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Some remarks on Lectures by the Rev. Edward White

AGAINST SPIRITUALISM,

*Delivered in St. Paul's Chapel, Kentish Town, from Oct. 31st
to Dec. 12th, 1858, from notes taken on the spot,*

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

Plato's speculations rested on a basis altogether historical. He connected himself with the actual phenomena of religious life, and with the traditions lying before him: as we see in his remarks on the doctrines of the gods, and on divination. He sought to embody in his speculations the truth which lay at the bottom of all this, and to separate it from all admixture of superstition. It still continued to be the aim of original Platonism to trace throughout history the vestiges of a connection between the visible and invisible worlds, between the divine and the human.—Neander.

The lectures on which I am about to make a few observations, have been in course of delivery, during the time specified, by Mr. White, the Baptist minister, of Kentish Town. They have been divided into the following heads: 1st. The existence, character, and craft, of the Devil and his Angels. 2nd. The demons and demoniacs of the Gospel History. 3rd. The ancient sin of Necromancy, or seeking to the dead. 4th. Spiritualism; Spirit-Rapping; and Spirit-Writing. 5th. On good Angels; their majesty, ministry, and help. 6th. On communion with God, and with Christ, the Lord of the world of Spirits.

It is not my intention to follow the lecturer through the whole of his course; but simply to state the main arguments and bearing of them. The great point, as it concerns modern Spiritualism, was the view which the lecturer took of the prohibition of the law of Moses—Deuteronomy c. xviii, v. 7—15, and his endeavour to prove this law still in full force under the Christian dispensation. It is quite clear that if he could have proved that, the fate of Spiritualism was settled for ever. The words of this law are that the Israelites, when they came into their land should not do after the abominations of the nations driven out before them, namely, to make their sons or daughters pass through the fire, or use "divination, or be observers of times, or be enchanters, or witches." To be charmers; or consultants with familiar spirits, or wizards, or necromancers. It declared that

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the Lord had driven out the nations of the land for those very abominations. And the text went on to show that "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me, (Moses) unto him shall ye hearken."

Mr. White, therefore, contended, and with reason, that the Israelites were forbidden, under pain of death,—for they were not to permit an Idolater to live—to hold communication with divining spirits, or the spirits of the dead: and that they had no excuse for doing it, because God not only lived amongst them, but, in every age, almost to the coming of Christ, the great prophet ultimately alluded to, he sent prophets, who carried God's messages to them. There was one point, however, which Mr. White here kept out of sight, though one of those on which he was expressly going to lecture, namely, that all this time, *besides* the prophets, the Israelites enjoyed the ministry of angels. This ministry of angels in which he professes his firm belief, might here, however, have greatly weakened his case; it would, at all events, here greatly modified it. For what was this ministry of angels, but the ministry of Spirits? Thus the Israelites, during the the period of their strictest prohibition, were in the enjoyment of a spirit-communication, ordained and sanctioned by God himself. A ministry which was abundant in its manifestations throughout the whole of the old Testament period, and renewed as abundantly under the New Testament one. This, therefore, reduced the Mosaic injunction simply to the fact that the Israelites should not abstain from communication with spirits altogether, but only from that of evil spirits. This no Spiritualist would be at all disposed to contest.

Taking, however, the Mosaic prohibition in a full and absolute sense as to all spirits, Mr. White next attempted to continue this prohibition to Christians. But here he signally failed. He could not show that the prohibition against even evil spirits was expressly continued under the Christian dispensation. His endeavour was to prove that many things belonging to the old law not verbally abrogated by Christ, were virtually abrogated, as circumcision and the like. So far as the negative argument went, we might readily go with him: nay, we would go further, and admit this communion with evil spirits to be in the very nature of things, tacitly forbidden by the Gospel of Christ, which is a system of perfect purity and holiness. But as to the positive prohibition of seeking to or holding any communications with spirits, the lecturer could not produce a tittle of evidence. The nearest that he could come, was to assert that St. Paul warned those to whom he wrote, against "worshipping of angels," which, by a violent stretch of logic, he said, meant holding communication with spirits.

Without stopping to notice an argument of this nature, we will therefore simply here advance ample proofs for a positive sanction of holding communication with Spirits, and amongst them, spirits of the dead, by Christianity, where the lecturer could not even produce a prohibition against it. So far then, was it from being prohibited by Christ to receive communication from the dead, that he himself, the moment that he expired on the cross, became a *Spirit of the dead*, and the head and prince of all the Spirits of the dead: as Mr. White himself, in the heading of his lectures, says, "The Lord of the World of Spirits." To his Spirit we are commanded to seek continually, and from it to receive all our spiritual life, strength and consola-

tion. He has encouraged us to seek to his spirit, by declaring that he stands for ever at the door and knocks; and if we open will come in, and make himself known, and also bring the Father with him.—That this communion, and for ever, established intercourse with his spirit, the prince of the spirits of the dead, was not to be confined solely to him, was immediately proved by the spirits of the dead rising at the crucifixion, and going into the city, and shewing themselves to many. This was a direct and incontrovertible demonstration that the law of Moses had lapsed so far as it regarded Christians. And this fact is still more confirmed by St. John, who in the apocalypse informs us, that a Spirit of the dead was one of the angels who appeared to him then. Revelations c. xix, v. 10. When John was going to fall down and worship the angel, (supposing probably it was Christ who had been in communication with him,) he said—“See thou do it not, I am thy fellowservant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” Thus from the first to the last of the Christian dispensation, from the first act of the divine drama of Christianity to the last, that in which the world winds up its story, the spirits of the dead are great and divinely commissioned agents.

