

**MOTHER
LUCY'S
SAYINGS**

With An Introduction By
Eldress Frances Carr

**The United Society of Believer's
In Christ's Second Appearing**

The Shakers

Sabbathday Lake "Chosen Land"

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The Shakers of Sabbathday Lake “Chosen Land”

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Have you already read The Biography of Mother Lucy Wright?

MOTHER LUCY'S SAYINGS SPOKEN AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND UNDER VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

INTRODUCTION BY
ELDRESS FRANCES CARR

In the ten years of Mother Ann's ministry in America, one of her major concerns was that of choosing the right leaders to whom the work of gathering converts to the growing band of Believers could be entrusted. Joseph Meacham was the first American to give himself wholeheartedly to this cause. Skilled in the art of preaching he had been active for some time in a spirited revival at New Lebanon, New York. Like so many other educated and learned men of the time he soon became interested in what was regarded as the "strange going-ons of these so called fanatics known as Shakers." Because of his remarkable gifts in argumentation and persuasion he was urged to attend one of their meetings where it was hoped he could dissuade them from their work of laboring for souls.

When word came to Mother Ann of his arrival she said to her small band, "the first man in America is coming." Even then she felt strongly the importance of securing such a person to aid in the cause. Because of the confidence and trust she placed in Father James, she sent him to talk with Joseph Meacham while keeping herself in the background. Father James realized Joseph's potential and was almost instantly struck with his fervor and depth of spiritual insight. Several times throughout the day he returned to Mother Ann in a state of emotional disturbance. After a daylong conference in which his every objection was overcome and all arguments and questions were answered to his full satisfaction, Joseph Meacham gave his full union to the cause to which he would devote his life.

With the passing of Mother Ann and Father James, both of whose premature deaths were in great part due to the physical abuse they had suffered at the hands of mobs, Joseph Meacham became the spiritual father of Shakerism. One of his first official acts was to appoint Lucy Wright as the female head of the church to work with him in the first formally ordered Ministry. This was probably not wholly unexpected, as Mother Ann had placed great trust in

Lucy. Often when Mother was away on long journeys she had left Lucy in spiritual charge of those she left behind. When in her last illness she sent for Lucy to care for her and attempted in many ways to center the thoughts and affections of the people upon Lucy as the probable one to succeed her in the gift of the "Mother Spirit."

It is interesting to note how very different these two Gospel Mothers were, despite the fact that they shared one bond in common, a deep yearning for spiritual perfection. While one had come from the poverty and urban squalor of a burgeoning industrial town, the other had sprung from the comfort and ease of colonial provincial life.

Mother Lucy was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, February 5, 1760, the daughter of John Wright who lived about one and a half miles from the former Hancock Shaker Village. Her mother was Mary Robbins who died when Lucy was eighteen years old. The Wright family possessed extensive means and were regarded as social leaders in the community. Lucy was given all the advantages accorded to girls of her station at that time. She was remarkably endowed with strength of character, intelligence, executive ability, and rich spiritual insight. Her natural physical beauty and pleasing personality combined with her comfortable home and material benefits helped to make Lucy's life a carefree and happy one. At nineteen she married Elizur Goodrich, a man nine years her senior and her equal in culture, ability and social position. His family had been among the first settlers in Massachusetts. After their marriage they settled in Richmond, Massachusetts where they soon became the social leaders of the younger set. Theirs was a happy marriage in which the religious instincts of both were strengthened by their mutual devotion. After a few months of life together they became involved in the great revival of 1779. Both were strongly affected, especially her husband who became an active sharer in the hopes, and visions of the revival. As is so often the case with revivals in which emotional fires run high, he became disappointed at the apparent failure of the work that had promised so much. He continued to pray and wait for the promised Kingdom of Christ. It was during this period of his life in which he was sincerely seeking to satisfy his spiritual hunger that he became aware of Mother's Gospel. He soon confessed his sins and having become involved with the Believers began to find the spiritual satisfaction which he had so long craved. As is often the case when two people love each other as deeply as Elizur and Lucy did, his new-found joy was tempered by the realization that she did not share his feelings about his newly found religion. He became very concerned for her soul and often discussed this with Mother. Lucy was not a person given to quick action or easily swayed by emotion. While she loved her husband deeply and wanted to share this part of his life, her natural instincts of cool, calculating discretion prevented her from joining herself to the cause in which her husband had now become so involved. Mother cautioned Elizur that he must not work on his wife's love for him in order to win her over, but that he must allow Lucy herself to make the decision on the strength of her own conviction. Elizur confided to Mother that because of Lucy's having inherited her family's pride in social position he sometimes doubted that she would ever believe and obey the gospel. Mother made no answer to this at the time but later when he was evidently under great strain because of his family situation Father William and Father James took Elizur by the arms and led him to Mother. He noticed that her face was unusually solemn and heavenly as she said to him, "Take faith, Lucy may be gained to the gospel and if you gain her, it will be equal to gaining a nation."

