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### The Witness of God with Special Reference to Hebrews 11:2

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THE WITNESS OF GOD  
WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HEBREWS 11:2

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of New Testament  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology.

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by

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June 1955

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In a spirit of gratitude

to

Our Father

and

my father



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## INTRODUCTION

The witness or witnessing of God, in a subjective sense (the precise phrase occurs only in I John 5:9 ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεοῦ) is a somewhat elusive Biblical term with expansive meaning, generally overlooked in Biblical theology.

Among other reasons (besides its elusiveness and expansiveness) it has been neglected probably because historical investigations have been occupied with accrediting the prophets and apostles themselves, although this is none the less historical; and, probably because Scriptures do not speak of it at length as of Faith, Hb 11; Hope, Ro 8; and Love, I Co 13 -- yet vide I Jn 5.

Used of God, it involves most of the words from the root smar appearing in the Greek stem μαρτυρ : μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, μάρτυς, ἑμάρτυρος, ἐπιμαρτυρέω, συμμα-, συμμαρ-, διαμαρτύρομαι, προμαρτύρομαι, excepting μαρτύρομαι, καταμαρ-τυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρ, ψευδομαρτυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρία.<sup>1</sup>

According to grammarians there seems to be little difference, other than construction, between the meaning of the active and the passive<sup>2</sup> (see Chapter 1).

In Hebrews 11:2 a faulty interpretation and consequently a faulty application of God's witness to the remainder of the chapter (taken in its full context 10:35 - 12:3) has led expositors into all sorts of purely ethical or synergistic concepts of faith.<sup>3</sup> Hebrews "11" needs a more theocentric exposition,<sup>4</sup> which a fuller exegesis of V. 2 should supply. One ought to compare the O. T. historical surveys, especially Ps 76 (77): 12 - 77 (78): 72; cf. also Ps 104 (105) to 106 (107) and 135 (136) where God's acting is verbally more apparent.

The meaning of God's witness is also important for the interpretation



of the theology of the writer to the Hebrews. It helps in clarifying the distinction between his thought and Philo's. Moreover, one is even tempted to take the divine witness as the Grundmotiv not only of Chapter 11 (where μαρτυρίῃ occurs five times with God as subject understood, besides the noun μαρτύς in 12:1) but also of the Epistle itself -- taking the Word of God as the formal principle of the Epistle and the witness of God as the material principle in the theology of the Epistle. The means of salvation is Christ (see Proposition X; cf. Lk 24:25-27) and the purpose of the Epistle is enduring faith unto salvation (10:39). The approach of the writer is like that of a prophet, revealing the word-deed-testimony of God (1:1-3; etc.; see Proposition I) for a "world to come" (6:5).

Furthermore, the writings of John strikingly parallel this "witness theology" and should be consulted together with other scattered Old and New Testament references. (The "witness of God" in I Jn 5 appears in a number of pericopes, particularly in the historic series for Quasimodogeniti Sunday.)

Since a study of the divine witness promises a clearer understanding of God and His ways and a more intensive penetration of Scripture, the following analysis of Hb 11:2 and a series of summarizing propositions are offered together with such philological and theological support as is available.

The form of this thesis reflects the history of its origin and development. The writer, like most Bible students and preachers, had long been fascinated by Hebrews Eleven. In the course of repeated study of the chapter in sermon preparation the underlying concept of the "witness



of God" impinged upon his mind. This led to a protracted inductive study of Scripture itself and, also, consultation of all secondary sources available. For his own sake the writer endeavored to formulate the results of all this study in concentrated, positive statements that, for the purposes of this thesis, have now taken shape in the eleven propositions which are presented in the second chapter.

A word of explanation to the reader is here in order. The formulated propositions, along with the Scripture texts which the writer believes validate his conclusions, are presented in double-spaced lines. Some notes deemed most necessary for the purpose of elucidation or corroboration have been presented along with the text of the propositions, but to distinguish them have been single-spaced. The chapter notes, not to mention the concluding Bibliography, will further indicate the primary and secondary sources which have been employed.

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<sup>1</sup>For etymology, meaning, and various usages, see Cremer, H., Biblico-Theological Lexicon of NT Greek (translated by Wm. Urwick, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878) and Kittel, Gerhard, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (in Verbindung mit zahlreichen Fachgenossen, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1939) sub voc. Cf. esp. Jn 3:11 with E. Riggensbach's statement: "Der μαρτυρ ist niemals ein blosser Beobachter, sondern stets ein Augen-und Ohrenzeuge, der seine Wahrnehmung kundgibt und mit seiner Person dafuer eintritt." (Der Brief an die Hebraeer, Zahnscher Kommentar, 1922) sub 12:1. Papyri examples given by Moulton, J. H. and Milligan, G., The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-19), while interesting, do not provide much help for this thesis since they refer almost exclusively to human testimony.

<sup>2</sup>Numm, H. P. V., A Short Syntax of N. T. Greek (London: Cambridge, 1924), p. 62; and Winer, G. B. and Moulton, W. F., A Treatise on the Grammar of N. T. Greek: etc. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882, p. 326.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., cf. the interpretation by Dods, M., "The Epistle to the Hebrews" (The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. R. Nicoll, vol.



IV, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1910) sub 11:2, "...on the ground of their possessing faith that the distinguished men of the O. T....being immortalized in Scripture...." I Th 5:10 is referred to as an "exact parallel"; or more extremely, Bruce, A. B., "Hebrews" in A Dictionary of the Bible (edited by J. Hastings, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1899): "In Hebrews the secret of faith's power is its psychological character as a faculty of the human mind...a principle making for heroism (is) not confined to the Christian world...hence even Rahab...." Titus 3:5 ought to be taken into full account before heaping any encomiums on these saints. Cf. also Clement of Rome, I Co 32:3 f: "So they were all glorified and magnified not through themselves or of their deeds nor through the uprightness of their doings, but through his will." -- translation by Goodspeed, E. J., The Apostolic Fathers: An American Translation (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950).

<sup>1</sup>e.g., as Michel, O., "Der Brief an die Hebraeer", Meyer's Commentary (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949) sub 11:2, "Zur Bedeutung von μαρτυρία im Hb: Gott hat sich zu den Alten bekannt und ihnen Sein 'Zeugnis' ausgestellt, (11:5.7); Er hat aber auch ueber sie 'Zeugnis' ausgestellt, so dass es in der Gemeinde erkennbar ist."



## CHAPTER I

### THE POSITION AND MEANING OF HEBREWS 11:2

The purpose of V. 2 is to establish, illustrate, and confirm the validity of the confidence-faith referred to in 10:35 - 11:1: ἐν

ταύτη ἡπίστευσα ἑμαρτηρήθην ὡς πρεσβύτερος.

