

A Biblical Study  
Entitled  
"THE CONCEPTION OF FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION  
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT"

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The Reverend James Davison Philips, B.A., B.D.



DEDICATION

To my wife and my eldest son  
who shared in my labors both  
in Edinburgh and here at home  
this study is gratefully  
dedicated.

## PREFACE

The Conception of Faith in the Christian Religion of the New Testament is so broad and comprehensive a subject that inevitable limits must be placed upon any attempt to deal with it. Without these limits the purpose would be vague, the length would be interminable, the results somewhat awkward, the value debatable.

It should be stated simply, therefore, that the purpose of this study grows out of a deep desire to understand what the Bible has to say about this great idea of faith. One may either reject what is said, or accept it but no one can deny the importance of knowing what is said. In these recent years when there has been a great revival of interest in Biblical study, and when there has come such new and refreshing material for the Biblical interpreter, such a study is quite pertinent.

The purpose, then, is to state succinctly and simply the conception of faith found in the early Christian religion reflected in the New Testament. Because so much of this is understood only as growing out of Judaistic soil, the Old Testament ideas of faith must also be included. What is more, to fulfill this purpose in the scope of such a research project, two difficult, but vitally important

limitations must be placed upon the work. First of all, the results must be stated in the form of a relatively brief summary. Vast amounts of Biblical material must be omitted. Only key passages may be included in the written results of this research. At every point, and in every chapter, there are matters of importance which could provide the basis for a research project dealing with that particular area alone. In exegetical work, one is limited to only the most important matters, or the work would be endless. What is more, the field of Biblical literature is so vast that only the most representative authors may be cited. As volumes continue to pour from the world's presses, adding to the great heritage of literature about the Bible which is already ours, it is obvious that some limitation upon authorities must be assumed. Thus, the plan has been to cite those which have given the impression throughout the study of being most representative of the various schools of thought available. Attempts have been made to set forth conclusions reached in their relation to varying ideas. Particularly, the work has sought to present the conception of faith as it is regarded in the work of present day authors who have the latest material available. These limitations, therefore, are necessary--a limitation of Biblical material, and of literature about the Bible.

In the second place, the study is undertaken in the attempt to present the Biblical idea of faith simply as the

Bible presents it. To attempt to solve all theological problems involved is outside the scope of this work. What the authors say, and what relationship that may have to other authors, is sufficient for the moment. The material is not studied in a purely mechanical way, however. Because of personal commitment to Christian faith it is impossible to do the work without feeling the pull and tug of the basic realities of the Divine-Human encounter. No man can work with Biblical material as though solving a cross word puzzle. Too much is at stake for such an attitude, or method. Rather, such work becomes a personal pilgrimage, and needless to say, a richly rewarding one.

Six years of this program of research have been spent in busy and demanding pastorates. Even though the work could be done only during vacations, and during time taken from such a ministry, yet it is not too much to say that the work benefits from active association with men and women who are suffering, rejoicing, grieving, achieving, failing, believing, and doubting. This association alone keeps the work from being purely an intellectual matter.

To study faith as we find it in the Scriptures is to find, not surprisingly, that one's own faith is stronger and purer. The Pauline "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" has strange connotations indeed.

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## INTRODUCTION

"There are cases", said Coleridge, "in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign."<sup>1</sup> The history of the word "faith" may certainly be included in that statement. In the secular and materialistic culture of our day such a word, however, may seem anachronistic. For mid-century culture reflects a terrifying atmosphere that has brooded over the thought processes of many intelligent men of the twentieth century. It is an atmosphere which laid the emphasis upon the search for facts, for new ways of describing them, for new ways of using them, so that a veritable torrent of gadgets has flooded the world. It is ironic beyond comprehension that this kind of fact became synonymous with truth.

To introduce the subject of faith into this atmosphere was to introduce an alien factor. At best, it was shrugged away as having only slight importance. The woefully misguided quip became a standard attitude that it mattered little what you believed, so long as you had some sort of faith. Such a totally erroneous idea was rudely shattered, not by argument in words, but by an irrefutable

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<sup>1</sup> Means, Faith, an Historical Study, p. 9.

argument in terms of the history of the 1930s and the 1940s. Young men, and in fact whole nations, were caught up in the maelstrom of war, when men fought and died because of their faith, whatever the object of that faith might be. For some it was some form of faith in liberty, in democracy. For others it was faith in the idea of race and fatherland, and the destiny they involved. It makes no difference what you believe? Most assuredly it does! Only a casual understanding of the churning movements of twentieth century culture should settle that question forever.

There is an almost frantic bidding for man's faith today. The materialism of the Communist, the planning of the Socialist, the program of the Capitalist--all are offered to the world as the ultimate solution of man's problems--and as worthy objects of his complete and loyal devotion.

In the midst of the clamoring confusion, the Church of Jesus Christ speaks to call men to faith in God. It is high time, then, that we reconsider that faith, the faith which men ought to have. Until we can discover the faith which Jesus wanted for his disciples, which they believed, and which is reflected in the primitive Christianity revealed in the pages of the New Testament, then we can have no adequate understanding of our relationship to God, and to His world.



How difficult the task! The process of analysis and dissection is fraught with danger. For, in a sense, faith defies dissection and analysis. A scientist, in examining a specimen, can name every nerve, every bone, every muscle --and describe it with the greatest accuracy. Yet, he still fails to capture, in terms of his analysis, the greatest fact of that specimen--its life! The dynamic escapes him. So it is with surgeons of the soul. How carefully we dissect the mechanics of language, how clearly we analyze environment and background--but how far short we fall in capturing the great dynamic of Christianity and its ideas.

The idea of faith, as conceived by the religion of the New Testament, is of interest to every intelligent man. To the psychologist, the philosopher, the historian it is of genuine interest and lasting value. To the student of Christianity, however, it is all important. Christianity cannot be understood until the idea of faith has been thoroughly explored.

There remains, then, one further question about such a study. Why, it may be asked, devote more time to the study of so familiar a concept as faith? Do we not have adequate information as the result of centuries of effort on the part of students? This may be answered in the words of Hoskyns, when he says,

It is a strange paradox that precisely as a critic grows in confidence in the adequacy of his method so he becomes increasingly diffident of his ability to

catalogue 'assured results'. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible to point to a number of critical achievements as though they were information to be handed out to the general reader . . . . The progress of critical historical investigation of the New Testament cannot be compared to the gradual mounting of the steps of a ladder. One generation does not achieve a number of results which pass into text-books, so that the next generation is enabled to mount a few steps higher on the ladder. Rather, as each advance is made the problem as a whole begins to look different; and the 'assured results' of the previous generation require constant reconsideration when seen in the new perspective . . . . Where they supposed that they had reached definite and final conclusions he sees new problems; and the older conclusions appear in their new context almost irrelevant, and at times, trivial.<sup>2</sup>

However these words may be applied, they point up the need of each generation to investigate the basic ideas of Christianity.

In their debate concerning natural theology, Brunner credits Barth with focusing attention on "the Word of God". "Today, we struggle no longer, as we did fifteen years ago concerning 'religion', but concerning the 'Word of God'".<sup>3</sup> For, says Brunner, Barth has brought the "pure and undiluted message of the Bible to bear upon the doctrines of the Church."<sup>4</sup>

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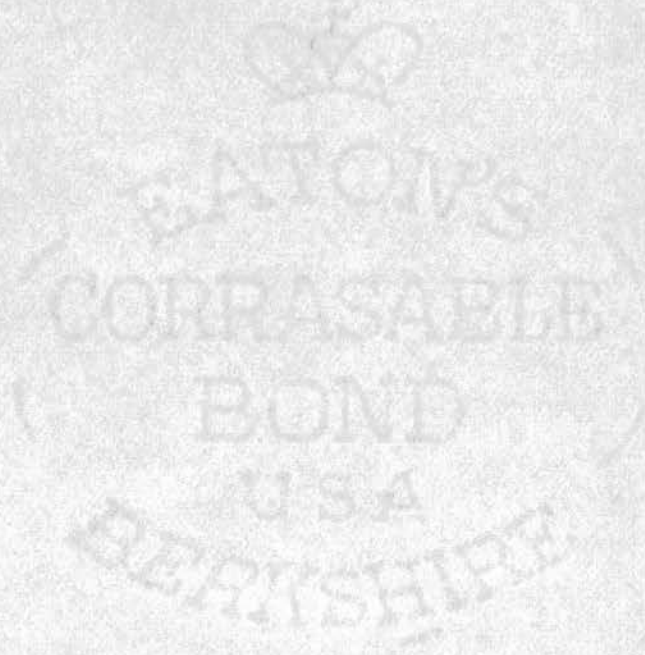
<sup>2</sup> Sir Edwin Hoskyns and F. W. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, London, 1931, p. 11ff.

<sup>3</sup> Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, Natural Theology (Trans. by Fraenkel), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

Thus, this investigation of basic ideas must begin with Biblical material. Any other place of beginning is illogical and inconsistent.

The writer would confess, also, at the beginning of this investigation that it is something of a personal pilgrimage. Out of the experience of World War II the idea of faith has come to be all important. I believe! Yes, but what is believing, and in what can we believe! The conception of faith which we find in the Christianity of the New Testament thus becomes of personal importance.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF FAITH

The conception of faith as presented in the Old Testament must not under any circumstances be considered of casual importance. It is a distinct mistake to think that a survey of the material found in the Old Testament is merely a necessary preliminary which must be disposed of quickly. It is regrettably true, as Snaith puts it, that "Christians have been tempted to regard the Old Testament as being but one of the many sacred books which the world has known, . . . and of small account for the Christian, who would do well to save his time in a busy thronging world and begin with the Gospel of Matthew."<sup>1</sup> Even the most superficial understanding of the full movement of Biblical material will dismiss such a notion as a pathetic distortion of the truth. It is true, of course, that the New Testament was written in a language intelligible to certain Greek-speaking people, but this is but "one of many pertinent facts".

To suppose that they (New Testament books) emerged from the background of Greek thought and experience is to misunderstand them completely. There is a strange and awkward element in the language which not only affects the meanings of words, not only disturbs

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<sup>1</sup> Norman H. Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, London, p. 14.

the grammar and the syntax, but lurks everywhere in a maze of literary allusions which no ordinary Greek man or woman could conceivably have understood or even detected. The truth is that behind these writings there lies an intractable Hebraic, Aramaic, Palestinian material. It is this foreign matter that complicates New Testament Greek.<sup>2</sup>

It may be safely said that New Testament authors themselves reflect the idea that their material cannot be understood or interpreted adequately without a knowledge of those sacred Scriptures which had come before them.<sup>3</sup> Neither can the Christian student of today interpret the New Testament apart from the Old.

Students of the New Testament have long been concerned, and rightly so, with the Hellenistic background of the era in which the Christian religion arose. Such a study is invaluable, but it cannot be used alone to the exclusion of the Jewish tradition which had long preceded it. To interpret the New Testament in the light of Plato and Aristotle is to err seriously. "Everywhere the peculiarly Christian usage of a word proceeds from a remoulding of the meaning which it had borne in the Old Testament."<sup>4</sup>

To interpret the idea of faith, then, without considering both of these great traditions would be hopelessly

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<sup>2</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, p. 24ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 25ff.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

inept. It is quite true that:

The four evangelists agreed in setting the life and death of Jesus firmly within the context of the Old Testament Scriptures and each evangelist presumes that no other context can provide an understanding of the nature of the action of God which He wrought through His Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

How, then, can we possibly understand the response of men to that action, to that Son, without placing it in a similar context? So in our study of the New Testament presentation of the faith-idea, we inevitably turn first to the Hebraic material out of which it grew.

#### Is Faith A Prominent Old Testament Idea?

We read the New Testament, and particularly, a passage such as Chapter Eleven of the Epistle to the Hebrews and, if we knew nothing of the Old, we might expect to find the word "faith" on every page of these books.<sup>6</sup> Men have actually been amazed at what is found. Schlatter, in his detailed study of Der Glaube im Neuen Testament speaks typically of the rare use of the word in the Old Testament.<sup>7</sup> It would be a grave mistake to make too much of this.

This does not mean that the writer to the Hebrews was mistaken or over-ingenious. For though the men of the Old Testament had not the word, they certainly

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> D. M. Baillie, Faith in God, Edinburgh, 1927, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Similarly Inge, W. Morgan, Marti, W. W. Warfield, Cheyne.

had the thing, and it was the insight of genius that perceived it and traced it as the religious thread which ran through their history.<sup>8</sup>

The Old Testament writers, it may be assumed by a casual reader, wander in some barren and arid wilderness of legality and ethics, with no dynamic such as faith in their experience. Such a casual assumption is completely false. Faith exists as a vital factor of their experience long before they gave it a name. As Means put it, "the absence of the term might lead to an assumption too wide and too sweeping to be sustained by the facts if it is not clearly kept in view that the essential capacity may exist though it be imperfectly formulated."<sup>9</sup>

#### Faith-Words Of The Old Testament.

In the relatively few instances, then, in which the idea of faith is conveyed in a word, the root which is found usually is agreed to be  $\text{אָמַן}$ . As Schlatter states it "Our faith goes back through the New Testament  $\text{ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΙΝ}$  to  $\text{אָמַן בְּהוֹה}$ .<sup>10</sup> Means finds that the verb is used in a religious sense some thirty times in thirteen Old Testament books.<sup>11</sup> There were others which are closely related in idea such as  $\text{אָמַן}$ , to trust;  $\text{אָמַן}$  to cleave;

<sup>8</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Means, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Schlatter, Der Glaube im Neuen Testament, p. 555.

<sup>11</sup> Means, op. cit., p. 3ff.

נָחַת to wait, or long for; and חָלַץ to wait or look for; קָרַב to draw near; and נָשַׁע to lean. Substantives which were derived from נָחַת include אֱמוּנָה faithfulness; אֱמוּנָה trusting, faithfulness; אֱמוּנָה faith, support; אֱמוּנָה firmness, faithfulness, truth.<sup>12</sup>

How is this basic idea used, then? If it is true that this verb signifies "to believe in, to trust in, to have faith in, to rely on", all in one, while the noun signifies "faithfulness, rather than faith"<sup>13</sup> let us look at the passages in which it appears. Sometimes it had for its object a specific work or word of God,<sup>14</sup> the revelation of God;<sup>15</sup> the words and the commandments of God in general;<sup>16</sup> or the prophets.<sup>17</sup> When it is used with God as the object, He is regarded as a faithful witness,<sup>18</sup> faith is given to Him as a person<sup>19</sup> or in other varied ways.<sup>20</sup>

The verb is always connected with the basic idea of "support" or "nourish", and more particularly in a religious

<sup>12</sup> William H. P. Hatch, The Pauline Idea of Faith, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Montefiore, The Old Testament and After, London, 1923, p. 171.

<sup>14</sup> Lam. 4:12, Hab. 1:5.

<sup>15</sup> Ex. 4, 5; Job 9:16.

<sup>16</sup> Psa. 106:12; 119:66.

<sup>17</sup> Ex. 19:9; II Chron. 20:20.

<sup>18</sup> Dt. 9:23; Isa. 43:10.

<sup>19</sup> Gen. 15:6; Ex. 14:31; Num. 14:11; 20:12; Dt. 1:32.

<sup>20</sup> Psa. 27:13; Ex. 4:31; Isa. 7:9, 28:16; II Kings 17:14; II Chron. 20:20; Psa. 78:22, Jonah 3:5.



context, with the ideas of "stability" and "trustworthiness".<sup>21</sup> However, in Biblical Hebrew there is no genuine substantive meaning faith. In the two places where the Revised Version admits the use of "faith" (Dt. 32:20; Hab. 2:4) the usage of the two different Hebrew words represented by faith indicates that the meaning is "faithfulness". We shall investigate these passages in greater detail.

But beyond the mechanics of the matter--in the total impact of the experience of these people a much more meaningful idea of faith is felt. It is a story of a response to a revelation, a revelation of Jehovah made to Jehovah's people, and that response is vitally related to the New Testament idea of faith. It is a response which is immersed in an atmosphere of a covenant religion. Consider, then, this covenant.

#### The Covenant Relation.

If we are to understand the Old Testament presentation of the idea of faith, we must see that Israel lived,

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<sup>21</sup> Dean Inge, Faith and Its Psychology, London, 1911, p. 4.

Cf. Warfield, Hastings Bible Dictionary, p. 82.

For a discussion of  $\text{אמונה}$  and its relation to  $\text{אמת}$   
cf.

Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Band 3, Leipzig, 1939, p. 23. He feels they are closely related.

moved, and had her being in an atmosphere charged with the conception of a unique relationship to God. This was the "Glaubensmotiv", the great and moving force behind all faith.<sup>22</sup> Apart from it, faith would have a different meaning.

As a matter of fact, "the distinctive thing about that religion (i.e. Israel's) was that it was a 'covenant' religion."<sup>23</sup> What is more, this covenant was the basis upon which their conception of faith rested.<sup>24</sup> Inge states the cases clearly:

The notion of faith, or rather faithfulness, in the Old Testament is largely determined by the idea of a covenant between God and His people. Faith, truth, or faithfulness belongs to the parties to a covenant; it has no meaning outside that relation. The covenant was made between God and His people collectively; individuals were parties to it as members of the favoured nation. Faith or faithfulness is the observance of the right attitude towards the covenant with God--it is the conscientious observance of the human side of the covenant, the divine is grace and mercy.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, in the Old Testament there are two concrete subjects, and a vital relationship between the two. Jehovah, the one true and living God, and Israel, His people. "What was required of the people was an attitude of mind and heart corresponding to this relation of God to them-- a receptivity and acceptance on their part as He drew near to

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<sup>22</sup> Schlatter, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Seeger, RGG Vol. II, p. 1199.

<sup>25</sup> Inge, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

them."<sup>26</sup> Unbelief and rejection would disrupt this relationship in a brutal and final fashion.

It is true, of course, that there was tremendous emphasis upon deeds and actions, as well as upon this idea of faith. This can be understood when the true meaning of faith is seen, particularly in its inseparable relation to this matter of deeds and actions. Robinson says:

The religion of Israel underwent many changes, but faith in the fellowship of God and man gave unity to its eventful history, and supplied that inner continuity which is the mark of a true development . . . . The fellowship of God and man became a living fact of experience . . . . The hope of Israel rose beyond sin and suffering into confidence in the covenanted help of God.<sup>27</sup>

He goes on to maintain that "the most characteristic feature of the religion is its moral emphasis."<sup>28</sup> This is balanced by his conclusion, however, that "the emphasis falls on Yahweh in this continuous relation of fellowship between man and God . . . . Such a faith in the moral and exclusive relation between Israel and Yahweh is the nucleus around which many elements from without gather and crystallize in the course of generations."<sup>29</sup> They meet, not as equals, but in a mutual relation that made demands, different though they might be, upon both members of the covenant.

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<sup>26</sup> A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, London, 1913, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 26; p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

The dominant attitudes then, were grace on the part of God, and faith on the part of man.<sup>30</sup> The emphasis on morality was a preview of that "faith of James" which demanded proof of faith in action.

Two things should be noted in this connection. First, there appears to be no question as to the existence of God. This was presupposed.<sup>31</sup> Whatever may be concluded about the origins of Hebrew religion, as controversial as that matter is, atheism seems to be impossible. It was a belief which arose out of the experiences of life.

The monotheism of the prophets is no product of reflection, but an experience of the heart. It is no hypothesis, but the result of empirical observation; it is not philosophical, but ethical monotheism. Their belief in the one God arose from an inner experience. (Cf. Amos 7:14f; Amos 3:4-6, 8; Isa. 8:11, 6:1ff; Micah 3:8; Jer. 20:7, 10; 15:17-21).<sup>32</sup>

This belief never had a very clear intellectual expression. "It would hardly have occurred to a devout Israelite even in the latter reflective age, to speak of the existence of God as a matter of faith."<sup>33</sup> If there was any doubt, it was not as to His existence, but as to His knowing and caring. Job's questions were not about God's existence, but about God's goodness and justice. Did He

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<sup>30</sup> Robinson, op. cit., p. 278ff. For the Relation of Faith to Law, cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 24f.

<sup>31</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 8. Cf. Robinson, op. cit., p. 54. Davidson, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>32</sup> Marti, The Religion of the Old Testament, p. 141.

<sup>33</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 18.

know, did He care, was He present, would He help? These were the great questions of faith.

Secondly, what is true of national faith, is true also of individual faith. Those who have insisted upon a line of evolution which is rigid have overlooked certain facts. We find individual faith clearly exemplified in the Psalms (e.g. 73, 23) and in Job. It is also found in the life of Abraham. Wellhausen, Marti, and many others press for a rigidly developing religion which changed radically as outside influences were brought to bear upon it.<sup>34</sup> This does not take into account the presence of a personal faith, even in the early days of Israel's history.

Moreover, the day came when the emphasis shifted from the God-Nation relation to a more individualistic God-Man relation. With all the complex differences between the Divine and Human it is still possible that they should meet. What is more, they meet, though not as equals, in fellowship.

#### Old Testament Material.

With these general remarks as background, let us now look at the more important instances where the idea of faith

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<sup>34</sup> Marti, *op. cit.*, p. 29f, finds four phases in Hebrew Religion, Nomadic, peasant, prophetic, and legal. He lays too much stress on the idea that the early phases emphasized other deities, belief in demons, etc. Cf. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 186. He maintains that in all phases of development, faith was a unifying factor.

rises to the surface of Old Testament experience. We can hardly avoid beginning with what has long been used by writers of varying convictions and of different times and circumstances as the classic passage of Old Testament faith. Those six little verses in Genesis 15 have captured the attention of men for centuries. Their importance is primary.<sup>35</sup>

In the midst of the venerable patriarch's despair over leaving no heir, the word of Jehovah comes to him with the seemingly unbelievable promise of a son. Yet, Abraham believing in Jehovah, **ה' אִמֵּן בִּיהוָה** has full and implicit confidence that He will fulfill His promise.

It is something more than trusting in a promise. Such an interpretation is superficial. It is, and must be, a faith that looks beyond the promise to the Promiser, to Jehovah Himself. Abraham met God in this experience, and his response to that meeting was the response of a total faith.<sup>36</sup>

Critical problems have been raised concerning this

<sup>35</sup> Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Abraham is called "den Typus des Glaubenden".

<sup>36</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.*, p. 3. "When the object is God **ב** is used with **ה' אִמֵּן** nine times and **פ** only twice. For the distinction between the two see Gesenius Kautzsch 'Hebrew Grammar' (Eng. trans. by Cowley, 1910), paragraph 119-1, where **ב ה' אִמֵּן** is translated 'cleave trustingly to'".

passage.<sup>37</sup> However, the approach required for this study leads us to concentrate on the faith of Abraham itself. Against all appearances he trusts in Jehovah, surrenders himself to Him in full confidence that He will fulfill His promise.<sup>38</sup>

It was at once gallant, adventurous, and sublime. When confronted with the presence of the living God, he could do no other. It is significant, too, that Abraham had earlier demonstrated this spirit when the voice of God said to him, "Get thee out of thy country . . . unto the land that I will show thee." (12:1). It was an excruciating demand to make upon a man--to forsake his home, his family, the security that he had known, and to venture into some strange and distant land before him. Faith is linked with obedience then, for we read, "So Abram went even as Jehovah had spoken unto him." (12:4). Later on, he was willing to obey even the hopelessly inexplicable demand to sacrifice the son God had given him. (Chapter 22). Could he do it because he was able mentally to affirm the existence of God; or because he was afraid of disobeying some awesome creature

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<sup>37</sup> The dispute here is whether this passage in Genesis or that of Isa. 7:9 is earlier. For those who accept J,E, and others as authors of this passage, it is a problem of authorship. For a full discussion of opposing views cf. Skinner, ICC, Genesis, 1910, p. 277f. Duhm, Handkommentar zum A.T., 1902, III, 1, p. 49ff. Driver, Westminster Commentary, Genesis, London, 1907, 6th Edition, p. 174ff.

<sup>38</sup> Driver, Westminster Commentary, Genesis, 1907, p. 174.

who would exact merciless revenge, unless, no matter how bitterly or reluctantly, he did the deed? It could not be so. As far as we can see into those hidden recesses of a man's soul, it meant that Abraham had stood in the presence of God, and he had, in the greatest act of worship of which man is capable, surrendered his whole self to that God.

This faith which went beyond a mental conception of certain abstract ideas was "counted . . . to him for righteousness,"  $\Pi \rho \tau \zeta$  (15:6). This righteousness involved a right relation to God. Faith was indispensable in that relationship.<sup>39</sup>

In the long process of change in the Jewish religion the emphasis came at times to be placed upon keeping the law. But for Abraham, living before the law had been clearly enunciated, righteousness lay in devotion and faith toward Jehovah--and not in meticulous observance of legal requirements.<sup>40</sup>

Here, then as Baillie has asserted, "we have the clearest recognition that to believe God, to trust in Him, to rely absolutely upon Him, is a thing which is of the essence of religion. According to Dr. Moffatt's

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<sup>39</sup> Skinner calls this righteousness "neither inherent moral character, nor piety in the subjective sense, but a right relation to God conferred by a divine sentence of approval." ICC of Genesis, p. 280.

<sup>40</sup> Driver, op. cit., p. 174.



translation, God 'counted his trust as real religion.'<sup>41</sup>

It goes far beyond the mind and a mental attitude.

Biblical faith is never mere intellectual belief in a given proposition or doctrine . . . . Abraham's belief in God . . . was trust as well as belief; it was faithfulness toward God, reliance on God, as well as faith in God.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, we begin to see in Abraham's experience something of a nature of a faith-response which, in all the varying circumstances of the passing centuries, abides in the human response to divine revelation. It is not surprising that the story of Abraham has occupied the minds and souls of men down through the years. His experience became a standing thesis for Jewish students. Philo, the great Alexandrian, quoted it no less than ten times. More important to us, it is referred to frequently in the New Testament. (Romans 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6; and James 2:23. Cf. I Mac. 2:52).<sup>43</sup>

Moses.

In the dramatic experience of Moses before the

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<sup>41</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Montefiore, op. cit., p. 171ff. Similarly Seeger, RGG, Vol. II, p. 1201, finds this a personal faith. Cf. Warfield, Hastings Bible Dictionary, p. 828.

<sup>43</sup> For a study of the appearance of the story in history, Cf. Lightfoot, Commentary on Galatians, p. 158ff. Sanday and Headlam, ICC on Romans, p. 101, 104. Bousset, Die Religion des Judentums, 1906, p. 226ff. Thackeray, The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought, 1900, p. 91ff.

burning bush, we have a clear illustration of a faith-response to revelation. (Ex. 2:23; 3:22).

Opinions vary as to this passage, but few can disagree with McNeile, when he says,

Few passages in the Old Testament stand on a higher plane of thought than this. God's revelation of His own character by means of a name hitherto unknown, marks an epoch in the history, not only of Israel, but of mankind. Whatever view may be taken of the historical value to be attached to the incident of the burning bush, the religious value of the narrative is unimpaired.<sup>44</sup>

The revelation of the "I AM" struck deeply into the consciousness of Moses. He removed his shoes. Thus the Jew always reacted to a revelation of that which was holy-- he stood in confession with head bowed, mantle over his face, and shoes removed. The Greek might plunge on into the holiest of holies, with nothing too sacred for investigation, and with head unbowed, but not the Jew.

The translation of 3:14 is difficult. It may be "I am that I am", or "I will be what I will be". The fundamental idea, however, is a revelation of the eternal omnipotence of God. Just as Isaiah cried, "Woe is me . . .", and Jeremiah, "I am a child", so Moses exclaimed, "Who am I . . . ." (3:11). The answer as with Jeremiah, (1:19) was "Certainly I will be with thee . . . ." (3:12). The question then became, not Who am I, but who art Thou?

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<sup>44</sup> McNeile, The Book of Exodus, Westminster Commentaries, London, 3rd Edition, 1931, p. 14.

The patristic writers felt that the revelation of God in the bush was a type of His revelation under the conditions in humanity in the Incarnation.<sup>45</sup> Certainly, the burning bush was a frequent conception among the ancients,<sup>46</sup> but the key to the revelation is not only the bush, but the Name. The thought seems to be that all of God's characteristics and attributes are to be found in that name. As time went on, the name took on added meaning. The Acts of Providence in Egypt, in the desert, in Canaan, the discipline, the guidance which came to the nation--all these showed Him to be a deliverer, protector, leader and Judge.<sup>47</sup>

To this revelation of God, however, which Moses felt, the response was a faith-response. He obeyed his commission, not as a man leaping into some great unknown darkness, but as one who knew Who had commanded him, and who was willing to stake his life upon that knowledge.

#### Isaiah.

We turn, first, to that dramatic interview between Isaiah, the son of Amos, and King Ahaz, ruler of Judah. It is a moment filled with tension and crisis. Syria and

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Greg. Nyss., de Vita Moysis; Theodoret, Quaest. in Ex.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Homer's Odyssey, XIX, p. 39ff.

<sup>47</sup> McNeile, op. cit., p. 18ff.

Ephraim lie just over the horizon with their armies waiting to pounce upon the people of Judah. Is it not surprising that Ahaz is filled with distress and terror? In this moment, he is confronted by Isaiah who comes, exuding confidence, assuring the king that the "two tails of smoking firebrands" (7:4) will not be triumphant, for Jehovah will stand with Judah. He climaxes his stirring words with a rapier-like thrust: "If ye will not believe, ( תִּמְנוּן ), surely ye will not be established." ( תִּמְנוּן ) (7:9b).

It is not too much to say that there are issues here far beyond the isolated incident in which they are found.<sup>48</sup> For the king to appeal to the Assyrian Empire for help was to Isaiah "panicky and opportunist, both politically unwise, and religiously unworthy."<sup>49</sup> His appeal was to God, and to Ahaz he offered faith in God as an alternative to servile fear and panic. The appeal is even more dramatic in the original than in our English translation. Isaiah makes use of a "play on words", as he did in other passages. (cf. 1: 23--5:7). Procksch, in observing that the first and last parts of the sentence contain the same root, נִדַּן, notes that the first is the Hiph'il form and the latter a Niph'al but maintains that the fundamental meaning is still

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<sup>48</sup> Gordon, The Prophets of the Old Testament, p. 106.

<sup>49</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 11.

that of certainty, safety, reliability, and credibility.<sup>50</sup>  
 It may well be that that sentence was an oft-used proverb, for it is reflected in II Chronicles 20:20. Many translations have been suggested incorporating a play upon words. George Adam Smith uses a word of local origin in translating thus: "If ye will not have faith, ye shall not have staith"<sup>51</sup>  
 Inge suggests: "if ye be not firm (in faith) ye shall surely not be made firm (in fact)"; or "if ye hold not fast, ye shall not stand fast."<sup>52</sup> Baillie favors Luther's version, "Glaubt ihr nicht, so bleibt ihr nicht."

We have already referred to the question of the dating of this passage, and its relation to Genesis 15:6.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Procksch, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, p. 117.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, Expositor's Bible: Isaiah, 4th Edition, London, 1889, p.106.

<sup>52</sup> Inge, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Duhm, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, 1st Ed. III, i, p. 49, attributes Genesis 15:6 to the Deuteronomist school rather than the Jahvist, as do most critics, and thus says, "There (Isaiah 7:9b) as far as we know, for the first time in Israel's religious history, is found the expression which was later to have such a mighty significance, the expression 'to believe'. Earlier writers do not use it even in those places where it involuntarily springs to our lips in the mere retelling of their stories: e.g. the Jahvist does not use it in Gen. 12:1ff where Abraham, with faith in God's promises, wanders into the lawless and shelterless Unknown: . . . . The Deuteronomist is the first to apply it with full consciousness of its significance in Genesis 15:6 . . . the birth-hour of faith is described in a manner which belongs to genius." Similarly Cheyne, Encycl. Biblica, Vol. II, pp. 149ff. Gray, ICC, p. 119, opposes.

Whether this is first or not, still it represents an epoch in the religious life of the Old Testament. Skinner states the case in saying "The words (7:9b) mark an epoch in the history of revelation; never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of faith been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and destiny."<sup>54</sup>

Panic would be natural without the fact of God. But once that fact is settled, the facts of human experience must be related to Him. Thus, the enemy did not seem so awesome when weighed against the power of Jehovah.

"In this passage much is obscure; two things are clear: Isaiah's contemptuous disbelief in the power of the allied armies of Syria and Ephraim, and his profound belief in Yahweh. In both respects, he differs from the King and the people, who fear the foe and have no sustaining confidence in Yahweh . . . . King and people quail at the news of the enemy's approach like trees bending before the wind."<sup>55</sup>

In bristling accents, the prophet condemns fear, and trust in material resources. (e.g. the water supply which occupied the King's mind). These material resources were necessary, but without faith in God's resources, they would be a fragile fortress. God is revealed as ruling the world,

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<sup>54</sup> Skinner, Isaiah, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>55</sup> Gray, International Critical Commentary: Isaiah, p. 115.

and thus is worthy of trust.<sup>56</sup> There are moments in the Gospel incidents when the "fear not" of Jesus is strangely reminiscent of this "fear not".

Any debate as to whether this Isaiah faith is "absolute" seems to some to be beside the point.<sup>57</sup> The religious experience reflected here simply cannot be compartmentalized. It is more than simply a "believing attitude", or "spirit of faith". That would be the height of folly without a strong conviction that it rested upon the righteous, all-powerful God.<sup>58</sup>

Isaiah 28:16.

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<sup>56</sup> Smith, Isaiah, p. 106. Cf. p. 110, 111, e.g. "It is not safe for men to exalt a deity to the throne of the supreme providence till they have certified of his character." p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Baillie, op. cit., p. 12. Procksch similarly.

<sup>58</sup> Marti, op. cit., p. 152, in comparing various summaries of prophetic messages, says "According to Hosea there is no true knowledge of God if there is a lack of good deeds, and by knowledge of God he does not mean anything merely intellectual, but the fine feeling and perception of the divine being and the divine strength in the depths of the soul, which of itself leads men to hope in God and urges them to active love and faith, to justice and righteousness. What Hosea calls 'hope in God', Isaiah terms 'faith' and sometimes 'quietness and confidence' . . . . Then . . . faith, too, has nothing purely intellectual about it; like Hosea's knowledge of God, it is man's response to his perception of the divine strength by the inner sense. The knowledge of God, and faith are therefore no human achievements, but the effects of divine strength, and therefore we have a proof of union with God wherever pure moral action proceeds from them and fellowship with God is a reality and not an illusion."

In a somewhat similar historical setting, the rulers of Judah consider a revolt against Assyria, with the hope of securing aid from Egypt.<sup>59</sup> Isaiah cries out against such a venture, believing it hopeless and ignoble for the people of God. In a climactic statement, he says, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth יִדְאָן־נֶחֱדֵן shall not make haste" (28:16).<sup>60</sup> Isaiah, who long opposed any relation with Assyria, also opposed any policy of opportunism that played off one nation against another. In this atmosphere he sounds the trumpet of faith, pleading for a consideration of the relation of God to their situation.

The figure of the corner stone is significant. Unless there was security, unless there was a sure foundation for all of life, then faith itself would be useless. On the contrary it would be disastrous. In Chapter 30 he

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<sup>59</sup> Critics are not at all agreed that this passage should be attributed to the period of the Egyptian alliance with Hezekiah. Cf. Delitsch, Bible Commentary on the Prophecy of Isaiah: Eng. Trans. Banks and Kennedy, Edinburgh, 1890, p. 1. Baillie, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> Delitsch, op. cit., p. 1, remarks that this is "one of three Old Testament sayings about faith, each of which is thrice referred to in the New Testament." Gen. 15:6, twice in Paul and once in James. Isa. 28:16; twice in Paul and once in Peter. Hab. 2:4; twice in Paul and once in Hebrews. Isa. 7:9 is not cited.



speaks similarly, "Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin; that set out to go down into Egypt and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh and to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt." (30:1, 2).

Against this wretched and false security, he sharply contrasts the security which comes from those who trust in Jehovah. "In returning and rest shall be ye saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (30:15). There is no word here which specifically means to believe. Yet the whole passage is alive with the idea. Confidence cleaves to Jehovah, renounces self-help as the only factor in an emergency, and leaves the ultimate decision to Him. It was no submission to an evil, implacable fate--it was submission to a gracious, merciful God.

Isaiah failed to persuade the King and the people to embrace such an attitude and to perform such an act. Yet, it is highly significant that Isaiah's faith was never shaken. It remained strong and unwavering.

