

THE  
CERTAIN DANGER, FOLLY, AND SIN,  
OF  
TABLE-TALKING  
AND  
TABLE-TURNING:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A L E C T U R E

DELIVERED IN LEAMINGTON, NOV. 23<sup>RD</sup>, 1853.

BY

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"The value of corroborative testimony is in proportion to its minuteness."—  
"What of itself, would be no evidence . . . becomes, through its cor-  
roborative position, proof most sure."

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\* \* The following Lecture has been unwillingly committed to the Press, and now appears only in deference to the wishes of some whom the Author could not refuse. Finding that "*Table-talking*," (the inevitable result of "*Table-turning*") had seriously affected more than one of his own congregation, he no longer doubted it to be his duty openly to warn all who would listen—against the danger and folly of such practices. In doing so, he is quite sure that had he refused the call thus made upon his time and strength: had he finched from the exposure of the danger and sin of this evil, daily increasing upon us—he would have proved himself faithless to that "*solemn vow, promise, and profession*," which he so sacredly pledged himself to at his Ordination.

In saying this, he does not presume to judge his brethren, though he might be tempted to remind them that the evil is far too widely spread, far too stupendous, than to be dismissed by a hasty condemnation, or a cry of derision and contempt.

It is surely worth a "*man's while to satisfy himself by actual search*" (within legitimate bounds) "*of the true colour and dimensions of the folly he condemns.*"

This I have attempted in the following Lecture, not at all moved by the "*cuckoo-cry*"—"*the danger of disturbing the minds of the weak and ignorant, by exposing it, is greater than the evil itself.*" The Author believes that, as there are some who will "*wrest*" even the Scriptures to their own condemnation: as there are some who will prostitute the bountiful gifts of God to the most pernicious end, so, doubtless, are there some who, in spite of warning, will still refuse to be warned, and use the warning to their further confusion and folly.

But this does not alter the duty of every Watchman. He is not to act upon the low principle of *expediency*, but bring to the light of God's word "*the hidden things of darkness.*" If it be a *reality* that such things are done in the midst of us—they must be dealt with as *realities*. When we heard that the Cholera was on the Continent,—that it had reached the northern parts of our land,—did not our Government, did not every Board of Health in the land warn and prepare the people concerning the pestilence?

And when we see America and the Continent, and our Metropolis, and our very neighbours, more or less infatuated with the peril of "*Table-talking*" and "*Spirit-rappings*," what is the plain duty resting upon those who have the power to fulfil it; but distinctly to warn the people "*whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,*" of the DANGER, SIN, AND FOLLY OF "*TABLE-TURNING,*" "*TABLE-TALKING,*" AND "*SPIRIT-RAPPINGS.*"

E. C.

Leamington Spa,  
November 28, 1853.

## A LECTURE, &c.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Did I not feel a very strong sense of duty, urging me publicly to avow my present convictions, in regard to one of the most remarkable phenomena of our day, I can assure you nothing would have induced me to come forward in the character of a public lecturer.

It may be asked, why bring before the public a subject of such a nature as "Table-turning and Table-talking," so foreign to the work in which you are engaged? As for the subject, it is before the public mind already, and to such an extent, and creating such amazing interest, as cannot fail, if not to alarm, at least to arouse very painful anxieties! And as for its being foreign to the work to which I am more especially pledged, I think before my lecture closes you will be convinced at least of this—that it is one which we, of all men, are most likely to investigate, and having done so, to make public the results, and thereby warn our people, whose souls we watch for, as men who must "give an account of their stewardship." With these preliminary remarks, I will at once proceed to the subject of the Lecture—"Table-talking and Spirit-rapping."

Now, at the very outset, I must beg you to understand I *have not witnessed* any of the marvels to which I shall refer. I have not so much as seen a table turned. *From the first I have declined joining in what appeared to me a matter far too serious to be undertaken in a spirit of idle curiosity.* I have no experiments to reveal, save those which other individuals in America, Germany, in our own country, in our own COUNTRY, and (if I were permitted) in this very town and parish, have either publicly or privately communicated.

I must beg you will remember that these testimonies are not confined to individuals of one locality. America, Germany, France, England, and Scotland have alike contributed their marvellous revelations. Bear in mind, too, that the testimonies are offered by men of different station and calling in life; men unknown to one another; men who can have had no conceivable purpose in view in giving publicity to their avowed facts, such as could possibly lead unprejudiced minds to doubt or question their statements.

The substance of their testimony I shall now bring before you: examine its credibility: and enquire into the possibility and probability of their statements, of *facts*, being true and unexaggerated. We shall then be able, I hope, to come to something like a conclusion, which may not be unserviceable for our future guidance.

In bringing, then, before you the testimony of others, who have both witnessed and published the results of their experiments, I select such as I have been able to test, either by direct communication, or incidental, corroborative testimony received from different and independent sources, I need not surely trace the rise of "Spirit-rapping." Mr. Spicer, in his flippant volume, "Sights and Sounds," professes to give the public, an "entire history of the American Spirit Manifestation." No great matter where it first originated. It is now a great, a melancholy fact, that the phenomenon has overspread the whole territory of the United States; carrying in its course, either as victims or disciples, names which stand high as men distinguished for intellectual and scientific attainments. It has extended to every part of Europe, and is now exciting the interest and wonder of those who dwell in the utmost bounds of the East. I need not pause to explain how these "spiritual manifestations" are obtained. The different means employed of "Table-moving," "Table-rapping," "Magic-circles," "Spiritual media," you are all familiar with. I will, therefore, select a manifestation, published in the *British Banner* of so late a date as Oct. 12th, 1853:—

