

Dear Robert,

I was very glad to receive your letter the other day; you seem to have written on the same day that I sent the post card.

This is written on my new typewriter. I got it for \$45. It is a new Sherwood, an Italian make. It is small and light and probably not the best built, but it serves my purposes very well.

I haven't heard much from home lately so your letter brought me up to date on a lot of things.

I noticed in the church paper that you are no longer listed as a college student of Hennepin. I assume from this that you have dropped your membership. Am I right? I also see that you have become president of the Channing-Murray Club, but you don't mention that you have joined the Unitarian Church so I assume that you haven't. Right again?

In the PS on the back of the envelop you say that Dad sent you a letter commenting on your religious beliefs. From what little I know of your beliefs, I would not say that they were shallow altho they certainly are humanistic. I think you avoid most of the worse errors of the worse type of humanist. If you ever get around to writing anything on your religious or social beliefs, send me a copy.

I too am very surprised at Douglas' beliefs. I never would have guessed that he would become a fundamentalist. I recall that Mom and Dad were very pleased with his religious life when they last visited them. However you mention that they do not go to church regularly so this leads me to think that maybe it is just an intellectual belief that has little or nothing to do with life, but is rather just something to talk about with one's friends. Would you concur in this? Doug's argument on the mixing of races is really fundamentalist. Things must have changed considerably since I knew him. It is a wonder what one picks up from the people around one.

Your comments about Warren and alcohol were news to me, but it fits in with what little I have been hearing from home, which also indicates a worsening situation since I left. Warren while I was there did not do much outside of home, but now all there are there are Mom and Dad and he can't talk to them. I didn't talk to him much but usually listened to all his new records and I was always there at dinner, etc. I got quite a long letter from Warren about 3 months ago explaining the thinking behind his atheism. He seemed to be thinking clearly then, but not very constructively. I don't think he has developed much strength of personality yet and so needs the support of his companions at school very much. This leads him to be very much a conformist. But there are some at his school that he will not want to follow and those are the dedicated fundamentalists. From what you say, there must also be a contingent of people there who aren't so conservative if he has been able to get his drinks from friends.

Mom usually and sometimes Dad answers my letters and I gather that they have both turned their lives even more toward the professional line. Mom says that we boys never were able to fully appreciate their interest in medicine. Now they can spend all their time on it and not do even a little thinking after they get home. She says that she really did enjoy Christmas alone--without all the bother of relatives, etc. You experienced an example of her anxiety at Sunday dinner. She gets worked up about a lot of little things and then the last one breaks the

camel's back. And once ~~when~~ she has set herself to attacking something she will continue even if it immediately appears that she did not understand the situation correctly.

It's 2:15 AM here now and it is snowing rather hard. But most of the "winter" there has been no snow on the ground and it has been above freezing and the grass green.

Thank you for all the stuff concerning campus religious activities. It gives me a real flavor of what the campus ministry is going to be like. It looks as if Wesley has changed preachers again.

I saw a bit of the campus also when the Presidents daughter visited her boyfriend there. It was on a national TV news program. We have one TV here for the whole domm and about that time every evening there are between 20 and 30 people in the TV room. I do not as a rule watch, but occasionally look in on my way upstairs. I saw the Beadles for the first time last Sunday.

Three couples in the Junior class are now engaged. All of the girls were BD's and two of them very close friends of mine. One of them I would consider an ideal match. None of the girls here this year are the type I am looking for. I will wait; maybe I will change my desires or the right one will come along.

My impression of the campus ministry corresponds to your comments about the changing function. I think I will be able to fit into this climate of art and conversation. I do not like a lot of modern art and music, but I have some definite reasons. I think I will be respected for my views. I think that the really serious artists have a great deal to say about our society. But much of art today does not have a serious or communicative purpose. Yes I have been down to the "Threshing Floor" in the Village (I am learning to talk like the locals). I was there on a Friday night from about 8 to 10:30. During that time there were only three parties that came in and none of them were beatniks. I was very disappointed in the Village in general. Because of the extreme high cost of living there (\$300 a month for 2 rooms), the Village is now a myth. I spent about an hour and a half looking about and saw only one coffee house and that was more like a Biggeman's on a respectable corner. The "Threshing floor" is not doing a great deal of business but they say that they are making ends meet, I was not impressed at all, and I don't think any religious purpose has been accomplished as yet. I gather that what they want to do first is to develop a regular trade among the people who live in the Village and get to know these few quite well, rather like the old English tavern. It is not a college-student place since it is so far from any educational institution. Most of the customers are married adults. There are a few coffee houses near Columbia and Union students go there usually or to one of the near-by bars which are still doing better business than coffee. A few Union students take the subway down to the Threshing Floor once in a while. The proprietor who lives there is sort of a beatnik who spends all his time doing nothing but going to musical events. The coffee house is open only in the evening and he does not even work all those nights. He used to be a student at Union but likes this life of ease much better. He may be able to establish contact with the people of the Village, but I don't know what kind of religion he will be able to witness to.

I don't know if I can respond in general to coffee houses. I can see how they could be a really great way for getting people there, but I wonder how difficult it will be to get them talking about the ultimates. Maybe it will all pass before I get into the business. Next year I want to do my field work at Columbia University. Here we have a lot of rich and intelligent college students. There is only one "Protestant Foundation" religion is at such a low ebb there. (28,000 students, 60% grad. students). There is at least one coffee-house up in this neck of the woods, but it does not do as much business as the several bars. Most of the students are serious enough to spend most of their time studying.

On social action I cannot agree with you concerning the idea that an atheist can have a relationship with God. He may have other good motivation and as I have said before if he can't believe in God, Man is second best.

I am finding that fewer and fewer of the theologians believe in God. This is disturbing in some ways and not so in others. It is mainly a part of the general intellectual trend away from belief in the supernatural. What is more disturbing is to find students who will go out in the world and preach the non-gods of these theologians for lack of the real God. I find myself very hard to place theologically. I do not fit into any of the schools. I am sort of a positivist plus. This will have to be a new brand of theology. I start with a God who is separate from the world because there is no longer room for any gods here in the light of modern science. So if there are gods, they must be elsewhere. I believe that the physical world is determined, but that man can transcend this if he wants to and works at it a little. And it is in this quality of transcendence that man meets God. God is limited in that he can do nothing in the physical world. This means that his ~~own~~ only contact is thru man. His grace is what helps the human being live. I don't know of anyone else who takes quite the same approach but I think that this kind of thing will have to be the religion of the future if there is to be any religion at all. We are entering an age of science and scientism and religion is going to have to make some of the presuppositions of the sciences seriously. Of course I go all the way with evolution. I think that man is the chance product of the natural forces of the universe. This does not mean that man's nature is to be understood in terms of his origin. He has gone beyond these. Every stage in evolution has something that cannot be explained in terms of its origin.

I am taking a very interesting course from Dr. Macquarrie in Contemporary Religious Thought. And he is dealing quite extensively with the question of science and religion. He usually favors the side of science. In the end he believes in Being as the God of the universe. This is very much like Tillich. But both are far too metaphysical for me. I have no metaphysics beyond saying that matter-energy is the ultimate nature of reality.

Other courses I have this semester are Modern Church History, Old Testament, Practice Preaching, Systematic Theology with Dr. DD Williams, a Whiteheadian, and my field work seminar which this semester has become ~~far~~ more academic. I am working a little harder than last semester and will have to do a few more papers.

Love, James