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REV. DS. I. E. BILL & B. THOMSON,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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"And there shall be no more Sorrow nor Sighing, nor any more Death."

When tossing on life's stormy sea,  
By wind and wave we're driven;  
Yet shall our course still onward be—  
There are no storms in heaven.

And though by death's all severing blow  
Our dearest ties are riven,  
We'll calmly slumber in the tomb—  
Friends never part in heaven.

Should grief and pain, and anxious care,  
By God to us be given,  
This thought shall drive away each fear—  
These cannot enter heaven.

And when the hour of death shall come,  
And we have nobly striven,  
We'll sweetly slumber in the tomb—  
There is no death in heaven.

## SPIRIT RAPPINGS.

We had prepared a paper on this subject which is now become so notorious, but having since read an article in the *Millennial Harbinger* on the same subject, we prefer placing those thoughts before our readers, and may at some future time again refer to this subject. Ens.

I have read with regret, the remarks of many of our religious journals, touching a subject which is now agitating a large portion of the people of the United States, and which is fraught with much interest to mankind, either for weal or for woe. I refer to what are termed *Spirit Manifestations*, which are so spontaneously occurring in all parts of the country, astonishing all who have witnessed them, even the most sceptical.

It is clearly evident from the tenor of their remarks, that they have never given the matter a careful investigation; for if they had, I am satisfied that their conclusions would have been widely different from those they have expressed. If they have never investigated the matter, it is not to be expected that their opinions can have much weight with the sober, thinking classes.

Having myself given the manifestations a thorough investigation, and believing that many of your readers would like to know the truth concerning them, I trust that you will have the liberality to publish what I shall say upon the subject.

It is now about five years that these manifestations have undergone the strictest scrutiny and investigation, without being able to detect the imposition, if there was one. Opportunity for detection has been fully used by men of various grades of intellect and learning, in different parts of the country, and the phenomena has been subjected to some of the most trying and searching inquiries that human ingenuity could suggest; and all without arriving at a solution of the mystery, that even approaches to being satisfactory to any who has at all examined into the matter. And on the other hand, none has been given that the most superficial observer might not at once discover to be fallacious.

Whenever a solution has been supposed to have been discovered, the character of the manifestations have immediately changed, apparently for the purpose, and certainly with the effect, of overthrowing the solution. For instance, when the rappings have been said to have been caused by the toe or the knee, the manifestation has changed to the ringing of bells, tipping of tables, writing, speaking, &c., &c., and this over and over again.

During the four or five years past, thousands and tens of thousands of acute, intelligent, educated people, in different parts of the country, have witnessed the manifestations and believed in them. Originally the mediums were few, now they number hundreds and thousands; at first the believers were

numbered by tens, now they number thousands and tens of thousands, and increasing with great rapidity. Originally it was confined to but one locality, now it has spread all over the United States, North and South, East and West, on the shores alike of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They have reached England, and from a long letter from the Methodist Missionary in Germany, recently published in the *Western Christian Advocate*, I learn that it has broken out in that country—*little children being the mediums*. Indeed, I expect soon to hear of its having extended itself to China, the islands of the sea, and all parts of the world. For if it is of God, nothing will arrest its progress; but if of the Devil, as some contend that it is, it will come to nought, and the sooner the better.

It has steadily progressed, notwithstanding all the opposition and ridicule it has encountered. Few of those who have believed ever fall back; while numbers of new investigators are added to the list of believers daily.

Everywhere, where the intercourse has extended, sceptics in the existence of a God, or a future state, have been converted to the belief in both. Now all these are facts, which are springing up all around us, and he who runs may read them; and the most sceptical observer cannot fail to notice them. And can it be that all these things are true of a humbug—a cheat, devised and carried out by simple, uneducated girls—a delusion capable of overcoming the minds of only the weak, the ignorant, the foolish? It seems to me that they who thus freely and in ignorance denounce, would do well to reflect, and, like Nicodemus of old, to ask, "How can these things be?"

Two important questions arise, in the investigation of the subject, which need to be settled; and the first is, Is it true that spirits, our departed friends, do really communicate with us? Second, If it be established that they do communicate with us, are the communications that we receive true or false—of a good or evil tendency?

I will, for the sake of argument, unscrupulously admit the reality of such spiritual responses, notwithstanding the numerous and various attempts to brand them with fraud or fiction. There may be, for aught I know, impostures, pretences, and a species of legerdemain trickery, amongst some of their real or pretended reporters or interpreters. But after all such subtractions are made, which, on any show or pretence of imposition are rendered doubtful or incredible, I am willing to admit the fact and the verity that there are, and have been, numerous and various true and genuine responses from the dead, concerning things past, present, and future. In one sentence, then, for the sake of argument, I admit them all to be true and genuine communications from the spirit world. I even rejoice that they are, in many instances, regarded as true and real indications of the positive existence, intelligence, perspicacity and power of the ghosts of other times, and spheres, and places.

The reasons of this easy and pleasurable acquiescence, on my part, are as follows: 1st. The infidelity of our age, our science, our learning, and our people, has, for a long time, been tending or veering to a gross and palpable materialism. Our most specious sceptics lean to Pantheism. Even Alexander Pope is suspected by some, because he converts the universe into a mammoth animal, "whose body nature is, and God the soul."

The Indian Brahmins, the Chinese philosophers, Hobbes and Spinoza, have all been charged with it. Perhaps Thompson, the poet, did not really believe, or intentionally teach, the doctrine, in calling material nature, in its movements, "the varied God," when he

says, "The rolling year is full of thee." But rather than give these popular poets over to pantheists and materialists, I would grant them a poet's license for these-too latitudinarian indulgences.

