

A

**Shaker's Answer**

To the Often Repeated Question,

**“WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THE WORLD  
IF ALL SHOULD BECOME SHAKERS?”**

By: Elder Richard Pelham  
in the First Order of the  
Church at Union Village, Ohio “Wisdoms Paradise”

**1868**

Published By The United Society Of Believer's  
In Christ's Second Appearing (The Shakers)

**2015**

This book may be copied, quoted, shared, translated or reprinted in any form.

**Come and see us at  
Zion's Center of Union in  
the Kingdom of God on Earth:**



**The Shakers of Sabbathday Lake "Chosen Land"**

**707 Shaker Road  
New Gloucester, Maine 04260  
[www.maineshakers.com](http://www.maineshakers.com)**

**Have you already read Sister Sarah's Faith?**

## ANSWER

---

### TO A LETTER FROM AN INQUIRER

Dear Friend,

1 Your letter of inquiry and suggestions, for the improvement of our religious community, came as expected. It, being addressed to the Society at large, fell into the writer's hands, who shall now respectfully return you an answer.

2 Looking into the spirit of your epistle, notwithstanding the differences of its views from our own, we see the unmistakable marks of honesty, which always command our respect; and we hope we shall succeed in giving you both a sincere and friendly reply.

3 You begin where most others do who contradict our principles, arguing the awful consequences of living Virgin Pure lives if universally adopted. We hesitate not to acknowledge, that, in such a case, the consequences you depict would certainly ensue; but we do not believe that the bringing to an end of this wicked world would be "a great wrong."

4 Most nominal Christians believe it will come to an end in a much less merciful way. You further observe: "No one can conscientiously advocate anything which he or she would not wish everyone else to advocate and practice." This feeling doubtless appears from your standpoint as an undeniable truth; but from our point of view there is no truth in it. The great Architect has diverse grades of workmen, who are all necessary in their proper places, in order to carry on the work and complete the building.

5 Let not those whose business it is to work in the mud and make brick, imagine that theirs is the all-important business and strive to pull down the bricklayer, the plasterer, the painter and those qualified to give the finishing touches of taste and ornament, into the mud and drudgery of brick-making. Nor let these brick-makers imagine that they can do the work of all the other classes of workmen and make the bricks too. Let every one of each class work on in his own calling, until the Master calls him to another grade of duty and not foolishly "wish everyone else to advocate and practice his trade." My friend, we are Christians, —believers in and followers of Jesus the Christ. He clearly recognized this distinction in the condition of men. On a certain occasion his disciples said to him, "If the case of the man be so with a wife, it is not good to marry." But he said to them, "All men cannot receive this saying, except they to whom it is given" . . . "there be eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matthew 19:10-11)." Again he says, "Many shall be called, but *few* chosen. Straight is the gate and narrow is the way, that leads to life and few there be that find it." Jesus both advocated and lived the life that we practice; and as he evidently did not believe that many in his day were qualified or "able" to live the same life, but considered such ability as a peculiar Gift of God, it is not probable that so wise and good a man "desired" that which he knew to be impossible; and so it is with us. We leave this matter

