

The Faith of
Sister Sarah Liddel

Of The

CHURCH AT UNION VILLAGE

Containing Her Correspondence with
Mary Carr

Edited By

Elder Richard Pelham

in the First Order of the

Church at Union Village, Ohio “Wisdoms Paradise”

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To the Reader

The following correspondence grew out of a visit, made September 5th, 1867, by a very respectable woman of the world, Mary Carr, to one of the families at Union Village; and during the short visit, in which she stayed only a few hours, she was waited on by one of the Shaker Sisters, Sarah Liddel. Mary, it seems, contracted a remarkable attachment to Sarah, as will be seen by reading the correspondence about to be detailed. Mary is a resident of Mount Holly City, New Jersey, where she has been employed some fifteen years in teaching primary school. She returned home soon after her visit at Union Village, and the first notice from her was a news print sent to Sarah, containing an account of her sojourn in Warren county, Ohio, including her visit to the Shakers. Of this part we shall first give much detail. Then will follow a letter of inquiry from Mary to Sarah, from which liberal extracts are given; and Sarah's answers in full are subjoined. A second letter from Mary is included, with still more important questions and objections, and their answers by Sarah. This is followed by a third letter from Mary, acknowledging herself fully satisfied with the arguments and answers.

As the questions asked and answered are such as are very generally asked by earnest inquirers into our principles, the editor conceived that if printed in the form of a tract and given to the public, it might replace the necessity of writing so many individual letters and be as satisfactory to many other minds as to Mary's. I will only add that her full and free consent was generously given for publishing this correspondence and for the use of her name.

Elder Richard Pelham

Visit to the Shaker Settlement

Last, but not least, comes up the remembrance of my visit to the Shaker Settlement. That is a leaf in memory to which I shall often turn. I have it all before me now. Its broad acres of rich land; the trees laden with ripe, golden fruit,—everything growing in rich abundance that the heart could wish for; the substantial, pleasantly built houses the cheerful ways of the well-ordered families; the great, broad-backed, soft-eyed cows, themselves partaking of the quiet, gentle ways of their keepers, —the rich, pure milk drawn from their udders by the pretty, young Shakeresses; the young brother who passed on before us, showing us his stock (and with an air of pride pointing out his best), with his broad-brimmed hat, fat, rosy cheeks, and bright black eyes, —all these things make a bright picture that will never fade.

As I passed from one to another and saw the calm, happy look on each, I could not help but wonder of their inner lives, —what of their hopes and fears, etc. As these things crowded my mind, the tall, slender figure of Sister Sarah comes up before me. Her kind, motherly ways gave me the confidence to ask what I whatever I wished. She told me how, at seven years of age, her mother had brought her from the far-off hills of Vermont, and laid her up as an offering upon God's altar, consecrating her to His service. Fifty years have passed since then, and her testimony now is, "I am happy." What a lesson for the worldling! I scanned that easy going face and no mark of discontent was there; no hard drawn lines had settled round any of the features, but a peaceful, happy expression, telling of the beauty of her life. As I looked at her I wondered if, when fifty-three years of my life had passed if I should be able to bear the same testimony? And then I said to her: Have you never in all these long years longed for the pleasures of the world? With an eye beaming with truthfulness and voice full of sweetness, she said "Nay, never." With this testimony I was led to believe what I had never thought before, that the Shakers are happy people. All that I saw led me to think it. It is surely no convent life with its rigid laws and penances; no dark vaults or gloomy cells; no high walls or grated windows. Strong, willing hearts are there, bearing firm but gentle rule. A ready obedience from all gives birth to the good order and happiness that is so plainly visible. As I passed through the cool, pleasant rooms, seeing the happy faces and hearing the cheerful voices of old and young and seeing the well-filled storerooms, I thought, 'Oh, what a home for the hungry, what rest for the weary!' I know it is very unromantic to talk of being hungry; but as I am of the earth and earthly, I confess I was able to do justice to the sweet Graham bread and golden butter, the fresh milk, cakes, pies and fruit that were set before us. And then there was such delicate politeness in the offering of this lunch, almost making us feel that it was by accident while we knew it was placed there especially for us. After feasting on these good things, we were led back to the reception room by gentle Sister Sarah. I could not but express my thankfulness for the kindness she had manifested and the pleasure I had realized and looking into her clear, calm eyes, I longed for a place in her love and memory; and when I asked her to grant me this benefit, bright tears gathered in those soft eyes and she bent over and imprinted a fervent kiss on my face. I shall never forget the pressure of those sweet lips and, like the child whom the great Napoleon kissed, must ever keep that spot sacred. I do not know that it was so, but I shall ever cherish the idea that when the dewy tears gathered in those soft eyes, and that warm kiss was given, there went up a prayer for my Eternal welfare. Be that as it may, I shall ever pray for one who was to me so kind, and look forward to the time when I shall rest beside the River of Life and hold sweet converse with the gentle spirit of Sister Sarah.

