by THE DIALOGUE ON RACE AND FAITH PROJECT

Awakening to Justice

Faithful Voices from the Abolitionist Past

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Taken from *Awakening to Justice* by Jemar Tisby, Douglas M. Strong, Christopher P. Momany, Sègbégnon Mathieu Gnonhossou, David D. Daniels III, R. Matthew Sigler, Diane Leclerc, Esther Chung-Kim, Albert G. Miller, and Estrelda Y. Alexander.

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CHAPTER ONE

“How Long, O Lord?”

A NARRATIVE OF THREE CHRISTIAN ABOLITIONISTS

Christopher P. Momany

“How long, O Lord, how long” shall this nefarious traffic continue?

David Ingraham, 1840

My heart ached to feel within me the life of liberty.

James Bradley, 1834

God speaks very loud, and while his judgments are on the earth, may the inhabitants learn righteousness!

Nancy Prince, 1850

THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF AUGUST

On August 1, 1841, David Stedman Ingraham, an abolitionist missionary to Jamaica, died in Belleville, New Jersey, exactly seven years after slavery was abolished among British-dominated lands. He and others had struggled for a day when complete justice would roll down like waters, but the day had not yet come, particularly in his native United States, where slavery was still legal. His body ravaged by tuberculosis, Ingraham drew his last, labored breaths on the anniversary day of emancipation in the British Caribbean, keenly aware that the fight for racial equity was far from over. “Brother Ingraham has put on immortality!” wrote his friend Theodore Weld. “He died last night at half past twelve Oclock. He will celebrate the glorious first of

Figure 1.1. Jamaicans celebrating West Indian emancipation, August 1, 1834

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August with his brother Angels in his own Father's house!" While the timing of his death symbolized arrival at a destiny, from our earthly perspective so much was left undone. Almost two hundred years later, we still ache at the incompleteness of the task.[1]

I remember listening to my fourth-grade teacher tell stories of her days in the civil rights movement. Geneva Isom was a unique educator and Sterne Brunson School in Benton Harbor, Michigan, was a unique place. Our community struggled with economic injustice and discrimination, and as a White student in a predominantly Black school, I had to learn a lot about my own privilege. But I remember being treated well by a diverse group of young friends. We thought we were the generation who would teach the world to thrive together. But that was fifty years ago. Here we are, a quarter of the way through a new century, and we continue to live with persistent racism. I can hear Psalm 13:1 ringing in my ears: "How long, O Lord?" When will things change? When will God's intended reign of dignity appear?

THE BEGINNING OF A MOVEMENT

David Ingraham descended from a long line of New Englanders. His mother, Elizabeth Stedman, was born in Ashburnham, Massachusetts, and his father, John, was most likely born in New Hampshire. They were married in Chester, Vermont, on January 19, 1808. Eliza, their eldest child, was born in Vermont in 1810, and David was born two years later, probably after the family had moved to western New York State.

John Ingraham served in a New York militia company during the War of 1812, and the family lived near the town of Lima, directly south of Rochester. That region was alive with spiritual revival at the time, and David Ingraham's journal records a homecoming of sorts when he traveled through Lima in the late summer of 1840 to see his "old friends once more." At some point, his parents moved to Michigan Territory, but much of his heart remained in western New York.[2]

Ingraham entered a profound period of his life in 1830. In January he joined the Second Congregational Church of Pittsford, New York, located

[1]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 and London: D. Appleton-Century, 1934), 2:871-72.
[2]David Ingraham, manuscript journal, Adrian College Archives, 67.

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between Rochester and Lima. Records show that he was received as a member upon "examination," and it may have been his first formal affiliation with a church. The pastor of the Pittsford congregation, a preacher named Asa Mahan, possessed a razor-sharp mind and a love for justice. Born in central New York State, he had studied at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and then at Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts. Barely thirty years old when he served the Pittsford church, Mahan became Ingraham's mentor, writing much later that Ingraham had been "the first fruit" of his ministry. Their bond was strong and continued after Mahan accepted a call to Cincinnati's Sixth Presbyterian Church in late 1831. Within a year, Ingraham moved to Cincinnati as well and joined Mahan's congregation. Neither of them had any idea of the battle that was to come.[3]

Cincinnati was a borderland, situated on a series of hills that sloped down to the Ohio River, a body of water symbolic of the divide between a nominally free North and the machinery of Southern slavery. Cincinnati was also home to a new venture in higher education, Lane Theological Seminary, which opened in 1829. Perched northeast of the city in an area known as Walnut Hills, it aimed to be an incubator for pastors who would lead revival up and down the Ohio Valley. Lane's first president was none other than Lyman Beecher, a Yale-educated pastor and head of a family that would make its name in abolitionist circles. With Beecher at the helm and a bright student body of committed young people, the Protestant establishment hoped to ward off other religious traditions and claim the region for energetic, conversion-focused ministry.

The venture showed great promise. A competent faculty, a strong board of trustees, and most of all, a talented student group, took shape. When Mahan began his duties at Sixth Presbyterian Church, he found himself asked to serve as a trustee of Lane Seminary. Before long, David Ingraham began studies at Lane. The seminary catalog lists David S. Ingraham as a student for the year 1833–1834.