in the hands of the Great Master-builder, knowing that none can come to us unless the Father draws him; and that all, in their several stations of life, are “safe in the hand of one ordering power.” In what I have further to write, I shall be more general in my remarks, without noticing other passages in your communication. Most of those who object to our faith and practice bring forward, as you have done, the formidable charge that we abstain from multiplying the human species. They argue that abstinence from marriage and procreation is a violation of the laws of Nature and therefore “a great wrong.” This argument and conclusion are based on the fact of the existence of the two genders of male and female and that Nature has furnished them with reproductive powers. If we appeal to the laws of Nature, we must determine, as far as we can, the operations of Nature in her varied productions, which we see around us. It is undoubtedly a law of Nature, that the use of the reproductive powers, under normal conditions, will produce offspring; but that Nature has no law requiring that those powers should absolutely be used, is most obvious. If it is a law of Nature that reproductive powers, in every individual being and thing possessing them, must be used for reproduction, then Nature violates her own laws. Every vegetable seed has organs of reproduction; and every bird or other animal that devours such seed, though stimulated by Nature’s laws to eat these seeds, must, according to those objectors, violate Nature’s laws by preventing those reproductive organs or seeds from being put to the only use they are, in their opinion, designed for. Every man, woman, or child that eats bread and every animal that devours vegetables or seeds of any kind, would violate Nature’s laws, as every kernel of grain thus consumed has the organs of reproduction. The fact is plain: Nature has no law requiring the reproductive organs to be used merely because they exist. The sacrifice of these organs to a higher use and nobler purpose is Nature’s general law. Their use for reproduction is incidental and exceptional. Nature evidently designed the greater portion of vegetable seeds for the support of animal life and thus to pass into a higher grade of being, at the expense and destruction of their use for reproduction; only reserving a small proportion for reproductive purposes.

6       When the farmer raises one thousand bushels of corn, does he feel that Nature’s laws require him to plant every grain of it, because it has the organs of reproduction? This would, indeed, be a breach of Nature’s laws, as she evidently designed the greater portion for the support of animal life. Nature produces more seeds annually than there is room on the globe for reproduction and more animals than the earth could furnish with subsistence, if all of them should use their generative powers with effect, to the extent of their ability; which they should do, if the laws of Nature require it. Hence millions of insects and small animals are every day devoured by birds and other larger animals and are thereby prevented from producing offspring; and all this is done in conformity to Nature’s laws and not in violation of them. Millions of animals, having generative powers, are every year emasculated, slaughtered and otherwise prevented by man from using those powers. These animals, being used by him for food, constitute at least a portion of his more refined organism and thus serve a higher purpose in the great scale of Nature. But we would ask, if the law of Nature is violated by man in each case of this kind? If so, why don’t those sticklers for Nature’s laws raise their voices against those enormous violations as well as against those of the Shakers, so few in comparison? Nature’s laws are like the laws of God: “He that offends in one point is guilty of all”; and while men violate what they call the laws of Nature to such an enormous extent themselves, we are led to doubt

their sincerity when they express so much horror because others, as they allege, break them. Do fish violate the laws of Nature, when the large ones devour the smaller? Do the myriads of sea-fowls, which devour whole shoals of young fish, violate Nature? Who taught them to do this? Would not the ocean itself fail of room and subsistence for them, if this were not the case? The naturalist, Leuwenhoek, counted over a million of eggs in a single codfish. It cannot be the design of Nature that each of these should produce a fish, each of which should, in its turn, produce a million more and so on, without serving any higher purpose. In Nature's economy, there exists a stern necessity, that the far greater portion of them should serve for the subsistence of superior grades of animal life, as well as for the continuance of their own species; which would inevitably perish for lack of subsistence, were it not for this great conservative law to check their increase.

7 The time is approaching, when the unrestrained spreading of the human species will *overpopulate the earth*. A modern writer informs us that our earth contains thirty-two billions of acres; that the present population is one billion and one hundred thousand; and that this population doubles every sixty years, despite of wars and all other calamities. At this rate, in less than three hundred years there will be only one acre each for every human being and in five hundred years there would be about nine human beings for every acre!

