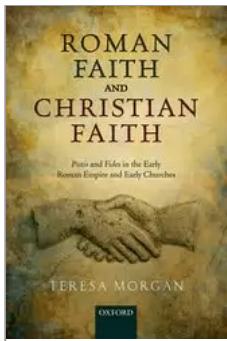


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Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches

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Introduction

Approaching *Pistis* and *Fides* in the Graeco-Roman World, Hellenistic Judaism, and Early Churches

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter begins by asking why ‘faith’ (*pistis*, *fides*) was so important to members of primitive churches. It argues that answering this question must be a thoroughly interdisciplinary project—a history of *mentalité* and praxis examining the operation of *pistis/fides* in the Graeco-Roman world of the early principate and Hellenistic Judaism as well as the New Testament, and not presuming that Christian *pistis* is *sui generis* from its earliest attestations. The semantic range of the *pistis* and *fides* lexica is well mapped, encompassing ‘trust’, ‘trustworthiness’, ‘faithfulness’, ‘good faith’, ‘credit’, ‘guarantee’, a legal trust, philosophical proof, and religious belief. Less well understood are the distinctive *shapes* of divine-human and intra-human *pistis/fides* in the world of the early principate. This chapter explores approaches to *pistis* and *fides* in classics, Jewish studies, and theology, and to trust and cognate concepts in sociology and history, before developing its own approach.

Keywords: *pistis*, *fides*, trust, trustworthiness, Graeco-Roman, Judaism, Christian, *mentalité*, praxis, interdisciplinary

This study arises from a simple question: why is faith so important to Christians?

It is a question both obviously significant and surprisingly little discussed. The language of faith is central to Christianity as to no other religious tradition: without it, it is impossible to do justice to Christian understandings of the relationship between God and

humanity.¹ Its importance, moreover, predates our earliest records. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, probably the earliest book of the New Testament in its current form, followers of Jesus Christ are referred to as *hoi pisteuontes*, 'the faithful', as if the term will already be familiar to Paul's audience.² That letter deploys *pistis* language, the key lexicon which is most often translated with the language of 'faith', 'faithfulness', 'belief', and so on, fourteen times in five short chapters, and thereafter *pistis* or its cognates appear in every book of the New Testament except 2 John.³ Within books *pistis* language is widely distributed, within layers of redaction and across them. The gospels put it repeatedly in the mouth of Jesus. It is integral to some of Paul's most creative and influential theological reflection. It is used of God and human beings, of individuals and groups, of conversion and life in worshipping communities. In the New Testament as a whole, occurrences of the *pistis* lexicon far outnumber those of other key **(p.2)** concepts such as love, righteousness, salvation, or hope.⁴ So important is it that at some point early in its formation (though, I shall argue, not in the texts of the New Testament themselves), the new movement becomes known simply as *hē pistis*, 'the faith'.⁵

The virtual omnipresence of *pistis* language in the earliest evidence for Christianity offers an excuse for the limitations of the present volume, which does not attempt to answer my opening question in all its historical, sociological, theological, and spiritual immensity. Instead it focuses on the much narrower, though still formidable, question why *pistis* so quickly became so important to the earliest followers of Jesus Christ that it already plays a key role in the New Testament.

Even this question has received surprisingly little discussion. For New Testament scholars, the centrality of faith is so obvious that its presence tends to be taken for granted, and debate focuses on the meaning and role of *pistis* in individual authors or texts. Classicists, meanwhile, who have studied the meaning and use of *pistis* or *fides* in the wider Graeco-Roman world, have taken little interest in why the terms were adopted with such enthusiasm in early churches. One field which has benefited from a number of careful studies in recent years is the connection between Christian *pistis* language and that of Hellenistic Judaism and the Septuagint on the one hand, and Greek religions on the other. Both traditions have emerged as contributing something to Christian understandings of *pistis*; at the same time, it has become obvious (if it was ever much in doubt) that *pistis*, along with other lexica of belief and related concepts, plays a far less significant role in either Judaism or Graeco-Roman religions than it plays in Christianity. Scholars of these traditions, though, have not usually sought to explain why, in that case, *pistis* became so important to Christians.

To pose that question is inevitably to raise another. What did the *pistis* lexicon mean to early followers of Christ—to those who composed, heard, or read the texts of the New Testament in the first century—that made it so significant? It is only when we understand, to whatever extent surviving sources allow, what communities meant by the language they used that we can begin to comprehend its importance for them. One of the aims of this study will therefore be to add something to our understanding of the meanings of *pistis* language in New Testament texts. In this project, an essential tool is the meaning and deployment of *pistis* (and *fides*) language in the world in which early churches emerged. Happily, a wealth of writing in both Greek and Latin has survived from this period, not only in literary and sub-literary texts, **(p.3)** but also in inscriptions and documentary papyri, and we will draw on it extensively to frame our understanding of emerging Christian usage.

If that formulation suggests, however, that the next three chapters of what follows are essentially background to the rest, in some ways the opposite is the case. I shall argue throughout that the New Testament writers must be read as products of their complex sociocultural context as much as contributors to it: as social agents whose lives and writings make their ways through an ancient, ever-evolving, densely constructed landscape of social practices, habits of thought, economic conventions, politico-legal institutions, and intellectual theories. From this perspective, the texts of the New Testament are an interesting, in some ways distinctive, but small part of a much larger and more complicated picture. This study also aims to contribute to our understanding of the bigger picture: the operation of *pistis*, *fides*, and related concepts and praxeis in the world of the early principate. In particular, I hope to draw out the coherences that make the socially indispensable, if endlessly contested and inescapably fragile, concepts and practices of *pistis/fides* widely comprehensible and transmissible around the Roman empire. One effect of this will be that when we turn to the New Testament, our focus will be as much on the embeddedness of Christian *pistis* in its socio-cultural context as on its uniqueness. This, to put it another way, will be a study of some key commonalities in the operation *pistis* and *fides* in the early Roman empire, incorporating a case study of one small cult to show how, within those commonalities, groups and networks could configure *pistis/fides* to some extent to serve their own social, intellectual, or spiritual needs.

It should be clear from these remarks that this is intended as a thoroughly interdisciplinary study, employing the same tools—above all those of *l'histoire des mentalités*—to approach Greek and Roman, Jewish, and Christian sources. We will return to methodology below, but first it is worth considering another question which this prospectus will raise in some readers' minds. Is its use in surrounding cultures more than the roughest guide to understanding Christian *pistis*? Is Christian *pistis* not remarkable rather for its distinctiveness, its unique meaning within worshipping communities? A strong strain of scholarship understands faith as defined by

its object, and Christian faith as therefore quite different from any other kind. Rudolf Bultmann puts it concisely in his *Theology of the New Testament*:

‘Faith’ is ‘faith in...’ That is, it always has reference to its object, God’s saving deed in Christ. Hence, ‘confess’ and ‘believe’ correspond to each other: ‘If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’ (Rom. 10:9)...Faith, therefore, is not ‘piety’ or trust-in-God in general. Rather, it has ‘dogmatic’ character insofar as it is acceptance of a word: ‘the word of faith’ (Rom. 10:8) or ‘the heard word’ (ἀκοή, KJ: ‘the hearing’) of faith **(p.4)** (Gal. 3:2, 5). Hence, faith can also be called ‘faith of the gospel’—i.e. faith in the gospel (Phil. 1:27).⁶

Up to a point Bultmann must be right. *Pistis* is a relational concept whose meaning is always defined in part by the relationship in which it operates: the faithfulness of a slave towards her master is not the same as that of a client towards his patron or that of a believer towards Christ. All relationships of *pistis/fides*, moreover, have some ‘dogmatic character’ in the sense that they involve propositions. To be faithful towards one’s master one must, at the very least, believe that he is one’s master. But by equating faith with the ‘faith of the gospel’, which for him ultimately encompasses the whole of Christian faith as he understands it from the perspective of the twentieth century, Bultmann stretches the meaning of *pistis* in the New Testament beyond what is historically plausible. In the process he violates a basic principle of cultural historiography. New communities forming themselves within an existing culture do not typically take language in common use in the world around them and immediately assign to it radical new meanings. New meanings may, and often do, evolve, but evolution takes time. This is all the more likely to be the case where the new community is a missionary one. One does not communicate effectively with potential converts by using language in a way which they will not understand. In its earliest years, therefore, we should not expect the meaning of Christian *pistis* (or *fides*) language to be wholly *sui generis*. We should expect those who use it to understand it within the range of meanings which are in play in the world around them, and our study of it should be equally culturally embedded. In the case of Bultmann’s example, this means that we should not, for instance, dismiss the possibility that Christian *pistis* towards God has features in common with ‘trust-in-God in general’. Unless and until the texts compel us to conclude otherwise, we should rather assume that it has. In later chapters I shall argue that, in places, New Testament texts do indeed attest the development of new understandings of *pistis*, but identifying such changes will be one of the end points of our discussion, not its point of departure.

These reflections highlight the fact that scholars in different disciplines are liable to bring somewhat different assumptions to the study of *pistis* in the New Testament. In light of this, it is worth reviewing some of the movements in recent scholarship on *pistis* and *fides* in the Graeco-Roman world, Hellenistic Judaism, and the New Testament which most powerfully inform current thinking.

(p.5) Approaches to *Pistis* and *Fides*: Classics, Jewish Studies, and the Study of the New Testament

The modern study of *pistis* and *fides* in Graeco-Roman culture at large⁷ was galvanized and significantly shaped by a 1916 article on *fides* by Eduard Fraenkel.⁸ Fraenkel argued, against received opinion, that the foundational meaning of *fides* is not ‘trust’. Rather, commercial meanings such as ‘guarantee’, ‘security’, and ‘credit’, along with relational ‘loyalty’, dominate literature of the republic, while ‘trust’ evolves as a meaning only in rhetorical theory of the early first century BCE.

A series of studies, culminating in what is now the standard monograph by Gérard Freyburger, has disagreed more or less thoroughly with Fraenkel, re-establishing trust beyond doubt as the foundational meaning and centre of gravity of the *fides* lexicon.⁹ (Freyburger emphasizes, what most would now accept, that ‘trust’ incorporates two meanings: the trust I give and the trust I am given—that is, trust and trustworthiness—which stand equally at the heart of the meaning and operation of *fides*.¹⁰) In many ways, however, Fraenkel established the lines along which much discussion of *fides*, and *pistis*, still runs. He aimed to trace the evolution of meanings of *fides*, and hence their relationships, while seeking to define rather closely the meaning of the word in individual passages of literature or inscriptions, an approach which is still detectable in contemporary debates.¹¹ He was interested in *fides* in a limited range of contexts: in rhetoric, law, public political relations (notably patron–client relationships), and above all in war- and peace-making, and these, together with religious contexts, are still the main foci of scholarship on both *fides* and *pistis*.¹²

Within these fields, most recent studies have sought to show how *pistis* or *fides* helped to sustain and articulate Graeco-Roman societies by investigating **(p.6)** who exercised *pistis* or *fides* towards whom, when, and to what effect.¹³ *Pistis* and *fides* have been found operating at every socio-economic level, between individuals and groups. In some sense they always involve reciprocity, because they always involve relationships, but it has also been pointed out that their reciprocity is commonly asymmetrical. The defendant puts trust in his advocate, the people in their magistrates, or the province in its emperor to be trustworthy: to look after his or their interests while looking after his or their own. An army offers loyalty to its commander, a slave to his master, and in return hopes to be well used.

It is also widely recognized that many meanings of the *pistis* and *fides* lexica represent what one might call reifications of trust or of the grounds of trust.¹⁴ When one partner in a commercial transaction gives credit to another, he or she expresses his or her trust and belief that the debtor is trustworthy; at the same time, the transaction becomes a legal entity with enforceable properties recognized by both parties. When an army takes an oath of allegiance to its commander, the oath both expresses the army's loyalty and acquires political and legal substance of its own. A form of argument which guarantees that, from true premises, a true conclusion will follow, is given its own identity by the name 'proof'. By such conceptual-linguistic processes, multiple secondary meanings of *pistis* and *fides* are actualized, capturing in new entities the ways in which people make, or try to make, trust definite, concrete, and binding.

At the same time, it is painfully clear throughout the sources how fragile *pistis* and *fides* are; how infinitely manipulable and constantly in danger of being undermined by lies, persuasion, fraud, envy, greed, ambition, faction, conspiracy, treachery, adultery, imperialism, and a host of other everyday attitudes and activities. In his study of trust (*pistis* and related practices) in classical Athens, the most sophisticated analysis to date of the operation of trust in a Graeco-Roman society, Stephen Johnstone discusses a range of ways in which the fragility of trust is addressed by Athenians through the development of tools, such as standard weights and measures, and social practices, from haggling to political collaboration.¹⁵ This study too will be much concerned with the fragility of *pistis/fides* and how people try to handle it, in the world of the first century and in early churches.

(p.7) The relationship between *fides* and *pistis* and their cognates themselves has attracted a good deal of debate. Do the two lexica mean the same, or much the same, in Latin and Greek or not, and do they operate in the same ways in Greek and Roman societies? After a period in which their differences were stressed, it is now widely accepted that they share almost all their meanings.¹⁶ 'Trust', 'trustworthiness', 'honesty', 'credibility', 'faithfulness', 'good faith', 'confidence', 'assurance', 'pledge', 'guarantee' 'credit', 'proof', 'credence', 'belief', 'position of trust/trusteeship', 'legal trust', 'protection', 'security' are all widely attested as meanings of both lexica. There are perhaps a few more shades of commercial legal meaning attested in Latin, and in Greek rhetoric and philosophy *pistis* may mean 'argument' as well as 'proof', but as Salvatore Calderone observes: 'The semantic correspondence, in reality, could not be fuller.'¹⁷

Whether Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides* function socially in the same ways is more contested. Fritz Pringsheim argued influentially that *fides* operated very differently in Roman society from the way *pistis* operated in Greek.¹⁸ Since Erich Gruen's 1982 essay 'Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*', however, the consensus has been that (by the second century BCE, at least) the two concepts were fully mutually intelligible and functioned in very similar ways in Greek- and Latin-speaking communities.¹⁹

So far we have discussed treatments of *pistis* and *fides* in Greek and Roman societies generally and across a broad range of sources. In three areas *pistis* and *fides* have more specialized meanings and scholarly literatures: philosophy, rhetoric, and law. Possible connections between *pistis* in the New Testament and rhetorical *pistis*—belief rooted in persuadedness—have been explored in a number of studies in recent years, as have possible connections between New Testament and philosophical *pistis*-belief based on evidence, or not based on evidence, depending on which philosophical school one belongs to.²⁰ Rather **(p.8)** fewer studies have examined potential connections between New Testament *pistis* and legal *pistis* or *fides*, but possible connections have been canvassed between the legal tool *fideicommissum*, which is rendered *pistis* in Greek, and *pistis Christou*.²¹ Some of these specialized interpretations of *pistis/fides* language will be discussed in connection with particular New Testament passages, but I shall argue that, overall, we best understand *pistis* in the New Testament when we locate it in the language of the early principate as a whole, in all its sociocultural breadth and complexity. Rhetoric, philosophy, and law were all significant elements in that complexity, but neither individually nor together do they dominate it. Moreover, though many New Testament texts show traces of contact with one or more of these disciplines, there is no reason to think that any New Testament writer had the kind of specialized rhetorical, philosophical, or legal education that might cause his thought to be decisively influenced by technical uses of *pistis* language.

In the past century the study of *pistis* in the Septuagint and in Hellenistic Judaism has also flourished, motivated largely by interest in the roots of Christian faith. While recognizing that faith or faithfulness is not the key concept in Judaism of any period that it is in Christianity,²² scholars have explored whether the Hebrew language that is translated with *pistis* language in the Septuagint, or with the language of faith and faithfulness, for instance, in English, has a range of meaning similar to that of *pistis* language in the New Testament, or whether it is rather different.²³

The starting point for all these discussions is the recognition that *he'emin*, the causative form of the Hebrew verb 'aman, which is sometimes translated 'to have faith' or 'to believe', and its related noun 'emunah, often translated 'faithfulness' or 'trustworthiness', map far from neatly onto *pistis* language.²⁴ The root of this lexicon in Hebrew also appears in words meaning 'to wrap in', 'to carry', 'to nurture', 'to trust', 'firm', 'certain', 'reliable', 'steadfast', 'true', and scholars disagree as to whether some or all of these concepts are

carried over into Septuagintal and other Jewish uses of *pistis* language.²⁵ In the Septuagint *pistis* language is only used to translate words from this Hebrew lexicon. The *alētheia* and *elpis* ('truth' and 'hope') lexica, however, are both also used to translate the 'emunah lexicon, and while *elpis* is often closely associated with *pistis* elsewhere in Greek, *pistis* and *alētheia* are less often found together. This suggests that in some passages meanings of 'emunah may be widely divergent **(p.9)** from those of *pistis*. Even when the *pistis* lexicon is used to translate the 'emunah lexicon, therefore, we cannot take for granted that it expresses the same concepts, relationships, or institutions as it does in gentile texts.

Early scholars in the field (epitomized for many by Martin Buber in *Two Types of Faith*²⁶) took Jewish 'faith' to be very different from Christian. Before Buber, Edwin Hatch identified trust in God and fidelity to the law as the dominant modes of faith in the Old Testament, contrasting them with Christian propositional belief.²⁷ Buber too contrasted Jewish trust in God with Christian propositional belief. C. H. Dodd identified steadfastness, A. G. Herbert faithfulness as key qualities of what may be translated 'faith' in the Hebrew Bible.²⁸ James Barr gave short shrift to all these views in *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, arguing compellingly that the root of a word does not determine its usage in every context; rather, one must look at individual contexts to establish meaning. The 'emunah lexicon, moreover, he maintained, has a wide range of meaning, and 'trust' and 'belief' as concepts are just as 'Hebraic' as 'faithfulness'.²⁹

Subsequent scholarship has become increasingly nuanced, particularly in investigating differences in the use of *pistis* language by different biblical and non-biblical authors.³⁰ Within the Septuagint, for instance, *pistis* language becomes more common in books of the Hellenistic period, and is commonest of all in the Wisdom of Solomon, which was composed in Greek, a development whose significance will be explored in Chapter 5.³¹ Dennis Lindsay, in *Josephus and Faith*, not only gives a detailed account of Josephus' *pistis* language, but illuminates its connections with the Septuagint, the New Testament, the works of Philo, and *pistis* towards the gods in Greek culture from the classical period onwards.³² He views Septuagintal *pistis* as retaining some overtones of 'emunah, such as firmness, standing firm, refuge, and 'saying Amen to God', but locates its centre of gravity, in religious contexts, in trust, faithfulness, and obedience towards God.³³ Focusing on the New Testament, Erich Grässer shows that the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews is closer to that of some other biblical and non-biblical writers than others, while Eduard Lohse argues that Paul draws on specific strains of biblical 'faith' language (derived principally from the model of Abraham) while evolving his own.³⁴

(p.10) As recent discussions of *pistis* in Jewish literature have ranged beyond the Bible, they have increasingly become investigations not just of texts but of the *mentalité* of a distinctive group within the Greek-speaking world. Dieter Lührmann's study of *pistis* in Judaism reveals that it shares much of the elastic meaning of the term in Greek in general, encompassing faithfulness, trust, belief, and proof,³⁵ while David Hay shows that the 'psychology of faith' as expressed by Philo and others—the place of *pistis* in the structure of the human personality—develops out of a fusion of biblical and Greek ideas, owing much in particular to Platonism.³⁶

It has also been scholars of Judaism or Christianity who have taken the most interest in divine–human *pistis* in gentile Greek culture.³⁷ Hatch early identified the Hellenistic world as a possible source of Christian concepts of faith.³⁸ Kurt Latte, Gerhard Barth, and Dennis Lindsay all note that while the standard classical Greek formulation for believing in (the existence of) gods is *theous nomizein, pisteuein* with the dative, referring to trust in a god, also occurs towards the end of the classical period and becomes more common in the Hellenistic period.³⁹ Divine–human *pistis* in the early principate has, surprisingly, attracted less detailed study than that of the classical and Hellenistic worlds, but Barth argues for close parallels between New Testament and Plutarchan usage, identifying a number of instances of *pistis* or *apistia* with the objective genitive in Plutarch which encourage an objective reading of *pistis Christou*, and arguing that a reference to ἡ πᾶτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις in Plutarch's *Amatorius* refers to the propositional content of faith.⁴⁰

Studies of biblical and Jewish *pistis* have often focused on identifying the semantic range of the lexicon and seeking to understand its meaning in particular passages, and sometimes, cumulatively, in individual books or authors.⁴¹ Much of the scholarship on early Christian faith takes a similar approach. Since *pistis* and faith are such vital concepts in Christianity, however, the depth and intensity of scrutiny to which New Testament texts have been subjected is proportionately greater, and the range of approaches wider.

The nature of faith, faithfulness, and related concepts in Christian thinking, particularly in the New Testament, has been the focus of so much interest since the beginning of the tradition, and of so much scholarship in the last **(p.11)** hundred years, that we can do no more here than indicate in broad terms what some of the most influential recent trends have been.⁴² In addition, *pistis* has been discussed in connection with every other key concept in the New Testament and in Christian doctrine, including sin, repentance, righteousness, salvation, the law of Moses, works, ecclesiology, obedience, hope, eschatology, relationships between Jews and gentiles, and the use of scripture, and although this and later chapters will touch on many of those relationships, they cannot hope to

do justice to them all.

Scholarship on faith, faithfulness, and so on which addresses the New Testament takes a wide range of approaches, from the theological to those inspired by sociology and anthropology (which might call themselves ‘New Testament studies’ rather than ‘New Testament theology’). Most scholars engage flexibly with more than one: many of those who seek to illuminate the thought of Paul, for instance, also aim to contribute to contemporary theology, while those for whom doctrine is the main focus do not evolve their views without reference to what New Testament authors may have meant to communicate to their first audiences. The present study originates in a slightly different disciplinary context again, that of *l’histoire des mentalités*,⁴³ but it also aims to make some contribution to the related fields of New Testament theology and New Testament studies.⁴⁴

A great deal of recent scholarship on faith and faithfulness has focused on Paul, to whom *pistis* language is so obviously central, and whose attempts in multiple letters to work through and communicate what his commitment to Christ means to him, and might mean to others, are so complex and so influential. A significant minority of modern studies of New Testament *pistis*, however, has discussed other books or authors, notably the synoptic gospels, the Johannine corpus, and the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁴⁵

One thing almost all studies of New Testament *pistis*, and Christian faith in general, have in common is that they are deeply influenced by Augustine of Hippo. Augustine’s division of faith into *fides quae creditur* and *fides qua creditur*,⁴⁶ ‘the faith which is believed’ (the propositional content of faith) and ‘the faith by which it is believed’ (that which takes place in the heart and mind **(p.12)** of the believer), has dominated western thinking since the fifth century. Probably all scholars accept that *fides quae* and *fides qua* are intertwined throughout the New Testament,⁴⁷ but opinions differ as to their relative importance in individual passages, books, and authors.⁴⁸ A strong strain in the history of interpretation of *fides qua creditur* has focused on the nature of the believer’s faith (or that of an individual New Testament writer) in God or Christ, or on the believer’s mystical unity with Christ.⁴⁹ Within an emphasis on *fides qua*, some scholars see faith as primarily a matter of propositional belief; some see it as a relationship of trust between the believer and God and Christ; some see it as a relationship of obedience to God and Christ; and some see it as a relationship of more than one model.⁵⁰ Bultmann developed a bifold model of *fides qua creditur* and *fides quae creditur*, and argued that its key characteristic was not so much trust in God or the mystical experience of God, as obedience to God (*hypakoē*).⁵¹ The aspect of obedience in *pistis* has subsequently come to play a large part in discussions about the semantic range of the lexicon in the New Testament.⁵²



In recent years discussion of the *pistis* of the believer has often taken place within debates over the meaning of *pistis Iēsou* or *pistis Christou* in the epistles and the Book of Revelation. Debate has raged over whether the phrase means predominantly Christ’s faithfulness to God or human faith in Christ.⁵³ Studies have drawn not only on *pistis* language in the Septuagint and Jewish literature, but also on readings of *pistis Christou* in the early church, to shed light on the debate, but opinions continue to differ.⁵⁴

(p.13) A few scholars have argued that to try to separate ‘faithfulness’ from ‘faith’ or other meanings of *pistis* is problematic. Those who used the term need not have intended, and those who heard or read it may not have expected, to understand a single meaning in any one context. Rather than trying to isolate specific meanings of the lexicon in particular passages, we should do better to work with the elasticity and multivalency of the concept.⁵⁵ For Henrik Ljungman, for example, Christ is not only faithful to God, but is also an expression of God’s faithfulness to humanity which prompts human trust in God and in him.⁵⁶ Barry Matlock points out that while English speakers distinguish between ‘faith’ and ‘faithfulness’, Greek speakers may not have done so, but may have understood the distinction between the *pistis* of God, for instance, and that of Abraham quite differently.⁵⁷

Some studies see faith as trans-subjective: less a quality pertaining to human beings, or even God, than a divine work which breaks into the world in the Christ event.⁵⁸ Most, though, assume, tacitly or explicitly, that *pistis* in the New Testament does pertain primarily to sentient beings, usually to human beings, and usually to individuals. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have sought to explicate the relationship between *pistis* and the Christian community. Ben Dunson argues that *pistis* both saves individuals and builds up community; Richard Burridge, that Christian response to the kerygma is located in community life.⁵⁹ Bruce Longenecker argues that for Paul in Galatians, faithfulness in the life of Jesus is defined in terms of his self-giving love, while the activity of the Spirit induces similar qualities in the believing community.⁶⁰

Most explorations of *pistis* focus on ‘trust’, ‘faithfulness’, ‘propositional belief’, and related meanings, but some have seen other ranges of meaning as equally important. James Kinneavy argues for the influence of Greek rhetorical theory on the New Testament’s *pistis* language, and suggests that we should hear the meaning ‘persuasion’ in it.⁶¹ A number of scholars have canvassed the possible philosophical connections of *pistis* in Hebrews 11.1, while David Hay argues for its use meaning ‘evidence’ or ‘grounds of belief’ (a

usage common in philosophical writing) in Galatians, which would lead us to interpret Jesus as the ‘pledge’ or ‘assurance from God’ which makes human **(p.14)** faith possible.⁶² Thomas Schumacher draws on the reciprocal operation of trust in commercial contexts to argue that we should see New Testament *pistis* as a similarly reciprocated relationship between human beings and God, while Roman law.⁶³ Lührmann, meanings in every book of the New

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definitely. We have barely mentioned studies which place the faithfulness of God, rather than that of Christ or human beings, at its heart, those which emphasize the difference between *pistis* as conversion and as an ongoing state, or those which focus on the nature of Abraham’s faith and its relation to that of Christians.⁶⁵ If one thing is clear from the wealth of scholarship in the last century alone, it is that no one study or approach can do full justice to the meanings which can be elicited from *pistis* language in the New Testament, let alone in later Christian tradition. Nor will any one approach satisfy everyone, or perhaps anyone: the subject is too large, too significant, and too much pondered. The aim of this study is accordingly less to supersede existing interpretations than to add to them in two ways. I shall argue that we will understand the evolution of early Christian *pistis* better by understanding more thoroughly its interaction with and evolution within its sociocultural context. And I shall try to show the importance of an aspect of *pistis* which (probably under the influence of Augustine) has been relatively neglected in the study of very early churches: the fact that it is, first and foremost, neither a body of beliefs nor a function of the heart or mind, but a relationship which creates community.

When the approaches of classicists to Greek and Roman *pistis* and *fides* are set side by side with those of scholars of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, and Hellenistic Judaism on the one hand, and of the New Testament and Christianity on the other, some parallels emerge, but also some striking differences. All three disciplines have a history of interest in the range of meanings encompassed in these lexica. Classicists, however, are particularly interested in the operation of *pistis* and *fides* in Greek and Roman societies: how they sustain communities and how they are embedded in social practices and institutions. Scholars of Judaism and Christianity have, on the whole, taken less interest in the ways in which *’emunah* or *pistis* operates socially, and more **(p.15)** in the nature of individual relationships of faith(fulness) with God or Christ, or the content of beliefs about God or Christ.⁶⁶

In what follows, I shall argue that New Testament studies have something to gain from classical approaches to *pistis/fides*, in particular from exploring the way the cluster of relationships and practices expressed through these lexica operate in the world into which early churches were born. At the same time, both disciplines have something to learn from others with closely related interests. In recent years, modern historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and economists have all explored extensively the concept which stands at the heart of the *pistis/fides* lexica: trust. Their approaches to trust offer food for thought for New Testament scholars and classicists alike.

Towards a Sociology of Pistis/Fides

Trust, as G. Bigley and J. Pearce observed in 1998, has become a large and complex field of study across the social sciences, encompassing the study of trust as an attribute of individuals, an expectation of others, a behaviour, a feature of social situations, an ethical principle, and an institutional arrangement.⁶⁷ Since they wrote, the field has grown even further, but certain trends and commonalities of argument are discernible within it.

It is widely taken as axiomatic that trust is one of the basic building blocks of any relationship and any society, without which structures from the family to the state to the multinational corporation cannot form, persist, or negotiate their inevitable stresses and strains. In recent years academic studies and popular accounts alike have taken this assumption as their starting point.⁶⁸ Two influential monographs by Francis Fukayama and David Rose illustrate two principal ways in which it has been developed. For Fukayama, trust operates most effectively within the dominant social structures of a given society. In some societies, family and kinship groups form these structures; **(p.16)** in others, non-familial groups and voluntary associations. The patterns of trust which develop within each type of society strongly influence the way in which that society’s economy develops. For Rose, the trust that operates within small groups such as families and voluntary associations does not scale up to larger social or economic structures: to be successful, societies must develop other bases for trust—located, for instance, in institutions.

Biologically and socially, trust is self-evidently rooted in our lack of self-sufficiency: our need of one another to survive.⁶⁹ At the same time, since human beings evolved in families and probably multi-family groups, there has never been a time when human beings elected *ex nihilo* to trust one another: trust not only arises within groups but helps to constitute and define them, and to many scholars it continues to seem least problematic within small groups, especially kinship groups.⁷⁰

As a means of enabling and fortifying societies, trust is widely seen as diachronic, forward-looking, and hopeful. Roy Lewicki *et al.* define it, from a socio-psychological perspective, as 'confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct'. Rousseau *et al.* describe it as 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another'.⁷¹

The forward-looking and community-forming aspects of trust are illustrated in a classic piece of game theory, developed in 1995 by economists Joyce Berg, John Dickhaut, and Kevin McCabe, which has been much cited in the study of trust.⁷² Though this game was originally designed to investigate trust and reciprocity in an investment setting, the authors claimed, and many have accepted, that it illustrates social relations in general and even primitive human behaviour.

Two groups of University of Minnesota undergraduates were put in non-connecting rooms, A and B. The members of 'A' group were given \$10 each and told that if they invested any money in room B, it would triple in value when it arrived. The members of 'B' group were told to decide how much of the tripled money to keep and how much to send back to room A. Prudentially, the members of 'A' group should have sent nothing; in fact, almost all **(p.17)** sent something, averaging \$5.16. The members of 'B' group returned on average \$4.06 and kept the profit. The game was repeated for several rounds.

The experimenters drew two conclusions from their subjects' initial behaviour. First, people tend to offer trust to those they do not know in the hope of creating it. 'Reciprocity exists as a basic element of human behaviour and... this is accounted for in the trust extended to an anonymous counterpart.'⁷³ Secondly, people are influenced by social norms, such that those who believe that others are generally trustworthy are more likely to trust those they do not know and respond to trust.

As an experiment in trust per se, the game had some obvious limitations. It did not take into account assumptions about trust which 'A' and 'B' groups brought to the experiment, nor the fact that as undergraduates of the same institution they already shared a cultural context. It made little of the fact that the behaviour of 'A' group could be characterized as a mixture of trust and mistrust, while that of 'B' group was a mixture of trust, trustworthiness, and self-interest. Nor did it investigate in what, exactly, 'A' group put their trust when they sent money.⁷⁴ (Did they, for instance, trust 'B' group to be 'naturally' trustworthy, did they trust that 'B' group shared their ethical commitment to trust as a virtue, or were they gamblers who trusted their luck?) Nevertheless, the study is widely seen as supporting a view of trust as endemic in human societies, forward-looking, and productive of positive new social relationships and practices.

At the same time, as the Investment Game acknowledged, trust is always a risk, which means that it typically coexists with what can also be characterized as its opposites: fear, doubt, and scepticism.⁷⁵ Lewicki *et al.*, drawing on insights from both sociology and psychology, argue that rather than being understood as opposites, trust and distrust are better seen as a single bipolar construct, neither separable nor two extremes of a spectrum. One does not simply trust or distrust: one always juggles the two, while relationships over time typically encompass both, so that one's experience of other people and institutions is that they are always potentially both trustworthy and untrustworthy, depending on circumstances.⁷⁶ Russell Hardin sees distrust as a useful and functional counterpart of trust, helping to ensure that in the process of trusting people do not become gullible or complacent and that they defend their interests effectively.⁷⁷

(p.18) Hardin has conducted the most sustained recent sociological analysis of trust, trustworthiness, and distrust in an influential series of books and articles published over two decades.⁷⁸ He discusses several ways in which the riskiness of trust may be palliated, which may conveniently be summed up in list form. People (at least, contemporary westerners) are more likely to trust, he argues, when one or more of the following is true:

- We think the trustee will be able to respond to our trust.
- We think it is in the trustee's interest to maintain a relationship with us.
- The trustee has a perceived moral commitment to trustworthiness.
- The trustee has a perceived psychological disposition to trustworthiness.⁷⁹
- We think the trustee is (e.g. professionally) competent.
- The trustee has a perceived commitment to professional integrity.⁸⁰

Piotr Sztompka, in *A Sociological Theory of Trust*, adds two further reasons for trusting: people are more liable to trust when,

- we give something we value into another's care, or
- we hope it will lead them to trust us.⁸¹

The 'trustee' here is framed as an individual, but the riskiness of trust can also be palliated by investing it in groups, social structures, or institutions, a theme to which we will return.

For both Sztompka and Hardin, human beings' own needs, their perception of others' characters, and their relationships all come into play when they trust. They also recognize that all these contexts for trust involve the truster's holding beliefs about the trustee. To trust someone we need to believe that they are trustworthy and/or that it is worth the risk of trusting them.⁸² At the same time, belief always ultimately involves trust—in our intuitions, our sources of information, or the coherence of our world view. This intimate connection between trust and belief is as important in the study of *pistis* and *fides* as it is in the study of trust in medieval or modern societies, and it will recur as a theme in later chapters.⁸³

The fragility of trust and the beliefs on which it depends is also recognized in the many and various safeguards which individuals and societies develop to **(p.19)** try to ensure the trustworthiness of others, in the form of rewards for delivery and threats of punishment for failure. It is often assumed that more safeguards—in the form of laws, penalties for infringement, and so on—should increase trustworthiness in societies. In a striking study of political, social, and economic contracts in developed countries, however, Iris Bohnet *et al.* argued for a more complex model. Their study found that in contexts where there are few safeguards, people are 'surprisingly' willing to trust. Where there are many stringent safeguards and harsh penalties for infringement, people also find it relatively easy to trust. But there is a middle ground, in which the institutions of many developed societies are located, in which safeguards and penalties exist, but are limited and not punitive, and then people find it hard to determine whether others will be trustworthy.⁸⁴ The question Bohnet *et al.* raise, in what circumstances people find trust easy or difficult, is an important one to which we will return in later chapters.

In principle, scholarship on trust distinguishes between trust as an emotion, a cognitive process, an action, a relationship, and an aspect of community,⁸⁵ but in practice, theories tend to involve more than one aspect of it; in particular, it is hard to frame a sociological theory of trust without reference to individuals and the way they think and feel.⁸⁶ What modern scholars struggle to distinguish, Greek, Roman, Jewish, and early Christian sources rarely attempt to. We shall find *pistis*, *fides*, and their cognates constantly treated as simultaneously cognitive and affective, active and relational, and this will be a significant factor in the investigation of *pistis/fides* among all these groups.

It can also be hard to distinguish between trust as strictly interpersonal, and trust as a shared commitment, for instance, to ideals, social formations, or institutions. We have already seen that the Investment Game, while claiming to assess interpersonal trust, did not consider whether 'A' and 'B' groups might have put their trust in ideas about trustworthiness which they assumed they shared, rather than straightforwardly in the other group as people. Other studies also find strictly interpersonal trust difficult to disentangle from shared trust in an ideal or institution. Birdwell, Farook, and Jones, for example, examining trust between local councillors and residents in a contemporary British city, emphasize the importance of interpersonal trust, but show in the process that the shared trust of the individuals concerned in the structures of local government also helped to make cooperation possible.⁸⁷ Susan Shapiro, **(p.20)** looking for ways in which trust is embedded in institutions rather than individual relationships, finds conversely that 'guardians of impersonal trust', such as codes of ethics, standards of practice, statutes, and judicial decisions, constantly create new problems of trust even while they seek to reassure those who live with them, and that eventually institutions always draw to some degree on interpersonal trust.⁸⁸

The idea that trust is fragile, and that trust and fear, doubt, and scepticism, together with their hoped-for palliatives, typically coexist and are interdependent in any relationship, society, or institution, is widely accepted, and many studies tackle trust and fear or trust and mistrust together. As far as I know, no one theory has attempted to locate trust, belief, their opposites or correlates and palliatives within a single model. A model, however, is to hand: that of *différance* or 'deferral', in the Derridan sense. However we trust, and depend on trust, our trust always depends on something else.

Suppose, for example, that I have a little farm which can only support olive trees, while you, my neighbour, grow vines and barley. At harvest time I shall need barley, you olives, so we make an agreement to sell what we need to one another. This requires us to trust each other to some degree. My trust is based on certain beliefs: that you are growing what you say you're growing; that you genuinely need what I am growing; that you have no better source of olives; that you are a trustworthy person.

What, though, if my beliefs are wrong? I can check what you are growing, assuming that I can believe my eyes. But what, for instance, if you have other sources of olives?

Perhaps I decide that it would be better for us to seal the deal with a legal agreement, or an oath at a shrine. This may be effective if we are both committed to keeping the law, or we both believe that the gods punish oath-breakers, but what if you do not? I may think you are a trustworthy person, but what if I am wrong? I can ask our neighbours—but what if other people are wrong, or conspiring with you to cheat me? Interpersonal trust, it seems, can never rest, but constantly defers to proofs, arguments, shared beliefs, institutions, and the views of a wider community, all of which themselves depend on trust and further beliefs. My action of trust generates an infinite regress of cognitive and relational fear and doubt.

This model is already adumbrated in a number of classic works on *pistis* and *fides* which map their interrelated meanings and operation.⁸⁹ It emerges equally strikingly from the definitions of the terms as they are listed in dictionaries. We might trace one differential path through the language of **(p.21)** *pistis* in Liddell, Scott, and Jones's *Greek-English Lexicon* as follows: in order to trust you, I must have 'belief', or 'confidence', that you are trustworthy—and *pistis* can mean 'belief' or 'confidence'. To believe that you are trustworthy, I need to be persuaded of your 'reliability', 'honesty', or 'good faith'—and *pistis* can mean 'reliability', 'honesty', or 'good faith'. I may feel I need an 'assurance' or 'pledge' of this good faith, which may require some kind of 'argument' or 'proof'. Such a proof might take the form of someone's 'testimony' or their 'protection'. In case, despite everything, I am disappointed, I may want some kind of 'safeguard' or 'guarantee'. Even then, I may decide to palliate the riskiness of our relationship by mediating it through a legal instrument such as a 'trust' or a 'trusteeship'.

The meanings of the *pistis* lexicon can all be seen as deriving, through *différance*, from the necessity and the precariousness of trust. (The path we have just traced is only one of many possible, and does not necessarily reflect the order in which meanings arose historically. Despite the work of Fraenkel, Calderone, and others, much of the historical evolution of *pistis* and *fides* is still obscure.) Many of the meanings of *pistis* and *fides* are in addition what I have called 'reifications' of the grounds of trust, some relatively simple and some quite complex.

If I wish my property to be disposed of in a certain way after my death, I must trust those who survive to follow my wishes. If I doubt their trustworthiness, I may create a legal instrument, a 'trust', and appoint a functionary, a 'trustee', to administer it. His cooperation and trustworthiness may be guaranteed by a law which requires him to fulfil his trust (though only if he gives credence to the force of law). Or if the emperor entrusts me with a letter to the prefect of Egypt, he evidently trusts me, but people I meet along the way may not. The emperor may therefore give me a reification, a token of his trust such as a 'safe-conduct', to help secure other people's trust and belief in my good faith. Those I meet may be incentivized to trust me by their trust in safe-conducts, and more generally by their trust in the imperial administration, or perhaps by the thought of what the emperor might do to them if they mistrusted me and were proved wrong. So new meanings of *pistis* and *fides* evolve.

Whether *différance*, in trust/belief, can ever come to rest, is a matter of philosophical debate. Adherents of foundationalism argue that it can, on the grounds that there are such things as basic beliefs—things we know we know—on which all other knowledge relies. Coherentists object that such beliefs must be of one of two kinds: either they are about external objects, in which case they can be challenged and are therefore not foundational, or they are not, in which case they only reflect how the world seems to individuals; their objectivity cannot be tested and they are therefore not foundational. Coherentism treats as true what fits into the most coherent view of the world we can create. Since, however, our world view is also ultimately a matter of **(p.22)** how things appear (to individuals or groups), it too is open to the objection that it is not objectively testable and cannot be foundational.⁹⁰

It seems possible that, logically, trust must continue to be deferred forever. As a matter of cultural practice, however, we shall see that Greeks, Romans, Jews, and early Christians all treat certain beliefs as foundational, and I shall argue that where they locate foundational trust is one factor in shaping their distinctive *mentalités*.

This discussion has hardly begun to do justice to approaches to trust in the social sciences, and has scarcely mentioned research on trust in other disciplines, from psychology to modern historiography. The themes we have touched on, however, are among those most widely discussed in recent scholarship, and have obvious points of relevance for students of early Christianity. Trust is not only a force within communities, but is crucial for their formation and evolution. Trust and community formation are intertwined to the point where it is often impossible to say which comes first, or whether either can exist without the other. Trust also coexists—including in the formation of communities—with a number of qualities which may be seen as very different but which cannot be separated from it, including fear, doubt, and scepticism. Trust and belief, too, are intimately related. It is possible in theory, but in practice almost impossible, to separate the roles of emotion, cognition, action, and relationality in trust. Trust may be located in many places, including oneself, other people, groups, shared values, roles, structures, and institutions. It is both backward- and forward-looking, referring to both past experience and future hope. Although socially endemic, it is also risky, fragile, and subject to continual deferral.

Trust is often treated, as it has implicitly been treated here, as though it operates in broadly similar ways in different cultures. With the perception that trust is essential to the very existence of human societies goes a certain, often unscrutinized, psychological essentialism. The psychology of trust is beyond the scope of this study to discuss, but in one respect, highly relevant to this study, trust is increasingly recognized as culturally specific. A number of scholars have recently argued that in every society, *who or what* is trusted, or not trusted, or regarded as problematic to trust, *on what grounds, and for what ends*, is distinctive to that society.⁹¹

In a study of the Wola of the New Guinea Highlands, Paul Sillitoe finds that trust is strongly linked to the reliability of statements, which itself depends on the quality of evidence supporting a statement, but that the only evidence which is regarded as wholly reliable is personal experience.⁹² There is, he (p.23) concludes, a gulf in this relatively simple, non-literate society between what the individual knows on the basis of his or her own experience, and everything else, which counts as hearsay, myth, or tradition. The only authority which can standardize what is known is shared knowledge of events of which more than one party has direct experience.⁹³ Sillitoe contrasts this situation with that of more complex, literate societies, where knowledge may be encoded in institutions and technologies such as written records.⁹⁴

Deniz Yukseker finds trust encoded in a quite different and equally distinctive way in a very different culture: the micro-culture created by the meeting of Russian and Turkish traders in an Istanbul market.⁹⁵ Here, Yukseker argues, a unique language has evolved which hybridizes a Turkish entrepreneurial understanding of trust, in which a chain of traders give credit to one another such that if one proves untrustworthy all suffer, and a Russian understanding, in which trust is built up over long periods by reciprocity. In this market, which is a locus of unregistered and unregulated international trade, these two ethnic groups trade with one another with particular success, through what they describe as long-term, reciprocal relationships based on credit chains.

In these analyses trust takes a shape which is culturally unique, definitive, and as distinctive as a fingerprint. They suggest the possibility of an approach to Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian *pistis/fides* which is wider than current approaches in either Classics, Jewish studies, or New Testament studies. Rather than focusing on what happens in the heart or mind of the believer, on the propositional content of a proclamation, on the meaning of terms in individual texts, or even on the power of trust to bind individuals and groups together, this approach looks for the unique *shape* of trust—or *pistis* or *fides*—as it operates in a community and discourses about that community. This approach emphasizes the uniqueness of the way that a quality like *pistis/fides* flows around a given community: what community members find easy, difficult, or problematic to trust or believe in; where and how trust is deferred; where reifications of *pistis/fides* and related concepts are located and where they are not; who invests *pistis/fides* in whom, on what grounds, in what contexts, and for what purposes. This approach will inform much of what follows. Before it is explored any further, however, there is one more body of existing literature to consider.

Intra-human and Divine–Human *Pistis/Fides*

All the approaches discussed in the previous section related to trust between human beings. This prompts an obvious question: is trust or *pistis* or *fides* (p.24) between human beings and the divine straightforwardly analogous to trust or *pistis* or *fides* between human beings? Or is there something about trust, *pistis*, or *fides* between human beings and the divine which is distinctive?

It is a question, surprisingly, which is rarely explicitly raised in any discipline. Theology, anthropology, the philosophy of religion, and the study of religions have all developed extensive literatures on belief in the gods and religious knowledge, but these typically focus on propositional belief rather than on relationships involving both belief and trust. When divine–human relationships involving *pistis/fides* (and therefore trust) are discussed by classicists, they are usually assumed without argument to be analogous to intra-human relationships, perhaps because the analogy is taken to be entailed when human beings conceive of the divine anthropomorphically.⁹⁶

There are signs, however, that the question hovers at the edge of many scholars' (and believers') consciousness, even when they do not face it squarely. Modern fideism, which treats religious faith as independent of reason or even deliberately counter-rational, may be in part an attempt to capture a sense that there is something distinctive about trust, as well as belief, in the divine.⁹⁷ Among studies of Christian faith, the idea that the believer's relationship with Christ is different from any other, both because of the content of the kerygma and because of the cognitive-affective condition of the believer, perhaps seeks to capture something of the same intuition. Albert Schweitzer's description of 'Christ-mysticism', for instance, in Paul's letters, as moving seamlessly and mysteriously from belief in Christ to love, obedience, fellowship with Christ and ultimately being-in-Christ, looks like an attempt to describe a unique relationship which may have something in common with intra-human *pistis* but also transcends it.⁹⁸

The idea of Christ-mysticism belongs to 'insider' theological writing in the strongest, confessional sense, in which it is not

inappropriate for a community member writing about his or her own tradition to use poetic or paradoxical language to try to capture a relationship which may be more fully experienced than understood. Such language is not available to historians of *mentalités* (or indeed anthropologists or students of religion). What is available to historians **(p.25)** is to take an ‘insider’ perspective in the weaker (phenomenological) sense of describing the views of insiders without reference to one’s own confessional position. On this approach, it is not self-evident that the language of divine–human *pistis* in the New Testament should always—if ever—be read mystically. Still less can we assume that Christian understandings of the divine–human relationship offer useful models for divine–human relations in the Septuagint or in Greek or Roman religious thinking. In what follows I take an *histoire des mentalités* approach to divine–human relations, investigating Greek and Roman material, the Septuagint, and the New Testament in their own terms, but non-confessionally, to try to discover what, if anything, these corpora understand as distinctive about divine–human *pistis* or *fides*.

One model for such an approach is offered by William Lad Sessions in *The Concept of Faith*, which opens with a lament for ‘the modern attenuation (or degradation) of the concept of faith into the concept of irrational propositional belief.’⁹⁹ Sessions offers six models of faith, of which five have both propositional and relational dimensions (the sixth being purely propositional). In Model Three, in some ways the most radical, which Sessions calls the ‘Attitude’ model, S has faith towards X if S’s whole life is oriented to X and S interprets the world in light of his or her relationship with X. This attitude creates what Sessions calls a ‘horizon of significance’, dividing what the person regards as significant in the world around them from what they do not, and creating a space in which potential and actual instances of significance can be located and related to one another.¹⁰⁰ The person’s faith is therefore inseparable from a distinctive *mentalité* which affects every aspect of his or her understanding of the world and interaction with it. Presumably it would in theory be possible for a human relationship to be so totalizing, but Sessions seems to be aiming here to capture something distinctive about divine–human relationships.

D. Z. Phillips offers another approach in his influential study *Faith and Philosophical Enquiry*. During a discussion of scholarship on the grounds of religious belief, Phillips suggests that philosophers do not pay enough attention to the question what kind of philosophical enquiry the idea of divine reality properly calls for.¹⁰¹ Rather than assuming that what it means to claim that there is a God is obvious, and that the only real question is whether there actually is one, he proposes that we should consider what it means to say there is a God, and that we should seek the answer in what belief means to worshippers.¹⁰² ‘It is within religious discourse that we find what is meant by the reality of God.’¹⁰³ Beliefs, he argues, are language games, in the non-trivial, Wittgensteinian sense that they regulate people’s thoughts, actions, and **(p.26)** expectations, and ‘[b]elief in God has a point only if certain consequences follow’.¹⁰⁴

Phillips is talking here about propositional belief, but his argument applies equally to relationships of trust between human beings and the divine. It is within religious discourses that we should look to understand what is meant by trust, trust-belief, or *pistis/fides* towards the divine, what it entails, and whether it is distinctive.

Both Sessions’s ‘Attitude’ model of faith and Phillips’s approach to understanding the reality of God share with fideism and Christ-mysticism a sense that divine–human relationships of belief or trust are somehow distinctive and different from intra-human relationships. Both, however, offer approaches to understanding divine–human relationships which are ‘insider’, in anthropological terms, or phenomenological, in study-of-religions terms, in the sense that they allow traditions to speak for themselves, without requiring the scholar to be a confessing member of the tradition (what I called above a ‘weak insider’ approach). In the following chapters we will keep both these models in mind, while trying to allow divine–human *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman religions, the Septuagint, and the New Testament to speak for themselves about their distinctive configurations.

Constructing Graeco-Roman and Early Christian *Pistis/Fides*

The threefold aim of this study is to add to our understanding of the shape and operation of *pistis* and *fides* between human beings, and human beings and the divine, in Graeco-Roman society between the first century BCE and the second century CE, in the Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism, and in very early churches. Chapters 2–4 accordingly explore the shape of *pistis*, *fides*, and cognate concepts and praxeis in early imperial Greek and Roman society and culture. In intra-human and divine–human relations, we will examine how *pistis* and *fides* help form, sustain, and articulate relationships and communities; where they are seen as strong and where fragile; where they are deferred and where reified into institutions or other social practices.

Unless otherwise stated, the *mentalités* of what are sometimes thought of as the Greek- and Latin-speaking ‘halves’ of the Roman empire will be discussed together, on the grounds that they are closely related. This approach is founded both on the material presented here and on previous studies of **(p.27)** other aspects of culture and society in this period.¹⁰⁵ On one level, the Roman empire of the early principate comprises innumerable micro-societies and subcultures, each with a proud history, many with their

own language or dialect, and most with at least a few distinctive social structures and cultural practices. On another level, the early Roman empire is a single, vast, multicultural complex. The interaction and interpenetration, not just of Greek and Latin, and Greek and Roman, culture and ideas, but of Aramaic, Punic, Celtic, Egyptian, Syrian, North African, Gallic, and other languages and cultures within this world, is too well known to need reiteration.¹⁰⁶ Latins and Lacedaemonians, Syrians and Spaniards, certainly did not have everything in common socially or culturally, but equally certainly, as both written and material sources attest, they shared a great deal.

The authors of the New Testament illustrate this interpenetration of languages and cultures as well as any. Aramaic and Latin can be detected at times between the lines of their Greek.¹⁰⁷ They show Jewish, Greek, Roman, and occasionally other cultures (Egyptian, Syrian, North African) interacting. The Roman emperor, Roman law, Roman officials, Roman soldiers, and Roman patrons—all individuals, groups, or structures which constantly employ and articulate *fides* language and translate it with *pistis* language—are all visibly part of their experience and thought world, along with that of the people they write about and those whom they address. The mindset of the writers of the New Testament, like that of subjects throughout the Roman empire, includes concepts, structures, and relationships which operate right across the empire in both Greek and Latin, to say nothing of other languages.

Occasionally, in later chapters, I shall draw attention to some aspect of the operation of *pistis* or *fides* which seems to pertain more in one body of sources, one language, or one part of the empire than another. More often, I shall argue that our sources attest the existence of an extensive cultural *koinē*: *pistis* and *fides* working in analogous ways across languages and regions, even in such specialized arenas as law, commerce, philosophy, and religion. In the first century one significant consequence of this multiculturalism, no less than of the multilingualism of the empire, was surely that it helped Christian missionaries make themselves understood, from Jerusalem to Antioch and from Athens to Rome. In this study it enables Latin sources to be used alongside Greek to frame our understanding of the cultural context in which early Christian preaching evolved.

Chapter 5 considers the shape of *pistis* in relations between human beings and between human beings and God in the Septuagint. Chapters 6–10 investigate the various shapes *pistis* takes in the books of the New Testament. **(p.28)** Chapter 11 enquires into the relationship between cognition, emotion, relationship, and action in *pistis/fides* in both Christian and non-Christian thinking, before Chapter 12 explores the role of *pistis* in eternal life or the eschatological kingdom of God.

Before we begin, it is worth noting some themes which this programme omits, or treats only tangentially, which some readers may have expected to find more central. Theologians may be surprised that my approach does not owe more to Augustine's division of *fides*, which we have already encountered and which has so strongly influenced western Christian thinking, into *fides quae* and *fides qua*. Augustine only juxtaposes these phrases once, in passing, in *On the Trinity* (13.2.5). It is clear, though, from references to one or the other scattered throughout his works, that this binarism is ingrained in his thinking.

Whether or not it is original to him (a question which falls outside the scope of this study), it is worth emphasizing how distinctive the shape of Augustine's formulation is. It divides *fides* into subject and object, excluding the shared ground of their relationship. It focuses attention on the interiority of the subject and the content of the object.

If we leave aside for a moment the cultural appropriateness of this formulation to the world of the early principate, as opposed to Augustine's own day, it makes sufficiently good sense, in principle, as long as the object of *fides* (a) is not also a subject and (b) behaves predictably. For example, I regularly place trust in my mobile phone, which has certain capacities and performs specific functions when I press the right button. Generally, my trust (whose interior nature need not concern us here) is justified. I would not seriously suggest that the phone and I have a relationship, but we do not need one: the phone fulfils my expectations, and that is enough.

When, however, the object of trust is also a subject, such as another human being, this model becomes problematic. When I place trust in my sister, I do not trust her, as I do my phone, simply to have certain capacities and perform certain functions. She has her own subjectivity and her own view of me which she brings to our association, complicating it with thoughts, feelings, and actions beyond my control. When I trust her (whether or not she trusts me), the interaction of our subjectivities is liable to affect both our lives unpredictably and correlatively. In other words, we have a relationship.

Inter-subjective trust of this kind has obvious risks and potentially far-reaching consequences. Often, however, in everyday life, we also want to be able to trust people in more limited ways. When, for instance, my colleague Bruno wants Ben to teach his students while he is on sabbatical, he wants to be able to trust that Ben will perform certain specific functions. He recognizes, however, that

Ben is a human being, not a machine; he cannot be programmed. Bruno therefore offers Ben a contract. In return for his salary, Ben will be trustworthy in certain specific respects (teaching subject X in **(p.29)** Y hours to N students) for the duration of Bruno's sabbatical. In the terms developed above, a contract is a reification of deferred trust. It allows the parties to recognize that inter-subjective trust is risky and unnecessarily wide in scope for their purposes, but that if both of them trust the law, they can use it to define trust and trustworthiness in much more limited terms for a specific purpose. One of the implications of a contract is that it allows a subject to be treated like an object, the specific scope of its trustworthiness defined and guaranteed for the duration of the agreement.

Augustine's model of *fides* is oddly limited. It addresses the *fides* of the *fidens*, and the object of her *fides* as long as it is an object. *Fides quae*, the body of Christian doctrine, is such an object. But the model leaves no room for inter-subjective *fides* unless, as it were, under contract. But if my *fides* towards God or Christ is anything at all like my trust in my sister, then it involves the interaction of our subjectivities in an unpredictable and potentially life-changing relationship. Alternatively I could, in theory, see my interaction with God or Christ as contractual. I could, for instance, understand God as engaging to provide me with righteousness if I provide God with faith. But although New Testament writers periodically use the language of covenant, I do not know of a theologian (or a Christian) who would claim that the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity is a contract.¹⁰⁸ The divine-human relationship is much more complex, more far-reaching, freer, and more loving than that—more like the inter-subjectivity of human relationships of trust.

This gives us one strong reason to suspect that *fides quae* and *fides qua*, influential as they have been, are inadequate as a description of Christian *fides* or *pistis*. Equally to the point, in the present context, is the fact that Augustine's model fits very poorly with the way *pistis* and *fides* are presented in any body of late Hellenistic or early imperial, Graeco-Roman, Jewish, or Christian material. As we will see, sources of this period have very little interest in the interiority of *pistis/fides*. On the other hand, they focus constantly on its relationality. They do not talk in terms of the content of its object, but they do display the configuration of relationships in such a way as to show what makes each instance of *pistis/fides* distinctive and what emerges from it. They sometimes use the language of covenant, but interweave it constantly with the language of inter-subjective relationships, including love and friendship, and parent-and childhood.

There are signs (not least in one of his favourite phrases, '*fides* working through love') that Augustine himself also understands *fides* as a relationship, but relationality remains rather submerged in his, and hence in much later Christian, thinking about faith.¹⁰⁹ For us, however, to view *pistis* or *fides* in the **(p.30)** earliest Christian writings through a fifth-century lens would be anachronistic, contravening the principle articulated at the start of this chapter that we should seek to interpret new cultural movements primarily in relation to the sociocultural context in which they emerge. It is preferable to begin where primitive churches began, in the world of the early principate. As we do so, it will become clear that relationship and community are fundamental and central both to Graeco-Roman and to primitive Christian understandings of *pistis/fides*.

There will be less discussion than some may expect in what follows about ancient rhetorical treatments of persuasion and philosophical treatments of proof (for reasons which should become clear in context¹¹⁰), and about *pistis* or *fides* as propositional belief, the aspect of faith which looms largest in many modern accounts. One reason for the latter has already been noted: propositional belief (secular or religious) is usually marked, in Greek and Latin, by the language of thinking (*dokein*, *nomizein*, *putare*, *censere*, etc.) rather than that of *pistis* or *fides*.¹¹¹ An exception in Greek is the phrase *pisteuein hoti*, 'to believe that', which occurs occasionally in Greek literature, including the New Testament, in the context of both intra-human and divine-human relations.¹¹² *Pisteuein hoti*, however, in the New Testament and beyond, is much less common than *pisteuein* with the dative or with prepositions of relationship such as *eis* or *en*. Propositional belief, of course, as has already been discussed, is always involved with trust, and vice versa, and in that connection will receive a good deal of attention in some chapters. But I shall argue that the focus of both intra-human and divine-human *pistis/fides*, Graeco-Roman and Christian, is more often than not on relationality, and that even in Christian thinking, propositionality is often less important than has often been assumed.

We have seen that the semantic range of both *pistis* and *fides* is extremely wide. Many studies have focused on establishing exactly what part of the range is in play in any given passage of Greek or Latin literature (the best-known case being the ongoing debate over whether *pistis Christou* in certain passages of the New Testament is best interpreted as 'faith in Christ' or 'the faithfulness of Christ'). Sometimes, undoubtedly, a particular passage requires a particular sense of a term, but often we cannot be certain what meaning is intended, and often that is for the good reason that more than one meaning is in play. It is in the nature of complex terms to be multivalent, not only in dictionaries but in use. In many passages, therefore, we will talk of multiple meanings being in **(p.31)** play, and sometimes the most satisfactory interpretation of a passage will depend on there being more than one meaning involved. Occasionally I shall argue that this is true even for parts of the spectrum of meaning that appear to be complementary opposites. *Pistis*

and *fides* are, in linguistic terms, ‘action nominals’, nouns derived from verbs which abandon distinctions of transitivity to encompass both active and passive meanings of the verb.¹¹³ We might assume that active and passive meanings cannot be in play at the same time, but in practice they often are. A classic example is the *fides* of a Roman magistrate. *Fides* means both trust and trustworthiness. The *fides* of a magistrate is usually taken to be his trustworthiness: the quality which reassures those over whom he has power that he will fulfil his office with integrity.¹¹⁴ The magistrate’s trustworthiness, however, is not self-sufficient. It is founded on his trust in (or loyalty to) the laws of his city or state, on his trust in (or devotion to) the gods, sometimes on his virtue (which itself, as we shall see, is typically understood as founded on his relationship with the divine), and, not least importantly, on his trust in the people to allow him to govern. The magistrate’s *fides* is therefore two-sided: he is both trusting and trustworthy, and *qua* magistrate he would not be trustworthy unless he were simultaneously understood as trusting.

Last, but not least, of the themes which this study does not tackle is the large body of Gnostic texts which feature *pistis* or the divinity Pistis Sophia. Some followers of Christ may well have been interested in *gnōsis* in the first century, and traces of Gnostic thinking have been identified in some New Testament texts. We do not have the sources, however, to investigate how any Gnostic group of the first or early second century thought about *pistis*. The earliest Christian writer to refer clearly to *gnōsis* as a movement or system is Irenaeus, and the developed ‘great systems’ of Gnosticism for which we have evidence do not seem to have evolved before the late second century.¹¹⁵ Gnostic understandings of *pistis* or Pistis, therefore, though distinctive, intriguing, and important in their own right, lie beyond our chronological scope.

Many readers will have taken for granted from the focus on *pistis* and *fides* so far that what follows is a ‘word study’, a genre which is somewhat out of fashion in Classics and very much out of fashion in New Testament studies. Since this is not intended as a word study in the traditional sense, it is worth, finally, reflecting briefly on the difficulties of the genre and how this study relates to it.

A recent essay by Richard Hays neatly encapsulates the problems of word studies from the perspective of New Testament scholarship.¹¹⁶ First, ‘words do **(p.32)** not carry semantic freight apart from contexts in which they are used’, and word studies tend to focus too much on the abstracted ‘meaning(s)’ of terms at the expense of the arguments in which they occur. Secondly, ‘why should [e.g. Bultmann’s] exposition of Paul’s theology take its starting point from an exposition of the concept *sōma*?’ Focusing on individual terms tends to be ‘arbitrary and fragmenting in its effect’.¹¹⁷

The short answer to Hays’s second question is that if there is one term or lexicon on which it is not arbitrary to focus in the New Testament, it is the *pistis* lexicon, occurrences of which, as noted, far outstrip those of other key concepts, which is a major theme in most books, and which so dominates Christian thinking that at some point early in its history the new cult comes to be known simply as *hē pistis*.¹¹⁸ A more interesting answer is that words are not merely words but concepts, through which individuals and groups understand and construct their world in ways which are also informed by, and have consequences for, their behaviour and social organization. As such, approaching a text (created by a socially embedded author, or more than one, for a social group, or more than one) or a social group, or both (as this study aims to do) through a concept such as *pistis/fides* constitutes a choice to undertake not simply a word study, but a *thematic* study of an aspect of the *mentalité* and sociocultural practices of that group.¹¹⁹

We can take for granted that any thematic study will be partial, in every sense, and do less than full justice to the complexity of a whole text or society. That, though, is a problem with the nature of scholarship, which is inevitably limited in what it can address, not with any particular subject. A study of trust, the kingdom of God, or Roman patronage would be equally partial. What follows—a thematic study of the conceptualization and practices of *pistis/fides* among various social and religious groups in the world of the early Roman principate—is no more intrinsically problematic than a study of trust, patronage, or the kingdom of God would be.¹²⁰

This is, however, a thematic study which takes as its starting point two clusters of words, which means that Hays’s first objection also deserves **(p.33)** attention. I fully agree with his insistence on the importance of context for the interpretation of terms in particular passages, and the following chapters offer many close readings of individual passages in order to explicate their particular uses of *pistis/fides*. But Hays’s general proposition that ‘words do not carry semantic freight apart from contexts [that is, literary contexts] in which they are used’ is, of course, historically and sociologically an oversimplification. By the period under discussion, Greek and Latin speakers have been using *pistis* and *fides* language for centuries, and each new deployment of it draws on existing shared understandings of its possible meanings (as well, sometimes, as extending its meaning). Words carry semantic weight in the individual and collective consciousness of users; if that were not the case, communication would be impossible. At the same time, it is also the case that, up to a point, every user of a language speaks or writes an idiolect, deploying inherited terms in minutely (and occasionally strikingly) different ways. Communication is an imprecise process and to capture it as best we can, we undoubtedly need to look at its elements in context. But—as every deconstructionist knows—‘context’ in this connection is not limited to the passage, the

work, or even the author in which a particular term occurs. It includes all the ways in which the term is already understood by the communities to which the writer and his audience(s) belong. The historian of *mentalité* illuminates these by looking at thousands of uses of the term and its relatives in hundreds of texts, authors, and genres, creating a map of understandings against which its usage in a particular context and the parameters of its likely reception can be investigated. Not only, therefore, does it not follow from the importance of context that we cannot study concepts and practices thematically, through the language which is commonly used to describe them: the opposite is true. Existing understandings are part of the context of interpretation.¹²¹

A different, historiographically more challenging question for thematic studies based on word clusters is whether a particular lexicon captures the most historically interesting concept and praxis that one could study: one sufficiently socially significant to justify treatment in its own right. If we want to study early imperial faith or belief, for instance, one might argue we should investigate not only *pistis/fides* but also habits of thought described with *credere*, *putare*, *nomizein*, *dokein*, and so on. If we want to study trust, then we should look at all the places where people practise what we would identify as trust, even if they do not use *pistis/fides* language. This is an important consideration which provoked a good deal of thought in the early stages of this (p.34) project (where, as noted, the investigation will sometimes broaden to include related concepts and lexica). The justification for focusing on *pistis* and *fides* is their obvious importance to early Christians, which does indeed seem to justify investigation in its own right, and the study of *pistis/fides* in the wider Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish worlds follows from that choice. (It is worth emphasizing that this does not constitute the simple or default choice for the historian. *Pistis* and *fides* justify investigation *despite* the fact that they do not map neatly onto modern concepts and practices, and so are harder to elucidate than a concept more familiar in one's own culture might be.) The social and conceptual significance of *pistis/fides* across the Graeco-Roman world varies in different contexts, and we will try to do justice to those variations, which are significant in themselves. (The fact, for instance, that *pistis/fides* is a theme in both Graeco-Roman and Jewish religiosity, but not a central one, is highly significant as part of the context for early Christian *mentalités*.)

In the essay quoted above, in which he is criticizing Bultmann's approach to Paul, Hays appends a third objection to Bultmann's word studies: by focusing on Paul's use of certain terms Bultmann does not do justice to the narrative about God, Christ, and humanity which (as Hays himself has convincingly argued) underlies Paul's thinking.¹²² This is a thought-provoking observation in the present context, because relationships of *pistis/fides*, by their nature, have a strong diachronic aspect, but I do not think that what follows falls foul of it. We will not trace the implied narrative behind every one of the thousands of instances of *pistis/fides* discussed, but we will trace it in many cases, including many passages of the New Testament, because it will be germane to our understanding of the shape and operation of *pistis/fides*. In other cases it will be not so much the narrative as the structure of a *pistis/fides* relationship that will interest us, which will be best analysed by taking, as it were, a snapshot of it at a moment in time.

Our guiding questions will include: 'What kinds of relationship and community are formed by *pistis/fides*? Where are they strong and where fragile? On what are they founded? How are they deferred and reified, and to what ends?' Understanding the relationships and institutions under discussion will often require close readings and arguments about meaning in individual texts, so we will often find ourselves investigating in some detail the use of a term in a particular passage in the context of its use elsewhere in that author and/or genre, community, place, and period. This double focus, moving continually between semantic specificities and the patterns of thought and praxis which are detectable when we survey large numbers of texts and images synoptically, creates a particular form of *l'histoire des mentalités*: one which seeks to locate (p.35) the mindsets of individuals and small communities in their larger context while revealing how and where, however subtly, they deviate from it. As such, this study also aims to contribute to the ongoing post-structuralist project of understanding societies both structurally and diachronically, by showing how existing patterns of thought and praxis inform the thinking, and presumptively the behaviour, of social agents such as early Christians, while, at the same time, they are also able to develop new ideas and behaviours which in turn change their societies.

Notes:

(1) On the relationship between 'word studies' and thematic studies, see pp. 31–4.

(2) 1.7, see p. 216. On the dating of Paul's authentic letters (which I shall take to be 1 Thess., 1 and 2 Cor., Phil., Gal., Rom., Philemon), see Brown (1997), 428; Becker (1989), 31. Parts of some letters, and layers of tradition in other books, may be earlier. On the interpretation of *hoi pisteuontes*, see Ch. 6, esp. pp. 240–1.

(3) The language of faith and belief in English does not map exactly onto Greek or Latin (or Hebrew); we will also discuss *nomizein*, *encheirizesthai*, *credere*, *tradere*, *putare*, and other terms, while hope, obedience, and other qualities will often appear as overtones of *pistis/fides* language. The principal terms under discussion will be transliterated throughout.

- (4) I use 'lexicon' throughout (as in 'the *pistis* lexicon') to refer to a term such as *pistis* together with all its cognates, and 'lexeme' to refer to all forms of a single term.
- (5) For a comparison of the lexical ranges of *pistis* and *fides*, see p. 7.
- (6) (2007), 317–18; cf. e.g. Bornkamm (1960), 130: '[Faith] means something quite different from the mere attitude of general trust in God, so typical, for example, of the Stoics, and seen in Epictetus and others'; (among recent studies) Schliesser (2012).
- (7) Leaving aside its long history of specialized study in Roman law, on which, see pp. 108–11.
- (8) Fraenkel (1916). For a brief discussion of earlier studies, see Klauser (1969), 7. 801–3.
- (9) Notably Heinze (1929), von Beseler (1934; cf. 1920), Lemosse (1991), D'Agostino (1961), Lombardi (1961), Calderone (1964), Freyburger (2009).
- (10) Freyburger (2009), 33, etc. also notes what is universally accepted, that *pistis* and *fides* derive from the same Indo-European root **bheidh-*, so are historically closely cognate despite their difference at first sight.
- (11) An approach carried further by Freyburger, among others.
- (12) See esp. Pringsheim (1931), Pöschl (1940), Lombardi (1961), Deissmann-Merten (1965), Hellegouarc'h (1972), Rothe (1978), Piccaluga (1981), Freyburger (1983), Carcaterra (1984), Moore (1989), Reusser (1993), Nörr (1997), Scafuro (1997), Fernández de Buján (2001), Roebuck (2001), Roebuck and de Loynes de Fumichon (2004), Ramelli (ed.) (2002). Schmitz (1963) focuses on legal and commercial meanings of *pistis* language in Graeco-Egyptian papyri; Holder (1999) on the *fides* of early imperial Roman armies; Morgan (2007b) on *pistis/fides* in popular moral thinking; Harris (2009), 23–66 on the credibility of dreams.
- (13) On connections between *pistis/fides* and other virtues and political qualities, see e.g. Hellegouarc'h (1972), 242–94, Rothe (1978), 13–43.
- (14) In another sense, all examples of *pistis/fides* (including all relationships) that survive to us are reifications, because they are specific instantiations of the concept. In this study, however, I use 'reification' more narrowly to refer to entities (such as an oath or legal trust) or concepts (such as proof) which derive conceptually from relational trust but are distinguished from it, acquiring technical meanings in the specialized discourses of law, philosophy or rhetoric. Nörr (1989), 43–4 calls this process, in legal contexts, 'objectivization'.
- (15) Johnstone (2011); see also Eidinow (2007) on the social construction of risk, particularly in relation to oracles.
- (16) See e.g. Calderone (1964) 61–98, Gruen (1982) for histories of the debate.
- (17) (1964), 92. Differences in semantic range may be due partly to the fact that more legal material survives in Latin and more philosophical in Greek. The relation of *pisteuein* to *peithein* suggests to some that 'persuadedness', hence 'belief' meanings resonate more loudly in *pistis* language, but since context is always key in determining meaning, we should not assume this to be so. For linguistic arguments against hearing 'persuadedness' as dominant in *pistis*, see Benveniste (1969), 115–21.
- (18) (1931), 24.
- (19) Gruen (1982) (focusing on *pistis/fides* in peacemaking but with wider implications), discussed at pp. 97–8; cf. Schmitz (1964), Calderone (1964) for earlier arguments to the same effect. Given that Latin sources become abundant after interaction with the Greek world is well established, it is possible that cultural cross-fertilization has already taken place (for a possible comparandum in the use of *andreia/aretē/virtus*, see McDonnell (2006), 72–104). NB 'Greek' here is a broad-brush term encompassing Hellenistic kingdoms, parts of which had earlier been independent poleis and which in the early principate became a number of provinces and client kingdoms. There may have been variations in usage from place to place.
- (20) See e.g. Gagarin (2000), Barnes (1989, 1991, 1993), Edwards (forthcoming) (on philosophy); Kinneavy (1987), Watson (1991, 2006), Kennedy (1999) (on rhetoric); Pringsheim (1931), Lombardi (1961), Calderone (1968), Nörr (1989, 1991) (on law). I distinguish here between discussions specifically of *pistis* as persuasion and the wider field of studies of the rhetorical language and

forms of New Testament books.

(21) Taylor (1966), see pp. 271 n. 39, 294 n. 110.

(22) Schenk (1982), 72–3 notes in addition that *pistis* is not missionary vocabulary in Hellenistic Judaism or the Septuagint.

(23) Scholarship has focused on divine–human relations, while recognizing that much biblical language of trust/faith concerns human relations.

(24) See pp. 196 n. 53, 206 n. 90, 219–20.

(25) See Ch. 5.

(26) (1951).

(27) (1917), 1–29; cf. Schmidt (1983).

(28) Dodd (1935), 65–70; Herbert (1955). Montgomery (1921), 292 argues unpersuasively that for Josephus *pistis* involves holding right doctrines.

(29) (1961), 203 and *passim*. Barr also dismisses (pp. 167–8) the idea that Paul thought in Aramaic and that Christian *pistis* language has Aramaic roots.

(30) Since in the period under discussion no distinctively Christian Bible yet exists, references to the Bible throughout this study will refer to the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint.

(31) pp. 195–6.

(32) (1993; cf. 1993a).

(33) pp. 22, 43–6. For Lindsay (pp. 53–72) and others (e.g. Edwards, forthcoming), Philo's usage is both closer to Platonic than biblical tradition, and more original.

(34) Grässer (1965), 79–85, 161–3; Lohse (1977), 159–60.

(35) (1973). He also returns (pp. 37–8) to the idea, dismissed by Barr, that Paul may have had Hebrew or Aramaic idioms in mind in his use of *pistis* language.

(36) (1977).

(37) An interest in cognitive-affective religiosity more widely has waxed and waned in classical studies: see pp. 124–6.

(38) (1917), 67–81.

(39) Latte (1960), 237, 272, Barth (1982), 110–26, Lindsay (1993), 7–16; cf. von Dobbeler (1987).

(40) (1982), 122; see p. 155.

(41) Cf. Boers (1997) dealing similarly with other key concepts (*charis* and *agapē*).

(42) For detailed surveys of earlier literature, see esp. Wissmann (1926), 1–47, Seifrid (2009), 1–75, Schliesser (2007), 7–78.

(43) See e.g. Lévy-Bruhl (1947), Chartier (1988), 27–37.

(44) As such it usually takes an 'insider' perspective; on 'outsider' approaches to belief, with particular reference to anthropology, see Sperber (1985); on the paradox of 'outsider' approaches to belief, MacIntyre (1964).

(45) e.g. Hahn and Klein (eds.) (1982) (on the New Testament as a whole); Moloney (1993), Meeks (1996) (on John); Mathis (1920),

Grässer (1965), Betz (1990b), Hamm (1990), Rhee (2001), Lindsay (2008) Still (2008) (on Hebrews); Horrell (1997) (on 1 Peter); Tonstad (2006) (on Revelation).

(46) *De Trin.* 13.2.5; see further pp. 28–9. Theissen (1999b), 279–80 comes close to identifying a third dimension of faith when he defines it as ‘a rule of association’, but his subsequent discussion remains focused on the individual’s relationship with God, rather than a community’s.

(47) Though see e.g. pp. 226–7, 348, 440–1.

(48) Where the language of *pistis* specifically is under discussion (as opposed, for instance, to the thought of a writer, which might be seen as implicitly discussing the propositional content of his faith), the response of the believer has been of particular interest in recent years, but for the argument for the importance of propositional belief, see e.g. Wissmann (1926), Bultmann (1968), 203, Corsani (1984), Towner (1989), 146, Lührmann (1992), 756–7 (on Paul and John).

(49) On how far faith is performed by the believer and how far it is a response in the believer to the action of God in Christ, see e.g. Schlatter (1982), 319.

(50) e.g. Mundle (1932) (on propositional belief); Pfeleiderer (1890), Deissmann (1925) (on mystical union); Wissmann (1926) (drawing on more than one model).

(51) e.g. (2007), 314–18.

(52) For Bultmann, faith also involves acceptance of the propositional content of the kerygma ((2007), 89, 314–18); cf. Minear (1971), Davies (1990), Garlington (1994), Miller (2000).

(53) See e.g. Hultgren (1980), Williams (1980), 274–5, (1987a, 1989), Johnson (1982), Hays (2002, 1997a), Hooker (1989), Stowers (1989), Longenecker (1993, 1996), Dodd (1995), Campbell (1992a), (1994), 58–69, Wright (1996), 259, Horrell (1997), Dunn (1997a), (1998), 642, Martyn (1997c), 150–1, Matlock (2000, 2003), Taylor (2004), Gathercole (2004), Watson (2004), Tonstad (2006), Heliso (2007), Schenck (2008), Stubbs (2008), Allen (2009), and esp. pp. 268–73, 288–305.

(54) e.g. Harrisville (1994), Wallis (1995).

(55) The same may be true of other concepts: cf. e.g. Boers (1997) on grace and love. See pp. 78–9, 82–4, 100–2, 273–4.

(56) (1964), 37–9.

(57) Matlock (2002); cf. Vanhoye (1999), Ulrichs (2007), Downing (2010).

(58) e.g. Lohmeyer (1928), 117, 127, Ljungman (1964), 13–35, Binder (1968), Seifrid (1992), Schliesser (2007), 394.

(59) Dunson (2011), Burrige (2007), 48. In Chs. 6, 8, and 12 I shall argue in the same direction on rather different grounds.

(60) Longenecker (1996); cf. Minear (1960), 136–72.

(61) Kinneavy (1987); cf. Baillie (1927). I shall argue that ‘persuasion’ is an important theme in some passages, but relatively few: see e.g. pp. 250–2, 261.

(62) See further p. 271 n. 39, pp. 338–41.

(63) Schumacher (2009), Taylor (1966).

(64) Lührmann (1976).

(65) e.g. Herbert (1955), Ljungman (1964), Bultmann (2007), 89–90, 324–9, Schliesser (2007), Wright (2013).

(66) Though, for some studies of Christian qualities deeply informed by their operation in the wider social world, see Betz (1975, 1978), von Dobbeler (1987), Klauck (1990), White (1990). Many scholars, of course, are interested in how churches work as

communities, without making specific connections with *pistis*.

(67) Bigley and Pearce (1998), 405.

(68) e.g. Erikson (1959), Fukuyama (1995), O'Neill (2002), Kohn (2008), Seldon (2009), Rose (2011); cf. La Porta *et al.* (1999), Dasgupta (1999). These and many other studies acknowledge a debt to Putnam (1995, 2000), who argued that declining participation in group activities was damaging American society, not least in its relationships of trust; against this, arguing that institutions create trust, not the other way around, see e.g. Sobel (2002), Hardin (2006), 82. Guinnane (2005) argues that trust is irrelevant to the analysis of commercial or economic problems, Ogilvie (2005) that it neither generates nor arises from other forms of social capital in early modern economies.

(69) Masters (1986), Meyer (2002), Wang (2002) (ethno-biological approaches).

(70) MacDonald (2002), Salter (2002a), Hardin (2006) 10; for a provocative alternative view, see Uslaner (2000).

(71) Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies (1998), 439, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998), 400; cf. Battacharya, Devinney, and Pillutia (1998), 481, McKnight *et al.* (1998), Sztompka (1999), 24–9. Fontaine (2001) traces in detail the relationship between hopeful trust, credit (a reification of trust created by deferral, on which, see below) in evolving social relations, in early modern France.

(72) Berg *et al.* (1995); cf. McKnight *et al.* (1998). The game in part responds to the Prisoner's Dilemma game, which was earlier sometimes cited as 'showing' that self-interest is a more fundamental instinct than trust.

(73) (1995), 122.

(74) Noted by Faulkner (2011), 6.

(75) Kasperson *et al.* (1992), Poortinga and Pidgeon (2005), Breakwell (2007); cf. Goody (1996).

(76) Lewicki *et al.* (1998), 440–5; cf. Boholm (1996), Bigley and Pearce (1998), 406–8, Sheppard and Sherman (1998), 422–8, Luhmann (1979), Pelkmans (2013) (on the anthropology of doubt). On the fragility of institutions that try not to rely on trust, see e.g. Whitney (1996), 1–10, Six (2005), 2–4. Models of trust and distrust often blend insights drawn from psychology and sociology.

(77) Hardin (2002a), chs. 4, 7; cf. Hardin (2004), Binder (2013), Liberatore (2013).

(78) Hardin (1996, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006).

(79) Hardin (2006), 16–18; cf. (2002c), ch. 2. See Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) for a very similar analysis; cf. Brownlow (1992), Jones (1996), Sheppard and Sherman (1998), 425–31, Ben-Ner and Halldorsson (2010).

(80) Hardin (2006), 36, 65–74; cf. Whitney (1996), 16, Hurley (2006). Hardin sees trust in institutions such as governments as rather different from interpersonal trust, characterizing it as confidence in their competence rather than trust in their integrity.

(81) Sztompka (1999), 27–9.

(82) Cf. Kohn (2008), 24–39 on trust as a cost–benefit analysis.

(83) e.g. van 't Wout and Sanfey (2008), Parayitam and Dooley (2009), Chang *et al.* (2010).

(84) Bohnet, Frey, and Huck (2001). Cf. McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998).

(85) See Kasperson *et al.* (1992), Faulkner (2011), 24 for an attempt to distinguish trust with and without an affective aspect.

(86) Observed by e.g. McAllister (1995), Jones (1996), McKnight *et al.* (1998), Potter (2002). Treatments of belief encounter the same difficulty; to address it Bell (2008) argues for the study of 'belief' as 'believing', an action involving cognition and affection. See further Ch. 11.

(87) Birdwell *et al.* (2010).

(88) Shapiro (1987); cf. Sheppard and Sherman (1998), 428–32, Szulanski *et al.* (2004), Bohnet *et al.* (2001), 131–2, 141, Sobel (2002) (the last two are relatively optimistic that rules or institutions can generate trusting behaviour).

(89) Notably Fraenkel (1916), Freyburger (2009), Johnstone (2011).

(90) The weaknesses of both positions are well set out by Halbach (1999).

(91) e.g. Doney *et al.* (1998), Mostert and van Renswoude (2008) (esp. the methodological reflections of Weltecke); cf. Szulanski *et al.* (2004).

(92) Sillitoe (2010).

(93) p. 22.

(94) pp. 24–5.

(95) Yukseker (2004).

(96) Much cognitive theory of religion takes this approach: e.g. Guthrie (1993), Boyer (2002), Tremplin (2006), Barrett (2006), Barrett and Keil (2006), Lawson and McCauley (2006). Those who assume divine–human relations are analogous to intra-human in Greek and Roman religious thinking include Pleket (1981), Gradel (2002), Versnel (2011), Pongratz (forthcoming).

(97) Often, wrongly, associated with Tert., *De carne Christi* 5.4. On fideism see e.g. Plantinga (1983), Evans (1998), Bishop (2007). Festugière begins *Personal Religion Among the Greeks* with the intriguing but unexplicated claim: ‘Religion might be defined, very generally, as belief in a fourth dimension’ ((1954), 1). Cf. Sperber (1985) and Pyysiäinen (2001) on the role of paradox in creating belief from an anthropological perspective.

(98) Schweitzer (1931), ch. 6; cf. Pfeleiderer (1902), 174–5, 247–9; Wissmann (1926), 95–114; Theissen (1999a), 279–80. In some accounts, trust in the divine leads to an equally distinctive sense of unity with both the divine and creation (Hick (1966), 115, Festugière (1954), ch. 7).

(99) Sessions (1994), 5.

(100) pp. 69–88.

(101) Phillips (1970), 16.

(102) pp. 18, 67–70.

(103) p. 70.

(104) p. 81.

(105) Including Morgan (1998) (on education), (2007b) (on popular morality), and Chs. 11–12, *passim*.

(106) Cf. pp. 36–8.

(107) In the case of Aramaic, occasionally in the text itself.

(108) See also pp. 178–82, 189 n. 39.

(109) Except, perhaps, insofar as the faith that seeks understanding or the faith that seeks to pierce the cloud of unknowing can be understood as already relational. But this is a more mysterious and aspirational relationality than is usually portrayed in texts of the early empire.

(110) Though see pp. 72–4, 151–7.

(111) See p. 1 n. 3.

(112) In the New Testament, of some 237 occurrences of the verb *pisteuein* (give or take one or two alternative readings), only eighteen take the form of the propositional *pisteuein hoti*; of these, ten are in the Johannine corpus, where they are outnumbered almost ten to one by relational occurrences of *pisteuein* with the dative or with *eis*, *epi*, or *en*. Strikingly, *nomizein* is even rarer in the New Testament, occurring only fourteen times in the whole corpus.

(113) Comrie and Thompson (2007), 334–76. This phenomenon is common cross-linguistically, including in Greek and Latin, both of which are rich in action nominals.

(114) Freyburger (2009), 206–8.

(115) Marksches (2003), 30–63, 67, 85.

(116) Hays (2014), 69–71.

(117) pp. 69, 70.

(118) pp. 1–2.

(119) Hays's argument may arise from a literary approach which seeks to interpret texts independently of what their authors may have intended or contemporary audiences heard. The present study, however, belongs to cultural historiography and *l'histoire des mentalités*, in which it is uncontroversial that texts (and sources of all kinds) created by agents in social contexts for socially embedded audiences are part of, and so evidence for, the thinking and practices of those who create and use them (and often of wider societies).

(120) See also p. 481. The value of word studies essentially depends on how they are done and for what ends. Studies which explore the semantic range of terms by combining study of the history of interpretation with close readings of ancient texts, for instance, perform a valuable service to interpreters. Thematic literary studies which explore the significance of a term in a text (as, for instance, one might explore the theme of gold in the *Iliad*), without reference to authorial intentionality or the text's reception, have their own coherence and can be highly illuminating.

(121) If the meaning of any one term in a sentence were radically context-dependent, then so would that of all the others be, and we would not be able to understand any one term without understanding all the others, which we would not be able to understand without understanding the first...which would render us unable to make any sense of anything.

(122) Hays (1981).

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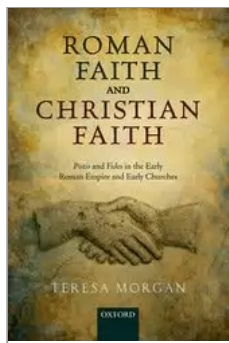
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Pistis and Fides in the World of the Early Principate I

Domestic and Personal Relations

Teresa Morgan

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter explores the shape of *pistis* and *fides* in Greek and Roman domestic and personal social relations more widely from the first century BCE to the second century CE, arguing that Greek and Latin language and culture are sufficiently closely related, socially and geographically interpenetrative, and mutually comprehensible by this period to be treated together. It finds that *pistis/fides* towards oneself, between family members, and between masters and slaves is treated across a wide range of sources as relatively, though not wholly, unproblematic. *Pistis/fides* in public life, between patrons and clients, and particularly between friends, meanwhile, is widely presented as more difficult, even when it is desirable. *Pistis/fides* in tradition, hearsay, and all kinds of discourse, however, is radically problematic.

Keywords: *pistis*, *fides*, family, master, slave, patron, client, friend, tradition, hearsay

In the Introduction I argued that one should begin to study *pistis* in the New Testament not by assuming that Christian *pistis* is conceptually unique from its inception but by assuming, until the evidence compels a different conclusion, that its meaning and use belong somewhere in the range of uses of *pistis* and *fides* language in the surrounding world. This chapter turns to the operation of *pistis* and *fides* in that world.

The Rome of the early principate was a colossus, uniting under its rule more of the Mediterranean littoral, Europe, and the Near East than any state had done before it. As such, it was multilingual and multicultural. Regions which had long been under Roman domination, such as Sicily, Gaul, and Spain, retained many distinctive social and cultural practices: in religion, for instance, language, food, and dress.¹ When the ambitious travelled to Rome to make their fortunes, they were marked as provincial, even if provinciality was no bar to success. More recent acquisitions, such as Egypt, Syria, and Britain, could still be regarded as extravagantly exotic or barbaric, and aspects of their cultures treated as pleasurably shocking, even as they were adopted and adapted closer to Rome.

The Mediterranean, with its surrounding seas and rivers, ensured that this was, as it had been for centuries, a densely networked world. People, finance, and commodities moved freely between ports and settlements.² Amphorae made in North Africa in this period, to transport quantities of wine, oil, or fish sauce around the empire, have been recovered from shipwrecks and rubbish-dumps as far apart as Britain and Egypt.³ Slaves—sourced in trade, war, or (p.37) piracy—whose manumission is recorded at Delphi around the beginning of the principate bear names originating all over the Greek East, Asia Minor, and Italy, while slave names recorded in Rome come in addition from the shores of the Black Sea and the Danube, Scythia, Moesia, Thrace, Germany, Britain, Syria, and the Levant.⁴ An inscription erected in Fulginiae in Umbria in the early second century honours one T. Haterius Nepos, a cavalry officer whose career culminated in the Prefecture of Egypt (120–4 CE). As a young man in the early 90s Haterius had served on Hadrian's Wall from where a letter survives which he probably composed.⁵ Later in the second century Irenaeus, probably a native of Smyrna, n for the Montanists of Asia Minor), for his peregrinations.⁶ And, of

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It is often observed that we hear oddly little about individual multilingualism, or about translators and interpreters, in this world, but anyone who travelled or had much education will have known something of more than one language, and possibly several of the scores that were in use. A few—notably Aramaic, Greek, and Latin—had become, through more or less recent conquest and settlement, *linguae francae* of large geographical areas and, at one time or another, complex administrations, and had evolved simplified common forms so that speakers from different regions could understand one another. Punic, descended from Phoenician, was widely spoken around the south and east of the Mediterranean basin, Celtic languages around the north and west. Few languages, living side by side, had interacted as extensively as would demotic Egyptian and Greek to produce Coptic, but it was common for languages to pick up at least a few words from their neighbours or trading partners.⁷

In the early principate, however, two languages and cultures dominated. They are sometimes seen as dividing the Mediterranean between them on an east–west axis, but in fact both were more widespread than that. Greek language and culture were common as far west as Sicily and Sardinia, southern Gaul, southern Spain, and Mauretania, while Greek inscriptions testify to their currency north of the Black Sea, around the Danube and throughout north-western Europe. Latin travelled everywhere, as the language of the top layer of the Roman administration and the culture, native or adopted, of the top ranks of military and civilian officials throughout the empire.

(p.38) The huge geographical reach and extensive interpenetration of Latin and Greek language and culture would, in time, greatly aid the spread of Christianity across the empire and beyond. In the first century CE, as we have noted, this was already a world in which many concepts, including those encompassed by the *pistis* and *fides* lexica, were understood and shared widely across linguistic and cultural regions. In this chapter, accordingly, both Latin and Greek sources are enrolled to show how *pistis/fides* operated in the world into which Christianity was born. We shall draw on material from the first century BCE to the second century CE, bracketing the evolution of early churches, but stopping before there is any likelihood that Christian ideas had a measurable impact on the wider culture. For convenience, the material is divided into (more or less) secular accounts of *pistis/fides* in this chapter and the next, and religious ones in Chapter 4. To divide Greek or Roman thinking into sacred and secular is, of course, artificial, since religion was bound up with every aspect of life. Since, however, later chapters will focus on *pistis* in divine–human relations, there is some advantage in treating divine–human and intra-human relations separately in the wider context, while bearing in mind that the separation is never absolute.

It bears repeating that this will not primarily be a lexical survey. Nor will it be what several recent studies in the field have been, a close investigation of the technical meaning of *pistis/fides* in specialized (for example, philosophical or legal) contexts. What follows will not add to discussions of the precise meaning of *deditio in fidem*, the definition of *pistis* or *bona fides* in commercial agreements, or the workings of the cults of Fides or Pistis. Instead, our starting point will be what were identified in the Introduction as some of the most interesting questions to emerge out of recent work in the sociology and economics of trust. Who and what do Greek and

Latin speakers at this time find it easy or difficult to trust, believe, or have confidence in? What is the distinctive shape of *pistis/fides* in the early principate? Where and how are *pistis* and *fides* deferred and reified into institutions or other cultural constructs?

We shall begin with the individual and *pistis/fides* towards oneself, working outwards through family, dependants, and friends, to larger social formations, structures, practices, and institutions. There is no compelling reason for this order: it is not intended to imply, for instance, that *pistis/fides* towards oneself is socially or psychologically prior to other kinds, nor can we demonstrate that Greeks or Romans thought it was. But one must start somewhere, and *pistis/fides* towards oneself has the attraction of being presented as relatively reliable in our sources.

The picture which will develop will derive cumulatively from thousands of individual references in literary sources, inscriptions, and papyri, and on coins. This kind of survey has both advantages and risks. Its main risk is that it puts side by side, as in some sense comparable, passages from very (p.39) varied texts and objects, without doing full justice to differences of context, author, genre, or audience which may affect their meaning. Its main advantage is that, carefully handled, it allows one to see beyond the immediate contexts of texts and objects, the imaginations of individual authors, and the demands of genre, to assumptions and habits of thought which are shared between texts, objects and their audiences, and arguably among populations more widely. The historiography of *mentalités* depends on the possibility of detecting such patterns of thought and assumption, and some qualities of the evidence give us confidence in doing so. *Pistis, fides*, and their cognates are sometimes the main focus of our sources' interest, but often they are mentioned in passing, when the main concern of an author, for instance, or a character is elsewhere. This makes it less likely that the concept is always being treated tendentiously or in a way distinctive to that author or character. The sheer breadth of material we will survey also acts as a control on individual examples. If any author, text, or object uses *pistis/fides* language in an unusual way, it should stand out, rather as a metrical abnormality stands out to someone reading a book of hexameter verses.

Pistis/fides Towards Oneself

Few things in Graeco-Roman life and society seem to have been regarded as more consistently trustworthy at this period than oneself, and in particular the evidence of one's senses. Affirmations of the senses recur in a wide range of contexts and types of literature, from proverbs to high philosophy by way of rhetoric and poetry.

Lucretius, writing as an Epicurean, takes the view that all the senses are equally trustworthy, and praises them at length in Book 4 of *On the Nature of Things*:

Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
notitiam veri neque sensus posse refelli.
nam maiore fide debet reperiri illud,
sponte sua veris quod possit vincere falsa.
quid maiore fide porro quam sensus haberi
debet?

You will find that the concept of truth arises first from the senses, and that the senses cannot be disproved. For something must be found which is more trustworthy than anything else, and can by itself refute what is false with what is true. What, then, should be held in greater faith than the senses?⁸

(p.40) For Lucretius, the senses are so fundamentally trustworthy that the very concept of truth is derived from sense impressions, and life would be unlivable if we could not trust them.⁹

In this view Epicureans seem to have gone somewhat beyond popular opinion, which tends to treat sight as more trustworthy than the other senses. Lucian and Dio Chrysostom both cite the Greek proverb that 'Eyes are more trustworthy (*pistotera*) than ears'.¹⁰ A Latin near-equivalent (which may originate as a translation of the Greek) is less stable, but appears variously in earlier sources as *credunt, quod vident; quod video, id credo mihi*; and *vidi, novi*, and in Seneca as a straight translation of the Greek proverb.¹¹ It is notable that although this appears to be a saying about the relative reliability of sense impressions, Dio and Lucian both use it to mean that autopsy is more trustworthy, not than hearing in general, but than heard speech. We shall return below to the unreliability of speech and what it purveys, but for now we may note that the proverb and the way it is used affirm at least the relative trustworthiness of sight.

Strabo claims that for the sailor, geometer, or geographer sight is more reliable (*piston*) than technology.¹² When one is determining distance and direction, one's own eyes, and even other people's observations, are generally to be trusted above one's measuring-

instruments. The anonymous scientific poem *Aetna* also holds that autopsy is a sound basis for reason and reasonable speculation:

...tu modo subtiles animo duce percipe curas
occultique fidem manifestis abstrahe rebus.

With only your mind to guide you, observe carefully what interests you
And derive confidence in what is obscure from what is clear.¹³

The relationship between autopsy and reason, however, is not always straightforward, because once reason has been informed by what one sees, and forged opinions, it may resist further input. In his account of the upbringing of Romulus and Remus (1.79.6), Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes how a herdsman, coming upon a she-wolf suckling two human babies, is struck by **(p.41)** astonishment and *apistia*. He cannot believe his eyes, and when he tells his neighbours about it, the strangeness of his story, compounded by his own difficulty in believing it, means that they flatly disbelieve his report. In the story, of course, the herdsman's eyes are right and his reason wrong, but Dionysius sympathizes with his difficulty. We saw in the Introduction, and will see again, the cycle of positive reinforcement by which trust helps to create communities, which then define, even constrain, whom one trusts. Dionysius suggests that trust in the senses works in a similar way: one trusts one's experience, and consequently experience constrains what one trusts.

Lucian is the author in this period whose use of *pistis* language is perhaps most distinctive. In particular, he uses it constantly to explore the boundaries and difficulties of belief. He also loves to play with the credulity of characters and audiences alike, toying with his readers' desire to trust what they read and his characters' desire to trust what they see or hear.¹⁴ In *A True Story* (1.7), he describes how a group of travellers in unfamiliar country come across a bronze tablet which records that Heracles and Dionysus have been there. Inscriptions enjoy a good deal of credibility in the world of the early principate; even so, the travellers balk at this one. Shortly afterwards, however, the travellers come across a river that has been turned into wine. This, says Lucian blandly, makes it much easier for them to believe (*pisteuein*) that Dionysus has indeed passed this way.

If this incident were taking place in a self-contained world in which it was not preposterous for rivers to flow with wine, then it might pass without raising more than a readerly eyebrow. By calling the piece *A True Story*, however, and introducing it with a direct address to the reader, Lucian invites the reader to deploy her own sense of what is credible as well as following that of the characters. The text then raises the question how one chooses between (the characters') autopsy and (one's own) experience-based reason, alongside the even trickier questions how one assesses eyewitness testimony from another person, and how one reads truth claims made in writing, by any author, or by a known satirist. To all these questions Lucian, characteristically, offers no answers.

In one passage of his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Philostratus treats sight, unusually, as less trustworthy than the sense of touch. (This may be just the kind of text whose credibility Lucian is challenging or making fun of in *A True Story*, full as it is of reports of miracles which Philostratus appears to take seriously—if not always to accept uncritically—and to expect his readers to take seriously.) Apollonius, brought to trial by Domitian, mysteriously disappears from the courtroom, and later the same day appears to two of his followers in a different place. They refuse to believe that they are seeing him **(p.42)** alive, until he tells them to touch him and prove it to themselves.¹⁵ Philostratus reports their convincement without comment, allowing readers to ponder for themselves whether they find Apollonius' followers' experience, or his report of it, compelling.¹⁶

Over time, as in the case of Dionysius' herdsman, trust in one's senses becomes trust in accumulated experience, from which reason draws certain conclusions about the world. Cicero appeals to this kind of experience in *For Flaccus*, when he tells the jury not to let evidence that takes them a few minutes to hear shake their confidence (*fides*) in what they have discovered for themselves about Flaccus over many years.¹⁷ In a less conflicted situation, but in a similar spirit, Pliny the Elder urges us to trust our experience when considering the best way to grow vines.¹⁸

When one's own senses have no evidence to rely on, one may try to apply reason to the evidence of other people's. This, though, is a risky business. Evidence may be equivocal, report unreliable, reason under-supported or intrinsically imperfect. In some cases, scepticism is a moral as well as a practical imperative: in *Slander* (31), for instance, Lucian advises the reader that when someone tells you something bad about another person, you should never trust (*pisteuein*) their judgement, but always investigate the truth for yourself. If one must rely on someone else's testimony, then it helps if there is some supporting evidence one can see for oneself.¹⁹

Trusting one's senses is a form of self-trust, and the validity of trusting oneself is so generally taken for granted in this period that it rarely needs to be made explicit.²⁰ After all, without some form of self-belief no one, in life or literature, could speak or act. Even Dio

Chrysostom's Oration 74, *On Distrust*, in which he tries to persuade readers that we cannot trust our enemies, friends, lovers, family, slaves, children, the elderly, women, co-religionists, or strangers, never suggests that we cannot trust ourselves.

The idea that self-trust is possible encourages philosophers indebted to Plato to see *pistis/fides* as one of those human virtues which are fragments and reflections of metaphysical virtues and ultimately of the divine. Epictetus colours this idea with his own form of Stoicism when he describes the divine as giving human beings *pistis* and asking them to exercise it:

[ὁ θεὸς] παραδέδωκέ σοι σεαυτὸν καὶ λέγει, οὐκ εἶχον ἄλλον πιστότερόν σου· τοῦτόν μοι φύλασσε τοιοῦτον οἶος πέφυκεν, αἰδήμονα, πιστόν, ὑψηλόν, ἀκατάπληκτον, ἀπαθῆ, ἀτάραχον.²¹

(p.43) [The god] has handed you over to yourself, saying, 'I had no one more trustworthy/reliable than you; keep this man for me as he was born, reverent, faithful, high-minded, undaunted, unimpassioned, undisturbed.'

The *pistis* of the human being in this case might be trustworthiness to others, but since interpersonal relations are not the focus of this list, it is perhaps more likely to mean trustworthiness/faithfulness towards the divine.²²

Philosophers are often celebrated, especially in the *chreiai* through which their personalities and some of their ideas are transmitted to audiences beyond the philosophical schools, for a quality closely related to self-trust: the self-confidence with which they stand with one foot outside society and criticize it on the basis of their understanding of the true, the good, or the divine.²³ Another group noted for self-confidence are great political and military leaders. These, however, are viewed with rather more mixed feelings by those who write about them.

The brave man, Cicero tells readers of the *Tusculan Disputations*, is *fidens*, self-confident.²⁴ In *Memorable Words and Deeds*, Valerius Maximus devotes no fewer than seventeen examples to *fiducia sui*, self-confidence or self-assurance, nearly all drawn from political and military history.²⁵ Here we find members of the Corneli family snatching dramatic victories in Spain and Africa and quarrelling with the Senate when it tried to regulate them; Livius Salinator sparing the remnants of Hasdrubal's defeated army so that they could return home and report their loss; Cato the Elder facing down his enemies in the courts.

Valerius admires such men.²⁶ The conflicts described in his stories, however, suggest that even when *fiducia sui* is justified in its own terms (Cato, for example, was innocent of the charges against him), it creates its own problems. Great men tend not to trust or cooperate with others, and do not inspire trust or cooperation; their self-confidence is more liable to put communities under stress than to build them up.

Sub-elite sources are even more ambivalent about the self-confidence of the great. The proverb 'Kelmis in iron' refers to a member of the mythical race of Dactyls. Appointed by the goddess Rhea, the mother of Zeus, to guard the baby Zeus in a cave on Mount Ida, Kelmis raped her and was imprisoned in the mountain (traditionally the source of the hardest iron) as a punishment.²⁷ **(p.44)** This proverb, says Zenodotus ominously, is aimed at all those who have too much confidence in themselves (ἐπὶ τῶν σφόδρα ἑαυτοῖς πιστευόντων). In fables, the most self-confident characters are the most powerful, but also the most dangerous and least cooperative. Lions, bears, eagles, and cats all live and hunt alone, neither trusting nor trusted.²⁸ Even in their own interests, they find it hard to collaborate²⁹ and even harder to help one another.³⁰ Their lack of trust sometimes brings rewards, in the form of power over other creatures, but it also means there is no one to help them when they get into trouble.³¹

This section began with the observation that few things are treated as more trustworthy in this period than oneself and the evidence of one's senses. Even this kind of trust now emerges as somewhat fragile or equivocal. The sense most widely described as trustworthy is sight, but even sight is often said to be trustworthy only in comparison with something else. In itself, some sources hint, it may not be as reliable as all that—but one must trust something. When one has to rely on other people's sense impressions, whether reported by themselves or others, *pistis/fides* becomes more difficult still, and since in everyday life one relies constantly on such indirect information, this is a disturbing prospect. Moreover, trust in one's senses defers to reason and experience, which can conflict with new sensory evidence and lead one astray. As for the self-trust or self-confidence of the wise and the great: it may enable philosophers effectively to criticize their society, and soldiers and statesmen to perform memorable deeds, but it comes at a cost. It rarely fosters trusting relationships or strengthens social bonds.³²

Many of the examples above show trust closely intertwined with belief, and in the process show that neither trust nor belief is self-sufficient. Strabo trusts his measurements because he believes his eyes, but believing that his eyes are right, on any given occasion, is an act of trust. The jurors trying Flaccus are urged to trust what they have learned to believe about Flaccus over years, but the very fact

that Flaccus is on trial must make them wonder whether their beliefs are mistaken. Even in the relatively simple field of trust in oneself and **(p.45)** one's senses, therefore, we can see emerging some of the complexities explored in the Introduction. *Pistis/fides* is necessary, but risky, hopeful, and doubtful. It seesaws between trust and belief; it struggles to find a foundation, and constantly defers to something else.

Family Members and Lovers

For Tacitus, at the beginning of the *Histories*, one of the few good points of the turbulent age he is about to describe is the *fides* that persisted within families and between family members and slaves.³³ *Pistis/fides* language is widely used of familial and domestic relationships, and like self-trust and trust in one's senses, it tends to be presented in these contexts as relatively reliable.³⁴

Within families, *pistis/fides* language is most often used of blood relationships, and describes them in several different aspects. For Epictetus, practising *pistis* towards one's parents and children, which involves in both cases not pursuing one's own self-interest at others' expense but exercising love, forbearance, cooperation, and good relations, is part of being the son and the father one should be.³⁵ Funerary inscriptions often celebrate the mutual *pistis/fides* of parents and children. A father, for example, may record that he has built a tomb for himself and his children, trusting that they will follow his wishes and be buried with him, or an heir may record that he has made good the *pistis/fides* placed in him by building a family tomb according to his deceased father's instructions.³⁶ On the tomb of Gaius Iulius Zoilus of Aphrodisias and his heirs, built around the turn of the millennium, the figure of *Pistis* appears next to that of *Aretē* in a series of personified divine qualities which celebrate the family's shared virtues.³⁷

Pistis/fides in these examples may be best characterized as a mixture of mutual trust and loyalty and the recognition and pursuit of shared interests. In other contexts, the *pistis/fides* of parents and children is more markedly asymmetrical. According to Dio Chrysostom's oration *On Trust*, a man is **(p.46)** entrusted with a family much as he is with estates or political office, and they become something for whose thriving he is responsible.³⁸ A poor man, giving his son up for adoption to a childless rich man in a declamation exercise, tells his rebellious offspring: *crede fidei meae, hoc fieri expedit*, 'Trust my good faith: this is expedient.'³⁹ Sons are not infrequently described as trusting their fathers and/or loyal to them, or urged to be so.⁴⁰ This may involve following in their father's footsteps and learning to be like him. According to Diodorus Siculus, the sons of Chaldean soothsayers learn their profession with greater *pistis* (which seems to mean something like 'reliability', with overtones of trustworthiness and conviction) when they learn from their fathers.⁴¹ Onasander claims that the children of a general, brought up to follow in his footsteps, become some of his best advisors and *pistoi*, 'trustworthy' guardians of his secrets.⁴²

In some of these passages the focus is on the *pistis/fides* of sons to fathers and in others that of fathers towards sons. *Pistis/fides* also operates in both directions between sons and mothers. In another declamation exercise, a man who has been thought dead reappears at home, allegedly having been rescued from slavery. His grandmother claims to recognize him; his mother does not. The speaker dwells at length on this failure of recognition, which is the worst thing the man could have feared, and damages his relationship with his mother *supra fidem*, beyond anything the bond between them should have allowed.⁴³ Alcibiades, in Plutarch's *Life*, can think of no more trenchant way to describe the utter untrustworthiness of the people of Athens as jurors than to say that he would not trust (*pisteuein*) even his own mother to find him innocent of treason.⁴⁴ The mother-son bond, the message seems to be, should be sacrosanct.

In one famous story a mother uses her son's *pistis* towards her to end a war.⁴⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes how, when the Roman war-leader Coriolanus is about to march against Rome (having transferred *pistis* from his own family and people to the Volscians), the women of Rome beg his mother, Veturia, to intercede for them.⁴⁶ Taking his wife and children, she goes to his **(p.47)** camp to reason with him. She tells him that she has not come to ask him to betray the trust the Volscians have put in him (48.1, 5), but to persuade him to persuade them to withdraw. If he cannot overcome his unreasonable hatred of Rome, then he should remember that he owes her, as his mother, his life and is therefore bound to do anything she asks of him without making excuses. 'For this is the right which the law of nature has ordained for all who have a share of sense and reason, and putting my trust (*pisteuousa*) in this law, Marcius my son, I require you not to make war on your native land' (51.2). If he does attack Rome, he will have to do it, literally, over her dead body—but she does not think he will, and she is right.⁴⁷

Pistis/fides between siblings seems usually to be taken to be both reciprocal and symmetrical, but occasionally their roles diverge, and with them, the nature of their *pistis/fides*. In *On Consolation, to Helvia*, for example, Seneca imagines Helvia's sister offering support in her grief with a heart that is *fidelissimum* towards her.⁴⁸

Pistis/fides does not always function well within families, but sources of all kinds attest a strong expectation that it will; occasions

when it is represented as malfunctioning are relatively rare and always treated as abnormal. The same is true of the closest of all non-blood relationships, the bond between husbands and wives.

Husbands and wives are sometimes portrayed, as in this tombstone from Faventia, as enjoying a reciprocal *pistis/fides* not unlike that of siblings or close friends:

Digna fui merito meo rara sodali,
 unus amor mansit, par quoque vita fidelis:
 si doluit aliqui, me quoque iunxi dolori;
 par fui dum potui. dulcis vale kare sodalis.⁴⁹
 I was worthy as few are of my companion,
 One love remained [between us], and a life equal in fidelity;
 If he suffered in any way I shared his suffering;
 I matched him while I could. Farewell sweet beloved companion.

Marriage, says Plutarch, is the beginning of many good things between husband and wife, including *pistis*, while a first-century Italian couple from (p.48) Anagni inscribe their mutual trust/faithfulness in a dedication to *fides sua*.⁵⁰ More often, we find *pistis/fides* characterized as a quality of wives towards their husbands, in something like the sense ‘devoted loyalty’ or faithfulness.⁵¹ This is the quality of which Lucretia, who committed suicide after being forced to betray her husband sexually, is the ideal for Romans. Valerius Maximus devotes a whole section of his collection to it (6.7), between *fides publica* and the *fides* of slaves. It is conventional to record the faithfulness of one’s wife among her domestic virtues on her funerary inscription:

Casta fide semper torum maritale dilexit
 sobria, non moecha, simplex animoque benigno,
 dedita coniugi soli suo, ignara alienum.
 With chaste good faith/faithfulness she always delighted in the marriage bed,
 Sober, no adulteress, straightforward, with a kind heart,
 She was given to her husband alone, unknowing of any other.⁵²

We rarely gain any impression from either literature or inscriptions that there is such a thing as too much conjugal *pistis/fides*, but one story in Plutarch’s *On the Bravery of Women* hints at the possibility. When Chiomara, wife of Ortiagon of Galatia, was taken prisoner at the defeat of the Galatians by the Romans in 189 BCE, she was first raped and then ransomed. At the point when she was handed back to the Galatians, she incited one of them to cut off her captor’s head. Wrapping it in her tunic, she brought the head to her husband as a trophy. Plutarch captures the horror of the man for whom good faith between enemies is at least as important as that between spouses: ‘Woman, *pistis* is a precious thing!’ ‘Yes,’ says his wife robustly, ‘but it is even better that there should only be one man alive who has slept with me.’⁵³ What became of this enterprising character Plutarch does not report, but he does mention that Polybius met her long afterwards in Sardis, and admired her good sense and intelligence.

Occasionally a wife’s *pistis/fides* helps, or even saves, her husband. The *Laudatio Turiae*, a funerary oration by a husband on his wife inscribed around the turn of the millennium, uses *fides* language in some of its most elevated passages to describe how Turia aided her husband’s career.⁵⁴ *Fides*, her (p.49) husband affirms, was one of Turia’s many domestic virtues (30). When he was exiled, moreover, she remained *fidissima*, defending his interests at considerable risk to her own safety (43–4). For that reason, when she despaired (*diffidens*) of her ability to bear children and suggested that her husband divorce her, he refused angrily, determined not to break *fides* with a woman who had been so faithful so effectively to him.⁵⁵ Occasionally, though more rarely, we also hear of the unilateral *pistis/fides* of husbands to wives.⁵⁶

If *pistis/fides* between husbands and wives, however, is normally portrayed in positive terms, *pistis/fides* between more distant relatives, especially in-laws and step-relations, but also uncles and cousins, is much more often described as problematic. Stepmothers are proverbially wicked and not to be trusted.⁵⁷ *Fides*, perhaps mutual confidence/good faith between a father-in-law and son-in-law, is sufficiently unusual to attract comment by Cicero in *For Flaccus* (93). Matters of money, inheritance, or other legal issues are frequently at the root of tensions in these relationships (it is no coincidence that much of the language of trust in Roman law—*bona fides*, *fideicommissum*, *fideiussor*, and so on—concerns financial transactions or inheritance law).⁵⁸ According to Diodorus Siculus, the archaic lawgiver of the Chalcidic colony of Catana, Charondas, went so far as to write a law to protect orphaned minors, whereby their property was managed by the next of kin on the father’s side, while the mother’s side took custody of the child.

He divided up the family's responsibility in this way to incentivize both sides to preserve *pistis*: the mother's family would not kill the child because they had not been entrusted with the property, while the father's could not because the mother's had custody.⁵⁹ The capacity of legal matters to fray trust, moreover, is not limited to matters of inheritance. In his essay on all kinds of curiosity and meddlesomeness (*polypragmosynē*), Plutarch notes that: 'We prefer to trust (*pisteuomen mallon*) letters and documents and seals to slaves and strangers than to inquisitive friends and relations.'⁶⁰

In-laws, step-relatives, and more distant relations are almost reliably untrustworthy, but the relationships in this section which cause the most uncertainty—mingling hope, trust, and confidence with fear, doubt, and despair—are those between men and women whose marital status is unspecified, and above all between lovers. 'Don't trust a woman even if she's dead', runs the Greek proverb—and is gratuitously glossed by ps.-Diogenianus: 'Because one must not trust a woman.'⁶¹ Gnomie sayings from Greek poets are equally negative: 'Don't trust a woman with your livelihood.' 'Women and (p.50) lionesses are equally savage.'⁶² Women's looks, complains Horace, are calculated to deceive,⁶³ and Greek and Latin love poetry resounds to cries of *apistos! perfidus! infida!*⁶⁴ A bitter quatrain which has been ascribed, among others, to Marcus or Quintus Cicero or Petronius runs:

Crede ratem ventis, animum ne crede puellis;
 Namque est feminea tutior unda fide.
 Femina nulla bona est, vel, si bona contigit una,
 Nescio quo fato est res mala facta bona.
 Trust your raft to the winds, but do not trust your heart to a girl,
 For the wave is safer than a woman's faith.
 There is no such thing as a good woman, or, if a good one does exist,
 I do not know by what fate a good thing was made from a bad.

Fides and *amicitia*, says Ovid cheerfully in *The Art of Love*, are empty words in love affairs.⁶⁵

When lovers marry, or husbands and wives are being described as lovers rather than as fellow-members of a household, the untrustworthiness of lovers occasionally infects spouses too.⁶⁶ And when husbands and wives are separated, they sometimes begin to worry about one another's faithfulness. Ovid's reassurances to himself in the *Tristia* that his wife, far away in Rome, keeps *fides* with him while he is in exile, have audible overtones of fear and doubt. 'You, the Great and Little Bear, turn your shining faces on my lady, and tell me whether she remembers me or not...Why does my hope falter, mingled with fear? Believe what you want to believe, and what is true, and stop being afraid for what is safe, and have perfect confidence in her perfect faithfulness (*crede, quod est et vis, ac desine tuta vereri, deque fide certa sit tibi certa fides*).' 'What a monument I have given you in my little books, my wife...that no one should think [my testimony about you] is given rashly, stand firm, and keep me and your loyal faithfulness (*piam...fidem*) alike.'⁶⁷

Pistis/fides within the family is so foundational that it is sometimes seen as threatening other relationships which are also properly characterized by trust. (p.51) The Roman general Corvinus, ordered to lead an army against a group of rebel soldiers and their allies in 343 BCE, persuaded the Senate not to fight, on the grounds that some of his soldiers were related to the rebels and he could not trust their *pistis* to him or Rome if pitted against family feeling.⁶⁸ Conversely, Plutarch cannot hide his disapproval when he describes Sulla putting his trust (*pisteusas*) in a barbarian who had already betrayed his own family. How could such a man be trusted by anyone else?⁶⁹

Masters and Slaves

We hear relatively rarely of the *pistis/fides* of masters towards slaves in this period,⁷⁰ but frequently of the *pistis/fides* of slaves towards masters. Most such references affirm the faithfulness of slaves to their masters, often in passing, when the focus of the narrative is elsewhere.⁷¹ (Affirmation, of course, does not necessarily imply certainty. *Pistos* appears as a slave name in Graeco-Egyptian papyri and occasionally in literature, and may point to the assurances of dealers or the hopes of masters rather than the actual behaviour of the slaves.⁷²) Occasionally someone refers to the difficulty of finding a slave who is *pistos/fidelis*.⁷³ It is, though, surprising how rarely slaves are referred to as untrustworthy, particularly given the rich tradition of duplicitous slaves on the Greek and Roman stage, and the fact that slaves could be tortured at law because their evidence was not otherwise thought to be trustworthy.⁷⁴

Valerius Maximus regards the *fides* of slaves as so significant an aspect of *fides* in general that he gives it its own section in *Memorable Words and Deeds*. His examples of *fides* of slaves towards masters all occur in extreme and abnormal circumstances, and in this he follows a well-established tradition. The slave who runs through his master on the battlefield rather than see him (p.52)

fall into enemy hands is a topos of Roman literature.⁷⁵ At the crisis of his political career, C. Gracchus is decapitated at his own demand by his faithful slave Philocrates.⁷⁶ A slave of C. Plotius Plancus refuses to reveal the whereabouts of his proscribed master under torture, while one of Urbinius Panapio's slaves changes clothes with him when he is proscribed and being hunted down, and is killed in his place.⁷⁷

These examples introduce a theme to which we shall return, that *pistis/fides* very often comes to the fore in times of crisis. (Not always, of course: slaves, and freedmen, are sometimes celebrated on their tombstones as *fidus*, *fidelissimus*, or *pistos*, and presumably most of the time this refers to a lifetime of ordinary, everyday loyalty to a master or mistress rather than to anything more spectacular.⁷⁸) These examples also illustrate something of the complex interaction of structures and relationships in the operation of *pistis/fides* between those who are not social equals. In principle, *pistis/fides* need not exist at all between a slave and master, who inhabit a coercive social structure reinforced by law.⁷⁹ In practice, *pistis/fides* is claimed to exist quite often, and not only complicates but occasionally reverses the inequalities imposed by law and convention.⁸⁰ In Chapter 12 I will argue that ethical systems have a claim to be treated as a social structure in their own right, and qualities such as *pistis/fides* between masters and slaves fit this model well. They can operate either in tandem with other social structures, such as slavery, or independently of them, because they are not so much ancillary to other social structures as parallel to them and interactive with them.⁸¹

With that observation, we may take opportunity to pause and reflect a little further on some of the ways in which we have found *pistis/fides* operating so far. We have seen that *pistis/fides* exists in relationships between social equals and unequals, and that it is a quality of both superior and subaltern partners in relationships. It can be characterized as holding all the partners together in a shared enterprise (such as the thriving of a household), or as structuring their complementarity: fitting them together like the pieces of a social jigsaw.⁸² To capture the nuances of these relationships we have used a wide range of terms in English, including trust, trustworthiness, faithfulness, loyalty, reliability, confidence, credibility, belief, and good faith. The unity of the *pistis* and *fides* lexica in Latin and Greek, however, expresses, first, the dependence of all their meanings on trust; secondly, the inevitable interdependence of trust (**p.53**) relationships; and thirdly, the fact that (sometimes contrary to initial appearances) the two ends of a trust relationship are not only complementary and different: they are simultaneously complementary and the same. If I am entrusted with an estate, I do not fulfil that trust unless I act in good faith. If I ask my son to trust me for his welfare, then for a relationship of trust to exist between us I must be trustworthy. (Of course, I could betray my son's trust, but then we would not be in a relationship of *pistis/fides*; he would be deluded.) I cannot remain a faithful wife to my husband unless he remains faithful, in the sense of remaining my husband, to me (if he is Greek or Roman, this naturally has no implications for his sexual behaviour). At the same time, for the landowner to farm his estate, the father to look after his son, or the husband and wife to remain married, each must trust the other to fulfil their side of the relationship and believe that they will; each must be loyal over time; each must be reliable and have confidence in the other; each must negotiate their fear or doubt that the other will not be trustworthy. And, as we have seen, all these aspects of *pistis/fides* defer continually to others, above all trust to belief and vice versa.

The inescapable reciprocity of *pistis/fides* means that within relationships of *pistis/fides*, power (encompassing all kinds of status and authority) never runs all one way. This, along with the fact that *pistis/fides* does not depend on other social structures to operate, but can exist wherever two or more people associate, means that it inflects social relations as powerfully as it is inflected by them.⁸³ The power in slavery, for instance, may, in law, belong with the owner, but *pistis/fides* is one of the reasons why in social practice it cannot. When, for example, a slave has the opportunity to display exceptional *pistis/fides* in his master's moment of crisis, as in the exempla of Valerius Maximus, the power in their relationship is substantially reversed.

That being so, it is worth noting that Greek and Latin texts tend to avoid referring to the *pistis/fides* of both parties to a relationship in the same text or passage. Where the social status of the participants is unequal, in particular, our sources seem to shy away from marking the reciprocal nature of their relationship. Perhaps marking its reciprocity might in some contexts seem to mitigate or complicate too much the relationship's hierarchical structure. (This conceptual awkwardness is one to which action nominals are peculiarly prone. One can, in contrast, praise the *clementia* of the emperor or a worshipper's *pietas* without any implied disturbance of the status of its object.)

Another way in which *pistis/fides*, however carefully handled, might be seen as complicating the structures in which it operates is through its emotional aspect. When *pistis/fides* operates between master and slave, for instance, or (**p.54**) father and son, it may imply not only that they enact the trust/faithfulness/loyalty which is conventional within the structure of their relationship, but also that they have an emotional commitment to one another. One could imagine this interacting unpredictably with the structure of the relationship, adding a different kind of reciprocity and destabilizing, even reversing, the balance of power. The senses in which *pistis* or *fides* might be said to be an emotion are discussed in Chapter 11. It is worth noting here, though, that although one can make a

case that aspects of *pistis/fides* have something in common with aspects of some emotions, I have not found it called an emotion nor discussed as one in Greek or Roman writing, and its claim to be seen as one is insecure.⁸⁴ This is significant in the light of the assumption by some modern scholars of the New Testament that affective aspects of *pistis* are central to its meaning for New Testament writers. Unless New Testament writers are strikingly out of line with other writings of the period, it is not likely that affective aspects of *pistis* are ever at the forefront of their treatment of it. In the context of relationships between fellow-members of households and other individuals, we can posit a potential emotional dimension to these relationships capable of adding complexity to their structure, but we must acknowledge that it is never explicit and only arguably implicit. Counter-intuitive as it may be to modern sensibilities, when writings of this period portray *pistis/fides* their interest is scarcely at all in its interiority but in its exterior, active, interactive, and productive aspects.⁸⁵ How a master feels about his slave or a father about his son may not, in principle, be irrelevant to their relationship of *pistis/fides*, but our sources show minimal interest in exploring it. (It is also worth noting in this connection that although *pistis/fides* sometimes appears in Hellenistic virtue lists, and as a virtue philosophers would see it as existing in the mind or heart, its interiority does not attract any discussion, as does that of some other virtues. Even when it is characterized as a virtue, it seems, it is the exterior, active, relational aspects of *pistis/fides* that interest our sources.⁸⁶)

It has been mentioned that *pistis* or *fides* often appears in some form in funerary inscriptions—of men and women, slaves, free, and freedmen—and it is worth reflecting briefly on the peculiar authority that tombstones give to such qualities. In funerary inscriptions *pistis/fides* is not usually attached to any particular activity, though it is often attached to a particular relationship. It becomes a virtue which the dead person possessed over time and now has forever. It ceases to be temporary, risky, hopeful, doubtful, vulnerable to deception, and constantly in a process of deferral, and becomes, literally and figuratively, monumental: unequivocal and incorruptible. In their commemorations, the dead in their necropoleis become archetypes which set a standard (p.55) for later generations in their cities, and challenge them to live up to it. By this means, funerary inscriptions do as much as any form of writing to affirm and transmit the role of *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman society.

Friends

Friendship is among the most complex concepts in Greek and Roman social discourse, encompassing a vast range of relationships in an equally vast range of contexts. *Pistis* and *fides* between friends, in the broadest sense, particularly in the political sphere, have been the subject of numerous studies which need not be replicated here,⁸⁷ nor is this the place to ponder which of the almost infinitely many shades of *philia* or *amicitia* are in play in all the passages of literature where they are linked with trust. We may, however, highlight some trends in the presentation of *pistis/fides* between *philoï* or *amici* in this period which are particularly significant for the present project.

