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DR. CUMMING'S Views on Spiritualism.

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People are naturally disposed to attach importance to the opinions of so popular a Divine as the Rev. Dr. Cumming, who has, according to one of his reviewers, "published more of the *dearest* and sweetest books, as the ladies say, than any other living theological author, and has had more tilts and tournaments with Pope, Jew, Gentile, and Infidel, than any other clerical knight,"—on a subject that is now engaging public attention, and which, according to the *Quarterly Review*, is "a great fact of the age." An attempt is therefore made to place before the reader the materials from the Doctor's published writings, to enable him to form a conclusion as to the views held by so great an authority on the important and interesting subject of Spiritualism. To assist the reader a few comments are added *en passant*.

Thirteen years ago Dr. Cumming, before the Young Men's Christian Association, expressed himself relative to "table-turning" thus:—

"Another sign of the times might be observed in what was popularly denominated table-turning or table-talking—for they were two eminently separate things. There were some who claimed for these manifestations a supernatural agency, while others believed that it was the result of electric influence. Because a thing could not be understood and explained, it was not therefore absolutely necessary for it to be the result of any invisible power, or the manifestation of disembodied spirits. He felt himself quite competent to speak upon this subject, having been associated with those who had made a number of most singular and successful experiments. The tables, at the request of the gentleman at whose house he had seen the experiments, had lifted up their legs and answered most of the

questions which were put to them, sometimes giving perfectly correct replies, but at other times they were entirely wrong. After what he had witnessed he was quite satisfied, with all deference, that Dr. Faraday's theory did not explain the phenomenon. It was a fact, that the fingers laid lightly on a heavy table, made it spin round and round, and throw itself into most extraordinary convulsions. He had moreover himself, in connection with his own son, made a chair spin round the room, and perform the most Bacchanalian gymnastics. These, however, were not the sort of manifestations that he looked for as the fulfilment of prophecy relating to the wonders which should be performed in the last days. About these manifestation there was no certainty, whereas, in the miracles performed by Christ, and in those which he believed would be performed according to prophecy, there would be no doubt whatever. The table-talking was so very equivocal, that the parties present were so bewildered that they knew not what to believe. For his own part he did not think it to be the result of diabolical agency, although he did not profess to be able to explain all the phenomena which he had witnessed. He had read every pamphlet which had been published in this country in favour of table-talking. The Devil was far too busy in his other schemes of wickedness to have anything to do with so aimless and unprofitable a speculation. The only thing that seemed to him to savour of it being associated with the Evil One, was the fact, that ministers of the Gospel had been induced to devote themselves to its elucidation to an extent and in a manner which did not seem to harmonise with their profession and calling."

In the above we have the facts testified to that tables move about without the agency of trickery. The Doctor will neither admit Faraday's theory nor Mr. Nangle's. He emphatically repudiates both. Science has not yet settled the point, and according to the learned Divine "The Devil is far too busy with other schemes of wickedness to have anything to do with so aimless and unprofitable a speculation." Dr. Cumming, it would seem, implies here that the Devil has not to do with *all* schemes of wickedness. Rather strange logic for a D.D. Why does the word *other* appear in the sentence, if the Doctor does not think that "table-talking," as he terms it, is one scheme of wickedness. Perhaps, some day, Dr. Cumming may make this clear. So far, we have the authority of Dr. Cumming against diabolical agency in the matter.

This must be satisfactory to Churchmen, who have held aloof from the study of spiritual phenomena purely out of fear that Satan is the sole active agent in the whole range of manifestations termed "spiritual."

