

“Sacerdotal Pretensions.”  
[DAWN, Nov1, 1921]

*The Canadian Theosophist*, commenting on the proceedings at the last Australian Convention, has the following:—

“‘Theosophy in Australia’ for May is largely occupied with the report of the convention, and contains President Martyn’s retiring address and the reply of Bishop C. W. Leadbeater.

“Mr. Martyn asked ‘for a wider, a truer tolerance than we enjoy to-day; for the encouragement of the expression—not the suppression—of what is in the minds of our members. . . . In Australia there is a seething unhappiness which threatens disruption. Nor are things right in other centres. I beseech you not to be misled by an artificial silence, for the silence is artificial. We can refuse to heed the warning, or we can pause and enquire by candid exchange of views whether or not we are failing before the inroads of sectarianism against which Madam Blavatsky so earnestly warned us . . . .’

“Bishop Leadbeater, in reply, said: ‘I happen to know that certain power does go along with the consecration of a bishop, but I value that power, not because it brings empty titles, but because it enables me to do more good than I could in any other way. . . . If by withholding the title they meant to imply that the orders of the Liberal Catholic Church are not equal to those of the Roman or Anglican Churches, then I think I must protest against it, because I know that the orders of that Church are in every way the equal to those others.’

“This is a frank declaration of sacerdotal authority which, if recognized by the Theosophical Society, would at once put it out of court with all the Free Churches and other religious bodies. Madam Blavatsky and other leading Theosophists ridiculed the sacerdotal pretensions, but the Theosophical Society as such has no opinion on the matter, being a strictly neutral body, committed only to the principle of brotherhood.”