

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

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Shakerism and the Godhead

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Individuals from all walks of life visit our museum. Their questions are varied and sometimes complex. Many are interested only in the furniture, while others are interested in Shaker history and theology. It has been my experience that Shaker theology is the one area least understood by our visitors, especially the concept of the Godhead. In an effort to better explain the Shakers and their beliefs, I looked at Shaker texts, both early and contemporary. I offer the following comparisons between the traditional Christian Godhead, the Holy Trinity, and the dual deity of the Shakers.

Central to any religious belief system is a definition of the Godhead. The traditional Christian Godhead—the Holy Trinity—is revealed in Old and New Testament scripture. The Oneness, or unity of the Godhead, is illustrated by Deut. 6:4:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.

The three distinct Persons of the Trinity are readily seen in Matthew 28:19 of the "Great Commission":
Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The following example of the Trinity is often used as a benediction: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* (II Corr. 13:14)

The preceding passages of scripture illustrate the mysterious nature of the Trinity. Within the Oneness and the unity of the Godhead, there are three distinct and coequal persons.

Any discussion of Shaker beliefs must include Mother Ann Lee, the seminal figure in Shaker history. Historians Anna White and Leila S. Taylor, also members of the Mt. Lebanon, NY, Shaker community, highlighted Mother Ann's importance in a single sentence:

Among the revelations to Ann Lee and imparted through her life and teachings, were ideas new to the Christian World (White & Taylor 1905:255).¹

Central to the teachings was the duality of God. Mother Ann Lee taught the Believers that God was a duality of Father and Mother, and not an all male Trinity (as defined in "God is Dual" below). White and Taylor felt compelled to vigorously examine the concept of the Trinity. In the following carefully worded definition of the Shaker Godhead, it is obvious that they were defending their unorthodox beliefs:

God is Dual

Shakers believe in One God—not three male beings in one, but Father and Mother. And here the Bible reader turns at once to Genesis 1:26.

"And God said"—in the beginning of creative work, whether by fiat or evolution matters not—"let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Did three masculine beings appear, in contradistinction to every form of life heretofore known? Nay! Verse 27 says: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them" (White & Taylor 1905:255).

The above definition uses Genesis 1:26-27 to illustrate their belief that male and female are mirror images of the maleness and femaleness of God, the Father-Mother progenitor.

The following is a clear and concise contemporary explanation of the Shaker Godhead. It can also be found at the Sabbathday Lake website:

Having no body, God has no sex in our human understanding of the term; yet being pure spirit He may be thought of by man with his limited power of comprehension as having the attributes of both maleness and femaleness. This duality of attributes within God's oneness is one of the Shaker theological concepts most misunderstood by the world (Johnson 1969:6).

Most of the misunderstanding regarding the Shaker Godhead may come from "the world's people" who assume that Shaker beliefs are the same as orthodox Christianity. However, there are clear and profound differences.

Hervy L. Eads, a Shaker Bishop of South Union, Kentucky, defended and promoted Shaker beliefs in an 1889 publication called *Shaker Sermons: Scripto-Rational*. The following is a spirited examination of Trinitarian concepts:

