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1923.

654<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B. THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>, 1923,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HOPE BIDDULPH, D.S.O., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read, confirmed and signed and the Honorary Secretary announced the Election of F. W. Howard Piper, Esq., as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Dr. D. Anderson-Berry to read his paper on "Occultism—at the Bar of Philosophy and Religion."

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*OCCULTISM: AT THE BAR OF PHILOSOPHY AND  
RELIGION.* By DAVID ANDERSON-BERRY, Esq., M.D.,  
LL.D.

**I**N 1875, Madame Blavatsky, aided by Colonel Olcott, founded a society in the U.S.A. for the purpose of:—

- (1) Establishing a nucleus of the brotherhood of humanity;
- (2) Promoting the study of comparative religion of philosophy; and
- (3) Making a systematic investigation of the hidden powers of life and matter.

This last is known as "Occultism."

Looking at all the great religions of the world some unifying principle was sought. From what supreme source did they all spring? And it was determined that they all were so many expressions of one great fundamental truth, which they called "Wisdom Religion." How are we to discern the truth of this? By appealing, Madame Blavatsky said, to a "Secret Doctrine" and "Exotic Teaching." This, she proclaimed, was the possession for ages of certain mysterious adepts in "Occultism," or "Mahatmas."

She said she was in psychical as well as physical connection with these "Mahatmas," and sealed her testimony by giving manifestations of "occult phenomena."

Unfortunately, for her, the fraudulent character of these "occult phenomena" was displayed by several capable and responsible investigators.

Thus we are not asked to study these "occult phenomena," but to investigate and judge the teachings which have thus been handed down by secret companies of men both in the West and the East, especially in the East.

Starting with the premise that this "secret doctrine" is the groundwork of all great religions, it follows that members of these religions may be occultists because rites and ceremonies are a mere camouflage; a gilding of the pill to make it palatable to various tastes.

Hence they quote the words of Archbishop Temple (1857): "We are in need of, and are being gradually forced into, a theology based on psychology."

"Rites they are, but not dogmas. Therefore these deep religious customs can be adhered to by the learned and unlearned alike and form a bond of union between them. These rites are the ties that bind the population together" (Dr. Steiner, *Investigations in Occultism*, p. 222).

Nay, they approve also of such books as the Bible. "Dr. Steiner says much about the Bible, and his teachings are wholly ethical and consistent with the broad truths of Christianity." (*In. in Occultism*, p. 25.)

As to the truth of this we shall see.

They also approve of the doctrine of the Trinity: "The whole, in its ideal and complete perfection, proceeding eternally from God, existing eternally as the object of God's love and thought, and expressed in time in the person of Jesus Christ, is the second person of the Holy Trinity; and dwelling in us, manifesting, expressing Himself by means of us is His Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity" (Rev. G. H. McNeile in *Self-Training in Prayer*), quoted with this remark: "The following statement . . . is perfectly consistent with Dr. Steiner's investigations" (*op. cit.*, pp. 26, 27). This, too, we shall see whether it is so or not.

What are the chief doctrines taught?

I. *Reincarnation*.—This is, that souls existing from all time enter bodies at different stages of their (the souls') history. "Consequently, 2200 years are generally said to elapse between two

incarnations. In this time man appears twice, and comes as a rule once as man and once as woman, so that the time is really 1100 years" (*op. cit.*, p. 64). This time is fixed by the passage of the sun into a particular sign of the zodiac at the vernal equinox; "this sign constantly recedes, so that in a period of, say, 2200 years the sun enters the next sign" (*op. cit.*, p. 63).

Reincarnation or metempsychosis is not accepted by Western thought. Two obstacles to its acceptance are: there is no remembrance of any previous existence, and on memory depends our personality. And souls are not physical entities like a packet of tea to be handed on to the next recipient. Its nature depends on the body to which it belongs, for a dog's soul or a centipede's soul is not a human soul.

And if it is replied: But we are speaking of reincarnation as a man or a woman,—then I ask, where is responsibility, which is the basis of judgment and reward?

II. *The Nature of Man.*—According to occultists, a man's body is a complex thing. It consists of:—

- (1) "The physical body, through which all outer senses function.
- (2) "The etheric body, which in delicately toned light permeates the physical body throughout.
- (3) "The astral body, which contains the psychic principles:—
  - (a) The sentient soul;
  - (b) The intellectual soul;
  - (c) The self-conscious soul.
- (4) "The ego or body of consciousness, which sets about transforming the first three by acting upon the psychic principles.
- (5) "Manas, partly developed.
- (6) "Buddhi, } of which there is merely a seed"  
 "Atma, }

(*op. cit.*, pp. 55, 56).

I give this description of the ego as seen by the initiate:—  
 "As he inspects the astral body" (this has, we are told, "a reddish-grey fundamental colour") "he sees everything in perpetual motion except a little space, which, like a bluish egg placed on its side, lies motionless behind the forehead, near the root of the nose" (pp. 51, 52).

This is the description how one is to see the etheric body :—  
 “ If you want to see the etheric organ alone, you must, by use of your will-power, be in a position to suggest the physical frame away, while fully retaining ordinary self-consciousness. If and when you succeed in this, the space where the physical frame was is not left empty ; you see in front of you the etheric organ, a form made of bluish-pink light, a phantom of light, somewhat darker than a peach blossom.”

