



SOULISM.

Or the Doctrine of "Soul in Human Embodiments."

Compared and Contrasted with "Orthodox Spiritualism," "Transcendental Egoism," and "Theosophical Re-incarnation."

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Written Expressly for The Progressive Thinker.

From time immemorial thinking men have pondered "the whence, the why, and the whither." All along the ages there have come to the race, in one form or another, "intimations of immortality." But never until there appeared the varied phenomena that group themselves under the term Modern Spiritualism, was it made possible to man to rest the problem upon an orderly arrangement of facts, and apply to it the powers of an unfeigned reason. This marks a new epoch in human history: the advent of a new order of progression. But even now, if the answer to the "whence, why, and whither" given by the New Dispensation be accepted only in so far as it is limited to material or purely formal concepts, it is conclusive only as to an exceedingly narrow and circumscribed segment of the "whither" while its delectable, upon both the "whence" and the "why"—that is to say, upon the origin of existence and its intrinsic moral meaning—are still adapted to a form of thought now happily in a rapid decline: a stage of thought quite oblivious to the truth that there are moral considerations bound up with man's conception of his origin that are of even greater importance as influences to conduct than the hour is but a suggestive prelude; and there is little doubt that henceforth the absolute nature of the inner or spiritual life, will be more and more brought into the forefront of discussion by the intelligences who have this movement in their wise keeping.

Sound reasoning demands that ideas be held strictly to the implications of the terms in which they are expressed. Now, the term "Spiritualism" in its modern restrictive (i. e., sectarian) application, is limited to the sphere of sensible phenomena—i. e., the sphere of the manifesting spirit—and all thought areas lying outside of this formal or sensible presentation are logically excluded from its definitive meaning. This is a sad limitation.

But if Spiritualism, when held to a logical definition, is unable to answer the riddle of existence in its entirety, there is that in the world now which can. This answer, as a voice, is in Spiritualism, but, strictly speaking, is not limited by it. This solvent, in distinction to the concrete term Spiritualism, I shall venture to call *Soulism*—though the more descriptive title employed by the inspiring intelligences of Mr. C. L. V. Richmond, by whom these interpretations of transcendental existence are specifically given, is "*Soul: in Human Embodiments*."

I am of those who believe that a New Dispensation is upon us; and that this Dispensation can no more be expressed by the term Spiritualism, than the manifestations of the "Holy Ghost" during the apostolic period can be made to express the full significance of the Christ mission of the Carpenter of Judea. A sensible vouchment should never be mistaken for a spiritual reality.

With regard to man's spiritual origin there are at least four distinct positions in the composite known as Modern Spiritualism. These are held by: (1) Those who have denominated "orthodox" Spiritualists, who derive the human ego from arorely non-egoistic antecedents. (2) Those who declare for a "transcendental ego" as lying back of the material ego. (3) Those who posit a metaphysical abstraction styled Spiritual Monism, and further its development to individuality by means of successive incarnations. (4) And, finally, those who start with soul as perfect being; to whom soul is the individualized and illumined source of all manifestation in the realm of moral consciousness—in the hierarchy of spirit no less than in the lower or sensible domain of man—and whose mode of expression is by impulses into matter, each impulse resulting in some form of expression in consonance with the soul's inner desire. And while the soul is never embodied as such, that which it seeks to express is embodied. And as it is reasonable to suppose that it will be desirable to express the same thing twice, so it follows that there is no re-embodiment in any sense affecting man's personality. In other words: In the outworking of "soul" in human embodiments, man as man is never re-embodied, and his egoistic integrity remains inviolable in the consciousness in which it originally realized itself.

ORTHODOX SPIRITUALISM.

