

THE “COME OUTERS”



“I am still at the mercy of words, though sometimes now, knowing a little of their behavior very well, I think I can influence them slightly and have even learned to beat them now and then, which they appear to enjoy.”

- Dylan Thomas



The Come-Outers were evangelical agitators who asked others to abandon their existing church memberships and instead worship God privately, on the grounds that these churches, usually for reasons of collaboration with the institution of human enslavement, were not religious bodies but actually irreligious, actually abominations before the Lord. Such agitators would stand in the street outside a church and holler “Come out! Come out!” in precisely the same evangelical manner that, say, a temperance agitator might stand outside a saloon and holler “Come out! Come out!” at drunkards and other persons who hung around such venues. An example would be the antislavery agitator Stephen Symonds Foster, who was again and again roughed up, stoned, nose bloodied, clothing torn by indignant mobs of worshipers bursting forth from the doors of New England churches – and who relished nothing so much as to display his wounds.



COME OUT!

COME OUT!

1838

In a letter from James Caleb Jackson to Gerrit Smith: “*Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you.’ Jesus Christ—” Clearly, these Come-Outers were purists.¹*

COME-OUTISM

What the “Come-Outers” believed was that [slavery](#) was a much more ubiquitous situation than had been recognized. Any social institution which frustrated the human aspiration for spontaneity or impeded the directness of the governance of God over the human individual amounted to slavery. Perhaps the ultimate example of come-outism was the [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Joseph Smith](#) and his people moved from Kirtland, Ohio to Far West, Missouri. During this year and the next there would be a de-facto state of war in existence between the [Mormons](#) of Far West, Missouri and the other peoples of Missouri. However, by far the greatest concentration of Come-Outers who considered themselves as Come-Outers (200-300 persons) was on Cape Cod.²

1839

Anonymous publication of [Elizur Wright, Junior](#)’s small volume [LA FONTAINE](#); A PRESENT FOR THE YOUNG.

In this year in which in England [Friend Joseph Sturge](#) was founding the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and in which in America John A. Collins was becoming general agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, for some reason abolitionism simply was not prospering. Those whites who had an economic investment in or social interest in or libidinal involvement in human enslavement were proving to be quite immune to, merely hardened and angered by, all the relentless propaganda. The initial idea, that first the abolitionists would convince the institutions of the North to be righteous, and then the North would bring righteous pressure on the South, had proved in application to be utterly disconnected from the reality of our condition. For instance, in eight years of agitation not a single one of the white religious denominations had separated into a northern sect opposed to human enslavement and a southern sect in favor of human enslavement, despite the standoff between their northern white congregations and their southern white congregations over this issue. Although there had been a few anti-enslavement advocates positioned in the US

1. Righteousness is a precious and limited commodity, and the way one obtains it is by taking it away from someone else. Much of the antebellum abolitionist/proslavery struggle among America’s whites was a struggle not over the quality of the lives of American black people (although that was a token in the game) but over the possession of righteousness. Northern whites sought to take possession of righteousness by denying it to Southern whites, who were painted with the pitch-pot of unrighteousness. Meanwhile, Southern whites sought to take possession of righteousness by denying it to Northern whites, who were painted with the pitch-pot of unrighteousness. Southern white painted Northern whites with the pitch-pot of unrighteousness by associating them with blackness, calling them “nigger lovers,” and “amalgamationists.” Northern whites painted Southern whites with the pitch-pot of unrighteousness by associating them with blackness, pointing out the sheer size of the Southern population of mulatto Americans, which was the result of countless semi-secret acts of amalgamation between the white slavemaster males and their female captives (such as, for one example, Sally Hemings). Equally, on both sides, in this struggle to seize the moral high ground, one’s religiosity became *defined* by one’s politics. In the north it would be considered by many white Americans to be impossible for one to be considered “religious,” unless one was against human slavery — an extreme manifestation of this was the “Come-Outers” centering on Cape Cod. Meanwhile, in the south, it would be considered by many white Americans to be impossible for one to be considered “religious,” unless one believed strongly enough in the righteousness of keeping the animal impulses under decent control by use of the tool of human enslavement.

