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'That peace which human hands cannot rob me of': religious themes in the emergence of women's rights movement within Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1829-1939

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Before her life got too busy for diary writing, Angelina Grimké kept diaries between 1828 and 1833 that shed important light on the religious foundations of the women's rights movement that she and her sister launched within the antislavery movement in 1837. Born in 1805, Angelina was thirty-two years old when she became the most popular speaker sponsored by the American Anti-Slavery Society, and, on a speaking tour of Massachusetts, defied custom and her abolitionist colleagues by defending women's rights as a cause equal in importance to slavery. Her actions created a new path for women active in the Garrison movement, which in 1839 precipitated the movement's split on the "woman question."

In that defiant moment Angelina and Sarah Grimké spoke of women's rights as "god given," and so did their supporters. For example, the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society" of Providence, Rhode Island, resolved to support women's rights in 1837 with these words:

we act as moral agents and Christians fearlessly in this cause--thinking and acting in view of our accountability to our Maker--remembering that our rights are sacred and immutable, and founded on the liberty of the gospel, that great emancipation act for women.¹

Was this religious stance just posturing?--the empty recitation of a prepared cultural script? Or was it using the cultural tools of religion to shape a new public discourse about women and gender relations?

As a step toward answering those questions, today I want to explore the spiritual record of Angelina's diaries to see how she used the cultural tools of evangelical religion during the Second Great Awakening to challenge reigning paradigms in her life before 1833.² Then I use other evidence to see how religion helped her formulate a new public discourse about women's place in public life between 1833 and 1837.

Angelina's diaries help us see that she used the cultural tools of evangelical religion, consciously or unconsciously to achieve three results:

- These tools enabled her to construct an autonomous personal identity capable of resisting other forms of power in Charleston and Philadelphia.
- Very important in that regard was her construction of a large space for private reflection, which she kept secret from others.
- These tools enabled her to master the rich metaphors of religious discourse, which after 1835 infused her public voice with authoritative cultural meaning.

Spanning the five years between 1828 and 1833, Angelina's diaries reached from the year before her departure from Charleston in 1829 to the eve of her conversion to Garrisonian abolitionism in 1833. I want briefly to view five stages of her spiritual journey:

- her departure from Charleston in 1829;

- her "moratorium" with conservative Philadelphia Quakers between 1829 and 1835;
- her "conversion" to Garrisonianism in 1835;
- use of religious discourse as an anti-slavery speaker in 1836 and 1837;
- her use of religious discourse as a women's rights speaker, 1836-1837.

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The drama of Angelina's opposition to slavery, her insistence on her right to speak to audiences consisting of both men and women--and to speak about women's rights as well as slavery--make her a very compelling figure. There is material enough here without focusing on her religious motivations and spiritual history, so perhaps it is not surprising that historians have paid relatively little attention that history.³ Yet by looking closely at it we gain new insight into the impulses that fueled her resistance to the contemporary status quo in race and gender relations.

Recent writings on the transatlantic dimensions of the antislavery movement have helped us see differences as well as similarities in the British and American movements.⁴ One important difference was the explosive force with which women's rights erupted within the American movement in 1837, leading to the splitting of that movement in 1839. Women's rights advocates remained in the Garrisonian wing of the movement in the American Anti-Slavery Society, but the "new organization" (the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society) limited women's membership to auxiliary organizations, a pattern first set in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.⁵

What was it about American public culture that fostered such an explosion of women's rights in 1837?⁶ Elsewhere I have written about the differences in British and

American Quakerism that provide a partial answer to that question.⁷ Those differences have made me aware of the importance of what we might call "radical religious discourse" in Garrisonian abolition and in the women's rights movement that emerged inside Garrisonianism. By "radical religion" I mean discourse that derives its authority more from direct communications with God than from institutionalized religion.⁸ Today I want to explore that radicalism from the perspective of Angelina Grimké.

My remarks focus on Angelina rather than on Angelina *and* Sarah Grimké, not only because Angelina kept a more detailed record of her spiritual state in the years before 1833, but also because, of the two sisters, Angelina was the more important protagonist for the launching of women's rights within Garrisonian abolition. Angelina's religious quest did not stop with conservative Quakerism (as did Sarah's), but in 1835 drew her on into Garrisonianism. (At first Sarah vehemently opposed Angelina's affiliation with the reviled movement.) And in 1836 and '37 when both sisters became speakers for the American Anti-Slavery Society, Angelina was the one people flocked to hear. It was Angelina's public "performance" that generated the crowds that drew the opposition that prompted the sisters' defense of women's rights. As a speaker Sarah was adequate, but not charismatic. Sarah did the very important work of speaking and writing about women's rights, but Angelina's "performance" of women's rights as a speaker demonstrated for all to see that women could equal men's talents in public life.

How did Angelina use the cultural tools of evangelical religion to construct new choices in her life before 1833? Looking at her diaries, let's first see how those tools helped her escape from Charleston in 1829.

I. Angelina's departure from Charleston, 1829.

Across the top of the first page in her first diary Angelina inscribed the following words: "Take heed lest there be more of self than of Christ in the diary." Luckily for us Angelina ignored that admonition most of the time, and focused almost exclusively on herself. Nominally, her diaries were about the state of her soul. But substantively, they concentrated on her evolving sense of self and her communion with that self in the private space she constructed for her own personal religion.

Gerda Lerner has given us a wonderful description of Angelina's spiritual journey in Charleston that took her from her mother's Anglican church, to Presbyterianism, and finally to the city's moribund Quaker meeting.⁹ What I would add to Lerner's portrait is Angelina's effectiveness at using religious reflection to shape her own destiny. Religious reflection taught her to listen to the promptings of her own "heart" and to wait and watch for the opportunity to satisfy those promptings. Above all, religious reflection lent significance to life and her life choices. On her first day of diary-writing, she wrote:

I may be mistaken but it does seem that if I am obedient to the still small voice of Jesus in my heart that he will lead into more difficult paths & cause me to glorify Him in a more honorable & trying work than any in which I have yet been engaged.¹⁰

Religion drew Angelina into an arena of action with a Biblical scale of significance.