Still more, St. John tells us that there were spirits, both good and evil, active in the church from the very first, c. iv : v. 1, 2 and 3 of his 1st Epistle. Had the law of Moses been in force, certainly John would have reminded them of it: but, on the contrary, so far from forbidding this intercourse he encouraged it by telling the church to prove the spirits, whether they are of God or not—and assured them that every spirit which confessed Christ come in the flesh, they might be satisfied came from God. The lecturer might have told his hearers too what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. c. xii, v. 4 to 11 respecting the gifts of the Spirit to the church, the very same gifts which the Spiritualists now claim, as the heritage of Christ's church to the end of time, and many of which they now enjoy and use, as the gift of healing, the working of miracles, namely, the wonderful physical manifestations of speaking through tables, lifting them into the air, rapping upon them etc, which confound materialism above every thing, and not less the dead faithless spirit of mere traditionary Christianity. The gift of discerning spirits, possessed by numbers at this day, of using and understanding divers tongues, and interpreting tongues, etc. These very things which so many are ready to attribute to diabolical agency, Mr. White amongst the rest, St. Paul fully recognized as the divine gifts of the church, all given “by the same God which worketh all in all.”

Mr. White, however, took care to quote Paul's words to Timothy, (1 Timothy c. iv, v. 1; 2 and 3.) “Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,” etc. The lecturer stated that the translation was not very literal—that it should be “demons teaching doctrines,” instead of “teaching doctrines of devils.” It is not necessary to enter, in the present limited vehicle, into all the philological arguments of such questions. Enough, that in this case, the distinction is really without a difference. If they are *seducing* spirits, it is enough, and if they are demons

teaching doctrines, these doctrines must be doctrines of devils or they are harmless. But unfortunately for Mr. White's intended application of Paul's words to modern Spiritualism, the words themselves mark their real application and the date of it. The forbidding to marry and to eat meats, identify these seducing doctrines, as those of the Romish church, and Paul's latter times are very old times to us, namely, the 10th, and 11th centuries, in the latter of which the notorious Gregory VII, completed these diabolic suggestions of seducing spirits by forbidding the marriage of the clergy. With these doctrines of devils came in all the abominations of the confessional, of absolution by priests for money, of praying out of purgatory for money etc., doctrines so devilish, so opposed to nature and sound morals, that they sufficiently identify themselves.

That seducing spirits would come, Paul clearly foresaw, and the events has attested the correctness of his prophecy: but whilst the doctrines he had particularly in view are expressly marked by him, their application can only extend to Spiritualists if they suffer themselves to be similarly seduced. That the devil is as active as ever to seduce we are quite as well aware as Mr White, but there is no more reason to charge Spiritualism distinctly with lying under such influences, than the christian world at large. As Spiritualists profess generally the same faith, hold the same sincere and living belief in the divine and mediatorial efficacy of Christ, to charge them with being actuated by devils is precisely to do as the pharisees did by Christ himself, attributing his holy work to the devil, which he declared to be the only unpardonable sin—the sin against the Holy Ghost. Is it not as well for such daring preachers, who denounce that which christians, as thoroughly pious and sincere as themselves, declare to be the work of God's spirit, and the spirits of his angels, as the work of devils, to ask themselves whether instead of doing God service, they are not committing the worst and most unpardonable of sins? Would it not be as well for them to reflect on the words of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrim when it was persecuting the apostles? Acts c. 5, v. 34—39. This wise old man reminded the hot-headed Jews, who like so many of our modern lecturers and theological writers are so ready to rush in and denounce their brethren as actuated by devils, before they themselves have actually examined the realities of the case,—that certain false prophets and Christs had from time to time appeared, Theudas and others, who had led away many, but that they had all died out; and he concluded with this sensible advice:—"If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." This surely might induce our zealous neighbours to wait at least till they have made themselves really and practically acquainted with what they attack. If it be false, it is not worth the trouble they give themselves; it will die out of itself: if it be of God they can not move it. This same Spiritualism—has already in ten years convinced three millions of people in America alone! in Europe I believe, there are not less than another million, and the rapidity with which it is diffusing itself through all ranks and classes literally from the palace to the cottage, should set them thinking. It would startle some people to discover in how many royal *palaces* in Europe it is firmly seated; and with

