itself. Asked to speak on the subjects of slavery and abolitionism, Pillsbury began his speech to the convention with a rant protesting what he considered the pointlessness of what he had heard from the many Spiritualist speakers. “It appears to me,” he complained, “that we have been compelled to listen to pretty long harangues, coming from this world or the other, and not always of any great practical interest^C to the objects of this Convention.” Pillsbury did not mince words in expressing his doubt that Spiritualism had anything particularly useful to contribute to the cause of radical reform. “I will not become so enraptured with anticipations [of the heavens offered by Spiritualists] as to allow my ears to be stopped or my heart hardened against the cries and wailings of four millions of slaves,” he declared. Talking ad nauseum about disembodied spirits was unconscionable when “we have vastly more important business than settling the condition of our friends in the future; and there are in our country four millions of living bodies” in bondage. Throughout his career, Pillsbury condemned the church as an impediment to perfectionist reform, and at Rutland, Spiritualism became the latest target for his ire against institutionalized religion. He ended his talk as he began, complaining that he was “out of patience” when “hour after hour” of the convention was taken up by Spiritualists and trance speakers, the latter of whom he derisively

^B Unless the convention was titled the “Rutland Convention” (rather than--or in addition to) the “Free Convention,” “convention” would be lowercased here (since it’s used descriptively rather than as a title). I’ve tentatively lowercased “convention” in “Rutland convention” below, but if the convention was also known by that name, I’ll change the capitalization back.

^C Is “interests” (plural) true to the source text?

characterized as “lispering girls.”²

On the one hand, we see Pillsbury applauding Spiritualism’s spiritual aspirations, so pregnant with “Millennial hope and progress,” on the other criticizing the movement in the language of political expediency (“practical interests” and “important business”). His schizophrenic attitude exemplifies what had always been a persistent tension in radical abolitionist thought between practical politics and utopian perfectionism. During the 1850s, the advent of Spiritualism helped amplify that tension to the breaking point among some Garrisonian abolitionists. Spiritualism drew from even as it reworked some of the same religious currents that sustained Garrisonian abolitionists like Pillsbury, including perfectionism—the conviction that men and women were capable of leading sinless lives and achieving moral perfection—and millennialism,^d the belief that they might play active, positive roles in the great cosmic drama rather than being mere spectators watching it unfold. Many Spiritualists conflated their new religion and radical reform. They insisted that Spiritualism was the missing element that would finally usher in the moral revolution for which radical reformers had spent decades fighting. This claim helped push Pillsbury and many other abolitionists to rethink the extent to which radical religious practice and radical reform activism abetted one another. It led them to question not just the political efficacy of Spiritualism per se but of “spirit” and spirituality more generally. Spiritualism became a flashpoint that led many Garrisonian abolitionists to reconsider a politics infused with spirituality and to increasingly temper their perfectionism and millennialism with political pragmatism.

In the scholarship on Spiritualism, one of the driving issues has been the religion’s

relationship with radical reform. How closely linked were the two movements? Did Spiritualism energize or deplete reform activism? The scholarship has come no closer to a resolution on these questions than Pillsbury did in 1858. Some historians, particularly those like Ann Braude and Molly McGarry who have focused on issues of women's rights, gender, and sexuality, have argued that Spiritualism fueled radical activism and helped sustain progressive politics both before and after the Civil War. Other historians have instead emphasized the hierarchical, conservative, and even reactionary aspects of Spiritualism. R. Laurence Moore and Bret E. Carroll each argue that Spiritualists sapped reformist energies by insisting that peace and justice would be realized in the afterlives regardless of what happened here on earth, thus robbing reform of any urgency. Robert S. Cox argues that Spiritualist politics were by no means exclusively reformist; Spiritualism found many enthusiastic adherents among the opponents of radical reform whose politics were reactionary and racist. Taken together, this scholarship reveals that Spiritualism's impact upon reform was anything but simple or consistent. For some nineteenth-century Spiritualists, it helped to generate, energize, and sustain a commitment to fight for radical social change. For others, it attenuated that commitment, redirecting time and resources into religious practice that otherwise might have been directed to reform. For many other Spiritualists—whether they were committed, indifferent, or hostile to reform—the religion did little or nothing to change their politics.³

The political polyvalence of Spiritualism directs us not to ask whether the religion abetted or undercut reform but to analyze the often heated debates between Spiritualism's proponents and critics within particular reform movements about the religion's political

³ I've just used a comma here because more than a single set of dashes in a sentence can make it (visually)

implications. Surprisingly, the relationship between Spiritualism and abolitionism has received very little sustained attention. With very rare exceptions, Spiritualism has received only the most glancing notice in scholarship on abolitionism, most often in biographies of abolitionists who sympathized with or practiced Spiritualism. For sure, almost all of the significant studies on Spiritualism consider antislavery at least in passing. But as yet no one has analyzed in any depth the conflicts and arguments that Spiritualism precipitated among abolitionists, particularly among Garrisonian abolitionists who were more likely to be drawn to Spiritualism than some of their more moderate antislavery colleagues. The debates among the Garrisonians are especially interesting and revealing because they involved questions of strategy, tactics, ideology, and spirituality—fundamental questions about the relationship between what they believed and what they did as reformers. What role did spirituality and religion play in effecting radical social change? Could they be translated into practical reform strategies? How exactly? Reform-minded Spiritualists emphatically insisted that the religion would prove instrumental in realizing radical social change. Others found these claims spurious; worse yet, these critics insisted that Spiritualism was ultimately damaging to abolitionism inasmuch as it substituted naive wishful thinking for more practical and effective strategies. The debate between abolitionist proponents and critics of Spiritualism brought into relief and amplified an ideological and strategic split within their ranks. The proponents renewed their commitment to strategies from the past that were grounded in a millennial faith in the power of spirituality and morality; the critics insisted upon exploring more pragmatic strategies and tactics.

