

# *Tributes to Sir Henry More*



## Tributes to Sir Henry More

**One of the truest Platonists of modern times, a precious ornament to our race, a glory to his country, and so pure and unselfish that the Masters held him in profound esteem.**

**By Henry Steel Olcott and Boris de Zirkoff.**

*From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) Vol. IV pp. 658-61.*

**S**IR HENRY MORE was an English philosopher and theologian of the Cambridge Platonist School, born at Grantham in 1614. Both his parents were strong Calvinists, but he himself “could never swallow that hard doctrine.” At fourteen, he was sent to Eton School for Greek and Latin studies, and in 1631 was admitted to Christ’s College, Cambridge. In 1635, he graduated B.A., and received his M.A. in 1639. At about the same time he received holy orders, and from then on lived almost entirely within the walls of the College, except when he went to stay with his “heroine pupil,” Anne, Viscountess Conway, [659] at her country seat of Ragley in Warwickshire, where More wrote several of his works. He drew around him a number of young men of a refined type, and won a high reputation both for saintliness and for intellectual power, refusing all preferences to the advantage of his studies and writing. More shrank from bitter theological disputes, but had the courage of his opinions which were very definite and often contrary to the existing current of thought.

More belonged to that little hand of Platonists which formed at Cambridge in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; he represents the mystical and theosophic side of this movement; mystical elevation was the chief feature of his character, “a certain radiancy of thought which carried him beyond the common life . . . and his humility and charity were not less conspicuous than his piety.” The “occult sciences,” of which such men as van Helmont and Greatrakes were in More’s time the apostles, had a singular fascination for him. He was a voluminous writer both in prose and in verse, his most notable work being the *Divine Dialogues* (1668), which summarizes his general view of philosophy and religion.

Henry More died on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1687, and was buried in the chapel of the College he loved so well, The most vivid and interesting picture of himself and his life is in his own “Preface” to the 1679 edition of his *Opera Omnia*. Rev. R. Ward wrote his *Life* in 1710.

Accounts concerning Henry More which are to be found in various encyclopaedias, while attempting to give a fair idea of the character of this remarkable man, probably fall short of the actual truth. The profound respect which Mme. Blavatsky felt for him, and the manner in which she spoke of him, half-reveal a certain occult significance in the life and thought of this figure. Surprising as it may be, the name of Henry More is associated with the writing of *Isis Unveiled*, nearly two hundred years after his demise. The facts are related by Col. Henry S. Olcott in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 237-39, 242-43:

. . . I was made to believe that we worked in collaboration with at least one discarnate entity — the pure soul of one of the wisest philosophers of modern times, one who was an ornament to our race, a glory to his country. He was a great Platonist, and I was told that, so absorbed was he in his life study, he had become earth-bound, *i.e.*, he could not snap the ties which held him to the Earth, but sat in an astral library of his own mental creation, plunged in his philosophical reflections, [660] oblivious to the lapse of time, and anxious to promote the turning of men's minds towards the solid philosophical basis of true religion. His desire did not draw him to taking a new birth among us, but made him seek out those who, like our Masters and their agents, wished to work for the spread of truth and the overthrow of superstition. I was told that he was so pure and so unselfish that all the Masters held him in profound respect and, being forbidden to meddle with his Karma, they could only leave him to work his way out of his (Kāmalokic) illusions, and pass on to the goal of formless being and absolute spirituality according to the natural order of Evolution. His mind had been so intensely employed in purely intellectual speculation that his spirituality had been temporarily stifled. Meanwhile there he was, willing and eager to work with H.P.B. on this epoch-making book, towards the philosophical portion of which he contributed much. He did not materialize and sit with us, nor obsess H.P.B. medium-fashion; he would simply talk with her psychically, by the hour together, dictating copy, telling her what references to hunt up, answering my questions about details, instructing me as to principles and, in fact, playing the part of a third person in our literary symposium. He gave me his portrait once — a rough sketch in coloured crayons on flimsy paper — and sometimes would drop me a brief note about some personal matter, but from first to last his relation to us both was that of a mild, kind, extremely learned teacher and elder friend. He never dropped a word to indicate that he thought himself aught but a living man and, in fact, I was told that he did not realize that he had died out of the body. Of the lapse of time, he seemed to have so little perception that, I remember, H.P.B. and I laughed, one morning at 2:30 a.m., when, after an unusually hard night's work, while we were taking a parting smoke, he quietly asked H.P.B. "Are you ready to begin?," under the impression that we were at the beginning instead of the end of the evening! And I also recollect how she said: "For Heaven's sake don't laugh deep in your thought, else the 'old gentleman' will surely hear you and feel hurt!" That gave me an idea: to laugh superficially is ordinary laughter, but to laugh deeply is to shift your merriment to the plane of psychic perception! So emotions may, like beauty, be *sometimes* but skin-deep. Sins, also: think of that!

