

THE TESTERS TESTED ;

OR,

TABLE MOVING, TURNING, AND TALKING,

NOT DIABOLICAL :

A REVIEW

OF THE

PUBLICATIONS OF THE REV. MESSRS. GODFREY, GILLSON,
VINCENT AND DIBDIN.

BY REV. F. CLOSE, A.M.

INCUMBENT OF CHELTENHAM.

“AND THEY SHALL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH,
AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES.”—2 *Tim.* iv. 4.

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THE TESTERS TESTED ;
OR, TABLE MOVING, TURNING, AND TALKING,
NOT DIABOLICAL.

TABLE MOVING TESTED, AND PROVED TO BE THE RESULT OF
 'SATANIC AGENCY. *By Rev. N. S. Godfrey, S. C L., &c.*
 Seeley.

TABLE TURNING THE DEVIL'S MODERN MASTERPIECE, being
 the Result of a Course of Experiments. *(By the same.)*

TABLE TALKING ; DISCLOSURES OF SATANIC WONDERS AND
 PROPHEPIC SIGNS. A Word for the Wise. *By the Rev.*
E. Gillson, M.A., Curate of Lyncombe, &c., and Author
of Lectures on the Second Advent, &c. Bath : Binns & Co.

A WATCHMAN'S APPEAL with especial reference to the unex-
 ampled Wonders of the Age. *(By the same.)*

SATANIC INFLUENCE : its probable connexion with Table Talk-
 ing. A Sermon, preached at the Holy Trinity Church,
 Islington, Oct. 23, 1853. *By Rev. Wm. Vincent, M.A.,*
Incumbent. London : Jackson.

TABLE TURNING. A Lecture. *By Rev. R. W. Dibdin, M.A.*
 Delivered in the Music Hall, Store Street, Nov. 8, 1853.
 London : Aylott and Co., Paternoster Row.

LORD CHANCELLOR BACON in his second book " on the advance-
 ment of learning," has a weighty passage bearing on such in-
 vestigations as that before us. Discoursing upon what he calls
 "nature erring, or varying," from her more known laws, he
 says—

"Neither am I of opinion in this history of marvels, that
 superstitious narrations of sorceries, witchcrafts, dreams, divina-

tions, and the like, *where there is an assurance and clear evidence of the fact*, be altogether excluded. For it is not yet known in what cases, and how far effects attributed to superstition, *do participate of natural causes*: and therefore howsoever the practice of such things is to be condemned, yet from the speculation and consideration of them, light may be taken, not only for the discerning of the offences, but for the farther disclosing of nature." (p. 78.)

And from a passage which occurs in his books on "Natural History," it might be almost suspected that the elementary principle of Table Turning had suggested itself to this great practical and metaphysical philosopher.

"This instance doth excellently demonstrate the force of compression in a solid body: for wheresoever a solid body, as wood, stone, metal, &c. is pressed, there is an inward tumult in the parts thereof seeking to deliver themselves from the compression: and this is the cause of all violent motion. Wherein it is strange in the highest degree that this motion hath never been observed, nor inquired; it being of all motions the most common and the chief root of all mechanical operations. This motion worketh in round" (in a circular direction) "at first, by way of proof and search which way to deliver itself: and then worketh in progress, where it findeth the deliverance easiest." (Bacon's Works, Vol. I. p. 248.)

All practical Table Turners will be aware that this centrifugal motion is that which the table, if left to itself, invariably assumes upon the pressure of the hand or fingers—and that after awhile, if no human will is exercised upon it, it will also advance in some other direction, while it continues to revolve upon its own axis.

With these gyrations of the table, and with none other of its mysteries, was I acquainted when I wrote my former tract upon this subject. As far as *my personal experience* is concerned, it still extends no further—nor is it necessary that it should do so in order that I might candidly and seriously investigate the

simple question upon the subject which I have mooted, and that which is the only one with which as a theologian I have to do—viz: whether this agitation of the table, or of the hat, or of any inanimate and unconscious substance is attributable to any undiscovered natural property or whether it be supernatural—and if supernatural whether the agency be good or evil. The question would hardly assume the importance which I am constrained to attach to it had not several Clergymen of reputed piety, and hitherto esteemed to be of sound discretion in their religious views, accredited these developements as Diabolical, not only warning their disciples and congregations against the practice as an undoubtedly sinful attempt to hold communion with the world of spirits, but also with no little solemnity conjuring their brethren in the same ministry not to deny these dogmas, lest they should be found fighting against God.

I say it is not necessary to my present argument that I should have personal knowledge of the details which I am about to review, because I am ready to admit any well authenticated facts—and I am not about to dispute the accuracy of the mass of details before me; I say of *those before me*, because on many of the mercenary exhibitions which have been displayed about the country imposture and fraud are clearly written. But the “rappings” to which our present attention is drawn are attested by the domestic and social circles of several distinct and independant bodies of witnesses and accredited by at least four Evangelical Clergymen; and therefore I will not suppose for a moment that so many persons of respectability would avouch that they did see certain movements of the legs of tables, and hear certain knocks made by them, if they did neither hear nor see them. Nor can I suppose that these persons could be deceived as to the leading facts taken as a whole,—and I think that peremptorily to deny, or offensively to ridicule them, would be as indecorous as it would be futile.

But when these same witnesses attest with equal earnestness that these movements of inanimate matter are properly super-

natural, and strictly speaking physical miracles—and when upon peril of suspicion of infidelity or profaneness we are called upon to believe that these are the works and revelations of the Devil—then these advocates ascend from the region of fact to that of hypothesis, and conjecture; or at all events they require us to receive not only their facts, but their inferences and conclusions. Their facts may be true, and their inferences false—they may establish certain unaccountable movements of material bodies apparently connected with the human will—and yet they may be as far as ever from proving supernatural interferences.

If they are determined to propound that everything which is extraordinary, and inexplicable by any known laws of matter, must be properly miraculous—and further that everything the “*CUI BONO*” of which they cannot explain, or which to them may seem useless or wicked, must of necessity be diabolical, and Satanic, of course such men are beyond the circumference of rational debate, or even Scriptural argument—and we must leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of their own persuasions. But it may be hoped that the good men who have too easily lent themselves to this erroneous persuasion, will at all events give a patient consideration to our reasons for coming to conclusions so different from theirs.

Now it must not be forgotten that our debate is confined to purely PHYSICAL MIRACLES. None of the brethren whose names are prefixed to this tract will accuse me either of doubting, or even of withholding the doctrine of the personality and spiritual interference of Satan. I can appeal to many of my publications for my clearness and fidelity on those points—no one feels them more strongly, nor can have warned his people more plainly upon this subject than I have done. Indeed I may say with all candour, that the conviction that these imaginary-interferences of Satan are calculated in the highest degree to alarm the soberminded, and to cast doubt and suspicion upon all diabolical agency, has had much weight with me in inducing me to undertake a painful, but I believe a needful task.

