

Home,

June 12, '89

Dear Madeline:—

I have very earnestly read the account of the graduation exercises in the paper you sent and am daily expecting the typewritten copy of your essay & valedictory speech and the minute account of your dress and emotions and your grad photograph, ^{all of} which (of course) you are going to send me as soon as you have time to prepare them.

I was very much surprised
at the ~~tone~~ of your essay,
or the extracts of it which
the paper published - and
Gillie, it was a very happy
surprise. I knew you were
growing fast this winter but
not so fast ~~as~~ the essay
indicated. To think of
Maddie the recent scoffer,
~~at~~ the satirist, the girl without
any taste for literature, weaving
into her essay quotations
from Milton, from Ruskin and
from Carlyle. I am very
very glad that the
woman is developing
and with honesty & sincerity
tenderly my congratulations
You have done nobly this
winter. My respect for
the man or woman who
walks the path of duty royally

as you have² done this
~~winter~~ is unbounded. My delight
in knowing that you are
fostering and making the
most of your lately awakened
appreciation of the good &
beautiful in literature and
in nature is unbounded.
Assert yourself; rise up to
your full height; Breathe
the air of mountains, and
their inapproachable
summits will lift thee
to the level of themselves"
— miles above the "plane
of mediocrity" which you so
logically defend.

I am prepared to love the
woman more than I loved
the girl.

I am sure you enjoyed
your watch. I thought
it was lovely. I am glad the

books pleased you.

I hope everybody you know remembered you. Enjoy it all - laurels, summer vacation and all - without a qualm. You deserve it every bit, and more.

You ask me about my religious convictions. I really find it impossible to voice my creed. Once somebody came up and said "Well, Benjah, what do you think of things in general?" and I could not tell. The cases are parallel.

If you were with me I could discuss the subject; or I can answer specific questions. yes I believe in the Bible more than I believe in any other book - by which I mean that I believe the bible contains more of Truth than any other book - in fact it contains

the whole truth³ about right living
I certainly believe that he who
makes the most of his life
must live in the spirit of
Christ's life.

Several religions in fact
every religion of which I have
any knowledge have in them
some truth but there is
none so free from
error or so high in teaching
as the Christian religion
because no other religion has
so noble a character as Christ.
The bible account of Christ
is limited, but judging
the whole from the
fragmentary account, the
character of Christ seems
to me absolutely perfect.
I believe that man is
incapable of imagining a
greater character than that of Christ.

bible
as it is written in the

The grandeur of the conception
is growing upon me.

Perfect unselfishness, perfect
communion with God, perfect
faith, perfect knowledge,
perfect command over self,
and the power to perform
miracles! It raises my
faith in mankind to know
that it is worthy such
an example.

Let me entreat you Madeline,
to give the subject of religion
your attention when you ignore
it you ignore the best thing
in life! Do not enter the
subject basely, but use your
sense as you do in other things.
Surely this subject, considered
so vital by the best people of
the world should call forth
a higher faculty than
credulity. From the bible
from other good books, from nature

from the talk⁴ of good men
women and most of all from
the light which God lets into
your heart in answer to your
continual prayer for Light
from your creed - and as
fast as you have learned
it, do it. Do not ~~be~~ be
discouraged because you
cannot understand the
whole science of life at once
any more than you were
discouraged because you
could not conjugate amo
at the end of your first
Latin lesson.

Take up theology as you took
up History, except that
the thoroughness with which
you learn your lessons
in religion will vitally
affect your life. Consult all

sources of ~~inspirate~~ information,
to which you have access
just as you consult all available
textbooks. Take for your
beginning, your "something to
stand on", your "foundation"
your "infallible source of
knowledge" the light that
comes into your own heart
in answer to prayer for light
~~and for~~ Believe in that
absolutely even if it be in
defiance of everything else in the
world: Even if it be an error
it is ^{way to} a truth, just as a
false supposition leads to
the the right conclusion in
those queer examples that
we prove by the Reductio ad
Absurdum. (Remember
Religion is a growth, ^{produced by daily food} not
~~by~~ a dose to be taken once
for all and to keep acting on
the system) take as your ^{most}
valuable aid the Bible life of Christ

not judged by a sentence or
two but studied as a whole.
(You would call it foolish to
judge any other ~~man~~ by fragmentary
remarks: Be just to Christ)
gather from every other ^{possible} source
the knowledge that you can
on the subject. And as
fast as you recognize a truth
put it in practice. As fast
as you outgrow your ideas on
the subject discard them,
for the sake of Heaven do
not hang on to worn out notions
because they were sacred
to somebody else, or to you
at one time any more than
you would keep on wearing
an old outgrown dress
because you liked it
when it was new, or
because somebody said once that
it was becoming.