The publication of the lecture from which the above extract is taken, was followed by a pamphlet written by a "Member of the Royal College of Physicians," hailing from Worcester, who "thought it right to endeavour to avert the mischief it was calculated to do to young minds, and to kindle a beacon to warn the credulous of the clergy, the nobility, the gentry, the pseudo philosophers, the medical fraternity, and the enthusiast, on their voyage in the discovery of Truth." With the presumption and conceit which characterise his cloth when dealing with spiritual and kindred topics, this M.D. says, "I confess that it would be difficult for my pen adequately to pourtray the varied emotions and passions that arose in my mind after reading the extract from your lecture. Distraction and surprise seized upon me. I read again; disdain and anger alternately moved and flushed me; but at length mild Pity stole in and mantled my troubled spirit with her gentle 'sympathy for suns that set,' and I briefly concluded that 'much learning had made thee mad.' I slept upon it; still the phantom arose with the waking mind, and I said, 'though the man be mad, his madness hath method in it,' and then I bethought me of taking up the matter on public grounds, * * I now, therefore, in serious sadness, hold you up in the arena of public judgment, and impeach you at the bar of public opinion, on the charge of wilfully perverting, by your power, your eloquence, and your accredited great name, the stream of 'common sense,' thus depriving the community, by your influence, of the salutary godly gift of their own unbiassed opinion."

This zealous champion of the "Truth" then goes on, in his own modest way, to remark, "Others you say, believe electricity can turn tables,—egregious boobies! what, electricity! electricity that can move with a celerity of 800,000 miles in a second of time—

the handmaiden of Jehovah through all His works—turn the tables against its eternal parent—preposterous thought! How little dost thou know, in thy doctor's cowl, of this Almighty agent! Then, in thy simplicity of mind, thou dost aver that, because the pseudo-phenomena of table-turning cannot be understood nor explained, it is not necessary to be the result of invisible power, or the manifestation of disembodied spirits. Disembodied spirits! What do you mean? Whence disembodied? From what or whose body proceeding?" The meaning of the writer's remarks relative to "Electricity turning the tables against its eternal parent" is not quite obvious, but this may be owing to our obtuseness, we therefore let it pass. He then proceeds to say "I am not surprised that your erudite, recondite mind should have found itself in 'a fix' to explain all the phenomena of table-talking, for

"One science only will one genius fit,
So vast is art so narrow human wit."

To my *simple mind*, [the italicising is in the original] one simple expression embraces all the inaginary phenomena of table-talking, table-turning, and spirit-rapping, *e.g.*, 'moonshine,' and this conclusion I arrived at without, like yourself, having 'read every pamphlet which has been published in this country in favour of table-talking.'" What a clever man! thus to *settle* a matter; whilst numbers of the first minds of the age, after years of patient and careful investigation, have *settled* it in quite a different way.

The Doctor is then advised to "Read logic, and learn that no effect can arise without a cause [whoever supposed it could?], and that every change in *physical nature* must imply a *material agent*, and this will lead to the conclusion, that to whatever purpose we apply our minds with 'singleness of heart,' and without prejudice, we shall discover traces of a divine superintendence." Does this writer understand the nature of the imponderable elements? Does he not know that all the forces of nature are invisible, and can only be judged of by their effects, and are practically

immaterial agents ; and that the visible world is not the *cause*, but the *consequence*, of the invisible world? Let the spirit within him answer this question, if it can : What is spirit ?

Dr. Cumming's next essay is a letter to the *Zoist*, in which, probably owing to the castigation he had received at the hands of the Worcester Solon, he deems it advisable to qualify his statements by providing a scapegoat :—

