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**THE CONCEPTS OF PISTIS, ELPIS,
AND AGAPEE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**

**A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of New Testament Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity**

**by
Karl L. Barth
May 1947**

**Approved by: Martin H. Franzmann
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**THE CONCEPTS OF PISTIS, ELPIS, AND
AGAPEE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**

Introduction

When we speak of faith, hope, and love in the New Testament, we are speaking of three fundamental, cardinal Christian concepts. Every believing Christian, though perhaps not knowingly, has these concepts written on the tables of his heart. He may not speak of πιστις, ελπις, αγαπη or even mention their English equivalents; but when he says, "I know that Jesus died for me; in Him I put all my trust; because of what He has done, I am sure that heaven is mine; I now want to serve God and my fellow-man"---that is faith; that is hope; and that is love.

In all New Testament writing and thinking, these three concepts are found, not isolated or treated as cold dogmatic assertions, but fused into one glorious concept, so that they become the very soul-center of religious thought.

Every believing student of the Bible necessarily, then, wants to acquaint himself more fully with these concepts

and their meaning for true Christian living. He wants to search them out in the New Testament writing, study them, digest them, and make them more and more his own. It is this desire which prompts the writing of this paper. Undoubtedly the presentation of the triad in I Corinthians 13 has heightened the interest in determining the meaning of pistis, elpis, and agapee. Again, these words are not always used in the same way in the New Testament, nor is the purpose of the holy writer in each instance the same. All these factors make such a study highly interesting and profitable.

But why study these concepts in the Letter to the Hebrews? In the first place, the Letter to the Hebrews, if we may make such a comparison, is one of the most glorious books in the New Testament, in that it presents the cardinal truths of Christianity in all their objective brilliance. Christ shines throughout the entire letter as the Only-begotten of the Father who became man's true High Priest and brought salvation's work to everlasting completion. The entire letter would shower the Christian reader with the assurance of the New Covenant's superiority and completeness in Christ Jesus.

Again, in choosing an epistle for such a study, the "faith chapter" strikes the eye, as one by one the heroes of "faith" pass by in review. What is this "faith"? Why does the author spend so many words in its presentation? Is it

the same as Pauline "faith"?

These and other questions this treatise hopes to answer. We shall not attempt to solve the problem of authorship, nor will the content and purpose of the epistle be treated beyond their relation to pistis, elpis, and agapee. Our problem is to determine: 1. what these words mean in the various passages in which they are used; 2. the role that these concepts play where they are present merely by implication, e. g., "the abiding city" as part of the hope concept; 3. their relation to one another.

Biblical quotations are, unless otherwise indicated, the readings of the Authorized Version.

I. THE PISTIS CONCEPT

Pistis in the New Testament

Just as the word "faith" in English does not always connote the same thing, so pistis, also in New Testament usage, has more than one meaning. We should say at the outset of our discussion that it is quite difficult to categorize this word pistis, for, as a Christian concept, it is far-reaching in its connotation.

We can, however, distinguish at least four meanings of pistis in the New Testament, though logicians may add shades of meaning to each. Pistis is most often used in the sense of saving faith, trust in the merits of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. This use of pistis is often called the Pauline concept of "Faith," since he speaks of it so often. It is most clearly pictured in chapters 3 and 4 of Romans, where the apostle talks about "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (dia pisteos Ieesou Christou), 3, 22; and in chapter 4 he writes: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (logizetai hee pistis autou eis dikaiosuneen), v. 5.

This pistis is very obviously something subjective, something within the believing heart. The word is used in an objective sense in the New Testament also, however. In Jude 3 the holy writer says, "It was needful for me to write

unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The Greek has epagoozizesthai tee hapax paradotheisee tois agiois pistei. The meaning in this passage (and probably also in v. 20) is to be the "doctrines of faith," the substance of Christian faith, or that which is believed by Christians. Some try to find the same meaning of pistis in I Tim. 1: 4, 19; 2: 7; 3: 9; 4: 1, 6; etc., though such a meaning is doubtful in those passages.

Besides its use in the sense of belief or that which is believed, pistis is at times used in the sense of "loyalty," "faithfulness." So when Paul speaks of the unbelief of the Jews, he asks, "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" A better translation of pistis here would be "faithfulness," for the apostle's purpose is to show that God remains faithful in spite of the fact that men reject the salvation which He has procured for them in Christ. The A. V. translation of pistis in Titus 2: 10 is accurate when it speaks of "fidelity."

Closely related to this use of pistis, a "faithfulness," is its meaning "pledge of faithfulness." In at least one passage this seems to be its true meaning. Acts 17, 31 reads: "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof

1. Cf. also Matt. 23, 23 and Gal. 5, 22.

He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." The Greek uses a participial construction for "hath given assurance:" pistin paraschoon.

What does pistis mean in the letter to the Hebrews? Is it "conviction" and does that "conviction" imply more than mere trust in God's promises in a general way? It is this problem especially which confronts us in this chapter.

An Exegetical Study

We should say at the very outset of our exegetical discussion of pistis in the Book of Hebrews that we shall not treat the concept of unbelief (apistia) at any length. The word is indeed used, and the writer to the Hebrews not only presents great examples of faith which the readers are to mimic; he also shows his readers the unbelief of the children of Israel, as a warning. The Letter to the Hebrews presents both positive and negative examples of faith.

The verses in the early part of chapter 4 in which pistis and pistenoo are used are part of a long section (3: 7-14: 13) in which the negative example of the children of Israel is presented. Beginning with the seventh verse of chapter 3, the author quotes from the 95th Psalm and shows that God rejected those who left Egypt under Moses because of their unbelief.

Apistia is found just twice in ch. 3: 7-19, but the

unbelief of the Israelites is described in other terms. They "hardened their hearts;" they tempted by their murmuring, for theirs were erring hearts, vv. 9-10. Again, they did not come to know God as they ought, v. 10. All these expressions describe the unbelief which caused God to become disgusted with them and to reject them, to keep them from entering the Promised Land. Since they had experienced God's gracious mercy and care, their unbelief was not just ordinary unbelief, but amounted to a hardening of the heart. This term is used three times in the section, 3: 7-4: 13.

After a preliminary warning to the readers that they should watch lest any of them be hardened, the author repeats that those who did not enter into God's rest² did not enter because of unbelief: ouk eedunectheesan eiselthein di apistian.

The preliminary discussion is important for a proper understanding of ch. 4: 2 ff., for the author now applies the lesson of history to his Hebrew Christians of the New Testament era. In a gentle manner he begins the fourth chapter, "Let us therefore fear (phobeethoomen oun) lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it." He means: Don't let happen to you what happened to the children of Israel. You,

2. For Israel this "rest" meant the earthly Canaan; for the readers the heavenly Canaan is meant. The word will be discussed later.

too, have a promise, namely, that you shall enter the heavenly Canaan through Christ; that promise is there also for you, just as the promise was given to the Old Testament Jews.³ It could happen that some might fall short of their Christian goal; that is the concern of the author. In spite of the fact that the promise was there, they must take hold of it, if it is to be theirs.⁴

This thought of the necessity of faith is expanded in the second verse; the two verses are parallel. The A. V. seems to indicate the proper sense of the second verse when it translates: "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The "promise" in verse 1 corresponds to the "Gospel" in verse 2, and the "falling behind" in verse 1 corresponds to the remark that "the word.....did not profit them" in verse 2. It is this obvious parallel that argues against Lenski's interpretation of dokee tis ex hymoon hystereekenai in the sense that some of the Jews might have thought that they had fallen behind by going over to Christianity and that the way to regain that lost ground was to revert to Judaism.⁵

3. In the discussion of the "promises" we shall see that ultimately the "promise" is one; it never stops short of heaven.

4. kataleipomenees epaggelias, a genitive absolute.

5. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle to James, p. 125 f.

The phrase ho logos tees akoees "denotes what has been made known by proclamation to the people of God....."⁶ Tees akoees is the genitive of quality, so that we might translate: "the word of the hearing" or "the word they heard."

Why did not the "word of hearing" profit the children of Israel? It was not "mixed with faith in them that heard it." This phrase has been variously interpreted by the exegetes. The problem is caused to a large extent by the variant readings. Riggenschbach discusses the most important readings. They are: moe sygkekerasmenos tee pistei tois akousasin (sic), the reading which we accept; mee sygkekerasmenous tee pistei tois akousasin; and mee sygkekerasmenous tee pistei tois akoustheisin.⁷ Another reading gives the genitive toon akousantoon. This last reading is untenable, since the purpose of the author is here to show the lack of faith in the children of Israel. The genitive construction would admit that these people had faith.

Probably the only really well-attested reading other than that of the Nestle text is the one accepted by Riggenschbach. He holds that the accusative plural participle of the verb sygkerannumi should be read. This reading, mee sygkekerasmenous has the Egyptian MSS and p 46 in its favor. Yet that reading gives a strange meaning. Then "those" (ekelous) "were not mixed by faith with those who heard." But

6. Carl Bernhard Moll, "The Epistle to the Hebrews", Lange-Schaff, p. 85.

7. D. Eduard Riggenschbach, Der Brief an Die Hebraer, pp. 96-98.

who were those who heard? Joshua and Caleb? Then we would expect: "were not mixed by faith with those who did believe." But akouoo cannot be taken in that sense, and furthermore, in ch. 3, 15 ff., the author attributes unbelief to all the Jews and makes no distinction.

We accept the nominative singular; the sense then is: "because it was not for the hearers mixed (mingled) with faith." ⁸ The tois akousasin denotes the subject, in relation to which the mee sygk. tee pistei took place. The mee sygk. and tee pistei then go together, not tois akousasin and tee pistei. ⁹ This construction puts the stress where it belongs: on the tee pistei. We know who these people are who did not have faith. The tois akousasin merely repeats the ekeinous, those mentioned in the preceding verses. The stress is on the fact that these people did not accept in faith the word preached to them.

Verse 3 has the same purpose, namely, to stress the importance of faith. That is the purpose of this entire section, 3: 7-4: 13. Some exegetes try to suppress the faith element in these verses, because the author has already made clear in the preceding that the Israelites did not enter into "the rest" because of unbelief. Yet a study of the verses can put the emphasis on nothing but pistis. The word

8. Moffatt gives classical parallels for this construction, James Moffatt, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 50.

9. For this latter interpretation, see Moll, op. cit., p. 86.

has been preached; the promise is there, but faith alone makes the promise something personal and the word of personal benefit.¹⁰

Verse 3 says: eiserchometha gar eis teen katapausin hoi pisteusantes. The eiserchometha must be taken as a futuristic present in the sense: "we are sure to enter." We shall most assuredly be transported into the rest of God. That "rest" is the heavenly Canaan above. Long ago that rest had been brought into being---that is the force of kaitoi in verse 3b---by God. It is there for all, but who shall enter into it? "We" shall, namely, "we who have come to faith" (hoi pisteusantes). How clearly the importance of pistis comes to the foreground. The reason why the people of old did not enter into the rest was that they did not believe; it is not that God has not prepared it for them.

Hoi pisteusantes, then, has the purpose in this verse of restricting the "we" to a very definite class of "us", and the stress is on this participle. Just those of us who have manifested faith shall enter the eternal rest of heaven.¹¹ "The present eiserchometha is employed with reference to the certainty of that to be looked for in the future, and hoi pisteusantes, not hoi pisteuontes is placed, because the pisteuein must have already preceded as an historic fact,

10. Cf. Gottlieb Luenemann, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Maurice J. Evans, trans., p. 481.

11. Luenemann shows that the meaning cannot be: "if we have manifested faith;" then pisteusantes alone without the article would have been used. Ibid.

before the eisarchesthai can be accomplished." ¹²

The pistis here spoken of, and on which the author in these verses lays so much stress, is no other than that faith by which we are justified. It is the appropriation of all the glories of Christ, the seizing hold of what God has provided through Christ. By it the forgiveness of sins is made personal, and salvation certain (medium leeptikon; fides salvifica). Many interpreters refuse to take pistis anywhere in the book of Hebrews except in the sense of trust in that which God has promised. Yet such a view seems to departmentalize faith too minutely. The whole problem will be discussed in connection with the 11th chapter. Here it is sufficient to remark that the euaggelizomai and the katapausis mentioned in these verses so intimately with pistis allows of no other meaning for the word other than that usually spoken of as "Christian faith."

Pistis occurs in the first verse of chapter 6 in the phrase pisteoos epi theon, and this passage also has been variously interpreted. What does the author mean to say with the words: dio apentes ton tees archees tou Christou logon epi teen teleioteeta pheroometha, mee palin themelion kataballomenoi.....? Some hold that this is a declaration of the author regarding his purpose; he is going to leave behind or omit the elementary doctrines concerning Christ and

12. Ibid.

advance to perfection in his teaching.¹³ Others maintain that the author summons the readers, himself included, to advance in their Christianity, their subjective perfection. The whole passage must be discussed before any individual phrase can become clear.

Grammatically, either view can be held. Lenski¹⁴ takes the passage in an objective sense, as the purpose of the writer to the Hebrews, and there are some things that speak for this interpretation. Aphentes, for one thing, may mean "to omit;" it is so used with logon in classical writings.¹⁵ Again, logos is often used in the sense of "discussion." Furthermore, verse 3 may very easily be appealed to for such an interpretation: "And this will we do, if God permit." Those words seem to fit more easily with the "purpose" interpretation.¹⁶

Yet the interpretation that here we have a summons to the readers to grow in Christian perfection seems to be more strongly attested. How else can the dio be explained? The author has in the last verses of the fifth chapter shown the immaturity of the readers' Christianity. "Ye are dull of hearing." "Ye have need that one teach you again the first

13. Of the older commentators, both Erasmus and Luther held this view.

14. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 174-179.

15. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 73.

16. The plurals are in this exegesis taken then as editorial plurals.

principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." "Wherefore" (dio), the author says, let's advance together in our Christianity, so that we can become such as can have "strong meat." The dio is inescapable, and the words are difficult to explain in any other way, without supplementing the thought between the fifth and sixth chapters or changing the meaning of dio.¹⁷

Again, if we understand these words as a summons to the readers, teleioteeta keeps the meaning which has been assigned it in 5: 14.¹⁸ In 5: 14 the author speaks of those who are mature, the teleioi. Now he says: "Let us go on to that perfection."¹⁹

And not only does the preceding context favor the second interpretation; the words in verses 4 ff. are quite conclusive. There the author tells them that if they spurn this Gospel, it may become impossible "to renew them again unto repentance." The discussion centers around the Christianity of the readers. The author feels concern for them, and, therefore, urges them to become "matured" in their faith.²⁰

As was mentioned before, the whole passage must be ex-

17. Cf. Riegenbach, op. cit., p. 145.

18. This word is very important in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Cf. the exegetical study of elpis, 7: 19, pp. 71-74.

19. The teen in teen teleioteeta is the article of previous reference.

20. Most of the interpreters favor this second explanation; Moll, op. cit., p. 111, presents the arguments most clearly.

amined before any word or words become clear. Yet for our purposes the words beginning with mee palin themelion kataballomonoi are the most important. What is the significance of "repentance", "faith", and the doctrines mentioned after them?

Grammatically, we must take the three genitives: metanoidias, pistecos, and didachees as genitives of apposition to themelion.²¹ Not only baptismon, but all the following genitives are dependent on didachees, objective genitives.

These three, metanoia, pistis, and didachee are the abc's of Christianity, and must not be taken as mere neutral concepts.²² There is unity in these six genitives, and the author pairs them. Apparently the readers were acquainted with these six things. It is commonly supposed that they formed the catechetical instructions of the early Church.

The first pair speaks of the basis of Christianity, repentance and faith. This close relation between repentance and faith gives a deeper meaning to pistis than mere belief in God. It is a reference to the true Christian faith, that in Christ as the archiereus. They must not remain with the foundations; they must build on them and come to a more ma-

21. We accept the reading didachees, not didacheen. Didachees is very strongly attested, and the reading didacheen would make it an object of kataballomonoi and would make themelion predicate accusative. Then, as Riggenbach shows, we would have to translate: "Indem wir nicht abermals als Fundament der Umkehr.....und des Glaubens auf Gott einsenken die Lehre von Taufen und Handauflegung." Riggenbach, op. cit., p. 148.

22. So Moll, op. cit., pp. 111 f.

ture grasp of Christ. Their faith must be built up and strengthened. Faith follows repentance, just as it does in this verse, and not just any faith, but that faith in Christ, the faith that saves. The other two pairs of genitives, as we shall see, both contain closely related thoughts. Only if pistis is taken in its usual sense, justifying faith, does this pair retain its close relationship.

