

HELEN KELLER

*Let Us
Have Faith*



*A militant message of hope
and courage by one of the
world's best-loved women*

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Let Us Have Faith



BOOKS BY
HELEN KELLER



LET US HAVE FAITH
HELEN KELLER'S JOURNAL
OPTIMISM (AN ESSAY)
OUT OF THE DARK
MIDSTREAM: MY LATER LIFE
MY RELIGION
THE SONG OF THE STONE WALL
THE STORY OF MY LIFE
THE WORLD I LIVE IN

HELEN KELLER

Let Us Have Faith



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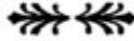
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Let Us Have Faith



FOR those of us who mourn the wrecking of half a civilization and the noble values it gave us to serve it is hard to see good in the future. Blessings once sweet have turned to ashes because millions are in utter want of all things. But however dark the world may seem we have a light at our command. It is faith, and it is ours to do with as we will. For faith is thought directed toward good, and like all thought-power it is infinite.

Faith is a brave look of the soul for new paths to life. It is not dogma. It is a white fire of enthusiasm. Even in its perverted forms it is the strongest motive force we have. In its highest forms it is the kindler of all nobility. It is not confined to any church or institution. Creeds are bodies and die. Faith is immortal.

How vital it is—this hunger that leads people to look for truth in the Bible, the Vedas and the Koran! It is faith—marshaling the most useful and ennobling ideas for all men—that the loftiest thinkers in every age and country have striven and are still striving to impart.

In capturing faith's pure passion and enthusiasm they have abandoned superficial associations with time, number and size. Wherever a courageous soul rises man is invincible. Faith sanctifies any place, renders its climate bracing to weakness, its air luminous to doubt-dimmed eyes. Continents sink; empires disintegrate; but faith and the universe of heroic minds abide forever.

Faith transmutes circumstance, time, condition and mood into vitality. This is why Christ's teaching was momentarily effective nineteen centuries ago and still is among those who truly respond to it. Society was regenerated by a race of slaves in the early days of Christianity. To all practical intents and purposes they were chattels and beasts of burden, with eyes that saw not, ears that heard not and wills that were paralyzed by tyranny. Nevertheless, at Jesus' advent they walked erect and wholehearted and went straight to the fact that life, the Kingdom of God, is within us. From confidence in God they distilled confidence in their fellow men. They kept

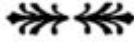
their souls unmanacled, their minds open to visions and their bodies alert for fulfilment. That was Jesus' miracle for all ages.

Over against a society marked by caste and brute supremacy, throttled by ignorance except for the amazing intellectual activity in a few cities, faith shouldered the issues of life which must be shouldered today. "Bear ye one another's burdens," faith declared, and it went further. It left an inner light as a trust for all human beings. It began remolding the world according to hitherto untried ideas. It made the first purposeful scrutiny of the profundities of the collective soul, and Divine Modesty cried, "Ye shall do mightier things than these."

In days like these to believe that Good is the dominant principle is an ordeal as by fire, but for me it would be much harder to surrender that faith. All too well do I realize that the bitterest fears of modern thinkers did not envisage the ruin into which we are now being hurled. So much more then is faith imperative to pour healing upon blinding anguish and deafening fear. Heaven and earth, it has been affirmed, are mirages rising from the deserts of man's despair. Picturesque indeed would despair be if it could perform such a miracle. But to everyone with faith his own world is real, no matter what it may appear to be to others, and happiness—its fundamental meaning is a free breathing of the soul—has also a share in the mirage. From the delight of young animals in simply being alive, from children at play, from youth risking all for love, from the triumphs that follow long effort—from all these faith gathers materials for her Temple to form a bulwark against the storm.

I believe in immortality as instinctively as the fruit tree in the seed and quite as growingly, but that is not faith, except as it shines among its aggregate of nerving truths. Without immortality faith would still count it a magnificent vision to look upon God's face a brief while, to hold a beloved mortal's hand, to receive a child's kiss and look through a glass millions of miles to other universes.

Faith Arms the Soul



POWER, not comfort, is my demand upon faith. Living faith is discomfoting to the last degree. It does not offer an escape from life and its evils, but it gives a more abundant life despite all obstacles and all hardships. Faith, rightly understood, is active, not passive. Passive faith is no more a force than sight is in an eye that does not look or search out. Active faith knows no fear. It denies that God has betrayed His creatures and given the world over to darkness. It denies that men are to be judged after the appearance of race, color and opinion instead of according to the Law of Life. It denies that a society in which good will shall replace hate and intelligent co-operation supplant armed force is unattainable. It denies despair. Defeat is simply a signal to press onward. Reinforced by faith, the weakest mortal is mightier than disaster. The God within braces him against the universe; his soul is whole and equal to any emergency.

Faith has such might because next to love it is the force most inherent in one's own awareness. It directs to the light when darkness prevails; it supplies incentive to action and converts ideas into realities. It fires the imagination, and this is essential, for one must envision the higher life and behave as if it were a fact before it can unfold. But though faith belongs to the future, its energy irradiates the present, just as the green leaf pigment—the delicate link between the sun and life—permeates the vegetable world.

Faith carries me to the limit of whatever light I have, whatever good I find, and beyond that it blazes a trail, scorning precedent or the shelter of known fact. What is a fact but a thing done so far and no farther? Just one special “fact” existed to bridge the chasm between mankind and me—the education of Laura Bridgman, the first deaf-and-blind person ever to be taught to communicate with her fellow creatures.

The facts which equip most lives for labor and learning are as numerous as the sands of the sea, but it is faith which lights us into sustaining realities beyond those perceived by the physical senses. Faith, like philosophy, endows me with a unity I miss in the chaos of material experience devoid of

sight or hearing. But like everyone else I have eyes in my soul. Through faith I create the world I gaze upon; I make my own day and night, tint the clouds with iridescent fires, and behold! a midnight is strewn with other stars.

Proof is not my concern. Can anything really be proved—goodness or beauty or joy? You cannot define happiness any more than you can define health, but you know them when you feel them. What I want is to live. Not letting faith breathe in me would be death.

*If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out.*

Suppose faith is a dream, a delusion. I know that it made my life possible and that of many of my fellows. Personal religious experience had sunk into lethargy when the movement came to understand the faculties of the normal and the handicapped so as to raise them to higher levels. “All things are possible with God,” it was asserted, but people remained content with a mystical enjoyment of this truth as thought only. Even as late as 1880 physical defects and temperamental drawbacks were viewed as signs of God’s wrath, and good will was shackled by a sense of futility in trying to repair what He had broken. Faith penetrated this dungeon with an optimism that sees the Creator’s image in every human being and a determination to expand his capabilities to the utmost through suitable teaching and helpful environment.