Mary Carr

Extract from Mary's First Letter

Sister Sarah,

You perhaps think this an intrusion, but believe me, it is no idle curiosity, but friendly feeling and I desire to know more of you and of your people and doctrines. You will perhaps remember my visiting you last summer. I had long desired to visit your people, to see and know for myself what I had so long heard of. To say that I was pleased is useless, for I can never express the gratification experienced from that visit. I shall ever look forward with pleasure to returning and shall look back upon it with the same feeling. I think of it as one of the green spots in the desert of life. Your well-ordered happy homes often rise up before me in my lonely hours and I often exclaim, 'Oh, for such rest from the din and bustle of the world!' I need not say that you are spared much that is vexing and trying to the spirit. No doubt you have your trials, but they are not as ours. Have you any objections to answering a few questions which I wish to ask? What were the reasons that these good men and women had for retiring from the busy world and leading the life they do? What reason do you give for dissolving the ties of husband and wife, parent and child, —the ties which we consider of all others the most binding? Then, again, what reason can you give for men and women living in celibacy? Marriage was appointed by God: by it the human race is propagated. Perhaps you will think I should not ask these questions, but believe me, it is no idle curiosity that leads to me asking them. If you will reply to my letter, recognizing me as a friend and an inquirer after truth, I shall be greatly pleased and indebted to you. Please write and address Mary Carr, of Mount Holly City, New Jersey.

Sister Sarah's Answer

Dear Mary,

I pray you talk not of "intrusion". You cannot tell how delighted I was to receive your friendly and very interesting letter. I was pleased to be informed of your health and of your safe arrival home and above all, that you feel so deep an interest in us and our religious principles as to induce you to cultivate further acquaintance and to inquire more strictly into our doctrines and the reasons for the life we live. We feel it our duty to "be ready always to give an answer to everyone that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us." But I am no theologian and cannot pretend to answer your questions in orthodox style, but will endeavor to give you true and simple answers according to my own experience, feelings and reflections. You ask: "What were the reasons these good men and women had for retiring from the busy world and leading the life they do?" No other reason or motive than purely a *religious* one, —an intense desire to live pure and spotless lives, —in a word, a desire to become true Christians and true followers of Jesus the

Christ. Not merely outward followers, but to gain and possess His inner *life*,—His spirit. “If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His (See Romans 8:9).” And if we have His spirit it will be manifested in us by our “walking even as he walked (1 John 2:6).” You next ask: “What reason do you give for dissolving the ties of husband and wife, parent and child, the ties which we consider, of all others, the most binding?” Perhaps you will understand me as thoroughly as by any answer I could give, were I to say, we dissolve those ties for the very same reason that a young man “forsakes father and mother and joins himself to a wife.” He has outgrown his childish and boyish affections and ties and looks upon the married relation as higher enjoyment and happier life. So the Christian, when he becomes *wedded* to Christ and gets a taste of His Divine, unselfish love and feels that same Sacred and Holy tie of love to Christ in *His true members*, which are His brethren and sisters in Christ, he is weaned from all partial, sensual and lower loves, and gives his whole heart and all his faculties to the building up and support of this Holy relation and institution. And who can doubt that this Divine, spiritual life of Christian Love is infinitely higher, holier and happier than the sensual life of the world, with all its comparatively low ties and relationships? If the Christian institution has no ties, no love, no relationships or enjoyments which equal those natural ties and relations of the world, as professing Christians testify, what can it do for the world? How can it make them happier or better? And with all reverence I would ask: Why should Jesus expect that men and women would forsake fathers, mothers, wives and children, houses and lands, for His sake and in order to become His disciples, as he required, unless His religion and its relationships would afford them higher enjoyments? Indeed, our Savior did promise “*a hundredfold*” of *gospel relations* in exchange for the natural relations of the world, which he required them to forsake. This increased and spiritual relationship is the promised inheritance of Christ’s true followers; and to us this promise is fulfilled. The inward working of the spirit of Christ ultimately develops this high and Holy state of the affections and those who hear its still, small voice and follow it diligently, will surely be led in the right way; and this, my dear one, is my prayer in regard to you.