Most remarkable of all is the persistent faith with which Isaiah himself, in spite of his disappointments with his king and people, clung to his conviction that God would yet save the faithful remnant, and thus in the latter years of his career enunciated and maintained the dogma of the inviolability of Zion. Through the terrible days of Sennacherib's invasion he encouraged the people at last to heroic resistance by an absolute and unequivocal assurance that Jerusalem would be spared; and the actual event when the desolating armies

of Assyria turned back at the very gates of the city, must have been an extra-ordinarily impressive testimony in the eyes of the people to Isaiah's faith, and is indeed, however the historian may interpret the whole matter, one of the most remarkable instances in history of the vindication of faith in apparently desperate circumstances. Perhaps it may be said that in this whole matter of faith Isaiah taught a lesson which his people, or at least the best of them, were never able to forget through all subsequent generations.<sup>61</sup>

But this evidence of his faith is not to be taken as an end in itself. Isaiah maintained such confidence only because it was a symptom of a deeper experience than that of that particular moment. The heart of the matter lies in the fact that Isaiah felt he had met God in an intimate revelation. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (6:1). It was in that moment that the voice was heard saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts" (6:3). In that hour of revelation, the immediate response is a sense of complete unworthiness, that wretched cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone", (6:5), but the ultimate response is one of committal, surrender, dedication. "Send me!" (6:8). Thus in this situation, we find a point of contact with the experience of Abraham and Moses--first the revelation of God, and then the faith-response of man. The initial act was followed by a continuing, vital communion of man with God. This is also developed in Isa. 12:2 and 26:3, 4.

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<sup>61</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 13f.

## Psalms.

To praise the book of Psalms is to gild the lily. Countless thousands have found here a mirror of their experience and a refuge that is timeless. In the midst of excruciating trial, men have found their way to these pages. And let us never forget it, in the midst of peace and rapture, they have turned, also, to the Psalms. If we are to learn anything of the conception of faith as men have known it, we must turn, inevitably, in that same direction.

Written over a long period of years, in the midst of every conceivable human experience, written by varying authors, it is amazing that they give evidence of any unity and coherence. One unifying fact, we may safely say, is that running through the vast symphony of prayer and praise with its harmonious melody of thanksgiving, with its tumultuous imprecations, with its pleading and complaining, with its quiet meditation, there is a phrase which comes back repeatedly--"trust in the Lord!"

Trust in Jahweh, says Oesterley, "is the most prominent element in the doctrine of God as set forth in the Psalter . . . . The experience of life has taught the Psalmist that trust in God is all in all. In one form or another this central element of religion appears throughout the Psalter . . . in every trial, in every emergency, in every danger, material or spiritual there is the conviction that God can and will help." (e.g. Psa. 42:5; Psa. 121, 46, etc.)<sup>62</sup>

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76. <sup>62</sup> Oesterley, The Psalms, London, 1937, Vol. I. p.

As Kirkpatrick puts it,

God is as it were the sun around which all revolves and His light and heat illuminate and animate the whole . . . . They (the Psalms) are the inspired response of the human heart to God's revelation of Himself in law and History, and Prophecy, and Philosophy.<sup>63</sup>

It may be too much to say that "man's communion with God is more vividly and insistently set forth in the Psalms than anywhere else in the Bible,"<sup>64</sup> but nonetheless, there is a vivid and significant presentation here of that communion as men knew it when the Psalms were written.

It was a book of worship, and in it there are the yearnings of the child-like, and the loftiest aspirations of mature men.<sup>65</sup> This is the emphasis of recent study of the book. We are told that "the high criticism of the Psalter has undergone a complete revolution in the last quarter of a century (1924-1939). The old point of view studied authorship, background, and then assigned psalms to various periods. The new concentrates on the function of the Psalms. They were designed for worship, and very little private worship--mostly individual acts in public worship."<sup>66</sup> The widest possible diversity of opinion has been formed concerning dates and authorship, and the truth is, no real certainty may be claimed for much that has been

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<sup>63</sup> Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. ix.

<sup>64</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> Briggs, ICC, The Psalms, p. xciv.

<sup>66</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 5.

suggested.<sup>67</sup> There is no real evidence, however, for post-exilic dating of all the Psalms. No doubt, it was a changing, dynamic, living representation of the worship and fellowship which men sought.<sup>68</sup>

The great appeal of the book today lies in what Moffatt calls,

Its religious expression of confidence in a good and guiding God . . . . History may be questioned, theological arguments may be challenged, but a cry is always real and the Psalter is a book of real cries from Man to God.<sup>69</sup>

We do not, of course, find a dogmatic systematic presentation of some doctrine of faith.<sup>70</sup> But we do find

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Wellhausen, Bleek's Introduction to the Psalms, p. 507. Reuss, History of the Old Testament, par. 282. Cheyne, The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter in the Light of the Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions, Bampton Lectures, 1889. For rather rigid groupings of the Psalms cf. Gunkel's arrangement presented in "Die Psalmen", 1926 and "Einleitung in die Psalmen", 1933, as quoted by Oesterley, op. cit., p. 6. Also Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. lii for his progressive grouping; and Briggs, ICC, The Psalms, P.lxxxix 66.

<sup>68</sup> Moffatt, The Book of Psalms, 1930, p. v., says "This book of Psalms was the hymn book of the Jewish Temple."

<sup>69</sup> Moffatt, op. cit., p. vi., "It is a faith for which still many long so keenly that they turn to its pages in the hope that they may catch something of this confidence."

<sup>70</sup> Briggs, op. cit., p. xcv, "The doctrines of the Psalter are not in a dogmatic form, demanding acceptance by the intellect and the will; but in a concrete form expressing the faith already entertained and established. From this point of view, while on the one side the doctrines are not so complete in detail and not so clearly defined in their relations as in the prophets, yet on the other hand they rise to the loftiest heights in their conception of God, sink to the lowest depths in searching the soul of man, expand to the greatest width in their comprehension of the union of God and man and the world in the divine idea of redemption. For these reasons the Psalter is nearest to the New Testament of all of the Old Testament."

"trust in God" a profound and fundamental factor of the religious experience of the men of Psalms. The idea occurs in every kind of situation.

A look at the Psalter reveals a great mass of references to "trust". We shall look at only a few, under the rigid limits of this type of study. Picturesque words are used to portray the idea of "trust". For example there is  $\overline{\text{נ}} \overline{\text{ו}} \overline{\text{א}}$  to lean on, trust, be confident:  $\overline{\text{ל}} \overline{\text{ל}} \overline{\text{ל}}$  to roll on;  $\overline{\text{נ}} \overline{\text{ד}} \overline{\text{נ}}$  to take refuge in; and the familiar  $\overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{א}} \overline{\text{ל}}$ , to abide steadfastly in faith.

Everywhere there is conflict. The sons of Asaph, the sons of Korah, David and all those unknown poets and singers, often climaxed their worship with stirring confessions of faith in the midst of the storm of conflict.

Suffering was often "the arena on which the victory of faith had to be won, not by Job alone, but by all those who were Israelites indeed. Faith in the Old Testament is always "trust", confidence, in the everlasting arms of God as a sure support. Abraham is its great exemplar in Hebrew Story, and in the Psalms, 'trust' is the characteristic attitude of the soul towards God."<sup>71</sup>

Consider the 78th Psalm, which bears the inscription

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<sup>71</sup> Cheyne, op. cit., col. 1946, Encyc. Biblica.

of one of the psalms of the sons of Asaph.<sup>72</sup> It is typical of those psalms which seek to use history to grapple with deep issues of human experience. It is an effort by the Psalmist to formulate a philosophy of history which is to be used in interpreting the experience of the nation of Israel. It becomes then, a didactic psalm whose method it is to "work through the history of the early days, contrasting Yahweh's benefits with Israel's rebelliousness and infidelity."<sup>73</sup> It traces the long and tortured history of Israel from the Exodus to the building of the Temple. It recalls "Jehovah's guidance of His people through the wilderness and conveys the assurance that He will yet seek the lost and gather the scattered and guide them back into their own land."<sup>74</sup>

It was a tragedy of greatest degree that the people doubted and rebelled with no temporary doubt or rebellion. (vs. 22) Repeatedly they ignored all warnings and defied the Lord of Heaven. The Lord was wroth because they forgot His works and wonders (vs. 10), (vs. 11), in Egypt and in the wilderness. For, in spite of all of this revelation of

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<sup>72</sup> Asaph is generally believed to have been one of David's three chief musicians along with Heman, Ethan, or Jeduthun. He was selected by David to lead the music when the ark was brought to Jerusalem. His sons were leaders of courses of musicians and helped to dedicate the Temple. Cf. Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 428ff.

<sup>73</sup> Oesterley, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

<sup>74</sup> Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 430. Cf. 74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 80:1.

God's Power, "they sinned still and believed not for His wondrous works" (vs. 32). This was the supreme evidence of sin--it was no ignorant, accidental unbelief--it was unbelief in the face of repeated revelations of God in His Power and Mercy. This was unthinkable to the Psalmist and it brought disaster and inevitable ruin in its wake. It is evident, then, that faith was no added frill to religion--it was a vital, imperative factor in man's relation to God. It was not a leap into the unknown--there was much that could be known of God for He continually revealed Himself to men.

For an example of the sorely tried, but victorious faith, consider Psalm 73, also inscribed to the sons of Asaph. The Psalm seeks an answer to an ancient, rankling question of rewards and punishment.<sup>75</sup> "The Great Nevertheless" is the title prefixed to the psalm by Kittel, and it well justifies that phrase.<sup>76</sup>

As for me, my feet were almost gone  
 My steps had well nigh slipped.  
 For I was envious at the arrogant  
 When I saw the prosperity of the wicked  
 For there are no bands in their death:  
 but their strength is firm.  
 They are not in trouble as other men;  
 Neither are they plagued like other men. 73:2-5

That is the problem! And, when the solution to the problem

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Psa. 37, 49, and of course the Book of Job.

<sup>76</sup> As quoted by Oesterley, op. cit., p. 342.



is offered, it is "not the glib statement of an easy and superficial orthodoxy. He has descended into the depths of torturing doubt."<sup>77</sup> Even though he confesses that he asked if God knew of his plight, (vs. 11) the heart of the matter seems to be resolved when the Psalmist is confronted with the presence of God, (vss. 16, 17).<sup>78</sup> From there to the end there is the constant reverberation of the response of a doubting spirit to the revelation of God.<sup>79</sup> Negatively, he rests his solution on the fact that the wicked ultimately perish, (vs. 27) but positively, he glories in the true happiness which comes in communion with God. (vss. 23-26)

Frequently we face in the Psalter a contrast between faith in men and in material power, and faith in God. In a typical affirmation of faith at its highest level, the Psalmist in Psalm 20:7 sounds a ringing call to confidence in the face of threatening enemies. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name

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<sup>77</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>78</sup> The sanctuary here means that temple of the spirit where God and man meet in perfect communion. Cf. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 436, for discussion of various interpretations.

<sup>79</sup> Briggs, et al. suggest that vss. 17-20, and 27, 28, are glosses added to solve the problem presented in the Psalm, by simply ascribing ruin to the apostate and blessing to the obedient. This is not convincing, however, for it faces the charge of forming a conclusion and forcing it upon the material at hand from a preconceived bias. Cf. Briggs, op. cit., p. 140.

of the Lord our God."<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, the 44th Psalm portrays the appeal of the nation to God in a time of unmerited disaster and humiliation.<sup>81</sup> In the midst of this appeal, he says, "I will not trust to my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us." (vss. 6, 7)<sup>82</sup>

In Psalm 81, the folly of trusting in wealth is graphically portrayed, for Jehovah can do what wealth cannot do. (vs. 6ff) There is a point of contact in the thought here, and that of the parable of the Rich Fool. In a Psalm which was probably sung at many feasts, and particularly the Feast of Tabernacles, the pertinent verses assert that it is better to trust (i.e. take refuge in) in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. (Psa. 116:3; 116:11; cf. 116:8, 9).

In a typical prayer for help in the midst of affliction, Psalm 13 pictures the Psalmist fighting from despair

<sup>80</sup> Horses and chariots were to the Psalmist what planes, tanks, and atomic bombs, are to this age. Cf. II Kings 10:23; Judges 7:18; I Sam. 17:45; II Chron. 16:8, 9; Psa. 33:16ff; Isa. 26:13.

<sup>81</sup> For the arguments concerning Maccabean origin of the Psalm, dating, etc. see Kirkpatrick, (favors), p. 234ff, and Oesterley, (opposes), p. 245.

<sup>82</sup> This, says Oesterley, *op. cit.*, p. 245, is an "irreverent approach to the Almighty", but it is easy to misunderstand the spirit and language of the Psalmist.

to hope and to faith.<sup>83</sup> It reveals the tortured spirit of one who feels that God has forgotten him. (vss. 1, 2) It is a great cry for help, but the conclusion of the Psalm brings us to a calm and confident expectancy. "I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me." (vss. 5, 6) In that magnificent poem, Psalm 32, which resounds with the blessedness of those who are forgiven, we find some indication of the relation of faith and forgiveness. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusted in the Lord, loving-kindness shall compass him about" (32:10). In the great need of the human spirit for the elimination of the great disrupting fact of sin, faith brings a man into an atmosphere of mercy.<sup>84</sup>

Psalm 33 is an example of a Psalm written to praise Jehovah for His deliverance, and for His goodness and power.<sup>85</sup> It combines a call to unite in praise, with a glowing description of God's power and His willingness to use that power for the blessing of His people. (vss. 12-19)

<sup>83</sup> Could this be David, while a fugitive? Cf. Kirkpatrick, p. 165.

<sup>84</sup> This was a favorite Psalm of St. Augustine. When he fell ill, he had the words written on the wall of his room, where it was always before his eyes.

<sup>85</sup> The Psalm is probably a congregational hymn of praise after some national deliverance. Cf. Kirkpatrick, p. 165.

Thus, the faith which is placed in Him, as indicated in Verse 21, is not that of some blind response. It is significant, too, that the statement is "we have trusted in His holy Name!" This should not be puzzling, however, in view of the great significance of names and their use in revealing the total character and personality.

In a Psalm that reveals "a calm confidence contrasted with a cry for help",<sup>86</sup> Psalm 28 is typical of those psalms which represent both prayer for help, and praise for God's goodness. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusteth in Him, and I am helped." 28:7. Similarly Psalm 31 finds the Psalmist worn out in mind and body, feeling that he has been rejected and persecuted, but believes that God will not reject him. "But I trusted in Thee, O Lord, I said Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me." (31:14, 15) The striking thing is the feeling of intimacy which the Psalmist has for Jehovah. He knows, He cares, He understands, and He holds his destiny in His hands!

Besieged by formidable foes, despairing of escape, the Psalmist moves to high ground in his spiritual experience in Psalm 56. He writes in moving words, "What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee . . . . In God have

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<sup>86</sup> Briggs, op. cit., p. 248.

I put my trust, I will not be afraid. What can flesh do unto me?" (56:3, 4). "The danger is imminent, fear is inevitable; but faith is victorious over fear."<sup>87</sup>

In one of his clearest presentations of the problem of suffering, the Psalmist sings, in Psalm 37. As Baillie has written,

We have seen that some of those expressions of trust arose out of seasons of trouble and suffering, and indeed the troubles and sufferings of the nation or of the godly seem to run as a perplexing theme through a large part of the literature of the Old Testament. This becomes especially plain in the later and more reflective literature where the intellectual side of faith is forced to become more prominent because of the strain put upon it by the apparent anomalies of human existence, such as the sufferings of the godly man or nation alongside of the prosperity of the ungodly man or nations.<sup>88</sup>

The Book of Job is the best known example of an attempt to grapple with this all too frequent, and still modern, problem. It is significant, that one of the great statements of human experience arose out of the troubled, tortured life of Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15)

Psalm 37, in dealing with the problem,<sup>89</sup> presents a

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<sup>87</sup> Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 315. He suggests that the psalm may have been written by David about his experience as a fugitive in Gath.

<sup>88</sup> Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Cf. Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, par. 246.

<sup>89</sup> Delitzsch writes that Tertullian called the Psalm, 'Providentiae speculum', a mirror of providence; Isidore, called it 'potio contra murma', an antidote to murmuring; and Luther 'vestis piorum, cui adscriptum hic sanctorum patientia est, a garment for the godly with the inscription: here is the patience of the saints.

simple answer. In effect the Psalmist says, "time will tell, wait and see. In the end there will be justice". It is true that Job wanted more than this, and even in Psalm 73, the answer is differently presented, with the reply that the highest joy is to be found in fellowship with God, no matter what happens on earth. (Cf. Psa. 73:23-26) The command here is, literally, "roll thy way upon the Lord" (37:5) and He will reward your faith with His blessing. It is a magnificent plea for patience, faith, and peace.

A vital presentation of the relation of faith and prayer, is, of course, found everywhere in the Psalms. We must come to God in confident faith, or He cannot help us. "I trust, let me not be ashamed" is often the argument of the Psalms. (e.g. Psa. 25:2) Those who trust should be as secure as the mountains. (Psa. 125)<sup>90</sup> One of the clearest instances when faith and prayer are united is found in the 86th Psalm.<sup>91</sup> In the midst of the usual fervent plea for help, two grounds for the plea emerge. First, the need of the supplicant is overwhelming. He is poor and lowly. Second, there is the character of God--He is good, loving,

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<sup>90</sup> Mountains in general, and Mount Zion in particular, represented the ultimate in the immovable, the unchangeable. Nothing could be more worthy of confidence. (Cf. 93:1; Isa. 54:10)

<sup>91</sup> For a discussion of a fragmentary theory cf. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 514.

merciful. Verse two begins by saying, "O Thou my God, save Thy servant that trusteth in Thee." He might be in need, but he is still trusting God. Thus, in prayer under varying conditions, the element of faith is ever present.

No survey, how<sup>ever</sup> brief and rudimentary, would be complete without a look at one or two major psalms. The 22nd, for example, has been forever immortalized as that used by our Lord at Calvary. In its interpretation, there have been many approaches, personal, ideal, national and predictive, and Kirkpatrick is right in saying that though each of these lines contains some truth, none is complete in itself.<sup>92</sup>

The psalmist could not accept the fact that God had forsaken him. He protests, "Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee; and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." (vss. 4, 5, 6) A stirring imperative calls for rolling upon Jehovah all problems.<sup>93</sup>

Psalm 46 will live forever as the battle hymn of the Reformation. It forms a trilogy with the two following it, and it glows with the light of Jehovah's presence. To

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 113ff.

<sup>93</sup> There is some justification for the use of the imperative rather than the perfect. Cf. Wisdom 2:16ff.

understand the faith which it reflects, the fact of Jehovah's presence is vital. It was to that that faith responded. Jehovah was a mighty refuge, and, regardless of the circumstances in which it <sup>was</sup> <sup>94</sup> set, it reveals a faith that remained unshaken in the midst of tumult. It was faith in spite of circumstances.

The best loved Psalm of all, Psalm 23, still brings incomparable evidence of faith. To many, it is unrivalled in its calm serenity, and perfect faith. From the opening "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," to the concluding line, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" there is genuine faith. The secret of such faith may be found in the simple, but profound conviction, "for Thou Art with me" (vs. 4) Once more, it is response to the presence of God, who was vitally concerned with life. No darkness, no enemy can destroy, for God is there.

#### Conclusion.

Thus, in the book which has taken hold of the hearts of God's people in every age, <sup>95</sup> faith is found in infinite variety and circumstance. It may be national peril, personal

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<sup>94</sup> E.g. the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, Isa. 30:29; the invasion of Judah during Jehosaphat's reign, II Chron. 20; and when Pekah and Rezin waged war against Ahaz.

<sup>95</sup> Perowne, The Psalms, p. 22.



disaster, a moment of joy, or tragedy, but whatever the experience, God was there, and to Him men responded with faith. Their problems were as real as ours are today. To them it may be horses and chariots, and with us atomic weapons. But faith, which might have withered and died as it faced the circumstances, looked upon one who revealed Himself, and however little or great the knowledge of that revelation, the men of the Psalms gave their trust to Him. There was no quicksand underfoot, but the foundation of all they had learned of God in history, in national and personal experiences in the world about them--one who was all powerful, all loving, and always acceptable. The one unforgivable lapse was unbelief. In the words of H. Wheeler Robinson,

The spiritual outlook of prayer and praise in the Psalter is very wide. In the first place there is the consciousness of an adequate self-revelation of God through His Providence, (Psa. 19, et. al.) on the one hand, and His written Law on the other. The Providence of God is visible in the whole course of Israel's history, the things 'which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us.' (Psa. 78) It is also visible in the natural world where His manifold works display His wisdom and glory (Psa. 104). In one Psalm (19) the revelation of the natural world is placed side by side with the companion revelation of the written law; 'the heavens declare the glory of God; and His perfect law restores the soul . . . . Through natural world and the written law then, the worshipper feels that he has access to God; in these God came forth to meet him and to hold communion with him. But, in the second place, the Psalter is profoundly conscious of the great barriers--sin and death.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> H. Wheeler Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, London, 1913, p. 152.

The Communion of man with God, then is founded upon revelation, and upon faith.

Habakkuk 2:4b.

If ever there is an instance where New Testament usage of an Old Testament passage focuses attention on the latter, we have it in Habakkuk 2:4b. If this fragment of a verse had not been used by Paul (Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11) and used in such an important argument, we might have passed it over without a second glance.

The first part of the book is formed into two chapters in our versions, and the last contains the portion usually known as the Psalms of Habakkuk. Many have thought that this Psalm is entirely separate, but there is some reason to link it with the verse which is before us.<sup>97</sup>

The prophet is burdened over the injustice which he sees around him. He wails, "O Lord, how long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto Thee of violence

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<sup>97</sup> Beyond his name, which may be translated "Embrace", little is known of Habakkuk. A very doubtful, fanciful bit of tradition says that the superscription to the Codex Chisianus of the LXX in the book of Bel and the Dragon states that the story was taken 'from the Prophecy of Hambakoum, son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi.' Also, Ps. Ephiphanius in "De Vitis Prophetorum" puts Habakkuk in Judah, tribe of Simeon, around 586 B.C. Davidson places him just prior to the fall of Jerusalem around 586 B.C. Puser, Der Prophet Habakkuk, 1903, puts him as a hostage in Nineveh around 625 B.C. deducting this from 2:13. The widest speculation exists. For dating, etc. cf. Davidson, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah; revised by Lanchester, Cambridge, 1920, p. 43ff. Wade, Westminster Commentary, pp. 141ff, 148ff.

and Thou wilt not save." (1:2ff) This injustice is typified in the Chaldeans, and it is excruciating spiritual agony for the Prophet to see that apparently God makes no distinction between the evil and the just.

In his contrast between the wicked and the righteous, he places the words which are found in 2:4, "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him, but the just shall live by faith."

It is obvious as the chapter progresses that the prophet feels that the solution to the problem of injustice is in the ultimate blessing of the righteous, and the punishing of the unrighteous.<sup>98</sup> (Cf. 2:6-20). But, for our purpose, there is much more in the statement "the just shall live by faith" than may at first appear. There is a very serious difference of opinion as to the translation of  $\text{בְּאֵימָנוֹתָיִם}$ . There are those who feel that there is no warrant for interpreting it in the active sense. For example, Wade says:

When it is declared that the upright shall live by his steadfastness, there must not be read into the word more than the level of religious belief then attained allows.<sup>99</sup>

For him faith is simply faithfulness to moral principles, the value of which will eventually be vindicated.

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. Hatch, *op. cit.*, 0.5.

<sup>99</sup> Wade, Westminster Commentary: Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, London, 1929, p. 183.

If, however, the word is translated "faith in God," this still suits the context. It would be somewhat similar to the thought used by Isaiah during the time of the contemplated revolt against Syria (28:16). If it is faithfulness, then it is similar to that used by Ezekiel (33:11-16) when he states that the wicked man who turns from his sins and does that which is lawful and right, shall live by his righteousness. There are those who feel that the lexical considerations are determinative here, and thus feel that faithfulness is the proper translation since it most commonly is the idea in the Old Testament.<sup>100</sup>

There is no doubt that Luther thought of it in the active sense.<sup>101</sup> He used it with that in mind. Perhaps, however, the truth is that there is something of both here. Lightfoot in commenting on the quoted passage in Galatians says,

It will thus be seen that *Emunah* properly represents the passive sense of *pistis*, as indeed the form of the word shows. But, it will at times approach near to the active sense: for constancy under temptation and danger with an Israelite could only spring from reliance on Jehovah. And something of this transitional or double sense it has in the passage of Hab. 2:4.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. Nowack, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, 1903, iii, 4, p. 282; Ward, ICC, Habakkuk, 1911, p. 13, and the lexicons of Brown-Driver-Briggs, 1906, and Gesenius Buhl, 1910. Davidson, op. cit., p. 64ff.

<sup>101</sup> Schlatter, op. cit., p. 561ff. Warfield, Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, 1899-1904, agrees.

<sup>102</sup> Lightfoot, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, London, 1876, p. 155.

It is very easy to read into the passage elements of our Christian conviction, but it still remains futile to attempt to isolate two ideas such as faithfulness and faith. It simply can't be done completely. There is a vital point of contact.

The Septuagint, which was Paul's Old Testament, translates the word in such way as to emphasize the active sense. *Pistis* is the word which Paul, et al., found when they read the passage.<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps, the Septuagint had in mind the trustworthiness of God when it rendered the passage "the just shall live by my faithfulness."<sup>104</sup>

The important thing is that it was perfectly natural for the New Testament writers to give it the active sense in view of their increased knowledge of God and the relation

103 The Massoretic text has  $\text{יְחַיֶּה אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֱמוּנָתוֹ}$  which being represented by all the Greek versions known to Origen is certainly as old as the second century after Christ and in all probability is the reading adopted by the official revisers of the Hebrew text towards the close of the first century of our era. Before this time,  $\text{יְחַיֶּה אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֱמוּנָתוֹ}$ , which differs but slightly, in appearance, seems to have been current. The LXX has  $\text{ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως σου ζήσεται (αβδ)}$ . It is true that A and many minuscules have  $\text{σου}$  before  $\text{ἐκ}$ . (With  $\text{ἐκ πίστεως}$  Paul, however, wrote Galatians 3:11, which would be represented by  $\text{יְחַיֶּה אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֱמוּנָתוֹ}$  in Hebrew.)

104 Other Translations: Old Latin, "iustus autem ex fide mea vivit"; Vulgate, "ex fide sua"; Aquila:  $\text{ἐν πίστει αὐτοῦ}$  Symmachus:  $\text{τῆ ἐαυτοῦ πίστει}$

of man to Him. In the words of Hatch,

The LXX as we have seen renders "Emunah" by "pistis" which may mean either faithfulness or faith; and the rabbis who were familiar with the word in the active sense of faith seem to have given it this meaning in the prophecy of Habakkuk. The apostle Paul studied theology in Jerusalem before his conversion; and like most Hellenistic Jews, he was accustomed to reading the Old Testament in Greek, though he doubtless was able to use the Hebrew original. Hence when he became a Christian and began to reflect on the significance of faith (pistis) as a factor in religion, it was only natural that the prophetic promise of Hab. 2:4 should present itself to his mind as an irrefutable confirmation of his own experience and theory.<sup>105</sup>

#### Summary.

In the Old Testament we have the foundations upon which the conception of faith presented in the New Testament was laid. No matter what we may think of the faith of Abraham, Moses, the Psalmist, or Prophets, the New Testament authors found there vivid examples of faith as they conceived it. As a matter of fact, the great difference between faith in the New and the Old Testament lies in the difference in the knowledge of God. Faith as such is a natural development from the Old to the New. It is a revelation of God in Christ that makes the difference.

In  $\gamma \rho \alpha \phi \eta$ , then we have the word which is the basis on which  $\pi \iota \sigma \tau \iota \varsigma$  was built. We have traced the idea through a number of major passages. We have seen that

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<sup>105</sup> Hatch, op. cit., p. 6.

there are other words, which were used to portray ideas expressing the relation of men to God, or their trust in Him.

One further word about these remaining passages. The idea of trusting in Jehovah is found frequently in **בטח**. Thus, Zephaniah condemns Jerusalem as a rebellious, defiled, and oppressing city, which does not trust Jehovah. "She has not trusted **בטח** in Jehovah; she has not drawn near **קרבה** to her God. (Zeph. 3:2). **קרבה** is often used in the Old Testament to denote an approach to the Lord on the part of men, but here particularly it connotes an attitude of trust.

Jeremiah, echoing Isaiah and the Psalms writes, "Cursed is the man who trusts **בטח** in man, and makes flesh his arm; whose heart turns aside from Jehovah . . . . Blessed is the man whose trust in Jehovah and whose confidence Jehovah is.<sup>106</sup> In Proverbs this basic truth is reiterated: "A greedy man stirs up strife, but he who trusts **בטח** in Jehovah will prosper. He who trusts **בִּטְחוֹ** in his own heart . . . is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom shall be delivered." (Proverbs 28:25f.) Cf. II Kings

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<sup>106</sup> Duhm, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, Tübingen, 1901, commenting on 17:7 calls this trust "the characteristic of a pious man." G. A. Smith, in Jeremiah, London, 1923, says, "Lyrist as he is and subjective, Jeremiah dwells not so much upon the attributes of God on which faith rests, as upon the effects of faith in man."

18:5; Psa. 21:7; Psa. 91:2; Isa. 26:3f; Psa. 31:14; 37:5; Jer. 49:11. That other basic idea of God as a refuge which appears so frequently in the Psalms is reflected in Nahum's words, "Jehovah is good to those who wait **למנוח** for Him, a refuge in the day of distress, and He knows those who seek refuge in Him." (Nahum 1:7).

In the great idea of cleaving to God, clinging to Him, there is a relation to the idea of believing. "Jehovah thy God, Him shalt thou fear and serve; and to Him shalt thou cleave **תדבק** and by His name shalt thou swear." (Dt. 10:20, cf. 11:22; 13:5; 30:20; Joshua 22:5). Hezekiah cleaved to the Lord. (II Kings 18:5ff).

In these varying, but typical passages, we see the idea of faith taking form. It was part of an intimate personal relation with God, between nation and people. God revealed Himself in the experience of history of the nation, the covenant relation,<sup>107</sup> the world about them and in the law. In the theophanies, a unique presentation is made of that revelation. Men sometimes were afraid, other times were amazed, but still much was impressed upon them in that experience.

It may be that "in all living religions there is in

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<sup>107</sup> For the development of the individual's place in the covenant relation, cf. Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testament, Band III, Leisig, 1939, p. 236f.



germ the elevation of the heart to God in love, fear, and trust,<sup>108</sup> as Bousset maintains. However, no religion could possibly have had the same conception of response to revelation which Israel had. Paganism, with an idea of gods who "have eyes but see not" reflected nothing but spiritual blindness. Fear, terror, implacable hatred often marked their relation to those gods. For the Israelite, Jehovah was the Lord, the King, the Judge, the Father of His people, and the only basis of communion with Him was faith.

We may find no frequent use of words which clearly correspond to our conception of faith. But we do find in the Old Testament in a determinative way, the idea of a response to God which involved the total personality of man and was a continuing act of worship and dedication. The nature of this response is the foundation on which the idea of faith in the New Testament was built.

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. Bousset, Die Religion des Judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, Berlin, Reuther and Reichard, 1906, p. 223.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE INTERIM PERIOD

The years between the Testaments cannot be described in any sense of the word as a "period of silence". For there are voices speaking out of those dim and obscure moments in history which bring us some description, brief though it may be, of the years of the interim period. This description is enough to give us some insight into the erosion of those years upon the life of men in their relation to God. In the rapid survey which we are making, many details must be omitted, but a basic, important question must be answered. How did the makers of the Septuagint convey the Old Testament notion of faith to the Jews of the Diaspora, of whom the great majority read those scriptures in Greek rather than in Hebrew?

For, the exile had not only changed the geographical situation of Israel, but it had doubtless had its effect upon every area of their experience. The Diaspora developed through the years until the Jewish people were scattered in all directions, either by force, or by voluntary immigration into every corner of the known world.<sup>1</sup> In this dispersion,

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<sup>1</sup> Swete, Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, p. 2f.

inevitably they learned to speak the Greek language.<sup>2</sup> The attic dialect of Athens which had been the medium for Greek literature in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ became the basic ingredient of the language which the armies of Alexander scattered wherever they went. But, and this is important, there are many modifications. The process of change in the dialect went on wherever there occurred a fusion of the East and West. The result was a new mixture.

The Septuagint and the New Testament were written in this basic dialect.<sup>3</sup> The Koine Greek was a common pool into which the older forms, the environmental influences, and the passing of the years all poured their ingredients. To be sure, there are differences even among the documents which use the new mixture.

At the moment we are primarily concerned with the Septuagint. Unlike the New Testament, "the Septuagint is not the work of a single generation, nor is it the work of a single translation. The LXX is a collection of translations belonging partly to the third century, B.C., partly to the second and first, and the original books chiefly to the end of the period."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 63, Edinburgh, 1901. Kennedy, Sources of New Testament Greek, Edinburgh, 1895, p. 21ff.

<sup>3</sup> A number of Egyptian papyri use the dialect.

<sup>4</sup> Swete, op. cit., p. 290.

In this dialect, created by the synthesis of various dialects, the Old Testament was read by New Testament men and women. Thus it became the bridge between the two Testaments.<sup>5</sup>

The Septuagint may not be important to our study from the standpoint of grammar or syntax, but it is all important for the light which it may throw upon the meaning of words.<sup>6</sup> The tradition outlined in the Letter of Aristeas concerning the translation of the LXX, with some variations, is still acceptable. The work of the LXX, it is stated, was performed by seventy-two Jewish elders who translated the Old Testament into Greek during the reign of the Egyptian King, Ptolemy II, Philadelphus, 285-246 B.C.<sup>7</sup> The translation was made over an extended period and was not completed in one, or even two generations. The work on the Pentateuch, done first, is usually regarded as the best translatory

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<sup>5</sup> Great controversies have existed over the idea of a special Biblical Greek. E. G. Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek, p. 34, says, "The great majority of New Testament words are words which, though for the most part common to Biblical and contemporary secular Greek, express in their Biblical use the conceptions of a Semitic race and must consequently be examined by the light of the Cognate documents which form the LXX." Kennedy, op. cit., p. 137, violently disagrees as does Deissmann, p. 64. For a discussion of the views of Moulton and Deissmann as contrasted with those of Wellhausen and Dalman, cf. Ottley, A Handbook to the Septuagint, London, 1920, p. 160ff.

<sup>6</sup> Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, London, 1944, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Oesterley, An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha, p. 5; Swete, op. cit., p. 27; and Ottley, op. cit., p. 159.

effort. The circumstances produced, then, a series of variations in the work of translation.

The great characteristic of the translation was the effort made to achieve literal fidelity to the text. Thus many semiticisms are found. Hebrew constructions abound with many transliterations and a few amplifications.<sup>8</sup>

Written by men of Semitic thought and attitude, this was inevitable.<sup>9</sup> "The general colouring of the Greek Old Testament is thus affected by the presence of various Hebrew ideas and forms of expression and by the constant matching of Hebrew phrases and constructions."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Swete says, "It is in this manner, in the construction of the sentences and the disposition of the words that the Greek of the LXX is unique, and not only or chiefly in its lexical eccentricities." Op. cit., p. 297. See Ibid for a comparison of Philo and Josephus with the LXX.

<sup>9</sup> "The Greek which the Jews of Alexandria learned to speak was neither the literary language employed by the scholars of the Museum nor the artificial imitation of it affected by Hellenistic writers of the second and first centuries B.C. It was based on the 'patois' of the Alexandrian streets and markets--a mixture, as we may suppose of the ancient spoken tongue of Hellas with elements gathered from Macedonia, Asia Minor, Egypt and Libya. Into this hybrid speech the Jewish colony would infuse, when it became their usual organ of communication, a strong colouring of Semitic thought and not a few reminiscences of Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicography and grammar. Such at any rate is the monument of Jewish-Egyptian Greek which survives in the earlier books of the so-called Septuagint." Swete, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ottley, op. cit., p. 131. For the relation of Greek to Hebrew in sequence, subject matter and words, cf. p. 101ff.

### The Relation Of The New Testament To The LXX.

As of greatest importance for this study, the relation of the New Testament to the Septuagint must be kept in view. Generalizations are perilous, but it cannot be doubted that the translators of the LXX were trail blazers and left New Testament writers tools for their work. There were words, and form, and language available to Christian authors when they sought to do their work. When all the differing circumstances of time and place are considered, still the LXX casts its shadow over the New Testament. We have only to see the vast number of quotations which come from the LXX to see its influence.<sup>11</sup> In studying these quotations it is interesting to see that while many differ from the Massoretic text, not more than fifty differ materially from the LXX.<sup>12</sup> It is impossible to doubt that the New Testament authors used the LXX as the principal source from which their quotations came.