Now the debatable subject being, not the accuracy of the facts attested, but the soundness of the conclusions drawn from them ; in other words, the question being whether the circumstances related are supernatural, and if so, whether they are diabolical ; those circumstances must be submitted to the ordinary tests by which all facts claiming to be miraculous have ever been tested, and must be tested. Their advocates must remember that this is not a question of FAITH but of SIGHT ; that no sooner does any man propound a MIRACLE, than upon the principles, no less of Scripture than of common sense, he invites a searching enquiry ; all the senses of man and the reason of man being appealed to as a jury to decide the question. To this tribunal did our Lord himself continually appeal. He might on other occasions use other arguments, and claim credence to his mission upon other grounds, but when he wrought a miracle he always submitted to this test. To quote instances of this, would be to relate the narrative of his miracles : there was no doubt, no uncertainty, no questionable mode of ascertaining whether a superhuman power was exercised, his miracles were palpable to all men ; they were uniformly admitted to be supernatural, though the prejudiced and the blinded attributed them rather to the evil than to the good spirit. At all events it may be safely affirmed that in no case is any fact recorded as supernatural in Scripture, which in itself was irrational, foolish, or contrary to the evidence of men's senses.

In approaching the particular cases before us we encounter one difficulty, viz. : that the witnesses are not agreed among themselves whether the supposed miracle be the work of the Devil himself, or of a disembodied spirit of man, or of a good angel. I rather gather from the whole that we are called upon to believe that in all cases the answers given by the inanimate leg of the table, are dictated by one and the same evil spirit, who impersonates the various beings, spirits, or intelligences whom he represents. Be this as it may, we proceed to examine the facts attested as miraculous.

And the first general feature which strikes the observer is the strange medium through which these supposed communications from the world of spirits are conveyed to us :—and we may add the capricious mode adopted by the enquirers. I am not aware of any mode of communication from the world of Spirits recorded in Holy Scripture at all approaching in its character to this. When Spirits move, and the dark curtain is raised which severs men in the flesh from men out of the flesh, or when angels or devils appear and commune with men, I think the believers in Holy Scripture have a right to test the movement by the general character of such revelations in the Word of God.

Now have we ever read of Spirits indicating the secrets of the eternal world, and even the spiritual condition of the departed, by giving a certain number of knocks with the leg of a table, now more quickly, now more slowly, at the dictation of the enquirer? Is this, can this be a sure, or I had almost said, a rational mode of ascertaining unrevealed mysteries? Upon what authority does the enquirer rest when he chooses thus to put a question to an angel, a devil, or a departed spirit? Can he find any clue, or hint, in Scripture, or even any analogical deduction from it, to lead him to suppose that without voice or sign or any miracle proper, he is justified in creating and inventing this medium of communication with the World of Spirits? How has he arrived at this hypothesis? He discovered, what I freely admit, that by some unknown power inanimate bodies are moved—yea, even by the will of man alone, on contact, without conscious mechanical motion—that at his mental bidding those bodies will move, will stop, will display phenomena which imply the suspension or interruption of the received laws of gravity: possessed of this secret, and suddenly introduced to an acquaintance with what I am persuaded, with Lord Chancellor Bacon, is a law of motion not yet unravelled—he—some one—proceeds to ask questions of this inanimate matter upon ordinary subjects: the ingenious interrogator inventing at will the rules of the conversation with his strange mysterious acquaintance. The utmost

extent of the conversation, however, reaches only to a positive or negative—to *yes* or *no*:—if such a thing is true rap twice—if false remain still, and so forth.

The next step was to propose questions upon deeper matters—spiritual—invisible—eternal, man's curiosity being boundless, and by the same process YES or NO is obtained upon the deepest truths of Revelation; but still only by knocks, one, two or three. I am not now examining the character of the answers in any case, but simply commenting upon the nature of the medium; and that medium considered in its most favourable light; and I ask any devout student of Holy Scripture, well acquainted with the *media* through which messages from the eternal world are known to be conveyed, whether he does not think that this medium of communication is utterly unworthy of the subject, and whether the methods adopted by the enquirers, are not on the face of them both frivolous and capricious, and whether upon such evidence he could for a moment suppose that he was called upon to recognize a preternatural revelation?

Upon my own mind this consideration weighs heavily: throughout the only infallible record of true miracles, and true revelations, I find a certain propriety—a certain dignity and solemnity on the one hand, and on the other a certain natural appropriateness, truthfulness, and idiosyncrasy, which, if it do not convince and carry captive the mind of the beholder, forbids the approach of levity. But can such a feeling be excluded from these premises? If "Table Turning be the Devil's modern master-piece," he is certainly not grown wiser by the lapse of time, and has become less subtle than when he entered the serpent to tempt our first parents.

I do not press this point for more than it is worth—God can Himself, and He can if He pleases allow Satan also to work by such improbable *media* as these—all I venture to affirm is that He has not done so in times past—that nothing in Holy Scripture leads me to suppose that He will do so—and that unless substantiated by unquestionable miracles of another order I should be

much disposed, *a priori*, to distrust any evidence which came to me in so questionable a shape. The mode or medium of communication is as fair a subject of reasonable enquiry as the substance of the communications themselves—and so far forth I think it will be admitted by most reflecting persons, who hold the Word of God in their hands, and exercise the reason which God has given them for this very purpose, that the eccentric motions of the leg of a table, or a piece of senseless wood, apparently obeying the capricious rule of its interrogator, is no likely, probable, or seemly channel of the revelations of good or bad Spirits. It is an oracle that few men in their senses would consult!

But passing from the *media* of these communications to the character of the communications themselves, we have again a right to demand respecting facts said to be supernatural, something of rational coherence—and that at all events the rules of common sense and reason should not be utterly set at defiance. And if this very natural test be applied, the result is inevitable; the utter incredibility of the whole matter may be fully established by the nature of the evidence itself.

Let it not be supposed for a moment that in thus reasoning I am admitting that the answers supposed to be given by the table-knocking were real answers at all—or that any genuine conversation was maintained either with the table itself, or any power in the table, or present in the room—I am not at the present moment mooted that question—and I have admitted nothing except that these witnesses did see the table lift its leg, and heard sundry knockings; what I am now about to show is, that supposing that these were answers given by something or somebody, then these answers are in themselves a mass of incoherent, contradictory falsehoods, with some admixture of truth; about as much as if the interrogators had cast lots, or tossed half-pence into the air, and abided by the result.

To substantiate this sweeping and severe accusation—not of the truthfulness of the actors in these melancholy and humbling

scenes, but of the visionary conclusions which they have drawn from them—I must sully these pages by some actual quotations from the publications of brethren whose piety and sincerity I revere, while I deplore their errors in judgment, and the mischief which those errors may inflict upon many weak-minded persons.

The first witness on my list is the Rev. N. S. Godfrey, S.C.L. of Catherine Hall, Cambridge, and Incumbent of Wortley, Leeds. He appears to have led the way in these bye-paths of superstition, being the first person in this country of any education, station, or piety, who has publicly advocated the dogma, that Table Moving, Talking or Turning, is the result of diabolical agency. He has sent out two tracts upon the subject in quick succession, with the FACTS of which I will now deal, reserving their arguments for the present. In his "TABLE MOVING TESTED," Mr. Godfrey relates (page 20) that "himself, his wife, his national school-master, and his two female servants" (!) assembled as a jury to test the mysterious powers of the table—and the following were among the results.