Judge Edmonds, of New York, who has long been a believer in spiritual manifestations, and has for some time been considered a medium of considerable power, has recently published a letter, defending himself from the charge that he had "consulted the spirit of his deceased wife," in regard to his legal decisions, and stating the mode of his "conversion." \* \* \* It was in January, 1851, (he says), that my attention was first called to the subject of "spiritual intercourse." I thought a good deal on what I witnessed, and I determined to investigate the matter, and find out what it was. If it was a deception or a delusion, I thought

that I would detect it. For about four months, I devoted at least two evenings a week, and sometimes more, to witness the phenomenon in all its phases. I kept careful records of all I witnessed, and from time to time compared them with each, to detect inconsistencies and contradictions. I read all I could lay my hands on on the subject; and especially all the professed "exposures of the humbug." I went from place to place, seeing different mediums, meeting with different parties of persons, and often with persons whom I had never seen before, and sometimes where I was myself entirely unknown; sometimes in the dark and sometimes in the light, often with inveterate unbelievers, and more frequently with zealous believers. In fine I availed myself of every opportunity that was afforded, thoroughly to sift the matter to the bottom. I was all this time an unbeliever, and tried the patience of believers sorely by my scepticism, my cautiousness, and my obdurate refusal to yield my belief. I saw around me some who yielded a ready faith, on one or two sittings only; others, again, under the same circumstances, avowing a determined unbelief; and some who refused to witness it at all, and yet were confirmed unbelievers. I could not imitate either of these parties, and refused to yield unless upon most irrefragable testimony. At length the evidence came, and in such force that no sane man could withhold his faith.

"After depending upon my senses, as to the various phases of the phenomenon, I invoked the aid of science, and with the assistance of an accomplished electrician and his machinery, and eight or ten intelligent, educated, shrewd persons, examined the matter. We pursued our inquiries many days, and established, to our satisfaction, two things: first, that the sounds were not produced by the agency of any person present or near us; and, second, that they were not forthcoming at our will and pleasure.

"In the meantime, another feature attracted my attention, and that was '*physical manifestations*,' as they are termed. Thus, I have known a pine table, with four legs, lifted up bodily from the floor, in the centre of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down, and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads, and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have known that same table to be tilted up on two legs, its top on an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present put it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a centre leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, *in spite* of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rang again. I have seen the same table tipped up with a lamp upon it, so far that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity; yet it fell not, moved not. I have known a dinner bell taken from a high shelf in a closet, rung over the heads of four or five persons in that closet, then rung around the room over the heads of twelve or fifteen persons in the back parlour, and then borne through the folding doors to the further end of the front parlour, and then dropped upon the floor. I have frequently known persons pulled about

with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once when all my own strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected. I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen people sitting, yet no one was touched, and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was coming with a violence which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs."

"This is not a tithe, nay, not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me."

"Still the question occurred, may not all this have been, by some mysterious operation, the mere reflex of the mind of some one present? The answer was, that facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterwards found to be true; like this, for instance: when I was absent last winter in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts and of the state of my health seven times, and on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal, it was found to be invariably correct. So in my recent visit to the West, my whereabouts and my condition were told to a medium in this city, while I was travelling on the railroad between Cleveland and Toledo. So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind, and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others, so as fully to establish the fact, that it was not our minds that gave birth to or affected the communication. \* \* \* \* \* These are not apocryphal cases. The parties are at hand, and in our very midst, and any person that pleases may make the investigation, as I have, and satisfy himself. But all this, and much, very much more of a cognate nature, went to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon, and intelligence outside of and beyond mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of that could at all explain that, whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who will take the trouble to inquire."

"Scarcely more than four years have elapsed since the 'Rochester Knockings' were first known among us. Then mediums could be counted by units, but now by thousands; then believers could be numbered by hundreds, now by *tens of thousands*. It is believed by the best informed, that the whole number in the United States must be several hundred thousands, and that in this city and its vicinity there must be from twenty-five to thirty thousand. There are ten or twelve newspapers and periodicals devoted to the cause, and the spiritual library embraces more than one hundred different publications, some of which have already attained a circulation of more than ten thousand copies. Besides the undistinguished multitude, there are many men of high standing and talent ranked among them; doctors, lawyers, and clergymen, in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and reverend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign Ambassadors, and ex-members of the United States' Senate."

Now I make no comment on these extraordinary revelations but *one*. Is this learned Judge Edmonds a credible witness? The following is the testimony borne to his character by the editor of the *British Banner*:—

“As a Judge in the Empire City, he is, of course, a man of intelligence and intellectual culture, and an accomplished lawyer.”

From America we turn to Germany. I have not seen, as yet, any account so marvellous as that just read to you. There may be such published. Nevertheless there is one of the following date—*April*, 1853—published in the name of a learned Professor, Dr. Schaunberg, one of the Professors of the University of Bonn, and confirmed by the testimony of *four* intelligent witnesses who were present, and which, to use the Doctor's words, at least confirms this general result, “*that Table-moving and Table-language are incontrovertible facts.*” The questions put to the table were of a simple character. “The company had too much good sense to enquire about serious matters relative to the future.” His testimony is unequivocal and decided. “The table, by a motion from top to bottom, performed, with the most accurate measure, replies to the questions proposed to it.” Now, when you remember that the Doctor is one of the Professors of the University of Bonn, and that his statements are confirmed by *four* out of the six intelligent eye-witnesses, I leave it to you to determine the value of his testimony. We come nearer home, and find, that even here, in England, the marvels of Table-moving, Table-talking, and Spirit-rappings, are the universal subjects of conversation and anxious enquiry. Certain statements have been put forth by Clergymen of the Church of England, living in different localities, whose characters and positions forbid the idea of *collusion*, or *illusion*, or *deceit*; men who foresaw that, in giving publicity to their experiments, they would probably only earn for themselves abuse and ridicule; whose statements ought, at least, to be received with courtesy and respect. These statements are before the public. It is not for me to express any opinion upon their judgment, one way or the other, in giving publicity to the frightful experiments they record. Most certainly I believe that, in giving to the public the solemn warnings they have, they have been actuated by the purest and best of motives, and deserve thanks rather than revilings. I take up, then, first, a Tract published by one of the most respectable London houses (Seeley's), which professes to record the result of a course