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<sup>11</sup> Westcott and Hort, The New Testament in Greek, p. 581ff, present an exhaustive list of quotations including both formal and indirect allusions. Cf. Swete, op. cit., p. 382. He notes 160 direct quotations besides many allusions to passages in the LXX, with 51 from the Pentateuch, 46 from the Poetical books, 61 from the Prophets, and 2 others from other portions of the Old Testament. 40 of these come from the Psalms, and 38 from Isaiah. The Synoptics quote 46; John quotes 12; Acts 23; Paul 78; (with 42 in Romans alone) and Hebrews 28. Turpie, The Old Testament in the New, p. 267, goes even further in asserting that 212 citations in the New Testament differ from the Massoretic text, while only 185 differ from the LXX.

<sup>12</sup> Grinfield, Apology for the LXX, p. 37.

The New Testament, however, is dependent upon the LXX for more than quotations. In the all important matter of vocabulary, the influence of the LXX is found everywhere in the New Testament. As Kennedy puts it,

There was a basis of Hebrew ideas beneath the structure. Accordingly, therefore, even in the case of the purely Christian conceptions it was thoroughly natural for the New Testament writers to frame their language on the analogy of the existing theological vocabulary which they found in the LXX.<sup>13</sup>

We may see, then, the significance of the LXX for our study of faith. As the Synoptic writers, and those of the epistles dealt with faith, it was natural that they should turn to the word which the LXX used, *πίστις*, and give it the meaning which they sought. There was new revelation in the New Testament, and thus faith, inescapably, had deeper, fuller meaning. But the idea is developing in the LXX, as it bridges the gap between the two Testaments, and in the canonical books, and in the Apocrypha there is material pertinent to the New Testament conception of faith.

Typical of the older view which regarded the distinctions between the Testaments as somewhat complete is that of Deissmann.

He maintains that,

The saying that the New Testament has its sources in the Old is correct only if by the Old Testament one means the book as it was read and understood in the

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<sup>13</sup> Kennedy, op. cit., p. 95.

time of Jesus. The Greek Old Testament itself was no longer understood in the Imperial period as it was in the Ptolemaic period, and again, a Gentile Christian in Rome naturally read it otherwise than a man like Paul.<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to illustrate his meaning by citing the idea of faith,

Whether Paul discovered it or not does not in the meantime concern us. At all events, he imagined that it was contained in his Bible, and considered outwardly, he was right. In reality, however, his idea of faith is altogether new; no one would think of identifying the pistis of the LXX with the pistis of Paul.<sup>15</sup>

This is hardly accurate. As we shall see later, Paul's idea of faith grew out of all that had gone before, and to say that it was "altogether new" is to ignore the real significance of the Old Testament in its original text, and in the LXX. There are certain differences, as we shall see, but there is a vital connection between the pistis of the LXX and the pistis of the New Testament.

How, then, is "pistis" used in the LXX? Let us look first at the translation of the Hebrew words into the Greek of the LXX. The following table is suggested as a condensed summary of this translation:

ⲓ ⲛ ⲕ	= πιστεύω, ἐνπιστεύω
ⲛ ⲟ ⲓ	= ἐλπίζω, πέποιθα
ⲣ ⲓ ⲧ	= κολλᾶσθαι, προσκολλησθαι, ἔχουσθαι, πρόσκεισθαι, προστίθεσθαι

<sup>14</sup> Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 69.



הנח = μένω , ὑπομένω

הסח = ἐλπίζω , πέποιθα , εὐλαβέομαι  
ἀντέχομαι , σκεπάζομαι

לחי = ἐλπίζω , ὑπομένω , ἐγγίζω

הקח = ὑπομένω , ἐλπίζω , πέποιθα  
ἐγγίζω

כחח = ἐγγίζω

שחח = πέποιθα , ἀντιστηρίξομαι  
ἐλπίζω , ἐπαναπαύομαι

By and large, we find that "pistis" represents all the meanings and usages of "emunah" except that it is difficult at times to tell if the meaning is faith, or faithfulness. "Pisteuo" represents, likewise, חַיִּים though sometimes we find καταπιστεύω (Micah 7:6). ἐμπιστεύω (Deut. 1:32), Judges 11:2; II Chron. 20:20; and πείθω (Passive in Proverbs 26:25). The usual construction in the LXX is a dative of the person or thing believed or trusted, representing both ח and כ after the Hebrew word. (Cf. Gen. 15:5; 45:26. Exodus 4:1; Jonah 3:4; et al.) Other constructions such as ἐν with the dative (Psa. 77:22; Jer. 12:6; Dan. 6:23); ὅτι with a clause (Job 9:16; 15:21), and the infinitive (Job 15:22;

Psa. 26: (27) 13) appear rarely.

Dean Inge points that the LXX wavers "In translating the Hebrew word for 'trustworthiness', the nearest equivalent to faith, and the corresponding adjective rendering them sometimes ἀληθεία, ἀληθινός as well as πίστις and kindred adjectives."<sup>16</sup>

Baillie finds that the verb πιστεύω is regularly used to translate the Hebrew word 'to believe'.

In the case of the noun, it is used in a variety of senses and in those cases where it appears as an ethical or religious term to denote a certain disposition of man, it is sometimes impossible to say whether the translators meant 'faith' or 'faithfulness' though the meaning of the Hebrew would always lead one to the latter view. The truth doubtless is that the meanings were not clearly distinguished for the Greek word in itself could denote either. But before the beginning of the Christian era, 'pistis' must have become in Jewish circles at least a technical term for faith in the proper sense.<sup>17</sup>

In understanding this usage, the factor of the influence of environment must be considered. The translators labored in an environment where the Hebrew influence was mixed with the Hellenistic culture about them. Could there have been a hesitancy to submit "the name JHVH" representing their idea of God to the critical eye of the new culture?<sup>18</sup> The Greek terms do not do full justice to some of the ideas of Jehovah, but He is still presented as a truly personal

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<sup>16</sup> Inge, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bousset, op. cit., p. 365ff. Means, op. cit., p. 9.

God, Lord, King, and Father of His people. Thus, it is not inconsistent to employ the faith-words used to describe the response of men to Him.

It appears reasonable, then, to conclude that the translators felt that the response of men to the God revealed to them could be labeled "pistis". They must have felt that this was consistent with the spirit of the Old Testament. Thus emerges, in a fuller form, the idea that comes to full fruition in the New Testament.

#### The Apocrypha And Pseudepigrapha.

The varied legalistic, apocalyptic, and pietistic literature which is called "The Apocrypha" and "Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament" is important as another reflection of Jewish thought during the interim period and beyond it.

Says Goodspeed:

What makes them of positive importance to the New Testament, however, is the influence they exerted upon the personalities of the New Testament, and the light they throw upon its life and thought, the groups we meet in its pages and the ideas there developed. For a full understanding of the New Testament, it is not too much to say that the Apocrypha are indispensable.<sup>19</sup>

Jerome has largely been credited with the segregation of these books from the canonical Old Testament as a result of his papal commission in 382 to revise the Latin version of the Bible. He discovered that the Hebrew Old Testament

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<sup>19</sup> Goodspeed, The Story of the Apocrypha, Chicago, 1939, p. vii.

of Palestine and the eastern branch of the Church did not include these in their Bible, though they were copied with the others. He named them Apocrypha--secret, or hidden books,<sup>20</sup> having in mind the story of II Esdras 14:45, 46. He rated them as suitable for limited use, but not inspired, dividing them into libri canonici, and libri ecclesiastici. They remained as Jerome placed them, in the Latin Vulgate, and in Wycliff's and Purvey's translations. But Luther, gathering them together for his Bible in 1534, was not enthusiastic about them. He left them in for edification but not for doctrine. The Puritans objected to their low moral level, and from 1599 on, various editions have appeared without them.

The period out of which the books arose was a period of great turmoil. There was bitter unrest, violent discord, war, bloodshed, invasion. The hatred of the invader corroded the minds and spirits of men. Much of the literature may have been written in an effort to bolster the courage

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<sup>20</sup> Oesterley, in An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha, London, 1935, p. 4, places major emphasis on the idea that these books were not suitable for ordinary people, and thus they were hidden. So Schurer, Porter, W. Schmidt, et al. derive the name from א'תןןן א'תןןן. Charles disagrees, and calls them "store away books"-- too mysterious, less valuable, even heretical books. Cf. Charles, The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Oxford, 1913, p. vii. Kautsch, Die Apokryphen and Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments, Tubingen, 1903, p. xiff.

and hope of the people, to get them to lift their eyes from the appalling circumstances of life to see the power of the God of the heavens. There is a variety of subject matter. Oesterley summarizes it as follows:

Here we have in the books of the Maccabees, history, recounting the tales of heroism (e.g. I Macc. 6:43f), descriptions of battles (e.g. I Macc. 9:1ff), examples of brilliant generalship (e.g. I Macc. 4:1ff), information regarding party divisions among the Jews (I Macc. 1:11-15; 2:45-47), stirring accounts of valiant struggles of the Jews in defense of their religion, (I Macc. 2:14ff and elsewhere), diplomatic correspondence between the Jews and foreign nations (I Macc. 8:22f; 11:32ff), to mention but a few of the topics of historical interest. Then we have romance as in the book of Tobit; myth in the story of Bel and the Dragon; midrash in I Esdras; abundance of wisdom writings in Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom; philosophy in the first part of Wisdom, numerous instances of folklore (e.g. Tob. 7:16, 17; Bar. 2:24), manifold pictures of social life in all its phases, in Ecclus. Then, in the religious domain, almost every book gives dogmatic teaching in one form or another; further there is prophecy in Baruch, visions in II Esdras, prayers, psalms, religious poetry, and liturgical pieces in different books, also eschatology and apocalyptic in II Esdras. This does not by any means exhaust the riches of the subject matter, but it will have given some insight into the variety of topics dealt with.<sup>21</sup>

#### The Significance Of This Content.

It is possible to err in a question of this type, simply by over-emphasis. The truth probably lies between two extremes--that of ignoring the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and that of thinking that they are completely determinative in matters of New Testament form and thought.

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<sup>21</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 8.

There was, however, a definite influence on the New Testament which came out of these books. Their importance is in revealing something of the transition and the change of atmosphere which occurred during this interim period. For example, no group is more in evidence in the New Testament than the Pharisees, and the Apocrypha shows us that vigorous sect from its infancy,<sup>22</sup> in the chasideim of the Maccabean era. We find two self portraits in the books of the Maccabees, the Sadducee in I Macc. and the Pharisee in II Macc. The bitter legal procedure of Susanna, the insistence on legalistic rules of conduct in Judith, show something of the background against which Jesus and the early Christians struggled. In short, "the Apocrypha introduces us to the dramatis personae of the New Testament--Pharisees, the Sadducees, angels and demons, saints and sinners, as well as the social, political and religious situation into which Christianity came, and the theological ideas which prevailed."<sup>23</sup>

However, it is saying too much to assert that this literature is higher than that of the Old Testament, and that it is of greater influence on the New. The matter of the relative number of citations from the Old Testament should be of some significance, though, of course, that is

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 120ff.

<sup>23</sup> Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 122.

not the major factor. Only those who continue to hold to some rigid theory of religious evolution in the Scriptures, moving from the lowest to the highest forms, will insist that the Apocrypha is of greater influence upon the New Testament than the Old. Contrary to this theory, it is enough to say that they formed part of the background of the period of Christ and of early Christianity, and helped to reveal the atmosphere of that period. In some of these books religion sank to its lowest level, and offered nothing more than a dark background for the dawn of Christianity. (e.g. II Maccabees may be contrasted, vividly, with Matthew 5:43-45).

#### The Idea Of Faith Presented.

In this strange assortment of ideas and theories, what is the conception of faith which is presented?

Can we say that "in the Apocrypha, belief in God is identical with that of the Old Testament in its most highly developed form?"<sup>24</sup> Basically that is true. However, we have seen that faith is determined, first, by the revelation of God. Through the Apocrypha the idea of the self-revelation of God is assumed. The significant thing is that it is not always a direct revelation, but is often revelation through some medium. Sometimes the angels are

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<sup>24</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 74.

the medium of this revelation. There is the revelation of God in nature (Ecclesiasticus 42:15; 43:33), the revelation of God through wisdom, (Wisdom 10:1ff, the Book of Tobit), and the revelation of His Will through angels, (Susanna, vs. 59). In the books of the Maccabees we have numerous instances of revelation, both direct and through media.

This revelation led to a definite idea concerning God. The unity, creative activity and fatherhood of God are stressed by such writers as Tobit (13:14) and Ben Sira (23:1). He is eternal, holy, omnipotent, omniscient, righteous, (Tob. 3:2; Song of Azarias vss. 3-5; Susanna 60; Wisdom 12:15), just, merciful and longsuffering. He is the God of history.<sup>25</sup> Some even avoid direct mention of the name of God from a sense of reverence. (I Macc.) You cannot read these books without being impressed with the reality, sincerity, and depth of belief in God among these writers. It was a part of their very being. He was to them a person. What is more, He was not only Creator, Lord, King of the World, but they saw Him in the more intimate relations of Father and Saviour. (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon 14:3; III Macc. 5:7; Psa. So. 8:39; 17:3).

It must be understood, however, that in this period the predominant instrument of revelation which these men saw was the Law. There were too many differences to allow

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<sup>25</sup> Oesterley, op. cit., p. 77ff.



anyone to generalize glibly, but it is true that the Pharisaic conception of the Law predominated. There are some few exceptions. (e.g. II Esdras 9:36 where it is applied to all men and seems unable to redeem the sinner). Good works become all important if a man is to be found righteous. The meticulous observance of the Law could even atone for sin. (Ecclesiasticus 3:3, 14, 15, 30). Alms had become almost a synonym for righteousness. (Cf. Tob. 12:9; Ecclus. 3:30). They brought the giver much reward. (Ecclus. 29:11, 12). They deliver him (Tob. 4:10; 12:9). Thus, the idea of earning favor with God, of salvation by merit became prominent, and evidences of it may be seen in the ideas which Paul and Jesus combated.

Thus fidelity to the Law became the supreme demand of religion, the queen of all virtues. It is not surprising that men began to trust the Law rather than the Law-giver. "A man of understanding will trust in the Law and the Law will be faithful to him." (Ecclus. 36:3, LXX. The Hebrew version is incomplete). This confidence in the Law tended to obscure the need for confidence in God. (Cf. IV Ezra 5:1; 6:5, 26).

In all fairness, however, the idea of trust in God had equal place with that of reverence for the Law. This faith, no doubt, was in marked contrast to the unbelief of the Gentiles of the period, and that of apostate Jews.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Hatch, op. cit., p. 15ff.

For example, Ecclesiasticus, often called the gem of the Apocrypha, at times approaches the conception of faith, as a response to revelation, which we find in the Psalter. Written by Ben Sira in Hebrew, about 200 B.C., and later translated into Greek by his grandson, it has appeared as recently as 1931 among manuscripts discovered at that time. In one passage he calls men to faith in stirring words, "Put thy trust in Him, and He will help thee; make straight thy ways and set thy hope in Him . . . . Ye who fear the Lord, put your trust in Him, and your reward shall in no wise fail . . . . Look at the generations of olden time and see: who put his trust in the Lord, and was put to shame?" (Ecclus. 2:6-10).

When the aged Matthias was about to die, he held up before his sons the example of the three companions of Daniel, who having trusted (pisteusantes LXX) "were saved out of the flame."<sup>27</sup> (I Macc. 2:49ff.)

The pious Hellenistic Jew who wrote IV Maccabees sometime between 65 B.C. and 70 A.D. found a stirring example of Jewish courage in a mother of the Maccabean martyrs who could stand bravely the spectacle of the torture of her sons and she remained "unshaken in soul" (16:14). The noble mother willingly surrenders them through faith in God, as

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<sup>27</sup> A review of men of faith similar to Hebrews II is given. Kautsch and Charles date the story from 137-105 B.C.

she recalled the courage of Abraham. (16:22ff. dia ten pros theon pistin).

In the story of Susanna, the heroine is the victim of the malice of two elders of the people who falsely charge her with adultery when she resists them. In the midst of her difficulty, she is delivered by the astute aid of a questioner who discovers contradictions in the accuser's statements. We read, "she wept and looked up to heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord." (1:35, Goodspeed's translation).

The book which calls itself the second book of Esdras, though designated as IV Esdras by the Vulgate, does not afford evidence for a clear decision as to date and circumstances.<sup>28</sup> The important thing here is that it places faith and works together as a basis of a standard of judgment. "Everyone who shall be saved, and who shall be able to escape on account of his works, or through the faith by which he has believed, he shall survive the perils aforementioned and shall see my salvation in my land and in my borders." (IV Esdras 9:7, 8). The book is helpful in that it gives "still more ample evidence that in the age of Christian beginnings the idea of faith has a recognized

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gunkel, 90-96 A.D. in Kautsch, op. cit., ii, p. 352. Schurer, Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes, iii, p. 327f. And Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 39. Kabisch, Das Vierte Buch Esra, 120 A.D., 1889, p. 131ff.

place in Jewish religion."<sup>29</sup>

In the magnificent book Wisdom of Solomon, so often quoted in the New Testament, there is a strong warning against skepticism, materialism, and idolatry. "He is found by those who do not try Him, and is manifested to those who do not disbelieve Him" (1:2), is typical of his attitude toward faith.

Faith is sometimes, in the apocalyptic portions of I Enoch linked with apocalyptic hope. "Mine eyes saw the Elect One of the righteousness and faith" (I Enoch 39:6), "These are the names of the holy who dwell on earth and believe in the name of the Lord of spirits" (43:4), and "It shall be said of the holy in heaven that they should seek out the secrets of righteousness, the heritage of faith. The kings of the earth shall say, 'We have not believed before him, nor glorified the name of the Lord of spirits'" (58:5f), are other examples of this type of usage. The significance of these passages is that in the century before Christ faith was coming to be spoken of along with the other great elements of religion--wisdom, peace, righteousness and mercy. It had a name of its own. Light-foot says,

The usage of the Apocrypha is chiefly valuable in showing how difficult it is to discriminate between the two meanings (active and passive) where there is

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<sup>29</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 28.

no Hebrew original to act as a check and how easily the one runs into the other. (e.g. Ecclus. 46:15; I Macc. 2:52; Ecclus. 49:10). In these passages the active sense seems to be forcing itself into notice.<sup>30</sup>

We reiterate, however, that to the writers there seemed to be no contradiction, or no difficulty in using the words for those two meanings. As a matter of fact, it seems that they actually regard the two as vitally related.

It should be mentioned in passing that the Wisdom literature gives us most clearly "the development of theological and religious conceptions which Judaism bequeathed to the Gospels and to later Christian thought."<sup>31</sup> Among the major subjects of reflection were man's relation to the universe, the problem of evil, divine providence, and the relation of faith to the circumstances of life. In Job, for example, the great problem of suffering is worked out, with the conclusion that man is incapable of fully understanding God and the world about him. Suffering could be used to purify and discipline the soul.<sup>32</sup>

#### Rabbinical Literature.

Although the rabbinical literature was not written before the New Testament era, yet it preserves ideas and thoughts from earlier days, and presents a clear picture of

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<sup>30</sup> Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>31</sup> Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature, Edinburgh, 1946, p. viii.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 20. For a study of the whole problem of evil, cf. p. 22ff.

the theological thought in Jewish schools about the time Christianity began. These writings give us a few scattered passages dealing with faith, but when viewed in proper proportion, it was not in the forefront of rabbinical thinking. In this they are in sharp contrast to Christian thought.

It is true that "it was not Christianity alone that commended faith",<sup>33</sup> yet there are large areas in rabbinical thought which ignore it. The great concern was that a man obey the Law, and thus have fellowship and communion with God. Faith did enter into the interpretation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, however. Schlatter, in his discussion of that interpretation, mentions among other things that Moses, in faith, let his hands be upheld in the victory over the Amalakites.<sup>34</sup>

Both Abrahams and Montefiore give attention to the presence of faith as a subject of interest to Rabbinic thought. "The most frequent Rabbinic thought", says Abrahams, "is that man's faith moves God to perform the most miraculous feats on behalf of the faithful."<sup>35</sup> Montefiore feels that the Rabbis felt no real tension between their ideas of faith and works.<sup>36</sup> Still, however, the supreme virtue in their thinking was fidelity to the Law.<sup>37</sup> How

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<sup>33</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>34</sup> Schlatter, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> Abrahams, Pharisaism and the Gospels, p. 191ff.

<sup>36</sup> Montefiore, op. cit., p. 384ff.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, 1909, p. 148ff.

religiously the Torah was studied! References to it abound everywhere. Contrast this with the infrequent allusions to faith and it will be seen that faith stood on a lower level. Schlatter thinks it is highly significant that the Targum seems to obscure and even changes the meaning of passages such as Isaiah 7:9; 28:16; and Exodus 14:31. The words of the prophets became the object of faith.<sup>38</sup>

This infrequent mention of faith has been explained by saying that it was such a familiar thing to the Rabbis that it was often taken for granted. This, however, is no adequate argument when placed alongside the way the New Testament used the idea, and the place of importance accorded it there. It must be concluded, then, that there is actually nothing in Rabbinic literature comparable to the understanding of faith as it is in the New Testament.<sup>39</sup>

When it was necessary to introduce the idea by commenting on Old Testament passages, we find such words as those in the "Mekilta" a halakic Midrash on part of Exodus.

The people feared Jehovah. Formerly in Egypt they did not fear Jehovah but now the people feared Jehovah and they trusted in Jehovah and in Moses his servant. If they trusted in Moses much more (did they trust) in Jehovah. This came to pass for the purpose of teaching thee that he who trusts in the faithful shepherd is as

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<sup>38</sup> Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 384, "only when a comment has to be made upon a Biblical passage in which the Hebrew term for faith or trust occurs."

<sup>39</sup> Schlatter, *op. cit.*, p. 28, footnote.

if he trusted in the word of him who spoke and the world was . . . . Great is faith whereby Israel trusted in him who spoke and the world was; for because Israel trusted in Jehovah, the Holy Spirit rested upon them and they sang a song.

The faith which appears in such passages often expresses a simple trust in a personal God, the Father, the Refuge of His people. But, still, the Law was the great glory and distinction of Israel, and fidelity to it was the height of religion.

It was this emphasis which the New Testament had to struggle against in bringing men into communion with God through Christ.

#### Philo.

It is a rather fascinating fact that it was not a Palestinian rabbi, nor a heathen convert who shows clearest evidence of the spirit of religious life in that age. He was a man who had the greatest sympathy for the hopes and aspirations of Greek thought, and who had combined them with the conviction of the greatness of Judaism. He was Philo of Alexandria. In all probability he lived until the dawn of Christianity had begun.<sup>40</sup> Philo stood apart from and above his contemporaries, but in him was the most fertile field for the sowing of the seed of the Gospel. He never

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<sup>40</sup> 40 or 45 A.D. Cf. Swete, Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, p. 372ff.



quite succeeded in reconciling the Jewish religion with Hellenistic culture, but his very attempt is symbolic of the searching spirits before the coming of Christ.

For Philo, faith was a familiar term and idea. It meant more to him than it did to his contemporaries. Pistis had for him a number of meanings such as proof, trustworthiness, trust, faith and conviction.<sup>41</sup> But when used as "faith" it was the queen of all virtues. "The only genuine and stable good is faith towards God  $\epsilon\upsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$   $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ , the consolation of life, refusal of unhappiness, knowledge of piety, inheritance of happiness, all around bettering of the soul as it rests its weight upon him who is the cause of all things, who is able to do anything, but who wills what is best."<sup>42</sup>

For Bousset, Philo was the first great psychologist of faith, and presented, for the first time, faith as the center of religion.<sup>43</sup> It seems doubtful that such an accolade can be accorded him, for it ignores the history of Hebrew Religion.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Schlatter, op. cit., p. 579ff. Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek, p. 84ff.

<sup>42</sup> De Abrahamo, 268-270, Cohn and Wendland Edition.

<sup>43</sup> He calls him "der erste Theologe des Glaubens, der erste, der eine ausführliche Psychologie des Glaubens entwickelt." Bousset, Kyrios Christos, p. 145.

<sup>44</sup> Baillie, op. cit., p. 40. "Even if he was 'the first great psychologist of faith, he was not, perhaps, one of its great prophets.'"

Philo's conception of faith was largely guided by his study of the story of Abraham's faith. Just as the Rabbis studied this account, and as Paul was greatly attracted to it, so Philo found in it his understanding of the idea.<sup>45</sup> But, this is the important thing, it was the fusion of this story with his own Grecian ideas which gave him the final form of his ideas.

Says Inge:

As a Jew he emphasizes trust as determining faith; but his philosophy leads him to single out the unchangeableness of God almost exclusively as the ground and object of faith . . . . Philo's faith is thus a steady reliance on the eternal and unchangeable ideas of truth and righteousness which lie behind the fleeting shows of phenomenal existence. The active sense has fairly established itself, but faith for Philo differs rather widely from the Christian virtue in that it is the prize (*De Praem. et Poen*) (ii p. 412) and not the starting point of the race, standing at the end, not at the beginning of the religious life.<sup>46</sup>

This rather intellectual idea of faith saw a kind of mystical reward, then, for those who pursued a long course of knowledge and renunciation.<sup>47</sup> One of his great passages reads,

It is not easy to have faith in God alone without the addition of any other, because we are inevitably united with that which is mortal, and this induces us to put faith also in riches and honor and authority and friends and bodily health and vigour, and many other things. But to wash oneself free of all these things, and put no faith in creation, which in itself is alto-

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<sup>45</sup> Kennedy, Philo's Contribution to Religion, London, 1919.

<sup>46</sup> Inge, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Montefiore, op. cit., p. 527.

gether untrustworthy, this is the work of a great and Olympian mind, no longer enticed by any of the things which are around us. And it is well said, 'the faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness' for nothing is so righteous as to exercise a pure and unmixed faith towards God alone (Quis Rer. Div. Heres, par. 90-95).<sup>48</sup>

He felt that Abraham demonstrated the humility of the faithful when he said, "What am I that thou shouldest impart to me of thy speech?" (Quis Rer. Div. Heres. par. 26ff). Philo exulted in Moses' fearlessness which was a product of his faith. (Quis Rer. Div. Heres. par. 19). In Abraham's experience he developed his idea that faith was, by steadfastness, won as a prize, "a perfect good". (De. Migr. Abr. par. 43ff). He says of Abraham, "He who was the first to forsake empty pride for truth, who used for his perfecting the virtue which could teach him, wins faith toward God as his prize." (De. Prem. et Poen. 27, Cf. 30, 49).

In God's approach to man Philo finds that there are mediators, λόγοι, συνάμεις, ἄγγελοι, which come to man's assistance in its highest aspirations.

Man's greatest achievement was to have a vision of God. "What lovelier or more fitting garland could be woven for the victorious soul than the power with clear vision to gaze upon Him who is? Truly splendid is the prize held out

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<sup>48</sup> Quotations are based on Cohn and Wendland, Berlin, 1898.

to the wrestling soul." (De. Mut. Nom. 82). Many fail in that effort, and God does not reveal Himself to all. (Leg. All. 47). But for others God, "by reason of His gracious nature, goes forth to meet them . . . revealing Himself to those who crave to behold Him, not as He is, for that is impossible . . . but in so far as it was possible for a created nature to approach an incomprehensible power." (De. Fuga 141). These two poles of thought are in conflict --God is transcendent and yet He could be found in some measure.

Drummond suggests that Philo found three Biblical ways of attaining that knowledge, Abraham through faith, Isaac through intuition, and Jacob, the ascetic who seeks for wisdom by laborious practice.<sup>49</sup>

#### Summary.

For Philo, then, faith stood at the end of religious experience. It was something attained by a long process. Only by renunciation, suppression, and discipline can it be reached. Pure intellect is inadequate, to grasp the reality of God, but faith, a rather mystical quality can.

Thus, we have traced the response of men to God's revelation as we find it recorded for us.

That revelation, however, was just beginning, and

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<sup>49</sup> Drummond, Philo-Judaeus, London, 1888, p. 320ff.

accordingly the response of men was also growing. We come now to the New Testament, and to the great hour when God sent His Son into the world, that moment that transcends all others in its importance.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CONCEPTION OF FAITH IN THE SYNOPTICS

The pages of the New Testament present a strange paradox. Here are words which bring peace to many a tortured spirit, comfort to many who have suffered the deep wounds of sorrow, light to those who have blundered on in darkness. After all these years they come with tremendous impact upon the spirits of men. Yet, it is equally true that these words have disturbed the minds of men, and set them into restless motion. There was a time when men were concerned with the New Testament only as a locale for the feverish quest for the historical Jesus. Not too many years ago this was the great aim of the New Testament study. Schweitzer could say,

The greatest achievement of German theology is the critical investigation of the life of Jesus. What it has accomplished here has laid down the conditions and determined the course of the religious thinking of the future.<sup>1</sup>

For many extremists, the quest led to a kind of agnosticism which ended in a confession of impotence. "It is futile," said Bultmann, "to try to place him within a process of

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, Trans. by Montgomery, London, 1910, p. 1.

historical development."<sup>2</sup> For some, "the Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence."<sup>3</sup> The result was inevitable, and the danger of presenting a "Jesus who was too small"<sup>4</sup> became an actuality.

In recent decades, however, the pendulum has swung. Now the critics are saying, for example,

There are here no 'assured results', nor indeed can there be. The evidence is far too slender. The modern critic is thus thrown back upon the documents themselves. The question for him is not primarily who wrote these documents or when precisely they were written or where they were written. The question is whether these documents do more than bear witness to the life of the Primitive Church. Do they also bear witness to Jesus of Nazareth . . . they do bear unmistakable witness to Him . . . they are otherwise in the end unintelligible.<sup>5</sup>

In the varying strata of the New Testament, it seems clear that "no stratum of tradition capable of being isolated by the methods of literary analysis reveals a non-Messianic basis."<sup>6</sup> The rigid assumption that a mass of

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<sup>2</sup> R. K. Bultmann, Cf. Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien, p. 33. Neues Testament und historische Methode, Tübingen, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 396.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 398.

<sup>5</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, London, 1931, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> William Manson, Jesus, The Messiah, London, 1943, p. 3.

intrusive material produced by the faith and thought of the early Church (Gemeindetheologie) must be cleared away before the real Christ could be discovered is now largely abandoned. It is true that these books were written as confessions of faith in Jesus Christ, and as a means of calling others to faith. They witness to us of that faith, and they call us to the Christ who lives and moves in these pages. They do not simply invite our judgment upon this witness--they place us under the judgment of God!<sup>7</sup> We study them then for a purpose.

There is a kind of Biblical study which inevitably provokes the question: "Why?" As an exercise in ingenuity a game of chess would have done quite as well. New Testament study is never an end in itself, like the working of a cross-word puzzle. The age old question is asked, "Is there any word from the Lord?", and we believe that in these pages God speaks to us. Beyond the "sacred page" we seek Him, for in these pages we see Him coming toward us with love and mercy! We see Him primarily through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

It is not our purpose to settle these critical questions completely, if it could be done. Suffice it to say, that we come to the New Testament to see what faith meant to those early pioneers of faith. As the revelation

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<sup>7</sup> C. H. Dodd, History and The Gospel, London, 1938, p. 11f.



of the Messiah made its impact upon them, what was the nature of their response? Thus we find in the New Testament abundant evidence which answers that question. It is this that primarily concerns us. We turn first, of course, to the Synoptic Gospels.

### The Synoptic Gospels.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His son! This is basic fact of history, and the center of all New Testament thought. The backbone of history was broken and the impact of the presence and personality of Jesus of Nazareth became the mightiest power in the world. It has altered civilizations, shattered the concepts of thinkers, and all of time is related to this single event.

The great expectancy of the prophets had reached forward to the moment when God would act, and would intervene in history. Although that event was unlike that which they expected, yet in a very real sense their expectations were fulfilled. As Dodd states it, "for the New Testament writers in general the 'eschaton' has entered history; the hidden rule of God has been revealed; the Age to Come has come."<sup>8</sup> And, what is more:

a sense of inconclusiveness and of expectation is

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<sup>8</sup> C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching: and its Development, London, 1936, p. 204ff. Cf. Matt. 12:28; Acts 2:16; II Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:13; II Cor. 3:18; Titus 3:5; Heb. 6:5; I Peter 1:23; I John 2:8.

characteristic of the Old Testament as a whole. In contrast, the New Testament, in taking over the general scheme of eschatology, declares that the expected event has actually taken place. In the coming of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, the prophecies have been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is revealed . . . . They are not simply important events, not even the most important events in the series, but unique and final events, in which the God beyond history intervened conclusively to reveal His Kingdom on earth.<sup>9</sup>

What is the response to it? It is faith.

The faith of the early Christians, then, was a faith which was based upon that action of God. We can know God only as He makes Himself known. Thus, the initiative is always with Him. These Gospels were written to record the way in which He acted. Above all, they were written within the context of the Old Testament promise of the prophets--no other context can provide an understanding of the nature of this action of God which He wrought through Jesus Christ, His Son.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, we come to that basic announcement of God's action: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Gospel." (Mark 1:14, 15).

This basic announcement, upon which so much of the Christian faith and preaching of the early church was based, is of primary importance. It provided the frame-work for

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<sup>9</sup> C. H. Dodd, History and the Gospel, London, 1939, p. 35ff.

<sup>10</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., p. 100ff.

the great message of good news which was proclaimed to the world.

Christ's message then was "τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ", the good news sent by God to men through Jesus. The very name of the message speaks of its nature--the act of God is good news--the best news the world would ever hear! The word, "εὐαγγέλιον" had moved through its classic usage as a reward to a bearer of good tidings to a New Testament usage of glorious good news!<sup>11</sup> The good news of God is, "The Kingdom is upon you!" "For the Evangelist and for the tradition it means, of course, that in Jesus the 'Messiah' had stepped onto the stage."<sup>12</sup>

Consider the developing statement. First, "The time is fulfilled." God's great hour had come. The people were wary of false alarms. They had been deceived, and had seen

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<sup>11</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, *op. cit.*, p. 116. "It is only when we turn to the Septuagint version of the Psalms and of the book of Isaiah that we discover the background of Mark's usage of the word. There a Hebrew verb meaning 'to announce good tidings' has been translated by the Greek verb corresponding to the noun 'evangelion'. In its context this verb expresses the announcing of the Good News that God was fulfilling His promises, was acting and about to act. It is connected with the Advent of the Salvation of God, with His mercy, with Remission of sins, with the peace of God, and with the coming of His righteousness, with the Acceptable Year of the Lord, and with the justification of the Poor, with the emergence of Zion as the centre of the world where the Action of God would take place. This Old Testament background with its hope of the future and supreme action of God is clearly presumed in the title of Mark's book."

<sup>12</sup> Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

their hopes and faith cruelly smashed, by such false announcements. The great expectancy of the prophets is now realized. "The Kingdom of God is upon you." It was there because the King was there. In His ministry, and in His death, resurrection and exaltation, the Kingdom was at hand. The prophets longed to see "ἔσχατον", the great day of the Lord, and now it was realized. All efforts to restrict the uses of "Kingdom" to either its initiation or complete realization are futile, unless we see that the whole process was viewed as a single act of God. The King had come, He suffered, He was exalted, and all that remained was the completion of that which was already in existence.<sup>13</sup> The King returns, not to introduce a new order, but to complete the work which He had begun. As Manson has well said,

If Jesus preached a merely familiar doctrine of the Kingdom of God, there would have been no religious crisis and no historical rise of Christianity. The Jewish people had had a sufficiency of such doctrine before. But because Jesus not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God as a glorious event of the future but laid the arrest and the power of it upon the spirit and conscience of the present, bringing it into direct practical and converting relation to men's lives, he opened a new era in spiritual history. He created a religious crisis, indeed the supreme religious crisis for man-kind.<sup>14</sup>

The great thing, then, was the announcement that the

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<sup>13</sup> C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 61.

eschaton was now an established, present fact.<sup>15</sup>

What, then, is the response demanded? "Repent and believe the Gospel",  $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\epsilon$   
 $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\omega\ \epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega.$

Certainly " $\mu\epsilon\tau\kappa\upsilon\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$ " echoes the preaching of John the Baptist. So closely is it related to the response of faith that it seems but part of the same act.<sup>16</sup> Certainly it is, as the word indicates, a complete change of mental attitude. That attitude in turn so affects the will that it, too, is completely changed. A world in which the Messiah did not exist could not possibly make the same demands of a man as that in which He did exist. Thus, the demand for repentance.<sup>17</sup>

The response demands much more than a turning away from. Thus the demand, "believe the Gospel".<sup>18</sup> To believe

<sup>15</sup> C. H. Dodd, op. cit., p. 198, feels that the Old Testament prophets viewed the eschaton as that Day of the Lord when His whole purpose would be revealed and fulfilled.