Let me repeat that religion
I mean your religion is alive
and growing ^{like a tree} you will be as soon
as you plant the seed ^{not a thing like} to be gotten ^{like a tree}
Religion was always in the
world ~~like~~ as forests were
always in the world, but
your religion must be planted,
nourished in every manner
possible, and made to
stretch its light towards
God as far as possible;
I think the germs of religion
are in every human being
all men have the seed.
But my dear girl think of
the sin of letting it remain
a seed or a tiny weak
dwarf! you call it a great
mistake not to develop your
intellect — think of the
terrible mistake of allowing
your soul to remain
undeveloped. And as you love

your soul ^{to} begin to develop
it now. Of a Truth it is
as disastrous to leave
soul culture until late in life
as it is to leave mind
culture until late in life.
There Maddie: Do you
understand what I mean?
If you do not, remember that
it is hard to explain things
sometimes ^{even} off of paper, and
have faith enough in
me to believe that I
mean something and am
not just ranting & ^{counting}.
And if you do understand
and do not believe what
I say remember that it
is only the thought of a
girl fallible and inaccurate
in other things, but have
faith enough in me to believe
that I am telling my honest

thoughts not merely "advancing
ideas" a la Will Ellis

I might have said it better
but my time is limited
and so I send just what
comes into my mind as it comes.

I do not stay in Fargo another year. I intended to but the board requested me to resign my position. I was astonished at first, but do not feel ~~badly~~ about it. Mr. Smith I am positive expected me to stay another year: he told me in so many words, when I spoke of ~~of~~ my years work as a failure that he did not call it a failure and that I did myself injustice when I did - that I did better than he expected me to do - and that he thought it was better for me that I was compelled to stop and go on with my education - that he would lend me \$100 without interest to be paid when I could if I got stuck at school, and that

I deserved a recommendation
and should have one.
Which seemed to me a great
deal for conservative Smith.
Fortunately nobody knows
but that I have "resigned
~~to attend college~~" and Mr. Smith
advised me to let it remain
so. So do not speak of my
~~religious~~ dismissal to anyone
not even to ^{the} Elgin people
say if you say any thing
that I resigned my position,
(as I did literally) and am
going to college.

I am not sorry. I am not
fitted by nature for primary
teaching, there was no joy in
the work - I can go to college
now. I have \$400 + 20 cattle
which will take me part way
and I can stop a year
in the middle as well as
I can stop a year now - and on the

I
whole I am glad the hard struggle
is ended.

I am going to Cornell if I can
enter under any conditions
— have ~~not~~ written to the
Pres. (Smith also wrote) but have
not yet recd an answer —
and if I cannot enter without
preparation will go to Minneapolis.

Tomorrow I have
my exercises; have everything
ready & school closes on Friday
June 24, and then I am
free.

Love to Mrs Wallin. With Mrs
Wallin's consent I took the
picture of the little boy
& girl & the picture of the ^{landscape}
under the red rock ^{the fans}
to hang in the schoolroom
from Saturday intil Monday
I was sure she would not object.

no harm can befall

I religiously obey the directions
on the card and am taking care
of things as well as I can.

This letter has stretched out
interminably there is some
more to say but I have not
time to say it now

With Love

Bulah

No, there is just room to say it.
I went last week to Macbeth
by Miln + Adele Pagn with Jessie
who was down; Mr Walling^{kindly}
gave us that pleasure: to the
Haydens to tea, saw John Samuel
sistence, to ride with Bro. A.
+ to the Boston Philharmonice
in the Y.M.C.A. building with
Bro. A.

