

Wesleyan University.  
October 12, 1926.

My dear father:

I am truly astonished at the quick reaction to my remark which was deliberately dropped in your hearing when last we met. I had hopes of having some sort of a reply, but never so soon. Your letter is quite extraordinary and therefore requires a carefully thought <sup>of</sup> answer. With what equipment at my disposal, I set out to do my best.

In the first place you do not need to fear that too much praise will be a dangerous thing in my case. As a matter of fact I can recall very little that is truly remembered and what is not remembered does not psychologically affect the workings of the brain save perhaps the subconscious. On the theory that what affects the subconscious, affects the system as a whole, perhaps some subterranean affect has been worked. That I honestly doubt. The world is as you suggest, full of a good deal of praise which may be properly labelled "saying the right thing at the right time". Little comes of such talk for it is quickly detected and easily seen through. It profits none. And I dare venture to assert that a good deal of so called "kidding", which we all more or less do, is to be classed in the same group. Trade psychology is now-a-days wholly that much, to the discredit of the salesman. My experience in the world so far has led me to decide that true praise comes only from true friends both being few and far between. Therefore when confirmation comes from some desired or respected source it means something and is taken seriously. I must confess also that to date there are very few that I can count deep friends even though my acquaintances are many. If you have reason that praise will spoil (in quantities as have been manifested) please do tell me just how you come to such a conclusion and present some concrete data to support, for I cannot from within see it. I do not agree with the attitude of "peaceful non-resistance" but father a participation not unlike that of our mutual friend and hero T. Roosevelt. I recall the impression I received when for the first time the contents of his letters to his children were transferred from printed page to my gray matter. It seems to me that the psychology underlying the deliberate actions of that father with respect to his children as revealed throughout the volume is one which would be well worth a careful analysis. The book is there in the house somewhere. Read it, for no doubt you will be profited thereby. Of course the letters were addressed to young children but they prove conclusively the value of intimate contact at all times between old and young. The "close up" method always affords a better opportunity to get at the facts, rather than theorized facts.

It would be unfair to say the least to write on the topic that you suggest, at so early a date. Of course I have met the men with whom I do and will continue to work this coming year. I have also had the natural "first reaction", more or less impulsive or intuitive as you like. Then again, odd things said and done which are not particularly allowable as far as my code of ethics is concerned have appeared from time to time. But even the saint has something which does not fit in with every one. So I feel that your inquiry will have to be answered at a later date. The men with whom I work in the Dept. of Physics are very agreeable and very human men. The mathematicians are a bit harder to meet although I do say that Camp has so far been indicative of being a fellow extraordinary, as far as mixing teaching and leading is concerned. These next few years will be less formative than the past, for a concentration in one field develops one side only. The character development that my come will I dare say be due to the reliving of my experiences in Boston. But as before, no one can tell although some will prophesy, what the future may do.

The trip to Springfield was made without any difficulty in just three hours, good time for Sunday. I had about one-half hour to wait for my train and Ten p.m. found me in bed. A holiday is declared Sat. the 23rd so that everyone can attend the football game with Amherst. Perhaps we will come home then. Another holiday is the 6th of November. Perhaps this will be a more suitable time to come. Will be sure of that later.

Feel free to write whatever you wish at any time. I have no "line" that interests me especially except what men are really thinking of and not what they are concocting. If you wish to know just what is what, feel free to try to find out by first hand methods. There is no reason why a father should not know what his son thinks or

plans. The interest should be mutual and reciprocal.

A letter from Bea reveals the fact that the Abell tribe enjoyed the trip much and were none the worse for the journey and quantity of dinner. Mrs. Ellis (who is by the way, Mrs. Ellis) has not ceased to talk about her enjoyable visit. The rest of the family consider it an achievement to have successfully carried through her part of the visit. The other family of Ellis will probably be down soon if Bea and I can successfully scheme it. Between the two we should succeed!

Good for Dr. Homan. I still remember vividly his participation in the trip to Washington.

Ever,

William