
876 1/7/1858

From: Silas J. Lee

To: My Dear Cousin [OO
Howard]

OOH-0816

Chicago

Source: Bowdoin

Chicago January 7th 1858

My Dear Cousin,

Your very kind note of the 31st, with mothers came to me yesterday. I heartily thank you for the interest your letter shews me. You feel for my welfare, temporal and spiritual. That I am a christian is a matter of much doubt even with myself. I do not profess to be a prayer loving, or scripture searching christian. My views of religion differ from yours or my mothers, materially. Mine is a religion of conscience, founded entirely within man himself, and has been fixed in, and proved to me by reading and observation. I cannot comprehend how there can be a future existence, and therefore do not believe there is one. I believe that man receives his full reward or punishment here in the body, his conscience his accuser, and in his conscience he finds his reward or punishment, according as he lives. I believe it acts with man mentally as it does physically. A man eats too much, and he has disobeyed a physical law and suffers accordingly. He drinks too much or otherwise too greatly indulges, he suffers physically, and mentally. So, I believe it is in all matters concerning man, as a man eats and drinks so he is in health or otherwise.

So I believe it is spiritually with him, he sins against his conscience, and how quickly his conscience judges and condemns him. He is honest in all things, and generous and good to all mankind, and his conscience again judges and approves. Then he is happy he feels well towards himself and the World, which is his reward, and is not that reward sufficient? I am satisfied with it, and on the other hand what is more severe than the punishment of the conscience? I believe all that is required of a man, is to live to do all in his power for the good of his fellow man, to live honestly and with a hand ready at all times to assist and willing too. Then he carries with him through life a glad heart and a clear conscience and I think and believe a life so led, is a life of constant prayer, and should there be a future (which I question) is more acceptable than any form of church prayer. Honesty and sincerity is the foundation of all religion, or, of true christianity, and I believe a man who is honest and sincere, to be a true Christian and that he receives his reward.

I look upon the Bible as a history of the creation, & of men and things in the earlier years of the World, but that it is a work of inspiration, I do not believe, any more than Josephus' Works, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress or even the history of more modern times and men. Had the Bible been written by a hand inspired by God, and intended to shew us the way to Heaven, (?) I believe it would have been more plain, not so allegorical, and then again, there are many parts of that great book which are really profane, and totally unfit for many children or even young people to read. I have read the Bible a good deal, and have been unable to find any portions which prove to me anything of an existence after this life. I believe in a God, in this wise, that there is a supreme power which governs and controls us, and produces life, that is incontestible, it shews itself in everything, in the vegetable Kingdom, the mineral and animal, also in the disposition and government of the seasons and the planetary system. That power is called God and as such I accept it by that name, and believe that there is as much consistency in the Indian's addressing their prayers and offerings to the Sun, as in our talking to that power. That power is every where, it is within and around us, is in our thoughts, is allied to our vital parts, and is consequently within us, and if it is conscious, it must know our thoughts and intentions; then why is the use of prayer by word of mouth, of more benefit than correct life and actions? We every day see professors of Christianity & Clergymen, who we know devote stated times each day to long prayers, and loud, yet whose lives are quite the reverse of their professions. Those men think themselves Christians because they have uttered a loud and long prayer on their knees, to that spirit that is giving them life, and in praying they have done all that is required, and go forth among the world, to see where they can take an advantage of another and fill their pockets. Perhaps they do not use profane language, drink or gamble, yet they live a selfish, ungenerous, life, and expect to go to Heaven because they pray. Once in a great while we see a person who we have every reason to believe is sincere and live up to their professions. Truly if there is a future state, this World is in a sad condition! Heaven will not receive a very large delegation from it, but Hell will be filled even to overflowing.