2. These 200-300 Cape Cod Come-Outers were particularly under the influence of Jakob Böhme and [Friend George Fox](#).

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House of Representatives, there had also been enacted a very specific gag rule to silence them on this one central topic. The ideological and emotional commitment of a number of leaders in the struggle against practices of human enslavement, however, the ones whom I am here terming “pragmatics,” was that American democracy was basically sound, and that the flaws in American character that had led to this enslavement situation were minor and isolated flaws. A few agreements, a few insights, a few changes in the rules, and the institutions supporting the practice of human enslavement would crumble. There was no need to tamper with anyone’s soul. Examples of this attitude were:

- [Elizur Wright, Jr.](#)
- Henry Brewster Stanton
- James Gillespie Birney (who wanted to establish a third political party, the “Liberty” party, which would be antislavery, and compete directly in the political process, making deals and peddling influence like the Republicans/Democrats of that era)



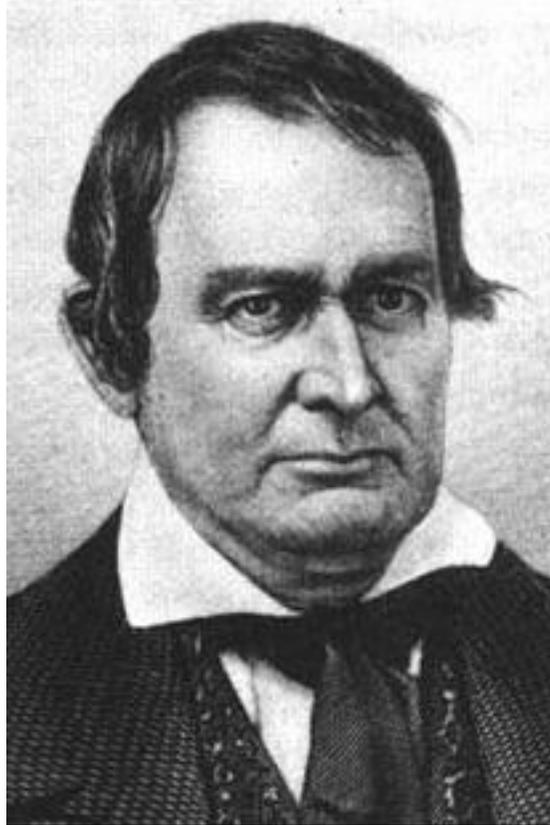
In this year Gerrit Smith condemned his denomination, Presbyterianism, for its failure to denounce slavery, yet when it was proposed to him that young black men be trained in Canada and Mexico and sent into the slave

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states to lead revolts, he rejected that plan.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



Then there were the Garrisonians. The struggle between the two abolitionist psychologies, like the struggle between the Orthodox or Evangelical Quakers and the Hicksites, was a struggle that can readily be described in terms of a binary split over a single issue. Previous analyzers of the split have attempted to conceive of a binary split between the abolitionists who wanted to mix anti-slavery with the “confounded woman question” and those who wanted to keep such issues in separate compartments, and have not been able to make a case for that analysis, or have attempted to conceive of a binary split between the abolitionists who embraced the principle of non-resistance to evil and those who regarded this principle as the pinnacle of wickedness, and have not been able to make a case for that analysis. Some have suggested that the split was not binary, that the struggle was between those abolitionists who wanted to be understood as “pragmatics,” and those abolitionists who wanted to be understood as “strugglers” and as “Come-outers.”

COME-OUTISM

These are not the analyses that I favor. In this “Kouroo” contexture, you will find, the analysis that I have favored is that of a binary split between, on the one hand, the abolitionists who wanted a future of racial integration, “amalgamation” as it was then called, in which all God’s children could live together on God’s holy mountain (these people known as “Hicksites,” a type case of this being Friend Lucretia Mott), and, on the other hand, the abolitionists who wanted a future of apartheid, of racial segregation, of Jim Crow, in which we were equal, more or less, but existed separately (these people known as “Quietist Friends,” and as “Orthodox Friends,” and as “Evangelical Friends,” a type case of this being Friend Moses Brown).



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1840

Early in the year [John Adolphus Etzler](#) had returned from the West Indies to New-York. Undoubtedly to meet and suitably impress other reformers, he would there attend the Fourier Society of New York's annual celebration of the French philosopher-utopist [Charles Fourier](#)'s birthday. There he would make the acquaintance of a [Fourierist](#) socialist and humanitarian, C.F. Stollmeyer, also a recent German immigrant, who was at that time reading Albert Brisbane's THE SOCIAL DESTINY OF MAN for publication. Stollmeyer was to become not only the publisher of [The New World](#), but also a primary disciple of Etzler. This SOCIAL DESTINY OF MAN, seconded by the writings and lectures of such men as the [Reverend Dana McLean Greeley](#) of Concord, the Reverend [William Henry Channing](#), [Horace Greeley](#), and Parke Godwin would stimulate the rise of several Phalansterian Associations, in the middle and western states, chiefest of which would be the "[North American Phalanx](#)" on the north shore of New Jersey.

