



The Correspondence of William James: William and Henry April 1905 - March 1908

William James

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This eleventh volume of a projected twelve continues the series of William James's correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues that began with volume 4. Consisting of some 500 letters, with an additional 650 letters calendared, volume 11 gives a complete accounting of James's known correspondence from April 1905 through March 1908.

Several major professional events in James's career occur during this period, including his California adventure—a semester of teaching at Stanford University in the spring of 1906 that is interrupted by the San Francisco earthquake on April 18. In the fall of that year, James delivers the Lowell Lectures on pragmatism. Also during this period, in 1908, he agrees to deliver the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford, which were to become *A Pluralistic Universe*. In 1907, after several years of a reduced teaching load, James retires from Harvard, giving his final course that January.

James has trouble concentrating on writing what he considers his great work in philosophy, a book setting out his metaphysics but with the central focus shifting now from radical empiricism to pluralism. And as criticism of pragmatism persists, he becomes more and more impatient with its critics, who in his view make no effort to understand this new philosophical movement.

He continues his correspondence with the first generation of professionally trained philosophers and psychologists in America, among whom are Dickinson Sergeant Miller, Charles Augustus Strong, Charles Montague Bakewell, Mary Whiton Calkins, Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, Ralph Barton Perry, and Horace Meyer Kallen, and remains in touch with friendly critics Francis Herbert Bradley and Josiah Royce as well as with philosophical allies Henri Bergson, Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller, and Charles Peirce.

A number of correspondents make their first appearance in this volume. Marion Hamilton Carter, a muckraking journalist, acquaints James with some of the social problems of the South but also drags him into many futile sittings with mediums. Horace Fletcher, a nutritionist whose reforms became known as Fletcherism, gives James dietary advice. Alfred Hodder, a former student of James, embroils James in his complicated marital situation, and only Hodder's death saves James from having to testify in court. Maxim Gorky, who on a visit to America scandalized some by presenting as his wife a woman to whom he was not married, makes a brief appearance as James praises his writing. Clifford Beers, a former patient in a mental hospital, receives moral and financial support from James and initiates a movement for the reform of mental hospitals.

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