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extinguish it for ever. But this (they will say) is no argument. A wise man faces facts, a good man prefers the hardest truth to the most alluring illusion. If there be no ground for assuming a living purpose behind the indifferent mask of nature, let us not fill the vacancy with a phantasm of our own creation. Let us at least sink back into the nothingness from which we rose with our intellectual integrity undamaged. Let all other values perish, so long as rational values remain undimmed.

Here, according to my view, lies the great illusion. Those who in all sincerity, and often with deep emotion, plead after a fashion like this, profoundly misunderstand the situation. They are indeed worthy of respect. They must not be confounded with those unstable souls who ignore God when they are happy, deny Him when they are wretched, tolerate Him on Sundays, but truly call on Him only when life, or fortune, hangs doubtfully in the balance. They are of a different and more virile temper. But are they less mistaken? They search for proofs of God, as men search for evidence about ghosts or witches. Show us, they say, the marks of His presence. Tell us what problems His existence would solve. And when these