Some may ask why the author does not say "faith in Christ" instead of "faith in God." We quote from Lenski:

Because he (the author) refers to faith based on God who spoke concerning Christ in the Old Testament. The Jews did not need another god, they needed faith in the God whom they knew, genuine trust in Him and in the revelation of His Word. 23

In Rom. 4: 4 the apostle Paul speaks the same way when he describes the "faith.....counted for righteousness." It is found in him who "believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly," pisteuonti de epi ton dikaiounta ton asebee, and is not referred directly to Christ.

As metanoia and pistis are closely allied, so also are baptisma-epithesis cheiroon, and anastasis nekroon-krima aioniou. The first of these pairs speaks of the beginning of the converts' Christianity. Through Baptism the convert was received into the Church, and by the laying on of hands

23. Lenski, op. cit., p. 177.

received whatever endowments were necessary for his service in the house of God. The close relationship between the resurrection of the dead and the judgment is obvious. They speak of the end of the Christian life.

In summary, the six things mentioned in the second verse are not neutral but Christian concepts, depicting the abc's of Christianity, the themelion. Hence, the "faith" mentioned here is not just the belief in a God; it is not just a trust that God will fulfill His promises; it is true, living, saving faith that follows "repentance from dead works." Basic to Christianity---remember that here the author speaks of ho logos tees archees tou Christou---is not only faith in God, but faith in the God who has revealed Himself in His Son, who sent Him into the world and Himself called Him "an High Priest," 5: 10. In the faith in that High Priest the readers must advance; they must no longer be laying foundations but rather must advance to perfection and strive to "grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." (Eph. 4: 15)

"Don't apostasize" is the big thought of the author to the Hebrews, and it is repeated time and time again. The whole presentation of objective truth has the purpose of keeping the Jewish Christians in the faith of Jesus, who is far

24. On these three pairs of genitives, cf. Paul E. Kretzmann, "The Epistle to the Hebrews", Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament, II, p. 456.

superior to the angels, to Moses, and to all the priests of the Old Testament.

From time to time the author punctuates his arguments with exhortations not to slip back into Judaism. So also in the sixth chapter the author intersperses his arguments with admonitions to constancy and growth. He begins by telling the Christians to press forward, vv. 1-3. The following verses portray the danger that awaits those who harden themselves against the message of the Gospel, and vv. 9-12 bring another appeal to the readers.

In verse 11 the thought is that the readers should manifest the same zeal which they have shown for works of love with respect to their hope. Also the achri telous, while not the big thought in verse 11²⁵ leads over to the exhortation to constancy in verse 12. They should manifest this zeal, hina mee noothroi geneesthe, mimectai de toon dia pisteos kai makrothymias kleeronomountoon tas epaggelias. We translate: "So that you don't become sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and constancy are inheriting the promises."

Only faith makes "inheriting the promises" possible--- saving faith as we shall see---but it is the constancy in faith that is stressed here. The form of speech is hendiadys; the kai between the two substantives is used in the sense

25. Cf. exegesis of elpis, 6: 11, pp. 61-66.

of "and indeed," so that the author means to say that the hearers should keep faith and indeed constancy in the same. 26
 The example of Abraham shows that constancy is the word stressed here; in verse 15 only makrothymia is used. Because Abraham "waited out" God's promises, they were fulfilled in him.

Faith and perseverance are linked by the author in other passages. In the last verses of chapter 10 the thought is strikingly similar. There the author tells them that they need "perseverance" (our translation of hypomonees) if they want to "carry off the promise" (komizesthe teen epaggelion). And in vv. 38 ff. he warns against hypostolee and reminds them that they are pisteos eis peripoiesin psuches. We shall consider that passage later.

Here the pistis which the author urges upon his readers is most assuredly saving, justifying faith in Jesus, the archiereus. The parallel passage which speaks of "the saving of the soul" (possible only through saving faith) in itself shows that, but there is evidence right in the text to show that saving faith is what the author has reference to.

The strong argument for our view that pistis here also means saving faith, and not just trust in the promises of God generally, is found in the phrase kleeronomoutoon tas epaggelias, and the argument becomes stronger and stronger.

26. Cf. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 541.

the more we dwell on these words. In the first place, these words cannot mean that people are merely being promised something. It is obvious, also from v. 15, epetychen tees epaggelias, that these words mean "to come into possession of that which is promised." Luenemann brings this out most clearly,²⁷ and all interpreters recognize that often in the Letter to the Hebrews the epaggelia obviously refer to "that which is promised."

Secondly, the kleeronomein idea speaks strongly for the interpretation of faith as justifying faith. The kleeronomia idea in Hebrews is always associated with eternal salvation, the hope laid up for the Christians in heaven. So in 9: 15 the author says that Christ took away the sins of the world hooos.....teen epaggelian laboosin hoi keklemenoi tees aiconiou kleeronomias. The inheritance is that which awaits every Christian in its completed form in heaven.

Again, the "inheriting the promises" spoken of here is not only a reference to the Old Testament patriarchs. Significantly the writer uses the present participle kleeronountoon, "those who are inheriting the promises." It is something that is constantly going on; all those who remain constant in their faith enter into God's rest, inherit the promises. Of all such the Jewish Christians should be imi-

27. Ibid., p. 542.

tators and so themselves enter into that rest.

The promise was originally given to Abraham; the quotation is taken from Genesis 22: 16, where God promises to make his seed as the sand along the sea-shore and promises: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham held his faith, manifested makrothymia, and saw the promise fulfilled in Isaac. Later Christ was born of his seed, and the Christians of the New Testament era see all God's promises, that beautiful chain, completed in the Messiah. Through faith and constancy in that faith, they shall "inherit the promises." No faith makes that possible but saving, justifying faith.

There is a rich variety in the language of the writer to the Hebrews. He may tell the hearers to "hold fast until the end," (3: 6); he wants them to have perseverance, 10: 36; constancy, 6: 12. They dare not draw back, 10: 38. And when he names the Christians they may be "partakers of the heavenly calling," (3: 1); they may be "the called," (9: 15); "partakers of Christ," (3: 14); "those who inherit the promises," etc. Yet in all these phrases, so rich in their various shades of meaning, there remains the author's concern for the hearers' souls, and his plea, "Don't apostasize!"

Is "faith" in the Letter to the Hebrews merely a trust in God of some kind, as distinguished from saving, justifying, Pauline faith? Again in 10: 22 pistis can mean only

true Christian faith. The passage reads: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." What is the pleerophoria piteoos?

It becomes necessary again to study the context briefly. We have already seen that the author from time to time intersperses his didactic sections with hortatory remarks.²⁸ So also in 10: 19 the author begins another hortatory section. These exhortations would have the Jewish Christians hold fast objective truths, hold them fast in faith. We need not discuss at this time the significance of the echontes, the three exhortations in vv. 22-24, or the fact that the author has just finished a beautiful presentation of objective truth. These things will be discussed more fully in connection with the exegesis of elpis, which word also occurs in this section.

Our concern here is to show with what these objective truths of the tenth chapter deal. Are they so closely linked with the central doctrines of Christianity that no other conception of pistis but as saving faith is possible? We believe this to be the case.

Even the casual reader must notice that the purpose of this entire preceding context, vv. 1-18, is to show the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ. This section speaks

28. Cf. 4: 14; 6: 9 ff., etc.

directly and clearly of the removal of sins, and of the sure efficacy of Christ's "offering of His body." Indeed, the law has only a "shadow of good things to come;" (v. 1) "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins;" (v. 4). Christ, however, in contrast to the priests who daily minister and whose sacrifices "can never take away sins," (v. 11), has offered "one sacrifice for sins forever" (v. 12). In vv. 16 f. the author quotes Jeremiah 31: 33 f., and the subject matter is again the removal of sins: ".....And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

We do not quote these passages to show that the author depicts Christ's sacrifice as inherently efficacious, in contrast to those of the Old Testament---he does do that--- but our purpose is to show that when the author says, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," he means faith in the blood of Christ, who has once and for all taken away the sins of the world. That seems to be the only possible interpretation of the word pistis here. Communion with God is what the author is talking about here, and that is possible only if the readers "draw near in full assurance of faith." Moll, though he distinguishes this "faith" from Pauline faith, speaks of this section in these words:

It becomes apparent that also here it is not the example of Jesus that renders possible our communion with God, but the death of the God-man,

which in its connection with atonement and propitiation, as indicated by the train of thought through the entire Epistle, can neither be a figurative representation of an idea, nor have a mere moral significance. Our way to God leads through this rent veil of the flesh of Jesus Christ, which is the henceforth unveiled and open gateway to heaven. 29

Both rantizoo and louoo recall the cleansing of the high priest of the Old Testament. He was sprinkled with blood, Ex. 29: 21; Lev. 8: 30, and was to wash with water, Ex. 40: 12; 30: 19. Most commentators are agreed that both these participial clauses should be linked with proserchoometha and not with the following.³⁰

Pleerophoria, as everywhere in the New Testament, must be taken in the passive sense and not in the sense of "perfecting." It corresponds with the parreesian mentioned in v. 19; by the blood of Jesus we have "boldness to enter into the holiest;" we can now directly approach the throne of grace---let us "draw near in full assurance of faith."³¹

That pistis is here justifying faith is shown also in the term proserchoometha, for this word links the exhortation in v. 22 with the objective truths pictured early. Lenski speaks of this connection when he says,

Proserchoometha is a ritual or liturgical term, harmonizing with errentismenoi* and leloumenoi, as also with 'the Sanctuary' and 'the Veil.' "Let us draw near" or "go to" means actual entrance into this Sanctuary, although in this

29. Moll, op. cit., p. 175.

30. Cf. Riegenbach, op. cit., pp. 317 f.

31. Here cf. the exegesis of elpis, 6: 11, pp. 61-66, where pleerophoria is used also.

life it is yet only in spirit (John 4: 24) or with our hearts. 32

No one can enter that Sanctuary without the fides salvifica. Indeed, how else can one have a "true heart" if it is not a heart that holds to Jesus in real, justifying faith?

In summary, the references to the remission of sins, the proserchoometha, the "true heart," indeed, the whole context, general and immediate, show pistis to be here also justifying faith.

What is commonly called the "faith section" of the Letter to the Hebrews already begins in the tenth chapter, with v. 38. The commentators who believe "faith" to be something different from "Pauline faith" pay very little attention to the clear passages which we have already mentioned and considered. And here also, in 10: 38, 39, they find it very hard to uphold their interpretation. So Luenemann says, for example, with regard to this passage:

.....according to the connection, the design is not to state by what any one becomes dikaios, but by what he will obtain the epaggelia, or, what is the same, the zooe aionios.....The meaning, in harmony with the concept prevailing everywhere in the Epistle to the Hebrews, divergent from that of Paul, is the believing, enduring trust in God and His promises. 33

So Luenemann also describes the dikaios as "not to be taken

32. Lenski, op. cit., p. 353. *Lenski accepts this reading over rerantismenoi.

33. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 657.

in the narrower Pauline sense, but in the general sense of the devout men." ³⁴ He fails to see that one becomes dikaïos, receives the epaggelia and the zooee aionios by the same faith, faith in Jesus as the true archiereus, by whom God has spoken to the world.

The A. V. translates, beginning with v. 37: "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." The passage is a quotation from Habbakuk 2: 3 f. It does not serve our purpose to show how the author of the Hebrews has adapted the words to suit his purpose. The words about the "coming" were originally spoken of a vision, and the writer to the Hebrews has added the article to refer "the coming" to the ³⁵ second Advent of Christ.

The emphasis in this passage is again on hypomonee, "perseverance." The author speaks of throwing away their confidence, v. 35; he speaks of "a very little while;" he tells them that Christ will not delay in His second coming; ³⁶ he warns them against "drawing back," etc.

34. Ibid.

35. For a more complete discussion on the original text, the LXX translation, etc., cf. Moll, op. cit., p. 180, Moffet, op. cit., p. 157.

36. hypostellein was used originally of lowering a sail, then of timidly drawing back, Moll, op. cit., p. 180.

That saving faith is referred to is very clear. The speaker very obviously speaks of eternal damnation (apoo-leia) and eternal salvation (peripoieesin psychoes). The phrase eis peripoieesin psychoes reminds us of I Thessalonians 5: 9, where Paul says: "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (eis peripoieesin sooteerias). Saving faith alone will mean that we shall "save our souls" and not be everlastingly doomed.³⁷

The whole context speaks of gaining heaven, and so faith must be that faith which alone can gain heaven for us. Already in verse 35 the author speaks of the megalee misthopodosia, while verse 36 speaks of "carrying off the promise."

The objection that in Hebrews the dikaiois concept is not connected with pistis is not valid. In verse 4 of chapter 11 the author shows that it was by faith (pistei) that Abel was attested righteous, and in verse 7 he speaks of hee kata pistin dikaioisynee. So Riggensbach says of the "righteous man":

Der dikaiois ist der Gott gehoerige und seines Wohlgefallens sich erfreuende Fromme, dessen Gerechtigkeit ganz wesentlich in seinem Glauben besteht, cf. 11, 4. 7, so dasz pistis und dikaioisynee hier vollends, unzertrennlich verknuepft sind. 38

37. Cf. also Moffatt, op. cit., on peripoieesis, p. 158.
38. Riggensbach, op. cit., p. 337.

There is a certain kindness and gentleness in all of the author's warnings and admonitions that reveal his deep concern for these Christians. The warnings are plain and often very pointed, but they are always followed by a vote of confidence, cf. 6: 9 ff. So here the words of verse 39, heemeis de ouk esmen hypostolees eis apoleian alla pisteos eis peripoleesin psychees,³⁹ seem not only to present a truth but to offer a plea to the readers to be sure that they remain in the true faith which alone makes the promises of God personal and alone saves.

From this exhortation to remain firm in the "faith" and to persevere in "faith" the author proceeds to speak of this "faith" more plainly and brings before the eyes of the readers many of the Old Testament heroes of "faith", who, in spite of all trouble, clung tenaciously in faith to the promises of God. He wants his Christians to be "mimickers" of those heroes.

We shall speak more of the purpose of the writer in this "faith chapter" a little later. Even here, however, we should remember that the author is accustomed to link "faith" with makrothymia, hypomonee, and parresia. It is the clinging to God and His Christ in the face of all trouble and all seeming impossibilities that is stressed. We should

39. The genitives are probably the strictly classical construction of the genitive of belonging; others insert mentally the words tekna or huioi, here cf. Moll, op. cit., p. 180.

mention also that we can by no means give an exhaustive interpretation of chapter 11: 1. Much has been written, and we shall attempt only to present gleanings from the various interpretations.

What is "faith" in the 11th chapter of Hebrews? Moll rejects the thought that Christian faith is defined and speaks of "faith" here as "religious faith in its broadest and more general aspects."⁴⁰ Surely the writer did not mean any kind of "faith" when he said, Estin de pistis el-pizomenoon hypostasis, pragmatoon elegchos ou blepomenoon. What then is the significance of pistei.....pistei.....pistei in the rest of the chapter? Was it some kind of hazy faith that made Abraham "sojourn in the land of promise," that made him "offer up his only-begotten son?" Was it merely some "religious faith" that made these heroes "quench the violence of fire," madethem "strong out of weakness," etc.?

Luenemann says that it is only one aspect of faith that is mentioned here.⁴¹ While it is true that the author, in the 11th chapter, stresses the idea of how faith motivated the entire lives of these Old Testament characters, yet we agree with Delitzsch when he says, "At the commencement of such an historical summary, a comprehensive and general de-

40. Moll, op. cit., p. 183.

41. Cf. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 667.

definition of what faith is in itself.....was the only definition suitable and possible." ⁴² The author of the Letter to the Hebrews begins his great "faith chapter" by telling just what true, saving, Christian faith really is. Yet, since he does not say, "Faith is the trust and firm assurance of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ," we may speak of this definition of faith as generic, rather than specific.

In this definition of faith many have tried to prove that the author of Hebrews had a different conception of faith than the apostle Paul (assuming now that Paul did not write the epistle). From the 11th chapter they would show that "faith" in Hebrews means simply a trust in the promises of God. Rather than saying that "faith" here is not exhaustive, we believe that the author here shows Christian faith in its broadest aspects and shows how true, saving faith becomes evident in all phases of life. Timothy Dwight says with regard to the relation of faith here and Pauline faith that had Paul written these lines, i. e., with the express purpose of urging constancy in the faith in the midst of trials, etc., he would have spoken in exactly the same way with regard to faith. ⁴³ To sum up the introductory remarks then, let us say that while "faith" is in the

42. Delitzsch, quoted in Lenski, op. cit., p. 379.

43. Cf. Dwight's notes in Luenemann, op. cit., p. 694.

11th chapter to the Hebrews by no means mere "religious faith in its broadest and more general aspects," it is Christian faith in its broadest aspects. Or, as we expressed it previously, we have here in 11: 1 a generic definition of true, saving, Christian faith.⁴⁴

The word hypostasis has been given every kind of interpretation and meaning possible by the commentators, because of the fact that it has such a variety of meaning in Greek usage. From the papyri some translate it "title-deed"; others propose "firm confidence" and thus make it subjective. The A. V. translation "substance" goes back to Aquinas and ultimately to the Greek fathers, who spoke of it as substantia.

