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The Mystery of the People called SHAKERS,
laid open, and their Ministration
exploded, for its Falsities and Impositions.

By William Scales.

ATTENDITE HOMINES, ET SPECTACULUM
IN SANUM VIDETE.

THIS piece is design'd for the conviction of the people called SHAKERS, and for the good of all generations; therefore I shall pretty much omit every thing else, and proceed directly to my great design, which I shall effect by a dialogue between the Elder of that people and myself the Author, and A will stand for Author, and E for Elder.

E. What emboldens you to appear in public?

A. A very great sense of duty.

E. What is your education?

A. I received a liberal education at Harvard College, and was graduated in the year '71.

E. But that society hath no good repute for its piety.

A. But I have a certificate signed by the rulers of that society of my diligence and honesty.

E. But the wicked will approbate the wicked.

A. It is, perhaps, too much for you to say that the rulers of that society are wicked; besides, my principle being very contrary to theirs, they would not have testified my diligence and honesty without good evidence; and I went to College by the advice of ministers and the approbation of their Churches.

E. But vice, since it, hath destroyed your reputation.

A. I know not what you say, for I have ever since done my utmost to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly; and to confirm this, I was soon after graduation, approbated and licenced to preach the gospel by ordained ministers.

E. What, of that? Is ordination any thing?

A. An uninterrupted succession of the ministerial office from the first Apostles is of infinite importance for the support of true faith and government in the Church.

E. I think nothing of that; but were it admitted, what is that to you, since the Dissenters and Protestants have it not? The Papist only have that.

A. That is not admitted; for it is evident enough that the Elders and Ministers of the separation from the Papal Church were ordain'd by that class of men that stood in the lineal succession.

E. The Episcopal Church deny a proper lineal succession in the independent and Presbyterian Elders and Ministers.

A. That doth not disturb us: There are many besides the Papists that are so drowned in pride, avarice, and things of dominion, that they would fain be Gods, while others must be content to be trampled underfoot; I believe if the truth were known, that the Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, and every other religious denomination are as beloved of God and as much own'd in their piety, discipline, office and ordination, as the Papal or Episcopal Church.

E. What, do you hold that the Quakers are the Church of Christ?

A. Verily I do; yea Shakers and every other sect in Christendom; and I doubt not but they are all upon a level before God. I disdain that contracted spirit that dooms all others to Paganism, Anti-Christianism and to hell. The different sects in Christendom verily are but so many different parts of the Church of Christ, differently enlightened, and formed into different bodies, to support their different light or testimony.

E. Truly, you rake together a hedious company for the Church of Christ, but I guess you will find it to be a synagogue of Satan before you have done with it.

A. I expect to find a great many corruptions in it, and that which is evil

is sure enough of the devil, and God will purge it away in due time.

E. Where then is the Anti-Christian Church?

A. The Anti-Christian Church is all that heap of corruption, pride and avarice, that have dominion in Christendom, whereof the Episcopal and Papal Church hath a great share. And to sum up the whole matter with you, kind Friend, as I am Catholic in my principle, so I am full of love and tender mercy to all my fellow creatures. Therefore, knowing they cannot be own'd of God in their prevailing pride, avarice and thirst of dominion, I purpose to do my part to put away these abominations from among them; and, since necessity requires my appearing in public, I will, in modesty, hand my credentials to the public also.

Besides what I have already deliver'd, I have a number under my hand, signed by the people, in St. Georges, eastward, in Georgetown, in Vassalborough, in Kittery, and where I have sojourned for a time, which, in spite of all the rage of my enemies, ascertain my innocence, honesty and ingenuous dealing with them, I dwelt and dealt with them: And in Vassalborough there is recorded on Town book, by vote of the inhabitants, words vouching my ingenuous dealing with them in all respects.

E. You have been sadly persecuted then, in your reputation.

A. Ah verily so I have, and that perhaps beyond any man on earth: There is nothing that can be invented in an evil imagination but hath been said of me, and you Shakers have done the same and much more abundantly, while at the same time I walked before you in all the innocence I was capable of, labouring hard, and subjecting myself to the feet of every one of you.

E. But you opposed our ministration very much.

A. So I did, and finally prov'd it an imposture, and it is for that very reason you counted me the worst of all men, and dubb'd me with names without number, too infamous to be sounded in public.

E. But do you justify yourself, and condemn us and others altogether?

A. I am not going any more to take that upon me I am not guilty of, as I have done to an infinite degree in times past.

E. An infinite degree? how you express yourself!

A. Verily, the iniquities I opposed were infinite, and the whole force

thereof came down upon me in all manner of calumny and evil speaking to which I was obliged to yield and condemn myself. But now knowing my innocency, I purpose to shake it all off, and prove my innocency, which I can abundantly do.

E. But you made sad work of confessing of sins while you was among us, which made it appear that you exceeded them all for wickedness.

A. I thank your ministration for all that; For it taught me that every act of sin I had committed in all my life, is considered before God as one continued act of abomination through the whole of my life, and that since the heart is infinitely deceitful, I was infinitely worse in every act of sin than I could imagine. Therefore I was resolved to make thorough work and cut off my name from among men; to this purpose I took hold of every the least failing of my life, and by the most superlative expressions, and by hyperbolical descriptions, made it look both as if it was of itself an enormity equal to Sodomy, and as if it had been the common practice of my life.

E. Was you not then very unwise?

A. I was very simple in it in one sense, and very crafty in it in another.

E. How was you simple in it?

A. Because I really believed as I was told that I was infinitely bad in all my failings.

E. How was you crafty in it?

A. In that I did it mightily to strengthen myself against your ministration if I should at last find it to be an imposture.

