

and visions—a study in mental philosophy, showing what the mind may do under certain circumstances. Yet it is all easily accounted for. These Indians have mingled with the whites for a long time, nearly ever since most of them were small. All classes of whites have made sport of their religion—the infidel, the profane man, the immoral one, the moral one, and the Christian—and they have been told that God and the Bible were against it, consequently they lost faith in it. But the Indian must have some religion. He can not do without one. They were not ready to accept the Bible in all its purity. They wanted more excitement. Like the Dakota Indians more recently, they saw that Christ was the great center of the most powerful religion of the most powerful, intelligent, successful, and wisest nations with whom they came in contact. Consequently they formulated a system for themselves that would fill all their required conditions, and when a few leaders had originated it, a large share of the rest were ripe to accept it, but having had more Christian teaching than the wild Dakotas, it took a somewhat different form, with no thought of war and with more of real Christianity.

James Wickersham, esquire, of Tacoma, Washington, the well-known historian of that region, is the regular attorney for these people as a religious organization, and is consequently in a position to speak with authority concerning them. In reply to a letter of inquiry, he states that the Shakers believe in an actual localized heaven and hell, and reverence the Bible, but regard John Slocum's revelations as of more authority. "They practice the strictest morality, sobriety, and honesty. Their 500 or 600 members are models, and it is beyond question that they do not drink whisky, gamble, or race, and are more free from vice than any other church. They practice a mixture of Catholic, Presbyterian, and old Indian ceremonies, and allow only Indians in the church. They have five churches, built by themselves, and the sect is growing quite rapidly." From all this it would appear that the Shaker religion is a distinct advance as compared with the old Indian system.

Under date of December 5, 1892, Mr Wickersham wrote again on this subject, as follows:

I read your letter to my Indian friends, and they beg me to write you and explain that they are not Ghost dancers, and have no sympathy with that ceremony or any other founded on the Dreamer religion. That they believe in heaven as do the orthodox Christians; also in Christ, and God, the Father of all; that they believe in future rewards and punishments, but not in the Bible particularly. They do believe in it as a history, but they do not value it as a book of revelation. They do not need it, for John Slocum personally came back from a conference with the angels at the gates of heaven, and has imparted to them the actual facts and the angelic words of the means of salvation.

This testimony is even better than the words of Christ contained in the Bible, for John Slocum comes 1800 years nearer; he is an Indian, and personally appears to them and in Indian language reports the facts. These people believe Slocum as firmly as the martyr at the stake believed in that for which he offered up his life; but it is the Christian religion which they believe, and not the Ghost dance or Dreamer religion.

In short, they have a mixture of Catholic, Protestant, and Indian ceremonies, with a thorough belief in John Slocum's personal visit to heaven, and his return with a mission to save the Indians and so guide them that they, too, shall reach the realms of bliss. Personally, I think they are honest, but mistaken; but the belief certainly has beneficial effect, and has reduced drinking and crime to a minimum among the members of the "Shaker" or "Tschaddam" church.