

ACCOUNT OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS in the Crystal Ward Pocatello Stake

State of President William A. Hyde.

In the latter part of 1926, my attention was called to certain disturbances in the Crystal Ward of the Pocatello Stake, which is presided over by Bishop Lorenzo S. Whiting.

It was reported that a woman by the name of Bessie Davis, a new comer there from the Southern States, was possessed by evil spirits and the bishop sought my advice as to how to deal with the situation. I gave such counsel as I thought wise, but matters got worse instead of better, until I sent three men, selected for their physical and spiritual strength and their experience, to the ward to investigate the case, do what they could and report to me.

Finally, on their recommendation, the woman was brought to Pocatello, was subjected to an operation and finally recovered.

Physicians and others who saw the operation, received, with little credit the accounts made by the actors in this drama, but there are certain happenings in the history of the case that cannot be explained by science, and which cannot be dismissed by the laughter of the incredulous.

It was with the endeavor to get at the facts in that case, if possible, that I endorsed the intention of the principal actors in it to set down the main incidents in the story. Out of what happened there, the people have received an unusual testimony as to spiritual realities and truth of what these earnest men have said. This is my thought, rather than to keep alive unpleasant recollections of the things that happened during those days of anxiety.

A group of the principal actors in the case have set down from memory the events referred to, and I shall repeat as nearly as I can, in their words what they have said, making only such comments from time to time as may seem necessary.

William A. Hyde

Account of spiritual manifestations in the case of Bessie Davis, sister of Moses Fannin of Crystal, Idaho.

Bessie Davis came from Kentucky to the home of Moses Fannin, November 12, 1925. The next night after her arrival, she had some sort of a spell or convulsion, and at different periods had several of these, their nature was unknown to us.

August 27, 1926, she was seized again and at this time she would talk, using a tone of voice not her own. Her brother asked her to sing the "Arkansas Traveler" which she did perfectly, though when normal she did not know and could not sing the song.

Moses Fannin says: "October 13, I came in from the field, and was informed that my sister was asleep. I went into the room, and I was accosted and asked what my name was. In reply, I said, what is your name? and a voice from the woman made the reply. "I am Robert E. Likens," and then said, "I offered her a two year old horse, saddle and bridle if she would be my wife, and she refused, and she will never have any more peace." In a few minutes she was seized again, and we got Bishop Whiting, and said, "who are you?" And the voice replied, "I am Satan, the devil, and I have twelve of

my followers with me and at 8:30 o'clock tonight I am going to take the body of Bessie Davis and you cannot stop us. And the Bishop said, "you will not take the body of Bessie Davis, for we have power over you." And Satan Said, "we have power too." This was spoken in a coarse male voice. At eight o'clock he made this statement, and in ten minutes he said, "Ten minutes of the time is now gone. Bessie could not see the clock and had no way of knowing the time. At 8:30 he tried to take her, it took four men to hold her, and satan was rebuked through the power of the Priesthood, and she fell helpless and was free and normal again. A short time after this she was seized by the evil power, and was under it's influence until 20 minutes to ten o'clock, at which time she was relieved for the last time that night.

On October 28, Bessie was seized again. At this time Sister Fannin and the children were the only ones present. Bessie tried to escape from the house, but was prevented by Sister Fannin, and she jumped on the bed and began to groan and a voice spoke out of her body and Said, "my soul is being tormented." And Sister Fannin asked, "Who is there? and a male voice replied, "Robert E. Likens, son of Jim Likens (both of these men are dead). Sister Fannin told him he had to go and it seemed as though he had left for some time. After Brother Fannin came home, she was seized again, and they took her in the bedroom, his son Lester, assisting him. The son is a deacon, and a male voice said, "Get out of here you Mormons and deacon." It was Liken's voice speaking again, and he said that he had come for the body of Bessie. Brother Fannin persisted in his efforts to relieve his sister of the evil power, and they (Robert E. Likens) spoke out and said, you take the body and we will take the spirit." And Brother Fannin kept on trying to cast them out, the voice said again, "We have offered fair." Brother Fannin refused permission, and in a little while they said, "Go and look at your pigs and see if they don't act different. "Knowing that they were trying to decieve him and get him out of the house, he refused.

