

true Christ, Messiah, or Savior is the divine principle within every human being (*A Book of Quotations from Robert Crosbie*, pp. 105-6). Gottfried de PURUCKER, successor to Katherine Tingley as head of the Point Loma community and the Theosophical Society there, while he may not have worshiped with the Liberal Catholics, offered a fine exposition of the esoteric interpretation of Jesus in lectures later published as *Clothed with the Sun: The Mystery-Tale of Jesus the Avatara* (1972). He emphasizes, however, as have other esoteric writers, the correlation of the Christian mysteries with those of other ancient deities, noting, for example, that the day selected for the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ is identical with the birth-celebration of Mithras and the Roman festival of Sol Invictus, the unconquerable sun.

Other twentieth-century groups related to Theosophy have generally carried on something of the same esoteric Christian tradition. The Alice BAILEY groups and books, especially *From Bethlehem to Calvary and The Reappearance of the Christ*, take seriously and broadly the coming World Teacher, for whose coming they see themselves as making preparation, with the return of the Christ. The Anthroposophy of Rudolf STEINER has made as virtually central to its program a very profound Western, Christian mysteries occultism. In the "I AM" movement Jesus has appeared, together with SAINT GERMAIN, as one of the most important Ascended Masters.

One perceives within modern Theosophy two modes of thought regarding Christianity. The first style was willing to grant value in the "original" teachings of Jesus, which were held to include reincarnation and other Theosophical precepts. This school honored the ancient Gnostics, and even acknowledged the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection as a "mystery drama" instructive as to the crucifixion of spirit on the "cross of matter" and its liberation therefrom; but these Theosophists clearly sought to distance themselves from all subsequent forms of churchly Christianity. This was the style of Olcott, Judge, Sinnett, Blavatsky herself, and of the TS (PL) and ULT.

The second party, originally associated mainly with former Anglicans like Kingsford, Besant, Leadbeater, and Hodson, was prepared to see value in the doctrines and practices of historic Christianity as well, especially in its Catholic forms. While accepting the allegorical character of much of the Christian mythos, it did not stop there. These Theosophists also viewed Christ, together with the church's seasons, festivals, and sacraments, as not only