The term "Orthodox Spiritualism," in the sense already indicated, undoubtedly represents a majority of present believers in the phenomena of the New Dispensation. Fundamentally, spirit is to this class a substance analogous to matter, only finer; which "stuff," through the processes that distinguish the organic universe, and by causes

purely fortuitous, becomes involved with common matter, and thus is there evolved a self-conscious being, which, by virtue of the "finer stuff," is guaranteed an immortal existence. This is, of course, materialism pure and simple: from which implication an inclusion of "spirit matter," or a "spiritual substance," in no wise saves it; unless the matter as substance thus posited be conceived as having what alone can be said to distinguish spirit *per se*—namely, self-consciousness. But such a conception necessarily involves the thought of pre-existence, and that is "orthodox's" particular bete noir. Therefore, and because it likewise closes the door against miracles, or the idea that each spirit is a special creation, "orthodox Spiritualism" is unalterably bound to a purely materialistic concept of human origin and destiny. Many Spiritualists were, and are to-day, recruited from the ranks of Materialism—a form of thought once my own. The idea of existence that logically goes along with the materialistic concept is modified with difficulty; and when stubborn facts finally compel some sort of spirit admission, the modification in the concept goes no further than the formal fact necessitates, and in place of seeking to adapt our notions to "things of the spirit," as we should, we strenuously set about to conform "things of the spirit" to our materialistic form of mind—regardless of the fact that our logic stands in clear denial of the proofs of immortality made evident by spirit communion.

And next, what sort of a Spirit-world is it that presents itself as a necessary development of this materialistic form of thought? Why, plainly, it is a sense and substance world: in some things a slight improvement on this matter-world, and in other things positively worse. "But the spirits tell us theirs is a world of things: that they live in houses, that they are surrounded by fields and gardens, that they grove embower them, and the limpid brook murmurs musically by." And pray, if our minds remain cast in this "form of things," what report do you think we shall be able to make when our feet touch the other shore? Nothing is more literally true than that we now make the Spirit-world we shall inhabit. It must inevitably be the exact reflex of our concepts; and growth there has no other application than a modification of our concepts, not to any absolute order of things to be objectively discerned, but to more perfect types or visions that press for perception within. Thus, there are "spirit spheres" innumerable, but none arbitrarily located. In a sense, all descriptions of formal conditions reported by our translated friends are true descriptions—that is to say, they are *long life* transcripts of what they have perceived for—but this truth is a purely subjective one, and does not go one iota beyond the individual limitation. So long as the essence of a thing eludes our perception, we must perceive visualize it, or go without it altogether. If any one is desirous of knowing to what extremes of crudity these material notions may be carried in their application to the realm of spirit, my advice is to read "The Spirit World," by Dr. Eugene Crowell; and if that does not open his eyes to the absurdity of the fixed and materialistic views of spirit existence, then his case is simply hopeless.

TRANSCENDENTAL SPIRITUALISM.

The second class (represented on our rostrum, for example, by Mr. J. Clegg Wright) affirm a transcendental ego—a higher self, uncreate and immortal in its essence and being—as lying back of the material ego. In the *Progressive Thinker* of June 14 last, I find this answer by Mr. Wright's control to the question, "What truth is there that the ego never had a beginning?" And I regard this answer as one of the most logically conclusive on this head that I have ever seen. He said:

"The ego, the transcendental self, if it had a beginning, either began by creation out of nothing, or it began by creation out of something like unto itself; that is to say, the transcendental ego must either always have existed, or it must have had a beginning. If it always existed, it is self-existent: it is not indebted to cause for its existence. If it was created—that is, if it had a beginning—then it was created from something like itself, or from something different from itself. If created from something like unto itself, it is but a continuation of the same thing; if created from something different from itself, it would contradict the postulate of reason that things which have nothing in common cannot be the cause of each other. Therefore, through the reasonable conclusion, I have to affirm as a universal postulate of the domain of reason that elements are uncreated, that they persist in the necessity of existence itself; that is to say, the transcendental ego never had a beginning."

I have listened to Mr. Wright on a number of occasions, and always with interest and profit. His position on the Spiritualistic rostrum strikes me as a unique one—holding apparently an even balance between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy"—between the old and the new in Spiritualism. Standing on the dividing line, he says, "If I look towards you, or as it would appear to you, with your present comprehension, if you stood in my place, i. e., the place of his control—it is thus, and so. But if I turn away from you as an outward limitation, and look in the opposite direction—that is, within—I see a very different state of things, utterly incomprehensible to you now. Looking towards you in matter I see your human ego, and with it that which after the change called death will be your spirit ego; but looking away from or through the darkness of the phenomenal world toward and into the world of light and reality, I perceive

there your "transcendental ego," the eternal self-consciousness, of which you are but a matter-limited fragment.

