

THE
MANIFESTATION
OF
SPIRITUALISM AMONG THE SHAKERS
1837—1847

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“Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions”—Joel ii 28

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BY HENRY C BLINN
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THE

MANIFESTATION OF SPIRITS.

I.

PRELIMINARY.

IN the illustration of that peculiarly interesting subject, which is generally known as spiritualism ; some phases of which have been manifested in our religious communities ; we are now able to present some few notes, which we trust will prove interesting and instructive to our many readers.

We have no occasion to collect data and enter into an argument, to prove the correctness or incorrectness of anything that may have been said or heard. That could better be left to those who can find pleasure in it, as they persuade

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themselves that they have found the true solution of the problem. We write only of what took place, and that without comment, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions.

Our object is simply to make a record of a few interesting incidents, of what has been termed, "A Manifestation of Spirit presence," among the Shakers, from 1837 to 1847.

Some who have written upon the subject of visions and trances, have thought best to arrange them in classes,—as religious, intellectual, or reasoning, or as conscious or unconscious, and have these brought out in accordance with the powers that are exercised.

These trances, however, now under consideration, must be classed among the religious, as they were manifested in a religious Community, and yet their presence has no special claim upon any religious enthusiasm.

But we may accept this elaborate theory in regard to the visions and trances and readily believe that those who are enthusiastically exercised on any special subject, will be more or less, susceptible to the influences arising from

this action of the mind. It becomes the active principle of their being, and time and mind are deeply buried in the anticipated plan. Reading, writing and conversing upon this absorbing theme, as the one great object, might well induce a state of visionary trance. Of this we have some noted examples, as in the case of George Fox, Emanuel Swedenborg, John Wesley, Mother Ann Lee and others.

This, however, has nothing to do with the visions of the little children, in the Shaker Community, who, in all probability had never read one page on the subject, nor spent five minutes in either writing or talking about dreams, visions or trances. Indeed, a wide margin must be claimed for the youthful visionists, who were taken as nature found them,—a company of bright, lively, wide-awake, fun-loving, rollicking children, as may be found in every city and village throughout the United States.

Their visions never came from any active, religious thought, nor from any prayerful anxiety of the mind. Neither was it from any educational lessons, by which pious teachers were

trying to make little angels of them before the proper time. Visions were not the order of the day, any more than were the spirit rappings before the appearance of the Fox children.

The origin of spiritualism with this family was through the medium of obscure and simple rappings, and were as foreign to the mind, as were the visions among the children of the several Communities. The whole affair, of both parties, at first, seemed very childish and hardly worth the serious attention of more mature age. But the intelligent taps that were heard by the little Fox girls, have made themselves heard throughout the whole earth, and thousands of believers in spiritualism have been blest through this simple medium.

The same remark may hold true in regard to the little Shaker visionists. Their simple message has become the blessing of thousands, and has placed in the heavens above them, a beautiful star of hope.

Suddenly the little children were entranced, and began to sing some very pretty songs, and then to relate the visits they were making in the

Spirit Land, in company with an angel guide.

There was no special religious protection attached to this interesting privilege, and the visionists were the same laughing, playful children on their return to their earth home, as they were before receiving the visions.

As the phases of spiritualism were changed from time to time, many subjects of deep interest were brought forward, very much to the pleasure and profit of all who were engaged in the work. Through all this wonderful manifestation of spirit influence, no instance occurred when a communication was received, either by rappings or tippings, as subsequently introduced by the Spiritualists.

A dark seance never entered the mind of a Shaker medium, and it is well for the Community that this form never became an avenue through which to seek for spiritual intelligence. "I am the way and the light," said Jesus, and it is in this light of the Christ life, that all spiritual influences should be tested. Nor did the many curiosities of spirit materialization, ever become a phase of Shaker spiritualism. There

were other things equally hard to solve, that may have been of far less value to some persons but the mediums were quite ignorant that such a wonderful materializing power existed.

To clothe a spirit with flesh and bones, in a few moments and give it the power of speech, is indeed, a wonder of the age. Those who seriously aver that they have seen this remarkable and unparalleled change take place, should know whereof they speak.

Every form of spiritualism, from the first recorded, includes more or less mysticism, and yet becomes very pleasant and acceptable to those who are interestedly engaged in it. Such may be the case in what we are experiencing even at this late date; and the different phases are enjoyed by the different parties as especially interesting and valuable, but of this each one must be his own judge. It was, however, a wise Providence that kept the knowledge of such an exhibition, from the minds of the mediums of the Community and allowed them to progress on other lines of spiritual development.

Spiritualism evidently began with the creation

of man, and is as much a part of that wonderful creative plan, as is any quality of the mind with which we are directly familiar. Our most reliable, ancient history,—the Bible, informs us that God conversed with Adam, as a man would converse with his friend, and this soon after Adam had accepted a residence in the garden of Eden. In this history Adam is denominated a son of God, and this made the conversation as that between a father and his son.

From the first chapter of Genesis, to the last of Revelation, the sacred record is filled with the most remarkable manifestations of spirit influence, and the same laws that made it possible, at that early age for the dreaming of dreams,—the seeing of visions,—the hearing of spirit voices, and the ascending to heaven in a chariot of flaming fire, also makes it possible to accomplish the same wonderful manifestations to-day. No exhibition that has taken place in modern times, through dreams or visions, or special revelations, has moved in advance of those which we find recorded in the history of the Jewish race.

Through this wonderful influence, the waters of the sea were divided, and horses with their riders passed over on dry ground. The sun was commanded to stand still, at mid-day; fire was brought down from heaven, and bread, sufficient to feed a host of two hundred thousand persons, was miraculously rained upon the earth for nearly forty years. The sick were healed, the dead were restored to life, and persons were carried bodily from the earth to the heavens.

Like the air that we breathe, these became the free gift of nature, to the just and the unjust, and were used by them as circumstances demanded.

A lack of harmony between religious parties, has always made this a subject of bitter controversy. One party demands that all these mysterious or miraculous demonstrations of the Bible or the church, as the drinking of deadly poison without harm, or the raising of the dead from their graves, should be accepted as the work of a divine power, but that all such manifestations are shockingly demoniacal if they take place beyond the pale of the church.

The more liberal professors, as well as the non-professors, believe that all those manifestations as recorded in the Bible, or that took place in the church, or among those not of the church, are all from the one, good, over-ruling Spirit, if the gifts promote good ; and that they are from an evil source if they promote evil.

We know that the prophets of Israel and the prophets of Baal never harmonized in their exhibitions of spirit influence, and indeed, they never harmonized in any of their religious views, and the Catholics and Protestants have been equally at variance.

As was the Mosaic church, so was the primitive Christian Church in its wonderful demonstrations of mysterious influences. Through this, the lame were made to walk,—the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Bread enough to feed five thousand persons was made to increase from five small loaves, and large quantities of the best of wine were taken from jars, filled only with water. Hundreds of instances, no less wonderful are recorded in the New Testament.

Probably, the exact difference between these

religious orders, in the exercising of their occult powers may never be harmoniously adjusted, as those out of the church are quite as well satisfied with the ministrations which they receive, as those who claim a churchal authority.

The religious order which stands first, after that of the apostolic, believes implicitly in the spirit manifestations that have taken place in its own church, but are quite free to denounce all that may come from other churches.

The Protestants with less active belief in any spiritual phenomena, except those recorded in the Bible, do not hesitate to denounce as spurious, all the miracles of the Catholic church, as well as all those brought forward by the Spiritualists or through those beautifully gifted minds who do not belong to any of the organized churches.

These same Protestants, however, are so limited in their illustrations of spirit influence, that we can find only a few incidents of interest.

A somewhat redeeming feature may be found in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which introduces so pleasantly the many interviews with

the departed saints, and with angel guides and protectors, throughout the whole story.

But the Protestants in their great hurry to work up a Reformation, anxiously anticipated something entirely new. They protested that all inspiration, all revelation, all prophesying and all forms of spirit manifestation came to an end with the closing of the book of Revelation. They made a strong effort to blot out what had been one of the choicest gifts of God to man, from the beginning of the creation, "and frowned down and discredited all claims to the supernatural;" and in this effort they became only a body of progressive materialists.

Dr. Martin Luther, however, retained a little of the visionary after he became a Protestant, for while sitting at his desk, he is said to have seen the Devil enter his room. For the boldness of this black visitor, the Dr. hastily threw at his satanic majesty, his well-filled bottle of ink. Subsequently, a large blotch was discovered on the wall of his room, and the inkstand was in pieces on the floor. The Devil, however, like the children of Mother Goose,—

“Skipped out and ran away,
To come again, another day.”

It is recorded that John Bunyan heard a voice from heaven.

“John Bunyan was very fond of dancing on the village green, and of a game called ‘Cat,’ till a sermon against dancing and games drew him for a time from these youthful diversions. The temptation, however, again ‘shook the sermon out of my mind,’ he says, ‘and to my old custom of sports and gaming I returned with great delight. But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game called ‘Cat’ and having struck it one blow, from the hole, and just as I was about to strike it a second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, ‘Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?’”

