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Shaker Correspondence with the Amana Society: Charles Julius Preter and Ezra T. Stewart

The correspondence between Charles Julius Preter and Ezra Stewart with the Amana Inspirationists came fifty years after the two groups had first encountered each other. This interesting correspondence is presented here.

Charles Julius Preter was born in Nassau, Germany, on April 23, 1811; he emigrated to the United States, and joined the Shakers around 1840. Preter appears in the 1880 United States Census as a farm laborer. As a German, Preter was chosen by Shaker leaders to produce a series of Shaker booklets, in German, to engage the immigrant audience. Preter died at Union Village, Ohio, on January 17, 1892.

Ezra J. Stewart, the second Shaker correspondent, was born in Canada in 1869. Stewart was briefly a member of the Shaker community at Shirley, Massachusetts. Later, Stewart relocated to the Hancock, Massachusetts, Shaker community where he lived until 1903 when the Central Ministry sent him to help lead the new Shaker settlement at Narcoossee, Florida, started in 1894.

Stewart remained with the Society at Narcoossee until it was closed by the Ministry in 1924. Unwilling to move from Florida, Stewart left the Shakers and began a career in real estate in the Tampa area. Stewart was last known to be managing an apartment building, aged sixty-five, in 1934 after which he disappears from the record.

The originals of these documents are in the Amana Heritage Society Archives, with the exception of the Preter letter, which is in a private collection.



Elder Gottlieb Scheuner's desk is kept in the Amana Church Archives. Scheuner was a prolific community historian, crafting a chronicle of the Inspirationist movement from 1714 to 1897. Scheuner's draft reply to Shaker Charles Preter as well as the publication Preter sent to Amana were found in one of the desk drawers.

Charles Julius Preter to the Elders of the Amana Society

Union Village, 1st Order Church Family—

October 4th 1888

Beloved Ministry and Elders,

The highest-ranking brothers who serve as administrators in our communities of Mount Lebanon and Watervliet in the State of New York and more especially share governing more than 17 Shaker societies in general were, through a spiritual gift from God, inspired and prompted to have a pamphlet printed in German so that spiritual light and illumination might be spread to German, as it had to English-speaking, Shaker families for more than a hundred years now. Since I now am one of the oldest German brothers—more than 48 years a member—they sent me the means to have 1,000 copies printed in Cincinnati. We firmly and strongly believe the Kingdom of God is founded on earth and that no soul can abide therein who in anyway, whether within or outside marriage, indulges in the satisfying of lusts of the flesh. That is why we demand the strictest celibacy of all our brothers and sisters as the first and main principle of our belief.

It was through the love and goodness of our heavenly parents, the father and the mother, or God and the Holy Spirit, that I came to our church as a young man just as a special spiritual revival was occurring in all our 17 communities. This revival had started in 1838, two years before I was accepted. It lasted five more years until 1845, 7 years long. Hardly one hour of the day and evening went by without one of us, especially young brothers and sisters, becoming inspired by the Spirit. I, myself, was often under the influence of the Spirit and saw wondrous things so that I was convinced that it was only through the Holy Spirit could such numerous wonders occur. At that time, if anyone committed any carnal sins, of any kind, he or she would be severely chastised in “open church.” They usually left the next day on their own or were expelled. It was emphatically impressed upon me by the “good Spirits” that as long as a Brother or Sister protected their own chastity they would ever find themselves under the special shelter and grace of God.

In a book with the title “Charles Nordhoff’s Communistic Societies,” [sic] I discovered that in your Amana Society, as in our [Society], a chaste life’s journey is considered pleasing to God. I did not know that before and had believed the Economy Society near Pittsburgh to be the only German community that considered a celibate life to be the most pleasing to God. So it was very welcome and interesting to learn that your beliefs in that [regard] agreed with ours.