The grad. exercises I am afraid will
be under difficulties. Chrit. Wood has
ill this spring also Rolland Sellier
Phemie R. brother died, Ed. Gamble
valedictorian has been expelled for non



George Sumner
Worcester

Miss Madeleine Wallin
Detroit Lake
Minnesota

of Judge Wallin.





Miss Madeline Wall
Elgin
Ill.

M



Fargo, Dak., April 28th, 1889.

My dear Friend:-

I did not have a very good day yesterday, but I do not think you will trace any of ~~the~~ influence of yesterday in to day. There is sunshine here to-day with just enough clouds in the sky to make it serious and to set me to wondering if there isn't a silver lining behind them. A touch of kindness from a friendly hand brought a ray of the sun to me. The best followed that single ray. This is the key which unlocks me, The lock gets rusty sometimes and resists stubbornly, and even bruises the hand that uses the Key, but a persistent turn has never yet failed.

Christmas of one year ago I remember. I also remember the day before when you came into the office with something that disconcerted me to such an extent that I have not to this day even said how pleasant a surprise it was. I sometimes wonder what you thought about that. I knew I ought to have made some acknowl-

edgment of the pleasure that taken
of remembrance gave me, and be-
cause I didn't do ^{it} when I ought-
to I wouldn't say any thing at
all afterwards. The unexpected some-
times deprives me of presence of
mind.

I wish Mr. Amidon could be
guilty of some more offenses like
that of New Year's. I would forgive
him with the greatest of pleasure.
What did I honestly think? Well,
I thought I was caught in a very
pleasant trap, and was a very will-
ing victim. You never really un-
derstood me at all, if you have
ever thought that I considered
your company as anything but
a pleasure to me. You would
probably discover if you were to
go on a tour of investigation that
your grave and silent friend has
always thought good things about
you and had a much stronger
liking for you than you ever sus-
pected. My faith in you is not
a late and sudden growth, for I
have always thought of you as more
honest, more thoughtful, more con-
siderate than other girls.

I think your inquiry about your
room mate which follows the state-
ment "she needs to cultivate the

social graces" must be addressed to the heavenly spaces and not to me. For how can I tell you how to help her do that? A fellow feeling, it is said, makes us wondrous kind and perhaps out of that I can make some suggestions which if carried out might do her some good. I am not at all surprised that she says you help her for you are good for shy and reserved people. If you can take some of your girl friends into your confidence, who are willing to be missionaries and do something to help some one, even if their kindness doesn't seem to be very well repaid at first, I think you might organize a conspiracy which might result in some good. Get them to notice her, to talk to her, to draw her out, to interest themselves in her and seek her company. Such notice will do her good and she will be grateful for it, even though she may not seem to be very responsive to it. It may take some time to make her begin to trust herself, but this will give her more confidence in herself, if anything, that can be done for her wherever she is, can. I hardly think this scheme practicable, but I am quite sure from a study of myself that it-

would do her good. If I were in a similar position it would help me. As long as she is in the condition of mind she is now she won't do anything for herself. She will still seek what she needs. Some one must bring it to her, and what she needs is self reliance and confidence in herself. If she can begin to think she has genuine friends, that she can be of some use to them, that they can find pleasure in her society and are interested in her thoughts and feelings, then these qualities will come to her and she will begin to do something for herself.

If you knew the honest thought that was actually in my mind when I made that rather doubtful remark to you, and which I intended to express in a subdued manner by what I said, I think you would have no reason to complain. There was another time if my memory serves me well, when I said what I intended in a way which left no room for doubt, and that was really what I meant the first time. Accept my revised version of my opinion on that subject-

and you will have the truth. And don't you charge me with heresy in this matter or I may be tempted to make some remarks of a dangerous character.