"I was asked to go and visit two of the most able and effective performers upon tables in the house of a dear and valued friend, a member of my congregation. I watched suspiciously the whole from the beginning to end. It is important, however, to discriminate two things confounded. There is table-moving, which is one thing; there is table-speaking, or disembodied spirits speaking through tables (as it is alleged), which is a totally different thing. The one may be a scientific phenomenon; the other I shall try to describe as I think it deserves. It may seem presumptuous to say, even with deepest deference, that I am satisfied that Faraday in his letter does not explain the phenomenon. This may be my error, but it is my impression. Whether it be by electricity, or galvanism, or mesmerism, or any other yet undetected motive and subtle element, it is a fact that the fingers of a lady laid lightly on a heavy table made it in my presence, spin round, lift its legs, stamp the floor, and throw itself into most extraordinary and unbecoming convulsions. Table-turning is an amusement for children. Table-taking is not so. The one is child's play, the other is either downright nonsense or worse. It is important that we should understand, if possible, what pretends to be above human; for while expecting miracles and signs supernatural—or, rather, infra-natural—in the last days, we must be on our guard against imposture and prepare to decide what are and what are not so. My friends asserted in their drawing-room, not only that this new motive power was true (which may or may not be), but that there was something above and beyond table-moving, or the supernatural. It may be electricity, it may be galvanism, it may be neither; or it may be some other natural influence which we do not at present know of; or it may be what Faraday suggests. I am aware there are difficulties in supposing the existence in human fingers of an undetectable power, for how does it happen that when people sit down to dine, and lay their finger on the table, it does not begin to dance? But it is a fact that I saw a table, touched lightly by the fingers of a lady whose muscular powers, I am sure, were not very formidable, rise, leap, move from side

to side, in the most extraordinary manner. Faraday, I think, does not, and I cannot, explain this. But it is not, therefore, supernatural. My two friends, however, said that it was supernatural. They set the table in motion, and then asked me to put questions to the supposed spirit which had just taken possession of the table. I said, 'No, I decline to do so; I am here simply as a spectator, and have reasons for declining which I need not state. I am here simply as an enquirer; you begin, and I will look on.' The question was then asked, 'Do you know the Rev. Mr. Reeve?' The table gave three gentle taps, which means in the table vernacular, 'Yes.' 'Do you know the Rev. Mr. Fisk?' The table gave three gentle raps, in precisely the same manner. After asking two or three questions about various persons present or absent, and receiving similar polite and courteous replies, 'my friend asked the supposed spirit, 'Do you know Dr. Cumming?' The table positively forgot all the respect due to a lady's drawing-room, and threw itself into a state of convulsive kicking, which made me anxious, not about my creed, but about the table's safety. My friends then asked how many shillings were in my pocket. It guessed eleven, and there were only five. They then asked how many sovereigns I had. It guessed five, and I had only one. It was then asked, 'Will you answer Dr. Cumming at all?' The answer, according to their interpretation, was, 'No,' in the most decided manner. 'Why not?' An alphabet was then laid on the table, and certainly the proceeding was very curious. We began: A, the table stood still; B, it gave three taps. That was set down as the first letter of the answer. We then began again: A, the table was silent; B, still silent. We went on until we came to E, then there were three taps. This was proceeded with till the words were made out 'Because he laughs.' When I heard this, I submitted that my laughing and incredulity ought to be a reason for convincing me, and not leaving me a sceptic. But the table, or, if not the table, its manipulator, seemed to dislike me excessively. I confess I saw much that was curious; a great deal ingeniously done; but I have also seen very remarkable things in the feats of tumblers in the streets of London, in the tricks of card-shufflers in a room, and in the conversaciones of ventriloquists in a chimney nook. But I have seen nothing necessarily supernatural about it; and mark, if there be a doubt that a thing is a miracle, it is no miracle. In the days of our Lord there was no doubt expressed by bitter enemies that what he did was miraculous; the puzzle was, 'Is it from the Devil below, or is it from God above?' But table-talking is so equivocal that the parties present witnessing the so-called miraculous responses are puzzled to determine whether it be supernatural, or only very clever and talented. Now, in the last days, I look not for

equivocal feats and dubious miracles, but for terrible startling manifestations of superhuman power, which shall deceive, if possible, the very elect.