Garrisonians debated Spiritualism intensely because it hit so close to home, involving core articles of faith that had helped shape their reform strategies and sustain their political commitment for decades. As they looked at Spiritualism, in many respects it was like looking in a mirror: they could see many of their politicized beliefs reflected back at them. That reflection, however, was far from perfect. It was distorted in ways that could sometimes be compelling but could also be disquieting. In Spiritualism, they saw magnified the faith they had placed in spirituality as a means of achieving revolutionary social and political change. By spirituality, I'm specifically referring to a recurrent preoccupation among many radical abolitionists with liberation from the material body, with the capacity of men and women to manifest themselves as pure soul. The most egregious evils of the nineteenth-century Atlantic world—racial slavery, the institutional subordination of women to men, international war—were rooted in bodily distinctions of race and sex and nation. Those evils might be eradicated if blacks and whites, women and men, Americans and foreigners could transcend their bodily differences, if they could relate to one another as undifferentiated and equal spirits. Usually this aspiration to become a disembodied spirit was clearly metaphoric; occasionally it was earnestly metaphysical. This preoccupation with disembodied spirituality and this formulation of its social implications is a leitmotif running through antebellum radical reform, a facet of the reform thought that I label spirit politics.

In its simplest and most powerful formulation, spirit politics offered an idiom for imagining and exploring the revolutionary social and political change that radical reformers so desperately wanted. As a number of historians, particularly Robert H. Abzug and Lewis Perry, have demonstrated, radical abolitionism emerged from and in turn

further fueled profound religious innovations. Abzug argues that antebellum reform generated nothing less than a “rethinking [of] the basic theological and social foundations of Western culture.” He characterizes antebellum reformers as “religious virtuosos” who engaged in “metahistorical tinkering” with the teleology of the cosmos; they first questioned and ultimately cast aside the traditional sources of authority in Christianity—clergy and the Bible—and sought to rebuild religion and theology, earth and heaven anew. Perry finds abolitionism to have been just as visionary and utopian, motivated by a desire to destroy all earthly institutions that usurped God’s authority over man. While slavery was the most egregious of these institutions, the abolitionists’ mission to restore the government of God led some of them to attack other institutions—church, human government, even organized antislavery societies—as well. Both Abzug and Perry stress that the millennial and utopian goals of abolitionism oriented abolitionists to rethink personal relationships. (Abzug suggests that reformers “made it their business to clarify the ways in which the most personal and most cosmic issues interconnected”; Perry that abolitionists sought to “establish new, noncoercive styles in human relationships.”)⁴ Spirit politics was one such reformulation—a particularly powerful one that signified the abolitionists’ desire to establish godly, egalitarian, and spiritually satisfying relationships with other men and women free of the taint of the unrighteous authority, not just of institutions but of the raced and sexed earthly body as well.

We see hints of abolitionists’ preoccupation with disembodied spirituality in the numerous assertions in their letters that despite being physically separated from one another, they were united in spirit. In 1843, William Lloyd Garrison voiced this aspiration in a letter to Henry C. Wright, who was then living abroad. Though their separation was a

“severe trial,” Garrison told Wright, it was not “incompatible with a unity of the spirit.” Frederick Douglass expressed the same sentiment in a letter to Amy Post, writing her that “pleasures abroad do not turn my spirit from home.” While he wished he could see her in person, he believed that “in^E the absence of this we may commune with our absent^F through the mysterious agency of thought and spirit.” Radical abolitionists imagined connecting with friends and colleagues through spirit. As Garrison told another colleague, “In imagination, I am with you all, continually; for I hail you as kindred spirits.” We should not dismiss the use of such language as cursory or shallowly colloquial. This language conveyed an earnest and heartfelt aspiration to connect soul to soul. These abolitionists believed that letters might serve as a proxy for their souls. In many ways, letters were a preferable way of communicating because they liberated mind and spirit from the physical body. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his 1841 essay “Friendship”: “To my friend I write a letter, and from him I receive a letter. That seems to you a little. It suffices me. It is a spiritual gift worthy of him to give, and of me to receive. It profanes nobody. In these warm lines the heart will trust itself, as it will not to the tongue.” Many radical abolitionists would have agreed with Emerson, preferring—in the abstract if not always in reality—disembodied warm lines to the embodied tongue.⁵

Some reformers attempted to apply this aspiration to spiritual disembodiment to level hierarchical relationships. Theodore Dwight Weld’s courtship of Angelina Grimké was a particularly blunt application of spirit politics. Courting a champion of woman’s rights

^E In *Chicago* style and LSU Press house style, the capitalization of the first letter of a quotation is adjusted without brackets to suit the context in which the quotation appears.

^F Is “commune with our absent” true to the source text? Is something missing after “absent,” or is “absent” functioning as a noun here? It’s correct, there’s no word after absent (<http://rbsc.library.rochester.edu/items/show/1139>)

who had argued that marriage was an institutional means for men to oppress women, Weld's strategy was to approach Grimké not as a woman but as a disembodied, genderless spirit. He fell in love with her, he told her, "not [as] a Brother nor a Sister spirit but [as an] unimbodied spirit with none of the associations or incidents of the physical nature. . . . I felt as tho communion with your spirit was a law and a necessity of my being." That he knew and loved her sexless soul rather than her female body was the dominant theme of his love letters. At moments Weld verged on expressing distaste and disgust with the fact that she had a sex, that she was a woman and not just a sexless spirit. The thought of her sex, her womanhood, was "an unwelcome intruder, of which the mind instinctively and instantly rids itself, feeling it to be a disturbing force, a felt non conductor, intercepting the progress of the soul toward the spirit that draws it and a veil dimming its vision of the loved one." Henry C. Wright expressed a similar conception of pure marriage as a communion of souls. "No man can be what he was designed to be, till, by marriage, the spirit of a woman has entered into him, to refine, beautify and strengthen his peculiar nature, and assimilate it to the divine," he declared. Likewise "No woman can be what she was designed to be, till the spirit of a man had entered into her, to purify, elevate and adorn her peculiar nature." For these abolitionists, true marriage was a union of souls, and in their most radical and politically self-conscious formulations a union of unsexed—and thus equal—souls.⁶