After various gyrations, knocking of legs, &c. the experiment was repeatedly tried, which has been tried by several other parties of laying the Holy Scriptures on the table. "I then caused the table to revolve rapidly and gave the signal—THE BIBLE WAS QUIETLY LAID UPON THE TABLE, AND IT STOPPED! WE WERE HORROR STRUCK." Other books it is affirmed of the same size and weight were laid upon it, and no effect followed—but whenever the Holy Book was laid upon it it invariably stopped. Mr. Gillson and others, on separate occasions, and in a distant part of the country tried the same experiment, always with the same result. Upon which particular instance I will make no remark.

"As it was now past eleven o'clock at night, we left off and had supper." It might be suggested that the heads and nerves of such a jury might have been clearer and more to be relied upon at eleven o'clock in the morning, than at this "witching

hour of night." But if Mr. Godfrey and his maidservants had been "horror struck" before supper, what might their feelings be when after supper the following dialogue was maintained—always be it remembered by the table knocking at command.

"I commanded the table to move and it immediately began as before. I now said, 'If there be a hell, I command you to knock on the floor with this leg (the one next me) twice : ' it was motionless. 'If there be not a hell, knock twice : ' no answer. 'If there be a devil knock twice : ' no motion. 'If there be not a devil, knock twice : ' *to our horror, the leg slowly rose and knocked twice!* I then said, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, if there be *no* devil, knock twice : ' it was motionless. This I tried four several times, and each time with the same result. I then asked other questions—'If there be a heaven, knock twice.' 'If there be not a heaven,' 'If there be not an eternity,' 'If the soul live after death.' To not one of these questions could I get an answer. Thus ended our experiment"—says Mr. G.—and he adds—"I confess I was hardly prepared for so successful a result." Indeed? then I can only say that Mr. G. is very easily satisfied! It could tell "what o'clock it was"—but other weighty matters it could not tell—and all that it did tell about them was "*a lie.*" But it is in Mr. Godfrey's second pamphlet called "*Table Turning*" that the chief evidence is adduced to prove that the table knockings are Satanic. The first twenty pages of this tract are occupied with a disquisition upon Diabolical agency in general, bearing little upon the peculiarities of the present subject. We pursue the facts:—

At page 21, we are told that on the evening of 4th of July another jury sat upon this subject—"a few persons"—"the lay agent"—two ladies, his curate, Mr. R. &c. were assembled.

"Various questions had been put, *some of which it answered correctly, some incorrectly,* before I arrived." To this recurring feature in the evidence I call special attention.

Space will not allow me to quote at length the description of the modes of communicating through an alphabet, &c. my object

is simply to show the vacillating inconsistency, and absurdity which is proved by the internal evidence of these facts themselves. Mr. G. however says "that he discovered that the leg only knocks an *affirmative* ;"—he does not tell us how he arrived at this remarkable discovery ; or whether this faculty was peculiar to *his* table, does not appear.

"Among other questions asked was this, "What is the person's name upon whom Mr. G. has called to-day? Spelt distinctly V—— 11. M—— answered yes, to place, street and square. Now Mr. G. HAD NOT BEEN THERE!!!" wrong—and "Mr. V.'s house is No. 1, not No. 11." wrong again! "Yet asks Mr. G. with marvellous simplicity—

"What could have made the table spell his name? (Mr. V——s' name was spelt *entirely* by the alphabet.) We were not thinking of him, and he *is* a friend of Mr. G——. *It told a parcel of lies about what he was doing, as we have since ascertained, but from its answers we obtained a most plausible narrative, of which the following is the substance :* * * * Here we had first a complete jumble of letters, but on varying the form of the question, we obtained Mr. V——'s name as above."

After a number of questions upon subjects of an awful and holy nature, the answers to which cannot of course be tested as they relate to matters unrevealed—Mr. G. asks the supposed Spirit "Could you appear? Yes! "I COMMANDED IT TO APPEAR,—BUT IT DID NOT !!!"

Can it be that we are reading the records of the sayings and doings of a well-educated, intelligent gentleman, and a clergyman of the Church of England?

This Spirit being so often wrong in his numbers and calculations, we are told "that several other questions were asked concerning uncounted money, also the time of day, all lazily answered AND ALL WRONG—the Spirit was then commanded to leave the table and to send another more intelligent !!!"

To prove that this "command" was obeyed, Mr. G. adds,—

"After this, repeated commands were given to the table to move, to raise its leg, &c. but for more than five minutes, by the watch, no answer was given. At length the well-known "crack" was heard, and the table commenced moving." (p. 33.)

So it took this "lazy" and blundering Spirit five minutes to fetch a more intelligent one—and when he came, his replies were equally satisfactory :—

" After answering some minor questions, *some correctly others nonsensically*, e.g. Is so and so right? Yes.—Is it wrong? Yes.—Don't you know anything about it? No."

The interrogator however after many blunders and mistakes gets out of this Visitor certain persons names, and a perfect *meleè* of contradictions, on which it was hardly necessary to add the foot note—

" I must here observe that in this case, as in that of Alfred Brown, every enquiry has been made to ascertain the truth of these statements, but without success."

Sundry other Spiritual Visitants are summoned who profess themselves to be *the spirits of persons recently dead, brought from Hades!* It would be painful if not mischievous to quote more, the above is enough, I should think, for any one in whom superstition has not quite extinguished reason and common sense. But the close of this scene is worthy of the occasion :—finding that after the party had left the table, it continued in motion, would not be quiet, but seemed disposed to have a will of its own, Mr. G. states :—

" I therefore went up to the table, and placing my hands on, said to the spirit, ' I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus to quit this table.' I then walked away, and although the two persons tried for probably ten minutes afterwards, the table stirred no more."

What will another advocate of Diabolical Agency say to this? Mr. Dibdin reminds me with all due solemnity—

" Now, in the 72nd canon of the Church of England, which every clergyman knows, or ought to know, that he is pledged to, we find this—

" No minister or ministers shall, without the license and direction of the Bishop of the diocese, first obtained, and had under his hand and seal, * * * * *

attempt, upon any pretence whatsoever, either of possession or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to *cast out any devil or devils*, under pain of the imputation of imposture or cozenage, and deposition from the ministry."

Surely Mr. Godfrey has committed an act here for which, if this canon is still in force he ought to be put into the Spiritual Court! If ever in the darkest times exorcism was attempted or practised, Mr. Godfrey has here done the same!

In an appendix, Mr. G. relates some similar scenes performed in the NATIONAL SCHOOL ROOM, WORTLEY, on the 18th of July. Whether the National Society, or the Privy Council, if it be a School in connexion with Government, will approve of such a use of their School Rooms remains to be seen; after extracting from the table similar incoherent and absurd answers, some false, some true, and some ridiculous—I might add of both questions and answers ALL PROFANE—Mr. Godfrey sums up his evidence of FACTS in proof of Diabolical Agency in the following passage.

“I need only add that I have communicated with many persons, since the publication of my former pamphlet, and that the results, as far as they go, entirely corroborate my views. I know also of two cases which I have thoroughly investigated, in which Table Moving has led to much annoyance; the parties being disturbed in the night by *knockings, rustlings, and other noises*; while, in one case, *an appearance was distinctly witnessed by two persons*; in the other, *the bedstead was moved and the curtains violently shaken.*”

Thus does this clergyman of our Church not only inculcate the fact of diabolical interference through Table Turning, but seeks corroboration for his spiritual fiction by adducing as FACTS some of the most pitiable instances of childish superstition, worthy of the most ignorant of his female servants, and totally beneath investigation!

