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This I believe, 1953.

THIS I BELIEVE

May 3, 1953

This, I believe. Few people, my dear friends, ever actually itemized for themselves the things they believe in. It is never quite as easy as one would imagine, to itemize one's belief. It is never quite as satisfactory. Reduced to writing, a credo, a belief, either says too little or says too much, and what is said is often very vague and ambiguous and undefined. The powerful convictions and urges which move and control our lives often defy definition. Words are too narrow and too shallow a vessel to hold the deep matters of our minds and of our hearts.

Not a single religious teacher of the Bible or of the Talmud gives us a complete statement of his religious belief. Naturally, all these teachers are overwhelmed by the reality of God although they are fully aware that God is beyond human comprehension and beyond human definition. They are all impelled and challenged by the moral law which God established for man, and of man's duty to obey it, but not a single religious teacher of the Bible or of the Talmud has arranged or organized into one comprehensive system, a precise and complete system, of what this moral law consisted. It was really not until the 13th century of the common era that an attempt was made by the great Jewish philosopher Maimonides to crystallize, to condense into a formal creed the theology and the doctrines of Judaism. Nevertheless, it is true that men act in response to basic beliefs, however indeterminate and vague they may be. The motive power, the driving power behind significant conduct in a man's life is his faith and his convictions, even when he is not fully aware of them, even when he is not fully conscious of them. One's life simply spells out his dominant convictions.

"A man lives by believing," as Thomas Carlyle said. "A man lives by believing, by believing something, not by debating and arguing about many things."

Now, when I speak of belief, I am speaking, of course, of real belief, the kind which leads directly to action, the kind which takes hold mightily of a human being, directs him to definite goals. Otherwise, his beliefs are vain things and self-

deceiving things. Thus a belief in God which does not directly lead a man to prayer and to good deeds is less than nothing. It is hollow, it is deceptive, it is frivolous. A belief that is real is a bulwark for man, a strong shield and defense. It is also a reservoir of strength whose waters never fail.

Now, not all men have the same beliefs, but there is one thing which they share in common if they are real. They are all genuine; they are all sincere; they are all conscientious; they are unaffected; they are not meant to impress other people; they are not conventional beliefs. They are a man's inner sanctuary - the real, driving, controlling motives of his life's conduct. And strangely enough, however much such beliefs may differ among men, they closely resemble one another. However distant and far apart they may appear, upon a closer scrutiny and observation, they come very close to one another. They are but different planes, as it were, different facets, of the same sparkling brilliance of one's spiritual diamond of the human soul. They are different ways of looking at the same thing. They are different emphases, if you will - different approaches to the same, one basic reality in life.

Now, such genuine beliefs have one other quality in common. They are "beneficent" beliefs; that is, they carry with them some goodness, they make for some goodness either in one's own life or in the lives of others. A belief which does not have this quality of goodness about it, of beneficence, a belief, for example, which feeds the greed and the selfishness and the cruelty in the human being, or which prompts a man to be hurtful and harmful to his neighbor, is simply a rationalization of evil. It is an evil obsession, however sincerely held.

Sincerity is not the only test of a true belief. I have heard people say, "Oh, that man is very sincere," as if to imply that the fact of sincerity is sufficient excuse for anything that that man may do. It isn't! Sincerity is not the only test of a true belief. It must be genuinely human and humane and friendly. There must be

a quality of lovingkindness about one's belief, or it is an evil obsession and a danger to the man who holds it and to those about him. And a man must constantly examine and re-examine his beliefs to see whether they are basically good and tend toward goodness.

All this I am prompted to say in reaction to an interesting book which I had the pleasure of reading recently called "This I Believe". "This I Believe" are selections from Edward R. Murrow's radio program and column of over 100 men and women from all walks of life who wrote down what you might call their personal philosophies of life, their genuine beliefs. They have now been collected in a book called "This I Believe". A reading of these personal philosophies of these men and women is very rewarding. Some of them are very profound and moving, and others inspire by their very simplicity and unaffectedness and directness. Now, these credos, these confessions of faith, are all briefly stated, limited by the requirements of radio time, but their very brevity has a charm of its own. They suggest more than they state. They evade more than they enunciate. They set you thinking and a sentence which sets you up is far better than a whole chapter which lets you down.