Needless to say that I have not succeeded. But it reminds me of a book which was published as a medical work. It was accompanied by a screen. You were to place the patient in a certain position in a room suitably arranged and then to look at him through the screen. You would then observe certain differently coloured emanations. A key to the colours gave you the names of the diseases these signified.

On a representative of the firm pressing me to buy, I replied that I would wait. Already I was a pioneer in one direction, and that was enough for me. I would wait for a lead.

It came to nothing, and (I believe) the firm to bankruptcy.

Even the promises of the occultists are not encouraging.

“ But everyone may say : ‘ I shall see the greater worlds as soon as the eyes of my spirit have been opened.’ An operation may be performed on the eyes and ears of each one who has the necessary patience and perseverance.

“ ‘ How long will it be before I can gain these powers ? ’ ” Subba Row has given answer. He says : ‘ One attains them in seventy incarnations ’ ” (you will remember the 2200 years !), “ ‘ another in seven incarnations . . . ’ ” (*op. cit.*, pp. 81, 82).

The three worlds are :—

(1) The physical world, the scene of human life.

(2) The astral or psychic world, the world of the soul. Here everything is reversed as in a mirror. “ For instance, he has to learn to read numbers backwards. The number 345 will appear as 543 ” (p. 83). This applies to moral matters, so there we are surrounded “ by malignant black forms which threaten and torment them.” Fortunately, “ a seemingly approaching form is really in retreat ” (p. 84).

“ In the physical world we see first the hen and then the egg ; in the astral world, we see first the egg and then the hen that laid it.”

(3) Devachanic or spiritual world spreads broader than the preceding : “ It is a world of colour and of sound.” The student

“learns to understand a profound saying of Indian Wisdom : *Tat tvam asi*, i.e. ‘That art thou.’ Much has been written about this, but its true significance is only learned by the student when he goes from the astral world into that of Devachan. Then for a moment he sees his physical form outside him and says *Tat tvam asi*, ‘That art thou’” (*op. cit.*, p. 88). Our writer assures us that this world of sound is added to the astral world or world of colours. True it was already there, but then it had no meaning. He adds “Pythagoras designated this sound the music of the spheres . . . Cosmic harmony is heard ; everything lives in the form of sounds. Goethe, being an initiate, makes the sun resound and unveils the secret of Devachan . . . ‘The sun sings in the old way, competing with his brother’s choir, and accomplishes his predestined journey with a march of thunder.’ He means the spirit of the sun, which really resounds when we are in the world of Devachan.”

Then we are told Devachan is divided into four parts :—

- (1) “Everything physically solid is visible—the devachanic continent.
- (2) “Everything living flows along as water—the devachanic ocean.
- (3) “Everything in the form of feelings and emotions, pleasure and pain, flows like the air—this is the atmosphere of Devachan.
- (4) “Everything living among mankind in the form of original thought—the region of spiritual archetypes.”

Then we come to the Akashic Record, where everything done amongst men, whether mentioned in history or not, is kept in an imperishable record. Does the enquirer wish to know anything about Nelson ? then he has only to concentrate, and around him on every hand appear pictures of everything that Nelson did, what he thought, and what his intentions and the imaginations of his heart were. Here we would have many portraits of the unfortunate Lady Hamilton. But we are told “these akashic records are a perplexing language, because Akasha is itself alive.” A curious statement ! For a reason still more curious !

III. *Death*.—We are told that in sleep “man loses consciousness because the astral vehicle has left the body . . . at death something further happens. Not only the astral and the ego

but also the etheric body leaves the physical . . . Death takes place when the connection . . . is broken at the heart."

As an illustration of how the etheric leaves the physical body, we are told "when a finger goes to sleep the clairvoyant will observe another sort of finger creeping out. This is the etheric finger, or the etheric body leaving the physical in this particular place."

Now when I have sat on a hard chair my leg has gone to sleep, because of the pressure of the edge of the chair on the great sciatic nerve interfering with its functions. But if I believed the occultist I should know that this simple reason is foolishness. It is not pressure on my sciatic nerve, but the etheric leg leaving my trunk at that place; and if I were clairvoyant and looked into a mirror, I should exclaim, "Oh, Isle of Man! here is a man with three legs!"

"We have now come to that point of time after death when we see in an ordinary man two corpses . . . physical body . . . etheric body" (*op. cit.*, p. 59). What remains alive? The astral body.

Now we have in our path of dissolution after death reached *Kama loca*, or "the place of desire." Gradually, however, through "a law of the spiritual" world, which is "expansion," we become "a third corpse," for we shed our astral body (*op. cit.*, p. 60).

What happens should he be quickly re-born and light upon his "astral corpse?" "In this case the old astral body appears to him in bad dreams or visions as his second ego, and hovers round him, harassing and troubling him. This is the false Guardian of the Threshold." Now we know what nightmares are!

But we gain, because when dying we perceive a memory of all the past in a form of pictures. This gradually fades, but "the complete product of the past life is stored in the higher astral body in the form of an *extract of energy*" (p. 62, italics mine). This when we are reincarnated forms another body, which is called "causal." Thus these that have lived on earth repeatedly "have a rich causal body" (p. 62).

Thus we see how we part with our bodies in death. What remains? The soul and the spirit. The former is the link between the latter and the body. After death the soul and spirit are bound together, and as the soul is coloured and saturated by the body which it inhabited, it forms a sort of covering for the spirit replacing the body. It appears to me to be like the soft skin

of the hermit crab when he leaves his shell in search of another. And in reincarnation, it is the duty of the soul to guide the spirit to a right physical receptacle. That is why it is coloured and saturated so that it may be led to the right body. This path of destiny is known as *Karma*.

