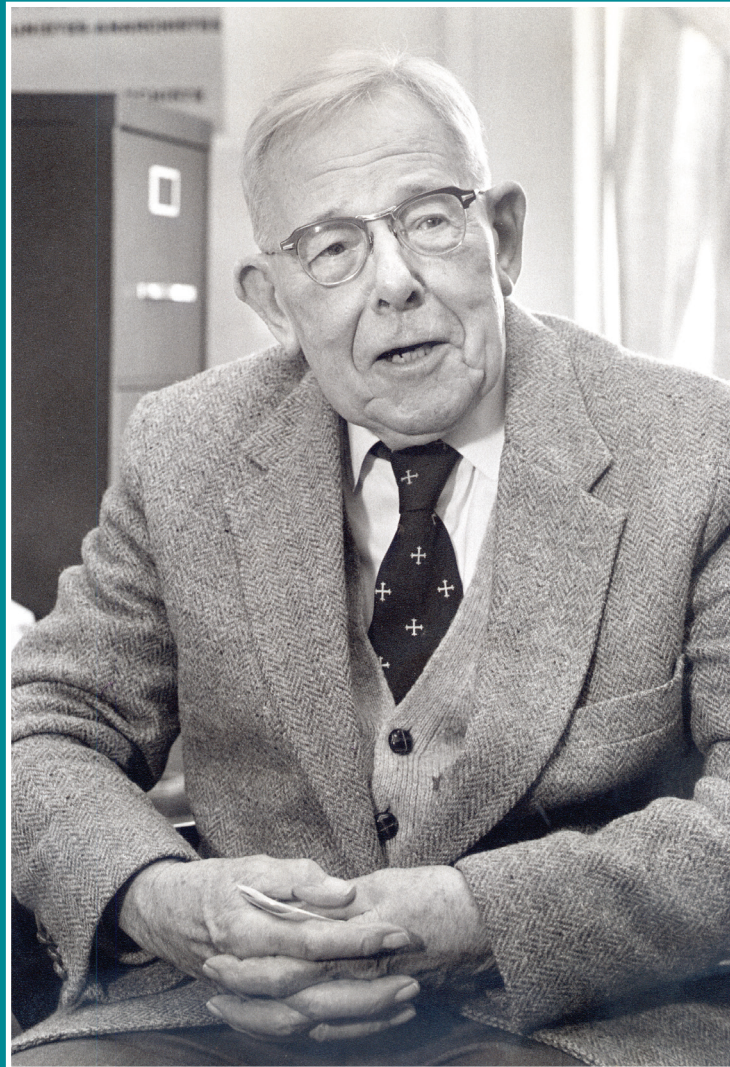


The Papers of F. G. Marcham: VI

Beliefs

Eight Essays and Nine Rules to Live By

By Frederick G. Marcham



Edited by John Marcham

The Internet-First University Press

Ithaca, New York

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Cover: Professor Marcham in his office in McGraw Hall, March 4, 1987,
in his 63rd year of teaching at Cornell University.

—*Charles Harrington, University Photos.*

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131 Upper Creek Rd., Freeville, N.Y. 13068 (607) 347-6633.

Printed in the United States of America

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This Volume

Beliefs contains seven numbered essays F. G. Marcham shared most often with friends and others, and an eighth, unnumbered essay on nature, delivered at Cornell's Adult University. He had the fourth essay set in type and printed as a small booklet.

He also prepared a list of nine rules to live by, which he shared with students who asked advice. The particular printing reproduced here was given out in December 1991 in connection with the final meeting of the History 151 course in English history and literature he had taught for forty years. A videotape of that class is among his materials in the Kroch Library at Cornell and is reproduced with the DVD associated with this project.

In his memoirs entitled "Cornell Notes" he explains in part how he came to write several of the essays. Pages from the "Notes" MSS that apply are included as appendices at the end of this volume. The Walton essay, he explains, grew out of a wish to improve the essay, "Nature, Beauty, and Western Man." He discusses his experience teaching alumni and other older attendees in the volume "On Teaching," pages 51-58.

Foreword

Frederick George Marcham, the Goldwin Smith professor of English history, emeritus, was a Mr. Chips for the 69 years he taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, between 1923 and his death in 1992.

The university asked me, his son, to assemble material that would reflect on his career as teacher, adviser to students, coach, faculty advocate, author, and mayor of Cayuga Heights for 32 years. I drew upon dozens of composition books, notes, unpublished manuscript pages, photographs, and other mementos he deposited in the Cornell archives or left me to sort, turn over to the archives, and control access to.

F. G. Marcham had already shown some of his nearly 2,000 manuscript pages of memoirs, essays, and other writing to students, colleagues, and other friends. After his death, the least complicated and expensive way to continue to make these available to people in Ithaca and at a distance was to arrange MS pages in logical volumes, xerograph, and offer them at cost or to be read in the archives in the Kroch Library at Cornell.

This year Professor J. Robert Cooke's Project for Creating an Open Access Paradigm for Scholarly Publishing began making available and online DVDs and other materials about and by notable Cornell professors, starting with the Nobel physicist Hans Bethe and President Emeritus Dale Corson.

Selections from the F. G. Marcham papers constitute six of the eleven elements of such a DVD on Professor Marcham, produced by The Internet-First University Press of Ithaca. The other five elements: A video introduction by Prof. Walter LaFeber and myself; The Photographs of Frederick G. Marcham; an audio of a talk on Job by Marcham; a video of his talk with the last meeting of a class in 1991, and an audio of his memorial service.

The pages of the six books contain the latest draft I could find among my father's papers. Little effort was made to change his occasional "English English" spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, except when needed to make a point clearer. Any changes of mine are shown by ellipses or within brackets. His own parenthetical remarks are either within parentheses or dashes.

Not among the six Internet-First University books are the following original xerographic volumes: Cromwell (six essays), Cayuga Heights Memories, and Governance at Cornell (an uncompleted MS); and two volumes, Cornell Notes 1967-1979 and Personal Memoirs, which are to be released later.

The Cornell Notes in particular are very frank descriptions of the struggles among professors, departments, college deans, and central administrators to govern a university. Why so frank? I asked a close colleague of my father's. "He wanted to leave his view of the story." Which fit with a remark that the constitutional historian in him once made, "I'd rather be secretary than chairman [of a group], to be sure the record is straight."

F. G. Marcham grew up in the slums of Reading, England, and won scholarships to a public (private secondary) school and after World War I to Oxford University.

“Last Lecture” in *On Teaching* gives a sense of his reverence for the documents that record the centuries-long movement in England toward the franchise and freedoms for the working class. His relations to working class advisees and his dogged activism on behalf of Cornell professors and in civic life attest to a concern for underdogs and with arbitrary authority.

Brief observations in the second Cornell Notes, under “His Role in the University,” express disappointment at being shunned for responsible positions by several presidents and deans. In later years he applied his administrative and persuasive energy to keeping Cayuga Heights a tight little village and chairing the History Department.

My editing draws on nearly six decades as a reporter and editor of newspapers, magazines, and books in Ithaca and elsewhere: the *Cornell Daily Sun*, *Ithaca Journal*, *Cornell Alumni News*, and a dozen previous books of Cornell and community history.

Particular thanks go to Bob Cooke and my grandson Liam Frederick Lowe of Etna for their help, especially with these newfangled computers, and to my wife, journalist Jane Haskins Marcham, for patience through the months this project has occupied.

December 2005

John Marcham

First Essay

I write this account of my views on human existence to clear my mind and satisfy my conscience. I write with humility, judging myself unable to say anything of weight because of my own deficiencies and of mankind's few gifts, rational and non-rational, for an enterprise of this sort. My words are therefore not intended as an argument, least of all as a challenge or contradiction to the thoughts and beliefs of others. Yet I have others in mind as I write—my relatives and friends. For them it is, I believe, appropriate that I make a record of my views so that they may, if they wish, know what creed I live by. Many of them have a religious faith and in some degree make their faith the foundation of their views on man's destiny and his capabilities. Aware of the difference between them and me, and stirred by the thought that they may be concerned about this difference, or at least interested in it, I shall try to set forth my views as clearly as possible.

I begin with stating my sense of the immensity of the universe. My mind can grasp in a feeble way the mere quantitative range from the atom to the vastness of outer space. I can "see all heaven in a grain of sand." I have a dim notion of the complexity of this physical universe and am awe-stricken by it. Such new knowledge as I gain in this matter adds to my sense of wonder. My fellow men have searched out and demonstrated the great range and complexity of this system of material things and I believe them capable of pushing their search still further.

The purpose of the creation, if such there was, or of the working and development of the universe, are, I believe, topics beyond the compass of man's intelligence and non-rational powers. I believe him capable of great feats of reason, intuition and imagination. But this, I believe, to be beyond him. That he should seek to infer a purpose I regard as natural; the human mind speculates and creates schemes while it is seeking factual knowledge. Were men to offer their views in the form of human theories rather than as divinely inspired religious creeds I would be ready to entertain them, perhaps tentatively to give one a priority over another. What troubles me about religions known to me is the certainty with which each asserts its concept of the purpose of the universe. To accept one or other of these views becomes a necessary act of faith for the believer. Indeed the concept of God as the creator, of a divinely appointed agent who carries the message of God's purpose, of man as the recipient of that message and the chosen beneficiary of the total creation, these are the central features of religions, the foundation on which they build their concepts of the duty of man.

Man is to me but one of many forms of life upon one of countless terrestrial bodies. That he is a privileged creature I find it impossible to believe. To me he has gifts that by human standards mark him off from other things within his range

Written about 1960.

of understanding. His power to distinguish the qualities of other things, when coupled with his own set of values, makes it appear that he is more gifted than they. As he sees it, birds build nests; and he builds structures many storeys high and of great complexity. Dogs bark; he speaks and writes. The fishes take their food and drink from the element around them; he cultivates the soil for his foodstuffs and brews his beverages. Other creatures have no arts that he is capable of discerning; he paints, makes music, and constructs philosophical systems. Between the works of man and the works of beasts there is a great difference. We as men are specially aware of the difference. But to me the difference is one of degree, not of kind. The plays of Shakespeare, the paintings of Leonardo, the satellites and atomic bombs are by human standards more subtle, more imaginative, and more complex than the toys and tools of other living things, but to me they are not evidence that man is a different kind of creature, only that his intellectual qualities are more highly developed. It is easy for me to believe that other living creatures—insects and trees, for example—have ways of living and perhaps of expressing themselves that are as diversified as mankind's, as individual as individual man's, and—in terms of another set of values—capable of being classified in some such manner as is implied by the human concept of beauty.

To many persons the notion that man is a privileged creature, the chief of God's creation, possessed of a soul, is an important part of their religion. It derives from their belief that they have learned by revelation the purpose of the universe. I do not wish to disparage the faith of others. That so many millions upon millions of persons have, down through the ages, been able to accept one or other of the great religions weighs heavily with me. Who am I to stand not only against the mass of mankind but against so many persons with powers of thought and imagination far exceeding my own? I do not question the faith of my fellows. But faith of this kind I do not have. My own powers allow me to say that I do not know, that I do not believe one or other of the accepted religious creeds.

My lack of faith of this sort, and my opinion that man is no more than an insignificant part of the creation, does not lessen my interest in and sense of obligation to my fellows. On the contrary I feel more strongly bound to them. Concern for their well-being is my chief interest. I say truly that I love my fellow men collectively and individually. I spend a large part of each day seeking to promote their happiness. My concept of the insignificance of man as part of the creation makes his lot all the more significant to his fellows. If his welfare is not the special concern of God, all the more reason that he himself should seek to promote it as best he can. Therefore I have been a teacher throughout my adult life, concerned equally to encourage students to develop their minds and bodies and to help them adapt themselves to life in college and to prepare themselves for life in the adult world. To me each student has been an individual, a fellow man, and while some have sought my help more than others, I can, I think, justly say that I have turned away from no one who has come to me. I see each of them not as the bearer of the divine imprint but as a fellow creature, one of my own kind, a man, the one creature with whose strengths and weaknesses, hopes and moments of despair—for these are strong in the young—I am able to sympathize. Concern for my fellows has led me to take a prominent part in the life of the faculty; the pleasure of human company encourages me to serve as a minor municipal official.

I say this not to boast but to show that my views regarding the lot of mankind has strengthened rather than lessened my sense of duty towards my fellows.

On the basis of my own experience and my knowledge as an historian I believe mankind to possess certain traits which appear to be ineradicable, though perhaps capable of some modification. Selfishness, or self centered-ness, is one of them; greed, a form of selfishness, is another. Hostility towards others is a third; fondness for acts of violence is a fourth; laziness is a fifth. These traits in some degree belong to almost everyone I have known or read about. I know that I have them myself. The person capable of love, that is of acting generously towards others, of taking pleasure in their company, above all of accepting other persons as they are and doing things to please them without ulterior motive, I regard as rare. The prospect that two such persons of opposite sex will meet and marry I judge to be altogether unusual. Hence in the family, as in other human relationships, for example the state, I believe, the common lot to be more or less unhappiness and conflict. Hence the disordered state of the human scene. Hence the tendency of many persons to withdraw into themselves.

To me some persons have at all times in human history tried to better the conduct of men towards one another. They have had some success for a time, now here, now there. I believe it to be the duty of all persons to give themselves to this service and I base my own life on the belief that such service itself provides happiness of the highest order. For me the greatest joy that man can have consists in the inner pleasures of observation and contemplation and the outer pleasure of serving his fellows. But few people, I believe, share this view. The task of converting any large proportion of mankind to this concept of joy seems to me to be the work of centuries, if not of millennia. I am reconciled to the view that mankind will always suffer, if not from war and other major man-made disasters, at least from the discomfort that now attends the personal relations of most individuals.

My interest in the welfare of mankind has not eclipsed my interest in the rest of the creation. The vastness and complexity of it arouses awe in me, as I have said, and increases the sense of my own littleness. But my mind is not content merely to stand in wonder. I am a man, an animal, living here in this little corner of this world. Around me are a thousand other kinds of life, each with its special form, each going its own way. These are my fellow creatures, to be observed for their color, shape, and movement. By sound and sight, smell and touch, sometimes even by taste, I seek to know them. Their beauty is daily a source of joy to me. And so is the beauty of inanimate things. All these form the world in which I live, of which I am happy to be a part. What the purpose of it is does not concern me because I do not believe myself capable of knowing it. Enough that for the present, with such qualities as I have, I can enjoy it and do something to help my fellow men enjoy it. At death I seek no more than the belief that I have lived according to this creed.

Second Essay

Ten years or so ago I wrote a short essay to state my views on man and his place in the universe. I did this because I felt uncomfortable when my wife and my sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren more or less suddenly seemed to become religious. In our family not one of us had gone to church on any other occasion but to attend a wedding or a funeral. Now Sunday church going became the rule. I found myself alone on Sunday mornings. My grandchildren asked why I did not join in the church going. I put them off with an easy answer. My wife's church-going friends asked questions. I felt uncomfortable at first. Then I thought it well to leave a record of my own beliefs and uncertainties. I found pleasure in putting together a six or seven page essay. I showed it to a friend or two. A number of persons of quite different religious faiths said that it expressed their own views. In one instance, I was told, it was read aloud in the local Unitarian Church.

I do not have a copy of that essay at hand as I sit down to write today and that is all to the good because I wish to write another statement of my views and to do so as far as possible *de novo*. Much has happened since I wrote the other essay. My wife is no longer a regular church goer, though she supports the local Congregational Church. My son John and his wife Jane have broken away from the same church in which they were for a few years leading figures. The reason for this I do not know though I assume that Jane found some aspect of the church's activities unbearable and made separation from the church a life and death issue for the whole family. Since I wrote my last essay my son David has married a devout, active Catholic. He has been absorbed into the pattern of the church's life. Their two children are being raised as Catholics. We rarely see this part of our family. Their religious views would, of course, not be a matter of controversy between us.

I myself have changed my views on man and the universe for reasons that I will try to explain later. The earlier statement of my views was intended to show that I did live by a creed and that the creed had, in my eyes, a coherence even though on a number of vital issues I had to admit that my response was a blank. My present views have, in my eyes, coherence. I have one or two areas of certainty where before I was blank. But I'll try to explain first what I regard as new in my attitude to life and living and work out of this into a general statement of my views.

Since 1963 I have had a new acquaintance with death. Early that year I faced for the space of a few hours the prospect that I would die before the night was over. For an hour I lay alone in a hospital room and thought about this. The articles of faith I had set forth in my first essay were a great joy to me during that hour.

Written December 31, 1969.

I was not afraid but relaxed and happy at the memory of my life and particularly of the people I had worked with and the world of nature I had enjoyed. About the time I wrote my first essay I said to myself that if I believed what I said there, I ought to be able to say to myself, "You are ready to die at any moment. You can fall down in this gutter and die now. Can you?" And I answered, "Yes." From time to time I put this question to myself. In this sense I was ready when I faced death on March 4, 1963.

