

# *H. P. Blavatsky to the American Conventions*

{Excerpts}

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## Letter I — 1888

TO WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,

*General Secretary of the American Section of  
the Theosophical Society.*

MY DEAREST BROTHER AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY;

In addressing to you this letter, which I request you to read to the Convention summoned. ... I must first present my hearty congratulations and most cordial good wishes to the assembled Delegates and good Fellows of our Society, and to yourself — the heart and soul of that Body in America. We were several, to call it to life in 1875. Since then you have remained alone to preserve that life through good and evil report. It is to you chiefly, if not entirely, that the Theosophical Society owes its existence in 1888. Let me then thank you for it, for the first, and perhaps for the last, time publicly, and from the bottom of my heart, which beats only for the cause you represent so well and serve so faithfully. I ask you also to remember that, on this important occasion, my voice is but the feeble echo of other more sacred voices, and the transmitter of the approval of Those whose presence is alive in more than one true Theosophical heart, and lives, as I know, preeminently in yours. ...

The multiplication of local centers should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a center of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a center from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.

But let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally. We are all fellow students, more or less advanced; but no one belonging to the Theosophical Society ought to count himself as more than, at best, a pupil-teacher — one who has no right to dogmatize.

... Yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. ... There are ... among us {those} who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy — the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets — is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.

This should never be forgotten, nor should the following fact be overlooked. On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission — namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not on a labor with selfish motives — on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realization of which Humanity is vainly waiting for the last 18 {now 20} centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.

Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body, its many other ugly features notwithstanding. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergencies would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge. ...

It must be remembered that the Society was not founded as a nursery for forcing a supply of Occultists — as a factory for the manufactory of Adepts. It was intended to stem the current of materialism, and also that of

spiritualistic phenomenalism and the worship of the Dead. It had to guide the spiritual awakening that has now begun, and not to pander to psychic cravings which are but another form of materialism. For by “materialism” is meant not only an anti-philosophical negation of pure spirit, and, even more, materialism in conduct and action — brutality, hypocrisy, and, above all, selfishness — but also the fruits of a disbelief in all but material things. ...

... Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, goodwill to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to oneself, are its chief features. ...

I am confident that, when the real nature of Theosophy is understood, the prejudice against it, now so unfortunately prevalent, will die out. Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. ... The function of Theosophists is to open men’s hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all. ...

... But you must remember that, although there must be local Branches of the Theosophical Society there can be no local Theosophists; and just as you all belong to the Society, *so do I belong to you all*.

Yours ever, in the truth of the GREAT CAUSE  
we are all working for —

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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## Letter II — 1889

*Friends and Brother Theosophists:*

... A firm will and a steadfast devotion to our great Cause of Theosophy must and shall break down every obstacle until the stream of Truth shall burst its confines and sweep every difficulty away in its rolling flood. May Karma hasten the day.

But you in America. Your Karma as a nation has brought Theosophy home to you. The life of the Soul, the psychic side of nature, is open to many of you. The life of altruism is not so much a high ideal as a matter of practice. Naturally, then, Theosophy finds a home in many hearts and minds, and strikes a resounding harmony as soon as it reaches the ears of those who are ready to listen. There, then, is part of your work: to lift high the torch of the liberty of the Soul of Truth that all may see it and benefit by its light. ...

... The Society must grow proportionately and not *too* rapidly, for fear lest, like some children, it should overgrow its strength and there should come a period of difficulty and danger when natural growth is arrested to prevent the sacrifice of the organism. ... What can be done to prevent such a thing is for each Fellow of the Society to make Theosophy a vital factor in their lives — to make it real, to weld its principles firmly into their lives — in short, to make it their own and treat the Theosophical Society as if it were themselves. ...

We need all our strength to meet the difficulties and dangers which surround us. We have external enemies to fight in the shape of materialism, prejudice, and obstinacy; the enemies in the shape of custom and religious forms;

enemies too numerous to mention, but nearly as thick as the sand-clouds which are raised by the blasting Sirocco of the desert. ...

... The road is wide and broad which leads to such destruction; and it is but too easy to find; and only too many go ignorantly along it to their own destruction. But the practical cure for it lies in one thing. That is the course of study which I mentioned before. It sounds very simple, but is eminently difficult; for that cure is “*ALTRUISM*.” And this is the keynote of Theosophy and the cure for all ills; this it is which the real Founders of the Theosophical Society promote as its first object — *UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD*.

... But there are dozens of small occult Societies which talk very glibly of Magic, Occultism, Rosicrucians, Adepts, etc. These profess much, even to giving the key to the Universe, but end by leading men to a blank wall instead of the “Door of the Mysteries.” These are some of our most insidious foes. Under cover of the philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion they manage to get up a mystical jargon which for the time is effective and enables them, by the aid of a very small amount of clairvoyance, to fleece the mystically inclined but ignorant aspirants to the occult, and lead them like sheep in almost any direction. ...

But in order that we may be able to effect this working on behalf of our common cause, we have to sink all private differences. Many are the energetic members of the Theosophical Society who wish to work and work hard. But the price of their assistance is that all the work must be done in their way and not in any one else’s way. And if this is not carried out they sink back into apathy or leave the Society entirely, loudly declaring that they are the only true Theosophists. Or, if they remain, they endeavor to exalt their own method of working at the expense of all other earnest workers. This is fact, but it is not Theosophy. There can be no other end to it than that the growth of the Society will soon be split up into various sects, as many as there are leaders. ... You work and work hard. But to work properly in our Great Cause it is necessary to forget all personal differences of opinion as to how the work is to be carried on. Let each of us work in his own way and not endeavor to force our ideas of work upon our neighbors.