But a word more on this subject. I have read on one side the Rev. Mr. Close and the Rev. D. Wilson, who have written very ably and admirably; though I do not agree with either as to the grounds of their decision, yet I agree with their conclusions. I have read every pamphlet I could find on the other side, from Mr. Dibden, one of the best and most pious men in London, to Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Gilson and others, who have written in favour of their views; and in reading those various interesting works I noticed that each inquirer of the table got all his answers very much in the direction of his own wishes and predilections. Let us mark well that fact. For instance; according to the Rev. R. W. Dibden, demons enter into the table and tell lies, and declare that the worship of the Virgin Mary is right; that is, they are Jesuits, or Popish demons. According to Mr. Godfrey, it is the spirits of departed sinners that emerge from hell and confirm every doctrine of the Bible; that is, Protestant spirits. According to Owen, the infidel and socialist, Voltaire, and Diderot, and D'Alembert, and Paine, all come down from eternal happiness, and tell him how perfectly happy they are and expect to be. According to the Rev. Mr. Gilson, spirits speak against Popery; while, according to Mr. Dibden, they praise it as if they had been the priests of Dr. Wiseman. Now, I cannot believe that an evil spirit would speak the truth, or attest the inspiration of the Bible; for if a kingdom be divided against itself, how can it stand? I cannot, in the next place, believe that an evil spirit would be so stupid a blunderer as to preach the worship of the Virgin Mary to so sound and pious a Protestant as Mr. Dibden. And I never can believe that godly, pious, and evangelical ministers are the *media* by whom devils come from hell to tell lies or truths to mankind. Nor can I believe that "Alfred Brown," the name given by one spirit, could describe his torment, as recorded in the book of Mr. Godfrey; or that any other lost spirit can be, or is, suffered to come up to this world and tell the transactions of its awful prison-house, as long as I read the petition of the rich man, and the decisive answer that was given him. "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldst send Lazarus unto my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. And Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Now, mark you, if the Old Testament alone was sufficient eighteen hundred years ago to render unnecessary and impossible an apparition from the dead to test its truth, the Old

and New Testaments together are, *a fortiori*, more than sufficient to render unnecessary, unexpected, impossible, untrue, an apparition of a spirit from the realms of the lost for the same object and mission. I expect supernatural deeds before this dispensation closes; but table-talking is not such proof of the manifestation of Satan as we are to look for. Besides, Satan has higher game to fly at; he is at present too busy in spreading German Rationalism, Tractarianism, Popery, and various kinds of moral evil, to have any disposable force and time to spare for such bungling manifestation as table-talking. I admit that there is much in it as a physical phenomenon that is curious, much that I cannot explain; but I protest against the conclusion that, because I cannot explain the phenomenon, I am bound to attribute it to supernatural and miraculous agency. The only trace of the serpent's presence, if such it be at all, that I can discover in the matter, is, I confess, to me a very sad one. It is this: that the absurd excitement it has produced should make lunatics in America*; that the monstrous thing should be organized into a church, as they call it, in Philadelphia; that a clergyman should advertise a lecture on the theology of table-talk in the metropolis of the world; and that Christian ministers, of undoubted piety and talent, purity of life, and clearness of mind, should waste their influence and weaken their power by publishing mediæval fancies, monkish nonsense, profane and anile fables."

The above letter was written several years ago, but the Spiritual question still perplexes the great I AM's of the press, and the Church still holds undue influence over the popular mind. Talk to the majority of people, and they at once allude to Faraday, Brewster, Pepper, Brougham, and Cumming, or even Cummins (of Liverpool celebrity), as authorities against the subject. On the other hand, Spiritualists are ready with their long list of names, including the late Professor Hare, Judge Edmonds (of America), Professor De Morgan, Wm. Howitt, S. C. Hall, and a host of others. It is a strange habit of the popular mind to lean upon the crutch of authority, which conveniently saves it the trouble of thinking for itself. We by no means believe in the too common practice of accepting or rejecting any theory on the mere strength of authorities. Men and

* The Report, 1864, of the New York State Asylum, in Utica, one of the largest and finest institutions in the country, represents four clergymen as subjects of insanity, and more than fifty persons whose maladies were caused by religious anxiety, but not a single Spiritualist is reported,

women had better be ciphers than slaves to the authority of either king or peasant. Freedom of thought is the culmination of all true manhood or womanhood. We therefore say to our fellow-beings—think, speak, and act from no authority save that of truth and reason. Accept a fact because *it is true*, not because Dr. Cumming, Mr. Spurgeon, Sir D. Brewster, or any other representative man *says* it is true; reject it if your own reason pronounces it false, not because the pet idols of certain schools of thought *say* it is so.

