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Berlin-Grunewald, 17 April 1920

Very esteemed Doctor,

In your valued letter of the 8th of this month, for which I give you the best of thanks, two things were of quite particular interest to me: first, your opinion that the red shift of the spectral lines in the gravitational field called for by the Einstein theory is not seen in nature. That would be a fact of such fundamental significance that establishing it would justify the greatest of sacrifices. Unfortunately, I can contribute nothing to that effort myself but must leave it to the astrophysicists.

¹ Translator's note: In English in the original.

A positive result from your idea of attempting to examine the question of whether large masses carry the ether with them² would naturally have a similar significance. For the time being, it takes great daring to believe in such a positive result, although it would be just as distorted to consider it excluded. For this reason, an examination of the question would be valuable in any case.³

If I do not go into this subject in more detail today, the reason is that it is important to me to write to you as soon as possible about the second matter, namely to express to you first and foremost my sincere congratulations on the position in Rochester

² Translator's note: "Large masses carry the ether with them" is underlined in pencil.

³ Translator's note: This paragraph is highlighted by a double vertical line in pencil in the margin.

and to send with you on your trip the desired blessing in due form for your “five bodies and souls.”⁴ May it bring you just a tenth of what I put into it in real benefit.

I have the most beautiful memories of America from the year I spent there, 1909. At the time, I was lecturing at Columbia University in the City of New York,⁵ but I also visited various other universities, such as Cornell in Ithaca, N.Y., and on my trip to Niagara Falls I also passed through Rochester, although I only saw the train station.

⁴ Translator’s note: “Five bodies and souls” is in English in the original.

⁵ Translator’s note: “The City of New York” is in English in the original.

May you and yours find unlimited good fortune in the land of unlimited possibilities.

With the best of greetings,

Your candidly devoted

M. Planck