Yet there was more to the growth of Lane than the arrival of Mahan and Ingraham. In 1832 a cadre of students with abolitionist convictions had come to Lane from Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York. Leading

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[3]Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light; or the Hidden Life Made Manifest Through Facts of Observation and Experience* (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1876), 241.

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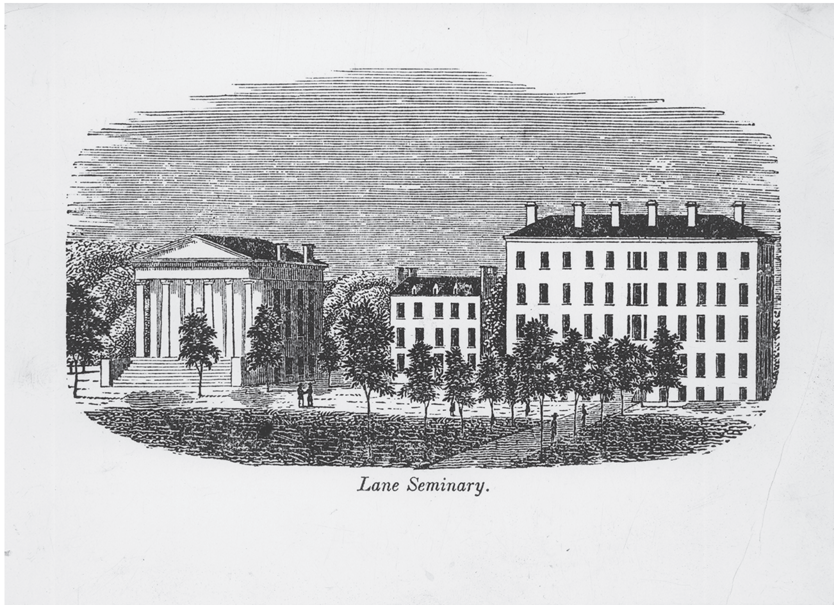

Figure 1.2. Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio

the group was Theodore Weld, a convert from the preaching of Charles Finney, the legendary revivalist who had set much of New York State ablaze around the time that the Erie Canal opened. In Utica, New York, in 1826, Weld had come to Christ through Finney's direct and rapid-fire oratory. Six years later, Weld found himself as the organizational catalyst of the Lane student body. The institution was heading for an honest confrontation with slavery.

JAMES BRADLEY AND DAVID INGRAHAM MEET AT LANE SEMINARY

Among a host of notable young people who gathered at Lane was an extraordinary student named James Bradley. Born about 1810 in West Africa, he had been enslaved and forced to the United States at a very young age. Later he recalled that the "soul-destroyers" tore him from his mother's arms and forced him aboard a ship. That floating hell eventually arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, where Bradley was sold to a man and taken to Pendleton County, Kentucky. Soon he was sold again. When Bradley was a teenager, he was taken to Arkansas Territory. The brutality of his

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childhood and youth was severe, but as Bradley later noted, it was also not particularly unusual.[4]

In 1834 he recalled how his heart had ached for freedom during his enslavement. "I was never told anything about God, or my own soul," he wrote. When the man who claimed to be his master died, Bradley took on the management of the family's business. He also sacrificed hours of sleep each night, working side jobs, hoping to buy his freedom. In 1833 he accomplished his goal and headed to Ohio, a state where at least officially there was no slavery. While in Cincinnati, he heard of Lane Theological Seminary and hungered for "the light of knowledge." Bradley became the only Black student at Lane and later spoke of having been treated with respect there.[5]

Therefore, as 1833 closed, Asa Mahan's trusteeship, James Bradley's hunger for learning, Theodore Weld's leadership, and David Ingraham's love for God and others were coalescing in the hills northeast of Cincinnati. Lane Theological Seminary could boast a student community of disciplined and convicted young adults, and they were not about to conduct themselves without purpose. Something profound was stirring in their hearts and minds, and the year 1834 promised to be momentous.

THE GREAT LANE DEBATES

During the bleak winter of February 1834, the students at Lane Seminary organized a series of debates. The gatherings, scheduled over eighteen evenings, were more like extended conversations, intended to consider the issue of slavery from many angles. They addressed two major questions, one concerning immediate abolition and the other concerning methods to end slavery in America. Each evening session lasted two and a half hours.

Seventeen people spoke during those events, arguing in favor of emancipation even though almost half of them had come from families that benefited from slavery. Weld spoke first, issuing a series of lectures that argued for immediate emancipation. His impact was substantial, but the most convincing speech was probably the one that Bradley gave.

Bradley narrated the injustice of slavery from personal experience, but he also did more than that. Not content merely to recite a harrowing tale, he

[4]James Bradley, "Brief Account of an Emancipated Slave Written by Himself, at the Request of the Editor," in *The Oasis*, ed. Lydia Maria Child (Boston: Benjamin C. Bacon, 1834), 106.
[5]Bradley, "Brief Account," 108, 109.