of experiments. In the appendix I find the following awful statements:—

The following experiments were conducted at the National School Room, Wortley, on the evening of Monday, July 18.

Most of the following questions were asked by me, standing at some distance from the table, and consequently not in contact with it.

Are you a departed spirit?—Yes.

Were you an inhabitant of Wortley?—Yes.

Did you die here?—Yes.

Were you buried here?—Yes.

How many months ago?—The leg knocked the number of months; but as his relations are living, I am obliged to suppress all particulars which could lead to the identification of the individual. It is sufficient to say that, on *searching the register*, we found the entry.

Can you spell your name?—Yes.

Spell it?—He spelt it by knocking the number of the letters from the beginning of the alphabet.

Did you know me?—Yes.

Who buried you? Did —, or —, or —, (mentioning the names of neighbouring clergymen)?—No.

I forbear quoting further from Mr. Godfrey's pamphlet. But, in confirmation of these awful statements, I find another and well-known and respected clergyman, residing at Bath, publishing, through the well-known Bath publishers, Binns and Goodwin, a pamphlet, in which he states, that, for the express purpose of testing the phenomena:—

“We met last Friday evening (September 2, 1853), seven in number. I had never before witnessed any experiment in table-turning, and therefore requested those who had been accustomed to it to commence operations. Their hands had not been on the table many minutes, before a cracking was heard, and this was immediately followed by a slight movement of a very peculiar character. It was a sort of heaving, straining motion in the table. A question was then put, and an answer immediately given. I placed my hand upon the table, and put a variety of questions, all of which were instantly and correctly answered. Various ages were asked, and all correctly told. In reply to trifling questions, possessing no particular interest, the table answered by quietly lifting up the leg, and rapping. But, in answer to questions of a more exciting character, it would become *violently agitated*, and sometimes to such a degree that I can only describe the motion by the word *frantic*.

I inquired, Are you a departed spirit?—The answer was, Yes, indicated by a rap.

Are you unhappy?—The table answered by a sort of writhing motion, which no natural power over it could imitate.

It was then asked, shall you be for ever unhappy?—The same kind of writhing motion was returned.

Do you know Satan?—Yes.



Is he the Prince of Devils?—Yes.

Will he be bound?—Yes.

Will he be cast into the abyss?—Yes.

Will you be cast in with him?—Yes.

How long will it be before he is cast out?—He rapped ten.

Will wars and commotions intervene?—The table rocked and reeled backwards and forwards for a length of time, as if it intended a pantomimic acting of the prophet's prediction:—

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.—Is. xxiv. 20.

How many spirits have been in the table this evening?—Four.

Many questions were asked, and experiments tried, in order to ascertain whether the results would agree with Mr. Godfrey's, and on every occasion they did, *especially that of stopping the movement of the table with the Bible.\** The table was engaged in rapping out a number, but the instant the divine volume was laid upon it the movement ceased. When the Bible was removed it went on. This was repeatedly tried, and invariably with the same result. Other books were laid upon the table, similar in size and shape to the Bible, but without any effect.

These are truly awful things to read. We involuntarily exclaim, are these witnesses credible? Are there such persons as Mr. Godfrey, of Leeds, Mr. Gillson, of Bath? Is their testimony credible? To satisfy myself, I addressed both these gentlemen. I received the following replies:—

Mr. Godfrey writes:—"In all my large correspondence not one fact has come to my knowledge which has upset or contradicted the Satanic theory, nor has any one attempted to account for my experiments at pp. 22, 36, 39, 41, 45, 56, while I know of them having been accomplished by *other persons.*"

5, Widcombe Terrace, Bath,  
November 14th, 1853.

My dear Sir,

I am truly thankful to hear the view you have taken on the marvellous subject of Table-talking, &c. I receive similar communications from all quarters. Two London clergymen, amongst many others, have not only declared their views, but acted upon them like yourself. Mr. Vincent, of Islington, has preached and published a sermon. Mr. Diodin has himself *tested the matter, and writes to tell me that he can fully corroborate all my statements and much more.* He allows me to use his name, and has announced a Lecture upon the subject, which I believe he intends to publish. Mr. Goodhart has delivered a Lecture at Reading, in which he introduced the subject. With regard to my own views upon the matter, I can truly say that it has opened out to me a truly appalling extent since I have written my pamphlet. As to the mere matter of evidence to the facts, what I have related is a mere grain to the mountain. Really what Mr. Godfrey and I have related is literally as nothing in comparison with what is published on the subject; backed by the testimony of millions! *People who know anything about the*

\* See Appendix, note 1.

subject must give up the quibble about the facts. The only question is how to deal with them? With respect to my own party, they were all ladies, with the exception of Capt. Cox and myself; and, after all the abuse and slander with which I have been assailed, I think they would scarcely have courage to come forward publicly and share in my reproach. *They are always ready* privately to bear testimony; and Captain Cox would be quite willing to write fully in reply to any application, as he has already. His address is "Capt. Cox, R.N., Prior Park Buildings, Bath." You would be amazed to hear of the persons who are in the habit of consulting spirits through the various means of "Rapping," "Table-tipping," &c., &c. I feel that a solemn responsibility lies upon us as watchmen! and those who see it in the same light should feel it in an especial bond of union.

