

Open Letters to the American Conventions

Woe to those who try to convert a noble philosophy into a den for disgusting immorality, greediness for selfish power, and money-making under the cloak of Theosophy. Karma reaches them when least expected.



Salient points

- Theosophy is the philosophy of the rational explanation of things, not hollow tenets. It is the Beacon-light of Hope guiding humanity on its true path.
- Its mission is to unite men of all nations in brotherly love and noblest acts of charity, beyond kith and kin, to all that lives and feels, and needs help and kindness.
- Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man in addition to the animal, and at the sacrifice of the superfluous animality which modern life and materialistic teachings have developed to a degree which is abnormal for the human being at this stage of his progress.
- Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the conditions of mankind.
- Their function 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 worthy of the name.
- 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.
- 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 labour with selfish motives — on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man.



First Letter

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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 for April 22nd, 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, pre-eminently in yours. May the assembled Society feel the warm greeting as earnestly as it is given, and may every Fellow present, who realizes that he has deserved it, profit by the Blessings sent.

Theosophy has lately taken a new start in America which marks the commencement of a new Cycle in the affairs of the Society in the West. And the policy you are now following is admirably adapted to give scope for the widest expansion of the movement, and to establish on a firm basis an organization which, while promoting feelings of fraternal sympathy, social unity, and solidarity, will leave ample room for individual freedom and exertion in the common cause — that of helping mankind.

The multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a centre 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 centre 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.

Since the Society was founded, a distinct change has come over the spirit of the age. Those who gave us commission to found the Society foresaw this, now rapidly growing, wave of transcendental influence following that other wave of mere phenomenalism. Even the journals of Spiritualism are gradually eliminating the phenomena and

wonders, to replace them with philosophy. The Theosophical Society led the van of this movement; but, although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. The days of old are gone to return no more, and many are the Theosophists who, taught by bitter experience, have pledged themselves to make of the Society a “miracle club” no longer. The faint-hearted have asked in all ages for signs and wonders, and when these failed to be granted, they refused to believe. Such are not those who will ever comprehend Theosophy pure and simple. But there are others among us 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 labour 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 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.

According as people are prepared to receive it, so will new Theosophical teaching be given. But no more will be given than the world, on its present level of spirituality, can profit by. It depends on the spread of Theosophy — the assimilation of what has been already given — how much more will be revealed, and how soon.

It must be remembered that the Society was not founded as a nursery for forcing a supply of Occultists — as a factory for the manufacture 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, a disbelief which has increased enormously during the last century, and which has led many, after a denial of all existence other than that in matter, into a blind belief in the *materialization of Spirit*.

The tendency of modern civilization is a reaction towards animalism, towards a development of those qualities which conduce to the success in life of man as an ani-

mal in the struggle for animal existence. Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man in addition to the animal, and at the sacrifice of the superfluous animality which modern life and materialistic teachings have developed to a degree which is abnormal for the human being at this stage of his progress.

Men cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. 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 godlike qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also — he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy.

This aspect of Theosophy has never failed to receive due and full recognition in the pages of the "PATH," a journal of which the American Section has good reason to be proud. It is a teacher and a power; and the fact that such a periodical should be produced and supported in the United States speaks in eloquent praise both of its Editor and its readers.

America is also to be congratulated on the increase in the number of the Branches or Lodges which is now taking place. It is a sign that in things spiritual as well as things temporal the great American Republic is well fitted for independence and self-organization. The Founders of the Society wish every Section, as soon as it becomes strong enough to govern itself, to be as independent as is compatible with its allegiance to the Society as a whole and to the Great Ideal Brotherhood, the lowest formal grade of which is represented by the Theosophical Society.