8 Malthus, the great political economist, in his work on Population, says, "Population, when unchecked, would be doubled in every generation, or rather, that it increases in a *geometrical ratio*, while food can only be made to increase, at furthest, in a *arithmetical ratio*. At this rate of increase, in five hundred years, the population would be more than a million times its present number; but, in the most favorable circumstances, the produce of a country could hardly be, uniformly and permanently, increased to twenty times its amount every five hundred years; which, however, would be only arithmetical progression, as compared with the geometrical increase of inhabitants, From these two different rates of increase, it results, *that powerful checks on population must be constantly in action.*"

9 Thus, we see, a conservative principle in Nature must exist somewhere, to meet this issue. And what should that be but the disuse of the reproductive organs and the assumption of a *higher sphere, or spiritual life*, — the life of Christ? Malthus admits, that "abstinence from marriage" must constitute one of those "powerful checks"; but what is mere abstinence from marriage, without the religious element? There is no principle in human nature except this powerful enough to deal with man's lust and restrain him from something worse than mere marriage. But the moment the life of Virgin Purity is assumed from a religious motive, — when a man makes himself a eunuch in the inner life, "for the kingdom of heaven's sake", then all Christendom is in distress for fear the world will come to an end.

10 The fact that there is an element of Virgin Purity in the human soul, which will yet be more fully developed, is most evident. It has manifested itself, more or less, from the beginning of the race. It cropped out in the community of Essenes among the Jews and, indeed, the Nazarites before them, the Therapeutae of Egypt and the monastics of Europe and America during the whole Christian era. It may be traced among the Brahmins and ascetics of the East and has flourished for unknown ages among the followers of the Grand Lama in Tibet, The support of the *vestal virgins* in the Roman temples as *priestesses*, shows the innate veneration of the

human soul for the celibate and virgin character, as connected with religion. This order of virgin priestesses was kept up for at least a thousand years in succession.

11 We believe that the time for the more perfect development and organization of this great conservative principle has come and that it will operate and be gradually extended, in order that it may be fully and practically investigated, clearly understood and firmly established for future and more general adoption, as it becomes more necessary.

12 Hear what A. J. Davis says: “When mankind shall have become *spiritually larger* and *finer in body*, they will have fewer and fewer children. Down in the lower stratum of society, behold how populous! Take the early races: they propagate rapidly. Earth’s mothers have been broken down by their exceedingly numerous offspring. Rise higher in the scale and the married have fewer children and less frequently. Rise still higher in the mental scale and you can easily believe the time will come that *reproduction will cease!* There will then be fathers and mothers with their descendants and the offspring will become *as Angels*, neither marrying nor given in marriage; having risen above the mission of reproduction. The cerebellum, I repeat, will one of these days cease to have any thoughts *with reference to reproduction*. The finest and most poetic and spiritual minds gather nearly all their propagating power and essences into the front brain and top faculties. Only friends to truth dare to speak the whole truth on this subject.”

13 It requires but little reflection to discover, that as mankind reforms and complies with the sanitary laws of life and health, as well as those of procreation, the population of the earth will increase with an increasing ratio. A large majority may then be reserved from the work of reproduction, in accordance with the general laws of Nature in every other department of everyday life and may pass into the higher or inner life, at the expense and sacrifice of the reproductive principle.

14 What can we understand from the teaching of Jesus, — “*Cut of the right hand, pluck out the right eye and thus let some of the members perish*”, if it does not at least imply that the use of some of the members or faculties should be weakened if necessary for the salvation and spiritual elevation of the human soul? A late writer, referring to the above scripture, says, “The Master seems to approve those who should mutilate themselves for the sake of the *Kingdom of God*.” By “mutilate” he undoubtedly means *weaken*; and this is true, though not literally so. The same is more plainly taught in approving those who “make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.” What can show a more apparent violation of Nature’s laws than this strong figurative teaching of Jesus? But think you that he taught their violation? Nature teaches the musk-rat to gnaw off its own tail, when caught in a trap, to save its life. Jesus and Nature teach men to act on a similar principle; but these acts are not violations of Nature, for they accord with her highest mandates. The power to live a Holy inner and outer life of strict Virgin Purity will yet come to be understood as one of Nature’s most sublime operations, designed to serve the ultimate ends of man’s subsistence on the earth, as well as his resurrection and onward progress in the spiritual life.