In September 1963 my dearest friend died suddenly. A call came to me one morning. I could not believe it, and then when I did believe it I could not accept the fact that the word "dead" meant dead as I had previously understood it. Before, my view was that death was a mystery but that for myself I was satisfied to accept death as a final and complete obliteration of the person as a person. When I said, "Yes, I was ready to die in the gutter" I accepted the fact that death was the total end.

The deaths of my friend and of others close to me during the past six years have changed my view of death. I have no sense of certainty about my view, but my view of the mystery has new attitudes and a new faith. At first I simply refused to believe that my friends were gone. Dead, yes; cremated or buried. But that, I said to myself as millions of others have done, that doesn't mean the end. They are here by me, with me. I can talk to them, pray to them, pray for them. They are as much about as ever they were, perhaps more so. I was strong in believing this. My thoughts turned into these channels many times during the day. I never went to sleep without a farewell to the dead ones. My belief was blind faith, my own: not sustained by the faith of any church. It should have been diminished by the knowledge that, as I have said, from the beginning of time millions upon millions of people have thought the same thoughts. But it was not.

My faith in this matter was blind until the Summer of 1968. One day I drove out into the country by South Lansing. The morning was warm and sunny, the countryside was teeming with life, the trees now in full leaf, the birds singing. As I looked across this lovely scene I said to myself, "Here is energy, here is a force, here is life. I can see it, hear it, feel it." And then I thought, "Is this the only form that energy and life take in the universe, this life that I can see and hear. Surely the brain and the senses of man are only a puny instrument for measuring life. Man's capacity to weigh and count, to fit the visible universe into his own capacity for thought, cannot be much more than the capacity of any other animal to understand the universe." And so I had a vision of the universe as a great complex of forces, or forms of life, of which only one—the one that man knew and could measure—was available to my understanding, to my knowledge through my senses and my brain. I saw myself as a creature whose knowledge took the form dictated by senses and brain. Because of these limits—the human view of the universe and the human means of apprehending the universe—I, like other human beings, thought in terms of time, of a time sequence that moved forward by hours and days and years. I thought in terms of space, I apprehended the world around me in terms of colors and sounds, of heat and cold. These modes of apprehension I rejoiced in, they presented to me the beautiful scene I now saw before me. But how ridiculous it would be, I thought, to suppose that this little man-eyed, one-eyed view of the universe was everything; that because this is the way we human beings see and

feel things, there is no other way. And so my vision taught me in a moment or two that the life, the energy, the force that is the Universe had many forms besides the small and limited one that I could apprehend. And here I found confirmation for my earlier belief that my new view of death might well be true. The old view was the human view, built on man's concept of time, and space, and matter. I thought that my vision had brought me into harmony with life as it is.

Since that day my life has been entirely different. I have a sense of living in a new world, a world made up of the old way of life—time, places, work, family, friends, the daily, hourly beauty of sights and sounds—and a new way of life which sees all these familiar things as just one form of what is going on around me. I am sitting here writing, aware of this book, the pen, and my thoughts, and aware also that the things I cannot see and feel are no less a part of me. When I stand at the edge of the gorge behind Sibley Hall and look at the trees and hear the music of the water below, I have a sense of eternity, of space that flows outward for ever, of my friends living and dead who are part of me. I cannot find words to express this sense of my union with all creation, all the energy, the force, the life that exists, has existed, will exist, the continuum of being.

(Resumed January 1970.)

Where is God? This is God; this creation is God; God is this creation and I am part of God. I am part of the whole, the whole is partly in me. Nothing is significant for itself alone. It has a new significance because it is a part of everything. And so I look at it with new wonder. I see, I hear, I feel, the thing itself and yet in doing so I know that it is part of a great visible, audible, touchable whole, and this whole is no more than one expression of all the forces that are the Creation.

I cannot find words to carry further my sense of what I know or apprehend. I can go on to say that my new view brings me great joy and serenity and that in a new sense I regard myself as part of the Creation. Looking out from my favorite spot behind Sibley Hall and seeing down into the gorge I have a sense of being inside the scene, an equal part with the trees, the rocks, and the water. They are my companions, my kin.

The exhilaration that comes from communion with all that is around me is a kind of worship. I am happy. I am grateful for the vision. I wish to give thanks to God, to God whom I can conceive for the present only as the totality of the Creation. I have the wish to thank God; my mind uses the words I learned as a child when I went regularly out of duty to services daily in the Chapel of my school, Christ's Hospital. Daily for five years I recited the service of the Church of England, spoke the Psalms, and sang the hymns. The words of prayer, psalms and hymns are carved into my memory. They serve me now as I speak to this Creator, this God, of which I feel myself to be a part.

So far I have spoken almost exclusively about my relationship with the Creation, or particular manifestations of it. The world around me, as I have referred to it, has been the world of nature, as we call it. The leaf, the feather, the glistening branch, the sky—all these I look at when I am outdoors as though I were in a picture gallery.

But what of the world of man, the company of my fellows, my family, my colleagues, my students? They also are part of my daily life and my view of the relationship between them and me has undergone change in consequence of my concept of the Creation.

I see mankind, as I have done for many years, as a part of the Creation not different in kind from the rest but different in degree; a particular form of life. What our own gifts and failings are we human beings know. How they compare with those of other forms of life on this planet or elsewhere we do not know; nor does it matter, so long as we do not take it for granted that we are superior, the ultimate form of the Creation, and that the rest exists for us to use, consume, and bend to our will. Our capacity to think and to measure and to express ourselves in various ways has given us the means to control forms of life and matter in this planet, perhaps in others. In a way, perhaps, this capacity is the extravagance, the abnormality, the eccentricity of our species. Perhaps a kind of cancerous growth that dooms us.

As a teacher I dedicate my life to helping persons develop their minds and other means of knowing. The ability to think, to feel, to understand has been a great joy to me. If others seek the way of life that comes through the mind, the senses and the spirit I stand ready to help. This way of life I see as an attribute of the human species, one that can be developed in the individual to good ends, that is to the benefit of his fellows and the reasonable use of the world around him.

But while I see the human being as capable of using his particular gifts to good ends, almost everything that I see in human affairs around me points the other way. Human affairs are in disarray. Wars, the internal strife of nations, the class struggle, the generation gap, the conflict of black and white, of Arab and Jew, these are the great confrontations on the world scene, while overpopulation, drug addiction, organized crime, pollution are further large scale causes of human misery. Shall I believe these to be a continuing part of man's lot, like the exposure to disaster that goes with the life of other species? Shall I say that man, having inherited like other species his share of suffering has added to it or given it a particular twist because of the qualities of his mind and spirit? My response is a blank. I do not know. Man has created extraordinary machines for producing material things, some of which without question have the capacity for improving the well-being of mankind, others for doing immense harm. What man has not yet developed is the means for directing these machines towards good and away from harm. His political and social skills have failed him.

I can see no way out of this difficulty though I do and will do all in my power to take part in politics and to help my students to an understanding of what I believe to be the right use of political and social systems. Apart from this my only comfort is in the thought that by slow adaptation of the relationships of individual men and women, by a change in outlook of the individual upon the human scene, a way may open to solution of the larger problems of mankind.

Nature, Beauty, & Western Man

Almost seventy years ago I won a prize, the only prize I ever won for singing. I was 6 years old and attended a so-called Infants' School in England. I remember the scene well. I held my head up like a singing bird and sang the words of a version of one of Robert Burns' lyrics. The words, as best I remember them, often pass through my mind.

*Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doon
How can ye look so fresh and fair,
How can ye chant ye little birds,
And I sae weary, full of care*

*Ye'll break my heart, ye little birds
That wanton through the flowery thorn
Ye mind me of departed joys
Departed never to return.*

The words, I am sure meant nothing to me. If I was in any sense part of the song, I was a bird, not the melancholy Robert Burns.

When I had finished singing the teacher handed me a book, saying it was a prize. It was a pretty book with a blue and white cover; Charles Kingsley's *Heroes*, an adaptation for children of some Greek Myths. I took it home to show my parents. At home by accident I spilled ink over the blue and white cover. I was at wits end what to do and the next morning I crept back to school and as I handed the book to the teacher, I told her how the accident had happened. "But Fred," she said, "the book is yours. It is your prize." Such was my innocence I did not know what the word "prize" meant.

With something of the same innocence I come here today to speak about Western man and nature and beauty. I come as one who believes rather than as one who knows. I am an amateur rather than a professional. My colleagues in this program are professionals; they have spent their lives in the study of subjects related to the topics on which they will address you. What I have to say is the product of my senses rather than of my mind.

Today my mode of discussion will be to consider three major approaches by man to nature; the religious and mystical approach of primitive man, the scientific approach of post-primitive man and the approach by way of the senses which seeks

Written for Cornell's Adult University, summer 1974.

not knowledge but beauty, joy. My purpose is to develop discussion of the last of these approaches; indeed to present the view that cultivation of the approach to nature by way of the senses is a source of aesthetic pleasure and spiritual strength. I shall argue that the good life, insofar as it derives from man's contact with nature, calls upon the experiences of the mind and the senses. But first I must say a few amateur words about primitive man, his religion, and nature.

That primitive man stood in awe of nature we can well believe for he was at the mercy of the elements to a greater degree than we are. We know that he built his worship around the forces that he judged to be central to his life, sun, moon, fertility, the seasons. Scores of primitive legends and sagas, in their stories of the creation, mingle man's fate with forces and creatures, natural and unnatural. Man drew the world around him into his daily life through ritual and dance and storytelling.

The anthropologists say that among the Nuer people of Africa one "belief was in an Eden where man did not suffer from hunger because what later became his stomach lived a life of its own in the bush, where it fed on small insects. He did not have to labor to live. There was no desire and mating, for male and female organs were also not yet part of man and woman but lived apart from them and separate from one another. Man did not know how to beget or woman to bear. Man had no knowledge of fire and he did not know the spear.

Then all changed. The new order is sometimes presented as arising from a quarrel in the camp where hitherto all the animals had lived in friendship. One story is that fox persuaded mongoose to throw a club in elephant's face. The animals then separated; each went his own way, and began to live as they now live and to kill each other.

Stomach entered into man so that he is now always hungry. Elephant taught him how to pound millet so that he now satisfies his hunger by ceaseless labor. The sexual organs attached themselves to man and woman so that they now constantly desire each other. Mouse taught man how to beget and woman to bear. Dog brought fire to man. While fox was plotting to sow dissension among the beasts, he gave man the spear and taught him how to use it. It was then that man began to kill.

In stories such as these man is at one with other creatures, no less, no more than they, a simple sojourner upon the earth. I am reminded of an inscription in a Baltimore church: the date 1692. Addressing man it says, "You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and stars. You have a right to be here."

For some primitive peoples the relation with nature is warm and intimate. To the pygmies of the Ituri forest the forest itself was and is mother. The chief musician sings:

*Forest,
Thou art beautiful & always green and fresh and young.
As beautiful and green and young as a virgin,
That Muungu, the God of Gods hath made;*

Hath he, himself made.

Forest,

Thou art a mother to us, thine own children,

A mother who giveth us food and drink & shelter.

And weapons and medicines and all

Who giveth us life and strength & death & weakness too,

Who giveth all.

Of these and similar accounts of man's relations with features of the natural order, anthropologists say the total effect is to present a universe which is personal in several different senses. Physical forces are thought of as interwoven with the lives of persons. Things are not completely distinguished from persons and persons are not completely distinguished from their external environment. The universe responds to speech and music. It discerns the social order and intervenes to uphold it, as in the case of the African people called the Lela who believe that if a diviner effects a cure and the patient fails to pay his healer promptly for his services, early relapse or even a fatal complication of the illness will result.

The attitudes of primitive peoples towards the world of nature, however varied the characteristics of their beliefs, reflect the notion of a coherence in the pattern of the universe. The parts have order, symmetry. There are those parts which are right, benevolent, good. These constitute the true, the whole, the holy, the clean, the pure; the rest are to be avoided, the unclean, the impure, the evil. Mary Douglas, in her book *Purity and Danger* on which I have drawn heavily for some of these brief remarks, deals with the theme of the pure and the impure. She begins by speculating on the significance of the concept of "dirt" and shows that the world is meaningless without a concept of order. Cornell's Liberty Hyde Bailey, the famous horticulturalist, described a weed as a plant out of place. So here dirt is something that does not accord with our notion of order.

Ms. Douglas develops this theme with subtle distinctions and brings into play at one point a topic that is known to most of us: the elaborate lists of things that the Jews might and might not eat, as set forth in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. She argues that the creatures that might be eaten conformed to standards deemed appropriate to the element in which they lived. If they were land animals, they must be cud-chewing and clovenhoofed. If they were creatures of the air they must fly and have legs. If they lived in the water they must have scales and fins. The mode of locomotion also had significance. Among other things it helped to distinguish the edible locusts: those which hopped were acceptable; those which crawled were not. Persons who kept these dietary laws had a daily reminder of the divine order; of the wholeness, the holiness of God's creation.

The religious and other patterns of belief I have set forth in these few remarks I offer as examples of views of primitive man's place in nature. All of them, the most elementary and the most sophisticated, deal with the concept of an ordered universe in which man has an allotted place. His duty is to conform, to obey

the rules. What if he wished to study, to learn the laws of the universe and to go beyond dutiful acceptance of the patterns offered him by priest and prophet or the traditional beliefs of his people?

Primitive man had at least three reasons for trying to understand the rules or laws of nature: concern for his health, concern for his food, and concern for his general personal, perhaps spiritual well-being. He wished to find a means of knowing when seasonal foods might be available to him; when fish might swim out of the sea into the rivers, when migratory animals, such as reindeer, might move from one grazing area to another. So he began to keep records on a piece of bone or other hard material, in which he could show divisions marking the months or other seasons. By locating here and there on the crude calendar the heads of reindeer or of salmon he could indicate times of scarcity and plenty.

To make possible exact observations of what seemed to be the movements of the heavenly bodies, and then to keep abreast of the passage of time, he built such precise and elaborate observation posts, observatories, as Stonehenge. And he had another reason for these structures. There was widespread belief that heavenly bodies determined the pattern of each man's life, his destiny. The exact location of certain bodies at the time of birth gave the key. Once the astrologer had established these facts he could cast a horoscope. The accumulation of data concerning the heavenly bodies by ancient peoples is vast in its scope and striking in its accuracy. One branch of science was taking form.

Many of the earliest writings that have survived list remedies for ailments. Wise men had begun to study and record the laws of health and disease. By the time of Hippocrates the art of medicine had gone beyond the knowledge of remedies to the description of the methods by which the physician should approach the study of his patient and/or the principles by which he should attempt a cure. It speaks of "discoveries" made by physicians. "Many elegant discoveries have been made during a length of time and others will be found out if a person, possessed of the proper ability and knowing those discoveries which have been made, should proceed from them to prosecute his own investigation."

To Hippocrates medicine, the study of man in health and disease, was the basis of the study of nature. He says, "I think that one cannot know anything respecting nature from any other quarter than from medicine. Wherefore it appears to me necessary to every physician to be skilled in nature and strive to know, if he would perform his duties, what man is in relation to the articles of food and drink, and to his other occupations and what are the effects of each of them to every one." The knowledge he had he regarded as firm and sure: he contrasted it with, that which was occult and dubious.

I do not have the knowledge to present even a thumbnail sketch of Greek science. For my purpose today it is enough to call attention to basic techniques men used in their attempts to master the laws of nature. One was, as in the case of Aristotle, to accumulate information about the characteristics of the Universe, the heavenly bodies, plants, animals, and by classifying them and arranging them in patterns to give form and order to the world of nature. Differences in form and function among the things observed made possible this classifying or sorting out into categories.

Aristotle's method was meticulous: "With fishes furnished with gills, the gills in some cases are simple, in others duplicate; and the last gill in the direction of the body is always simple... Those that have the least number of gills have one gill on either side and this one duplicate, like the boar fish; others have two on either side, one simple one duplicate, like the Conger and the Scarus." And so he passes to other groups of fish as he goes the number of gills increases. He names the elops, the muraena, and the carp. "The dogfish," he says, "have all their gills double, five on a side, and the sword fish has eight double gills. So much," he concludes, "for the number of gills as found in fishes."

Alongside observation and classifying, another major technique was the abstract speculation we call mathematics. Men elaborated and refined its procedures as a form of logic, a branch of philosophy, and in due course learned how to relate mathematics to natural phenomena and so to develop the principles of physics and other branches of science.