Not only so, but the soul is the life of the spirit (p. 71).

And following its destiny it passes through seven regions which form a kind of oriental purgatory. At the end "the soul-nature has now been absorbed by its own world, into which it has voluntarily expanded, and the spirit is free of all bonds" (p. 77).

"One remains in *Kama loca* (this purgatory) for about a third of one's previous life, which . . . as having been 75 years" (p. 79).

We have thus passed from the physical through the astral to the devachanic world where the spirit life is now spent. There we learn to say *Tat tvam asi*, and to understand the meaning of the phrase "that art thou."

It must be somewhat difficult, for our first experience in Devachan is to discover that "Everything is seen in its complementary colours . . . wherever a human being occupies a space physically, there is nothing to be seen but a hollow space surrounded by a sheath of rays."

What is man's occupation after death? "In lower Devachan he finds among his companions the egos of plants, and is able to transform their kingdom. In this way he takes part in the transformation of the earth . . .

"It is thus absolutely true to say . . . 'This is the work of the dead.'

"Even in the forces of nature the action of discarnate human beings is to be seen. The earth is thus rebuilt by man" (*op. cit.*, p. 131).

On the other hand, notice "All material things are an illusion if we do not look upon them as an expression of the divine. If we renounce the outer world, we renounce the divine. If we deny matter, . . . then we deny God" (p. 239).

Yet we are assured, "Nowhere at all in the outer world is the Godhead any more manifested. Man must plunge into his own inner nature, and seek God in his own heart" (*op. cit.*, p. 199).

Here, however, we wait the rest of the 2200 or 1100 years whilst our next body is being prepared for us.

IV. *Some physiological and psychological peculiarities.*—"The human ego enters the man with the air which he breathes. When we speak of an ego common to all men, this has also a common body, the air. It was not for nothing that the ancients called that common ego *Atma*, i.e. breathing . . . The entrance of the individual ego into man is described . . . as the descent of the *manas*, of the *manasaputras*. Every time a human being drew breath, he slowly absorbed *manas*, Buddhi of *Atma* in the germ" (p. 191).

"On coming into existence, the Earth had met with the planet Mars.

"The two planets interpenetrated each other, the Earth going through Mars, and gaining from it a substance which it had not previously possessed, namely, iron. Mars left iron behind in the Earth, in a vaporous condition . . . Man would have been able to breathe heat, but he could never have had warm blood, for iron is the source of heat in the blood" (p. 182). Now we know what we owe to Mars and to iron. Something new I guess to the astronomers and to the physiologists!

But mark this: "Oxygen we inhale; we exhale carbonic acid, the poison; and thus with every respiration we are incessantly killing other beings . . . the occult teacher is intent on changing that . . . Modern materialism makes health depend on fresh air, but its method of healing through air is a method of killing . . . Just as man has already once passed through the mineral and the plant kingdoms, so he will return through them. He will become a plant . . . He will then keep the carbon within himself" (pp. 224, 225). But what about the individual and universal egos which we receive by inhaling the air?

V. *Soteriology.*—How does this mysterious being, man, obtain salvation? Jesus Christ is admittedly a great Guru and teacher. Historically seen, He was the incarnation for the time of the second person in the Trinity. His words are good, that is, provided they are read occultly. What do I mean by this? Suppose you received a letter from me. Read as it stands it is a begging letter, but instructed you read only every fifth word consecutively, and the meaning is clear but quite different; it is no longer a begging letter. It reminds one of Bacon's history of himself, as found in the writings of William Shakespeare according to some.

Thus, the initiate reads the Bible (if he likes), but the message it has for him is the secret or occult message hidden beneath the text. This is what he understands by "the letter killeth."

"There are three paths of occult development; the Oriental, the Christo-Gnostic and the Christo-Rosicrucian."

For lack of time, let us omit the study of the Oriental path which consists of instructions that can be classified in eight groups: (1) Yama; (2) Asana; (3) Nyama; (4) Pranayama; (5) Pravahara; (6) Dharana; (7) Dyana; and (8) Samadhi. Yama includes everything that must be given up. Asana is the observance of religious customs. Nyama means keeping to a certain posture in meditation. Pranayama is yoga breathing, and so forth.

The Rosicrucian path came into existence about the fourteenth century and consists chiefly in lower self-knowledge or self-contemplation by means of which the lower self is conquered; and the higher self-knowledge which is born of self-renunciation.

But the Christo-Gnostic path requires a little consideration. St. John's Gospel is taken as a basis. The first five verses are to be meditated on daily for years until "clairvoyance is brought about" . . . and "the pupil sees astrally all that is said in the Gospel of St. John" (p. 230).

In the first twelve chapters "he is introduced into the akashic records of Palestine." Then comes the 13th chapter which begins the stages of "Christian initiation."

- (i) The washing of feet.—In this the pupil is "permeated with meekness." "The other symptom is that he feels . . . as if his feet were washed with water. The inner symptom . . . he sees himself washing the feet of many people."
- (ii) The scourging.—This teaches endurance. Outwardly he feels "a pricking pain all over the body." Inwardly "the pupil sees himself scourged."
- (iii) The crown of thorns.—To endure scorn and ridicule. Outwardly "a pain in the head." Inwardly "a vision of being thus crowned."
- (iv) The Crucifixion.—Indifference to the body. Outwardly the stigmata will appear. Red marks in various places.
- (v) The Mystic Death.—"Dying awhile to all earthly things." Inwardly, darkness when "*the pupil learns*

to know all that exists in the world of vice and wickedness. That is the descent into hell." (Italics mine).