The chief drama in Angelina's life in 1829 was devising a means to join her sister Sarah in Philadelphia and escape from Charleston and what she later called "Slave Country." Thirteen years older than Angelina, Sarah had left Charleston in 1821 to reside with Quakers in Philadelphia, whom she had met in 1819 when she accompanied her dying father there. Another sister, widow Anna Frost, also lived in Philadelphia. Sarah

was actively recruiting Angelina to join her in Philadelphia, but Angelina felt she could not depart without her mother's approval, and her mother withheld that approval.

From January 1828 until October 1829, when her mother finally permitted her to go, Angelina's diary was filled with her spiritual struggle with the possibility that she might never be allowed to leave Charleston. This struggle was profoundly private. In it she became practiced in the art of establishing a personal relationship with God in which she placed the decision in his hands. Paradoxically, her way of retaining agency and hope was to give that agency to a higher power. In the midst of this struggle in April 1829, she wrote: "Sometimes I think resignation has been attained to, that I have given up the North and am willing to stay here. . . . this much I can say, that I do sincerely desire to give up my own will."¹

As historians who read this we might tend to think: "No! No! don't give up your own will! don't stay! Go North! -- Who cares what your mother says?" Yet from Angelina's point of view, the surrender of her will connected her with a greater power than her mother, and gave her the spiritual resources to wait out her mother's decision.

Although we might think that this permission was a nicety that Angelina could forego, it mattered much more in her society than it would in ours today. In Philadelphia in 1831, for example, Angelina was initially denied membership in the Quaker meeting that she had been attending for two years on the grounds that she had left Charleston without her mother's permission.¹²

While waiting for her mother's decision, she became practiced in the art of private reflection and cultivated a secret interior life that she shared with no one. In the summer

of 1829 she penned a moving description of her interior life as a house containing treasures that required vigilant defense.

It was shown me I must be very careful not to unfold my feeling to any for none here could understand me, the case of Hezekiah was brought before me how he showed to the stranger of Babylon the house of his precious things, the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointments and all the house of his armour and all that was found in his treasures and how the Lord commissioned Isaiah to take him that in consequence of his doing so, he should be deprived of every thing, nothing should be left. I think I was mercifully preserved from speaking to others about things I knew they would either not believe or not understand . . . I think I was very careful not to give to others the bread which was handed for my own sustenance.¹³

In addition to revealing Angelina's protective attitude toward the private spiritual life she was constructing, the passage also shows how this young woman of twenty-four was beginning to master the religious discourse that eight years later she would use with powerful effect in her public speaking. Vast stretches of her diary seem to be rehearsing this discourse, heavily laced with scriptural passages and metaphors like: "A deeper spring was opened in my heart and my soul daily drank of their hidden waters."¹⁴

II. Angelina's "moratorium" with conservative Philadelphia Quakers, 1829-1835.

Angelina's mother relented and gave her permission to emigrate in the fall of 1829. The next chapter in her spiritual development in Philadelphia created even stronger patterns of resistance to the social norms around her. These years seem to me to constitute a "moratorium" because she was separated from southern culture but never really embraced northern culture. In this process she developed capacities for independent action in which her only allegiance was to God. Toward the end of this period she wrote, "no earthly love interferes for a moment to usurp the throne of my heart."¹⁵ As was the case with Martin Luther, her moratorium

ended with a burst of transformed and transforming energy.¹⁶

Historians have noticed that Angelina was not happy in Philadelphia. I love Gerda Lerner's phrase that summarized the doldrums of those years. Commenting on the sisters' use of a simplified spelling system that their brother had developed, Lerner concluded: "That was their life, their substitute for a life in 1833." Lerner also noted that this period in Philadelphia was "like the long incubation of the butterfly in the cocoon."¹⁷

If we look more closely at Angelina's spiritual journey as depicted in her diaries, we can see what was going on inside the cocoon. Three levels of activity seem especially important.

- Angelina's immediate and enduring dislike for the Quaker community in which she and Sarah lived;
- her coping with that dislike through her continued reliance on an interior life that she kept secret from others;
- her responses to rejection by the community, especially her outrage when the most powerful family in her community publicly treated her as an unsuitable bride for their son.

Combined, these factors help us understand the courage--indeed the necessity--of her break with the Quakers. By 1835 when she encountered Garrisonian abolitionism, she was tinder awaiting a match.

When Angelina first arrived in Philadelphia she sought nothing more than a refuge among strangers, though she was very conscious of her isolation. In November, 1829, she confided to her diary:

Again and again I travel forward in my journey am I constrained to say "He hath ordered all things well" . . . my home now is just what I asked for "a

quiet retreat"--I feel like a hidden one tho' in the city and exposed to much company, still my lips are [mortificated] when among strangers and I think they know me not.¹⁸

A month later strangeness had hardened into dislike. She thought that Satan was persuading her that she was "too good to be one of them. . . .by showing me the inconsistency of the people." ¹⁹

While we can't know exactly what she meant by "inconsistency," she might have meant "hypocrisy," for while these conservative Quakers declared slavery a sin, they permitted no discussion of slavery or any other contemporary social issue. Unlike the Hicksite Quakers from whom they had recently separated in 1827 (more on that in a moment), Philadelphia's "Orthodox" Quakers sought to limit the effects of dissent within their ranks by prohibiting the discussion of controversial topics. (In 1837 the Arch Street community voted explicitly not to support Garrisonian abolition.) As Angelina wrote her brother Thomas, "We mingle almost entirely with a Society which appears to know but little of what is going on outside of its own immediate precincts."²⁰

Then and now Quaker worship consisted of spontaneous speaking by those who felt moved to speak. Although Sarah spoke often, Angelina never did, a consequence of her disdain for as well as her discomfort in the community. A month after her arrival in Philadelphia, she wrote:

Sometime it seemed impossible that I should ever be willing to join the S[ociety of] F[riends]. I felt my heart was full of rebellion & . . . think it hard I should have to bear the burden of a people I did not, could not love.²¹

But she benefited from the fact that Quaker worship matched her propensity for silence and encouraged her capacity for self-sufficiency. In the fall of 1829, she wrote:

This morning in my [cocoon?] of silence felt that Jerusalem is as indeed a quiet habitation, her gates are praise and her walls salvation, there "every

man may sit under his own vine and his own fig tree.²²

Yet by 1836 Angelina had had enough of Quaker silence. She left the community, describing its effects on her as strongly negative, writing Sarah: "I feel no openness among Friends. My spirit is oppressed and heavy laden, and shut up in prison."²³