15 Thus, my friend, while you look upon our principles and practice as “a great wrong”, tending to depopulate the earth, we consider them as subserving the best interests and ultimate existence of the race. A volume might be written to illustrate this: I can only give hints.

Mankind is yet ignorant of Nature's laws. They do not comprehend her system of checks and balances, her grand scheme of supply and demand and compensation, in her vast domain; and therefore, with a blind foolishness common with our race, are found quibbling and opposing Nature's own plans, while they think they are contending for and supporting them. I find this suggestion well supported by a modern publication, from which I here take an extract: "By what authority does short-sighted man assume to determine what God's laws permit and what they deny? By what warrant does he take upon himself to assert that to him all these laws are known? The term of his life is but a day, the circumference of his range of vision is but a spot, whence derives he his commission, groping about in his little span of the present, arrogantly to proclaim what is and what is not, to be in the limitless future? Does not history in every page pronounce a condemnation on such impiety? Does not experience rise up daily and testify against such presumption? Not thus is it that those speak and reason whom deep research has taught how little they know. It occurs to the humble wisdom of such men that laws of *Nature may exist with which they are wholly unacquainted*; nay, some, perhaps, which may have never been brought into operation at all even since man was first here to observe them (R. D. Owen, "Foot-Falls")." Again, the same author observes: "If a phenomenon actually presents itself which we are tempted to regard as a violation of Nature's law, it is more likely (ten thousand to one odds), that a similar phenomenon has already shown itself more or less frequently in the past, than that it presently presented itself for the first time in the history of our race (Ibid., p.82)."

16 Nature's great law is **PROGRESS**, carrying up and directing each lower grade of being to serve the grade above. Nature's law of reproduction is only a sub-law, submissive to the grand law of progress. Those portions of seeds which are reserved for reproduction can rise to no higher use than merely to *propagate and die!* This is an inflexible law of Nature. They yield and transmit their lives to their offspring and enter into no higher organizations or grades of being. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it dies (1 Corinthians 15:36)." On the other hand, the vastly greater portion which yield up their organs of reproduction enter into nobler uses and higher grades of life, forming blood, muscle, bone, nerve, brain and thus serving, if not actually constituting, the sublime mentality of the human intellect. By analogy of reason and in accordance with Scripture, the same is true with regard to man. While the genders continue to become "one flesh" and thus propagate their species, they must remain in a state of death, as to the enjoyment of the higher or spiritual life. "To be carnally-minded is death." While men continue to follow the "*first Adam*", —the multiplier, —they cannot enjoy the spiritual life, "In Adam all die." Death, as to the things and life of the spiritual sphere, is stamped upon all who are in the generative sphere of the first Adam. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Such are and must remain, "dead in trespasses and in sins." But "in Christ" (who never entered into the work of generation or procreation) all are made alive." That is, *all who are in Christ* — in his life and spirit — are made alive. This is called a New Life, because it is distinct from and superior to, the old life in Adam, which is death in comparison. It is called "a new and living way", because it is a new way of living and because it is a more recent development of life and is derived from a new and more sublime source, —from the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, instead of the impulses of a mere animal nature. Those who live this life are called "New Creatures", because they have forsaken the old influential life of the first Adam and entered into the life of Christ, the New Man.

17 As we have had frequent occasion to speak of Nature and her laws and may yet make further use of those terms, it may be well to remark here, that no truly enlightened mind supposes Nature to be an intelligence separate from God. This term, when used in the aggregate or abstract, means the inherent qualities which all things possess, as implanted by the Creator. Each distinct species of these beings and things is governed by the inherent laws of its creation. The sun having the quality or internal essence causing it to emit light and heat, shows this to be Nature's law in regard to it. The earth and sun both possessing the laws of gravitation and attraction, develop other laws, — those of the earth's daily motion on its own axis and its orbital motion around the sun. And although these laws are Eternal, their discovery by man was never made until comparatively modern times.