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applied relentless and sometimes sarcastic logic to the evil. Opponents of immediate abolition were known to make self-serving arguments. First, they held that it would be somehow dangerous for society to free enslaved people, and second, they asserted that those freed would not be able to care for themselves. Bradley blasted such nonsense with his personal example and unyielding reason.

Freed persons, he asserted, would seek honorable work and education, contributing to the betterment of all. Moreover, the enslaved were already skilled at providing for themselves and had shown that they could do so while also compensating for inept abusers. Bradley could point not only to his own narrative of thriving as a free person but to his record of having run the business affairs of his Arkansas oppressors while simultaneously improving his own prospects.

Those eighteen animated evenings led to overwhelming student support for immediate abolition. The students also roundly refuted so-called colonization, a term that was being used to describe a movement that sought to end slavery but force freed persons to settle in Africa. The young people at Lane were not buying that approach. They denounced colonization as an insult to those who had as much claim upon America as anyone else.

Following the debates, several students drafted a constitution for an antislavery society. The document echoed American revolutionary principles and stated that enslaved people possessed a God-given right to "liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Writing two years later, Weld summed up the guiding philosophy of the Lane students: "Persons are to be treated according to their intrinsic worth *irrespective of Color, shape, condition* or what not." The reference to "intrinsic worth" was no accident. It described a value endowed by God for all people. In 1848 Asa Mahan would write a textbook on ethics, *Science of Moral Philosophy*, that made the intrinsic worth of people a starting point for thought and action. But the language of intrinsic worth was far from being some irrelevant terminology used by privileged thinkers. It grounded a whole movement against slavery, not least the student advocacy at Lane.[6]

[6]Weld was apparently quoting from another source, now obscured, that served as a defining principle for him and his Lane contemporaries; emphasis included in the Weld source. "Preamble and Constitution of the Anti-slavery Society of Lane Seminary," *The Standard*, n.d., Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.24800600; Barnes and Dumond, *Letters*, 1:270; Asa Mahan, *Science of Moral Philosophy* (Oberlin, OH: James M. Fitch, 1848).

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Abolition. Geo. Clark.

THE STANDARD.—*Extra.*

PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION

OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY OF LANE SEMINARY.

Believing it incumbent upon all, who associate for the advancement of the general good, to state explicitly their object, their reasons for seeking it, the means proposed for its accomplishment, and the *principles* which are to control their action; we make the following exposition.

1st. *Object.* Our object is the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race within the United States: The emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites.

2d. *Reasons.* We advocate the immediate emancipation of the slave for the following reasons. 1st. He is constituted by God a moral agent, the keeper of his own happiness, the executive of his own powers, the accountable arbiter of his own choice; personal ownership his birth right, unforfeited and inalienable; liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, his chartered rights, inherited from his Maker and guarantied by all the laws of his being.

Slavery robs himself of himself, body and soul; and though he is immortal, created in God's image, the purchase of a Saviour's blood, visited by the Holy Ghost, and invited to a citizenship with angels and to fellowship with God, it drags him to the shambles and sells him like a beast, goads him to incessant and unrequited toil, withholds from him legal protection in all his personal rights and social relations, and abandons to caprice, cupidity, passion, and lust, all that is dear in human well-being. It crushes the upward tendencies of intellect, makes the acquisition of knowledge a crime, and consigns the mind to famine.

It stifles the moral affections, represses the innate longings of the spirit, paralyzes conscience, turns hope to despair, and kills the soul.

As a system, slavery annihilates the marriage relation, exposes to pollution a million females, and makes stripes or death the penalty of resistance.—It tears asunder parents and children, husbands and wives, sisters and brothers, and consigns them to distant and hopeless bondage, desolate and heart-broken.

2d. It excites the enmity of the oppressed against the oppressor, goads to desperation and revenge, provokes insurrection, and perils public safety.

3d. It *tends* to blunt the sensibilities of all who exercise authority over the slave, and to transform them into tyrants. The whole process is drawn to the life by President Jefferson, who lived and died a slave holder.

"The parent storms: the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs, in the circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot fail to be stamped with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy, who can retain his morals and manners undepraved in such circumstances."

4th. It is the occasion of deep moral pollution to the families of slave holders;—a pollution mingling with the first thoughts, spreading wider and wider with the increase of years, and naturally resulting from contact with those whom legalized oppression renders liable to prostitution.

5. It cripples the energies of the whole nation, entails poverty and decay upon the States which uphold it, foments division and alienation in our public councils, and puts in jeopardy the existence of the Union.

6. It is opposed to the genius of our Government, makes our Constitution a mockery, converts our national Declaration into a rapsody of sentimentalism, convicts us of hypocrisy at the bar of the world, neutralizes the power of our example as a nation, and checks the progress of republican principles.

7. It opposes an insuperable barrier to the conversion of the world, is a standing libel upon the avowed influence of the Christian religion, and heathen nations will not be slow to read the disgraceful commentary. It sanctions, as a principle, the absurd and wicked prejudice against color; and thus, not only dooms to despair the unfortunate millions of colored people in our own country, but would, if carried out, paralyze all missionary effort and shut the bowels of mercy forever against the world.

