

at the Post Office when I returned. I had already read
the most of the letter at home. We are having beautiful
weather & have had since that long storm, that met me on
my arrival & rendered my first ^{term} of guard duty
so very agreeable. Mr. Shedd says that he draws 65 dollars
per month; and he is in the infantry: so rations & all the pay put
together - for the second Lieutenant in the infantry amount to
65 dollars per month. Tell Father if he looks in the
proper place of the Army Register, he can find the pay, the amount
of rations & the total amount for an officer of any rank.

We now have to go to drawing every day & draw two hours -
from 2 till 4 o'clock, and if my duty is tiresome this is - especially
to the young man who has after experience discovered his
want of ~~extra~~ talent for the fine arts. I am now drawing
a cottage scene & feel quite interested in my work. I hope
I shall get a letter & a paper to day at noon; for as
I am as yet a little homesick, these things are more
than ever agreeable. If you saw Lizzie at Commencement
tell me about her how she looked & seemed: & what she
had to say. She managed to keep pretty cheerful before
I left, and I was glad. Again remember me to all the
family - to Aunt Lucretia's family, one & all & to all my friends
at Leeds; especially to the one with whom you seem to like to sing
Sunday evenings. Ask mother to write me as soon as she
can find time. Good bye from

Your affectionate brother
A. E. Howard

West Point N.Y. Sept 4th 1852

Dear Brother,

I received your letter Thursday -
and was glad indeed to hear from you, though I had not
been long from home. You are right; that week after I left
home did pass rapidly enough, especially the first part
of it; - I came back to West Point rather reluctantly, but now
I am back - I am glad of it, for every week that passes
brings me on to the close of my term. I have less about
rank than I used to; but since I have been away & seen
a little of society & of men abroad, I feel more than ever
a desire to increase my stock of knowledge. I have been
doing pretty well this week - study does not come hard. Though
now & then ~~the~~ thoughts of those I have left behind - a sort
of longing to have again the same respect - attention & kindness
restored upon me, that I have ^{had} for the past few weeks - will make
my open book become dim before me; and you need not be surprised
that the tears do sometimes start to my eyes when I think of the change.
But it is all well - I am well situated compared with what I might
be. Of course every man has his hardships & his trials, and he is a
man, mathematically speaking, in the direct proportion that he
nerves himself up to an effort sufficient to overcome them. My lot
has sometimes been hard, but now it is easy. To tell you the truth
my standing at the head of my class is of very little consequence;
it serves to flatter my vanity & to please my friends, but to graduate
& to subserve hardly any other purpose. If my object is to be a civil

Engineer, supposing I had an equal amount of knowledge to graduate
lower; to stand 1st would do me little good. If I wished to remain
in the Army - promotion is so slow in the Engineers, that it would
be better that I should be in the Artillery - And again an Officer in
the Artillery, can get a post at West Point as Instructor or Assistant
Professor as readily & often more so than an Officer of the Engineers. So you
see I have a little common sense to console me if I fail to stand
as high as I have wished. It is best to be prepared with a little
sound philosophy in your head to counteract at all times the
effect of these little failures & disappointments. Mother spoke in the
few lines that she wrote of my afflictions, which I term Job's afflictions.
Will I with violent intent forget those two that were making their
appearance when I started from home; for I did not want the plague
of the things while travelling but last Tuesday a new one began to come,
in a new place, and I have been quite lame with it as it was on
my leg. I have however been the gainer to a degree to compensate for all
the pain that I have suffered for I have been excused from drills - drop-
parades - marching - & riding till today when it broke: and it being
Saturday I do not have to go to drills. My health has otherwise been
excellent. I prescribed for myself Sulphur & Cream of Tartar - but
I believe they have sent me clear Sulphur. I have to take it in
water, in which it does not dissolve very well - so that it makes queer
medicine. General Stott was here yesterday; and our class fired
a Salute of fifteen Guns - He did not get any more than his rank
entitles him to; though he be a candidate for the Presidency.

I did not see him for I was not at the firing of the Salute. I have
not seen Warren to speak with him since my return; for
Capt Alden has kept me in confinement ever since - You know

I presume, that all we mean by confinement is that one under
this punishment must keep his room except when on duty.

A breach of confinement is 4 or 10 demerits & a very grave offence.

So all I have to do is to keep my room. This does not trouble
me much, for I can find as much to interest me here as else-
where. Capt Alden has really no right to keep me in confinement;
for no official notice has been taken of my offence: but I keep
pretty still in hopes that he will by & by let me off without giving
me any demerit. I might complain of him to Colonel Ge. but I
reckon it would not be good policy. Colonel Ge. the father of my
class-mate is now the Superintendent, as I believe I told you in another
letter. I have not heard from Charlie yet. You have already
been to Penasance ment I shall expect a good long account
of the proceedings - a description of the generous Pierce - one
of my Alumni brethren. How does mother do since I left? Give
her my love. If she could make it so as to come & visit me next
summer, nothing would give me more pleasure; but I thought
that considering the many calls upon her for money that
it might be asking too much. Lizzie says she will come, and perhaps
her mother & wants to know if you will not go too. I found a good
long letter from her when I arrived which was very acceptable
I assure you. Give my love to all - Tell me what you
intend to do, if you have given up going to Kent's Hill.

I felt bad about leaving you without bidding you goodbye -
but perhaps it was the easiest way of getting off. - Take good
care not to catch cold. I do really take an interest in these
approaching State Elections. My Advertiser has not come this
week. I found lots of documents & all my old Advertisers

86 9/4/1852 *From:* O. O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-050

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Sept 4th, 1852.

