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6.5 | *Opinion, Belief, and Faith*

The three subjects considered here all tend to bring the meaning of knowledge into sharper focus. Does the man who says "I know" signify a different state of mind from the man who says, of the same matter, "I opine," or "I think," or "I believe"? What is the difference? Are there some things of which we can only say "I think," "I opine," or "I believe," but not "I know"? Is faith a belief about things that we cannot know? These and similar questions are dealt with in the passages quoted below.

Employing the phrase "right opinion" to designate an opinion that happens to be true, Plato attempts to point out why it is better to have knowledge than right opinion even though both put the mind in possession of the truth. In a similar vein, Aristotle com­ments on the difference between knowing the truth of a theorem in geometry because one is able to demonstrate it and believing or opining that it is true on the authority of one's teacher. In subsequent elaborations of the same insight, knowledge and opinion or belief are differentiated by the distinction between that which the mind necessarily af­firms and that to which it voluntarily gives

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from the proposition that two plus two makes four, then I know it to be true; I do not opine or believe it. But if what is pro­posed is something that I can voluntarily ac­cept or reject, then my affirmation or denial of the matter is an act of opinion or belief, not of knowledge. In jjeometry, for example, an axiom commands my assent, but I am free to accept or reject a postulate which asks me to take something for granted.

As the difference between knowledge, on the one hand, and opinion or belief, on the other, becomes clearer, the door to skepti­cism is opened by doubts concerning the ex­tent of the area in which men can properly say that they know. This is countered by giving greater weight or credence to opin­ions and beliefs in proportion as they are well grounded in observed facts or support­ed by cogent reasons even though the facts and the reasons do not produce the certainty of self-evident or of demonstrated truths. Accordingly, the discussion of opinion and belief becomes involved with considerations of probability, and with efforts to ascertain the degree of probability that, for all practi­cal purposes, is as good as certainty.

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and "faith" are often used interchangeably, but the word "faith" has a special and dis­tinct significance when it is employed by writers in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of Western thought. The passages quoted here reflecting that tradition set religious faith apart from the ordinary run of secular be­liefs by confining it to the things that God has explicitly revealed to men in Sacred Scripture. Having such faith is thought to be

a mark of divine grace. Men may exercise their own will to believe about other mat­ters, but belief in the articles of religious faith is a gift that God himself bestows upon them. Because theology, or at least dogmatic theology, finds its first principles in the arti­cles of religious faith and then attempts to explicate what is thus believed, some quota­tions dealing with theology are included here.

1 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto
my path.

*Psalm* 119:105

2 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye
indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed,
but perceive not.

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and un­derstand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

*Isaiah* 6:9-12

3 *Socrates.* If a man knew the way to Larisa, or any­
where else, and went to the place and led others
thither, would he not be a right and good guide?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And a person who had a right opinion about the way, but had never been and did not know, might be a good guide also, might he not?

*Men.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And while he has true opinion about that which the other knows, he will be just as good a guide if he thinks the truth, as he who knows the truth?

*Men.* Exactly.

*Soc.* Then true opinion is as good a guide to correct action as knowledge; and that was the point which we omitted in our speculation about the nature of virtue, when we said that knowledge only is the guide of right action; whereas there is also right opinion.

*Men.* True.

*Soc.* Then right opinion is not less useful than knowledge?

*Men.* The difference, Socrates, is only that he who has knowledge will always be right; but he who has right opinion will sometimes be right, and sometimes not.

*Soc.* What do you mean? Can he be wrong who has right opinion, so long as he has right opinion?

*Men.* I admit the cogency of your argument, and therefore, Socrates, I wonder that knowledge should be preferred to right opinion—or why they should ever differ.

*Soc.* And shall I explain this wonder to you?

*Men.* Do tell me.

*Soc.* You would not wonder if you had ever ob­served the images of Daedalus; but perhaps you have not got them in your country?

*Men.* What have they to do with the question?

*Soc.* Because they require to be fastened in order to keep them, and if they are not fastened they will play truant and run away.

*Men.* Well, what of that?

*Soc.* I mean to say that they are not very valu­able possessions if they are at liberty, for they will walk off like runaway slaves; but when fastened, they are of great value, for they are really beauti­ful works of art. Now this is an illustration of the nature of true opinions: while they abide with us they are beautiful and fruitful, but they run away out of the human soul, and do not remain long, and therefore they are not of much value until they are fastened by the tie of the cause; and this fastening of them, friend Meno, is recollection, as you and I have agreed to call it. But when they are bound, in the first place, they have the nature of knowledge; and, in the second place, they are abiding. And this is why knowledge is more hon­ourable and excellent than true opinion, because fastened by a chain.

Plato, *Meno,* 97A

4 *Socrates.* Seeing . . . that riot only rhetoric works by persuasion, but that other arts do the same, as in the case of the painter, a question has arisen which is a very fair one: Of what persuasion is

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rhetoric the artificer, and about what?—is not that a fair way of putting the question?

*Gorgias.* I think so.

*Soc.* Then, if you approve the question, Gorgias, what is the answer?

*Gor.* I answer, Socrates, that rhetoric is the art of persuasion in courts of law and other assem­blies, as I was just now saying, and about the just and unjust.

*Soc.* And that, Gorgias, was what I was suspect­ing to be your notion; yet I would not have you wonder if by-and-by I am found repeating a seemingly plain question; for I ask not in order to confute you, but as I was saying that the argu­ment may proceed consecutively, and that we may not get the habit of anticipating and suspect­ing the meaning of one another's words; I would have you develop your own views in your own way, whatever may be your hypothesis.

*Got.* I think that you are quite right, Socrates.

*Soc.* Then let me raise another question; there is such a thing as "having learned"?

*Gor.* Yes.

*Soc.* And there is also "having believed"?

*Gor.* Yes.

*Soc.* And is the "having learned" the same as "having believed," and are learning and belief the same things?

*Gor.* In my judgment, Socrates, they are not the same.

*Soc.* And your judgment is right, as you may ascertain in this way:—If a person were to say to you, "Is there, Gorgias, a false belief as well as a true?"—you would reply, if I am not mistaken, that there is.

*Gor.* Yes.

*Soc.* Well, but is there a false knowledge as well as a true?

*Gor.* No.

*Soc.* No, indeed; and this again proves that knowledge and belief differ.

*Gor,* Very true.

*Soc.* And yet those who have learned as well as those who have believed are persuaded?

*Gor.* Just so.

*Soc.* Shall we then assume two sorts of persua­sion,—one which is the source of belief without knowledge, as the other is of knowledge?

