

Oct-31 1918

My dearest Ruth, No mail to-day & a dull day altogether. You seem to have been very energetic in your reading lately. It was a brave effort to wade through Sir Douglas Haig's despatch; I only skimmed it & took it to be a document misprised solely with the idea of excusing the C-in-C of Gen. Gough. Of course the trouble really started earlier. There's no shadow of doubt that the whole Passchendaele offensive was a sad failure; I've seen it referred to en passant in French papers as the 'disaster' to the British Army last autumn; L.G.* tells me that Joch was dead against it & said it was madness to attack in Flanders; the P.M. opposed it strongly. But even apart from that it was not only in the new sector that defences had not been prepared & if Byng found time to make them as he did up here why shouldn't the troops covering Passchendaele; & further there is plenty of labour in this country, Chinks etc which could have been turned on to making line m'ears - if the material was available; & if

* Major Guyllym Lloyd George, s. of the P.M.

it wasn't whose fault was that?

Im seem to have been struggling manfully rather than enjoying your religious books; but it has evidently given you much to think of. I don't quite understand with regard to immortality whether it is a theory the author is trying to prove or merely an idea of immortality of which he is trying to show the probability. I cannot myself see how any such theory could be proven or even made to appear anything more than in harmony with our experience; his sort of immortality seems to me to be that so far as I have understood it. I agree that the relation of an individual with his environment is supposed important but I'm not sure from what you say that the author doesn't value the environment higher than the relation; it seems to me rather the intensity of the relation than the circumstance of atmosphere related that matters. I have been thinking of that value on my own account lately & concluding that if one could do it, life would be wonderfully well spent if one were simply to develop to the fullness of their possibilities the relations

of life in one or another of its appearances; & what
I worship at such times is the divine essence in things
which we recognise as the great good moving every-
where & love & cherish and pursue. What can
be more lovely than you reading this letter, diligently
probing & testing my words to find out all that has been
in my mind because you love me, & holding it all up
for truth's sake to your own true mirror of experience;
and that I should be trusting ^{you} to behave just so. As my
mind wanders among the possibilities of all that I
picture to myself a truth seeker humble & devout
adding here a drop of distilled wisdom, there a flashing
gem to that treasure ~~and~~ collection which so much
love & so many hard exclusions have purified till
the tender & sensitive owner of it would lay down his
life rather than sacrifice the least of it; - and then
extend the vision to a company of such devout & tender
persons & the lovely intercourse they would hold, so
strong & yet so gentle, so humble yet so sublime & so
musical with purest & sweetest laughter: as my
soul trembles with hope & desire in response to such
a vision, to the contemplation of what is more than
naturally noble, what is it that I see but God -
divinely enough He knows in my feebleness; but it is

which are to hand. This I may add is far from
being a statement of intention. It is but one way
of pushing up - but I doubt if any other way can
bring me so high. My darling I think
it very important for all of us to take our religious
life very much as a serious & I'm delighted you should
take so much trouble about it. As for your posting
ways with me, I make very little of that. I can
assure you nothing is more dull than a reflection of
what one thinks; you have far more to teach me
than you are aware of & perhaps I have already
learnt more than you know. I can't think I shall
ever again have much use for the outward forms of
Christian ritual, but I haven't the least objection to
you or anyone else having a value for them; the difficulty
perhaps with me is that what is called worship seems
to have no affinity with my highest spiritual experi-
ences. I have worshipped in my fashion far more
intensely than ever in Church at moments it
may be in a London Street or on a mountain side
or in bed - just as my thoughts happen to take me
& I am lifted up to see aseth the glory & wonder

His own face as I believe. And how better should I see it in Church or in any holy place than here & now in this railway truck? And how better descent one should add though it may not concern the argument than through looking towards you?

The trail of Thought is swifter than the written word & far less circumscribed; more definite too I think but in detail less refined. The mind sees ahead enough a series of images & its course depends upon the spiritual purpose which has set it in motion. The images themselves seem to have little importance - the essence lies rather in the atmosphere of the mind on its spiritual journey, in the height at which it travels & its sensitiveness to the appeal of the Good. Consequently description of images is inexpressive & even misleading. Perhaps all that can be conveyed by a choice of words is the degree of poignancy in the spiritual experience; but even that would require a very skilful choice. I say all this to put you on your guard against a wrong impression of me which you might receive from my written words. Put briefly the whole argument is this: that the ranging of the mind in pursuit of the Good - an unconscious purpose perhaps - is a form of religious life.

After so serious a discussion I won't descend
to trivialities.

Ever so much love to you dear

Yrs George.

Friday morning (1 Nov.)

From the sum of our experiences it is evident that
letters from here have either been very much delayed
or positively stowed - which is a sad thought I'm
rather anxious about the one I wrote to Fletcher;
I expected an answer & it is now a fortnight since
I wrote; if you happen to see Mr J. you might
find out whether he has received it - but don't go
especially for that.