<sup>16</sup> Schlatter feels that there is some real significance in the order in which the words are used. In speaking of the ministry of John the Baptist, Schlatter feels that Jesus links them together. When God forgives the repentant soul "was damit geschah, das hat Jesus Glauben genannt, als er in jener Erörterung über den Täufer die Gemeinde in solche einteilte, 'die ihm geglaubt, und in solche' 'die ihm nicht geglaubt haben'." Schlatter, op. cit., p. 89. Cf. p. 99ff and p. 147ff.

<sup>17</sup> For the function of John the Baptist in relation to the ministry of Jesus, Cf. Stewart, The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ, p. 36ff.

<sup>18</sup> This construction  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\omega\ \epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega$  is found here, and in John 3:15 and in a similar way in Ephesians 1:13. Usually, as we shall see, the simple dative is used.

the facts of the message was the first step, and it is significant that here in the earliest record of the teaching of our Lord that such a demand is made. It is obvious that more than a mental assent is needed. If a crisis is at hand, then the first thing to do is to acknowledge, and then, next, prepare for it. To act on the basis of the certainty of the message, then, is to truly believe in it. The way in which the word is used here is but a reflection of its ultimate use as pertaining to the person of Christ.

#### The Words Used.

Just at this point let us look at the words which the synoptists employed in presenting the idea of faith. Then, we shall see how they conceived faith as the response to Christ which God desired. ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ have increasing usage through the Gospels and the remainder of the New Testament.<sup>19</sup> They appear frequently in the

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<sup>19</sup> For the lexical background of these faith words both in classical and New Testament Greek, cf. Walter Bauer; Griechisch--Deutsches Worterbuch, Alfred Topelman, Berlin, 1937, p. 1104ff. Hermann Cremer in his Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek (3rd Eng. Ed.) transl. by William Urwick, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1886, argues the case for a unique use of "pistis" in the New Testament, and principally in Pauline thought. He contends that "pistis" did not mean faith in the LXX, p. 831ff, nor was the idea compatible with basic Judaism, p. 831ff. For Philo it had "central signification", but it principally belonged to Paul, p. 832ff. For "pisteuein", there is a link between Old Testament and New Testament usage, p. 835. Its reference is always soteriologic. As we have noted, the basic idea of faith is present in Old Testament thought concerning revelation and response. It is true that the words are not present in the frequency with which they are found in the New Testament. This is not, however, the whole story.

Synoptics, and even more frequently in the Acts and the Epistles. Of course, the principal words are the verb  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  which is found in 31 Synoptic passages and the noun  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  which is found in 24 Synoptic passages. Such related words as  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (16 times),  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  (once)  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  (4 times)  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\acute{\alpha}$  (4 times)  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (4 times), and  $\beta\lambda\iota\gamma\acute{\omicron}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (5 times) are also found. These are but instruments in expressing this idea of the response God expected in the encounter of the Divine-Human personalities.

We turn now to a consideration of the instances in which these words appear. Such a study, of course, is fundamental to an understanding of the conception of any idea, and we will then go beyond the direct references to a discussion of its full meaning.

#### Pistis.

$\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is found most frequently without any object specified in the text. As we shall see, the context ordinarily indicates what Jesus had in mind. In one important passage, Mark 11:22, magnificent in simplicity, but profound in meaning, " $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ", "Have faith in God!"<sup>20</sup> He goes on to say to them that they can,

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 1105, for the lexical background of the phrase " $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ".

with faith, move mountains. Prayer and faith are inseparable factors in spiritual experience. Says Wendt:

In the consciousness of Jesus trust in God and prayer were essentially connected ideas. (Cf. Mark 9:23, 29; 11:22-25). For trust in God finds its natural expression in the words of prayer directed to God; and conversely prayer should always and altogether be founded on trust.<sup>21</sup>

What is this faith commanded, however? Directly, here, it was faith in God's power to meet their needs, and answer their prayers. But above and beyond that, it must be understood within the framework of Christ's coming. He revealed to them beyond anything the world had known before, this goodness and power of God. What God demanded of men, as a basis for His blessing was nothing less than complete abandonment to Him. "Faith, co-operating with the Divine will could fill yonder basis with the mass of limestone beneath their feet."<sup>22</sup> But the passage can only be understood if faith is "regarded as the normal attitude of the heart, not a sudden emotion or isolated act."<sup>23</sup> Thus, the application to prayer is illustrative of His demand for faith as a basis of relations with God. It is not the only factor in prayer, for as Verse 25 shows, there must be a right relation to men, as well as to God.

In Matthew 23:23, in that severe rebuke of Pharisaical

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<sup>21</sup> Wendt, The Teaching of Jesus, Vol. I, p. 300.

<sup>22</sup> Swete, Mark, p. 259. (Mark 11:23).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 260.



meticulousness and hypocrisy, for omitting the supreme matters of judgment, mercy, and faith, while making much of minor matters, the usual interpretation of faith is "faithfulness" or "fidelity". This is the only passage where this translation is possible.<sup>24</sup>

In Luke 18:8, the Second Advent is the context in which Jesus wonders, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" But let it be remembered that this is a part of the action of God which had already begun.<sup>25</sup>

In the majority of instances, however, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ is used in a situation in which the power of God, working through Christ, is brought to bear on the physical and spiritual needs of the people who came to Him in faith. This has often been dismissed, simply as "miracle-faith", the faith in the miraculous power of Christ. In five of eight instances in which this power is brought to bear upon the lives of believing men and women, all three Synoptists record the incident.

Jesus went into a Capernaum home, and immediately the crowds thronged in. Four men, with a friend sick of the palsy, were so determined that they would not be stopped

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<sup>24</sup> So EGT, p. 282, Theodore H. Robins ed: MNTC, The Gospel of Matthew, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1928, p. 189.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. EGT, p. 598, ICC p. 415ff, and William Manson: MNTC, The Gospel of Luke, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1930, p. 201.

by the difficulty of the crowd. In an ingenious effort, they removed part of the roof and lowered him down into the room below. "When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (2:5; Luke 5:20; Matt. 9:2). Their action had proved their faith. It was faith on the part of the friends, and no doubt, at least in some significant measure, on the part of the paralytic.

This pattern was to be repeated over and over again. In the healing of Jairus' daughter, there was no faith on the part of the spectators. Rather they laughed when he said that she was not dead. But to the distressed father, His command had been, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36; Luke 8:50. Cf. Matt. 9:18). That account is placed by the Synoptists with the story of the woman with an issue of blood. Evidently a victim of all who had promised, but failed to help, her faith had a desperate quality in it. As a matter of fact, the ministry of Jesus was always to desperate men and women, and not merely the religious. He came to liberate the captive, to relieve the blind, to minister to the poor. This is typical of the people who sought Him. To her, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." (Mk. 5:34; cf. Matt. 9:22; Luke 8:48). A more accurate translation is "healed you". If this statement was reserved for

extraordinary faith it is to be found here.<sup>26</sup>

The phrase, "thy faith hath saved you" occurs again in the incident on the highway leading out of Jericho where blind Bartimaeus sat begging. Only one who had actually been in his situation could understand the depths to which he has fallen in spirit. Thus his faith, with this same desperate quality, reached out to Jesus as He passed by. (Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42; Cf. Matt 20:29).

In an incident found only in Luke and Matthew, one of the great demonstrations of faith may be found in the experience of the Centurion. In a dramatic way, he illustrates his conception of the power of Christ by citing the authority a military man would use in commanding his troops. Just say the word! My servant will be healed! Thus the Saviour says, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." (Matt. 8:10; cf. Luke 7:9). We can well understand something of Jesus' desire for faith in His delight in so magnificent a demonstration of it.

There could be no more dread disease in Palestine than leprosy. It is met, as is a great variety of disease, in many instances of the Synoptics. The healing of the ten lepers, however, is found only in Luke. (17:11-19). Faith is linked with the gratitude of the one leper who returned

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Swete, op. cit., p. 245ff.

to express it. Again, the familiar formula is found "thy faith hath saved thee." (17:19). Another miserable person, suffering as only a mother can suffer, was the Syrophenician woman. Jesus found her faith was great, Matt. 15:28; cf. Mark 7:25ff, for in persistent, desperate prayer, she asked for healing for her daughter.

In the one incident in which this power is brought to bear upon the world of nature, the Synoptists tell the tale of the tempest tossed disciples, cringing in their fear of destruction as the storm beat upon the ship. (Mark 4:40ff; Matt. 8:23ff; Luke 8:24ff). He is amazed, and disappointed at their lack of faith! After all they had seen and known, it seemed impossible that they should be so weak.

Now, the question in this survey of the passages having to do with manifested power, is this. Is the faith simply a faith in the power of Christ to do certain amazing things, as though He were a magician? Or is it something more? When we consider the context in which Jesus had been presented as Messiah, we understand something of the significance of these signs. If God's power had broken into the world in the person of Christ, then this was but a demonstration of it, and one which made a tremendous impression on the world about Him. Faith was the requisite for His activity--without it He could do no mighty works. (e.g. Nazareth). But a faith which ended simply as a trust

in His mighty power, was not the faith which He sought.

As an indication of the true quality of faith, we find that Jesus replied in significant words to the request of the disciples for more faith. The disciples came to Him on the occasion when He commanded forgiveness seven times with a fervent plea, "Lord, increase our faith!" Using the figure of the mustard seed which He often employed to describe the Kingdom's growth (Cf. Matt. 13:31; Mark 4:31), Jesus told His disciples that if they had any faith at all, even that of a mustard seed, it would be sufficient for their needs. (Luke 17:5, 6). In Matthew 17:20 it is a mountain which could be uprooted, and in Luke it is a sycamore tree, but in either instance the figure is dramatic. The desire for faith was an admirable one, but if the nature of faith was properly understood, then it was sufficient.<sup>27</sup> The faith of the disciples was often conspicuous by its absence, as we have seen in the storm incident. It is clearly projected against the dark disaster of Calvary, when all forsook and fled. Jesus had promised Peter, in His warning, however, that He would pray that Peter's faith fail not. (Luke 22:32).

These instances employ the noun. In the use of various forms of  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ , the verb, further insight

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Manson: MNTC, The Gospel of Luke, p. 193ff. ICC, p. 400ff, Easton, Commentary on Luke, p. 257ff.

may be seen.<sup>28</sup>

Briefly summarized, the following constructions are found in the use of the verb. With the simple dative, indicating belief either in words spoken, or in the person speaking, it may be found in such verses as Luke 1:20 "And behold thou shalt be silent, and not be able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season," words spoken by the angel to Zacharias. In challenging Jesus' authority, the Chief priests and elders are caught in the dilemma of Jesus' question concerning John the Baptist and his authority. "διὰ τί οὖν οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε κυτῶν" (Matt. 21:25; cf. 21:32; Mk. 11:31; Lke. 20:5) are the words which appear in their discussions. As an imperative command, the same sense is found in the warning, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ or here, believe not." (Matt. 24:23; cf. vs. 26; and Mk. 13:21).

With prepositions there appears a deeper meaning in the word. We have already seen the instance in which it appears with ἐν in Mark 1:15. It appears with ἐπὶ αὐτόν (Here textual variants are εἰς αὐτόν, ἐπὶ αὐτῶν and αὐτῶν) "Let him now come down from the Cross and we will believe on Him." (Matt. 27:42) they cried

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Bauer, op. cit., 1100ff. Cremer, op. cit., p. 834ff.

at the Cross. In that word of wonder at their slowness to see that the prophetic expectancy had been fulfilled, Jesus cried, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in (or after) ἐπι all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25). (ἐπι πασιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται). It is used with εἰς and the accusative: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones who believe on me to stumble, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:6). He was speaking not merely of "child believers, but all of whom a child is the emblem, as regards social or ecclesiastical importance. Those who are caused to stumble are always little ones: 'majores enim scandala non recipiunt.'" (Cf. Mk. 9:42).<sup>29</sup>

The verb occurs more frequently in its use without prepositions. We have seen that believing is a vital part of prayer. (Matt. 21:22). It is preposterous to confront God in any relationship with reservations, doubts, and unbelief. This disrupts the communion in a thorough and final fashion. Elizabeth sang of the blessedness of Mary for she believed the promise of God. (Lk. 1:45). In the same gospel, it is used in the sense of believing the

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<sup>29</sup> EGT, p. 237ff. Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 209, St. Paul's ἀδύνατοι, Romans 15:1. "εἰς ἐμὲ" is omitted in Tisch, WH, RV, Lat. Vet. C. D. et al.

specific witness of Jesus to His own Messiahship. "Tell us", his enemies demanded, "art thou the Christ?" "If I tell you, ye will not believe." (Luke 22:67).

We have seen how faith was present in the great stories of healing. These desperate men and women could all have cried with the father of the demoniac son, "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief." Mark 9:24. In that plea for the impossible, "if thou canst", the words are turned back upon him to stress the need for faith. I can, if you believe.

It is not surprising to find  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  used in connection with one of the great parables of the New Testament, since so much that is basic appeared in parabolic form. The seed fell on the wayside, and was plucked up by the evil one, "lest they believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12. Cf. Matt. 13:2; Mark 4:1). That which fell on the rock and withered, represented those who believed for a little while. (Luke 8:13).

In a somewhat similar spirit, those other related words, such as  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\gamma\acute{\omicron}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , and  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$  may be found.

$\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  usually described one who was faithful and reliable, such as a faithful servant or steward. (Lk. 13:42, 16, 10, 11; 19:17). On the other hand,  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  indicated unfaithfulness (Luke 9:41, 12:26).  $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\gamma\acute{\omicron}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  was the word describing those who worried as the pagans did,



living as if God did not exist and did not care. (Luke 12:28; cf. Matt. 6:30). It was used of the disciples in the storm when their fears routed them, (Matt. 8:26; Mk. 4:40), and of Peter, who attempted in typical fashion the improbable feat of walking on the water to Christ, and when frightened, began to sink. (Matt. 14:31). Jesus could say of them, "How little you really trust me!" It was as serious a problem to the Master as was the open hostility of His enemies. In the mind of Jesus, ἄπιστία was an appalling absurdity, and it stands out in vivid contrast with the great faith of the Centurion and others like him. (Matt. 13:58; Mk. 6:6). In the same way, ἄπιστος is used in Matt. 17:17 as the kind of generation which wearied the Master with its low level of spiritual perceptivity. The word, found only in Mark, has a definitely fluid meaning, but as it is used in Mark 14:3 it seems to connote that which is genuine and trustworthy.

The verb, ἀπιστέω depicts the attitude of the Emmaus road disciples who simply would not regard the story of the Resurrection as anything but an idle tale. (Luke 24:11, 41; Mark 16:11). The eleven were upbraided for their unbelief ἀπιστία (Mark 16:14).

Also in the fragment at the end of Mark's Gospel

which is not in the best manuscripts<sup>30</sup> (16:9-20), there is a statement attributed to Jesus in which faith, baptism and salvation are linked. After the command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, we find these words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (9:16) Miraculous signs were promised in the experience of those who believed. (9:17ff). Here faith, baptism and salvation are resolutely joined. Baptism followed faith, and salvation was impossible unless faith was present. These are ideas developed in the Epistles and in the Fourth Gospel.

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<sup>30</sup> Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in B and  $\lambda'$ . The Gospel ends with vs. 8. Eusebius stated that the Gospel ended with vs. 8, also. L,  $\psi$ ,  $\gamma^{12}$ ,  $\rho$ , have shorter endings perhaps added by the scribes with variations and the longer as an alternate. In many other manuscripts the longer ending appears and it seems to be well known to Christian writers after the middle of the second century. In view of the external and internal evidence, however, the fragment is generally regarded as an addition. This usage of words for unbelief is found in Luke also, and is the only pertinent point for us here. Cf. B. Harvie Branscomb, MNTC, The Gospel of Mark, Harper and Sons, London, 192-, p. 311ff; H. B. Swete, The Gospel According to St. Mark, London, 1927, p. ciiiff; James Moffatt: Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament (3rd ed.) T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1918, p. 238ff. For comparative collation of alternate endings cf. Frederick C. Grant, The Gospel According to St. Mark, The Interpreter's Bible Vol. VII, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, 1951, p. 915ff.

### Conclusions.

It is obvious that the waiting world could only respond to God's revelation through faith. These "faith words" tell us much of this fact. We learn significant elements of Jesus' attitude toward faith, the faith which was found about Him, and the relation of faith to His ministry. We see his reaction to unbelief.

It is crystal clear that Jesus expected to find faith in those about Him. He was cruelly disappointed when it was missing, and He rejoiced when He found it present. He, Himself, demonstrated it beyond measure. In His complete submission to the Father's will, in His intimate fellowship with Him, with His evident dependence upon Him, He revealed His own strong and vibrant faith. It was a shocking thing to Him, that the disciples did not have that same, constant faith. Their faith wavered and failed, it fled before the fear of storms and mobs, but still it was present at times. Whenever it was present, it reached out to the power of God, and Christ was able to do His work of ministering to the needs of men's bodies and souls. The faith of those who sought healing and help was faith born of desperation, and of the deep conviction that if He could not help them no one else could. They had the spirit of complete abandonment to His ministrations. They not only believed that He could help them, but they also believed

that He would. Even when their faith was weak, it was sufficient for the demands of Christ. His great command was simply, "Have faith in God!", "Fear not, only believe!" Rejection was the ultimate evil, and acceptance the ultimate good.

However, if we stop with this rather mechanical and simple survey of direct references using faith-ideas, and faith-words, we will miss the true picture which is presented in the Synoptics.

We began by saying that the key to understanding the New Testament is to see it as literature reflecting and witnessing to the great entrance of the Divine into human history. This great act, coming in fulfillment of centuries-long yearning and expectation, can only be understood in relation to the announcement which Jesus made, saying, "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is upon you, repent ye and believe the Gospel." Mark 1:15. The early Christians preached a gospel, therefore, consisting of the great essentials of the life of Christ--His ministry, His Crucifixion, His resurrection--His exaltation--His return. In order to be a part of His Kingdom, to be under His rule and reign, negatively, there must be repentance, a change of mind, a turning away from the old aims and purposes, the shoddy attitudes, the despicable habits which destroyed man's fellowship with God. Positively, there must be faith. It was a faith, however, which went beyond

the facts which it embraced, and led the believer to the Person who stood at the center of all Divine action, Jesus of Nazareth.

Everything about Him was meant for revelatory purposes. He could say, in that significant prayer:<sup>31</sup> "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal 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 Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. (Matt. 11:25-27. Cf. Lk. 10:21-22)." There is much of significance here. God, taking the initiative moves toward man through Christ. The lowly ones, the child-like ones receive this revelation.<sup>32</sup> It is followed immediately by that magnificent invitation, "Come unto Me!", (Matt. 11:28-29) in Matthew's version, and perhaps he had in mind linking the two. At any rate, it is significant that Christ's great invitation to men is just that, "Come!" How often He caught the attention of some lonely man with His, "Follow Me!" With these men, seemingly unpromising material for any new venture, He fashioned the force let loose in

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<sup>31</sup> Usually assigned to "Q".

<sup>32</sup> Easton, Christ in the Gospels, New York, 1930, p. 152. "If we try to analyze this quality of childlikeness too minutely, we shall probably injure the thought . . . for the quality of childlikeness is nothing more and nothing less than childlikeness and it needs no explanation."

the world as the Christian Church.

It is not too much to say, however, that our idea of faith is conditioned by the idea of Messiahship which is the basis of the Synoptics.

As Hoskyns and Davey put it,

The various strata of tradition which are brought together in the Synoptic Gospels do not provide evidence of the presence in the primitive church of different ideas about Jesus. The further the critic is able to dig into tradition the more clearly is the Christology seen to be one single Christology expressed in terms of Son of Man and Son of God. Jesus is the Messiah who came in humiliation and who is His humiliation inaugurated the Kingdom of God and fulfilled the Righteousness demanded by the Law and the Prophets. Jesus is also The Messiah who will come in Glory at the end of the present order, and will establish the final Kingdom. Those who believe in the humiliated Messiah and share in His humiliation, will also share in His Glory and in eternal life of the Kingdom. Not only is this Christology present in the various strata of the tradition, but the whole material is controlled by it.<sup>33</sup>

With the great conceptions of Son of God and Son of Man which were in existence in the primitive Judean stratum, the significance of the coming of Jesus and His life and ministry was joined together. The confession of Him as Messiah is not to be found at the end of some long process of development in Christian history. After a most minute investigation, Manson says,

Before any of the acts or words of Jesus were proclaimed to mankind as the sign or proof of a divine redemption offered to the world in Him, in other words before the tradition, as we have it, had begun to crystallize, Jesus already was acknowledged as the

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<sup>33</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., p. 162ff.

Messiah of Israel, the coming Son of Man. The confession stands so near to the beginning of Christian history that beside it no other starting point is perceptible. Dating as public proclamation from the Easter days of the primitive church, it is the absolute presupposition of the Church's tradition and the substratum of the Christian theology in all later forms of development.<sup>34</sup>

The significant thing for this study, then, is that Jesus is presented to us in the Synoptics with His functional significance as Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man always preeminent.<sup>35</sup>

When we apply this fact to the miracles in which faith was presented as the basis upon which the power of God could act, we must see them not as isolated incidents, but as imbued with revelational significance within the context of His Messiahship. It is true that,

The Marcan miracle narratives which at first sight seem to record conventional actions of a wonder-worker, are found upon closer investigation to have a wholly different significance. The Marcan miracles are signs that the Messiah is present in the heart of Judaism . . . and . . . . Moreover, they are not only signs of His presence, they are signs of the nature of His power, since they point, as the Old Testament prophecies had already pointed, away from the mere physical healing to freedom from sin and to the recognition of the power of the Living God. They bear witness to the Advent of His Kingdom. It is the Christology which underlies the miracles and apparently conditions the details of the behaviour of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

This is not only true of Mark, but in that common source of Matthew and Luke the miracles have the same

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<sup>34</sup> William Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 2ff.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>36</sup> Hoskyns and Davey, *op. cit.*, p. 175ff.

significance of portraying the nature of Jesus and making manifest in startling clarity the long-awaited intervention of God in history, the Messiah. They are more than miracles--they are indications of His coming, in victory and in exaltation, in spite of the suffering through which He would pass. They are the signs of the advent of the Kingdom. And, we may gratefully add, "wheresoever man's spirit is liberated from sin, captivity, injustice, and heartbreak, there still are the signs of the Kingdom."<sup>37</sup>

So, Messiah came seeking men, revealing the love of God, His will for the world, and saying, "Come, follow me!" In the experience of the early disciples, the pattern of their experience led from a knowledge of the truth to an act of the will, an act which involved the total personality. They committed themselves with real abandonment to Christ, and this was the character of their faith. It was no vague mental atmosphere--it was a cataclysmic decision, a complete surrender that strangely enough made them men of mighty power.

The work of the Messiah was, at every turn, the task of revealing the truth and evoking a believing response to it. It was an amazing thing that any instinctive movement toward Him (e.g. Mark 10:28-30, or any of the miracle incidents) was rewarded with a tremendous display of Messianic

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<sup>37</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 50.



power.

Of course, the question will be asked in all of this --where did the Messianic conviction originate? Bousset, speaking typically of those who feel that it was a "disciple-inspired" conviction, suggests that Jesus had made such an impression on their spiritual natures that nothing could blot it out--not even the supreme shame of the Cross, a disaster beyond description. Thus, as a substitute for their first hopes of a national Messiah, they developed the Son of Man idea about Him, and became followers of One who through the Cross had entered into Glory.<sup>38</sup> It seems unreasonable, however, to believe that their Messianic faith could have survived the Cross if they had not been prepared for it. Would it not expose the Sufferer to the charge under the Jewish religion of being under the curse of sin, an outcast from God? The martyrdom theory simply will not fit the facts of the experience of early believers.<sup>39</sup>

Wilhelm Wrede at the beginning of the twentieth century, in his Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien, propounded the thesis that Jesus neither called himself "Messiah" nor had been known as such.<sup>40</sup> After his death, when his disciples became convinced that He was the Messiah,

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<sup>38</sup> Bousset, Kyrios Christos, p. 17ff.

<sup>39</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 5ff.

<sup>40</sup> Wilhelm Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien, Gottingen, 1901, p. 33ff.

they explained his failure to make his mission known on the grounds that, for reasons of policy, He had kept the claim a secret from all except his most intimate disciples. This book, appearing at the same time Schweitzer was also disputing the conception of "the liberal Marcan Jesus,"<sup>41</sup> though from a different point of view, insisted that Mark was not a historical source but a construction of the imagination centering around the belief of the early Church in Jesus' Messiahship, a belief which He himself had never held.

Though Wrede brilliantly developed his thesis and supported it by the commands of Jesus to the disciples to remain silent about him, yet it is based on a very questionable assumption. It requires the assumption that Jesus did not regard Himself as Messiah, and this is not substantiated by the facts. Wrede did what he blamed others for. "Subtracting and reinterpreting" the Biblical material, he pared away the idea of the Messiahship and all that was tainted with it. For example, he explains the Caesarea Philippi Confession superficially.<sup>42</sup>

No man dares speak authoritatively on the mind of Jesus. We may not see the order of events clearly, but we do know that at some moment in His ministry Jesus stood

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<sup>41</sup> Albert Schweitzer, Sketch of the Life of Jesus: the Secret of the Messiahship and Suffering, 1901.

<sup>42</sup> Wrede, op. cit., p. 101ff; p. 238ff.

"self-disclosed as the Messiah or Son of Man to be."<sup>43</sup> As we have seen, for the Evangelist and for the Synoptic tradition, when Jesus announced to the world that the Kingdom was at hand, the Messiah had stepped upon the stage of the world's history.

Above and beyond, then, the instance in which faith-words occur, there is an equally important factor to be reckoned with. It was the total response of men to the Messiah. It is true that the great demand of Jesus was, "Have faith in God!" But He was God's servant, the instrument through which His redemptive purpose was to be realized. This sense of mission was paramount in His thinking from the first through to the bitter hour of the Cross. Although God was the ultimate object of faith, and in only one instance is faith directed towards Himself (Matt. 18:6; cf. Lk. 18:8), yet He regarded Himself as the channel through which God's power came. Thus, faith in Him, acceptance of His Messianic nature, was a vital factor in the Synoptics. As Denney puts it:

God is undoubtedly the only and the ultimate object of faith, but what the Synoptic Gospels in point of fact present to us on this (the centurion's faith) and many other occasions is . . . the spectacle of men who believe in God through Him. Their faith is their assurance that God's saving power is there in Jesus, for the relief of their needs. Such faith Jesus demands as the condition upon which God's help becomes effective; and the more ardent and unqualified it is the more joyfully it is welcomed. The faith in Christ which is illustrated

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<sup>43</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 96ff.

in the epistles is in essence the same thing.<sup>44</sup>

To be sure, His own faith is the great example of faith. He moved through acclaim and through rejection, through success and through defeat, through Gethsemane's lonely agony, through Calvary's bitter torture, and still He could say, "Not My will but Thine be done", "Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit." (Matt. 25:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 23:46). But, as Messiah, it would be inconsistent for Him to ask for faith in God, and not expect that response to God's Son. In the instances in which His Messianic significance is most clearly seen, we find Him looking for a response of deep confidence that God will through His servant meet the greatest needs of human experience.

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the words of the "Great Confession". Jesus' question to His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" is recorded by all the Synoptic writers. (Matt. 16:15; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). The three accounts present Peter as the spokesman for the group. In Mark, Peter's confession is: "Thou art the Christ", (8:29), Matthew adds, "The Son of the living God", and in Luke it

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<sup>44</sup> Denney, Jesus and the Gospel, p. 254ff. For discussion of terms Cf. Manson, p. 103, "Son of God", p. 110, "servant of the Lord", p. 117, "Is it not possible that the great expansion of the Son of Man doctrine according to which the Son of Man's exaltation (Daniel 7:13-14), is from a human life of suffering on earth originated first in the mind of Jesus, Himself?" Cf. Rudolph Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp. 201-210.

is simply "The Christ of God."<sup>45</sup> They all affirm, then, the Christhood of Jesus.

Few passages in the New Testament have had a more controversial history, and few have been more widely interpreted. Matthew, however, records the intense delight with which Jesus responds to it. (16:17) Regardless of the interpretation, it is self-evident that Jesus rejoiced in it, and at the same time cautioned His disciples about broadcasting the fact indiscriminately. Whether fearful of the latent nationalism of the country, or whatever the reason, Mark and Luke record His warning that they keep silent about it.

For the disciples, it was the key to their faith. This deep conviction had brought them to complete commitment to Christ. Their commitment often wavered under fire, but it was the heart of their response to Him. What is more, in that confession of our Lord, (Mark 14:62) this Messianic basis for faith is confirmed with His identification as the Son of the Blessed.

When questioned by the high priest, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?", He replied, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Says Denney:

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<sup>45</sup> EGT. p. 223, "Would Peter's vehement and emotional temperament be grounds for the more detailed confession?"

In this self-assertion or self-revelation of Jesus there is in a sense nothing new. He has said substantially the same thing before. (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27). It expressed indeed the consciousness in which He lived and died--the sense of Himself, and of His vocation and destiny by which the gospels are filled from beginning to end. All that is exhibited in the 110th Psalm . . . all that is exhibited in the seventh chapter of Daniel . . . is to be fulfilled in Him.<sup>46</sup>

To return to Peter's confession, however, the most satisfactory interpretation of the rock on which the Church is to be built would be, not Peter himself, nor even Peter's faith, but a group of men who by their faith had committed their lives and destinies to One whom they believed was Messiah.<sup>47</sup>

No longer need they concern themselves with intermediaries, such as the angels, nor should they worry for fear demons would thwart their approach to God.<sup>48</sup> Messiah was present, and in all the long experience of His ministry, God was impinging upon their consciousness--and to the revelation of God they responded with nothing short of themselves--a response which was given to God Himself.

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<sup>46</sup> Denney, op. cit., p. 369. For a study of "Son of Man" in "every one of the strata of the evangelic records," see p. 286ff. "We may be sure that in appropriating the title to Himself, Jesus did not lose the consciousness of what originally gave it its meaning. It was always charged with the idea of humanity, as well as that of final sovereignty, or apocalyptic splendour." p. 289.

<sup>47</sup> McDowell, Son of Man and Suffering Servant, Nashville, 1944, p. 904.

<sup>48</sup> A common idea.

It is this basic idea of faith, growing within the Judean-Hellenistic culture, which the apostles declared to be the key to man's fellowship with the Divine.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PAULINE CONCEPTION OF FAITH

The Apostle Paul belonged to two worlds. Before ever he became a Christian, two strains had mingled in him, two influences had been playing upon him. He was at once a Jew, and a citizen of the wider world. Nurtured in the faith and ways of Judaism, he nevertheless had experience of the contact and influence of a Greek environment.<sup>1</sup>

It was not merely the uniting of two influences into a force which was the result of a simple union. As a matter of fact, the two in uniting produced a unique force which was far more than a union of the sum total of their characteristics. Just as two parts hydrogen, and one of oxygen interact with one another to produce the substance which we call water, a substance which is vastly more than a simple combination of the two, so these two influences, the Hebrew and the Greek interact in the life and thought of the Apostle.

What Dodd says of Romans is true of the Pauline literature as a whole:

There are two open doors into Paul's world. The one is the Old Testament which all Christian readers of the Epistle (i.e. Romans) should know. The other is Greek thought which in spite of the decline of the classics in the schools still exercises an influence in our education. But Paul's immediate environment was not purely that of the Old Testament or of classical Greece. He is a writer of the Hellenistic age

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<sup>1</sup> James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, London, p. 32ff.



when a mixed civilization arose out of the interaction of Greek thought with that of various peoples of the near East, including the Jews. The direct influence of the Non-Jewish Hellenistic thought upon Paul has, I think, been exaggerated. His main background is Judaism, though not altogether the Judaism of the Old Testament or of normal or orthodox Rabbinism, but partly the Hellenized Judaism of the Dispersion.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising that in a man who is the product of the interplay of so many diverse forces, it is possible to detect almost any emphasis, if presuppositions exist in the mind of the interpreter. As a matter of fact, it is not too much to say that each age has constructed a Paul in its own likeness. As Stewart summarizes it,

Baur made Paul a Hegelian, a master of the Hegelian dialectic. Ritschl made him a genuine Ritschlian, 'The heroes of old time', says Von Dobschutz scathingly with the apostle and his commentators in mind, 'argue and reason just like the authors of the encyclopaedia.' Paul has been too big for his interpreters; and his great comprehensive Gospel--'the many coloured (Πολυπρόικλος) wisdom of God' as he Himself called it (Ephesians 3:19),--has been lost in a mass of partial and one-sided reconstructions.<sup>3</sup>

The greatest sin against the greatest of the Apostles, then, is the effort to cram him into some mold which, ironically, has been prepared for him. In view of the nature of his subject matter--that many-sided, varied Gospel of the Grace of God, in view of the complex situations which he confronted and to which he addressed his correspondence, in view of his conception of his mission as an apostle, in view

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<sup>2</sup> C. H. Dodd, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary: Romans, p. xxxi.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 12ff.

of the fact that much of his thinking took the form of mental pictures--how can we compartmentalize the thought of the apostle in any clever scheme! To do so is to create a Paul who never really existed.

As Stewart goes on to say,

Yet history, which has been unjust to many of its greatest men, has given us from time to time by a strange irony of fate, a Paul who is himself the type and embodiment of the very things against which he strove with might and main. We have had Paul the ecstatic visionary, Paul the speculative theologian, Paul the organizer and ecclesiastic, Paul the humanitarian moralist, Paul the ascetic. Of these portraits which have appeared at different times in the course of Pauline study, by far the most unfortunate in its results have been the second--Paul the dogmatist, the doctrinaire thinker, the creator of a philosophy of religion, the constructor of a system. This is history's greatest injustice to its greatest saint. It is the blunder which has ruined Paul for thousands.<sup>4</sup>

The great tragedy of setting Paul against Christ has primarily resulted from converting a diversity of emphasis into a false contradiction. To regard Jesus as a mere teacher of righteousness, one of the world's great religious spirits, and "seekers after God," who called men to imitate his spirit, and at the same time to regard Paul as a theologian who radically changed the new Faith, and created Christ as its object, is to misunderstand, misrepresent and misinterpret both Christ and Paul. Such a view could be maintained only if the Gospels, the Epistles,

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<sup>4</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 1. Goguel, *The Life of Jesus*, commenting on Paul, said, "He preached a Gospel, he did not teach a doctrine." p. 107.

--in short, the whole New Testament is radically altered and first rewritten.<sup>5</sup>

The first fact of our investigation of Paul, then, is that his thought defies systematization. His subject matter, the situation he addressed, the way he thought in mental pictures--all this and more would make such an effort impossible. When this is combined with the fact of the interpretation of Hebrew and Greek worlds in which he found himself, we can see how complex is interpretation of Paul. That fusion of two worlds, moreover, was in turn transformed by Paul's own experience with Christ. The third factor, then, is the knowledge that here is the thinking of a man whose whole life has been transformed in what, to him, was the great event of his whole experience. It has been called "the theology of a converted man".<sup>6</sup> There was a new world of grace opened to him, where he felt that God had met him in Christ, and that God reached out in love in reconciliation, in mercy. That Judaistic heritage of the relation of men to God in the Covenant, and the revelation of God in the history of Israel provided him with the basic idea of response to God. The Greek environment about him could supply certain words which could be used to translate Hebraisms for that response.

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<sup>5</sup> H. H. Rowley, Article in Interpretation, The Relevance of Biblical Interpretation, Richmond, Va., Jan. 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Wernle, Jesus und Paulus, p. 41, "Sein ganzes Denken ist Bekehrungdenken".

They had a varied usage in classical and Hellenistic thinking, and they were to come to new usage in the world of Christian experience into which they would now be placed. It was Paul's own personal experience that influenced his use of them, as he took both Hebraic and Grecian factors, and with them sought to interpret his experience of God in Christ.

Let it be said, too, that there are some important reasons why Paul is pertinent to a conception of faith. First, the letters of Paul represent what may have been the earliest major literary deposit of Christianity. We cannot be dogmatic as to relative dates, but the internal evidence of such major epistles as Romans and I and II Corinthians may be combined with our knowledge of the life of Paul as found in Acts, and with our knowledge of secular history, and the dates of these epistles may be determined with reasonable accuracy. Within approximately twenty-five years after the death of Christ, the major letters of Paul were written. If this dating is accepted, we are safe in saying that there is no major literary deposit earlier than Paul. Of course, the events in the Gospel narratives took place earlier than did the events of Paul's experience. No doubt the narratives are based on written records which were earlier than the earliest of Paul's letters. But the Gospels, in the form in which we now find them, were not written down before Paul's major letters were in circulation.