Reason hardly warranted Anne Sullivan’s attempt to transform a little half-human, half-animal deaf-blind child into a complete being. Neither science nor philosophy had set such a goal, but faith, the eye of love, did. I did not know I had a soul. Then the God in a wise heart drew me out of nothingness with cords of human love and the life belt of language, and lo! I found myself.

Faith—Anne Sullivan’s and mine and that of all who wrought with us—has made my limitations ineffectual if not trivial. And since I have the privilege of doing it, I am proud to bear this testimony to the power of faith. If I had not faith to think with and suffer with I could not bear the incessant wrenching at my mind caused by the revival of barbarism and intolerance, the mutilations of mankind by war and persecution and tyranny. Faith is the red blood that braces when all else fails.

Faith serves me best on a plane where I cannot attain the ideal life—a plane where there is a harmonious blending of all faculties and organs.

Through faith alone can I fulfil the two senses I lack—sight and hearing—and build out from my imperfect speech. Faith has the ingenuity to bring me insight, and I know where I am going. Could I win out on a half soul, seeing nothing but deficiencies—my awkward walk, my inability to do even the simplest thing unaided? No risk would be worth while for me. I should slide back into the devouring void, and the universe would crush me. In my doubly shadowed world faith gives me reason for trying to draw harmony out of a marred instrument. Faith is not a cushion for me to fall back upon; it is my working energy.

All men are limited in their service when they fight alone. This is especially true of the severely handicapped, but when they and their normal fellow creatures help one another they have a sure defense, a conquering strength—and it is faith. Life for me has been one long battle against obstacles, and it is still a dear necessity for me to “lean hard” on friendship if I am to continue my victories. Withdrawing aid from the handicapped even for a short time may hurl them back into isolation and brain-withering idleness.

Unity in service to one another is stirring evidence of faith. It need not wait to be the work of an entire civilization; in fact, it is here among us if we tear defeatism from our eyes and look for it. The achievements which have contributed most to progress—faith’s fruits—have never been wrought in distrustful aloofness from the people, and they have rarely borne the flag of any nationality or the emblem of any class or creed. They have overleaped political boundaries to elevate and instruct people under every banner. The effort to abolish every form of slavery has been the responsibility of a universal brotherhood of faith. The ever-widening conquest of disease is an international epic. Frenchmen, Germans, Japanese and Americans have shared in the checking of diphtheria. Ethylene gas anesthesia and insulin were given to the world by scientists in the United States and Canada without thought of personal profit. There are no frontiers of faith for Madame Curie, Harvey, Pasteur, Darwin, Galileo and Copernicus. Agriculture and invention encircle the earth regardless of wars or class struggle. Genius in sculpture and literature is nonsectarian. Homer and the Prophets, Shakespeare and Goethe are indestructible Gibaltars of man’s spirit and will outlast all empires and despots.

Faith Can Be Acquired



FAITH is not the prerogative of great souls only. Faith, it seems to me, is acquired somewhat as we develop an artistic appreciation of nature. A person without faith resembles a native of the soil who is surrounded by mountains and waterfalls, yet oblivious to their magic. The farmer may walk daily, head bent, eyes blind to the brilliant verdure he treads upon, caring only whether his crop will be abundant or not. Sometimes I am astonished by the stolid indifference of country folk to their heritage of sky and earth.

However, it is a refreshing truth that often a solitary shepherd, a mountaineer or a prairie dweller is poetically alive to the fascinating habitation that is his home, even though he is forced to adopt a practical attitude toward the land from which he wrests a hard living.

Faith does not oblige us to be unusually endowed, but receptive. To say others may have it but we cannot is wanton self-limitation. To be alert for whatever surprises may glow within us is to have at our command a zest for living which outweighs all material possessions. Stepping inward softly so as not to crush shy dreams and impulses, we shall marvel as our minds little by little disclose the completeness and oneness we potentially are. We shall, as I can testify after fifty years' unbroken experience, grow longer wings as we draw from superficial living into our happiness. To me the only satisfactory definition of happiness is wholeness—a blending in harmony of all one's feelings, visions, skills with the world of unfoldment waiting to be scrutinized and claimed.

It need not discourage us if we are full of doubts. Healthy questionings keep faith dynamic. In fact, unless we start with doubts we cannot have a deep-rooted faith. One who believes lightly and unthinkingly has not much of a belief. He who has a faith which is not to be shaken has won it through blood and tears—has worked his way from doubt to truth as one who reaches a clearing through a thicket of brambles and thorns.

Faith gathers stimulus from the doubters as well as from believers. A few years ago a man who did not give his name but called himself “a futile

creature” without a helpful idea to offer wrote in a magazine that he had lost all motivating faith. He would wait in his quiet study for a desire to see or hear or do something different, but the desire never came. He said if he could create man he would abolish memory and give him lusty wishes and swift feet to pursue them. He would leave principles out and fill him with “a magnificent audacity.” His fierce honesty stabbed me awake. I looked in myself for obstacles and learned how to abolish daily memory of disheartening experiences. Since then I have been better able to keep my wishes lusty and run swiftly in their pursuit.

We hear on all sides a summons to return to religion. There is an encouraging ring of sincerity in the cry, but is it not a bit confusing to say “return to religion” when religion means “return to faith”? Religion is the fruit of faith, and to ask for religion without faith is like asking for the flower without seed. Many religions have spread inspiring hope upon earth, but one Faith has been their tree, just as good will is the one root of all truly beneficent activities. It has crossed my mind that religion may perhaps be man’s despair in not finding God, while faith is hope—God’s searching for man.

Unfortunately faith is sometimes confused with superstition and religion with dogma. Some of the noblest thinkers have disparaged religion because they assumed that religious emotions prostrate the soul to an unknown Power and subject the intellect to its tyrannical dictates. Obviously spiritual slavery, like any other form of slavery, would menace the liberty essential to full personal development. That has often been the case. There have been savage forms of animal and devil worship which were fetters upon the souls of believers. Religion for them was not a joy but a doom. There is also a type of religiosity (I scorn to call it religion) which encroaches upon free investigation and experimentation which of right belong to science and modern philosophy.

Faith is no jailer. It rends asunder thoughts that retard growth and it releases souls bound by fear. Nietzsche wrote, “Convictions are prisons.” Such convictions may come when one mind dominates another. This is equivalent to putting the body in chains.

Faith refuses to be confined to one path. It will break through any wilderness regardless of every restraint except the Law of Life, untroubled by conditions but creating the next state by its discoveries.

