SHAKER MANUSCRIPT HYMNALS
from
South Union, Kentucky

by
Jean Healan Thomason

With comment on the musical notation by
Fann R. Herndon
and
Introduction by Julia Neal

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Not only is there primary manuscript material but there are Shaker publications pertaining to the two Kentucky Societies. Among these works are The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery (1808); John Dunlavy, Manifesto, or a Declaration of the Occasions and Practices of the Church of Christ (Pleasant Hill, 1818); A Memorial, Demonstrating against a Certain Act of the Legislature of Kentucky (Harrodsburg, 1826); Richard McNamar, Investigator, or a Defence of the Order, Government, and Economy of the United Society called Shakers (Lexington, 1828); Elder H. L. Eads, The Condition of the Society and Its Only Hope (Day-Star Office, 1847); and also by Eads, Shaker Hymnals: Scripto-rational (1884).

The library has just added two extremely rare books: Millennial Psalms, containing a Collection of Gospel Hymns, in Four Parts. Adapted to the Way of Christ's Second Appearance, compiled by Seth I. Wells, Hancock, 1813; and the 1846 edition of A Short Abridgment of the Rules of Music, Isaac N. Youngs, New Lebanon. Millennial Psalms, containing only texts, was the first printed Shaker hymnal. Young's Abridgment is an explanation of the Shaker letter notation system used in the Shaker manuscript hymnals. A page of Young's book is reproduced below.

The Kentucky Library Shaker collection contains an extensive number of the general Shaker publications. Among these is a long run of Shaker periodicals including The Shaker, The Shaker and the Shakers, The Manifesto, and The Shaker Quarterly. Not only are there the usual Shaker works in early editions, but there are also a number of derogatory accounts, some written by apostates. The collection also contains all of the important secondary treatments of Shakerism.

The Kentucky Library is open to any qualified researcher, but all the materials are non-circulating and are not available by interlibrary loan.

Julia Neal
Director of the Kentucky Library and Museum
Western Kentucky University
A Collection of Hymns, Anthems and Tunes; Adapted to the Worship by Betsy Smith. Born 28 August 1828. South Union, 1 January 1835.

Title page to Betsy Smith's book.

1

A Collection of Hymns, Anthems and Tunes: Adapted to the Worship by Betsy Smith contains four hundred songs, most of which seem to have originated in the South Union community. Many are signed "South Union" and others are ascribed to individuals who are known to have lived at South Union. Other Shaker communities that are represented are New Lebanon, with fifteen songs; Watervliet, New York, with three songs; Union Village, four; Enfield, New Hampshire, one; Enfield, Massachusetts, one (this must have been an error in copying since there was no Enfield Shaker community in that state); Enfield (-), one; Pleasant Hill, two; Whitewater, two; Hancock, one; and two are simply labeled "East" or "Eastern" meaning one of the communities in New York or in one of several New England States.

Not all the songs have dates at the end of the texts. The dates that are given are in general chronological order from 1830 to 1835.5 The individuals most often named as authors are Sally Bads for thirty-five songs and Harvey Bads for twenty-four. Others with more than one hymn to their credit are Molly Goodrich, three; Nancy Moore, four; Robinson Bads, seven; Isaac Young, five; Samuel McLellan, two; George W. Waddle, two; Susannah Parnam, two; William Rice, three. Betsy Smith, the scribe, contributed two of her own.6

This book is especially rich in marches and dance tunes. Fifty-three are labeled "Dancing Tunes," with musical letter notes only, no words. There are seven "Tunes for
II

The hymns in Mary Edwards' Book are dated intermittently from 1843 to 1853. The handwriting appears to be that of one person. There are ninety-three songs of which five are ascribed to South Union and one to Pleasant Hill. Most of the other songs have no signatures of communities or individuals.

The musical notation in the book is mixed. Some of the songs have no notes, some have letter notes for two lines at the beginning of the hymn, and others are completely noted.