It may also be said, that the other books of the New Testament cannot be placed with certainty before Paul.

Secondly, in spite of the fiercest attempts to do so, the authorship of these major letters cannot be seriously questioned. The authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is disputed, as is Ephesians. But the Pauline authorship of epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, the Philippians, Philemon and probably Ephesians, too, is now fairly certain. Many scholars have challenged the Pauline authorship for they are obviously out of harmony with many reconstructions of Christianity which are current today. But the epistles do reflect a situation in the Church which did exist around 50-65 A.D. when Christianity was rising out of a Judaistic background to become a world faith. They do not reflect the later situation when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the right of the Gentiles within the Church had been firmly established. Thus, if we limit our argument to those epistles whose authorship is established, e.g. Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians, we do have in these letters one of the great starting places for the study of the Christian Faith. The conclusions in this chapter as to the conception of faith which we call "Pauline" could be sustained in these epistles alone.

It should be stated, however, that in spite of the historical, theological, ecclesiastical and literary

difficulties advanced for the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and the Pastoral epistles, they are still valuable in Pauline study. The absence of the words "at Ephesus" in some of the oldest manuscripts, the absence of personal references, and the general tone of the letter may be accounted for in the assumption that it was intended as a circular letter for churches of that area. As for the Pastoral Epistles, they do bear Paul's name traditionally, and contain certain vivid personal references which have the authentic Pauline ring. Whether they were written by some assistant who took the apostle's ideas and put them into writing, or by some later loyal disciples, they still are accepted as containing previously unpublished passages from the Apostle himself.

In the third place, there is little doubt as to the integrity of the text of the great Pauline letters. They were written by Paul, and sent to the churches. They are not the result of some long process in which many sources were combined to make a finished product. They were treasured, copied, and preserved in the churches. The textual criticism of these letters is an exact science, and the few places at which doubt still remains concerning the text do not affect the essential message of the epistles concerning faith.

So then, though all these centuries separate us, in the letters of a man who in God's providence was the leader

of the establishment of Christianity in the Gentile world, we go back to the heart of the Church in its early years of existence. As we read these epistles, "the centuries fall away and the believer becomes contemporary with Paul as he proclaimed to his generation the meaning for him of the coming of God in Christ."<sup>7</sup>

Here is a man of deep Christian experience, of genuine integrity, of wide contact with the acknowledged leaders of the early church, a child of his own age of Judaism, Hellenism, and now Christianity. He stands in the center of that group of men who were among the first to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

As has been indicated previously, as we turn now to consider the idea of faith as found in Pauline material, we cannot expect to find a rigidly formed conception with its doctrinal significance carefully and fully presented. His usage is not identical in each instance, nor is the meaning of the words used fixed and specific. Each of his great words such as "law", "spirit", and "faith" may be found in a variety of meanings.<sup>8</sup>

#### Grammatical Usage.

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<sup>7</sup> H. Rolston, Consider Paul, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1951, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Stewart, op. cit., p. 26ff.

In the epistles of Paul, the noun predominates three to one over the verb. In the epistle of James, the ratio is five to one, while in the epistles of Peter there is no significant contrast.<sup>9</sup> As in the Synoptics, so also here, there is little grammatical usage of the noun which indicates the idea of some passive sense of the word, e.g. "faithfulness". (Cf. Romans 3:3; Gal. 5:22; Titus 2:10; I Timothy 5:12; and perhaps I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22; 3:10 and Philemon 5). In almost every case, it is clear that there is spiritual significance in its usage. Sometimes an object is expressed, and other times, only the spirit of the Apostle's message can indicate his meaning. It may be faith in the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27); or in the saving truth of God, (II Thess. 2:13); or in the activity of God who raised Jesus from the dead (Col. 2:12); or the redemption offered by God (Romans 3:25). The fame of the Thessalonians spread abroad because of their faith toward God. (I Thess. 1:8). More frequently Christ is the object of faith. Gal. 2:16, 20; Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 1:15, 3:12, 4:13; Phil. 3:9; Col. 1:4, 2:5; I Tim. 1:14, 3:13, 15; II Tim. 1:13, 3:15; Philemon 5; (Cf. Acts 20:21; 24:24; 26:18; James 2:1).

We find the objective genitive at least twelve times in Pauline literature. It may be the genitive of the thing

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 832, Bauer believes  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is especially Pauline.



in view--the gospel, Phil. 1:27; the saving truth, II Thess. 2:13; the Almighty working of God, Col. 2:12. In the other instances Christ is set forth as the object on which faith rests. (Romans 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; 4:13; Phil. 3:9). The subjective genitive construction can be distinguished from the objective use only by the context. That the phrase, "through the righteousness of faith" (Romans 4:13) contains the former construction is evident when we compare it with Paul's statement in Romans 10:6, "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise ---." Another example is the phrase, "for obedience to the faith among all nations" Romans 1:5.

Next most frequently, faith is joined to its object by means of the preposition  $\epsilon\upsilon$  which indicates that on which faith rests. In Romans 3:25 it is faith in the redemption offered by God in Christ. In other instances, it is Christ Himself who is the object of the preposition: (Gal. 3:26; Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; I Tim. 1:14; 3:13; II Tim. 1:13; 3:15). Somewhat less frequently, its object is joined to faith by means of the preposition  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ . This designates again, the object toward which faith is exercised. Paul, speaking to the elders of Ephesus, refers to his own ministry as "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Cf. Acts 24:24; 26:18; Col. 2:5). In two instances  $\tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  is used indicating a faith which looks and

adheres to God, I Thess. 1:8, or to Christ, Philemon 5.

Since the word  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  had become by this time well fixed in Christian speech, it is not surprising that the New Testament writers felt at liberty to use it without a specified object.<sup>10</sup> In the epistles, it is found generally with God or Christ as the implied object. (I Cor. 16:13; Gal. 1:23; 6:10; 3:23; Phil. 1:25; Col. 1:23; I Tim. 1:19; 4:1; 6; Titus 1:3. Cf. Jude 3, 20). It would appear that the readers were expected to understand the point clearly enough without further specification.

Although it appears less frequently,  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  is used with the same distinctive religious sense as the substantive. Occasionally it is used with the sense of entrusting something to someone, as in Paul's great conviction of a stewardship entrusted to him. (I Cor. 9:17). Similarly Gal. 2:7; I Thess. 2:4; I Tim. 1:11; Titus 1:3). In the sense of giving assent, it is used in I Cor. 11:18. (Cf. II Thess. 2:11; Acts 9:26). Quite frequently it is used with the dative. When the object involved is a thing, it is usually the spoken word of divine truth. In citing Isaiah, Paul uses it in the lament, "Lord, who have believed our report." (Romans 10:16. Cf. II Thess. 2:13). When the object is a person, it is usually God or Jesus. In the

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<sup>10</sup> Cremer, *op. cit.*, feels  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is used for faith principally by Paul. We have seen that this is incorrect.

famous passage dealing with Abraham, it is used in the citation, "And Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Romans 4:3. Cf. Gal. 3:6; James 2:23; Titus 3:8; Acts 16:34; 27:25. In one of the clearest passages dealing with faith as self-commitment, II Tim. 1:12, Christ is presented as the object of the faith involved, if we read the context correctly.

The construction with  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  is as rare here as in the Synoptics. Only Ephesians 1:13,  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \omega \acute{\iota} \kappa \alpha \iota \pi \iota \sigma \tau \acute{\epsilon}\upsilon \sigma \alpha \nu \tau \epsilon \varsigma$  "in whom . . . having believed . . . ." Scarcely more common is the parallel construction of  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi \iota$  with the dative. Besides the quotation from Isaiah 28:16 appearing in Romans 9:33, partially in 10:11, and in I Peter 2:6, "Behold I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," it occurs only in I Tim. 1:16, "for an example of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life." Constructions with prepositions governing the accusative are more commonly used. Twice in Romans 4  $\pi \iota \sigma \tau \acute{\epsilon}\upsilon \omega$  appears with  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi \iota$  with the accusative. Referring back to the faith of Abraham Paul stresses the act of "believing on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, (4:24), and "believing on him that justifieth the ungodly." (4:5). In other cases, the object is God. This may be compared with the exhortation in the Philippian jail, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31).

The construction with εἰς<sup>1</sup> may be found in such crucial passages as Gal. 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even so we have believed in Jesus Christ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law." (Cf. Romans 10:14; Phil. 1:29). In the many instances when the verb is used without an expressed object, the author seems to imply that Christ is the object which he has in mind. (Romans 3:22; 10:4, 10; 13:11; 15:13, 19; I Thess. 1:7; 2:10, 13; II Thess. 1:10; Heb. 4:3; I Peter 2:7). If the object implied is not Christ, at least the faith indicated is closely related to Him. In Romans 1:16, it is the matter of believing the gospel, the good news of Christ.

It is a significant thing, too, that although the disciples were called Christians at Antioch and elsewhere, (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16), yet a frequent designation for them was οἱ πιστεύσαντες or οἱ πιστεύοντες (Cf. I Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13, 19; I Thess. 1:7; 2:10, 13; Acts 2:44; 4:32; II Thess. 1:10; Heb. 4:3; Acts 5:14).

With this brief survey of the use of these major faith-words in the epistles, let us consider ~~them~~, the conception which they indicate.

As has already been indicated, we may expect no

simple, clear, concise statement of Paul's idea of faith.

What faith in itself consists of Paul never defines. He found the word already established as the watch word of the church, and from the first it implied much more than a bare assent to a given affirmation. To 'believe' in Jesus involved an acceptance of his teaching and way of life. It meant a confidence in his promise of the Kingdom of God and a submission to him<sup>11</sup> which was expressed in the confession 'Jesus is Lord'!

One thing obvious in such a statement is that a variety of ideas may be found in Paul's conception of faith. It is used as something more than mere assent, as acceptance of Christ, as confidence in His promise, as a submission.

Sanday and Headlam, confining themselves to the epistle to the Romans, find that all ordinary uses of the idea of faith appear in the Epistle:

We have the word (i) clearly used in the sense of 'fidelity' or 'faithfulness', (the faithfulness of God in performing his promise), Romans 3:3; also, (ii) in the sense of a faith which is practically that of a miracle-worker, faith as the foundation for the exercise of spiritual gifts, (Romans 12:3, 6). We have it (iii) for a faith like that of Abraham in the fulfillment of the promise of which he was the chosen recipient, Romans 4:passim. The faith of Abraham however becomes something more than a particular attitude in regard to particular promises; it is (iv) a standing attitude, deliberate faith in God, the key-note of his character; in Ch. 15 the last sense is constantly gliding into this. A faith like Abraham's is typical of the Christian's faith, which has however both a lower sense and a higher; sometimes (v) it is in a general sense the acceptance of Christianity, Romans 1:5; 10:8, 17; 16:26; but it is also (vi) that specially strong and confident acceptance, that firm planting of the character upon the service of Christ, which enables a man to disregard small scruples, Romans 14:1-22. The centre and

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<sup>11</sup> E. F. Scott, The N. T. Idea of Revelation, p. 168.

mainspring of this higher form of faith is (vii) defined more exactly as 'faith in Jesus Christ'. (Romans 3:22 q. v., 26). This is the crowning and characteristic sense with St. Paul; and it is really this which he has in view wherever he ascribes to faith the decisive significance which he does ascribe to it, even though the object is not expressed. (as in 1:17, 3:27ff; 5:1, 2). We have seen that it is not merely assent or adhesion but enthusiastic adhesion, personal adhesion; the highest and most effective motive power of which human character is capable. It is well to remember that St. Paul has all these meanings before him; and he glances from one to another as the hand of a violin player runs over the strings of his violin.<sup>12</sup>

#### Union With Christ.

If we are to understand the usage of the faith idea, however, we cannot be content with simply listing a series of differing conceptions which are found in Pauline material. It cannot be understood at all without seeing the relation it had to his total spiritual experience.

One of the great advances in the rather tumultuous history of interpreting the Apostle's thought and message, has been the conviction that "union with Christ" is the heart of his own personal experience, and the focal point around which his thought revolves. Stewart summarizes in this forceful way,

The heart of Paul's religion is union with Christ, This, more than any other conception--more than justification, more than sanctification, more even than reconciliation--is the key which unlocks the secrets of his soul. Within the Holy of Holies which stood revealed when the veil was rent in twain from

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<sup>12</sup> Sanday and Headlam, ICC, Romans, p. 33ff.

the top to the bottom on the day of Damascus, Paul beheld Christ summoning and welcoming him in infinite love into vital unity with Himself. If one seeks for the most characteristic sentences the apostle ever wrote, they will be found, not where he is refuting the legalists, or vindicating his apostleship, or meditating on eschatological hopes, or giving practical ethical guidance to the Church, but where his intense intimacy with Christ comes to expression. Everything that religion meant for Paul is focused for us in such great words as these: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20). "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1). "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. 6:17).<sup>13</sup>

Justification, reconciliation, the righteousness of God are all vital themes of the mind of Paul. Ritschl with his two emphases on justification and the kingdom of God, Denney, and his view of reconciliation, Barth, and his great sense of the righteousness of God have all made important contributions to Pauline interpretation.<sup>14</sup> But the works of Deissmann, Inge, J. Weiss, H. A. A. Kennedy, Mackintosh, and even Schweitzer, are typical of this trend of placing emphasis upon "union with Christ" as the basis of Paul's thought. Though these, and other similar authors, vary widely, still they have that point of view in common.

The publication in 1892 of Die Neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu" by Deissmann presented a thorough examination of the use of the preposition "ἐν" with a personal dative and found that Paul had given new content

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<sup>13</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>14</sup> For a full discussion of these men, cf. Stewart, Ibid., p. 148ff.

to a term which had existed before. While the Synoptics spoke of being "μετά" Christ, yet Deissmann felt that the Pauline conception was unique. As Stewart points out, however, Jesus could have been indicating the idea when he gave the great promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). In the Johannine passage, Jesus is quoted as saying "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4).<sup>15</sup>

It was Paul's contribution however that lifted the idea up into the very heart of Christian experience. For him Christ was life. Life was to be lived in His presence. All that God's activity in history, and in his own spiritual experience, had accomplished led to the end result of life in Christ. He was the atmosphere, the environment, the power, the sphere of the new life which Paul had entered.

Says C. H. Dodd, in discussing so important an idea as justification, and commenting on Romans 5:10 "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

The 'much more' here has great significance. It shows that, in spite of the emphasis which Paul felt he must lay upon justification (partly because it was at this point that he had to meet opposition) he found

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<sup>15</sup> Stewart, Ibid., p. 156.



the real centre of his religion in the new kind of life which followed upon justification. It was life 'in Christ' or 'in the Spirit'; life in the love of God, as mediated to us by 'the Lord the Spirit'.<sup>16</sup>

What is more, the phrase "in the Spirit" helps us to understand the other phrase "in Christ". For Paul, the Christian's new environment was a pneuma element which was the very breath of life. The Christian soul was immersed in that atmosphere. Thus, "in Christ" indicated the way in which the Christian lived in a new world in which Christ was all in all.

This meaning cannot be forced into every passage in which the formula occurs, but it does illuminate the basic pattern of his conception of the Divine-human relation.

A typical passage is that in Romans 6:1-14, in which Paul presents the relation of the believer as that of union of Christ in His death and resurrection. For him, as with nearly all early Christians, baptism was highly important for its significance in the initiation of the believer into the Body of Christ. (6:3).

Says Dodd,

It is the baptized person who is in Christ. He has been baptized into the Church, into the body of Christ, and so into Christ. He has become one of that company of people who embody the new humanity of which Christ is the inclusive representative. (Cf. Rom. 7:5).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C. H. Dodd, MNTC, Romans, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Dodd, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

There has always existed much confusion as to the meaning of this Pauline "mysticism" as it is called. Much has been read into Paul. It seems clear that the ideas of Paul, his experience with God, may not be called "Mysticism" in the usual sense of the word. His great experience described in II Cor. 12:2-5, was unique even for him. Rather than visions and raptures, he felt that union with Christ was something which all Christians knew.

As Dodd continues,

So the 'Christ-mysticism' of Paul is not exactly analogous to what is usually called mysticism. The typical mystic has an intensely individual experience of ineffable union with God (solus cum Solo), conceived as the One or the All. Paul's sense of union with Christ is conditioned by the experience of life in a society controlled by His Spirit, as well as constituted historically by His act. It is a sense of being included in the 'corporate personality' of Christ which is manifest in the Church. This idea is no doubt rightly called mystical, but it is mystical with a difference. To be in Christ does not depend on states of abstraction or ecstasy--though Paul knew such states (See II Cor. 12:2-5). It depends on active fellowship with others who are also 'members of Christ'. That is not to deny the deep inwardness of the relation for every individual 'member'. In each 'member' as in the whole Body, Christ lives and works.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to the Philonic conception of a privileged minority, Paul believed that every Christian could have this noble experience. Says Stewart,

What Paul by the grace of God discovered was that the glorious experience was waiting for any soul which gave itself in faith to Christ. Not only so: such union with the divine, he knew, needs be no transient

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<sup>18</sup> Dodd, op. cit., p. 88.

splendour, flashing for a moment across life's greyness and then gone; it could be the steady radiance of a light unsetting, filling the commonest ways of earth with a gladness that was new every morning. Unhealthy reactions such union never could engender. The crushing sense of world-weariness which has marked too many types of mysticism, the contempt of life, the absorption in unproductive emotion, were foreign to it all together. Its effect, as the Apostle saw and as his own career in Christ convincingly proved, would be the very opposite. It would make men not less efficient for life, but more so. It would vitalize them, not only morally and spiritually, but even physically and mentally. It would give them a verve, a creativeness, an exhilaration, which no other experience in the world could impart. It would key life up to a new pitch of zest and gladness and power. This is Pauline mysticism; and great multitudes who have never used the name have known the experience, and have found it life indeed.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the Christian enters a new sphere of life. In it God had graciously brought him to light and to life through the Gospel. The new situation demanded the highest kind of character and ethical living. Christians must live in view of what they are, and the great ethical demands of the epistles are presented on just that basis. But, it is not the matter of a totally impossible ideal which is held before the readers.

#### Faith And Union With Christ.

How then does faith relate to this vital experience available to every Christian? It has a most important relation. There can be no union, in the Pauline mind, without

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<sup>19</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 163.

a certain act on the part of man. It is crystal clear that,

Before union can take place, two things must happen. On the one hand, there must be an outgoing of God to man. This is divine initiative, and its name is 'Grace'. On the other hand, there must be an outgoing of man to God. This is human response, and its name is 'faith'.<sup>20</sup>

A key passage such as "By Grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8) clearly brings both God's revelation and man's response to that revelation together. In the Pauline mind, then, faith dominated the scene when man's participation in communion with God was in any way described. He did not need to devise an entirely new word for this conception. Trained in Hebraic thought, he could take the conception which was latent in Old Testament teaching concerning man's response to the revelation of God, and immediately he would know that he had the word which was needed. After all the work of giving it a new Christian content, the basic simplicity of the idea was not altered in any radical way. The challenge of Christ to men to surrender all to Him was, in Paul's mind, the true response of men.

In actual usage, Paul gave no clear definition of the idea. As a matter of fact "faith" is used in varying ways, yet all revolving around the central idea of total commitment in response to God's revelation in Christ. We have already seen in our study of the details of this usage

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<sup>20</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 173.

that the faith words appear in a number of different constructions. Let us go back, however, and view Paul's usage in the light of this experience which leads to union with Christ.

There are some passages in which the Old Testament ideas of "Faithfulness", "Conviction of the unseen", and "confidence in the promises of God" appear.<sup>21</sup> "We walk by faith and not by sight" and "who against hope believed in hope . . . and being not weak in faith . . . staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform" II Cor. 5:7, Romans 4:18ff are suggested as typical examples of these ideas. But, as Stewart goes on to suggest, these ideas of conviction and confidence only led a man to the more frequently presented idea of faith as total surrender to Christ.<sup>22</sup> Because a man had this conviction and this confidence he felt the imperative need of personal surrender.

Let us, then, go on to a consideration of two other Pauline usages which like the Old Testament ideas are found occasionally and do relate to his basic conception of faith. In a clear and concise discussion, Stewart suggests that they are "tatsachenglaube"--conviction of Gospel facts and faith as Christianity itself--the faith.

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<sup>21</sup> Stewart, Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

"Tatsachenglaube."

We have suggested that faith inevitably begins with an attitude of assent in the mind before there can be an act of commitment by the will. It is but a preliminary to faith, but it is all important none the less. In recent years, New Testament students have given much thought to this phase of the early Christian community and its missionary activity.<sup>23</sup> In seeking to arouse men to faith, Paul, like other Christians went up and down the countries of the Mediterranean world as a "Town-crier". Some scholars have asserted that the real unity of the New Testament is to be found in the simple fact that there was a basic message proclaimed--a message which outlined the facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection, and called for acceptance of them. They were historic events and over and over we find them presented in all parts of the New Testament.

When Paul writes of the foolishness of preaching, (I Cor. 1:21), Dodd is convinced that the word translated 'preaching', kerygma, signifies not the action of the preacher, but that which he preaches, his message.<sup>24</sup> He looks upon Paul, and other primitive preachers, as a keryx. "A keryx may be a town crier, an auctioneer, a herald, or anyone who lifts up his voice and claims public attention to

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<sup>23</sup> i.e. C. H. Dodd, Rudolph Otto, Oscar Cullman, William Manson.

<sup>24</sup> C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, London, 1936, p. 3.

some definite thing he has to announce."<sup>25</sup> Thus, keryssein may be translated "to proclaim--and if it is followed by 'the Gospel' as it frequently is, it is the equivalent of evangelizesthai."<sup>26</sup>

The great mission of the early Christians was to proclaim to the world this kerygma. These were not human ideas developed by religious genius. Rather the kerygma was made up of facts. Historic facts cannot be altered or debated; there is a finality about them. Time has frozen them beyond change.

"The facts of the Christian message were not just historic; they were unique, unrepeatable, absolute, final like the judgment trumpet, as indeed in a sense they were the judgment trumpet."<sup>27</sup> They were (hapax) "once and for all." "In that He died", said Paul, "He died to sin once for all." (Romans 6:10) "Jesus, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." (Romans 6:9) These events happened, and they will not happen again.

What is more, the kerygma presents historic "once for all" events that can only be understood as eschatological events. The keryx declared that the hour toward which men had looked had now arrived. The opening word of our Lord

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> James S. Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim, New York, 1953, p. 21.

Himself was "the time is fulfilled." (Mark 1:15) The battle cry of the apostles as they faced the bristling ramparts of first century paganism was "the hour cometh and now is." (John 4:23; 5:25) This battle cry reappears, says Stewart, "in the primitive declaration that the Messianic age has dawned, in the Pauline doctrine in the Spirit, in the Johannine conception of eternal life here and now, in the vivid picture in the Epistle to the Hebrews of the intersection of two worlds and the 'anchoring' of the Church to the world unseen. In short, the Church recognized itself to be a new eschatological humanity. Here, in literal fact, the human race had renewed its youth like the eagle's."<sup>28</sup>

This rediscovery of the kerygma's true nature has called the Church back from a pathetic preoccupation with religious synthesis which made Christian thought "one among many" religious systems, and, in vivid words from Soren Kierkegaard, "a vaporized Christianity, a culture consciousness, the dregs of Christianity."<sup>29</sup>

#### The Content of Pauline Kerygma.

Inevitably, we ask, "What are these unique, historic, eschatological kerygmatic facts?" To be sure, though there is basic unity, we need not look for identical presentations

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<sup>28</sup> Stewart, Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Cited by Stewart, Ibid., p. 31.



in every instance. In the synoptics, it was preaching the Kingdom of God, and in Paul it was preaching Christ, and in Acts, both! But basically, the message was the same.

In Paul, the familiar pattern was usually as follows:

1. He proclaims the facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. (Gal. 3:1; I Cor. 15:3ff).<sup>30</sup>
2. He asserted that all this happened according to the Scriptures. (I Cor. 15:3ff).
3. He maintained that Christ did all this for our sins. (Gal. 1:4).
4. He declared that the word of faith which he preached was "Jesus is Lord and God has raised Him from the dead." (Romans 10:8-9; II Cor. 14:4, (Cf. Rom. 14:9).
5. He warned of judgment to come. (Romans 14:10; II Cor. 5:10; Romans 2:16; I Cor. 14:5; II Cor. 5:10; 4:5)

Dodd says in this connection,

It is to be observed that in these passages the fact of judgment to come is appealed to as a datum of faith. It is not something for which Paul argues, but something from which he argues, something therefore which we may legitimately assume to have been a part of his fundamental preaching. Judgment is for Paul a function of the universal Lordship of Christ

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<sup>30</sup> Dodd summarizes these facts as follows: "The prophecies are fulfilled, and the new Age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ. He was born of the seed of David. He died according to the Scriptures to deliver us out of this present evil age. He was buried. He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures. He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God, and Lord of the quick and the dead. He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men." Dodd, op. cit., p. 28.

which He attained through death and resurrection and His second Advent as Judge is a part of the kerygma.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to observe at this point that Paul believed that this kerygma was basically like that of the other apostles. With some minor alterations, this is true. Thus his contention maintained in Galatians 2:2 and in "the locus classicus," I Cor. 15:1ff, is a valid one.

In the swiftly moving events recorded in Acts, the various speeches present a good picture of what Dodd calls "the kerygma of the Church at Jerusalem at an early period".<sup>32</sup> This kerygma is summarized as follows:

First, the age of fulfillment has dawned. (Acts 2:16; 3:18; 3:24). It was a standing principle of Rabbinic exegesis of the Old Testament that what the prophets predicted had reference to the "days of the Messiah", that is to say, to the expected time when God, after long centuries of waiting, should visit His people with judgment and blessing, bringing to a climax His dealings with them in history. The apostles then declare that the Messianic age has dawned . . . . Secondly, this has taken place through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, of which a brief account is given, with proof from the Scriptures that all took place through "the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God": a. His Davidic descent . . . 2:30-31. b. His ministry . . . Acts 2:22; 3:22. c. His death . . . 2:23; 3:13-14. d. His resurrection . . . 2:24-31; 3:15; 4:10. Thirdly, by virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel . . . Psa. 110:1; 2:33-36; 3:13; 4:11; citing Psa. 118:22; 5:32 . . . . Fourthly, the Messianic Age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ . . . 3:21. Finally, the kerygma always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy

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<sup>31</sup> Dodd, Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Dodd, Ibid., p. 37.

Spirit and the promise of 'salvation', that is, of the 'life of the Age to Come' to those who enter the 'elect community' . . . Acts 2:38-39; 3:19-25-26; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43.<sup>33</sup>

It is indeed significant that in both these kerygma summaries there emerges a clear pattern which is singularly similar to the key passage of Mark 1:14-15 which sets forth the preaching of Jesus. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, Repent ye, and believe in the Gospel." A close study will show that these great phrases form the framework for the apostolic kerygma.

"The time is fulfilled" is usually expanded into a reference to the prophecies concerning Messiah, and the deep confirmation that these are now fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The second clause, "The Kingdom of God is at hand (or, has drawn near)", is usually expanded into an account of the life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection, the exaltation of Jesus. The eschatological feature of these events is always clear. Thus, the presentation of facts as historical events is reflected in the manner of presentation. The third clause, "repent and believe the Gospel",  $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\ \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega$ , is similar to the great apostolic appeals which brought the messages to their climax. First

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Dodd, William Manson, Stewart.

the facts, then the appeal on the basis of those facts. It was a logical approach, and the zealous appeal to repent, to believe, to receive forgiveness was the climactic conclusion of this basic primitive preaching.

Although the matter is debated, the whole atmosphere of Jesus' ministry is such that there is little evidence that the Gospel authors were summarizing His mission in a framework which did not actually originate with Him, nor fit His message. At any rate, the preaching of the Christ, and of the Apostles followed the same pattern, as we have it recorded in these pages of the New Testament.

Not only is this fact of similarity important, but it is equally significant to note that basically the kerygma of Acts, and that of the Pauline letters follow the same pattern. There are some differences of emphasis which should be noted, however.

For example, Paul stresses certain facts which may not be found in the Jerusalem kerygma in the same terms. First, Jesus is not usually called the "Son of God" in the Jerusalem kerygma. The Old Testament titles such as "Servant" are used. However, the idea that Jesus is the Christ is so deeply imbedded in the Synoptic material that such a variation is not too important. In view of the Old Testament connotation of such titles, it is obvious that both were built upon the same idea. "Son of God with power", Romans 1:4, is much the same idea as "Lord and

Christ" in the Jerusalem kerygma.

Again, Paul stresses the relation of forgiveness of sin and the death of Christ, and the Jerusalem kerygma does not assert this specifically. However, it is a logical inference from the facts of the life and death of Christ, and is not primarily an invention, or original idea with Paul.

Finally, the Jerusalem kerygma does not stress the ministry of intercession of our Lord, as does Paul. The great conception of an exalted Christ at the right hand of God interceding for us is not unique with Paul. To cite only two references, it is to be found in Hebrews 7:25, and is clearly implied in Matthew 10:32.

Thus it can be concluded that the more we move within the mind and the thought of the early Christian Church, the more we find them clinging to the idea that God had acted, and that the events of the earthly ministry of Christ, including life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and second advent, are the component parts of that action. It was, indeed, one great Divine Event. God has visited His people as He had promised, God was in Christ reconciling men unto Himself, God was revealing Himself to men.

In relation, then, to the faith demanded, it must be noted that Paul's use of faith as acceptance of certain facts is definitely more than a mechanical mental assent. It is too closely involved with an act of the will to be

just that. It was the beginning of an experience of faith, and not the whole of it. A great part of his writing and preaching sought to convince men of certain facts about Christ. (Acts 9:20, Acts 9:22; I Thessalonians 4:14; Romans 10:9). But as Stewart says, "Paul was far too clear-sighted, however, not to recognize that the idea of faith as the acceptance of certain historic facts was one which might easily, unless very carefully handled, land the Church in serious danger."<sup>34</sup>

He demanded, even in presenting certain facts, that there should be more than mechanical assent. That was a distorted, dangerous kind of faith. A casual assent to dogmas and propositions was the last thing he wanted. Rather, this assent came only to lead a man into a vital, living experience of union with Christ. This faith came from without, even it was a Gift of God. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (I Corinthians 12:3). "The human heart does not produce it; God bestows it."<sup>35</sup> Thus, in all the kerygmatic preaching, faith began with mental assent, but never ended with that. The demand was for total commitment of life to the Christ whose life was presented.

#### The Faith.

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<sup>34</sup> Stewart, A Man in Christ, p. 180.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Another facet of faith, as depicted in Pauline material, is to be found in the application of the word to describe Christianity itself. He spoke of this new religion as "the faith". How eloquently it describes this Christian movement! Nothing could more clearly demonstrate both the importance of, and the nature of, the early conception of faith than to discover that ΠΙΣΤΙΣ<sup>36</sup> is the word selected to describe the Christian movement. He spoke of "obedience to the faith" (Romans 1:5, 16:26), of "the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). He called men to "continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22), and directed the Roman Church to receive those "weak in the faith" (Romans 14:1).

#### The Believers.

Closely linked with the designation of the early religion as "The Faith" is the use of the basic idea to describe the early adherents to Christianity. It is significant that all through the New Testament the most frequent description, or name, is "believer". Those who are Christians are "the believers". Paul may speak of a believing wife, or an unbelieving husband (I Corinthians

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<sup>36</sup> Stewart, *Ibid.*, p. 181, "nothing more forcibly illustrates the vital place of faith in the Gospel as Paul conceives it than the way in which he makes this word do duty for the Christian religion as a whole. That fact alone speaks volumes for faith's pre-eminence."

7:12ff), or address his appeal to those who believe (I Thessalonians 2:10, 13). In it all he is demonstrating that "believer" had become synonymous with the idea of "Christian".

#### Faith As Commitment.

We have given a brief survey of the extensive field of thought to be found in Paul's varying usages of the faith idea. Particularly, because of its importance, we have spent a greater period of time in what still is a brief study of the use of faith in kerygmatic preaching. We have also indicated the basic thought in Paul's use of faith to describe the new religion and adherents to it. The major usage, the all important one, however, is yet before us. These usages which have just been described are related to this climactic one but it is infinitely above and beyond the confines of those faith ideas.

In union with Christ the basic thing is faith. It is man's great response to God's revelation in Christ--a revelation of what God is like, and what He is doing, and what He is willing to do. Little wonder that the word is found so prominently in Pauline literature. For example, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ may be found at least 109 times in the ten basic Pauline epistles. In Romans and Galatians, two key epistles in any attempt to study the Pauline mind, the word appears 62 times, 40 in Romans and 22 in Galatians.



The theology of Paul was hammered out in personal experience, and is, as is often declared, the theology of a converted man. He was, in the highest and best sense, "a believer". He was in "the faith". He knew precisely the way along which his own poor, blundering soul had come. Thus, the Damascus Road experience which marked the beginning of his commitment to Christ is a clear example of the beginning of faith. There was a great new revelation of Christ to him. He assented, intellectually to it. He yielded his will to Him. He believed that now he was united with Christ, identified with Him, and that he no longer lived his own life, but the life of Christ.

We have learned in the recent war the meaning of the term "total surrender", or "unconditional surrender." Such is the idea of faith. Paul conceived the thing demanded in his own experience and in that of others as a complete and utter surrender to Christ. Everything is given to Him, and all that is needed comes from Him. If he is to be understood anywhere it is in a key passage describing his desire to be found, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ" (Philippians 3:9; cf. Romans 3:22).

The Righteousness of the Law--that which a man laboriously earned for himself--was obviously faulty. Still he falls short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). No matter

how meticulously he observes the law, still he is doomed to the frustrating experience of knowing that his labor is in vain. His righteousness is insufficient to bring him into a right relationship with God. But, the righteousness which is given as a gift of God's grace to those who completely abandon themselves to Him in faith, relying on His mercy, on the righteousness of Christ with which faith identifies him--that righteousness is sufficient, and he is thus justified. "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16).<sup>37</sup> The believer has a new relationship in that he is now a member of the unique family of believers--the children of God. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

Faith, then, for Paul "means nothing short of being overpowered by Christ. It means the making over of the whole man--thought and feeling and will--to Christ in unconditional surrender. It means an act, and then a life."<sup>38</sup> Christ is not merely the object of some act of faith. He is that, but He is infinitely more. He is the very sphere in which the believer lives. Even when prepositions are

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<sup>37</sup> When we find "the faith of Jesus Christ" the genitive cannot be taken subjectively. It is subjective in a phrase like "the faith of Abraham." Obviously, however, Paul is not thinking of Jesus own personal faith. In Deissmann's phrase these usages are that of the "mystic genitive". Cf. Stewart, Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>38</sup> Stewart, Ibid., p. 185.

used for believing in or on Christ, the translations do violence to the idea.

To understand Paul is to realize that the key to his conception of faith is to be found in the confession "To me to live is Christ", (Philippians 1:21) or that classic passage, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20). The "act" of faith takes place in the initial moment when the human spirit encounters the Divine Spirit, and recognizes that he must yield to that overpowering Love. But that act becomes the abiding attitude and condition of life forever after. It is an act--and then a life!

Thus the Apostle calls men to union with Christ--a union based upon two central factors. First, there is grace--the reaching out to man which characterizes God. Second, there is faith--this response of man to God's grace. That response is the absolute, unconditional surrender of the total personality to God.

In order to complete this picture of a faith response, it is helpful to see it in its relations. In the briefest way, let us now look at the relationship of faith to a number of very important elements in the Apostle's teaching.

## Faith And Works.

The relationship of faith and works is best understood against a background of the experience of Paul in communion with God, and in his controversy with the Judaizers. Naturally, his Pharisaic background colors his whole conception of faith and works. He knew the agony and frustration of attempting to establish righteousness before a righteous God through strict and meticulous adherence to the Law and its legalistic code of conduct. The failure is summarized in a typical statement in his Roman letter, "For, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3). He knew that experience personally. He knew the bitterness of defeat in spite of deep and zealous striving. The Judaistic desire to attain righteousness by careful observance of every detail of the Law was always the desire of the life of Saul of Tarsus. But, there is evidence that both before and after conversion Paul knew that this was impossible. Some other method was needed. This was to be found in God's gift of righteousness which came to men through the sacrifice of His Son.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of ἱλαστήριον (Romans 3:25) as an atoning sacrifice see Hatch, op. cit., p. 57.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time His Righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Romans 3:21-28).