Faith Rises



RECENTLY I was wounded to the quick by a sermon which referred to the dictatorship of God. Such an expression seems incredible from one who claims to know the tender mercies of the Giver of Life to men. God is not omnipotent in that barbaric sense of the word. God, I have heard said, is the sum of the best aspirations and wisest thoughts and most beautiful actions of mankind. God is truly this sum, since He gives these things to man, but He is far beyond all of them and will forever be beyond the highest man achieves, just as love and moral progress and beauty in art will forever lie beyond what man is able to attain.

There are large numbers whose faith, I know, outruns their creeds. Where reason perceives one truth the heart seizes many.

When Thomas Paine was crossing the Delaware with Washington's defeated troops his magnificent faith in his fellow man made history. Seated among those despairing, barefooted men shivering amid snowdrifts, he wrote on a drumhead warnings against "the sunshine patriot" and the "summer soldier." Washington had this rallying message read aloud, and the men's hearts revived with a might above their own to wrest victory from an army superior in numbers and equipment. Yet Thomas Paine considered himself an atheist.

Matthew Arnold called himself an agnostic, but his poem, *The Buried Life*, is a deep expression of faith. It is a pity that it is read so little. I will quote the final stanzas:

*Only—but this is rare—
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadow where it glides, the sun, the breeze.*

*And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.*

I know there are people who are bored with spiritual ideas. They are bored because they do not know their own capacities and consequently miss the multitude of bright, illuminating interests that would come if they learned to think inwardly. A bored person is one who is unacquainted with himself and God. God is never a bore to those who know and love Him.

Another fact I do not forget is the tendency of the beliefs which fire one generation to grow chill in the next. As enthusiasm cools the spontaneity and joy of communing with the Divine are lost. Ideas of life and conduct are accepted without investigation. True religion is obscured by sects, rites and legal codes. The dead weight of the letter killeth, and faith, the song that "turns a stone and starts a wing," ceases at the approach of dull-eared orthodoxy. Revolt is needed to rekindle the spirit that giveth life. But this very ebb and flow shows how unsubduable are faith and the freedom it reincarnates. In all ages faith renews man's impulse to penetrate the

splendors of creation; it reveals a power working within him and apart from him and directs him toward new objectives.

Faith never despairs. Every calamity, every thwarted longing is a plowing of the heart, turning its sod to the sky so that something fairer may spring up and blossom. Confronted with defeat, faith still lays up unseen treasures. Quiet and unafraid, Sigrid Undset urges Norway never to yield to “those loathsome catchwords of blood and race, blood and iron,” and her idealism will go marching on as long as heroism is remembered. Let the circumstances be ever so horrible, to choose faith is to create.

Defeat is nothing to be ashamed of; it is routine in digging the gold of one’s personality. I have known people of faith who were defeated times without number and with whom I never associated failure. For their gift to the world was what it cries out for most—great, simple souls.

To succeed and remain mediocre is despicable. It is avarice in the use of whatever one has latent in oneself, and it is a sacrilege against faith.

Defeat is a gateway to mental adventure that makes humdrum days piquant, causes the blood to sing and may even invest drudgery with grace. That is the meaning of Walt Whitman’s song that victory is great, but defeat, if necessary, is greater.

Faith is mental perception of what is good, together with a steady endeavor to live it despite all obstacles. I say obstacles because everything that is easy was once difficult. Ease is like rest, and like rest it can become stagnation. Without resistance the bodily powers shrivel. Would the infant ever learn to walk or talk if it did not struggle? Only through innumerable downfalls and countless lispings does he gain free movement and become articulate. If that is possible to the untaught instinct of a child, how immeasurably much more can be wrought by an adult equipped with bright-eyed, full-limbed faith!

Because faith thinks for itself it has eyes to see that what is true is true and what is good is good. It revives the generous ideals which have fallen among robbers in a cruel past. Out of the present wreckage it salvages confidence to sustain men in another stand against barbarism. It ventures limitless mortgages of energy and sacrifice so that the future shall not sink into affliction and bondage.

Faith Regenerates



THE capabilities of man remain unknown to us. As God challenged the unbeliever to fathom His power, so we may challenge thinkers to sound the resources and declare the boundaries of human nature and show what initiatives may issue from it in coming ages. The Roman Empire, changed by Christianity, was an example of these unpredictable happenings. St Augustine is typical of the unexpected and unmeasured regenerative forces stored up in the human mind.

I have an unshakable belief that mankind's higher nature is on the whole still dormant. The greatest souls reveal excellencies of mind and heart which their lesser fellows possess—hidden, it is true, but there all the same. That inborn goodness renders it possible for most people to recognize nobility when they see it, as the latent poet in a reader enables him to appreciate a fine poem.

Even in debased natures we have gleams of splendor. Goya, the most brilliant artist and feared cartoonist in Spain, seemed a living flame of lust and malign hatred. Yet at the heart of him was a tender love for children. Tortured by ill-health, he would stay at home, playing with them and coaxing their charming ways into portraits. His affection carried their limpid little souls and candid, credulous faces alive to the canvas. Far under the desert of Goya's wolfishness shone a layer of nobility to which lovers of the young are forever indebted for illumining glimpses of their souls, unobscured by self-consciousness, unencrusted by sophistry and care.

Dr Johnson was afflicted with a nervous, pessimistic temperament, and he saw human nature in its basest forms in high places and among the criminal classes. Out of a sincere charity matching the nobility of his books he declared, "As it is said of the greatest liar that he tells more truth than falsehood, so it may be said of the worst man that he does more good than evil."

Faith is a cogent necessity in view of this knowledge: we are told that the population of the earth is around two billion and that in every hundred,

reckoning roughly, there are four beautiful hearts and two “live-wire” minds. Faith alone will quicken the advance and even up these two spiritual organs, so that they may form a sound unit and spread vitality through society’s blood stream.

The odyssey of men and women who turn wounds of body or soul to unsuspected inner vigor is a magnificent prophecy of what mankind, reinforced by wholeness, shall achieve when its lameness drops away and it gives three leaps and goes forth to other planets of potency.

It is true that human intercourse is cluttered up with pessimistic inhibitions. Frequently it is asserted that the majority of human beings lack special gifts and that their nature cannot be changed. Referring constantly to the hopeless stupidities of humanity is a habit inherited from static beliefs which bred contempt for the multitude. Instruction for them was discouraged until after the Middle Ages, and even now our educational methods lag far behind their goal of universal effectiveness.

Experiments in the enrichment of the heritage of the human mind are only just beginning. The utmost faith at our command is needed to carry them out. As matters now stand, we are too near the abyss of a returning dark world to let such experiments lapse through want of faith. If we keep gazing into the abyss it will gaze back into us and we shall be engulfed. This pernicious habit must be broken. It prolongs mind-blighting traditions and prevents the worshiper from being a participant in the whole of his own faith. Generous risks must be taken for progress.