If any sober-minded Christian can read such a tissue of elaborated absurdity and contradiction, and then receive it all as an undoubted spiritual communication from the unseen world, his mind must be in a singularly morbid state. When we come to touch the arguments of these writers—if such they may be called—we shall find, however, that the more absurd, and the more false, and it should seem the more ridiculous the supposed answers are, the more abundant the proof in their eyes that it must be Diabolical Agency!! How are such reasoners to be approached?

The next witness is the Rev. E. Gillson, M.A. Curate of Lyncombe, Bath ; he commences with authenticating all the above ! “ Mr. Godfrey has done a good service in his investigation of the subject, and in his account which he has published of it :—All that I shall at present attempt, is chiefly to corroborate his testimony, and to reiterate his warning.” In this case, seven witnesses are assembled in the evening of September the 2d, and the experiments truly “*corroborated*” those of Mr. Godfrey, bearing the same character in most respects ; although the Spirits at Bath appear to be rather more correct in their answers, at least in those cases wherein they could be tested, such as ages, dates, &c. Far from answering “*lazily*”—however, Mr. Gillson’s table was often so agitated that he says “ I can only describe the motion by the word **FRANTIC**.” When asked if he were a Spirit in Torment, “ *The table answered by a sort of writhing motion which no natural power over it could imitate ! ! !*” Does Mr. Gillson mean to say that the table imitated the torments of the damned ? **HE DOES !** How fearful such imaginations ! But this is not a single instance ; questioned upon unfulfilled prophecy “ the table rocked and reeled backwards and forwards for a length of time, as if it intended a “*pantomimic acting of the prophets prediction—‘ The earth shall reel to and fro as a drunkard : ’ &c. Isaiah xxiv. 10.*”

Indeed this evidence is chiefly characterised by the presumptuous nature of the questions put—I really must say their profaneness and levity ! For such extraordinary errors must be “ rebuked sharply.” The Spirit is asked “ how long it will be before Satan is cast out—and it raps **TEN !**” Whether ten days, months, or years—we are not told. It reported by “*frantic*” motions that Rome was the “*Devil’s head quarters*”—when soon after “*contradicting himself*,” the interrogators discovered that the first Devil had departed, and another “*invisible agent*” had come in his stead, who proved to be the departed Spirit of a man who had been in his life time an infidel but died a Papist ! Question—“ Do you know the Pope ? The table was violently

agitated! I asked, how long will Popery continue? He rapped TEN, exactly coinciding with the other Spirit's account of the "Binding of Satan!" So that though on other points "neither did their witness agree together"—because upon a favorite Prophetic theory the table hit upon the desired No. 10—Mr. Gillson receives it as a profound augury, and supernatural confirmation of his creed of Prophecy! Greatly delighted with the freedom of intercourse thus established between the party present and this communicative table, Mr. G. continues—

“As we proceeded with our questions we found an indescribable facility in the conversation, from the *extraordinary intelligence and ingenuity* displayed in the table; e, g, I enquired if many devils were posted in Bath!! He replied by the most extraordinary and rapid knocking of the three feet in succession, round and round for some time—AS IF TO INTIMATE THAT THEY WERE INNUMERABLE!!!” No doubt this answer discovers “extraordinary intelligence and ingenuity”—and the effect of such a discovery and announcement upon the people of Bath can be better imagined than described! Upon these “satisfactory experiments” Mr. Gillson founds a not very modest or becoming tirade not only upon the world, and upon the Church, but on his clerical Brethren in particular for unfaithfulness upon this subject of Satanic influence. But notice of this must be deferred until we have done with the sickening subject of these supposed questions and answers with Devils and departed Spirits. For the same reason Mr. Gillson's second Tract “A Watchman's Appeal,” just published, may remain unnoticed in this plan, as it contains no additional facts. The sermon of the Rev. W. Vincent, A.M. must in like manner be set aside until we canvass the arguments of these persons; as he too only corroborates these errors by an *ex-Cathedrá* declaration of their truth from the pulpit. And we now come to the most extraordinary of all those witnesses of Diabolical Agency in working physical miracles. The Rev. R. W. Dibdin, M.A. delivered a lecture at the Music Hall, Store-street, so lately as the

8th of November, 1853, of which a published report lies before me. Here we cannot complain of a paucity of FACTS—or of facts said to be credibly established by competent witnesses: but tested by their own coherency and internal evidence of probability, they exceed all the others in absurdity and improbability. Still let it not be forgotten that I am not questioning the “Word” of these witnesses—neither need Mr. Dibdin say to me, “Surely we are not all Liars”—(p. 21.) “Surely we are not all fools”? All my present object is to show that the nature of the replies, not to say of the questions, received or put is such that to attribute them to any Spiritual Agency or miraculous interference of the Wicked One is impossible and absurd. I shall furnish other reasons for not believing them to be so. But this point is not unimportant.

From the confused and rambling evidence adduced by Mr. Dibdin in his lecture, I select only those passages which differ from the general character of the similar performances already noted, and of which one page is as good as a volume.

After stating his opinion that in no case these answers came from the spirits of departed men and women, but that they are the invention of Devils who personate them, Mr. D. proceeds to give some experiments of his own at length, and of some other person’s whom he authenticates. He tells how the conversation is maintained with the table.

“I will first show you how the table answers a question. This is the very table with which several times I have made experiments. When we want to ask a question, we say, ‘If there are so many people in the room, strike three’; and then the table lifts up a leg and strikes on the floor—one, two, three; sometimes faster and sometimes slower—sometimes higher, and sometimes hardly lifting the leg from the floor. That is the way in which my inquiries were conducted.”

As a general specimen, I give the following:—

- “1. If there be a God, strike three with this leg next the fire-place. That leg was raised, and struck thrice.
2. If there be a devil, strike so many times with this leg.—It did so.
3. If the Pope be the head of the Church, strike, &c.—It did so.

4. If Martin Luther was a good man, strike, &c.—No reply.
5. If Emanuel Swedenborg was a good man, strike, &c.—It did so.
6. If Socinius was a good man, strike, &c.—It did so.
7. If Jesus Christ be come in the flesh, strike, &c.—It did so.
8. If salvation be by faith and works, strike, &c.—It did so.
9. If salvation be by faith alone, strike, &c.—No reply.
10. If Dr. Achilli be a good man, strike, &c.—No reply.
11. If Dr. Achilli be turned Swedenborgeon, strike, &c.—It did so.
12. If Dr. Newman be a good man, strike, &c.—It did so. (Very quickly.)
13. If Mr Tonna be a good man, stop moving.—It continued moving.
14. Strike the day of the month.—It struck twenty-eight.
15. Strike the hour.—It struck seven, and a gentle lift of the leg. (It was half-past seven.)
16. If it be right to go to a Socinian chapel, strike, &c.—It did so.
17. If right to go to the theatre, strike, &c.—It did so.
18. Say how many years it is since Her Majesty came to the throne.

