

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1954

Dr Norman Vincent Peale's Concept of Faith

Ronald G. Goerss

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_goerssr@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Goerss, Ronald G., "Dr Norman Vincent Peale's Concept of Faith" (1954). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 419.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/419>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S

CONCEPT OF FAITH


A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by


Ronald G. Goerss

June 1954

Approved by:



Advisor



Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
<p>I. INTRODUCTION AND CRITIQUE OF DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S CONCEPT OF FAITH</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Introduction</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Critique of Dr. Norman V. Peale's Concept of Faith</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>
<p>II. BACKGROUND AND APPROACH OF DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A Short Biography of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Approach of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>7</p>
<p>III. DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S DEFINITION OF FAITH . . .</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH A PERSON COMES INTO POSSESSION OF FAITH</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>V. THE RESULTS AND BENEFITS OF POSSESSING FAITH . . .</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>	<p>37</p>

This book which follows will discuss Dr. Peale's background and general approach to religion, the definition of faith, the means by which one comes into possession of this faith, and what the results and benefits of such faith are. The material presented is based on Dr. Peale's own writings, some of which have achieved best seller status. The writing of this paper is done in the fact that as this association is being written, more material is being made available by the authorized pastor of the South Methodist Church in New York City. Realizing the subject matter to be done from a contemporary point, he proceeds to offer an objective view of Dr. Peale's concept of faith.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND CRITIQUE OF DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S CONCEPT OF FAITH

Introduction

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale has been heralded from coast to coast in the United States as one of the most outstanding clergymen of this modern day. Books, magazines, and newspapers throughout the country continue to carry his thought and his fame to millions of Americans, while he meets them more personally through the medium of radio and television. Dr. Peale has influenced the lives and thinking of people from all walks of life.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the concept of faith as it is presented in the writings of Dr. Norman V. Peale. This chapter will include a critique of Dr. Peale's concept of faith. The body of this paper which follows will discuss Dr. Peale's background and general approach to religion, his definition of faith, the means by which one comes into possession of this faith, and what the results and benefits of this faith are. The material presented is based on Dr. Peale's own writings, some of which have achieved best seller status. The writer of this paper is aware of the fact that as this examination is being written, more material is being made available by the celebrated pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. Realizing the subject matter to be taken from a contemporary pen, he proceeds to offer an objective view of Dr. Peale's concept of faith.

Critique of Dr. Norman V. Peale's Concept of Faith

As Chapter III of this thesis points out, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's concept of faith is bound up with his thinking on Christianity and religion in general. Much of what Dr. Peale says of faith is true. However, it is often difficult to determine what he means when using the term. He very frequently speaks of faith in terms of belief in a Higher Power, belief in oneself, belief in others, but never does he write of faith in the suffering and atoning Christ. It is what he does not say that leaves the reader with much to be desired. The Gospel is obscured. Faith is an attitude, a power, a workable principle, but it is not what justifies one in the presence of the living God. There is a commitment, an assent to and confidence in the objects of faith alone. However, this commitment lacks real knowledge of the objects of faith. Furthermore, his concept does not have as the content and object of faith that of which the New Testament speaks. One finds that faith lacking, which holds to Christ the Incarnate Son of God Who lived a perfect life, died, rose from the dead, sits at the right hand of God and will come again in glory.¹

Dr. Peale develops to a great degree in his writings the means by which one can come into possession of faith as he conceives it. In fact, the "how-ness" of having faith is emphasized, in addition to the "how" of Christian living in general. Chapter IV of this thesis brings out the techniques which Dr. Peale advances for coming into possession of

¹Cf. Romans, chapters 1-11, and other passages concerning faith in the New Testament.

the faith about which he speaks and writes. Dr. Peale, stemming from a background of Reformed theology, never mentions Word and Sacrament as the means of grace. He has no such concept. Rather, in order to have faith one need simply to "have faith," surrender himself to God, believe with his own power to believe, saturate his mind with positive faith concepts, and make a diligent use of prayer techniques.²

Chapter V of this thesis deals with the results and benefits which faith brings to those who possess it. These effects are promised throughout the writings of Dr. Peale. One cannot deny that many of these results are possible and profitable and do occur in the lives of many people. Certainly it is true that Dr. Peale's writings, counselling, and preaching, have done much to help people solve their problems of daily life. On the other hand, what is not said is again of great importance. With all of the discussion of faith and its effects in the words of Dr. Peale, one finds a lack of the Gospel very much in evidence. The terminology of the Gospel is frequently used. However, the effects of the Gospel--forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Christ alone--are conspicuous by their absence. A definite approach to hedonism can be traced throughout his works.

Dr. Peale has done much to help people. The Reader's Digest has aptly entitled a feature article on Dr. Peale, "The Pastor of Troubled Souls."³ Furthermore, many people have been exposed to the Bible and its content by Dr. Peale's words and works who might never have been

²Infra, Chapter III, passim.

³Lois M. Miller and James Monahan, "Pastor of Troubled Souls," Reader's Digest (February, 1954), 65-69.

except for his efforts, But with all of the good done, still only symptoms have been treated in so many cases where a proper application of Law and Gospel would have been of value for the salvation of many people.⁴

A detailed critique of all of the tenets of Dr. Peale's views and uses of the concept of faith would go far beyond the scope of this thesis. Consequently, the few words of critique above serve only as an introduction to the chapters of examination which follow. Any final conclusions on the concepts of Dr. Peale would be presumptuous. He continues to preach, teach, and write. A fully developed critique in the light of historical judgment must await a future date.

⁴cf. 2 Tim. 2:15.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH OF DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

A Short Biography of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was born in Bowersville, Ohio, May 31, 1898, and was graduated in 1920 from Ohio Wesleyan University.¹ He received the degree of Master of Arts from Boston University, and the Bachelor of Sacred Theology from Boston University School of Theology in 1924. The honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Syracuse University, Ohio Wesleyan University, and Duke University. Lafayette College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, and William Jewell College the degree of Doctor of Laws.²

Dr. Peale has been minister of the historic Marble Collegiate Church, Fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street, New York City, since 1932.³ He is associated with Dr. Smiley Blanton and other assisting psychiatrists and psychologists in the Marble Collegiate Church Clinic, widely known for its counselling service in personal problems.⁴

Dr. Peale is author of The Art of Living, You Can Win, A Guide to Confident Living, and The Power of Positive Thinking. In collaboration with Dr. Blanton he has written two books, Faith Is the Answer, and The Art of Real Happiness. In addition he is the author of several tracts

¹Who's Who in America, A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, c.1952), p. 1895.