My brief mention of these themes focuses attention at this point on man the thinker, the student of nature. He stands aside and seeks as an observer to learn the rules or laws of nature. His instruments are his capacity to observe and to count and measure—five gills as against three—and his capacity to construct logical systems. By categorizing and classifying natural objects he fits them into families and species; by logic he attempts to show the unifying physical principles of the whole. One part of the history of Western Man in the past 2,000 years is the record of his success in the study of nature. His investigations and the theories associated with them continued down the ages and as his knowledge grew he began to turn it to his own advantage. He saw nature as his servant; science was a key to nature's resources. He obeyed the command given in Genesis when God said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

As the study of nature and the universe continued, investigators refined their techniques and improved the laws of physics at the hands of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, and Newton. Their vast intellectual systems attempted to explain the fundamental principles that governed the universe. When Descartes built his own system on the thesis, "I think, therefore I am," he gave a text for the work of all of them.

On the other hand, Francis Bacon laid out a scheme for exhaustive study of the earth's resources; in his *New Atlantis*, 1620. There he spoke of a college "instituted for the interpreting of nature and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of man." "The end of our foundation," he said, "is the knowledge of causes and search motions of things and the enlarging of the "bounds of human empire." His program of research topics and procedures reads like a section from the catalog of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

In more modern times the work of scientists—physicists, chemists and biologists to name a few—has flourished mightily and the privileged ones of the Western World have benefitted from their dedication and skill. Man's health, his physical comfort, his means of communication, his opportunities for learning, for employment and for recreation, all have improved at a rapid rate. Research

proceeds on many fronts, and much is known. For a few years I worked from time to time in the American Museum of Natural History in New York and as I moved from one floor to another in that immense building and walked what seemed to be the miles of the endless corridors I thought that here Aristotle's study of nature had been completed. All nature had been labelled, classified, and filed away in jars and cases, drawers and cabinets.

As for the theorists of science it had seemed to the layman that they had mastered the fundamental truths. Thanks to the predecessors of Einstein and to Einstein himself the physical lairs of nature were known. A few formulae were enough to express them. To cap it all as it seems at first sight is Einstein's dictum, "The mystery of nature is its comprehensibility." The success of scientists in comprehending nature and the benefits science has brought us are not the only products of the mind of man in the world of nature. Beyond the material benefits, as my colleagues will show you, are pleasures and satisfaction that arise from contemplating the form and function of natural things, the beautiful effects of natural phenomena and the variety of creatures, great and small.

Sir Thomas Browne expressed this pleasure in his *Religio Medici* (1635), "Nothing in nature is purposeless. There are no grotesques in nature. In the most imperfect creatures and such as were not preserved in the ark but, having their seeds and principles in the womb of nature, are everywhere where the power of the Sun is; in these is the wisdom of god's hand discovered. Out of this rank Solomon chose the object of his admiration and indeed what reason may not go to school to the wisdom of bees, ants and spiders? What wise hand teacheth them to do, what reason cannot teach us?"

"Ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of nature—whales, elephants, dromedaries and camels. These I confess are the colossus and majestic pieces of her hand; but in these narrow engines there is more curious mathematics and the civility of these little citizens more neatly sets forth the wisdom of their maker." In the presentations of Professors Howard Evans and Jay Orear we too shall have cause to stand amazed at the civility of the little citizens, or denizens or particles of the world around us.

As I conclude these remarks about Western Man and science and nature, man the student of nature, it is I think appropriate to say that the concepts of science are so powerful in our culture that to a high degree we apprehend the world around us not as a scientist would but in terms of some of his techniques. I have not time to develop this theme in detail. For my purposes today it will be enough to call attention to our habit of classifying things and attaching a name to them. For most people this is the first act of recognition, for many it is the only one. We do it with the people around us. As we look out upon the Cornell Campus we are satisfied to know that the trees are oaks and beeches and elms and that the birds are robins and starlings and pigeons and sparrows.

To Linnaeus a violet was a plant that fell into a certain genus and species by virtue of the number and disposition of its parts, its anthers, petals, leaves and so forth. To Rousseau a violet was a thing of beauty, with fragrance. He saw it not as isolated, classified, recorded, depicted in a book, but alive and flourishing in its woodland setting, a living thing like himself. I will now for a time become a

follower of Rousseau and consider nature as the world around us, the setting in which we find ourselves, a panorama of objects which we may apprehend through our senses.

When Einstein said that the mystery of nature is its comprehensibility I think he meant not that all nature had been comprehended through the mind and reduced to formulae, nor that it could be so comprehended, but that he was amazed to find that some part of it, any part of it, could be sorted out and explained in terms or formulae created in the human mind. If this is what he meant, I agree fully with him; to turn the notion around I would say that it is the utmost arrogance for man to state that those aspects of the universe and nature that he apprehends are all that there is of the universe and nature. I agree that man is an animal of great intellectual powers but to me it is sacrilege to suppose that only that exists which he is capable of understanding.

I would rather argue the case that just as a dog, shall we say, has the capacity to comprehend the world around him within limits set by the characteristics of its mind, so man with much greater powers of comprehension, sees the world around him within certain limits imposed by his mind. I have a sense of mysteries lying beyond what man has comprehended or will comprehend. As Andrew Marvell said,

*And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.*

For the present let us consider the fact that in our approach to nature we do not need to depend only on our minds. We have sense, we see, hear, touch, smell, taste. Through our minds we learn of the order of nature and of its law. Through our senses we learn of the beauty of nature. Francis Bacon said, "Reason doth buckle and bow the mind to the nature of things" and as some of us have found when reading Mr. Chen Ying Yang's book much buckling and bowing of the mind was necessary. An approach to nature through the senses presents no such problem. The child and the illiterate have senses as keen as those of persons the most mature and sophisticated. The senses are open. All that is required of us is that when we approach nature we keep them open.

Henri Matisse speaks to this topic. "The effort to see things without distortion takes something like courage and this courage is essential to the artist who has to look at everything as though he saw it for the first time. He has to look at life as he did when he was a child. If he loses that capacity, he cannot express himself in an original, that is, a personal way."

All persons are capable of sense experience unless disease or accident, or a deficiency at birth has intervened to destroy sense organs. Yet not all persons use their senses to the same degree. What I have next to say bears upon the topic, what does it mean to see, to hear, to touch, to taste, to smell? I find no better way of answering this question than to quote extensively. I hope my quotations are to the point and that they come from a sufficiently wide range of sources to offer some descriptions that are new to you.

The sense we use most is seeing; in consequence much of what I have to say deals with this sense. First, a description of an artist in the act of seeing, Frank Chapman, eminent ornithologist writing about Louis Agassiz Fuertes. “Fuertes in possession of a freshly captured specimen of a bird which was “before unknown to him is for the time wholly beyond the reach of all sensations other than those occasioned by the specimen before him. His concentration annihilates his surroundings. Color, pattern, form, contour, minute details of structure, are all assimilated so completely that they become part of himself and they can be reproduced at any future time with amazing accuracy.”

I turn again to Matisse: “To see is itself a creative operation requiring an effort. Everything that we see in our daily lives is more or less distorted by acquired habits and this is more evident in an age like ours when cinema, posters, and magazines present us every day with a flood of ready-made images which are to the eye what prejudice is to the mind. To take an example, nothing is more difficult for a true painter to paint than a rose. Before he can do so he has to forget all the roses that were ever painted.”

Of what the artist sees when an object is before him for the first time Matisse speaks as follows. “The skyscrapers are not at all what you would expect from photographs. The sky begins after the tenth story because the masonry is eaten up by the light and its reflections take the materiality from the building. Seen from the street the skyscraper gives the sensation of a gradation of tones from the base to the top. The gradation of a tone, which evaporates in the sky, tailing on the softness of the celestial atmosphere with which it mingles gives the passerby a feeling of lightness which is completely unexpected by the European visitor. This lightness, which corresponds to a feeling of release, is quite beneficial in counterbalancing the overwhelming hyperactivity of the city.”

If seeing is a creative operation requiring an effort, what of hearing. Again I must resort to descriptions, but here I rely on the impressions of a person unusually sensitive to sound. The bird painter Fuertes was such a person. He had training in music and used it not only in memorizing bird songs but in reproducing them through his own lips. So successful was he in this that he could call almost any bird to him and used this as a means of studying them at close quarters. In this passage, dashed off as he sat in a tent on a Columbian mountainside, he told his wife, in Ithaca, New York, of an evening at a mountain inn:

“Last night, when we were all there and settled in the big room, the young woman asked us if we would like some music. Certainly, what? Well, her brother had picked up the art of playing the guitar. We haven’t seen any men around that worked like her brother, so, ‘How old is your brother, senorita?’ He’s just gone 5.”

“Well a little, somewhat old-looking, babyish boy was produced in a minute. She sat in a corner and held the guitar on her lap. The youngster stood beside her and played all on the neck of the guitar. He couldn’t reach around it, so his thumb was only a nuisance to him and he did the bass string with his little finger—never mind. I’ve heard the best guitar player in Bogota and perhaps a hundred others along the streets: this little kid played with perfect precision and had all the tricks of mute and thumb and hush and three fingers four time (that makes your whole inside dance with them) that any I ever heard could handle. Then he sang.

“Madge, I would have given anything in this world to have had you (just for that hour if you wished it) in this high square bare mud-floored room, lit by a candle, to see and hear the group of two in the corner. The girl was just setting. That youngster sang songs to the most moving and wild accompaniment and that were such perfect embodiment of romance that words were useless (although he had ‘em), and not one but was the purest, most intensely characteristic expression of these places and people you could possibly get. He had a curious trick of hushing, then singing out like a purple finch, with his head back, everything rich minor except for an occasional line—for a question in the major. Then that goat getting hush on the minor reply. His sister said she helped him with the words only. He sings with utter self-forgetfulness, with the open, tremulous manner. The thing is much bigger than the kid: how did it get into him. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry and was near both.”

Of such an experience T.S. Eliot wrote, “Music heard so deeply that it is not heard at all, but you are the music.”

What of tasting, smelling, touching? I wish I had time to explore these senses, as one well may, with Melville, Conrad and Walt Whitman. Instead I will tell a story, or let a participant tell the story, of what it meant to see. The participants are Louis Agassiz, the Harvard biologist and one time lecturer at Cornell, and Nathaniel Southgate Shaler. When Shaler asked to study biology under Agassiz, Agassiz gave him an elaborate oral examination. Languages, French, German, Latin, Greek and Italian, the classical writers, contemporary philosophy. “He was pleased too,” says Shaler, “to find that I had managed a lot of Greek, Latin and German poetry and had been trained with the sword.” Accordingly Agassiz arranged a bout between himself and his pupil-to-be and when this satisfied the professor, he led Shaler into the laboratory and assigned him a small pine table with a rusty tin pan upon it.

“When I sat me down before my tin pan, Agassiz brought me a small fish, placing it before me with the rather stern requirement that I should study it, but should on no account talk to any one concerning it, nor read anything relating to fishes, until I had his permission so to do. To my inquiry, ‘What shall I do?’ he said in effect: ‘Find out what you can without damaging the specimen; when I think that you have done the work I will question you.’ In the course of an hour I thought I had compassed that fish; it was rather an unsavory object, giving forth the stench of old alcohol, then loathsome to me, though in time I came to like it. Many of the scales were loosened so that they fell off. It appeared to me to be a case for a summary report, which I was anxious to make and get on to the next stage of the business. But Agassiz, though always within call, concerned himself no further with me that day, nor the next, nor for a week. At first, this neglect was distressing; but I saw that it was a game, for he was, as I discerned rather than saw, covertly watching me.

“So I set my wits to work upon the thing, and in the course of a hundred hours or so thought I had done much—a hundred times as much as seemed possible at the start. I got interested in finding out how the scales went in series, their shape, the form and placement of the teeth, etc. Finally, I felt full of the subject, and probably expressed it in my bearing; as for words about it then, there were none from my master except his cheery ‘Good morning.’ At length, on the

seventh day, came the question, 'Well?' and my disgorge of learning to him as he sat on the edge of my table puffing his cigar. At the end of the hour's telling, he swung off and away, saying: 'That is not right.' Here I began to think that, after all, perhaps the rules for scanning Latin verse were not the worst infliction in the world. Moreover, it was clear that he was playing a game with me to find if I were capable of doing hard, continuous work without the support of a teacher, and this stimulated me to labor. I went at the task anew, discarded my first notes, and in another week of ten hours a day labor I had results which astonished myself and satisfied him. Still there was no trace of praise in words or manner."

As Shaler went forward with his work he discovered two months later a condition regarding the placement of scales on a fish which he believed had escaped Agassiz.

"I had a malicious pleasure in exhibiting my 'find' to him, expecting to repay in part the humiliation which he had evidently tried to inflict on my conceit. To my question as to how the nondescript should be classified he said: 'My boy, there are now two of us who know that.'"

We have considered a few descriptions of use of the senses by persons whose ability to express themselves as painters or writers or biologists grew out of the need to see or hear exactly. For us the question is, what does this mean for the ordinary person?

First, that we have almost limitless opportunities to enjoy the world around us. We might argue that the complete man is he who seeks this enjoyment. We might use the analogy that the complete man puts his mind to full use, and, by walking, running, cycling, dancing and playing games, keeps his body active and in health. Not all the sense experiences that come in upon us, not all that we see, hear, taste, smell or touch, are pleasurable. But the pleasurable ones are there to be sought out and to be lingered over.

They must be sought out. True a brilliant sunset forces itself upon us. But not the beauty of a leaf or feather or the sound of rippling water, or the roughness of the bark of an oak tree. We must take time to find them and above all to let their beauty gradually unveil itself to us. With a leaf, as with a drawing of Rembrandt, a glance is not enough.

Time and concentration and the wish to be involved in the thing observed, these are part of the right approach whether we listen to a Chopin nocturne or look out upon a landscape. Indeed, if I were prescribing a pattern of action in this respect, as one might prescribe a pattern of physical training, I would suggest that the beginner spend five minutes a day in silent contemplation of a tree or flower or the light falling upon a building or garden. Objects that have been the most ordinary take on new life. In the words of Matisse, "Find joy in the sky, in the trees, in the flowers. There are flowers everywhere for those who wish to see them."

In an earlier part of my lecture I spoke of the effects upon our minds of the scientific element in our culture and argued that it is impossible for us to look out upon the world without applying to what we see and hear or feel the categories that science has drawn up. This thing is a bird, perhaps a chickadee, perhaps a black-capped chickadee, perhaps *parus atricapillus*; this thing is a car, a sedan, tan-colored, a Pontiac, 1971, four-door, engine no., etc.; this thing is a man,

white, middle aged, Southern accent, a doctor, a specialist in peripheral vascular diseases.

We treat time in the same way, I have to meet a client at 9 a.m. I am attending a committee meeting at 7:30—this report must be in the bosses' hands by 4:30, I shall be in Cleveland from the 24th to the 27th. We look at our days in terms of commitments such as these, at the things around us in terms of familiar categories. We are slaves to these patterns.

I myself am caught up in this way of life. I get up every weekday at 6:30 and at 6:45 on Sundays. I put some knock-about clothes on and go down to make my breakfast. At about 6:50 I take my wife a tray with a pot of tea, some milk and a cup and saucer, except that on Sundays the time is 7:10 and the tray also has a piece of buttered toast. I eat a light breakfast and exercise lightly for about 15 minutes. I wash and I shave and prepare coffee, which I share with my wife who has come down to breakfast at 7:50. I dress for the office and leave at about 8:20. I have a class at 9:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and other classes on other days. In the rest of the mornings I talk to students and colleagues.

And so in a tight pattern I live through the day until at 10:30, I go to bed. I have met my social and professional obligations. And from hour to hour I have been keenly aware of the clock; I have also kept in mind the different kinds of persons, undergraduates, graduates, alumni, colleagues, I have talked to and worked with during the day. This is one part of the world I live in.

I also live in another. When I get up I go to the window and examine the morning scene, the clouds, how the light falls on the pear tree this morning, the bird songs. When I have parked my car behind West Sibley Hall I look at West Hill across the valley; how bright is the landscape today, what are the cloud patterns? As I walk the two hundred yards to McGraw Hall I pass a dozen trees, a variety of tree forms—the columned English elm, the vase shaped American elm, to name the most striking. Many have branches so low that I can hold a leaf, drink in its greenness, or in winter look at its limb pattern. Before I go into McGraw Hall another landscape appears, reaching to the south, up the Inlet; and last of all it is important to look at the west face of Goldwin Smith Hall. In the early morning much of the light falling on it seems to be reflected from the clouds or the buildings on the west side of the quadrangle, from day to day the four great columns vary in the part they play in the pattern. The pigeons and the starlings are always busy. The starlings alone talk each morning during the winter. Sometimes a gull or two sails eastward or a cardinal or a peewee or a purple finch sings. And in the office there are other objects, no less fascinating. Students the records call them, but for our purposes they are human beings, in varying degrees of cheerfulness or concern or, sometimes, unconcern. What is the mood of this one today, does he wish to talk, or shall I do the talking first, down what paths does he wish to travel; how shall I help him, how far beneath the surface shall we try to go today.