- (vi) The Burial.—All things become a part of him. "The earth has become his body."  
 (vii) The Resurrection.—"This condition cannot be described in words." It "can only be conceived by those where soul has grown to be independent of the brain."

This crowns the initiation. Imagination fails to go further.

And the occultist denies the resurrection of the body. Hence it is well said that it "can only be conceived" by one "whose soul" is "independent of the brain!"

*Is occultism necessary to salvation?* That salvation is necessary the occultist admits, for "Since the days of Adam, very few of our race have succeeded in attaining perfection" (*op. cit.*, p. 15). No. Occultism "applies only to those who really want to devote themselves to such an occult development. A person can be a very good Christian, and quite fulfil all that the Christian religion requires of the laity, without subjecting himself to a Christian occult training. "If someone declares: 'Without any occult training it is possible to be good and to attain to a kind of higher life,' there is nothing to be said; it is a matter of course" (*op. cit.*, p. 219).

Now for a few remarks on the subject.

Vaughan well says "Mysticism, whether in religion or philosophy, is that form of error which mistakes for a divine manifestation the operations of a merely human faculty" (*Hours with the Mystics*, I., 22). And occultism is a form of mysticism to which the words of Morell well apply "Mysticism is that system which refusing to admit that we can gain truth with absolute certainty, either from sense or reason, points us to faith, feeling, or inspiration as its only valid source" (*Speculative Philosophy*, II, p. 332).

Now when we bring occultism to the bar of philosophy let us remind ourselves that in the history of human thought from its earliest ages we find that four great classes are formed. I. *Materialism*, when thinkers affirm that the world is made of one substance, and that matter. II. *Idealism*, when it is affirmed that that one substance is spirit. III. *Scepticism*, when perceiving that these two cannot be right, one must be, whilst both may be, wrong, affirms its opinion that "this only

can we know that we know nothing." IV. The Common-sense people accept, what they would never probably have doubted but for these philosophers, the existence of matter and spirit.

Even amongst the lowest classes of human beings, say the head-hunters and cannibals of New Guinea, you will find that both are believed in, even to this extent that the wizards or wise-men deny the materialization of spiritual beings of which our modern "medicine men" make so much. No, to them spirit is spirit and matter is matter; and as the phenomena belonging to each, feeling, willing, knowing, and form, extension, solidity, mass, colour, etc., are ever distinguishable so the substances thus made known to us cannot be confounded together.

Now we know space and time by their relativity, otherwise they are not known. For as space is the place of bodies so time is the place of events. Our faculty of implied knowledge makes them known to us without a shadow of a doubt, for bodies imply space, and succession time.

Mark this, in your own way, if you like, for occultism runs ashore here.

As we have read, colour, sound, and form have much to do with both their physical and spiritual worlds, and although they try to assure us that in regard to the latter these expressions are to be taken metaphorically, yet we have the limitations of time and space predicated of these worlds.

And whilst in one place Dr. Steiner writes as a Pantheist—God is All, and All is God—yet he also represents God, who he assures us is pure spirit, to be pure matter. "If we deny matter, we deny God."

Like so many of these efforts of the human imagination, confusion of philosophic thought enters; for, as in Mrs. Eddy's case, at one time we see he is as pure an Idealist as Hegel, with whom thought and the thinker, being and not being, are identical, yet we find him as great a Materialist as any.

Judged by Natural Philosophy, his statements are peculiar. For instance, iron in the blood is the source of bodily heat. Is it?

This reminds me of the class-room in Glasgow University where Sir Wm. Thomson (better known as Lord Kelvin) introduced us into the marvels of Natural Philosophy, and this by the concatenation of ideas recalls the great question of Evolution. Some of you may admire that product of the scientific imagination. Well, then, what do you say to the occultist's

idea of Evolution ? “ The line of Evolution goes back into very ancient times . . . Man was there . . . The first human organism was a kind of auric egg, within which was a curious structure, not very unlike barnacles packed together . . his physical body was still very imperfect . . . He still wore a soft, etheric body, and his soul worked on that physical body from outside. Man at this point contained all other being in himself . . . separated the birds from himself. Next the reptiles and amphibians came out of man . . . Later still, man put the mammals out from him ; finally, thrust out the monkeys . . . Thus man was man from the beginning, not monkey ” (*op. cit.*, p. 164). Still, further, man made the earth : “ *As a matter of fact*, the crust of the earth originated through man’s having crystallized it out of himself ; and just as the snail’s shell was once contained within the animal, so man once had the other beings and kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, within him, and can say to all of them . . . ‘ I myself am all that ’ ” (*op. cit.*, pp. 167, 168, 176 ; italics mine).

Yet we are told “ In the far future this state of things will be changed . . . Just as the man ” (in the course of his evolution) “ has already once passed through the mineral and the plant kingdoms ” (when “ human structures were cup or bell-shaped ”), “ so he will return through them ” (*op. cit.*, pp. 187, 225).