Dear Brother,

I received your letter Thursday and was glad indeed to hear from you, though I had not been long from home. You are right, that week after I left home did pass rapidly enough, especially the first part of it. I came back to West Point rather reluctantly, but now I am back, I'm glad of it, for every week that passes brings me on to the close of my term. I care less about rank than I used to, but since I have been away & seen a little of society & of men abroad, I feel more than ever a desire to increase my stock of knowledge.

I have been doing pretty well this week - study does not come hard, though now & then thoughts of those I have left behind, a sort of longing to have again the same respect, attention & kindness bestowed upon me that I have had for the past few weeks, will make my open book become dim before me, and you need not be surprised that the tears do sometimes start to my eyes when I think of the change. Yet it is all well. I am well situated compared with what I might be. Of course every man has his hardships & his trials, and he is a man, mathematically speaking, in the direct proportion that he nerves himself up to an effort sufficient to overcome them. My lot has sometimes been hard, but now it is easy.

To tell you the truth my standing at the head of my class is of very little consequence, it serves to flatter my vanity & to please my friends, but to graduate 1st subserves hardly any other purpose. If my object is to be a Civil Engineer, supposing I had an equal amount of knowledge to graduate lower, to stand 1st would do me little good. If I wished to remain in the Army, promotion is so slow in the Engineers, that it would be better that I should be in the Artillery. And again an officer in the Artillery can get a post at West Point as instructor or assistant professor as readily & often more so than an officer of the Engineers. So you see I have a little common sense to console me if I fail to stand as high as I have wished. It is best to be prepared with a little sound philosophy in your head to counteract at all times the effect of these little failures & disappointments.

Mother spoke in the few lines that she wrote of my afflictions, which I term Job's afflictions. Well, I, with violent intent, stopt those two that were making their appearance when I started from home, for I did not want the plague of the things while traveling but last Tuesday a new one began to come, in a new place, and I have been quite lame with it as it was on my leg. I have however been the gainer to a degree, to compensate for all the pain that I have suffered, for I've been excused from drills, dress parades, marching, & writing till today when it broke, and it being Saturday I do not have to go to drills. My health has otherwise been excellent. I prescribed for myself Sulfur & Cream of Tartar, but I believe they have sent me clear Sulfur. I have to take it in water, in which it does not dissolve very well, so that it makes queer medicine.

Gen. Scott was here yesterday, and our class fired a salute of 15 guns. He did not get any more than his rank entitles him to, though he be a candidate for the Presidency. I did not see him for I was not at the firing of the salute.

I have not seen Warren to speak with him since my return for Capt. Alden has keep me in confinement ever since. You know I presume that all we mean by confinement is that one under this punishment must keep his room except when on duty. A breach of confinement is 8 or 10 demerit & a very grave offense. So all I have to do is to keep my room. This does not trouble me much, for I can find as much to interest me here as elsewhere. Capt. Alden has really no right to keep me in confinement, for no official notice has been taken of my offense, but I keep pretty still in hopes that he will by & by let me off without giving me any demerit. I might complain of him to Col. Lee, but I reckon it would not be good policy. Col. Lee the father of my class-mate is now the superintendent, as I believe I told you in mother's letter.

I have not heard from Charlie yet. You have already been to Commencement I shall expect a good long account of the proceedings, a description of the Generous Pierce, one of my Alumni brethren. How does mother do since I left? Give her my love. If she could make it so as to come & visit me next summer, nothing would give me more pleasure, but I thought that considering the many calls upon her for money that it might be

asking too much. Lizzie says she will come, and perhaps her mother & wants to know if you will not go too.

I found a good long letter here from her when I arrived which was very acceptable I assure you. Give my love to all. Tell me what you intend to do, if you have given up going to Kents Hill. I felt bad about leaving you without bidding you goodbye, but perhaps it was the easiest way of getting off. Take good care not to catch cold. I do really take an interest in these approaching state elections. My Advertiser has not come this week. I found lots of documents & all my old Advertisers at the Post Office when I returned. I had already read the most of the latter at home. We are having beautiful weather & have had since that long storm, that met me on my arrival & rendered my first Camp tour of Guard duty so very agreeable.

Mr. Rundell says that he draws 65 dollars per month, and he is in the infantry, so rations & all the pay put together for the second Lieutenant in the infantry amount to sixty five dollars per month. Tell father if he looks in the proper place of the Army Register, he can find the pay, the amount of rations & the total amount for an officer of any rank.

We now have to go to drawing everyday & draw two hours, from 2 till 4 o'clock, and if my duty is tiresome this is especially to the young man who has after experience discovered his want of talent for the fine arts. I am now drawing a cottage scene & feel quite interested in my work. I hope I shall get a letter & a paper today at noon, for I am as yet a little homesick, these things are more than ever agreeable.

If you saw Lizzie at Commencement tell me about her, how she looked & seemed & what she had to say. She managed to keep pretty cheerful before I left and I was glad. Again remember me to all the family, to Aunt Lucretia's family, one & all & to all my friends at Leeds. Especially to the one with whom you seem to like to sing Sunday evenings. Ask mother to write me as soon as she can find time. Goodbye from

Your affectionate brother
O. O. Howard



Mr Rowland B. Woodward.

North Leeds

Maine

West Point N. Y. Nov 10th 1851.