*Gor.* By all means.

*Soc.* And which sort of persuasion does rhetoric create in courts of law and other assemblies about the just and unjust, the sort of persuasion which gives belief without knowledge, or that which gives knowledge?

*Gor.* Clearly, Socrates, that which only gives be­lief.

*Soc.* Then rhetoric, as would appear, is the arti­ficer of a persuasion which creates belief about the just and unjust, but gives no instruction about them?

*Gor.* True.

5 Things that are true and things that are better
are, by their nature, practically always easier to
prove and easier to believe in.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1355a38

6 Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father,
Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid
these things from the wise and prudent, and hast
revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

*Matthew* 11:25-27

7 The disciples came, and said unto him, why
speakest thou unto them in parables?

He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the king­dom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And in them *\s* fulfilled the prophecy of E-sai-as, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should under­stand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

*Matthew* 13:10-17

8 Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain
of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain,
Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall re­
move; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

*Matthew* 17:20

9 And straightway the father of the child cried out,
and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou
mine unbelief.

*Mark* 9:24

Plato, *Gorgias,* 454A 10 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall

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**say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.**

**Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**

***Mark* 11:23-24**

**11 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

***John* 20:29**

**Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

**How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?**

**And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**

**\_ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For E-sai-as saith, Lord, who hath believed our re­port?**

**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

***Romans* 10:13-17**

**13 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, , that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?**

**This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

**Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**

**Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.**

**He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

**Even as Abraham believed God, and it was ac­counted to him for righteousness.**

**Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.**

**And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.**

**So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.**

**For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**

**But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**

***Galatians* 3:1-11.**

**14 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my
course, I have kept the faith.**

**// *Timothy* 4:7**

**15 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed
to the things which we have heard, lest at any
time we should let them slip.**

**For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;**

**How shall we escape, if we neglect so great sal­vation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;**

**God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?**

***Hebrews* 2:1-4**

**16 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the
evidence of things not seen.**

***Hebrews* 11:1**

**17 We have not followed cunningly devised fables,
when we made known unto you the power and
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewit­
nesses of his majesty.**

**For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

**And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.**

**We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.**

***II Peter* 1:16-19**

**18 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave
unto him, to shew unto his servants things which
must shortly come to pass; arid he sent and signi­
fied it by his angel unto his servant John:**

**Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.**

**Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**

***Revelation* 1:1-3**

**19 I was glad also that the old scriptures of the Law
and the Prophets were set before me now, no lon­
ger in that light in which they had formerly
seemed absurd, when I criticised Your holy ones**

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for thinking this or that which in plain fact they did not think. And it was a joy to hear Ambrose who often repeated to his congregation, as if it were a rule he was most strongly urging upon them, the text: *the Utter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* And he would go on to draw aside the veil of mystery and lay open the spiritual meaning of things which taken literally would have seemed to teach falsehood.

Augustine, *Confessions,* VI, 4

20 I wanted to be as certain of things unseen as that
seven and three make ten. For I had not reached
the point of madness which denies that even this
can be known; but I wanted to know other things
as clearly as this, either such material things as
were not present to my senses, or spiritual things
which I did not know how to conceive save corpo­
really. By believing I might have been cured; for
then the eye of my mind would have been clearer
and so might in some way have been directed
towards Your truth which abides for ever and
knows no defect. But as usually happens, the man
who has tried a bad doctor is afraid to trust even
a good one, so it was with the health of my soul,
which could not be healed save by believing, and
refused to be healed that way for fear of believing
falsehood. Thus I was resisting Your hands, for
You first prepared for us the medicine of faith and
then applied it to the diseases of the world and
gave it such great power.

Augustine, *Confessions,* VI, 4

21 I continued my miserable complaining: "How
long, how long shall I go on saying tomorrow and
again tomorrow? Why not now, why not have an
end to my uncleanness this very hour?"

Such things I said, weeping in the most bitter sorrow of my heart. And suddenly I heard a voice from some nearby house, a boy's voice or a girl's voice, I do not know: but it was a sort of sing-song, repeated again and again, "Take and read, take and read." I ceased weeping and immediately be­gan to search my mind most carefully as to wheth­er children were accustomed to chant these words in any kind of game, and I could not remember that I had ever heard any such thing. Damming back the flood of my tears I arose, interpreting the incident as quite certainly a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the passage at which I should open. ... So I was moved to return to the place where Alypius was sitting, for I had put down the Apostle's book there when I arose. I snatched it up, opened it and in silence read the passage upon which my eyes first fell: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impuri­ties, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences. [Romans* xiii, 13.] I had no wish to read further, and no need. For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as

though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty van­ished away. . . .

Then we went in to my mother and told her, to her great joy. We related how it had come about: she was filled with triumphant exultation, and praised You who are mighty beyond what we ask or conceive: for she saw that You had given her more than with all her pitiful weeping she had ever asked. For You converted me to Yourself so diat I no longer sought a wife nor any of this world's promises, but stood upon that same rule of faith in which You had shown me to her so many years before. Thus You changed her mourning into joy, a joy far richer than she had thought to wish, a joy much dearer and purer than she had thought to find in grandchildren of my flesh.

Augustine, *Confessions,* VIII, 12

22 This Mediator, having spoken what He judged
sufficient first by the prophets, then by His own
lips, and afterwards by the apostles, has besides
produced the Scripture which is called canonical,
which has paramount authority, and to which we

■ yield assent in all matters of which we ought not to be ignorant, and yet cannot know of ourselves. For if we attain the knowledge of present objects by the testimony of our own senses, whether inter­nal or external, then, regarding objects remote from our own senses, we need others to bring their testimony, since we cannot know them by our own, and we credit the persons to whom the ob­jects have been or are sensibly present. According­ly, as in the case of visible objects which we have not seen, we trust those who have (and likewise with all sensible objects), so in the case of things which are perceived by the mind and spirit, i.e., which are remote from our interior sense, it be­hoves us to trust those who have seen them set in that incorporeal light, or abidingly contemplate them.

Augustine, *City of God,* XI, 3

23 Men see Him just so far as they die to this world;
and so far as they live to it they see Him not. But
yet, although that light may begin to appear
clearer, and not only more tolerable, but even
more delightful, still it is only through a glass
darkly that we are said to see, because we walk by
faith, not by sight, while we continue to wander as
strangers in this world, even though our conversa­
tion be in heaven.