It is according to the spirit and practice of the world to propagate and spread its species; but the spirit and work of Christ and of true Christians, who are one with him, is to **SAVE** those that are propagated. And they have business enough of their own, without meddling with that of the world, out of which they are called and chosen. “Come ye out from among them.” — “I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”, saith the Savior to His followers. So, then, as it is the law of the first Adam and the propagating order to “forsake father and mother and cleave to the wife”, it is the law of Christ and His order or institution, to “forsake father and mother, wife and children”, **ALL** for Christ’s sake and the Gospel (See Luke 14:26 and Matthew 19:29). Of course, if any of these natural relations choose to go with the Christian into the higher spiritual life of Christian love, they will be embraced in that impartial love on equal terms with others. The gospel is an expansion of love, not requiring us to love our natural relations less, but to love others more and all on a different and higher principle. It is only such as hate Christ and His way that are to be forsaken and even they are to still to be loved and

prayed for. We can only know the spirit of Christ by His teaching and example, until it takes its abode in us and becomes living saving power. On a certain occasion, Jesus was teaching an assembly, mostly of His disciples and someone informed him that his mother and brothers stood outside desiring to see him. He did not do as the spirit of the world would have dictated; He illustrated His teachings by His example. He asked, “Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?” and He stretched forth His hand toward **HIS DISCIPLES** and said: “Behold my mother and my brethren! Whosoever doeth the will of my Father in Heaven, the same is my mother, sister and brother (Matthew 12:48-50).” Thus He rejected all mere *fleshly ties* and gave His disciples practical lesson to do the same. He owned no parental relations except those of a spiritual nature. With him the mere fleshly relations of the world were nothing; while those of the Kingdom of God were everything. On another occasion Jesus assured His disciples, “that there is no man that has left house or parents or brethren or wife *for the Kingdom of God’s sake*, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time and in the world to come life everlasting (Luke 18:29).” In Mark 10:30, the things to be received and enjoyed in this present life, instead of those forsaken, are more particularly specified, “Houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children and lands.” Now, as all the *names of relations* here mentioned as being restored are the names of *spiritual relations*, we must see that “*wife*”, though mentioned among those to be forsaken, is not named among those to be restored, because it is the name of a carnal or fleshly relation, — a relation not known in the Kingdom of Heaven or Church of God. In view of these sayings and doings of Jesus the Christ, and more that might be mentioned, we think the question: “What reason have we for dissolving the ties of husband and wife”, is the same as to ask us why we have become practical Christians, — real followers of Christ. We have dissolved those ties because Christ required it of all that would become His disciples (Luke 14:26) — because our spiritual natures demand it, —because we hungered and thirsted for righteousness and were totally dissatisfied with our own earthly, sinful, sensual lives and because we longed for a higher, holier, inner and outer life than could be found in any of the natural earthly and fleshly relations. I know it is as you say, that those natural ties are, of all others, the “**MOST BINDING.**” And it is a sorrowful fact that they bind too many from entering into the more happy relations of the Kingdom of God.

You further ask what reason I can give for men and women living in Virgin Purity. This question, I think, has been already in some measure answered and much more might be said on the subject; but the very best reason we can give is, that Jesus the Christ, who was set as an example, that we should follow His steps, did set us this example and encouraged us by the promise of all the blessings of earth and Heaven, of time and Eternity, to follow Him in this thing, —to forsake wife or husband,—forsake **ALL** for His sake and the gospel. You add: “Marriage was appointed by God —by it the human race is propagated and spread.” So it was appointed by God, and so is *Virgin Purity*. The first was given to the old man, Adam, —the second to the New Man, Christ the Second Adam. Therefore Christians are required to “put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24).” The first man (Adam) is of the earth and

earthly the second Adam (Jesus) is the Lord from Heaven; and as is the earthy, so also are they that are earthy and as is the heavenly, so also are they that are heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:47-48). That is, the followers of the first Adam are like him, and the followers of the second Adam (Jesus) are like Him. "No man can serve two masters." And now, Mary, you say: "Perhaps I think you should not ask you such things." But indeed I do think you should ask just such things and as many more as you may feel an interest in asking; and if, in my broken and fragmentary way, I have satisfactorily answered you in any one point, I shall be pleased. If I have failed, do try me again. Tell me where the lack is and I will try and do better next time. Dear friend, you speak of looking forward to coming to see us a second time. Be assured we shall be exceedingly pleased to see you at any time when it may suit your convenience to give us a call and we hope it may not be long. I shall be glad to continue correspondence with you as long as you may feel an interest in it and shall look for an answer to this in due time.