Pistis/fides between friends is, unsurprisingly, universally regarded, in principle, as a good thing. ‘So trust your friend that there is no space for your enemy’, advises a gnomic saying culled from Publilius Syrus.⁸⁸ Being *pistos/fidus/fidelis* towards one’s friends is marked as a virtue in anything from an everyday to a technical, philosophical sense,⁸⁹ while trusting and being trustworthy are regularly said, by literary characters and authors *in propria persona*, to be part of the way friends behave.⁹⁰ Being a loyal friend is a quality important enough to be inscribed on one’s tombstone: so, for example, the gravestone of Paramonos of Edessa from the early third century tells us that he was ‘a good man, faithful to all his friends’.⁹¹ Friends who remain loyal when one is in trouble are especially praiseworthy, and loyalty to one’s friends is a redeeming feature even of those who have betrayed others or caused trouble in the state.⁹² If anything, says Aelius Aristides, one should err on the side of excessive faithfulness towards one’s friends; to abandon them, whether in good times or bad, is a sure sign of bad character.⁹³ In politics or business, (p.56) at the library, the gymnasium, or the bathhouse, to be *infidus* or *perfidus* towards a friend is equally unforgivable.⁹⁴ The essence of wickedness, according to Dio Chrysostom, is to be led by greed into ignoble and unjust actions involving disloyalty to one’s friends: such a person is shamed with the label *apistos*.⁹⁵

Despite all this commendation of *pistis* and *fides* between friends in principle, it is also recognized as often problematic in practice.⁹⁶ ‘Do not trust the appearances of all your friends’, advises a gnomic saying on papyrus.⁹⁷ Philostratus finds wisdom in Homer: ‘Hateful as the gates of hell to me is the man who says one thing and hides another in his heart.’⁹⁸ In fables, as I have argued elsewhere, the most striking characteristic of those who try to make friends is their lack of both trust and trustworthiness.⁹⁹ ‘An eagle, flying down to a lion, suggested that they join forces. “Why not?” said the lion. “But you will need to give me your primary wing feathers to ensure that you do not renege on your pledge (*pistis*). How can I trust you as a friend if you do not stay with me?” (πῶς γὰρ φίλοι σοι μὴ μένοντι πιστεύσω;)’ ‘A dog started a hare on a mountain and pursued him, snapping at him when he caught up with him, and then turning and fawning on him, patting him like a friend. The hare said, “Be a straightforward animal. Are you a friend? Why do you bite me? Are you an enemy? Why do you fawn on me?” The minds of men are ambiguous, when we can neither trust nor mistrust them.’¹⁰⁰

Trust between those who might be friends in fables is at best fragile and temporary, at worst non-existent. 'High' literature is not quite so pessimistic, but even here trust between friends is constantly presented as problematic. When Solon, for example, in Plutarch's *Life*, tells his closest friends that he is going to cancel the Athenians' debts, they promptly betray his trust by taking the opportunity to borrow large sums of money which they know they will not have to pay back.¹⁰¹ Cicero's speeches and letters are full of the language of *fides*: assertions that others have it, worries about whether they have it, and reproaches to them for not having it.¹⁰² 'It is unbelievable', he writes to Atticus in 59, 'how much I rely on your...love and *fides*' (*credibile non est quantum ego in [tuo]...amore et fide ponam*).¹⁰³ A year later he writes: 'If I were criticizing your *fides*, I should not trust myself (*crederem*) to your house [as (p.57) a refuge]; I blame my own foolishness, because I thought you cared for me as much as I wanted.'¹⁰⁴ 'Friendship is a great thing,' he can write in *On Ends* (1.65–7), which does not stop him worrying constantly about his own *fides* and that of others towards him.¹⁰⁵

Ovid has a persistent interest in *fides*. His love poetry laments the difficulty of trusting a lover, his poems from exile the difficulty of trusting friends. In the latter, he alternately asserts that various friends and relations are *fideles*,¹⁰⁶ asks them to remain *fideles*,¹⁰⁷ insists that he will not believe that they have abandoned *fides*,¹⁰⁸ and upbraids them for renegeing on their *fides*, *fiducia*, and *amicitia*.¹⁰⁹ Dio Chrysostom, in *On Distrust*, goes even further and asserts that not only enemies but friends harm each other all the time. If Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus were true friends, then they were the only characters in history who were; the rest of us cannot hope to trust anyone.¹¹⁰

Sometimes *pistis* or *fides* is remembered nostalgically as a quality of friendships of the past, from the mythical past of the golden age to the semi-mythologized past of the Roman middle republic.¹¹¹ The ancient Spartans had it, according to Plutarch.¹¹² Men of the earlier republic had it, according to Sallust, but lost it when Fortuna took control over their affairs and they grew rich and powerful.¹¹³ In the contemporary world, however, it is widely agreed that trust between friends is almost insurmountably risky and problematic.

The philosophically minded sometimes try to fortify the connection between friendship and *pistis/fides* by deferring trust to proof. Before making a friend one should test his virtue, including his trustworthiness. True friendship, says Cicero, can only exist between good men, whose virtues include *fides*.¹¹⁴ In *On Friendship* he claims, *firmamentum autem stabilitatis constantiaeque est eius quam in amicitia quaerimus fides est*: '*fides* is the basis of the stability and constancy for which we look in friendship.'¹¹⁵

Seneca criticizes one of his correspondents for referring to someone as a friend when he does not fully trust him. One must trust a friend as one trusts oneself, he asserts, and to this end test his virtue rigorously before granting him *fides*.¹¹⁶ No doubt to make friends only with good men, or to test one's acquaintances rigorously before admitting them to trust and friendship, is the action of a prudent person, but when philosophers set the bar for credible (p.58) friendship as high as this, one cannot help feeling that they view most people's trust as a fragile quality indeed.¹¹⁷

Anyone who makes friends without determining that the person is trustworthy is simply asking for trouble. Epictetus offers a cautionary scenario, generously sprinkled with *pistis* language. A soldier sits down beside you at a public event and starts to speak ill of the emperor. You feel as if his confidence gives you *pistis*—an earnest of his trustworthiness. Trustingly, you start to respond in kind—and the next thing you know, you are being led off to prison in chains. People who tell you all about themselves, Epictetus concludes, are not necessarily either trusting or trustworthy: they are just loose-tongued and potentially dangerous.¹¹⁸ 'Remember, therefore, in general, that words spoken in confidence depend on trust and suchlike judgements (οἱ ἀπόρρητοι λόγοι πίστεως χρείαν ἔχουσι καὶ δογμάτων τοιούτων); but where can one easily find those nowadays?'

Related to the sense of some authors that one can trust only a virtuous man as a friend is the paradoxical but widespread view that one can trust a man who is—trustworthy. This, at first sight a tautology, is better seen as another example of deferral: one can trust someone who possesses the virtue of *pistis/fides*. In *On Duties* (2.33), Cicero tells us that there are two ways of gaining the *fides* of other people: by acquiring a reputation for wisdom and justice (because people tend to trust those whom they think understand more than they do themselves, and who can therefore predict the future and deal with crises), or simply by being *bonus*. People put *fides* in *boni* because their soundness of character means that they will always be trustworthy.¹¹⁹ We have already encountered individuals who enjoy self-confidence because they find themselves trustworthy, but that empowering condition need not be based on possessing the virtue of *pistis/fides*. Having *pistis/fides* as a virtue enables not only one to trust oneself, but other people to trust one with good reason.

The virtue of *pistis/fides*, like *pistis/fides* more widely, is usually attributed either to men of the past or to the dead on their tombstones.¹²⁰ From time to time, however, our sources encounter it among the living, and when they do, it is so powerful and attractive a quality that it can challenge all other trust commitments, even those reified in institutions in which, otherwise, a great

deal of trust is placed. Aulus Gellius tells how once, while acting as a judge of private suits, he heard a man from whom a sum of money was claimed claim (p.59) that he had already paid it. The man could not produce documents or witnesses, but to Gellius it was obvious *virum esse firme bonum notaeque et expertae fidei et vitae inculpatissimae*, 'he was a thoroughly good man, of well-known and tested good faith and most blameless life'. The claimant, on the other hand, was clearly a low and perfidious creature. The claimant's advocates argued that his moral character was irrelevant in law. Gellius, as a loyal servant of the law, found himself in a quandary, seeing the force of the legal point, but unable to bring himself to convict a man of perceived *fides*. In the end, he took an oath that he could not make a decision and was relieved of the case.¹²¹ Cicero goes a step further and tells the story of an Athenian man who, approaching the altar to take an oath that his evidence in a court case was the truth, was prevented by the jurors, who cried that it would be a shame to think that the *fides* of an honest man was secured by an oath rather than by his good character.¹²²

In the latter case, if the Athenians had not trusted the man for his perceived honest character, they could have appealed to a powerful reification of deferred trust: an oath taken at an altar. If they had done so, then the shared trust of all present in the gods and their willingness to punish the untrustworthy, as expressed in the oath, should have been enough to create a presumption of trustworthiness and hence trust. Plutarch tells a story in which this happens. After the murder of Romulus, a patrician, a *pistos* and intimate friend of Romulus, swears to having seen him transformed into a god. The people of Rome, trusting both the character of the man and the oath he takes, decide that his report is *piston* and conclude that Romulus has been not murdered but translated.¹²³ Here the fact that the man was a trusted friend of Romulus, his apparent character, and the oath he takes all conspire to encourage the people to trust him. Ironically, in this case, trust is misplaced, since Plutarch makes clear that he thinks the man was lying.

In *Topics* (78), Cicero observes that identifying *pistis/fides* in friends and associates is a hit-and-miss affair. In general, he says, people regard as virtuous not those who are, but those who seem to be. Those who have great gifts and have lived what are popularly regarded as good lives are admired by the rest of the population as models of what they would like to be, and these—whether they are men of affairs, orators, historians, philosophers, or poets—are the men who are given *fides*. On the positive side, this hints that it may in practice be more common to credit others with the virtue of *pistis/fides* in Cicero's day than he or other literary sources suggest. On the negative side, it indicates that (p.60) such judgements are generally wrong: people's perception of trustworthiness is based on what they admire, which is based on what they would themselves like to be rather than on anything that a philosopher would call a virtue.

Athenaeus tells a *chreia* which makes fun of people's tendency to attribute *pistis* to those they admire, without making it any less disturbing. Seeing Diogenes in the distance, laughing with some friends, his parasite Chirisophus laughed too. When Diogenes asked him why, he said: 'Oh, I trust you (ὁμῖν...πιστεύω) that whatever was said was funny.'¹²⁴ Only a sycophant, the implication is, would base trust, even in something as trivial as a joke, on appearances like this.

Pistis/fides in Public Life: Freedmen, Patrons, Clients, and Other Individuals

The tendency of people to trust those they admire and aspire to imitate, and the fact that the appearance of trustworthiness can be cultivated whether or not one actually possesses the virtue, is particularly useful to those in public life, and is well recognized as such. Above all, it is useful to orators. In *The Parts of Oratory* (28), Cicero puts the insight of the *Topics* into his father's mouth to very different effect. The introduction to a speech, says the elder Tullius, is designed to ensure that the speaker is heard amiably, intelligently, and attentively, by presenting him as a man of virtues, including *fides*. Again, *fides* rests on the perception of a man's personality, which itself is judged by the qualities the audience already values—but orators, even Cicero, are evidently content to exploit the fact without worrying too much about its ethical implications.¹²⁵

Dio Chrysostom warns his audience not only against trusting individuals on the basis of their perceived trustworthiness, but also against letting themselves be trusted in this way. People, he says, typically place too much confidence and hope in those they trust, promote them to office, and then are disappointed in them, throw them out, and may even prosecute them and put them to death.¹²⁶ (We might see the behaviour of the electorate here as a kind of deferral of trust to the magistrate's hoped-for good behaviour in the future.) If one difficulty with *pistis/fides* as a virtue is that it is difficult to diagnose accurately, another is that people are apt to expect too much from it.

Yet another is perhaps that, although the appearance of *pistis/fides* makes a great impression on those who encounter it directly, it does not translate well (p.61) into *oratio obliqua*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells of a consul who claims to have information about a plot which he regards as trustworthy because it comes from another individual whom he thinks trustworthy.¹²⁷ The Senate, however, does not share the consul's trust in his report, and forces him to make his own case for the intelligence. However attractive *pistis/fides* may be as a virtue, it seems it is hard to create confidence in it at second hand.

The idea that there is a ‘virtue’ form of *pistis/fides* which enables some individuals to be trusted absolutely is a powerful and compelling one. At the same time, our sources are anxiously aware that such, is easy to fake, easy to mistake, hard to identify even at first hand, and even harder at second hand. ‘It isn’t to be believed, even if Cato says it,’ says Plutarch quoting what is apparently a proverb.¹²⁸ Even the proverbially trustworthy, it seems, cannot always be trusted.

In some of these and many other examples in this section, the individuals concerned could be seen as either friends or political associates. Some slippage between these categories is inevitable, given that the language of friendship is endemic in Greek and Roman public life, expressing all kinds of political alliances and patron–client relations, while friends in private life may also be political allies and vice versa. Elsewhere in public life, trust between friends is especially characteristic of two contexts, one rather specialized and one extremely widespread: conspiracies, and relations between patrons and clients.

Co-conspirators, both Greek and Roman, are commonly both friends and *pistoi/fideles*, but the nature of their trust may be described rather differently depending on how the writer who describes it views their activities.¹²⁹ In two accounts by Plutarch of conspiracies in what those involved believe is a good cause—the restoration of democracy to Thebes in 379/8 BCE and the overthrow of Julius Caesar—the conspirators trust one another without deferring their trust to proofs of good faith or reifying it in oaths.¹³⁰ In contrast, in Sallust’s account of the Catilinarian conspiracy Catiline, disloyal himself and untrusting of others, forces his co-conspirators to take an oath before he will trust them with the details of his plan.¹³¹

Given the intimate relationship between patronage and the language of friendship in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, it is perhaps surprising that patron–client relations are not more often explicitly characterized as having **(p.62)** *pistis* or *fides*.¹³² When they are, it is, as in master–slave relations, often at a moment of crisis. Even his client’s loyalty, says Valerius Maximus, could not save L. Villius Annalis when, having been proscribed, he took refuge with him.¹³³ Seneca’s Medea seeks the *fides* of Creon’s protection when Jason abandons her.¹³⁴ *In propria persona*, Seneca suggests that a client may repay a patron for favours received by giving him *fidele consilium*, advice in good faith, at moments of decision. Alternatively, one might provoke such a moment by shocking him out of *stultam fiduciam*, his mindless confidence that his power will last forever.¹³⁵

When patronage is working well, the *pistis/fides* of each party helps them not only to do business with one another, but to extend their relationships in new and productive directions. Pliny the Younger makes free use of *fides* language in what one might call ‘networking’ letters. Commending some connection of his own to a third party, he often comments on their *fidelitas* or *fides* as friends or his *fiducia*, confidence, in them as their friend.¹³⁶ By using his *fides* with his friends or patrons to help those in whom he claims to have confidence in himself, Pliny is following a well-recognized convention, and there is no reason to suppose that he is pulling a confidence trick, not least because his own *fides* would not survive many such practices.¹³⁷ Rather, he is persuading one person to trust another for the benefit of all three parties.¹³⁸ (It is, incidentally, striking that Pliny includes such letters in his published corpus. It suggests that he sets considerable store by his achievements in extending *fides* from one person to another, and by extension that he does not take success for granted. Given, as we saw above, how difficult it can be to convince one person or group of the *pistis/fides* of another at second hand, he is surely right not to take success for granted. The inclusion of these letters, then, is perhaps meant to display and monumentalize the exceptional personal *fides* which enables him to create *fides* relationships in others.)

A set of bronze tablets, dated to 177 CE, shows *fides* in action in North African patron–client relations in a way which Pliny would have found entirely appropriate. Leaders of the Zegrenses, a Mauritanian tribe, have written to the emperor asking for Roman citizenship for their wives and children. With their letters they have enclosed endorsements from local Roman procurators testifying to their exceptional *fides*. The emperor responds **(p.63)** affirmatively. The *fides* of the tribal leaders helps to maintain *pax Romana*; the emperor acts with *fides* as their patron, while the procurators use their *fides* with both parties to oil the wheels.¹³⁹

At the same time, it comes as no surprise (particularly given the fragilities of *pistis/fides* between friends) that *pistis/fides*, or the lack of it, between patrons and clients generates constant doubt and anxiety in our sources. A man cannot really have *fides* towards you at all, says Seneca, if your relationship is that of client and patron: true friends live in your heart, not in your atrium.¹⁴⁰ His Medea, who seeks Creon’s *fides* as a step towards destroying his family, is an extreme case, but (patrons might worry) not by that token a unique one. Juvenal offers readers a monstrous fictional client who calls his patron *ingrate et perfide* because he does not appreciate the fact that the client has ‘saved’ his wife from virginity and given her children. Tacitus dwells on a historical freedman whose still-slavish mind prefers the material rewards of *perfidia* to *fides* to his former master and patron.¹⁴¹ Clients, they suggest, may not only offer *fides* in a crisis, but may provoke crises of their own. Nor does anxiety run all one way. A *controversia* (a fictional lawsuit on which schoolboys and orators honed their rhetorical skills) described by Seneca the Elder deals with the *perfidia* of a patron towards the

freedman who hid him when he was proscribed. In return for his help, the patron had released the freedman from certain services the freedman had agreed to perform; now that he is no longer proscribed, the patron wants to renege on the deal.¹⁴²

In *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, Plutarch worries about the corrupting effect of flattery on the *pistis* of both clients, or parasites, and patrons. The flatterer finds himself taking on all the bad characteristics of those he flatters, including *apistia*.¹⁴³ The flattered, for their part, may find all their worst qualities, such as a tendency to trust (*pisteuein*) their worst suspicions of their neighbours, inflamed by the flatterer. They may even find themselves telling the flatterer their secrets, which locks them into a negative kind of *pistis*—something close to a situation of moral blackmail—with him.¹⁴⁴ Here, the trust that pertains between patron and client exacerbates the bad qualities, including the untrustworthiness, of both parties. Their co-dependence and mutual manipulation result in neither being able to form appropriate *pistis* relationships.

The language of friendship, when used of patrons and clients, is sometimes seen as a cynical exploitation of the term for the worst purposes: calling a spade an instrument of workers' liberation. One could see the language of *pistis/fides* in the same terms, but that would be unjust. As in relations between friends, *pistis/fides* between patrons and clients is risky because it is powerful **(p.64)** and potentially productive, and because it is based on individuals' perceptions of each other's personal qualities and interests which are hard to assess with certainty.

Trust between patrons and clients, at its best, is better understood as a hopeful risk, rooted in the need of all agents in Greek and Roman public life to make friends, connections, and allies, and the sense that alliances may maximize benefits to all parties. This is captured by Plutarch in *Precepts of Statecraft* (805b), when he observes that sometimes, practising *pistis*, good faith or trustworthiness, by acting as an advocate for a weak client against a powerful opponent, or speaking up bravely on behalf of justice against a bad ruler, may be the beginning of a glorious public career. Plutarch is not recommending that ambitious men fake *pistis*, nor identifying an easy route into public life. He is commending *pistis* as a way of forging new relationships which enable new social networks to develop, which in turn benefit both individuals and society as a whole. In this vision, *pistis/fides* not only sustains society in its existing forms; it also renews and reconfigures it. In the Introduction we saw that trust is often viewed as a basic building block of societies. Plutarch shows how this may continue to be true in a society that is already highly evolved. If others shared his view, then it is perhaps not surprising that loyalty to a patron is sometimes something which a man's relatives chose to commemorate on his tombstone.¹⁴⁵

Trust in one well-attested group in this period is rooted not so much in their personal qualities as in their knowledge and expertise. Professionals and experts of all kinds are strikingly and consistently well regarded in our sources.¹⁴⁶ Onasander, introducing his treatise on generalship, tells us:

Since all men naturally give credit (*to piston*) for truthfulness to those who appear to write with professional experience, even if their style is poor, while they mistrust (*apistousin*) inexperienced writers, even though their teachings are practicable, on account of their lack of reputation, I consider it necessary to say in advance about the military principles collected in this book that they have all been derived from experience of actual deeds.¹⁴⁷

Cicero mentions in passing in *Topics* that people tend to put *fides* in those who are experienced.¹⁴⁸ Pliny the Elder instances doctors—though he adds that when they disagree, *melius est non credere*, it is best not to commit one's **(p.65)** belief.¹⁴⁹ The most famous story of trust in a doctor is that of Alexander and his doctor Philip, who is accused of planning to poison him. Philip, as Plutarch describes the scene, shows his *pistis* in Alexander's *philia* by preparing a medicine for him, and Alexander demonstrates his *pistis* in Philip by drinking it.¹⁵⁰ Strabo turns trust in professionals into an advertisement for his *Geography*. A statesman need not know everything about every specialist discipline (astronomy, for example). He may want to know something about some, but others he should take on trust (*pisteuein*), leaving expertise to those with more leisure—such as Strabo himself.¹⁵¹ We might speculate that experts suffer the same risk as men of perceived personal *pistis/fides*, that those who put their trust in them hope too much of them, sometimes find themselves disappointed and punish them, but this does not seem to worry our sources as much as other failures of trust.

Tradition, Hearsay, Discourse, Reason, Rhetoric

If oneself, one's senses, and the people closest to one tend to be seen as relatively trustworthy in our sources, other people, their experience, and the way they report it are everywhere presented as problematic and untrustworthy.¹⁵² Tradition, hearsay, rhetoric, and all kinds of discourse originating with other people are a fiduciary minefield.

We have already encountered examples of how difficult it can be to accept one person's testimony to the trustworthiness of another, or to something they have heard or seen, especially if it runs counter to experience or reason. Among those who are most concerned with the fragility of report in this period are historians (political, military, or natural) and writers of technical literature. All historians and technical writers aim to create *pistis/fides* in what they claim are truthful or factual discourses, and are all uneasily aware that the process is not simple. One widespread strategy is to posit boundaries between parts of their material which are treated as reliably based on evidence and **(p.66)** reason, and parts which are not.¹⁵³ Another is to criticize predecessors whom they regard as more gullible or less responsible than themselves.¹⁵⁴

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, discussing the origins of a Roman festival, asserts that those who write about the early histories of a particular people (he is referring to what he believes to be the foundation of Rome by Greek colonists) should do so in a way worthy of trust (*axiopistōs*), which means by producing μαρτυριῶν...πολλῶν καὶ δυσαντιλέκτων, 'many and indisputable testimonies', so that their accounts appear *pistai*.¹⁵⁵ Livy begins his history of Rome by expressing scepticism about early traditions which are *poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur*, 'rather decorated with poetic stories than based on reliable records of what was done'. These traditions are those about the founders of the city (roughly, the ones that Dionysius treats as historical); after disparaging them as mythical, Livy retails them at length.¹⁵⁶ A fragment of Book 1 of Cassius Dio finds him claiming to begin his history at the point where he has been able to establish the clearest account of events.¹⁵⁷ This point is the foundation of the Latin race—rather before the foundation of Rome.¹⁵⁸ Diodorus Siculus, meanwhile, is unhappy about trusting (*pisteuein*) any chronological table that has come down to us from before the Trojan War, and many later ones.¹⁵⁹ He warns us to distinguish between earlier historians, some of whom have themselves believed false reports and are not to be trusted (*apistein*).¹⁶⁰

It is notable, though beyond the scope of this study to explore, that three of these authors identify not-dissimilar moments as marking the beginning of historical narrative, all connected with the foundation of Rome, but that none fully agrees with either of the others.¹⁶¹ It is also notable that, for Dionysius, history begins with 'many and indisputable testimonies', while for Livy it **(p.67)** begins with *incorruptis...monumentis* and for Dio with *saphestata*, the clearest information. All three authors would like to root the trustworthiness of their narratives in a combination of clear and multiple sources, together with whatever impression of reliability they are able to communicate themselves.¹⁶² Believing in what one cannot test or prove is treated as foolish, naive, childish, or characteristic of the uneducated masses. Believing (*credere*) in myths that talk about marriages between the gods, for example, says Pliny the Elder (1.17) is simply childish.¹⁶³

Writing about the distant past is so widely accepted to be problematic that, in *Against Apion*, Josephus can use Greeks' scepticism about their own historical traditions as a stick to beat them with.¹⁶⁴ No wonder, he says, they do not know what to believe, when they have so many books, all of which disagree with one another. No wonder, too, that they know nothing about the Jews, since their sources for the distant past are patently defective. The Jews, in contrast, have just twenty-two books which contain all their records and are rightly believed to be divine, and on that basis are incontrovertibly reliable.¹⁶⁵

Tacitus shifts the burden of credibility from his sources to himself, asking the reader to trust not so much his evidence or proofs as his own lack of bias when he claims to write *sine ira et studio*.¹⁶⁶ Diodorus, too, invites the reader to trust his judgement. Describing an expedition by the Assyrian king Ninus against the Bactrians, for instance, for which Ninus allegedly raised an army of nearly two million, Diodorus insists that these numbers are quite possible when one considers the size of Asia and of later Persian armies.¹⁶⁷ We may not find Diodorus' argument in this passage well founded, but at least it is an argument; in other passages, a quirk of style makes trusting his judgement seem even riskier. Who would believe, he says, spaciouly and repeatedly, the depths of the sands of Libya, the numbers of fish in the Nile, the flocks and herds of the Nabateans, or the wealth of the mines of Iberia? Their **(p.68)** unbelievable, *apiston* nature is apparently the very reason why we should believe what he says about them.¹⁶⁸ Diodorus may be presenting his own incredulity here as a *captatio benevolentiae*, to establish his lack of bias and transparency as a witness.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, as a rhetorical strategy it is far from reassuring.

Strabo aims his work at the busy statesman who does not have time to investigate for himself everything he needs to know.¹⁷⁰ He wants the statesman to trust him, but in the course of the work he questions so many other authors and sources of information, sometimes in such paradoxical terms, that the reader might be forgiven for coming away with the impression that little, if anything, is certain in geographical research.

Strabo places the greatest credence, as we have seen, in what one can see and test for oneself.¹⁷¹ After that, he trusts his own reason—but not always in ways that are easy for the reader to follow. Homer, in particular, he regards as extensively trustworthy, despite the fact that, as he says, Homer sweetened his knowledge everywhere with myth and stories to make it more palatable as education.¹⁷² To

sharpen the paradox, Strabo thinks that myths and other unreliable sources of information about the past, such as Homer provides, though inadequate for educated men, are good enough for women, children, and the uneducated. Since it is axiomatic in his day that the uneducated become educated above all by reading Homer, we may wonder how Strabo thinks they learn to discriminate between myth and truth.¹⁷³ He also claims that early historians and scientists were myth-makers, throwing their reliability into doubt along with Homer's.¹⁷⁴ When two sources disagree, he sometimes tells us that one is more likely than the other to be *pistos* without explaining why.¹⁷⁵ The statesman who seeks clear and consistent grounds (**p.69**) for trusting what Strabo says, it seems, is likely to be frustrated; to make use of him, one must simply decide to trust his judgement.

In *How To Write History*, Lucian's target is what he claims is the untrustworthiness of historians as a class. Most, he says, prefer flattering rulers and generals to reporting events, which renders most of the things they say incredible, *apithana* (7, 11).¹⁷⁶ They introduce inappropriate quasi-poetic flights of fancy into their work (8), aim to give pleasure instead of sticking to what is useful (9–10), exaggerate to the point of lies (13), get the facts wrong (24), and gloss over the important events in favour of trivial ones (27). One draws Lucian's particular scorn for praising the virtue of autopsy without, allegedly, ever having left home (29). All these criticisms could and do appear in serious works of history; at the same time, it is impossible to read Lucian without suspecting him of irony, and if we try to imagine the work of historiography that would evade all his criticisms, we can see where the irony lies. Such a work would report only incontrovertible facts, and only when they were useful, never seeking to give pleasure and only reporting what the author himself had seen. But is there such a thing as an incontrovertible fact? Can one select what facts to present without exercising judgement? Is any work composed with no intention of giving pleasure likely to be read, however useful? And is autopsy any guarantee of truth? The most rigorous historian might struggle to answer 'yes' to any of these questions. The reader is left wondering whether, if Lucian is given any credence at all, historians' criticisms of one another are unreasonable, or the only history worth writing is impracticable, or both.¹⁷⁷

In other essays, many of which are cast as a parody of historiographical or geographical reportage, one of Lucian's favourite techniques is to challenge credulity by making one character tell another, who struggles to believe him, some impossibly tall story which he claims to have witnessed or taken part in himself.¹⁷⁸ Apuleius is another acrobat of the incredible, and the reportage style of his *Metamorphoses* parodies, among other things, contemporary historical writing.

Early in the novel, Apuleius' anti-hero Lucius finds himself at a banquet at which one of the other guests, Thelyphron, tells the story of the time he volunteered to guard a corpse from witches during the night before a funeral. As the dead man was carried out to be buried the next day, his uncle rushed up to accuse the dead man's wife of murdering him. The uncle demanded that an (**p.70**) Egyptian necromancer be allowed to conjure the man's spirit back into his body so that he could testify as to the manner of his death.

The necromancer performed and the corpse testified that it was murdered. The crowd divided into those who thought the wife should be buried alive as punishment, and those who thought that the lies of a corpse bore no credence (*fidem non habendam*). The corpse said that he had proof: the previous night, witches tried to get at his body, but only succeeded in attacking his watchman—Thelyphron—who had his nose and ears cut off and replaced with wax. Thelyphron put up his hands, found his nose and ears missing, and ran away before he heard any more of the impromptu trial.

The response of the dinner guests to this story is to roar with laughter, while Apuleius plays with the paradoxes of belief.¹⁷⁹ Within the story, do the bystanders disbelieve the corpse because it is a corpse or because they think it is lying? If they think it is lying, then on what basis? If they think corpses can't talk, are they victims of the paradox we encountered at the beginning of this chapter, that trust in our senses tends to defer to accumulated experience, making it unreliable in the face of new experiences?

Do the diners believe Thelyphron's apparently eyewitness testimony, backed by evidence of mutilation which is hidden from view? If so, why do they laugh, and if not, why not? Are they, too, victims of accumulated experience? Or is it significant that Thelyphron's name means 'female-minded', because women proverbially cannot be trusted?¹⁸⁰ What would convince the diners of the truth of this story? Are there some stories that cannot be believed with the aid of any evidence? If so, is this a challenge for the reader as well as the dinner guests?

To continue to focus on the reader, should the reader automatically assume that the whole of this story is fictional? If so, why, other than on the doubtful grounds of accumulated experience (people do not generally turn into donkeys, corpses do not speak, etc.)? Are some stories rendered incredible by their location in a certain type of narrative? If so, is this a challenge, say, for readers of Homer? Along with entertaining his readers, Apuleius raises questions about the constraints and difficulties of narrative and truth which are no less pointed for being highly polished and decorated and embedded in a preposterous story, and which may have been heard all the

more keenly so close to the beginning of the novel as a genre.¹⁸¹

(p.71) Apuleius and Lucian point up what historians and technical writers all reflect, and many explicitly acknowledge: the difficulty of gaining the reader's trust in any narrative, its sources, or a narrator's judgement. Ultimately, trusting any writer is a decision which readers make for their own reasons: a leap of faith over the unbridgeable impossibility of compelling *pistis* or *fides*.

Amid all the difficulties which authors and audiences alike experience in trusting documents, testimony, or the credibility of tradition, very occasionally we find an author or a character falling back on one of the simplest sources of information: oral report. Plutarch, in his *Life of Demosthenes* (2.1), tells us that when written sources fail, as they inevitably do, it is essential for a historical writer to live in a city in which 'he can find out by hearsay and investigation those things which elude writers and are saved with more obvious fidelity (ἐπιφανεστέραν...πίστυν) in human memory'.

In *On Heroes*, Philostratus presents a dialogue between a vine dresser who tends the gardens round the tomb of the hero Protesilaus and a passing Phoenician merchant. The Phoenician views myths of the heroes sceptically (*apistōs*), never having met anyone who heard or saw a hero at first hand. The stories he has heard—for instance, that heroes were ten cubits tall—are *apithana*, incredible, though he admits he believed them (*episteuon*) as a child.¹⁸² The vine dresser takes the things the Phoenician finds *apistoumena* as his starting point, and first reports what his grandfather 'knew' about the heroes, and then drops the bombshell that he himself has encountered Protesilaus in his own vineyard.¹⁸³ Finally, the Phoenician is convinced, and says *pisteuō*: 'I trust/believe you.'¹⁸⁴ The dialogue is thickly scattered with *pistis* language, in which propositional belief and trust are intertwined. We never learn why the Phoenician finds the vine dresser so trustworthy that he believes his report, but the idea of a heroic epiphany is not intrinsically implausible in Philostratus' world, and his dialogue lacks the obviously satirical edge of Lucian's or Apuleius' tall stories. If it leaves the reader wondering on what basis one might accept oral reports about the distant past or the supernatural, it does not seem automatically to rule them out.¹⁸⁵

Plutarch seems to view oral tradition as a rather benign and stable phenomenon. It has, however, a much more alarming relative: rumour. Rumour is a formidable force, obscure in origin, fast-moving, unstable, seductive, and influential. Literature of all kinds abounds in examples of rumours which proved false only after they had taken in large numbers of people.¹⁸⁶ During his account of the aftermath of the battle of Pydna in his *Life of Aemilius Paulus*, Plutarch breaks off to tell a series of stories about rumours (24–5).

(p.72) A mere three days after Pydna, a rumour suddenly struck the Roman theatre that Aemilius had defeated the Macedonians. The crowd erupted in joy—only to realize that the story had no sure foundation, and lose confidence in it. Similarly, when Antonius revolted from Domitian in 91 CE, a sudden rumour arose in Rome that Antonius had been killed. So powerful was it that some magistrates actually offered sacrifices of thanks—and then it melted away. Shortly afterwards another rumour spread, that Domitian had defeated Antonius. When it began, he had not—but by the time it arrived at Rome, he had, so the rumour became retrospectively true. Plutarch leaves open the possibility that the gods may be responsible for the preternaturally swift spread of rumours that turn out to be true, but in the process he illustrates both how enticing and how fragile they are perceived to be, even by those who believe them.

The popular ethical handbook the *Distichs* of Cato gives such precarious information, and those who transmit it, short shrift:

Nolito quaedam referenti credere saepe:
Exigua est tribuenda fides, qui multa loquuntur.
Do not trust the person who regularly has news to give,
Those who have a lot to say deserve little credence.¹⁸⁷

The author of the rhetorical handbook *To Herennius* (2.12) notes cynically that one can exploit people's tendency to unjustified belief in rumour in two ways: by saying there's no smoke without fire, or by saying that rumour has no credibility because anyone can manufacture it (an observation which does not enhance the reader's confidence in the trustworthiness of orators).¹⁸⁸ The precariousness of rumours is compounded by the fact that those who transmit them may be as unsure of their truth as those who receive them.

The difficult relationship between rhetoric and trust has been notorious for as long as rhetoric has been recognized as an art and a teachable discipline.¹⁸⁹ The earliest teachers of rhetoric as a *technē*, arriving in fifth-century Athens from the exotic fringes of the Greek world, were alternately fêted and feared. The theorists who in the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE began to compose treatises on rhetoric were frank about its power to sway listeners' or readers' minds for good or ill.¹⁹⁰ In the early empire, Strabo refers to Homer's Odysseus (*Il.* 3.221) as the paradigm of a great speaker (1.2.5): his words fall like the snows of winter, soft and deep,

blinding and disorienting, so that no human being can contend with him. Persuasion is mentally overwhelming, **(p.73)** like losing a fight; completely different from rational assent to a proposition, such as philosophers practise, where one remains intellectually in control.

We could multiply indefinitely examples of the power of rhetoric and the mingled trust, admiration, suspicion, and fear which it engenders, but one example may stand for many. Quintilian's *Training of an Orator* is as famous for its passionate commitment to morality—Quintilian's insistence that an orator should be *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 'a good man skilled in speaking'—as for the exhaustive detail in which Quintilian discusses every aspect of the orator's education from birth to maturity.¹⁹¹ To rule his state, lead his people, command his army, and advise his councillors, says Quintilian (superbly unregarding of the fact that in his day only one man at a time, the emperor, did all those things, and few skills were less important to any emperor of his day than oratory), the orator must be exhaustively versed in the best language, literature, mathematics, physical training, and philosophy, as well as rhetoric itself.¹⁹² He insists repeatedly that all these exercises—even geometry and physical training—have a moral dimension; nothing is more important to him than that the orator should be virtuous as well as accomplished.

Quintilian strongly resists definitions of oratory—even by so eminent an authority as Aristotle—that seem to allow that oratory can be used well for bad ends.¹⁹³ It is therefore deeply ironic that when he discusses *fides* (plural), in the technical sense of 'proofs', translating the Aristotelian term *pisteis*, he acknowledges that they cover many kinds of argument as well as proof as such, and that some of these types of argument are not based on proof at all, but depend precisely on the orator's being able to persuade an audience of his way of thinking without proof.¹⁹⁴ Further, he devotes a long section to how to present oneself and manipulate the emotions of one's audience so that oneself as an orator, and one's client and their witnesses if one is in court, appear trustworthy.¹⁹⁵ 'Proofs (in the strict sense)', he says (6.2.5), 'may indeed make judges think our cause is better, but appealing to their emotions will make them want it to be better—and what they want, they will also believe (*id quod volunt credunt quoque*).' Judges listening to a great orator will become incapable of reason, abandon the search for the truth, allow themselves to be swept away by passion, and, weeping, yield unquestioningly to the torrent (6.2.6–7).¹⁹⁶

Quintilian divides his account of the emotions into discussions of *ēthos* and *pathos*. *Pathos* refers to the rousing of strong emotions, *ēthos* to the creation of a 'moral character' (6.2.17), a projection of oneself which tells one's audience **(p.74)** that one is the kind of person they want to believe (6.2.8–31). Quintilian slips repeatedly between wanting the *ethos* of the orator to be his real character and recognizing that it does not need to be. '*Ēthos* demands that a man be thoroughly good and sympathetic. For he must have, or be believed to have (*aut habeat aut habere credatur*), those virtues which, if possible, he must commend in his client' (6.2.18). 'If we want our words to seem sincere, we must imitate the emotions of those who really feel them, and our speech must arise from the same state of mind as we want to create in the judge' (6.2.27).

Finally, Quintilian describes how we conjure up in ourselves the emotions we want to convey, by imagining dire scenarios of death, danger, or desolation. He ends by saying that he has thought it right to share all this with the reader because this talent for faking emotion has, he believes, brought him most of the reputation as an orator that he has. 'I have often been so moved', he says complacently, 'that not only was I overcome with tears, but I actually turned pale and showed every appearance of grief' (6.2.36). From a teacher, a key part of whose project is to show the morality of every aspect of the orator's craft, this passage is a remarkable admission that, by its very nature, turning speech into a craft makes the relationship between speech and *pistis/fides* much more complex, and opens up a gulf between the two which is not less profound for being, by skilled practitioners, routinely bridged.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun to investigate the distinctive shape of *pistis/fides* in operation in the early principate, exploring some of the most important contexts and relationships in which *pistis/fides* is at issue, how it is experienced, and where it is presented as robust or fragile, necessary or naive, desirable or difficult. We have seen that *pistis/fides* is treated regularly as a good thing, even as a philosophical virtue, while at the same time it is always vulnerable to fear, doubt, and scepticism. In a few areas, notably in relation to oneself and one's senses, close family members, and slaves, *pistis/fides* is, if not wholly unproblematic, at least relatively so. In other areas, notably in relationships between friends, it is, however desirable, intensely difficult. Most problematic of all are all kinds of tradition, hearsay, and oral and written discourse. However hard those who produce such discourses try to persuade readers and listeners of their trustworthiness, there sometimes seems little middle ground from which to respond to them between chronic scepticism and wilful leaps (in the modern sense) of faith.

Relationships of *pistis/fides* are often of considerable duration, but (apart from on tombstones, when the *pistis/fides* of the deceased is transmuted into a permanent quality of their monumentalized *persona*) they are frequently **(p.75)** marked, especially in literature,

at moments of crisis or decision, or when an exceptional instance of the quality is called for. We have seen this in so many stories of relationships between family members, slaves and masters, patrons and clients, and friends that we can conclude with some confidence that one of the most significant aspects of *pistis/fides* in this period is as a virtue of crisis and moments of decision.¹⁹⁷

On one level, the omnipresence of *pistis/fides* language in discourse about every aspect of society and social life in this period needs no reiteration. On another, it is worth highlighting the way the texts we have discussed weave *pistis/fides* language together with the language of love and friendship, familiarity, and particularly knowledge and understanding. The way the term 'belief' is used in modern English, to translate *pistis/fides* with a strongly cognitive and propositional accent, makes it easy to forget that cognitive processes and propositional belief are primarily expressed in Greek and Latin using the language of thinking (*putare, nomizein*, etc.). When our sources are discussing whether a source or a piece of information about the world around them, the people around them, the past, a hero, or miracle is reliable, they need not use *pistis/fides* language: they can (and commonly do) use the language of thinking or knowing. Often, however, they use *pistis/fides* language alongside 'thinking' or 'knowing' language. This is a strong statement of the perceived importance, as well as the difficulty, of trust and trustworthiness, not only in interpersonal relationships but also when authors or characters are processing information or discourse or seeking to understand their world.¹⁹⁸

The texts which have been discussed fit well with some of the economic and sociological models of trust discussed in the Introduction. *Pistis/fides* (as will emerge further in the next chapter) is everywhere understood as a basic building block of societies, emerging from the need of individual and groups to make and maintain relationships. As such, it is hopeful, forward-looking, and productive, but also risky and open to fear and doubt. Social agents enact *pistis/fides* partly as a calculated risk, and partly in response to the perceived trustworthiness of others, intertwining trust especially closely with belief, to which it constantly defers and which in turn defers to it.

One theme prominent in sociologies of trust which is less explicit in our sources is that of rational self-interest, which many sociologists see as the key driver of interpersonal trust. The difference here is partly one of perspective: the outsider may see trust as the operation of self-interest where the insider (p.76) characterizes it as a gift or an end in itself. This is not, however, the whole story, since Greek and Roman sources are also capable of understanding *pistis/fides* as self-interested. Cicero, for instance, in *On Duties* (2.21), says that people who promote one another's interests do so for various reasons: out of goodwill or honour; because they think the other deserves to do well; because they have confidence (*fides*) in him and think they are acting in their own interests by promoting his; out of fear of his power; because they hope for favour, or because they have been promised a reward. The significant difference between modern sociology and ancient thought here is that Greek and Roman writings (whether literary, sub-literary, or documentary) never see *pistis/fides* in purely instrumental terms. It is always also a virtue: an intrinsic good; an end as well as a means. This view of *pistis/fides* is important not only for Greeks and Romans in general, but for early Christians in particular, and we shall return to it in Chapter 12.

Notes:

(1) Lewis (1983), Millar (1993, 1990, 1998), Bowman (2003), Alcock (1997), Goodman (2007), Woolf (1998), Parsons (2007).

(2) Horden and Purcell (2000), 377–80, 389–95, though Lazer (2009), 221–46, 268 strikes a cautionary note.

(3) Peacock and Williams (1986), 99, 157, 170.

(4) Sen., *Ep. mor.* 80.9, Mart. 7.8–10, Juv. 9.42; Thompson (2003) 29–30, 34–45.

(5) The inscription is edited as *ILS* 1338, the letter as Bowman and Thomas (2003), 611; see Bowman (2006), 78–9.

(6) Within a few years of his death, a fragment of Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*, written in Gaul, was being read in Oxyrhynchus (*P.Oxy.* 3.405).

(7) Mullen and James (2012).

(8) 4.478–83; cf. 484–512, *passim*. Lucretius follows Epicurus *contra* the Sceptics (cf. Cic., *Acad.* 1.41); on the history of debate on the subject, see Bailey (1947), vol. 3 ad loc. Scott (1989) discusses the paradox that Epicurus thinks both that the evidence of the senses is reliable and that human beings suffer constantly from illusions.

(9) Lucretius does think, though, that the mind can misinterpret sense data (e.g. 4.462–6), so we must add reason to the evidence of

the senses (e.g. *Lucr.* 2.10.23–39; cf. 4.462–6 (on wrong belief); cf. Long and Sedley (1987), 72–90, 236–53). The emphasis in ‘high’ philosophy is therefore slightly different from that across a range of literary and popular sources, which emphasizes the reliability of the senses unmediated by reason.

(10) *D.Chr.* 12.71, Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 29; cf. *Plu., Rom.* 7.4–5 (trusting the evidence of one’s eyes); cf. *Cic., De or.* 3.40. The idea that ‘seeing is knowing’ goes back to Homer (*Od.* 8.487–91); cf. Heraclit., fr. 101a DK, *Hdt.* 1.8.2.

(11) *Plaut., Asin.* 202, *Mil. glori.* 1005, *Ter., Eun.* 350, *Sen., Ep.* 6.5.

(12) 2.1.11; cf. *Plin., HN* 2.6.

(13) 144–5; a possible pre-echo of *Heb.* 11.1?

(14) e.g. *Somn.* 3, *Tox.* 56, *Dial.* 287, and see p. 69.

(15) 8.8.50; cf. *D.H.* 1.79.6; cf. *Lk.* 24.39, *Jn.* 20.24–9.

(16) cf. *Lk.* 24.36–9, *Jn.* 20.26–9. Another situation in which the trustworthiness of a form of autopsy is controversial is dreaming. Debate rages throughout antiquity as to whether one can believe what one sees in a dream (see pp. 5 n. 12, 138, 145–7, 403, 456 n. 44).

(17) *Frag. Mediolanense.*

(18) 18.25.

(19) cf. *Cic., Div.* 2.122, *Longus* 2.18.

(20) *D.H.* 5.8.1 observes in passing that it comes naturally to men to judge other people’s behaviour by what they find *piston* or *apiston*.

(21) 2.8.23; see also p. 133.

(22) Though *Sen., Ep.* 22.15 makes a similar reference to human beings being brought into the world by Nature free from desires, fears, superstition, *perfidia*, and all other curses, and here the context suggests that both divine–human and intra-human relations are at issue.

(23) Morgan (2013a), where I have described this as ‘xenological authority’.

(24) *Tusc.* 3.14. He prefers this form to *confidens* (but says beware of being too confident, *nimis confidens: Off.* 1.73; cf. 3.79, 82).

(25) 3.7; cf. *Caes., BG* 7.76.5, *Liv.* 34.46.5, *Quint.* 5.13.51, *Suet., Claud.* 25.

(26) He describes them as men of virtue: 3.7 pr., 3.7.1g.

(27) *Zen.* 4.80. The Dactyls are daemons, also credited with the invention of metalworking. For a more positive (though still not uncomplicated) view, cf. *Zen.* 5.49: Heracles relying on (*pisteusanta*) his own strength.

(28) *Babr.* 67, 89, 94, 99, 105, 140, 143 (in 98 the lion who traduces his nature lives to regret it; cf. 106; 102 is the utopian exception). On attack as the best form of defence, if one is strong enough; cf. *Plu., Mor.* 201d (of Scipio the Younger), *Ael., VH* 11.9.

(29) *Babr.* 7, 44, 51, 76, 83, 85, 123, 134 (91 is a rare counter-example).

(30) *Babr.* 46, 55; cf. *Epict.* 1.3.7, *D.Chr.* 32.63 (powerful animals are *dyspistotera* because of their strength and savage nature). *Babr.* 107 is the exception.

(31) *Babr.* 16, 98, 122; though for an unlikely alliance between the lion and the mouse, see 107; cf. 47.

(32) Though see pp. 90–1. Trust (either in others of their kind or in a more powerful animal) is often portrayed as a risk taken by the

weak, who need help to survive, but in the harsh world of fables no group of the weak overcome their enemies through mutual *pistis/fides*, while the weak who trust the strong nearly always live (often, only just long enough) to regret it: e.g. Babr. 16, 77, 93, 95, 101, 103, 115, 122, 130. (In 97, 121, and 132 the vulnerable recognize their risk and escape in time.)

(33) *Hist.* 1.3. Conversely, Seneca (*Ben.* 3.25) comments that during the civil wars it was rare for slaves to show *fides* to their masters.

(34) Val. Max. 11.13, ext. 2 tells of Masinissa, who had so little *fides* in the people around him that he surrounded himself with guard dogs instead; Valerius asks what use his children, empire, or friendship with Rome were if he could find no better protection than that of dogs.

(35) Epict. 2.22.18–20.

(36) *AE* 1945.136 (Rome), 1992.204 (first century CE); cf. 1971.4, Peek (1955), 2017.5 (Corcyra).

(37) Smith (1993), 58–9. It is always possible, of course, that children and heirs are adopted rather than blood relatives; in some of the above examples it is clear that blood relatives are meant, but it is surely significant that no text I know of distinguishes between the *pistis/fides* of natural and adoptive parents and children.

(38) 73.3. What thriving consists of in the family context Dio leaves unexplored. This is an example of ‘jigsaw’ ethics, on which, see esp. pp. 494–5.

(39) Sen., *Contr.* 2.1.38.

(40) e.g. Gell. 1.23.13; cf. ps.-Quint. 328.3.

(41) 2.29.4; cf. Sen., *Ag.* 941.

(42) Onas. 1.12.

(43) 388.33 (Winterbottom’s translation of ‘beyond belief’ is perhaps too narrow); cf. Andromache’s maternal devotion, according to Sen., *Tr.* 587–666.

(44) *Mor.* 186e–f, *Vit. Alc.* 2.22. Since Alcibiades is guilty, this suggests that he, at least, expects family loyalty to trump justice or truth.

(45) The emphasis is on the mother’s demand for loyalty from her son because the demand comes from Veturia herself, but this shows that, if uncommon, it is not unimaginable for a son to enact *pistis* towards a mother. Veturia’s trust, of course, is not explicitly (though surely it is implicitly) in her son, but is deferred to the law of nature.

(46) *Ant.* 8.1–54, esp. 33.1–4, 39.1–54.1.

(47) Várhelyi (2012) analyses this story to show how Veturia appeals to Coriolanus to show quasi-divine forgiveness.

(48) *Cons. Helv.* 19.1. For balanced sibling relations, see e.g. Cic., *Att.* 4.2.8, Sen., *Phoen.* 478–80, Tac., *Hist.* 4.42, ps.-Quint. 328.3; for a (rare) case of being *infidus* between brothers, see Virg., *Georg.* 2.496.

(49) *CE* 491, Lattimore (1942), 277; cf. *CE* 111.52, 57; 158.2, 381.1, 560c.1. Certain birds and animals, especially doves, pigeons, crows, and some fish, are also noted for mutual conjugal fidelity (Ov., *Am.* 2.6.14, Plin., *HN* 10.104, Ael. 1.4, 1.13, 3.9).

(50) *Mor.* 769a; *CIL* 10.5903. Trust between husbands and wives is rarely, but occasionally, unjustified: Zen. 2.87, Apollod. 2.3.1, Ach. Tat. 8.10.7. It is also rare for spouses to be accused of *perfidia*, but see e.g. Prop. 3.13.23, Ov., *Ep.* 12.37, Sen., *Med.* 916, *Ag.* 111.

(51) e.g. Cic., *Phil.* 9.5, *Adfam.* 14.1.1, Hor., *Ep.* 2.1.142, Plu., *Mor.* 700c, Sen., *Herc.* 309, *Herc. Oet.* 957, Sil. 13.879, App., *Met.* 8.31, 9.14, D.Chr. 45.11, Artem. 2.32; cf. Longus 2.39, D.C. 65.14 on the death of Vespasian’s mistress, who was *pistotatē* to him.

(52) *CE* 548; cf. *CE* 1508, *CIL* 2.6139, 3.8833, 10.1909, *AE* 1909.80, 1972.38 (Rome), 1976.76a, Peek (1955), 243.1 (Dorylaion, second century). For *pistis/fides* of other women, see e.g. Peek (1955) 1436.3, *CE* 81.1–2, 158.2. *CE* 1988 records a man’s grief for his

freedwoman and mistress, one of whose qualities is that she is *fidissima* (l. 1); cf. *CIL* 6.6191.

(53) *Mor.* 258d–f.

(54) *CIL* 6.1527, 31670, 37053 = *ILS* 8393.

(55) Together with *pudicitia opsequium comitas facilitas lanificii studium religio*, and the absence of superstition and vanity.

(56) Val. Max. 6.7; Ov., *Fasti* 2.815 (Lucretia's faithful husband), Ach. Tat. 6.16.3, *CIL* 6.11195 (tombstone).

(57) Ps.-Diog. 2.76, 7.66, Otto (1890), 245–6; cf. App., *Met.* 10.4.

(58) Cf. pp. 108–12.

(59) D.S. 12.15.2–3.

(60) *Mor.* 519e.

(61) Ps.-Diog. 4.4.

(62) *P.Oxy.* 2661.12–13 (Morgan (1998), 135–8); cf. D.Chr. 74.9, Morgan (2007b), 106–9.

(63) *Carm.* 2.8.6.

(64) e.g. (among many possible examples, some using *credere* as well as *fides* lexica) Cat. 64.132–3, 135, Tib. 1.6.75–6, 3.6.47–52, Prop. 1.13.3, 1.15.2, 2.5.3, 2.9.28, 4.7.13, 70, Ov., *Her.* 2.8–9, 2.31, 2.63–4, 4.59, 5.99, 6.21, 6.41, 7.57–8, 10.58, 12.19, 12.72, 17.39–40, 20.7, 20.39–40, *Am.* 2.2.42, 2.8.18, 3.3.1–2, *Ars am.* 1.536–8, Virg., *Ecl.* 8.91, *Aen.* 4.305, *Aetna* 583, *Culex* 132, Hor., *Carm.* 3.7.13, *Ep.* 15.3, Sil. 6.518, Stat., *Theb.* 4.193, Long. 2.39. According to Plu., *Mor.* 768e–f being made a catamite, because it is a relationship of no *pistis*, creates *apistia* and hate in the catamite towards his abuser thereafter.

(65) 1.740; unusually, at 3.31–2, Ovid claims that men deceive women in love but women are rarely guilty of *fraus*.

(66) Cf. Sen., *Med.* 430–9 (to be loyal to his children he must be disloyal to his wife), *Ag.* 108–24.

(67) 4.3.11–20; 5.14.1, 19–20.

(68) App., *BC* 3.2.

(69) *Vit. Sull.* 3.2

(70) Though see Artem. 1.35, 2.5, 2.9, Ach. Tat. 2.4.2. According to D.S. 11.89.7–8, a shrine of the Palici in Sicily acts as a sanctuary for runaway slaves until their masters have given a pledge (*pistis*) to treat them more humanely. But what the masters have *pistis* towards here is not so much the slave as the law. Val. Max. 6.8.5 describes what looks like a classic case of a master's *fides* towards a slave, but avoids using the word.

(71) Nearly all references to the *pistis/fides* or otherwise are to slaves owned by individual households, though see e.g. App., *BC* 1.9, with reference to the Sicilian slave rebellion of 135 BCE; e.g. Cic., *Ad fam.* 14.2.6, *De off.* 2.25, Ov., *Am.* 2.7.25, *Met.* 6.462, 9.569, 10.382, 13.748, Col. 12.1.6, Sen., *Herc. Oet.* 535, *Octav.* 346–60, Jos., *AJ* 7.224, 9.88, Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* 2.7.2 (Naber p. 133), Artem. 1.35, 1.64, 2.9; cf. *P.Oxy.* 3.494.9 (156 CE), *BGU* 1.326.1.15 (194 CE, a clause in a will).

(72) Moulton and Milligan (1926), vol. 6, p. 515, col. 2.

(73) Cic., *Ad Att.* 1.13.1, *Ad fam.* 13.21.2; cf. 13.69.1.

(74) Examples include ps.-Quint., *Dec. Min.* 259.9, D.Chr. 74.9, App., *BC* 1.10, Artem. 2.9, Ath. 6.264d–e (quoting Plato).

(75) e.g. Val. Max. 6.8.2 (C. Marius), 6.8.34 (C. Cassius), App., *BC* 4.135 (Labeo).

(76) Vell. 2.6.6, Val. Max. 6.8.3.

(77) Val. Max. 6.8.5, 6; cf. Sen., *Ben.* 3.25.1.

(78) Cf. nn. 52, 71.

(79) Well captured by D 48.18.1, where Ulpian opines on the very few cases when it is not appropriate to torture slaves in capital cases.

(80) Albeit, given the limitations of our evidence, almost entirely in contexts which reflect the slave-owner's perspective. A classic case is the trusted house-slave of comedy.

(81) See pp. 486–7 and Morgan (2007b), 1–3.

(82) Cf. Morgan (2007b), 183–4.

(83) Saller (1988) sees (intra-human) *pietas* as operating in a similar way. Cf. Morgan (2007b), 1–3, arguing that moral qualities, including *pistis/fides*, should be understood as socially structural in their own right, not as ancillary to other structures, and studied as such.

(84) See also Morgan (2013b).

(85) See also pp. 224–6.

(86) See Ch. 11.

(87) See esp. Konstan (1997), Peachin, Alföldi, and Caldelli (2001), Rosen and Sluiter (2010).

(88) 300; cf. 209, 27, *P.Iand.* 5.77.3, Morgan (2007b), 99–100.

(89) Cic., *Fin.* 1.65–7, D.S. 14.26.4, 16.46.3, 18.58.2–3, 20.19.2, Hor., *Sat.* 2.5.1–2, Plu., *Pomp.* 1.3, *Aem.* 2.6, *Sert.* 1.4, *Phoc.* 33.3, *Art.* 11.1; Val. Max. 4.7.4, 4.7.5, 4.7.6, 4.7.7, 9.11.7, Onas. 2.5; Sen., *De tranq.* 7.6, *De ben.* 5.22.4, Quint. 5.7.8; D.Chr. 32.96; Gell. 12.8.6, Sil. 14.79–84, Lucian, *Cat.* 23, *Dem. Enc.* 18; D.C. 14.6b; Marc. 1.15.2, 9.42.4, Ael., *NA* 8.3, Ath. 4.151d.

(90) D.S. 10.4.5, D.H. 6.78.4, Lucian, *Rh. Pr.* 4, *Syr. D.* 24, App., *Met.* 8.12.

(91) *AE* 1993.1388; cf. Peek (1955), 1001.6 (Rhodes, c.100 BCE), 1924.6, 23, 1926.4 (first century, Rome), 1333.3 (Rome, second–third century), 1526.1 (Patras, second–third century), 1407.4 (Nicaea, first century), 690.6 (Rome, second–third century), *CIL* 6.5271 (Rome), *AE* 1956 (Hippo Regius, 125).

(92) e.g. Cic., *Planc.* 1, Val. Max. 4.7.1–3, Plu., *Phoc.* 33.3

(93) 12.37.

(94) e.g. Cic., *Lael.* 53, *Fam.* 1.2.3, Val. Max. 9.6 pr., Phaedr. 9.7, Juv. 13.24, Suet., *Caes.* 75, *Ner.* 5, Apul., *Met.* 4.21.6; cf. Gell. 14.2.6.

(95) 31.32.

(96) Cic., *Cael.* 14, *Dist. Cat.* 1.26, Val. Max. 9.6, *passim*, App., *Met.* 9.40, Juv. 13.5–6, Sall., *Cat.* 20.2–3 (Catiline's 'friends' are traitors).

(97) *P.Lond.Lit.* 253; cf. Pub. Syr. 576, 592.

(98) *Vit. Soph.* 542 (*Il.* 9.312).

(99) Morgan (2007b), 68–70.

(100) Babr. 99, 87; cf. 98.

(101) Plu., *Vit. Sol.* 15.6.

(102) e.g. *Ad Att.* 3.8.4, 3.20.2, 6.1.21, 7.2.7, 9.6.3, 9.7a.2, 10.9.3, 16.16.1.

(103) *Ad Att.* 2.23.3; cf. 3.19.3.

(104) *Ad Att.* 3.15.7.

(105) *Ad Att.* 9.7a.2.

(106) *Trist.* 1.9, e.g. 33, 35; 4.5.1, 14; cf. 5.4.35.

(107) *Ex Ponto* 2.6.35.

(108) *Trist.* 4.7.19.

(109) *Trist.* 5.6.1–4, 8, 18.

(110) 74.1–3, 28.

(111) e.g. Sall., *Cat.* 9.1, Cic., *Off.* 3.45.

(112) *Mor.* 237e.

(113) Sall., *Cat.* 9.1, 10.1; cf. Lind (1989) on *fides* as a key traditional (i.e. early/middle-republican) virtue. See further pp. 488–9.

(114) Cic., *De am.* 18–19.

(115) 65.

(116) *Ep.* 3.1–3.

(117) On the Stoic and Aristotelian background to this attitude, see Griffin (2013) 40, 331–2.

(118) 4.13.5–19, 23.

(119) In this context, *pistis/fides* is always ‘trustworthiness’, not ‘trust’. The act of trusting people per se is not a virtue, because one can trust mistakenly or inappropriately.

(120) e.g. Cic., *Mur.* 58, *Rp.* 1.2, 1.51, 3.27, *Am.* 18–19, *Off.* 1.121, *Dom.* 1, *Planc.* 1, Plu., *Vit. Rom.* 28.1, *Vit. Num.* 7.4, *Vit. Phoc.* 26.3, *Vit. Cat. Min.* 60, 64.3, *Mor.* 539e–f, Lucian, *Apist.* 5; cf. Plu., *Mor.* 522f (the intrinsic untrustworthiness of Darius Nothus). Cf. p. 55 n. 91.

(121) 14.2.

(122) *Pro Balbo* 12; cf. D.H. 12.1.14, Cic., *De am.* 54 (Tarquin’s bad character meant that he could not acquire *amicitiae fideles*). Quint. 5.6.2 observes that offering to take an oath during a lawsuit tends to prompt the suspicion of bad faith, but one may try to nullify this by claiming that one is so obviously virtuous that the idea of perjury is unthinkable.

(123) *Vit. Rom.* 28.1–6.

(124) 6.249d–e.

(125) Cf. *Font.* 23, where self-interest, as a vice, detracts from the orator’s *fides*; and see pp. 73–4.

(126) 73.5.

(127) 12.1.14.

(128) *Cat. Min.* 19.4. On the insecurity of second-hand information, see e.g. pp. 71–2, 245.

(129) e.g. Sall., *Cat.* 20.2–3, 35.1, 44.3, D.H. 4.85.1.

(130) Plu., *Vit. Pel.* 8.2, *Vit. Brut.* 12.1, 12.8.

(131) Sall., *Cat.* 2.22; cf. D.H. 2.38.5 on the untrustworthiness of Tarpeia. In politics, *pistis/fides* and their opposites usually refer to personal relations, but Quint. 12.9.15 refers to a *perfidus* betraying a cause.

(132) The Twelve Tables of archaic Roman law forbid a patron to violate his *fides* to his client (7.17); Badian (1958), 1–14, Saller (1982) 13–24, Wallace-Hadrill (1989b), Verboven (2002), 39–41.

(133) Val. Max. 9.11.2.

(134) *Med.* 248.

(135) *Ben.* 6.29.2, 6.33.2.

(136) e.g. 2.13.5, 3.2.1–3, 10.4.3–4, 10.86b (Cotton (1981) suggests that this may not be standard language in such letters, but cf. Tabula Banasitana, below and n. 139).

(137) Kaster (2005), 49 sees occasions like this as tests of Pliny's own *fides* too: the degree of confidence he enjoys with more powerful men.

(138) Cf. D.Chr. 50.3.

(139) Tabula Banasitana, ed. Seston and Euzennat (1971); cf. Saller (1982), 168–70.

(140) *Ben.* 6.34.3–4.

(141) Juv. 9.82, Tac., *Ann.* 15.54.4.

(142) *Contr.* 4.8.

(143) *Mor.* 53e.

(144) 61f, 54a.

(145) Bernand (1969) 10.8 (Terenuthis, early Roman); Peek (1955) 655.4 (Trachonitis, second–third century).

(146) The *pistis* of expertise is also celebrated on tombstones: e.g. Peek (1955), 1916, second century. Cic., *Off.* 2.34 observes that wisdom in general (not linked to any particular expertise) may inspire *fides*, but not as much as justice.

(147) Pr. 7 (transl. Loeb, modified); cf. Plin., *HN* 7.8 (relying on authorities rather than his own observations about racial facial features). Plu., *Vit. Lys.* 12.3 observes that there are more and less *pithanoi* opinions about shooting stars.

(148) *Top.* 74.

(149) *HN* 29.17 (on the trust placed in doctors), 29.29 (on cures accredited by experts), 28.81 (female authorities disagree about what causes abortions).

(150) Plu., *Alex.* 19.2–4; cf. Curt. 3.6.6, where Alexander asks rhetorically: 'Shall I condemn my doctor's *fides*?' and when he has drunk the draught (12), '*crede me non minus pro tua fide quam pro mea salute esse sollicitum*,' 'Believe me, I am not less concerned for your loyalty than my health.'

(151) 1.1.21; see also p. 164 n. 150.

- (152) Though Pyrrhonists, at least, treat with equal contempt sense impressions, myth, and argument without proof: S.E. 1.117, 147, 150, 173.
- (153) Helpfully surveyed by Saïd (2007); cf. Sacks (1994), Marincola (1997) 117–27, Mehl (2011), 18–32.
- (154) Historians since Herodotus (2.98) have treated as most reliable the evidence they have seen or researched for themselves, on which, see Marincola (1997), 63–86, Schepens (2011).
- (155) 7.70.2. He goes on to say that religious rituals are such testimonies (cf. Tac., *Ger.* 39.1, making a similar point); at 1.90.2 he has said that the testimony of authors ‘who are not worthy of disbelief’ (οὐκ ἀξιῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι) are another source. At 1.84.1 he comments that many people think the story of Romulus and Remus is absurd and *apithanon*.
- (156) 1.pr.6–7.
- (157) 1.3.
- (158) One of Plutarch’s many criticisms of Herodotus is that he does not use the most trustworthy sources for some of his early histories: *Mor.* 857e–f, 859e–f, 860g. Contrast D.H., *Pomp.* 3, where Dionysius says that Herodotus trusted himself (*pisteuein*) to produce something better than earlier historians, and succeeded.
- (159) 1.5.1, 1.23.7–8, 1.26.1–3, 1.29.5–6. Funke (2011), 427–8 shows that D.S. uses epic relatively uncritically as a source and does not distinguish between historians and poets as sources.
- (160) On the problems of myth for Diodorus and others, see Marincola (1997), 117–27. Discussion of the difficulty of drawing a line between ‘myth’ and rationally investigable history, of course, goes back at least as far as Herodotus, and Ephorus (*Fr.Gr.Hist.* 70 F 9) says that the further back in time one travels, the less trustworthy one’s sources become.
- (161) Von Ungern-Sternberg (2011), 119.
- (162) All writers of histories recognize that they rely on the testimonies of others to some degree. A few, like Pliny the Elder, rarely signal that they find this problematic (7.8, 8.61, 28.52, 29.9; this tolerance seems to extend even to popular beliefs, e.g. 8.80–1, 8.105, 10.32, 25.42, 25.47, 25.94, 28.10–19, 28.24, though 26.20 disapproves of the credulity of our forefathers). One or two, notably Josephus, like to fortify tradition with what they claim is documentary evidence (but see Marincola (1997), 103–5 on the rarity of this; cf. D.H. 8.5–6 on the ‘books of the pontiffs’ as sources). On the variable and contested status of documents as creators of *fides* in the medieval world, see Burgers (2008), Plessow (2008).
- (163) Cf. Plin., *HN* 28 *passim*, Plu., *Mor.* 589d. Compare bases of beliefs about the gods; see pp. 241–6.
- (164) *Ap.* 1.14.
- (165) 1.38, 1.161.
- (166) Marincola (1997), 158–74 discusses the importance for many historians of claiming impartiality; cf. Luce (2011, 291. Woodman (2011) argues that Tacitus does not, as has been thought, owe much to Stoicism here, though *contra*, see Turpin (2008).
- (167) e.g. 2.5.5; cf. 3.30.1, 4.8.1–2, 5.23.1. Cic., *Fin.* 2.46 seems actively to promote our basic instincts as a guide to what is *fidelis*, along with what is true and constant. Sen., *Ben.* 30 also claims we take our values on faith, including *fides*.
- (168) 1.32.4, 1.36.1, 1.80.5, 2.5.5, 3.36.1, 3.43.4, 5.38.1, 11.11.3, 11.89.1, 13.81.5; cf. 1.33.4, 3.18.3, 4.8.1–2, 16.9.1.
- (169) As such it owes something to paradoxography (cf. Lucianus, *Herm.* 72, observing that some people are liable to believe in monsters (*pisteuousin*) simply because they are monsters); see Giannini (1964), Delcroix (1996), Schepens (1996).
- (170) 1.1.21–2.
- (171) e.g. 2.1.11, 11.6.4, 15.1.28; cf. Ov., *Met.* 15.361–2. On the reliability of Strabo’s cartography, see Jacob (1986).

(172) 1.2.9–11. Strabo's use of Homer has been well explored: see Floratos (1972), Biraschi (1984), Dueck (2000), 31–40, Kim (2010), 47–84.

(173) Morgan (1998), ch. 3, *passim*; Plu., *Mor.* 17d–37a and Quint. 1.8, 10.1 offer explanations for how one learns Homer's limitations by reading him, but the question remains unsolved in Strabo's text. The paradox of Homeric and Hesiodic (un)trustworthiness is a cliché by this period (D.Chr. 11.4, Lucian, *Sat.* 5, *Hes.* 1; cf. Lucian, *Herm.* 72). Strabo discusses other scholars' views of Homer's trustworthiness too, rejecting some of their criticisms on the basis that 'everyone knows that Homer's poetry is a philosophical work' (1.2.17).

(174) 1.2.1–14.

(175) e.g. 2.1.8. He seems to regard other writers as untrustworthy when they did not experience what they talk about for themselves: e.g. 15.1.6–7, 15.1.28.

(176) See Luce (2011) on the conventionality of this claim.

(177) Kemezis (2010) treats the work as serious historiography, discussing (pp. 299–305) the history of debate about Lucian's debt to Thucydides or Polybius in arguing for a 'practical, scientific sort of history appropriate for statesmen' (p. 299), but his description of the kind of history Lucian would approve of (pp. 297–8) surely makes too little of his satirical bent (though he does note that 'the historiographical world described by Lucian is strange and unreal', p. 302).

(178) e.g. *Somn.* 3, *Icar.* 2, 12, *Philops.* *passim*, *Tox.* 56.

(179) 2.21–31. On this and other stories in which the dead testify, see the narratological analysis of Winkler (1985), 69–88, emphasizing how Apuleius plays with the difficulty of establishing the narrator's authority and the audience's trust.

(180) Following the generally accepted restoration of this name (van Mal-Maeder (2001), 304).

(181) Even to rely on another person's representation of something that one can see for oneself may be dangerous. The Thessalian women who, in Plutarch's *Obsolescence of Oracles*, claim during eclipses that they are drawing down the moon, somehow manage to convince many people that they are indeed doing so (416f–17a).

(182) 7.9–12.

(183) 8.1–18.1.

(184) 44.5.

(185) Whitmarsh (2009) suggests that the work challenges not primarily beliefs about heroes, but more widely readers' sense of self and cultural identity.

(186) e.g. D.H. 10.12.7, Vell. 2.102, Jos., *AJ* 8.171, Philostr., *Vit. Ap.* 8.25.2–26.1.

(187) 2.20. On the role of rumour and report in the practical policing of the empire, see Fuhrmann (2012), 51, 151.

(188) Cf. Quint. 2.4.18: it is appropriate to discuss whether a traditional story is *credibile*.

(189) Kennedy (1994), Day (2007).

(190) Arist., *Rhet.* 2.1–17.

(191) 12.1.1; cf. 1.2.4.

(192) Morgan (1998).

(193) 2.15.10–37.

(194) 5.10.1–31.

(195) 6.2.1–7. *Dig.* 22.5.2 takes a rosier view, citing Modestinus, who says that the value of testimony depends on the—presumptively genuine—dignity, morality, gravity, and *fides* of the witness; cf. Cic. *Verr.* 1.18, *Font.* 23.

(196) NB Quintilian does not treat *fides* itself as an emotion, but as created by emotion.

(197) Cf. e.g. pp. 117–20, 187, 197–8, 243, 258, 304–5, 437.

(198) A curiosity, though it is not germane to this study, is the frequency with which natural phenomena, especially seas, rocks, and shorelines dangerous to shipping, are personified as *infidus*, *infidelis*, or *perfidus*: e.g. Lucr. 2.557, Ov., *Trist.* 4.4.60, Plin., *HN* 2.205, 36.169, Sil. 17.58, Plin., *Paneg.* 66.3.

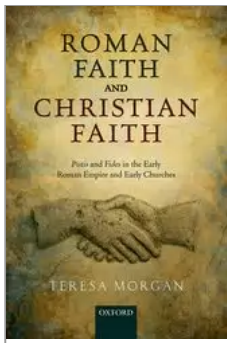
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Pistis and Fides in the World of the Early Principate II

Structures of State

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter continues the examination of the distinctive shape of *pistis/fides* in Graeco-Roman society begun in the last chapter, considering *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman structures of state, including law and government, in armies, and in political, inter-state, and economic relations between the first century BCE and the second century CE. It examines the roles of mediators in a range of public and political roles. It explores the role of *pistis/fides* at the foundations of states and its connections with justice, friendship, hope, and other socially and politically central concepts and praxeis. It discusses why *pistis/fides* is invoked above all at times of crisis, and why it is one of the few qualities which are equally applicable to domestic and public contexts and equally important in both.

Keywords: *pistis*, *fides*, law, political, army, economic, crisis

In the previous chapter, the shape of *pistis/fides* in the early principate began to emerge through attitudes articulated by authors, characters, sayings, and stories to trust and related concepts in oneself and between fellow-members of a household, friends, associates, patrons, and clients. This chapter turns to some of the key structures of state, exploring where *pistis* and *fides* were experienced as easy or difficult, and where and how they were deferred and reified, in relation to the principate, the army, the law, the economy, and inter-state relations.

Military Relationships

Few relationships in Graeco-Roman societies are so often or so positively described with the language of *pistis/fides* as those between armies and the state and army commanders and their troops.¹ Perhaps none is attested across so wide a range of sources. Evidence for the importance of military *pistis/fides* thrusts itself on our attention from literary texts, inscriptions, papyri, and coins, speaking in almost uninterrupted chorus of the loyalty of troops to their commanders, the trustworthiness of commanders towards their men, and the devotion of both to their state, king, or emperor.² It is wholly appropriate, to Romans, and infinitely resonant that in Virgil's

dux Achates.³ At the same time, we
and need to be worked at—and not
reification of *différance*, the military

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In literature, all great and admired generals, from Alexander to Hannibal to Caesar, together with a galaxy of lesser-known figures are described as having relationships of *pistis/fides* with their troops.⁵ We may not be surprised to hear that troops are typically loyal to their commanders (nor, for instance, that Aelian, in *On Animals*, can take soldiers as paradigms of *pistis*⁶). It may be more surprising to find that trust or confidence by commanders in their troops is almost equally marked. So, for instance, we hear of Caesar and Antony, in the midst of civil war, each trusting the bravery of their soldiers; Darius investing *fides* in his troops even on the point of defeat by Alexander; Plutarch's Aratus backing his men against the Macedonian army; and innumerable acts of trust by generals in guards whom they believe to be *fidelissimi/pistotatoi* or in troops chosen for special operations.⁷

The *pistis/fides* of soldiers towards their commanders is, by its nature, diachronic, expressed over the length of a campaign, a command, or a military career. As such, it is continually productive and forward-looking. Occasionally, in addition, it is marked, as we saw the *pistis/fides* of slaves and clients marked, at a moment of crisis or decision-making.

Caesar offers a poignant example of the empowered and empowering *fides* of an ordinary soldier.⁸ During the civil wars of 48 BCE a standard-bearer is fatally wounded in battle against Pompey. He dies saying: 'I have defended this eagle, living, for many years with great care, and now, dying, I restore it to Caesar with the same *fides*.'⁹ His *fides* is not only his oath of allegiance, but also **(p.79)** the trust that has been placed in him and the responsibility he has discharged. He dies knowing that Caesar and his commanders have relied on his loyalty as certainly as he has been loyal to them.

The bond between generals and armies is so strong that it can survive quite severe attacks of externally generated fear and doubt. Valerius Maximus describes how Sulpicius Gallus, when campaigning against the Macedonians in the early second century BCE, was able to reassure his army, terrified by an eclipse and losing its self-confidence (*fiducia*), that they had nothing to fear, by discoursing learnedly on the movements of the stars.¹⁰ The Etruscan general Manius had a little more difficulty convincing his army and people to trust him when, during the Gallic wars of 296–295 BCE, he interpreted a series of dire portents as meaning that the Romans would eventually be victorious.¹¹ Torn between hope and fear, they were unable either to trust (*pisteuein*) or not to trust him (*apistein*), but in the end they remained loyal and won the war. Both these incidents also highlight the conceptual elasticity of *pistis/fides*. Military loyalty need not involve trust in an individual or willingness to believe what he says outside the military sphere, but in these cases it does, and the relationships between the generals and their men are stronger for it.

We saw in the last chapter that a powerful ground of trust in public and private life was the perception that an individual possesses the virtue of trust and is intrinsically trustworthy. This differential move is no less favoured in military circles. In *On Generalship*, Onasander discusses at length what goes into the making of a general who has and can command *pistis*. He must be wise (not to be distracted by physical pleasures from higher matters) and self-restrained (not to give in to his passions). He must be sober (so as to be able to spend nights awake planning major actions), frugal (so as not to waste resources), tough (so that he is the last man in his army to tire), and clever (quick as a bird, as Homer says, in thought). Last but not least, he must not desire wealth, which ensures that he is incorruptible, for many, says Onasander ominously, are brave enough in the face of enemy action, but are corrupted by gold.¹² Once selected, a general must be sure to be a sound man, affable, ready for action, unflappable, not so gentle that he is despised, but not so fearsome that he is hated, and neither too harsh nor too lenient a disciplinarian.¹³ He must choose officers at every level who are *pistotatoi*, and on whom he can rely to take over command if necessary.¹⁴ When a man has all these qualities, and the kind of reputation they ensure, then his troops will be bound to love, obey, and trust him.¹⁵

(p.80) If *pistis/fides* is one of the paradigmatic qualities of good generals and loyal armies, its failure is symptomatic of a failed relationship between the two, or of the treacherous nature of either the troops or the commander. The alleged *apistia* between himself and his army is symptomatic of the tyrannical nature of Rome's formidable first-century enemy, King Mithradates VI of Pontus.¹⁶ The

Roman traitor Marcus Perpenna, pursued by Pompey in Spain in 72 BCE, forces a confrontation which he loses because he fears his army will not remain *pistos* for long.¹⁷ During Scipio Africanus' Spanish campaigns at the end of the third century BCE, Scipio falls ill and some of his troops take the opportunity to desert from his deputy, choosing new generals and centurions and taking an impromptu oath to one another. When he discovers this, Scipio plays on the deserters' personal trust in him (*pisteuein*), which persists despite their disloyalty, to trick them into a meeting, where he executes the ringleaders, pardons the rest, and ends the mutiny.¹⁸ Plutarch signals Sulla's growing arrogance, which will ultimately lead to his downfall, by his behaviour after a successful siege of the Latin town Antemnae.¹⁹ The Antemnians sue for mercy; Sulla promises safety if they will do some damage first to his enemies, who have fled into the city for safety; they trust his promise (*pisteusantes*) and attack the soldiers in the city, but when Sulla enters the city, he kills enemies and citizens alike.²⁰

Pistis/fides has already been translated several times in military contexts as 'loyalty', which reflects the dominant aspect of obedience in military *pistis/fides*, and the fact that armies throughout antiquity swear oaths to their commanders. In places it is better rendered 'trust' or 'confidence', to capture a relationship of personal trust which seems to develop between some commanders and their troops. It comes naturally to modern readers to hear in such language an allusion to the interiority of *pistis/fides*—what takes place in the heart or mind of the one who trusts—and we cannot rule out that *pistis/fides* in some of these passages has cognitive-affective aspects. (Sulla's commander Marcus Lucullus, for example, who trusted (*pisteuein*) the bravery of his troops but held back from sending them to attack a much larger force, surely had an attitude and perhaps even an emotion of trust towards his men as well as a trusting relationship with them.²¹) As in the previous chapter, though, we must be **(p.81)** aware that the sources show little explicit interest in the cognitive aspects of *pistis/fides* and none in its putative emotional aspects. The slippage in relationships where something more than 'loyalty' seems to be in play is typically a slippage between two kinds of relationship, that which is demanded by certain roles and that which can develop between people regardless of role, rather than between exterior and interior aspects of the relationship.²²

Roman emperors maintain a professional army, but even citizen militias, by the fact that they train, swear oaths of loyalty, and are bound to fight to the best of their ability when required, have a degree of professionalism about them. Military *pistis/fides*, by that token, also carries overtones of professional trust and trustworthiness, and it may be that when armies and commanders are marked as trustworthy as well as loyal, it is partly due to the confidence which, as we have seen, is widely reposed in professionals.

When the Roman army (or that of any state) takes an oath, it is in principle confirming its loyalty to an undivided state and an unchallenged leadership. In practice, army oaths and army loyalty, in fact and representation, can be weapons of fractured *fides*, political rivalry, and civil war. When the dying standard-bearer in Caesar's *Civil War* affirms his *fides*, he is ostensibly referring to his loyalty to Rome, but what he articulates explicitly is loyalty to Caesar, and it is no great stretch to hear in his words partisan devotion to Caesar over Pompey. Caesar uses the language of *fides*, *fiducia*, *confidere* regularly of the relationship between himself and his troops, and also of his relationships with non-Romans.²³ On one level he may be indicating the loyalty of all parties to Rome. On another, he is indicating his own strength to his rivals—even signalling a warning to anyone who might think of trying to thwart his ambitions.²⁴ During the various wars of succession in Tacitus' *Histories*, the moments when Tacitus describes armies as keeping, breaking, or renewing their oaths of loyalty to reigning emperors or their challengers are almost always moments when major challenges to imperial authority are made or the balance of power shifts in favour of a new contender. The legions break *fides* with Galba; Vitellius executes three centurians 'guilty of *fides*' to Otho; during Vespasian's bid for power, the rank and file of the Rhine armies remain *fidi* to Vitellius while the officers incline to the pretender.²⁵ Both the *Histories* **(p.82)** and the *Annals*, in general, are notable for the paucity of their *fides* language. When it does appear, it is almost always because an emperor finds he cannot trust an individual army officer, because a legion or province is in revolt, or because armies are split between competing candidates for the purple.²⁶

Despite this, the dominant theme in discourse about armies and commanders in this period is that they do practise *pistis/fides*, whether to one another or to their state or monarch. The turbulent circumstances of rebellions and military-backed bids for power, in which *pistis/fides* is fractured and becomes a weapon in the conflict, are not rare and leave powerful traces in the memory, but they do not dominate the early imperial mindset either.

The power of *pistis/fides* and its reciprocal nature are nowhere more vividly expressed in this period than in the many coins and inscriptions which celebrate the *pistis/fides* of Roman armies and emperors. The title *pia fidelis* was awarded to legions or auxiliary units for exceptional loyalty to an emperor, either when he was making a successful bid for power or, more often, when he was putting down a revolt. The first attested award dates to 42, and was given by the emperor Claudius to the seventh and ninth legions for their loyalty during a revolt by the governor of Dalmatia. After that the title is known to have been awarded to ten legions and around fifty

auxiliary cohorts or *alae* in the first two centuries CE. There are ample signs of how highly the title was valued both by units and by individuals. It is found in dedicatory inscriptions on buildings and altars and on tile-stamps. It was included in the military diplomas which recorded the award of citizenship to retiring auxiliaries, and it appears on countless tombstones of retired soldiers as part of a summary of their career. *Pia fidelis* (or *eusebēs pistos*) echoes around the graveyards of the empire, summing up the best years of countless military lives.²⁷

To designate a legion or unit *fidelis* is a claim not only about its loyalty to the emperor, but also about the emperor's trustworthiness and loyalty to the unit. The emperor, it says, notices your faithfulness, values, and rewards it. When every soldier took an oath of loyalty as a matter of course, however, there is also a hint of ambiguity about the affirmation. It suggests that there may have been army units in the past that were less *fideles* than this, and that there might be such now and in the future. It raises the possibility that the relationship between the emperor and his commander, and commanders and troops, may not always be watertight; that their interests and loyalties may sometimes diverge. It may even be heard as carrying a note of appeal both to the units (**p.83**) which carry the name and to those which do not: the emperor hopes that you will remain, as you have been, *fidelis*. It is an often-remarked weakness of trust that to affirm it is always to throw just a shadow of doubt on it, and nowhere is that doubt more audible than in emperors' commendations of troops who are bound to them by oath for their *fides*, with all its overtones of personal trust and faithfulness, and the boasting of those troops in the *fides* they have had.

A similar mixture of messages is detectable in the many coin types which survive from the early principate, proclaiming *fides* in words, images, or both. Some of these types bear one of a small repertoire of legends. *Fides publica* or *fidei publicae* refers historically to the collective good faith of the Roman people. In this context, it may also be meant to imply the mutual trust and good faith between the emperor and his subjects. *Fides exercituum*, *fides cohortium*, or *fides praetorianorum* celebrate primarily the loyalty of the army to the emperor. Thanks to the ambiguity of the genitive, however, which can be read subjectively or objectively, they also allow the reader to remember the emperor's loyalty to the army.

The imagery of *fides* on coins is richly varied, and by no means all military: civil, religious, and economic images also appear, and images are variously combined for greater symbolic richness. The goddess Fides frequently appears either in person or represented by clasped right hands, the ubiquitous symbol of good faith.²⁸ *Fides* in all its possible meanings, the image says, is cultivated in this state. The goddess often carries ears of corn and/or a basket or plate of fruit.²⁹ The corn (sometimes visibly wheat or barley) is usually taken to symbolize the emperor's control of the grain supply; hence his guarantee of food at reasonable prices, especially for the Roman poor. Outside Rome, the image might also stand more generally for prosperity, arising from peace in the empire. The fruit basket or plate suggests bountiful food, which goes with peace and prosperity, and may also recall the goddess Pomona, the patron of gardens and orchards, who is herself connected with *ops*, wealth. Fides also appears holding a cornucopia, the symbol of plenty which is connected with the agricultural goddess Ceres.³⁰

Clasped right hands also appear with ears of corn, and often poppies too.³¹ Poppies, probably because they grow well in ploughed fields, are an ancient (**p.84**) symbol of Demeter and Ceres; they are also beautiful and make an attractive image, pointing not only to plenty but to the beauty of agricultural order in times of peace. Emperors rarely think of agriculture, however, without also thinking of commerce and the movement of grain around the Mediterranean. The clasped hands and wheat ears are commonly accompanied by a snake-headed and sometimes winged caduceus, the staff of Mercury, patron, among other things, of trade and commerce.³² The plenty presided over by Fides, these coins proclaim, is also freely traded and distributed around the empire.

Occasionally Fides is seen sacrificing with a *patera*, a dish for making offerings. Gods making offerings to gods, if paradoxical, is not an uncommon type of image,³³ but given, as we shall see, that practising *pistis/fides* towards the gods is sometimes commended in literary texts, one might also be tempted to detect a visual pun here: Fides/*fides* practises conventional piety.

All this imagery is combined in many ways, not least with military imagery and legends. The legend *fides exercituum* or *fides cohortium*, for instance, is often shown with corn ears or a cornucopia. The same legend, or clasped right hands, may be shown with corn ears and poppies or military standards or both.³⁴ The cumulative effect (at least to a modern audience which has the benefit of seeing large numbers of coins together) is to emphasize the interdependence of all the benefits of *fides*. Peace, ensured by armies, together with strong government, brings prosperity, trade, fair prices, and satisfaction to all the subjects of the empire.

Not all emperors issue coins featuring Fides/*fides*, and those who do have preferences for certain types of imagery over others. Vespasian seized power in a well-coordinated military coup, and he and his sons put down a number of rebellions, subsequently awarding the title *pia fidelis* to a number of army units. Nevertheless, though they issue several coins featuring *fides*, they consistently

favour non-military legends, such as *fides publica*, and imagery, playing down the role of the army in bringing them to power and keeping them there. Commodus and Septimius Severus, in contrast, both favour military images of *fides*, to which both add new forms. Commodus issues coins portraying a commander, presumably himself, addressing his troops, while a coin of Septimius Severus represents Fides holding a small Victory in her right hand and a standard in her left.³⁵ They convey the message that these are strong emperors whom no wise person—or army unit—would challenge.

The grammatical construction of many of the legends on these coins, together with the representation of *fides* as a goddess, and the inbuilt multivalency of **(p.85)** images, allows *fides* to flow freely between the components of each type. Divine sponsorship of agriculture, of good faith, of trade, of the Roman state, and of emperors is bound in multiple reciprocal relationships with the emperor's and his subjects' piety, loyalty, and labour. Peace, loyal armies, plenty, prosperity, piety, and public order are mutually involved and mutually supporting. Woe betide the individual or group who disrupts any or all of them for partisan gain.

Military *pistis/fides*, like *pistis/fides* in the family, which we examined in the last chapter, is a good example of trust and so on which both binds all group members in a common enterprise and also articulates their different roles in a social 'jigsaw'. As a coda to this section, which has already begun to look ahead to *pistis/fides* in political and economic relations, it is worth noting that coins illustrate a connection which evidently looms large in Roman minds but which literary texts almost completely ignore: that between *pistis/fides* and food. *Fides* imagery appears constantly on coins with grains, fruits, poppies, cornucopias, and Hermes' caduceus, and quite often with standards or a military legend too. It is clearly a quality of pre-eminent importance for the production and movement of food around the empire and the feeding of its people, and the role of the army in maintaining it is not overlooked.

The gap between the interest of emperors, and perhaps also of the people, in the role played by *pistis/fides* in feeding the empire, as attested by coins, and the lack of literary interest in the subject in most of our written sources are a prime example of the lack of interest in matters economic which regularly frustrates historians of the ancient economy. Coins also promote another theme about which literary sources have little to say: that some emperors are keen not only to mark the *pistis/fides* of armies and people to them, but also, implicitly, theirs to armies and people, and to suggest by imagery that they regard themselves as responsible for the operation of *pistis/fides* in the empire.³⁶ With this in mind, we turn next to the operation of *pistis/fides* in politics.

Political Relationships

Pistis/fides in political life, especially in the late Roman republic but also in the Hellenistic world and occasionally under the principate, has been the focus of numerous studies exploring how and among whom it worked, and when and how it failed.³⁷ Among the main objects of discussion have been patron–client **(p.86)** relations, friendship in public life, and the *fides* of magistrates and that of judges, along, of course, with military oaths, inter-state treaties, and *pistis/fides* in inter-state relations in general.

We will return to legal and inter-state relations, but it is worth noting here that our sources for *pistis/fides* in many parts of public life under the empire are considerably less rich than those for the Roman republic, in particular. No imperial author shares the intense interest of Cicero or Sallust in who, among the ruling classes, trusts whom, and with what justification or what results, in any one place or time. Indeed, the relative paucity of the language of trust in discussions of imperial politics is striking and—as we noted in the case of Tacitus—surely significant.³⁸ Above all, literature of the early empire has remarkably little to say about the *pistis/fides* of emperors. At the same time, it has so much to say about the lack of trust and untrustworthiness of tyrants and other monarchs that it is difficult not to view this discourse as on some level commentary on the principate.

We have seen that the presentation of *fides* on imperial coins allows readers to understand emperors as exercising *fides* towards their armies and people, as well as people and armies exercising it towards emperors. Literary sources rarely refer to the *pistis/fides* of emperors towards their people. When they do, it is almost always in something written by an emperor, addressed explicitly to an emperor, or written by someone close to an emperor who might have expected his views to become known to the emperor.

In his panegyric to Trajan on the occasion of Trajan's election to the consulship in 100, Pliny celebrates in fulsome terms the freedom of speech enjoyed by Romans under Trajan's rule. By the guarantee of the emperor's right hand (the symbol of good faith), the man who trusts/accepts that guarantee (*credere*) may speak his mind without fear.³⁹ (As befits the genre, no hint of irony ruffles the smooth surface of Pliny's discourse here.) When Trajan's election to the consulship was announced, Pliny recalls, among the Senate's many acclamations was *crede nobis, crede tibi!*—'Trust us; trust yourself!' This apparently meant that Trajan was being urged to trust the wisdom of the Roman people in electing him, together with his own virtue which equipped him for the post.⁴⁰

(p.87) *Pistis* is one of the many virtues which Marcus Aurelius identifies in his *Meditations* as demanded of him as emperor.⁴¹ If a

man proves *apistos* to him, moreover, he urges himself to examine his own thought process, and identify why he made the mistake of taking on trust (*pistis*) that the man had the character to be trustworthy (*pisteuein*) to him.⁴² (With this measured account of imperial *pistis* we may juxtapose a lively cameo in Cassius Dio's history, in which Marcus rouses his troops to war against the rebel Cassius in 175 with a tirade against subjects who betray the emperor's trust.⁴³)

Much more often, it is said even of good monarchs that they cannot afford to trust anyone. Plutarch's Seven Sages of archaic Greece, advising an Egyptian king on how a monarch gains a good reputation, warn him not to trust anyone around him.⁴⁴ Apollonius of Tyana, asked during a visit to the king of Parthia how he can rule firmly and safely, says: 'By honouring many and trusting (*pisteuōn*) few', while for Diodorus Siculus the surest way to keep safe for a tyrant is through systematic *apistia*.⁴⁵ Reciprocally, kings do not generate trust; *nulla sancta societas nec fides regni est*, says Cicero, quoting Ennius: 'Where there is a king, there is no inviolable fellowship or good faith.'⁴⁶ At least one emperor apparently took this advice to heart. In a letter to Fronto, Marcus Aurelius quotes a passage of Plautus about the flatterers who stand round a throne ready to deceive the trustful by pledging their faith and then breaking it.⁴⁷

What is true for good rulers is even more true for bad ones. Tarquin the Proud, Darius Nothus, Dionysius I of Syracuse, Mithradates, Julius Caesar, and Nero are among the tyrants proper and tyrannical monarchs whose inability to trust their families, friends, subjects, armies, or even themselves is axiomatic in this period.⁴⁸ According to Diodorus, Dionysius became so paranoid that he let his hair grow long rather than trust himself to a barber.⁴⁹ Seneca (*Clem.* 1.26.1) confirms that tyrants have good reason not to trust anyone: their guards frequently betray them, demonstrating the treachery, brutality, and *perfidia* that their master himself has taught them.

Tyrants have no friends, says Dio Chrysostom bluntly (2.75), and therefore no one they can trust.⁵⁰ In another speech (9.15), the constant companions of tyrants are *philotimia* and *apistia*, which between them ensure that tyrants can never make true friends. In Dio's view (46.19.3), it is the consciousness of their own malevolent purposes that stops tyrants believing in the sincerity of others **(p.88)** and so trusting them. Tyrants, says Cicero, love no one and no one loves them. In the lives of tyrants there can be 'no trust, no affection, no confidence in the stability of goodwill, but everything is suspect, everything causes anxiety, and there is no room for friendship' (*haec enim est tyrannorum vita, nimirum in qua nulla fides, nulla caritas, nulla stabilis benevolentiae potest esse fiducia, omnia semper suspecta atque sollicita, nullus locus amicitiae*).⁵¹

The difficulty, if not the impossibility of *pistis/fides* between tyrants and those they rule has ramifications beyond the ruler-ruled relationship itself. Cassius Dio offers an extended example in the trial of Marcus Primus for treason in the reign of Augustus.⁵² Primus was accused of having made war, unprovoked, on the Odrysae, a friendly Thracian tribe, while proconsul of Macedonia. He claimed that he had acted on the instructions of Augustus, who was consul at the time. Augustus personally went into court to deny that he had given any such order, explaining this highly unusual action as necessary for the good of the state. In her analysis of this incident, Barbara Levick argues that Augustus expected Primus' advocate, Murena, out of *fides* to the emperor (impossible to ignore in the emperor's presence), to avoid his only reasonable line of defence, that Primus had been following orders. Murena, however, could not take this line without breaking *fides* with his client. Faced with a choice between acting with *fides* to the emperor or to his client, he chose his client. The alienation between emperor and subject that resulted led to Murena's participation in a plot against Augustus, his prosecution, and execution for treason. Ultimately, the impossibility of exercising *fides* simultaneously to the emperor and to anyone else destroyed him. In the previous chapter we saw some examples of how *pistis/fides* between clients and patrons might act positively to create new relationships and political possibilities. Dio invites readers to consider whether the very existence of a monarch renders impossible the positive operation of *pistis/fides* not only in direct relation to himself, but also among his subjects.

Even accounts of *pistis/fides* towards emperors or rulers, (including in the military sphere) are less common than we might expect. Seneca urges the imperial freedman Polybius to get over the grief of a bereavement by thinking of the *fides* he owes the emperor. 'See what loyalty, what industry you owe him for his favour towards you, and you will realize that it is no more permissible for you to bend under your burden than it is for him...whose shoulders support the sky.'⁵³ Pliny, outraged that the Senate plans to honour Nero's freedman Pallas, whom he thinks dishonest and, worse, vulgar, for his *fides* **(p.89)** and *industria*, nevertheless implicitly allows that *fides* towards the emperor is possible. When addressing the emperor directly, in a different context, Pliny can call Trajan's attention to his own (Pliny's) *fides* as governor of Bithynia.⁵⁴ Artemidorus, writing his handbook on dream interpretation at the end of the second century, is unusual in praising political authority without, as far as we know, having any immediate expectation that authority is listening: 'Of those who are said to be worthy of trust/belief [when they appear in a dream], whose words one should trust (*pisteuein*) and obey, I say that the gods come first; for it is against the nature of a god to lie. Then priests...Then kings and rulers. "For to rule is to have the power of a god."⁵⁵ From time to time we hear of the *pistis/fides* of individual or groups of courtiers or

counsellors to monarchs, nearly always in times of crisis (and often in spite of those monarchs' failings).⁵⁶ On the whole, though, the idea that relationships of *pistis/fides* are possible or desirable with kings, tyrants, or emperors is conspicuous in writings of this period by its absence.

Emperors and tyrants, however, are not the only focus of reflection on political *pistis/fides* in the early principate, and few narratives of this period help us to reflect on political *pistis/fides* better than two stories, retold by Diodorus Siculus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, of transformative moments in the history, respectively, of Athens and Rome. Both these narratives concern events which occurred hundreds of years earlier. Both are long, detailed, and circumstantial to a degree which renders them wholly unreliable as historiography but highly suggestive as contemporary political commentary. One is a story of how trust and mistrust, cleverly counterpointed, enable a creative political vision to be realized to the benefit of the state. The other is a story of how mistrust, reluctantly allowing itself to be overcome, enables the partial rehabilitation of a failing state without solving any of its fundamental problems. Between them, they sketch powerfully the riskiness of *pistis/fides*, its potential, and the sheer complexity of practising it in politics.

Diodorus Siculus' account of how the Piraeus came to be developed as the harbour of Athens (11.41–2) is an exemplary story of the power (along with the complexity) of democratic *pistis*. In the aftermath of the Persian wars in **(p.90)** 477 BCE, Themistocles conceived the idea of building up the Piraeus as part of Athens' bid for naval hegemony in the Greek world. Knowing, however, that the Spartans would try to stop the plan if it were known, he decided not to propose it publicly, but asked the assembly to choose two men whom it especially trusted (μάλιστα πιστεύση) to hear and assess his plan on its behalf. Not entirely trusting Themistocles, who had a reputation for being tricky, the Athenians chose two men who were not only honest but his political rivals. These listened to his plan and declared to the assembly that it was important, advantageous, and workable. The people, however, were still suspicious of Themistocles, whom they suspected of aspirations to tyranny, so they asked him next to share his plan with the Council of 500. He did so, the Council was impressed, and the plan went ahead.

Diodorus reveals political *pistis* as cautious but not risk-averse, forward-looking, and productive, in a state which, as a radical democracy, both invested heavily in trust and spent a great deal of effort in regulating its citizens' activities to try to ensure their trustworthiness. The Athenians' doubts about Themistocles, rather than causing them to dismiss his plan or putting them at loggerheads about it, lead them first to defer trust to the opinions of more trustworthy individuals and a more trustworthy body, and then, fortified by positive feedback, to put their trust directly in Themistocles, with highly successful results. Composed as it was in Rome, in the middle decades of the first century BCE, when the city was destroying its own political system through the inability of those in power to trust or cooperate with one another, it is hard not to hear in Diodorus' narrative a commentary on the key role of *pistis* in negotiating political tensions and enabling creative political evolution.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus' narrative of the year 494 BCE in Rome tells a very different story.⁵⁷ The plebs, chronically resentful of their treatment by the magistrates, have ceased to cooperate with them and, in an atmosphere of mutual fear and civic breakdown, have withdrawn from the city. The Senate decides to send Menenius Agrippa to negotiate with them. In Livy's version of this story, Agrippa, being himself a plebeian by birth, knows exactly how to speak to the plebs.⁵⁸ He tells them the fable of the parts of the body: how, when the limbs rebelled against the stomach, refusing to feed it, the whole body suffered. The plebs are converted by this hoary tale and concord is restored. Dionysius, with less interest than Livy in showing Rome's evolution in a favourable light, makes a far longer, more complex, and more problematic narrative of it, in which *pistis* language is used repeatedly to highlight the difficulties of productive political engagement.

(p.91) When the plebs abandon the city (6.49.3), Agrippa addresses the Senate to persuade it that it must make peace with them. Senators must recognize, he says, that they cannot preserve Rome without the people; anyone who puts their trust (*pisteuontes*) in any other solution cannot justify it (49.5). Even Rome's closest allies are abandoning their *pistis* towards Rome, seeing its internal difficulties as an opportunity for themselves (50.2). Moreover, while the plebs are in revolt, no food can enter the city from the countryside, so that those left in the city are bound to become increasingly distressed. Hungry and hostile, most of these too will have to be ejected as no use in a siege, which will leave almost no one whom the Senate can trust (*pisteuein*) to defend the city. There is no practical course for the Senate other than to trust the plebs and make peace with them (51.3), if they do not want to lose their constitution, city, and land (53.2). Cutting away part of a complex community is no more a solution to strife than cutting away part of a body is to illness (54.3); moreover, the Senate are fellow-citizens with the plebs, raised and educated with them; they share a natural affinity (55.3).

If mistrust, in Diodorus' narrative, was used creatively to test Themistocles and his idea, in Dionysius' story it is a counsel of despair.

The Senate is no longer in control of Rome; if the city is not to collapse, *pistis* must be tried. Agrippa is presented as looking for reasons why it may work, but it is obvious how fragile and tendentious his argument is.

After a debate lasting several days (during which Appius Claudius opposes Agrippa on the grounds that *pistis* only operates among the ruling classes, and there can be no *pistis* with the mindless mob (61.2)), the Senate decides that it must seek reconciliation with the plebs and sends an embassy to where they are encamped.

In addressing the plebs, the ambassadors do not use the language of *pistis* which played a significant part in convincing the Senate to seek peace. Instead, they tell the plebs not to be childish, but to submit to the Senate and come home (71.3–4). Lucius Junius replies for the plebs in very different terms. He reminds the patricians of the plebs' role in building Rome, driving out the kings, fighting for their shared freedom, and helping to create Rome's empire (74.1–76.1). In return, he says, the patricians have violated all their promises to the plebs and treated them tyrannically and unjustly (76.3). Even so, as recently as the previous year, the plebs trusted the patricians, but the patricians once again deceived them (77.1–2). Now he wants to know what terms the patricians are offering for the plebs' return. 'Who will be guarantor of the terms for us? Trusting in what assurance shall we put down our weapons... (τινὶ πιστεύσαντες ἀσφαλείαι τὰ ὄπλα θήσομεν ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν...)?' (78.2–3).

The plebs, according to Lucius Junius, have trusted the Senate, their trust has been violated, and they see no reason to trust again. Are they going to trust decrees of the Senate?, he asks rhetorically. Or the *pisteis* given by the ambassadors, whom the Senate has already used to deceive them? Or *pista*, (p.92) agreements made with sworn oaths to the gods? Lucius Junius thinks these the least trustworthy of all, because they have been broken before. What kind of reconciliation are the patricians in a position to offer (78.1–3)? 'What kind of friendship and *pistis* is it, in which we shall be forced to cultivate each other against our better judgement, while we are each guarding our own advantage?' (78.4).

Neither trust itself nor trust reified in pledges or oaths has any currency for Lucius Junius. He advises the plebs to found a new city of their own. The plebs agree with his view that the patricians have exploited, defrauded, and deceived them (81.1), but eventually they are persuaded by the offer of the abolition of debts and reassertion of the rule of law to return to Rome. Why the plebs are persuaded that the patricians will regard themselves as bound by a shared trust in the law, when they have broken it before, is not clear. Perhaps Dionysius thinks that the law has power to coerce trust among Romans greater than it might have in other states.

Just before the climax of Menenius Agrippa's persuasive final speech, he begs Lucius Junius not to throw over *pisteis* made by citizens to one another and sanctioned by the gods (δεξιὰς δὲ καὶ σπονδὰς καὶ πίστεις ἐπὶ θεῶν γιγνομένης μήτε σὺ διάβαλλε, Βροῦτε, μήτ' ἀναίρει τὸ κάλλιστον ἐπιτήδευμα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων...) (84.4). The plebs are not persuaded by this, but then Agrippa tells them that the parts of a state need each other as surely as the parts of a body (86.1–4). It is Agrippa's account of what will happen to the people left in the city that finally breaks the plebs' resolve. Weeping, they agree to return to the city. Lucius Junius, however, mistrustful to the last, insists on the creation of a number of people's magistrates to defend their interests, and so the office of tribune of the people is born and made as secure as possible by law and oaths (89.2–3).

The double theme that runs throughout Dionysius' extraordinarily extended account of these events is the desirability and failure of *pistis*. If it ever existed between Senate and plebs, it has disintegrated. It is not recreated now. The people of Rome are reunited, but reluctantly, and only because on both sides, for different reasons, they feel compelled to it. What fragile trust they have is deferred and reified in laws, oaths, and a new magistracy, even though they recognize that all of these have failed before. The mutual scepticism of Senate and plebs reads all the more sharply when we remember that, when Dionysius was writing and his first audience reading, laws, oaths, and magistracies were failing in Rome again. With perhaps both past and future in mind, Dionysius offers an analysis of why self-interest and compulsion without *pistis* are inadequate foundations for a strong and stable state.⁵⁹ Finally, he raises the question whether the Romans, who take such pride in the *fides* that, in their (p.93) own view, underpins their state, their social relations, and their political activities, are as secure in it as they like to believe.

Dionysius' 'outsider' analysis contrasts vividly with the phrase endemic in Roman political thought by which Romans summed up their conviction that one of Rome's outstanding characteristics was the mutual *fides* of her citizens: *fides publica*. The collective good faith of the Roman people, and hence of the state itself, is seen everywhere as operating in both internal and inter-state political relations. Writers on war use it to persuade us that Roman imperialism is a virtuous and benevolent thing. (Those who say that we should care about the rights of fellow-citizens and not about those of foreigners, says Cicero loftily in *On Duties*, destroy the essential fraternity of humankind.⁶⁰) Valerius Maximus identifies the goddess of the Capitoline cult above all with *fides publica* (and sees it as particularly important in enabling Rome to make peace with other states).⁶¹ We should probably understand *fides publica* as involved

wherever Livy talks of the Roman *fides* to which erstwhile enemies commit themselves in the process of becoming part of the Roman empire. It is the concept to which Lucius Tarquinius appeals, in Sallust's account, when offering to betray the Catilinarian conspiracy: he will pass on information if he is given *fides publica* and allowed to be reconciled with his peers.⁶²

Despite the apparent optimism of this concept, however, there is no better illustration of the riskiness of trust, the anxiety that surrounds it, and its inevitable entanglement with fear and doubt than many of the contexts in which *fides publica* is invoked. In Latin literature it appears most frequently in the last days of the republic, when *pistis/fides* in war and politics is crumbling on every side.⁶³ In these contexts *pistis/fides* is more often deployed to explain the disruption of political life than invoked of positive political relationships; it emerges as a concept which Romans would like to apply to themselves, and would like others to apply to them, but which they constantly fear is failing. Perhaps no moment illustrates the fragility of *fides publica* in political relations in this period better than the disastrously ill-conceived appeal of Caesar's assassins to the Roman people shortly after his death, in the account of Dio Cassius (44.34.3). Having just murdered their erstwhile friend, ally, and ruler, they appeal to the army and people to preserve *homonoia*, unity. They try to ensure this by promising not to revoke any of Caesar's acts or confiscate anyone's goods, fortifying their promise with oaths that they will be *pisteuomenoi*, trustworthy. They do not persuade anyone of their good faith. Romans (p.94) of the late republic and early principate may want to believe in *fides publica*, but in domestic politics, at least, it seems to be all but impossible.

The taxonomy of *pistis/fides* and their correlates in political relations is, as we would expect, complex and sometimes contradictory. Tyrants, for instance, who rule entirely in their own interest, neither attract nor expect *pistis/fides*. Emperors, and those close to them, invest a good deal of effort in presenting emperors as less like tyrants than benign patrons: trusting and trusted. At the same time, the paucity of *pistis/fides* language in many accounts of early imperial politics, which take a subaltern perspective, suggests that those outside imperial circles did not often share the imperial view.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the language of *pistis/fides* in politics, however, is how rarely it presents mistrust, or cautiously evolving trust, as positive or productive (as many modern sociologists would understand it to be). Diodorus' account of the development of the Piraeus is a rarity in presenting the Athenians' mistrust of Themistocles not as destructive, but as an incentive to all sides to test an idea and develop support for it gradually before executing it successfully. Elsewhere, Dionysius' model of political *pistis/fides* prevails. Trust is good. Doubt and mistrust are bad, and damaging to any state.

The prevalence of this model may account for another feature of our sources, especially for the late republic: despite their evident fear that *fides* is everywhere failing, it is surprisingly uncommon for writers to refer directly to their political rivals or enemies as *infidus* or *perfidus*. Lepidus' round attack on Sulla, in a speech of Sallust, as a 'tyrant', all of whose hopes depend on 'evil and *perfidia*', stands out (and, significantly, is not a real speech delivered to the people).⁶⁴ Caesar occasionally refers to the *perfidia* of his enemies in the *Civil War* (though not nearly as often as he refers to the treachery of non-Romans in other works).⁶⁵ Cicero is freer than most with the language of mistrust, but even he usually stops short of explicit accusation.⁶⁶ Sometimes we find him raising the spectre of mistrust or infidelity by denying that it has or could occur.⁶⁷ In a letter to Varro (9.1.2), he refers semi-humorously to the shame he feels at having deserted his books for (unnamed) less trustworthy associates. A dispirited letter to Atticus from exile in 58 finds him seeking sympathy for the *perfidia* of those dearest to him (again unnamed), who have betrayed him and stripped him of his wealth and reputation.⁶⁸ In the course of defending Sextus Roscius Amerinus, Cicero accuses Titus Roscius of *perfidia* and fraud (p.95) towards his friends (116–18)—but character-assassination is a convention of forensic rhetoric, and Titus is not on trial, so Cicero's insults have no immediate impact on him. Even Cicero seems to avoid direct accusations of treachery or untrustworthiness, surely because they carry such a powerfully negative charge throughout this period. There is, in most Greek and Roman discourse, nothing to be gained, nothing to be salvaged from any relationship other than one of *pistis/fides*. Valerius Maximus confirms it in his section (9.6) on *perfidia*: the opposite of trust is simple treachery, a 'hidden and insidious evil' whose power lies in falsehood and deceit, its outcome in crime, and which 'does as much harm to the human race as *bona fides* does good' (9.6 pr.).

This difference between our sources and modern sociological constructions is doubtless one of insider/outsider perspective. Greek and Roman observers were fully capable of recognizing, for instance, the delicate processes of negotiation and familiarization that lead strangers or even enemies to become friends and allies. If they do not characterize such processes as creative mistrust, it is because *pistis/fides* is so strongly marked as a virtue and its opposites as vices. A process that produced a good outcome must be one of *pistis/fides*.

Inter-state Relations

The role of Greek, and especially Roman *pistis/fides* in inter-state relations has received close attention in recent decades: in

particular, republican Rome's relationships of *fides* with enemies, allies, and members of her expanding empire.⁶⁹ Rome's regular assertion of her own, divinely sponsored *fides* towards other states is well known, and (from the Roman perspective) tends to be presented as significantly less problematic than *fides* in domestic politics. *Apistia/perfidia* (unsurprisingly) is also common in narratives of war, but is more often attributed to non-Romans than Romans;⁷⁰ Romans, under the **(p.96)** early principate, as earlier—and later—enjoyed dwelling on stories of the admiration and gratitude of enemies, allies, and subjects alike for their *fides*. (Though Roman *fides* towards other states was a corporate phenomenon, the prestige of being a general who had occasion to enact it on campaign was so great that the unlikeliest figures of the period lodged a claim.) Even Cicero, describing his minimal military activity as proconsul of Cilicia in a letter to Cato in 51/50, asserts, 'I made the most devoted allies out of the most hostile, and the firmest out of *infidelissimi*, and brought their minds round to their old benevolence towards our power' (15.4.14). The rare occasions when Romans are represented as having behaved with *perfidia* only serve to emphasize this rule.⁷¹

Discussions of *pistis/fides* in inter-state relations have focused on two themes: the exact nature of *deditio in fidem* in Roman law compared with *deditio*, *deditio in dicionem*, *deditio in potestatem*, and *receptio in fidem*, in the context of the making of peace and treaties between states, and the extent to which *pistis* and *fides* carried sufficiently similar meanings in Greek and Latin to be mutually comprehensible to Greeks and Romans in diplomatic exchanges.⁷² The various forms of *deditio* not involving *fides* are now generally agreed all to refer to unconditional surrender, after which the state which received the surrender was entitled to do as it liked with those who had surrendered (subject, in principle, to the always contestable demands of inter-state law, which often seem to have been honoured more in the breach than the observance). Invoking *fides*, however, if it means anything at all, should imply that the side which receives the surrender understands itself as bound in **(p.97)** some sense by good faith.⁷³ What good faith might involve here is never spelled out by the sources, but is often taken by modern scholars to involve clemency, protection, or even some special favour towards those who have surrendered. In the view of some, therefore, *deditio in fidem* referred to a form of surrender to Rome in which Rome was bound to treat the surrendering state with clemency, perhaps offering it special protection or favour. Others, however, have seen *fides* here as carrying no special meaning, and *deditio in fidem* as indistinguishable in practice from other kinds of *deditio*.

Erich Gruen discusses the history of this debate in an article of 1982 which focuses on a famous crux for the interpretation of *deditio in fidem*, and the meaning of *pistis* and *fides* in general. In 191 BCE, during the wars of expansion between Rome and the Seleucid King Antiochus III in northern Greece, the Aetolian confederacy, a sometime Roman ally which had recently switched allegiance to Antiochus, found itself abandoned by Antiochus when he was defeated in battle. Besieged and defeated themselves soon afterwards, the Aetolians sought to make terms. Polybius reports that they placed themselves in the *pistis* of the Romans, expecting clemency, but instead were offered the tough conditions which might have been expected to follow abject surrender. The Aetolian general, Phaeneas, protested that these demands were 'neither just nor Greek'. The Roman general Glabrio responded that, having surrendered to Roman *fides*, the Aetolians must take what they were offered. Outraged, Phaeneas rejected the Roman terms.⁷⁴

Polybius appears to present this as a case of cultural misunderstanding, and it has been used to debate both whether Greeks and Romans understood different things by *pistis* and *fides*, and whether, if what was involved in this surrender was a form of *deditio in fidem*, it should indeed have involved clemency or some kind of special treatment. Gruen, however, argues convincingly that there is no evidence that *deditio* with and without *fides* were legally different. At the same time, *pistis/fides* was not a meaningless term to either Greeks or Romans, so it is reasonable to assume that when it was offered or invoked in situations like this, it carried the hope or expectation of something more than the brute exercise of power (though exactly what might be involved, if it was not legally defined, could have varied situation by situation). Secondly, Gruen argues, there is no reason to think that Greek and Latin speakers understood different things by *pistis* and *fides* in general at this time.⁷⁵ Rather, the point of the story is to show Phaeneas and Glabrio jockeying for position: Phaeneas trying to secure good treatment for the Aetolians, Glabrio trying to **(p.98)** justify imposing harsh demands on them. Gruen concludes that, if anything, Polybius portrays Glabrio as deliberately disingenuous when he interprets 'surrender into Roman *pistis*' as surrender into Roman power, pure and simple.⁷⁶ Both sides could and should have expected the invocation and acceptance of *pistis/fides* to make a difference to the way the Aetolians were treated. Moreover, he demonstrates conclusively that the concept of submission to the good faith (*pistis*) of another state with the expectation of clemency was recognized by the Greeks at least as far back as the fifth century, and also by the Carthaginians, Numidians, and Gauls.⁷⁷ *Pistis/fides* was, it seems, well understood cross-culturally, both in Greek- and Latin-speaking areas and well beyond them.

Gruen's conclusions are similar to those of Frank Walbank, who discusses this incident, more briefly, with its legal and cultural implications in his commentary on Polybius, and they have been widely accepted.⁷⁸ For our purposes, two more points of interest emerge from their analysis. First, this passage of Polybius (written, of course, in the second century BCE, before the period in which

we are mainly interested) dominates modern discussion of the question whether *pistis* and *fides* were mutually intelligible to Greek and Latin speakers, for the simple reason that no other author, earlier or later, questions it. We could hardly hope for stronger confirmation that *pistis* and *fides* do indeed, in the late Hellenistic world and early principate, substantially share the same range of meanings and are fully mutually intelligible. (This is all the more true since, we have seen, Polybius' point in this passage is almost certainly not that Greek and Latin speakers genuinely understood different things by *pistis* and *fides*, but that Phaeneas and Glabrio were pretending to misunderstand each other for political purposes.⁷⁹) Secondly, the fact that no other account of inter-state relations shows *pistis/fides* at issue at a moment of surrender in the way that Polybius' does, suggests that this is not seen as a context in which the exercise of *pistis/fides* is usually especially problematic.⁸⁰

A well-known passage of Livy suggests that *fides* in the context of the surrender of one city to another was not simply, more or less formally, offered (**p.99**) and accepted. It was also reified by the ritualized asking and answering of certain questions, which confirmed the new relationship between the participants.⁸¹ Early in their wars with nearby cities (around the end of the seventh century), a nascent Rome defeated the Sabine Collatini. The surrender of the Collatini, says Livy, was expressed in the following manner:

Rex interrogavit: 'Estne vos legati oratoresque missi a populo Collatino, ut vos populumque Collatinum dederetis?' 'Sumus.' 'Estne populus Collatinus in sua potestate?' 'Est.' 'Deditisne vos populumque Collatinum, urbem, agros, aquam, terminos, delubra, utensilia, divina humanaque omnia in meam populique Romani dicionem?' 'Dedimus.' 'At ego recipio.'

The king [of Rome] asked, 'Are you the ambassadors and spokesmen sent by the Collatine people, to surrender yourselves and the Collatine people?' 'We are.' 'Is the Collatine people sovereign over itself?' 'It is.' 'Do you give yourselves and the Collatine people, its city, land, water, boundaries, shrines, utensils, and all things, divine and human, into my power and that of the Roman people?' 'We do.' 'I receive your surrender.'

As we have seen, *deditio in dicionem* is probably equivalent to *deditio in fidem*, but it seems that *fides* cannot be assumed, enacted, or even simply stated in this context. For the Roman and the Collatini to achieve it, *fides* must be formally demanded, affirmed, heard, and accepted before it is reified.⁸² (The unexpected resonance of this passage for students of Christianity may not be a coincidence. If a ritual sequence like this is not one of the direct ancestors of the formulae by which catechumens articulated their *pistis/fides* and were admitted into the *pistis/fides* of the church, it at least suggests that ritual affirmations of *pistis/fides* were not a cultural novelty.)

Somewhat less discussed in recent years, but interesting for this study, is the role of ambassadors, mediators, those who, as members of one state, looked after the interests of another in their homeland, and other, more or less formal go-betweens in inter-state relations. Such intermediaries are often explicitly invested with *pistis/fides* by those whom they represent or with whom they negotiate, and they are also described as practising it towards both sides.⁸³

A series of inscriptions from the sympolity of Plarasa/Aphrodisias, dated originally to 88 BCE, illustrates the importance the city places in choosing ambassadors who have the trust of their fellow-citizens, and the productive (**p.100**) consequences of their choice. The occasion is early in Rome's first war against King Mithradates of Pontus. Quintus Oppius, Roman proconsul in Cilicia, is under siege in Laodicea on the river Lycus by Mithradates' army, and sends to Plarasa/Aphrodisias for help. The city later recorded on stone its decision to send both a relief force and ambassadors to act as go-betweens:

ἔπει Κοϊντος Ὀππιος Κοϊντου υἱὸς στρατηγὸς ἀνθύπατος Ῥωμαίων πέπομφεν πολιορκεῖσθαι Λαοδικιῶν τε καὶ ἑαυτὸν ὁ δε δῆμος ἔκρεινεν βοηθεῖν κατὰ πλῆθος συνεκπορευέσθαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς παροίκους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, εἴλατο δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν ἡγησάμενον. ἀνανκαῖον δὲ ἐστὶν ἐξαποστεῖλαι καὶ πρεσβευτὰς τοὺς ἐμφανιοῦντας τῷ ἀνθυπάτῳ περὶ τε τῆς αἰρέσεως ἧς ἔχει ὁ δῆμος ἡμῶν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ὄντας σωτήρας καὶ εὐεργέτας καὶ ἐάν τι ὁ στρατηγὸς ἐπιτάσῃ καὶ ἄλλοτερον τῆ πόλει διαταξαμένους ὥστε διασαφηθῆναι καὶ γένεσθαι· δεδῶχθαι τῷ δῆμῳ ἐλεῖσθαι πρεσβευτὰς ἄνδρας τῶν τειμωμένων καὶ πίστιν ἔχόντων καὶ εὐνοϊκῶς πρὸς Ῥωμαίους διακεμένων οἵτινες ἀφικόμενοι πρὸς Κοϊντον Ὀππιον τὸν ἀνθύπατον ἐμφανιοῦσιν αὐτῷ ἵν ἔχει ὁ δῆμος ἡμῶν αἴρεσιν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς πάντας Ῥωμαίους, ὑποδείξωσι δὲ ὅτι οὐ μόνον κατὰ πλῆθος συμμαχεῖν ἐκρεῖναμεν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς συμμαχίας εἰλάμεθα Ἀρτεμίδωρον τὸν στεφανηφόρον ἄνδρα τῶν τειμωμένων καὶ πίστιν ἔχόντων καὶ τῆ ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀρετῇ διαφέροντα· ἐμφανιοῦσιν δὲ αὐτῷ ὅτι πᾶς ὁ δῆμος ἡμῶν σὺν γύναιξί καὶ τέκνοις καὶ τῷ παντὶ βίῳ ἔτυμος παραβάλλεσθαι ὑπὲρ Κοϊντου καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πραγμάτων καὶ ὅτι χωρὶς τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας οὐδὲ ζῆν προαιρούμεθα.

Since Quintus Oppius, son of Quintus, Roman praetor with proconsular power, has sent [a message] that Laodicea and he himself are under siege and since the People decided that they should help him in force and that the *paroikoi* and slaves should march out with them and has also chosen in the assembly a man for their leader and it is necessary to dispatch ambassadors too, to inform the proconsul of the policy of our People towards the Romans who are saviours and benefactors, and, if the governor gives any other instruction for the city, to arrange that it is passed on clearly and carried out, the People decided to elect as ambassadors men from among those who are honoured and hold trust and are well disposed towards the Romans, who shall go to Quintus Oppius the proconsul and inform him of the policy of our People towards him and all the Romans and shall report that we have not only decided to fight alongside him in force but have also chosen a man to command this auxiliary unit, Artemidorus the *stephanēphoros*, a man of those who are honoured and hold trust and one distinguished in military excellence, and shall inform him that our whole People, together with our wives and children and all our property (?) is ready (?) to risk all for Quintus and the Roman cause; and that without the rule of the Romans we do not choose even to live.⁸⁴

The people elect as ambassadors men who are honoured, who 'have *pistis*', the trust of the people at home, and who are well disposed towards the Romans. Perhaps they hold a brief to look after Roman interests in the sympolity; at any rate, the fact that they are well disposed towards the Romans suggests that they (**p.101**) trust them and perhaps are trusted by them too.⁸⁵ *Pistis* therefore enables an act of diplomatic and military cooperation to take place, to the mutual benefit of the participants: the Romans get help, the people of Plarasa/Aphrodisias credit, and both sides draw closer together. A subsequent inscription records that Q. Oppius wrote to thank the people of the sympolity, saying that he would do anything consonant with his *pistis* (perhaps here his 'position of trust') to help them in the future. A third inscription records that he was as good as his word: he wrote to Rome to report the *pistis* of the Aphrodisians, and the Romans wrote in turn to the sympolity to commend its *pistis*.⁸⁶ (In both the last two cases we may speculate that the Romans heard in the term rather more of the loyalty of the client, Aphrodisians more of the good faith of the ally, but nothing further happened between sympolity and state to expose any differences of interpretation.)

We have seen how, in a two-way relationship, *pistis/fides* is characteristically bivalent, referring to the trust and trustworthiness of both sides and often fitting complementary aspects of *pistis/fides* together in a social 'jigsaw' pattern. When someone in the middle of a three-part relationship has *pistis/fides*, this bivalency works in two directions. The mediator must be both trusting and trustworthy towards both parties in order to accomplish the desired relationship between them.

Mediation and arbitration—informal, or formal and legally binding—were almost as common as embassies between states of the Mediterranean world.⁸⁷ Typically, a state more powerful than either of the disputants was asked to arbitrate a dispute between them.⁸⁸ (A fable of Babrius tells us that mediators who are less powerful than those they try to help tend to lack credibility.⁸⁹) Alternatively, the synhedrion (council) of a league to which two disputants both belonged might mediate between them.

Whether or not the language of *pistis/fides* is used explicitly of their activities, it is clear that ambassadors, negotiators, mediators, and arbitrators of all kinds need to be trusted and seen to be trustworthy by both parties in order to accomplish what they do. Several of Valerius Maximus' stories of Roman *fides publica* celebrate the *fides* accorded to ambassadors. When a ship full of notable Carthaginians fell into Roman power in 203 BCE, for example, and claimed to be an embassy in the hope that this would gain them protection, Scipio Africanus went along with their pretence, preferring to have his *fides* presumed upon rather than that any Roman general should be suspected of (**p.102**) violating the *fides* of ambassadors.⁹⁰ The *pistis/fides* of those who mediate between states is sacred and inviolable. When two Romans offered violence to an embassy from Carthage in 187 BCE, the Senate, in accordance with its own *fides*, handed them over to the enemy for the Carthaginians to punish as they saw fit.⁹¹

The most famous example of ambassadorial *pistis/fides* is also one of the most cited exemplary figures in Roman literature: Marcus Atilius Regulus.⁹² During the First Punic War, in 255 BCE, the story goes, Regulus, campaigning in Africa, was captured by the Carthaginians. He was sent to Rome to negotiate peace, or perhaps just an exchange of prisoners. Out of *fides* to his position, he made the offer but, on the basis of his *fides* to Rome, advised the Romans not to agree to it. Then, keeping *fides* with the Carthaginians, he returned to Carthage to be tortured to death.⁹³

Cicero gives a good deal of space to Regulus in *On Duties*, where he reflects at length on the nature of Regulus' *fides*. In the first place, he argues, it consists in Regulus' keeping his word to his enemies. This determination, however, is rooted in Regulus' *fides* towards his state and his gods. If *fides* towards Rome and her gods meant simply partisan loyalty, then there would be little reason for Regulus to keep faith with the Carthaginians: indeed, breaking faith with them might have constituted a form of loyalty to Rome. But Rome and/or her gods require more than that. They demand that Regulus act with trustworthiness/good faith to everyone. Regulus accepts

this demand, and his devotion to Rome and her gods means that both they and his enemies can rely on him not to let them down.