Hypostasis occurs in only five passages in the entire New Testament, and three of these passages are found in the Letter to the Hebrews. Thayer lists just two uses of the word in order "to illustrate N. T. usage: 1. a foundation (so used in the LXX); 2. that which has a foundation, is firm---in the sense of "real being"; 'substantial quality, nature'; or 'steadiness', 'confidence', 'assurance'.⁴⁵" The two passages other than those in Hebrews where hypostasis is found in the New Testament are found in II Cor. 9: 4 and 11: 17.

44. Here we might mention that some have tried to prove that we do not have a definition of faith here in 11: 1. The position of the copula, however, estin de pistis....., shows that the author is going to say expressly what "faith" is.

45. John Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Corrected Edition, p. 644.

The expressions there are very similar, and Paul obviously means "assurance" by hypostasis when he says, en tee hypostasei tautee tees kaucheeseoos (9: 4) and en tautee tee hypostasei tees kaucheeseoos (11: 17).

In ch. 1: 3 of our epistle Jesus is spoken of as being "the express image of His (namely, God's) Person," charakter tees hypostaseoos autou. Here, of course, God's nature or substantial quality is spoken of, but in chapter 3: 14 the author urges the readers to "hold fast the beginning of the confidence" and again uses the word hypostasis. In other words, in four out of the five times it is used in the New Testament, hypostasis means "confidence" or "assurance."

Mathis' appeal, therefore, to the Greek fathers is far from conclusive. He wants to translate hypostasis "reality" or "presentation of reality."⁴⁶ Because hypostasis is used in so many ways in Greek literature, and since New Testament usage favors a subjective interpretation of the word, we consider hypostasis to be used here in the sense of "confidence" and translate: "Faith is the firm confidence of things hoped for."

The "things hoped for" are the object of the confidence. They are the "rest of the children of God," "the promise," etc. This does not confuse "faith" with "hope," though they

46. Michael Ambrose Mathis, Pauline Pistis-Hypostasis According to Hebrews 11: 1, Cf. his conclusions on Heb. 11: 1, pp. 141 ff.

are very closely related. "Hope" is the resultant of "faith." Because we are sure that the glories of the redemption through Jesus, the "great High Priest" are realities, we are confident, sure that the glories of heaven are ours, and so also "hope" for them, wait for their fulfillment.

But the definition of faith has two parts; the second part says that faith is pragmatoon elegchos ou blepomenoon. Elegchos again may be taken in various ways. The A. V. translates it "evidence," and many have adopted similar interpretations of the word. Except possibly for II Tim. 3: 16, where the Nestle text accepts the reading pros elegmon, this is the only time elegchos is used in the New Testament. The problem is again whether we should take the word in an objective or a subjective sense. We prefer the latter, since hypostasis is undoubtedly subjective. The word means a "testing," proving," but can also mean the inward result of such proving. Luenemann speaks of it as "a being convinced of things which are invisible."⁴⁷ Again the genitive is objective, so that this "conviction" or "being convinced" is with regard to "things not seen."

Schlatter takes a strange view with regard to this word elegchos and its genitive. He translates the word "Ueberfuehrung" and interprets the genitive as a subjective genitive, so that the "things not seen" are the things that con-

47. Cf. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 657.

vince us of their reality. The genitive is then one of a-
 48 gency. But this view is untenable. In the first place, the author would not, in an obviously parallel construction, follow the objective genitive with a subjective genitive, That would merely confuse the readers. Again, how can the "things not seen" convince us of their reality? They are by no means the agent that produces faith in the heart; that is the function of the Word.

The "things not seen" is a broader term than the "things hoped for," so that this second part of the definition draws just a little wider circle around the first. As hypostasis and elegchos are practically synonymous, so "things hoped for" and "Things not seen" are not mutually exclusive, so that the "things hoped for" are one thing, and "things not seen" another. "Things not seen" is a broader term and takes in also present things which are not seen and things in the past. It includes everything from Creation on, and, especially, the glorious work of Christ by which "He obtained eternal redemption for us," 9: 12.

Appeal is often made to the rest of the chapter by those who do not accept pistis here in the "Pauline sense." In the rest of the chapter many of the Old Testament heroes of faith pass in review---Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc. Abraham

48. A. Schlatter, Der Glaube Im Neuen Testament, pp. 457 ff.

especially is placed in the foreground as one who "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Significantly Paul speaks of this faith of Abraham at some length in the 4th chapter of Romans. There we are told that "his faith was counted for righteousness." Now no one will deny that the "faith" spoken of in Romans 4 is the fides salvifica. Is a different kind of "faith" attributed to Abraham in the 11th chapter of Hebrews? Is it not significant that both Paul and the author to the Hebrews speak of the same promise when describing Abraham's faith? Both sections speak of the promise of the seed and of a mighty nation stemming from this patriarch. So Rom. 4: 18, 19 says: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was said, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old,...." Paul says of this faith, v. 22: "It was imputed to him for righteousness." If the "faith" of Abraham in Hebrews 11 is a different kind of faith, it must deal with different promises. But vv. 17-19 speak again of the promise of Isaac and the building of a great nation through this natural son of Abraham. When God told him to sacrifice that son, Abraham "by faith" offered him up---faith in the same promise of which Paul speaks, faith in that line of promises that center in the Messiah, saving faith.

Nor does James make a distinction between the "faith" in

the Old Testament and that in the New Testament. In chapter 2 of his epistle he also speaks of this faith of Abraham, by which "he offered his son Isaac upon the altar." And what kind of "faith" was it? That James describes in the first verse of the chapter when he says, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons." It is the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, that glorious saving faith; that faith Abraham had when he offered up his son. How can we then say that when the author of our epistle says, 11: 17, "By faith Abraham.....offered up Isaac," that he is not referring to that pistis which alone saves?

Furthermore, in several passages of chapter 11 pistis is so closely linked with righteousness and salvation, that its significance is lost unless saving faith be admitted as implied. In verse 4 we are told that Abel, by his sacrifice, "obtained witness that he was righteous." Again, how could Enoch be "translated that he should not see death" except through saving faith? The author says, pistei, namely, "by saving faith." Verse 6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please Him," and verse 7 tells us that Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Dwight says with regard to this last passage:

49

The similarity of the expression to the Pauline dikaioyneek pisteoos, and yet the difference in respect to the preposition, will not fail to be noticed by all careful readers. We must determine

49. The writer to the Hebrews has tees dikaioyneek kata pistin egeneto kleeronomos.

the question as to the writer's idea in the use of this phrase in view of these points. It may be remarked 1. that though it does not seem absolutely necessary to give to dikaioynee here the Pauline sense, i. e., the condition of being declared right by God as before His tribunal---the suggestion of 10: 38, as the author employs the words of that verse, is, nevertheless, favorable to this sense; 2. that the contrast with the verb katekrinen, which is, to say the least, hinted at, favors this meaning; 3. that the striking familiarity to the Pauline phrase is most easily explained by giving dik. this sense; and 4. that the use of klecronomos adds some force to the previous considerations. We may say, therefore, that either the writer's idea coincides with that of Paul, or if this is not certain, that it presupposes the existence of the Pauline doctrine. 50

Dwight has not been completely convinced, but his words are free from the subjectivism of some commentators.

"Faith is the firm confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Real Christian faith most assuredly is just that. It has not witnessed with the eye all the glories of the redemption, but it is sure that they are real and personal. It is the assurance that God has truly spoken to us "by His Son" and that this Christ is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person." It is the conviction that though Christ is far superior to the angels, He most certainly partook of flesh and blood, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Faith is the assurance that Christ has "entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," and that He does not need

50. Cf. notes by the American author in Luenemann, op. cit., p. 695.

to daily "offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself," that "this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God," that "He ever liveth to make intercession" for those who "come unto God by Him" and that "He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

The discussion of *pistis* in ch. 12: 2 centers more around the words archeegos and teleiotees than around *pistis* itself. We must answer the question whether the picture of Jesus here is one of the Example of faith or of the Object of faith.

After the beautiful 11th chapter, in which all the Old Testament believers pass in review, the author reverts to the theme of the closing verses of chapter 10. It is apparent that the Christians to whom the letter is addressed had to endure much persecution and trouble because of their faith, although none had yet suffered martyrdom, 12: 4. They had gone through a "great fight of affliction," 10: 32 ff. In spite of these troubles they are to remain firm in their faith so that they "carry off the promise." This is the theme of the verses that begin chapter 12.

We translate with Lenski, beginning with verse 1: "So then we, too, on our part, ⁵¹ having so great a cloud of wit-

51. Toigaroun is found only twice in the N. T. It is used in I Thess. 4: 8. Found often in the classics, cf. Moll, op. cit., p. 197.

nesses all about us, by having put away every weight and the easily hampering sin, let us by means of perseverance go on running the contest lying before us, looking to Jesus, the Author and Completer of faith."⁵² The author likes to begin his hortatory sections with echontes, cf. 4: 14 and 10: 19.

In what sense are the believers of the Old Testament "witnesses" (martyroon)? We must avoid the spiritualistic touch in interpreting these people as witnesses who from heaven above are watching this "race" or "contest" in which the Christian is engaged. Probably the author means simply that these people are witnesses whose whole life attest that they were true believers indeed.⁵³

The relation of the three participles in the passage is interesting. Echontes we take in a causal sense, as elsewhere in the book; apothemenoi we coordinate with trechoomen, in spite of the fact that the former is aorist, the latter durative present, for the author means to tell them: "Put aside,....run."⁵⁴ The "putting aside" of course, must be done before the running can begin, while the "looking away" is done simultaneously with the running. We would, therefore, more accurately speak of the aphorontes as "ever looking away."

52. Lenski, op. cit., p. 430.

53. Ibid., p. 431.

54. The phrase teen euperistaton hamartian is variously interpreted, since euperistaton is found only here in Greek writings. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., p. 431 f.

Moffatt, Riggenbach, and others would make Jesus the great Example of faith, "The supreme Pioneer.....of personal faith, not the Author of faith."⁵⁵ This interpretation violates the use of archeegos in Hebrews. In 2: 14 Jesus is spoken of as the archeegos tees sooteerias heemoon, He who has made all these things possible. Furthermore, Jesus is never spoken of in the New Testament as being an Example of faith. Archeegos is synonymous with aitios, the word used for Christ in 5: 9. There again He is the "Cause" sooterias aioonion.

Teleiootees, furthermore, makes clear that Jesus brings the faith described in ch. 11: 1 to completion; He is "the Completer." The teleioosis idea is found often in the epistle; the author uses it to show that Jesus has "completed" what the Old Testament sacrifices, etc. were not able to do.⁵⁶ The A. V. "Finisher" is then much better than the R. V. "Perfecter." Luenemann discusses this phrase and shows that Jesus is here referred to as the object of faith, not the example: "The exemplary characteristic in Jesus, to which the author directs his readers, is not already expressed by His being designated as archeegos kai teleiootees tees pisteos, which on the contrary,....first is expressed by means of the following relative clause."⁵⁷

55. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 196.

56. Cf. 7: 11, 19.

57. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 702.

Tees pisteocos is, of course, the objective genitive and does not refer merely to the faith of the author and the readers, so that we would then take the article in the sense of the possessive pronoun; it is the faith spoken of in chapter 11: 1, which all believers have.

We shall not dwell long on the last pistis passage in the book. It comes in the specifically hortatory section of the letter, and the context does not help much in determining the meaning of the word. We translate verse 7: "Call to mind your leaders, who were such as (hoitines) spoke to you the Word of God, whose faith keep imitating, carefully viewing the end of their manner of life." The passage reminds us of 6: 12, except that the thought here is more restricted.⁵⁸ Here the readers are urged to be mimickers of their former leaders.

Who were these leaders? The whole problem of authorship and the identity of the readers enters in here. Many say that the readers were the second generation since Christ; yet they make the "leaders" the apostles. We are told, however, that the leaders spoke to "you" the Word of God, etc. The leaders are probably the people referred to in 2: 3, who had heard the Lord and confirmed in these readers the message of truth. Lenski believes these leaders to be Peter and Paul.⁵⁹

58. Paul likes this word mimeomai and mimeetai, cf. I Cor. 11: 1 and Phil. 3: 17.

59. For a discussion of the whole problem, cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 7-25.

These "leaders" led in two ways: first, they preached the Word of God, and, secondly, they were "leaders" in the faith, showing their close communion to God by a life lived "by faith of the Son of God."⁶⁰

The phrase anatheoourontes teen ekbasin tees anastrophees is rather difficult. The A. V. translates this passage: "considering the end of their conversation." The ekbasis mentioned is not the development or the result of their walk but refers to their departure from this life, whether by martyrdom or not; the former is implied.⁶¹ The word is used in two different ways; it is found in I Cor. 10: 13 where the Lord promises that with temptation He will make a way to escape (ekbasin). In our passage its obvious meaning is the act of going out, namely, out of this life.

The anastrophee is the whole Christian conduct and life. That life was a life lived in faith by those leaders. They looked ever upward as they ran the race, looking away to Jesus, the Author and Completer of faith. Now, as their death drew near, their eyes remained fixed toward heaven. The readers are to mimic that faith and pay particular attention to the manner of these leaders as they prepared to meet their Redeemer. If they so remain in the faith, that faith which casts aside all earthly joy and sorrow and centers in Jesus,

60. These heegoumenoi are not the same ones mentioned in 13: 24; the latter are still living, the present leaders.

61. So Moffatt, op. cit., p. 215.

the "great High Priest over the house of God," then they, too, shall "carry off the promise," "enter the rest."

Faith and the Book Generally

When we understand the importance of the "faith concept" in the epistle, two closely related thoughts, so important for present-day thinking, come to mind. In the first place, it is significant that in this letter, where "faith" is so emphasized, we have the most complete picture of the work of Jesus as the Great High Priest found anywhere in Holy Scripture. And isn't that a natural thing? For you cannot separate Jesus from faith---where you have the true Jesus of the Bible, there you have faith, and where you have true, saving faith, there the glories of Jesus are most assuredly present.

Jesus is presented to the readers in every chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; and since we nowhere treat of this subject elsewhere, we shall briefly summarize the author's dogmatics on the person and work of the Savior. In chapter 1 the deity of Christ is vividly portrayed: by Him God made the worlds; He is, in fact, "the express image of God's Person." And not only according to His divine nature, but also according to His human nature He is all-powerful, for God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and the angels of God worship the God-man who now sits on the "right hand of the Majesty on high." Chapter 2

presents a similar thought when it says that God has put all things under His feet. Again, the necessity of Christ's incarnation becomes clear, namely, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." "It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren," for truly Christ is the Brother of all them that believe in His name. In chapter 3 Jesus is first presented as the "High Priest of our profession," far superior to Moses, in that He is not a servant, but a Son over the house of God. Chapter 4 again speaks of the High Priest who has "passed through the heavens" and shows Jesus to be a sympathetic Friend in all trouble, in that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Chapter 5 compares the High Priest with those "taken from among men" and shows the humiliation of this eternal Son of God, for even though He was a Son, yet "learned He obedience by the things which He suffered and.....became the Author of eternal salvation." Jesus, in chapter 6, is the Forerunner who has entered the space within the veil for us. Chapter 7 is glorious in its presentation of Jesus as the High Priest "after the order of Melchisedek;" He has an unchangeable priesthood, because He continues forever. His priesthood, furthermore, was just the kind that we needed, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (the active obedience) and once and for all offered up Himself for the sins of the people (passive obedience).

This Jesus, whom the heavens cannot contain, is according to chapter 8 the "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises;" in Him the shadow religion of the Old Testament was superseded, and God's own glory was made manifest in the flesh.

In chapter 9 one sees Christ the Savior, the complete Redeemer, in almost every verse. While in the Old Testament the veil signified that the "way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," Jesus entered into that holy place with His own blood and obtained, once and for all, eternal redemption for us. He shall, furthermore, return again the second time without sin to all them that look for Him for their salvation. Chapter 10 shows the work of salvation as completed, not to be repeated as the sacrifices of the Old Testament were; this Jesus, the High Priest, has indeed "sat down on the right hand of God," His whole work of redemption effected by the offering of His body.