I have been more open and frank to you in regard to my religious opinion than ever before to any of my relations. I have never referred to it to Mother, because I know well what she would think, and had rather she would draw her own conclusions with regard to me and my religion than tell her. I am fully aware of the pain it

would give her and that is my reason for not approaching the subject or evading it when with or writing to her. I believe my mother to be sincere in her belief and that she lives up to it. Therefore I consider her a true Christian. It matters little to me what a person believes, so that they live accordingly. One great reason for my believing as I do, is, seeing so much of believing and professing one thing and living another. There can be but little Christianity in living a lie - but what multitude I see daily who do.

My dear Otis, your letter has carried me way back to days almost gone out of mind, of times when we were little boys, of the old farm, the old School house with its sides stripped of shingles, the old Orchards, with the glorious Apples, and the woods where we have gathered beach nuts and acorns for Winter evenings; and recalls to mind many of our school mates, not thought of for years. How everything is changed, and you and I more than almost any other. Our family, which used to be huddled so closely, is now dreadfully scattered. I, far off in the west, Perry in another part of the World, and Sarah in still another. Not a vestige of any of us is left in Leeds. I sometimes wonder if I shall ever see the old place again. I hope I may, but I intend to get rich first, & then go down there & have a rest from the very toils of this world for a while.

I thank you again for your letter also for your kindness to Mother, and with my love to your Wife and good wishes for the little ones am as ever and always,

Your affectionate cousin
Silas J. Lee

A happy new year to yourself and family. I am not much of a letter writer, so hope you will criticize sparingly.

877 1/7/1858

From: Ella [Ellen Patten
Howard]

To: My dear Otis [OO
Howard]

OOH-0818

Bath

Source: Bowdoin

Bath Jan 7th 1858
Thurs Eve.

My dear Otis,

Is it too late to wish you a "Happy New Year"? Indeed I do wish you many happy ones. This last year has been peculiarly blessed to many of us, hasn't it. You and Lizzie, Rowland and I, all hope we have begun to live the Christian life. May each new year see us growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, until the end.

I have been in to the Vestry tonight to our Thursday evening meeting. I was very sorry to see Mr Fiske there - sorry, because he is sick, and I think it very imprudent for him to go out this cold night, and sit in that close, badly ventilated Vestry. Mr Fiske has not been well for some weeks. For three Sundays, he has not preached. His lungs are weak, and he has a cough, and is so hoarse that he speaks with difficulty. I am very fearful that it will end in something worse than "Slow Fever" although he has had a little fever with his other troubles. O may his life be spared to us yet many years! Mr Fiske is very much beloved by all his church, and congregation, and he deserves to be, and it seems as if he never was so prized, as now. O he looks so sick!

We younger (female) members of the church have a little weekly meeting, by ourselves. We meet every Saturday evening, from seven to eight at a private house. There have never been more than nine, sometimes less. But I have found it the most precious hour of the week. We each take part - there is no backwardness on the part of any. We feel perfectly free with each other, and try to do each other all the good we can. It has been very profitable to me, and I trust all the others find it so.

Sun. Eve. I thought my letter would have reached you before this, but I was obliged to leave it Thursday night, and I have been so busy, since, that I have found but little time to write. We have been enjoying another lovely Sabbath. Mr Fiske preached this morning, but was not able to speak again this afternoon, so we had no meeting at our church.

I have not been very well for a few days past, and thought I had better spend the afternoon at home, in reading. Hannah Lizzie has been quite lame for some weeks past and does not go out, except to ride. She and Horace were my companions at home this afternoon.

I had a letter from Charles last week. He seems very happy. He says one of his scholars, a young lady is beginning to be interested in religion and he has had a good many conversations with her. What a bond of sympathy exists between a christian and one who is trying to see Jesus!

Rowland is coming to Bath in a fortnight. He has a little vacation then. We hear from Albert often. He is in New Orleans now, on board Uncle Lincoln's ship. I don't know how long they will remain there. They are almost discouraged, themselves, I guess. I don't want you to write me very oftener than is perfectly convenient. I know you have many calls upon your time, and I don't wish you to think that I expect letters often, although I do love very much to hear from you and Lizzie and the children.