- ASSOCIATION OF INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION
- ONEIDA COMMUNITY
- MODERN TIMES
- UNITARY HOME
- BROOK FARM
- HOPEDALE

The Reverend [Adin Ballou](#)'s "Practical Christians" began to publish a gazette, the [Practical Christian](#), for the "promulgation of Primitive Christianity." He would write in HISTORY OF THE [HOPEDALE](#) COMMUNITY, FROM ITS INCEPTION TO ITS VIRTUAL SUBMERGENCE IN THE HOPEDALE PARISH that this year would initiate "a decade of American history pre-eminently distinguished for the general humanitarian spirit which seemed to pervade it, as manifested in numerous and widely extended efforts to put away existing evils and better the condition of the masses of mankind; and especially for the wave of communal thought which swept over the country, awakening a very profound interest in different directions in the question of the re-organization of society; — an interest which assumed various forms as it contemplated or projected practical results." There would be, he pointed out, a considerable number of what were known as [Transcendentalists](#) in and about [Boston](#), who, under the leadership of the [Reverend George Ripley](#), a [Unitarian](#) clergyman of eminence, would plan and put in operation the Roxbury Community, generally known as the "[Brook Farm](#)" Association. A company of radical reformers who had come out from the church on account of its alleged complicity with Slavery and other abominations, and hence called [Come-Outers](#), would institute a sort of family Community near [Providence, Rhode Island](#). Other progressives, with George W. Benson at their head, would found the Northampton Community at the present village of [Florence](#), a suburb of [Northampton](#).



One of the debates of the 18th Century was what human nature might be, under its crust of civilization, under the varnish of culture and manners. [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) had an answer. [Thomas Jefferson](#) had an answer. One of the most intriguing answers was that of [Charles Fourier](#), who was born in Besançon two years before the Shakers arrived in New York. He grew up to write twelve sturdy volumes designing a New Harmony for mankind, an experiment in radical sociology that began to run parallel to that of the Shakers. [Fourierism](#) ([Horace Greeley](#) founded the New-York [Tribune](#) to promote Fourier's ideas) was Shakerism for intellectuals. [Brook Farm](#) was Fourierist, and such place-names as Phalanx, New Jersey, and New Harmony, Indiana, attest to the movement's history. Except for one detail, Fourier and Mother



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Ann Lee were of the same mind; they both saw that humankind must return to the tribe or extended family and that it was to exist on a farm. Everyone lived in one enormous dormitory. Everyone shared all work; everyone agreed, although with constant revisions and refinements, to a disciplined way of life that would be most harmonious for them, and lead to the greatest happiness. But when, of an evening, the Shakers danced or had "a union" (a conversational party), Fourier's Harmonians had an orgy of eating, dancing, and sexual high jinks, all planned by a Philosopher of the Passions. There is a strange sense in which the Shakers' total abstinence from the flesh and Fourier's total indulgence serve the same purpose. Each creates a psychological medium in which frictionless cooperation reaches a maximum possibility. It is also wonderfully telling that the modern world has no place for either.



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According to the dissertation of Maurice A. Crane, “A Textual and Critical Edition of [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)’s *The Blithedale Romance*” at the University of Illinois in 1953, various scholars have fingered Zenobia as:

- Mrs. Almira Barlow
- [Margaret Fuller](#)
- [Fanny Kemble](#)
- [Mrs. Sophia Willard Dana Ripley](#)
- Caroline Sturgis Tappan

while various other scholars have been fingering Mr. Hollingsworth as:

- Bronson Alcott
- Albert Brisbane
- [Elihu Burritt](#)
- Charles A. Dana
- [Waldo Emerson](#)
- Horace Mann, Sr.
- William Pike
- the Reverend [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), or maybe
- the Reverend [William Henry Channing](#), or maybe
- the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)

Hawthorne should really have told us more than Zenobia’s nickname, and should really have awarded Hollingsworth a first name more definitive than “Mr.”? Go figure!