Some members of the family of a friend of Mr. Dibdin raise the spirit of Dr. Young, the sacred poet. This friend came to Mr. D. on the 20th of October :—

“ He came, and brought his sister-in-law with him. He said, ‘ I have brought my sister with me, because she has more influence over the table than I have, and particularly *over Dr. Young*. She can bring him whenever she likes, and make him reveal anything. But I must tell you fairly,’ he said, ‘ before I go any further, that I have found it all out—it is all a delusion.’ ”

This gentleman, who, as we shall find, remained sceptical as to Diabolical Agency to the end, is reported to have had the following conversation with the lecturer :—

“ ‘ Well, what is your reason for thinking so ? ’ ‘ Why,’ he said, ‘ I’ll tell you how it happened. The very day I saw you, and agreed to give you my experience, I went, in the evening, to a friend’s, and he told me that he had had Dr. Young there, answering questions. I was very much surprised. I tried the table, and asked the spirit whether he was Dr. Young. He said, “ Yes.” I found that he could not even *spell*. My sister-in-law arrived shortly afterwards, and the real Dr. Young came; and he said the other was an impostor. I found out then that it was all a delusion ’ ”

And no wonder, for this same credible witness to FACTS, but *unbeliever of Satanic Agency*, adds—

“ He said, ‘ I will tell you the most ridiculous things. When we tried the table afterwards, we had the most funny answers. We said, “ What sort of eyes has so-and-so ? ” The reply was “ Roguish eyes.” “ What sort of

eyes has so-and-so?" "Laughing eyes." "What sort of eyes has so-and-so?" "Yankee eyes" And then my sister said to the table, "Do you love me?" The reply was, "I adore you." *And one in the room said, "If you do, kiss her," and the table rose up to her lips!* "And you say this is all electricity?" "Yes; the fact is this." And he went over the former ground again."

This silly levity is immediately followed by the record of new experiments, tried at the same time, all of the most solemn and awful nature; at the close of which, when asked where a certain person was, the table spells "H-E-L-L"; and it is added—

"As the last letter was indicated, the girl drew her hands quickly off the table, much as a person would do who was drawing them off a hot iron. Her brother-in-law turned very pale, and took his hands off the table also."

Is there no remedy nor prevention for such insane trifling as this? If that girl and her brother-in-law were bereft of their senses and ended their days in a lunatic asylum—what wonder? And where would the blame be? on imaginary Spirits of Evil, or upon these clerical conjurers and enchanters who pretend to invoke them? Wonderful to relate, Mr. Dibdin's hard-headed friend remained, and I hope he still remains, a sceptic—and "*thinks it is electricity after all.*" Whether it be that or any other power I neither know nor care; but so long as he resists all this strange, inconsistent and profane evidence, and believes it is neither supernatural nor satanic, I agree with him; and am quite prepared to endure the *Wizard's curse*—which Mr. D. thus complacently and modestly records:—I beg his pardon, it is only a part of it—the more solemn words he used, for our nerves' sake he withholds—stating only—

"Nor shall I record the solemn words that passed between us, except so far as to say, that I told him my fears lest he had been so 'giving place to the devil,' that he seemed to have fallen under the blinding influence of the 'god of this world' in this matter."

Very like giving his friend over to the Devil! It is difficult to restrain one's pen—but I forbear—merely suggesting that possibly the Apostle of Diabolical Agency and his friend might change places with equal truth—and he might reply to Mr. Dibdin

"Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur."

The very next clause to that now quoted, is Mr. Dibdin's confession of faith, printed, as in his published speech, in italics !

" Here, then, are the facts upon which I rest my argument—that it is of supernatural agency. If any one doubts my veracity, or questions the possibility of my senses being correct witnesses—in such a case, I have nothing to reply to that person. Such an one puts himself out of the reach of all argument ; and by such incredulity makes it impossible to prove anything to him." (p. 9.)

No, I am not to be thus put out of court—it is not necessary either to admit or deny your facts, though they have a tongue and speak for themselves—neither your " veracity," nor " the credibility of your senses," need be called in question—let the facts stand—take them for what they are worth—they are, as you say, the basis upon which you rest your argument, " that this is Supernatural Agency " : grant the basis for the sake of argument, and then we come to fair and legitimate ground—argument, reason, ratiocination : the use of those powers which God has given us, by which, more especially if we take His written word as our directory, and a spirit of prayer as our guide, we cannot greatly err.

And here we will retrace our steps, and examine the general arguments upon which these several witnesses endeavour to prove that nothing less than Diabolical Agency can effect these things. Mr. Dibdin, the latest witness and advocate, appears to rest entirely upon the unquestionable evidence of his facts ; but the other advocates in this cause plead the probability of such events, and endeavour to prove, by authority of Holy Scripture, that such things are to be expected. Here I join issue with them with all holy confidence. Mr. Godfrey, indeed, takes a Scriptural retrospect of Satanic influence not unlike my own in my last Tract on this subject, written, as I have previously intimated, before I had seen any of these Tracts now before me. Occupying the first nineteen pages of his little pamphlet with this survey, he arrives at a conclusion still more approaching to that truth upon which the whole question greatly turns—the cessation of the miraculous powers shortly after the completion

of the Canon of the New Testament Scriptures. He notices the inferential argument as an objection to his system—

“The only other objection to meet is this: that evil Spirits ceased to trouble man shortly after our Saviour’s work was accomplished. To this I reply *that so long as the supernatural gifts of the Spirit remained among men, so long the evil spirits were cast out and their presence detected; but that when those miraculous powers were withdrawn, they could no longer be discerned; although they might still have existed.*”

Then those miraculous powers “*were withdrawn*”—that is one great point to be upheld—one of the great Protestant-Catholic truths—as I have ever understood—that miracles, good and bad, ceased “Shortly after his Saviour’s work was accomplished.” Mr. G. asserts that the suspension of miraculous action—a fact pretty well established—did not remove, but only *concealed* the miraculous powers of evil spirits. “They might still have existed—though they could not be discerned”—to which we have equal *right and proof* to say—and THEY MIGHT NOT! Nay, but says Mr. G. “I am sure they did exist, and have existed, and do exist, and I have incontestible evidence of it!” Mr. G. continues—

“And that they do exist, I appeal not only to the *tradition* of every country, town and neighbourhood, but also to every person, whether he has not heard upon unquestionable authority facts which could be accounted for under no other supposition, if indeed he be not personally cognizant of such facts” (p. 20.)

So we are to believe that Supernatural action and miracles have been going on, all these centuries, because there is a TRADITION of such things, and tales of Ghosts and Spirits to be found in all places! This is a strange mode of refuting and contradicting a scriptural fact, previously admitted—and is even worse than the statement of Mr. Dibdin, who meets my view on this point by a not very courteous reference to “Milner’s Church History,” adding his own opinion “that miracles continued into the middle of the Third Century, and even further:” (p. 18.) an admission quite enough for me, leaving me a thousand years, and a broad margin without miraculous interference.

This is one of the weak points of all these authors. They must either admit the cessation of miracles, or they fall into the snares of Father Newman, and cannot consistently deny the miracles of Rome.

In his second pamphlet Mr. Godfrey further enlarges for twenty pages upon various features of Satanic agency in the days of scripture story, which no one who receives Scripture as the Word of God ever questioned—but after all at what conclusion does he arrive. (Table Turning, p. 19.)

“After what God reveals of Satan and his resources it certainly is not *impossible*, nay rather it is highly *probable* from the very nature of the case, that communications should some times take place between man and the Spirit-world by which he is surrounded.”

