

A REVIEW OF MY SPIRITUAL SEARCH

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I seriously doubt that one can cogently evaluate his own spiritual development. The reason I doubt it is that we human beings are so very likely to be self-deceived. We are wishful thinkers. Even the most introspective of us can be quite mistaken about himself. But whether or not I did make any spiritual progress in my journey thru life, I should be able to look back at what happened to me and perhaps identify a few places where "two paths diverged in a wood" and try to see where my choices led me. And if you find that you know me better than I know myself, of course you will make correction in your mental notebook and not be swayed by what I say about it. That will be OK.

Perhaps you will agree with me that any man's remarks on a religious subject, being personal, cannot be fully apprehended unless you know something of the background that gave him birth and nurture. The circumstances of my life have been so fortunate -- not easy, but fortunate -- that I can take no credit for being a self-made man, so-called. I have been lucky Joe from the day I was conceived. My parents first had two daughters. Then 4 years went by before I came along. By that time they wanted another baby and they wanted a boy baby and I was it. The fourth child was a girl, so for 8 years I was the boy in our family. There was never any doubt in my mind or in my feelings that I was wanted and cared for and loved by my whole family. It was also obvious to me that much was to be expected of me, or at least, hoped from me: an ideal start in life.

Just before I was born my parents had been missionaries in North China. My father was a physician who did a rather prodigious amount of building and medical work there until his missionary career ended after only 4 years because of my mother's frail health. I was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington. My parents were not Fundamentalists or evangelicals, but Sunday in our home was the Lord's day and we always went dressed up to Sunday school and church services, never to Sunday movies or Sunday ball games. We weren't even supposed to read the funny papers until Monday. We could go to the museum on Sunday, or read or enjoy good music, but we were not to study our school lessons because that would be unnecessary work. Sunday was to be a day of rest and worship. I know of only 2 good things about these rules:

We had to learn to amuse ourselves and each other, that is, how to avoid boredom; and second, we learned to pack the other 6 days of the week full to make up for the lost 7th day. There were at least 3 times that my parents triad to institute family prayers and scripture readings on a daily basis in our home. It never lasted more than a week or two. We were all too busy and impatient to get on with living.

We went to the public schools, and indeed they were unusually good ones. When I was in high school I had a section in my

notebook labelled "Things I Learned That I Was Not Supposed To Learn" These were quotations from teachers and text, which if taken all by themselves, out of context, could be guaranteed to rob the thinking student of his religion. They were facts that appeared to contradict what religion seemed to teach.

Our church is important in connection with this subversive notebook of mine. Ours was a liberal Presbyterian church whose minister was an intellectual Scottish mystic with a twinkling sense of humor, an unconscious pulpit manner, and an extemporaneous poetical delivery. A real scholar, his sermons enabled me to bridge the apparently widening gap between science, history and literature on the one hand and religion on the other. He successfully resisted the great temptation to join in on the controversies between the modernists and the Fundamentalists. His intellect would have delighted in it. He did show that he was well acquainted with both points of view and with modern scholarship, but he reiterated steadfastly that the essence of Christ's message has nothing to do with the controversies over doctrines, and that the only really important fundamental is the essence or the experience of Love, which is God. To speak in words of this experience requires poetry and an open heart and a growing mind, so in his sermons he soared into the upper reaches of his soul's mystic eloquence.

Few persons, it seems, have had such a privilege in the years of their awakening youth. It is because of the wisdom I got from him that I have always wondered whether the silent worship of Friends is really the best form for children and adolescents. Because of his well informed intelligence, his humor and spirituality I found the disturbing impact of a modern scientific education to be a welcome stimulus, even though it could easily have become a substitute for religion.

In our congregation sat the principal of our high school, a man of Quaker background who in manner and appearance reminded one of Abraham Lincoln. For a year and a half he and I went down town to Rotary Club together every week because I was president of the Student Council. At high school I saw the marvelous fruits of secular democratic education which were possible under the leadership of such a strong, wise, Christian man as principal. It was while I was in high school that I realized that one's concepts of God and eternal truth and holiness should undergo change as one grows up, and that the changes do not have to mean that all is lost.

