

Lucretia Mott Speaking

Excerpts from the Sermons & Speeches
of a Famous Nineteenth Century
Quaker Minister & Reformer

COMPILED BY
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR Assistant Secretary for Information for the American Friends Service Committee, where she has worked since 1962, Margaret Bacon's professional background includes journalism, public relations, and social work. Frequent assignments have taken her to Africa, Europe, and the Orient, and volunteer service has claimed much of her time. But she has still found her way to producing six books on history and biography, the most recent being *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott* and *As The Way Opens: The Story of Quaker Women in America*.

Out of her studies on Quaker women grew her enthusiasm for Lucretia Mott. She sees in this stalwart character the great pioneer and spiritual leader of women's struggle for equality, as well as a powerful influence in turning the Society of Friends toward social action. In certain ways Margaret's own life is much like that of her heroine. Herself a Friend and deeply involved in social issues she, like Lucretia, has successfully combined these activities with wifehood and motherhood. She is married to S. Allen Bacon, and both belong to Central Philadelphia Meeting (Race Street) — a meeting which Lucretia Mott also attended.

Foreword

Lucretia Mott is remembered today as an abolitionist and a pioneer of the woman's rights movement. Less well known, but perhaps in the long run more important, was her role as a nineteenth century Quaker minister, blessed with a deep spiritual insight, and a keen analytic mind. More perhaps than any other single nineteenth century Friend, she preached a social gospel, urging Friends into positive action in the peace movement and other humanitarian concerns as well as against racial and sexual discrimination. Many Friends today who believe in translating beliefs into action have been touched, perhaps unknowingly, by her lengthening shadow.

For reform-minded Friends, it is important to rediscover the Christian basis for this tradition. For those who fear and question the role of reform in religion, it is equally important to investigate the spiritual basis from which Lucretia Mott drew her strength.

True to Quaker tradition, Lucretia Mott spoke only as the spirit moved. She never wrote a speech or sermon, and she disliked formal writing of any sort. Except for her journal, kept while she was in England, a labored biographical memoir, and her breezy, domestic-centered correspondence, we might have no record of her thought. However, it was fortunately the custom of the day for someone to take down the sermons of noted Quaker ministers, and for newspaper reporters to drop in on meetings when a speaker of the stature of Lucretia Mott was in town. As a result we do have access to her sermons and her speeches at antislavery and woman's rights conventions, though her thoughts are all strained through the imperfect comprehension of the reporter.

From these sources, as well as her letters, some of her sayings are here compiled. Her marked influence on

twentieth Century Quakerism will be apparent to the reader, as well as the depth and breadth of her interests.

For many years Friends have quoted Fox, Penn, Woolman, Barclay and other male Friends. Yet even a cursory reading of Quaker history tells us that women ministers were active also. It is hard to believe that they had less access to the Inward Teacher than their male contemporaries. Rather it would appear that the world's culture intervened, making them less apt to set their thoughts down on paper, or less apt to offer their journals to posterity. It is time that we as a Society recapture this lost treasure, by digging out the words of women ministers. Hugh Barbour has begun by setting forth the words of Margaret Fell. Hopefully the words of Lucretia Mott will be followed by others, so we will begin to recover all aspects of our spiritual heritage.

Margaret Hope Bacon

Lucretia Mott: Memoranda On Herself

A native of the Island of Nantucket, — of the Coffins and Macys on the father's side, and of the Folgers on the mother's; through them related to Dr. Franklin.

Born in 1793. During childhood was made actively useful to my mother, who, in the absence of my father, on a long voyage, was engaged in mercantile business, often going to Boston and purchasing goods in exchange for oil and candles, the staple of the island. The exercise of women's talents in this line, as well as the general care which devolved upon them in the absence of their husbands, tended to develop their intellectual powers and strengthen them mentally and physically.

In 1804 my father's family removed to Boston, and in the public and private schools of that city I mingled with all classes without distinction. My parents were of the religious society of Friends, and endeavored to preserve in their children the peculiarities of that sect, as well as to instil its more important principles. My father had a desire to make his daughters useful. At fourteen years of age I was placed with a younger sister, at the Friends' Boarding-School, in Dutchess County, State of New York; and continued there for more than two years without returning home. At fifteen, one of the teachers was leaving the school, I was chosen as an assistant, in her place. Pleased with the promotion, I strove hard to give satisfaction, and was gratified, on leaving the school, to have an offer of a situation as teacher, if I was disposed to remain, and informed that my services should entitle another sister to her education without charge. My father was, at that time, in successful business in Boston; but with his views of the importance of training a woman to usefulness, he and my mother gave their consent to another year being devoted to that institution. In the spring of 1809, I joined our family in Philadelphia, after their removal there.