**Truly your friend,
Sarah**

Mary's Reply

Dear Sister Sarah,

Your letter came at a time when it was most needed. It came at a time when I felt that I needed something to cheer and comfort. It came when I was worn and weary, weary in spirit as well as in body. I was longing for something to change the current of thought. Your kind letter was real rest; and then I was so glad to know that mine had not been an intrusion. I was glad to also know that you appreciated my motives and were kind enough to answer all my questions. You certainly defend your cause with a dedication worthy of a crown and your reasons are good. And yet I must confess that much of the Scripture you gave to prove your faith correct should have taken for the opposite. You have thrown light where it was darkness to me. But, my dear sister, it seems to me that there is so much of the earth and earthy about me, that I never could live the pure and Holy life that your faith calls for; and yet I see it in all its beauty! When I compare your manner of living and your homes to those of the worldling, or even to professing Christians, it brings a train of thoughts and questions which I cannot solve. I love to think of all I saw, heard and felt the day that I visited you. I think of it more especially when I am tired,—when, after combating with the world, I am weary of its strife. Then it is my mind turns to your Eden of repose,—then it is the memory of your quiet homes comes to me and it seems like the shadow of a great rock in weary land. There was one thing that I meant to ask you in my last letter; that was, if you, as people, believe in the Divinity of Christ. But from your letter I suppose you do and judge that our faith is very much alike. But tell me, do you regard all as lost sinners

who are not of your faith? Do you count yours to be the only true way, —the only safe way to the better land? You say Christ gave us (by His life) an example of Virgin Purity. So he did but then He certainly approved of marriage, for He was present at a marriage in Cana. And He also forbade the separation of husband and wife. And then He tells us that God made them male and female and for this cause shall a man leave all and cleave to his wife. Now you may be able to throw different light upon this; but it seems to me that it is God's Holy will that this relation should exist. I know the example of Christ is before us but remember He was Divine and He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me." He had a mission to perform that was not of a carnal nature. Now the question comes up, are not all sent into the world with some kind of mission? And are not those who are living a pure and good life in the married state doing God's will as much as they that have chosen to remain free from such entanglements? The married relation is very often dishonored. Men and women rush into it without thought as to their fitness for each other. There is no unity of spirit, no affinity between them and oh, what a difficult life is theirs! It is often too late when they find out their mistake. Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that such have no right to live together and bear children. A loveless marriage will not make a loving family. And I believe such marriages are the cause of nearly all the sin in the world. Children bred under such circumstances cannot be what they should.

Will you please tell me who the founder of your Society was? When and where was the first settlement made? How many settlements are there in America? Are there any in Europe? Do you have a regular school system among you? And what branches do you teach? By this time I am sure you are ready to say I am a true daughter of fallen Eve. But as I have said before, it is no idle curiosity that prompts the asking of these questions. I am fully satisfied that your motives are all pure. I only wish the world would seem so much of nothing to me as it does to you. I wish I could give up its pleasures and work for good as willingly as you.

**Please write again to your friend,
Mary**

Sister Sarah's Reply

Dear Mary,

I received your letter from January 22nd and it manifests those same soul-breathings for a higher, Holier and better life for which I feel so much sympathy for you. The soul-pangs which you seem to foretell, in passing from your present condition to a higher spiritual life, — even the life of Christ, can no more be avoided than the pains of labor in the case of a natural birth. Hence our separation and deliverance from the fetal condition of our natural and worldly life is called a *New Birth* by our Savior. We must be born out of the worldly and fleshly natural state into the Christ state. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again (John 7).” But sister, you lack faith. You say: “It seems to me there is so much of the earth and earthy about me, that I never could lead the pure life your faith calls for and yet I see it in all its beauty.” It is well that you should have both a lively sense of your worldly condition and of the purity of the true Christian’s life; but it is not well that you should assume there is no power of Christ which can deliver you from a sinful state. The Apostolic faith is, “through Christ’s strengthening us we can do all things.” That is, all things necessary to work out our salvation and separation from the world and its evil influences. But faith, as our Savior said, is like a grain of mustard seed, it is small in the beginning and must have time to grow and if it grows it must be *cultivated*. We must receive truth in the LOVE of it and increase faith by living up to its requirements. Our Savior said, “If ye do whatsoever I command you, then shall ye know the doctrines are true.” Thus it must be *practically* worked out, or faith without works is dead, being alone.