The ideas attached to μαρτηρεῖν in this verse are important for the meaning and application of the whole chapter. This can be seen from its introductory position at the head of the chapter, its threefold use in the introductory characters (Abel, V. 4, and Enoch, V. 5) and in the comprehensive, eschatological thoughts of Vv. 39 f.

The shifting from the active (V. 4 b in this chapter) to the passive (Vv. 2. 4 a. 5. 39) does not essentially alter the meaning of the verb as grammarians have generally pointed out (see Introduction, footnote 2). The passive of intransitive forms using the genitive or dative in the active may be illustrated: ἐγκλησθε, Acts 19:38 (passive) and 40 (active); πιστεύετε, Mt 21:25 (active) and I Ti 3:16 (passive); and μαρτυρεῖσθε, Acts 6:3 (passive) and Lk 4:22 (passive); and yet see 3 Jn 12, used in both voices: Δημιούργησθε μαρτυρήσατε ὑπὸ πάντων καὶ ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας· καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυροῦμεν.....<sup>1</sup>

The reason for the passive usage may be merely a matter of choice on the part of the writer, a stylistic device in this chapter perhaps to point up the characters as concrete examples.

In V. 2 μαρτηρεῖν occurs in the passive voice, as in six out of eight instances in Hb: pres., pass., part., 7:8; pres. pass., 7:17; pres. act., 10:15; aor. pass., 11:2 and 4 a; pres. act. part.,



11:4 b; perf. pass., 11:5; and sor. pass. part., 11:39.

This passive use with an expressed nominative is reflected in Acts 16:2, Τιμόθεος ... ὃς ἐμαρτυρεῖτο ὑπὸ τῶν ... ἀδελφῶν, in I Tim 5:10 with the subject understood (widows) and with the proposition: ἐν ἐρχοῖς κυλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη; and with the dative of the active construction retained, 3 Jn 12 (Demetrius, see above; the subject of the active here would be expressed by ὑπό).

A comparison of the verb in these passages and in this voice indicates approbation, and in Hb 11:2, God's approval.

The question we ask is: on what basis, in what sense, in what manner, is the approbation given? Beyond 'approval', the word must receive its content from the context, as elsewhere in Scripture. The reader has been prepared by previous instances of the word and its cognates (δοῦναι μαρτυροῦντος 2:4; δισμαρτύρητο, 2:6; μαρτυρεῖν, 7:8. 17; 10:15). We expect further qualification from the fact that 11:2 is part of the introduction (Vv. 1-3) to the chapter and its economy of words. We are not disappointed, for the thought is expanded and the word itself employed in Vv. 4 (twice). 5.39.

"By faith the ancients received God's approval" and as the reader proceeds he learns that such approval was and is:

A) based upon their righteousness, ἐμαρτυρήθη εἰς αὐτοὺς δίκαιος, V. 4 a, specified in V. 7 as faith-righteousness: τῆς κατὰ τρέπην δικαιοσύνης.<sup>2</sup> (See Proposition IV).

B) given to them personally, V. 4 b: μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ ταῖς δωροῖς αὐτῶν τοῦ θεοῦ. Westcott<sup>3</sup> translates the ἐπὶ as "on (the) occasion of his gifts", used of "accompanying circumstance



or condition" as in Hb 9:15.17 and elsewhere in the N. T.<sup>4</sup> (See Propositions III and VIII.) Furthermore, this approval "stands recorded" in Scripture, νεμαρτισηται, 11:5, as many exegetes interpret the perfect here; cf. ειρηκεν, 1:13; 4:4; 13:5 in introducing quotations; and Westcott's remarks about the writer's use of the perfect voice.<sup>5</sup> (See Proposition V.)

Zur Bedeutung von νεμαρτισηται im Hb: Gott hat sich zu den Alten bekannt und ihnen Sein 'Zeugnis' ausgestellt (11:5.7.); Er hat aber auch ueber sie 'Zeugnis' ausgestellt, so dasz es in der Gemeinde erkennbar ist. In diesem 'Zeugnis' bestaetigt Gott den Glauben der Alten, bekennt sich zu ihm und erwaeht den Glaubenden. Auf Grund dieses in der Schrift gegebenen 'Zeugnisses' reden die Maenner des Alten Bundes noch heute zu uns (11:4; 12:1).<sup>6</sup>

C) of a promisory, eschatological character, V. 39 f: "All these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better...." "Das Urteil ειμαρτισηται δικαιου unklammert also das ganze Kap. 11, wird durch die Aussage, dasz sie die Erfuellung der Verheissung nicht erreicht haben, eingeschraenkt."<sup>7</sup> (See Propositions II and X.)

<sup>1</sup>See Blass, F., Grammar of N. T. Greek (translated by H. Thackeray, second edition, London: Macmillan, 1911), Paragraph 53.3., who defines, "As in Attic, a passive verb may have a person for its subject even in a case where in the active this person is expressed by the genitive or dative; the accusative of the thing remains the same with the passive as with the active verb."

<sup>2</sup>See Westcott, B. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews (New York: Macmillan, 1903) who comments on "righteousness", sub 11:7, and also his remarks on "inheritance", p. 169 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., sub 11:4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., sub 9:10.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., sub 7:6 and 12:3



<sup>6</sup>Michel, O., "Der Brief an die Hebraeer", Meyer's Commentary (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), p. 249 f.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 244.



## CHAPTER II

### THE SCOPE AND IMPORT OF THE WITNESS OF GOD

#### PROPOSITION I

The witness of God is the overt revelation and activation of the will of God (the voluntas signi; 2:4; 13:21; the unchangeable character of God's purpose, 6:17, to bring many sons to glory, 2:10).

Dr. F. Pieper writes<sup>1</sup> about the voluntas signi: "God who by His essence is invisible and unknowable to us, has through His Word stepped out of His hidden invisibility and through a perceptible sign (signum) has made Himself known to us. Luther: 'That operation of God is called the will of the sign whereby He comes forth to us and deals with us cloaked in external things which we can apprehend, such as the Word of God and the Sacraments instituted by Him' (Opp. Exeg. 2: 173; St. Louis, I: 489)." Luther usually has the Gospel in mind when he speaks of the voluntas signi, but he also includes the Law, i.e., the Ten Commandments: "These also are the will of the sign." Again, Luther writes of "word and sign" operative in the case of Noah, Abraham, Gideon, Ahaz, in the Mass and Baptism, in his "Babylonian Captivity."<sup>2</sup>

The Father witnesses (inferred throughout Hebrews, expressly stated only in Jn 3:32; 5:32.37; 8:18; I Jn 5:9 f).