At the early age of eighteen, I married James Mott, of New York, — an attachment formed while at the boarding-school. He came to Philadelphia and entered into business with my father. The fluctuation in the commercial world for several years following our marriage, owing to the embargo, and the war of 1812, the death of my father, and the support of a family of five children devolving on my mother, surrounded us with difficulties. We resorted to various modes of obtaining a comfortable living; at one time engaged in the retail dry goods business, then resuming the charge of a school, and for another year was engaged in teaching. These trials, in early life, were not without their good effect in disciplining the mind, and leading it to set a just estimate on worldly pleasures. I, however, always loved the good, in childhood desired to do the right, and had no faith in the generally received idea of human depravity. My sympathy was early enlisted for the poor slave, by the class-books read in our schools, and the pictures of the slave-ship, as published by Clarkson. The ministry of Elias Hicks and others, on the subject of the unrequited labor of slaves, and their example in refusing the products of slave labor, all had their effect in awakening a strong feeling in their behalf. The unequal condition of woman in society also early impressed my mind. Learning, while at school, that the charge for the education of girls was the same as that for boys, and that when they became teachers, women received but half as much as men for their services, the injustice of this was so apparent, that I early resolved to claim for my sex all that an impartial Creator had bestowed. At twenty-five years of age, surrounded with a little family and many cares, I felt called to a more public life of devotion to duty, and engaged in the ministry in our Society, receiving every encouragement from those in authority, until a separation among us, in 1827, when my convictions led me to adhere to the sufficiency of the light within us, resting on truth as authority, rather

than 'taking authority for truth.' The popular doctrine of human depravity never commended itself to my reason or conscience. I 'searched the Scriptures daily,' finding a construction of the text wholly different from that which was pressed upon our acceptance. The highest evidence of a sound faith being the practical life of the Christian, I have felt a far greater interest in the moral movements of our age than in any theological discussion.

The temperance reform early engaged my attention, and for more than twenty years I have practised total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. The cause of peace has had a share of my efforts, leading to the ultra non-resistance ground, — that no Christian can consistently uphold, and actively engage in and support a government based on the sword, or relying on that as an ultimate resort. The oppression of the working-classes by existing monopolies, and the lowness of wages, often engaged my attention; and I have held many meetings with them, and heard their appeals with compassion, and a great desire for a radical change in the system which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. The various associations and communities tending to greater equality of condition have had from me a hearty God-speed. But the millions of down-trodden slaves in our land being the greatest sufferers, the most oppressed class, I have felt bound to plead their cause, in season and out of season, to endeavor to put my soul in their souls' stead, and to aid, all in my power, in every right effort for their immediate emancipation. This duty was impressed upon me at the time I consecrated myself to that gospel which anoints 'to preach deliverance to the captive,' 'to set at liberty them that are bruised.' From that time the duty of abstinence as far as practicable from slave-grown products was so clear, that I resolved to make the effort 'to provide things honest' in this respect. Since then our family has been supplied with free-labor groceries, and, to some extent,

with cotton goods unstained by slavery. The labors of the devoted Benjamin Lundy, and his 'Genius of Universal Emancipation' published in Baltimore, added to the untiring exertions of Clarkson, Wilberforce, and others in England, including Elizabeth Heyrick, whose work on slavery aroused them to a change in their mode of action, and of William Lloyd Garrison, in Boston, prepared the way for a convention in Philadelphia, in 1833, to take the ground of immediate, not gradual, emancipation, and to impress the duty of unconditional liberty, without expatriation. In 1834 the Philadelphia Female A. S. [Anti-Slavery] Society was formed, and, being actively associated in the efforts for the slaves' redemption, I have travelled thousands of miles in this country, holding meetings in some of the slave states, have been in the midst of mobs and violence, and have shared abundantly in the odium attached to the name of an uncompromising *modern* abolitionist, as well as partaken richly of the sweet return of peace attendant on those who would 'undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke.'