Yours, most truly,  
EDWARD GILLSON.

16, Prior Park Buildings, 15th Nov., 1853.

Rev. Sir,

Mr. Gillson has kindly favoured me with the perusal of your letter to him on the subject of Table-talking, and although I feel, from the very high estimation in which he is held by all parties who know him, that it is presumptuous in me to offer one word in addition to his pamphlet; still, as the experiment was tried in *my house*, I cannot resist the temptation of bearing my unqualified testimony to the truthfulness of every word therein stated; at the same time I feel it perfectly impossible to convey, to the mind of any one, the full effect of the wonderful *actions* and *movements* of the Table under the experiment,—it must be *seen* to be truly understood and believed. It may not be out of place to add here, in further confirmation of Mr. Gillson's statements, that, on the following evening, I tried the same experiments with exactly the same results, varying, of course, a few of the questions; but what I consider remarkable is, that those questions which did at all bear on each other, produced answers in perfect accordance. The questions were put by a gentleman (I am not authorized to give his name) who at the time had no knowledge of the questions put by Mr. Gillson on the preceding evening. To shew how this very extraordinary power, whatever it may be (for on that subject I dare not venture), is insidiously working its way in the world, I will endeavour briefly to state how I have been led, almost without the power of resistance, into a discovery of the facts related:—My daughter and myself were spending the evening with a friend, who, in the course of common conversation, happened to mention that she had seen *Table-turning* tried, and that "she believed the table really did move when desired." As we all appeared very sceptical on the matter, and, in fact, turned it into ridicule, the young people proposed putting a small table to the test. After sitting something about fifteen minutes, or so, I tired of it, and was on the point of removing my hands when I very perceptibly felt a tremulous motion under them, which at once drew my particular attention, when I perceived the table moving round to the left hand as we had previously desired. We then bid it turn to the right, and ultimately across the room. This was quite

enough for me, and I seriously advised my young friends to have nothing more to do with it. I confess, however, I could not shake it from my mind, and subsequently tried it again on a drawing-room round table, the result proving the same. I made up my mind, as I thought, not to persevere in other experiments. I would beg you, Sir, to mark, up to this moment the idea of *Table-turning* and *Table-talking*, or *Spirit-rapping*, or whatever name may be given to it, being one and the same, never entered my imagination; therefore I was much astonished to hear a short time afterwards, that a lady of our acquaintance had actually obtained answers as stated in pamphlets published in the United States of America. This circumstance we mentioned to Mr. Gillson, and on learning his opinion to be, "that it was a subject not to be lightly received or trifled with," he appointed a meeting to test the vague reports which had reached him; the result is fairly stated in his book and speaks for itself. Since then I have read and listened attentively to all that has been stated in objection, and although some *learned* pamphlets have been published, I confess not one has altered in the slightest degree my first impression. I believe the generally received opinion at present is, that the table is moved by *muscular power*, quite unknown to the persons themselves, and that power again is acted upon by the mind, so that after all the *chief power* is the *mind*. Now, Sir, during our experiments, I recollect two circumstances which, in my opinion, tend to throw doubt on this theory: the first is this,—I lost a brother in the East Indies, and I was always impressed with the belief, and I never had any other, that he died in 1819; on asking the question the answer was 1818. I said you are wrong, try again, but it repeated 1818, and, if I mistake not, a third time. I believe now the table was right, but whether right or wrong, if my *mind* was strongly fixed on one year, and the answer was *contrary* to that fixed belief, how, I ask, could the mind have influenced the answer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Convinced as I am in my own mind that it is unlawful, under present appearances, to practise this phenomena out of idle curiosity, I have never again attempted it, and although the desire is strong within me, I pray the grace of God may enable me to resist it. Believe me to be,

Rev. Sir, truly yours,

DOUGLAS COX.

In addition to these communications, I have this very day received the following communication from a brother clergyman well-known in this town, and who lives within an hour's ride by rail. His testimony is entirely of an independent character:—

Coton, Tuesday.

My dear Brother,

Till the thing happened to be brought under my notice, some six weeks or two months ago, I had no interest in *Table-turning*, and knew nothing of *Table-talking*. I was then led to investigate the matter for myself, being naturally little disposed to take up the reports of others on any perplexing subject. The result has been perfectly satisfactory to my own mind—I mean,

as to the nature of the agency at work. I set myself to experiment, prepared to *sift the thing to the uttermost*. After two or three private experiments in the presence of my own family, I invited three or four friends to a first trial. Subsequently, and at the last experiment, the results were still more decisive than any that had been obtained before, and did I feel at liberty to try again, I don't doubt that *most tremendous results* might be had.

I, personally, had *nothing to do with the table*. The table was placed at a distance, and I ensconced myself in my arm chair on the other side of the room, with a table before me. At a second table sat a scribe, to note down the questions, orders, &c., with the results and answers. The table used *for the experiments* was a small square mahogany one, on a pillar and *three legs* (not claws) — an old-fashioned thing. The manipulators in the three first experiments were Mrs. H—, Miss H—, and two other members of the family. In the fourth, Mrs. H., the governess (just come into the house, who had scarcely heard of such doings before), and two other individuals, one a fresh one.

