

January 14, 1949

Reverend Mr. Frank Jennings
14 Beacon Avenue
Boston 8, Massachusetts

My dear Frank:

I am very glad to have your good letter of January 12. It will be 11 weeks tomorrow since Gertrude left me, and I still count the days.

The courage that you expected of me based on religious faith was denied me. I had prayed so hard and fervently for my wife's recovery that I did not give up hope until the last. As I thought of the miracles of the Bible, for instance the turning of water into wine for the delectation of the wedding guests seemed so useless and trivial a display compared to that of saving a worthwhile human life.

I know how you must have felt and how you must have been tried when your daughter passed away. We continue to ask why, and no answer is returned to us. Why, in the first place, if God is all powerful does he permit cancer to take this terrible toll of human lives? Why is not science permitted to combat it successfully?

I should not say these things to you, and I am trying my best to find a solution, but so far it has escaped me. We are urged to have faith, and yet the hungry soul cries out, "Faith in what?"

I have tried through the years to do, perhaps more than my part, in supporting good causes, and why should I have more sympathy and more kindness toward those in need than the one we are told has full power to effect changes. I am trying my best not to be hard, not to be bitter, not to be deterred from continuing whatever gracious thing it has been mine to do but, seemingly, I pray against a blank wall.

I have had some beautiful letters and friends have tried to send me comforting articles and Scripture, The old Scotch ballads