

1953

Photocopy of various letters and quotations

Jean Johns

John F. (John Fitzgerald) Kennedy (1917-1963)

James W. (James Wesley Silver (1907-1988)

Charles Bartlett

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November 4, 1953
Francestown,
New Hampshire

Dear Mr. Kennedy;

I am a member of a teen-age Youth Fellowship in Francestown, New Hampshire. We are now studying the power of prayer. We have decided to write to several prominent people to get their ideas on prayer. We have selected you as one for your many accomplishments. These are the questions;

What does prayer mean to you? What has prayer done for you? What can prayer do for us?

We would appreciate an answer for it would be a tremendous help to us in our study. The results of this study will be recorded on paper and sent to our parish members.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Jean Johns
Francestown,
New Hampshire

COPY

February 12, 1954

Mr. Edward McCaffrey
30 Jarvis Street
Revere, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. McCaffrey:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of recent date, wherein you have expressed your disapproval and a feeling of resentment as the result of some of my positions and actions as they relate to matters of public interest and concern.

Permit me to assure you that I was not greatly surprised by what you said, because I have never expected that I would be able at all times to please everyone, so public official would ever be able to do that, however such he might endeavor to do so. I do strive to please, and to think and act in accordance with what I consider to be for the best interest of the people I am privileged to represent.

However that may be, I appreciated receiving your letter, for I would rather that you write me, even to criticize, than not to write me at all. Every servant of the people needs to know what the people he has been chosen to represent may be thinking about his every activity, not only those who may agree with him in what he does, but likewise those who may disagree, for in that way only, and in no other way, can he know the true sentiments and wishes of his constituents.

Assuring you that I shall always welcome your suggestions, and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy

November 24, 1953

Miss Jean Johns
Francestown
New Hampshire

Dear Miss Johns:

Your letter of recent date has been held for my personal attention. I am sorry that it was not possible for me to reply sooner.

I certainly appreciate hearing from you and I think it is highly commendable that the young people in Francestown, New Hampshire, are thinking along the lines as suggested by your note.

In answer to your question, I believe that man is created by God with an immortal soul. I believe that those who follow his teaching will be rewarded by eternal life with Him in Heaven. On the long and difficult road of life it is quite natural that we should turn to Him, our Master, for guidance and for relief from troubles that beset us. It is unfortunate that too often we are prone to turn to Him only in moments of difficulty, but he never permits prayers to go unanswered.

When my crew and I were lost for several days in the last war, after being shipwrecked, I believe that the prayers were directly responsible for our being finally rescued. This is only one example when prayer has been of assistance to me. In short, prayer can help all of us, both individually and as a Nation, in the difficult days ahead.

Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
UNIVERSITY, MISSISSIPPI

Department of History

January 14, 1954

Miss Evelyn Lincoln
Secretary to Senator John Kennedy
Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Miss Lincoln:

Mr. Robbs was kind enough to forward to me your letter to him of January 14. There seems to have occurred a small comedy of errors in my correspondence with Senator Kennedy but the blame must fall on me because I did not carry out his original instructions.

In 1951-52 I was in attendance at Harvard as a Ford Fellow in Economics and I met Senator (then Representative) Kennedy when he spoke to one of Professor Hecombe's seminars. As I remember it, we even got into a slight argument regarding his favorite subject of New England industry moving South. In any case, he told me that he would be happy to come to the University of Mississippi to conduct a forum on some phase of the New England-Southern relationship. I was greatly impressed with him (though at the time I doubted the wisdom of his running for the Senate against Mr. Lodge) and, of course, I was greatly pleased that he planned to make us a visit.

Last year I had some correspondence with the Senator and I was to have written him again in August, 1953. This I neglected to do, mainly because I was in California for the summer and did not have my correspondence there. I did write him in the first week or so of September and this was the letter you referred to. I understood at the time that he would shortly take off on his honeymoon to Mexico and wasn't too surprised that I did not hear from him ~~the~~ right way. In any case, I am glad that the correspondence has been renewed.

It would please us immensely if Senator Kennedy could get away from Washington long enough for a quick trip to Mississippi. The Memphis airport, where we can pick him up, is only three hours away from the nation's capital. The enclosed sheet will give you some idea as to what we are trying to do in these far-off places. This year we have been fortunate enough to secure such people as Claude Bowers, Hanson Baldwin, Llewellyn Robb, Eddy Gilmore, and Alfred Robens, former statesman of labor in Britain. Jacob Potofsky will be with us in February.

Please ask Senator Kennedy to give this his serious consideration. If he could have a few days at his disposal, we should like nothing better than to show him this part of the Mid-South.

Sincerely,

James W. Silver
James W. Silver

Charles Bartlett--

"I remember we once got an economist to teach us economics just after Jack had been elected to the Senate. He used to come to the Senator's house in Georgetown, and I'd go there about 8:30, and we'd have an hour and a half with this fellow. He was very interesting; he was teaching us the details of the economic system, about which none of us knew very much. One time, the fellow arrived before the Senator had finished his dinner, and so he brought his dessert in--ice cream with chocolate sauce--while the fellow was discussing the Federal Reserve Board. Suddenly, he was interrupted by Jack, who called the butler, George, and said, 'George, isn't this yesterday's chocolate sauce?' This undid the economist. It was quite funny. After Jack became President, I said, 'My Lord, I wonder what ever happened to that economist who used to teach us eight years ago.' The President thought for a minute: 'I don't know; he probably committed suicide.'"

Herman Kahn--

"[The author of the letter to the left] James W. Silver, then professor of history at the University of Mississippi, came into national prominence with the publication in 1964 of his remarkable analysis of his home state, entitled Mississippi: The Closed Society."