The most common subjects are affirmation of faith, twenty in number; heavenly scenes, twelve; prayer, fifteen; and Mother Ann, nine. Included are only three dance tunes and one marching song.

The only two individuals named as authors are Polly Lawrence and B. Dunlavy. Polly Lawrence is presenting a song to Mary Edwards, and B. Dunlavy dedicates his to the Ministry of South Union. In the hymn sent to Mary Edwards, Polly Lawrence says at the beginning, "This hymn was sung in Heaven when Mother Ann left the earth and went home to rest." At the end of the hymn she writes,

Beloved sister I want you to be so kind as to sing this song and take much comfort, for fleeting time is short and soon you shall have a glorious reward in heaven when you are done with the things
Although the title A HYMN BOOK containing several plain noted songs: February and October 1848 sets the date of 1848, most of the dates given at the ends of the songs are between 1852 and 1854. Each song of the one hundred and five in this book is complete with musical lettered notes. However, most of the songs are anonymous. The songs seem more child-like in their rhymes - much less polished than songs found in other South Union manuscripts.

There are twenty-four marches and dances marked as such, with many of the other songs seeming lively enough also to be dancing songs. The handwriting throughout the book seems to be that of only one person.

One song is from Canterbury, one from New Lebanon, and the others are presumed to be from South Union. Only three of these songs have names of authors: Harriet Mill, Benjamin Cummings Truman, and Polly Lawrence.

Polly Lawrence sends a song to Mary Edwards with the note:

Beloved sister Mary I want you to be so kind as to sing this song to the aged sisters, and take comfort for you don't know the reward that's laid up both for them and you. Do receive my love. I will give you the tune.

Farewell song with lettered notation and decoration.
O Master I pray don't come after me
For I can't be a slave any more
I'm beyond the tyrant's laws
Save beneath the Lion's paw
And he'll growl if you come near the shore.

Chorus--
O don't you remember the old tarry oak
Where you put on the last forty-four
And you bow'd your lofty head
To behold the blood I shed
O remember I bleed there no more.

Chorus--
O don't you remember the promise you made
At my old dying Mother's request, that
I never should be sold
For silver nor for gold
While the sun roll'd from east to west.

Chorus--
O don't you remember as soon as she was dead
E'the sod had grown green or e' her grave
I was advertised for sale
And would now have been in jail
Had I not cross'd the old Erie wave.

Two types of letter notation placement.
In her second book, named **Eldress Mary Edwards's Book**, Eldress Mary has collected one hundred forty songs, which appear to be in the handwriting of at least two people, and the dates shown are 1868, 1869, and 1870.

Seventeen hymns are from Pleasant Hill with the following authors named: E. L. Rupe, Emma Todd, F. M. Rupe, Lucinda Shaver (two songs), Matilda Milton, and Harriet Chamberlain (two songs). From Mount Lebanon there are fourteen songs. Two authors are named—Amelia Colver and Eldress Sarah L. There are four hymns from Enfield, New Hampshire, one from Enfield, Connecticut, and two from Enfield (-). Canterbury is represented by four songs: Whitehouse, two; North Union, one (with an author, Elmina Phillips); Canaan, one; Alfred, one; Harvard, one; Union Village, one; and "Eastern," three. There are no songs ascribed to South Union.

Many authors are given without name of the community, but some are prominent: Shakers whose societies were well-known to all the Shakers. These are Elder Abram Perkins (seven songs), Eldress Dorothy Durgin, (three), M. Clark (three), Mary Frances McCoy, Eldress Pauline Brian, Caroline James, T. Trotter, Lansing, Mary Edwards, Elizabeth Copley, James Russel, E. Greer, and James Richardson. David H. Buckingham is listed as author of one song with G. V. 1868 (Waterville) following his name.