“Wherefore, leaving my ‘Cat’ upon the ground, I looked up to heaven and was as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down on me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punish-

ment for those and other ungodly practices."

Dr. Luther believed in the absurd superstition of changelings. The general belief was that children were liable to be changed, till they were baptized. In his Table Talk, Luther says, "Eight years ago I saw at Dessau, a changeling twelve years old. This child did nothing but feed; it would eat as much as two farm laborers. It cried if any one touched it, and was never happy but when mischief was abroad. I told the prince of Anhalt if I were in his place I would throw the child into the Moldau, and I exhorted the villagers to pray God to take away the cursed thing out of the land. They followed my advice, and their prayers were heard, for the creature died within two years."

- Luther relates the following; "A man lived in Saxony who had a 'Kill crop' (a child) and it required several persons to feed it. As he was taking it to Halberstad to be rocked by the Virgin, and while crossing a river, a Devil below the water called out, 'Kill crop, Kill crop!' and the child which had never spoken before, answered, 'Ho, ho, ho.'"

“ ‘Whither away?’ asked the Devil. ‘To the Virgin Mary to be rocked,’ said the infant. The father in alarm, then threw the babe into the river, and the two Devils, (the infant and the river Devil) floated down the stream crying, ‘Ho, ho, ho.’ ”

Luther adds, “The Devil hath the power of changing children and laying imps in the cradle in place of human beings.”

Spiritualism, however, will evidently remain one of the powerful possessors of this world so long as the race exists. Its value in the scale of good or ill must be determined by a careful investigation of the influence that it may exert upon an individual, or upon any class of people who may accept it. The advice of the Apostle on this special subject is quite to the point, and a safe rule for personal guidance. “Try the Spirits whether they are of God.” Try them by the best rule of intelligence at our command, and decide accordingly.

II.

WATERVLIET, N. Y.

The following statement is from the records of the Society at Watervliet, where the first exhibition of the trance among the children took place.

ON the 16th of August, 1837, a new era commenced in the society at this place. At first some of the little children, who were learning to sing and to read, were suddenly entranced. This fact was ascertained through the observation of more mature minds. While in this state some of the children began to shake and to whirl.

At 7-30 p. m. they were taken to their chambers for the night, but they soon began to sing and to talk about the angels. This proved to be very interesting to the listeners, and most of the family assembled to witness these new and strange manifestations. The visions and trances continued from day to day, till many others became impressed with the same gifts.

Under the direction of spirit guides they were conducted from place to place, and these guides conversed with those in the body, through the entranced persons. Without premonition they were taken on a visit to the Spirit Land, and as children, in their simple way, related all that they had seen and heard, to the great pleasure of their eager listeners. They had heard some beautiful singing, had seen some very pretty flowers, and had enjoyed a lovely visit with companions of their own age.

Attention was called to things not seen by the natural eye, and a conversation entered into with the spiritual guides, that seemed quite beyond the age of the entranced children.

An older class were soon passing away into visions and trances, and many others were exercised with a great variety of outward operations, such as bowing, whirling, and shaking.

Some would speak of what they saw, or act as they saw others act, while in a visionary state. Many beautiful songs were learned, and many interesting and wonderful experiences related, having reference to their visits in the spirit land.

A VIEW OF THE SPIRIT LAND.

“Being called upon to write, I entered the room where my things were, not knowing what I was to write. I soon had spiritual views of things which to me were very unaccountable. I saw a long table which seemed to be in a dark place, surrounded with spirits, dressed in black, from the head to the feet. They seemed to be engaged about something which I could not clearly see, but was informed that they were gambling.

I was much surprised at this, not having the least idea that spirits had the means or even the desire to gratify their evil propensities in this way. I then saw others sporting in the highest glee of carnal recreation, such as dancing, frolicking, wrestling and at various games.

While I paused in astonishment at what I saw and wondering what it meant, I was spoken to in these words:—This is the situation of those who have not been awakened to feel tribulation about their souls; who have left this world in a natural and unsubdued state, with

all the cravings of the carnal mind upon them, the same as they had while in time." *P. B.*



III.

MOUNT LEBANON, N. Y.

It was in the early part of the year 1838, that not less than eight persons entered the trance state. This was an introduction to the great spiritualistic wave that passed over the society and continued active for several years. The record of visions for some days reached the astonishing number of eighteen.

Messages were received by the mediums and spoken or written for the encouragement or the admonition of all who may have heard them. The same singular demonstrations occurred in this society, as in other societies, such as whirling, bowing, shaking, jerking or falling upon the floor and remaining for a long time as one that is unconscious. Some of the mediums were the unwilling subjects of the jerks and manifest-

ed these singular conditions whether in retirement or engaged in their daily duties, and sometimes, even while at the dining table. Spiritual gifts of all kinds were brought forward as in other places, and became one of the essential features of the work.

In 1841 written messages became more frequent. Some of these were largely of a reformatory character. Swine's flesh, foreign tea and coffee, and the use of tobacco in every form were considered objectionable for the Believers and quite forcibly discountenanced. All alcoholic drink was placed on the objectionable list.

Some of the mediums when engaged in their spiritual labors, practiced a very rigid abstinence, and for a term of six or more days, would restrict their diet to the simple fare of bread and water.

On the very highest point of the mountain, east of our village, the mediums were directed to locate the "Holy Mount," a place for worship, and for several years, the society made an annual visit to the place, and enjoyed wonderful

demonstrations of spiritual influence. This place was closed in 1854 as the journey to the "Mount" was more than many were able to accomplish.

In 1842 the Public service was closed, and the sign of a cross was placed in front of the Church. A notice was posted on the building, informing the public that the house would be closed on the Sabbath. This continued till 1845, when the Church was again opened to the public.

Companies of Brethren and Sisters marched over the fields, keeping step to the notes of some beautiful songs, and at the same time sowing the seed of blessing, with a prayer to God, that all might be worthy of his love and care.

Then came the ministration of the various nations in whom the mediums became deeply interested, and for whom they worked with untiring zeal. The writing of the "Sacred Roll" was the work of a medium who lived at Mt. Lebanon. It was the first work written by inspiration that was given to the public.

IV.

EAST CANTERBURY, N. H.

SINCE the closing of the Bible record, less attention has been given to the subject of spirit manifestations, and they have largely, faded away. So clearly was this fact recognized that its return in the simple and even childish demonstrations of 1837, among the Shakers and in 1848 at Hydesville, N. Y. were received with the greatest of astonishment.

Since that date, both in and out of the church, the belief in the unseen, and in the ministration of angels, has brought forth a powerful army of believers, whose spiritual light can never be extinguished. As strange as it may seem, this same spirit influence entered into the quiet homes of the Shakers as early as the year 1837, some ten years before the spirit rappings were heard at Rochester, N. Y.

Although the Shakers had from their first acceptance of divine light, believed in the ministration of Angels, and were often led by this heavenly influence to walk in Wisdom's ways,

yet it was to them, only the promise of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible revelation they had received the faith, that to believe and be baptized into the life of Christ, it would clothe them with a measure of the same spirit that he had when the heavens were opened, and visions and revelations were ministered to him.

Its introduction, however, into a Shaker family in 1837, was a matter of great surprise, although its simple beginnings could not otherwise than interest and amuse those of mature years, and no less all those of a thoughtful mind. All doubts and fears were, at once, dismissed when the introduction of this spirit influence was manifested through some of the youth and children.

In the autumn of 1837, the little children of this Society were visited with the visionary and trance power. Nothing of the kind had taken place at a former date, and its introduction through a class of active, fun-loving little children was nothing less than a matter of surprise, as well as of conjecture.

Abundant reasons were brought forward to

account for this remarkable visitation. To some it was the outgrowth of a natural cause,—a matter of education or moral discipline, while others could solve the problem more readily by ascribing it to some hidden pre-natal condition, and yet the problem remained. •

In and through all this worldly-wise discussion, the little children were filled with their mirth-loving plays, while the house echoed with song and laughter, either in or out of a visionary state, to the amusement and wonder of those who stood as witnesses. These visions became more and more frequent, and the interest heightened as the simple narration of these wonders kept a corresponding pace. An elder class were soon favored with visionary privileges, and within the space of a few months the same manifestations were common in every Shaker Community in the United States.

It would be interesting to be able to analyze that visionary wave, and know fully the cause of its visitation. Class after class of children, appear from year to year, just as good, just as active, and just as susceptible of spiritual influ-

ence, but the visions and trances of 1837, have not since that date, made much of a record.

Indeed, the heavens seemed to have been opened and the treasures of the celestial Kingdom were given as from the hands of angels. All hailed the dawning of this new day with gladness, and pleasant anticipations were the order of the religious service. The minds of the audience were also changed into that of astonishment.