Augustine, *Christian Doctrine,* II, 7

24 Just as poor as the store of gold and silver and
garments which the people of Israel brought with
them out of Egypt was in comparison with the
riches which they afterwards attained at Jerusa­
lem, and which reached their height in the reign
of King Solomon, so poor is all the useful knowl-

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**edge which is gathered from the books of the heathen when compared with the knowledge of Holy Scripture. For whatever man may have learnt from other sources, if it is hurtful, it is there condemned; if it is useful, it is therein contained. And while every man may find there all that he has learnt of useful elsewhere, he will find there in much greater abundance things that are to be found nowhere else, but can be learnt only in the wonderful sublimity and wonderful simplicity of the Scriptures.**

**Augustine, *Christian Doctrine,* II, 42**

**25 What I understand I also believe, but I do not
understand everything that I believe; for all
which I understand I know, but I do not know all
that I believe. But still I am not unmindful of the
utility of believing many things which are not
known. . . . And though the majority of things
must remain unknown to me, yet I do know what
is the utility of believing.**

**Augustine, *On the Teacher,* XI, 37**

**26 Although by the revelation of grace in this life we
cannot know of God "what He is," and thus are
united to Him as to one unknown, still we know
Him more fully according as many and more ex­
cellent of His effects are demonstrated to us, and
according as we attribute to Him some things
known by divine revelation, to which natural rea­
son cannot reach, as, for instance, that God is
Three and One.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Tkeologica,* I, 12, 13**

**27 The light of faith makes us see what we believe.
For just as, by the habits of the other virtues, man
sees what is fitting to him in respect of that habit,
so, by the habit of faith, the human mind is di­
rected to assent to such things as are fitting to a
right faith, and not to assent to others.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II—II, 1, 4**

**28 Unbelievers are in ignorance of things that are of
faith, for neither do they see or know them in
themselves, nor do they know them to be credible.
The faithful, on the other hand, know them, not
as by demonstration, but by the light of faith
which makes them see that they ought to believe
them.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, 11-11,* 1, 5**

**29 Science and opinion about the same object can
certainly be in different men, as we have stated
above about science and faith. Yet it is possible for
one and the same man to have science and faith
about the same thing relatively, that is, in relation
to the subject, but not in the same respect. For it is
possible for the same person, about one and the
same thing, to know one thing and to think anoth­
er. And, in like manner, one may know by dem­
onstration the unity of God, and believe that He is**

**a Trinitv. On the other hand, in one and the same man, about the same thing, and in the same re­spect, science is incompatible with either opinion or faith, yet for different reasons. Because science is incompatible with opinion about the same thing absolutely, for the notion of science demands that what is known should *be* thought impossible to be otherwise, but the notion of opinion demands that the thing of which there is opinion may be thought possible to be otherwise. Yet that which is held by faith, on account of the certainty of faith, is also thought impossible to be otherwise; and the reason why science and faith cannot be about the same object and in the same respect is because the object of science is something seen, while the ob­ject of faith is the unseen, as stated above.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II—II, 1, 5**

**30 Whatever is in opposition to faith, whether it con­
sist in a man's thoughts, or in outward persecu­
tion, increases the merit of faith, insofar as the will
is shown to be more prompt and firm in believing,
Hence the martyrs had more merit of faith,
through not renouncing faith on account of perse­
cution; and even the wise have greater merit of
faith, through not renouncing their faith on ac­
count of the reasons brought forward by philoso­
phers or heretics in opposition to faith.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II—II, 2, 10**

**31 Other things being equal sight is more certain
than hearing. But if (the authority of) the person
from whom we hear greatly surpasses that of the
seer's sight, hearing is more certain than sight.
Thus a man of little science is more certain about
what he hears on the authority of an expert in
science, than about what is apparent to him ac­
cording to his own reason. And much more is a
man certain about what he hears from God, Who
cannot be deceived, than about what he sees with
his own reason, which can be mistaken.**

**Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II—II, 4, 8**

**32 Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and
argument of things which are not seen; and this I
take to be its quiddity.**

**Dante, *Paradiso,* XXIV, 64**

**33 I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who mov-**

**eth all the heaven, himself unmoved, with love and with desire.**

**And for such belief I have not only proofs physic and metaphysic, but it is given me likewise by the truth which hence doth rain**

**through Moses, through the Prophets and through the Psalms, through the Gospel and through you who wrote when the glowing Spirit had made you fosterers.**

**And I believe in three eternal Persons, and I be­lieve them one Essence, so One and so Trine as to comport at once with *are* and *is.***

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With the profound divine state whereof I speak,

**my mind is stamped more times than once by**

**evangelic teaching. This the beginning is; this is the spark which then**

**dilates into a living flame, and like a star in**

**heaven shineth in me.**

**Dante, *Pamdiso,* XXIV, 130**

**34 The principal lesson of theology is that Christ can
be known.**

**Luther, *Table Talk,* 1353**

**35 Prior to faith and a knowledge of God, reason is
darkness, but in believers it's an excellent instru­
ment. Just as all gifts and instruments of nature
are evil in godless men, so they are good in believ­
ers. Faith is now furthered by reason, speech, and
eloquence, whereas these were only impediments
prior to faith. Enlightened reason, taken captive
by faith, receives life from faith, for it is slain and
given life again.**

**Luther, *Table Talk,* 2938b**

**36 Faith justifies not as a work, or as a quality, or as
knowledge, but as assent of the will and firm con­
fidence in the mercy of God. For if faith were only
knowledge, then the devil would certainly be
saved because he possesses the greatest knowledge
of God and of all the works and wonders of God
from the creation of the world. Accordingly faith
must be understood otherwise than as knowledge.
In part, however, it is assent.**

**Luther, *Table Talk,* 4655**

**37 Little children are saved only by faith without
any good works; therefore faith alone justifies. If
God's power be able to effect that in one, then he
is also able to accomplish it in all; for the power of
the child effects it not, but the power of faith;
neither is it done through the child's weakness or
disability; for then that weakness would be merit
of itself, or equivalent to merit. It is a mischievous
thing that we miserable, sinful wretches will up­
braid God, and hit him in the teeth with our
works, and think thereby to be justified before
him; but God will hot allow it.**

**Luther, *Table Talk,* H304**

**38 Faith consists in a knowledge of God and of
Christ, not in reverence for the Church.**

**Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* III, 2**

1. **Faith is a knowledge of the benevolence of God
towards us, and a certain persuasion of his veraci­
ty-
Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* III, 2**
2. **The principal hinge on which faith turns is this—
that we must not consider the promises of mercy,
which the Lord offers, as true only to others, and**