In 1840, a World's Anti-slavery Convention was called in London. Women from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, were delegates to that convention. I was one of the number; but, on our arrival in England, our credentials were not accepted because we were women. We were, however, treated with great courtesy and attention, as strangers, and as women, were admitted to chosen seats as spectators and listeners, while our right of membership was denied, — we were voted out. This brought the Woman question more into view, and an increase of interest in the subject has been the result. In this work, too, I have engaged heart and hand, as my labors, travels, and public discourses evince. The misrepresentation, ridicule, and abuse heaped upon this, as well as other reforms, do not, in the least, deter me from my duty. To those, whose name is cast out as evil for the

truth's sake, it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgement.

This imperfect sketch may give some idea of the mode of life of one who has found it 'good to be always zealously affected in a good thing.'

My life, in the domestic sphere, has passed much as that of other wives and mothers in this country. I have had six children. Not accustomed to resigning them to the care of a nurse, I was much confined to them during their infancy and childhood. Being fond of reading, I omitted much unnecessary stitching and ornamental work, in the sewing for my family, so that I might have more time for this indulgence, and for the improvement of the mind. For novels and light reading I never had much taste. The "Ladies Department," in the periodicals of the day, had no attraction for me.

Chronology

January 3, 1793	Born Lucretia Coffin on Nantucket Island.
April 10, 1811	Married to James Mott in Philadelphia.
January 1821	Became recorded minister in the Society of Friends.
December 9, 1833	First meeting of Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.
September 26, 1839	Attended first anniversary meeting of the New England Non-Resistance Society.
June 12, 1840	Excluded from the World Antislavery Convention in London.
September 23, 1841	Sermon delivered at Marlboro Chapel in Boston on women, first of many.

- January 15, 1843 Sermon delivered to U.S. Congressmen in First Unitarian Church of Washington. One of many in anti-slavery crusade.
- June 10, 1846 An address to the women of the City of Exeter. Beginning of peace making.
- July 19, 1848 Seneca Falls Convention.
Declaration of the Rights of Women.
- February 11, 1849 Sermon to medical students at Cherry Street Meeting.
- December 17, 1849 Discourse on women in the Assemblies Building, Philadelphia.
- September 1852 Women's Rights Convention, Syracuse, New York. Lucretia also spoke at the conventions of 1853, 1854, 1856 and 1866.
- January 1866 Organization of the Pennsylvania Peace Society. In 1868 Lucretia later became president.
- May 10, 1866 Organization of the American Equal Rights Association. Lucretia Mott president.
- May 30, 1867 Organization of Free Religious Association.
- Nov. 10, 1869 Dedication of Swarthmore College.
- July 4, 1876 Addresses National Women's Suffrage Association. Lucretia president.
- July 19, 1878 Thirtieth anniversary of Seneca Falls.
- November 11, 1880 Lucretia dies at Roadside, her home in Philadelphia.

Lucretia Mott Speaking
... On Slavery

Let us put our souls in their souls' stead, who are in slavery, and let us labor for their liberation as bound with them. Let us look at the souls who are led into hopeless captivity, deprived of every right and sundered from every happy association — the parents separated from their children, and all the relations of life outraged — and then let us obey the dictates of sympathy. Let us examine our own clothing — the furniture of our houses — the conducting of trade — the affairs of commerce — and then ask ourselves whether we have not each, as individuals, a duty which we are bound to perform.

— Marlboro Chapel, Boston, 1841

I am aware of the place I stand; I know there are many who will not allow anything to be said in behalf of the slave. But I believe it to be my duty to plead the cause of the poor and of the oppressed whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. I have long believed that an obedience to Christian duty required more mouths should be opened upon this subject. Yet I do not regard this as an evil resting upon a particular part of the country, but “we are all verily guilty concerning our brother,” the manufacturers of the north, the consumers of various commodities of southern productions, are implicated in this matter, while the sweets of this system are found upon our tables, we are partakers of other men's sins. What would this nation be, of what could not this country boast, if she were free of this enormous system of injustice! Nations that are subjecting their people to wrong, might then admire our free institutions and the prosperity and happiness of our land.

— Unitarian Church, Washington, D.C., 1843

I am glad of the evidence of advancement amongst abolitionists as to the commercial and manufacturing relations of the country; it being made known that these are carried on by the gain of oppression, while the North, equally with the South, is building its house by unrighteousness, and its church by wrong, “using its neighbors’ services without wages, and giving him not for his work.” It is beginning to be seen that they must despise the gain of oppression and deny themselves the blood-bought sweets and the blood-stained cotton that has come through this corrupt channel. They feel that they are called upon not to be partakers of other men’s sins, and not to participate in this matter, except so far as in the general admixture of things, they are necessarily involved, while they live in the country. The fact that they are also implicated in other oppressive systems — by the use of the products of human labor, ought not to discourage them ...the axe was first laid at the corrupt tree of human slavery, and through this their eyes have been anointed more clearly to behold what are the universal rights of man. None are more ready to assist the oppressed laborers to obtain his rights than they. Let them be faithful to their trust, so shall their work be blest, not only to the poor slave, but to all those who are in any way wronged and injured.

