

## Articles and Sermons :: Blaise Pascal??

### Blaise Pascal?? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/18 20:21

Our dear brother Lars started a thread called:

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id2593&forum35](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id2593&forum35)) Pensens where he is quoting from a document written by this man of old. I am wondering is he a true christian? is his testimony valid.. I found some things he wrote to be inspiration and very true.

Thanks for your help brother Lars or others.

### Re: Blaise Pascal?? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/18 20:24

sorry to answer my own question I found this helpful short bio:

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Blaise Pascal was born at Clermont Ferrand in Auvergne on June 19, 1623. His father Etienne had been trained as a lawyer in Paris and held the post of president of the court of Aids at Clermont. His mother, Antoinette Begon who was very religious, died in 1626, leaving her husband to care for Gilberte, Blaise and the baby Jacqueline.

In 1631, Etienne Pascal sold his post, moved to Paris and devoted himself to the education of his son. He had different educational views and decided to teach his son himself. After he had mastered Greek and Latin, young Blaise was allowed to study Geometry. But at the age of twelve, the boy began geometry by himself and is supposed to have achieved the equivalent of Euclid's first thirty-two theorems before his father noticed his precocity. The elder Pascal always associated with men of celebrity in science and the arts, and in his company the young Pascal was introduced to Father Mersenne's circle and became acquainted with Desargeres, Fermat and Roberval.

At the age of sixteen Pascal published his first work on the Geometry of conic sections titled "Essai pour les conique". He also proved at this young age one of the most beautiful theorems in the whole range of Geometry, the "cat's cradle" theorem.

Pascal had a frail health and spent most of his life in physical pain. He developed migraines at a young age. Throughout most of his life, he suffered from chronic insomnia. Despite his health problems, he worked constantly. At the age of eighteen he invented and made the first calculating machine in history. However, five years later, in 1646 he experienced his first spiritual conversion. It did not take deeply, possibly because Pascal was only twenty-three.

His scientific greatness flurried up again in 1648 in an entirely new direction, carrying on the work of Torricelli on Atmospheric pressure. Later, Pascal received a somewhat formal visit from Descartes. He and Pascal talked about many things including the Barometer.

Although the Pascal family had been regular and respectful in their religious practice, religion was not especially important in their lives until 1646 when they became acquainted with Jansenism, a Roman Catholic reform movement that stresses on the belief in divine grace, rather than good works, as the key to salvation.

Pascal was only twenty three when he had his attention directed to religious and theological questions, and he seems to have been influential in converting his whole family to the Jansenist version of Catholicism. By 1654, Pascal had experienced what is known as his "second conversion", and his growing decision to retire from the world was confirmed on November 23rd of the same year.

Pascal lived in the age of the rise of rationalism. Revelation had fallen on hard times; man's reason was now the final source for truth. In the realm of religious belief many people exalted and adopted a deistic view of God. Some however, became skeptics, they doubted the competence of both revelation and reason.

Pascal couldn't side with the skeptics, neither would he go the way of the rationalist. Instead of arguing that revelation was a better source of truth than reason, he focused on the limitations of reason itself. He believed that although the advances in science increased man's knowledge, it also made people aware of how little they knew. Therefore, through our reason we realize that reason itself has limits.

Pascal is best known to the general reader for his two literary classics, the "Pensées" and the "Lettres écrites pour Louis de Montalte à un provincial de ses amis" commonly referred to as the "Provincial Letters". Pascal believed that our knowledge is somewhere between certainty and complete ignorance. He said about the knowledge of God: "If natural things are beyond reason, what are we to say about supernatural things?".

On the science side, many scholars consider Pascal the greatest "might have been" in history, claiming that if he had devoted himself totally to science he would have achieved far more than he did. On the other hand, his contribution in religion was immensely valuable. With "Pensées" (Thoughts), written toward the end of his short life, Pascal has left for us a masterpiece in religious philosophy.

As death approached, Pascal's life became more austere. He gave his possessions to the poor. In June 1662 he gave shelter to a poor family which developed smallpox. He died on August the 19th at the age of thirty-nine. His last words were: "May God never abandon me".

taken from <http://www.ourladyoflebanon.org/literature/pascal.htm>

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"Pascal had experienced what is known as his "second conversion", and his growing decision to retire from the world was confirmed on November 23rd of the same year." - is that a reference to his born again experience?

**Re: Pascal - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2004/7/18 21:44**

I know that Ravenhill has referred to Pascal in several of his sermons, saying that he mastered the full circle of sciences by a young age, only to have a similar experience to Solomon in finding nothing but utter meaninglessness, which turned him to God. He recounted his seeing a vision of Christ on the cross, who told him that He was thinking of him he was offering himself as a sacrifice.

I'll try to find the particular sermon in question, and refer you to it.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/18 21:57**

Quote:  
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WOW brother Aaron that's awesome.. I am quite excited now. It's amazing the sense of determination and discipline in the lives of older saints.