You say that in your former letter you had intended to ask if we believed in the Divinity of Christ, but you conclude from my letter that we do and that your faith and ours is nearly alike on that subject. I do not know your views well enough to verify your conclusion of our faith being alike. There are many shades of difference among the various denominations of *professing* Christians on this question and though we might have answered you in the affirmative, we are too aware that our views are not strictly “orthodox”. We believe in His Divinity and we also strictly believe in His humanity. You ask: “Do you regard all as lost sinners who are not of your faith?” *We regard all sinners as lost*. But if you mean by “*lost sinners*” those that are doomed to Eternal perdition, then we answer in the negative: we do not so regard them. When Jesus sent out His disciples to preach, He said: “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost” —to save “*lost sinners*” from their sins. So we have the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-45) and of the prodigal Son. “For this my Son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” Whoever, then, has found Christ, or rather is found of Him and saved by Him from sin, no matter where he is located, even to the farthest verge of this green earth, he is not lost. Jesus came to save those that were already lost —the whole race, not merely such as were in danger of being lost.

Again you ask: “Do you believe yours to be the only true way, the only safe way to the better land?” We certainly do believe so. The *loss* of man is from *one* great fall and the only way out of that loss is through *one way*. We have no faith in a multitude of ways, schemes and gospels, all of man’s invention, for though there be “lords many and gods many” yet to us there is but one God, one Gospel, one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

In reference to my former communication you make this remark: “You say Christ gave us (by His life) an example of Virgin Purity. So He did; but then He certainly did approve of marriage, for He was present at a marriage feast in Cana.” I am pleased with your honesty in acknowledging that Christ did by His life give us an example of Virgin Purity. As to His being present at a marriage and turning so much water into wine “*after men had well drunk*” and ordering it to be handed out to all present, the advocates of alcoholic drink have claimed that He

encouraged drinking, if not drunkenness, rather than marriage and I am inclined to think they have the best of the argument. You remember, He was charged with being a wine bibber. It appears quite unreasonable to me that this single fact of Jesus attending a wedding should cancel and invalidate all His plain teaching on this subject and His whole life's example. And it seems quite as reasonable to say that He authorized all the wickedness of the crowd that followed Him and the publicans and sinners whose houses He visited and with whom He ate and drank and associated. The Pharisees seemed to be of this opinion when they reproached Him, saying: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" and certainly thereby approves their sinful lives! Upon the whole, I think it quite foolish to conjecture the designs of Jesus in such movements, in order to justify that which we are in favor of, —that which goes to indulge our earthly, carnal natures. Fortunately, we are not left to conjecture on this subject. The inspired Apostle has recorded the motives of Jesus in working this His first miracle. Thus he says: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested *His glory*; and *His disciples believed on Him*." Thus it is plain He was there and worked that miracle, not to sanction marriage nor drunkenness, but to give proofs of His Divine mission and confirm the faith of His disciples. Let us then leave this matter where the Sacred penman left it and not be wise above what is written. If there was any reason for believing that Jesus by His presence intended to sanction that marriage, I should not hesitate to admit it. I should not consider it any sanction or authority for introducing marriage into His church or *Kingdom of God on earth*; for there is not the least proof that either of those married partners were His disciples and He might consistently sanction the marriage of "the children of this world" because the truest light had not yet reached their minds, nor were they professed disciples of Christ. You further say that: "Christ also forbade the separation of husband and wife." Now, Mary, let us take a fair view of this matter. Jesus certainly did encourage men by all the rewards of earth and heaven, of time and Eternity, to **FORSAKE** their wives. Everyone that hath forsaken houses, wife etc., for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit Eternal Life (Matthew 19:29). Mark says: "He shall receive an hundred fold now *in this time*, and in the world to come Eternal life." Now, would Jesus make such principles and hold out such powerful incentives for men to forsake their wives and then forbid them from doing it? I dare not accuse Him of such an inconsistency. Let us then examine fairly and see what He did say, which is thought by many to have cancelled out those plain requirements and promises. If possible let's harmonize the sayings of Christ. I will refer you to Mark 10:2 etc. "And the Pharisees came to Him and asked Him, saying, Is it lawful for man to put away his wife?" *tempting Him*. We must notice here that the Pharisees question is one of "LAW", not of Gospel. They did not ask Him what *He* would teach in this case, but what *Moses* had taught, —"is it lawful" or according to Moses? Hence, Jesus answered by asking: "What did *Moses* command you?" What does the *law* say? "And they said Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." Now we acknowledge that Jesus did find fault with this precept and teaching of Moses and referred to a law prior to that of Moses. "From the *beginning of the creation*, God made them male and female. For this cause man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. What, therefore, God