I asked my father many, many questions, such as "How can God possibly concern himself with every one of the millions of people on earth personally, individually?" "How can He hear all the prayers in all the different languages all day and all night?" "Do you believe the miracles?" "As a doctor how can you believe in the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection?" My father's answers were both scholarly and wise, but not always entirely satisfying.

He said that I must expect that some mystery will always remain.

In childhood my concept of God was that of a person, a father like my own wonderful earthly father, only perfect and

all-powerful and attentive if called upon. I understood that He expected us to learn to look after ourselves and each other, and to help Him get the right things done on earth. I also understood that although He loved us He did not always give us what we wanted, but what we needed instead, because He is much wiser than we. This put him a notch above Santa Claus.

However it was the belief in Santa Claus, followed by the truth about Santa Claus that gave me the first concept of a purely spiritual reality and the earthly symbols of spiritual reality. The reality that we call the Christmas spirit is the generous, loving, all-embracing emotion and attitude and good will which we can afford at least once a year and which has its own spiritual rewards for us and for each other if we let it come into us and express itself thru us. It does not have to be symbolized by Santa Claus or by gifts or by carols or Nativity stories, but 'how much these symbols do help, when we are children, to introduce us to this spiritual reality!

So, during my school years, although I continued to engage in prayer, my concept of the Deity to which I prayed gradually changed. And what I prayed for changed also. Rather than a fatherly person up in heaven I realized that God is a spirit or mystical reality which one can only sense or experience, not sense with the 5 senses, but an internal experience which can be as convincing as a sensory experience can be convincing. So maybe it is a delusion. The senses do delude us sometimes. I didn't know. But the strong, beautiful, lovely emotions which flooded me and supported me when I was paying attention to God and partaking of His spirit in our religious observances and in my own private worship seemed to be a most important reality to me. It was important in helping me to define my goals, to decide what kind of person I wanted to be, and to choose my behavior relative to other persons. These decisions were urgent because I was destined to be doing a man's work among grown-ups from the time I was 16 years of age, on up. My character needed to be stable, predictable.

When I was only 13 I was offered a job on Mt. Rainier as an "Apprentice Guide". Of course I was the youngest one in the guide department by far. Fortunately I always looked 2 to 5 years older than I really was. The next summer I was an Assistant Guide, and in that capacity I led my first party to the summit of Mt. Rainier. It occurred when the Swiss guide was too sick to continue above the 12,000 ft. elevation. I was on the mountain during summers until I was 24 years old. The other guides were well educated men, mostly teachers and professors. Some were agnostics. Some were avowed atheists. The summer I was 16 the guides were called upon for an unusually large number of rescue expeditions, nine of them. There were 4 human fatalities, and one saddle horse killed when he and his rider backed over a cliff, and there were 4 lost hikers, at different times, to be found before they would perish. I had the awful experience of seeing a fellow assistant guide fall from just above me from a rock wall to his death far below. On another day there was an earthquake which shook loose some rocks on the summit climb. A Stanford student, a member of Hans' summit party was struck on the head by one of the rocks and it killed him. I

