

Faith

Two common sayings frequently heard are, “seeing is believing” and “I’ll believe it when I see it”. Where does this leave a blind man? Is he destined to believe nothing for the want of sight? If the blind man is told about an object by someone he trusts, even though he may not be able to see it or sense it, he could still believe it exists. This is not a bad example of faith. If the blind man could see it for himself, faith would not be necessary.

Belief is an essential part of faith, but faith is not simply belief. It is possible to believe something without faith being involved. Where science, logic, etc. can prove the truth or existence of that thing, faith is not required.

Faith is an extension of belief into a realm beyond that which can be ascertained by our five natural senses. We might have faith that a person we know is able to perform a particular feat, even though we have no previous experience of the person having accomplished it in the past. Here, as in our example of the blind man, the elements of confidence and trust are playing a part, and thus requiring the exercise of faith.

When we consider this, we can see why faith is such an essential part of religion. If we are to have faith in God, belief in Him is the first step. The apostle Paul in the Bible indicates the necessity of belief when he says, “he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” That belief is insufficient of itself is also clear, for as the apostle James points out, “You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” What

is also required is the trust and confidence aspect extending into the spiritual world.

Faith, then, is having belief, trust and confidence in God as our souls, being the spiritual part of our fabric, recognise Him and intercommunication becomes possible.

There is one more requirement of faith, and that is that it should be living and not dead. To know whether faith is alive or dead, you have to examine its results in the life of a person who claims to have it. While good works are not a requisite to bring about a person’s salvation, they are evidence of a living faith. Faith is the cause, and good deeds are the effect.

How can we acquire faith? Well, it is a gift which God bestows, so it has to be sought from Him. We don’t deserve it, but the God of all grace and mercy gives it to those who diligently seek Him.

Finally, we began by considering a blind man, so we will end this page with the same. ‘Blind faith’, to which some may occasionally refer, is something of an oxymoron. One of the miracles performed by Jesus was the healing of a man who was born blind. The religious leaders of the time were thoroughly disconcerted by the effects Jesus was having upon the people, and they investigated this miracle. I can just imagine the scenes which followed, and if it wasn’t for the sad condition of the Pharisees, it would be quite entertaining. You can find the account in the ninth chapter of the gospel according to John in the New Testament. I commend it to you. In the course of his examination, the man who was given his sight said to the Pharisees, “one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

Maybe it was unintentional, but what an excellent description of faith that was!