The Shakers originated toward the end of the 17 hundreds, just like your Amana Society. You will see this in the 7 pamphlets which I enclose under the special command from God. I also enclose a copy of our *Manifesto* in which you will find one of my articles. In earlier publications of our community, I often published what the Holy Spirit assigned me to write. I consider myself only a worm and a poor mortal on the grave's edge since I am almost 78 years old. I'm sending the seven copies of *The Manifesto* so that each of your *Gemeinde* will have one. Just like you, we have published many books. Some of them are almost entirely revelations from God.

We are nearly completely in agreement in regard to the godly commandments. We only cannot understand that you still allow some to live in wedlock since it is clearly stated in the Bible "they that live in the flesh are not pleasing to God" and such "are spiritually dead."¹ When they arise from the dead (relative to this world) neither do they question nor do they answer questions for they are children of temptation.

"The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure." Jas. 3.17. You will see in my pamphlets that in the 3rd dispensation marriage was allowed, but only with the stipulation that it be only to procreate children, not to satisfy lusts. Nevertheless, then in the 4th dispensation it prescribes swimming over the life current.

My principle and foundation was no longer to walk the way of earthly fleshly lust and desires and that the more a soul is freed from all sinful burdens the easier it is to reach the other shore, the promised Canaan land. We know, for certain, that it is impossible for young-married people, in the bloom of their lives, to live in the same room or bed together and not to lower themselves to the level of animals. All animals, except for goats, follow the laws of nature in regard to certain times for pairing. Goats mate at all times and it is with them (the rams) humans in a fallen state are compared. It is to be pitied that many good and upright people like the Quakers, Mennonites, and Herrnhutter [Moravians] do not understand how they have fallen below the level of beasts in regard to physical lust. A true Christian does not lust: Lust is lust, in or outside of marriage. Very interesting is the part in the Bible, Rev. 17.8 "The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss." Explained in the following way: All who again seek a celibate life and are taken up in a community of children of God, but who lived before in sins of the flesh, fulfill the concept of "the beast that was" and then also "is not" then continue to give in to beastly lusts, "the beast that still is". In Revelations 21.27 "No one that commits atrocities or indulges in sins of the flesh will be able to enter the Holy City." Where in the world is there a wedded pair in the bloom of their youth that sleeps together only to conceive a child??

The pious patriarchs did not constantly sleep with their wives. We read about Abraham's tent, and Sarah's tent, Rachel's tent, and Noah's tent. Noah was 500, and his three sons over a hundred years old before they begat children. Is not that a proof that they didn't have children out of lust, or they would have procreated children in their youthful years?

Allow me, in brief, to herewith share our insight and belief in regard to the trinity teachings. All Shaker communities were, already 100 years ago, given full explanation through direct godly revelation. Spiritual things were perceived from the eternal Godhood. This occurs in a duality, two, and not three persons, or, furthermore, godly powers. [These are]: the eternal father and the eternal mother. "Let us create people in our image."² Two people were created, Adam and Eve, but not three people. Jesus, from God's view, was a created spirit, like all other souls. He was one with the father in a spiritual sense, as all good souls are. "All souls are mine." Dust returns to dust, and the soul returns to God, who gave it. We are all the offspring of God: Acts 17.29. Souls enter from God, but even before birth are influenced by the character of the parents, either to good or bad through the parents' magnetism. Some years ago several Italians in Rome studied the old catacombs and gravestones of the first three centuries, and discovered with certainty that all Christians at the same point in time acknowledged God to be a duality, and not as a trinity consisting of three male persons. We read ourselves that the eternal Godhood can be seen on things that are produced. We find a duality in everything, but never a triad, or trinity. That is the invention of depraved priests who, in the year 325 during the reign of the tyrant Constantine, adopted those anti-Christ teachings in council. Even the old Egyptians honored Isis and Osirus, father and mother, and Horus was their offspring. And the Indians in Hindostan [India] in their Veda they have Brahma and Vishnu, father and mother, and Siva the offspring. Later Siva was petitioned, just like Jesus in those times. All followers of Christ are at one with him and God in a spiritual sense, but not per se God himself. What I am sharing here with you is from God and was revealed by Him a long time ago. It is the correct truth. Now, you can follow from my pamphlets, "The life of Christ is the only true Christian religion." So, as Adam was a picture of him that would be in the future, so was Eve a model of her, the bride, the lamb's wife. These are the two Anointed, who stand by the creator of the whole earth (Zach.4.14). See also Daniel 12.5. and Rev. 22: 2 and 17. In conformity with Revelation, Father Jesus and Mother Ann Lee are the spiritual first parents in God's holy Zion on earth, and in each Shaker family the first son and the first daughter are their followers on earth.³ Usually the second son and the second daughter, too, have a role in