Later (3.102–3) Cicero returns to Regulus, pondering further the basis of his *fides*. Did he keep his oath and his *fides* to Jupiter because he was afraid of the god's wrath? Some would say that he could not be afraid of the god's wrath because every philosopher agrees that the god is never angry, nor does he harm human beings. Perhaps, then, Regulus worried that to break faith would have been morally wrong. But, some would say, he could have taken to heart the proverb 'Choose the least of evils', and decided that to break faith was better than to allow his enemies to torture him. Or he could have followed Atreus in the play of Accius, and taken the view that oaths given to *infideles* are no *fides* at all.⁹⁴

Cicero considers each of these arguments in turn. He agrees that the gods do not get angry with human beings, but argues that this is beside the point. Jupiter sponsors justice and good faith, so pledging one's *fides* means by its **(p.103)** nature undertaking a sacred obligation, and to break it is automatically to break faith with the god. Moreover, the pain Regulus suffered in torture was nothing to the moral pain he would have suffered in breaking faith with the god, so he did in effect choose the lesser evil. As for the quotation from Accius: it was appropriate to the faithless character of Atreus, but that does not mean it is to be imitated by good men.⁹⁵ All in all, Cicero concludes, Regulus did the only thing possible, and he did it because he was a good man who was properly pious towards the gods. We shall return to the idea that the gods are foundational for the operation of *fides*, but it is worth noting here that the role of the gods in guaranteeing *fides* is seen by Cicero as self-evidently *fides*' most solid foundation. Those who acknowledge the justice and *fides* of the gods with *fides* towards the gods are required to act with *fides* in general. They can therefore be trusted by all parties when they act as go-betweens.

A little later still (3.111), Cicero returns once more to Regulus with a further thought: *ista laus non est hominis, sed temporum*, 'The credit (for his action) belongs not to the man, but to his time.' It was axiomatic in Regulus' day that nothing guaranteed *fides* more securely than an oath, so in keeping his oath to the Carthaginians, Cicero reflects, Regulus was doing no more than any man of his day would have done. Cicero does not explain why, if this is so, Regulus is so famous, but his comment highlights a paradox in his and others' thinking about *pistis/fides*. Do the actions and attitudes of individuals shape society and culture, or do society and culture shape, if not wholly determine, the attitudes and actions of individuals? As a conundrum of cultural historiography, this question has intrigued countless scholars since Cicero, notably students of structuralism and post-structuralism. Neither Cicero nor any author of the early principate systematically pursues it, but in Chapters 6 and 10, we will encounter the idea in New Testament texts that those who are capable of *pisteuein* towards God and Christ are pre-elected to do so. Stretching a point of cultural influence (or parallel cultural development) somewhat, we might hear in those writings an echo of the question in Cicero's mind, why it is that some people and some groups are more strongly characterized by *pistis/fides* than others.

Ambassadors, mediators, and other go-betweens in inter-state relations have a strikingly positive image throughout this period. Far more often than not, they are portrayed as personally trusted and trustworthy by both sides, and they are regularly celebrated as achieving peaceful solutions to difficult situations or improving relationships between diplomatic partners.

Accounts of *pistis/fides*, its successes and failures in inter-state relations, fall largely into two groups. In one, all parties take a risk, knowing that it is a risk but believing that it is in all their interests to trust one another. In the other, **(p.104)** one group subordinates itself to another, believing for one reason or another that this is its safest course. Some experiments in inter-state *pistis/fides* are portrayed as more successful than others, but a story from Appian's *Punic Wars* captures the acute sense of risk and opportunity, the hopes, the doubts, and the fears that characterize them all.⁹⁶ The Carthaginians, who are doing badly, send ambassadors to Rome to sue for peace. They are, says Appian, hoping to achieve, if not peace, then at least a suspension of hostilities until they can recall Hannibal from his campaigns in Italy. The Senate is divided, some members pointing out that Carthage has a history of *apistia*, others that, since their own resources are exhausted, it is worth taking the risk of making peace. Eventually they defer to Scipio, the general on the ground in Africa. Scipio, sceptical of Carthaginian good faith and hedging his bets, makes a limited treaty on strict terms, involving minimal *pistis*. As soon as Hannibal arrives and their prospects improve, the Carthaginians break it.

The best and most reliable kind of *pistis/fides*, in inter-state relations as in other kinds, is perhaps the rarest: that which is innate, pertaining to an individual's virtuous character.⁹⁷ (We have already described this, in the context of personal relationships, as an example of deferred trust.⁹⁸) During his Gallic wars, Caesar finds his attempt to collect grain from the Aedui sabotaged by the chieftain Dumnorix. He would like to punish Dumnorix, but is prevented by the moral excellence of his brother Diviciacus, who not only favours Rome but is remarkable for his *fides*, *iustitia*, and *temperantia*.⁹⁹ Out of respect for Diviciacus and desire to retain his friendship, Caesar speaks to him first (via an interpreter in whom he has *fides*). Diviciacus begs him to spare Dumnorix, so Caesar reasons with Dumnorix, warning him off his treacherous behaviour.¹⁰⁰ *Pistis/fides* as a virtue, it seems, can bring about new

situations and relationships not only on its own behalf but also on behalf of others.

Economic Activity

Omnibus est opibus melior vir mente fidelis, says a gnomic hexameter of Columbanus, probably of Catonian origin: ‘A man trustworthy in mind (**p.105**) is better than any amount of wealth.’¹⁰¹ His segregation, even polarization, of *fides* and wealth is symptomatic of a strong strain in Greek and Roman thinking which treats economic activity of all kinds at best as matters of indifference to men of birth, inherited wealth, culture, or virtue, and at worst as inimical to them. It is an attitude which makes the economy of the ancient Mediterranean, and a fortiori *pistis/fides* in economic relations, notoriously difficult to research through literary texts. Economic historians rely heavily on material evidence for activities from farming to trade and manufacture. Historians of *mentalité*, for whom texts are indispensable, may assume that economic activity implies trust (or a cocktail of trust, hope, risk, doubt, belief, and scepticism), but we can rarely see the fine detail of *pistis/fides* in operation in economic transactions.

When literary sources do mention *pistis/fides* in an economic context, they tend, like Columbanus, to separate them rather than celebrate their interaction. At most, we may hear that whether or not wealth, or economic activity, is desirable depends on the *pistis/fides* of those who take part.¹⁰² Any idea that trust might be placed, for instance, in commercial law, interactions, or contracts in order to facilitate relationships and generate trustworthiness—ideas which are ingrained in the modern historiography and sociology of trust—is noticeable by its absence. Instead, we find the literary cliché that the world would be a better place if people practised *pistis/fides* instead of needing laws, contracts, or tokens of exchange like money. ‘If only no contract bound the buyer to the seller’, says Seneca loftily in *On Benefits* (3.15.1–3):

utinam nulla stipulatio emptorem venditori obligaret nec pacta conventaque impressis signis custodirentur, fides potius illa servaret et aecum colens animus! sed necessaria optimis praetulerunt et cogere fidem quam expectare malunt. adhibentur ab utraque parte testes. ille per tabulas plurium nomina interpositis parariis facit; ille non est interrogatione contentus, nisi reum manu sua tenuit. o turpem humani generis fraudis ac nequitiae publicae confessionem! anulis nostris plus quam animis creditur.

...and no agreements and covenants were guarded by impressed seals, but trust/good faith and a justice-loving mind did the job instead! But people have preferred what is necessary to what is best, and would rather compel good faith than expect it. Witnesses are summoned by each party. One creditor, by using agents, causes the names to be entered in several books; another is not satisfied with an oral commitment unless there is a written signature as well. Oh shameful confession of the fraud and open wickedness of the human race! More is trusted (*creditur*) to our seal rings than our hearts.

(p.106) When we need signatures and seals to prove that something that has been received has been received, says Seneca, the system does not so much confirm men’s reliability as show that you could not trust them on any other basis. The deferral of good faith into legal documents only highlights that it does not truly exist.

Juvenal’s thirteenth satire addresses one Calvinus, who is enraged at having lost a legal case against a friend who has defrauded him of a loan (14–16, 71–2). Calvinus feels his *fides*—in both his creditor and the legal system—has been betrayed (5–6). The poem’s narrator tells him not to be naive. What did he expect? What day does not throw up cases of theft, *perfidia*, fraud, and profit through crime (23–5)? No one has kept an oath, believing that the gods lived in their temples, since the age of Saturn (34–7). Nowadays the repayment of a debt is an act of *fides* so great it’s a prodigy (60–3).

Where Seneca takes the view that the very existence of legal instruments to promote *fides* indicates where *fides* has failed, Juvenal seems to suggest that agreements and laws could fortify *fides* if people kept them—but they do not. Laws and morals, he seems to suggest, do not interact but evolve along parallel lines, and fail to influence one other.

The fundamental problem, Juvenal continues, is that some people nowadays believe (*credant*) that fortune rules the world and do not believe in the gods. Others think the gods do exist, but think that it is worth risking divine wrath to make money (86–91). If anything can fortify *fides*, apparently, it is fear of the gods, but this is an age of impiety. Calvinus should give up on his money (177–8) and take comfort from the thought that his creditor will be suffering the tortures of a guilty conscience (192–5). (Why this should be so, if he has neither fear of the gods nor an innate moral sense, Juvenal does not explain.)

It is beyond the scope of Juvenal’s satire to attribute a love of *fides* to anyone for its own sake, even in the past. Even in the age of Saturn, he indicates, people kept *fides* out of fear of the gods rather than anything else. We have already come across the idea that fear of the gods is at the root of human commitment to *fides*, and we will meet it again in the next chapter. Juvenal, however, makes what

for him is an unusual move here in tying the decline of *fides* specifically to a decline in *religio*, instead of invoking the full, flamboyant range of moral ills which he so often blames for what is wrong with contemporary society. It is a sign of how closely the operation of *fides* in every part of life is, for Romans, bound up with the gods.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus also connects contractual *fides* with the gods, but more positively. King Numa, he tells us in *Roman Antiquities* (2.75.1–4), while developing the laws of early Rome, noticed that contracts made in public were generally kept (because they had been witnessed and to break them would bring shame on the defaulter), but that contracts made in private rested only on the *pistis* of those making them, and hence were more fragile. He (p.107) decided to fortify all contracts by making *pistis* worthy of worship (as justice, for instance, already was). He therefore built the first temple of Pistis Dēmosia (Fides Publica) in Rome, and instituted sacrifices in her honour. Inevitably, says Dionysius, *pistis* soon became so revered among Romans that ‘a man’s good faith became the greatest oath he could swear’, and if there was any dispute between two contracting parties, the *pistis* (perhaps ‘reputation for good faith’) of each was enough to determine who was in the right. There is no sign in this passage that Dionysius thinks that Numa invented the goddess Fides in order cynically to manipulate Romans’ behaviour. Rather, by reifying the concept of divine sponsorship of trust, and giving Romans a cult context in which to enact ritually their respect for that sponsorship, he brought them face to face with their own beliefs and values and made it harder for them to ignore them in everyday transactions.¹⁰³

Both Juvenal and Dionysius see *pistis/fides*, based on respect for the gods, as a good thing. At the same time, we might see it as an example of deferral, reified in cult, which is also an admission of its fragility. For Seneca, as a Stoic, the *fides* of a good man does not involve deferral in the same way, because practising it, like any good thing, means that he is living rationally in harmony with the rational nature of the divine.¹⁰⁴ (The difficulty for Seneca is rather how to achieve this happy state.)

A handful of texts suggest that there may be another way of fortifying *pistis/fides* in economic activities without appealing to the gods. In his *Civil Wars*, Caesar describes how he, as dictator, presided over the elections to magistracies and himself became consul.¹⁰⁵ At that time there was a general loss of confidence in public order and institutions, as a result of which credit was restricted and loans were not being repaid. In order to re-establish *fides* and get credit flowing again, Caesar appointed arbitrators to assess the value of existing creditors’ property and possessions as a basis for repayment.¹⁰⁶

In a similar vein, Velleius Paterculus (126.1–3) reports that *fides*, credit, was restored to the forum by the strong rule of Tiberius. Tacitus also reports efforts by Tiberius to improve the flow of credit and currency around the economy, and although his language is a good deal less eulogistic than Velleius’, he too attests that Tiberius substantially restored *fides* in what appeared to be a collapsing credit system.¹⁰⁷ Strong rulers, like gods, it seems, are—at least on occasions, in times of crisis—capable of re-establishing *pistis/fides* for the time being in parts of the economy that are crumbling. None of these passages explicitly connects the ability of the dictator or emperor to fortify his subjects’ (p.108) *pistis/fides* with worship of him, or aspects of him, as divine (and in Caesar’s case, the first took place before any question of the second was raised publicly), but one may wonder whether the investment of *fides* in one man, implied by his ability to restore credit on a large scale, may not be unconnected with the status accorded to rulers which allows them, throughout the Hellenistic world and the principate, to receive divine honours.

It is a truism of economic historiography that the ancient world, seen through an economic lens, looks in some ways very different from the same world seen through narratives of politics or war or the products of high culture. We saw earlier how coins, in words and imagery, offer a vision of the empire in which *pistis/fides* between emperors and armies and emperors and people is mutual and, among other things, ensures the peaceful production and distribution of food supplies to the emperor’s subjects. Now we have seen indications, even within political narratives, that despite the highly sceptical view of imperial *pistis/fides* that dominates political discourse, the status of the emperor may in some situations be seen to engender such *pistis/fides* that he can stabilize a collapsing credit system. Two useful caveats follow from these observations. First, we cannot forget, if we cannot do much about, the limitations of our evidence. Secondly, the way trust, or any concept, works in a society may often not be the same as the way members of the society perceive it as working and discuss it. Our evidence for the early principate equips us to investigate in some detail how (some) people thought about *pistis/fides*, but allows much less investigation of who actually trusted whom in everyday practice (the kind of trust that has been widely studied in recent years, for instance, by medieval and early modern historians). Perhaps no sphere of the operation of *pistis/fides* suffers more from these two limitations in our evidence than the economic.

Law and Magistracies

The operation of *pistis/fides* in Greek and, especially, Roman law, as in inter-state relations which intersect with the law, is a large and technical field in its own right which is beyond the scope of this study to survey.¹⁰⁸ We can, however, make some observations about the shape of legal thinking about *pistis/fides* which are relevant to our purpose.

Fides is invoked, in classical Roman law of the early empire, in inter-state relations (as we have seen), in relations between patrons and clients and tutors (**p.109**) and tutees, and in commercial agreements, agreements involving credit or securities, agreements in which one person or more stands as guarantor for another, and ‘trusts’ in the modern sense, in which one person entrusts the management of something he owns (typically after his death) to another.¹⁰⁹ Later, *fides* will be invoked in other areas, such as the regulation of decurians, tax collectors, and other office holders.¹¹⁰ For now, it seems to be applied particularly to spheres of interaction which are socially important and relatively well defined, but which are neither highly regulated by other means (as armies are, for instance, by the oath of allegiance), nor bound by powerful ties of other kinds (as living family members, for instance, are bound by blood, affection, and shared interest).

The obligation on patrons to treat their clients and tutors to treat those in their care with *fides* goes back to the Twelve Tables, fortifying by law what we have seen is a widespread social expectation.¹¹¹ Our primary evidence for the early principate, however, is the *Institutes* of Gaius, the second-century jurist, supplemented by comments from other jurists of the period in Justinian’s *Digest*, passages in literary sources, and inscriptions.¹¹²

Actions arising from laws in which *fides* is invoked are known as *bona fide iudicia*, and are judged partly on the *bona fides*—‘good faith’—of the participants. *Bona fides*, as the *Digest* expresses it, ‘requires that what has been agreed be done’ (*Dig.* 19.2.21).

Since *fides* is especially strongly associated with Roman law, it is worth noting that *pistis* appears in Greek law as far back as the fifth century BCE, to characterize the legally desirable relationship between the citizen and the *polis*, in inter-state agreements, and in the sense of ‘proof’ in law-court speeches. In Hellenistic states it can express the relationship of a subject to his or her king, and that of a conquered state to its conqueror. In Hellenistic private law it appears meaning ‘proof’, ‘oath’, ‘credit’, ‘security’, and ‘trust’ in legal agreements, while in Egypt under Roman rule *pistis* is used as a translation of *fideicommissum*, and *kalē pistis* appears translating *bona fides*.¹¹³ All this (**p.110**) suggests that *pistis*, if not used as extensively in Greek as in Roman law, is used in Greek states and in the Greek-speaking areas of the Roman empire in ways that Latin speakers would not have struggled to understand.

It is much debated whether *bona fides* as a concept has its origins in religion, social ethics, or both. I have argued elsewhere that the gods are as closely involved with ethics in popular moral thinking as they are in philosophical thought, suggesting (though more work is needed in this area) that religion and ethics are more closely connected throughout Graeco-Roman thinking than is sometimes assumed.¹¹⁴ If so, then it will be inappropriate to try to trace *bona fides* to a purely religious or ethical origin; both are likely to be involved.¹¹⁵

The phrase itself is something of an oddity, because *bona fides*, as the explanation quoted above from the *Digest* shows, means the same as *fides*. *Bona fides* appears first in Plautus, who uses it several times (in the ablative) meaning something like ‘certainly’.¹¹⁶ It has been suggested that as a legal term it arose with the ‘objectivization’ or reification of *fides* itself into a legal instrument, creating the need in legal parlance for a separate phrase which expressed the intentions of those using the laws.¹¹⁷

It is also notable that *bona fides* is opposed by a variety of terms in Roman law: *mala fides*, *fraus*, *dolus*, and *dolus malus*. Unlike *bona fides*, *mala fides* captures a subtle but distinct concept which is not captured by any single word. A person intends and enacts *mala fides* when he persuades another to trust him with the intention (then or later) of betraying his trust, while an action *mala fide* means that the person involved intended to deceive or to break the law. Once the concept *mala fides* existed, it would be no great stretch for jurists or orators to adopt the phrase *bona fides* to emphasize the contrast between the two types of intention or action. Patchy surviving evidence from the second century BCE, in which *bona fides* appears earlier than *mala fides*, cannot, admittedly, confirm this hypothesis, but it cannot be ruled out either.

I suggested above that the fact that *fides* is invoked in certain kinds of laws suggests that the areas covered by those laws are seen as important but relatively poorly supported by other types of relationship or bond, such as (**p.111**) those which fortify families or armies. In particular, inter-state relations and transactions involving the transfer of money, goods, or property seem to be regarded as arenas of interaction which ought to be governed by *fides*, but where *fides* cannot not be expected to operate through existing social structures or norms.¹¹⁸ Cicero seems to recognize this when, in *On Duties* (3.69–70), he laments the fact that fraud and deceit are not universally recognized as morally wrong but have to be encoded in law. As a philosopher, he would like, ideally, all human beings, but certainly all fellow-members of any state, to recognize their unity and common purpose to the extent that they did not need to be told to exercise *bona fides*. But he knows that they do not recognize anything of the kind—at least not when commerce is in view—so their *fides* and *bonitas* have to be enforced by law.

It may—though it does not automatically—follow from this that the law is felt (by some people, at least) effectively to supply in these areas the authority to enforce *fides* which is lacking elsewhere. If so, then *pistis/fides* towards the law itself in this period must be high. When we reflect that the presence or absence of *bona fides* in a party to a lawsuit is decided by whoever is hearing the case, we may conclude that the prestige of officers of the law is greater still. The implication is that anyone who is sworn in as a judge, no matter who he is, what his ethics in private life, or whether he has any relationship with those he judges, will be able and willing to examine the *bona fides* of those who come before him and assess it impartially.¹¹⁹

Laws, in the terms we developed in the Introduction, powerfully reify deferred trust. They address areas of social activity where interpersonal trust is difficult and create instruments which define what constitutes *pistis/fides* in particular contexts, specify how to enact it, and offer incentives for enacting it. The role of the law in defining *pistis/fides* in individual contexts is relatively little discussed by modern scholars, but it is significant. In many social or economic contexts, the question ‘Can I trust this man?’ has an alarmingly open-ended sound. (How trustworthy does he have to be, in how many areas of life, before I feel I can trust him in any particular situation?) The existence of the concept of *bona fides*, however, for example in commercial contracts, allows parties to a contract to ask themselves a more limited question: ‘Can I trust this man to regard it as in his interest to keep the law by honouring this contract?’ By narrowing the definition of *pistis/fides* to something more specific and context-dependent than all-round trustworthiness, the law enables people to risk trusting one another in certain situations, on certain grounds, even if they have doubts about one another’s *pistis/fides* in general.

One instrument of *fides* which entered Roman law under the emperor Augustus well illustrates the role of the law in fortifying trust. *Fideicommissum*, (p.112) a legal ‘trust’, the mechanism by which one person could leave property to another for the benefit of a third, existed before Augustus’ day, but only as an informal bequest which was not actionable.¹²⁰ Augustus brought it within the law and made it actionable. Justinian’s *Institutes* (1.2.23.1) offer an explanation of the reason:

primus divus Augustus semel iterumque gratia personarum motus, vel quia per ipsius salutem rogatus quis diceretur aut ob insignem quorundam perfidiam, iussit consulibus auctoritatem suam interponere. quod quia iustum videbatur et populare erat paulatim conversum est in adsiduam iurisdictionem....

It was the late emperor Augustus who first instructed the consuls to interpose their authority, after he had more than once been moved by individuals, either because someone was said to have been asked ‘by the emperor’s safety’ or on account of the glaring perfidy of certain people. Because this seemed just and popular, it was gradually turned into a permanent jurisdiction.

...¹²¹

What constituted *fides* in this context was already defined, but Augustus apparently thought that it would gain strength by being encoded in law. We may also note the implication here that the emperor was being used as a court of appeal when *fideicommissa* were disputed, but that he thought (whether on grounds of justice or administrative convenience) that his continuing to rule on such cases was less desirable than the embedding of *fideicommissa* in law.

The indication that the emperor was dealing with disputes over *fideicommissa* is another reminder of the limitations of our evidence, which relatively rarely, in this period, shows us the emperor handling routine legal business.¹²² It may be that, alongside the *pistis/fides* invested in the law, more trust was in practice reposed in the emperor, as the apex of the legal system, than we can usually detect. If so, then in this respect the law suffers as the economy does, from an imbalance between evidence of attitudes to *pistis/fides* and evidence for how it worked in everyday life. In general, however, in contrast to our evidence for *pistis/fides* in economic relations, most of our evidence for *pistis/fides* in legal contexts views it as possible, desirable, and regularly practised, suggesting that even if our sources are unbalanced, the picture they draw may not be as far out of line with what other evidence might offer as is likely to be the case in the economic sphere. Other than the role of the emperor, the area in which our legal sources are most likely to underplay levels of trust in (p.113) operation in everyday life is that of commerce, where evidence of attitudes to the law in general suggests that the law may have made *bona fides* more possible than literary attitudes to economic activity suggest. (On the other hand, it may be that both economic activity and legal appeal to the emperor were practised despite the low levels of trust both engendered, simply because there was often no alternative.)

Both literary and epigraphic sources regularly represent both laws and officers of the law as trusted and trustworthy. Cicero often appeals to the *fides* of judges on the basis of oaths that they have sworn.¹²³ ‘It is...the particular obligation of a magistrate to understand’, he says in *On Duties* (1.124), ‘that he represents the state in his person and that he should bear himself with dignity and propriety, protect its laws, apportion rights, and remember that these things have been committed to his *fides*.’¹²⁴

What Cicero commends, other authors and inscriptions amply illustrate. Moore has shown how Livy regularly represents Roman magistrates as exercising *fides* towards the state in fulfilling their duties.¹²⁵ Former magistrates regularly boast of their own *pistis/fides*, or have their loyalty and reliability praised by those who erect honorific inscriptions to them.¹²⁶ *Fides* is characterized by Elizabeth Forbis as a ‘relatively important’ virtue in municipal inscriptions of early imperial Italy, where it occurs in dedications to office holders of diverse ranks. A senator can be praised for his *laboriosa fides* in securing the grain supply of the town of Ariminum, an equestrian local magistrate for serving the republic *fideliter*, and an imperial freedman for managing the affairs of a theatrical troupe *inconparabili fide*.¹²⁷ *Fides* is typically used to describe men who are honoured for their political and administrative activities (for holding office, for instance, rather than for giving money to their town or city), and it often appears in association with those other key virtues of Roman office-holding at this period: *innocentia*, *industria*, *abstinentia*, *moderatio*.¹²⁸ At Comum, in the late second century, Publicus Sextilius is praised for fulfilling the office of quaestor ‘faithfully and nobly’ (*fideliter ac liberaliter*).¹²⁹ Honorifics in a similar vein abound all over the late Hellenistic world and the empire, to men who have held all sorts of office,¹³⁰ **(p.114)** and *pistis/fides* also appears regularly on tombstones, in the biographies of magistrates deceased.¹³¹

Arbitration between individuals as an alternative to a civil lawsuit was practised in classical and Hellenistic Greek states and throughout the Roman empire. Arbitration, in individual as in inter-state relations, could be public or private, more or less formal, and more or less legally binding, depending on the requirements of the participants.¹³² Civil arbitrators could be informally chosen by the interested parties, or appointed by the state.¹³³ They were not necessarily magistrates, but they were constrained by similar ideals of *pistis* or *bona fides*. That an arbitrator had to be *vir bonus* and that one of the qualities of *bonitas* was *fides* are stressed repeatedly in accounts of arbitration.¹³⁴ A reputation for integrity, according to Pliny, could compensate for a multitude of irregularities. In a letter to Annius Severus (5.1.1–6), he reports how, together with two friends chosen by himself, he acted as the informal arbitrator in a case in which he was himself one of the interested parties—apparently to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The practice of arbitration seems to draw, in principle, on the valorization of *pistis/fides* both in the law and in social relations more widely. A man of *pistis/fides* could solve problems with the blessing of society, and perhaps the specific backing of the law, whether or not he held any office at the time. As in inter-state relations, arbitration between individuals has a high reputation for resolving conflicts and improving relationships. No doubt it did not always succeed, but when we hear about it, it is much more often than not because it has.

Amid the chorus of praise to the *pistis/fides* of laws, magistrates, and other officers of the law, there are a few dissenting voices. We have already seen that some authors doubt that laws can create trust or trustworthiness in economic relations: only gods, or perhaps very strong rulers, can do that. The tension we saw above, between *fides* as an intrinsic quality of good people and *fides* as something which is guaranteed by a third party in which two principals share trust, also appears in writings about *pistis/fides* elsewhere in the law, government, and administration.

(p.115) When, in Quintus Curtius Rufus’ rhetorical history of Alexander’s conquests, Alexander encounters the Scythians, those paradigmatically noble barbarians express contempt for the Greek passion for oaths and treaties. The Scythians, they say (7.8.26–9), do not ratify a friendship by taking an oath; keeping *fides* is their oath. If the Greeks need to seal agreements and call on the gods to trust each other, then they do not really trust one another at all. It is a pertinent critique of the problem of deferred trust.

The Scythians invoke a standard which Romans, in particular (ironically, for a people heavily invested in their laws), sometimes apply to themselves. When Tiberius becomes emperor, according to Velleius Paterculus (126.1–2), he brings about all kinds of peace, justice, effective working, and *fides* to the political structures of Rome. Right is honoured, evil punished—but all these transformations are described in terms of moral rather than legal or institutional change. Seneca, predictably, thinks in similar terms. In *On Anger* (2.28.1–2) he comments that no one is perfect, even in the eyes of the law. And even if there were such perfection, the law is a pitifully low standard of innocence. ‘How much further does the rule of duty extend than the rule of law! How much does piety, humanity, generosity, justice, and *fides* demand of us—all of which lie outside the statute books!’ (2.28.2). The law may claim to articulate, sponsor, and enforce moral values, but it does a poor job compared with philosophy or other ways of cultivating good ethics. When Aulus Gellius found his belief in the virtue of a defendant in a trial at odds with the apparent facts of the case, he found it impossible to choose between what he perceived as *fides* of character and *fides* in law, and was forced to recuse himself. His action may have been appropriate to a philosopher, but the reader is left wondering how robust legal *fides* is if it results in the conviction of a good man.¹³⁵

This dilemma is not only a Roman one. Plutarch makes Aristides, in his *Life* (4.4), complain to the people of Athens that when he served them in office faithfully and well he was attacked and persecuted, but when he throws away the common fund on thieves he is treated as a hero. Dio Chrysostom (73.5) comments that when people have entrusted someone with office, they are then often

disappointed when he behaves well in it. In both stories the people of Athens on the one hand respect their magistrates for their innate *pistis*, and presumably expect them to behave with *pistis*—keeping the law—in office, but at the same time are disappointed when their integrity stops them using their office to hand out favours. It is not only whether laws and so on create *pistis/fides* that may be problematic, it seems, but also whether populations always want them to.

(p.116) Perhaps it is the fact that even those who, in principle, create, maintain, and abide by the laws may feel ambivalent about their power to create or define *pistis/fides* which leads to the rather different ways orators describe the confidence with which people may approach legal cases. A ps.-Quintilianic declamation challenges a defendant: ‘If you had any *fiducia* in your innocence, would you not be trusting yourself to these processes [of law]? What *diffidentia* you have in your case, and what *fiducia* we have in ours, that we trust (*confidimus*) that the jury will be on our side!’ In contrast, the elder Seneca records a declamation in which a man accused of rape, who is resisting being taken to law about it, says: ‘There is no integrity that is so confident of itself that it actively wants to plead its case....’¹³⁶

Doubts about the operation of *pistis/fides* in legal contexts and by magistrates and other legal officers, however, are relatively rare. On the whole, in this period, laws and those who enact them are portrayed as champions of trust and trustworthiness. Occasionally, we even hear that office-holding acts as a test of *pistis/fides*. Ausonius, thanking the emperor Gratian for his consulship (20.4), claims that Gratian has appointed many better men to office: men distinguished for their *fides* and tested by office.¹³⁷

Few more rousing affirmations of the power of an institution to create and fortify trust survive, from any period of antiquity, than the passage in Cicero’s Fifth Verrine oration (2.5.167), quoted by Gellius, in which Cicero says that men of low birth who have few friends or contacts can travel anywhere in the world because of their *fiducia civitatis*, their confidence in their Roman citizenship. They believe that they will be safe, not just before magistrates, who are constrained by their respect for the law and public opinion, and not only among Roman citizens, who are united by the bonds of language, right, and interests, but anywhere and among any people. Such, claims Cicero, is the power of Roman law to create *fides*.

Solon makes a similar point, in less dramatic terms, in Lucian’s *Anacharsis* (34), when he tells Anacharsis that the Scythians suffer from *apistia* towards one another because their relations are based on individual choice and not regulated by laws. (This view contrasts neatly with the Scythians’ self-praise which we encountered above, in Quintus Curtius.¹³⁸ Since Scythians are often used in Greek and Roman literature as a ‘mirror’ whose extreme otherness reflects back to Greeks or Romans something of themselves, we may take both comments as reflections on *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman law.) A more cynical version of the same idea appears in a ps.-Quintilianic declamation (245.4): there should be penalties for avarice and greed, says the speaker, because *fides* cannot be maintained among human beings except by fear (in this case, it seems, of the law).

(p.117) Pistis/fides as Domestic and Political, at the Foundation of the State, and in Times of Crisis

We have now looked in some detail at the shape of *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman society between the first century BCE and the second century CE, focusing on who and what Greeks and Romans find it relatively easy or difficult to trust. Cutting across all the categories we have considered so far are three broad themes which deserve some attention in their own right. *Pistis/fides* is very often a quality and practice of difficult times and moments of decision. It is equally at home in the public and private spheres. And it is linked with a range of other qualities and behaviours which are equally important for the creation, articulation, and functioning of any group or institution.

Like modern sociologists, Greeks and Romans assume that trust, good faith, and related qualities are endemic in human societies. No society can evolve, develop beyond the most rudimentary level, or survive without them. This kind of foundational *pistis/fides*, however, is of little interest to our sources. (The only time when *pistis/fides* is seen as constantly and unproblematically in play in a stable society is in the golden age, the age of Saturn, or occasionally early monarchical or early republican Rome.) When *pistis/fides* is discussed, it is usually because it cannot be taken for granted. Perhaps the trustworthiness of normally reliable senses is being tested by some abnormal sight or sound. Perhaps a lover is suspected of being unfaithful. Perhaps soldiers are displaying exceptional loyalty by unhesitatingly attacking a difficult target. Perhaps a magistrate is being celebrated for having resisted all temptations to fulfil his office with perfect *fides*. Despite all the variations we have seen in the perceived robustness of *pistis/fides* in different contexts, when it is the focus of attention in literary and documentary texts alike, it is almost always because there is an element of doubt about it. Either there is a danger it might fail, or someone is exercising or being urged to exercise it at some moment of crisis or decision.¹³⁹ Very often, as we have seen, these moments will, for better or worse, decisively affect situations or relationships for the future. When individuals and groups are being tested; when they have to make life-or-death decisions; when they do not know where to turn; when they are exposed and vulnerable—then whom and what to trust becomes a vital issue.

Related to this is another distinctive feature of Greek and Roman *pistis/fides*. It is one of the few qualities which are equally at home in the domestic and public spheres: in the family, the marketplace, the council chamber, the temple, the palace, and the battlefield. Perhaps the only other quality and **(p.118)** practice with so wide a reach is *philia/amicitia*, which can range in meaning from family love to political alliance. *Pistis/fides*, as we have seen, is one of the key qualities that characterize the relationships of wives and husbands, parents and children, master and slaves, patrons and clients, subjects and rulers, armies and commanders, friends, allies, fellow-human beings, gods and worshippers, and even fellow-animals. What is more, the semantic range of both lexica means that they can capture with great subtlety the symbiosis between these relationships, whether symmetrical or asymmetric.

Pistis/fides is also closely associated with a number of other key qualities and practices of both public and private life, and this close association also helps to describe its role at the foundation of social relationships. Foremost among its prime partners are justice, love/friendship, obedience, hope and confidence, piety, and fear.¹⁴⁰

Dikaiosynē/iustitia and *pistis/fides* are chief among the qualities which make human associations possible. For Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.58.4), *pistis* is the pledge of good behaviour which the Trojans, newly arrived in Italy, make with the local inhabitants, that enables them to settle in peace. For Cicero and others, *pistis/fides* and *dikaiosynē* are jointly foundational for any state.¹⁴¹ Sometimes justice is specified as the foundation of trust, and sometimes trust of justice.¹⁴² Once states are founded, as we have already seen, we may also hear that they teach *dikaiosynē/iustitia* and *pistis/fides* to their inhabitants.¹⁴³ When *pistis/fides* and *dikaiosynē/iustitia* come together in Greek and Roman texts, the power of each to forge social relationships, create polities, and change sociopolitical landscapes is multiplied.

It is no surprise either that the *pistis/fides* of slaves, soldiers, subjects, and often family members is expressed in obedience,¹⁴⁴ nor that *pistis/fides* is characteristic—or at least hoped-for—in relationships of friendship and love.¹⁴⁵ When people are trusting and friendly, says Plutarch (in connection with teaching statesmen how to praise themselves without causing offence), it **(p.119)** is easy to do them good, while if they are untrusting and unfriendly, it is impossible.¹⁴⁶ When *pistis/fides* between friends is shaky, it can be fortified by legal or other formal bonds. According to Lucan (*BC* 1.119), for instance, the *fides* between Caesar and Pompey was always fragile, but while Caesar's daughter Julia lived and was married to Pompey, it survived. When Julia died, and the legal bond between the two men dissolved, so did their *fides* and friendship.

Hope tends to be based on *pistis/fides*, rather than the other way round. Fides and Spes (together with Fortuna) are worshipped together at Capua, and Horace puts both Fides and Spes in the retinue of Fortuna in one of his odes,¹⁴⁷ but elsewhere, this association is seen as more fragile than most: when hope and trust are mentioned together in literary texts, it is more often than not because hope has been disappointed.¹⁴⁸ Confidence (*tharsos (tharros)/fiducia*) is also more often based on trust rather than the other way round.¹⁴⁹

In one passage of Plutarch, in his *Life of Cato the Younger*, *pistis*, hope, and love are all described as proceeding from justice. Describing how Cato tried to eradicate corruption in elections for magistracies at Rome, with mixed success, Plutarch reflects:

Οὐδεμῶς γὰρ ἀρετῆς δόξα καὶ πίστις ἐπιφθόνους ποιεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι καὶ δύναμις αὐτῇ καὶ πίστις ἴπεται μάλιστα παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν. οὐ γὰρ τιμῶσι μόνον, ὡς τοὺς ἀνδρείους, οὐδὲ θαυμάζουσιν, ὡς τοὺς φρονίμους, ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλοῦσι τοὺς δικαίους καὶ θαρροῦσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ πιστεῦουσιν.

No virtue, by the fame and *pistis* it generates, creates more envy than justice, because both power and trust follow from it, especially among the masses. They do not only honour them, as they do the courageous, nor admire them, as they do the wise, but they also love the just and have confidence in them and put their trust in them.¹⁵⁰

Trust in the courageous is mixed with fear, says Plutarch, and trust in the wise is mixed with mistrust—and besides, both qualities are seen as gifts rather than as something one achieves by virtue—but justice is produced by virtue, and is therefore especially trustworthy.

We cannot read much into Plutarch's echo, in his juxtaposition of *pistis*, *tharrein*, and *philia* and their connection with *dikaiosynē*, of 1 Corinthians 13, though to readers of the New Testament the coincidence strikes the eye. But parallels between the New Testament and non-Christian literature in the juxtaposition of *pistis/fides* with justice, love, hope, fear, piety, and obedience, **(p.120)** in general, are not likely to be a coincidence.¹⁵¹ Both those who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the formation of New Testament texts, and those who heard and read them, inhabited the world of the early principate and were formed in part by its *mentalité*. It would be more surprising to find qualities and practices that are widely connected in first-century thinking disconnected in early Christian thinking than to find them similarly connected there.

Conclusion

No man's happiness is in his own hands, says Seneca (*Ben.* 6.33.2): it must be sustained at least in part by the *fidi* around him. In this chapter and the last, we have seen how fundamental a role *pistis*, *fides*, and their cognates play in the societies of the late Hellenistic world and the early principate. Through the wealth and diversity of sources for this period, we have seen how *pistis* and *fides* operate in almost every social context. We have explored how, at their best, they help to create, develop, and mediate relationships, and how relationships and situations are sometimes saved or transformed by them at moments of crisis and decision-making.

Some readers may have been surprised by the attention given to social relations, for instance, compared with that given to *pistis/fides* as a form of persuasion or philosophical proof, to technical meanings of *fides* in law, or to *editio in fidem* in inter-state relations. One reason for this is that the latter are well explored, including, in some cases, as possible backgrounds to *pistis* language in the New Testament. More importantly, though, my analysis follows the contours of the use of *pistis/fides* language across the full range of our written sources for the period. Technical meanings of *pistis/fides* in specialized discourses were discussed by Greek and Latin writers, and their deployment was not confined to those discourses. At the same time, *pistis/fides* language is used most frequently by far of a wide range of everyday social situations and relationships. By capturing the breadth and shape of that range, we not only do most justice to the way *pistis/fides* was understood and practised in this period in general; we also reconstruct most plausibly the *mentalité* within which early churches took root and developed. To understand what *pistis* meant to the writers of the New Testament, in other words, we need above all to understand how *pistis/fides* was imagined, spoken of, and enacted, not in one or two technical discourses, but, as far as possible, in all kinds of speech, writing, and social relations.

(p.121) *Pistis/fides* is always important in this world but never absolutely reliable; it coexists inescapably with fear, doubt, hope, and risk. We have seen, however, how the perceived strength or fragility of *pistis/fides* varies in different contexts, from the relatively robust trust which one might place in the evidence of one's senses or the good faith of a magistrate, to the precarious confidence one might invest in a rumour or a friend. These variations trace the distinctive shape of *pistis/fides* in the *mentalité* of this period, and form the context in which early Christian ideas of *pistis* will evolve.¹⁵²

Where *pistis/fides* is fragile and contestable (which, to some degree, is almost everywhere¹⁵³), we have also seen how it is 'deferred' and 'reified'. One defers trust in a friend, for example, to belief in his goodwill (and belief in his goodwill, in turn, to trust, since (mis)trust is endlessly regressive); one defers trust in a rumour to evidence, common sense, and the perceived reliability of one's informant (each of these, again, to some extent a matter of doubtful trust). One reifies *pistis/fides* by creating an object which parties seeking to trust one another may each be willing to trust more than they presently trust one another. Oaths, credit agreements, cults of Fides, and legal trusts all seek to fortify interpersonal trust by creating something to which social agents can commit trust and trustworthiness, and which can be imagined, by an act of communal cognitive risk, as guaranteeing *pistis/fides* (morally or through the threat of punishment for dereliction) independently of the trustworthiness of individuals.

The process by which trust is deferred and reified in oaths, cults, or legal instruments is intriguing in itself. It is beyond the scope of this project to try to trace it for all the reifications of *pistis/fides* in operation in the early principate, but when we turn to the texts of the New Testament, part of our project will be to explore the ways in which the desirability and fragility of *pistis* is negotiated, including through processes of deferral and reification.

It has been emphasized in several places that while the nature of the evidence enables us to examine in depth attitudes to *pistis/fides* across the geographical range of the Roman empire and (to a lesser extent) across social groups, it limits our scope for investigating the operation of *pistis/fides* in everyday life. We have also touched in several places on the complex nature of *pistis/fides* as an emotion, a process of cognition, an action, and a relationship. This complexity, which bears significantly on the operation of *pistis* in New **(p.122)** Testament texts, needs fuller discussion in its own right, and we return to it in later chapters.

In the conclusion to the last chapter we noted that although, in many ways, ancient views of *pistis/fides* fit well with modern economic or sociological theories of trust, they differ in the important respect that they never see *pistis/fides* as purely instrumental but always also as a virtue, an intrinsically good relationship, and an end in itself. With this in mind, the next chapter turns to one of the contexts in which *pistis/fides* is most powerfully seen as a virtue and an intrinsically good relationship: that of relations between human beings and the divine.

Notes:

(1) Phang's (2008), analysis of the many forms of social and cultural conflict and negotiation within Roman armies rightly

emphasizes the ideological aspects of the literary picture of unity expressed through *pistis/fides*.

(2) This is not, of course, limited to the principate. *Fides* in particular is so strongly associated with armies that soldiers who are described in Latin texts as *boni* or *optimi* are often described as 'loyal' or 'faithful' in English translations. The same is true of the phrase *bonus civis*, often translated 'loyal citizen'.

(3) Weber (1988), Casali (2008), 181.

(4) Stäcker (2003), 293–368.

(5) e.g. Front. 1.11.16 (Epaminondas), Curt. 3.6.4, 8.1.47, Plu., *Mor.* 344e (Alexander), Curt. 3.8.4, 5.11.1–12, D.S. 13.112.5 (Dionysius), Plu., *Agis* 33.4–5 (Agis and Ptolemy IV), Sil. 16.22, D.C. 13.5 (Hannibal), Plu., *Cat. Maj.* 13.5 (Elder Cato), *Cat. Min.* 56.2, 60 (Younger Cato), *Sull.* 17.7 (Sulla), *Pomp.* 13.1 (Pompey), *Caes.*, *BC* 3.49, 3.64, 3.109, *Jos.*, *BJ* 4.619, *App.*, *BC* 4.89, 4.99 (Cassius), *Flor.* 1.42.2 (Mark Antony), *Tac.*, *Hist.* 1.59 (Otho), 3.39, 4.27 (Vitellius); cf. Plu., *Galb.* 14.3, 26.2, *Tac.*, *Hist.* 1.60, 4.60, Herod. 7.5.3–5 (emperor), *Nep.* 14.6.6 (king), Herod. 2.10.2 (Septimius Severus bidding for power), 7.8.11 (Maximin bidding for power); cf. *Sall.*, *Lep.* 31, *Q.C.* 6.9.20–21, 6.10.15, 7.2.14, 10.9.10, Herod. 3.24, 3.61, 7.8.11, Front. 4.7.7, 4.7.36 (commanders trusting/having confidence in soldiers). Loyalty to field commanders and ultimate commanders, moreover, often cannot be distinguished, unless the field commander is a rebel.

(6) *HA* 1.4.

(7) *Caes.*, *BC* 3.24, *Bell. Afric.* 31, *App.*, *BC* 2.73, *Q.C.* 6.4.8–14, Plu., *Arat.* 18.1; cf. *Sull.* 27.7, D.S. 1.82.4, 1.83.2, and see n. 5. *Tac.*, *Ag.* 33.2 may refer to Agricola's *fides* both to the emperor and to his men. On reciprocal *pistis/fides* among animals, see e.g. *Plin.*, *HN* 8.142 (dogs), *Ael.*, *NA* 1.4, 1.13, 2.8, 3.9, 13.22.

(8) *BC* 3.64.

(9) On the eagle or the standard as symbolic of the emperor, and loyalty to it or loyalty to the emperor, under the empire, see Stäcker (2003), 171–3, 179–86.

(10) 8.11.1; cf. 8.11 ext. 1 (of Pericles).

(11) *D.C.* 8.28.

(12) 1.1–8. He should also, ideally, be personally wealthy and well-born (2.1).

(13) 2.1–3.

(14) Cf. Plu., *Arat.* 18.1 (a good commander trusts his men).

(15) 2.5, 42.14; cf. 10.15 (assessing the residual *pistis* of deserters), 16.1 (how to ensure *pistis* in watchwords and signs). A general must not, however, be too trusting (e.g. *Sen.*, *Vit. beat.* 26.2).

(16) *App.*, *Mith.* 12.111.

(17) *App.*, *BC* 1.115.

(18) *App.*, *Hisp.* 6.34–5; cf. *Val. Max.* 2.7.12.

(19) *Sull.* 30.1; cf. 3.2; *D.S.* 33.108: as Sulla comes closer to his dream of absolute power, he ceases to trust (*pisteuein*) his best generals.

(20) Although *pistis/fides* is important in Greek military contexts, in Roman eyes it is above all a Roman quality, closely related to Romans' firm belief in their *fides* in war and international relations, and also to the highly militarized nature of Roman society. It is surely no coincidence that the Greek states, Sparta, Thebes, and Macedonia, which are particularly credited with strong relationships of *pistis/fides* between armies and commanders, are also among the most militarized.

(21) Plu., *Sull.* 27.7.

(22) See Ch. 11.

(23) e.g. *BG* 1.19, 4.21, 5.5, 7.50, 8.3; cf. 7.54; *BC* 3.64 (the standard-bearer), 3.49, 3.109.

(24) Grillo (2012), 59–72. This can be seen as part of Caesar's wider project of presenting himself as a paragon of political as well as military virtues, in contrast to the Pompeians (Collins (1952), 29–33, 58–75), as well as to the notorious *perfidia* of barbarians (cf. Sall., *Jug.* 46.3, Virg, *Aen.* 10.231, Hor., *Carm.* 3.5.33, 4.4.49, Ov., *Tristia* 4.2.33, *Pont.* 3.4.97, Liv. 9.3.2, Val. Max. 9.8.1; see Hall (1998), 12). Caesar is sparing with the language of *perfidia* of his Roman opponents in war, leaving their disloyalty, from his point of view, largely implicit, though see e.g. *BC* 2.14.4.

(25) 1.12, 1.59, 4.27; cf. 1.60, 3.39, 3.52.

(26) e.g. *Ann.* 11.33, 15.68, *Hist.* 1.5, 1.12, 1.59, 1.60, 3.39, 3.52, 3.59, 4.27, 4.42, 4.57–60, 4.73–4, 5.21.

(27) Holder (1999), 237–46; *AE* 1991.1572 (Apamea), *AE* 2004.1227 (Moesia Superior), *AIJ* 375 (Pannonia Superior), *CIL* 3.10036a (Dalmatia) (epitaphs); *CIL* 3.10394 (Budapest), *CIL* 3.14219, 3.14341 (Budapest) (votives); *CIL* 6.420 (*eusebous pistēs*). Simply being a soldier is also something worth boasting about on a tombstone, e.g. Bernand (1969), 5.3, 10.8, Peek (1955), 800.4.

(28) Stevenson (1889), 385–7. Clasped right hands also sometimes accompany other legends, notably *pax* (Sutherland (1940), 74–5).

(29) *RIC I* (1984) Vitellius 34, 67, Galba 133; *II* (2007) Vespasian 301, Domitian 214–15, 288–9, 368, 378, 413, Hadrian 241A; *III* Marcus Aurelius 440a, Commodus 389–90, 232–4, 388, 432–3.

(30) *RIC II* rev. edn. Vespasian 1256, 1163–5, 1210–14, 1232, 1254–5; cf. Hor., *Carm. saec.* 57–60, where *fides* is associated with the horn of plenty (discussed by Barker (1996), 442, 445–6).

(31) *RIC I* (1984) Vitellius 34, Vespasian 402, Titus 1485. Clasped right hands, sometimes with stalks of wheat, also appear on engraved gems (Weiss (2007), 194, 195), especially in wedding or betrothal rings, representing the hope of *fides* and prosperity in marriage (Osborne (1912), 242–3).

(32) *RIC I* (1984), Vitellius 34, *II* (2007), Vespasian 402, 1256, Titus 1485.

(33) *RIC II* (2007) 1214.

(34) A type of Claudius shows Fides Praetoriana carrying a spear (*RIC I* 121). A type of Commodus (*RIC III* 608) shows Rome and Fides facing one another, each holding a spear, a star between.

(35) *RIC III* 651.

(36) Fears (1981), 863–97, 928, 933; *fides* is unexpectedly absent from Norena (2011), 59–60, 108–22.

(37) Hamberg (1945), Harmand (1957), Nicolet (1976), 141–3, Meslin (1978), 24–5, 128–9, 232–5, Saller (1982), 13–24, 78, Eilers (2002), 13, Hölkeskamp (2004), ch. 4, Freyburger (2009), 118–33, Hellegouarc'h (1972), 23–40. On potential clashes between *fides* in politics and friendship, see e.g. Cic., *Off.* 3.43–5, Val. Max. 4.7.1–3.

(38) pp. 81–2.

(39) 66.5.

(40) 74.2–3; cf. 45.3 (Trajan can be trusted because his principate is the opposite of a tyranny). The right hand is strongly associated with Fides in her character as guarantor of oaths (Val. Max. 6.6 pr. Clark (2007), Freyburger (2009), 136–41, 277–8; cf. 56.2: everything combines to make the highest praise of Trajan no more than a faithful (*fidelissimum*) record of truth. At 92.2 the relationship is apparently reciprocal: Trajan has *fiducia* in the integrity of magistrates.

(41) Not without echoes of Onasander, perhaps reflecting Platonist elements in Marcus' writing, since Onasander is traditionally identified as a Platonist philosopher.

(42) 3.11.2, 9.42.4.

(43) 71.24–6; cf. D.Chrys. 3.129, 32.96.

(44) Plu., *Mor.* 152a–b.

(45) Philostr., *Ap.* 1.38.1, D.S. 10.34.2.

(46) *Off.* 1.26.

(47) *Ad M. Caes.*, 2.10.1 (Naber p. 33).

(48) Cic., *Am.* 54 (Tarquin), Plu., *Mor.* 522f (Darius), *Dion* 9.3 (Dionysius), D.C. 37.12.1, D.Chrys. 37.12.1 (Mithradates), 46.19.3 (Caesar), Tac., *Ann.* 15.68 (Nero).

(49) 20.63.3.

(50) Cf. D.C. 46.19.3.

(51) *Am.* 52. Notably, Dowling's (2006) study of the key imperial virtue *clementia* contains no discussion of imperial *fides*.

(52) Discussed by Levick (1975). Gallia (2009) explores the same problem, raised by Tac., *Dial.* 40.2.

(53) *Cons. Polyb.* 7.1.

(54) *Ep.* 8.6.6–7, 10.86b; cf. 10.121 (Trajan tells Pliny that he was right to feel *fiducia* that Trajan would grant his wife a travel permit).

(55) 2.69 trans. White (1975), emended; cf. p. 138. Good kings and even an occasional good tyrant is said to possess *pistis/fides* among other personal virtues: D.S. 9.11.2 (on Pittacus of Mytilene), D.Chrys. 3.129. Plutarch (*Num.* 7.4) tells how King Numa, who literally enshrined *pistis* at Rome, disbanded the bodyguard of his predecessor Romulus, saying that he would not reign over people who do not trust him (*apistein*), and he declines to mistrust (*apistein*) people who do trust him.

(56) D.H. 4.85.1 (*pistis* of his friends towards Tarquinius Superbus, but *contra*, see Cic., *Am.* 54), Curt. 4.6.7, 5.8.6–8, 6.5.1–3 (*fides* of his courtiers to Darius), Plu., *Mor.* 821b–c, *Vit. Cat.* 39.3, D.Chrys. 3.129, D.C. 20.3; *contra*, discouraging trust in rulers, Plu., *Mor.* 821b–c, D.Chrys. 18.16–17.

(57) Livy (2.28–33) dates it to 494 but Dionysius puts it in 491 (6.69.1). Both Dionysius (6.81.1) and Livy (2.31.7) attribute the tense political situation in part to moneylenders.

(58) Livy is surely wrong about this, since at this date a plebeian is unlikely to have been a senator.

(59) Cf. Cic., *Rab.* 13 (*fides* of senators towards the equestrian order).

(60) 3.28; cf. 3.111 (at 3.107 he excludes pirates from this generalization). Cf. Cic., *Balb.* 10, *Caes.*, *BG* 2.3.2, 2.13.2, 4.21.8, Liv. 38.31.2, 38.33.33; cf. Cic., *Flacc.* Fr. 102, *Rosc.* 37.106, Val. Max. 65.1b.

(61) 3.2.17, 6.6.

(62) *Cat.* 48.4.

(63) e.g. Sall., *Cat.* 47.1, *Jug.* 32.1, 35.7, Cic., *Cat.* 3.4.8, D.C. 37.45.1–2, 45.37.1, 46.8.4, 46.19.3, 5, 46.22.2, 46.54.2, 50.27.6–9, Fronto, *Ad Ant. Imp.* 2.6.14 (Naber p. 107).

(64) *Or. Lep.* 1.

(65) e.g. *BC* 2.14; cf. Hor., *Ep.* 9.10: looking back to 36 BCE, he calls Pompey's friends *servi...perfidii*.

(66) In the negative sense; Cicero also uses *perfidia* in its positive, intensive sense: e.g. *Att.* 2.19.5.

(67) e.g. *Rab. Post.* 33, *Att.* 2.22.2, 4.3.5.

(68) 3.19.3. Clodius' *leges Clodiae* of that year made executing a Roman citizen (as Cicero had executed co-conspirators of Catiline) without trial punishable by exile.

(69) e.g. (of many possible examples) Sall., *Cat.* 51.5, Caes., *BG* 1.19, 4.21, 5.5, 7.54, 8.3 (where it is often, surely intentionally, ambiguous whether *fides* of Gauls is to Rome or to Caesar himself), *Bell. Alex.* 23, 33, Cic., *Verr.* 1.13, 2.3.127, 2.3.64, 2.2.2–4, *Flacc.* 71, *Phil.* 2.6, 3.38, 7.11, 8.19, 12.10, *Balb.* 10, Val. Max. 5.2 ext. 4, 6.6, *passim*, 7.2.6c, Plin., *HN* 25.21, Luc., *BC* 3.302–4, 7.720–1, 8.281–2, 8.581–2, Sil. 14.79–84, 14.169–71, 15.565–6, 17.67–70, Jos., *Vit.* 39, 305, *AJ* 14.190–2, Tac., *Ann.* 11.24, *Hist.* 4.57–8, *Ger.* 28.5, Gell. 6.3.5–6, D.C. 12.49, 14.6b, 40.6.2, Ael., *NA* 26.56, Flor. 1.22.3, 1.37.3, Front. 1.1.5, 2.11.1, Ael., *VH* fr. 7. Plu., *Caes.* 22.2, *pistis* only lasts until the first breaking of a truce. Greek authors can use parallel language of *pistis* between allies or states and their dependants: e.g. D.H. 1.58.4, D.S. 12.57.3, 13.21.6, 14.29.5, 16.52.7, 18.20.2, 18.31.3, 18.66.2, 19.65.2, 19.74.1, Zen. 4.9, Onas. 37.3, Plu., *Mor.* 258f, D.Chrys. 74.2–3, 74.14, Ael., *NA* 12.37; cf. Jos., *AJ* 7.211–12, 12.45–7, 12.149–50, 13.51.

(70) On the *perfidia* of allies, see e.g. Liv. 4.32.12, Val. Max. 2.7.12, 9.6.3, Sil. 13.99, 15.321. On *perfidia* as routine in war, see e.g. Caes., *BG* 4.13.4, Sall., *Iug.* 61.3, *Ep. Mith.* 7, Liv. 3.2.4, 7.42.8, 21.4.9, 30.32.7, 38.14.3, Val. Max. 5.6 ext. 4, 9.6 ext. 1, Vell. 1.12.6, Tac., *Ann.* 2.3.1, Lucan, *BC* 8.443. Thiel (1954), Prandi (1979), Starks (1999) discuss *fides Punica* as the bad faith axiomatic of Carthage by the Augustan age, in contrast to Rome's axiomatic good faith.

(71) e.g. Cic., *Pis.* 38. Roman *fides* towards allies is axiomatic according to e.g. Cic., *Off.* 1.39, 3.107, 3.111, Liv. 34.59.4; cf. 1.3.8.2, 7.30.6, 26.14.2, 26.16.5, 26.16.12, 26.23.12, 29.3.3, 40.49.1, 42.63.10; see discussions of Badian (1958), 31 34–5, 50–1, D'Agostino (1961). Deissmann-Merten (1965), 100 notes that Livy, who is often thought of as one of the most committed affirmers of Roman *fides*, recognizes that Romans sometimes violate their own standards of *fides*, and also argues (p. 102) that Livy seems to locate *fides* in Roman generals and the Senate rather than in the people, making it a more aristocratic and 'top-down' concept than it perhaps was in the republic. Val. Max. 6.6 ext. 1–2 shows that other states could be seen as enacting *fides publica* too; Sall., *Cat.* 48.4 that in times of rebellion or civil war, it could also be imagined as operating between rebels and (the rest of) the Roman people. *Pistos/fidelis/fidus*, meaning 'loyal', is often used in inter-state relations of subaltern partners in an alliance, and usually of others, not oneself, but in 45–6 the people of Lycia could describe themselves as loyal (*pistoi*) allies of the emperor (*AE* 2001, 1931/*AE* 2004, 1528, Patara; cf. *AE* 2003, 1559 (Samothrace, reign of Claudius).

(72) On *pistis/fides* in inter-state law, see Piganiol (1950), Calderone (1964), 59–98 and *passim*; Rothe (1978), 43–50; Nörr (1989), 13–19, (1991), 94–214; Hölkeskamp (2004), ch. 4; cf. Gaurier (2007). Walbank (1959–79), 80–1 and Gruen (1982), 51–60 survey past scholarship on the meaning of *fides*; Walbank also disposes of the idea that *deditio* and *receptio* are different forms of agreement: rather, they refer to the same process from the perspective of victor and vanquished.

(73) Eckstein (2009), however, points out that even if all parties understood *pistis/fides* in the same way, there was no 'international law' enshrining the practice to which the Greeks could appeal. On this as recognized by Plautus, see Franko (1995); cf. Owens (1994); for an analogous debate between Romans and Gauls, see Freyburger (1983).

(74) Polyb. 20.9.10; cf. Liv. 39.54.7, Val. Max. 6.5.1.

(75) 53–4, 57–8.

(76) 62.

(77) 64–8.

(78) Walbank (1959–79), 79–81; cf. Deissmann-Merten (1965), 27; Moore (1989), 35, 50–5 (cf. Varro, *LL* 5.86); Nörr (1991), 4–5. On religious aspects of inter-state *fides*, see Harris (1979), 171–3; Nörr (1991), 28–41; Freyburger (2009), esp. 237–9. Moore (1989), 36–9 rightly points out that *pistis/fides* often refers to the quasi-subaltern loyalty of an ally to Rome, but underplays its role in less structurally unequal relationships. On one person's or state's self-confidence as another's arrogance or tyranny; cf. *Bell. Alex.* 75,

Luc., *BC* 3.302–4. Liv. 5.27.14 portrays the opposite in perhaps the most favourable of all portrayals of inter-state *fides* from a Roman perspective: Rome's principled commitment to *fides* persuades the Faliscans to ally with them rather than continue to fight them.

(79) Even Livy 36.27–8 presents Glabrio's behaviour as beyond what befits *receptio in fidem*.

(80) Though since most accounts of the operation of *pistis/fides* in inter-state relations in this period take the Roman perspective, the picture is doubtless biased.

(81) 1.38.1–2; cf. Polybius' discussion of the same ritual (36.4.2), and Plautus' parody, *Amph.* 258–9, with Eckstein (2009). Ogilvie (1965), ad loc. notes that the form of this declaration is not unique to *deditio*: it is paralleled e.g. in *stipulatio* in private law.

(82) To understand how seriously Rome took her obligation of protection towards those with whom she had treaties, once *fides* was in place, we need only, as Harris points out, look to the numerous occasions on which Rome goes to war because an ally has been attacked (Harris (1979), 34–5, 188–9).

(83) Campbell (2002), who notes in passing (p. 3) that *fides publica* is sometimes applied to envoys meaning 'safe passage'.

(84) Reynolds (1982) no. 2, trans. Reynolds.

(85) An implication which may be reinforced by the position of the phrase πίστιν ἐχόντων.

(86) Reynolds (1982), 3.37–8 (Oppius' letter), 8.28–94 (record of Rome's commendation of the sympolity's *pistis*).

(87) See Ager (1996), Roebuck (2001), Paschidis (2008), with Cary (1926) on the Hellenistic world; Roebuck and de Loynes de Fumichon (2004) on the Roman world.

(88) Cary (1926), Champion (2007).

(89) Babr. 39 = Aes. 95 (Chambry).

(90) Val. Max. 6.6.5.

(91) Val. Max. 6.6.4.

(92) Mix (1970), Fröhlich (2000).

(93) Cic., *Off.* 1.39; cf. C. Sempronius Tuditanus fr. 5 (Peter), D.S. 24.12. Hor., *Carm.* 3.5, Val. Max. 1.1.14, Gell. 7.4. Valerius Maximus cites Regulus under *pietas*, itself closely associated with *fides* (see e.g. p. 148 n. 102). This story had no less power as an exemplum for being almost certainly fictional; see Tipps (2003).

(94) *Atreus*, Ribbeck (2) 227–8.

(95) Plutarch takes the same approach in *Mor.* 18e–20b.

(96) 8.31.

(97) e.g. Cic., *Phil.* 2.6, 3.38, 8.19, Sil. 151.565–6, Plu., *Mor.* 258f.

(98) See pp. 58–9.

(99) 1.19; cf. 8.134 where the Romans reflect on the *apistia* of Carthage, and 8.107–8 where nevertheless the generals Scipio and Phameas find themselves able to trust each other pragmatically.

(100) Barlow (1998) (Diviciacus' prime virtue is *fides* to Rome). Conversely, the least trustworthy groups are those who are untrustworthy by nature e.g. the Alexandrians (*De bello Alexandrino* 23, Front. 1.1.5), Germans (Plu., *Caes.* 22.2), Parthians (Plu., *Ant.* 49.2). Appian uses markedly more language of *pistis* and (especially) *apistia* in this account of the Carthaginian wars with Rome than of Rome's wars in the East, which perhaps suggests that he is more willing to attribute *apistia* to Carthaginians than

Greeks.

(101) Columb., *Catonis* 47.

(102) e.g. Val. Max. 8.2.1, Tac., *Ann.* 6.16–17, Gell. 10.1.40–1. Ps.-Quint. 312.1 claims that when soldiers deposit money, they are most likely to do it with another individual of the same rank, because *fides* can more easily be expected from such a person (compared, presumably, with someone of another rank or a professional like a banker). Hor., *Sat.* 1.1.29 refers to a *perfidus* tavern-keeper as a type of those who live by commerce.

(103) Similarly, according to ps.-Diogen. 2.80, ‘Attic trust’ is proverbial of those who are trustworthy (πιθανῶν καὶ πιστῶν) and keep their oaths, because the Athenians established a temple to Pistis. By the same token (3.11), an ‘Attic witness’ is especially trustworthy (*pistotatos*) and truthful.

(104) *Ep.* 124.13–14; cf. 76.9–10.

(105) 3.1; cf. Tac., *Ann.* 6.16.1.

(106) Cf. Cic., *Marc.* 23.

(107) *Ann.* 6.16–17.

(108) Fundamental studies of (*bona*) *fides* in Roman law include Pringsheim (1931), Lee (1956), Lombardi (1961), Hausmaninger (1964), Calderone (1968), Johnston (1988, 1999), Nörr (1989, 1991), Kaser (1993), Bretone (2000); see also Schulz (1936), 223–38, Fernández de Buján (2001).

(109) Roman law is our main interest as applying to Roman citizens throughout the empire (and also used by non-citizens). *Tutela fiduciaria* belongs to laws relating to persons (Gaius 1.166a); sale, theft, security, trusts, and guarantors to laws relating to things (Gaius 2.45, 49, 60; 3.115–21); buying and selling, leasing and hiring, unsolicited administration, mandate, deposit, trust conveyance, partnership, guardianship, and action for a wife’s property to law relating to actions (Gaius 4.61–2, 182).

(110) e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 1.7.3, 1.10.8, 1.16.3, 1.28.1, 1.32.5, 1.34.3, 6.23.1, 6.28.8, 6.30.20, 6.35.5–7, 8.1.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.5, 10.2.2; cf. 4.4.4 (the influence of Christian *pistis* may also be a factor here).

(111) Twelve Tables 7.16, 17; D 26.10.1–5. The law says nothing of the *fides* of clients to patrons, etc.

(112) e.g. *CIL* 6.2210 (concerning *tutela*); *AE* 1914, 266, *AE* 1958, 137 (*fideicommissum*).

(113) Schmitz (1964), 2–64, 101–11. Uses of *pistis* to mean various kinds of legal document, agreements, peace treaties, and marriage contracts, as well as the use of *pistos* to mean ‘loyal’ to an authority, are also known to the Rabbis (Sperber (1984), 41–3, 60, 145).

(114) Morgan (2007b) 207–11, (2013b).

(115) *Dig.* 1.3.2 cites Marcian as quoting with approval Demosthenes’ dictum that everyone should obey the law because law is a discovery and gift from god. The first religious law in the Twelve Tables (10.1) states that oaths must be taken with the greatest seriousness in order to ensure *fides*. *Dig.* 22.5 cites Papinian’s view that in any action of *bona fides*, no performance contrary to good morals can be claimed. On the (arguably) moral origins of *bona fides*, see Lombardi (1961), Turpin (1965), 262, Nörr (1991) 4–5, 42–4, Kaser (1993), 126. Nörr (1991), 11 emphasizes that both sides have rights in a relationship of *fides*: if not horizontal, it is always reciprocal and gives some power to both parties.

(116) e.g. *Truc.* 2.7.37, *Aul.* 4.10.42; cf. Cic., *Off.* 3.66, 70.

(117) Nörr (1991) 43–4.

(118) Even in families or armies, of course, *pistis/fides* could not be guaranteed in practice.

(119) Discussed by Jovanović (2003), 764–7.

(120) Johnston (1988), 2 and *passim*.

(121) Trans. Johnston (1988), 30 (modified); cf. 13 on emperors being called upon to resolve cases where trusts had failed, both in the first instance and on appeal. A *fideicommissum* did not have to be written in any particular form, but some forms came to be preferred over others as more watertight in law, and hence more trustworthy and less open to doubt (Johnston (1988), 156–98).

(122) Millar (1992), 240–52, 507–50 indicates that they may have handled a good deal, which suggests that in practice a good deal of trust was reposed in them (though much of his evidence is later in date).

(123) Heinze (1929), 162.

(124) In letters, Cicero sometimes represents himself as fulfilling this ideal, e.g. *Att.* 7.2.7 on his governorship.

(125) Moore (1989), 44–5: e.g. Liv. 4.40.9, 25.40.1, 26.41.25, 29.37.2, 31.4.6, 32.1.7, 39.23.1; cf. 29.10.1, 32.1.7, 39.23.1; see also Stem (2007).

(126) Gaius (*Dig.* 3.46.4) notes that procurators must conduct their business with *bona fides*.

(127) *CIL* 10.1795, 11.377, 14.2299.

(128) Forbis (1996), 62–4.

(129) *CIL* 5.5304; cf. *CIL* 14.2299 (ager Albanum, 161), 14.2807 (Gabii, late first century), 14.2812 (Gabii), 10.1795 (Puteoli, 193–235 CE), 11.3258 (Sutrium), 11.414 (Ariminum), 11.406 (Ariminum), 5.4499 (Brixia).

(130) e.g. Robert (1927), 105, *OGIS* 438.6–7 (magistrates as men who have *pistis*), Sokolowski (1955), 20.1.56 (of a member of a guild, perhaps religious, possibly Dionysiac), Malay (1994), 354, *SEG* 42 (1992), 1599 (of a prefect of Egypt), *SEG* 38 (1999), 1451 (of an *agoranomos*), *AE* 1931.2 (of a procurator), *CIL* 2.4248.

(131) *AE* 1924.112 (Ostia), CAG.13.1 p. 166 (*fidus libertus*).

(132) See Roebuck (2001), 307–32 on evidence of public and private arbitration in Hellenistic and Roman papyri from Egypt. Civil arbitration is discussed as background to 1 Cor. 6–8 by Winter (1995). Scafuro (1997), 142–92 discusses the presentation of private arbitrators and their *bona fides* in republican Roman drama, which continued to be widely read into the principate.

(133) Roebuck and de Loynes de Fumichon (2004), 61–2, 64, 67–93, 135–6.

(134) Campbell (2000), 46.22–33, 53, 56; D 31.1.1, 33.1.3.2–3, 32.11.7–8. *Integritas* is equally important: e.g. Cato, *Agric.* 149.1–2, 145.3, 144.2–3, Juv. 8.79–80, D 32.43, 17.2.75–6.

(135) 14.2; cf. pp. 58–9. Pliny's friend Erucius Clarus (*Ep.* 2.9.4), a model of both virtue and advocacy, seems to suffer no such difficulties, pleading his cases with *fides* as well as skill.

(136) 8.6 (369M).

(137) Cf. Cic., *Att.* 1.16.7, Gell. 20.1.8, ps.-Quint. 252.16.

(138) p. 115.

(139) Cf. Cic., *Planc.* 1, Luc., *BC* 8.518–2.

(140) In certain authors or works slightly different links are made: so Rothe (1978) shows that Cic., *Verr.* pleads the sorry plight of the Sicilians and emphasizes Cicero's patronal relationship with them by connecting *fides* with *humanitas*, *misericordia*, *clementia*, and *mansuetudo*; cf. Heinze (1928), 157–9. Pöschl (1940) 81–109 shows how Sallust and others connect *fides* with *iustitia*, *clementia*, *gratia*, *beneficia*, and *amicitia* in connection with inter-state relations. On connections between *pistis/fides* and wisdom, see e.g. pp. 64 n. 146, 208, 248–9, 322 n. 56, 342.

(141) e.g. Cic., *Rep.* 2.2, *Off.* 1.121, 2.32, 38, *De or.* 1.85–6; cf. 2.343, Hor., *Carm.* 1.24.5–8, Plu., *Mor.* 275a. At Cic., *Off.* 2.21, trust enables the pursuit of mutual self-interest; cf. Juv. 13.33–7, 91.

(142) Trust is foundational for justice, e.g. Cic., *Off.* 1.23; justice for trust, e.g. Plu., *Cat. Min.* 44.7–8. In *Petr.* 2.19(1a).4 a petitioner for release from prison describes himself as giving *pista*, pledges of good faith, in the name of justice or ‘fair play’, (τοῦ καλῶς ἔχοντος).

(143) e.g. Cic., *Inv.* 1.3, *Part. or.* 1.85–6, *Off.* 3.111, D.Chrys. 39.4.

(144) D.Chrys. 9.15.

(145) Sall., *BJ* 31.23–5, Cic., *Off.* 3.43, *Fin.* 2.46, *Att.* 2.24.3, *Ov.*, *Trist.* 4.5, *passim*, 5.4.35, Plu., *Pomp.* 1.3, Fronto, *Ad Verum* 2.1.4 (Naber, p. 119), *Ad Ant. Pium* 8.1 (Naber p. 169), and see above, Ch. 2.

(146) *Mor.* 539e–f.

(147) CIL 10.3775; Hor., *Carm.* 1.35.21 (Fears (1981) 863).

(148) e.g. Plu., *Rom.* 7.4–5, D.Chrys. 73.5, D.C. 8.28, 71.24–5, *Dist. Cat.* 1.13; on trust based on hope, see e.g. Herod. 7.5.3–5. *Fides* and *spes* are sometimes associated on coins (Clark (1983) 82); cf. Astramps. *Orac.* qu. 68, answers 1.1, 14.10, 17.4, 22.5.

(149) Cic., *Am.* 52, *Ov.*, *Trist.* 5.6.1–4, Val. Max. 6.6.2, Sen., *Contr.* 4.6.

(150) 44.7–8, trans. Loeb, modified; cf. Cic., *Off.* 2.38.

(151) See further pp. 488–500.

(152) Bohnet *et al.* (2001) (see pp. 19–20), arguing that trust is relatively strong where safeguards and penalties are either strong (as in the law) or minimal (as in families), but that it is weak where they are limited and not punitive, offers one possible explanation for this pattern, though probably not the decisive one, since the pattern is not detected in all studies cross-culturally.

(153) Though trust in a man of virtue remains in principle reliable, along with trust in Fides as a divinity (and in God for Jews and Christians), and perhaps also self-confidence.

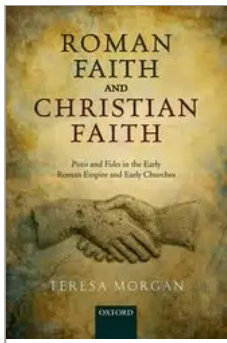
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Pistis and Fides in Graeco-Roman Religiosity

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter outlines the history of scholarship on belief in Greek and Roman religiosity, before turning to some neglected evidence for *pistis/fides* in divine–human relations in religious thinking from the first century BCE to the second century CE. It discusses divine *pistis/fides* towards human beings, human *pistis/fides* towards the divine, and the role of the gods in sponsoring *pistis/fides* between human beings. It explores the relative significance of relational and propositional belief and the range of foundations which are claimed for divine–human *pistis/fides* (including autopsy, hearsay, the written word, consequentialism, foundationalism, and coherentism), together with their tensions and fragilities. It investigates the relationship between divine–human *pistis* and *fides*, fear, doubt, and scepticism, and between divinely sponsored *pistis/fides* and justice. It discusses the analogies that are made between divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides*, and the relationship between philosophical accounts of belief and others.

Keywords: *pistis*, *fides*, god, propositional belief, foundation, fear, doubt, philosophical

We cannot begin to explore the role of *pistis/fides* in Graeco-Roman religious thinking without a few caveats. First, no one would begin a study of Greek or Roman religiosity by looking at *pistis/fides*: it does not play a large enough role in the evidence of any period (though it is worth noting that while abundance of testimony reliably indicates that a topic is much thought about, and presumptively culturally significant, paucity of testimony does not prove the opposite). Secondly, what follows is not a study of Graeco-Roman ideas about belief or faith, because belief, in Greek and Latin, is often expressed or discussed through other lexica, when it is expressed at all, and insofar as it is important to Greeks or Romans is probably expressed more through actions than words.¹ Thirdly, expressions

of *pistis/fides* towards the divine tend not to map straightforwardly onto other forms of religiosity. An author or literary character, for example, may express trust in Fortuna without directing his pious remark towards any particular cult of the goddess, and without indicating whether his *pistis/fides* is connected with any particular myth or ritual activity. (Conversely, it is likely that certain myths or ritual activities imply *pistis/fides* between gods and human beings without articulating it.) Fourthly, as we noted in previous chapters, to divide occurrences of *pistis/fides* into ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ is to some extent artificial; an important aspect of divine–human *pistis/fides* in the world of the early principate is the authority it gives to a wide range of intra-human activities.

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that we can sketch some aspects of the way it operates which cohere with the findings of the last two chapters and throw light on the evolution of Christian *pistis*.

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Approaches to Divine–Human *Pistis/fides* and Graeco-Roman Belief

Among those who have studied *pistis/fides* in Greek or Roman divine–human relations, those who are primarily interested in it as part of the context of Hellenistic Judaism or primitive Christianity have tended to focus on evidence for human *pistis/fides* towards the gods, particularly in the Hellenistic period, while those who are interested in Greek or Roman social history have tended to focus on what one might call divine sponsorship of intra-human *pistis/fides*. So, for instance, Lindsay (drawing on earlier work, particularly by Bultmann and Latte) observes that *pistis* language already appears (though rarely) in classical Greek, referring to trust in the gods, and that this language becomes slightly more common in the Hellenistic period.² He understands this trust, in terms which sociologists would recognize, as the taking of a risk in relation to another being for a hoped-for benefit.³ It is, however, he argues, a less complex concept than Christian ‘faith’, in particular because it does not imply any commitment to specific propositional beliefs about the gods other than that they exist.⁴ In addition, Hellenistic sources sometimes express explicitly either propositional belief in the existence of the gods, usually using the *nomizein* lexicon, or doubts about their existence.⁵

Gerhard Barth brings the study of *pistis* in Hellenistic religiosity into the early principate, in which period *pisteuein* is used with the dative or with *pros* to signify trust in the gods, and *pisteuein hoti* or *peri* to signify propositional belief in their existence.⁶ Occasionally, Barth argues, we even find *pistis* referring to the content of belief, citing a passage of Plutarch’s *Amatorius* to which we shall return.⁷ This is territory which we will explore further in this chapter, adding *fides* language to the discussion.

(p.125) Although previous studies have tended to focus on classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, it makes sense to extend the field of enquiry to the world of the early empire, and the whole of that empire. As we have seen (and studies of primitive Christianity now regularly emphasize), the world in which Christianity evolves is one largely under Roman rule, in which Roman structures of government, laws, and religion and patterns of thought are increasingly familiar, so Roman as well as Greek and Jewish ideas may always be in the background of the thinking of early Christian writers. Moreover, the literary and epigraphic records of the first century BCE through to the second century CE are exceptionally rich, providing better sources from which to draw material and within which to interpret it than are provided by the Hellenistic or even the classical period. As a result, one can hope to draw a more nuanced picture of divine–human *pistis/fides* in this period than has yet been attempted.

Classicists have taken relatively little interest in divine–human *pistis/fides*, but they have, from time to time, taken a good deal of interest in the concept of belief, and this debate is worth revisiting briefly, not least to highlight its differences from the present project. In the past century debate has tended to focus on whether belief plays a significant role in Greek or Roman religious thinking.⁸ Many would argue that it does not.⁹ Greeks and Romans told myths; they performed rituals; they knew things about the gods, but they did not self-consciously articulate beliefs about them.¹⁰ Scholars point to the absence of works of doctrine, credal statements, and sermons from our sources, and the fact that Varro, one of the few ancient systematists of religion, categorizes Roman religious matters under priesthoods, holy places, festivals, rituals, and gods, but not beliefs. In Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods* (3.5), the Academic Cotta divides them even more simply into rituals, auspices, and warnings.¹¹ In his own voice at the start of that work (1.14), Cicero offers a longer list of elements of *religio*, religious observance, which depend on human understanding of the nature of the gods: reverence, piety, holiness, ritual, *fides*, the swearing of oaths, temples, shrines, solemn sacrifices, and auspices. Even this taxonomy, though, is not usually seen as encompassing **(p.126)** statements of belief.¹² Belief, it seems, does not constitute a category in Greeks’ and Romans’ thinking about their own traditions. If *pistis* and *fides* occur occasionally in non-Christian contexts to refer to human attitudes to the divine, they mean no more than the divine–human equivalent of the loyalty people normatively offer to more powerful members of their human community, and not what Christians, for instance, mean by faith.¹³

A few scholars have taken the opposite view that belief is part of Graeco-Roman divine–human relations, and have explored some of its forms.¹⁴ Recently, something of a consensus has been reached that in some relatively weak and limited senses, most Greeks and Romans did believe in their gods. They believed—or simply assumed—that the gods existed.¹⁵ They thought that the gods could help or harm them.¹⁶ But belief in these senses has not been thought to merit a great deal of investigation,¹⁷ and some of the most sophisticated recent writing on Greek and Roman religions still either claims that Greeks and Romans did not believe, or does not include belief as a category of analysis.¹⁸

Neither those who have embraced belief as a category of analysis nor those who have rejected it have usually defined it explicitly, but their assumptions are reasonably clear and consistent:

(p.127) What mattered was the performance of cult acts, not the state of mind of the actor. In as far as individuals were recognized as especially ‘religious’ it was for what they did, not for what they thought.

In the case of his belief in divination, for example, Herodotus can accept all or some of the following propositions—that seers are often motivated by greed, that even Delphi could be bribed, that some oracles, some prophets, are just not very good, that collections of prophecies are often tampered with...that oracles are characteristically ambiguous—and still protest his belief in the truth of the prophecies (8.77) and his unwillingness to listen to those who deny that truth.

The expression θεοῦς ἠγείσθαι in the unambiguous sense of ‘believe in gods’ is attested already in the 1st quarter of the 5th cent. BC. We have quoted [a number of passages] as testimonies where ἠγείσθαι θεοῦς without any trace of doubt means ‘to think that gods exist’ (*meinen, dass Goetter sind*) or ‘to believe that there are gods’....Then there are the numerous places with double accusative or acc.cum.inf. in the sense of ‘think, take it, believe that someone is (a) god.’...Our conclusion, then, must be that while θεοῦς ἠγείσθαι is prevalent in the sense of ‘believe (in the existence of) gods’, θεοῦς νομιζειν, too, is frequently used in the same cognitive meaning.¹⁹

It emerges from references such as these that belief for historians of Greece and Rome is characteristically propositional belief: belief that certain things are true. Though cognitive, this kind of belief is often presented as non-rational, in the sense that it is not based on anything that would ordinarily be regarded as good evidence or argument.²⁰ It often seems to be assumed (and is occasionally said) to be a personal matter, and it is sometimes spoken of as having an emotional dimension.²¹

The language of *pistis* and *fides* has not featured largely in these studies. Studies of *pistis* and, especially, *fides*, however, have often had a good deal to say about divine–human relations, and these draw a somewhat different picture from the one which emerges from discussions of propositional belief and the language which most often expresses it. The most nuanced study is that of Freyburger, which deals with *fides* from its beginnings to the Augustan age.

Though the study of Fides as a goddess and a cult occupies less than a third of his monograph, Freyburger shows convincingly how divine–human *fides* is interwoven with every aspect of Roman public, and many key aspects of domestic life. The gods (primarily, but not exclusively, Jupiter and Fides herself) sanction *fides* in war, the making of treaties, the taking of oaths, and the making of contracts.²² Trust, loyalty, trustworthiness, and good faith (**p.128**) operate, all being well, between the Roman people and their magistrates, armies and commanders, patrons and clients, husbands and wives, between friends, in politics, law, commerce, and social life, and in all these contexts they are sanctioned by the gods and guaranteed by them. Respect for the gods and respect for other people are intimately interwoven: when one breaks down, the other follows, to the detriment of the state as a whole.²³ It is even possible, Freyburger argues, that being trusted or trustworthy was seen from an early period as a gift from the gods.²⁴ From time to time Freyburger also makes comparisons which make clear that not only do the terms *pistis* and *fides* come from the same Indo-European root, but that they operate in the Greek world from our earliest evidence, in Homer, onwards, in ways very similar to those in which they operate in the Roman republic.

Freyburger’s focus is on the human social practices and institutions that divine *fides* helps to make possible; though it is hinted at in some of his evidence, he has little to say about *fides* as a direct relationship between gods and human beings. Nevertheless, there is some evidence for the latter, which is particularly interesting in the context of the evolution of Christianity, and this will be our focus in what follows. As in the previous chapter, we will have less to say about the individual contexts in which *pistis/fides* operates than on its social shape, including where it is strong, weak, or problematic. We will also pay some attention to the bases of *pistis/fides*, and ways in which *pistis/fides* is deferred and reified. Finally, we will return to a question raised in the Introduction, and consider whether the sources allow us to conclude that *pistis/fides* between people and gods is analogous to, or significantly different from,

that between human beings.

Divine Pistis/fides Towards Human Beings

It emerged in earlier chapters that *pistis/fides* between human beings is often deferred to *pistis/fides* between human beings and the gods: not only (or even primarily) to human trust in the gods, but to the gods' innate trustworthiness and sponsorship of human trust.²⁵ No aspect of divine–human *pistis/fides* is more consistently affirmed in sources of this period than the trustworthiness of the gods—especially that of Jupiter and Fides herself.

The close connection, in both Greek and Roman thinking, between *pistis/fides* and *dikē/iustitia* makes it unsurprising that the primary divine association of both *pistis* and *fides* should be with Zeus or Jupiter, both of whom are closely associated with justice. At the same time, the connection is not made **(p.129)** explicit in Greek or Latin literature or inscriptions as often as one might expect, though occasionally Jupiter is referred to as *fidus*.²⁶ In the Roman world, the connection is most visible in evidence for cults of Fides and literary references to the goddess.²⁷ Both Jupiter and Fides, as has been noted, are honoured as guardians of oaths, treaties, and contracts, which led Georg Wissowa to propose what has been generally accepted, that Fides as a divinity was a hypostasis of Jupiter.²⁸ Fides is not the only or even the earliest such hypostasis: probably earlier is *Dius Fidius*, who also guarantees oaths but who seems to have been overtaken in importance by Fides in the third or second century BCE.²⁹ The complexities and obscurities in the relationships between these cults need not concern us here; the important point is that by the early principate Fides is well established as a divinity and is often praised in literary texts and inscriptions.³⁰ She acquires, however, as Freyburger notes, little personality of her own, which suggests that her identity remains closely bound up with that of Jupiter.³¹

Since the cult of Fides has been recently and carefully studied by Freyburger, while other aspects of divine–human *pistis/fides* have received less attention, I will not discuss it in detail, but a few observations about the way Fides the goddess is conceptualized will be in order. She is consistently portrayed as benevolent. She has a symbiotic relationship with *ops* (plenty, wealth, or power), and *concordia*:³² as we have seen, she appears on numerous imperial coin issues, sometimes crowned with olive, the symbol of peace, or carrying ears of corn or a cornucopia to symbolize plenty. Among the legends which celebrate her on coins are Fides Augusta (the good faith/trustworthiness of the emperor), Fides Publica, Fides Exercitus, Fides Militum, Fides Exercituum, **(p.130)** and Fides Maxima,³³ while the reverses of these coins sometimes display divinized Felicitas or Pax.³⁴ The goddess Fides, coin types proclaim, supports the flourishing of every aspect of society from agriculture to politics, in war and peace. As we have also seen, *fides* (and *pistis*) are closely associated with such social virtues as justice, friendship, confidence, and piety. The relationship between justice and trust, in particular, mirroring that between Jupiter, Fides, and divine Iustitia, is so intimate that each can be seen as giving rise to the other or the two together as forming the foundation of civil society.³⁵

Latin literature abounds with references to *fides* both as a quality of the divine and as a divine quality in its own right.³⁶ Literature also shows some interest in the nature of the divinity and her range of activity. One of the more elaborate literary characterizations of Fides as a goddess comes from Valerius Maximus, who describes her as *venerabilis*, and as stretching out her symbolic right hand in the 'most certain pledge of human welfare'.³⁷ From the examples that follow, Valerius is thinking of *salus humana* primarily in inter-state relations, though he may have understood it as operating in other spheres too. Apuleius' anti-hero Lucius, in the *Metamorphoses*, certainly does. When he is turned into an ass (*Met.* 3.26), he retreats to the stables of the house where he is staying, where he assumes that his horse will recognize him and, moved by pity, offer him a haven. Instead the horse attacks him, and in outrage he calls on *Iuppiter hospitalis et fidei secreta numina!*—'Jupiter, god of guests [because he is a guest in the horse's stable], and the hidden powers of *fides*!'³⁸ The divine powers of *fides* here sponsor relationships between members of a household, and in particular the relationship between those who serve and those who are served. Lucius seems to regard it as a quality that might be expected to generate not just loyalty but a degree of sympathy or kindness.³⁹ (The idea that the divine may, by the *pistis/fides* it commands, **(p.131)** sponsor, or even compel appropriate relationships between family members, in which kindness is also involved, is not restricted to Roman religiosity. In *Jewish Antiquities* (17.179), Josephus makes Herod the Great, on his deathbed, urge the few remaining members of his family, by the kindness due to them and the *pistis* they owe to God, to make certain arrangements for mourning at his funeral. *Pistis*, which plausibly encompasses loyalty and good faith here, is deferred in classic style from the intra-human to the divine–human relationship. Herod (who was notorious for not trusting those close to him) does not trust his relatives directly, nor expect loyalty of them, but he thinks he can appeal to their *pistis* towards God to make them keep a promise.)

The benignity of Fides is occasionally honoured in inscriptions, like this one from Brindisi in the first or early second century CE:

si non molestum est, hospes, consiste et lege.
navibus velivolis magnum mare saepe cucurri,

accessi terras complures: terminus hicce est,
 quem mihi nascenti quondam Parcae cecinere.
 hic meas deposui curas omnesque labores;
 sidera non timeo hic nec nimbos nec mare saevom,
 nec metuo, sumptus ni quaestum vincere possit.
 alma Fides, tibi ago gratias, sanctissima diva:
 fortuna infracta, ter me fessum recreasti;
 tu digna es quam mortales optent sibi cuncti...
 If it's no trouble, stranger, stop and read.
 I travelled the great sea many times in swift-sailed ships;
 I reached many lands: this place is my terminus,
 Which once the Fates sang for me when I was born.
 Here I have laid down my cares and all my labours;
 Here I fear neither stars nor storms nor the cruel sea,
 Nor do I fear lest my costs should outweigh my profit.
 Nurturing Fides, I give you thanks, most holy goddess:
 Three times, when my fortunes were in ruins and I was despairing, you restored me;
 You are worthy that all mortals should look to you...⁴⁰

In these verses, the idea that Fides sponsors commercial activities is intertwined with the idea that Fides sponsors human welfare more generally. Fides is not just favourable but *alma*, 'nurturing', an epithet also attached to her in literature,⁴¹ and she does not merely restore the speaker's fortunes but cures his despair. The epithet *alma* is connected elsewhere in literature with the nurturing provided by mothers and nurses, as well as with other nurturing divinities such as Ceres and Venus; when one remembers that Zeus and (p.132) Jupiter are both widely known as 'Father', it is not a big step to see the gods' sponsorship of *pistis/fides* as part of a nurturing, even familial, relationship between the gods and humanity.

Though Jupiter and Fides dominate explicit affirmations of divine *pistis/fides*, it by no means only a western idea, nor does it belong only to these gods. There is no sign that the cult of Pistis is controversial when it reaches the Greek East in the second century CE. Funerary inscriptions attribute *pistis/fides* to the gods of the underworld.⁴² In *On Superstition* Plutarch attributes it to all the gods, asserting that to think the gods *apistoi* towards human beings is to misunderstand them, and is a sign of superstition.⁴³

Does attributing *pistis/fides* to the gods imply that they not only sponsor human *pistis/fides* but also actively endow human beings with it? Evidence for the cult of Fides does not allow us to decide, but some literary references suggest that the gods (not only Fides) can be thought of as giving human beings *pistis* or *fides*.⁴⁴

Occasionally, literary characters ask the gods explicitly to give them *pistis/fides*. In Persius' Satire 2 (6–14), a man prays aloud in a temple for *mens bona*, *fama*, *fides* (good sense, a good reputation and *fides*)—and under his breath for a pot of money. (The fact that *fides* appears alongside *mens bona* and *fama* and in opposition to financial greed suggests that it is thought of here as a virtue of public life: trustworthiness, perhaps, or good faith.⁴⁵)

Plutarch and Epictetus both regard themselves as serious philosophers, but both address and were read by wider audiences in both East and West, so we need not assume that their ideas were directed or confined to small groups of the intellectual elite or to one part of the empire. Epictetus asserts more than once that the god gives *pistis* as one of a series of virtues which characterize humanity as it should be. When we fail to be good, we dishonour the divine craftsman who made us, and forget that he not only made us, but entrusted us (*episteusen*) to our own moral safekeeping. This image links Epictetus' Platonically inspired account of virtue with the popular idea, expressed, for instance, in a number of fables, that the gods give people both virtues and (p.133) vices, or more generally all good and bad things, sometimes explicitly including virtues and vices:⁴⁶

[ὁ θεός] παραδέδωκέ σοι σεαυτὸν καὶ λέγει, οὐκ εἶχον ἄλλον πιστότερόν σου· τοῦτόν μοι φύλασσε τοιοῦτον οἶος πέφυκεν, αἰδήμονα, πιστόν, ὑψηλόν, ἀκατάπληκτον, ἀπαθῆ, ἀτάραχον.⁴⁷

[The god] has handed you over to yourself and says, 'I had no one more trustworthy [?] than you; keep this man for me as he was born, reverent, trustworthy [trusting/faithful?], high-minded, undaunted, unimpassioned, undisturbed.'

Epictetus shares with Plutarch the view that we can also acquire virtues, including *pistis*, by imitating the god.

λέγουσιν οἱ φιλόσοφοι, ὅτι μαθεῖν δεῖ πρῶτον τοῦτο, ὅτι ἔστι θεός και προνοεῖ τῶν ὄλων και οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν αὐτὸν οὐ μόνον ποιῶντα, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ διανοοῦμενον ἢ ἐνθυμούμενον· εἴτα ποιοῖ τινες εἰσίν. οἷοι γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνοι εὐρεθῶσιν, τὸν ἐκεῖνοις ἀρέσοντα και πεισθησόμενον ἀνάγκη πειρᾶσθαι κατὰ δύναμιν και ἐξομοιοῦσθαι ἐκεῖνοισι. εἰ πιστόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον, και τοῦτον εἶναι πιστόν.⁴⁸

The philosophers say that we must first learn this, that god exists and provides for everything, and that it is impossible to hide not only our actions, but our thoughts or intentions from him. Then we must learn what the gods are like, for however they are found to be, the man who is to please and obey them must try with all his power to make himself like them. If the divine is trustworthy [faithful? reliable?], he must be trustworthy [etc.] too.

The god, says Plutarch, embodies every virtue and offers himself as a pattern, so that every virtue is accessible to people who follow the god.⁴⁹ At the same time, both Epictetus and Plutarch carry a warning, Epictetus explicitly. If we do not behave as Zeus has arranged for us to behave, we alienate ourselves from the divine and injure ourselves, by destroying in ourselves what is trustworthy, reverent, and decent (τὸν πιστόν, τὸν αἰδήμονα, τὸν κόσμιον, 3.7.36).⁵⁰ Plutarch's interpretation of the proverb θεὸν ἐποῦ, if not its original meaning, may be one way in which the phrase is generally understood by the early principate.⁵¹ We acquire virtues, he says, including *pistis/fides*, by following or imitating the virtues of the gods.⁵²

(p.134) A number of other authors agree that the gods sponsor *pistis/fides* among human beings and that human society is better when the divine gift of *pistis/fides* is part of it. According to the Romans, says Plutarch (*Mor.* 275a), in the golden age when Saturn ruled over the gods, *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* flourished among human beings. *Pistis* here may have the widest meaning, encompassing both public and private trust, trustworthiness and good faith. *Fides* appears with *pax*, *honos*, *pudor* as a golden-age virtue in Horace's *Carmen saeculare*, while *cana Fides*, 'hoary Fides', will be one of Rome's lawgivers in the golden age of Augustus, according to Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁵³ Cicero too links a good human society with a society which reveres the gods and one which practises *fides*. Piety, he says, like any virtue, cannot consist solely of outward show, and if piety disappears, so will other essential virtues and society will fail:

atque haud scio an pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani et una excellentissima virtus iustitia tollatur.

And surely, if piety towards the gods disappears, even trustworthiness/good faith and human society, together with that most excellent virtue justice, will be destroyed. (1.2.3–4)⁵⁴

There are many variations of the story that when people behave badly the gods withdraw from the earth in sorrow.⁵⁵ Ovid describes (*Met.* 1.128–50) how in the age of iron, when human beings gave up *pudor*, *pietas*, *fides* (towards one another and perhaps also towards the gods), the gods, including Fides, abandoned the earth. Eumolpus' poem in Petronius' *Satyricon* (124) describes how gods including Pax, Fides, Iustitia, and Concordia fled the world at the catastrophes of 49 BCE. A character in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (4.21) offers a variation on the theme: 'No wonder there is no *fides* to be found in our lives: she has emigrated to live with the ghosts and the dead in disgust at our *perfidia*.'⁵⁶ Not only may the gods endow human beings with qualities such as *pistis/fides*; they are apparently pleased when people practise them and dismayed when they do not. The relational aspect of *fides* is strongly to the fore here, and it is notable that even if the failure of trust takes place between human beings, human–divine relations are affected by it. If there is no *fides* **(p.135)** between people, the implication seems to be that there cannot be *fides* between people and gods either.

If there is widespread agreement that following the god and practising *pistis/fides* are a good thing, there is less agreement as to whether the gods actively reward people who practise it or punish those who do not, other than by withdrawing from the world. When Lucius regains his human form at the end of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (11.16), the bystanders say that he must have earned the patronage of heaven through the *fides* and *innocentia* of his past life: '*felix hercules et ter beatus, qui vitae scilicet praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit tam praeclarum de caelo patrocinium...*' Whether *fides* here refers to faithfulness to the gods, or trustworthiness in human activities, or both, the bystanders seem clear that the gods approve of it and reward it. Catullus, addressing a disloyal friend, threatens him with punishment by Fides, who remembers all such betrayals.⁵⁷ Ovid, on the other hand, in the persona of a disappointed young lover, suspects that if there is a god, he is in love with beautiful young women and lets them behave as they like, including when they break faith with their lovers.⁵⁸ Even in more serious mood, in the *Fasti*, Ovid is capable of notable cynicism about the gods' tolerance for violations of *fides*. Under the Ides of May (5.673–92) he offers us a picture of a merchant who,

at the end of a hectic day's buying and selling, purifies himself in the waters of Mercury near the Porta Capena. 'Wash away the perjuries of the past,' he says; 'wash away the day's perfidious words (*perfida verba*)' (681–2). He asks that the south wind blow away all his lies, cheating, and taking of the gods' names in vain, so that tomorrow he may begin to cheat and profit afresh. At such prayers, says Ovid, Mercury laughs, remembering that he is a thief himself (691–2).

A passage of Silius Italicus' *Punic Wars* (2.457–525), written in the late first century CE, combines several characterizations of divine Fides which we have already seen, and adds another which is more surprising. At the outbreak of the Second Punic War in 219 BCE, the people of Saguntum in Spain are starving to death under siege by the Carthaginians. Hercules, seeing their suffering, travels to where Fides lives in a distant part of heaven. Addressing Fides as 'more ancient than Jupiter', he demands whether she is going to watch people die defending her.⁵⁹ Fides replies that no breach of *fides* goes unpunished, even though she has been forced by human failures of *fides* to remove herself from the earth:⁶⁰

(p.136) inde severa levi decurrens aethere virgo
luctantem fatis petit inflammata Saguntum.
invadit mentes et pectora nota pererrat
immititque animis numen; tum, fusa medullis,
implicat atque sui flagrantem inspirat amorem.

Thence the severe virgin goddess descended the light aether and, inflamed, hastened towards Saguntum which was struggling with its fate. She took possession of [the people's] minds and pervaded their familiar breasts, and instilled her divine power into their hearts; then, having poured herself into their marrow, she gripped them and inspired them with a burning love for herself.

Inspiration by the goddess provokes the people of Saguntum to even more heroic efforts of resistance, and finally, *fidus* to the end, to a glorious death. It is highly unusual to hear of a divine quality like Fides possessing a human being, and even more so a group, but the idea may evolve by analogy with the way Zeus or Apollo sometimes possesses a prophet.⁶¹

Compared with affirmations of the *pistis/fides* of the divine towards human beings, concerns that the gods may not be trustworthy are relatively rarely raised, and then usually to emphasize that they are unjustified. A lively, sometimes obstreperous debate runs throughout antiquity about the reliability of oracles: in particular, whether the gods' speech may sometimes be so veiled as to be misleading, or whether human intermediaries may sometimes, intentionally or accidentally, misrepresent them, or whether the complexities of the process may sometimes make it difficult for recipients to interpret what they receive.⁶² In this period, however, our sources avoid concluding from this that the gods are *apistoi* or *infidi*.⁶³ A story told by Valerius Maximus (1.8 ext. 8) emphasizes the reliability of oracles in the face of human scepticism. A Greek sophist of the late third century BCE tries to prove the Delphic oracle a fake by asking it whether he will find a lost horse which has never owned. The oracle says that he will find it, but it will throw and kill him. As he returns from Delphi, very pleased with himself *delusa sacrarum sortium fide*, 'for having cheated the *fides* of the sacred oracle', the sophist falls in with King Attalus of Pergamum, at whose expense he has made jokes in the past. Attalus has him **(p.137)** thrown off a cliff named Horse. Valerius draws the moral that the sophist paid a just penalty for mocking the gods; he might equally have recommended readers to place *fides* in the gods' *fides*.⁶⁴ Dio Chrysostom (10.26) uses the classic exemplum of Croesus to defend the trustworthiness of oracles. Croesus made war on the expansionist King Cyrus of Persia in 546, putting his trust in a Delphic oracle which said that if he fought, a great kingdom would fall. The kingdom proved to be his own. Croesus thought, says Dio, that he was carrying out the wishes of the god *pistōs*, faithfully, by fighting, and so expected to win, but his defeat was his fault, not the god's: he misunderstood what he received.

The only god who is sometimes said explicitly not to be *axiopistos/fidelis* (worthy of trust) is Tyche/Fortuna. Tyche/Fortuna is notorious for changing her allegiances and breaking faith (as she does, for instance, with the Trojans in the *Aeneid*⁶⁵) with people who have done nothing to offend her.⁶⁶ So conventional is it to upbraid her for her unreliability, that when Lucan's Caesar pretends to mourn the death of Pompey after Pharsalia, he does it by chastising Fortuna as *perfida* (9.1061). Despite this, literary characters and people in general are often described as placing *pistis* or *fides* in Tyche or Fortuna.⁶⁷ According to Dio, people trust Tyche, despite calling her *apistos*, simply because she has more influence on human lives than anything else.⁶⁸ Even a blatantly untrustworthy divinity, it seems, can attract *pistis/fides*—but no author speculates openly on this basis whether other gods in whom human beings place *pistis/fides* may not be trustworthy either.

Human Pistis/fides Towards the Divine

From the idea that the gods are trustworthy, sponsor *pistis/fides* and benevolently communicate it to human beings, it is not difficult to infer that people (of all kinds and statuses) can and should trust the gods. It is therefore not surprising to find both Greek and Latin writers inviting their audiences to do so, and describing with approval those who have.⁶⁹

(p.138) For Artemidorus, the gods head the list of those whom one can trust or believe when they appear in a dream:

τῶν ἀξιοπίστων λεγομένων, οἷς λέγουσιν τι πιστεῦειν χρῆ καὶ πείθεσθαι, φημί πρώτους εἶναι θεοὺς. ἀλλότριον γὰρ θεῶν τὸ ψεῦδεσθαι.⁷⁰

Of those who are said to be worthy of trust/belief, whose words one should trust [believe?] and obey [believe?], I say that the gods come first; for it is against the nature of a god to lie.

Kings, rulers, parents, teachers, and prophets are all trustworthy for Artemidorus to the extent that they are in some way like gods.⁷¹ For Apollonius, *pistis* towards the gods stands at the apex of a ladder of social relations (*Ep.* 33):

Μιλησίοις· οἱ παῖδες ὑμῶν πατέρων δέονται, οἱ νέοι γερόντων, αἱ γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, οἱ ἄνδρες ἀρχόντων, οἱ ἄρχοντες νόμων, οἱ νόμοι φιλοσόφων, οἱ φιλόσοφοι θεῶν, οἱ θεοὶ πιστεως·

To the Milesians. Your children need fathers, your young men elders, your women men, your men rulers, your rulers laws, your laws philosophers, your philosophers gods, your gods *pistis*.

In each pair except the last, the first partner seems to need the second for guidance and perhaps regulation. It does not seem likely that Apollonius is telling us that the gods are guided or regulated by human *pistis*, so the grammatical parallel here is probably made for rhetorical effect rather than meaning. Apollonius may mean that people need *pistis* towards the gods to guide and regulate them (people), or he may mean that people need to enact *pistis* towards the gods for the gods to be willing or able to guide and regulate them.⁷²

Septimius Severus urges his army to enact *pistis* towards the gods as part of his bid for imperial power in 193. Take control of Rome, he says, and from there the rest of the world, ‘putting your trust in divine predictions and in the strength of your weapons and bodies (θείαις τε προρρήσεσι πιστεύοντες καὶ τῇ **(p.139)** τῶν ὑμετέρων ἀνδρεία ὀπλῶν τε καὶ σωμάτων)’.⁷³ People trust the gods to be just—or when they do not, something has gone wrong with society: so Virgil, in *Culex* (226–7), laments that old-fashioned *fides iustitiae* has left the land.⁷⁴ At a religious ceremony, Horace tells us that there is a sure reward for ‘faithful silence (*fideli...silentio*)’, suggesting that it is desirable to approach ritual acts in a spirit of *fides*.⁷⁵

It is axiomatic that a central part of ritual, and divine–human relations in general, is prayer, through which human beings may make requests of the gods. *Pistis/fides* language rarely appears explicitly in this connection, though an inscribed oracle of around 200 CE, discovered in a Romano-Egyptian fort, commends prayer to a worshipper using the cognate verb *peithein* (suggesting ‘trust/belief-through-persuadedness’):

[...] εὖ
χου τοῖς θεοῖς πεποιθώς,
καὶ αὐτοὶ σε κυβερνήσουσιν ἐφ’ ὃ πορεύῃ [...]

Pray to the gods with conviction and they will guide you where you are going.⁷⁶

In a brief excursion beyond the proper bounds of this study, a letter from Libanius to his friend Eudaimon in the fourth century also attests that *pistis* may be involved in praying to the gods, in this case for healing. Libanius has been suffering from gout, and Eudaimon has travelled on his behalf to the temple of Asclepius at Aegae to seek a cure. Eudaimon reports having had a vision at the temple, which he interprets as being of Hygeia, the goddess of health. Libanius thanks him and says that thanks to Hygeia’s embrace his gout is already better:

ἤδη γὰρ ὁ πούς δύο μοίρας ἀπέληφε τῆς δυνάμεως ἣν ποτε εἶχεν. αἱ μὲν χεῖρες τοῖν ἩἸπειρώταιν, τὸ δὲ δῶρον Ἀσκληπιοῦ. πιστεῦειν οὖν χρῆ καὶ περὶ τοῦ λειπομένου.⁷⁷

My foot has already regained two-thirds of the strength it used to have. The hands are those of the Epirotes, the gift that of Asclepius. So I must trust/be confident for the remainder.

Libanius is unusual in connecting *pistis* explicitly with a visit to a shrine, but he is not alone in putting his trust in the gods to make him well. Fronto's correspondence with the emperor Marcus Aurelius in the second century reveals the intense interest of both men in their own and their families' health, and their reliance on the gods to improve it. In one letter the emperor reports that his (p.140) family is suffering a variety of ailments, *sed confidere dis debemus*, 'but we must trust the gods [to make us well]'.⁷⁸ In another, Marcus trusts or hopes (*dis volentibus confido*) that Fronto is getting better and his bowels have moved.⁷⁹

If *pistis* towards the gods almost never appears explicitly in inscriptions, *apistia* occasionally does. Surviving examples are closer in date to Libanius than to the rest of our sources, but they are too well known to pass over without comment:

I, Claudia Bassa, have been punished during four years, and yet I did not trust the god (μη πιστεύουσα τῷ θεῷ); finally I happened to understand the reason why I was suffering (ἐπιτυχοῦσα δὲ περὶ ὧν ἔπαθα); I erected the stele as a thanksgiving.⁸⁰

In this example Claudia records having failed to trust or have confidence in the god, though whether to end her suffering or to make clear to her why she is suffering, we cannot tell. Her *pistis* may well have elements of propositional belief (that the god can help her), and also of confidence or hope; perhaps even of obedience. Belayche interprets Claudia's *apistia* as her failure to acknowledge the power of the god to punish her, in line with her interpretation of *pistis* in general as the tribute paid by the less to the more powerful, whether human or divine.⁸¹ In line with attitudes towards the benevolent trustworthiness of the gods which we have seen in earlier literature, Claudia may equally be acknowledging her failure to trust or have confidence in the trustworthiness and ability of the god to help her.⁸²

One must be cautious in putting side by side a relatively small number of references, composed over two or three centuries, and drawing from them too confident a composite picture of the role of *pistis/fides* in divine-human relations. At the same time, when a coherent picture emerges from the juxtaposition of several sources, it would be over-sceptical to dismiss it lightly. References to *pistis/fides* in divine-human relations, as we have seen, are scattered thinly but persistently through literature of the early principate. Without being a major theme in all but a very few works, it seems to be widely taken for granted as part of Greek and Roman *mentalité*. The mostly brief references examined so far occur in texts of many different genres, addressed probably to rather varied audiences. The very brevity of these references, however, and the variety of their genres are significant in their own right. They show that *pistis/fides* in divine-human relations is not just the concern of a few philosophers or the conceit of a few poets: it can be invoked in many (p.141) genres and in a wide range of contexts. It can, moreover, regularly be mentioned in passing without explanation or justification, which strongly suggests that authors expect the concept to be familiar to readers. The indications are that *pistis/fides* is genuinely a factor in divine-human relations of this period.

The shape of the relationship, as it emerges from the sources, is distinctive. *Pistis/fides* is a quality especially of Zeus/Jupiter, but sometimes of all the gods or of the one divinity of Platonism or Stoicism. It is a quality associated with some divine warmth, even with the divine nurturing of human beings. In different contexts, the gods possess it, model it, give it to human beings, like to see them exercise it and are disappointed when they do not. Failures of *pistis/fides* between humans seem to damage divine-human relations and may be punished. The gods are often portrayed as sponsoring *pistis/fides* between human beings. Nowhere, however, do we hear that the society which human beings create using *pistis/fides* has to take any particular shape: all kinds of communities, it seems (provided that they encode and enact trust, justice, and the other divinely sponsored virtues), may be built on its foundations. If the gods offer *pistis/fides* to human beings and encourage them to offer it to one another, human beings also offer it to the gods. They trust/have confidence/place their hope in the gods to be just, to make them well, to support them in many areas of life as long as they themselves have *pistis/fides*, and to reward well-performed religious rituals.

We saw in earlier chapters that intra-human *pistis/fides* is deferred to divine-human *pistis/fides* in many different contexts. Divine-human relations in general are often portrayed by historians of Greek and Roman religions as in some sense contractual: human beings offer the gods worship, and hope in return to receive protection, good harvests, success in war, and other benefits. In the terms of the model developed in the Introduction, any relationship with a contractual element defers the *pistis/fides* in that relationship to the contract, the implied assumption being that the parties cannot trust each other directly, but both are willing to invest trust in an agreement backed by another authority which both acknowledge. The texts discussed so far in this chapter, however, suggest that a contractual model of divine-human relations, involving the deferral of trust, has serious difficulties. There is no suggestion in any of the passages we have looked at that divine-human *pistis/fides* needs to be deferred, unless to the *pistis/fides* of the gods themselves (a very short differential step): on the contrary, the strong emphasis on the intrinsic *pistis/fides* of the gods makes further *différance* unnecessary. This makes good sense given that there is no higher authority in Graeco-Roman culture than the gods, so it is hard to

see to whom or what trust between gods and human beings could be deferred.⁸³ It seems more likely that divine–human relations are understood as **(p.142)** a primary relationship of (overwhelmingly justified) trust, on which other contractual relationships can be based, rather than as themselves created or bound by contract. It is beyond our present scope to explore this model of divine–human relations further. It is, though, notable that the language of divine–human *pistis/fides* strongly suggests that *pistis/fides* is at the root of any model, and is no less powerful for not being constantly articulated.

Individual works of high literature often present mixed, ambivalent, or negative views of the gods' attitude to human activities and human attitudes to the gods. Rituals may suggest that human beings hope for good things from the gods without indicating how confident they are in that hope. Many of the passages we have looked at, in contrast, indicate considerable confidence in the gods' positive commitment to the human world and in their desire that divine–human relations should be characterized by *pistis/fides*. Individuals back this belief by putting their trust/confidence/hope in the gods to help and guide them, and claim that they have experienced their doing so.⁸⁴

This is not the place to prejudge the findings of the next few chapters by comparing Greek and Roman divine–human *pistis/fides* with that articulated in Jewish or Christian sources. Nevertheless, it is hard not to be aware already of rather more similarities between Graeco-Roman and Jewish or Christian *mentalité* than might have been expected. The benignity of the gods, their gift of *pistis/fides* to human beings, their disappointment when human beings ignore or abuse their gift, their punishment of offenders—all these form a pattern with obvious analogies in Jewish and Christian theology.

One might even draw on an image from Christian theology (itself drawn ultimately from Greek political theory) to characterize the model of divine–human *pistis/fides* which has just been outlined. Theologians sometimes talk of the 'economy' of salvation, highlighting the way such qualities as love, grace, and righteousness do not simply pertain to God, or to human beings, but flow and circulate from God to human beings, between human beings, and from human beings back to God.⁸⁵ In a similar way, one might not inappropriately identify an economy of *pistis/fides* in Greek and Roman religious thinking of this period, circulating through the divine and human spheres, from the gods to human beings and back again.

Propositional Belief in Relation to the Divine

So far, the meanings of *pistis/fides* under examination have been dominated by the relational, inviting translation with the 'trust' spectrum of the lexicon. As **(p.143)** we have seen in previous chapters, though, it is often hard to separate trust and propositional belief (belief that something is so), not least because each defers constantly, explicitly or implicitly, to the other. In a few texts from this period 'belief' in the sense of propositional belief seems a more natural translation of *pistis/fides* language, or belief and trust are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate them.

Propositional belief, as has been noted, is typically expressed through 'thinking' language in both Greek and Latin (*putare, censere, dokein, nomizein*, etc.).⁸⁶ It can, though, also employ the language of trust/belief (*credere, confidere, pisteuin*, etc.).⁸⁷ 'We have believed that Jupiter rules, thundering, from the sky,' (*caelo tonantem credidimus Iovem regnare*) says Horace (*Carm.* 3.5.1). The woman of Thessaly, who in Plutarch's *Obsolescence of Oracles* (417a) claims to have drawn down the moon, may have been a fake, but she nevertheless gains the *pistis* of bystanders: they believe that she did what she says.⁸⁸ When the Romans capture Veii in 396 BCE, in Valerius Maximus' account (1.8.3), they ask the statue of Juno whether she wants to go to Rome. Juno replies that she does, and awestruck, and believing that they are carrying not an image but the actual goddess (*non simulacrum sed ipsam caelo Iunonem petitam portare se credentes*), the Romans take her to a new home on the Aventine. Plutarch, telling another story from early Rome (*Numa* 4.3–4), expresses scepticism that the nymph Egeria made love to King Numa. There is reason to think, he says, that the gods want to consort with the best men, but it is hard to believe that they want to sleep with them (*ἔργον ἤδη και τοῦτο πεισθῆναι*).⁸⁹

A defining feature of atheism, according to Plutarch (*Mor.* 165b), is ἀπιστία τοῦ θεοῦ. Since he has just defined atheism as 'the miserable judgement that nothing blessed or incorruptible exists' (ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὐσα φαύλη τοῦ μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον και ἄφθαρτον), ἀπιστία τοῦ θεοῦ is probably propositional here: 'disbelief in the divine'. Lucian's Menippus (*Icar.* 10), reporting his confusion at all the theories of the divine with which literature presents him, and his determination to arrive at the truth, explains:

ἀπιστεῖν μὲν οὐκ ἐτόλμων ὑπιβρεμέταις τε και ἠϋγενεῖσις ἀνδράσι· οὐ μὴν εἶχόν γε ὅπη τῶν λόγων τραπόμενος ἀνεπιληπτὸν τι αὐτῶν εὔρομι και ὑπὸ θατέρου μηδαμῆ περιτρεπόμενον.

(p.144) I did not dare disbelieve high-thundering men with great beards, but I did not know where to turn to find a theory that was irrefutable and could not be overturned by someone else.

In Menippus belief and doubt coexist; elsewhere they are juxtaposed. In Lucian's *The Lover of Lies or The Doubter*, Tychiades (ironically named for the one goddess people trust without justification) is prepared to believe that the gods exist, but thinks that many of the stories about them are false. He reports to his friend Philocles a series of increasingly tall stories about gods, spirits, miracles, journeys to Hades, and more, all of which have been told to him by other friends who claim to have experienced or witnessed what they describe, or to be stating what is common knowledge. *Pistis* language is used repeatedly (though not exclusively) of these friends' propositional belief and the (un)believability of their stories.⁹⁰

Ovid's *Heroides* 2 (49–53) offers an example of a passage where it is impossible to distinguish belief and trust. Phyllis admits that she believed/trusted her lover's words, his family, his tears—and the gods by whom he swore:

credimus blandis, quorum tibi copia, verbis;
 credimus generi nominibusque tuis;
 credimus lacrimis—an et hae simulare docentur?
 hae quoque habent artes, quaque iubentur, eunt?
 dis quoque credimus...⁹¹
 I trusted/believed in your blandishments, of which you had so many;
 I trusted/believed in your lineage and its famous names;
 I trusted/believed in your tears—or can one learn even to fake these?
 Are these also artistic, can they also flow to order?
 I trusted/believed in the gods too...

Both Phyllis' trust in her lover and the gods, and her belief that they were trustworthy, seem to be involved here. Similarly, when Lucian's false prophet Alexander makes his famous proclamation, at the beginning of a ritual, that godless men, Christians, and Epicureans should make themselves scarce, the implication is both that those who stay are believers, in the sense that they do not think Alexander is a fake, and that they are putting their trust in—in the sense of making a commitment to—the god Alexander invokes:

(p.145) εἴ τις ἄθεος ἢ Χριστιανὸς ἢ Ἐπικούρειος ἴκει κατάσκοπος τῶν ὀργίων, φευγέτω· οἱ δὲ πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ τελείσθωσαν τύχηι τῇ ἀγαθῇ.⁹²

'If any atheist or Christian or Epicurean has come to spy on the secret rites, let him flee; let those who trust/believe in the god complete them, with the help of good fortune.'

Passages where propositional belief is explicit or dominant in *pistis/fides* language are a small minority in sources of this period. What is most striking about the examples we have cited, though, is that in almost of them, in one way or another, belief is problematic. The woman who gains credence by appearing to draw down the moon is, like Lucian's Alexander, a fake. The Romans who come to believe that they are carrying the actual goddess Juno do so in spite of themselves. Plutarch is sceptical that nymphs want to sleep with mortal men. Lucian's Menippus struggles to believe what he reads and his Tychiades flatly disbelieves most of what he is told, while Phyllis' belief in her lover has been betrayed.

In the first two sections of this chapter we saw trust in the gods and the trustworthiness of the gods treated positively, and not, on the whole, as difficult or controversial. Belief seems to be much more problematic. Why? The answer seems to lie not in the gods or the divine–human relationship, but in the nature of belief itself. Propositional belief demands grounds and reasons. But when one ponders one's reasons for believing something about the gods, they soon begin to seem fragile. Among the grounds that prove fragile in the examples above are the evidence of the senses, literature, oral report, a lover's charm, and his lineage. In the next section a number of others emerge.

Foundations of Divine–Human *Pistis/fides*

In the Introduction I noted that the study of religions and the philosophy of religion recognize many foundations for belief, from correspondence to evidence to internal coherence, and from Pascal's wager to a hunch, a hope, or a working hypothesis.⁹³ *Pistis* and *fides* defer in this period to a more limited repertoire of foundations, most of which have already been encountered in intra-human relations. Some are treated as more reliable than others, but none is beyond debate.

One, commonly cited, is personal experience of dreams, visions, voices, or signs. This is often, though not always, treated as a relatively secure basis for **(p.146)** *pistis/fides*, whether by literary characters or by authors writing *in propria persona*. When the

gods tell us to do something, Ausonius says in a dedicatory poem (1.4.1–4), *fidere tam fas est, quam dubitare nefas*, ‘it is as right to trust [obey?] them as it is wrong to hesitate [doubt/question?]’. The commands of men may require deliberation; those of gods (among whom he includes the emperor) do not.⁹⁴

The Romans’ experience of the voice of Juno at Veii, as Valerius Maximus describes it, is unusual in that a group of men hear it together. More often, one person has the experience and must persuade others that it is credible. This is not always easy. When Apuleius’ Lucius is told in a dream by a man with a twisted foot to get himself initiated into the cult of Osiris, he believes the dream, and so do the priests of Osiris (possibly, within the story, for sound business reasons as well as out of piety).⁹⁵ Cicero, on the other hand, attacking divination in *On Divination* (2.122), takes the view:

quodsi insanorum visis fides non est habenda, quia falsa sunt, cur credatur somniantium visis, quae multo etiam perturbatiora sunt, non intellego.

If one cannot have faith [belief/trust/confidence?] in the visions of the insane, because they are false, I do not understand why we believe [in?] the visions people have when they are asleep which are much more confused.⁹⁶

In Plutarch’s *Life of Marius* (17.4–6), during Marius’ wars against Gallic tribes in 102/1 BCE, a priest of Cybele travels from her shrine at Pessinus to Rome to report that the goddess has told him that the Romans will win the war. The Senate is inclined to believe him (apparently on his own authority), but one of the tribunes of the people calls him an impostor and refuses to let him report his news to the people. Immediately after the meeting, however, the tribune falls ill and dies, as a result of which the priest’s report gains general *pistis*. This kind of consequentialism, in which a person’s trustworthiness is deemed proven by something significant that happens after his report of a religious experience, is perhaps the most common basis of trust in such experiences.

The Senate may have trusted the priest of Cybele partly on the basis of his quasi-professional expertise (though if so, then expertise seems to have had less leverage in this field than it has in some others we have seen). When an expert is not available, one may be tempted to rely more on reports of (p.147) experience by those closer and better known to one, such as family members or member of one’s household. In a famous letter on ghosts (7.27), Pliny the Younger tells his friend Licinius Sura that he is led to believe (*credere*) that ghosts exist by something that he has heard happened to Curtius Rufus, and by two events which he can confirm himself, as they happened to a freedman and a slave of his own (12). The freedman dreamed that someone was cutting his hair in the night—and, the next morning, found a shaved place on his head and some of his hair on the floor. Shortly afterwards, a household slave had the same dream with the same result (13). Nothing remarkable happened as a result of these events, says Pliny candidly, unless perhaps the fact that he was not brought to trial by the emperor Domitian, as he might have been had the emperor lived longer (14). His observation reveals, however, that he regards ghosts, if they exist, not just as strange phenomena but as portents.

Pliny regards these rather unspectacular occurrences as portents on no fewer than four different grounds, three confirmed and one prospective. They were reported by people he knows and trusts.⁹⁷ They were supported by physical evidence. Something happened consequently (or rather, did not happen) to which the dreams could be seen as pointing. (Pliny’s determination to find something to which his freedman’s and slave’s dreams could have been pointing, however obscurely, is testimony to the power of consequentialism as a basis for belief.) And in case all of these are not enough, Pliny seeks Licinius’ informed opinion on the basis of his erudition about whether ghosts can be seen as portents (15–16). He will, he says, defer to Licinius’ consideration of these reports, and he begs him to make a decision on them, to put an end to Pliny’s doubts. Report, evidence, and consequences, it seems, still need to be fortified by reason. (Pliny provides another striking example of consequentialist thinking when he tells Trajan, in his *Panegyric*, that the best basis for thinking that Trajan’s predecessor Hadrian is divine is Trajan himself, since choosing a good successor is ‘the most certain proof (*fides*) of divinity’.⁹⁸)

Certain signs, such as those mediated by birds, carry the authority not only of personal experience (one’s own or others’) and consequentialism, but of tradition. When, in Ovid’s *Fasti* (4.814), Romulus and Remus are trying to decide which of them should found a city, Romulus says, *magna fides avium est, experiamur aves*: ‘Great trust is put in birds; let us try the birds.’⁹⁹ The impersonal *magna fides...est* seems to appeal to traditional acceptance of the sign, though Romulus stops short of saying that he has faith in the birds himself (perhaps because he intends to interpret them to his advantage, (p.148) however they present). Earlier in the same book of *Fasti* Ovid, speaking in his own voice of the birth of Jupiter, exhorts the reader:

Iuppiter ortus erat (pro magno teste vetustas
creditor: acceptam parce movere fidem)...

Jupiter was born (antiquity is believed as a good witness; forbear to shake the accepted belief)...¹⁰⁰

Again Ovid uses the passive to indicate that tradition is widely regarded as trustworthy—though the sceptical reader may choose to hear just a hint that Ovid himself has his doubts.

In Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, Gaius Aurelius Cotta represents Academic scepticism; since he is also a priest, however, Cicero portrays him as holding conflicted views about tradition. Cotta can criticize both the Epicurean Gaius Velleius and the Stoic Quintus Lucilius Balbus for accepting tradition (1.61, 1.77, 3.11–13). He can also say that, as a priest, he should, and does, uphold 'the beliefs about the immortal gods which we have received from our ancestors (*opinionones quas a maioribus accepimus de dis immortalis*)' (3.5).¹⁰¹ We shall return below to *On the Nature of the Gods*; for now, it is worth noting that (especially, perhaps, for educated and sophisticated worshippers), tradition may be both foundational for divine–human *fides* and significantly problematic.

Not, however, it seems, always. Plutarch, like Cotta, is both a priest and a Platonist, a worshipper and a very sophisticated thinker. In *Why Pythian Oracles Are No Longer Given in Verse* (402e), he negotiates, and puts in the mouth of one of his characters, a much more positive view of tradition. We should not, he claims, be angry with the god, or deny his power, because he no longer prophesies as he used to; we must try to explain the change without letting go of the *πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις*, the 'pious conviction of our ancestors'.¹⁰² (Apparently some people thought that what they believed to be the change in the oracle's behaviour threw doubt on its long tradition of trustworthiness.)

(p.149) If Plutarch and Cicero's Cotta, and very likely Cicero himself, as an Academic, can all struggle as pious philosophers to reconcile the demands of scepticism with those of tradition, some Sceptics took a much more radical and decisive view. Sextus Empiricus, true to his rationalist credentials, has no tender feeling for tradition at all, and no hesitation in saying so: *μυθικὴ πίστις*, belief in legends such as those about Cronus, he says roundly, is belief in unhistorical fictions, however much credence they gain.¹⁰³ Perhaps the most remarkable thing about a position like Sextus', however, is how rarely it is articulated. More often, even philosophers who experience the most searching doubts about religious tradition work to bring tradition and reason into a positive relationship rather than abandoning either.

Very occasionally a philosopher's *pistis* or *fides* towards the divine appears, at least to a modern reader, to be based on something very like modern fideism: a conviction which deliberately eschews a basis in reason or evidence. Discussing Isis and Osiris, Plutarch observes that the gods should never be made to look too human (that is, irrational or immoral) because this degrades the divine to the level of the human and dissipates the *pistis* and *timē*, reverence, which are planted in nearly all human beings at birth.¹⁰⁴ We might be tempted to read this as a statement that the essence of *pistis* towards the divine is that there is no foundation for it. Plutarch, however, has no such claim in mind. This is another formulation of the philosophical idea to which we saw both Plutarch and Epictetus subscribe above, and which goes back at least to Plato, that *pistis* is one of the divine qualities which human beings, however imperfectly, embody because they are divine creations. We practise *pistis/fides* towards the gods because the gods endow us with their virtues, including *pistis/fides*. Insofar as there is a non-evidence-based (though not non-rational) aspect to this claim, it occurs at a much earlier stage in Plutarch's theological thinking than relations between individuals and the divine, and we shall return to it below.¹⁰⁵

In one or two passages we find *pistis/fides* in accounts of divine–human relations meaning something like 'belief without proper evidence, as opposed to knowledge'. Apollonius of Tyana (*Ep.* 52) lists having knowledge of the gods, as opposed to *pistis*, as one of the benefits of associating with Pythagoreans. He too, however, is indebted to Plato here, and we return below to the relationship between *pistis* and knowledge in Platonism.¹⁰⁶

Lucian's *Lover of Lies* has already been seen to be a rich source of belief language. *Pistis* is consistently propositional in this text, and at different points **(p.150)** in the story different reasons are offered for why its hero, Tychiades, should believe the tall stories he is told. One is testimony, often that of an eyewitness.¹⁰⁷ Another is the authority of wise men.¹⁰⁸ Yet another is the coherence of the world view of the story's participants. Early in their discussions (10), Tychiades expresses scepticism that names of power can cure people of illness or injury. He is told that not believing in names of power is tantamount to not believing in the gods. Since this, in the view of this interlocutor, would be absurd, he must believe in names of power: such belief is part of the coherence of the speaker's world view.

