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FAITH

In the divine scheme of salvation the doctrine of faith is central. God addresses His words to faith, and where no faith is no true revelation is possible. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Every benefit flowing from the atonement of Christ comes to the individual through the gateway of faith. Forgiveness, cleansing, regeneration, the Holy Spirit, all answers to prayer, are given to faith and received by faith. There is no other way. This is common evangelical doctrine and is accepted wherever the cross of Christ is understood.

Because faith is so vital to all our hopes, so necessary to the fulfillment of our hearts, we dare take nothing for granted concerning it. Anything that carries with it so much of weal or woe, which indeed decides our heaven or our hell, is too important to neglect. We simply must not allow ourselves to be uninformed or misinformed. We

must know.

For a number of years my heart has been troubled over the doctrine of faith as it is received and taught among evangelical Christians everywhere. Great emphasis is laid upon faith in orthodox circles, and that is good; but still I am troubled. Specifically, my fear is that the modern conception of faith is not the biblical one; that when the teachers of our day use the word they do not mean what Bible writers meant when they used it. Perhaps it will help us to know what faith is if we first notice what it is not. It is not the believing of a statement we know to be true. The human mind is so constructed that it must of necessity believe when the evidence presented to it is convincing. It cannot help itself. When the evidence fails to convince, no faith is possible. No threats no punishment can compel the mind to believe against clear evidence. Faith based upon reason is faith of a kind, it is true; *but it is not of the character of Bible faith*, for it

follows the evidence infallibly and has nothing of a moral or spiritual nature in it. Neither can the absence of faith based upon reason be held against anyone, for the evidence, not the individual, decides the verdict. To send a man to hell whose only crime was to follow evidence straight to its proper conclusion would be palpable injustice; to justify a sinner on the grounds that he had made up his mind according to the plain facts would be to make salvation the result of workings of a common law of the mind as applicable to Judas as to Paul. It would take salvation out of the realm of the volitional and place it in the mental, where according to the Scriptures it surely does not belong. True faith rests upon the character of God and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie. It is enough that God said it, and if the statement should contradict every one of

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the five senses and all the conclusions of logic as well, still the believer continues to believe. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4), is the language of true faith. Heaven approves such faith because it rises above mere proofs and rests in the bosom of God. In recent years among certain evangelicals there has arisen a movement designed to prove the truths of Scriptures by appeal to science. Evidence is sought in the natural world to support supernatural revelation. Snowflakes, blood, stones, strange marine creatures, birds and many other natural objects are brought forward as proof that the Bible is true. This is touted as being a great support to faith, the idea being that if a Bible doctrine can be *proved* to be true, faith will spring up and flourish as a consequence.

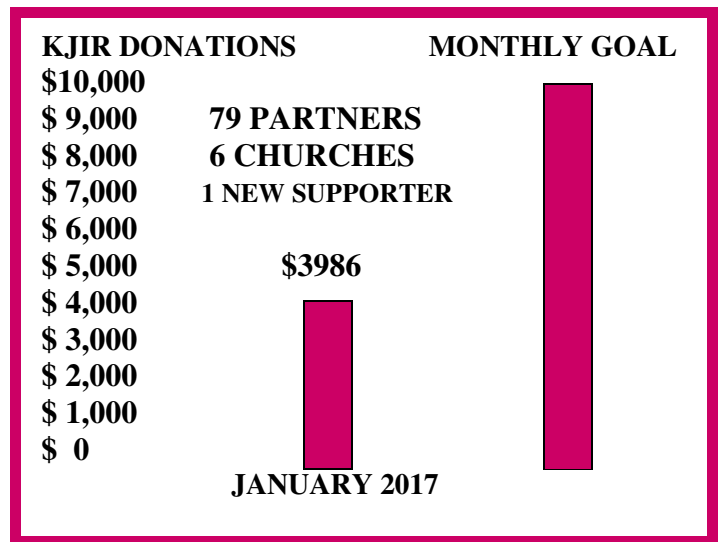
What these brethren do not see is that the very fact that they feel a necessity to seek proof for the truths of the Scriptures proves something else altogether, namely, their own basic unbelief. When God speaks unbelief asks, "How shall I know that this is true?" I AM THAT I AM is the only ground for faith. To dig among the rocks or search under the sea for evidence to support Scriptures is to insult the One who wrote them. Certainly I do not believe that this is done intentionally; but I cannot see how we can escape the conclusion that it is done, nevertheless.

Faith as the Bible knows it is confidence in God and His Son Jesus Christ; it is the response of the soul to the divine character as revealed in the Scriptures; and even this response is impossible apart from the prior inworking of the Holy Spirit. Faith is a gift of God to a penitent soul and has nothing whatsoever to do with the senses or the data they afford. Faith is a miracle; it is the ability God gives to trust His Son, and anything that does not result in action in accord with the will of God is not faith but something else short of it.

Faith and morals are two sides of the same coin. Indeed the very essence of faith is moral. Any professed faith in Christ as personal Savior that does not bring the life under plenary obedience to Christ as Lord is inadequate and must betray its victim at the last.

The man who believes will obey; failure to obey is convincing proof that there is not true faith present. To attempt the impossible, God must give faith or there will be none, and He gives faith to the obedient heart only. Where real repentance is, there is obedience; for repentance is not only sorrow for past failures and sins, it is a determination to begin now to do the will of God as He reveals it to us.

A.W. Tozer



What Is Love?

What is love?

No words can define it,
It's something so great
Only God could design it...
Wonder of wonders,
Beyond man's conception,
And only in God
Can love find true perfection,
For love is enduring
And patient and kind,
It judges all things
With the heart not the mind,
And love can transform
The most commonplace
Into beauty and splendor
And sweetness and grace...
For love is unselfish,
Giving more than it takes,
And no matter what happens
Love never forsakes,
It's faithful and trusting
And always believing,
Guileless and honest
And never deceiving...
Yes, love is beyond
What man is immortal
And God's gift is divine!