the family, and these, together, form the four-part spiritual altar where all sins must be offered or acknowledged. In short, all good Shakers as much as possible and ect. follow the 144,000 in the Revelations who were not defiled with women, nor women with men. Rev. 14.1. In this regard they are like the angels, and have heaven on earth.

Should you wish more of my pamphlets, I can accommodate you at the cost of \$5.00 a hundred. I wrote them by inspiration, and it would make me very happy if we, with your communities, could together build up God's kingdom on earth.

There were two brothers among us who had visited you and has much good to say about you.⁴ That is why I am writing you these lines in the hope that you, too, want to be children of the heavenly parents and acknowledge Father Jesus and Mother Ann Lee as the bridegroom and the bride in the Kingdom of God on Earth. I most courteously ask you to gladden me with a reply to the address

Charles Julius Preter

Union Village, Warren County, Ohio

The dear Lord be with you all, and the love of Jesus Christ his divine son, and the love of our good Mother Ann, His divine daughter

Gottlieb Scheuner, Reply to Charles Julius Preter.

Amana, 27 October 1888

Mr. Charles Julius Preter,

Union Village, Warren Co. Ohio.

Worthy Sir and Friend!

We received your October 4th letter together with the pamphlets and [have] read them. You have openly presented your Basis of Faith and Teachings and desire an answer about these from us. We shall also openly and freely present our response to you within our knowledge and understanding.

Our community has been in existence for more than 170 years. It is called the Community of True Inspiration because it was founded by the Lord through the spirit of truth which is the Spirit of Christ. It is based on a firm basis and fundament, which is the evangelical apostolic Bible basis from the teachings of Christ and his apostles, from which basis and source the word of true inspiration flows. [. . .]

In 1846, just after our community migrated to this land and existed at Eben-Ezer near Buffalo, N.Y., it so happened that a brother that upheld our ways in Albany came to know the Shaker community there in Watervliet [New York]. This gave the opportunity for some of them to come to

Ebenezer for a visit to become better acquainted and to join with us, and therefore they gave us their writings, both printed and [hand] written, to look at wherein, however, our brothers, who were the first elders, found these writings to fall short of, and to oppose the Holy Scriptures. At the point when they were supposed to give an answer to the Shakers, the Lord, through His spirit of true inspiration, imparted conclusions about these shortcomings through the *Werkzeug* Br. Christian Metz. These conclusions and revelations were, at the counsel of the Lord, to be translated into the English language and given to the Shaker community at Watervliet.

These are still the best response given for your papers and pamphlets. If you would like these we will send them to you in the German language.