Who were these Quakers who were more like prison guards than liberators? The Quakers with whom Angelina and Sarah took up residence in 1829, like most Philadelphia Quakers, had been converted in the 1820s by missionaries from London to adopt British innovations that made Quakers look more like other Protestant denominations, including the adoption of creeds like the divinity and atonement of Jesus and practices like the hiring of paid ministers. In the "great schism" of 1827, Anglophile innovators gained control of most of Philadelphia's large meetings, named themselves "Orthodox," and dubbed those Quakers who retained a belief in the primacy of individual conscience "Hicksites." After 1827 most orthodox meetings sought to avoid further internal divisions by banning the discussion of controversial topics, including slavery and abolition.²⁴

These divisions within Anglo-American Quakerism highlight the importance of Hicksites within American abolitionism and the conservative effects of Orthodoxy within British abolitionism on the question of women's rights. If we fast-forward to 1840, we see that those divisions and effects became visible at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London that year. The convention was held only a year after the American movement split into two groups over the issue of women's rights, with the Garrisonians remaining with the American Anti-Slavery Society, and Garrison's opponents forming the "new organization," the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which allowed

women to be members only through auxiliary organizations and denied them the kind of leadership responsibilities that Garrisonian women continued to exercise. The British conference hosts refused to seat women delegates, all of whom were sent by American Garrisonian organizations, and British women abolitionists failed to support the American women's rights advocates. Garrison sat in the visitors gallery with the American women delegates, expressing his alienation from the British convention hosts as well as his support for women's rights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, who first met in London, resolved to hold a women's rights convention in the United States, which they eventually did in Seneca Falls in 1848.²⁵

As I have written elsewhere, this division over women's rights at London in 1840 had religious roots. Most of the American women delegates were Hicksite Quakers, whose religious communities retained more of the original radicalism of 17th century Quakerism than did British Quakers, including, for example, ideas about the illegitimacy of governmental authority. This radical stream was much diminished within contemporary British Quakerism, partly because British Quakers were in the midst of a campaign to obtain suffrage for propertied Quaker men. Like other non-Anglicans in England, Quaker men were not allowed to vote. In this context middle-class British Quakers were trying to look respectable enough to be trusted with the franchise, and the adoption of rituals and beliefs similar to other Protestant denominations was part of that effort. The appearance of American women Hicksite Quakers, with their outlandish claims to be seated as equals with men, threatened to destabilize these assimilationist strategies. As one British Quaker said to Lucretia Mott in explaining why he did not invite her to his home, "I fear thy influence on my children!!"²⁶

The assimilationist agenda within British Quakerism meant that most British Quaker women had a different set of priorities from their American counterparts--civil and political rights for propertied Quaker men being at the top of their list.²⁷ When British women abolitionists did not support the American women's efforts to be seated, Lucretia Mott wrote in her diary that she was "much disappointed to find so little independent action on the part of women."²⁸ Some, particularly Elizabeth Pease and Anne Knight, befriended the American gender radicals--but religious differences loomed large in their interactions. On her first walk with Elizabeth Pease, Lucretia Mott told her diary that they "talked orthodoxy." Three days later Mott met Anne Knight, who, "enlarged on the importance of belief in the Atonement."²⁹

Angelina's diary in 1832 contains one brief but fascinating reference to an opponent to the new ritual in her Orthodox community. That autumn she joined a reading group "the most serious and interesting" member of which "had been disowned [expelled from church membership] some years before, because she would not rise in meeting during the time of supplication." Angelina's critique of this event went beyond sympathy with the dissenter to express spiritual--perhaps also physical--attraction.

I never believed that either self will or obstinacy had been the cause of such a deviation from our established order, but a deep conviction of duty, and tho' I felt no unity with the spirit which I believed had induced her to pursue such a course, yet there was something so sweet, so meek and lowly about her that I could not help feeling drawn to her and she was as unexpectedly and as strongly attracted to me & even more so, I think. . . . From time to time my mind has been exercised about her and lately I have apprehended that when opportunity offered I should have to open a conversation with her about it.³⁰

Unfortunately that's all we know about the relationship, but it is interesting to note that one of Angelina's strongest expressions of solidarity during her four years of diary writing about life in this Quaker community included her "attraction" to this

dissenter against the new ritual.

Angelina's exit from this community occurred when she shifted her religious quest to Garrisonian abolitionism, but it was also partly due to the community's effort to disown her. Her diary depicts two such occasions. The first came in the spring of 1831, when women Overseers denied her application for membership on the grounds that her place was with her aged mother in Charleston. Insulted and distraught, Angelina played the slavery card:

My tears which had before only stolen down my cheeks now flowed in torrents. . . . As soon as I could command myself I remarked that it felt deeply humbling and wounding to me that M. should think we had committed a breach of duty in leaving Mother--that she was in excellent health and had other daughters with her and that I believed it must be very peculiar which would render it binding on any one who had embraced the principle of Friends to live in a Slave Country. And that I could not feel it my duty to subject myself to the suffering of mind necessarily occasioned by it. . . . that it was not only with her consent that we had left C[harleston] but that knowing how much we suffered there she did not wish to see us live there.³¹

The Overseers retreated and Angelina was admitted to membership.

The second disowning came a year and a half later from one of the most powerful families in the community. Their son had begun to court Angelina as soon as she was admitted to membership, but he died in September, 1832, in a cholera epidemic, and they refused to permit her to attend the funeral or to occupy a place of honor among the grieving family members. The family probably had multiple reasons for their animosity, including Angelina's own ambivalence toward the marriage. Soon after the courtship began she had visited Hartford, Connecticut to explore the possibility of studying at Catharine Beecher's female seminary, and upon her return squelched the courtship by announcing her intention of going to Hartford. Still ambivalent, she changed her mind and tried to renew the courtship,

which was only fully restored at the time of her suitor's death.

Angelina took her exclusion from the funeral honors quite hard. She wrote at length about "the fiery trial thro' which I have been lately called to pass," in which her humiliation at the hands of her suitor's family figured large.