These questions are questions the mind puts. But the senses are also at work, listening to the tone of voice, alert to degrees of enthusiasm, and watching the eyes and the facial and other body movements. As the mind works out its mode of approach—the challenging or encouraging words—so the senses maintain a

constant appraisal. The senses are as much involved as in the appreciation of a flower or landscape. In this situation, as elsewhere during the day, I live in the two worlds of mind and sense.

In my view these two worlds are complementary to one another. I believe, and I presented myself to you earlier as a believer, I believe that an equal concern for both of them contributes to the full life. I am not a psychiatrist, therefore I cannot discuss the question whether by cultivating this twofold approach to the world around us we are likely to become more stable persons. As for the spiritual benefits of living in these two worlds my first inclination is to remember what Sir Thomas Browne said when he considered making his own defense of the Christian faith. "Every man is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity. Many, from the ignorance of these maxims and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error and remain as trophies unto the enemies of truth."

But if my first inclination is to hide behind Sir Thomas Browne, my second is to be more bold. To approach nature through the senses is to identify oneself with nature in a special, personal way. He who studies nature to a degree, stands aside and as the saying is looks at nature objectively. He who uses his senses alone becomes part of nature. If you stand on the little platform across the road from Sibley Hall and look down into Fall Creek Gorge and simply see the trees and shrubs and flowers and listen to the waterfall you have a sense of being part of the scene, of having these living and moving things as your companions. The setting is the rocky gorge and this, joined with the rhythm of seasonal changes in the living things and the movement of the water, carries with it the image of eternity. And you, as a living creature enfolded by this scene, have your own intimations of eternity.

Before I am carried away into the realms of mysteries I should comment on one advantage, solid and demonstrable, of approaching nature through the senses. This is the approach of the great artists; they base their writings and paintings on exact observation. Thomas Carlyle went too far when he said, "What is Great poetry but exact observation." But true it is that if we are to enjoy works of art that present nature to us we must bring, to our reading and our contemplation of pictures, experiences no less profound than theirs. When Shakespeare says, "Rude winds have dashed the darling buds of May," he assumes that we too have walked around the garden after a spring storm and seen magnolia petals scattered on the grass. Let me illustrate the point more precisely.

You have in your hands the opening lines of a poem by John Skelton, an English poet of about the year 1500. Of Skelton I may say in parenthesis that a critic of him and his works, a lady no less, said no wonder Henry VIII turned out to be the monster he was for he had as tutor "filthy Skelton."

For our purposes Skelton was a nature poet, in this instance. In his mock lament on Philip Sparrow's death, he chose to begin with words from the Latin Mass for the Dead, intermingled with English words. He used these words, as you see in single staccato syllables. We might ask with Skelton, "Wherefore and Why, Why." None of Skelton's learned editors asked this question. They assumed, I suppose, that it was a quirk of his. But not so. The sparrow he spoke of was the

English sparrow, or as the English call it the house sparrow; with them as with us a common bird. It is one of the few English birds that has no true song; it utters quick, monosyllabic, unmusical chirps. You have heard these staccato sounds scores of times. What better way of beginning the poem than by mimicking the sparrow's brisk chatter. I might say with Professor Agassiz, "Now two of us know that."

And so to my final words. I have spoken of the mystery of nature. I have suggested that the experiences of the mind and of the senses leave part of nature unexplored. I believe that contemplation of the beauty of a flower carries with it a sense of mystery, of something over and above what is apparent to us. This quality of mystery is well conveyed by a sonnet by Joseph Blanco White.

TO NIGHT

*Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lively frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,

Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed.
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we then shun death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?*

PHILIP SPARROW

*Pla ce bo,
Who is there? Who?
Di le xi,
Dame Margery.
Fa, re, mi, mi,
Wherefore and why, why?
For the soul of Philip Sparrow,
That was late slain at Carow
Among the Nunnës Blake,
For that sweet soul's sake*

*And for all sparrows' souls
Set in our beadrolls,
Pater noster qui
With an Ave Mari,
And with the corner of a Creed,
The more shall be your meed.*

Third Essay

My life is happy and active, full of people, of work and of sights and sounds that are pleasing to me. I am now well into my seventy-seventh year and find it appropriate to do what I have done twice before; that is, to write a description of my views concerning the world around me. The first of these statements I wrote about 1960, the next in 1969. The second was in some matters more firm than the first, particularly as it expressed my concepts of the universe and of death. I have not recently read either of these earlier statements. As I write now I shall not refer to them except in a general way; I shall put down as best I can the thoughts that are in my mind now.

For me the most forceful things in my daily life are the consequence of the fact that I have continued to be a teacher and have had the good luck to be able to teach small classes ranging from one student to five or six. I have maintained a program of teaching from 9 to 1, five mornings a week, with an occasional break, say an hour every other day. The students have come to the office I use, by grace of [Prof.] Joel Silbey. We have discussed subjects that interested them and which fell somewhere within or near the range of my academic experience. Five of these groups—twenty-five students in all—have been so-called sections from the elementary course in Western Civilization, duly assigned to me, as to other assistants in the course, for a one hour period for each section a week. The others, about seventeen, also undergraduates, have come to me as volunteers, have stated a wish to study this or that, and in all instances except two, have sorted themselves out into groups of two to five. These students I see for two hours a week.

All of the forty-odd students have maintained simple, open, friendly relations with me, except two or three who have lost interest in studying. At no time has the age difference between us been a handicap as far as I can judge; rather I think it has been an asset. Had I been but one generation removed from them I might have represented a father figure, parental authority, or the conservatism of the establishment. As it has been, I believe they have seen me as a person outside the normal structure of the university, elderly of course, to a degree a scholar, but above all a person who has no other wish or commitment than to help them to learn whatever they have chosen to study.

So my mornings are filled with meetings with them, informal meetings where my task is to find in each of them a point of intellectual interest and then, by discussion or suggested reading or proposed topics for a paper, to enlarge upon the point of interest and lead the student into some weeks of reading, study, and writing. The friendliness of the relation between the students and me is one major source of pleasure to me; another is the experience of seeing them enrich their sensitivity to ideas and to modes of expression. It is not unusual for me to become aware that a student has for the first time felt the beauty of poetry or of

Written July 14, 1975.

a drawing or has understood that the effect of a law or of a judicial decision rests upon the interpretation of a single word. What could be more exciting than to have a student begin to wonder about the meaning of the word “mysticism,” and then on his own, with a name or two suggested here and there, go forward with months of reading and discussion and essay writing. Each student has his or her own mental gait, range of interest and appetite for study. My task is to treat each one as a special person and to fit my mode of operation to his or her characteristics.

I find this work endlessly satisfying and though I welcome an occasional break, so that I may catch up on other things, I go through the greater part of the year with a sense of exhilaration from day to day. Last summer, as I have written elsewhere, I took part in the Cornell Alumni University and found myself dealing with groups of students, about twenty strong, persons whose ages ranged from the middle 20’s to the 70’s and 80’s. Here the personal relations were more intense. People asked direct, searching questions about my opinions and my way of life. They reached out a hand to touch me. They wished me to join them in their social hour and at dinner. By the end of each day I felt emotionally and spiritually drained out. But the total experience—two weeks of slogging work separated by a week of relaxation—was one of the highlights of my teaching experience, in the sense that it established an immediacy of communication between the students of me; and this within three or four days. Almost at the moment we meet the barriers between us vanished, even though in most instances we were previously unknown to one another. We spoke from the head and the heart.

Personal relations of this kind are for the present the center of my life. How long I shall be able to go on in this manner I do not know. Should a failure in my health or an administrative decree end the present pattern I would be forced into a way of life that depended less on my associations with others and more on my ability to find new sources of satisfaction. These are of course available to me through my interests in nature and the arts. But I will not speculate on what may happen in a few months or a year or more. Sufficient unto the day is the joy thereof.

What does this have to do with my beliefs? How does this touch my attitude towards the universe and God and death? Not directly, perhaps. But as I recall in general terms what I have written before on these subjects my opinion is that in discussing them I spoke to a considerable degree of myself as an individual, separated out from my fellows, dependent on my own resources. I had a sense of my identity with God; I thought I had found a way of coming to terms with death. I had experienced the power that expresses itself in the universe. It was as though I had written upon the theme used by William Blake

*The angel that presided at my birth,
said “Little creature go,
and love, without the aid of anything on earth.”*

There is, as a foundation stone of my beliefs, the notion that each person must learn to live and be happy with himself or herself alone. However close the bonds with others, they cannot totally overcome the separateness of person. John

Donne said, "No man is an island." In a limited sense that is true. Almost all are members of a social system, tightly or loosely held together: to touch one is to touch others, if not all. But in a larger sense and with significance for a greater part of a person's life, "Every man is an island." He or she must find peace and the ultimate judgment from within. Thoughts such as these were basic to my beliefs in my earlier writings. The experiences of the past six years do not change the force of this notion for me. But they do say something more; they say, "Yes, that is so, but there's more to consider. Take joy in fellowship. Direct your life more towards others. Share your experiences with others." It is possible, while believing in one's identity with the creative forces of the universe, to draw deep pleasure from human relations and from the continuing, enveloping presence of the natural world.

My work with the Alumni University last summer had as its theme "Man, Nature, Beauty." For a year I prepared by reading, meditating and writing. I developed the topic so as to preach the merit, indeed the importance of apprehending nature through the senses. I moved back and forth between my own thoughts and the words of English and American nature poets and as I did so I gained a heightened appreciation of the natural scene. The experience of reading and writing on this subject and finally of communicating my own response to the beauty of nature to others, brought the natural world into my life more vividly than ever before. In lectures and discussions and walks outdoors, the students and I talked of colors and forms and sounds. We touched and smelled flowers. And as I looked again at the blue of a chicory flower or held up the branch of a locust tree to show the pattern of its leaves, I myself was more alert and perceptive. Their enjoyment of the event, the sense that many of them were taking pleasure in an experience that was new to them, added to my own joy.

If on the one hand my teaching experience has made me more conscious than in my earlier years on the worth to me of human friendship, so on the other a year's thought and attempts at creative expression regarding nature strengthened in me the belief that I must at every opportunity take into myself the shapes and colors, the sounds and odors of natural things.

I found it, as before, easy to move from the individual sense experience, say the appreciation of the form and color of a flower, to the meadow in which it grew, to the larger landscape, and so to the whole, not only as a total scene but as a part of continuing time. The flower assured me of the unity of all in space and time and was also proof of the all-pervading life force which is central to my views of the universe.

In our lectures and discussions at the Alumni University my colleagues set forth at length certain aspects of man's appreciation of nature which come to him by way of his mind. An anatomist and an atomic physicist talked of things animate and inanimate and showed the complexity and range of scientific knowledge. Their knowledge proved man's power to observe with precision, to measure material things, to arrange them in categories and project laws to explain the behavior of matter. I saw, as it were, the foundation stones of science and learned the simple formulae, such as $x = \frac{y}{z}$, by which, for some scientists, the sum of all forces at work in the universe may be explained. The scientists who were my colleagues left me convinced that the immense record of science was no more

than part of the story of the universe, and that not the most important part.

All in all the experiences of the last few years have deepened the beliefs I expressed in my second essay. The universe is a thing of beauty, a thing to wonder at; perhaps I should say that there is in it, hour by hour and day by day, beauty in many forms. It is woven into my waking life; my eyes bring me the light as it falls on a face or a building. My ears catch the sound of a child's voice or a bird's song. I smell the odor of the woods, I touch the surface of a leaf. Sight, I believe, brings me the most continuous pleasure, particularly when I look at the faces of those with whom I work and mingle during the day.

As I move about indoors and outdoors, I am in large part an observing mechanism. Things perceived, both large and small, flow into me. "Not I," said D.H. Lawrence, "but the wind," suggesting I suppose, that he was, like a shell, an echoer of sounds and forces outside himself. My own view of myself is not passive in this manner. The sense experiences that come to me do so because I seek them. I go about with my senses alert. I am ready to stop and look at a cloud or the shape of a leaf, or to watch patterns of movement as students walk across campus. This is my life; the outside world flowing into me. It is a continuing stream of sense awareness which I enjoy throughout the waking day; when I am alone thinking about my work and when I am talking to students and colleagues.

At the so-called round table discussions which ended the sessions of the Alumni University, we of the faculty faced the students and answered questions they put to us. The final question put to me was "Has your study of nature, beauty and man changed your views regarding the existence of a supreme being?" I answered that I had not reached the point where I could distinguish between the creator and the creation. To me they were one. I said that my constant wish was to enjoy the beauty of the creation and to feel a sense of unity with it. Was it appropriate to consider these attitudes of mine as a form of worship? My own answer is "Yes."

In my second essay I expressed the idea that God was in me and I was in God. What I now mean by this is that I am constantly aware of myself as acted upon by the universe, and of myself as identified with the animate and inanimate things around me. To stand in a wood is to feel the earth under my feet and to see the trees that are around me as living columns that create space patterns—before and behind and reaching up over me. Here the pace of life is slow but the force immense. The scene envelops me, yet it exists in me because my senses carry it to me.

In this essay I have used the word "Universe" with a special meaning. I am aware of the immensity of the astronomer's Universe, of billions upon billions of stars and planets and of galaxies hurtling away from one another into outer space. I have a stronger awareness of the opposite extreme; of the individual organisms, animate and inanimate, that can be broken down into smaller and smaller parts until they disappear into electric waves. A true concept of the universe should extend from one extreme to the other and must be in large part, I suppose, an intellectual concept. The mind conceives it. Only in rare instances does the universe come to me in this form. Rather, by "universe" I mean the world around me; what my senses bring to me, the leaf rather than the collection of vegetable cells, the night sky rather than the astronomer's infinity.

I believe that the world around us, and the processes by which it works are

accessible to the human mind only to a small degree; only in those aspects of experience that lend themselves to measurement, to arrangement in categories and to logical analysis. These things we may understand; what lies beyond may be in part apprehended through the senses. I cannot explain—that is, set forth in rational argument—my sense of identity with the rocks, the stream or the trees. To go much further, I cannot explain why, while I accept the fact of death as a physical experience, a change in the pattern of a collection of cells, I believe, that in a manner, beyond the capacity of the human mind to understand, the person continues to exist. To an extraordinary extent we are captives of our minds and of the intellectual structures our minds have created. The concepts of time, of space, and of matter are so powerful with us that we accept the notion of a beginning and an end, of the day that begins at midnight and ends the next midnight, of the continuing flow of time. “Time like an ever-rolling stream bears all her sons away.”

These and similar concepts are not enough for me. I am strongly convinced that death is a mere material event and that in some manner personality continues. I have a sense, renewed by meditation from day to day, that as I am still in touch with my living friends who have gone away, so I am with my friends who have died. The day is ill-spent when I do not summon up memories of them, and hope, indeed pray, for their happiness.

During the past year I have talked much about religion with two or three of my students at their request. One, a devout Christian, insists I am as much a Christian as he is; an anonymous Christian he calls me. But in truth it seems to me that I can claim to be no more than one who tries to hold together a standard concept of duty towards his fellows with a reverence for and joy in the world around him.

I am still concerned, as I was in my earlier essays, about the passions of mankind at large, and the war, violence, and human degradation and suffering that lie like a curse upon us. In the presence of continuing disasters I feel able to do no more than I can in the presence of the immensity of the universe. In either instance I might be appalled, shocked, overwhelmed. Rather, I see myself as a single figure in a relatively small landscape; the world immediately around me, the persons with whom I work from day to day. This is my scene of action. Here I must do by best.

Fourth Essay

Some Thoughts after Reading Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*

Let us suppose we are Izaak Walton and that we are living today. We decide to write *The Compleat Tennis Player, or the Active Man's Recreation*. What shall we put in it? Certainly, as Izaak did three centuries ago, we shall wish to give full, detailed description of equipment—kinds of racquets, balls, perhaps shoes and clothing. We shall talk about the problems associated with different playing surfaces; grass, clay, wood. Then how to execute certain strokes: the service, forehand, backhand, lob, smash, volley. Elementary rules of strategy might come next; where to stand for different kinds of service, when to come to the net, how best to move in singles and doubles. So far we are writing a how-to book.

We might wish to do more and answer the question, "Why play tennis?" First, perhaps a brief history of the game and next the advantages of playing tennis—improvements in general health and bodily coordination, and the opportunity to meet others on a friendly basis. Last a few words about the game as an opportunity for improving one's emotional control, with a footnote on [Ilie] Nastasé. Comments of this kind would round out our *Compleat Tennis Player* and make it a worthy companion to set beside the many other books of this kind on golf, skiing, bowling, and so forth which crowd the paperback book shelves.