was with a different party at that time and can bear witness to the occurrence of the earthquake. After getting his party down off the summit route, Hans, the summit guide, was emotionally devastated by having this fatal accident happen to a party of his. He was ready to quit being a guide on Mt. Rainier. But as aviators are sent up again as soon as possible after they survive a crash, he was assigned another summit party in 3 or 4 days. The chief guide, a teacher of mine in high school, told me I was to go with Hans as his assistant. I said, "I notice that it is a party so small that you don't usually send an assistant guide along. Is there some particular reason you want me to go?" He replied, "Joe, when you get there you will see why I am sending you" Hans led the party all right but he was very uncommunicative, plodding along mechanically, lost in troubled thought. When our climbers would ask him questions he would say "You ask Cho." At our half way camp we put the party to bed in the guest cabin and we two guides retired to the little guide cabin: 2 beds side by side behind the rocks. That night at Camp Muir was about the most interesting night I ever stayed awake. Hans couldn't sleep and he couldn't let me sleep. He had to relive the accident in every detail over and over again. Then he repeatedly implored me to explain why this had happened to him. He said, "I am not what you call a very religious man, maybe, but I have always trusted in God. I have never once approached that rock without a prayer that me and my party come around it safely. And now see what has happened! Why? Why?" His child-like faith in a loving Heavenly Father was shattered and he was bewildered and bereft. He felt deserted and shamed. But he was imploring me for some understanding of it, some comfort and some miracle of reassurance. What could God have against him, or against that college student? I am sure we talked most of the night, and yes, I found out why I had been sent along. And Hans did finish the season out as our head summit guide.

I am telling you a little about my mountain guiding days because I want to talk to you about Fear. Religion, it appears to me, religions play upon peoples' fears: fears of misfortune, fears of punishment, fears of being out of favor with the deity, fear of condemnation or disapproval, fear of the unknown, fear of something new, or somebody foreign or strange, fear of accidents, fear of intense emotions, fear of change or challenge, fear of death, and finally fear of what might come after death. Religions appear to provide comforting reassurance, even protection in the face of our fears. This is one of religion's chief functions, to give comfort. But in doing so religions also seem to validate and increase our fears by calling attention to all the things there are to be afraid of, as if telling us that we ought to be afraid of them until comforted or saved by religion.

I seem to have grown up as free from fear as anyone I know. I have never had enough fear, of anything, to terrorize me or to paralyze me so that I could not function. Some would say that it is because I was brought up with my childhood belief in my kind, protective Heavenly Father and the salvation and forgiveness of Jesus. But I was never encouraged to believe that these doctrines permitted me to live a charmed life, to be to be foolhardy, to discard care, caution and prudence. Belief

would not make me immune to suffering and harm. For example I don't think I would ever be persuaded to take up sky-diving. The odds don't appear attractive. I would not expect my religion to protect me. Some psychologists have told us that our fears are conditioned by our previous experience, vicarious or actual. In that case I should be afraid of bees. When I was just a toddler learning to walk I was left sitting and crying on a nest of yellow-jackets, digger wasps noted for their irritability and painful stings. I was promptly covered with stings. But I have never had any fear of bees.

Why are people so plagued by fear? I ask this question because it appears to me that fear is the greatest enemy of mankind. I suspect that fear is instilled into us and cultivated in us by those who would be overprotective of us, or who can profit by keeping us afraid while posing or performing as our protectors. The best example after we grow up is the military-industrial complex. They keep us afraid of our so-called enemies so that we will spend billions of dollars each year on our military-industrial complex. And it is the same in every country.

Personally I have never been cowed by fear, as far as I know. And I ask myself "why?" I believe the prayers my parents said with me at bedtime were a good beginning in early childhood, but what they gave me in later childhood seems more important. They put me on my own and showed confidence in me. They were not afraid_for_me. At 10 years of age I had 2 delivery jobs that took me all over the city, even long after dark. The serious pandemic of influenza which swept the world in 3 waves came in the winter of 1918-19 when I was still 10 years old. Schools were suspended, emergency hospitals were set up in church basements as regular hospitals overflowed. My father the doctor worked day and night. It was exhausting so he asked me if I would like to learn to drive the car and be his chauffeur. Of course I was thrilled. We would start out about 7 a.m. He would tell me the next address, then get in the back seat and sleep until we arrived there. I remember the effect it had on me one time to see a young patient in a bed near the door of an emergency hospital who was so ill that my father said he would be dead before tomorrow. Most of the deaths occurred in young adults. My father did not seem to be afraid that either he or I would catch it.