**not to ourselves; but rather make them our own, by embracing them in our hearts.**

**Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* III, 2**

**41 Perhaps it is not without reason that we attribute
facility in belief and conviction to simplicity and
ignorance; for it seems to me I once learned that
belief was a sort of impression made on our mind,
and that the softer and less resistant the mind, the
easier it was to imprint something on it. ... The
more a mind is empty and without counterpoise,
the more easily it gives beneath the weight of the
first persuasive argument.**

**Montaigne, *Essays,* I, 27, It Is Folly**

**42 Some make the world believe that they believe
what they do not believe. Others, in greater num­
ber, make themselves believe it, being unable to
penetrate what it means to believe.**

**Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12j Apology for Raymond Sebond**

**43 We must not give God chaff for wheat, as they
say. If we believed in him, I do not say by faith,
but with a simple belief; in fact (and I say it to
our great confusion), if we believed in him just as
in any other history, if we knew him like one of
our comrades, we would love him above all other
things, for the infinite goodness and beauty that
shines in him. At least he would march in the
same rank in our affection as riches, pleasures,
glory, and our friends.**

**Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12; Apology for Raymond Sebond**

**44 The participation that we have in the knowledge
of truth, whatever it may be, has not been ac­
quired by our own powers. God has taught us that
clearly enough by the witnesses that he has chosen
from the common people, simple and ignorant, to
instruct us in his admirable secrets. Our faith is
not of our own acquiring, it is a pure present of
another's liberality. It is not by reasoning or by
our understanding that we have received our reli­
gion; it is by external authority and command.
The weakness of our judgment helps us more in
this than its strength, and our blindness more
than our clear-sightedness. It is by the mediation
of our ignorance more than of our knowledge that
we are learned with that divine learning.**

**Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond**

**45 Reason does nothing but go astray in everything,
and especially when it meddles with divine things.
Who feels this more evidently than we? For even
though we have given it certain and infallible
principles, even though we light its steps with the
holy lamp of the truth which it has pleased God to
communicate to us, nevertheless we see daily how,
when it strays however little from the beaten path**

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and deviates or wanders from the way traced and trodden by the Church, immediately it is lost, it grows embarrassed and entangled, whirling round and floating in that vast, troubled, and undulat­ing sea of human opinions, unbridled and aimless. As soon as it loses that great common highroad it breaks up and disperses onto a thousand different roads.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond

46 I do not at all hate opinions contrary to mine. I
am so far from being vexed to see discord between
my judgments and others', and from making my­
self incompatible with the society of men because
they are of a different sentiment and party from
mine, that on the contrary, since variety is the
most general fashion that nature has followed,
and more in minds than bodies, inasmuch -as
minds are of a substance suppler and susceptible
of more forms, I find it much rarer to see our
humors and plans agree. And there were never in
the world two opinions alike, any more than two
hairs or two grains. Their most universal quality is
diversity.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 37, Children and

Fathers

47 I enter into discussion and argument with great
freedom and ease, inasmuch as opinion finds in
me a bad soil to penetrate and take deep roots in.
No propositions astonish me, no belief offends me,
whatever contrast it offers with my own. There is
no fancy so frivolous and so extravagant that it
does not seem to me quite suitable to the produc­
tion of the human mind. We who deprive our
judgment of the right to make decisions look mild­
ly on opinions different from ours; and if we do
not lend them our judgment, we easily lend them
our ears. Where one scale of the balance is totally
empty, I let the other vacillate under an old
woman's dreams. And it seems to me excusable if
I take rather the odd number than the even,
Thursday rather than Friday; if I am happier to
be twelfth or fourteenth than thirteenth at table;
if I would rather see a hare skirting my path when
I travel than crossing it, and rather give my left
foot than my right to be booted first. All such idle
fancies, which are in credit around us, deserve at
least to be listened to. For me they outweigh only
emptiness, but they do outweigh that. Popular
and chance opinions count in weight for some­
thing, and not nothing, in nature. And he who
does not let himself go that far may perhaps fall
into the vice of obstinacy to avoid that of supersti­
tion.

Montaigne, *Essays,* III, 8, Of the Art of

Discussion

regard it as a most highly assured fact that th road is not less open to the most ignorant than t the most learned, and that the revealed truth which conduct thither are quite above our intelli gence, I should not have dared to submit them t< the feebleness of my reasonings; and I though that, in order to undertake to examine them an< succeed in so doing, it was necessary to have som< extraordinary assistance from above and to b more than a mere man.

Descartes, *Discourse on Method,*

49 Though the matters be obscure with which ou
faith is said to deal, nevertheless this is understocx
to hold only of the fact or matter of which i
treats, and it is not meant that the formal reasoi
on account of which we assent to matters of fait!
is obscure: for, on the other hand, this formal rea
son consists in a certain internal light, and it i
when God supernaturally fills us with this illumi
nation that we are confident that what is pro
posed for our belief has been revealed by Him
Himself, and that it is clearly impossible that H<
should lie: a fact more certain than any natura
light and often indeed more evident than it oi
account of the light of grace.

Descartes, *Objections and Replies,* I

50 The Scripture was written to show unto men thi
kingdom of God, and to prepare their minds t<
become His obedient subjects, leaving the world
and the philosophy thereof, to the disputation c
men for the exercising of their natural reason.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* I, *i*

51 Faith of supernatural law is not a fulfilling, bu
only an assenting to the same; and not a duty tha
we exhibit to God, but a gift which God freel;
giveth to whom He pleaseth; as also unbelief i
not a breach of any of His laws, but a rejection o
them all, except the laws natural.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* II, 2l

52 Disputing of God's nature is contrary to His hon
our, for it is supposed that in this natural kingdon
of God, there is no other way to know anythini
but by natural reason; that is, from the principle
of natural science; which are so far from teachin
us anything of God's nature, as they cannot teacl
us our own nature, nor the nature of the smalles
creature living. And therefore, when men out c
the principles of natural reason dispute of the at
tributes of God, they but dishonour Him: for ii
the attributes which we give to God, we are not t
consider the signification of philosophical truth
but the signification of pious intention to do Hir
the greatest honour we are able.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* II, 3

48 I honoured our theology and aspired as much as anvone to reach to heaven, but having learned to

53 Belief and unbelief never follow men's command: Faith is a rift of God which man can neither eiv

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nor take away by promise of rewards or menaces of torture.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* III, 42

