

The Theosophical Society ¹

By Geoffrey Hodson

THE WORD *Theosophia*, derived from two Greek words, meaning Divine Wisdom, was coined by the Neo-Platonists in the Second Century of the Christian era to connote the truths revealed to humanity by our evolutionary Elders at the dawn of human life on this planet, and added to, checked and rechecked down to the present day by an unbroken succession of Adept occult investigators.

Theosophy, then, is offered to us as the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages,

an uninterrupted record, covering thousands of generations of Seers, whose respective experiences were made to test and verify the traditions, passed on orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted Beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. . . No vision of one Adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions-so obtained as to stand as independent evidence-of other Adepts, and by centuries of experience.

The Secret Doctrine, by H. P. Blavatsky, Vol. I, p. 316, Adyar Edition.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES of religion, philosophy, art, science and politics are all contained within this Wisdom of the Ages. From the time of the closing of the Neo-Platonic and Gnostic Schools to the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, save for the few alchemists, Kabbalists, Rosicrucians, occultly instructed Masons and Christian mystics, Theosophy was unknown in the Western world. Before then it was known and studied in various forms by the Platonists, the Pythagoreans, the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, whilst in India and China it has been preserved down the ages in unbroken continuity. It is the wisdom of the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas*, the very heart of Hinduism, Taoism and Islam. By means of allegory and symbol it is revealed in the Christian Scriptures, the dead-letter reading of which has blinded Christians to their deeper significance.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, founded in New York in 1875, a reincarnation of innumerable similar movements in the past, is one of the many channels chosen from time to time by the Teachers of humanity for the transmission of this Ancient Wisdom to man. Theosophists are offered the opportunity of studying, living and presenting the age-old truths to the world in terms of modern thought. Though the presentations may vary, Theosophy itself, being all-Truth, is unchanging and eternal.

¹ Adapted from *Lecture Notes: The School of Wisdom, Volume II*, Geoffrey Hodson.

THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION reveals the existence of certain doctrines, which are common to all World Faiths. Although differently presented in each, when collected and blended into a whole, these teachings constitute a basic body of revealed Truth, which can be studied independently of all religious systems. Each world religion reveals an arc of the circle of Eternal Wisdom. Theosophy, although as yet but partially revealed to man, is the full circle of Truth. Age by age, at the direction of Those who are the Guardians of knowledge and its accompanying power, aspects of the Eternal Wisdom are revealed to humanity through world religions and philosophies.

THE GREAT PRACTICAL VALUE OF THEOSOPHY consists in its revelation of the meaning and purpose of human existence, which without it is a hopeless puzzle defying solution. A puzzle may be solved by two methods. One is that of trial and error, of experimenting with various pieces in the hope that ultimately they will fit together. This is a slow and unsatisfactory method, particularly in the attempt to solve the problems of life. The other method, far more satisfactory, is based on pre-knowledge of the position of the various pieces in the complete design. Theosophy provides that knowledge, and reveals the due place in an evolutionary plan of every individual and every event.

LIFE SOMEWHAT RESEMBLES A PIECE OF TAPESTRY. On the underside one sees little save incomprehensible tangles, knots, badly blended colors and a general confusion. Examination of the upper side, however, reveals the whole pattern, shows that the confusion is only apparent, since every juxtaposition is essential to the completion of the design. So, also, the apparent confusion in the lives of individuals and of Nations. Theosophy reveals the plan of life, thereby bestowing mental serenity upon those who study it and making intelligent and purposeful living possible for them.

THE STUDENT OF THEOSOPHY will do well to recognize that the human mind, being finite, cannot fully comprehend abstract Truth, which is infinite. As the human intellect develops, our power of comprehension increases. Truth appears to change, as does the shape of a mountain gradually approached and seen from different points of view. The mountain itself is, however, relatively changeless, as also is eternal Truth. Theosophy being all-Truth, no final theosophical statement is ever possible. No theosophical teacher can legitimately make authoritative pronouncements. In the Theosophical Society opinion is therefore free, save, perhaps, concerning the brotherhood of humanity.