8. Slavery exposes the nation to the judgments of God. We adopt and reiterate the memorable sentiment of Jefferson: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice will not sleep forever:" and we urge an immediate repentance of the sin which provokes his wrath, and an immediate breaking off from it by righteousness.

We advocate the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment and civil disabilities;

Because color, condition of birth, poverty, calamity, and complicated woe, deserve no punishment. It is the part of a tyrant to inflict penalties upon the innocent; and when the victim is powerless, friendless, long oppressed, and already heart-broken, it is the part of a fiend. The colored race in this country are the objects of scorn and persecution. Impoverished, disfranchised, and trodden into the dust, they faint under the inflictions of a public sentiment, "which exalteth itself above all that is called God." We cannot hold our peace while these, our brethren, are immolated upon the altar of prejudice and pride. They need our sympathies and our aid, *and they shall have them.*

3. *Principles.* The principles which will control our operations are inculcated in the following precepts of our Lord: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." "Beware of hardness of heart towards thy poor brother." We adopt implicitly and entirely the law of love as the basis of our action.

4. *Mode of Operation.* We shall seek to effect the abolition of slavery,

1st. Not by instigating the slaves to rebellion. This would be *murder.* Our principles on this point are those of our Master and Lord. "Resist not evil." "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

2. Not by advocating an interposition of force on the part of the free States. We are no advocates for war.

3. Not by advocating congressional interference with the constitutional powers of the States. Even if Congress had power to abolish slavery, our principles "show us a more excellent way."

We shall seek to abolish slavery;

1st. By approaching the minds of slave holders with the truth, in the spirit of the Gospel. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor and not suffer sin upon him," is the command of God. We shall endeavour to induce men to forsake *this*, as every other sin, by speaking the truth in love; addressing it to the understanding, pressing it upon the conscience, appealing to sympathy, invoking patriotism and philanthropy, and summoning out the manhood of the soul to an act of justice after long and guilty delay. In fine, we propose to use only such means as are sanctioned by the laws of the land, the dictates of humanity, the principles of justice, and the Gospel of Christ.

2 By appeals to the pecuniary interests of the slave holders.

3. By presenting facts, arguments, and the uniform results of experiment demonstrating the practicability, safety, and expediency of immediate emancipation, and the presumption and peril of delay.

4. By a general dissemination of facts, reasonings, and appeals upon the subject of slavery.

5. By embodying and concentrating public sentiment against the system.

6. By promoting the observance of the monthly concert of prayer for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the world, and by beseeching our fellow christians, and fathers and brethren in the ministry, to pray without ceasing, in secret and in public, that "every yoke may be broken," and that "all the oppressed may go free."

To prevent misapprehension, we subjoin the following exposition of immediate emancipation. It has been extensively adopted as expressing the views of Abolitionists, and embodies, substantially, our own.

"By immediate emancipation, we do not mean that the slaves shall be turned loose upon the nation to roam as vagabonds and aliens—nor

That they shall be instantly invested with *all* political rights and privileges—nor

That they shall be expelled from their native land to a foreign clime, as the price and condition of their freedom.

But we *do* mean—that instead of being under the unlimited control of a few irresponsible masters, they shall really receive the protection of law:

That the power which is invested in every slaveholder, to rob them of their just dues, to drive them into the field like beasts, to lacerate their bodies, to sell the husband from his wife, the wife from her husband, and children from their parents, shall instantly cease;

That the slaves shall be employed as free laborers, fairly compensated and protected in their earnings;

That they shall be placed under a benevolent and disinterested supervision, which shall secure to them the right to obtain secular and religious knowledge, to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, and to seek an intellectual and moral equality with the whites."

Finally, impelled by these considerations, and looking to God for wisdom, strength, and success, we solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, to seek through evil report and good report, "the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race. The emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral and political equality with the whites."

CONSTITUTION

ART. 1. This Society shall be called "The Anti-Slavery Society of Lane Seminary."

ART. 2. The Officers of this Society shall be elected annually, on the first Tuesday evening of January, and shall consist of a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, and twelve Managers.

ART. 3. Each officer shall perform the several duties usually belonging to the office he holds.

ART. 4. The Board of Managers shall from their own number, elect an Executive Committee of five, who shall through the Corresponding Secretary, direct all the correspondence of the Society, prepare for publication such documents as they may deem important, and control the appropriation of the Society's funds, subject to the supervision of the Board of Managers.

ART. 5. The incidental expenses of the Society shall be defrayed by assessments upon the members. Funds for all other purposes shall depend entirely upon voluntary contributions.

ART. 6. The Society shall hold quarterly meetings on the first Tuesday evening of January, April, and July, and 3d Tuesday evening of October, and an annual meeting on the first Tuesday evening of January.

ART. 7. Any member of Lane Seminary may become a member of this Society, by subscribing the Preamble and Constitution.

OFFICERS.

WILLIAM T. ALLAN, Ala., President.
MARIUS R. ROBINSON, Tenn., Vice Pres.
ANDREW BENTON, Mo., Rec. Sec.
JAMES A. THOME, Ky., Cor. Sec.
COLEMAN S. HODGES, Va., Treasurer.
HENRY P. THOMPSON, Ky., Auditor.

