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THE GENIUS OF A LIVING FAITH

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“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” – *Hebrews 11:1*

To the unbeliever, man is simply an evolutionary accident. His hopes of survival after death are strung on a figment of his imagination. To him, his fears, loves, longings, and beliefs are but the reaction of the incidental placement of certain lifeless atoms of matter. No display of energy nor expression of trust can carry him beyond the grave. The devotional labors and inspirational genius of the best of men are doomed to be extinguished by death – the long and lonely night of eternal oblivion and extinction. Nameless despair is his only reward for living and toiling under the temporal sun of mortal existence. Each day of life slowly and surely tightens the grasp of a pitiless doom which a hostile and relentless universe of matter has decreed will be the crowning insult to everything in human desire which is beautiful, noble, lofty, and good.

But this is not man's end and eternal destiny. Such a vision is but the cry of despair uttered by some wandering soul who has become lost in spiritual darkness, and who bravely struggles on in the face of the sophistries of a material philosophy, blinded by the confusion and distortion of complex learning. Yet all this doom of darkness and all this destiny of despair are forever dispelled by **one brave stretch of faith** on the part of the most humble and unlearned of God's children on earth.

There is no more powerful act that can effect such an immediate and absolute change in one's life, one's outlook, and one's entire paradigm of living. No amount of learning, no amount of reasoning, no amount of logic will do man more instant and eternal good than the simple, pure act of faith. For faith alone alleviates and even cures man's most profound, inherent and unrelenting fear – the fear of personality extinction at mortal death.

To effect personality survival, man must venture down the path of a living faith. This saving faith has its birth in the human heart when man realizes that the human personality most certainly can be preserved and translated from the material world to the spiritual world, from the human to the divine, from time to eternity.

The power of such a faith causes immediate and present personality enhancements in that:

- Faith causes ethics and morals to progress despite inherent and adverse animalistic tendencies.
- Faith produces a sublime trust in the goodness of God even in the face of bitter disappointment and crushing defeat.
- Faith generates profound courage and confidence despite natural adversity and physical calamity.
- Faith exhibits inexplicable poise and sustaining tranquillity notwithstanding
- baffling diseases and even acute physical suffering.

- Faith maintains a mysterious poise and composure of personality in the face of maltreatment and the rankest injustice.
- Faith maintains a divine trust in ultimate victory in spite of the cruelties of seemingly blind fate and the apparent utter indifference of natural forces to human welfare.
- Faith persists in the unswerving belief in God despite all contrary demonstrations of logic and successfully withstands all other intellectual sophistries.
- Faith continues to exhibit undaunted faith in man's survival regardless of the deceptive teachings of false science and the persuasive delusions of unsound philosophy.
- Faith lives and triumphs irrespective of the crushing burden of complex and partial civilizations of modern times.
- Faith contributes to the continued survival of selflessness in spite of human selfishness, social antagonisms, industrial greed, and political maladjustments.
- Faith steadfastly adheres to a sublime belief in universe unity and divine guidance regardless of the perplexing presence of evil and sin.
- Faith goes right on worshiping God in spite of anything and everything. Faith dares to declare, as did the suffering Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." (*Job 13:15 - King James Version*)

However, we must make this distinction: faith is not the same as belief. Beliefs are a formulation of creeds which a certain group may agree upon as a common religious attitude. Whereas faith stands for the individual's relationship to God. As Paul wrote:

“So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” – Romans 14:22

A living faith is more than the association of noble beliefs; it is more than an exalted system of philosophy. It is a living experience concerned with spiritual meanings, divine ideals, and supreme values. It is God-knowing and man-serving.

Man has a tendency to confuse a set of beliefs with a living faith. For example, we may proclaim that we are Jehovah's Witnesses, or Baptists, or Catholics, or Methodists and view these designations as indicative of our faith. But none of these designations carry any assurance of faith. We need only consider the reality that many claiming these "faiths" sometimes behave in a manner that is wholly inconsistent with a true and living faith. The pathway to faith is this: knowledge leads to belief; belief lead to actions; and actions create the experiences from which faith is derived.

Beliefs may become group possessions, but faith must be personal. Theologic beliefs can be suggested to a group, but faith can rise up only in the heart of the individual. Belief is always limiting and binding; faith is expanding and releasing. Belief fixates, faith liberates.

Beliefs, however, are a starting point which foster religious unity and fraternal support. But a personal living faith can only be sustained only upon a belief system that encompasses divine ideals rather than human ideas. Accordingly, we developed a Statement of Beliefs that form the basis for the information on this website. In a future article we will publish

the Statement and discuss why we believe these fundamental beliefs can unite all of Christianity, and possibly the world.

