

23. vii. 71

36 The Ridgeway,
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Dear Peter

First let me thank you for adding your signature to my 74th birthday card. Much appreciated. This must sound like Methusaleh to you.

[The story goes that on Methusaleh's 700th birthday one of his friends congratulated him "why, you don't look a day over 500".]

You have a great future ahead of you, and soon you'll move into a new and perhaps larger world. Whether you live in a college or in a student Hall, you meet the same people, or many of the same people every day. You have a wide choice. You are probably one who makes friends easily and some friends at University become friends for life. At least it has been so for me, & I notice most of them (if not all) are men who had some touch, direct or indirect, with what is known now as MRA. They didn't all change - just like that. A few did. Others never forgot. Unknown to us, perhaps even to themselves, something stuck. One man told me that it was because of meeting MRA as a student he was able to lead his men

Triumphantly thro' some very tough "commando" exploits in the 2nd.

World War. It surprised me. I would not have expected it of that particular man. But then there is a lot more in people than you think. It only needs a crisis sometimes to draw it out.

One or two men (I think of one in particular) who began to change but went back to his old sins. Successful? Yes, he was - in a worldly sense.

But his home broke up: he left his wife & two sons, & married again. I hadn't heard of or from him for years till one of his colleagues (also at the top of the Medical Profession) told me what Bob had said to him. "The biggest mistake of my life was when I left Frank Buchman's side" - This although in his biography, a successful book, he'd said some rotten (& quite untrue) things about "F. B." as he called him.

* The point is he's not indifferent!

So don't worry. If you've got the right purpose - as I believe you have - you're on the winning side - The man who opposes* you first may come to be your best friend when he changes.

I think a purpose is the most important thing to have when you're a student.[†] Otherwise you waste time

For at any other time!

(at least,
I did)

and let drawn off into such futile things. By purpose, I mean a purpose for your life.

I had a hope when I went up to Oxford, but no real purpose. I entered whole heartedly into all the fun & games & had a whale of a time doing it - had heaps of friends - or so I wd have said: but in my heart I knew I had no real friends. I was too scared someone wd find out what I was really like underneath. So I set out to be popular etc. but it was all bluff. The set I moved in were all much the same as I. So much was just 'posing' -

You have your musical gifts & that will take you into a circle where you'll have mutual interest & enjoyment. That is a great asset, & you'll not lack for friends - Musical people are usually sensitive & they will soon spot that you have a purpose.

While human nature is very much the same everywhere, human beings as persons vary very much. What differences there are matter a great deal. There is a way to the heart of every man, even those with whom you have no natural affinity or common interest. It can happen you reach one man quickly, an-

other it may take time. You have probably read how Dr. Buchman got to know & win Blair Buck (in the ^{Bill} Pickle story. "Making of a Miracle" in "Re-making the World").

I also found that a lot of fellows were plain bored - bored with their surroundings, with their studies, with college meals, with the daily routine of life. So they have to blow off steam somehow - sometimes by "ragging" - organized or just personal: then by violence or street fights or college vs. college: sometimes raiding rooms, smashing windows, burning furniture thrown from upper rooms etc. Then you remember "Burnup Supper" ^{night} at the Oxford Conference last April (or were you not there?), Alan Thornhill's new play.

When you're bored & purposeless, your standards (if any) go & you "fall for anything" as the saying goes. Pretty dirty stuff. Sometimes & you excuse it by saying "It doesn't matter" or "other fellows do it, so why not I?" Then of course you have the reaction of feeling worse than ever.

If you have a purpose, you're a marked man - People may say nothing, but they watch you. In a closed community like a Univ. not much stays hidden. Some will laugh at you - at first & try

to get you down to their level. But you can sit easy to all that, & not fuss about it. After all you're having a better time than they are. You can afford to laugh.

Wanting to be popular is one of the biggest traps in Univ. life. So far go with the popular set (if they'll have you), do the things they do, talk the way they do & generally behave that way.

You have to stifle your conscience to do it. You take refuge in cynicism, hoping to excuse every thing. But it doesn't quite work. You conform but you still don't quite know where you are or where you're going - All you know is perhaps you've got mixed up with a lot of things you wouldn't tell your parents, for instance.

There's a saying about conformity: "Any old dead fish can float down stream: it takes a live sucker to swim up against it." If you start swimming up against it, it's amazing how many other fish change direction & decide to swim upstream with you! At least that was what I found. Some of 'em really surprise you.

Soon you have a force with a purpose. The fun may fly, but it's lots of fun. You're never bored. You do three hours' work in two & you've always^{got} time to listen to

6.
something he has never told anyone
his fellow who comes to talk to you - rather shyly perhaps at first, but gradually he opens up. Then he's ready to answer direct personal questions. These are probably his real things on his heart he's never told anybody.

I used to be afraid a fellow w'd be angry if you asked him certain questions. I find they're not - In fact often they're glad you did, they'd been too shy or afraid to say it themselves, but hope you will.

I find it pays to be bold. You've got to forget yourself & your "reserve" - mind you. There are two kinds of reserve, a true reserve & a false reserve, where you hide something (or try to. "Love is blind but his notions ain't") - I find at Caux I'll ask a fellow "do you live a pure life?" There was a time I would never have dared to ask anyone a personal question like that. But it pays off. Even if he hadn't expected it, he usually tells you the truth. You can tell how you found victory. Don't talk too long about yourself - just enough so he sees ~~how~~ you understand & that there is an answer. So many just expect defeat & stop fighting, and drift along.

Be natural with people. You don't have to pretend to be what you're not. Don't try to look too good or talk too wise.

Fear is the worst form of guidance!

7.

Don't be afraid of people either. I at ways was, but it was my 'ego'.