So a “*POSSIBILITY*,” or “*A PROBABILITY*” at best is all that this author can extract from his view of Scripture in favour of Spiritual, or miraculous intercourse between the two worlds:—and yet in the same page he speaks in oracular strain of those who differ from him as if “Satan had blinded their eyes.” A sentence passed by these writers, without exception, upon all who do not agree with them!

But admitting, as they do, and must do, that the fact of the cessation of miracles for some 1500 or 1600 years raises a degree of probability that their suspension is of God, and that it has a reason—and that therefore any professed revival of them needs some other testimony of Scripture to make it probable, these writers, one and all, press the language of our Lord into their argument, and again and again refer to it in evidence that at, or towards the close of this dispensation miracles are again to be expected. Thus Mr. Godfrey, first pamphlet, p. 16, 17. Mr. Gillson (*2d pamphlet, p. 23.*) These solemn predictions of our Lord are recorded in Matthew xxiv. and portions of them in the parallel passages of Mark and Luke. And the Saviour does there speak of “false Christs and false Prophets, who shall show great signs and wonders”—(v. 24,) &c.—But the writers of the Tracts cannot be ignorant that the wisest and most learned Com-

mentators are divided with respect to the events to which the Saviour here refers—whether to those immediately about to occur in connection with the fall of Jerusalem, or to the end of the world. This is a most dubious prophecy upon which to rest so great an event as the present revival of miracles. Mr. Godfrey sees also in another passage a prediction of miraculous, and specially of diabolical influence. 1 Tim. iv. 1. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times” (a phrase of very pliable import) “some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils”—further illustrated by what follows—“Speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” I never before met with the suggestion that “seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils,” referred to miraculous powers to be exercised by Devils. Nor would any simple student of Scripture who had not a theory to support, extract such a meaning from this passage. I know that with the School of Divines with which I am contending, authorities when opposed to them, weigh little—but they will find that Tillotson, Burkett, Gill, Scott, Henry, and a host of others interpret this and all the similar passages, of FALSE TEACHERS influenced by Satan indeed through his ordinary and spiritual temptations, but not through miracles nor signs, to which there is no sort of allusion. So of another text pressed into the service of miraculous agency of Devils. “Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God: because many FALSE PROPHETS are gone out into the world.” (1 John iv. 1.) Here also a simple student of Scripture would gather that he was only warned against FALSE PROPHETS, in and by whom, lying Spirits taught error and heresy; denying either the Divinity or manhood of Christ; and that he was to try the Spirit which was in any teacher by the tests suggested by the Apostle. This is the sense in which this word is constantly used—as in that passage, “the Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets.” (1 Cor. xiv. 32.) In this case also the advocates of Diabolical Miracles will find the stream of

commentators against them : though indeed no commentator but the Spirit of God, in answer to prayer is here required to enable a plain Christian who has no favorite system to set up, to glean the simple and obvious meaning from such passages.

These writers have here opened a line of Scripture reasoning fatal to themselves. It may safely be asserted that all the warnings found in the Apostolic writings against the powers and devices of the Devil are directed against those mental, intellectual, spiritual, and immaterial powers which alone He can now exercise. Take that entire passage in Ephesians vi. 11—19. a portion of which these writers are so fond of quoting. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil”—“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood” ; that is, in wrestling with the Devil we do not encounter him in flesh and blood—he is not matter himself, but pure spirit—and he cannot become flesh and blood, or else we should wrestle with flesh and blood—and if he cannot fight us in or through the flesh, why by any other form of matter ?—if he is not flesh and blood, why should he be able to become a piece of wood ? No ; the Apostle is distinctly showing us the nature of our adversaries, WICKED SPIRITS—many of them, of different degrees, but all spiritual, unearthly, not material : nor does he terrify us by telling us that we can see them or hear them—that they can shake our bed-curtains, or trouble us with knocks : and the armour he furnishes for the contest is all spiritual—and the weapons to be wielded are all spiritual—the Gospel, salvation, faith, hope—not a hint of danger from spirits entering into matter ;—no, they are not to be encountered in the leg of a table, but in fallen hearts, and wicked thoughts—a wide, terrible, destructive domain—here Satan roams, often he rules and reigns—but in material bodies we fear him not, but confidently deny and defy his power ! He is a “roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour”—but no one ever heard his roar, nor ever saw the flash of his savage eye : no—his work, his power, and his boundary is in the spiritual and intellectual world. To

exaggerate this appalling sway is impossible—but to teach that he has other powers now, that he can hold communion with men in the flesh through material bodies, is unscriptural, superstitious, and dangerous.

In fact, it would have been a thing incredible and altogether unaccountable that upon, such evidence as has been adduced, clergymen and men of any education, to say nothing of scriptural soundness in their general doctrines, should have authenticated diabolical miracles, had there not been A PREDISPOSING CAUSE. In my former pamphlet, I intimated my conviction that many teachers both of the extreme High Church party, as well as a considerable portion of the Evangelical body, had for some years past been generating by their doctrines a morbid feeling of superstition. The Mediæval sentimentalism of one party has prepared many to believe in the revival of miracles, and makes the apocryphal tales of the Romish Church not unpalatable to *them*—while the bold speculations and wild predictions of some of the modern interpreters of prophecy would prepare the way for the reception of any marvels by their disciples, however incredible.

Now it is a fact worthy of thoughtful observation that all those clergymen who have as yet entered the lists in favour of diabolical interference are not only divines of this school, but actually plead their expectation of the revival of miracles before the coming of Christ *as a great reason for accepting these wonders as miraculous*. Christ is at hand—his second coming is near—miracles are to be revived immediately before his coming, therefore, these things are miracles; and these things being miracles are again evidences that Christ is near—a sort of circular syllogism without any centrifugal force.

That I do not accuse them falsely the following extracts shall prove :—

Thus Mr. Godfrey (“Table Moving Tested,” p. 28.)

“But I contend that, if, as I have shewn, Satanic powers were formerly manifested, are still, *although not indisputably*, manifested, and shall ultimately

be developed in Satan's last grand effort to overthrow Christ's kingdom, the argument is in favor of the present miracles, being a resultant of the same agency; and, considering how much *the will* has to do with it, as to a certain extent it doubtless has, inasmuch as the table obeys the will and word of command, it seems to me to have an evident connexion with the approach of those times to which the eye of every student of prophecy is directed, when we are told, 'The King,' *the heading up of the iniquity of man and devil*, 'shall do according to his will,' which, considering all that is foretold, would seem to intimate that he will have the power of merely willing a thing to be done, and it shall be done."

Such a comment on such a text surely never was before attempted!—

"Dear reader, I cannot tell you from dates the hour or the day of our Saviour's coming; 'of that day and that hour knoweth no man'; but *I can point you to these manifestations, and ask, are not these signs of the times?* and the signs of the times the Pharisees were rebuked for *not* observing. I am now *firmly convinced that Table-moving is a Satanic device; these various manifestations indicate that the enemy is growing bolder; the bolder he becomes the more open will be his miracles; the more open his miracles the closer our proximity to the development of the Antichrist ruling by Satanic possession and power.*"

I protest that such teaching as this is calculated to shake all reasonable faith in God's word!

To what lengths a person may be carried when he thus yields himself up to a blind persuasion is fearfully illustrated at the close of Mr. Godfrey's second pamphlet. (p. 51.)