The humiliation I have passed thru in going to that house, no tongue can tell. The language is constantly sounding in mine ear-- "Hitherto shall thou come but no further." If this is not a treading to war in the valley of humiliation, I know not what is, -- This is a narrow path and nothing but almighty wisdom can direct it and almighty power preserve me in it.³²

Predictably enough, Angelina retreated into silence and perfected her mastery of religious discourse by writing about her feelings in her diary.

The sorrows of my heart are like hidden waters in a deep well unseen, unknown even to my dearest friends. God only knows the grief of my soul even now when I remember the wormwood and the gall. I have exercises and feelings to pass thro' on this subject which I dare not divulge to any human being, secret baptisms which often beget the fervent prayer that I may be purified in the furnace and that this suffering dispensation may accomplish the thing whereunto it was sent, for I do believe if I am not measurably purified in these flames I must be destroyed by them.³³

By the time of her last diary entry in May, 1833, Angelina was still working on the challenge of being purified rather than consumed by the furnace of her feelings.

Two more years passed before she moved decisively out of the community, but when she did, the world knew about it. Angelina's second effort to escape from the community was more determined, more successful, and more personal. It also employed the full regalia of the religious ritual known as "conversion."

III: Angelina's conversion to Garrisonian abolition, 1835.

Historians have noticed but they have not problematized the ritual of religious conversion with which Angelina committed herself to Garrisonian abolition.³⁴ By

focusing on this conversion we can see how Angelina created a new personal and public persona that propelled her to the front lines of leadership within the abolitionist movement.

Angelina was jarred out of her moratorium in the summer of 1835 by the surge of mob violence against Garrisonians in the North and South, including Charleston, where a mob burned Garrison in effigy.³⁵ In March she had heard British abolitionist, George Thompson, speak in Philadelphia, in May she attended a meeting of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, where she might have witnessed Lucretia Mott in action. She began to read The Liberator, where she found accounts of mobs incited by community leaders who said Garrison headed a revolutionary conspiracy, and learned about the heroism and martyrdom with which abolitionists confronted the mobs. In The Liberator on August 22, Garrison named the violence a "Reign of Terror," and insisted "WE SHALL NOT YIELD AN INCH."³⁶

Galvanized by these events, Angelina joined the embattled movement eight days later, writing Garrison a letter that was filled with militancy to match his own. She sacralized his efforts--writing, "The ground upon which you stand is holy ground; never--never surrender it." She was willing to be a martyr: "It is my deep, solemn, deliberate conviction, that *this is a cause worth dying for* . . . Let us endeavor, then, to put on the *whole* armor of God, and, having done all, to stand ready for whatever is before us."³⁷

Garrison, knowing of her prominent slave-holding family, published her letter with an introduction that described her in saccharine rather than militant terms: "It comes to us as the voice of an angel," he wrote, mentioning "Its spirit, dignity, endurance, faith, [and] devotion." Nevertheless, he concluded by referring to abolitionism in a way that could

accommodate the militancy that Angelina would later bring to the cause: "We publish it, that all who are toiling with us for the redemption of the bodies and souls of perishing millions, may be with us quickened and confirmed in our good work."⁸⁸

Angelina had already left her Philadelphia community when she wrote Garrison, having found refuge with a sympathetic friend in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. A month later Sarah had recovered sufficiently from the shock of her sister's actions to write disapprovingly in her diary, "The suffering which my precious sister has brought upon herself by her connection with the antislavery cause, which has been a sorrow of heart to me, is another proof how dangerous it is to slight the clear convictions of truth."⁸⁹ For Sarah "the clear convictions of truth" lay in the Quaker admonition to be still and avoid conflict.

To defend herself against Sarah's harsh judgment, Angelina wrote her sister a full description of the religious conversion that underlay her commitment to immediate abolition. Angelina's was a classic description of the emotional process of conversion that reflected her awareness of others in the genre. First came uncertainty about her behavior--in this case, her letter to Garrison.

I . . . laid it aside, desiring to be preserved from sending *it* if it was *wrong* to do so. On Second day night on my bended knees, I implored Divine direction and next morning, after again praying over it, I felt easy to send it, and after committing it to the [post] office, felt anxiety removed, and as though I had nothing more to do with it.

Then came total self-annihilation followed by certainty.

I think on Fifth Day I was brought as low as I ever was. After that my Heavenly Father was pleased in great mercy to open the windows of heaven, and pour out upon my grief-bound, sin-sick soul, the showers of His grace, and in prayer at the footstool of mercy I found that relief which human hearts denied me. . . . Since then I have been permitted to enjoy a portion of that peace which human hands cannot rob me of, though great sadness covers my

mind; for I feel as though my character had sustained a deep injury in the opinion of those I love and value most --how justly, they will best know at a future date.⁴⁰

Angelina's conversion was her ticket of admission to a community of believers where the event was understood to connect her to an ever-renewable font of sacred energy. Her days of secret interior communion gave way to new forms of public expression.

Sarah joined Angelina in the abolitionist movement in the summer of 1836, only after push factors within her community grew too strong to ignore. Male elders had never approved of her speaking at meeting, and now--perhaps because she was associated with the taint of Garrisonian abolitionism--they openly expressed their disapproval. A presiding elder rose on one occasion, and violated community norms by cutting her off, saying "I hope the Friend will now be satisfied." Silenced, Sarah sat down. This breach of Quaker etiquette was clearly meant to silence her permanently in the meeting. Sarah wrote Angelina, "my dear Savior designs to bring me out of this place," and Angelina replied, "I will break your bonds and set you free."⁴¹ Within a few weeks Angelina had convinced Sarah of the righteousness of her Garrisonian views, and Sarah acknowledged the younger sister's leadership in setting their future course.

IV: Angelina's use of religious discourse as an anti-slavery speaker 1836-1837.