Here in England Theosophy is waking into new life. The slanders and absurd inventions of the Society for Psychical Research have almost paralyzed it, though only for a very short time, and the example of America has stirred the English Theosophists into renewed activity. *Lucifer* sounded the reveille, and the first fruit has been the founding of the "Theosophical Publication Society." This Society is of great importance. It has undertaken the very necessary work of breaking down the barrier of prejudice and ignorance which has formed so great an impediment to the spread of Theosophy. It will act as a recruiting agency for the Society by the wide distribution of elementary literature on the subject, among those who are in any way prepared to give ear to it. The correspondence already received shows that it is creating an interest in the subject, and proves that in every large town in England there exist quite enough isolated Theosophists to form groups or Lodges under charter from the Society. But, at present, these students do not even know of each other's existence, and many of them have never heard of the Theosophical Society until now. I am thoroughly satisfied of the great utility of this new Society, composed as it is to a large extent of members of the Theosophical Society, and being under the control of prominent Theosophists, such as you, my dear Brother W.Q. Judge, Mabel Collins, and the Countess Wachtmeister.

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 conditions 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. People say that Theosophists should show what is in them, that “the tree is known by its fruit.” Let them build dwellings for the poor, it is said, let them open “soup-kitchens,” *etc., etc.*, and the world will believe that there is something in Theosophy. These good people forget that Theosophists, as such, are poor, and that the Founders themselves are poorer than any, and that one of them, at any rate, the humble writer of these lines, has no property of her own, and has to work hard for her daily bread whenever she finds time from her Theosophical duties. 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.

Now with regard to *The Secret Doctrine*, the publication of which some of you urged so kindly upon me, and in such cordial terms, a while ago. I am very grateful for the hearty support promised and for the manner in which it was expressed. The MSS. of the first three volumes is now ready for the press; and its publication is only delayed by the difficulty which is experienced in finding the necessary funds. Though I have not written it with an eye to money, yet, having left Adyar, I must live and pay my way in the world so long as I remain in it. Moreover, the Theosophical Society urgently needs money for many purposes, and I feel that I should not be justified in dealing with *The Secret Doctrine* as I dealt with *Isis Unveiled*. From my former work I have received personally in all only a few hundred dollars, although nine editions have been issued. Under these circumstances I am endeavouring to find means of securing the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* on better terms this time, and here I am offered next to nothing. So, my dearest Brothers and Co-workers in the trans-Atlantic lands, you must forgive me the delay, and not blame me for it but the unfortunate conditions I am surrounded with.

I should like to revisit America, and shall perhaps do so one day, should my health permit. I have received pressing invitations to take up my abode in your great country which I love so much for its noble freedom. Colonel Olcott, too, urges upon me very strongly to return to India, where he is fighting almost single-handed the great and hard fight in the cause of Truth; but I feel that, for the present, my duty lies in England and with the Western Theosophists, where for the moment the hardest fight against prejudice and ignorance has to be fought. But whether I be in England or in

India, a large part of my heart and much of my hope for Theosophy lie with you in the United States, where the Theosophical Society was founded, and of which country I myself am proud of being a citizen. 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*.

I shall leave my dear Friend and Colleague, Col. Olcott, to tell you all about the condition of affairs in India, where everything looks favourable, as I am informed, for I have no doubt that he also will have sent his good wishes and congratulations to your Convention.

Meanwhile, my far-away and dear Brother, accept the warmest and sincerest wishes for the welfare of your Societies and of yourself personally, and, while conveying to all your colleagues the expression of my fraternal regards, assure them that, at the moment when you will be reading to them the present lines, I shall — if alive — be in Spirit, Soul, and Thought amidst you all.

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

[SEAL]¹

H.P. BLAVATSKY . .

LONDON, April 3rd, 1888



¹ [Sanskrit letters सत् for *Sat*, over a winged globe. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

A coloured version of the seal, designed by Philaletheians GR, is shown in the front page. — ED. PHIL.]

Second Letter

Reprinted from the *Report of Proceedings* of the Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section, held in Chicago, Ill., April 28th and 29th, 1889, in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION) XI pp. 161-69.