Even in the strictly hortatory section of the letter, the author cannot but tell of this Christ. He is mentioned in chapter 11, where we are told that Moses was content to bear "the reproach of Christ." In chapter 12, as we have seen, He is the "Author and Finisher of our faith," and finally, in the last chapter, the author again shows the deity of this High Priest when He says, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

The writer to the Hebrews includes practically the en-

tire work of redemption: Christ's deity, His humanity and the necessity of the incarnation, the active and passive obedience, humiliation, exaltation, suffering, death, ascension, sessio---all are presented in the epistle. Where you find faith presented, there Jesus must be presented.

That fact implies our second thought, closely related, namely, that faith is based on objective truth, for faith involves an intellectual element. Machen discusses this very thing at some length in his book, What Is Faith? He says, "The absence of doctrinal teaching and preaching is certainly one of the causes of the present lamentable ig-
62
norance in the church." He points out that "all faith
63
involves knowledge and issues in knowledge."

This by no means would take the emotional element from faith, for faith is an emotion; yet true faith, also as presented by the writer to the Hebrews, is not founded on some hazy "religious experience" nor is it based on anything within; it is founded on dogmatic truth. Nor does the statement that knowledge is logically the basis of faith mean to claim that a deep intellectual understanding precedes faith in the order of time.

The epistle's constant appeal to something outside man's self, namely, the truths concerning Christ and His work, make it a tremendously important book in this day of mysti-

62. J. Gresham Machen, What Is Faith?, p. 25.

63. Ibid., p. 40.

cism, pantheism, "originality," etc.. Mysticism, as we commonly understand it, is always the sign of an anti-intellectual age. It exalts experience, but at the expense of thought and objective truth. Pantheism with its hazy conception of God finds God everywhere; and yet, when we possess that god, we find that we have nothing that we did not have before, if He is but the totality of all things. "Originality" is a key word in 20th century religious thinking. Men don't want to be bound by any old, dogmatic presentation; they want freedom to let their minds go to work. But as Machen so aptly puts it, "A man cannot be original in his treatment of a subject unless he knows what the subject is; true originality is preceded by patient attention to the facts."⁶⁴

All the arguments against Christianity and its "silly dogmatism," all the harangues on "religious experience" collapse before the presentation of our epistle. In Hebrews you find no long discourse on religious emotion, feeling, etc. The author presents the glorious objectivity of Christianity and then urges his readers to take these truths as their own by faith. Indeed, faith saves, not as a good quality of the soul, but only as the establishment of contact with the object of faith.

In summary, the "faith concept" in Hebrews makes clear

64. Ibid., p. 19.

that Jesus and faith are found together, the Jesus of the Bible, so that only where the objective truths of His Person and Work are found, can faith be anything more than mere sham. The Letter to the Hebrews, than, is tremendously important for the present day, when so many religious leaders would throw out all the objective truths of Christianity. It is the epistle par excellence for our day. Nowhere better than in this writing can we see detailed the truths of Christianity that need to have a profound hold upon Christians today.

"Faith" and "The Promises"

Faith takes all the promises of God as "yea and Amen," we said; the writer to the Hebrews links the concepts of "faith" and the "promises" very closely. In the 3rd chapter he makes clear that though the children of Israel had received the promises, specifically with regard to the Promised land, "They could not enter in because of unbelief," 3: 19. And since "the promises" are mentioned so often in the letter ---epaggelia occurs more than fifteen times---a more thorough study of the "promise concept" and its relation to "faith" is appropriate at this time. ⁶⁵ "The promises" will also be mentioned in the chapter on "hope," and there also we shall present our conclusions with regard to the relation between

65. Pistis and epaggelia are linked closely also in ch. 6: 12 ff; 10: 23; and in all the "promises" passages in chapter 11.

"faith" and "hope" as the writer of the epistle presents them.

The noun epaggelia is used in two different ways in our epistle. It may refer to the promise itself or it may refer to that which is promised. The verbs used with this noun are: kleeronomeoo, epitychanoo, lambanoo, komizomai, anadechomai and echoo. Only the last two refer to having or receiving the promise in the sense of being promised something. The others refer to coming into possession of that which has been promised. The number of the noun, however, does not help us in distinguishing its meaning. The writer uses both when speaking of the promise itself or of what is promised. Of course, when the verb epaggelizomai is used, it necessarily refers to the subjective act of promising something.

The author means the promise itself when, in chapter 4: 1, he speaks of the epaggelia eiselthein eis teen katapausin autou. The katapausis is what is promised, and the promise deals with the "rest;" it is a promise concerning entering into the rest. This first use of epaggelia is illustrated also from 7: 6, where Melchisedek, we are told, ton echonta tas epaggelias enlogeeken. Here Abraham "had" God's promise in the sense that God had promised him something, not that he had already come into possession of that which God promised.

66. For similar usages of epaggelia, cf. 8: 6; 11: 17.

When epaggelia is used as equivalent to what is promised, it does not always refer to the same thing. In the majority of instances, that which is promised is heaven and its glories. We shall treat this usage also in the "hope" chapter. So in 6: 12, when the author speaks of hoi klee-ronomountes tas epaggelias, he means the believing Christians whom God receives into heaven; the meaning is not that people are constantly being promised something by God--- they are coming into possession of the thing promised. That heaven is meant is obvious. ⁶⁷ Again, perhaps the clearest use of epaggelia in the sense of the promised heaven is found in verse 15 of chapter 9. There the author informs his readers that Jesus died in order that teen epaggelian laboosin hoi keklemenci tees aioniou kleeronomias. Here we have a fine example of the genitive of apposition; "the called" receive "the promise of eternal inheritance." This phrase we might translate: "the promise, namely, the eternal inheritance." ⁶⁸

In one passage the thing promised is the Holy Land; the writer says in 11: 9: "By faith he (namely, Abraham) so-journed in the land of promise" (eis geen tees epaggelias). This passage is an allusion to the promise, oft-repeated to Abraham and his descendants: "I will establish My covenant

67. Cf. here also the exegesis of pistis in 6: 12, pp. 17-21.

68. For a similar use of epaggelia cf. 6: 17; 10: 36.

between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God," Genesis 17: 7 f.

Now the relation between "faith" and "the promise," as we have seen, is clear enough: faith takes the promises of God and accepts them as true and certain of fulfillment. Yet since "the promises" in the Letter to the Hebrews do not always directly refer to heaven, the commentators who take pistis in the general sense of "trust in God's promises," as something other than the Pauline concept, believe that their argument is strengthened. Perhaps that would be true, were it possible to departmentalize not only faith but also the promises. It is highly important to remember, however, that the promises of God mentioned in the Letter to the Hebrews form an unbreakable chain that never stops short of heaven. The promises of God which we have considered are not isolated, having no relation the one upon the other; on the contrary, all these promises are a part of the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed, that He would be their God and they His people.

When He promised Abraham seed in spite of his age and promised that his descendants should become a powerful nation, He closely linked that promise with the promise that

those descendants should live in and rule over the Holy Land, cf. Genesis 15 and 17. And when God promised Abraham that seed, He most certainly and assuredly included the Messianic promise: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Furthermore, it is only because of the promise of this Savior, this Christ, that the "promise of entering into His rest" could be given, and that we today, through the Christ who has come, have the promise of the abiding city in heaven, "whose Builder and Maker is God," 11: 10.

So when the writer to the Hebrews speaks of "faith in the promises" he does not speak in a general way but refers this faith to that glorious chain of promises that center in the Christ of God, whose work is vividly pictured in the epistle. ⁶⁹ It is not an isolated faith, separate from saving faith, any more than the promises are isolated promises, apart from Christ and the glories of heaven.

Conclusions

1. Pistis in the New Testament usually, though not always, means saving faith in the Christ of God.
2. According to the writer to the Hebrews, faith is a necessary prerequisite for communion with God.
3. Faith is the subjective grasping of the objective promises. Only those who "believe" shall enter "the rest of God."

69. The only exception we find in 11: 33, where the author speaks of "promises" in a more general way, but confines them to the promises made specifically to the heroes of faith mentioned in v. 32.

4. Pistis is used in close conjunction with katapanousis, metanoia, hoi kleeronomountes tas epaggelias, peripoleesis psychees, dikaios (ynee) and so means saving faith, not mere general trust in some of God's promises.

5. Saving faith need not be expressly referred to Christ, 6: 1.

6. It is constancy in faith that the author stresses, since these Christians were in danger of apostasizing. (Cf. makrothymia, hypomonee, etc.).

7. Pleerophoria, as everywhere in the New Testament, is passive and means "full assurance." En pleerophoria pisteos then means: "In full assurance of faith."

8. Hebrews 11: 1 gives us a comprehensive summary of true, Christian faith.

9. Hebrews 11: 1 gives us a generic definition of faith.

10. Had Paul written the 11th chapter, he would have spoken the same way about faith.

11. Hypostasis, 11: 1, must be taken in the subjective sense of "firm confidence."

12. "The things hoped for" are "the promises," "the rest," etc.

13. Elegchos is subjective also, 11: 1, and means "conviction."

14. "The things not seen" is a broader term than "things hoped for" and draws a larger circle around the first half of the definition.

15. We translate 11: 1: "Faith is the firm confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

16. Saving faith is not isolated but makes itself felt in every phase of the Christian life and at every stage of the "Heilsgeschichte." Hence no appeal to the rest of chapter 11 by those who do not believe faith here to be saving faith is justified.

17. In fact, the close association of faith with "righteousness" and salvation in chapter 11 favors the interpretation of faith in Hebrews as "Pauline faith."

18. Jesus as the "Author and Completer of faith" is the Object, not the Example of faith.

19. Pistis is a great concept in our epistle, and it is significant that in this epistle we have the most complete picture of Jesus, our High Priest, found in Scripture.

20. Similarly, faith is based on objective truth, for faith involves an intellectual element.

21. Epaggelia is used in two different ways in Hebrews: It may mean 1. the promise itself; or 2. that which is promised.

22. The "promises" in Hebrews form a chain, centered in Christ, that never stops short of heaven.

23. Saving faith takes all these promises of God as Yea and Amen.

II. THE ELPIS CONCEPT

The Hope Concept in the Old Testament Era

A short survey of the hope concept in the Old Testament era seems to be very appropriate; first, because of the Jewish background of the readers of the letter, and secondly, because we are in our discussion of "hope" interested in the "Messianic hope" idea of the Old Testament era. In our discussion we shall present this hope concept both from the Old Testament and as it changed through rabbinical teachings.

The word elpis is most often found in the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew mib-tach, or in the verb form, for ba-tach.¹ Elpis may be found in the Old Testament as merely a neutral concept, so that we must first insert the word "good" or "bad" before the word "hope." A clear usage of elpis in this sense we find in Job 11; 9. The A. V. translates: "the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." The LXX renders the words "their hope....." with hee elpis autoon spooleia. In the 31st chapter of Job, verse 24, the LXX has ei de kai lithoo polytelei epepoitheesa.

In Isaiah 28: 19, however, the use of elpis in the sense of merely "an awaiting" is most clearly expressed. There the English "vexation," the German "Schrecken," is rendered elpis

1. Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "Elpis", Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Gerhard Kittel, II, p. 518.

ponera, "an evil hope."²

This usage of elpis is found in some of the classic writers,³ but never in the New Testament. In the New Testament the expectation is never one of fear but always one of joy.

But we find elpis in the Old Testament also in the sense of confidence. Two passages that fall into this category are Prov. 23: 18 and 24: 14. The first says in the LXX: hee de elpis ouk aposteesetai. In 24: 14 the thought is very similar; the words read: kai elpis se ouk egkataleipsei. Hope and confidence are so closely merged, that they become almost synonymous. And since this confidence is always God-directed, we may say that "Gott die Hoffnung, die Zuversicht der Frommen ist."⁴ God will surely deliver them out of their present distress and will continue, as He has done in the past, to bless them and keep them.

This confidence is there, however, only because the believers look to God for their final salvation. Elpis, in other words, also in the Old Testament, is used eschatologically. Even as God delivers the believers from trouble in this world, so He shall finally lead us into everlasting bliss with Him; then there shall be an end of all the troubles that plague us now. Is. 25: 9 expresses this thought

2. Other passages where the hope concept, with or without elpis, is considered something neutral are Prov. 13: 12 and Job 41: 9.

3. Cf. Thayer, op. cit., p. 205.

4. Buittmann and Rengstorff, op. cit., p. 519.

in the words: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." The words "waited for Him" are translated in the LXX eph' hoo⁵ elpizomen.

Elpis in this last usage is what we usually refer to by the "Messianic hope." The Jews looked to God as their hope of final salvation because of the Messiah who was to come. All the rituals, sacrifices, and worship of the Old Testament were based on the Messianic hope. In the rabbinical writings, however, we notice a different strain in this "Messianic hope" concept. The "hope" is made something concerning the nation primarily and not the individual. In a positive way, Israel as a nation will become very powerful, and negatively, all their enemies will meet with their deserved punishment.

When the Jews then tried to make this "hope" something of the individual, they were often led away from the "hope" in the Messiah. They were led to a work-righteousness religion in the vain hope that their salvation could be made sure. The emphasis was shifted from God's mercy to man's deeds, and the theology consequently became one of fear, not hope. The "Leistungsreligion" kept people from certainty of salvation, for they never knew whether they had per-

5. Cf. passages of a similar nature: Is. 26: 8; 30: 15; 51: 5; Jer. 29: 11; Micah 7: 7.

formed enough pious deeds to merit heaven or not.⁶

In our discussion of the hope concept in the book of Hebrews we shall see that true hope must be based on the work of Christ. It is something that we have only by the grace of God. When Christ is taken from religion, then all certainty leaves also. It is for that reason that Rengstorff ends his discussion on the Heilsgewisheit with these words:

Hoffnung ist naemlich erst da moeglich, wo der Mensch lernt, dasz er nichts, Gott aber alles zu seinem Heile vermag und dasz Gott sein Ziel darin sieht, den Menschen zu diesem Heile zu fuehren, nicht auf dem Wege der Leistung, sondern in der Gewaehrung des Heils sola gratia.⁷

An Exegetical Study

The author wastes no time in making clear his object in this epistle. Already at the beginning of the second chapter he urges the readers to remain constant in their Christianity. He is afraid of a lapse into Judaism, as the whole epistle shows. Hence, the exhortations are not so much against direct apostasy as against a neglect of that which they have learned.⁸

So in 3: 6 the writer wants them to "hold fast." After telling them that they belong to "the house of God."⁹ The author adds the condition: "if we hold fast as firm to

6. Bultmann and Rengstorff, op. cit., p. 524.

7. Ibid., p. 525.

8. Hermann Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, A. C. Kendrick, VI, p. 376.

9. For a discussion of why epi ton oikon autou must refer to God's house, see Moll, op. cit., p. 72.

the end the assurance and the boast of the hope," ean teen parreesian kai to kaucheema tees elpidos mechri telous bebajian kataschoomen. It contains a gentle warning to the readers that they dare not "neglect so great salvation."

But what does this passage mean, and what does elpis here signify? To begin, parreesian here must be translated "confidence," and not (as the R. V.) "boldness;" nor does it mean "bold confession." The other uses of the word in the book ¹⁰ show clearly that "confidence" is what the author has in mind. It is something subjective to which he here alludes. Also, parreesia cannot govern tees elpidos. While perhaps the thought would be only slightly changed, parreesia never appears with a genitive. ¹¹

The readers must "hold fast the confidence as firm," ¹² and also they must "hold fast" the kaucheema tees elpidos. Kaucheema is taken by many in the sense of kaucheesis, the activity of boasting. ¹³ Here, however, it must be the thing about which one boasts, the cause of the boast, or, simply, "the boast." If the author had meant the activity of boasting, he would have used kaucheesis. The readers then should "hold fast" the "boast of the hope." Elpidos is here objective.

10. 4: 16; 10: 19, 35.

11. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., p. 108. This against Bernhard Weiss, Handbuch Ueber den Brief an die Hebraeer, footnote, p. 98.

12. Bebajian agrees with parreesian, the latter being the first noun; we accept the words mechri telous bebajian as genuine.