²"Publicity Data Regarding Dr. Norman Vincent Peale" (New York: Marble Collegiate Church, 1952), p. 1.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

and booklets listed in the bibliography. Dr. Peale's weekly column, Confident Living, currently appears in many metropolitan newspapers. He is Editor-in-Chief of Guideposts magazine, which has well over 500,000 subscribers.⁵

Dr. Peale's sermons are printed and sent out monthly to thousands of subscribers by the Sermon Publications, Inc., Pawling, New York.

He has written articles for many leading magazines, among them "Reader's Digest," "American," "Coronet," "Woman's Home Companion," "Liberty," "Your Life," "Farm Journal," "Journal of Living," "Look," and "Opportunity."⁶

A feature story on Dr. Peale for Newsweek, December 28, 1953, has his estimate that in 1953 he

reached some 30,000,000 people through his sermons, personal appearances, his religio-psychiatric clinic, radio and television programs, syndicated newspaper columns, and his latest book, The Power of Positive Thinking--the year's No. 1 non-fiction best seller.⁷

As is indicated in the above excerpt, Dr. Peale's outreach is not only through the printed word and the personal contact of his New York parish. His radio program, The Art of Living, is carried weekly over the coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company. He appears with Mrs. Peale in the first religious TV husband-and-wife show.⁸

Certainly Dr. Peale has made a great name for himself through his

⁵Ibid., p. 1.

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁷"Dr. Peale: An Articulate Leader of Christianity," Newsweek, (December 28, 1953), p. 43.

⁸"Publicity Data," p. 1.

preaching, teaching, and famed counselling. Arthur Gelb, special correspondent of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, has said of Dr. Peale that he "sheds the same brand of magnetism upon Protestants as does the dynamic Bishop Fulton Sheen on his Roman Catholic followers."⁹

The Approach of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

One of the greatest reasons for the popularity of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale can be found in the approach he takes to the needs of the American public today. In a clear, simple manner he outlines practical methods to solve any problem that may confront modern man. This paper is limited to an examination of his concept of faith. However, in order to understand this concept it is necessary to take a look at his basic ideas about religion. One finds these in great number throughout his writings. Directly tied up with his concept of religion in general and Christianity in particular is the manner in which he seeks to make religion a workable technique in the lives of his hearers and readers.

In his own words Peale explains how he started on the road to success in meeting the problems of people:

I came to the ministry of a Fifth Avenue church at the low point of the depression, back in 1932. New York City, as the financial center of the nation, was profoundly affected by the depression and I soon became aware of the fear, anxiety, insecurity, disappointment, frustration, and failure everywhere at hand. I began to preach on these themes and stressed how faith in God could give courage and wisdom together with new insights for the solution of problems. Advertising such topics in the press brought large congregations to hear these discussions. Soon my schedule of personal interviews

⁹ Arthur Gelb, "The Power of Positive Thinking America's Biggest Need Today, Says Dr. Norman Vincent Peale", St. Louis Globe-Democrat (January 10, 1954), Section F, p. 1.

was more than I could possibly handle and long waiting lists developed. Recognizing my lack of specialized knowledge, I turned to a highly competent psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, for help and thus began the counseling clinic in the church.¹⁰

Dr. Blanton has been with Dr. Peale since 1937 following a brilliant career in his own field.¹¹

Dr. Peale's great idea has been that religion can work in all areas of human life solving all its problems with the help of psychiatry. The approach he uses in his books is basically the same as is his and the clinic's in practice. His desire is to bring the techniques he has found workable and successful to as many people as he can. How many people can use these techniques? All who have problems in life, says Dr. Peale. In his introduction to A Guide to Confident Living, Dr. Peale says that he is offering what the reader wants to know, how to be happy and successful, and how to overcome whatever problems come into his life.¹² It is the same approach we find in his other books. He wants to help people live well-adjusted lives. This is possible through the right application of religious principles and psychiatry. Religion is not a theoretical something, but it is a workable science to be used in the solution of everyday problems.

The most antiquated man in America is the rare gentleman who still gets off the old canard that religion is something for Sunday only. That remark stamps him as belonging to the horse

¹⁰Norman V. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. 5.

¹¹Dr. Smiley Blanton was born in Unionville, Tennessee, May 7, 1882. He received his M.A. from Cornell U. in 1914. He received his diploma in Psychological Medicine from Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, London, England in 1923. He taught at various colleges and universities and practiced medicine before becoming the director of the religio-psychiatric clinic, Marble Collegiate Church, New York City, in 1937. He has been an associate of Dr. Peale since that year. Cf. Who's Who in America, Vol. 27 (1952-53) (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, c.1952), 226.

¹²Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. viii.

and buggy era.

Probably the reason so-called practical men think of Christianity as theoretical is because they regard it entirely as theology or philosophy. It does fulfill itself in these fields, but Christianity may also be thought of as a science. It is the science of personal and social living. Learn its laws and you will always and invariably get equivalent results.¹³

It is the aim of Dr. Peale to show people the "how" of practicing their religion. He makes the statement that people are urged to pray, but are not told how to pray. "We are urged to have faith, but are not instructed in the precise and workable procedures of faith We need now to learn the simple ABC's of how to put the curative principles of faith into operation."¹⁴

Dr. Peale believes that religion and psychiatry can work hand in hand with solving the maladies that afflict the people who come to the clinic and who need the help he, and Dr. Blanton, offer in their published works.¹⁵ Especially in the two books, Faith Is the Answer and The Art of Real Happiness, which Dr. Peale and Dr. Blanton wrote together, we see that the former's approach to religion and Christianity is definitely one which centers in solving the problems of mundane life.¹⁶

Dr. Peale's words taken from the introduction to A Guide to Confident Living speak for the emphasis he puts on the "how" of religious techniques:

This book is not theoretical. It contains the detailed description of a technique of living that can lead those who definitely put

¹³ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁵ Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁶ Smiley Blanton and Norman V. Peale, Faith Is the Answer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1940), p. 9. See also Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 24.

it into operation to success and happiness. The book is written with one primary purpose: to state and demonstrate a simple, workable technique of thinking and acting that has revitalized the lives of thousands of moderns. The important substance in the book is the how-ways. It tells HOW you can achieve your most cherished desires.¹⁷

Similarly in an earlier work, You Can Win, Dr. Peale already emphasized that his purpose in writing was to show the key of successful living in this life.¹⁸ His latest book which reached non-fiction best-seller status, The Power of Positive Thinking, likewise follows the purpose of showing the "how" of religious living in order to live a successful daily life and the answer to the problems one meets. It is pertinent to note the following from the introduction of that volume:

The purpose of this book is a very direct and simple one. •It makes no pretense to literary excellence nor does it seek to demonstrate any unusual scholarship on my part. This is simply a practical, direct-action, personal-improvement manual. It is written with the sole objective of helping the reader achieve a happy, satisfying, and worthwhile life. I thoroughly and enthusiastically believe in certain demonstrated and effective principles which, when practiced, produce a victorious life. My aim is to set them forth in this volume in a logical, simple, and understandable manner so that the reader, feeling a sense of need, may learn a practical method by which he can build for himself, with God's help, the kind of life he deeply desires.