17 LANSDOWNE ROAD,
HOLLAND PARK, W.
April 7th, 1889

FRIENDS AND BROTHER-THEOSOPHISTS:

You are now once again assembled in Convention, and to you again I send my heartiest greetings and wishes that the present Convention may prove a still greater success than the last.

It is now the fourteenth year since the Theosophical Society was founded by us in New York, and with steady persistence and indomitable strength the Society has continued to grow amid adverse circumstances, amid good report and evil report. And now we have entered on the last year of our second septenary period, and it is fitting and right that we should all review the position which we have assumed.

In India, under Col. Olcott's care, Branches continue to be formed, and wherever the President lectures or pays a visit, a new centre of interest is sure to be created. His visits in the spirit which animates him are like a shower of rain to thirsty, sun-parched soil; flowers and herbs spring up in profusion, and the seed of healthy vegetation is sown. Now he is on a visit to Japan, whither he was invited by a strong and influential deputation to lecture on Theosophy and Buddhism, among a people who are mad and crazy to acquire Western civilization; who believe that it can only be obtained by the suicidal adoption of Christianity as a national religion. Aye! to neglect their own natural national religion in favour of a parasitic growth — and for Western civilization with its blessings such as they are!

Truly young Japan is like the conceited Greek before Troy: "We boast ourselves to be much better men than our fathers."

I have heard with regret that though Col. Olcott meditated a visit and a lecturing tour in America after his visit to Japan, his visit has unavoidably been prevented.

Here in England we have been hard at work; we have met some difficulties and surmounted them, but others, like the Hydra-heads of the labours of Hercules, seem to spring up at every step that is made. But 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.

Therefore it is that the Ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of nature and man.

With such favourable conditions as are present in America for Theosophy, it is only natural that its Society should increase rapidly and that Branch after Branch should arise. But while the organization for the spread of Theosophy waxes large, we must remember the necessity for consolidation. 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. This is a very real fact in the growth of human beings, and we must carefully watch lest the “Greater Child” — the Theosophical Society — should suffer for the same cause. Once before was growth checked in connection with the psychic phenomena, and there may yet come a time when the moral and ethical foundations of the Society may be wrecked in a similar way. 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. Following closely on this is the necessity for Solidarity among the Fellows of the Society; the acquisition of such a feeling of identity with each and all of our Brothers that an attack upon one is an attack upon all. Then consolidated and welded in such a spirit of Brotherhood and Love we shall, unlike Archimedes, need neither fulcrum nor lever, but we shall move the world.

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 Si-rocco of the desert. Do we not need our strength against these foes? Yet, again, there are more insidious foes, who “take our name in vain,” and who make Theosophy a byword in the mouths of men and the Theosophical Society a mark at which to throw mud. They slander Theosophists and Theosophy, and convert the moral Ethics into a cloak to conceal their own selfish objects. And as if this were not sufficient, there are the worst foes of all — those of a man’s own household — Theosophists who are unfaithful both to the Society and to themselves. Thus indeed we are in the midst of foes. Before and around us is the “Valley of Death,” and we have to charge upon our enemies — right upon his guns — if we would win the day. Cavalry — men and horses — can be trained to ride almost as one man in an attack upon the terrestrial plane; shall not we fight and win the battle of the Soul, struggling in the spirit of the Higher Self to win our divine heritage?

Let us, for a moment, glance backwards at the ground we have passed over. We have had, as said before, to hold our own against the Spiritists, in the name of Truth and Spiritual Science. Not against the students of the true psychic knowledge, nor against the enlightened Spiritualists; but against the lower order of phenomenologists — the blind worshippers of illusionary phantoms of the Dead. These we have fought for the sake of Truth, and also for that of the world which they were misleading. I re-

peat it again: no “fight” was ever waged against the real students of the psychic sciences. Professor Coues did much last year to make plain our real position, in his address to the Western Society for Psychic Research. He put in plain language the real importance of psychic studies, and he did excellent work in also laying stress upon the difficulties, the dangers, and above all, the responsibilities of their pursuit. Not only is there a similarity, as he showed, between such pursuits and the manufacture of dangerous explosives — especially in unskilled hands — but the experiments, as the Professor truly said, are conducted on, with, and by a human soul. Unless prepared carefully by a long and special course of study, the experimentalist risks not only the medium’s soul but his own. The experiments made in Hypnotism and Mesmerism at the present time are experiments of unconscious, when not of conscious, Black Magic. 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.