When I was 11 years old my parents arranged for me to work all summer for my room and board for a bachelor who had an apple orchard farm in another State. His sister was a good friend of ours. My folks put me on the train in Tacoma, told me to change trains once in Portland and again in the town of Hood River, Oregon, and Uncle Billy whom we had never seen would meet me at the end of the line. I had already spent 4 or 5 summers tagging around after men on farms.

Another time they left me on an island at my request, where I worked for a farmer and broke in a pony who would not tolerate riders, my parents never seemed to worry about me because they considered me competent. They were proud of me as if I were responsible, capable and had good sense. When I finished the 8th grade and was ready for high school my father said, "I want you

to stay out of school for a year and go to work in industry or business as a laborer. You could do it between high school and college, but I think it would be better for you to do it now between grammar school and high school". I had been eager to go to our famous high school so I asked "Why?" My father explained, "I want you to have experience in the work-a-day world of common labor so that you will appreciate what an education does for you.

You are not tired of studying now so you will surely go to high school. But if you wait till you have been graduated from high school you may think you know so much that you don't need to go to college. That would be a mistake, so stay out and go to work now". He had already found a job for me. Some of his patients who owned a factory agreed to employ me. Dad had to go to the Police Station and get a special permit for me to stay out of school and to work, because I was only 13 years old. So I rode my bicycle to work and back, about 5 miles each way thru the center of the city 6 days each week. My wage was \$6 per week. I was given experience working in every department of the factory except the business office. After one summer and the Fall and Winter semester my father let me go to high school in February. He said I had earned the privilege.

When I went to work in the guide department on Mt. Rainier my family seemed to have no fear for me although a neighbor girl of ours has been killed on the mountain. When the other assistant guide was killed while climbing with me when I was only 16 my mother and father came up to the mountain to see how I was taking it and to learn how I had comported myself on that disastrous expedition. I thought they would probably jerk me off the mountain. At the end of our visit my father asked "Well, son, are you ready to come home now? Or do you want to stay on the mountain?" I said "I want to stay on the mountain in the guide department." "Very well", said my father, "Take care of yourself and learn all you can". My mother looked a little disappointed and distressed but she assented tearfully as she kissed me good-bye, letting me know that I was precious to them.

I believe it was this early treatment of me by my parents and their friends and the educators in our public schools and church that enabled me to grow up unencumbered by fear, yet not foolhardy. When I was graduated from high school there were 5 professions I wanted to follow and I could not choose which one to train for. The point is that none of them scared me. I would have been game to tackle all of them if that had been possible.

As for spiritual growth, the point of all this about fear is that the promptings of the spirit in me could be expressed in action because I did not fear disastrous consequences to me or my career. Thus I knew by the time I entered medical school that my way of life would be an attempt to remove the causes of war and would be incompatible with killing as a method of solving problems. So if we ever did get into another war I would have to stand up and out as a conscientious objector, even though doctors are supposed to be not required to be combatants. I knew I would be misunderstood and reviled. The girl I was to marry understood all this from the second day we met and she stuck by me like a heroine.