Not only his books, but his published sermons and tracts emphasize the practical side of religion, which, when used in the various techniques prescribed result in the success sought by the user. One is invited to read various sermons listed in the bibliography where it is apparent that

¹⁷Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. viii.

¹⁸Norman Vincent Peale, You Can Win (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1936), pp. 9-10.

¹⁹Norman V. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (New York: Practise-Hall, Inc., c.1952), p. 2.

practical religious principles, along with a good measure of psychology and psychiatry, are the order of the day.

The views which Dr. Peale holds with regard to religion are illustrated throughout his written material with case histories of people who have definitely been helped by his methods. No one will deny that his approach has been helpful in adjusting people to their place in this life. Reference to these will come in later chapters.

All of the above material is necessary to consider before the actual discussion of Dr. Peale's concept of faith itself. This particular subject, which is the immediate concern of this paper, follows.

Faith for Dr. Peale is seen in the opening words of *The Art of Being*

CHAPTER I

Successful living hinges on the capacity to believe. The un-
 compassed and unmeasured of this world are those who have
 mastered the art of faith. They draw constantly on this inner
 source of strength, for they have acquired and held ever fresh
 in their hearts an abiding faith in a higher Power, and in
 their own destiny. Without such faith they are dependent
 before the inevitable difficulties that all must meet; and if
 they are opposed against such the worst result of adversity.

One can not find the term faith used in Peale's writings without an
 explicit prescription of how to get it and what it will do for the
 reader. By carefully noting how he teaches the term in two places,
 and defines religion, Christianity, and faith itself in others it can
 be observed what is the content and the object of faith for Dr. Peale.
 What is not the content and object of his concept of faith is clear.

Thomas V. Peale and Bailey Atwater, *The Art of Being Religious*
 (New York: Putnam-Dall, 1896, 2:157), p. 2.

CHAPTER III

DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S DEFINITION OF FAITH

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale uses the term "faith" innumerable times in the course of his writings. One finds himself at a loss to cull any exact definition of faith from the way in which Dr. Peale uses the term from time to time. We shall examine his use of the concept in such a way that through a fair synthesis of his material it can be seen wherein faith consists for him.

The close tie-up between the ever important well adjusted life and faith for Dr. Peale is seen in the opening words of The Art of Real Happiness:

Successful living hinges on the capacity to believe. The unconquered and unconquerable of this world are those who have mastered the art of faith. They draw constantly on this inner source of strength, for they have acquired and hold ever fresh in their hearts an abiding faith in a Higher Power, and in their own destiny. Without such faith they are defenseless before the inevitable difficulties that all must face; with it they are armored against even the most cruel of adversaries.¹

One can not find the term faith used in Peale's writings without an immediate prescription of how to get it and what it will do for the reader. By carefully noting how he inserts the term in some places, and defines religion, Christianity, and faith itself in others it can be observed what is the content and the object of faith for Dr. Peale. What is not the content and object of his concept of faith is clear,

¹Norman V. Peale and Smiley Blanton, The Art of Real Happiness (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1950), p. 3.

namely, trust in the atonement of Christ. This will be discussed more fully at the end of this chapter.

As editor of the book entitled Guidenosts, Dr. Peale makes the following comments in introducing the volume:

Since 1944 these wana, human stories have been appearing in Guidenosts, a non-profit, non-sectarian inspirational magazine published at Pawling, New York. The experiences of our writers who represent various faiths point up the fact that the important thing about a person's religion is: Does he really believe and practice his own faith? Faith, your faith, will work when worked. Because of your belief in God your life can be happier and more productive. Authors include Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Universal principles of faith are stressed. In addition, men and women of three faiths work side by side in the business and editorial offices of Guidenosts. This publishing project therefore stands as a symbol of the essential unity of all "believers."²

These representative words show that the content and object of faith are rather immaterial as long as this faith works in adjusting to daily life. The practical value is what counts. Dr. Peale emphasizes that faith works when worked. Compare his words in A Guide to Confident Living to see this emphasis on the unimportance of having a particular religious faith.³ This position of Dr. Peale's colors all he writes on the concept of faith. "The essence of religion is that it releases in a man a power and a force beyond human capacity to generate, by which he may rise to a place of existence in which he is superior to everything life may hurl against him."⁴

²Norman V. Peale, editor, Guidenosts (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. xii.

³Norman V. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. 17.

⁴Smiley Blanton and Norman V. Peale, Faith Is the Answer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1940), p. 126.

Dr. Peale wishes to emphasize again and again that the content of the faith he advances as a practical and workable one, is not an intellectual and theological assent to some ideas.

Faith is ordinarily thought of as theological, as the acceptance of a creed. We also think of faith as an intellectual proposition, an assent to an idea. But there is another meaning to faith. It is something alive and active. It is a vital substance like sunlight, like the violet ray, like the growth of our beings. Faith is not only theological and intellectual, but also acts as a medicine. That is to say, it is a healing property for the mind, the soul, and often the body as well.⁵

The content of faith is also spiritual power, wherein one finds that he need not carry his burdens alone.⁶ It is "faith power" that "works wonders."⁷ Faith also consists in a technique, which is "one of the most powerful truths in the world having to do with the successful conduct of human life."⁸ It is a workable instrument.⁹ Faith is simple trust and confidence; it is comparable to trust in a bed—that it will hold you up at night.¹⁰ Faith also exists as an attitude of mind. Dr. Peale uses an illustration from the life of Robert Louis Stevenson to bring out this aspect of faith's content:

Robert Louis Stevenson, who shook off the fell clutch of circumstance to become an expert in the art of living, gave us a sage bit of advice. "Sit loosely," he said, "in the saddle of life."

⁵Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 132 f.

⁶Norman V. Peale, You Can Win (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1938), pp. 15 f.

⁷Norman V. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1952), p. 103.

⁸Ibid., p. 141.