In an era that venerated the spoken word, Angelina became a master of contemporary oratory. Her achievement was highly gendered; Wendell Phillips, a prominent Boston abolitionist, said that she expressed "eloquence such as never then had

been heard from a woman." He thought that her power derived from "the profound religious experience of one who had broken out of the charmed circle, and whose intense earnestness melted all opposition." He was impressed by "her serene indifference to the judgment of those about her. Self-poised, she seemed morally sufficient to herself." She "swept the cords of the human heart with a power that has never been surpassed, and rarely equaled." Her capacity to express her feelings made audiences feel that "she was opening some secret record of her own experience"; their "painful silence and breathless interest told the deep effect and lasting impression her words were making."⁴² One Boston minister from whose pulpit she lectured said, "Never before or since have I seen an audience so held and so moved by any public speaker, man or woman."⁴³ Popular women preachers had previously drawn crowds of listeners, but Angelina was the first woman to lecture on political issues with the backing of a social movement.

In letters to her Philadelphia friend, Jane Smith, Angelina described how she used religious ritual to construct her podium presence. For example, here's how she overcame stage fright before her first talk in December 1836:

I laid my difficulty at the feet of Jesus. I called upon him in my trouble & he harkened unto my cry, renewed my strength & confidence in God, & from that time I felt sure of his help in the hour of need. My burden was rolled off upon his everlasting arm, & I could rejoice in a full assurance of his mercy & power to be mouth & wisdom, tongue & utterance to us both.⁴⁴

By June, when she spoke seventeen times in ten towns, with over eight thousand attending, this religious construction had become central to her "work process." It gave her powers that "human hands" could not take away--including those who said women should not publicly lecture on political topics. She wrote Jane Smith:

It is wonderful to us how the way has been opened for us to address mixed audiences, for most sects here are greatly opposed to public speaking for

women, but curiosity in many & real interest in the AS [antislavery] cause in others induce the attendance of our meetings. When they are over, we feel as if we had nothing to do with the results. We cast our burden upon the Lord, & feel an inexpressible relief until the approach of another meeting produces an exercise & sense of responsibility which becomes at times almost insupportable. At some of the meetings I have really felt sick until I rose to speak.⁴⁵

Thus as Angelina saw it, her success as a speaker--what we might call her charismatic performance and what she called "the results"--arose from her ability to draw on religious energy as she spoke.

It was Angelina's charismatic speaking on behalf of abolition that prompted the Massachusetts clergy to denounce her in their Pastoral Letter of early July. They specifically deplored women who assume "the place and tone of man as a public reformer."⁴⁶ If she had been a mediocre speaker with talents no greater than her relatively uninspired sister, -- if, in other words, she had spoken at the level that was expected of a woman--her lectures might not have attracted such crowds, her tour might not have attracted the full force of clerical opposition, and the women's rights issue might not have emerged so forcefully in her tour. Be that as it may, Angelina was a riveting speaker who attracted unprecedented crowds as well as forceful opposition, and responded defiantly to that opposition.

Angelina did not keep copies of her speeches, and the only transcription we have was her talk at Pennsylvania Hall in May 1838, as part of the second national women's anti-slavery convention. During her speech the hall was being attacked by a mob, which later that night succeeded in burning the building to the ground. She spoke autobiographically about slavery and her opposition to it, including a contrast between her life with Philadelphia Quakers and with the Garrisonian movement.

I fled to the land of Penn; for here, thought I, sympathy for the slave will surely be found. But I found it not. The people were kind and hospitable, but the slave had no place in their thoughts. . . . I therefore shut up the grief in my own heart. . . . But how different do I feel now! Animated with hope, Nay, with an assurance of the triumph of liberty and good will to man, I will lift up my voice like a trumpet.

Her language sacralized the suffering of slaves: "Every Southern breeze wafted to me the discordant tones of weeping and wailing, shrieks and groans, mingled with prayers and blasphemous curses." She also sacralized the abolitionist cause: "The great men of this country will not do this work; the church will never do it. . . . They have become worldly-wise, and therefore God in his wisdom, employs them not to carry on his plans of reformation and salvation." In closing, she urged members of her predominately female audience to petition Congress, saying: "We have these rights . . . from our God. Only let us exercise them."⁴⁷

V: Angelina's use of religious discourse to defend women's rights, 1836-1837.

Angelina's profoundly autobiographical message included a strong sense of her own self-worth, on which she drew strongly in constructing her historic defense of women's rights. But she had plenty of help. Women's-rights ideas were present at the beginning of her speaking career in the encouragement of abolitionist minister Theodore Weld. In December 1836 he urged her to overcome her feeling that it was "humanly impossible" for her to speak in public. Angelina wrote Jane Smith that Weld had

expressed his full unity with our [holding meetings], and grieved over that factitious state of society which bound up the energies of woman, instead of allowing her to exercise them to the glory of God and the good of her fellow creatures. In the case of the slaves, he believes, she has a great work to do & must be awakened to her responsibility &c.⁴⁸

Because radical ministers like Weld wanted to use Angelina's oratorical power to benefit

Garrisonian abolition, they encouraged her to step beyond what was customary for women.

The sisters had no trouble doing that. By February 1837 they had created a division of labor in which Angelina spoke on abolition, and Sarah backed her up with a defense of women's rights. That month, for example, before they had begun to speak to mixed audiences, Angelina wrote Jane Smith,

Sister spoke one hour on the effects on the soul, & I finished off with some remarks on the popular object Slavery is a political subject, therefore women should not intermeddle. I admitted it was, but endeavored to show that women were citizens & had duties to perform to their country as well as men. . . . I tried to enlighten our sisters a little in their rights & duties.⁴⁹

In July at the height of their speaking tour of Massachusetts the sisters gave nineteen lectures in fourteen towns, reaching nearly twelve thousand.⁵⁰ Radical minister Henry Clark Wright served as their agent, booked their speaking schedule, arranged their lodging and publicity, and supported their most radical defense of women's rights.⁵¹

However, by mid-July other abolitionist ministers, including Theodore Weld, urged the sisters not to divert their energies to women's rights and thereby make themselves "so obnoxious as to cripple your influence on the subject of slavery."⁵² Seeking to break Wright's influence with Angelina, Weld had him transferred to Philadelphia.⁵³ When other ministers urged her in August 1837 to explain to her audiences that she was interested in women's rights because she was a Quaker, Angelina emphatically rejected the idea. "We do not stand on Quaker ground, but on Bible ground & *moral right*. What we claim for ourselves, we claim for every woman who God has called & qualified with gifts & graces."⁵⁴

Defying Weld and working independently of the anti-slavery movement, in August 1837 the sisters began publishing letter essays in The Liberator that were compiled as books and published in 1838, Angelina's as Letters to Catharine Beecher . . . on Slavery and Abolitionism, and Sarah's as Letters on the Equality of the Sexes. Their most basic idea--that women and men were moral equals--was expressed in Angelina's twelfth letter, written in August, 1837: "Human Rights not Founded on Sex."⁵⁵

In her twelfth letter Angelina quoted scriptural authority for women's moral equality, "In Christ there is neither male nor female," and she developed at some length an argument that established women's equality at the time of creation.