It seems almost strange to me that you should thank me for saying what I did on religious subjects. It made me feel a little penitent - that I had acted in such a way as to make you think of thanking me. I understand your feeling and its cause. The cause will never exist - again and I hope that feeling is entirely gone. The confidence you have given me, the trust you have in me is the most beautiful, the most blessed thing that has come to me ever. I appreciate the sacred gift - and look upon it - as God - sent to save me from despair. You told me once about - trying to be good. You can't know how glad and touched I was by that confidence, for it - came at a time when I thought - you didn't - care any more for my friendship any longer. I found three flowers and gave them to you that night - to express my gratitude. I thank you with a grateful heart for all these things, and I thank you specially for

one paragraph in your last letter in which you say I might give you a greater happiness. I will try, but I am afraid I could not stand such a test now. I do not know.

You are not to be afraid I will be annoyed or that you trouble me by telling me all you think about the things that you are thinking of. It is a pleasure to me to have you do it, as great as it can be for you to come to me with them.

I do not know very clearly just what you do believe. I know some things about which you are in doubt; for you have told me about them.

God and immortality are settled questions, for to doubt that is almost equivalent to suicide. I almost thought from what you said about brain cells and the emotions that you had perhaps wandered into the dreary desert of materialism. Don't ever go there! There isn't an oasis in it. It is one waste of burning sand unchurched by one flower of hope. The beautiful dreams, if they are dreams, of a better life are worth cherishing, and it is better to die in utter

ignorance of the truth than to live with such a blighting truth as materialism teaches confronting one.

✓ Mrs. Drallin has asked me to say what I could conscientiously to help you to become more orthodox. I am not going to use any personal influence, if I have any, to urge you to join any church. I want you to follow your own best impulses, to be good, to do right, and when you think it is right to take such a step as allying yourself with a church I want you to do that, That is as far as I shall ever urge you. It is a mistake to appeal to the emotions or to use any power one has over another through ^{the} affections to lead them to take such a step as you are thinking of. I have had ~~an~~ experience of that kind myself and I know it is unwise. Such a step should be taken seriously, thoughtfully, and as far as possible free from all personal considerations. If taken then it will be abiding, and there is not likely to be a long period of regret for doing something only half honestly and without any thought-particularly.

What are called revivals are very objectionable for these reasons. I don't believe in them at all. What I believe because I have thought-it-out for myself, I am sure of. But what I might say I believed under the influences that might touch my emotions I might doubt as soon as I had time to reflect. I have done just that once. It cost me weeks of self reproach in which I accused myself of having been dishonest with myself first - to please some one, and I prayed to God to make me believe what I had said. I finally thought - I did. I do not know now whether I did or not.

I am not right yet myself. I think I am on the right track and I am hoping I can get right and trying some, but it seems like a wavy road often. I had surrendered almost everything and I have all the hills to climb again from the bottom. I see no one below me. I am not orthodox, and though I believe in the divinity of Christ - I do not accept the orthodox beliefs about Christ. You will find that I am but a blind leader. I can tell you what I think and you can accept it -

for what it is worth.

You said in one of your letters you couldn't get as much inspiration out of the Bible as you could out of other good books. I am sensible of the same feeling. I have never talked with anyone about their feelings on this subject, but I think it will be found to be an almost universal experience, if an honest opinion was expressed. The Bible belongs to another age. It was addressed to all ages, but it has the setting of the ages in which it was written, and is particularly addressed to the thoughts, the feelings and experiences of those times. It is the fountain head of religious truth, but that same truth when it is clothed with the thought, the feeling and experience of this age comes home with greater force. Because it gets nearer to our heart. It seems to me perfectly natural that this should be so - an inevitable consequence. There is among church members, if I am not entirely wrong, a large amount of what might be called sentimentality and they soon get accustomed to expressing

their thought - in stereotyped forms, and I may say it is quite frequently a lack of thought - they express in that way. They have always heard it, and they grow into it, and I have not the least doubt become quite honestly attached to their beliefs in a kind of unthinking way. They have a kind of vague idea that under certain circumstances it - is proper to say certain things their ancestors have said for generations. Such believers would probably consider it - almost infidelity - to admit - that any book could have more inspiration for them than the Bible. (These remarks don't apply to those who really think) But I think when you get down to the serious and honest thought - of those who read the Bible, ^{this feeling} this would be found in most. I do not want you to think that I say what I do with a kind of queer. I do not underrate the merit - of those I speak of. They are following the best light - they have and are trying to lead good lives.