Tychiades is remarkably resistant to believing the stories he hears. His world view does not allow for miraculous cures, moving statues, visions of Hades, necromancy, automotive brooms carrying water, or any other such abnormalities, and only seeing them

with his own eyes, he says (15), would convince him to change his mind. The title of the dialogue, however, raises doubts even about Tychiades' scepticism, which are made explicit at the end. They say, says his friend Philocles darkly, that those who are bitten by mad dogs go mad themselves. Having been 'bitten' by a host of lies at his friend's house, Tychiades, despite himself, has surely gone mad and come to believe in what he heard. Worse, he has passed the madness on to Philocles. Tychiades responds robustly that they can rely on the antidote of truth to preserve them, but Lucian leaves the reader wondering whether he is protesting too much.¹⁰⁹

Many literary stories express concern about the reliability of beliefs, however founded. Stories of people who are tricked into false beliefs about the gods are something of a literary topos. Several authors report, for instance, that after Romulus was killed, certain individuals testified to having seen him, dressed as a god; ordinary Romans believed them and therefore believed—as they were intended to—that Romulus had been not murdered but deified.¹¹⁰ There are stories about disingenuous generals telling their troops that Castor and Pollux, or other gods, are helping them, to encourage them before battle, and the encouragement working, evidently because it was believed.¹¹¹ Occasionally the **(p.151)** story works the opposite way: Valerius Maximus, as we saw in the previous chapter, tells two stories of generals who overcame fear in their armies by explaining scientifically an eclipse, which their soldiers had believed was a sign from the gods.¹¹² But the prevalence of false beliefs, and the ease with which especially those who are in a position of trust for some other reason, such as army commanders and political leaders, can create them in their followers, is a persistent concern in sources of this period.

In the last section we saw that propositional belief in the divine is often treated as more problematic than divine–human relationships of trust, not least, it seems, because its foundations are perceived as insecure. In this section we have encountered further possible foundations for *pistis/fides* (some of them closely related to foundations for intra-human *pistis/fides*), all of which also seem less than wholly secure. A pattern of divine–human *pistis/fides* emerges from these and previous sections which is no less powerful for being in some ways paradoxical. The trustworthiness of the gods is strongly affirmed. The possibility, appropriateness, and productivity of human relationships of *pistis/fides* towards the gods are strongly affirmed. Belief in the gods and in certain things about the gods is largely taken for granted. But our sources are profoundly, pervasively unsure of their grounds for *pistis/fides*. No basis for trust or belief is beyond doubt. Many are seen as alarmingly manipulable. Though people are recognized as more likely to ground *pistis/fides*, for instance, in personal experience than oral report, in family than foreigners, the cumulative impression of the passages we have discussed is that nothing is so challenging to divine–human *pistis/fides* than asking why someone practises it.

Divine–Human *Pistis/fides* and Philosophy

It is sometimes argued that the evolution of Christian *pistis/fides* owes much to Greek philosophy. There are, however, reasons to doubt the strength of the connection, at least in the New Testament. As we shall see, *pistis* language is predominantly used in the New Testament of interpersonal relationships and community formation. Rhetorical, legal, and even administrative meanings play a part, but there are few if any passages where 'high' philosophical ideas can plausibly be seen as forming even part of the background to New Testament *pistis* language. The philosophical tradition in which *pistis* is most discussed, moreover, is Platonism, and Platonist ideas are not among those most readily detected in New Testament texts.¹¹³

(p.152) Platonist writings of this period discuss *pistis* in both secular and religious contexts, so this section could have been lodged in either of the previous two chapters as well as here. The significant developments in Middle Platonists' treatment of *pistis*, however, occur in connection with divine–human relations, so it is most appropriate to discuss them at this point.¹¹⁴ To make these developments clearer, it is worth describing briefly the way *pistis* is used by earlier philosophers.

In a forthcoming essay on *pistis* and Platonism, Mark Edwards shows how, before Plato, *pistis* is almost always used by philosophers and scientists of trust or confidence based on evidence or reason, or of 'evidence' or 'proof' itself.¹¹⁵ *Pisteuein* is used similarly of reason-based or evidence-based believing.¹¹⁶ Plato, with his radical mistrust of the senses and the sensory world, uses *pistis* and *pisteuein* specifically of trust/belief in sensory perceptions. This kind of *pistis* involves at best assent to physical phenomena, which may point to reality but are not themselves real, at worst self-delusion.¹¹⁷ (It is worth noting, however, that although *pistis* is a state inferior to knowledge, it is not, for Plato, an intrinsically counter-rational activity. Its problem is not the process by which it draws conclusions, which may be fully rational, but the data it uses to do so, which are of poor quality because they come from the physical world, along with the decision to use such data, which shows that one has not grasped the illusory nature of this world. Only the metaphysical realm can provide data from which one can draw firm conclusions about reality.) At the same time, Edwards observes, Plato uses *pistos* in a wholly conventional way of faithfulness, trustworthiness, and loyalty in interpersonal relations.

Our principal sources for the 'Middle' Platonism of the early principate are Philo and Plutarch.¹¹⁸ Philo uses *pistis* frequently with the

everyday meanings ‘evidence’ or ‘proof’;¹¹⁹ evidence or proof often comes from scripture, which Philo assumes to be infallible.¹²⁰ Philo also uses *pistis* to refer to trust in God, God’s self-disclosure to his people, or God’s promises.¹²¹ At this point he takes a turn away from Plato and his predecessors. Rather than treating *pistis* as the state at which we arrive by reasoning from (reliable or unreliable) data, Philo treats *pistis* towards God as a key development in the relationship of a **(p.153)** righteous person with God. It is within a relationship of trust in God that we learn what the truth is.¹²²

In *Who is the Heir* (90–4), Philo tells us that the words ‘Abraham put his trust in God’ (Gen. 15.6) are written to express the praise due to one who has trusted God. But, he adds, is there anything praiseworthy about *pistis*? Surely even an unjust or impious man would listen to God. On the contrary, he asserts (92), most human beings find trust in God difficult, because we are fallible creatures who are constantly tempted to put our trust in contingent things like wealth, reputation, power, friends, health, and strength. To distrust all such trivia and put our trust only in God, who alone is worthy of trust, takes exceptional understanding (93), and should therefore be credited to the trusting one as *dikaiosynē* (94). Philo goes on to point out that Abraham’s trust here rests partly on the fact, of which God reminds him (Gen. 15.7), that God has already brought him out of the land of the Chaldeans to the land which he will inherit (96).

In *On the Migration of Abraham* (43–4), Philo sees Abraham’s trust at Genesis 12.1¹²³ as elicited not by what God has already done but by hope based on what God promises to do (43):

...ἀρτηθεῖσα γὰρ καὶ ἐκκρεμασθεῖσα ἐλπίδος χρηστῆς καὶ ἀνενδοίαστα νομίσασα ἤδη παρεῖναι τὰ μὴ παρόντα διὰ τὴν τοῦ ὑποσχομένου βεβαιότητα πίστιν, ἀγαθὸν τέλειον, ἄθλον εὐρηται...

...for [the soul], hanging and depending on a good hope, and thinking that things which are not present are undoubtedly already present, because of the steadfastness of the one who promised them, has gained *pistis*, a perfect good, as its prize...

When a little later we read that ‘Abraham trusted God’, we know that he is exercising the gift he gained through his earlier trust and hope in the one who is wholly reliable.

These passages might at first sight seem to support an understanding of divine–human *pistis* as radically different from intra-human *pistis*, in which *pistis* is what we might call a ‘leap of faith’, based on neither experience nor reason, into a relationship with an unknown and unknowable divinity. On closer inspection, however, the distinctiveness of divine–human *pistis* in these passages is much less radical than we might suppose. In the first passage Philo **(p.154)** makes the foundational assumption, partly as a Platonist and partly on the basis of Jewish scripture, that God is trustworthy. If one holds that conviction, it is only rational to put one’s trust in God. What stops people doing so, for Philo, is not the gulf between humanity and divinity or human beings’ lack of knowledge of God, but their moral frailty, which leads them to prefer to trust various untrustworthy human phenomena. They can, however, purge themselves of this frailty and reach up to the divine through their (originally divinely implanted) understanding.

In the second passage the trustworthiness of God, which Philo again takes for granted, means that human beings can place their hope in God for the future as well as the present and past; if they do this, they will be rewarded with *pistis*. We might have expected Philo to say that God’s trustworthiness enables people to put their trust, rather than hope, in him in the first place, but if anything Philo seems to want to avoid the suggestion here that *pistis* is foundational on the human side of the divine–human relationship. Even Abraham’s relationship with God, he tells us, began with a revelation—God’s speaking to him (Gen. 12.1)—rather than with Abraham’s *pistis*.

In both these passages Philo’s one ‘leap of faith’, in anything like the fideistic sense in which the phrase might be used nowadays, is one he shares with most ancient philosophers and, to judge from the evidence we have seen in this and earlier chapters, with most people who put their trust in the gods in this period: he assumes that the God whose existence he takes for granted is both interested in human beings and trustworthy. That being so, for a human being to put his or her trust in God is not very different from putting one’s trust in another person, except that it should, if anything, be less risky. (It may be to minimize any suggestion of risk that Philo avoids describing Abraham’s first move in relation to God as *pistis*.) Even if it carries an element of risk, from the human point of view, trust in an interested divine being is likely to be a risk worth taking. Risks of *pistis/fides*, as we have seen, are forward-looking and hopeful, and all, if they turn out well, are productive of new or strengthened relationships and new eventualities. In these respects, Abraham’s relationship of *pistis* with God parallels an intra-human relationship closely. It is certainly not a deliberately non-rational leap into the unknown and unknowable, a cognitive-affective move unparalleled in the human sphere.¹²⁴

As if to emphasize the reliable nature of the experience of the divine on which Abraham (and also Moses) bases his trust in God, Philo

goes on in *The Migration of Abraham* to say that the words of God, when they come to the patriarchs, are not only heard but seen by the eye of the soul (47–9). This image (which also goes back to Plato) appeals to sight as what is recognized **(p.155)** across the Graeco-Roman world as the most reliable and ungainsayable of all bases for trust and belief.

Plutarch, as has been seen, deploys *pistis* language plentifully throughout his works in a wide range of interpersonal and cognitive meanings. He uses it of the trustworthiness of the gods and (dis)belief in the gods, belief in the afterlife, the believability of legends and divination,¹²⁵ commercial trust and credit, oaths,¹²⁶ the trustworthiness of those who hold public office and of advocates to their clients,¹²⁷ and in connection with the making of truces.¹²⁸ Unexpectedly, perhaps, in his most explicitly Platonist works, such as the *Platonic Questions* and essays on the *Timaeus* and against the Stoics and Epicureans, Plutarch uses *pistis* language rather little,¹²⁹ and not usually in any distinctively Platonic sense.¹³⁰ When he does use *pistis* language in what looks like a Platonic sense, it is nearly always, following Plato himself, of beliefs in perceptible things as opposed to knowledge.¹³¹

We have seen that in *On the Delays of Divine Vengeance* (550d) Plutarch quotes Plato as saying that the divine is a paradigm of every virtue, and that human beings in some sense become assimilated to the divine by ‘following the god’.¹³² His ‘statement of faith’ here is that the divine exists and is good; once that is allowed, then putting one’s trust in it, for Plutarch as for Philo, is rational and hardly risky. In *Amatorius*, in a more conventionally pious mood, Plutarch makes one of his characters say that we should not need proofs to fortify our opinions about the gods. The ancient traditional *pistis* is enough (ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις): indeed, it is the common foundation of all piety.¹³³ Here again, *pistis* is far from a radical act of trust/belief in the unknowable; it is part of an ongoing relationship with gods who are seen as having a long and proven relationship with people.

On Superstition deals occasionally with *apistia* rather than *pistis*, but Plutarch’s argument is, implicitly, once again that once the existence of the gods is granted, *pistis* is a rational response to them. Much of the essay concerns the irrationality of the superstitious, who think, among other things, that the **(p.156)** gods are capricious, untrustworthy (*apistoî*), fickle, vengeful, cruel, and easily provoked (170e). Plutarch introduces his theme (165b) at the start of the work by saying that atheism, the judgement that nothing blessed or incorruptible exists, leads to lack of trust (*apistia*) in the divine, and thence to indifference and the absence of all fear. The ignorance which constitutes disbelief is, for Plutarch, a distressing condition, as if the soul had lost the use of the eye with which it perceives the divine (167a–b). (Like Philo, Plutarch repeatedly emphasizes the experiential and ungainsayable aspect of perception of the divine using the imagery of seeing.) Superstition, in contrast, is the mistaken conviction that the gods exist but cause grief and injury. As for Philo, relationships with the gods do not, for Plutarch, begin with *pistis*. *Pistis* is an appropriate response to the understanding, based on tradition, experience, or one’s recognition of oneself as a divine creation, that the divine exists, is benignly disposed towards human beings, and is therefore trustworthy, while *apistia* is the internally rational but mistaken response to the mistaken view that the gods either do not exist or are not benignly disposed towards human beings.¹³⁴

Middle Platonism is sometimes seen as taking a turn towards the fideistic, one perhaps shared by early Christians. The evidence, however, as we have seen, is weak. The one ‘leap of faith’ which Philo and Plutarch take is one they share with everyone who believes in the existence of trustworthy gods.¹³⁵ Granted a trustworthy divinity who is interested in human beings, human *pistis* is rational, minimally risky, and has a good hope of forging new or evolving divine–human relationships. Plutarch adds to his Platonism a pious acceptance of tradition, Philo a pious acceptance of the truth of scripture, but these too are widely paralleled within, if not beyond, their traditions; they certainly do not constitute new leaps of faith.

So far in this chapter we have encountered a number of understandings of *pistis/fides* and possible foundations of *pistis/fides* which parallel understandings of *pistis/fides* in intra-human relations. It is time to tackle systematically a question which was raised in the Introduction and so far has been sidestepped: whether divine–human *pistis/fides* is generally analogous to intra-human *pistis/fides*, or whether there are, in some respects, significant differences.

(p.157) Divine–Human and Intra-human Pistis/fides

In the last two chapters we saw that *pistis/fides* between human beings is widely understood as socially foundational. Hopeful and risk-taking, forward-looking and productive, pragmatically peaceful, it helps to create human relationships and communities *ab initio*. In conjunction with justice in particular, *pistis/fides* creates not only relationships, but order; not only community, but social structures. Without it, it is hard to imagine relationships or communities developing at all, and when it fails, communities and societies are described as soon following suit.

Divine–human *pistis/fides* is also socially foundational in the sense that divine sponsorship of intra-human trust is as important as human risk-taking for the creation of communities. According to those influenced by Plato or the Stoics, divine–human *pistis/fides* is

more basic still. It is a gift from a divinity by nature *pistos/fidus* to human beings at the moment of creation, which gives them the capacity for *pistis/fides* which they may then choose to use. Thanks to this gift, human beings have the capacity not only to form ordered intra-human relationships, but also to live in that harmony with divine order which characterizes a life of virtue.

Does the pre-social endowment of human beings with *pistis/fides* by the divine make divine-human *pistis/fides* fundamentally different from intra-human? One might argue that the fact that all our sources seem to take for granted that human beings can make relationships of *pistis/fides ab initio* suggests that trust and trustworthiness are generally understood as humanly innate, pre-social qualities, whether or not an author expresses the view that *pistis/fides* has a divine origin. If so, then the likelihood of human beings' making trusting relationships with one another should be understood by our sources as strong, and the riskiness of doing so weak (in principle, though in individual cases the risk may still be strongly felt), in the same way as it is when one is dealing with a trustworthy divinity.¹³⁶ Since no author of this period discusses this question explicitly, however, the argument remains speculative.

In addition to helping to create relationships and communities, intra-human *pistis/fides* also operates in tandem with other relationships and social structures. In these contexts *pistis/fides* is, at least in part, inflected by the roles and relative positions of those who practise it. The faithfulness of a slave to a master is different, in some ways, from that of the master to the slave; the good faith of a judge is different from that of a vegetable-seller. At the same time, *pistis/fides* transcends roles and positions, inflects them, and sometimes subverts or transforms them. In order to trust one another to fulfil their roles, the (p.158) slave and his master must each, on some level, trust the other to be trustworthy. In some ways, the good faith of the judge and that of the vegetable-seller are the same, because both defer to the law and undertake to observe the law faithfully. (Even if the vegetable-seller comes up before the judge, their *pistis/fides* has something in common, assuming that both accept the power of the law to define and enforce good faith.) As we have seen, within social relationships the *pistis/fides* which is most interesting to our sources is often that which takes place at moments of crisis, change, or decision-making, when a slave may have the chance to save his master's reputation, or a wife may have the chance to preserve her husband's property.

We have seen the *pistis* or *fides* of gods towards human beings and vice versa repeatedly acting within the structure of their relationship. The gods give human beings the capacity to trust; Fides guarantees oaths and contracts; human beings trust the gods to help them and worship them faithfully. Can divine-human *pistis/fides* also transcend or reconfigure the relationship between gods and human beings? Evidence for this interesting possibility is elusive. One might argue that, just as masters and slaves must trust each other to be trustworthy, so must gods and human beings, and to that extent the structural inequality of the relationship is inevitably superseded. It has been suggested that the piety of the Romans, in particular, is sometimes represented as so great as almost to compel the gods to support them.¹³⁷ One might take the view that part of the logic of sacrifice and religious rituals is to persuade or even pressurize the gods into doing what the worshipper hopes for.

In the course of discussing the significance of dreams about sacrifice, Artemidorus observes that if one dreams of gods sacrificing to other gods one's house is going to be deserted, because 'gods only sacrifice to one another when they feel no human beings are present' (2.33). The phenomenon of gods sacrificing to one another is most familiar from late antique and early classical Greek vases, and an important recent interpretation suggests that these do not represent sacrifices that gods are imagined as actually making, but rather the idea that human religious rituals are inspired and instigated by the gods.¹³⁸ This view offers an appealing parallel with the idea that *pistis/fides* originates with the gods, who endow human beings with it, but we may also note that whatever Greek vase-painters understood by their images, Artemidorus thinks (p.159) that gods actually sacrifice to one another and, moreover, that they do so only when no sacrifices are available from human beings. This indicates that the gods not only enjoy sacrifices but need them (not an unfamiliar idea elsewhere in Graeco-Roman culture¹³⁹); if so, then human beings surely have a degree of leverage in the relationship.

These examples hint at the possibility that *pistis/fides* transcends in some respects the structural inequality of the divine-human relationship, even that it occasionally reconfigures it. Perhaps even more significant than this possibility, though, is the near-unanimity with which our sources avoid exploring it. Relationships between slaves and masters or wives and husbands may be reciprocal, and may even, at moments of crisis, be shown as inverted, without society's falling apart, but the gods, it seems, cannot be portrayed as relying on the trustworthiness of human beings. Even when they withdraw from the earth in response to failures of human *pistis/fides*, they are never said to do so other than voluntarily.

If divine-human *pistis/fides* is not explicitly inverted in times of crisis or decision-making, however, it does share with intra-human *pistis/fides* that it is often most visible at such times. As in intra-human relations, the kind of routine, everyday *pistis/fides* which is presumptively part of all successful interactions is of little interest to our sources. Human *pistis/fides* towards the gods, in particular,

which often invokes divine *pistis/fides* towards the worshipper, is never more emphasized than when people are embarking on war, threatened with annihilation by their enemies, sick and hoping for healing, or looking for guidance in their private or public lives.

This pattern points to another parallel between divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides*: it straddles the domestic and public spheres. The goddess Fides is especially associated with public good faith (above all, in contracts and inter-state relations), and the imagery which accompanies her on coins (such as clasped hands, wheat ears, caducei, and military standards) is also that of public, military, judicial, and economic activities. When Fides is called *alma*, however, or when Artemidorus encourages us to trust what gods tell us about our lives in dreams, *pistis/fides* has more domestic associations, while certain gods, like the Lar who in Ovid's *Fasti* is described as *fidus* to the master of the house, by their nature practise *pistis/fides* in domestic contexts.¹⁴⁰

There are, then, extensive analogies between the roles played by divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* in the establishment, maintenance, development, and inversion of social relationships and structures. It is also noteworthy that human beings seem to be able to believe similar things **about (p.160)** the gods to those which they believe about one another (though what the gods believe about human beings remains opaque). We have seen characters and authors express or imply the belief that the gods, like human beings (ideally), are trustworthy, can help them, and are disposed to help them.¹⁴¹ If there is a difference between what the sources believe about the gods and about one another, it is that they sometimes see the gods as more trustworthy than people.¹⁴²

Do divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* rest on the same foundations? Do people trust or believe in the gods on the same terms as those on which they trust or believe in one another? Often, it seems, they do.

In one important respect we might expect to find no analogy between divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides*. At least a few people in antiquity seem to have been able to believe that the gods do not exist, and human beings do not need to be concerned with them. To deny the existence of human beings, in contrast, is surely a practical impossibility. Even a Platonist, holding that the world of ideas is the true reality, must deal with people every day, if only to satisfy her basic needs. As far as we can tell, no one in antiquity did deny the existence of people. In practice, however, it proves harder to separate this kind of belief in the divine or the human than one might expect. In *On the Nature of the Gods*, for instance, Cicero and his Epicurean and Stoic speakers, Velleius and Balbus, all say that even philosophers almost all assume that the gods do exist (1.2, 1.43, 2.5). Philodemus, in *On Piety* (22–3), says that even though no one has found a convincing demonstration (*apodeixis*) of the existence of the divine, only the mad do not worship the gods (and assume, a fortiori, that they exist). In practice, virtually everyone behaves in practice as if the gods exist.¹⁴³

(p.161) One might take the view that even if this kind of belief in gods and people is superficially analogous, at a deeper level it is not: we may believe in people because we cannot avoid dealing with them every day, but the same is not quite true of the gods. There are hints, however, that this analogy is not quite the right one. In some discourses, believing in the gods is compared with believing not in the existence or qualities of our neighbours but in those of strange peoples living at the far edges of the world, or in the wildlife or natural phenomena of distant lands.

Lucian makes the parallel explicit across several essays. In *The Descent into Hades* Menippus claims to have visited Hades and to be able to report what it is like. In *Icaromenippus* he claims to have travelled up to heaven and visited Zeus, discovering that what the poets said about him was right and the philosophers wrong. In *A True Story* the narrator claims to have made a voyage west from the Pillars of Heracles, and to be able to report on the nature of that fabled region. Lucian's technique is parallel in each case:¹⁴⁴ the story's narrator challenges his interlocutor to believe wildly counter-intuitive reports of faraway places and beings for which he claims the powerful evidence of autopsy.

Lucian is playing with a long Greek tradition of reports from strange places, and the excitement and doubt they raise in listeners' minds.¹⁴⁵ It is always tempting to believe such stories; at the same time, because what they report is often outside our everyday experience, we doubt; and since we have not visited the places ourselves, we are uncomfortably aware that neither belief nor doubt is securely based. Lucian exploits these paradoxes without aiming to resolve them, but what is notable for our purposes is that he can play the same game with stories about the gods and about faraway places and peoples. Belief and doubt in this connection, it seems, rest on analogous foundations.

By a nice coincidence, Tacitus, in the *Germania* (34.3), reports a series of allegedly historical assaults on the western ocean by the Romans. They tried to explore it but were repeatedly forced to turn back, until they concluded that it was 'more pious and reverent to believe in the works of the gods than to know them (*sanctiusque ac reverentius visum de actis deorum credere quam scire*)'. The Romans' conclusion, as Tacitus articulates it, comprehends two levels of belief: the Romans were exploring both the edges of the

natural world and the works of the gods, and they could take failure as a sign that it was enough for them to believe reports about both.

These examples take us into the related but distinct realms of paradoxography and tradition, both of which deserve a little further exploration. Debate (**p.162**) rages across the ancient world as to whether and when one should believe in *paradoxa*, stories of unlikely wonders, often from distant parts of the earth. It is common for authors to condemn them in general while presenting certain examples as trustworthy, or to condemn other people's while commending their own, on the face of it equally bizarre, stories. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, a keen retailer of strange stories of the gods, tells readers disapprovingly (2.68.1–3) that the most paradoxical divine manifestations have been believed (*pepisteutai*) by the Roman people, precisely because they were implausible, while a character in Lucian's *Hermostimus* observes ironically that people are always liable to believe (*pisteuein*) in monsters, simply because they are monsters and intrinsically unbelievable (72).) Paradoxography as a genre creates steep challenges for *pistis* and *fides*; at the same time, it flourishes, and not the least notable thing about it is that it presents all kinds of mythical, historical, and geographical wonders as credible (or incredible) on the same terms. When, for instance, Phlegon of Tralles (29–31) reports in short order that one Alexandrian woman gave birth to twenty children in four deliveries, another had five children at one time and three the following year, Aegyptus had fifty sons with his wife, a daughter of the Nile, and Danaus fifty daughters with another daughter of the Nile, nothing suggests that he thinks that believing in wonderful human and mythical births is anything but a parallel exercise.¹⁴⁶

The content of tradition is (often, though not always) a little less fantastical than that of paradoxography but, as we saw in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, it can be almost equally problematic as a basis for belief in matters human or divine. Tradition, especially as it is transmitted in poetry, antiquities, histories, and other literary genres, is both inestimably culturally important throughout Graeco-Roman antiquity, and a site of multiple ongoing battles about its trustworthiness.

Some of the techniques which authors of this period use to tackle the challenges of tradition are equally applicable to traditions about the mortal and the divine. Heraclitus the Paradoxographer, whose *On Incredible Things* (*Peri apistōn*) is headed, 'the analysis and cure of traditional myths which are against nature', and is, paradoxically, not so much a celebration of the weird and wonderful as a rather austere exercise in rationalization, applies four techniques of analysis, indebted to Alexandrian and Stoic scholarship, to a range of stories about gods and human beings of the distant past.¹⁴⁷ At its simplest, rationalization explains mythical stories in human terms (Medusa, (**p.163**) for instance (1), was really a beautiful prostitute who so affected those who fell in love with her that they were as if 'turned to stone'). Euhemerism makes stories of heroes more plausible by explaining rationally their stranger elements (Atlas (4) is said to 'carry heaven on his shoulders' because he was a pioneering astronomer). Allegory explains apparently implausible stories by finding alternative meanings in them (Homer's portrait of the Cyclops (11) symbolizes people who are primitive and uncivilized). Etymology uses the science of grammar to offer explanations of the meanings of words or grammatical constructions which, again, are not always obvious on first reading (Spartans are so called (19) not, as often said, because they sprang from 'scattered' (*speiromenoi*) dragon's teeth but because they were scattered before being gathered together by their founder Cadmus).

In *How the Young Man Should Listen to Poems*, Plutarch uses similar strategies, alongside others, to enable his addressee to understand rationally and morally what the poets—above all, Homer and the tragedians—say about both gods and human beings. (Other techniques Plutarch recommends for the interpreting of poems in this essay include bringing one's own moral judgement to bear on them (18b), looking for clues from the author as to how to take a particular character's speech or action,¹⁴⁸ interpreting one passage in the light of another (27a) or in light of another text (29d), and a number of highly ingenious technical grammatical dodges.¹⁴⁹) Traditions about both the divine and mortal spheres, Heraclitus and Plutarch convey, can and must be saved, but many of them require elucidation before they can be used as a guide to either intra-human or divine–human relationships.

The importance for Plutarch of interpreting the poets and other transmitters of tradition appropriately is powerfully attested in *On Superstition*, where he describes at length the pitiful condition in which the superstitious man, lacking appropriate *pistis* towards the gods, drags out his life:

The man who is afraid of the gods is afraid of everything: the earth, the sea, the air, the heavens, darkness, light, noise, silence, dreams...the man who fears the rule of the gods as a harsh and inexorable tyranny, where can he go, where can he run to, what land or what sea can he find without gods? In what hiding place in the universe can you secrete yourself, wretched man, trusting (*pistuseis*) that you have evaded god? (*Mor.* 165e, 166d)

(p.164) Superstition, Plutarch concludes, ruins every aspect of life (even ritual activities, which become the religious equivalent of

the flatteries one offers to a tyrant: disproportionate, obsequious, and insincere (170e)). The essay is larded with literary references and quotations, and it is evident that one of the prime sources of superstitious mistrust of the gods, in Plutarch's view, is Homer and other poets, when they tell stories about the underworld or the horrible things which gods sometimes do to human beings.

Occasionally there are indications that traditions about the gods need not always be subjected to quite such scrutiny as those about human beings. I know of no parallel in traditions about human beings to the advice of Plutarch or Cicero's Cotta that one should simply trust ancient traditions about the gods.¹⁵⁰ Nor do the assertions of Dionysius, Livy, and Cassius Dio, that tradition becomes a reliable basis for history only at the point when one has clear and multiple sources for it, have parallels in discussions about the bases of opinions about the gods.¹⁵¹ In some contexts, it seems, the bar for believing in or believing things about the gods seems to be somewhat lower than that for believing in or believing things about human beings.

We have seen that personal experience, especially the evidence of the senses, is widely regarded as a relatively sound foundation for *pistis* or *fides* in both intra-human and divine-human relations. We also saw Dionysius of Halicarnassus illustrate the perceived problem that the mind, conditioned by past sensory impressions, sometimes cannot believe a new, true impression which does not fit with its experience.¹⁵² Epicureans, including Cicero's Velleius, discuss the same problem in relation to the gods. According to Epicurus' *Letter to Menoecus*, 'The knowledge of [the gods] is self-evident to the intellect', through the power which Epicurus calls *prolēpsis*.¹⁵³ But we are also subject to false impressions (for instance, when we see the gods as tall and beautiful in dreams), which may develop into mistaken beliefs and even traditions about the gods, and stop us seeing what by nature we are able to see about the gods. As Dominic Scott observes in his discussion of this problem, it is not obvious why we mistake false impressions for true ones in the first place, or, having done so, how we identify which of our impressions are false, but for our purposes it is enough to note that here again, ways of thinking about how we (p.165) trust or believe in things divine or human often run in parallel.¹⁵⁴ In one respect, though, they do not. We have seen that people sometimes do not believe their eyes when faced with something unexpected belonging to the human sphere. Authors, dedicators of inscriptions, and characters in literary sources, in contrast, rarely refuse to believe their eyes when faced with something supernatural.¹⁵⁵ Even Lucian's ultra-sceptical Tychiades claims that he would believe all the wonders he hears about if he saw them himself. The bar for believing what one's senses report about the divine, like that for traditions about the divine, seems sometimes to be rather lower than that for *pistis* or *fides* in the human sphere.

Consequentialism operates constantly in intra-human relations, and is taken so much for granted that it is rarely marked.¹⁵⁶ One person or group takes a chance on another by making friends or an alliance, or doing business; if the relationship works out, then all sides assume that their *pistis/fides* was justified; if it does not, that it was not. In divine-human relations consequentialism is more controversial; at the same time, it sometimes seems to be even easier to accept than it is in the human sphere. In Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, Balbus (2.7) claims that we can believe in divination because premonitions of the future have often (though admittedly not always) been proved right. This is not, on the face of it, a very demanding standard of proof, and the Academic Cotta has fun with it (3.14), pointing out that there is no compelling reason to think the croaking of a raven or a misshapen liver has the slightest connection with anything that happens after one sees it. (Since Cotta himself is a priest, we may incidentally feel that his scepticism is somewhat undermined by his own religious behaviour.) In his letter on ghosts, as we have seen, Pliny is disposed to believe in ghosts on, if possible, even weaker grounds. Two men dream of having their hair cut and find the next morning that their hair has indeed been cut, and—perhaps as a result, says Pliny—*nothing happened*. Only a strong commitment to consequentialism as a ground for belief in the divine can explain this, on the face of it, extraordinary argument.

No work of this, or arguably any, period of antiquity tells us more about what the philosophically educated might have understood as the foundations of beliefs about the gods and relationships with them, including relationships of *pistis/fides*, than Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*. We cannot do justice to its complexity here, but some of its observations and arguments about the foundations of belief in the gods are illuminating for our purposes.

(p.166) Cicero introduces the work *in propria persona*, stating that the study of the nature of the gods is both intrinsically interesting and essential for the regulation of religion (1.1). A few philosophers have denied the existence of the gods, but 'most philosophers say the gods exist (which is most likely to be true, and what we all think under nature's guidance)' (1.2). What is vigorously disputed among them is whether the gods are 'inactive, uninvolved in caring for or governing the world, or whether, on the contrary, everything was made and ordered by them from the beginning and is ruled and moved by them throughout eternity' (1.3).¹⁵⁷ Cicero does not agree with those who think the gods have nothing to do with people. 'If the gods are neither able nor willing to help us, nor do they look after us in any way, nor take notice of what we do, nor is it possible that anything comes from them into human life, what makes us give any cult, honours, or prayers to the immortal gods?' (1.3). 'Piety,' he continues, 'like the rest of the virtues, cannot exist just as a pretence, and if piety goes, so do holiness and observance', and after them, *fides*, *iustitia*, and human society as

a whole (1.3).

I have quoted much of this passage, despite the fact that *fides* appears only once near the end, because it shows so clearly the foundational and coherentist nature of belief in the existence of the gods, and their nature and relationship with human beings, which underlies the arguments not only of Cicero himself but of all three characters in the dialogue (and, we may suspect, of most Greeks and Romans).¹⁵⁸ Almost everyone, Cicero affirms, thinks the gods exist, despite the fact that the enquiry is *perdifficilis... perobscura*, ‘extraordinarily difficult...and obscure’ (1.1). This suggests either that Greeks and Romans are deliberately perverse, choosing to believe what is hardest to prove, or that the gods are so integral to their understanding of the world and relationship with it that not to believe in them would be practically unthinkable—a giant leap outside their mental set. If we assume the second, Greeks’ and Romans’ belief in the gods is, in the terms we discussed in the Introduction, foundational or basic: it just is something that they believe.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, says Cicero, nature leads us to think the gods exist. He does not explain how, but he is probably referring to the point which both Velleius and Balbus will make (1.19, 2.6), that people claim direct experience of the (p.167) divine,¹⁶⁰ and/or the point that Balbus will make in several passages, that we perceive nature as having perfection, pattern, and meaning which we can only understand with reference to the divine.¹⁶¹ The first is another foundational claim: we trust our experience because nothing seems to most of us more basic, real, and trustworthy. The second is both foundational and coherentist. Many people simply do perceive the world as orderly, regular, and predictable: it is a basic experience. And by understanding the world as orderly, we find that we can make assumptions about it and operate in it, so our experience of living in it is that in general it makes sense.

Cotta will object, fairly, to the assumption that the regularity of nature indicates the existence of the gods, pointing out that it could be self-generated (3.16–24). It is notable, though, and most interesting for our purposes, that no speaker offers a rational way of choosing between these positions. They are both foundational: either one accepts them or one does not.

To his adumbration of these arguments Cicero adds another coherentist claim. The gods must be able and willing to help us, because if they are not, our piety is hollow and pointless, and if we abandon piety, justice, good faith, and society itself cannot stand. This is no cynical functionalist statement that religion shores up society. It attests, rather, Cicero’s sense that his society’s understanding of the gods and of itself are so intertwined that if it abandoned one it would lose both, and that is more than society or he is prepared to contemplate. When we think about the nature of the gods, the coherence of our whole world, divine, human, and social, is at stake. We can push the point a little further and hear Cicero as saying that there are certain qualities of the gods, such as being interested in people, which cannot effectively be discussed, because to deny them would be to deny such a large part of what we mean by the divine that we would no longer be talking about the gods as we currently understand them. A little later (1.30) Cicero gives a similar argument to Velleius, when he says that Plato must be wrong that the divine is incorporeal, because an incorporeal deity would not be able to feel or be wise or experience pleasure, and ‘we understand all these as being one with our notion of the gods (*quae omnia una cum deorum notione comprehendimus*)’. There are things (p.168) about the gods that one cannot not think and remain within the mental set of one’s society.

Later in his introduction (1.10), Cicero says that what is needed in discussions about the gods is reasoned argument (rather than the pronouncements of authority). At the same time, as an Academic, he does not think himself that argument will solve anything, because nothing in this world is beyond dispute (1.10–12, 14).¹⁶² Everything is subject to multiple opinions and so is inevitably open to doubt, and this is equally true of things divine and human. Others, notably Stoics and Epicureans, think otherwise, but what Cicero shows in the course of the dialogue is that nobody’s arguments solve their questions about the nature of the gods. Everyone’s position is, ultimately, a series of foundational and coherentist claims. Moreover, the position of the Epicurean, the only speaker who claims that the gods are not interested in human beings, is, by his own admission, not sustainable in everyday life.¹⁶³ Everyone (unless perhaps the thoroughgoing atheist, whom Cicero does not discuss) behaves in practice, if they do not always speak, as if the gods both exist and direct and govern the world. This assumption, as Velleius affirms and Balbus agrees (1.43–4, 3.5), is shared by all human beings, educated and uneducated alike, and carries more weight than any authority, custom, or law.¹⁶⁴

Though they are not always linked with *fides* language, the arguments of all the speakers in *On the Nature of the Gods* are illuminating for our project because they show the power of foundational and coherentist claims about the universe, divine and human, and how even philosophers ultimately rely on them to describe their understanding of the gods and relationship with them. This is not only interesting in its own right (and we shall return to it in the context of conversion to Christianity); it also illustrates another respect in which divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* are analogous. Our belief that the material world, and other people, exist is also foundational. It depends on sense impressions and other experiences which we simply and ungainsayably feel are

real (and even when individual experiences let us down, still we feel that experience in general is reliable). Our conviction that we understand the world around us, natural or social, that we can make predictions about it **(p.169)** and operate in it with a degree of confidence, is coherentist. We trust and believe in one another, for instance, because intuition and experience tell us that trust works in a world where it supports and is supported by other relationships and social structures. Cicero has relatively little to say about the nature of humanity in *On the Nature of the Gods*, but his and his speakers' arguments testify to the parallels between the way Greeks and Romans think about divine–human relations, including relations of *pistis/fides*, and relations between human beings.

It is often observed that we rarely find thoroughgoing atheism expressed in the classical world. If anything, thorough mistrust of the gods or of the bases of divine–human *pistis/fides* is even rarer. Even a sceptic like Cicero's Cotta affirms that he behaves, ritually, as one who trusts the gods; even Lucian's sceptic Tychides is willing to believe that there may, in principle, be sound bases for believing and trusting in the gods. Dio Chrysostom confirms that the human tendency to trust the gods is so strong that people even trust the axiomatically untrustworthy Tyche. Poets occasionally refer to *Pistis/Fides* as abandoning human beings in times of civil war and the breakdown of society, but such occasions are always described as happening in the past, with the implication that normality has since been restored. Like the golden age whose dystopian counterparts they are, ages of comprehensively failed trust cannot exist in the present: they are equally beyond experience and imagination. Whatever doubts or fears are expressed about divine–human *pistis/fides*, Greeks and Romans are in practice extraordinarily reluctant to step outside their assumption that the gods are trustworthy.

In the previous two chapters we several times found intra-human trust being deferred to trust in the gods. It is human beings' shared *pistis/fides* towards the gods that allows them to take oaths, make contracts and peace treaties, and establish laws and enforce them.¹⁶⁵ *Pistis/fides* between human beings and gods, in contrast, as we noted earlier in this chapter, has in principle no higher authority to which to defer.¹⁶⁶ This, on the face of it, is a significant difference between divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides*.

In one respect, however, *pistis/fides* towards the gods is deferred to the human sphere, because it appeals to reasons for exercising *pistis/fides*, such as personal experience, professional expertise, report, tradition, and reason, which human beings can and do ponder.¹⁶⁷ In this respect, divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* are interlocked in a shared circle of reasoning. **(p.170)** Human trust and belief typically rely ultimately on their perception of divine *pistis/fides* towards human beings; divine–human *pistis/fides* relies on human explanations of the bases of *pistis/fides*, which rely on their understanding of the divine,...and so on. Occasionally the circularity is stopped, as when, according to Tacitus, the Romans voted that it was more religious and reverent to believe in the works of the gods than to understand them.¹⁶⁸ But explicit statements that one should simply trust or believe in the gods, abandoning reason or investigation, are rare. Our sources seem to prefer to ponder a range of reasons for divine–human *pistis/fides*, even while acknowledging, explicitly or implicitly, that they are all open to debate and ultimately circular.

One reason why this circularity is tolerated may be that the foundationalism and coherentism evoked by Cicero's Velleius and Balbus are also widespread among the less philosophically sophisticated. When Velleius and Balbus say that the gods must exist and have a certain nature because everyone thinks they do, they appeal to a universal sense that the world, encompassing both divine and human spheres, has certain qualities—is a certain way. It is, for instance, the kind of orderly place in which *pistis/fides*, on the whole, operates. It seems likely that some such intuition, inarticulate but powerful, is at the root of much thinking about both divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides*, including thinking about the reasons why one might have *pistis/fides* towards the gods. To that extent, divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* are neither different nor parallel, but interwoven in a perception of the nature of the world which embraces both spheres.

Divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* are not always presented as analogous, but often they are. Not the least of their similarities is that both coexist with fear, doubt, and scepticism. Of the two, however, *pistis/fides* towards the gods is often presented, if anything, as easier. Modern western readers, conditioned to understand the divine as mysterious, metaphysical, and above all radically Other, may find this surprising. Can we explain it? One might see it as a way of compensating for the fact that the gods are harder to interrogate or test than other people. One might connect it with the foundational nature of divine–human trust: if a universe in which divine–human *pistis/fides* does not exist at all is unthinkable, it is perhaps not surprising that authors and characters often seem disposed to accept it. Or perhaps (in a form of Pascal's wager) it testifies to the importance of divine–human relationships. One might refuse to trust one's neighbour without society's falling apart, but not trusting the gods might have much more severe consequences. Any or all of these suggestions are plausible, but all remain speculative.

(p.171) It may surprise some readers that a long discussion of divine–human *pistis/fides* can take place without reference to Paul Veyne's concept of the 'balkanization' of the brain: the compartmentalization of different aspects of a cognitive practice into different

parts of the imagination such that one can, for instance, 'believe in' the gods, human beings, and the evidence of one's eyes in quite different senses.¹⁶⁹ Veyne develops this idea in relation to propositional belief in the Greek world rather than in relation to *pistis/fides*, but it has obvious relevance to the study of *pistis/fides*. Denis Feeney explains the attraction of Veyne's theory for many classicists:

His marvellous phrase...captures the capacity of educated Greeks and Romans of the post-classical era to entertain different kinds of assent and criteria of judgement in different contexts, in ways that strike the modern observer as mutually contradictory. These people are involved in very different activities when they sacrifice outside a temple, talk to the custodian of a temple, read the aretology inscribed outside the temple, read the scholar Apollodorus' book *On the God*, listen to hymns, read Homer allegorised or Homer rationalised, read an epic on Heracles, or read about Heracles the supreme commander in a history.¹⁷⁰

It is surprising that Feeney sees balkanization as explaining a phenomenon which is otherwise mysterious to the modern observer. One could say of modern educated Christians, for instance, in exactly analogous terms, that they are involved in very different activities when praying in church, attending a Remembrance Day service, singing Christmas carols in the street, talking to the vicar, looking at the gargoyles on the church roof, reading the Bible, reading a work of modern theology, reading Philip Pullman's *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*, or listening to Bach's B Minor Mass (in a church or a concert hall). This is what we should expect: it is likely that in every culture religious activity inhabits many registers, most, if not all of which also encompass other aspects of worshippers' social, political, intellectual, and cultural lives, and that the relationship between these activities and spheres is highly complex. Balkanization does not explain anything that is distinctive about the Graeco-Roman world. That in itself does not vitiate the model, but its assumption that all activity of a particular kind constitutes one form of assent to the divine, and its failure to seek commonalities in the nature of assent or criteria of judgement across contexts, are more problematic. Forms of assent, as any worshipper knows, are not coterminous with particular activities. Several different kinds of assent or engagement with the divine, for example, may be taking place when a group of worshippers takes part in the same ritual act. One worshipper may engage with a repeated act in **(p.172)** different ways on different occasions. For the same worshipper, an experience (for instance, of the trustworthiness of God) may come on one occasion in private prayer and on another while listening to religious (or non-religious) music.

Most significantly, for the present discussion, balkanization's assumption that the nature of assent and criteria of judgement are different in different contexts does not do justice to the Greek or Roman evidence. In this chapter we have seen a wide range of authors discuss the nature and foundations of divine-human *pistis/fides* in ways which have multiple analogies with discussions of intra-human *pistis/fides*. We have seen human beings express trust in gods on the same bases, and with the same hopes—that the gods will prove trustworthy, favourable, and helpful to them—as they exercise in intra-human relationships. We have seen divine-human *pistis/fides* described as playing a role in the foundation, development, and articulation of societies analogous to that between human beings. We have seen authors affirming the strength of autopsy and other forms of direct experience as a foundation for divine-human, as well as intra-human, *pistis/fides*, pondering the risks and fragilities of hearsay, tradition, and other indirect foundations for *pistis/fides*, and accepting that in divine-human, as in intra-human relations, *pistis/fides* is itself ultimately foundational and coherentist: an intuition about the nature and operation of the world without which it is impossible to imagine how any relationship or society might function. We have also seen differences between divine-human and intra-human *pistis/fides*, but they are subtler and more complex than the differences proposed by balkanization. Veyne's model is insufficiently nuanced to be useful in the present discussion, and it is doubtful that it fits the evidence closely enough to illuminate any discussion of the nature of Graeco-Roman divine-human relations.

Conclusion

If Cicero's foundationalist-coherentist claims about the gods, divine-human relations, and enquiry into them sound familiar, it may be because they resonate with the argument of D. Z. Phillips which we discussed in the Introduction.¹⁷¹ Phillips proposes that, rather than assuming that what it means to claim that there is a god is obvious, and the only question is whether there really is one, we should think about what it means to claim that the divine exists, and look for the answer in what belief means to worshippers, because it is within religious discourses that we find what worshippers mean **(p.173)** by the reality of the divine. Religious belief and disbelief, he argues, are language games: they have meaning only within systems of thought and action (a point which also marks their similarity to beliefs about and in the human sphere).

Cicero and other voices we have heard in this chapter sound strikingly in harmony with this view. More or less explicitly, they acknowledge that Greeks or Romans have no place to stand, outside their existing understandings of the gods, from which to

determine whether the gods exist, what they are like, or what human relations are with them. Questions about the gods and human relationships with them are only meaningful within the world view of the questioner. The gods exist because we (Greeks and Romans) experience them as existing. Because we experience mysteries, paradoxes, that we call god. Because 'god' is what we call our understanding of the pattern and meaning of the universe. Because to deny the gods is to dismantle our understanding not only of the divine but of human nature and society. The gods are trustworthy, moreover, because if they are not, nothing and no one is and society cannot operate. Because that quality of *pistis* or *fides*, which enables human beings to take risks, make new relationships, preserve and develop their community, be confident, be loyal, give credence, and be persuaded, is part of what we call the divine in the world.

If Phillips's argument helps us (non-Greeks and Romans) to understand divine-human *pistis/fides*, what of Sessions's model? Does belief in the gods, or *pistis/fides* towards the gods, in Sessions's terms, constitute a 'totalizing world view', which creates a 'horizon of significance' within which worshippers interpret the world in the light of their relationship with the divine? From what we have seen, we might well agree that belief in the gods does so. It seems clear, however, that *pistis/fides* does not. Trust-belief in trustworthy gods, and the practice of divinely sponsored *pistis/fides* towards other people, are part of Greek and Roman religiosity, but not by any means the whole, or even the dominant element in it.

In *Against Apion* Josephus observes that, while piety is part of virtue for the Romans, virtue is part of piety for the Jews.¹⁷² It is a glib epigram, and does less than justice to the importance of piety to Romans or Greeks, but it does capture something of the difference between the way Graeco-Roman and Jewish divine-human relations are often characterized in our sources. We (p.174) might say, by analogy and perhaps with more justice, that while *pistis/fides* is part of virtue for Greeks and Romans, virtue is part of *pistis/fides* for Christians. In the New Testament, *pistis* dominates worshippers' understanding of God, humanity, their relationship, and the universe they share in a way which is significantly different from anything we have encountered so far.

Having said that, one should not underestimate the importance of divine-human *pistis/fides* in the sources discussed in this chapter, and one way to assess its significance is by asking whether, in these sources, acknowledging divine-human *pistis/fides* makes a difference to worshippers' actions or attitudes. Occasionally, it seems, it does not. The people of Saguntum were resisting the Carthaginians before Fides inspired them; her inspiration keeps them resisting, but there is no compelling reason to suppose that they would not have done so anyway. If some people trust Tyche despite her notorious untrustworthiness, we might conclude that trusting the gods has nothing to do with the perception of their trustworthiness (or, as was suggested earlier, that the sense that the gods in general are trustworthy is so strong that it overrides Tyche's defects in this department).

In a number of passages, however, divine-human *pistis/fides* does seem to affect people's behaviour, and it is notable that these are all 'non-fiction' contexts (handbooks, letters, treatises, or inscriptions) in which writers are affirming that they practise *pistis/fides*, or listeners or readers are being exhorted to practise it. Artemidorus tells his readers that they can trust what gods, in dreams, tell them to do, while Ausonius affirms that it is right in general to trust the gods when they tell us to do something, and the inscription on the Egyptian fort urges readers to trust the gods to guide them. Marcus Aurelius, Fronto, and Libanius all believe that the gods have healed them in the past and trust them to do so in the future. Plutarch thinks that lack of trust in the gods ruins the superstitious man's life. Valerius Maximus claims that the Romans who took Juno from Veii to the Aventine believed they were doing her bidding, while soldiers who were told before battle that Castor and Pollux were on their side fought all the better for it.

As evidence of a horizon of experience within which worshippers interpret the world in distinctive ways, these examples are rather thinner than Sessions might like. They attest, however, that trusting in trustworthy gods can be understood as affecting human behaviour in a wide range of contexts. Within the world in which divine-human *pistis/fides* is acknowledged, it makes a difference.

This observation prompts another, which applies to all the last three chapters. *Pistis* and *fides*, in Greek and Roman thinking, are understood as powerfully functional. When I am loyal to my master or commander, his aims are mine. I trust my friend to support me in my activities and interests as I support him. When I express confidence in a trustworthy deity, I hope that she will favour my city or me. This does not mean that Graeco-Roman views (p.175) of *pistis/fides* are shallow or manipulative. It means that they acknowledge *pistis/fides* as profoundly transformative: as making possible new relationships and communities, new forms of action and social structures. *Pistis/fides* is rarely, if ever, an end in itself: it is almost always a beginning. In later chapters, one of the questions to which we will return is what, in early Christian communities, it is the beginning of.

We have seen that *pistis/fides* is presented in this period as operating more reliably in some intra-human contexts and activities than others. It may be significant, in a time of extensive, ongoing social and political disruption and change, that the contexts in which *pistis/fides* is experienced as working relatively well (the family, the army, the law) are those which are traditionally most densely

interwoven with cults and rituals, while those in which it is experienced as most fragile (such as relations between friends and between monarchs and their subjects) are those with fewer cult connections (though successive emperors worked hard to create new cult connections around themselves). It is, perhaps, where divine–human *pistis/fides* is most strongly affirmed that intra-human *pistis/fides* is able to function most smoothly.

At the same time, we have encountered significant levels of mistrust, scepticism, doubt, and fear in a wide range of contexts, divine–human and intra-human. Above all, many of the foundations of *pistis/fides* are perceived as fragile and even potentially misleading. In the mid-twentieth century some scholars detected a crisis of confidence in the traditional religions of the early Roman empire which, they suggested, led to a growing interest in elective cults, including Christianity.¹⁷³ The idea of a crisis of confidence in traditional cults no longer has much currency, but there are stronger grounds for seeing both divine–human and intra-human *pistis/fides* as under pressure in this period. In the turbulent world of the late Roman republic, the late Hellenistic kingdoms, and the early principate, trust, trustworthiness, faithfulness, good faith, confidence, credit, and belief were all at a premium and all under intense pressure, and it is in such circumstances that such qualities are most liable to give way, with catastrophic results for individuals and states.¹⁷⁴ In later chapters we will see how the simultaneous desirability and fragility of *pistis/fides* in many areas of life in the first century created opportunities which were exploited, among others, by the first preachers of the kerygma of Jesus Christ.

Notes:

(1) Explored rather differently by Linder and Scheid (1993) and Scheid (2005); rightly re-emphasized by Scheid (2013), 175–91. I agree with Scheid ((2005), 175) that it is anachronistic to assume that for Greek or Roman piety to be genuine it must express some ‘émotion individuelle et sincère, indépendante de tout context social’, and that this conceptualization of piety or faith owes much to the later evolution of Christianity. It does not follow, though, as Scheid claims (p. 190), that religious emotions—or *pistis/fides*, whether or not it is best understood as an emotion (on which see Ch. 11)—must be separated from religious behaviour in classical antiquity. I shall argue in this chapter and in Chs. 6–11 both that *pistis/fides* plays a role in both traditions and that early Christianity is, in some ways, closer to Graeco-Roman religiosity than to modern Christianity in its understanding of *pistis/fides*. For an alternative approach to the relationship between ritual and belief, see Nameescu (2013).

(2) Lindsay (1993), 8, 11–16 (though as we have seen, all trust implies belief of some kind).

(3) Cf. pp. 16–23.

(4) Lindsay (1993), 7.

(5) Lindsay (1993), 8–10; cf. Versnel (2011), appendix 4.

(6) Barth (1982), 114–22.

(7) p. 122. He also points to a number of passages in which *pistis* or *apistia* is followed by the objective genitive. Von Dobbeler (1987), 45–9 discusses the connection between *pistis* and *pneuma* in classical Greek literature.

(8) Early students of Greek and Roman religions (even the Cambridge ritualists) seem to have been less sceptical that Greeks or Romans exercised ‘faith’ than more interested in other things. Kowalzig (2007), 14–16 finds one possible root of classicists’ scepticism about belief in the writings of William Robertson Smith, but notes that Jane Harrison accepts ‘faith’ as a category.

(9) Among those who think it does are Nock (1925 and 1933), Festugière (1954), Veyne (1988), Yunis (1988), Harrison (2000), Bendlin (2000), King (2003), Mikalson (2010), and Versnel (2011); among those who think it does not are Price (1984), Feeney (1998), Scheid (2003 and 2005), Ando (2008), and Parker (2011).

(10) e.g. Price (1984) 11–15, Versnel, (2011), 544–5, Scheid (2003), 18, 20.

(11) *Ant.* 27–41.

(12) The presence of *fides* in this list has attracted little attention, and (probably rightly) it is not generally taken to mean ‘faith’. Pease (1955) ad loc., who discusses it at some length, focuses on its role as guarantor of the sacredness of oaths; Cf. Beard, North, and Price (1998), 152; Price (1999), 3; Scheid (2005), 58–83.

(13) Belayche (forthcoming).

(14) e.g. Nock (1925, 1933) (the latter discussing belief as a dimension of philosophical as well as religious affiliations); Festugière (1954), Lloyd-Jones (1971), Veyne (1988), Yunis (1988), Lloyd (1997), Mikalson, (2010). A recurrent theme in these works is the relationship between corporate and individual relationships with the gods; belief is often taken to operate, if at all, in individual rather than group relationships. For a counter-argument that belief is regularly socially constructed and mediated, see e.g. Luckmann (1971), Borhek and Curtis (1975).

(15) On the rarity of atheism, see e.g. Drachmann (1977); Fahr (1969); Dorival and Pralon (2002).

(16) This development is outlined by Feeney (1998), 12–46; cf. Beard, North, and Price (1998), 30–54.

(17) Two exceptions are Harrison (2000) and Mikalson (2010), which focus throughout on belief, though Harrison takes it narrowly to mean propositional belief. Mikalson goes well beyond most commentators in investigating what kinds of divine–human relationships are implied in belief language. Versnel (2011) explores Greek ways of thinking about the gods which could be interpreted as beliefs, but confines discussion of belief as such to an appendix (where he recognizes the potential complexity of the concept but restricts himself to discussing propositional belief). Kowalzig (2007), 2 observes that: ‘Belief and practice are intrinsically intertwined in the constant interplay of myth and ritual.’ The focus of her study, however, is how belief is engendered through the interaction of myth and ritual, sacrifice, and prayer, rather than an exploration of its nature.

(18) e.g. Ando (2008), pr. *passim* (polarizing Roman knowledge about the gods and Christian faith), Rüpke (2007) (for whom it is not a category of analysis). Classicists’ approach to religion has historically owed much to anthropology and sociology; among writings on belief much cited by classicists are Needham (1972), Rappaport (1999), esp. 395–405; Bell (2008). For a contrasting approach, see e.g. Wiebe (1979).

(19) Veyne (1988), 54, Harrison (2000), 243–4, Yunis (1988), 39, Osborne (1994), 144; cf. Fahr (1969), King (2003).

(20) Ando (2008), ix, xvi–xvii; cf. Phillips (1986).

(21) e.g. Harrison (2000), 16, Scheid (2013), 175–82.

(22) pp. 231–8, 282–98. Freyburger notes (p. 286) that the personification goes with the deification of the quality.

(23) p. 222, and see this chapter, pp. 134–5.

(24) pp. 100–2.

(25) pp. 91–2, 102–7.

(26) Wissowa (1912), 103; cf. Plaut., *Rud.* 9–12; Sil. 2.484 emphasizes the primacy of Fides by saying she was born even before Jupiter.

(27) Cult does not seem to have been offered to Pistis until the later second century CE (Clark (2007b), 74). Peitho receives cult on Paros from at least the Hellenistic period and perhaps as early as the archaic period (Stafford (2000), ch. 4), and occasionally elsewhere, as an aspect of Aphrodite and connected with sexual attractiveness and marriage: Dragoumis (1895), 554–5; *MDAI(A)* 35 (1910), 460, 42; cf. Diogenian. 2, 80. Pistis could appear as a personification of virtue earlier: e.g. Smith (1993), 58–9, on a funerary monument of around the Augustan age, from Aphrodisias.

(28) Wissowa (1912), 52–3; cf. Freyburger (2009), 282–3.

(29) Freyburger (2009), 288–92. *Dius Fidius* is translated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the first century BCE as *Zeus Pistios* (*Ant.* 4.58.4), but an alternative tradition suggests that *Fidius* is a form of *Filius* and referred to Hercules as Jupiter’s son (Festus (ed. Lindsay), 133 and *Ov., Fasti* 6.213).

(30) On Fides’ cult, temple, and priests, see Piccaluga (1981), Freyburger (1983 and 2009), Carcaterra (1984), Reusser (1993), Ramelli (2002).

(31) p. 281.

(32) e.g. Cic., *Rab. Post.* 4, *Att.* 11.1.2, Hor., *Carm.* 1.35.21; Freyburger (2009), 299–306, and see p. 83.

(33) ‘The good faith of the Roman people’, ‘the loyalty of soldiers [or perhaps “foot-soldiers”]’, ‘the loyalty of the armies’, ‘the greatest loyalty/good faith’.

(34) See pp. 83–4, with Stevenson (1889), 385–7. On the right hand sacred to Fides as the hand with which Romans take oaths, seal agreements, and pledge their word, see e.g. Plin., *HN* 11.250; Freyburger (2009), 126, 236.

(35) e.g. 118–19.

(36) e.g. Cic., *ND* 2.78–9 (where *fides* is a virtue), Virg., *Aen.* 7.365; Ov., *Ars Am.* 1.536–58; Petr., *Sat.* 124 (where Fides is described as *submissa* (humble/obedient), [Quint.] *Dec. min.* 312.1.

(37) 6.6 pr., trans. Shackleton Bailey (2000). On the association of Fides’ right hand with human welfare, see Clark (2007b); on its twin religious and legal roots, see Freyburger (2009), ch. 3. Mueller (2002), 162 suggests that when defeated enemies extend *fides* towards Rome, the Romans are likened to gods.

(38) Hospitality is widely regarded as a sacred duty: cf. Prop. 4.9.7, Liv. 1.12.8, Virg., *Aen.* 7.362, Hor., *Carm.* 1.15.2, Val. Max. 1.6.8 (*hospites* who are called *perfidus* for failing in their duty).

(39) Lucius has just referred to the ‘unspoken and natural bond’ (*tacitum ac naturale sacramentum*) which exists between animals, using a term used of legal bonds, oaths of allegiance, and religious obligations, but the idea that this should produce *miseratio* suggests that more than a legal bond is imagined here.

(40) *CIL* 9.60, discussed by Freyburger (2009), 242.

(41) e.g. Cic., *Off.* 3.29.104, Sil. 6.132, Stat., *Theb.* 11.98; cf. *Carm. Epig.* 1.533.

(42) e.g. Peek (1955), no. 1439 (= Merkelbach–Stauber (1998), 08/03/01).

(43) Plu., *Mor.* 318a see pp. 155–6, 163–4; cf. App., *BC* 4.99, D.H., 2.75.1–4. *Pistis/fides* is sometimes said elsewhere to exclude fear (Ov., *Ars Am.* 1.536–58, *Met.* 15.658; Plu., *Mor.* 424a), and gods occasionally tell people not to be afraid of them (Ov., *Met.* 15.658), but fear may also be a positive and appropriate response to the divine (Cic., *Inu.* 2.67–8; Ov., *Am.* 3.3.23–6, *Met.* 5.100 ff.; Plu., *Mor.* 165b; Sen., *Tr.* 1–4, Strabo 1.2.8).

(44) Freyburger (2009), 100–2 suggests this is possible, though evidence is lacking.

(45) The gods are also sponsors of *pistis/fides* in Ov., *Her.* 20.39–40, Tib. 1.10.15–20, Apul., *Met.* 11.16. Reversing the trend, M. Ant. (5.33) describes *pistis*, with *aidōs* and *alētheia*, as having made their way up to Olympus from the human sphere. In Sil. 17.67–70, breaking a military alliance together with ties of hospitality which cemented it is to break faith (*fidem...rumpere*) with the gods.

(46) e.g. Babr. 57, 58, 63, Phaedr., prose para. 274; cf. Aesop 1 (Chambry), Cic., *Fin.* 2.46 (love of all things *fidelia, simplicia, constantia* is a basic instinct).

(47) 2.8.23, quoted p. 43.

(48) 2.14.11–14.

(49) Plu., *Mor.* 550d (quoting Pl., *Theaet.* 176e).

(50) These qualities are not linked with action here, but since Epictetus has just been talking about our duties as members of society, they are probably thought of as to be practised towards other human beings. Epictetus here draws on Plato as well as on his Socratic-Stoic cosmological framework (Long (2002), 166–72, 224–6). Cic., *ND* 2.78–9, 3.61 presents opposing views about where human virtues come from: either from the gods, or from within human beings.

(51) The original meaning, if that is a meaningful concept at all, is obscure; Cf. M. Ant. 7.3.11; Epict. 1.12.8. An educational list of maxims from the first or second century begins with it (Oikonomides (1980)). According to Seneca (*Ep.* 16.2) we follow the god but endure fortune.

(52) On *pistis/fides* as a virtue see Ch. 11; cf. D.S. 9.11.2, Plu., *Mor.* 749b, Marc. 3.11.2, Sall., *Cat.* 9.1–2, Cic., *Rep.* 1.2, *Cat.* 2.25, *Ad Att.* 7.2.7, Sen., *Ep.* 88.29, *De ira* 2.28.1–2, Sil. 14.79–84. On virtues as encompassing cognition, affection and action, see Annas (1992, 103–20), Fitzgerald (2008, 1–5), Graver (2007, 1–13), Kaster (2005), 1–8, Konstan (2007), 3–40. On imitation in the New Testament, see pp. 257 n. 162, 321, 341, 402.

(53) *Carm. saec.* 57–60, *Aen.* 1.292–6 (both looking forward to Augustus' reign as the return of the golden age); cf. Hor., *Carm.* 4.5.20.

(54) Val. Max. 6.6 pr. Cicero does not say here that *fides*, like *pietas*, must be a matter of mind and heart as well as of action, but since both are virtues, it is clearly implied.

(55) Discussed by Piccaluga (1981), 723–32, who emphasizes the political agenda of texts which paint this picture, but does not discuss what the use of these particular qualities in this context indicates about the way they were perceived.

(56) Also a variation on the Aesopic fable about Truth (Chambry 259), who removes herself from the town to live in the desert because all men have become liars.

(57) *Cat.* 30.11–12.

(58) *Am.* 3.3.1–2, 23–6. (In Val. Max. 6.6 ext. 1 the good intentions of Fides are frustrated by Fortuna.)

(59) 'Older than Jupiter' suggests that *fides* is older than *iustitia*. Saguntum is defending Fides by remaining loyal to its ally Rome.

(60) On the idea that divine qualities remove themselves from human beings who do not honour them, cf. Aesop's fable cited in n. 56.

(61) Liebeschuetz (1979), 175–7 discusses the parallel with prophetic possession, and suggests that (176): 'As represented by Silius *Fides* is close to being a goddess of moral conduct; she is the glory of gods and men, the partner of justice. Without her, a peaceful life is impossible.'

(62) e.g. Parker (1985), Bowden (2005), 49–51, 74–86, Eidinow (2007); cf. Plu., *On the Obsolescence of Oracles*, defending, among other things, their validity.

(63) In the only counter-example I know of, Lycurgus, grief-stricken for his young son, who has died at Thebes (*Stat., Theb.* 6.197), calls Jupiter *perfide* because Jupiter's priest's words have not been fulfilled and Lycurgus' prayers have not been answered. In Sil. 4.643 the river Trebia rises up against the Romans during the Hannibalic wars at the instigation of Juno, and is called *perfidus*, but the epithet does not transfer to the goddess, since she is consistent in hostility to Rome.

(64) Cf. Sen., *Phoen.* 259, where Oedipus, describing his past, says bitterly that he has kept faith with Delphi (*praestiti Delphis fidem*).

(65) 5.604.

(66) e.g. Ov., *Trist.* 5.14.20, Sil. 15.1–5; cf. Morgan (2007b), 33, 77, 111–12, 115, 119–20, 134–5, 242–3.

(67) Hor., *Car.* 1.35, D.Chrys. 65.7; cf. Plu., *Mor.* 316c [D.Chrys.] 64.10.

(68) 65.7. Dio's defence of Tyche is that by constantly changing whom she favours, she ultimately distributes her gifts more fairly. Plutarch (*Mor.* 316c, 318a) articulates the Roman view that when Tyche reached Rome she settled down, abandoned her untrustworthiness, and set herself consistently to favour the Romans; Cf. Sil. 15.1–5.

(69) e.g. Ov., *Fasti* 5.139, Luc., *BC* 1.647, Sen., *Prov.*, *passim*, Ael., *NA* 28.81 (various gods are trustworthy); cf. ps.-Ov., *Cons.* 191–6 (most people think the gods trustworthy).

(70) 2.69.

(71) Cf. D.H. 1.77.3. Graeco-Roman literature does not regularly connect divine *pistis/fides* with truth in the way that the Septuagint appears to, and which early Christians inherit (though for Platonists and Stoics who hold the unity of the virtues it would be implicit).

(72) For Plutarch (*Mor.* 170e), not exercising *pistis* towards the gods (which he identifies as both a cognitive and emotional condition) leads the superstitious person into a miserable and impious life (169e–f). Right thinking and feeling are part of right worship here, as they occasionally seem to be in temple inscriptions which challenge worshippers to come with a pure mind or soul: e.g. Sokolowski (1962), 91.1–5; (1969), 130. On the Hellenistic trend towards identifying ritual with moral purity, see Chaniotis (1997). In contrast, though, see e.g. Val. Max. 3.7 ext. 6, where trusting omens is less rational than trusting the advice of a general on the eve of battle, and ps.-Ov., *Cons.* 191–6, where the speaker, who is about to make a prayer, changes his mind, asking why, *credulus*, he should pray to gods who showed no care for another.

(73) Herod. 2.10.8–9. In a different context, Bacchus assures Ariadne that he is *fideliior*, a more trustworthy lover than Theseus (Ov., *Ars Am.* 1.555). Gods may also be *fidus* towards one another: e.g. Ov., *Met.* 2.837 (Mercury towards Jupiter), *Met.* 10.585 (Iris towards all the gods).

(74) The goddess may be intended here, as in *Geor.* 2.473–4, which makes a similar point.

(75) *Carm.* 3.2.25–6, noted by Page (1895), ad loc. as an apparent example of faith in the gods, but ‘faithfulness to the gods’ would probably characterize it better.

(76) Cuvigny (2010), 263, no. 20.

(77) *Lib., Ep.* 137.3–4.

(78) Ad M. Caes. 5.45 (60) (Naber p. 90).

(79) Ad M. Caes. 5.55 (70) (Naber p. 91).

(80) Petzl (1994), no. 12, trans. N. Belayche, on which, see e.g. Malay (1988), Belayche (2007 and 2008). *Apistia* towards the gods is also attested epigraphically at Epidaurus in the fourth century BCE (Lindsay (1993), 10). On failures to trust the gods as castigated from the fourth century BCE, see Belayche (forthcoming). Nock (1972), 1.327 is now seen as over-Christianizing when he calls these experiences miracles and claims that *pistis* is their result.

(81) Belayche (forthcoming); cf. Mitchell (1993), Fowden (1988), 176–7.

(82) Cf. *AE* 2001, 1841, *BCH* 125 (2001), 293–5 (reign of Claudius).

(83) Cf. Plu., *Rom.* 5.1–2 (a temple-keeper wants to keep an agreement with his god over a dice game) and Versnel (1976) on Roman *devotio* as contractual.

(84) On this attitude of the gods in proverbs, fables, etc., see Morgan (2007b), 61, 207–11.

(85) e.g. Reumann (1967), McGrath (2006), 267.

(86) p. 1 n. 3; Versnel (2011), 539–59.

(87) There are also many passages where *tharrein* may be translated ‘trust/believe’, as it sometimes is in the New Testament.

(88) πιστις, δοξάζειν, νομιζειν are used in close succession in this passage, which suggests perhaps propositional belief with overtones of trust.

(89) It is not obvious what Plutarch’s scepticism here is based on: perhaps a Platonic view that intellectual affections supersede physical ones? At Str. 15.1.59 what Indian philosophers believe is described using *pisteuein*.

(90) 7, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 28, 30, 32, 38; see Barth (1982), 118–20. Aristid., *Or.* 49.40 invites listeners to believe his religious

testimony in a more confessional spirit.

(91) *Credere* and *fides* and cognates often occur in close conjunction in literary texts, with both sacred and secular meanings, as here, 9–10, 20–1, 25–6, 31–2; cf. Cic., *Att.* 11.1.2, *Ov.*, *Her.* 6.30, *Fasti* 2.443–5, *Curt.* 3.6.6, *Sen.*, *Contr.* 2.1.38, *Sen.*, *Ep.* 3.2–3, *Juv.* 6.56–60, *Front.*, *Strat.* 1.11.8–11.

(92) *Alex.* 38; cf. *Val. Max.* 3.7 ext. 6, 8.11.1 ext. 1; *Plin.*, *HN* 28.3; *Herod.* 2.10.8–9.

(93) e.g. Mitchell (1994, 28–51), Kenny, (1987, 16–18), MacIntyre (1990), Swinburne (1993, 2004, 2005), Helm (2000, 23–84).

(94) Cf. *Val. Max.* 1.7 ext. 8, *Plu.*, *Mor.* 313d, 589d, *Rom.* 27.8–28.6, *Arat.* 43.4 (Aratus has no *pistis* in dreams or divination), *Epict.* 1.14.1. Arnold (2005) explores how non-canonical beliefs, e.g. in vampires, in medieval Europe are typically based on the ‘evidence’ of personal experience.

(95) Even before his belief is confirmed by a daytime sighting of the man (*Met.* 11.27), for which Apuleius uses *fides* in the sense of ‘proof’. According to Plutarch (*Mor.* 589d), most people think that one can receive divine inspiration in sleep, but regard the idea they might receive it while awake as *apiston*.

(96) Cicero argues against his brother, the two representing well-established positions against and for the credibility of divination, including through dreams; opinions differ as to whether the work concludes in favour of either position or neither (Krostenko (2000), 353–61).

(97) On trust/belief in what one hears as dependent on how well one knows and trusts those who report it in the medieval world, see Nedkvitne (2008), 352.

(98) 11.1–4; Trajan deified Hadrian.

(99) *D.H.* 8.5–6 mentions ‘books of the pontiffs’, recording divine epiphanies, etc., as fortifying traditional Roman trust in the gods.

(100) *Fasti* 4.203–4; cf. Cic., *ND* 3.9.

(101) This is a formulaic protest with a genealogy going back at least to Plato’s *Apology*; cf. *Phld.*, *Piet.* 26, 51 claiming the same of Epicurus and by implication his followers. Cicero evidently does not want to encourage the impression that Academic scepticism leads to practical impiety. On the past more generally as a basis for believing things about the future, see *Lucret.* 5.338–47.

(102) Cf. *Mor.* 756a–b, where ‘our inherited and ancient *pistis*’ is said to be better than any evidence that Eros is a god. Frazier (2005) builds on these passages to argue that Plutarch has a ‘hermeneutic of tradition’ (p. 130) in his later works. Piety (*eusebeia/pietas*) often appears as an accompaniment to *pistis/fides*: e.g. Cic., *Att.* 4.2.8, *ND* 1.3–4, *De bell. Alex.* 70, *Ov.*, *Trist.* 1.9.33–5, 4.5.1, *Met.* 1.125–8, *Tiberianus* 2.18–21, *Sen.*, *De ira* 2.28.1–2, *Clem.* 2.1.3–4, *Octav.* 844–5, *Ag.* 108–24, *Plu.*, *Mor.* 402e, 756b, *Strabo* 1.2.8, *Plin.*, *Ep.* 8.18.7.

(103) 1.147. For belief based on past experience rather than tradition, see e.g. *Lucian*, *DDeor.* 5(1) 205.

(104) *Mor.* 359f–60b. It is again hard to separate trust and propositional belief here: gods who look too human may be both less believable and less trustworthy.

(105) pp. 155–6.

(106) Barnes (2006), Edwards (forthcoming).

(107) e.g. 13–14, 18, 22, 27. Correspondence and coherence criteria of credibility are mingled here: those who claim to have seen wonders claim this as evidence for their beliefs, while those who believe them trust not only an eyewitness account but the words of people whom they already trust for other reasons. Tychiades produces Democritus of Abdera as an example of a wise man who did not believe in the supernatural (32), but he has rejected the testimony of so many other philosophers that to cite one in his support is a weak move.

(108) 5–6, 29–32.

(109) 40. This is reminiscent of the role of emotion in creating belief in rhetorical theory, where emotion can affect people in spite of their rationality (e.g. Quint. 6.2). Dickie (2010) argues that behind Lucian's relentless irony and scepticism in this and other essays we can detect something of his own religious views, which are broadly Platonic, with some sympathy for Epicureanism (360–1); the idea that we can detect anything of Lucian's views is appealing, but the infection of scepticism is as powerful as that of belief and I remain doubtful.

(110) e.g. Liv. 1.15.5, Plu., *Mor.* 313d, *Rom.* 27.8–28.6; cf. Sen., *Apoc.* 11.14.

(111) e.g. Front., *Strat.* 1.11.8–11.

(112) Val. Max. 8.11 ext. 1.

(113) Compared with Stoicism or even Cynicism, though see Betz (2000), Cox (2007), 24–5, 352–3, Wasserman (2008a) for arguments that Platonist influence may be detectable in a small number of passages (none of which feature *pistis* language).

(114) On the trustworthiness of sense impressions in other schools see pp. 39–42, but since this concern is widely shared outside philosophy, we cannot attribute its appearance in the New Testament to philosophical influence.

(115) Edwards (forthcoming).

(116) e.g. Heraclit. A6, Emp. B3.10, Parm. B1.30, Democr. B9, 11, 125.

(117) *Rp.* 509d–11e, 534a, *Tim.* 29c; Taglia (1998), Gagarin (2000).

(118) For the Hellenistic and imperial reception of Plato in general, see Barnes (1989, 1991, 1993).

(119) *Fug.* 136, *Abr.* 141, *Vit. Mos.* 1.247, *Somn.* 2.220, *Spec. Leg.* 2.143.

(120) *Spec. Leg.* 4.176, *Virt.* 46, *Dec.* 15, *Vit. Mos.* 2.40, *Conf.* 198.

(121) *Fug.* 152, *Mut. Nom.* 182, 201.

(122) *Post. Cain.* 13, *Conf.* 31, *Abr.* 270, 273, *Somn.* 2.68. Edwards sees human *pistis* as the starting point of a human relationship with God, but on the roles that God's *pistis* towards humanity and the testimony of scripture play, see e.g. pp. 154–6. For possible Septuagintal precedents, see pp. 190–2, 194–5. If we accept with Hay (1977), 888 that Philo has a strong interest in interior structures of the personality, his usage of *pistis*, etc. remains more relational than psychological. Lindsay (1993), 62–3 notes that Philo very occasionally (e.g. *Abr.* 122) uses the propositional *pisteuein hoti*, but surely exaggerates when he calls it a 'creedal formula' for Philo. He also notes that *pistis* is a virtue for Philo in a technical, Greek sense.

(123) Philo calls Abraham by the same name throughout, though in Genesis he is known as Abram until 17.5.

(124) On the evolution of Abraham's relationship with God according to Genesis, Philo, and Josephus, see pp. 178–88.

(125) *Mor.* 170e, 165b, 359f–60b (the gods); *Mor.* 612a (afterlife); *Mor.* 266c, 360a–b, 1092f, *Lyc.* 19.4 (legends); *Arat.* 43.4 (divination).

(126) *Mor.* 530b (commercial), *Brut.* 12.8, *Galb.* 26.2 (oaths).

(127) *Mor.* 539e–f, 1129c (those who hold office), 812; cf. 821b–c, *Cat. Mi.* 44.7–8; *Mor.* 805b (advocates).

(128) *Caes.* 22.2, *Sert.* 9.5.

(129) The exception is *Adv. Col.*

(130) *Mor.* 1089d, 1090a, d, 1091a refer to the Epicurean *piston elpisma*, 'stable hope' of happiness, to which Plutarch gives no

credence.

(131) 1001d, 1023d, 1031b, d, 1121b, 1123a–d; cf. 1058f, 1114e (quoting Parmenides), 1118b. *Mor.* 1001b refers to the believability of a statement of Plato's about the universe.

(132) Cf. p. 133.

(133) *Mor.* 756b; see also p. 10; cf. *Num.* 4.3–4 (of things it is hard to believe about the gods); Plutarch less often uses *pistis* of evidence or proof, but see e.g. *Mor.* 1120d, 1059e.

(134) Cf. Philod., *Piet.* 2032–60, where Philodemus criticizes non-philosophers for lacking *pistis*, which goes with thinking that the gods are 'terrible tyrants', expecting misfortune from them, and achieving nothing. Meijer's observation ((1981), 261–2) that, for Theophrastus and Plutarch, *deisidaimones* are cowards, fits Philodemus too. It is worth noting that *perfidia* seems not to be used explicitly of an inappropriate attitude towards the divine until the Christian era (though the concept is implicit e.g. when a host is called *perfidus* for flouting the laws of hospitality (see p. 130 n. 38); or when someone is called *perfidus* for forswearing an oath (e.g. *Ov.*, *Fasti* 3.473)). In general (in religious and secular contexts), the negative forms of the *pistis/fides* lexica are more common in Christian texts and texts of the Christianized empire than earlier.

(135) Cf. *Sen.*, *Apocol.* 11.4.

(136) There would still be a difference in the origin of *pistis/fides*, but that would not affect its operation.

(137) Suggested by *Plu.*, *Mor.* 316c, 318a; cf. Wagenvoort (1980a), Morgan (2007b), 131.

(138) Patton (2009), 170–80. Earlier interpretations suggested that these were representations of 'real' situations in which less powerful gods sacrificed to more powerful ones, or younger to older ones, but this is not now generally accepted. Scholars have also suggested that the gods represent human beings or the ideal attitude of a worshipper towards the god (pp. 3–23, 121–59). The phenomenon of gods performing human activities is widespread in other cultures and is also explored by Patton (in the Talmud, for example, God wears tefillin, prays, and studies Torah: pp. 249–81).

(139) It forms part, for instance, of the premise of *Ar.*, *Av.* and the discussion of *Pl.*, *Euthphr.*

(140) 5.139 (the *Lar* is compared with a dog, also *fidus* to its master, here, but presumably not with the implication that being a household god is a servile status); cf. *Tib.* 1.10.15–20 (*fides* was kept better in the old days when it was guarded by wooden *Lares* in household shrines).

(141) It is sometimes suggested that one of the distinctive things about the gods and hence about divine–human relations is that Greeks and Romans perceive the gods fundamentally as 'powers' rather than 'people' (Nock (1925), Vernant (1983), 323–40). Insofar as the trustworthiness of both gods and human beings consists in their power to help one another, both gods and human beings, in social relations, are perhaps imagined as much as powers as people.

(142) e.g. *Sen.*, *Clem.* 1.2–4; cf. *Apocol.* 10.1, *Plu.*, *Mor.* 318a, *D.Chrys.* 65.7 (if people trust *Tyche* because of her divine power, despite her acknowledged untrustworthiness, it suggests that the gods in general are assumed to be trustworthy). Despite this, as we have seen, degrees of fear, doubt, and scepticism also coexist with *pistis/fides* in divine–human as in intra-human relations, but perhaps not at the initiation of societies, social projects, or relationships. I can find no parallel in this period for the creative intra-human mistrust which we saw, for instance, enabling the development of the Piraeus (pp. 89–90), and which one might see in the developing relationship between God and Abraham. Divine–human relations are often described in familial or political terms parallel to those of the human sphere (father, lord, slave), but the implications (e.g. of power, authority, or care) of these titles in both spheres are so wide-ranging and elastic that it is hard to be sure in any one context what the presumptive parallel signifies.

(143) Explicitly linked (cf. *ND* 3.1, *Piet.* 26; cf. 27–31) to the importance of piety as a marker of community identity and loyalty which is a powerful force throughout the Graeco-Roman world.

(144) Allowing for the fact that *VH* addresses the reader directly while the others have internal interlocutors.

(145) At *VH* 1.3 he points the comparison by comparing himself with the historian *Ctesias* and his allegedly true but bizarre stories

about India.

(146) It is also notable that *mythos* and *fabula* are applied equally in this period to stories about gods, heroes, the distant human past, and faraway places and peoples as if problems with believing in them are equivalent (e.g. Varro, *Ant.* 7.1, Cic., *ND* 3.13, Plin., *HN* 5.5, 6.79, 8.8, 11.232, 28.107, 29.29, 32.143, 37.203; cf. 14.71 on *divus Augustus*).

(147) Stern (2003).

(148) 16e, 18e, 19b–d, 20b.

(149) e.g. 22b: note whether the position of a noun, adjective, or verb blunts the negative point of the passage (e.g. *Il.* 24.525). 22c: we may use glosses to explain the meanings of words in a way which enhances the moral of a passage (especially useful where a word has more than one meaning). 23d: when *Il.* 1.3 says that Zeus' design sent many brave souls to Hades and gave their bodies to dogs and birds to feast on, by 'Zeus' here we should understand 'Fate', not conclude that the god does evil to men; Cf. *Mor.* 677c–78b, Gell. 2.6.3, 13.10. On related techniques used by Philo and other Alexandrian Jewish commentators on the Bible, see Niehoff (2011), esp. parts 2 and 3.

(150) Cf. Cic., *Div.* 2.28, 71, 2.148, Liv. 39.15.2, Aug., *CD* 6.10 (quoting Seneca). The opinions of religious experts are also acknowledged as powerful arguments for the existence and nature of the gods (Cic., *ND* 2.7, 3.5); according to Plu., *Mor.* 167e, contempt for religious experts is a sign of atheism.

(151) Jos., *Ap.* 1.38. 1.161 seems to assume that a Greek or Roman audience will agree with him in finding trust in divine revelations about divine–human relations, as he claims to find in the Bible, less problematic than their own histories.

(152) pp. 40–1.

(153) 123–4, trans. Long and Sedley (1987), 1.140; cf. Cic., *ND* 1.43–9. Cicero's Cotta is scathing about arguments from experience in general: e.g. 3.11, 3.13.

(154) Scott (1989).

(155) Cf. e.g. Edelstein and Edelstein (1945), Brenk (1977), chs. 2, 9, 10, Harris (2009), ch. 4 (with the caveat (pp. 123, 127–9) that not all dreams are believed to come from the gods), Petsalis-Diomidis (2010).

(156) Cf. p. 41.

(157) Only Epicureans seem to have suggested that the gods were uninvolved with the world. On atheism, see e.g. Drachmann (1922); at the time of writing a good deal of recent work on atheism and disbelief is not yet in print.

(158) On foundationalism and coherentism, see e.g. pp. 21–2. Modern philosophy treats them as alternatives, but intuitively they often, as here, go together. Explicit recognition that some beliefs are foundational goes back at least to Arist., *Top.* 1.1, 100b18, while Clem., *Strom.* 8.7.2 points out (indebted to both Aristotle and Platonism) that in any sphere of knowledge, including that of the divine, one must begin by assuming something (Stead (1994), 109–13).

(159) pp. 21–2.

(160) Velleius is citing the Platonist view that human beings have an intellectual vision of the divine, which is superior to physical vision but directly experiential in a parallel way. He criticizes Platonists, but Epicureans also think that human beings can perceive the divine, through the intellectual process of *prolēpsis* (Scott (1989), 366–9).

(161) e.g. 2.3, 2.47–8, 2.73, 2.79, 2.154. Balbus organizes his discourse (2.4) around the questions whether the gods exist, govern, care for the world, and have a certain nature. The superhuman regularity of the heavenly bodies (2.16), the pervasiveness of symmetry in nature (2.19), and the fact that everything in the world exists for the benefit of (gods and) human beings (2.154–62) are among the phenomena which he argues demonstrate the divinity of the universe, the fact that it is actively governed by the divine, and the fact that the divine cares for human beings. He also invokes the idea of a first cause (2.18, 79).

(162) On the genuineness of Cicero's scepticism in this work, see Momigliano (2003), 205–6; at best it seems highly qualified; Cf. Cotta's criticisms of Velleius, 1.62, 77, 82, 116, 121. Velleius claims (1.61) that only the correspondence of arguments to truth would convince him of the gods' existence (not a common position but cf. Arist., *Anal. post.* 1.19.81b18–23), but never says what kind of evidence he would accept as truth.

(163) Burnyeat (1980), arguing persuasively that sceptics cannot live their scepticism, suggests that Cicero as an Academic could not live his scepticism either, but Cicero's affirmations in his introduction strongly indicate that he does not anyway see himself as trying to do so.

(164) The idea goes back to Aristotle and is widespread by this period: see the discussion of Pease (1955), ad loc. Velleius concludes his speech with a supplementary appeal to foundationalism and coherentism, saying that human beings worship the gods out of (again, apparently natural and instinctive) veneration of their perfection (1.45–6).

(165) e.g. pp. 59, 102–3, 106–7, 114–15; cf. Philod., *Piet.* 1450–72, where Philodemus defends the conventional religiosity of Epicurus. He employed and kept oaths and tokens of *pistis* (good faith), which in context must mean that he did these things out of respect for the gods.

(166) See pp. 141–2.

(167) Cf. the reasons for belief identified by Parker (2011), 1–34 as operating in earlier Greek religion, including the argument from intelligent design, accepted by all philosophers from the fifth century BCE, and arguments from epiphanies, wonders and portents, divination, experience, moral intuition ('how the gods ought to be' p. 33), and the usually unexpressed but powerful sense that 'the gods exist because we worship them' (pp. 11–12).

(168) See p. 161; cf. Plin., *HN* 2.1–4, 14.

(169) Veyne (1988), used e.g. by Feeney (1998) 14–17; cf. Harris (2009) 127–34 on belief in dreams: 'there is belief and belief' (p. 129).

(170) (1998) 14–15.

(171) pp. 25–6.

(172) 2.170. Our best hopes for outsider perspectives on Greek or Roman *pistis/fides* towards the gods, Josephus' *Against Apion*, Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*, and, towards the end of the period, the early Christian apologies, have, disappointingly, virtually nothing to say about it. *Jos., Ap.* 2.163.2 does say that Moses was undoubtedly given his laws (the best there are) by God. The Greeks may believe that their laws were given to archaic lawgivers by Zeus or Apollo, but they cannot be sure. This suggests that Josephus recognizes that Greeks and Jews share a similar understanding of the origins of their laws, which in both cases is interpreted within their religious 'horizon of significance'.

(173) Following Nock (1933), 99–121.

(174) It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss scientific developments (especially in medicine, natural science, and mathematics) in this period, but it is also possible that their methods of argument and appeal to material proofs affected what were understood as reasons for trusting the gods, in particular, and fostered scepticism (see Vidal and Kleeberg (2007), who also emphasize helpfully that both knowledge and belief are practices rather than solely mental attitudes).

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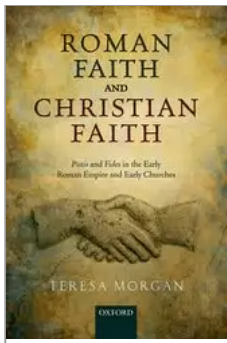
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Teresa Morgan

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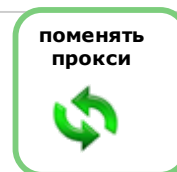
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Pistis in the Septuagint

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses the role of divine–human and intra-human *pistis* in the Septuagint, arguing that an evolution can be detected from the books of the Pentateuch to the Hellenistic wisdom tradition and Roman-period commentaries on the Book of Genesis. It discusses the role of *pistis* in the covenants which Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites make with God in Genesis and Exodus. It examines Job's understanding of *pistis* in his complaint against God, and the shape of the divine–human relationship implicit in God's response. It investigates the *pistis* of God towards the faithful and that of the faithful towards God in the Wisdom of Solomon and in Sirach. It also explores the role of God as sponsor of *pistis* between human beings, the relationship between *pistis* and truth, and the relationship between faith, fear, doubt, and scepticism.

Keywords: *pistis*, faithful, Septuagint, Abraham, Moses, Job, wisdom, Sirach, God

In this chapter we turn from the dominant Graeco-Roman culture of the early Roman empire to Christianity's other principal source and interlocutor, Judaism, and to the most important work of Hellenized Judaism, the Septuagint. We begin by acknowledging what Tessa Rajak, among others, has pointed out, that the name 'Septuagint' properly refers to the corpus of Greek biblical texts in its fully evolved, late Roman form, and not to all versions of the Jewish Bible in Greek.¹ It does, however, remain a conventional name by which to refer to the evolving corpus, which encompasses third-century BCE Greek translations of the Pentateuch, translations of the prophets and writings added gradually through the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and new material which was created during the same centuries, some of which was composed in Hebrew and some in Greek. This chapter is concerned with books available in Greek

to the earliest Christians, and uses ‘Septuagint’ for convenience to refer to that corpus.² The textual history of most of these books is complicated, but as Rajak observes, ‘there is a great deal we can take out of the text without worrying about textual obstacles’.³

In recent years studies of *pistis* in Hellenistic Judaism have tended to focus on Jewish tradition and culture as a whole, rather than specifically on the Septuagint, taking into account the extensive writings of Philo and Josephus, the fragmentary survivals of other authors, and texts excavated from the Judaean desert.⁴ Philo’s use of *pistis* language, however, is mostly either mainstream or closely related to that of other Middle Platonists, while Josephus’ is well in line with that of other Greek prose writers, especially historians, so both fit naturally in earlier chapters, where they have appeared a **(p.177)** number of times.⁵ It is, moreover, not likely that either was known to most, if any, of the writers of the New Testament.⁶ The Septuagint, in contrast, stands at the heart not only of Hellenized Judaism but also of the writings of primitive Christianity, so for the purposes of this study its use of the *pistis* lexicon is especially significant and interesting.

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 ... in mind that since the oldest part of
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 ... Lührmann, Lindsay, and others in
 locating the centre of gravity of Septuagintal *pistis* language in its meanings of trust, trustworthiness, and faithfulness, along with some of its key ‘deferred’ meanings such as belief and proof, while recognizing that it may at times retain overtones of the Hebrew *’emunah* lexicon, such as the ideas of firmness, refuge, and saying ‘Amen’ to God.⁸ As always, context is key in exploring its meaning in particular passages. I also follow the unanimous scholarly view that *pistis* language is not the dominant concept in Jewish thinking that it already is when we first encounter Christian thought. The caveat with which we began the last chapter, that no one would start studying Greek or Roman religiosity by looking at *pistis/fides*, applies to the Septuagint too. At the same **(p.178)** time, the role of *pistis* language in this corpus is not negligible, and is worth examination both in its own right and as part of the mental set of the authors of the New Testament and other early followers of Christ.

There will be little discussion in what follows of redaction criticism. Central as it is to modern interpretation, the study of the strands and layers of composition of sacred texts was of little interest to Hellenistic Jewish or early Christian readers—not because they did not notice such things as linguistic variations or inconsistencies in narrative, but because they used different interpretative tools, such as grammatical analysis, allegory, and discussion of authorial intention, to explain them.⁹ Passages like Genesis 15, whose compositional history is now recognized as formidably complex, will be analysed as it seems likely that first-century Greek speakers would have heard or read them: as multi-thematic, in places problematic, but unified stories.

The overarching theme of this chapter, as of previous chapters, will be the shape of *pistis* in the books of the Septuagint and what kinds of divine–human and intra–human relationships it helps to structure. Not every instance of *pistis* language in the corpus will be discussed: in most books, if it appears at all it is rather thinly spread, and does not play a major role. In a few books or passages, however, it plays a larger and more significant part. The first two sections examine some passages of Genesis, Exodus, Job, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, and Habakkuk in which *pistis* language is central and particularly interesting, before we cast the net more widely to examine the *pistis* of God, human *pistis* towards God, and *pistis* between human beings.

Pistis in Divine–Human Relations: Covenant-making in Genesis and Exodus

The first appearance of the *pistis* lexicon in the Septuagint occurs at a moment which is foundational for the history of Israel and will become a battleground in the construction of Christian identity: καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην· ‘And Abram trusted/believed God, and it was credited to him as an act of righteousness.’¹⁰

(p.179) The ‘and’ gives away that this is not the beginning of Abram’s relationship with the Lord. Some time earlier (12.1), God has told Abram to leave Haran, where his family has recently settled, and travel to a land which the Lord will show him.¹¹ ‘And Abram went (*eporeuthē*)’, says the Septuagint neutrally (12.4). When they arrive in Canaan, the Lord appears to tell Abram that he will give this land to his descendants, and Abram builds an altar there (12.7). During a subsequent famine, a journey by Abram and Sarai to Egypt, their return to Canaan, and parting from Abram’s nephew Lot, Abram hears nothing from the Lord, but after Lot has left, the Lord appears again to reaffirm that he will give this land to Abram’s descendants forever (13.14–17). When Lot falls victim to the wars of the kings of Sodom and Abram makes an expedition to recover him, we again hear nothing from the Lord, but it emerges that Abram has sworn an oath to God not to take any booty from his enemies except to recoup the expenses of war (14.22–4).¹² ‘After these matters’ (15.1), God appears to reassure Abram that the Lord will protect and reward him, at which point Abram responds that wealth is no use to him if he remains childless (15.2–3). The Lord promises him again that he will have descendants, and Abram trusts

him.¹³

Abram's relationship with God may be seen, implicitly even when it is not explicitly, as a story of evolving *pistis*, and every time Abram obeys God as a new instance of *pistis*, based on his ever-growing experience that God's commands are good for him.¹⁴ Understood this way, Abram's *pistis* might be seen as forming part of a much longer story of implicit divine–human *pistis*, (p.180) going back to Noah and ultimately to Adam.¹⁵ God has repeatedly shown himself to be trustworthy in the past, and following (trustingly) God's commands has repeatedly proved good for human beings (as when Noah built the ark), and disobeying them bad (as when Adam and Eve ate from the tree in the garden of Eden). Even if one sees divine–human trust as implicit throughout the first fourteen chapters of Genesis, however, it is notable that hitherto Abram and those of his ancestors who have had a good relationship with God have been said to practise not *pistis* but obedience.¹⁶ Trust and obedience, of course, are often closely related, but not inevitably so, and it is significant that at the point where *pistis* is introduced into this narrative for the first time, something else is also introduced: doubt. Abram's ancestors have obeyed God and been rewarded, or disobeyed him and been punished. Abram himself has obeyed without question when told to leave Haran. But now, without questioning his relationship with God itself, Abram has doubted and raised a question about how God's promise to him can be fulfilled. God has reaffirmed his promise (though without explaining how he will fulfil it), and it is at this point that Abram *episteusen*.

Abram's *pistis* therefore takes place within a tried-and-tested divine–human relationship.¹⁷ It is certainly not a 'leap of faith' *ex nihilo*. Nevertheless, it marks a real departure. For the first time, God has not only chosen Abram; Abram, by raising his question, has asserted a degree of independence from God and then made a choice to trust him. Immediately afterwards he is credited for the first time with *dikaiosynē*.¹⁸

Dikaiosynē in the Septuagint (and the New Testament) is typically understood as the quality of respectful acknowledgement and obedience towards God which characterizes the human being who stands in a proper relationship with God, and as such is often translated 'righteousness' rather than 'justice'.¹⁹ (p.181) At the same time, as we saw in previous chapters, to a Greek speaker of the late Hellenistic world or early principate *dikaiosynē*, and even more the juxtaposition of *dikaiosynē* and *pistis*, have unmistakeably social, political, and legal overtones.²⁰ *Pistis* and *dikaiosynē* are terms of social order and social contract or covenant between the divine and human spheres and between human beings. *Dikaiosynē* is the quality and practice which, in association with trust, enables societies to develop and persist and laws to be forged, accepted, and enforced. When Abram is credited with *dikaiosynē*, he was surely heard by Greek speakers as being credited with more than a personal relationship with God. He was marked as electing to play his part in the establishment of the society which would grow out of his offspring and become Israel.²¹ By the same token, Abram's *pistis* is presented as more than that of an individual obedient to his God. It is an independent and socially foundational action, enabling a new and creative phase in the divine–human relationship and in human society.

A few verses later Genesis confirms the new status of Abram's relationship with God: 'On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram (διέθετο κύριος τῷ Ἀβραμ διαθήκην)' (15.18). *Diathēkē*, which normally means a will, testament, or any kind of compact, is another word with strong implications of social and legal contract. On one level the covenant reifies the act of *pistis* which Abram and God have made, making formal the hitherto informal relationship of trust between God and Adam's and Noah's descendants in a way appropriate to the prospective status of Israel. On another level it is a reification of deferred trust, designed to allay whatever uncertainties remain in Abram's mind. That uncertainties do remain is strongly suggested by the two acts which immediately precede the making of the covenant. God reminds Abram (15.7) that he has been reliable before: he brought him from Ur to Canaan. And he tells Abram to prepare a sacrifice, over which God performs a miracle (15.17). Even between God and human beings, Genesis recognizes, *pistis* does not evolve without the negotiation of doubt.

It will already be obvious that in this story *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* fit a pattern familiar from earlier chapters of this study. Deliberate, risk-taking trust, fortified by evidence of the past and reified in oaths and rituals, enables the evolution of a relationship which is social and political as well as personal. Abraham's relationship with God is not presented as that of a golden age in which *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* flourish unproblematically in a harmonious divine–human and intra-human society.²² It is more reminiscent of the way Diodorus Siculus describes the evolution of democratic Athens or Dionysius (p.182) of Halicarnassus that of Rome under King Numa.²³ *Pistis* and *dikaiosynē* cannot be taken for granted and must be negotiated on both sides. When they are negotiated successfully, however, both individual relationships and societies (in Abram's case, a prospective society) develop and are strengthened.

After this establishment of the covenant, the establishment of the same covenant in chapter 17 is, to modern eyes, an obvious doublet.²⁴ The Lord again comes to Abram and tells him that his descendants will be numerous and will rule Canaan (17.4–8). This

time Abram is not said to trust God: instead he falls on his face in the manner of a subject honouring an absolute monarch (17.3). God tells Abram that his and his descendants' part of the agreement will be to continue to worship the Lord as their God (17.7) The covenant is marked by Abram's being renamed Abraham and by the institution of circumcision. The tone of this pericope is noticeably different from that of the earlier one. In place of the evolution of a relationship of trust, we find God informing Abram of his terms and Abram prostrating himself in obedience. Neither *pistis* nor *dikaiosynē* language is involved in this story, which makes it of less interest to the present discussion. It is worth noting, though, that the two stories offer two different models of appropriate ways for a human being to relate to the Lord, not two understandings of the role of *pistis* in Abraham's relationship with God, nor two understandings of the relationship between *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* at the foundation of Israel.

Among later retellings and commentaries on Genesis 15–17, two are especially interesting for our purposes because they indicate that Josephus was disturbed by the two covenant stories and that Philo was disturbed by Abraham's expressions of doubt.²⁵ In *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus retells the story of Abraham with significant changes, which iron out what he evidently felt were problematic aspects of the narrative. Of particular interest to us is that he glosses over God's promise of offspring to Abraham at Genesis 12.2 (1.154), so that God makes only one promise to Abraham (1.183; cf. Gen. 15.1). What God promises at 1.183 is initially the rewards of Abraham's successful recent war (cf. Gen. 15.1). When Abraham asks what good such rewards will be when he has no son to whom to pass them on, God promises that he will also have a son. Abraham's response (1.184) is to offer a sacrifice (cf. Gen. 15.8) confirming his acceptance of the oracle. Abraham's doubts about God's previous promise of offspring, God's reassurances, Abraham's trust, and any reference (**p.183**) to the covenant they make are all omitted. Shortly afterwards (1.186), Josephus reports that Abraham does worry about Sarah's continuing barrenness and prays for a son; God confirms that he will have one, and this is the nearest Josephus comes to introducing doubt or negotiation into Abraham's relationship with God. The second account of the establishment of the covenant, at Genesis 17.1–14, is omitted almost completely from Josephus' narrative. His only allusion to it comes when God is foretelling Isaac's future (1.191–2; cf. Gen. 17.19–21) and tells Abraham to circumcise his family to prevent his descendants from intermarrying with others.

Josephus' narrative departs from that of Genesis in several other interesting ways which are outside the scope of this chapter.²⁶ Three aspects of his account, however, are relevant here. Josephus is not prepared to show God and Abraham as involved in a complex, deliberative, quasi-contractual relationship of evolving trust, doubt, reassurance, and proof, emphasizing instead Abraham's obedience to God's authority. He never says that God and Abraham establish a covenant, preferring to present the origin of Israel as a political entity later, in the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai (*Ant.* 3.83–8). And the Septuagintal term *diathēkē* is not the only one not to appear in his Greek narrative: the closely linked, sociopolitically foundational language of *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* is not mentioned either. Josephus seems to want not only to smooth out many of the complexities in Abraham's relationship with God, but also to avoid any language which might suggest that Abraham is the father of Israel as a *politeia*.

Philo takes a different approach to the *pistis* of Abraham. In *Questions and Answers on Genesis* (3.1–10) he raises a number of questions about Genesis 15.1–13, of which the most interesting for us is Question Two on Genesis 15.8: 'Why does [Abraham] say, "Lord, how shall I know that I shall possess [this land]?"' Here, says Philo, Abraham is seeking a sign (*sēmeion*) as of God's promise. Philo's explanation for this is based on his Platonic separation of the intellect, which is able to apprehend the truth, from the outer senses, which do not recognize truth and so suffer from doubts and misunderstandings.²⁷ With his intellect Abraham unquestioningly trusts (*pisteuein*) in God and his word. (We saw in the last chapter that for Philo, *pistis* can act as the basis of knowledge of the divine.²⁸) With his outer senses, even though he shows (says Philo) that on some level he trusts God by calling him 'Lord', and says explicitly that he trusts him, Abraham still needs reassurances, or proofs, that (**p.184**) God will do as he says. For, Abraham says in Philo's words, he is a mortal, who cannot always approach the good even when he knows he should.

Philo does not discuss Genesis 15.6 in this series of questions, but what he says about Abraham's doubt and trust in relation to 15.8 could equally be applied to 15.1–6. He is troubled by Abraham's doubt (unsurprisingly, perhaps, given the status of Abraham in tradition and that of scripture in general), but thinks he can explain it. Philo has in common with Josephus, however, that he is not interested in Abraham, with his *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*, as the founder of Israel as a *politeia*, and not only in this work. In other passages where he talks about God's promises to Abraham, Philo interprets them in various ways allegorically as concerning the relationship between the body, soul, intellect, and virtue.²⁹

Philo's and Josephus' responses to the Pentateuch, and especially what they cut, change, or feel the need to discuss, offer fascinating glimpses into some of the ways in which the text could be heard in the first century. It seems clear that the process by which God and Abraham negotiate their relationship in Genesis 12–17, through overtures and acts of trust, doubts, reassurances, proofs of good faith, reaffirmations of trust, covenants, and recognitions of foundational righteousness, is controversial for some readers at this

time. Both authors deal with it at length, and in Philo's case repeatedly, omitting, altering, or glossing at every point. To judge from their responses, moreover, no part of the story needs more attention than the idea that Abraham, from within his relationship with God, doubted, was reassured with words and proofs, trusted, was deemed just, and made a covenant that established Israel as a land and a people. The implication must be that no part of the story was more important to Philo's and Josephus' contemporaries.

Abraham's trust in God does not come at a moment of crisis, in the sense that Abraham is in immediate danger, but it does constitute a moment of decision which is pivotal for Abraham's own life and for the future people of Israel. In the Book of Exodus *pistis* language features at another turning point in the relationship between God and Abraham's descendants which is also a moment of decision.

At the beginning of Exodus 3, Moses, Israelite by birth but brought up as an Egyptian, who has fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian whom he saw beating an Israelite, has made a new life in Midian. One day, as he is shepherding near Mount Horeb, an angel of the Lord appears to him in a flame emerging from a bush. When Moses goes to look more closely, God speaks from the bush, telling him to return to Egypt and announce to his people that God has sent him to rescue them. Moses objects: 'Suppose they do not trust/believe me (ἐὰν οὖν μὴ πιστεύσωσιν μοι)?...If they say, "The Lord did not appear to you", (**p.185**) what shall I say to them?' (4.1). The Lord responds by enabling Moses to perform a number of pieces of magic, 'so that they may trust/believe you (ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν σοι), that the Lord, the God of their fathers, God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob, has appeared to you' (4.5).

Trust and belief are classically intertwined and mutually supportive in this passage (not least through the unusual juxtaposition of *pisteuein* with the dative followed in 4.1 by a propositional claim and in 4.5 by a *hoti* clause).³⁰ Moses thinks that the Israelites will not be disposed to trust or believe him, not only because his story is extraordinary but also, no doubt, because he grew up in the Pharaoh's palace, got into trouble, and fled the country. Other than his one disastrous intervention on behalf of an Israelite slave, he has no history of the kind of relationship with his people that might engender personal trust and belief in his extraordinary story. By enabling Moses to perform magic, however, God enables belief to be deferred to a recognized proof of the magician's special relationship with the divine: the Israelites will believe their eyes. It is clear that more than propositional belief will need to ensue. If the Israelites do accept that Moses' mission comes from the Lord, they will have to trust him enough to follow him out of Egypt.

The text emphasizes that Moses can trust God to enable the Israelites to trust him by making God remind him, in a rhetorical tricolon, that he is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The Israelites are already in a relationship with God, who has proved trustworthy in the past, and it will behoove them to remember it now. The author confirms the integral role of *pistis* here with God's culminating words:

ἐὰν δὲ μὴ πιστεύσωσιν σοι μηδὲ εἰσακούσωσιν τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ σημείου τοῦ πρώτου, πιστεύσουσιν σοι τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ σημείου τοῦ ἑσχάτου. καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύσωσιν σοι τοῖς δυοῖν σημείοις τούτοις μηδὲ εἰσακούσωσιν τῆς φωνῆς σου, λήμψη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ ἐκχεεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ ξηρὸν, καὶ ἔσται τὸ ὕδωρ...αἷμα ἐπὶ τοῦ ξηροῦ.

'Now if they should not trust/believe you or listen to the voice of the first sign, they will trust/believe you because of the voice of the last sign. And it will be if they should not trust/believe you and these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some of the river's water and pour it on the dry ground, and the water...will be blood on the dry ground.' (Exod. 4.8–9)

Then, the clear implication is, they will believe/trust you.³¹

In the event, when he returns to Egypt Moses goes first to his brother Aaron. Aaron tells the people of Moses' instructions from God, Moses performs his miracles, and the people, says the translator, *episteusen* and, (**p.186**) rejoicing, bowed down in worship of God (4.31). The difficulties of trust and belief are successfully negotiated, and will shortly lead to the Israelites' following Moses into the desert.

Pistis language appears again some chapters later as the Israelites make their escape from Egypt. Pursued by the Egyptians and hemmed in by the coast of the Red Sea, they turn on Moses: 'Were there no burial-places in Egypt that you had to bring us out here to die in the desert?' (14.11). The Lord tells Moses to advance on the sea and walk through it, which he does, and when the Egyptians try to follow they are drowned (14.28). The Israelites, however, reach the other side safely, ἐφοβήθη δὲ ὁ λαὸς τὸν κύριον καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ Μωϋσῆϊ τῷ θεράποντι αὐτοῦ, 'and the people feared the Lord and trusted God and Moses his servant'.³² 'Fear' here is, of course, mainly 'good' fear, awe of God's power, with just a faint resonance of the negative fear that accompanies all trust (if God can do this to the Egyptians, what may he not some day do to us?). The emphasis, however, is on the positive trust which

enables the Israelites to set off into the desert.

From the moment Moses accepted his vocation at the burning bush the Israelites have been a people in transition, from slavery to freedom and a new identity as an independent political community. In the desert they are given the laws by which the new community will be structured, and at this crux in their relationship with God *pistis* language again plays a prominent role.

When the Israelites reach the wilderness of Sinai, Moses climbs Mount Sinai to hear again the call of God. God tells him to remind the Israelites that they saw what God did to the Egyptians. He has proved his trustworthiness beyond doubt. Now, if they listen to God's voice and keep his covenant, they will become dearer to him than any other people: a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (19.3–6). Moses descends and reports this to the people, who affirm that they will keep the covenant. Moses reports their response to God, who tells him that he will come to Moses in a dark cloud, ἵνα ἀκούσῃ ὁ λαὸς λαλοῦντος μου πρὸς σὲ καὶ σοὶ πιστεύσωσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, 'so that the people may listen while I am speaking to you and they may trust you forever' (19.9).³³

Like Abraham's covenant with God, the Sinaitic covenant both expresses the Israelites' evolving relationship with God and fortifies it against the inevitable fear and doubt which accompany new initiatives of trust (from both of which the Israelites have suffered already and from which they will continue to suffer throughout their years in the desert). In addition, God plans to endow Moses with some of the trust which the Israelites have in Godself, by (p.187) showing them that Moses can and does communicate with God. Along with its laws, another key aspect of the structure of the community is shaped at Mount Sinai: the authority and trustworthiness of God is formally invested in a human intermediary (and below him, it will emerge later, in a wider group of lesser intermediaries).³⁴ Moses' reciprocal relationship of trust and trustworthiness with God, together with his reciprocal relationship of trust and trustworthiness with the people, will help the community in the future to maintain its relationship with God through Moses.³⁵

The story of Exodus, like that of Abraham, is one of evolving *pistis* between a divinity and a group of human beings. Initiated by God, it develops by judicious risk-taking on both sides, interspersed with attacks of Israelite doubt, deferring periodically to the evidence of divine revelations and miracles, and reified in a series of oaths, sacrifices, and covenants. Essentially forward-looking and productive, it plays a key role in moments of crisis and decision-making which change the situation of the human community and take it in new directions. One thing it does not involve is a 'leap of faith' in a fideistic sense (at least, not by human beings). On the contrary, human beings never practise *pistis* without being reminded of God's past and present trustworthiness towards them. (We might wonder whether God's creation of humanity and covenant with them constitute leaps of faith, but that question is not canvassed by the texts.)

The role of *pistis* in the new *politeia* which begins to be formed at Mount Sinai has parallels with the role of *pistis* in evolving Greek or Roman communities, in ways which would surely have been audible both to Hellenistic Jewish audiences and to early Christians. There is, though, a measurable difference of emphasis. Greeks and Romans, as we have seen, tend to focus on the evolution and working of human communities, which are fortified by their participants' trust in the gods. In the Septuagint the focus is on the *pistis* relationship between God and leading members of the community, which (ideally) cascades down to create *pistis* between community leaders and the community more widely. 'Ordinary' community members, however, are very rarely indeed, in Genesis and Exodus, described as practising *pistis* towards one another.³⁶ We should not exaggerate this divergence: in both models divine trustworthiness and human trust in the divine are seen as being at the root of (p.188) intra-human trust. Nevertheless, the difference of emphasis is clearly detectable when we read the corpora side by side. The Israelites' understanding of themselves as God's people in a uniquely strong sense makes divine-human *pistis* especially important in stories of Israel's foundation.

The translators of the Septuagint do not insert *pistis* language into these narratives from Genesis and Exodus at whim: as we should expect, it translates 'emunah' language. More significantly, perhaps, given the range of terms available to translators with which to render the 'emunah' lexicon in Greek, the translators regularly choose *pistis* language at moments of change and decision-making, when the relationship between God and his people is portrayed as entering a new phase, or a covenant is made which will create or shape Israel in the future.³⁷ The parallels which have been drawn between the operation and significance of *pistis* in these passages and in the later Hellenistic and Roman worlds are therefore most unlikely to be coincidental. The translators surely expected Greek-speaking listeners and readers to hear in their text resonances with the ways in which *pistis* language was deployed in the world around them.

The Book of Job

In the Book of Job, which was probably composed in the fifth or fourth century and translated into Greek in Alexandria in the second century BCE, *pistis* language plays a role which in some ways is rather different from its role in Genesis and Exodus. It begins as Job,

as a test of his piety (*theosebeia*) (2.3), is stripped by Satan, with God's connivance, of his possessions and family and covered with boils. Three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, hear of his misfortunes and come to comfort him. For seven days they sit together in silence and ashes, and then Job speaks at length (ch. 3) to curse the day he was born.

The first friend to respond is Eliphaz. In a manner as familiar to Greeks and Romans as to Israelites, he says that he has seen a spirit in a dream which told him that no man can be pure (*katharos*) or blameless (*amemptos*) before God (4.12–17). God puts no trust (*ou pisteuei*) even in his servants, and finds fault with his angels (4.18); how much more easily are mere human beings crushed into the dust?³⁸ To a Hellenized audience, at any time between the second (p.189) century BCE and the first century CE (the era, from a Jewish perspective, of Greek and Roman tyranny and Israelite resistance or enslavement; from a Greek perspective, of Greek resistance to or forced negotiation with Roman power; from a Roman perspective, of Roman conquest of Greek tyrants and negotiation with its own sometimes despotic emperors), it must have been hard, hearing this description, not to envisage Eliphaz's God as an absolute ruler, even a tyrant: ruthless, untrusting, and untrustworthy, his relationship with human beings unregulated by any covenant involving justice. For good measure, Eliphaz repeats this view in his second speech: '[W]ho being mortal can be blameless, or who can be in the right, born of woman? If [God] places no faith in his holy ones (εἰ κατὰ ἀγίων οὐ πιστεύει), then heaven is not pure before him. But aha, abominable and impure, a man drinking injustices (*adikias*) like a drink!' (15.14–16).

In chapter 9 Job picks up the theme of justice: 'If I am in the right, he will not listen to me; and even if I call and he responds, I have no confidence (*ou pisteuō*) that he will listen to me' (9.15–16). A man cannot be *dikaïos* before God, Job says (9.1), echoing Eliphaz's theme of purity before God and contradicting Bildad's claim that God does not distort justice (8.3). 'Because, for one thing, he really prevails by force, who then can withstand his judgement? For instance, should I be right, my mouth will turn out impious! And should I be blameless, I will prove to be perverse!' (9.19–20). Job's complaint is one which is made against all tyrants: they may operate the semblance of a justice system, but it is stacked against everyone but themselves.

Eliphaz and Bildad may be identifying being *dikaïos* before God here with being pure, and taking the view that, as no human being can be adequately pure before God, no one can be sufficiently just. It is, however, notable that a relationship in which God acts, to human eyes, tyrannically, and in which *pistis* does not pertain between God and his divine or human servants, is not characterized by *dikaïosynē* either. The polity founded on a trusting relationship and characterized by justice which we saw in evolution in Genesis and Exodus is pointedly absent from Job's picture of divine–human relations.³⁹

The significance of this picture, or this part of the debate about Job's relationship with God, within the book as a whole should not be exaggerated. The speeches in which *pistis* and *dikaïosynē* are invoked are relatively few in number, while the arguments which rage between Job and his friends for thirty-four chapters are long and complex, involving many themes which are beyond our purview. Elsewhere, moreover, one or another of the friends (p.190) claims that God is indeed *dikaïos*. At 8.3 Bildad anticipates the affirmation which God himself will make, that as the maker of all things he is necessarily just, while at 11.13 Zophar anticipates another divine argument, that Job simply is not wise or visionary enough to criticize God. These passages, however, do not use *pistis* language, so they do not concern us here.

In his 'summing-up' of his case against God, Job reiterates that, as far as he has understood his obligations as a human being under God's rule, he has done right: he has been honest, just, generous to the needy, hospitable to strangers, and a leader in war (29.5–25).⁴⁰ Despite all this, God has crushed him unmercifully, buffeting him with his strong hand and casting him into the mud, dust, and ashes (30.19, 21–2). God, the clear implication is, has not kept his part of the bargain, and when Job cries out in protest, God does not even answer (30.20).

When God finally responds, his first argument, and the one which has received the most attention, is that his nature and his power are so far beyond Job's imagining as to make it nonsensical for Job to try to call him to account. He also, more obliquely, answers some of Job's specific complaints that he is not just, attentive, or trustworthy. He looks after the young of birds and animals (38.39–41). He regulates all living creatures equally (38–41, *passim*). He has a relationship of trust with the wild ox: it serves him, he trusts it, and believes or trusts that it will bring home the harvested grain to his threshing-floor (πέποιθας δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῶν...πιστεύσεις δὲ ὅτι ἀποδώσει σοι τὸν σπόρον...) (39.9–12). Even the keenness of the horse to prove his trustworthiness in battle is God's doing (39.24).

The message of God's response seems to be not only that he is a being of unimaginable power (which Job never disputed), but also that he rules a regulated universe, one in which there is both trust and justice between God and his non-human creatures and in which human beings can therefore trust too. In this light, the ending of the book, which can seem either incoherent with the long central section, or unnecessary after Job's reconciliation with God at 42.1–6, becomes a little less unsatisfactory. Job's restoration to

family and fortune can be seen as symbolizing the order that the universe is finally found to have. Meanwhile, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who at some (if not all) points in the debate have urged Job to humble himself before even an apparently tyrannical God, are only saved from God's anger by Job's intercession.

At first sight, Job presents a picture of a universe in which there is no covenant between God and human beings, because God is an absolute ruler with whom there is no treating. Job, from a human perspective, furnished with the concepts of trust, law, and justice in the human sphere, complains about **(p.191)** this and is shown why no legal system operates between God and humanity. By the end of the book it appears that there is a covenant of sorts between God and human beings, but one which is significantly different from that of Genesis or Exodus. It is based on God's trustworthy regulation of creation as a whole, and the restoration of Job implies that human beings can trust that God will not ultimately allow his creatures to suffer, beyond what is inevitable in the course of life and death. Any idea that God has a special relationship with some people, however, or that it is possible for individuals or peoples to negotiate and develop a divine-human polity, seems far from the mindset of this book. The closest it comes to the *mentalité* of Genesis or Exodus seems to be when God points to his care of birds and animals to prove that he is not indifferent to the world, answering Job's scepticism with the evidence of nature around him.⁴¹

The Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach

It has been suggested that the Septuagintal text of Job owes something, compositionally and theologically, to its creation in Alexandria, where it may have originated in the same circles as the Wisdom of Solomon.⁴² If the two books do come from the same circles, the connection is not obvious in their *pistis* language. The Wisdom of Solomon has in common with Job that it **(p.192)** links *pistis* with legal language, but in other ways its use of the lexicon is rather different.

In general, no part of the Septuagint uses *pistis* language more than the wisdom books composed in the Hellenistic period, and none more than the Wisdom of Solomon, which is almost certainly not a translation but an original Greek composition.⁴³ The book presents its interest in *pistis* in its opening verses:

Ἀγαπήσατε δικαιοσύνην, οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν,
φρονήσατε περὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἐν ἀγαθότητι
καὶ ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίας ζητήσατε αὐτόν.
ὅτι εὕρισκεται τοῖς μὴ πειράζουσιν αὐτόν,
ἐμφανίζεται δὲ τοῖς μὴ ἀπιστοῦσιν αὐτῷ.
Love justice, you who judge the earth;
think about the Lord in goodness,
and seek him with sincerity of heart;
because he is found by those who do not test him,
and he reveals himself to those who do not mistrust him. (1.1–2)

In the light of the passages already discussed, it is interesting that the writer begins his book by addressing those who have juridical authority.⁴⁴ The configuration of trust, justice, and the divine-human relationship here, though, is rather different from the one we encountered in the Book of Job. Job's concern was whether the justice of God rules the world. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon is concerned with intra-human as well as divine-human relations. He sees human *pistis* towards God as the foundation of that right attitude of mind which results in human beings behaving justly towards those over whom they rule.

In this book no new divine-human covenants are made: it is taken for granted that God and human beings are in an ongoing relationship, and the only risk is that, by failing in justice or integrity, human beings may separate themselves from God or make a catastrophic 'anti-covenant' with death.⁴⁵ In the cause of avoiding these disasters, the author returns repeatedly to the importance of cultivating a relationship of *pistis* with a God who is presumptively always trustworthy. In chapter 12 he says that God warns offenders of the sins they are committing and rebukes them 'little by little...in order that, being freed from wickedness, they may put their trust in you, Lord (πιστεῦσωσιν ἐπὶ σέ, κύριε)' (12.2). The full violence of which the natural world is capable is brought to bear against the wicked, and is relaxed for those who trust God, so that people may learn that, even more than food, it is God's **(p.193)** word that sustains *tous...pisteuontas* (16.23, 26). The Israelites were warned before the event that God would kill all the firstborn of Israel, so that they could take evasive action and learn to rejoice in the oaths (to God) in which they had trusted (18.6).⁴⁶

The author's exhortations to *pistis* are often addressed to the powerful, who are in a position to rule Israel well or badly. Sometimes, though, he addresses the powerless and vulnerable. They too should practise *pistis* towards God. If they do, even though they suffer

and are persecuted, they will be protected and vindicated—if not in this life, then in the eschatological future. ‘The souls of the just are in the hand of God’ (3.1):

κρῖνοῦσιν ἔθνη καὶ κρατήσουσιν λαῶν,
καὶ βασιλεύσει αὐτῶν κύριος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.
οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ συνήσουσιν ἀλήθειαν,
καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ·
ὅτι χάρις καὶ ἔλεος τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ.
They will judge nations and rule over peoples,
And the Lord will be king over them for ever.
Those who trust in him will understand truth,
and the faithful will remain with him in love
because grace and mercy are on his chosen ones. (3.8–9)

The idea that the faithful should accept whatever happens to them and put their trust in God, even when they are suffering, for however long their suffering lasts, in the hope of vindication, ultimately if not in this lifetime, moves a stage beyond the attitudes of Job and his friends. In the last three lines this passage takes an even more radical step. Trusting God is described as connected with, and, if the future tense of *συνήσουσιν* is consequential, foundational for understanding truth and living in love with God.

In the previous chapter, as already mentioned, we saw that Philo departs from Plato’s use of *pistis* language in relation to the metaphysical by positing *pistis* towards God as foundational for the development of the divine–human relationship within which human beings come to understand the nature of truth.⁴⁷ Philo’s theory has been seen as a development within Platonism, though if so, it is a substantial one, given that Plato treats *pistis* as the opposite of the understanding of truth. This passage suggests that Philo’s theory may have biblical roots.⁴⁸

(p.194) Although the author of the Wisdom of Solomon is interested in intra-human as well as divine–human *pistis*, he has relatively little to say about it. An exception is 14.1–5, where he describes how God makes a path through the waves and providentially guides the boats of merchants in order to show his power. The divine–human relationship is the main theme here, but this is not where *pisteuein* is used in this passage. It is only because God has determined that the products of his Wisdom should be used, the author affirms, that human beings trust (*pisteuousin*) their lives to wooden ships (14.5). Here, God gives human beings a skill and enables them to trust it and each other as executors of it, in a pattern similar to one which emerged several times from Greek and Roman material.⁴⁹

The Book of Sirach also emphasizes the importance of divine–human *pistis* as the foundation of a just human society. ‘Trust God (πίστευσον αὐτῷ) and he will help you; make straight your ways and hope in him...You who fear the Lord, trust him (πιστεύσατε αὐτῷ)...has anyone trusted in the Lord (τίς ἐνεπίστευσεν κυρίῳ) and been disappointed?...Woe to the fainthearted man who does not trust (οὐ πιστεύει)...’ (2.6, 8, 10, 13); ‘He who trusts in the law preserves himself; and he who trusts in the Lord will not be put to shame (ὁ πιστεύων νόμῳ...ὁ πεποιθὼς κυρίῳ)’ (32.24).⁵⁰

Trust here is both corporate and individual, but with the emphasis on the individual. Like the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach takes for granted a context in which both the group and the individual are in a covenant relationship with God, and also the kind of cosmic context implied in the later chapters of Job, where God is the ruler of an ultimately orderly creation. *Pistis* here is a covenant-maintaining rather than a covenant-making quality. It is based on appropriate fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom (1.14), and, along with justice, it is closely linked with endurance of injustice, hope, and at least implicitly with obedience.⁵¹ If one has power, one should use it well; if not, one should endure the injustice of others and wait for the justice of the Lord. ‘Do not admire how sinners live, but trust in the Lord (πίστευε δὲ κυρίῳ) and wait for his light.’ In the Book of Exodus we saw community leaders’ trust in God cascading down to fortify the community’s trust in them. **(p.195)** In this book it is the law which acts as a focus of the community’s trust on the human plane. Listeners and readers are urged to trust the law as they trust God, because the law comes from God and is authorized by God (and perhaps even because, with God’s backing, it enables them to trust one another).