Now, most of these men and women whose confessions of faith are contained in this volume did not stumble accidentally upon their life's philosophies. They did not pick them up at random at some attractive counter, as it were, or in some shop window. You don't go shopping for your basic beliefs. These men and women seem to have plumbed the depths to get at their basic beliefs. They came by them by searching experiences of their own lives, some of them from sorrow and suffering. They were fashioned out of their struggles and their frustrations and their handicaps. Some of them learned their philosophies through long instructive years from parents or wise counselors or teachers or great books whose wisdom they painfully assimilated.

Beliefs, my friends, which are easily come by are easily lost. Beliefs must have their deep roots in life, in one's own life and in the lives of others. Otherwise, as I read from the Sayings of the Fathers, they are like trees whose roots are few and when a storm sweeps over them, they are toppled and they fall.

Take, for example, the belief recorded in this volume of a man by the name of Robert G. Allman. "Robert G. Allman has succeeded in the triple fields of athletics, law, and sportscasting despite the fact that he is blind. As a child he attended Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia, where he first started wrestling. After he entered the University of Pennsylvania, he won over fifty matches.

"Mr. Allman was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, Phi Beta Kappa. Following this, and added by his brother, George (since few law books are printed in Braille), he studied law and was graduated from the University's Law School. A continuing interest in sports led him to become for a time a sportscaster for Station KYW.

"Now a busy practising Philadelphia attorney and insurance broker, he enjoys fishing, swimming, and golfing. As president of the U.S. Blind Golfers Associations he believes it a mistake for the sightless to seek consolation among themselves, and that 'they should go out and rub elbows with the world'."

And this is how Mr. Robert G. Allman sums up his life's philosophy:

I lost my sight when I was four years old by falling off a box car in a freight yard in Atlantic City and landing on my head. Now I am thirty-two. I can vaguely remember the brightness of sunshine and what color red is. It would be wonderful to see again, but a calamity can do strange things to people. It occurred to me the other day that I might not have come to love life as I do if I hadn't been blind. I believe in life now. I am not so sure that I would have believed in it so deeply otherwise. I don't mean that I would prefer to go without my eyes. I simply mean that the loss of them made me appreciate the more what I had left.

Life, I believe, asks a continuous series of adjustments to reality. The more readily a person is able to make these adjustments, the more meaningful his own private world becomes. The adjustment is never easy. I was bewildered and afraid. But I was lucky. My parents and my teachers saw something in me - a potential to live, you

might call it, which I didn't see, and they made me want to fight it out with blindness.

The hardest lesson I had to learn was to believe in myself. That was basic. If I hadn't been able to do that, I would have collapsed and become a chair rocker on the front porch for the rest of my life. When I say belief in myself, I am not talking about simply the kind of self-confidence that helps me down an unfamiliar staircase alone. That is part of it. But I mean something bigger than that; an assurance that I am, despite imperfections, a real, positive person; that somewhere in the sweeping, intricate pattern of people, there is a special place where I can make myself fit. . . .

. . . Perhaps a man without sight is blinded less by the importance of material things than other men are. All I know is that a belief in the existence of a higher nobility for men to strive for has been an inspiration that has helped me more than anything else to hold my life together.

Here is a man who fought it out with blindness and who learned to believe in himself and to believe that there is a special place for him in the scheme of things. He came to believe in the existence of a higher nobility in man, and so, from his own tragedy, from his own self, he learned to see greatness and goodness and found strength.

And take this confession of another man who was forced to drink the bitter waters from the dark cup of life. "Richard H. McFeely was stricken with infantile paralysis while he was a football-playing student at Swarthmore College in 1927. Recuperating at Warm Springs, Georgia, he formed a friendship with another man who also had to build a new life, Franklin D. Roosevelt. By 1929 he had sufficiently recovered to allow him to become assistant dean of men at Swarthmore." And here is what Mr. Richard H. McFeely writes down as his philosophy of life, as the thing which he believes in:

I have always loved sports. In high school and college I played almost everything - football, basketball, baseball, lacross, and all the rest. I had planned graduate study in physical education and then working in it with young people. Suddenly, during the football season in my senior year in college, I was stricken with infantile paralysis. I was told I had lost the use ~~the~~ of my legs forever except with crutches or braces.

Two of the most valuable lessons of my life grew out of this crippling attack. At first I was very low in mind and spirit. I had no real hope for the future. One day my mother revealed to me the two lessons which have helped me immeasurably ever since. She realized, as only a mother can, the depths of my mental depression. She wanted to help me by giving me something that would sustain me, strengthen a waning courage, revitalize a spirit of self-forgetfulness.