"Just a short time before this," says Brother Fannin, again, "my sister had been baptized into the LDS church, and she reports that the spirits came to her in the form of a minister, and said that they would baptize her. They reported that they had a bottle of ointment, which they told her had come from God. They tried to put this on her head, and in the attempt spilled a drop on her chest. When under my administration she became conscious again, she complained of this place on her chest, which she said burned like fire. I looked at it, and it appeared like a bee sting, and on the opposite side of her body was a similar welt. I anointed these with oil and administered to her before she was out of her pain. These welts stayed red as a flannel rag for several hours, then disappeared.

Another time she was seized while we were asleep and she got up and went out on the highway, I overtook her at 100 yards on the road. My wife came to my assistance, but we could not handle her until my wife commanded the evil spirits to depart, and her arms dropped and her body went limp and then I succeeded in administering to her, and she came to herself and asked, "How did I get up here?" She then walked back to the house unaided. "When she was seized, she would be unconscious, and her spirit would leave her body, and I had to chase the evil spirits out, and command her spirit to return."

October 31st, while in church, she was seized by the evil power, and they spoke through her in a male voice and said, apparently speaking to her, "We told you not to come to church," and when asked how many there were of them they replied, "Sixteen." We asked what they wanted, and they said they wanted the body of Bessie David." They tried to banter and compromise as in the former instance, and failing in this they said, "We don't like you Mormons, you have too much authority." We cast them out. On returning from church, they attacked her again, and Brother Fannin sent for the elders and they soon came. The voice declared that there were a hundred of them present. By one glance at her eyes you would know that an evil power was with her. She would gnash her teeth and strike at you with her hands and attempt to bite and would pull her hair out. They would fight

savagely through her to prevent the elders from putting their hands on her head so they wouldn't have to go. They admitted this.

As Bessie was from Kentucky, she spoke in a Southern dialect, but under the influence of the evil power, she spoke in various voices and most of the time using good English, that is, language from peculiarities of dialect.

When the evil power had control of her body, if asked if she knew the people in the room, she could only name those who took part in the administration, when herself, she knew all who were in the room.

We would ask their names, and sometimes they would tell us, and we would cast them out by the name given. On one occasion, Alfred R. Whiting asked the name of one of them, and he said that he had no name. Alfred asked him if he was one of those that were cast out of heaven with Satan in the beginning and has never been permitted to have a body, and he said that he was, and then said: "Are you not sorry for me?" Alfred replied, "Most certainly, to the bottom of my heart I am sorry for you." Then Alfred said, "Why did you not listen when we tried to persuade you in the spirit world?" And he replied that he could not see things that way at that time. Then he said, "Please let me stay in this body, she has had it for a long time and I have not had a body." Then Alfred said, "Maybe the Lord will forgive you in time and let you have a body," and the voice replied that he did not think that he would ever be forgiven. When we proceeded to lay our hands upon her head, he begged us to cease and let him stay, for if we commanded him he would have to go. Alfred told him he had no right in that body and would have to leave and we cast him out.

Being seized again and William Whiting now assisting in the administration, proceeded by saying: "We, the servants of the living God," and the male voice interrupted and said, "We are the servants of the devil." Then we cast them out. Shortly after that for a while she seemed to be normal and was repeating to us a little verse which she said the spirits were repeating, which was "No preaching, no praying, no Bibles in Hell, And when you get there, it's your final farewell.

We then noticed that there was something wrong with her, and knew that it had been the evil power that had given us the couplet. When the evil spirit was cast out, we told her what he had said, and she laughed and said she had never heard that before, and knew nothing about it.

Shortly after they first came, they said that they were going to stay until eleven o'clock. At eleven o'clock, A.R. Whiting was standing by Bessie and he said, "Satan is in the room, I can feel the power of him" Bessie said, "Yes he is in that corner," and Alfred just commenced to rebuke him from the room, when he looked at Bessie and could see that a change had come over her, and that the evil power had control of her, and he asked, "Who is there?" A Coarse, strong, male voice spoke out, "I am Satan, the Devil." He was asked, "What do you want?" And he replied, "want the body of Bessie David, and I have come to see if my servants have accomplished what I sent them to do and I'm going to take it. William Whiting said, "You are not." and the Devil said, "I have power." and William Whiting said "Christ has power over you." And Satan said no more and we rebuked him.