54 As for those wingy Mysteries in Divinity, and airy
subtleties in Religion, which have unhing'd the
brains of better heads, they never stretched the *Pia
Mater* of mine. Methinks there be not impossibili­
ties enough in Religion for an active faith; the
deepest Mysteries ours contains have not only
been illustrated, but maintained, by Syllogism
and the rule of Reason. I love to lose my self in a
mystery, to pursue my Reason to an *0 allitudo!* 'Tis
my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension
with those involved ^Enigma's and riddles of the
Trinity, with Incarnation, and Resurrection. I
can answer all the Objections of Satan and my
rebellious reason with that odd resolution I
learned of *Tertullian, Certum est quia impossibile est.* I
desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point;
for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not
faith, but perswasion. Some believe the better for
seeing Christ's Sepulchre; and when they have
seen the Red Sea, doubt not of the Miracle. Now
contrarily, I bless my self and am thankful that I
lived not in the days of Miracles, that I never saw
Christ nor His Disciples; I would not have been
one of those *Israelites* that pass'd the Red Sea, nor
one of Christ's patients on whom he wrought his
wonders; then had my faith been thrust upon me,
nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pro­
nounced to all that believe and saw not. 'Tis an
easie and necessary belief, to credit what our eye
and sense hath examined: I believe he was dead,
and buried, and rose again; and desire to see him
in his glory, rather than to contemplate him in his
Cenotaphe or Sepulchre. Nor is this much to be­
lieve; as we have reason, we owe this faith unto
History: they only had the advantage of a bold
and noble Faith, who lived before his coming,
who upon obscure prophesies and mystical Types
could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossi­
bilities.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici,* I, 9

55 How shall the dead arise, is no question of my
Faith; to believe only possibilities, is not Faith,
but meer Philosophy.

Sir Thomas Browne\* *Religio Medici,* I, 48

56 Faith indeed tells what the senses do not tell, but
not the contrary of what they see. It is above them
and not contrary tb them.

Pascal, *Pensees,* IV, 265

57 If we submit everything to reason, our religion
will have no mysterious and supernatural ele­
ment. If we offend the principles of reason, our
religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

Pascal, *Pensees,* IV, 273

58 Instead of complaining that God had hidden
Himself, you will give Him thanks for not having
revealed so much of Himself; and you will also
give Him thanks for not having revealed Himself
to haughty sages, unworthy to know so holy a
God.

Two kinds of persons know Him: those who have a humble heart, and who love lowliness, whatever kind of intellect they may have, high or low; and those who have sufficient understanding to see the truth, whatever opposition they may have to it.

Pascal, *Pensees,* IV, 288

59 The knowledge of God without that of man's mis­
ery causes pride. The knowledge of man's misery
without that of God causes despair. The knowl­
edge of Jesus Christ constitutes the middle course,
because in Him we find both God and our misery.

Pascal, *Pensees,* VII, 527

60 We understand nothing of the works of God, if we
do not take as a principle that He has willed to
blind some and enlighten others.

Pascal, *Pensees,* VIII, 566

61 It is a wonderful thing, and worthy of particular
attention, to see this Jewish people existing so
many years in perpetual misery, it being neces­
sary as a proof of Jesus Christ both that they
should exist to prove Him and that they should be
miserable because they crucified Him; and
though to be miserable and to exist are contradic­
tory, they nevertheless still exist in spite of their
misery. They are visibly a people expressly creat­
ed to serve as a witness to the Messiah (Isaiah
43.9; 44.8). They keep the books, and love them,
and do not understand them. And all this was
foretold; that God's judgments are entrusted to
them, but as a sealed book.

Pascal, *PenseeSi* IX, 640-641

62 What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;

That to the highth of this great Argument I may assert Eternal Providence, And justifie the wayes of God to men.

Milton, *Paradise Lost,* I, 22

63 Thou Celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her pow­
ers

Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Milton, *Paradise Lost,* III, 51

64 So spake the Seraph *Abdiel* faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful only hee;
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshak'n, unseduc'd, unterrifi'd

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His Loyaltie he kept, his Love, his Zeale; Nor number, nor example with him wrought To swerve from truth, or change his constant

mind

Though single. From amidst them forth he passd, Long way through hostile scorn, which he sus-

teind

Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught; And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd On those proud Towrs to swift destruction

doom'd.

Milton, *Paradise Lost,* V, 893

65 Where there is much desire to learn, there of ne­
cessity will be much arguing, much writing, many
opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowl­
edge in the making.

Milton, *Areopagitica*

66 As in the whole course of my investigation I found
nothing taught expressly by Scripture, which does
not agree with our understanding, or which is re­
pugnant thereto, and as I saw that the prophets
taught nothing, which is not very simple and easi­
ly to be grasped by all, and further, that they
clothed their teaching in the style, and confirmed
it with the reasons, which would most deeply
move the mind of the masses to devotion towards
God, I became thoroughly convinced, that the Bi­
ble leaves reason absolutely free, that it has noth­
ing in common with philosophy, in fact, that Rev­
elation and Philosophy stand on totally different
footings.

Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise,* Pref.

67 Scripture does not teach philosophy, but merely
obedience, and ... all it contains has been
adapted to the understanding and established
opinions of the multitude. Those, therefore, who
wish to adapt it to philosophy, must needs ascribe
to the prophets many ideas which they never even
dreamed of, and give an extremely forced inter­
pretation to their words: those On the other hand,
who would make reason and philosophy subser­
vient to theology, will be forced to accept as Di­
vine utterances the prejudices of the ancient Jews,
and to fill and confuse their mind therewith. In
short, one party will run wild with the aid of rea­
son, and the other will run wild without the aid of
reason.

Spinoza, *Theologico~Political Treatise,* XV

68 Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;

The things we must believe are few and plain.

Dryden, *Religio Laid,* 431

69 Divine faith itself, when it is kindled in the soul, is
something more than an opinion, and depends
not upon the occasions or the motives that have
given it birth; it advances beyond the intellect,
and takes possession of the will and of the heart, to

make us act with zeal and joyfully as the law o God commands. Then we have no further need t( think of reasons or to pause over the difficulties o argument which the mind may anticipate.

Leibniz, *Theodicy,* 2?