Board of Managers:
JAMES BRADLEY, Ar. Ter.,
HENRY B. STANTON, N. Y.,
ABNER S. ROSS, N. J.,
JAMES STEELE, N. Y.,
SERENO W. STREETER, Mass.,
GEORGE CLARKE, CONN.,
GEORGE WHIPPLE, N. Y.,
JAMES MORRISON, OHIO,
JAMES M. ALLAN, Ala.,
THEODORE D. WELD, N. Y.,
JOHN T. PIERCE, Mass.,
HUNTINGTON LYMAN, La.

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Figure 1.3. "Preamble and Constitution of the Anti-slavery Society of Lane Seminary," 1834 (note the names of James Bradley and Theodore Weld, among others)

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The elders at Lane were alarmed by the student debates. The trustees feared a backlash. Tensions mounted over the spring and summer of 1834 until formal action by the trustees created a real crisis: they approved a policy that called for the dissolution of the student antislavery society and the exercise of arbitrary power to dismiss student agitators. Mahan remembered those critical times with a mix of disgust for his trustee colleagues and admiration for the students. He made his opposition to these heavy-handed measures known and was one of very few leaders on campus to support the students. His children were attacked in the street and he found himself shunned by most of Cincinnati’s civic leaders.

After the trustee crackdown was published, Weld, Bradley, and Ingraham (along with most of the student body) left Lane in protest. On December 15, 1834, the students released a document called “A Statement of the Reasons Which Induced the Students of Lane Seminary, to Dissolve Their Connection with That Institution.” Weld, Bradley, and Ingraham, along with forty-eight others, attached their names to the eloquent defense of the student position.

At this moment of uncertainty, a complex set of forces intervened that would eventually bring many Lane students north to Oberlin Collegiate Institute (later renamed Oberlin College). The college in Oberlin, about thirty-five miles southwest of Cleveland, had been founded in 1833 by John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart. Financial challenges and low enrollment plagued its first years of operation, but late in 1834, Shipherd got wind of the Lane situation and visited Mahan’s home in Cincinnati. Conversation ensued between Shipherd and the former students, who by then had become known as the Lane Rebels.

While many of the expatriates were willing to go to Oberlin and inject the school with much-needed vitality, they would only commit under certain conditions. Mahan would have to be appointed Oberlin’s president, and their own professor, John Morgan (formerly of Lane Seminary), had to be added to the faculty. Most of all, African American students would have to be admitted to Oberlin, and the trustees had to promise not to interfere with academic matters. The Rebels also wanted their gifted colleague Weld appointed to Oberlin as a professor of theology, but he declined, later becoming an agent of the American Anti-slavery Society in Ohio. Weld did, however, recommend his mentor, Charles Finney, for the professorship.

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Oberlin December 31st 1834

We, Students of the O. C. Institute hereby certify our view as to the practicability of admitting persons of color to this Institution under existing circumstances,

In favour	Against
Miranda W Capen.	Mary Williams.
Betsey A Hartson.	Betsey Hoskins.
Fanny W. Fletcher.	Sarah C. Capen.
Charlotte Hendry	Fanny Cummings
L S Gillett	
M McLeroy	Harriet A Spencer
Adaline Smith	Emma E Hendry
Clarissa Cranney	Persis M Hall
C. Cowles	Angeline [illegible] Fidelia Scovell
J. Foster	Mary [illegible]
J. D Eastman	Harriet Kennedy
Wm Lewis	Abigail T Hall.
John Middleton	Lucy A Hall
Wm P. Cochran	Eliza Gaston
Horsehel Reed	H. N. Ingersoll
Charles Garnish	C. A. Walker
William W. Weir	[illegible]
Philip D. Adams.	R W Lane
William Hills	J. D. Ingersoll
Wm Sheffield	William Knight Junior
Charles H Moore	A. E. [illegible]
Levi Grant	A M Williams
Samuel Davis	L. E. Beardsley
W M H. Hoisington	[illegible]
A. S. Brooks.	Elihu Horford
C L Stevens	William B Hewitt
	Franklin R. Hawes.
	Orenus Horford
	Asahel Munger
	James M Hall
	Rollin Brown

Figure 1.4. Survey on the "practicality of admitting persons of color" to Oberlin Collegiate Institute, December 31, 1834 (note Betsey A. Hartson's name, second in the left-hand "in favour" column)

The Lane Rebels possessed a great deal of bargaining power, but their proposal was not accepted outright by Oberlin's board of trustees. Oberlin College came to be regarded as a leader in equal-opportunity education, and several women had been enrolled that same year, in 1834. But would the trustees open Oberlin to African Americans? In December a document appeared, drafted by students who were already attending the college, speaking directly to the admissions policy. The student statement read: "We, Students of the O. C. Institute hereby certify our view as to the practicability of admitting persons of color to this Institution under existing circumstances." Beneath this introductory sentence were two columns, one listing those students who supported the admission of African Americans and one listing those who opposed the proposal. Twenty-six students were in favor, and thirty-two were opposed.[7]

The second person listed in favor of admitting African American students was a young woman from Elyria, Ohio, named Betsey A. Hartson (1815–1845). Hartson would eventually marry David Ingraham. Before the Lane expatriates stepped foot in Oberlin, Hartson and others were advocating for equal opportunity and an open admissions policy.