what vigour it is diffusing itself through all ranks and professions of men, who do not care to make much noise about it, men and women of literary, religious, or scientific fame. And if the modern objectors would only just make themselves really and practically acquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism—for it is on plain and palpable phenomena, not on mere fancies, that these millions of believers base their faith,—and then after such a real acquaintance with these phenomena, they would just take the trouble to make as careful an examination of the ancients, the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks, the Romans, they would find precisely the same doctrines built on the same familiar phenomena, existing there and as clearly and fully enunciated by them. Let them then, go to Socrates, to Plato, to Xenophon, to Pythagoras and Appollonius of Tyana, a man living only sixty nine years after Christ, who for his wonderful power of healing was declared a sorcerer, but who says of himself —“A sorcerer I am not, but a better man sustained by God in all my actions. Sacrifices I have no need of, for God is always present to me, and fulfils my wishes, so that I leave all those cheats and impostors behind me.” Let them take a passing peep at Zoroaster and the wonders of the Zendavesta, and a glance at the marvellous doctrines and healing powers of Egypt. Let them read what Strabo, Suetonius and Tacitus say of the miraculous healing powers of the emperor Vespasian. Let them then descend to the great theosophists and therapeutæ of Alexandria: the neo-Platonists, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, who are all advocates for the doctrine that the Spirit of God not only dwells in sincere believers, but endows them with marvellous gifts. These men were perfectly acquainted with the most familiar forms of Spiritualism, mesmerism, and clairvoyance. Iamblichus tells us that the body of a person, whose inner eye is opened to the Spiritual world, may be cut or stabbed at will without feeling it. He tells us “there are, however, different kinds of divine inspiration; therefore the appearances are different. Either God dwells in us himself, or we are consecrated ourselves to him wholly. Sometimes we participate in the highest; sometimes in the intermediate, and at others in the lowest degree of power. Sometimes God is revealed in his full presence in us, sometimes it is a union through inspiration.”

Let the objectors consider these doctrines of pagans, and ask themselves whether they are willing to be left so far behind pagans? But let them go on. They will find all the ages since thronged, with the fathers of the Church; the fathers of the Desert, who with all their eccentricity, exhibited proofs of divine visitation. Let them consider what Tertullian says of the Christians of the third century, that even then they had such power over demons, that he would have any pretending to be Christians put to death who could not cast them out. Let them follow the course of the saints of ancient Catholicism, who had most undoubted gifts of miracles from the holy spirit. Let them study the character of St. Catherine of Sienna; who though living only to the age of thirty-three, healed the sick, walked amid the plague curing and consoling; drew the people after her by her words of fire: stepped into the battle field and stayed the combatants, reconciled contending parties, and converted the sceptical to their own astonishment; and whose improvised poetry has been declared equal to that of Dante. Who shall

dare to say that the power of the gospel did not work in her with all its original energy ?

Follow down the so-called mystics, Eckardt, Tauler, Luther ; the theosophists of the 16th and 17th centuries, Van Helmont, Theophrastus, Paracelsus, Croll, Behmen, Richter, Gassner, Madame Guion, George Fox, down to Swedenborg, John Wesley ; to those of our own day, Oberlin, Stilling, men whom the religious world venerates. All these, whom the outer world regarded as enthusiasts, bear testimony to the same invariable phenomena, all assert the same eternal law of spiritual life, all claim the same experiences as the gift of God in fulfilment of the promises of his son to his church.

Now, until men have made themselves master of these cycles of facts, first of the modern, and then of the ancient, we must deny their qualifications for judging on this great subject. Until they have gone patiently and candidly into all the manifestations of to-day, ascertained their actuality, carefully studied their tendency, and then have gone with equal care through the history of the past, which deals with the same laws, and developments, they have *no right* to dictate on this subject. They stand in the position of quacks and empirics, uttering their ignorance in the presence of the aggregate testimony of the great psychologists of all ages and nations. For, whatever they may suppose, the same mighty and eternal Power has been visiting the souls of his creatures with the same baptismal fire of spiritual life, growth and sustenance ; visiting them by his own spirit and the spirits of his messengers through all the vast worlds of nations, ages and histories. For as St. Paul declares, God has at no time left himself without a witness in the souls of men, even in the darkest and most pagan periods. Therefore, they who live to-day, and never heard of the long past ages and people to whom we have referred, are at this moment experiencing in all the varied manifestations of Spiritualism, identically the same phenomena which these persons, thousands of years ago, unheard of by them, then experienced : and the great and prominent laws of the divine economy, thus testify to their own truth beyond all human challenge.

I am not, therefore, attaching any weight to the dicta of individuals except as the dicta of a class : and these arguments of Mr. White, are precisely the same as have been used, and are used by able editors and zealous theologians in America as well as here, passing like the wind over the grass, and leaving Spiritualism in its undisturbed verdure. They are all based on this same cardinal defect of knowledge of the history of psychologic philosophy in the different ages of the past and the present. Mr. White's knowledge, personally, of the real phenomena of Spiritualism, is very slight indeed, yet he ventures to oppose it to the real knowledge of all the past ages, and of the millions of present believers, many of whom have for years been daily conversant with these phenomena. Can he, or any man, hope with the feather of a superficial observation to move the deep-seated rocks of experimental knowledge, any more than those who have gone before him ?

From what I have said, it will be seen that Mr. White has, however, advanced beyond the first mere rudiments of Sciolism. He scouts the very idea of Spiritualism being humbug, legerdemain, or mesmerism. He gives to millions of

serious and sane experimentalists, the credit of dealing with realities. He has in fact, advanced to the devil. So far so good. That is a substantial step; a real gain. How many thousands, philosophized out of all faith in spirit; men believing themselves wise, who have gone back to materialism, or in other words, to something more dark than paganism, would rejoice if they could have proofs of a devil! Oh! to them what comfort in a devil! For if a devil, they would know that God and his angels were not far off, as sure as that there must be a sun before there can be a shadow.