**Hymns with letteral notes at beginning, and a round dance.**
is listed as the composer of three.
Dorothy Durgin from Canterbury is author
of six.9

The careful attention to detail by the
Shakers is shown on one page where the
printed song reads that the song is from
Canterbury. Thats marked through and by
hand someone has written "By Wm. Rice,
So. Union."

The content of most of the hymns deals
with descriptions of heavenly scenes and
very general affirmations of faith. Also
copied into this book are tunes to "Free
Masons March," "Arkansas Traveler," and
"Soldiers Joy."

O. C. Hampton, Union Village, writes
here with a rather undistinguished sing-
-song meter. This seems to be more mech-
anical than the earlier hymns and to have
lost some of the spontaneous spirit.

Life is mostly what we make it
Fill'd with sunshine or with storm,
Just which ever way we take it
Sad or cheery, cold or warm
Come what may we need not borrow
Grief or trials great or small
Troubles of the brewing mornowhich may never come at all.

April 5, 1876

A Christmas hymn, praising the Savior and Mother Ann.
Four kinds of musical notations are contained in a fourth book by H. L. Eads. In the sixty-one songs in the book, the most frequently used are the hand-written letter notes. However, there are twelve songs using hand-written round notes of customary notation, and seventeen with printed customary notes. One song with printed letteral notations, "The Rainbow of Hope," is evidently a page from The Musical Messenger, published at Union Village, Ohio (n. d.).

Four composer's names are given without a community name, those of James Russell, O. C. Hampton, Mary Vance, and Otis Sawyer. The community signatures are Mount Lebanon, eight songs; Alfred, eight; Gloucester, four; Enfield, New Hampshire, one; Groveland, one; Canaan, one; and Union Village, one. Individuals named under communities are Groveland, Elder Peter Long; Mount Lebanon, Marcha J. Anderson; and Alfred has one by Mary Ann Gillespie and five by Elder Otis Sawyer.

The dates in the hymnal begin in 1874 and extend to 1881. The most common subjects by far are affirmation of faith and heavenly scenes, with prayer being third in number. There are two marches and two "Harvest" songs.

One hymn signed by North Family, Mount Lebanon, has the note, "P.S. Many thanks for 'Shaker Theology' I am reading it by course. D. C."

Another song entitled "Fleeing Time" from Canaan has the postscript "Beautiful song, so I say. MLE"
MUSICAL NOTATION IN SOUTH UNION HYMNALS

This collection of Shaker hymnals from South Union provides excellent examples of the Shaker system of and technique in music composition. Of the fifteen hymnals, three had no musical notation, and two were compiled after 1870, at which date standard music notation began to appear. The remaining ten volumes utilized what was probably the simplest of their notating devices, that of the small alphabet from A to G representing the desired note or pitch. Key signatures did not appear until 1870 or later, and only in one book were staffs used; only letters appeared in the others. Sometimes the letters would be written in a straight line:

\[ \text{\textbf{E F G E D C C.}} \]

Or the letters would be placed up and down to indicate voice movement:

\[ \text{\textbf{E F G E D C C.}} \]

Notation appeared either directly below the words or above the entire text.

The single melodic line centered primarily around a tonic of G for facility and simplicity of notating because there was no suggested or fixed pitch until after 1870. There was very little melodic repetition in the earlier books, but in the two compiled after 1870, many of the hymns repeated at the end internal melodic phrases.

Rhythm was generally indicated by \( \text{\textbf{b}} \) and \( \text{\textbf{r}} \) were not infrequent. If the rhythm was not given at the beginning of the line, the number of letters within bars (\( \text{\textbf{b}} \)) along with curved lines (\( \text{\textbf{a}} \)) and dots (\( \text{\textbf{f}} \)) or accent marks (\( \text{\textbf{c}} \)) suggested the composer's choice of rhythm and note values. Occasionally, the composer would suggest tempo with "largo," "slow," or "presto." And it was not unusual to find change of rhythm within a song.