We do not want to rush a response to the letter that you sent us. Some of it we recognize (accept), some of it we do not. We praise, for instance, your desire that you have for pursuing simplicity in your lifestyle, also in your food and drink. We especially recognize the drive towards true chastity and pureness of body and soul. We are also bothered that there are so few, even those who are Believers, who do not recognize the high nobility of True Christianity and still fewer who desire it with their whole heart! We know, however, that it is truly impossible for a person who is conceived and born in sin and whose every thought and consideration is somewhat evil, to live chaste and pure, if he also truly has the will because, in God's presence, are not only words and deeds but also thoughts, sinful and punishable. Therefore, God has given us a way, through repentance, by which a person, even the worst sinner, including whores and adulterers, can find grace and forgiveness—and also blessedness—if the repentance is a true and justified repentance. Yes, such far fallen ones who recognize their fall and are now in repentance can often still find their grace, as [do] many self-righteous and holy ones whose teachings do not require repentance as the examples of the Pharisees and the tax collector teaches us. Therefore we can, and may also, live in marriage. [Although] we give preference to celibacy, in the right manner and do not despise it, because the Lord, yes, wants to seek holiness for all and, sooner or later, they will eventually find it through the cross and suffering and through purity in the path of repentance.

Further, we feel that it is important for us to say that you dare to believe, dear friend, that the universal Christian teaching of the holy triune God and the tenants of the different sects and denominations that are not conforming to your teachings to be “anti-Christical teachings” and that the Shakers alone have the only true religion, though indeed God still has His true workers among all sects and denominations.

We do not wish to respond to each individual point in your writing, though one thing we must mention: we cannot agree with the theology stated in your pamphlet, whereby you refuse the most allegorical and all important [precepts] which the patriarchs and prophets demonstrated and which, indeed, are the only comfort and hope of all poor sinners—the work of redemption through Jesus Christ, and thusly push aside the One Savoir and Redeemer, the only Restorer of all the fallen and lost as it is written:

Another point that we wish not to leave undisturbed is that your interpretation and explanation of “mysterious numbers” [numerology] in so far as they concern Anna [sic] Lee and the second coming of Christ, we simply cannot accept [this]; rather, we consider this entire section of your teaching to be erroneous. We do not want to express ourselves further over this issue. Yet, we wish to share with you the godly revelation on this point which the Lord gave in 1846. It follows thusly:

The preceding [testimony] is from the first mentioned revelation; the following is from the second:

So, dear friend, we have given you a response because you desired one of us. We have spoken openly and freely, according to our God-given knowledge and the conviction of our conscience and without judgment. We wish to continue what we have recognized through God’s Grace and to which he gave us a living and certain conviction, because we do not wish to be led into uncertainty. Indeed, we do not expect Heaven on Earth, because we know that here on earth is the valley of the cross and a time of suffering and preparation, and we will have to endure much tribulation [in order] to enter heaven. There, however eternal, bliss rest and blessedness are prepared for all those who fight faithfully unto the end. Therefore, we wish to come before the Lord at all times as poor sinners and humble ourselves and thus, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, the one High Priest Intermediary and Redeemer, to seek and find Grace and desire blessedness.

[Gottlieb Scheuner]

Georg Heinemann, Response to Ezra J. Stewart

South Amana May 4th 1896

Mr. Ezra J Stewart

Mt. Lebanon NW

Dear Sir,

Your esteemed favor of the 11th ult. was handed to one for reply. Our Society was founded almost 200 years ago, or to speak precisely, about

A.D. 1714, by some, who could not find in the so-called Church and denominations, that practical and true Christianity, as taught and set forth in the bible, and according to the teachings of Christ and his apost[les], so the[y] separated from the church among them principally, where Eberhard L. Gruber and John Fred. Rock, who with others were the first beginners in this new movement, and who commenced to hold prayer meetings. At about the year 1717 some revivalists, who professed to be inspired by the spirit of the lord, came to the country where the aforesaid lived, in southern Germany, and bore witness, that the course pursued by them in separating from the church was the correct one. Soon John Fr. Rock and others also received the gift of the true spirit of inspiration and spoke in the Lord's name, extorting the people to humiliate themselves and repent, and to seek God and know Jesus more in spirit and in truth, then in the formalities of the church.