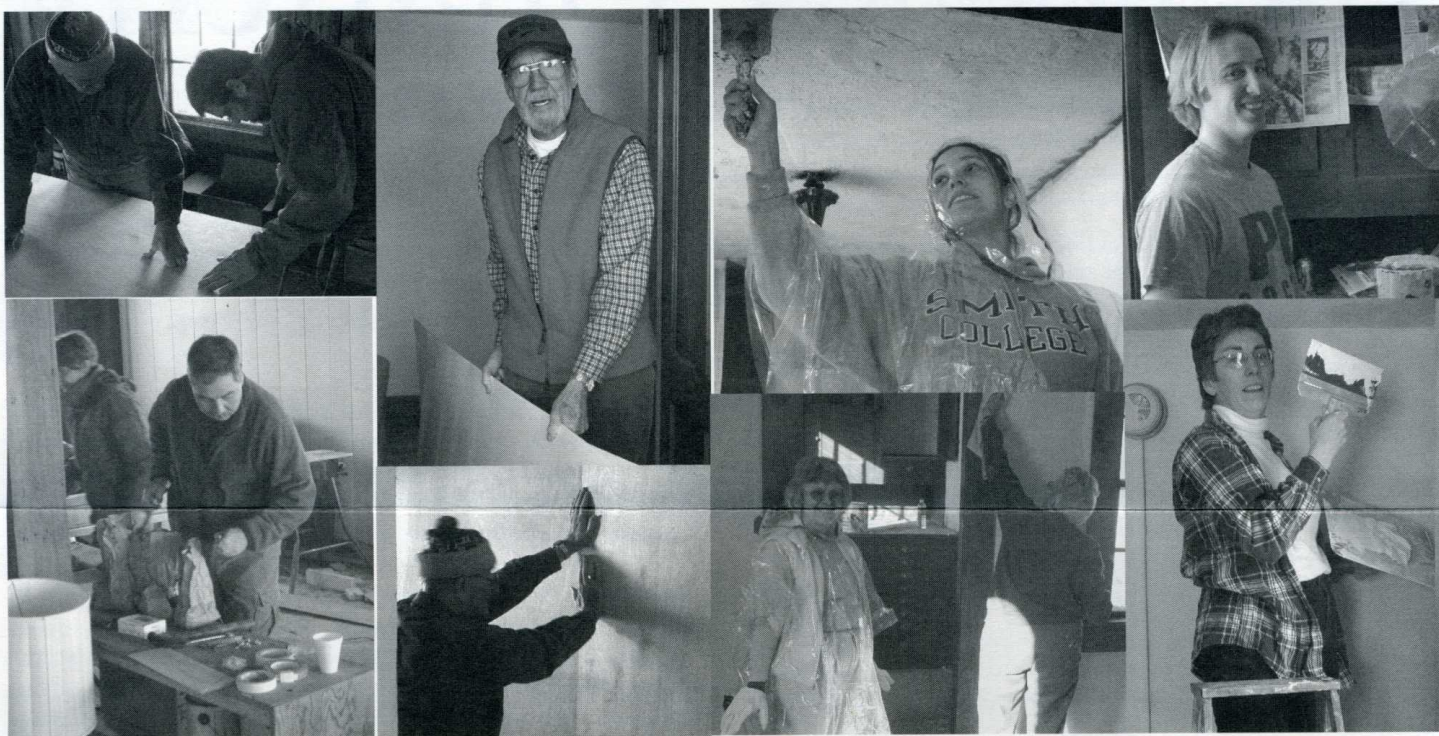
I am well aware that your divines (?) when closely pressed, acknowledge the Unity of the Supreme Being . . . and so interpret words as to make you believe that the terms unity and trinity are synonyms. . . But these divine reasoners, whilst they declare that the Son is the Father still hold that there is a Father aside from the Son . . . But the defenders of the triple-God doctrine say the three are combined in a "mysterious yet all harmonious union" . . . (Eads 1889:14-16).

The notion that the Trinity is a great mystery is answered by Eads in the following statement, "God is no mystery to those to whom He is revealed" (1889:17).

A booklet, *Plain Talks*, published by the Shakers at Watervliet, New York, circa 1882, states under the section titled "Are the Shakers Spiritualists?":

By our Spiritualism we are become confirmed infidels to the foolish

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Museum Volunteers Refurbish East Brethren's Shop

Sage Thoughts

GARLIC - *Allium sativum*

Garlic is an herb that has been cultivated for so long that no one knows its exact place of origin. It was grown in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, written about in the Sanskrit tablets and found dried in Tutankhamen's tomb. In 1722, during the plague in France, garlic was the main ingredient in the famous Fur Thieves' Vinegar that kept robbers alive and well as they plundered and stole from the sick and dead!

This strong scented bulb is a member of the lily family. Its English name comes from 'gar': a spear, and 'leac', a plant, because of the shape of its leaves. There are two subspecies of garlic; hardnecks and softnecks. The three main kinds of hard-neck garlics are rocamboles, purple stripes and porcelains. They like cold winters, have a short shelf life and a complex flavor. The softneck garlics do better in the warmer zones, last longer in storage and are the ones most commonly found in grocery stores. Elephant garlic is a much larger bulb and is closely related to the leek. The flavor is milder and less pungent than that of *Allium sativum* but its uses are the same as true garlic.

Planting garlic in New England is done in the fall of the year - anytime from Columbus Day to the end of October. This gives it time to establish good root growth without promoting extensive green top growth. It benefits from its long winter rest in the ground. Plant it in the spring, and the bulbs will be much smaller at harvest time. Prepare an area in full sun, with well drained fertile soil that has been enriched with compost and Pro-Gro organic fertilizer. Select large, firm cloves that have not

sprouted, from good sized heads of garlic. Set the cloves 4-5 inches deep and space them about six inches apart in every direction, pointy ends up. Place a mulch of straw over the planted area after the ground has frozen. This is usually done sometime near the end of November.