I will tell you about some of the considerations which lead me to believe in the divinity of Christ. - He has left behind an influence such as no human being ever had. No one has had an influence to be compared with it. I don't refer to the numbers who accept Christ, but to the character of that influence. There is not an act in that life which does not show a love, a gentleness, an unselfishness which was never known on earth before or since. There is not a word in his recorded teachings which does not show the same thing. Mahomet claimed to be the prophet of God. But to gratify himself, selfishness crept into the teachings which he said were from God. Human passions show very clearly in his later teachings. The same thing appears in all other religions, which debase instead of exalting. I say therefore if there is a divine teacher it must be Christ. He stands so far above all that it is not inconsistent to suppose that there was something more than human in his life. The evidence that there

was something more is found
in the New Testament. There is
an account of his life and teachings
by four men who shared his
daily life. There is no question
but what those accounts were
written as they purport to have
been. They are not the invention
of a later age, nor are there any
but very slight interpolations in
those accounts. The evidence on this
point - is too overwhelming to found
the shadow of a reasonable doubt -
upon. I ask myself, does the New
Testament clearly teach that Christ
is divine? I can find only one
answer to that. It does and so
clearly that I cannot doubt it. I
can understand it - in no other way.
The only inquiry left to me
then is, what is the value of that
evidence? Was Christ - an imposter?
Did four men knowingly write
such an account of such an im-
poster? Are they guilty of such a
crime as wilfully lying, or did
they not understand? I read that
life and say - I can say noth-
ing else - There is too much purity
and goodness in it - to think
He was an imposter, or that He
was other than He claims. Did
He who prayed "Our father which

art in Heaven" commit such a crime! It is impossible. Such wickedness and such goodness cannot dwell together in the same being. The men who wrote the accounts of that life are good men. No stronger evidence can be found, than their writings, of that fact. It is apparent in every line. Their words bear the impress of sincerity and truth. I find the same difficulty in believing that they are false or untruthful as I do in believing that Christ was.

Good does not come from an evil heart and an evil heart always betrays itself. The moral impossibility is too glaring to be credited. I wish to call your attention to some of Christ's words in John. "Before Abraham was born, I am."

8:58. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you into myself."

14:2-3. "For without me you can do nothing."

15:5. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." 17:24

These are but a few of many similar sayings found in the four Gospels. Think what boundless egoism it-

would be for any man to say
such things as these. Do those things
disturb you? Do you rebel against
the claims made in these words?
What would you say if any one
but Christ- had given utterance to
such sentiments? Unitarianism
has a problem here, which I see
no way of meeting satisfactorily.-
No man ever had the right- to
say such things, for they would be
unpardonably egotistic in the best
man that ever lived, or ever will.
A consideration with me, which
is stronger than any other is the
evidence of Paul. He was a Ro-
man citizen, a man gifted with
wonderful powers, to whom almost
any career he might choose
was possible. There is not a
man of his age who had his
talent- and he was ambitious
in worldly ways and for a
long time he breathed "threatening
and slaughter against the disciples
of the Lord". The account of what
happened to him appears in the
first-portion of the ninth chapter
of Acts. It is his own language,
and it- may be figurative, but-
something happened which
changed the entire course of

His life. He gave up a life of worldly pleasure in which a man of his strength of character, of his training and ability could hope for abundant recognition and honor. And all the bright possibilities he no doubt saw before were surrendered for a life of trial which would be a life long martyrdom to him whose heart and convictions were not in his work.

He was almost a contemporary of Christ, an able, educated man, sagacious and not easily deceived, and with all the evidence that then existed before him, with full opportunity for investigating its truth or falsity, he believed in Christ; in his divinity. Paul is not a fiction; he lived and wrote the works attributed to him within less than one hundred years after the death of Christ—many of them while the personal followers of Christ were still living. I think it is idle to question that fact. It cannot be controverted and those who have assailed the authenticity of his writings have must significantly failed to produce a