18 The law of gravitation belongs to and governs inert matter; but this law is overruled and gives place to the "higher law" of vital force in vegetable and animal life. By this law of vital force, we see the law of gravitation suspended. Thousands of tons of inert matter are daily made to move upward and ascend to the tops of the tallest trees, of which our immense forests are at once monuments and proofs. This is the law of vegetable life, as is evident from the fact, that, the moment vitality ceases, the ascent of inert particles ceases as well: the tree decays and falls back under the primitive law of inert matter. The same is true of animal life: the blood courses in the veins and arteries, upward with the same facility as downward; and the law of gravitation finds itself suspended and its power annulled. And, besides this power of animal life to suspend gravitation, it has still higher vital forces, such as locomotion, sensation and instinct, carrying it up still higher in the scale of being and fitting it for nobler ends and uses than the vegetable. Hence, in the great scale of Nature's laws, the vegetable life and reproductive seed-germs are given up to sustain the higher animal life. What judgment should we now form of some would-be philosopher, who should rail out against all vegetable vitality, declaring that it was violating Nature's law of gravitation and would, if suffered to proceed, destroy dry land or inertia itself and so bring the world to an end! The same amusing scene might be acted over by our sapient philosopher, when he should see all animated nature devouring vegetables and seeds, violating Nature's laws and, still worse, animals devouring the subjects of their own animal kingdom! A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, — must come to an end! Fear not! The infinitely wise Author of Nature holds the balance. All this is done in conformity to Nature's great law of **PROGRESS**; and this apparent "discord is harmony not understood." The same holds good with the laws of Nature when applied to man. In order to know these laws, we must study man's nature and his history, especially what has been revealed of him from a higher and wiser source.

19 Man is presented to us in scripture and in fact as a immoral intellectual animal and a generator of his species as *such*. The laws of generation, with the result of all they can do for or make of him, are summed up in his history of four thousand years, from Adam down to the coming of Christ. From this we discover that it is an inflexible law of Nature, that man, in the procreation of his species, transmits to his offspring his own depraved nature, with even more certainty than that of the human form. Another law of nature is that man, while in the generative order, must act upon the selfish principle. If he *multiplies*, he must *divide*; and an endless series of division and isolated interests must exist. Hence, *joint interest* and generation cannot co-exist; and, as Dr. Dwight says, "A separation of interest is a separation of affections." In the annals of our race, men have made some attempts to nullify this law of Nature, but never have succeeded.

Nature has asserted her rights and her law has prevailed. Some six hundred years before our era, the great and we may say good philosopher, Pythagoras, tried to make the *community* principle unite with the work of *generation*. He got together some six hundred men, with their wives and children, at Crotona, to live in community, determined to reform and improve the race, both physically and morally. He taught that it is wrong done to offspring when parents indulge in licentiousness; rigidly adopted the one-wife system and the intercourse was greatly restricted. Strict fidelity to the husband and to the wife was required and intercourse, except for offspring, considered shameful and strictly forbidden. Doubtless the good old philosopher expected to produce a generation of pure and undepraved offspring. But alas! The inflexible law of Nature prevailed; and “that which was born of the flesh was flesh.” We never hear any thing more of that attempted pure generation, or of the community, after the death of its projector. Robert Owen, Fourier and many others, have made the same attempt in our own times and failed.

20 When Jesus the Christ came, he publicized, not the work of generation, but of **REGENERATION**, — the *rebirth*, or resurrection to a new and spiritual life. This new and immortal life was brought to light by his gospel and the laws of Nature with regard to this regenerative work were clearly laid down and defined. The children or subjects of this resurrection “neither marry (present tense) nor are given in marriage; but *are* as the Angels.” They can have nothing to do with the generation. “They are not of the world, even as I [Jesus] am not of the world,” and therefore can no more generate the subjects of the world than citizens of the United States can propagate British subjects.

