

**SHAKERS: COMPENDIUM OF THE ORIGIN,  
HISTORY, PRINCIPLES, RULES AND  
REGULATIONS, GOVERNMENT, AND  
DOCTRINES OF THE UNITED SOCIETY OF  
BELIEVERS IN CHRIST'S SECOND APPEARING.  
WITH BIOGRAPHIES OF ANN LEE**

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Shakers: Compendium of the Origin, History, Principles, Rules and Regulations, Government, and Doctrines of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. With Biographies of Ann Lee by F. W. Evans

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**F. W. EVANS**

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SHAKERS.

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COMPENDIUM

OF THE

ORIGIN, HISTORY, PRINCIPLES, RULES AND REGULATIONS,  
GOVERNMENT, AND DOCTRINES

OF THE

UNITED SOCIETY OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST'S  
SECOND APPEARING.

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WITH BIOGRAPHIES OF

ANN LEE,

WILLIAM LEE, JAM. WHEATKILL, J. BOURNELL, J. MEECHAM,  
AND LUCY WINGETT.

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BY F. W. EVANS.

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"O my soul, swallow down understanding, and devour wisdom;  
for thou hast only time to live."—EVANS.

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## TO THE READER.

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IN respectful response to the often-expressed desire of the public, to have the information respecting *Shakers* and *Shakerism*, that is now spread through some five or six volumes, concentrated in a Compendium, this work has been prepared by the author and compiler, in union with, and aided by, his Gospel friends.

It being, as stated in all previous publications by the Society, the settled faith of the Church, from the beginning, that *its foundation* was Divine REVELATION; and that the records of past Dispensations, and their revelations, can be understood and interpreted aright *only* by means of a

*present living revelation*; we therefore feel ourselves untrammelled by the *letter* of *yesterday*, and write and express our views in accordance with the increasing *light* of *to-day*, as we hope and trust, subject to the dictates of "the Comforter," or "Spirit of Truth," dwelling and abiding in the *Church*, which is gradually, but surely and safely, leading it into the knowledge of "*all truth*." For "in Christ are hid," as we fully believe, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

F. W. EVANS, }  
CALVIN GREEN, } Committee of Revision.  
GILES AVERE, }

August, 1858.



## INTRODUCTION.

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THE *United Society of Believers* in Christ's Second Appearing, at this day, stand before the public in a very different attitude from what they have ever done at the time of issuing any of their previous publications.

Many of the most obnoxious features of the Society—such as drew down upon it the opposition and secret or open persecution, particularly of religious professors—are now becoming the popular views of the times, at least of all the progressive minds of the age.

Again. The ignorant or willful misconceptions of what were the actual doctrines, principles, and faith of the Society, are being corrected; and the false judgments of certain discrepancies existing between the profession and practice of the people, are almost entirely removed from the public mind.

It is no longer believed that Ann Lee was a "witch," because she was known to possess supernatural powers; or that the Shakers think her to be something more than human—equal to Christ; or that they worship her, etc., etc.

It is now generally known, that we do not condemn the Marriage institution, in its *own order*, and when governed by its *true laws*; but simply hold that it is *not* a *Christian* institution.

The wonderful and almost incredible openings of light and truth pertaining to this and the external spiritual world, and which address themselves almost exclusively to the external man, by sensuous facts and physical demonstrations, and which, in former times and other ages, were suppressed and condemned, as the effect of unlawful communings with the powers of darkness, are now being received with joy and gladness by thousands of persons, as proof of a *telegraphic* communication established between the two worlds; and no more to be disputed or doubted than is the existence of that marvelous submarine *telegraphic cable* that connects the Eastern and Western continents.

In all these advances of the human mind in knowledge relating to the mundane and supermundane planes, we find cause for hope and encouragement that the time is drawing nigh when the

interior and truly *spiritual* powers of the souls of our fellow-creatures will be awakened as from a long night of slumber, and when human *hearts* will be touched with the fire of conviction for sin, from the altar of *religious truth*, quickening them into that affection for each other that shall burn up selfishness, and draw them, as with strong cords of love, into communities of brotherhood and sisterhood, not only under a Christian *profession*, but also into a Christian *practice*—a CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

*All truth*, being primarily of Divine origin, is fit food for human souls when “rightly divided” and properly used. The observation of natural facts and phenomena on the earth plane, and the orderly arrangement of such facts, together with the scientific deduction of general principles therefrom, which can be applied to the use and benefit of mankind, are, in their place and order, right and good.

With such knowledge we have no war; for “we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” All truth, when *unadulterated* with human pride and self, is a *unit*. And *true* earthly knowledge, talents, and capacities bear the same relation to the Divine revelation of spiritual good and truth that the vessels which the widow bor-