The way we proceeded was this:—I had before me on the table the letters of the alphabet, in consecutive order, A, B, C, D, &c., with the numeral figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c., and I generally took the letters in regular order, pointing to them in succession, A, B, C, &c., till the table rose up and knocked the letter. I then began the alphabet again, till the table indicated to the *next* proper letter, and so on till the word was finished. In some instances I pronounced the letters of the alphabet, till the knock indicated the right one. In this way I obtained the answers.

Now remember, I had nothing to do with the table, but sat or stood at a distance, simply putting the questions, and, therefore, the table could not *by any possibility* have been effected in any way *by me*.

At our last experiment, I had *previously prepared* a set of questions, relating to a variety of things, most of which were wholly unknown to any but Mrs. H—, Miss H—, and myself, some were known to Mrs. H— *only* and *not to me*, and *some to me only* and not to Mrs. H. nor any in the room, and *indeed to few of this generation*. Besides moving at *my word of command*, in every direction, often moving of itself, knocking and walking about most furiously, repeating its raps in rapid and violent succession, (now to the tune of 100 and anon up to 149) rising up on each leg successively, and spinning round on it, standing stationary on one leg (just think of a three-legged table standing by itself on one leg), tumbling over on the floor, and there literally heaving and writhing, with various other antics, the intelligence of which no description can portray; beside all this, the following were a few of the questions and results at one or other of the experiments, taken promiscuously:—

How many persons in this household?—Knocked, 12.

How many children of the name of S—o?—No answer.

(It was here suggested to me, I had pronounced S—o), I then repeated the question as S—y?—Knocked 5.

How many of these in the room?—Knocked 3.

How many gone to bed?—Knocked 2.

Next, I asked *the age* of Philip and Edmund S—y?—Both knocked right.

What's *the united ages of all five*?—Knocked 53, and then corrected itself to 58, which was right.

Spell the name of Mr. Newdegate's place?—Spelt, Arbury.

How many agents are there here?—Knocked 4.

Spell their names!—Francis, Mary, Lucy, George.

(Another night.)

How many such agents here to-night?—Knocked, rapidly and violently, 100, and at the hundredth time the leg came down with a flourishing rap, so as to convey the impression, "there! what do you think of *that*!"

Do you mean to say there are 100 spirits in this room?—Knocked, most emphatically, Yes.

Where do you all come from?—H, E, L, L.

This answer *was violently knocked*, and then the table spontaneously commenced a march, and a succession of rapid and furious knockings.

I then said, Can you tell the meaning of all this violence?—Knocked, Yes.

Spell the chief word of your meaning?—D, E, S, P, A, I, R; and then it began again a series of most furious knockings (as if to indicate the *depth* of despair). The No. of 87.

Now, be it known, that in one of the paroxysms of knocking the table rocked to and fro rapidly under the hands of the manipulators, THE HANDS BEING HELD STATIONARY, and points of the fingers merely and scarcely touching it. This rocking was so urgent as fairly to drive one of the parties into the fire-place.

What's the meaning of all this?—Then it began knocking 149 times.—W, A, R, N, I, N, G.

Who is your master?—DEVIL.

Who was the source that withstood Paul?—E, L, U, M, A, S. (Here the table would not knock to Y, as *we* spell the name, but only to U, the Greek spelling ELUMAS.)

Have you seen him in hell?—Yes.

But, passing by very many searching questions, of all sorts, about individuals, some dead, some living, which I do not wish at present to mention, I put a question *known to myself alone*, concerning a name and fact, of the date of nearly fifty years ago—this was answered correctly, and at once, and with a delicacy of distinction which really happened to exist, that was altogether astounding.

At our third experiment, I invited four friends to witness and investigate the matter, namely, H. R. H—r, Esq. (Magistrate for the County, and my neighbour and parishioner), Rev. W. C— (my neighbour), and Henry D—s, Esq. (Solicitor), with Mrs. D—s. During the time when Mr. and Mrs. D—s were with us, the table refused to move at all, except very faintly once or twice; but, as soon as they had left, it moved freely. Both Mr. H—r and Mr. C— are prepared to certify what they witnessed. The former is satisfied there was no trickery, acknowledges the wonderfulness of the thing, confesses he cannot account for it, but wishes it withal to be understood, he does not believe it to be Satanic Agency.

I can solemnly assure you that *no deception or frolic of any sort was used*. We were all much too curious and serious. As for *unconscious manipulation*, the hands were laid in *the lightest possible way* on the table, and often nothing more than the *tips of the fingers*. Besides this could not account for *rational answers*. This was especially the case when the table *rocked to and fro fiercely under stationary hands*, and when it performed its gyrations on *its three legs, successively, and unbidden*.

But no description is graphic enough to convey to those who did not witness it, a due impression of the *indescribable INTELLIGENCE* and sensible *emotion* of the movements. I think one might defy the most determined sceptic to *see for himself*, without being convinced, that the insensate piece of wood was actuated by a living, rational being. *The violence and frantic raging* of the table (I can call it by no other name), was ever the greatest when the subject was 'hell,' 'despair,' or kindred things; and still it seemed to get tired of trifling, irrelevant, curious questions, and often tried, of its own accord, to revert to awful subjects.

The above questions and answers are but a small part of what was done, and give you but a *poor idea of our proceedings*. I used all possible care to make the experiments clear and satisfactory, and collusion was *neither practised nor possible*. I ask, what collusion could there be in answers to questions which were altogether unknown to the manipulators? And, *as for myself*, I had no more to do with the movements of the table than you had. At the same time, I am bound to say, that several of the answers were *totally wrong*, though it does not affect the question of the *intelligence* of the agent, but only its *ignorance* or *moral character*.

