

**WHENCE AND WHITHER,
AN INQUIRY INTO THE
NATURE OF THE SOUL, ITS
ORIGIN AND ITS DESTINY**

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Whence and whither, an inquiry into the nature of the soul, its origin and its destiny by Paul Carus

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PAUL CARUS

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BY

DR. PAUL CARUS

SECOND EDITION

"FOR WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE
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PREFACE.

SOME psychologists of the modern school have characterised their science as a "psychology without a soul." They mean thereby that the old dualistic conception of the soul as a metaphysical ego-being, with faculties and functions, has been discarded; that there is no such thing as a soul-entity; and that, accordingly, our psychology must be reconstructed, pretty much after the manner in which we might reconstruct the play of "Hamlet" with the rôle of Hamlet omitted. The author of this little book is fully aware of the gravity of the charges that have been made against the old-fashioned soul-conception; in fact, he himself is one of the most energetic supporters of the monistic philosophy, but he would insist that, while a deeper insight into the nature of things necessitates a revision of our science, the facts of man's soul-life remain the same as before, and the new psychology is not a psychology without a soul, but a psychology with a new interpretation of the soul.

The soul, it is true, can no longer be regarded as

a mystical being, as an entity, or an essence,—a something in itself, possessed of certain qualities and endowed with faculties : the soul is not that which feels and thinks and acts, but is the feeling itself, the thinking itself, and the acting itself ; and the faculties, so called, are simply various categories under which the several sets of psychical functions may be subsumed.

There is as little need for the psychologist to assume a separate soul-being, performing the several soul-functions, as there is for the meteorologist to assume a wind-entity, which, by blowing, produces a commotion in the air. According to the positive school, the commotion in the air itself is the wind. But though we deny the existence of a metaphysical wind-entity, winds blow as vigorously as they ever did ; and why should the soul of the new psychology be less real than the soul of the old psychology ?

The dualistic conceptions of thing-in-themselves, which are supposed to be the agents of phenomena, constituting the concrete things, is gone forever ; and some thinkers to whom this conception of the world has grown dear, feel sad at heart and sigh over the loss of their spiritual treasures, for they fancy that the highest ideals of mankind have been impaired, and science is doomed to end in dreary nihilism. But let us remember, that, if *things-in-themselves* have no real existence, the *things themselves* remain. If the metaphysical soul-conception must be abandoned, the facts of our soul-life remain.

The personality of man, so little understood before, is not of less significance, if we can analyse it and trace the fibres which enter into the wonderful system of its make-up; and the unity of the soul is not gone, because man's psychical activity is not a rigid unit, not an atom, not a monad. The soul is a complex organism, consisting of many ingredients and different parts with varied functions. It is a compound, but, being an organism, it does not lack unity. It is subject to change, but for that very reason it is capable of growth, of expansion, of advancement, and elevation.

The main fact of man's psychical activity is the continuity of his soul, for this is the ultimate basis for the identity of a man's personality through all the changes of his development. The continuity and identity of each soul are conditions which beget the feeling of responsibility, and thus force upon man the necessity of moral conduct.

The first questions of psychology are the *Whence* and *Whither* of the human soul; and we must understand their significance in order to be able to answer the main question of life, "What shall we do? How shall we act? Which aim shall we pursue?"

The continuity of man's soul-life is not limited to the span of time that lies between birth and death; it extends beyond the boundary line of individual existence, and links the fate of each single person to the lives of his ancestors and contemporaries, as well as to the generations to come.

It is not impossible to comprehend the nature of man's soul, to trace its *Whence*, and to point out its *Whither*; and we trust that when a man has gained an insight into the relation of his own being to the general life of the race, he will think with greater reverence of the past and with more consideration for the future. It will make him judicious in whatever he undertakes, and will serve him as a mariner's compass on his journey over the stormy ocean of time.

THE AUTHOR.

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