The inspiration of Mr. Wright teaches by implication, embodiment, but not embodiment. Standing on the dividing line, his office—and that of others like him—seems to be that of a bridge whereby those whose vision begins to open to the theme celestial, may pass over into the wider realm by a perfectly natural gradation: for once let the thought of an eternal "transcendental ego" as background to the human ego, take possession of your consciousness, and it will not be long before you will feel the impulse to know more about your relations towards it—why it felt called upon to express itself at all, and what the moral meaning of it is—and so by easy stages the mind resolves itself into a state of receptivity, in which inward perceptions naturally wait upon a sincere desire to perceive, and intuitions in direct touch with the "transcendental ego," i. e., the soul—more and more inform the mind, and make it ready for divine and ever diviner inspirations.

The "transcendental ego" descends to the world of phenomena for what? For experience or expression, you may answer. But suppose it fails, what then? Suppose the "expression" dies before any "experience" comes to it—say with its first breath—what then? If experience or expression in the human form is valuable or desirable for a "transcendental ego," is it not necessarily valuable or desirable for all? You see in what a dilemma this "transcendental ego" puts you, unless you go with the *embodiment* in the affirmation that what it fails to get or to express at one time it will get or express at the next trial, or the next, and so on, until all its divine attributes find full and satisfying expression in the Christ-man. Manifestly if the "transcendental ego" embodies itself once, it is hard to find a reason against a second, or any number of embodiments, merely formal grounds. Obviously, the "transcendental ego" carries with it too many implications to be a safe resting point. Many who have been lured from their materialistic basis by the hope that it would be a comfort to rest upon the bosom of an eternal selfhood, as the most likely means of having immortality assured to them, will scamper hastily to the arms of the materialist, and with an added industry seek for the germ of the ego in the primal activity of matter. Others, however, will feel an equally strong impulse in the opposite direction, towards the soul; and, regarding human existence no longer as primarily and principally a physical question—a mere achieving of material form, with a mysterious "spirit form" attachment will now begin to ponder it as essentially a moral proposition. The physical generation of life is a scientific question; the spiritual expression of it is a moral question in the domain of morals. Science interrogates the "how," Morals forever asks the "why."

I think it safe to go on the theory that whatever answers most completely the moral propositions of existence comes nearest the truth all round. That the doctrine of *Embodiment* is concerned in the spirit of ideal justice none will deny; and that its acceptance is hindered chiefly by the implication of re-embodiment of whatever is once embodied, is indisputable. The reason, therefore, why it meets with such strenuous opposition, often quite bitter and vindictive, is primarily due to the fact that there is in all human beings an unconquerable objection to a *re-embodiment* of what they have perceived for—but this truth is a purely subjective one, and does not go one iota beyond the individual limitation. So long as the essence of a thing eludes our perception, we must perceive visualize it, or go without it altogether. If any one is desirous of knowing to what extremes of crudity these material notions may be carried in their application to the realm of spirit, my advice is to read "The Spirit World," by Dr. Eugene Crowell; and if that does not open his eyes to the absurdity of the fixed and materialistic views of spirit existence, then his case is simply hopeless.

RE-INCARNATION.

We have now to consider *Re-incarnation*. This doctrine is chiefly distinguished as the *modus operandi* of Theosophy. That the reader may clearly distinguish at the outset between *Re-incarnation* and *Embodiment*—two radically different ideas, but about which there is a deal of confusion in the public mind—let me say that *Re-incarnation* starts with an indeterminate germ, and builds it up by repeated incarnations into an individuality which by its own acts may become entirely extinct, when the indeterminate germ returns into the body of eternal substance from whence it was derived; while, on the other hand, we have *Embodiment*, which starts not with an indeterminate "Monad," but with the Soul as Absolute Being, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken, which was, is, and will be forever. For this soul there is no building up by accretions from without, and all that takes place in the phenomenal world is the result of the soul's desire to express itself. You might call this soul the "transcendental ego" if you liked, while its expressions are human egos, each one different from every other, of course, and each secure in its individual or personal existence in the consciousness of the soul, from whence all human consciousness is derived; and along with it the intuition of *Being*.