21 But we must not suppose that these newly revealed laws of Nature were then first enacted and illogically imposed. Like her other great laws, they are Eternal. The circumstances and consequences of their revealing may have been and doubtless were, much modified by man’s depravity; but if all men had been and remained like Noah, who was “*perfect in his generations*”, or procreations, they would have been merely *good animal men*, who still could not receive the things of the spirit without first forsaking the things of the flesh and entering into the spiritual sphere. This transition from the generation to the regeneration, by them “*to whom it is given*”, could and would have taken place without violence if man had not become depraved. The clash and conflict arise from the opposition of human depravity to Nature’s “*higher law*”. Hence the introduction of this law by Jesus the Christ and his Apostles wears the appearance of war, opposition and conflict.

22 A late writer says, “Jesus decidedly taught celibacy. The Master seemed to approve those who should mutilate themselves for the kingdom of God (See Matthew 18:8). If thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off, etc. The *cessation* of generation was the sign of the kingdom of God.

23 All things were thought useless which *served only to continue the world*. Property was forbidden. He preached war boldly against Nature, a total rupture with kin.” We excuse this author for saying that Jesus preached war against Nature. He, like the rest of men who are unacquainted with Christ through actual experience by obedience to his teachings and the nature of his kingdom, was ignorant of Nature’s higher law of spiritual and Angelic life, which Jesus revealed and broadcasted. The teachings of Jesus must appear like war on Nature to those who do not understand the things of the Spirit. What else can they make of the saying, “Think not that I have come to send peace, but a sword”, — to break up all kindred ties, so that a man’s foes

shall be those of his own household? It was the design of Jesus to introduce the kingdom of God” on earth, which, in its nature, is distinct from the kingdoms of the world, having its own peculiar qualities, properties, constitutions and laws. Hence, conformity to these is as much of a conforming to Nature’s higher law as conformity to the laws of generation and reproduction is to a lower law of Nature. As, then, the nature and constitution of this kingdom of God are such that it cannot admit of generation, the ceasing from generation by the subjects of this kingdom is no violation of Nature’s laws, but a direct fulfilment of them. The attempt to combine the two institutions of generation and regeneration, would, if successful, violate Nature’s laws; but it never can succeed. It must be observed, that the above-mentioned hostilities and conflicts are all on the part of the generative order, — the opposition of the kingdoms of the world to the kingdom of God. Jesus pressured no man: he simply proclaimed the unalterable laws of God’s kingdom and left it to the free choice of men to enter into it or not. “If any man will be my disciple, let him”, — “Whosoever will, let him”, is the language of the Spirit. The hatred was all on the side of the world. “The world hateth me, because I testify of it that its works are evil.” It was not, however, his person, but his testimony, which they hated; and their hatred sprang from their depravity. It is true that Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth [permits] violence”; but this was not to be committed on outsiders, nor on any one by another, but by each one on his own depraved habits and lusts, — on his whole “old man”, whom he is to “*put off, — crucify!* with his deceitful lusts.” The disciple of Jesus is to “deny [renounce] himself”, not others.

24 It was said of Jesus, that he knew what was in man. He understood human nature, — he knew that man possessed a twofold life, animal and spiritual; the spiritual life being so sleeping as to resemble a state of death, man, as to that life, was pronounced *dead*. Thus said Jesus, The hour is coming and now is, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of man and they that hear shall live. Nature had ultimately designed for man to assume that *New Life* and Jesus said the time had then come. This assumption, as has been stated above, was a moral and spiritual resurrection; and this was the great work which Jesus was commissioned to introduce among men; and he clearly laid out and defined the nature and Laws of this New Life. He plainly pointed out the distinction between the new and the old, — the children of this world and the children of this newly-introduced kingdom of God. “The children of this world marry; but the children of the resurrection do not marry, but are as the Angels”. They are like the Angels because they have entered into the life of Christ, which is equal to that of any Angel. This indicates that it is just as contrary to Nature for these children of God to propagate their species by natural generation, as for the Angels to do so. The subjects of this new kingdom are represented by Jesus as having made themselves eunuchs for the purpose of attaining to it; and this clearly teaches that it is as contrary to Nature for the subjects of this kingdom to propagate offspring by natural generation, as for him who is literally a eunuch to do it. This amounts to an impossibility: and it really is *impossible* for the subjects of this spiritual kingdom to propagate natural offspring: For, the very moment they consent in their hearts to the act, they die! This is the way the man of Eden died, — he lost his spiritual life, — the very day he committed the act. This is Nature’s law and is as irreversible as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Their spiritual life becomes extinct: it is a “second death”. The law of depravity in their members has warred against the law of the life-giving Spirit in their minds and brought them “into captivity to the law of sin and death.” The soul that sins dies. He who would add a new member to the kingdom of God by generation, after being made alive in the spirit”, is like the naturalist who seeks to