single valid reason for believing
to the contrary. It is all surmise,
probability and suspicion. No
one can successfully assail the
character of the writer. The life
is grand enough to place it
beyond all suspicion. It is
the life of a great and noble
soul, struggling to convince the
world of the truths he knew
and felt. His writings are full
of a Christian humility, love
and sympathy. They are
stamped with the impress
of truth and sincerity. I can-
not doubt the genuineness
of his belief. I cannot doubt
the high nobility and goodness
of the man and therefore can-
not believe that he has know-
ingly borne false witness. Was
he mistaken? There was no
man of his time less likely
to make such a mistake. He
had a keen and penetrating
mind, and there is a calm
dignity about his writings which
forbids the belief that he was
a sentimentalist or visionary.
If one accepts the New Testament
as a truthful narrative of the

person called Christ; I cannot see any way of escaping the convictions that Christ was more than human. That seems to me to be the plain and simple teaching of the Bible. Any other theory seems to me to need so many strained and far fetched explanations that it is always involved in an endless labyrinth of inconsistencies and contradictions. The human mind has a natural tendency to rebel against a belief in the present happening of the supernatural and superhuman. It seeks to explain all things by natural causes and from this source, I think, spring many of the accepted ideas of Christ-
 by those who regard him as a man. It is the same with miracles. We have never seen one; "none was ever done". It is the first-instinct of the human mind to say this. This is consciously or unconsciously the strongest cause of scepticism on this. Is it incredible that He who breathed the breath of life into the body, could call it back to its deserted tenement; or restore to its natural condition

the home of the soul? Is it hard
or impossible to believe that
the creator ~~can~~ recreate? Is
God's creative energy dead? Did
He place the universe under
the control of natural laws,
as we call them, and then
Himself lose all control? The
universe itself is a stupendous
miracle, and this earth is crowded
with living, breathing miracles
who walk upon its surface and
doubt the potency of that which
gave them being. If God, the cre-
ator, in whom you believe, exists or
ever existed, he exists and reigns
to-day over all his creations, has
all the creative power he ever
possessed, and can perform
miracles great as that creation
whose evidence is everywhere be-
fore us, could have incarnated
the Divine in Christ and through
His divinity have performed all
the miracles recorded. This is
possible according to my ideas
of God. Miracles are usefully re-
garded as something which are
in violation of **Natural** law.
I do not think it necessary
to suppose that such is the

Case, and that simplifies them and makes them more credible. They are simply results of the use of natural law in ways which we do not understand and out of the ordinary course of things to which we are accustomed, but which would be perfectly natural and intelligible if our comprehension were broader. The divinity of Christ and the miracles must stand or fall together. They are sustained by the same testimony. If the testimony is false in one case it is probably in the other. The internal evidence of the Bible, or New Testament, itself convinces me that it is a truthful narrative & truthful because it speaks the language of simple conscientious men. Its moral tone is too high to have come from any other source. Then more I think of this and study these histories, the stronger my conviction becomes. This may not have the weight with any one else, it does with me, and I have but dimly outlined the considerations which influence me. I believe in the di-

vinity of Christ. What follows this
I do not know. It is all vague
and indefinite to me yet.
I do not believe in the ortho-
dox eternal punishment further
than I said in one of my
letters. Each one makes his
own spiritual nature, is re-
sponsible for its development,
goes to that source from whence
no traveller returns unchanged,
scathed by all the sins he
has committed and in him-
self he finds happiness or
unhappiness. The road is al-
ways open to a better life to
the end of time if one will
but take it; but bad spiritual
habits, if such a term may be
used, may be an almost-
insurmountable barrier. I agree
with the ideas expressed by you
"that only in the degree which our
freedom from sin allows will we
worship the Lord in the beauty of
holiness." We will enjoy only
what we have fitted ourselves to
enjoy. No mere belief in Christ-
will change our capacity for
enjoyment, or make it greater
than we have made it ourselves.
We take up a new life just where
we lay this one down, with

every possibility for making it always better than we now have. I do not believe in the doctrine of the atonement or merits of the Redeemer. I do not think that was Christ's mission. He does not save us from the consequences of our sins. These we must always bear. They will always be a part of our character. He saves us from our sins simply by our yielding to the influence of that infinite love and conforming our life to His. He saves us from our sins by bringing such an influence into our lives that we struggle against temptation and do not commit sin. That is all I understand the mission of Christ to be. The world needed to all a perfect life, to have a proof of God's love and Christ came.