Dear Brother

I received your triple letter the latter part of last week, and was exceedingly glad to find that Charlie was able to write. This letter should be written to him, but Lizzie wrote me that he was expected in Portland about this time. So that if he happens to be there it would be better to write him the next one that he may have it fresher when he gets home. And you are such a politician, I presume you are measuring rather a long pace. Whigs are rather badly defeated at this Presidential election, worse than could possibly have been expected by any politicians to trial. Did you ever know of such a fall as we have had before this? My birthday generally comes on a colder day than it did this year. I can hardly realize that I have passed the age of twenty one power. Yet such is the fact; and though I have passed the the age of boyhood & youth and have reached the period where one is expected to be a man, I believe myself just as much of a boy as I was six years ago. You too are getting on in years. eighteen & over. What good farmers we able bodied young men could now make, had you been less lazy & less ambitious. Don't you wish me now settled down, living quietly & happily, as prosperous young farmers: enough to eat & drink & wear, respected by our neighbors for our virtues & our industry, and particularly eligible to the smiles of the blooming, marvellous fair ones. Supposing you wanted to get married

you would have somewhere to put your wife. You
could not have to live on your neighbors' errors & questions.
Like the lawyer, or like the library man taxing your
poor brain instead of your right arm for bread. But after
all, everything considered, we are well off as we are. It is
a difficult matter to curb a restless spirit. With an
education, though we may not contribute much to our own
personal comfort, though the sum totum of our happiness
may not be increased. Yet we are better enabled to do
good; that is if we put our education to a proper use, if we
let knowledge have its legitimate effect. The circle of our
influence will be much widened, and thus we may have a better
opportunity of carrying out our nobler purposes, than if our
sphere of action was narrow. What are you doing nowadays?
Reading perhaps, & if so what? I do not read much. I do not get
time to do so. I wish to read more, but my lessons must
come first, and military duties are not to be got over any
way. After I graduate I go to my station, provided it be in
a civilized region as it probably will be, I will endeavor
to read & make a business of it. My health is now very good
and I am getting on very well in everything. My standing
for last month says - 2^d in Mechanics - 5th in Chemistry &
11th in Drawing. Mr. Raper was 1st in Mechanics. It was
owing to my getting one or two bad marks. Mr. Lee was
3^d. Mr. Raper is going to give me a hard try & will
perhaps be put ahead of me in Mechanics. Since I seem
to have the ill-luck to do badly when Prof. Bartlett comes into
the section room. He visits us about once a week & usually on
Monday. I am not apt to have my lesson well Monday

morning since I never study Sunday, & I believe my mistakes
are beginning to discover the fact. Week before last
I got 2, $\frac{4}{10}$ Monday & a maximum every other day for the
week. Last week I got 2, $\frac{4}{10}$ on Monday & a max. every other
day. Last Monday, my birth day, I did better than on
Monday in general, & probably got a max. (3.). But these
details are of small moment. Thought of such little things
is our life at West Point made up. These little marks, have
a direct bearing upon our general standing & it becomes
us to get the best marks possible every day. You will
perceive that I did not get any demerit last
week, month. I got one, but since I did not get any
more, according to the regulations it came off.

I hope you will be as fortunate everytime you get
run away with, as you were the last time. Sometimes
see some pretty good runs here, but they do no damage
since no carriage is behind the horse. Give my love to
all. Thank Lillie for writing me so long & so good a letter.
He must try hard. I fancy Charlie is in Portland, if not
tell him he shall have a letter in a few days.

Write soon; while you are all at home, you can get
me up a letter pretty often. Do not make them quite so
heavy as the last, or put on a double stamp, because as
you say it is a dead loss to pay an extra five cents.
I am much obliged for the money you sent me, for it
enabled me to settle my debts, have one dollar left & feel
quite independent once ^{more}. Do not tell any body. But I keep
that dollar hoarded up - in gold, in the bottom of my watch
pocket. Give my love to Mother. I shall write her soon.
Your affectionate brother
C. D. Howard

87 11/10/1852 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

To: Mr. Rowland B. Howard

RBH-051

West Point N.Y.

South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N. Y. Nov 10, 1852

Dear Brother

I received your triple letter the latter part of last week, and was exceedingly glad to find that Charlie was able to write. This letter should be written to him, but Lizzie wrote me that he was expected in Portland about this time, so that if he happened to be there it would be better to write him the next one that he may have it fresher when he gets home. Since you are such a politician I presume you are wearing rather a long face. Whigs are rather badly defeated at this Presidential election, worse than could possibly have been expected by any previous to trial. Did you ever know of such a fall as we have had before this?

My birth-day generally comes on a colder day than it did this year. I can hardly realize that I have passed the age of 21 forever. Yet such is the fact, and though I have passed the age of boyhood & youth and have reached the period where one is expected to be a man, I believe myself just as much of a boy as I was six years ago. You too are getting on in years, 18 & over. What grand farmers we able bodied young men could now make, had you been less lazy & I less ambitious.

Don't you wish we were settled down, living quietly & happily, as prosperous young farmers, enough to eat & drink & where, respected by our neighbors for our virtues & our industry, and particularly eligible to the smiles of the blooming, marriageable fair ones. Supposing you wanted to get married you would have somewhere to put your wife. You wouldn't have to live on your neighbors errors & quarrels, like the lawyer, or like the literary man taxing your poor brain instead of your right arm for bread. But after all, everything considered, we are well off as we are. It is a difficult matter to curb a restless spirit. With an education, though we may not contribute much to our own personal comfort, though the sum totum of our happiness may not be increased, yet we are better enabled to do good; that is if we put our education to a proper use, if we let knowledge have its legitimate effect, the circle of our influence will be much widened and thus we may have a better opportunity of carrying out our nobler purposes, then if our sphere of action was narrow.