Several individuals were suddenly whirled from their standing or sitting positions, and although spinning like a top, they did not share the least sensation of dizziness. This whirling would sometimes, continue an hour or more, while others would be shaking or skipping around the room. A great variety of operations became common among these active workers. They would, sometimes, fall to the floor and lie motionless, as if dead:—then rising, they would speak and act what they had heard and seen in their visions.

One of the most singular manifestations was that of the “jerks.” These were not particu-

larly interesting nor instructive, and many times they must have been very distasteful to the actor. The head would be twitched from side to side, and at times with extreme velocity. The arms would be thrown involuntarily in every direction, and this would often take place in the dining hall, and even when engaged in manual occupation, in the shop or in the field.

Sometimes it would occur while the medium was on the highway, very much to his own mortification, and quite as much so, perhaps, to his friends. With his arms spasmodically thrown out, and violently jerked back, he certainly must have presented a very singular appearance, and have been subjected to the derision of the general observer. The best illustration of this strange phase of spiritualism is from the pen of Richard McNemar in writing of the Kentucky Revival in 1805.

“Nothing in nature could better represent this strange and unaccountable operation, than for one to goad another, alternately, in the body, with a piece of hot iron. The exercise commonly began in the head, which would fly back-

ward and forward, and from side to side with a quick jolt, which the person would naturally, labor to suppress, but in vain. The more one attempted to stay himself, and be sober, the more he staggered and the more rapidly the twitches increased."

"He must necessarily go as he was stimulated, whether with a violent dash to the ground, and bounce from place to place like a foot-ball, or hop around with head and limbs twitching in every direction, as if they must inevitably, fly assunder. And how they could escape without injury was no small wonder to the spectators."

"At another time the mediums might be heard singing beautiful and melodious songs, without thought of being seen or heard. Gradually, the developing work moved on and individuals who had heretofore stood as erect as a statue were seen to be engaged in the most active exercise."

"Children at the age of ten years were often entranced and held in this state for several hours."

Young men and women became the willing or unwilling subjects of this new and strange visitation. During their journeys to the more spiritual sphere, they became the active mediums for singing the most beautiful pieces of music, and in their exaltation, their descriptive language was remarkably increased, as they related their wonderful visits to the spirit land, and pictured the lovely mansions prepared for the faithful in Christ.

These visionists in their ethereal life would march and dance as did those whom they were visiting. They personated many of the dear friends in spirit life, who had entered the Holy City, long before some of the mediums were born. This was so correctly done, both by speech and gesture that the individuals were recognized without a moment's hesitation.

A spirit guide generally took charge of the visionists, and conducted them, sometimes, through the abodes of the righteous, and at other times through the dwelling places of the unfaithful. All who became the subjects of visions were introduced to the abodes of both

classes, and often gave vivid representations of all that came under their observation.

As a general thing these visionists were entranced only a few hours, but instances are recorded of forty and sixty and eighty hours, and the longest term was one hundred and forty-four hours, or a period of six days.

During the year ending November 30, 1838, five visionists visited the spirit land some two hundred and eighty-nine times. Nearly sixty-five days were spent in these interviews, making their visits on an average, about five hours and one half each time. One of these visionists was entranced eighteen times during the month of March, and several of the visits were not less than twenty-four hour's duration.

While on these visionary journeys, no food of any kind was administered, as there seemed to be no action of the bodily functions. An over-anxious attendant would, at times, moisten the lips with a few drops of water, having the idea that it gave a momentary relief, but the verbal illustrations of the mediums of the visit that was being made, and the singing of the

spirit songs, gave ample evidence that there was no occasion for fear.

Sometimes the visionists would be engaged in conversation with their spirit friends, at or near the hour of midnight, or break forth into some beautiful music, much to the amusement of those who became listeners to these strange phenomena. Very interesting interviews were related of their visits to the several nations, and to the close listeners, it would seem quite like the story of "Manners and Customs," in earth life.

In 1838, three persons were so absorbed in the spirit of the visionary work that they held most of their conversation in an unknown language. This continued during a term of some three weeks. At times, while engaged in their domestic duties, it proved to be very humiliating, and at other times was a source of sad vexation.

As singular as this ministration may have been, these persons could understand those around them, yet at the same time they were unable to use their own accustomed language.

Had this been the freak of a few days, and these persons bearing each other company, we might have a slight cause for suspicion or of artful collusion.

Their occupation, however, was in different departments, and by the side of keen and critical observers who were forced to admit the case unsolved. One of this number, especially, excited the sympathy of the listeners, in the effort to make others understand what might be wanted. A thought with the medium that it might be a divine infliction for the use of an unruly tongue, at a former date, brought an anxiety for releasement, and also brought out the promise of greater carefulness and gentleness in the future.

This loss of speech occurred to the mediums in the several societies, and it was often with great difficulty that they were able to so express themselves with signs and gestures, so as to be correctly understood. It was as one might easily conjecture, a very humiliating and embarrassing position to be placed in for either a few days or weeks.

The visionists also saw and learned several beautiful forms of exercise, in which the spirits were engaged, and these were drafted for use in our own home, and are known to us as the,—

Winding March.

Lively Line.

Changeable Dance.

Double Square.

Mother's Star.

Cross and Diamond.

Mother's Love.

Elder Benjamin's Cross.

Finished Cross.

Lively Ring.

Moving Square.

Square and Compass.

Celestial March.

Many others might also be added. Visionists in the several societies enjoyed these same privileges.

In 1839 the visions as well as the many forms of spiritual gifts, now gave place to another form of inspiration which was made manifest to the mediums by impression. The same change

also took place, more or less, in the other Communities.

These persons would orally, deliver messages and exhortations, from their ministering spirits and in many cases, quite beyond the ability of the speaker when in a normal condition.

While it had been the gift of the visionists to see the many and varied, beautiful treasures of the spirit land, it now became the privilege of the visionists and no less of the impressionists, to dispense these simple gifts to others in the family. It was, indeed, a pleasant manifestation, and in some respects, a very childish affair, and quite beneath the dignity of the one who gave the present, and no less of the one who received it.

Among these simple presentations for spiritual benefit, were pens and ink, and paper; baskets of fruit, knives, forks and spoons, etc.

These seers who visited the land that we generally term the unknown, took the liberty to pass out many things that were inadmissible in the Society, upon the earth, and many things that created a surprise and maybe a smile.

When a visionist would say that the spirit of some good saint, whom we had known as one of the most self-sacrificing on earth, had sent to us a precious gem, or a jewel, or a gold chain, there certainly was an occasion for meditation.

It was fortunate, however, that they belonged to the spiritual kingdom, as no well-disciplined Shaker, would for a moment adorn himself with either gems or jewels, or be heard to encourage any person to make such a departure from the faith.

At another time there would be the presentation of bells and musical instruments. Flowers were brought and described as being most beautiful and exquisitely fragrant, and then came the many varieties of delicious fruits such as could only be found in the gardens of the spirit land.

Some of the mediums were far more susceptible of these spirit influences than others, and entered with greater enthusiasm into the very life of the work. All that they did and said would carry one with an irresistible impulse into the love and glory of the whole manifestation.

Although the gift of seeing spiritual objects, and hearing and delivering divine communications from the spirit world were among the first gifts received by the inspired mediums, yet the gift of feeling, tasting and smelling were progressively added, so that every faculty of the soul came into requisition, each to be improved in its proper place. To these were added understanding and communication, and the subject of the inspiration would from impression communicate these messages from different persons.

Mr. Dixon, an English writer, after visiting Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., wrote as follows;—"To this dogma of the existence of a world of spirits, —unseen by us, visible to them, the disciples of Mother Ann most strictly hold. Elder Frederic Evans tells me that the reign of this spiritualistic movement is only in its opening phase. It will sweep through Europe, through the world as it is now sweeping through America. It is based on facts representing an active, though an unseen force."

V.

IN 1840 another phase of inspiration was brought forward, and the mediums began to write messages, as dictated by some spirit, through whom they were in harmony. As the work advanced verbal and written messages became more frequent.

Many of these were brought forward by a class of persons, who in their normal state would have been unable to write articles with such a choice selection of language.

Some of these mediums not only wrote messages, but also wrote books of several hundred pages, which have been valuable for instruction, for reproof, for exhortation "that the man of God may be perfect, furnished unto every good work." When these inspired writers were engaged in their sacred duty, they entered an apartment devoted to this purpose, and observed the time in silence, or rather abstained from all unnecessary conversation, and fasted so far as to make their meals of plain bread, and drank only pure water. This order of

arrangement was continued more than a year.

In the ministration of Holy Wisdom, a general inspection was made of every room where any person resided. All that was held in possession came under this close scrutiny and the furniture, clothing, carpets, rugs, pictures, and in fact every article was accepted or rejected in accordance with the decision of these inspectors.