Must I make any remarks ? I can only see Lord Kelvin’s face when one of us made an unusually gross blunder ! The sight was sufficient punishment, whilst the ribald laughter of the class rubbed in the salt !

I turn for a few minutes to Religion. The only religion I know to be true is the Christian. It is a Faith and a Revelation. It has pleased God to reveal Himself to man not only by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to reveal the Father and by the Holy Spirit enable men to become sons and to say “ Abba Father ! ” ; but also by His Word, called the Bible, inspired that it may be infallible, and infallible that it may not fail us in all the crises of Life and Death.

As Professor Hodge says, “ If the Bible be the Word of God, all the great questions which for ages have agitated the minds of men are settled with infallible certainty. Human reason has never been able to answer to its own satisfaction, or to the assurance of others, the vital questions : What is God ? What is

man ? What lies beyond the grave ? If there be a future state of being, what is it ? and, How may future blessedness be secured ? Without the Bible, we are, on all these subjects, in utter darkness. How endless and unsatisfying have been the answers to the greatest of all question, What is God ? The whole Eastern world answers by saying, ' That He is the unconscious ground of being ' . . . A Christian child says : ' God is (a) Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth ' . . . Without the Bible, we are without God and without Hope. The present is a burden, and the future a dread."

The occultist praises the Bible, but he deals with it as the believers in the Baconian theory treat the works of William Shakespeare. He deals with it as he deals with the world without and within. He says of it, " It is God's Book because it is first of all man's book ; and those millions who have derived benefit are those who have been able to receive it as an expression of human experience " (*op. cit.*, p. 23). Not so the Apostle Paul, a greater thinker than these men, " which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual," or better, " clothing spiritual things with spiritual words " (1 Cor. ii, 13). And surely if you have considered the extracts I have made, with much pain and intolerable weariness, you will say with the Roman Governor, although with better reason, " Much learning has made thee mad ! "

" Evil is but the minister of good. Sin is not lawlessness against God but the means of rising to greater goodness." In this teaching there is no room for the redemptive, atoning work of Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no need for deliverance from sin by His death, for man as we have seen is his own creator, and by self-absorption, inward contemplation, deep breathing and proper postures, his own deliverer. There is no personal hope, for the ego is but an empty space behind the root of the nose, and the atmosphere its substance.

Resurrection from the dead ; re-union with those we love and have lost awhile ; being changed into the image of Jesus Christ at His appearing ; the entrance into perfect bliss and eternal felicity as the manifested children of God : all these truths and many more besides clearly taught in the Bible, have no place in the occultist's mind. As to future judgment we are told " It is man, not God, who makes up the accounts "

(*op. cit.*, p. 146). Above all, the love of God that led Him to give His Son "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal Life" is unknown by him. The gracious assurance that "the Father Himself careth for you" has no place, neither can have any place, in his teachings.

It is true, alas, too true of him, what the verse says :—

“ Said the robin to the sparrow—  
 ‘ I should really like to know  
 Why these anxious human beings  
 Rush about and worry 'so ! ’  
 Said the sparrow to the robin—  
 ‘ Friend, I think that it must be  
 That they have no Heavenly Father  
 Such as cares for you and me.’ ”

In conclusion : The heart of Humanity is a better pointer to the Pole Star of truth than man's imagination is.

What is it we fear most ? I reply, Death.

For even so great a saint as Paul the Apostle shuddered at the thought (2 Cor. v, 4).

And I think most if not all men feel the truth of the poet's words :—

“ For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
 Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ? ”

To me, who having penetrated the charnel house of humanity, have viewed the works of mortality, becoming an object of repulsion to one's loved ones is a cause of abhorrence and of dread.

But it is not Death as the King of Terrors with his barbed spear and conqueror's mien, but Death as the Thief in the Night who steals our heart's treasures that I mean when I answer, Death. Man has always trembled at the thought of this parting. To part and for ever !

To the breaking heart the Resurrection of the body is a sure balm. Here the Christian revelation with its promise and its proof that we who love and part shall meet to love for ever and part no more, comes in. Face to face and not a stranger shall

we meet, it assures us, beyond the shadows. The promise as expressed in that wonderful pæan of victory in 1 Cor. xv has comforted many a sad heart when the clouds are falling; whilst the proof found in the actual resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (a fact placed historically beyond all doubt) assures us that the promise is no empty figment of the imagination. Thus is comfort brought to the heart of Humanity, a comfort it has sought all down the ages.

Against the fear I have spoken of, Occultism provides no breastplate. For this sorrow Occultism supplies no comfort.

The greatest fear and the deepest sorrow are chased away by Him alone Who is "the Resurrection and the Life," and in Whose presence

"Death is swallowed up in Victory!"

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN, LIEUT.-COLONEL HOPE BIDDULPH, said:— Occultism professes to be the study of the spiritual or super-sensible world, and Dr. R. Steiner in his book, *An Outline of Occult Science*, makes the following claims:—

1. While Occultism cannot be proved by ordinary scientific research, but must be learned by each student experimentally; yet all who follow the path of training prescribed for it arrive at the same conclusions, and only by this course of action can the path be proved right.

2. The experience gained is knowledge of super-sensible worlds, through spiritual powers said to be inherent in all men; and such knowledge being possible, it is a sin against man's faculties not to develop them in this direction.

3. By this study the problems of life will be answered, and the prospect of overcoming everything which hampers and enfeebles life will be opened; so that a man's thirst for knowledge is satisfied, and strength and stability is given to life.