This is, indeed, a monumental passage in that it clearly presents the heart of the Apostle's conception of the relation of faith, justification, righteousness, and works. All through Romans, Galatians, and other letters, it appears in similar form.<sup>40</sup> His Jewish ancestry, though it was a source of great pride, was insufficient. "We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:15-16).

Though of great value for a number of reasons, such passages make the supreme contribution to our survey in

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<sup>40</sup> i.e. Galatians 3:1-13.

giving a clear statement of the primacy of faith in justification.<sup>41</sup> There is a relationship with God and with Christ which faith, and faith alone can bring. We must remember that the idea of righteousness here is immersed in Old Testament thought, which is vivid and stimulating, but nevertheless, hard to define. It is more than an idea of justice or even holiness. Barth called it "the consistency of God with Himself." God is active in the fulfillment of His purposes, and the vindication of His plans. It carries the idea of deliverance and of vindication of the afflicted. Later Judaism placed primary emphasis upon a vindication which came to the individual who conformed to the Law. God alone could give the final verdict, but surely He would consider the degree of conformity to the Law. The anxiety as to God's final decision was always present. Would He acquit, pronounce righteous, or justify the man whose good works merited salvation?

Out of this background Paul drew the frame of reference for his use of righteousness. It meant a number of things to him. It meant the nature of God, Himself, and it meant a status which He gave to men under certain conditions. It was given to men who had the faith response for which God sought. When used to describe the nature of God it sometimes speaks of God's character as a somewhat

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<sup>41</sup> For detailed study of justification see Stewart *op. cit.*, p. 243ff.

abstract thing. "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say, Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" (Romans 3:5). More often it denotes the character of God as an active force. For example, when God reaches out to deliver men from sin in a manner still consistent with Himself, we find the Divine Righteousness actively at work. When Paul speaks of the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16, 17), we have a passage presenting His righteousness actively at work. "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." (1:17a).

When righteousness is related to man's status again we have several related meanings in the Pauline thought. Occasionally Stewart finds that it is an ethical quality.<sup>42</sup> "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield . . . your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). Ordinarily, however, the element of status with God which is given by His grace is the thing in view.

When man responds to God's offer of reconciliation in Christ, He makes a declaration of a new status. That man is now justified for "the just shall live by faith." He is vindicated, He is accepted, He is acquitted, He is pronounced "righteous". "Just as the touch of the royal

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<sup>42</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 248.

sword", says Brunner, "transforms a burgher into a noble, so the divine declaration of forgiveness raises the sinner into a state of righteousness."<sup>43</sup> As Stewart says,

The Old Testament conception here shines clearly through. This is the underlying idea of the words, 'He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' (II Corinthians 5:21). Paul's great ambition--so he tells the Philippians--was to be found in Christ, 'not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith' (Philippians 3:9). The very form of the words (Τῆν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην) emphasizes the fact that man's acceptance has its source, not in human achievement, but in the character of God. In short, the only righteousness which is valid before God is one of God's own conferring. It consists of a radically new relationship to God, and a consequent participation in the life which is life indeed. The gift of this new status Paul calls 'justification'. (δικαίωσις). Resemblances there are to Jewish doctrine, but the difference is momentous and decisive. Pious Jews could only peer into a dim, mysterious future, hoping against hope that God would pronounce a sentence of acquittal at the last. But it was Paul's glorious certainty that for himself, and for all who had faith in Christ, the liberating sentence had been pronounced. What else could the peace and joy which had come to him at Damascus mean? Judaism toiled and hoped and struggled and doubted: Paul possessed. The new life surging in his heart could betoken only one thing--God had accepted him. 'Not guilty' had been the verdict. What, then, had become of his sins, that bitter and grievous burden which had been the problem of long haunted years? God, in accepting him, had blotted them out. They were annulled. Hence justification and forgiveness went hand-in-hand. Daily forgivenesses might still be necessary for daily sins, as Jesus in the great prayer He taught His followers implied: but the initial act was complete. The alien had been proclaimed a member of the household. The defeated devotee of an elusive righteousness had been clothed in

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<sup>43</sup> Emil Brunner, The Mediator, p. 523.



a righteousness of a higher and diviner order. The sinner had been 'justified'.<sup>44</sup>

From this great summary of Pauline thought we may conclude that what 'works'--the slavish devotion to the Law--could never do, God had done in Christ, in the Divine Act, and His offer of righteousness awaited those who believed. For Paul there was no hazy hope, no future promise, no longing, no laboring for some expected prize. He was adopted into the household of faith, the family of God, and it was a present relationship. (Cf. Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:5).

As we have seen, the classic illustration of Judaistic thought for any theological problem was usually that of Abraham. It is so, here. Paul cites Abraham as the example of one who was justified by faith and not of works. (Romans 4:1-25) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (4:3). "He staggered not at the promise of God, (i.e. for an heir) through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (4:20-22). Even circumcision, the distinctive mark of a Jew, the Apostle declared to be the seal of righteousness or justification which the patriarch obtained by faith. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteous-

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<sup>44</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 249.

ness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcized; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcized; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." (Romans 4:11). It is to be remembered that in the Covenant between God and Man, so prominent in Judaistic thinking, circumcision was the sign of that covenant, signifying man's entrance into it.

One question remains. Is this conception so concisely presented here actually original with Paul? We have already indicated his debt to Old Testament thought, and we would also clearly state that the Synoptics present the basic material which serves as the soil from which the idea sprang. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican clearly condemns those who feel a merited righteousness, and who trust in an acceptance before God which is laboriously earned. (Luke 18) Again, the story of the lost son indicates that a clear cut confession of sin, and an abandonment to the mercy of God, brings immediate acceptance and all the rights of sonship. (Luke 15) The elder brother's "merit-philosophy" is condemned. Jesus' attitude toward hypocrisy as exhibited in the Pharisaic mind and life, His whole attitude toward sin and the sinner, His reaching out to seek and to save the lost--all this indicates the Synoptic attitude. "Here is the true root of Paul's conception of justification," says Stewart. "It is no invention of his own. It is no mere legacy of Jewish scholasticism. It

springs from Gospel soil. It bears the stamp of Paul's deep evangelical experience. It mirrors the life and death and teaching of his Lord."<sup>45</sup>

Having clearly repudiated "works" as a means of establishing a valid relationship with God, and having presented faith as the key to a right relationship, Paul rests his case. It must be noted, however, that the true conception of faith in Pauline thought would never be so to dilute the word as to separate it completely from life. We have already seen that faith was not primarily, nor solely, a single act--it was an act and a life, a continuing surrender to Christ. Such a continuing surrender could only be valid if it produced life on a high level. A typical indication of this part of Pauline teaching is the way in which his epistles dealt with both doctrinal and practical matters. Ephesians is divided into two divisions--the first half teaching "what we are to believe", and the second half, "what we are to do."

In Paul's detailed discussion of the relation of the believer to the Spirit, many references indicate that God dwells within the life of the individual believer, and that there are produced qualities of character and conduct that are Christlike, indeed. To the Corinthians Paul said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the

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<sup>45</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 253.

Spirit of God dwelleth in you! (I Corinthians 3:16). What is more, each believer must give evidence of fruit of the Spirit." "The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). What the law could not do in establishing the right relationship with God, what the Law could not do in producing godly character--God, The Holy Spirit, does do for the believer. The right relationship is established, contends Paul, and the right life is produced--by faith!

#### Paul And James.

Certainly, at this point, a brief reference must be made to the relationship between the Pauline literature and the Epistle of James. The limits of this discussion clearly prevent more than a general statement. In Luther's somewhat petulant phrase, "an epistle of straw", the epistle of James is immortalized in a somewhat dubious way. Clearly, in Luther's mind, the conflicting material was too much--it could not be explained. When James explicitly says, "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24) Luther must have felt that this was a clear contradiction to a Pauline conviction that "a man is justified by faith without the works of the law" (Romans 3:2-8).

There are several approaches to the matter. One, like that of Luther, chooses between the two, regarding

them as mutually exclusive. One is right, the other wrong. Another approach is to slur over the difficulty--to ignore the matter by asserting that they do not mean what they say. Neither of these approaches is satisfactory.

When the background, and the frame of reference, of James' thought is understood, the difficulty is not as large as it appears. A careful reading of what is said by both men will indicate that in both instances faith and works are recognized as vital parts of Christian experience. In each case, however, definitions are all important. For James, "pistis" is a word used to describe a kind of legalistic faith, to use a significant, though seemingly contradictory phrase. It was a false kind of faith which involved a dead creedal confession, such as the orthodox Jew gave when he used "Sh'ma" ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord . . . . Deut. 6:4) as a sure means of receiving all the promises of God. James clearly states "Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble" (2:19). With this in mind his use of the classic illustrations of Abraham and Rahab take on new meaning. A mere orthodox assent to some creedal confession was not enough to explain their experiences, their lives, and neither could it solve their dilemmas.

The life, for James, always was an evidence of the right kind of faith--a faith that meant more than a mechanical mental assent, but went farther to include

unconditional surrender of all of a man's personality. His demand, "shew me thy faith without thy works" (2:18) is an impossible one--as he well knew. Faith without works is not only dead--it is not even faith! Thus, where the life was evident there was conclusive proof of the existence of faith.

The terminology was not yet fixed when James wrote, and his epistle is a valuable contribution to any discussion of early Christian faith. Though certainly there is a different emphasis, the major Pauline--James difference lies in definitions and meanings given the words involved, rather than in completely different convictions.

#### Faith And Love.

It is abundantly clear that the truth of the Bible comes to us through a succession of events.<sup>46</sup> Paul was tremendously concerned with events in the life of Christ, as we have already discovered. The supreme event for the individual is the Divine-Human encounter when God is confronted. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and in that great act nothing is more apparent than the love of God for men. We should consider, then, faith and its relation to love.

Says Moffatt, "the God who meets us in Christ, Paul

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<sup>46</sup> C. H. Dodd, The Bible Today, New York, 1947.

teaches, is a God of love who forgives sins because He loves men. The response to this free and forgiving love is believing trust, such trust as carries love with it.<sup>47</sup>

In the revelation of God in Christ, it is abundantly clear to Paul, that we meet a God of love. The love of God and of Christ for men is, indeed, a controlling idea. In all that He seeks to do, it is clearly evident. To love, then, (ἀγάπη) Paul gives great prominence as a Christian virtue. Says Hatch, "It is a fruit of the indwelling Spirit, and consequently it cannot be had without faith; and it is also the greatest of the Christian Graces, for it excels the most striking of the charismatic gifts and is superior even to faith and hope. Moreover, the Apostle believes that love will remain over unchanged into the age that is to be inaugurated at the parousia of Christ (cf. I Corinthians 13)."<sup>48</sup>

In the believer's experience, union with Christ must issue in love. Love is the work of faith par excellence (Cf. I Thessalonians 1:3), and love is the fulfilment of the Law itself. (Romans 13:8ff). Just as he remains "steadfast in faith" (Col. 1:23), so he must be "rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17).<sup>49</sup> Indeed, in view of

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<sup>47</sup> James Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, London, 1929, p. 171.

<sup>48</sup> Hatch, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>49</sup> Tisch. Weiss, v. Sod, place the phrase in verse 18: W. H., in verse 17.

the parousia the Thessalonians are exhorted to "put on the breastplate of faith and love" (I Thessalonians 5:8).

Moffatt believes that "it is in line with the teaching of Jesus that Paul thus summarizes the Christian religion towards God and man; faith (rather than love) towards God, carrying with it love towards other Christians. The combination of the two is one of his creations . . . . No doubt the Christian religion could not be summed up in any phrase, even in 'faith and love'; but these two words together did come nearer than any others to the heart and centre of the movement as it took shape."<sup>50</sup> The phrase, "faith, hope and love", appears to come in quite casually at the end of the great Hymn of Praise to Love, I Corinthians 13. The fact that faith and hope had already been mentioned is often forgotten. Moffatt says,

It is futile to see the origin of such a phrase in Hermetism or elsewhere. Such a collection would not sound strange to the Corinthians, or indeed to any hearers of the apostle if we may assume that his letters reflect his preaching. (He had actually spoken of all three: Galatians 5:6; I Thessalonians 1:3, 5, 8) . . . . Here the special emphasis falls on faith being more than a formal or voluble belief, love being more than a fitful goodwill, or a transient emotion, and hope being something better than a vague, passive yearning.<sup>51</sup>

Faith and love were, then, for Paul correlative terms which described the Christian's response to God, and the

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<sup>50</sup> Moffatt, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 185.



believer's attitude towards others. Faith in Christ, and love for Christ were closely connected, and faith always produced a life of love for men everywhere.

#### Faith And Grace.

Similarly, let us relate faith to "grace", another great word in the Pauline vocabulary. It is found primarily in describing the attitude of God toward man and in His action in redeeming him. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24) "God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:4-9).

These and other similar references present not only the fact of an attitude of God,--yes, that is there. He does reach out in grace, mercy and love toward men. Grace, however, is more than a vague good will, an attitude toward men. It is God in action! It is the motive and the foundation for God's action, but it is an active thing, actively

at work. It is true that "Grace denoted for the primitive Christians the standing relationship of God toward men, not any mood of His which needed to be aroused. Men did not appeal to his grace; His grace appealed to them. The initiative was with Him. Men might refuse grace, or desert it, or fail to use it when it "was offered; but it did not occur to the primitive church to speak of finding grace . . . . Grace had found them."<sup>52</sup>

In the great encounter with God, faith responded to a gracious God, a God who sought the believer, who "hounded" him in a sense with invitations to life, with offers of a new power. "Man's faith answering to God's grace" has even been suggested as a valuable statement of the objective truth in Christianity."<sup>53</sup> But it must be noted that God's grace is present not only at the beginning of the Christian experience. It is just as much present throughout every moment of it. The Believer lives and moves and has his being in the atmosphere of fellowship with a gracious God. Grace characterizes his experience with God each day and in every way. Thus the great answer to Paul's prayer for release from a "thorn in the flesh" has immense significance --"My grace is sufficient for thee." (II Corinthians 12:9). Moreover, Paul regarded God's grace as sustaining him,

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<sup>52</sup> James Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament, London, 1931, p. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 11.

making him what he was. "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (I Corinthians 15:10). So, just as faith characterizes the believer's day by day response to God, so Grace is daily revealed as a characteristic of God, and as God's power in action in human lives. The supreme revelation of God's grace is Jesus Christ. "Grace is so distinctively the mark of revelation in Jesus Christ that he (Paul) reserves it exclusively for the experiences of Christian men. In other words 'grace' belongs to the years A.D., not to B.C.

Strikes for us now the hour of grace

Saviour, since Thou art born.

This is truly a "Pauline couplet."<sup>54</sup> This is not to forget the mercy of God demonstrated in a hundred ways before Christ. But it does point up the supreme revelation of God's purpose and power.

Grace is distinctively a Pauline word. It was a dominating word for him. Its relation to faith lay in what it signified concerning the revelation of God in Christ. That revelation elicited the faith response. "There are two foci of his ellipse, 'all is of grace' and this 'grace is for all'".<sup>55</sup> Always the initiative is with God.

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<sup>54</sup> Moffatt, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>55</sup> Moffatt, op. cit., p. 9.

### Faith And Gnosis.

We cannot forget, either, certain other ideas at work in the first century outside the Christian church which made a tremendous impact upon Christianity. The first century was a momentous one in the history of Greek thought. A new type of thought emerged in that century which we now designate "gnosis". For three hundred years the philosophic methods with their rationalistic basis ruled. The new method involved the idea of a higher knowledge than men had known. It was more than the basic thought of "seeking to know". The old Platonic warning that truth was unattainable unless man could be assisted in his seeking by some Divine Voice had never been forgotten.<sup>56</sup>

It should be noted that the term "Gnosticism" is used today in a confusing variety of ways. Recent authors in Germany have used it in a broad etymological way to include Christian teachers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Hellenistic Jews such as Philo, and pagan writers such as the Hermetists. In this discussion, however, it is restricted to a large and somewhat amorphous group of religious systems described by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in their works against Heresy, Adversus Haereses and Refutatio Omnium Haeresium, and similar systems known from other

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<sup>56</sup> Phaedo 35.

sources. While this use of the term may be somewhat arbitrary in view of the fact that it is not so established by the writers themselves, or other ancient authorities, it has been widely used by theologians in this way.

The various systems differ widely, but they do have many "points of contact" with Christian thought. This is true in the relation between faith and knowledge.

As. E. F. Scott says,

The natural faculties had failed to lay hold of the final realities, and by their nature are incapable of ever succeeding. Recourse must therefore be had to other means of knowledge. It might be that in myths and symbols of ancient religions God has spoken, and that by the light thus given men might spell out the hidden things. It was certain that in the soul itself there were capacities not yet explored, affinities between man's own life and the greater life of which he was obscurely conscious. The aim of Gnosis was to awaken these dormant faculties and call them to the aid of reason. If reason was blind there might yet be hidden somewhere in man's irrational nature a true power of vision.<sup>57</sup>

In the Gnostic systems of Basilides, Justin, and Valentinus, we find the basic idea of a metaphysical dualism. There is a lower and a higher world, one material and the other spiritual. They attempt to relate the two. For example, Basilides pictures it thus:

In the beginning there were light and darkness . . . . When each of these came to recognition of the other, and the darkness contemplated the light, the darkness as if seized with desire of the better thing, pursued after it, and desired to be mingled with it and to participate in it. But while the darkness did this,

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<sup>57</sup> E. F. Scott, The New Testament Idea of Revelation, London, 1935, p. 122.

the light by no means received anything of the darkness into itself, nor desired anything of it, albeit it too suffered the desire to behold. So it beheld the darkness as if in a mirror. Thus a certain colour of light (enfasis, id est color quidam lucis) alone came to the darkness . . . . Hence there is no perfect good in this world and what there is of good at all is very little . . . . Nevertheless, by reason of this little bit of light, or rather of this sort of appearance of light, the creatures had power to generate a likeness tending towards that admixture which they had conceived from the light.<sup>58</sup>

The systems of Justin and Valentinus, as described by Hippolytus and Irenaeus, are more complicated, but through allegory and parable deal with this basic relation between the higher and lower orders and reflect many Christian ideas.<sup>59</sup>

Of particular interest is the identification of Christ as the first true Gnostic.<sup>60</sup> Basilides seeks to convey the Christian Gospel as Gnosis. In the Gnostic systems the idea of a Mediator is widely employed. Redemption comes through Gnosis.<sup>61</sup>

All of this is related to Christian teaching in many ways. The idea of a basic need for revelation of some kind is important. If the truth was to be known, some assistance was needed in order to grasp it. Clement of Alexandria

<sup>58</sup> Hegemonius, Acta Archelai LXVII 7-11. For a more elaborate form of Basilidian thought on this relation, cf. Hippolytus, Refutatio Omnium Haeresium VII 21.

<sup>59</sup> Hippolytus, Refut. VII 25, V 23-28, VI 21-37. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I. 1-14.

<sup>60</sup> Hippolytus, Refut. VII 26.

<sup>61</sup> Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I 14. Hippolytus, Refut. V

suggested that the use of "faith" and "knowledge" to mark successive stages in spiritual progress went back to Valentinus.<sup>62</sup> Clement and Origen accepted them in order to establish the right to pursue their scientific and speculative theology within the Church. Faith became a summary knowledge of urgent truths, and knowledge a demonstration of what has been received through faith, being itself built upon faith. Faith is the first inclination toward salvation.

In the Book of Baruch, attributed to Justin, there is a mythical adaptation of Old Testament material which has a short Christian episode in the scheme. This episode presents Jesus as the first initiate into the true Gnosis.<sup>63</sup> Through this position there is cleansing.

No doubt these emphases and characteristics were not only known by New Testament writers but they had some influence on them, either positively or negatively. Paul clearly recognized both the virtues and the faults of this philosophy. Although he valued it for its emphasis on the need for assistance in knowing, he rejected it on the basis that man, not God, took the initiative. The Gospel originated with God. "The world by wisdom knew not God . . . ." (I Cor. 1:21). His Gospel had been received. (I Cor. 15:3ff)

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<sup>62</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Strom. II 111 10.

<sup>63</sup> Hippolytus, Refut. V 23-28.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." (I Cor. 2:9-13).

Gnosis might speak of a "direct apprehension of God" but it had nothing to say of God's nature.<sup>64</sup> God has revealed this knowledge to those who believe.<sup>65</sup> After praying that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, Paul indicates the blessings which result for the Ephesian Christians. Among them is the blessing of knowing the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. (Ephesians 3:19). Always he cautions his readers that they have imperfect knowledge, however, even in the wisdom which comes to believing hearts. "For we know in part", he says in the great Hymn of Praise to Love, "and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away . . . . For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (I Corinthians 13:9, 10, 12). What is more important, even knowledge at its best has its perils. The peril of pride is obvious. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." (I Corinthians 8:1b).

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<sup>64</sup> Scott, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 166.



Knowledge comes, then, not out of the wisdom of men, but from God to the believing heart and mind.

#### Faith And Hope.

We cannot fail to give at least a look into the relation of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΕΛΠΙΣ in Pauline literature. So often grouped with faith and love, hope is a great word of the early Christian Church. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13) is the most familiar instance of the use of this triad of vital Christian virtues. Our word "hope" is typical of the English words which do not contain the thought which occupied so large a place in primitive Christianity. "ΕΛΠΙΣ" for early Christians was never a vague and shallow optimism--a grasping at some last straw--with the wish that all may be well at last. It had the ring of certainty to it, the confidence which remained unshaken. In the Colossian letter, Paul gives thanks for faith, love and hope in the Colossian experience of Christianity. The hope is "laid up for you in heaven" (1:5) and came through hearing the truth of the Gospel. In the Thessalonian correspondence, the phrase "the hope of salvation" (I Thessalonians 5:8) also has the forward look. To the Romans, Paul wrote of rejoicing "in hope of the glory of God" (5:2). The hope of glory was, indeed, the familiar conception of union with Christ, "Christ in you" (Colossians

1:27). Primarily, Paul used the word to describe the sure and certain confidence of the fulfillment of God's promises concerning "salvation" which would be consummated in the Age to Come at the parousia. Says Stewart, "It is characteristic of Paul that, while rejoicing in the assured possession of a real and present salvation he can also gaze away into the future and see visions and dream dreams of a culminating and glorious day of the Lord."<sup>66</sup>

There is so much which is a present possession--sonship, redemption, the certainty of the presence of Christ, joy, peace, glory--but the full realization of all this is yet ahead. We may never forget that the entrance into the Kingdom was an accomplished fact in the fullest sense of the word. (i.e. I Corinthians 6:11). "They had passed into a new realm of being. Things which prophets and kings of olden time had yearned in vain to see and hear were now happening all around them. Eternity had broken through into time, Christ was with them. The Spirit was in control. Their own lives were eternal."<sup>67</sup>

It cannot be argued from this that Paul's principal concern was an eschatological one. The emphasis on the present union with Christ is too strong to allow such a conclusion. Nevertheless, hope was a vital part of his

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<sup>66</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>67</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 262.

experience. All the believer has now is indeed wonderful. But it is still a "foretaste" (Romans 8:23) and an "earnest" (II Corinthians 1:22) of still greater things to come. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour" (Philippians 3:20). With deep expectancy Paul could cry "Maranatha" (I Corinthians 16:22), "Lord, Come!", for then the final victory would be won, and the ultimate in Christian experience would be his. In the great struggle with spiritual adversaries (Cf. Eph. 6:12) the fight was fierce now, but then all would be concluded in triumph! The individual believer would have a life of endless glory. This is the Hope which the Apostle possessed, because he believed! Hope is the logical result of faith.

#### Conclusion.

Through all of Pauline thought, therefore, we can trace a continuity. God has broken into history in the person of Christ Jesus, confronting man, taking the initiative, reaching out to him in his great dilemma, and offering a great and glorious new life. This life is life "in the Spirit", a life of union with Christ, a life of love, of hope, of joy. Man enters it when he responds to God's gracious invitation with a great act of faith, an act of complete and unconditional surrender to Christ and to God. All that follows is marked with that faith, with day by day commitment to Christ and to God. That life will have

its final consummation at the parousia toward which Paul looked with great expectancy. Faith appears in various ways in the Epistles, but this is the basic idea and the more important one. The great glad news of Christ was indeed the power of God unto salvation--to everyone that believeth! Accepting the truth of the kerygmatic declaration, the individual believer gave his life over into the hands of Christ, and discovered a great new life resulting from union with Him. This act, so basic, and final, and yet so continuing a process, was to Paul--faith.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE JOHANNINE CONCEPTION OF FAITH

The Fourth Gospel is, paradoxically, both simple and complicated. No book in the Bible has presented more difficult problems to the scholar, and yet no Book is, on the surface, clearer in purpose and in message. There is no doubt that the material presented is the result of a definite purpose in the mind of the author, a purpose which results in a specifically selective process. The aim of the author is clearly stated, and the selective process is definitely evident.

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this Book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name. (John 20:30, 31).

This purpose of the author governs our investigation of his conception of faith. At the heart of this conception we find the idea of revelation and response. Revelation is related to Jesus Christ. Response is related to the basic factors of spiritual experience which are presented as "faith" and "life". The relationship between these two factors is important. The two are inseparable. The great words for "believing" are in the

present tense here,<sup>1</sup> and thus carry the force of continuing to believe, and to keep on believing. We note that faith is related to a conviction concerning Jesus of Nazareth, with material selected to convince the readers that He is Messiah, to strengthen any conviction already present, and thus to give them that continuing possession of life. Life was the great result of faith.

It is from this point of view of the author's express purpose that we consider his conception of faith. As has been the case in a basic survey of this character, we must resist the temptation to turn aside to consider in detail the important problems of date, authorship, historicity, authenticity and sources. Let it be simply stated at the outset that certain presuppositions are taken as the basis for this survey. The historicity and authenticity of the Gospel are accepted--but not without an awareness of the difficulties existing. Although it may have been dictated by the Apostle John to John the Elder, and thus have been affected by the mind of the latter, it still reveals in an essential way the mind of the

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of purpose is expressed with  $\iota\nu\alpha$ , and the present active subjunctive of  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ . The participle  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  is present, and  $\epsilon\chi\eta\tau\epsilon$  is the present active subjunctive. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1952, p. 31, Footnote 3.

Apostle.<sup>2</sup> It seems likely that it was written at the end of the first century, from Ephesus.<sup>3</sup> We shall consider the matter of origins of thought, and relationships to other New Testament books in detail further on.

Let us return then to the purpose of the Book.

#### The Purpose of the Author.

We have seen that the aim of the author is clearly

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Temple, Hoskyns, Headlam, et al. Rudolf Bultmann has propounded a thesis which ascribes the thought of the Fourth Gospel to Mandaean influence. He contends that the Fourth Gospel represents a Christian revision of the myth current in the Baptist (Nazoraean or Mandaean) sect, in which the leading ideas are those of the originally Iranian myth in its Mandaean form, and the claim is made for Jesus that He is in fact the divine Messenger who descends and ascends again for the salvation of the world. The type of Christian thought which it represents, being very close to that of Mandaeism and of its founder John the Baptist, is actually more primitive than that represented by the Synoptic Gospels, which are the product of Jewish reaction. While there are impressive parallels in support of this thesis, the evidence is far too slim to establish it firmly. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, ZNTW, xxiv (1925) pp. 100ff. Rudolf Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Gottingen, 1952, (3rd ed.) pp. 1ff. Dodd disagrees. "It seems that we must conclude that the Mandaean literature has not that direct and outstanding importance for the study of the Fourth Gospel which has been attributed to it by Lidzbarski, Reitzenstein and Bultmann, since it is hazardous, in the presence of obvious and pervasive Christian influence, to use any part of it as direct evidence for a pre-Christian cult or mythology." The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, The University Press, Cambridge, 1953, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Dodd thinks of the readers of the Fourth Gospel as "consisting primarily of devout and thoughtful persons (for the thoughtless and religiously indifferent would never trouble to open such a book as this) in the varied and cosmopolitan society of a great Hellenistic city such as Ephesus under the Roman Empire." Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 9.

stated at the close of the book. "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the Disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." (20:30, 31).

It is profoundly true that,

the Fourth Gospel must remain to a large extent enigmatic unless the purpose for which it was originally written can be defined in such a manner as to explain the author's vigour and concentration. He has forged his book into one whole, its unity being secured by a steady revolution around one central theme, indeed, around one point where the author has seen the truth manifested in the darkness.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, many motives have been assigned to the author. Some have thought that his effort was polemical in nature. It was designed, it is said, to refute the heresies of Cerinthus, or the Gnostics. Others have felt that it was written to complete the message of the Synoptic Gospels. Still others have attributed to it a speculative or syncretistic motive, considering it an effort to bring primitive Christianity into line with Hellenistic philosophy. Yet all these views fail to take into account the express purpose of the author in the book itself. All of these ideas may have influenced the author, but they are of minor importance. He did recognize certain conflicting streams of thought, and that awareness affected his work. The

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<sup>4</sup> E. C. Hoskyns, (ed. by F. N. Davey), The Fourth Gospel, London, Faber and Faber, 1947, p. 48.



Fourth Gospel does give us more knowledge of Christ's life, and add to our understanding of His significance for the world. As we shall see later, moreover, the key statement of the prologue, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . ." (1:14) precludes a dogmatic assertion that what we have is a syncretism of Hellenistic and Christian ideas. The statement is so foreign to the Hellenistic idea of divine-human relations as to preclude a suggestion of a speculative, or syncretistic motive.

Thus, although these ideas have some minor influence upon the mind of the author, the major purpose is clearly stated. Let us consider it somewhat further.

The principle of selection is obvious. Evidently a great deal of material was available, but the idea was not to give a biography of the life of Jesus, but to present that material which would accomplish the aim of the book. None of the Gospels are biographical in a general sense. All of them used, to some degree, this principle. As E. F. Scott puts it in a recent book:

The writers are passionately convinced of the divine significance of Jesus, and of the truth of His message. They wish their readers to believe in Him as they do themselves. It was with this object that they drew up a narrative of His earthly life . . . .<sup>5</sup>

Earlier, Marcus Dods writing of the Fourth Gospel,

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<sup>5</sup> E. F. Scott, The Purpose of the Gospels, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1949, p. 85.

said, "If not a dogmatic treatise, (a 'lehrschrift'), it is at any rate a history with a dogmatic purpose."<sup>6</sup> He carefully selects the "signs" therefore, to fit the purpose.

To understand this purpose, it is necessary, too, to understand his idea of man and of Christ. Like the synoptics, the Gospel breathes an atmosphere of deep conviction that in Christ all the prophetic longings of the Old Testament are fulfilled, that in Him, man can see most the revelation of God. Through faith in Him, man, once alienated from God, can be brought into an experience of knowledge of Him, fellowship with Him, and an eternal life. The Gospel is written to authenticate this personal belief so that other men would come to it, too.

His great ideas of man, of Christ, of faith, of life, are at the heart of the Divine-human encounter. When these ideas come together, then we understand something of the crisis of that encounter. We should never be

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<sup>6</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. I, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, p. 678. Dodd writes, "It will have become clear that I regard the Fourth Gospel as being in its essential character a theological work, rather than a history. Nevertheless the writer has chosen to set forth his theology under the literary form of a 'Gospel', a form created by Christianity for its own proper purposes. A gospel in this sense consists of a recital of the historical narrative of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, prefaced by some account of His ministry in word and deed. To this type the Fourth Gospel conforms, and in this it differs from all other contemporary literature which has the same aim--to set forth the knowledge of God which is eternal life." Dodd, op. cit., p. 444.

satisfied until we stand where the first readers of the Gospel stood. For as Hoskyns puts it, the reader,

Must not rest until this position is found to be charged with universal significance, until he stands here naturally because it is his inevitable position as a man. He must not rest until he stands where the Jews once stood and did not apprehend, and where Abraham and Isaiah once stood and did not apprehend: until he stands confronted, not by the evolution of history, not even by the development of the Church, but by the Last Hour; until, that is to say, he stands confronted by the truth, until the present time is confronted by Eternity, and until the present place is met by the meaning of history--in fact, until he stands before God.<sup>7</sup>

Before we consider his conception of faith, we must state briefly his conception of man, and more importantly, his conception of Christ. In order to understand all three, let us also look briefly at the origins of his thought, and the place his gospel has in relation to the rest of the Scripture.

#### Johannine Origins.

W. F. Howard, in 1932, surveyed the various ideas which had been advanced to explain the origins of the Johannine message. Four major ideas are summarized:

First, there is the theory that Greek philosophic thought, mediated through Alexandria by way of Philo, is the key to the true understanding of this Gospel. Secondly, Hellenistic mystery religions, with their stress upon union with divinity through sacramental acts, are said to have contributed ideas and phrases,

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<sup>7</sup> Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 49.

which have left a deep mark upon the Evangelist's mind. Thirdly, some of the peculiar features of the Gospel are believed to prove kinship with Gnosticism in several of its forms. Finally, there is a strong reaction already setting in against looking to the ends of the earth for influences which were at the time operating in various ways within the borders of Judaism.<sup>8</sup>

This last reaction, it seems to many today, is the valid one. The first theory suggested, that the Gospel arose from the Hellenizing work of Philo of Alexandria who sought to form a synthesis of the Old Testament and Hellenistic thought, is based upon the use of the term "Logos" in the Fourth Gospel. No one would deny that Philo's influence is keenly felt throughout the Greek speaking world of that day. In dealing with the Johannine conception of Christ, however, we shall see that the use of the same word does not lead to identity of thought. As a matter of fact, it appears that the word had different meanings for Philo and the writer of the Fourth Gospel. For Philo, the "logos" expressed ". . . that personified activity of God in creation and revelation which was represented in later

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<sup>8</sup> W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, London, Epworth Press, 1931, pp. 159-60. A recent description of the setting of the Epistle is given by Dodd in his discussion of the Fourth Gospel published in 1952. For parallels in Johannine and contemporary thought, cf. Dodd, op. cit., p. 10 (Hermetic Literature), p. 54 (Hellenistic Judaism), p. 74 (Rabbinic Judaism), and p. 97 (Gnosticism). Parallels may be cited, but it is difficult to establish sources of Johannine thought as a result of these parallels.

Jewish thought by the conception of Wisdom."<sup>9</sup> God, moreover, was transcendent and unapproachable. The 'logos' was a mediating power that came into the world to bring men to knowledge of God. For the Johannine mind, however, the 'logos' was not a metaphysical idea. He was the Divine becoming incarnate, bringing not mere rational knowledge, but spiritual fellowship with God Himself. The Logos was a person--not truth personified. Thus, though there is a similarity, there is a basic difference which is most important. As Dr. Howard points out in a later book, recent studies such as those of Strack-Billerbeck and Kittel, have done much to cause the idea of Philonic influence to wane.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the Hebraic influence is seen in the identification of Wisdom and Torah in rabbinic studies as the real background of the 'logos' concept.<sup>11</sup> In the prologue we read, "The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17). Here the Logos which became flesh is seen to be the fulfillment of the Law, the Torah, the final declaration of the Divine Nature. (1:18). In Jesus the Divine became historically real, revealing the true nature of God and opening the way for fellowship with Him in eternal life. It is clearly a non-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. F. Howard, Christianity According to St. John, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1946, pp. 48, 51.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-51.

Philonic concept. The same term is used, but with differing content.

The second theory, particularly stressed by Bousset and Schweitzer,<sup>12</sup> is that the Gospel was deeply influenced by the Hellenistic mystery religions with their idea of the union with the Divine through sacramental acts. Both Paul and John are products of Hellenic mysticism and John particularly worked out a type of God-mysticism characteristic of the Hellenic thought. These sacramental acts are the Lord's Supper and Baptism. Such a view must have some presuppositions which may be seriously challenged. If the late date of the Gospel is selected, and if it is assumed that this is a Hellenic document, seeking to Hellenize Christianity, then the reference in Chapter Three to "being born of water and spirit," and "of eating of flesh and blood", may be applied to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The evidence of the papyrus dated at about 125 A.D. and now in the Rylands Library, Manchester, does not allow for a very late dating of the gospel as formerly assumed. Rabbinical scholars had already prepared for these conceptions, as we have seen, and a Jewish view is far more compatible with the spirit of the Gospel. As Howard states it,

. . . the emphasis put upon faith, and on the ethical demands of the new commandment, in the very passages where the mystical union with Christ is most

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, p. 163ff.

prominent leaves an impression on the mind of the reader that we are far removed from the outlook of Hellenistic mysticism.<sup>13</sup>

The third theory, that the Fourth Gospel was influenced by Oriental modifications of Platonic Gnosticism likewise depended on a late dating of the Fourth Gospel, and this is now impossible. It is true that some still seek to show it as a product of Hellenistic thought. Bacon, in 1933, sought to show that it was the work of John the Elder, a Hellenist who attempted to Hellenize the Christian faith for his readers in Asia.<sup>14</sup> In 1943, E. F. Scott set forth much the same view with certain modifications.