I know nothing about the doctrines of foreordination, predestination and several others of the same nature. They all seem to me like empty and barren speculations. The most eminent theologians disagree on all these subjects. They are all speculations about things

which are a mystery, beyond
the grasp of finite minds and
just as incomprehensible as the
idea of space or time, and
every time I have tried to
follow them up I have found
myself baffled and unable
to find my way. You say
in your letter if God created
a soul knowing that it was
to have a period of endless
torment - before it - It seems like
injustice. I say so too. To
make a rather coarse remark,
it - would seem like a very
poor job, or that the creator
delighted in misery. But the
whole matter is a mere spec-
ulation about the nature and
character of God, which no one
has ever yet penetrated. No one
knows that he has created a
soul which has a period of
endless torment before it. There
are some things which can
never be known, and one must
draw a line somewhere, must
believe something. There are
vital questions, truths which
may be believed and ~~these~~
are enough on which to
build the foundation of a

good life. There are some things which we must take for granted and then let them alone. Did God foreordain that I should be saved? I do not know - never can. No one can ever tell whether God made any foreordination or ^{had} foreknowledge that any one should be saved. In fact, I don't believe that any one will be "saved" in the usual acceptation of that term. I say this is a question for me to let alone. Of the many other similar questions I say the same. It is to be taken for granted that I can never penetrate the mystery which surrounds the Character of God. Why, therefore, involve myself in endless doubts on such matters? I believe in God - that he is a God of Love and justice and this in higher ways than I can understand. I think you know my creed. It is not orthodox and is perhaps different from all other creeds.

I have considered your uncle's letter somewhat. I think you can separate the good from the doubtful. The question is not are professing Christians as worldly,

as selfish and all else that is not-
good as some one else is, but are
you making your life what you
feel it-ought to be. "I am as good
as they are" is no excuse for not-
being better than they are. I
never liked such remarks very
well. I think there is an ac-
cent of bitterness almost in some
sentences in the letter. There
sometimes is a kind of acrid
feeling left in those who have
once been in the church and
have left it, - especially if there
are any lingering regrets at
having lost what was once a
high ideal. It is a kind of self-
defense. I may be mistaken,
in thinking I recognize this here,
but I have a faint impression
of that kind. I am not a defend-
er of creeds, rites or forms. They
are nothing to character. The
miracles of all except the Christian
religion have been proved by
conclusive evidence to be frauds.
I do not think these have been
proved that yet.

The teachings of Christ - have
never led any one to do

anything which would call the blush of shame to any one. Those who are responsible for such things were not following the teachings of the Christian religion, but perverting them for selfish ends, and ~~that~~ fact that crimes have been committed in the name of the Church is a disgrace only to those who committed them. Nor does the fact that there are many people outside of the Church better than many in it prove anything. This is very illogical argument and one which is sometimes resorted to when one is in a corner. It isn't fair argument. There are many things in the Old Testament which have the appearance of fable. I think they are fables. I wouldn't attempt to defend them and I don't believe them literally. How they got there I don't know, nor could I see what their significance is. There is some tendency to attack the institution known as the Church in its great points - to see the bad that the selfishness and cruel misunderstanding of men have got into it and not its good. I have

been taking the opposite course
from what I was requested
to do. You wanted me to tell
you what I thought was
good. I have pointed out my
objections because I thought
there was more good than
doubtful. It is a good letter
taken as a whole. ^{raising} ^{some}
questions which it requires
to discuss with any satisfaction.
I know you can be
trusted to find the good. You
will receive your uncle's letter
in the same mail with this.
I think you will find me
somewhat rambling, but I
have been so long out of the
business that I find it a little
difficult to get myself down
to anything like systematic think-
ing, and for a long time I had
almost an aversion for any-
thing like literary work. I suppose
it was because nature was
clamoring for rest. I am feeling
very much better and I believe
I have decided to get well. If you
survive your recent affliction and
this one I hope you will let
me hear from you.

Faithfully your friend,
C. L. Brainerd