In writing a book of this kind it is difficult to choose what to include beyond the bare essentials. Few are the topics which call for a general cosmic or philosophical treatment. Perhaps it might be necessary to deal with a wide range of subjects in a book on Yoga or Transcendental Meditation. But even a book on Rembrandt, or Bach, or the economy, or the civil war, or the theater of the absurd would have a relatively narrow cultural framework, according to the sophistication of the writer or the supposed sophistication of the audience. Why is this so?

Why, when I wrote a book on the work of [artist and naturalist Louis Agassiz] Fuertes, his paintings and drawings of birds, and his letters, why was there no general discussion of bird painting or of the art of letter writing? The editor and publisher insisted that the book comprise a selection of watercolors and drawings, a selection of letters and a short introductory essay on the personality and achievements of Fuertes. These items and these alone they regarded as the appropriate apparatus for such a book. As I interpret their attitude, and I acknowledge that they were persons of great experience in supervising the production of an important book, they judged that this was how people liked their books, because this was how they looked at the world around them. They saw it in terms of items of interest, or, as we might say, separate spheres of interest.

Written in 1977. Its background is explained in appendix B to this volume.

Such a way of looking at life might cast the man and the woman in a series of roles. The man as husband and father; the woman as wife and mother. The man as business or professional man, the woman with a business or professional role, or active in community work. Either man or woman as worshipper, thinker, reader, active in sports, a theater goer. Some persons do see themselves as living their lives from day to day if not from hour to hour in different roles such as these. For them each role has its limits, each its own standard of values. A good bargain is a bargain that meets certain standards in the field of business. A good game of golf is a good game of golf: what more need be said. If human experience is viewed in these terms, as spheres of interest, separate and self-contained, then our book on tennis, with its limits on what is appropriate to such a book, is symbolic of an attitude towards life.

Later I wish to argue that the good life is one that consists not of separate areas of interest; rather that it rests upon coherence; that the life of the body is interrelated with the life of the spirit and the mind. For the Compleat Angler or Tennis Player, I shall substitute the Compleat Nature Lover. I shall try to show how, for me at least, the constant awareness of the natural world and the enjoyment of its beauty penetrate and strengthen the life of the spirit. I believe that discussion of Walton's *Compleat Angler* from this point of view—the relation of his love of angling to his awareness of the world around him, of his fellow men, and of the universe—will give me a basis for offering my own ideas.

If in the manner of the Compleat Tennis Player we go to Walton for a description of the angler's equipment and techniques we find information in abundance, "Let your rod be light and very gentle. I take the best to be of two pieces. And let not your line exceed (especially for two or three links next to the hook) I say not exceed three or four hairs at the most, though you may fish a little stronger in the upper part of your line. And before you begin to angle cast to have the wind on your back and the sun, if it shines, to be before you, and to fish down stream." The last words are heresy to most modern trout fishermen.

Walton is strong on baits and lures. He tells us when to use "a black snail with his belly slit to show the white, or a piece of soft cheese, sometimes a worm, or any kind of fly, as the antfly, the flesh fly, or wall fly, or the dor or beetle, the grasshopper or young bumble-bee." He also says much about artificial flies; how to make them and how to use them. He describes a wide variety of materials for fly-tying—wool of all colors, black silk, feathers from a red capon, a partridge, a buzzard, a black drake, even a peacock. In all he lists twelve flies and concludes, "thus you have a jury of flies, likely to betray and condemn all the trouts in the river."

And he gives us advice on how to catch fish; say the pike. "I will tell you how to catch the pike. One method; if you bait your hook with live fish or frogs and in a windy day, fasten them thus, to a bough or bundle of straw and by the help of the wind you can get them to move across a pond or mere, and you are likely to stand still on the shore and see sport presently, if there be any store of pikes." In this connection Walton made his famous comment on fixing a frog to a hook; "use him as if you love him."

Once caught, the fish should be cooked. He tells us how to cook the chub. "First scale him and then wash him clean, then take out his guts. Put some sweet

herbs into his belly; then tie him with two or three splinters to a spit and roast him, basted often and well with vinegar or rather with verjuice and butter, with good share of butter mixed with it.”

After cooking, eating. “Now let us go to an honest alehouse, where we may have a cup of good barley wine and sing ‘Old Rose’ and all of us rejoice together.” There Walton and his friends would enjoy their meal and take pleasure in the “cleanly room, with lavender in the window and twenty ballads strung about the wall.” So far we have a good how-to book on angling.

Throughout his discussion of these practical topics Walton has had his eyes on the scenery. He begins his story with the angler stretching his legs on Tottenham Hill on a “fine, fresh cool morning,” as he hurries to catch up with the hunter and the falconer who are to be his companions. During the journey of the three companions and particularly when the angler is giving lessons to the falconer, Walton noted that they are passing a sycamore, a beech tree and other plants; at one point they sat under a high honeysuckle hedge and looked out upon a primrose hill. When they took shelter from a storm, the angler says “see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay and earth smells as sweetly too.”

Here the angler and his apprentice fisherman mused; “No life is so happy and so pleasant as the life of a well governed angler; for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip banks, hear the birds sing and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent, silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us.”

In settings of this kind the two companions sometimes met a milkmaid and bargained with her for a song. And so heard the words of Christopher Marlowe; which began

*Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, or hills, or field,
Or woods, or steeper mountains yield.*

At dinner, song and verse were part of the jollity that celebrated the catching and eating of the six-pound trout.

Walton moved a little further afield in talking about kinds of fishes. He is part naturalist, part storyteller. He names the different species, tells where they are to be found in stream or pond, what they eat and how to fish for them. His nature story is sometimes far-fetched, as when he cites “learned Gesner” for the theory that “some pikes are bred of a weed called pickerel weed.” He also read in Gesner of a Polonian gentleman who had seen “two young geese in the belly a pike.” For other parts of his discourse on fishing Walton ranges far among the literature of the ancients and of his contemporaries. From the Greeks and the Romans he cites Aristotle, Xenophon, Ausonius, and Pliny. And, he says, “You shall read in Seneca (Natural Questions, Book 3, Chapter 17) that the ancients were so curious to (particular about) the newness (freshness) of their fish that they seemed not

new enough that was not put alive into the guest's hand." Among those writers who lived within a century of his own time, Walton cited Montaigne.

To this point the *Compleat Angler* is a book of practical advice whose story has a vivid setting in outdoor scenes and in the warmth of the alehouse. The literary associations Walton establishes gives the book a place in contemporary culture. Indeed, the range of the practical information he gives, the richness of his descriptions and the authors he calls to his aid in his praise of angling all combine to make the book a work of scholarship.

And yet these qualities are the lesser part of his address to the reader. He has yet to reach the crux of his argument.

He gave a hint of his purpose when he discussed the fishes and assigned moral qualities to some of them. He produced on the one hand "the adulterous sargus that changes wives every day" and on the other "the chaste cantharus," that "never loves any but his own dear wife." To give the advantage to morality Walton presented "the adonis, a loving innocent fish" and said that "for chaste love the mullet hath no peer."

Of the relationship between the angling and human conduct he had much to say and produced a gallery of eminent men, most notably Dr. Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's in London. "I say this good old man was a dear lover and constant practiser of angling as any age can produce; and his custom was to spend, besides his fixed hours of prayer, a tenth part of his time in angling." He died aged 95. "Tis said that angling and temperance were great causes of his blessings and I wish the like to all that imitate him and love the memory of so good a man."

And so to the ultimate justification of angling, its place in the Divine purpose. The title page of the book gave what was, in Walton's day, the standard mode of argument. It read, *The Compleat Angler, or Contemplative Man's Recreation*; Simon Peter said, "I go a-fishing." They said, "We also will go with thee." John 21.3. Walton searched the Scriptures for references to fishing. He cited at one extreme a reference to fishhooks in the Book of Amos; at the other the presence, indeed the eminence among Christ's apostles of four fishermen. He made reference to the affairs of his own day and showed himself to be an opponent of Cromwell's Commonwealth, when, in development of his main theme, he remarked that "Moses appointed fish to be the chief diet of the best Commonwealth that ever yet was." And for his final point he brought in Christ himself. "And for the lawfulness of angling, it may very well be maintained by Our Saviour's bidding St. Peter cast his hook into the water to catch a fish for money to pay tribute to Caesar."

The Scriptures helped Walton to take his argument back to its beginning. In one of the angler's earliest statements to his companions, on that first day when they walked up Tottenham Hill, he had said, "And now for water, the element that I trade in. The water is the eldest daughter of the creation, the element upon which the spirit of God first did move, the element which God commanded to bring forth living creatures abundantly." He used scriptural passages to join human affairs and an image or scene associated with water. He quoted the lover in the Song of Solomon whose beloved "had eyes like the fish-pools of Heshbon." He told of the children of Israel who, "having in a sad condition banished all mirth and music from their pensive hearts, and having hung up their mute harps upon the willow

trees by the rivers of Babylon, sat down upon those banks bemoaning the ruins of Sion and contemplating their own sad condition.” The Psalmist David served Walton’s purpose well when he said, “they that occupy themselves in deep waters see the wonderful works of God.”

Walton had presented an angler who was complete in the sense that his art had a place in the total system of the universe. Knowledge sacred and profane linked angling not only to the history and culture of the Western world but to the Divine Revelation. Or to put it another way, Walton had a view of the world around him so inclusive and coherent that when he wrote on angling he thought it necessary to bring the subject within the structure of the whole system. He lived at a time and in a culture where most persons saw their world in this single and coherent manner.

Izaak’s world view and mine are far apart. My own experience of the world around me distinguishes two major spheres of interest, the social and the spiritual.

In the social sphere I am the member of a family and I enjoy the company of friends. I share my professional and business life and my recreation with others. The commonest scenes are at home, or at lunch with a few colleagues, or at a committee meeting, or in a small class in my office with half a dozen students. I am with my fellows. Love, affection, loyalty, duty, compassion and mutual respect join us. With them I experience joy, grief, achievement, and frustration and despair and hope; all the emotions that flow from the interchange of person and person. In these relations with others I and my fellows share a code of conduct, a sense of what is just, true, generous, tolerant, a matter of conscience. By these standards and the actions they give rise to we are bound to one another. Of this bond John Donne said, “No man is an island, entire of itself;” words which many have repeated and which I shall try to modify later.

By the spiritual sphere I mean in part that range of interests and activities that is built around the words, “I believe.” The life of the spirit is, I repeat, in part the attempt to understand one’s place in the universe. This is a region of awe and wonder and reverence and worship and prayer. This is not the region of personal emotion, of interpersonal loyalties. The life of the spirit, defined in terms of man’s worship of a Divine Being, has been for many a total, all absorbing experience. As monks and nuns, as mystics and hermits, they have withdrawn themselves from the material world. They have been the truly religious, the holy men and women, the prophets. They have known their Creator.

I myself can go no farther down this road of the spirit than to have a sense of awe, wonder, and reverence as I look around me. The faces of my fellows, the world of nature as I see it on this earth, the vast reaches of the heavenly bodies and outer space stir in me a strong feeling of belonging to a varied, mighty and on-going universe, the Creation. For me one meaning of the word “spiritual” applies to this feeling of belonging.

Another meaning for the word I find in the notion that all things that elevate the spirit are spiritual. Music, the graphic arts, literature and the dance elevate, that is give pleasure to the spirit. Beethoven, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Shakespeare, all the world’s other great artists have translated human experience

into works of beauty that call forth a spiritual response, a sense of having seen or heard or read a perfect expression of man's creativity. Who is not moved by Shakespeare's words:

*Shall I compare thee to a summer day;
Thou art more lovely and more temperate?*

Or Milton's: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where the immortal garland is to be won, not without heat and dust?"

Joy in the works of beauty man has created and wonder at the forces that shape the universe comprise for me the spiritual sphere. Together the two spheres, the spiritual and the social, occupy much of my daily life; hour by hour I pass from the one to the other. As I do so I am aware that they are interrelated: the half hour I spend in meditation or in reading the Psalms makes me a more sensitive and considerate counselor; what I learn about human nature from discussions with students adds to my appreciation of a novel or a play. And as I meet students in my small classes, I am aware of our social relationship; we are fellows, friends, enquirers, learners. What we do is spiritually elevating; we lead one another on to the formulation of new opinions, and through the interchange of ideas we find new beauty in our reading. But interrelated as the two spheres are, they do not fill up my life; they do not form a whole. There is not, as there was with Walton, an over-arching framework such as he found in his Christian view of God's work and purpose.

For me the enjoyment of nature brings into my life unity and coherence; it complements my social and spiritual activities; it works its way into the interstices of my daily routine.

There are many ways of enjoying nature. The chief in the eyes of most people is to understand it. In this endeavor the human race has been busy for many thousands of years; from early prehistoric man, who measured the seasons and who knew when the plants yielded their fruits and the animals brought forth their young, to our present day scientists and the flights to the moon. Man has wished to count and measure, to make categories of natural objects, to search for the laws that seem to govern nature. When we talk of these topics and this approach we are in the field of science. For many persons, to understand natural things, to know their names and categories, and what makes them what they are is enough. It is an adventure in learning and appreciation, it has its own rewards, its own exhilaration, its own beauty. For everyone, everyone who has an interest in nature, the understanding of nature is part of the enjoyment. I do not need to prove that this understanding, however weak and defective, has from the earliest times had vigorous effect upon the social and spiritual life of mankind. One has only to remember, for example, the dietary laws of the Jewish people, Stonehenge, and the controversies over witchcraft.

As for myself, I like to set beside the word "understand" the word "apprehend." By apprehend I mean "be aware of;" understanding is of course one way of being

aware of nature, but my concern at this point is with other forms of awareness, above all the awareness that comes through the senses.

This form of awareness has little to add to understanding if it is the mere surface appreciation of natural things; the brief contemplation of a sunset, a minute's silence beside a waterfall, a glance through field glasses at a passing bird in order to determine its species. What I have in mind is the active and continuous search for beauty in nature, in things large and small, near and far, in a shining landscape or a muddy ditch. It is the enjoyment of things heard as well as seen, things smelled and tasted and touched. It is enjoyment hour by hour, day by day. As against understanding, this mode of apprehending has the merit of requiring no use of the mind. The young child, the backward child, the blind or deaf child or adult has as much, perhaps more, capacity for enjoying the beauty of nature than the most learned.

All we need are five senses. But we must use them. We must be active and alert and seek beauty; not wait for it to find us. D. H. Lawrence, speaking of his gifts as a writer, said, "Not I, but the wind;" as if to imply at the creative spirit, an external force, used him as an echoing chamber. This will not do for me. Great works of art do not bring their beauty to us; we must seek it, perhaps seek it many times, before its full force comes upon us. And so it is with the beauties of nature. We must seek them.

And as we seek we must remember that few persons use their senses except in quite a limited way. The artist sees, the musician hears, the writer sometimes alert to the world around him, at least to the surface aspects of that world; the sculptor has an awareness of form and space and a sense of touch. As for the rest of us, perhaps only one in ten thousand uses his or her senses to as much as a tenth of their capacity.

To enjoy nature and to bring the art of enjoyment to bear upon our social and spiritual life we must cultivate our senses consciously, as we would, by hearing and hearing and hearing again, cultivate our appreciation of a poem or a piece of music. The most gifted of artists bear testimony to the concentration, the effort, they put into the act of seeing. Hear Matisse: To see is itself a creative operation requiring an effort. Everything that we see in our daily lives is more or less distorted by acquired habits, and this is more evident in an age like ours when cinema, posters and magazines present us every day with a flood of ready made images which are to the eye what prejudice is to the mind. To take an example. Nothing is more difficult for a true painter to paint than a rose. Before he can do so he has to forget all the roses that were ever painted. He has to look at life as he did when he was a child."

If we follow this example we gain a new awareness of cloud forms, we catch the exact phrasing of a bird's song, we are alert to the shape of trees, to patterns of movement among people in the streets, to the feel of grass under our feet, to faces, joyous, eager, alarmed, in agony, or burdened with worry or despair. Experiences of this kind are around us all the time, a gallery open to the senses.

To be aware of the everpresent beauty of things is the first step towards the enjoyment of nature. The next is to believe that the observer of nature is not an observer but part of the thing observed. The English painter Constable said, "We

live in a landscape.” For me the experience is more than that. The landscape is an assemblage of things animate and inanimate. I am one of the animate things, no more and no less a thing than the other living creatures—plants and animals. Their life cycles move to a rhythm different from mine. And yet it is, like mine, testimony to the continuity of things, to a force, to the life force shall we call it, that expresses itself through them as it does through me. And as it once did in the forces that created the earth on which I stand.

For me the act of feeling myself to be part of the natural scene is difficult to share with others. I have described a single incident as follows. “To stand in a wood is to feel the earth under my feet and to see trees that are around me as living columns that create space patterns, before and behind and reaching up over me. Here the pace of life appears to be slow, but the force immense. The scene envelops me and yet it exists in me because my senses carry it to me.”