Thus even if only in name a body of Altruists, the Theosophical Society has to fight all who under its cover seek to obtain magical powers to use for their own selfish ends and to the hurt of others. Many are those who joined our Society for no other purpose than curiosity. Psychological phenomena were what they sought, and they were unwilling to yield one iota of their own pleasures and habits to obtain them. These very quickly went away empty-handed. The Theosophical Society has never been and never will be a school of promiscuous Theurgic rites. But there are dozens of small occult Societies which talk very glibly of Magic, Occultism, Rosicrucians, Adepts, &c. 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. Witness the now notorious H.B. of L., and the now famous G.N.K.R. But woe to those who try to convert a noble philosophy into a den for disgusting immorality, greediness for selfish power, and money-making under the cloak of Theosophy. Karma reaches them when least expected. But is it possible for our Society to stand by and remain respected, unless its members are prepared, at least in the future, to stand like one man, and deal with such slanders upon themselves as Theosophists, and such vile caricatures of their highest ideals, as these two pretenders have made them?

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

endeavour 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, and as hopelessly fatuous as the 350 odd Christian sects which exist in England alone at the present time. Is this prospect one to look forward to for the Theosophical Society? Is this “Separateness” consonant with the united Altruism of Universal Brotherhood? Is this the teaching of our Noble MASTERS? Brothers and Sisters in America, it is in your hands to decide whether it shall be realized or not. 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 endeavour to force our ideas of work upon your neighbours. Remember how the Initiate Paul warned his correspondents against the attitude of sectarianism they took up in the early Christian Church:

“I am of Paul, I of Apollos,”¹

and let us profit by the warning. Theosophy is essentially unsectarian, and work for it forms the entrance to the Inner life. But none can enter there save the man himself in the highest and truest spirit of Brotherhood, and any other attempt at entrance will either be futile or he will lie blasted at the threshold.

But Karma will reconcile all our differences of opinion. A strict account of our actual work will be taken, and the “wages” earned will be recorded to our credit. But as strict an account will be taken of the work which anyone, by indulging in personal grievances, may have hindered his neighbours from doing. Think you it is a light thing to hinder the force of the Theosophical Society, as represented in the person of any of its leaders, from doing its appointed work? So surely as there is a Karmic power behind the Society will that power exact the account for its hindrance, and he is a rash and ignorant man who opposes his puny self to it in the execution of its appointed task.

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

Now what has been our work during the past year? Here we have organized the British Section of the Theosophical Society with the help and under the orders of the President-Founder, Col. Olcott. And instead of one Lodge have been formed small local Branches, which, therefore, have greater powers of work and facilities of meeting. What has been done in India you will probably have already heard. And you have heard or know what has been accomplished and what increase in strength your own Section has made.

As regards our means of spreading knowledge, we have in the West *Lucifer*, the *Path* and the T.P.S. pamphlets. All these have brought us into contact with numerous persons of whose existence we should not otherwise have become aware. Thus they are all of them necessary to the Cause, as is also the attempting to influence the

¹ [1 Corinthians i, 12.

Students may wish to reflect upon Paul’s actual words: λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. Consult “Paul an Initiate and founder of Christianity” and “Peter not an Initiate and the enemy of Paul” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

public mind by the aid of the general Press. I regret to say that several co-workers on *Lucifer* have now left it and the Society for precisely such personal differences as those alluded to above, and have now become antagonistic, not only to me personally, but to the system of thought which the Theosophical Society inculcates.