Finally, on February 9, 1835, the board of trustees agreed to receive students of color. Mahan felt he was now able to accept the presidency in good conscience. Arthur and Lewis Tappan of New York City were prepared to offer generous financial support for the reorganized college, and by the spring of 1835 Oberlin Collegiate Institute was a new place.

James Bradley traveled to Oberlin in March 1836. On the way he was threatened by racists, later recalling that bigotry was so thick in some places that he could "stir it with a stick." Bradley enrolled at Sheffield Institute, a satellite preparatory school of Oberlin Collegiate Institute some fifteen miles northeast. Ingraham attended the main campus in Oberlin.[8]

At some point following the spring of 1835, Betsey Hartson and David Ingraham developed an interest in each other, and they were married on August 10, 1837, not far from Oberlin. Fittingly, Mahan performed the service and blessed the young couple as coequal partners in ministry. They had no

[7]Petition of Oberlin students regarding admission of students of color, December 31, 1834, Oberlin College Archives, miscellaneous file; see also http://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/LaneDebates/StudentsPetition.htm.

[8]James R. Wright to Elizur Wright, Jr., April 4, 1836, James Bradley file, Oberlin College Archives.

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idea that their marriage would be cut short by terminal illness, but over the next four years, they crowded a lifetime of love and justice into their union.

THE CALL TO PERFECTED LOVE

Oberlin College quickly developed a reputation for spiritual renewal and social justice advocacy. In September 1836 a revival took place on campus. President Mahan had been preaching that God's grace was able not only to forgive sin but to empower right living. Mahan concluded that through God's grace it is possible to live a life of perfected love. This second work of God was known as entire sanctification.

It is one thing to contemplate God's mighty love in the act of forgiveness. It is quite another to consider how God might make one upright, loving, and just. What kind of completeness or maturity can Christians expect in this life? That fall, a recent graduate of the Oberlin theology department, Sereno Wright Streeter (one of the Lane Rebels), wanted an answer to this question. Mahan could not offer a clear response at the time but promised to give it thorough study and prayer.

During the winter of 1836–1837, Mahan joined his colleague Charles Finney in New York City, where Finney had an established ministry. As it happened, David Ingraham determined to visit the Caribbean that year, hoping a change in climate would improve his health. He also desired to be of some sacred service while he had breath. Suffering from tuberculosis, Ingraham stopped in New York to visit Mahan and Finney before leaving the country. The three engaged in profound conversation, and Mahan remembered Ingraham's words: "I am as ready to die here as anywhere else, and now as at any other time, if such is the will of my God." Ingraham found passage on a ship to Cuba and began a kind of exploratory trip for subsequent work in Jamaica.[9]

By the summer of 1837 Ingraham was back in Ohio, where he received ordination and he and Hartson married. In December of that year, the newlywed couple journeyed to Jamaica and began their pivotal mission with formerly enslaved people. The Ingrahams were some of the earliest American abolitionists to go to Jamaica. They desired to encourage Afro-Caribbeans in their quest for economic independence. By engaging in this mission of

[9]Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light*, 242.

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education and evangelism, Christian abolitionists like the Ingrahams hoped to repudiate the racist objection to emancipation promoted by proslavery Whites that freed people of color could not advance or govern themselves. Much like James Bradley's blistering critique at Lane, the Ingrahams believed that emancipated people were a blessing to the public good.

The journal that Ingraham kept during much of his Jamaican ministry began more than a year after he arrived on the island. The first entry came on July 14, 1839, and the last was on March 14, 1841. The journal is a marvelous window, sometimes mundane, often moving, to the experience of the Ingrahams and to the social dynamics in post-emancipation Jamaica.

The very first statement within the document exudes gratitude for God's grace: "This has been one of my best Sabbaths. O how unworthy am I of such blessed privileges." Ingraham strove for a more just community, but he always grounded his commitment in a deep spiritual experience. The journal records the challenges of travel across mountainous country, the hard work of crosscultural communication, the universal grind of local-church politics, and more, all in addition to confrontation with the continuing effects of slavery. Ingraham was not without his flaws and could not entirely escape his perspective as a privileged actor among those he served. But during a time that was gripped by dehumanizing forces, David and Betsey Ingraham joined others in efforts to make at least one corner of the world a better place.[10]

Among the many themes within Ingraham's journal, a certain fondness for language having to do with vision or sight appears again and again. This filter even haunts Ingraham's identification with Oberlin teaching on sanctification. On May 23, 1840, while beginning a return visit to the United States, he noted his poor health, then wrote about Charles Finney's landmark lectures that had appeared in the *Oberlin Evangelist*: "But have had some joy in reading and meditating on the word of God, Have also read one of Prof Finneys lectures on Sanctification. I see the subject plainer and plainer and see that nothing, but unbelief hinders me from the enjoyment of this great and glorious privilege."[11]

At times, Ingraham used vision language in counterpoint to the cloud of ill health that hung over him. "I have been thinking much of death lately," he

[10]Ingraham, journal, 3, emphasis original.
[11]Ingraham, journal, 46, emphasis original.