Although there were several instances where the gift of healing was acknowledged, we will make special reference only to that of Elder Eli Kidder. His health had been delicate for several years. An attack of the brain fever had left him quite feeble, so that his vision was impaired very seriously. He was now suffering from a consumptive cough, which annoyed him incessantly and produced extreme pain. He had been confined to his bed for several weeks and was so reduced in strength and vitality that he was expected to live but a few days. Skillful physicians had already pronounced his case hopeless.

Elder Eli was a man of faith, and had al-

ways been susceptible to spiritual influences. On the day that the mediums visited his home he had prepared to attend divine service, but his cough was so excessive that he was obliged to retire to his room. The medium speaking for the prophet Elisha, said to him,—

“Elder Eli, this is the Lord’s blessing, and I will shower upon you some healing love.” At the same time the medium’s hands waved above the patient’s head.

The healing began from that moment,—his cough ceased, his pains left him, and he was restored to a comfortable state of health. He was able to attend a meeting without injury. He was also able to work from day to day, and after sixteen years he affirmed that he had never enjoyed such uniform, good health as during the term since he received the gift of healing.

After he was seventy years of age, he was appointed to the Order of Elders, and remained in that office some ten years. He died at the age of 83 years, universally beloved.

In 1842 a spiritual work was introduced and called,—“The Sweeping Gift.” Four Brethren

and four Sisters were selected as mediums. Eight singers were appointed to accompany the Sweepers. This band marched in procession through every room in every building, and occupied more or less time in singing and speaking.

That it was a singular manifestation of the spirit, and in many respects both astonishing and convincing to those who were the attentive observers, could not for a moment be doubted. It was in many respects a powerful preliminary work of spirit influence, and a preparation for the "still small voice," which must be the culmination of every gospel work.

Whether manifested in dreams or visions, or speaking in tongues, or in the singing of songs, Spiritualism will ever be changing and adapting itself to the times, and to the people who present it, but it may never become the foundation upon which to build the Kingdom of God. St. Paul saw this in its true light when he wrote,—
"But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

This is not a foundational pillar ; but rather a helping hand, an angel's hand to encourage the Christian pilgrim. The better guide is love, "Love never faileth." To confirm this in the mind of the disciple, he must learn that our "God is love."

The Ministry and Elders were also in attendance with this company of speakers and singers, and occupied a part of the time in brief exhortations. This system of visiting from house to house, was made under the name of "Sweeping" as the whole work through song and testimony was one of spiritual cleansing.

Eight days were occupied in these exercises, and the sixteen persons were released from all temporal duties, during this term, and gave themselves to meditation and prayer:

Each day, however, they spent several hours in visiting the apartments of some building, and in singing and speaking, as the circumstances might demand. The company observed a system of fasting during the eight days, and subsisted almost wholly on bread and water.

This same work was repeated for some eight years, with but slight variations. Meetings were held every day, during the term, and sometimes they were very protracted, in order to accomplish all that was necessary in this wonderful spirit work.

At a later date when other degrees of spirituality, and other forms of ministration operated upon the mind, other voices gave utterance to beautiful words like the following ;—

“I shall meet the brave souls at the landing,
When shore unto shore shall respond;
When kindred and guardians are joyful
To widen the spiritual bond.
I shall meet them as friends of the Savior,
Who victory in earth life have found;
Where he triumphed, they also had conquest,
Together they reign and are crowned.”



PLEASANT GROVE.

IN October, 1842, a company of four Brethren and four Sisters, as mediums, were selected

to ascertain the mind of the spirit influence, and mark out a place on which to arrange for the meeting of the whole society.

The Ministry and Elders accompanied this delegation, and after spending several hours in walking from place to place, the mediums were, finally, impressed to select a spot about seven-eighths of a mile distant, in the midst of a beautiful grove, and on this account it was designated, "Pleasant Grove."

The work of uprooting the large trees was, at once, commenced. Great boulders were drawn from the ground, and the work of preparing the place was carried along with commendable zeal. In the following spring, work was again commenced at Pleasant Grove, and a fence was built around the premises.

A large gate was made at the north-east corner, and another at the south-east, for the use of the Brethren and Sisters, as they marched into the enclosure, in ranks of four, two Brethren and two Sisters, and was also used when necessary for carriages, in which the aged or infirm was taken to the grounds.

A house some 20x60 ft. and one story high was built on the south side for the accommodation of the whole company if necessity demanded it. Beautiful fir trees were placed near the fence, on the inside, and around the whole enclosure and these were so carefully watered, that not one failed to become a large tree.

In the center of Pleasant Grove was placed a marble slab, six feet high, three feet wide and three inches thick. It was of beautiful Italian marble. A message of considerable length was engraven on one side, while on the other was the name of the place, and the object of its erection. A bed stone had been prepared, weighing not less than a ton. This was mortised and the marble carefully inserted, and then fastened with melted brimstone. Pleasant Grove remained in a good state of preservation for nineteen years, when the house, fence and stone were removed, and no use of the place has been made since that date.

Around the center stone was another enclosure, about ten feet long and five feet wide, which was denominated "the fountain." It

was protected by a very pretty diminutive cedar fence, painted white. The tops of the posts were not more than one foot from the ground.

This same ministration was manifested in the several Communities, and corresponding places were selected, and arranged quite like the one described in the foregoing pages.

The next phase of spiritualism was the introduction of the Indian spirits. The remark, "as wild as an Indian," may become eminently appropriate in this case. Why the spirits of Indians should have special recognition in preference to others, is not within the province of elucidation, but the mediums said they were Indians, and their testimonies were accepted.

That these mediums, in many cases, were influenced by a class of crude, ignorant savages, we have not the least reason to dispute. As some of the mediums were young persons of delicate health, and of carefully, refined manners, there was a surprising change, as we heard hem converse, and saw their manner of dresst and then learned of the articles which they accepted as food.

The Indians were generally invited with a shout of welcome, and the grotesque maneuvers of the mediums excited a pleasant and kindly spirit throughout the assembly. If several tribes happened to be represented at the same time, the selfishness of human nature would soon be manifest. Their inharmony would be seen at once, and a marked quietness or sullenness would be the result.

On the disappearance of one or more of these strangers, all would become life and joy, and a return to the singing and dancing. At times a group would be seated on the floor engaged in conversation, or in singing some of their songs; others would be shouting, others laughing and still others trying to hold a conference with their white friends. These spirits were gifted in the singing of songs, and as many as twenty have been brought forward in one evening.

At one time it happened that the Indian men came before the squaws, and near the close of the conference, they said they must go and leave the squaws to finish the talk, rather intimating that too much had already, been said.

If perchance, at any time, negro spirits should be manifested, the most utter disgust and hatred would be shown toward them by the natives, who were hasty in expressing their dislike, by some scornful gestures which could not be quelled, only by the interference of the white people.

Through all this singular departure from the quiet, thoughtfulness of a Shaker life, a humble dependence upon the blessing of God was a lesson often inculcated by the spirit visitants, and no opportunity was lost to have this thoroughly impressed upon the minds of the young and inexperienced.

In harmony with this spirit the whole family was asked to march through the fields, and to pray, while marching and singing, that a blessing would reward the faithful labors of consecrated toil.

The manifestation of the Shepherdess was a phase of spiritualism directly opposite from that of the Indians, or from the composite company that was occasionally recognized by the mediums. She was a keeper of sheep, in her

earth home, and represented herself as engaged in the same occupation since passing to the spirit land.

If it can be determined that the passing from life in one sphere and entering upon an active life in another sphere, is recognized, then it may not be a surprising statement from those in the spirit land, that they are engaged in the same occupations as they were previous to their exit from earth life.

If it can be proved that St. Paul was correct in his statement, "that the things which we see are the unreal, and the things which we see not are the real," then the sheep in the spirit land are more real than those sheep which are on the earth. At any rate the medium led a flock of sheep, and after making a spiritual exhibition of them, some were left in charge of her earth friends with the assurance that the sheep would not make any special trouble. After a more intimate acquaintance with the order and government of the society, this spirit through the inspired medium, became especially, gifted in the ministration of a variety of beautiful songs.

Not only was this gift manifested in singing, but it was equally effective in exhortations, in admonition for unrighteousness, and in encouragement for a good and chastened life.

This checkered exhibition of the wonderful mediumistic influences, continued with unabated interest through a larger part of the years 1842 and '43 and sometimes for days and weeks demanded the attention of nearly the whole family. It continued to come upon us as comes a series of surprises, and carried us with the force of a tidal wave into the mysterious future. While it opened a new world for the investigating mind, it pleased the curious, and at the same time proved very satisfactory to the thoughtful.