The Society was maintained in a more or less prosperous conditions in Germany until about 1842, when the first of our people moved to the United States, locating in Erie County, NY and adopting in this country communism according to the first Church, who had all things in common. The Society was named the Eben-Ezer Society "Hither to the Lord helped us" also the community of "True Inspiration." At-that-time the instrument or organ through whom God revealed his will to us, in many witnesses, and manifestation and who was gifted with the spirit of true inspiration, was Christian Metz. After the most of our folks had come from Germany to this country, a constitution and by laws were framed and adopted, which are the fundamental principles of our Society, and its civil organization to this day, and which were also adopted after we had removed here to Iowa County, State of Iowa, by the Society and organized and incorporated under the laws of the State, under the corporate name "The Amana Society" Amana, which means "Remain True." To give you an insight on what the organization of our Society and its purpose is based, we will annex herewith article One of our constitution.

"The foundation of our civil organizations is and shall remain forever, God the Lord, and the faith which he worked in us according to this free grace and mercy, and which is founded upon (1) the word of God as revealed in the old and new testament; (2) the testimony of Jesus through the spirit of prophecy; (3) the hidden spirit of grace and chastisement.

"The purpose of our association as a religious Society is therefore no worldly or selfish one, but the purpose of the love of God in this vocation of grace received by us, to serve him in the inward and outward bond of Union, according to His law and His requirements in our own consciences, and thus to work out the salvation of our souls, through the redeeming

grace of Jesus Christ, in self-denial, in the obedience of our faith and in the demonstrations of our faithfulness in the inward and outward service of the Community by the powers of grace, which God presents us with.”

These are the aims, purposes and fundamental principles of our society or Community. To answer your enquiry more specially, “Have you an established virgin order, and if virgin purity is not a principal of your Society? What are the principals?”

We are not a celibate order, nor do we believe in the purity of the flesh, as we understand it is held in your Community; the celibate state is also with us preferable but on account of the weakness of mankind, and according, and in conformity with the teachings of St. Paul and the bible, marriages are allowed, and no detriment or obstacle to be a member of good standing.

During the fall of 1846 some of your members from Watervliet near Albany N.Y. wrote to us, wishing to get acquainted and in closer community with our people, and also some of your members visited us, and made enquiry and discovered our temporal and spiritual mode of living, and also our people were informed of your creed and teachings &c, in all of which it was found that our mutual views and teachings could not be reconciled. And our brother Christian Metz, the aforesaid spiritual instrument, bore testimony through and by the hidden spirit of grace, which embodies our views and our faith on these points of purity. We believe more in purity of the heart than in purity of the flesh, as therein extolled and declared, and in the redemption from our sins and all [im]purity, through the suffering and the shed blood of our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ, in whose expiation, and through His grace, and by following His teachings and the teachings of the Prophets and apostles as manifested in the old and new testament we only can be saved.

We believe that all, that is in glory, and ever will be in glory, holiness and purity, of mortal mankind, in the world to come, is and shall be through the cleansing Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God forever. See and read Book of Revelation, Chapter VII.

We enclose the testimony by Christian Metz which at the time was sent to your brethren at Watervliet.

We were also in other manifestations at that time exhorted to love you, in which brotherly love rejoice and remains

Yours Truly
Amana Society
George Heinemann

Christian Metz, Lower Eben-Ezer, November 26, 1846

Source: *Metz Sammlung* 21, No. 83, 371-77. Translated by Janet W. Zuber, 1998.

In the Thursday Versammlung [assembly], Br. Christian Metz became inspired through the Spirit of the Lord and presented the following important Word concerning mankind's first state and testified in reference to a letter received from the Shakers wherein they stated their fundamental principles in which were found an intermingling of erroneous belief.

How very anxious I am! My soul shivers! A great depth has opened within my spirit, a depth into which I must let myself fall. It is an unfathomable depth, profound, where all selfhood ceases, a depth wherein my soul is left nothing but two arms, the one of faith and the other of love, with which to comprehend Him from whom the soul received life. Because He wills it so, I must enter into that depth. He grants me the contemplation of His loving heart, yes, to see His wounds and He says to me: Open your mouth and speak.