[W]oman never was given to man. She was created, like him, in the image of God and crowned with glory and honor; created only a little lower than the angels,--not as is too generally presumed, a little lower than man; on her brow, as well as his, was placed the "diadem of beauty," and in her hand the scepter of universal dominion.⁵⁶

Angelina used religious discourse to endorse women's rights, just as she used it to endorse abolition.

Yet on this topic Angelina added another string to her bow: the moral authority of her own experience. In words that have been widely quoted by women's rights advocates ever since, she used Enlightenment human rights discourse to describe how the antislavery cause became "the high school of morals in our land" though which

we are led to examine why human beings have any rights. It is because they are moral beings; . . . and as all men have this moral nature, so all men have essentially the same rights. These rights may be plundered from the slave, but they cannot be alienated.

The same moral lesson applied to women.

Now it naturally occurred to me, that if rights were founded in moral being, then the circumstances of sex could not give to man higher rights and

responsibilities, than to woman. . . . My doctrine then is, that whatever it is morally right for man to do, it is morally right for woman to do.⁵⁷

The phrase "my doctrine" boldly asserted her own authority.

Angelina's use of the cultural tools of evangelical religion had taken her very far-- had made her a public figure of considerable repute. But she wanted something more than the spiritual equality that she had achieved. She wanted women to share in the governance of institutions. As a person whose spiritual equality was widely recognized, she saw the limitation of that form of equality. Her Twelfth Letter noted that "no Christian Society has ever [acknowledged woman's rights] . . . on the broad and solid basis of humanity." Some denominations permitted women to preach,

but this is not done from a conviction of her equality as a human being, but of her equality in spiritual gifts--for we find that woman, even in these Societies, is not allowed to make the Discipline by which she is to be governed.⁵⁸

As a spiritual equal Angelina had reached the top of the mountain and she could see the new territory that women needed to inhabit to achieve full equality with men.

For almost a decade she had used the tools of evangelical religion to construct a moral center capable of acting independently of those around her. Now she used that moral center to assert women's equality "on the broad and solid basis of humanity" as well as on religious grounds. Angelina's defense of "women's rights as human rights" connects her spiritual journey with the secular perspective of our own time. It deserves to be even better known than it is. Nevertheless, a full account of her journey requires us to notice that the journey that carried her to the point where she asserted women's equality "on the broad and solid basis of humanity" was primarily a spiritual journey. That journey equipped her with the personal and cultural skills that she needed to become a

public figure. That journey shaped her understanding of the limitations of spiritual gifts.

And that journey informed her perspective on the next step that women needed to take.

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1. "Resolutions Adopted by the Providence, Rhode Island, Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society," printed as "Voice of Woman," The Liberator, Nov. 3, 1837, reprinted in Kathryn Kish Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2000), 134.

 2. The historical literature on the Second Great Awakening is vast. Two analyses related to women show the diversity of the Awakening's effects: Nancy A. Hardesty, Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Revivalism and Feminism in the Age of Finney (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991); and Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

 3. Three recent books have helped us see new aspects of the intersection of religion and women's rights in the 1830s. Anne Speicher's 2000 book, The Religious World of Antislavery Women: Spirituality in the Lives of Five Abolitionist Lecturers (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000) offers a detailed account of the strong religious commitments of women leaders in the Garrisonian movement. Julie Roy Jeffrey's 1998 book, The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), illuminates the conflicts that women abolitionists had with the proslavery policies of American churches. Nancy Isenberg's 1998 book, Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), shows us that the women's rights movement used religious discourse in 1848. Religion is also highlighted in Marilyn Richardson's edited volume, Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Woman Political Writer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), which documents the centrality of religious discourse to Stewart's brief speaking and writing career in Boston, 1831-1833. Perhaps our most extensive writings about women's rights and religion in the 1830s has come from Nancy Hewitt and others who have studied the political culture of antebellum Quaker women. See Nancy A. Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Hewitt, "The Fragmentation of Friends: The Consequences for Quaker Women in Antebellum America," in Elisabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard, eds., Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women over Three Centuries (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989). Put together, these books suggest that there is a very big story yet to be told about the importance of religious discourse for women's rights advocates within Garrisonian abolition. Possibly because "rights talk" is so central to our understanding of women's emancipation today, and since in our own culture wars representatives of organized religion often speak in opposition to women's rights, historians of women have not paid as much attention as they might to this topic.

Our relatively thin treatment of the religious culture of abolitionist women is all the more striking because it is not true of the history of abolitionist men. Possibly because religious discourse has remained a strong component of Black civil rights movements in the U.S. during the past century and a half, historians have fruitfully and eloquently

explored the religious foundation of Garrisonian abolitionism. As James Stewart put it in Holy Warriors: the Abolitionists and American Slavery, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), immediatism was a social vision in which African-Americans "were to be fully included in the new Christian era. Slaves, their former masters, and liberated poor whites would all exercise their God-given rights to improve themselves" (p. 53). This interpretive emphasis has grown stronger over time, as exemplified by Robert Abzug's 1994 book, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) which commented on

"how closely becoming an abolitionist resembled the experience that lay at the core of religious conversion. Immediate emancipation for Garrison did not refer to a plan but rather to a total change of mind about the equal rights of slaves. . . . The proper and full acceptance of its implications on the part of a white person revolutionized his or her attitude toward blacks. Black and white, it meant, shared the same human, God-given rights" (p. 153).