Take nothing for granted. You can get guidance as the two of you talk. I once had guidance to ask a very senior schoolmaster (he'd invited me to tea) if he wd give his life to God. I told God, don't be crazy - It would close every school in England. The thought persisted. Still I couldn't get the conversation off the weather, 'Varsity Cricket, Henley etc. Finally I cleared my throat "By the way, would you like to give your life to God?" To my surprise & relief, he said "As a matter of fact, I would" & we got down on our knees by his desk & he prayed. From that day, Dec. 7th 1933 he never turned back - (Your father must have known him, or of him - Stephen Foot. He wrote several books about MRA).

So if you have guidance to do some original or daring thing, don't hesitate if it's something the other fellow needs.

You'll win men, Peter, not as a gifted fellow with a musical instrument: you'll win them as Peter Riddell as a man & as a person in his own right, with a commitment & something to say that's needed universally. It's possible, is it not, for a musician to use his instrument as a shield or protection against life or against

like the Roman soldier carry ⁱⁿ a shield ^{into} battle! 8.

people of whom he may be afraid. And people come to associate him with his instrument & his talent & they never either think of him or meet him as a man, for his own sake, music or no music. His instrument may also be a means of winning praise or distinction for himself. No need to tell you what's the wrong use of talent!

Don't be discouraged if you fall into impurity. That statement can be misunderstood. It doesn't mean that to fall into impurity doesn't matter or is "natural" - No fighting man (& every real Christian is a fighting man) will agree the enemy must win - that sin is inevitable - or that one form of sin is not so bad as some other kind - or that sin is not sin - a very popular argument. Sin is the disease - Christ is the cure - the result is a miracle.

Discouragement is the language of pride - because we want to think of ourselves as a success - till something happens which shows us we are not. God does not mean we are to achieve something to inflate our ego. What He asks is our obedience. Fellows say, "Oh I can't never live the 4 standards" - How do they know? have they ever tried. In any case, living the standards is the fruit of something else &

are not ends in themselves for your own glory.

The answer to sex temptations I find is two-fold: i. Your life, purpose, will are wholly given to Christ. So often impurity comes when you're frustrated.

There is something you want & can't get, so you take what you can get (alas, all too easily) You try to compensate & find satisfaction for yourself ("gratification" is a good word for it). But of course, it doesn't work. Sin never

satisfies*: it only leaves you wanting more - Appetite grows by what it feeds on - There are some appetites in us which ought to left to starve. Shakespeare* had it wrong when he says "If music be the food of love, play on! Give me enough of it, ^{that} appetite may sicken & so die". Surfeit of sin is not God's program for us. Victory is -

"Resist the Devil & he will flee from you" is a very real truth. The Devil wants you to fight the wrong battle (usually by an effort of repression which doesn't work.) So many things, like impure thoughts for instance will go if you ignore them, & let 'em go. It's not always easy - the look, the thought - the fascination & the fall - the break must come somewhere, say, between the thought & the fascination: otherwise the snake paralyzes the rabbit. If evil thoughts

* Jesus
J.E.S.U.S

Just
exactly

SUITS

SAVES

and
SATISFIES

US

SINNERS.

*
Correction
attached

[In London I need to pray 5 times a day "make & keep me 10. pure within"]

do assail us (& which of us young or old don't have him at times?), understand that God may have allowed the temptation in order to prepare you for someone you'll meet that day who is defeated by impulse habits & desperately needs your help. Use your temptations, make them assets instead of liabilities.

ii. That is point 2. Be on the attack - be changing people - be moving so fast he dirt doesn't stick. Then you won't have much trouble with sex.

As regards girls St. Paul says to the young men "Treat the younger women as sisters, with perfect propriety" - They are fellow fighters in the battle with you. Keep your relationships on that level & see that the men round you do the same.

No private r'ships where you use each other. That in the end destroys love. Let it be men's work for men and women for women, in the work of life-changing. Fellows fool themselves sometimes about "changing" girl friends. It's usually goes the other way. Let a girl in the team deal with the girl & tell the boy friend to stay out of it. They have to find a relationship centred on God, not on each other. Let them be honest about their motives. If they are sincere responsible & open with friends, fine.

That is a different matter. It's God control before and after marriage, yes, after!
 A conclusion to his long screed:

When we started in Oxford, a few of us met daily at 7.30 to read the Bible, listen, share & pray on our knees - B'fast 8.15 AM.

This was basic. Soon other groups in other Colleges were doing the same. Soon the Univ. Magazine got the news & had satirical editorials. This helped greatly as people's curiosity was aroused & we became known. The battle so heated up the London Times printed a letter from 9 Senior Oxford men (inc. 3 heads of Colleges) in our support - You can imagine what that did! & not just in Oxford.

All the time men were coming for personal interviews to get cleaned up & find a real purpose in their lives. Henry Drummond, Prof. at Edinb' Univ, whose books you may know, was sought in interview privately by scores of men. (He was all alone: we had a team later of up to a 100 in Oxford doing that work).

Drummond said to a friend to whose house in Edinb' we of the Oxford group were often asked -

"I have been listening to stories

of ill. living so vile & so loathsome
I felt I wanted to change my very
clothes. But to such I gladly gave
the garments of righteousness & the
robes of salvation."

Do this, Peter, & God will do the
rest.

Thanks for your patience.

Sincerely yours

Louison Hamilton.

// Don't stop with a fellow till he is
changing his friends.

CORRECTION. P. 9

FOUR HAYS MEWS · BERKELEY SQUARE · LONDON · W.1

GROSVENOR

3 4 4 3

Shakespeare -

Twelfth Night. Act I. Sc 1.

"If music be the food of love, play on!
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken & so die."

Peter Riddell.

from:

L. Hamilton

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Peter Riddell