13. So Riggenbach, op. cit., p. 73.

The author in his first extended exhortation of the epistle brings both the subjective and the objective ideas together. He wants them to remain firm in their Christianity. To that end, they must keep their "confidence" as well as the "boast of the hope" or the "hope of which they boast;" that "confidence" must be based on objective fact. It is very true that they were in danger of losing these objective realities; hence the comparison of Christ and Moses, 3: 2-6; the discussion of the "weakness and unprofitableness" of the Levitical priesthood, the lengthy portrayal of Christ, who "once for all offered up Himself," 7: 11-28; the comparison of the tabernacles, ch. 9; the comparison of the two covenants, ch. 8, etc.

"Hope", therefore, here signifies the glory of which we are assured.¹⁴ We shall enter into that hope at the telos,¹⁵ a word used often in various forms by the holy writer. God wants to give us this hope; He is "leading many sons to glory," 2: 10, and so we shall "hold fast" this "hope," as those "about to inherit salvation," 1: 14.

It is interesting to note here that katechoo (found twice elsewhere in the book) is used in close connection with elpis in 10: 23. Its other use is in this same third chapter, where the identical construction is found as the one in

14. So also Lenski, op. cit., p. 109.

15. Besides its use in 3: 14 in a similar passage, it is found with elpis again in 6: 11.

question. The only difference is that teen archeen tees hypostaseos is used in place of teen parreesian kai to kauchaema tees elpidos. The former expression we have translated "our original firm assurance." Here we see already the close relation of "faith" to "hope," for: the author would have them "hold fast" the "boast of the hope" and "the original firm assurance" (hypostasis), and this word, hypostasis is the one used in defining "faith," 11: 1: estin de pistis elpizomenoon hypostasis. The objective nature of "the things hoped for" in this latter passage strengthens us in the position that in this passage in 3: 6, elpis must refer to the objective hope, the glory that awaits us as children of God and "brothers" (2: 17) of Christ.

Fully to understand the meaning of elpis in 6: 11, and the meaning of the entire passage we must again give attention first to the preceding context. The author begins the sixth chapter, urging his readers to press on to things of full growth (epi teen teleioteeta pheresthai).

Then, in an extended construction, and with clear and exact language, the author warns against the sin against the Holy Ghost (vv. 4-7). He expresses fear for their Christianity, his apprehension at their apparent back-sliding. The general warning to "those who were once enlightened" is followed by the picture of the ground that brings forth thistles, thorns, and the like; "its end is to be burned" (hee to telos eis kausin).

The author is sure to make his point clear to the readers. The concern which he feels for their souls' salvation is evident, especially from the words preceding this elpis passage, where, in spite of the danger to their faith, they are called agapeetoi, and where their works of love are mentioned. Whatever the meaning of pepeismetha de, peri hymoon, agapeetoi, ta kreissona kai echomena sooteerias, and its relation to the preceding section,¹⁶ the author has not forgotten the works of love of the readers. In "ministering to the saints" they have shown love "for the name of God."¹⁷ In His mercy and grace God will not forget these works of love.

But now, they should show the same zeal which they have shown for works of love also in confidence and assurance of their hope (epithymoumen de hekaston hymoon teen auteen endeiknysthai spoudeen pros teen pleerophorian tees elpidos achri telous). That is the thought here. The stress is not as much on the achri telous as on the phrase pros teen pleerophorian tees elpidos. If the achri telous were the important thing, "the demand of the author would amount to this, that the readers should manifest the same zeal which, according to v. 10, they have already displayed, even to the end or in all future time. But in such manner it is assumed that

16. On the various interpretations, see Luenemann, op. cit., p. 539.

17. Cf. Riggerbach, op. cit., p. 162, on the significance of "the name of God."

the author has every reason for being satisfied with the Christian condition of the readers, and desires nothing more than a continuance of the same, whereas the whole epistle testifies that the state of things with the Hebrews was very different from this.¹⁸

With the general thought clear, let us consider the meaning of the individual words in the phrase, pros teen pleerophorian tees elpidos. We translate: "in regard to the full assurance of the hope," i. e., with respect to the hope. The pleerophoria poses the problem of how we shall interpret "hope" here. The word, pleerophoria, is used very seldom in the New Testament, four times, including once elsewhere in the book of Hebrews; we find it in ch. 10: 22 where the author says, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" (en pleerophoria pisteos). In this 6th chapter the meaning is undoubtedly "full assurance" also, and not "fullness," the other possible meaning of the word. The interpretation "full assurance" agrees with usage¹⁹ elsewhere in the New Testament.

Here then, we reject the interpretation of Riggenbach, who speaks of the "Halbheit und Unvollkommenheit" of the readers. Of course, it is true that "der Mangel der Leser liegt in der Halbheit und Unvollkommenheit ihrer Hoffnung," Dog-

18. Luenemann, op. cit., p. 540.

19. Cf. I Thess. 1: 5; Col. 2: 2; cf. also Rom. 4: 21; 14: 5.

matically and practically we have no argument, but to translate pleerophoria "fullness" necessitates taking elpidos, the genitive, as a possessive genitive and makes of elpis the subjective "hope" within the readers.²⁰

On the contrary, elpis must here also be construed in an objective sense. It is the "hope laid before us," 6: 18, the hope of the glory which we shall some day inherit as sons of God. These Jewish Christians had been slipping with regard to their faith and hope. That confidence in the hope of heaven had waned, and they had perhaps seemed to be falling back in their Christianity, 4: 1.

Of course, the subjective idea in the passage is not wanting. Their confidence is surely something that they have within them; they are to "hold fast," etc., and yet the "Hope" itself which the author here presents is not the "hope" within them" but rather the res sperata, the thing hoped for, the glories of heaven and salvation.

This genitive of reference, "with reference to the hope," is not an uncommon thing in the book of Hebrews. Indeed, the author has just used it sharply and clearly in ch. 5: 13: apeiros logou dikaiosyneos ("unskilled in the word of righteousness"); so also in ch. 3, where he speaks of "a heart evil with reference to unbelief" (kardia poneera apistias).

It is interesting that here, just as in the passage

20. Cf. Riggenbach, op. cit., p. 164; Weiss, op. cit., p. 160.

above, 3: 6, "to the end" is used following tees elpidos. In the above passage the wording is mechri telous; here it achri telous.²¹ The meaning is the same. They should make sure that they hold fast this hope in "full assurance of faith" "unto the end;" they have had the Gospel preached unto them, 4: 2. That is not enough. Nor is it enough that they "for a while believe," Luke 8: 13. "They have a great high-priest;" 4: 14; they can "come before the throne of grace with confidence;" but as long as they "see the promises from afar" and have not as yet received them, so long must that "hope" (subjective) be within them, so long must they "hold fast to the 'hope'" (objective, as here).

They must "hold fast to the hope," hina mee noothroi geneesthe. They cannot "become sluggish" (our translation) if that hope of glory remains in their hearts. It may seem strange that here he uses geneesthe, "may (not) become" while in ch. 5: 11 the author says noothroi gegonate tais akoais ("you have become dull of hearing"). Yet

in addressing a Christian body the author is not necessarily confined to a stereotyped style of expression. He may at one time charge them with actual backsliding, and at another, in a strain of tender exhortation, guard them against the danger of it..... 22

We mention this point, since it is so closely linked with the idea of Christian hope. At one time the fires of hope

21. Originally these two words did not mean the same thing; cf. Thayer, op. cit., p. 91, on their difference.

22. Moll, op. cit., p. 118.

and faith grow up in our hearts in a steady flame, ever stronger and brighter. Then again the Christian reaches periods when the flame is stifled with all sorts of cares ---sometimes it is almost extinguished, and only by the grace of God can we once more "look up to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith," 12: 2.

Elpis in 6: 18 hinges closely upon the preceding passage, yet the author stresses his point from a different angle. We must remember that the purpose of the whole epistle is to keep these Jewish Christians constant in their faith and hope; this the author would do by showing the glorious basis of the Christian hope, the glorious and sure Foundation of their faith (so much better than that of the Old Covenant).

He is persuaded ta kreissona kai echomena sooteerias about these Christians, in spite of the fact that he has spoken rather severely to them, 6: 4-8. They should "hold fast," for, (and this he shows in vv. 13-20) God's promises are sure.

God had made promises to Abraham, and even swore that they would surely come to pass (oomesen kath' heautou, legoon.....). God adapted Himself to the ways of men, for anthropoi (gar).....omnyousin, kai pases autois antilogias²²₂₃ peras eis bebaicosin ho orkos. On that principle God sealed His promise with an oath to Abraham.

22. On the condescension of God, cf. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 459.

23. En hoo means the preceding clause, not the "oath," Moll, op. cit., p. 123.

He did it for a purpose, and here we get to the elpis passage, and the crux of the matter. God swore in order that, by His promise and His oath, "we who fled away (from the world) to seize hold of the hope laid before us, might have strong encouragement" (namely, to continue to hold fast to that hope). The Greek says, hina.....ischyran parakleesin echomen hoi kataphygontes krateesai tes prokeimenes elpidos.

The meaning of parakleesis is generally accepted to be "encouragement," not "consolation." The exegetes differ, however, when they reach the word krateesai. To what does it belong? Is it dependent on hoi kataphygontes or on ischyran parakleesin echomen? Some say that to take hoi kataphygontes in an absolute sense demands a subjective rendering of elpis.²⁴ While we do not believe that such a view is correct, we prefer to take krateesai with the participle, "we who fled away to seize hold....." Taking hoi kataphygontes absolutely, we could translate: "In order that we who have fled away might have strong encouragement to hold fast the hope laid before us." Such an interpretation would take krateos in the sense in which it is used in 4: 14. No one appeals to the style of the writer, yet it seems strange that the author would slip an absolute participial phrase into the middle of the sentence. Where he uses such an ab-

24. Moll, op. cit., p. 123.

solute construction, he puts the participle at the end, lest there be any confusion, cf. 4: 3 a. It is much simpler to take the words as they come and take kratesai with the words immediately preceding it.

At any rate, elpis is again used here in an objective sense. Many disagree, but they fail to explain away the modifiers that make the meaning so clear. The "hope" is "laid before us" (prokeimenees). Surely the author means nothing else than that objective "hope" which God in His mercy has given us through Christ. The author never directs his hearers to "hold fast" to something within themselves. It is always Christ, the "Author and Finisher of our faith" to whom the readers are directed; the whole epistle centers in Him. He "was made lower than the angels;" "He entered in once unto the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Yes, He "is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," and there appears "in the presence of God for us." All outside man, all objective in nature. Everything is "laid before us" for us to seize.

Riggenbach and Luenemann both take elpis here in the subjective sense, the "hope within us." They do not argue from the prokeimenees, but rather explain that word away by reference to the 19th verse. That we shall presently discuss. Others mix the objective and subjective ideas.

25. Timothy Dwight in Luenemann, op. cit., pp. 554-5.

But now, what part do the words of v. 19 play in the interpretation of this passage? They read: Heen hoos agkyran echomen tees psychees asphalee te kai bebaian kai eiserhomeneen eis to esooteron tou katapetasmatos. We translate with Lenski: "which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and firm, and extending into the inner part behind the veil."²⁶ The anchor is elsewhere unmentioned in Scripture, but in the classics is often used as a symbol of hope.²⁷ This hope is just like an anchor for our soul, and it is something sure; yes, it extends "into the inner part behind the veil." All three modifiers (the two adjectives and the participle) go along with anchor and give "strong encouragement" to the Jewish Christians to "hold fast" until the end.

The picture of the anchor would seem to make the objective view of "hope" the clearer; Riggerbach, however, uses it to support his claim that here the "hope" must be taken in a subjective sense. He says:

Ein eiserchesthai eis to esooteron tou katapetasmatos laeszt sich aber vollends nur von der Hoffnung als menschlicher Gesinnung aussagen, denn das Hoffnungsgut oder der Hoffungsgrund ist zwar im Himmel vorhanden,....geht aber nicht dort hinein. 28

The point of the matter then settles in the participle eiserhomeneen. Surely it cannot be taken here as a verb de-

26. Lenski, op. cit., p. 201.

27. Here see Moll, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

28. Riggerbach, op. cit., p. 175.

noting action, namely, that this hope passes over from this world to the next. The author merely wants to give the locale of this objective hope. Lenski's translation then, "extending" fits well; in other words, this hope deals with the "space behind the veil" or the "inner part behind the veil."²⁹

This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that surely the author would not call the subjective hope of the believers, the "hope within us" as something that is "sure and firm," as an "anchor."³⁰ Nowhere in Scripture is our hope to be our anchor, for then the doctrine of sola gratia is lost, Rom. 11: 6. Our hope within ourselves is nothing "sure and firm," but the "hope which we hope" is definitely something "sure and firm," and to that the author here alludes.

We might conclude by saying that "the 'inner part behind the veil' is not a figure, but is language taken from the earthly type to designate the reality of the heavenly antitype, which would at once be understood by the readers who were former Jews. As the anchor is out of sight, so the hope, promised and sworn to us, is out of sight. It is in the heavenly Sanctuary. It is the promised salvation through³¹ the all-atoning blood of Jesus."

29. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 201 ff.

30. Cf. author's references to a better covenant, better tabernacle, better blood, better priesthood, etc---are objective realities upon which Jews must have hope---not upon the hope (subjective) itself.

31. Lenski, op. cit., p. 206.

The seventh chapter begins a series of contrasts. All have as their object to show the superiority of the New Testament era and the provisional and incomplete character of Judaism. In the seventh chapter the author shows how much greater the priesthood of Christ is than that of the Old Testament priests.

Christ is a High Priest "after the order of Melchisedek," and in the first part of the chapter this Melchisedek is described. Using references from Gen. 17 as a basis, the author not only describes Melchisedek himself but also shows how much greater his priesthood was than that of the Old Testament priests. He uses three comparisons, vv. 4-10, to prove "how great this man was."

And Jesus is a "High Priest after the order of Melchisedek." He is also, therefore, greater than the Old Testament priests and his priesthood far superior to theirs. The passage in question, v. 19, forms a transition in this long comparison: the author has shown why Melchisedek was superior to "those priests," and he will shortly show why Jesus is a much greater High Priest.

We translate, beginning with the 18th verse: "For on the one hand, an amendment occurs of the preceding commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness---for the law made nothing complete---on the other hand, a bringing in (occurs) of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God." Note that the clause, ouden gar eteleioosen ho nomos, is

parenthetic in nature. The A. V. translates, "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope ³² did." The whole construction, however, militates against that translation. Then the men in v. 18 a is left hanging. Further, if the contrast were to be between v. 19 a and 19 b the author would have to have used the article with epeisagooee as he did with nomos. The men.....de construction is ³³ quite plain here.

That the objective sense of elpis is again meant seems to be clear from the whole connection. God has disannulled and abolished the "previous commandment" and He does the "bringing in." What He brings in must be something objective in nature. All the glories that accompany the coming of Christ are those things to which the author here alludes. Objective realities such as these the Old Testament never had. He will mention them later; here he only speaks of the ³⁴ "bringing in of a better hope" generally.

Why is this a "better" hope that we have in the New Testament era? The following verses show that Christ "brings in" a "better" priesthood; He is "surety of a better testament," v. 22; this testament also is "established upon better promises," 8: 6; there are "better sacrifices," 9: 23.

32. So also Beza and others.

33. Cf. Luenemann, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

34. The epeisagooee is hapax legomenon, found in secular writers but not in the LXX or any other Greek translation of the Old Testament, including the Apocrypha. Josephus uses it in the story of Esther, the "bringing in" of a wife in place of the previous one, a use very similar to the one here. Antiquities, XI, 6, 2.

The kreittonos elpidos is a fitting expression, for all these "better" things add up to make a "better hope."

Surely the Old Testament had a hope of glory. Else no one in the Old Testament era would have been saved. Yet the "previous commandment," namely, concerning the Levitical ³⁵ priesthood, was weak and unprofitable. The Levitical priesthood and its law constituted a shadow, 8: 5; 9: 23, etc. The whole law (nomos), in fact, "brought nothing to completion." This idea of "completion" (teleiosis) is the center of the author's dogmatic teaching in his letter. The Old Testament sacrifices derived their worth only from the fact that they foreshadowed the great sacrifice of Christ; of themselves they were "weak" and "unprofitable." So now, with the coming of "the better hope" these sacrifices, this ³⁶ priesthood, this "earthly tabernacle" all lose their value. With Christ comes a "better hope"---not in incomplete shadows but in completed realities.