What are you doing nowadays? Reading perhaps, & if so what? I do not read much. I do not get time to do so. I wish to read more, but my lessons must come first, and military duties are not to be got over anyway. After I graduate & go to my station, provided it be in a civilized region as it probably will be, I will endeavor to read & make a business of it. My health is now very good and I am getting on very well in everything. My standing for last month says 2d in Mechanics, 5th in Chemistry & 11th in Drawing. Mr. Ruger was 1st in mechanics. It was owing to my getting one or two bad marks. Mr. Lee was third. Mr. Ruger is going to give me a hard try & will perhaps be put ahead of me in mechanics, since I seem to have the ill-luck to do badly when Prof. Bartlett comes into the section room. He visits us about once a week & usually on Monday. I am not apt to have my lesson well Monday morning since I never study Sunday, & I believe my instructors are beginning to discover the fact. Week before last I got 2,6/10 Monday & the maximum every other day for the week. Last week I got 2, 4/10 on Monday & a max every other day. Last Monday, my birth day, I did better than on Mondays in general, & probably got a max (three). But these details are of small moment, though of such little things is our life at West Point made up. These little marks have a direct bearing upon our general standing & it becomes us to get the best marks possible every day. You will perceive that I did not get any demerit last month. I got one, but since I did not get any more according to the regulations it came off.

I hope you will be as fortunate every time you get run away with as you were the last time. We sometimes see some pretty good runs here. But they do no damage since no carriage is behind the horse.

Give my love to all. Thank Dellie for writing me so long & so good a letter. He must try hard. I fancy Charlie is in Portland, if not tell him he shall have a letter in a few days.

Write soon. While you are all at home, you can get me up a letter pretty often. Do not make them quite so heavy as the last, or put on a double stamp, because as you say it is a dear loss to pay an extra five cents. I am much obliged for the money you sent me, for it enabled me to settle my debts, have one dollar left & feel quite independent once more. Do not tell anybody, but I keep that dollar hoarded up, in gold, in the bottom of my

watch pocket. Give my love to mother. I shall write her soon.

Yr affectionate brother
O. O. Howard

[Envelope]
Mr. Rowland B. Howard
South Leeds
Maine
[Postmark] [too faint]

The God of Nature gifts him with many talents, hence it may be he will have much to answer for, for his responsibility was great. In the private letters & Journals of John Quincy Adams, may be found much to attest the truth of the Christian religion - and he was no mean statesman. The purity of his private life, too, gives an exception to your general rule. But as you say it is a lamentable fact that intellectual men - those who are eminent in the departments of State, literature, the arts or sciences for great power of mind are too often either lukewarm Christians, or those who ridicule all things sacred.

Those doubts that you expressed were very natural, but I would not admit them, because my common sense would not let me admit them. I know there are Christians in the world - I know the Bible is true. I know further more that I may become a Christian, -

It would be a beautiful pleasure in our dear lives - to become Christians. Is it possible to sacrifice pride - to become fully conscious of guilt? to see clearly the purity of the Savior we would apply to?

Suggest any subject, you please, talk freely to me. with me you will never find ridicule, or the derisive smile that chokes all confidence. You may always be open with me, and if my failings my trials, my hopes & strong desires - may be of service or interest to you in the rehearsal, you may know them. The letter you directed is the last that I have rec'd from home. There ^{are} many things that I would say, but my time is very limited. Duty here, is you know not left to one's own discretion. Remember me affectionately to Adams. He & I were always the best of friends. He can tell you how very much we were together. Does Lizzie write you a good letter? If she does not she does not use you so well as she does me. You have a fine place at Mrs. Crofts. I would like to live with you this winter. I have to study a little too closely here. The examination is near. I continue to do pretty well in my studies from your affectionate brother. O.S.

West Point N.Y. Dec. 17th 1852

My dear brother,

I received your very good letter yesterday, and this is the first opportunity that I have found of answering it. I say very good letter because I like the spirit of brotherly confidence in which you wrote. It may seem to you that I have rather neglected you of late. I perhaps with reason you may say so; When you were at home I gave you your turn with Charlie & mother. I have not your convenient capacity of writing rapidly though you can bear me witness that I do not take very much pains with the mechanical part of my letter.

The truth is that I am a steady but slow thinker. While you are away from home I will try to be a more faithful correspondent, because as you say such things as letters are very acceptable to boys like me when away from our father's fire side; As I said I am glad to have you express your thoughts, your secret thoughts to me; and if I return the favor, our correspondence will tend to develop reflection and perchance that desire or feeling which you say is lacking, which prevents you from being a practical as well as a theoretical believer in those great, eternal truths of which you speak. I am and always have been, a sort of intellectual Christian, that is my intellect assents to divine truth, but my heart is not engaged, my affections do not apply themselves to that Savior, whose mediation, Christians & the

Bible tell us is our only safe guard. I have at times put
in practice the various methods proposed by divines for awakening
an interest in my bosom, concerning things, that common sense
tells us, are of the first consequence & of pressing urgency. I read
my Bible, I attempt to pray to my God & my Saviour before I
go to sleep each night. I try to do right, to eschew evil thoughts -
to forgive injuries, but it's no use. Yet it is of use, I am a
more cheerful, more contented being. For exertions to do & to think
and to feel right, must have a beneficial influence, but I mean
I am just as far from the goal I would reach as when I set
out. Where then is the remedy for this perfect indifference in
a matter of vital interest? The cause is here my heart is pre-
engaged. I love those things which are at variance with the
principles that I would espouse. I am ambitious of distinction. I love
praise. But reflection tells me that my worst enemy is vanity which
you know accompanies selfishness or is the result of it. I am selfish
when I look to Heaven for a blessing. and this same vain & selfish
spirit, hinders that simple, genuine feeling of trust, which those
should have who seek their Saviour to good purpose. In brief then
I believe I never will be a Christian, till I am prepared to devote
my whole soul to the service of my Father above. For while
I mingle in common pursuits, I have an ambition, which
is common to us all, and this ambition generates an inordinate
love for the fruits, which you are led to believe are the ~~from result~~
certain rewards of the ambition of those who have become great.
How easy it is to misunderstand this Scripture: "Seek first the Kingdom
of God & his righteousness and all things else shall be added
unto you". And yet you & I my brother are now very much
disposed to seek everything else first. You once ~~said~~ I wrote

sermons sometimes for letters, and I fear this may proportionate me.