On account of a personal feeling against Col. Olcott, *Le Lotus* — the French Journal — has also seceded from Theosophy; but we have just founded *La Revue Théosophique* to replace it in Paris. It is edited by myself and managed or directed by Countess d'Adhémar, an American lady, loved and respected by all who know her, and a friend of our Brother, Dr. Buck.¹

As many of you are aware, we have formed the “Esoteric Section.” Its members are pledged, among other things, to work for Theosophy under my direction. By it, for one thing, we have endeavoured to secure some solidarity in our common work; to form a strong body of resistance against attempts to injure us on the part of the outside world, against prejudice against the Theosophical Society and against me personally. By its means much may be done to nullify the damage to the work of the Society in the past and to vastly further its work in the future.

Its name, however, I would willingly change. The Boston scandals have entirely discredited the name “Esoteric”; but this is a matter for after consideration.

Thus, as I have already said, our chief enemies are public prejudice and crass obstinacy from a materialistic world; the strong “personality” of some of our own members; the falsification of our aims and name by money-loving charlatans; and, above all, the desertion of previously devoted friends who have now become our bitterest enemies.

Truly were those words wise which are attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. We sow our seed and some falls by the wayside of heedless ears; some on stony ground, where it springs up in a fit of emotional enthusiasm, and presently, having no root, it dies and “withers away.” In other cases the “thorns” and passions of a material world choke back the growth of a goodly fruitage, and it dies when opposed to the “cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches.” For, alas, it is only in a few that the Seed of Theosophy finds good ground and brings forth a hundredfold.

But our union is, and ever will be, our strength, if we preserve our ideal of Universal Brotherhood. It is the old “In hoc signo vinces”² which should be our watchword, for it is under its sacred flag that we shall conquer.

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:

¹ [Comtesse Marguerite Joséphine was the daughter of Labrot-Cromwell of Cincinnati, Ohio. On July 5th, 1873, she married Comte Gaston d'Adhémar de Croissac, who was born September 18th, 1844. They had a son, Raoul, born May 6th, 1874. They had an estate at Enghien, near Paris, where H.P. Blavatsky visited them.

As to Dr. Jirah Dewey Buck, consult Vol. III, pp. 498-99, for biographical data about him. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

² [Latin rendering of the Greek phrase *ἐν τούτῳ νικά*, i.e., in this (sign) you will conquer.]

“ . . . 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 Saviours 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 . . . ”¹

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



¹ [The source of this passage is unknown, and may have been a letter or message received by H.P. Blavatsky herself. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Third Letter

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TO THE BOSTON CONVENTION, T.S., 1891

For the third time since my return to Europe in 1885, I am able to send to my brethren in Theosophy and fellow citizens of the United States a delegate from England to attend the annual Theosophical Convention and speak by word of mouth my greeting and warm congratulations. Suffering in body as I am continually, the only consolation that remains to me is to hear of the progress of the Holy Cause to which my health and strength have been given; but to which, now that these are going, I can offer only my passionate devotion and never-weakening good wishes for its success and welfare. The news therefore that comes from America, mail after mail, telling of new Branches and of well-considered and patiently worked-out plans for the advancement of Theosophy cheers and gladdens me with its evidences of growth, more than words can tell. Fellow Theosophists, I am proud of your noble work in the New World; Sisters and Brothers of America, I thank and I bless you for your unremitting labours for the common cause, so dear to us all.

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 1897-98 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. The critical nature of the stage on which we have entered is as well known to the forces that fight against us as to those that fight on our side. No opportunity will be lost of sowing dissension, of taking advantage of mistaken and false moves, of instilling doubt, of augmenting difficulties, of breathing suspicions, so that by any and every means the unity of the Society may be broken and the ranks of our Fellows thinned and thrown into disarray. Never has it been more necessary for the Members of the T.S. to lay to heart the old parable of the bundle of sticks, than it is at the present time: divided, they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united, there is no force on Earth able to destroy our Brotherhood. Now I have marked with pain a tendency among you, as among the Theosophists in Europe and India, to quarrel over trifles, and to allow your very devotion to the cause of Theosophy to lead you into disunion. Believe me, that apart from such natural tendency, owing to the inherent imperfections of Human Nature, advantage is often taken by our ever-watchful enemies of your noblest qualities to betray and to mislead you. Sceptics will laugh at this statement, and even some of you may put small faith in the actual existence of the terrible forces of these mental, hence subjective and invisible, yet withal living and potent, influences around all of us. But there they are, and I know of more than one among you who have felt them, and have actually been forced to acknowledge these extraneous mental pressures. On those of you who are unselfishly and sincerely devoted to the Cause, they will