"Dick," she said, "what life does to you in the long run will depend on what life finds in you. You know we can change any situation by changing our attitude towards it." She went on to point out that we could not always explain our hard luck, which so often seemed unjust and undeserved.

"Remember," she added, "it is not so much what life brings to us in her hands as what we bring to life in our spirits - this makes the real difference between persons."

The other point Mother developed for me was this: "No one ever finds life worth living. One always has to make it worth living. Look at all the men and women who have lived successful, creative lives - in whatever period of history. They have not always been the prosperous, the fortunate, sitting on the cushioned seats. . . .

This is the philosophy that Richard H. McFeely worked out for himself.

Remembering this advice in the intervening years, I have asked myself, "Is life worth living?" and I have found the answer in the attitudes we hold and the quality of our spirit, not outward circumstances. Birth and death, happiness and sorrow, illness and good health, love and loss - these I find are no respecters of persons. They come alike to all. But not all respond alike. Some go to pieces, dissolve in self-pity, become a burden to others, perhaps even take their own lives in their despair and hopelessness. Others have something in them that in spite of ill fortune enables them to live constructively and creatively. Ofttimes it is more difficult to live a happy, useful life when all the breaks seem to be good ones.

For the most part, I think that what all things do to us will depend on what they find in us. "Life does not consist in holding a good hand, but in playing a bad hand well."

It is not what life does to you. It is what you do to life. No one ever finds life worth living. One always has to make it worth living.

Almost in the same way, but this time not from an afflicted person but from a scientist, a professor of social anthropology, the faith of Ina Corinne Brown, who holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Chicago, is professor of social anthropology at Scarritt College in Nashville.

The cornerstone of my own value system was laid in childhood by parents who believed that personal integrity came first. They never asked, "What will people think?" The question was, "What will you think of yourself if you do this or fail to do that?" Thus living up to one's own conception of oneself became a basic value and the question, "What will people think?" took a subordinate place.

A second basic value, in some ways an extension of the first, I owe to an old college professor who had suffered more than his share of grief and trouble. Over and over he said to us: "The one thing that really matters is to be bigger than the things that can happen to you. Nothing that can happen to you is half so important as the way in which you meet it."

Gradually I realized that here was the basis of the only real security and peace of mind that a human being can have. Nobody can be sure when disaster, disappointment, injustice or humiliation may come to him through no fault of his own. Nor can one be guaranteed against one's own mistakes and failures. But the way we meet life is ours to choose and when integrity, fortitude, dignity and compassion are our choice, the things that can happen to us lose their power over us.

The acceptance of these two basic values led to a third. If what one is and how one meets life are of first importance one is not impressed by another's money, status or power, nor does one judge people by their race, color or social position. This opens us a whole new world of relationships, for when friendships are based on qualities of mind and character, one can have friends among old and young, rich and poor, famous and unknown, educated and unlettered, and among peoples of all races and all nations.

. . . Perhaps all this adds up to a belief in what has been called the human use of human beings. We are set off from the rest of the animal world by our capacity consciously to transcend our physical needs and desires. Men must concern themselves with food and with other physical needs, and they must protect themselves and their own from bodily harm, but these activities are not exclusively human. Many animals concern themselves with these things. When we worship, pray, or feel compassion, when we enjoy a painting, a sunset or a sonata, when we think and reason, pursue ideas, seek truth, or read a book, when we protect the weak and helpless, when we honor the noble and cherish the good, when we cooperate with our fellow men to build a better world, our behavior is worthy of our status as human beings.

Here is "This I Believe" who derives his faith from his fathers, Justice William Orville Douglas, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, who "is a warm, friendly man who believes in what he calls 'bedrock idealism'. Just under six feet tall, with sandy, tousled hair, he does not present the usual conception of the learned judge which he indubitably is." ~~Thurmond~~ He is perhaps the outstanding professor of law in our nation, now on our Supreme Court bench. And what is the creed of Justice

William O. Douglas and where did he get his creed?

During moments of sadness or frustration, I often think of a family scene years ago in the town of Yakima, Washington. I was about seven or eight years old at the time. Father had died a few years earlier. Mother was sitting in the living room talking to me, telling me what a wonderful man Father was. She told me of his last illness and death. She told me of his departure from Cleveland, Washington, to Portland, Oregon. . . for what proved to be a fatal operation. His last words to her were these: "If I die it will be glory, if I live it will be grace." I remember how these words puzzled me. I could not understand why it would be glory to die. It would be glory to live, that I could understand. But why it would be glory to die was something I did not understand until later.