It is no use for me to try to work myself up into a blind enthu-
siastic spirit state, and wildly talk & wildly act. I believe
common sense aided & directed by Scripture truths, that is, conscientious
common sense, should direct a man in seeking religion as in all
things else; so soon then as his faith has become strong - so soon as
he has with decision & candor devoted his heart & life to the
service of his God - a retrograde is little to be feared. Strong excitement
the terror of an imagination, set on fire, by the depiction of the
horrors of future punishment, is attended with little love. Hence
when it subsides, we are surprised to find those who were ardent
Christians no better than ourselves. You & I, my brother, may be &
undoubtedly are similarly circumstanced to those who have acquired
distinction in state, in literature or in science - our feelings, & the
influences at work upon us are what theirs were at our
age. Supposing we yield to these influences - supposing we let the
love of Eminence, and hence very naturally the love of self, press us
on & on, to gain ambitious ends, at the expense perhaps of unwearied
exertion - incessant toil. Would it be wonderful if our souls became
absorbed in our occupation - if we gave little thought, & consequently wrote
& spoke very much less upon Religion? Would it be wonderful if
we yielded to doubts & scepticisms, since being practical Atheists
it would become no to convince ourselves of the falsity of theoretical
religion? But Samuel Webster was not such a man. Whatever may
have been his conduct, as a practical Christian. Never in all his
writings, never in any of his speeches have I found one sentiment
that would reflect any dishonor upon the Religion of our Country -
He always seemed to me to have a firm belief in an over-
ruling Providence & in the truth of Revelation. He was a Great man

88 12/17/1852 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

To: Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-053

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N. Y. Dec 17, 1852

My dear brother,

I received your very good letter yesterday, and this is the first opportunity that I have found of answering it. I say very good letter because I like the spirit of brotherly confidence in which you wrote. It may seem to you that I have rather neglected you of late & perhaps with reason you may say it. When you were at home I gave you your turn with Charlie & mother. I have not your convenient capacity of writing rapidly though you can bear me witness that I do not take very much pains with the mechanical part of my letter. The truth is that I am a steady but slow thinker. While you are away from home I will try to be a more faithful correspondent, because as you say such things as letters are very acceptable to boys like us when away from our father's fireside.

As I said I'm glad to have you express your thoughts, your secret thoughts to me, and if I return the favor, our correspondence will tend to develop a reflection and perchance that desire or feeling which you say is lacking, which prevents you from being a practical as well as a theoretical believer in those great, eternal truths of which you speak. I am and always have been a sort of intellectual Christian, that is my intellect asserts to divine truth, but my heart is not engaged, my affections do not affix themselves to that Savior, whose mediation, Christians & the Bible tell us is our only safeguard. I have at times put in practice the various methods proposed by divines for awakening an interest in my bosom concerning things that common sense tells us are of the first consequence & of pressing urgency.

I read my Bible. I attempt to pray to my God & my Savior before I go to sleep each night. I try to do right, to eschew evil thoughts, to forgive injuries but it's no use. Yes it is of use, I am a more cheerful, more contented being, for exertions to do & to think and to feel right, must have a beneficial influence, but I mean I seem just as far from the goal I would reach as when I set out. Where then is the remedy for this perfect indifference in a matter of vital interest? The cause is here my heart is pre-engaged. I love those things which are at variance with the principles that I would espouse.

I am ambitious of distinction. I love praise. But reflection tells me that my worst enemy is vanity which you know accompanies selfishness or is the result of it. I am selfish when I look to Heaven for a blessing, and this same vain & selfish spirit hinders that simple, genuine feeling of trust, which those should have who seek their Savior to good purpose. In brief then I believe I never will be a Christian, till I am prepared to devote my whole soul to the Service of my Father above, for while I mingle in common pursuits I have an ambition which is common to us all, and this ambition generates an inordinate love for the fruits, which you are led to believe are the certain rewards of the ambition of those who have become great.

How easy it is to understand this Scripture: "seek first the kingdom of God & his righteousness and all things else shall be added unto you." And yet you & I my brother are now very much disposed to seek everything else first. You once said I wrote sermons sometimes for letters, and I fear this may proximate one. It is no use for me to try to work myself up into a blind enthusiastic state, and wildly talk & wildly act. I believe common sense aided & directed by Scripture truths, that is, conscientious common sense, should direct a man in seeking religion as in all things else; so soon then as his faith has become strong, so soon as he has with decision & candor devoted his heart & life to the service of his God, a retrograde is little to be feared. Strong excitement the terror of an imagination, set on fire, by the depiction of the horrors of future punishment, is attended with little love, hence when it subsides, we are surprised to find those who were ardent Christians know better than ourselves.

You & I, my brother, may be & undoubtedly are similarly circumstanced to those, who have acquired distinction in state, in literature or in Science, our feelings & the influences at work upon us are what theirs were at our age. Supposing we yield to these influences, supposing we let the love of eminence, and hence very naturally the love of self, press us on & on, to gain ambitious ends, at the expense perhaps of unwearied exertion, incessant toil. Would it be wonderful if our souls became absorbed in our occupation, if we gave little thought, & consequently wrote & spoke very much less upon Religion? Would it be wonderful if we yielded to doubts & skepticisms, since being practical Atheists it would become us to convince ourselves of the falsity of theoretical

religion?