No such phenomena had ever occurred before in the Shaker church, and no one would have entertained the thought for a moment, that such a thing could exist. From its commencement in 1837, in some of its most simple forms, till the year 1847, it was an ever active

element, in all its varied changes. That it sometimes met an opposing condition will not be thought strange, as some could not or would not become receptive, and accept a place among the mediums. There were times when even the most conservative entertained smothered thoughts, "*I will not be surprised.*"

Directly, while under the solemnity of this religious reserve, in walks a medium, dressed like an Arab, and in a loud voice calls for his camel which had been stolen. Like an electric shock, it produced its effect, and some moments must pass before the nerves were again quieted. Other nations were personated and we found ourselves in close communication with the Negroes, Indians, Arabs and Eskimos.

One young woman who accepted the mediumistic privilege, astonished all her companions by catching a small snake and presenting it to every one she chanced to meet. Indifferent at the course she was pursuing, she frightened some of her more timid companions, who fled from her in disgust. In her normal state she would have been frightened herself at the sight of a

snake, and no inducements could have prevailed upon her, to have taken one into her hands.

Many of the presentations at the time were not congenial to a well-disciplined mind, and sometimes it might seem as though the mind of the medium gathered to a class, more or less, like itself, and then imposed the same upon the audience. Like gathers to like, and a God-fearing soul or disciplined medium will not be likely to accept a coarse or vulgar spirit, as a companion for presentation.

A medium from Mt. Lebanon, N. Y. visited Canterbury, and organized a company of six Brethren and six Sisters as mediums to enter a spiritual work of special significance. The two leaders carried lighted lamps in their right hands, as a sign that the light must not be hid.

Every medium wore upon the right wrist, a strip of scarlet flannel, some two and one half inches wide, and attached to this a written inscription as follows;—"War hath been declared by the God of heaven, against all sin, and with the help of the saints on earth, it shall be slain."

This company marched through all the rooms in every building and the visitation occupied some two weeks. The mediums gave their whole time as directed by the one from Mt. Lebanon. At midnight after the close of the third day, while the family was in silent slumber, a company of four Sisters passed through all the halls, and then through all of the Sisters' apartments, in the family dwelling. Their song was "The Midnight Cry."

Every sleeper, throughout the whole house, was aroused, and hastily prepared to join the ranks of the pioneers. On the next night at 2 a. m. a company of Brethren and Sisters, by previous arrangement, passed through the halls of the family dwelling, and again awakened all the inmates with their voice of song.

This midnight call had a strange effect upon most minds, by being so suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. At three o'clock the whole family were assembled in the chapel, and for an hour the voices of the speakers and singers were quite actively engaged.

After a period of four years, a class of spir-

its returned that were not, on the whole, very congenial. In the interval, the mediums had spoken and written many messages, and presented from time to time the varied operations of bowing, whirling and skipping, but with nothing that was particularly new or peculiar.

Again the mediums accepted a class of spirits that must have belonged to a very low sphere. One of these was a simple-minded fellow who gave his name as Laughing John.

The laugh, however, as silly as it may have been, was passed from one to another, till the whole body, young and old, would burst out with one merry peal of laughter.

The medium for this manifestation was not especially of a mirthful turn of mind, and gave no such exhibition when engaged in the common duties of the day.

Although there had been a great change within the space of a few years, in regard to the gifts of inspiration, which were received and brought forward for our spiritual benefit, still it seems to be from the same fountain of good in which we have so often rejoiced.

During the years 1847 and '48 the work continued about the same, and we were occasionally edified by some kind, angel voice, whose whispers of love and encouragement were very thankfully received. Many times our seasons of devotion were good and powerful, while those who were young, came forward with the spirit of testimony which like a two edged sword, cut a passage through all the evils that came in their way.

The time of our religious service seldom occupied, at this date, 1847, more than one hour. We were also enabled to conduct them agreeably to our regular order, and attended to them in their proper time.

Although we had experienced such a change, and the spirit of quietness pervaded our home, yet we were, at times, blessed with the gift of a revival. The outpourings of a special inspiration, had accomplished a great work for good in many souls, and those days of labor, with hours of bitter grief, and the humiliating exercises that many were called to pass through, will never vanish away.

But whenever the heavens are opened, and the gift of inspiration is manifested, and the good angels condescend to minister to us, we shall view the work with interest, and enjoy the treasures which shall flow from the fountain of God's everlasting love.

Among the many messages that were written by inspiration, was that of the "Sacred Roll," in February, 1843, some five years before the mediumship of the Fox sisters was known to the public. At this date if any reference had been made to the inspiration of an individual either by writing or speaking, it became largely, the subject of sport or ridicule by a large class of worldly-wise men, who believed that all divine inspiration had closed to man.

Even as late as 1848 the manifestations of spirit influence were abusively treated by a New Hampshire lawyer, before the State Legislature. Several of these mediums were led to prophesy that this manifestation of spirit power, in dreams, in visions, in writing and speaking, and in multiplied gifts, would soon be sent into the whole world.

The Sacred Roll bears witness to this fact on pages 168 and 169, and the truth of these statements is fully confirmed by the thousands and tens of thousands of Spiritualists who are in the world to-day, confidently preaching the harmony that now exists between the spirits on the earth, and the spirits in the heavens.

The "Book of Holy Wisdom," that was written at Watervliet, N. Y. was published in 1849 at Canterbury, N. H.



VI.

ENFIELD, N. H.

The following was received from Elder Abraham Perkins, who was a member of the Church Family of Enfield, N. H.

IN the early summer of 1837, what is generally called modern Spiritualism, commenced among the Shakers. As I was a witness, I will relate something of its movements as they appeared to me.

It came as a thief in the night. It was first manifested in the little girls of ten and twelve years, while in religious service. It seemed to be a power that exercised them in dancing, shaking and whirling. Some would remain unconscious for hours, while conversing with unseen friends, and singing new and beautiful songs.

They would exhort others to so live, that they might join them when they passed to spirit life. Some of the little boys were thrown violently to the floor, and it was with difficulty that they were removed.

Their visions became more and more convincing. The visionists were taken into the mansions of the saints, and shown the glories of the heavenly worlds. At other times they would be conducted to the abodes of the wicked, the sight of which would seem unbearable. With tears they would beg to be removed from such terrible scenes.

Other mediums of more advanced age were susceptible of these same spirit influences. As the light grew stronger, the testimonies of the

ministering spirits, became more convincing to all who heard them. We were informed by our spirit friends some years before the Rochester rappings took place, that these spiritual manifestations would go throughout the whole earth, and we are now witnessing the fulfillment of it to-day.



The following was received through the kindness of Sister Caroline Witcher, of Enfield, N. H.

A peculiar manifestation commonly known as modern spiritualism, began at Enfield, N. H. in the year, 1837. As I was living in the Society at the time I was conversant with the members, and a witness of their proceedings.

Its introduction into the family was through the mediumship of some little girls of ten and twelve years. As nothing unusual had transpired in the management of the family or in the religious exhortations, or exercises, no one was anticipating what came so suddenly upon them.

These little girls were moved with singular

operations, as shaking, dancing and whirling. Sometimes they were prostrated upon the floor, and would remain in an unconscious state for several hours. At other times they would be conversing with unseen friends, whom they frequently designated by name.

Again, they would be engaged seemingly with these spirit friends in the singing of new and beautiful songs. Exhortations were made through the mediums, for the upright walk of all who were privileged to hear the gospel.

These same manifestations were soon developed among a class of boys of corresponding ages, and often to the great surprise of the witnesses. Some of these children would fall to the floor, and the strongest men would fail in an attempt to raise them to their feet. At this early stage of modern spiritualism, such an unseen force of resistance was looked upon with the utmost astonishment.

As these exercises continued with wonderful additions, and the visionists became better able to illustrate their heavenly missions, a deeper interest was exercised in the ready listeners

who followed the mediums through the mansions of the saints, and were shown the glories of the Holy City.

- Some of these youthful seers were conducted to the abodes of those who had accepted darkness instead of light. Some of these interviews were, indeed, pitiful as the mediums personated those under suffering, and the groanings and weeping were sorrowful in the extreme.

As the work progressed those of adult age became susceptible to these varied and strange influences. Through them was given the gift of exhortation as well as of visions. Their testimonies for truth and righteousness, became more and more convincing as the spiritual light grew clearer.

All who came under the influence of this soul purifying work, were fully assured that it was from God, and would, like the refiner's fire cleanse the soul from all unrighteousness.

Our spirit friends informed us that these peculiar manifestations would go throughout the whole earth, and to-day we are witnessing the fulfillment of this prophecy.

The following graphic illustration of spiritualism occurred at Enfield, N. H. Written by H. Elkins.

IN our society the first announcement that was made of this spirit innovation was a shriek from some one, apparently, in great distress. It came from a child of some twelve years of age. Falling upon the floor and uttering agonizing cries brought a shudder to many sensitive minds. This sudden outburst of cries and groans, while in the enjoyment of a peculiar and well-disciplined quietness, was a problem so remarkable, that but few knew the rules by which it might be solved.

That it was the initiatory step to one of the most wonderful spirit manifestations that had ever been known, had not been even suggested through the influence of a dream, and the astounded witnesses looked on in silent wonder.