Very humanly most of us live much of the time below the level of our highest aspirations. We grow impatient, we forget; but the struggling nobility remains, and the recurrent moments of fellowship are God’s “awful rose of dawn” on the mountaintops of endeavor.

The child in each of us calls for the imposing majesty of such examples as Abraham almost unarmed, save with faith, Moses “slow of mouth,” yet swift to do and die for an ideal, and the Prophets who stood against idolatry, blood sacrifices and inhumanity.

We have an abundance of such examples. Bruno, perceiving the people’s ignorance and knowing that the hierarchy was determined to keep them mentally blind, never let go his faith. Condemned to the stake, he cried in a ringing voice, “I hope knowledge may be the common property of all.” As the flames leaped higher he called out again his faith that all would have the opportunity of education. Almost with his last breath he repeated, “I hope!”

Kepler was starved and persecuted to his dying day, but his words shine steadfastly in the firmament of faith: “Try to think God’s thoughts after Him.”

Science itself, which to the unthinking may seem far removed from faith, is a constant challenge to us not to live like pygmies. For what is science but faith staking everything on imaginative hypotheses so that it may retrieve larger hopes for the race from the unknown? Its courage and activity in piling up inventions and benefits, its implacable war upon ill-health are among the most inspiring records of man’s struggle upward. If simple faith can thus spur science to open up one immensity after another of natural truth, how much more can a thoughtful, all-round faith win great dominions in the soul of man!

Yet how are we moderns behaving toward such annals of faith? Moping and despairing on the shore of a continent upon which we are just setting foot. I did not think I would live to see such nervous collapse of a people—such utter breakdown of fundamentals. Spiritual helplessness is unworthy of us who feel ourselves men and companions equally with the stars and the atoms.

Faith enables us to stand chastened yet glad in the presence of the unrealized personalities that are our endowment—a music lifting off our bruised shoulders the weight and stupidity of half life. Vibrating to this spiritual music, we feel that life goes on without effort, and when it dies away into commonplaces we are conscious of a weight. It is not a mere coincidence that a sense of inner power created by faith has so frequently moved to music through transforming events. Shod with melody and song, the Israelites journeyed across the desert to the Promised Land. Their courage surged forth in psalms as they swept aside their foes and reared their Citadel of Humanity amid idol-darkened nations. Early Christianity sang its way from Greece to the farthest ends of the Old World. St Francis and his “Minstrels of the Lord” intoned a new rhythm of brotherhood among men and tenderness toward every living thing that with Love’s opened hand its desire might be satisfied. Luther’s songs pulsated might through the Reformation; and the true stories are endless how the inner beauty of hindered human beings sings above disaster and death itself. There can be no genuine faith devoid of music or some other art, since both are inspired by the Supreme Harmony within. Sincerity will express itself sooner or later to the senses.

The converse is an even deeper truth—there can be no true art without faith. Only when art expresses a vivid belief shared by many does it become

a moving force. Such beliefs are religious—"a form of music in the cathedral of the mind." Painting and architecture, I am told, and sculpture, as my hand does perceive, have this exalting, self-revealing effect upon the beholder. "Entertainment" is an inadequate, I should say, a frivolous word for leisure spent among such healing ministers to our faith and the fire of personality it kindles.

What I am attempting to say is an exploration of a Northeast Passage in my own soul. The wonder and imaginative freshness of childhood have never withered in my breast, and consequently life retains the urgent poignancy of a crisis as well as the rhythms of poetry. But when people ask how they can accomplish more, I observe that they either do not know or have lost the sense of crisis which pulls the faculties to a point and intensifies action.

One difficulty is that we do not transmit into our daily living the new ideas that sudden great psychic upheavals bring to us. We have not yet caught up with the organism which adapts itself to a new violent environment, not only acquiring but retaining the new powers it develops under that pressure. Often under pressure we begin to do great things, but when the pressure is removed we let them go.

The situation is pathetically illustrated by experiments with crustaceans. Suppose a lobster is tied by a claw to a stake and a dreaded enemy appears. Instantly the captive is quick with intelligence and self-help. He jerks away from the cord and flees with a bleeding limb. Yet if he is tied to the stake with plenty of delicious food just out of reach, plainly to be seen and smelt, he stays on the spot like a bump on a log until he starves! I am not going to call anyone a lobster, but I do emphasize an everyday fact: in times of danger large groups rise to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, courage and sacrifice—"great occasions inspire great thoughts." On lower levels of excitement, such as a swimming contest or a baseball match, the players set the spectators on fire with their prowess, elasticity and grace. Society would fairly blaze and sing with men and women majestic of presence and valiant doers of God's Word if only they kept the lessons they learn from crises! Why, oh, why do they let escape the treasure, enlarged personality, which has raised them to glory?

Are they afraid to confess what they surely sense deep down? Do they tire of the radiant challenges faith flings them? Or are there many grades they have skipped in the training of their minds, so that they cannot recapture the harmonious unity of spirit, brain and body which once swept them up the heights? William James speaks of "a fine delirium" that

prevents people in a crisis from seeing the path they tread or fixing as a permanent possession the higher excellence they have glimpsed. Certainly their loftiest moments are their true measure, and the most beautiful mission any teacher can conceive is to help them prolong those moments with the dramatic instinct, the expectant imagination and collected posture of crisis. Mankind will be refashioned and history rewritten when this law is understood and obeyed.

Faith teaches us to use our talents to the fullest extent, however slight they may be. Even if a frail body refuses to obey the soul's big behests, one can always do the little nameless things that give life grace and meaning. Simple goodness is "the dear essential of the heart," and the universe of the little significant lives is as vast as the universe of the stars. As Emily Dickinson has expressed it:

*If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.*

We betray ourselves into smallness when we think the little choices of each day are trivial. Drama and risk are needed to vitalize every commonplace act or lesson or posture. The personalities which heal and urge forward are the beautiful quintessence of this daily, hourly practice grown natural like breathing. Every day we should do a little more than is required. If we exert ourselves at some task we would rather not perform, provided we are not overworked horses going around in a blind circle, we shall find that soon or late our trained personalities will leap exultantly to the test. Inuring ourselves each day to resolute volition and spontaneous self-expression is like a plunge into the brine. Its benefits may not show at the time, but the salty-sweet virtue soaks into our fibers and is stored for the coming victory.

If to all we do we add a little more love, a bit more beauty, our interest will be too great to allow us to slip back into deaf, blind and dumb routine. From details of daily living endowed with purposeful ideals will rise beautiful tendencies to bless whole communities. This is what faith is for—Creation.