Some white radical abolitionists imagined using spirit to transcend the divisions of race as well as those of sex. Sarah Grimké, for instance, asked Sarah Douglass, an African American Quaker, to explain how racial prejudice felt, telling her that she desired that "thro' the grace of God, my soul may be in your soul's stead." Grimké longed for deep spiritual empathy where she did not merely feel for African Americans who experienced

the agonizing effects of racial prejudice but actually shared in that experience herself through an empathetic identification, collapsing the racial divide by connecting soul to soul. Abolitionist Thomas Earle expressed this same aspiration for spiritual communion across the boundaries of the raced body. "We must learn to put our stead in the souls of the poor African," he suggested, to "taste and drink and feel his wrongs." After being convicted of grand larceny for trying to ferry slaves from Missouri to the free state of Illinois, George Thompson reported that he went to prison "with cheerfulness" knowing that they could only imprison his body--"my spirit they cannot confine, my thoughts they cannot chain"—and that there he would be "a partaker of the slaves' sufferings." For abolitionists, spirit politics was at once an end and a means; it was simultaneously a figurative idealization of a postmillennial world of social equality and harmony and a strategy for realizing that world.⁷

Spiritualism reiterated, amplified, and refashioned this trope in abolitionist thought. Spiritualists claimed to have discovered the means to satisfy the desire to connect soul to soul that radical abolitionists had so passionately imagined in their letters and writings. Spiritualists believed that the physical body was not as nearly as formidable a barrier separating souls as some abolitionists feared. Far from it. For some Spiritualist mediums, the body became a tool for spiritual communion. Trance speakers and writing mediums could temporarily cede portions or the whole of their bodies to other souls, channeling those spirits and enabling them to communicate wisdom from beyond the grave. For other mediums, their bodies became little more than clothing for their souls that they could take off and put back on almost at will. These mediums could free their souls from their bodies,

leaving them behind as they communed with spirits in the spiritual spheres^G—the heavens of the many afterlives of Spiritualist theology. In short, the liberation from embodiment that radical reformers envisaged in their writings was a central component of Spiritualist religious practice. The divisions of gender, race, space, and even time and death were attenuated, if not obliterated, in Spiritualist practice when, for instance, young white female mediums channeled long-dead male Indian chiefs.

What had been implicit, inchoate, and metaphoric in spirit politics was in Spiritualism made explicit, systematic, and literal. The abolitionists' language about communing spiritually with one another voiced a sincere and serious spiritual and social aspiration, a desire so visionary and utopian that it never was nor could be fully satisfied. Yet however earnest, this language was clearly figurative. There was nothing figurative in the spiritual communions Spiritualist mediums claimed to regularly accomplish. One of the foundational texts of Spiritualism, Andrew Jackson Davis's The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind, described a scientific process that enabled Davis to leave his body to commune with the spirits of the spiritual spheres.^H The procedure to accomplish this feat was more mechanistic than mystic. It required a two-person team: a magnetizee, or clairvoyant, and a magnetizer, or manipulator. The two would sit facing one another. The manipulator would perform a series of movements to magnetize the clairvoyant, placing him in a trance state. In this trance state, Davis was said to have actually accomplished what some radical abolitionists hoped to do imaginatively or figuratively: he liberated his soul from earthly, corporeal materiality, enabling him to

^G You don't capitalize "Spiritual Spheres" in subsequent references. How would you prefer that the term appear?

commune intimately with others' spirits. His "mind . . . entirely freed from the sphere of the body," he temporarily became a disembodied spirit himself who could travel to the "spiritual spheres" inhabited by the spirits of humans who had died. While Davis's soul was away from his body communing with the spirits, his partner in this exercise functioned as a life-support system, sustaining Davis's empty body until his spirit returned.⁸

Displacing his materiality on to the magnetizer, Davis became all spirit. In this state, he could visit the five spiritual spheres. Davis revealed that after death each and every man and woman would be reborn in the second sphere, where they would become more spiritually enlightened before dying again to be reborn in the third sphere. This cycle of spiritual growth, death, and rebirth would repeat until a spirit reached the final, sixth sphere that orbited the "great Spiritual Sun of the Divine Mind." If radical reformers had not been yet able to realize a postmillennial world of ubiquitous peace and love on earth, Spiritualism assured them that they would find it in the afterlives. In the spiritual spheres, there existed no injustices, no wrenching social conflict. There "societies are made perfect" with all spirits united together through "a unity of feeling" and "a universal love"; there "all spirits are engaged in loving their neighbors, and advancing their welfare."⁹

The cosmology of Spiritualism literalized the connection between disembodiment, sinlessness, and sociality that had been imagined by radical reformers. As Davis moved from the second through the sixth spheres, the progressive perfection of the societies of each sphere was registered and produced by the increasing disembodiment of the spirits there. As beings moved through the five spiritual spheres, they gradually shed all bodily materiality to become pure soul. "The nearer they approach the Fount of purity," Davis

⁸ Capitalize "spiritual spheres," as above? (There's no need to respond again--I'll make the needed changes

reported of the spirits, “the more transparent they become, and the more do their inhabitants appear to exist as it were without body and without external and artificial habiliments.” In the spiritual spheres, bodies became difficult, even impossible to see. Moving through the spheres, Davis increasingly found that the “outer body is beyond my perception, and I only see well-constituted and living spirits.” As they shed their bodies, spirits became increasingly undifferentiated from one another. Social harmony was achieved through something more concrete than the spiritual communion radical reformers imagined. In the spheres, spirits literally united with one another, fusing together to such an extent that Davis had difficulty distinguishing them from one another. He reported that in the spiritual spheres, men and women “are so perfectly conjoined one with another, and their mutual affections are so absorbing and penetrating, that it requires a high degree of discernment to make a distinction between them.” The social equality and spiritual communion that radical reformers had aspired to realize and imagined achieving through spirit politics were realized in the spiritual spheres.¹⁰

Given how much some abolitionists could see of their own spirit politics reflected back at them in Spiritualist theology and cosmology, it is little wonder that many of them would gravitate to the new religion and see it as the powerful ally they had once hoped to find in the Christian churches. The mainstream Christian denominations had all failed to embrace abolitionism. Indeed, more often than not they had been hostile to it, leading many radical abolitionists to “come out” from those corrupted churches. Spiritualism seemed to offer them an opportunity to come back in to a new religious practice, one that appeared to many to merge their sacred beliefs and their social agenda.

throughout the essay when I have your reply about the capitalization of the term.)

