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January 26, 1949

Mr. W. C. Simons
Lawrence
Kansas

My dear Friend Simons:

I did not intend to be so long answering your first letter in response to my note. Now in a way I am glad I was delayed, because your second letter is a bit easier to answer.

I want you to know in the first place that I have, out of very bitter experience, quite a full understanding of the test to which you are now being subjected. It is never easy, and I only wish that we were not so far apart so that we could meet and talk it over more leisurely.

The problem of suffering is one of the oldest with which the human race has wrestled. There simply is no satisfactory answer so far as the human mind can find to many, many bewildering and baffling problems which beset us. However, as you have already discovered, and I feel sure will discover increasingly as time goes on, there are some marvelous compensations that come in the wake of the bitterest kind of suffering and mental anguish. Just one experience comes into my mind. Shortly after Audrey left us, the New England hurricane brought, as you will remember, great loss of life and property here. One of my close and understanding friends writing me about our loss and just after the hurricane had swept through here said, "I have no doubt that by this time you have already found it possible to help other people in ways which you would not have been able to do a short while ago." It is very literally true that the more we turn to find ways of helping other people out of their difficulties, the more we find help in the solution of personal problems or compensation for them.

I have not read "The Big Fisherman," as I hope to do before long. Meanwhile, I wonder if you have seen "Peace of Mind," by our Boston Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman. As you may know, Rabbi Liebman at the age just barely past forty, died suddenly last spring. The chapter in his book on "Grief's Slow Wisdom," is a classic. To be sure, he was particularly interested in the psychiatric approach to personal problems, including grief, but it has had many helpful suggestions for us.