— Address, “The Law of Progress,” New York, 1848

We are all guilty of the blood of our brother. The crime is national. We are all involved in it; and how can we go forth and profess to believe the faith of the Son of God, with all these great wrongs and evils clinging to us, and we upholding them? Have we nothing to do with it? Everyone has a responsibility in it. We are called to bear our testimony against sin, of whatever form, in whatever way presented. And how are we doing it? By partaking of the fruits of the slave’s toil. Our garments are all stained with the blood of

the slave. Let us then be clean handed. Seek to be so, and if we find the monstrous evil so interwoven with what we have to do politically, commercially by manufacturing interests, by our domestic relations, then so much the more need is there for our laboring.

— Sermon, Yardleyville, Pa., 1858

... On Women

Our foolish women set their faces so against any change — hugging their chains so hard I despair of any advance in our day.

— Lucretia Mott to Phebe W. Post, 3-26-1836

I long for the day my sisters will rise, and occupy the sphere to which they are called by their high nature and destiny.

— Marlboro Chapel, Boston, 1841

While in Western New York we attended two conventions called to consider the relative position of woman in society ...one held at Seneca Falls and the other in Rochester. The attendance and interest manifested were greatly encouraging, and give hope that this long neglected subject will soon begin to receive the attention that its importance demands.

I have received some cheering letters upon the subject since our return home — one from Massachusetts, while on the other hand, private and public testimonies have been borne against the movement. This must serve to impress the necessity of repeated meetings of similar character. All these subjects of reform are kindred in their nature, and giving to each the proper consideration, will tend to strengthen and nerve the mind for all — so that the abolitionist will not wax weaker in his advocacy of immediate

emancipation. We will not love the slave the less, in loving universal humanity more.

— Lucretia Mott to Edmund Quincy, 8-24-1848,
The Liberator, (10-6-1848)

The question is often asked, what does woman want more than she enjoys? What is she seeking to obtain? Of what rights is she deprived? What privileges are withheld from her? I answer, she asks nothing as a favor, but as a right, she wants to be acknowledged as a moral responsible human being.

— Discourse on Women, Philadelphia, 1849

Let Women then go on, not asking as a favor, but claiming as a right, the removal of all hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being. Then in the marriage union, the independence of husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.

— *Ibid.*

True, nature has made a difference in her configuration, her physical strength, her voice, and we ask no change, we are satisfied with nature. But how has neglect and mismanagement increased this difference! It is our duty to develop these natural powers by suitable exercise, so that they may be strengthened by reason of use. If cultivated and refined woman would bring her powers into use, she might engage in pursuits which she now shrinks from as beneath her proper vocation. The energies of men need not then be wholly devoted to the counting house, and common business of life, in order that women in fashionable society may be supported in their daily promenades and nightly visits to the theatre and ball room.

— *Ibid.*

Too long have wrongs and oppression existed without an acknowledged wrongdoer and oppressor. It was not until the slave holder was told “Thou art the man,” that a healthy agitation was brought about. Woman is told the fault is in herself, in too willingly submitting to her inferior condition, but like the slave, she is pressed down by laws in the making of which she has no voice, and crushed by customs that have grown out of such laws. She cannot rise therefore, while thus trampled in the dust. The oppressor does not see himself in that light until the oppressed cry for deliverance.

— Woman’s Rights Meeting, West Chester, Pa., 1852

This is called a “Woman’s Rights Convention” but the phrase “Human Rights” would more appropriately express its principles and its aims.

— Woman’s Rights Convention, New York, 1853

This Convention does not arrogate to itself the power of settling the propriety of a woman’s choosing a particular profession. The idea of the leaders of this movement is not that women should be obliged to accept the privileges which we demand be open to her. There are, no doubt, many women who have no inclination to mingle in the busy walks of life; and many would in all probability, feel conscientious scruples against voting, or taking any office under the present constitution of this country, considering some of its provisions.* That, however, supplies no objection to the coequality which we assert. This we mean to attain and keep.

— *Ibid.*

* Like many abolitionists, Lucretia Mott believed in not cooperating with the government in any fashion, while it maintained slavery “by the bayonet.”

