
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

July 31, 2016

Doubt and Faith (*a revision of a previous Heart and Soul*)

*“Will my Lord reject me forever? Will he never be pleased again?
Has his faithful love come to a complete end? Is his promise over for future generations? You are the
God who works wonders;
you have demonstrated your strength among all peoples.”*
Psalm 77:7, 8, 14 (Common English Bible)

British singer, Adele, has struck a deep place in the hearts of millions with her single, “Hello”, a piano ballad. The lyrics discuss themes of nostalgia and regret and it is the first song in history to sell over a million digital copies in a week. Lyrically, the song plays out like a phone conversation, “Hello, it’s me. I was wondering if after all these years you’d like to meet, to go over everything.” The difficulty is, the person to whom she places the call never answers, “I must have called a thousand times. But when I call, you seem never to be home.” Certainly, these words resonate with different listeners in different ways. For me, they express my prayer life some days. I place a call to God but God never answers. “Will my Lord reject me forever?”

People of faith occasionally experience conflict in their relationship with God. There are moments when it seems easy to affirm God, to believe in a larger purpose than our own small lives, and that, in Christ, we are called to participate in a high and holy purpose. Other moments, faith is questioned. These few verses from Psalm 77 speak of both, of faith and doubt. It is a conflict that is familiar to many.

What are we to do? Herbert H. Farmer proposes an extremely important question, “To which of these two voices in the soul concerning God are we going to make up our minds deliberately and consciously always to give the greater weight?”¹ Will we place faith on trial, demanding evidence before trusting in God? Or, will we place doubt on trial, demanding that it answer the evidence of God’s work in our lives? Unless we are deliberate with our answer, we will continually oscillate between the two, between faith and doubt, with the circumstances of life driving the condition of the heart.

It seems reasonable to me that the better choice is not to leave such an important matter to the uncertainties of life. I have experienced moments of doubt and I am certain I will again experience doubt in the future. Yet, I have made the deliberate decision to place my doubt on trial in every instance. Like the author of these words from Psalm 77, I have chosen to answer every moment of doubt with the evidence of God’s marvelous work of wonders, with every demonstration of God’s strength among those who know and love him.

Doug Hood

¹Herbert H. Farmer, “Doubt and Faith,” **Best Sermons: 1947 Edition**, edited by G. Paul Butler (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), 146.