⁹Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 55.

¹⁰Mannton and Peale, op. cit., p. 85.

I recall that Stevenson always had a childlike heart of faith. Perhaps it was that attitude which enabled him to sit loosely in the saddle of life, devoid of that tenseness and strain which breaks so many men.¹¹

Faith as an attitude of mind occurs often in Dr. Peale's works. Bound up with this principle is the importance of thoughts to the content of faith. The thoughts a person has make him what he is.¹² This applies also to the content of faith.

Because faith consists in an attitude, trust like a child, power, in workable principles, it is also possible to have this faith in varying degrees. The size of a person's faith is adjustable. Matthew 17:20 is a favorite text of Dr. Peale. His exposition of it finds his content of faith as a variable quantity:

Throughout the Bible the truth is emphasized again and again that "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:20) The Bible means this absolutely, factually, completely, and literally. It isn't an illusion, it isn't a fantasy. It is not an illustration, nor a symbol, nor a metaphor, but the absolute fact--"Faith, even as a grain of mustard seed," will solve your problems, any of your problems, all of your problems, if you believe it and practice it. "According to your faith, be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29) The requirement is faith, and directly in proportion to the faith that you have and use will you get results. Little faith gives you little results, medium faith gives you medium results, great faith gives you great results. But in the generosity of Almighty God, if you have only the faith symbolized by a grain of mustard seed, it will do amazing things in solving your problems.¹³

In speaking of the various sizes of faith, Dr. Peale expounds on the story of the mustard seed in one of his earliest volumes, You Can Win.¹⁴

¹¹Peale, You Can Win, p. 140.

¹²Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 232.

¹³Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 111.

¹⁴Peale, You Can Win, p. 29.

Interwoven with the content of faith for Dr. Peale one must consider the object of faith. Of what does this faith of which Dr. Peale speaks so profusely lay hold? A brief answer is found in Dr. Peale's "Spirit Lifters." In a short exposition of I Corinthians 13:13 he says that there are three powerful Spirit lifters. "First is faith--faith in God, and in Christ; in yourself, in your fellowmen, and in life itself."¹⁵ One must examine much of his material to know what he means, but here briefly stated are the objects of faith: God, Christ, oneself, other people, and life. The terminology is such that one can read into the text much of what he desires. But to understand what meaning lies in these words for Dr. Peale one must examine his writings in greater detail.

Faith in something outside of oneself is essential, whatever he may call it. A person must rely on some outside strength to get along in life.¹⁶ This outside strength which is the object of a person's faith is God and His goodness,¹⁷ God's will,¹⁸ God's power,¹⁹ God as a Person who cares.²⁰ He speaks of faith laying hold of Christ, the perfectly integrated Personality.²¹ Since faith in Christ is one of

¹⁵ Norman Vincent Peale, Spirit Lifters (Pauline, New York: Seaman Publications, Inc., c.1954), p. 37.

¹⁶ Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁷ Norman V. Peale, The Art of Living (New York: Pocketbooks, c.1937), p. 43. See also Peale, You Can Win, pp. 100 f.

¹⁸ Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 219 f.

¹⁹ Peale, You Can Win, p. 23. See also Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 182 f.

²⁰ Peale, The Art of Living, pp. 43 f.

²¹ Peale, You Can Win, p. 150.

the basic considerations, note Dr. Peale's words concerning faith in Christ and how the phrase is included in the paragraph:

Modern, dynamic psychiatry has learned that not only can man change through the solution of neurotic conflicts, but that once it is done he can also draw on energies the presence of which he hardly suspected. The clergyman directs himself to the release of man's inner powers: "The Kingdom of God is within you." Through faith in Christ you can attach yourself to the flow of Divine power. "Behold," we read in a great text from St. Luke's Gospel, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."²²

This is representative of the way in which Christ is referred to in the writings of Dr. Peale.

Dr. Peale distinguishes between two types of religion, the one traditional and handed down from generation to generation not having any personal value, and the other a religion of personal experience. "Briefly, it [religion] may be defined as the realization of God in one's own soul. It is not to get a new intellectual or credal conception of God, but to have your heart strangely warmed by a sense of his spiritual presence."²³ The object of faith is thus something outside man, as mentioned above, but also something in man, the presence of God, wherever he might be. This concept becomes clearer when we examine the means by which a person comes into possession of faith as understood by Dr. Peale.²⁴

Throughout the writings of Dr. Peale we see a very devoted belief in the immortality of the soul. There is no death. Life continues

²²Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 14 f.

²³Peale, You Can Win, pp. 17 ff.

²⁴Infra, Chapter III.

beyond this earthly existence. This can also be called an object of faith. He makes some wonderful statements concerning life after death, but what he says with it assumes that all who die can look forward to eternal life.²⁵

It is difficult to succinctly state a definition of faith for Dr. Peale. But as shown above its content and its object form a broad platform. Much of what he says of faith is true. Unfortunately it is what he fails to say that leaves much to be desired. Nowhere does he lay hold of the life and death of Christ as the means by which man has been reconciled to God. It is clearly a case of using terminology in such a way that if one puts the Atoning Christ behind it, it becomes quite valid in places. But the Atoning Christ of the cross, Who will come again in glory, is certainly not the content, object, and core of Dr. Peale's theology. He speaks much of faith and how to have it, and what it will do for a person, but the one thing needful, namely Christ and the Cross, are found very much wanting. It becomes a case of anything that is successful to attain a well-adjusted daily life is valid.

²⁵ Peale and Elanton, op. cit., p. 221.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANS BY WHICH A PERSON COMES INTO POSSESSION OF FAITH

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's works are vitally concerned with helping people live successful and happy daily lives by practicing their religion.¹ His purpose in writing these various books is to show people how to use religion, and psychiatry, in such a way as to get the most out of life. One need but look at the titles of his books, pamphlets, and published sermons to see the emphasis placed on the "how" of living.²

Vitally connected with this "how" teaching is the explanation of how to have faith. The concern of this paper is a consideration of Dr. Peale's concept of faith. This chapter deals with the ways and means that a person can use, according to Dr. Peale, in order to come into possession of faith.

An adequate summary of Dr. Peale's technique for having faith is found in the issue of McCall's magazine for January, 1954:

The problem of how to have faith looms so large in so many people's minds that Peale is planning to devote much of his next book specifically to that. If you want to have faith, he says, desire it deeply, wish for it, pray for it, and then believe that you are getting it. This is almost the equivalent of saying, "Have faith that you are getting faith," but actually it is a reflection of Peale's deep conviction that a sincere wish tends always to become an actuality. "If you want something," he says, "affirm it, visualize it, believe it, and it will actualize itself." He believes that his constant exhortations to other people have strengthened his own faith. (John Wesley had a similar conviction.) He also believes that reading the Bible and memorizing passages that appeal to you is of great value.