All here present, turn within and, in the holy fear of your God, avert your eyes. Consider your sins. It is the Lord. It is the beginning of all God's creation.

Yes, thus God directs to bring to light something more concerning the mystery of mankind's sin after the fall. This not only toward the understanding of the members of this Community, but also for others. For when the Love of God called the soul to go out from God's self, when that soul was born from out of God, it was complete and perfect; both masculine and feminine in one being. In a divine way, Love placed its own regenerative power within that being and, because the soul is spiritual, it received that power from Love, its creative source, intuitively.

Be calm and attentive, for thus speaks the Lord.

Then, when the soul turned away from Love, through the child of ruination's [Satan's] deception, the being became unable, yes, incapable of producing pure, enlightened emanations of itself, as children, upon this blessed Earth. This adulteration, or the turning from Love, would have produced offspring which would render righteousness unattainable.

Be on guard so that I might continue. Do not allow your intellectual workings to be of influence. For, what you are to answer and lay out to them that seek or have another way, shall be revealed in simplicity and in accordance with pure understanding.

This is how the first fall took place. It was thus ordained by the wisdom of God. The first human being [Adam] was created by God and then sank into a deep sleep. During this time the first being's side was opened and

one part taken from it, diminishing the intensity of divine light for both parts. It had been one flesh and one bone, a unity, or co-existence of divine spiritual power. The first human being, Adam, considered his origin, the eternal light from out of which he came. He regarded his partner [Eve] and, through intuition she was given spirituality, and the power to beget children of light with the seed of divinity.

After the first fall had occurred, the other followed. It would bring with it ever-increasing alienation, distancing, estrangement by the actions of the created from the influence of the Creator and result in the darkening of the eyes of the soul. And so, finally, the soul lost the radiance of the divine light, the noble tincture of life to produce children free from sin. So was born the serpent's betrayal. Because of disobedience to God's command, curse and punishment, yes, temporal death, followed and the soul entered into an animalistic state, into the lust of the flesh and transformed its nobility, its beauty, and its purity into earthly filth, thereby altering all creation.

Should I stop or is it necessary to continue so as to bring to light a most terrible mistake?

Who, under the sun, is pure? Who born of woman, beget by the seed of man, is made pure? Only that one is pure who, through the grace of restoration, reestablishes that first Adam within. But does this Adam, in Christ, have the power to beget a complete restoration or rebirth within itself? Oh yes! So then, why do you depend upon creatures who set themselves so high in spiritual standing as to present themselves as a mother?⁵ It is a mistake. It is an ungodly deification which will, in many eternities, still be recognized as betrayal, both among those who have separated from that belief as well as among all who have persisted therein.

Recognize this. May the love of God gain such power within you that you might acknowledge and accept this reproof! Do not set yourselves so high as to make a God out of one among you who has reached a degree of enlightenment and brilliance, one who has gained perception through sacrifice. Do not deify such a one!

Hear it once more: The Spirit, the Father and the Son are one unified Trinity from which the power and the grace of creation has been given to all creatures and all that is seen and unseen! Lay down in the dust, with your mother [Ann Lee] by your side, and acknowledge Him alone, who was born into this world and desires to be born again within you. In Him and in no other can you find forgiveness, salvation and rebirth, He suffered upon the cross, came forth from the grave, was raised up and in Him, in all eternities, all things are completed, restored and perfected. Yes, absolute inspiration must and will occur when all mistakes and errors, all idols and self-eminence are ended. Then, what was lost and fallen, in both body and

spirit, shall be restored.

With regard to all else, you can, indeed, you should love these people [the Shakers], for they are united in their intent toward self-denial and in their hatred of the way of the flesh [celibacy]. But there is another matter. In their smooth and refined manner, I still see their sinful nature despite an appearance of holiness. Deep humility and purity of heart is the profound gift of grace which the One and only God grants unto those who constantly repent, watch and pray. This gracious gift can only be achieved through constant repentance, watchfulness and prayer and is made possible through godly inspiration within the soul of man.