The devil is Mr. White's Deus ex machina. With the devil he performs all sorts of marvels. He makes him restore dead Christianity to life: revive the living God and the conscious Saviour in the soul. He revives defunct faith; casts out the devil of unforgiveness; opens the heart to heavenly and brotherly love. He purifies by him our fallen and gross nature; triumphs over the flesh and his own diabolism; kindles the spirit of fervent adoration; opens the vision to see angels walking, the ear to hear their celestial voices; expands the intellect to comprehend the greatness and the wisdom, and the inner sensorium, to feel the unspeakable love of God. He makes his devil charm the fierce and irritable to peace and patience; he converts atheists to the profoundest and most grateful belief in the gospel, which all the empty formalism of pulpits had failed to do. He diffuses a heavenly peace through thousands of human dwellings and binds together families and friends by new and holy bonds of affection. He brings men up shivering from the cold barren clay-pits of materialism; from the slime-pits of animalism; from the arctic frost of a dead faith; from the nettle beds of controversial theology, and plants them in God's open sunshine, on the solid floor of his truth, where the winds of spiritual health are blowing around them, where the rays of his light and love come down in silent but perpetual showers, sending life, strength, beauty and abundance through all his spiritual creation. He casts down the creeping, clinging fear of death; he makes firm in the human soul the assurance of life, firm as the consciousness of life itself; and enables the modern as the ancient Christian, to walk on humble, but triumphant, peaceful, patient, loving, and rescued from the lusts of Mammon and the teazings of ambition; enfranchized and sanctified to God, to Christ, to his brother man and to eternity. All this Mr. White, and such opponents do with the devil, if the devil be the source of Spiritualism, for such is Spiritualism, come whence it may. The opponents may not know that such is Spiritualism, such its effects: no matter, it does not exist by their knowledge; Spiritualists know it, and wherever they are, from India to the farthest America, those who alone have committed themselves to the guidance and guardianship of God and his Christ, will shout from their distant abodes, "It is the truth as we have found it to our unspeakable joy and advantage!" Such I have found it; such my family have found it. It has made known God as a living God, no longer "a God hiding himself;" Christ, a present and perpetual Saviour. We have found the great ministry of angels, established from the foundation of the world, still as real and active as ever. We have found our departed friends coming around us in their beautiful spiritual names, with messages and airs from heaven; with gifts of new and wonderful interest. New pow-

ers, faculties and pleasures have sprung up on our hearth, before which the mere amusements of the world, operas, theatres, concerts, earth-parties, appear "stale, flat, and unprofitable."

Let Mr. White and his colleagues ask themselves seriously, whether men really do gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Whether the great test of Christ for all things—"By their fruits shall ye know them" is yet a test? If so, how vain are the endeavours to drive four millions of men whose ranks are every day fast swelling, from the substantial knowledge of what they have proved and approved? Whilst Mr. White was triumphantly exclaiming in his pulpit, that if this new Spiritualism (which by the way, as we have seen, is not new at all,) be really from God, it ought to make a more magnificent appearance, like Christianity at first.—Spiritualism was rushing on so rapidly that it was his own plea for taking it up. He declared that it was spreading everywhere with astonishing velocity. That it had already in, ten years time, won three millions of adherents in America, and 17 journals devoted to it. That it was spreading through England, through Europe, through the whole world, and that too amongst the most able, educated, and intelligent people, men and women, of the soundest judgments and most practical experience, of world-wide fame, so that it would not do any longer to let it alone.

Surely that is important, that is imposing enough—in ten years to have converted to it three millions of souls! Did Christianity do this at first? I believe not. Christianity, like its new manifestation, was at first represented as a devilish agency. The Roman and some of the later Greek writers, contain some of the most repulsive descriptions of it. They called upon the emperors to extirpate it as a barbarous and even an obscene superstition. It was the *superstitio prava* of Pliny the younger: the *exitiabilis superstitio* of Tacitus: the Christians were the *homines per flagitiis invidios* of that historian. Every classical reader can lay his hand on these statements. Let then, Mr. White content himself. The sun makes no noise as he shines, yet he vivifies a universe. The dew makes no riot in falling, yet it feeds all vegetable, and, therefore, all animal life. The leaven which is now fast leavening the old dead lump of mere literal Christianity, is silent and unseen, yet it is pauseless in its action. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands—is rolling on as silent as the spheres, yet it is destined to fill the whole earth.

It is now necessary to give our readers a knowledge of what are the lecturer's views on a most vital question, that of the destiny of our fellowmen; for when this is known it immediately throws a light on the origin of his attack on Spiritualism. He declared it as his fullest and most solemn conviction that every one who has not received the gospel at the time of his death in any age, or any nation, is certainly and eternally destroyed, that is, annihilated. He declared that the Spiritualists promulgated a *new doctrine*, namely, that there is a succession of worlds after death, where spirits not fully purified, and therefore, not fully fitted to dwell immediately with God and his angels, dwell and pass on from one sphere to another, as they become more holy, till they at last reach the heaven and visible presence of God. This he denounced as wholly false, and contrary

to the whole of the gospel teaching. In stating this opinion, he grew very much excited, and declared that this was the clear, and positive doctrine of the New Testament; exclaiming "there is nothing but absolute destruction for the souls of the wicked, and of those who have not accepted Christ. There is nothing! nothing! nothing! but destruction by the eternal fire!"