The Garrisonian vision of racial equality was one of the movement's most distinctive characteristics. That vision sacralized the slave, making sacred what heretofore had been profoundly secular. To maintain that vision, a strong stream of religious faith flowed down the center of the movement, attracting religious radicals like Theodore Weld and Henry Clark Wright who dissented from the proslavery or accommodationist discourse that dominated American churches. See Caroline L. Shanks, "The Biblication Anti-Slavery Argument of the Decade, 1830-1840," Journal of Negro History XVI (April 1931); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969; reprinted 1997); Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher, Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform (Kent: Dawson 1980); and Louis S. Gerteis, Morality and Utility in American Antislavery Reform (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). For Weld and Wright, see Robert H. Abzug, Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Lewis Perry, Childhood, Marriage and Reform: Henry Clarke Wright, 1797-1870 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973; reprinted 1995). See also Stacey M. Robertson, Parker Pillsbury: Radical Abolitionist, Male Feminist (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

The *need* for religious radicalism in the abolitionist movement can be seen in the enormity of the task of advocating immediate abolition in the United States. David Brion Davis recently pointed out in an article in the New York Times that the capital invested in slaves in 1860 was three times that invested in manufacturing or railroads. David Brion Davis, "The Enduring Legacy of the South's Civil War Victory," New York Times, August 26, 2001, Section 4, p. 1. Slavery was abolished in British territories by acts of Parliament in 1833 and 1838. For a view of British governmental policy, see William A. Green, British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). It took one of the bloodiest wars in human history to achieve the same result in the United States. Because slavery was much more deeply embedded in American political institutions, social relations, and cultural

values, the Garrisonian call for immediate abolition was much more threatening to the established order. A tiny, embattled minority in the 1830s, members of the American Antislavery Society faced violence and contempt on a scale that had no equivalent in England, and, unlike British abolitionists, they faced the opposition of most organized religion. See John R. McKivigan, The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); John Ashworth, Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, vol. 1, Commerce and Compromise, 1820-1850 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Joanne Pope Melish, Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)

4. Bonnie S. Anderson, Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Margaret H. McFadden, Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth Century Feminism (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999).

5. For women in the British antislavery movement, see Clare Midgley's superb book, Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870 (London: Routledge, 1992).

6. Thomas Bender has defined "public culture" as "a forum where power in its various forms, including meaning and aesthetics, is elaborated and made authoritative." Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," Journal of American History 73 (June 1986), 126.

7. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation:' American and British Women at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, London, 1840," in Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

8. This is my own (quite rough) definition. The complexity of this issue becomes immediately apparent when we recognize that even individual authority derived from God requires a group to sustain it. Those group processes seem to be part of the continuing vitality of religion in the face of secularization in the twentieth century. For "the need for a certain aspect of self to be seen as constituted by a heteronomous authority and not simply as autonomous," see Adam B. Seligman, Modernity's Wager: Authority, the Self, and Transcendence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 141.

9. Gerda Lerner, The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman's Rights and Abolition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), Chapter 6, pp. 66-86.

10. Angelina Grimké Diary, January 10, 1828-April 19, 1829, [Diary 1], p. 1., Jan. 10, 1828, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, University of Michigan. All diaries cited below are from this collection. To keep track of the diaries, I have numbered them

in chronological order, 1-5. I am still in the process of identifying dates and page numbers for the quotations I have used. I am grateful to Barbara DeWolfe, Director of Manuscripts at the Clements Library, for her help in my access to both the manuscript and microfilm versions of the diaries.

11. Angelina Grimké Diary, April 21, 1829-July 13, 1829 [Diary 2], April 23, 1829, p. 1.
12. Angelina Grimké Diary, July 4, 1831-July 28, 1831 [Diary 5], n.d. p. 10.
13. [Diary 2], n.d. [summer 1829], p. 10.
14. [Diary 2], n.d. [summer 1829], p. 9.
15. Angelina Grimké Diary, November 17, 1829-May 18, 1833, [Diary 4], n.d., n.p., [next to last page, late 1832 / early 1833].
16. For a description of Luther's moratorium, see Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1958).
17. Lerner, The Grimké Sisters, pp. 109, 111.
18. [Diary 4], n.d., NEEDS PAGE.
19. [Diary 4], Dec. 20, 1829.
20. AG to Thomas Grimké [1829] quoted in Catherine H. Birney, The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the first American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885; reprinted by Greenwood Press, 1969), 91.

Angelina's disappointment with her Quaker community was based on their historic prominence in the struggle to abolish slavery in the North. In 1758 the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends voted to exclude anyone who bought or sold slaves; in 1776 excluded anyone who owned slaves. Between 1780 and 1800 most Northern states enacted statutes that abolished slavery, though this was usually accomplished gradually, as was the case in the Pennsylvania "Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery" of 1780, which immediately emancipated all children born after the passage of the act, but emancipated adults more gradually. See "Abolition Statutes," in Robert H. Bremner, et al, eds., Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History, Vol. I: 1600-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 324-26. At the time the sisters migrated in 1829, Negro slavery was still not totally abolished in the North; about 3,500 persons still remained in bondage, mostly in New Jersey. See Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 12-14

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- 21 . Diary 4, Dec. 20, 1829.
- 22 . Diary 4, Nov. 22, 1929, pp. 4-5.
23. AG to SG (1836), quoted in Birney, The Grimké Sisters, p. 137.
24. See H. Larry Ingle, Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986); Thomas D. Hamm, The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press., 1988); and Robert W. Doherty, The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth-Century America (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967).
25. See Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation."
26. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in Stanton, et al, History of Woman Suffrage, I (1881), 423, reprinted in Kathryn Kish Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges within the Antislavery Movement , 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: St. Martin's Bedford), pp. 163-68, quote p. 168.
27. See Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation," esp. fns.1-10. Garrison wrote to Elizabeth Pease in June 1841, "My bitterest opponents in England are found in the Society of Friends," printed in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, 152. Not surprisingly, British Garrisonians were concentrated in areas where the sense of alienation from national institutions was deepest--i.e. in Scotland and Ireland. See C. Duncan Rice, The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861 (Baton Rouge, La., 1981). In 1841 Richard Webb, one of the few remaining British Garrisonians, explained to Maria Chapman why British abolitionists--men and women--had shifted their loyalty from Garrison to the "New Organization:" "The glory of the Glasgow antislavery [society] melted away at the breath of their priests and New Organization. . . . I suppose they whispered 'Infidel! Unitarian! Women becoming lords of the creation Non-resistance--bloodshed and anarchy.' They need have said no more when presto! all their hearers grew pale, and banished the American Society from their purses and their prayers forever." R.D. Webb to Maria Weston Chapman, Nov. 20, 1841, printed in Clare Taylor, British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding [Edinburgh, 1974], 157. In 1853 Elizabeth Pease cogently explained the transatlantic differences on women's rights among abolitionists: "I find very few people who are aware that with you all white men are on a legal equality & that consequently our class restrictions, religious disabilities, landed propertied monopolies etc. etc. all the host of oppressions under which we groan resolve themselves with you into distinctions of sex or of color. If the English public had this key to the enigma they would be a little more merciful to the transatlantic Amazons as they suppose all the advocates of woman's rights to be." Elizabeth Pease to Maria Weston Chapman, January 10, 1853, Ms.A.9.2.p.4, Boston Public Library. For the inability of Garrisonian women like Pease in Scotland and Ireland to form a group to support Garrisonians in the U.S., see Clare Midgley,

Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870, 124.