has joined together let not man separate.” This is the old Adamic law—the law given by God to the first Adam (The Law of Nature). But surely this cannot be *Gospel!* This cannot be the foundation of the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven! “For they that are Christ’s have *crucified* the *flesh* (Galatians 5:24)” this “*one flesh*” with the rest. It is according to the order of the first Adam to “forsake father and mother and cleave to the wife.” But it is according to the order of the Second Adam (Christ) to forsake father and mother and *wife too* and cleave to Christ. “For he that is joined to an harlot is one flesh, but he that is *joined to the Lord is one spirit* (1 Corinthians 6:16-17).” The key to this whole subject is the wide difference between “*forsaking*” the wife and “*divorcing*” and “*putting away the wife*”. In every instance where Jesus encourages men to “*forsake*” their wives, it was to be done “*for His sake and the Gospel*”, “*for His name’s sake*”, or “*for the sake of the Kingdom of God* (See Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:29; Luke 18:29).” But why should Jesus expect His followers to forsake their wives *for His sake*, unless *He* required it? This must be the motive, *For His Sake*. But the sole motive for *divorcement* is to put the man or the woman, as the case may be, in a *legal* condition to get another wife or husband and not for Christ’s sake. There is no doubt that this precept and teaching of Moses had been basely abused, which abuse Jesus designed to check by holding those who were living according to the first Adam, “who was of the earth and earthy”, to God’s original law for such. This is made plain from what follows: “And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter, and He said unto them, whosoever shall *put away* his wife and *marry another*, committeth adultery against her and if a woman shall put away her husband *and be married to another*, she committeth adultery (Mark 10:11-12).” So, then, the case stands thus: Whosoever shall *forsake* his wife for the sake of the Kingdom of God, shall receive an hundred fold now in this time and in the world to come Eternal Life; but whosoever *divorces* or “*puts away*” his wife and marries another commits adultery, and therefore “cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (See 1 Corinthians 6:9).” I would here observe that *forsaking* the wife for Christ’s sake does not necessarily imply or require *separation*, but *divorcing* does. Only the *relation* of husband and wife—the married relation is to be forsaken, and not the person or persons; and as Paul says of Peter, man may “lead about a wife, a sister”, there being no other relation between them but that of brother and sister in Christ [**Note:** The Geneva version reads: “A wife being, or having become a sister.” A commentator says: “A wife who is or has become a sister in Christ.”]

After all, we do not say that Jesus *forbade* marriage, for he said “The children of this world marry”, but declared at the same time that they that shall be counted worthy to obtain that (“better”) world do not marry. He told His disciples that He had chosen them out of the world, and that they were no more of the world than He was of the world and if they were not of the world what were they of? Why, evidently, they were “children of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Jesus designed to make a clear separation and distinction between “*the children of the Kingdom*” and the children of this world,—between His followers and the followers of the first Adam,—between those who multiplied the subjects of the world and those who multiplied the subjects of the Kingdom of God, by calling lost souls into the work of *regeneration* to be Born Again and become as little children; “for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

You say, dear friend, that it seems to you that it is God's Holy will that the married relation should exist. I do not feel willing to dispute this; nor do I doubt that it is His Holy will that His kingdom on earth even His Holy church, should maintain anything less than a Virgin Pure and Holy life and I know these two orders should *never* be blended. There are, in my opinion, but two relations of the male and female which God approves. The married relation, when the laws of God and nature are strictly observed and no carnal intercourse indulged except for bearing children, is undoubtedly God's method for peopling the world. The other relation of the male and female is the pure spiritual relation of Father and Mother, Brother and Sister in Christ. This is God's method of saving lost sinners and peopling His Kingdom on earth, —that kingdom for which Christ taught His disciples to pray, and which He came to set up on earth.