An ancient sect, even in the Christian Church, taught and defended materialism under the protectorate of a Roman speculative aphorism—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*:—*From nothing, nothing is made*. In other words, every thing is made from a pre-existent something. Their whole science ranged in the order of things and persons; ours, in that of persons and things.

Materialists affirm that the soul of man is material, and, consequently, mortal. Some, indeed, choose to make reflection and thought modes of matter, the result of corporeal organization and development, as do some phrenologists. Dr. Priestly being both a materialist and a necessarian, and founding his philosophy too much on Hartley's theory of man, gave considerable strength and popularity to these speculations; and is still of too much authority amongst those who deny the Divinity of the Messiah and the spirituality of the human soul.

The mortality of the soul with the body, was, therefore, almost a logical sequence, or a legitimate corollary amongst certain philosophical schools, which have sometimes furnished the church with pastors and teachers of a too theological character; of which New England occasionally affords some well developed specimens.

Viewing, as I have been wont, the tendencies of all systems under the form of Christianity, and appreciating doctrines more or less by its fruits, I am sorry to confess that my estimate of these speculations is not such as to warrant the conviction of either a Divine or a philosophic origin.

Any thing, then, to set the mind abroad, and to give evidence of a spiritual universe; to produce or confirm the conviction, that death is not extinction, but mere dissolution, a separation of body and spirit, and not the absolute annihilation of either, is greatly preferable to a total apathy or indifference on a theme so incomparably transcending all others that can allure or engross the mind of man.

But these new spiritual manifestations do more than awaken thought in those who otherwise would not think at all. They have, on their own showing, given ample proof of a spiritual universe, and of the great fact that spirits survive the dissolution of their mortal tenements, and can even intercommunicate with those in the body, by certain physical and spiritual mediums. This, to a certain class of mankind, is an important gain. They believe not Moses nor the Prophets, yet they believe the spirits of their dead friends and neighbors, and are at least fully assured of the solemn fact, that there is a world of spirits, peopled, too, from the families of earth. There is, then, in their case, a clear gain. Any theory, with me, is preferable to absolute materialism, or absolute scepticism in a spiritual world.

I, therefore, approach the subject without prejudice, nay, indeed, with much faith. I cannot disbelieve the numerous and well attested reports which pour in upon us from all quarters, and from all sorts of witnesses. That these may be pretensions and pretenders, not possessing the attributes of honesty and sincerity, will be cheerfully conceded, without damage to the full assurance of faith in such communications from the spirits of the dead. There are even imposters amongst demons, demon consultants, and demon worshippers. Still, there are genuine communications, honest mediums, and honest reporters. The genuine always precedes the counterfeit. No true coins, no base coins; no honest men, no knaves.

But farther: the Bible itself confirms the

truth of such intercourse. Necromancy is old as Moses—as ancient as Egypt. And what is necromancy, but the science and art of mediums, of intercommunications with demons, and of the proper interpretation of infernal communications? The art and science of such mediums, if not explained, is unequivocally affirmed and exhibited in the Old and New Testaments. Even the spirit of Samuel was disturbed by the importunities of Saul, through the medium of Endor.

A positive statute was Divinely enacted through Moses, touching such mediums, then called *necromancers*, or, rather, *familiar spirits*, evoked through mediums called *wizards* or *necromancers*; and there were those who were called "consulters with familiar spirits," who gave responses to inquirers at their shrines. Nations then had their mediums and diviners, and to their responses the people hearkened, and frequently acted in harmony with their responses. Hence God himself interposed, and commanded that his people Israel should have nothing to do with them. Does God enact statutes against nonentities and phantoms? By no means. These familiar spirits and these demons were as positive entities as was Egypt, Pharaoh or Moses.

It was impious, in the ages of revelation, to have recourse to such mediums, because God, in his wisdom and benevolence, hides from mortal vision the affairs of the invisible world. He also wisely hides the future for reasons, a portion of which we do understand; therefore, to have recourse to mediums, is to pull the latch and force the lock, which he has both wisely and benevolently debarred. That demons, or the spirits of dead men, know more of the future and of the unseen world than we can, or ought to know, is as certain as that God spake by Moses and the Prophets, by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Indeed, the spirits of the dead are called *demons*, merely because, as their name imports, they are more knowing ones, more intelligent in the unseen world and its affairs, than we can possibly be, incarcerated, as we are, in houses of clay, and having our foundation in the dust of this earth.

That such demons could and did reveal things invisible to mortal sight, is just as true as the Bible. Even by Moses the Lord enacts a statute based on the fact that demons, and dreamers in magnetic sleep, did and could give signs and wonders in advance, concerning events then in the womb of time, and that such events would and did come to pass, is clearly and fully indicated in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy.

"If," says Moses, "there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spoke, saying [along with its accomplishment,] Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken to that prophet [a true prophet and a true] dreamer of dreams." Why? Why not hearken to the prophet who gives such proof of his inspiration by the reality of the event, because the Lord permits it "to know," or prove, "whether you love the Lord your God, and fear him with all your heart, and with all your soul?" "And that prophet or dreamer of dreams," which proves his truthfulness by the actual event, "shall be put to death." "Thou shalt put the evil one," or the evil thing, "away from the midst of thee. Thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people." [To be concluded.]

SEEKING TO BE USEFUL.—To follow that which is really and intrinsically useful, because it is so, and to do this in the fear of God, is the sublimest principle that can actuate an intelligent being.—J. H. Evans.