

**Our Mother**  
**In**  
**The New Creation**

**By Eldress Mildred Barker**

**The Church At Sabbathday Lake**  
**"Chosen Land"**

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

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**Have You Already Read The Precepts of Mother Ann?**

## **Our Mother In the New Creation**

In 1736, in the town of Manchester, England, there was born of humble and uneducated parents, a child destined to become one of the most controversial of all women. Her father, John Lee, was a blacksmith by trade and though poor was of good character, moral in principles, and honest in all his dealings. Her mother, though also uneducated, was a strictly religious and pious woman.

Thus it was that Ann Lee, who years later and after intense spiritual and physical suffering, became the acknowledged Leader of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, grew up in a family of five brothers and two sisters, and as was common with poor people was taught to work instead of being sent to school. Living in a manufacturing town, she soon found employment in one of the factories, preparing cotton for looms. She gained much favor wherever she was employed because of her neatness and industry. Even the most menial tasks received her utmost attention and the fullest use of her abilities.

A very sensitive child, she was in her early years the subject of many deep religious impressions and convictions concerning sin. During this period of her life her mother was her sole source of understanding and strength, her father having at that time no sympathy with her religious convictions. Later, however, history records the occasion of Believers having assembled at his home for worship at a time when a mob was raised, headed by the parish's principal warden. The mob burst

into the house, seized the worshippers without ceremony, and after abusing them, dragged them off to a stone prison where they were put in close confinement. The entire company of Believers were released the next morning with the exception of Mother and her father, John Lee, both of whom were removed to another prison and held there for several weeks. In this we see that her father, though unsympathetic at first, later accepted his daughter's convictions and was willing to suffer with her for them.

Ann's first and greatest loss was her mother, who died when Ann was still a young woman. Thus deprived of her one and only confidant, and having no other to assist her in the pursuit of her beliefs, the deep religious experiences dimmed for a time. During this period, she was married to one Abraham Stanley, a blacksmith by trade. Their four children died in infancy or early childhood. During these years Ann was again brought under a great exercise of mind and experienced excessive tribulation and suffering of soul. Her early convictions of sin returned four-fold and her cries to God for understanding and light were continuous. These experiences brought her to knowledge of the depravity of mankind, and through her suffering of spirit she sought ceaselessly for deliverance from sin. These sufferings, peculiar to herself, left her with no mortal guide from whom she might receive spiritual guidance or counsel until, when twenty-two years of age, she became acquainted with James and Jane Wardley, who were Leaders in the Society of Friends. As these people possessed a greater degree of Divine Light than any Ann had yet known, she readily embraced their testimony. This Light led them to a full and open confession of every sin and a full cross against everything that

they knew to be evil. By her implicit obedience to the counsel and instruction of these her Leaders, she was baptized with the same Spirit and continued to grow into greater knowledge and experience in the things of the Spirit than ever before. Following this new enlightenment, Ann prayed more earnestly for the state of her soul. In watching, fasting, and prayer both night and day she labored continuously for more understanding and for deliverance from sin. She was often in such agony of soul as to cause those around her to be filled with trembling. Still faithful to her Leads, she was wrought upon in this manner for a space of nine years. Releasement came at intervals, and at times she was filled with Light and Revelations of Divine Truth. In this manner, God, in His own way, opened her mind with ever-increasing Light and Understanding.

In the year 1770, the parish authorities in Manchester became alarmed at the strength of the testimony Ann held before the world. As a result of this, she was cast into prison and reduced to near starvation in an effort to suppress this testimony. It was in this particular imprisonment that she was kept in solitary confinement without food for fourteen days. Her cell was so small that she could neither stand nor even sit erect. James Whittaker, who was at that time a very young man, felt a deep spiritual attachment to Ann and her testimony. His conviction was so strong that he made nightly trips to her jail cell and succeeded in conveying some nourishment to her in the form of small quantities of wine and milk poured into a small pipe whose stem had been inserted into the keyhole of the cell door. This was all the nourishment she received during the whole period of her imprisonment. It was, of course, with utter consternation that her jailers watched her walk forth when her

cell was opened. One person present at the time, a future Shaker Elder, testified that everyone present was astonished and said that without doubt she was under some supernatural power. This prison became the center of the greatest enlightenment that Ann had yet received. After a period of intense spiritual suffering and tribulation she was blessed with a full Revelation and saw clearly wherein all mankind was lost and separated from God. The life of regeneration was made fully clear to her, and on her release from prison she was able to bear an open and powerful testimony against all sinful indulgences as well as every form of secret wickedness. Her testimony was delivered with such power and conviction that none doubted her authority. Through her this same Light and Power of God was revealed to all who heard her and received her testimony. From this time forth her followers acknowledged that the Christ Spirit had made its Second Appearance in the woman, Ann Lee. She was received and acknowledged without question as the First Spiritual Mother in Christ.

Let it be here understood that though Ann was called by those who followed her "Mother in Christ", she never applied this appellation to herself. It was enough that those who were inspired by her testimony so looked upon her and saw in her "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26)." This was truly her mission and she did indeed teach all Truth and bring to them the remembrance of Christ's promise to reveal Himself to all to whom "it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:17)." To voice their own words: "They saw that the candle of the Lord was in her hand and that she was able by the Light thereof, to search

every heart and try every soul among them."