On the question of spiritualism we have authorities everywhere dragged in. The members of Mr. Spurgeon's chapel are apt to ask what their minister thinks, and to place considerable reliance on *his* opinion. Imagine Mr. Spurgeon's opinion about Spiritualism canvassed by his own flock. If he said it was of the Devil, how many of his human lambs would disagree with him? If he said it was humbug, who among them would call in question *his* word? The same with Dr. Cumming, a man whose learning is far above Mr. Spurgeon's. Multitudes make a demigod of him, and, we think, worship him with an idolatry more fatal to their souls' interests than the idolatry of the heathens is to theirs. Be that as it may, Dr. Cumming has spoken at times beautiful words for Spiritualism, at others very unmeaning or illogical ones. We have already seen that Dr. Cumming is not satisfied with Faraday's explanation of the phenomenon of table-moving; that he vouches for a heavy table with the fingers of a lady laid lightly upon it, in his presence, springing round; and that Satan is not the Doctor's stalking-horse. If the readers of Dr. Cumming's works, together with all his admirers, could for the nonce forget him as an authority, and take his words for what they are worth, we are bold to say they would, one and all, that is, if they analysed his statements, pronounce him very illogical, first to vouch for the fact of a lady's fingers being laid on a heavy table, in a private room, when the table sprung round, and then to fly off, after a little breathing space, by saying, "I saw much that was

curious ; a great deal ingeniously done ; but I have also seen remarkable things in the feats of tumblers." The account the Doctor gives of his sitting makes us understand that he was not in the company of tumblers, but honest people, in whom he had confidence. If so, it is absurd to drag "tumblers" into the discussion, to give him a sorry means of escape from a logical difficulty. If the Doctor saw what he described, and was satisfied of the honesty of the medium, and the persons with whom he sat, the hypothesis of conjuring must fall to the ground. Would he employ the same kind of absurd *illogic* were he discussing Scripture miracles ? We think not. Suppose he took the account of Baalam's ass, and before accepting it as true, referred to the fact that certain ventriloquists of modern days can mimic all kinds of voices, the Doctor might then suppose that the ass did not speak at all, but that some ventriloquist imposed upon Balaam. Suppose the Doctor took the account of Belshazzar's feast, and the mysterious fingers on the wall, and said, 'but I have seen conjurers produce feats as remarkable,' and left on his hearers the impression that some conjurer might have imposed on Belshazzar's Court. Suppose the Doctor took the account of the transfiguration of Jesus, and said, but I have seen Pepper's ghost, which is very marvellous, and would be more so, did I not understand the scientific principle upon which the modern appearances are produced. We might thus show upon the Doctor's own premises, that he is inconsistent in his dealing with the question he had better have said nothing about. Dr. Cumming may be a very good and scholarly divine, but he is not a correct reasoner, or he would have avoided the quagmire into which the spirits (were they emissaries of Satan?) have led him. We believe, at the present hour, the Doctor still holds by the old fangled idea of conjuring. He does not deem the question worthy his attention, being possibly too much engrossed in prophesying, and waiting for, the end of the world. He has had evidences from honest persons, that phenomena take place of a character