Shortly after, she was seized again and we had a long talk with the evil spirits through her body. These are some of the things they said: That they were in torment and that the only rest that they could get was when they were in her body. Bishop Whiting asked what kingdom they were in and they said the lowest. Then the Bishop Asked why they wanted her to be in torment like they were and the voice replied: "We want more joiners. She used to belong to us but now she is a Mormon and we are going to take her away off in a forest where there is no church."

When we cast them out or her body she was dead. There was no sign of life in her that we could detect and she lay there several minutes -- we don't know how long. She seemed to us as dead as anyone can get. We decided that we would have to command the spirit to return, as it had been taken by the evil power. We laid our hands on her and commanded the spirit to return, as it had been taken and it was done accordingly, and she said amen with the rest of us and set up. We asked her where she had been. [She said,] "Away off in a forest with a queer looking old man," and when we commanded her spirit, they had to bring her back. We had been in this struggle with the evil power about twelve hours, and at this time were impressed to have them locked up in prison, and we commanded them to be shut up. And it was done, for from that moment they were taken from us and did not trouble us any more that night. (There is no corroboration for this, but A.R. Whiting declared that in vision he saw them depart in haste, and saw them driven into a strong building and a heavy gate was shut after them. This is his testimony.)

November 4, 1926.

On the evening of this day, Moses Fannin walked into the room where his sister was and he could see that the evil power was at her again and that [she] was not herself, and he inquired who was troubling her and Robert E. Likens again replied. He pleaded again as before for the body saying that when he was alive he had known her and she was the sweetest girl he had ever known. He was cast out, but others came, and said that they were a thousand. We sent for the Whiting Brothers and they soon came. Bishop Whiting; Forest Whiting; Alfred Reese Whiting; and William. Others who were there were Ola Hatch, Pearl Hatch, his wife; Bert Dahl; Esther Dahl, his wife; James Fannin; Sister Fannin; Ethel Fannin; Lester Fannin; Noah Skaggs, and the rest of the Fannin family of children. This was a night that will never be forgotten by the people who were there, They were as if in the very jaws of hell.

It seemed as if Satan had come to make a good fight. He was there and spoke through the woman several times. We fought them for some time, casting them out, and they would re-enter again, and it seemed that the room was so full of them that you could almost feel them, and we had the privilege of seeing the power of the lord made known. For while we were in the worst of the fight and the knees of the men were knocking together, Ethel Fannin seemed blessed with a vision and had just said a few words when the evil power seized her and she dropped to the floor in great agony, as her breathing was cut short, and it seemed that she was being choked to death. They were attacking Bessie also, and we had to divide our forces between the two. We rebuked the evil power from Ethel, which had not entered her body, but seemed to be crushing her from the outside, trying to prevent her from beholding the vision. It seemed that there was a battle over the girl and in a short time she was picked up by some power which must have been a good one, and was raised about two feet in the air and stayed there for some time -- we don't know just how long. She was standing straight up with her hands stretched out, and looking straight ahead, her eyes apparently fastened on something. She tried to describe some beautiful place and told us how careful we must walk in order to get to this place, and if what she said is true, one must walk perfectly and who are we to dispute it when she stood in the air to receive the vision. It is not for us to tell more of the vision, sometime she may want to write it. All we know is what we saw and the little we heard her say, and we heard only part of what she said as she was standing in the air.

Note: (in further proof of the correctness of this account, Forrest Whiting, who is six feet tall, had his hands on the head of the girl, who is not over five feet tall and as she raised in the air his hands were raised also until they were above his own head. when the vision was ended, Forrest took the girl in his arms and lowered her to the chair she had previously been sitting on.)

While all this was going on, the house was felt to shake, and we did not know what was going to happen next. We were casting some out and others were entering and the whole house was in

commotion. Satan declared himself again and said that he wanted this body for we were getting too many of his followers.

NOTE: (Whether the excitement affected their vision or not they did not know, but they say that with two good oil lamps in the room you could scarcely see from one wall to the other.)

Her Spirit was taken from her again this night, and we brought it back again as in the former instance, Brother Fannin being the spokesman.

Bessie tells us that in the early part of the evening she saw her father, his mother and two brothers (all dead) while she was out of her body. She said that she did not know her mother, as she died while she was quite young. She said her father introduced her mother to her and said, "I guess you know the two boys." And she said that she did. Her Father said that they did not come to do her any harm and that the time was not yet, but that they would call her in ten years, and that she had done right in being baptized, and that there was one of the boys that he was not worried about, and that was Moses. (Note: the one referred to in this account was Brother Fannin.) Moses had done the work for his father, mother and one brother in the temple. No work had been done for the older brother yet. Moses asked her what kind of clothes they wore, and she accurately described the temple clothes. Three were so dressed, the older boy had on ordinary clothing. Bessie had never seen a temple suit but described them in detail just as they were.