While the objective sense of elpis remains, the author again, as in 6: 18, includes the subjective idea in other words and phrases. By means of this hope "we draw near to God." That hope must enter our heart; when it becomes a part of us and we "hold it fast," then, we draw near to God in a wonderful communion. The author seems to use a pic-

35. So Weiss, op. cit., against Calvin and others, p. 184.

36. Teleiosis in its various forms occurs 13 times in the Letter to the Hebrews; therefore, no teleiosis in the Levitical priesthood, 7: 11; the high priests, schontes as-theneian and Christ, teteleioomenon, 7: 28; the teleioteere

ture with this eggizomen too theoo; in the Old Testament the people could not enter the Holy of Holies, 9: 6 ff. The "way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," 9: 8. With Christ, who "entered once into the holy place" and "obtained eternal redemption for us" we have "boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus," 10: 19. We can draw near to God" by a "new and living way," consecrated for us by Christ. We "draw near in full assurance of faith," 10: 22 (proserchometha.....en pleerophoria pisteoos).

The passage beginning with verse 19 of the tenth chapter is one of the grandest hortatory sections of the entire letter. As he reads the reader must feel the tender concern which the author feels for his soul's welfare. The tenth chapter has continued the glorious comparison between the Old and New Covenants: the blood of the bulls and goats could not take away sin (by themselves), v. 4; "we are sanctified" (heegiasmnoi esmen) by Christ's offering of His body "once and for all" (ephapax); by that one offering of His "He has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

After having presented these everlasting truths, the author continues in a strain that reminds us again of the purpose of the letter; he says, echontes oun, adelphoi, parreesian.....kai hiera megan.....proserchometha meta aleethinees kardias.....katechoomen teen homologian tees elpidos

skense, 9: 11; sacrifices not able teleioosai the one who did the service, 9: 9; etc.

aklinee.....You have these truths, the author means to say; don't let them go. You have the very Son of God as your priest. Will you now lapse back into the "shadow" religion of Judaism?

This idea "having", here with the participle echontes, is used several times in the epistle, and it gives us an insight into the whole meaning of vv. 19-25. In 4: 14 the author tells his readers to "draw near" (proserchomai again), since they have a great High Priest. This passage as a whole, in fact, is very similar to the one in 4: 14. Again in 8: 1, after showing what kind of High Priest was necessary for our salvation, the author says, tosouton echomen archiereea. Again, the hortatory verses of chapter 12 follow the participle echontes.

Since they, the Jewish Christians, have all these glorious truths, they should first of all "draw near"³⁷ in faith. They should, furthermore, v. 23, "hold fast the confession of the hope unbent." Finally, they should "consider one another"³⁸....."

Our concern is here the meaning of the words: kate-³⁹choomen teen homologian tess elpidos. "To hold fast the

37. Proserchoometha a ritual or liturgical term, Lenski, op. cit., p. 353.

38. It is interesting in these three exhortations that our three words, "faith," "hope," and "love" are used. Their connection and relation will be discussed later.

39. The second participial phrase of v. 22 must also be joined with proserchoometha; so Riggenbach, op. cit., against Weiss and Luenemann, p. 318.

confession of the hope" means simply that they should "hold fast" all those things which embody what we hope for. That is their confession; they must hold it "unbent" (aklinee), that is, they must hold their confession up high lest any of the contents be lost. The whole thought fits beautifully with the echontes of v. 19 and the discussion in the earlier part of the chapter. We hold fast to something objective. Judaism has none of these objective glories. We have them. Let us "hold them fast."

The elpis is again then the res sperata, the "Hoffnungsgut," the hope of glory. The author's purpose is not to tell them just to "keep on confessing that you hope;" such a subjective view of elpis here would not fit in with the whole trend of the argument. Rather, they should keep the confession that has as its object the Christian hope (confession in a passive sense, primarily).

Of course, one cannot wipe out the subjective thought in the passage. They must "hold fast;" that is subjective. Furthermore, if they "draw near.....in full assurance of faith" and really "hold fast the confession," they must make confession of that hope. Faith and confession always go hand in hand. The apostle Paul presents that truth in the 10th chapter of Romans, when he says, v. 10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The world will surely find out that they have this "hope of glory" within their hearts.

Finally, "let us hold fast," "for He who has promised is faithful." That will be their comfort, even when they are persecuted and oppressed for the sake of their "confession," vv. 32 ff.

Der Gott, welcher die Verheissung gegeben (6: 13; 11: 11; 12: 26) und ihnen damit Grund und Recht zum Hoffen verliehen hat, ist zuverlaessig (I Kr. 1: 9; 10: 13; I Th. 5: 24) und wird seine Zusage nicht unerfuellt lassen. 40

The parallel passages are: 3: 6, 14; 4: 14. The passages in chapter 3 both have a form of katechoo (cf. interpretation of 3: 6, pp. 58-61), while in 4: 14 the readers are urged to kratein tess homologias, since they have a "Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens." The other passage containing homologia, (besides that in this passage and in 4: 14), 3: 1, strengthens the interpretation of "confession" as something passive. There Jesus is called the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession."

Hope and the Letter Generally

We have considered at some length the word elpis and its meaning in the book of Hebrews. The author clearly refers with this word elpis to the "hope of glory" which is awaiting the children of God. It is the glorious "rest" which remains for those who "hold fast." It is the resperata, the "Hoffnungsgut."

40. Riggenbach, op. cit., p. 319.

Yet the concept of hope in the letter to the Hebrews is found not only in the word elpis. The author often refers indirectly to this "hope." Our interest in this section is to present the concept of hope in the letter generally. What role does "hope" play?

We must first of all study the occasion of the letter. Who were the readers and for what reason was the letter written? It seems quite evident that the recipients of this letter were not Gentiles. Such a view is impossible. Nor were the readers partly Jewish, partly Gentile. The author never speaks to Gentiles at all. And surely the author would not write to a mixed group and fail to mention the Gentile contingent entirely. The letter to the Hebrews is written exclusively to Jewish Christians, Jewish Christians of a certain locality. Some passages that prove that a specific group of Jewish Christians is addressed are these: in 13: 7 we read that some of their leaders have died; in verse 17 the readers are instructed to obey the leaders who are still with them; these leaders the author greets in the 24th verse; finally, 13: 23, the author hopes to join Timothy in a visit with them. A specific group is addressed.

And why was the letter written? Both the dogmatic and hortatory sections of the letter make the object clear; something had happened to the quality of Christianity in this group. They had been visited with "a great fight of afflictions" (10:32). Because they had sympathized with those who

had been imprisoned for their faith, they too had been persecuted to some degree; they had been humiliated and had suffered the robbery of many of their possessions, 10: 32-34. All this time they had remained firm in their Christianity. Now, however, something has happened to make their faith waver. They are even inclined to "draw back" to Judaism. For this reason the author writes them, urging them with sharp yet loving language to "hold the confession of faith unbent." The purpose of the entire letter is to avert a reversion to Judaism on the part of these Jewish converts to Christianity.⁴¹

The author must show the more glorious aspects of the New Covenant in order to accomplish his purpose. And here is where the concept of hope enters the picture. All the glories, fulfilled and complete in the coming of Christ, form the basis of the sure hope laid up for them in heaven. Because Christ has accomplished salvation's work, the hope of the Christian is a "sure and stable anchor of the soul."

That hope lies in the future. What of the present order of things? All earthly, temporal things perish. The author loses no time in making this truth clear to his readers. In the first chapter already it is presented. The

41. Lenski believes the event which prompted the inclination to return to Judaism was the death of Peter and Paul. For this discussion and the argument for Rome as the home of these Christians, cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 15-21.

deity of Christ is beautifully presented in the first chapter, God's Word in Ps. 2: 7,⁴² huios mou ei sy, egoo se-meron gegenneeka se, is quoted in verse 5, and the following verses Christ is shown to be far superior to the angels. Then, in vv. 10-12 Christ is shown to live forever, in contrast with all mundane things. The earth and the heavens "will be destroyed." "All will like a garment wear out" (pantes hoos imation palaiotheesontai); "Thou (Christ) wilt fold them up like a mantle;" yes, everything "will be transformed." This truth the readers must grasp if they would have the right idea concerning their hope, concerning their salvation.

Again in the 12th chapter the same thought is presented. It comes in one of the many hortatory sections of the book. In the verses preceding verse 26 the author has warned them against rejecting "Him who speaks from heaven."⁴³ Here, however, we are not interested in the hortatory section in itself. In the passage, though, the author stresses the fact that all things temporal perish. He says in verse 27, "'Yet once more' signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made."

No where more clearly than in 13: 14 does the author

42. It is quoted twice in the letter: here and in 5: 5.

43. These exhortations in this section have their parallels: the warning against following Israel's example is found also in 3: 7 ff; again, the thought that we shall more surely not escape for refusal to accept is found also in 2: 2 f.

show the Vorlauefigkeit of everything earthly. He says, "Here we have no continuing city." He must remind these Jewish Christians again that they are living epi sunteleia toon aiconoon.

But the author does not stop by saying that everything on this earth must come to an end. He also shows that the eternal glories shall ever remain. In this way also he expresses the idea of the "hope." The res sperata, "hope of glory" is something that shall never end. So in chapter 11 we are told that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations....." This city of glory, which God Himself has made, will never be destroyed. Indeed, it is part of the basileia asaleuton, "the kingdom that cannot be moved." This "city" in chapter 11 is the same as the "continuing city," 13: 14, for which we look.

Now, then, this glorious hope which every child of God has as a "sure and stable anchor of the soul" is not just some fanciful concept invented by human imagination. It has a sure foundation in the work and person of Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God. All the glories of hee oikoumenee hee mellousa, 2: 5, are based on the High Priestly work of Jesus. In this thought the concept of hope in Hebrews is linked with all the dogmatic truths presented in the letter. Wherever the word elpis is found in the book, the connection with Christ is discernible. In chapter 3 Christ is compared with Moses, and the glories of Christ are presented. In the

6th verse comes the appeal to the readers to "hold fast the hope of which they boast." The two passages containing elpis in the 6th chapter precede the glorious section, chapters 7-10, in which Christ is extolled, the Christ who has made this hope possible. So also in the 7th chapter, embodied in the discussion of the glorious features of Christ's priesthood is the phrase kreittonos elpidos, the "better hope" which we have through Christ. Finally, in chapter 10, Christ's sacrifice and the establishment of the New Covenant give us a "hope" which we must hold "unbent."

Not only is this hope based on Christ, but also, because it is based on Him and His work, it is a better hope than that which the worldly fame, etc. can give. Not only in the passage which speaks of a "better hope" does the author make this point clear. ⁴⁴ Here, however, we shall consider only the thought that this "hope" is far greater in its glory than anything the world has to offer. Not only are the treasures in heaven lasting, in comparison with the perishable riches of earth; they are also better in themselves. This thought the author presents in 10: 32 ff. He speaks of the laudable spirit of the Jewish Christians in their afflictions: they knew that they had "in heaven a better and enduring substance," v. 34.

44. For study, of. the exegesis of 7: 19, pp. 71-74, the kreittonos elpidos.

In the glorious "faith chapter" the same thought is presented. Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward," 11: 26. This "recompense of reward" Moses looks forward to, and in comparison with it everything else slips back into obscurity.

So again in the same chapter we are told of those who refused to be delivered from persecution. They kept the "confession of the hope" "that they might obtain a better resurrection," 11: 35. These heroes of faith realized that in heaven was laid up a glorious hope, which was theirs through faith.

The concept of hope is evident in these three last passages; for what else is this "hope" which the author mentions but an "enduring substance" in heaven, "the recompense of reward," "the better resurrection" for which every Christian waits? We Christians wait for the adoption, to wit, "the redemption of our bodies," Rom. 8: 23.⁴⁵

The more we read the book of Hebrews, the more this concept of hope and its importance in the book becomes evident. It is because of this glorious hope that the readers are called "partakers of the heavenly calling," 3: 1, for in heaven lies their hope. Because of the glorious hope in heaven, the heroes of faith enumerated in chapter 11 "con-

45. In the following verse the apostle Paul speaks of "hope."

fessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth," v. 13. It is for that reason that they "strive to reach (oregontai) a better country, that is, an heavenly," v. 16. As Christians then they "have tasted of the heavenly gift," 6: 4. The "hope which they hope" as Christians has its locale in "the inner part behind the veil," 6: 19.⁴⁶ The references to heaven are references to the "hope" which is theirs; they are truly coming "unto the heavenly Jerusalem," 12: 22.

As we have mentioned before, all these direct and indirect references to the hope laid before the Christians are not merely presented to lay down dogmatic fact. The author has a definite purpose in mind; he wants the readers to apply this message of "the hope" to themselves. We have made that clear in our exegetical study of elpis; in these passages the author never fails to supply the subjective exhortation. The same thing is true in those passages where hee elpis is merely implied. The readers must be sure not to let anything deter them in their "race." Rather, they must "look up to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," 12: 2.

In their specific trouble of persecution they must also be sure to keep the hope before their eyes. They are "chastened" by God, but only that they might enter into the

46. Here compare the exegesis of 6: 18 f., pp. 66-70.

hope, or, as the author puts it, 12: 10: "that we might be partakers of His holiness." Because they are coming "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God....," 12: 22, they should, in spite of their trouble, "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," 12: 12. No matter what may come upon them, the Christians must "hold fast till the end." Then they shall no longer have to "strive to reach" the better country; they shall enter it and forever join the hosts of saints in singing praise to "the Lamb who was slain," Rev. 5: 12.

The concept of the glorious objective hope then runs throughout the book of Hebrews, not only in the elpis passages. The author alludes to it in the passages where the frailty of temporal things are depicted; he speaks of it as a far greater treasure than any on earth, and above all, one that will never end. For us, as for the readers of the epistle, this presentation is something that builds us up in our faith and cheers us in our journey to the "kingdom which cannot be moved."

"Hope" and "The Promises"

There are two considerations which prompt us to study briefly the relationship between "hope" and "the promises" in the Letter to the Hebrews. The first consideration is that elpis in the letter denotes something objective, and so must be at least allied with "the promises." The second con-

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sideration, as we have seen, is that epaggeliaz is not always used in the same sense by the author. In one passage he may mean by this word merely the promises themselves; again, he may denote with the word epaggeliaz what was promised. Our discussion will show the relationship between "hope" and both these meanings of the Greek epaggeliaz.

Since "the promise concept" has been discussed in a previous chapter, some repetition at this time is unavoidable. In its original sense the word epaggelia refers to the promise itself. Here its relationship with "hope" is quite obvious. God's word and promise are spoken concerning "the hope" (res sperata), so that we may call them "promises of the hope" (objective genitive). Such a promise is the one in 4: 1, where the author says a promise remains eiselthein eis teen katapausin autou ("to enter into His rest"). The promise here tells us that we shall enter into the rest. The promise concerns "the rest" which remains for all the children of God. And what is that "rest" but the "hope which we hope," the "hope of glory"?

The phrase "better promises" in 8: 6 reminds us of the "better hope," 7: 19. The first verses of chapter 8 show Christ as a High Priest who fits our needs. He brings all the shadows of the Old Testament into glorious realities.

47. Cf. the section on "Faith and the Promises," pp. 48-52.

He is, therefore, "the Mediator of a better covenant, which
⁴⁸
 has been sanctioned by law on the score of better promises." Obviously the author does not here refer to what is promised but to the promise itself, and that promise has to do with "the better hope." Because the promise is better, the hope is better; the promises are based on the Christ who has come, not on the promised Christ, on whom the promises of the Old Testament had been based.

In 7: 6 and 11: 17 the "promises are again concerning the hope. Both passages speak of Abraham, who has received the promises.
⁴⁹ Directly the author probably refers only to the promises concerning Isaac, etc.---in 11: 17 especially the context makes this clear---yet in our discussion on "faith and the promises" we have seen that all the promises form a chain that never stop short of the promise of heaven and the hope that every Christian shall some day enjoy.

The other usage of epaggelia, in the sense of what was promised, brings "hope" and "the promises" into an even closer relationship. In this discussion we shall limit ourselves to a consideration of those passages only in which "the promises" are directly referred to the promises of heaven. In 6: 12, when the author speaks of "those who are inheriting the promises" he means those Christians who after

48. Our translation of nenomotheteetai; cf. Thayer, op. cit., p. 427.

49. Echoo and anadechomai are the verbs.

death enter the rest and come into the joy of the "Hoffnungsgut." See how closely "hope" and "the promises" are here linked. That "inheriting the promises" does not refer to merely hearing the promises becomes clear by comparing this passage and 4: 1: the readers had the promise, but that is not enough; they must be "mimickers of those who are inheriting the promises"⁵⁰ so that they too may inherit them. The same thought of inheriting the promises is found in verse 17 of the 6th chapter, where "the heirs of the promise"⁵¹ are mentioned.