The Son witnesses (2:3. 11-13; 12:2; Jn 3:11.32 f; 5:31; 8:13 f. 18; I Tm 6:3; Rev 3:5. 14; 22:20; and, if taken as a subjective genitive, Rev 1:9; 19:10).<sup>3</sup>

The Spirit witnesses (2:4; 10:15; Jn 15:26; Ro 8:16; I Jn 5:7 f; LXX: ἐπιμαρτυροῦσι, Neh 9:30).<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the Scriptures speak of God witnessing as One (11:2. 4.5.39; Jn 3:11; LXX: "the Lord is witness", Jer 36 (29) 23; I Kgs 12:5 f; Job 16:18 f; Mal 3:5) or the Three Persons separately as in 2:4; etc., as above.



This witness is a revelation in which God speaks and acts (καὶ διὰ λόγων καὶ δι' ἔργων μαρτυρίας τῷ δικαίῳ <sup>5</sup> mit Wort und Tat<sup>6</sup>) directly in His creation (10:35-12:3).<sup>7</sup>

God witnesses according to His own truth -- He cannot lie (ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀποψεύσεται θεόν), 6:16; Jn 5:32; 18:37; I Jn 5:7) and according to His own faithfulness in a covenant relationship (10:23; 11:11; LXX: Mal 2:14; see Proposition II).

At times He employs an oath, swearing by Himself (3:11.18; 4:3; 6:13-20; 7:20-22; Jn 13:21; cf. Deut 7:7 ff; and "as I live", Ezek 35:6; etc; cf. the "Amen, Amen" of Jesus in the Synoptics and John; LXX: Pr 12:17; 14:5.25).<sup>8</sup>

#### PROPOSITION II

God assumes the role of witnesser to establish (ἐβεβήκει ὁ θεός, 2:3 f; 6:16.19) the veracity (cf. Ps 88 (89) 37; Jer 39 (32) 10.14.) of His being or presence and the surety of His promises (11:1.5.6; cf. also 11:27; Ex 3:14).

According to this paper, 11:1 is understood: "Faith is assurance (confidence, 10:35; eine gewisse Zuversicht, Luther's Bible) about the things hoped for (established by the word-witness of God) and besides that, a conviction about facts not seen (also established by the word-witness of God) whether past, present or future" -- see Augustine's classic definition of Faith in Trench's Synonyms of the N. T.<sup>9</sup> On ἐπιβεβαιώσας see Moffatt's commentary<sup>10</sup> for a better and brief exegesis of this long standing problem. As in chapter 11 and elsewhere in Hb, although steeped in O. T. thought, the writer's motion is forward, eschatological in every respect.

The sequence of Abrahamic faith (11:8-19), in some respects peculiar to this epistle (that is, independent of a Pauline deliniation of "righteousness"), can only be properly understood in the light of 6:13-20 and Ro 4:16-25.

His witness, whatever the occasion, has lasting validity also in



N. T. times (11:2.39; 1:1; 3:15; 4:1 f; 9:15; 12:5.25; cf. Gal 3:14; I Pe 1:22-2:10; II Pe 1:17 ff). We belong to the family of all believers (2:17; 3:1-6; 4:9; 11:3; 13:12).

Schlatter,<sup>11</sup> Kaesemann,<sup>12</sup> and Michel<sup>13</sup> speak well on this point. G. Milligan<sup>14</sup> makes the cogent remark, "The blessings offered under the one covenant are represented as capable of extension to the other.... In strictness indeed we ought not to speak of two covenants at all, but rather of the one covenant manifesting itself under two different forms, which differed not so much in general purpose, as in the stage to which they were able to advance that purpose (8:6)."

### PROPOSITION III

God's witness cannot be isolated from His Word (2:6; 7:8.18; 10:15; LXX: μαρτυρία κυρίου, Ps 18 (19) 7; τὴ μαρτυρία, Deut 6:17.20; III Kgs 2:3; IV Kgs 23:3; I Ch 29:11; Neh 9:34; Ps 24 (25) 10; 77 (78) 5.56; 92 (93) 5; 118 (119) twenty three times; 131 (132) 12; Jer 51 (44) 23; see Proposition VIII).

"...das Wort Gottes, das den Glauben traegt, ist aber in Wirklichkeit ein zutreffender Ausdruck fuer das, was fuer den Hb im Glaubensbegriff grundlegend ist", according to Michel<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, there seems to be little difference whether it is the λόγος or ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ, as many exegetes have stated.

Under 2:2 ff, Luther<sup>16</sup> draws attention to Psalm 118 (119) among other words for the "message" and quotes Jn 3:27: "ein Mensch kann nichts nehmen, es werde ihm denn gegeben von oben." On "testimony, in this Psalm, Girdlestone says<sup>17</sup>, "The law of God is His testimony, because it is His own affirmation concerning His nature, attributes, and consequent demands."

God's witness cannot be isolated from His promise (4:1; 6:12.13.15.17; 7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:23.36; 11:9, twice; 11:10.11.13.17.33.39 sic; 12:26; see also "covenant" references in Hb).

The divine witness is, therefore, an accouterment of the creative, preserving Word, 11:3.



The full scope and import of this verse might be brought out in paraphrase: "By faith we (sic) perceive (comprehend) that the whole scheme of time and space (τοὺς αἰῶνας) was created and equipped with purpose (κτισθῆναι) by the word (expressed) of God, that the visible universe has come into existence from the non-phenomenal (will and word of God)." What is there to prevent understanding this verse as a cosmological "witness" of God? Michel<sup>18</sup> writes, "Blickt man auf den theologischen Sinn des Exkurses Hb 11, dann enthüllt er letzten Endes eine Geschichte des Wortes Gottes, die von der Schöpfung an einer Erfuellung entgegengieht: Ursprung und Ziel dieser Geschichte sind also dem Menschen entzogen. Jedes Glaubensereignis wird durch diesen 'Rahmen' mitbestimmt."

Note the variegated and telling force of God's speaking throughout Hb (1:1, twice with different emphasis; 1:5-8.13; 2:12; 3:5.7; as well as in many other places).

In His witness God confronts man with irrefutable authority and evidence<sup>19</sup> (see "duplication of witness", Proposition IV). To refute God's witness is to refute God Himself (3:7-11; I Jn 5:10).

Insofar as the divine witness is connected with the Word of God, it may be considered part of the "means of grace" (see "Justified", Proposition IV). The "water and the blood", in I Jn 5:8, some exegetes think of as witnesses together with the Spirit, not only to Christ personally, but also infer God's witness to the believer in the Christian sacraments.