The spirits were full of deceit getting worse toward the last. They would lie to us, and one spirit attempted to retain the body by saying her name was Bessie, but we detected her and cast her out.

Brother Satterfield, Brother Whitaker, and Brother Liliquist were sent from Pocatello to assist us and Brother Satterfield saw what appeared to be the cause of the trouble. After the report of Bishop Satterfield to President Hyde, Brother Hyde ordered us by letter to bring Sister Davis to Pocatello for an operation. Then Bessie was seized again, and the voice said, "We heard that letter read and Bessie is to have an operation and be healed and we have to stay out and we are going to give you a good stay now. "They said that they would not permit her to get to Pocatello, but that she would leave them at the foot of the hill. We had trouble on the road and at the hospital, but the operation was successfully performed. On her return home she became unconscious at times, and during such a period her father and mother appeared to her again, telling her that they were beside her while she was on the operating table, that she was to be careful until she got strong. At another time her father and mother appeared to her while she was awake, and together they sang a song of which we have the words.

Moses Fannin says: "These (referring 'to the incidents following the arrival of the brethren from Pocatello) are some of the matters that have come under my observation, and I certify that they are true. I further certify that the voices that spoke to us through my sister were not her voice, and not such voices that she could have uttered. The changes from the normal to the abnormal or strange condition and back again, were instantaneous, and when out of the bad influence she was natural as any member of the family."

Resuming the general account:

On one occasion when the evil power was speaking through her, they said "We have been down with Whiting's ducks, sporting ourselves, having a good time for a week." At that time, Whiting's ducks had been gone for a week, and no one knew where they were.

Note: This might appear to be a trivial incident, but Bessie confined to the house, knew nothing about the ducks, and this is convincing proof that some power, little enough and childish enough to

take such small items into account, was speaking through this woman.

At another time she said that she wanted to go to bed, and they permitted her to do so, and she just got started when she made a dive at two deacons in the room, at the same time uttering a loud scream. When rebuked, she fell helpless to the floor.

A short time after this, she was asleep, and she said that her brother, John Henry Fannin appeared to her. This is the older brother mentioned before; and he asked her if she would not have the work in the temple done for him, saying that he could not go where his father and mother were, for they were on a higher plane or kingdom. He gave his record to her so that his work could be done. This work was subsequently done February 15, 1927.

A short time after this work was done she was again under the influence of some power, and Robert E. Likens announced himself again, and said, "Won't you do something for me?" Brother Fannin (Moses) told him that he would have to repent and he cast him out but he came back soon and declared that he had repented. Then Brother Fannin asked him what he knew about the gospel and temple work, and if he thought that Mormonism was right, and he said that he knew it was right and that he saw J .H. Fannin pass to the higher kingdom the other day. So Brother Fannin said that he would have the work done for him. Likens then gave him his record and said, "You won't have to cast me out this time, I will go." and he did.

The next day a voice spoke from Bessie in the presence of Brother (Moses) Fannin and said, "I am Big Jim Fannin. Won't you do the work for me?" And Moses asked him if he was not the Big Jim Fannin that hung himself and he said that he was. He was asked if he thought that he would have a change to be saved, and he replied that Robert E. Likens had told him. Moses then questioned him trying to see if he really was Big Jim Fannin and he answered to his satisfaction so he asked for the man's record and he gave it to him. He then said, "Goodbye," and went. Shortly after Eleck Fannin, a cousin, made a similar request. He said that he had been dead sixteen years: an evil power got hold of him and they thought that he was crazy; then had put him in an insane asylum in Oklahoma and he was killed by a keeper. He gave his record and said, "If you knew the condition we are in you would go tonight," Moses said that it would be done in a few months, and he said that "Months seemed like years." Moses asked him if he ever saw Robert E. Likens and he said that he was with him. Brother Fannin asked him to inquire of Likens the date of his birth which he had neglected to get. He said "Goodbye" and went and in a few minutes Likens voice was heard. He said "Hello, Mr. Fannin, I am Robert E. Likens. I said that I would not come again but you sent for me. I have no date of my birth." Likens then asked permission to stay, saying that the only rest he could get was while he was in the body of Bessie, but he said that he would go with out being cast out, which he did, saying "goodbye." As he left, Susannah Fannin, a sister, also called, asking to have the work done for her, she asked Moses to warn her husband, which he did later. One, Rhoda Bailey, also sought assistance, and told him that she had left two children on this earth.