E. How could this strengthen you against our ministration.

A. Very exceedingly; but since it lays so deep, and out of the sight of the populace, I may not shew it: What I aim'd at while I was with you, was effectually to try your ministration, and to search it out in all its windings and complicated deviations.

E. But was you not then guilty of manifold duplicities?

A. Verily I was: but they are as innocent as to become a Jew when among Jews, to become as without law when among those that are without law, &c. which the great Apostle Paul said he did. Therefore, since your ministration, which declares itself to be full of eyes before and behind, and

by its omnipotent intuition, sees the secrets of all men, and eternity, I say, since your ministration did not at all see my manifold duplicities, but only as I laid them out in a more complicated way of subtilty, and that innocent too, owning me largely to be a man of God and minister in its gospel: I say this consideration of your ministration does forever explode it for an imposture, and a ministration of vain glory.

E. But if the case was so with you, are you wise to publish it?

A. I think it not altogether foolish, since it was innocent, and I expect I have done with the sort forever: For I intend to be one upright man in time to come.

E. But why will you publish our extravagances since you practiced them yourself and that much more abundantly?

A. You practiced them under the pretence of serving God; but I practiced them to try your ministration; and in that I serv'd God too, but in a different way.

E. If then we served God in holding and commanding, and you in trying them, why may we not shake hands upon equal footing?

A. So I will, if you will renounce your ministration, and cleanse yourselves from the abominations of false prophecies, and all other evils.

E. What false prophecies?

A. Infinite are the numbers, as it were; but when the day of trial comes between you and me, which I shall hasten as fast as convenient, I will endeavour to bring them forth.

E. What evils have you against me?

A. I have none against you properly, but against your ministration I have infinite loads of evils.

E. What are the principal?

A. I can comprehend them all, as many as they be, in sentences, very comprehensive: Infinite confusions of variegated exertions, positions, agitations, extensions, amplifications and distortions of the body and its members, in ways exceeding imagination. Infinite hissings like serpents, snarlings and barkings like dogs, rattling like hogs, crowing like dunghill cocks, peeping like chickens, and innumerable confused sounds and responses, strange howlings, shoutings, exclamations and vociferations of

infinite confusion. Whirlings of amazing velocity, signs by the head and all the members of the body, in such various ways, that were the most fruitful imagination to speak, it cannot mistake; extreme wallowing on the floor and walking about with extended arms, extreme labours of dancing, leaping and jumping and otherways, to which the people are driven, as the Israelites in Egypt, to their sore bondage by their cruel task masters, with infinite encouragements and promises of immediate redemption one hour, and infinite discouragements and menaces of eternal damnation the next; all which are so extreme and dreadful, that all have been or are perplexed beyond measure; many have been undone under the most awful apprehensions of eternal damnation; many have been and are thrown into consumptions, several have lost their lives, and others are in danger of losing them. Infinite confusions of doctrines, harangues of infinite inconsistencies, jargons of discourses of infinite impertinence, a gibberish of languages, that Seraphs can find no meaning in, perpetual denunciation of vengeance and damnation, accompanied with fury and rage equal to the madness of a raving man possessed with legions of devils, which was called the anger of God times without number, and at all times. Dissolving the authority of parents over their children, and setting children in authority over their parents whence hath proceeded infinite confusion, rage and insult against the aged. Dissolving wedlock, and separating the marriage bed, which hath been the source of adultery, or of men's going to women that are not their wives, and having children by them, and some have left their first wives and married other women, and some have taken young women into private apartments under the pretence of labouring with them for their soul's good, but have given them the venereal embrace, and some bastards have been begotten this way – and this dissolution of wedlock hath a sanction: For all marriage is declared by the Elders to be the covenant of death and hell, and the officers who ratify them the emissaries of Satan. Whereas all marriages is declared the covenant of hell, and they who ratify them the emissaries of Satan, young people are terrified at the thought of marriage, and abhor the ratifiers thereof with infinite hatred. All which, together with dissolving wedlock already ratified, have been the means of cutting off thousands of possible lives of human intelligences, and if suffered, thousands and millions more of the lives of such intelligences will it cut off. By the reason of your awful sentences, many have run almost distracted, and are bleeding away the life of their souls and bodies without a just cause. Hence it is that many have been tempted to put an end to

their existence in this life, and one Joseph Sanburn, of New-Enfield, in the State of New-Hampshire, really hath done it. By the reason of the terrors of your false prophecies and menaces, many have ruined their fortunes, others have very much damaged them, and all have been and are hindred from getting interests, increasing and multiplying from subduing the earth and replenishing it, and from all the comforts of society and friendship; and they have no reward from you for all this loss: For you say you hate them with a perfect hatred, and hate exceedingly to be in their company; – Therefore I impeach your ministration of murder, of dissolving the most sacred covenants, civil & religious, whence have proceeded whoredoms, adultery and illegitimate births; I also impeach your ministration of murder of thousands and millions of possible lives of human intelligences, and I impeach it of the ruin of men's fortunes, and declare it to be a public nuisance, not fit to be tolerated any longer in the land.

E. But what will you effect by this?

A. I intend to effect the utter extermination of your ministration from off the face of the earth.

E. But you cannot except you prove your charges.

A. That I can do, by innumerable living witnesses, and to this end, I petition, and earnestly desire, that all people who are acquainted with the mischievousness of your ministration, would prepare themselves against the day of trial.

E. But do you intend to destroy me?

A. By no means, but to treat you with the greatest charity and tender mercy; but your ministration I intend to exterminate from the face of the earth or that shall me.

WILLIAM SCALES.

____ June 9, 1789. _____