Commenting on this verse, G. B. Stevens says<sup>20</sup>, "Faith rests upon objective grounds; it appeals to historic facts for its justification." He gives a survey of the interpretations of this passage, remarking, "Many scholars... (Tholuck, Alford, Westcott, Plummer, Godet)... generally hold that an indirect or prophetic reference to Christian baptism is also veiled in the word."

In a most interesting and singular way, Justine Martyr employs the "witness of God" in his argumentation with Trypho the Jew:

What need then have I of circumcision, who have been witnessed to by God? What need have I of that other baptism, who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost? ....And there are so many righteous



men who have performed none of these legal ceremonies, and yet are witnessed to by God himself (μεμαρτυρηται ὑπὸ θεοῦ  
καὶ τοῦ).<sup>21</sup>

## PROPOSITION IV

God's witness to "righteousness" serves as the highest testimony to that righteousness of which He is the source (Abel, 11:4 a; Enoch, 11:5; Noah, 11:7; 12:16 f; and cf. Acts 13:22; and especially Ro 3:21).

Righteousness (11:4 a; cf. also 10:38) = do the will of God (10:36) = having pleased God (11:5 f) = heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (11:7) -- not as in 11:33 (which is to be understood as in II Sam 8:15 and Acts 10:35). Cf. Oecumenius: ἐμαρ-  
τυρηθέντων ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἐν ἁγιογραφίαις<sup>21</sup> and Way's translation<sup>22</sup> of 11:2, "It was through their exercise of this faith that the men of old had God's witness borne to their righteousness."

δικαιοσύνη is in Hb 1:9; 5:13; 7:2; 11:7.33; 12:11; and δικαίος in 10:38; 11:4; 12:23. On persecution for righteousness see Mt 5:10-12; I Pe 3:8-18, especially V. 12 (Ps 24:12-16).

Pieper<sup>23</sup> quotes Chemnitz in summary: "There is indeed a difference between the faith which apprehends Christ and the exercises of faith which are concerned with other objects. But these other exercises of faith always presuppose as their foundation that God has been reconciled by faith and always lead back to that fact, so that faith may be certain and the promise in other matters may be reliable. And this explanation is confirmed by the clear statement of Paul (II Co 1:20); 'All the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen.'"

Pieper continues, "Trust in the promises of God concerning temporal matters is therefore in every case the sure sign (signum) that faith in the forgiveness of sins is dwelling in the heart. What is more, Scripture designates the faith which trusts in the promise of temporal blessings (Ro 4:17 ff) as justifying faith. Accordingly, Luther says: 'In this sense the faith in the promise of temporal things which one does not yet see is identical (eadem fides) with the faith in justification and remission of sins, by which we conclude and are certain that God is gracious to us and will certainly keep His promise.' (II: 2029; St. Louis ed.)"

In 11:5 "πρὸ γὰρ τῆς μεταθέσεως μεμαρτυρηται ist nicht lokal gemeint ... sondern temporal, so dass sich der Gedanke ergibt: nach dem noch immer gueltigen Zeugnis der Schrift (note the perfect) hat Henoch vor seiner Entrueckung dauernd einen Gott wohlgefälligen Wandel gefuehrt."<sup>24</sup>

In 11:7, τῆς κατὰ μέτρον δικαιοσύνης is Pauline. See 10:22.38;



Deltizsch<sup>25</sup> and Dwight<sup>26</sup>. Read Hunter's The Message of the N. T.<sup>27</sup> on the whole problem of re-discovering the essential unity of the N. T. writers. Although he ignores some N. T. epistles he does include Hb in his discussion of the unity of the N. T. Heilsgeschichte.

Thus, righteousness is established by a duplication of divine witness (10:28; cf. LXX: Deut 17:6 and also Rev 11:3).

"...sich durch ihre Erklärungen fuer die Richtigkeit bestimmter sonstiger Aussagen verbuergen", in a more general vein, "Das Wort bedeutet dann oft soviel wie 'nachdruecklich unter Einsatz der vorhandenen Autoritaet bekunden.'"<sup>28</sup>

God is both Witness and Judge, as Schlatter points out:<sup>29</sup>

Hier ist er der Zeuge, bei Paulus der Richter. Waehrend der Spruch des Richters schaffend in die Verhaeltnisse des Gerichteten eingreift und sie aktiv neu bestimmt, spricht der Spruch des Zeugen den vorhandenen, gegebenen Thatbestand aus...Waehrend uns Paulus an der Rechtfertigung diejenige That der Gnade sichtbar machen will, an welcher unser Glaube entsteht, sorgt unser Brief fuer die Erhaltung des vorhandenen Glaubens, indem er ihn in Gottes Zeugnis die Bestaetigung und Vergewisserung finden heisst. Darum besteht hier auch das goettliche Zeugnis nicht nur in der einen Gabe der Gerechtigkeit, sondern in der ganzen Mannigfaltigkeit der goettlichen Hilfe, die Israel erfahren hat.

Moulton and Milligan<sup>30</sup> support the "legal and judicial" sense of μαρτυρίω with examples from the papyri.

It would be pressing the concept of witness too far to presume that God's witness "justifies" (forgives) the sinner immediately, equating μαρτυρίω with δικαίω; and yet, there is a connection, since both emanate from God, and the former does operate in the sphere of the latter.

Wie Paulus im Rechtfertigungsgedanken Gott als den Richter vor Augen hat, der den Glaubenden frei spricht, so ist hier Gott als der Zeuge gedacht, der fuer ihn einsteht und zwar durch ein Thatzeugnis, vgl. V.4. Alles was er ihnen an Anerkennung, Auszeichnung und Segnung verlieh, womit die Weise, wie die Bibel von ihnen redet, unmittelbar zusammenhaengt, kam ihnen durch ihr Glauben zu. Um seinetwillen 'schaemte sich Gott nicht, ihr Gott zu heissen', bekannte sich vielmehr zu ihnen mit Wort und That.<sup>31</sup>



He (God) testified, in the approbation of his offering, that he had respect to his person; that is, he judged, esteemed, and accounted him righteous; for otherwise God is no respecter of persons: whomsoever God accepts, or respects, he testifies him to be righteous, that is, to be justified and freely accepted with him: this Abel was by faith, antecedently to his offering; for he was not made righteous, he was not justified, by his sacrifice: but therein 'shewed his faith by his works;' and God by accepting his works of obedience, justified him (as he did Abraham) by works declaratively; he declared him to be so, giving testimony to his gifts.<sup>32</sup>

God's "praise" or "mention in Scripture" is not enough, or the chief idea in Hb 11, as many commentators assume.<sup>33</sup>

Not the same as Lk 4:22; Acts 6:3; 10:22; 16:2; I Tm 5:10; III Jn 3.6.12; for these reflect human opinions; enlightened as they may be, they are not directly God's approbation. These Hb references should be taken more in the light of Ro 16:10 and I Co 4:5.