With much love, and a kiss all round.

Y'rs truly
Ella

878 1/15/1858 *From:* Ann Otis Lee

To: Lieut & Mrs O.O. Howard

OOH-0819

Brooklyn

West Point
N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

Brooklyn Jan 15th 1858

Dear Otis & Lizzie,

I got along nicely the morning I left you . Got to Hastings at one, received a kind and cordial welcome from Mrs Mattison, got nicely rested, and at four P.M her mother Mrs Wolp and her sister Augusta, arrived from Brooklyn. They had a letter from Perry and another from Silas. I spent a pleasant day Friday at their house. It is one of those palace houses overlooking the Hudson. Their grounds are beautifully laid out and their house furnished in elegant stile. Every window from the house presents a fine view of beautiful scenery, but they say I must see Hastings in summer to appreciate its beauty. I left there Saturday, came off from the cars without my trunk having left it with the <Wescat> express man, and it came on to Maine that evening, and then we had a rainy day Monday which prevented me from getting my trunk until Tuesday, and then it was too late to go over to see about the lamp until yesterday (Wednesday). I purchased four copies of Capt Vickers life, five of Clark scripture promises. I had one copy of Capt Vickers sent to Silas (by mail) the other three with Clarks Scripture Promises, I carried, to be sent, to you by the man of whom I was to purchase the lamp as he said he could put the books in the box and it would save expenses. Please to accept the books from me to do with them as you desire.

And now as to the lamp, the clerk at the store said he would write to you & tell you about the lamps. Mrs Mattison has one of those with the glass shade and likes it very much. She has no troubles at all with it. It has a round wick like the old fashioned "asteral" lamp, and she cuts the wick evenly and trims it as we did the "asteral". Lets it burn slowly at first untill the wick is lighted completely. I want you to have the one with the glass shade but did not like to order it until I knew your mind. I hope you will order that. I shall have my old "asteral" lamp prepared for the kerosene oil for I like them so much.

I got a letter from Sarah yesterday. Frank is in tolerable health but does not feel as strong as before he left. They have no plans for the future, but will write me when they decide. Perry was to leave England for Nassau (by way of St Thomas) on the 27th of Nov. His letter to me, was dated the 23rd Nov. Silas letter was written previous to the one I got at West Point. Sarah & the children are well and they seem very happy, say the weather is delightful. Tell my darling Guy Frankie's mother writes to me, "Frankie every evening when he prays his evening prayer asks God to bless is grandmama " - "and writes letters to me every day", and says Dear grandmama, has gone to New York in the steam boat.

Please kiss the dear children for me and accept my thanks for all your kindnesses to me and believe me your
Affectionate Aunt
Ann Otis Lee

Mr & Mrs Howard

[Envelope]

[Postmark] Brooklyn N.Y. Jan 14

Lieut O.O. Howard

West Point

N.Y.

879 1/27/1858 *From:* Wm S Graham

To: Lieut [OO] Howard

OOH-0820

West Point N.Y.

U.S. Army

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y.
January 27th / 58

Lieut Howard
U.S. Army

Sir:

Knowing the deep interest you take in the service of our Lord and Master, I am constrained to let you know how I felt after the interview I had with you.

On my return home, I prayed without ceasing that God, in his mercy, would enable me to profit by what I had heard from you, and I never so fully felt my utterly lost condition, as on that night; even after I had retired to rest, I could not sleep, for that awfull warning - 'this night, thy soul may be required of thee..' - came vividly to my recollection, and I reflected with bitter sorrow on my misspent life, and thought on the fate, that awaited me, if I were called, to render an account of my Stewardship - but when I thought on the blessed promise, held out in Is. 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return, unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

I can scarcely describe the comfort I felt from these words: it seemed as if a heavy load was immediately lifted off my heart; that I had only to cast my doubts, and fears, and Sins, behind me, and enter into a new life, full of hope, in the atoning Blood of my Saviour.