While many radical abolitionists sympathetically investigated or actively practiced Spiritualism—among them William Lloyd Garrison, Adin Ballou, the Grimké sisters, Henry C. Wright, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Sojourner Truth—arguably the most devout Spiritualist among leading radical abolitionists was Isaac Post. A resident of Rochester, New York, Post and his wife, Amy, had been active abolitionists since the late 1830s. They were founding members of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, close friends and supporters of many prominent abolitionists (Douglass, Garrison, and Henry C. Wright among them), and “station masters” who sheltered fugitives escaping on the Underground Railroad. Devout Quakers, they left their Hicksite meeting in the mid-1840s after being pressured by their fellow Hicksites to moderate their abolitionist activism. While they helped form a local meeting of the decidedly reform-oriented Congregational Friends, they soon became ardent Spiritualists as well. When in the spring of 1848 two young sisters whom the Posts knew heard rappings in a house in Hydesville, New York—an episode that would launch the modern Spiritualist movement—the Posts were among the first investigators on the scene. Believing the raps to be of spiritual origin, they were quick to impress the movement in the cause of reform. Isaac became a medium himself, channeling messages from the spiritual spheres. In 1852, he published a collection of messages from famed politicians, reformers, religious leaders, and thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson, Margaret Fuller, and Voltaire in a volume entitled Voices from the Spirit World.¹¹

Voices from the Spirit World was replete with claims about the importance of Spiritualism to radical social change. All of the dead luminaries who took control of Post’s hand urged reform. If they had not been reformers in life, they had become so in the spheres. Their continued spiritual progress demanded that they repent their earthly sins

by aiding those still “in the body” to do better. While all were grateful to be in the heavenly spiritual spheres, some were happier than others. The earthly sins of some had cost them dearly. This was particularly true of those spirits who had been slaveholders, none more so than John C. Calhoun. Upon arriving in the spirit world, Calhoun’s spirit told Post that he was “surprised” that he did not find himself among “those whose characters I had most admired.” They were “far away,” “in a far happier condition,” while Calhoun found himself in a degraded state, lamenting that “mine is a comparatively low condition.” “I should have been a leader in good, instead of evil,” he now realized. “I should have been foremost in promoting liberty, instead of slavery.” To make amends for his sins, Calhoun’s spirit longed to broadcast his newfound wisdom about the evils of slavery—his newfound abolitionism—and convince his fellow southerners to emancipate their slaves. If they could “hear these truths from me . . . methinks they would listen, and . . . I could induce them to leave the evil of their ways, and do works meet for repentance.” The spirit of George Washington communicated this same desire. Since his death a half century earlier, Washington had spiritually progressed to the point of becoming an abolitionist from beyond the grave: “I have left the spirit that could make merchandise of my brothers far behind; I have left the spirit that could compel my brother to labor for me without wages, far behind.” “I am,” Washington’s spirit continued, “doing what I can to loose every fetter, so that the oppressor will see the necessity of loosening the bonds that fasten him to his bondman . . . for I greatly desire to make him sensible of his great present as well as future loss.”¹²

Relying upon disembodied spirits to “induce [slaveholders] to leave the evil of their ways” and to “see the necessity of loosening the bonds” linked antislavery Spiritualists of

the 1850s with the abolitionists of the 1830s. The abolitionists of the 1830s had hoped to end slavery through the strategy of moral suasion. In their most idealistic, simple formulation of moral suasion, abolitionists hoped to convince the slaveholder that slavery was a sin, and once converted to antislavery, they expected him to repent by voluntarily emancipating his slaves. The Declaration of Sentiments that chartered the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 committed its members to this strategy, to “the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption—the destruction of error by the potency of truth—the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love—and the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance.” The most ambitious application of the theory of moral suasion was the massive postal campaign that abolitionists organized in the mid-1830s to reach the slaveholder by flooding the South with abolitionist literature. Far from nurturing a spirit of repentance, southerners reacted by burning the mail, hanging abolitionists in effigy, calling for their extradition to the South, and threatening assassinations. In the wake of the failure of the postal campaign to nurture abolitionism in the South, many abolitionists began to retreat from moral suasion and develop and employ different tactics and strategies. Some launched antislavery political parties, others advocated disunionism, and, eventually, others embraced forceful, physical resistance to slavery. While a current of moral suasion always persisted in abolitionism, particularly among Garrisonians, beginning in the late 1830s it was largely superseded by other tactics and strategies.¹³

In the new religion of Spiritualism, some abolitionists revisited the old strategy of moral suasion. In terms of strategy, these Spiritualists were a throwback—the spirits would help accomplish reform by urging the living to repent their sins. A story in a brief article by Henry C. Wright entitled “Spiritualism—Its Bearing on Practical Reform”

illustrates the renewed optimism about moral suasion among antislavery Spiritualists. Wright reported how the spirit of the late minister of a church in Plympton, Massachusetts, was visiting his former parishioners to recant the conservative religious and political positions he had championed from the pulpit. He urged them now to adopt considerably more radical religious and political views. "He told them he had taught them falsely about the Bible, depravity, marriage," Wright reported, "and he urged the people to teetotalism, anti-slavery, non-resistance, and to all practical reforms." The moral suasion campaigns of the 1830s had been directed particularly toward the conversion of leading figures in local communities: newspaper editors, politicians, and especially ministers. Abolitionists had been particularly frustrated in their efforts to convert the clergy to abolitionism. With Spiritualism, abolitionists of the 1850s were given a second chance to win to their cause these once resistant clergymen—at least those who had died. "The priests of the past are beginning to appear, here and there, to do what they can to rectify their former errors," Wright happily reported. "It is high time they did. They are sacredly bound to repentance and restitution." Perhaps with such respected figures as these repentant ministers and former slaveholders like Washington and Calhoun now on their side, moral suasion would meet with more success.¹⁴