beyond Faraday's power to explain on any physical hypothesis. He does not, like most of his cloth, give the Devil the whole difficulty to carry; but he thinks tumblers may perform the feats, although he knows the lady whom he mentions was no tumbler. He does not think them miraculous, or supernatural, but "mediæval fancies, monkish nonsense, profane, and anile fables." Was the *seance* he describes at which he witnessed phenomena Faraday could not explain, a fable? Was he himself an "anile fable," or a "mediæval fancy?" If not, the *seance* was a stubborn fact. If so, it could not be an "anile fable;" and it seems to us one such fact should be satisfactory, even to an authority, like Dr. Cumming, if all the others were "anile fables." There is no necessity even for an authority to run into headlong theories; but he should keep from running into mental bogs. Dr. Cumming has written himself a witness to phenomena, which he says Faraday does not explain. Does he think he himself explains them by talking about "mediæval fancies, monkish nonsense, profane and anile fables." If he do, all we can say is, that he has a higher opinion of himself than we think any of his most servile admirers could have of him, if they would only forget his authority, and study the subject which he seems so incompetent to handle.

We take the following from Dr. Cumming's "Great Tribulation,"—a work extensively circulated; from a chapter entitled "Evening Clouds":—

"I have been shocked at hearing accounts of the spread of a system, known as Spiritualism, that attempted a lodgment here, and was laughed out of society by every sensible man. It has settled and rooted itself in America, and counts its increasing thousands of followers. It traces its succession most legitimately to the witch of Endor; like her it professes to hold communion with spirits in heaven and in hell; and pretends, blasphemously pretends, to bring down from heaven by knocking on a table, the spirit of anyone who has died, from the commencement of the Christian era down to the present moment. It is difficult to believe that such nonsense can flourish out of Bedlam; yet the other day I read in an American paper, that "this Spiritualism is spreading over the country; already its

adherents are great and respectable in number, above mediocrity in talent, and are found chiefly among the upper classes of America; among men influential in the Church, and in political life, and in literature; many others, like Festus, are half persuaded; and some come Nicodemus-like,"—That is a mistake; it ought to have been Saul-like, for it is for the same reasons that they come. These Spiritualists have four or five newspapers of great influence and circulation; the proprietor of one previously a clergyman. They have twenty-five thousand adherents secret or open in Boston alone; more than ten thousand are avowed believers, or as the orthodox phrase is, professors of spiritualism! they have three places of worship in that city open every Sunday; they have service in different halls, which they have hired throughout the country, their literature is on the increase, some of their books have a large circulation; and a judge upon the bench has adopted it publicly; and some of the preachers of the Spiritual doctrines have congregations and meetings three times a day in connection with this horrid heresy. How unexpected, how startling, that this system so utterly baseless, so utterly inconsistent with the Word of God, should be taken up by reflecting minds! Does it not suggest at least the possibility, shall I say the probability, that these things may be the first sprinklings of the fulfilment of the awful prophecy in my text, that before the end arrive there shall arise false prophets? These false spirits "shall show great signs and wonders." I need not allude to the signs and wonders that those men to whom I have referred show; some of them seem startling, but I cannot believe, even with those who have minutely investigated the matter, that there is anything supernatural in Spiritualism. I do not believe that they can summon a spirit from heaven or hell; or that Satan would employ so bungling a system to carry out his own purposes and schemes. I have found no evidence of it. Satan is in it, in the sense he is in everything that is bad, in everything that would corrupt and contaminate the truth and arrest progress among mankind, and in this delusion supremely; but in any other sense I cannot believe, notwithstanding all that has been said, that he is there; and still less can I believe that God would send a spirit from its happy home to gratify the itching curiosity of a fool who pretends to have communications with heaven while he has never sought to have useful communications with his own corrupt and depraved heart. But while it may be nothing as a reality, it may be a pre-significant sign, a partial fulfilment of the prophets; and as such alone I regard it. "There shall be false prophets."