Hebrews 11 is more than a call to an imitation of human examples (cf. 6:12; and also 13:7) as Riegenbach rightly remarks:<sup>34</sup>

Zuteil geworden ist ihnen jenes Zeugnis durch die rühmende Erwähnung in der heiligen Schrift und noch weit mehr durch die Segnungen und Verheissungen, die sie bei ihren Lebzeiten von Gott empfangen.

Dasz und wie er als ihr Zeuge fuer sie redete, erfahren die Leser durch die Bibel, doch nicht so, als bestaende Gottes Zeugnis nur in der lobenden Erwähnung der Alten in der Schrift; vielmehr ist der Blick des Briefs auf den thatsaechlichen Lauf der Geschichte gerichtet, mit dem er den biblischen Bericht ueber diese unmittelbar zusammenfasst.<sup>35</sup>

#### PROPOSITION V

God's witness is objectively perceptible, directly or indirectly, in time (past, present and future: 10:34-13:3; Acts 14:17; cf. Ro 1:18-21)<sup>36</sup> and in nature (11:4.5.6.12.19.28-30.33-35; the "works of Jesus" in Jn 5:36; 10:25).

The question of "how" God demonstrated his acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, Hb 11:4, has disturbed many, who refer to tradition: "Feuer kam vom Himmel u. verzehrte seine (Abels) Opfergabe."<sup>37</sup>



That fire should come from the Lord is certainly not without a full analogy of Scripture: e.g., Gen 15:17; Lev 9:24; Deut 4:11 f; Judg 6:21; I Kgs 18:38; II Chr 7:1; as Gerhard suggests.<sup>38</sup>

Luther interprets theologically,<sup>39</sup> "...gleiche wie I. Mos. 4,4: 'Der Herr sah gnaediglich an Abel', eben zuerst um des Glaubens, nicht des Werkes willen; denn das Werk folgt danach: 'und (sah an) seine Gaben.' Das also ist der Scheideweg, an dem die wahrhaft Frommen und die Heuchler sich voneinander scheiden: die wahrhaft Frommen sterben durch den Glauben und die Gnade zu den Werken, die Heuchler dagegen in verkehrtem Eifer durch die Werke zur Gnade, d.h. (dann) zu dem Unmoeglichen."

Would it not be enough to think of the "how" as "accidental" to the fact? Gen 4:4 says "God had regard (ἰμεν δὲ... ἰμεν) Abel and for (καὶ ἰμεν) his offering." Hb 11:4 repeats and expands this almost appositional phrase. The writer "interprets" Gen 4:4.<sup>40</sup>

If the variant reading of 11:4 (αὐτῷ, P13; Clement Strom. II 12:2) should be accepted -- as seems rather likely -- it would not vary the interpretation of καὶ ἰμεν greatly. See Michel<sup>41</sup> and Moffatt<sup>42</sup> for a discussion of textual variants.

Also, in general, see Oehler,<sup>43</sup> for the theology of O. T. miracles: "The full idea of a miracle is expressed only by its teleological designation as σημεῖον, according to which its meaning is, an indication of something higher and divine, and so to serve a definite divine aim.... Miracles serve this aim by means of the impression which they make (Ex 8:15: "This is the finger of God"), but only in connection with the word-witness which accompanies them or stands in connection with them."

The divine witness is subjectively perceptible in faith (11:2; Acts 15:8 f; or, as we have it in Paul, "in the spirit": Ro 8:16; see Proposition VI).

God's witness is part of the personal experience of Old and New Testament believers in time and eternity (καὶ ὁ καρδιόγραφός τοῦ θεοῦ ἐμαρτύρησεν αὐτοῖς τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τοῦ ἡμεῶν, Acts 15:8; Μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμεῖν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Hb 10:15; cf. Ro 8:16; I Jn 5:10; "today...when you hear his voice", 3:15; 4:2; 11:4-40; and the fact that μαρτυρεῖ in the aorist



occurs in three out of five instances in this historical chapter, including the historical sweep of V. 39 f., seems to support a historical action; see also Chapter I, B).

Die Antwort Gottes auf ihr Glauben fiel teils in ihre Gegenwart, da sie durch mannigfache Hilfe Gottes erlebten, was ihnen versprochen war, teils gehoert sie der Zukunft an, doch als ihr sicherer Besitz, darum weil Gottes Zeugnis schon ueber sie ergangen ist.<sup>44</sup>

Um seinetwillen wurde ihnen Gottes Wohlgefallen bezeugt, sei es in ausdruecklichen Worten, sei es in ihren Schicksalen.<sup>45</sup>

Cf. Way's translation<sup>46</sup> of V. 39: "Who through that faith received tokens of God's approval."

#### PROPOSITION VI

While God's witness is independent of men and faith, it is designed to motivate<sup>47</sup>, reassure, and confirm<sup>48</sup> their and our faith, patience, obedience, trust, confidence, hope<sup>49</sup> (11:2; I Jn 5:10) and endurance-conduct<sup>50</sup> (10:35-11:1; note the variety of action verbs in chapter 11 modified by πιστι).<sup>51</sup>

The witness may be experienced by the unbeliever (3:15-19; 10:39; 11:4.28-31) but it is accepted only in faith (11:2; I Jn 5:10) and acted upon by the believer.

The preposition in 11:2 ἐν = ἐν <sup>52</sup> = ἐν (11:4.39) is an instrumental dative<sup>53</sup>. The case (dative almost throughout chapter 11) determines the preposition<sup>54</sup>. The reason for the ἐν in V. 2, tending toward a locative, seems to be used in keeping with the purpose of Vv. 1-3, to show the motives, the Grund, the scope of faith, demonstrating a depth and a breadth of expression on the part of the author.

The dative πιστι without prepositional reinforcement occurs eighteen times in the chapter, and standing at the head of the sentences, strikes with telling rhetorical force: the means... the means...the means...by which we are enabled to do His will and receive his promises (10:36) to be justified and live (10:38) to save our souls (10:39) and to realize the content of 11:1-3. The prepositions ἐν, κατά, χωρίς and ἐκ occur a few times.



Oddly enough the verb appears only once (V. 6), the noun as a nominative, once (11:1) and a genitive without a preposition, twice (10:39; 12:2).

"...nowhere are eulogies mentioned which had been made upon the ancients on account of their faith, but it is merely shown how it appears from their history, that in no other state of mind can they have found the requisite strength for their achievements (or endurance) but in that described in V. 1 and in chap. 10:35-11:1, enjoined on the hearers."<sup>55</sup> A proper interpretation of  $\xi\upsilon\varsigma$  and  $\delta\iota\omega\varsigma$  in this chapter would help some expositors' difficulty in the inclusion of such "unworthies" as Sarah, Rahab, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, Vv. 31 f; this, together with a clear perspective of the witness of God (cf. "Spirit", Proposition I, and the Summary).