I associate experiences of this kind, and the attitude towards life associated with them, with a philosophy that is in some respects at odds with John Donne’s phrase, “No man is an island.” In a sense Donne’s words are true. We are members of a social system—family, friends, fellow worshippers, colleagues, business associates. Social bonds hold us tightly or loosely together. Touch one of us and you touch others, if not all.

But in a larger sense, and with significance for some of the most important events in life, every man and woman is an island. He or she must find peace and the ultimate judgment from within. He or she will not be happy with others if he or she has not learned to be happy alone. This has been my experience. My life for more than fifty years has mingled from day to day more or less closely with the lives of persons young and old, men and women, thousands upon thousands. Yet when I have faced the issues of life and death for myself and for my family and my friends, and when I have found it necessary to decide a matter of great principle, I have been aware of myself as a person standing alone, an island. And in lesser matters there is a point beyond which you cannot commingle your life with the lives of others, however close to them you may be by marriage or blood or affection. Beyond that point you are alone.

But why associate aloneness with the sense of being part of the natural scene? Is it a matter of turning away from one’s fellows and seeking refuge in the woods or at the seashore? I think not. To me to feel alone and apart from my fellows heightens awareness of my ties with the nature world. The beauty of nature crowds in upon me. The rhythm of nature takes the place of the patterns of social life. Above all, in place of the uncertainties of life among my fellows—frustration, promises broken, affection waning—I feel strength in the steadiness, continuity, indeed the sense of eternity the world of nature brings to me.

In the spring of 1963 I suffered a massive internal hemorrhage whose point of origin was not known. The surgeon gave me blood transfusions but reported that he could not keep pace with the loss of blood. He said he would perform an emergency, exploratory operation but said he thought it not likely that he could carry me through the night. He left me alone in a small room while he arranged for the operation. I felt relaxed, at ease, possibly from the lack of blood. The hospital was quiet. I thought about my life; my family, my colleagues, the thousands of

students; how I had enjoyed their company. There was a distant noise; perhaps a dog barking. No, it was geese on their spring migration. I was in touch with the eternal rhythm, and so at peace with myself.

In the spring of 1969, when the Willard Straight [Hall student] uprising was tearing Cornell apart, the University trustees in New York asked two other professors and me to come before them and give our views on what was happening and what should be done. All of us, trustees and professors, were deeply concerned and could not see into the future. After my colleagues and I returned to Ithaca, one of them came to my home, and, as our conversation continued, he asked me to describe my state of mind. He said, "The university you have worked for for more than forty years looks as if it might collapse. We don't know what will take its place. How do you keep calm?" I took him into the garden where some hepaticas were blooming, as they do each year at the end of April. "There," I said to him, "there's my answer."

The enjoyment of nature complements the joy and remedies the shortcomings of my association with my fellows. In the life of the spirit it is active. As for things of the spirit, literature, the graphic arts and the dance, the enjoyment of nature is a prerequisite to the full appreciation of them. Much of prose and poetry, much of the graphic arts and the dance had its origin in careful study by the creative artist of natural objects and the movements of natural creatures. From Chaucer to Shakespeare to Milton to Blake to Whitman and Cornell's Archie Ammons, the act of literary creation derives in part from the natural thing observed. When we read their works, or go to the art galleries to see paintings and drawings by the masters, our appreciation will be at its richest only if we ourselves have brought to the world of nature powers of observation similar to those of the creative artist.

If we think of the life of the spirit in its larger meaning so that it includes all that we believe, we must bring into the circle of our beliefs our attitude towards nature. We may see our maker as the Creator of the universe and hear him speak as he spoke to Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the Earth? Who laid the cornerstone thereof when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" If this is the form of our belief, if nature is God's work and we see him in part through his work, we are not far from Izaak Walton, when he quoted Scripture to say with the Psalmist David, "they that occupy themselves in deep waters see the wonderful works of God."

There are persons whose faith does not extend so far as to accept or understand the concept of a creator or of a divine purpose. Their faith will reach no further than the creation. That is their vision; behind they cannot see. But the vision is enough for them. They see the beauty of the scene that is accessible to their minds and senses. Strength comes to them from their awareness of nature's rhythms. The order of nature, as they apprehend it, gives them a sense of their continuing place in the flow of force that is the universe.

This may be a lesser vision than that of Walton or of any other religious believer. But to those who see it it has a wholeness of its own. The natural world is a setting which they share and can enjoy with family and friends; in it they have fellowship with other created things, animate and inanimate. The beauty of nature calls forth delight and awe and wonder. For these visionaries enjoyment

of the beauty of nature gives unity to their lives.

This vision has one major difference from that of a person whose religious belief is a unifying foundation. To Walton the vision came complete in all its detail. For centuries theologians and scholars had described the Divine Scene, painters had rendered it in many forms. The Fathers of the Christian Church, Dante, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael and scores of others had helped to create images of God and Christ, the Virgin Mary, the angels, the Devil, and Heaven and Hell which every believer could comprehend. And so it was in other religions. The vision shone in all its glory.

For those who see their vision in the Creation, in nature, there is the task of giving shape to it in their own imagery. They must by thought and imagination give coherence to what they apprehend. Thoreau, or Muir, or Aldo Leopold may express ideas that win their favor to a degree, but only the individual can put together the articles of his or her faith in their entirety.

And that is the act that gives full effect to the enjoyment of nature for such a person. Unity comes into his or her life through the interrelation of the natural world with human affairs and with the affairs of the spirit. The final step is for the person to sit down with three or four sheets of paper and to write an essay which begins with the words, "I believe." Here, as in all else, the mood is active. The writer seeks and draws together ideas, and finds words to express them. And for this act of creation there is the ultimate reward; serenity, a sense of having seen nature for one's self and having rendered into words the foundations of one's faith. Out of these actions of mind and spirit comes a wholeness to set beside that of Walton.

Fifth Essay

The good life: What is it? Perhaps to be here on a summer afternoon, free from immediate cares and eager to write this little essay. Age, nearing 86; health good; activities teaching—now at the end of my sixty-first year; being Mayor of the Village of Cayuga Heights—now in my twenty-ninth year. A full life from 6:10 a.m. to about midnight. What more could a man ask for in his later years? How apt the occasion for me to do what I have done at intervals of ten years or so; look inward to myself and outward to the people and the world around me, and say what I see and what I believe. The last time I did this—about 1974—I took myself seriously enough to print the essay I wrote then, under the title “Some Thoughts after Reading Izaak Walton’s *Compleat Angler*.” What I shall write now will, I think, be less formal.

To reach the age of 85 and be in reasonably good health is an immense blessing; is to be a privileged person. I have lost the spring in my walk and sometimes feel a little awkward with my legs and feet, but that is my only handicap. I think all my senses are as acute as ever, perhaps there’s a little deafness and I certainly cannot hear the high notes of warblers. To have this range of sensory experience means almost everything because my waking moments, minutes, and hours are full of light and sound—the sunlight in the tops of trees, the songs of birds, the sound of human voices. My mind seems to me to be clear. I can prepare lectures, carry on discussions, and preside over a meeting as effectively as I have done in past years. My mind stays focused on what is immediately before me. The past I can recall. Parts of it I can bring to life in my mind. After all I am a historian. The future I do not try to explore. As I have written somewhere, “Sufficient unto the day is the joy thereof.”

To reach the age of 85 and to be in good health has a special bonus. I am not a charge or emotional or physical responsibility to my children or to others who might concern themselves about me. With a glance to the future I may say I hope I never shall be. In the last few years, as a result of a six month spell of vertigo, I have known what it is to be completely helpless physically; the whole muscular system out of control, feet, legs, arms, hands, useless; the head falling back when I tried to raise it off the bed, as if my neck was broken. These experiences, with the knowledge that I was completely dependent on others for a few hours during each attack, have made me all the more aware how fortunate I am to enjoy good health today.

I have great pleasure and a sense of a stable place in the world because my children and grandchildren are alive and well. I see my son, John, and my daughter, Ann, at least once a week. We have meals together, often with my daughter-in-law, Jane, and my grandchildren, Bruce and Sarah. My older

Written August 8, 1984.

grandson, David, a member of that family, is in the Peace Corps in Africa. All of us write to him frequently and share the letters he sends us. My son David lives in Quincy, Mass. His wife Betty and their two sons, David and Patrick—the New England Marchams—all of them, father, mother and boys, are more distant from me than the Ithaca Marchams. I see them at intervals of four years or so; we talk on the phone every two or three months.

In recent years, especially since my wife died in 1977, I have thought a good deal about myself as a husband and father. I have come to see myself as a person who, perhaps five or six years after our marriage in 1923, became caught up in my life outside the family. I had much early success at Cornell. Seven years after I received my degree at Oxford in 1923, I was a full professor. Almost at once I began to take part in the political life of the Cornell faculty; serving on committees and drafting reports; soon I was accepted as a leading figure in the activities by which the faculty tried to influence University policy. All this went well for me. But so far as our family was concerned, I might have appeared almost as an outsider; at the best shy and withdrawing in family affairs, at the worst distant, not caring, perhaps, even hostile.

It is part of my nature not to be assertive in personal matters; not to reach out, socially or physically, towards a son, a daughter, a colleague. I am passive. My childhood had, I think, much influence here. I grew up in a turbulent family, in which the adults were my father and mother and my mother's mother and brother. The order of the day was quarrelling, tears, and threats of violence. By the age of six or so I knew which were the best corners in the room to seek, or chairs to hide behind during the more passionate scenes.

When my wife and children gave me my own family, I thought that love, harmony, gentleness, and quiet were the qualities of good family life I should seek, and I thought that I could do this by using a minimum of assertiveness on my part. I saw myself as a person who was careful not to enter into the lives of others unless they reached out to me. In this part of my story as husband and father, my wife and children might well have interpreted my attitude as evidence of neglect.

Since my wife's death I have had more opportunity to give time and thought to my children and grandchildren. I have taken a larger part in family life. Today there is still, at least on the surface, an element of the casual, of the "at-arm's-length" in our relations, but I have a sense that all of us bring strength and happiness to one another.

Age brings one pattern of affairs I had not foreseen. Close friends and relatives die. Since I wrote the last essay of this kind I have been face to face with death. I have seen my wife in her last agonies at my feet, her body writhing as if it were crying out for breath. All the friends of my own generation except one—and he lives in England—have died, and others who were in their forties and fifties and sixties. I have attended their funerals, and in one most poignant case, I conducted the funeral service for one of my recent students, a girl of 25. Every few months I hear of someone, friend, acquaintance, or fellow worker who has died or is fatally ill.

This means for me, as, I suppose, for most people of my age, that I live alone. Not so much in the physical sense, as I do today in my apartment, but in aloneness caused by the absence of friends and relatives whose presence I took for granted, whose thought and interests, and latest tales and jokes were in a sense my own.

For some time after my wife died, and occasionally even today, when I see something or hear something, or read something, that stirs me, I half turn my head as if there were another person in the room. I make a remark which in the old days would have called forth a reply. Today I have whole armies of friendly acquaintances—students, colleagues, former students, and persons I do business with in the University and the Village. But among them there is no one I can talk to in utter frankness and at ease.

But this is not devastating. As I have written elsewhere, we are, as individuals, alone in all the important issues of life and death. But over and above that, it is probably true that not all of us are so open and frank in our own natures as to be suited for full friendships and close relationships. For me the good fortune is that I have hundreds of associations with others. I have been shy about beginning these associations, particularly if they are with women. But somehow or other they have happened, usually at the initiative of the other person, and so, except for the twelve hours or so each day that I spend in this apartment sleeping, eating, working, my days are full of action in pleasant, lively acquaintanceship with others.

My daily routine is fixed. Up at 6:10, exercise for half an hour from 6:45-7:15, shower, shave, tidying the apartment, breakfast and off to the campus at 8:30. At 9 each day, Monday to Friday, I teach, which means lecturing, conducting discussions and meeting with individual students. I am busy until about 12:30. Three or four times a week I conduct a program outside my regular history teaching. I meet with groups of four or five students who have come together as friends and they come to me asking that I will preside over sessions in which they read aloud to one another. With a suggestion from me here and there, they choose the passages to be read—prose, poetry, plays. My chief task is to say a word about the meaning of a word, or the rhythm of a phrase, and, when they read plays to distribute the parts.

The students usually choose to read the Bible, for two or three sessions; Shakespeare, Chaucer, Milton, Marvell, Blake, Whitman, Tennyson, and Shaw. We do little discussing; the emphasis is on the words and the music. I try to persuade them to believe that the printed page is like a music score. To be known for all it has to say it must be read out loud.

Philosophic discussion is not for me. When working with students, whatever the subject or the class structure—except when I lecture—I try to make sure that the full meaning and the music of the word or phrase is apprehended. My mind is an ordinary workmanlike instrument which gives attention to aspects of word-use, as they relate to the workings of the author's mind, which other persons often overlook. As far as the qualities of my mind are concerned, I often have the experience, as other teachers do, of knowing that the mind of one or other of my students is better than my own.

My work with students is an attempt to lead them into a world of beauty that is new to them. Sometimes, with my small groups of students who read out loud to one another, I take a few outdoors and ask them what they see and hear. We look at trees, or a leaf, or a few blades of grass or a dandelion. As with the words and phrases, we do not hurry. Look, look, look again at the shades of green in this one leaf, look at its shape, run your finger over its surface, crush it in your

fingers and smell it. What I do proceeds from the notion that there is beauty to be found in everything.

Much of my teaching is the attempt to stir the student to a new state of awareness; to the level of awareness in which I live. In part I think I succeed with students. Certainly I succeed with myself, in the sense that day by day I stand by encouraging them to read the Book of Job, or a Shakespeare sonnet, and in doing so I myself respond with joy to the familiar words.

Though I am in all this an evangelist, I carefully avoid any reference to religion that might appear to be religious teaching.

Throughout my life I have turned over in my mind questions relating to religion, particularly Christianity in the form I saw commonly in England; namely, the Protestantism of the Church of England. When I was still in military hospital in 1919, and at the Knutsford Theological Seminary in 1920, and at Oxford University in 1920 to 1923, I thought of myself as preparing for the priesthood of the Church of England. In this, as in most of my life, I did not have available for discussion and counseling, a close friend, or relative, or companion with whom to talk about religion, except that in the last six months of my stay in hospital I had the companionship of the young hospital chaplain. He said he thought I was well suited to become a priest and urged me to find a seminary that would accept me.

Some part of my willingness to follow his advice came from the fact that I was grateful for having been spared death or serious mutilation during the First World War. Part also was the consequence of the fact that, at that time my father and mother were separated and that privately I prayed for their reunion, and that gradually I saw myself as a possible means of reconciling them, and so of becoming a reconciler and minister to others. And another part came from the opportunity preparation for the priesthood seemed to give me to turn away from what seemed the unhappy and empty working class life of the slums of Reading, to which, otherwise, I must return. I had left school in 1914, at the beginning of the war, six years had passed, I was without training for any job. Entry into the priesthood promised to solve all my problems.

As an Oxford undergraduate I followed, almost out of habit, the path that I had begun. The principal of St. Edmund Hall [his college at Oxford], a leading clergyman, my tutor, and my fellow students regarded me as a candidate for the priesthood. But I had had no inner spiritual growth. I was a conformer not a believer. A number of other undergraduates of St. Edmund Hall were candidates for the Church of England ministry, but we did not join in activities which might have deepened my religious experience. I myself became caught up in a swirl of new interests—the new horizons of intellectual life that had opened out before me, the study of history, debating, and athletics. The exhilaration which these activities provided was not matched by any similar religious enthusiasm. Gradually I came to see the purpose of my life to be not the ministry of the Church of England but some other form of service to my fellows. The influence of my escape from death or maiming in the First World War was still strong with me.

Teaching was the profession most readily suited to my new needs. Religion became an element of my personal life rather than my public life. My work as a

teacher of English History has kept me constantly in touch with formal elements of the Christian religion. It has been part of English History, as I have taught it, to understand the place of the Church of England in English public life, to know something of the structure of the church, to be able to explain the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism, and to find joy in the language of the King James Version of the Bible and Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*.

Almost every day some aspect of the story of Christianity and of the Church of England presents itself for description, explanation or discussion in my classes. As I think through the topic for the day, before talking about it in class, I consider the meaning of what I read in relation to my own religious convictions. From time to time I read and discuss with students such works as St. Augustine's *Confessions* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. I enjoy these experiences because they enrich my understanding of Christianity, but they do not make me a believer.

Belief is the concept that has cut me off from religion. I have not found it possible to believe, that is to accept as the ultimate truth, the fundamentals of Christianity. And so I live in a world of the mind and spirit that lacks the structure of a body of religion. I have no God, no Christ, no fellow Christian. When, on a Sunday morning, I look out of my apartment window and see the congregation assembling for service at the church across the road, I regret that I have no such community to join with in song and prayer.

