

Nantucket 9th Mo 24th '39

My Dear Friend  
Maria W. Chapman

My wife & self rec<sup>d</sup> an invitation to attend the anniversary <sup>meeting</sup> of the Non-Resistance Society. I had hoped till to day that circumstances would have permitted me to mingle with you, but I find I cannot. I forward this by a Mutual fr<sup>d</sup> who is going in the Morn<sup>g</sup> to Boston.

Thou art personally a stranger to me, but I have an evidence that my views & feelings are too much in harmony with thy own, for this remark to apply to any considerable extent. Thou wilt suffer in promulgating thy views, but I have no doubt thou hast counted the cost, & that the sacrifice is a freewill offering. I rejoice that there are those among our women (& the present conflict will increase the number) who tho' their name may be cast out as evil, will, in the armour of eternal truth & righteousness, yet overcome; even as David did, not only the lion & the bear, but him too, who I would charitably hope, despis<sup>d</sup>, in ignorance, the armies of Israel.

I have not taken the pen to address thee on the subject of Non-resistance, but rather to offer a few remarks touching the position which is assigned to woman by some of the Brethren. They have marked out to her what they conceive to be "her appropriate sphere". Some of the proscribed are disposed to surrender their birthright, while others, feel, that in doing so, the blessing wh. attaches to faithfulness, will also be forfeited. I would encourage such to stand fast in the liberty "wherewith Christ hath made them free".

Your <sup>N. R.</sup> society, however, recognizes the equal responsibility of man & woman, & that high & holy duties attach to each, irrespective of sex. This is the only legitimate principle, & I am convinced the more the subject is examined, the more the "veil will be rent from the top to the bottom" which now intercepts the true light from falling upon this interesting & somewhat absorbing subject. For myself, I could not attend a meeting, involving either an intellectual, moral or religious duty, where woman was by any record or vote excluded from an equal participation; neither could I contribute to the funds of such an association. Geo. Fox was right when he proposed this doctrine to the world - viz - "The equality of the sexes. No sex in souls. All one in Christ Jesus; consequently elevating the female world to the highest pitch of honour, usefulness & felicity". And I believe the system of a free gospel, which was advocated so powerfully by him, is yet to be proclaimed in the demonstration of the spirit in the 19th. Century, so that "multitudes will be moved & melted, subdued or exalted, as they were in that day by his grave & burning eloquence, & by the bold, simple dignity of the doctrines he taught." Are there not even now, among professing Christendom, many men & women, who feel that in the religious ceremonials (so called) which tradition & superstition have perpetuated among the people, there is no life-giving influence nor power; & that these ceremonials are as much an intervention to the full effusion of the Divine life or Holy Spirit, as the bodily presence of Jesus was, in the day of his outward manifestation? The views of his immediate Disciples & followers were so outward, that they did not comprehend his spiritual Mission, & even after his resurrection, they were still inquiring after an earthly kingdom: and is not the view of professing Christendom still, strikingly outward? The Apostle Paul saw the necessity of proclaiming - "Therefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea tho' we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." It was expedient that Jesus should go away in the outward, then, that the spiritual comforter might come, & hence we understand the deep import of the proposition - "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Thou wilt ~~probably~~ say, & perhaps justly, that this is irrelevant to the subject proposed; but I have been led into these reflections upon the spiritual nature of the Gospel, from a belief that when this is rightly understood, those passages in the

Ms. A. 9. 2. 12. 37  
listening to the argument between him & his fr<sup>d</sup> Colver.

Epistle to Timothy, & in those to the Church of Corinth, which according to their mere letter would circumscribe woman, ~~will~~ not ~~be~~ <sup>will</sup> be, ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~irrespective~~ <sup>irrespective</sup> of other qualifying parts; any more than the application of the strong rebuke to Peter - "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me &c" is to be disconnected from other parts, & by this disconnection, to fasten the judgment upon him, that he was not only a child of Satan, but even Satan himself.