¹Supra, p. 6.

²Of. Bibliography.

The first rule, then, is to have faith. The second one is to place yourself unreservedly in God's hands, affirm his presence constantly, and try to subordinate your will to his . . . God is your companion, a benevolent, all-powerful, all-understanding friend who will help you if you let him . . . do the best you can, then leave the matter in the hands of God.³

The above is a brief statement of what Dr. Peale teaches and advances throughout his literature. The emphasis is definitely on the ability of his readers to carry out the techniques that are outlined for them. One can, for example, note his closing words to his latest best seller, The Power of Positive Thinking, to see this fact.⁴

Again the close connection between religion and psychiatry is brought to mind when one deals with how to have faith according to Dr. Peale. The strivings of the unconscious mind are vitally connected with having faith. "Psychiatry postulates the unconscious, in which it finds not only savage impulses that give rise to fear and anxiety, but also those strivings which are the source of faith, and hope, and of courage, as well as the basis of creative strength."⁵ Faith, flowing from the capacity to love in an individual, can be clogged and stopped by conflicting feelings of the unconscious mind.⁶ Dr. Smiley Blanton claims that the unconscious mind holds the deepest feelings of our natures and if there is to be any very real personal or religious relationships the hidden inhibitions must be removed.⁷ These facts

³Arthur Gordon, "The Power of Norman Vincent Peale," McCall's (January, 1954), p. 66.

⁴Norman V. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1952), p. 237.

⁵Norman V. Peale and Smiley Blanton, The Art of Real Happiness (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1950), p. 13.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

⁷Smiley Blanton and Norman V. Peale, Faith Is the Answer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1940), pp. 17 ff.

influence the way in which people are advised to develop faith.

Recurring again and again in Dr. Peale's books and other published material is the necessity of saturating the mind with positive thoughts and faith thoughts in order to get faith. This fact is brought out by the instructions given to those who read the volume Guideposts.⁸ Faith begins as a "thin trickle across the mind" and can be built up by thoughts of faith.⁹ The Power of Positive Thinking is filled with the idea of getting faith by dropping faith thoughts into the mind and letting them penetrate into the subconscious.¹⁰ It is important to establish firmly that Dr. Peale makes great use of the Bible when prescribing this method of developing faith. An example of his procedure is given in this section of his best-selling book:

You can achieve the most tremendous things by faith power. And how do you develop faith power? The answer is: to saturate your mind with the great words of the Bible. If you will spend one hour a day reading the Bible and committing its great passages to memory, thus allowing them to recondition your personality, the change in you and in your experience will be little short of miraculous.

Just one section of the Bible will accomplish this for you. The eleventh chapter of Mark is enough. You will find the secret in the following words, and this is one of the greatest formulas the Book contains: "Have faith in God (that's positive, isn't it?) for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain (that's specific) be thou removed (that is, stand aside) and be thou cast into the sea (that means out of sight-- anything you throw into the sea is gone for good. The Titanic lies at the bottom of the sea. And the sea bottom is lined with ships. Cast your opposition called a "mountain" into the sea) and shall not doubt in his heart (Why does this statement use the

⁸Norman V. Peale, editor, Guideposts (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. xiii.

⁹Norman V. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. 83.

¹⁰Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 93 f.

the word heart? Because it means you are not to doubt in your subconscious, in the inner essence of you. It isn't so superficial as a doubt in the conscious mind. That is a normal, intelligent questioning. It's a deep fundamental doubt that is to be avoided) but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." (Mark 11:22-23)

This is not some theory that I have thought up. It is taught by the most reliable book known to man. Generation after generation no matter what develops in the way of knowledge and science, the Bible is read by more people than any other book. Humanity rightly has more confidence in it than any other document ever written, and the Bible tells that faith power works wonders.¹¹

Dr. Peale speaks very often of surrendering to God. This is another means by which one is able to secure faith. This surrender includes giving up sin and turning to God by an act of childlike faith and trust.¹² Peale illustrates this surrender to God in several ways. One of his favorites is the example of turning on an electric switch as showing how one can turn on the power of God in and for themselves.¹³ Dr. Peale shows that surrendering to God is a very simple act. He makes the challenge in his early book, The Art of Living, "Why not try God? It will work for you too, if you surrender yourself in childlike faith."¹⁴ This method of securing faith by surrender to God is closely related to that of mind-saturating. In his advice to a young lawyer suffering from depression Dr. Peale tells him to affirm aloud each day several statements of faith. One of these was, "I completely surrender myself to God and trust Him and have faith in His loving kindness. I know he forgives me for my old feelings of resentment and hate. This forgiveness

¹¹Ibid., pp. 103 f.

¹²Norman V. Peale, The Art of Living (New York: Perzabooks, c.1937), pp. 132 f.

¹³Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 10.

¹⁴Peale, The Art of Living, p. 180.

is happening now."¹⁵

Prayer and techniques of how to pray occur throughout the works of Dr. Peale. He gives a great deal of importance to the power of prayer. Prayer is another method for coming into possession of faith. It is a "pipe-line" to God, a manifestation of faith and a way to get faith.¹⁶ It must be stated at this point that prayer is closely associated with positive thinking and surrender as means of securing faith. It is important to remember that Dr. Peale advances his methods for securing faith by relating them to one another in many places. Consequently, prayer is also referred to as an act of surrender to God.¹⁷ The point of emphasis in this chapter is that prayer brings faith into the possession of the believing person who prays. A Guide to Confident Living gives a ten-point list of methods of prayer.¹⁸ There are various types of prayer, but Dr. Peale emphasizes the dynamic type which brings results in successful daily living and in securing a dynamic faith. "The acquiring of dynamic faith is accomplished by prayer, lots of prayer."¹⁹ In concluding this discussion Dr. Peale's words concerning prayer power are in order:

New and fresh spiritual techniques are being constantly discovered by men and women of spiritual genius. It is advisable to experiment with prayer power according to such methods as prove

¹⁵Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁶Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 213 f.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁸Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 113 f.

¹⁹Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 5 f.

sound and effective. If this sounds new and strangely scientific, bear in mind that the secret of prayer is to find the process that will most effectively open your mind humbly to God. Any method through which you can stimulate the power of God to flow into your mind is legitimate and usable.²⁰

Prayer is for Dr. Peale, then, another way of coming into possession of faith.