Lest we presume that an association of this [William Henry Channing](#) with Hollingsworth is utterly void of content, let us listen, as Marianne Dwight did, to the reverend stand and deliver on the topic of “devotedness to the cause; the necessity of entire self-surrender”.¹

He compared our work with ... that of the crusaders.... He compared us too with the [Quakers](#), who see God only in the inner light,... with the Methodists, who seek to be in a state of rapture in their sacred meetings, whereas we should maintain in daily life, in every deed, on all occasions, a feeling of religious fervor; with the perfectionists, who are, he says, the only sane religious people, as they believe in perfection, and their aim is one with ours. Why should we, how dare we tolerate ourselves or one another in sin?

1. Reed, Amy L., ed. *LETTERS FROM BROOK FARM, 1844-1847, BY MARIANNE DWIGHT Poughkeepsie NY, 1928.*



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March: The beginning of a Convention of Friends of Universal Reform at the Chardon Street Chapel in [Boston](#). [Waldo Emerson](#) would report on this lengthy convention, as on the following screen. Abigail Folsom was an annoying person who was likely to show up at Boston conventions, to rant pointlessly. Please notice that there appear to have been two women of color participating in this convention, a Mrs. Little and a Mrs. Lucy Sessions, and Mrs. Sessions appears to have been the mother of the Lucy Sessions who, in 1850, would receive from Oberlin College the 1st diploma knowingly granted to a woman of color in America.



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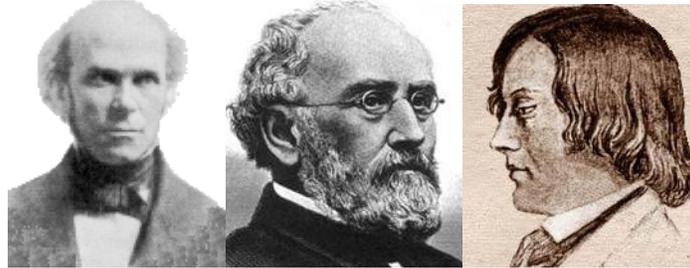
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In the month of November, 1840, a Convention of Friends of Universal Reform assembled in the Chardon Street Chapel, in [Boston](#), in obedience to a call in the newspapers signed by a few individuals, inviting all persons to a public discussion of the institutions of the Sabbath, the Church and the Ministry. The Convention organized itself by the choice of Edmund Quincy, as Moderator, spent three days in the consideration of the Sabbath, and adjourned to a day in March, of the following year, for the discussion of the second topic. In March, accordingly, a three-days' session was holden, in the same place, on the subject of the Church, and a third meeting fixed for the following November, which was accordingly holden, and the Convention, debated, for three days again, the remaining subject of the Priesthood. This Convention never printed any report of its deliberations, nor pretended to arrive at any **Result**, by the expression of its sense in formal resolutions, – the professed object of those persons who felt the greatest interest in its meetings being simply the elucidation of truth through free discussion. The daily newspapers reported, at the time, brief sketches of the course of proceedings, and the remarks of the principal speakers. These meetings attracted a good deal of public attention, and were spoken of in different circles in every note of hope, of sympathy, of joy, of alarm, of abhorrence, and of merriment. The composition of the assembly was rich and various. The singularity and latitude of the summons drew together, from all parts of New England, and also from the Middle States, men of every shade of opinion, from the straitest orthodoxy to the wildest heresy, and many persons whose church was a church of one member only. A great variety of dialect and of costume was noticed; a great deal of confusion, eccentricity, and freak appeared, as well as of zeal and enthusiasm. If the assembly was disorderly, it was picturesque. Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, [Come-Outers](#), Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-day-[Baptists](#), [Quakers](#), [Abolitionists](#), Calvinists, [Unitarians](#), and Philosophers, – all came successively to the top, and seized their moment, if not their **hour**, wherein to chide, or pray, or preach, or protest. The faces were a study. The most daring innovators, and the champions-until-death of the old cause, sat side by side. The still living merit of the oldest New England families, glowing yet, after several generations, encountered the founders of families, fresh merit, emerging, and expanding the brows to a new breadth, and lighting a clownish face with sacred fire. The assembly was characterized by the predominance of a certain plain, sylvan strength and earnestness, whilst many of the most intellectual and cultivated persons attended its councils. Dr. [William Henry Channing](#), Edward Thompson Taylor, Bronson Alcott, Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, Mr. Samuel Joseph May, [Theodore Parker](#), [Henry C. Wright](#), Dr. Joseph Osgood, William Adams, Edward Palmer, [Jones Very](#), Maria W. Chapman, and many other persons of a mystical, or sectarian, or philanthropic renown, were present, and some of them participant. And there was no want of female speakers; Mrs. Little and Mrs. Lucy Sessions took a pleasing and memorable part in the debate, and that flea of Conventions, Mrs. Abigail Folsom, was but too ready with her interminable scroll. If there was not parliamentary order, there was life, and the assurance of that constitutional love for religion and religious liberty, which, in all periods, characterizes the inhabitants of this part of America.