I will however continue a little further in my digression. I have in reflecting on the various religious organizations, believed, that there are those embodied among them, who, if they could sufficiently come out from under the influence of an interested Clergy or Priesthood; if retiring from Jacob's well, they would gather to the "Gift of God" in themselves, I say, there are those who I believe might be pillars in the Lords House, & Saviours to the people, even as Mordecai, formerly, was instrumental, when Haman conspired their destruction.

Individuals brought out by such convictions, would become powerful advocates, & hence, in & through their ministrations, the Redeemers Kingdom would be enlarged & magnified. How we should again see that the "rod of Aaron had budded," & that the glory & dominion & power are of God, & not of man. In this ministry woman would stand forth a co-equal with her brother, & being baptized into the Father, Son & Holy Ghost, or in other words having been made a recipient of the "Gift of God," in its most enlarged sense, she would go forth as the woman of Samaria ~~did~~ went, having the same everlasting gospel to preach, & the same invitation to proffer - "Come see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" In this church there is no carnal weapon - No striving of the potsherd of the earth; for Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. The Lords day, is the day of his power, & as often as man comes into the spiritual worship of the Almighty, he is in the Lords day; agreeing with the testimony of John - Rev 1 - 10th. - "What an enlarged conception of Deity, & how coincident with all His works! Let holiness be the inscription to the Almighty on every day of the week, that we may truly recognize the declaration of Jesus - "The Sabbath was made for man, & not man for the Sabbath." He also directed the woman of Samaria to the one place of worship & we shall look for it, in vain, either at Jerusalem or in Samaria, outwardly. And whenever we come to the Temple appointed by the Master himself, we shall behold the Body to which the Apostle alluded, when he said - "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day, which are a shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Christ."

But it is gravely said - "The scriptures forbid women's teaching." That is, because Paul addressed some wholesome advice to a particular church, & one, too, so constituted that he admonished its members they were unable to receive meat, & therefore he had fed them with milk; & who can marvel, when he reflects upon the character which the Apostle assigns to them? The Corinthian was a very degenerate church. Who can read the 1st. 3d. 4th. 5th. 7th & 11th Chapt. of 1 Cor. without admitting this position.

It was contentious, immoral, litigious, fraudulent, carnal, drunken; & it came together not for the better but for the worse &c. Moreover, instead of mourning for its degeneracy, it gloried in it. That the women should partake of these vices, there can be no doubt, & hence the inference is irresistible, that they introduced improper questions into the Church - questions having no relevancy, either to their religious duties, or to Church government.

Who can resist this conviction, when the Apostle tells us himself, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female"; & in his practice he recognized this fully. He travelled with Priscilla, & probably, in the ministrations of the Word. How interesting & imposing is the testimony which he has left, touching the character, the eminence, the devotedness of this woman - one qualified "to expound unto the Jew Apollos the way of God more perfectly," notwithstanding he was "a mighty man & eloquent in the scriptures."

The charge was also given "Help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel &c." & there are various other testimonies to the eminent qualifications & devoted, <sup>and</sup> enlightened women. But if every thing else were abrogated, there is one declaration of the same Apostle, which covers the whole ground, & which I have already quoted. I shall <sup>again</sup> introduce it, ~~again~~ in the language of John Newton - viz - No power but that which created a world can make a Minister of the Gospel, & man may task his ingenuity to the utmost to prove that this power is not exercised on women as well as men. He cannot do it, until he has first disclaimed that simple but all-comprehensive truth - "In Christ Jesus there is neither Male nor Female".

What system is not that Book of books wrested to support? Some of Paul's writings, particularly, are ambiguous, & the Apostle Peter had a view of this when he said - "As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unstable & unlearned wrest, do they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction."

There are many noble, talented women, who are now proclaiming the truths of Christianity & the Bible, with a zeal & efficiency that will compare with the labors of their brethren, either of this or of any other country.