Yet when I reflect on the enormity of my Sins against my God, the remainder of my life, (even if spared to old age) seems far too short, to atone for my manifold transgressions. May God grant me grace to continue in my good resolution, to serve him, and I humbly Pray that his holy spirit may abide with me.

I look forward, with feelings of pleasure and happiness, to the nights of our religious meetings. I wish they were more frequent, and Oh! how sincerely do I wish that one, and all, of my poor misguided companions, might be brought to the foot of the Cross, enquiring, "what they might do to be Saved"?

Oh! Sir, let me beseech you, to persevere, in the good cause you have entered into. You have been the instrument in the hands of God, of awakening me to a sense of my danger.

Do not be discouraged, that more do not respond to your call - the good seed, may even now be springing up in the hearts of many, and you, may yet be gladdened by seeing a glorious harvest in the vineyard of Christ.

(I speak this, because you told me you thought you had labored in vain.)

In reading the life of that good Christian, (Captain Vicars) I was much struck with the similarity of his feelings with mine - Particularly, where he speaks of his mother, I could almost fancy his case my own.

I fervently hope, I may endeavour to imitate his example, by serving faithfully under the banner of him, who died for us.

I earnestly beseech you to remember me in your prayers, that I may hold fast to that which is Gods; and that I may set a good example to my fellow Soldiers, and never cause shame to fall on the holy cause, in which I have enlisted.

May God in his mercy, bless you, and spare you long, to your family and friends, is the prayer of your

humble, friend in Christ
Wm S Graham

880 1/30/1858 *From:* OO Howard

To: My dear Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0821

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y.
Jany 30 1858

My dear Mother

I am going to write you all I can in an hour. I have been devoting all my leisure time that I can get from my official duties, to the conversion of the soldiers & others with whom I am associated, more or less. I have now two hours (& often two & a half) that I devote to Col Hardin's Children & to a daughter of the sutler Miss Clark. The former I am teaching in the common branches, & the latter in Algebra Moral Science & Grammar. Every day is filled up from seven in the morning till eleven & sometimes twelve at night. Regularly on Wednesday nights for several weeks I have lectured. I have now completed my lectures on the Lords prayer.

I have told you this, to show you, why I have'nt written you. I could often have written a few lines, but I always want to send you a full letter. Since I have told you some of my daily employment & weekly, I will say a little about the apparent fruit. Since I have been here the Sunday School has increased very much. Two Bible Classes have been formed, one for young men & another for young ladies. I hear the former & Lt Roberts a pious young officer the latter. A Cadet who embraced religion (the past year, I believe), Mr Tannatt, has a class of large boys. Miss Blanch Berard has a mixed class of boys & girls. Sergeant Owens with two daughters, Mr Merken, Commissary clerk Miss Clark, Miss Stewart & Miss Turner comprise the rest of my teachers. We have been enabled to purchase a nice melodian. Our first Wednesday evening lecture or prayer meeting was poorly attended, but now the men's side is filled with soldiers & citizens who are employed here in one capacity or another & I think all the protestant wives & other women, excepting the Professors' & officers families attend.

I write an introductory portion of some seven or eight pages & fill out by extemporizing.

The other night (Sunday night), as I was returning home from the Church a man overtook me & told me he would like to have some conversation with me. I walked & talked with him. He was a manly, straight forward soldier of the dragoon detachment. He had been some little time under strong conviction. He said he was a dreadful sinner, utterly unworthy. I talked with him till his "tattoo" which was near at hand when he came to me. He agreed to come to my room on the following day at evening. He did so, told me a little of his life. We read & talked & prayed together. His heart was burdened, but he promised by the help of God to lead a new life. I gave him a little Book containing Clarks Selection of Bible promises & leant him the life of Capt Vicars. He went to his room, & read & prayed & before he went to sleep had found peace. He wrote me a beautiful letter giving me an account of this & urging me to keep on in my work, for he said I had been in the hands of God the means of awakening him. I have reason to thank my Lord & Master for putting it into my heart to work here in his cause & for giving me richly of his grace.