The fact that "promises" is used in a sense almost synonymous with hope becomes clear from 9: 15. The verse reads in part: hopoos.....teen epaggelian laboosin hoi kekleemenoi⁵² tees ainoniou kleeronomias. In this passage we are told that hoi kekleemenoi shall receive the promise. The thought is evidently of entering heaven and the genitive following epexegetical. The "promise" as such is there for everyone, but only the called enter the rest; only they enjoy the "Hoffnungsgut;" only they "inherit the promises."

The same thought is presented in 10: 36, where the author⁵³ hopes that the readers will "carry off the promise." This they can do only if they have hypomonee. They shall

50. Our translation.

51. In both passages a form of kleeronomeoo is used.

52. Note how kleeronomia is linked with "the promise" passages.

53. Our translation of komizesthai teen epaggelian.

carry off the promise when they enter heaven and its glories. Only after they "have done the will of God" will these promises really be fulfilled in them. Then, the resperata will no longer be hoped for but will be something before their eyes, something which they can eternally enjoy.

Hope and "the promises" then form a concept that cannot be overlooked in the letter. When the "promises" are mentioned as the promises themselves, they are promises concerning the hope, concerning the rest. When "the promises" refer to what is promised, the shade of meaning between hope and the promises is so slight as to be lost. What is promised is to the Christian what is hoped; heaven is promised; heaven is hoped.

Since we have now discussed the concepts of faith and hope and also their relation to the "promise concept" in the letter, we might summarize briefly the relation between "faith" and "hope." Since "faith" as such is always subjective, while "hope" in the letter to the Hebrews denotes an objective concept, their relation is best described in the definition of faith given in chapter 11: 1: "Faith is the firm confidence of things hoped for."⁵⁴ Faith is most assured and convinced that all the glories of heaven, "the rest," are realities, made possible through the atoning blood of Christ. Again, this does not confuse "faith" with

54. Our translation.

"hope" as we usually speak of it, namely, in a subjective sense, for "hope", that which is within us, is the resultant of "faith" and is present only because of the assured trust in Christ and His merits and the conviction that heaven is through Christ ours. This subjective "faith" is then convinced of the reality of the objective "hope."

Conclusions

1. Elpis is originally a neutral concept, denoting a mere "awaiting." It may be good or bad.
2. In the New Testament elpis is always used in the sense of "good hope."
3. Hope in Hebrews is always objective, the thing hoped for, the "Hoffnungsgut," the res sperata, etc.
4. The readers were in danger of losing this "hope," the objective glories of Christianity.
5. The hee pleerophoria tees elpidos means "the full assurance of the hope," in favor of the interpretation of elpis as objective.
6. Again, the hope is "laid before us," 6: 18, and so cannot be subjective. It is an "anchor," which it cannot be if it referred to "the hope within us," for we are always directed to something outside ourselves in Christianity.
7. Eiserchomeneen in this passage does not denote an action but merely gives the locale of this hope.
8. The "better hope" is analogous to the "better promises," etc., all dependent on the coming of Christ.
9. The author not only mentions the objective hope, but, in accord with his purpose, tells the readers to grasp and hold subjectively these objective glories.
10. In order to complete the "hope concept," the author shows the perishable nature of all earthly things.
11. Again, in many passages besides those in which el-

pis is found, the author presents the hope: "The kingdom that cannot be moved," "the city which hath foundations," etc.

12. Because of this hope, the readers are "partakers of the heavenly calling," "partakers of Christ," etc.

13. The promise itself is a promise concerning the hope.

14. What is promised is synonymous with the hope.

III. THE AGAPEE CONCEPT

Agapee in the New Testament

When we speak of the agapee concept in the New Testament, we are speaking of one of the most beautiful and all-inclusive concepts of the entire Bible. It is a beautiful concept, in that it is this agapee which first of all runs through God's whole plan of salvation, so that man's love for God is but a reflection of the limitless love of God. So is it also all-inclusive, for, as we mentioned, it is God's "love" which motivates the entire redemption story, while "love for God" motivates the entire life of the child of God, both positively and negatively---in striving for that which is good and in resisting that which is evil.

The Lord Jesus speaks of this "love for God" in the Sermon on the Mount, and He includes much in this "love concept" when He says, Matt. 6: 24 f.: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life,...." Stauffer says of this passage: "Die Moeglichkeit der Liebe zu Gott¹ steht unter einem radikalen Entweder-Oder;...." Indeed, to love God means simply that one puts himself beneath the

1. Ethelbert Stauffer, "Agapee," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Gerhard Kittel, I, p. 45.

Master as a willing slave, a slave who is loyal and obedient, who obeys His Master's commands, and puts the performance of God's will above everything else. It means, furthermore, according to this word of the Savior, to hate everything that does not serve God and does not come from God. Finally, this "love of God" or "love for God" implies entrusting one's whole being into the gracious care of God, who feeds the fowls, clothes the lilies, and who will most assuredly guard and protect His children.

The "love concept" is certainly not isolated from any part of the Christian life. The Lord Jesus presents this agapee as a "bevorzugende Liebe" on the Christian's part also. The forgiving love of God in Christ must so grip the heart that all things, if need be, are forsaken for the sake of that forgiving love. Jesus' words are demanding: Ho philoon patera hee meetera hyper eme ouk estin mou axios' kai ho philoon huion ee thugatera hyper eme ouk estin mou axios' kai hos ou lambanei ton stauron autou kai akolouthei opisoo mou, ouk estin mou axios, Matt. 10: 37 f.

In the letters of Paul the origin of all true love is found in God; to Paul He is "the God of love and peace," II Cor. 13: 11, who en agapee "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself," Eph. 1: 4 f. For that reason Paul can say of this God: He "Loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." Beginning with the foreordination and predestination

in all eternity and through all eternity it makes itself felt towards the children of men.

But man now "must" love God. It is a love returned, so that when Paul speaks of "those who love God" he means those in whom God's first love has taken root. God has established this new relationship between God and man; He alone makes it possible for man to love Him, so that we can say:

Von ihm (namely, God) geht alles aus, was agapee heissen darf. Die Liebe der agapontes ton theon ist nichts als die unmittelbare Rueckstrahlung der Himmelsliebe, die auf den kleetos niederstrahlt. 2

And the Christian's love does not stop with the God who redeemed him; the Christian, who has been brought to liberty through Christ, now puts his life, by his love for God, into the service of his fellow-men, so that Paul tells his hearers, "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another," Gal. 5: 13. He calls them adelphoi, but he might just as well have used agapeetoi, those beloved of God, for "brethren" and "beloved" become interchangeable concepts.

James, in his stress on true faith that manifests itself in works of love, presents this love as Glaubenstat; it is made possible through faith, James 1: 6, "demanded" by true faith, James 2: 17, and, for the sake of faith, is counted for righteousness, James 2: 23.

2. Ibid., p. 50.

The apostle John, "the apostle of love," is very sure to show God as the origin of real love; he, furthermore, stresses the fact that in Christ God's love was manifested to the world. Christ is the Mediator; through Him God's love reaches out to the world, and by His death God's love has reached its pinnacle. In his first epistle he says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," I John 4: 9 f.

But let us turn now to a study of this agapee concept in our epistle.

An Exegetical Study

Agapee is a rich concept in all New Testament writing, and the Letter to the Hebrews is no exception. When the author speaks of "your work and (labor of) ³ love for His name," in 6: 10, he is aware of the beauty of Christian love; indeed, it is something far-reaching.

As we saw previously in the exegesis of "faith" in this section, the author begins another hortatory insertion with verse 9. He begins, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better

3. The A. V. accepts the variant reading which adds ton kopon. This "labor of love" is mentioned in I. Thess. 1: 3. The reading is poorly attested, and we shall not deal with the problem in our interpretation.

things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." The comparative kreissona, "better things," harks back to the harsh warning of vv. 4-8, where the writer speaks of the sin against the Holy Ghost. The pepeismetha, as we shall see later, is dependent not so much on a high regard for the readers' abilities as on the faithfulness of God, who will help them make good their defection.⁴

The author "is persuaded" kreissona kai echomena sooteerias about these Jewish Christians. The second phrase is to explain the first---the author "is persuaded better things, namely, things that accompany salvation." Indeed, these Christians are "not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," 10: 34. These words, pepeismetha de peri hymoon, agapeetoi, ta kreissona kai echomena sooteerias, remind us of the closing words of chapter 10 also in the fact that one feels not only conviction in the writer's words but also a fervent plea that they remain true in faith to the God who has bought them back from perdition.

The author "is persuaded," "for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which you have shewed for His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister," v. 10. The author does not mean to say that on the Judgment Day God will cover their deficiency, nor is He

4. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., p. 191.

even speaking of the Last Day here. By no means does he want the readers to ground their confidence in their works of love, on any works which they have performed. Riggerbach portrays the thought of the author when he says:

Er redet nicht von dem, was sie tun sollen, sondern von dem was Gott tut. Er wird in seiner Gerechtigkeit nicht bloss die vorhandenen Defekte in Betracht ziehen.....sondern auch anerkennen, was von echtem christlichen Leben noch Zutage tritt. Weil die Leser wirkliche Hingabe an Gott bekundet haben, so uebt Gott Gedult mit ihnen und gibt ihnen trotz der Ermattung ihres Glaubens und ihrer Hoffnung Zeit und Gelegenheit, sich wieder aufzuraffen, statt ihnen das Heil abzuschneiden. 5

So the faithfulness of God refers here to their present condition; He will, in spite of their deficiency, give them time and opportunity to "arouse themselves."

The readers are still agapeetoi, adelphoi; they still love their God, and in this presentation of the agapee concept one notices the close relation between good works and "love." These are not any "works" that the author mentions here, but works that manifest the love of the Christian for God. It is not that "work" is one concept, and "love" an entirely different one, for the works which God will not forget are those that manifest love for Him, works that flow from the believing heart. Indeed, "without faith it is impossible to please Him," 11: 6.

And, just as elsewhere in the New Testament, so here, love for God leads inevitably to a love for man. When man

puts himself under the rule and into the service of his God, he also becomes a servant of all men, especially of "them who are of the household of faith," Gal. 6: 10. That is just what the Jewish Christians had done, for they were ministering to the saints. Perhaps they performed these works for the non-Jewish Christians at Rome, who were probably suffering more under the persecution of the Romans. In their trouble they showed their love to God by supplying their need. That is true love; love for God which does not show a corresponding love for man is only sham. The "apostle of love" says, I John 4: 20: "If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

The author, when speaking of this "love" for man and the subsequent works which show this love, does not merely say that it flows from a love of God. He calls it a "love for His name." This expression is an Hebraism, found often in the Old Testament and in later Jewish writings. Is there any significance in the phrase? Riggenbach believes the author has a special reason for mentioning "the name of God" here. He says:

Es ist das Bekenntnis zu Gott, das dem Liebesdienst der Leser sein eigentümliches Gepraege gibt, da sie sich ihre Hilfeleistung gegeneber solchen, mit denen sie nur durch den gemeinsamen Glauben verbunden sind, als Bekenner desselben Gottes offenbaren. 6

The agapeetoi in this hortatory section that speaks of "love" seems significant, especially since this is the only time the author uses this appellation in speaking to his Christians. As we mentioned before, in the New Testament the words "beloved" and "brethren" (adelphoi) become almost interchangeable concepts. These hearers are agapeetoi, first of all, of God; they have experienced the love of God in the Gospel story, and it has been "shed abroad in their hearts," Rom. 5: 5.

One naturally wonders about the relation of faith, hope, and love here, since all three are used. While we have already exegetically treated "faith" and "hope" in this passage, let us summarize the author's thought here and so make clear the relation between these three concepts. The author begins verse 9 persuaded that these Jewish Christians will not harden their hearts against the Spirit and "put the Son of God to an open shame," v. 6. For God will not forget their works of love; they have been ministering to the needs of the saints and show the love of God within their hearts. God will help them, then, give them time and opportunity to erase this defection which they have shown in their Christianity and with which this whole letter treats. Now, while they have been performing good works, they should also be zealous in guarding the objective truths that are basic for their Christianity, all those glories which constitute the content of Christian hope. Un-

less they do that, they cannot persevere in the faith and so "inherit the promises." They will become sluggish, lose their faith, without which no man can love God. All these thoughts are related: the hope is the "things hoped for" which faith accepts as most certainly real and personally trusts in by reason of the atonement in Christ. And where faith is, there works of love for God are most assuredly. When the objective truths are lost, faith is lost; where faith is lost, love is lost, yes, heaven is lost.

Strangely enough, and in spite of the fact that God's love is most certainly portrayed in the epistle, both passages which use the noun for agapee in Hebrews speak of man's love, the love that flows forth from an appreciation of the Gospel message. The second agapee passage is found in 10: 24. There again it is found in a hortatory passage and in close connection with "faith" and "hope."

The passage reads: kai katancoomen alleelous eis paroxysmon agapees kai kaloon ergoon. We translate: "And let us keep on considering each other as regards provocation to love and good works." The main point of interpretation here centers in the phrase eis paroxysmon agapees kai kaloon ergoon. Does this refer to a growth and stimulation in the love and works of the readers, or are they to provoke their fellow-Christians to such devotion? Luenemann and others hold the former view, but we agree with Riggensbach, who describes this admonition as one to Bruderliebe:

the readers should do everything in their power to build up their fellow-Christians' love and encourage their good works.⁷ The thought is not that the readers should be stimulated in their love, etc., by considering the brethren in the faith; the participial exhortation parakalountes in verse 25 seems to stress the idea of Christian concern for the brother in faith.

It is, however, true that the Jewish Christians can perform their duty in this respect only if they themselves are so filled with the love of Christ that the welfare of the brother's soul means much to them. God's love, manifested in the great High Priest of our faith, fills the Christian heart with gratitude and love for God, and at the same time concern for the faith of the brother.

The use of eis in the meaning "with respect to" is not foreign to the New Testament. Acts 2: 25 says: Dauaid gar legei eis auton ("For David says with reference to him").⁸

It is significant that here again the author does not merely say "love" or "good works," but he says "love and good works;" he strives to show again the close relation between the two concepts and at the same time the fact that none is found without the other in the Christian life. Where faith in the Christ of God is found, there love abounds, and

7. Cf. Riggenbach, op. cit., pp. 319 f.

8. Cf. also Rom. 10: 4; 15: 2; 16: 19.

good works flow forth freely. Love is the root of all good works, for this is no dead love nor are the good works empty expansion of energy. Lenski says with regard to this passage: "Love and good works always go together; it is love that makes the works good in God's sight, who ever looks beyond what is outward to the inner motive of every deed."⁹

The phrase "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" merges into the "love concept" here, for the author asks for deeper fellowship in vv. 24-25. That is the desired end. It is true that without the hearing of the Word there can be no true faith, lasting hope, or love of God--- the author knows that. Here, while the reference is undoubtedly to divine services, the writer would urge them to remain close to one another, in order that they might "keep on considering each other," that they might "exhort" one another, etc. The readers should come themselves and should urge others to come, for some had not been attending the episynagoge.¹⁰ The stress in the "not forsaking" phrase then is on the fact that in their "assembling" they can remain close to one another, exhort one another, strengthen one another's faith, and generally "keep the unity of the Spirit," Eph. 4: 3. In the midst of the trouble which they had experienced and were experiencing this was doubly necessary.

This entire passage presents the "love" thought in the

9. Lenski, op. cit., p. 358.

10. For the historical background here, cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 359 f.

same manner as does 6: 9 f. It is a love for God that makes love for the fellow-man a necessity, that ministers to needs, bolsters up the weak, and constantly is bolstered itself through the Word. It is a love that is constantly at work, as the author says in 3: 13: Parakaleite heantous kath' hekasteen heemeran; the time is short, for "that day," v. 25, is approaching. The Master is coming, and He "will not tarry," 10: 37.

The entire section, vv. 19-25, presents a triple exhortation to the readers; they deal with faith, hope, and love, and are all three dependent on the fact that the readers have parresia eis teen eisodon toon hagion en tou haimati Iesou and have also hieraa epi ton oikon tou theou, vv. 19-21. Since they have these things, that is, they are there for the readers, they should: a) take them in faith; b) keep them constantly before their eyes, so that "faith" has real heavenly things to grasp; and c) make them more meaningful to their brethren. All three concepts, faith, hope, and love become fused into one glorious one. He who would approach God must do it in "faith;" he must be sure to keep the objective glories that constitute the "hope," lest "faith" become meaningless, and he "must," (his "love" for God constrains him) to build up "love," that resultant of faith, in his fellow-Christian.

The word agapee in its various forms does not often occur in the Letter to the Hebrews, though the concept of

"love," as we shall see, is expressed in many passages. Another oddity in the use of agapee in Hebrews we have already mentioned, namely, the noun agapee in both passages where it is found refers to the love of man, while the verb agapaoo refers to the love of God in a subjective sense.

