

Your Grace will now understand why it is that the Theosophical Society has taken for one of its three "objects" the study of those Eastern religions and philosophies, which shed such a flood of light upon the inner meaning of Christianity; and you will, we hope, also perceive that in so doing, we are acting not as the enemies, but as the friends of the religion taught by Jesus—of true Christianity, in fact. For it is only through the study of those religions and philosophies that Christians can ever arrive at an understanding of their own beliefs, or see the hidden meaning of the parables and allegories which the Nazarene told to the spiritual cripples of Judea, and by taking which, either as matters of fact or as matters of fancy, the Churches have brought the teachings themselves into ridicule and contempt, and Christianity into serious danger of complete collapse, undermined as it is by historical criticism and mythological research, besides being broken by the sledge-hammer of modern science.

Ought Theosophists themselves, then, to be regarded by Christians as their enemies, because they believe that orthodox Christianity is, on the whole, opposed to the religion of Jesus; and because they have the courage to tell the Churches that they are traitors to the Master they profess to revere and serve? Far from it, indeed. Theosophists know that the same spirit that animated the words of Jesus lies latent in the hearts of Christians, as it does naturally in all men's hearts. Their fundamental tenet is the Brotherhood of Man, the ultimate realization of which is alone made possible by that which was known long before the days of Jesus as "the Christ spirit." This spirit is even now potentially present in all men, and it will be developed into activity when human beings are no longer prevented from understanding, appreciating and sympathizing with one another by the barriers of strife and hatred erected by priests and princes. We know that Christians in their lives frequently rise above the level of their Christianity. All Churches contain many noble, self-sacrificing and virtuous men and women, eager to do good in their generation according to their lights and opportunities, and full of aspirations to higher things than those of earth—followers of Jesus in spite of their Christianity. For such as these, Theosophists feel the deepest sympathy; for only a Theosophist, or else a person of your Grace's delicate sensibility and great theological