

powers latent in man.' That Theosophy is, however, in its teaching and in its activity—at least in India—wholly inconsistent with and opposed to Christianity has recently been shown on the testimony of one who has studied both at first hand. A pamphlet dealing with the subject, entitled *Theosophy and the Coming Christ*, has just been issued by Miss E. R. McNeile, who went out to India with the intention of working with Mrs. Besant and assisting her to promulgate the teachings of Theosophy. After a full investigation of Theosophy in India, Miss McNeile has become completely disillusioned, and has left the Theosophical Society to become the head of a Christian school. She emphatically protests against the idea which is held by many well-meaning people that Theosophy is, after all, a friend and ally of the Christian Faith, and that it is possible to be both a Christian and a Theosophist. She writes: 'Theosophy explicitly denies the Incarnation, denies the Atonement, denies the death of Christ, denies the claim of Christ to be the only way to the Father, and, if a Christian would be also a Theosophist he must leave all this out of his Christianity. It would be more straightforward if our friends who are practically adopting a new religion would also find a new name for it, or rather, in so far as this is not a new religion but a new combination of old heresies, if they would choose one of the old names and openly avow themselves Ebionites or Gnostics or Orphics, and leave the name of Christian to those who accept the test originally laid down, and subscribe to the fact that Jesus is the Christ.' In the East, she declares, for Hindu and Buddhist Theosophy has been a rallying point against Christian teaching.

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The cause which the Theosophists have at heart is not likely to be advanced by some of the recent developments in connection with the movement. In November of last year G. Narayaniah, father of the Indian boy Krishnamurti who was being prepared by the Theosophist authorities as the new incarnation of the World Teacher, entered a suit in the Indian courts to recover the possession of his son, making damaging allegations against the well-known Mr. Leadbeater, who had acted as his Theosophist guardian. Leadbeater, who before taking up with Theosophy had been a minister of the Anglican Church, was charged with personal immorality, and with having deliberately taught the boys in his charge grossly improper habits. On April 15 the Madras High Court gave judgment in favor of Narayaniah, and ordered Mrs. Besant to restore the boy to his custody. Two points, according to the *Bombay Guardian*, stand out prominently in the judgment. Although the particular charge against Leadbeater was considered to be not established, yet the judge at the same time held that from the evidence he had given Leadbeater was certainly an immoral person and was highly unfit to be in charge of the boys. The plaintiff was right in saying that his sons should not be allowed to associate with him. The judge held that the father had every right to take back his children. The second point is that the judge expressed the opinion that before parting with the boys the plaintiff had stipulated with Mrs. Besant that they should not have anything to do with Leadbeater, and this stipulation had been violated by the defendant.

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In a subsequent attempt made by Mrs. Besant to clear the Theosophical Society from the unsavory imputation likely to attach to it after the evidence given in the Madras case and to extenuate and palliate, as far as possible, the action of Leadbeater in giving to young boys the devilish teaching there testified to and admitted, that lady has brought a veritable hornet's nest about her ears. As President of the Society she addressed a letter to all Theosophical journals in the world in which, after stating she positively disapproved of the advice given by Mr. Leadbeater to some twenty boys, as she considered it 'most mischievous and dangerous,' she adds: 'He brought the idea over with him from the celibate priesthood of the Anglican High Church and the Roman Catholic, as a device for saving men' [from open profligacy]. At once the vile calumny

was met with a storm of indignant protests from the Catholics of India. And not from the Catholics only. To the denunciations of the *Madras Catholic Watchman* and the *Catholic Herald of India* were added those of public organs such as the *Poona Mail*, which said, 'We do protest most warmly against the wicked slander Mrs. Besant has made against Anglican and Roman Catholic priests,' and the *Indian Mirror*—itself a Theosophist journal—which characterised Mrs. Besant's statement as 'an ungenerous and unjustifiable attack on a most respected body of spiritual workers.' Finally, the united Catholic Associations of India and Burma addressed a vigorous and incisive 'Open Letter' to Mrs. Besant, calling upon her either to substantiate or unconditionally to withdraw the infamous charge. 'You cannot,' they wrote, 'be surprised that we deeply resent your shameful attempt to injure our clergy by identifying it with this "most mischievous and dangerous" advice. . . . What you indignantly repudiate as far as your society is concerned, we repudiate much more indignantly with regard to our celibate clergy. We consider it as a most unwarranted and malignant calumny against the well-known teaching of our Church. We emphatically declare that it is impossible to bring forward the slightest proof to substantiate such an outrageous libel, either from approved writers in the Catholic Church, or from a single fact which happened anywhere with the open or tacit approval of our Church. In the name, therefore, of the thousands of Catholics whom our associations represent; in the name, we may say, of all the Catholics in India, Burma, and Ceylon, we hereby demand that you publicly substantiate your charge or unconditionally withdraw it. It is clearly your duty to take this step, and it is our right to demand it.'

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Mrs. Besant can hardly evade so public and pointed a challenge; and in due time we hope and expect to hear that the odious calumny has been straightforwardly and unreservedly withdrawn. Meanwhile, it will be generally agreed that the Catholic Associations have done well to put on record, on behalf of the Catholic body, a united protest and denial, particularly in the land in which Mrs. Besant's name may be presumed to carry some weight and which is the headquarters of the strange cult with which she is so prominently associated.

Notes

The Rabbi's Reply

Want of politeness in tram cars is not common in New Zealand, but it is not altogether unknown; and the rebuke administered recently by a Jewish rabbi to a rude passenger in one of the American cities will bear passing on. The rabbi was riding in a street car, and rose to offer his seat to a lady. Before she could take it a young man plumped himself down in the vacated seat. The rabbi said nothing, but gazed at him in disgusted silence. 'What's the matter?' suddenly demanded the young man in a gruff voice. 'What are you glaring at me for like that? You look as if you would like to eat me.' 'I am forbidden to eat you,' answered the rabbi. 'I am a Jew.'

The Poet Laureateship

As might have been expected, the appointment of Mr. Robert Bridges as Poet Laureate has been received in England without any particular enthusiasm. 'On the whole,' says the *Pall Mall*, 'we may accept the appointment as an academic choice which does honor to Oxford and to English letters, and will continue to invest a unique and illustrious office with a fitting dignity. But the fact remains that the Laureateship has never been conferred for genius. If the criterion had been the creation of pure poetry, Mrs. Meynell has put into her slender output a larger number of immortal things than any living English poet can claim. It is when we come to the true interpretation of the Laureate as a voice of the race that we see how the

Wm. R. Kells

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