On the memory of one of this character, <sup>(Elizabeth Heyrick)</sup> we dwell with enthusiasm. Let any man with all his arrogance <sup>proclaim of his endowments</sup> & aristocracy of sex, let him say it is his province to teach, & woman's to hear & obey; let him even say with the King formerly - "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, & for the honour of my majesty?" & let him recount all his prayers his alms & his fasts; & what are they all, <sup>when compared</sup> with the blessing of Heaven upon her labours, effected? Not a single man only, but a whole nation were doubting - were halting. Yes, while her brother was temporizing, her penetrating vision, beheld amid the thick mists that enveloped him, a light, comparable to that which guided the wise men, formerly, to the Babe of Bethlehem. She directed his eye to it. He caught its light, & elaborated in its beams; & unborn millions, will, with grateful hearts, recal the name of their benefactress, nor cease to honour it, while it represents in the female form, the highest attributes of intelligent creation.

Shall man, then, presume to place himself merely from the circumstance of his conformation, above his sister? Shall he decree that she is in all the sacred duties of life less responsible than he? Then he must necessarily account the most degraded & worthless man, on account of his mere manhood, above the woman, whose intellectual powers are highly cultivated, & whose approximation to the character of Jesus Christ is exhibited in a blameless life and conversation."

I will not refer to living examples among American or European women, for thou knowest them well & that they are not few. I will, however, refer to one of past ages; even the wife of Pontius Pilate. If her husband had had his moral courage, he would have accepted her discriminating admonition - "Have thou nothing to do with that just man &c." & hence he would have carried out the convictions - the deep convictions of his own mind. If he had listened to his wife, he would never have released a robber & retained that just one; & hence he would have escaped the keen rebuke which the master implied when he offered the prayer (& in the spirit of non-resistance too - a principle which he invariably practiced) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I have heard of two or three men here, who refuse to sign the Constitution of the Anti-Slavery Soc. because it recognizes the equality of the sexes, & has officers in accordance with this provision. Perhaps there is among the number a professed Minister of Jesus Christ, for it is a remarkable fact that among those who do not recognize woman's equality in Christ, a large proportion, considering the relative numbers are ministers. With such abundant testimony in the Bible to the public ministrations of

women, I cannot reconcile such a position. Perhaps those very ministers are frequently admonishing their hearers of the depravity of mankind (it well they may, so the proper cause is assigned) - Perhaps they are telling them how necessary it is that the gospel word should be preached, & they may even dignify this as "the Word of God", & that tho' it is preached, yet there are many who regard it not - In truth, that every man doth not press into it -

If such is their teaching, they will find it necessary to qualify a declaration not of an Apostle, merely, but of Jesus Christ himself. And if they qualify one passage to which the general tenor of scripture is opposed, what forbids their qualifying another of a similar character; & if they assume the right of qualifying, shall they deny it to me? -

The Master says - "The law & the prophets were until John, since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, & every man presseth into it." Do other parts of the scripture,

Ruth & Harney  
worn quest  
1839

Mr Geo. Bradburn

John

Maria W. Chapman

I have enclosed a small check which thou wilt apply either to the expenses of the N. R. Convention, or to any other object connected with it which may seem advisable to thee - Please enclose our "Household Office" tract to H. C. Wright. At this very moment you are listening to the argument between him & his fr. brother.

according to their letter harmonize with this? Has it ever been verified in any age of the world? Is it verified under the preaching of those ministers, or under the preaching of any man? What then shall we do with the text? To me there is no difficulty in it. I could name a score of passages equally difficult to reconcile literally, & as isolated, which in their spirit & obvious application, so harmonize, that they clearly establish the Divine authenticity of the volume.

But I must conclude - My Eliza wishes me to say that on the reception of the letter speaking of the Fair, it was her intention to reply, but she left this land a few days, for 6 or 8 weeks, & during the time, some of our friends interested, having met thee, & communicated with thee on the matter, it seemed unnecessary again to call thy attention to the subject -

I scribbled a line to our Dear Wm L. Garrison in the spring, & directly I met its transcript in the Liberator. It was prompted by kind feelings on his part, & I let it pass but it would abridge my correspondence if I should be subject to a repetition of the kindness - I have only a place to subscribe myself, thy assured friend Ruth & Harney

Ms. A. 9. 2. 12. 37