

October 16, 1945

Dear Alan:

I cannot tell you with what sheer delight I read your recollections of the group of giants who established The Rockefeller Foundation. As a piece of character portrayal, I have never seen anything better, and how you did it without access to records is beyond my imagination. The portraits are brilliantly cut, and I don't think anyone has hit off any better Mr. Gates, Mr. Rockefeller and George Vincent. You were apparently concerned that there might be some errors in it, but I came across only very minor ones that do not in any way affect the validity of the study; i.e., you spoke of Dr. Buttrick as being a conductor on a railroad in his early years; he was a brakeman. That kind of thing is not important and can easily be corrected.

The stuff is so good that I didn't want to delay showing it to some of the people around here, and NST and Dr. Morison have already read it with great enthusiasm. Warren Weaver is reading it now, and Joe Willits wants to read it. I am sure that Debevoise, too, would greatly appreciate it, and your picture of him is the first one that I have seen that does justice to his distinguished contributions to this organization.

I have a feeling that your portrait could be rounded out perhaps by at least a reference to the other side of the shield. The men you were describing were intellectual giants - each in his

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own way - but they were not congenial intellectual giants. There were fundamental antipathies that often blazed into view, i.e., Vincent versus Rose, Gates versus Flexner and Embree, and Pearce versus Russell. I was in on most of the differences of opinion in the decade and a half from 1920 to 1935. Indeed, one of my jobs was to try to compose these differences, and I knew how sharp and deep some of them were.

If today we lack some of the outstanding figures of these early years, at least we have more harmony. Have we sacrificed intellectual greatness to unity? I don't know.

Anyway, we are all of us indebted to you for the time you took to put these portraits on paper. It is a distinct addition to the history of the Foundation, and we must think up some way by which it can be put in permanent form.

As ever,

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

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