I would here compare the advent of her ministry with that of Jesus. The man Jesus was ordained and Anointed of God to be the Savior of mankind. Born by the power of the Highest and the agency of the Holy Spirit, he possessed from his early years superior wisdom and understanding. At the age of thirty years he acknowledged his mission to be of God and fulfilled it. At Jesus' symbolic baptism with water, the Holy Spirit descended and acknowledged him as God's beloved Son. Thus the man Jesus received the Anointing Spirit of Christ and went forth to do the will of his Father as Jesus the Christ. The Word, or Divine Intelligence was manifested in flesh, that is, Jesus, and dwelt among men, that he might redeem them from the power and domination of sin. The Christ Spirit is a Divine Spirit and the man Jesus was not constituted the Christ or Messiah until, after his baptism, he was Anointed of God and put in full possession of that Spirit, which descended and abode with him. Here I seem to sense the question as to why Jesus was baptized with water and Ann was not?

While far from condemning water-baptism or any other religious ceremony which is conscientiously performed as a religious duty, Shakers feel that true baptism is a spiritual work, of which John's baptism was but a figure. John himself said, "After me comes one who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7-8)." True, Jesus himself was baptized with water by John, but he also performed other Jewish rites and kept the Law previous to the commencement of his ministry. John's

baptism was under the dispensation of the Law, and was, at most, but a figure or shadow of the true baptism of Christ. The introduction of the true baptism — that of the Holy Spirit — of course did away with the need for the continuance of the figure. This baptism of the Holy Spirit and of Spiritual Fire is the baptism, which will burn up, destroy, and effectually consume all dross of the soul. This to the Shaker is the true baptism of Christ and *this baptism* renders all shadows and figures entirely useless.

As the preaching and work of John the Baptist were preparatory to the First Appearance of Christ in the man Jesus, we believe the ministry of James and Jane Wardley to have been preparatory to the Second Appearance of Christ in the woman Ann Lee. Her baptism into the Spirit and work of their Society prepared her for that baptism of the Divine Spirit, which alone put her into possession of the Christ Spirit. That Mother Ann was the Chosen Witness of God and the first Spiritual Mother of all children of the New Creation we are fully confident. The Spirit of Christ is ever one and the same, be it revealed through man, woman, or child. The pure regenerating work taught by Ann Lee is but a manifestation of that Spirit. She accepted her calling and after much travail, by Divine Rebirth, she became the firstborn among many Sisters. Or in other words, "as the Father had been manifested by the Son, so should the Mother be made manifest by the Daughter." Again we hear Jesus promise to send a Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. This Spirit of Truth, through Mother Ann, proceeded as a heart searching and soul-quickenning work to search out and penetrate every secret of the heart. Yet, as a loving and tender Mother, she gently soothed the afflicted, "loosed the bonds of wickedness and let the oppressed

go free", through the baptism of the same Spirit of Truth. By her Spiritual elevation, she emancipated and paved the way for all women to accept their rightful place of equality with men. Listen to her own defense when questioned as to how she reconciled her teaching in and Leading the Church with the Apostle Paul's doctrine that women should keep silence in the Church:

"The order of man in the natural creation is a figure of the order of God in the spiritual creation. As the order of nature requires the cooperation of the man and the woman, so when they stand in their proper place, the man is first and the woman is second in the government of the family. He is the father and she is the mother, and all the children must be subject to the parents. When the man is not home, the right of government belongs to the woman, so is the family of Christ."

This reply clearly reveals that to be perfect, the New Creation in its order must have a Father and Mother. The spiritual creation is the offspring of spiritual parents as is the natural creation of natural parents.

Although always acknowledging Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior and Head of the Church, Mother Ann never doubted her mission, nor faltered in her calm assurance of the knowledge that to her had been given the revelation of the "Mother Spirit of God." [Note: Holy Mother Wisdom, The Bearing Spirit of all of God's Creation].

Like every other religious dispensation that has been revealed, Shakerism has had to encounter much cruel opposition. The self-denial the order demands separates us from the world and the result of this has been testified to us from the world, which result has been testified to long ago by Jesus: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:18-19)." The sufferings that Mother and her followers bore in England were equaled if not surpassed in America, whence they had come to find liberty to worship God as their conscience directed. Imprisonment, scourging's, derision and every form of punishment that the cruel mob could devise were meted out to this faithful band of Believers, who asked only that they be unmolested to serve God as His Spirit directed them. Mother, because of her leadership, suffered more persecutions than others, but her spirit remained undaunted, and through the most intense suffering of all she could, like the Savior, pray, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." At times she felt herself protected by an invisible power, testifying, "I felt myself surrounded by the Presence of God and my soul was filled with Pure Love. I knew that they could not kill me, for my work was not yet done." While being led into a valley to be stoned she sang this song:

**Touch not Mine Anointed nor do My chosen harm;  
 I the Lord Jehovah will shield them with My Arm,  
 I am a God of Mercy, of Justice and of Truth;  
 My work of Love and Power shall yet spread O'er the earth;  
 I dwell not in a mansion that's far, far away;  
 Nor do I inhabit a tenement of clay;  
 Beyond the starry regions I do not fix My Throne,  
 But in My Church on earth I am in Spirit known.**

### **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**