Then one day in a moment of great crisis I came to understand the words of my father. "If I die it will be glory, if I live it will be grace." That was his evening star. The faith in a power greater than man. That was the faith of our fathers. A belief in a God who controlled man in the universe, that manifested itself in different ways to different people. It was written by scholars and learned men in dozens of different creeds. But riding high above all secular controversies was a faith in One who was the Creator, the Giver of Life, the Omnipotent.

. . . These days I see graft and corruption reach high into government. These days I see people afraid to speak their minds because someone will think they are unorthodox and therefore disloyal. These days I see America identified more and more with material things, less and less with spiritual standards. . . These days the words of my father come back to me more and more. We need his faith, the faith of our fathers. We need a faith that dedicates us to something bigger and more important than ourselves or our possessions. Only if we have that faith will we be able to guide the destiny of nations, in this the most critical period of world history.

And so, from his father Justice Douglas learned his faith. "Our God, and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." Blessed are those parents who can give to their children that kind of a faith which they, later on in life, in moments of great crisis will be able to fall back on and be uplifted and strengthened and supported by it.

I wish I had the time to read some more of these outpourings of the innermost secrets of a man's spiritual life. Perhaps I shall close by reading one, the testament of faith in human progress written by a Negro, by Jackie Robinson. He writes:

At the beginning of the World Series of 1947, I experienced a completely new emotion, when the National Anthem was played. This time, I thought, it was being played for me, as much as for anyone else. This is organized, major league baseball, and I am standing here with all the others; and everything that takes place includes me.

About a year later, I went to Atlanta, Georgia, to play in an exhibition game. On the field, for the first time in Atlanta, there were Negroes and whites. Other Negroes, besides me. And I thought: What I have always believed has come to be.

And what is it that I have always believed? First, that imperfections are human. But that wherever human beings were given room to breathe and time to think, those imperfections would disappear, no matter how slowly. I do not believe that we have found or even approached perfection. That is not necessarily in the scheme of human events. Handicaps, stumbling blocks, prejudices - all of these are imperfect. Yet, they have to be reckoned with because they are in the scheme of human events.

Whatever obstacles I found made me fight all the harder. But it would have been impossible for me to fight at all, except that I was sustained by the personal and deep-rooted belief that my fight had a chance. It had a chance because it took place in a free society. Not once was I forced to face and fight an immovable object. Not once was the situation so cast-iron rigid that I had no chance at all. Free minds and human hearts were at work all around me; and so there was the probability of improvement. I look at my children now and know that I must still prepare them to meet obstacles and prejudices.

But I can tell them, too, that they will never face some of these prejudices because other people have gone before them. And to myself I can say that, because progress is unalterable, many of today's dogmas will have vanished by the time they grow into adults. I can say to my children: There is a chance for you. No guarantee, but a chance. And this chance has come to be, because there is nothing static with free people. There is no Middle Ages logic so strong that it can stop the human tide from flowing forward. I do not believe that every person, in every walk of life, can succeed in spite of any handicap. That would be perfection. But I do believe - and with every fiber in me - that what I was able to attain came to be because we put behind us (no matter how slowly) the dogmas of the past; to discover the truth of today; and perhaps find the greatness of tomorrow.

I believe in the human race.

I believe in the warm heart.

I believe in man's integrity.

I believe in the goodness of a free society.

And I believe that the society can remain good only as long as we are willing to fight for it - and to fight against whatever imperfections may exist.

My fight was against the barriers that kept Negroes out of baseball. This was the area where I found imperfection, and where I was best able to fight. And I fought because I knew it was not doomed to be a losing fight.

It couldn't be a losing fight - not when it took place in a free society.

And, in the largest sense, I believe that what I did was done for me - that it was my faith in God that sustained me in my fight. And that what was done for me must and will be done for others.

His fight had a chance! No guarantee, but a chance, and so he fought.

Here are chapters of faiths, of beliefs of men and women, real, deep-rooted, genuine, good, which enable them to overcome of the gravest, most tragic obstacles in life, which gave them courage to endure, courage to persist and courage to fight for a better world. That's the kind of a belief that a human being ought to have. Without it, he is empty, hollow. With it, he has an inner sanctuary. He has the strength of God working through him. Amen.



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and never quite ^{as} satisfactory.