Like unselfish love faith is, so to speak, a spiritual mutant, discontinuous from the stock of other experiences. It reorganizes one's mind with a feeling that a benign power is co-operating to overcome one's self-distrust and terror of unattempted enterprise. This inner power is what is most human in us. In the world's present cataclysm it is unfolding its holiest and most awful miracle. It is releasing millions from servile fear, rallying their ideals of liberty and fortifying their wills to shatter a desolating militarism and keep open the trails to civilization. In this vast sacrifice they are embodying the finest intuitions of their hearts—brotherhood and democracy. They are aflame with a unity more profound than that of any dogma or verbal formula, and this unity, if carried over into peace, will light up this midnight blackness as irresistibly as did the Spoken Word in man's remote past. For true unity shines forth from this lifting of the collective soul to an expansive, sanctifying principle. Through faith mankind is learning to grapple its calamities and convert them into redemption.

Let us quit saying we do not know how to express this inexpressible vision or any other. Let us blurt out what our real selves are prodding us to articulate, and language will be ignited. Let us regain our initiative, if we have mislaid it, and each day pile up circumstances to enlist imagination in exercising our crisis capabilities. Mind! Not a single day is to be skipped until the new attitude is firmly established. Each lapse undoes more than can be easily retrieved, like a drill left in the damp or a watch damaged by a fall. Continual training enables brain and nerves to act together and preserves their crisis alertness. Suffering a while for such a superb end is preferable to chronic suffering from boredom. Living for a cause will prove as gallant as dying for a cause.

There is no occasion for trepidation at the word "crisis." It is not necessarily a tragic finality. It may be a choice between lesser and greater light or between outworn values and progressive good. The courage to decide remains always the royalty of man. Ordinary choices are critical; simple words are decisive. Each time we break bread one with another has the appealing humanity of the last time if we look at it discerningly. Herein when someone dies lies the cause of self-reproach for appreciation held back and failure to help. Our joy is too limited to squander on the low planes of mediocrity when we are endowed sufficiently to stay at our best every day. Vicissitudes are too numerous and disorganizing for us to be perfunctory or careless about our inner defenses.

Faith Fears Not



IT is lamented that traditions upon which progress depends are vanishing. Since “tradition” means an idea or custom handed down from age to age, the question suggests itself. “Which traditions are worth retaining?” Are they great men’s thoughts and discoveries blooming in fadeless immortality, or are they the husks of ideas which have long since been threshed into nourishment for a changing era? Or clogs upon education and faith that should have been discarded with the Middle Ages?

Life does not derive its whole vigor from the past. With the birth of each child nature lays aside all traditions, except those man imposes. There are no traditions according to which the child shall breathe or think or speak or strengthen his limbs in the struggle for existence. Let us find out if the traditions bewailed are crutches for indolent minds or wills grown soft, and if so, let us cease to bolster them. Our task is rather to leave behind us stimulating lives that shall nerve posterity to higher goals, sloughing off our imperfect vision, our half-knowledge and half-gods, our ailments of mind and body. Disappearing landmarks are not our chief peril, but propaganda backed by neither good will nor faith.

A way of life that has become a tradition has ceased to be dynamic. Unless faith keeps ahead of tradition a vacuum is left by dead churches and dissolving ethical codes. Freedom gives way to misrule and despotism rushes in, riding roughshod over all rights. Might becomes right and the divine rights of states are revived. Faith alone can oppose panic and specious ideologies by reminding us that no ruler or state can give us life or implant the self-expressing culture which embodies us as free men.

Faith is a rampart of ideas, and ideas alone repel the malign forces of perverted society. While Emerson’s influence was at its height he wrote in “The Oversoul”: “No answer in words can reply to a question of things.” Unbeknown to the author that utterance struck at the breast of liberty. It is among the ideas that most aid and abet enemies of independent thinking. It blinds faith and mutes responsibility. Faith, it is true, is not faith if it

dogmatizes or coerces—true faith abhors preaching—but both words and ideas are vital if it is to speak victoriously in the battle with evil ideologies grown vocal and shameless.

A thought has often hung round me, the truth of which I am surer as I read and listen. Our vocabulary is not commensurate yet with inner progress. It looks to me as if faults and evil propensities have a whole lexicon to themselves and positive qualities only a brief page. Perhaps the reason is that good refuses to be dissected and labeled as evil is. However the case may be, I have not come across a word for good-finding to offset faultfinding. To permit one helpful concept to go unidentified is as wasteful as losing the tiny yet powerful units of radioactivity. Faith must have more working words as well as the uncountable beauties within for the nascent world that is to emerge from our untapped resources.

Many of our spiritual words have faded and become trite because we have permitted the ideas they represent to become static. I have been thinking that one of man's first great tasks is to get deeper into his emotions, then to use his intelligence to understand those emotions. He must "take stock." Those two words have a commercial sound, but the world of commerce and labor often puts us to shame in the vividness of its expressions. And mental indolence—I write this shamefacedly—often keeps us from saying the right word.

The old precept—and who can improve upon it?—is "Depart from evil and do good." Anyone who looks into himself can see which of his desires tend toward his own well-being and that of his fellow creatures. Some people know this intuitively, but regrettably many people lack intuition. Still, patient scrutiny will reveal to them their imperfections, faults, vices—call them what you will—and they will find motives and methods for removing these shackles upon their freer and happier life.

We are surrounded by complaints of the small amount of progress each generation achieves and passes on to the next. These complaints rest upon a half-truth. Perhaps we may gain another bit of truth from the fact that time never changes its proportions, whether it be a day, a thousand or a million years. I find a powerful spur to faith in considering man's existence as an evolutionary day of twelve hours. It startles me—the vivid realization that Babylon and Egypt began to do mighty works but half an hour ago and that the world, for the most part, has been somewhat civilized for only a few minutes. Modern science entered during the last minute ticked off by the

cosmic timepiece. Such a fancy makes possible a truer picture of man, still pathetically young, simple, stammering, bewildered by the swift accumulation of spiritual and mechanical forces he has not yet learned to control.

That man has traveled but a short distance is shown by the widespread lack of balance in his emotions and desires. Beset by strange problems, confused by complex duties, he hastens blindly onward without a definite goal. Under such conditions upheavals are inevitable. But I see no ground for the view that our basic human ideals are being annihilated. That is a cosmic impossibility. "Basic" ideals cannot be made void until all men die! Everyone has some ideal toward which his thought and disposition tend. It is his life, and for him to realize it is to live. However poor and ignorant this ideal may be, it is better than anything it actualizes. Just as a blighted, ill-nourished plant embodies the principle of vegetable life, so the worst character indicates that an ideal of goodness exists, and the most dense ignorance is a shadow of the truth of things. Ideals cannot be banished while creation breathes through us.