But Daniel Webster was not such a man. Whatever may have been his conduct as a practical Christian, never in all his writings, never in any of his speeches, have I found one sentiment that would reflect any dishonor upon the religion of our country. He always seemed to me to have a firm belief in an overruling Providence & in the truth of revelation. He was a great man. The God of Nature gifted him with many talents, hence it may be he will have much to answer for, for his responsibility was great. In the private letters & journals of John Quincy Adams may be found much to attest the truth of the Christian religion and he was no mean statesman. The purity of his private life too gives one exception to your general rule. But as you say it is a lamentable fact that intellectual men, those who are eminent in the departments of State, literature, the arts or Sciences for great power of mind are too often either lukewarm Christians, or those who ridicule all things sacred.

Those doubts that you expressed were very natural, but I would not admit them because my common sense would not let me admit them. I know there are Christians in the world. I know the Bible is true. I know furthermore that I may become a Christian. It would be a beautiful feature in our lives to become Christians. Is it possible to sacrifice pride, to become fully conscious of guiltiness to see clearly the purity of the Savior we would apply to?

Suggest any subject you please, talk freely to me, with me you will never find ridicule, or the derisive smile that chokes all confidence. You may always be open with me, and if my failings, my trials, my hopes & strong desires may be of service or interest to you in the rehearsal, you may know them. The letter you directed is the last that I have rec'd from home. There are many things that I would say, but my time is very limited. Duty here, is you know not left to one's own discretion. Remember me affectionately to Adams. He & I were always the best of friends. He can tell you how very much we were together. Does Lizzie write you a good letter? If she does not she does not use you so well as she does me. You have a fine place at Mrs. Frosts. I would like to live with you this winter. I have to study a little too closely here. The examination is near. I continue to do pretty well in my studies.

From your affectionate brother
Otis

which the God of Nature has given you. Once I feared that a partial success in getting the attention of others directed to your "early promise", might tend to render you superficial. Then I feared the very reaction, which seems to be going on in your mind now. The discovery of a want of system & regularity in your various materials that you have gathered into your head. I never thought you would be vain or conceited, but that you would become averse to all that cost exertion wrongly thinking that permanent success could be gained without it. - I am at times filled with doubts & forebodings. I have scarce money enough in the world to carry me to Washington & back. - I do not know whether to remain in the Army or not after graduating. If I attempt to fathom the future, it is dark. I know nothing of the world. I could not buy a suit of clothes without getting cheated. I do not know now to keep or make money. I have plenty of clay, useless abstractions in my head. Here I might go on till you might laugh heartily over my simplicity; since you think me a man, because forsooth I speak boldly & full of hope & usually concerning the present & future. Now I just say when I get to reflecting thus - "here young man what are you about," "take care of the present & let the future take care of itself." Pippi holds because you do not write her. She goes to school. Bann expecting you to visit me next summer if Providence will permit it. Remember me to Adams - He is an example of a man who "takes the world easy". Ask him if he is not going to get married before me. Let him be must marry. For before the close of 1856. I hope to be a married man. I had a letter from home a short time since. All well. My affectionate brother

C. J. Howard

West Point N.Y. Jan. 14th 1853.

My dear brother

You may be wondering why I have not answered your letter before this, or rather why I have let so long a time intervene between this and my last letter. You would have to be here at West Point during one of our long & tedious Examinations, to know how all absorbing they are to those who are to pass the ordeal. I am now entirely through; finished to day. In Mechanics my luck was not very good. Each individual has to be called up twice in any study of the mathematical kind. On my demonstration at the board I did well, but on 'Questions' after missing one I got into a state of excitement as is my wont, spoilt my recitation, and as a consequence fell from the head. I came out second. In Chemistry I did first rate to day. The instructor gives you a subject thus: "take the subject of 'Specific heat' for instance;" You must take up the subject and discuss it in full till he tells you to take some other. We have to take metals & gasses - tell their constituents the compounds from which they are derived. the substances which precipitate them - all their properties & uses and their tests on the floor without assistance. A single gas would afford you little trouble. You might remember all this in detail, but when you come to take a book full of them it becomes no easy matter to prepare yourself thus. I would

about as big as most as many pages in the Latin Lexicon.
But when I found I must get the subject thus I set about it
with a good will. But I have had to study harder & more
hours than I ever have on anything else since I have
been in the institution. It may seem strange to you -
but they seem to have a peculiar propensity here of
making things easy to be understood. hard. But I am glad
of it, for I know Chemistry can be of little practical benefit
to a man, unless he has it in his head. See G. had it
thus by heart when we began - and ever has made most
beautiful recitations. He is now ahead in Mechanics - & will
be in Chemistry. I will probably be among the first five -
In drawing. I have risen from thirty five to fourteen, that
is where my mark puts me. Our pieces have not as
yet been inspected by the Examining Board. You see by this
that there is little chance of my being ahead again - but you
may know, that this standing ahead is rather a game of chance
- It is well known here that there is seldom much more than
a shadow of difference between the first four or five
men in a class. Now in Mechanics there were over six hundred
pages. and had I happened to have been questioned anywhere
else than where I was I would now be first instead of second
in that branch. But enough of myself. You speak of violating
the rules of Epistolary writing. I did not know there were
any such to be observed - or if there are any - it would be
stiff to observe them between brother & brother. You say you
consider yourself & doubtless your friends consider you a bundle of
inconsistencies. This is a wrong & foolish fancy - but one into which
I fell during the first part of my college course. It arose in part