When she became fully convinced that Mother's Gospel was one she could embrace and one in which she might find the spiritual perfection she sought, she too became a member of the growing church. It is doubtful that we can fully realize the real mental suffering and soul searching which was a part of Mother Lucy's decision to embrace the Shaker faith. Her love for her husband was deep and even in a day when the married state was merely the way of life normally accepted, often no more than tolerated by the world at large, theirs was a marriage of love. It must have been difficult indeed to realize that in accepting this part of her husband's life it would mean giving up the married state in which two people of refined nature and high ideals had created for one another a life filled both with meaning and real happiness.

As is often the case with people who enter upon a new life, Lucy soon found many of her natural gifts fulfilled. When at the age of twenty-eight she became the female head of the church her natural capacity for motherhood evidenced itself in the care and guidance she bestowed on the young sisters and girls now under her charge. It was not an easy task and it was only through love that she could train, discipline, and inspire the young sisters and girls and educate them in the newly unfolding gospel.

Aware of the great importance of a unity in both mind and spirit within the growing communities, Mother Lucy ever sought to strengthen the concept of union as she built up the several communities given under her charge during her long and fruitful ministry. In her lifetime she had been opposed to written compilations of any sort circulating among Believers. She believed that the written word in this instance killed the spirit behind the words and opened the door to the dangers of legalism and spiritual stagnation. Following her death, however, many felt that the words of strength and encouragement which she had uttered should be gathered together and distributed for the benefit of all Believers. The first such compilations began to circulate almost immediately after her death in 1821. By 1830 they had reached definitive form. The standard compilation *Mother Lucy's Sayings*, can doubtless claim the distinction of being the only Shaker inspirational and devotional source to have maintained a continuous tradition of use down to the present day, although it has existed only in manuscript. Printed here for the first time we have the text of a late manuscript copy of 1887 still regularly read in meeting at Sabbathday Lake.

MOTHER LUCY'S SAYINGS

Young people must not expect to please themselves with every fancy, or think to have every notion they would naturally want, or to have their own ways; but they must remember that they are called to be exemplary in all things.

Brethren and Sisters, you hear a great deal about the cross; perhaps a great deal more than you want to hear, many times; but every one ought to consider that all they have gained toward the Kingdom of Heaven is by the daily cross; and all who do not carry the daily cross in all their thoughts, words and actions cannot travel far in the way of God.

Some think they have harder times than others; but such ought to consider whether there is not something in them which needs greater crosses to subdue; And don't you flounce or frown till you see whether you do not need all you have and more.

Such as you call little orders you pass by, and will say — by and by when Mother and the Elders are gone — why we did so when Mother was here, why can't we do so now? If they allowed such things, who can blame us? But I want you to remember that such things are not allowed; we do not allow disorder.

Mother in speaking to her children on Christmas said, "If there are any hard feelings, difficulties, or anything so great that it cannot be settled today, it ought to be done tomorrow; and if you cannot get hold of a forgiving spirit, do sell all you have and buy it; You have enough to part with if you will.

I desire there may be none, neither male nor female, but that labor to be peacemakers. You had better sacrifice a great deal, than not to keep peace, Brethren and Sisters.

You must not take, or give offence; If anyone will take offence, they will give an offence; And if they will give an offence they will take one: If you break the precious laws of Christ, you get off the Christian ground.

This I call a sacrifice, to give up, and to hate our nasty natures, natural dispositions and ugly appetites, with which we were all born into the world; and who is there that will flinch or give back because the way is so straight? I hope there is none!!!

I do not glory in my profession: I would as willingly be a Jew as to profess to be a follower of Christ and not be one.