That there is no mistake on this head we learn from his own evidence in print. We have, presented by himself, a small volume styled "The Theory of Missions," and a larger one called "Life in Christ." In his "Theory of Missions," Mr. White denies as horrible the doctrine of the Missionaries, who call on people to support missions on the plea that they are saving those who do not hear of Christ from eternal torments in hell. That their doctrine is that all, men and women, of whatever age or nation, who do not obtain the preaching of the gospel, as well as those who reject Christ when heard of, are plunged down into eternal fire.

To escape from this very horrible doctrine, Mr. White adopts, on what he deems scriptural authority, a somewhat milder notion: he annihilates such persons. Yes! all living souls, in all ages, from the foundation of the world to the present time, and hereafter to the end of the world, who have not received the gospel of Christ, will assuredly be annihilated at the general resurrection. Though they shall go into an intermediate state till the resurrection, they will then have no further offer of—or chance of salvation.

Now the moment we understand this doctrine, we see at a glance the origin of the preacher's antagonism to Spiritualism. He is pledged both from the pulpit and the press, to advocate the utter annihilation of the souls of innumerable millions of his fellow creatures; if we are to judge from appearances, of ninety-nine hundredths of the whole human race, from the creation to the end of time. We say ninety-nine hundredths, for are there ten in every hundred of human beings on the earth at any time, however good, who are so pure and perfect, at the moment of their death, that they are prepared to be received into the immediate presence of God, in whose holy eyes his very ministers are not pure? If not, they perish according to Mr. White, inevitably and eternally. Now this doctrine, infinitely as it is preferable to that of tormenting eternally, souls unvisited by the gospel, is still monstrous, and most libellous of the divine attributes. To suppose that the all-wise, all-good, all-merciful God, the same God who so loved mankind, that he sent his only son to die for their salvation, shall have created the great bulk of the incalculable millions of his rational creatures only to annihilate them, is a doctrine so entirely opposed to every idea of justice, and mercy, that the moral sense of man revolts at it. That he who desireth not the death of a sinner, and that he who came to seek and save that which was lost should thus make havoc with his fair creation, is incredible on any conceivable principle. Man may be willing to annihilate countless millions of beings, thinking, living souls, quivering with all the sensibilities of life, and the hopes of immortality, but that God should be so ready to destroy what by his love he embraces and by his power and wisdom he might raise and glorify, is not so readily to be conceded. Such a theory degrades the all-gracious Deity below the veriest bungler that ever made a pot.

Take the simile of the potter used by Jeremiah, c. 18, and again by St. Paul to the Romans, c. 9. If such a potter should mar not one vessel on his wheel, but ninety-nine hundredths, nay nine tenths, or one tenth, he would be ejected from the veriest pot-shed in the land, and derided as an incurable bungler. Shall we dare to conceive of the sublime architect of the universe, and of the human soul in such a manner? Is it not far more consonant to our ideas of his power, his wisdom, his love and his long-suffering, that what he has so wonderfully made he shall as royally raise, ennoble and perfect, at least in its far greatest part, having infinite worlds and infinite ages to accomplish it in? Is it not marvellous that the love of his neighbour should not more affect Mr. White, undoubtedly a benevolent man, than that he can, in his doctrine, contemplate the wholesale annihilation of his fellow creatures with the most unruffled mind? But so abhorrent to him is the doctrine that there is a chance for these unhappy souls beyond this little, fleeting being, in that boundless eternity where they may yet come to perceive the truth, and advance towards the divine beneficence, that he looks on Spiritualism, which holds out such a hope and trust in the Divine Spirit, and in its holy messengers, as a fearful heresy.

Spiritualism, in fact, comes with a divine commission utterly to annihilate the whole system of annihilation. On it, therefore, Mr. White makes unmitigated warfare. He contends that there is no single trace of any doctrine of progression, of a succession of states after death in the Old or New Testament. Let us see. We, on our part, believe the whole system of eternal annihilation to be built on a few doubtful phrases. We believe that a little philological examination of the terms applied to duration in these cases will show them to be nearly all period-lasting. But for such disquisitions, this is not the place, enough, that to economise our space, we prove our own position. Swedenborg was taught by the angels, with whom he conversed, that there was a succession of worlds or states, for the progressive improvement and advance of souls. All angels and departed spirits now teach the same as a fact to the Spiritualists, and both scripture and reason, in our opinion, confirm that view. Mr. White said in his lecture if there be such states, why have 1800 years elapsed without so important a fact being made known? Is it likely, he asked, that such a truth should be kept concealed so long?

We might just as reasonably ask whether it was likely that so great a fact as the coming of Christ and all the truths that he brought with him, should have been delayed 4000 years. When a Saviour and restorer was announced to man at the fall, would it seem likely that his appearance should be distant 4000 years? Yet God fixed that period in his divine economy, though it was declared that in his name alone could the nations of the earth be blessed. We might just as rationally ask why such a continent as America was concealed for nearly 6000 years? Yet God did conceal it, and when it was needed for his purposes brought it forth and peopled it with great nations. We have waited much longer for gas, steam, electricity, and telegraphs. But they were necessary as civilization advanced and have come in their appointed time. So Spiritualism was needed to combat effectually materialism, animalism, and the fossilization of the churches

and it has received a fresh and wonderful dynamic impulse. Many other great truths both physical, intellectual and spiritual, still undoubtedly await in the bosom of the future the call of God, for he is as infinite in that direction as in any other. There are many things which both our Saviour and Paul said were too hard or high for those early times, which most probably will be brought out for the more advanced ones,—needs for them, as they were superfluous for less artistic ages.