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or too much - and what is said is often
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The powerful convictions and urges which move
and control our lives, often defy definition. Words
are too narrow and too shallow vessels to hold
the deep matters of our minds and souls.

2) Not a single religious teacher of the Bible or the
Talmud - gives us a complete statement of his
religious belief.

They are all overwhelmed with the reality of God -
altho they are fully aware that He is beyond
human comprehension - definition.

They are all impelled and challenged by the Moral
Law - which God established for man; and
man's duty to obey it.

But they have not org. ^{arranged} it into a comprehensive
"system" - precise, ~~well defined~~, complete

3) It was not until the 13th c. - that an attempt
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2
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"A man lives by believing something, not by debating
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Other wise they are vain ~~and~~ things & self-deceiving.

Thus a belief in God which does not directly
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7/ Not all men have the same beliefs - but there is

on things which they ^{all} have in common - if they are (3)
Real! — they are genuine, sincere, conscientious
They are unaffected — They are not want to impress others.
They are not conventional — they are sincerely one's
own — the inner drive — the inner sanctum.

5/ And strangely enough, however much such beliefs
may differ — they ~~are~~ closely resemble one
another. However distant and far apart they
may appear — they come very close to one another.
They are ~~but~~ different planes and fronts, the same
sparkling brilliance; the one spiritual dimension
of the human soul.
They are diff. emphases — different ways / looking
at the same things.

9/ Such genuine beliefs have one other quality
in common — they are "heartfelt" beliefs — i.e.
They carry with them a "sincerity" — they
mark for "sincerity" either to the best in one's self
or to others —
A belief which feeds the good and suppresses and
cruelty in one's self — and is hurtful to one's
neighbors — is a sectarian dogma / bad — and

is an evil obsession, however sincerely held.

'Sincerity' is not the only test of a true belief - It must be practical human and friendly - There must be "loving-kindness" in it -

10/. Recently - "This I Believe" - selection from Edward R. Murrow's radio program and column - Over 100 men known, from all walks of life, wrote down their personal philosophies - they permeate beliefs.

A reading, there is very rewarding - Some are very profound and moving. Others inspire by their very simplicity and directness...

They are all briefly stated - limited by the requirements of radio time - But, there very brevity has a charm - They suggest more than they state, they evolve more than they enounce to. They set you thinking! A sentence which sets you off - is far better than a chapter which lets you down.

11/. Most, there are known - did not stumble occidentally upon their life philosophies - They didn't pick them up at some attractive counter or in some shop window - They plumbed

depths to get at them - They ~~came~~ ^{came} by their their
searching experiences, their sorrows and suffering - They
were forewarned out of their struggles and frustrations, and
handicaps. They learned their their long instructions
from parents, or wise counsellors or teachers,
or great books whose wisdom they painfully
assimilated.

Beliefs which are easily come by are easily lost: Beliefs must have deep roots in life as one can life as in the lines of the —

14/ TAG — (p. 1) — the "Thin & Believable" — Robert J. Allman

Read

He fought it out with blindness - and he learned (1)
to believe in himself. - a special place for him in the world
He was blinded less by the importance of material things - because
he was a man without sight

He came to believe in the existence of a higher nobility in man. 2. 1/11 25/11/2011

13/ And Tell "His Beliefs" from another man who was
forced to drink the bitter water from the dark cup.

(H107) Richard H. McFeeley.

① If it's not what helps, does it hurt? It's what's good for the

② No one ever finds life worth living. Am always here to make it worth living.

14/ Almost in same vein - but this time w/ from an (6)
affected person - but from a scientist - a professor of
social anthropology - Miss Ina 'Corinne' Brown
(p. 11)

15/ Here in 'This & Belief' - from a man who ~~derived~~ ^{derived} his
from the faith of his fathers - father was Orville Doyle -
(p. 45). - 1/21/21 c. 10/11/11 N 10/11 - Blended as parents

16/ Here in the faith of a man - who while engaged as
a soldier in fighting battles, disturbance came to
himself in the misunderstanding of war -

Captain Lloyd Jordan

(p. 87)

He found a sense of security in the ^{knowledge} ~~knowledge~~ that man
has a future - in spite of the feeling of a day-to-day existence
without hope for to-morrow -

17/ I wish I had time - on last testament / Faith
in human progress - Jackie Robinson

(151)

His fight had a chance! - No guarantee, but a chance!
- deeply rooted - must dominate - German - "God"