In emphasizing the way to overcome all the difficulties of life in his books, Dr. Peale outlines many methods of how to become adjusted to life and meet any difficulty. A great deal is outlined for the reader to do himself. The Self Improvement Handbook exemplifies this point in a succinct form.²¹ The ability of the readers who are to be helped carries over into the area of how to come into possession of faith. This has been intimated in the foregoing part of this chapter. But this can be seen more clearly in those parts of Dr. Peale's works where he simply states that one can believe with his own power to believe. A person has it in him to have faith.

Many people fail to obtain the gift of God's power merely because they do not trust their own capacity for faith. They assume they have to be very strong, or very great saints, but that is not the method Christ teaches. "If thou canst believe," he said, "all things are possible." That means, let go of the tension and let your life relax in his loving care. When you let go and allow your spiritual rigidity to disappear, your life will become an open channel through which the endowing grace of God will pour like a freshet into an arid and dusty country after a long drought.²²

The fact is stated often that if one really tries to have faith, he has

²⁰Ibid., p. 47.

²¹ Norman Vincent Peale, Self Improvement Handbook (New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1950).

²²Hanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 123.

the ability to believe. One is encouraged to remember "the man who leans on a shovel cannot expect to lean on God."²³

Whatever your problem, no matter how difficult, you can release spiritual power sufficient to solve your problem. The secret is --"pray" and "believe." Even though it may be hard to believe, do it nevertheless. Simply believe that Almighty God will give His power to you. Pray and mentally yield yourself to God's power. Do this by affirming that you have not sufficient power within yourself and that, therefore, you are willing to put yourself completely in contact with spiritual forces. The basic secret of the Christian religion is not effort or will power, important as they are. The secret of Christianity is faith. The only struggle it urges you to exert is the effort to believe. The art is to learn to have faith. When you have done so you become a channel through which divine power flows. It flows through "you." You then have all the strength you need to meet any situation involving you.²⁴

As a means for coming into possession of faith, simply to have faith is closely linked with the above procedure. In the brief article at the beginning of this chapter this was included in the summary of how to come into possession of faith.²⁵ Believe that you have faith and you will have it.²⁶ It is as simple as that. After outlining the method of habitual prayer and devotion as a method for developing faith, Dr. Peale states in Faith Is the Answer that "now the second and ultimate method for having faith is simply to have faith."²⁷ It is clear that this is another way to come into possession of faith, namely,

²³ Peale, The Art of Living, p. 44.

²⁴ Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 108 f.

²⁵ Summa, p. 16.

²⁶ Norman V. Peale, You Can Win (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1936), pp. 150 f.

²⁷ Manton and Peale, op. cit., p. 35.

to have faith.²⁸

The accent throughout the discussions of how one can come into possession of faith is on the ability of the person who desires it himself. In The Power of Positive Thinking are found words of Dr. Peale which show this emphasis throughout:

The most powerful force in human nature is the spiritual power technique taught in the Bible. Very astutely the Bible emphasizes the method by which a person can make something of himself. Faith, belief, positive thinking, faith in God, faith in other people, faith in yourself, faith in life. This is the essence of the technique that it teaches. "If thou canst believe," it says, "all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23) "If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:21) "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29) Believe--believe--so it drives home the truth that faith moves mountains.²⁹

With his emphasis always on making religion relevant to the people he is reaching, Dr. Peale urges the procedures for carrying out the techniques of religion and psychiatry he (and his associate, Dr. Blanton) offers. Faith is possible to possess by following certain techniques of developing faith. These techniques, or means, have been shown to be: the saturation of the mind with faith thoughts, the surrender of oneself to God, a diligent use of prayer, believing with one's own power to believe, and simply getting faith by having faith. The accent has most definitely been on the ability of the person who is seeking to come into possession of faith. Although there is frequent mention of the use of the Bible, the concept of the Word of God as a means of grace to create and preserve faith is entirely foreign to the

²⁸Cf. also Peale, You Can Win, p. 157 and Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 12.

²⁹Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 94.

thought of Dr. Peale. The work of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament is a concept beyond his scope as any effective cause of faith. This is understandable in the light of the fact that Dr. Peale stems from a background of Reformed theology coupled with a great measure of modern psychiatric methods and beliefs.

He shows people how to overcome their spiritual difficulties through the practice of their religious observances, and teaches in the everyday lives of the people what will give them satisfaction and successful lives. In particular, this book has great value in Peale's concept of faith, a vital part of his doctrine of psychology. Chapter III shows wherein faith is essential for Dr. Peale, while Chapter IV considers the ways by which one is able to bring about a realization of this faith. In this chapter a rather detailed list will be given to the reader as to benefits of faith.

Throughout his writings one cannot but realize and appreciate the results and benefits which are possible for one who practices them. Dr. Peale points out the many effects which faith has on the life of an individual who has it. Faith is key to happiness, to good health, to a life, good work and success and freedom. The author's doctrine and life without a substantial measure of faith is not to be desired or practiced by millions. There are very many instances of people who have experienced the benefits and success of faith in their lives, in themselves, in others, and in life, of which the reader may be sure as probably.

If one will turn to the Bibliography at the end of this volume, he will see from the list of titles under the bibliography of Dr. Peale

CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS AND BENEFITS OF POSSESSING FAITH

As it was pointed out in the previous chapters, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's objective in his preaching, counselling, and writing has been to show people how to practice their religion with techniques outlined for them. The practice of these techniques promises results and benefits in the everyday lives of the users which will give them well-adjusted and successful lives. In particular, this paper has dealt with Dr. Peale's concept of faith, a vital part of his doctrine and practice. Chapter III showed wherein faith consisted for Dr. Peale, while Chapter IV considered the means by which one is able to come into possession of this faith. In this chapter a brief discussion will be devoted to the results and benefits of faith.

Throughout his writings one cannot but again and again read of the results and benefits which are possible for one possessing faith. Dr. Peale points out the many effects which faith has on the life of the individual who has it. Faith in God, in oneself, in other people, and in life, grant many good results and benefits. Dr. Peale's writings are not without a substantial number of case histories to support the practices he outlines. There are many case histories of people who have experienced the results and benefits of having the faith in God, in themselves, in others, and in life, of which Dr. Peale speaks and writes so profusely.

If one will turn to the Bibliography at the end of this thesis, he will see from the list of titles under the authorship of Dr. Norman

Vincent Peale that he is concerned consistently with helping people acquire well-adjusted daily lives. Each title implies that results and benefits are being offered within the pages if one follows the advice given.