It is extremely difficult for the Doctor, consistently with his opinion expressed thirteen years ago, to admit

that the Devil is at the bottom of spiritual phenomena. He talks strongly enough about "nonsense," "Bedlam," "bungling," "blasphemy," and so on. But he does not say that the facts are not facts, or that they originate either in Heaven or Hell. If Dr. Cumming is not prepared to deny their existence, it seems to us "bungling nonsense" for him to dispute (taking his theology into account) their origin. To be consistent, he is driven to one of two fathers,—the Father God, or the "father of lies." Spiritualism must, according to the Doctor's notions, be the child of God or of the Devil, unless an intermediate independent cause can own the paternity. Surely Dr. Cumming, on this subject, is at sea in "evening clouds."

We have shewn that Dr. Cumming has accepted the table-tiltings, and, as he terms it, "table-talking" phenomena as genuine. We have likewise shewn that the learned divine will by no means saddle the phenomena on the back of Beelzebub. In this he is more than ever emphatic. We extract evidence from the Doctor's "Millennial Rest" in favour of the hypothesis of angelic intercourse with those that are the "heirs of salvation."

"The upper and under world have ceaseless intercourse by the new and living way. Angels come down in shining troops, and encamp around the people of God. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'—Heb. i. 14.

"Modern theology too much ignores the truth recorded here. Is there then any communion between heaven and earth? Have the redeemed in glory any sympathy with the redeemed that are on earth? Has the church militant directly or indirectly any actual relationship to the church triumphant that is above? These are anxious questions. As friend after friend passes into the shadow of the grave; as near and dear relatives ascend, in obedience to the invitation, 'Come up higher;' instinctively our hearts follow them to the heavenly rest; and we long to know—it is an instinct we cannot help—if their love to us is as warm as our remembrance of them. Is the gulf between heaven and earth like the gulf between heaven and hell, impassable? Do those who fill the choirs of the blessed hear, or know, or see us, or in any way sympathise with us who are in the cold crypt of the church below? It is

a very common notion that the world of redeemed spirits and the world of Christians struggling upon earth are at the antipodes of each other, that the blessed in heaven are too happy to think of us they have left behind them, and that we have little to do with them; as if they would not condescend to look back, however earnestly and lovingly we look after them; that a great gulf is fixed between us, which none can pass. Is it so? Is there proof in Scripture that it is so? One text would settle the whole controversy, and solve the difficulty. This is certain, angels descend from the choirs of the blessed, and minister to the company of the suffering; those angels return from their ministry to the choirs of the happy; and can we suppose they will be silent on what they have seen and to whom they have ministered below? There is a very beautiful line in Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope,' quoted frequently as exquisite poetry, but which is unquestionably very bad theology. He says:

'Like angel visits, few and far between.'

"Angel visits are neither few nor far between; but in the language of our Lord, they ascend and descend upon the Son of man; that is, by Christ the Mediator. It is evident that we do not see them; that is matter of fact and of human experience; but still it may not be less real. We do not see the friend at Dover with whom we communicate at London Bridge by the medium of the electric telegraph; and yet we communicate with that friend. We do not see the wire, nor the lightning that flashes along that wire as it carries the message on its wings, and conveys our wishes, or our desires, or our affliction, or our joy. So in the same manner we may not see angels, and yet every church may be filled with angels; our homes may be filled with angels; in our greatest trials, struggles, sorrows, griefs, angels may be ministering to us, and strengthening us.