produce little, if any, impression. On some others, those who place their personal pride higher than their duty to the T.S., higher even than their Pledge to their divine SELF, the effect is generally disastrous. Self-watchfulness is never more necessary than when a personal wish to lead, and wounded vanity, dress themselves in the peacock's feathers of devotion and altruistic work; but at the present crisis of the Society a lack of self-control and watchfulness may become fatal in every case. But these diabolical attempts of our powerful enemies — the irreconcilable foes of the truths now being given out and practically asserted — may be frustrated. If every Fellow in the Society were content to be an impersonal force for good, careless of praise or blame so long as he subserved the purpose of the Brotherhood, the progress made would astonish the World and place the Ark of the T.S. out of danger. 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 fore-runners 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 good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves.

Here in England I am glad to be able to report to you that steady and rapid progress is being made. Annie Besant will give you details of our work, and will tell you of the growing strength and influence of our Society; the reports which she bears from the European and British Sections speak for themselves in their record of activities. The English character, difficult to reach, but solid and tenacious when once aroused, adds to our Society a valuable factor, and there are being laid in England strong and firm foundations for the T.S. of the twentieth century. Here, as with you, attempts are being successfully made to bring to bear the influence of Hindu on English thought, and many of our Hindu brethren are now writing for *Lucifer* short and clear papers on Indian philosophies. As it is one of the tasks of the T.S. to draw together the East and the West, so that each may supply the qualities lacking in the other, and develop more fraternal feelings among Nations so various, this literary intercourse will, I hope, prove of the utmost service in Āryanising Western thought.

The mention of *Lucifer* reminds me that the now assured position of that magazine is very largely due to the help rendered at a critical moment by the American Fellows. As my one absolutely unfettered medium of communication with Theosophists all over the World, its continuance was of grave importance to the whole Society. In its pages, month by month, I give such public teaching as is possible on Theosophical doctrines, and so carry on the most important of our Theosophical work. The magazine now just covers its expenses, and if Lodges and individual Fellows would help in

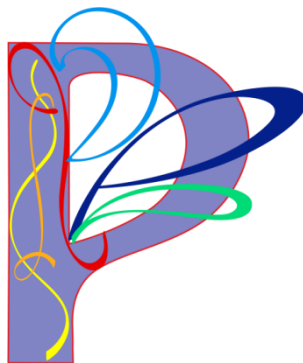
increasing its circulation, it would become more widely useful than it is at the present time. Therefore, while thanking from the bottom of my heart all those who so generously helped to place the magazine on a solid foundation, I should be glad to see a larger increase in the number of regular subscribers, for I regard these as my pupils, among whom I shall find some who will show the capacity for receiving further instruction.

And now I have said all; I am not sufficiently strong to write you a more lengthy message,¹ and there is the less need for me to do so, as my friend and trusted messenger, Annie Besant, she who is my right arm here, will be able to explain to you my wishes more fully and better than I can write them. 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* realisation 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 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. My own span of life may not be long, and if any of you have learned aught from my teachings, or have gained by my help a glimpse of the True Light, I ask you, in return, to strengthen the cause by the triumph of which that True Light, made still brighter and more glorious through your individual and collective efforts, will lighten the World, and thus to let me see, before I part with this worn-out body, the stability of the Society secured.

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 . . .



¹ [Blavatsky passed away on the 8th May 1891, twelve days after this letter was read.]