I do not know but I have a different understanding of the gospel, and about the way of God from what some of you have; I thought when I first heard the gospel that I must give up

every kind of evil: I thought that *old ugly* was going to be rejected. I expected to give up pride, covetousness, deceit, lying and every bad thing if I ever went to Heaven. And if you think you can give away to backbiting, anger, crabbed and crooked ways and whatever an evil nature may lead you to and think you are going to Heaven, I want no such Heaven.

If there are any that have a disposition too good, too nice, and too pretty to be destroyed, they ought to let it be known: so that we need not expect so much of them; but my natural make and mindset is none too good to die; I do not want to save it; I hate my old natural disposition and I find need of the cross.

You ought to have love and union to each other; a godly union which is very different from a fleshly union. I would desire you would speak to each other in the new tongue, and not let the old tongue bear any rule. Just as much as you give way to the old tongue, to chafe and gall each other, just so much you are defiled.

Those who have the spirit of Christ are meek, submissive and humble; it makes them simple like children willing to do anything to find favor with God.

I want you to consider how mean and poor you are without the gift of God; this does not lift you up and make you proud and disdain submission; neither will it make you feel cast down, or despised; but by it you will feel confidence and peace.

But this great big sense makes one feel hateful and makes one look contemptible; I can almost always tell a person who feels big whenever I see such a one.

I can love and bless all; I feel that the Brethren and Sisters are my interest, and that I am theirs I feel that I cannot do without them, nor they without me. I desire that none would excuse themselves; that they cannot bless because there is something in the way; there is always room enough to bless.

I feel more concerned about the union than almost anything else. I do desire you all to watch yourselves in this point; it is a matter that all can understand, there are none of you so strong that you can divide and separate without loss. You cannot go to Heaven alone but you can be lost alone. I believe disunion will be the overthrow of many souls yet. But if any souls are lost, they will have to come down and acknowledge their own folly and guile.

If any feel as though they could not have their natures spoiled, they ought to step back and not unite with the rest in worship.

There is a daily duty to do; that is, for the Brethren to be kind to the Brethren, Sisters kind to the sisters, and Brethren and Sisters kind to each other.

You ought to be very careful how you speak to each other; speak lovingly one to another according to the simplicity of the gospel.

Mother Lucy, in speaking to a company of young Brethren and Sisters said, I was taught when I was a young believer that I had better eat my fingers off than to speak or feel against those who are before me in travel in the way of God. And it is really so, and you must not do it.

And again says Mother, you must all labor to keep good order, for it is your protection. The orders of God seem hard to the carnal mind, but I should say that there are not many, if any here present, so young but that they may see and feel the necessity of keeping good order.

To my sense, Believers are held together in union, by a golden chain, this chain is composed of the gifts and orders of God; and every order is a link in this chain; and if you break any of these orders you break this chain and are exposed to be led astray. But while you are careful to keep the gifts and orders of God, you are surrounded by this golden chain and are secure from all.

(The last foregoing sentence was spoken by Mother about fifteen days before her decease.)

Shaker Communities

THE PROPHECY

A Worldwide Kingdom of God and Zion of His Likeness on Earth (Daniel 2:44).

FOUNDER

Ann Lee, the Bride of Christ (1736-1784) of Manchester, England.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Virgin Purity, Peace, Justice and Love

Expressed Through: Celibate Life, Complete Confession and Forsaking of all Sin,
Non Resistance, Community of Goods and Divine Order.

BELIEFS

Duality of the Deity, Father and Mother God (Power and Wisdom). The Mighty Dual Spirit,
Creator of Life, Light, Truth and Love. Duality of the Christ Spirit, as manifested by Jesus Christ
and Ann Lee, Immortal Life, Progress of the Soul, Faithfulness, Lawfulness,
Equality of the Genders, Equality in Labor, Equality in Property, Temperance in all things,
Justice and Kindness to all Living Beings.

GOVERNMENT

The Head of the Shaker Order is Christ.
Represented in a Dual Order of Leaders, Ministry Elders and Trustees.

COMMUNITY

Serious Minded and Competent individuals who vow to never deny
the Father God, the Mother Wisdom, the Son Jesus Christ or the Daughter Ann Lee.

SHAKER MOTTO

Hands to work, and Hearts to God.—ANN LEE

Zion's Center Of Union