70 Though everything said in the text be infallibly
true, yet the reader may be, nay, cannot choos<
but be, very fallible in the understanding of it
Nor is it to be wondered, that the will of God
when clothed in words, should be liable to tha
doubt and uncertainty which unavoidably attend
that sort of conveyance, when even his Son, whilsi
clothed in flesh, was subject to all the frailties anc
inconveniences of human nature, sin excepted.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding* Bk. HI, IX, 2;

71 Though the common experience and the ordinary
course of things have justly a mighty influence or
the minds of men, to make them give or refuse
credit to anything proposed to their belief; yel
there is one case, wherein the strangeness of the
fact lessens not the assent to a fair testimony given
of it. For where such supernatural events are suit­
able to ends aimed at by Him who has the powei
to change the course of nature, there, under sucli
circumstances, that may be the fitter to procure
belief, by how much the more they are beyond oi
contrary to ordinary observation. This is the prop­
er case of miracles, which, well attested, do noi
only find credit themselves, but give it also tc
other truths, which need such confirmation.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding* Bk. IV, XVI, *12*

72 Reason is natural revelation, whereby the eterna
Father of light and fountain of all knowledge
communicates to mankind that portion of truth
which he has laid within the reach of their natu­
ral faculties: revelation is natural reason enlargec
by a new set of discoveries communicated by Goc
immediately; which reason vouches the truth of
by the testimony and proofs it gives that the)
come from God. So that he that takes away reasor
to make way for revelation, puts out the light o
both, and does muchwhat the same as if he woulc
persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better t<
receive the remote light of an invisible star by :
telescope.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding* Bk. IV, XIX, -

73 I believe that thousands of men would be ortho
dox enough in certain points, if divines had no
been top curious, or too narrow, in reducing or
thodoxy within the compass of subtleties, niceties
and distinctions, with little warrant from Scrip
hire and less from reason or good policy.

Swift. *Thoughts on Relieio*

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74 Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;

Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n, Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n; Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, Some happier island in the watry waste, Where slaves once more their native land behold, No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold! To Be, contents his natural desire, He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire; But thinks, admitted to that equal sky, His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Pope, *Essay on Man,* Epistle I, 99

75 For Modes of Faith, let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Pope, *Essay on Man,* Epistle III, 305

76 When any opinion leads to absurdities, it is cer­
tainly false; but it is not certain that an opinion is
false, because it is of dangerous consequence.

**Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding,* VIII, 75**

77 Upon the whole, we may conclude, that the
Christian religion not only was at first attended
with miracles, but even at this day cannot be be­
lieved by any reasonable person without one.
Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its
veracity: And whoever is moved by faith to assent
to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his
own person, which subverts all the principles of
his understanding, and gives him a determination
to believe what is most contrary to custom and
experience.

**Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding,* X, 101**

78 The universal propensity to believe in an invisi­
ble, intelligent power, if not an original instinct,
being at least a general attendant of human na­
ture, may be considered as a kind of mark or
stamp, which the Divine workman has set upon
his work; and nothing surely can more dignify
mankind, than to be thus selected from all other
parts of the creation, and to bear the image or
impression of the universal Creator.

**Hume, *Natural History of Religion,* XV**

79 Mr. Murray praised the ancient philosophers for
the candour and good humour with which those
of different sects disputed with each other. *Johnson.*"Sir, they disputed with good humour, because
they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the
ancients been serious in their belief, we should not
have had their Gods exhibited in the manner we
find them represented in the Poets. The people
would not have suffered it. They disputed with
pood humour unnn their fanciful theories, hecause

they were not interested in the trulh of them when a man has nothing to lose, he may be i good humour with his opponent. Accordingly yo see in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues onl negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoick, who ha something positive to preserve, grows angry. Bein angry with one who controverts an opinion whici you value, is a necessary consequence of the un easiness which you feel. Every man who attack my belief, diminishes in some degree my confi dence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Thos only who believed in revelation have been angr at having their faith called in question; becaus they only had something upon which they couli rest as matter of fact."

**Boswell, *Life of Johnson (Apr. 3, 1776***

80 The opinion of a learned Bishop of our acquain
tance, as to there being merit in religious faith
being mentioned;—*Johnson.* "Why, yes, Sir, th
most licentious man, were hell open before hirr
would not take the most beautiful strumpet to hi
arms. We must, as the Apostle says, live by faitr
not by sight."

**Boswell, *Life of Johnson (June 3, 1781***

81 Since . . . the most sublime efforts of philosoph
can extend no farther than feebly to point out th
desire, the hope, or, at most, the probability of
future state, there is nothing, except a divine revc
lation that can ascertain the existence and d«
scribe the condition of the invisible country whici
is destined to receive the souls of men after thei
separation from the body.

**Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roma Empire,* X^**

82 Personal interest is often the standard of our be
lief, as well as of our practice.

**Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roma Empire,* X3**

83 The most sagacious of the Christian theologian:
the great Athanasius himself, has candidly cor
fessed that, whenever he forced his understandin
to meditate on the divinity of *the-Logos,* his toil
some and unavailing efforts recoiled on them
selves; that the more he thought, the less he corr
prehended; and the more he wrote, the les
capable was he of expressing his thoughts. In e\
ery step of the inquiry we are compelled to fe<
and acknowledge the immeasurable disproportio
between the size of the object and the capacity <
the human mind. We may strive to abstract th
notions of time, of space, and of matter, which s
closely adhere to all the perceptions of our experi
mental knowledge. But as soon as we presume t
reason of infinite substance, of spiritual generc
tion, as often as we deduce any positive conck
sinns from a negative idea, we are involved i

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darkness, perplexity, and inevitable contradiction.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman*

*Empire,* XXI

84 I maintain that all attempts of reason to establish
a theology by the aid of speculation alone are
fruitless, that the principles of reason as applied to
nature do not conduct us to any theological
truths, and, consequently, that a rational theology
can have no existence, unless it is founded upon
the laws of morality. For all synthetical principles
of the understanding are valid only as immanent
in experience; while the cognition of a Supreme
Being necessitates their being employed transcen-
dentally, and of this the understanding is quite
incapable. If the empirical law of causality is to
conduct us to a Supreme Being, this being must
belong to the chain of empirical objects—in which
case it would be, like all phenomena, itself condi­
tioned. If the possibility of passing the limits of
experience be admitted, by means of the dynami­
cal law of the relation of an effect to its cause,
what kind of conception shall we obtain by this
procedure? Certainly not the conception of a Su­
preme Being, because experience never presents
us with the greatest of all possible effects, and it is
only an effect of this character that could witness
to the existence of a corresponding cause. If, for
the purpose of fully satisfying the requirements of
Reason, we recognize her right to assert the exis­
tence of a perfect and absolutely necessary being,
this can be admitted only from favour, and can­
not be regarded as the result or irresistible demon­
stration. The physico-theological proof may add
weight to others—if other proofs there are—by
connecting speculation with experience; but in it­
self it rather prepares the mind for theological
cognition, and gives it a right and natural direc­
tion, than establishes a sure foundation for theolo­
gy-

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Transcendental

Dialectic

85 Holding for true, or the subjective validity of a
judgement in relation to conviction (which is, at
the same time, objectively valid), has the three
following degrees: opinion, belief, and knowledge.
Opinion is a consciously insufficient judgement,
subjectively as well as objectively. Belief is subjec­
tively sufficient, but is recognized as being objec­
tively insufficient. Knowledge is both subjectively
and objectively sufficient. Subjective sufficiency is
termed conviction (for myself); objective sufficien­
cy is termed certainty (for all). I need not dwell
longer on the explanation of such simple concep­
tions.