"It occurred to me, while writing, that the table '*moved simply by the laying on of hands.*' L. H. (before referred to) says, "This moral nothing . . . on the imposition of your hands, BEGINS TO LIVE!" Can it be that this is *the beginning of Satan's last struggle*, that, on the imposition of hands, the table is endued with power *from the Devil*, as the Lord's servants, on the imposition of hands, were, in the Apostles' days, endued with power *from on high*? I merely ask, Can it be?"

"Are any inclined to laugh at all this? Oh, it is too serious a matter to be made the subject of a jest."

"LAUGH," indeed! No, it might make an Angel weep to read from the pen of a person of piety and good intentions a PARODY of the most holy Work of God the Spirit, which, from the pen of a sceptic we should know how to characterise!

The Rev. E. Gillson in like manner discovers plainly enough the School to which he belongs. Quoting an oft cited prediction, he exclaims—"But these are the words of prophecy, and therefore they are treated as empty nullities?" (p. 12.) not so,—it is only your application, and interpretation of them that are so treated! This fallacy pervades Mr. Gillson's two pamphlets, which are filled with indiscriminate condemnation; and while he complains loudly of being abused and ridiculed himself, he deals out hard measure to others. Mr. G. thus gives his confession of faith on the matter before us—and then connects it with his prophetic views.

"Hence I feel bound to declare, upon our united testimony, that living agency, possessing not only power but intelligence, was infused into the table, or connected with the table in some mysterious manner—that it was a living agency foreign to ourselves—independent of our will or mind—and often acting entirely in opposition to our conceptions or anticipations. But if it be a living agency, it must be *spiritual*, because *invisible*. And if *spiritual*, then *Satanic*, for the spirits acknowledged that they were sent by Satan; and one spirit confessed that he was sent to deceive and ensnare us."

Such reasoning can hardly convince any one who is not previously convinced. He adds immediately after this—

"*We are entering without a doubt upon the final struggle—we have all alike slumbered, and it is time to awake. "The day of thy watchman and visitation cometh:" The spirits of Devils working miracles "are already going forth—Hence the great day of God Almighty" is at hand! "*"

In his second book (p. 6), Mr. Gillson assures us "that, if the Bible had been read as a book to be understood and acted upon, we should not only have had a ready explanation of these mysteries when they did arrive, BUT WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO EXPECT THEM," &c. as this "WATCHMAN" evidently was. After a sweeping assertion that the clergy as a body have not discharged their duties in the present day, Mr. G. describes himself as a vigilant "Sentinel," who thought he saw the enemy approaching, and was therefore bound to give the note of warning. Of the approach of the enemy there is

indeed no doubt, but whether he has not subtly betrayed these persons into doing his work, while they thought they were defeating it, is grievously to be doubted. Had these reverend brethren let the matter alone, it might have soon died away and been forgotten, with many like delusions before it ; but, having now excited infinite attention and curiosity, and having solemnly announced to the world and to the Church that Satan is working these miracles, the mischief which must result is incalculable. There can be no doubt that honest and simple motives have urged them to this course : but sincerity is a poor guide without wisdom or discretion.

But to return from this digression. Mr. G. chiefly dwells towards the close of his second pamphlet upon this point, which is evidently to him the engrossing one : that “ *these unexplained wonders of the age*” are to usher in the last days and the glorious second Advent.

“ The time has arrived in his providential purposes to unfold these hidden stores of nature. It is the day of his preparation. Everything declares it. We cannot turn our eye in any direction with the divine word as our guide without meeting evidences of the fact. All things indicate a state of preparation, exactly answering to the various signs with which the prophetic word is replete. Never did an admonition meet with a more special application, than that of our Lord to those who refuse to recognize the present signs :—‘ Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth ; but how is it that ye do not discern this time ?’—(Luke vii. 56.)

This is the melancholy and uncharitable monotone of this school. And when we come to these so palpable signs of the times, we find them nothing more than the ingenious speculations of theoretic men, with no further certain marks of prophetic signs than Table Turning and Talking itself :—while the figurative language of the book of Revelation is quoted over and over again in support of opinions which are mere echoes of the uncertainty of prophetic speculations through whole generations of interpreters, who like the kine in Pharaoh’s visions, have successively devoured each other ! Mr. Gillson speaks of “ the incredible absurdities of scientific theories, which are readily

swallowed"—but forgets that there are "absurdities" equally "incredible" set forth by some Christian teachers, and swallowed with equal greediness by persons whose appetite for the wonderful has been so pampered that they have no longer a relish for the sober doctrines and precepts of God's Word.

The following is Mr. Gillson's peroration—

"If then the present mysterious movement be really the commencement of the Satanic flood, it behoves the spiritual watchmen to be awake and alert. I therefore appeal to those who are disposed to meet the subject temperately and deliberately:—'A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.'—(Prov. xiv. 16.)

"The world will scoff, as it ever has done, at any attempt to treat spiritual things as a reality. The sleepy portion of the professing Church will join with them; real Christians, who have neglected the study of prophecy, will give them their countenance; and even many amongst those who have given attention to the prophetic subject, are slow to realize the things to which they assent. THERE FEW, therefore, who are disposed to meet the subject solemnly and deliberately, and who, on investigation, believe that Satan is making his preparation for his last assault, are called upon for especial union. A union of prayer is an obvious duty; and I think also a union for confidence and deliberation would be well."

Mr. Vincent in his sermon avows the same views and the same expectations; (p. 15.) he assures his hearers that we are living under the "sixth vial" "that the Euphrates is fast drying up"—although the Turkish power has been gaining rather than losing strength—that the beginning of those days is before our eyes when "Unclean Spirits" "the Spirits of Devils working miracles" are sent forth into the world—and that the present manifestations are these very things. Again he says (p. 18.) "My own mind after much study and thought of the subject is *at present* persuaded that this is the work of Satan and his evil Spirits." (p. 19.) "*I regard these things myself as signs of the times. I have for several years expected some decided manifestations of Satanic power.*"

I believe that Mr. Dibdin, although he does not refer to the subject in his present lecture, belongs to the same School of Prophecy.

Now here it appears to me is the only clue to the solution of that which is in itself more extraordinary than all the feats of the Tables, viz. :—that there should be found Clergymen, and Laymen of any piety and sense ready to accredit these things as SATANIC MIRACLES : the cause is here discovered “ THEY HAVE BEEN EXPECTING THEM.” Their views of prophetic interpretation have wrought in them such a morbid, unhealthy love of the marvellous that they are ready to embrace any fable which borders on the supernatural. THEY WANT MIRACLES TO CONFIRM THEIR SYSTEM ; and therefore they are really not disinterested witnesses in such a case.

