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Toronto, October 5, 1893.

Theosophical Dogmas.

SINCE the recent visit of Mrs. Besant to Toronto, it would seem the subject of theosophy, which she expounded to a large and influential audience in the Auditorium, has been receiving a sympathetic attention it does not deserve. The greatest danger of theosophy, when it is presented only in its most attractive form, as was done by Mrs. Besant, is that its vague pleadings may enlist our sympathies, and win the colour of approval before the whole question has undergone the strict criticism to which such a system must reasonably be subjected. A brief examination of the two or three leading positions taken by accredited theosophists will show very clearly that the system is fundamentally and irrevocably antagonistic to the truths and teachings of Christianity. The idea most prominently advanced by Mrs. Besant in her lecture, was that of re-incarnation, modified from the old belief of India to the extent that it is confined to the human race. As Madame Blavatsky has it, it is only through re-incarnation a knowledge of human life can be made exhaustive; re-incarnation gives occasion for the development of all those faculties which can only be developed during re-incarnation; only through re-incarnation is the unsatisfying nature of material life fully demonstrated; the subordination of the lower to the higher nature is made possible by many earth lives; re-incarnation secures variety and copiousness to the discipline we all require." This position will not stand for a moment before the touchstone of reason, and as a matter of faith it is both unsatisfying and grovelling. The second dogma advanced is the doctrine of Karma, or the doctrine of consequences. In a word, this doctrine is expressed thus: You are under the now personal, merciless law of cause and effect. It is useless to repent, for there is no one to forgive. The "It," from which all things emanate, and to which all things return cannot hear you when you pray. It is a question of consequences, not of repentance, reform or regeneration. The way which Mrs. Besant refines upon this is that the soul has a will by which it can, under conditions sometimes within its own range, purify itself, yet it is under the decree of inexorable law, liberties against which bring sure moral punishment. Probably the lecturer understands this better than the reader can; but it is with such obscure statements we have to deal. The writings of theo-

sophists make it plain that theosophy is pantheistic. In the "Key to Theosophy" by Madame Blavatsky the following is to be found. "Do you believe in God?" Answer: "That depends on what you mean by the term." "I mean," says the inquirer, "the God of the Christians, the Father of Jesus, and the Creator; the Biblical God of Moses, in short." Answer: "In such a God we do not believe. We reject the idea of a personal, or an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God, who is but a gigantic shadow of man, and not man at his best either. The God of theology, we say—and we prove it—is a bundle of contradictions and a logical impossibility. Therefore, we will have nothing to do with Him." "We believe it a universal Divine principle, the root ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of being." Some of those who profess theosophy disclaim that they are pantheists, but no accepted leader of the movement has been able to disentangle their doctrines from the meshes of pantheism pure and simple. These are a few of the accepted beliefs of theosophists. If the system is examined, more of like import will be found, showing that the paths on which the new Cult and Christianity travel are widely divergent.

Priestly Tolerance.

AN esteemed correspondent draws our attention to a letter which appeared in the Montreal Witness, in which the writer, Rev. T. Fenwick, of Woodbridge, Ont., describes the "Christian treatment" received by Protestant Evangelists in Upper Ontario from a Roman Catholic priest. Our correspondent would take us to task for our strictures in the Sorel persecution case, and asks "In view of these facts, can you brand the Roman Catholic priest as an intolerant persecutor?" Before giving Mr. Fenwick's letter we remark: Is it so strange a thing for a Roman Catholic priest to deal out "Christian treatment" that when it does occur it is greeted with welcome surprise? Again. We are not aware of having in these columns described the priests of Rome as "intolerant persecutors." We did express indignation at the persecution which was shamefully permitted at Sorel, and which must ever disgrace our boasted civilization and liberty of the subject, and we have no doubt whatever, that the Church if not directly responsible for the occurrence, did incite the populace to commit the outrage, by incendiary statements from the altar, but the persecutor was not in this case the priest, so much as the representative of the civil law. From Sorel it is indeed pleasant to turn to Arthur, where tolerance, the prized possession of Protestants, seems to prevail. According to Mr. Fenwick's account, three young men lately took a "Gospel carriage" as far as Arthur, Ont., in the township of that name, holding meetings at several places on the way, among others, Woodbridge. Arthur is largely settled by Roman Catholics. The priest heard of their coming, and, on the Sabbath before they began their meetings, he spoke to his people about them, morning and evening, to the following effect: "The 'Gospel carriage' is coming to this place. The young men in charge of it are going to hold meetings. Now, if you wish to attend any of these meetings you are at liberty to do so. But remember this, you must make no disturbance, but conduct yourselves in a quiet, orderly manner." The first two nights, some of the Roman Catholics present acted rather unbecomingly. But after that, the young men could not have been treated more respectfully than they were by their Roman Catholic hear-