Very truly yours,

H. HAKE.

Here, then, we have, *first* of all, the publications themselves; *secondly*, an avowal by the authors themselves, and a solemn declaration of the veracity of their statements; *thirdly*, the corroborative testimony by one of the parties present; and *fourthly*, the independent testimony of a clergyman personally known to numbers present. In the face of these witnesses it is too late surely to quibble about the veracity of the *facts*: too late to ask, are such things possible? It is impossible to deny them. It is childish to ridicule them. What of itself would be no sure evidence, becomes, through minute corroborative testimony, unanswerable. Accepting, then, the testimony of six unimpeachable witnesses,—satisfied that their statements are genuine and authentic,—we proceed to enquire, are they explainable on any known, sound, philosophical hypotheses? Are these the results of natural or supernatural agency?

To discuss all the different theories proposed by different experimentors is impossible and unnecessary.

Nothing like a satisfactory or uniform opinion has been arrived at. Some contradict one day the theory proposed.

the day before. Some find subsequent experiments upset previous conclusions. Some, confidently assert that electricity, passing in a stream from the fingers to the table, is the great moving cause: others, that it is "unconscious muscular action." Some having been driven first from one position and then from another, are candid enough to admit that upon no known principles can they explain the facts they have witnessed. Thus for instance, a writer in the *Globe*, 21st October, 1853, after having decried alike the scepticism of the *Quarterly Review*, and sneered at the credulity of Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Gillson, upsets at once the electricity and muscular action theories by this declaration—"I assure you, on the honour of a man who values his word, that I have seen a table move rapidly from its place without any one touching it! Yes, a quick changing in that table, accompanied by violent action, without any one touching it." It may be said this is an anonymous newspaper communication. If it stood alone you might dismiss it at once; but it is confirmed by Judge Edmonds, and by a statement from a work, allowed, by one competent to judge, to be both *able and candid*. \* \* \*

Rev. C. Beecher, in a valuable, though very pedantic little volume, has examined the subject in a most philosophical and learned manner. His review is worthy of the most careful perusal. Nothing like it has yet been given to the public. He comes to the conclusion that the whole of these marvels may be, with the utmost probability, referred "*to powers unseen, powers ærial,—which, under the masterly guidance of some one mind of fathomless ability and fathomless guile—is preparing nominal Christendom for the fraternal embrace of Pagandom semi-Christianised!*"

Is such a conclusion philosophical, or is it Scriptural? It is an easy matter to dismiss it with a sneer, or treat it with flippant contempt. These are weapons which betray conscious weakness. Men who affect philosophy, and claim for science an entire monopoly, sooner or later to explain all these mysteries, must remember that "even philosophers have been carried away by the wildest vagaries." The reproach of Cicero has not yet lost its point—"How it is I know not, but there is nothing can be mentioned so absurd as not to have been said by some one of the philosophers." While we desire, therefore, on all accounts, that philosophy (within legitimate bounds) should explain to us the mystery of these things, we ask for Inspired Revelation to have full place in its considerations.

We ask, and expect every truly scientific man will acquiesce ; that in every theory which may be advanced, the whole facts and teaching of the Bible may be taken into account. We ask, too, that those who claim for themselves and their views respectful consideration, should accord the same forbearance, the same calm, patient listening, to any who may state their conviction, "that it is neither sound philosophy nor safe theology to reject the idea of *supernatural* spiritual agency and interference."

First, "let it be proved that such agency is an *impossibility*," and then they are justified in rejecting all faith in the theory. Until that be done, it is both contrary to sound reason and the plain teaching of Holy Scripture, to *deny* the theory of supernatural agency.

For is it not an admitted principle of science, "that theory is the preferable one which most readily accounts, not only for every point which other theories cannot satisfactorily explain, but also all they cannot even reach." The theory of *foreign spiritual agency* does account for all the mysteries which other theories cannot account for, without driving the consistent reasoner into "materialism" on the one hand, or reducing him to the absurdity of maintaining that "intelligent manifestations may be produced unintelligently." True it has been contended that certain currents of "electric" or "*odyllic*" fluids are sufficient to account for Table-turning, (and by the term "odyle" you are to understand a "certain agent identical with Animal Magnetism," which some call the "nervous principle" by which "mind acts upon matter;" "which is itself neither mind nor matter.") Possibly it may! But until some facts are established upon satisfactory evidence; until some general law can be defined; until it can be satisfactorily shewn that in this theory "there is some such harmony between cause and effect;" it certainly becomes us to pause—before we reject the almost universal belief of *supernatural interference*.

It may be that those fluids "flowing through certain physical bodies, serve as a medium of communication with spiritual Beings." The contrary has not yet been proved. But if so, THEN Table-turning, whose sequel is Table-talking, and Spirit-rappings, is the very means of holding intercourse with "*familiar spirits*;" of consulting "the living to the dead;"—things, I need not remind you, are solemnly forbidden by Moses and the Prophets.

But it has been said that the theory of an evil spiritual intercourse is unscriptural! that we have no warranty in



Holy Scripture for the probability of such interference! It cannot surely be denied that the 18th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy denounces "consulters of departed spirits:" (describing them under various names) "not for pretending to do what they could not, but what they ought not." It is equally certain, too, from the incidental notices, in the Books of Samuel, Job, and the Prophets, that the existence and interference of spiritual agents were known and experienced. The same holds true of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. But we are told that all this has ceased for ever, "since the power of the Devil was overcome by Christ and His Apostles." To this sweeping assertion we demur, because it appears to be altogether one-sided, and begging the whole question. It flatly contradicts the teaching of St. John and St. Paul:—

Ephesians vi., 12.—"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against *spiritual wickedness* in high places." (Marginal reading, "wicked spirits.")