Moral suasion in Spiritualism was in fact a purer version than that of the 1830s. The moral suasion campaigns of the 1830s were leavened with some political pragmatism. In the postal campaign of 1835, along with the hope of converting the slaveholder to abolitionism, abolitionists had more realistic goals in mind: generating needed publicity, stoking political controversy, and raising the national profile of the abolitionist campaign.¹⁵ Just as Spiritualism exaggerated spirit politics, so too it produced an extreme variant of

moral suasion.

This extreme, unadulterated moral suasion logic of Spiritualism as an antislavery strategy struck many abolitionists as impractical, even preposterous. It was difficult to imagine how the spirits would persuade anyone to become an abolitionist. The spirits, some abolitionists protested, were only preaching to the choir. The Calhoun who communicated his posthumous abolitionist message would not reach the slaveholding Carolinians he said he wanted to convert. His message was received by a lifelong Quaker abolitionist who published his communications from the spirit world in what was no doubt a small run through a local printer in Rochester, New York, a relative haven of abolitionism far from the slaveholding South. Anti- and proslavery Spiritualists would hear undoubtedly different messages, these critics suggested. To believe this, one did not even need to cast doubt upon spiritual communications or level charges of either fraud or self-delusion against mediums. Spiritualist theology suggested that this would be the case. Andrew Jackson Davis wrote of “the law of congeniality and affinity” that governed sociality in the spheres. There, he revealed, “every spirit has a peculiar sphere of its own,” and “spirits know and associate with each other according to the quality of the sphere which is exhaled from their interiors.”¹⁶ Spirits would and could commune and communicate only with those approximating their own spiritual development. Calhoun found himself among the least enlightened spirits in the spirit world because, among spirits, “like attracts like.” The same law governed communications between the living and the departed. Critics were quick to point out how much this damaged the moral suasion potential of spirit communications. A Spiritualist would hear from a spirit “corresponding with his own mental and spiritual development.” Thus slaveholders would be visited by “disembodied . . .

Legrees” rather than spirits preaching reform and repentance. Little wonder that there were so many proslavery Spiritualists, one critic concluded, for “Who else so well fitted to receive the messages, per spiritual telegraph, of James K. Polk and Bully Brooks.”¹⁷ These contemporary critics of Spiritualism recognized what a number of historians of the movement have noted: the varied politics of Spiritualism and its adherents. Radical spirits were no more likely to reach or convert slaveholders in the 1850s than mailed abolitionist literature had two decades earlier.

More troubling than its failure to reach the slaveholder with the message of abolitionism, critics of Spiritualism repeatedly charged that it distracted abolitionists from actively pursuing reform. Spiritualists became so enamored by the perfection of the next world that they became neglectful of and uninterested in any efforts to actively champion social justice in this one. “The general result of Spiritualism taking the hand of Anti-Slavery,” one abolitionist argued, “has been, not to lead it nearer the slave, but further from him.” Instead of joining in the practical work of antislavery activism, Spiritualists instead retreated “into some darkened room, to spend [their] time and energies in listening to the ravishing spiritual music of hand-bells and dinner-horns.” Communication from the spirits were siren songs that, however beautiful, offered little of practical import for reform. “Too busy with peeping under the corner of the ‘blanket of the dark,’” Spiritualists neglected the “needed reforms of this world.” “Having a great deal to say about the spirits out of the flesh,” another critic similarly complained, too many Spiritualists ended up being “utterly indifferent to the dearest rights of spirits in the flesh.” After attending another Spiritualist-dominated reform convention a year prior to the Rutland convention, Parker Pillsbury condemned “a morbid, mawkish Spiritualism” that he felt had infected abolitionism like

“the potato-rot.” In Pillsbury’s estimation, however much some Spiritualists might favor reform, their faith sapped their activism because they were always “gazing away into the darkness for spirits to come and do its work.”¹⁸

Worse yet, by displacing the millennium into the spiritual spheres and by relying upon the guidance of departed spirits, Spiritualism undermined the perfectionism that had motivated a generation of reformers to imagine themselves and others as disembodied spirits. Despite Spiritualists’ declarations of an imminent social and spiritual revolution, their cosmology conveyed a message with deeply conservative social and political implications: perfection would not be achieved here on earth. Social and spiritual perfection were such distant goals, Spiritualism suggested, that that perfection could not be achieved in this life, nor the next life, nor even the life after that. The world of peace and justice promised by millennialism would not happen here on earth but only in a distant afterlife in the sixth sphere.

Spiritualism undermined the egalitarianism of spirit politics as well. Spirit politics had been radically egalitarian because it insisted that all souls—the souls of men and women, of whites and blacks—were inherently, eternally equal. In Spiritualism, all souls were not equal. As Bret E. Carroll has argued, the Spiritualist universe was a “cosmic hierarchy” characterized by “deferential relations between higher and lower spirits.” The spirits of each spiritual sphere were more enlightened than those of lower spheres. Even within individual spheres, infinite gradations of spiritual enlightenment separated souls from one another. Most importantly, the spirits of the spheres possessed greater spiritual insight than those still embodied on earth. The departed spirits that communicated through raps at the séance table or through speakers in trances were, for the most part,

invested with the authority of angels. While certainly many Spiritualists insisted that not all spirits should be trusted and that their messages were not inerrant, nevertheless the basis of Spiritualist reform politics was the belief that the spirits were fonts of a divine wisdom that could not be found from earthly sources. They were less than God but more than man, mediating between the divine and the living. The empowering emphasis upon the soul of man in spirit politics was evacuated when Spiritualists looked to departed spirits as the source of spiritual and political direction.¹⁹