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In venturing an opinion upon this subject, I am well aware that I tread on tender ground ; but my convictions of truth will not allow me to remain silent. And before I add more I may perhaps be allowed to indulge in a little egotism, more especially as the close of Mr. Dibdin’s lecture seems to force it upon us. It is the common exclamation of these writers, “ Oh! he has not studied prophecy—he knows nothing of what he is saying, &c.” Now, it happens that this subject was pressed on my attention more than thirty years since : that in the years 1822-3, I sat on the Jew’s Committee in Wardrobe-place, Doctor’s-commons, with Messrs. Bayford, Drummond, Hawtrey and others, at the time when these topics began to attract notice. I then thought, and read much about them :—at a subsequent period some 25 years since, I again, in conjunction with a sainted man now in glory, the venerable Mr. Kempthorne extensively examined the subject, and from the conclusions at which in conjunction with him I then arrived I have never since swerved. If then years, and some acquaintance with their stirring topics entitle a man to speak, I solemnly record my conviction that prophetic speculations have been the most fruitful cause of error and schism among evangelical people during the last 35 years. The Irvingites passed away from orthodox Churches, by this gate. The Plymouth Brethren commenced their career by the same route—and now if these lamentable

delusions of Satanic influence obtain a footing in the Church it will be effected not only by men attached to the same school of prophetic interpretation, *but by men who acknowledge that their expectations of the accomplishment of unfulfilled Prophecy predisposed them to credit miraculous interference!*

Now, far be it from me to say that all who take a particular view of the pre-millennial advent fall under the same category with the writers whom I am now reviewing; these opinions are held in a great variety of degrees and promineney by excellent men of every shade—but I do affirm that the bold, rash, speculative and dogmatic teaching of many who are attached to this school has damaged the public mind, distracted the attention of Christians from practical and experimental divinity to that which is exciting, theoretic and uncertain—so that numbers are in the same predisposed state to catch the infection of any baneful religious epidemic which may arise among us.

I cannot close this tract without a short reference to the lecture of the Rev. W. Dibdin; with whose **FACTS** I have already dealt. A large portion of his lecture is taken up with arguments in reply to those who have suggested various natural causes as probably accounting for the phenomena, of Table Turning and Talking—with these I have no concern. I am inclined to believe with the lecturer that nothing yet discovered is sufficient fully to explain the mystery: nor have I ever attempted to explain it: nor do I feel called upon to do so. My mind is fully satisfied that there is no spiritual interference, good or bad—and I am content to await the result of time and experience to decypher the rest. I must, however, protest against the sort of quiet dogmatism which Mr. Dibdin bestows upon all who presume to differ from him on this subject. His treatment of our excellent brother, the Vicar of Islington, is very unbecoming: he sneers at Mr. Wilson's age, puns upon his being a Nestor, and calls his tract "*a small piece of Dogmatism.*"

"I trample on the pride of Plato"—"With greater pride Diogenes!"

These personalities can only encumber and injure such a subject as this: if Mr. Wilson's style be naturally vigorous, and his habit of teaching dogmatic, it is far less offensive than the sort of oracular style which pervades Mr. Dibdin's lecture; had he the URIM and THUMMIM to guide his augury he could not be more authoritative: he tells many a startling tale, but winds up with the declaration—"there are those present who could testify that I have not only told what I have seen, and they too, but that I have *forborne to state what would be immeasurably more fearful and startling!*" "I could a tale unfold," &c.!!

But this is almost worse than telling all. No horrors are so great as imaginary ones, and whether Mr. Dibdin and his brethren are justified in playing upon the nerves and trifling with the religious fears of superstitious persons, by multiplying such lectures and such books, I leave others to judge. I should give him and his brother advocates of Diabolical interference more credit for their concluding advice, which I believe in every case they administer, if they had not previously acted so inconsistently: Mr. Dibdin's last words are—"My object has been not to gratify a morbid taste for the marvellous, but firstly to prove that Table Turning is DIABOLIC, and secondly to beseech you to have NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!"

But it is impossible to peruse this extraordinary lecture without acknowledging that though Mr. D. may not have *gratified* this taste for the marvellous, he has done all he can to *excite* it—and most of all by this very conclusion, in which he declares himself in possession of greater horrors still! He leads his hearers to the brink of a giddy precipice, and then implores them not fall down—he describes in wild and bewildering terms wonders and mysteries—and then beseeches his hearers not to look into them.

One word more upon Mr. D.'s reference to the 72 Canon of the Church of England, upon the authority of which he calls upon me as a good Churchman to believe that exorcism, "or casting out devils," can be exercised under a bishop's license.

Of course he believes this, or he would not call upon me to do so : and as a good Churchman I have to call upon him to believe also that the miracle of touching for the King's evil is still genuine—for I have in my possession a copy of the Book of Common Prayer in which there is the office for the due performance of that Royal Miracle! Perhaps this is one of the well authenticated "traditions" upon which Mr. Gillson founds his "appeal" in behalf of the slumbering and torpid but not *efete* power of miracle working which he maintains has remained though undiscovered all this while in the Church. But believing that inspired scripture and the natural understanding which God has given me, warrant me to reject both one and the other, neither the Canon of the Church, nor the defunct, and quietly ejected office for the cure of the King's-evil, should induce me to credit them—and most deliberately do I add that guided by the same good old fashioned leaders, the written word, and common sense, I utterly, fearlessly, and indignantly reject alike the *evidence* and the *arguments* by which I am called to believe that Table Moving, Turning, and Talking is effected by supernatural agency good or bad :—and I still hold that "TABLE TURNING IS NOT DIABOLICAL."

While these pages are passing through the press, I grieve to perceive the necessity for this publication further illustrated by the announcement of another lecture upon the subject at the Hanover Square Rooms, by Mr. Godfrey. When and where is this mischief to end? If diastrous consequences ensue, and mental calamities should be produced similar to those occasioned in America by the daring and insane speculations which have been attempted in that country, upon whom will the responsibility rest? May it please God to pour upon his Church "the Spirit of power and of love and of a SOUND MIND."

APPENDIX.

Since writing the above I have received from an intelligent correspondent the following remarkable account of a series of experiments made by him with a view if possible to ascertain whether the replies supposed to be received from some foreign and independent agency, were not the mere suggestions conscious or unconscious of some of the interrogators themselves.

“ On Saturday Evening, December 3d, I sat down with another gentleman at a small mahogany table having first written down four questions which I desired the gentleman first to answer *in the affirmative*, and then to ‘ will’ that the table should rap the same answers as he had given himself—*which it did*. I then desired him to ‘ will’ that the table should answer the same four questions in the *negative*—WHICH IT DID !! I then desired him to fix in his mind upon one of the letters of the alphabet (which was to remain unknown to me) and then to will, that when (whilst reading over the alphabet) I pronounced that particular letter the table should rap once—*which it did*. This experiment was tried three or four times and with the same effect.

“ Again—The particular letters fixed upon were written on slips of paper and placed on the table (the figures downwards) so as to remain unseen by me until the experiment ended.

“ I then desired him to fix in his own mind upon any number under ten, to write it down on paper as before, and then to will that upon my naming the number the table should rap the amount—*which it did* !

“ This experiment was repeated four or five times.

“ The gentleman then willed that the table should rap, and continue to rap until he willed it to stop :—which it did.

“ He then desired it to rise on two legs, and to remain in that position until he willed it to drop :—which it did, &c. &c.

“It thus appears evident that what we call WILL (whatever that may be) is the power by which the table is governed—and that superhuman agency, properly so called, has nothing whatever to do with it.”

Such is the simple and straightforward account of my correspondent. And should his experiments be corroborated by further and more patient investigation, all the Diabolical agency which has been conjured up will vanish into thin air.

By the same Author,

TABLE TURNING NOT DIABOLICAL. A Tract for the Times.
(Fourth Edition—Fourth Thousand.) 4d.

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND ADVENT: Four Sermons. 1s.

POPERY DESTRUCTIVE OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, proved Historically: A Sermon on the 5th of November.

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