Re-incarnation, therefore, is a process of building the within from without; whereas *Embodiment* is a process of building the without from within—its direct antithesis. The most scholarly exposition of *Re-incarnation* is undoubtedly to be found in that remarkable book called "*The Perfect Way*," a curious medley of spiritual insights and illogical reasoning.

Re-incarnation, according to this authority, starts with a divine substance, uncreate being, all-consciousness. This substance, we are told, is homogeneous, yet composed of "monads," each of which is potentially the same as the entire substance. Each "monad" constitutes a "soul," which "soul" realizes individuality by effecting repeated incarnations in matter. Let us analyze this. We have an all-conscious substance, and "monads" composing this substance. Now, is it possible for the mind to conceive something that is nothing? Certainly not. Yet that is precisely what the *Re-incarnationist* asks us to do, for his con-

crete philosophy depends on conceiving this "monad" as nothing, and the working it up into an individuality through repeated incarnations. Let me make this still clearer. If the "monad" in all-consciousness has any meaning, it must be distinguished by something, and the only thing possible to distinguish it by in these circumstances is individuality—conscious individuality—because individuality in consciousness not to be itself conscious would be the absurd of all possible absurdities. If there is actually anywhere, it must be when we start eternally substance, and that pertains to it must be actual. And while it is possible to conceive that what passes out of this state actual into a state phenomenal may lose something—not in itself, of course, but as expression—it is simply inconceivable that it should gain anything, and, least of all, individuality.

Embodiment individuality is the root. In *Re-incarnation* it is the flower; and the "monad" is the seed in which individuality—i. e., the principle of self-consciousness—resides in *potentiality*. Right here we strike the radical defect in this doctrine, in that it predicates potentiality of an actuality. We speak of potential forces in nature because the difference between a thing potential and a thing active, or between the seed and the flower, between the acorn and the oak, between dynamite and an explosion, is a difference not in kind, but one of degree or relation only, for each can be expressed in the terms of the other. But what term expresses consciousness except matter? It is in the attempt to set up individuality on a bridge between these two positions that failure comes in. The bridge will not carry, and underneath flow the waters of oblivion. And this Theosophists practically confess.

This individuality that is derived from a conjunction of non-individualized elements—i. e., of "monad" and matter, to both of which individuality is explicitly denied—is seen to be a shaky sort of a contrivance even by those who are logically (or, rather, illogically) responsible for it, and accordingly they give it only a sort of nondescript provisional existence—a sort of something-nothing or nothing-something—and make its absolute individuality depend on its good behavior. If it is "very good," then there comes a time when it partakes of the divine spirit, and its future is thereafter eternally secure; but, on the other hand, if it turns out "awfully horrid," it is left to its own evil devices, and the individuality derived from nowhere, returns to nowhere; while the "monad," with all its "potentialities" intact, goes back into the bosom of the conscious substance from whence as nothing it issued forth.

If now we epitomize all what the soul is and what it is not, according to this doctrine, we have the following delightful mess of metaphysical *olla podrida*:

1. The soul is the seat of the divine central will.
2. It is engendered in the lowest forms of organic life.
3. It is generated in the fluidic material called the astral body.
4. It is perfected or dissipated and lost.
5. Once begotten it is immortal, until its own actions cause it to perish.
6. The soul is in its nature eternal.

The soul is the individual, and perishes finally if unformed by the spirit. One is at a loss to account for contradictions so obvious on rational grounds. Occult causes alone are capable of furnishing an explanation. There is an attempt in "*The Perfect Way*" to show that the inspiration which expresses it, and which the Spiritualists call the "astral" carrier, i. e., the product of phantasms, mere reflections of things, of "elementals" and other such fry—and this we are told is their intellectual and moral status: "Of contradictions in their own statements they are altogether unconscious; and be these gross and palpable as they may, they (the said nondescripts) remain wholly unaffected by the contradictions of things." Obviously, for once these phantasmic reflections must have escaped the limitations of Spiritualism, and turned themselves loose for a "picnic" in "*The Perfect Way*."