This is the position of the Fourth Evangelist. He has no quarrel with the traditional faith, and does not wish to change it into something different. Neither does he make any deliberate effort to conform it to the Hellenistic modes of thinking. But he himself is a Hellenist, and apocryptic ideas were not congenial to him as they were to Palestinian Jews. He replaces them with others which come nearer to his own convictions . . . . He described things that meant most to him in terms of his own habitual thought, which was that of a Hellenist of Asia Minor.<sup>15</sup>

These, however, must be set against a large number of other interpreters who have recently presented the view that the Gospel is basically Hebraic in background.<sup>16</sup> One

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<sup>13</sup> Howard, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>14</sup> B. W. Bacon, The Gospel of the Hellenists, New York Henry Holt & Co., 1933.

<sup>15</sup> E. F. Scott, The Varieties of New Testament Religion, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1943, pp. 276-77.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hoskyns, Strachan, Wright, and Howard.

of the best arguments in favor of that position, though, may be found in a collection of notes printed, after the author's death, in 1920.<sup>17</sup> Dr. Holland argues the Hebraic origin from the whole movement of thought in the Fourth Gospel. If there is any Hellenistic quality in the Fourth Gospel, it certainly is Christianized Hellenism, and not Hellenized Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

Positively, there are definite indications of this Hebraic quality of thought. First, there are the titles ascribed to Jesus in the Gospel, and the metaphors which He uses. We shall discuss the Son of God and Son of Man more fully later. Titles such as Vine, Good Shepherd, Bread of Life, Light of the World find their counterpart in the Old Testament. As Holland puts it,

Nor can we be surprised to find that such a Jew as this is steeped and saturated through and through with the Jewish Scriptures. His imagination is wholly held within their frontiers. His phraseology knows no other world. Every symbol, every allusion, every metaphor he uses runs back to this one source. Shepherd, vine, dove, spouse, bread, wind, water; the contrasted pairs in which life's antithesis is summed, life and death, light and darkness, love and hate; all these are notes of a mind over which the Old Testament holds an instinctive and spontaneous and life long sway. Its presence, its mastery, is to be felt underlying every phrase. And no other literary influence touches the author. The whole book throbs with the very soul of Hebraism.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Henry Scott Holland, The Philosophy of Faith and The Fourth Gospel, New York, Dutton, 1920, pp. 156-68.

<sup>18</sup> Oscar Cullmann, (trans. by Floyd Filson), Christ and Time, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1950, p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> Holland, op. cit., p. 160.



To this we add a later comment:

As far as the religious thought of the author is concerned, it is dominated by the conviction which runs through the Old Testament--namely, that the purpose of the Eternal God is manifest in the events of time. Eternity was not sundered from history, but revealed in history. There is no more Jewish Writer, in the New Testament, than the Johannine Evangelist.<sup>20</sup>

This Hebraic influence may be seen in several specific ways. First, the Messiahship of Jesus was more or less an open secret throughout His ministry. John the Baptist spoke of his own function in terms of the Coming One. Andrew and Philip, in the burst of enthusiasm characteristic of faith, rushed away to announce that they had found the one of whom Moses wrote, the Messiah. (1:15, 41, 45). In Chapter Three John the Baptist's witness is explicitly stated. In Chapter Four, Jesus affirms His Messianic nature to the Woman of Samaria. In 5:46, in His controversy with the Jews, the claim is made. (Cf. 10:24-25). In addition to direct witnesses, again and again events are given Messianic significance. In fulfillment of Messianic prophecies, the author presents the events of the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments, (19:24), hatred of Jesus without cause, (15:25); and gazing upon the One whom they had pierced, (19:37).

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<sup>20</sup> H. D. A. Major, T. W. Manson, and C. J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus, New York, Dutton, 1946.

To Nathaniel, Jesus was "Son of God", and "King of Israel", both Messianic ideas. The climax of public revelations, however, came in the use of the Suffering Servant concept in 12:38. It is in reference to this righteous servant, that John pictures the awesome unbelief of the Jews. His suffering consisted in the fact that He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. (1:11). John hinted at it when he spoke of the Lamb of God. (1:29). In Chapter Twelve, the universal mission of the suffering servant is revealed more fully.

The relation of the gospel to the Old Testament may be seen in the concept of the function of the disciples, who as the spiritual descendants of Israel, must share in the creative suffering which would transform the world. (16:33). As the perfect Servant they trusted in Him.

In the great concept of the Covenant between God and man, the Torah was central, as the bond between God and His people. Jesus' relation to the Torah is, as has been suggested, presented in the prologue. "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (1:17). He fulfills the Torah, and super-<sup>21</sup> sedes it as the center of man's relation to God.

For the author, then, Jesus is the fulfillment of

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. G. B. Stevens, The Johannine Theology, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1907, p. 23ff.

two great Old Testament thoughts, the Messiah and the Torah. God's revelation had reached its final climax in Jesus Christ.

#### The Relation Of The Gospel To The New Testament.

In passing, let us note that in recent years there has been a significant change in the conception of the unity of the New Testament. Says Hunter,

Anyone conversant with the most recent work on the New Testament must have sensed in it a change of approach, a change of direction. The scholars are leaving the 'circumference and the corners'; they are 'bent on the centre'. Hitherto their method has been largely centrifugal; now it is becoming more and more centripetal. There is a growing recognition of the essential unity of the New Testament and of the need for synthesis.<sup>22</sup>

We continue to have some emphasis on the differences, however, and still hear of the religion of Paul, the religion of Jesus, and the religion of John. This is not the most common emphasis today, however. E. F. Scott, in 1949, finds that unity, in contrast with his earlier writings.<sup>23</sup>

Typical of the newer attitude is that of C. H. Dodd who finds the kerygma as the basis of the unity of the New Testament. We have seen in our Pauline studies that this was a summary of the early apostolic preaching. The Acts gave us the earliest formulation of this preaching, Paul

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<sup>22</sup> A. M. Hunter, The Message of the New Testament, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1944, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Scott, op. cit.

echoed it, and as Hunter put it, the Gospels are ". . . expanded forms . . . of it."<sup>24</sup> The New Testament then is a unity because it is the preaching about Jesus Christ. The Fourth Gospel may be shown to have a rightful place in the stream of the New Testament thought for it takes up this basic outline of preaching and thought.

First, Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises, the great climactic event in history. The age of fulfillment had dawned. We have just seen something of that fulfillment in our study of Old Testament relationship to this Gospel. John considered that the coming of Christ was God's great act of revelation.

Secondly, he shows something of the ministry, mainly the Judean ministry of Jesus, His death, and His Resurrection and regards them as the critical facts of human history.

Thirdly, He is the Messianic head of the new Israel. (e.g. Chapter 15, the Vine and the Branches). Fourthly, nowhere is the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit more clearly expressed in the New Testament than in Chapter 14, and 16. He is the sign of Christ's present power and glory. Fifthly, there is the expectation of the coming of Christ in the consummation of the Messianic age. Chapter 14. Finally, though repentance has a relatively small

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<sup>24</sup> Hunter, op. cit., p. 30.

place in the gospel, John's ministry sought to prepare men for Christ by urging it. Moreover, faith is such an all-embracing idea here that without it, there could be no complete surrender.

As Hunter says, ". . . the pattern of the kerygma stands out more clearly in the Fourth Gospel than in St. Matthew and St. Luke."<sup>25</sup>

Certainly we recognize the differences which exist between New Testament writers, but they may be regarded as differences due to temperament, experience, and environment rather than as basic disagreements about Christ, the Church, and the Gospel.

As Dodd puts it:

The work of Paul and John represents the most significant and far-reaching developments of the apostolic preaching in the New Testament. As we have seen, their writings, as well as those of other New Testament writers, betray a direct acquaintance with the traditional forms of the kerygma. We could not otherwise account for the way in which they all recur to certain guiding ideas, and even a certain arrangement of these ideas and formulas for expressing them. The primitive kerygma lived on.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, we shall see that faith is presented against the Hebraic background of the Gospel, and that there is no reason to disassociate the Gospel from the other New Test-

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<sup>25</sup> Hunter, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching And Its Developments, p. 121. Dodd does feel, however, that the Pauline influence on Johannine thought is not as great as some believe. Cf. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 5ff.

ament books. They are bound together by the presentation of certain facts of history dealing with God's great Act.

### The Johannine Presentation of Christ.

At the risk of doing injustice through a rigid synthesis, let us consider the Johannine presentation of Jesus, for without that, our study of faith would be incomplete.

It is fundamental to the mind of the writer that the revelation of God reached its highest fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Let us briefly summarize the way in which that revelation is portrayed through the Logos-conception, the Signs, the "I Am" statements, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

#### a. The Logos.

While it is true that the Logos-conception has often been over-emphasized in interpreting the Johannine mind, yet it is vital for it is used effectively by the writer in the prologue of the gospel. Where did it spring from? It was used in Greek philosophy to mean divine reason, immanent both in man and in nature. Heraclitus, writing in Ephesus, first proclaimed that idea. For the Stoics it was the divine ethereal fire, eternal in nature and endowed with creative activity that is the source of all things. Justin Martyr, greatly influencing later interpretation of

John, endeavored to show that every man was born with a portion of the universal reason, with Christ the supreme incarnation of that reason. As Howard says, ". . . it is Justin rather than John who is responsible for the misunderstanding."<sup>27</sup>

Philo has always been regarded by many as the source of John's use of the term. In his synthetic process, he used the term often in its New Testament clothing. He speaks of the Logos as "the Son of God", "image of God", high priest, and the "first born son". But his thought is basically that of divine Reason rather than word.<sup>28</sup> As Howard puts it,

Philo uses the term Logos to express the conception of a Mediator between the transcendent God and the universe, an immanent power active in creation and revelation, but though the Logos is often personified, it is never truly personalized.<sup>29</sup>

Billerbeck has likewise shown that Aramaic term MEMRA of the Targums is not the main source of the idea. The term is

Never employed to express either the dynamic word of creation or the medium of revelation . . . . 'Memra' is not an intermediary nor a hypostasis, but only a purely formal substitute for the sacred tetragrammaton, the ineffable name.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Howard, op. cit., pp. 35, 36.

<sup>28</sup> F. C. Cook, (ed.), The Bible Commentary, New Testament, Vol. 11, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1883, p. xvi.

<sup>29</sup> Howard, op. cit. p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

When we turn to the Old Testament, however, we read of the "Word of the Lord" in terms of an active, intermediary force. (e.g. Isa. 55:11; Psa. 33:6). Although it was not used in identical ways, yet it is not too much to say that a personification of the Word could emerge without too much difficulty.<sup>31</sup> In Proverbs 8 we have an illustration of the Word of God identified with the Wisdom of God. (8:22ff). In all Wisdom literature, and in the interim period, this personification became more prevalent. Howard finds that there is a close similarity between statements about the Law made in Rebbinical days and about the Logos in the Prologue.<sup>32</sup> Here, perhaps, we have the meaning which is most nearly akin to that of John.

Whatever the sources, he is not simply repeating something which he borrowed. This material is unique for it deals with a fresh, unique event. In using the word it takes on new meaning. Logos is the word used by the Septuagint to translate dabar, which meant, "spoken word". As Strachan points out,

It is essential to understand that a spoken word to the Hebrew is not a mere sound uttered through the lips in order to express a meaning. A word is a living thing, and has power to effect things.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>32</sup> Howard, op. cit., p. 50ff.

<sup>33</sup> B. H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, (Rev. ed.), London, Student Christian Movement Press, 1941, p. 91.



John presents the Logos, first, as eternal. "The word was" (1:1) in the beginning. Moreover, the Word was with God. *Προ's* here

implies not merely existence alongside of, but personal intercourse. It means more than *μετα* or *παρ* and is regularly employed in expressing the presence of one person with another.<sup>34</sup>

There is a vital, living relationship between the eternal God, and His Eternal Word. But there is something more. "The Word was God." The fact that the article is missing before God may indicate that while the Word is participating in the Divine, still there is a distinction from God Himself. Now this Word who was in the beginning with God is also with men. Only when His eternality is understood, can we grasp the true meaning of the incarnation.

Secondly, the eternal Word is also the Creative Word. "All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (1:3). God is eternal, but all else that exists became. Existence is dependent upon the Word. (1:4). As the Light, the Word is not overcome by darkness, but "lighteth every man coming into the world." (1:9). The Word, eternal, participating in the Divine nature, yet distinguishable from God, is the agent of creation, the source of all life and

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<sup>34</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, (editor), EGT, op. cit., p. 684.

truth, and has left the imprint of the Divine on all things that exist. No darkness can blot out that light.

Then we come to a crucial step. That Word became flesh, (1:14) but He was unrecognized, unaccepted, and rejected of men. (1:12). As many as received Him, He gave them the right to become children of God. (1:10-12) Even John's witness could not persuade men to embrace Him.

Thus, in a unique sense, He presents the unbelievable, magnificent fact: God has become man! Only the eyes of faith can see that fact; but it is eternally true, God has invaded history, and has spoken, once and for all, in the man, Jesus Christ.

The rest of the Gospel tells us of what His message is, portraying it in deeds, rather than in words. Full of grace and truth, men beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father.<sup>35</sup>

Because He does what He is, then His work is consistent with His nature.

Speaking to the Jews who had seen the loss of all that was considered basic in religion, the holy city, the Temple, Jesus was presented as one who superseded the Torah, took the place of the Temple, and whose followers were more than the chosen people. By rebirth through faith, they came to a new standing as the people of God.

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<sup>35</sup> Glory, simply put, may be defined as the self-revealed character of God.

b. The Son Of Man.

There is no doubt as to the humanity of Jesus. The Gospel is too full of references to his weariness, (4:6), his tears, (11:35), his thirst, (19:28), his shed blood (19:34), his body, (20:27) to fall into any Docetic fallacy.

Does, however, the phrase "Son of Man" have always a human connotation? Eleven times the phrase was recorded as upon his lips.

1. First, the words "ascending" and "descending" appear in three of the references. In His conversation with Nathaniel, Jesus tells him that he will see "the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending to the Son of Man" (1:51). In the conversation with Nicodemus rebuking him gently for his blindness, He says, "no one hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven." (3:13). As many forsake Him, He asks, "Does this cause you to stumble? (e.g. eating His flesh and drinking His blood). What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?" (6:62). In each instance there is the conflict and doubt, but men who have the eyes of faith may perceive the revelation of God presented through "the flesh".

Some have thought that the idea of the Son of Man here is alien to that of Daniel and Enoch. The evidence

does not bear this out. Actually, the ascent and descent are figures which have revelatory significance for us, for He came out of the Eternal, and dwells upon the earth, and He alone brings the two together. This is not inconsistent with the Old Testament idea, if all the circumstances are kept in view.

2. The Son of Man was "lifted up". In 3:14 the experience of Numbers 21 is cited with the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. In the act of dying which is completely human, Jesus fulfilled a necessary requirement for His Saviourhood. That experience was not only necessary, but in 8:28, it was the climax of revelation when light and truth would be most clearly seen. Similarly 12:34 presents Him as the Light lifted up, and the discourse on the light of the world follows. Again the term presents the Divine revelation moving through a human channel.

3. The Son of Man gives Himself for the world. In the discourse on the Bread of Life, the multitude is told to work for the food which abideth unto eternal life which the Son of Man shall give you . . . ." (6:27). Similarly, 6:53 cautions them to eat the flesh of the Son of Man if they are to live. Jesus, in His earthly existence gives Himself, and is the means of the Divine self-giving.

4. The Son of Man has authority. In 5:27, we read ". . . and He gave him authority to execute judgment,

because He is Son of Man."

5. Finally, the Son of Man was glorified. Just before the passion, Jesus said, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." (12:23. Similarly 13:31-32). The revelatory significance of His suffering will be unsurpassed. God reaches out in love to men willing to pay any price to reach them. It is His greatest revelation of that love.

### c. The Signs.

In stating the purpose of his account, the author had indicated his selective process of giving a few of many possible signs so that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, they might have life in His name. The word sign, as used here, meant an outward symbol of an inward truth. When Jesus performed a sign, it was, to the writer, an evidence of the eternal truth involved. That which is signified was all-important. In several instances, discourses followed the signs.

As Wright says,

" . . . the centre of gravity in his thought is not the narrated incident, but that which is signified by the narrative. His precise motive in these narratives is to unfold different aspects of the moral and spiritual ministry of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> H. D. A. Major, T. W. Manson, and C. J. Wright, op. cit., p. 688.

Thus the revelation of God in Christ may be seen in the signs selected.

That there are grave difficulties here no one can doubt. Often, much is read into them. If the supreme sign, the resurrection, is included, these eight signs selected should conform to the purpose of the Gospel. They cannot be examined for detailed significance--but should be allowed to make a major witness to this purpose.

#### 1. The Sign Of The Rejoicing, 2:1-11.

The sign at the marriage feast, unlike many others has no interpretive discourse attached. It is the simple narrative of crisis of a wine shortage at the feast. In Mary's appeal to Jesus, His reply to her, Mary's announcement to the servants, and the surprise of the guests, the story unfolds. John tells us that the disciples, unlike the others, recognized his glory in this act, and believed on him. Following this there is the cleansing of the temple, and Jesus' words to the Jews when they ask for a sign of his authority. Speaking of His own body as the temple of God, he says that they may destroy that temple, and God in three days would raise it up. In so saying, He places Himself, rather than the temple, as the center of spiritual life.

Whatever else the sign says, it does speak of the transforming power of God, operative in Christ. In a sense

it depicts the whole ministry of Jesus in transforming men.

As Dods says,

When John recorded this miracle he saw how fitly it stood as the first, rehearsing as it did the entire work of Christ, who came that human happiness might not untimely close in shame.<sup>37</sup>

Westcott finds a three-fold character in the sign.<sup>38</sup> Its essential character is that of sovereign power over inorganic matter. Its circumstantial character was that of changing from a simpler to a richer element. Its moral character was the response of love to faith.

In essence, the sign presented the power of God at work in His Son, a power designed to help and to transform.

## 2. The Sign To The Dying. 4:46-54.

Again, in Cana of Galilee, a sign is given, the healing of the nobleman's son. As in Synoptic incidents, here is one who is desperate for help. His son was at the point of death (4:47). In seemingly harsh and severe words, Jesus replies, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe" (4:48). Was it true faith, or merely a desperate appeal to a wonder-worker? The nobleman's reply indicates his complete abandonment, and in the ensuing experience his faith is authenticated by his immediate act of

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<sup>37</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, (ed), op. cit., p. 706.

<sup>38</sup> F. C. Cook, (ed), op. cit., p. 39.

leaving at the time Jesus spoke. It is significant that the nobleman would be regarded as outcast by the Jews. Thus the universality of His mission is verified.

### 3. The Sign To The Infirm. 5:1-18.

The third sign, unlike the first two, is set in an atmosphere of conflict. One man in that pathetic, waiting multitude at the pool of Bethesda, sought the help of Jesus in getting into the water. The reply was, "Take up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked." (5:8, 9). Two things should be noted here. The spiritual health of a man is emphasized in the word of Jesus to the man when he later finds him in the Temple, "Behold, thou art whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." Jesus is not saying that the affliction was due to the man's sin. At least we can say that he warns that spiritual disease of the soul is to be avoided at all costs. He has the power to remove the barrier between men and God, and give them life. Secondly, there is the matter of healing on the Sabbath. He broke it, in the eyes of the Jews, in the act of healing, and the man broke it in the act of carrying his bed. The significant reply in defense of his act was, "My father worketh even until now, and I work." (5:17).

According to rabbinical teaching, God's activity



continued on the Sabbath,<sup>39</sup> and Jesus then was identifying Himself with the activity of God.

In the work of Jesus the Jews are confronted by the work of God. This work involves, not the violation of the Law of the Sabbath, but its complete overthrow and fulfillment: for its vacuum is filled with the creative, life-giving love of God.<sup>40</sup>

Here, then, is the consciousness of His mission, in the equating of the act with the activity of God. He does not, in so many words, equate Himself with God, but with God's will and purpose, claiming a divine power. This the Jews considered the height of blasphemy.

In the great discourse following the sign, we have a clear presentation of His statement on the relation of the Father and the Son. He shows that His supreme function is to give life, eternal life, to men: and that this life is appropriated to those who believe His word. (5:24). He is the Redeemer of men--all men. (5:28-29).

#### 4. The Sign To The Hungry. 6:1-14.

This is the only sign recorded by all four Evangelists. Although it comes in a different chronological order here, yet it follows the other accounts closely. Like the sign to follow, it presents the function of Christ in redeeming men by moving from a physical fact to a spiritual

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<sup>39</sup> Hoskyns cites Strack-Billerbeck's findings in support of this fact. Cf. Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>40</sup> Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 267.

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The interpretation of the giving of bread to the five thousand with the five barley loaves and two fishes as the basis of a gift is found in the discourse of Jesus. Recognizing that their interest is not spiritual, but political and material, Jesus rejects their claim upon Him as a giver of food. It is natural that He should represent Himself as the bread of life, and caution them to seek that bread. The great fact here is Jesus' consciousness of His mission. As the manna that Moses gave could not perpetuate indefinitely the physical life of the people, neither could the law perpetually give spiritual life. He is now the giver of life to the World. (6:49-50). Moreover, the giving involves sacrifice. (6:61). Not only His cross, but His whole life was an act of sacrificial self-giving.

##### 5. The Sign To The Faithful. 6:15-21.

In the act of coming to the fearful disciples, Jesus showed again His great concern for men. "It is I, be not afraid" (6:20), is among the most comforting words of the Bible. Certainly the presence of Divine power in the midst of grave danger was of great encouragement to the disciples. The incident is significant in that it reveals the great confidence of the disciples in Christ. They were ready to entrust all to Him.

## 6. The Sign To The Blind. 9:1-41.

In the act of giving sight to the blind, Jesus indicates His mission of revelation, of the giving of spiritual sight to the spiritually blind. In the questioning of the Pharisees, Jesus again shows His consciousness of mission. "For judgment came I into the world, that they that see not may see, and that they that see may become blind." By His nature and mission, He creates a crisis for men. He came to redeem. If they reject that redemption, then His coming is full of significance in terms of Judgment.

## 7. The Sign To The Dead. 11:1-57.

The last of the seven signs is that of raising Lazarus from the dead. Here, for the first time, is death robbed of a victim. The sick have been healed, but this is more than the healing of a disease. In it there is seen the glory of God. Jesus said to Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (11:40). Christ is the giver of life--of eternal life. (11:25).

The Jews, already under the judgment of unbelief, begin to plot with finality the death of Christ. They see in Him the enemy of all they stand for and believe, and thus the conflict ends in an inevitable crisis.

What do these signs, so briefly mentioned, reveal concerning Christ? They teach us that He is concerned for the whole nature of man, and that He believes that His mission is to bring them into a right relation with God where life in the fullest sense is to be found. What the Law could not do, He does, in dealing with sin. In the giving of Himself, He reveals the character of the glory of God. The Divine power, working through Him, brings to men the blessing needed. This is, in the mind of the writer, proof that this is God's anointed One, the Coming One, the Christ.

d. The "I Am" Sayings.

The sayings which begin with "I Am" are so numerous that it is impossible to mention them all. There are some which stand out, however, in that they reveal the mind of Christ as to His function in the world. Some of them occur along with the signs already mentioned.

(a) "I Am The Bread Of Life." 6:35, 48.

In connection with the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus declares that He is the bread of life. (6:35, 48). He is the bread which came down out of heaven, (6:41), and is the living bread. (6:51).

If we recognize His consciousness of being sent by the Father to bring life to the world and that He Himself

was "life", then the symbol of the bread is an illustration of that fact. Those who receive Him receive that life. (Cf. 5:26, 1:4). The impartation of life is the function of Christ.

(b) "I Am The Light Of The World." 8:12, 9:5.

Occurring twice and implied in others, (e.g. 1:4, 3:19, 12:46), the dramatic figures of light and darkness illustrate His mission. In the world there is darkness and those who know not God live in it. Through faith men come into the right relation with God, and live in the light. (8:12. Cf. 11:9-10, 12:35-36).

In the prologue the Word is the Light, which came from the Father. It is symbolic of life, even as darkness is symbolic of death. Believers become the sons of light. (12:36).

(c) "I Am The Door." 10:7, 9.

In the story of the Good Shepherd, this saying and the next occur in the same context. Each makes a contribution to the idea of Christ's mission. Here He is pictured as the way by which the sheep enter the fold. It is a unique function, as the reference to thieves and robbers shows, and it is another way of saying "I am the Way . . . ." (14:6). He is the way by which men reach that perfect harmony with God.

## (d) "I Am The Good Shepherd." 10:11.

This is perhaps more important. No figure could have been more forceful to the readers than this. He is the good shepherd caring for the sheep, providing for them, leading them, guiding them, and laying down his life for them. All this is to the end that they may have life and have it more abundantly. It is an entirely voluntary act of self-giving. (10:17, 18). This is, of course, typical of the Johannine conception of Christ's function.

## (e) "I Am The Resurrection And The Life." 11:25.

This, of course, is another saying in connection with a sign, that of raising Lazarus. Martha has just spoken of her belief in the final resurrection at the last day--a Pharisaic teaching of that time. Jesus, asserting that He fulfills that teaching, presents Himself as the Resurrection, the giver of life to men. "Jesus is the Resurrection because He is the Life. Through faith in Jesus, Christians possess eternal life."<sup>41</sup>

It is more than the power to call men back from physical death. He offers release from the bondage of spiritual death as well, a victory over sin. Faith is the requisite for this divine action, and believers enter into

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<sup>41</sup> Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 402.

that victory.

(f) "I Am The Way, The Truth, And The Life." 14:4ff.

In His reply to Thomas, Jesus, for a second time speaks of Himself as life. It is a statement to the disciples during the last intimate moments of His life with them. We understand His essential nature as life. The words way and truth are similar to door and light. As the one having Life, He is the way through which men find life, and find their entrance into God's fellowship. He again pictures His work in terms of sacrificial self-giving.

(g) "I Am The Vine." 15:1.

Here again the life-giving work of Christ is pictured, for the branches get life through their union with the vine. That life is evidenced in the production of fruit. (15:4, 6-9).

Three times Jesus simply says, I am. Although the word "he" is often added, there is no warrant for doing so. To the woman of Samaria (Chapter IV), and to the Jews, (8:24), (8:59), the "I am" reveals His consciousness of the Divine fulfillment in His own life and mission.

All these signs and sayings reveal to us His nature and His mission, and the relation between the two. He has a mission consistent with His nature. He is life--He gives

life. He is light--He is the resurrection. Above all, He gives Himself completely to accomplish this mission. He is presented as giving Himself for ( ὁτι ἐφ' ) (for the sake of) men. (6:51, 10:11, 15, 11:51-2, 15:13, 17:19). (For the sake of, not in place of, man).

Let us summarize briefly, then, the Johannine conception of Jesus' mission.

First, His supreme task was to impart life, eternal life to men, which He alone can give by virtue of His union with the Father. Second, this is to be accomplished by revealing to men the true nature of God through His own being as the fulfillment of the Mosaic tradition and as Messiah. Third, in the giving of life there is victory over sin, death, and the world. Man, a sinner, can have that life and victory through faith. Fourth, this revelation finds its climax in Jesus' self-giving in life and in death.

#### The Cross And The Resurrection

The fourth theme, then, finds its place in the climactic moments of Jesus ministry. Revelation by word and by sign is completed in the events of the Cross and Resurrection.

Everything Jesus has said about Himself is focused in the way He went to His death. Everything He has said about the Father is revealed on a Cross, whereon the Son incarnates the Father's own mind and purpose . . . . God has spoken in man . . . the Father's mind



is incarnate in Him who knew Himself to be the Son.<sup>42</sup>

The Cross, then, is an act of fulfillment where the revelation of the Word become flesh is completed. He suffers and dies, in order to complete His mission of redemption. It is the absolute fulfillment of the divine self-giving. It is the cup given Him to drink. Here the love of God may be seen with the eyes of faith in its greatest manifestation. (3:16).

The great conflict of sin and righteousness is resolved, for righteousness emerges triumphant in the cross and resurrection. Sin did its worst, and God triumphed. John places the event of the crucifixion on the day of preparation for the Passover, rather than on the day of the Feast as do the Synoptists. To the author, it had spiritual significance. As the paschal lamb was slain, the Lamb of God was lifted up for the redemption of the world.

Of course, if the cross had been the end, all of this would have been buried in the depths of history. Thus the resurrection is the supreme sign. Without it, the others would be empty indeed. The disciples, slow to believe, finally accept it (Chapter 20). In it, His eternal life and victory are revealed. It is the seal, placed upon all that had been done. Thus, He is presented in the

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<sup>42</sup> Major, Manson, and Wright, op. cit., p. 906.

Fourth Gospel, as God's Son, the Coming One. What response to this revelation is demanded, then, of men?

### The Johannine Conception Of Man

If we are to understand the response of man, we must sketch in very broad outlines, the nature of man as John presents him. In the Fourth Gospel, the kosmos is viewed in three ways. First, the sum total of God's creation; second, the sinful world of men, rebelling against God; and third, that alienated mass of men which is the object of God's redemptive purpose. Thus, man is a creature, a sinful creature, and a sinful creature who is the object of God's redemptive purpose.

#### a. Creature.

In the prologue, it is stated "All things were made through Him and without Him, was not anything made that hath been made." (1:3). Man is obviously included. And, this in the moment of creation, there is a relation between the Creator and the Created, between God and Man. There is an echo here of Genesis 1:1, "In the Beginning God created." This idea of createdness is basically Hebraic. Although man has some knowledge of God as a creature, still he does not come to full knowledge except through the light which is in Christ. In man there is a capacity for a choice, for some received and some rejected that light. (1:10-12).

Those who accepted Christ were made children of God.

What is more, man was created for a purpose. In the signs of the healing of the blind man (9:3) and of Lazarus (11:40) Jesus declared that this purpose was the glory of God. His own mission was ultimately to glorify God. (17:1, 18:37). Thus, the glory of God, that self-revealed character and being, was manifested in the human body and personality of Christ. In life and death this glory was present.<sup>43</sup> It was man's mission, moreover, to make evident in his own life, this glory. As Strachan warns us:

We shall miss the meaning of 'glory' in this gospel unless we realize that to the Evangelist, even with all his heightening of effects in the story of Jesus' life, 'glory' is not just the display of Divine Majesty and power to be wondered at and admired. It stands for the final act of the living God in history, through the person and mission of Jesus, directed towards the bringing of all men into the family of God. Christ is said to give His disciples His own glory. That means not merely life after death, but life here and now. They are enabled to reproduce in their own lives, and mission, the active love and power of the Father. 'Glory' in this Gospel is God in action through Jesus Christ, bringing the whole 'weight' or riches of the love of the Father to bear on the world of men.<sup>44</sup>

The choice, then is to become what God intended us to be, or to flout that will. We are in the process of becoming, and our choice is the crucial factor in the process.

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Strachan, op. cit., p. 104ff.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

b. Sinner.

The choice made by men is to flout the will of God. Jesus saw the nature of man, for even when they believed on Him because of His signs, still He ". . . did not trust Himself to them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for He himself knew what was in man." (2:24-25). The impossible happened--the creator is rejected by the created. (1:10, 11).

The sin, in essence, is presented as a state of bondage. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (8:34). The phrase, "to commit sin" indicates a habitual sin--a state of continued wilful rejection of the overtures of God. This leads to a state of bondage. Even though by race they were children of Abraham Jesus saw the Jews as children of the devil, under the power of the prince of this world (14:30). Men in this state are blind, (3:19). It involves a state in which the material is more important than the spiritual. Unless men turn to Christ there is no hope for them. To the Jews, Jesus said, ". . . ye shall die in your sins; for except ye believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins" (8:24) (Cf. John 3:16, 14:6).

Howard summarizes it this way:

To St. John . . . the world is the mass of mankind mobilized in defiance of the divine purpose . . . the world so regarded is the world of men alienated from God, blind to His presence, and hostile to His rule. He looks in one direction and sees Vanity Fair with

its cheaper glitter and empty pomps, its corruption and its disillusionment, and he foretells its swift decay. He looks in another direction and he sees society organized in stark opposition to God, refusing to accept the freedom of the truth, resolutely bent upon the destruction of the Christian witness, and animated by hatred against Christ Himself and all who make confession of his faith.<sup>45</sup>

John simply recognizes sin and sees its dire effects in the life of man. Man, the creature, has chosen to rebel. The consequences are inevitable.

c. Object of God's love.

Were it not for this last fact, of course, there would be nothing but futility for man. God is not content to leave him as he is. God sent His Son into the world that whosoever believeth in Him might be saved. To those who believe, there is new standing as a child of God. (1:12). They are given new life, not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God. (1:13).

In John the Baptist's striking figure of the Lamb, familiar to Jews who faithfully worshipped in the Temple as a symbol of sacrifice and deliverance, Christ removes the problem of sin. This alienating factor is taken away, (1:29), and man is restored to fellowship with God.

We let the Fourth Gospel speak for itself:

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<sup>45</sup> Howard, Christianity According to St. John, pp. 83-85. Cf. Dodd, op. cit., p. 210. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 111ff.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. (3:16-17).

The initiative is always with God. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you . . . ." (15:16) (6:44).

God, revealing His loving purpose through Christ, calls men to Himself. He demands that a clear response be given. Man is always in the process of becoming something --either like God or unlike Him. He chooses. In that choice, faith is primary. Let us turn, therefore, to the meaning of faith.

#### The Johannine Conception Of Faith

We need to remind ourselves again and again that we are not dealing with a philosophical treatise, although we do not forget the form of the prologue, but with a drama, with actors upon the stage who move through their entrances and exits, and all with important roles to play. Each scene selected is designed to bring men to a conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, to maintain that conviction in them, and to bring them to the faith that leads to eternal life.

In the first portion of the Fourth Gospel where Jesus is publicly revealed, and in the latter part where He reveals Himself more completely to the inner circle the material has great significance for any study of faith.

## Word Usage

It is surprising, however, to discover that the noun, **ΠΙΣΤΙΣ**, does not occur at all in the Fourth Gospel, only once in the First Epistle of John, and only four times in the Apocalypse.<sup>46</sup> In the Epistle it is used as a summary of Christian experience, similar to one of the Pauline usages, "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). In the Apocalypse it is used in the series of letters to the churches as a summary of the Gospel, when it is said of the church at Pergamos, ". . . thou holdest fast my name and didst not deny my faith," (2:13). As an attribute of Christian experience it also appears in Rev. 2:19, 13:10, 14:12.

As is often the case, however, the rare use of the substantive is in sharp contrast to the frequent use of the verb. In the Fourth Gospel alone it occurs almost one hundred times and in the large majority of cases, the words are attributed to Jesus, Himself. **ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ** is used three times as much in this Gospel as in the three Synoptics put together, and nearly twice as much as in

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<sup>46</sup> Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 186. The idea of faith in the Fourth Gospel is defined by Dodd as "that form of knowledge, or vision, appropriate to those who find God in an historic Person of the past, a Person who nevertheless, through it, remains the object of saving knowledge, the truth and the life."

those Epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul.<sup>47</sup>

Again we find it used both with and without the prepositions  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  and  $\epsilon\nu$ . However, in the Fourth Gospel the simple dative construction may be found only eighteen times. It is found more frequently with prepositions.

In the use of the verb with the simple dative, the idea expressed is often that of giving credence to something, to accepting it as a fact. The nobleman at Capernaum "believed the word that Jesus spake unto him." (4:50. Cf. 2:22, 5:47, 12:38). If a person is involved, it may be Moses, (5:46), or sometimes God, (5:24) (I John 5:10) but most of the time, Jesus. "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" He asked. (8:46. Cf. 5:38, 46; 6:30; 8:31, 45, 46; 10:37ff; 14:11).

More than any other literature in the New Testament, the Johannine material used  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\omega}$  with  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ .

Of the forty-nine times that this construction appears in the New Testament, approximately four fifths of the instances are found in Johannine material. In the Epistle, there is an instance in which faith is directed to

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Dodd, op. cit., p. 182. Bultmann maintains that  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\omega}\epsilon\iota\nu$  takes over an element of the meaning of the Hebrew  $\text{יָרַד}$  which the Greek  $\gamma\iota\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$  was incapable of expressing. It is the idea of acknowledging God by way of submission to His will, or, to acknowledge Christ and to accept Him as the revelation of God. Cf. Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Article on  $\gamma\iota\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , Band I, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1933, p. 713.



the witness which God had witnessed concerning His Son (I John 5:10). Elsewhere the object of the faith involved is always a person. Sometimes it is God. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." (John 14:1. Cf. I John 5:10). More often it is Christ. "This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee . . . and His disciples believed on Him. (2:11). (Cf. 3:15, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40; 7:5, 31, 38, 39, 48; 8:30; 9:35, 36; 10:42; 11:25, 45, 48; 12:11, 37, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20).