The only book of the earlier volumes which used staffs is A Collection of Hymns, Anthems and Tunes: Adapted to the Worship by Betsy Smith. This book is the most elaborately notated hymnal of the collection, each page being a work of art, with its intricate border design, meticulous handwriting, and neat, precise music notation. Staffs are used, sometimes simply as a form on which to place the letters, without regard for a standard tonal system, as a treble or bass clef would give:

\[ \text{\textbf{E G F E D C C.}} \]

(In fact, this is a mesza clef, very rarely used.)
Occasionally, notes are placed corresponding to the treble clef with the base clef. 

Also, the bass clef is used from time to time:

On page 37 of Betsy Smith's book, she slipped in a two-part harmony scheme, for there are both treble and bass clefs, with letters properly placed on the staffs, and with sixteen measures to each line. Also with staves are found both the straight line of letters and positioned letters. On the whole, the simple melodies are clearly notated here.

After 1870 the notation became more sophisticated with the use of standard notation, key signatures and staves, and treble and bass clefs. Even four-part harmony was admitted. Machine printed sheets were incorporated into the South Union Hymnals around 1880, though hand printing continued until after 1900, as did the more primitive notation.

In H. L. Bad's Music Book, 1875-1876, there are both hand-written and machine-printed hymns, the latter obviously having been taped or pasted in the book. The hand-written hymns used standard notation on staves with predominant treble clefs, though bass clefs were used with the four hymns of four-part harmony. Key signatures range from C to F♯. Excepting one hymn, key signature of which indicated C♯ though the composer noted F and the closing two notes are F, they all ended in the tonic of the given key. The chordal progression is primarily I, IV, V, I (tonic, sub-dominant, dominant, tonic). The chords are almost always in root position, with only an occasional second inversion. Among the deviations from the simple pattern were V7, I6, VI, and VI7. 11 But outside these few unlikely chordal structures, the music followed a simple scheme.

The study of the Shaker music underscores the simplicity of all aspects of the Shaker life. At the same time, the music reflects the changing Shaker culture with the gradual adoption of four-part harmony and ultimately a return to standard musical notation.

Fann R. Herndon
Western Kentucky University
A Collection
of
Millennial Hymns,
Adapted
To the Present Order
of the
Church.

And the messenger of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy. — Isa. xxxv. 10.

Printed in the United Society,
Canterbury, N. H.
1847.
PREFACE.

The first form of this book, having been found by experience, to be somewhat imperfect, it was considered advisable to make some alteration. The near resemblance, and even identity of one title to another, render it necessary to adopt some other method of designating the hymns; therefore, in addition to titles, figures will be used.

As the printing of this work has been done at different periods of time, it has occasioned many difficulties. Perhaps some things have escaped detection which might otherwise have been avoided; yet the candid reader must have charity for the printer.

"Not critic like, seek faults to find,
And every beauty leave behind;
But if a weed appear in sight,
A flower call to make it right."

Where errors occur, they may be corrected by the reader and have the love of all concerned. For,

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what me'er was, nor is, nor e'er will be."

It will be observed that the size of this work is increased in order that a larger number of the beautiful, long meter hymns may be saved which could not have been put into the smaller form; therefore, it is hoped that this will in part compensate for all disadvantages.

PRINTER.

Canterbury, N.H. May 1847.
The Final Decision.

1. The day of decision, by prophets foretold,
   When Christ in his glory the world should behold;
   Has broken forth in splendor, in glory so bright,
   That all in darkness may come to the light.

2. Again he's descended in glory complete,
   To sit in his fullness, the true judgment seat—
   The earth and the heavens, and mortal to shake,
   That they from the death of pollution awake.

3. The mountains and fabrics of antichrist's day,
   Like mist in bright sunbeams, shall vanish away.
   The face of the temple, by coverings conceal'd,
   Is brought to the light, and the mystery's reveal'd.

