

**MAN'S PLACE IN THE
UNIVERSE: A SUMMARY
OF THEOSOPHIC STUDY**

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Man's Place in the Universe: A Summary of Theosophic Study by W. S. Elliott

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A SUMMARY OF THEOSOPHIC STUDY

BY
THE AUTHOR OF
THE STORY OF ATLANTIS

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PREFACE

THE need for a handbook of Theosophy is expressed by a daily-increasing number of students who wish to obtain some knowledge of its teaching, without necessarily having to read through the volumes in which its more abstruse problems are dealt with at length.

But the scope of the subject being so stupendous, and the employment of some oriental terms being an unfortunate necessity (owing to the want in our language of words capable of conveying the required ideas), it is obvious that the writing of such a handbook is not quite a simple task. For Theosophy is the Divine Wisdom which has

been handed down through the ages, and from it, as from a great root, have sprung all the religions which have enlightened man. In other words, Theosophy is the Science of Life—the knowledge about God, about the Universe, about man and his relative position in the scheme of things. God Himself only knows this Science in its sublime totality. But the vastness of extent and complexity in detail even of the fragments we have been privileged to receive, are a bar to the absolutely simple statement which a handbook is supposed to constitute.

The main outlines of the subject which have been specially brought before Western students may indeed be summed up so shortly that a child might understand them. They may be formulated thus: that the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man are fundamental facts. That the Law of absolute justice is all pervading—that Law which ordains that every thought we

think, every word we speak, every action we perform, shall have its inevitable sequence for good or for evil, for happiness or for misery, to ourselves and to others, in ever-widening circles. That this Law has been operative through untold ages, and that our very existence here is in consequence of its action ; that our earthly pilgrimage was not begun at birth, and will not be ended at death ; that, while desire of life remains, we must inevitably return to incarnation, in order to work out the *effects* of our past thoughts, our past words, and our past actions, while the fresh *causes* we generate at every moment will in their turn produce effects which will have to be worked out through future lives. And, finally, that the great law of sacrifice—that law which has been more or less travestied by every religion in turn—is, when rightly understood, the final explanation of the deepest mysteries of being, and the crown of our most sublime attainment.

These are some of the fundamental ideas which are associated with the name of Theosophy. But when we come to work these out in further detail, and, still more, if any reference has to be made to our past history, and the long process of evolution which has made us what we are, the subject becomes one which cannot easily be grasped by every superficial reader. The problem cannot be formulated in absolutely simple language.

While attempting to put before the public as clear and plain a statement as possible, the main object in the writer's mind will be to collect and summarise the various fragments of the great body of teaching, which any close student may recognise by the evidence obtainable, as having existed during past ages in many parts of the world. The first instalment of this ancient teaching, *in its present form*, was made public about twenty-five years ago; but the added store of knowledge which has since been received

has not only thrown illumination on many previously unintelligible problems, but has vastly extended the whole scope of the teaching.

But while simplicity and lucidity shall be our aim, the most transcendent heights of thought have to be faced at the very first step, for the opening chapter deals with man's relation to God; and though God is the fundamental fact of all existence, the words we are obliged to use in speaking of Him are very apt to seem but metaphysical abstractions to the great majority of men.