Now let us note what another authority in Theosophy reports on this subject. Mr. A. P. Sinnett (whose open-mindedness and unbiassed manner of treating this subject deserves special recognition), in his "*Esoteric Buddhism*," is delightfully comprehensive, but exasperatingly vague. He, too, begins the movement from neuma to phenomena with a "monad," and in telling his readers what it is, talks with a charming generality about "the stream from the spring," "the tide of life," the wave of existence, the spiritual impulse, call it what name we please. In all this verbiage there is one expression only that carries a meaning with it: and that is "spiritual impulse." In "*Embodiments*" the word "impulse," when applied to the soul, has a special significance—is, in fact, a solvent note in the abstract yelp "monad," *solens solens*. In their meshes, there is manifestly no occasion to talk about an "impulse," and there is, of course, at the same time an end to the thought of a moral purpose in man's existence; and if this be not the way of it, what then is it that starts this non-existence on its pilgrimage to existence?

Finally, we have this from Mr. Sinnett: "The consideration that ultimate progress is determined by spiritually irrespective of its moral coloring is the great meaning of the occult doctrine that to be immortal in good one must identify oneself with God, to be immortal with evil, with Satan. These are the two poles of the world of souls; between these two poles vegetate or die without remembrance the useless portions of mankind."

It is pretty safe to assume that a civilization that has once and for all given a quietus to the devil indigenous to it, so

to speak, is hardly the one to put in his place a variety of foreign devils—i. e., souls "immortal in evil"—and, but for the fact that Theosophy is just now lifted into temporary prominence in the spiritual field to serve as a foil to a higher and more adaptive form of the truth, it would not be a rational person's worth while to give the slightest heed to its caustic puerilities.

THE DOCTRINE OF EMBODIMENTS.

Some fundamental propositions of existence have been brought clearly to notice in what has gone before; and among others this self-evident one: that consciousness (which can never be other than self-consciousness), in order to escape extinction with the dissolution of the body, must be in its nature absolute; i. e., an attribute or quality of soul or being. In this view man is because soul seeks expression in human form, and his consciousness proceeds from that which puts him forth: not because he is in matter, but in spite of matter—matter doing utmost to limit his consciousness to its peculiar conditions and forms; and in some instances (as in the case of idiots) quite succeeding in limiting the celestial flame to the merest flicker of self-recognition—typical of an almost complete triumph of matter over its hereditary enemy. In the child, years elapse before persistent self-consciousness is achieved—i. e., before that which realizes itself as absolute self-consciousness establishes itself in some permanent modification as human self-consciousness. And in all cases matter puts its peculiar limitations upon the intruder. Some it permits to realize only the clouds of the earth, and the wherewith to feed and clothe the body. This, indeed, is a limitation from which the vast majority are reduced, while comparatively few only—because the soul, through repeated embodiments, expresses more and more its divine attributes—make touch with the infinites.

That there exists a fundamental difference between the ideas comprehended respectively under the terms *Embodiments* and *Re-incarnation* has, I trust, been sufficiently clear. But what has not, perhaps, been emphasized as it deserves, is the circumstance that *Re-incarnation* and "Orthodox Spiritualism" start from precisely the same premise: neither positing a self-conscious entity as lying back of and constituting the real element of spirit, and both conceiving spirit as evolved to consciousness by material processes: the only difference being that the latter, in its mode of evolution, is a succession of birth-throes. The first is a descending series from light into deeper and ever deeper darkness and limitation, until the human expression in matter is achieved; the second is an ascending series from darkness into light, from imprisonment to greater and ever greater perceptions of the light celestial.

The soul is *being*: it is the measure of all consciousness that can ever be man's portion, for no effect can exceed its cause. It is by reason of the soul's consciousness that man is conscious (though in an absurdly limited degree, comparatively speaking) and if alone is typical, in any true sense, of eternal life.

Man is not being. If he were, he would have compassed the universe and eternity, and there would be literally nothing more for him to do. *Being* is both the beginning and the end, the *alpha* and *omega* of man and his possibilities. Man, therefore, is not being, but because he is an expression of, or from, *being*, he has an *intuition of being*, and it is this intuition that constitutes his ego. This sense is that which unites him to the absolute. It is a something related neither to time nor to space. Regard it as we will, we can consider it only as a *quality*—as the "knower" in contradistinction to things known—and cannot be considered other than as a *priori*.