During preparations for World War II we heard the minister of the Claremont Church preparing his flock to approve of our entry into the war. He was intellectually able to see all the practical and political necessities for compromise with the Christian profession of Peace and Love. We were to keep the love in our hearts and the peace in our goals and intentions while doing what we had to do. In other words, love your enemies while annihilating them, presumably for their own good, or somebody's. I felt that it was not his calling to seek the compromise for us. Compromising is the necessary and honorable calling of the political representative in government, not the privilege of the minister of the gospel. So we, my wife and I, joined with like-minded persons in the congregation and had silent worship meetings in the manner of the Religious Society of Friends. The Claremont Church gave us room and no objection to our silent meetings. My wife and I remembered that in the early background of each of us there had been persons of Quaker persuasion or origin who had been very important to our development. I could remember four. To enrich our meetings and our lives we made contact with Orange Grove Friends Meeting in Pasadena. Jeanette and I were accepted as members of that meeting some months before I was re-located for the duration of the war to Exeter, California where too many physicians had been drafted out of civilian life. My local draft board in Pomona was not going to let me escape conscription this way, so they made great trouble for me. They refused to classify me as essential to civilian needs even after the War Manpower Commission moved me to Exeter. They tried to send me to a Civilian Public Service Camp where I would have no income with which to support my wife and 4 children. If I were in camp my family would have to go on relief, for the children were very small. My case had to go thru 2 Regional Appeal Boards and was finally settled, in my favor, by the Presidential Appeal Board in Washington, DC. American Legionnaires in Pomona lied about me to Legionnaires in Exeter so the latter told me to get out of their territory or they would do anything to get rid of me. They would literally ride me out on a rail, a time honored American custom. That was when I first went there and they did not know me. They were surprised when I asked to meet with them and they found that they could not scare me a bit. They did not withdraw their threats, but they must have realized that their community might need a doctor and that I was harmless. In the year and a half I was there not one person ever gave me any trouble, face to face.

Of course we must realize that during the war none of us ever knew what the Nazis were doing to the Jews. If we had known that, would we have continued to be pacifists? I do not know. But I know that if I had been told about the holocaust of the Jews at that time I would not have believed it, because America was enveigled into World War I by false reports of German atrocities, later admitted to be lies by the British. I had seen my father's attitudes toward the German problem radically altered by British contrivances and propaganda distorting the truth in World War I, and I would have assumed that the holocaust report was also false in World War II. If I had been a Vietnamese man and had seen the atrocities committed by the American military in my country I doubt if I could have remained non-violent. I

always knew that there is this vulnerability in the conscientious objector stand, but I also knew that I personally could not perform military action under military orders for military objectives. I would not be myself if I undertook to do so. Furthermore I was convinced that war had become obsolete, counterproductive, and that time would prove it to be incompatible with human survival ultimately. To continue to resort to war will be to select the human species for extinction.

There has been some growing awareness of this in the 20th century, even in high places. Next we will have to ask ourselves whether guerrilla warfare and terrorism and nuclear blackmail have a place, and what to do about them.

During World War II Jeannette and I found spiritual congeniality at Trabuco College. It was more like a monastery than a college. It was built by Gerald Heard and Felix Greene. Aldous Huxley was frequently there also. The intellectual treats were tremendous, and the zeal for making spiritual progress was intense. It was there that I learned to make the most of the practice of meditation. If you compare it with our meeting for worship, however, there is an important difference. In our silent meeting we are conscious of each other and concerned about each other and about the meeting. We know that if we are not thinking straight or are holding unloving feelings we are subject to being corrected by others in the meeting. We open ourselves to this as well as to the upwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. At Trabuco College meditation was done in the dark and there was no vocal ministry during meditation, so it was mostly for personal spiritual growth, even though you had knowledge that others were doing the same thing in the same room with you. I believe that the difference is in favor of our meeting for worship. Trabuco is now a Vedanta monastery for the Ramakrishna order. Our retreats to Trabuco on my week-ends off duty were stimulating and sustaining in a time of troubles. However the message and the personal influence there was too urgent and too intense. Jeannette got caught up in it and it had an unsettling effect on her stability for a time.

Then came the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. When we learned what those two little bombs did to a defenseless civilian population I confess that I gave thanks that I had had no part in the military effort that had perpetrated those atrocities. It was obvious that the second bombing, at least, was unjustifiable.

Then it was discovered that the Japanese were ready to end the war before the first A-bomb was dropped on them. All we would have had to do was to let them save face a little as they surrendered. President Roosevelt's bluster for Unconditional Surrender was intended to be revenge for the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor which caused us to lose face so badly. But his reiterated demand for unconditional surrender prolonged the war. Then a couple of young historians, one of whom I knew, a conscientious objector, wrote books telling the truth about Pearl Harbor. I am unable to become proud of my country's military behavior. The Marshall Plan and perhaps the occupation of Japan come closest to being praiseworthy.