This child wailed like one in distressing torment, and tore the hair from her head, in her paroxysms of visionary fear. By this time the officers of the society began to anticipate that

the mind of the individual was not just as it should be, or that some hidden transgressions were about to be revealed. The company were then dismissed and the medium left in charge of her sisters.

This unpleasant outburst of spirit presence, as an introduction to the society was not so pleasant and congenial to the mind, as were the pretty visions of flowers and fruits, and as were the sweet songs that were received from the little children.

At a second and third interview, the number of mediums increased, but their messages all ran on the same line. Their very breath was hatred and their language vile and profane. No respect was shown to either age or official position, and to all intents it prefaced a case of insanity.

These delirious spells, however, lasted only a few hours, and when returned to a normal state the mediums would weep as in deep sorrow, and sometimes suddenly, swoon, and on recovery go about their usual occupations.

The phenomena soon passed away, and by

many it was thought that the unsubdued natures of the mediums led largely toward such peculiar manifestations.

Other gifts, perfectly original and illustrative of the inspirations of crude and uncivilized spirits, continued to exist. Some of these were so grotesque that they became highly amusing.

Under the influence of the Indian spirits they would shout and dance, and then give their war-whoop. Some acted precisely the peculiar traits of the negro, the Arab, the Chinese or even the politeness of the French. They conversed, and each class seemed to understand their own company, but to the spectators it was peculiarly amusing. One squaw had on an old felt hat, which was without geometrical form. In her wanderings about the house, she entered the kitchen and espied a pan filled with some meat that was being prepared for dinner. A sudden seizure of some of this uncooked food gave the Indian a chance to exercise her strange gift, and although a delicate young woman, she devoured this raw meat as though it was a rare delicacy.

Although these actions were mysterious and often became extremely difficult of solution, still no special harm was experienced by either the mediums or their friends. With the knowledge that there is of spiritualism in the world to-day, all of these singular manifestations can be readily solved, and would be considered highly interesting.

Some of the mediums became gifted in the speaking of what was termed an unknown tongue. There was nothing very remarkable about it, and we have an authority for its use in the church of the New Testament. No one thought strange of its use whether heard in the religious service, or in the work shop. We give this introduction as a prelude to the wonderful mediumistic insight to a case that came before the family.

A young man, whom we will call Henry, had manifested a very wicked spirit, in his profanity, and ridicule of a religious life. The Elders of the family persuasively urged him to turn from his wicked course, and kindly overlooked his errors. Henry being a good scholar, had in

connection with his other studies, taken a few lessons in his Latin grammar. A wicked thought entering his head, he concluded he would also talk in an unknown tongue like the mediums. During an hour of worship, while many others were absorbed in diverse gifts, Henry began to exercise his gift in an unknown tongue.

Suddenly a medium under the inspiration of Ann Lee, stood before him and in a low and distinct voice exposed his present act. Henry, who afterwards admitted that he was using vile and profane words, suddenly bowed beneath the reproof and smiting his breast; cried,—“Pardon! pardon!! O forgive my transgressions!”

His cries soon degenerated into inarticulate yells of horror. He rushed from the group which surrounded him and glided from one extremity of the hall, to the other. He smote with clinched fists, the walls of the apartment and reeled in convulsive agony as he was removed from the room.

A confession of his blasphemous profanity was made before he left the Community. Those

who read the above can illustrate it in their own minds as may seem best.



VII.

SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

By Elder Giles B. Avery.

Published in "The Progressive Thinker" of 1890.

IN some degree and operating in some manner, spirit manifestations have ever been the inheritance of the Christian church; to this the Shaker branch has not been an exception. But a very marked and profuse gift of the same was inaugurated some fifty years ago; the first phases of which were manifested in visions of spirits and the spirit world with its life experiences and scenes presented in a most wonderful manner. This presentation was at the Shaker Society in the town of Watervliet, N. Y.

In the autumn of the year of 1837, these visionists or trance inspired persons, simultaneously were visited by messengers from the land of souls, who appeared to them in vision, as persons in the physical form, who gave their

names and manifested to them personal characteristics, which when related by these visionists to persons who had lived in their society, when they were denizens of earth, were readily recognized by them, but to the visionists they were entirely unknown.

These spirit messengers oftentimes took possession of these youth, and entranced them for many hours consecutively. While thus entranced these spirit messengers led them on visionary journeys in the Spirit world, the scenes and incidents of which they, while entranced, would describe with all the graphic and enchanting minuteness of a most exquisitely gifted earthly traveler. Their trance journeys were made by gestures as of flying, and an interesting feature of this manifestation was, that these youth were exercised precisely alike: both narrated the same scenes and circumstances, although while entranced and separated from each other by an intervening room and two brick partitions.

During these entranced journeys the visionists met multitudes of spirits and often conversed

with some of them as with mortals, relative to the cities and places visited, the condition of the inhabitants and the enchanting beauty of the scenery. All this they would vocally express to the witnessing bystanders. The character of these manifestations was so alluring, it won the interest and admiration of all witnesses and commanded credence. These presentations continued many months.

Credence of witnesses secured, the next phase of manifestations consisted of messages from spirit guides of those entranced, delivered through them to individual members of the society. The character of these messages was adapted to the state and condition of the individual, according to real needs and circumstances, the ministering spirits acting the part of disciplinarians; thus communications were at times approbative and comforting: sometimes condemnatory and reproving; but always adapted to the needs of the individual to whom they were administered, and very appropriate; meeting absolute conditions of individual character, and dispensing judgment and mercy, as from

the throne above, and undeniably convincing both to the Believer and hesitating skeptic. In this capacity these entranced persons voiced communications from spirits in the soul world, which were productive of great good to Society.

At length as these ministrations continued, the inspiring baptism was thence transmitted to many persons in and throughout all the societies of the Shaker Order, and such baptized souls became message bearers of communications from souls in the Spirit world, to persons in the body, physical. These inspired persons were called instruments or media. Some of them were exercised as public speakers; others writers of messages, others the recipients and dispensers to their Brethren and Sisters of improvised, inspired new songs, sometimes as many as twenty in one day, through the same medium. These were a great worth to society, serving to mould the feelings and wills of members to a Divine Order of life and conduct, on the principle in which a writer once remarked; "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws."

Persons thus baptized of the spirit as media, were very frequently much exercised physically while under the ministrations of spirits: these exercises often consisted of bowing, kneeling, turning exceedingly rapid, and oftentimes of very mortifying gesticulations. These media were often directed by the spirits to practice much fasting, both from material food and from social conversation. Sometimes media could not speak a word in their native tongue; for weeks consecutively they were required by the spirits to give their entire strength of mind and spirit, and often of bodily powers, to attain unto soul life and culture, and to spirit ministrations.

To media thus exercised the spirit world was often manifest as an ever open book, or a wide field of intelligence; and though not meeting each other at all, they would know each other's gifts and communications before they were voiced, and tell the gist of the same to some confiding witness who would maintain entire secresy and reticence until the message was voiced by some other inspired medium. Media would sometimes read and disclose the state of

souls, and reveal the thoughts and deeds of persons with whom they met, but had not corresponded one word, spoken or written, thus producing faith and conviction of the existence of a spirit world, and its real life, light and clairvoyant knowledge, giving evidence to all that the work of the Christ baptism is a work whereby God will bring every soul unto judgment, with all the deeds of life, whether secret or public, good or evil, and reward every soul according as his works have been.

At the inauguration of this phase of the spirit manifestations, it was declared by media that every person in this world has one or more guardian spirit or spirits, guide or guides, who perpetually minister to such person. The character of these spirits is in some degree determined by the character and willed purpose of the earthly inhabitant. These guardians sometimes minister directly; at other times through persons in the mortal frame more nearly assimilating with their purposes than their word at the time possesses.

The lesson is that kindred spirits attract each

other, and the will forces and desires of the earth inhabitant, propel the ministrations from the spirit spheres. The divine law that the influences of malignant spirits upon each other produces constant irritations, abrasions of comfort, producing unhappiness, is the divine method to excite a desire in a soul to reforms of character and betterments of life. The errors of a vitiated life, when a soul is made to see and feel them, become, eventually a spiritual emetic and purgative which promotes desire for reform, and this condition clears the way for the access of good spirits, as commissioned tutors and guardians, to reach the sufferer and find acceptance.

To the pure in heart and life the ministrations from the spirit world will emanate from the sainted throng who dwell in the mansions of God's truth and love; and the inspirations from these are heaven born and true.

The foregoing described phase of spirit manifestations continued about ten years, during which period the avenues of communication between mortals and the world of spirits were

widely opened: messages from spirits in the land of souls, through media were frequently, sometimes of a character uplifting, consoling, sometimes didactic, at times prophetic; at other times admonitory.