The pillars of government east and west may rock to and fro to the downfall, but the two billion inhabitants upon which our real world rests cannot be dissolved. Empire is its own doom. No state based on brute might can last. The Prophets declared of old that "dominion is the rod of the wicked; it shall not rest upon the righteous, or they will turn unto iniquity." A nation, however noble its units, cannot hold power over human souls and bodies without ultimately violating its own integrity. Every spiritual breach causes an infraction of man's natural estate, even during the lifetime of the victors, but retribution is inescapable. As fires extinguish one another, so empires will rush together and be annulled. Then a livable social order will arise, yes, even though only the maimed, the blinded and the deafened should stagger from the battle-fields to proclaim it as Barbusse pictured them in *Under Fire*. Such a consummation does not seem likely, as the world has been defensively though fumblingly jerryed together after each catastrophe, but if it does occur the truth shall prevail through the white flame of hearts welded in fraternal service, and liberty shall stand justified. What, then, have we to fear?

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. God Himself is not secure, having given man dominion over His works! Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold. Faith

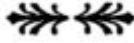
alone defends. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.

Serious harm, I am afraid, has been wrought to our generation by fostering the idea that they would live secure in a permanent order of things. It has tended to weaken imagination and self-equipment and unfit them for independent steering of their destinies. Now they are staggered by apocalyptic events and wrecked illusions. They have expected stability and find none within themselves or in their universe. Before it is too late they must learn and teach others that only by brave acceptance of change and all-time crisis ethics can they rise to the height of superlative responsibility.

That is what Moses and the Israelites did. That is what Jesus and the disciples did. That is what the molders of the nineteenth century did. They were not content to meet immediate danger in a sublime, self-denying manner—even a lobster has that capacity. They went on from there. Encountering common choices they tore loose from a prejudice, a stale custom, an out-of-date maxim, and wrought into every day a glory from dawning sciences and kinder creeds. So can we; and following the Gulf Stream of undreamed potency, we shall arrive at unmapped archipelagoes of achievement.

Stability has never been a characteristic of dynamic ages or nations. “Fret not thyself because of evildoers” has no egotistical context. What it says is, “Go forward thyself, or thou wilt go back.” Motion pictures will improve when we use them to elevate morals or they will lower them. If the radio is holy with our ideals it will broadcast Mind or it will sink to folly. If we speed motors up to the nobility dormant in us, they will not only end starvation but also sweeten with congenial work each one’s portion of air, sunlight and bread—or they will be degraded to implements of shame, wreck and death. If ever it is true that war has a negative value as a station on the road to knowledge of ourselves, it will be hastened toward extinction if we put day-by-day crisis faith and democracy behind every cannon, tank and bomber.

Faith Is a Responsibility



WE are heirs of the most magnificent mechanical equipment in history. Proudly bequeathing it to another age, we have forgotten that civilization is not human or humane unless it is rethought and relived with heart and soul. Implements can be handed down, not minds and personalities. Our latest blunder, which we must prevent from turning to a Balaclava, is to worship tools, deserting the One and Only that can draw the imponderable loveliness they conceal and lift them as vapor into His Firmament for stores of refreshing joy. We are spirits, not things—and for that matter “things” are another kind of spirit dumbly begging to rise again as ideas and impulses of creation. Poetry is their speech translated, their prayer. There are no deputies for our souls, and we are only mediators for a stupendous machine crying for a soul.

This is a grippingly personal emergency, and the breakage and agony rending us today will be our salvation if they drive us by new routes to meet it. No one can proxy for us a masterpiece of loving or experience for us the rapture of art or launch for us book ships freighted with sweet bread to strengthen man. As of old we must be our own seers, musicians and explorers, and to an extent vaster than ever before. This is the purpose to which we are being summoned to harness our world-body! It is not another weakness we have tumbled into; it is power we have never had before. Instead of decay, as we miscall this cycle, birthcries of future energy are racking us, and faith equal to our suddenly titanic power is the release from pain tearing apart too restricted mental organs of destiny. Heroic responses in ideals and in conduct are a choice of regal dignity in the presence of a new earth and Heaven. Laying hold upon life’s splendor instead of being crushed by it will vindicate our coming of age in God’s Mansions.

Our racial childhood, I conjecture, is passing. Responsibilities we are asked to gird ourselves for imply that we can no longer think as children. Hitherto we have had simple belief permitting us to sleep abundantly. Now faith proclaims our tempestuous adolescence. Tremulously, hopefully I witness our confirmation in God’s universal temple. We have outgrown

many forms of childish destruction and bungling which justified the saying that excellence was the exception rather than the rule. Now it is not so rare; rather it is immature manipulation of the race's expanding, ill-adjusted will power and slowly focusing perceptions. Patience and again patience will be the due exacted from all lookers-on during this raw, perverse yet gloriously promising exodus from the Egypt of mechanical absorption to the mature spirit that merges what we use and what we are—perhaps for the first time—in a beautiful equilibrium worthy of the name civilization.

There is no standing still. We have an eternal choice between life and good, death and evil. Rest is a flywheel steadying the momentum, never slowing it down. Sleep is never a “dead pause”; it is a change from one way of doing things to another. The nerves, left to their own resources, watch just the same; the heart pumps on; the brain builds, registers and perhaps solves problems before we wake. Rest and energy turn out to be indivisible. Disrupting their sweet unity imposes a bruising weight when there should be wings. “Labor” is an anomaly because it is a drag. Work—every human being's birthright—is balanced. The spiral expresses to me this truth satisfyingly—it eliminates disastrous backward slides and the prison of the circle; it breaks the tyranny of our symbolical pendulum, swinging from progress to stagnation and back again, from fluidity to frozen stay-putness and yet back again; it tendrils upward, allowing an arc for a law discovered, another for adaptation, curving to rest and rising to joyous re-creating force.

Our will to act becomes vigorous in proportion to the frequency and definiteness of our actions, and the brain grows to its exercise. Then truly it implements faith. When we let a resolution or a fine emotion dissipate without results, it means more than lost opportunity; it actually retards the fulfillment of future purposes and chills sensibility. There is plenty of courage among us for the abstract but not enough for the concrete, because we allow our daily bits of bravery to evaporate.

However strenuous the times may be, we need to relax so as to gain insight into the reservoirs of feeling and dream which make us what we are. I have read of a tribe in the Amazon Valley who on a long journey stop every little while in order to let their souls catch up with their bodies. What a refreshing instinct! It is high time we stop our materialistic rushing to and fro and give the soul leisure to explore its treasures, recharge its faith and devise abilities to overtake the body. The mute approach of things waiting for us to catch up with them is an endless challenge.