...

... Karma will reconcile all our differences of opinion. ...

Thus, then, “UNION IS STRENGTH”; and for every reason private differences must be sunk in united work for our Great Cause. ...

But our union is, and ever will be, our strength, if we preserve our ideal of Universal Brotherhood. ...

And now a last and parting word. My words may and will pass and be forgotten, but certain sentences from letters written by the Masters will never pass, because they are the embodiment of the highest practical Theosophy. I must translate them for you: —

“ \* \* \* Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man’s profit.” \* \* “There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of Self and forgetting all other Selves.”

“The Universe groans under the weight of such action (Karma), and none other than self-sacrificial Karma relieves it. \* How many of you have helped humanity to carry its smallest burden, that you should all regard yourselves as Theosophists. Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviors of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them!, would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly. \* \* \* \* \*”

These are golden words; may you assimilate them! This is the hope of one who signs herself most sincerely the devoted sister *and servant* of every true follower of the Masters of Theosophy.

Yours fraternally,

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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### Letter III — 1890

*Brother Theosophists and Co-workers:*

... There are signs, {from the Society in the West} visible though only gradually coming into sight, that its members are at last awakening from their apathy and setting to work in earnest to *practice* the first principle of true Theosophy — UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. Gradually they are becoming alive to the duty of helping others, as they have been helped, by bringing a knowledge of the life-giving truths of Theosophy within the reach of all. ...

... To the members of that Section I say: See and realize what great results can be achieved by those who are really in earnest and unite unselfishly to work for humanity. Let this year's outcome show you in unmistakable signs the weighty responsibility that rests upon you, not only towards the Society, but towards the whole of Humanity. Therefore do not for one moment relax in your efforts; press closer, shoulder to shoulder, every day; stand together as one man, come what may, fine weather or storm, and the victory of the cause to which you have pledged yourselves is certain. Striving thus in unison with your Higher Self, your efforts must and will be fruitful of good to the Society, to yourselves, to Humanity. ...

... Let it make all feel that there is a power behind the Society which will give us the strength we need, which will enable us to move the world, if we will but UNITE and WORK as one mind, one heart. The Masters require only that each shall do *his best*, and, above all, that each shall strive in reality to feel himself one with his fellow-workers. It is not a dull agreement on intellectual questions, or an impossible unanimity as to all details of work, that is needed; but a true, hearty, earnest devotion to our cause which will lead each to help his brother to the utmost of his power to *work* for that cause, whether or not we agree as to the exact method of carrying on that work. The only man who is absolutely wrong in his method is the one who *does nothing*; each can and should cooperate with all and all with each in a large-hearted spirit of comradeship to forward the work of bringing Theosophy home to every man and woman in the country.

Let us look forward, not backward. ...

What I said last year remains true today, that is, that the Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. The latter relate wholly to the material and evanescent part of the septenary man, but the Ethics sink into and take hold of the real man — the reincarnating Ego. We are outwardly creatures of but a day; within we are eternal. Learn, then, well the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, and teach, practice, promulgate that system of life and thought which alone can save the coming races. Do not work merely for the Theosophical Society, but *through* it for Humanity.

May Theosophy grow more and more a living power in the lives of each one of our members, and may the coming year be yet more full of good work and healthy progress than the one just closing, is the wish of your humble co-worker and fellow member.

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### Letter IV — 1891

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Let me remind you all once more that such work is now more than ever needed. The period which we have now reached in the cycle that will close between 1897-8 is, and will continue to be, one of great conflict and continued strain. If the T.S. can hold through it, good; if not, while Theosophy will remain unscathed, the Society will perish — perchance most ingloriously — and the World will suffer. I fervently hope that I may not see such a disaster in my present body. ... Take for your motto in conduct during the coming year, "Peace with All who love Truth in sincerity," and the Convention of 1892 will bear eloquent witness to the strength that is born of unity.

Your position as the forerunners of the sixth sub-race of the fifth root-race has its own special perils as well as its special advantages. Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outruns the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period, so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of Those whose goodwill will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves. ...

... After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never dormant wish of my heart, **“Be Theosophists, Work for Theosophy!”** Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western World from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other, and from that hatred of class and [from] social strifes, that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can save it from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as older civilizations have done. In your hands, **Brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century: and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.** ... {bolding added}

May the blessings of the past and present great Teachers rest upon you. From myself accept collectively, the assurance of my true, never-wavering fraternal feelings, and the sincere heartfelt thanks for the work done by all the workers,

From their Servant to the last,

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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#### Letter V — 1891

{Dated April 15th, 23 days before H.P.B.'s death}

*Brother Theosophists: —*

I have purposely omitted any mention of my oldest friend and fellow-worker, W. Q. Judge, in my general address to you, because I think that his unflagging and self-sacrificing efforts for the building up of Theosophy in America deserve special mention.

Had it not been for W. Q. Judge, Theosophy would not be where it is today in the United States. It is he who has mainly built up the movement among you, and he who has proved in a thousand ways his entire loyalty to the best interests of Theosophy and the Society.

Mutual admiration should play no part in a Theosophical Convention, but honor should be given where honor is due, and I gladly take this opportunity of stating in public, ... my deep appreciation of the work of your General Secretary, and of publicly tendering him my most sincere thanks and deeply-felt gratitude, in the name of Theosophy, for the noble work he is doing and has done.

*Yours fraternally*  
*H.P. Blavatsky*