from attempting to estimate your own abilities before your
talents are properly developed. You say very truly that it is easy
to advise. You can tell another what course to pursue -
how to spend his time &c. It is easier certainly to advise
than to act, but it is possible to act. I can tell you how
to remedy every defect you mention - not by preaching
and giving moral lectures, which one day you would
~~resolve~~ to heed & the next forget. Lay aside as your brother
has done, all this pondering over the elements of your
composition. This constant estimate of your natural abilities &
defects. These futile attempts to ascertain what you are fit
for and what you are made for. Choose from the
Employments of men a vocation, which you would like
supposing yourself as capable as anybody - With this end
constantly in view without wavering labor for it. You will
say to yourself "this is possible for a mind constituted like
yours but it does not apply to me". I do not believe it. -
with a will, few young men fail to mould their characters
to suit their purposes. Now is the time for you to store up
knowledge & you are doing it. Never mind the heterogeneous
mass - it will some day come straight. I would not discourage
self examination by any means - but this studying ones capacity
and measuring it by comparison with other men. It only makes
a young man unhappy. fearful of making a failure - fearful of
setting off from the shore, ^(filling him) with the crowd of being wrecked if you be
once in the open sea. I am comparatively contented & happy
when I strive to do right. and perform with a good will my
present duty. I did like to advise you I would rather not, but
I have often had fears that you would not do justice to the mind

89 1/14/1853 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-054

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Jan. 14, 1853.

My dear brother

You may be wondering why I have not answered your letter before this, or rather why I have let so long a time intervene between this and my last letter. You would have to be here at West Point during one of our long & tedious examinations, to know how all absorbing they are to those who are to pass the ordeal. I am now entirely through, finished today.

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I would about as lief commit as many pages in the Latin Lexicon. But when I found I must get the subject thus I set about it with a good will. But I have had to study harder & more hours than I ever have on any thing else since I have been in the institution. It may seem strange to you, but they seem to have a peculiar propensity here of making things easy to be understood hard. But I am glad of it, for I know Chemistry can be of little practical benefit to a man, unless he has it in his head. Lil G had it thus by heart when we began, and never has made most beautiful recitations. He is now ahead in Mechanics, & will be in Chemistry. I will probably be among the first five.

In Drawing I have risen from thirty-five to fourteen, that is where my mark puts me. Our pieces have not as yet been inspected by the Examining board. You see by this that there is little chance of my being ahead again, but you may know, that this standing ahead is rather a game of chance. It is well known here that there is seldom much more than a shadow of difference between the first four or five men in a class. Now in Mechanics there were over six hundred pages, and had I happened to have been questioned anywhere else than where I was I would now be first instead of second in that branch. But enough of myself.

You speak of violating the rules of epistolary writing. I did not know there were any such to be observed, or if there are any, it would be stiff to observe them between brother & brother. You say you consider yourself & doubtless your friends consider you a bundle of inconsistencies. This is a wrong & foolish fancy, but one into which I fell during the first part of my College course. It arises in part from attempting to estimate your own abilities before your talents are properly developed. You say very truly that it is easy to advise. You can tell another what course to pursue, how to spend his time, &c. It is easier certainly to advise than to act, but it is possible to act.

I can tell you how to remedy every defect you mention, not by preaching and giving moral lectures, which one day you would resolve to heed & the next forget. Lay aside as your brother has done all this pondering over the elements of your composition, this constant estimate of your natural abilities & defects, these futile attempts to ascertain what you are fit for and what you are made for. Choose from the employments of men, a vocation which you would like supposing yourself as capable as anybody. With this end constantly in view without wavering labor for it.

You will say to yourself "this is possible for a mind constituted like yours but it does not apply to me." I do not believe it:-with a will, few young men failed to mould their characters to suit their purposes. Now is the time for you to store up knowledge & you are doing it. Never mind the heterogeneous mass, it will some day come straight. I would not dissuade self examination by any means, but this studying one's capacity and measuring it

by comparison with other men. It only makes a young man unhappy, fearful of making a failure, fearful of setting off from the shore, & filling him with dread of being wrecked if he is once in the open sea. I am comparatively contented & happy when I strive to do right, and perform with a good will my present duty. I dislike to advise you. I would rather not, but I have often had fears that you would not do justice to the mind which the God of Nature has given you.

Once I feared that a partial success in getting the attention of others directed to your "early promise", might tend to render you superficial. Then I feared the very reaction which seems to be going on in your mind now. The discovery of a want of system & regularity in the various materials that you have gathered into your head. I never thought you would be vain or conceited, but that you would become averse to all, that cost exertion, wrongly thinking that permanent success could be gained without it. I am at times filled with doubts & forebodings. I have scarce money enough in the world to carry me to Washington & back. I do not know whether to remain in the Army or not after graduating. If I attempt to fathom the future, it is dark. I know nothing of the world. I could not buy a suit of clothes without getting cheated. I do not know how to keep or make money. I have plenty of dry, useless abstractions in my head. Here I might go on till you might laugh heartily over my simplicity; since you think me a man, because forsooth I speak boldly & full of hope, usually concerning the present & future. Now I just say when I get to reflecting thus "here young man what are you about." "Take care of the present & let the future take care of itself."

Lizzie scolds because you do not write her. She goes to school. I am expecting you to visit me next summer if Providence will permit it. Remember me to Adams. He is an example of a man who "takes the world easy". Ask him if he is not going to get married before me. Tell him he must hurry for before the close of 1856 I hope to be a married man.

I had a letter from home a short time since. All well.