COME OUT!

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August: The Reverends [Theodore Parker](#), [George Ripley](#), Christopher Pearse Cranch and other [Transcendentalists](#) attended a [Come-Outer](#) convention at Groton.





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November: At the Chardon Street Chapel in [Boston](#), a continuation of the 1st meeting of the Convention of Friends of Universal Reform, that had begun during March. Attending “to discuss the origin and authority of the ministry” were, among others, the [Reverend George Ripley](#) from [Brook Farm](#) and David Mack from the [Association of Industry and Education](#), plus at least four other future members of that [Northampton](#) association. [Waldo Emerson](#)’s report of this is on the following screen.



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1841

March: Continuation of the Convention of Friends of Universal Reform that had begun during the previous November at the Chardon Street Chapel in [Boston](#). [Waldo Emerson](#)'s report of this is on the following screen.



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1842

Lewis Perry has had the following to say in regard to the Concord NH, New Hampshire attitudes of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers during this period:



Although Lynn nurtured some of the most anarchic elements of nonresistance and [Come-Outerism](#), it was a minor theater of conflict with the Boston Garrisonians compared to New Hampshire. There antislavery and no-organizationism were synonymous, and Nathaniel P. Rogers, at the forefront of this anarchistic movement, rhapsodized on free meeting. Rogers was a widely respected reformer. Descended from the Smithfield martyr John Rogers and from American Puritan divines, he was the "pet and darling" of abolitionism, at one time editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard and a delegate to the world convention in London in 1840 when he was in his forty-sixth year. According to the political abolitionist William Goodell, Rogers was second only to Garrison, and perhaps surpassed him, in energy and talent. Together they might easily have dominated the antislavery societies if Rogers' nonresistance had not been total. From opponents of nonresistance came further testimony: the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who knew about such things, recalled that Rogers' journalism had "a spice and zest which would now command a market on merely professional grounds." But he was a "Non-resistant of non-resistants" and "out-Garrisoned Garrison." As editor of the Herald of Freedom, Rogers came close to making no-organizationism a coherent theory touching on every aspect of culture and society. Though his style had zest, this American romantic nonetheless did not believe in formalities of style. Nature and speech were key words he use. He was led to distinctions resembling those favored by Alcott: "Argument," he said, meant less for reform than "STATEMENT"; or action is necessary only for unjust causes which will not bear earnest speech. Probably no other reformer has placed a higher value on free speech. Rogers literally expected to talk slavery out of existence. Although Rogers started out with faith in speech, his destination was always the end of slavery. His earliest rejection of the ballot was based exclusively on the proslavery character of the available parties. In April 1839, Orange Scott still thought that Rogers might be enlisted in opposition to Garrison's nonresistance, but Rogers explained that he respected both Scott and Garrison and did not worry about the extraneous opinions of dedicated abolitionists. As a budding no-organizationist, he denied that any leader spoke for him. As he became increasingly committed to nonresistance, he confessed that his mind had changed. He was now "convinced that all legislation was force, and that as anti-slavery, in our opinion, was a strictly moral and religious movement, a work of repentance and reformation, we could not



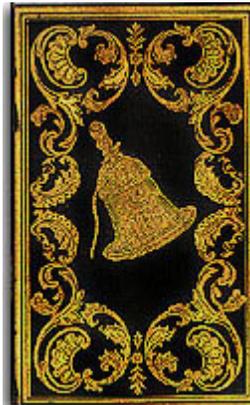
COME OUT!

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resort to physical force." The basis of his radical career, then, was evangelicalism. Ten months after writing Scott that nonresistance was a matter for private judgment, of little concern to antislavery, Rogers was prepared to argue that legislation could create only "free niggers," that laws could never eradicate prejudice and racial domination. Thereafter his antislavery position was fixed: emancipation was as wrong as legislated abolition was futile, for it presumed an "act of mastery" to give up slaves, and masters must, in justice, disappear along with slaves. The real problem was to transform a national character in which men were willing to hold slaves and think of themselves as masters. That problem seemed obviously religious.

