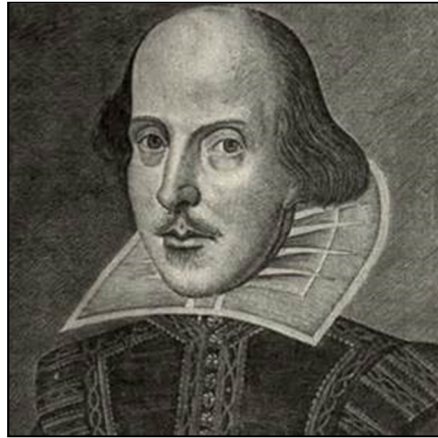


Shakespeare Extravaganza



A COMPILATION OF ARTICLES FROM THEOSOPHICAL JOURNALS
SHOWING THE PRESENCE OF ESOTERIC IDEAS IN THE WRITINGS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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PREFACE

In late December 2015, I came across an article in the Arts Section of *The Wall Street Journal* announcing that the year 2016 would mark the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, a man many regard as the greatest writer of the English language to have ever lived. Throughout the year and throughout the world, theatrical companies, opera houses, cinemas, and orchestras would be presenting his works, or those inspired by him. Moreover, publishers were already preparing to release dozens of new Shakespeare-related titles during the upcoming year.

I thought that it would be wonderful if the Theosophical Society could participate somehow in the festivities. After checking various periodicals housed in the Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library at the national center of the Theosophical Society in America, I was delighted to discover that many articles had already been written detailing the presence of esoteric ideas within the writings of Shakespeare. I quickly made it a personal project to identify the best ones and distribute them on a monthly basis to our membership. This series of twelve articles is the result.

Some of you might ask, “Why would Theosophists be interested in Shakespeare?” It may come as a surprise to discover that Shakespeare and Theosophists have something in common. The Bard may not have used modern Theosophical terminology, but many of his insights have a remarkable affinity with the way students of esoteric tradition view the world. Specifically, it was his genius to see deeply into the workings of the human soul, and his observations about human nature are deeply resonant with the perspective provided by Theosophy. Moreover, the writings of Blavatsky include multiple mentions of Shakespeare, as well as numerous quotations taken from his writings. If H. P. Blavatsky was an admirer of Shakespeare, then maybe we, as Theosophists, should be curious enough to find out why.

David P. Bruce
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