It is we, not God, in whom what is, ought to be and will be is fossilized. God is the Whole and the Alive. We act partially; we sunder faith from

religion, personality from being, character from happiness. Severing the organism's vitality from the need to plan and merge we come dangerously near to fashioning society in the image and likeness of a machine and behold that machine today weltering in the blood and crushed hopes of mankind whose good should be our dearest concern! Unless we set as civilization's goal this task to speed up evolution, so to speak—blending individuality, spontaneity and love with mass planning and symmetry, the result will be a myriad shrunken parts having not even the negative value of fossils. We shall be toppled by dead weights—a generalized labeling of mankind, flesh and blood reduced to formulas and balance sheets. We had better never have been born if that happens! But it shall not happen if with faith's banner we move determinedly toward the Whole that yearns to gather us under His wings and heal us—the Soul overarching what has been, is and will be. The idea of wisdom will be born a Fact before which other facts must bow, and sheer faith in peace and unity will turn the world's course unto the Perfect Day.

States of mental laceration and social ill-health like the present are signals for us to recover the elasticity and wholeness we must have for survival. It is a profanation to disregard them.

“Take time to be holy” (harmonious, whole, uniting all the faculties)—they come back transfigured words bearing a sadly neglected life elixir. One day when Jesus observed how the multitude kept coming and going, not even pausing for food, He told His disciples to withdraw “to some quiet place and rest for a while.” If those simple folk dwelling in the rural calm of a sweet Galilean countryside needed time for healthy introspection and the discovery of their finer selves, how infinitely more our soul health demands it in the turmoil and pressure of America—the Martha among nations cumbered with much serving! How in the name of reason are we to keep sane if we do not get away by ourselves on an island of quiet, forgetting the machine, the radio, the commercialized temptations, and hear the music within us which gives each power its own rhythmic measure? Failure thus to commune with God and the nobler personalities He has created in us has wrought the confusion and lack of proportion from which we are suffering. Economic injustice, inertia of the schools, corrupt politics have their full share in the dislocation, and I am adding their crime against the spirit. Undeveloped in comparison with what we are capable of, we put a pitiable fragment instead of the whole into our performance. Nature punishes such violations of its laws with discord and hostility. Never will this far-echoing note of bitterness cease until we all grasp wholeness as a principle infusing a new power of life.

*To vision profounder man's spirit must dive,
His eye rolling eye never at any goal will arrive.*

This is different from conceit, miscalled ego, whose corroding acid destroys individuality. Self-deprecation, a quality which Thomas Mann, traveling the world over, has seen hammered into the populace is equally despicable—sheer insult to oneself as God's creature and as a responsible person called to the world vineyard. Such an attitude is treason against human dignity. It is like destroying a child's joyous curiosity about the wonder world opening upon his mind. Another of faith's changeable garments of glory is curiosity searching out hidden personal resources. It is bound up in our very natures, and disobedience to it is unhuman, disintegrating. Turning the eye of aspiration inward and finding undreamed courage and beauty and generosity is a binding up of jarred faculties and bruised sensibilities. Granting that it is slow work—one day at a time, thought by thought—it remains momentous as the laying of plank by plank, stone upon stone in a noble building. And there shall be no end to our central joy when once we ascend to the stratosphere of our richer abilities.

But let us remember that the self-help within us is a vital power known as yet to comparatively few. We shall retain it on a sternly narrow condition—that we examine this power and broadcast it to others. It is a gift that can never be fully bestowed; it is a seed which has taken incalculable preparation to harrow in and which can be catastrophically lost unless it is faithfully waited upon to its maturity. Faith, then, is a responsibility for us as well as a privilege.

For years to come the debris of a convulsed world will beset our steps. It will require a purpose stronger than any man and worthy of all men to calm and inspirit us. A sane society whose riches are happy children, men and women, beautiful with peace and creative activity, is not going to be ordained for us. We must make it ourselves. Our destiny is our responsibility, and without faith we cannot meet it competently. Long enough have we been told that faith is impracticable, that we must trim our sails to whatever winds that blow. Now the truth is burning in us that indifference and compromise are chaos.

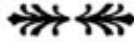
Throughout history nations have fallen as a result of denying faith and sinking into irresponsibility. This decay has once more brought them—all of them this time—to the most tragic straits. The administrators of earth's resources—human and material—have sealed their ears to God's voice, closed their ears to humanity's cry, and madness reigns among us. What else

could be expected? “Thou wilt have none of me,” He has said of old, “and dominion and surrender of all thine heritage will be thy portion.”

Faith welcomes the thoughts and clasps the hands of other nations. No nation is wise enough to rule another. That is why empires have fallen and are still falling. Differences in language make it wellnigh impossible to understand an alien culture, which is a people’s way of thinking, especially when they try to communicate through prejudice, neither hearing nor wanting to hear the other’s mind. No two individuals are alike, and no two ever completely understand one another. Even the most intimate friends do not really know each other, but each gains from the other stimulating hints of potency and new varieties of truth. In the same way one nation can give to another whatever spiritual learning and culture it has, humbly receiving the other nation’s point of view, which is often a different kind of wisdom garnered from totally different experiences. Then the two nations can seek a harmony in which their faiths blend and ring true. This has already been done in some instances, and faith will spread this world Pentecost.

Faith makes life whole, and those who dwell in its Temple are happy because they are whole. Even when their hearts ache they remain happy because, as that word implies, their souls are whole. This is an old Greek idea, but it is being reaffirmed with startling force. This deep-within-deep feeling of happiness explains why God is such a precious idea to those of us who have it. Because of this feeling we are willing to die for free thought and liberty of action. These build the wholeness of life. The barbarians of all ages have put a part for the whole; in this lies their brute strength, and in this also lies their weakness. And the new barbarians are less excusable than the old because they have a greater heritage out of the past. Their weakness is their shortsightedness. The retrogressive are always shortsighted. The Roman Empire claimed for itself the ability to maintain a world, but that world rested on power parted from freedom, and the degradation it entailed of mind and spirit finally dragged down ruler and militarist alike. Then the paralyzed forces of humanity reasserted themselves and revitalized society.

America the Torchbearer of Faith



IT is devoutly to be hoped that the American people will never jeopardize their strength by putting a part for the whole of wisdom.