discover the life-principle by an incision into the heart of a living man: the act designed to find life extinguishes it and he commits murder instead. Those who “begin in the spirit and end in the flesh” murder their own souls long before their work of generation can be accomplished. And when accomplished, instead of producing a “Holy offspring”, it will be found to have been, like David of old, “conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity”.

25 The primeval pair of our present race, the first Adam and Eve, pure from the hands of the Creator, tried to generate a Holy offspring, but produced a murderer [Cain] and lost paradise!

They became dead to the life and things of the spirit. Noah was “*perfect in his generations*”; yet his offspring all became idolaters in a generation or two after the flood. Jesus is said to have been begotten by a Holy Ghost and Pope Pio Nino decreed, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was immaculate; and yet he possessed all the depravity common to human nature and was tempted in all points like the rest!

26 The life of the “children of the resurrection”, or “children of God”, is an inspired life; and this inspiration of the Spirit of God raises them above the elements which govern the carnal man in his generative life. Without this *inspired life* they can no more be elevated and supported above the elements of generation, than inert matter can counteract the law of gravitation. When the primitive Christians, on the day of Pentecost, were thus Divinely inspired, how suddenly was the strong band of greed, materialism and covetousness rent asunder and all property renounced and devoted to the common good. Thus, also, the strong ties of husband and wife and all the other fleshly relationships growing out of them, fell asunder, severed by a stronger attraction of the higher and Holier relationships of the Spirit, — sons and daughters of God, — brethren and sisters in Christ, without partiality or respect of persons.

27 Dear friend, we have, perhaps, already wearied your patience; and, though what we have written may not convince you of the correctness and truth of our position, it must, we think, satisfy you that we can never comply with your proposition with regard to the work of propagation, especially your “*house of generation*”, and its prescribed order. You cannot fail to see that we are wholly disqualified to generate either a pure or depraved offspring, after the flesh. If we enter into the work of creation, or propagation, it must be in the realm of Mind, molding and forming men’s hearts, lives and affections, in conformity with the character of Christ. “If any man be in conformity to Christ he is a new creature.” And consequently there is a new creation.

28 We, however, heartily agree with your views of the unbounded abuse of the generative order and its evil consequences on the race; and also your idea of the licentious consequences of the filthy custom, which so universally prevails, of husbands and wives constantly lodging together. The ancients did not so. We read of Abraham’s tent and Sarah’s tent; of Jacob’s tent and Rachel and Leah’s tents. And when the wives wanted offspring, they were wont to invite and sometimes hire, their chaste husbands to visit them (See Genesis 30:15-16).

29 We think you ought to let your light shine on this subject. Cry aloud and spare not. It is not our work to improve the generation. You that work at the business must do that. We want good bricks, —the very best that can be had and sincerely wish you all success in

improving them. We are not brick-makers, though we consider those that are, just as necessary in their place, if they do their work properly.

30 We are Master-builders, called to build in the temple of our God and go no more out forever.

**Thy sincere friend,  
Elder Richard Pelham**