Because of this displacement of perfectionism and millennialism, some abolitionists who looked at Spiritualism did not see their own beliefs in spirit politics at all but only something vaguely similar that had been twisted almost beyond recognition. In the letter from Frederick Douglass to Spiritualist Amy Post (the wife of Isaac Post) quoted earlier, he made a point of distinguishing between the “mysterious agency of thought and spirit” that he was referring to and what he dismissively called “the ‘rapping.’” He insisted that the former was “a higher and . . . a holier mode” than the latter.²⁰ Some abolitionists fought to protect the perfectionism and egalitarianism of spirit politics from being diluted or bastardized by Spiritualism. They chafed against Spiritualism’s demotion of man in the cosmic order. Quaker abolitionist Richard Glazier voiced this outrage when he complained of Spiritualism’s “want of faith in man.” In this regard, Glazier judged Spiritualism no better than the Christian denominations that many radical reformers found spiritually and politically wanting. The doctrines of both duped individuals into searching outside of themselves for salvation. “While the old religions have him sacrificing man to the ‘glory of God,’” he charged, “the new will forget him while listening to the spirits.” Glazier countered by reiterating some of the core premises and promises of spirit politics. Spiritualists erred

in looking to the spirits and the spheres as the sources of progress and insight. The only genuine, true sources were to be found in man's own soul: "The law of growth, of unfolding, . . . is germinal—from within, outward." Glazier played with and subtly critiqued the Spiritualist cosmology that pictured the Godhead as a sun surrounded by orbiting spiritual spheres that man, in his many afterlives, migrated through toward the divine source. Glazier reversed this formulation, locating man not at the periphery of the cosmic order but at its center. "All right ethics are central, and radiate thence," he maintained. That was the true "order of the moral universe." For Glazier, Spiritualism was an empty faith. However much it borrowed the trappings of spirit politics, it possessed none of its power. A Spiritualist was "a mere believer, an abstractionist, looking for that in creeds, and spirits, and coming heaven, which is only to be found embosomed in beauty and beatitude¹ away back in the fountain sources of his own being." Instead of looking to disembodied spirits, man needed to remember "the sacredness of his fellow-man and of his own nature" and "that heaven and hell are within his own consciousness, and elsewhere only as myths."²¹

Yet if some attempted to defend spirit politics from Spiritualism, they were the exception. Spiritualism's adaptation of spirit politics was more likely to discredit spirit politics among radical abolitionists. Some critiques of the limitations of Spiritualism as an ally of reform could and did turn into broader critiques of spirit politics. This was certainly the case at the Rutland convention even with its large Spiritualist contingent. We have seen Parker Pillsbury's criticisms. More scathing was Ernestine L. Rose. She was sharply critical of the time and attention devoted to Spiritualism and religious issues at the Rutland convention. Far from aiding reform efforts, attention to spirituality or religion distracted

¹ Is this a typo for "beatitude"? Yup—a typo. Thanks for catching that.

reformers from valuable political and social activism. “I say, no matter about religion,” she bluntly declared, “take it for granted that it is true; no matter about gods,—take it for granted that they exist. If they are infinite and independent, they do not need our services. But who does? You and I. We need each others’ services, each other’s kindness and love. . . . Let us do our duty to humanity here, and when we reach another state of existence, we will attend to the duties of that state.” Spiritualists at the convention insisted that Spiritualism would advance the reform movements of the day, but Rose saw nothing more than pointless, blathering rhetoric: “If the Convention is not called for the benefit of man, it is useless; if it is, the moment we come together, the time is not ours to discuss the duties of life hereafter and neglect the life here.” Invoking traditional millennialism, she called upon the conventioners to cease talking about the heavens and instead focus their attention on “mak[ing] the heaven that ought to be here on earth.” They should labor not to glimpse the beauties and happiness of the heavens from afar, but instead devote their energies to political and social reforms that might make the world they lived in now such a place that instead of welcoming their passage into the spirit world at death all could instead feel that “it is really a pity to leave this beautiful earth entirely.”²²

It is not at all surprising that Rose—who was decidedly atypical among abolitionists as an atheist and secular freethinker who had been raised Jewish in her native Poland—would condemn not just Spiritualism but religion and spirituality more generally. The even harsher criticisms of Spiritualism that were offered by Garrisonian Stephen Foster are more revealing, suggesting how Spiritualism contributed to a retreat from spirit politics among some radical abolitionists. Like Pillsbury and Rose, he too was frustrated at the amount of time devoted to discussing immortality and Spiritualism at a reform convention.

Foster leveled the same charge at Spiritualists that had been so often aimed at Garrisonians: that they talked rather than acted. "I am told you are all anti-slavery here, and ready to act. In God's name, why don't you act?," he demanded of the Spiritualists at the convention. In the back-and-forth that followed this question, Foster mounted a critique not just of Spiritualism but of the faith in disembodied spirituality that served as the foundation of spirit politics. Physical violence, he suggested, would prove a more effective antislavery tactic than spiritual communion. Responding to someone who said they were ready "to give the pound of flesh, but no blood"—by which he meant they would perform the unpleasant task of voting to support antislavery but that they would stop short of employing violence—Foster attempted to turn conventioners' attention away from the spirit to the body. "Yes; and what is that flesh?," Foster retorted, "that pound of flesh is the slave." It was their bodies that were enslaved, and antislavery advocates might have to physically confront—not just spiritually or politically confront—the slaveholder to protect fugitives. Foster did not shy away from but seemed to almost relish the prospect: "Some will say, 'This will result in blood.' Very likely it will. What of it? I ask you, is not every one ready to spill oceans of blood, if necessary, to secure his own freedom?" Foster turned the Spiritualists' belief in immediate rebirth upon death against them. If death was nothing to fear, why not die in a righteous cause? "You pretend to be Spiritualists, and believe in a future life; and yet, you are so attached to this, that you dare not repudiate the pro-slavery, man-thieving government, because it may cost a drop of blood, a scratch on the face!" Again focusing attention toward the material body ("flesh," "blood," "face") and away from the disembodied soul, Foster tauntingly urged the largely Spiritualist audience to attack slavery right now by any means necessary no matter the costs. "You believe in