Through instruments or media the people were visited by spirits manifesting the characteristics of every class of nationality, and every grade of development of human society, from highest to lowest. Those belonging to the resurrection Order of the New Creation, the Kingdom of Christ in the second appearing through the female, came as teachers.

Many others both high and low, from all nations, manifested themselves as inquirers and learners, while others manifested themselves in a gross, sensual state, as not being yet awakened to even a desire to better their conditions, manifesting that as death left them, so eternity found them, and they had not yet been touched by the wand of judgment, to be rewarded according to their works.

During these ten year's experience, of constant manifestations from the spirit world, long

time previous to the spirit knockings at the Fox family, in some of the Shaker families, the people were often called upon to kneel and knock on the floor, and were prophetically informed that they should yet know what this sign meant; so, when the spirit rappings commenced with the Fox sisters it was well understood and comprehended. The Shakers were further informed, prophetically that the spirit manifestations as they had been presented among them as a people, would mostly cease for a season and would go out from the Shaker Order and extend to all nations and peoples, and be manifest to all classes of society, the enlightened, the simply civilized and the barbarian, just as they have been manifested during the past forty years: but eventually the ministrations from the spirit world would return to the Shakers in a more exalted form, and extended manner, adapted to the then needs and conditions of society.

This withdrawal has been and still is experienced, yet living souls who are industriously toiling in the vineyard of Christ, will not be

left without the inspiration in some manner and degree from the heavenly world.

During these spirit manifestations important lessons were learned by the Shakers concerning communications from the spirit world, confirming and reassuring Believers in Christ's Kingdom of the truths proclaimed by the apostle John, that death of the mortal frame does not alter the state of the soul; but it enters the soul land in the same condition in which it was in the earthly tenement, and as it left the shores of time, so it enters the vestibules of eternity.

Therefore, as all are not good souls while inhabiting the earthly tenement, so they are not suddenly converted to sainthood by laying aside the earthly casket.

That when the avenues of communication between the shores of time and spirit world were opened as they wonderfully have been during the last fifty years, all classes of spirits in the land of souls are enabled to avail themselves of the opportunities of correspondence with kindred spirits inhabiting the earthly home.

Therefore, it is frequently the case that lying,

wicked spirits often manifest themselves under false names, and bear messages to those in time that are untruthful. Hence the wisdom of the admonition of the apostle John.—I John iv.

Not even all honest spirits are yet harvested into the Christ Order of the present advent of the Christ spirit, therefore, multitudes of spirits communicate what they understand as truths, but ministrations that belong to the earthly, worldly sphere.

Therefore, to illustrate this fact, it may be said; Jewish spirits would minister Jewish theology; Mahommedan spirits the sentiments of the mussulman; Catholic spirits the Catholic theology; Protestantism of the different orders, ideas in accord with the beliefs those spirits entertained in the earth life, until those varied classes of spirits become gathered into the true and highest order of the Christ life revealed to humanity.

To receive only truthful and pure communications from the spirit world, souls must live truthful and pure lives, as media, and to receive communications of the highest order of human

progress, media must have a baptism from that order.

It is not to be understood that because the peculiar character of communications from the spirit world of which we have been recording, have for many years measurably ceased among the Shakers ; that as a people, they are not in the truest, purest sense of the word spiritualists ; for it is the true Christian faith that every true follower of the Christ mission is and must be, a genuine spiritualist ; a disciple of him who said : "My kingdom is not of this world." Therefore, it must be of the spirit world, and all its subjects must become a spiritual people.

It is a matter of deep surprise to witness the fact that people who call themselves Christians have become so darkened and beclouded by sin and the ravishing influences of a worldly, sensual life as not to believe in spirit manifestations, except as communications from the satanic regions.

The true Christian Shaker life is guided by the counsel of Paul thus, "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts." The Shaker also

feels toward mankind as Paul felt to the churches of Rome: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."

The work of the gospel is a work of spiritual resurrection of the soul from the dearth and death of sin, to an abundant and heavenly growth of all celestial flowers and fruits, the graces and soul food of angels in the paradise of God.



VIII.

WEST PITTSFIELD, MASS.

WITNESSES in this Society attest to the same form of manifestations, as have already been noticed. Visions and trances were of frequent occurrence in the year of 1837 and continued for several years. These were also introduced through the mediumship of the little girls, after the same manner as in other societies.

At first this unlooked-for phenomenon, was

witnessed with astonishment as well as with pleasure, and at times with a thought that it must be a fulfillment of the prophetic voice. That these little children should be made a speciality at this date, and be thrown into a visionary state, is as yet an unsolved problem. No direct religious teaching was given to this class of children, above that given to any former class, neither were they induced by any special religious excitement. These singular manifestations of spirit influence, were to many who had the pleasure of witnessing them, a source of great satisfaction and pleasure.



TYRINGHAM, MASS.

By Julia Johnson.

Published in "The Progressive Thinker."

SPIRIT manifestations among the Shakers commenced in 1837 and continued without interruption until 1844, when there was a decided cessation. There were many mediums among the people, and many different phases of the phenomena.

Among the mediums were several trance goers, who would be absent for hours at a time, taken from the house of worship and carried to their homes by carriage, laid upon a bed where they would be like one dead, save for breathing, and perhaps a few words of message now and then to certain individuals. When they returned from their spirit travels they would relate many wonderful sights and scenes realized, mostly of a pleasurable character, but often they met with very painful experiences, spirits in darkness and in prisons, suffering great distress in consequence of their past sinful lives here on earth.

All they saw, both happifying and otherwise, was as real to them as anything here in earth life. They visited beautiful mansions, and saw the inmates engaged in various kinds of occupation—and study; went into places of worship, and institutions of learning, heard instructive discourses and sweet music both vocal and instrumental.

They described the lovely dresses worn by those in the higher circles, some of pure white, and others of varied beautiful fabric and colors.

They also went sailing on silvery streams in fairy-like boats, with those who had once been their companions here in time and were very sad at times at being called upon to make their earthward return journey in company with the guides who had taken them away and shown to them the wonders of the life beyond. The beauties and glories which they had been privileged to witness were of such a high order, that earthly scenes however bright seemed to them dark beyond endurance.

Angels and good spirits were constantly in our midst—not only at the appointed times of worship, but when about our household duties. We had many clairvoyants and clairaudients, who were daily in a condition to see and converse with the disembodied, and they seemed as real and familiar to all of us, through the agency of these mediums as did those still in the flesh.

Many spirit communications were written, both for public and private benefit, many trance lectures were given, and several of our mediums had the gift of personification—would some-

times for days together seem to be another person—talk and act entirely foreign from themselves when in a normal condition, and when coming out of this state would be utterly ignorant of anything they had said or enacted.

One personated a young woman of foreign birth—a princess it was thought, who had been imprisoned and brutally treated for some reason unknown to us, and the dreadful agonizing aspect of her features, would bring the tears to our eyes. She looked like one dying—eyes distorted, tears rolling down her cheeks which seemed cold and rigid, and white like a corpse, her mouth drawn out of shape, and general appearance like one in terrible distress. She felt bad to be under this influence, but could not ward it off. It would take days for her to recover from its sad effects. She was a lovely sister, one of our teachers, full of love, liberality and sympathy, and it seemed that this suffering spirit was drawn to her for the purpose of relief.

There were many, who brought beautiful influences, and imparted to us much strength and

blessing. We were visited by all the different nations—Kings and Queens came—some to be instructed, and others to administer for our benefit. Many of our mediums spoke in tongues of different kind, and others would interpret. Songs were given in unknown language, and many were sung extemporaneously. The Indians were almost constantly in attendance and usually brought a very good influence—loving, simple and friendly—would always impart to us of their peculiar paraphernalia—beads, belts, blankets, moccasins and the like. Songs in their own language were often sung in our meetings, and many were their written communications given. Some had the ability of reading the mind and thought of others, with astonishing correctness.

All manner of presents were brought us—beautiful robes, ornaments of gold and pearl, instruments of music, doves, singing birds, and even little white lambs, flowers, fruit, manna, and water from the ever-living fountains above, gold cups to drink from, wine was often administered produced from the heavenly vineyards.

Little angel messengers were given to be ours, and innumerable benefits, far beyond my capacity to recount.

Well these things were a comfort, and we partook of them as being the reality of life. We gave more thought to the heavenly than otherwise, and for seven years there was an uninterrupted flow, then a decided cessation, which left us in a barren, and almost despondent condition of mind. There were prophetic mediums in our midst, and they had told us it would be so, and that we must carefully cherish all these beautiful givings, for a famine would surely come, in which the least morsel from spiritual avenues would seem a blessed benediction.

The spirit of Mother Ann Lee, founder of the order, said she should leave us for a time and go out into the broad world, working for the enlightenment of humanity at large—that earth's children were in a benighted state, and knew nothing of the higher life and the beauties beyond. She said, "The knowledge must be spread broadcast throughout the whole earth 'as

the waters cover the sea'—that every tongue and nation must learn of the goodness of God, and the glories prepared for the upright and honest worker, when done with things of time." Many shed tears at her parting address and the cessation of these beautiful manifestations made, as it were, a sad blank in our lives.