Do I believe in anything? Not with the certainty of the true believer. Rather, I have what I will call a quiet confidence in the existence of certain conditions. I do, of course, have more than quiet confidence in the existence of the universe, in the existence of the earth and all that dwells on it and in it. In a large and vague way I have a sense of fellowship with all other human beings and, with this, an awareness of a duty toward them.

In more personal matters I feel a duty to work for the good of the men and women who share my daily life as relatives and friends and colleagues and students. What I can offer them by way of judgment, advice, information, comfort, even money, I must do. To work toward these ends day by day is the central purpose of my life.

I maintain, as I have throughout my life, the liveliest sense of the beauty of the world around me. The appearance of the natural world, the clouds, the winds, the trees, the birds, the flowers and the leaves, all this I am aware of when I am outdoors. The appearance of the people with whom I associate, their faces, the sound of their voices, their minds, their dress, all this stirs me from hour to hour.

So the happy life of activity, of activity directed towards the well-being of my fellows, of activity within a setting that is a continuing source of pleasure to me. I marvel at my good fortune. I live in the present. May I be here and in the same spirit and health ten years from today to have another opportunity to speak of myself and the world around me.

Sixth Essay

To have a stroke and survive; what does it amount to? First of all relief, relief to be able to live again. And then a short look at what happened once the re-awakening began.

But what had happened immediately before the stroke. I lived then at a great pace: up at 6 a.m., half an hour exercise, bed at 12:15. All the day occupied in the month before the stroke with countless jobs associated with the end of the academic year and the homecoming to Cornell of classes for the annual academic reunion week. I had been deep in all this; talking here, dinner partying there, visiting one group or another day by day. A little before the stroke I had walked down, after a busy morning mostly in Barton Hall, the half mile to my car behind McGraw. I had to find an elderly lady and take her somewhere. Some fifty yards from my car my legs were so weak I had to sit down. During this whole period I had what seemed to be a cold. And so to the story.

On a Tuesday morning, June 27, 1987, at 6 a.m. I awoke to find myself on the floor of my bedroom. Later I learned that what I saw was in some way a hallucinatory view of what was before me. I lay on my stomach in my night clothes, as I then saw it, on the floor, and around me on the floor were small items; e.g. a small piece of glass, a quartered orange and such, reaching around me and in front of me as far as I could see. (These were part of the hallucination.) I could just use my muscles in my hands to the extent the fingers on my hands were capable, with much effort, of moving me forward an inch at a time. This took much effort, perhaps, an inch, then rest a minute or two. Above me to my right and on my night stand were my telephone but I could not reach that, and though, around my neck I carried a means for calling the police, it was behind me. In any case it did not come into my thought.

I knew at once that I could not call my daughter, Ann, who lives next door to me. I could not reach my front door—sixty feet away—to stop her as she left at 7:45 a.m. for her work. So I began, inch by inch—a minute or two between movements—to crawl on the floor to the front door. By 7:45 when she left, I had got about three yards by the bathroom door. By 8:30 I had crawled a few steps further and by 9:00 I reached in this manner the front door. I could not now reach up my hand to touch the key. I lay still for half an hour and then opened the door.

We live on a new dead-end street where, on that Tuesday morning, I could see no one. For a long time no one moved. The weather outside was too cold for me to be there in my nightclothes, so I lay there, for half an hour at a time, opening for a minute or two if I thought I heard something that might help. At about 12 noon I opened again and it now seemed to me that if I lay there, the door full

Written in late July, 1987.

open, some one passing by might see me. An hour of this and the sun sent me to sleep, and so I was, when at 1:30, my daughter, home for lunch, noticed something wrong with my apartment, came, saw me, and called the chief of police, David Wall. In two minutes he was there, knelt down beside me, gave me assurance I would be alright, and told me I should go to hospital. That I did by 2:30 p.m. and there I stayed for five days.

I could not at first remember anything over and above what I have written above, but within a day or two I became aware of the old world; my mental function came through fully, limited only by my difficulty in thinking up the right name for this or that person or other object. I got better fairly rapidly, and on the fifth day, a Sunday, my son John came for me and now at last in street clothes, I joined him as he drove me home. Within a moment or so for the first time since I left the house, I walked on my own feet, got into the house and soon found myself in my favorite chair. There were two nurses there who treated me most splendidly; brought me tea and attended to my bodily and social needs. That was four weeks ago.

During this period I have done well. My general condition has improved, my thinking is straight except for some memory lapses over names. In writing I feel more at ease than I did before the stroke—not so much to think about now as then. My general wish is to do what I wish to do, namely what my physician, Dr. C. J. Kilgore, says, which is to take up, as quickly as I can my earlier pattern of life.

And so it comes to be a question, how does the world look now? It certainly isn't the old world that was there before the stroke. Then a prevailing view to me was that the world was a continuing process, one day succeeding another; one day, perhaps a Wednesday, being dictated by what had happened on yesterday, Tuesday, and another by what is promised for tomorrow. I was in the middle of things; life, with me in it, went on.

Now all is different. My life stopped for a moment or two; at least stopped in large part for a few minutes. I was in the moment of the stroke, brought out of bed, and then collapsed on the floor—bruises to show how I fell. In the hallucinatory state—7 1/2 hours—I was not fully aware of the world around me. Now I am, for all practical purposes, back again in the world once more.

But now I see myself in a different place in the world. First to my family and friends. My relationship to them has strengthened. They have helped me, managed my affairs, sent letters or have come themselves to show proof that they are in a personal way more to me now than they were before. Then it had been the warm confidence of one person to another. To this is added generous and joyful concern about my physical improvement, a wish that soon I shall be as active as I was before the stroke, and indeed, more than that, that somehow, on my side at least, in the affairs that relate to me, I am myself again. The old story has been once more renewed, subject always to the notion that I had been out of action for a few weeks. This, as I saw it, was how my relatives and friends saw me.

There were, of course, two differences of the obvious sort. Before the stroke my mind had been full of questions concerning teaching at Cornell and the ordinary run of the mill relations there. When I got up in the morning I at once began to think about the lecture for the day. I had thought it through the night before, made elaborate plans; did the same pattern work today. Or, thinking of

the Village, are there meetings today, people I said I could meet, letters I would write. Thoughts of this kind did not arise for me in hospital.

And then something quite different. I had no decisions to make about myself—dress, no; plans to visit, no. In brief, I had entered into a period of almost self-abandonment; delightful in one sense, distressing in another. But this condition was a surface complaint; one week, one month, to be withdrawn if all went well.

My own reaction to the consequence of the stroke is different. Let me begin by saying that I am now past 88 years; I am an old man. Until the stroke I had enjoyed a full, energetic life; my concerns being my family, teaching at Cornell, and the life of the Village. In most respects this life was pleasant to me. The stroke in a way ended that; I was no longer in command of this life. I became a patient of the doctors and the nurses and obeyed their orders. What they told me to do I did and by obeying them I came back to the condition I am in now. Glory be.

In this way, as I look out upon the world around me, I look on human affairs in a new light. At first I am part of the men and women who from millennia and for millennia to come, have lived upon the earth. And as I think of that I go from life on earth to the edge of the universe. There may be countless millions living out there too. At the other extreme, gratitude, a sense of belonging to the small company of my family and friends and the persons I come to know from day to day. I pray that I may enjoy their friendship and good will and that it may last me all of my life.

And from these thoughts of love and life to look once more on death. As I sit here now I say what has been in my mind for many years; that I am not afraid of dying. The question is what happens after death. Shall I accept Socrates' concept of death as a sleep for ever, or a new life where one might find oneself among persons, now dead, some friends and some not, whom you wished to talk to. Or the Christian view of death, so deep in the society I had grown up in; the willingness to go from life to resurrection by the acceptance of the Christian covenant with God and, for those who do not enter into that covenant, another form of death.

For a time, yes; and for a long time, no. I have no longer accepted the Christian form of death and the hereafter. My thoughts have led me to a simple but not final solution. Here I sit writing now. My right hand is 88 years old. It is full of energy; moves when my mind commands it to move. Yet it is obviously, from a physiological point of view, no other than the hand of an old man. Here and there are wrinkles, veins stand out, the insides of the fingers when extended have the marks of old age. Soon this must go. And with it all the force that now drives it? What an adventure to contemplate the prospects of death.

My deepest thoughts have led me to a simple, but not final solution. I judge that the whole fullness of life on this earth and the universe beyond it, are, like death, matters too complicated for the human mind to consider. These are matters beyond our thinking or spiritual belief. Of course we think, of course we carry in our hearts what it is we wish for.

In these circumstances I myself, twice a day call into my mind those relatives and friends who are, or in death have been, close to me. I pray for them. To whom,

I don't know. I know only that they are and have been part of me and twice a day
I share my communion with them.

Seventh Essay

I am 92 years old and I rejoice that I am alive and well. At my age I know that each day may be my last but this somber warning lies far in the background of my thoughts and when it comes to me it may add new force to my teaching a class or give new flavor to the raw oyster I am about to eat. The small perils of age are with me; sometimes I forget the name of a friend or do not shut a door. I was for twenty years a boxing instructor and skipped rope fifteen minutes a day so I feel the handicaps of my present legs and feet which will not always do what I wish them to do.

But for the handicaps of age there are the pleasures of age, the long rich memory and the multitude of friends alive and dead who have shared their lives with me. I have known three generations; the first overshadowed by the First World War, the second by the Second World War and the third by my wife's death in 1977 and the life of living alone I have had since then.

My memories of the first generation begin at 65 Edgehill Street in Reading where my father, a laborer, earned \$5 a week and we lived in a house at \$1 a week. From those scarce years I went to the substantial and orderly life at Christ's Hospital for five more years and from there, after two years as a military clerk, living in Reading, I served three years and more in the British Army in the First World War and more than a year in a military hospital. And so to Oxford and across the Atlantic in 1923 where I came to Ithaca and settled down to a career at Cornell University.

I became a [full] professor here in 1930 and passed almost at once into faculty business at a time when the faculty considered and directed the university's academic and administrative affairs. At the faculty's monthly meetings and, at the meetings of the University's Policy Committee to which I was elected, we decided how to shape all the university's policies except in matters of finance and such administrative business as to say who would be appointed as the next university provost.

The Second World War in 1939 began my next generation of memories. Edmund Ezra Day was the university president and, with the United States in the war, I myself had the task of teaching English History and American History and serving as boxing instructor four hours a day in the Army and Navy training officers who attended Cornell. The University Policy Committee and the faculty lost its force in directing the development of the university. The president and the Board of Trustees took charge but by good fortune the faculty elected me to represent them on the Board for the years 1945 to 1950.

Written January 15, 1991.

In the time of this war and more particularly in the years after the war the academic and social structure of Cornell University changed. This came through the increase in faculty and students, the reshaping of the administration to deal with student housing, the association of the university with private industry, and similar new issues. Finally the post-war faculty had small interest in the management of the university and a greater interest in their commitment to the individual's own research and teaching. I was caught up in the changing government of the university. An overwhelming number of faculty members chose me to be dean of the faculty but President [Deane W.] Malott opposed them and he carried the Board of Trustees with him.

My last generation of memories began where the second ended. Since 1960 the university had struggled to create a new community of trustees, administrative staff, faculty, students, and alumni. President Perkins brought to Cornell a new group of black students and these students promoted the view of a separate and essentially self-governing college within the University with its own teaching and research programs. The vigorous demands of these students and of the white students and the faculty who supported them led to the seizure of Willard Straight Hall and caused six or seven thousand person to meet in Barton Hall and there to debate and produce a new constitution for the university.

I had no part in these developments. As a constitutional historian I examined and wrote about the forms of the new governments to be created and especially about the [University] Senate whose charter had many discrepancies. The discrepancies here as elsewhere allowed not for general community control of the University but gave to the university president and his staff control over teaching and research. The new movement in the 1960s and 1970s passed away into nothing by the 1980s. Faculty and students turned their minds to other things as I myself had done. Teaching undergraduate students was for me my daily work for the university.

My memories of half a century as I have shown them here are a part of my life, my university career. I have had other careers; a career as a scholar and, in public life, a career as mayor of the Village of Cayuga Heights, New York, where I served for thirty-two years. As a mayor—victorious in sixteen elections—I and the Village Board managed the finances of the village, the police department, the fire department, the water and sewer systems, the roads and the collection of garbage. I presided over the monthly meetings of the board and daily I saw and spoke to villagers. There are other memories which I shall not chronicle here.

But above all there has been my career as a husband and as a father, a grandfather, and a great-grandfather, memories so rich and continually prevailing today that I cannot write them down. They came to a moment of disaster in 1977 when a heart attack killed my wife in the fifty-second year of our marriage. I then built a house for myself and another one beside it for my daughter, Ann. We live separate lives, connected by use of a common garage, and talk to one another for half an hour a day. With her and with my son and daughter in law, John and Jane, with my grandson Bruce, who comes to Ithaca once a fortnight, with my granddaughter Sarah and her husband Chris, and with their son, Liam, with all of these I keep close friendship from week to week. And what a joy to be with them.

For the past thirteen years I have lived by myself in my home, keeping it in order, cooking my meals and, once every other week, inviting in granddaughter, her husband and son, Sarah and Chris and Liam Lowe to an evening dinner. At other times friends come to a meal or come to talk to me: they are my neighbors or men and women who were students of mine from as long ago as 1930 or from the present.

These meetings with family and friends make a social life for me which goes along with another social life that has its source in a Thursday lunch meeting with half a dozen professors. Associations of this kind are the background to my life as a teacher.

I think of myself today as a teacher whose work improves from year to year. Each term I teach one formal history course, a course I have taught sixty-eight times before, but still each year, as I read my lecture notes of past terms, I see a fault here and there and so I put together a new lecture. Much of my time at home goes into thinking and planning for this course and I have daily visits to the campus for lectures and for meetings with students.

Alongside my formal history course I teach each term I have a course called Supervised Reading. For the past forty years students from all colleges have come to me and have asked me to help them read works they have not read in their other courses. They say they have read to gain information about engineering and agriculture and trade unions, and they say they wish to spend an hour each week reading aloud to one another books that will stir their imagination, books of poems, plays and basic words of the spirit, particularly the Bible.

Each term I arrange the students in this course in groups of ten for each class and the number of classes is five. The classes meet an hour each week. I have given them plays to read by British and Irish playwrights of the past century and I manage the classes in such a way that every student had a part to play during the hour and so he and she acted. Reading out loud from literature of this kind opened a new world for them, for the plays by Wilde and Shaw to the writers of the 1970s and 1980s brought them ideas and information and gave them the ability to read to others.

This program succeeded so that at every term I turned away students who wished to work with us. Last summer, as I thought again about the works we had read I had a new notion about our readings and I created a new program. The list for the term I have just completed began with three weeks of reading from the Bible, beginning with the Book of Job.

The list goes on, from Pericles Funeral Oration to the letters of Abelard and Heloise, from Chaucer and Shakespeare to Bunyan and Swift, and the end was a judgment in a case before the British House of Lords in 1942. As I presented the reading for each week I said we will study the English language as it is used to convey the meaning of a poet's view of the world around him or a scriptural story or a Puritan's account of the entry into Heaven or the judge's interpretation of the phrase, "a reasonable cause to believe." All of these will give you examples of the way to use language for the rest of your life.

My conduct of this course and of my formal history course and of my work from day to day with other students is for me a leading pleasure of my life to be

set beside the affection and warmth of my families and friends. What all these pleasures give me is the force and liveliness of spirit which continues to move me.

I have, of course, settled by now into a daily pattern which begins at 6 a.m. with prayer for the two dozen or so persons of family and friends, some dead and some living, whose work and well being are my daily concern. I remember what they have done for me and I also remember my sins. I exercise for ten minutes, shave, and bath, and make my breakfast and then go to the campus for three and a half hours. I go home to read and to listen to and to consider the world outside as it comes to me by radio and television. And so to bed at 11:30 with the aid of Scotch and water.

The world outside me today gives me memories of the First and Second World Wars and memories from my reading and studying as a historian. I know no more of the world's public life than this but the world presses upon me and causes me to make judgments about this person and this policy. My first thought is to remember my years as mayor when there were two things in my mind as I did my work: the complexity of ordinary, simple things, for example how to put together a law to control the movement of dogs in the village and next the range of emotions immediate and short-lived, that came into play in determining what law to use. My first thought might be that those who settle the world's affairs today and who look towards war are caught up in the business of world administration, incompetent administrators. But I see more to it than that. On the basis of the information I have I see a deeper and more threatening appearance of men who themselves are arrogant, self-assured, uncertain in their thoughts, men without integrity for the moral issues I believe should guide person and person, nation and nation.