"That we do not see the angels is no argument. That the Romish church has perverted and corrupted this truth, is no argument against it. Our mortal eyes can only see what is palpable, material, and tangible; but we know, and science has learned the fact, that there are substances in our world material, yet invisible and impalpable to us. The air we breathe is invisible, it is impalpable, though not imponderable; hydrogen gas is twelve times lighter than the air we breathe; we do not see it. So there may be agencies, powers, influences, in the air, in our homes, in our sanctuaries, in our counting-houses, in the world, on the ocean, on the field of conflict, influencing, actuating, strengthening, encouraging; not taking the place of Christ, but emissaries executing Christ's behests, and fulfilling his purposes of loving-kindness to all that believe, in his holy name. We read, for instance, in the New Testament

that fallen angels enter into the human heart, and tempt, and touch, and besiege it. Shall we admit that fallen angels may reach the heart, irrespective of the volition of its possessor, and that good angels may not do so? Shall we believe that Satan can enter the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to tempt them to lie and to do what is unholy, and shall we deny that holy angels may enter the hearts of believers, and whisper the strains of heaven, and spread around them the atmosphere of the blessed, and encourage them in the way that is good, and strengthen them to bear the burden that is very heavy? Protestants often recoil at the first hearing of such words as these: they instantly think, Why, this is Romanism. But Romanism is the perversion and the corruption of grand truths.

"Connected with the intercourse between the higher and the lower world, there is a most interesting question, beset with extreme difficulties. Do our near and dear ones who have preceded us to glory in any shape or in any way know us, love us, or hold communion or intercourse with us? That angels do so is an unquestionable fact; whether those who have preceded us to the better land do so is a very different question. All the Scripture says on the subject I have gathered. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, says: 'In heaven a vast multitude of them that are dear to us await our arrival: a multitude of parents, brethren, and children, who are now secure of their own salvation, and are only anxious about ours.' Those who are gone before us recollect this world, and those they have left behind them. It seems to me an irrefragable conclusion that those who have gone before us must recollect them they have left behind. The life that now is shapes the life that is to be; the impressions we receive in time we never can forget in the realms of eternity. Separate our growth here from our recollections there, and you separate the individual from himself. Were the past blotted out, for instance, from the memory of some one admitted into heaven, he could not believe himself to be the same person. As long as I am placed anywhere, so long the I must recollect what it was, what it has gone through, what influences it has felt, what motives have inspired it, and what progress it has made. Separate in my memory my past from my present, and you annihilate me,—you create a totally distinct and different being. We cannot conceive memory to be expunged in heaven, because we cannot conceive the individual to be annihilated there. Place me in the heights or place me in the depths—place me where you please in the orbs of the universe—I must recollect the preacher I listened to, the sermons I heard, the Bible I read, the fire-side by which I prayed, the roof-tree under which I dwelt, the sorrows by which I was burdened,

and the joys by which I was gladdened. And if you could for one moment so separate the past from the present, earth from heaven, what has made me from what I am become, you annihilate me, and you place in my stead and room another and a distinct creation. Shall the lost in misery recollect those they have left on earth, as the rich man did when he prayed that some one might rise from the dead, and go and speak to his five brethren, and shall the saved in heaven not recollect those they have left behind them? I believe that those who have gone before, your wives, your husbands, your children, your mothers, your fathers, perfectly recollect what you were, and where you were; and have not forgotten, but on the contrary, see with intenser light and with greater sharpness, all the events and intercourse, and communion, and incidents, and accidents, that God in his providence blessed to their conversion and everlasting life."

All this is beautiful and full of the highest Spiritualism. Not only arguments but spiritual authorities are pressed into service here. Let the Doctor's contemporaries study it and wonder at their blindness. Is it not strange that evidences so overpowering in favour of spiritual aids can be selected from the Sacred Scriptures, and yet so many high dignitaries of the churches, who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible, cannot, or will not see them? Dr. Cumming, say what he may, unless he can ignore what he has placed on record, must take a high position among Spiritualists. The apparently "bungling" and "puerile" manifestations which take place, are not attributable, according to Dr. Cumming, to Satanic agency; but he clearly proves that the higher manifestations of angelic intercourse have a divine origin. We gladly accept his definitions, and leave him to work them into the service of Faith.

** * * Those who desire to know more of this subject cannot do better than read "WHAT SPIRITUALISM HAS TAUGHT," by WILLIAM HOWITT, which can be had of Heywood & Co. Price 3d.*

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