I met six of my Bible class yesterday evening at the Hospital for considering the Scriptures. I think they all knelt at prayer & were exceedingly interested. The young dragoon, whose name is Wm S. Graham was one of the number. He hasn't yet met with us at the Sunday school, but will next Sunday (tomorrow).

Sunday evening. I was called away yesterday immediately after dinner for the examination of a Cadet, who was sick & absent, while his class were being examined. I did not get time to finish my letter.

In the afternoon Lt. Mack, who used to live with me at Tampa & whom I left there visited us yesterday & he & Cadet Carter from Portland took tea with us last evening. I was surprised to meet Lt Mack & very glad to see him. This morning we had a sermon from Mr French that you ought to have heard. It was on St. John 6:56 "Whose eateth my body & drinketh my blood, he dwelleth in me & I in him." He dwelt upon the outward signs & also upon the inward corresponding grace. It was an appropriate & excellent sermon preparatory to the partaking of Our Lord's supper. I think Christians often put the Sacrament of the Lord's supper too much in the back-ground. It is of great benefit to me. Don't you find it so when you go, in faith, putting your whole trust in Christ!

Two of my teachers were absent today & Lizzie went to the Sunday school with me. She taught the young Ladies Bible Class. My Class seemed very glad to meet me & I trust we received mutual profit from our consideration of the Scriptures.

The young Dragoon, Graham, was there. I saw him this morning & advised him to go & hear Mr French. I saw him in the Gallery & was glad for I think, since he was baptized in youth that the sooner he can come to the Lord's table the better for him.

After Lizzie & I got back from Sunday School we thought we would stay at home & not go to prayers from ½ past 3 P.M. till after four. In the evening I go to our Soldiers Church under the <hill> (where we have the S. School) to hear the Methodist Minister Br Edwards. You must pray for us for we are hard at work here. Rowland asked me to pray with him at ½ past 6 on Saturday nights for <Leeds>. I remember you all in my prayers & have particularly done so Saturday's, but through my want of watchfulness, I have'nt thought of it at ½ past six, for that is not our hour of prayer. We have prayers after breakfast, & before retiring besides the asking our father to bless the bounties of his providence to our use & to forgive us our sins, at each meal. In the school, the Lecture, when I meet class & individuals I shall make it a point to ask the blessing & direction of the Holy Spirit.

Guy is a great fat boy full of life & activity he uses quite long sentences & talks pretty well. The baby, Grace, is fat, hearty, pretty & good. She is quite active, springing very much as you hold her & delighted with Guy and his plays.

Lizzie is pretty well, looks well, but is troubled with her aching-back quite often. She says give my love. I think Lizzie rejoices in the Lord. She will get much attached to the Episcopal Church here. Our privileges are great here.

Give my love to Father & Dellie. I presume Dellie & Charlie don't realize that it is excessive labor that keeps me from writing. I want to make my whole time tell by the assistance of the Divine blessing - so I write to others, who are not professing Christians, very much hoping to persuade them to embrace the truth. I have written twice to Silas Lee once recently to Perley. I ought to write to Cousin Oliver again, & I know I should write to my old friends Col Loomis & Mr Lyne at Tampa. Great changes have taken place in Florida since I was there, but Col Loomis still remains in command. Give my best love to Cousin Laura Howard. Tell her not to be sad, there is no cloud on the Saviour's face, if she will always look Northernward.

My love to Cynthia & Rowland & Johnnie. Guy remembers you all. He said Gramma Grandpa & Uncle Rowland Charlie, Dellie, Cattie & Georgie. His memory is excellent.

Your aff. Son
O.O. Howard

Lizzie says I have forgotten to tell you that Grace says Dah! meaning Guy.