2nd Thess. ii., 3, 4, 9.—"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."—"Even him, whose coming is after the working (*energy*) of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders."

1st Timothy, iv., 1.—"Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of *Devils*."—(demons.)

See also the following texts:—Revelations, xii., 9, 10; xiii., 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; xx., 3, 7, 8, and 10.

I will not dwell on these passages. But when a well-known author, and one deservedly honoured for his works' sake, confidently asserts the *impossibility* of these mysteries being connected with any foreign evil agency, and "sighs" over the "departure of common sense," "Scriptural intelligence, and healthy, manly, courageous piety;" we most respectfully remind him, that numbers of his brethren in the Ministry, and out of it, whose piety will bear to be tested to the uttermost, who are not yet bereft of "common sense," are exceedingly anxious to know how he can, possessed of "common sense" and "Scriptural intelligence,"

affirm so confidently the impossibility of spiritual evil agency, in the teeth of such plain texts of Scripture?

But I must draw my remarks to a close. The sum of what we have advanced is this—That in connexion with Table-turning, manifestations of a living agency, possessing power and intelligence, have been exhibited; acting, in some instances, in a way quite independent of the will or mind of the operators,—that questions have been put and answers given, “so as utterly to confound the mind and imaginations of those who put them,”—“that many of these questions related to the existence of spirits in the unseen world,”—and further, that both in America and in the Metropolis of our own land, there are thousands who, by tables, or living “media,” consult with (as they suppose) the souls of the departed.

We have enquired how far it is possible, on any known principles of science, to account for such mysteries; and have seen that, while it is possible science may unravel the secret how, by the imposition of hands, the table becomes instinct with life, and moves, tips, taps, and bows, writhes as if with pain, or rolls to and fro as a ship in a tempest; yet that the probability is *infinitesimally* small, that any explanation should ever be given, sufficient to account for the marvellous and terrible phenomena of “Table-talking and Spirit-rapping.”

Hence, we *conclude* that, it is far more in accordance with the soundest principles of reason, and the plain teaching of Holy Scripture, to consider the whole thing as only explainable on the theory of *some supernatural spiritual agency, developing itself through certain odyllic conditions of the physical bodies.*

Now, if such be a sound conclusion, (I implore you not to reject it, until you have fairly weighed it in the balances of fair and consistent interpretation of Scripture, and the acknowledged and established laws of science), then need I warn you, to beware most sacredly, of risking the moral pollution of your souls; of provoking against you the anger of God, so repeatedly and energetically denounced in Holy Scripture against such, as through idle curiosity, or to gratify the cravings of a morbid imagination, seek communion with the spiritual world.

If such be a sound conclusion—if there be even the shadow of a possibility of its being so—if there be even the *suspicion* in the mind that it be so,—oh! can you be too strongly resolved, God’s grace aiding you, to “touch not! taste not! handle not!” these matters.

*I warn you*, as in solemn duty bound—*I warn you* most emphatically, by the awful spectacle of nearly the whole nation of America, as “systematically consulting the dead, as they do the Post-office and the electric telegraph.”

Tell us that Table-turnings are in themselves as “innocent as the spinning of a top.” Oh! most rash expression! I would that no Standard Bearer in our Israel had penned such a sentence, with such fearful FACTS before Him. Ponder them for yourselves.

In the last annual report of the Ohio Lunatic Asylum, twenty-six inmates are mentioned as having come there through “Table-turning and Table-talking;” while the Superintendent of a Lunatic Asylum in New York states that he has under his care no less than thirty cases, the victims of Table-turning!

Thus there is certain *danger*, if not as certain sin. For what is the *spiritual aspect* of the whole thing?

Mr. Beecher affirms, in his unanswerable review, that the tendency of the whole movement is directly antagonistic to the authority of the Bible.” “*Claiming for all men an inspiration in common with Christ and His Apostles;*” “*Denying the doctrine of the Resurrection,*” “*as taught by St. Paul,*” “*affirming that it is past already;*” “*Invoking the aid of many mediators*” to the dishonour of the One Mediator, Jesus Christ our Lord,—it is at once in DIRECT ANTAGONISM TO THE FAITH AND HOPES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

And of such a system, of which “Table-turning” forms so prominent a feature, can it be said that *the process* (table-turning) *is in itself as innocent as spinning a top?*

Seeing then, that “Table-turning” and “Table-moving,” tried by any principles known to us, seem, as yet, to be supernatural; and that, as they cannot be of God (being directly antagonistic to His truth.) they must be of the Evil One; I call upon you most seriously to pause, before yielding yourselves to “become the passive thoroughfare of influences you know not whence.”

Most surely it behoves every one of us to be very careful how, heedlessly or curiously, we meddle with mysteries seemingly supernatural. Surely, too, what is coming to pass in America and elsewhere warns us that a time of trial and temptation threatens us; such as in its kind at least we have no record of as happening heretofore; “not merely another form of evil,” but most likely the last—the most fearful form of evil—that shall try and prove the faith of the professing Church of God.

And just such a trial of the Church's faith we are prepared for, by the Scriptures, already referred to in St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians and to Timothy, and the Revelations of St. John.

