Technique of the Course

These conferences are not formal lectures - they will deal with a subject not in any complete, exhaustive way, but in the tentative way of one who is trying to get the facts, sift, absorb them - whose ideas are still more or less ahzy. That is, there is nothing dogmatic; and if the conference is carried on as I conceive it should be, you will contribute out of your experience much to this material. That is, you must visualize what we are talking out about of your ideas and your experience. In order to get the most out of it you should feel very free - I think I might say that the oftener you stop me to ask a question, to challenge a statement, to contribute to the point I am trying to make, the better it will be for all of us. I have no fear of interruption. That will be the very life of the conference. If you do that freely I shall feel that you are not lazy-minded toward what I am saying, indifferent, that you really are trying to do as I am doing, get my ideas, my facts in orderly procession as the writer of a book must - get my ideas about the meaning of these facts clear. This habit of challenging what one hears, of trying to get it clear in mind - is one of the most important things in our intellectual development. Many pupils never give themselves that advantage either out of a lack of understanding of what is a fact, that in no other way is a mind made acute, sensitive, kept active, or indolence, or shyness, or vanity - the fear of making a mistake. Don't be afraid of making a mistake. At the present moment I could make more mistakes on the subject matter of
these conferences than all of you together for the simple reason that I know more about it than possibly any of you do, having worked in it some time and realizing how much I don't know and that I must know before my book is completed.