Except in the case of this old Platonist, I never had, with or without H.P.B.'s help, consciously to do with another disincarnate entity during the progress of our work . . . [And yet, there] arises the question whether the Platonist was really [661] a spirit disincarnate, or an Adept who had lived in that philosopher's body and seemed to, hut really did not, die out of it on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1687. It is certainly a difficult problem to solve. Considering that the ordinary concomitants of spirit-possession and spirit-intercourse were wanting, and that H.P.B. served the Platonist in the most matter-of-fact way as amanuensis, their relation differing in nothing from that of any Private Secretary with his employer, save that the latter was invisible to me but visible to her, it does look more as if we were dealing with a living man than with a disincarnate person. He seemed not quite a "Brother" — as we used to call the Adepts then — yet more than anything else; and as far as the literary work itself was concerned, it went on exactly as the other part of it when the dictator, or writer, as the case might be, was professedly a Master . . .

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

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## Suggested reading for students.



- BLAVATSKY ABOUT TO UNVEIL ISIS
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS ISIS UNVEILED
- PAGES FROM ISIS UNVEILED

— *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*

- ISIS UNVEILED IS A TREASURE OF LIGHT.
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED

— *in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.*



### **From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.**

- A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO LORD LYTTON
- A LAY CHELA ON OCCULT STUDY
- A LAY CHELA ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- A THEOSOPHICAL LOVE FEAST IN FRANCE
- A THIRSTY HORSE-LEECH PLEADING ADMISSION TO THE T.S.
- ALETHEIA IS OUR GOD AND DOGMA
- ANCIENT ETHICAL WORSHIPS
- ARCHAIC THEOSOPHY IS PRE-BUDDHIST WISDOM-RELIGION
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS BLAVATSKY
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY

**THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- BLAVATSKY ON ANNA KINGSFORD
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE THEOSOPHY OF DR. N.I. PIROGOV
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TRAVELLING TRUTHSEEKER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE VEILED PHRASEOLOGY OF THE PURANAS
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES ARGUMENTS AGAINST THEOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES THE ASSERTIONS OF A FRENCH THEOSOPHIST
- BLAVATSKY'S OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW THEOSOPHISTS
- BUCK ON THE NATURE AND AIM OF THEOSOPHY
- COLD METAPHYSICS VERSUS DIVINE WISDOM
- CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF A TRUE THEOSOPHIST
- CORY'S ANCIENT FRAGMENTS (1832)
- COSMOPOLITANISM IS FAR HOLIER AND NOBLER THAN GRASPING GREEDINESS CLOAKED IN PATRIOTISM
- DE ZIRKOFF ON CHARLES JOHNSTON
- DE ZIRKOFF ON EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT
- DE ZIRKOFF ON FRANZ HARTMANN
- DE ZIRKOFF ON GERALD MASSEY
- DE ZIRKOFF ON HP BLAVATSKY COLLECTED WRITINGS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON SUBBA ROW
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE DREAM THAT NEVER DIES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THREE EMINENT THEOSOPHISTS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN
- DE ZIRKOFF RECALLS HIS FORMATIVE YEARS IN RUSSIA
- EARLY THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES EXPOUNDED BY H.P. BLAVATSKY
- EASTERN LIGHT SHINES ON WESTERN MINDS
- EASTERN THEOSOPHY IS NEITHER A CREED, NOR A RELIGIOUS BODY
- ESOTERIC BUDDHISM HAS RENDERED PRECIOUS SERVICE BY POPULARIZING, IN EX-OTERIC FORM, ESOTERIC TRUTHS.

**THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- ESSENTIAL THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES
- GLIMPSES OF THE FATHOMLESS MYSTERIES OF ZOROASTER
- HARTMANN ON HOW TO ENTER THE PATH TO INFINITE LIFE
- HARTMANN ON THE HARMONICAL SOCIETY
- HOW THEOSOPHY REKINDLED TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN INDIA
- HUMANITY SEEMS TO PROGRESS BY INVENTING ONE DISCOVERY AFTER THE OTHER
- IMPORT AND POTENCY OF NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS
- IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS A TREASURE OF LIGHT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED
- JUDGE AND DE ZIRKOFF ON GEORGE MEAD
- JUDGE ON THE HEART DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- JUDGE ON THE TRUE THEOSOPHIST'S PATH
- JUDGE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND WORK
- KEYS TO THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE
- LET THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PERISH, THAN FORSAKE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH
- MEDITATION ALONE WILL NOT LEAD TO THEOSOPHIC DEVELOPMENT
- MYSTERIES ARE SACRED TRUTHS
- MYSTERY IS NOT UNREVEALED KNOWLEDGE
- NO THEOSOPHICAL JOURNAL CAN SATISFY ALL CREEDS AND BELIEFS
- OCCULT TRUTH IS NATURE WITHOUT THE ILLUSORY VEIL OF THE SENSES
- OUR GOD IS HUMANITY AND OUR CULT THE LOVE OF OUR FELLOW-MAN
- OUR ONLY DELIVERER AND SAVIOUR
- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
- PREREQUISITES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
- PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITARIANISM IS AN AFFRONT TO BROTHERHOOD
- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
- STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO PATHS
- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
- THE ADYAR THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY BELITTLED THE MASTERS

**THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- THE AIMS AND MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY FULFILLED
- THE BROTHERS OF THE ROSY CROSS NO LONGER EXIST
- THE CROWN JEWELS OF THEOSOPHY (PHOTO ALBUM)
- THE EMPYREAN PHILOSOPHICAL EXHORTATIONS OF ZOROASTER
- THE POWER OF THE TRINITY OF KOSMOS MANIFESTS THROUGH THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAN
- THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY
- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES
- THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IS NOT A NURSERY FOR BUDDING ADEPTS
- THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ARCANES TERMS
- THEOSOPHIA - FOUNTAIN, PERSPECTIVES, PRACTICE (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHIA: INNER WISDOM
- THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, THE GREAT MORAL BUT SILENT FORCE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - ESOTERIC SECTION (LETTERHEAD)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MISSION AND FUTURE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OBJECTS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SYMBOLS (TRUE TYPE FONT)
- THEOSOPHIST IS WHO THEOSOPHY DOES
- THEOSOPHISTS DEFINED ATTITUDINALLY, ETHICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
- THEOSOPHY IS DEEPER MONISM THAN SECULARISM, AND MORE PHILOSOPHICAL
- THEOSOPHY IS RELIGION ITSELF AND SUBLIME CODE OF ETHICS
- THEOSOPHY IS THE PRECIOUS PEARL WITHIN THE SHELL OF EVERY RELIGION
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE
- TRIBUTES TO CHARLES SOTHERAN
- TRIBUTES TO DE ROBIGNE MORTIMER BENNETT
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE



**THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- TRUTH IS ALWAYS MIXED WITH ERROR AND HINDERED BY TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- TWO JOURNALS DEVOTED TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- VERNAL BLOOMS BY WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- VISTAS OF VIRTUE AND TRUTH
- WADIA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE TS
- WHAT SORT OF MAN THE REAL PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE?
- WHEN PURE LOVE IS PERVERTED, HUMANITY QUIVERS
- WHO CAN MEND THE BROKEN SOCIETY?
- WHO CAN READ THE RIDDLE OF THE SERPENT?
- WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS?
- WHY A BRAHMIN ABANDONED HIS CASTE
- WHY PAGAN SYMBOLISM IS INDESTRUCTIBLE?