Spiritualism? Why, I have more Spiritualism in my little finger”—again, emphasizing the physical body—“than you have in your whole bodies. With all my non-resistance, I do not shrink from the thought of blood as you do. . . . What matters if I die, so that I die battling for the right?”²³

As Foster had been a committed Garrisonian abolitionist and nonresistant for decades,¹ his arrival at these positions is telling. By the late 1850s, his belief in the power of morality and spirituality had been deeply compromised, and he sought alternative strategies and tactics to fight slavery. He had long been tempering his nonresistance. Eight years earlier following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, he urged those who did not share his nonresistant convictions to use violence to defend runaway or free African Americans from recapture or kidnapping. Yet he insisted he would never kill anyone himself, even to defend a fugitive, reiterating his conviction that the “sword of the spirit” was mightier than the “sword of physical violence.” By 1858, he was not only more forcefully advocating violence but also the use of the ballot box. At the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society earlier that year (which featured a short but heated debate about the political implications of Spiritualism), Foster declared the Garrisonians’ tactics of moral suasion—lecturing, passing resolutions, organizing antislavery revivals—“no longer sufficient” and “impracticable.” Dissenting from what was effectively the Garrisonian dogma of condemning all political parties and electoral participation, Foster advocated the establishment of a new party to champion Garrisonian antislavery.²⁴

Of course, Spiritualism was not the only or even the primary source of the political pragmatism that Foster and other Garrisonian abolitionists increasingly evinced during the

¹ I’ve just rephrased slightly here so that the opening phrase wasn’t read as modifying “Foster’s arrival,” OK?

1850s. The dramatic events of that decade—the Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Bleeding Kansas, the beating of Charles Sumner, the Dred Scott decision, Harpers Ferry—brought slavery to the forefront of national politics and increasingly prodded radical abolitionists to become sectional provocateurs rather than principled idealists. The mounting sectional crisis encouraged many abolitionists to gradually compromise their utopian aspirations and principles—particularly regarding nonviolence—in order to fan the flames growing between the North and the South. Perennially torn between utopian perfectionism and practical politics, these events increasingly pulled them toward the latter.²⁵

What has not been appreciated is how Spiritualism pushed many abolitionists in the same direction, away from perfectionism toward pragmatism. As Spiritualists amplified and refashioned the foundational premise of spirit politics—that disembodied spiritual communions would effect revolutionary social change—they prompted radical abolitionists to reconsider the ways they had fused spirituality and activism. For a few like Isaac Post and Henry C. Wright, Spiritualism renewed and reenergized their faith in moral suasion. For others, it compromised that faith and contributed to a deep disillusionment. As they looked back at a quarter century of activism, many Garrisonians could only confess that moral suasion and spirit politics had failed to effect the revolution they had long sought. When Spiritualists proposed that what was now needed was more moral suasion—now originating from departed spirits—many abolitionists could only balk. The more Spiritualists insisted that communion with disembodied spirits would finally effect a moral and social revolution, the more unrealistic, even absurd, that idea seemed. Spirit politics appeared increasingly quixotic, and Spiritualism a dead end.

Creating the postmillennial world of peace, equality, and moral perfection no longer seemed likely or even possible. In this regard, Spiritualism's displacement of utopia into the spiritual spheres was emblematic, epitomizing a growing disenchantment among perfectionist abolitionists during the 1850s. Even as their hopes for a universal spiritual revolution dissolved, they remained committed to achieving an extraordinary social revolution by ending chattel slavery. To that end, they hesitantly accepted strategies and tactics like party politics and violence that they had once spurned as sinful. As dreams of the millennium receded ever further into other worlds and other lives, radical abolitionists found themselves increasingly willing to employ imperfect means to change an imperfect world.

@ECH:Notes

@UNN:I would like to acknowledge and thank Kevin Pelletier, Robert A. Gross, Matt Cohen, Brian Geiger, Scott Nesbit, and the editors of this volume for their thoughtful and useful criticisms of drafts of this essay.

@EN: 1. Parker Pillsbury, "The Convention at Rutland, Vt.," Liberator, July 2, 1858.

2. Proceedings of the Free Convention Held at Rutland, VT, June 25th, 26th, 27th, 1858 (Boston: J. B Yerrinton and Son, 1858), 82, 88. On Pillsbury's lifelong critique of the church and clergy and his devotion to perfectionism and millennialism, see Stacey M. Robertson, Parker Pillsbury: Radical Abolitionist, Male Feminist (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000).

3. Ann Braude, Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-

Century America, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Molly McGarry, Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); R. Laurence Moore, In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Bret E. Carroll, Spiritualism in Antebellum America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Robert S. Cox, "Vox Populi: Spiritualism and George Washington's Postmortem Career," Early American Studies 1 (Spring 2003); Robert S. Cox, Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

4. Robert H. Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4, 228; Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), xi.

5. Garrison to Henry C. Wright, April 1, 1843, in The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, vol. 3, No Union with Slaveholders, 1841–1849, ed. Walter M. Merrill (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1973), 143; Frederick Douglass to Amy Kirby Post, April 11, 1848?, Post Family Papers, University of Rochester Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation; Garrison to Elizabeth Pease, September 16, 1841, in Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, 3:29. Emerson, "Friendship," in Essays: First and Second Series (1841; n.p.: Library of America, 1990),^k 121; William Caleb McDaniel, "Our Country Is the World: Radical American Abolitionists Abroad" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University,

^k Would you please provide the place of publication? There isn't a clear place of publication listed for this volume. Neither Google Books nor Amazon list it either. The Library of America is a division of Random House in NY, but that's not definitely a place of publication.