Reading the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach after Genesis, Exodus, and Job gives one a vivid, if inevitably impressionistic, sense of how Israelite–Jewish understandings of divine–human *pistis* may have evolved. In the later books there is no question of God’s approaching individuals who decide whether or not to put their trust in him; no question of God’s offering proofs or pledges of good faith; no question of God’s creating new intermediaries whose trust and trustworthiness towards both himself and their fellow human

beings helps his people to trust him. God is reliable but rather distant, his trustworthiness often presented as encoded in the nature of the universe or in an existing covenant, represented among human beings by the law, rather than in direct individual relationships. Human beings are required to practise *pistis* towards him in order to avoid punishment and to maintain a just society. Those who do may nevertheless find themselves persecuted in the world; they will be vindicated, but they cannot know when, so they must continue to trust indefinitely.⁵² Very occasionally the text hints that practising *pistis* may bring one closer to God. It is not clear who the 'chosen ones' of 3.9 are: they could be the rulers of verse 8, but they need not be. If they are not, then the author may be introducing listeners and readers here to a somewhat different kind of individual divine–human relationship from any seen or heard earlier: one which is not confined to community leaders, but is open to all the chosen who put their trust in God.

It is tempting to connect this evolution with Jewish contacts with Greeks, and perhaps even Romans, and the God who regulates the universe with justice and good faith, sponsoring human laws and enabling people to practise trust towards one another, has some obvious parallels with both Zeus and Jupiter. The parallels, however, remain on a very general level: one cannot point, for instance, to a clear example of Jewish borrowing from a Greek text involving divine–human *pistis*. There are, moreover, similarities between older presentations of divine–human *pistis* in Genesis and Exodus and Greek or Roman texts, which cannot be the result of direct borrowing. One might hypothesize that ideas about divine–human trust and so on circulated around the Near East and the Mediterranean over hundreds, if not thousands, of years, finding their way into diverse traditions. Equally, one might assume that **(p.196)** Jewish understandings of trust and so on, and those of other traditions, developed largely internally and that parallels are coincidental. What is clear, however, and noteworthy for this study, is that there are enough parallels between Jewish and Graeco-Roman ideas about divine–human *pistis* in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds to make them intelligible to each other. This will prove a significant factor in the development of *pistis* in early Christian communities.

The Pistis of God

We saw in the last chapter that Greek and Roman gods can be characterized as *pistoi* or *fidi* towards those who worship them. The God of Israel, too, is described in the Septuagint as faithful to his people.⁵³

The faithfulness of God is part of Moses' proclamation to the Israelites at the beginning of the Book of Deuteronomy. In this passage God's faithfulness is marked not as a quality of God per se, but as a consequence of his covenant with Abraham. God, says Moses, has chosen the people of Israel in accordance with his oath to their forefathers: he is *theos pistos*, the faithful God who keeps his covenant down to the thousandth generation (7.9). God's faithfulness means that he will always defend Israel against the much larger and much more powerful nations that surround her. Towards the end of Deuteronomy, Moses returns to God's faithfulness to his covenant in a song which celebrates the history of God's relationship with Israel, culminating in the placing of the tablets of the law in the Ark of the Covenant. God is a rock for Israel: just, upright, without deceit, *theos pistos* (32.4).

In 2 Chronicles, after Solomon has completed the Jerusalem temple and lodged the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, he prays to God to keep the promise he made to David that someone of David's line would always sit on the throne of Israel, and that as long as Israel's kings kept the law, they would never fail in their kingship (6.12–16). 'And now, Lord, God of Israel, let your utterance indeed be confirmed (*pistōthētō*), which you spoke to your servant David' (6.17). God here is appealed to as trustworthy in fulfilling a promise to David within his covenant with Israel, and Solomon calls on him to honour his promise for the future as well as the present.⁵⁴

(p.197) According to Psalm 32.4, the words of the Lord are upright and all his works *en pistei*, 'trustworthy', or perhaps performed 'in good faith'.⁵⁵ He loves mercy and justice (ἐλεημοσύνην καὶ κρίσιν), and for this the *dikaioi* praise him (32.1, 5).⁵⁶ This is a psalm of praise for many occasions, and the faithfulness of the Lord is not linked to any particular moment or sequence in Israel's history, but more broadly to his role as creator and ruler of the cosmos (vv. 5–12). God's rule over creation is also the theme of Psalm 88. This time, though, his *pistis* is celebrated not in connection with his mercies in general but with his covenant with David (v. 29).

Psalm 110 praises God for his mindfulness of his covenant with Israel through time (110.3–6), and at verse 7 all his commands are described as *pistai* (while truth and judgement, *krisis*, are the works of his hands). The psalms, it seems, understand God's *pistis* variously as a function of his covenant (with Israel or particularly with David) and as an intrinsic and universally applied quality of his divinity. It is tempting to construct the Israelites' thinking as evolving from the first conceptualization to the second, but the difficulty of dating the psalms makes chronological speculation a dangerous exercise.⁵⁷

First Isaiah also understands God as having made a covenant with David within his covenant with Israel. A descendant of David will arise at a moment of crisis for Israel and, sitting on David's throne, establish peace, prosperity, and justice in his kingdom forever

(9.1–6). Deutero-Isaiah takes up this theme, revisioning God's covenant with David as a promise of new life for Israel as a whole through the obedience of the suffering servant.⁵⁸ 'You who thirst, go to water, and as many of you as have no money, go, buy, and drink wine and fat...Hear me and you shall eat good things, and your soul shall revel in good things...I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the holy things (*hosia*) of David that are *pista*...' (55.1–3). A little earlier, the servant of the Lord who sings chapter 49 says that the Lord has promised to show his glory through Israel (49.3) in order to bring the descendants of Jacob and Israel back together (49.5). God will make Israel a light to the nations in order to extend his salvation to the ends of the earth (49.6). The nations will prostrate themselves before God's servant, revealing that God is *pistos* to Israel.

(p.198) God's covenant faithfulness in the past is affirmed as the basis for Israel's renewal of *pistis* in the future. Since the overarching theme of Deutero-Isaiah is that God saves Israel despite her past sins, his *pistis* may also be understood more widely. God has remained *pistos* even when the Israelites have not, emphasizing that his faithfulness is not only intra-covenantal, but a quality of God *per se*.

In these passages we also hear that the nations and the Israelites themselves have lost confidence in the *pistis* of God towards Israel and need to have it reaffirmed. God therefore not only renews his covenant; he also defers the Israelites' confidence in him to reminders of his past faithfulness and the promise of an even more glorious future. The fact that God appeals to the past and the future to encourage the renewal of the Israelites' *pistis* hints at another theme, encountered above and in earlier chapters: even in steeply unequal relationships of *pistis* or *fides*—even in divine–human relationships—both sides continue to be understood as needing to gain and keep the confidence of the other.⁵⁹

Deutero-Isaiah calls God's people to a renewed relationship of *pistis* with God at a pivotal moment in their history: their liberation from slavery in Babylon by Cyrus the Great of Persia, when he conquered the Babylonian empire in 539 BCE. Jeremiah too shows *pistis* in operation at a moment of crisis, this time between human beings.

Jeremiah 49 finds the Israelites in disarray. The Babylonians (some fifty years before their conquest by Cyrus) have taken Jerusalem, and many Israelites have been sent into exile. Those who are left, whom the Babylonians put under the authority of a puppet king, Gedaliah, have fallen to faction-fighting and Gedaliah has been assassinated. Gedaliah's surviving subordinates approach Jeremiah for advice about what to do next, saying, 'Let the Lord be among us as a just and faithful witness (*μάρτυρα δίκαιον καὶ πιστόν*)' if they do not act as he tells them to (49.5). The trustworthiness of God acts here (in a way familiar from Greek and Roman contexts but rare in the Septuagint) as the ultimate guarantor of human oaths and contracts.⁶⁰ Jeremiah agrees to pray for advice, and receives word that the Israelites are to stay put and not, as they were considering doing, flee to Egypt.

In these passages the *pistis* of God can be seen operating on several levels. It enables agreements between God and individual leaders of Israel, and maintains God's covenant with Israel as a whole. It is an intrinsic quality of God in the whole of his relationship with his creation, which is sometimes understood as enabling him to renew his covenant with Israel even when she fails him. As one of his intrinsic qualities, God's *pistis* may act as the ultimate guarantor of **(p.199)** human good faith, though this use of divine *pistis* is rare in the Septuagint, with its dominant focus on divine–human relations, compared with sources for the Graeco-Roman world.

The idea that the God who made heaven and earth is by his nature trustworthy is a form of foundationalism not dissimilar to that which we encountered in Graeco-Roman philosophical thinking in the last chapter.⁶¹ The fact that some Septuagintal texts hold this view, however, does not prevent others from seeing *pistis* between God and Israel (and potentially humanity in general) as somewhat fragile, liable to fail in times of stress, and as needing to be repaired, primarily from God's side, not only by present help but also by appeal to past and a promise of future faithfulness. (Assuming that later readers of Isaiah understood that there had indeed been a renewal of the covenant at the end of the Exile, they doubtless read God's promise as justified by subsequent events, in which case there is an element of consequentialism in play here too.) If one were constructing a theology of Septuagintal divine *pistis*, one might try to reconcile these views (and might find more than one way of doing so), but for present purposes it is more relevant to note their diversity. Originating as they do in different genres of writing and probably at different dates, by the early Roman empire these presentations of divine–human *pistis* could be read side by side to offer a repertoire of ways of thinking about divine–human relations of which early Christians, among others, made use.

We saw in the previous section that when Abraham makes his covenant with God he is described as *dikaïos*, while Job struggles to find his relationship with God one of either *pistis* or *dikaïosynē*. In this section God's *pistis* has frequently been connected with his justice (and his truth). God's faithfulness and trustworthiness not only form a firm foundation for his relationship with his people; they are an aspect of his orderly governance of the universe which forms a framework and a model for orderly human societies.

In one or two passages from the psalms, it is not the *pistis* of God himself, but that of his covenant or commandments that is praised. This might be taken as an example of deferred trust, but, as has already been seen, the law is probably better understood as representing and mediating trust in God on the human plane, much, for instance, as Moses did: listeners and readers are urged to trust it because it comes from God and is authorized by God. God is praised for his *pistis* as creator or long-term protector of Israel; by keeping his covenant and commandments, his people maintain their *pistis* towards his faithful and trustworthy self.

Pistis language does not feature largely in the prophecies of Habakkuk, but one passage became so important to Christians that it cannot pass without comment. Habakkuk 2.4 is celebrated as foundational to Paul's, and **(p.200)** subsequently Martin Luther's, understanding of *pistis*,⁶² and also in its own right, because the Masoretic and Septuagintal texts of the second half of the verse are significantly different. At the beginning of chapter 2, God has instructed Habakkuk to write down a prophecy: destruction will come to arrogant, greedy men of no integrity (2.2–20). In the Hebrew version the prophet then says that the just man will live by his faithfulness to God.⁶³ The Septuagint changes 2.4b to read, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται, 'the just man will live by my [God's] *pistis*'.⁶⁴

The faithfulness or trustworthiness of God is contrasted in the Septuagintal version with the perversion of justice which is being practised in the prophet's society by impious men who oppress the just (1.3–4). A just society, the prophet implies, would be one in which proper honour was paid to the trustworthiness of God. The prophet also emphasizes that the work which God can and will do in his day will be such as οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ἂν τις ἐκδιγῆται, 'you [the impious] would not believe if someone told you' (1.5). This verse might seem to echo the paradoxical idea in Greek and Roman thinking that something should be believed just because it is unbelievable, but Habakkuk's point is slightly different. In part he is emphasizing how far the impious are from God by saying that they would not believe what God can do even if they were told, and in part he is re-emphasizing the point he made in the first half of verse 5, that God's actions are so marvellous as to be beyond human conception. The prophet returns to the incapacity of the impious to recognize and honour the true God at the end of chapter 2, when he pours scorn on those who put their trust (*pepoithen*) in idols made of metal, wood, or stone and try to bring them to life and power (2.18–19). The righteous, in contrast, live by the trustworthiness of God, which, though beyond imagining, is powerfully real.⁶⁵ The power, justice, and reliability of God are all presented here as intrinsic qualities of God; Habakkuk does not connect God's *pistis* with his covenant with Israel until he perhaps does so implicitly in chapter 3, when he remembers past occasions on which God has saved his people (3.13).⁶⁶

Human Pistis Towards God

In the earlier discussion of *pistis* in the later wisdom books of the Septuagint, *pistis* emerged less as a quality of moments of covenant-making and more as a **(p.201)** quality of life within the covenant. The idea that it is always appropriate to be *pistos* towards God is endemic throughout the Septuagint, and need not be explicitly (though it is arguably always implicitly) connected with keeping the covenant or the commandments.

The fact that they are consistently *pistoi* towards God is one of the qualities which distinguishes leaders of Israel, including Moses (Sirach 45.4), Samuel (1 Sam. 3.21), and the later prophets (Sirach 49.10). For the writer of 2 Chronicles, the faithfulness of the people as a whole towards God, the temple, and temple cult is part of what makes the reign of King Solomon a golden age.⁶⁷ The psalmist (115.1) claims that 'I trusted' (*episteusa*) even when he was suffering, because he sees the Lord as having been generous to him and because he is the Lord's slave (115.3, 7). In Psalm 100.6 the eyes of the speaker are on the *pistoi* in the land, as part of a programme in which the singer says that he will associate only with the good and destroy the wicked in his service of the Lord. The psalm does not say explicitly to whom or what the *pistoi* are faithful, but since the theme of the whole psalm is that the singer rewards and associates with those of whom he thinks the Lord will approve, we assume that they are faithful to God.

Sirach (15.15) affirms that keeping God's commandments is a choice: human beings opt to be *pistos* and do God's will.⁶⁸ Not trusting in God is always seen as the fault of the one who does not trust, and as ruinous for them.⁶⁹ Across many books, the failure of individuals or groups to be *pistos* is a sign that Israel's relationship with God is under threat. At Deuteronomy 9.23 and Psalm 105.24 Israel is criticized for having failed in faithfulness in the desert, in Psalm 77 (22, 32) and Jeremiah 25.8 for having been *apistos* at various points later in her history.⁷⁰ Isaiah (1.21) grieves that the once-faithful city of Jerusalem has become a whore, but promises that in the future she will again be called *pistē* and the city of righteousness (1.26).

We have seen that being *pistos*, according to the Wisdom of Solomon (3.9), leads not only to divine favour but also to the understanding of truth and living with God in love.⁷¹ 4 Maccabees, which like the Wisdom of Solomon was composed in Greek in the later Hellenistic period, takes a similar view but avoids explicit terms of affection (perhaps under the influence of Aristotelianism, possibly via Stoicism). 'What person, who lives as a philosopher by the whole rule of philosophy and trusts in God (πεπιστευκὼς

θεῶι), and knows (**p.202**) that it is blessed to endure every pain for the sake of virtue, would not gain full control of the passions with the help of godliness?’ (7.21–2).

Pistis as a continuous state of life usually refers to trust in Godself, but one psalmist asks God to teach him kindness, learning, and understanding (*gnōsis*) because he has put his trust (*episteusa*) in God’s commandments (Ps. 118.66). As in Psalms 88 and 110, above, the commandments here probably represent God and God’s trustworthiness on earth; the emphasis in this passage and throughout the psalm is on the consistent benevolence and trustworthiness of the Lord, together with the devotion of the psalmist. As in the Wisdom of Solomon 3.9, there is another hint here of the idea that *pistis* may form the basis for a relationship with God in which understanding develops later.

Sometimes, *pistis* is not so much a quality of appropriate ongoing relationships with God as a quality which, as in the passages of Genesis and Exodus discussed above, people practise, or are urged to practise, towards God at a moment of crisis. For 1 Maccabees (2.59), for instance, it is the *pistis* of Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael at the point of death that saves them from the burning fiery furnace.⁷²

The *pistis* of Abraham is often revisited in later books of the Bible: not, perhaps surprisingly, as the quality which enables him to make his covenant with God, but rather as a quality of other important moments at which, in Genesis, *pistis* language does not appear. For Nehemiah (9.8), God found Abraham’s heart *pistos* when he brought him from Ur to Canaan. For 1 Maccabees (2.52), Abraham is *pistos* when he is tested by being told to sacrifice Isaac, and it is this which is reckoned to him as righteousness. Sirach (44.19–20) is also likely to be referring to the sacrifice of Isaac when the author says that, having entered into an agreement with God, Abraham was found *pistos* when he was subsequently tested. These commentators present *pistis* as a quality of moments of crisis and decision-making which take place within an ongoing relationship and covenant with God, rather than as the quality that enables covenants to be made. The shift of emphasis may be intended to speak to audiences who are conscious of living within the covenant, making Abraham a role model for covenant faithfulness in addition to being the patriarch whose trust enabled the covenant to be made.⁷³

Early in the Book of Isaiah (7.1–9) Jerusalem is under attack by the kings of Aram and Israel. The Lord tells Isaiah to go to Ahaz, king of Judah, and tell him to have courage. The Lord will not let Jerusalem be overrun. If Ahaz stands firm in *pistis*, he will survive—but if his trust is not firm, Jerusalem will not stand (7.9).⁷⁴ Isaiah’s challenge (in which *pistis* audibly retains the senses (**p.203**) of ‘firmness’ and ‘refuge’ from its Hebrew original), in which his imagery of standing firm in *pistis* mirrors the physical firmness which Ahaz will need to enact, gives almost ponderable solidity to the proposition that if Israel maintains her relationship of *pistis* with God, God will help her. Later in the book, in the course of an oracle against Judah, Isaiah claims that Judah has made a false covenant with death, giving Judah a false sense of security (28.14–15). God therefore says that he is laying a stone in Zion to act as a cornerstone, a sure foundation, and the one who puts his trust in it (ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ) will not be shaken (28.16). Here again is a powerfully concrete depiction of the idea that *pistis* is the basis of God’s support for his people.

Deutero-Isaiah (43.10) offers not the promise of help if people exercise *pistis*, but the assurance that God has redeemed the people of Israel, and that God himself, along with his chosen servant and the people of Israel, if they choose, are witnesses to it. ‘Be my witnesses; I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and the servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and trust/believe and understand that I am (ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ πιστεύσητε καὶ συνῆτε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι). Before me there was no other god, nor shall there be any after me.’ (Translators tend, wrongly, to take this as an example of propositional belief. If knowing, believing, and understanding are meant to be distinguished here, *pisteuein* cannot refer to propositional belief, because one does not need to believe something that one knows. It is more likely that the three verbs constitute rhetorical *variatio* on the single theme of knowing.⁷⁵)

Trusting God is always, in the Septuagint, the right thing to do, and although there are stories at the heart of the tradition in which the trust of a patriarch or prophet in God develops by degrees, most, if not all, of those who hear or read them already know that Abraham or Moses will put his trust in God and that that *pistis* will transform his and others’ lives. Whether patriarchal or prophetic *pistis* will prove justified is not seriously in question. Stories, moreover, that describe struggles with *pistis* which end in failure, or partial failure, with catastrophic consequences, are rare. The best-known is God’s condemnation of Moses and Aaron for not having sufficient trust in him in the Book of Numbers (20.12): ‘Because you did not trust/believe [in me] (*ouk episteusate*), to sanctify me before Israel’s sons...you yourselves shall not lead this congregation into the land which I have given to them.’⁷⁶ In the Wisdom of Solomon, in a passage of praise for the Lord, the author affirms that no one can withstand God’s judgement (12.12), but that because God is just, he manages everything justly so that no one needs to take him to court (12.12–15). The origin of God’s justice is his strength: it is because he rules everyone that he spares them:

(p.204) ἰσχὸν γὰρ ἐνδείκνυσαι ἀπιστοῦμενος ἐπὶ δυνάμεως τελειότητι
καὶ ἐν τοῖς εἰδόσι τὸ θράσος ἐξελέγγεις·
for you show your strength when someone doubts the completeness of your power
and you rebuke any insolence among them that know it. (Num. 12.17)

This is not the place to investigate the remarkable theology of this passage, but we can note that while it acknowledges that those who belong to God's people may doubt, it assures the reader that doubt will be effectively dealt with. Absolute trust, the author affirms, is the only appropriate relationship with the Lord.

In a few other passages of wisdom, being *apistountes*, faithless, becomes a generic term for the wicked, or even more generally, the Other—non-Israelites such as the Egyptians, who practise magic and maltreat their slaves.⁷⁷ This usage is likely to be one of the roots of the New Testament use of *hoi apistoi*, and it also implies that *pistis* can be understood as definitive of Israelites.⁷⁸ The Septuagint does not use *hoi pisteuontes* to mean the Israelites as a group, in the way that the New Testament will use it to mean followers of Christ, but these passages confirm at least that the idea of using *hoi pisteuontes* to identify a group would not have been absolutely strange to first-century Jews.⁷⁹

One situation which is common in the New Testament is rare in the Septuagint: that in which someone puts their trust in God for the first time on the basis of something they have seen or heard. When Achior, in the Book of Judith, sees everything the God of Israel has done (summed up in the beheading of Holofernes), puts his trust firmly in God (ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ σφόδρα⁸⁰), has himself circumcised, and unites his house with that of Israel, he is doing something highly unusual in Jewish scripture. The systematic use of *pistis* language to describe the moment of conversion or commitment to God and Christ seems to be a Christian innovation which will invite detailed investigation in later chapters.⁸¹

Pistis between Human Beings and its Foundations

Since the whole of the Septuagint concerns God's relationship with humanity and particularly with his people, and since, for all the diversity of ways of **(p.205)** speaking of God in different books, no biblical author calls God untrustworthy, all *pistis* language in the corpus, whether it explicitly involves God or not, in some sense relates to God. God as creator implicitly (though never in so many words) gives human beings the capacity for *pistis*;⁸² God exercises *pistis* himself; God asks human beings to exercise it, punishes failures of it, and can therefore be seen as sponsoring it.

A good deal of *pistis* language, however, occurs in the context of relations between human beings. The Septuagint does not offer the weight of references for intra-human trust and so on that Greek and Latin sources do for the later Hellenistic and Roman world, but points of comparison can be detected. In this, the Septuagint is closer to other Greek and Latin sources than it is to the New Testament, where the operation of *pistis* between human beings is limited to a very narrow range of contexts and relationships—another way in which the New Testament departs from both its Jewish and its Graeco-Roman background.⁸³

Greek and Roman sources, as we saw in Chapter 2, tend to present family relationships as relatively strong and family members as relatively trusting and trustworthy.⁸⁴ The Septuagint offers rather more mixed views of the *pistis* of family members towards one another. Joseph has to reforge trust with the siblings who sold him into slavery and told their father he was dead, when they arrive in Egypt to supplicate for food (Gen. 42.20). When the brothers return to Jacob with the food and the news that Joseph is alive and well, Jacob does not believe them (45.26). Tobit does not believe his wife when she brings home a goat, a gift from her employers, and evokes her anger (2.11–14). Once your kin have betrayed you, says Jeremiah, do not trust them again, even if they have friendly words for you (12.6). On the other hand, Tobit does trust a kinsman to conduct his son on a journey (10.6, though his wife does not), while Hosea proposes to take a wife ἐν πίστει, 'in faithfulness' (2.20).

The trustworthiness of friends and other members of one's social group, in contrast, tends to be relatively well regarded. Sirach is particularly positive: 'A faithful friend (*philos pistos*) is a sturdy shelter...a faithful friend is beyond price...a faithful friend is a life-saving medicine' (6.14–16). 'He who reveals secrets has destroyed *pistis*, and will never find a friend for his soul. Love your friend and keep faith with him (στέρξον φίλον καὶ πιστώθητι μετ' αὐτοῦ)' (27.16–17; cf. 29.3).⁸⁵ Trust breeds trust: so, according to Proverbs, for instance, the person who is *pistos* in spirit receives and keeps confidences (11.13).

(p.206) One of the definitive qualities of leaders of Israel such as Moses, as has been seen, is their *pistis* in relation to both God and their people.⁸⁶ Kings, too, can attract the trust of their people. The people of Jerusalem trust King Hezekiah when he tells them they can hold out against Sennacherib of Assyria, who is about to attack Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32.1–8). Sennacherib tells them not to trust

Hezekiah: to hold out against him is simply to invite a worse death (9–15), but the people stand firm and the Lord sends an angel to defend them (21). Like trust between human beings and God, trust between people is not infrequently mentioned at moments of crisis or decision-making.

Sirach expresses wariness of trusting people more powerful and influential than oneself,⁸⁷ but he also recommends gaining the trust of those poorer than oneself if one is rich (22.23), and says that a wise man is trustworthy when he instructs his people (37.23).⁸⁸ On balance, he seems to regard relations between those who rule and those who are ruled as potentially trustworthy. Those who are already recognized as enemies, however, it almost goes without saying, are worthy of no trust. ‘Never trust your enemy,’ says Sirach, ‘for just as copper corrodes, so does his wickedness’ (12.10).⁸⁹

There are scattered indications throughout the later books of the Septuagint that God approves of interpersonal trust, and that if a character is known to be faithful to God, it enhances his trustworthiness to other people. ‘Acts of *pistis*’ are one of the first things commended by the author of Proverbs after his introduction praising wisdom (3.3). ‘[H]e who performs *pisteis* [towards other human beings] is acceptable to [the Lord],’ he says later (12.22), and ‘Those who plan evil do not understand mercy and *pistis*, but acts of mercy and *pistis* are with planners for good’ (14.22). In the Wisdom of Solomon a special reward is in store for eunuchs who practise *pistis* towards the Lord and do not think wicked things (3.14). In these passages, practising *pistis* is so axiomatically desirable to God as to be almost a synonym for doing good.

It is tempting to speculate, once again, that what appears to be a growing interest through the books of the Septuagint in intra-human trust owes something to the Hellenization of diaspora culture. Genre, however, is likely to be at least as significant a factor, since most language of intra-human *pistis* occurs in the wisdom or Hellenistic history books. In Maccabees, genre and Hellenization probably both play a role, since all four books are informed by Greek historiography as well as biblical writings.⁹⁰

(p.207) According to Sirach (46.15), Samuel’s *pistis*, trustworthiness as a prophet to other people, stems from devotion in following the Lord (46.10). Sirach also says (48.22) that it was because Isaiah was *pistos*, reliable as a prophet, that he was able to ensure that King Hezekiah kept to the paths of David. When in his own book (8.1–4) Isaiah needs a symbolic document witnessed, bearing the name of his son, which is also a description of what the Assyrians are going to do to Israel, the faithfulness of Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah as witnesses perhaps derives from their faithfulness to God. In the Book of Daniel, Daniel’s devotion to God (1.8) makes him a sure interpreter of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue with feet of clay.⁹¹

The four books of the Maccabees have a good deal to say about intra-human *pistis* in a historical genre which is rather different from that of any of the other books we have discussed.⁹² Several passages describe individuals or groups acting as loyal subordinates, military or political.⁹³ A handful refer to the trustworthiness of magistrates or other office holders, Israelite or Roman.⁹⁴ In a few cases, individuals act as intermediaries whose known relations of *pistis* with two groups allow them to mediate between them or, in one case, to deceive one side.⁹⁵ In 4 Maccabees 8, the Greek ‘tyrant’ Antiochus IV Epiphanes offers a group of Israelite youths leading positions in his kingdom if they will trust him (8.7), disown their laws, and accept his patronage. The youths refuse to act as intermediaries of Greek tyranny over their people and are martyred for their obduracy.⁹⁶

When *pistis* is at issue, both authors and characters in the Septuagint, like authors and characters in Greek (and Latin) literature more widely, are strongly disposed to trust the evidence of their senses, and rather less disposed to trust hearsay and rumour. When the Queen of Sheba comes to visit Solomon in 2 Chronicles, she observes that she has heard about Solomon, but did not believe the report until she came and saw his kingdom with her own eyes (9.6).⁹⁷ ‘Do not believe everything you hear,’ advises Sirach (19.15).

(p.208) ‘[S]tand by your heart’s counsel, for there is nothing more worthy of your trust (*pistoteros*) than it is’ (37.13). Messengers, for the author of Proverbs, may be reliable or unreliable, and so may witnesses. The roles themselves, it seems, are not highly enough regarded to guarantee trustworthiness.⁹⁸

We also hear in the Septuagint from time to time a sentiment which we encounter frequently in Greek and Roman popular wisdom: trust can only take one so far. Practical wisdom is even more desirable. ‘The simple man believes/trusts everything he hears (*πιστεύει παντι λόγῳ*),’ says Proverbs, ‘but the smart man comes to a change of mind’ (14.15). Sirach urges listeners not to trust an unfamiliar road (32.21).

Apart from the covenant between God and Israel itself, the Septuagint refers to a handful of mechanisms and institutions for codifying and confirming trust: what have been described as reifications of deferred trust.⁹⁹ Like such mechanisms, especially legal mechanisms, in the Graeco-Roman world, these are generally well thought of. The law has already been seen to be more than a

reification of deferred trust for Israelites; more even than sanctioned by God; it is something close to God's representative in human society, mediating between God and his people as a prophet, patriarch, or priest might do. 'A sensible man will trust in the law', says Sirach (33.3), 'and the law is for him as *pistos* as a divine oracle.'¹⁰⁰ In the Book of Tobit, a bond (*cheirographon*) for a sum of money left in trust for twenty years is kept by both sides, and on production of the document the money is faithfully returned (5.2–3, 9.1–5). When the people of Israel, on their return from exile, take a renewed oath to follow the Mosaic law and keep the commandments of the law, Nehemiah (9.38) ensures that the agreement is a 'trustworthy' one made in writing, signed and sealed with the names of the Israelites' princes, priests, and Levites.¹⁰¹ In 1 Chronicles (9.22), the job of gatekeeping is referred to as a *pistis*, a 'position of trust'.

The Israelites are not urged explicitly to trust in tradition in the Septuagint, but God's historical commitment to Israel is so often rehearsed, especially in connection with the covenants made with Abraham and on Mount Sinai, that it is impossible not to conclude that both Israelites within the text and those reading it are being encouraged to trust God all the more because he has been faithful to Israel throughout history. That message is connected with another, again not pointed explicitly but inescapable: Israelites can trust scripture, which tells them of God's historical relationship with Israel and assures them of its continuance. The writings of the Bible, by their insistence on **(p.209)** God's past and future relationship with his people, powerfully affirm their own trustworthiness and that of tradition more widely.

These examples might seem to suggest that Septuagintal texts are somewhat more optimistic about intra-human *pistis* than are Greek and Roman texts, finding *pistis* between all sorts of people as, in principle, possible and desirable. One cannot, however, build too much on such a small repertoire of passages. One might equally argue that what they show, unremarkably, is that all intra-human relationships are ideally strong but that, in difficult circumstances, any of them may prove fragile. More significant, perhaps, if not much more surprising, in comparison with Greek and Roman culture, is that references to divine–human *pistis*, even in a book like Sirach which has at least as much to say about human relations as divine–human ones, greatly outnumber references to *pistis* between human beings. Where the focus across a wide range of Greek and Latin sources is on the negotiation of human relationships which the gods sponsor, the focus throughout the Septuagint remains on the divine–human relationship which informs all others.

One might argue that this is because the Septuagint consists of 'religious' writings, while much of Greek and Latin literature does not. This argument is not without force, but the comparison should not be overdrawn. The gods are involved, at some level, in Greek and Roman thinking about virtually every (arguably, absolutely every) aspect of life, from domestic to political relationships, law to commerce, war to literature. Hardly any, if any Greek or Roman writing can therefore be seen as wholly secular; conversely, hardly any, if any Israelite writing can be seen as wholly sacred (in the sense of dealing purely with divine–human relations); the two are everywhere entwined. Many of the literary genres of the Septuagint (histories, legal texts, sayings of wise men, prophecy, hymns, prayers, and other poetry), moreover, have more or less close Greek and Latin relatives. Early Greek literature owes much to the interrelated Near Eastern cultures in which Israel evolved, if not directly to the Israelites, while later Greek, if not Roman, influence on Israelite and Jewish literature is not in doubt. It seems more likely that there are other reasons why divine–human *pistis* dominates Septuagintal texts as it does not dominate other literatures.

The obvious explanation is the simple one that (in those books that are translated from Hebrew) *pistis* language almost always translates the 'emunah lexicon, which itself is strongly associated with divine–human relations.¹⁰² This observation, though, raises a further question. Given the resonances of truth and reliability, firmness and security in the 'emunah lexicon, it is less surprising to find 'emunah closely linked with divine–human relations than it is to find *pistis* language used to translate it. *Pistis* is always freighted with risk, **(p.210)** fear, and doubt in ways that 'emunah is not, so why use it of divine–human relations at all? Why not translate the 'emunah lexicon, alongside the *alētheia* and *elpis* lexica which are sometimes used to interpret it, with *tharreïn*, 'to have confidence in' (often used elsewhere in Greek as an alternative to *pisteueïn*), or with language more suggestive of certainty or security?

We saw above that some of the stories in which divine–human *pistis* is most prominent, such as those of Abraham, Moses, and Job, are stories in which divine–human trust is not taken for granted but is in question or in a process of development. Extrapolating from these, one might suggest that the Greek translators of the Bible fully understand *pistis* language as encoding fear, doubt, and risk as well as trust and confidence, and use it where they find those resonances appropriate. The argument can be taken a step further: this understanding of divine–human relations may have been gaining strength in the Hellenistic period. The trend in the later books of the Septuagint, which was noted above, towards seeing God as reliable but distant, trustworthy not because of individual relationships with people or peoples but because he is the creator and regulator of the universe, plausibly attests to such a development. Trust in a creator whose justice and benevolence operate universally but not necessarily in favour of human individuals

or small groups is fearfully risky, even if one does not doubt his existence. It means trusting that even if the world seems to go against one, all is fundamentally well, which is a significant step beyond trusting a God whose reliability seems to be confirmed by one's witnessing miracles, being given children, or being saved from one's enemies. Perhaps the choice of *pistis* language in many passages to translate the 'emunah lexicon testifies to a sense that trusting even a trustworthy God, let alone trusting his creatures, always involves risk, doubt, and negotiation.

Conclusion

Pistis, as has been noted repeatedly, is not a central theme of the Septuagint in the way it is of the New Testament, or even of Greek and Latin literature. We must be wary of building too much on the references we have discussed. Nonetheless, they show enough of a pattern to justify some inferences. Two modes of *pistis* dominate this corpus: it is one of the key qualities of the forging of new relationships and of moments when significant relationships evolve to a new stage, and it is the ongoing quality of divine commitment to human beings and vice versa.

Overtones of both hope and obedience are common in Septuagintal *pistis* language: above all, obedience to God and hope in what Israel's relationship with God will bring. *Pistis* is also said, as one might expect, both to coexist with **(p.211)** fear (appropriate fear of the Lord),¹⁰³ and to be the opposite of fear (inappropriate fear of circumstances or other people).¹⁰⁴

In Genesis and Exodus, divine-human *pistis* can be seen as in many ways analogous to intra-human *pistis*, with the qualification that God is consistently trustworthy. Divine-human *pistis* evolves gradually, through initiatives of trust, doubt, assurances, proofs, and reifications of trust to create new relationships on which new societies are built. By the Hellenistic period it is harder to see divine-human and intra-human trust as analogous. Trust becomes a non-negotiable obligation for human beings, which they cannot expect to defer to divine appearances or signs, even though it may not, if they are weak and unfortunate, bring any positive consequences in their lifetime. Israelites' main reassurance, if *pistis* needs one, lies in scripture and tradition, which affirm that God has never abandoned Israel nor let her down in the past, and the law, which comes from God and expresses and embodies Israel's covenant with God. If the Lord sometimes seems distant, and trust in the Lord a challenge, the Lord's commandments, as the Deuteronomist says (30.14), are in the mouth and in the heart and in the hands, and keeping them is a way of expressing daily one's trust in God and faithfulness to God.

Notes:

(1) Rajak (2009), 14–15. On the origins, history, cultural context, language, and use of the Septuagint by Jews and Christians, see Marcus (2000), Rajak (2009).

(2) As Lieu (2004), 38 notes, the Hebrew Bible 'does not have a special place' in New Testament writings.

(3) (2009), 20. What follows will seek to show that different books treat *pistis* language in different ways, but I do not detect radical discontinuities, for instance, between books composed in Hebrew and those composed in Greek.

(4) pp. 9–10.

(5) See also pp. 182–4, 193, 187 n. 34, 207 nn. 92, 96; see also Lindsay (1993), 53–72, 77–164; cf. Lindsay (2008). *Pistis* language is too rare in the fragments of other authors to analyse separately, but appears occasionally below. On the danger of over-drawing the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews in this period, see Borgen (1994); cf. Llewelyn and van Beek (2011). On Hellenistic Jewish 'faithfulness' as the opposite of protesting or pleading one's cause against God, see Ljungman (1964), 35–6. He also emphasizes the strong connection between God's faithfulness and truth, which Paul continues (pp. 13–35). The connection between *pistis* and *alētheia* is not distinctive to Christianity: on the conjunction in papyri, see Moulton and Milligan (1926), 6. 515, col. 1.

(6) Though e.g. James 2.18–26 has direct antecedents in Jewish debate, attested by Philo, *Mig.* 89–93. Dibelius (1976) notes further parallels and resonances short of clear dependence. On parallels between Josephus and Luke-Acts which are not now usually seen as indicating Lucan dependence, see Mason (1992), 185–6, 207–8, 214–23. On Josephus' connections with Greek and Roman historiography, see e.g. Feldman (1998), Hadas-Lebel (1994), Gruen (2011), though Ladouceur (1983) cautions against assuming dependence. Bilde (1988), 184–5 argues that Josephus thinks people should put more trust in God than in other people, which distinguishes him from Greeks and Romans. On the (rather slender) evidence that Greek and Roman authors or magic-workers knew the Septuagint, see Rajak (2009), ch. 8.

(7) On the relationship between the 'emunah and *pistis* lexica, see e.g. pp. 8–9, 188, 196 n. 53, 209–10; since our interest is in *pistis*

language I shall not deal systematically here with passages in which the *'emunah* lexicon is translated with *elpis* or *alētheia*.

(8) Lindsay (1993), 22, 43–6. He also offers (pp. 37–8) a more nuanced version of the argument rejected by Barr (1961) that Paul may have had Hebrew or Aramaic idioms in mind in his use of *pistis* language. I shall not discuss the Septuagintal translators' knowledge of Hebrew and how it may have affected their translations (on which, see Hiebert (2010), Joosten (2012), esp. chs. 3–9).

(9) See esp. Niehoff (2011). This did not prevent translators sometimes treating their originals freely (Cook (2001)), or later authors citing scripture in forms which do not otherwise survive to us, and which may be the result of imperfect memory or deliberate emendation.

(10) Gen. 15.6, my translation. Translations of the Septuagint are taken from Pietersma and Wright (2009), occasionally modified, unless otherwise stated. We need not try to separate trust and belief, both of which are involved in this passage, but note that Philo understands trust as dominant: e.g. *AL* 3.228 (Abraham's trust in God is better than reasoning or conjecture), *Mig.* 43–4 (Abraham trusted God for the future), *Mut.* 186 (Abraham's *pistis* is an example of an inclination of the mind to virtue (trust may be a virtue for a Platonist; cf. *Quis rer. div. heres* 91, *Abr.* 270, but propositional belief is not)), *Virt.* 215–16 (Abraham is driven towards *pistis* by his innate capacity for virtue); cf. *Abr.* 262–3, *Deus* 4 (Abraham recognizes the firm trustworthiness of the Lord when he is willing to sacrifice Isaac), *Her.* 101 (on which, see Niehoff (2011), 108–9). Josephus omits this verse from his retelling of the story in *AJ*, on which, see Franxman (1979), ad loc., Feldman and Gata (1989), 145; cf. Gafni (1989). The frequency of later citations and comments on the passage indicates its importance for Jews.

(11) Here and in later chapters the familiar Anglicized forms of personal names and places are used.

(12) Taking the LXX's 'I will extend my hand to God most high' to mean the same as the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT), 'I have sworn to the Lord, God Most High'. Translations from the Hebrew Bible are taken from the New American Bible, occasionally modified, unless otherwise noted.

(13) This narrative throughout remains very close to the Hebrew text. Wevers (1993) ad loc. argues that *pisteuein* here carries the meanings of the Hebrew original, so Abraham does not so much trust God as accept that he is telling the truth. This understates the role of trust here and overdraws the distinction between Hebrew and Greek. Since God is making a prophecy about the future, not a verifiable statement about the present or past, trust must be involved on Abraham's part, and trust always defers to belief/confidence in the reliability of the one trusted. On the disunity of this passage (dominated by the Yahwist (J) and arguably Elohist (E) sources), see the discussions of Wenham (1987) and Gunkel (1997), ad loc. Westermann (1985) argues ad 15.6 that there is nothing odd about believing in God; it is odder not to (cf. Isa. 7.10–12), but on the reading above, Abraham's relationship with God is one of evolving, rather than foundational, trust, so cannot be taken for granted as an appropriate response to God.

(14) Abraham's *pistis* is also a risk, especially since Sarai is beyond child-bearing age.

(15) The author of Hebrews identifies Noah, along with Abel, as having *pistis* towards God before Abraham. Abram is descended from Noah's son Shem (Gen. 11.10–26).

(16) e.g. 6.22, 'And Noah did all the things that God commanded him'; cf. 7.5. Noah is also said to be *dikaios*, and his *dikaiosynē* also culminated in a divine–human covenant (9.11). Note that since Noah is previously said to have walked with God (6.10) and is descended from Adam, his obedience to God is no more *ex nihilo* than is Abraham's.

(17) It is notable that at every point in the story of Genesis so far, the Lord has made the first move, by creating, communicating with, and appearing to a succession of human beings. Human trust in God has never, therefore, been an 'act of faith' in the sense of being the first move in a divine–human relationship.

(18) Von Rad (1961), ad loc. identifies, in the statement that *dikaiosynē* is credited to Abraham, a cultic *mentalité* and layer of redaction (cf. Lev. 7.18, Num. 18.27). This does not fit comfortably with a view of the relationship as developing by negotiation; see also the redactional arguments against von Rad of Wenham (1987), ad loc.

(19) e.g. Wevers (1993), ad loc. It also characterizes intra-human relations, on which, see pp. 191–2. On the relationship between wider Greek and Septuagintal uses of *dikaiosynē*, especially linked with *pistis*, elsewhere, see e.g. Tov (1999) 109–28, 85–94, Olley (1979) (on Isaiah), Cook (1997) (on Proverbs).

(20) e.g. pp. 118–19, 134.

(21) These associations are also embedded in the Hebrew version and awareness of them would not be confined to Greek speakers.

(22) pp. 134, 488–9.

(23) pp. 90–1, 106–7.

(24) Primarily from the Priestly (P) source (von Rad (1961), Westermann (1985), ad loc.; visible in the LXX's shift from calling God *kyrios* to *theos*).

(25) Philo probably used a Greek version (following Niehoff (2001), 208–9), Josephus Hebrew, but the language of the original does not affect my argument here. Most important for both Philo's and Josephus' interpretations of the story of Abraham is his position as the first monotheist, to which their discussions of his *pistis* are ancillary (Calvert-Koyzis (2004), chs. 4–5; cf. Niehoff (2013), 66).

(26) Also outside the scope of this discussion but not irrelevant is Josephus' repeated attribution of *eusebeia* to Abraham: on connections between piety and *pistis/fides*, see p. 102 n. 93.

(27) Philo's Abraham 'sees' that God exists with the eye of the intellect here and elsewhere (Calvert-Koyzis (2004), 31–3).

(28) pp. 152–5.

(29) e.g. *Mig.* 1, *Haer.* 266–9, *Mut.* 1.

(30) The Septuagintal narrative follows the Hebrew text closely throughout.

(31) Wevers (1990), ad loc. notes that *pisteusōsin* in v. 9 is qualified, unusually, by two datives (the Israelites will trust/believe both Moses and his signs), but this causes no unclarity in meaning.

(32) 14.31. Since God has not spoken directly to the Israelites nor has Moses reported what God said to him, *episteusan* here must mean 'trusted' rather than 'believed'. Cf. Ps. 105.12, where they believe/trust in Moses' words.

(33) J, E, and P sources are probably too entangled in the Hebrew narrative to be analysed to general satisfaction (Propp (2006), 141), but most, if not all readers of the Septuagint almost certainly read the narrative as unified, if sometimes in need of interpretation.

(34) Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and seventy elders are later allowed to see where the Lord stands and gain from this authority under Moses (24.1–11). Josephus presents the *pistis* of Moses towards God as enabling him to channel the power of God and mediate *pistis* to the Israelites and evoke it in them, and as making him an object of their *pistis* (*Ant.* 2.276, 3.27; Lindsay (1993), 125–6). On this as prefiguring the mediating roles of Christ and Paul, see pp. 217, 273, 293–4.

(35) Though at Num. 14.11, just before the Israelites enter Canaan, the Lord complains to Moses that the people still do not trust him, despite all the signs he has performed.

(36) Exceptions: Gen. 42.20 and 45.26 (Jacob and his brothers). On the paucity of intra-human *pistis* in the New Testament, see Chs. 6–10, *passim*.

(37) Elsewhere in these books other translations are used (e.g. Gen. 24.27, 48). At Gen. 32.10 and Exod. 34.6 *alētheia* is used where *pistis* would also work well, which attests the close connection between God's trustworthiness and truth in Septuagintal thinking.

(38) Taking 4.18–21 with Clines (1989), ad loc. as part of the interpretation of God's oracle in 4.17, rather than a continuation of it.

(39) Ljungman (1964), 35–7, 114 characterizes 'faith' in Jewish and Rabbinic theology as the opposite to 'pleading one's cause against God', and so as the opposite of contractual. This may reflect the perspective towards which the book moves in its later chapters and which we see in wisdom literature, but in the early chapters Job reads more naturally as wanting a legal-type, hence social-contractual, relationship with God and as angry because he does not have one.

(40) Emphasized when he describes the old days as the days when God was with him and sheltered his tent (29.4–5).

(41) One passage which we have not discussed but which looks to modern Christian eyes very much like a statement of faith, is 19.25–7:

οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι ἀέναός ἐστιν ὁ ἐκλύειν με μέλλων ἐπὶ γῆς.
 ἀναστήσαι τὸ δέρμα μου τὸ ἀνατλῶν ταῦτα·
 παρὰ γὰρ κυρίου ταῦτά μοι συνετελέσθη,
 ἃ ἐγὼ ἐμαυτῶι συνεπίσταμαι,
 ἃ ὁ ὀφθαλμός μου ἑώρακεν καὶ οὐκ ἄλλος·
 πάντα δέ μοι συνετέλεσται ἐν κόλπῳι.

To be sure, I know that he who is about to undo me on earth is everlasting.
 May my skin, which patiently endures these things, rise up;
 For these things have been accomplished on me by the Lord—
 Things I am conscious of in myself,
 Things my eye has seen and no other,
 And all of them have come to an end for me in my bosom.

The translation of this notoriously corrupt passage is inevitably somewhat impressionistic, but it is clear that what is sometimes seen as Job's 'statement of faith' is cast as a declaration of what he knows, not what he trusts/believes. In Psalm 26.14, however, a not-dissimilar 'statement of faith' can use *pisteuein*: πιστεύω τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ κυρίου ἐν γῆι ζώντων, 'I trust/believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living', demonstrating that confident propositional belief can shade into the language of knowing (on which, see further, Ch. 9).

(42) Cox (2006), 116 and *passim*.

(43) Reese (1970), 3–31.

(44) If the last two lines are parallel, this is the kind of relationship characterized by Ljungman (1964), 35–7.

(45) 1.3, 1.12–16.

(46) Much of the book is devoted to advice on seeking wisdom (chs. 6–10) and to an extended account of how God preferred the Israelites to the Egyptians (chs. 11–19).

(47) Cf. e.g. Ps. 118.66.

(48) Though Philo never cites Sirach, and in general cites the writings very rarely (Cohen (2007), 157–73). The great majority of Philo's citations, however, come from the Torah, so this may indicate not that he did not use the writings, but that he chose to confine citation largely to books of the greatest authority. Philo's understanding of the divine–human relationship of *pistis* and understanding is essentially individualistic, while the author of the Wisdom of Solomon speaks in both individual and corporate terms of divine–human *pistis* and does not seem to distinguish between the two.

(49) pp. 130–5.

(50) Skehan and di Lella (1987), 150–2 emphasize the Deuteronomic theme of probationary suffering that runs through this passage. Lindsay (1993), 44–5 sees *pistis* as so dominantly a religious concept for Sirach that 'friendship itself is a "sacred" relationship' (p. 44); I see it rather as an example of the interconnectedness of divine–human and intra-human *pistis* which is characteristic of Greek and Roman thinking too, in which one may argue that no human relationship exists without reference to the divine, but it does not follow that all are wholly sacralized.

(51) Cf. Num. 20.12, Deut. 26.88.

(52) I have argued elsewhere (2013) that Greek popular wisdom offers a picture of divine–human relations in which the gods are interested in human lives and liable to intervene at any time, and in which close, personal relationships between gods and humans outside the context of formal cult and festivals is imagined as commonplace (albeit in a world with few markers of place, time, or social situation). This picture echoes aspects of Abraham's relationship with God more than the world view of Hellenistic wisdom.

- (53) As an indication of the significance of this theme, Perry (1953), 254–5 notes that half the instances of *'emunah* in MT refer to the trustworthiness of God, often expressed by Godself and often understood as the basis for human trust in God.
- (54) See n. 58 on the 'covenant with David'. This passage is closely based on 3 Kgs 8.12–15, where, however, *pistis* language does not appear.
- (55) Lam. 3.22–3 (MT): 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases...great is your faithfulness', is absent from the Septuagint.
- (56) To gloss God's qualities as 'loving-kindness', as does e.g. Craigie (1983), *ad loc.*, sacrifices too much of the semantic specificity of the text.
- (57) Also true, of course, of earlier books.
- (58) Chs. 40–55, *passim*; see esp. Baltzer (2001), Childs (2001), both *ad* 55.1–5. Baltzer argues that the prophet may not anticipate the restoration of Davidic rule, Childs that he does not, but that the whole of Israel now fulfils David's role of glorifying God. Baltzer notes that the renewed covenant benefits all God's people, and also that David is, uniquely, here, a witness to God's grace as well as the historical recipient of it.
- (59) We may question whether this dynamic is visible in Job, even if it is elsewhere, but we may see God's eventual direct communication with Job as a move to restore his confidence.
- (60) Lindsay (1993), 87–8 sees the same idea in play at Jos., *AJ* 17.179, 284.
- (61) e.g. pp. 165–8.
- (62) Rom. 1.17, Gal. 3.11.
- (63) Cf. 3 Macc. 2.11, 4 Macc. 7.15, 16.22.
- (64) Other Greek versions offer slightly different versions, as does Paul: see the discussion of Andersen (2001), *ad loc.*, offering various explanations for the changes, and see further pp. 276, 286–7.
- (65) Cf. e.g. pp. 128–32, 215–16, 286–7, 331.
- (66) The reference to an 'appointed time' in 2.3 may hint at a covenant but reads more naturally as affirming that God has a plan for the world.
- (67) 2 Chr. 31.12, 15, 18; cf. 34.12 (priests and people alike act *ἐν πίστει*). Cf. Neh. 13.13. On the Levitical priesthood as a favourite theme of this author, see Skehan and di Lella (1987), 511–14.
- (68) Lührmann (1973), 32–4. On Sirach's 'doctrine of free will', see Skehan and di Lella (1987), 271–2. Lindsay (1993), 48–9 sees human faithfulness towards God in Sirach as strongly inflected by Hebrew meanings of steadfastness, but as we have seen, the idea of faithfulness over time is native to the Greek lexicon too.
- (69) Cf. Job 15.31.
- (70) Cf. Deut. 32.20.
- (71) pp. 191–4.
- (72) Cf. 2 Macc. 3.12 (trust in a holy place at a moment of crisis), 3.22, 4 Macc. 15.24, 16.22.
- (73) It may also reflect the greater emphasis in Hellenistic books of the LXX on the importance of faithfulness to God whatever happens, even if one suffers or is persecuted.
- (74) Barton (forthcoming).

(75) See further Ch. 10; but 53.1, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' is more strongly propositional.

(76) Cf. perhaps 2 Macc. 8.12, a passing reference to Israelites in the army of Judas Maccabeus who cannot trust God's justice enough to stand up to the Greeks.

(77) Wis. Sol. 18.3; cf. 10.7, Prov. 17.6a, Isa. 17.10.

(78) See pp. 234–41. Thibaut (1988), 1–122 argues that occurrences of *apeithein* in LXX refer to failures of faith or faithfulness by the Israelites (e.g. Jos. 5.6), but a wealth of papyrological evidence now confirms that the verb usually occurs in contexts of insubordination rather than the failure of trust/faithfulness and is better translated 'to disobey'. Failures of trust, faithfulness, or belief in LXX are normally translated with *apistia* and *apisteuein*.

(79) Le Boulluec (2005), 59.

(80) 14.10.

(81) See esp. pp. 216, 224, 248, 258, 382.

(82) Lindsay (1993), 88–9 sees this idea echoed e.g. in Jos., *BJ* 3.404 and *Ap.* 2.128.

(83) See e.g. pp. 215, 217–18, 255–6, 278.

(84) pp. 45–9.

(85) Lindsay (1993), 39–46 notes that Sirach uses *pistis* language a good deal, especially the verb, interpreting it as a 'religious virtue': this is surely right in a non-technical sense of 'virtue' as something people practise that is well regarded, but probably not in a philosophical sense.

(86) For the connection of this theme in Jewish scripture with the New Testament, see e.g. Rosner (1994), 112–15.

(87) 13.11: 'Do not aim to speak as an equal with [a powerful person], and do not trust (μη πιστευε) his rather many words.'

(88) This passage may be based on Prov. 9.12, with added *pistis* language (Cook (1997), ad loc.).

(89) Cf. Sir. 36.31 (do not trust robbers).

(90) Lindsay (1993), 77–80. No obvious patterns emerge in translators' choice of Greek terms in the later books translated from Hebrew: 'emunah, etc. is also translated relatively often, for instance, by *alētheia* and its cognates in Sirach.

(91) 2.45. The interpretation itself is said to be *pistē*, the epithet transferred from Daniel's reliability.

(92) Maccabees' usage here is similar to that of Josephus, who himself is well in line with Polybius and earlier historians (see n. 86). Though they originate in different times and places (and languages), the four books' use, in their Septuagintal form, of *pistis* language does not vary widely.

(93) 1 Macc. 3.13, 7.7–8, 10.27, 2 Macc. 7.24, 3 Macc. 3.3, 5.31, 6.25; cf. ps.-Hecateus, *De Jud.* Fr. 2 ad Jos., *Ap.* 2.4, 42–3.

(94) e.g. 1 Macc. 8.16 (Roman), 14.35 (Israelite).

(95) 1 Macc. 10.37, 1 Macc. 1.30 (involving deception).

(96) Miller (1982), 87–8 notes that the Maccabean corpus uses *politeuein* frequently, especially of Jews' living in accordance with God's law (as does the *Letter of Aristeas* and Philo, *Conf.* 17). *Pistis* and *polity* are not closely connected but this use of *politeuein* together with the fact that *pistis* is often used of faithfulness to God and God's law adds to the plausibility of seeing divine–human *pistis* as a key element in a divine–human *polity* (see further Ch. 12).

(97) 9.6; cf. 3 Kgs 10.7.

(98) 12.17, 14.5, 14.25 (witnesses); 13.17, 25.13 (messengers).

(99) Cf. p. 6.

(100) Interpreting a difficult Greek sentence with the help of MT.

(101) If all else fails, those who have been defeated in war trust themselves to the mountains (Isa. 33.16). At Lam. 4.12 the kings of the earth are wrong to believe that no enemy can enter the gates of Jerusalem.

(102) The relative infrequency of *pistis* language is also partly explained by the fact that the *'emunah* lexicon is also translated by *elpis* and *alētheia*.

(103) Gen. 14.31, Sir. 2.8.

(104) Isa. 28.16, Sir. 2.13, though cf. 32.21 (do not be overconfident). Trust in God coexists much less with doubt or scepticism (even, for instance, in the Book of Job); though trust in people may coexist with doubt or scepticism (as in the Books of Maccabees).

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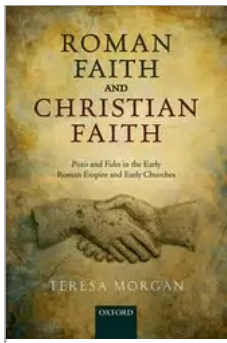
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Pistis and the Earliest Christian Preaching

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines Paul's treatment of *pistis* in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, seeking to understand what Paul borrows from Jewish and Graeco-Roman *mentalité* and where he breaks new ground. It investigates the shape of the divine-human community in 1 Thessalonians and finds that in some ways it is highly distinctive. It explores how far *pistis* can be understood as a state of mind or an emotion, as opposed to a relationship and praxis. It considers the foundations on which Paul calls people to put their trust in God. An excursus on the origins of the terms *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi pistoi* to mean 'Christians' considers all the passages in the New Testament in which these phrases may mean not simply 'the faithful' or 'believers' but specifically designate 'Christians'. Finally, it considers what 1 and 2 Corinthians add to our understanding of Paul's treatment of *pistis*.

Keywords: *pistis*, faithful, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, community, foundation, *pistis*, *hoi pistoi*

This chapter turns from the well-established, richly diverse thought worlds of the Hellenistic Judaism to the beginnings of Christian preaching and the formation of the earliest churches. In the last five chapters a number of questions have been developed which can now be asked of the earliest evidence for *pistis*. Who do followers of Christ see as exercising *pistis* towards whom, in what circumstances? Where is *pistis* presented as easy or difficult to negotiate? On what foundations is it built? Where is it deferred or reified? Does it create its own 'horizon of significance'?¹ Through these and related questions we will explore the shape, or shapes, of *pistis* in primitive churches as they emerge from the epistles, the gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. The answers these questions yield will reveal where the *pistis* practised in churches is located in relation to



Jewish and gentile culture, and where it begins to evolve into a new and unique concept and praxis.

We begin with what, in the form in which it has come down to us, may well be the earliest surviving Christian document: Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. After a more than a century of investigation into the authenticity and order of Paul's letters, the early date (c.50–1) of 1 Thessalonians is now widely accepted.² This poses an immediate temptation to historians, who are always looking for sequences in groups of sources which may reveal change and development over time: in this case, for instance, in Paul's thought. Ordering Paul's other letters, however, is a notoriously difficult and contested exercise.³ They were probably written within a ten-year period, but since Paul had been a missionary for more than ten years before that, it cannot be assumed that his thought developed significantly during this time, and any chronology of his development based on the letters themselves is open to dispute. More secure **(p.213)** grounds for dating some of the letters have been identified in the information Paul gives about his travels and situation as he writes. 1 Corinthians and, very likely, at least parts of 2 Corinthians were written from Ephesus in the mid-50s (1 Cor. 16.8). At Romans 15.24–6 Paul tells the Romans that he plans to visit them on his way to Spain, after he has visited Jerusalem again; Acts 20.2–17 reports that Paul travelled from Corinth to Jerusalem in 57, where he was arrested, tried, and eventually sent to Rome as a prisoner, so it seems likely that Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth shortly before he left in 57. Both Philippians and Philemon were written while Paul was in prison (Phil. 1.7, Phlm. 1.1), either in Rome in the late 50s, or in Ephesus if, as some scholars think possible, he was imprisoned there in the mid-50s, or conceivably in Caesarea.⁴ The dating of Galatians is very uncertain indeed: it could have been written during Paul's stay in Ephesus or some time later.⁵

For present purposes, it is not necessary to presume any particular chronological ordering of the letters. I shall, however, argue that 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians have much in common in their treatment of *pistis*, while the next chapter will seek to show that Galatians, Romans, and Philippians 3 have much in common in their treatment, which is rather different from that of 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians. If we combine these observations with what can plausibly be reconstructed of the chronology of the letters on other grounds, it becomes possible—though certainly not conclusively demonstrable—that Paul's treatment of *pistis* in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians 3 represents an evolution in his thinking.⁶ Alternatively, it is possible (and many contemporary commentators would argue) that the similarities between Galatians, Romans, and Philippians 3 are due more to the concerns and arguments which those letters share, especially about the law, *pistis*, and *dikaïosynē*, than to any evolution in Paul's thought.⁷

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ment of the next few chapters. It is carry significantly different meanings, usually understood as meaning the hy'. Christian *pistis*, however, as we saw in the Introduction, is often understood as *sui generis*: a unique orientation of the heart and mind; a relationship between the one who has **(p.214)** faith and the object of faith, defined by the distinctive content of faith, which is quite unlike that of any other *pistis* relationship in the world around it.⁸ *Pisteuein*, meanwhile, is often connected especially with propositional belief.⁹ On this view, there is no necessary connection, for instance, between having Christian *pistis* and being (as Paul's co-workers are sometimes said to be) *pistos*: the former is a distinctive spiritual condition, the latter a common, every-day one. Even to have *pistis* and *pisteuein* might mean rather different things (the former, for instance, meaning to exercise trust/obedience towards God or Christ, and the latter to believe certain things about God or Christ).

I argued in the Introduction that to assume the uniqueness of Christian *pistis* at the beginning of the tradition is methodologically unsound. We should not expect a new community forming within an existing culture to take language in common use and immediately assign to it radical new meanings. In the Greek-speaking world, as Chapters 2–4 demonstrated, it is taken for granted that *pistos*, *pistis*, *pisteuein*, and other parts of the lexicon are closely related, so on the same methodological principle we should assume that the writers of the New Testament thought the same unless and until the texts compel a different conclusion.¹⁰ On this basis, I shall argue, for instance, that when Paul calls a co-worker *pistos*, he means something more than everyday reliability by it; that although Paul only once says that God has *pistis* (Rom. 3.3), he refers to the same quality when he calls God *pistos* (e.g. 1 Thess. 5.24); and that the balance of propositionality and relationality in occurrences of *pisteuein* must be explored with close attention to their context. It will emerge in what follows that in some ways Christian uses of *pistis* language do evolve, even within the period of the New Testament writings. These evolutions, however, may not always be the ones that students of later Christian faith would expect.

Divine–Human Pistis and the Creation of Community

1 Thessalonians has played, at best, a minor role in discussions of Pauline *pistis*, probably because in this letter Paul does not

connect Christ, *pistis*, and *dikaïosynē* in the complex configurations which make Romans, Galatians, and Philippians such a rich source of debate.¹¹ Nevertheless, the likely early date of **(p.215)** 1 Thessalonians gives it a significance of its own, and when we reflect that that in its five short chapters *pistis* language appears no fewer than fourteen times, it becomes an obvious starting point from which to explore the emergence of early Christian understandings of *pistis*.

Throughout 1 Thessalonians *pistis* language is always connected with the relationship between God and human beings. '[F]rom you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaëa, but in every place your *pistis* towards God has gone forth...' (1.8).¹² There are no phrases in this letter that can be interpreted as trust in Christ, nor are the Thessalonians encouraged to trust one another as fellow-community members.¹³

A number of passages in later letters will be discussed in which Christians are exhorted to practise *pistis* towards Christ, but we shall find at best very few, and arguably no, passages in which community members are encouraged to practise *pistis* towards one another purely as fellow-community members.¹⁴ The reason for this is evidently not that churches are not imagined as communities: clearly they are. Nor is it that Christians' behaviour towards one another is not regarded as a matter for Paul, or other community leaders, to discuss and offer guidance on. But *pistis* is not represented as practised by human beings for the formation and sustenance of human communities.¹⁵ The praxis which forms and sustains communities is above all that of *agapē*: 'On the subject of mutual charity you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another' (4.9).¹⁶ In the context of the Graeco-Roman world, and of Hellenistic Judaism, the near-absence of intra-human *pistis* from Paul's discussion of Christian communities is unexpected and very striking, and suggests that *pistis* in early churches begins to evolve in its own direction from a very early date.

God is *pistos* for Paul, as for many of the writers of the Septuagint, and it is no great stretch to see human *pistis* in 1 Thessalonians as deriving from the faithfulness of God.¹⁷ Paul states that God is *pistos* just once in this letter, in a prominent position near the end.¹⁸ God's faithfulness is linked in this passage with the fact that he has called the Thessalonians: 'The one who calls you is **(p.216)** faithful (πιστός ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς).' Paul has already referred (1.4) to the fact that the Thessalonians were 'chosen', and that they responded with *pistis*. He seems to be imagining a faithful God as reaching out to human beings and choosing them, before human beings respond with trust in him.¹⁹

No doubt referring to God as *pistos* comes naturally to Paul as a Jew, but the word's overtones of faithfulness and trustworthiness make it equally powerful whether he is preaching to Jews or gentiles. Jews (and god-fearers) could hear in it an assurance that the God who was calling them was the God who had chosen and protected Israel in the past. Gentiles could hear in it an assurance that the God in whom they were being called to put their trust anew was trustworthy.²⁰ It is well recognized that in later books of the New Testament *pisteuein* is sometimes used effectively to mean 'to convert'. Here *pistis* is seen already to be linked with conversion and, moreover, already working in that context to encompass both Jews and gentiles.²¹

God did not call the Thessalonians directly, but through the 'gospel of Christ' (3.2) and through Paul. In Romans, Galatians, and Philippians Paul will use *pistis* language in developing an integrated model of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity. In this letter, as already noted, no connection is made between *pistis* and Christ, whether to describe Christ's relationship with God or that of *hoi pisteuontes*, the faithful (1.7), with Christ. The importance of Christ to Paul is not in doubt. His opening greeting refers to 'God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (1.1), and Jesus appears throughout the letter as Christ and Lord, the one who will come in glory on the day of the Lord.²² But Christ has not yet found a place in Paul's articulation of the *pistis* relationship between God and humanity. Arguments from silence are always equivocal, but we may have evidence here of a relatively early stage in the evolution of Paul's thinking, in which he has not fully integrated his sense of the role of Christ in salvation with his inherited model of divine-human community.

Paul does, however, use the *pistis* lexicon in this letter to describe his own role in bringing the word of God to the Thessalonians and the Thessalonians to trust in God. He has, he says, been 'entrusted' (*pisteuthēnai*) with the gospel by God (2.4). *Pisteuesthai* is not the most common way of expressing what we translate as 'being entrusted' in Greek of this period (*encheirizein*, 'to put [something] in someone's hands' is standard), so Paul's repeated use of it is **(p.217)** significant.²³ Now that the Thessalonians have received the gospel, moreover, they themselves have become a model for other *pisteuontes* (1.7).²⁴ 'For from you the word of God has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and [in] Achaëa, but in every place your *pistis* towards God has gone forth...' (1.8).

We can see developing here what we might call an economy of *pistis*. A faithful God calls his apostle to *pistis*; the faithful apostle, acting as God's intermediary, calls others to *pistis* towards God, who may themselves inspire yet others, by their example if not by

active preaching. Before they are called (or after they have rejected a call), human beings lack *pistis* (Paul calls them *hoi apistoi*²⁵); evidently it is the call that stimulates their *pistis*.²⁶ *Pistis* is not the only divine quality which Paul preaches (others include love, mercy, and righteousness), but the quality which most naturally evokes *pistis* is *pistis* itself, not only here but everywhere in Greek and Roman thinking, in the Septuagint, and in modern theory.²⁷ *Pistis* can therefore be seen as circling, from God, through the apostle, to other people and back to God.²⁸ If we focus more narrowly on the way Paul sees himself as entrusted by God with his mission, we can also see *pistis*, in the sense of ‘trustworthiness’, as we saw it in the last chapter,²⁹ as ‘cascading’ from God to his apostle,³⁰ from his apostle to those to whom he preaches, and from communities of converts to others who are inspired by them.³¹ We are reminded (though Paul does not draw the gentile Thessalonians’ attention to the comparison³²) of the way God’s relationship of *pistis* with Moses in the desert cascades down to lesser leaders of the Israelites, and thence to the Israelites as a community.

The relationships of trust and trustworthiness which Paul sketches between himself and God, and himself and his communities adumbrate the limited and specific sense in which Paul’s epistles do speak of intra-human trust. Those who receive the gospel put their trust in God. When someone like Paul is called to preach, he must be thought trustworthy by others, and those others **(p.218)** must on some level put their trust in him. This idea will be developed further in later letters, where we find Paul describing himself and his co-workers as *pistoi*.³³ For now, we may note that *pistis* in this context is strongly hierarchical and typically attributed to those in positions of authority in the community.³⁴

Pistis is not always recognized as having an economy of this kind, but its operation, as described above, is not unparalleled in Paul’s letters: it has features in common with his understanding of justice or righteousness, *dikaïosynē*. *Dikaïosynē* is a quality of God which God extends to human beings who cannot achieve it by themselves. Through the saving action of Christ, communicated by the preaching of apostles, human beings respond to God and become *dikaioi*, members of the community of Christ’s followers and proleptically members of God’s kingdom. This is not the place to discuss *dikaïosynē* at length, not least because the lexicon appears only once in 1 Thessalonians (at 2.10, where Paul tells the Thessalonians that both God and they are witnesses of how ‘devoutly, justly (*dikaïōs*), and blamelessly’ he behaved towards them), but we will return to it and its possible parallels with *pistis* in Chapter 12.³⁵

If Paul’s cascade of *pistis* is evocative of the Book of Exodus, it is unlike that of Exodus insofar as Paul seems to go out of his way to downplay the active role of human beings in evoking *pistis* in others. He describes the word of God almost surreally as having been ‘projected out of’ the Thessalonians (*exēchētai*) (1.8). The gospel Paul himself preached came to the Thessalonians not only with (his) words but with power and the holy spirit (1.5), while his words were not really human words at all, but the word of God mediated through him which now works in the Thessalonians (2.13–14). The same point arises in a slightly different form in his ethical exhortations in chapter 4. Calling the Thessalonians to sexual purity (the opposite of lust), Paul insists that the person who disregards this teaching ‘disregards not a human being but God, who gives his holy spirit to you’ (4.8). People, Paul seems to be saying, are merely vehicles of the divine word and power.

The idea that people who have put their trust in God may become vehicles for the word, spirit, or power of God draws on another tradition common to Jewish and Graeco-Roman religiosity. Prophetic utterances are regularly described as the word or voice of God or a god sounding through a human voice, while the activities of wonder-workers are commonly attributed to the power of a god working through the individual.³⁶ The same idea is widely attested in **(p.219)** the New Testament.³⁷ Prophetic or magical power is a paradoxical quality in which the status, role, and authority of the human medium can be presented (by the medium or others) as trivial or very great (or both), and this is no less true for Paul and other preachers and wonder-workers in the New Testament than for those in the surrounding cultures.³⁸ Paul often seems to downplay the active role of those, like himself, who evoke *pistis* in others—but this may be part of a paradoxical rhetorical strategy to boost their trustworthiness and that of the gospel.

Insofar as *pistis* shapes the Thessalonian church,³⁹ it forms a ‘wigwam-shaped’ community, in which many *pisteuontes* are held together at the ‘top’ by their *pistis* towards God, and secondarily by their trust in those who minister to them. As has been noted, against the twin backgrounds of Jewish tradition and Graeco-Roman society this characterization looks both deliberate and unusual. Previous chapters have not offered many possible parallels or types for this model, but they have offered one or two which are surely significant. We have already noted the similarities between Paul’s cascade of *pistis* and that of the Book of Exodus. A gentile or gentile-educated listener might hear in Paul a reminiscence of those bands of colonists who throughout early Greek history set out from famine-ridden or devastated homes to found new cities in more fertile or friendlier lands. It is typical of stories of journeys of this kind that trust is invested in the god who orders the expedition and in the expedition leader who is sanctioned, and occasionally chosen, by the god, but that trust is not marked among the expedition leader’s followers.⁴⁰ For listeners or readers acquainted with Roman culture, the paradigmatic example of this pattern is that of Aeneas and the followers who invest *fides* in him but not

(explicitly) in each other as they wander round the Mediterranean and struggle to establish themselves in Italy.⁴¹ Even more strongly, perhaps, the wigwam model recalls the *pistis* or *fides* which, as we saw in Chapter 3, armies (**p.220**) swear to their commanders, which similarly cascades down the ranks from emperors and generals to leaders of smaller units.⁴² (It may not be irrelevant that both the Israelites in the desert and Aeneas and his companions on their wanderings represent whole peoples, who, when they finally settle, will found new states, while Greek and Roman armies, moving as they do in large numbers, sometimes accompanied by women and children, and building camps which are microcosmic cities, are often likened to peoples in transit.) In all these cases, common sense suggests that 'horizontal' trust, loyalty, and so on must in fact obtain between community members too, at least to some degree, but the *pistis/fides* that is marked and discussed is that between leaders and followers: in these communities it is vertical *pistis/fides* that matters most.

Paul's Thessalonians might be imagined as a band of brothers (1.4, etc.), led ultimately by God, by Christ, and more immediately by Paul and Timothy, making their way in hopeful endurance (1.3) through an often hostile world towards a promised heaven. Self-segregated (at least in principle) from the sinful society around them, encouraged to mind their own affairs and not to depend on others (4.11–12), they have interactions with the peoples they encounter on the way that consist mainly in trying to stay out of trouble, or get out of trouble, in order to reach their destination.⁴³ The parallel is never explicit, but the type of the small, embattled community, divinely inspired to seek a better place to live and meeting all kinds of dangers on its way, is such a potent theme of myth and history in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture that it would not take much prompting for Jewish or gentile Christians to hear echoes of it in this and other letters and apply it to themselves.⁴⁴

In 1 Thessalonians Paul has little more to say about the shape of the community, but what he does say is well in line with what will emerge in later letters. God is Father, so in one sense the community is either a family or (**p.221**) a household.⁴⁵ Members serve (*douleuein*) the 'living and true God' (1.9) as slaves, but are also described as children of God (1.3) and 'sons of light' (5.5). (They are also both children of Paul, as God's apostle (2.11), and his brothers.⁴⁶) In just one verse Paul refers to God's kingdom (2.12), into which God calls the Thessalonians as subjects. Paul's frequent references to Jesus Christ as *kyrios* are ambiguous, resonant equally of the master of a household and the ruler of a state. We have seen that *pistis* is one of the rare qualities which are equally at home in the domestic and political spheres, and we shall see most of the writers of the New Testament taking advantage of this breadth when modelling divine-human relationships, but it is only hinted at in this letter.

The activity of the community is summed up at the start of the letter as the 'work of faith and labour of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1.3).⁴⁷ Of these, Paul returns, as has often been noted, most often to hope.⁴⁸ In response to this hope, the Thessalonians are to wait (1.10), to stay 'alert and sober' (5.6), to endure persecution (2.14–16), to mind their own affairs and not depend on outsiders (4.12), and to behave worthily of God (2.12), which involves loving one another (3.12, 4.9–10) and practising various forms of what for Paul was probably conventional ethical behaviour.⁴⁹

To call all this 'activity' is perhaps to exaggerate how active it is. It might be nearer the mark to see the Thessalonians, as Paul characterizes them at the end of the letter, as allowing themselves to be kept in the right condition in which to meet the coming wrath: 'May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (5.23).⁵⁰ If Paul's representation of *pistis* in earlier passages was reminiscent of the trustworthiness of Moses and the prophets, he may here be drawing on Hellenistic Jewish wisdom's understanding of *pistis* as a quality which Israelites should practise, even when the world seems hostile, in the conviction that God will ultimately vindicate them.⁵¹ (**p.222**) Unlike wisdom writers, though, Paul expects the eschatological vindication of the faithful imminently.

These passages also illustrate a tension which will characterize Paul's understanding of salvation throughout his letters and inspire copious debate among later Christians. On the one hand, the Thessalonians work at faith and are urged to progress in it, imitating Paul himself, other churches, and the Lord. On the other, God calls them, increases their mutual love, and destines them for salvation, all language which minimizes their active role in the process. One might reconcile the two, at least in this letter, by suggesting that the point is less that the Thessalonians are to do nothing than that they are not to act independently of what they are taught or on their own judgement. They are children and slaves of God, mediators of God's word and spirit, and no longer their own masters. If this is right, then we may even be able to see in these passages one of the roots of Paul's understanding of life in Christ as death followed by Christ's living in the one who has *pistis*.⁵²

Whether by their own efforts or not, Paul clearly regards the Thessalonians' *pistis* as capable of development.⁵³ 'Night and day we pray beyond measure to see you in person and remedy the deficiencies of your faith' (3.10). *Pistis* responds to encouragement, growing (Paul hopes) in strength (3.2–3); it is susceptible to temptation (3.5–6) but has the capacity to stand firm (3.8).⁵⁴ The emphasis,

however, seems to be on accepting instruction and resisting temptation rather than on self-improvement. This impression is reinforced towards the end of the letter (5.8), when Paul says, ‘let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation...’. The breastplate and helmet are both pieces of defensive armour, appropriate for warding off the slings and arrows which the world may fling at the faithful, but not equipment with which to take the offensive.⁵⁵

The rewards of *pistis* in this letter are clear: the Thessalonians will be delivered from the coming wrath (1.10), called into God’s kingdom and glory (2.12), and taken up to meet the Lord (4.17).⁵⁶ There is, strikingly, in this letter, no sense that putting one’s *pistis* in God in expectation of the coming wrath is particularly risky or difficult in itself, nor that the Thessalonians’ trust in God (**p.223**) is in serious danger of failing. Paul offers, moreover, no hint of how failures of trust might be punished by God. His picture of the divine–human relationship, as we have seen it so far, is strong and positive. We will return to this theme in connection with what Paul presents as foundations for *pistis*.⁵⁷

In these passages there are signs that Paul is thinking about how *pistis* works to maintain and develop the relationship between God and humanity with a subtlety, and in a degree of detail, that are unmatched in either the Septuagint or Graeco-Roman literature. Here again we can begin to see Christian *pistis* in evolution. The central importance of *pistis* to Christians will mean that they develop understandings of its nature and operation, especially between the divine and humanity, which are far more complex than those of surrounding cultures.⁵⁸

Paul has no difficulty, here or elsewhere, in describing his communities as active—for better or worse—when practising *agapē* or engaging in a multitude of other ethical or unethical activities. It is only in connection with *pistis* (and perhaps, in other letters, *dikaioynē*) that their behaviour is cast in these bivalent terms. For *pistis*, as Paul sees it, human beings are dependent on God, and a life of *pistis* is one of handing over one’s activities, relationships, and even one’s voice to God. And here we may perhaps find the beginning of an answer to the question why Paul does not have more to say about *pistis* between human beings. Paul gives *pistis* towards God a radical and potent interpretation. It is more than trust, faithfulness, or even obedience: it is tempting, leaping ahead to a later letter (though not necessarily to a later stratum of tradition), to label it ‘kenosis’, an emptying out of self in order to become a slave to God.⁵⁹ Only towards God would such extreme handing over of one’s life be appropriate, so *pistis* in intra-human relationships is restricted to rare and specific forms of relationship (such as that between an apostle who is passing on the word of God entrusted to him and his audience).⁶⁰

(p.224) This account assumes that the inspiration behind Paul’s evolving understanding of *pistis* is theological rather than social. It is, though, also worth noting from a social–functionalist perspective that treating *pistis* as constitutive of the divine–human relationship and marginal in intra-human relationships may have had practical advantages. In churches which were developing from a mixture of Jewish and gentile converts, intra-human trust may not always have been easy. By calling community members to practise *agapē* rather than *pistis* towards one another, Paul may be trying to encourage them to act in a neighbourly way, even if they struggle to trust fellow-members who come from, in some respects, very different and not always mutually trusting backgrounds.⁶¹

Interiority, Relationality, Propositionality

So far, *pistis* has been discussed primarily as ‘trust’, and the focus has been on the kind of relationship and community which Paul sees *pistis* as creating and articulating between God and human beings. I have argued that Paul understands *pistis* as a quality of God; that God who is *pistos* chooses those whom he calls and, through the preaching of those who are entrusted with the gospel, enables them to enter a relationship of *pistis* with him. *Pistis* is already linked in this letter with conversion. Among converts, it obtains between God and community members and between those who mediate the gospel and community members, but is not a quality of intra-human community in general. The shape of the community formed by *pistis* is reminiscent of that of the Israelites during the Exodus or of migrant Greek and proto-Roman communities. One of its distinctive qualities, however, is that it empowers *hoi pisteuontes* to serve God and put themselves at God’s disposal, but not to act on their own account, though their *pistis* may develop as they endure and ‘stand firm in the Lord’ (3.8).

It emerged in earlier chapters, however, that the relational aspects of a quality like *pistis* are often difficult, if not impossible, to separate from its cognitive and affective aspects. Interpersonal trust, whether divine–human or intra-human, also involves emotions and beliefs, and to these we now turn.

(p.225) Is *pistis* understood as an emotion in 1 Thessalonians, or more broadly as an interior state (what was characterized by Augustine as *fides qua*, the faith by which one believes), and if so, how do interiority and relationality relate to one another? The simple answer is that Christian *pistis* is virtually certain to have an interior aspect, because trust and cognate concepts in general do.

A more complex answer, encompassing Graeco-Roman, Septuagintal and New Testament *pistis/fides*, is explored in Chapter 11, whose argument I will not anticipate extensively here. Nevertheless, we can make some initial observations.

Pistis is never marked as interior in this letter. It is not linked, for instance, with the heart or mind, nor described in such a way as to suggest that Paul thinks of it primarily as a cognitive or affective condition. It is, though, linked several times with love (itself widely recognized in this period as having interior and emotional aspects), in such a way that it is plausible to assume that Paul thinks of them in similar terms.⁶²

The nearest Paul may come to characterizing *pistis* as interior in this letter is at the very beginning, but the phrase in which he uses it is unfortunately ambiguous:

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνεῖαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of *pistis* and labour of love and endurance of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Given the contrast Paul will draw in later letters between faith and works of the law, and the controversies this will generate, it is ironic (and, the next chapter will suggest, not insignificant⁶³) that what may be his earliest surviving mention of *pistis* occurs in the phrase ‘your work of faith’. What, though, is the force of the three genitival phrases ‘work of faith and labour of love and endurance of hope’? Should one, in particular, understand the Thessalonians’ *pistis* and *agapē* as works, or their works as based, for instance, on internal states of *pistis* and *agapē*?⁶⁴

The simplest phrase of the three to interpret is probably the last. It would be odd to describe the Thessalonians’ hope appositionally as endurance (hope normally being a rather different quality from endurance), but, as has been seen, it makes good sense to describe the Thessalonians’ hope as based on their endurance, in the sense that their endurance will help to ensure that they are worthy to be called into God’s kingdom. Assuming that this is right, then if the **(p.226)** three phrases are parallel, the Thessalonians’ works or labours (which are indistinguishable in meaning) are based on their (perhaps interior) *pistis* and *agapē*. Paul, however, is quite capable of writing, for rhetorical effect, grammatically parallel phrases which are not parallel in meaning.⁶⁵ If he is doing so here, then the last phrase is most likely to have been massaged grammatically to fit the other two, because it is natural to use the grammatical construction which best fits the meaning of the majority of one’s phrases, and also natural to put any phrase which is grammatically a little strained at the end of the sequence, where it will least disrupt listeners’ attention. With this in mind, we cannot take for granted that the three phrases are grammatically parallel, nor that the meaning of the last is the best to start from when interpreting the other two.

This leaves rather little to go on, except the presumption that the other two phrases are parallel. It is uncontroversial to understand love as combining cognitive, affective, active, and relational aspects, so there is nothing awkward about seeing love as a work and understanding ‘labour of love’ appositionally. As Chapter 11 will show, *pistis* is understood in Greek in terms very similar to *agapē* or (more commonly) *philia*, as a relationship-creating activity with cognitive and affective aspects, so ‘work of *pistis*’ could also be understood appositionally here. On the other hand, one can also imagine such a thing as ‘work based on love’. Would ‘work based on faith’ make sense as a concept within this letter? There are reasons to think that it would not. We have seen that Paul expects the Thessalonians to ‘remedy the deficiencies’ of their *pistis* (3.10), suggesting that *pistis* is a work in progress.⁶⁶ But we have also seen that the Thessalonians’ *pistis* inspires and is a model for others (e.g. 1.7–8) without their positively doing anything, and moreover, that they are not encouraged to exercise *pistis* towards one another in the community. Paul therefore gives us some sense of what ‘the work that faith is’ might look like for the Thessalonians, but no sense what ‘[active] work based on *pistis*’ might look like, either among community members or beyond.⁶⁷

It seems likely, therefore, that ‘work of *pistis*’ (and perhaps also ‘labour of love’) are to be read appositionally, and that *pistis* is being understood as both interior (something the Thessalonians can work on) and exterior, in the sense that it is relational and has an impact on others, even if it does not appear to involve the Thessalonians in ‘faith-based activities’ such as preaching or healing.

If there is plausibly an aspect of *fides qua* to *pistis* in 1 Thessalonians, what of Augustine’s *fides quae*, the (propositional) content of the faith which is believed? This, as we have noted, became so important to later Christians that **(p.227)** its presence and role in what is probably the earliest book of the New Testament are of particular interest. How do the propositional and relational aspects of *pistis* relate to one another in this letter?

We saw repeatedly in the last five chapters that wherever relationships of trust exist, beliefs are also involved. To trust people we must, more or less explicitly or self-consciously, believe things about them, while our beliefs are themselves based on trust, and so on in an infinite regress. We can therefore take for granted that belief is involved in some way wherever *pistis* language occurs in the New Testament. Its precise role, though, bears a little more investigation.

At 1 Thess. 4.13–14 Paul tells the Thessalonians:

Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα. εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτοῖς.

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.⁶⁸

To these verses we can add 1.10, which affirms that God raised Jesus from the dead, and 5.9–10, where Paul says, ‘God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us (τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him.’ These passages do not encompass all the propositional claims about God, Christ, or humanity in this letter, but they include the two, that Christ died for us and that he was raised from the dead, which are fundamental to the first Christians, unique to them, and definitive of them, so they make a good focus for discussion.⁶⁹

That Christ was raised from the dead and that salvation comes through Christ’s death and resurrection are clearly matters of propositional belief for Paul (he believes that they occurred and are true), and vitally important ones. That being so, it is perhaps surprising that his treatment of them is not more emphatic or more central to this letter.⁷⁰ At the beginning, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of their history as *pisteuontes*. He tells them that they were chosen to hear the good news by a God who loved them,⁷¹ implying that God’s (**p.228**) relationship with them preceded their reception of the gospel.⁷² The good news came in words, power, and the holy spirit (1.5), and the Thessalonians’ response was to put their trust in God.⁷³ Propositional belief, as we should expect, is implicit here—the Thessalonians must have believed what Paul said about God for it to have made sense to turn to God⁷⁴—but the Thessalonians’ response to Paul’s preaching is not described as belief that certain things are so, but relationally as trust in God (1.8), turning to God (1.9), serving God (1.9), and waiting for God’s Son (1.10). The crucifixion and resurrection are mentioned first in a subordinate clause in verse 10. The Thessalonians are awaiting God’s Son from heaven, ‘whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath’. Paul takes it for granted that the Thessalonians share his belief that the resurrection occurred, but he does not characterize it as the focal point of their *pistis* now. What defines the Thessalonians as *hoi pisteuontes* is what the Macedonians and Achaeans declare about them: that they turned to serve the living and true God.

When Paul returns to the resurrection in chapter 4 he does so in response to a concern which some Thessalonians have evidently raised, that those who die before the coming of the Lord Jesus may not be taken into heaven (4.13–18). Paul tells them that they can believe that God will raise the dead to life at the coming of Christ if they believe that Jesus died and was raised: ‘[I]f we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep’ (4.14). Paul assumes that the Thessalonians do believe this (though beginning the sentence with εἰ γὰρ is a weak way of expressing it), but the climax of the passage is what he says at the end of verse 17: ‘Thus we shall be always with the Lord. Console one another therefore with these words.’ He returns to this point at 5.9–11: God destined followers of Christ to gain salvation through Jesus Christ, ‘so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him. Encourage one another and build one another up, therefore...’.

The (admittedly limited) evidence of this letter therefore suggests that the saving death and resurrection of Jesus are central to Paul’s preaching, and that accepting his proclamation is essential for the Thessalonians’ acceptance of the gospel, but that, for Paul, the Thessalonians’ acceptance of the gospel takes place within an (at least from God’s perspective) existing relationship, and what his preaching has achieved is to enable them to recognize and embrace that relationship. Now that they have done so, their focus is on the divine—(**p.229**) human relationship itself, on serving God and awaiting the day when they will be taken up to heaven to be with the Lord (Jesus Christ) forever, though conviction of the death and resurrection of Jesus continues to underlie their hope. The relationship between relationality and propositionality in *pistis* is thus already a complex one, the elements balanced somewhat differently at different times in the lives of *hoi pisteuontes*. The indications, though, are that *fides quae* does not play quite the central and explicit role in the ongoing life of the community that it plays in later centuries.⁷⁵

In this connection it is worth looking at another passage, from a letter probably written not long after 1 Thessalonians, which is often

regarded as demonstrating beyond doubt the centrality, in both apostolic preaching and community *pistis*, of propositional belief. 1 Corinthians 15.1–4 is close in content to the Thessalonian passages quoted above but says rather more:

Γνωρίζω δε ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε, δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε. παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα...

Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you trusted/believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Kephias, then to the twelve...(1 Cor. 15.1–4)

The significance of the gospel he received for Paul is explicit and unquestioned. Its claims, moreover, must have been so astonishing to Jewish and gentile ears alike that only its vital importance would have led the apostles to place it at the forefront of their preaching. The context of this passage, however, shows a little more about the relationship between propositional claims and other aspects of *pistis*.

At 15.12 it emerges that some Corinthians have denied that the dead will be raised. (Paul implies that they are not so much worried, like some Thessalonians, about those Christians who have died, as sceptical about resurrection in principle.) Paul tells them, as he told the Thessalonians, that they can be confident that God will raise the dead at the end time because God raised Jesus Christ. Paul takes for granted that the Corinthians (like the Thessalonians) believe this (cf. 15.11), and that it is a crucial basis for their *pistis*: 'if Christ has (**p.230**) not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty (*kenē*), too, your *pistis*' (15.14). This formulation, however, leaves open the relative weight of propositionality and other aspects of *pistis* here: how far *pistis* constitutes believing Paul's preaching and its content, how far it is an emotion (such as confidence, for instance, based on the resurrection), and how far it is a relationship with God and/or Christ based on the grace of God (cf. 15.10) which is expressed in the resurrection. No doubt all three aspects are involved, but a few verses later we find that relationality is particularly important: 'if Christ has not been raised, your *pistis* is pointless (*mataia*); you are still *in your sins*' (15.17). Freedom from sin and the restoration of a proper relationship with God are the *telos* of God's action in raising Christ from the dead, and the divine–human relationship is therefore the key aspect of the *pistis* of community members.

The importance of the divine–human relationship is confirmed, and its future powerfully envisaged, in the long passage on resurrection which follows and which forms the climax of this chapter. When everyone has been brought to life through Christ (15.23) and all his enemies are destroyed (15.24–8), Christ will hand over his kingdom to God his Father (15.24), complete with its population of *pisteuontes*. Human beings, in incorruptible, immortal form (15.42, 52–3), will 'inherit the kingdom of God' (15.50) and live triumphantly in it forever: '[T]hanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (15.57). How literally Paul takes this vision is open to debate, but need not concern us here. We need only note that in this chapter of 1 Corinthians, as in 1 Thessalonians, it is essential to him that people believe his preaching, and believe its content, above all that 'Christ died for our sins... that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day' (15.3). At the same time, the consequence of believing this is the release of the faithful from their sins and their restoration to a proper relationship with God, while their ultimate hope is for their participation in the kingdom of God. For those within the community, therefore, relationality takes over from propositionality as the principal form and focus of their *pistis*.⁷⁶

We may note that the logic of the kerygma itself supports this interpretation. It is important that human beings should no longer be 'in [their] sins' (**p.231**) (15.17), because, says Paul, it is only when they are released from their sins (or, as he says in other letters, 'made righteous') that they will be able to inherit the kingdom of God. This logic would not work the other way round: if believing (propositionally) in the death and resurrection of Christ, or being released from one's sins by believing in it, were the essence of *pistis*, there would be no obvious need for preachers to invoke the coming cosmic upheaval.⁷⁷

We need not be surprised to find relationality at the heart of *pistis*, in the divine–human as in the intra-human community. Early Christian preachers aim to change the hearts, minds, affiliations, and behaviour of *hoi pisteuontes* and incorporate them into the household and kingdom of God and a loving, worshipping community on earth. We can readily imagine a relationship of trust working as a foundation for all those things (and it is hard to imagine any other quality, relationship, or praxis doing so).⁷⁸

This discussion has focused rather narrowly on those aspects of Paul's preaching which he connects with *pistis* language in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians 15. In particular, in focusing on his eschatological vision, it has ignored his equally powerful sense that, with the resurrection, the relationship between God and humanity and the possibilities for human life have already been transformed. In Galatians, Romans, and Philippians these themes are explicitly connected with *pistis* language, so they will be given more of the attention they deserve.

We have not quite finished with propositional belief, and return to it below at the end of the section on foundations of *pistis*.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, it is also worth noting that 1 Corinthians, like 1 Thessalonians, does not invite *hoi pisteuontes* to put their trust in Christ. Paul has a strong sense of the importance of putting one's trust in God, of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of Christ's future coming, but he does not connect these aspects of his preaching with *pistis* towards Christ. In Romans, Galatians, and Philippians 3 he does speak of exercising *pistis* towards Christ, and connects *pistis* with the activities of Christ (**p.232**) as well as those of God, and I shall argue that his understanding of *pistis* itself may have helped his thinking to develop in this direction.⁸⁰

Paul says at 1 Corinthians 15.1 that this preaching was passed on to him, and we have no reason to disbelieve him. In the Acts of the Apostles we encounter another apostle preaching a kerygma which is very similar to that of 1 Thessalonians, and which may support the interpretation of Paul's preaching outlined above.⁸¹

In the course of the Acts of the Apostles 'Luke' offers a series of speeches by different preachers which he seems to have composed on the principle, endemic in Greek historiography since Thucydides, of combining his experience and information with what he thinks would have been most appropriate for each speaker to say in each situation.⁸² All these speeches make the same proclamation; at the same time, they are all slightly different, depending on who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances. The most distinctive is Paul's speech on the Athenian Areopagus (17.22–31), which offers the Athenians an account of natural theology designed to convince them that they already believe almost all of what he is preaching. Peter, too, expresses himself distinctively in his early speeches in Jerusalem (2.14–36, 38–40; 3.12–26), above all in his speech to the Jerusalem crowd at Pentecost. Though the Pentecost story, and Peter's speech, cannot have occurred as they are described, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Luke had access to elements of oral tradition about very early preaching, and it is significant that this is what he thinks Peter might have said on such an occasion.⁸³

Peter opens the speech by proclaiming that now is the time spoken of by the prophet Joel:

'It will come to pass in the last days', God says, 'that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun (**p.233**) shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.'⁸⁴

The 'day of the Lord' is coming with universal judgement, and only those who put their trust in ('call on the name of') the Lord will be saved. Having established his theme, Peter goes on to speak of Jesus:

Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται, ἀκούσατε τοὺς λόγους τούτους· Ἰσοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις οἷς ἐποίησεν δι' αὐτοῦ ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε, τοῦτον τῇ ὀρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὀδύνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ...ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι καὶ κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε...μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθῆτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. ὑμῖν γὰρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν, ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσῃται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν.

You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it...Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified...Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call. (2.22–4, 36, 38)

God worked through Jesus to demonstrate that Jesus was ‘commended’ to human beings by him. By repenting and being baptized, people may obtain forgiveness of their sins and a portion of the spirit, though Peter does not develop the idea that Jesus died for human sins, nor explain how the name of Jesus Christ and forgiveness are linked.⁸⁵ Those who receive the spirit and are linked with the name of Christ are presumably identified with those who in Joel’s prophecy call on the name of the Lord and are saved on the Lord’s ‘great and splendid day’.

Peter’s speech has two themes: his triumphant proclamation of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus (2.22–36), and his call to Jews and non-Jews (**p.234**) alike (cf. 2.14) to ‘Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins’ in order to ‘save yourselves from this corrupt generation’ in these last days (2.38, 40, 16–17). He does not call listeners to *pisteuein*, but, like Paul, he implies that his audience must believe what he reports about Jesus and restore their relationship with God through repentance and the forgiveness of sins. There is also a strong hint (amplified by the comparison with David at 2.29–34) that he looks forward to the creation of a Messianic kingdom of which only those who repent will be members (cf. 2.21). As for Paul, believing in the resurrection is especially important for Peter in bringing people to the point of restoring their relationship with God, while within that relationship the focus is more on the divine–human relationship and society in which they will participate at the end time.⁸⁶

This speech suggests that the speaker has not yet fully integrated his understanding of Christ, what Christ achieved by his death, and Christ’s relationship with those who follow him with his inherited understanding of the relationship of *hoi pistoi* (as the Septuagint calls them) with God.⁸⁷ By the time Luke was writing, several ways of understanding the relationship between God, Christ, and Christ’s followers were evolving, not least under the pen of Luke himself. To have presented what is plausibly a less evolved kerygma and put it in the mouth of one of the leading apostles is not something Luke can have done lightly. It seems likely that he was trying to imagine, or show, what he thought a very early strand of tradition might have sounded like. We can, I suggest, comparing Peter’s speech with 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians 15, be cautiously optimistic that Luke is not too wide of the mark.

Excursus: Hoi pisteuontes/hoi pistoi as Designations for Community Members

The argument of the previous section also has implications for our understanding of the phrase *hoi pisteuontes*. Before we discuss these, however, this is a convenient moment at which to explore a larger question which concerns (**p.235**) the New Testament as a whole. As we have already begun to see, the *pistis* lexicon is used almost exclusively in the New Testament of relationships between human beings and the divine. Furthermore, it is used, in its positive forms, exclusively of God, Christ, and Christ’s followers. Though Jews, Greeks, and Romans all refer to themselves as trusting in God or a god using the *pistis* or *fides* lexicon, New Testament writers never use *pistis* language to refer to anyone other than Christians. Can we take the further step of demonstrating that *hoi pisteuontes* and/or *hoi pistoi* (whom we encounter in other books) *formally* designate Christians in these writings (as, for instance, *hoi mathētai* seems to do in the Acts of the Apostles⁸⁸)? It is often taken for granted that both do, but when we look closely at the text, we find that there are surprisingly few passages in which this is clear, and many where it is not. When, for instance, Acts 2.44 says, using the aorist participle, that ‘All who trusted/believed (*hoi pisteusantes*) were together and held all things in common,’ the author is clearly referring to followers of Christ, but since he is making the point that it was as a consequence of their *pistis* that they held everything in common, we cannot assume that he is using the phrase nominally, as a title for community members, rather than simply descriptively.⁸⁹

Given that *pistis* language is used constantly and exclusively in the New Testament of those who follow Christ, the line between its use as a formal title for them and its use more generally to describe them is inevitably blurred, but in a few passages it seems relatively clear that designation, not simply description, is involved. The first passage is one we have already discussed: at 1 Thessalonians 1.7 the Thessalonians have become a model for *pantas tous pisteuontas* in Macedonia and Achaia. *Hoi pisteuontes* is the only term used in this letter to describe the group in question, and only the phrase itself and the context tell Paul’s audience that he must be referring to followers of Christ.⁹⁰ The fact that Christian groups other than the Thessalonians have *pistis*, moreover, is not the focus of Paul’s interest in this passage (as it is, for instance, of Luke’s at Acts 2.44); if anything, given that the Thessalonians are acting as models for other *pisteuontes*, the implication is that the latter are deficient in *pistis*. Nevertheless, they can be described as *hoi pisteuontes* without introduction and without an object. This can only be because *hoi pisteuontes* is understood as referring, distinctively and designatively, to Christians.

(**p.236**) In his advice on marriage at 1 Corinthians 7.12–16, Paul says that if a ‘brother’ (*adelphos*, another word for ‘community member’⁹¹) has a wife who is *apistos*, but who is willing to go on living with him, he should not divorce her, and if a woman has a husband who is *apistos*, she should not automatically divorce him (7.12–13). For a man is made *hagios* (‘holy’ or ‘a saint’, yet another word for ‘community member’⁹²) by his wife, and vice versa, and children are made holy by having a parent who is not *apistos* (7.14). In theory, *hoi apistoi* in this passage could be faithless or immoral community members (a usage for which there is

Septuagintal precedent⁹³), but that would put Paul in the unparalleled position of arguing that the virtue of one person makes up for the vice of another. It is more likely that *adelphos/apistos* and *apistos/hagios* are to be read as complementary categories and that *apistos* means ‘outsider’ (and by implication, community members are presumably *pistoi*).

If this is right, then it becomes more likely that *apistos* also means ‘outsider’ a few chapters later. At 14.22 Paul tells the Corinthians that speaking in tongues is a sign that one has received the gift of the spirit—but that it is not a sign for *hoi pisteuontes*, but for *hoi apistoi*. Conversely, the gift of prophecy is a sign not to *hoi apistoi* but to *hoi pisteuontes*, to whom the prophecies are addressed. Speaking in tongues is associated at Acts 2.6 with preaching to the not-yet-converted, while prophecies (in line with Israelite tradition) are more likely to be addressed to community members (if not necessarily virtuous ones). In verses 23–4 Paul follows this up by saying that speaking in tongues would not be probative in the *ekklēsia* (so among community members), but that prophesying is probative. Finally, he links *apistoi* with the ‘uninstructed’ (in the gospel) as those who, if they walked in on a scene of prophecy, would be instantly converted by it. It seems likely here that *hoi pisteuontes* is Paul’s term for community members, and *hoi apistoi* for outsiders.

Paul refers to *apistoi* in several other passages, and at 2 Corinthians 6.14–15 (if the generally accepted text is right) contrasts *hoi apistoi*, who are lawless followers of the devil, with *hoi pistoi*, who are righteous followers of Christ.⁹⁴ Returning to his other *pistis* term for community members, he uses *hoi (p.237) pisteuontes* once more, at Romans 4.11. He is arguing that Abraham is the father of all followers of Christ, whether or not they are Jewish. He distinguishes between circumcised and uncircumcised followers of Christ, and emphasizes that since Abraham received the ‘sign’ of circumcision as a ‘seal’ of the *dikaiosynē* which he received through his *pistis* (that is, his *pistis* preceded his circumcision), he must be the father of ‘all the uncircumcised *pisteuontes*’ as well as the circumcised. Here the argument is unambiguously about two groups of community members, and *hoi pisteuontes* is clearly a designation for community members *tout court*. Acts also refers to the difference between circumcised and uncircumcised community members, using *hoi pistoi* rather than *hoi pisteuontes*: at 10.45 the author refers in passing to *hoi ek peritomēs pistoi*, those community members who were circumcised.⁹⁵

The author of 1 Timothy begins chapter 4 by talking about those who, it is prophesied, will, in the last times, turn away from their *pistis*. In light of this, the author may be referring to loyal community members rather than community members as such when he says, at verse 10, ‘we have set our hope on the living God, who is the saviour of all, especially of *pistoi*’. On the other hand, since he has gone on in the interim to talk of other things (instructions for community leaders), there is no compelling reason to take these two verses closely together. At 5.8, when he says that any community member who does not provide for their relatives has denied *tēn pistin* and is worse than an *apistou*, he may also be referring to apostates rather than outsiders, though outsiders would make equally good sense.⁹⁶ In chapter 6, however, it is overwhelmingly likely that he uses *hoi pistoi* to designate Christians. In the course of giving advice to slaves (6.2), he says that those slaves (themselves community members) whose masters are *pistoi* must not take advantage of the fact that they are *adelphoi*, ‘brothers’, but must serve them even better because they are *pistoi*. His point, emphasized by his use of *adelphos* (and later *agapētos*) as a synonym for *pistos*, is not that the masters in question are trustworthy people in general, or even trustworthy towards their slaves, but that they are faithful to God: they are community members.⁹⁷ The author of the Epistle to Titus (1.6) uses *pistos* in a similar way when, describing the qualities required in a presbyter, he says that the man must be moral and monogamous, with children who are *pista* and not badly behaved. Given that being *pista* appears just before the children’s moral behaviour here, *pistos* could mean that the children should be faithful towards their father, but it has a stronger meaning in the sentence if it means that a presbyter’s children should themselves be members of the community.⁹⁸

(p.238) At 1 Peter 2.5–7 the author describes how the communities he is addressing have allowed themselves to be built into a ‘spiritual temple’ (*oikos pneumatikos*) on the foundation of Christ. He quotes Psalm 117.22 (LXX), saying that for *hoi pisteuontes* Christ is the cornerstone, while for *hoi apistountes* ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’ (2.7).⁹⁹ *Hoi apistountes* here are linked, via the psalm, with those who were responsible for the death of Jesus,¹⁰⁰ and must be non-community members, so *hoi pisteuontes* presumably means Christians. We may also note that verse 7 is so surrounded by other language of community—*hoi pisteuontes* are not only a temple but a holy and royal priesthood, a chosen race, a holy nation, God’s own people (2.5, 9)—that it is hard not to hear the phrase as referring to community members as such.

These examples constitute a very conservative list of possible uses of *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi pistoi* not just to refer to those who put their trust in God and Christ at a given moment, but to refer to followers of Christ—Christians—as such. Compared with the number of instances of *pistis* language in general, it is a short list, but, as noted above, given that the lexicon is only used in the New Testament of those who trust/believe in God and Christ, many other references inhabit a grey area between the description of the act of *pistis* and the designation of identity. The links these passages make, moreover, between having *pistis*, *hoi pisteuontes*, and *hoi pistoi*, and the

contrasts they draw between *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi pistoi* and their opposites, show that both lexemes can equally well be understood as designative.

It is worth noting that there is nothing very surprising, in the first century, in followers of Christ identifying themselves by a term like this. In the Hellenistic world it seems to have become increasingly common for groups of Jews to identify themselves, or to be identified by others, as in some way distinctive among God's people, whether for their politics, theology, or approach to the law: one thinks, among others, of Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, Haverim, Hakamim, and perhaps Hasidim.¹⁰¹ Some Pharisees, who were especially scrupulous about tithing, were even known as *ne'emanim*, 'faithful ones'.¹⁰² It is by no means remarkable that followers of Christ should have acquired a label of their own.

But why *this* label? Why, of all the terms they could have chosen, did the first generation of followers of Christ choose to call themselves *hoi pistoi/pisteuontes*?¹⁰³ We can be virtually certain that it was their choice (because **(p.239)** *pistoi* and *pisteuontes* are consistently used as terms of approval in the New Testament) and that the choice was made very early (because Paul and Acts show both terms in widespread use by about 50 CE). But why did the apostles, and/or developing churches, choose the *pistis* lexicon above all to express their identity?

Here we encounter the perpetual frustration of New Testament studies, that texts written so close in time to the events they describe, which themselves are foundational to the communities to which they refer, so often cannot reliably take us back a few more years to understand better the events that gave rise to them. The short answer to the question why *pistis* became so important to followers of Christ in the years before their earliest surviving texts were written is that we do not and cannot know. We can offer some hypotheses. In Chapter 9 we will consider the possibility that the language of putting one's trust in God went back in some form to the preaching of Jesus.¹⁰⁴ The evidence is fragile, but it must remain a possibility that a concept so influential was associated with Jesus himself. Bearing in mind that some Pharisees called themselves 'the faithful' and that the gospels attest tensions between Pharisees and Jesus and his followers, we may also wonder whether faithfulness became a point of contention between the two groups (or between followers of Christ and other Jewish groups in general) in Jesus' lifetime or soon after his death, and that by calling themselves *pistoi/pisteuontes* Jesus' followers were claiming that they, of all Jews, were the ones who were truly faithful to God. A possible growth in the use of *pistis* language in Hellenistic Judaism, which is suggested by the Hellenistic books of the Septuagint, may have furnished a background against which *pistis* could become a focus of such a contention.¹⁰⁵

Like all propositions about the historical Jesus and the very beginnings of his cult, these hypotheses have limited scope and value. However, this is a study of the evidence we have, not of what we do not have, and if we are unlikely ever to know why, aboriginally, *pistis* became so important to followers of Christ, we can say a good deal about why it continued to be—even became increasingly—important during and after the first century. This chapter has already begun to argue that there are powerful reasons why *pistis* language, once adopted, should have persisted and grown in importance to Christians. Its complexity and elasticity of meaning, together with its familiarity and multidimensional resonance for both Jews and gentiles, made it a superb tool through which to explore the new divine-human relationship in which followers of Christ found themselves, the nature of their new communities, and their evolving understanding of Jesus Christ.

In the next four chapters we will pursue this theme and try to show why and how *pistis* continued to be, and even became more, important for the **(p.240)** writers of the texts of the New Testament and their communities. Meanwhile, to return to the theme of the relative importance of propositional belief and relational trust which we began to explore above, it is worth considering what the terms *hoi pistoi/pisteuontes* were understood as meaning in the early years of their use among Christians. Were followers of Christ identifying themselves primarily as believers (e.g. in the resurrection and Lordship of Christ), or as faithful towards God (and Christ), or are the two impossible to separate?

Two observations suggest themselves. *Hoi pisteuontes* could mean either 'those who trust in God/are faithful to God' or 'those who believe', but *hoi pistoi* can only mean 'those who trust/the faithful': no Greek speaker would have coined the term *hoi pistoi* to mean 'those who believe'.¹⁰⁶ Since both terms were in use by the early 50s, apparently in the same communities and certainly by the same writers to refer to the same people, they must either have been coined to mean the same thing, which must be principally 'those who trust/the faithful',¹⁰⁷ or for some reason communities must have wanted to refer to themselves as both 'the faithful' and 'those who believe'. The second is possible (and whether or not this is the origin of *hoi pisteuontes*, later writers certainly exploited the phrase's propositional potential), but it suggests a slightly strange ambivalence among Christians about what distinguishes them as a group.¹⁰⁸ If, however, both *hoi pistoi* and *hoi pisteuontes* were coined to mean primarily 'those who trust/the faithful', there is no grammatical oddity or ambiguity in self-characterization to explain.¹⁰⁹ We may also note that, since being *pistos* in the sense of

being faithful to God is already present in the Septuagint, for Christians to adopt *pistis* language in this meaning is a small step linguistically and conceptually, and as a methodological principle we should prefer a model of development by small steps.

We may still wonder, if both *hoi pistoi* and *hoi pisteuontes* were coined primarily to mean ‘those who trust in God/the faithful’, why two terms were coined. The simplest explanation is that both translate equally well the same Hebrew or Aramaic term (presumptively *he'emîn* and/or its nearest local Aramaic equivalent). They could have arisen originally as the translation (p.241) preferences of different communities, or they could even have originated within one community. The fact that in Greek they capture different nuances of meaning in communities which proclaimed the resurrection as well as the necessity of putting one’s trust in God is sufficient reason for both to have persisted.

A probably incidental but, to early community members, surely a useful aspect of the double designation *pistos/pisteuōn* is that both terms encompass and, in slightly different ways, are equally applicable to, Jewish and gentile followers of Christ. A Jew could hear being *pistos/pisteuōn* as meaning that s/he was properly faithful to God (unlike those Jews who did not follow Christ). A gentile could hear it as meaning that s/he put his or her trust/believed in the true and living God (unlike those who continued to put their trust in idols). Both groups could thus use the same terms of their community membership, while implicitly acknowledging that they arrived at it from different starting points.

Foundations of Pistis

Paul offers the Thessalonians a number of reasons to trust him and his proclamation and to put their trust in God. He tells them that their *pistis* was not a leap in the dark, the first move to create a divine–human relationship, because God had already chosen them to hear the good news (1.4). (Later, he adds that they were taught directly by God to love one another.¹¹⁰) They can be sure that God chose them because Paul’s gospel came to them not only in words (which themselves were ‘not without effect’ (2.1)¹¹¹), but also with power, the holy spirit, and ‘much conviction’ (1.5).¹¹²

Paul has worked hard, ‘justly and blamelessly’ on the Thessalonians’ behalf, treating them as would a nurse or a father (2.7–12). The implication seems to be that Paul’s own commitment makes his message more believable. We saw in Chapter 2 how in the wider Graeco-Roman world trust and trustworthiness are perceived as strong between family and household members, so Paul is here appealing to an idea which the Thessalonians are likely to have found easy to accept. There may even be a hint of appeal to the trustworthiness of the expert in his mention of acting as a nurse.¹¹³

(p.242) One might expect Paul to appeal consequentially here, as he does elsewhere, to the way his new relationship with God and Christ has changed his life and that of the Thessalonians, but, except insofar as the idea is implicit in his description of how hard he has worked for the Thessalonians, he does not. He does tell them that they have become a model for other *pisteuontes* (1.7), which shows, among other things, that their *pistis* is visible and powerful. He declares himself delighted to hear, from Timothy, that they have not succumbed to temptation (3.5)—another way of assuring them that their *pistis* is strong. In the course of a list of gnomic imperatives, he exhorts them, ‘Do not quench the spirit’ and ‘Do not despise prophetic utterances’ (5.19–20).¹¹⁴ This may suggest that manifestations of the spirit and prophetic utterances have been occurring among the Thessalonians, in which case Paul’s reference may point to these as reasons for keeping faith, as well as an encouragement to the Thessalonians to pay attention to them in the future. Elsewhere in the letter, Paul spends more time pointing out where the Thessalonians can improve their *pistis*. It has *hysterēmata*, ‘shortcomings’ (3.10).¹¹⁵ They can do even more than they are doing to behave morally and with charity (4.1–12). They do not need to worry about community members who have died (4.13). They need only to encourage each other and build each other up as they wait for the day of the Lord (5.11).

If he does not appeal to the way conversion has changed their lives, however, Paul does appeal repeatedly to the experience which caused the Thessalonians to convert. They know, he says (1.5), how he behaved when he was with them. ‘And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...’ (1.6). The conjunction at the beginning of the sentence has the force of a result clause: the Thessalonians put their trust in God *because* they were persuaded by their own experience of Paul—and, Paul implies, they can trust themselves. He uses *kai* in the same way again a few verses later. It is known among the Macedonians and the Achaeans that Paul was well received by the Thessalonians *and* (as a result) they turned to God from idols (1.9). Paul hammers the point home at the beginning of chapter 2: ‘For *you yourselves know*, brothers, that our reception among you was not without effect’ (2.1), and he returns to it periodically thereafter: ‘You are witnesses...’ (2.10), ‘As you know...’ (2.11), ‘For you yourselves know...’ (5.2). The message is that the Thessalonians trusted themselves—their judgement of Paul and his messages—in putting their trust in God, and that they were justified in doing so. Moreover, they can go on doing it. ‘Test everything; retain what is good,’ Paul says (5.21) in his list of exhortations. Why the Thessalonians are justified in trusting their (p.243) experience and judgement, Paul apparently does not

need explain. In Chapter 2 we saw that the evidence of one's own senses and one's own judgement are very widely accepted in the Graeco-Roman world as among the best bases for trust or belief. Paul may therefore be appealing to a common argument for *pistis*, and one which he thinks the Thessalonians will find compelling.¹¹⁶

We also saw in previous chapters how often, in Greek, Roman, and Jewish thinking, *pistis* or *fides* is invoked at moments of crisis or decision-making.¹¹⁷ With that in mind, one of the most powerful incentives to trust God to emerge from this letter is Paul's repeated reference to the approaching wrath and the coming of the Lord.¹¹⁸ Paul appeals to both hope and fear in these passages: non-community members will be whatever Paul imagines as the opposite of saved (which he does not specify, but which evidently involves judgement and punishment for sins, and perhaps destruction by divine anger).¹¹⁹ *Hoi pisteuontes*, meanwhile, will be saved (5.9) and taken up to be with God (4.17).

These add up to a substantial set of reasons for *pistis*. It is worth emphasizing that they are reasons: nowhere in this letter (nor, I shall argue, elsewhere) does Paul demand a deliberately counter-rational 'leap of faith' from those to whom he preaches.¹²⁰ In the terms developed in the Introduction, *pistis* is subject in this letter to extensive *différance*. At the same time, we might think, the reasons Paul offers in this letter are a little oddly balanced. Apart from his traditional claims about God's faithfulness and assertion that God has chosen the Thessalonians (for which the evidence is presumably his own mission to them), his reasons are weighted towards human experience and judgement about other human beings, either the Thessalonians' view of Paul or other people's of them, and within that, to the judgement of human actions rather than speech. In particular, Paul makes remarkably little appeal to his own preaching as a basis for the Thessalonians' *pistis*.¹²¹

The way Paul problematizes the role of his own rhetoric in the creation and maintenance of Christian communities is notorious and has been extensively studied in recent years, especially in relation to the Corinthian letters.¹²² It is already well developed in 1 Thessalonians. The good news, Paul says, came to the Thessalonians 'not in word alone' (1.5), while the converts have made **(p.244)** such an impression on other communities that 'we have no need to say anything' (1.8).

Paul refers more than once to the idea that the word of God, mediated by his words, is in the Thessalonians and is working through them.¹²³ At the same time, references to his words more often than not take a negative form ('Our gospel did not come to you in word alone...'; 'Our exhortation was not from delusion or impure motives...'; 'We were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves...'¹²⁴), or are tucked into subordinate clauses ('...in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word...'; '...trying to prevent us from speaking to the gentiles...'¹²⁵).

In 1 Corinthians (e.g. 2.1–5) Paul claims that he did not speak persuasively at Corinth, almost certainly, at least in part, to distinguish himself from the sophists whose psychagogic words are unconnected with truth. In 1 Thessalonians he takes a slightly different approach. He says that after he had been roughly treated in Philippi, he drew courage from God to speak to the Thessalonians 'with much struggle' (2.2), leaving open whether his struggle was with fear of speaking, speech itself, or something else. In preaching, he continues, he did not speak from 'impure motives' (2.3): he was not out for money (2.5) or praise (2.6). He did not persuade the Thessalonians by deception (2.4), nor did he flatter them (2.5).¹²⁶ This might be taken as an admission that he did not speak well, in rhetorical terms—praise, flattery, and deception all being standard tools of the competent rhetorician—but it is more likely to be a standard *captatio benevolentiae* aimed at establishing his integrity and credibility. In a world where attitudes to rhetoric, as we have seen, are profoundly conflicted, and where orators are both lionized and constantly criticized as sycophants, twisters, moneygrubbers, and publicity hounds, it is routine for an orator to try to capture the favour of his audience by claiming that he has not flattered or manipulated it.¹²⁷

Paul next insists that he did not speak to 'seek praise' (2.6)—'although we were able to impose our weight as apostles of Christ' (2.7)—but that he was gentle, caring for the Thessalonians like a nurse (2.7). He spoke, that is, not to his own glory, but entirely for the benefit of his listeners. He reinforces the point shortly afterwards by saying that his exhortations, encouragement, and ethical demands were like those of a father towards his children (2.11–12).

As in 1 Corinthians, Paul is defending himself here against any suggestion that he has manipulated his audience or acted for his own benefit. Unlike in **(p.245)** 1 Corinthians, however, he seems here to allow that he spoke effectively. His worry is that his very effectiveness risked shifting his audience's attention, perhaps even admiration, away from the message to the messenger. Paul wants those to whom he preaches to turn to God. He wants his authority as one who speaks the word of God to be recognized. But he also wants to make clear that he is not speaking for himself: he is 'entrusted with the gospel' (2.4) for the good of others. He is, moreover, sharply aware of the perceived weakness and ambivalence of public speech as a medium of persuasion and a foundation of trust in the

world of the early principate. In this letter he attempts to reconcile these conflicting pressures and neutralize possible concerns about his rhetoric among his audience by representing speech as a minor aspect of his work and a minor foundation of their *pistis*.¹²⁸

It is striking that in this letter Paul only twice, briefly (at 1.10 and 4.17), invokes his or others' experience of the resurrection as a basis for *pistis*.¹²⁹ Given, as we have seen, how consistently rumour, hearsay, and the testimony of anyone outside one's immediate social circle are problematized in this period, neither Paul, nor other apostles, nor their audiences can ever have forgotten that news of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus depended on the testimony of a relatively small group of people, personally unknown to most converts. Elsewhere we see Paul and other New Testament writers struggling constantly with the fragility of those experiences as a basis for others' *pistis*. In this letter they are less problematic, whether because Paul makes a deliberate decision not to rely on them, or simply because his focus is on other issues. The claims which are focal in this letter ('you turned from idols to serve the living and true God...'; 'For the Lord himself, with a word of command, will come down from heaven...'; 'the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night...'; 'God did not destine us for wrath...'; 'The one who calls you is faithful...')¹³⁰ also have their fragilities, but they avoid the particular fragility of being based on the testimony of a few followers of Christ whom most converts never have met and never will.

As to his positive statements about God and the coming wrath: these are the ones which Paul implies the Thessalonians believe because they came with spirit, power, hard work, and care and appealed to the Thessalonians' experience and reason. The Thessalonians are invited to believe them not as a leap of faith, but on the basis that they have already experienced the power of God at work in their communities—and also, no doubt, because they are such large **(p.246)** and dramatic claims that some listeners feel there is a prudential advantage in taking them seriously.

In comparison with our picture of the shape of *pistis/fides* in the early principate at large, Paul seems to have a shrewd idea of what the Thessalonians are likely to find easy or difficult to trust and believe. Both Jewish and gentile audiences have traditional reasons for accepting that God is *pistos*. It is likely to be easier for Jews than gentiles to think of God as having chosen them, but members of either group might be galvanized by the threat of cosmic upheaval to come. Both groups are likely to be attracted to signs, wonders, manifestations of the spirit of God, especially if they witness them themselves. The news of a resurrection which was not witnessed by any of the Thessalonians is not invoked as a prime reason for their *pistis*. References to scripture and tradition, which for Jews are always good reasons for continuing or renewing trust in God, are also rare in this letter, but no doubt because it expects to have a primarily gentile audience, not because Paul doubts that scripture carries authority.¹³¹

Divine-human *pistis* in this letter already exhibits considerable complexity. Before Paul has finished with it, it will have developed more. It will also develop reifications, but in this letter there is no sign yet that *hē pistis* has become objectivized in any distinctively Christian way.

Pistis in Evolution? 1 and 2 Corinthians

We have spent a good deal of time with 1 Thessalonians because it has been relatively little discussed in the study of Pauline *pistis*, and because, as plausibly Paul's earliest surviving letter, it is a good starting place from which to examine his understanding of *pistis*. The next chapter will investigate Paul's treatment of *pistis* as he debates the role of the law in salvation and the relationship between God, Christ, and *hoi pisteuontes*. First, however, we turn to two letters which (or parts of which) may well have been written soon after 1 Thessalonians, in the early to mid-50s: 1 and 2 Corinthians.

One simple difference between the *pistis* language of 1 Thessalonians and that of 1 and 2 Corinthians is that in the latter we find the faithful called not only *hoi pisteuontes* but *hoi pistoi*, and non-Christians *hoi apistoi*.¹³² Some commentators see 2 Corinthians 6.14, which refers to *hoi apistoi*, as part of a **(p.247)** significantly earlier letter.¹³³ If they are right, then this, together with the fact that *pistos/apistos* is used in the Septuagint, could indicate that *hoi pistoi/apistoi* is used for insiders and (probably) outsiders even earlier than *hoi pisteuontes/hoi apistountes*.¹³⁴

Paul's comments on *hoi apistoi* in 1 Corinthians capture both the symbolic importance and the practical difficulty of Christian non-dependence on outsiders, which he recommended in 1 Thessalonians (4.12). In 1 Corinthians 6.6 Paul identifies *apistoi* with the unjust and morally inferior, to whom Christians should not take lawsuits, because they (Christians) will ultimately judge them. At 2 Corinthians 4.4 *hoi apistoi* have been blinded by the gods of this age so that they cannot see the light, which makes them wholly different from Christians and inferior to them. In the same vein, Paul tells *hoi pisteuontes* not to be 'yoked' with *apistoi* (2 Cor. 6.14). He also, though, tells Christians who are married to *apistoi* not to divorce them (1 Cor. 7.12), and says (1 Cor. 10.27) that it is acceptable to eat with *apistoi*. In part, these differences of view depend on whether Paul is trying to encourage community members to greater moral efforts in a particular passage or to temper their zeal. Possibly, too, Paul recognizes that it is practically easier to avoid

going to law than to break up one's family or friendships (though one might dispute whether that is always true in the Roman world). Even so, the range of behaviours Paul recommends towards outsiders is symptomatic of the inherent tension between Christians' sense of difference and the impossibility of segregating themselves from the world.¹³⁵ Nowhere is this more evident than in Paul's pragmatic solution to the identity of children of mixed marriages in 1 Corinthians 7.14. Apparently, in these cases, if it is not precisely possible to be a community member without having *pistis*, at least being married to a community member may neutralize the impact of one's *apistia* on oneself and the next generation.¹³⁶

Paul's treatment of *pistis* in 1 and 2 Corinthians is close to that of 1 Thessalonians in a number of other ways. He affirms that God is faithful when telling the Corinthians that God called them into the community of the faithful, when warning them not to become complacent in that community and give way to immorality, and to fortify an appeal to his own reliability.¹³⁷ 'God is *pistos*, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus (**p.248**) Christ our Lord' (1 Cor. 1.9); 'God is *pistos* and will not let you be tried beyond your strength' (1 Cor. 10.13). 'As surely as God is *pistos*, our word to you has not been Yes and No...' (2 Cor. 1.18). The connection of *pistis* language with conversion, which we saw already in operation in 1 Thessalonians, continues throughout this letter: 'It was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save *tous pisteuontas*.'¹³⁸

Pistis is also, in 1 Corinthians as in 1 Thessalonians, a condition in which followers of Christ live, standing firm and waiting for the coming of Christ: 'He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus [Christ].'¹³⁹ While they wait, their *pistis* can increase, excel, and be tested to assess its strength.¹⁴⁰ The other key qualities which *hoi pisteuontes* are encouraged to practise as they wait for Christ are hope and love, and 1 Corinthians is the other letter which links *pistis*, *elpis*, and *agapē* as the three most important aspects of Christian life.

As in 1 Thessalonians, a number of reasons to put one's trust in God are scattered through the letter. God calls certain people.¹⁴¹ Judgement is coming, but those who trust God will be saved.¹⁴² '[M]y message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom (πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις), but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your *pistis* might not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God' (2.4–5). This declaration closely echoes that of 1 Thessalonians 1.5, that it is not Paul's rhetoric but the power of God that converts people, and at first sight rhetoric plays much the same role in 1 Corinthians as in 1 Thessalonians. On closer inspection, however, his description of the effects of his own speech is somewhat different, and his account of the relationship between rhetoric and *pistis* rather more complex.

Paul asserts (1.17) that Christ sent him to preach, 'not with the wisdom of human eloquence' (1.17), but with a proclamation which looks foolish to all except those who accept it (1.18–25). This statement incorporates two comparisons, between the form of Paul's preaching and other people's rhetoric, and its content and other people's claims about the divine. The passage that (**p.249**) follows, however, largely (though not completely) separates the two issues. In 1.21–5 Paul deals mainly with the content of his message, in 2.1–5 with his rhetoric. He affirms that the content of his preaching looks foolish: 'Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles' (1.22–3). He insists, however, that, 'the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom' (1.25). Then he turns to the quality of his speech.

In 1 Thessalonians, as noted above, Paul insists that it was not mainly his words that converted the Thessalonians, but he does not seem to imply that he spoke badly.¹⁴³ The effect is that of a standard *recusatio*, in which an effective orator tries to convince the audience that it is not in fact his rhetorical techniques (which are liable to be regarded as morally problematic) that are persuasive, but something else. In 1 Corinthians, in contrast, Paul claims that his rhetoric itself was defective: 'When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom...' (2.1); 'I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive [words of] wisdom...' (2.3–4). The effect is of someone trying to defend an actual rhetorical failure. Most interpreters now think Paul is being disingenuous here, claiming rhetorical incompetence as a way of distancing himself from Greek sophistry.¹⁴⁴ Whether or not this is right (a question which is beyond our current scope), Paul's positive claim is the same: God's wisdom is not that of the world, rhetoric is a form of 'human wisdom' (σοφία ἀνθρώπων) (2.5), so effective rhetoric is an inappropriate tool for communicating the wisdom of God and rhetorical ineffectiveness, paradoxically, is a sign that the wisdom Paul preaches is God's. In a rhetorical master stroke, he then turns this admission into a demand that the Corinthians show they are mature, spiritual people (2.6, 2.14–15) by accepting his preaching, not in spite of, but because of its apparent shortcomings, or at least by showing their willingness to become mature and spiritual by 'becoming a fool' and reaffirming that they belong to Christ (3.18, 3.23). This leaves rhetoric in an even more ambiguous position than it holds in 1 Thessalonians. In much of the rest of this letter Paul seems to deal with the ambiguity by ignoring it; at any rate, he employs a wide range of rhetorical techniques to excellent effect. 'Though I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal,' he says later (13.1), implying that speech in general, and perhaps his speech

specifically, can be effective, and he indicates no difficulty with the **(p.250)** fact that prophecy operates through speech: 'Whoever prophesies builds up the church' (14.4).