Yr affectionate brother
O.O. Howard

and take it for me. I never have yet been able to find out why he did not. If you will ask the President, after presenting my compliments, if the reason was because I did not perform my part at Commencement or because I did not hand in the one I had written, I think he will tell you. I hoped the College Government would write for me to come & take my second degree next summer, it being at the end of three years, and I supposed that I might get a leave for a couple of weeks or ten days ~~to~~ go to Commencement. But of course a man cannot take his second degree before he takes his first. Remember me to Adams, ask him if Georgianna is married & see if he does not laugh. Ask him what he thinks of his old room-mate's course of procedure. Mother wrote me that George Jones had started for California. She thought he would take a ride up to see me but I have not seen him. We lost three men out of our class this January - one from New Hampshire. He did not think of being in danger of being found deficient, but he did very badly on the examination and had to leave. Three were sent from the first class - one from the third & 14 from the fourth. This is the first Jan. anyone has ever been sent away from the first class. Cadets generally think themselves safe when they have reached the first class & they ought to be. I think you take a wide course, not to go into those cold rooms this spring - but you do not learn one half so much as you would by listening to others reciting every day, but it does not matter, you can make it up by & by
your affectionate brother O. Howard

West Point Feb. 7th 1853.

Dear Brother

I received your letter of the 29th ult. in good season, but will have to beg your pardon for a want of promptness in answering it. I had been when I received yours, owing one to Berley for some time, and so by 'odd jobs' I managed to make him out a full letter last week. I presume you laugh in your sleeve at all my poor apologies and say "I know where your leisure time goes to!" I have a particular time for writing those especial letters and I allow nobody to encroach upon it. You will, being a sensible young man, readily acknowledge the necessity & propriety of such a private arrangement with myself. Nothing made me feel worse than the hint that you might not visit me next summer, for I had counted upon it strongly & laid it by as a certainty. I do not think I can let you off. Certainly, I will not take you from your studies. But you will have vacations, either of which you can spend by coming to see me. It is expensive it is true, but it may not be made much so, and if you are moderately careful you will or may save more than enough to defray your expenses between this & then, over and above what you might otherwise spend & think nothing of it. How quickly I would let you have enough for that, if it was possible. It is difficult to conjecture, where in the wide world you will be able to find me

after I leave this place. Perhaps I am wrong to urge you to do what you would do with the greatest pleasure if it becomes possible. Yes, my playmate Melvin Howard has left us forever - and I believe with you that he is in a happier & better world than this. Methinks you had quite a nice time with Miss Pether - a ride to Bath and a sleigh-ride to Bowdoinham village! I have consulted with Lizzie about the propriety of telling Anville. Yes I would have liked a sleigh-ride too, with a pretty girl - I would want my pick, however. You see I never do such a common everyday thing as to step into a sleigh - it is unmilitary. We have some fun nowadays at riding "cutting heads". Without some explanation you might imagine that we ^{amused} engaged ourselves in the sportive process of cutting off each others heads, or perchance, that we hung ourselves up by the legs on crop-poles, & slipped off cutting our heads on sharp stones. Oh, no: we do not often enjoy that fun. Very seldom do we indulge in the pleasure even of throwing tumblers at each others plates. It is something that occurs in the regular line of duty this cutting heads. Imagine two ranks of horsemen mounted & drawn up in battle array each rank facing the other in a large rectangular drill-hall. You see six men with soft heads made on purpose to be cut off, arranged at equal intervals round the hall. Two men start from each outer flank with sabers drawn, flap each other on the right - first they walk, then trot then gallop, go round once till the horses get a-going at full speed - then they each begin to cut off the heads of the stationary men each on his own side. He cuts the head

of the first by a front cut, the second by a right cut and the third by a pierce which operation is called a terce point. I have cut off every head yet and sent them rolling on the ground. Now you must not imagine there is any blood spilt for there is not. The bodies of these stationary men are made of wood, and the heads I reckon are bags of sand. Now you perceive these are the kind of heads to practice on, and Heaven preserve me from cutting off any others. I did not understand what you meant by Uncle Henry's last stroke, unless you meant his charging father with telling of his offer of a thousand or two thousand dollars when in truth he ought not to have had a red cent. Is there anything else remarkable that he has done? I expected he would be in New York or Philadelphia before this getting rich very fast & moving in the first circles of the Social world. I do hear from home occasionally, but not so often as when you were there. I am tired of studying tired of drawing every day. Oh, you can scarcely imagine what a bore it is for a man with my artistic skill to bone away over that drawing & painting day after day & week after week. Before January however I rose from 35th to 16th. This encouraged me a little, but I am very tired of the operation. You wished for a register. No registers are ever issued in January - none ~~are~~ ^{are} published excepting in June. Then five ^{apiece} are given to the first five in each class, the rest have one each. Do you ever see the President or talk with him? I wish you would ask him why I did not receive my Diploma. Mr. Perley was to pay for it

90 2/7/1853 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-070

West Point

Source: Bowdoin

West Point Feb. 7, 1853.

Dear brother

I received your letter of the 29th ult. In good season, but will have to beg your pardon for a want of promptness in answering it. I had been when I received yours, only one to Perley for some time, and so by "odd jobs" I managed to make him out a full letter last week. I presume you laugh in your sleeve at all my poor apologies and say "I know where your leisure time goes to" I have a particular time for writing those especial letters and I allow nobody to encroach upon it. You will, being a sensible young man, readily acknowledge the necessity & propriety of such a private arrangement with myself.

Nothing made me feel worse than the hint that you might not visit me next summer, for I had counted upon it strongly & laid it by as a certainty. I do not think I can let you off. Certainly I will not take you from your studies, but you will have vacations. Either of which you can spend by coming to see me. It is expensive it is true, but it may not be made much so, and if you are moderately careful you will or may save more than enough to defray your expenses between this & then, over and above what you might otherwise spend & think nothing of it. How quickly I would let you have enough for that, if it was possible. It is difficult to conjecture, where in the wide world you will be able to find me after I leave this place. Perhaps I am wrong to urge you to do what you would do with the greatest pleasure if it becomes possible.

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From yr affectionate brother
O.O. Howard