The materializations we never realized in our midst. Only the clairvoyant could see, but we doubted not, but enjoyed what was given through their agency, knowing them to be true and honest in their daily walk of life. The following were among the many manifestations ;

Clairvoyance, trance, inspirational speaking, singing, writing, talking in tongues (and interpreting the same,) prophesy, personating the dead, so-called, both of our own and other nationalities (the mediums sometimes for days together being under spirit influence and unable to speak a word of English, while under normal conditions they were utterly ignorant of any other.) Hundreds of spirit messages were written, both for public and private benefit. Numberless new songs were given, many of

them sung by individuals extemporaneously while in our seasons of worship.

Spirits from all the different nations came to attend our meetings for the purpose of receiving instruction as to higher conditions of happiness than those they had yet attained; our leaders and others always responding with suitable addresses.

Many beautiful presents were given by spirit friends; robes, wreaths, satin slippers, handkerchiefs, gold chains, drinking-cups, pens, writing-desks, instruments of music, silver speaking trumpets, doves, singing-birds, lambs, baskets of fruit, flowers, leaves from different kinds of trees, with inscriptions of love thereon and other things too numerous to mention. The Indians were frequent visitors, and favored us with gifts of "wampum, feathers, blankets, beads and moccasins," as well as new songs, and messages of love in their own tongues. Some of the mediums were mind readers, and would frequently reveal to others their most interior thoughts. Our trance goers would sometimes be absent for hours together, and on

their return, relate their travels on the "other side," which to us were intensely interesting. They visited beautiful mansions and saw the angel inmates; entered magnificent temples and saw the teachers of a high order, with innumerable spirits assembled for the purpose of worship, and all needful instruction. They passed through flowery fields, and wonderful gardens, filled with all manner of fragrance and beauty, and fountains of sparkling waters. They sailed upon the River of Life, in company with many beautiful beings. They saw people engaged in various kinds of employment; some in literary line, and each amid surroundings peculiarly adapted to the occasion, all looking real, similar to those on earth, yet far superior.

The inhabitants on that side were robed in raiment of various hues and textures; some had on what seemed like filmy gold; others were clad in garments of rich, changeable colors, glossy, like silk, while some were enveloped in soft, fleece-like drapery, as white as snow. Around many of their heads were crown-like halos of golden light; some were decorated

with diamonds, stars, pearls and other precious gems. They did not seem to walk, but glide along swiftly, and with perfect ease. Their movements were all graceful and countenances shining.

While the manifestations were at their height in our midst, some of the mediums predicted that they would soon cease with us, and go out into the broad world, and that every kindred, tongue and nation would yet learn the beautiful truths of immortality and spirit return.

Mother Ann Lee, the founder of Shakerism, enjoyed visions in her childhood, and right along through life. Her powers of clairvoyance were remarkable. She would read the lives of those she had never before seen, and tell their very thoughts. She also had the power to heal sickness and infirmities.

Mother Ann was a healer of both body and soul; so were many of her followers in the days gone by. I have read scores of testimonies by the early converts to this effect: "They laid their hands upon the sick and their infirmities were immediately healed."

Mother Ann was clairvoyant and could read the different states of those who came into her presence, and many who approached to ridicule and persecute would leave in a new and converted condition of mind. One man said he had "seen the most wonderful woman of his day, who had told him nearly all the sins of his life." He had ridden upon horseback, the leader of a gang of roughs, in order to ridicule and persecute and called out for "the old woman who it was said could tell him his sins." She came forth and in a calm unruffled state of mind but under the control of a mighty influence, went on telling him many of his most secret and ignoble transactions, till finally he wheeled about, followed by his rabble, in a sheepish, vanquished state of mind, leaving "Mother" for that time to the enjoyment of her own quiet and peace-loving spirit.

All of these things have gone down in Shaker history, and can be had by applying to leaders of that order at any time. Their rise and progress in America is all on record for the public to examine if so desired. They have beautiful

homes in eight States of the Union, which are always open to enquirers. I have found out since my wanderings commenced, that this people are not so much known as I once imagined, and in many places I have been, especially at a distance from them, very many I have talked with never even heard of their existence.



NORTH UNION, OHIO.

By Elder James Prescott.

IN August 1838 some young persons were walking on the bank of the creek, near the Mill family, when they heard some beautiful singing which seemed to be in the air above their heads.

They were taken by surprise, listened with admiration and then hastened home to report the phenomenon. Some of them afterwards were chosen mediums for the spirits.

This manifestation commenced among the little girls, while they were engaged in religious devotion. It was on the Sabbath that word

was received, that something uncommon was taking place among the children. The Brethren and Sisters soon visited the children to witness the singular phenomenon.

On entering the apartment the children seemed to be under the influence of a power beyond their own. They were hurried around the room, and back and forth very rapidly. If any attempt was made to stop them, it was found to be quite impossible. Suddenly they would be prostrated upon the floor, apparently unconscious of what was going on around them. With their eyes closed, muscles strained and joints stiff, they were taken up and laid upon the bed.

They now held converse with their guardian spirits and others, some of whom they knew in the form. The conversation could readily be heard by all in the room, and from this we could obtain some idea of the place they were exploring, in the land of souls.

One prominent feature of these manifestations, was the gift of songs, hymns and anthems, new, heavenly and melodious.

The gifts continued to increase among the children. They visited different cities in the spirit world, and held converse with indwellers thereof. They were accompanied by their guardian angels, and appeared to be flying. Suddenly they stopped and the following questions and answers would take place between them.

Ques. What City is this?

Ans. The City of Delight.

Ques. Who live here?

Ans. The colored population.

Ques. Can we go in and see them?

Ans. Certainly. For this purpose you were conducted here.

They were admitted and their countenances changed.

Ques. Who are all these?

Ans. They are persons, who were held as slaves in the United States.

Ques. Who are those persons behind the slaves?

Ans. They were the slaveholders.

Ques. What are they doing?

Ans. Serving the slaves, as the slaves served

them while in the earth life. God is just. All wrongs will be righted.

Ques. Who are those persons in the corner?

Ans. They are slaveholders who were unmerciful, and abused their slaves, and are too proud to comply with the conditions.

Ques. What are the conditions?

Ans. To make confession and ask forgiveness of the slaves, and right their wrongs: but this they are not prepared to do.

Ques. What will be done with them?

Ans. When their time expires, they will be taken away to suffer, until they repent. All wrongs must be righted, either on earth or among the disembodied spirits, before souls can be happy.

When the girls came out of the vision, they would relate these same things. Visions among the boys were of a corresponding character, and we will let the mediums describe the first City they reached after crossing the river.

Ques. What City is this?

Ans. The Blue City.

Ques. Who live here?

Ans. The Indians.

Ques. What Indians?

Ans. The American Indians.

Ques. Why are they in the first City we come to in the spirit land?

Ans. Because the Indians lived more in accordance with the law of nature, in earth life, and were the most abused class, by the whites, except the slaves, and many of them are, now in advance of the whites, in spirituality, and are the most powerful ministering spirits.

At another time these same mediums, fifteen in number, of both sexes, while in public worship, saw a band of Indian spirits coming from the "Blue City" to unite with them in worship, and said,—“They are coming,” and as soon as the spirits entered the room the mediums left their seats immediately. Then followed the Indian songs and dances, and a conversation among the Indian spirits.

VISIONS OF 1805.

The following was taken from the writings of Brother Richard McNemar, of Union Village, Ohio. He was present at the time of the Kentucky Revival.

In some of these rapturous scenes, the mediums professed to be carried clear out of the body, and to be favored with a particular interview with the spirits of their departed friends; and to see and learn their different allotments in the invisible world. Sometimes they mixed with great multitudes who had embraced religion in the past century, and were waiting for the New Jerusalem to appear, and the way to be opened into the Holy City.

Besides these singular transports, they had another species of visions, more universal in which the sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, plains, vegetables, fruits, animals and a thousand particular things and circumstances in nature were used as emblems of things in the

spiritual world, or kingdom of Christ. One had a night vision of two suns, another of three moons, another wide awake saw a great platform of bright stars in the noon-day hemisphere.

One discovered a certain spot of ground illuminated all over with the brightness of burning fire and thousands of human beings flocking into it from all quarters, and are instantly purified from all the effects of a gross and fleshly nature.

Another saw the air crowded with birds of prey, commissioned to devour the flesh of every dead beast. Another saw a road marked out in the color of a bright light, a thousand miles long and stood with his visual faculties intensely fixed upon it until he discovered certain persons coming forth with good news from afar. Some of their visions were employed, in crossing rivers, climbing mountains, finding treasures or more delightfully employed in eating the fruits of the tree of Life, bathing in clear water, casting off old garments and putting on new.

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