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Transcendental

Method

86 When men exercise their reason coolly and freely
on a varietv of distinct nuestinns. thev inevitahlv

fall into different opinions on some of them. Wher they are governed by a common passion, theii opinions, if they are so to be called, will be th< same.

Hamilton or Madison, *Federalist 51*

87 Public opinion . . . deserves to be as much re­
spected as despised—despised for its concrete ex-
pression and for the concrete consciousness it ex­
presses, respected for its essential basis, a basii
which only glimmers more or less dimly in thai
concrete expression. But in itself it has no criterior
of discrimination, nor has it the ability to extract
the substantive element it contains and raise it tc
precise knowledge. Thus to be independent o!
public opinion is the first formal condition o:
achieving anything great or rational whether ir
life or in science. Great achievement is assured
however, of subsequent recognition and gratefu
acceptance by public opinion, which in du<
course will make it one of its own prejudices.

Hegel, *Philosophy of Right,* 31f

88 Opinion is like a pendulum and obeys the sam<
law. If it goes past the centre of gravity on one
side, it must go a like distance on the other; and ii
is only after a certain time that it finds the tru<
point at which it can remain at rest.

Schopenhauer, *Further Psychologica Observation.*

89 There is no other revelation than the thoughts o:
the wise, even though these thoughts, liable to er­
ror as is the lot of everything human, are ofter
clothed in strange allegories and myths under th«
name of religion. So far, then, it is a matter o:
indifference whether a man lives and dies in reli­
ance on his own or another's thoughts; for it ii
never more than human thought, human opinion
which he trusts. Still, instead of trusting whai
their own minds tell them, men have as a rule £
weakness for trusting others who pretend to super­
natural sources of knowledge. And in view of th<
enormous intellectual inequality between mar
and man, it is easy to see that the thoughts of on<
mind might appear as in some sense a revelatior
to another.

Schopenhauer, *Christian Systen*

90 Faith is the highest passion in a man. There an
perhaps many in every generation who do no
even reach it, but no one gets further.

Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling,* Epilogu<

91 Mysticism has not the patience to wait for God'
revelation.

Kierkegaard, *Journals (July 11, 1840,*

92 We are born believing. A man bears beliefs as ;
tree bears apples.

Emerson. *Wnrshi*

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93 The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its
power to charm and command the soul, as the
laws of nature control the activity of the hands—
so commanding that we find pleasure and honor
in obeying.

Emerson, *Address to Harvard Divinity School*

94 Strong Son of God, immortal Love,

Whom we, that have not seen thy face, By faith, and faith alone, embrace, Believing where we cannot prove.

Tennyson, *In Memoriam,* Pref.

95 *Ahab.* If the gods think to speak outright to man,
they will honourably speak outright; not shake
their heads, and give an old wife's darkling hint.

Melville, *Moby Dick,* CXXXIII

96 It is remarkable that the highest intellectual mood
which the world tolerates is the perception of the
truth of the most ancient revelations, now in some
respects out of date; but any direct revelation, any
original thoughts, it hates like virtue. The fathers
and the mothers of the town would rather hear
the young man or young woman at their tables
express reverence for some old statement of the
truth than utter a direct revelation themselves.
They don't want to have any prophets born into
their families—damn them! So far as thinking is
concerned, surely original thinking is the divinest
thing. Rather we should reverently watch for the
least motions, the least scintillations, of thought in
this sluggish world, and men should run to and fro
on the occasion more than at an earthquake. We
check and repress the divinity that stirs within us,
to fall down and worship the divinity that is dead
without us. I go to see many a good man or good
woman, so called, and utter freely that thought
which alone it was given to me to utter; but there
was a man who lived a long, long time ago, and
his name was Moses, and another whose name
was Christ, and if your thought does not, or does
not appear to, coincide with what they said, the
good man or the good woman has no ears to hear
you. They think they love God! It is only his old
clothes, of which they make scarecrows for the
children. Where will they come nearer to God
than in those very children?

Thoreau, *Journal (Nov. 16, 1851)*

97 What we call rational grounds for our beliefs are
often extremely irrational attempts to justify our
instincts.

T. H. Huxley, *On the Natural Inequality of*

*Men,* fn. 1

98 There is the greatest difference between presum­
ing an opinion to be true, because, with every op­
portunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted,
and assuming its truth for the purpose of not per­
mitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contra-

dicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.

Mill, *On Liberty,* II

99 The usefulness of an opinion is itself matter of opinion: as disputable, as open to discussion, and requiring discussion as much as the opinion itself. There is the same need of an infallible judge of opinions to decide an opinion to be noxious, as to decide it to be false, unless the opinion con­demned has full opportunity of defending itself. And it will not do to say that the heretic may be allowed to maintain the utility or harmlessness of his opinion, though forbidden to maintain its truth. The truth of an opinion is part of its utility. If we would know whether or not it is desirable that a proposition should be believed, is it possible to exclude the consideration of whether or not it is true? In the opinion, not of bad men, but of the best men, no belief which is contrary to truth can be really useful: and can you prevent such men from urging that plea, when they are charged with culpability for denying some doctrine which they are told is useful, but which they believe to be false?

Mill, *On Liberty,* II

100 Reason ... is subservient to faith, as handling,
examining, explaining, recording, cataloguing,
defending the truths which faith, not reason, has
gained for us, as providing an intellectual expres­
sion of supernatural facts, eliciting what is implic­
it, comparing, measuring, connecting each with
each, and forming one and all into a theological
system.

Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* Pt. II, VII, 3

101 From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fun­
damental principle of my religion: I know no
other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any
other sort of religion; religion, as a mere senti­
ment, is to me a dream and a mockery.

Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua,* II

102 Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.

Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua,* V

103 The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Arnold, *Dover Beach*

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104 That ancient deception which demands faith in
what has no reasonable explanation, is already
worn out and we can no longer return to it. ...
Man always understands everything through his
reason and not through faith. It was once possible
to deceive him by asserting that he knows only
through faith and not through reason, but as soon
as he knows two faiths and sees men who profess
another faith in the same way that he professes his
own, he is inevitably obliged to decide the matter
by reason. ... In our time the attempts made to
infuse spirituality into man through faith apart
from reason, are like attempts to feed a man
otherwise than through his mouth.