On the island of Nantucket — for I was born on that island — I remember how our mothers were employed, while our fathers were at sea. The mothers with the small children around them — 'twas not customary to have nurses then — kept small groceries and sold provisions, that they might make something in the absence of their husbands. At that time it required some money and more courage to go to Boston — they were obliged to go to that city — make their trades, exchange their oils and candles for dry goods, and all the varieties of a country store, set their own price, keep their own accounts, and with all of this, have very little help in the family, to which they must discharge their duties. Look at the heads of these women; they can mingle with men; they are not triflers, they have intelligent subjects of conversation.

— Woman's Rights Convention, Cleveland, 1853

It has sometimes been said that if women were associated with men in their efforts, there would not be as much immorality as now exists, in Congress, for instance, and other places. But we ought, I think, to claim no more for woman than for man; we ought to put woman on a par with man, not invest her with power, or claim her superiority over her brother. If we do, she is just as likely to become a tyrant as man is; as with Catherine the Second [Catherine the Great of Russia]. It is always unsafe to invest man with power over his fellow being. "Call no man master" — that is a true doctrine. But, be sure that there would be a better rule than now; the elements which belong to woman as such and to man as such would be beautifully and harmoniously blended. It is to be hoped that there would be less of war, injustice, and intolerance in the world than now. Things are tending fast that way.

— *Ibid.*

Give me noise on this subject, a real Boanerges. It needs that the advocates of woman's rights should be thoroughly grounded, to be able to stand firm against all opposition, and ridicule and misrepresentation.

— *Ibid* .

Resolved: that as the poor slave's alleged contentment with his servile and cruel bondage only proves the depths of his enslavement, so the assertion of woman that she has all the rights she wants, only proves how far the restrictions and disabilities to which she has been subjected have rendered her insensible to the blessings of true liberty.

— Woman's Rights Convention, New York, 1856

... On Native Americans

The native Indians of our forests have their worship, and having witnessed some of their strawberry festivals and dances, and religious operations, I have thought that there was, perhaps as much reasonableness and rational worship in it as passing around the little bread and wine, or I might name, perhaps some of the peculiarities of our own people [Quakers], for all sections, all denominations have their tendency to worship in the letter rather than in the spirit — with an outward rather than an inward salvation.

— Friends Meeting House, 15th Street, New York, 11-11-1866

Our friend has spoken of the barbarities which have been practiced towards the Indians, and of their present condition of degradation in contrast with their condition when William Penn landed on this continent. It occurred to me to ask if Friends were truly alive to their situation and to the fact of the treatment they have received from the agents that have been employed by the government and

who have wronged them so shamefully, whether there would not have been more frequent and more earnest protests and appeals to the government on their behalf. We have not considered the wrongs of the Indians as our own. We have aided in driving them further and further west, until as the poor Indians said, "You will drive us away, until we go beyond the setting sun." I wonder if, with the profession we Friends have made, of care for the Indians, we have been active enough in our labor.

— Abington Peace Meeting, 9-19-1869

... On Injustice

We meet with a few individuals who hold the opinion that if less assistance were given to the poor, their energies would rally and they would make greater efforts to help themselves. The object of our institution is to aid those whose circumstances prevent their earning a subsistence in any other way, such as the aged, the sick and the infirm, and widows with families of small children, who have no other dependence for support than the needle, which too frequently furnishes but a scant pittance for the day's toil.

— *Friends Weekly Intelligencer*, Vol. VI,
No. 37, (12-8-1849), 293

Any great change must expect opposition because it shakes the very foundation of privilege.

— World Temperance Convention, New York, 1853

There is a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord among the people and I will trust the people. I have confidence in their intuitive sense of the right and of the good. It is this great heart of the people we are to preach unto, to proclaim liberty and truth, justice and right unto, and let it be done.

There is a need of preachers against the excesses of the age. There is a need of preachers against existing monopolies and banking institutions, by which the rich are made richer and the poor poorer. It is contrary to the spirit of this Republic that any should be so rich.

— Sermon, Yardleyville, Pa., 1858

It is not enough to be generous, and give alms, the enlarged soul, the true philanthropist, is compelled by Christian principle to look beyond the bestowing of a scant pittance to the mere beggar of the day, to the duty of considering the causes and sources of poverty. We must consider how much we have done toward causing it.