Now, while no Christian will deny the existence of a super-sensible world, yet his teaching in these matters is diametrically opposed to what has just been stated. While it is true that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned the Christian attains to this by surrender to the Spirit of God, whereas the Occultist trusts to the "self-development of inherent powers."

In the method of training laid down, viz. "Meditation and Concentration," there appears to be a resemblance to that of the Christian Mystics who practised "Recollection."

But the important question is to know where this pursuit leads us.

In the work already referred to Re-incarnation is plainly taught, while Our Lord Jesus Christ is designated the "exalted Sun-being" (p. 252); the great "Sun-spirit or Spirit of Light." (In this may perhaps be traced the origin of Sun worship, identified with Ormuzd, p. 278, and Osiris, p. 282, while on p. 291 "In Christ the lofty Sun-Spirit appeared in human form, as the great ideal for human life on earth.")

Such doctrine stands self-condemned from the Christian standpoint.

There is, however, a subordinate question. Is this cult a fraud and a conscious deception; or are its teachers honest but self-deceived? We may believe that there is a partial truth behind this doctrine, for inasmuch as the spiritual body of man will closely resemble, at least in form, his present physical body, it may reasonably be inferred that there are latent and spiritual powers in man, which have not been altogether lost by Adam's fall, but which, nevertheless, are perverted if used as taught by Occultists. The argument that what is possible to man's faculties should be developed, is manifestly false; for otherwise Sir A. C. Doyle's advice to every woman to try for automatic writing could not be gainsaid.

It was a thirst for knowledge on the part of the first woman, that brought disaster on the human race, and the result proved neither satisfying, nor did it give strength and stability to life.

In a book called *Germany's Swelled Head*, written before the War, it is said that Germans claim for their nationality most of the great men in the world's history, no matter to what country they ostensibly belong. Thus Dante's face is said to be "characteristically German," St. Francis of Assisi, Pascal, Raphael, Shakespeare, amongst many others, are said to be of German origin, while even our Saviour is not Jesus, a Jew, but "Gerus, the German man."

In like manner does Occultism claim its great names; for amongst others, Moses, Solomon, St. John and St. Paul are said to have been "Initiates," while the powers exercised by Our Lord during his earthly ministry are alleged to have been due to the same cause.

But, unfortunately for Occultists, St. Paul does not write as they would do when he alludes to the "wisdom of the world," and "wise men"; for he affirms that "the world by wisdom knew not God," but that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I Cor., i, 19-21.

What then becomes of this self-development, secret doctrine, and ancient wisdom of Occult Science?

With regard to human learning, Solomon, speaking from experience, said that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. We may say, too, that the only thing in the world to satisfy man's thirst for spiritual knowledge, and solve the problems of life is to know Jesus Christ, and to this truth some of the world's greatest scientists have borne testimony. May it not be that when the last veil is drawn aside, the "Initiate" finds that the revelation and object of his search is the "God of this World."

MISS JOSEPHINE M. PARTRIDGE said:—When we speak of Occult Science we imply that to us the contents of our universe are classed, from our point of view, as the Known and the Hidden (or not known), and we farther imply that it is possible for some individuals to gain exact knowledge of what is about to be, and as yet is not—*i.e.*, has not come into our consciousness. This is not the place to discuss the exact differences between existence and "subsistence." The whole question rests on the difference between "a state" and a "process."

Years ago in the Alexandrian Society of Glasgow University I framed the thesis, "We progress within limits," and further, that "two human beings *can* have the same position in space, but *not* in time."

Individual tenants of same house, or estate, have been chronicled in successions and series. Each individual's time is his own, his space relation is common to the series. These chronicles are based on memory.

The important point is that since the individual memory of a human being is one indivisible living thing, it can ascend and descend.

In England children are taught to review the events of the day, beginning from the moment they wake up. Now this method of memory is useful and produces exact recollection of the events of that

day. Yet this method is non-natural. It forces us to subdivide our lives into compartments called waking days. The natural method is to begin from the present moment and travel backwards up to the first of our conscious moments.

Either of these methods is good, but if the same individual attempts to travel both ways, up stream and down, the result may lead to serious mental chaos and disaster. If, then, memory is reversible, the question of the reversibility of time comes to be of importance.

A series to infinity may begin at any point and end "anywhere." If time neither begins nor ends, and is that in which we exist, then it is a cycle.

To attain to Occult Science, we must have perfect command of our personal memory, but this is but the first step. The next is to understand and control our own space relations. And Occult Science is the knowledge of the past and present contents of the universe, and of the contacts in time and space of Personalities and of the results of these contacts. This knowledge of what exists and subsists is the basis of judgments formed by the Occultist. Feeling, sentiment may not come in to bias such judgments. Hopes, fears are as hammers to enforce the dictates of such occult judgments or decisions, which are, in fact, in accord with Destiny and are objective realizations of Fate.

"Rem, sed quocumque modo, rem."