For our democracy at present is menaced by power severed from responsibility on the part of those who have toward those who have not. Farsighted patriotism is demanding a redistribution of wealth and control of natural resources for the advantage of all the people. The war is devastating proof that social justice has been postponed centuries too long. Yet measures upon which depends America's future elicit outcries against the invasion of private enterprise and "rugged individualism" if they entail heavier taxes upon the fortunate. It apparently does not occur to them that their possessions and abilities impose a responsibility of sacrifice for democracy, or that responsibility confers human dignity as well as privilege. The labor unions, too, have taken without giving. When they should be democracy incarnate they have done little to champion the unorganized millions who toil up and down the land or seek vainly for work. The irresponsibility of taking and not giving is dangerous at any time, and the doom of those who will not yield self-interest to a community spirit is already visible. A country's surest defense is the loyal brotherliness of all its people and their responsible faith in serving one another.

Liberty not joined to faith is already half dead. Americans have for the most part not had faith enough in themselves to demand a decisive share in rearing the structure of the government. Rarely have they gone to the trouble of choosing men of high politics who would truly represent their interests. They have shirked their responsibility, and faith, the friendly, unitive force, has been left to preachers, "dreamers" and invalids when it should have been communicated throughout society.

Consequently their democracy has become static and is enringed by platitudes which breed doubt and irony. They have continued drifting until the most formidable foes they ever had—dictatorship and blasting power politics—are on the horizon. Too few now are the men and women mindful

of democracy's future. Too little do they realize or teach that democracy is thought—brain power applied to daily living and directed toward the safeguarding of every human right. Otherwise it could not be the brotherhood which enhalos Lincoln's brow and breaks in splendor through Walt Whitman's poetry.

The present crisis, I believe, will cause a spiritual reawakening in the public which, though late, will replace irresponsibility with idealism and check the decadence sweeping over half the earth. Leaving our freeman's heritage undefended we have imposed upon ourselves an implacable Must that brooks no choice or denial.

It is natural that lovers of liberty the world over should center their hopes about America. For it was here that democracy was first attempted on a large scale. It was America that originated the first practical union of free states, each working its own destiny while submitting to a federal government policies of national scope—peace and war, the postal service, education, roads and waterways. To be sure, American democracy is far from what it should be, but it would be a grievous calamity if its daring faith was lost to mankind.

But this will not happen if America places faith at the forefront of its endeavors. There are qualities in our people which inspire my confidence. Naturally affection for them has a part in my judgment, but from the time the republic was established down to the militant social idealists of our day Americans have blazed up in generous fury for the disinherited, the victims of cruelty and neglect. Their world-embracing crusades against disease, insanitation and ignorance reveal a heroic temper such as only faith can forge. Their colossal gifts toward education and the rebuilding of war-wasted areas on other continents need no comment. When the government has not acted countless individual Americans have made the cause of the oppressed their own in other lands. For a people to be of great heart is a priceless cornerstone for a worthier civilization.

There is another hopeful American attitude. It used to be a too-easy optimism running wild in superficial good nature, but now it is mellowed by a sympathy that seeks to understand. Such optimism spreads defiant, transmuting faith, and is a mighty buttress in the edifice of the future.

Moved by these thoughts I plead with the American people to take back into their lives the faith which has piloted them through three changeful centuries.

*Let us go back to keep alive the gleam,
To cherish the immortal, godlike dream,
Not as poor cravens flying from the fight,
But as sad children seeding the clean light.*

It was the faith of the founders of the nation that wrought its unique heritage. Democracy is a compound of faith embodied in fellowship, knowledge and action. These cannot be sundered without incalculable violence to personal liberty and the people's welfare. Democracy is a searching test of character, and no responsibility is more fateful than its maintenance.

Under circumstances such as these it is preferable to put aside work unfinished, leave position and fortune unacquired, research uncompleted, yes, and church walls unbuilt rather than leave humanity unprotected against the wicked desire to surrender will, intellect and person to unscrupulous leadership. Let us give a manly answer to the murderous doctrines that burn books, starve populations, exile seekers of truth and strive to blot out the humane culture which is our one heirloom from the past worth preserving. Away with sordid prudence and acquiescent irresponsibility! Let the country sign and seal with heart and hand the solidarity of all churches and parties, the unity of all men in faith that shall uphold its soul.

About us is a cloud of quiet witnesses to love and the endless treasures of beauty which never fail to calm sorrow. In them we have faith, but why cannot we look further and perceive the world within this one to which they point—a realm of spirit, mind and future potencies? This is the source from which we spring and the one to which we shall ascend if our faith matches that destiny.

In Christmas we celebrate the birth of Him who bestowed faith upon us as a responsibility and gave us the dreams of a freer, nobler humanity which lie in us like summer within the heart of winter. It costs us an effort to tune our minds to peace on earth and good will to men, but we cannot evade the beautiful summons. For it envisions our future, and our quenchless longing to live in it puts us there for a little while.

Even the bravest cannot call this Christmas bright, for we see it through the lens of our mood, and our mood is one of profound mourning. But for children the Christmas bells ring, and for us, their defenders, rings faith's clarion call. How dare we waver before it? How dare we shun our responsibility in moral preparedness as testimony pours in of unbeaten purpose in armies benumbed with cold and fatigue, torn by bombers, yet

mighty with something higher than discipline or bodily courage—the heroism of peace—men of the people who die to curb oppression, just as they have faced danger and ill-requited labor in mine and factory and on the soil that their little ones might have bread and childhood’s joy? How can we be weaklings when we look at Europe and Asia who for thousands of years have foreseen disaster past imagining and yet have kept on living dangerously, calmly, producing splendid literatures, magnificent works of art and philosophies that we have not overtaken? How could they have done it without faith as irresistible as hunger or the first cry of a child? Surely it is not in us to falter as we witness the faith which has sustained humanity in ages past.

When faith lights a people their activities break into stimulating achievement. Under its rays all ideas gain a richer efflorescence. To the poet the universe becomes instinct with beauty, a revelation of divine friendship, and to the philosopher and the scientist it becomes a very Temple of Reason. Poetry, religion and knowledge stand or fall together. Cynical doubt and irresponsibility gnaw at their roots when faith grows cold. The world becomes a chaos which is seized upon by lawless minds and ruthlessly perverted to purposes of dominion. Surely, however, the dead city that was Paris of the thinking mind and the burning indignations against injustice will nerve us with a powerful resolve to keep the United States among the defenders of faith and free thought. The beauty of Paris is immortal. With trumpet notes the summons rings out of France’s many-times martyred soul, out of Europe’s travail, out of China’s unbroken faith—“Never let yourselves be trodden upon mentally or morally as stepping stones to despotism. Keep always open a refuge for the unfettered intellect and the hand that tears away the yoke of ignorance! Consecrate with your lives and if need be your blood the heritage you have wrought out of earth’s best races and ideals! That is the holiest memorial—the only acceptable one—you can dedicate to the Old World whose struggling impulses Godward and fruitful scholarship and passion for beauty throb through the New.”

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Let Us Have Faith* by Helen Keller]