This subjective love of God, or, more specifically, of Christ, is depicted in 1: 9. We shall treat the passage although it is not organically connected with the pistis, elpis, agapee triad. The passage is a quotation from Psalm 45. We translate: "Thou didst love righteousness, and didst hate lawlessness. For this reason God, thy God, did anoint Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." The A. V. translation, "Thou hast loved righteousness....," of agapeesas dikaiosyneen kai emiseesas anomian is not quite accurate; the Greek uses the aorist, not the perfect tense, for this passage is a reference to the work of Christ here on earth. In general, the tenses are employed in the New Testament in exactly the same manner as in the classical Greek authors; the action of the aorist denotes merely an occurrence at some former time.¹¹

Why does the author here speak of Christ's righteousness in that He loved righteousness, etc.? We have shown previously that in the first chapter the author is comparing Christ to the angels; he wants to show how more glori-

11. Georg Benedict Winer, Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms, here cf. p. 248.

ous and powerful this Christ is. In verse 7 he shows the position of the angels, their work, etc., when he says:

"Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." He then proceeds to speak "with regard to" (pros)¹² the Son. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever....."

While the original in the Psalm speaks of the coronation of the King and shows all the glories of the kingdom of Christ, here the author, by the use of the aorist, and by speaking of the human nature,¹³ puts the stress on the glories of the person and work of this God-man Christ Jesus.

What a glorious "love" is spoken of in this passage! This is love in its highest measure, for this is the love of the Man Christ Jesus, who existed from all eternity and so is at the same time "Very God of Very God." The author might just as well have here said of this Christ: He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," 7: 26; "He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins....," 7: 27. Indeed, He has no sin; He is holy; as true God, this Man Christ hates and abhors all that is evil, loves all that is good and pure.

No other man has any claim to such holiness. The love of the Christian, no matter how far he seems to progress in his sanctification, can never approach this love of good which fills the God-man, for every good work is still tainted

12. We believe, with most commentators, that the ho theos in verse 8 is definitely vocative. No other explanation fits the context.

13. Cf. v. 9 b.

with sin; the old Adam is still at work, and the heart can never fully rid itself of vanity, deceit, and wickedness. Without digressing too far, we should mention that it is only because this Christ, this God-man, did "love righteousness and hate lawlessness" that our salvation is complete. He had to be holy; "such an high priest became us," 7: 26. We needed Him desperately, and He truly kept the Law in every respect for us.

The man of God then strives to model his life after this "loving of righteousness" and "hating of lawlessness" of Christ. His love, as we have shown, is a reflected love, a love based on God's love for him and which then accordingly would love all that God loves and abhor all that which He despises. The whole "love" concept is one: our love for God is based on His love for us, and we strive to love even as God loves.

The words which follow "Thou didst love righteousness and hate lawlessness" show beyond a doubt that this "loving" and "hating" is done by Christ, and specifically, Christ in the flesh; the words read, "Therefore God, even Thy God,¹⁴ hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." It is not necessary for our purposes to investigate fully the meaning of the "anointing" here or to identify the metochoi.¹⁵ The important thing is that God has given some-

14. The aorist again is used; we would say "anointed."
 15. Here cf. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 55 f.

thing to the Son, and so the reference must be to the human nature of the Christ of God; according to His divine nature He already has all things, has created all things, and fills all things. It is the incarnate Son of God to whom the author points here, as throughout the whole book. He is far superior to the angels; He is far superior to Moses; He is far superior to the Old Testament priests. And here, though the author's purpose is merely to show the superiority of Jesus Christ, the Christian again finds his perfect Example for Christian living. Here again he finds Him who is indeed Himself "Love," who is the Author of all good, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, who manifests love in its highest degree. He, in the days of His flesh, "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;" so the Christian, both positively and negatively, must be an example of true Christian love.

And when the author to the Hebrews says, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," the agapee concept breaks forth in another glorious aspect. Indeed, this love of God is not isolated or concerned merely with the sending of Christ Jesus into the world for the world's redemption. This love plays a part in the entire life of the Christian; it is, in fact, the motive which is behind every act of God upon the Christian's life.

The meaning of this word, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth....." becomes very clear from the context. It is

found in the 12th chapter of the letter, v. 6, where the writer applies the example of the Old Testament believers to the lives of his readers. In chapter 11 and elsewhere perseverance in faith is stressed, and in the opening verses of this 12th chapter we become aware of why this has been done: these Christians had been undergoing persecu-¹⁶tions. They had "not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin," v. 4, but they were in danger of becoming "wearied and faint" in mind. For that reason the author says, v. 1: "Let us run with patience....;" for that reason he speaks of Jesus who "endured the cross," v. 2, "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," v. 3.

The writer urges them to remain firm and then reminds them again that chastisement is a mark of sonship, that God is a loving God who directs also the troublesome days of His children. He says, "hon gar agapa kurios paidenei, mastigei de panta hyion hon paradechetai. They must remember during their trials that God's good purposes are being worked out for them through their troubles, and that God's love, not His anger, is at work, also in time of persecution. That God's love is at work in the Christian's trials does not mean that the chastisement is not to correct us, for its purpose is to drive out the sin within us, purify us, etc. Yet that correction and purifying has the one purpose of

16. Cf. 10: 32 ff.

bringing us closer to our loving Father, of helping to make us the sons we should be.

Here again one stops to compare God's love with man's love. The Christian's love is based on understanding of God's plan of salvation and a complete trust in that salvation. Again, it has a high purpose, namely, to serve God and fellow-man. Yet God's love is so much greater, so far beyond comprehension. God's love is based on complete understanding, a complete understanding of all the frailties of the Christians, all his weaknesses, and it has the lofty purpose to bring men and to keep men with Him. It is not tainted with greed and ambition; it is perfect love, even as God is perfect and God is Love. God's love, then, as shown also in His chastisement, is to make the love of the Christian abound ¹⁷ more and more unto every good work.

The admonition which the author here voices is needed, since this lofty purpose of God is not always realized by the person afflicted. The author says in verse 11, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." The Christian cannot always see that "all things work together for good to them that love God," Rom. 8: 28. Peter realized this weakness when he said, "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," I Pet. 1: 6. The son does not always see that God

17. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., p. 441.

would try our faith, sometimes with fire, that it "might be unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," I Pet. 1: 7. He should, as James says, however, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience," James 1: 2 f. In the words of the writer to Hebrews, God chastises us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness," 12: 10.

This love of God is then, as Riggerbach says, "eine er-¹⁸ziehende Liebe," training and educating the child of God. Scripture speaks of it often. Besides this passage in Hebrews 12¹⁹ we find this thought in Deut. 8: 5: "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." Jesus speaks of it when He says, John 15: 2: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it might bring forth more fruit." Finally, in Revelation, the Apostle of Love speaks of this love of God in trouble with these words: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," Rev. 3: 19.

God's love in chastising us---a wonderful thing! It is not a weak, grandfatherly love of an Eli, who lets his sons live in sin without correction; it is not shallow. It is, on the other hand, the highest type of love, one based on complete understanding of all the child's weaknesses, his

18. Cf. Riggerbach, op. cit., p. 392.

19. A quotation from Proverbs 3: 11 f.

ability to stand up under trouble, and on the will to bring all men into eternal communion with Him and His love.

The Love Concept in the Book Generally

We have already mentioned that the "love concept" in our epistle goes much farther than the mere word agapee. Since this concept of love is basic to and permeates the whole Christian life, all the exhortations to godly living, brotherly love, etc., are a part of this concept. Especially in the last chapters, the author exhorts his readers to lead a godly life, to walk as befits the child of God, who has experienced the rich love of God towards him; our purpose in this section is to present a few of these passages.

We shall consider, however, only man's love and the exhortations to godly living on the part of the Christian. The whole letter speaks of God's love; the whole Gospel message, the treatment of Christ as the great High Priest make God's love manifest, for it is His love which has made the whole work of salvation possible and which has brought this work to its completion. The incarnation, the suffering and death of Christ, the faith of the Christian,---all flow forth from God's love to a wicked world.

And since this "love concept" runs throughout the Christian life, we shall divide the passages into various larger groups. In the first place, the author urges the readers in several passages to serve God generally; in them he more or

less sums up this whole thought of love. He says, for example, 9: 13 f.: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Aside from the fact that the author here stresses the sure efficacy of the work of Christ, so glorious in comparison to the "flesh-purifying" religion of sacrifices, here we have a strong passage that shows Christianity in its true light. The reference to the "blood of Christ" and the subsequent reference to Christian living makes us think again of the relation between faith and love. Indeed, Christianity is not a dead set of dogmatic principles, nor is the Gospel a lifeless thing. On the contrary, when this message of the cleansing by Christ's blood and His substitutionary life ²⁰ has been accepted in true faith, a life of serving God must follow. Faith inspires love for God; otherwise it is no faith. And this love is a driving force in life, so that the apostle Paul says, Gal. 2: 20: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." In that one sentence he sums up the whole Christian life---its motive, action, and power. It is

20. The "eternal Spirit" is a reference to the divine nature, because of which Christ could offer Himself "without spot to God."

based on the faith which accepts Jesus as the only Helper from sin, the personal Savior, without whom no man can see God.

This word latreuo, to serve, which denotes the service which all Christians should render to God---in contrast to the leitourgein of the priests---²¹is used again in 12: 28, where we translate: "Wherefore, as receiving a Kingdom unshakable, let us be grateful, whereby we serve God in a well-pleasing way....." It is the same thought again. The bestowal of blessings on the Christian, accepted in faith, makes thankful hearts that serve God in every way every day.

In other passages the writer urges the readers to serve God in newness of life, though he does not specifically mention the word "God." He speaks of the Christian life in 12: 13, where we read: "Make straight paths for your feet." It reminds us of the Savior's words when He tells the Jews of the narrow and the broad way. The broad way is easy, but it leads to everlasting shame and despair. The Christian must "make straight paths," that is, he must ever abide in the Word of truth, never deviate from it, and live according to it in a life devoted to God and his Savior. Verse 14 speaks the same way: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness." In other words, the Christian, who by God's love and grace, has been declared just and holy, now out of love to the same

21. Cf. Lenski, op. cit., p. 304.

God strives after perfection and holiness in his personal life.

We have quoted passages which form a part of the "love concept" generally; the author, however, in connection with this idea of love to God for all blessings, gives specific instructions to his hearers with regard to their Christian life. As we have heard, the Christian life of love means a hating of all that is not pleasing to God and a striving for all that is God-pleasing. For that reason the author warns them against specific sins, for example, fornication. The words of chapter 13: 4 are well-known: "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." The life of love means a forsaking of those sins which now cause the Christian shame, as he looks back. They brought forth no fruit; indeed, they can only destroy love and so destroy faith in Him who has not only freed us from the curse but also from the power and dominion of sin.

And sin is ever ready to take hold once more of the child of God and to bring him again into subjection. Fornication the author mentions, and also covetousness. "Let your conversation ²² be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." Here again the "love concept" is spoken of, though not directly. He who has based all his faith and hope, for time and eternity, on the God of love,

22. The Greek has tropos; we would say "conduct."

realizes in all his ways God's tender care for him, and because he loves God, is not of a covetous nature. The idea of "the hope" enters here also, for the Christian realizes that all this earth's goods are temporary, perishable, and that they give no lasting happiness and peace. He has found his peace in his High Priest Jesus and has learned in whatever state he is "therewith to be content," Phil. 4: 11.

In a positive way, the Christian strives to serve God, to learn more of God, and, of course, to be strengthened in his faith. For that reason he cannot "forsake the assembling" of Christians, where God's Word is preached and where he has an opportunity to build up the faith and love of the neighbor. We have already mentioned this positive action of love in connection with agapee, 10: 24.

Indeed, this love for God means a loving concern for all men. The writer urges, 13: 1: "Let brotherly love continue." In this sentence he summarizes all the duties of the man of God over against those who in like manner have been brought to faith in the Christ of God. The child of God will, for example, exhort his brother in the faith constantly, 3: 13, lest his brother harden his heart and drop down again into paganism. He will help his brother in his weaknesses and also urge him on to a godly life, lived in the shadow of the Cross, 10: 24. Especially in times of persecution---the readers were experiencing it when

this epistle was written---he who has felt God's love will "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," 12: 2. In obedience to God's command he will "obey them that have the rule" over him, the elders of the church, realizing that it is God who has placed these pastors over them and that some day they must give an account for his soul, 13: 17.

It becomes clear that the "love concept" reaches into every corner of the Christian life. It means walking with God in every way, also in prayer. This the writer urges when he says, 13: 3: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." These Christians should pray to their heavenly Father, in compassion for their fellow-Christians, that they might, by His will, soon be delivered from their imprisonment and above all that they might remain true in the faith to Him who "was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification," Rom. 4: 25.

In temporal things the Jewish readers had been active for their fellow-Christians; they had been "ministering to the saints," 6: 9. Yet the writer encourages them to continue these deeds of charity and love. "To do good and to communicate forget not," 13: 16. Why? "For with such sacrifices God is well pleased." As Christians they want to please God; they can do it also by supplying the wants of the brother. They will by that same love "entertain strangers," 13: 2. They will, then, in all things, be merciful and

kindly affectioned, even as their Father in heaven.

This entire concept of "love" the author puts into one sentence when he prays for these Christians that God will "make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ," 13: 21. There the whole matter is presented---God must work this love within their hearts, give them the strength to lead lives that show forth His love within their hearts. "Through Jesus Christ" and through Him alone man has the motive and power to serve God. With faith in this Christ comes a new "drive" within man that will not let him rest in false security but which makes him active "in every good work." The Gospel, and it alone, makes works "well-pleasing" in the sight of this God of love.

All these Christian concepts of faith, hope, and love are part of the glorious picture of Christianity, and without one the other two are meaningless. Faith in the Gospel message alone brings a real true hope within the Christian heart and takes the things promised as real and true for the individual heart. This same faith produces a love for God that makes itself felt in every phase of the Christian's life so that he "must" shun all that is evil and cling to all that is good. And basic to all is that love of God, by which He has reconciled us to Himself, II Cor. 5: 18, brought us to faith, and shall accept us into everlasting happiness in our hope.

Conclusions

1. God's love is basic for the agapee concept in the New Testament.
2. The love of God is evidenced even in eternity in the election of the saints.
3. The love of the Christian is then merely the "Rueckstrahlung der Himmelsliebe."
4. When the author to the Hebrews says, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love," he does not mean to urge the readers thereby to ground their confidence in works of love.
5. Nor is this passage, 6: 9, a reference to the Last Day; it only means that God in His faithfulness will give them time and opportunity to erase their deficiency, for they are agapeetoi.
6. This love for God makes itself felt in deeds of kindness.
7. Agapeetoi is found just once in our epistle and is synonymous with adelphoi, etc.---those who are beloved of God and have been touched with His love.
8. The relation between faith, hope, and love in the letter is clear. The readers must keep the objective truths of Christianity and the hope before their eyes, for where these truths and glories are lacking, faith has nothing on which to base its trust. And without faith, love is impossible and it is impossible to please God.
9. Love for God means love for the brother; it means that the child of God "provokes" the brother to love and good works.
10. Love is the root of all good works; faith is the root of love.
11. Love for the brother means that the Christians will band together in close communion and so strengthen one another, especially during days of persecution.
12. In Hebrews the noun agapee is always predicated of man, while the verb passages speak of God's love.
13. This love of God is first of all His love for all that is good and holy; Christ, also according to the human nature, was and is perfect. Hence, we are assured that His

active obedience for us was true obedience.

14. The love of the Christian can never attain to the perfect love of Christ.

15. The love of God makes itself felt in every phase of the Christian life, also in chastening and affliction.

16. Chastisement then is a mark of sonship.

17. This does not mean that the chastisement is not to correct us; it is to purify the Christian and so bring him closer to his God.

18. The love of God found in chastening is one based on complete understanding and is not the weak, often indulgent love of earthly parents.

19. God's high purpose and His glorious love the Christian must learn to recognize, also in afflictions.

20. The "love concept" is found not only in the word agapee but in all the exhortations to a godly life.

21. In his personal conduct, his concern for the brother in temporal and spiritual things, his prayer for the afflicted, the Christian makes manifest his love. The concept reaches into every corner of the Christian life.

22. None of the three concepts---faith, hope, or love ---becomes meaningful without the others. Where the hope is lost sight of, faith is lost, and love is impossible.

23. These concepts, basic for Christianity, are based solely on the grace of God.

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