4. Now human inventions all prostrate must fall,
   And all other systems be roll'd up as a scroll;
   His kingdom a city as prophets had priz'd,
   And other foundations can never be laid.

5. This city, in beauty's ensign'd by a wall,
   Upon which are watchmen proclaiming the call;
   Come forth all ye nations, ye kindreds and tongues,
   And bring to the light all ye evils and wrongs.

6. The trumpet is sounding, the banner's unfurled,
   The call is now going throughout the whole world;
   The wise will obey, for in it there is life—
   A perfect salvation from evil and strife.
2.

Deceitfulness of Earthly Joy.

1. How short are the pleasures of earthly enjoyments! No durable substance these things can afford; They hold, and awhile they may flatter the creature, By man they’re esteemed, and most highly adored. To those who in pleasure of earth are seeking, They show forth a treasure both shining and fair, Alluring the mind from the true God of heavens, To worship an idol that leads to despair.

2. These things may look fair, but in them lies deception; There’s vanity and vanity spread in the way, By vanity and vanity shall deceivers, Who seeks to deceive and enslave whom he may, Then let us not wander in man’s dark desert, Her paths are crooked, and veil, revolting and vain; And though they seem dross’d in the richest profusion, They’ll lead to the regions of darkness and pain.

3. But O why should mortals delay, for there’s danger! Their sun may go down like a phantom at noon; O why should they hearken to dreams so delusive! For life is a shadow that vanishes soon.

5.

G then obey we sue the enchantment they follow’d, Like canker it poison’t—corrupted the soul, And led them in by-paths, array from the sav’ry, While passions of nature their sense did control. Then all those vain pleasures in which they delighted, Will only their torment and sorrows increase; Before us, just God they must there stand indicted, Till they seek his mercy—find comfort and peace.

Behold and consider the delectful condition Of those who can revel in sin with delight; Rejecting the call of Jehovah in mercy— What can be more shocking than such a dread right!

Thus O my relations! my gospel relation, Let heart-felt emotions of love freely flow, To God who has call’d us from Babel’s confusion, To mingle our joys with the righteous below. O let our hearts be glad, for God is diffusing The light of the gospel unto a lost world, And we must see to it—how we are improving, Lost we, by his judgments to rain be hurled.

3.

Who shall stand?

1. The dark and dismal day of death at length has past, The last great trump of God has blown its final blast; The present earth and heavens, and nature all around, With loud and thrilling echo now return the sound. That dark polluted veil, with which the devil veiled, The temple to conceal, in pieces has been rent; Christ has appear’d again in this hallowed land, Judgment to execute, and who, O! who can stand?
6

Millions of sleeping dead from sin begin to wake,
And earth’s corrupting fester now begins to shake;
The burning wrath of God by mortals now is felt,
The elements of earth with fervent heat do melt.
Those lofty heights of sin, towering with guilt and shame,
All prostrate now must fall before the gospel flame.
Prepare; to judgment come, is now the dead command;
Alas! we hear the call, but who, oh! who shall stand?

3 For in this mighty crash of every thing of earth,
When natural things must fall with all their transient worth;
Proud, selfish man must quit his hold on all,
Or in the shivered wreck he buried by the fall.
For sought of worldly pride, in pomp and splendor daze’d,
Nor treasures of the earth will ever stand the test;
For in some fleeting light, or house upon the sand,
These withered joys of earth shall never, never stand.

4 Then whither shall we fly? O whither shall we look
To find a safe retreat from this Almighty shock?
Is there no power to save? no place of endless life,
Where we can ever dwell, far from a world of strife?
O yes; here is a rock,—a sure and steadfast place,
A tower of endless strength to save the fallen race;
’Tis led in flaming truth by God’s almighty hand,
And all who fix on this, they will forever stand.

5 On this we firmly rest, we are both safe and sure;
For this eternal rock, forever will endure;
And now no worldly fame, no vain and growing pride,
No element of sin shall cause our feet to slide.