The sadness of the world outside casts a shadow over the world of my daily life, but no more than a shadow. The daily life must be lived and be enjoyed and that is my great concern. There is for me what I may call another shadow, as I said at the beginning of this essay, my age and the shadow of death. My mind and the human mind at large I believe cannot think of what happens after death or indeed of the whole range of life and what follows life on this earth or on the billions and billions of other spheres that reach out beyond us. For the present I am here and for what lies beyond the present I do not know but it may have its adventures.

Rules for Life

Have faith in yourself. You are a person; a body, a mind, a spirit. You will be part of a world of pleasure and pain and you will hold to your faith in it.

You are able to help others to enjoy life. The persons you meet—relatives, friends, acquaintances and passers by—may turn to you by word or gesture asking that you listen to them, or talk to them, or advise them. Give what you can.

Others will help you to enjoy life. Alongside your family keep three or four persons as your close friends whose presence and conversation you enjoy. With them you will present and will discuss the complete range of your own interests and concerns.

Be alert. Have a sharp, continuing awareness to all forms of nature; the clouds, the living things, songs, movements, even weeds and stones. Let them flow into you.

Be attentive to the appearance, attitudes, and spiritual qualities of persons who come into your world.

To those who come to you, look first, in the bare coldness of fact, like an anatomist, at the face, the eyes, the hands, the clothing, the manner. Then let the rest of the person come through. What do they bring to you, friendliness or distrust, with understanding of you, with no concern for you, or with hatred. It will all come to you at one time or another.

Three or four times in your life you will face complete disaster. Your wife or husband will leave, your son will have a fatal disease, you will lose all your money. Keep to your own standard of living and your own principles.

Throughout your life have before you four or five centers of interest; your family, your profession, your own physical health, and work for some public or private service. Keep actively with them from week to week so as to widen the power of your mind and to bring into your life persons of many interests.

Moment by moment let your spirit move you. Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy.

*Given to Wesley Hicks, Nov. 21, 1987 and
as part of a lecture in December 1991*

Appendix A

Earlier Thoughts on Death

The work of these years in the late 1950's and early 1960's I carried on sometimes with hindrances caused by illness. In 1955 a car knocked me into the air outside the Statler Club and I escaped death and broken bones principally, I believe, because boxing had taught me how to fall. In any case I was lucky...

Less than a year after my accident I developed pneumonia and a bladder infection. An ambulance rushed me to the hospital. I had begun to bleed from the bladder and in general felt wretched. The doctor's off-the-cuff diagnosis as he saw me in the hospital was nephritis. In the late afternoon he called on me and said quite simply that he thought I was seriously ill. I should make plans accordingly.

My concern about how long I might be in hospital came from the fact that I had been put out of action in the middle of the first term. My teaching program was a full one: a general course of about two hundred, and advanced course of about thirty and half a dozen graduates. I had had no warning of serious illness and so had made no preparations. Fortunately my senior assistant, Sallie Siegrist, a small but jaunty and able young lady, took over and succeeded at what must have been for her the formidable task of facing my large elementary class of sleepy students each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 8 a.m.

When the doctor returned the next morning and began to speak about tests for nephritis I became aware that at my age the disease might be fatal. Fortunately the tests and some consultation with other doctors established the fact that I was suffering from nothing worse than pneumonia and a bladder infection. An Episcopal minister who called, unsolicited, the next evening said, unsolicited, "Pneumonia, ah yes; they used to call it the old man's friend, you know; it carried them off without too much suffering." I recovered slowly and returned to teaching after about a month. Everything was intact, thanks to Sallie Siegrist.

This experience put me in mind of the fact that I had not thought about my own death. I had of course made a will, but that was only a prudent thing to do, like taking fire insurance on a house. In this present instance I had made no preparations for any mode of carrying on my work in my absence and I had not assembled my thoughts about death. When I entered the hospital I had felt too wretched to worry about anything. I thought I should now prepare myself in case I suddenly found myself rushed to hospital again. The best preparation that I could devise was to resolve that I would be ready to die at any moment. And so from time to time from this point on I asked myself, "Are you ready to

From Cornell Notes, WWII-1968.

fall into the gutter and die now?" I found that I could answer, "Yes." This was not for me a morbid obsession; just the opposite. I had a sense of having come to terms with life and death. Here was one great issue I did not need to worry about any more.

In the spring of 1963 I had an illness which I took to be the flu. From my acquaintances, adult and student, I learned that a prevalent form of flu showed itself in general weakness and a tendency to faint. I myself had never fainted. The general weakness asserted itself one weekend. I found it more and more difficult to do my daily twenty minutes of exercise. On a Sunday I felt physically and emotionally exhausted and decided that the time had come for me to go to bed. I put the car away and climbed the stairs to my bedroom. As I reached the top of the stairs I experienced the classic symptom of fainting. I began to black out. I got to my bed, lay down and found myself in full consciousness, though still weak. The next day I felt weaker, though I had no cough, no pain. But it suddenly dawned on me that for the past two days my stools had been black, the blackness of shoe polish, and I remembered that I had read that this might be a sign of internal bleeding. I called my doctor who replied instantly, "The classical signs of internal bleeding; come to the hospital at once." I dressed, packed a suitcase, called a taxi and went to the emergency room of the hospital, which I entered under my own power.

My doctor was waiting for me, put me on a stretcher and sent me to a room. There he directed tests and ordered a supply of blood to be made ready. Within an hour I was connected to the blood supply apparatus and he began to discuss with me where we stood. I had, he said, lost a large quantity of blood; the count stood at 7, it should have been 14. He suggested three possible causes for the bleeding, each of them difficult to establish in the absence of pain. The normal course would be to operate and search for the lesion, but this he did not wish to do because of my blood count. He would keep up the blood supply in the expectation of raising the count to 11 1/2; that would be a safe figure. From time to time in the afternoon the technicians and the doctor visited me. At 7 o'clock he came in again.

He said that they could not raise the count above 7 1/2, and with that I would not survive the night. He had no alternative but to risk an operation. This would be dangerous even if he knew where to look for the lesion; in the circumstances the odds were bad because the one thing I could not survive was a long exploratory operation. That evening the medical society was holding its monthly meeting at the hospital. He would ask a group of surgeons to assist him; with their eyes and assistance they might make possible a quick analysis of the problem. While we were talking I became aware of stiffness in my left forearm. The arm was strapped to a board and held rigid to facilitate the blood transfusion: it began to ache in this position. I said to the doctor, "Can you loosen something on my left arm, you're ruining my left jab." He said, "That's the least of your worries." He had already reported his preliminary findings to my family which, fearing a visit would add confusion to a tense situation, had said they would wait until after the operation. He asked, did I wish to see anyone; I said, "No."

From about 7:30 to 8:30 I was alone in the small, dim hospital room. My state of mind was I think induced partly by the fact that I had lost much blood and perhaps by the effect of an antihistamine tablet the nurse had given me when,

following the beginning of the transfusion, blotches had appeared on my hand and arm. Whatever the cause the result was a feeling of complete relaxation; bliss would not be too strong a word. There was nothing to worry about. My fate would flow from incidents over which I had no control. In the meantime I thought it right to give thanks for the things I had enjoyed and particularly to recall my associations with students and faculty friends. My mind wandered slowly as though it were in a long portrait gallery. How satisfying to remember them all, and to know that to some degree I had been part of their lives. In this mood I floated happily for an hour. The doctor returned and with injections and shavings they began to prepare me for the operation. He asked again, was there anyone I wished to see. I said No, but it might be well to get in touch with my old student friend, Dr. John Waller of New York, to whom I had gone annually for physical examinations. He would know about my general physical condition. The doctor did this, reported to me and disappeared. Within a few minutes I was being moved towards the operating room. As we left my own room my son John appeared, and placed his hand on mine.

I woke the next morning and asked when the operation would take place. The answer was that it was over, and shortly one of the attending surgeons looked in and said they had found a large bleeding ulcer in my stomach and had removed four-fifths of my stomach and some associated organs. I felt no pain, but some discomfort from the tubes that passed through my nostrils into the area of the operation and from the other tubes that supplied blood and intravenous feeding. But these were bearable discomforts; I became used to the tickling at the back of my throat. Soon my doctor appeared and reported that all had gone well. My son John appeared and the doctor began, in a teasing way, to say, "The Old Man here had a close call last night. He tried to pretend that he wasn't worried. You know, British phlegm, stiff upper lip. But at heart he's like the rest, soft, sentimental." My son asked the doctor, "What did you do last night after the operation? I waited outside the operating room for two hours after the nurses had gone and you did not appear." The doctor, noted for his curtness of manner, the personification of the square-headed, thickset Dutchman, a man of few words and no nonsense, said, "I had them put a bed in the recovery room and slept beside the old man."

I had a steady, quick and complete recovery and left the hospital sixteen days after I entered it and on a morning when what I had first believed to be the barking of dogs proved to be the honking of migrating geese going north. The doctor advised me to take a two or three week vacation in Florida and I did so. I returned to my normal activities in mid-May and found that all my affairs were going forward easily. Two of my graduate students had taken over my lectures. My seminar had been more of a success than if I had conducted it myself. At the beginning of the term I had asked the group of about ten what they wished to study. They said they would soon be out in the world teaching their own courses and wished to have the experience of planning and managing a course in all its detail. We agreed on a course in British 19th and 20th century history and in the interval between the beginning of the term and my removal to hospital on March 4 we had assigned a topic for lecture to each person and had agreed that each person must prepare appropriate examinations; bibliographies and so forth. In my absence they had gone forward with the program and with all the more benefit because they had had to settle their problems among themselves.

This sudden illness had confirmed for me the benefit of being prepared for death. It confirmed also the value to me of my continuing daily exercise; the doctor said that my physical condition had turned the operation into a success. But much remained to be thought about and fitted into my view of my relationship with the world around me. The simplest lesson to learn had been that my practical affairs were not arranged in such a way that my heirs would know what to do with my books and pictures. I had begun to plan and correspond regarding the [Louis Agassiz] Fuertes book [of bird paintings]; I had done much of the work on a new edition of the *Sources of English Constitutional History*. I began to prepare instructions regarding these and similar matters.

But there was something else. I had indeed been ready to die; my resolution in this matter had given me strength and would continue to do so; was it enough to come to terms with death in the sense of being ready for it? What were my views about death, where did I place death in the general scheme of existence? My thoughts on these subjects had strong stimulus in the fall of 1963 when one of my best friends, a vivid, vibrant person, died after an illness of twenty-four hours. Another friend died of a heart attack a little later. He had been sailing and was stepping ashore when he died. I found that I could not accept death as an end, a termination, though that had been the essence of my thoughts when I considered the possibility of my own death.

My opinions came into focus the following summer. One bright, sunny morning I was driving to the north of Ithaca to pick strawberries. At a point near South Lansing I saw before me a beautiful sight, reaching over fields and trees across Lake Cayuga to the rising hills on the other side. I stopped the car and gazed at the scene. Here, I said to myself, is nature in one of the forms that I love best; here is the force of life revealing itself in a thousand forms and colors, the vegetation reaching up out of the earth. I said, What I have seen around me I have taken to be the manifestation of life; I have assumed that what I have seen and what others have seen constitutes the whole of the creation. But surely the life, the creative force, which produced the things that I can see, expresses itself in many other ways. What arrogance it would be to believe that only those things exist which the mind of man can perceive. The mind of men is just that, the perceiving and reasoning instrument of one form of life. It can apprehend only a part, probably a minute part of the total creation. Later I worked these notions out on paper and was able to satisfy myself that for me they had coherence.

As I wrote I found it possible to think again of death and to conclude that death was one of those phenomena that went beyond the range of human understanding. True, with death, as with much else, the human mind could make certain observations: this is the sign of death, this is the cause of death. The mind could measure, weigh, mark physical differences. But that was all: I would accept the notion that death was a transition, not an end, and that, in the infinity of forms in which the creative force asserted itself, there was one, unobservable by the human mind, into which the living creature passed after the humanly observable death.

Out of these thoughts came a new sense of my own relationship with the creation. I had long thought of myself as a fellow creature with trees and birds

and other living things in nature. My new sense was grander. I thought of myself as a part of the total creation, the visible and the invisible, the knowable and the unknowable. As I stood at my favorite observation post at the edge of the gorge behind West Sibley Hall, I was aware of my unity with the things I could see and all the forces that stirred and pulsated beyond my vision. I saw myself as part of the total creation. And as I was part of it, part of it was in me. These thoughts brought into order in 1963 and 1964 were a great source of strength to me.

Appendix B

Background of the *Compleat Angler* Essay

Back in Ithaca [in 1976], and the first term over, I had to plan for a Cornell Alumni University program I had agreed to join in early May. The place of meeting was to be Lake Mohonk in the Southeast Catskills and my task was to lecture on some aspect of the nature topic I had used in 1974, I was anxious to do this because I still carried in my mind the thought that I had done badly at the earlier meeting, certainly in my opening lecture which I had spoiled by trying to put too much in it.

My first plan, worked out in the fall of 1975, was to have the participants read W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions* and Walton's *Compleat Angler* and somehow for me to draw out, from a discussion of those two ways of handling concepts of man and nature, my own philosophy. I worked hard at the Green Mansions part of the program for some weeks and began to put together the substance of the lecture by analyzing the book. But when I had done this work and written up my comments I saw that I could not build a bridge between the two books or use the one against the other so as to stimulate discussion.

So I substituted a new plan which offered a more elaborate study of the *Compleat Angler* than I had first intended. This occupied me for several weeks; I had the lecture fully written out a week before delivery. My reason for doing so was in part my memory of that other appearance before the Alumni University, when time ran out on me and the fear that in a strange place and before a strange audience I might lose the thread of my argument.

At the last, two or three days before we were to leave, I summoned up courage and made an elaborate outline of the lecture in twelve or thirteen pages, with five pages of quotations. On a beautiful spring morning [G. Michael] McHugh drove me down to Lake Mohonk, my eyes and ears and nose attentive to the scene that unfolded, the trout streams, the birds in migration. And our temporary home at Lake Mohonk exceeded all expectations; a rambling, but not quite ramshackle, 19th Century resort hotel in its own vast grounds at the summit of a small mountain. Gatekeepers guarded the points of entry. We climbed steep winding roads through the woods until we reached the top, where the view opened out across ridge after ridge of high hills.

I found the Mohonk meeting to have much of the enthusiasm and personal warmth of listeners to lecturers, and general informality that marked the meetings I had spoken to in Ithaca. Among the 150 or so who attended were old students, some of whom I had not seen for almost fifty years, such as George Hamilton, now a retired doctor. He had been son of an eminent Cornell professor and he

From *Cornell Notes*, 1967-79, unpublished as of 2005.

and I had been close friends when he was a student at Cornell. Ira Miller and his wife were also there and others who did not declare themselves right away, but came up casually from time to time and asked, “Do you remember me? I was in your freshman class in 1933” and so forth.

Something of a feeling of talking to friends made it easy for me to give my lecture in the evening of the first day. The notes proved to be adequate. I found it easy to move away from them without losing the line of my argument and since I was the only speaker that evening I did not have a continuing fear that I would overshoot my allotted time. To my great surprise I spoke for one hour and twenty minutes. I had the audience with me all through and ended as I wished to end.

On the afternoon of the second day I led a group of about twenty on a walk around Lake Mohonk, perhaps half a mile long, beside a large body of water at the top of the mountain. The rock formation on one side of the lake was striking; great cubes and rectangular blocks of granite type rock lying as though they had been balanced and tilted there by a giant. These rocks offered perfect examples of one kind of natural beauty. We found others in the mosses, lichens, and other plants that formed patterns on the rocks and the bushes and trees that surrounded the lake. I found it easy to point to different effects caused by the sunlight falling on leaf surfaces, on the range of greens to be seen around us and the different textures presented by ferns and the bark of trees.

On the morning of the third day, just before we were to leave for Ithaca, there was a large and long discussion of what John Donne had called, as I had said in my lecture, the Issues of Life and Death. One of the participants—there were about one hundred at the meeting, mostly middle aged and elderly professional people from New York City and New England—wished to know what I thought of Dylan Thomas’s line, addressed to his dying father, “Do not go gently into that long night.” The participant thought that, as in the line, men ought to rail against death. He concluded his statement by saying, “I want to live on and see my grandchildren grow up.”

I took the opposite position: life is a matter of accepting the processes of nature and of seeking from day to day what beauty and what pleasures of love of fellowship life has to offer. When I got back to Ithaca I resolved to try to create an essay out of my lecture, using my notes and ideas that had occurred to me while speaking. I did not use the full draft I had prepared in the weeks preceding the lecture. I completed a version that satisfied me and showed it to a number of friends, young ones for the most part. I also plucked up courage, on the basis of what they said, to send a manuscript copy to Norman Malcolm, Cornell’s most eminent philosopher. His warm endorsement of it persuaded me to have it printed in bound pamphlet form, under the title “Some Thoughts after Reading Walton’s *Compleat Angler*.”

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