Examine for yourselves only that single passage in Thessalonians:—"The Church at Thessalonica had become shaken in mind, and troubled, by certain men teaching, in opposition to the Apostles' doctrine, that the day of Christ was *then* impending, (PRESENT) and he therefore writes to warn them against believing such a word (v. 3.), and repeats what he had already told them, 'while he was yet with them,' (v. 5.) that that day shall not come, 'except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,' (v. 3-4.) even 'that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved for which cause, God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a lie,' &c. (v. 8-11.)

"It testifies, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that the age of Supernatural manifestations is *not* past for ever; but, on the contrary, that the End of this dispensation will be *especially characterized* by such signs, ending in the revelation of that Wicked One. Consequently, the idea of spiritual agency is not 'inadmissible;' but is, in fact, an absolute article of faith."

An opinion is, however, prevalent that "the day of Christ" must be a time still indefinitely distant, and so these phenomena are not now to be feared; that the Christian Dispensation is ordained to enlarge itself, till it has embraced the whole Earth, converting all nations to the faith. But such an idea cannot be reconciled with the Apostle's teaching. It is plain from his words, that the last days he speaks of are evil, and not good; that his Dispensation ends in a tremendous Apostacy, and not in general prosperity: that its course is marked by the progress of two Mysteries, the mystery of Godliness, and the mystery of Iniquity; the one ending in the appearing of the Lord, and our gathering together unto him (1. Thess., iv. 17), the other in the revelation, and destruction of the Man of Sin.

He will come in glorious beauty, clothed with all speciousness of human excellence, encompassed with forms of Godliness (II. Timothy, iii. 5), sitting in the Temple of God (II. Thess., ii. 2). He will be so perfect a counterfeit of Christ, that, if it were *possible*, he shall deceive the very elect. "His eye-lids are like the eye-lid of the Morning." "I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportions." The popular voice has of a long time now been speaking of "the coming Man," and he will be hailed by his victims as "the Man" long waited for, the incarnation of all their hopes and expectations.

Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the solemn warning of the Apostle was given, and *knowing* that, instead of the age of Supernatural manifestations being past, they are the special *mark* of the last days,—it behoves every man to be very careful how he meddles with things, of which the nature is unknown.

The more we think of the words of the Apostle, the more cause do we find for the greatest jealousy and caution. He says, because men "receive not the love of the truth," God shall give them up to strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; and so they become fellow-workers with that Wicked One, whose coming is with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."

*Believing, then,—*

"I. That at the end of this dispensation,—come when it may,—there will be a fearful incursion of Evil Spirits, with the manifestation of all power, signs, and wonders :

"II. That they will insinuate themselves in such a shape that their source will be unsuspected; and men will greedily run after them, and amuse themselves with them, as with curiosities of physical science, ignoring the possibility of supernatural agency."

I do most *solemnly and earnestly warn* all and each, into whose hands this Tract may fall—to shun altogether the *dangerous, sinful, experiments of Table-Turning, Table-Talking, and Spirit-Rappings.* "WATCH AND PRAY, LEST YE ENTER INTO TEMPTATION."

## A P P E N D I X.

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Captain BEVILLE thought all would agree with him that they were deeply indebted to Mr. Clay, for the Lecture he had that day given them. Before, however, proposing a vote of thanks, as he thought it was important to throw into this interesting question even the least possible evidence, he might be allowed to give some little testimony in the matter, which he was personally enabled to do. A short time ago a relation of his, who had held for years a high Government appointment in a foreign country, and a man not likely to be impressed without cause, was staying at his house, when "Table-turning" and "Table-talking" became the subject of conversation; and Mr. Godfrey's pamphlet was likewise alluded to, and the gentleman was asked whether he had read it. He said "No; but had seen extracts in the papers, and also how it was abused and criticised, which was enough for him." After dinner, six or seven sat round a table in the hall, his friend being one of the number; the table presently moved, and when it had done so, he called upon it to pronounce the age of one of his children. It did so. He called upon it in several cases, and in three or four instances it was literally correct. With respect to himself, he would tell them an extraordinary fact. He called upon it for his own age. It struck "tap, tap," at a certain pace till it came to the last. It then stopped, and, pausing twice the length of time it had previously done, it gave another tap. Upon this his children said it was wrong, it had struck one too many; but the fact was he was eight months past the year to which the table first tapped, and the doubtful rap indicated the unfulfilled period. Upon this his friend got up and said, "I'll read Godfrey's pamphlet to-morrow." This he (Captain Beville) could certify, being a living witness of the truth of what he had stated. In addition to what he had stated, he would say that he was the person referred to by Mr. Clay, as being in the room and having told him of what he had spoken. He had had a letter from a near relation, who knew not how to tell a falsehood,

informing him that in her presence a table had been experimented upon. She said that her husband, who is a clergyman, had not his hands upon the table, but he put on it a heavy book, he believed a Dictionary, which had no effect in stopping it. He then removed the book and put down a small Greek Testament, when the table stopped, and this was done more than once with the same effect. These were facts, and facts they wanted brought before them. Mr. Clay had dwelt entirely upon facts, and facts which, to a certain extent, he could corroborate. Now he called upon them to pass a vote of thanks, not only for the able Lecture they had heard, but also for the motive which had caused Mr. Clay thus publicly to come forward. They were all aware of the delicate state of Mr. Clay's health, and he was convinced nothing would have brought the Reverend Gentleman forward beyond the services of his own Church, but a feeling of deep responsibility in the matter, and a desire to benefit the souls of his fellow creatures. He begged to move a united and unanimous vote of thanks to the Lecturer. (Cheers.)

The vote of thanks was seconded by Mr. H. L. SMITH, of Southam, and carried by acclamation, after which the company separated.