You further say: "I know Christ's example is before us, but He was *Divine*." We must not forget that He was also *human* and well qualified to set us an example in everything pertaining to our duty on earth as His followers and subjects of His gospel. As to His *humanity*, it is said that He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (See Hebrews 2:16 and Hebrews 4:15)." Thus He had our human nature and set us an example how, as Christians and His true followers we should treat that nature; how we should deny that nature through the cross by living a Virgin Pure and Holy life and never indulge that which is carnal and by this means sanctify the human and make it Divine. You say: "He had a mission", Indeed He did and that very mission was to "*set us an example in order that we should follow His steps*." And it seems to me that there is no part of human life or relations in which a true example is so much needed as in the married relation. You seem to realize this from the terrible picture you draw of the evils attending those relations. You say and say truly: "they are the cause of nearly all of the evil in the world." And let me ask: Is this evil confined to the *non-professing* part of the world? Must it not be acknowledged that *professing Christians* are equally involved in it? This being so, it must appear that Jesus utterly failed in His mission of setting mankind an example of how to live in a married state so as to avoid the great evils so justly complained of, that is if it was His design that His followers should live in the married relation which I have shown it wasn't. The only remedy for all those evils is the Virgin Pure and Holy life which His example and teachings mark out. Friend, there are the two orders, the *generation* and the *regeneration*,—the order of the old man Adam, which is of the earth and earthy and the order of the New Man, Christ, the Lord from Heaven. We cannot belong to both; for "all in Adam die; but all in Christ are made alive." "Put off, therefore, the old man, which is corrupt with his deceitful lusts, and put on the *New Man* (Christ) which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24)." And, dear friend, as free agents, we are left to choose between these two. The *law* was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* (the Gospel Law of Grace) came by Jesus, the Christ. If we choose the work of generation we come under Moses' law which regulates it, as found in Leviticus chapter 12. If we choose to follow Christ in the regeneration, we are delivered from the law by being raised above it and living such pure and Holy lives that we do not come under its grasp. If we commit no uncleanness, we are not required to observe its "*diverse washings and carnal ordinances*." If we bear no children we are

not to be turned out of the church or congregation and not allowed to come in again until we “offer a sin offering for our sin” at the end of forty or eighty days (Leviticus Chapter 12). The law of Moses is a system of commandments and penalties, adapted to the order of the generation, — “thou shalt and thou shalt not.” The Gospel is a system of grace and a gracious invitation to a Holy life. “Whosoever will, let him” is the language of the Spirit. “If any man will be my disciple, let him” —not force him or pressure him, —but, “let him take up his cross and follow me.” But what will happen if he refuses? Just what happened to those in the parable of the feast who rejected the invitation,—“they shall not taste of my supper.” Those who continue in the generation and hold their union and relation to a sinful world must share in its sins and sorrows, its troubles and its guilt and remain destitute of that justification and purity of life which gives quietness, peace and assurance forevermore.

Mary, I do not know if you are yet prepared to make the wise choice of your ancient name-sake [the Mother of the Lord] and receive that better portion which will never be taken from those who truly devote themselves to Christ. But when I contemplate the turmoil and trouble,—the weariness of your body and spirit, my heart is touched with deep sympathy and I say to myself, Oh, if she would come to Christ and consecrate herself wholly to Him and His cause! He would say to the troubled waters, “Peace. Be still.” I cannot help hoping and believing that these soul-struggles indicate a transition state, —a preparation to break the shell and come forth into a new and brighter sphere of life, in which you will have wings of faith and hope which will waft you high above the dark troubled waters of the earth sphere. But, friend, I do not want to hurry you. Consult the highest, Holiest dictates of your own heart and conscience; listen honestly, sincerely and lovingly to the soft whispers and obey the teaching.

You ask for my prayers. You have them, and shall continue to have them; for within you I recognize your soul, struggling to break forth into the light and liberty of the true sons and daughters of God.