I have revealed unto you the gift of grace which I have given this Community. It is a virile and vital gift, which must be active and activated within you if the Community is to stand. It is the power of overcoming, of victory, of discernment. It shall be a generative power which, through teaching and through the Word, has within it the seed to bring forth children, children of Love, born of the spirit of pure Love. That spirit shall spring forth from within each heart, as a nurturing mother.

(Br. Christian arose): Thus you are to inform the present children of Adam; they are no longer to live after the flesh, they are no longer to serve sin, they are to cast off the work of unrighteousness and darkness and work anew. They are to welcome into their hearts the spirit of discipline and chastisement. For the scorn of our righteous and holy God shall come upon all works of darkness, all works of the flesh, yes, upon all children born of the sinful seed. If they persist in their sinful living, do not change, nor allow themselves to be brought to righteousness, they shall continue to sow their unrighteous seed.

Hear and understand! Spirit produces Spirit. Nothing good can be brought forth by flesh and blood. Therefore, strive inward toward the spiritual. It is there that the gracious Word, the means toward righteousness of the soul, is imparted. It can come in no other way. Find it within your hearts. Make room for the Lord's dwelling place, so that you may be guided toward repentance, toward purification and gracious renewal. That is the blessing and promise of the covenant. The true blood of the covenant shall create a longing and desire to escape the death of sin. Arise, while yet you hear the Lord's voice and while the spirit of religious action is among you. Strive to accomplish the good Work!

(Br. C. M. sat down.) You well know where this is to go; hold it in readiness for yet awhile, and then it is to be your reply. Because I was called upon, I have come forth.

Christian Metz, Middle Ebenezer, December 9, 1846

Source: *Metz Sammlung* 21, No. 90, p. 401-5. Translated by Magdalena Schuerer, 1982. Translation reworked by Janet W. Zuber, 1998.

Br. Carl L. Mayer became closely acquainted with the Shakers, a singular sect in this area with whom we have been in contact before, when he was in Albany, which is not far from their settlement known as Watervliet. A short time ago two of them and later another one visited here and it appeared as though a wish to unite with us resided within them. Through writings they have given us, some printed and some handwritten, concerning the fundamentals of their faith, we found erroneous statements and points of faith which run counter to the Holy Scriptures. This concerned us, and we asked that the Lord might clarify these issues for us so that we stood on solid ground and might neither wrongfully encourage nor discourage closer association with this group. During the Unterredungsarbeit [work of the spiritual examination services] in the three communities, the Lord presented His fatherly instruction. (See testimonies No. 66 and 83)

Today, the Lord revealed the following Word through Br. Christian Metz.

The Lord speaks to me: Human Child, I will teach you further concerning Wisdom. Wisdom was from the very beginning and, is to this day. Wisdom has no end and all things that do not originate or flow from Wisdom shall be proven foolish.

I was the consummate being before I brought forth from Myself or created angels and human beings. I, the fatherly heart, known as Love, was the nurturing mother of all created human beings, known as souls. After going forth, I said; Let there be light. So it was that the original beings, borne out of Me, recognized their beauty, gave themselves the glory and deprived their Creator of the honor. This caused discord. At the moment when they, the created beings, grasped their portion of light in selfishness, the Word of Love separated from them and they were cast from on high.

Humankind, after your fall and through the influence of these falsely enlightened spirits, you have allowed the pure and humble eye of your soul to stray from the Source of all Love which was once and is still among you. After taking from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you became covetous! Woman, it was through you that transgression was introduced.

You are that part which, after sleep, I took from the complete procreation in one being and presented to the male portion of that original complete being as its other half. Because you wanted to be like God, you, in the delusion caused by the light known as reason, determined to become a mother. While I, as the autonomous, eternal Word of power cursed you and directed you to servitude and toward earthly death. But, because you, along with your man, had your existence or life from me, I promised you

that, through your seed, I would control evil and crush the head of the serpent.