Mr. W. HOSTE said :—We are indebted to Dr. Anderson-Berry for his able presentation of Occultism, though I cannot quite see why he did not call it "Theosophy" straight away. The system has one great advantage, it claims to be judged not by ordinary mental processes, but by reasoning only known to Occultism. So it can say what it chooses. Is there not a misprint on page 159? Dr. Steiner would hardly write of himself "Dr. Steiner says much about the Bible." Are the astronomical facts on page 160 dependable? I thought the sun was continually shifting from one sign of the zodiac to another, according to the revolution of the earth round it. I suppose I have overlooked "in the vernal equinox" which would answer my query. Of course, according to Theosophists, the soul does remember its past experiences in other states. Buddha is said to have remembered the experiences of his 550 previous incarnations, and the Hindu proverb puts it: "He who remembers all things is

God." However, who can prove that what is claimed as remembered is anything but imagination? That, according to the Akashic Record, page 162, if you can get mental pictures of all some man, dead and gone, did and thought, why not also of one's own performances in past incarnations? The Occultist calls this "Intuitional knowledge." It ought to be the great business of a man claiming perfection to attain to it and this can only be by self-mortification, *i.e.*, abstinence from marriage, meat and alcohol; conditions which tally well with what are described as "doctrines of demons" of the latter times (1 Tim., iv., 1, 2). One more point I would note in conclusion. The Occultist creates a "smoke screen" by employing Christian terminology in a non-Christian sense. Thus he talks of "Our Heavenly Father," but means his higher self, of "prayer," but only in the sense of an aspiration after this higher self. If you ask whether they believe in Christ? Certainly, but the name was shared by Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and others. Unfortunately, for the interpretation Peter makes an exclusive claim that "there is none other name but Jesus given among men whereby we must be saved." When we remember that the fourth great object of the Theosophical Society founded in the seventies by Mme. Blavatski was "to destroy the influence of Christianity in heathen lands by diligently spreading accounts of its ecclesiastical crimes, mis-demeanours, schisms and heresies, or anything else which could prejudice non-Christian minds against it," it is rather hard to use the "registered terms" of Christianity to destroy Christianity, and to claim to be, as Theosophy does, "the only true exponent of Christianity." The origin of a system which rejects the Deity of Christ in any special sense, scouts the atonement, makes man his own saviour, and goes one better than the Satanic promise of Eden: "Ye shall be as gods," Ye shall be God Himself, can hardly be in doubt.

Col. MACKINLAY said:—Our thanks are due to Dr. Anderson-Berry for the information he has given us, obtained, as he tells us, with "intolerable weariness," page 170, in this unsatisfactory subject. He has well pointed out several of the inconsistencies and absurdities in the lines of thought of the Occultist, and he tells us a little of the strange verbiage which he employs.

As Dr. Anderson Berry rightly says, many religious systems come from the East. Our own eastern possessions contain many. During a residence in India some fifty years ago, it often occurred to me that the natives had been overcome, and that we had been put in positions of authority for the same reasons that the Canaanites were supplanted by the Jews—on account of the extreme wickedness of the native inhabitants.

I further used to think that the Jews were corrupted by the descendants of those they had conquered and by the neighbouring nations to serve idols ; but fifty years ago Englishmen were averse to following the lead of the natives of India in *any* matters, and, consequently, the religions of the East had but little effect on the ordinary Englishman. Now, however, times have greatly changed, and eastern religions are studied with interest and sympathy. Let us be on our guard.

MR. THEODORE ROBERTS wrote :—“ I am inclined to think that it would have been better to have entitled it ‘ Theosophy.’ The author has not seen it necessary to disprove the system he is attacking but simply to shew its extravagances and mis-use of Christian teaching. Perhaps he feels the whole system is so unsupported by evidence as not to need refutation.

“ I remember when Mrs. Annie Besant became a theosophist, the *Times* remarked that she had accepted the Mahatmas with very much less evidence than that she had rejected as insufficient for the Christian faith.

“ I remember, too, how the late Mr. Gladstone in his review in the ‘ Nineteenth Century ’ of her Autobiography pointed out that from the beginning to the end there was no evidence that she had ever been sensible of sin in the presence of God, and this, I think, affords the key to her aberrations.

“ In my view there is only one true point of contact for man with God and that is by means of his conscience, but unless at the same time his affections are engaged by the presentation of Christ, the thought of a sin-hating God will only harden him. I think we get this exemplified in the wonderful conversation recorded in John’s Gospel as having taken place between our Lord and a Samaritan woman. It was not until He had won her confidence by the presentation of grace that He attempted to reach her con-

science as to her sinful life. Thus 'Grace and Truth' came by Jesus Christ."

Mr. W. E. LESLIE wrote:—"The term 'Occult' is so loosely used that it is difficult to define. As describing such writers as Rudolph Steiner it indicates a special body of 'knowledge' arrived at by the use of powers alleged to be developed by a certain discipline. These, not being common property, may be described as hidden or Occult. When this alleged knowledge is investigated it is speedily seen to be in conflict with the conclusions of the various special Sciences.

"The Occultist, however, replies that his beliefs are spiritually discerned and cannot be adjudicated upon by the Intellect. This makes it difficult to approach his position in view of the reaction against intellectualism since William James and Henri Bergson. For the Christian Philosopher there is the added difficulty of correctly interpreting 1 Cor., ii, 14, 15 ('because they are spiritually discerned').

"Under such circumstances several lines of approach may be suggested. First, there is the Historic Method by which the genesis of these occult ideas may be traced. Then it may be shown that the sphere of the intellect is not limited to mere logic chopping. Its pervasiveness is best realized by imagining it eliminated, as it is in the case of a complete imbecile.

"Again, even if there is a non-intellectual pathway to Truth, still the avouchments of any such faculty must not contradict those of the Intellect, for whatever its character, and whatever place we assign to it, it is at present a fundamental part of our being.