— Bristol, Bucks County, Pa., 1860

Reformers ought to be satisfied to be destructives — they are too apt to wish to be constructives. It only lays the foundation for future trouble & fighting when, for reputation and to please men, reformers seek to build again the things they are called on to destroy ...Statesmen and politicians and editors need constant watching, as indeed who or what class among us does not?

— Lucretia Mott to her sister, Martha Coffin Wright,
12-6-1861

The apostolic of every age, the sent-of-the-Father, are ever calling for a higher righteousness, a better development of the human race, a more earnest seeking to equalize the conditions of men. It is a disgrace on our profession of Christianity — the present unequal condition in Christendom — these vast distinctions that exist in Europe, even in England, between the rich and the poor. The lordly aristocracy, the kingly government, the aspiring priesthood there, and our own tenement houses — all these things go to show how little we have really advanced.

— Friends Meeting House, 15th Street, New York, 1866

The requirements of truth have ever been similar in all ages and as nations have been prepared by circumstance to receive it, they have ever found it requiring “righteousness and true holiness.” I want this age to be more zealous of good fruits of everyday righteousness and true holiness in business, in all transactions of life. Hearing last night some of your politicians talking together about the corruption in this state and in Pennsylvania I said, why is it that your religion is not brought into politics? Why is it that your religious worship has regard to Sabbath day devotion rather than an every day truth? Why is it that you are not uplifting the poor and the lowly?

— Second Unitarian Church, New York, 11-24-1867

The gospel understood is “glad tidings of great joy” to all people. Are you making it so? Are you doing your part to make it so? Here is this eight-hour labor demand. Do you consider that these eight hour laborers have as good right to make that demand, and to reap the fruits of their labor, as your school teachers would have, as your minister has? ...I am glad that there is a stir about these tenement houses. Let this be a country, as it ought to be, the tendency in which is to equalize society.

— *Ibid.*

I look to this class (reformers) for such changes in the commercial world, in the monetary system of the country, in all the relations of capital and labor, in all the influences around us — I look to these to do away with, to remove the terrible oppression, the terrible wrongs which so large a part of our fellow beings in this and other lands are groaning under, and which can only be removed by the Divine power opening and putting it into the heart of the people to plead in their behalf. I say the only means I know of appointed by God in any age of the world, is the faithfulness of his children,

the obedience of those who are sent the Sons of Him in every age, the Messiahs of their age, who have gone forth proclaiming greater liberty, greater truths to mankind, greater duty for that entire community. Yes, though they may be few in number, comparatively, though they may be weak in force comparatively it has been said, and may be said again, "I have chosen the weak things to confound the strong and the wise."

— Race Street Meeting Philadelphia, 3-14-1869

... On Peace And Non-Violence

The extreme cases which may be brought to demand corporal punishment are like the extreme cases brought to nullify so many other arguments. The reasons such extreme cases occur, is I believe, because parents are not prepared. They overlook the fact that a child, like all human beings, has inalienable rights. It is the master that is not prepared for emancipation, and it is the parent that is not prepared to give up punishment.

— New England Non Resistance Convention, 1839

I cannot but rejoice in the efforts that many are making to arrest the progress of war. The offering of a prize for the best essay on the best mode of settling international disputes, and the thousands of people who thronged to hear addresses of George Harris at Birmingham on capital punishment, afford a cheering indication of an enquiring state of the public mind in England. As enquiry proceeds, men will discover the principle of forgiveness and will feel the power of the spirit of love. They will then become more consistent with the Christianity they profess, and will find that they must no longer indulge the spirit of retaliation. In the course of our progress in the application of these

principles we shall have to put this sentiment into practice. We shall then understand the true spirit of forgiveness and conform our lives to its requisitions.

— Marlboro Chapel, Boston, 1841

We hold it the duty of Women, to look with an attentive eye upon the great events which are transpiring around them; in order that with an enlightened judgement, as well as a feeling heart, they may direct the force of their moral influence against the iniquitous spirit of war. Great is the responsibility of women in relation to this subject. The false love of glory, the cruel spirit of revenge, the blood-thirsty ambition, swelling the breast of the soldier in the battlefield; these are often the ripened harvest from the seed sown by his mother's hand, when in his childish hours she gave him tiny weapons, and taught him to mimic war's murderous game.