Tolstoy, *On Life,* Appendix III

105 People today live without faith. On the one hand,
the minority of wealthy, educated people, having
freed themselves from the hypnotism of the
Church, believe in nothing. They look upon all
faiths as absurdities or as useful means of keeping
the masses in bondage—no more. On the other
hand, the vast majority, poor, uneducated, but for
the most part truly sincere, remain under the hyp­
notism of the Church and therefore think they
believe and have faith. But this is not really faith,
for instead of throwing light on man's position in
the world it only darkens it.

Tolstoy, *What Is Religion?,* VIII

106 Thought in action has for its only possible motive
the attainment of thought at rest; and whatever
does not refer to belief is no part of the thought
itself.

And what, then, is belief? It is the demi-ca-dence which closes a musical phrase in the sym­phony of our intellectual life. We have seen that it has just three properties: First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a *habit.* As it appeases the irritation of doubt, which is the motive for thinking, thought relaxes, and comes to rest for a moment when belief is reached. But, since belief is a rule for action, the application of which involves further doubt and further thought, at the same time that it is a stop­ping-place, it is also a new starting-place for thought. That is why I have permitted myself to call it thought at rest, although thought is essen­tially an action. The *final* upshot of thinking is the exercise of volition, and of this thought no longer forms a part; but belief is only a stadium of men­tal action, an effect upon our nature due to thought, which will influence future thinking.

C. S. Peirce, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*

107 Whoever has theologian blood in his veins has a
wrong and dishonest attitude towards all things
from the very first. The pathos that develops out
of this is called faith.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist,* IX

108 The 'will of God' (that is to say the conditions for
preserving the power of the priest) has to be
known—to this end a 'revelation' is Required. In
plain words: a great literary forgery becomes nec­
essary, a 'sacred book' is discovered^it is made
public with all hieratic pomp, with days of repen­
tance and with lamentation over the long years of
'sinfulness'.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist,* XXVI

109 The logical reason of man operates in this field of
divinity exactly as it has always operated in love,
or in patriotism, or in politics, or in kny other of
the wider affairs of life, in which our passions or
our mystical intuitions fix our beliefs beforehand.
It finds arguments for our conviction, for indeed it
*has* to find them. It amplifies and defines our
faith, and dignifies it and lends it words and plau­
sibility. It hardly ever engenders it; it cannot now
secure it.

William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* XVIII

110 Our faith is faith in someone else's faith, and in
the greatest matters this is most the case.

William James, *The Will* i *to Believe*

111 So far as man stands for anything, and is produc­tive or originative at all, his entire vital function may be said to have to deal with maybes. Not a victory is gained, not a deed of faithfulness or courage is done, except upon a maybe; not a ser­vice, not a sally of generosity, not a scientific ex­ploration or experiment or textbook, that may not be a mistake. It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified re­sult *is the only thing that makes the result come true.* Suppose, for instance, that you are climbing a mountain, and have worked yourself into a posi­tion from which the only escape is by a terrible leap. Have faith that you can successfully make it, and your feet are nerved to its accomplishment. But mistrust yourself, and think of all the sweet things you have heard the scientists say of *maybes,* and you will hesitate so long that, at last, all un­strung and trembling, and launching yourself in a moment of despair, you roll in the abyss. In such a case (and it belongs to an enormous class), the part of wisdom as well as of courage is to *believe what is in the line of your needs,* for only by such belief is the need fulfilled. Refuse to believe, and you shall indeed be right, for you shall irretrievably perish. But believe, and again you shall be right, for you shall save yourself. You make one or the other of two possible universes true by your trust or mistrust,—both universes having been only *maybes,* in this particular, before you contributed your act.

William James, *Is Life Worth Living?*

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112 These, then, are my last words to you: Be not
afraid of life. Believe that life *is* worth living, and
your belief will help create the fact. The 'scientific
proof that you are right may not be clear before
the day of judgment (or some stage of being which
that expression may serve to symbolize) is
reached. But the faithful fighters of this hour, or
the beings that then and there will represent
them, may then turn to the faint-hearted, who
here decline to go on, with words like those with
which Henry IV greeted the tardy Crillon after a
great victory had been gained: "Hang yourself,
brave Crillon! we fought at Arques, and you were
not there."

William James, *Is Life Worth Living?*

113 It is not disbelief that is dangerous in our society:
it is belief.

Shaw, *Androcles and the Lion,* Pref.

114 William James accomplished a new advance in
Pragmatism by his theory of the will to believe, or
as he himself later called it, the right to believe.
The discovery of the fundamental consequences of
one or another belief has without fail a certain
influence on that belief itself. If a man cherishes
novelty, risk, opportunity and a variegated esthet­
ic reality, he will certainly reject any belief in
Monism, when he clearly perceives the import of
this system. But if, from the very start, he is at­
tracted by esthetic harmony, classic proportions,
fixity even to the extent of absolute security, and
logical coherence, it is quite natural that he
should put faith in Monism. Thus William James
took into account those motives of instinctive sym­
pathy which play a greater role in our choice of a

philosophic system than do formal reasonings and he thought that we should be rendering : service to the cause of philosophical sincerity if w would openly recognize the motives which inspir us. He also maintained the thesis that the greate part of philosophic problems and especially thos which touch on religious fields are of such a na ture that they are not susceptible of decisive evi dence one way or the other. Consequently *h* claimed the right of a man to choose his belief not only in the presence of proofs or conclusiv facts, but also in the absence of all such prooi Above all when he is forced to choose between on< meaning or another, or when by refusing t choose he has a right to assume the risks of faith his refusal is itself equivalent to a choice. Tfo theory of the will to believe gives rise to misunder standings and even to ridicule; and therefore it i necessary to understand clearly in what wa-James used it. We are always obliged to act in an' case; our actions and with them their conse quences actually change according to the belief which we have chosen. Moreover it may be that in order to discover the proofs which will ulti mately be the intellectual justification of certaii beliefs—the belief in freedom, for example, or th< belief in God—it is necessary to begin to act ii accordance with this belief.

Dewey, *Development of America Pragmatisr*

115 Dogmas are at their best when nobody denie them, for then their falsehood sleeps, like that c an unconscious metaphor, and their moral func tion is discharged instinctively.

Santayana, *Life of Reason,* III,