2006), 106–53.

6. Weld to Grimké, February 8, 1838, in Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (1934; repr., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), 2:534; Weld to Grimké, March 1, 1838, in Letters of Weld, Grimké Weld, and Grimké, 2:581–82; Henry C. Wright, Anthropology; or, the Science of Man: In Its Bearing on War and Slavery, and on Arguments from the Bible, Marriage, God, Death, Retribution, Atonement, and Government, in Support of These and Other Social Wrongs (Cincinnati, Ohio: E. Shepard, 1850), 28–29; Robert K. Nelson, “‘The Forgetfulness of Sex’: Devotion and Desire in the Courtship Letter of Theodore Dwight Weld and Angelina Grimké,” Journal of Social History 37, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 663–79. Donald Yacovone has argued that radical abolitionists embraced “a theory of Christian androgyny that sought to restructure American society” in his essay “Abolitionists and the ‘Language of Fraternal Love,’” in Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 87.

7. Grimké to Douglass, 3 April 1837, Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Thomas Earle quoted in Richard S. Newman, The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 119–20; George Thompson, Prison Life and Reflections; or, A Narrative of the Arrest, Trial, Conviction, Imprisonment, Treatment, Observations, Reflections, and Deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson, who Suffered and Unjust and Cruel Imprisonment in Missouri Penitentiary, for Attempting to Aid Some Slaves to Liberty (1847; A. Work: Hartford, 1855), 100. Joseph Yannielli, “George Thompson among the Africans: Empathy, Authority, and

Insanity in the Age of Abolition," Journal of American History 96 (March 2010): 979-1000.

8. Andrew Jackson Davis, The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind (New York: S. S. Lyon and Wm. Fishbough, 1852), xvii. Ann Braude has also emphasized how Spiritualism took existing traditions—in her examples, ideas associated with Transcendentalism and Quakerism—and made them “concrete” and thus, particularly in the former case, “made itself reprehensible to some of its most important philosophical forebears” by compromising the subtleties of those ideas (see Braude, Radical Spirits, 46). For biographical accounts of Davis’s career, see Robert W. Delp’s “Andrew Jackson Davis: Prophet of American Spiritualism,” Journal of American History 54 (June 1967): 43–56; and “A Spiritualist in Connecticut: Andrew Jackson Davis, the Hartford Years, 1850–1854,” New England Quarterly 53 (September 1980): 345–62.

9. Davis, Principles of Nature, 672, 650, 655.

10. *Ibid.*, 669, 647, 663.

11. Braude, Radical Spirits, 10–16; Nancy A. Hewitt, “Amy Kirby Post: ‘Of Whom It Was Said, “Being Dead, Yet Speaketh,”” University of Rochester Library Bulletin 37 (1984): 5–21; Caitlin Powalski, “Radical Transmissions: Isaac and Amy Post, Spiritualism, and Progressive Reform in Nineteenth-Century Rochester,” Rochester History 71, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 1–27.

12. Isaac Post, Voices from the Spirit World, Being Communications from Many Spirits (Rochester, N.Y.: Charles H. McDonell, Printer, 1852), 87–90, 33.

13. “American Anti-Slavery Society,” The Abolitionists: or Record of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, December 1833; James Brewer Stewart, “Peaceful Hopes and Violent Experiences: The Evolution of Reforming and Radical Abolitionism, 1831–1837,”

Civil War History 17, no. 1 (December 1971): 293–309. Studies of the development of alternative strategies to moral suasion within abolitionism beginning in the mid-1830s are numerous. A classic, insightful, and influential study is Aileen S. Kraditor, Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834–1850 (Chicago: Dee, 1967).

14. Henry C. Wright, “Spiritualism—Its Bearing on Practical Reform,” Liberator, July 29, 1853.

15. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “The Abolitionists’ Postal Campaign of 1835,” Journal of Negro History 50, no. 4 (October 1865): 227–38.

16. Davis, Principles of Nature, 647–648.

17. Richard Glazier, “Reply to ‘Justice,’” Liberator, December 18, 1857.

18. J. A. H., “‘Justice’ to All Parties,” Liberator, December 18, 1857; E. R. Place, “Spiritualism and Anti-Slavery,” Liberator, July 23, 1858; Pillsbury, “Progress of Disunionism at the West,” Liberator, October 23, 1857.

19. Carroll, Spiritualism in Antebellum America, 63, 75. Carroll has suggested that Spiritualists “sometimes sounded almost Calvinistic in suggesting that the people of earth were incapable of improving themselves and required help” (101). Ann Braude has offered a different argument: Spiritualism may have displaced perfection in the spiritual spheres, but it still emphasized human perfectibility. People might die morally imperfect, but they would continue to grow toward perfection. By compromising perfectionism—the most extreme departure from Calvinistic doctrines of predestination, God’s grace, and man’s innate depravity—she suggests that Spiritualism actually salvaged it (Braude, Radical Spirits, 36–37). On the problematic issue of authority in Spiritualism, see also Perry,

Radical Abolitionism, 218–22.

20. Douglass to Post, April 11, 1848?

21. Glazier, “Reply to ‘Justice.’”

22. Proceedings of the Free Convention, 13, 31; Carol A. Kolmerten, The American Life of Ernestine L. Rose (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 204–7.

23. Proceedings of the Free Convention, 97–99.

24. “Anti-Slavery Convention at Valley Falls, R.I.,” Liberator, October 11, 1850; “Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society,” Liberator, February 5, 1858; Troy Duncan and Chris Dixon, “Denouncing the Brotherhood of Thieves: Stephen Symonds Foster’s Critique of Anti-Abolitionist Clergy,” Civil War History 47 (June 2001): 97–117.

25. James Brewer Stewart, Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 151–80; Valarie H. Ziegler, The Advocates of Peace in Antebellum America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 116–48; John L. Thomas “Antislavery and Utopia,” in The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists, ed. Martin Duberman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), 240–69.

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