

MY FAITH .

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Born and bred in the tradition of my home and country I was a believer from my infancy in a Divine Power which rules and regulates the universe. I am a believer now. Science in the end, has widened the vistas of my belief in God and in the imperishable human spirit.

As a young boy I prayed and worshiped regularly. Outside the house of my maternal grandfather, near the fields, was a house of worship where I would offer prayers, sometimes, in the hope that God would listen to my supplications and send early rains and help us in raising good crops.

As I grew older and learned some science, doubts and suspicions began to grow and I became skeptical about the usefulness and rationality of a worship of this kind.

It was immature science, and instead of making me a better believer it had a reverse effect. When I became a graduate in science I had little faith left in any religion. I almost assigned to myself the role of the Deity and ceased to have much interest in what, then, I began to think of as a "man-made God." My skeptical attitude reflected the prevailing mood of most of the scientists of the early decades of this century everywhere.

Fortunately for me, I think, my interest in science was deeper than in the case of a student who wishes to take it up with an eye to a future administrative business or professional career only. I was personally engaged in research, in my special field which was chemistry. I was interested in science, for its own sake, from all sides.

The development of science itself restored my religious faith by steps. The work of the physicist, and of the chemist, exploded the great myth of "materialism" -- that an atom was indivisible. The basis of the older "mechanistic" view of the world was shaken when it was discovered that the atom, instead of being the ultimate, indivisible physical reality, itself was composed of electrical charges.

That matter and energy may ultimately be one, that scientist, great though his achievements had been, had really succeeded in touching barely upon the mere fringes of the problem of life, made me return to the belief that there was something which is not wholly accounted for by materialistic reasoning. The nature of the mind, particularly, remained unexplained.

I, for one, was far from satisfied with the purely materialistic attempts to explain the mind, the personality and the destiny of man. An age-old problem, for example, is this: Why are two brothers not exactly alike in their personal developments and experiences? One brother may rise to the heights of attainment and fame, and the other one may make no headway whatsoever.

Religious believers have conceived of a divine justice, a moral balance which transcends a man's physical life span, in various ways. If one concedes that the spirit, exceeding the limitations of the physical realm of the body, has its own laws of cause and effect, of a balance sheet between good and bad deeds, an orderly pattern of reason and morality becomes manifest.

Every faith has its own special language and symbols, but all religions have the same fundamental conception of an imperishable spiritual existence in which the moral values are adjusted, destinies are balanced. Scientists are familiar with the phenomena of energy, of action and reaction in

physical world, and it seemed to me that they would be the first to concede the reasonableness of justice and equilibrium in the mental and spiritual spheres.

Belief in a divine judge, in a cosmic judgement of the human spirit, is a great aid against a purposeless and antisocial, brutal way of life. It has been a deterrent against aggressiveness, destructiveness, devastating selfishness of powercrazy men. It has stimulated man to fruitful, socially constructive thinking and doing.

The scientist is faced, as never before, with the greatest moral issue. The last two wars in Europe, which set ablaze the whole world, have brought home to us more than anything else that science will destroy its very purpose of bettering the lot of humanity if it becomes subservient to dictators of any kind.

The events which have led to the development of the atomic weapons show that, if scientists keep drifting in purposeless skepticism and spiritual indifference, they are on the way to becoming new kinds of monsters. The professed aim of science to serve humanity, through the discovery and applications of truths, must be strictly followed by us to prevent disaster to science and to mankind.

Scientists need faith to sustain them against the demands of dictators. They work at best, imbued with a faith in truth and goodness. Historically the devoted work of scientists follows the same pattern as that of prophets, saints, philosophers, poets.

Personally I have been vastly enriched and deepened in my religious faith by contacts with some of the purest believers in God, humanitarians and poets. The scientist may lack the emotional intensity and softness of the saint, the religious believer and worker, and of the philosophers, but he is a steady and self-effacing addition to humanity through which, I believe, God manifests Himself.

The old idea which dominated the philosophy of some of our scientists that science is just knowledge for its own sake, without any relationship to the fate of mankind, is fast changing. Science and faith, approaching the issues of life from different directions, supplement each other.