— Friendly address to the women of Exeter, England, Philadelphia, 1846 (anonymous, but presumed to be written by Lucretia Mott)

For it is not John Brown the soldier we praise, it is John Brown the moral hero; John Brown the noble confessor and patient martyr we honor, and whom we think it proper to honor in this day when men are carried away by the corrupt and proslavery clamour against him. Our weapons were drawn only from the armory of Truth; they were those of faith and love. They were those of moral indignation, strongly expressed against any wrong. Robert Purvis has said that I was "the most belligerent Non-Resistant" he ever saw. I accept the character he gives me; and I glory in it. I have no idea because I am a Non-Resister of submitting tamely to injustice inflicted either on me or on the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral power with which I am

endowed. I am no advocate of passivity. Quakerism as I understand it does not mean quietism. The early Friends were agitators, disturbers of the peace, and were more obnoxious in their day to charges which are now so freely made than we are.

— Reported in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*,
11-3-1860

I regard the abolition of slavery as being much more the result of this moral warfare which was waged against the great crime of our nation than coming from the battlefield. It is true the Government had not risen to the high moral point which was required to accomplish this great object and (felt) it must use the weapons it was accustomed to employ.

Another result, that we may look forward to with hope, is the removal of the death penalty.

— Excerpts from speech, Second Anniversary of
Pennsylvania Peace Society, 1868

We are not to wait until all are converted to pure non-resistants, any more than we had to wait for all to be made antislavery in heart. We are not to wait until there shall be no disposition to take revenge, but to declare that revenge shall not be acted out in the barbarous ways of the present.

— Race Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, 3-14-1869

I lament more than I can express that a military education and training is being introduced into our public schools. It has no business there. With such profession as we are making, a Christian profession, we have no right to be instructing children in the art of war, in the art of murdering their fellow being.

— *Ibid.*

While we aim to be thorough and maintain the highest peace principles, at the same time we can labor with those who do not go as far as we do. The working men of England sent us a beautiful response to our peace efforts and made an appeal which was circulated in Great Britain and Ireland. They resolved they would no longer submit quietly to being used in war, and some of them went so far as to resolve to put an end to war even if they had to fight for it.

— Pennsylvania Peace Society, 1871 (in regard to the
First International Workingmen's Alliance)

... there are rumors that some of the people will demand their rights by force. I hope as lovers of peace, for there is not true peace that is not founded in justice and right, we shall show our love for the whole people without distinction by using all proper means (to obtain justice) and by a free and open recognition of the rights of all.

... I want there should be a fullness of faith in the possibility of removing mountains on the side of right. If we believe that war is wrong, and everyone must, then we ought to believe that by proper efforts on our part it may be done away with.

... I want that we may all show our faith by our works, by our honesty and justice and mercy and love; I want love to begin with little children; they should be governed by love, and love only. I am glad the rod is so far banished in the family circles and the schools. Children love peace. The little child knows when it says, Mother, I love everybody. There is a Divine instinct in them which prompts to this feeling.

— Mother's Peace Festival. 6-21-1876

While I am in favor of peace, I am also in favor of war. I mean the firmness and combativeness that marked the antislavery warfare.

— *Ibid.*

... On The Inward Teacher

It is lamentable that the simple and benign religion of Jesus be so encumbered with creeds and dogmas of sects. Its primitive beauty obscured by these gloomy appendages of man — its investigation of honest dilemmas checked by the cry of heresy and infidelity ...I long to see obedience to manifest duty leading to practical righteousness, the Christian standard, the fruit of faith.

— Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 3-23-1841

We never attempt to draw or define the precise relationship to the father, nor is a trinity acknowledged in our galleries. We rather urge obedience to manifest duty as a means of acceptance with the Searcher of hearts. This is the old fashioned Quaker doctrine, neither is there salvation in any other.

— Lucretia Mott to Irish abolitionist, Richard Webb,
2-25-1842

I must confess to you, my friends, that I am a worshipper after the way called heresy, a believer after the manner that many deem infidel. While at the same time my faith is firm in the blessed, the eternal doctrine preached by Jesus and by every child of God from the creation of the world, especially the great truth that God is the teacher of his people himself; the doctrine that Jesus most emphatically taught, that the kingdom of God is with man, that there is his sacred and divine temple.

This noble gift of God is legitimate, a part of man's being as the moral sense with which he is so abundantly endowed, or the animal propensities which are bestowed for his pleasure, his comfort, and his good. I believe man is created innately good, and his instincts are good.

— Sermon to Medical Students, Cherry Street Meeting
House, Philadelphia, 1849

Those who go forth ministering to the wants and necessities of their fellow beings, experience a rich return, their souls being as a watered garden, and as a spring that faileth not.