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confessed in June of 1840, "and have endeavored to look it in the face." A bit further in the journal his concern for seeing focused on intimacy with Christ. He spoke of wanting "to see Jesus as He is. O how lovely, inexpressibly lovely He appears." But Ingraham's otherworldly awareness did not in the least diminish his compassion for others. He lived as one who wished for fulfillment of the heavenly vision on earth.[12]

DOCUMENTING THE INIQUITY OF THE SLAVE TRADE

Ingraham's poignant yearning had also been evident in the journal some months earlier. On Christmas Day in 1839, Ingraham visited Port Royal, Jamaica (near Kingston), and stepped aboard a ship that had recently been used to imprison and transport enslaved people from the western coast of Africa. The vessel was identified as the Portuguese brig (two-masted ship) *Ulysses*. It had been intercepted by the British war schooner *Skipjack* south of Cuba on November 30. Newspaper accounts tell of a chase that lasted twelve hours before the Portuguese craft was overtaken.

The people held captive on the *Ulysses* had come from the ports of Ouidah and Popo in Dahomey (now Benin), Badagry (now Nigeria), and the River Nunez (now Guinea). Ingraham's journal entry for December 25, 1839, is arresting. It is also the only page of his manuscript to include a diagram or sketch (see appendix C). His chilling description of the ship indicates inhumanely tight quarters. The ceiling height is listed as having been two feet, five inches. The stern of the vessel included an area that measured sixteen feet by fourteen feet and held 117 girls. The next compartment was twenty feet by twenty feet and held 107 women. The third was thirty-two feet by eighteen feet and held 216 men. The fourth, at the bow, was fifteen feet by twelve feet and held 93 boys. In all, 533 people survived the ordeal, while 556 had boarded at the beginning of the voyage. Ingraham could record the dimensions of the *Ulysses*, but he also cried, "Who can measure the guilt or sound the iniquity" of such abusive trade?[13]

The end of the trip did not signal the end of injustice for those who had been held captive aboard the *Ulysses*. After landing at Montego Bay, Jamaica, seven

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[12] Ingraham, journal, 48, 54, emphasis original.

[13] Ingraham, journal, 24. The dimensions given by Ingraham for the internal compartments of the *Ulysses*, recorded in his journal on December 25, 1839, differ slightly from those dimensions given in his published letter of January 15, 1840 (see appendix D).

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died within a month. Most of the remaining 526 people were forced to work on various plantations, primarily in St. James, Westmoreland, and Hanover. Seventy young men were coerced to join one of the British West India regiments as soldiers. Many went to work for a man named Thomas MacNeill of Westmoreland and were treated little better than those in a formal state of slavery. Within the year, several people quit MacNeill, charging him with terrible working conditions. Those who left were pursued by police, who attempted to force them back to MacNeill's property, but an uprising among locals defended them.

Ingraham contrasted conditions on the *Ulysses* with God's intended justice. "How long, O Lord?" he lamented. "How long shall these poor creatures be torn from their homes and made to endure so much for the avarice of men?" On January 15, 1840, he followed his personal examination of the ship with a detailed letter to abolitionist newspapers (see appendix D).[14]

The terror aboard the *Ulysses* leaves us with a horrible challenge. The forced anonymity of those who were captive in its hold makes it extremely difficult to give them proper honor. We can acknowledge their suffering: the violent separation from their families, the constant hunger from barely being fed, the stench of their surroundings in the ship's hold on a fifty-day voyage. But we can also listen very carefully for their individual life stories, their courage and genius, their agency—the unique power they possessed as persons.

My own participation in this research arises from a sense of obligation that I have accepted to hear the voices of the people who were forced aboard the *Ulysses*. To learn history and to write books are fine, as far as they go. But this project is different, perhaps deeper. We are engaging the very *meaning* of history here, and I freely admit that I bring my standing convictions regarding the sacred nature of people to this effort. This is a story about personhood denied—and then, hopefully, about personhood reaffirmed.

Some might consider the term *obligation* misapplied to this project. After all, there are interesting discoveries involved, moments of insight, even some inspiring witnesses of old. But living into an obligation is one way to find godly purpose. We are, indeed, obligated as human beings and followers of Christ to listen to those who have been ignored, to respect them. If vocation entails receiving a call, then this is vocation writ large. Among the many thousands of people who were brutalized and then forgotten during

[14]Ingraham, journal, 24.

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the shameful reign of Atlantic slavery, the men, women, and children of the *Ulysses* give us an opportunity to hear, to change, and to work toward something better in the world.

DAVID INGRAHAM RECRUITS NANCY PRINCE

When Ingraham visited the United States during the summer and fall of 1840, he gave a lecture about the Jamaican mission at Boston's Marlboro Chapel. It was the same site where Mahan had delivered an influential series of lectures on sanctification a few years earlier.