1845

In Boston, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair put out for sale a printing entitled THE LIBERTY BELL, as a fund-raising effort of the "Friends of Freedom":



- The Liberty Bell. By Friends of Freedom. Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1845.
- Barton, Bernard. "Sonnet to the Friends of the Anti-Slavery Cause in America"
- Coues, Charlotte H. L. "An Appeal to Mothers"

Any mother who has lost a child should sympathize with the slave mother "whose child is removed, not by the commands of a Father of infinite love, and by the still hand of death, but at the bidding of the fierce demon of avarice.... "

- Bowring, John. "To the American Abolitionists: Encouragement"
- Cabot, Susan C. "The New England Convention"
- Follen, Eliza Lee. "To Cassius M. Clay"
- Pease, Elizabeth. "Responsibility"

Scripture proves that "all mankind, the world over, [is to be regarded] as one great family."

- Longfellow, Henry W. "The Norman Baron"



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- Clarkson, Thomas. “[Letter] To the Christian and Well-Disposed Citizens of the Northern States of America”
- Burleigh, George S. “Worth of the Union”

This poem indicts Southern dominance of national culture: “Down with the blood-streaked flag!”
- Downes, George. “Character of an Irish Bell-Ringer”
- Sturge, Esther. “The Judgment”

A vision of the judgment day, on which the “fiend of disquiet” takes possession of slaveholders’ souls.
- Placido. “A Dios”

Placido was a Cuban ex-slave executed in July 1843 for attempting to free the slaves of Cuba.
- Chapman, Maria Weston. “Prayer: From the Spanish of Placido”
- Bremer, Fredrika. “Letter on Slavery”
- Chapman, Ann Greene. “The Armor and the Prize”
- Whipple, Charles K. “The Abolitionists’ Plan”

Impassioned argument for immediate, universal [emancipation](#).
- Weston, Anne Warren. “The [Come-Outers](#) of the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries”
- Quincy, Edmund. “Philip Catesby; Or, A Republic’s Gratitude”
- James Russell Lowell. “The Happy Martyrdom”
- Phillips, Wendell. “The Constitution”
- White, Maria. “The Maiden’s Harvest”

Allegorical poem depicting the white female liberator as a Christ-like sower of seeds.
- May, Samuel J. “The Liberty Bell is not of the Liberty Party”
- Poole, Joseph. “Southern Hunting Song”
- Frederick Douglass. “The Folly of our Opponents”

Rebuts the idea that there exists an “impassable barrier” between this country’s white and non-white people.
- Poole, Elizabeth. “Stanzas, Written After a Visit to the Comeragh Mountain, County Waterford”
- Clapp, Henry Jr. “Modern Christianity”
- Barton, Bernard. “A Sonnet [Heart-stirring text! Proclaim it far and wide]”
- Remond, Charles Lenox. “The New Age of Anti-Slavery”

Condemns racism as well as slavery.
- Garrison, William Lloyd. “The Triumph of Freedom”
- May, Samuel J. “Fidelity”
- Parkman, John. “Word and Work Worship” 6 (1845):
- Kelly, Abby. “What is Real Anti-Slavery Work?”
- Hempstead, Martha. “The Fugitive”
- Grew, Mary. “The Dangers of the Cause”
- Crosse, Andrew. “Emancipation in the British Isles”
- Wright, Paulina S. “The Grand Difficulty”
- Nathaniel Peabody Rogers. “The Anti-Slavery Platform”
- Garrison, William Lloyd. “The American Union”

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- Murray, J. Oswald. “To the Ministers of the Free Church of Scotland: On Their Accepting the Contributions of Slave-holders, and Defending Their Doing So by Speeches Palliating Slavery”
- Thaxter, Anna Quincy. “Purity of Heart”
- Jackson, Francis. “The National Compact”
- Harriet Martineau. “[Letter] To Elizabeth Pease”





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1848

The railroad tracks at this time extended out *Manamoyik* (Cape Cod) as far as Sandwich. However, a Cape Cod Come-Outer, a “white bearded queer chap,” instead of riding the rails, walked from the Cape to [Boston](#), and slept overnight in a hayloft, in order to attend an anti-Sabbatarian convention. Whenever the speakers emphasized that all days were equally holy, he disrupted the assembly by shouting out his agreement.



The term “come-outer” was part of the vernacular of revivals, where it meant a “new light,” one who was converted to a public profession of faith and entered into a new relationship with the sinful world.

COME-OUTISM

The root of the term seems to be in REVELATION 18:4:

Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.



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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s *INTRUDER IN THE DUST*



Prepared: July 4, 2013

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