The Christological sources and content of faith are observed throughout the epistle and unmistakably summarized in 10:22-25 and 12:2, the latter reading like the Apostles' Creed in embryo.

In the form of promises (10:36; 11:9,11,13,17,33,39; I Jn 5:11; etc.), especially the promise of everlasting life, the witness excites hope, which of course is based on faith (11:1).

Wenn Gott Menschen das Urteil der Gerechtigkeit schenkt, dann liegt in ihm eine eschatologische Verheissung, ein jetzt noch unerfuelltes Anrecht, ein Hinweis auf zukuenftige Herrlichkeit.<sup>56</sup>

#### PROPOSITION VII

His witness has both positive and negative consequences: the former resulting in salvation (2:3; 10:38; I Jn 5:11), the latter in condemnation (11:4,7,28-30; Jn 7:7; LXX Zeph 3:8). In other words, it conveys His disposition toward men so that they are without excuse (LXX: Ex 31:19).

#### PROPOSITION VIII

The divine witness is distinguished from human witness (2:4; I Jn 5:9; Jesus differentiated it: Jn 5:34-36) and yet it may be transmitted by human witness or testimony (see Proposition IX). Thus:



Holy Scriptures bear His testimony (2:6; 7:8.17; 10:15; 11:2; see also 4:7; Jn 5:37; Acts 10:43; Ro 3:21; LXX: Deut 31:19.26; Ps 118 (119) passim twenty three times).

μαρτυρεῖ ὁ λόγος hat im Hb einen besonderern Klang...weist wieder auf eine lebendige Wort-Gottes-Anschauung in Hb hin.<sup>57</sup> Michel also refers to I Clement as holding a similar view, 17:1 ff; 18:1; 19:1; 30:7; "sie (the Bible) bestimmte Urteile Gottes ueber Menschen, die den Glauben bewahrt haben." While μαρτυρεῖ appears often in Philo, it is allegorized.<sup>58</sup>

As to the unique form of quotation in Hb, it is paralleled elsewhere in the N. T. only in Jn 7:42; Ro 15:4; Gal 3:8.22; 4:21.30; and in the cryptic reference of Christ, Lk 11:49 ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπέειπεν (not in the Mt 23 parallel). Besides the cognates of μαρτυρεῖν, Hb uses λέγειν; but it does not warrant Dodd's curt dismissal of mere "rhetorical elegance" to soften away the force of μαρτυρεῖν.<sup>59</sup>

"No difference is made between the word spoken and the word written ....The record is the voice of God; and as a necessary consequence the Word is itself living. It is not a book merely. It has a vital connection with our circumstances and must be considered in connection with them. The constant use of the present tense in quotations emphasizes this truth. (2:11; 3:7; 12:5.26.)"<sup>60</sup> "It follows that the historical truth of the Scripture records is everywhere guarded, but the recorded facts are treated as 'signs', and the believer is led to see in them a fuller meaning as the course of life is unfolded. The records are not changed, but men are changed by gaining deeper insight into nature and history."<sup>61</sup>

"What is done in the Scripture for our use, is immediately done to us; and what is spoken in it, is spoken to us....It (Scripture) argues, it pleads, it maintains a holy conference with us; it presses the mind and will of God upon us; and we shall find the force of its arguing if we keep it not off by our unbelief."<sup>62</sup>

Proponitur autem illud testimonium Sacris literis, quae sunt tabulae testimoniales.<sup>63. 64</sup>

The preaching of the Gospel bears His testimony (2:3.4; Rev 1:2; I Pe 1:11; 5:12; Mt 24:14: "And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony, ὡς μαρτυρίαν, to all nations; and then the end will come.").



The faithful deeds of the saints (12:1) are His witnesses in a secondary and distinct yet unseparated way, bearing a participating authority with His primary witness (2:3f; 12:1 f; Acts 5:23; 10:43 f; 14:3; 15:8; I Co 1:4-7; 2:1-5; I Th 2:6).

## PROPOSITION IX

When God witnesses, He establishes or appoints<sup>65</sup> some person or persons with divine authority (children of Israel, Is 43:10.12; 44:8; David, Is 55:4; Acts 13:22; Stephen, Acts 22:20; Antipas, Rev 2:13; angel witness, Hb 2:2; Rev 22:16; Christ: in the Synoptics, baptism and transfiguration; especially in Jn 5 and 8; in Hb strongly implied 1:2 ff; 5:1-10; etc; cf. "calling" 3:1; 9:15; 11:8; the idea of appointment in this connection borders on ἀποδείκνυμι and its noun ἀπόδειξις: e.g., of Christ, Acts 2:22 f; of man, I Co 2:4 f).

"Die voellige Beschlagnahme des Wortes μαρτύριον und seines Plurals μαρτύρια fuer die Selbstbezeugung Gottes in der mosaischen Gesetzgebung ist ein fuer die Ausbildung des at.lichen Nomismus hocchst bezeichnender Vorgang."<sup>66</sup>

By His 'witnessing' God may appoint some thing or things with a divine authority, for example:

The tent of witness or testimony: σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου, Ex 27:21; etc. about 152 times in the O. T., Acts 7:44; with τοῦ μαρτυρίου understood, Hb 8:5; 9:2 (3) 6.8: "By this the Holy Spirit indicates" -- δεδόω in Hb approaches the idea of "witness", cf. 12:27 and also I Pe 1:11; the earthly tent is a prototype of the heavenly, Hb 8:2; 9:11; Rev 13:6; 21:6; with τοῦ μαρτ. Rev 15:5.<sup>67</sup>

The ark of testimony κιβωτός μαρτυρίου, Ex 25:9 (10); etc. about 14 times in the Pentateuch.

The two tables of stone ἑξήκοντα τὰ πλάκες τοῦ μαρτυρίου, "written with the finger of God", Ex 31:18; "the work of God", the writing of God", Ex 32:15; with plural genitive, Deut 9:15.<sup>68</sup>



The book of the law, Deut 31:26.

Or, simply "testimony" alone, Ex 16:34; 30:6.36; Num 7:4 (19); IV Kgs 11:12; II Chr 23:11.

Similarly, too, men may call upon Him to witness to the truth of their transactions (Ro 1:9; II Co 1:23, Ph 1:8; I Th 2:5.10; cf. I Kgs 20:23.42; Jer 49 (42) 50; etc.).<sup>69</sup>

#### PROPOSITION X

These concepts of the divine witness are applicable to the interpretation of Old and New Testaments alike, although the witness is more cumulative in succeeding time and more deeply developed in the fulfillment of the N. T. era. Regardless in which testament they appear, they are valid for us today (11:39; 12:1).