28. Frederick B. Tolles, ed., "Slavery and 'The Woman Question': Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," Journal of the Friends Historical Society, supplement 23 [1952], quoted in Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation," 314.

29. Ibid, quoted in Sklar, "Women Who Speak for an Entire Nation," 319.

30. Diary 4, n.d. [autumn 1832], p. 68.

31. Diary 4, n.d. [May 1831], p. 10.

32. Diary 4, n.d. [Sept. 1829] NEEDS PAGE..

33. Diary 4, n.d. [Sept. 1829] NEEDS PAGE.

34. My use of the term "ritual" in this context is based on the work of Catherine Bell in Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). She approaches ritual within the framework of practical activity, viewing ritual as "a way of acting that differentiates some acts from others." (ix). Bell argues that "aside from the drawing of a contrast between the ritualized activities that are being performed and other forms of social behavior. . . . [t]he strategies of ritualization are particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment. . . . An important corollary to this is the fact that ritualization is a particularly 'mute' form of activity. It is designed to do what it does without bringing what it is doing across the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking." (93). My view of religious ritual is informed by Ann Taves, Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), which views religious behavior as the product of social expectations rather than mental instability.

35. See Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing:" Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Abolitionists' Postal Campaign of 1835," Journal of Negro History 50, (October 1963), 227-38. In 1835 the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) launched a "postal campaign" that sent vast amounts of abolitionist literature through the mails that summer, 175,000 pieces through the New York City post office in July alone. Mobs destroyed these "inflammatory appeals" and attacked abolitionist meetings.

36. WLG, The Liberator, Aug. 22, 1835.

37. AG to William Lloyd Garrison, August 30, 1835, printed in The Liberator, September 19, 1835, and reprinted in Larry Ceplair, The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimké: Selected Writings, 1835-1839 (New York: Columbia University

Press, 1989), 24-27. AG offered her own life as a higher sacrifice than the sacrifice of wealth that Garrisonians were asking slave-owners to make. Her letter continued, "If we call upon the slave-holder to suffer the loss of what he calls property, then let us show him we make this demand from a deep sense of duty, by being ourselves willing to suffer the loss of character, property--yes, and life itself, in what we believe to be the cause of bleeding humanity."

38. William Lloyd Garrison, The Liberator, Sept. 19, 1835, reprinted in Ceplair, The Public Years, 24-25.

39. Sarah Grimké Diary, Sept. 25, 1835, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library.

40. AG to SG, Sept. 27, 1835, quoted in Birney, The Grimké Sisters, 127-29.

41. Sarah Grimké Diary, Aug 3, 1836; and AG to SG, both quoted in Birney, The Grimké Sisters, 143-45.

42. Wendell Phillips quoted in Birney, The Grimké Sisters, 189-90.

43. Robert F. Walcutt, quoted in Birney, The Grimké Sisters, 190.

44. AG to Jane Smith, New York, Dec. 17, 1836, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, printed in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 89-91.

45. AG to Jane Smith, Danvers, Mass., June 1837, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, printed in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 115-16.

46. "Pastoral Letter: The General Association of Massachusetts to Churches under Their Care," July 1837, reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 119-21.

47. AG, transcription of speech at Pennsylvania Hall, Philadelphia, May 16, 1838, in Samuel Webb, ed., History of Pennsylvania Hall, Which Was Destroyed by a Mob, on the 17th of May, 1838, (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838), 123-26; reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 153-56..

48. AG to Jane Smith, Dec. 17, 1836.

49. AG to Jane Smith, New York, Feb. 4, 1837, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 93-94.

50. AG to Jane Smith, New Rowley, Mass., July 25, 1837, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 117.

51. The sisters had stayed in Wright's home when they first arrived in Boston; Angelina called him "one of the holiest men I ever saw." In The Liberator Weld defended the

sisters' decision to write as well as speak about women's rights and to treat that issue as equally important as abolition. In late July, Angelina wrote to Jane Smith that "brother Wright" had converted her to his views of civil government as illegitimate power, and helped her see the "Christ . . . is our King, our lawgiver & our judge. Without these views I know not how I could press forward in the path of difficulty which lies before me." AG to Jane Smith, June 26, 1837, quoted in Ceplair, The Public Years, 140, and AG to Jane Smith, July 25, 1837.

52. Theodore Weld to AG and SG, August 15, 1837, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library, reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 127-28. .

53. Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling, 182.

54. AG to Theodore Weld, Groton, Mass., August 12, 1837, Weld-Grimké Collection, Clements Library; reprinted in Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 124-127, quote 127.

55. Sarah's writings built upon Angelina's notion of moral equality, but in my opinion never achieved Angelina's clarity with the concept. Although Sarah wrote at greater length on women's rights, it was Angelina who forged the basic idea of moral equality on which Sarah's writings rested. Sarah Grimké's feminist thought has been insightfully analyzed by Gerda Lerner in Lerner, The Feminist Thought of Sarah Grimké (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). See also Elizabeth Ann Bartlett, ed., Sarah Grimké, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and Other Essays (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

56 . AG, "Human Rights Not Founded on Sex: Letter to Catharine Beecher," Aug. 2, 1837, originally printed in The Liberator, Aug. 2, 1837, subsequently in AEG, Letters to Catherine E. Beecher, in Reply to an Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism (Boston: Knapp, 1838), and Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges, 142-45.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.