The role of speech and rhetoric in his preaching continues to concern Paul in 2 Corinthians.¹⁴⁵ This letter is notable for the number of times Paul uses the lexicon of persuasion, *peithein* and *pepoithēsis*, which, though linguistically cognate with *pistis* language, tends to be used in different contexts in Greek.¹⁴⁶ In several passages Paul uses the lexicon in a way which is not strongly marked, to refer to the 'confidence' which he hopes he and the Corinthians have in each other, using *peithein* in meanings very close to *pisteuein*.¹⁴⁷ In a few passages, however, he uses *peithein* in ways which do seem marked, to make unusual and counter-intuitive points.

At 1.9 Paul is reporting an affliction he suffered in Asia. '[W]e had accepted within ourselves the sentence of death, that we might trust (?) (πεποιθότες ὄμεν) not in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.' The lexical resonance of being persuaded by God is initially surprising in this context. Paul understands his preaching as accompanied by manifestations of divine and spiritual power, which add a divine force of persuasion to his words, but here he is talking about his own ongoing relationship with God. He may want to emphasize that his relationship with God does not depend on human rhetoric or reason. He may also want to mark the continuing persuasive power of his experiences of God as a Christian. God, he says, 'rescued us from such great danger of death and will continue to rescue us' (1.10). Every experience of God's saving power, within their relationship of *pistis*, strengthens that relationship and Paul's commitment to God. As a result, it is even more true now than before that 'Christ's sufferings overflow to us,' (1.5) and that Paul acts 'with the simplicity and sincerity of God' (1.12). It is on this basis, not on the doubtful persuasiveness of his preaching, that the Corinthians can have confidence in him.

At 3.4 (in what may originally have been a different letter, running from what is now 2.14 to 7.4, possibly excluding 6.14–7.1) Paul invokes *peithein* language in relation to God once more. He is wondering whether he is beginning to commend himself to the Corinthians again, or whether he needs letters of recommendation, which might be written either 'to you or **(p.251)** by you' (3.1). The idea that Corinthians might write letters of recommendation on Paul's behalf (affirming, perhaps, as letters from a Greek or Roman patron might, Paul's *pistis*¹⁴⁸) suggests that one of the key things that can commend him to the Corinthians is their own experience of him. Paul confirms this immediately (3.2): the Corinthians themselves are his letter, he tells them, a letter from Christ, administered by Paul, written not in ink but on his, and perhaps also on the Corinthians', hearts by the spirit.¹⁴⁹ He seems to be urging them to trust this experience of himself, the spirit, and perhaps also the consequences of their conversion.

Paul does not take any credit here for his past activities at Corinth: his qualification to administer this 'letter' comes from God. 'Such *pepoithēsis* we have', says Paul (3.4), 'through Christ, towards God.'¹⁵⁰ This exclamation is usually taken with the next two verses: Paul has 'confidence' in God because God has 'qualified' him (ικάνωσεν ἡμᾶς) as a minister. It could equally be taken with the preceding three verses: Paul has confidence that his work among the Corinthians is a 'letter of Christ' written by the 'spirit of the living God' (3.3) because he has *pepoithēsis* towards God. The model is the same either way: Paul's own *pepoithēsis* towards God, not any persuasion that he practises, is what allows him to bring others into the 'new covenant' (καινῆς διαθήκης). *Pistis* would not be out of place instead of *pepoithēsis* at 3.4, but by using *pepoithēsis* Paul adds another ingredient to the ideas in play. His trust in God is a persuadedness by God, arising from the proofs God has given of his power and faithfulness both at Paul's conversion and in their subsequent relationship. Once again, human persuasion is shifted out of the frame.

Peithein is used in an even more elaborate and unusual way at 10.7 (in what may be a fragment of an earlier letter, now chapters 10–13). Paul is working on convincing the Corinthians to accept his authority when he returns to visit them in person, despite the fact that his preaching has been (he claims) ineffectual in the past. He says, εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς: 'Whoever has persuaded himself that he belongs to Christ should consider that as he belongs to Christ, so do we.' The first surprise in this verse is that Paul is not saying, as one might expect an apostle to say, 'If you believe me, you should believe in Christ,' but 'If you believe in Christ, you should believe me.' At stake is not the fragility of a gospel dependent on preaching, but Paul's personal credibility. He claims to take for granted that the Corinthians' relationship with Christ is strong, and leverages it to demand respect for **(p.252)** himself: they must look for authority beyond those who recommend themselves (through rhetoric) to those whom the Lord recommends (10.18). The second surprise is that Paul does not talk here about anyone persuading the Corinthians of anything; he talks of them persuading themselves. If persuasion is involved in their relationship with Christ, he seems to be saying, it does not come from him. He does not deny that he has authority: on the contrary, he affirms it (10.8) and looks forward to having more as the Corinthians' *pistis* increases (10.10–11). But he undermines the connection between authority and persuasive speech (15.10–11), locates his authority elsewhere, in his apparent foolishness (11.1), and shifts the burden of persuasion onto the Corinthians themselves.

There is some inconsistency in Paul's use of *pepoithēsis* in these passages, which may be the result of their originating in several different letters. If Paul himself is persuaded by God, and his authority in relation to the Corinthians is that of one who mediates between God and human beings, then one might think that it would not be unreasonable for the Corinthians to want to be persuaded by him. Rather than trying to identify a coherent theory of divine–human *pepoithēsis* in this letter, however, it is probably preferable to see Paul as working, in diverse ingenious ways in different letter fragments, to shift the heavy and equivocal burden of persuasion away from himself. In this he is (rhetorically, at least) rather successful.

I suggested that in 1 Thessalonians we see emerging the idea that as servants of God, through whom God's word and power may work, human beings may become something close to vehicles of divine power, in the way that wonder-workers are sometimes seen as vehicles of divine power, or that slaves or ambassadors, for instance, are seen as vehicles for the authority of their masters or states. I suggested that this acting as a vehicle is rather more than obedience, which is widely recognized as an aspect of *pistis*: it comes close to the idea of kenosis. This idea, as we have already begun to see, reappears, in slightly different terms, in both 1 and 2 Corinthians.

In 1 Corinthians Paul once describes himself as a servant not only of God but also of Christ (4.1).¹⁵¹ Christ here begins to move towards integration into the structure of divine–human *pistis*, though Paul does not try to describe how *pistis* between God, Christ and humanity operates. The power which *pistis* gives the faithful is so great that it can move mountains (13.2).¹⁵² This need not be a reference to a reported saying of Jesus (though if not, the coincidence is striking), but it is evidently meant to suggest the immensity of the divine power which the faithful person channels. The very grandeur of the idea of moving mountains (**p.253**) emphasizes how great the power wielded by the faithful person is, and by implication how profoundly he must be subjected to God to wield it.

This idea is reinforced a few verses later in a verse which has often been mistranslated. The subject is now love, but the point, that *ho pistos* is utterly subjected to God, is the same. ἡ ἀγάπη...πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει (13.7) is usually translated: 'Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.' This, however, gives an unsatisfactory translation of the middle two phrases. To say that love may bear and endure everything [the world throws at it] is well in line with what Paul says elsewhere. But why should love trust or hope everything? Love surely needs to place trust and hope in very specific things: the love and faithfulness of God, the saving action of Christ, the preaching of the apostles, future entry into God's kingdom. Moreover, the grammar of πάντα πιστεύει, if it is translated 'trusts all things', is odd. *Pisteuein* with the accusative of what is believed is not absolutely unknown, but it is very rare.¹⁵³ We should expect the dative or a prepositional phrase. Of course, Paul is deliberately creating a series of grammatically parallel phrases for rhetorical effect, but this should not lead us to assume that he is playing fast and loose with the normal meaning or grammar of the words he uses, unless no other explanation is to hand. In this case, another explanation is to hand and makes better sense of the verse. πάντα not infrequently carries the adverbial meaning 'absolutely', which would allow the translation: 'Love...endures absolutely, trusts absolutely, hopes absolutely, stands absolutely firm.' Absolute trust and hope, here, bear the natural meaning which they bear everywhere in Paul's letters, of trust and hope in God and Christ. The adverb emphasizes the complete, unconditional subjection of *ho pistos* to God.¹⁵⁴

If *pistis* in 1 Corinthians has the potential to move mountains, in one section of 2 Corinthians (probably from the letter fragment which is now chapter 2.14–7.4) it enables Paul to preach the gospel. The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (4.4) is a 'treasure' which is in human hearts as in earthenware vessels (4.7). The 'surpassing power' with which it shines is 'of God, not from us' (4.7). Even as Paul is being persecuted, and 'death is at work' in him (4.12), it enables him to communicate life to the Corinthians (4.12–14). He has (4.13) 'the spirit of *pistis*' (τὸ...πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως), which could mean either a gift of the spirit based on his *pistis* or *pistis* as a spiritual gift.¹⁵⁵

(p.254) There is nothing intrinsically implausible about the idea that *pistis* is the basis of the gift of the spirit which enables Paul to preach. It fits naturally with his quotation from Septuagintal Psalm 115.10: ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, 'I trusted, therefore I spoke.' It sits oddly, though, in the sequence of thought in this section of the epistle. Paul has been emphasizing that he has the ministry of shining with the light of the Lord to bring the knowledge of God and Christ to the world (4.1; cf. 3.7–18, 4.6). At 4.14, moreover, he will emphasize that he knows that God who raised Jesus will raise the faithful to heaven too. He might be taking a step back at 4.13 to say how he came by this knowledge and ministry, only to return to his theme at 4.14, but the switch would be rather abrupt.

Alternatively, we might understand 'the spirit of *pistis*' as meaning that *pistis* is itself a spiritual gift: the gift of letting the power of God shine through the heart to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God. (4.6). On this interpretation, Paul would be using the psalm to mean something like, 'I had [the gift of] *pistis*, on the basis of which I spoke'—not the most straightforward interpretation of the verse, but certainly not impossible. This reading of *pistis* fits seamlessly into the sequence of thought in chapters 4 and 5 and follows naturally from Paul's description of his ministry in 4.5–6.

If this interpretation is right, we can see this chapter developing further an idea which we encountered in 1 Thessalonians. The ministry of *ho pisteuōn* comes from his allowing himself to be used by God and Christ, to shine a light through him into the world. He wields a knowledge, a power, and an authority which are both his and not his, because they come from his placing himself wholly at the disposal of God and Christ. In 2 Corinthians Paul's language of putting himself at the disposal of God and Christ dramatically prefigures that of Galatians 2.19–20. His physical frailty ensures (and presumably reassures others) that any power he has comes from God, not from himself (4.7). At the same time, it is a sign that he carries the dying of Jesus in his body, in order that the life of Jesus may also be manifested through his body (4.10–11). This image simultaneously emphasizes Paul's subjection to God and Christ, and the power he wields as a result, and implies that his power to bring life to others is a direct emanation of the life of Christ 'manifest' in him (4.11).

Paul's interest in *pistis* continues in the next chapter, where he calls the body a tent which we long to take off in order to put on our 'heavenly habitation' (5.1–4). The gift of the spirit which Paul mentioned in the previous chapter is now the pledge (*arrabōna*) of this change (5.5). Being in the body means being away from the Lord, and this means that 'we walk by *pistis*, not by sight' (5.7).

Pistis is usually taken in this passage to mean our trust/belief in God, which we use in preference to our physical sight, to guide ourselves through life. This interpretation, though, does not fit easily in context. Paul's *pistis* is not trust seeking knowledge of God or closeness to God. He already knows (5.1) that an **(p.255)** eternal dwelling awaits him in heaven and that in this mortal life he cannot reach it (5.4). God, however, has given him and others the spirit, and he is therefore brave, because although separated from the Lord, 'we walk by *pistis*, not by sight' (5.7). *Pistis* could mean a relationship of absolute certainty with God, but that strains even the elastic meaning of this word. Alternatively, it could refer to a spiritual gift, and mean that we walk by the power of our gift of *pistis* rather than by our own sense of sight.¹⁵⁶ When we remember that the eyes are almost universally assumed in antiquity to emit the light by which they see, and that Paul has just described the gospel twice as a light shining out of him (4.4, 6), this interpretation becomes more attractive. As the gospel itself shines out of Paul, so the spiritual gift which enables him to preach it also shines and lights his way.¹⁵⁷

While we are still in the body, Paul continues, we aspire to please God (5.9), and one way he does so is by preaching (5.11). Verse 5.11, though it appears to be linked to the previous verse by *oun*, 'therefore', may be explaining how Paul tries to please the Lord, or it may be summing up his whole picture of himself as a preacher so far, but either way the thrust of his argument is the same. Preaching is Paul's ministry: it shines out of him like a light, bringing life to others; however much Paul may want to go home to the Lord, he schools himself to use his gift as best he can. And perhaps, in the process of lighting the way of others, his *pistis* also lights his own way better than sight could do.

In 1 Thessalonians we saw the beginnings of a cascade of *pistis*, from God to his apostle and from the apostle to *hoi pisteuontes*. 1 Corinthians develops this idea a little further, and makes clearer that implicit in the cascade is an evolving hierarchy of intra-human trust. At the beginning of chapter 4, Paul says of himself:

Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ. ὧδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις, ἵνα πιστός τις εὐρεθῆι. ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας...ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν.

Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found *pistos*. It does not concern me in the least that I be judged by you or any human tribunal...the one who judges me is the Lord. (4.1–4)

Paul asserts that his duty of *pistis* is to Christ; he does not care what the Corinthians think of him. His assertion, however, draws attention to the fact that the Corinthians need to judge him—specifically, to judge his *pistis* trustworthy by themselves—in order to imitate him, as he wants them to **(p.256)** do.¹⁵⁸ The language of stewardship encourages the Corinthians not to see this structure as counter-intuitive or controversial (or overflattering of Paul): a steward is one who looks after his master's affairs on his master's behalf, and with whom his master's dependants may deal as his master's representative.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, in this structure Paul must exercise *pistis* towards the Corinthians, as God exercises *pistis* towards humanity in general, in order to trust them with his preaching. The relationship between God and humanity is thereby replicated among human beings, and some community members gain authority over others.

In 2 Corinthians 5.19–20 (belonging the same letter fragment as the last passage discussed), Paul develops the idea a little further.

'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us (θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν) the message of reconciliation (*katallagē*). So we are ambassadors (*presbeuomen*) for Christ...' Ambassadors, as we have seen, are endowed with the authority of their state in order to represent it to another, in which role they both have high status and no individual status at all (except insofar as they are known as men of *auctoritas* or integrity).¹⁶⁰ Processes of mediation and reconciliation, in various degrees of informality and formality, are endemic throughout the Greek and Roman worlds, between individuals, groups, and states, which makes this a thoroughly familiar image to any contemporary listener.¹⁶¹ In placing himself metaphorically in the position of an ambassador, Paul gives himself a significant role in the reconciliation of humanity to God. At the same time, he says that it is 'in Christ' that God is reconciling himself to the world. No *pistis* language appears in this passage, but between Paul's understanding of himself as steward, having *pistis* towards both God and humanity, and as ambassador, reconciling God and humanity, and in that role as having some similarity to Christ, we begin to see Paul drawing together the ingredients which coalesce in his understanding of *pistis Christou* in other letters.

(p.257) No sooner does intra-human *pistis* such as that of 1 Corinthians evolve, than it becomes more complicated. At 1 Corinthians 4.17 Paul says that he is sending Timothy, his 'beloved and *piston* child in the Lord', to remind the Corinthians, not of God or Christ, but of Paul's ways in Christ, so that they can imitate him.¹⁶² Paul trusts Timothy as God trusts Paul with his message, and the Corinthians are invited to trust Timothy as Paul's steward as Paul is trusted as God's.

The identification of this pattern may help us to interpret the occurrence of *pistis* in a different context: that of the gifts of the spirit in 1 Corinthians 12.4–11. *Hoi pisteuontes*, says Paul, between them form the body of Christ, which has many parts, all important (even if some receive more honour than others).¹⁶³ Members of the community receive different gifts from the spirit, one of which is *pistis*. The meaning of *pistis* here has been much debated, and on the face of it, it might be interpretable as a purely intra-human quality such as 'loyalty' or 'good faith'.¹⁶⁴ Context, however, should lead us to assume that a specifically Christian kind of *pistis* is in play here, just as the other gifts of the spirit are activities which are described elsewhere as characteristic of followers of Christ.¹⁶⁵ That being so, given that gifts of the spirit are all qualities which are enacted within the community in relation to other *pisteuontes*, a plausible interpretation is that *pistis* here is the committed trust in God and service to God which enables other community members to trust the person who has it and treat him or her as a 'steward of the mysteries of God'. If this is right, then we are dealing in this letter, if not with two different kinds of *pistis*, at least with two slightly different operations of it which are not necessarily shared by everyone. *Pistis* may be the defining quality of those who follow Christ, but as a spiritual gift it comes to some members of **(p.258)** the community and not others. Paul emphasizes that no one community member is better than another for having a particular gift, but it is hard to avoid the inference that those with *pistis*, such as apostles,¹⁶⁶ have greater authority than most in the community by virtue of their gift.

In 2 Corinthians 1.23–4 (which may, though it does not certainly, belong to the same letter as 2.14–7.1), the hierarchy implicit in Paul's portrayal of intra-human *pistis* becomes a little clearer, by way of denial. 'I call upon God as witness, on my life, that it is to spare you that I have not yet gone to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your *pistis*: rather, we work together for your joy, for you stand firm in *pistis*.'¹⁶⁷ Paul is sensitive to the fact that characterizing himself as *pistos* towards the Corinthians, which implies that they exercise a kind of *pistis* towards him, does look hierarchical, and is anxious—disingenuously, since he has just admitted that he does see himself as having a degree of authority over them—to deny that it is. (Only a few verses earlier he has 'boasted' of behaving towards the Corinthians with the 'simplicity and sincerity of God, [and] not by human wisdom but by the grace of God' (1.12). After that, disclaimers of authority are difficult to take entirely seriously.)

Conclusion

This chapter has traced, through three Pauline letters, the beginnings of an economy of *pistis* which draws on the meaning and use of *pistis* in the wider Graeco-Roman world and the Septuagint, but which is, in some ways, already unmistakably Christian. God is *pistos*, and Paul portrays God as reaching out through his apostle to evoke *pistis* in those whom he calls. The primacy of *pistis* among ways in which human beings relate to God is evident in the fact that followers of Christ already, before 1 Thessalonians is written, call themselves *pistoi* and *hoi pisteuontes* and others *apistoi*.

Human *pistis* towards God is celebrated in the Septuagint (and is a virtue in Graeco-Roman religiosity too), but so are many other qualities and practices, so this cannot be more than part of the reason why Christians make so much of it. We saw in Chapters 2–4 that *pistis* or *fides* is often invoked at times of crisis or decision-making, and this may be a factor. Christian preachers, including Paul, proclaim a time of crisis in the literal sense: the end time is imminent, and human beings must decide now whether or not to put their trust in God and await the return of Christ in the hope of inheriting the kingdom of God. *Pistis* in these letters is already linked

with conversion. Even **(p.259)** if a devout Jew or gentile understands him- or herself as being in a relationship of *pistis* with the divine, Paul is clear that putting one's trust in God in response to apostolic preaching is a decisively new act. In the turbulent world of the first century it is perhaps surprising that more elective cults and new religious movements did not make more of the benefits to worshippers of trust in their divinity.¹⁶⁸ That Christianity did so may be, at least in part, because it actively evangelized, and its assurance that God is *pistos* together with its urgent call to *pistis* may be one of the reasons for its missionary successes.

The relationship of *pistis* between worshippers and God dominates Paul's letters (and, as we will see, the whole of the New Testament) to the near-exclusion of intra-human *pistis*, in a way which marks a radical departure from both Jewish and Graeco-Roman tradition. The intensity of Paul's focus on *pistis* towards God has much to do with the imminence of the end time: trust in God is the kind that contributes to the salvation of *hoi pisteuontes*, and in the limited time which Paul assumes they have, that is what matters.

It is not surprising that the key role played by trust elsewhere in creating human communities is of little interest to Paul, if there is little time in which to forge such communities. At the same time, one might point out that Paul clearly has some interest in human communities, since he tells community members to practise *agapē* and urges them to address their conflicts. This points to the well-recognized tension in Paul's (and other) writings between eschatology and ethics, and in general life in the resurrection community. This tension probably cannot be resolved, and historians need not worry about resolving it (though theologians may); they need only recognize it and ponder its implications. In the present context, it suggests that early Christians' interest in *pistis* belongs to the eschatological aspect of their preaching, the side that is less interested in community life. We might be tempted to take a further step and conclude that *pistis* towards God is, for Paul in these letters, essentially individualistic. That conclusion, however, would be unjustified. If the shared life of Christians, from an eschatological viewpoint, is that of many **(p.260)** people putting their trust in God and his apostle, it does not follow that their *pistis* has no communal dimension, any more than it would follow that the trust of the Israelites following Moses, or of the Trojans following Aeneas, was not in some sense a shared trust in their leader.

Where *pistis* does operate between human beings, it characterizes above all, for Paul, the relationship between himself as an apostle and his communities. Entrusted by God with the gospel, Paul brings it to those to whom he preaches. His converts put their trust not only in God but also in Paul himself, as 'steward of God's mysteries' (1 Cor. 4.1).

Only a few are called, like Paul, to preach the gospel and become active ambassadors of divine *pistis* (though a community of the faithful may sometimes be seen as a model for others (1 Thess. 1.7)). The gospel shines through Paul, lighting his way (2 Cor. 4.3–6); God communicates through his words and demonstrates God's power in accompanying signs. *Pistis* is therefore, literally, a powerful relationship: it acts as a channel of the power and proclamation of God in the world. For the apostle to be the instrument of this power, his *pistis* must be of an extreme kind: a form of slavery, even of death in life (2 Cor. 4.10–11). At the same, his *pistis* gives him authority, which makes *pistis* one of the earliest, if not the earliest, instrument of authority and hierarchy in early churches. When communities put their trust in Paul, they acknowledge his divinely confirmed trustworthiness. From time to time Paul commends one of his co-workers to a community as *pistos*. A person who is trusted by Paul with the gospel is also, presumably, to be treated as an authority—no doubt a lesser one, under Paul's aegis, under God.

The community that is shaped by *pistis* is strongly, if implicitly, reminiscent of the community of the Exodus, or of a Greek or Roman band of colonists, inspired by God and its leader to seek a divinely promised land. In the light of the resurrection, Christian communities recognize that a new divine–human relationship and a new life have been inaugurated. They move, in time and space, through the old world, limiting (at least in principle) their contacts with *apistoi*, their focus fixed on the end time and the kingdom of God. While they travel, their *pistis* can, it sometimes seems, develop, but its development is not one of Paul's main interests.

Pistis is nowhere fideistic in these letters, in the sense that followers of Christ are called to put their trust in God in a leap of deliberately non-rational assent. On the contrary: to confirm the trustworthiness of what he preaches, Paul appeals to his own and others' personal experience of the resurrection, to experiences of the faithfulness of God, the power of the spirit, signs and wonders, and to scripture.¹⁶⁹ Trust in God, Paul wants to convince his **(p.261)** listeners, has solid foundations. In Chapter 5 I suggested that the Hellenistic books of the Septuagint may have become decreasingly interested in signs and reasons for trusting God, and increasingly interested in the idea that one must trust God, even when he is not obviously saving or defending one. If so, then Paul in these letters does not follow that trend.

We also see Paul wrestling with the credibility, notoriously fragile in his world, of report and persuasive speech. He spends a good deal of energy debating the role of human persuasion, and human mediation in general, in divine–human *pistis*. Poised between his

need to ensure that his communities listen to him and his need to affirm that his preaching comes not from himself but from God, Paul uses *pistis* to develop a series of models, some quite complex, of the way in which his preaching mediates God's word and power.

In all this, Paul's main interest is in *pistis* as relationship-forming and power-mediating. As such, he sees *pistis* is dominantly an exercise of trust which involves heart, mind, and action. Like all trust, it is intimately connected with belief, on which it depends and which depends on it. That certain things are true, such as that Christ died for human sins and was raised from the dead, is integral to Paul's preaching, and he undoubtedly wants those to whom he preaches to believe them. But this kind of belief is not the essence of Paul's preaching nor of Christian *pistis*. Essential and distinctive is the holistic *pistis*-relationship through which *hoi pisteuontes* understand themselves as released from their sins and in which they hope ultimately to enter God's kingdom.

1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, despite some differences, present in many ways a coherent and well-developed understanding of the *pistis* of God and *hoi pisteuontes*. In Chapter 7 we will see Paul developing some of the same themes further. We will also see him developing an understanding of the relationship between God, Christ, the faithful, and the law which, though not incoherent with the ideas outlined in this chapter, is in some ways rather different from them and has different implications from anything we have seen hitherto.

Notes:

(1) Cf. pp. 5–23, 34–5.

(2) Opinion is evenly divided as to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. On the basis of its treatment of *pistis* I follow the sceptics, but treating it as authentic would not significantly affect my argument; see pp. 314–15.

(3) I follow the widespread view that Paul's authentic letters are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon (see e.g. Brown (1997), 407, 433–5).

(4) e.g. 1 Cor. 15.32, 2 Cor. 1.8, referring to difficulties in Ephesus and Asia respectively, have been taken speculatively to refer to an imprisonment.

(5) Brown (1997), 428–37, Schnelle (1998), 15–50.

(6) Paul's treatment of *pistis* language is taken up and developed in different ways in the deuteron-Pauline letters, which may suggest that writers had access to different letters (or that considerable care is being exercised in pseudepigraphy). See pp. 307–30, esp. 313, 314, 315, 317–18, 329–30.

(7) See pp. 262–3.

(8) See pp. 3–4.

(9) See e.g. pp. 11–12; cf. pp. 126–7.

(10) Paradoxically, *pistis* and the *peithein* lexica are often treated as closely related in New Testament writings, though they are lexically less closely related than elements of the *pistis* lexicon to one another and tend to be used in different contexts in Greek: see pp. 7, 250, 511.

(11) An important exception is Ulrichs (2007), which devotes a chapter (pp. 71–93) to it.

(12) Translations are from the NAB (occasionally modified) unless otherwise stated. Quotations are taken from Nestle–Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edn. (NA28).

(13) At 3.6–7 the Thessalonians' *pistis* (and at v. 6, *agapē*) is referred to without an object and could in theory refer to *pistis* between community members, but since *pistis* is repeatedly identified as towards God before and immediately after this passage, there is no reason to assume a change of object.

(14) See e.g. pp. 216–18, 278, 299–301.

(15) Nor, in later letters, and equally oddly in a cultural context, is *dikaiosynē*.

- (16) On the relationship between *pistis* and *agapē*, see pp. 224–6, 237, 248, 259.
- (17) Josephus identifies God as both *pistos* and giver of *pistis* (e.g. *BJ* 3.404, *Ap.* 2.218, and see the discussion of Lindsay (1993), 88–9). On the faithfulness of God in Paul, see Ljungman (1964), *passim*.
- (18) 5.24, just before his final greeting.
- (19) Marshall (1990) argues persuasively that this formulation does not amount to predestination, but that God calls and people choose to respond. I use the masculine pronoun for God throughout in reflection of the usage of New Testament writers.
- (20) On the likely make-up of the Thessalonian church, see e.g. Wanamaker (1990), 6–9.
- (21) In Ch. 4 (p. 142) I borrowed the theological model of the ‘economy of salvation’ to apply to a similar dynamic in Graeco-Roman religiosity: see further pp. 217–18.
- (22) 1.1, 1.3, 2.19, 3.11, 4.15–17, 5.9, 5.23.
- (23) *Encheirizesthai* is not used in the NT. For *peithesthai* meaning ‘to be entrusted’ elsewhere, see e.g. *Jos.*, *AJ* 20.183, *BGU* 4.1159 (10) (reign of Augustus).
- (24) Paul uses the term in passing as if it will be familiar to the Thessalonians: apparently followers of Christ are already known as *hoi pisteuontes*. Cf. 2.11, 2.13; see pp. 234–41.
- (25) See pp. 236–7.
- (26) This *pistis*, of course, is trust/belief etc. in the ‘living and true God’ who has raised Jesus from the dead, and in his Son who ‘delivers us from the coming wrath’ (cf. 1.10), so its content is distinctive, but there is no reason to suppose that qua trust, belief, etc. it constitutes a different cognitive-affective condition or praxis from *pistis* towards other gods or the one God differently understood.
- (27) Cf. pp. 6, 17–19.
- (28) Cf. Watson (2004), 193.
- (29) See pp. 217–20.
- (30) Presumably, in principle, to all apostles, but Paul’s focus is on his own ministry.
- (31) Though there is no indication that Paul expects those to whom he preaches to become active apostles like himself, and all his letters express a strong sense of continuing authority over those he has converted.
- (32) The letter as a whole, unlike most Pauline letters, makes only a handful of references to Jewish scripture.
- (33) e.g. pp. 255, 257, 260, 268.
- (34) Cf. pp. 64–5, 79, 113–14.
- (35) pp. 476–8, 484–91.
- (36) See esp. Lightstone (2006) on Greek, Roman, and Jewish mediation of divine power; Edwards (1996), 49–68, 91–118; cf. Schwartzmann (2012), 41–57 for a discussion of the power of God and its relation to preaching in some later texts. Kee (1993), 151–9 discusses Jesus and his followers as agents of divine power; Hays (1994) describes a parallel model, not using the language of power, in which ‘God is at work through the spirit to create communities that prefigure and embody the reconciliation and healing of the world’ (p. 32). He emphasizes the importance of the ecclesial context for the shaping of this vision (on which, see further Ch. 12). Aune (1980) emphasizes the continuity of Christian understandings of the mediation of divine power with Graeco-Roman and Jewish models, which continue with the use of the name of Jesus in magical texts; cf. Meyer and Smith (1999), Janowitz (2001). Schliesser (2007), 14–15 notes the role of Schlatter in bringing this perspective, important to the Reformers but underplayed by nineteenth-century scholars, back into play.

(37) Bultmann (1985), 96–7 suggests that being *en pneumati* and even *en Christō* is a description of ecstasy reminiscent of possession, though using the inverse metaphor.

(38) One of Paul's rare scriptural references in this letter recalls the persecution of the prophets who were called to preach God's word (2.15).

(39) It is not, of course, the only thing that does, and a study of the Thessalonian community per se would discuss, for instance, how eschatologically focused *elpis* together with the strongly intra-human practice of *agapē* interact with *pistis* to shape it, but that is beyond the scope of this enquiry.

(40) e.g. Dougherty (1903), Patterson (2006), Wilson (2006), 28, 43–51. Hdt. 4.145–59 develops a classic example.

(41) Aeneas' model follower is *fidus* Achates (on whom, see Weber (1988)).

(42) On generals celebrated for inspiring loyalty in their troops, see e.g. pp. 77–9. The model would work with either God or Christ as the leader figure, but though Paul makes one reference in 1 Thess. (1.6) to the imitation of Christ, he does not, as noted, in this letter refer to people having *pistis* towards Christ: here, the community's leader is Godself. Alexander (1994) sees the idea of a loyal band grouped around a charismatic leader as close to that of Hellenistic schools; given that some (real or mythical) founders of philosophies and schools were vagrants, these models too are not without resonance (cf. Meeks (1983), ch. 3; Malherbe (1998), on the similarity of conversion to Christianity and philosophical schools).

(43) In addition to potential persecution from outside, Paul also hints (e.g. 2.1–11) that there may be some competition for the Thessalonians' loyalty from within, perhaps from other apostles, but if so, in this letter (unlike others) it remains below the surface; we do not hear that the Thessalonians have reneged on any of Paul's teachings.

(44) Käsemann (1984) develops a similar idea out of Heb. 3.7–4.13, arguing that Hebrews understands Christians, by analogy with the Israelites during the Exodus, as the 'wandering people of God', and that their *pistis* (pp. 37–48) forms the basis of this identity. Cf. Mayr (2012), 57–60; see further pp. 337–8.

(45) 1.1 does not specify God as worshippers' father (as opposed to Christ's), but 1.3, 3.11, 3.13 do. Faubion (2001), 1–12 highlights the significance of families we choose to belong to rather than those we are born into in contemporary anthropology; they may be experienced as more significant and formative.

(46) 2.11, 2.14, 2.17; cf. 3.2, 3.7. For a comparison of household and brotherhood language in non-Christian elective associations, see McLean (1993b), 237, 269–80, Aasgaard (2002); Hollander (2009) notes the use of language of *koinōnia* among these groups. Horrell (2001) sees the language of brotherhood evolving into that of a household; cf. also Meeks (1983), 75–7: see Ch. 7.

(47) It is unclear whether the Thessalonians' becoming a model for others is seen as part of their calling, or a fortunate accident (1.7–8), though see p. 218 on the 'cascade' of *pistis*.

(48) 1.10, 2.12, 2.16, 2.19, 2.33, 4.14–18, 5.1–12, 5.23.

(49) 4.3, 9, 11. Von Dobbeler (1987), ch. 5 notes that standing fast or enduring in *pistis* also occurs occasionally in wider Greek literature. On *pistis* and ethics, see Ch. 10.

(50) This may indicate that the Thessalonians are not expected to engage actively in converting others.

(51) Cf. pp. 193–5.

(52) e.g. Gal. 2.20–1.

(53) Characteristically of an ethical quality.

(54) Cf. 5.8, where *pistis* and *agapē* are both likened to a breastplate. Here faith might be seen, like the word of God, as working in people (cf. 1.8).

(55) It is oddly little noticed that New Testament references to armour are nearly always to defensive armour (even the short sword of Eph. 6.17 is primarily a defensive weapon, though cf. 2 Cor. 10.4: ‘the weapons of our battle are not of flesh but are enormously powerful, capable of destroying fortresses’). Jennifer Strawbridge points out to me that, paradoxically, later commentators on e.g. Eph. 6.11–17 often interpret this passage in offensive terms, talking of active combat against hostile powers (e.g. Clem., *Strom.* 2.20, *Protr.* 11; Or., *Comm. Ex.* 11.4; cf. Tert., *Jejun.* 7.7–8).

(56) On the rabbinic connections of this passage and 1 Cor. 15, see Moss and Baden (2012).

(57) Paul’s emphasis in this letter on the Thessalonians’ relationship with God fits naturally with what I take to be his eschatological focus (*contra* e.g. Marshall (1997)). His shift of focus in later letters may reflect not a lessening interest in eschatology but, in part, an increasing interest in the complexity of the practice of *pistis*.

(58) Without adding substantially to its lexical range (though see e.g. pp. 265–7, 291–2, 329, and the discussion of second century writers, pp. 509–14).

(59) Phil. 2.7–8.

(60) Even the language of slavery is hardly strong enough to express this concept (on the other hand, its strongest articulations (notoriously Arist., *Pol.* 1, *passim*) give slaves less responsibility for their activities than Paul (see Garnsey (1996), 107–27 on Aristotle; 173–88 on Paul)). Slavery (especially domestic) was highly complex at this time, encompassing many degrees of status and diverse expectations (see e.g. Bradley (2011), Thompson (2011)). On slaves integrated with family, see Edmondson (2011); on similar situation in Judaism, see Hezser (2011); cf. MacDonald (2007), on Colossians, and (2011), on difficulties of relating household codes to social life in general. Malherbe (1994) connects Paul’s language of humility and service to God as freedom (in 1 Cor. 8–9) with Stoicism and Cynicism.

(61) I have not found another example of a community being described as founded on *agapē*. *Pistis/fides* is not often marked as cross-communal, in general; the Romans were remarkable (in their own eyes) in offering *fides* towards even enemies in war (e.g. Val. Max. 6.6.3, 5) and sometimes creating relationships as a result (see p. 96). We should not, of course, exaggerate the cultural gap between Jews and gentiles here: some gentile converts may have been ‘god-fearers’ (though on problems with this concept, see e.g. Lieu (1996), 44–6, 106–7) and many Jews deeply Hellenized (even in Israel (Meyers and Meyers (2011))).

(62) 1.3, 3.6, 5.8; see pp. 450–3.

(63) See pp. 268–70.

(64) Ulrichs (2007), 76–86 discusses the history of the debate over this tricolon and reaches conclusions similar to mine.

(65) Cf. Price (1969), lecture 8.

(66) Cf. 3.2–10, 5.4–22.

(67) NB this passage is about the Thessalonians’ work; Paul would no doubt say that his ‘work based on *pistis*’ is preaching the gospel.

(68) At 2.13 Paul describes the word as working not through but in *tois pisteuousin*. If *pistis* is still being imagined as parallel to love, then it should have interior, affective, and relational aspects here too.

(69) In other letters, too, the passages in which *pisteuein* is most strongly propositional are also passages in which Paul connects believing in the death and resurrection of Christ with salvation (e.g. 1 Cor. 15.1–4, Rom. 10.9–10).

(70) All three affirmations occur in subordinate clauses, 1.10 and 5.10 very briefly indeed.

(71) ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ θεοῦ in v. 4 could mean that they were loved after turning to God, but there is no obvious reason for Paul to interject that thought at this point, and the way this phrase sits within the phrase εἰδότες...τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν strongly suggests that they are meant to be taken together.

(72) Though Paul does not mention whether the Thessalonians were called to believe this as part of the good news. On predestination as a theme in Paul, see e.g. Levering (2011), 25–35.

(73) πίστις ... πρὸς τὸν θεὸν must be relational.

(74) And/or thought it was worth speculating on as a hope or wager.

(75) It is possible, of course, e.g. that proto-credal affirmations were central to this community's worship and this letter simply does not provide evidence of them, but on parallels for the configuration of *pistis* in this letter, see further pp. 223–5 and Ch. 7.

(76) Ljungman (1964), 64–5 rightly notes that *pistis* in this passage is not only about affirming the occurrence of the resurrection but its concordance with scripture: in other words, it is a truth based on coherence as well as correspondence. The close cooperation of God and Christ as Lord in bringing Christians into the kingdom is emphasized by 1 Thess. 1.1, 1.3, 2.14, 4.16, 5.9–10. Ljungman argues further (p. 79) that Paul includes the resurrection in what we know, not what we believe: it is not an object of faith in the fideistic sense. Gyllenberg (1964), 619, 623 is unusual in emphasizing the role of *pistis* in community formation for Paul, though he links this only with Paul's reading of scripture. Stuhlmacher (1988), 37 argues that *pistis* towards God and belief in the resurrection jointly constitute the earliest proclamation but does not focus on how they relate.

(77) Nowhere else in the ancient world are propositional beliefs foundational to religious commitment, or, on their own, a route to favourable treatment by a god. Nor should we expect them to be, since divine–human relationships by definition involve emotions, actions, and community formation as well as cognition. If Christians had held a view as unusual as that believing certain things about the death and resurrection of Christ was in itself the way to divine favour, we might expect them to have made a special case for it, and nowhere in the New Testament do we find such a case. Indeed, as the author of James reminds his readers in the course of making a slightly different argument that community members must do good to one another (2.19), believing things about Christ bears no necessary relation at all to the holistic commitment to Christ which is *pistis*. Cf. Mk 1.23–8 = Lk. 4.33–7, Mk 5.7 = Mt. 8.29 = Lk. 8.28; also, making an analogous point about knowledge and love, 1 Cor. 8.1–3.

(78) Ljungman (1964), 63–4 points out that in the Tefilla, raising the dead is an aspect of God's faithfulness, which Paul may also intend his listeners to register here and to act as an encouragement to *pistis*.

(79) pp. 245–6.

(80) e.g. pp. 272–4.

(81) Agreeing with e.g. Stanton (1974), 67–85 that Peter's speeches, and the early chapters of Acts in general, capture elements of very early preaching, though not with Dodd's (1936) strongly propositional view of the early kerygma nor his view of its development (against which, see e.g. Lowe (1941)). On the history of the debate over Acts' sources, see Fitzmyer (1998), 81–8. Friedrich (1982), 113 notes the interactivity of trust and propositional belief, discussing how for Paul the proclamation leads to trust and trust to confession. Lührmann (1990), 248–9 notes as surprising to a form critic that Paul's kerygma at Thessalonica does not focus on expiation of sins through Christ's death but on coming judgement. Wanamaker (1990), 9–10 also emphasizes that Paul's preaching about Jesus focused on deliverance from judgement.

(82) Thuc. 1.22 (though, unlike Luke, Thucydides heard some of the speeches he reports and learned of others from people who heard them, so he can also claim to be as faithful as is possible to what was actually said).

(83) On the possibility that Luke has access to earlier traditions, though the Pentecost story and Peter's speech cannot be historical in their form here, see e.g. Lüdemann (1989), 47–9. By creating the speech, of course, Luke also inscribes it in the mindset of community members.

(84) Joel 2.32 (LXX) is also used by Paul, Rom. 10.13, 1 Cor. 1.2 ('[E]veryone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved').

(85) At 2.36 he calls Jesus 'Messiah', linking him with salvation, but not necessarily with sin. Possibly the link was so obvious to Luke that he did not see the need to articulate it here.

(86) There is also an indication that those who hear this preaching will be those who are called (2.39).

(87) There is no reason to suppose that Luke would have extrapolated Peter's sermon from 1 Thess., and though passages of 1 and 2 Peter (e.g. 1 Pet. 1.3–5) are (not surprisingly) not incompatible with Acts 2, the shape of their thinking overall is significantly different (see Ch. 8). On the resurrection as a basis for trust and hope in God here, see Elliott (2000), 334. Achtemeier (1996a), 97–8 also emphasizes Peter's hopeful, eschatological focus, and *pistis* within it as trust; he sees not individual salvation but escape from judgement as Peter's theme. Horrell (1998a), 24–5 sees Peter as preaching trust-faithfulness to God through which the faithful hope that an inheritance is being prepared for them in heaven. Jobes (2005), 87–9, though, sees faith in Christ and salvation through resurrection as central.

(88) e.g. 6.1, 11.26, 13.52, 14.20, 15.10.

(89) This is true of all the many passages in Acts where the aorist participle is used. Only the present participle, if any, has a claim to be being used as a formal designation.

(90) Later in the letter Paul speaks of the *ekklēsiai* of Judaea, which we infer is an alternative term for *hoi pisteuontes*.

(91) Cf. Mt. 18.15, Acts 1.15, 6.3, 10.23, 11.1, Rom. 7.1, 11.25, 1 Cor. 2.1, 2 Cor. 1.8, Gal. 1.2, Col. 1.2, 1 Tim. 6.2, Heb. 10.19, Ja. 2.5, 5.12, 1 Jo. 3.13, 5.16, Rev. 19.10, 22.9.

(92) Cf. Acts 9.13, 26.10, Rom. 1.7, 8.27, 12.13, 15.25, 15.31, 1 Cor. 1.2, 6.1, 14.33, 16.15, 2 Cor. 1.1, 8.4, 9.1, Eph. 1.1, 1.15, 6.18, Phil. 1.1, 4.22, Col. 1.4, 1.12, Phlm. 5, 7, Heb. 3.1, 1 Pet. 3.5, Rev. 5.8, 13.7, 16.6.

(93) See p. 204.

(94) 1 Cor. 6.6, 10.27, 14.23–4, 2 Cor. 4.4. Goulder (1994) argues that *hoi apistoi* here are Christians with whom Paul does not agree. While it is possible in principle that Paul uses *hoi apistoi* in two different senses, and there certainly are groups with whom he does not agree, there is no compelling reason to read *hoi apistoi* as referring to insiders in this passage (the rhetoric of the rest of the passage fits outsiders better), and it is preferable to assume that Paul's usage is consistent unless there are clear contraindications.

(95) At 16.1 and 16.15 references to an unnamed Jewish woman and to Lydia the purple-dealer as *pistai* probably refer to their community membership rather than specifically to their trust/faithfulness.

(96) Cf. 1 Tim. 5.16.

(97) Mutschler (2010), 298–9.

(98) Cf. pp. 316–17.

(99) [Peter]'s *pistis* language does not appear in the psalm.

(100) Cf. Mk. 12.10 and parallels.

(101) Grabbe (1992), 465–501. For a Comparison of Christian with Jewish self-conceptions of community, see e.g. Kee (1995). Gager (1975) connects Christians' early focus on community with millenarianism. *Hoi pistoi* are grammatically equivalent to *Hakamim*, *Haverim*, etc.

(102) Levine and Brettler (2011), 59.

(103) Paul and Acts attest that both terms arise early and are in widespread use by c.50.

(104) See pp. 350–1.

(105) See pp. 206–7.

(106) *Pistos* can mean 'to be believed' in the sense of 'credible, reliable', but in that meaning *hoi pistoi* would refer to the credibility of Christians themselves, which cannot be right.

(107) Encompassing both 'those who are (properly) faithful to God' and 'those who are faithful to the true and living God', as

suggested above, p. 241.

(108) As an interpretation it also flouts Ockham's razor, which is unpalatable if not decisive.

(109) *Contra* e.g. Fitzmyer (1989), who interprets *hoi pisteuontes* as 'believers', and Trebilco (2010), 68–75, who notes that *hoi pisteuontes* is used of those who trust God in LXX and of the 'faithful' in the New Testament, but then translates it 'the believers', and takes it to refer to their propositional beliefs. Cf. Tac., *Ann.* 15.44.4, Suet., *Ner.* 16.2, Plin., *Ep.* 10.96.5–7, and perhaps the *birkat haminim* (but see the discussion of Langer (2012), 16–39), none of which pinpoint their propositional beliefs as what is problematic about Christians. Acts 11.26 with Tac., *Ann.* 15.44.3 indicate that the name *Christianoi* was originally an outsider label.

(110) 4.9.

(111) Said of Paul's reception in general, but as he goes on to talk about his speaking, the reception of his words seems likely to be particularly at issue.

(112) It is unclear whether this refers to the Thessalonians' conviction or Paul's, or both.

(113) See e.g. Sor. 2.12.88–9 on the nurse as professional; Malherbe (1970), on nursing imagery in philosophical schools.

(114) This list of exhortations is strongly reminiscent of popular gnomic school texts (Morgan (1998), 120–51), hinting at Paul's role as teacher as well as nurse.

(115) 5.14–23 may imply the same, though since even philosophers never claim perfect virtue for themselves, we should not assume that Paul thought the Thessalonians particularly defective.

(116) See pp. 39–45.

(117) See esp. pp. 117–20.

(118) 1.10, 2.16, 2.19, 3.13, 4.15, 5.2, 5.9, 5.23. For Paul and others, the time of crisis is the time of *kairos* (e.g. Montesano (1995)); for the linking of Paul's invocation of *kairos* with the creation of *pistis*, see Sullivan (1992).

(119) 2.16 (see the discussion of Wanamaker (1990), 116–18).

(120) Wolter (2011), 86–96 develops out of fideism the subtler and more satisfactory idea of *pistis* as 'reality-certainty', which captures both the directness of experience and the sense of knowing implicated in Paul's *pistis*.

(121) On the importance of witness throughout the New Testament, see Trites (1977), though with limited discussion of its problems.

(122) See esp. Mitchell (2010).

(123) 1.8, 2.13.

(124) 1.5, 2.3, 2.8.

(125) 2.13, 2.16.

(126) Nor did he 'impose his weight' as an apostle (2.7)—but it is hard to see how this would have impressed the Thessalonians before they converted. Paul implies (1.9) that he converted them himself, though it is possible that he was not the first apostle to visit them.

(127) See the discussion of Thistleton (2011), 51–2.

(128) He is much less explicitly ambivalent about the written word (despite 4.9, where he says that he does not need to write to tell the Thessalonians to love one another).

(129) For this purpose it does not matter whether 1.9–10 summarizes Paul's teaching or that of other apostles too (on which, see e.g. Bruce (1982a), Richard (1995), *ad loc.*).

(130) 1.7, 1.9, 4.3, 4.15, 5.2, 5.9, 5.23.

(131) Even reference to what Paul evidently considers vital scriptural testimony for Christ's death for human sins and resurrection is omitted in this letter (cf. 1. Cor. 15.–4, Mitchell (2010), 8–9).

(132) 1 Cor. 6.6, 7.12–15, 10.27, 14.22–4, 2 Cor. 4.4, 6.14. Conceivably, Paul was the first to use *hoi pisteuontes*, and his unmarked use of it in 1 Thess. means that he has used it previously to the Thessalonians, not that others have used it.

(133) e.g. Bornkamm (1961), ad loc.

(134) See pp. 235–8, 388.

(135) Cf. Furnish (1999), 50–64, Lieu (2002), 309 and *passim* on the inevitable 'selectivity, fluidity, dynamism, permeability' of boundaries, probably a preferable view to that of Esler (1996), 238, who sees them as more robust.

(136) Murphy-O'Connor (1977).

(137) On Paul's work to fortify his own credibility, especially in 2 Cor. 10–13 (which is probably part of a different underlying letter from the passages discussed on pp. 248–51), see Mitchell (2010), 79–94.

(138) 1.21; cf. 2.5, 15.1–2, 15.14.

(139) 1.8; cf. 15.2, 16.13. Here too the role of God is emphasized in keeping the Corinthians' *pistis* firm; cf. 1 Thess. 5.23.

(140) 2 Cor. 8.7, 10.15, 13.5; Barrett (1973), 337–8 and Barnett (1997), 609 are among the many who take the last to refer to 'the faith' on the grammatically weak ground of the presence of the article. Bultmann (1976), 244–5 understands this as the 'obedience of faith'. Martin (1986), 478 takes it to mean even more than the propositional content of faith: Paul's correct version of it as opposed to that of others, but *contra*, see e.g. Furnish (1984), 577–8.

(141) 1.24–9.

(142) Ch. 15, *passim*. In 1 Corinthians this theme is developed further in the direction of predestination: 'it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith' (1.21), while God's wisdom is predetermined (2.7) and 'prepared for those who love him' (2.9). Those who have received the spirit can understand it; those who have not, never will (2.11–15). How God chooses to whom to send the spirit, Paul does not discuss.

(143) Assuming that his reference to speaking 'with much struggle' (2.2) is not a reference to his difficulties as an orator. Since Paul makes this comment immediately after speaking of being maltreated in Philippi, and what follows does not suggest inadequate speaking, 'much struggle' seems more likely to refer to social than rhetorical difficulties.

(144) Argued e.g. by Pogoloff (1992), Winter (2002); cf. Munck (1959), Eshleman (2012). White (2013), widens the scope of the discussion to include Greek *paideia* more generally.

(145) On the almost certainly composite nature of 2 Cor., see the discussions of e.g. Barrett (1973), 11–18, Furnish (1984), 30–48. This plausibly explains the rather different treatment of *pistis* in different passages of the letter.

(146) The adjective *peithos* appears once, in 1 Cor. 2.4, but the verb and noun do not. (Paul, and the New Testament in general, as Thibaut points out ((1988), 171–2), use *peithein*, *apeithein*, etc. in meanings close to those of the *pistis* lexicon.) Cf. 2 Cor. 1.9, where the perfect participle of *peithesthai* is appropriately translated 'trust' by the NAB: 'Indeed, we had accepted within ourselves the sentence of death, that we might trust (πεποιθότες ὧμεν) not in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.'

(147) 1.15, 2.3, 8.22, 10.2, 10.7. NB this usage appears in possibly as many as three different underlying letters (1.1–2.13, ch. 8, chs. 10–13), though not in 2.14–7.4.

(148) Cf. pp. 62–3.

(149) 3.1–3; e.g. Martin (1986), 51 argues that 'your hearts' is implied here, Barnett (1997), 166–7 that 'our hearts' is intended.

(150) Here Paul comes as close as anywhere in these letters to locating Christ in the middle of the relationship of the faithful with God, as he will in Rom. 3, Gal. 2, and Phil. 3.

(151) ὑπηρέτης is used of one who renders service rather than a slave, but the distinction may not be significant, given that Paul talks of slavery to God and Christ elsewhere.

(152) Proverbial: e.g. SB 1.759; Luc. *Nav.* 45 (Barrett (1971a), 301). Conzelmann (1975), 222 notes that this is a Jewish proverbial phrase.

(153) LSJ gives just one example, which is not grammatically analogous: Thuc. 5.105, where *pisteuein* is followed by an accusative and infinitive; the verse could, though, be understood as it is now in antiquity: e.g. Jo. Chr., *Hom.* 33, PG 61:275–85, Aug., *Serm.* 350, *PL* 39.1535.

(154) Fee (1987), 639–10 is also dissatisfied with the traditional translation, observes that *panta* comes close to carrying an adverbial meaning such as ‘in everything’ or ‘always’, and thinks the latter makes better sense of the middle two terms. He also notes (pp. 632–3) that ‘so as to fathom *all* mysteries’ is a somewhat strained translation of 13.2.

(155) As at 1 Cor. 12.9.

(156) It is tempting to take ‘sight’ and ‘trust’ here as a conventional polarity, but there is no evidence that it is.

(157) On eyes and sight, see Villard (2002).

(158) On which, see Getty (1990). Anyone with an elementary rhetorical education would be well aware of this: see e.g. Arist., *Rhet.* 2.1.2–7, 2.5, Cic., *Ad Herr.* 1.8.12, Quint. 5.6.5, 7.8, 8.1–9.37 and see pp. 73–4 on the creation of *pistis/fides* in rhetoric. Paul aims here, as in 1 Thess., to root the Corinthians’ trust in him in his commitment to God and Christ (rather, for instance, than in his persuasive speech; this passage follows on from Paul’s argument about the role of speech in chs. 1–3).

(159) Cf. 1.17, 7.25, 9.1, perhaps 4.15; at 12.27–30 all members of the body of Christ are given authority of different kinds and by implication represent Christ in different ways (Minear (1960), 173–220).

(160) On the tension between this and his language of brotherhood and reciprocity, see Best (1988a), 29–95, 140. Chow (1992), 167–86 and Clarke (1993), 95–112 argue that ideas of patronage are also in the background of Paul’s and the Corinthians’ thinking. Clarke (p. 119) also notes Paul’s use of agricultural language to emphasize his authority: this evokes not only authority but the care of the teacher (Morgan (1998), 244–61).

(161) See pp. 99–103 and e.g. Winter (1991) (within states), Joubert (1995), 216–17.

(162) Cf. 4.16, ‘be imitators of me’. Getty (1990) connects Paul’s language of imitation here with his family language. Though imitation (of God, Christ, or those entrusted with authority) is not often connected explicitly with *pistis* language here or elsewhere in the New Testament, imitation can be seen as one way in which human beings learn how to respond to the *pistis* that God and Christ extend to them. For *pistis* and imitation treated together or closely linked, see e.g. Lk. 22.26–31, 1 Thess. 1.6–8, 1 Cor. 4.1–17, Phil. 3.9–11; cf. Ign., *Eph.* 1.1 (the faithful are imitators of God). For the argument that imitation is more important in Paul and some other epistles than is usually assumed, see Morgan (2015).

(163) Cf. 12.23. Holmberg (1978), 95–121. I take it that the power/authority of *pistoi* is analogous to Weber’s charismatic, rather than institutionalized authority (discussed by Holmberg in this context (1978), 125–92), but that the two may not be separable: see further Ch. 12. The analogy here is with a state (cf. Aesop’s fable (Halm (1852), 197 and versions listed by Perry (1984), 446–7; Livy 2.32.9 and D.H. 6.86, Jos., *BJ* 4.406, Q. Curt. 10.6.8; Nestle (1927)). The fable points up both the importance of solidarity and the inevitability of hierarchy (Furnish (1999), 86, 89–91) On power struggles in the Corinthian community related to both apostleship and spiritual gifts, see Holmberg (1978), 70–93, 95–121.

(164) Barrett (1971a), 285–6 suggests it is the power that moves mountains, etc.; cf. Fee (1987), 593–6, Harrington (1999), 454, Conzelmann (1975), 209.

(165) Wisdom, knowledge, gifts of healing, mighty deeds, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, the interpretation of tongues

(12.8–10).

(166) And perhaps others? Cf. 4.27–30.

(167) Generally agreed by commentators to mean ‘faith’ rather than ‘the faith’ (Furnish (1984), 152); on Paul’s relationship with the community here, see Bultmann (1985), 44.

(168) Bultmann’s assertion in *TDNT* ((1968), 181–2) that *pistis* ‘became a catchword in those religions which engaged in propaganda [by which he means some, if not all, elective cults]...All missionary preaching demanded faith in the deity proclaimed by it’ does not stand up to scrutiny. There is little, if any, sign of proselytizing in this period (Goodman (1994*b*), 20–37 notes the difficulty of proving a negative, but concludes that members of cults other than Judaism and Christianity proselytized only occasionally, if ever). Expressions of *pistis/fides* between human beings and gods, on the other hand, are mainstream and not uncommon; they are not connected with evangelism nor distinctive, as Bultmann suggests, of the cult of Isis or of Pythagoreanism. Bultmann cites a claim which Origen attributes to Celsus (*CC* 6.11) that some groups proclaim one saviour and some another, but all demand, πιστευον, ει σωθηναι θελεις, ‘trust/believe, if you would be saved’, as if it refers to elective cults. The idea that devotion to a divinity might lead to salvation, however, is not particularly linked to elective cults nor to evangelism; it is notably characteristic of imperial cult (Moralee (2004)) and healing cults, not to mention Judaism.

(169) *Pisteuein* for Paul is arguably less of a ‘leap of faith’ even than it is for Abram in Gen. 15, since Abraham’s choice to trust/believe is made after his questioning of God; in not contemplating the possibility that God might be questioned or argued with, Paul is close in spirit to the Hellenistic books of the Bible.

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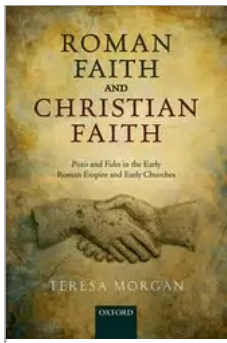
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Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches

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Pistis in Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses Paul's treatment of *pistis* in Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon, and particularly how Paul uses *pistis* to locate Christ at the centre of the divine–human relationship of the new covenant. This leads to a discussion of *pistis Christou*, which argues that it is neither simply the faithfulness of Christ to God, nor human trust/faith in Christ, but simultaneously Christ's faithfulness to God and God's trust in him, and Christ's trustworthiness to human beings and their trust/faith in him, which enables him to act as a mediator and restore a relationship of *dikaiosynē* between God and humanity. The chapter discusses some Graeco-Roman models on which Paul may have drawn, and considers how this development affects Paul's understanding of the shape of the divine–human community. It also explores passages in which Paul stretches the meaning of *pistis* to include 'bond of trust', 'community', and even 'new covenant'.

Keywords: *pistis*, *dikaiosynē*, Galatians, Philippians, Romans, Christ, mediator, new covenant, *pistis Christou*

Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans, together with Philippians 3.2–21 (which is thought by many to be an interpolated fragment of a separate letter¹) and the letter to Philemon, use *pistis* language in ways which have much in common with each other, but which differ in some respects from the use of *pistis* in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians.² Most significantly, these letters show *pistis* not only characterizing human beings' relationship with God but also playing a key role in human relationships with Christ and in the making *dikaios*³ of the faithful through the death and resurrection of Christ. Exactly what part *pistis* plays in that process, however, is one of the most contested questions in New Testament studies.

This chapter, like the last, approaches *pistis* language in Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon by exploring the nature of the divine–human relationships it describes: by looking at the shape, strengths, and weaknesses of those relationships, the ways in which Paul tries to secure the *pistis* of those to whom he is writing, and where *pistis* language moves from one relationship or discourse to another.⁴ Before we begin, it is worth reiterating the point made at the beginning of these two chapters: the order of Paul's letters in these two chapters emerges inductively from their analysis of his use of *pistis* language and is not based on any presumption about the order in which the letters were written. As we have noted, among New Testament scholars there is currently considerable resistance (for biographical and/or theological (p.263) reasons) to any attempt to order Paul's letters chronologically.⁵ To contribute to that debate is not one of the aims of this study, and it is undoubtedly possible that the differences between 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians on the one hand, and Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon on the other, have to do with the particular arguments Paul is making in each letter, not with any evolution in his thought. At the same time, I do not think our difficulties in dating Paul's letters render it impossible in principle that the distinctive features of the letters discussed in this chapter mark an evolution in Paul's thought, in which he moved from using *pistis* language to express the relationship between human beings and God, as it is commonly used in Jewish and Graeco-Roman religiosity, to using it to express the distinctive three-way relationship between humanity, God, and Christ.



We begin this chapter with Galatians, but what follows does not depend on any particular view of the order of Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, and Romans. Philippians 3, together with a short section of chapter 1 (probably from a different letter), is left till last because its use of *pistis* language is relatively brief and allusive: it is possible to take a view of its meaning by comparison with Galatians and Romans, but it would be difficult to develop a view based on this letter alone.

The complexity of thought compressed into these letters, two of them not very long,⁶ is formidable, and the degree to which Paul's thinking, particularly about *pistis*, *dikaiosynē*, and the law, is interconnected means that any study which focuses on one element of the complex is in danger of doing less than justice to the whole.⁷ At the same time, *nomos*, *pistis*, and *dikaiosynē* remain separate entities, and the advantage of focusing on one is that one may develop understanding of it in such a way as to illuminate its relationship with the others. In recent decades Paul's treatment of the law has been radically reconceived and intensively discussed, and this study substantially follows the 'new perspective' pioneered by Krister Stendahl and E. P. Sanders.⁸ Paul's understanding of *dikaiosynē* has also received a number of detailed (p.264) treatments in recent years, both as part of the 'new perspective' on Paul and in response to it.⁹ What follows will try to show how an approach to Paul's use of *pistis* language which is informed by the historiography and sociology of *mentalité* can add something to recent interpretations of *nomos* and *dikaiosynē* and contribute further to our understanding of Paul's thinking about all three in relation to one another.¹⁰

Hē pistis is sometimes translated, in certain passages of these letters, as 'the faith', meaning something close to what modern Christians might mean by 'the Christian faith' or 'the Christian religion': the complex of doctrines, attitudes, practices, sense of community, and more which makes up a modern worshipper's understanding of religion. Translations which imply this meaning, however, are to be resisted. There is, notoriously, no word for 'religion' in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, and little sign of the concept in Jewish, Greek, or Roman thought of this period.¹¹ Greeks and Romans speak of cults of the gods, piety and religious observance (the meaning of *religio* in Latin), of opinions about the nature of the gods and stories about the gods, but they do not identify what worshippers think and do (which in any case may vary widely from place to place and person to person) as 'a religion' in the sense of

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distinguished from, in modern terms, a religious concept in the Graeco-Roman world. The concept of a religion separate from the gods would have seemed to modern writers in this period speak of the people of Israel and God's relationship with Israel, the covenant, the law, the scriptures, piety, and faithfulness, and recognize, for instance, that keeping the law of Moses is different from keeping the laws of Alexandria or Rome (and that Jews sometimes do both), but they do not routinely distinguish between 'religious' and 'secular' aspects of the lives of God's, or any people. The divine, for the great (p.265) majority of Greeks, Romans, and Jews alike, is everywhere involved or embedded in human life, and little, if any human activity takes place without reference to the divine.¹⁴

If followers of Christ had begun, as early as the first century, to refer to their relationship with God, opinions, and practices as 'the faith' in anything resembling the modern sense of a religion, they would have created (in an extremely short period of time) not only a new cult, but a new cultural concept. This, of course, is not impossible, but it is a very large claim, and one which would need careful demonstration. To my knowledge, no one has tried to demonstrate it: the modern concept has simply been assumed to exist in the first century and *hē pistis* has been translated accordingly. Methodologically this is unacceptable; we must assume that meanings of *hē pistis* in the New Testament are related to those which already exist in the world around them until the texts themselves compel us to

conclude otherwise, and, as we trace the evolutions which do occur, seek to understand how they develop out of existing meanings. At what point, if not in the New Testament, Christians did evolve the concept of ‘a faith’ in anything like the modern sense of a religion is an important question, but one which lies outside the scope of this study.¹⁵

Pistis in Galatians

Paul’s treatment of *pistis* language in Galatians has points of comparison with its treatment in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, which are discussed later in this section.¹⁶ In the passages in which *pistis* language plays the largest and most significant part, however, Paul uses it in what appear to be some new and distinctive ways.

The first appearance of *pistis* in this letter already has a slightly different feel from anything we encountered in the last chapter. During his early years as a missionary, Paul tells the Galatians, he was not personally known to the churches of Judaea. [T]hey only kept hearing that “the one who once was persecuting us is now preaching *tēn pistin* which he once tried to destroy (ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει)”, and they glorified God because of me’ (1.23–4).

(p.266) This is the first time we have encountered *hē pistis* as the object of preaching, and it is tempting to read it as a synonym for *to euangelion* and as parallel to 1 Corinthians 15.1: ‘Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν) ...’ Following the argument of Chapter 6, *hē pistis* would then refer to the content of Paul’s call to potential converts to put their trust in God and be freed from their sins in preparation for the end time. In some ways this is an attractive interpretation, but it assumes a significant shift in the meaning of *pistis* from a relationship of trust to the content of the kerygma. Such a shift is not theoretically impossible, but it cannot be taken for granted either.¹⁷

Meanings such as ‘trust’ or ‘belief’ are not obviously appropriate to *hē pistis* here: they make little sense unless, for instance, one assumes that ‘trust’ is a shorthand for ‘the message of trust in God, etc. which I [Paul] preach’, which is simply a roundabout way of referring to the content of the kerygma. Among the other common meanings of *pistis*, ‘argument’ or ‘proof’ could act as the object of *euangelizomai* but make poor sense in the context of Paul’s self-understanding (he is proclaiming what he sees as a truth, not an argument).

Another interpretation is suggested by Paul’s use of *porthein*, the other verb of which *pistis* is the object in this sentence. *Porthein* (a relatively uncommon form of *perthein*, and as such an unusual choice by Paul) is normally used of ravaging or destroying places or communities—towns, areas of country, or groups of people. Paul has just used it himself in this sense, at 1.13, of his persecution of the ‘assembly of God’.¹⁸ *Porthein* would be an odd word to use of disputing a viewpoint or the content of a proclamation, but it could be used of destroying a relationship.¹⁹ Paul’s reference to τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει reads without strain as a reference to an attempt to destroy the trust, in the sense of ‘the relationship of trust’ (or even ‘the bond of trust’) between God, Christ, and Christ’s followers. (It is implicit, of course, that this relationship rests on certain foundations, which no doubt include certain beliefs about God and Christ, because beliefs are always implicit in trust relationships.) The latter part of 1.23 could then be translated: ‘the one who was persecuting us is now proclaiming the relationship of trust [between God and human beings] which he once tried to destroy.’

(p.267) On this interpretation, Paul’s use of *pistis* has evolved, but not as far as is usually assumed. We have already encountered *pistis* several times referring to the trust which the faithful practise towards God.²⁰ This passage reifies that trust into ‘the relationship of trust’ or ‘the bond of trust’ between God, Christ, and the faithful. This interpretation locates the meaning of *pistis* somewhere between the common relational meaning ‘trust’ and reifications such as ‘pledge of good faith’ or ‘trust’ in a legal sense, which are well attested elsewhere in Greek. It fits seamlessly into Paul’s statement that he is now preaching what he once tried to destroy, since *euangelizomai* can mean to ‘bring good news about’ a wide range of things, including a relationship or the bond created by a relationship.

Paul returns to *pistis* in what looks like a similar sense at the end of the letter, when he exhorts the Galatians, ‘while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to τοὺς οἰκειοὺς τῆς πίστεως’ (6.10). To translate this phrase as ‘members of the household of trust’ sounds slightly odd. To translate it, as it is sometimes understood, as ‘members of the household of *the* faith’ assumes a much larger evolution of meaning in *pistis* and is still slightly odd, since one cannot be an *oikeios*, for instance, of a set of doctrines, or even the combination of a set of doctrines and an attitude or orientation of the mind and heart. One can, however, without difficulty be an *oikeios* of a community formed by a relationship.²¹ To translate this phrase ‘fellow members of the relationship’ or ‘the bond of trust’ again assumes relatively little evolution in the meaning of *pistis* and makes good sense in context. If the bond is understood as reified slightly further here, *hē pistis* may even mean ‘the community of trust’. Verse 6.10 would then run: ‘While we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to fellow members of the relationship/community of trust [which

exists between God, Christ, and faithful human beings].²²

In Galatians 2, in the course of explaining why gentile Galatians do not need to keep the Jewish law, Paul plunges into a series of references to *pistis* which are unlike anything discussed so far:

Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοὶ· εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐθρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο. εἰ γὰρ ἂ (p.268) κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω. ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆι τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ. οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν.

We, who are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the gentiles, [yet] who know that a person is not justified by works of the law *unless through the pistis of Jesus Christ*, even we have put our trust in Christ Jesus, so that we are justified *by the pistis of Christ* and not *by* works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, *seeking* to be justified in Christ we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? Of course not! But if I am building up again those things that I tore down, then I show myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live *in [the] pistis of the Son of God* who loved me and gave himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if *dikaïosynē* comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.²³ (2.15–21)

Paul's overall concern in this passage is how human beings are to achieve a relationship of *dikaïosynē* with God.²⁴ What enables human beings to achieve this condition is *pistis Iēsou Christou*.²⁵ The idea that human beings cannot bring themselves into a relationship of *dikaïosynē* with God but are enabled to achieve it by Christ is, of course, not new: Paul has written elsewhere, and specified that he inherited as a teaching from others that Christ died for human sins.²⁶ 'Being made righteous', 'acquitted', or 'justified' (*dikaïousthai*) is a less familiar idea. It occurs only twice in the letters we have already looked at, in 1 Corinthians. At 1 Corinthians 4.1–4 Paul tells the Corinthians that a steward (such as he is of the divine mysteries) must be found *pistos*, trustworthy in office. He is not conscious of there being anything against him, but οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ δεδικαίωμαι, 'I do not thereby stand acquitted', because only the Lord can judge him. Being *pistos* and being declared *dikaïos* are connected in this passage, but not in the close relationship of Galatians 2.²⁷ At 1 Corinthians 6.11 Paul tells the Corinthians that they have been 'washed, sanctified and justified (*edikaïōthēte*) in the name of Christ and the spirit of God'. Here, (p.269) *dikaïousthai* is linked with Christ but not with *pistis*.²⁸ Galatians takes a step further and links closely all three.

A man is not made *dikaïos* by the works of the law, says Paul, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The phrase ἐὰν μὴ has attracted a good deal of attention in recent years, and is most often translated (including by the NAB) 'but', giving, for instance: 'a person is not justified by works of the law but through *pistis Iēsou Christou*...' ²⁹ This, however, is not the usual meaning of ἐὰν μὴ in Greek, which (in *koinē* as in classical Greek) is 'unless' or 'except'.³⁰ J. D. G. Dunn has argued for the regular meaning here, suggesting that 2.16a reflects an early stage in Paul's thinking in which he saw the law and *pistis* as complementary, while the rest of the verse reflects a later stage, in which *dikaïosynē* is based exclusively on *pistis*.³¹ A number of scholars have accepted the grammatical argument; Dunn's inference has proved hard to defend, but the feeling lingers that 2.16a does less than polarize *pistis* and *nomos* and that this should be significant.³² Perhaps the most attractive interpretation is that of Andrew Das, who argues that 2.16a is cited by Paul as a formulation acceptable to all Jewish Christians, whether or not they keep the law, which allows the law-observant to believe that to be made *dikaïos* one must keep the law as well as exercising *pistis*.³³ Paul goes on, however, to make his view clear in the rest of the verse: Christians are made *dikaïos* by *pistis* and not by the law at all.

It is also worth noting that Paul never says, here or elsewhere, that Jews *ought* to abandon the law, even if he did not think it was necessary for them to continue to keep it; the law is never a bad thing.³⁴ It is 'not opposed to the promises of God' (3.21); it has been human beings' custodian and disciplinarian when they needed one (3.23–4).³⁵ Nor does Paul ever condemn the law (p.270) *in toto*; he simply wants to establish that *dikaïosynē* does not derive from it.³⁶ The translation 'unless' in 2.16a may therefore also express Paul's own desire not to denigrate the law, while insisting that the Galatians need not keep it.

On this interpretation, *nomos* and *pistis* stand in contrast but not in hard antithesis. Nor do we need to hear *erga* and *pistis* as antithetical. 'Works' are not, for Paul, bad things in general; in many passages they are clearly good.³⁷ (At 1 Thessalonians 1.3, as we

have seen, Paul referred to the Thessalonians' 'work of faith'; at Philippians 2.17 he calls the Philippians' *pistis* a 'liturgy', an act of service (used of service to both governments and gods), while at Romans 2.15 the gentiles have the 'works of the law' written on their hearts when they conform to what the law requires, though they are not technically keeping it.) For Paul, it is self-evident that God values both the law and good works, though neither is enough for *dikaïosynē*. (It is also worth noting that there is no indication, here or elsewhere, that Paul thinks that the law is reducible in principle, or is reduced by anyone in practice, to works. Certainly there is no reason to think that in this passage Paul claims that anyone thinks doing the works of the law without paying any attention to one's attitude of heart and mind would be enough for righteousness.³⁸) Paul's reference to *erga nomou* in this passage (and the following chapter) is most likely rhetorical: the phrase balances *pistis Christou* and improves the rhythm of the sentence.

Since we already know, from the beginning of this letter and elsewhere, that Paul thinks that Christ 'gave himself for our sins that he might rescue us from the present evil age' (1.4), there is no difficulty in reading *pistis Christou* at 2.16a subjectively, as referring the faithfulness of Christ in his self-giving. At the same time, the phrase could, grammatically, refer objectively to the trust that his followers put in Christ (though the construction carries this meaning relatively rarely); moreover, it is clear that Paul thinks we can and do put our trust in Christ, because he says so unambiguously in the next clause (2.16b). How best, then, is *pistis Christou* to be interpreted through this passage?³⁹

(p.271) If *pistis Christou* refers to human beings' trust in Christ, then Paul is saying that a person cannot be made *dikaïos* by fulfilling the law, unless she or he also believes in Christ. We have believed in Christ, so that we may be made *dikaïos* by believing in Christ and not by fulfilling the law, because no fleshly being is made *dikaïos* by keeping the law. Much of the debate about this passage has focused on its (alleged) repetitiousness.⁴⁰ We cannot do justice to all the arguments on both sides, but I doubt that any interpretation can absolve Paul entirely of repetition here. It has already been argued that, contrary to first impressions, he does not quite repeat himself on the subject of achieving *dikaïosynē* by keeping the law, because he says first that observant Jews do not achieve *dikaïosynē* that way, and then that nobody does. Even on this interpretation he comes close to redundancy, but since this is the main point of this passage, repetition is forgivable. If *pistis Christou* refers to human beings' trust in Christ, however, then Paul says that trust in Christ is what makes them righteous twice, if not thrice, in one compressed passage where his main point **(p.272)** is that gentiles do not need to keep the law. This is certainly not impossible, but it would be surprising.

If, on the other hand, *pistis Christou* is understood subjectively, then this passage bears more substantive meaning and is less repetitive. A person, it asserts, is not made *dikaïos* by fulfilling the law, but by the *pistis* of Christ (if we leave open for a moment exactly what that means). (Even) we (though we are good Jews) have put our trust in Christ so that we may be acquitted by Christ's *pistis* rather than by fulfilling the law. This train of thought is consonant with Paul's convictions, expressed elsewhere, that it is appropriate to put our trust in both God and Christ, that being Jewish is not enough for *dikaïosynē*, and that Christ achieves our *dikaïosynē* by something he does. All that is new about it is that what Christ does is expressed by *pistis*.

On this reading, what does Paul understand the *pistis* of Christ as meaning, when he says that it enables human beings to become *dikaïoi*? If we confine ourselves, partly for simplicity and partly out of methodological caution, to what Paul says about what Christ does at the beginning of this letter and in the rest of this passage, we find that Christ gives himself for human beings to rescue them from this evil age, in accordance with God's will (1.4). He loves Paul, has given himself up for him, and has died to achieve Paul's *dikaïosynē* (2.20–1). These formulations show Christ facing two ways. He does God's will, which fits with what Paul elsewhere calls his obedience.⁴¹ He might therefore be appropriately said to be *pistos* towards God, a term which is commonly used of the obedient in scripture and beyond. At the same time, Christ loves and acts to save human beings. When God is described elsewhere as loving and acting to save human beings, he is called *pistos* towards humanity, and the term might appropriately be applied Christ here. Christ might therefore be said to be *pistos* towards both God and human beings.⁴² At the same time, God evidently trusts Christ to carry out his will, and the faithful trust him to enable them to become *dikaïoi*. Christ is therefore at the centre of a nexus of divine–human *pistis*. His *pistis* is simultaneously his faithfulness or trustworthiness towards both God and humanity, and his trustedness by both God and humanity.

Paul uses the language of *pistis* here, I suggest, to capture his sense of the doubly reciprocal relationship of Christ with God and humanity, his sense of the place of Christ in the overarching relationship between God and humanity, and his sense of the quality of Christ, his faithfulness, trustworthiness, and trustedness by God and human beings, which makes his saving activity possible. No other term in Greek could have captured the nature and complexity of **(p.273)** this quality and relationship in the same way. If Paul had evolved his understanding of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity *ex novo*, he might well have decided that *pistis* was the best way of expressing it. Given that he inherited *pistis* as a characterization of the relationship between God and human beings, the nature and operation of the concept may well have helped him to develop his understanding of the place of Christ in the

divine–human relationship and the drama of salvation.⁴³

Apart from the use of *pistis* in the Septuagint to describe the divine–human relationship, and Paul’s view, developed from his own resurrection experience and the preaching he inherited, of the nature and role of Christ in salvation, the other influence on Paul’s configuration of *pistis* in the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity is doubtless his inherited understanding of the place of the law of Moses in the divine–human relationship.⁴⁴ We saw in Chapter 6 that in the Septuagint, especially the later books, Israelites are sometimes urged to put their trust in the law.⁴⁵ The law expresses and embodies God’s covenant with Israel, and keeping it is a mark of *dikaioσynē*: ‘He who trusts in the law preserves himself; and he who trusts in the Lord will not be put to shame’ (Sir. 32.24). In Galatians, Romans, and Philippians Paul’s references to the *pistis* of Christ are concentrated in passages in which he contrasts Christ with the law. In this context it would be surprising if the idea of trusting the law were not one of the origins of *pistis Christou*. The fact, however, that Christ, unlike the law, is a being who can exercise *pistis* on his own account, together with his close identification with God, allows Paul to develop in the concept of *pistis Christou* more complexities and reciprocities than were available to the writers of the Septuagint in connection with the law.

Given, as we saw in the Introduction, that *pistis*, in linguistic terms, is an action nominal, encompassing both active and passive meanings of its cognate verb (such that, for instance, both ‘trust’ and ‘trustworthiness’, ‘credit’ and ‘credibility’ are always implicated in it)—given, too, as we have seen, that the multivalency of *pistis/fides* language is constantly exploited wherever it is used—it is surprising that *pistis Christou* has not been understood more often as simultaneously Christ’s faithfulness to God and human faith in Christ.⁴⁶ Only Morna Hooker, in *From Adam to Christ*, has developed an argument along these lines.⁴⁷ An interpretation of *pistis Christou* as doubly reciprocal, however, not only cuts the Gordian knot of argument about the interpretation of the phrase; more importantly, it expresses admirably Paul’s representation in these letters of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity. The Janus-faced quality of *pistis* enables Paul to capture the **(p.274)** qualities and practices of both partners in each simple relationship, and of both ends of each relationship in more complicated configurations with more partners. Trust and trustworthiness, trustworthiness and faithfulness, are all always implicit in it.⁴⁸ It is precisely the fact that Christ is both faithful to God and worthy of God’s trust, trustworthy by human beings and trusted by them, that enables him to take those who *pisteuein* into righteousness (and human beings, in turn, to spread the word to others).⁴⁹

We return below to some further implications of this interpretation, and to some possible models for this configuration of *pistis* which Paul may have had in mind and which he may have relied on his audiences’ knowing to help them grasp his meaning.⁵⁰ For now, we may note that in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians God is sometimes portrayed as faithful to human beings and human beings to God, while human beings can attract a measure of trust from others by acting as messengers of God.⁵¹ In Galatians the divine–human relationship of trust is slightly but significantly different. Christ is located in the middle of it, mediating God’s new relationship with humanity. Except when Paul is talking about Abraham, human beings will not be said to put their trust directly in God again in Galatians, nor in Romans, Philemon, nor Philippians (though no doubt Paul still thinks that they do put their trust in God). From now on, Paul will be more interested in his tripartite configuration of *pistis*.

At Galatians 3.1–2 Paul asks the Galatians rhetorically whether they received the spirit from works of the law or ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως. This could mean, ‘through what you heard about *pistis*’, ‘through *pistis* created by what you heard’, or ‘through *pistis* in what you heard’. We should probably take Paul, here and in verse 5, as deliberately equivocating between all three, in order to emphasize that the moment of hearing and the moment of accepting the kerygma are indistinguishable, and that it was this moment, rather than anything the Galatians did afterwards, that was decisive for the establishment of their *pistis*.⁵² We may also catch here a hint, audible also in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, that the transmission of the kerygma by preaching is more precarious than Paul could wish. The crucifixion which the Galatians heard preached is described as ‘publicly set forth before their very eyes’ (οἷς κατ’ ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγγράφη) (3.1). Paul’s vivid visual imagery distracts attention from the fact that the Galatians did not in fact see the **(p.275)** crucifixion or the resurrection, which one might expect them to have found more convincing than hearing about it.⁵³

The argument that follows, in which Paul tries to explicate the relationship between Abraham, *pistis*, and the law, is complicated, but much of its complexity comes from the legal side: from Paul’s wanting to insist that the Galatians do not need to keep the law while insisting that they are being brought within God’s covenant with Israel, that the saving actions of Christ are continuous with God’s covenant with Israel, and that the law, though now surpassed, has also been an essential part of that covenant.⁵⁴ To the outsider this looks like an all-but-impossible circle to square, and the volume of scholarship which seeks to make sense of Paul’s thought process seems to confirm it. Paul’s language of *pistis* has been taken to be equally complicated because it tends to be interpreted at every point in the argument as complementary to whatever the meaning and status of the law is at that point. If it is separated from the law,

however, and considered in its own right, we find that, if not entirely straightforward, it can be set out in reasonably coherent form. In the rest of chapter 3 Paul says the following of *pistis*:

- ‘Abraham put his trust in God (ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ) and it was credited to him as *dikaiosynē*’ (3.6);
- Those who are *ek pisteōs* are children of Abraham (3.7);
- Scripture foretold that God would justify the nations *ek pisteōs*, telling Abraham that through him all the nations would be blessed (3.8);
- Consequently, those who are *ek pisteōs* are blessed along with the *pistos* Abraham (3.9);
- No one is made righteous by the law, for ‘the one who is *dikaios ek pisteōs* will live’ (3.11). The law is not *ek pisteōs* (3.12);
- Christ rescued us, not only from our sins in general, but from the ‘curse of the law’, so that the blessing of Abraham could be extended to the gentiles through Christ, so that we [that is, everyone], ‘might receive the promise of the spirit *dia tēs pisteōs*’ (3.13–14);
- Scripture confined everything under the power of sin, so that the promise ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῆι τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (3.22);
- Before *pistis* came, ‘we were held in custody under the law, confined until the coming of the *pistis* which was to be revealed. Consequently, the law was our *paidagōgos* until Christ came, that we might be made righteous *ek pisteōs*. But now *pistis* has come, we are no longer under a *paidagōgos*. For *dia tēs pisteōs* you are all children of God in Christ Jesus’ (3.23–6).⁵⁵

(p.276) The relationship with God into which Paul understands his community as entering is that of the ‘children of Abraham’, which makes it indistinguishable from Israel; Paul clearly sees his community as the fulfilment of God’s promises to Israel, not as a new, separate community. But people do not enter that community simply by putting their trust in God as Abraham did; Abraham’s children are those who are *ek pisteōs*.⁵⁶ What does Paul mean by this? *Dikaiosynē*, as he has already sketched out in the previous chapter, comes through the *pistis* of Christ to God and to human beings, and human beings must put their trust in God through Christ and his actions. *Ek pisteōs* and also *dia tēs pisteōs*, a little later, echo 2.16, where Paul uses both to refer to something that Christ accomplishes for us by his *pistis*. His train of thought runs: Abraham put his trust in God and was reckoned *dikaios*; we are reckoned *dikaioi*, and hence ‘children of Abraham’, by putting our trust (in God and Christ), which we are able to do because of the *pistis* of Christ. In this connection, Paul’s rendition of Habakkuk 2.4 as ‘the *dikaios* will live by *pistis*’, avoiding both the Hebrew Bible’s specification that the *pistis* is the just man’s own and that of the Septuagint that it is God’s, is a master stroke.⁵⁷ By leaving *pistis* unqualified, Paul allows it to refer equally and simultaneously to the *pistis* of God towards Christ and humanity and that of Christ towards God and humanity which make *dikaiosynē* possible, and that of the human being towards God and Christ.

Paul recognizes, however, that putting one’s trust in God through the *pistis* of Christ does not self-evidently connect one with Abraham and hence make one part of Israel (even if proclaiming the resurrection or putting one’s trust in Christ as the Son of God were not being rejected by many Jews). It is likely that, if he was not already conscious of this, it was drawn to his attention by Judaizing opponents who argued that gentiles could not be adopted into the seed of Abraham except by being circumcised and keeping the law.⁵⁸ Paul therefore develops the argument that Christ alone is Abraham’s seed, through which God’s promises to Abraham are fulfilled. That connection, in his argument, explains why scripture foretold the saving *pistis* of Christ and why those who put their trust in Christ are blessed along with the faithful Abraham.

Paul then argues that keeping the law of Moses is not an essential for this community. It long post-dates Abraham (3.18), and is neither a source of *dikaiosynē* (3.11) nor a necessary consequence of the divine–human *pistis* relationship (3.12). It is variously a curse (3.10),⁵⁹ a *paidagōgos*, and an interim custodian (3.23–5). Without diving into the deep waters of what Paul is saying about the law here, it seems clear enough that in some way it defined Israel **(p.277)** while it was in operation, but now that Christ has ransomed us from sin, Paul thinks it no longer defines Abraham’s descendants.

The tensions inherent in Paul’s argument about *nomos* and *pistis* are no doubt inevitable, given the diverse audiences he is addressing, and perhaps also because he probably did not start with one of these convictions and work towards the others; he probably started with one or two, developed another in answer to his opponents, and then found himself needing somehow to reconcile them. His understanding of *pistis* in this passage, however, is not especially problematic. As in chapter 2, it is the nexus of trust ‘through’ or ‘out of’ which human beings are made *dikaioi* which becomes accessible to all and effective for all because of the *pistis* of God in Christ towards humanity, the *pistis* of Christ towards God and humanity, the saving action of Christ which grows out of that *pistis*, and the *pistis* of human beings towards God and Christ.⁶⁰

Paul returns to *pistis* at 5.5, where it is once again the basis on which the faithful receive the spirit and the hope of righteousness. He also says that *pistis* works through *agapē* (referring presumably to intra-human love, since there is no specific indication elsewhere that *pistis* works through love between God, Christ, and the faithful). Paul's only other reference to *pistis* in this letter seems slightly at odds with the rest: it appears in his list of the fruits of the spirit at 5.22. *Pistis* is not easy to read here as the trust in God and Christ which is the human being's response to the gospel: we should expect that *pistis* to be the precursor of spiritual gifts, not one of them. Paul could be referring to the intra-human virtue of *pistis* so common in other Greek texts (especially, for instance, if Paul has taken over a Hellenistic virtue list, in which *pistis* would be a standard component, from some other source⁶¹). The interpretations of 1 Corinthians 12.9 and 2 Corinthians 4.12 in Chapter 6, however, suggest a further possibility: that *pistis* here is the particular quality that certain community leaders, such as Paul himself, have when in the power of the spirit they mediate between a faithful God and Christ and their faithful people.⁶²

Paul's focus in Galatians on how righteousness is achieved and the role of *pistis* in that process means that some of the themes which run throughout 1 Thessalonians and the Corinthian letters play at most a minor role here. We (p.278) hear little, for instance, of the ways in which the Galatians are enduring the hostility of the world or developing in their relationship with God. At 4.19 Paul indicates that he is working for the Galatians until Christ is 'formed in them' as Christ is already in him (2.20). At 6.7–9 he says in general terms that one sows what one reaps; if one 'sows for the spirit', one will reap eternal life from the spirit. But although we can assume (cf. 2.20, 5.5) that both life in Christ and life in the spirit are based ultimately on *pistis*, the connection is not explored further in these passages.

We hear a little more of how Paul imagines the Galatians' relationship with God within the community of the faithful. The Galatians are children of Abraham (3.7) and children of the promise (4.28), traditional language of Israel both as a people and as a politico-legal community.⁶³ They are children and heirs of Godself (3.26, 4.6–7).⁶⁴ They are οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως, family in the community of the faithful. By using phrases traditionally associated with the people of Israel, Paul both emphasizes that gentiles are just as much part of the community of the faithful as Jews, and, as we saw in the earlier letters, characterizes the divine–human relationship itself as both quasi-domestic and quasi-political.⁶⁵

In Galatians, as in earlier letters, *pistis* is often a quality of hierarchical relationships: relationships above all between God, Christ, and humanity, but also between Paul and his community.⁶⁶ Paul does not describe himself or a co-worker as *pistos* in this letter, but the implication of a cascade of trustworthiness from God and Christ through the apostles to their communities is there when he describes himself as a divine messenger to the Galatians (4.14), and the Galatians as his children (4.19) and his pupils (6.6).⁶⁷ *Pistis* is also associated in this letter with the 'channelling' of the spirit into exceptional acts which is made possible by the self-sacrificing obedience of the faithful. The Galatians receive the spirit as a result of their *pistis*, and God who sends the spirit 'works mighty deeds' among them (3.2, 5). Not only is the spirit present in Paul and the Galatians, and working through them (4.19), but so is Christ: 'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the *pistis* of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me' (2.19–20).

As in the letters already discussed, Paul offers a number of reasons why the Galatians (or anyone) should put their trust in God, in the gospel, and in him, though these are not in every case explicitly or closely related to *pistis* language. The rhetorical structure and language of Galatians, which in themselves form a powerful encouragement to trust Paul, have been widely discussed (p.279) since Hans Dieter Betz's seminal commentary; here we will do no more than pick out some of the reasons which Paul offers for the Galatians to give him credence.

The gospel he preaches, Paul says, is 'not of human origin' (1.11), recalling passages in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians where he described God as entrusting the gospel to him or the word of God as sounding through himself and others.⁶⁸ He tells the Galatians that since they put their *pistis* in God and Christ, its validity has been proven by the gift of the spirit and their great deeds (3.2, 5), of which they have direct experience. Here, as elsewhere, Paul is also not above introducing a warning, even threatening, note into his discourse. Those who keep the law but do not have *pistis* are cursed (3.10, 13), while those who were not born Jewish were slaves to things that are not really gods (4.8–9). In sociological terms, we might say that Paul is telling his audience that putting one's trust in Christ is worth the risk—except that, for Paul, no risks are involved, only certainties. (The same is true, as far as we can tell, of all New Testament writers, and this emphasis on the foundational reliability of God and trust in God, inherited from Hellenistic Judaism and paralleled in Graeco-Roman religiosity, is one of the distinctive features of divine–human, as opposed to intra-human, *pistis/fides* in this period.⁶⁹) The opportunities which the gospel offers, the danger of not listening to it, the consequences of exercising *pistis*—and by implication, Paul's knowledge of all these things—are all invoked as reasons to take Paul seriously.

Paul's own biography also plays a role. Like 1 Thessalonians 2.1–6, Galatians 1.10 asserts that by preaching the gospel and being a slave of Christ Paul is not trying to please any human being. He has, that is, no incentive to preach as he does other than the truth of the message itself. Uniquely, in this letter, he also asserts his authority by explaining how he changed from a persecutor of the people of God (1.13) to a preacher of the gospel. He was chosen and called by God (1.15; cf. 2.9), and God revealed Christ to (or perhaps 'in') him (1.12, 16).⁷⁰ As the story unfolds, it emerges that Paul's main aim is less to proclaim the power of the gospel by describing how much resistance it overcame in him, than to emphasize that, despite the fact that he came to apostleship by a route different from that of Jesus's original disciples, his authority is not less than theirs. On his first trip to Jerusalem he implies that Peter recognized his mission (1.18), and on his second he says that the apostles acknowledged that he had been entrusted (*pepisteumai*) with the gospel to the gentiles (2.7; cf. 1 Thess. 2.4). Paul's use of *pisteuesthai* here, as in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, is surely meant to be noticed; the fact that he is literally entrusted with the gospel implies that he is worthy of trust by God, and that **(p.280)** the apostles recognize it. Paul is careful to avoid saying that he has been entrusted with his mission by the Jerusalem apostles, since that would be to place him under their authority; all the same, by mentioning that they recognized his divine authority, Paul is obliquely invoking the authority of the apostles too. It is on the basis of his direct call and trust by God, however, that Paul is able to say on his own authority that Peter is wrong when he draws back from eating with gentiles (2.12).

Paul also appeals to the Galatians' earlier investment of trust in him: they received him 'as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus' (4.14). Why, the implication is, would they want to abandon their investment now, along with all the spiritual fruits it has brought them? By listening to others, they risk forfeiting the blessedness they have already achieved by listening to Paul (4.15). Paul represents himself as baffled by their change of heart (4.20). Why would anyone throw away all they have gained by trusting in God and Christ? It suggests that they are irrational (or even, at 3.1, bewitched), gullible (because they do not recognize his competitors' unhealthy motives), and perhaps also ungrateful for all his work on their behalf (4.15–20; cf. 3.1–3). Here, perhaps, more than anywhere else in Galatians, we hear what is more clearly audible in 1 and 2 Corinthians: Paul's sense of the fragility of *pistis* as a preaching and as a commitment; the constant danger that it will be abandoned or undermined.

Here and throughout the letter, Paul emphasizes the truth of his preaching (1.7–8, 2.5, 2.14, 4.16, 5.7), and that it is based on knowledge (1.11, 2.16, 3.7, 4.8–9). Nothing causes him to preach other than the fact that he knows what God wants communicated to those whom he calls. The motives of his competitors, in contrast, are human and sordid. They want to 'pervert the gospel of Christ' (1.7) and use the Galatians to promote themselves (6.12–13).⁷¹ Last but not least, we have already seen how Paul characterizes himself as the Galatians' father and as working hard for them (e.g. 4.19). More mysteriously, he also appeals to them to 'be as I am, because I have also become as you are' (4.12). This is usually taken to refer to Paul's ceasing to keep the law; if so, then the risk Paul implicitly sees himself as taking by abandoning that part of his heritage and identity is surely meant to impress upon the Galatians the strength and reliability of his conviction and commitment.⁷²

Life in Christ and in the spirit leads, Paul says, to eternal life (6.8). His concluding exhortation, 'while [or 'as'] we have the opportunity, let us do good to all' (6.10), which, in its emphasis on the importance of the moment, may reflect his opening affirmation that Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins to 'rescue us from the present evil age', may imply that he continues to expect the 'coming wrath' of 1 Thessalonians. Otherwise, as has often been noted, **(p.281)** coming judgement is much less visible here than it is in 1 Thessalonians as a reason for *pistis*. In this letter, release from sin and the attainment of *dikaiosynē* are human beings' main incentives for putting their trust in Christ.

Public speech, which played a large role in both 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, is again important in this letter, but again in slightly different terms. Paul implies that his initial preaching to the Galatians was effective, but that it has not stuck under attack from his opponents. Nevertheless, nothing in the self-reflexive passages of this letter hints that Paul expects anything other than to convince the Galatians again—unless the assertion, 'I am confident (*pepoitha*) of you in the Lord that you will not take a different view' (5.10) paradoxically admits remembrance that the confidence of the greatest rhetoricians has been known to be disappointed. But that is only to point out the inescapable irony of all discourse, that to claim conviction about anything is to admit the possibility of its being disputed.⁷³ Overall, Paul seems to have confidence in his preaching in this letter.

To sum up: Galatians has rather less than earlier letters to say about why Paul thinks people should respond to his preaching with *pistis* towards God, or what the difficulties with that process might be, or about how his converts might live in a community of the faithful. In this letter, however, at least partly in response to his need to convince the Galatians, against his Judaizing opponents, that they do not need to keep the law, Paul takes the language of divine–human *pistis* (inherited by him from Judaism, but also recognizable to his gentile audience) in a new direction. For the first time that we know of, he uses *pistis* to articulate the tripartite relationship between God, Christ, and humanity, putting Christ in the centre of a nexus of faithfulness, trustworthiness, and trust

which runs in all directions between God and Christ, Christ and humanity, and humanity and God. To create this understanding, Paul draws on the semantics of *pistis* itself, on accounts of the place of the law in the relationship between God and Israel in the later books of the Septuagint, and on models of the operation of *pistis* in use in society around him, which are explored further in the next section, ‘*Pistis* in Roman and Philemon’.

It is often observed that in Galatians (and Romans and Philippians), Paul shows much less interest than he does in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians in the end time, focusing rather on *dikaiosynē*, the law, community life, and the transformational nature of *pistis*. At the end of Galatians 2 his argument about *pistis* and works of the law culminates in the powerful statement, ‘I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live in [the] *pistis* of the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me’ (2.19–20). It is tempting, in the tradition of (p.282) ‘Christ-mysticism’,⁷⁴ to interpret *pistis*, whether the believer’s or Christ’s, in this passage as the means by which the believer achieves a mysterious and exalted state of heart and mind, a spiritual union with Christ leading to an ontological change within life. Romans 6.6–8, however, provides a useful corrective to this view. Here, too, Paul says that the faithful are crucified with Christ and will live ‘with’ him, but he makes no mention of *pistis Christou*. We might choose to describe Paul’s image of dying with Christ and living with or being inhabited by Christ as mystical (though mysticism is a notoriously slippery and multivalent term), but there is no pattern of association in Paul’s letters between passages which we might call mystical and *pistis* language.⁷⁵ *Pistis* is, for Paul, as has been noted, a relationship which enables the power and word of God to be transmitted through the faithful to the world, but it is not marked as a relationship or a state of mind or heart which leads to mystical visions of Christ or union with Christ.

Pistis in Romans and Philemon

Romans shares with Galatians an interest in the relationship between law, *dikaiosynē*, and *pistis* in communities of the faithful, and this relationship shapes some of its most important and most discussed passages. The main aim of this section is again to consider the shape of *pistis* in the letter, rather than to offer an interpretation of all the concepts with which it interacts or an interpretation of the letter overall.⁷⁶

Romans begins, like Galatians, by associating *pistis* particularly (though not necessarily exclusively) with the beginning of the gentiles’ relationship with Christ. ‘Through [Christ] we have receive the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of *pistis* (ὄπακοὴν πίστεως), for the sake of his name, among all the gentiles...’ (1.5). *Pistis*, as we have seen, is often associated with obedience and the language of service, and ‘the obedience of *pistis*’ is best read as a genitive of apposition, referring to Paul’s sense that the *pistis* into which he brings gentiles is, like his own, a relationship of slavish obedience to (p.283) Christ.⁷⁷ The Romans’ *pistis*, Paul says (like that of the Thessalonians), is ‘heralded throughout the world’.⁷⁸ He longs to visit them, ‘so that you may be strengthened, that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by one another’s faith, yours and mine’ (1.12). In line with the ‘obedience of faith’ that has already been mentioned, and the usage that dominates other letters, this can be taken to mean that Paul envisages himself and the Romans as being encouraged by each other’s *pistis* towards God and Christ, rather than by intra-human *pistis*.

Verses 16–17, which mark the beginning of the body of the letter after Paul’s greeting and thanksgiving, are among the most discussed in Romans. Having been central to Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith, they are now a key interpretandum in debates over Paul’s understanding of *pistis*, and are also seen as programmatic in accounts of the letter which focus on the story of God’s righteousness:⁷⁹ ‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (*panti tō pisteuonti*): for Jew first and then Greek. For in it is revealed the *dikaiosynē* of God from *pistis* to *pistis*; as it is written, “The one who is righteous *ek pisteōs* will live.” It is characteristic of Paul to introduce the main theme of a letter, or one of them, in this position,⁸⁰ so that these verses encapsulate key themes of Romans is not in doubt. It is, though, less clear that, as some commentators have assumed, the many things Paul says about salvation, *dikaiosynē*, and *pistis* in the rest of the letter all refer back to and explicate 1.16–17. It is preferable, initially at least, to interpret these verses primarily in their immediate context.

Viewing 1.16–17 in context invites an interpretation of Paul’s *pistis* language which is well in line with that of previous letters. Paul begins by emphasizing that he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is a power of God for salvation (1.16). This has been understood variously as a way of Paul’s (p.284) affirming what he believes, as a reference to a hypothetical ‘eschatological lawsuit’ in which he imagines defending himself, or as a reference to his sense, elaborated in 1 Corinthians 1–2, that the message of the cross may constitute a ‘stumbling block’ to the ‘wise’.⁸¹ Any or all of these resonances might have been heard by Paul’s audiences in these verses, even assuming that they had not heard earlier letters (the second, perhaps, especially by Jewish and the third especially by educated listeners). It is also possible that Paul’s formulation is a way of expressing pride in his mission while avoiding language that might suggest arrogance or complacency.

Robert Jewett, in his commentary, develops another possibility which also connects this passage with Paul's thinking in 1 Corinthians: that Paul's formulation attests both his self-understanding as sent by God to preach a socially and ideologically revolutionary gospel (which may sound shocking to some listeners but of which he is not ashamed), and his confidence that through him God's power can and does work to save. In the latter phrase, Jewett suggests, Paul presents himself as equivalent to an ambassador or some other representative through whom an earthly power might work. Jewett also notes that it was not unknown in the world of the early principate to celebrate priestly, military, or administrative offices as means by which the saving power of emperors extended to their subjects. This is a good deal to develop out of one verse, but it has attractions as an interpretation: we have already encountered Paul presenting himself as a mediator or ambassadorial figure, and we will do so again.

If there are overtones of ambassadorship in this verse, Paul has already, twice, explicitly called himself a slave (1.1, 1.9⁸²), called to his service as an apostle, and said that he is under an obligation (ὀφειλέτης εἰμι) to preach to Jews and gentiles, the wise and the ignorant (1.14) (which is why he wants to visit Rome (1.15)). In this context, Paul's affirmation that he is not ashamed of the gospel balances his self-representation as wholly at God's disposal. His slavery, paradoxically, is something to celebrate. It also promises the Romans that (like the Thessalonians) they have been chosen by God to hear the gospel from Paul (glossing over the fact, which he has already admitted, that they have already heard it from others). And it offers the Romans a state not unlike Paul's own: *hypakoē pisteōs*, a slavery which brings salvation. The gospel, moreover, is a power of God for salvation.⁸³ This is a stronger statement than it is sometimes taken to be, implying that the kerygma emanates directly from God, like the power of the spirit or the gift of healing. Like other powers, **(p.285)** it acts on human beings: it is salvific *panti tō pisteuonti*. Not the least interesting, though a little-noticed, point about this sequence of thought, is that it is very similar to that which we encountered in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians.⁸⁴ In some respects, Paul's understanding of *pistis* has not changed a great deal.

Paul leaves open in 1.16 whether, in addition to the faithful putting their trust in God and Christ, he also wants to convey that they should believe and put their trust in him and/or his preaching (and presumably that of other apostles, though Paul is much less interested in them).⁸⁵ In that it comes so soon after the strong first-person statement, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel [which I preach]', not to mention 1.11 and 1.15, where he emphasizes his eagerness to preach to the Romans, it is hard not to hear this ambiguity as strategic. By accepting the kerygma, those who hear Paul (or others) implicitly accept the preacher's trustworthiness and put their trust in him; *pistis* and salvation are offered to others through his words. By preaching, therefore, Paul both communicates the power of God to save and channels that power. Here again, Paul's thinking is close to the idea, encountered in the last chapter, that certain individuals channel divine power, with all its parallels in Jewish and Graeco-Roman thinking about prophecy and wonder-working.⁸⁶ One might go further and suggest that Paul portrays acceptance of the gospel here, with its power to save, as closely analogous to trust or belief in a healing power.⁸⁷

This theme recurs and is more fully developed by Paul in chapter 10. At the beginning of this chapter Paul is arguing that Israel, despite her 'zeal for God', has failed to understand and submit to the *dikaiosynē* of God which comes through Christ (10.2–3). The *dikaiosynē* that comes through *pistis* affirms that the word of *pistis* which Paul preaches is in the mouth and the heart of the faithful (10.6–8): 'for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved' (10.9). This passage is another good example of the interdependence of cognition, emotion, action, and relationship in Paul's conception of *pistis*, which is further discussed below and in Chapter 11 of this book.⁸⁸ For now, it is the next section of the argument that most concerns us. '[O]ne believes with the heart and so is justified,' says Paul, 'and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.' For (quoting the same passage of Joel as Peter in Acts 2.21), **(p.286)** 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (10.13). 'Calling on the name of the Lord', here as in Acts 2, suggests the whole complex of acknowledging the Lord, recognizing one's need, putting one's trust in him and appealing for help. *Pistis*, says, Paul, is the precondition of that call (10.14). But how can one put one's trust in someone of whom one has not heard? And how can one hear without there being someone to preach? (10.14). And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? (10.15). 'Thus *pistis* comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ' (10.17).

To achieve the relationship of *pistis* which leads to *dikaiosynē*, one must hear the word of Christ through the words of the preacher. No wonder, says Paul, that scripture says, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' (10.15). It is strongly implied, though not spelt out, that for the faithful to have confidence in him, the preacher himself must be in a relationship of *pistis* with God, Christ, and the faithful. The preacher, once again, fulfils a powerful role in communicating the power of God and Christ for salvation.

To return to 1.16–17: the gospel reveals the righteousness of God ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Whose *pistis* is being referred to here, in Paul's own words and in his quotation from Habakkuk? Recent debate has focused on whether *pistis* in each case is that of God, Christ, or the ordinary believer.⁸⁹ It is possible, however, that Paul is being deliberately

ambiguous.

We have seen that God is *pistos* for Paul, and at 3.3 he will refer explicitly to τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ, ‘the faithfulness [or perhaps ‘good faith’] of God.’⁹⁰ We have also seen that in the Hebrew Bible’s (MT) version of Habakkuk 2.4 the righteous man lives by his own faithfulness, while in the Septuagint he lives by God’s faithfulness, but that in Galatians 3.11 Paul omits the pronoun altogether, leaving open whether *pistis* refers to God, Christ, human beings, or all three.⁹¹ A similar interpretation fits this verse well. Paul could be referring here to the righteous faithfulness of God which reaches out in power to enable faithfulness in human beings,⁹² the faithfulness of Christ which reveals the righteousness of God for the enabling of faithfulness in human beings, or the faithfulness of the preacher which reveals righteousness of God for the enabling of faithfulness in others. Since Paul undoubtedly thinks that all these things are part of the reality of salvation, then we may **(p.287)** do best to see him as exploiting the ambiguity of his phrasing to sketch in a compressed fashion the whole economy of *pistis* and *dikaïosynē*. As for the quotation from Habakkuk, we can assume that *ho dikaios* is now the ‘righted’ human being, since he or she is the only participant in salvation whose *dikaïosynē* (or indeed life) is at issue, but *pistis* could again refer equally well to the *pistis* of God, Christ, the preacher, or the faithful, and it may be best to assume that Paul is deliberately exploiting its ambiguity to affirm the central role of *pistis* at every point in the economy of salvation. It is also worth noting here that if the preacher is indeed implicated in this economy of salvation (as Paul’s reference to the gospel as ‘the power of God for salvation’ in the previous verse puts beyond reasonable doubt), the preacher once again holds a powerful place in the process.

Considering 1.16–17 in its immediate context, rather than in the light of Paul’s several treatments of its principal themes later in the letter, reveals that it follows well from the letter’s introduction, develops certain themes which have interested Paul in earlier letters, has points of similarity with Galatians 3.11, and adds something to our understanding of the way Paul views the economy of salvation and the role of *pistis* in it. On this interpretation, which sees Paul here as interested in *pistis* as a dynamic relationship between God, Christ, and humanity which enables him, as a preacher, to mediate the power of God and help to bring *pistis* to others, we may also note that *pistis* is not, at this point, necessarily in conflict with the law. One could imagine them working side by side as different but complementary aspects of the divine–human relationship. Disputes over whether gentile converts need to keep the law, however, do bring *pistis* and law into juxtaposition, if not into conflict, in this letter, and it is in this connection that we next find Paul discussing *pistis*.

Between 1.17 and the opening of chapter 3, Paul excels himself rhetorically in a comprehensive attack on the gentiles for failing to recognize the one true God, and on the Jews for recognizing God but continuing to sin anyway.⁹³ At the opening of chapter 3 he has just claimed that it is the spirit of the law, rather than the letter, that makes one Jewish (2.29). True circumcision, for instance, is not of the flesh (2.28).⁹⁴ Now, however, it occurs to Paul that adding what he has just said about the law (that keeping it spiritually is what matters) to what he has just said about the gentiles (that they ought to be able to recognize and acknowledge God and understand how God wants them to live simply by looking at the world around them) could be heard as implying that there is no need for the Jewish law, or even for Jewishness, at all. This, however, is more than he wants to say.

(p.288) At the beginning of chapter 3 Paul therefore asserts that being Jewish remains important. ‘What advantage is there then in being a Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much, in every respect. In the first place, they were entrusted (*episteuthēsan*) with the utterances of God’ (3.1–2). The use of this verb, which is always significant for Paul, marks a strong statement of Paul’s confidence in the tradition. Moreover, even though some Jews were unfaithful, God remained faithful to them (3.3). This, as Chapter 5 showed, is a well-established theme in the Septuagint, especially in books of prophecy. An echo is already detectable here of the theme of Israel’s renewal and restoration which Isaiah and Jeremiah connect with God’s faithfulness and Israel’s renewed trust in God, and which Paul will connect with trust in Jesus Christ.⁹⁵

Still, Paul returns to the theme that both Jews and gentiles are ‘under the domination of sin’ (3.9):⁹⁶

Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή, πάντες γὰρ ἡμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυστρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἐνδειξίν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχηῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἐνδειξίν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

The NAB translates:

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, though testified to by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as an expiation, through faith, by his blood, to prove his righteousness because of the forgiveness of sins previously committed, through the forbearance of God—to prove his righteousness in the present time, that he might be righteous and justify the one who has faith in Jesus. (3.21–6)

The meaning of *pistis Iēsou Christou* in this passage, together with the passage's overall interpretation and redaction history, has been intensively debated in recent years.⁹⁷ This discussion can confine itself largely to *pistis*, but (p.289) it is worth noting that at 3.21 Paul describes the *dikaiosynē* of God as having been manifested 'apart from the law', using an adverb of physical and conceptual separation and difference short of opposition. As at 3.1–4, Paul emphasizes the irrelevance of the law to gentiles and that it does not lead to *dikaiosynē* for Jews, without condemning the law *tout court*. 'On the contrary,' he will insist at 3.31, 'we support the law.' Given that other aspects of this passage are close to Galatians 2–3, this interpretation offers additional support for the argument in the section 'Pistis in Galatians' on pp. 269–70 above that Galatians 2.16 does not oppose the works of the law and *pistis Iēsou Christou*, though it does seek to distinguish them in order to make clear how anyone becomes *dikaïos*.⁹⁸

The *dikaiosynē* of God has been manifested διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. Since *dikaiosynē* has been manifested to or for the faithful, this phrase already contains an affirmation that certain human beings are faithful to God and/or Christ. If the *pistis* in question is that of those who are already faithful, then God seems to be showing them to themselves, which no doubt is not impossible but implies a convoluted train of thought and is not paralleled elsewhere. The more straightforward reading attributes *pistis* to Christ here, giving the interpretation that God's righteousness has been manifested to the faithful through *pistis Christou*. This could be taken as referring solely to the faithfulness of Christ to God. It has, however, been seen many times that it is rarely possible to confine the interpretation of *pistis* to a single meaning; moreover, some of the most convincing interpretations of New Testament passages are those which decline to segregate, for instance, faith and faithfulness in their interpretations, but hear Paul as invoking both, so we should not jump to the conclusion that we are dealing here solely with Christ's *pistis* towards God.⁹⁹

It is implicit in what follows that Christ has been obedient to God in letting himself be set forth as an expiation. (The much-debated prehistory of vv. 24–6a is beyond the scope of this discussion, but if Paul inherited this, perhaps credal, formulation he may have inserted *dia [tēs] pisteōs* in the middle of it to link it linguistically to his own model. *Pistis* is not closely connected elsewhere with models or language of sacrifice, either Jewish or Graeco-Roman, and it remains unclear what role the phrase plays in the image of Christ as expiatory offering.) *Pistis Iēsou Christou* could therefore be read in both verses 22 and 25 as Christ's trust/faithfulness towards God. At the same time, verses 21–2 are also susceptible of translation as 'the *dikaiosynē* of God been manifested...through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ towards all who believe.'¹⁰⁰ Since, for Paul, God is *pistos* and practises *pistis* towards human beings, and Christ is the Son of God and Lord, it is no great stretch to see Christ as (p.290) exercising *pistis* towards human beings too.¹⁰¹ Last but not least, Paul affirms that God acquits τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ. Grammatically it is very strained to translate this 'the one who has faith in Jesus'. It is slightly less strained to understand it as 'the one who is righteous because of the *pistis* of Jesus', leaving open whether the *pistis* of Jesus is towards God or human beings.

Setting the most plausible readings of *pistis* in this passage in sequence produces a view of the operation of *pistis* which is complex but paralleled in part in a number of other passages, and which is by no means implausible in itself or in the context of this letter. God trusts Christ (by implication) to act as an expiation for human sins. Christ is faithful and obedient towards God and very possibly also towards the human beings whose acquittal he makes possible. Human beings put their trust, probably in both God and Christ, though verse 22 does not specify. Through the *dikaiosynē* of God, the bilateral *pistis* of Christ, and their own *pistis* the faithful are made *dikaïoi*. This, says Paul (3.27), is the 'law of faith' as opposed to the 'law of works', a phrase which emphasizes both that *pistis* has made the law redundant in the divine–human relationship, and its own imperative nature.¹⁰² The operation of *pistis* in this sequence is very like its operation in Galatians 2.16–21, and like Galatians 2, this passage makes *pistis* language central to Paul's articulation of the place of Christ in the divine–human relationship and the economy of salvation. It also fits well with the way that Greek speakers understand the operation of *pistis* (and Latin speakers that of *fides*) in general as always double-ended, and as incorporating both trust and trustworthiness, faithfulness and good faith, and so on.¹⁰³ It is worth noting in this connection that although Christ's trust-faithfulness towards human beings is never spelt out by Paul, Greek speakers would expect it to obtain, simply because human beings are right to trust in Christ, and well-founded trust, as we saw repeatedly in Chapters 2–4, is by its nature reciprocal.¹⁰⁴

On this interpretation, the meaning of *pistis* in this passage falls well within common usage. One further possibility is worth

discussing, which assumes that Paul's use of *pistis* has evolved somewhat. The *pistis* of Jesus Christ in verse 22 may well be Christ's faithfulness, but it could also mean the 'assurance' or 'pledge' of *dikaiosynē* which Christ gives to the faithful by his blood. This assurance would presumably be that, as they exercise *pistis*, human beings are made *dikaioi*. An attraction of this interpretation is that it emphasizes the active role of Christ in salvation: he does not only obey and allow himself to be made an expiation; he makes an assurance or pledge by offering himself. Following this interpretation through the passage, it could also constitute the meaning of *pistis* in verses 25 and 26. This would yield the following translation:

(p.291) But now the *dikaiosynē* of God has been revealed apart from the law (having been attested by the law and the prophets)—the righteousness of God through the pledge/assurance which Jesus Christ secured for all who put their trust in God/Christ. For there is no distinction: all sinned and failed to attain the glory of God. They are made *dikaioi* as a gift by his grace through the ransom paid in Christ Jesus—whom God put forward as an expiatory offering—through the pledge/assurance he secured by (?) his blood—for the demonstration of God's righteousness (because of his passing over of sins already committed, through the forbearance of God)—to show his *dikaiosynē* in the present time, so that he himself might be *dikaios* and make *dikaios* the one who comes out of (i.e. has taken up) the pledge/assurance of Jesus.

At this point it is worth pausing to sum up the most significant ways in which Paul can be seen to be extending the meaning of *pistis* in Galatians and Romans by extending his account of its operation. It has been argued that he uses *pistis* to refer to the relationship of trust/belief between God, Christ, and the faithful, the pledge or assurance secured by Christ which binds them together, the bond formed by the pledge, and the community formed by the bond. Of these, only the last extends the meaning of *pistis* beyond those in regular use in Greek in Paul's day, and as a reification of trust it does not take a large step beyond the existing lexicon. It may, however, begin to suggest how *hē pistis* will develop into what is nowadays translated as 'the faith'.

If *pistis* can mean 'pledge' or 'assurance' (along, in legal contexts, with 'trust'), it is not difficult to imagine usage slipping from that reification to a very similar one: 'covenant'. It would therefore not be very surprising if *hē pistis* came to be heard, even in the first century, as meaning something close to 'the (new) covenant'. There would have been definite advantages for early Christians, at least in some contexts, in adapting a common term like *pistis* to mean 'new covenant'. It would have been easily understood by Jews and gentiles alike, and among gentiles it would have avoided the strongly Jewish associations of *hē diathēkē*, given that *diathēkē* is not a common word in Greek outside Jewish circles. (Among Jewish Christians, of course, *hē kainē diathēkē* is an obvious and highly resonant phrase for what the death and resurrection of Jesus achieve). Since the covenant is understood from very early, among followers of Christ, as made between God and humanity through the sacrifice and blood of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor. 11.25), Paul's use of *pistis* here in the context of the expiation performed by Christ by his blood would be wholly appropriate. It may even furnish an explanation for why Paul perhaps slips 'through *pistis*' into the middle of Rom. 3.25.

The earliest meaning of *hē pistis* in any sense close to 'the faith', I therefore suggest, may have been 'the (new) covenant'. It is, however, important to recognize that 'the faith' in this sense is something very much more limited than is implied by the modern understanding of the phrase. It is a shorthand for the relationship between God, Christ, and human beings which is offered **(p.292)** by God and secured through the expiatory offering of Christ for those who put their trust in God and Christ, which for followers of Christ describes what they have committed themselves to.

This interpretation of *pistis* does not replace those discussed in this chapter and in the last, but simply adds another layer to them. For the *pistis* of Christ to operate as a pledge or assurance, even as a covenant, all the relationships of *pistis* which have been discussed above need to be in operation. As earlier chapters have shown, *pistis* (and *fides*) do not lose their relational meanings when they are deferred and reified: their new meanings presuppose and build on their existing ones.

The understanding of the operation of *pistis* in divine-human relations developed above may seem somewhat complicated. In essence and in operation, however, it is relatively simple. It is also paralleled in many contexts in Paul's world. It may be helpful to illustrate how it works by re-describing it using different participants and a less theologically loaded context.

God and humanity are in a position not dissimilar to that of two parties who are at odds and who, for some reason (in the Christian context, humanity's slavery to sin), cannot be reconciled unaided. A mediator or ambassador, who has the trust of both sides, comes between them as an instrument of reconciliation.¹⁰⁵ We have seen many examples of this process, configured in several slightly different ways, at work in earlier chapters.¹⁰⁶ A key feature of Paul's understanding of the process is that the initiative for the reconciliation comes entirely from one side. God initiates salvation through Christ and human beings respond. This, if not the most common situation in which mediation occurs, is certainly not unknown in the Graeco-Roman world. A remarkably close parallel, for

example, occurs in Book 1 of Tacitus' *Annals* (31–52).

Around the time of the death of the emperor Augustus and the accession of Tiberius, the Roman legions in Germany revolted. Tiberius' nephew Germanicus, who was in command on the Rhine, hurried to the centre of the rebellion to try to resolve it. Germanicus stood between the emperor and the army as few individuals could. As a member of the imperial family, he was closely identified with the emperor. As a soldier, he was, like the rebels, under the emperor's command. Tacitus' narrative explicitly emphasizes both Germanicus' *fides* (p.293) towards Tiberius and the troops' *fides* towards him (33–4) as a very successful and popular army commander.

Germanicus upbraids the troops for their lack of *fides*, dramatically asserting his own *fides* to the emperor (34.4, 35.4, 41.4–42.4). At the same time, he shows his sympathy and understanding of the troops (40.1), and invokes their *fides* towards him (39.6–40.2). He exhorts them to *paenitentia*, repentance, which will create *fidei vinculum*, a renewed 'bond of loyalty/faithfulness' between them and the emperor (43.4) The troops, convinced, beg Germanicus to punish the guilty, pardon the fallen, and let them get back to their proper work as the emperor's soldiers (44.1). After one or two more twists in the story, which need not concern us here, the troops are reconciled with the emperor and return to duty. The bilateral *fides* of Germanicus—the fact that he is loyal to both parties and both parties trust him—enables him to effect the reconciliation. Paul could have written of the incident, in terms very similar to those he uses in Romans 3.21–6: 'The *dikaïosynē* of the emperor has been manifested...to the legions through the *pistis* of Germanicus.'

Tacitus' anecdote, clearly showing, as it does, Germanicus' exceptional position in relation to the army and the emperor, and his relationships with both which make his reconciling actions possible, offers an analogue for Paul's understanding of how human righteousness is achieved through Christ. It is paralleled more or less closely in innumerable processes of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and states up and down the Graeco-Roman world. (One notable difference, of course, is that in Tacitus' story—as in most stories of mediation and reconciliation in the Graeco-Roman world—Germanicus does not have to die for the reconciliation to become possible. In that respect, Paul's inherited understanding of Christ's death as sacrifice introduces an extra dimension into his model.) Mediation, more or less formal, is endemic in classical antiquity, and trust is intrinsic to it: just such tripartite trust, flowing in both directions in each of two parallel relationships in order to create a bond of trust between the mediated parties, as Paul proposes in this passage.

Christ is not called a mediator in Paul's letters, though both the image and the term are picked up by deuterio-Pauline 1 Timothy and Hebrews.¹⁰⁷ At Galatians 3.19–20, indeed, Paul goes out of his way to contrast the law, which came to the Israelites through the mediation of Moses, with faith in Christ. This contrast is not fully coherent, since Paul says that 'there is no mediator when only one party is involved, and God is one', in the middle of a lengthy argument in which he affirms repeatedly that Christ acts on behalf of human beings to restore their relationship with God (3.13–16, 4.4). His point, however, is that Christ is not comparable with Moses, because Christ is the Son of (p.294) God; the rest of his account shows that he is not trying to deny that Christ acts in some ways like a mediator between God and humanity. Romans 5.1 does not call Christ a mediator, but clearly describes him as such: 'Therefore, since we have been acquitted by *pistis*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access [by *pistis*] to this grace in which we stand...' There seems no doubt that Paul conceives of Christ as a mediating figure, even if he does not use the term.¹⁰⁸

At Romans 10.6–8 Paul contradicts his apparent unwillingness in Galatians to compare Christ with the law as a mediator between God and his people. Moses, he says, writes about the *dikaïosynē* that comes from the law: 'The one who does these things will live by them' (10.5). 'But the *dikaïosynē* that comes from *pistis* says, "Do not say in your heart." "Who will go up to heaven?" [that is, to bring Christ down] or "Who will go down into the abyss?" [that is, to bring Christ up from the dead].'" But what does it say? "The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart.'" This paraphrase of Deuteronomy 30.12–14, replacing what Deuteronomy says about the law with Christ, shows that Paul is capable of seeing the two as mediating between God and humanity in parallel ways.¹⁰⁹

The practice of *pistis* and the relationships between God, Christ, and the faithful, says Paul at Romans 3.28, enable our *dikaïosynē*. The law is not involved. Furthermore, Jews and gentiles achieve *dikaïosynē* by the same means: it is not the case that the sacrifice of Christ is on behalf of gentiles, while Jews achieve *dikaïosynē* through their ancient covenant with God.¹¹⁰ At 3.30 and elsewhere Paul uses ἐκ πίστεως...διὰ πίστεως as if they might mean two different things, but to assume this is to assume that Paul demanded (p.295) extreme subtleties of listening from his audience.¹¹¹ The idea, moreover, of 'two-covenant theology', that Paul imagined two paths of salvation, one for gentiles and one for Jews, has been discredited in recent years.¹¹² The likeliest explanation of 3.30 is that ἐκ πίστεως...διὰ πίστεως is simply stylistic *variatio*.

Paul returns to the relationship between *pistis* and the law in chapter 14, when discussing what have apparently been disputes between Jewish and gentile community members over Jewish food laws. ‘One person believes in eating anything (πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα), while the weak person eats only vegetables’ (14.2). The construction is unusual but *pisteuein* surely means ‘believes’ in the sense close to ‘thinks’ here.¹¹³ By using *pisteuein* rather than a ‘thinking’ verb, however, Paul may be hinting that the choice to eat everything is itself an act of trust in God and Christ.

After developing his tripartite understanding of the *pistis* relationship between God, Christ, and humanity, Paul turns in Romans 4 to the *pistis* of Abraham. As in Galatians 3, it seems likely that this is (or develops out of) a response to Judaizing opponents. This chapter too has been intensely studied, especially in the twentieth century, but most of the debates about it need not concern us here.¹¹⁴ It is, however, instructive to compare Paul’s treatment of Abraham with those of the Septuagint and his near-contemporaries Josephus and Philo. We saw in Chapter 5 that, in the Septuagint, the moment when Abraham puts his trust in the Lord (15.6) is a decisive step, but only one step, in an evolving divine–human relationship which also involves Abraham’s personal experience of God and his reliability, doubt, risk, reassurance, and the deferral and reification of trust in two covenants. Josephus, apparently unhappy with the idea that Abraham doubted and needed reassurance and multiple agreements with God, reshapes the narrative to eliminate almost all of Abraham’s risk and doubt and God’s repeated assurances, proofs and reifications of trust, in the process eliminating verse 15.6. Philo, in his *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, is also apparently worried by the complex of risk, doubt, and trust attributed to Abraham and explains it philosophically, avoiding direct comment on 15.6, though not eliminating it.¹¹⁵

(p.296) Paul’s midrash on Genesis 15.6 in Romans 4 eliminates the evolution of Abraham’s relationship with God not by querying it or rewriting Genesis 12–17, but simply by leaving it out. The consequences are far-reaching. In the first place, Paul’s commentary conveys the impression that Abraham’s *pistis* is the beginning of his relationship with God. God makes an approach, promising that Abraham will become the ‘father of many nations’ (4.18). Abraham responds with *pistis*, and is reckoned *dikaïos*. Secondly, Paul asserts (contradicting Genesis 15.2 and 17.17) that Abraham never wavers in his trust. ‘He did not weaken in *pistis* when he considered his body as already dead (for he was almost a hundred years old) ...’,

εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίαι, ἀλλ’ ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, δοὺς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπήγγελται δυνατὸς ἐστὶν καὶ ποιῆσαι.

nor did he doubt God’s promise in mistrust; rather, he was empowered by *pistis* and gave glory to the Lord, and was fully convinced that what he had promised he was also able to do. (4.20–1)¹¹⁶

Thirdly, Paul’s presentation directs the reader’s attention, alongside Abraham’s *pistis*, towards his hope. ‘He believed, hoping against hope, that he would become “the father of many nations”.’ If *pistis* is linked to *dikaïosynē*, it is also inextricably involved with future hope. Two other characteristically Pauline themes are also worked in here. Abraham’s *pistis* is not presented as a leap in the dark: it is a response to God’s approach and promise to him. And *pistis* empowers him (4.20), though to do what, beyond giving glory to God, Paul does not say.