It will be noted in the following discussion that much of what Dr. Peale says is correct. However, again what is left unsaid is most serious.

In Faith Is the Answer, Dr. Peale points out what he considers to be the chief aim of religion and psychiatry.

The first function of religion, and I believe of psychiatry too, is to point the way to happier lives by teaching men and women how to cope with a sense of guilt which is due to their own unwisdom.

Psychiatry uses its own method of diagnosis and treatment.

Religion brings to distressed minds the knowledge of God's forgiveness and thus of the peace that passeth all understanding.¹

Dr. Peale is out to help people attain happiness in this life. He points out that the desire for happiness indubitably is the fundamental goal of every individual.² Religion and faith enable one to attain joy of living.³ To have and to possess God forever is the chief end of man, and this is to possess the quality known as happiness.⁴

¹Smiley Blanton and Norman V. Peale, Faith Is the Answer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1940), p. 109.

²Norman V. Peale, The Art of Living (New York: Permabooks, c.1937), p. 83.

³Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 152 ff.

⁴Peale, The Art of Living, pp. 84 f.

As a result of having faith, one's whole life is remade.⁵ Through faith one's life can be revolutionized and successful.⁶ As a result of the new faith thoughts that permeate one's mind, he is actually a "different person" because he is thinking "differently."⁷

The possession of power is closely linked to faith. Faith gives one extra power to meet life's obstacles;⁸ "Faith supplies staying power. It contains dynamic to keep one going when the going is hard."⁹ "Indomitable mastery and control over adversity or opposition is exercised by the mind when the driving energy of faith is released."¹⁰

I can almost hear some of my readers saying: "That sounds very well, but I never say anything like that in religion. Religion only means going to church and listening to a sermon." Well, my friend, you have stated and answered your own failure. If religion has been only form for you, it is nothing but form. But if you will really put your faith in God and trust your life to him, religion will change from form to power. People who trust God with unquestioning, childlike faith become undefeatable, indomitable persons who do things and for whom life is a never-ending delight.¹¹

One has as a result of faith also the quality of imperturbability. "Christianity puts the steel-like element in people, so that they do not break under the hammer of circumstance. That precious ingredient is

⁵ Norman V. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1952), p. 173.

⁶ Norman Vincent Peale, You Can Win (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1938), p. 21.

⁷ Norman V. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1946), pp. 83 f.

⁸ Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 55.

⁹ Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 111.

¹⁰ Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 155.

¹¹ Peale, You Can Win, p. 112.

given them by faith."¹² Faith gives a patient calmness that enables one to live in troubled times.¹³

As a result of faith, one gains an insight into himself. It reveals that frequently things go wrong because of conflicts within the person himself.¹⁴ It also shows that there is a "great, old rugged character" within a person whom no one can discourage or defeat.¹⁵ In speaking of the insight into self it must be pointed out that faith also grants relief from one's self, the self that harbors conflicts and griefs. "Genuine faith in, and practice of, the Christian life will give you relief from yourself."¹⁶

Faith releases the power which rids one of any anxiety or fear.¹⁷ Through faith in God one has perfect peace by keeping his mind on God.¹⁸ Beginning with his earliest book, The Art of Living, and continuing to the present day, Dr. Peale asserts that as a result of childlike faith in the Heavenly Father there is a removal of worry.¹⁹

Dr. Peale has much to say on the subject of healing through faith. An insight into his thinking on this subject is given to us with these words:

¹²Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 179.

¹³Peale, The Art of Living, p. 148.

¹⁴Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 154.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁶Peale, You Can Win, p. 150.

¹⁷Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 77 f.

¹⁸Peale, The Art of Living, p. 75.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 46 f.

Today we know that an important step toward emotional and physical health is to believe in and practice your religion. Religion contributes to physical and emotional health because it deals with mental states and attitudes. Many human ills, as explained many times in this book, derive from improper thinking.²⁰

Dr. Peale feels that faith is essential in the healing process in many cases since so much illness is due to psychosomatic origin.²¹ "Life is unhappy and sinful because it is cut off from the flow of life-giving force. Simple faith and surrender to God correct this condition. It is remarkable what a sincere attempt to humanize our lives with God's power will do physically, mentally, and spiritually."²² Out of fairness and a desire for objectivity, it must be emphasized that Dr. Peale is definitely not one of the advocates of a "healing-cult" variety of religion. He again and again asserts that it must be a combination of religious faith and medicine which is used. Dr. Peale's reply to a businessman's question on the subject of whether faith can heal sums up his belief.

"There are a good many well-authenticated examples on record of people who have been healed by faith," I answered. "Of course, I do not think we should depend on faith alone to heal a physical ailment. I believe in the combination of God and the doctor. This viewpoint takes advantage of medical science and the science of faith, and both are elements in the healing process."²³

Faith also rids one of deep grief of all sorts. As it wells up it freshens the life of the individual so that he is not sour about everything.²⁴

²⁰Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 167.

²¹Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 150.

²²Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 218.

²³Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 148.

²⁴Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 157.

Faith is the solution for loneliness also, as it leads one to the church and the fellowship that is there with other people of faith.²⁵ Faith untangles the disorganized personality which makes many lonely.²⁶ There is a greater appreciation for the brotherhood of man.²⁷ In this connection mention should be made of the benefits which faith brings into marriage relationships. It cements them and resolves all the difficulties that may arise.²⁸

A further result and benefit of faith is that one need not fear growing old. As faith removes all of the difficulties of life, it adds the ability to meet life in old age the same way that it does in youth.²⁹ Death never wins in the end either, according to Dr. Peale.³⁰ One need never fear concerning his loved ones who have passed on or about himself when he dies. Dr. Peale's personal faith in immortality is exemplified in the experience he relates from his own life. He tells of how he felt the personal presence of his deceased mother.³¹ It is apparent that Dr. Peale believes that beautiful life continues for all after death, regardless of their particular beliefs.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 169 f.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 176 f.

²⁷Peale, The Art of Living, pp. 186 f.

²⁸Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 195 ff.

²⁹Norman V. Peale and Smiley Blanton, The Art of Real Happiness (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1950), pp. 246 f.

³⁰Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 224.

³¹Blanton and Peale, op. cit., pp. 175 f. See also Wainwright Evans, "Visit After Death," The American Weekly (October 4, 1953), p. 6.

In this discussion it must be brought out again that a person's ability to believe and have faith is vitally important. It is in proportion to the faith one has that he reaps the results and the benefits.