Only slightly less frequently does the verb occur in the absolute sense. While it is used in this way fifteen times in the Synoptics, twenty-two times in Acts, twenty-three times in Paul, John uses it twenty-nine times. Four times in a single chapter, it is used of faith in a specific event, the resurrection of Christ. (John 20:8, 25, 29). Occasionally it is used of credit given to specific testimonies of Jesus. (1:50; 3:12). Less frequently it is limited to a kind of "miracle-faith". For example, Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye shall in no wise believe." (John 4:48. Cf. 11:40). Jesus' insight into the psychological vagaries of the mob mentality influenced only by miracles is hinted at in the statement "Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men." (2:24). Most numerous, however, are the absolute uses of the verb which implies a relationship with Christ which meant total abandonment of the total

personality to Him. (3:15, 16, 18; 4:41, 42, 53; 5:44; 6:36, 47, 64; 9:38; 10:25, 26; 11:15; 12:39; 14:29; 16:31; 19:35; 20:31).

Howard interprets these usages as being significant for a precise definition of the thought of the writer.

It is an impressive example of the way in which theology can sometimes determine grammar. When pisteuein is used for 'to believe', 'to give credence to', it is invariably followed by the dative alone. When it means 'to trust', 'to have confidence in', with the rarest exceptions it is followed by a preposition.<sup>48</sup>

He goes on to say that the more frequent use of the latter construction would indicate that the verb "stands for the active exercise of the higher judgment, with a certain moral force, in so far as it involves taking up of a personal attitude to Christ."<sup>49</sup>

Because it is difficult to find words to suit precise meanings, such statements are not far from the fact of the matter, but they tend to leave much unsaid. It is always difficult to systematize the thought of the New Testament, and so it is here. For John, faith was an all-consuming response to the revelation of God's glory as seen in Christ. It was a response of the mind, of course, in giving assent to certain facts of history, and giving credence to certain acts of Christ. But, invariably this

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<sup>48</sup> Howard, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

was followed by an inseparable act--an act of the will, in which a man surrendered himself to Christ, in order that he might be united with the Life of God. Man--creature, sinner, beloved of God--could only come into fellowship with God through the Person of Christ. It involved, for him, a complete abandonment of himself to Christ.

Nowhere is this more clearly presented than in the purpose of the gospel which we have considered so frequently in this survey. Twice, in that stated purpose, *πιστεύω* appears, first it is used with the present active subjunctive and *ἵνα* to indicate the purpose of the Gospel. The material is presented ". . . that ye may believe, and keep on believing, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Here, quite definitely, an act of the mind is involved--of accepting as fact the conviction that Jesus is the long awaited coming one, and that in Him God has acted to accomplish His redemptive purpose. But to end there is to misrepresent the idea presented. He goes on "and that believing, (present active participle), ye may have life in His name." This second use presents a means by which the individual appropriates the life which is in Christ. It is much more than mere intellectual assent. It involved a response to Christ of complete surrender of the whole personality, and becomes an act of the will in which a man keeps on believing.

As Strachan says,

To 'believe in the name' of Jesus is to believe in, and to accept His claims, as substantiated in the story of His life on earth, and in the experience of the Church and of individuals. To have 'life in His name' is to come into a real and living relationship with Him, 'to abide in Him', as is the more frequent phrase in the Johannine writings.<sup>50</sup>

The dynamic quality of this decisive act of man is abundantly evident. In the drama unfolded in the Gospel we see evidence of those who abandoned themselves to Christ. Always the act of the mind in accepting the claims of Christ must be accompanied by an act of committal to Him, or the faith is invalid.

#### The Relation Of Signs To Faith

At the risk of forcing ideas into ready made compartments, let us look for a moment at the Johannine idea of faith illustrated by its relationships to other factors. We have examined the signs presented as vehicles of revelation. They demanded decision in terms of rejection or acceptance. In them the claims of Christ were authenticated, and the loving purpose of God for men revealed.

It is significant that, in the Synoptics, faith was the basis on which the action of God was seen. Here, the signs are presented as occasions for faith. Yet, a full examination reveals a close relationship between the writers and their presentations.

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<sup>50</sup> Strachan, op. cit. pp. 39, 40.

We have already seen that Jesus deprecated belief if it was based simply on the signs. To the nobleman asking for the healing of his son, Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe." (4:48). Certainly this idea is in accord with the Synoptics. Such a faith is incomplete and falls of its own accord. Jesus would not trust himself to the multitude who saw his signs "for that He knew all men, and because he needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man." (2:18, 23-25). This is further illustrated in the attitude of the multitude at the feeding of the five thousand. They asked, "what sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What workest thou?" (6:30). In spite of the revelation of God's love and His interest in them, still they look for signs. The same attitude may be seen in Jesus' own brothers who encourage Him to go up to Jerusalem at the time of the feast and do His works there to attract the people. (7:4-5). Thus we see that this kind of attitude toward signs was not what Jesus wanted, and the writer of the Gospel included this material to make that abundantly clear. They had a far greater significance than such a shallow and empty use.

We go on to see that faith involving signs was approved if it led on to that basic act of the total personality of a man. The ability of Jesus to tell him what he was doing, when Philip came to Him, led Nathanael to the

beginnings of a faith which Jesus regarded as valid. (1:50). After the first sign, the disciples believed on Him. (2:11). Jesus did not reject in a final way Nicodemus who seems to have been attracted by the signs He performed. (3:2). In several other instances faith aroused by the signs was seemingly accepted as the beginning of a valid response. (7:31; 9:16; 11:45; 12:10-11).

It is this fact which enabled Jesus to regard the works which He did as witnesses to Himself. In 5:36 He says, ". . . the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent Me"; and again, in 10:37, 38, He says, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

The signs, then, were not occasions for faith simply because Jesus could work miracles. They reveal the Divine in the human, the Word become flesh, and thus faith moves toward the God who has taken the initiative and is reaching out to men. Whenever Jesus found any semblance of a reaching out to God by man, He encouraged it. Even when Thomas did not believe the fact of the resurrection, the supreme sign, Jesus sought to bring faith into his life. His ultimate response, "My Lord and my God", indicates a faith which went beyond the acceptance of a fact, and reached out toward the God at work in Christ.

These signs, then, are significant for faith in that they reveal the loving purpose and power of God in Christ. They are occasions for faith, for the opportunity for a clear decision of commitment is afforded. Man must choose, he must accept or reject. The signs are not alone in their witness to Christ. The witness of the disciples to Peter, and to Nathanael is an example. The witness of the woman of Samaria to her townspeople, the witness of the Baptist, the witness of the Father are all occasions for faith. Whatever the witness, however, it is an opportunity for that personal act of decision. Though the act may begin in the most rudimentary way, if it continues to move ahead, it is valid for the Divine-human encounter.

#### The Relation Of Action To Faith

Much can be learned of the conception of faith in the mind of the Johannine author in the way in which it is interpreted in terms of activity and action. In a way which surpasses other New Testament writers he describes faith in dramatic and figurative terms.

##### a. An Act of Coming:

It was an act of coming to Christ. ". . . he that cometh to me shall not hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (6:35). "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink" (7:37); ". . . he that followeth

me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12). Faith is pictured, in these passages, as a continuous act of moving toward Christ, and toward God. Such an act is rewarded beyond all description with life and light and satisfaction.

b. An Act of Eating:

The relationship to Christ was illustrated in the act of eating and drinking. "Everyone that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst . . ." (4:13). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (7:37). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves" (6:53). He proclaimed, then, Himself as the Bread of Life (6:51). What is more natural than to use the idea of eating and drinking? There is no doctrine of the Holy Eucharist here, for the idea of the spiritual presence of Christ when men partake of the sacrament gives the passage intense and decisive meaning.

c. An Act of Hearing:

In illustrating the response of man to God's revelation, the idea of hearing is used. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (5:25). The spiritually dead would be resurrected if



they would hear (it must be, of necessity more than merely hearing the words) the Son of God. That hearing meant a receptivity that allowed God to have His way in life.

d. An Act of Receiving:

In the great summarizing statement of the Prologue (1:10-12), the response is in terms of receiving Christ, or receiving Him not. Similarly, He said in 5:43 "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive Me not."

e. An Act of Obedience:

Nowhere are faith and action more clearly linked than in passages dealing with doing the will of God. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (6:36). Brunner correlates faith and obedience into his conception of "vertrauensgehorsam".<sup>51</sup> "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (17:7). That kind of receptive obedience is descriptive of faith.

f. An Act of Abiding:

Nowhere is faith more clearly presented however than in the act of abiding. "If ye abide in my word, then

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<sup>51</sup> E. Brunner, The Divine-Human Encounter, p. 98ff.

are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (8:31). In the great discourse of Chapter 15 it is used over and over again to describe the relation of men to the Master. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me" (15:4). "Abide in my love." (15:9, 10).

Through faith we are united with Christ and that union is a permanent, continuing relation that is a growing one.

All of these acts point to faith as an activity that involves all of a man--mind, emotions, will. There is a decisive act of surrender to Christ, but it is also a continuing act that is characteristic of all of life. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent", said Jesus. (6:29). That initial "work" was followed by a continuing succession. When Jesus spoke to men, if they believed, they acted. The blind man went and washed his eyes. Men rolled away the stone at Lazarus' tomb. Even though there was no bread, the multitude sat down at his command. Thus faith and action go hand in hand in response of men to God.

#### The Relation Of Faith And Life

As has been intimated from time to time, John presents faith as the means whereby man appropriates the life

that is offered in Christ.

In Him was life and the life was the light of men, 1:4. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (3:14-16). Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. (5:47). If a man keep my word, he shall never see death, (8:51). . . . I give unto them eternal life; and they (the sheep) shall never perish. (10:27). I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. (11:25). And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him who Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. (17:3).

Thus faith is the vital factor which appropriates the life which is in Christ.

What is, therefore, life eternal? It is life given by God to men, a life which is a part of Himself, transmitted through the One sent for that purpose, a life which is a present possession which involves a future fulfillment. It is more than simply living forever, it is living forever in the God-given life. There is quality of life instead of more quantity.

In the conversation with Nicodemus in Chapter Three the great idea of a new birth is presented to show this act of God in the experience of men. Faith brings so radical and cataclysmic an event in the life of men that no other way of describing it is sufficient. Born of the water and of the Spirit, born from above, man possesses a new

quality of life which promises an ultimate fulfillment.

This is the life which Jesus Himself knew, and the life of which He was the incarnate manifestation. . . . Jesus always regarded Himself as the transmitter of this life, and not as its originating source. He was from the Father.<sup>52</sup>

In essence this life is fellowship with God Himself through His Son. Faith is the means of appropriating the gift of that life, and of leading a man into knowledge of the true God.

#### The Relation Of Faith To Prayer

In the briefly mentioned ideas of prayer, petition, and communion with God, faith is presented as having a vital part. In Chapter 15 there are two important references. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (15:7). ". . . Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." (15:6). Similarly, in Chapter 16, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (16:24, cf. vs. 26). The condition of asking is abiding--the petitioner abides in Christ, and His words abide in the petitioner. Only the basis of a faith that unites in this relationship is worthy of prayer. True prayer is prayer in the name of Christ, that is prayer consistent with His will and purpose,

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<sup>52</sup> Major, Manson and Wright, op. cit., p. 699.

His nature and character.

To ask in Christ's name must, therefore, be practically the equivalent to asking while abiding in Him, and while His words are abiding in the petitioner, that is to ask in Him, in His spirit, in accord with the whole aim of His work for and in the believer.<sup>53</sup>

It is therefore, the continuing surrender of man to God and thus is vitally related to a continuing relation of faith in Him.

#### The Relation Of Faith To Knowledge

It has always been difficult to determine the place which the Gnostic movement had in the thought of the Evangelist. That it influenced the early Church is evident: but the degree of the influence has always been somewhat uncertain. Some claim that the author was attempting to use the terminology and the ideas of the Gnostics to develop a presentation of a high "gnosis". Others feel that the influence was largely an unconscious influence. It is true that Gnosticism was a rising threat to the strength of the Christian movement at the time the Gospel was written. Certainly the author could hardly have escaped its influence. However, though he does use some of the same terms, it is fairly clear that he is not trying to compete seriously with Gnosticism by promoting a different theory of religious knowledge. Rather, for the author, knowledge is but a part

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

of the experience of man in fellowship with God in Christ. It is the inevitable consequence and associated with the decisive act of faith. They go hand in hand together.

The words 'know' and 'true' are often used in the Fourth Gospel. Sometimes their meaning is simply to be in accord with the facts. There is a knowledge of God, however, which is above and beyond anything perceived through sensory perception. It is a knowledge which comes only through faith.

Several incidents picture faith and knowledge. In that great confession of Peter, in 6:69, "Lord, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that Thou are the Holy One of God." The order of the words and the tenses of the verbs indicate here that faith precedes knowledge. However, the vital thing is that the two are indissolubly linked together. There can be no true knowledge without faith.

The woman of Samaria expected that Messiah would impart knowledge. "I know that Messiah cometh; . . . when He is come He will declare unto us all things." (4:25). Jesus replies, "I am, that speak to thee." (4:26). Before this knowledge could be fully perceived however, it must be received with faith. Only then could there be receptivity and perception.

In 7:28-29 Jesus showed that the Jews, who knew Him through sensory perception, still did not truly know Him.

"Ye know neither me nor my Father", he said in a similar fashion, "If ye know Me, ye would know my Father also." (8:19, cf. 8:54). At the close of his great prayer, Jesus said,

O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I know Thee; and these knew that Thou didst send me; and I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them and I in them. (17:25-26).

Those who believe and know are distinctly separated from those who do not believe, and thus do not know. However, only when there is full faith can there be full knowledge. (16:30ff).

Jesus, Himself, clearly shows the nature of this relationship between faith and knowledge in such passages as 7:17, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself"; in 8:28, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things"; and finally in 8:31, 32, He says, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Let it be understood, of course, that knowledge is never abstract, or intellectual. It is an experience of Divine reality, a perception of God. It is the knowledge of God that gives life eternal (17:3). This experience is the direct result of the act of man's total personality we

have called faith. As Moffatt puts it,

Know and knowledge are here used in the same sense as . . . in Paul; they denote a personal relationship with God. John does not employ faith (or belief) and knowledge as opposing terms as though the latter marked a higher level than the former; he can indeed speak of Christians knowing, when he means that they have definite assurance of their faith, but he finds both faith and knowledge in the higher unity of love.<sup>54</sup>

#### The Relation Of Faith To Unbelief

Very briefly, we contrast unbelief and faith to complete the study of the thought here. There are these two themes running through the Fourth Gospel. There is acceptance and there is rejection. There is, beginning in Chapter Two and continuing through the recorded events of Jesus' ministry, the element of unbelief. In the account of the Feast of the Tabernacles (7:11-52) and in the discourse of Chapter Eight, we have a typical presentation of the conflict with unbelief. The opposition, breaking out after the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda (5:18), now came out into the open. The multitude is swayed back and forth. The chief priests and Sadducees marvel at Jesus' learning, the Pharisees scoff, the rulers are hostile, the officers are afraid, Nicodemus pleads for a just consideration of the matter. In Chapter Ten, there is open violence when the Jews ". . . took up stones again to stone him" (10:

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<sup>54</sup> James Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, p. 276.



31). "If thou art the Christ tell us plainly," they cry, and Jesus replies, "I told you and ye believe not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." (10:25ff). Information they had, but faith they did not have, and thus they could have no vital experience with God. At the end of the section concluding with Chapter Twelve there seems to be complete rejection by the Jews (12:37-43). There was hidden loyalty, yes, but it was outweighed by fear. "They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (12:43). Says Plummer:

St. John here sums up the results of the ministry which has just come to a close. Their comparative poverty is such that he can explain it in no other way than as an illustration of that judicial blindness which had been foretold and denounced by Isaiah.<sup>55</sup>

In spite of the clear revelation of God in Christ, they were not believing (Imperfect tense). They misunderstood and rejected this revelation and this led them deeper and deeper into spiritual blindness. Psychologically they had rendered themselves unable now to turn to God. They had shut themselves away from him.

The blinded eyes and the hardened hearts of Christ's enemies are actually the evil result of their own refusal to respond to Christ's coming and appeal. That the moral and spiritual order of things should be such that refusal of this kind is inevitably followed by

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<sup>55</sup> A. Plummer, The Gospel According to St. John, Cambridge, University Press, 1890, p. 260.

spiritual and moral deterioration--hardening of the heart--is the doing of God who created and sustains it.<sup>56</sup>

Thus the unbelievers created for themselves a blindness and a hardness which was the result of their unwillingness to believe. This brought upon them the judgment of God.

Throughout his Gospel the author insists, that, though the life and death of Jesus in the flesh was for the salvation of the world, this very fact involved the ultimate judgment of God upon those who rejected Him. It is the clear recognition of the alternative of Judgment or Salvation that provides the acute tension which runs through his narrative from beginning to end.<sup>57</sup>

Faith brings a man into full fellowship with God through Christ. Unbelief separates man from God. This is the relation of faith and unbelief.

#### Summary

Thus, in the development of his purpose, the author presents to us the idea of faith in all its relations. In the dramatic account of the life of Christ which he presents he states that only a few things are selected for it, but each has a purpose, that of bringing man to faith. It is, first, a recognition of certain facts about Christ, but much more than that, it is a decisive act of the will that

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<sup>56</sup> Strachan, op. cit., pp. 262, 263.

<sup>57</sup> Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 429. Cf. Bultmann op. cit., p. 111ff.

brings men under the rule of Christ. God had acted, and His Kingdom was at hand. Men entered that Kingdom when they surrendered to the King. Faith might be a matter of hearing His word, of obeying His command, of coming to Him, receiving Him, abiding in Him, but it took all of man. It is the deep and abiding conviction of the author that God had been revealed in Christ, that the Word became flesh. The response of faith brought life eternal. Unbelief brought judgment, fierce and awesome. In the words of Howard,

The object of faith in the Johannine, as in the Pauline message is nearly always Jesus. This is one of the cardinal claims of the Fourth Gospel, for Jesus is represented as the Logos, the spoken word of God, who has been sent forth from God to reveal the Divine character. Faith is the response of the human soul to the appeal and demand made by this revelation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Howard, op. cit., p. 158.

## CHAPTER SIX

### "FAITH" IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents, in all probability, as many unsettled problems for the interpreter as any other book in the New Testament. The Fourth Gospel, the Apocalypse, Second Peter--none of these can offer more difficulties than the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In spite of this, however, the book takes high rank for the consummate skill with which the author develops his theme, the intellectual breadth of thought, the greatness of its spiritual insight, and its unique and masterful portrayal of Christ as High Priest.

Archibald M. Hunter, in surveying the history of the Epistle's interpretation in recent years, cites the well known verdict of E. F. Scott, one of the leading interpreters of a modern school which detached the Epistle from its Judaistic environment, who summarizes the problem thus:

The epistle to the Hebrews is in many respects the riddle of the New Testament. Among early Christian writings it stands solitary and mysterious 'without father, without mother, and without genealogy', like that of Melchizedek on whom its argument turns.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Archibald M. Hunter, Interpreting the New Testament, Philadelphia, 1951, p. 114.

The older view saw the epistle as a reflection of a basic Judaistic problem which had threatened the well being of early Christians and the life of the New Church.<sup>2</sup> One of the great contributions of recent years, however, is a new analysis of the Epistle and its interpretation which presents a truer picture of the Epistle's spirit and purpose. As Hunter expresses it, "It is idle to pretend that in the last fifty years we have thrown much more light on it (i.e. the riddle of the Epistle) than was available to A. B. Davidson and B. F. Westcott, the authors of two admirable commentaries on Hebrews towards the close of the Nineteenth Century. Indeed, it is arguable that our Twentieth-Century commentators like Moffatt and E. F. Scott have unwittingly led us further from the heart of the riddle."<sup>3</sup>

In one of the most complete expressions of the new approach, William Manson says,

As a New Testament teacher I have long been dissatisfied with the direction which critical thought, principally associated for us in this country and in the English speaking world with the names of two distinguished scholars, Professor James Moffatt and Professor E. F. Scott, has taken with regard to Hebrews during the last half-century. Whereas the older criticism understood the Epistle to reflect a phase or crisis in the evolution of Jewish Christianity in the apostolic period, the modern theory has unhitched

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<sup>2</sup> Such as A. B. Davidson, B. F. Westcott.

<sup>3</sup> Hunter, op. cit. p. 115.

the Epistle from these moorings and floated it out into the midstream of the general life of the first century Church, so taking it out of a supposed back-water to give it a place in the main current of Christian history. On this interpretation the religious situation of the community addressed in Hebrews had nothing specifically to do with any attraction exercised by Judaism but was determined by some form of secular drift to irreligion or to paganism.<sup>4</sup>

This tendency resulted in an unfortunate obscuring of some of the great ideas of the Epistle, and in Manson's opinion, the idea is based upon "peripheral features" and "a priori" and not sufficiently examined assumptions regarding both Judaism and Christianity in the apostolic age.<sup>5</sup>

If these interpretations do not adequately reflect the historical situation of the apostolic age, and more particularly, that of the Epistle, at what point do they fail to make contact with history? The suggestion is now advanced that "neither the older nor the more recent approach to the problem of Hebrews has sufficiently integrated the Epistle into the historical development of the world-mission of Christianity or brought the situation behind the letter into clear and adequate focus."<sup>6</sup>

After a careful examination of the Stephen records of the Book of Acts, there is considerable evidence linking

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<sup>4</sup> William Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London, 1951, p. v.

<sup>5</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. vi.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

the teaching of Stephen with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The key to this contact is the development of the Christian World-mission. Manson's research, therefore, results in an effort to "(1) integrate the Epistle afresh into the history of the world-mission from its inception in Stephen, (2) re-evaluate the potentialities of the religious situation in such a centre of world-mission Christianity as Rome, (3) trace the connection between the doctrine of Hebrews and the theology of the world-mission as a whole, and (4) from careful study of the argument of the Epistle establish conclusions as to the situation and character of the community addressed and so recover for the Epistle its organic position in relation to First-Century evangelism and life."<sup>7</sup> This great effort is made in the hope that we may see "the Christian Church and theology more squarely and broadly built on the foundations of the Old Testament, and rising phoenix-like from the embers not only of Jewish legalism but of the Jewish means of grace."<sup>8</sup>

This new view, which is arousing interest and winning approval, finds the clue to Hebrews in Stephen as the true forerunner of the author of the Epistle. His magnificent profession of Christ as the "eschatological Son of

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<sup>7</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. vi.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

Man"<sup>9</sup> who claims the allegiance and service of all nations, peoples, and tongues, is indicative of his grasp of Jesus' Messianic significance. The great world mission of Christianity found its origin in his conviction that with Jesus Judaism was outmoded by something far better. Hunter summarizes the argument in this way:

Here is the key to Hebrews. The Jewish Christians to whom Auctor wrote were not spiritually different from the men who resisted Stephen. Clinging to the ancient sanctities, they recoiled from the vision of the world mission. Hence Auctor's summons (in his hortatory sections), to 'the eschatological life' - to the new Exodus begun with Jesus, which brooked no looking back. Hence, too, his insistence, in his doctrinal passages, that with Jesus the central order of God has entered time and moves on to its great consummation. Hence, finally his argument that in the new approach to God opened up by Jesus the Forerunner the old means of grace are not lost but spiritualized and perfected. To whom then did Auctor write his appeal? To some disaffected Jewish Christians in Rome who, fearing the Imperial persecution, shrank back under the protection of the Synagogue as a religio licita. To these Auctor threw down his challenge: 'Go forth unto Jesus outside the camp (of Israel)' Heb. 13:13.<sup>10</sup>

One great point of weakness in the two major earlier theories is that neither did adequate justice to the eschatology of the Epistle. The view of the Epistle as addressed to a situation quite general in the early Hellenistic Church, and the older idea that it was specifically addressed to Jewish Christians lapsing into Judaism both

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<sup>9</sup> Hunter, so interprets Acts 7:56. Cf. op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>10</sup> Hunter, op. cit., p. 117.



fail at this point. The supreme concentration of interest on the critical finality of the moment of time in which Christians are placed by the Gospel<sup>11</sup> is paramount to an understanding of the Epistle. "For the writer to the Hebrews this moment is one which permits no dallying and no turning of the eyes backwards. He sees all things in the light of the crisis brought about by the announcement of the Eternal World in Jesus and the swift approach of the end of the present order, including the Last Judgment. He believes with the Johannine writer that 'it is the last hour', with St. Paul that 'the time is foreshortened . . . the fashion of this world is passing away.' Eschatology in this sense is a determination of mind or attitude according to which all life and all history are judged purely as they relate to that Ultimate Event towards which all things are now fast hastening."<sup>12</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that those Christians addressed in the letter had as an immediate problem a diminishing vigor of faith and expectancy which arose out of disappointment when the parousia was long delayed. Manson suggests that the persons addressed may have belonged to the original nucleus of Christians in the Church at Rome and were probably of Jewish extraction. In view

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<sup>11</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

of their expectant hope that the parousia would consummate the Kingdom, their disappointment may have been more deeply felt than that of others.<sup>13</sup> So the writer calls repeatedly throughout the epistle for a standing fast, he warns against drifting away. He says in a typical passage:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. (10:35-39).<sup>14</sup>

#### The Eleventh Chapter

It follows logically, therefore, that the faith idea is a vital one in the epistle. Set against such a background and in such a frame of reference, it is inescapable in such an appeal. Thus, we come to the great chapter on faith which is beyond question one of the great chapters of Biblical Literature.

We have intimated already that much of the material of the epistle is definitely linked with the Stephen passages of Acts. In this chapter we have a review of history

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<sup>13</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 71ff.

<sup>14</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 71, translates this last sentence, "But we are not for resiling and being lost, but for believing and winning the soul."

and an interpretation of it which is, indeed, quite similar to the review of the same history by Stephen in Acts 7.<sup>15</sup>

The writer begins with a definition of faith, proceeds to an interpretation of faith's relation to life in the present, and concludes with a summary of the excruciating tests to which faith was subjected in the experiences of the heroes of faith. Here we may find the best expression of "faith" as viewed by the author.

Now faith is the substance ( $\upsilon\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) of things hoped for, the evidence ( $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron\varsigma$ ) of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (11:1-3).

The word,  $\upsilon\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$  has as a basic meaning the idea of "standing under" and appears in a number of different ways to indicate firm support, strong basis, etc. When applied to time as in Psalms 38:6 (LXX) it signifies duration. When applied to things, it signifies origin, foundation, substance, or structure. But when it is applied to the moral and spiritual realm, it has the meaning of firmness, assurance, being fully persuaded, steadfastness. Even in this epistle (Hebrews 1:3) it has a different shade of meaning than may be found in Chapter II. In that reference it deals with the essence of being to be found in God

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<sup>15</sup> In view of the different audience (Christian, not Jewish), which is addressed in Hebrews, there are differences. The rejection of the prophets and of Christ is minimized.

and which was reflected in Christ. In Chapter Eleven, however, the meaning is that of being fully persuaded concerning the supreme realities of our relation to Christ and God. Faith does not give them reality in the sense of visible substance, but faith makes these invisible things the supreme realities of life. This meaning is also found in 3:14, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." So, faith here is "that subjective apprehension of transcendent realities by which these realities become basic and all-determinative for religious life."<sup>16</sup>

For those who can find little unity throughout the Scripture in the use of the faith idea, this passage will not be so understood. By glossing over this fundamental concept and moving to the great tests of faith mentioned, a supposition which is misleading is produced. Faith is more than simply enduring suffering for God because there is some vague hope that all will be vindicated. Kirsopp Lake writes along this line,

The faith which is discussed in Hebrews is not quite the same as the faith of either James or Paul. For James, faith is merely intellectual assent; (We have seen that this is oversimplification); for Paul, it is a confident acceptance of Jesus as the source of new life; for Hebrews it is the courageous following of the call of God, even through suffering and death, as it was followed by the heroes of ancient Israel,

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<sup>16</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 75.

and most perfectly of all, by Jesus 'the leader and completer of faith.'<sup>17</sup>

But faith here is clearly more than "courageous following". It involves a deep conviction of mind which leads to an absolute commitment to God of all of life. At that point, it establishes kinship with faith ideas expressed by others in varying circumstances and with varying motives.

Similarly, *ἔλεγχος*, evidence, or conviction, basically means test, or proof. Here in the long series of illustrations cited it finds a perfect extension of a basic meaning. In both these words faith has both the mental assent and the living demonstration which makes up so much of New Testament thought. "The life of faith is by both terms grounded on cognitive assent to the reality of heavenly things, but this assent by the very nature of its objects carries with it the acceptance of a transcendent value and use for life. From being a cognitive act faith passes into a principle regulating and inspiring behaviour. Its motives are existential."<sup>18</sup>

In Verses two and three of Chapter Eleven, the author goes on to show that this faith is the distinctive mark of all true religion in other ages. It underlies the

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<sup>17</sup> Kirsopp Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament, London, 1938, p. 160.

<sup>18</sup> Manson, op. cit., p. 76.

doctrine of creation. He now proceeds to demonstrate the meaning of his definition in the lives of the heroes of faith. In these experiences there is belief in God's existence, but there is infinitely more. There is the whole-souled commitment of life to God. Thus, we find ideal examples of true faith in action.

This magnificent panorama of faith begins by citing Abel as one who was called "the righteous" because of the way faith led him to godly living. Enoch, by faith pleased God. "For without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (11:6).

Faith, moreover, produces crisis in that a choice is demanded between the invisible realities and the present, visible order of things. There is an "either-or" decision which must be made. Noah, warned of God of events yet to come, made preparation by building an ark. By this (an action) he demonstrated that the world was in error, and he entered into a relationship or "rightness with God" produced by faith. Thus we see the two elements of attitude and action which are a part of true faith. Faith is decisive.

In addition Abraham is cited as one who, when called, left his home, went out into the unknown way, living a nomadic life, but looking for the city whose builder and maker was God (11:8-10). It should be noted that Hebrews

and Stephen (Acts 7:2-7) both begin with Genesis 12 in their use of Abraham's faith, rather than from Genesis 15:6 as did Paul. Abraham displayed his faith in this gallant and courageous commitment of his life to God. Sara, also, placed herself in God's hands, believing Him all sufficient, (11:11-12).

Then, in a great appeal to the wavering Christians whom he addressed, he simply cites these as having died "believing", not having received the promised blessings, but nevertheless, seeing them "by faith". God is not ashamed to be called their God!

So the chapter moves on to cite those who by faith endured the fiercest tests. Abraham offered up Isaac. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all demonstrated their faith. Supremely, however, Moses is cited (11:24-31) for his courage and strength during the trials of the Exodus experience. Again the matter of choosing enters in his desertion of the luxuries of the Egyptian palace for obedience to God and "the reproach of Christ". This latter term indicates that he accepted the kind of reproach later borne by Christ who was reviled, rejected, crucified, mocked. But, it could also have the deeper meaning of identification with the Messiah and His suffering as developed in Messianic thought. Surely, these early Christians, suffering reproach, misunderstanding, persecution at every turn would be heartened as they remember such faith!

Time would fail me, said the author, to tell of all who by faith "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valient in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (11:33-37).

These all, having established a name for faith, failed to receive the Promise here, but now share it with us, as God planned that they should.

Now, having so "vast a throng of witnesses" certain responsibilities are upon us. We live before the gaze of a great throng, watching as we run. All that hampers, all that is evil, must be laid aside. The past is forgotten, we look toward Jesus, the Pioneer, and the Completer of faith. His acceptance of the Cross, the supreme act of faith, is our example. Other exhortations follow, but this is enough to show the line of thought followed. In the tense and crucial moment of his writing; in view of the



desperate situation among his readers, it is not surprising that the note of conflict is found in his epistle. The Christian, no matter the test, must find his peace through a firm and unwavering commitment to Christ. It is at this point that there is a point of contact with Pauline, Johannine, and Synoptic thought.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, because of its frame of reference and its major purpose, does concentrate on the part of faith that involves assurance, certainty, faithful obedience in life, but to say that faith here is simply a following of the call of God is oversimplification.

Even when faith is called "obedience-in-trust"<sup>19</sup> the idea is not adequately represented without amplification. Obedience must be understood as something more than mechanical subservience. It involves a glad and loving response to God's Will. True faith is not grudging obedience. It is a joyous thing to the writer of Hebrews. To commit one's life wholly to God and to His purpose is faith in action.

Paul may emphasize the beginning of Christian experience, and the relation of faith to that beginning. Here the emphasis may be upon the day by day experience of the Christian life. But both find common ground on the

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<sup>19</sup> Emil Brunner, The Divine-Human Encounter, p. 48.

basic idea of whole souled commitment. Paul may concentrate his thought on being "in Christ", and Hebrews may think of being "with Him", or "looking toward Him" in faith, but the ideas are not mutually exclusive. In either case, the relation is one of revelation and response, a response of man to the revelation of God in Christ. At that point, we find the point of contact between the two.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

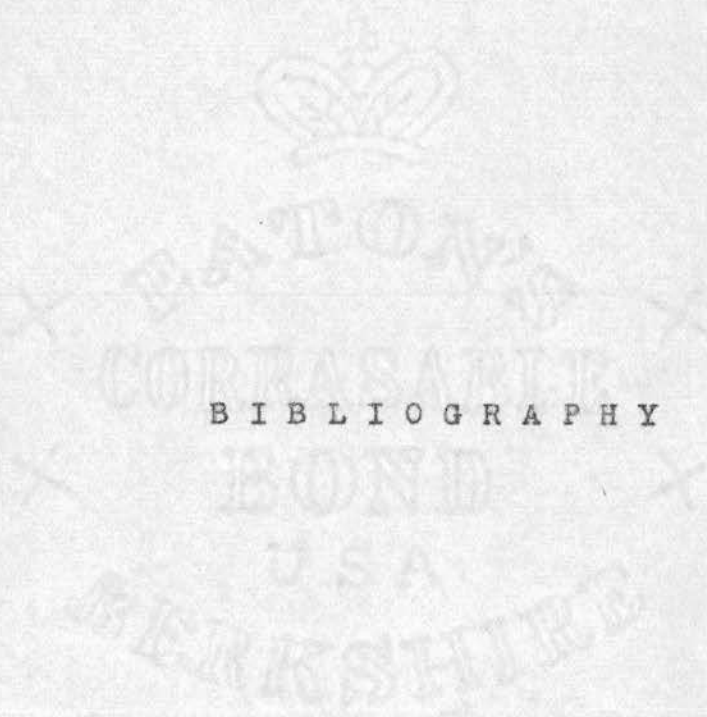
### CONCLUSION

What, then, is the conclusion of the matter! So much has been said at every turn of this journey through the Bible that only a brief word is needed here concerning basic conclusions.

There is a unique unity in the Biblical conception of faith. Of course, there are radical differences of time, place, emphasis, and purpose which must give faith a different cast. Basically, however, this unity is to be found in the idea of revelation and response. God reveals Himself. He takes the initiative, moving toward men. He did this in the Old Testament in the days of the Law and the Covenant. There was response to that revelation. At its best, it involved unconditional surrender to Him, and the conviction that He had purpose for the world which would some day be consummated. Men built their lives on that conviction and that faith. With the coming of Christ, however, the action of God was clearly seen. In great Divine Events of Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and a promised Parousia God revealed Himself in Christ. To that revelation, the response of faith was demanded. It was a response that involved mental acceptance of certain facts,

but it never ended there. To end at that point was fatal, as James indicates. It was a mental attitude that led to a life, a life beginning with an act of unconditional, whole souled surrender to Christ. That act established a new relationship, "union with Christ", which was evident in Christian living. That union brought certain qualities of life and of character which only God could produce. It established a right relationship with God, it brought forgiveness of sin, justification before God, peace with Him. Ultimately, God will complete the Divine action in the world when His purpose is consummated in Parousia. In the kerygmatic preaching of the early Church all this may be found in various ways from various men--Paul, Stephen, Peter, and others. The various components of faith found emphases which appear at times to be contradictory. But there is a basic unity at the heart of these divergent emphases which is neither arbitrarily assumed, nor produced by preconceived prejudice. The more one observes the thought of the early Church, the more the conviction dawns that the unity is there.

Thus the Scriptures call us to faith. "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom is at hand, repent and believe the Gospel" is an unavoidable appeal to men today. Believe God, Believe Christ, give Him your life in complete abandonment--and LIVE!



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