But let us not confound a stronger afflux of spirit with a totally new dispensation. No, Spiritualism is as old as the Bible. The theory of the succession of worlds is just as old too. The Hebrews, Mr. White very truly showed, held a faith in such a series. They had their Gehenna, their lower and upper Hades, and their heaven, the abode of the Lord above that. There were at least five ascents, including our earth, in their secular scale. Solomon, when dedicating the Temple, asked how was God to dwell in that house, when the "Heaven of Heavens" could not contain him. Thus there was a heaven of heavens, a sort of universal heaven, containing the lesser ones. This was evidently a fixed idea at the coming of our Saviour, for before his departure (John c. xiv.) he tells his disciples that in his Father's house are *many* mansions: and he says that if it were not so he would have told them, evidently meaning, that as they believed with their countrymen, the Jews, in a number of heavens, he would have told them the truth, even had it been to extinguish that idea.

Now, if there be many heavens, or regions, is it not rational to suppose, as the angels always teach, that these regions are successive, adapted to the condition of Spirits who have for a period to inhabit them? If all Spirits, not decidedly evil, on being admitted to the invisible world, were by some miraculous power, made at once as spiritually perfect as the highest angels, why should they not dwell with them? The plurality of heavens infers a plurality of states, and accords with the highest conceptions of an all-wise Creator, still educating, still accomplishing his intelligent children amid the ever opening mysteries and wonders of eternity.

This idea was accordingly confirmed by St. Paul (II. Corinthians : 12) who tells us that he knew a man, supposed to be himself, caught up to the *third* heaven.

So there are, according to St. Paul, not only different heavens, but a succession of them. Christ says, there are many, and Paul does not limit them. He only reached the *third*, and there even learnt things not allowed to him to relate on earth.

But that sins *are* forgiven, in these states, which are not forgiven on earth contrary to the theory of Mr. White, and many other professors, is equally clear. Christ in speaking of the sin against the Holy Ghost, declares that it is the *only* sin which shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in *the world to come*. So then, not only are sins forgiven in the world to come but *all* sins may be forgiven there except *one only*. But if sins, and all kinds of sins, are there forgiven, with only one exception, there must be progression. To pass out of sin into forgiveness is itself progression. But in the infinitely varied degrees of sin and impurity which in so wide a capacity for pardon must exist, the need of a wide field of

progression and purification is apparent. And as in all the works of God that we are acquainted with, the work is one of progressive development, the plant from the seed to the leaf, the blade, the flower, the fruit: the man, from the child to the adult, to old age, and then to the disembodied spirit; so we are warranted by every principle of analogy to believe that there is the same progressive development hereafter. It is the only idea in accordance at once with our experience of nature, and of the sublime attributes of the Creator. When, therefore, the lecturer exclaimed as in the superlative of reproach:—The Spiritualists believe in a succession of heavens: in a perpetual advance from evil to good, from imperfection towards perfection!" it seemed to me the noblest eulogium that he could have pronounced on this faith.

Some of Mr. White's objections were too obviously groundless to demand more than a notice, such as that Spiritualism was intended to supersede Christianity. If some wild Americans have asserted themselves independent of the Bible through possession of a new revelation, Christian Spiritualists are no more responsible for that than the Independants are for the blasphemies of the Mormons. That the devil is hard at work to mislead men through Spiritualism we are quite as much convinced as Mr. White, but we are equally convinced that his exertions arise from opposition to God's own movement in Spiritualism, not from his introduction of this movement. "Offences will come, but who unto him, by whom they do come." Christian Spiritualists, who are the majority, hold fast by the Bible, and are no more responsible for the follies or the extravagances of others, than protestantism is for the burnings and butcheries of past Popery, or for the assumed supremacy of the Pope.

Again, he asserted that if Spiritualism were true, it would not maintain one thing in America, another in England, another in France, and another in Germany. The highest Spirits maintain in every part of the world the truth of Christianity, but other and lower Spirits maintain such doctrines as please their votaries. There is no safety but in the the Cross, and they who will not seek safety from it, will be led into error and differences, whether through Spiritualism or without it. What is the condition of the Christian world now after its having existed for upwards 1800 years? How much crime and sensuality, and ignorance prevail? How many contradictory things have the churches maintained and still maintain, though all professing to walk in the light of Christ? If the argument of universal unity of doctrine were to be the test of a true church the christian church must long ago have been condemned as spurious. The apostles themselves disagreed on circumcision, on eating with the Gentiles, and other points. Paul disputed with Peter, and Barnabas with Paul. The Roman church was at variance with the Greek. The Roman and Greek churches were at variance each in itself on points of doctrine and ritual. The Reformation instead of union, produced multiplied discordances of practice and opinion, which still exist in the shape of High Church and Low Church, Puseyites, Independants, Baptists, particular and general, Quakers, Hickites, Presbyterians, Kirk and Free Kirk, Antinomians, Erastians, Sandemanians, Swedenborgians, Unitarians, Arians, Universalists, Dunkers, Shakers, Methodists, Calvinistic and Ar-

menian, Whitfieldites, Wesleyans, Kilhamites, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians. Old Lutherans and new Lutherans, Reformed-evangelical on the continent, with Mückers or Pietists, and remains of the old Anabaptists, etc. etc. If want of agreement in teaching or practice is to invalidate Spiritualism, which has never yet raised the flaming faggot, or built an Inquisition with its racks and torture, or called out the trooper with the exterminating sword against those who ventured to disagree with it, woe to the Christian Church at large, which is not only full of violent contentions of both opinion and feeling, but is drenched in the blood of the saints.