See and experience My day as many before you, trusting in their faith, have lived it! Who, possessing only that acquired reason, is able to see into the mystery of My great day? I, the Eternal Word, the heart of the Father, the absolute divine being and soul, lowered Myself from on high into the womb of Mary. Divesting Myself of all majesty, power and sovereignty, I clothed Myself in humble form. This is the profound mystery of My humility, not understood by the devil nor falsely enlightened spirits, wherein I demonstrate My love to all My created beings who lie in sin. Even the angels did not recognize My purpose. Thus, I am Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word which was from the beginning, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, became flesh and through My coming to earth, humility and love conquered the powers and hosts of the proud Lucifer. It is I who, through My Love, vanquished all hate and enmity. Through Myself, Jesus Christ, I have restored God's love for humanity. I am known as the Son; all perfection and abundance of divinity resides within Me and has always resided within Me. No one other than I, the self-succeeding eternal deity, named Father and known as holiness and righteousness, could reconcile and atone for fallen mankind. Before this, no departed soul could enter Eden or come into Paradise.

So then come to Me all children of Love who join in My humility and carry within you the hidden treasure. Renounce all pride and false propriety which resulted in mankind's original fall into sin.

Perceive this, you so-called Shakers, who have written to these, My Children, whom I have brought from afar. You are not to address another human soul, born in the fall of sin and after the manner of sinful issue, as mother. You are not to adopt such an extreme error, as this. This is a mistake which will stand in eternity. Do not accept it yourself much less recommend it to others. Whosoever will deny and not accept the perfect divinity of the Son's attributes cannot in all eternity be united or at one with Me, the pure, eternal, original light. Such a spirit shall, even in death, remain separate and become as a phantom, a pretense, in the light of deceptive spirits. While on this earth, such a one recognizes truth but eventually becomes desirous of perfection. My Love and Grace once enflamed their hearts but, giving in to temptation in their deep search for divinity, they went where I did not bid them go!

That is why, due to self-will and egotism, the woman's [Eve's] eyes were opened allowing the serpent to bring about this result, the power to reproduce. That obvious, fundamental basis and fact, was placed within her. Thereby, through an inestimable lowering of divinity, God's Son was

born. In selfish presumption of holiness and complacency, some souls now believe chastity of the flesh to be the highest virtue when actually it is the chastity of the spirit which, next to the friendship of God and His Jesus, is the highest virtue. Truly it is purity of the spirit, through humility and self-denial, which brings about the purity of the flesh.

So speaks the risen Lord who tolerates no deceit nor falsity; I have decreed all as sin so that I, alone, am exalted and all must come to Me in search of mercy. Therefore, you are to remain humble and seek your nobility in Me. All your self-created chastity and purity, your singing and shaking, your fasting and praying can only be regarded as insufficient. To attain the grace of your soul's bridegroom you must be meek and allow yourself to be taught, instructed and prepared by the Voice of the Holy Spirit; for it is the Holy Spirit that will discipline you and lead you in all Truth. Failure to understand this is the real foolishness of this world.

Behold how God's wisdom creates something out of nothing and how from many members He prepares the right bride for the heavenly Bridegroom in every age. So it was that your forefathers in faith saw My day and were glad and through faith your fathers received the prophecy. In the last times I will yet manifest Myself wondrously. I will roar like the lion and do battle with all the godless who shame My Holy Name! The Word of My Holy Spirit, in His sevenfold power, resides within Me. He shall draw His flaming, double-edged sword to cut down as stubble all Mine enemies. Yes, and Amen! Let all who will, Comprehend!

C. L. Mayer, you are to translate this, to send to the Shakers, and add a letter. Pray to the Lord asking that you be able to give the true meaning to this Word!