The greater part of these experiences and events we cannot write for they covered a period of three or four months and on each occasion there were a lot of things that happened, and much was seen and heard.

We have tried to present what we think are the most essential of the occurrences in the history of this case, for the people will call us superstitious and imaginary even in what we have now said, But the things which we have now said we do testify are true. That we did see and hear these things which we have written, on the several dates on which we were present and we do hereby set our hands to this effect.

Dated the fourth of January, in the year at our Lord, 1928.

L.S. Whiting
Alfred Reese Whiting
William Whiting

Pearline Whiting
Forrest Whiting
Mrs. Irene Whiting

Moses Fannin had signed his individual testimony previously, Which is in harmony with that on the above.

To the statements of these men and women, I might add my own conclusions with such comments as my knowledge of the occurrences will justify.

The sequel of the case is that Bessie Davis was brought to the Hospital at Pocatello on my orders. She was operated upon, and in due time was returned to her home in Crystal. She was much improved but had several attacks after her operation. Aided by the faith and intercession of the saints, she fully recovered and later married and is now perfectly well, as far as we know.

That the operation was the turning point in her recovery, is the basis in the minds of some, for unbelief as to the history of the case as herein set out; but there are some things apparent to the honest investigator that cannot be explained without taking into account the presence and influence of spiritual powers.

First, in Justice to the actors in this drama, there are no more sturdily, sensible and honest men in the church than the Whiting Brothers, and they have, with their common sense, the simple faith that not many men possess. I am sure that most men would have weakened under the ordeal through which they passed.

Moses Fannin, who had many of these experiences, is a man at splendid faith and a reliable man.

Furthermore, I have the report of the three men I sent to investigate the case, which bear out, so far as their experiences went, this remarkable story.

My conclusions are that two classes of spirits had access to the body of this women who was weakened and poisoned by disease. One type was the evil disembodied spirits. Whether the latter actually possessed her body, perhaps no one can say, but that they did speak through her in strong male voices, I think, is beyond dispute. That she was occupied by evil spirits is also certain. This remarkable fact the witnesses declare, that when her body was possessed, according to the number that were attacking her, her limbs and body would swell. So tight would the skin become that it would seem ready to break, and pressure upon the flesh would make no indentation. When relieved, the body, in a second would become normal to the touch and pressure.

I know of no theory, except that of the presence of spirit forces, that will explain the different voices, some and most of them, distinctly of male quality, coming from a weak woman. This opens up room for puzzling speculations. Did the spirits, if spirits they were, use the vocal cords of the woman? If not, how did they find utterance in speech? If they did use the vocal cords of the woman, there is still a great mystery. But we cannot dismiss the statements of these witnesses, for this part of their testimony stands out most strongly and cannot be contradicted, that there were different voices proceeding from the woman.

It would seem that thus being a prey to spirits who had designs upon her liberty and life, she became also subject to the other class who used her freely as a medium. The clairvoyant element enters into

the case here, for it seems that in this simple home, with men and women having no thought of the thing they were doing, were demonstrating the possibility of communication between the mortal and the spiritual world. These things are not explained by any theory of insanity for no insane person, that I have ever seen, (and I have seen many in the course of my official duties) have been immediately cured by the laying on of hands.

The spirits were subject to the Priesthood, but the field of their endeavors was so favorable that they persisted with great determination and but for the enduring faith of these good men, they must have succeeded in their designs upon this women.

Another thing that this record does not disclose is that strong men felt the application of spiritual forces upon their bodies. Reese Whiting, a powerful and vigorous man, while combating the power was "doubled up" as he expresses it. W. P. Whitaker, a giant in size and strength felt their power to the extent that he thought that it would almost take his breath.

The other power, the heavenly, giving the vision to the girl, lifting her up gently and held her in the air before the eyes of the amazed. A number of individual visions were seen by these men, but not set down in testimony because there was no possibility of corroboration.

One of them I included in a note. I must believe the earnestness of the man who gave it to me. Surgery and medicine do not explain these things, nor account wholly for these unusual happenings.