But in answering another objection, we may more fully answer this. Mr. White said that the Spiritualists, when pressed, admitted that the modern inspirations were not equal to the old, and yet he contended that if they came from the Divine Spirit they must be of equal value and authority with those of the apostles. On this head I gave him the following illustration in writing:—The sun, from the centre of our system, pervades the whole of it by its rays. Whatever of life, animal or vegetable, exists in any part of it, exists through the law of God, by its action. All the developments and processes of physical life, all its changes and manifestations, are the result of the emanations from the sun. But how differently! In what infinitely differing degrees do the rays operate in different parts of the system, and when moving through purer or grosser media. The rays of the sun travelling through the ethereal space, we may suppose fly onward in their direct course and greatest velocity. When, however, they strike on the grosser atmospheres of the planets, they become refracted, and dispersed in all directions, producing their intended effects, but in an infinite variety of results, and with infinitely varied degrees of purity and intensity. In the tropics, with what force and splendour do they act! What Magnificent forms of vegetation and of animal life do they produce. How different again in the temperate Zones, how much diminished in the arctic circle, till they cease to act at all, and there remain only frost and night.

In all these progresses and processes of emanation, the sun's rays enter into combination with matter; mingle their nature with its nature, and thence produce their endless effects of varied life, color, taste, odour, with all their sustaining, destructive, and remedial powers. Yet in all these cases it is still the sun, and its genuine rays which, under God, effect all these miraculous results: for without the sun there would be nothing but eternal frost, eternal physical death. Nay, we may go still further, and say, that amid all the perfected forms and qualities which the sun's rays produce, there are frequently defective, distorted and even malignant forms and abortions. Yet—in all these the pure and living rays of the sun are as really operative, though not so harmoniously as in the more perfect developments of nature. And this is, because these life and form-giving rays are met by opposition of gross and even diseased media, and are thus productive of defective, and distorted, and sometimes monstrous organizations. Still, they are the effects of the genuine rays of the sun, for without such rays, no physical life can exist. Those rays, at least the calorific ones, operate in what we often think perfect darkness, in vaults and cellars, producing vegeta-

tion, either of fungoid or colorless kinds. Nevertheless, the operative principle in these colorless and fungoid vegetations is the action of the sun. So not only by the argument of analogy, but by the assurance of the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that all things are made after a pattern in the heavens, we are taught to believe that the Spirit of God, from his central throne, fills all the infinite universe, and communicates of his spirit, by measure more or less, according to his manifold plan, to every rational creature. To great prophets and apostles a fullness of divine afflatus proportionate to the greatness of the work to which they are appointed, and so on, in varied measure and degree, down to the smallest requirements of the spirit placed in the smallest circle of Spiritual labour and influence. As the sun's rays mingle and combine, to produce their necessary development, with matter, so no doubt, the divine spirit mingles and combines, to a certain degree, with the minds through which it operates, so that not only do the inspirations differ wonderfully in force, intensity and scope, but are more or less free from the mingling of men's own minds and qualities. Náy, there can be little doubt that the analogy betwixt the action of the natural sun and that of the spiritual sun, the Divine Spirit, is carried on much further, and to a startling extent. That, as in the natural world, distorted or defective creatures are produced by the vitality of the sun, meeting with resisting and distorting influences, so in the spiritual world, the divine inspiration comes forth through such distorting media and causes, in forms which are not to be admitted to be fully divine, but yet have the power of God in them. This is to me very clear in the case of fanaticism, and in some forms of false worship, which have yet undoubtedly traces of the divine in them. At least, it would be a bold thing to pronounce, in some of these cases, that they had not arisen from resistance to genuine inspirations. Even in legitimate cases, God's ways are often not our ways, nor at all in accordance with our notions. I do not pursue this argument so far in order to defend extravagance, or delusion, but to shew the necessity of caution and careful enquiry before we condemn. Well is it for us that God has given us, through Christ, certain means of judging whether a thing be wholly from him, for if so it must be wholly good, for men do not gather grapes of thorns, etc. And by the same rule we can judge of comparative and mingled good. But that all communications from the Divine Spirit should be of the same rank, dignity, and value, as those of the apostles and prophets, is certainly contrary to everything speaking through nature or through the spirit. If that were the case, the prophets and apostles would be on the same plane with Christ, as to inspiration which is impossible. That which is given by *measure*, can not approach that which is *without measure*. As in nature the work of an elephant can not be achieved by the ant, so in Spiritual life, the measure of the apostle is not given to every Christian who has only to seek his own edification or at most that of his neighbour. Yet in the latter case, the inspiration may be equally genuine and as much from God as that of the intellectual giant, the most spiritual apostle, or the most august archangel.

