



An Experiment With Faith

by

Ernest Holmes

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We like to tryout new things and see how they work. There wouldn't be much fun in living unless we did this, for life is a great adventure. As a matter of fact, is the great adventure. Unless new things are happening to us life becomes uninteresting and drab.

When God put us here He made each one of us just a little different, and if Divine Intelligence made each one of us just a little different, as though each one were a new mold then the greatest adventure in life would be an experiment with ourselves to see what we could do with this thing that is within us.

We seem to be made up of flesh and blood and a hank of hair, a few clothes and certain conditions and surroundings. We seem to be the product of our environment. But this is a very superficial viewpoint. For while we are thinking of everyone as having just ordinary, commonplace talents, the first thing we know as Emerson or Einstein appears, or a Buddha or a Jesus. And all the world marvels and says that they were not made of the same kind of stuff that you and I are made of.

This is where we make our biggest mistake, for in reality you will never discover anything outside you greater than you, yourself, are. Even the words of the great mean nothing to us unless we could understand them. The things they say and do have no significance until we grasp their meaning. And we couldn't grasp their meaning unless there were something in us that is already equipped to seize on the truths they taught and make them our own.

When you go to hear a symphony, you don't go just to see others perform to to hear a great artist sing or a great musician play. What you really go for is that they awaken within you something that corresponds to and with what they are doing. And they really give you back to yourself. This, too, is an adventure in self-discovery.

Jesus turned water into wine. We believe that he did this because we believe that the power of God was in him and it is the power of God that makes the grape and the vine and the juice, and it is really the power of God, through the laws of nature, that converts them into wine. Jesus changed this whole process and immediately converted water into wine because the Power that makes the wine and the water was already in Him.

But suppose someone were to say to us: Why don't you turn water into wine? What would our response be? Well, we know what it would be -- we would say: "Why, I can't turn water into wine. I wouldn't know how. The very idea is ridiculous." But how do we know that we couldn't turn water into wine? Who told us we couldn't? Perhaps we should think the thing over again and try to find out what it was that Jesus understood that enabled him to perform this miracle.

But someone may say: "Well, Jesus was different from other people." And maybe he was. But he didn't say that he was. As a matter of fact he said: What I am doing you can do too, if . . . If, what? When you actually believe in a Power greater than you are and come to know that you, as a human being have nothing to do with the processes of

life whatsoever, you can do anything as long as you believe. You live but you did not create your own life. You think, but you didn't create your own mind. You are a Spirit, but you didn't make the Spirit.

At once we are confronted with such a stupendous thought that it almost staggers the imagination -- there is something in me greater than I appear to be, and that something really isn't myself, as a mere human being, at all. It is something that was put there when I was born. There is a Presence and a Power within me waiting for me to recognize it. But my very denial of it makes it impossible for it to operate in a larger way. It is true that it has already worked in me, in digesting my food, circulating my blood, causing my heart to beat, giving me such intelligence as I have. It is true that I didn't make any of these things.

Perhaps I am asleep to the greater possibility. Perhaps I am someone who is drugged and only half conscious. If I could only wake up. If I could only believe that the Power which has done all this for me might be able to do a little more, perhaps it could do something beyond my wildest dreams. How do I know. It told Einstein how to figure out his equations. It told Emerson how to write his essays. It told Browning how to write his poems. What happened to these people? They must have believed that they could do these things or they never would have attempted them.

And when we think of Jesus, the greatest of the great, perhaps when he first began to experiment with his faith, something said to him: You can't multiply loaves and fishes. It is useless for you to tell the paralyzed man to get up and walk. You can't resurrect yourself. There is no sense in your telling Lazarus to come forth from his tomb.

How do we know but that early in life Jesus met the same difficulties we do, the same obstructions in his own mind? He said that he had overcome the world; that He had conquered unbelief.

As a matter of fact, I think we should lose the whole meaning of his teaching, his life and his work, if we overlook this. For certainly Jesus did not say, "I am more divine than you are. God likes me better than He does you. God has told me secrets that He withholds from you." This is exactly what he never did say. Rather, He said, "I have overcome the world. I know that no man can take from me or add to that which I am. And I am telling you that everything I do is an example of an adventure and an experiment you all may engage in with the same certainty, the same assurance."

"I have come among you; I have lived with you and worked with you and taught you; I have told you about these things which I call the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven."

And then he told them it was necessary for him to leave them, physically. They couldn't understand this for they were relying on Him. He was the one who knew all the answers. He was the one who was close to God. He was their savior. But Jesus told them why it was necessary for him to depart from them, for he said, "I have really been telling you about yourselves and somewhere along the line the Spirit of Truth within you, which he called the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God in you, will reveal to you the meaning of everything I have said.

Jesus had finished the greatest experiment with life that any man ever made. There were no longer any questions or doubts, no longer any ifs or ands or buts. He said, "This is the way it is. Now you prove it for yourselves." So, after his departure, the disciples gathered together in the upper room -- which means in an exalted place in their own consciousness and suddenly the Holy Ghost did descend upon them, that is, they became aware of a living Presence. Jesus knew that this would happen and He knew it would have to happen after He had left them because, had He been there, they could have ascribed this power to Him alone and would not have awakened to that self-realization that Jesus knew is essential to every living soul.

Really, this is the adventure you and I are on. It is a terrific one and it should fire the imagination and the will to action. We are on the adventure of self-discovery through faith, and we are learning the greatest lesson in life -- man doesn't live by bread alone but by a subtle power which flows through everything, a Divine Presence which encompasses everything. Man doesn't live by will or wishing or hoping or longing. Man lives only because the Divine Life has descended into him.

God comes new and direct to everyone who expects Him, talks to everyone who listens, and acts through everyone who imbibes His spirit. The authority of your word, your prayers, your meditation, is in the Law of Good and not in you at all, any more than the authority of gravitational force is in you as a person. That authority is divine; that authority is as absolute as you permit it to be. Our experiment is not with the power or the goodness or the presence or the love or the truth or the beauty of God, but with ourselves.

And so we get right back to that little word of Jesus -- if you can believe, then it will be done unto you, and it will be done unto you as you believe. It is the "if" and the "as" to which we must pay attention. If we can believe, then the power is delivered, and it will be delivered of as we believe. For this is the way of life, nor can you or I change one part of it. We can neither add to nor take from the divine fact that God is still in His heaven and that part of His heaven which you and I enjoy is within.