During the spring and early summer leave the mulch on as to help retain moisture and slow the growth of weeds. When the flower buds (Scapes) appear in late June it is advisable to remove them so that the bulb will grow bigger. Harvest when the bottom leaves have died off until six green leaves remain on the plant. Cure for 2 to 3 weeks by storing out of direct sunlight with very good air circulation. Once dry, the extra leaves and roots can be trimmed off, then stored in a cool, dry room.

From the earliest times garlic has been used medicinally. The Shakers recommended it for coughs, asthma, catarrh, and hoarseness. The very component that gives garlic its strong odor is the one that destroys or inhibits various bacteria, fungi, and yeast. When cut or crushed, the garlic clove releases an enzyme that converts the allin into allicin thus releasing an antibacterial action that is equivalent to 1% penicillin. Raw garlic is much more effective in treating illnesses than cooked garlic. It can boost the immune system, tone the heart and circulatory system and may help to reduce attacks of hay fever. It is one of the few herbs found useful in all disorders of the human body. As a preventive medicine, it has no equal in the home. The International Herb Society honored this "stinking rose" by naming it the Herb of the Year for 2004.

Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

A Very Short History of the East Brethren's Shop

A Shaker Work Shop

The East Brethren Shop is a post and beam structure, built by the Enfield Shakers in 1819. The workshop originally stood in the "first row" of Shaker buildings, which also included the first dwelling house and the



Sisters' Shop. In 1820 a twin structure was built and named the West Brethren's Shop. It stood in the "second row," behind the East Brethren's Shop. Both buildings were moved to their present location in 1834, in order to make room for the construction of the Great Stone Dwelling. They continued to serve as workshop space for Shaker brothers until the Enfield community united with the Society at Canterbury in 1923.

A LaSalette Residence

In 1927 the Missionaries of LaSalette purchased the Church and North Family properties from the Enfield Shakers. The East Brethren's Shop was immediately renovated and enlarged for use as a residence of the LaSalette Brothers. For many years the Brothers, who were the manual laborers and farmers of the Order, lived separately from the community's Priests. Their residence was named "The Hermitage."

In the late 1960's, in part in response to Vatican II, the Priests and Brothers of the LaSalette Community were united in a single residence, the Great Stone Dwelling. The Sisters of Martha, the religious order of women who served here, moved from the Mary Keane House to the East Brethren's Shop. Their residence was referred to as "The Convent."

The Bethany Program

In 1974 the LaSalette High School closed, and the Sisters of Martha no longer had a vocation here. A province-wide summer program for teenage boys was instituted to encourage interest in a religious life. The program was called "The Bethany Program." The boys who came to Enfield lived in the East Brethren Shop, which was renamed Bethany House. During the year the building was used as a retreat center.

A Commercial Property

When the property was sold to the Chosen Vale partnership in the 1980's the building provided rooms for the inn, and a residence for employees. It also housed the post office boxes for Lower Shaker Village. For two years the Museum ran a store called the Village Emporium in the front room of the building. When the Museum purchased the "historic core" in 1997, Bethany House became office and residential space for Historic Inns of New England personnel.

An Educational Programming Resource

The work now being undertaken in the East Brethren Shop will allow the Museum to rent the western half of the building, while renovation is done in the other half. This will provide the Museum with an income stream to meet the expenses of the building, and create much needed workshop, teaching, and short term residential space for Museum programs.

Meet New Board Member Karol Hammer



In November 2004 four new members were welcomed to the museum's Board of Directors. They are Sheila Brown, Sy Bortz, Jim Kelleher and Karol Hammer.

It seems logical that Karol Hammer should have a strong interest in American history. She was born in Salem, MA. and traces her ancestry on her mother's side to Goody Nurse, famous victim of the Salem Witch trials.

Karol's family moved to Vermont when she was a child, and she was raised in St. Johnsbury. When Karol and her partner, Mark Johnson, moved to Lebanon, NH they made an intimate connection with the area's Shaker history. They were in fact living in a Shaker building, the Church Family School House. Their new home had been constructed in Enfield in 1825 and had served the Shaker community until the school was closed. About 1920 it was sold to a Mr. and Mrs. William Towle who disassembled it, moved it to Lebanon, and reassembled it at 89 Mascoma St. Karol and Mark made the Enfield Shaker Museum one of their first "field trips" to introduce their daughter Bailey to Shaker history.