Let me resume the story of my spiritual search at the point where I had to choose my vocation. Which one of the 5 ambitions was I to follow? From my parents, my church and school I had derived a concept of the purpose of life, at least for me. It seemed clear to me that that purpose is to enjoy learning and serving, that is, to live so that one has an ameliorative effect on fellow living beings. My father's example in this made a great impression on me. And he must have enjoyed it. He laughed a lot, even in his sleep, and he never complained. So I knew I wanted to work with people and with persons' problems, and that I wanted the power to be effective as in an authoritative position.

So the next question was what did I most want to learn? I wanted most to know as much as possible about human nature. What is human nature? How does it behave and why? So that is why I studied medicine, to be a general practitioner of all that I could learn.

Now notice how all of these purposes and idealistic callings made possible for me the conscious acceptance of the rigorous discipline, academic discipline and self-discipline, hard work, long hours and asceticism necessary to learn as much as possible in a premed course and in medical school and internship. As to asceticism, I already had excellent habits, but the most difficult part of it was celibacy. My religion helped here. Also I had observed that romantic entanglements were likely to be engulfing interruptions. I arrived in Ann Arbor a total complete stranger. Of all those thousands of faces and names not one could I expect to recognize. But in only 2 weeks I had a good circle of good friends by going to the young peoples' groups in the local churches on Sunday nights. If I had waited until my friendships had accumulated in a more haphazard manner just think how much more haphazard my self-discipline and asceticism would have been. So I chose Sundays for my days of rest, recreation, sociability, and I did no studying on Sundays. I still correspond with some of my friends of those student church circles.

It was in the depth of Great Depression that I was a student in Medical school. In the middle of my junior year my father had to write a letter to me telling me that his patients could not pay their doctor bills, his resources were exhausted, he could no longer send me my monthly checks, would I please find a way to earn my board and room. It was very difficult for him to say this. He had approved of my working for my board previously. but when I entered medical school he had said, "I want you to concentrate on learning all you can in medical school. Do not take time to work at any other job." Now he had to write, "Find one". But before that letter could reach me I received a telegram that my father was dead. He died by accident, falling down a flight of stairs. His life insurance benefits, including double indemnity, were paid promptly and all the family's financial problems were solved as if God had answered all his prayers. I did not have to quit medical school.

Observe, now, how my two life purposes, to learn and to serve, complemented and compensated each other. Thru all those years of

schooling I was not serving anyone but myself, but I certainly was learning, and that was engrossing enough, thrilling, really. And I was learning and being selfish in order to be able to serve later. As soon as my internship was completed I was so eager to have my own patients in my own practice that I joined a young surgeon in a large rural area. There I was so busy serving that I had no time for any more book-learning or clinic-learning. So I changed that by coming to Claremont in 1937, where I have had a much better chance to study and learn and serve and research and teach all at the same time. It has been a most abundant life.

I never had an identity crisis until I was 63 years old, lying in the hospital unquestionably due to die in a few weeks. But how had my concepts of God or of ultimate reality or of the nature of universe or of the meaning of mankind -- how had these concepts changed for me by the time I was supposed to be making ready to die? They had changed gradually, very gradually, usually by small steps, each step considered, compared, mulled over for long months and years. One of the first things I learned was to not be in a hurry to agree to anyone's answers. We all know that uncertainty and conflicts are uncomfortable to bear, but I was taught that a sign of maturity is the ability to tolerate conflict and uncertainty in the mind, to let them be there, to even savour them, relish them. The natural urgency is to resolve conflicts as quickly as possible and so become comfortable. But I accepted the teaching that it is a great mistake to do that, to make a premature resolution of a conflict by accepting some facile solution to a problem which is really not yet solvable. Look for more data, more evidence, more probable interpretations, a better model of the way things interact.