While in Boston, Ingraham called on a woman named Nancy Prince, who was living at the home of J. W. Holman, a Free Will Baptist pastor and abolitionist. Having already known of Prince's interest in Jamaica, Ingraham encouraged her to join the mission there. In August 1839 he had written his friend Amos Phelps that should Prince journey to Jamaica, "our arms and doors shall be open for her." A year later the invitation was formally issued in person, and she sailed for Jamaica aboard a ship called the *Scion* on November 16, 1840.[15]

Prince had already lived a full, challenging, and impressive life when Ingraham recruited her for mission work. She was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1799. Her mother was the daughter of Tobias Wornton, a man who had been taken captive in Africa and brought to the American colonies. Wornton had been enslaved, but he fought for liberty in the American Revolution and is remembered today for his military service at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He later gained his freedom. Prince's maternal grandmother was Native American. Her father, Thomas Gardner, worked in the whaling industry on Nantucket and was a free person. Prince made sure that others knew her ancestry. It demonstrated her family's investment in the blessings of liberty and her right to the same freedom as any other American.

Prince moved to Boston as a young person and was baptized at the African Meeting House in 1817. She then joined the free Black community on the north side of Beacon Hill and married a man named Nero Prince in 1824. Her husband secured a post among Russian royalty, and before long, Nancy and Nero Prince found themselves in St. Petersburg. Illness would eventually force Prince to

[15]D. S. Ingraham to Amos Augustus Phelps, August 6, 1839, Anti-slavery Collection, Boston Public Library.

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return to Boston, and in a twist of tragedy, her husband would die before they could be reunited. But during her days in Russia, she observed a world that was built upon social hierarchy but did not order such distinctions according to race. The experience informed her later analysis of North American injustice.

In going to Jamaica, Prince hoped “to raise up and encourage the emancipated inhabitants, and teach the young children to read and work, to fear God, and put their trust in the Saviour.” She made great contributions but also witnessed serious inequities. At one point she confronted racist propaganda from the United States claiming that emancipation had not helped the Jamaican people. She also indicted some missionaries when they demanded that Jamaicans pay for Bibles and the instruction of children. Prince observed that a common wage in Jamaica was but thirty-three cents per day, hardly enough to sustain a home and underwrite mission initiatives. Still, she believed in the possibility of authentic advocacy for recently emancipated people and labored on their behalf for some time, even after Ingraham’s death in 1841.[16]

Prince and Ingraham toiled in different locales at first but reconnected during the summer of 1841. In July of that year, Prince encountered Ingraham as he came down from his work in the mountains, his health failing. Ingraham determined to sail for America again, knowing that his days were numbered. David and Betsey Ingraham, along with their daughters Sarah and Jane, set sail for Baltimore, continuing onward to the home of Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimké, and Sarah Grimké in Belleville, New Jersey. David succumbed to his tuberculosis while at the Weld-Grimké home on August 1, 1841. The revered abolitionist Theodore Sedgwick Wright, founding member of the American Anti-slavery Society and the first African American graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, was sent for to preach his funeral sermon. While Betsey never returned to Jamaica after David’s death, Sarah Penfield and her new husband, Thornton Bigelow Penfield (known to his family as “Bigelow”), went back to the island twenty years later in the 1860s. They served under the auspices of the American Missionary Association and worked at a place known as the Oberlin Mission Station. Today the legacy of the Ingraham family lives in the Oberlin Complex: a high school, medical clinic, and church, north of Kingston.

[16]Nancy Prince, *A Narrative of the Life and Travels of Mrs. Nancy Prince*, 2nd ed. (Boston: published by the author, 1853), 45.

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The terrible incompleteness of the legacy left by Ingraham, Bradley, and Prince challenges us to continue the fight. "How long, O Lord?" When will God's justice reign? We have spiritual ancestors in these three who in their own courageous ways pointed toward God's future. How will we respond to the call they answered?

To confront this question requires us to act, and we would leave matters incomplete if we were merely to document past abuse and historical attempts to rise above injustice, though such aims are worthy. An exploration of this kind would fail miserably were it to lead to no action at all. Yet there is an equal danger, one that is often neglected in a rush to action. Before we can act justly, we must hear. White activists, in particular, are prone to overlook their privilege, take matters in hand, and force a change, often with plenty of self-congratulation along the way. The reprehensible irony of such behavior is that it turns others into instruments for the accomplishment of an agenda driven by well-meaning White people. But if the intrinsic worth of persons is critical for this kind of work, then hearing is as important as doing. Those of us with privilege must listen first and *then* act *with* others. All of us must understand our power or past lack of power in the conversation. Many of us are indeed called to speak and be heard, perhaps for the first time. Others, also perhaps for the first time, are called to listen and hear.

If we are to listen well, we must be willing to hear the whole story. Most of us know something about slavery and abolitionism in nineteenth-century America. But how well-versed are we in the lives of the African persons who were captured, enslaved, and transported in inhuman conditions across the Atlantic in the middle passage? Who were they? Where did they come from? What was the political, social, and economic context that would lead to the bondage of the 556 men, women, and children who were aboard the *Ulysses*, the slave brig that David Ingraham examined? Chapter two will describe West Africa around the time that the *Ulysses* set sail, offering a glimpse into the lives of the persons whose existences were shattered by the coming of the European slaving industry, and how it came to be that they were taken away from the places they called home.

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