Karol hopes to apply her professional interests to her service on the Board. Before moving to the Upper Valley she was director of development at Lyndon State College. She also had her own consulting business that specialized in fund raising services and workshops for non-profits. She currently works at SYSTRA Consulting in Lebanon, a rail transportation engineering/consulting firm, whose Lebanon office designs software for rail network simulations. Karol's responsibilities include documentation, licensing negotiations and marketing. "Public relations and fundraising aspects of the museum are right up my alley," she notes.

Karol serves as secretary of the board. The level of commitment of fellow board members impresses her. Serving is not about coming to meetings and listening to reports, she notes; "The board is very active, and personally invested in making the museum successful." Karol recognizes the importance of a well informed membership, and plans to help with as much of that effort as she can. Her first focus will be to help update and maintain the museum's website.

Karol and Mark have two daughters, Bailey, age 10 and Chase, age 3. Karol loves to cook, and she is an avid reader. She notes that she has a collection of children's books in her head that she hasn't had time to write yet. She is looking forward to learning more about gardening with museum herbalist, Happy Griffiths. (Editors Note: Board member profiles will be a regular feature of *The Friends' Quarterly*.)

News from the Museum Store

Early springtime means maple syrup here at the Enfield Shaker Museum store. We are pleased to announce that this year we will once more be selling syrup from the Shaker sugarbush! In addition to syrup in several size bottles and tins, we also carry four kinds of maple candy and granulated maple sugar in glass shakers. Or, you might add a dash of maple horseradish mustard, sweet maple mustard, or apple maple drizzle to your favorite dish. Of course, we also carry small ceramic syrup jars, as well as votive candles with the maple sugar scent.

Spring time also means time to start planning your garden. Please check our wide selection of books on growing herbs and natural landscaping. The delightful little book *The Shaker Garden* has a facsimile copy of the 1843 *Garden Manual* tucked in its back cover and makes a lovely springtime gift.

Speaking of springtime gifts, be sure to think of the Museum store when it comes to choosing your May Day basket. Along with fine collector's pieces by well-known basket-makers Sharon Dugan and Roseann Saridakis, we also carry a wide range of very reasonably priced Shaker-style baskets. Along with maple candy, old fashioned toys, or a pair of sterling Shaker chair earrings, you may to include a beginners "make your own Shaker basket" kit.

Also new in the store are beautiful notecards that replicate the Enfield Shaker poster by Kate Emlen Chamberlin. The signed and numbered limited edition print, which depicts the typical Enfield-style Shaker chair, table, and painted boxes, is available for \$150, while the notecards are \$1.25 each.

Remember, members always receive a 10% discount in the store, and you will be supporting the work of the Enfield Shaker Museum, as all store profits directly benefit the ESM!

Shakerism and the Godhead (Continued from page 1)

Bodily Resurrection theory; to the untrue and disappointing Atonement doctrine; to the monstrous Trinity scheme; to the cruel Predestination belief, and to all the man-made creeds of the popular churches professing Christianity (Lomas 1882:12).

In this strongly worded booklet, the Shakers leave no doubt about their opinion of the Trinity and firmly state their position as Spiritualists, believing in the Second Coming in spirit rather than in flesh. This booklet reveals other Shaker theological concepts that should be studied as well.²

The belief that God is dual, both male and female, is fundamental to the development of Shaker theology, which is reflected in the organizational structure, the architecture, and the sacred imagery of Shakerism. One's appreciation and understanding of Shaker gift drawings is greatly enhanced by knowing that the symmetry and unity have theological foundations. In his publication *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, Shaker theologian Benjamin S. Youngs expounds on the idea that the dual essence of the Godhead is reflected in Jesus and Ann Lee, Father-Son, Mother-Daughter. Thus the notion of the dual Godhead, as well as the dual messiahship, completes the symmetrical and spiritual balance. Youngs writings will be further examined in a subsequent article.³

The Shakers have a long and remarkable history. We, as interpreters, answer questions about our displays, discuss the millennial laws, and inspire our visitors to marvel at the inventions and products that the Shakers produced and sold. Our interpretations should be balanced and responsive. When we answer questions about Shaker beliefs accurately and contrast them with other communal societies in a meaningful way, visitors leave with a deeper understanding of the Shakers as a radical religious sect.

¹ See White and Taylor 1905:255-270 for further study.

² Held in the Rauner Rare Book Collection, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH.

³ See Youngs 1810 for the role of Ann Lee as Messiah.



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