Dr. Peale quotes the New Testament:

The New Testament says "according to your faith be it unto you." We receive good in direct proportion to the amount of faith we exercise. "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief," is the attitude that opens the door to new life.³²

To this point no direct mention has been made of Dr. Peale's concept of sin and forgiveness in connection with the results and benefits of faith. It deserves separate consideration at this time. The view of sin advanced by Dr. Peale, and Dr. Blanton, shows a very atomistic concept. Sins are individual injuries which damage personality and result in frustrations, guilt complexes, and a variety of other ills.³³ Sin is described as an unclean wound that cuts deeply, and if not removed, will result in poison to the mind and to the life.³⁴ Both Dr. Peale and Dr. Blanton assert that no evil thought is sin as long as the mind does not make it welcome.³⁵ Dr. Peale's attitude is reflected in these words from Faith Is the Answer:

What is the trouble with sin and loose living in general? Is it merely breaking a set of theological rules? No, the real trouble with it is that it takes the bounce out of life. If we live wrong, and the old fresh delight in life fades, we take something into the system which may add zest for the moment but soon grows bitter and leaves a bad taste.³⁶

³²Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 35.

³³Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 37.

³⁴Peale, The Art of Living, pp. 79 f.

³⁵Blanton and Peale, op. cit., p. 59.

³⁶Ibid., p. 154.

It must also be reflected here how Dr. Hlanton views sin in the life of the individual. His own words best sum up how he considers the problem of sin and its effect on the life of the individual:

There is a precept inherent in all religious teaching, that if an individual seeks to better his life, there is definitely a way to do it. First, there must be a conviction of sin or wrongdoing. Second, there must be repentance, or a desire to lead a better life. Third, restitution must be made to whomever has been injured or treated badly. Fourth, there must be atonement, self-punishment of some kind or other. Finally, the average person arrives at the point where he feels forgiven. He is then able to take up life again. Obviously, no one can go through life carrying the ever-mounting burden of a disapproving conscience.³⁷

The remedy for sin is not the atonement of Christ on the cross. Both Dr. Hlanton and Dr. Peale emphasize the importance of a feeling of forgiveness, but Christ's sacrifice is not the object of faith which results in forgiveness for the individual through faith in Him. "A healthy mind," says Dr. Peale, "is Christ's contribution to men. Faith in him eliminates that sense of guilt which interferes with a healthy mind."³⁸ This statement is true as far as it goes. But there is no mention of the atonement. Dr. Peale contrasts the littleness of men's sins with the greatness of God. God is great and forgives sins. We should forget them.³⁹

The Bible says that we are "saved through faith." That is, salvation comes to us by asking forgiveness through our faith in God and then having the faith to believe that it is granted; for other wise old failures and sins become an intolerable load that weighs us down so that our best energies, which should be

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 93 f.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 100 f.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 118 ff.

used to meet today's problems, are spent repenting yesterday's failures.⁴⁰

One is again and again encouraged to forget sins and wrong-doings and to go forward. Faith results in being freed from the guilt of sin and its symptoms. This result of faith is mentioned here to bring out the clear fact that Dr. Peale completely by-passes the atonement as the object of the faith which results in forgiveness. Dr. Peale makes the statement, "Your sins--he (God) will cover them all in a minute with his forgiving love."⁴¹ However, this is not for the sake of Christ's life and death and resurrection.

This chapter has shown what are the results and benefits which avail the person who is in possession of the faith about which Dr. Peale writes. Many fine effects are offered. People's troubles and difficulties will melt away as a result of having faith. The happy, well-adjusted daily life is theirs resulting from faith. The experience of many people proves that these results and benefits are possible. It must be pointed out that what is unsaid is again most serious. This is only a logical deduction, however, following all that has been said concerning Dr. Peale's concept of faith. The troubles of people are met and dealt with in a very systematic and helpful manner. The criticism must come, on the other hand, that the message of the Gospel and its real effect on spiritually deprived mankind is obscured.

⁴⁰Peale and Blanton, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴¹Peale, You Can Win, p. 135.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blanton, Smiley and Norman Vincent Peale. Faith Is the Answer. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1948.
- "Dr. Peale: An Articulate Leader of Christianity," Newsweek, December 28, 1953.
- Evans, Wainwright. "Visit after Death," The American Weekly, October 4, 1953.
- Gell, Arthur. "The Power of Positive Thinking America's Biggest Need Today, Says Dr. Norman Vincent Peale," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, January 10, 1954, Section F.
- Gordon, Arthur. "The Power of Norman Vincent Peale," McCall's, January, 1954.
- Guidposts, A Practical Guide to Successful Living, 1953-54, passim.
- Need, Frank S. "Grassroots in Manhattan." Reprinted from the Christian Herald, no date.
- "Minister to Millions," Look, September 22, 1953.
- Peale, Norman Vincent. The Art of Living. Fernabook Edition. New York: Fernabooks, c.1937.
- Changed Attitudes Change Everything. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- The Greatest Man Alive Today. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- A Guide to Confident Living. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948.
-, editor. Guidposts. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1948.
- How to Attract New Opportunities and Friends. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- How to be an Asset to Yourself. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- How to Have Good Relations with Other People. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- How to Keep Anyone from Hurting You. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.

- . How to Make Your Future What You Want. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . How to Release Your God-given Powers. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . How to Stop Being Tense. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . Impressions after Preaching Twenty Years on Fifth Avenue. New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1952.
- . Let's Be Thankful Like Our Forefathers. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . New Spirit For Living. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . No Fear of Life, No Fear of Death. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . No Wonder We Love Christmas. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . The Power of Positive Thinking. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1952.
- . Relax Mentally and Live Efficiently. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . Self Improvement Handbook. New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1950.
- . Simple Secrets of Successful Living. New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . Spirit Lifters. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . Things Go Better When You Pray. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . Thought Conditioners. New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1951.
- . What's Your Trouble? New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1952.
- . You Can Improve Yourself If You Want To. Pawling, New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1954.
- . You Can Relax. New York: Sermon Publications, Inc., c.1953.
- . You Can Win. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1938.

Peale, Norman Vincent, and Smiley Blanton. "Are You Looking for God?" American Magazine, October, 1947.

Peale, Norman Vincent and Smiley Blanton. The Art of Real Happiness. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c.1950.

"Publicity Data Regarding Dr. Norman Vincent Peale." Mimeographed release. Issued by the Marble Collegiate Church, New York City, N. Y., November, 1952.

Who's Who in America, A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women. Volume 27, 1952-53. Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, c.1952.

Woodbury, Clarence. "God's Salesman," American Magazine, June, 1949.