— Cherry Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, 3-17-1850

We may all admit, that if we receive the Divine Spirit, in its operation in our soul, there will be no mistake, it will be found a reprovor of evil, and if we obey it, it will be regenerating in its nature. It will make us understand that which is spiritual, and to discriminate between that which is spiritual, without underrating the natural.

— Sermon, Yardleyville, Pa., 1858

I heard George Thompson, after residing in British India, speak of an organization found there the members of which did not believe in war, who would have nothing to do with warlike actions. These evidences in all parts of the world are the fullest testimony to the teachings of the divine spirit, independent of man's teachings, showing that the same divine principles of goodness and love are to be found wherever man is found, in whatever age or nation or country to some extent ...If we read the researches and examinations of those who dare to think for themselves, who dare to publish to the world their thoughts, we shall find that the truth has been the same in all ages of the world, that it has ever been given as far as people have been prepared to receive the idea that "God is the teacher of his people himself." We do not need to depend upon ministers, bibles, pulpits, teachers of any kind. We can go directly to the fountain head ...We must look for truth and love for it is from the Eternal source of light. Then let truth ever be our guide.

— "Religious Aspect of the Age," Race Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, 1-3-1869

We are not to found our veneration upon anything outward, upon any confession of times, upon any arrangements of our fathers. We are to take truth for our authority, and not authority for truth.

— Race Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, 3-14-1869

... On Religious Liberty

Where God is, there must be true liberty.

— London, 1840

I am not troubled with difficulties about the Bible. My education has been such, that I look to that Source whence all the inspirations of the Bible comes. I love the truths of the Bible. I love the Bible because it contains so many truths, but I never was educated to love the errors of the Bible ...It is a far less dangerous assertion to say that God is unchangeable, than that man is infallible.

— Cleveland, 1853

I desire the full use of intellectual and reasoning powers, while remembering that there are other faculties of human nature to be considered. True religion and freedom of thought seem to be so inseparable that I cannot make the comparison that it is better to be free than to be religious. Religion and freedom must go together. If truth were obeyed, then we should be free indeed.

— Address to the Free Religious Association, Boston,
5-31-1872

You do not hear, in any of the pulpits, a definition of what love and justice, and mercy and right are. You know and all know that they are innate, and self-defined. Therefore, I say preach your truth, let it go forth, and you

will find, without any notable miracle, as of old, that every man will speak in his own tongue in which he was born. And I will say, if these pure principles have their place in us and are brought forth by faithfulness, by obedience, by practice, the difficulties and doubts that we may have to surmount will be easily conquered. There will be a power greater than these. Let it be called the Great Spirit of the Indian, the Quaker “inward light” of George Fox, the “Blessed Mary, mother of Jesus,” of the Catholics, or Brahma, the Hindu’s God — they will all be one and there will come to be such faith and such liberty as shall redeem the world.

— Address to Free Religions Association Boston, 1873

... On Prayer

I can bear testimony here in favor of enlightened spiritual prayer and though I seldom find it my place or duty to bring my own actions into view, yet I can say that when I have risen in the assemblies of the people and with solemn sense of dependence upon a higher power, I have asked in humility for his aid to stand by and strengthen and support me, I have been blessed, abundantly blessed.

— Cherry Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, 10-14-1849

This strong confidence is what we need, so that when the fathers and the mothers of the church forsake us, we may rest assured that the Lord on high will take us up, that he will give us ability to do and suffer whatever may be necessary for the truth’s sake and his angels will be our abundant consolation and comfort.

— *Ibid.*

We need to pray for strength; for the great efficacy of prayer is not to pray for partial favors, which would be,

perhaps, in violation of the very laws we have transgressed, and which bring upon us their proper penalty, not to pray for special favors which we have no right to ask, but to pray that strength may be given us to do what is required of us, to stand fast, to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. We may not have sins to repent when brought together, if we are every day desirous to be found doing our duty, and invoking the Divine Power to aid us in this great desire of our hearts.

— Friends Meeting, New York, 1866

It is years since I have felt free to rise in time of prayer — as is the custom in our meetings — so entirely have I concurred with the recommendation of Jesus, who said, “When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and shut the door, and there pray to the Father in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” This kind of prayer is as natural to man as the air he breathes — the aspiration for divine aid, for strength to do right, the inward desire after truth and holiness, the yearning to be led to the rock that is higher than he. But when it comes to praying for rain in dry weather, or the removal of evils that have been brought upon us by our own violations of the laws of health and nature, then it is most absurd and superstitious.

— Address to the Free Religious Association, Boston, 1875

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