"It is regrettable that Dr. Anderson-Berry has not developed some such arguments. He offers no definition of the term Occult. His treatment of Occultism at the Bar of Philosophy I am quite unable to follow. It will be noticed that for the term 'Religion' in his title, he has substituted Christianity."

Dr. SCHOFIELD writes:—"Some unacquainted with the spread of Theosophy may deem their time wasted in listening to the able summary of the ravings of Occultism that Dr. Anderson-Berry has given us.

"It is not so, when we consider the many thousands of thoughtful (?) and intelligent (?) people who are carried away by it to-day; for though the lecturer does not name Theosophy, the greater part

of what he quotes is theosophical, and Dr. Steiner is the head of the cult on the Continent, Annie Besant in India, and the late A. P. Sinnett was in England.

“ The doctor evidently (rightly) thinks it is enough to state the beliefs of Occultism for their self-refutation (*see* page 169. ‘ Must I make any remarks ? ’)

“ I am pleased to learn (page 160) that a decent interval exists between the reincarnations, because I made a determined effort to be informed on this subject at a large gathering of Theosophists in a London Club, and no one present seemed to know anything about any interval at all.”

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I have to thank you for the gentleness of your criticism. But in reply I would point out to those who have remarked that I have not dealt with *Theosophy*, the following facts :—

(1) The paper is limited to a certain number of words, and the nature of the subject required my setting forth of the teaching in the teacher's own words, as far as possible. That this was necessary is seen from the fact that where I compressed and summed up the context in a short quotation a critic has suggested that the words quoted do not give a true representation of the teacher's meaning. But they do. Hence the room taken up by quotations alone.

It also necessitated my being as elliptical as possible, trusting to the mentality of such an audience to supply what I should have had to supply in the case of an audience of a different mental calibre.

It also prevented my dealing with side issues with which every subject, and none more than such an one as this, is endued.

(2) Clarity required my sticking to my subject. I feel I have not been clear. Had I brought the side issues suggested by some of my critics under purview the effect would have been more disastrous.

(3) *Theosophy* is not *Occultism*. The latter, as I have stated, is of modern production. The former would have taken us back to the days of *Porphyry* and entailed our dealing with *Jacob Behmen*, *Emmanuel Swedenborg*, not to mention the *Neo-Platonists* of earlier, and *Schelling* of later times. Six papers would not have been

equal to the field thus covered. Still, the two have this in common with themselves and with *Spiritualism* : whilst the *Christian* knows God by divine revelation and the *Philosopher* seeks to know Him by "divine reason," the *Theosophist* and his fellows claim to have discovered Him and His works on the basis of a speculation peculiar to themselves and by an intuition which they call the highest wisdom. I claim that this is but a high-falutin' way of describing imagination. Now Imagination is a secondary faculty of the mind by which it blends together the products of the primary faculties. By memory we recollect these products and by imagination we blend them together as we will and play tricks with *time* and *space*. Has anyone seen a kinematographic restitution of a Christmas dinner ? Then we see morsels of turkey politely picked out of the diners' mouths with the forks and placed again on the plates. The carver puts them back as slices, and the turkey thus rebuilt is returned to the oven to be unroasted. Taken from the oven the cook sticks on the feathers and placing it on the table with one stroke of the knife he replaces its head and it lives !

Imagination can do greater things than these and the *Occultist* can as gravely record them.

Some things have been said about Time. According to my philosophy (a critic refers to what I call my philosophy and my religion, but a man can only tell what is his own, what is another's he merely describes), *space* and *time* are realities, the former the place of *bodies*, the latter the place of *events* ; everything that happens must occur somewhere and somewhen. We may play tricks with them as Camille Flammarion does in his little book *Lumen*. He tells of a man that died in 1864. His soul flies straight to one of the planets of *Alpha*, the largest star in the constellation *Capella*. Here he found the inhabitants watching with great distress the bloody scenes of the French Revolution which had taken place seventy-two years before, exactly the time it takes light to travel from *Earth* to *Alpha Capella*. Again, the product of the imagination.

*Bergson* bases his whole philosophy upon the distinction between *duration*, as it is felt by the individual living through it, and *time*, as it is employed by the physicist in his calculations.

And I close this very imperfect answer to my gentle critics with these words :

“ To sum up : every demand for explanation in regard to freedom comes back, without our suspecting it, to the following question : ‘ Can time be adequately represented by space ? ’ To which we answer : Yes, if you are dealing with time flown ; No, if you are speaking of time flowing.” (*Bergson*, “ Time and Free Will,” page 221.)

Two members having asked me to explain the following experience, an experience common, perhaps to all of us, I add as a *post scriptum* what I believe to be the true *raison d'être* of what follows.

One sees for the first time a face or a place, yet with the certainty that the face or the place is well known to one.

For instance, in your travels you come to a place for the first time in your life.

There are the quaint houses, the dusty mill, the ancient bridge, all are familiar to you as well known. Can it be that in some former stage of existence you have lived here ? Hitherto unknown, yet it is well known.

The explanation is simple. It is due to a lack of synchronization between the two sides of the brain, the result being two impressions, produced by the same set of objects, with a hiatus between them which the mind cannot measure ; hence the first is placed in the indefinite past, and the second impression in the definite present. Thus lack of balance between the cerebral hemispheres explains this experience requiring no appeal to another and previous experience. *Ignotum per ignotius.*