You want to know the founders of our Society. We claim Ann Lee, of Manchester, England, as its human founder. The true Gospel of Christ was lost from among men, though there were thousands of those who were incorrectly proclaiming “lo-here is Christ and lo-there is Christ!” She was illiterate, as was Jesus (see John 7:15) and received the Gospel in its purity by revelation from God and publicized it in England. She was persecuted, imprisoned and suffered much and was then warned of God to come to America, which she did in 1774, being accompanied by eight of her followers. They settled in the State of New York, at Niskayuna, now Watervliet, near Albany, where the oldest Society still exists. They continued to quietly lay a foundation for an in-gathering, which **MOTHER ANN** (for so we call her) confidently declared would take place. Continuing for three and one-half years (forty and two months) they finally opened and publicized the testimony that a *second revelation* of Christ’s pure Gospel had been given through Ann, of Manchester, which would save souls from sin as in the times of Jesus and the Apostles. Many believed her testimony, confessed their sins and showed their deeds to God’s witnesses. Persecution began. Mother was imprisoned in Poughkeepsie jail, but the word and

work of God grew mightily and prevailed until there were, in a few years, eleven Societies established in New York and New England. In 1806, the work began in Ohio and Kentucky and there have been since then six new Societies established, making eighteen in all. There are no other *Societies* of our people in any other country or nation, though there are individual members elsewhere.

We have a regular school, taught under the supervision of the proper State officers, in conformity to the common school laws, and teach all branches common to such schools, making no distinctions.

I shall close, having, as I hope, satisfactorily answered all your questions and shall be interested to hear from you again whenever you feel inclined to write.

**Truly your friend,
Sarah**

Mary's Reply

Dear Sister Sarah,

I did not intend to let your kind letter remain so long unanswered. It did me good to read it; there was so much in it to refresh and comfort the tired spirit. The kindly spirit you manifest and the promise of your prayers, all seem like water to the thirsty. Your arguments are good; they are forcible and conclusive. I cannot refute them, so I will take them and try to digest them; I long to tread the King's highway of holiness. I want the teaching of those that know more of Christ than I do myself. From early infancy I have been taught to love and respect God and His teachings. As a child I was peculiar. I would not believe unless I had a reason for so doing. I was left to form my own conclusions of things. I was fond of reading and read much that was beyond my comprehension. I read the Bible as a text book and was my own commentator. For years I drifted about as a ship without a pilot in an unknown sea. But at last I seemed to hear a voice say "This is the way, walk ye in it." And found harbor in the Episcopal Church. For twelve years I have found a comfort in striving to conform to the demands of that faith and by teaching the poor and aiding and visiting the sick. I have tried to do my duty. But in quiet hours the thought comes up: what if, after preaching to others, I myself am found to be a castaway? I long for a deeper peace. I want the *abiding* presence of Him who has said "I will betroth thee unto me forever." The world never has and I know it never can satisfy the demands of my nature. I long for rest from sin. My parents are living and my home is with them. In early life I became a *teacher* and have taught for fifteen years. I have held the position of Principal of the Primary Department of the Mount Holly City Public Schools for twelve years. I have had the charge of one thousand children in that time. I have had a good opportunity of sowing good seed. But the question often comes up: What fruit will it bear? I often wonder if, when the great harvest of the world shall

come, will there be any to rise up and call me blessed. As I said before, I want help from someone who will guide me in the right path. The first and the only time I ever saw you, my heart was drawn out toward you. I felt that ours were kindred spirits. I feel so yet. I love to think of you as my friend. Ever let me claim you as such. I do not often feel so open to strangers; I have always been very selective regarding my affections and where I placed my confidence and can account for this only as the inner workings of the Spirit. The little tract you sent me (*A Shaker's Answer*) I read and like very much. It is a true version of Christian love. Such reading I like and at any time it will be welcome. Now, asking your love and prayers, must say good night.

Mary Carr

2015 Note: Mary Carr never became a Shaker. Sister Sarah's obedience to God still witnesses and bears fruit to this very day. We all rise and call you blessed forever Sister Sarah! Thank you on behalf of all Shakers past, present and future for your most beautiful and timeless teaching and your living example of faith found within these pages.

It is sure to win you many new children in Zion for generations to come. Amen

Shaker Communities

THE PROPHECY

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

FOUNDER

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

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Virgin Purity, Peace, Justice and Love

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

BELIEFS

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

GOVERNMENT

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

COMMUNITY

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

SHAKER MOTTO

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

Zion's Center Of Union