The divine witness reaches its climax in Christ, His incarnation, ministry, teaching, atonement (12:24),<sup>70</sup> high priesthood, and parousia<sup>71</sup> (1:1; 12:2 f; etc.; I Jn 5:10). If it were Paul writing, he would have put it as in II Co 1:20 ("all the promises of God find their Yes in him") and if John, as in Rev 1:5; 3:14 ("the Amen, the faithful and true witness") or a repetition of Jn 1: the Word made flesh. Christ is the first and last word (1:1-3) of the voluntas signi (revelata), God "speaking and acting directly in His creation" (see Proposition I).

All Christology and, therefore, all Soteriology, stands or falls with the divine accreditation of Jesus in His Messianic character -- the link, which, if not accepted, breaks the chain of blessings intended for each person B. C. and A. D. by the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ.



## PROPOSITION XI

The witness of God concept is part of the kerygma<sup>72</sup> and didache of the apostles, their basis of argument (sermons in Acts; quotations in Hebrews),

It is interesting to note in Tertullian's regula fidei a similar appeal to God's direct word and action in the O. T.: "who produced all things out of nothing through His Word, first of all sent forth (Jesus); that this Word is called His Son, and under the name of God, was seen 'in diverse manners' by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets...."<sup>73</sup>

as it was of Jesus (Lk 24:26 f; Mt 24:14), recorded with this particular emphasis in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Johannine writings, with traces of it in Paul, Luke and Peter.

Whereas the priesthood of Christ is the Christological center of the Epistle, the witness of God appears to be its theological center. Hb 11 is not an apologia pro vita senium as is Ecclesiasticus 14:1 ff ("Let us now praise distinguished men") or an historical illustration of "humility" (Clement of Rome), as if we were only to draw inspiration from their lives and be motivated by their example (although this is true here and there elsewhere in the N. T. including Hebrews and perhaps in an inferential manner also in chapter 11) but Hb 11 is an apologia pro fide, showing us what great things God can and does accomplish in our lives through faith (10:35-39).

The theology of witness was probably brought more into the fore during the declining apostolic age to undergird apostolic testimony, since the apostles themselves were leaving the arena of earthly life.

So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3)

<sup>1</sup>Pieper, F., Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), II, 40.

<sup>2</sup>Luther, M., Three Treatises (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947), p. 152 f.



<sup>3</sup>Jesus' testimony to Himself is discussed in a separate chapter by Stevens, G., The Theology of the N. T. (New York: Scribner's, 1899, pp. 199 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Gal 4:6; see Michel, O., "Der Brief an die Hebraeer" in Meyer's Commentary (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), sub 10:15; read comments on the work of the Spirit in the O. T. by Oehler, G., Theology of the O. T. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), p. 141 (paragraph 65) and p. 462 (paragraph 204).

<sup>5</sup>Chrysostom, J., Hom., 22, sub 11:4; Migne, P.G. 63. He assumes that fire came down from heaven on the basis of the "Syriac" (really another version).

<sup>6</sup>Schlatter, A., Der Glaube im Neuen Testament (Calw & Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1896), p. 334; and also Luenemann, G., "Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews" in Meyer's Commentary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), briefly sub 11:2.

<sup>7</sup>See Oehler, op. cit., p. 124 (paragraph 55) for an outline of God's self-revelation in the O. T.

<sup>8</sup>The oath has two results, negative and positive: it finally stops all contradiction: and it establishes that which it attests. -- Westcott, B. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews (New York: Macmillan, 1903). For Philo's interpretation of God's oath in the O. T., see Moffatt, J. "A Critical & Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews" (International Critical Commentaries, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952) sub 6:13 f.

<sup>9</sup>Trench, R. C., Synonyms of the N. T. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), p. 390.

<sup>10</sup>Moffatt, op. cit., sub loc.

<sup>11</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>12</sup>Kaesemann, E., Das Wandernde Gottesvolk (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939), p. 37.

<sup>13</sup>Michel, op. cit., sub Chapter 11, "Zur Analyse."

<sup>14</sup>Milligan, G., The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899), pp. 172 ff.

<sup>15</sup>Michel, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>16</sup>Luther, M., Hebraeerbrief (deutsche Uebersetzung von E. Vogel-sang, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1930), sub 2:2 ff.



- <sup>17</sup>Girdlestone, R. B., Synonyms of the O. T. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 209; XVII, 5.
- <sup>18</sup>Michel, op. cit., p. 244.
- <sup>19</sup>Cremer, H., Biblico-Theological Lexicon of N. T. Greek (translated by W. Urwick, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), sub καρπικῶν and Riggerbach in Michel, op. cit., sub 10:15.
- <sup>20</sup>Stevens, G. B., The Johannine Theology (New York: Scribner's, 1894), pp. 238 and 239.
- <sup>21</sup>Quoted in Luenemann, op. cit., sub 11:2.
- <sup>22</sup>Way, A. S., The Letters of St. Paul . . . with the Letter to the Hebrews (Eighth edition, Chicago: Moody, 1950), sub loc.
- <sup>23</sup>Pieper, op. cit., II, p. 450.
- <sup>24</sup>Riggerbach, E., "Der Brief an die Hebraeer" (Zahnscher Kommentar, 1913), sub 11:5.
- <sup>25</sup>Delitzsch, F., Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), sub voc.
- <sup>26</sup>Dwight, T., in Luenemann, op. cit., LXCVIIc. sub 11:7.
- <sup>27</sup>Hunter, A. M., The Message of the N. T. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1944).
- <sup>28</sup>Kittel, G., Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (in Verbindung mit zahlreichen Fachgenossen, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1939), sub καρπικῶν, etc., article by Strathmann.
- <sup>29</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 336, followed by Riggerbach.
- <sup>30</sup>Moulton, J. H. and Milligan, G., The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-19), sub voc.
- <sup>31</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 334.
- <sup>32</sup>Owen, John, An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews (revised and abridged by Edward Williams, London: James Black, 1815) sub 11:4.
- <sup>33</sup>Michel, op. cit., sub 7:8 and 11:2, agrees.
- <sup>34</sup>Riggerbach, op. cit., sub 11:2.
- <sup>35</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 334 f.



36 Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., sub μαρτυρία cite a usage where it means a popular or public demonstration (in honor of an official).

37 Strack, H. L. and Billerbeck, P., Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck, 1926), sub 11:4, "Raschi zu Gen 4,4."

