

I believe S.B. was perceptibly influenced by Church teaching; that he was not wholly sincere in rejecting Christianity; that he did so because he regarded the Church as linked with the Government which would surely destroy his people, unless successfully resisted.

He was anxious to learn, from every possible source, and may have learned something of shamans, as many Indians affirm. But---The great Jonathan Edwards, in a boyhood essay on spiders, commences by writing "There are many kinds of spiders", thus showing early genius. There are many kinds of everything, including shamans. Why is not a Catholic or Episcopalian minister a kind of shaman? I do not think S.B. was in any sense a " juggler". I have it on the statements of Indians who knew him in Canada, that he did, sometimes, pray to the Virgin Mary, while in distress in Canada. One Bull saying that he prayed only to "The Holy One" ( i.e. "Taku Wakan") does not mean very much, since "Taku Wakan" covers a vast range. According to best information I've been able to get, he did have a stone, but discarded it when he was somewhere about 30 years old. (Sinte Sna Mani, an honest Indian doctor, member of my mission, decided to discard his stone---brownish-black, 20 inches by about 9 inches by about 5---because the same was a sort of unnecessary "idol", and was as out of harmony with the old Sioux belief as with the Bible. After he had taken the stone away and secretly hidden it a couple times, and it had in some way come back to his door, he moved his house away from the stone, about 100 yards, and left the stone there. Later, while about everybody was away at a fair, but I was in my house, though supposed to be away, in the late evening twilight, through my window, I saw two Indians come and carry away the stone, and where it went to I do not know. Sioux, formerly, were very averse to noticing a stone that had been in any way fashioned by human hands, and for that reason, they despised many stones of Arikaras. I just wonder whether you got the old legend about the Standing Rock, here, or some one of the many later legends that have attached to this stone.

As I get the traditions, S.B. interfered the least possible with the ordinary course among his people, was not a "reformer"; and so he did not hold himself out as a healer. Yet I've no doubt at all that he did perform cures on some occasions. All I've heard agrees that when he was trying to divine matters with the "sacred fire", he also had the medicine bowl, which actually did go round the fire, with nothing human or visible to cause this. Yet accounts agree that he laid no emphasis on miracles---considered many of them humbugs. But this does not at all mean that he rejected the "supernatural". He was distrustful of white men, and their miracles. If "Fakir" means something false, then S.B. was not a "Fakir"; for he sincerely believed in himself, whatever illusions may have been his illusions. He did not "play tricks", as some Indians did do, and, without words, he rejected and despised this. According to all accounts, S.B. was, in some sense, a "medicine man", as that term is understood. Yet to display him as merely a "medicine man", or such in his main character, would be error, I think.

The saying about the lame cow, refers to the Grattan affair, and means, to be careful about misunderstandings. The one about the eggs means the Minnesota matter, and means, to the ordinary child, not to quarrel over trifles. Who on earth could interpret the old saying, said to have been liked by S.B. "Wherever there is a songbird singing, there is always a snake nearby." If 50 bright Edisonians were to "guess"---interpret this, the brightest of the lot might be as near to correct as classroom teaching is to the Real.

It means that when zeal-enthusiasm, there is greatest danger of falling down into inertia. It refers to the old legend of the twin brothers, one of whom became the birds, especially the Thunderbird, while the other, without zeal-enthusiasm and love of Beauty, became the creeping things. A long legend. I will pick-out of my books some proverbs, and send them, in a few days or so. As the accounts show, S.B. had no special hardships in youth, he lived his own way, and attention turned to him, so that by the time he was, say 23 years old, his fame was beyond his immediate people. Yet he seems to have taken it in a dull sort of way. It took an occasion, a crisis, to arouse him out of his introvert contemplative satisfaction into extrovert action. And, also, he was always timid, to some extent, like a woman, like Cardinal Newman. (Well, I'm sure nothing here aids you in determining how to begin. Am sending, separate cover "Heart-in-the Lodge", a folk-play written just according to the tradition, in which the "heroine" does not even appear until the thing is half done. Indians were in no hurry, unless devils were after them. Just before they War, a Chicago Company arranged to transform and stage the play, but the War sidetracked this. It has been called "An Indian character-and-custom portrayal." Now that is the Indian of it. But how to get anything of that sort into the whiteman's style--- I gave it up, and "snapped up" the thing just as tradition has it. And how to get a Life of S.B. into conventional style, when there is nothing conventional in it-----

Mrs. Byron Wilde, Black Water Post Office, can give you what you need about the "Fox Society", and the "Midnight Strong Hearts", and the "White Horsemen" much better than I can. If more desired, call on. I want to see success, & will aid you all in my power.

Sincerely  
A. M. B. Beede