Finding in Abraham a figure through whom to unite Jews and gentiles in a definition of God’s chosen people which does not involve the Mosaic law, therefore, Paul takes the opportunity to rework Genesis to affirm a number of other things about *pistis* in line with his presentation of it elsewhere. It is a response to a divine approach and the beginning of a (new) divine–human relationship. This relationship is absolutely secure and empowering for *ho pistueōn*. From it comes *dikaïosynē* (not as anything that is earned, but as a gift) and it is intimately involved with hope for the future.

(p.297) In Galatians 3 Paul introduced Abraham from a slightly different angle, as scriptural fortification for the Galatians’ own experience. ‘O stupid Galatians!... did you receive the spirit from works of the law, or *ex akoē pisteōs*?’¹¹⁷ The Galatians had experienced the transformative effects of *pistis*, and the tradition that Abraham put his trust in God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness confirms that they were not misled. While he is invoking scriptural authority, Paul also takes the opportunity to tell the Galatians that their own conversion was foretold when God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed by him (3.8; cf. Gen. 12.3, 18.18). The rest of Paul’s midrash on Abraham in this chapter, though, takes a rather different turn: rather than Abraham’s being developed as a model of faithfulness for members of Paul’s community, he becomes the ancestor of Christ through whom God’s promises to him are fulfilled.

It has been observed a number of times that trust and belief are everywhere interdependent.¹¹⁸ Paul’s midrash on Deuteronomy 30.14 at Romans 10.5–10 illustrates particularly clearly how trust and propositional belief are entwined in Paul’s thinking, and also how

confession is more than cognitive-articulative: it is inextricably linked with emotion, action, and relationship.¹¹⁹ Paul has been complaining that law-observing Jews try to ‘establish their own *dikaiosynē*’ rather than letting themselves be made *dikaioi* by the *dikaiosynē* of God which comes through Christ (10.3). ‘For Christ is the goal of the law for justification *panti tō pistueonti*’ (10.4). As in earlier passages, it is simplest to read *ho pisteuōn* as referring to the one who puts his or her trust in Christ unless the next few lines point to a different meaning. Paul continues: the righteousness that comes *ek pisteōs* says that ‘the word [by which he means ‘the word of *pistis* which we preach’] is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (10.6, 8). We will see in Chapter 11 that where qualities such as *pistis* are concerned, the heart and mind are closely involved with one another, so these phrases should be read as both cognitive and affective.¹²⁰

Confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead lead jointly to salvation (in verse 9 confessing with the mouth comes first and in verse 10 believing with the heart, and both are described as saving, so there is no indication that one precedes the other). **(p.298)** That confessing and believing place one in a particular relationship with the Lord is made clear in verses 12–13: ‘the same Lord is Lord of all’, and (quoting Joel 3.5 LXX), ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’. Accepting the Lord as Lord and calling on his name means more than affirming the existence and power of the Lord: it means throwing oneself on his mercy and expressing one’s devotion and obedience to him. The repeated references in this passage to the prophets, who call Israel not merely to affirm the existence of the Lord but to return to obeying him, observing his commandments, and behaving as their historical relationship demands, confirm that, for Paul, believing and confessing are more than cognitive, or cognitive-affective: they express the relationship of the faithful one to God and Christ, and his or her willingness actively to serve and obey God and Christ.¹²¹ Cognition, emotion, relationship, and action are all involved in confession and belief.

As we have seen, Romans, like Galatians, focuses strongly on the beginning of *pistis* and *pistis* as initiating a new relationship between God and human beings. Nevertheless, a handful of passages hint at ways in which *pistis* may develop in the course of the relationship.¹²² At 1.12 Paul envisages himself and the Romans as being mutually encouraged by each other’s *pistis*. I have suggested that ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν at 1.17 may refer to the development of *pistis* in believers from hearing the gospel to achieving their own relationship with Christ.¹²³ At 3.1–3 Paul connects *pistis* with the opposite possibility: that people who have once had *pistis* may lapse in faithfulness to God. But, overall, the evolution of *pistis* is at most a weak theme in Romans.¹²⁴

Pistis appears in a scattering of other references towards the end of this letter, each different from the others in some ways, but most linked with earlier themes. In an unusual phrase in chapter 12, Paul tells the Romans to ‘think soberly, each according to μέτρον πίστεως apportioned by God’ (12.3). Despite the carefully argued objections of C. E. B. Cranfield, this phrase, in context, surely refers to different quantities of *pistis* which God has apportioned (*emerisen*) to different people as a gift or grace (12.6) and which allow them to exercise different ministries (12.6–8).¹²⁵ *Pistis* here can be read straightforwardly as ‘trust/faithfulness’, the fundamental quality that allows **(p.299)** one to become part of the body of Christ (12.5). Equally interesting for present purposes, and less discussed, is the next occurrence of *pistis* in this chapter, where Paul says that if our gift is for prophecy, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, ‘in proportion to *pistis*’, then we should practise it (12.6). This suggests that the stronger the trust of the faithful in God, the more strongly they may feel moved to communicate it to others, as a form of ‘living (self-)sacrifice’ (12.1).

‘Salvation is nearer now than when we first trusted (*episteusamen*),’ says Paul (13.11), recalling other letters in which *pisteuein* is associated with the first coming to faith of the faithful, and looking forward more explicitly than does Romans for the most part to the end time.

‘Good faith’, though a common meaning of *pistis*, rarely seems its most natural translation in Paul. At 14.22–3, however, it makes the best sense. Paul has been urging the Romans not to fall out over the Jewish food laws. Those who are strong in *pistis* feel able to abandon them; those who are weak do not (14.1–2), but the weak must not despise the strong nor the strong pass judgement on the weak, because they are all community members welcomed by God (14.3). Everyone does whatever he or she does for the Lord, and each will have to give an account of him- or herself to God, for whom judgement is reserved (14.6–12). Paul then goes further and says that though he is convinced (*pepeismai*) ‘in the Lord Jesus’ that no food is unclean, ‘it is unclean for someone who thinks it unclean’ (14.14). Finally, he says:

σὺ πίστιν [iv] ἔχεις κατὰ σεαυτὸν ἔχε ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. μακάριος ὁ μὴ κρίνων ἑαυτὸν ἐν ᾧ δοκιμάζει. ὁ δὲ διακρινόμενος ἐν φάγῃ κατακέρταται, ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως· πᾶν δὲ ὁ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἁμαρτία ἐστίν.

Keep the good faith that you have towards yourself before God. The one who does not condemn himself because of what he approves is blessed. But the one who doubts condemns himself if he eats, because he does not act in good faith; for everything

which is not based on *pistis* is sin. (14.22–3)

The language of these verses is strongly juridical, a context in which it comes as no surprise to encounter *pistis* meaning ‘good faith’, in a sense close to ‘integrity’. Paul argues that as long as community members act honestly in accordance with what they believe—keeping or not keeping the food laws, for instance—God will not condemn them. If, however, they act against their beliefs—if, for instance, they eat what they think they should not (v. 23), or if they do not ‘pursue what leads to peace’ within the community (v. 19)—then God will condemn them. The important thing, within one’s commitment to God and Christ, is to keep faith with oneself.

The phrase *kata seauton* invokes the language of witnessing in a legal context. Each person is exhorted to act as a witness to his or her own views about the law and to the fact that good faith requires him or her to honour them. These verses are particularly interesting as highlighting the elements of honesty and truthfulness in *pistis*, which are not often Paul’s main focus. We (p.300) have, however, seen *pistis* and *alētheia* linked often elsewhere (and *alētheia* is often preferred to *pistis* in the Septuagint as a translation of ‘*emunah*’ language), so there is nothing unusual in itself about Paul’s usage here.¹²⁶ The last phrase of the chapter neatly exploits the semantic range of *pistis* to link the ‘good faith’ meaning of these verses back to the ‘trust’ meaning which dominates earlier chapters. In context, as we have seen, it is attractive to translate it, ‘Everything which is not based on good faith is sin’, but it evokes the argument of chapters 3–8 that only *pistis*—not keeping the law—can contribute to a person’s being liberated from sin.

Last but not least, Paul begins to draw the letter to a conclusion with the formulaic-sounding, ‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *en tō pisteuein*, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy spirit’ (15.13). Joy, peace, and hope are all regular qualities of *pistis*, which here could refer equally well to the action of trust or the relationship which it creates.

We have seen in previous letters that the group characterized by *pistis* is often imagined as a type of household (especially in pastoral passages and the beginnings and concluding paragraphs of letters). In Romans, even more than in Galatians (which makes more use of the language of sonship and heirship), the group to which followers of Christ belong is portrayed as a people. This is a natural consequence of Paul’s invocation of Abraham and his discussions about the relationship between gentiles and the law, and it is reinforced by Paul’s references to *pistis* language in Habakkuk (1.17), Deuteronomy (10.6–11), Isaiah (10.16), and less specifically, ‘the law and the prophets’ (3.21).¹²⁷ Romans is, of course, by no means without familial language. Paul is a slave of Christ (1.1) and the Romans are his brothers (1.13, 15.14; cf. 16.1, 17). He rather briefly makes use of the language of adoption and heirship which he exploits in Galatians (8.15–17).¹²⁸ But his sustained passages of argument about sin, *pistis*, and righteousness all imply the model of a people, a political community, rather than a family. The same emphasis appears in Philippians (1.27), when Paul tells the Philippians to ‘govern yourselves (*politeuesthe*) in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ’, striving together side by side against their opponents in the manner of an army.¹²⁹

One may detect in Romans, as perhaps in 1 Corinthians, where we also hear a good deal about the Corinthian community itself at the moment when Paul was responding to its internal difficulties, a tension between the Christian (p.301) community as Paul describes it theologically and the community to which he addresses a good deal of pastoral advice. Socially, community members are described as having different, in principle complementary, gifts and roles (e.g. Rom. 12.3–8). Different members, presumably, undertake diverse activities (e.g. 12.13). Some are described by Paul as ministers or co-workers, pointing to the evolution of a hierarchy of authority (16.1–16). At the same time, theologically, the community is one, undifferentiated, and distinguished solely by every member’s *pistis* towards God and Christ.

It may be that the authority of Paul’s co-workers and fellow-ministers, like that of Paul himself, is established by that extreme commitment which Paul can call slavery to Christ, and the fact that they wield the power of the gospel for the calling of others. Paul reminds us of his own status at the beginning and end of the letter: he is Christ’s slave (1.1; cf. 6.17–21),¹³⁰ and through Christ he has received the gift of apostleship so that he can bring about the ‘obedience of faith’ to all the gentiles (1.5–6; cf. 15.15–16). He has been sent to preach and so to bring about *pistis* in others (10.14–17), and through him Christ has indeed led the gentiles to obedience (15.18; cf. 16.25–6). Paul imagines sharing something of his spiritual gift with the Romans when he visits them (1.11) (and then corrects himself, remembering that as Christians already, they may, in principle, be able to endow him with *their* spiritual gift (1.12)). At this point he might seem to be imagining all Christians as being able to pass on the gift that they have received,¹³¹ but later (12.6–8) it emerges that only some have the gifts of prophecy, ministry, or teaching. The gospel which Paul and at least some others preach transmits, as we have seen, ‘the power of God for salvation for every faithful person’ (1.16). The cascade of *pistis* and authority from God to humanity is not a dominant theme in Romans, which makes more of the access of gentiles as well as Jews to righteousness through Christ, but where it does appear, Paul presents a consistent picture: *pistis* is a relationship with God and Christ which the

faithful enjoy, and which those who have the gift of preaching also evoke in others.

Paul's own call to apostleship is, as it is in some form in every letter, one important basis on which he hopes that the Romans will be persuaded by his various arguments. But Romans is less obviously concerned than most of Paul's letters with reasons why people should trust God, Christ, or Paul himself. Notoriously difficult as it is (and beyond the scope of this study to explore) to be sure why Paul wrote what he did to the Romans, it is surely plausible that the relative lack of emphasis on reasons for *pistis* in this letter relates to the fact that Paul is not here addressing a community to which he (**p.302**) has preached in person, which he founded, or in which he has played a significant role in the past. He does not, perhaps, feel that the *pistis* of the Romans, or its foundations, are quite as much his responsibility as are those of the Thessalonians, Corinthians, or Galatians.

Before we turn to Philippians, the mention above of the cascade of *pistis* from God to humanity prompts us to discuss briefly the only Pauline letter which has not yet been mentioned at all. The Epistle to Philemon refers to *pistis* twice in its twenty-five verses, both in Paul's thanksgiving after his opening greeting: 'I give thanks to my God always, remembering you in my prayers, as I hear of the love and the *pistis* you have towards the Lord Jesus and towards all the holy ones, so that your partnership in *pistis* may become effective in recognizing every good there is in us that leads to Christ' (4–6). The text is not beyond dispute, but if we accept Nestle–Aland's reading, Paul seems at first sight to be commending, alongside *pistis* towards Jesus, intra-human *pistis* within the community. It may, however, be significant that this letter, unlike the others we have discussed, is addressed to an individual whom Paul identifies as a 'co-worker' (*synergos*) (1), rather than to the community as a whole.¹³² Paul may be understood as commending Philemon's mediation between Christ and the community through his trust in Christ and his trustworthiness to others which fosters their trust in Christ. Paul tells Philemon that the *κοινωνία τῆς πίστεως* which they share enables him to recognize every good in 'us' which leads us to Christ. We should expect 'us' to refer to Paul himself (though it is unusual to find Paul offering himself for inspection by a co-worker like this). This phrase is chiefly interesting, though, for expressing the idea that *pistis* constitutes, or creates, a *koinōnia*: a partnership, fellowship, or community. Some commentators have seen this phrase as referring to the 'shared experience of a common trust in Christ'.¹³³ This may be right, or it may be possible to hear in this phrase another step, in line with those identified in Galatians and Romans, towards the reification of the relationship of *pistis* into a community created and sustained by *pistis*.

Pistis Christou in Philippians 3

Philippians 3.7–11 offers an account of the relationship between *pistis* and righteousness which is briefer than those of Galatians and Romans, but (**p.303**) evidently related to them. Paul has been asserting that by birth, education, and practice he has been a good Jew.

[ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν. ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἠγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ ἠγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, εἴ πως καταστήσω εἰς τὴν ἑξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

[But] whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having my own *dikaiosynē* based on the law but that which comes *dia pisteōs Christou*, the righteousness from God, depending on *pistis* to know him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Here, as in Galatians 2 and Romans 3, *pistis Christou* is integrated into the relationship of *pistis* between God and humanity, and here again it is far from self-evident whether Paul thinks that *pistis* is faith in Christ, the faithfulness of Christ, both, or something more thoroughly and systematically multivalent, such as I argued for in the sections 'Pistis in Galatians' and 'Pistis in Romans and Philemon' above.¹³⁴

Paul has already described, in the 'Christ-hymn' (2.5–11), how Christ empties himself, humbles himself in human form, obeys God even to death, and is therefore exalted.¹³⁵ With this fresh in the minds of his audience, it would not be surprising if they heard *pistis Christou* subjectively. The second *pistis* is more enigmatic: it could again refer to the faithfulness/trustworthiness of Christ, though if so, it is a little unclear why it is needed. It could refer to human beings' trust in Christ, and if so, it offers a rare example, in Paul, of the idea which we have encountered in Philo and one or two passages of the Septuagint, that *pistis* may lead to greater knowledge of the

divine.¹³⁶ Since the language of verses 9 and 10, however, is so close to that of Galatians 2 and Romans 3, it seems most plausible to interpret them in the same way, in which case *pistis* is Christ's faithfulness both towards God (in which God's trust and **(p.304)** faithfulness towards Christ are also implicit) and towards human beings, which invokes human trust in both God and Christ.

In this passage Paul also refers to being 'in' Christ, a phrase which also occurs at Galatians 2.17 and Romans 3.24, as well as widely elsewhere.¹³⁷ We shall have a little more to say about this phrase in Chapter 12, though its larger implications are another theme beyond the scope of this study.¹³⁸ Since, though, it is involved with all three of the passages in which Paul works out his model of the involvement of Christ in the *pistis* relationship, it is also worth discussing briefly here.

At Galatians 2.17 we seek to be made *dikaioi* 'in Christ'. In the previous verse Paul has affirmed that we are made *dikaioi* not by works of the law but through *pistis Iēsou Christou*. The strong implication is that 'in Christ' and 'through the *pistis* of Christ' are very closely related, if not identical, in meaning. At Romans 3.24 Paul says that redemption (*apolystrōsis*) is 'in Christ Jesus', and *apolystrōsis* leads to *dikaiosynē*. At Philippians 3.9 Paul 'gains Christ' and is 'found in him', which is related to (though not necessarily equivalent to) the state of *dikaiosynē* which comes through *pistis Christou*. All these could well be foundational meanings: being 'in Christ' could simply be another way of saying that one is made righteous through the *pistis* of Christ. In the context of these passages, however, another possibility presents itself. At Romans 12.3 we saw that Cranfield suggests that *pistis* may refer metonymically to Christ. It seems possible that in this passage Christ and *pistis* are again paralleled, such that being *en Christō* and being *en pistei* both refer to being in the relationship or the bond of trust created by the *pistis* of God, Christ, and faithful human beings.¹³⁹

Conclusion

Much of Paul's treatment of *pistis* and related concepts in Galatians, Romans, Philemon, and Philippians is close to that of 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians. In this chapter, as in the last, we have seen him associate *pistis* with conversion and moments of crisis and decision-making. *Pistis* has again been presented as the quality and practice par excellence which forms new **(p.305)** divine-human relationships and communities. Paul has again been interested (though perhaps less so in Romans than other letters) in how *pistis* is founded and in the precariousness of its transmission by preaching. He seems to be somewhat less concerned, in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians than in other letters, with what it means to live through time with *pistis*, but continues to be interested in the hierarchy of trustworthiness which it generates, descending from God through Christ, Paul himself, and those of his co-workers whom he characterizes as *pistoi*.

This chapter, however, has also seen Paul use *pistis* language in some distinctive ways. Above all, Christ is explicitly integrated into the *pistis* relationship between God and humanity in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians as he is not in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians. In Galatians 2, Romans 3, and Philippians 3 *pistis* is central to the way in which Paul describes the economy of salvation. We cannot tell whether Paul's vision of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity draws consciously on contemporary Graeco-Roman models of conciliation and mediation. What is clear is that it resonates with a wide range of common operations of *pistis* and *fides* in the world around him, and so may have been intuitively easy for first-century listeners, whether Greek, Roman, or Jewish, to understand.

The process of developing this model also leads Paul to develop his use of *pistis* in some other passages: not dramatically, but in ways which will significantly shape later Christian thinking. In places in these letters the relationship of divine-human trust becomes something more like a bond of trust, a community of trust, the assurance created by the sacrifice of Christ, and perhaps even the new covenant in Christ's blood. This gradual semantic shift will lead to Christians defining the nature of their community, the content of its proclamation, and eventually the cult itself by the name *hē pistis*.¹⁴⁰

Paul develops his tripartite understanding of divine-human *pistis* in contexts where he is arguing that gentiles do not need to keep the law, and, as we have seen, he is capable of comparing the place of Christ in divine-human relations explicitly with that of the law. The theological character and salvific focus of the relevant passages of Galatians 2, Romans 3, and Philippians 3 may seem to leave rather limited space for any vision of what kind of community is formed by divine *dikaiosynē*, *pistis Christou*, human *pistis*, and human *dikaiosynē*. In Chapter 12, however, I will argue that these passages tell us a little more about divine-human community, present and ultimate, than we might **(p.306)** think. In particular, we will explore the nature of life *en Christō* as the consummation of divine-human *pistis* and of life under the law.

In the Introduction and in Chapter 4 we discussed the relationship between divine-human and intra-human *pistis/fides*, in theory and in Graeco-Roman religiosity. If, as I have argued, intra-human *pistis* in Paul's letters is limited to the relationship of authority which Paul and those he calls *pisteuontes* have with their communities, then, in one sense, divine-human and intra-human *pistis*

are closely analogous, though very limited in scope compared with their Graeco-Roman and Jewish equivalents. In another sense, divine–human *pistis* in Paul’s letters—and throughout the New Testament—is very different from its Graeco-Roman or Jewish equivalents. By all but eliminating the forms of everyday, intra-human *pistis* which dominate Greek and Roman sources and are well represented in the Septuagint, Paul and other New Testament writers virtually redefine *pistis* as a divine–human relationship without an intra-human analogue. This, which brings us back to where we began with Paul at the start of Chapter 6, is one of the most radical aspects of Christian *pistis* we have encountered so far. Dialectically and rhetorically, it cuts *hoi pisteuontes* off from a fundamental mode of human interaction, without which, axiomatically, human communities cannot develop or sustain themselves. It casts them wholly on God and Christ. It tells them that there is no longer any trustworthy relationship or community for them except that which exists with God and Christ and in the kingdom of God.

Notes:

(1) See e.g. Beare (1973), 100–2.

(2) Philemon can be grouped with Rom., Gal. and Phil. 3; it adds little to their treatment of *pistis* but is discussed on p. 302. Among the minor divergences, God is not shown as *pistos* in these letters, though we can assume that Paul continues to think he is.

(3) The *dikaiosynē* lexicon is as complex as *pistis/fides*, and to do it justice would be (and often has been) a study in its own right. To discuss e.g. the relative importance of juridical and ethical meanings in its use is beyond our scope, but we return to it briefly at pp. 476–7, 488–91 in this chapter and elsewhere I will translate it as ‘justice’ or ‘righteousness’, etc. as seems most appropriate in context.

(4) On deferral, see p. 20.

(5) See pp. 212–13 (though Pauline scholars in the past have thought the exercise both possible and worthwhile).

(6) By the standards of everyday Greek and Roman letters and rescripts (responses by kings, emperors, governors, etc. to problems arising in communities they rule) Paul’s letters are relatively long, but by the standards of paraenetic letters, with which they also have much in common, most are relatively short.

(7) Hays (1997a), 55–7 lists the following as key issues in the *pistis Christou* debate, and hence for the understanding of *pistis* in these letters: Christology, soteriology, experiential-expressive vs. narrative theology, the cruciform character of Christian obedience, and the link between the righteousness and the covenant faithfulness of God. Paul encourages the interpretation of his key terms with reference to one another, not least by his repeated use of nominal phrases, linking *pistis*, for instance, with *nomos*, *erga*, *dikaiosynē*, *euangelion*, and *Christos*. While interpreting the elements of his thinking in relation to one another is the final aim of the study of Paul, however, it is helpful in the process to consider one concept and praxis at a time, as here.

(8) Esp. Stendhal (1963), Sanders (1977, 1983).

(9) e.g. Williams (1980), Räisänen (1982), Dunn (1983), Campbell (1992a), Seifrid (1992), Carson, O’Brien and Seifrid (2004), Schlatter (1995), Wright (2009).

(10) Cf. pp. 15–23.

(11) Price (1999), 3, Rüpke (2007), 5–12. Nongbri (2013), 50–3 and *passim* is right, *contra* Beard (1986), to put the emergence of ‘religion’ as a category of thought much later than Varro, *Ant.* and Cic., *Div.*

(12) Rüpke (2007), 7 rightly points out that we cannot be absolutely certain that everything in Roman life involved religion. There is, for instance, a concept *profanus*, ‘non-sacred’, in Latin (though it means ‘not sacred to the gods’, ‘profane’, or ‘polluted’ rather than ‘in no way connected with religion’), and some apartment buildings have been excavated which do not have built-in shrines for household gods (though this does not mean that inhabitants did not make their own). On the other hand, known atheists are extraordinarily rare (see p. 126 n. 15) and almost always sharply negatively characterized.

(13) See e.g. pp. 38, 123, 209–10.

(14) Smith (1998), 281–2.

(15) On how meanings evolve in the second century, see pp. 509–13.

(16) pp. 278–9, 286, 299–302. It has often been noted that in Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul makes frequent use of (*a*)*pistos* and (in the Corinthian letters) relatively little use of *pistis* and *pisteuō*, while Galatians and Romans make little if any use of *pistos* but frequent use of *pistis* and *pisteuō*.

(17) *Contra* Wolter (2011), 74, who argues from this passage and Phil. 1.27 that *pistis* is already defined by the same content as the gospel, and Sprinkle (2009). At Phil. 1.27 Paul exhorts the Philippians to strive together τῆι πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, but here too to interpret *pistis* as the content of the kerygma is a big shift; the phrase can be more conventionally understood as ‘the relationship’ or ‘bond’ of trust which the kerygma proclaims. The even larger shift that is assumed in some translations to the holistic meaning ‘the faith’ is, a fortiori, even less defensible. See further pp. 267, 278, 291–2, 302.

(18) Cf. Acts 9.21 (a group of people).

(19) Overlooked by most commentators.

(20) Thess. 1.8, 3.2, 1 Cor. 2.5, 2 Cor. 15.14.

(21) We cannot assume with e.g. Betz (1979) ad loc. that *hē pistis* means ‘the faith’ in the sense of ‘the religion’ here.

(22) This interpretation need not read counter-intuitively to modern Christians, since ‘the relationship of trust between God, Christ and the faithful’ captures an important aspect of the modern faith, if not, for most, the whole of it.

(23) Alterations to NAB italicized.

(24) For present purposes it does not matter whether this passage is a summary of Paul’s communication to Peter at Antioch or the *propositio* of his argument to the Galatians, or something of both (see the discussion of Longenecker (1990), 80–1).

(25) Though *pistis* here, as elsewhere, is an essential prerequisite for acquittal for Paul, he cannot intend listeners to assume that *pistis* guarantees *dikaïosynē*, since human beings would not then be dependent on God or Christ: see Dunn (1998), 370, *contra* Silva (2004), 218, 227.

(26) Accepting that the language of sin (1 Cor. 15.3) is probably pre-Pauline rather than his own formulation.

(27) On the connection between practising *pistis* and being found to practise it, see Ch. 12.

(28) Arguably drawing in part on a pre-Pauline baptismal formula (so e.g. Fee (1987), 246–7, though *contra* Barrett (1971a), 142–3).

(29) e.g. Betz (1979), Martyn (1997a), ad loc., both citing Blass, Debrunner, and Funk.

(30) Blass, Debrunner, and Funk (1961), §376, 480(6). They suggest that, very occasionally, the phrase means ‘but’, citing this passage along with Mk. 4.22 and 1 Cor. 8.8, but in both the latter ἐὰν μὴ can be and often is translated ‘except’; cf. SB (s. §488(8)). Martyn ((1997a), ad loc. suggests that Paul may be using a Semiticism here, but there is no need to posit this unless there is no good explanation of the phrase as Greek.

(31) Dunn (1983).

(32) See e.g. Räisänen (1985) (arguing for the traditional interpretation), Walker (1997).

(33) Das (2000). If the formulation was already in circulation among Jewish Christians, Das suggests that Paul incorporates it here because it was invoked by his opponents.

(34) Cf. 1 Cor. 9.20–1, where it is clear that Paul does not condemn observant Jewish Christians for continuing to keep the law.

(35) At 3.13 the law is called a curse, but so is Christ: the reference is to the role of each in the history of salvation, not their intrinsic qualities. Less positively, the law was ‘promulgated by angels’ (3.19), which Paul usually seems to regard at best ambivalently elsewhere (cf. Rom. 8.38, 1. Cor. 4.9, 6.3, 11.10, 13.1, 2 Cor. 11.14, 12.7, Gal. 1.8, though 4.14 is more positive).

(36) Cf. Bruce (1982b), ad loc. Longenecker (1990), 85–7 argues that although Paul's statements about the law vary, here he is treating it negatively; while accepting this possibility, I do not think this passage compels a negative interpretation.

(37) On the history of recent debate on works within the 'new perspective', see e.g. Westerholm (2004); on the lack of consensus over the interpretation of the phrase, see e.g. Bachmann (2009). On faith and works as arguably contributing to justification, see e.g. Watson (1986), Moo (2004), 212–16, Silva (2004), 217–19. Martyn (1997a), 260–3 argues convincingly that the Galatians are used to hearing of observance of the law as a positive thing, though he then argues that Paul opposes faith and works in a way which the Galatians may have found shocking.

(38) On discussions of this, see Westerholm (2004); cf. Räisänen (1982), 176–99.

(39) Debates about the meaning of the phrase in Galatians, which over the last thirty years have been intense and detailed, are usually connected with its use in Philippians and Romans. On the history of the debate, see Hunn (2009), Easter (2010). In favour of the objective genitive (interpreting it as trust in Christ or belief in certain things about Christ), see esp. Hultgren (1980), Johnson (1982), Johnson and Hay (1997), Dunn (1997a), Martyn (1997a, b), Matlock (2000, 2002, 2007), Watson (2004), 158–60, Wright (2009), 178, Dunson (2011); cf. Boers (1994), Peterman (2010). In favour of the subjective genitive, see esp. Hays (2002), ch. 4, (1997a), Williams (1987a), Longenecker (1993, 1996), Campbell (1997), (2009), 602–38, Schenck (2008), Stubbs (2008), Allen (2009). (Herbert (1955) no longer carries conviction.) On the early history of interpretation, which suggests that *pistis Christou* has been interpreted both subjectively and objectively from an early date, see e.g. Harrisville (1994), Wallis (1995), Elliott (2009) (discussing both and arguing, against Wallis, that objective interpretations dominate in the Church Fathers), Whintont (2010) (arguing that the Apostolic Fathers did speak of the faithfulness of Christ); cf. Foster (2002). On the importance of God's own faithfulness at the beginning of the process of justification, see e.g. Ljungman (1964), 13–35, Campbell (1991, 1992a), Oropeza (2007). My view is closest to that of Hooker (1989), ch. 14, who argues that *pistis Christou* refers to both the faithfulness of Christ and faith in Christ; cf. Silva (2004), 218, 227. Ulrichs (2007), 18–23 and Schliesser (2012), 97–8 argue that subjective and objective *pistis* are not mutually exclusive, exegetically or theologically. Wright (2013), 839–40 makes the point (not disputed by those in favour) that a subjective interpretation must not distract attention from the importance of followers' practising *pistis* towards Christ. Hay (1989) makes a thought-provoking argument for *pistis* as meaning 'ground for faith', 'pledge', or 'assurance' at Gal. 3.23–5: hearing overtones of different meanings of the lexicon in individual passages is plausible, but to restrict *pistis* to that range of meaning here seems to minimize the significance of Christ's activity too much. Vanhoye (1999) attractively emphasizes 'the trustworthiness of Christ' as a possible meaning in Galatians and Romans. I agree with Boers (1994), who argues that Paul understands justification by faith fundamentally in the same way in Galatians and Romans. Eastman (1999) points out that scholars tend to neglect the role of grace in justification, an omission of which this, as a study of *pistis*, is, regretfully, also guilty. Taylor (1966) argues that *pistis Christou* in Galatians is modelled on the Roman concept of *fideicommissum*; the parallel is ingenious and remarkably close, but it would surely not have been familiar to most readers; it is preferable to look for models for Paul's thinking in more common use. On a different Roman parallel (Strecker (2005)), see p. 294, n. 110.

(40) Matlock (2007) helpfully summarizes the debate (cf. Ulrichs (2007), 240–2 on the same debate about Phil. 3.9). His stylistic argument that what looks like repetition may be interpreted as reiteration, with amplification, for effect, is a strong one in principle, but his discussion shows how many ways the verses he deals with can be analysed and highlights the difficulty of demonstrating decisively what Paul, who follows no firm rules of rhetoric or style, intends in any one passage. I therefore remain sympathetic to concerns about repetition, and am doubtful that we can place much weight on stylistic analysis.

(41) Rom. 5.19, Phil. 2.8. On the relationship between *pistis Christou* and Jesus' faithfulness and obedience in the gospels, see Bolt (2009), Salier (2009).

(42) The *pistis* of Christ may also act as an example to others: see Hays (1997a), 51–2; cf. Morgan (2015).

(43) On action nominals, see p. 31.

(44) See e.g. Caneday (2009) on the law and *pistis Christou* as paired covenants in this passage.

(45) pp. 194–5, 199, 208–9.

(46) Cf. e.g. pp. 13, 30–1, 53.

(47) (1990), ch. 14.

(48) Cf. e.g. pp. 6, 14, 53–4, 82, 187.

(49) This, of course, does not explain how atonement comes about, only the configuration of relationships that allows it to do so. Seifrid's (2009) argument that *pistis Christou* is the faith that comes from Christ seems to me too abstract, forfeiting something of Paul's sense of relationship with Christ, but it could form an additional overtone to *pistis*.

(50) e.g. pp. 292–4.

(51) e.g. pp. 215–18, 247–8.

(52) Cf. Rom. 10.16. On hearing and accepting as inseparable, see Wolter (2011), 72–82.

(53) Cf. Philostr., *Her.* 33.38, with the discussion of Whitmarsh (2009), 225–6 on the language of seeing as used in especially vivid and convincing reportage.

(54) 3.8–9, 13–14, 16, 21–5.

(55) The article here may refer back to the *pistis* mentioned in the previous verse, or may be unmarked, with no special meaning.

(56) On whether *ek pisteōs* and *dia pisteōs* mean the same thing, see e.g. Stowers (1989) (distinguishing them), and esp. Campbell (1994) (identifying them).

(57) Cf. pp. 199–200.

(58) Barrett (1982c).

(59) See p. 269 n. 65.

(60) Colquitt and Rodell (2011) observe that, cross-culturally, the relationship between justice and trust is not well understood, but they are consistently articulated as closely related.

(61) Martyn (1997a), 532–3.

(62) *Contra* Minear (1960), 136–72. Schumacher (2009) rightly emphasizes the interpersonal nature of *pistis* in many ordinary Greek contexts, notably commercial ones, though commercial meanings are not usually the most audible in the background of Paul's thinking. Hays (1987) argues that fulfilling the 'law of Christ' (Gal. 6.2) involves imitating the faithfulness of Christ, alongside clearly intra-human ethics; still, he may mean faithfulness of Christ to God, but cf. Stanton (1996), who thinks Paul is not clear about meaning in Galatians but is in Romans. Dunn (1998), 632–40 sees *pistis* as an interpersonal ethic, but apparently a priori. Fikentscher and Wuellner (1988), 25 suggest that the 'law of Christ' is an oxymoron: it does not fit cross-cultural definitions of what a law is.

(63) They are also neighbours (5.13–14). Cf. Phil. 1.27.

(64) On the background to this language, see Martyn (1997a), ad loc.

(65) Cf. pp. 117–18.

(66) Cf. p. 302, on Phlm. 5. On imitation in this connection, see p. 257 n. 162.

(67) As his brothers: 4.28, 31, 5.13.

(68) e.g. pp. 215–17.

(69) Cf. pp. 128–37, 196–200.

(70) The implication of *en* is uncertain, but cf. perhaps 2 Cor. 4.6, where God shines in the heart of his apostle to reveal to others the

knowledge of the glory of God.

(71) On ‘the teachers’ with whom Paul disagrees, see esp. Martyn’s (controversial) hypothesis (1997a), 117–26, 302–6.

(72) e.g. Matera (1992), ad loc.

(73) *Peithein* does not play the significant role in this letter that it does in e.g. 2 Cor., appearing only twice outside this verse (1.10, 5.7) in standard meanings, while *pepoithēsis* does not occur.

(74) Cf. pp. 24, 26.

(75) Following e.g. Schweitzer’s identification ((1931), 3–4) of mystical passages of Paul. Against reading Gal. 2.20 as mystical, see e.g. Shauf (2006). Ulrichs (2007), 139–40 resists either a strong mystical or participatory reading of 2.20, while accepting that it expresses the close relationship of the believer to Christ.

(76) Whether the main theme of the letter is the law, the righteousness of God, or something else, is much debated: see e.g. Ziesler (1972), 9–42, Davies (1990), Seifrid (1992, 2004b), Dunn (1998), 340–69, Heliso (2007), 8–16; cf. Williams (1980), Piper (1983), Gathercole (2004), O’Brien (2004), Yarborough (2004), Campbell (2009a), Wright (2009), 100–14. Seifrid (2004a) rightly sees *dikaioynē* and ethics as connected here, but wrongly claims that they, and religion and ethics more generally, are segregated in Greek thought.

(77) Cranfield (1975–9)), 66–7; cf. 16.26; Garlington (1994), 13–15, Miller (2000), 40–6; *contra* Davies (1990), 25–30. Translating this subjectively as ‘the obedience based on *pistis*’, though, would not substantially alter the interpretation.

(78) 1.8; cf. 1 Thess. 1.8.

(79) On the key nature of these verses, see e.g. Ziesler (1972), *passim*, Dunn (1988), 37–46, (1998), 340–69, Campbell (1994), Longenecker (1996), Heliso (2007), Jewett (2007), 135–47; *contra*, see esp. Dodd (1995), Dunson (2011). For or against Messianic interpretations of 1.17, see e.g. Heliso (2007), 21, discussing Hays (2002); Taylor (2004), 338–9, Watson (2009). For the argument that there is not a single coherent centre to Paul’s thought, see e.g. Achtemeier (1996b). Campbell (2009a), 610–13 and (2009b) favours a Christological interpretation of these verses; more broadly ((2009b), 55–61), he discusses very interestingly the logically problematic role of faith in both major forms of justification theory and points out that, strictly speaking, Paul’s understanding of justification cannot explain the importance he places on *pistis*. His points are well taken but beyond the scope of this discussion, which takes as its premise (what Campbell acknowledges) that Paul does in fact claim that human beings are made *dikaioi* by *pistis*. Campbell’s argument does, though, speak to the opening question of this study, why *pistis* is so important to Christians.

(80) Cf. 1 Cor. 1.10, Gal. 1.11.

(81) See the discussion of Jewett (2007), 136–8.

(82) In using *latreuein* at 1.19, Paul is surely not referring to himself as a hired labourer, and there is no need to emphasize that he is engaged in religious service, so the reference must be to slavery.

(83) Not necessarily ‘the’ power, in the absence of the article.

(84) pp. 215–19, 223, 247–8, 252–4.

(85) See e.g. Corsani (1984).

(86) pp. 218–19.

(87) *Sōtēria* can mean physical health or well-being: salvation is not a common meaning of the abstract noun (cf. BGU 423.13, *P. Oxy.* 939.20), but it is a common meaning of other parts of the lexicon.

(88) Campbell (2009b), 817–21 notes that a propositional reading of *pistis* in this passage would be ‘thin’; he also calls *pistis* here ‘more a marker than a condition’ of salvation (pp. 817–18), describing the whole complexity of the divine–human relationship of

trust, trustworthiness, faithfulness, belief, endurance, etc. (cf. pp. 79, 917–19).

(89) Minear (1971), 42, Cranfield (1975–9), 99–100, Wallis (1995), 98, Dunn (1998), 43–6, Hays (2002), 41 (following Dunn). Given the prominent position of the verse in the letter, Ziesler (1989), 71 surely underplays the significance of the phrase ‘from *pistis* to *pistis*’ by characterizing it as ‘simply rhetorical reinforcement of the importance of *pistis*’.

(90) At 3.4, uniquely, he also calls God *alēthēs*. *Alētheia*, as noted (p. 209 n. 102), is an alternative translation of the ‘*emunah*’ lexicon in the Septuagint, but *alēthēs* is otherwise used of God only at John 3.33 (see p. 396). Here God’s *alētheia* is very close in meaning to his *pistis*.

(91) See p. 275.

(92) Cf. Barth (1933), 40–1.

(93) Thibaut (1988) 131–5, 169–70 notes that Paul uses *apeithein*, etc. in this letter equally of Greeks and Jews who have not kept the law (2.8, 10.21, 11.30–32, 15.31).

(94) Surely informed by the contemporary debate among Jews to which Philo and James also testify, as to whether one should keep the law physically or spiritually or both; see p. 342.

(95) Ps. 88.34–8 LXX is perhaps echoed at 3.3; cf. Isa. 51.6–8 at 3.21.

(96) I follow Sanders (1977), 443, 474–82, etc. in assuming that Paul’s conviction of salvation, not his perception of sin, is the starting point of his account of *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*.

(97) See p. 271 n. 39; cf. Johnson (1982). The questions how Christ saves and the origin of vv. 25–6, which does not affect this discussion, are left aside here, but see Cranfield (1975–9), 199–218, Dunn (1988), 163–83, Jewett (2007), 268–93. On the difficulties of interpreting *apolystrōsis* and *hilasterion* see respectively Campbell (1992b), 22–32 and Ziesler (1989), 112–14, Fitzmyer (1992), 349–50.

(98) p. 270.

(99) Cf. pp. 272–3.

(100) Paralleled by a number of passages where human beings *pisteuousin eis...*, e.g. Rom. 10.10, Gal. 2.16, Phlm. 1.29.

(101) Cf. pp. 292–3.

(102) Dunn (1996b), 74.

(103) Cf. pp. 6, 31.

(104) See e.g. pp. 45–51, 99–101, 112–14, 128–9, 134–8.

(105) I am doubtful of the argument of Cox (2007), 24–5, that Paul draws on Middle Platonist theories about intermediaries in the divine–human relationship, because there is so little elsewhere to suggest that Paul drew on Platonism, while models of human mediation are ubiquitous in Paul’s world and would be readily grasped by his communities (cf. p. 400 n. 36). Segal’s (1977) exploration of intermediary powers offers closer parallels—above all, perhaps, the Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch (pp. 202–3), but the pattern which seems to be imagined by Paul and other NT writers of a divine figure who becomes human and then returns to God seems not to be paralleled exactly in any surviving Jewish text.

(106) Kim (1997) notes that *katallagē* language is not used of divine–human reconciliation in Greek or Latin literature, but it is so used in 2 Maccabees.

(107) 1 Tim. 2.5, Heb 6.17, 8.6, 9.15, 12.24 (in the last three, Jesus is mediator of a new covenant).

(108) The reason for this is not obvious: the law is not, for instance, regularly called a mediator in LXX.

(109) On the possibility that Paul identifies Christ with Wisdom here, drawing on an existing tradition identifying Wisdom with the Torah, see the discussions of Ziesler (1989), 260–1, Byrne (1996), 320–1. Strecker (2005) suggests a different Roman parallel: that people are admitted into the *pistis* of Christ as they might be admitted into the *fides* of Rome, which is a community-forming relationship, based on trust, which also forms an identity-marker. I considered the same idea before encountering this article: it is attractive particularly because it exploits the elasticity of *fides* to mean an act of trust, a relationship, and the legal status created by that relationship. I concluded, though, that mediation is a better model. In Strecker's model, Christ's position is analogous, if anything, to that of a Roman general receiving a foreign people into *fides* on behalf of the state, but the general, who represents Rome, cannot stand between and represent both groups as does Christ. The mediation model locates the mediator in a position closer to that of Christ, while also belonging to the political sphere (while this language itself appears in the epistles); moreover, mediation can be said to achieve *dikaiosynē/iustitia*, while *iustitia* is not typically described as the outcome of inter-state *fides*. Still, I think it possible that Roman inter-state *fides*, if not the main model here, could be one of a number of partial models (like Taylor's (1966) model of *fideicommissum*) which, in the background of contemporary thinking about *pistis/fides*, might help audiences intuitively to understand Paul's model. On *pistis* as identity-marker in Galatians, see Ulrichs (2007), 94–148.

(110) Cf. 9.30–32, 10.4, 11.20.

(111) Stowers (1989), argues that Paul uses *dia* when only gentiles are in view and *ek* when both Jews and gentiles are in view but cannot distinguish the meanings of the phrases sufficiently to convince.

(112) e.g. Sanders (1983), 192–5.

(113) Cf. e.g. Exod. 4.1, 4.5.

(114) On this chapter and the history of scholarship, see esp. Schliesser (2007). At 5.1–2 Paul moves to restate the role of Christ at the centre of the divine–human relationship, saying that 'since we have been made righteous by *pistis*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access [by *pistis*] to this grace in which we stand...' (cf. 5.8–10).

(115) pp. 183–4.

(116) Schliesser (2012b) argues that *diakrīnesthai* elsewhere in Greek of this period does not yet mean 'doubt' but means 'separate', 'decide', or 'contend/dispute', and so it should be interpreted in the New Testament. *Diakrīnesthai* is occasionally used of combatants bringing a dispute to resolution, but Schliesser exaggerates the strength of this meaning and its incidence. Of its occurrences in the New Testament, 'doubting' seems to me more appropriate at Mk. 11.23 = Mt. 21.21, Jas. 1.6, and Jude 20–2; 'contending' is a possible interpretation at Acts 10.20 and also has attractions at Rom. 14.23 (where the context is one of disputes within the community). Interpreting *diakrīnesthai* as Abraham disputing with God here does not affect the above argument, since the point is that Abraham did *not* doubt/dispute, and it neatly fits the account in Gen. 15.1–6, suppressed by Paul (but perhaps alluded to in this verb), that before he trusted God, Abraham argued with him. We may also note that doubt can be close in different contexts to either fear or scepticism; in the latter case disputation might well be part of it.

(117) Cf. pp. 274–5.

(118) Romans makes use of more propositional language than most letters: e.g. 'If, then, we have died with Christ, we *pisteuein* that we shall also live with him' (6.8). This claim is based on Paul's direct experience of the resurrection and 'knowledge' that he has been crucified with Christ (*contra* e.g. Friedrich (1982), who sees preaching as creating belief and belief as leading to knowledge). Friedrich's conception is too fideistic for the ancient world; it is not analogous with e.g. Philo's *pistis* which leads to knowledge, because that is rooted in scripture, which has the intrinsic authority that preaching lacks. The connection between belief and knowledge is more prominent in John: see further Ch. 10.

(119) Cf. Ljungman (1964), 88–91.

(120) See pp. 447–50.

(121) Cf. 10.11, quoting Isa. 28.16; 10.20, quoting Isa. 65.1–2.

(122) At Phil. 1.25 Paul says that he will always serve the Philippians for their 'progress and joy of *pistis*'.

(123) pp. 286–7.

(124) 14.1–2, which contrasts the strong and weak in *pistis*, may imply that individuals do not always develop. On the other hand, endurance and development are occasionally mentioned, unconnected with *pistis* language (e.g. 5.3–5, 12.12).

(125) Cranfield (1962); I follow what he notes (pp. 345–6) is the traditional interpretation. Cranfield objects that this would involve a Christian thinking better of himself than of a fellow-Christian of less *pistis*, but this does not follow; one might be grateful for the *pistis* God has allowed one without looking down on others.

(126) Cf. Ljungman (1964), 13–26, 41–7 on the close connection between *pistis*, *alētheia*, and the *dikaiosynē* of God elsewhere in Romans.

(127) Abraham's faith initially affected his household, of course, and Paul emphasizes the common descent of the faithful from Abraham (e.g. 4.13), but Abraham's descendants are so many that they are more readily imagined as a people than a household. By the same token, the larger community is implicit in references to the 'household of faith'.

(128) At 12.3–5 the Romans are one body.

(129) On the community of faith as *politeia* in Philippians, see Miller (1982). See further Ch. 12.

(130) Cf. Phil. 2.17, where he describes himself as a 'libation which is poured out' for, and perhaps even by, the Philippians; cf. Rom. 12.1, Eph. 5.2, 1 Pet. 2.5.

(131) He tells everyone to be a living sacrifice at 12.1.

(132) Paul (and Timothy) also extend greetings at the start of the letter to Apphia their 'sister' and Archippus their 'fellow-soldier' and their house church as a whole, but the letter goes on to address Philemon in the singular.

(133) Dunn (1996a), 318–19; cf. Campbell (1932); cf. the discussion of Minear (1960), 136–72. Ryan (2005), 228–9 ad loc. notes the power of *pistis* to create community in general.

(134) Bockmuehl (1997b), 210–12 makes the general point in connection with this passage that the *pistis* and *hypakoē* of the believer may plausibly be seen, here and in Romans and Galatians, as based on those of Christ, and moreover that the *pistis* of Christ is fundamentally an instrument of divine action, and human *pistis* 'merely the mode of its reception' (p. 211). He therefore sees *pistis* as both that of Christ in his death and that of the believer. Martyn (1997), 150–1 makes a similar argument in relation to Gal. 2.16–21.

(135) Widely agreed to be substantially a pre-Pauline hymn, on which, see e.g. Martin (1967).

(136) pp. 152–3, 201–2.

(137) Rom. 6.11, 6.23, 8.1–2, 8.39, [9.1,] 12.5, [15.17,] 16.3, [16.7, 9, 10,] 1 Cor. 1.2, [1.4,] 1.30, 3.1, 4.10, 4.15, [4.17,] 15.18, [15.19,] [15.31,] 16.24, 2 Cor. 2.17, 3.14, 5.17, 5.19, 12.2, 12.19, Gal. 1.22, 2.4, 3.14, 3.26, 3.28, Phil. 1.1, 1.13, 1.26, 2.1, 2.5, 3.3, 3.14, 4.7, 4.19, 4.21, 1 Thess. 2.14, 4.16, 5.18, Phlm. 8, 20, 23.

(138) p. 496.

(139) For Greek and Latin parallels which might have helped listeners hear such an implication, see e.g. pp. 6–7, 20–1, 46, 47–8, 78–9, 110–11. On the interchangeability of *pistis* and Christ elsewhere, see Wolter (2011), 74–5; cf. Theissen (1999a), 279–80.

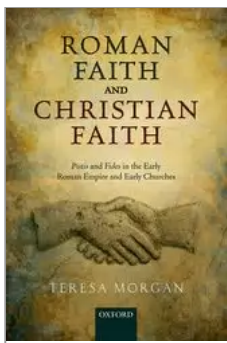
(140) Schliesser (2007), 394–5 emphasizes, surely rightly, the salvation-historical focus of *pistis* for Paul, but reifies it more than is necessary as 'a category whose purpose is to transfer its salvific power to human beings'. For Paul, *pistis* remains a quality and action of God, Christ, and human beings and the relationship that joins them, not an independent entity, whether 'dynamic-temporal-historical' or 'existential-individual'.

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Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches

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Pistis in Non-Pauline Letters

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter looks at divine–human *pistis* in the non–Pauline epistles: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude. It examines how deutero–Pauline letters do or do not take up Paul’s use of *pistis* (arguing, for instance, that Ephesians and Colossians allude to Paul’s model of *pistis Christou*, but develop the idea of pre–election further than Paul). It explores some new ways in which these writers treat *pistis*: for example, the pastoral epistles develop the idea that certain groups within Christian communities (wives, children, slaves) may enact *pistis* in different ways suited to their social position. It discusses the meaning of the phrase ‘the mystery of faith’, arguing that *pistis* is not intended to be mysterious to community members. It examines the distinctive treatment of *pistis* in the letter to the Hebrews and argues for a new interpretation of Hebrews 11.1.

Keywords: *pistis*, non–Pauline epistles, *pistis Christou*, pre–election, community, pastoral, mystery of faith

Compared with those before and after it, this chapter has a somewhat miscellaneous feel, because rather than analysing the shape and operation of *pistis/fides* in large corpora of sources, or tracing their role in substantial texts by a single author, it explores *pistis* language in a handful of writers, each of whom has left only one or two traces of their thinking in mostly relatively brief letters. In some of these letters, moreover, *pistis* language plays a minor role, while in other it is central, though it will be familiar to audiences, but with hardly enough elaboration to allow us to investigate how it is understood. Possible, within these limitations, the aim of this is the same as that of earlier chapters: to consider how the non–Pauline writers, including the Johannine letters, which

will be discussed in Chapter 10) understand the operation of *pistis* and cognate concepts and practices, without taking for granted what they have in common with Paul, with other writers, or with one another. Two questions are of particular interest: whether we can detect that *pistis* and its relatives are treated differently by different writers, and so perhaps understood differently in different communities, and whether we can detect evolutions in their treatment beyond those of Paul. Since there are few, if any, grounds on which to debate the order of these letters' composition, the order below has little significance except that I begin with some letters which seem, in some ways, relatively close to Paul, and place next to one another some which have a certain amount in common.

Ephesians

Ephesians is the letter whose ascription to Paul has been most vigorously debated, and its use of *pistis* language furnishes one among several reasons: it is closer to Paul's in its range and sophistication than that of any other epistle.¹

(p.308) Like Paul, the author (whom we will call [Paul], since he speaks in Paul's voice) uses both *hoi pistoi* and *hoi pisteuontes* to refer to community members, though his references do not meet the stringent criteria set out in Chapter 6 for identifying designations of identity.² The letter begins, for example, 'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the ones who are holy (*hagioi*) [in Ephesus] and *pistoi* in Christ Jesus...'.³ *Hagios* can also be used to designate Christians, so both terms could be being used in parallel to mean 'Christians', or just one of them could be designative, in which case the first is the more likely candidate,⁴ or both could be being used descriptively but not designatively. Like Paul, too, the author refers to a companion, Tychicus, whom he is sending to the community with news, as 'my beloved brother and *pistos diakonos*, faithful deacon in the Lord' (6.21). Calling Tychicus *pistos* marks Tychicus' authority as God's, and more immediately as the author's, representative.⁵

Pistis for Ephesians comes ultimately from God and Christ, though neither is said explicitly to be *pistos* in this letter: 'Peace be to the brothers, and love with *pistis*, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (6.23).⁶ It plays a significant role in chapters 2–3, in which the author outlines his understanding of God's plan of salvation and its implications for the Ephesians. The Ephesians were (like everyone) 'dead in your transgressions and sins' (2.1) until God, 'who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us... brought us to life with Christ', and raised us to heaven (2.4–6). God did this 'that in ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved *dia pisteōs*, and this is not your doing: it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast (τῆτι γὰρ χάριτι ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῆσθαι) (2.8–9).

Whose *pistis* is involved here? The emphasis of the passage is strongly on what God does for sinful human beings through Christ, so it could be Christ's. When, though, the author emphasizes that their salvation is not the Ephesians' own doing, what does he think they imagine might have achieved it: their works, their *pistis*, or both? He could be making one of several possible claims here:

... their works had nothing to do with

... responded with *pistis*, their *pistis* works.

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3. God saved the Ephesians by grace, through Christ, and through the doubly reciprocal *pistis* relationship of Christ with God and humanity, the whole of which is a gift from God and not brought about by the Ephesians' works.

Of these, (2) is just possible, though the concern that *hoi pistoi* might take inappropriate credit for their *pistis* does not occur in Paul and there is no sign of it elsewhere in this letter, so it would be surprising. Both (1) and (3) are also possible: either could derive from Galatians or Romans, depending on one's interpretation of *pistis Christou* there.⁷

[Paul] continues his account of God's plan into chapter 3. At 3.7–12 he describes how he has been granted the grace of ministry to the gentiles so that the wisdom of God may be made known to the world. This, he says, is in accordance with God's purpose, which he accomplished in Christ Jesus (ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ),⁸ in whom we have 'boldness of speech and confidence of access διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ' (3.12). This is often taken as meaning 'through faith in him', but Paul Foster has pointed out that grammatically, and in the context of the sentence, it is more likely to refer to the *pistis* of Christ himself.⁹ This fits well with what the author has said so far: not only in 2.1–6 but also in chapter 1, where the adoption of *hoi pistoi* by God comes through Christ (1.5), redemption comes through Christ's blood (1.7), and *hoi pistoi* are raised up to heaven by God with Christ (2.5). If *tēs pisteōs autou* at 3.12 is Christ's *pistis*, then interpretation (1) of 2.7–9, above, and the idea that salvation comes through the *pistis* of Christ, gains plausibility. Towards the end of the chapter [Paul] describes himself as kneeling in supplication before the Father to ask that the Ephesians may be strengthened with power through God's spirit (3.16), 'and that Christ may dwell in your hearts *dia tēs pisteōs*; that

you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to...know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (γινῶναι τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ), so that you may be filled (**p.310**) with all the fullness of God' (3.17–19). The emphasis here is on qualities which come from God and/or Christ. The spirit comes from God explicitly, while the love in which the Ephesians are 'rooted and grounded' cannot be their own because (logically and elsewhere in the New Testament) one is rooted in, or grounded on, something other than oneself.¹⁰ This love may be both God's and Christ's, since verse 19 speaks of the 'love of Christ'. The 'love of Christ' in this verse, being the object of *ginōskein*, must, I think, in the first instance, be the love that comes from Christ,¹¹ but since it also surpasses knowledge which must be ours (Christ's knowledge presumably being unsurpassable), the author may have in mind that the Ephesians should respond to love that comes from Christ with love of their own.¹² All this makes it more likely that *hē pistis* in verse 17 also comes from God and/or Christ, though it too may be a quality to which the author hopes the Ephesians will respond in kind. This in turn suggests that interpretation (1) of the role of *pistis* in salvation is most likely to be involved here, but that (3) is again possible. (Despite the reference to the Ephesians being strengthened with power through the spirit at 3.16, we may note in passing that this letter has little to say about *pistis* as a quality which helps the community through times of trial. The extended image of the armour of light, however (6.10–17), does exhort them to 'stand firm against the tactics of the devil', and *pistis* plays a role in this action. At 6.16 it has become a shield with which to 'quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one'.¹³)

Even if the Ephesians' own *pistis* does not secure their salvation, the author is clear that they do and must have *pistis*, probably towards both God and Christ. At 4.5 and 4.13 *pistis* is part of the author's argument (4.1–16) that the community of the faithful is unified in principle and should be in practice. There is 'one Lord, one *pistis*, one baptism; one God and Father' (4.5).¹⁴ The focus here is on what the community holds in common, so *pistis* is likely to be a human quality rather than the faithfulness of God or Christ. At 4.13 *pistis* (**p.311**) is paired with knowledge (*epignōsis*) of the Son of God as something every community member aims for: '[Christ] gave some as apostles, others as prophets...to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of *pistis* and of knowledge of the Son of God...' (4.11–13). Grammatically, the *pistis* phrase presents as '*pistis* of the Son of God', but the genitive of the Son of God follows *epignōsis*; since the unity of *pistis* is something community members can hope to attain to and appears to be parallel to *epignōsis*, it would be odd to read this as referring to anything but trust in the Son of God which unifies community members in the 'wigwam' configuration which we first encountered in 1 Thessalonians.¹⁵

Pistis towards Christ has also been identified at 1.13 and 1.15:

(11) In whom [Christ], we were also chosen, destined (ἐκκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες) in accord with the purposes of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, (12) so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ (*en tō Christō*). (13a) In whom (*en hō*) you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, (13b) in whom/which (*en hō*) you have trusted/believed (*pisteusantes*), were sealed with the promised holy spirit, (14) which is the first instalment of our inheritance towards redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory. (15) Therefore I, too, hearing of your *pistis* in the Lord Jesus (τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ) and of your love for all the holy ones, do not cease giving thanks for you...' (1.11–15)

At verse 13b the second *en hō* is often taken to refer to trusting 'in Christ', following verses 11–13a, where *en* and *en hō* refer repeatedly to Christ. This produces a slightly convoluted sentence, so we may prefer to understand *en hō* at 13b as referring to trusting/believing in the gospel. (The author may want to emphasize either that people can trust the preaching they hear because the preacher is trustworthy, or that they can trust its content, for the same reason—neither of which would have shocked Paul.¹⁶) At verse 15, *pistin en tō kyriō Iēsou* follows no fewer than five occurrences of *en Christō* in the previous eight verses (1.7, 10, 11, 12, 13) in the strong and (opaque but) distinctively Pauline meaning of 'in Christ'. It is consequently tempting to hear '*pistis* in the Lord Jesus' as meaning '*pistis*, in the Lord Jesus', but given that the author has shifted from speaking of 'Christ' to 'the Lord Jesus', this phrase may bear its everyday meaning (particularly common in Hebrew or Aramaic-influenced Greek) of 'trust in the Lord Jesus'.¹⁷

(p.312) However we interpret verses 13b and 15, the most striking aspect of this passage is the connection which the author makes between *pistis*, being 'in Christ', and pre-election. When he says that 'in Christ' community members were 'chosen' and 'destined' to exist for God's glory, he hints at the possibility that some people are 'in Christ' even before they hear the gospel. Verse 1.11 closely echoes 1.3–5, where the writer said:

Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us *en Christō* with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him [Christ] (ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ), before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him [God]. In love he destined us for adoption (*huiothesia*) to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favour of his will...

Community members are *adopted* through (the salvific action of) Christ—that is, they do not become God’s children until after the crucifixion and resurrection—but they are *chosen* long before that, ‘in Christ’. Exactly where being ‘in Christ’ fits in the sequence of events is not fully clear, but it precedes the foundation of the world and may be another way of describing pre-election itself.¹⁸ In either case, the *pistis* of human beings, in Jesus and probably in the gospel, becomes less a free act of trust which brings people, from the human side, into a relationship with God, and more an expression and confirmation of their chosenness and pre-election. As such, though it is in line with Paul’s occasional suggestion that certain people are chosen by God to hear and receive the gospel before it is preached to them, it moves beyond Paul’s understanding of being ‘in Christ’ as a consequence of *pistis*.¹⁹

If the *pistis* of community members is a response to their pre-election and an expression of it, it is less surprising that this letter takes relatively little interest (aside from the reference discussed at 1.13b) in the (other) bases on which they put their trust in God and Christ. Notably, there is no reference in this letter to signs and wonders,²⁰ nor to the first-hand testimony of the apostles to the resurrection and appearances of the risen Christ (though the resurrection itself is mentioned or alluded to periodically (1.20, 2.5–6)). Rather, the author expresses the hope that the ‘eyes of [the Ephesians’] hearts’ will be opened (1.18) by the divine gift of ‘a spirit of wisdom and revelation’, so that they can see the riches of glory to which they have been called. If the (p.313) author thinks that human trust in God is in any way not to be taken for granted, he addresses the issue less by appealing to events in the physical world and more to his conviction of the Ephesians’ pre-election to a divine inheritance. The most obvious, though inevitably speculative, explanation of this is that as memories of Jesus in life, of individuals’ experiences of the resurrection, and even memories of contact with those who experienced the resurrection recede in time, other reasons for putting one’s trust in God and Christ come to the fore.²¹

In some ways, Ephesians’ use of *pistis* language is well in line with that of Paul; in at least one it may be more conservative than Paul’s (particularly if it focuses on Christ’s *pistis* rather than on the whole salvific nexus of *pistis* between God, Christ, and humanity), while in at least one other it goes beyond his (by linking *pistis* with pre-election and being ‘in Christ’). For this author, as for Paul, *pistis* is of central importance: God extends it to human beings, Christ practises it towards both God and humanity in his salvific actions, and human beings extend it to both God and Christ. It is, however, commended to the Ephesians on the basis of ‘the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, (1.13b), together with foundational claims about God’s plan for the salvation of the chosen and the promise of heaven, rather than as a response to the apostles’ experience of the risen Christ, the threat of coming wrath, converts’ own experience of signs and wonders, or their experience of the effects of turning to God. The writer understands *pistis* less as a free act of trust in God and Christ than as an expression and confirmation of the predestination of the faithful for heaven. He has, moreover, little interest in *pistis* as a quality of life in community as the faithful await their inheritance.

Colossians

Colossians makes less use of *pistis* language than Ephesians, and uses it in ways which suggest that the author depends heavily on conceptualizations inherited from Paul and perhaps also from Ephesians.²² Community members are called *pistoi* (to God) ‘in Christ’ (1.2),²³ while two deacons, Epaphras and Tychicus, who are said respectively to work on behalf of the community and to speak for [Paul], together with [Paul]’s ‘beloved brother’ Onesimus, are also commended to the community as *pistoi* (1.7, 4.7, 4.9). Community members put their trust in the power of God (2.12) and directly in Christ (*eis Christon*) (2.5), and as in Paul’s letters, *pistis* is a state in which community members persevere in hope (1.23; cf. 1.5).

(p.314) At 1.4 the *pistis* of the community is described as ‘your trust/faithfulness in Christ Jesus (τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)’. The phrase is not explicated nor repeated later in the letter, and the context is simply that [Paul] has heard of the Colossians’ *pistis*, along with their love for fellow-community members. *Pistis...en* here could mean nothing more than ‘trust in’ in an everyday sense,²⁴ or the author could be drawing on Paul’s (and Ephesians’) more specialized sense; if the latter, though, the context does not reveal what he thought it meant.²⁵

Pistis is based, in this letter, partly on ‘the hope reserved for you in heaven’ (1.5), partly on ‘the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven’ (1.23),²⁶ and partly on what the Colossians were taught (2.7),²⁷ including that God raised Jesus from the dead (2.12). As in Ephesians, direct appeals to the experience of the apostles or references to their power have been eclipsed by appeals to teaching and the vision of Christ as the ‘firstborn of all creation’ (1.15). Colossians, though, does not share Ephesians’ strong emphasis on pre-election, and when the author tells the Colossians to keep firm and persevere in *pistis* (1.21, 2.5), he seems to give them a more active role in their own *pistis* than does the author of Ephesians.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians is regarded by many commentators as Pauline, and though on balance I follow the sceptics, the writer’s use of *pistis*

language has much in common with that of 1 Thessalonians. The lexicon appears ten times in the letter's three short chapters. As in 1 Thessalonians, the Lord is faithful (*pistos*) (3.3).²⁸ *Pistis* distinguishes community members either from outsiders or (possibly) from renegade members of their own church: 'not all people have *pistis*' (3.2).²⁹ As in 1 Thessalonians, *pistis* is capable of development and endures under persecution (1.3–4), and at 1.11 [Paul] refers to the 'work of *pistis*' which he hopes God will help listeners or readers fulfil, a phrase which otherwise appears only at 1 Thessalonians 1.3.³⁰

(p.315) At 1.10 [Paul] tells his audience that they are *pisteuontes* because, 'my testimony/proof was believed by you (ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς)'. *Martyrion* and related words are strong terms, often used of eyewitness testimony or irrefutable proof, suggesting a reference to Paul's experience of the resurrection and that of other apostles. The writer goes on to express his concern about a 'lawless one' (2.3, 2.8), who claims that he is a god (2.4), and who is demonstrating his status through great deeds, signs, and wonders—which, however, come from not from God but from Satan (2.9). Those who believe his lies apparently do so on the basis of the evidence of his great deeds. [Paul] urges the Thessalonians not to be 'shaken out of your minds' by a fake spirit, nor by *logoi* or letters which claim, falsely, to be from Paul (2.2), but to stick to his own teaching, which he communicated in person through *logoi* and through letters (2.2, 15).³¹ His teaching is true (2.10, 12, 13), whereas what the lawless one communicates is lies and deceit (2.9–11). The writer sums up by saying that God is sending those who 'have not accepted the love of truth so that they may be saved' a 'deceiving power, so that they may believe the lie, that all who have not believed the truth but have approved wrongdoing may be condemned (εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει, ἵνα κριθῶσιν πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστευσάντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλὰ εὐδοκήσαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ)' (2.11–12; cf. 13.)

The intrusion of the lawless one into the Thessalonians' affairs takes us into territory unexplored by 1 Thessalonians, but the writer's concerns about the signs, wonders, lies, and false demonstrations of spirit which he claims are being practised by his competitor are a mirror image of the claims Paul makes in 1 Thessalonians to convince the Thessalonians of the reliability of his own preaching. (They also describe exactly the kind of seductive but unreliable evidence for claims of divine patronage which sometimes worry other Greek and Roman writers.³²) Ultimately, the writer says, the lawless one will be unmasked and destroyed by the Lord Jesus (2.8), but he does not ask his audience to trust God, Christ, or himself in hope of this future outcome; rather, he tells them to believe on the basis of what they have already heard, and threatens them with destruction if they do not.

Titus

Titus is another letter which makes heavy use of *pistis* language (eleven times in three chapters), in ways which in some respects are well in line with Paul's usage but in others go beyond it.³³

(p.316) God is not described as *pistos* in this letter, but it is implicit when [Paul] refers to himself as 'entrusted' (*episteuthēn*) with the proclamation of God's word (1.3), 'for the sake of the *pistis* of God's chosen ones' (1.1). This is presumably the trust of the chosen ones in God and Christ, whose slave and apostle [Paul] is (1.1). Shortly afterwards the author refers to the *pistis* which he and Titus share (1.4), while at 3.8 he tells Titus to emphasize to the community that the appropriate response to God's grace is various kinds of virtuous behaviour (3.1–9). (This list does not include intra-human *pistis*, but *pistis* towards God (3.8) is the basis on which people devote themselves to good works.)

Like other deutero-Pauline letters, Titus has a good deal to say about the different ways in which community members should behave. At 1.6 [Paul] says that when the community appoints presbyters, they should be men who are, 'blameless, married only once, with children who are *pista* and not accused of licentiousness nor rebellious'.³⁴ As we discussed in Chapter 6, being *pista* here could refer to the children's ordinary human obedience to their father, but is more likely to refer to the desirability of their being community members (or conceivably community members who acknowledge and are *pistos* towards their father's spiritual, as well as human, authority).

Another passage about the behaviour of community members may shed further light on 1.6. At 2.9–10 [Paul] says that slaves should be wholly under the control of their masters, 'giving them satisfaction, not talking back to them or stealing from them, but showing all loyalty (*pāsan pistin*) so as to adorn the teaching of God our saviour in everything (ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν)'. 1 Timothy 6.2, as we have seen, gives not dissimilar advice, but there the author makes clear that the issue is that the normal authority of masters over slaves should continue to pertain even when they are fellow-community members (*pistoi*) and so, in one sense, 'brothers'.³⁵ In this passage of Titus, *pistis* looks primarily as if it means ordinary human loyalty—but with a twist. Titus sees the *pistis* exercised by slaves towards their masters as an expression, even a celebration, of their *pistis* towards God. In effect, they demonstrate and 'adorn' their religious *pistis* by a certain form of secular behaviour. This is the first clear example we have encountered of what will become a persistent theme in Christian ethics: that community members express and live

out their faith through behaviours which are specific to their status, whether as men, wives, slaves, children, or **(p.317)** office holders.³⁶ This interpretation also makes possible another interpretation of 1.6. The children of presbyters may be being required to be *pista* not simply in human terms or as community members, but *as community members who are the children of presbyters*, as a way of marking their particular status. If this is right, then these passages mark a significant step away from the conceptualization of *pistis* as something which is exercised towards God, Christ, and those to whom God has entrusted the gospel, to its conceptualization as something practised (as in Judaism and Graeco-Roman society more widely) between community members, under divine protection. These passages still fall short of understanding *pistis* as practised between community members purely *as* community members, characterizing *pistis* as functionally specific to members' status—but in that, they replicate most instances of *pistis* in wider society, where the nature of *pistis* is tied to the relative status and the specific activities of the participants.

We saw in Ephesians and Colossians, though not in 2 Thessalonians, that the writers appeal less to Paul's personal experiences or those of his converts as a basis for *pistis*, and more to his teachings. The same is true in this letter. An elder, says the author, should be someone who holds fast to the *pistos logos*, the 'trustworthy word', according to the teaching he has received (1.9). After describing the saving action of Christ in chapter 3 (4–7), he says (3.8), *pistos ho logos*: 'this saying is trustworthy.'³⁷

In most of this letter *pistis* is interpretable as trust in God or in inherited teachings, or, more adventurously, as loyalty towards other human beings which defines and 'adorns' one's position in the community of the faithful. In addition, the writer once uses *en tē pistei* and once *en pistei* in ways which may mean something like 'in the *pistis* relationship which marks our community'.³⁸ At 1.13 he is reminding Titus that he left him in Crete so that he could appoint sound elders in every town: 'For there are also many rebels, idle talkers and deceivers, especially the circumcised' (1.10). Cretans, after all (quoting a famous line from the archaic Cretan poet Epimenides which had become proverbial), 'have always been liars, vicious beasts, and lazy gluttons' (1.12).³⁹ They must therefore be admonished, ἴνα ὑγιαίνωσιν ἐν τῇ πίστει, 'so **(p.318)** that they may be sound in *pistis*'. This may refer to the Cretans' trust in God, or, since the writer has just been talking about the soundness of Cretan communities in general, it could refer to 'the *pistis* relationship' or even 'the community created by trust in God'. At 3.15, as part of his farewell, the author says: 'Greet those who love us in *pistis* (ἄσπασαι τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει).' This could refer to 'those who love us because of their *pistis* towards God', or again it could, echoing one of the extended usages of Galatians and Romans, refer to the relationship or the community of the faithful in which followers of Christ live.⁴⁰

1 and 2 Timothy

1 and 2 Timothy are thought by many commentators to share an author with each other and with the Epistle to Titus.⁴¹ Their use of *pistis* language has much in common with that of Titus and is similar to one another's, so they can conveniently be considered together.

God is again not explicitly called *pistos* in these letters, but 2 Timothy 2.13 affirms that even if community members fail in trust (*apistein*), Christ remains *pistos*.⁴² Since this *logos* comes at the end of a series of four which all concern Christ's relationship with human beings, the simplest reading of *pistos* here is as referring to Christ's faithfulness to humanity. This and the previous couplet, however, run: '[I]f we deny him, he will deny us; if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful (εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει), for he cannot deny himself.' This suggests that Christ also remains faithful to God, because for Christ to 'deny himself' would mean denying his role in the salvation which, as the writer has just expressed it, God has brought about through him (cf. 1.8, 10). Though, therefore, the writer's language does not echo that of Galatians, Romans, or Philippians, he may be drawing here on Paul's understanding of Christ as mediating between God and humanity through his *pistis* towards God in his salvific death and resurrection.

Another later passage offers some support for this idea. At 3.10–16 [Paul] is praising Timothy for continuing to follow his 'teaching, way of life, purpose, *pistis*, patience, love, endurance...' (3.10) under persecution, and warning him that he can expect to be persecuted further. 'But you, hold fast in what you have learned and believed (*epistōthēs*), because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred scriptures, **(p.319)** which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through *pistis tēs en Christō Iēsou*' (3.14–15). Like the author of Ephesians, the author of 2 Timothy understands community members as saved and called to a holy life (1.9) not by their own works, but by God's plan and 'the grace bestowed on us *en Christō Iēsou* before time began' (1.9). Being 'in Christ' is therefore not something Christ's followers achieve for themselves: it is given to them, which suggests that the salvation that comes through *pistis tēs en Christō Iēsou* at 3.15 is also not achieved by them but by Christ. This, as David Downs has argued, brings this phrase into the *pistis Christou* debate, on the 'subjective' side.⁴³ At the same time, as Downs also argues, Timothy's own *pistis* is invoked in this letter, without an object at 1.5 and in relation to what he has learned at 3.14, and so is [Paul]'s own at 3.10, allowing us to hear *pistis tēs en Christō Iēsou* as the *pistis* which Timothy practises too. Downs suggests, therefore, building on Morna Hooker's (1989) argument about Paul,⁴⁴ that *pistis* in this passage is both the

faithfulness of Christ and the faith of those who are in Christ. If so, then both here and at 2.13 the author of 2 Timothy is echoing one of Paul's most theologically complex and innovative uses of *pistis*.

In both letters community members can be referred to as *pistoi* (1 Tim. 4.10, 5.8, 5.16, 6.2; cf. 4.3, 2.2), while non-members can be called *apistoi* (1 Tim. 5.8; cf. 1.13).⁴⁵ Unusually, the *pistis* of women is mentioned specifically three times in 1 Timothy. At 5.16 'any *pistē*' refers simply to female community members, but two other passages describe distinctive ways in which women should behave: 2.15, where the author says that women 'will be saved through child-bearing, if they persist in *pistis* and love and holiness with prudence', and 3.11, where he says that women must be 'dignified, not backbiting, sober, faithful (*pistas*) in everything'.⁴⁶ The contexts of both references are virtue lists, but unusually short ones, with a balance of virtues directed towards God and towards other community members, leaving open whether the *pistis* of women here is directed towards the men of the community or directly to God.⁴⁷

Setting 1 Timothy 6.2 alongside these passages suggests that the *pistis* of women is directed towards God. At 6.2 the author urges: 'Those [slaves] who have masters who are *pistous* must not be disrespectful (μη καταφρονεῖτωσαν) towards them because they are brothers (*adelphoi*), but must give better (p.320) service, because those benefiting from their work are *pistoi*...'.⁴⁸ I argued in Chapter 6 that the *pistis* of the masters here is towards God, not towards their slaves. As community members, the slaves too are *pistoi* towards God. If it were appropriate for them also to have intra-human *pistis* towards masters who were community members, this would be a natural place to say so, but the author does not. We infer that the author's interest is in divine-human rather than intra-human *pistis*, which makes it more likely that the *pistis* of women at 2.15 and 3.11 is also towards God.

To whomever the *pistis* of women is directed, however, the most striking feature of 1 Timothy 2.15 and 3.11 is that it identifies certain behaviours as appropriate for female community members *as women*. This is not the first time that an epistle writer has tried to regulate women's behaviour (cf. 1 Cor. 7.4–16, 25–40, 11.3–6), but it is the first time that gendered behaviour has been explicitly linked with *pistis* and, apart from the example we have just encountered in the Epistle to Titus, the first time we have heard that *pistis* towards God may express itself in different ways in community members of different statuses. For the first time here in churches, it seems, the faithful are not just faithful, but faithful in specific and status-dependent ways.

Pistis or *hē pistis* is used several times in these letters to designate the divine-human relationship. The people of Ephesus, the writer tells Timothy (1 Tim. 1.3–5), must not 'teach false doctrines' or 'concern themselves with myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations'; rather, they should receive God's government *en pistei*. Since *pistis* is being described here as an appropriate response to being governed by God, we can assume it refers to human trust/obedience towards God.⁴⁹ This *pistis*, the writer goes on to say (1.5), should be *anhypokritos*, 'sincere', a strongly relational word and one whose positive form is strongly associated with politics.⁵⁰ 2 Timothy 1.5 uses the word again, to praise the sincere *pistis* which lives in Timothy and which his mother and grandmother practised before him.⁵¹ We can detect here signs of inflation in the use of *pistis* language, testifying to how much it has been used already in Christian communities: for this author, it is not enough to tell people to put their trust in God; they must do it wholeheartedly.

The author of 2 Timothy opens his letter by exhorting Timothy, in terms strongly reminiscent of Romans 1.16, not to be ashamed of his witness to Christ (1.8). He himself is not ashamed, though he has suffered through answering his call to a holy life (1.9, 12), 'because I know the one in whom (p.321) I have put my trust and I am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been given to me...' (1.12).⁵²

1 Timothy 2.7 offers another example of the trusting relationship of the faithful to God, this time adding a layer of human hierarchy to the picture. The author has just affirmed that Christ gave himself as a ransom for all, and says that this was the testimony, 'at the proper time'. He continues: 'For this I was appointed preacher and apostle (I am speaking the truth; I am not lying), teacher of the gentiles *en pistei kai alētheiai*.' Since the writer is talking of Paul and his mission here, *pistis* and *alētheia* probably refer to his conduct of his ministry in a relationship of trust and trustworthiness with God and of truth-telling on God's behalf.⁵³ He says something similar at 2 Timothy 3.10, when he tells Timothy: 'You have followed my teaching, way of life, purpose, *pistis*, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra...' Here, Paul's *pistis*, among other qualities, seems to act both as reason to follow him (as he follows Christ) and perhaps also as a model for imitation.

We can hear these verses as references to a developing hierarchy of authority within churches all the more easily because, at 1 Timothy 1.12, [Paul] has already said explicitly that he is grateful to Christ, who thought him *pistos* and appointed him to serve as a deacon. Here being *pistos* is clearly more than being a community member: it means, as we have already seen it meaning in some of

Paul's letters, a special calling to authority because of one's work on Christ's behalf. [Paul] later affirms that Christ works through him to bring others to trust/believe in him (*pisteuein ep' auto*) (1.16) and that deacons gain a good standing in the community (3.13).

At 1 Timothy 1.14 *pistis* is 'the *pistis* and love that are in Christ Jesus'.⁵⁴ We have noted several times how difficult 'in Christ' is to interpret, and since it is far from self-explanatory (even, as far as we can tell, to a contemporary ear), the author of this letter may be borrowing the formulation from Paul without any very clear or independent idea what it means. At a minimum, however, we can infer that *pistis* and love are understood as characteristics of the relationship which Christ made possible by his saving action (cf. 1.15) and which Paul achieved with God and Christ when he stopped being *apistos* (cf. 1.13).⁵⁵ 2 Timothy 1.13 uses almost the same phrase in a very similar way, again in the (p.322) context of Christ's salvific action. Timothy is urged to hold to the standard of sound teaching which he has heard from [Paul], 'in the *pistis* and love which is in Christ Jesus (*ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*)'.⁵⁶

In a number of other passages, the trusting relationship of the faithful with God seems to have become reified into something more structural. [Paul] opens 1 Timothy (1.2) by describing Timothy as his *γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει*, 'loyal child in *pistis*'. At 4.1 he warns Timothy that the spirit says that in the last times some will turn away from *hē pistis* to demons; at 5.8, that anyone who does not take care of family members 'has broken the *pistis*' (*τὴν πίστιν ἤρνηται*, using a verb commonly used of breaking treaties). In chapter 6 (10–12) he tells Timothy that some have wandered away from *hē pistis* for love of money, while others (6.21), even as they have confessed *hē pistis*, have deviated from it. To this we might add 3.9, which exhorts deacons to hold fast to 'the mystery of *pistis* (*τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως*)'.⁵⁷ 2 Timothy (4.7) continues the theme, concluding the main body of the letter: 'I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept (*τετήρηκα*) *hē pistis*.' *Tērein* is a strongly politico-military word, meaning 'to guard' or 'keep safe', which anticipates a physical or legal object; this suggests that *pistis* is reified here, perhaps into the divine–human bond of trust. In all these passages *pistis* can be understood as something—the relationship, the bond, even the community or the new covenant—in which the faithful live. (There is, though, no reason to hear it as having evolved further than that in the direction of the later meaning 'the faith'.⁵⁸)

It has already been noted that Ephesians and Titus take a particular interest in the trustworthiness of teachings, perhaps reflecting their composition at a time when most community members were no longer converted by encountering and hearing apostles who had known Jesus in his lifetime or who had experienced the resurrection at first hand.⁵⁹ 1 and 2 Timothy invoke the trustworthiness of teachings even more often. At 1 Timothy 1.15, [Paul] observes *pistos ho logos*, that Christ came into the world to save sinners. At 3.1 the same phrase confirms that whoever aspires to become a bishop aspires to a good work. The phrase appears yet again at 4.9, confirming that piety (towards God and Christ) holds the promise of life now and in the future, and again at 2 Timothy 2.11, introducing the proclamation that if we have died with Christ, we shall also live with him, and he will always remain faithful.⁶⁰

To modern ears, the *pistis* of words or discourse is likely to be strongly associated not just with trust or trustworthiness, but with truth and (p.323) propositional believability. (The Book of Common Prayer translates 1 Timothy 1.15: 'This is a *true* saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.') We have seen, however, that in the Septuagint *alētheia* language is often used as an alternative to *pistis* language to translate the 'emunah lexicon, where the accent is on (often God's) reality, foundational steadfastness, and reliability.⁶¹ In Greek in general, too, 'reality' (as opposed to 'mere appearance') is as strong a meaning of *alētheia* as 'truth' (as opposed to a lie). If the author of 1 Timothy had spoken of his *logos* being *alēthēs*, whether in the ordinary Greek sense of such a phrase or in a meaning influenced by the Septuagint, he could have been heard as meaning not only that the words could be demonstrated by evidence to be true, but also that he and they could be trusted as being honest and reliable. By using *pistos* rather than *alēthēs*, he emphasizes this aspect of his meaning. A *pistos logos* is true and believable, but it is, even more importantly, trustworthy and reliable, and by extension, so is the person who communicates it.

1 Timothy's primary concern in these passages is therefore the trustworthiness of words and writings as a source of life-changing *pistis* towards God and Christ, at a time when the communication of the good news and evocation of *pistis* relies decreasingly on the preaching of Jesus' earliest followers. Similarly, when at 2 Timothy 2.17–18 [Paul] criticizes Hymettus and Philetus, 'who have deviated from the truth (*alētheia*) by saying that the resurrection has already taken place and are upsetting some people's *pistis*', the *pistis* they are upsetting is not simply the belief that the resurrection will happen, but some people's trust in God for their ultimate attainment of eternal life (cf. 1.1, 1.10). The author confirms this in the next verse, when he says: 'Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands, bearing the inscription, "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord avoid evil.'" (2.19). *Pistis* means basing one's life and hope on God, affiliating oneself with God rather than evil, and waiting to be summoned as one who is known by God to belong to God, to 'reign with Christ' (2.12).⁶²

Shortly afterwards (3.1–9), the author foretells that the last days will be full of evil people who ‘make an appearance of piety but deny its power’ (3.5), who are ‘always trying to learn but never able to reach an understanding of *alētheia*’ (p.324) (3.7), and who must be rejected by the faithful. ‘Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so they also oppose *tē alētheiai*: people of depraved mind, unversed in *tēn pistin*’ (3.8). *Pistis* and *alētheia* come close to being equated here, not in the sense that *hē pistis* is a set of propositions which followers of Christ believe are true, but in the sense that those who are depraved or mindlessly foolish (3.9) cannot be in that right relationship with God which is characterized by piety, trust, and understanding.

Excursus: to *mystērion tēs pisteōs*

The best-known occurrence of *pistis* in these letters comes at 1 Timothy 3.9, as the author, as we have already seen, is setting out how various groups of community members (overseers, deacons, women) should behave. Like overseers, he says, ‘deacons must be devoted to God [or perhaps just “dignified”] (*semnoi*), not deceitful, not heavy drinkers, not greedy for sordid wealth, but they must hold to *to mystērion tēs pisteōs* with a clear conscience’ (3.8–9). The phrase ‘the mystery of (the) faith’ has attracted wide-ranging exegetical discussion and stimulated even more theological and spiritual reflection, in which contexts ‘faith’ or ‘the faith’ is frequently understood as itself a mystery.⁶³ For various reasons, however, this is not likely to be what the author has in mind.

First, we may note the immediate context of the phrase. The author is setting out rules of conduct for community leaders; theological or spiritual profundities are not his concern in this passage. If the phrase were in common use elsewhere in early churches, then he could have used it in passing, with reference to an established meaning, but though the word *mystērion* is used elsewhere in the New Testament, this phrase is not, and there is no reason to think it was in common use among Christians at the time. Context thus suggests that *pistis* is not being described as intrinsically mysterious.

Secondly, we should bear in mind the meaning of *mystēria* elsewhere in the Greek world. *Mystēria*, the earliest attested form of which are the Eleusinian mysteries, are primarily ‘mystery’ cults (or the rituals or objects used in them);⁶⁴ what makes a cult a mystery is that only initiates know its rituals (and, by extension, what worshippers ask for and receive from the god worshipped). Most Greek and Roman cults are open to all: one does not have to be an initiate to watch a procession or a sacrifice, listen to prayers, enter a temple, or take part in worship. The spaces, rituals, and prayers of mystery cults, however, are open only to those who have been through an (p.325) initiation rite, and initiates are supposed not to tell anyone what takes place in their acts of worship (though in practice at least parts of the rituals of large cults such as the Eleusinian mysteries were an open secret by the early principate). By the first century CE there were dozens, if not hundreds, of mystery cults scattered around the Graeco-Roman world, especially in the Greek East: a few of them large and wealthy, but most small, with small numbers of worshippers.⁶⁵ Since by their nature they did not publicly display their calendars, rituals, prayers, or worshippers, evidence for most of these cults is now very scarce, but most people in the first century must have known of their existence, and many early followers of Christ will have known something about at least some of them, and may even have participated in one or more.

The appearance of the term *mystērion* twenty-eight times in the New Testament, which in general has little to say about Greek or Roman cults, indicates that these cults were indeed well known, at least by reputation, to writers of the New Testament and to their audiences. It further suggests that *mystēria* had features which struck followers of Christ as similar to aspects of their own cult. Though lack of information about most mystery cults hampers comparison, one obvious point is that just as only initiates are allowed to witness and take part in the rituals of mystery cults, only the baptized are allowed to witness and take part in the celebration of the Eucharist. It has also been suggested that both mystery cults and discipleship of Christ involved imitating the object of worship, and (more speculatively) that mystery cults, like Christianity, understood the relationship between worshippers and the object of worship as in some way closer than did most other cults.⁶⁶ What is unlikely to be the case, however, is that followers of Christ thought of their *pistis* towards God or Christ as a mystery, or even ‘mystical’, in any modern sense—as intrinsically mysterious or taking place on a spiritual plane different from that of other forms of religious observance and relationship. There is no good evidence that either first-century Christians or adherents of mysteries thought of their cults in such terms.⁶⁷

(p.326) The way *mystērion* and its cognates are used metaphorically elsewhere in Greek literature supports this view. Plato, for example, uses the term of the philosophical understanding of virtue (*Men.* 76e) and of the teachings of Protagoras (*Tht.* 156a), which are mysterious to those who do not understand them, but not to those who practise philosophy. Philo (*Imm.* 61–2) describes as *mystēria* teachings about God and virtue which human beings can only grasp with divine guidance. In addition, *mystērion* is commonly used in Greek of an everyday secret, which is known to some people but not others.⁶⁸ In all these usages, what makes a *mystērion* a *mystērion* is not that it is intrinsically mysterious or mystical in any modern sense, but that it is understood only by insiders.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Revelation use *mystērion* in varied contexts, but among New Testament writers 1 Timothy is doubtless drawing on Paul's usage.⁶⁹ Paul uses *mystērion* eight times in 1 Corinthians and Romans.⁷⁰ At 1 Corinthians 2.1, for example, he tells the Corinthians: 'When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the *mystērion* of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' This passage is part of Paul's apologia for the crucifixion, which he calls a 'stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1.23–4). His argument is that only those (p.327) who are called by God and respond can understand why the cross is not a *skandalon*, but, 'wisdom...righteousness, sanctification, and redemption' (1.30). The 'mystery of God' is the divine–human relationship which only those who are called to *pistis* and who respond will understand; it is like a Greek mystery in that those who remain outside it will never understand it.⁷¹

At 4.1 Paul describes himself and his fellow-apostles as 'slaves of Christ and stewards (*hypēretai*) of the mysteries of God'.⁷² At 13.2 he says: 'If I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all *mystēria* and all knowledge...but do not have love, I am nothing.' At 14.2 Paul criticizes those who speak in tongues as speaking only to God, not to other human beings; he prefers those who prophesy, because they do address other human beings. In all these passages *mystēria* are referenced as inaccessible to outsiders but comprehensible to insiders who serve the relevant divinity.

At Romans 11.25 Paul has been warning gentile followers of Christ not to 'boast against' (11.19) the Jews, just because they (gentiles) are not required to keep the law.⁷³ Rather, they should recognize that they are 'a wild olive shoot' grafted by God's grace onto Jewish stock and supported by it (11.17–18, 22). 'I do not want you to be ignorant of this *mystērion*, brothers,' Paul says, 'so that you will not become wise in your own estimation...' There is no reason to think that Paul regards the incorporation of the gentiles into the body of Christ's followers (cf. 12.5) as mysterious in the sense that community members are not expected to be able understand it. He has been explaining and justifying it throughout this letter, as he does elsewhere. It is a teaching which, he tells the gentiles, those who are (proper) community members, who do not rely on their own wisdom but on that of God, can and should understand.

The idea that a *mystērion* is something that (proper) community members can and should understand is also in play in 1 Corinthians 15. 'Behold,' says Paul, 'I tell you a *mystērion*. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in the blink of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed' (15.51–2). This may sound to a modern ear as mysterious as anyone could wish, but Paul's point is that he *can* conceptualize and describe the final resurrection, and if the Corinthians are good community members, they will accept what he says. If, on the other hand, they cannot accept it, then by implication they do not (p.328) accept the resurrection of Christ, and if they do not accept that, then 'empty is our preaching; empty too your *pistis*' (15.14). The resurrection is a mystery in the sense that it is something that only community members are expected to put their trust in and to understand, but to community members Paul does not expect it to be mysterious or difficult to believe.

At Romans 16.25–6 (if these verses are original) Paul uses *mystērion* in a slightly different way again, saying that the *mystērion* has been 'kept secret for long ages' but is now revealed through prophetic writings, and above all through Jesus Christ and the gospel, so that it can be made known to the whole world and evoke the 'obedience of *pistis*' (among some, if not all). The *mystērion* here is evidently the fact that salvation and *dikaiosynē* have come to human beings who have *pistis*, through the self-sacrifice of Christ. The idea that this has been kept secret in the past sounds slightly odd, since Christ's self-sacrifice has only recently happened (and was foretold by the prophets), but Paul must be referring to the idea, which he has articulated elsewhere, that God planned everything that has happened, but that until now it has been a secret in the sense that only God has known his own plan. Here again, the implication of the term *mystērion* is that outsiders (who until the coming of Christ included everyone) did not know what God knew. Whether there is still an element of *mystērion* about following Christ Paul does not say, because his concern in the rest of this passage is the fact that the gospel can be preached throughout the world, but in the light of the other passages we have considered there is no reason to think so.

For Paul, therefore, *to mystērion* means very much what it means in Greek culture more widely. He uses it in several slightly different ways, but never to mean something that is mysterious to those within the community of the faithful.⁷⁴ The same is likely to be true at 1 Timothy 3.9, where the author refers to 'holding fast to *to mystērion tēs pisteōs* with a clear conscience'. The author is listing the good qualities which deacons need to have. The simplest interpretation of this verse is that it means that deacons must be steadfast and honest in their commitment to everything that it means to be a community member. There is no reason to think that what this involves is meant to be a mystery to insiders—not least because if it were, how could deacons be expected to 'hold fast' to it?

(p.329) Return to 1 and 2 Timothy

In addition to considering the meaning of *to mystērion* at 1 Timothy 3.9, we may reflect briefly on *hē pistis* in the same verse. This is

one of the passages where most commentators understand *pistis* as meaning something very close to ‘the faith’ in the modern sense. And in association with *to mystērion*, which refers to a cult in all its aspects, *hē pistis* does seem to come as close here as anywhere in the New Testament to meaning ‘the cult which trust in God and Christ creates’. Whether, though, this is because *hē pistis*, by the time this letter is written, is beginning to be understood as meaning something close to ‘the cult’, or whether this meaning is an accidental consequence of the juxtaposition of two words which usually appear separately, is not clear.

To sum up: in 1 and 2 Timothy *pistis* is characterized as a relationship between God and the faithful and Christ and the faithful. The author may also take up Paul’s understanding of *pistis Christou*, in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians, as the doubly reciprocal *pistis* of Christ towards God and humanity and God and humanity towards Christ which seals the new covenant. (If so, however, he seems to combine it with a stronger sense than Paul’s that Christ’s followers are pre-elected, and therefore that their *pistis* is less a free act which enables them to be saved than a recognition that they are already ‘in Christ’.) *Pistis* is strongly represented as a crucial, if not the crucial, marker of community identity: those in the community have it and those outside do not. Within the community, some people are described as *pistoi* in the distinctive sense that they have extra authority, having been chosen by God to preach, teach, and/or serve as deacons, though in these letters, in contrast with Paul’s, the power which being chosen by God confers seems to be confined to preaching, and does not extend to signs or wonders. The author of these letters takes up what we have argued are Paul’s most extended uses of *pistis*, to mean not just the relationship between God, Christ, and faithful human beings, but the entity that this relationship creates, whether we call that the community, the *ekklēsia*, or the new covenant. He may even go further, and at 1 Timothy 3.9 use *hē pistis* to mean something close to ‘the cult’. The idea of this community as an entity is fortified periodically by political and military, as well as religious, language, which affirms that God is the community’s ruler and that its relationship with him is to be maintained by sincere deference, defended and fought for as well as lived in.⁷⁵ Within the community, the author also expands what it means to be *pistos*, by linking it more than any writer we have yet encountered with specific social statuses, and developing **(p.330)** the idea that there are distinctive ways to be *pistos* as, for instance, a slave, a woman, and perhaps even a community leader’s child.

In contrast with Paul, the author of 1 and 2 Timothy has rather little to say about the basis on which Timothy or others accept the preaching of the gospel; what he does say focuses strongly on the reliability of inherited *logoi*, teachings. Notably absent from these letters is what is present in Paul: appeal to the apostles’ direct experience of the resurrection and of signs and deeds of power.⁷⁶ Perhaps, in churches moving on from the explosive first years of the proclamation, trust in the truth of teachings is beginning to take the place of certainty based on direct or indirect experience.

Hebrews

Among non-Pauline epistles, the *pistis* language of Hebrews has attracted by far the most discussion in recent years: appropriately enough, since Hebrews is a long and theologically distinctive letter which makes extensive use of the *pistis* lexicon. Hebrews is sometimes understood as developing a distinctive concept of *pistis*, and sometimes as drawing on Jewish or Greek concepts with relatively little modification.⁷⁷ The recent monograph by Victor Rhee discusses extensively the recent history of interpretation, before developing its own approach.⁷⁸ The way *pistis* is interpreted in this letter, Rhee argues, relates closely to the way in which the letter is understood overall: whether as strongly ethical, Christological, or eschatological. When ethics are understood as central, for example, *pistis* is the proper response of human beings to the sacrifice of Christ, the human side of the new covenant which is a praxis rather than the content of belief.⁷⁹ In some analyses Christ is seen as the object of faith, in others as a model of faith.⁸⁰ When eschatology is seen as central, *pistis* is understood as forward-looking or as having present aspects too; as spatial and transcendent rather than temporal.⁸¹

Erich Grässer is among those who have blended a number of these approaches, arguing that for the author of Hebrews, Christians exist in a time of waiting, in which existential faith is dissolved into the virtue that they need to **(p.331)** endure until the arrival of the parousia.⁸² Rhee and Dennis Hamm too understand *pistis* in Hebrews as a complex concept, involved in both theology and paraenesis.⁸³ They argue, along similar, though not identical lines, that Christ is at once the object, model, and enabler of faith, while human *pistis* is best understood both ethically and eschatologically. Human faithfulness involves obedience, steadfastness, endurance, and confidence.⁸⁴ Human *pistis* looks forward to the parousia, which gives it a strongly eschatological dimension.⁸⁵

The nature of the relationship between God, Jesus Christ, and faithful human beings is an implicit theme in all these approaches, all of which have significant attractions (though their complexity and connections with late Christian understandings of faith raise once more the spectre of anachronism). It may be possible to add a little more to them by focusing explicitly on *pistis* as a relationship in the context of Hellenistic Judaism and the early principate.

In Hebrews, as elsewhere, *pistis* is first exercised by God, who is faithful to his promises (10.23). Though the *pistis* of God is not mentioned explicitly until chapter 10, it is illustrated from the beginning of the book, which the author frames with an apocalyptic picture of God and his son on high (1.3). God created the world through his son (1.2); having spoken in ‘partial and various’ ways to the Hebrews’ ancestors (1.1), he spoke unambiguously to ‘us’ through his son (1.2) during his life on earth, and later through those who heard him (2.3). The author defends the trustworthiness of this revelation by reporting that to the word announced through angels and through the Lord (2.2–3), God added ‘signs, wonders, various acts of power, and distribution of the gifts of the holy spirit according to his will’ (2.4).

The idea that God is faithful will not have surprised the author’s original, (presumptively) Hellenistic-Jewish Christian audience. In addition, as has often been noted, the *pistis* of Jesus Christ is referred to unambiguously more often in this than any other letter, and is clearly a key theme for the author.⁸⁶ Jesus is first described as *pistos* to God at 2.17: ‘he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and *pistos* high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people.’ The high priest whom the author particularly has in mind, it emerges, is Melchizedek, the high priest of Genesis 14.18–20 and Psalm 109.4 (LXX), who by the late first century CE could be (p.332) treated as a divine being who descends to the human sphere or is taken up from it.⁸⁷ We cannot be sure that the author has these strands of tradition in mind, but even if he does not, since the divine Sonship of Jesus has already been established, the *pistis* of Jesus is introduced in the context both of his divine origins and of the special importance of his *pistis* during his lifetime. The high priest (whether divine or not), as representative of the people of Israel, intercedes for them, and also behaves as God would wish all his people to behave: loyal and obedient to God, even in suffering, merciful and helpful towards his fellow-human beings (2.17–18). The author may have in mind here passages from the scriptures in which faithfulness is described as a quality of priests in general, though Melchizedek himself is not described in the Septuagint as *pistos*.⁸⁸

Immediately after this passage Jesus is described as ‘the apostle and high priest of our confession’, who was *pistos* to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was “in all his house” (3.1–2). Moses too, by the late first century, could be portrayed as angelic or divine, especially in connection with his role as mediator between God and the people of Israel, though again we cannot be certain that those strands of tradition are in the author’s mind.⁸⁹ The author’s focus, though, is again likely to be on the connection between Jesus’ *pistis*, his divine origins, and his role on earth as mediator between God and humanity. In this passage it is perhaps more likely that Moses is understood as human, because immediately afterwards the author moves to distinguish Jesus from Moses, saying that Moses was ‘*pistos* in all his house’, but that Christ (changing from Jesus’ name to his title) was ‘as a son placed over his house’ (3.5–6).⁹⁰ This description of Moses quotes Numbers 12.7, where Moses is indeed said to be *pistos*, which makes Moses one of the few types of *pistis* to whom the letter points who are explicitly described as *pistos* in the scriptures. The *pistis* of Christ, here, it seems, is analogous to that of other mediators appointed by God but exceeds it.

(p.333) In these early chapters, therefore, the *pistis* of Jesus, though enacted especially in his earthly life, is to be understood as an aspect of his identity as God’s Son and the unique position from which he mediates between God and humanity. So far, the author has much in common with Paul, who also locates Jesus Christ between God and humanity and makes *pistis* integral to Christ’s expiation of sins. In some ways, however, the role of *pistis* in the formation of the new covenant, as the author of Hebrews conceptualizes it, is significantly different. God, for him, is faithful (*pistos*) to human beings. As God’s Son, Jesus may also be understood as faithful to human beings, though the author never makes it explicit. Jesus is explicitly faithful to God, and his faithfulness (together with that of many biblical figures) is a model for others, who are exhorted repeatedly to be faithful to God.⁹¹ But people in Hebrews are never exhorted to put their trust in Christ. The author does not take the final step that Paul takes in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians, of placing *pistis* towards Christ alongside traditional *pistis* towards God.

We have anticipated a theme which the author makes explicit at 12.2, when he describes Jesus as the ‘leader and perfecter of our *pistis*’.⁹² He has just urged the Hebrews to rid themselves of ‘every burden and sin’ and to run the race before them (12.1), while keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus. ‘For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart’ (12.2–3). We might expect the reference to the cross to be a reference to what Christ accomplished for human beings, but instead we hear that Jesus endured it for the sake of the joy that lay before him, and the Hebrews are then urged to follow his example. The emphasis here (again in contrast with Paul’s letters) is on the exemplarity of Jesus for (other) human beings.⁹³

Verses 12.1–2 are the culmination of chapter 11, in which the author sketches the stories of ten exemplars of *pistis* from the Bible: ‘those who, through *pistis* and patience, are inheriting the promises’ (6.12; cf. 10.39). Some, though not all, are past leaders of the Israelites, ‘who spoke the word of God to you’ (13.7); here, as in Paul and elsewhere in this letter, *pistis* may be a special quality of community leaders. At the same time, they are all paradigms for all Israelites. In each case it is clear that the individual’s *pistis* is a

relationship with God, but the shape of the relationship varies somewhat with their story. Before we elicit the distinctive shapes of these instances of *pistis*, it is worth turning briefly to (part of) the way they are introduced.

(p.334) At 11.6 the author offers what is apparently a second general definition of *pistis* (after 11.1, to which we will return). ‘Whoever approaches God must believe that (*pisteuein...hoti*) he is (*estin*) and that he rewards those who seek him.’ Given, as has often been noted, that atheism is exceedingly rare in the ancient Mediterranean world and Near East, that almost everyone assumes that god or gods exist, and that the only question for most worshippers is which god(s) to worship, it is exceedingly unlikely that *estin* here means ‘exists’.⁹⁴ It must mean something like, ‘acknowledges that [the God we are talking about] is the one, true, and living God’.⁹⁵ Anyone who approaches God must believe that he is the one, true, and living God and that he rewards those who seek him. This conviction, the author implies, is the *pistis* Enoch had, which enabled him to please God (though it may not have been the whole content of what pleased God), as a result of which he was taken up to heaven (11.5–6).⁹⁶

If believing that God is the one, true, and living God who rewards those who seek him is the whole content of *pistis*, we might perhaps expect the author to say so at the beginning of his list of examples. The rest of the examples themselves, however, suggest that there is more to it.

Abel’s *pistis* enabled him to make a sacrifice to God which was greater than Cain’s (11.4). This suggests that *pistis* gives Abel an understanding of what will please God that Cain lacks, drawing perhaps on the scriptural (and philosophical) idea we have encountered elsewhere, that *pistis* leads to knowledge of God and greater closeness to God.⁹⁷ By *pistis*, Abraham leaves his home when he is called to go to a land he does not know, and lives in that land in tents, looking forward to ‘the city...whose architect and maker is God’ (11.8–10). The double theme of Abraham’s *pistis* is obedience and hope. It is also through *pistis* that Abraham receives the power to procreate at a great age, ‘for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy’ (11.11). The connection between *pistis* and deeds of power (though they do not elsewhere include miraculous procreation) is, as we have seen, well established in scripture, in Greek and Roman tradition, and among other New Testament writers.⁹⁸

The *pistis* which Abraham places in God when he offers up Isaac (11.17) has strong resonances of trust, obedience, and also confidence. In addition, though, it is at least partly based on the specific belief that God can raise the dead (11.19), because of which Abraham thinks that God could keep his promise even if Isaac is killed. The *pistis* of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (11.20–2) **(p.335)** may also have a dimension of trust, and it explicitly has a dimension of hope (11.20, 22), and perhaps conviction that God keeps his promises.

Moses’ parents’ *pistis* is based on lack of fear of the king’s edict, and suggests confidence in God (11.23). Moses chooses by *pistis* to be known as an Israelite rather than an Egyptian (11.25–6): ‘he was looking to the recompense’, says the author, which indicates that the *pistis* of Moses here is well in line with that of 11.6. The *pistis* which led him to leave Egypt, however, is closer to that of 11.1: ‘he persevered as if seeing the one who is invisible’ (11.27).⁹⁹ *Pistis* led Moses to keep the Passover and cross the Red Sea, and the Israelites to destroy the walls of Jericho: this in each case looks not so much like trust in long-term promises of God, but in instructions about the immediate future: trust which is fortified by recent experiences that trust has been justified. Finally, sweeping up a clutch of other examples together (11.32–8), the author tells us that they all received a promise from God, believed it, and were approved (though they did not receive what they hoped for, because that was reserved for a later generation) (11.39–40).

Two points stand out from the examples of *pistis* in chapter 11. First, they show that the author’s understanding of *pistis* is complex, making use of a wide range of meanings, including trust, faithfulness, belief, confidence, obedience, and hope. *Pistis*, moreover, may be based on communications from God, signs, past experience, or hope, it may operate in the short or the long term, and it may lead to the better understanding of God or to the empowerment of the one who trusts. Secondly, this chapter shows that *pistis*, in his own time and as a feature of the divine–human relationship throughout history, is so important to this writer that he introduces it into the stories of a series of characters who are not said in the scriptures to have *pistis*, or are not said to have it on the occasions to which he alludes. This passage is, among other things, a remarkable midrash on a series of biblical characters in terms of a quality which is relatively rare in the Law and the Prophets but which this author sees everywhere in God’s relationship with those who obey him.¹⁰⁰

The author of Hebrews does not use *hoi pistoi* or *hoi pisteuontes* as a formal designation of community membership.¹⁰¹ He shows some interest in the idea **(p.336)** that *pistis* marks the beginning of one’s relationship with God: he refers to it as foundational at 6.1, while among the exemplars of chapter 11, Abraham and Moses, at least, forge new relationships with God at the moment when they first exercise *pistis*. On the whole, though, neither *pistis* at the moment of entry into the community nor *pistis* as a community identifier interests this author as much as it interests some other New Testament writers. He takes for granted that those he addresses

are community members, and takes little interest in their pre-faithful past or in the non-faithful around them. He is, however, interested in the ongoing role played by *pistis* in their relationship with God within the community.

At 10.19–23 the author urges the Hebrews to have the confidence of their ‘entrance into the sanctuary’, thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus, and to approach the sanctuary, symbolically, with a sincere heart and absolute *pistis*. They should have clean bodies and hearts, and hold unwaveringly to ‘the confession of their hope’ (τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος), or ‘the confession that gives them hope,’ (both may be implied), ‘for the one [God] who made the promise is trustworthy (πιστὸς γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγελάμενος)’. (10.23) *Pistis*, it seems, ideally based on recognition of the long-term faithfulness of God and the sacrifice of Jesus, is confirmed by confession, purifies its body and heart, and looks forward to the future with hope. It is possible here that the author understands community members’ approach to God as the moment of their initial confession, which defines the rest of their life, but there are signs that he is referring to repeated practices involving prayer, liturgy, and perhaps confession too. He envisages community members approaching the (symbolic) ‘sanctuary’ in the future, finding ways to avoid sin (v. 26), attending their assembly (*episynagōgē*) regularly, and encouraging one another (particularly in the assembly, apparently), including to love and good works (v. 24). *Pistis* is an ongoing community praxis which finds expression in many forms.

It will have come as no surprise to Jewish Christians to hear that purity of body, heart, and mind alike is the appropriate condition in which to approach the presence of God, and therefore an appropriate expression of *pistis*.¹⁰² Nor will it have surprised gentile Christians, when they began to read the letter. From at least the fourth century BCE, some Greek temples had urged those (p.337) who approached them to enter not only in a state of physical, ritual purity but with a ‘pure mind’ or ‘soul’, which indicates that priests and/or worshippers understood their ritual actions as being affected by their state of mind. Plutarch, in *On Superstition* and *On Isis and Osiris*, is just one of the authors who, in the early principate, develop the idea that holding wrong opinions about the gods and wrong attitudes to them vitiates one’s ritual observance.¹⁰³

In *The Wandering People of God* Ernst Käsemann develops the idea (based especially on Hebrews 10.19–13.17) that the community of Christ’s followers is a community with no home in this world, whose existence is a journey towards the ‘city that is to come’ (13.13–14).¹⁰⁴ In this connection, Käsemann understands community members’ *pistis* as above all the faithfulness which endures difficult times and the hostility of others: a faithfulness which is obedient, hopeful, and defends itself against sin.¹⁰⁵ ‘Faith’, he says (p. 44), ‘...becomes a confident wandering.’ Käsemann has been criticized for connecting this theme with the gnostic idea that the soul, imprisoned in flesh, seeks to return to the metaphysical sphere, but even without this connection his model is an attractive one.¹⁰⁶ Its antecedents in the Exodus story, and in Greek myth and history, are obvious, and, as we saw in Chapter 6, it is also detectable in 1 Thessalonians, where the community of the faithful is depicted as having rejected this world in search of a better one.¹⁰⁷ Whether or not the author of Hebrews owes anything to Paul in this connection, he shares Paul’s interest in the ongoing endurance, in obedience and hope, of those who follow Christ.¹⁰⁸

Despite the element of endurance which is implicit in the topos of wandering, in some ways endurance is a weaker theme in this letter than in some of Paul’s. A distinctive tone of confidence runs through it and chimes with its address to a people who, as Jewish Christians, not only see themselves as God’s people now, but as having been God’s people for a long time. The author sees his community’s *pistis* towards God as the culmination of a long relationship in which God has been consistently trustworthy, giving them even more confidence in the future than they have had in the past. In this relationship the community knows not only of what it thinks about God and Christ but also what is pleasing to God, and expects its *pistis* to please God. In Chapter 5 (p.338) we saw how the faithfulness of God through time—which is to be affirmed even when people are persecuted and vindication is slow in coming—is emphasized especially in the Hellenistic books of the Septuagint.¹⁰⁹ In Hebrews we see this theme restated in triumphant tones, from the perspective of a community that understands itself as saved and vindicated once and for all by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Does this context help us to interpret the most-discussed verse of this well-discussed letter, which is one of the most hermeneutically challenging statements about *pistis* in the New Testament or anywhere else? ‘*Pistis* is the *hypostasis* of things hoped for, the *elenchos* of things not seen (ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων).’ (11.1) Intensive reflection on it since the early church has not elucidated this gnomic statement to general satisfaction. Michael Mathis set its language, especially its use of *hypostasis*, in the context of Greek and Patristic literature, arguing that shortly before and around the time that Hebrews was written, the meaning ‘reality’ dominated philosophical and common usage.¹¹⁰ This, he suggested, gives the verse a meaning something like, ‘*pistis* is the reality of the things hoped for, the proof/test/conviction of things unseen’. More recently, Heinrich Koester has strengthened the case for this interpretation further, arguing in addition that ‘reality’ or ‘underlying reality’ also makes sense as an interpretation of *hypostasis* at 1.3 and 3.14.¹¹¹

Betz points to the two-part, arguably parallel, form of the verse, suggesting that it imitates the parallelism common in Hebrew poetry and that its meaning derives from the Septuagint, in particular from Isaiah 28.16. On his interpretation, *pistis* is both a foundation (*hypostasis*) laid by God, and the attitude to God of the faithful human being.¹¹² Others have connected this verse with the thought of Philo, who calls *pistis*, among other things, a ‘most sure and certain quality’, and refers on a different occasion to what he claims is an ‘ancient saying’ that ‘things that are unclear are the *pistis* (test/proof) of things that are unclear’.¹¹³ It is true that for Philo *pistis* can be an attitude of mind or heart which leads to understanding and contemplation of the divine, but it is not foundational in the sense of being an a priori belief, since it rests on **(p.339)** scripture.¹¹⁴ Lindsay, moreover, is surely right to emphasize the differences between Philo’s thinking and that of Hebrews, not least Hebrews’ eschatological orientation.¹¹⁵

The arguments of Mathis, Koester, Lindsay, and others are all informed by careful exegesis and deep understanding of the possible background(s) of this verse, but (while recognizing that a definitive interpretation is probably beyond reach) I share with Betz the view that ‘foundation’ is the most convincing translation of *hypostasis* here.¹¹⁶ Any idea that *pistis* might be an intuition unsupported by evidence or experience which leads to the understanding of the divine, a right relationship with the divine, or the revelation of God’s plan, fits badly with the way in which it is understood elsewhere in this letter or more widely.¹¹⁷ The idea of *pistis* as the foundation of what we hope for, however, fits well with what we have seen of the use of *pistis* in this letter and elsewhere. *Pistis* marks the beginning of human beings’ relationship with God. This is a relationship which looks forward hopefully to the future (in this case, ultimately to the faithful being brought to ‘glory’ (2.10)). Moreover, the fact that people are in a relationship of *pistis* with God enables them to achieve what they hope for. *Pistis* is therefore foundational in two senses: it creates the divine–human relationship within which it becomes possible for human beings to hope for certain things, and the relationship within which those hopes become achievable. (What is hoped for within this relationship, of course, is not worshippers’ own choice, but consists of what is promised and given by God through Jesus Christ.) In the rest of chapter 11, as we have already seen, *pistis* continues to be doubly foundational in the same way: it creates a relationship within which human beings develop certain hopes, and leads to those hopes’ being fulfilled.

The first half of 11.1 can therefore be translated: ‘(The) *pistis* [of those who put their trust in God] is the foundation (in two senses) of the things that are hoped for.’¹¹⁸ In accordance with the conventions of parallelistic Hebrew poetry, the second half of the verse may mean the same as the first, or may develop or modify it.¹¹⁹ What, then, does it mean to say that ‘*pistis* is the *elenchos* of things not seen’?

(p.340) Among the meanings of *elenchos* in Greek, most (such as ‘argument’, ‘refutation’, ‘scrutiny’, ‘disproof’) have no obvious relevance. The likeliest meanings (which are all closely related to one another) are ‘evidence’, ‘proof’, or ‘test’.¹²⁰ The second offers a particularly tempting possibility, since ‘proof’ is also a common meaning of *pistis*.

‘Things not seen’ could be of two kinds: they could (like the things hoped for) be in the future, or they could be metaphysical, and so invisible to the physical eye but visible to the eye of faith. There are, however, strong reasons why the second option is unlikely to be the right one here. For one, putting one’s trust in a metaphysical entity might be either justified or deluded, but it is wholly unclear how it would constitute evidence, a test, or a proof (in the sense of the means by which something is proven) of that entity’s truth or reality (or any other quality). For another, although, as we have seen, doubt and scepticism regularly go hand in hand with *pistis/fides* in the ancient world, testing the divine to prove its reality, reliability, and so on is rarely considered as a possibility, and almost always frowned on when it is.¹²¹ There is, moreover, no sign that testing or proving anything about God is any part of the project of the author of this letter or of the models of *pistis* which he cites. Furthermore, the author is addressing people who already belong to the community of the faithful, who do not need persuading of the truth or reality of God, so it is hard to see why he would praise *pistis* for doing so.

There is no good reason to take ‘things not seen’ as referring to the metaphysical, but, paralleling the ‘things hoped for’, it could well refer to the future. It makes good sense to translate the second half of the verse: ‘(the divine–human relationship of) *pistis* is the means by which things which have not yet happened are tested/proven.’ The particular things which have not yet happened are most likely to be those which we hope for, since these have just been mentioned: above all, what the author sums up in the previous verse (10.39) as ‘possessing life’. Through being in a relationship of *pistis* with God, the author tells us, we come to prove the reality of what God has promised us and we hope for but have not yet seen: eternal life.

The whole verse should therefore be translated: ‘The divine–human relationship of *pistis* is the foundation (in two senses) of everything human beings hope for, the proof of everything (which God has promised) that they have not yet seen.’ There follows a series of examples of people who put their trust in God in this way and were not disappointed.

At 11.1 *pistis* is foundational. We have already seen, however, that in the rest of the chapter the *pistis* of a series of scriptural exemplars itself rests on **(p.341)** foundations, all of them commonly cited by other New Testament (as well as other) writers, including experience, communications from God, and signs. Elsewhere in the book the *pistis* of community members can be described as resting on preaching, teaching (about repentance, trust in God, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement), and imitation of those who are already faithful, above all, of Jesus himself.¹²² In addition, though the author never says so explicitly, through its plethora of citations of the Septuagint, Hebrews communicates strongly that Christian *pistis* is founded in scripture. Since the writer is addressing a Jewish-Christian community, this comes as no surprise (no doubt he does not need to make it explicit precisely because appeal to scripture is so common in Jewish writing), and since his community has already put its trust in Christ, he evades the difficult question how one accepts that scripture testifies to Christ unless one has already put one's trust in Christ.¹²³ Appealing to scripture within a community that already trusts the scriptures is one of the ways in which this letter seeks to persuade its audience that *pistis* is not fragile or risky. It fortifies the author's appeal to teaching—which, as we have seen in other later epistles, is increasingly relied on as a foundation for *pistis*, as direct experiences of Jesus in life and of the resurrection recede into the past.

James

The letters attributed to James and Peter both make much less use of *pistis* language than do letters in the Pauline tradition; the famous passage in which [James] uses it repeatedly (2.14, 17–22) is highly unusual.¹²⁴ We will return to this passage in Chapter 11, but we may note here that recent work on Paul and the law, and what has been argued above about trust as the centre of gravity of Paul's *pistis* language, both tend to the conclusion that if [James], as has often been assumed, is responding to Paul in chapter 2 of his letter, he has either **(p.342)** misunderstood Paul or is pretending to misunderstand him for rhetorical effect. Alternatively, he may be responding to someone else.¹²⁵

The author claims that for some followers of Christ all that matters is *pistis* that God is one.¹²⁶ 'You believe that God is one (ὁ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός)', he says with heavy sarcasm. 'You do well. Even the demons believe that, and tremble.' (2.19) Propositional belief, without actions to back it up, is, he says, empty.¹²⁷ There is, as has often been noted, no reason to suppose that Paul would have disagreed with this; he never suggests that *pistis* renders good behaviour unnecessary. It is, however, significant that James uses *pisteuein* here to refer to propositional belief, in a context where he is attacking an adversary. In Chapter 10 and in the Conclusion I will argue that propositional belief owes much of its development as a significant aspect of Christian *pistis* to disputes between Christians and outsiders or between different groups of Christians. Together with 1 John, the letter of James offers one of the earliest examples of this aspect of *pistis* in evolution.¹²⁸ ([James]'s claim that it was Abraham's works (of obedience, presumably), rather than his *pistis*, which caused him to be called righteous, is more debatable as an interpretation of Genesis, but again, it does not answer Paul's arguments about Abraham in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, since those are about the fact that Abraham lived before the giving of the law of Moses rather than about his good actions.)

Elsewhere, [James] has limited interest in *pistis*, which he seems always to understand as a relationship of trust in God. At 1.2, according to some manuscripts, *pistis* is a state which can be tested and which produces endurance.¹²⁹ At 1.6 it is the opposite of doubt and is perhaps best understood as 'confidence': those who lack wisdom should ask for it with *pistis*.¹³⁰ At 5.15 the prayer of *pistis*, together with anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, will save the sick: surely a reference to trust/confidence in God and Christ. The verse in which *pistis* is most difficult to interpret is 2.1. The writer's brothers are urged not to treat community members differently according to their wealth and status as they practise *tēn pistin*.¹³¹ This is often taken to refer to 'the faith', but later in the chapter (2.18) the author (like the synoptic gospel writers¹³²) uses *πίστιν ἔχεις*, 'you have *pistis*', as equivalent to *pisteueis* (2.19). Since *pistis* here refers to trust/belief at 2.18–19, it is most likely to do so at 2.1, **(p.343)** which yields the unproblematic interpretation that the brothers are urged not to differentiate between community members as they practise trust/belief towards God. Some manuscripts add two genitival phrases: '[the *pistis*] of the *doxa* of our Lord Jesus Christ (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης)'. It is tempting (and stylistically conventional) to take *doxa* as directly dependent on *pistis* here and translate it 'opinion' or even 'teaching', in which case the phrase could refer to the trust/belief of community members either in the teaching of Jesus which they have received, or the teaching they have received about Jesus Christ.¹³³ (Either way, this would fall well into line with the emphasis we have seen in other post-Pauline letters on teaching.) Alternatively, since *doxa* equally commonly means 'reputation' or 'glory' in Greek, the reference could be to the trust/belief of community members in the glory of Jesus Christ (referring perhaps to his resurrection or Lordship). A number of commentators, however, see 'of our Lord Jesus Christ' here as directly dependent on *pistis*, opening up debate about whether this is a subjective or objective genitive. I am doubtful about the authenticity of this phrase altogether, and equally doubtful that, if it is authentic and to be read in this way, we can establish from grammar or context what *pistis...Iēsou Christou* means, but if we were to try, Bruce Lowe's argument for an eschatological subjective genitive is

subtle and attractive.¹³⁴

1 and 2 Peter

In 1 and 2 Peter *pistis* is again primarily a relationship of trust/faithfulness between human beings and God. God is *pistos* (1 Pet. 4.19);¹³⁵ *pistis* is a gift of God (2 Pet. 1.1), and human beings should put their trust in him (1 Pet. 1.8, 1.21). *Hoi pisteuontes* is used as a formal term for Christians at 1 Peter 2.7 and community members, here as elsewhere, are called *pistoi* (1 Pet. 5.12).¹³⁶ *Pistis* is an ongoing state in which one is tested (1.6), in which one must steadfastly resist the devil (1 Pet. 5.9), and in which one must practise virtue (2 Pet. 1.5),¹³⁷ and which ultimately leads the faithful to salvation (1 Pet. 1.5, 1.9).

(p.344) [Peter]’s understanding of *pistis* is close to that of the scriptures and to those strands of interpretation that Paul draws from them, without the addition of the complexities distinctive to Paul. Like Paul, but unlike some of the deutero-Pauline letters, these letters also appeal to the resurrection as the foundation of the *pistis* of the faithful, and point forward to the end time when the community’s *pistis* will prove to be justified (1 Pet. 1.20–1; cf. 1.5).¹³⁸ If what appears to be the diminished interest of some deutero-Pauline letters in the end time is a sign that they are written relatively late, then 1 Peter may here draw on an earlier stratum of preaching. At 1.8–9, however, the author says: ‘Even without seeing him you love him; even though you do not see him, you trust and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your *pistis*, the salvation of your souls.’¹³⁹ The emphasis here on trust which is based on teaching rather than experience, but which looks forward to eventual vindication, is closer to deutero-Paul, which suggests that earlier and later strands of preaching coexist in this letter.¹⁴⁰

Jude

The letter of ‘Jude, brother of James’—at twenty-five verses, the same length as Philemon—like Philemon incorporates two instances of *pistis* language. At verses 3–4 the author says that he is writing ‘to encourage you to strive for the *pistis* which was once handed down to the holy ones’ against ‘intruders...godless persons...who pervert the grace of God into licentiousness and who deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ’. *Pistis* is often taken here to refer to a body of teaching about Christ and salvation which has been handed down by earlier preachers. This, however, as we have argued before, would involve a large shift in meaning of the kind which should not be assumed if a more economical interpretation is available. A *pistis* which has been handed down and needs to be defended has surely been reified, and probably into something more than a relationship (since it sounds odd to talk of a relationship’s being handed down). The existing meanings ‘trust’ (in the legal sense), ‘bond’, or ‘covenant’ would fit equally well here. The meaning ‘covenant’ makes particularly good sense if *hē pistis* is understood as having been handed down, not only from earlier preachers but, **(p.345)** directly or indirectly, from Godself. This would cohere with the author’s reference to salvation in verse 3 and the grace of God in verse 4, if salvation is understood as happening through the covenant by the grace of God. On this interpretation, verses 3–4 read: ‘Beloved, although I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel a need to write to encourage you to strive for the covenant that was once for all handed down to the holy ones. For there have been some intruders...godless persons, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness, and who deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ.’ Propositional belief is naturally involved in this covenant, which recognizes Christ as Lord, without dominating *pistis*.¹⁴¹

At verses 20–1 the writer urges his audience to ‘build yourselves up by/with [or ‘in’ or ‘on’] your most holy *pistis* (ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῆι ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει); pray in (*en*) the holy spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.’ Here, *pistis* may be the foundation of the relationship between the faithful with God and Christ that saves them and/or an ongoing praxis, and also bears the implication that divine–human trust creates a community with an enduring structure.¹⁴²

Conclusion

In most of these letters the shape and operation of *pistis* has much in common with what we saw in Paul’s letters, but in all of them it is somewhat, sometimes subtly and sometimes strikingly, different. As in Paul’s letters, *pistis* typically originates with a faithful God, to whom human beings respond, and who entrusts certain people with transmitting the gospel, giving them authority in the human community in the process. As in Paul, community members are identified as *hoi pisteuontes* and (more often, here) *pistoi*. Within the community, *pistis* is always between God and humanity, but some epistles (Ephesians) take more interest in the *pistis* that creates the divine–human community, and some (Colossians, 2 Thessalonians) in the faithfulness with which community members are obedient, endure, and hope for eternal life.

I argued in Chapter 7 that Paul uses *pistis* language in developing his understanding of Christ as mediating between God and humanity in his saving activity, partly by trusting both God and humanity and being trustworthy **(p.346)** towards and trusted by both. Some later epistles (Ephesians, perhaps Colossians, and 1 and 2 Timothy) take up this idea, or something close to it, in varying

forms, but others relate Christ and *pistis* differently. In Hebrews, for instance, Christ is *pistos* to God and perhaps to community members as a divine being, but, more importantly, he is the key exemplar of *pistis* towards God, and community members are encouraged to practise *pistis* towards God but not towards him. Hebrews is also distinctive in developing its own typology for the mediating role of Christ, linking him with Moses and Melchizedek and invoking multiple scriptural examples of *pistis* for its audience to ponder.

