

Faith

Faith is unquestioning belief. It is a remarkable fact that no people have been discovered who do not believe in the existence and survival of souls. Barnabus wrote: "For all the time past of our life, and our faith will profit us nothing; unless we continue to hate what is evil, and withstand the future temptations." Aquinas: "The first thing that is necessary for every Christian is faith, without which no one is truly called a faithful Christian." Kierkegaard: "as the definition of faith: that the self by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself is grounded transparently in the Power that constituted it." Augustine: "Faith, on the other hand, is an acceptance of, or assent to, something that is not clearly seen."

Calvin wrote that "election does not depend on faith; faith makes election manifest. Man cannot choose faith or reject it, for grace is irresistible. God freely chooses some and rejects the rest..." Calvin was a false prophet of immense magnitude. It is not just God that gives us faith, but faith that gives us God. Have faith and it will create God within you. Faith is God coming to your own knowledge. To believe is precisely to lose one's understanding in order to win God. Faith should not be a leap in the dark, but a leap towards light. Faith is the ability and the willingness to believe and act where doubt is still possible. For this reason our thought must be so grounded upon knowledge that we shall feel the truth of it.

What is required in the believer is an effort of will. What will be required is faith as a liberating praxis. Faith in a holy cause can be a substitute for the lost faith in ourselves. So I must acknowledge the reality of doubt, not simply to make common cause with modern man, but because doubt is the price that must be paid for faith.

Watchman Nee asked "What is faith? Faith is my acceptance of God's fact. It always has its foundations in the past." In daily Christian living there is actually no conflict between faith and works. To the faithful Christian, one is impossible without other. Faith works better when there is no natural hope. Jesus didn't divide men into those who had faith and those who did not, but into those using the faculty and those refusing. Paul never means dead faith, faith and works entwined. The primary signification of this word is "trust." The belief in any truth in any ground belief is what is beyond the sphere of the senses. Trusting in God's testimony is receiving all that God has given to us.

Faith viewed philosophically must be regarded as lying at the basis of all knowledge. Faith is not simply the assent of intellect to revealed truth; it is the practical submissions of the entire man to the guidance and control of such truth. "The devils believe and tremble." The truths of revelation are in many cases above reason, though not against it. Such truths were revealed because it is hard for reason to discover them. The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was delivered unto the saints.. But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Paul: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Faith is the assent of the understanding to any truth. Religious faith is assent to any truth of divine revelation and of the events and doctrines contained in it. This may be merely historical, without producing any affect on our lives and conversation; and it is then a dead faith, such as even the devils have. But a living or saving faith not only believes the great doctrines of religion as true, but embraces them with the heart and affections; and is thus the source of sincere obedience to the divine will, exhibited in the life and conversation. True faith is an essential grace, and a main-spring of Christian life. By it the Christian overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil, and receives the crown of righteousness. [03, 06, 33, 56, 68, 93, 134, 141, 147, 162, 181, 185, 188, 194, 201, 313, 314, 339, 377, BD, I Corinthians, Jude, Hebrews, 380]