Man advances from stage to stage by concepts. He has now, so far as physical aspects are concerned, mastered the idea very thoroughly, that the sum total of the universe can never be added to or taken from. To the scientific mind it is now simply inconceivable that a single atom can ever be added, or one solitary atom ever subtracted, from the totality. This concept marks a transcendental achievement in the evolution of the human mind. And following this logical sequence, another concept is awaiting the awakening of a still higher perception, and it is this: that *being* is subject to a similar arbitrary numerical limitation, and that it is just as impossible to create new beings—i. e., absolute things-in-themselves—as it is to create new atoms. The absolute nature of an atom must remain to the end of time, just as the absolute nature of *being* is bound to assume, or we cannot think rationally about the spiritual universe. Each realm requires a final basis—an eternal background, whence issues the entire phenomenal phantasmagoria—an eternal background upon which the panorama of phenomenal existence pictures itself in an endless variety of sensible illusions.

All progress is a process of shutting back doors and opening front doors. All lower functions, or forms, are lost in higher functions or forms. And in a similar manner—such is the relation of man through spirit to soul—all lower selves are perpetually lost in higher selves—but so divinely ordered are the processes of transition, that the thread of egoism which joins all forms of expression to *Being* is never broken.

"Orthodox Spiritualism" takes the generally accepted view that consciousness is in man; i. e., that it is a product *per se* of function: "*Soulism*" reverses the formula, and says "man is in consciousness"—consciousness being thus identified with *Being*, and conceived as an eternally persistent thing-in-itself.

If the human limitation in consciousness is a real thing, what has become of John's consciousness? Is it extinct? The Materialist answers, "Yes, it is non-existent, and must remain so until a certain material process, for a time in abeyance, again set it in motion." Now, what does the Spiritualist say? The answer can be made that is more satisfactory than the Materialist's, if he rejects the views that consciousness is a thing-in-itself? Given a persistent background of consciousness, and the conservation of each and every limitation

ness. Now, if spirit be superior to matter, it must be so because it has what matter has not—consciousness, self-awareness, egotism and intuition of being. Matter is matter still, though it be a million times super-refined. And because matter and self-awareness, there is simply nothing. These, matter (or force, or energy) and consciousness, constitute the sum of the universe. As has matter, so has consciousness, an infinitude of modifications; but, in the last analysis, all manifestations are reduced to these two conceptions. In so far as spirit can be said to have form—i. e., in so far as it presents an appearance conformable to human conception—it is a counterpart of the human body, and may be conceived of as the resultant of material conditions. But this "form" in the spirit *per se*, or only a thought garment put on for purposes of sensible recognition? If you answer that the "form" expresses spirit *per se*, then, surely, we have spirit as a material product. If, however, your answer is that the likeness is as a thought-woven garment, then the spirit must be regarded as the expression of some eternal verity; and its existence prior to any earthly embodiment is a necessary corollary. And if this pre-existence be granted, then the putting on of material conditions has a far other meaning than is ordinarily imputed to birth—i. e., as conferring existence—for that it already had. Obviously, then, there is but one conclusion permissible to us, namely: that which spiritually exists comes to earth for expression.

From the point of view of *Soulism*, spirit is that which in another world-order stands towards us as the immediate promoter as well as the conservator of embodiments or expressions in matter; while soul is that which puts forth the expressions—is that which employs the spirit-state as a vehicle for expression—and is that in whose supreme consciousness all associated expressions or embodiments constitute a unit, not by any process of loss to any single embodiment or expression, but by reason of each gaining what all the rest contribute. In this view, neither spirit nor man is anything in itself or himself—both are at best only temporary states. Man dies in the spirit to vaster outlooks, and so spirit at last dies in the angel, and by this birth the horizon widens to proportions comparatively illimitable.

The process of evolution from soul to man eventuates in what we call birth—we ought to call it death. The process of evolution from man, through spirit, to the angel, we call dying—it is really a succession of birth-throes. The first is a descending series from light into deeper and ever deeper darkness and limitation, until the human expression in matter is achieved; the second is an ascending series from darkness into light, from imprisonment to greater and ever greater perceptions of the light celestial.

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(when what we call unconsciousness over-takes it) comes easily within the range of human comprehension—and without this predicate the annihilation of self-consciousness with the dissolution of the body is an inevitable consequence.