What were my sources and resources? For these deep philosophical, religious, personal problems and concepts some believe that meditation, prayer, contemplation and deep introspection are the appropriate prescription. Well, I have a place for that sort of inquiry. I do use it, of course. I am alone much of the time, so it operates. But I do not choose it as my major source of enlightenment. When I was lying on my death bed in the hospital in 1971 it was the only one available to me and I was not satisfied with it. By the way, I did not die. My life was surprisingly saved by the combined efforts of a very large team of doctors, nurses, and paramedics using for the first time new discoveries in medical-surgical nutritional technology. I escaped all complications and will never again have the same illness. People ask my opinion as to why my life was spared. I know they expect me to have some revelation as to how I am supposed to live to repay Providence for this miraculous reprieve, this additional gift of life. In reply I can only say, "For the life of me I cannot say why I am still here unless it is because I appreciate it so much. My tombstone should say 'He enjoyed it the most'".

Instead of the introspective method of searching for the deep philosophical and religious truths I prefer to pay attention to discoveries about the natural processes in our world. These discoveries are usually made by scientists using the scientific method and testing their theories against actual phenomena, whether in the radiant energies coming from outer space, or in

the behavior of matter and living organisms on earth, in our various environments. This includes, of course, students of human behavior and history, and animal behavior and evolution, whether they report their findings in science or literature, prose, drama or poetry. Beauty has always been very important to me.

For more than 20 years we had Great Books Discussion-type groups in our home. Some of them made important contributions to my thought, especially books written since 1945. When I started to teach biological sciences at Scripps College in 1960 I had to bring my knowledge up to date. This new knowledge was so fascinating, so exciting, so full of wonder and explanation that I found myself studying far, far into the nights to prepare myself for 8 a.m. lectures. And now that I can no longer serve I am compensating again by learning.

I told you that I wanted to learn all I could about human nature. I still do thrill to that objective. But the way I used to talk about it you would think that human nature was some thing to be known, an entity or a state of nature, a static quality or pattern to be discovered, identified, grasped, and defined. Then you could test a person and find out how true or how false he was to human nature, or how much he had or how much he lacked of it. And when you knew that, then you would know how to appeal to him, how to influence him, how to correct him, how to return him to the fold of decent, beautiful human nature. Not so, my friends. That static concept of human nature does not fit. Instead, in reality there are processes of change going on which we call human nature. We misuse that static term when we really mean an ongoing dynamic process of change. Our thinking is handicapped by our language which is full of static terms, making it difficult for us to conceive of ongoing developmental processes, where the only constant you can count upon is change. This is what I call the Divine Paradox: the only constant is change.

Finally, I don't think I want to say more about my present concepts and beliefs, or my experience of a so-called spiritual dimension in my nature. I will tell you why. If you are seeking spiritual growth I don't think it helps much for you to try to understand or intuit an other person's state of progress. Your quest must be your own. And as you are unique, so will your course among the stars be an uncharted one, at least in part. I have given up dependence on certain items of our religious creeds, however precious they may have been to me in former times. But I would not want you to give up such convictions of yours under any influence of mine. Likewise you should not adopt my concepts of what is real and true. Be willing to bet on your own. My reason for reticence is that I am convinced that in matters which cannot be proven we, all of us, believe what we need to believe. If you believe something you can't prove by demonstration or logical argument, it is because you want to believe it or because you need to believe it. For your present stage of development it is a necessity or an indispensable desideratum upon which you depend for your peace of mind or soul or sense of security or destiny, or to make sense of some intolerable uncertainty -- something important like

that. If I had to live a life of as much hardship, illness, bereavement, and frustration as most of our ancestors endured, I am sure I would also have believed in the rewards and compensations of a Heavenly existence after death, probably quite literally, as they apparently did. My good fortune has been such that I have had Heaven already, and it lingers on. Verily my cup runneth over.