7

No foe of earth or hell can reach this chosen rock,
Who’ve plac’d their all in Christ the everlasting rock;
For God is ever here to guard this shining hand,
Which will in endless day, forever, ever stand.

4.

Celestial Blessings.

1 Come good angels lower round us,
While with grateful hearts we sing,
Heavenly blessings which surround us,
Praise and bless our glorious King.
Here his hand the vine hath planted,
Lo the branches spread and grow;
Joy of heaven to us are granted,
Here celestial fountains flow.

2 Here we gain divine protection,
All the powers of earth defeat,
Where no sinful, vile affection,
Ever can stain the golden street.
Here the light of heaven is shining,
Over the meridian day;
Golden cords of love entwining
Every heart that does obey.

3 Here is love that cannot fail us,
For it binds our souls in one;
Though affliction may assail us,
Still the joyful song we run.
For we know the prize is ours,
Mother’s children will be crown’d;
Heavenly gifts descend like showers,
Sweetly flowing all around.
4 Praise the Lord with true thanksgiving,
Praise his name with heart and voice,
Praise his name among the living,
Praise his name, rejoice, rejoice.
Holy angels give him glory,
Saints with joy surround the name,
Loudly singing, holy, holy,
Holy, holy is his name.

5

The Church of God.

1 Zion, arise, break forth in songs
Of everlasting joy;
To God eternal praise belongs,
Who doth thy foes destroy.
Thee Church of God, awake, awake,
For light beams from on high;
From earth and dust thy garments shake,
Thy glory's drawing nigh.

2 To raise thee high above the earth,
God will his power employ;
He'll turn thy mourning into mirth,
Thy sorrow into joy.
In shining robes thyself array,
Put on thy garments pure;
Thy King shall lead thee in a way,
That's holy, safe and sure.

3 He'll bring thy wandering children home,
And gather those without;
And with a wall of jasper stone,
Will guard thee round about.

9

He'll feed thy little ones with food,
And their protectice be;
And nothing, that is for thy good
Will he withhold from thee.

4 In thee, the Lord shall place his name,
And make thee his delight,
And place on thee a diadem,
Divinely fair and bright;
And thou shalt be the dwelling place,
Of him that reigns above;
Yes, thou shalt be adorn'd with grace
And everlasting love.

5 The joy of nations thou shalt be;
A bright and shining light;
For God is in the midst of thee,
To keep thee day and night:
His arm shall be thy sure defence,
That thou canst never fall,
And shining saints shall pitch their tents
Within thy glorious wall.

6 Arise, O Zion, praise thy king,
And make his name thy trust;
With joy and triumph loudly sing,
For he is true and just.
O Zion, sing with thankful voice,
Thy great Redeemer's praise;
In his almighty power, rejoice
Throughout eternal days.

Harvard, Mass.
Behold his rich blessing, unsparkingly spread,
Which children of purity share;
By seraphs and angels they daily are fed,
On wholesome and heavenly fare.
Their crowns are all glorious, out shining the sun,
Their robes are far whiter than snow;
Their Mother did promise if faithful we'd run,
And keep in the valley that's low.

In this holy vineyard true virtues are found,
Here Wisdom does wave her pure hand;
While saints and bright angels do guard it around,
In honor to God and the Lamb.
Now in this sweet covert, this purified place,
His heavenly mansion below,
Where all that is lovely in subjects will grace,
Who in the true spirit do grow.

Here sit in this mansion, the King and the Queen,
Array'd in their garments so pure;
And round them their sons and their daughters are seen,
Who all perseverance endure.
And as we now suffer and victory gain,
Our treasure no mortal can tell;
With Jesus the Saviour our spirits will reign,
And in his blessed kingdom we'll dwell.

CONTENTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A view of the last state of Man.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Meditation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Offering of Praise to God.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angels' Prize</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Suppliant's Prayer</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angels' Invitation</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A prayer to the Savior</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Stalwart Mind</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armor of Peace</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRTH Day of Freedom</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be ready my children.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessings of the faithful</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be ye Valiant</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty of Zion</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Star</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright and Happy Land</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Lovely and Thankful</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed Treasure</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELESTIAL Blessings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celestial Enjoyment Glory and Praise.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come and Welcome</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Pleasure</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Zion</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain of Protection</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OMNISCIENCE of the Deity.</th>
<th>Surpassing beauty.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ode to Contentment.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Gospel.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path of Sorrow.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise to Mother Anna's Birthday.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promised Desire.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise ye the Lord.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of the Savior.</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Blessing.</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise to Mother.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition to Mother.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise all that is Praise-worthy.</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise and Praise.</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precious Gift.</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasures of the Gospel.</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTIONS on time.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejecting Idols.</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repentance.</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembrance of Mother.</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on the Goodness of God.</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRIT of Noah.</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplication and Prayer.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Conviction.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd and Shepherdess.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak Gently.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Warning.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Promise.</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solemn Reflection.</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 198 |
| 199 |
| Surpassing beauty. |
| Spiritual Rock. |
| Self Warning. |
| THE Church of God.  |
| The Holy Savior.  |
| Thundering on Mount Sinai. | 22 |
| The Millennium. |
| The Harmony of Angels. |
| True life of God's Children. |
| The Happy Calling. |
| The Gospel Valley.  |
| Thanksgiving and Praise. |
| The Voice of a Parent. |
| The Earthquake. |
| The Gift of Repentance. |
| The Best Choice. |
| Trump of God. |
| True Salvation. |
| The Saint's Prayer. |
| The Morning Sun. |
| The Lord's Prayer.  |
| The Mercy Seat. |
| The Manifestation of God. |
| Trumpet of Heaven. |
| Tender Mercy. |
| UNFEIGNED Thanks. |
| Union and Love. |
| Unceasing Praise. |
| VOICE of Awakening. | 12 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the Righteous</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Band</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Mother Ann Lee</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorious Gospel</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyard of God</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO shall stand?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning Voice</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom's Path</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchfulness</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of God</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words of Holy Wisdom</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom's Harp of Peace</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZION'S Cowsm</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ORIGINAL

SHAKER MUSIC

PUBLISHED BY

THE NORTH FAMILY

OF

Mt. Lebanon, Col. Co., N. Y.

"Man is a harp of a thousand strings;"
"Touch the spiritual chord of his heart,
And let with what inspiration he sings;
Unclouded by science, unmuffled in art."
"It is the voice of God in his soul that sings,
And is more than a harp of a thousand strings.

NEW YORK

W. M. A. POND & COMPANY

BY UNION SQUARE

1893.
PREFACE.

The gift and inspiration of spiritual songs has been with Believers ever since the establishment of the Order over one hundred years ago.

In the early days of devout and religious fervor, the outpouring of soulful emotion in praise and devotion was simple in the extreme, but it was original and peculiarly expressive of the sentiments of an awakened people who had consecrated themselves to the service of God and the best interests of their fellow men.

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Not for its scientific merits, but for the truthfulness of its testimony as expressed in simple words and music, we commend this collection.

The marches are marked M.; and the slow marches, S. M.

Mt. Lebanon, Cuy. Co., N. Y.
as the crystal fountain pours forth, pours forth in living streams, let sweet praises flow from hearts pure and free.

Rejoice and be glad, rejoice in the truth, whose light has

spread from sea unto sea, and reign from shore to shore.

the triumph of the Prince of Peace will hush the voice of war.

will hush the voice of war. Then will the nations of the earth increase in righteousness, increase in righteousness, and

heaven and earth conspire in the song which once the angels sang, Peace, peace, ever-aching peace to earth, for ever, and ever, more...