38 Gerhard, J., Commentarius super epistolam ad Hebraeos (second edition, 1661) sub 11:4.

39 Luther, Hebraeerbrief, op. cit., sub 11:4.

40 So Michel, op. cit., sub loc.

41 Ibid.

42 Moffatt, op. cit., sub 11:4.

43 Oehler, op. cit., p. 139 ff (paragraphs 63 and 64).

44 Schlatter, op. cit., p. 334.

45 Strathmann, H., "Der Brief an die Hebraeer", Das Neue Testament Deutsch (vol. IX, Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1947), p. 136.

46 Way, op. cit., sub voc.

47 So, e.g., Ebrard, J. H. A., "Hebrews", Biblical Commentary on the N. T. by H. Olshausen (translated by A. C. Kendrick, New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1858) sub loc.; cf. Ro 15:4.

48 So, e.g., Cremer, op. cit., sub μαρτυρία.

49 All these qualities are closely connected with faith, Michel, op. cit., chapter 11, "Zur Analyse."

50 See Strathmann, op. cit., p. 136.

51 See Burton, E. on "Faith" in N. T. Word Studies, edited by H. R. Willoughby (Chicago: U. of C. Press, 1927) and especially ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in the appendix to his commentary on Galatians, International Critical Commentaries (New York: Scribner's, 1920) pp. 475 ff. "When the article is omitted the noun (faith) has a qualitative force." Faith involves more fiducia than Burton allows in commenting on Hb 11:1.3. when he speaks of the "intellectual" element, but his further comments related to this intertestamental concept of faith are helpful: "That the line of distinction cannot be sharply drawn and that N. T. writers easily pass from one conception to the other is a result and evidence of the fact that faith, whether directed towards the God revealed in O. T. or towards Christ or God as revealed in the gospel, is conceived of as



always essentially the same in character...without reference to the distinction...signifies faith as the attitude towards God of the man who accepts and believes whatever accredits itself to him as from God, and commits himself in trustfulness and obedience to God...."

For "faith" in Hb, see Ménégos, E., La Théologie L'Épître Aux Hébreux (Paris: Fischbacher, 1894), chap. 4: "La Foi, Moffatt, op. cit., xliii f; Michel, op. cit., p. 24 for a theological survey (dependent upon Riggerbach) and p. 243 and especially p. 247 ff; et al.

52 Blass, op. cit., p. 116.

53 See Robertson and Davis, A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament (New York: Harper, 1931-33) p. 238 f.

54 Ibid., pp. 248 f.

55 Ebrard, op. cit., sub 11:2.

56 Michel, op. cit., p. 256.

57 Ibid., sub 7:8; cf. also sub 10:15

58 Ibid., p. 250.

59 Dodd, C. H., According to the Scriptures (London: Nisbet, 1953), p. 32.

60 Westcott, op. cit., p. 477.

61 Ibid., p. 482.

62 Owen, op. cit., sub 12:1.

63 Gerhard, op. cit., sub 11:2.

64 Further on this mode of quotation, see Streuffert, W. B., "The Appeal to Scripture as the Living Voice of God," Concordia Theological Monthly, July 1954, p. 537; Tasker, R. V. G., The O. T. in the N. T. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947) pp. 97 ff. For theological orientation on this subject, read "The Epistle and the O. T." in Nairne, A., The Epistle of Priesthood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Glark, 1915) p. 248; and Westcott's large appendix "On the Use of the O. T. in the Epistle", op. cit., pp. 473-397, for tabulations and comments.

65 cf. of time appointed, μαρτυρία, I Kgs 9:24; 13:8.11.

66 Kittel, op. cit., sub voc.

67 See Westcott, op. cit., note on tabernacle, p. 235 ff., the various titles of the tabernacle representing "a) the Presence of God



with men, b) His righteousness, c) His 'conversableness'." p. 237.  
See also Oehler, op. cit., p. 252. 254 f. (para. 115. 116.) in regard to revelation and testimony.

<sup>68</sup>For positive and negative aspects (cf. Proposition VI) of the witness of the ark, see Ibid., p. 258 (para. 118). Consult Girdlestone, op. cit., p. 231 f. in regard to all three.

<sup>69</sup>See Osterloh, E., Biblich-Theologisches Handwoerterbuch... (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1954) sub "Zeuge."

<sup>70</sup>See Westcott, op. cit., p. 295 for discussion on the Blood of Christ.

<sup>71</sup>See Riggerbach, op. cit., sub 11:39.

<sup>72</sup>See Dodd, op. cit., p. 13 ff, for an analysis of the apostles' use of the O. T. Scripture in the kerygma.

<sup>73</sup>"On Prescriptions Against Heretics", XIII, Ante-Nicene Fathers, op. cit., vol. 3; also Migne, P. L., 2.



## SUMMARY

This interpretation of 11:2 provides 1) a more theocentric dynamic to Hebrews 11, much in need of being freed from the humanizing of faith by modern religionists; from Pauline enthusiasts, who too readily cut off Hebrews theologically from the great apostle and the rest of the N. T.; and from the "Philo-philos" who Hellenize the Epistle theologically rather than linguistically. 2) This witness theology reveals an important correspondence with Johannine thought.

3) This interpretation enlarges the scope of 11:1-12:2 to include a more active divine witness, and 4) helps to explain the presence of such "embarrassing" individuals as Sarah, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson in this chapter (cf. Proposition VI). On the human level, the author of Hebrews is not writing about men but faith; and their accomplishments (see second introductory paragraph) were all πίστει, ἐν πίστει, or διὰ πίστεως. Burch<sup>1</sup> calls those in V. 33 "psychic judges" --

Cf. the Spirit of the Lord coming, e.g., upon Gideon (Judg 6:34); Jephthah (11:29); Samson (13:25; 14:6.19; 15:14); David (I Sam 16:13); Samuel (I Sam 3:9.21; etc., the appearance of the Lord to him).

or, "nuclear men", central to the organism of the community:

Their (judges, kings, priests, prophets) office and qualities, which are primarily to communicate the spirit of Jahwe to their fellows by deed and word or to ensure its sovereignty throughout the (Israelitic) society.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, God bore witness through them.

Finally, this interpretation 5) draws a closer tie between chapters 10 and 11; and 6) fits chapter 11 in closer with the whole scheme of the Epistle. It is not an "excursus" as too many hastily suppose, the same interpreters forgetting their earlier praise for the writer's supreme



craftsmanship. Not only is the author a master of epistulary rhetoric and an inspired interpreter of the O. T., but a theologian of many facets, provoking students and scholars of Scripture for centuries into fresh investigations of his profound revelation.

The End

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<sup>1</sup>Burch, V., The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Williams & Norgate, 1936), p. 117 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



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