Another weakness of mere belief is that belief may not be able to resist doubt and withstand fear, whereas faith is always triumphant over doubting, for faith is both positive and living. The positive always has the advantage over the negative, truth over error, experience over theory, spiritual realities over the isolated facts of time and space. The convincing evidence of spiritual certainty consists in the fruits of the spirit which such believers – fathers – manifest as a result of this genuine spiritual experience. (*Galatians 5:22-23*) It is what Jesus meant when he said:

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” – *John 13:35*

Belief has attained the level of faith when it motivates life and shapes the mode of living. The acceptance of a teaching as true is not faith; that is mere belief. Neither is certainty nor conviction faith. A state of mind attains to faith levels only when it actually dominates the mode of living. Faith is a living attribute of genuine personal experience centered on God alone, who is the personification of love, truth, beauty, goodness and infinitely more.

Faith has betrayed its trust when it presumes to deny realities and to confer upon its devotees assumed knowledge. Faith is a traitor when it fosters betrayal of intellectual integrity and belittles loyalty to supreme values and divine ideals. Faith never shuns the problem-solving duty of mortal living. Living faith does not foster bigotry, persecution, or intolerance.

Faith does not shackle the creative imagination, neither does it maintain an unreasoning prejudice toward the discoveries of scientific investigation, for zeal of faith is according to knowledge and its strivings are the preludes to sublime peace. Faith vitalizes religion and constrains the religionist heroically to live the golden rule: So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” – *Matthew 7:12*

Faith transforms the philosophy of God into the certainty of God through the personal religious experience. Skepticism may challenge the theories of theology, but confidence in the dependability of personal experience affirms the truth of that belief which has grown into faith. In other words, while faith is certainly logical and reasonable, we must appreciate the superb preeminence of the personal experience **of** the Father over mere logic and reason **about** the Father.

Convictions about God may be arrived at through wise reasoning, but the individual becomes God-knowing only by faith, through personal experience. When dealing with the daily affairs of life, we can be content with probabilities, but when considering divine realities, we must approach God with the certainty of a living faith. The God-knowing soul dares to say, "I know," even when this knowledge of God is questioned by the unbeliever who denies such certitude because it is not wholly supported by intellectual logic. To every such doubter, the believer need only reply, "How do you know that I do not know?"

It is true that many who are inwardly sure about God fear to assert such feelings of certainty because of the multiplicity and cleverness of those who assemble objections and magnify difficulties about believing in God. However, it requires no great depth of intellect to pick flaws, ask questions, or raise objections. On the other hand, it does require brilliance of mind to answer these questions and solve these difficulties; faith certainty creates this brilliance which is the greatest technique for dealing with all such superficial contentions.

Though reason can always question faith, faith can always supplement both reason and logic. Reason creates the probability which faith can transform into a moral certainty, even a spiritual experience. God is absolute truth. The vast gulf between the experience of the **truth** of God and ignorance as to the **fact** of God can be bridged only by living faith. Reason alone cannot achieve harmony between infinite truth and universal fact. Contemplate what this means.

Just as certainly as men share their religious beliefs, they create a religious group of some sort which eventually creates common goals. We believe that someday soon religionists will get together and actually effect co-operation on the basis of unity of ideals and purposes rather than attempting to do so on the basis of psychological opinions and theological beliefs. Goals rather than creeds should unify religionists. Since true religion is a matter of personal spiritual experience, it is inevitable that each individual religionist must be allowed to have his own and personal interpretation of the realization of that spiritual experience, without prejudice.

The God-knowing individual is not one who is blind to the difficulties or unmindful of the obstacles which stand in the way of finding God in the maze of superstition, tradition, and materialistic tendencies of modern times. He has encountered all these deterrents and triumphed over them, surmounted them by a living faith, and attained the highlands of spiritual experience in spite of them.

The Universal Father, who is the object of our faith, lives in every rational mortal mind. But you cannot be sure about God unless you know him and sonship is the only experience which makes fatherhood certain. That is why this site focuses so much on the realization that ‘So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.’ (*Galatians 3:26*) And a living faith in the Father is the first step of a son.

Faith is the price you pay for entrance into the family or Kingdom of God; but forgiveness is the act of God which accepts your faith as the price of admission. Receiving God’s forgiveness involves a definite and actual experience and consists in the following four steps – the kingdom steps of inner righteousness:

- God’s forgiveness is made actually available and is personally experienced by man just in so far as he forgives his fellows.
- Man will not truly forgive his fellows unless he loves them as himself.
- Consequently, to love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.
- Moral conduct, true righteousness, becomes, then, the natural result of such love

In other words, a living faith in the Father leads to love for our fellow man and results in a clean conscience and true righteousness. And more than that, a living faith results in personality survival whereupon a mortal child can experience the sublime realities of a heavenly and eternal existence as a spiritual son of the Father. No other earthly endeavor can achieve such all-encompassing, far-reaching and soul-satisfying reality. A living faith is the guarantee of all of the Father’s promises. Indeed:

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” – *Hebrews 11:1*

We welcome your comments.

“Elaia Luchnia”