Mr. White admitted that this was "A very luminous and beautiful exposition of what," he says, "I cannot but regard as the true doctrine on Divine Inspiration." Yet in his subsequent lecture he returned to the charge, that Spiritualists, when

pressed admitted the present inspiration to be inferior to the ancient. The reader will judge whether the above illustration does admit anything of the kind. On the contrary, Spiritualists consider that the present inspiration is identical with the old, and part and parcel of Christianity. Whether in these latter ages, communications precisely of the same character, as those given to the ancients will be given, is a question. It is not likely that men will be commanded like Isaiah to walk naked for three years, or like Hosea, to marry first a prostitute and then an adulteress, to symbolize the corruption of their nation, neither may they receive the same ultra missions of denunciation and thunder. God varies his mode of action to the character of the times; but the measure of power exerted is the result produced. Now we have sufficiently commented on the wonderful progress of Spiritualism: and there is no reason why as magnificent productions should not be given now through the press, as formerly, though oral proclamation or epistolary dictation. Some very beautiful and some magnificent writings have already appeared both in America and this country. If any one would read such poetry as has been rarely surpassed since Milton, let him read Harris's "Lyric of the Morning Land" and of the "Golden Age." But my space stops me. I must return to these topics another time. Suffice it here to say, that it is not likely that God in the work of private and domestic edification, will send the thunder of archangels, any more than to use Mr. White's own metaphor, that the great bell of Westminster will be rung on every ordinary marriage, or to tinkle in the members of the Commons to a division. But occasions may come when the great bell of the spirit may have to send forth its stupendous tones. God's arm is not shortened,—there is nothing to prevent it.

I had still some remarks to make on Mr. White's view of the ministry of angels, which turned out to be so identical with that of Spiritualists, that one wondered why he had opposed this at all. But as if recollecting himself, he said they must not be confounded together. "The angels in scripture *never came in their own names*; those of Spiritualism *always do*. The angels came invariably in the name of the Lord; those of Spiritualism *never have done so*." This every Spiritualist will instantly recognize as so singular a mistake that it needs no refutation. Not only did the angels of scripture frequently announce themselves in their own names, as Gabriel and Michael, or in other scripture books, which though now not canonical, were long held so, and are still credited by the Jews; as Raphael, Azrael, Uriel and others; but *never* do good angels, whether departed spirits or not, come but as messengers of the Lord. On this head there are many beautiful and important things to say hereafter. The only remaining difference then, betwixt Mr. White and the Spiritualists was that he *believes* the angels now come unperceived; the Spiritualists *know* that they are perceptible to all the senses. And thus this ingenious opposition was reduced to a mere question of consciousness, or unconsciousness. And is this all! What a splitting of hairs! What a shaving of films! In this difference the Spiritualists have clearly the advantage. The lecturer does not know when ministering angels come; they do: many see them as well as converse with them. And it is worthy of note that whilst the ancient angels had names significant of their natures and office—Ga-

briel, the strength of God ; Michael—the humility of God ; Raphael, the medicine of God, Azrael, the succour of God, a beautiful name for death : so the modern angels, the spirits of the departed as well as the rest, have their names expressing their qualities, thus shewing that the law of God, in these matters, is the same, yesterday, to-day and for ever. One spirit is called, Wisdom in Humility, another Comfort, another Verity, another, Moving Onwards, another The Quiver of Divine Delights. Let us, to conclude, pray that our opposing friend, and all who stand thus on the very edge of the truth, may have their eyes opened. As he has kindly endeavoured to pluck the mote out of our eye, let us pray that the beam may be extracted from his eye, that he may enjoy the privileges which venerable old Hesiod; a thousand years before Christ, nearly 3000 years ago, rejoiced in :—

Aerial spirits, by great Jove designed,
 'To be on earth the guardians of mankind;
 Invisible to mortal eyes they go,
 And mark our actions good, or bad, below :
 The immortal spies, with careful watch preside,
 And thrice ten thousand round their charges glide.

Oper : et Dies ; lib : I. ver. 121.

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TO MY POET FRIEND IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

From the forthcoming volume, entitled "Confessions of a Truth Seeker."

Sing to me friend of the years that are gone,
 When Hope flush'd and glow'd bright like a nebulous star ;
 When Youth's pulses beat high and its vision swept far,
 As gaily we sung in the joy of the morn.

Sing to me songs of the friends we loved best,
 A merry, a happy, a generous band ;
 Of the joys that we shared, of the schemes that we planned,
 When the noblest thought was the welcomest guest.

Sing to me friend from that deep heart of thine
 All the wonderful song of life's mystical march ;
 With its griefs, and its fears, and its hopes which o'er arch,
 The waters of Death, and spaces of Time.

Sing to me friend of the bright spirit-band,
 They whose feet have the shores of eternity trod,
 The dear angels who guard us and guide us to God,
 O sing me the songs of the Heav'nly land !

* * * * *

Sing on O Seraph ! Thy soul-witching strain
 Doth a solace, a peace to my spirit impart,
 'Tis the music of Heaven ; O breathe it again,
 It lightens, and gladdens, my o'er-laden heart.

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Observe :—Two numbers of the Supplement, containing No. 4 and 5 of Dr. Ashburner's Essays to the Working Classes, will be published on the 15th.

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