

Quotations on Faith

1. "Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has; it struggles against the divine word, treating with contempt all that emanates from God. The Virgin birth was unreasonable; so was the Resurrection; so were the Gospels, the sacraments, the pontifical prerogatives, and the problem of life everlasting." (Martin Luther)
2. "For whose sake is it that the proof [of the truth of the Scriptures] is sought? Faith does not need it; aye, it must even regard the proof as its enemy." (Søren Kierkegaard)
3. "If we submit everything to reason, our religion will have no mysterious and supernatural element. If we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous." (Pascal, *Pensées*, 273)
4. The Grand Inquisitor, in F. Schiller's *Don Carlos* (line 5275):
"Before the faith
No voice of Nature has validity."
5. "It is a quality of faith that it wrings the neck of reason. ... But how? It holds to God's Word: lets it be right and true, no matter how foolish and impossible it sounds. So did Abraham take his reason captive and slay it, in as much as he believed God's word, wherein was promised him from his unfruitful and as it were dead wife, Sarah, God would give him seed. ... There is no doubt faith and reason mightily fell out in Abraham's heart about this matter, yet at last did faith get the better, and overcame and strangled reason, that all-cruellest and most fatal enemy of God. So, too, do all other faithful men who enter with Abraham the gloom and hidden darkness of faith: they strangle reason ... and thereby offer to God the all-acceptablest sacrifice and service that can ever be brought to him." (Martin Luther)
6. "I would far rather feel remorse than know how to define it." (Thomas A Kempis, *Of the Imitation of Christ*, I.i.3)
7. "It would be a gain to the country if it were vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce in its religion than at present it shows itself to be." (Cardinal Newman, *History of My Religious Opinions from 1833 to 1839*)
8. "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt." (Cardinal Newman, *Position of My Mind Since 1845*)
9. "It is absurd to argue men, as to torture them, into believing." (Cardinal Newman, Sermon at Oxford, Dec. 11, 1831)
10. "But at least learn of your inability to believe, since reason brings you to this, and yet you cannot believe. Endeavour then to convince yourself, not by increase of proofs of God, but by the abatement of your passions. You would like to attain faith, and do not know the way; you would like to cure yourself of unbelief, and ask the remedy for it. Learn of those who have been found like you, and who now stake all their possessions. These are people who know the way which you would follow, and who are cured of an ill of which you would be cured. Follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, etc. Even this will naturally make you believe, and deaden your acuteness." (Pascal, *Pensées*, 233)
11. "Credibile est, quia ineptum est." (Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 5.4)
12. "If anyone had written to me that the truth was outside of Christ, I would rather remain with Christ than with the truth." (Dostoevsky, letter to a woman benefactor)

13. "So far as I can remember, there is not one word in the Gospels in praise of intelligence."

(Bertrand Russell)

14. Bob Dylan, "Highway 61 Revisited" (1965):

God said to Abraham, "Kill me a son"

Abe says, "Man, you must be puttin' me on"

God say, "No." Abe say, "What?"

God say, "You can do what you want Abe, but

The next time you see me comin' you better run"

Abe says, "Where do you want this killin' done?"

God says, "Out on Highway 61."

15. "Faith, *n.* Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel." (A. Bierce)

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