It is consoling to the Orthodox Spiritualist will answer, because within us there is a spirit—an organism like the human organism, except that it is composed of "finer stuff"—and it is this that carries on the thinking process after death: it is in this that egoistic consciousness is conserved. Granted that it is so, what then? Surely there are no nearer the solution of the problem than we were before. *How* consciousness manifests itself is of small concern beside the question: "What is consciousness?" Is it a product of matter that you are now conserving in the spirit, or is it something by itself to which matter has merely given a certain limitation or form? In other words: can matter create an entity—there must be no juggling in fine, is it possible to conceive that it can do anything more than put a limitation upon consciousness—i. e., crib and confine it, and reduce it to its lowest term as expression?

The position of the Materialist is undoubtedly false, but it is strictly logical—there is perfect accordance between his premises and his conclusions—all the way along he holds himself strictly to conditions of matter, time and sense. Now the position of the Spiritualist is a supremely difficult one if he provides himself with no other premise than that taken by the Materialist, for it is his business to show how that which is now obviously in time is to be got into eternity without the intervention of some *how* or *medium*. There must be no juggling here—no confusion of notions—heretofore different. If spirit is a time product there is no hocus-pocussing it into eternity—to a philosophical mind it is simply an unthinkable procedure. Then, if you say man is immortal by reason of the spirit within, which is an eternal substance, you are bound to concede to it, as a possession before material birth, all those essentials that you expect it to possess after its earthly pilgrimage; for, obviously, the only elements that matter can yield is experience, provided there is ready to hand a consciousness to receive it. And if consciousness is regarded as pre-existent—i. e., eternal nothing essential smuggled into eternity with what we call death—all that is taken there is a certain amount of experience, constituting the phenomenon man (as spirit) in the neumeal consciousness of soul; and this phenomenon, so humbly so humbly, so little time in acquiring larger and ever larger perceptions of its diviner self.

Let us, by way of illustration, take some man of note. He has had many experiences. He has solved many problems; many discoveries stand to his credit; he has been in many lands, and a clear mind enables him to realize the entire synthesis of his life. One day, after another drops out of his recollection; and finally he is returned to the incidents of his childhood, and all the great achievements of his life are out of his consciousness. We find that ninety and nine parts of the man are gone—only the hundredth part remains. Where now are these ninety and nine parts? You will answer: they are in the spirit, and all will come back to him as he awakes in the realm of spirit. Very well, but in what form are they in the spirit? All was in consciousness once; but this consciousness has outwardly contracted and crowded them out, and now the vital question is, are these experiences still conserved in consciousness, and do they realize themselves in spirit just as well now as they will when the final hundredth part shall arrive, and the human book is finally closed.

Clearly, it is only by considerations of this character that we can ever arrive at any satisfactory conclusions upon this deepest and sublime of all subjects. Spirit is a state. From that state you are now excluded. That state does not await your death. That state is now what it ever will be. All you have lost will find there. Of course, it is there now; and as it was not a thing, but a consciousness of a thing, you must expect to find it not as a thing, but as consciousness. If in spirit you expect to be admitted to larger and larger realms of consciousness, those realms must be there, or you cannot be admitted to them. Or do you expect to reverse the method and give consciousness to spiritual realms from the puny self—the self that often has literally forgotten itself through old age,—that, as a last remnant, goes over there?

Both *Re-incarnation* and "Orthodox Spiritualism" make "achievement" their shibboleth. In distinction to this, "*Soulism*" makes "expression" its shibboleth. It is a difference comparable to not having a thing and wanting it, and having it to give. If you regard yourself as wholly a product of evolutionary processes, you naturally look forward to your environment, to externalities, to assist you to what you conceive to be intellectual or spiritual growth. If, however, you regard yourself as the result pre-eminently of an involution, you will as naturally look inward for means to perfectibility. Obviously, if you believe you have nothing until it is "acquired," you naturally lay stress upon intellectual or external agencies rather than spiritual verities. The evolutionist might say, "Move forward and lay hold on the elements to perfectibility that are about you;" the involutionist will say, "Move inward and let the divine elements awaiting expression lay hold on you." Christ has said, "Heaven is within." It is not amidst the stars. It is not amidst the sciences. It is not found by considering intellectual propositions. It is purely a soul element. And it is only when the soul possesses you (Continued on fourth page.)

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