Where Paul is intensely interested in the foundations of *pistis*, their strength or fragility, most of these letters are less interested in them and take their strength for granted. Among bases for *pistis*, these letters, with the exception of 2 Thessalonians and, to a lesser extent, 1 and 2 Peter, share a greatly decreased interest in the direct experience of those who knew Jesus or experienced the resurrection, and of the signs and wonders that were said to accompany their missions, and a much greater interest in the authority of teaching. Some (Ephesians, Colossians, possibly Hebrews) also develop more fully Paul's occasional interest in the idea of divine chosenness or pre-election.

The community of the faithful with God is represented increasingly strongly as a household in some of these letters.¹⁴³ In the pastoral letters we saw this development tied explicitly to *pistis*, in the evolution of the idea that not only must all community members have *pistis*, but that the form their *pistis* takes should be connected to (even determined by) their role in the community. At the same time, the gradual reification of the divine–human *pistis* relationship which was beginning in Paul's letters continues, with *pistis* being treated in several letters (especially the pastoral epistles) as the community of the faithful, the bond that holds them, and perhaps even the new covenant.

Propositional belief, meanwhile, always implicit in trust relationships but not, I argued, central to Paul's understanding of *pistis*, comes to the fore in the letter of James. I suggested that the significance of this lies above all in its context: a dispute between community members of different views. We will see again in later chapters that it is in the context of disputes, between community members and between Christians and outsiders, that propositionality gradually becomes more important to followers of Christ.

Notes:

(1) I follow e.g. Muddiman (2001), in taking the letter to be pseudographical in its final form. Some other arguably pseudographical letters (e.g. 2 Thess.) have a higher density of *pistis* language, closer to Paul's.

(2) pp. 234–41.

(3) 1.1; cf. 1.19 (*hēmas tous pisteuontas*). Best (1998), 95 claims wrongly that Ephesians differs from Paul in using *hoi pistoi* substantively; the opposite is more likely.

(4) '[W]ho are Christians and faithful...' would read less oddly than 'who are holy and Christians...'.

(5) Cf. 3.2, where [Paul] says he has been given the 'stewardship of God's grace' for the community's benefit.

(6) Best (1998), 623.

(7) NB [Paul]'s implicit characterization of *pistis* as a work: cf. 1 Thess. 1.3. Another possibility, making more of the Ephesians' contribution to salvation through their own *pistis*, does less justice to [Paul]'s insistence that their salvation is not their doing.

(8) See further pp. 304, 311–12.

(9) Foster (2002), *contra* e.g. Muddiman (2001), 162, MacDonald (2000), 267 (though admittedly a run-on sentence, which the objective reading would produce, is hardly unknown in Paul or his imitators). Foster (2010a, b) answers various objections to his earlier thesis and argues for the same interpretation on further contextual grounds. Bell (2010) argues for the objective genitive; to my ear he underplays the contextual theme of God's action in Christ, but no argument here is likely to be conclusive, and the writer clearly does also expect followers to put their trust in Christ.

(10) Cf. Rom. 15.20, 1 Cor. 3.10,12, Col. 1.23.

(11) I do not know of an instance (in *koinē* or literary Greek) of *ginōskein* being used of experiencing an emotion, as English speakers talk e.g. of 'knowing grief'. Elsewhere in this letter the author talks of God's love for Christ (1.6) and us (1.4, 2.4), Christ's love for the

Ephesians (5.2, 6.24) and the *ekklēsia* (5.25; cf. 4.15), community members' love for one another (1.15, 4.2, 4.16(?), 5.2, 6.23), and husbands' love for wives (5.25, 28, 33), but not directly of community members' love for God or Christ.

(12) Lincoln (1990), 206–7 rightly notes that since *pistis* is primarily a relationship of trust between two parties, and the author asks on behalf of the Ephesians for understanding and an experience of love that surpasses even knowledge, he must be asking for trust rather than belief, which is cognitively weaker than knowledge.

(13) Muddiman (2001), 293 notes that *pistis* here could be either initial Christian commitment or ongoing faithfulness.

(14) Some commentators (e.g. Best (1998), 268–9; cf. MacDonald (2000), 288 and the discussion of Lincoln (1990), 240) see this as the content of 'faith' or of a baptismal confession—i.e. an example of *fides quae*—but this implies an evolution in meaning beyond what is necessary to make sense of the passage.

(15) Another example of *fides quae* in the view of some (e.g. Lincoln (1990), 255, despite his understanding of *pistis* as trust elsewhere), but this is again anachronistic.

(16) Cf. e.g. pp. 217, 285.

(17) Cf. helpful discussions of past interpretations by Lincoln (1990), 54–5, with Muddiman (2001), 83.

(18) Schnackenburg (1991), 53 rightly observes that the writer's concern here is not to develop a doctrine of the soul's pre-existence.

(19) This is again compatible with interpretation (1) or (3) of 2.7–9. Paul also talks of pre-election (see e.g. pp. 216 n. 19, 126 n. 15) and *pistis* occasionally comes into proximity with being *en Christō* (1 Cor. 4.17, Gal. 2.16–17, 5.6; cf. 2 Cor. 13.5), but Paul does not connect *pistis*, pre-election, and being *en Christō* as this passage does. Ephesians is, if anything, closer to John's gospel here: on the connection between *pistis* and pre-election, and the importance of pre-election, in John, see pp. 418–25.

(20) When gifts to the apostles are mentioned at 4.11, only gifts to prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are noted.

(21) Other letters in this chapter show evidence of the same development.

(22) Putting its treatment of *pistis* in line with other key themes in the letter.

(23) O'Brien (1982), 4.

(24) Cf. 2.5, where the author refers to *pistis* towards (*eis*) Christ.

(25) Barth and Blanke (1994), 152–3 develop the idea in relation to this passage that God is faithful, in the sense of truthful and loyal to his promises, and that this divine *pistis* is an example for human *pistis* towards God.

(26) MacDonald (2000), 73 notes that opinion is divided as to whether this refers to *fides quae* or *qua*, but it is better understood as the relationship based on what the Colossians heard.

(27) *Pistis* does not appear in all manuscripts here.

(28) 'The Lord' here is surely God (so Bruce (1982a), 199–200, Richard (1995), 370).

(29) Cf. e.g. pp. 236–7.

(30) Richard (1995), 311 understands this as 'the work that *pistis* leads us to undertake', but see Malherbe (2000), 411.

(31) Assuming that this letter is pseudographical, there is more than a touch of irony here.

(32) e.g. p. 79.

(33) Marshall and Towner (1999), 214 note that the density of uses of *pistis* in the pastoral epistles is even higher than in Paul, which is not surprising if they are taking up language that, through Paul and others, is increasingly self-definitive for Christians. On all

three pastoral letters, see esp. the detailed study of Mutschler (2010), with much of which I agree. NB in particular his demonstration (e.g. pp. 17–18, 215–17, 370–94, 401–2) that *pistis* in these letters is the foundation of the divine–human relationship, almost never (I argue, never) the content of orthodox teaching.

(34) Cf. p. 237.

(35) See p. 237 and further, p. 319–24.

(36) Roitto (2008) makes a similar argument, discussing whether there is any tension between Christians' identities as Christ-believers and as household members, and arguing that while Paul regards them as potentially conflicting, deuter-Pauline letters do not. See also Mutschler's comparison of the use of this phrase in different letters (2010), 243–4, 381–2.

(37) With overtones of truth (cf. 1.1) and perhaps also of firmness and reliability, (Dibelius and Conzelmann (1972), 150). Verse 3.8 is indistinguishable in meaning from [Paul]'s claim at 1.13 that ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῆ ἐστὶν ἀληθῆς, referring to the proverb that Cretans are always liars.

(38) 1.13, 2.2, 3.15. I do not think it is possible to distinguish meanings of *pistis* with and without the article in these verses (cf. Mutschler (2010), 388–90). At 2.2, a list of desired virtues of elders includes ὑγιαίνοντας τῆ πίστει, 'being sound in *pistis*', which surely means simply 'trust', probably in God.

(39) Morgan (2007b), 49.

(40) On *pistis* as characterizing ongoing Christian life, see Mutschler (2010), 393–401.

(41) See e.g. Houlden, (1976), 18–26, Cranfield (1998), 1–2, Mutschler (2010) with a helpful survey of past scholarship.

(42) In what is almost certainly a pre-existing unit of tradition.

(43) Downs (2012).

(44) See p. 273.

(45) Cf. p. 237.

(46) Johnson (2001), 202 and Porter (1993), 87–102 both discuss whether this means that women enact their *pistis* by having children or are saved by keeping their children in the community, or whether their *pistis* is critical for their child-rearing, and agree that the answer is uncertain.

(47) The same is true of the *pistis* of Timothy at 1 Tim. 4.12, 6.10–12, and of the whole community at 2 Tim. 2.22: it appears in a list of qualities, some of which are definitely aimed at God and some probably at community members, but probably here too *pistis* is meant to be directed towards God.

(48) Cf. p. 237.

(49) Dibelius and Conzelmann (1972), 18 note the oddness of this expression against a Pauline background: 'sincere' is not a qualifier Paul would have found it appropriate to use of *pistis*.

(50) Used at Rom. 12.9 of sincere love.

(51) This sounds a distant echo of Gal. 2.20 but probably unintentionally: Paul uses *zaō*, this author *enoikeō*, and this verse surely simply means that Timothy 'has' *pistis*.

(52) Marshall (1999), 710 *ad* 1.12 translates παραθήκην as 'deposit' and suggests the verse may mean both that the author has put his personal trust in God and that he trusts God to guard his 'deposit'.

(53) Johnson (2001), 194 suggests that this means that [Paul] teaches truthfully the path of *pistis*. *Alētheia* here could also echo the LXX's use of *alētheia*, etc., and be another way of speaking of [Paul's] steadfastness or reliability.

(54) Cf. 3.13. Johnson (2001), 179 understands *pistis* here as a quality of Christ.

(55) NB at 2.5 Christ is described as a ‘mediator’ as well as having given himself as a ransom for all.

(56) *Pistis* is also most easily interpreted as a relationship with God/Christ at 1.16–19; cf. 2 Tim. 3.14–15, where ‘wisdom for salvation’ comes through the *pistis* which is in Christ Jesus.

(57) See pp. 324–9.

(58) I disagree with e.g. Towner (1989), ch. 6, who takes *hē pistis* always to mean ‘the faith’ in the pastoral epistles.

(59) e.g. Eph. 1.13, Titus 1.9, 3.8.

(60) 1 Tim. Cf. 4.6.

(61) Bultmann (1967); cf. Mutschler (2010), 142–5.

(62) The image here could be that of an (honorific) statue and its base, though this would be an unusual use of *themelios* (which in the NT, as elsewhere, usually means the foundations of buildings or walls). Ma (2013), 45, 55–63 argues that in inscriptions on Hellenistic statue bases, in which the community (e.g. the city) dedicating the statue appears in the nominative and the honorand in the accusative, the community presents itself as the ground and arbiter of the norms and values which the honorand exemplifies, and so glorifies primarily itself, while the glory of the honorand depends on his having acted in accord with these values. 2 Timothy similarly confirms that salvation depends on validation by God and that the glory is ultimately God’s (cf. 4.18). On *pistis* as foundational in the sense that one must *pisteuein* to enter the community, see Mutschler (2010), e.g. 392–3, 404.

(63) Reflected e.g. by Dibelius and Conzelmann (1972), 58, Johnson (2001), 228, who take this phrase to mean ‘the mystery that is faith’.

(64) Later than this period, *mystēria* can also be secrets revealed by a god: e.g. *Corp. Herm.* 1.16.

(65) See e.g. Burkert (1987), Cosmopoulos (2003) (esp. the essays of Graf (2003), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003)), Scarpi (2004), Casadio and Johnston (2009).

(66) Though ideas like this, and occasional unfounded assumptions in modern scholarship that there is something mystical about being an initiate, are open to suspicion of being influenced by modern Christian understandings of ‘the mystery of faith’. Reference to the mysteries may be linked with the concept of imitation of Christ: Betz (1967), 138 argues that the terminology of mimesis comes from the mysteries; cf. Käsemann (1974), 151–4. Graf (2003), 256 suggests (speculatively) that local mysteries of the early empire reduced, even eliminated, the distance between initiates and the God they worshipped.

(67) e.g. Caragounis (1977), 3–29. Plu., fr. 178 is sometimes invoked as a description of initiation into a mystery leading to an intrinsically mysterious or mystical state: ‘The soul on the point of death...has an experience like those being initiated into the great mysteries...At first wanderings and exhausting runnings around and certain anxious uncompleted journeys through darkness, and then before the consummation itself all the terrible things, shuddering and trembling and sweat and amazement. But after this he is met by a wonderful light and received into pure places and meadows, with voices and dancing...now completely initiated...he keeps company with holy and pure men, and surveys the impure, uninitiated mass of the living as they trample on each other’ (trans. Seaford (2010), 201). Plutarch indicates that non-initiates do not know what initiates know and that the process of initiation may be confusing, even frightening, but that initiates enjoy a state of light (with all its associations of clarity and knowledge), purity, and life which does not appear to be at all mysterious in itself. The only element in his description which might suggest an intrinsically mysterious or mystical experience is the fact that Plutarch is comparing initiation with death, when the soul parts company from the body. We should, though, be wary of assuming that the state of death itself is regarded as mysterious or mystical by Greeks or Romans. Descriptions of the soul leaving the body at death, of ghosts and shades, and of the underworld are common in Greek and Latin literature, and do not suggest that there is anything mysterious about the afterlife once one is there (even to visitors). Seaford discusses the common theme of emerging from darkness into light as part of initiates’ experience (cf. Ar., *Ran.* 454–6, where this light is associated with the light of the sun which only Eleusinian initiates enjoy after death). He also (1997) explores parallels between passages of the *Bacchae* and Acts 9.3–7 and 16.25–30, arguing that both reflect mystic ritual but not that they are mysterious

to the initiated; cf. Apul., *Met.* 11.23, indicating that the mysteries of Isis and Osiris are clear to initiates.

(68) Caragounis (1977), 21–4, who also gives examples of these everyday meanings in LXX. In 1 Enoch (pp. 24–6), the Watchers who are supposed to guard a heavenly secret, described as a *mystērion*, betray it to womankind. On Jewish contexts for Paul's *mystēria*, see Bockmuehl (1990).

(69) *Mystērion* occurs only once in each of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Mt. 13.11 = Mk. 4.11 (sing.) = Lk. 8.10), where Jesus tells his disciples, after explaining the parable of the sower, that 'knowledge of the *mystēria* of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you...' (Mt. 13.11): i.e. they understand the *mystēria* because they are in the community of those who follow Christ.

(70) 1 Cor. 2.1, 2.7, 4.1, 13.2, 14.2, 15.51, Rom. 11.25, 16.25.

(71) Cf. 2.1, 2.7.

(72) Used occasionally of servitors of mystery cults (*Rev. Hist. Rel.* 109.64) as well as, more commonly, of servants in general, including in Hellenistic Judaism (cf. Lk. 1.2, Acts 13.5).

(73) These could be Jews who do not follow Christ, but since the letter is concerned elsewhere with difference between community members over keeping the law, they are more likely to be Jewish community members.

(74) Paul does recognize that not all community members understand all the implications of his preaching at once, and (e.g. 1 Cor. 3.1–4) can talk of nursing them through stages of learning. Penna (1978), 27, 87–9 links this theme with the *mystērion*, not to claim that Paul thinks what he teaches is mysterious, but arguing that, for Paul, the *mystērion* is something that is revealed in stages to the faithful. Cf. the anonymous scientific poem *Aetna* (144–5), which views autopsy as a sound basis for reason: *...tu modo subtiles animo duce percipe curas | occultique fidem manifestis abstrahe rebus* ('With only your mind to guide you, observe carefully what interests you | And learn trust in what is obscure from what is manifest').

(75) Kretschmar (1982) recognizes rightly that *pistis* evolves in meaning in the pastoral epistles, but that it continues not to be primarily cognitive or propositional, but a 'full life practice' in commitment to God.

(76) Nor does the author appeal strongly to the future resurrection as a consequential reason for *pistis*, suggesting that expectation of it as imminent is fading in his community.

(77) Hamm (1990), 270–1, Lindsay (2008), 158–60, 165–7.

(78) Rhee (2001).

(79) e.g. Goppelt (1981), Lindars (1991), Whitlark (2011).

(80) As the object of faith, e.g. Leonard (1939), Miller (1987); as the model of faith, e.g. Hornung (1978), Hamm (1990); cf. Hughes (1979) on Christology. Hornung's analysis of 12.1–2, showing how Christ is developed as an exemplar, is highly persuasive and widely accepted.

(81) e.g. Longenecker (1977) (emphasizing forward-looking aspects), Thompson (1982) (emphasizing the spatial and transcendent).

(82) Grässer (1965), though Dautzenberg's (1973) criticism that he underplays the aspect of faithfulness, endurance and confidence in LXX and Paul is fair.

(83) e.g. Rhee (2001), 64–79, 81–100; cf. Still (2008), 48.

(84) Hamm (1990), 273–6, Rhee (2001), 97, 101–29, 130.

(85) Hamm (1990), 252–3.

(86) Still (2008), 48, Lindsay (2008), 160. Mitchell (2007), 76 argues that Jesus is faithful to both God and his people and that this is part of his role as mediator. Jesus' faithfulness to God is developed at 3.2–6 and his sympathy with human beings at 4.15–16. Attridge (1989), 95 also stresses the complex nature of Jesus' *pistis*: 'As the heavenly intercessor, Christ is reliable and to be trusted.'

(87) Cf. 5.6, 6.20, 7.1–17. Melchizedek is divine or angelic at 11Q13 (second–first century BCE). For Philo (*Som.* 1.214–5, *Spec. Leg.* 1.116, 189) the divine Logos is high priest of the temple of God that is the cosmos, while the human high priest is the image of his representative; both represent and intercede for God's people. See the discussions of Horton (1976), 64–82, 152–64, Leonhardt (2001), 128–9, 230–3; cf. 2 Enoch 71.12–72.11 (late first century CE), where Melchizedek is miraculously born of a virgin and soon after is removed to the Garden of Eden by the angel Gabriel.

(88) Cf. Gen. 14.17–20, Ps. 109.4 LXX.

(89) Horton (1976), 161 thinks not, but the parallels with other texts and the internal parallel with Melchizedek are suggestive: cf. Ezek. Trag., *Exod. Fr.* 6–7 (Eus. Hist., *Praep. Ev.* 9.29.4–6), Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.158, *Test. Mos.* 1.14, 4Q374, 377.

(90) Mitchell (2007), 81 sees this as meaning that Jesus was not only faithful to God but worthy of trust by God. The omission may be only for reasons of stylistic balance. At 3.2 the author specifies that Jesus was *pistos* but leaves the word out of his quotation about Moses; this time he puts *pistos* in his quotation about Moses but omits it from his description of Christ.

(91) e.g. 6.1, 10.38, 13.7; cf. 4.2, 6.12, 10.22, 10.39, 11 *passim*.

(92) Mitchell (2007), 265 and Attridge (1989), 356 both emphasize his humanity here.

(93) Cf. the discussion of Richardson (2012), who, however, argues for a higher Christology here. The author's theology of the cross is developed especially at 9.11–28, 10.5–31.

(94) On atheism, see e.g. Pl., *Leg.* 905d, Cic., *ND* 1.1–2, 2, DS 12.20.2, Epict. 2.14.11, *Ench.* 31.1, Plu., *Mor.* 1075e, 393a, MA 12.28; cf. p. 264 n. 12.

(95) e.g. Lane (1991), 338 cannot be right that this passage and 6.1 refer to belief in the existence of God.

(96) Enoch is not identified as having *pistis* at Gen. 5.24.

(97) pp. 152–4, 192, 201.

(98) e.g. pp. 218–19.

(99) Cf. pp. 185–6.

(100) Mitchell (2007), 237–8 suggests that *pistis* has a motivating and guiding role in these stories, but nothing more complicated; most other commentators see trust, obedience, and confidence as dominating these exempla. *Pistis* is contrasted throughout with rejection of God's promises: a very Septuagintal theme. There is also an implication of the contrast which we find in Philo between the reliability of *pistis* towards God compared with that towards created beings (e.g. *Rer. div. her.* 9203, *Sacr. AC* 70, *Abr.* 263).

(101) When the author urges the Hebrews not to practise evil and *apistia* in their hearts, as the Israelites did in the desert (3.12, 3.19), he is clearly referring to backsliding among community members rather than to those outside the community. At 3.6 the Hebrews are told that they are the 'oikos of Christ'—the household over which Christ is placed by God—if they hold fast to their confidence and pride in their hope (ἐάν[περ] τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος κατὰσχῶμεν). That the Hebrews also have *pistis* as members of Christ's household is not stated, but *pistis* is so often linked with the language of confidence and hope that it is strongly implied. At 13.14 the Hebrews will become not only the family but the partners of Christ, if they hold the 'beginning of the *hypostasis* firm until the end' (*metochos* is usually used of a partner or someone who shares a business, activity, or enterprise. On the translation of 'hypostasis', see pp. 338–9). Again, *pistis* is not mentioned explicitly but is strongly implied by the language of looking forward and by the use of *hypostasis*, pre-echoing 11.1; so exercising (qualities closely related to) *pistis* defines one as a community member.

(102) e.g. Neusner (1973), Klawans (2000), Haber and Reinhartz (2008), pts. 1 and 3, Kazen (2011).

(103) e.g. Sokolowski (1962), 91.1–5, (1969), 130. On one's state of mind as determining the validity of one's ritual actions for Plutarch, see Morgan (forthcoming).

(104) Käsemann (1984), 22–4.

(105) pp. 37–48.

(106) Käsemann (1984), 67–96.

(107) Whether the author of Hebrews owes anything to Paul we cannot tell, since there is little clear intertextuality.

(108) Hurst (1990) rightly emphasizes the author's background in Hellenistic Judaism and (pp. 107–24) explores the possible influence of Paul on the letter, though he does not discuss this theme. At pp. 119–27 he compares Paul's with Hebrews' treatment of *pistis* and notes similarities (both present *pistis* as hope in God's promises, steadfastness, trust in God, and trust in Christ), though he does not note how widespread these similarities are with other books.

(109) pp. 193, 195.

(110) Mathis (1920), esp. 119, 143–8; cf. Grässer (1965), 99–102, which also explores meanings of *hypostasis* in wider Greek literature. Mitchell (2007), 31 takes it to mean 'being', and (p. 228) suggests that an 'experience of trust in that transcendent reality' may also be implied, together with confidence in what is assured. Lane (1991), 328 translates 11.1: 'the reality of the blessings for which we hope, the demonstration of events not seen'. Attridge (1989), 308 rightly points out that there is no need to understand this as an exhaustive definition of *pistis* even for the author of Hebrews. It is 'something that is necessary for hopes to come true and...puts the possessor in touch with what is most real' (p. 39). He too translates *hypostasis* as 'reality'.

(111) Koester (1972).

(112) Betz (1990b), 434–8.

(113) *Conf.* 31, *Vit. Mos.* 1.280; on the latter, see e.g. Hanson (1974), 63.

(114) pp. 152, 154–6.

(115) Lindsay (2008), 161–3.

(116) Though 'reality' or 'substance' makes better sense at 1.3, at 3.14 the meaning is more debatable, and could be 'foundation'. We cannot, however, be certain that the author uses such a multivalent term in the same way in every passage, and we should not seek to determine the meaning of 11.1 on the basis of debatable interpretations elsewhere in the book.

(117) Cf. e.g. pp. 145–51, 241–6.

(118) This is close to Plu., *Mor.* 756a–b, where *pistis* is the 'basis and common foundation (ἔδρα τις αὐτῆ καὶ βάσις) for piety'; cf. Cic., *ND* 3.4.9.

(119) Even if this verse is not evoking Hebrew verse, common sense suggests that these constitute the range of likely relationships between the two halves.

(120) The common English translation 'conviction' (so e.g. NRSV) bears at best a tenuous relation to any meaning of the Greek word and owes its currency to the anachronistically fideist understanding of *pistis* as belief based on no evidence.

(121) e.g. pp. 136–7, 148.

(122) 4.2, 6.1, 6.12, 12.2. At 4.2, accepting teaching is itself predicated on having (the disposition to?) *pistis*, which only those chosen by God to enter his 'rest' (4.3) have.

(123) As do all New Testament writers.

(124) This passage is even more unusual if, as has been suggested, it is a response to Paul. Not everyone thinks so: see the discussions of Martin (1988), 82–4, and Dibelius (1976), 154–8 on v. 18 (taking the view that works demonstrate *pistis*). Some think that Paul and James are facing different opponents, others that they essentially agree but approach the issue from opposite directions. Whatever their distinctive approaches, both surely think that life in communities of the faithful should be highly moral, with or without the ballast of the law. On whether this section is a conglomeration of separate units of teaching or a single argument, see the

persuasive view of Johnson (1995), 239–43 (*contra* Dibelius) that it is a single argument. He also (pp. 241–3) argues, surely rightly, that James reduces *pistis* to propositional belief for rhetorical purposes, contrasting it with *pistis* as a ‘whole-life’ response to God.

(125) See also pp. 468–71.

(126) Perhaps surprisingly, he does not specify claims about Christ or salvation as objects of *pistis*.

(127) Discussed by Schnackenburg (1965), 10–32.

(128) Cf. pp. 439–41.

(129) Cf. Rom. 5.3 (but *pistis* does not appear in every ms. here).

(130) The previous verse echoes Prov. 2.2–6, Wis. 9.4, 9–12, and v. 6 also has a ‘wisdom’ feel, though it is unparalleled in the scriptures.

(131) Some mss. add what looks like a gloss, ‘of the teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ’. Versepunt (2001), Dibelius (1976), 126–8, and Martin (1988), 59 take this to mean ‘faith in Christ’, but *pistis* in James is never explicitly in Christ.

(132) e.g. pp. 353–4, 355.

(133) Cf. e.g. Arist., *Metaph.* 996b28, Phld. *Ir.* P. 86 (*doxai* as opinions or teachings of philosophers); *Kyriai Doxai* (‘Philosophical Maxims’) is the title of a work by Epicurus.

(134) Lowe (2010) gives a useful summary of debate about this verse, and an ingenious solution to the oddity of the position of *tēs doxēs* in addition to his argument about *pistis*...*Iēsou Christou*.

(135) Horrell (1997) shows that 1 Pet. 1.5 could also refer to the faithfulness of God rather than that of the believer, or that it may be deliberately ambiguous.

(136) See pp. 231–41.

(137) Bauckham (1983), 184–5 implies that *pistis* here is itself a virtue which produces other virtues; on *pistis* as a virtue, see pp. 458–61. At 1 Pet. 2.8 (cf. Heb. 3.18, 4.6, 4.11), *apeitheia* is used as in LXX as the opposite of *pistis*, with strong overtones of disobedience (Thibaut (1988), 144–5; cf. Käsemann (1984), 45–6).

(138) Bauckham (1983), 132–4 takes *pistis* here to mean ‘active trust’ rather than ‘passive faithfulness’, but *pistis* in the sense of faithfulness is never passive in Greek thinking.

(139) Elliott (2000), 344 emphasizes the eschatology embedded here.

(140) Kelly (1969), 56–7.

(141) MacDonald (2000), 37 takes *hē pistis* at Jude 3 and 20 to mean ‘the faith’ in a comprehensive sense; Kelly (1969), 147–8 and Bauckham (1983), 32–4 understand it as the content of ‘faith’ and the beginning of Catholic tradition which claims a fixed body of orthodox doctrine, but this goes beyond what we need to assume.

(142) Kelly (1969), 285–6 takes the allusion to be to a temple, as at 1 Pet. 2.5.

(143) e.g. Malherbe (1992), 301–4; Horrell (1995, 2001); cf. Lincoln (1999), Macdonald (2011).

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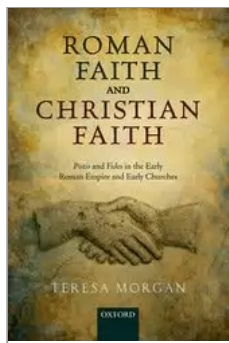
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Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches

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Pistis in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the treatment of *pistis* in the synoptic gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. It argues that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all use *pistis* language to develop their Christologies, exploring the complexity of Jesus's identity, status, and activity between God and humanity. Like the epistles, these gospels have little interest in *pistis* between human beings, but focus on that between humanity, God, and Christ. This chapter shows how *pistis* allows the power of God to work through Jesus and, potentially, his followers, for whom he acts as a model for *imitatio* as well as the object of *pistis*. It examines the writers' treatment of doubt and fear, which are condemned in those who lack *pistis* towards Jesus, but criticized short of condemnation in those who do follow Jesus. It examines these writers' exploration of the bases for *pistis*, including encounter, report, and the written word.

Keywords: *pistis*, synoptic, Acts, Christology, power, *imitatio*, doubt, fear

This chapter introduces two new genres of text and a new world: a world at once commonplace and strange, paradigmatic and inimitable, in which followers of Jesus Christ depict Christ as being born, dying, rising from the dead, and calling others to follow him.

The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are new not only to this study but also, in one sense, to first-century literature. Nothing quite like them in form or structure predates them. In another sense they are typical, given that the most characteristic feature of late Hellenistic and early imperial writing is its fertility of generic invention. Throughout this period traditional genres, from epic to satire,

are written in new ways. New genres evolve from aspects of older ones (the apocalypse, the natural history). Above all, genres everywhere interbreed: rhetoric with history, history with philosophy, pastoral with epistolography, geography with history, myth with geography, satire with epistolography—one could, and Greek and Latin writers do, multiply the examples almost indefinitely. Ovid takes the religious calendar, which typically consists of lists of dates and rituals inscribed on the walls of a temple, and turns it into epic. Plutarch and Gellius conjure symptomata out of grammar and metaphysics. Evangelists weave genres with dashes of other genres, from the prayer to the apocalypse. The author of Acts uses historiography, paradoxography, and anabasis to translate the idea of the life of a great individual into the corporate life of his followers.



This chapter and the next will not add to recent discussions about genre, because in a period whose hallmark is invention there is some value in identifying forms of writing, but little in trying to place individual works in one category rather than another.¹ The gospels, Acts, and Revelation are *sui (p.348) generis*. In this, they fit comfortably (along with much contemporary Jewish literature) into the cultural landscape of their world.

The gospels and Acts are, additionally, composed of many layers of genre-bending tradition and redaction, including oral traditions which were passed down from the lifetime of Jesus and teachings which originated in the post-resurrection community of the faithful, which were combined in different ways, edited, and re-edited. No study can ignore this complexity, but it will not be the primary focus of this chapter or the next. The focus in what follows is on the texts as they have survived to us, which seem to have been widely disseminated in something close to their current form soon after they were written.²

In the Introduction I argued that Augustine's division of *fides* into *fides quae* and *fides qua* is problematic in its own terms, and, more importantly for the present project, that it is an anachronistic lens through which to look at *fides* or *pistis* in the first century. *Pistis/fides* is rather, at its heart, a relationship which in certain contexts is deferred and reified into further concepts, structures, and institutions.³ It is worth reiterating this basic principle, not least because some recent studies of *pistis* in the synoptic gospels have divided it into the faith of the believer and the object of faith.⁴ *Pistis* will be approached in this and the next chapter, as in previous chapters, primarily as a relationship and a praxis, rather than primarily as a state of the heart and mind with an object.

Mark

We begin with 'Mark', whose gospel, after more than two centuries of intensive study of the 'synoptic problem', is accepted by most scholars as the earliest of the three synoptic gospels.⁵ Before turning to Mark's treatment of *pistis* in (p.349) detail, it is worth making a few general observations, in the light of some of the conclusions already drawn about Paul's letters.⁶

Though *pistis* language is spread more thinly through the synoptic gospels than through John's gospel or Paul's letters, its importance is unmistakable. Mark, for instance (if we discount the 'long ending' of the gospel (16.9–20), which uses *pisteuein* four times but is generally agreed to be later in date than the rest), uses *pisteuein* ten times (eight of which are put in the mouth of Jesus himself), *pistis* five (four in the mouth of Jesus), *apistia* three, and *apistos* once (in the mouth of Jesus).⁷ *Pistis* language makes more appearances in Mark than the kingdom of God (sixteen references), the verb 'to save' (thirteen instances), or 'sin' and 'sinners' (twelve instances). It is, moreover, widely distributed through the gospel, in healings, exorcisms, and nature miracles, teaching material, disputes between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, and in the passion narrative. And we will see that Mark's sense of the significance of *pistis* language is matched by Matthew's and Luke's

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or either of the other synoptic gospels and the likely Jewish tradition, his faithfulness can be taken

for granted.⁹ We might hypothesize that God's *pistis* is not emphasized because the gospels want to focus attention on the power and activity of Jesus, but the *pistis* of Christ towards human beings is not overtly a theme of this, or any other synoptic gospel either. (We might take it as implied by Mark, for instance, when Jesus says that his blood will be shed for many (14.24), but we should not presume the connection, since *pistis* language is not closely associated with passages that refer to the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.¹⁰) Nor is Jesus said in the synoptic gospels to be *pistos* towards God, though his trust/faithfulness towards God is strongly implicit in the obedience that leads him to 'serve and give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk. 10.45). Where Paul uses *pistis* language to try to clarify and define the relationship between God, Christ, and the faithful, the synoptic gospels, as we will see, use it rather to express the complexity of Jesus' identity and status, and the complexity of the divine–human relationship when Jesus is involved.

(p.350) Human beings are urged in Mark to put their trust in God and in the good news, and some passages only make sense if

people are also expected to put their trust in Jesus,¹¹ but human beings are never urged to practise *pistis* towards one another nor described as practising it, either within the group of Jesus' followers or beyond. The synoptic gospels (and John's) share the view of the epistles that *pistis* above all characterizes the divine–human relationship. Followers of Christ, in the gospels as in the epistles, form a 'wigwam' community held together by members' shared *pistis* towards God, but the creation or development of human communities through intra-human *pistis* is not one of the evangelists' main concerns.¹²

Almost all *pistis* language in the synoptic gospels, as noted above, is put in the mouth of Jesus, who, in most passages, calls people to practise *pistis*, commends them for practising it, or criticizes them for not practising it.¹³ In Mark, Jesus' *pistis* language is fairly evenly divided between these three categories.¹⁴ Clearly, it is important to the gospel writers to present Jesus as calling people to *pistis*. It is surely possible, though impossible to prove, that they do so in part because they preserve a memory that the historical Jesus called people to put their trust in God.

Arguments that Jesus did call people to put their trust in God have not, on the whole, been received with much scholarly enthusiasm.¹⁵ N. T. Wright, however, has recently made the case afresh, pointing out that every strand of synoptic tradition shows Jesus using *pistis* language, and arguing that themes or terms which appear regularly in multiple strands of tradition have a relatively strong claim to originate in Jesus' lifetime.¹⁶ The triple tradition in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, for example, makes Jesus tell the woman with the haemorrhage: 'Daughter, your *pistis* has made you well.'¹⁷ Matthew and Luke both take from 'Q' Jesus' praise of the *pistis* of the centurion who asks Jesus to heal his daughter: '[N]ot even in Israel have I found such faith.'¹⁸ Matthew adds to the story of the centurion (from another source or, more likely, on his own account) Jesus' command: 'Go; as you have believed, let it be done for **(p.351)** you.'¹⁹ Luke adds to Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the sower that the devil takes away the word of God from the hearts of some people, 'that they may not believe and be saved'.²⁰

This is an attractive, if still ultimately inconclusive, argument. Against it we may note the dearth of *pistis* language (or its equivalents in other languages) in non-canonical gospels and Acts. The Gospel of Thomas, for instance, which is widely dated to the second century and whose material overlaps extensively with that of the canonical gospels, includes only one logion about faith/belief, which is not a saying of Jesus: 'They said to him, "Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you"' (91).²¹ In this substantial and early sayings collection, Jesus never urges his followers to *pistis/pisteuein*, and Thomas is by no means unusual among apocrypha in taking so little interest in *pistis*.²²

Could this divergence indicate that *pistis* is not so much a theme of Jesus' ministry which became part of Christian tradition, as a theme of particular interest to certain writers who were later incorporated into the New Testament? This surely overstates the case in the other direction. We cannot argue with any degree of plausibility that the writers of the New Testament all acquired their interest in *pistis* language from one another (and no one does): there is not enough evidence that most of them knew each other.²³ Nor can we sensibly propose that (despite its relatively low profile in both Judaism and Graeco-Roman religions) all the New Testament writers hit on *pistis* as an important concept independently of one another, and that so many later Christian leaders independently agreed with them that they chose, of the many texts available to them, to treat as what we call canonical those which privileged the concept of *pistis*. The only plausible explanation of the New Testament writers' shared interest in *pistis* is that *pistis* was already an important concept in the churches with which they interacted—churches which were also the ancestors of (some of) those from which the compilers of the canon came. *Pistis* can only have been so important to those communities either because Jesus was remembered as having used (an equivalent of) it, or **(p.352)** because it became important for some other decisively important reason very close to the beginning of those communities' formation.²⁴

We have seen, and will continue to see, that there are good reasons why *pistis* should have been important to primitive churches. At the same time, if, as I have argued, *pistis* is foundationally trust (rather than belief in the resurrection or the divinity of Christ, for instance),²⁵ there is no conceptual reason why it should not have originated in the preaching of Jesus, and perhaps the simplest explanation for Christians' early and universal commitment to trust/faithfulness towards God continues to be that they inherited it from Jesus himself. The call to trust God, moreover, is deeply embedded in Jewish prophecy and wisdom, while the concept of trusting God is inseparable from Jesus' teaching about repentance and turning to God, obedience and serving God, and waiting for the coming of the Son of Man and the kingdom. Given that *pistis* language would have resonated with Jewish tradition and fitted Jesus own message, insofar as we can recover it, there is no strong reason to *assume* that he did *not* use it.

We cannot therefore rule out that the New Testament's use of *pistis* language goes back to Jesus himself, but neither can we demonstrate that it does. This uncertainty, however, does not affect the argument of this chapter, which is about the synoptic authors' rather than the historical Jesus' use of *pistis*. In considering the origins of Christian *pistis*, moreover, we should also bear in mind

that neither its use by Jesus nor its usefulness to primitive churches furnishes a full explanation of its importance. Having put their trust in God, Christians find in the concept layers of meaning and multiple resonances with the way *pistis* is understood in Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture. Within Judaism, it is strongly connected with the faithfulness of God which enables the Israelites to be reconciled with God, even when they have sinned.²⁶ In the Graeco-Roman world as a whole, *pistis/fides* is invoked especially at moments of crisis and decision-making; it functions equally in the public and domestic spheres, both of which are invoked as models for the Christian community; it is closely linked with *dikaiosynē*, *philia/agapē*, *elpis*, and other qualities and practices of relationship and community formation which became important to Christians; it is widely used of ambassadors, arbitrators, and others who mediate between parties who want to develop their relationship or whose relationship has broken down and needs to be restored. It is intimately connected with belief and can be used to mean a 'bond of trust', 'pledge', and even 'covenant'. However *pistis* language originated among Christians, we owe the extent and complexity of its use in no small part to its role in contemporary *mentalité* and society. *Pistis*, and later *fides*, language captures much of what is central to Christian thinking in terms and **(p.353)** concepts which were easily understood by all Greek and Latin speakers, Jewish and gentile, and this was an invaluable asset in its promulgation and evolution.

Even if Jesus did call people to put their trust in God, and perhaps in himself, it does not follow that all the sayings in which he uses *pistis* language in Mark (or any of the gospels) are authentic. Mark describes Jesus' earliest preaching as:

Πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near: repent and put your trust/believe in the good news. (1.15)

To euangelion is so characteristically a word of post-resurrection preaching that its presence immediately arouses suspicion here. Elsewhere in Mark it appears only in obviously redactional programmatic statements about Jesus' mission and that of his disciples.²⁷ When, moreover, Jesus commends people for having *pistis* later in the gospel, or criticizes them for not having it, he can be read straightforwardly as referring to *pistis* towards God,²⁸ and probably also towards himself;²⁹ for him to call people to put their trust in, or believe in, 'the good news' rather than directly in God seems unnecessarily circuitous.³⁰ Matthew (4.17) substantially follows Mark in giving Jesus' earliest preaching as: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand', but he omits Mark's second phrase.³¹ It seems likely that the last clause is a Markan formula, aimed at authorizing post-resurrection preaching by associating it with the early apostles' and perhaps' Jesus' own call to *pistis* towards God.³²

At 11.22–4 Jesus tells his disciples:

ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὃς ἂν εἴπη τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ· ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ μὴ διακριθῆι ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ πιστεύητι ὅτι ὁ λαλεῖ γίνεται, ἔσται αὐτῷ.

(p.354) Have *pistin theou*. Truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but trusts/believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for (?) him.'

The idea that some quality acceptable to God (such as faithfulness, righteousness, or wisdom) enables one to move mountains, uproot trees, and so on is a traditional one which also appears in rabbinic sources. Since it is attested in several strands of Christian tradition, Jesus may have been among those who used it.³³ Grammatically, Jesus' first exhortation could mean: 'Put your trust in God', 'Accept God's confidence [in you]', or even something like 'Have a divine self-confidence'. If the final *autō* means 'for him', then the scenario imagines the disciple's putting his trust in God and God's acting on his behalf. *Autō* could, however, be instrumental, in which case the scenario imagines the power of God working through the disciple by means of their *pistis* relationship.

It is possible that Mark is deliberately exploiting the ambiguity of *pistin theou* here to suggest both that Jesus' followers must put their trust in God, and that doing so will enable them to act as instruments of God's power (as Jesus himself does).³⁴ This interpretation fits well with the context in which the saying occurs. Peter has just drawn Jesus' attention to the withering of a fig tree which, the previous day, Jesus had cursed (11.14, 21). He cursed it by saying, 'May no one ever eat of your fruit again,' leaving open whether in destroying it he was drawing on the power of God or whether his curse was an appeal to God to act on his behalf.

We will return to this ambiguity, but for now we may note that the primary meaning of 11.22–4 is likely to be that Jesus' followers are called to put their trust in God. In the following pericope, which also has good claim to originate in Jesus' ministry, the view is attributed to him that people should trust those who put their trust in God (11.27–33).³⁵ The chief priests, scribes, and elders ask Jesus by what authority he acts as he does. Jesus asks them by what **(p.355)** authority, earthly or heavenly, John baptized. His

interlocutors are perplexed, realizing that if they say ‘heavenly’, Jesus will ask why they did not trust/believe (*episteusate*) John, but if they say ‘earthly’, the crowd will be angry with them. They say they do not know, to which Jesus replies that he will not reveal his own authority. Since Jesus surely regards John as exemplary in his own relationship with God as well as in fulfilling his prophetic calling, and since Mark gives no indication that Jesus’ interlocutors were wrong to attribute to him the view that John should have been trusted, we infer that those who trust God—including, presumably, Jesus himself and those whom he calls—are themselves to be trusted. Commentators disagree about whether the whole of this pericope is historical, or only the exchange of questions, but we may note that trust and trustworthiness are implicated as soon as authority is mentioned, so even if the *pistis* language here is added by Mark, he is doing no more than making explicit an inescapable inference. If John had divine authority, then he was to be trusted, and, by the same token, so is Jesus.³⁶

Though Mark has little to say about the trustworthiness of Jesus’ followers elsewhere in the gospel, the fact that Jesus sends them out to preach on his behalf (6.8–11) suggests that they too are to be trusted. In these passages Mark hints, though he never develops the idea, that he understands *pistis* as ‘cascading’ from God, through Jesus (and John), to those whom Jesus calls, in a way similar to that in which it cascades in Paul’s letters from God through Christ and his apostle(s) to those to whom they preach.³⁷

If these are the passages in which Mark’s *pistis* language has best claim to go back to the historical Jesus, elsewhere it is certainly redactional. As such, it throws a good deal of light on how Mark and/or his community understood their relationship with Christ, as well—though this looks beyond the scope of this study—as on the way they understood the identity of Christ himself.

In the saying about moving mountains, and the story of the withering of the fig tree, we saw trust in God envisaged as leading to God’s performing deeds of power, either on behalf of the faithful one or through him. At 4.40 it is made clear that Jesus wields the power of God himself. He is at sea with the disciples, asleep in the bottom of the boat, when a storm blows up. The disciples, terror-stricken, waken him up: ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ (4.38). Jesus rebukes the wind and sea and the storm subsides. Then he asks: ‘Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith (οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν)?’

(p.356) Again, Mark leaves it open whether what the disciples lack is *pistis* towards God which would have led to God’s acting directly, or through Jesus, on their behalf, or whether, if they had had *pistis*, God would have worked through them to enable them to still the storm themselves. Again, the ambiguity may be intentional. While Jesus is with them, the focus of the disciples’ *pistis* is appropriately on God and on him. After Jesus has left them, Mark may be implying that it is open to the disciples in turn to practise the kind of *pistis* which would enable God to work through them. Verse 6.13 offers some support for this view: when Jesus, even in his lifetime, sends out the disciples to preach repentance without him, they both drive out demons and heal the sick.

If the disciples are encouraged to let the power of God work through them, in the gospel they more often fail than not. In chapter 9, while Jesus is away with Peter, James, and John on a high mountain (9.2), a man approaches the other disciples asking them to heal his son, who is possessed by a mute demon. They fail, and when Jesus returns he calls them a ‘faithless (*apistos*) generation’. The man asks Jesus to help, if he can. Jesus replies: ‘If you can! Everything is possible *tō pisteuonti*’ (9.23). He commands the spirit to come out of the boy. Later the disciples ask why they could not perform the exorcism, and Jesus says: ‘This kind can only come out through prayer’ (9.23). *Pistis*, together with prayer, it seems, would have enabled the disciples to exorcise demons—but on this occasion they failed to enable God to work through them.³⁸

Mark’s Jesus is highly critical of the disciples when they fail in *pistis*. There are, however, indications that he distinguishes between the *apistia* of his followers and that of others. During the storm at sea Jesus identifies fear as hampering the disciples’ *pistis* (4.40).³⁹ At 9.19 he recognizes that they want to and have tried to expel the mute spirit, but do not have enough *pistis*. At 11.22 his teaching on *pistis* is a response to Peter’s surprise that the fig tree had withered since the previous day, which suggests that Peter had been doubtful or sceptical that Jesus’ curse would work (or work so quickly). (At 16.14, moreover, in the long ending of the gospel, Jesus rebukes the disciples for their *apistia* and ‘hardness of heart’ (*sklērokardia*), because they did not believe those who reported seeing him risen from the dead. The writer evidently thought that attributing doubt or scepticism to the disciples would fit Mark’s portrayal of them.) The *apistia* of the disciples, it seems, is symptomatic of an ongoing struggle between *pistis*, fear, doubt, and scepticism.

(p.357) Since, as we have seen, trust, belief, fear, doubt, and scepticism are understood as constant companions throughout ancient literature, and across many modern disciplines, the reader is hardly surprised to find them coexisting in the disciples. Mark’s view of them, however, is more in line with that of the later books of the Septuagint than with the Pentateuch or most Greek and Roman sources. However understandable, fear, doubt, and scepticism are not truly positive or productive forces in the forging of

relationships. The ideal relationship between followers of Jesus, God, and Jesus himself is one of absolute *pistis*. Despite this, the disciples' fear, doubt, and scepticism do not cause Jesus to reject them as followers, nor stop him helping them or those whom they have been trying to help: if he does not approve of *apistia*, Jesus seems to understand it. Verse 9.24 tells us that a condition of mixed *pistis* and *apistia* can exist outside the circles of the disciples too. When the father of the boy with the mute demon cries, 'I do believe; help my unbelief (πιστεύω· βοήθει μου τῆ ἀπιστίαι),' he is acknowledging what the disciples never do but Mark does: that *pistis* may not be perfect, but may be—perhaps, for most people, always is—entangled with its opposites.⁴⁰ (In some of Paul's letters we saw that he can imagine the possibility of *pistis* developing during one's life in the Christian community. We do not see such a development in the disciples in Mark, but its possibility is implicitly acknowledged when Mark criticizes the disciples for their shortcomings.) The fact that Jesus does not reject his disciples when their *pistis* fails is surely encouraging for listeners to the gospel, and Mark may intend that it should be.⁴¹

Jesus' view of the disciples' failures of *pistis*, though critical, is qualitatively different from his attitude to *apistia* in those who are not his followers. When the chief priests, scribes, and elders approach him with their question about John the Baptist (11.27–33) and betray their lack of *pistis*, he refuses to tell them by what authority he preaches and performs miracles. This is tantamount to saying that if they cannot recognize him and listen to him for themselves, he will not help them to take his proclamation seriously, and hence that he has no further interest in their participation in the kingdom of **(p.358)** God. Verses 6.5–6, notoriously, go even further. When Jesus teaches in the synagogue at Nazareth and is rejected, he is 'not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed by their *apistia*.'

To say that Jesus could not do any deed of power at Nazareth is, on the face of it, counter-intuitive, even shocking, and has often been seen as self-contradictory.⁴² It is hard to absolve 6.5 of a degree of self-contradiction, but the first part of the verse need not shock us too much. If *pistis* is understood in terms of *fides qua*—as an attitude which people do or do not hold towards Jesus as the object of faith—there is no obvious reason why an attitude in the hearts or minds of his fellow-townsmen should affect Jesus' power one way or another. If, however, we think of *pistis* as a relationship, the verse sounds less radical and makes better sense. That the absence of a relationship of trust should prevent the power of God being transmitted from God through Jesus to those who need it is intuitively easier to understand. Mark's point is not about the power Jesus has (in the context of *pistis* language, it is not clear that that is ever Mark's interest), but in how God's power reaches human beings through relationships of *pistis* which connect human beings with God and Jesus, and Jesus and God with one another. The interpretation of this verse is a good example of the conceptual problems, discussed in the Introduction, which are created by the exclusion of the middle ground in the model of *fides quae* and *fides qua*.⁴³ When we restore the middle ground by recognizing *pistis* as a relationship, the verse makes good sense and fits Mark's presentation of the operation of *pistis* elsewhere in the gospel.

We can add further to the interpretation of 6.5–6 by hearing it, not only as the climax to Jesus' rejection at Nazareth, but also in relation to the examples we have just seen of *apistia* in Jesus' disciples. The *apistia* of the disciples, who have put their trust in God and Jesus but cannot yet rid themselves of all their fear, doubt, and scepticism, does not inhibit Jesus from acting on their behalf: exorcising a demon or saving the disciples from the storm. The *apistia* of those who have not yet put their trust in God and Jesus at all does. Part of Mark's intention at 6.5 may have been to offer community members listening to the gospel a reassurance, coupled with a hint of a warning, about their own *pistis*. *Pistis*, he indicates, need not be perfect all at once. What matters is that **(p.359)** community members, like the disciples, want a relationship of *pistis* with God and Christ, and that they make a start by repenting and believing in the gospel. Once they do that, they have something which God and Christ can work with and a prospect of being included in the kingdom of God.⁴⁴ Those, however, whose *apistia* is a complete rejection of Jesus, have no prospect of entering the kingdom.

So far, in Mark's account, *pistis* has emerged as a divine initiative to which human beings are invited to respond and which enables the power of God to work through them in the world. In addition, Mark shows human beings playing a significant role in their own salvation: above all, in the healing stories in which those who are healed or their friends or relations are commended for having *pistis*. The friends of the paralytic who break through the roof of the house where Jesus is preaching (2.3), the woman with a haemorrhage who makes her way through a crowd to touch his cloak (5.27), Jairus, who falls at Jesus' feet to ask him to heal his daughter (5.22–3), and blind Bartimaeus, who shouts out to Jesus from his beggar's pitch at the roadside (10.46–8), all seek their own salvation or that of someone they care for.⁴⁵ The *pistis* of the woman with the haemorrhage is the most striking of all. She does not ask Jesus for healing, but tells herself, 'If I only touch his clothes, I shall be cured' (5.28). If at 6.5–6 Jesus could do no deeds of power for people who refused to enter any *pistis* relationship with him at all, in this pericope he cannot but act: the force of the woman's trust/belief, highlighted by her physical touching of him, means that power flows out of him involuntarily (5.30).⁴⁶ It is a telling expression of the power of human *pistis*.

These four stories make an interesting group in other ways. Their protagonists are all socially transgressive: the paralytic's friends in damaging property to get to Jesus, the woman in bringing her unclean flow of blood into a crowd, Jairus for prostrating himself before someone other than a king or a god, and Bartimaeus for creating a public nuisance and refusing to be silenced. These four demonstrate no self-respect and no respect for convention, only an overwhelming recognition of their need. Vulnerability and need, Mark implies, are primary reasons why people seek Jesus out and put their trust in **(p.360)** him.⁴⁷ At 9.42 Jesus confirms that those in need are under his protection, and may imply in addition that vulnerability is a native, even a necessary quality in those who have *pistis*, in a saying which compares the vulnerability of community members with that of children: 'Whoever causes one of these little ones who trust (*pisteuontōn*) to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.'⁴⁸

In these stories, as elsewhere in the gospel, *pistis* is strongly connected with the creation of new divine-human relationships or the strengthening of relationships that fear or doubt are causing to waver. What does not greatly interest Mark is ongoing trust/faithfulness, or the role of *pistis* in the everyday lives of the faithful as they await the coming of the Son of Man. We do not even hear whether or not most of the people Jesus heals follow him (though Bartimaeus is said to 'follow him in/on (*en*) the way' (10.52), which could mean either on the road out of Jericho, or permanently). The desire of the sick for healing, and Jesus' response to it, creates a relationship, but not obviously a community on earth. That said, what those who come to be healed say to Jesus, or Jesus says to them, often indicates that they can hope for entry into the kingdom of God. Jesus calls the paralytic 'child' (2.5) and tells him that his sins are forgiven (2.10); he calls the woman with a haemorrhage 'daughter' (5.34) and tells her that her *pistis* has healed her, using the verb *sōzein*, which also means 'saved'.⁴⁹ Jairus, as we have seen, prostrates himself before Jesus as before a king or a god (5.22). The Syrophenician woman seeking healing for her daughter calls him *kyrie* (7.28), a title equally appropriate to a worldly or heavenly ruler. Bartimaeus addresses him by the Messianic title 'Son of David'. If Mark has limited interest in the community of the faithful on earth, he does point to the creation through *pistis* of an eschatological community of the saved.

People come to Jesus not only because they need him, but also because they have heard about him. The woman with a haemorrhage is said explicitly to have heard about Jesus (5.27). The healing of the paralytic occurs just after a leper broadcasts his cure, which brings others flocking to where Jesus is staying (1.45). Mark does not represent Jesus as having visited Jericho before the occasion when he meets Bartimaeus, but Bartimaeus knows who Jesus is (10.47), presumably through hearsay. The striking aspect of this theme is that it ignores the doubt and scepticism about rumour and report which, as we saw in earlier chapters, so bedevil first-century *pistis/fides* in the wider **(p.361)** world, and also among Christians.⁵⁰ When people hear about Jesus and respond with *pistis*, Mark seems to be saying, they are, uniquely, never disappointed.

If report plays a part in creating *pistis*, however, the greatest part in Mark's gospel is played by personal encounter. The baldness of Mark's narrative—largely bare, as it is, of such framing devices as histories of the actors, explanations of the reasons for Jesus' actions, and linking passages of narrative—adds to the effect that most people put their trust in Jesus simply because of something they experience when they encounter him.⁵¹

Mark's stories of the call of the disciples do not include *pistis* language, but in view of the *pistis* language that is used of them later, we can assume their call is a call to *pistis*. To Levi, Jesus simply says, 'Follow me' (2.14). James and John, too, are called without elaboration (1.20). To Simon and Andrew, Jesus adds, 'I will make you fishers of men'—in form, a reason for *pistis*, but an enigmatic one (1.17). Jesus' calls to the disciples are calls to people to put their trust in him, simply because they recognize something of who he is.

Some of Jesus' disputes with members of the Jewish authorities, who do not recognize or trust him, also suggest that the appropriate response to him would simply be to recognize who he is. Jesus criticizes the Jerusalemite scribes who think he drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul for incoherent thinking (3.20–7), but sees no need to explain where his power does come from: apparently they should be able to tell. He criticizes those who ask him to produce a sign from heaven as proof of his identity (8.11–12; cf. 15.32): they too should be able to tell who he is without supernatural proof. At 11.33, as we have seen, he refuses to tell a group of chief priests, scribes, and elders on what authority he exercises his ministry: if they cannot see, words will not convince them. Mark strengthens this theme by appealing periodically to the language of sensory perception in connection with the identity of Jesus or his work.⁵² 'Let anyone with ears to hear, listen!' he says in the middle of a chapter of parables (4.23). 'Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear?' he demands of the disciples when they misunderstand a teaching (8.18).

Sight and hearing, Mark indicates, are all people should need to recognize Jesus. Sight and hearing, as we have seen, are widely counted among the soundest bases for trust/belief in both human and divine phenomena in the world of the first century.⁵³ They are

also the media through which God communicates unmistakably with human beings in the Jewish scriptures. **(p.362)** When God speaks from heaven, through a burning bush, or in a dream, when God sends an angel or shows Godself directly to Moses, only the irredeemably wicked or perverse in Jewish tradition do not recognize what they see and hear. By emphasizing that some people recognize (at least something of) Jesus' identity simply by seeing him, hearing him, or hearing of him, and that those who do not are hypocrites (7.6), sinners, and blasphemers (3.29), Mark underlines his conviction that Jesus is the Son of God and that his presence and actions on earth reveal him as such. This move, in Mark's own understanding, turns the tables on those who, in Jesus' lifetime and probably in his own time too, declare themselves unconvinced that Jesus is the Messiah. In his view, it is not up to Jesus or his followers (let alone to God) to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God. When God reveals Godself to human beings, he implies, it is up to human beings to respond appropriately.

It is ironic that Mark, writing some time after Jesus' death for people who almost certainly had never met him or, increasingly, anyone who did meet him, emphasizes so strongly the validity of basing *pistis* on the report of those who met Jesus, on one's own need to meet him, and above all on face-to-face encounter. Mark's own answer to this irony is surely his book itself, which, through brief but vivid stories of Jesus, recreates for latter-day followers something of the experience of hearing of Jesus in his lifetime and even of encountering him. We might go further and speculate that Mark's disjointed style, which makes so little use of framing narrative or explanations for events, aims to heighten the sense that listeners and readers are encountering Christ as he was encountered in his lifetime. Personal experience is often vivid but disjointed; one encounters others without knowing where they came from or much about them, beyond what one has heard or sees. The gospel perhaps aims to evoke for later Christians something of the abrupt, disruptive power of meeting Jesus in person, and demands of them what Jesus demanded of his contemporaries: that in this encounter they see him and trust him for who he is.

In the next chapter we will see that John shares Mark's sense that when God is revealed to human beings through his Son only the incorrigibly sinful fail to recognize and put their trust in him. At the same time, both John and Mark understand that Jesus' humanity complicates the recognition of his divinity. The different ways in which they address this complexity have far-reaching consequences for their soteriologies.

Pistis language, as we have seen, is well distributed through Mark's gospel, in teaching material and miracles of all kinds, in disputes with the Jewish authorities, and in the passion narrative. That being the case, it is striking how rarely it is used in close proximity to any of Jesus' messianic titles. The only titles which are used in proximity to *pistis* language are 'Son of Man', which Jesus uses of himself soon after the healing of the paralytic (2.10), and 'Son of David', which Bartimaeus uses of him (10.47). 'Son of David' is a title for an **(p.363)** earthly Messiah, while Jesus more often than not seems to use 'Son of Man' to refer to his suffering humanity, so insofar as *pistis* language is connected with messianic titles at all, they are dominantly human ones.⁵⁴ Mark surely does not think that people do not practise *pistis* towards Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, or eschatological king: given the importance of these concepts for his overall understanding of Jesus Christ, he must do so. But when people who are practising *pistis* or being urged to practise it call Jesus anything, they usually call him *didaskale*, teacher (4.38, 9.17), or *rabbi* (10.51, 11.21).

At the same time, *pistis* language is not closely associated with the complementary theme which also runs through Mark's gospel: the hidden nature of Jesus' true identity or 'Messianic secret'.⁵⁵ People who express *pistis*, or are commended for showing it or chastised for not doing so, are, as we have seen, people who recognize Jesus as extraordinary: as a healer, an exorcist, a teacher, a wonder-worker. The disciples leave their homes and families to follow him. If they do not fully understand Jesus' identity, these are the people who, in Mark's narrative, understand it better than anyone else in his lifetime.

This pattern may owe something to Mark's sources; he may have inherited some of his uses of *pistis* from stories which did not use messianic language. Even so, Mark could have brought the themes of *pistis* and messiahship, which are both central to the gospel and obviously connected with one another, into closer conjunction than he does. There are, on the other hand, reasons why he may have kept them apart deliberately.

People who express *pistis* or are commended for practising *pistis*—the paralytic's friends, the woman with the haemorrhage, the father of the boy with the demon—often do so for a specific and limited reason. They know of Jesus as a healer or an exorcist, and they need help. What they are given, however, is more than the solution to their problem. The paralytic is told: 'Your sins are forgiven' (2.5). The woman with the haemorrhage and blind Bartimaeus are both told: 'Your *pistis* has made you well' (5.34, 10.52), using a verb which literally means 'has saved you'. Jairus asks for healing for his daughter, but Jesus brings her back from the dead. The disciples look for help in a storm, are shown a power over the natural world beyond their wildest dreams, and are told that they too will wield it if they have sufficient *pistis*. **(p.364)** *Pistis* repeatedly takes people into a relationship with Jesus, and with God, which

is much more profound and far-reaching than the one they sought. They look for help with one problem in this life and find themselves offered admittance to an eschatological community of the saved and the approaching kingdom of God.

This picture of *pistis* has distant relatives in Genesis and Exodus, where the relationship of Abraham or Moses with God begins on the human side with discrete, limited acts of trust and grows to encompass God's entire relationship with a people, a land, and ultimately the whole world throughout time. More immediately, it suggests a reason why Mark keeps *pistis* language separate from claims about Jesus as Son of God or Messiah. For Mark, as we have seen, it is important that people actively put their trust in God and Jesus Christ. To recognize the full identity of Christ in the person of Jesus, however, is a unique challenge (one met, throughout the gospel, only by metaphysical powers); to the extent that Jesus' messianic identity is meant to be kept secret, it may be one which no one is expected to meet. Mark therefore shows people putting a trust in Jesus which is wholehearted and life-changing, but which does not necessarily involve full understanding of who he is. He then shows listeners/readers that *pistis* offered in this spirit is enough for God, and Christ, to work with; it is enough to release people from their sins and give them hope of the kingdom of God.

This interpretation also suggests an explanation for the often-noticed oddity that *pistis* and *pisteuein* in Mark more often than not lack an object.⁵⁶ When, for example, Jesus commends the woman with the haemorrhage for her *pistis*, Mark does not specify in whom or what she trusts. She could be putting her trust in God, in God's willingness to act through Jesus, in Jesus himself as the mediator of God's power, in Jesus as a human being faithful to God, in Jesus as a powerful human being in his own right, or in herself as having the confidence to take healing from him. All these are possible in principle, nor are they idle distinctions, especially if *pistis* towards God is qualitatively different from *pistis* towards a concept, another person, or oneself.⁵⁷ Mark's repeated use of *pistis* language without an object, however, turns it into a concept and relationship which encompass all these possibilities, and enables human beings' relationship with Jesus to evolve as their understanding of him grows.⁵⁸

(p.365) For Mark, to be ransomed from one's sins, one must actively put one's trust in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and recognizing Jesus as the Son of God should, in principle, take no more than seeing and hearing him. He believes, though, that it was inevitable—even essential—that, in Jesus' lifetime his identity was not revealed beyond the possibility of mistake or doubt. It was therefore acceptable, even necessary, that those who had *pistis* did not fully understand in whom they were putting their trust, and that what on God's side is an all-encompassing and wholly transformational relationship should often begin, on the human side, with something more limited.

It is worth summing up the main themes we have elicited from Mark's treatment of *pistis* before we move on. The *pistis* of God and of Jesus towards human beings, though never spelt out, is (as elsewhere in Jewish, and often in Greek and Roman thinking) taken for granted. In turn, human beings' relationship with God and Jesus is (in line with the thinking of the Hellenistic texts of the Septuagint) ideally one of absolute *pistis*, though Mark's Jesus seems to recognize that *pistis* is usually a work in progress, and he does not punish, if he regularly rebukes, the *apistia* of his followers. *Pistis* enables Jesus' disciples to ask God to help them, even to become an instrument of God's power, while those whose *pistis* gives them such authority are to be trusted by others.

Mark seems to think, on the one hand, that those who encounter Jesus ought to recognize who he is simply by seeing and hearing him; on the other hand, that it is inevitable, even necessary, that most do not. Those who do have *pistis* often see Jesus as a rabbi or healer rather than the Son of God, but in putting their trust in him, they get more than they bargained for: not just teaching or healing, but salvation and the hope of a place in God's kingdom. We might take a step further and see relationships of *pistis/apistia*, in this context, as one of the ways in which Mark develops his Christology. Across the many scenes in which it features, it captures vividly the complexity of Mark's understanding of Jesus Christ, encompassing his trustworthy divinity—his divinely given authority—his role in enabling others to put their trust in God and become instruments of God—the necessity of putting one's trust in him in order to be saved and attain the kingdom of God—the hiddenness of his identity which makes recognition of him and *pistis* difficult, and at best partial in his lifetime—the way that those who do put their trust in Jesus begin by trusting a human being, and find themselves in a quite different and much more radically transformative relationship with God.

(p.366) 'Q' or the Double Tradition

Material which is not found in Mark but is common to Matthew and Luke is often assigned to a lost source, 'Q', which putatively included sayings and parables, perhaps in some kind of narrative frame.⁵⁹ Alternatively, Matthew and Luke may be seen as sharing several sources which Mark did not know but which did not belong to a single collection (the material of the 'double tradition'). Material taken by Matthew and Luke from Q, or belonging to the double tradition, includes five passages which contain *pistis* language.⁶⁰ (For convenience, I will refer to these as Q material; arguments for and against Q seem to me finely balanced, but for the purposes of this discussion it makes little difference whether Matthew and Luke drew on one shared source or several.)

Some of Q's *pistis* sayings are similar in content and implications to some of Mark's. To the end of the story of the healing of the boy with a mute demon, which they borrow from Mark, Matthew adds a Q saying (Mt. 17.20) which Luke treats as an independent logion (17.6): 'Truly, I say to you, if you have *pistis* the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.' This, obviously parallel in content to Mark 11.22–4, is used in a similar way, to tell the disciples that, if they have *pistis* like Jesus', they will be able to perform deeds of power.

Q shares with Mark the understanding that the disciples' *pistis* is not always strong. Both Matthew and Luke depict Jesus as calling his followers *oligopistoi* during the teaching which forms part of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 6.30 = Lk. 12.28):

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear...Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your lifespan? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow...If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, *oligopistoi*? So do not worry...(Mt. 6.25, 27–8, 30–1)

It has been argued that the use of *oligopistos* here goes back to Jesus himself.⁶¹ Certainly, the concept has a Hebrew equivalent and rabbinic parallels.⁶² If, as (p.367) argued above, Jesus sees failures of *pistis* by the disciples as rather different from those of non-followers—rather the result of the interaction of *pistis* with fear, doubt, or scepticism than of a refusal to trust or believe at all—the concept *oligopistia* would also fit Mark's presentation of the disciples. That being so, if (an equivalent of) the term goes back to Jesus, it is perhaps surprising that Mark does not apparently know it. This is an inconclusive argument, but whether or not Jesus used an equivalent of *oligopistos*, the context of this logion in both Matthew and Luke implies that the disciples' *pistis* may not only be shaken by crises, but may also be less than firm in ordinary, everyday contexts. This in turn suggests that *pistis* in Q can refer to the ongoing faithfulness of community members, a theme which is weak, if not absent entirely, in Mark.⁶³

This inference is confirmed by two *pistis* sayings which are distinctive to Q. At Matthew 24.45–51 and Luke 12.41–6 Jesus draws an analogy between the way in which his followers should await the unpredictable hour of the coming of the Son of Man and the way a 'faithful and wise slave' (πιστὸς δούλος καὶ φρόνιμος) awaits the return of his master to his house (Mt. 24.45 = Lk. 12.41). Shortly afterwards in Matthew (rather later in Luke), Jesus tells the parable of the talents to show his followers how they should behave while waiting for the coming of the Son of Man (Mt. 25.14–31 = Lk. 19.11–27). A man going on a journey leaves three of his slaves in charge of, respectively, five talents, two, and one. The slaves with five and two talents use them to trade and double them, and when the master returns and asks for an accounting, he says to each of them:

εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ, ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστός, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω· εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ κυρίου σου.

Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over few things; I will set you over many; enter into the joy of your master. (Mt. 25.21, 23 = Lk. 19.17, 19)

The slave who was only given one talent explains that he buried it because he was afraid of his master's anger if he lost it. His master calls him 'wicked and idle' (πονηρὲ δούλε καὶ ὀκνηρὲ) (Mt. 25.26 = Lk. 19.22), and, in Matthew's version, casts him into the outer darkness (25.30).

Being *pistos* in these stories is a key quality of those who are in an ongoing relationship with God, a quality which enables them to live rightly between the time of their turning to God and the return of the Son of Man, and a quality by which they endure the uncertainties of that period. Though Mark does not use *pistis* language in connection with these themes, we have seen that Paul does, so the connection is evidently widely recognized among communities of the (p.368) faithful. It is also worth noting that in the parable of the talents *pistis* is contrasted with (inappropriate) fear of one's master; fear, like faithfulness, can not only attack community members at particular moments, but can also be an ongoing condition.⁶⁴ Given that this teaching is in parable form, the content of faithful life remains impressionistic: we gather only that it involves doing what the master has set us to do. Pushing the parable further than it may be intended to go, we might also suggest that, just as the slave has no life, identity, or activities outside his service to his master, so Q takes no interest in any life followers of Jesus might live outside their relationship with God.

Q shares Mark's view that Jesus' mission is to the gentiles as well as the Jews, and highlights it by connecting non-Israelites with *pistis* language. Mark, for instance, tells a story about Jesus' healing of the child of a Syrophenician Greek woman (7.24–30), in which Jesus does not commend the woman's *pistis*.⁶⁵ Matthew and Luke tell a similar story, about a Roman centurion who at Capernaum asks Jesus to heal one of his slaves (Mt. 8.5–13 = Lk. 7.1–10). Jesus says that he will come to his house, but the centurion demurs, saying that he is not worthy to receive Jesus. If Jesus only says the word, though, his slave will be healed. Jesus

wonders at him and says to his followers, 'I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such *pistis* (λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὗρον)' (Mt. 8.10 = Lk. 7.9). Not only can non-Israelites have *pistis*, it seems, but their *pistis* can be exemplary. Matthew reinforces the point with another Q logion which Luke places elsewhere (Mt. 8.11–13 = Lk. 13.28–9): 'I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness...' *Pistis* here is the basis on which people are admitted to God's kingdom, and even though his kingdom is the one originally offered to Abraham and his descendants, God will not now discriminate between Jews and gentiles.⁶⁶ Here again, Q's use of *pistis* is also close to that of Paul, who presents *pistis* throughout his letters as a key, for Jews and gentiles equally, to the relationship originally forged between God and Abraham and his descendants and the kingdom originally reserved for Jews.⁶⁷

The sayings that comprise Q have, then, something in common with Mark in their treatment of *pistis*, and also something in common with Pauline usage. Q seems, though, to take more interest than Mark in *pistis* as an important aspect of life after conversion, which may help *hoi pistoi* endure the uncertainties (p.369) of the period intervening between their repentance and what the parables of the faithful slaves characterize as the return of the master.⁶⁸

Matthew

Matthew, as we have already seen, follows Mark extensively, and all the themes identified in Mark's treatment of *pistis* are also present in Matthew.⁶⁹ Since the existence and content of Q are inferred from material present in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark, it goes without saying that the additional themes identified in Q's treatment of *pistis* are also present in Matthew (and Luke). In addition to both of these, Matthew makes use of *pistis* language on his own account.

In a few passages Matthew adds extra *pistis* language where Mark has already used it, apparently to emphasize the theme further. When the disciples are unable to cast out the mute demon, for instance (Mt. 17.14–21), and ask Jesus why not, Jesus changes Mark's: 'This kind cannot be driven out except by prayer' (9.29) to: 'Because of your *oligopistia*.'⁷⁰ Given that Jesus has already (in both Mark and Matthew) called his entire generation *apistos*, Matthew's *oligopistia* underlines that even as they follow Jesus, the disciples continue to share their contemporaries' inadequacy. On another occasion, when the disciples are at sea and Jesus is on land, he comes to them, walking across the water (Mt. 14.22–33). The disciples are frightened and Jesus tells them not to be (Mt. 14.26–7 = Mk 6.50). Matthew, adding to Mark's story, then describes how Peter gets out of the boat. He begins to walk towards Jesus over the sea but becomes afraid and starts to sink. Jesus catches him, saying: '*Oligopiste*, why did you doubt?' (14.31). Since Peter has just given the beginnings of a spectacular demonstration of *pistis*, this usage nicely points up the imperfect nature of the disciples' *pistis*, which in some ways is already strong and in others remains weak.⁷¹

Matthew uses *oligopistos* elsewhere where Mark talks of the disciples' lack of *pistis*. During the storm at sea, where Mark's Jesus asks whether the disciples (p.370) do not yet have *pistis* (and Luke follows him), Matthew's Jesus calls them *oligopistoi*.⁷² Here, as elsewhere, we may see Matthew's use of *oligopistos* both as softening Mark's Jesus' criticisms of the disciples, and as pointing up the fragilities inherent in trusting relationships.

I suggested on p. 357 in the section 'Mark' that when, in Mark's gospel, the father of the boy with the mute demon says, πιστεύω βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίαι, he confesses to a trust which is still mixed with fear or doubt. Matthew cuts that sentence from his version, but he adds the same idea to the story of the woman with the haemorrhage. When Jesus turns and sees her, he says: 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well (θάρασει, θύγατερ· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε)' (9.22). We saw in previous chapters that *tharsein* and its cognates are closely related to the 'confidence' register of *pistis* language and are often used in conjunction with *pistis* language.⁷³ By telling the woman, who has already demonstrated powerful *pistis* towards him, to take heart or have confidence, even as he tells her that her *pistis* has saved her, Matthew's Jesus reminds his listeners that even powerful *pistis* in ordinary human beings is always to some degree provisional and evolving, and always entangled with fear, doubt, and scepticism.

During the crucifixion narrative, in which Matthew in the main follows Mark closely, passers-by mock Jesus on the cross, saying: 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel: let him come down now from the cross, and we will put our trust in him (πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτόν).'⁷⁴ Matthew adds: 'He trusts in God (πέποιθεν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν); let God deliver him now if he wants him, for he said that, "I am the son of God"' (27.43).⁷⁵ In none of the synoptic gospels does Jesus say that he puts his trust in God, and this is the only time that trust in God is explicitly attributed to him. Despite the fact that this is said by those hostile to Jesus, however, it is consonant with the inference which the synoptic writers allow elsewhere that, as the disciples must follow Jesus in other respects, so they must follow him in *pistis* towards God.⁷⁶ Just as Paul almost certainly understands Christ as faithful towards God, so do the synoptic gospels.⁷⁷ In Paul, as we have seen, Christ's faithfulness is pointed up in passages where Paul is discussing the role of Christ

in the drama of salvation and at the centre of the relationship of *pistis* between God and human beings.⁷⁸ It may be no accident that Matthew's only assertion, in the mouths (**p.371**) of the passers-by, that Jesus trusts God is made in the context of the crucifixion. Matthew has inherited an understanding of Jesus' death as sacrificial (cf. 26.28), even if he does not develop a theology of atonement himself.⁷⁹ Just as, for Paul, the *pistis* of Christ to God is part of his saving self-sacrifice, Matthew perhaps transmits here, if admittedly briefly and allusively, something of the same idea.

We have already seen that Jesus commends the *pistis* of the Canaanite woman in his version of Mark's story of the Syrophenician woman (Mt. 15.21–8), echoing the conclusion of the healing of the centurion's servant that not only may Jesus heal a non-Israelite, but non-Israelites may have exemplary *pistis* and be admitted into God's kingdom. Matthew goes further than Mark in criticizing some of the Jews for neglecting *pistis*, and bringing into question whether, consequently, they will be admitted into God's kingdom.

It is implicit in the passages of Mark where Jesus criticizes the scribes, Pharisees, priests, and other Jewish community leaders that he thinks their relationship with God is inadequate, but Mark does not use *pistis* language in this connection. Matthew, however, does. At 21.28–32, during a debate with a group of priests and elders in the temple, Jesus tells the parable (unparalleled elsewhere) of a man's two sons, both of whom were asked to go to work one day in their father's vineyard. One refused, but later repented and went. The other agreed to go, but did not. Which, Jesus asks, did his father's will? His interlocutors say, the first. Jesus replies:

Truly I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of *dikaiosynē*, you did not trust/believe him (οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ); but tax collectors and prostitutes trusted/believed him (ἐπίστευσαν αὐτῷ). Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your mind and put your trust/believe in him (πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ).' (21.31–2).

Both tax collectors and prostitutes could be either Jewish or gentile, but the likely implication here (strengthened by the fact that the brothers begin with the same status) is that Jews who are regarded as unrighteous by other Jews are practising *pistis* towards God where the pious are not.

Jesus elaborates on this theme during his denunciation of the Pharisees at 23.1–36. Among the Pharisees' many failings in this passage is that they are scrupulous in paying their tithes, but neglect more important matters of law: justice, mercy, and *pistis* (23.23). This passage does not make reference to gentiles, but if it is set side by side with passages in which Jesus praises gentiles for their *pistis* and foretells that they will be received into God's kingdom, we see a clear pattern emerging: *pistis* is what puts human beings, Jewish or (**p.372**) gentile, into the right relationship with God, and simply being Jewish, or even being Jewish and scrupulously keeping the law, does not do so.⁸⁰

In Mark's gospel, when Jesus is rejected in the Nazareth synagogue, he could not do any deeds of power because of the congregation's lack of *pistis*. Matthew modifies Mark's statement: 'And he did not do many works of power there, because of their *apistia*' (Mt. 13.58). He is evidently unhappy with the idea that anything human beings can do could curb the power of Jesus.⁸¹ Even so, for Matthew as for Mark, human beings play an active role in their own salvation. In places he seems to strengthen this theme. In the story of the woman with the haemorrhage, for instance, Matthew omits Mark's detail that the woman came because she had heard the reports about Jesus, throwing even more emphasis on her own initiative and determination.⁸² Matthew's Canaanite woman, similarly (unlike Mark's Syrophenician woman), is not said to have heard of Jesus: she is simply presented as recognizing that he can help her (15.22).

We saw that in Mark's gospel *pistis* language almost never appears in close proximity with Jesus' Christological titles, and argued that there are good reasons for this. Matthew follows Mark in making a pair of blind men seeking healing call Jesus 'Son of David', and makes the Canaanite woman call him 'Son of David'.⁸³ He diverges from Mark, however, by linking *pistis* language in several passages with the title *kyrios*, 'Lord'. The centurion who asks for healing for his slave addresses Jesus twice as 'Lord' (8.6, 8).⁸⁴ The blind men who call Jesus 'Son of David' also call him 'Lord' (9.28), as does the Canaanite woman (15.22, 25). The man who brings his possessed son to be exorcised, and in Mark addresses Jesus as 'Teacher' (9.17), in Matthew addresses him as 'Lord' (17.15). During the storm at sea, Mark's disciples wake Jesus by calling him 'Teacher', Matthew's by calling him 'Lord' (8.25). When, in Matthew, Peter tests his *pistis* by getting out of a boat to walk to Jesus across the Sea of Galilee, he calls Jesus 'Lord' when he asks Jesus to summon him to him, and again when he begins to sink (14.28, 30). *Kyrie* is an ambiguous title: it can refer to any human being in a position of power or authority, but in the Septuagint it often refers to God, while in the Graeco-Roman world more widely it is given equally to divine and to human rulers.⁸⁵ When people put (**p.373**) their trust in Jesus as *kyrios*, Matthew therefore leaves it open to his listeners to understand *kyrie* as a reference to Jesus' divinity, even when those who use it do not do so. Alternatively (more

speculatively), Matthew's listeners could hear those who use it as beginning to see Jesus as more than a great teacher and wonder-worker, and perhaps even more than human, even if they do not fully understand the implications of that recognition.

Matthew makes a further connection absent from Mark: between *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* and related terms. At 21.32 he criticizes the chief priests and elders: 'When John came to you in the way of *dikaiosynē*, you did not trust/believe (*ouk episteusate*) him.' He attacks the Pharisees (23.23) for paying their tithes but neglecting *krisis* (just judgement), mercy, and *pistis*. In chapter 23 Jesus several times calls the Pharisees hypocrites (including at 23.23),⁸⁶ and at 23.28 (cf. 23.35) he identifies hypocrisy as the opposite of *dikaiosynē*, so *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* are here ranged together, with other qualities such as mercy and humility, against hypocrisy. Several other passages make the connection less explicitly but still audibly. For Matthew, *dikaiosynē* is paradigmatically the quality of those who seek and attain the kingdom of God or heaven (5.6, 5.10, 5.20, 6.33). When Jesus says, in connection with the *pistis* of the centurion, that many will come from east and west, and feast in the kingdom of heaven, while those who expect to inherit it will be excluded (8.11–12), he connects *pistis* with *dikaiosynē* and affirms that gentiles may exceed Jews in it (just as faithful Jews may exceed the scribes and Pharisees). In the parable of the faithful or unfaithful slave, the slave who lacks *pistis* is given a place among the hypocrites, which is also the place where there is 'wailing and grinding of teeth' (24.51), identified elsewhere as the 'outer darkness' and the opposite of heaven (e.g. 22.13).⁸⁷ The same theme reappears in the parable of the talents: the slave who is not *pistos* is cast into the outer darkness (25.26–30).⁸⁸ In all these passages, *pistis*, *dikaiosynē*, and entry to the kingdom of God or heaven are more or less explicitly linked, while the absence of *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* leads to catastrophe. In each passage, moreover, not all of those who take it for granted that they are *pistoi* or *dikaioi* or will enter heaven do so. Matthew does not connect *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* as Paul does (and as Genesis did), by saying that the one leads to the other. But it is notable that he links them as often as he does, and Jewish and gentile audiences alike would have had no difficulty in understanding the combination as the foundation and inauguration of the best kind of divine–human relationship and community.

(p.374) Much of Matthew's treatment of *pistis* follows Mark's (and, like Mark, his Jesus challenges people to have *pistis*, commends people for having it, and criticizes people for not having it, or not enough of it, in roughly equal proportions). He uses *pistis* language to point up Mark's theme that people do not have to be Jewish to trust God and be admitted to the kingdom,⁸⁹ and the Q theme that as well as being the quality which establishes one's new relationship with God, and saves, *pistis* is also a quality which the faithful must go on practising till the coming of the Son of Man. On his own account he sharpens the contrast between faithful gentiles and those Jews who assume that they are *dikaioi* simply because they are Jewish, or because they are meticulous in keeping the law.⁹⁰ His linking of *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* highlights his interest in the changed nature of *dikaiosynē* in the new age inaugurated by Jesus' birth. His linking of *pistis* with the title *kyrios* affirms that any encounter with Jesus is always, whether or not it is fully recognized as such, an encounter between ruler, human or divine or both, and subject, and reminds readers that encounters with Jesus Christ are always encounters between humanity and God. He may even hint that the *pistis* of Christ describes the relationship with God which allows Christ to seal the new covenant and the forgiveness of sins through his death.

Finally, it is worth noting one connection which Matthew does not make. Despite his interest in the church, Matthew does not connect *pistis* with intra-human relationships, in the post-resurrection community. Like all the other New Testament writers so far discussed, *pistis* for Matthew characterizes above all the divine–human relationship and community, not intra-human ones.

Luke

Like Matthew, Luke owes much to both Mark and Q, and several times illustrates an understanding of *pistis* very like Matthew's in material which is unique to him.⁹¹ Like Matthew, however, he also alters or adds to the traditions he has inherited in accordance with his own interests.

Luke shares with Mark, Q, and Matthew an interest in the *pistis* of the disciples, which, though imperfect, is not to be despaired of. In one saying unique to him, he goes beyond Mark and Matthew in indicating that the disciples' *pistis* may both decline and grow. When Jesus foretells Peter's denial **(p.375)** of him at the Last Supper (22.31–4), he says, 'I have prayed about you [or, 'on your behalf'] that your own *pistis* may not fail (ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδεήθην περὶ σοῦ ἵνα μὴ ἐκλίπῃ ἡ πίστις σου); and having once turned back yourself, strengthen your brothers'⁹² (v. 32). Peter's prospective failure of faith does not refer to his denial of Jesus, which, as Jesus tells him immediately afterwards (v. 34), is certainly going to happen. It must refer to the aftermath of that betrayal: Jesus has prayed that Peter's behaviour will not lead him to give up on his commitment to God and to Jesus altogether, but that he will rally and be able to rally the other disciples. *Pistis* is evidently something which can both fail and grow within discipleship.

More generally, Luke shares Q's and Matthew's interest in the ongoing faithfulness which community members must practise till the coming of the Son of Man. Luke's version of Jesus' Q saying about the faithful and wise slave or steward who is ready whenever his

master comes home is very close to Matthew's (Lk. 12.42–8 = Mt. 24.45–51). Where Matthew (v. 51) says, however, that the unfaithful servant will be 'put with the hypocrites', where men wail and gnash their teeth, Luke says that he will be put with the *apistoi*. While both authors clearly indicate that the unfaithful servant will be excluded from the kingdom of God or heaven, Luke's phrasing links entry to the kingdom explicitly to *pistis*.⁹³

A saying unique to Luke (16.10–12) parallels closely the conclusion of the Q parable of the talents. 'He who is *pistos* in very little is *pistos* also in much and he who is unjust (*adikos*) in very little is also unjust in much. If therefore you have not been *pistoi* over unjust mammon, who will entrust you (*hymin pisteusei*) with the truth? And if you have not been *pistoi* in that which is another's, who will give you what is your own?' This saying follows the parable of the unjust steward and appears to be part of its interpretation.⁹⁴ A steward is accused of wasting his master's resources. Afraid that he will be dismissed, and convinced that he cannot earn his living any other way, he seeks to put some of his master's debtors in his own debt by cooking the books and reducing what they owe. When the master finds out, he commends the steward for his shrewdness.⁹⁵ Luke's Jesus interprets the parable by saying that, '[T]he children of this world are wiser in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light,' followed by the saying above. It seems (p.376) paradoxical to commend the steward for being trustworthy over small things and over unjust mammon, when in the story he has proved both untruthful and untrustworthy with his master's (presumptively honestly gotten) wealth, but if we allow that the master the steward has served faithfully in small things is himself, the saying just about fits the story.

Luke follows this section of unparalleled material with the Q saying: 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon' (16.13 = Mt. 6.24). This saying adds a little more to the conclusion of the parable of the talents. Community members must be consistently faithful to God and 'despise' (*kataphronēsei*) the world. This connects *pistis* with the theme of the parable of the rich fool (Lk. 12.16–21), also unique to Luke, where *pistis* does not occur (one should store up one's treasure in heaven, not on earth), and also with the wider theme of the Q material in which it is embedded in Matthew: one should rely on God for everything and not worry about everyday problems such as what one is going to eat, drink, or wear (Mt. 6.25–34 = Lk. 12.22–32). *Pistis* towards God goes with ceasing to worry, or care about, and certainly to serve the things of this world. The theme in Mark and Matthew that *pistis* belongs to human beings' relationship with God and their admission to the kingdom of God is sharpened here: *pistis* is associated with the active rejection of the world. In Acts, Luke will represent the post-resurrection community of the faithful in its earliest form as communistic: everyone puts everything they have into a shared fund (2.44–5; cf. 5.11). His interest in the gospel in connecting *pistis* with the rejection of worldly wealth and concern for material possessions foreshadows and justifies his admiration for the anti-materialism of the post-resurrection community.

A healing which appears only in Luke follows Q's and Matthew's shared interest in the *pistis* of non-Israelites which leads to their salvation. Passing from Samaria to Galilee, Jesus encounters ten lepers, who cry for mercy.⁹⁶ He tells them to show themselves to the priests, and as they go they find they are healed. Just one, a Samaritan, turns back to praise God and fall at Jesus' feet in gratitude. Jesus asks rhetorically: 'Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?...Rise and go your way; your *pistis* has made you well/saved you (ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε)' (17.18–19).

Luke, like Matthew, also emphasizes that though various groups of Jewish leaders are convinced of their own piety, they are not as faithful to God as they should be. At Jesus' questioning before the Sanhedrin during his trial (23.67–8), Jesus is challenged: 'If you are the Messiah, tell us.' Jesus replies: 'If (p.377) I tell you, you will not believe (οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε).' The implication seems to be that if the Jewish authorities are blind to everything that Jesus has so far said and done, nothing will convince them.⁹⁷

Another passage unique to Luke where he talks about *pistis* has, at first sight, a rather tangential relationship with the parable which precedes it and to which Luke appears to attach it. Verses 18.1–8 are introduced as a parable about the need for constant and unwearied prayer (18.1). In a certain town an unjust judge was pestered relentlessly by a widow who wanted him to give a just judgement in her favour. Though the judge neither feared God nor respected any human being, he was driven to deliver a just judgement by the woman's sheer persistence. Jesus concludes: 'Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes will he find *pistis* on earth?' (18.7–8).⁹⁸ The *pistis* of this question is that of the faithful who endure every injustice while waiting for the Son of Man, and is also reminiscent of the faithfulness implicit in Jesus' teaching: 'Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you' (11.9 = Mt. 7.7).⁹⁹ It also connects with the empowered *pistis* of those who ask for healing in Luke and the other synoptic gospels. *Pistis*, Luke indicates, takes the initiative. It not only trusts and endures: it seeks, asks, knocks, lobbies, and is not satisfied until it gets the *dikaiosynē* it longs for.

We have seen that several other passages in the synoptic gospels attribute a significant degree of power to the *pistis* of those who put their trust in God or in Jesus. At 8.12–13, however, Luke suggests that if the salvation of human beings is seen from a cosmic perspective as part of a battle between God and Christ on the one hand and the devil on the other, human beings and their *pistis* may be little more than pawns in the struggle. In Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the sower (8.11–15 = Mk. 13.18–23 = Mt. 4.13–20), Luke says (following Mark) that the devil comes and takes the word out of the hearts of some of those who have heard it (like a bird, apparently, picking seed corn off a path), 'so that they may not believe and be saved (ἵνα μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν)' (8.12).¹⁰⁰ On the face of it, there is no obvious way to reconcile the **(p.378)** activity of the persistent widow, for instance, with the passivity of those whose *pistis* is taken away from them by the devil. One solution might be that while the earth cannot choose whether it is hard, rocky, or a fertile field, people can: they can choose how they receive the gospel, and so whether it grows well in them or not.

Luke connects *pistis* with *dikaiosynē* occasionally, but not as regularly as Matthew—not surprisingly, since although Luke shares Matthew's sharply critical view of some Jews, he is less interested than Matthew in the relationship between *dikaiosynē*, salvation, and the law.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Luke occasionally links *pistis* language with the title *kyrios*, but not as regularly as does Matthew. The centurion who seeks healing for his slave calls Jesus 'Lord'.¹⁰² Peter calls him 'Lord' at 22.33, adding emphasis to his protest that he will never deny him. At 17.6 Luke refers to Jesus as 'the Lord' in a passage where *pistis* language also occurs, but the title is not put in the mouths of the disciples. Elsewhere, Luke's disciples, frightened by the storm at sea, call on Jesus as *epistata*, 'Master', where Mark uses 'Teacher' and Matthew 'Lord'.¹⁰³ The ten lepers whom Jesus heals in a single-tradition Lukan story also call on Jesus as *epistata* (17.13). When the man whose son is possessed appeals to Jesus, Luke follows Mark in making him call Jesus 'Teacher' (and Matthew again substitutes 'Lord').¹⁰⁴ In addition to the passages above, Simon uses it to address Jesus several times (5.5, 8.45, 9.33), and the disciple John once (9.49).¹⁰⁵ The semantic range of *epistatēs* in Greek in general is similar to that of *kyrios*, so, like *kyrios*, it can be heard by Luke's listeners as a Christological title even if they assume that those in the gospel who use it are addressing Jesus as a human being.¹⁰⁶ More broadly, there are few signs that Luke develops his use of *pistis* language in the gospel in connection with his distinctive Christology or (what may be seen as) his understanding of salvation history and eschatology.¹⁰⁷ His understanding of *pistis*, in the context of Jesus' ministry and death, largely remains close to what he has inherited.

(p.379) Where Luke's treatment of *pistis* in the gospel is most distinctive is at its beginning and end, in chapters 1 and 24. Here, in his portrayal of the world before Jesus' birth and the world after his crucifixion, Luke develops a theme very close to his heart: the reliability and authority of words and report, oral and written. He opens the gospel by telling his addressee, Theophilus:

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately (*akribōs*) anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty (*asphaleia*) of the teachings you have received (1.1–3)

Being an eyewitness to events is clearly a role of vital significance, but Luke is also confident of his ability to establish 'everything accurately' from his own researches and pass it on. The written word is no less authoritative in this formulation than autopsy itself.¹⁰⁸

In chapter 1, Zechariah, visited by an angel who tells him that his wife Elizabeth is going to bear him a son, is doubtful. 'How shall I know this?' he asks, 'For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years' (1.18).¹⁰⁹ (Unusually, the vision of an angel and its message from God are apparently not evidence enough.) Gabriel replies, 'I am Gabriel, who stands before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news.' Angels do not, in Jewish scripture, typically need to prove their credentials before they are believed. 'But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not trust/believe my words (οὐκ ἐπίστευσας τοῖς λόγοις μου)...' (1.20). Significantly, it is Zechariah's doubt about the message rather than about the vision he sees that prompts the angel to prove his provenance. Words, we infer—against the grain of Graeco-Roman, and perhaps even Jewish, *mentalité*—are even more important in the creation of *pistis* than what one sees.¹¹⁰

Mary, when Gabriel appears to her (1.26–38), does not express doubt, and when she meets Elizabeth, Elizabeth praises her for it: 'Blessed are you who trusted/believed (*pisteusasa*) that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled' (1.45). Again, it is Mary's *pistis* in the Lord's words rather than in Gabriel's appearance that is important. Luke's phrasing reminds his community that the *pistis* of Zechariah or Mary is ultimately towards God, even when God communicates through a heavenly messenger, but it also affirms the validity of the transmitted word and message in themselves.

(p.380) At the end of the gospel Luke returns to the importance of *pistis* in what is heard, in the very different context of the

resurrection. On the evening of the first day of the week, two of Jesus' followers are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus when they fall in with a stranger, whom their eyes are 'prevented from recognizing' as the risen Christ (24.16). The stranger asks what they have been talking about, and they tell him about the preaching and death of Jesus and their disappointment that he has proved not to be the Messiah (24.17–21). Moreover, they say, some of the women in their group found his tomb empty that morning, and claimed to have seen a vision of angels who told them that Jesus was alive, but when some of the men went, they saw nothing (24.22–4). The travellers do not say, but leave open the implication, that they do not believe the women's report. The stranger criticizes the travellers for not trusting/believing what the prophets spoke when they prophesied that the Messiah would suffer before entering into glory (ὄ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῆι καρδίαι τοῦ πιστεῦειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφηταί...) (24.25–6). His discourse takes them to Emmaus, where they persuade him to stay the night with them; when, however, at supper he takes bread, and blesses and breaks it, they recognize him and he vanishes from sight (24.29–31). The two say to each other: 'Were our hearts not burning within us when he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?' (24.32). They set out immediately for Jerusalem, where they report what they have experienced and find other disciples saying that 'The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!' (24.34).

It is striking that the two on the Emmaus road are not criticized for failing to recognize Jesus, but for not trusting or believing in the prophets, while when Jesus leaves them they ask each other whether they did not have an intuition of who it was, not from his appearance or even his actions, but from what he said to them about the scriptures. Visions of the risen Christ generate fear and amazement when they are recognized for what they are, but it is the word, written and spoken, whose power and importance for *pistis* Luke takes trouble to emphasize.

The same theme emerges in Luke's next resurrection story. While the disciples are still discussing the experience of Simon Peter and the travellers to Emmaus, Jesus appears among them. They are terrified (*emphoboi*) and, in spite of their recent experiences, think they are seeing a ghost (24.37). Jesus reassures them and invites them to touch him (implying, unusually, that touch is a more reliable basis for belief than sight).¹¹¹ Then he reminds them that while he was still with them, he told them that everything written about him in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled (34.44). **(p.381)** 'Then', says Luke, 'he opened their minds to understand the scriptures' (34.45).

Recognizing Jesus by sight would clearly be to the disciples' credit, but what matters most is that they understand what Jesus has taught them and what is written about the Messiah in the scriptures. In the world in which Luke is writing, where visions of the risen Christ are receding into history and what is left are oral and written stories about Jesus, together with the Jewish scriptures, Luke's emphasis on the importance of what one hears and reads at the expense of what one sees reassures his own listeners and readers that scripture and tradition are an even better basis for *pistis* than sight, and points to the desirability of believing his gospel.

It is worth noting that Luke's perspective here would be significantly easier for Jewish than gentile audiences to understand. We have seen how much doubt and scepticism both oral and written report generate in Graeco-Roman thinking in the early principate. In contrast, the authority of the scriptures is a well-established theme in Judaism. We may even wonder whether, given that professional, technical writings are often treated by Greeks and Romans as more trustworthy than other kinds in this period, Luke invokes the language of professional expertise in his preface in the hope of persuading gentile audiences to trust him more than they otherwise might.¹¹²

This interest in the power and authority of the spoken, and implicitly of the written, word continues to be a dominant theme in the Acts of the Apostles. In that book, however, other uses of *pistis* language come into play which had no role in the gospel but which are equally important to the author and his community.

The Acts of the Apostles

Pistis in Acts is once again almost exclusively a divine–human relationship. Followers of Christ are never told to practise it towards one another, nor described as practising it simply as fellow-community members, though they are occasionally described as putting their trust in apostles when the latter preach or heal.¹¹³ Like the gospels, too, Acts does not refer to God as *pistos*, though, unsurprisingly, there are again indications that Luke does think that **(p.382)** God is faithful.¹¹⁴ Nor does Acts refer explicitly to the *pistis* of Christ. The focus in this book, in line with its subject and Luke's interest in the developing church, is on the *pistis* that people come to place in God and Christ after the resurrection, and the life in community that they make on the strength of it.

The largest group of references to *pistis* and *pisteuein* in this book concerns conversion.¹¹⁵ 'Many of those who heard the word *episteusan*', says Luke of the response to Peter's second speech after Pentecost (4.4). 'This became known all over Joppa, and many *episteusan* in the Lord,' he says after Peter raises a community member from the dead (9.42).¹¹⁶ We could multiply examples, but

these two accounts, though brief, are typical in two important ways. Luke almost always describes *pistis* as arising either as a result of preaching, or of signs and wonders performed by the apostles, or both. And when *pisteuein* is used of conversion, it almost always either has no object, or people are described as putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ (with the dative, *eis*, *en*, or *epi*).¹¹⁷

At 5.12–15 Luke says: ‘Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.’ They congregated under Solomon’s portico, and no one dared to join them, but many admired them, and more and more people joined them, *pisteuontes* in the Lord (5.14), while others brought their sick into the streets so that Peter’s shadow might fall on them. The proximate cause of *pistis* towards Christ here seems to be miracles.¹¹⁸ The same is true in Joppa, where Peter raises Tabitha from the dead. He is **(p.383)** summoned to Joppa from Lydda because Tabitha is ill (9.38). Raising her is the first thing he does on his arrival (9.39). ‘This became known all over Joppa’, says Luke, ‘and many *episteusan* in the Lord’ (9.42).

On other occasions a miracle brings someone to trust/belief in a message he has already heard, or opens him to teaching. When Paul causes the magician Elymas to become blind, for instance, the proconsul who sees what happens *episteusen*, ‘having been astonished by the teaching of the Lord’ (13.12). When an earthquake delivers Paul and Silas from prison, their gaoler, shocked by the miracle, asks: ‘Lords, what must I do to be saved?’ They tell him to put his trust in the Lord Jesus, speak the word of the Lord to him, and baptize him (16.32).

Often, however, it is preaching alone that brings people to *pistis*. Paul and Barnabas, for example, speak in the Iconium synagogue in such a way that a great many Jews and Greeks *pisteusai* (14.1). At Corinth, it is in response to Paul’s preaching that Crispus *episteusen*, together with his household and others (18.8). Sometimes Luke makes explicit that the apostles are only vehicles of God’s word. At 6.7 it is the ‘word of God’ rather than the apostles’ preaching that spreads and increases the number of disciples. When a group of Cypriots and Cyrenians starts preaching to the gentiles of Antioch, Luke says that: ‘The hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number, *pisteusas*, turned to the Lord’ (11.21).¹¹⁹ Peter, defending himself at the council in Jerusalem (15.1–29), says that not he, but ‘God made his choice among you that through my mouth the gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and *pisteusai*.’ (15.7) Nor is it only God and the apostles who are involved. At Beroea (17.10–12), Luke highlights the role of those who are open to Paul’s preaching in their own coming to *pistis*. ‘They received the word with all willingness, examining the scriptures daily to determine whether [what Paul preached] was so.’ Many of them then *episteusan*.

It is clear from these and other references throughout the book how important preaching, and the forging of *pistis* through verbal teaching and testimony, are to the author.¹²⁰ I suggested on p. 362 in the section ‘Mark’ that one of the aims of the gospel writers may have been to recreate something of the experience of a direct encounter with Jesus Christ for those who did not encounter him in life or in a resurrection experience, and that, if so, they must hold a high view of the capacity of the written word to strengthen and even engender *pistis*. Acts takes just as high a view of both the spoken and (vitaly, to the author) the written word. Luke’s evocations of the life and preaching of the apostles and Jesus’ first post-resurrection followers are vividly and compellingly **(p.384)** described to reassure his own listeners of the significance of the good news he is passing on.

At the same time, it is notable that Luke never says explicitly in Acts that anyone believes directly in the apostles’ preaching, or in the content of their preaching. Either *pisteuein* is left without an object, or Luke says that followers of Christ believe (in) God, the Lord Jesus Christ, or an apostle.¹²¹ In several passages he can even be read as putting some distance between people’s reception of preaching and their *pistis*. At 4.4 ‘many people, having heard the word, *episteusan*’. On some level, of course, these people must have believed what they heard, because trust and belief are always intertwined, and because they would have had no reason to put their trust in God or Christ if they gave no credence to Peter’s words. But Luke does not take the opportunity to say that they believed (in) the *logos*: he says that they heard the *logos* and *episteusan*. It is unlikely that *ton logon* is intended to serve as the object of both verbs here: it is in the wrong case to be the object of *pisteuein*, and *pisteuein* occurs so often without an object in Luke that there is no difficulty in reading it that way.¹²² It looks rather as if Luke uses two verbs deliberately to avoid stating that people trust/believe in Peter’s preaching or its content. Elsewhere, the distance between reception of the word and *pistis* is extended further. The Jews of Beroea ‘received’ (*edexanto*) the word, examining it (*anakrinontes*) for themselves, before *episteusan* (17.11–12).

If, however, people are not said to trust/believe in the word they hear or its content, what do they put trust/believe in? Sometimes *pisteuousin* in God or Christ, but more often, as noted, *pisteuein* appears, in the context of conversion and elsewhere, without an object. In the gospels, as we have seen, the same phenomenon allows the evangelists not to specify whether *pistis* in any one passage is trust in God, Christ as the Son of God, Jesus as an exceptional human being, Jesus’ preaching, or even those who practise *pistis* themselves; this ambiguity reflects the complexity of the evangelists’ understanding of the relationships between God, Christ, his followers, and the gospel, and captures the idea that characters in the gospels who initially approach Jesus out of some quite specific

need are drawn into a much more radical, all-encompassing, and far-reaching relationship with God. Is the same deliberate ambiguity at work in Acts?

(p.385) There are signs that it is. As in the gospel, those who follow Christ in Acts put their trust in God, Christ, the apostles, and a proclamation about what God plans for his people. Where in the gospels, though, those following Jesus have a very imperfect understanding of who he is and what God plans to accomplish through him, in Acts they are offered a complex but definite understanding of both. One might think that in this environment it would be harder for objectless *pistis* to describe a relationship in which people have room to move from limited and self-interested to more profound and far-reaching *pistis*. On the other hand, Luke does give occasional indications that it is possible and desirable for disciples and communities to be 'strengthened' (*epistērizontes, estereounto*) in *pistis*, which suggests that there is room in Acts for divine-human relationships to evolve.¹²³ An incident early in the book (3.1–10) is even more suggestive. Peter and John were on their way to the Temple to pray. A crippled man at the Temple gate begged them for alms. Peter told him to look at them. The man looked attentively (*epeichen*), expecting to be given something. Peter said, 'I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, [rise and] walk' (3.6). The man leapt to his feet and entered the Temple with Peter and John, praising God, while the people who saw him were filled with astonishment. This is an unusual healing in many ways: the man did not ask for it, Peter's demand that he look at himself (Peter) and John is unparalleled, and this is the first time in Luke that someone heals in the name of Jesus Christ. In one respect, however, it parallels several of the gospel healings closely. The man asks the apostles for one thing, but as he attends to the person of whom he has asked it, he is given much more than he asked for.¹²⁴

What objectless *pistis* is not, predominantly, in Acts as in the gospels, is propositional belief. In Chapter 6 I argued that, contrary to what is often assumed, propositional belief is not the main focus of Peter's speech at Pentecost (2.14–40). Peter calls Israelites to repent for the forgiveness of sins because the last days are here. He affirms the life, death, resurrection of Jesus, and his exaltation, as Lord and Messiah, as inaugurating this new time and making possible repentance, forgiveness, and the gift of the holy spirit. All these elements of his proclamation are clearly central to it, but Peter does not call the Israelites to propositional belief as such, for instance, in the resurrection; he calls them to repentance and trust in God and Christ.

A series of later speeches by Peter and Paul confirm this view of the Pentecost speech. In chapter 3 Peter takes the opportunity to preach to the crowd which has gathered around the man he has just healed. He tells them that he and his friends are witnesses that God has glorified his servant Jesus, as he foretold through the prophets, by raising him from the dead (3.13, 15, 18). **(p.386)** *Therefore*, says Peter, the Israelites should repent and be converted, so that their sins may be wiped away and God may send them his Messiah, as he is prophesied to do (3.19–22). This is the focus of his call to *pistis* and, says Luke: '[M]any of those who heard the *logos, episteusan*, and the number of men [in the community of Jesus' followers] grew to about 5,000.' (4.4),¹²⁵ Paul, in his speech at Pisidian Antioch (13.16–41), similarly preaches what he calls 'this word of salvation' (13.26) by summarizing the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, to which the apostles are witnesses (13.26–31), and concluding that 'through him, forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you...and in him, the one who trusts/believes is made *dikaios* (ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται)' (13.38).¹²⁶ Most striking of all, in his speech on the Athenian Areopagus (17.22–1), Paul preaches with almost no reference to Jesus Christ. His message is that the God who made the world and everything in it (17.24), and ordered it so as to prompt people to search for him (17.27), has been patient with human ignorance, but now demands that everyone everywhere repent, because he has 'established a day on which he will "judge the world with justice"' (17.31). He will do this through 'a man whom he has appointed,' and he has provided confirmation of this by raising that man from the dead (17.31). So Luke confirms, with a (for him) unparalleled piece of natural theology, that the essence of Christian preaching is repentance in view of coming judgement.¹²⁷

We have seen how important the spoken and the written word are for Luke as vehicles of the good news. In case listeners are in any doubt that his interest in the authority of written word is as strong in Acts as in the gospel, he reminds Theophilus at the beginning of Acts (1.1) of his gospel prologue, in which he sets out in unequivocal terms his view that his *logos* is accurate and reliable (1.1–4). We have also seen that healings and other miraculous events can act as stimulants to *pistis*. Visions too play a large part in Acts.¹²⁸ In chapter 9 Saul, in hostile pursuit of disciples, travels to Damascus. On the road, however, he sees a flashing light; he falls to the ground, and hears a voice asking: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' The voice is that of Jesus, and it transforms Saul's life and the future of the Christian mission (9.1–9). So **(p.387)** large does Paul's conversion and mission loom in Luke's imagination that, after this pericope, he makes Paul himself tell the story of his conversion twice (22.3–16, 26.2–18). Equally famous and transformative for the mission of the faithful is the vision which Peter has on his way to Caesarea (10.9–16), in which God tells him that he can consider all foods clean and fit to eat. Again, this vision is so important for Luke's understanding of the Christian community, to which Jews and gentiles belong on equal terms, that he makes Peter retell it, almost word for word, in the next chapter (11.5–10). Both these visions lead in the first place to a single conversion, Paul's to Christ and Peter's to a new understanding of who

can appropriately be in a *pistis* relationship with Christ (11.17), but these conversions lead to many more.

It emerged several times in previous chapters that autopsy, personal experience (including of the miraculous), and visions are widely perceived as the most powerful and effective bases for *pistis/fides* in the Graeco-Roman world, and often in the Septuagint too.¹²⁹ In making much of them, Luke is appealing to what his audiences are likely to see as the most secure foundations of *pistis*. We have also seen that second-hand report is perceived (by Greeks and Romans, though not necessarily, at least in relation to scripture, by Jews) as being perhaps the least reliable of all bases for *pistis/fides* in the world of the first century. By insisting on the reliability of both the preached and the written word, Luke seeks continually to mitigate possible perceptions of the fragility of preaching as a basis for *pistis* in general, and of his writing as a basis for *pistis* in his own community. (He does not, however, use *pistis* language of his writings or the effect they are intended to have, reserving it for the divine–human relationship which he hopes his writing will help to foster.)

He fortifies both arguments by presenting the activities of the apostles and the growth of Christian communities in almost wholly positive terms, and finding remarkably little to say about fear, doubt, or scepticism. He recognizes that not everyone to whom the apostles preach or who witnesses their miracles is converted.¹³⁰ He reports occasional tensions within communities (5.1–10, 6.1). He shows Peter, filled with righteous anger, as capable of striking fear into the hearts of the faithful (5.11). He does not ignore, though one might argue that he underplays, differences between the apostles (11.1–18, 15.1–21). When Paul first tries to join the disciples in Jerusalem, Luke reports (in terms so unflattering as to have the ring of truth) that they are afraid of him, not believing that he is really a disciple (9.26). But, overwhelmingly, Acts is a story of the power of the word in evoking *pistis* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even when they are persecuted, he never presents the *pistis* of Christians as wavering. The clear message is that the word—received from God, preached, and finally (**p.388**) reported by himself—can be relied on as a foundation for the *pistis* that leads to salvation.¹³¹

Those who turn to God and Christ and put their trust in God and Christ are identified at least once in Acts as *hoi pistoi* and possibly occasionally as *hoi pisteuontes* or *hoi pisteusantes*.¹³² We have already discussed the meaning of these phrases, and there is little to add here.¹³³ It is, though, worth noting that if one comes to Acts after reading Paul's epistles, one encounters *hoi pisteuontes* or *hoi pistoi* with no surprise. If, however, one comes to Acts after reading Luke's gospel, Luke's characterization of *hoi pisteuontes/pistoi* is a surprise. In the gospel *pistis* was a challenge, an achievement to be commended, and on at least one occasion work in progress. After Pentecost *pistis* becomes the common denominator of Christian identity: something that, once entered into, can apparently be all but taken for granted. Though Luke does not draw explicit attention to the change, it is a dramatic statement about the new world in which followers of Christ live and act after the resurrection that what was so difficult even for Jesus' closest companions in his lifetime is now descriptive of the uncounted numbers to whom they preach.

In a small number of passages of Acts, translators are sometimes tempted to translate *hē pistis* as 'the faith'. In accordance with the principles outlined in the Introduction, we should resist this translation if a less radical interpretation is available.¹³⁴ In chapter 13 the proconsul Sergius Paullus has summoned Barnabas and Saul (*sic*) to Paphos because he wishes to hear the word of God. A magician called Elymas, who is already installed with Paullus, opposes them, 'in an attempt to turn the proconsul away from *tēn pistin*' (13.8). 'Trust' (in God or Christ) makes perfectly good sense of *hē pistis* in this context, and we need dwell on it no further. At 14.21–2 Paul and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, where they have preached before, to strengthen the spirits of the disciples and encourage them to persevere *tē (p.389) pistei*, because: 'It is for us to persevere through many hardships to reach the kingdom of God.' The idea that one must persevere in trust or faithfulness to reach the kingdom of God is one we encountered in Paul's letters, and 'faithfulness' is the natural translation of *pistis* here.¹³⁵ At 16.5 Luke sums up a period of Paul's missionary activity by saying: 'Day by day the churches grew stronger *tē pistei* and increased in number.' Here again, there is no difficulty with translating *pistis* as 'trust' or 'faithfulness'.

Not only is there no good reason to translate *hē pistis* as 'the faith', in the sense of 'the religion', in these passages, but Acts in general presents far fewer 'deferred' or 'reified' meanings of *pistis* language than do, for instance, the epistles.¹³⁶ In every passage we have discussed so far, *pistis* is understandable in straightforwardly relational terms, in many cases involving only the simplest implicit deferral to the concept 'belief'. One of very few verses where it may have evolved somewhat is 6.7: 'The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large crowd of priests became obedient *tē pistei*.'

Becoming obedient to trust in God sounds odd—but so does becoming obedient to a religion or a tradition. The verb *hypakouein* is only used once elsewhere in Acts, of a servant answering a door, and only twice in Luke's gospel, at 8.25, when the disciples ask who Jesus is, that even the winds and waves obey him (a direct borrowing from Mark), and at 17.6, when Jesus tells the disciples that if

they had *pistis* the size of a mustard seed, they would be able to tell a mulberry tree to uproot itself and it would obey them.¹³⁷ *Hypakouein*, it seems, is not a distinctively Lukan word. *Hypakouein* and *hypakoē* are, however, distinctively Pauline: apart from seven references in the synoptic gospels and Acts (five of them above) and four in 1 Peter, the other twenty-five uses of this lexicon in the New Testament are all in Paul or deuterio-Paul. Particularly interesting in the current context are Romans 1.5 and 16.26, where Paul refers to ‘the obedience of/that is *pistis* (ὕπακοὴν πίστεως)’, and Romans 10.16, where he talks of ‘obeying the good news’ (ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ). We may also note that at Galatians 1.23, *tēn pistin* is the object of preaching.

It would not be remarkable if Luke owed some of his thinking about *pistis* to Paul’s way of speaking or writing (though not necessarily to knowledge of these particular letters).¹³⁸ Romans 1.5 and 16.26 show that *hypakoē* and *pistis* go together for Paul; in both passages, moreover, they can be read as virtual (**p.390**) synonyms.¹³⁹ We interpreted *tēn pistin* at Galatians 1.23 as the ‘relationship’ or ‘bond of trust’ between Christ and the faithful. In that light, Acts 6.7 may be read as meaning that the priests ‘put their trust in/gave their obedience to the relationship/bond of trust in Christ’ that was being preached by the apostles. If so, then this passage imports a touch of the sophistication of Paul’s thinking about *pistis* into a narrative which for the most part understands it as straightforwardly relational.¹⁴⁰

We have seen that the crux of all Peter’s and Paul’s set-piece speeches in the course of the book is to call listeners to repentance for the forgiveness of sins, in the hope that they will receive the holy spirit and salvation in the last days. *Pistis* is consistently associated with this message: it is the quality and practice above all that, from the human side, enables healing or salvation to occur and the holy spirit to be received.¹⁴¹ *Pistis* leads, for instance, to healing at 3.16 and 14.9, to the ‘cleansing of hearts’ at 15.9,¹⁴² to salvation at 15.11 and 16.31, to the forgiveness of sins at 10.43, to *dikaiosynē* at 13.39, and to the reception of the holy spirit at 11.15–17,¹⁴³ 10.44, 15.7–8, and 19.6,¹⁴⁴ while Stephen and Barnabas are both described as filled with the holy spirit and *pistis* (6.5, 11.24).¹⁴⁵ At 14.27 (cf. 14.22), it is the door by which the gentiles enter the kingdom of God.

One might feel that in all this Luke has missed an opportunity to develop his characterization of *pistis* further. We saw in the gospel that Luke can present being *pistos* as an aspect of the relationship between God and human beings after conversion.¹⁴⁶ In Acts he can call converts *pistoi* and perhaps *pisteuontes*. He is, moreover, widely seen as understanding God’s kingdom as having already, in some sense, broken into the world and as marking it ahead of the *eschaton*.¹⁴⁷ Here, surely, is an opportunity for Luke to ponder and describe not only the role of *pistis* in making it possible for human beings to enter God’s kingdom, but how *pistis* operates where the kingdom has been (**p.391**) inaugurated. He makes little of it.¹⁴⁸ He twice connects *pistis* language with descriptions of the Jerusalem church’s early communal lifestyle (‘All *hoi pisteuontes* were together and had all things in common’ (2.44; cf. 4.32), suggesting that the sharing of resources, and the social equality which it implies, are characteristic of the *eschaton*.¹⁴⁹ When Lydia, the purple-dealer of Philippi, says to Paul, ‘If you consider me a *pistē* in the Lord, come and stay at my home’ (16.15), she may indicate that the giving and accepting of hospitality belong to it too. Life in *pistis* is clearly also life in the spirit, but while we hear a good deal about what the faithful achieve through the spirit, this does not tell us what is distinctive about life in *pistis*. Luke’s downplaying of tensions between community members might be seen as introducing a theme notable by its absence in most New Testament writings, that in the kingdom (as in the golden age or the age of Saturn in Graeco-Roman mythology), perfect and harmonious *pistis* pertains between human beings. Beyond these slender hints, however, the role of *pistis* in the world of the resurrection and the inaugurated kingdom remains frustratingly vague.¹⁵⁰

Finally, we may note that, despite Luke’s evident knowledge of Paul, and although Acts regularly refers to Jesus as ‘Lord’, and less often as ‘Christ’, Luke does not use *pistis* language to explore the complexity of the nature of Christ nor, as Paul does, to articulate the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity in salvation.¹⁵¹ Luke’s focus remains on the importance for human beings, in the light of coming judgement, of putting their trust in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than in the present ‘corrupt generation’ (2.44) and the ‘power of Satan’ (26.18).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have encountered a number of themes which we also encountered in Paul’s letters. A God who can be presumed to be *pistos* reaches out to humanity through Jesus Christ, and subsequently through those who (**p.392**) follow him, creating a cascade of trustworthiness which spreads from God ever more widely through the world. People are called to put their trust in God and in Christ, though not in one another, creating a powerful, wigwam-shaped divine–human community. The focus of this community is firmly on the kingdom. The kingdom may be represented as coming more or less imminently, or as already inaugurated, but as far as *pistis* is concerned, it has not yet begun, and insofar as the synoptic writers are interested in the period between people’s putting their trust in God and Christ and the coming of the kingdom, their emphasis is on the faithfulness in adversity which community members need to sustain them while they wait.

Where Paul occasionally refers to the pre-election of those who have *pistis*, and John, as we will see, makes it a major theme of his gospel, the synoptic writers emphasize the role the faithful have in their own *pistis*. Those who recognize something out of the ordinary in Jesus or recognize that he can address their need are commended. At the same time, all the synoptic writers acknowledge to some degree that even within the *pistis* relationship there is room for fear and doubt; no relationship is perfectly secure, but all have room to develop (and, for Luke in particular, may also degrade). In these passages we can hear the writers addressing their communities, perhaps reassuring members that even when they have already put their trust in God and Christ they may experience fear, doubt, or scepticism, and that these need not exclude them from the kingdom if they keep practising *pistis*. Beyond these passages, though, none of these writers takes a sustained interest in the evolution of *pistis* or the nature of the community of the faithful on earth: not even Luke in Acts, where we might have expected more reflection on the nature of the *pistis* relationship between God and the faithful in the last days.

Matthew and Luke, in many respects, follow Mark's treatment of *pistis* closely. They take from another source, which we have called Q, much of their (limited) interest in the ongoing faithfulness of the community of Jesus' followers, together with material which highlights that gentiles as well as Jews may put their trust in God and Christ. Matthew, in line with his generally relatively favourable treatment of the disciples, palliates a little the Markan Jesus' criticisms of the disciples' failings in *pistis*. Conversely, he uses *pistis* language to sharpen Mark's criticisms of some Jews, emphasizing their hypocrisy and failure to keep the spirit as well as the letter of the law. In that connection, Matthew several times connects *pistis* with *dikaiosynē*: *pistis* towards God and Christ, he tells Jewish listeners, is the true *dikaiosynē*. Luke uses *pistis* to underline two of his own particular interests. Putting one's *pistis* in God and Christ goes especially strongly for Luke with ceasing to worry, or care about, the things of this world, a theme closely connected with his presentation of primitive life after the resurrection as communistic. And Luke's interest not only in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, but in the growth of the post-resurrection community of the faithful, makes a **(p.393)** particular point of showing that *pistis* is appropriately and reliably invoked by both the spoken and written word.

All the synoptic authors appeal, in addition to the spoken and written word, to foundations of *pistis* which were regarded as relatively reliable in the world in which they were writing: above all, the evidence of signs and wonders, autopsy, and personal experience. The fact that *pistis* language is often connected in the synoptic gospels and Acts with various kinds of miracles is sometimes seen as an indication that *pistis* is of limited importance for the books overall. One of the writers' concerns, however, must have been to offer converts and (indirectly, if not directly) potential converts reasons for putting their trust in God as the father of Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ as God's son, and in the world of the early principate appeal to signs, wonders, and exceptional personal experiences was a prime way of justifying an appeal to *pistis*. Not only do the synoptic gospels and Acts present and promote *pistis* towards God and Christ; they are also themselves *pisteis*: arguments or proofs of the validity of *pistis*.

In Chapters 6 and 7 I argued that in Paul's earliest letter Christ has not yet found a place in Paul's inherited Jewish conceptualization of the divine-human relationship of trust, but that in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians Paul uses *pistis* to locate Christ at the centre of that relationship, presenting Christ as faithful to both God and humanity and trusted by both God and humanity, and that double *pistis* as the basis of his salvific activity. The synoptic writers, too, use *pistis* language to express their Christologies, but in a rather different way. For each of them—above all, perhaps, for Mark—Christ's identity as the Son of God means that trusting in God and Christ are closely linked. At the same time, Christ's humanity means that those who put their trust in him rarely understand fully in whom and what they are putting their trust. For the synoptic evangelists, therefore, the *pistis* that his followers put in Christ is typically ambiguous, positioned somewhere, unlocalizable by human beings, in the field formed by the *pistis* one might give to a great teacher, a wonder-worker, a divinely sanctioned saviour, and a divinity. *Pistis* in the synoptic evangelists thus captures not so much Christ's unique and distinctive location in the divine-human relationship as the complexity and, in his lifetime, the mystery of his identity.

Notes:

(1) 'Literature' (which is not, of course, an ancient category) is used here in a broad and modern sense. Debates over the genre of the gospels (e.g. Talbert (1978), Aune (1987), Burridge (2004)) are ultimately irresolvable; most helpful are the nuanced discussions of e.g. Stanton (1992), 62–6, Edwards (2006); cf. Sanders and Davies (1989), 25–47.

(2) The texts offer many variant readings consistent with constant copying, but remarkably few major differences (on the scale of the presence or absence of the long ending of Mark).

(3) pp. 28–30.

- (4) Notably the important study of Marshall (1989), 44–5, with much of the rest of whose approach I agree (e.g. his understanding of *pistis* as (partly, in his view) ‘existential commitment’ (p. 56) and his sensitive exploration of powerlessness, need, and courage in healing stories (ch. 4)); cf. Wallis (1995), 53–5.
- (5) On the ‘synoptic problem’, see e.g. Metzger (1977), Tuckett (1983*b*), Sanders and Davies (1989), 51–119, Schnelle (1998), 161–79. I follow e.g. Sanders and Davies in accepting that Matthew knew Mark and other sources (though they are sceptical about the existence of Q), that Luke knew Mark and Matthew, as well as other sources, and that there may also have been cross-copying between different editions of the gospels. I also follow the consensus that Luke and Acts share an author (see e.g. Maddox (1982), 3–9). I will not discuss authorship in what follows, but use ‘Mark’, etc. as conventional handles.
- (6) References to Paul in this chapter and the next mark points of similarity or difference without implying that one writer knew another unless this is discussed specifically.
- (7) The long ending also uses *apistia* once and *apistein* twice. Mark uses *pistikos* once in the unmarked meaning ‘very’ or ‘really’ (14.3, of the ‘really expensive’ nard with which the woman anoints Jesus’ feet; cf. Jn. 12.3).
- (8) pp. 353–4. The likelihood, however, is that *pistis theou* here means trust in God.
- (9) The faithfulness of God is strongly implied not least in the preaching of both John and Jesus to repentance for the forgiveness of sins, which echoes that of successive prophets. See also pp. 197–200.
- (10) Cf. pp. 362–3.
- (11) e.g. 6.5–6. At 9.42 Jesus refers to the trust of ‘little ones’; some manuscripts make explicit what may have been more widely assumed, that this is trust in himself.
- (12) Cf. p. 360, though see pp. 367–8, 375.
- (13) At 13.21 Jesus warns the disciples not to believe in false Messiahs.
- (14) Calls to *pistis*: 1.15, 5.36, 11.22–4; cf. 11.31; commendations of *pistis*: 5.34, 10.52; cf. 2.5, 9.42; criticisms of lack of *pistis*: 4.40, 9.19; cf. 6.6, 11.31.
- (15) The consensus is now that Jesus spoke Aramaic, though for the argument for Hebrew (and perhaps some Greek), see e.g. Birkeland (1954). The arguments of Ebeling (1960), 224–38 have not been widely accepted; Lührmann (1976), ch. 2 offers a more nuanced account.
- (16) Wright (1996), 259–63; on the power of arguments from multiple attestation, see e.g. Malina (1999).
- (17) Literally, ‘saved you’, on which, see Mk. 5.34 = Mt. 9.22 = Lk. 8.48. Mark and Matthew share Mk. 11.23 = Mt. 21.22.
- (18) Mt. 8.10 = Lk. 7.9; cf. Mt. 24.45 = Lk. 12.42.
- (19) Mt. 8.13; cf. Jn. 4.50, in a similar though not identical story, and Mt. 9.29.
- (20) 8.12; cf. 8.13, 17.5–6, 17.19.
- (21) Trans. Elaine Pagels (from Coptic) (Miller (1994)); reminiscent of e.g. Mk. 11.31, 15.32; very close to Lk. 22.67 (in the mouth of the Pharisees); see Lührmann (1976), 22–3.
- (22) The incidence of *pistis* language in apocryphal gospels and Acts is variable but nearly always significantly lower than that in their canonical relatives. In many texts only one or two instances survive; probably only the Acts of Peter, Thomas, and Paul and Thecla, together with *Epistula Apostolorum* and perhaps the Apocryphon of James, preserve enough to allow meaningful analysis.
- (23) It is, for instance, unlikely that either Mark or John knew Paul and uncertain whether John knew Mark, while few agree even that Luke knew Paul, and there is no obvious connection between Paul and Q (which I take here, for convenience and following the balance of scholarly opinion, as a discrete source). On possible connections between Matthew and Paul, see e.g. Strecker (1982), 40,

Sim (2007).

(24) See pp. 238–41.

(25) Though these beliefs are, of course, implicated: see Chs. 6–7, *passim*.

(26) To a lesser extent it also describes Greek and Roman gods (see pp. 130–2).

(27) 1.1, 1.14, 8.35, 10.29, 13.10, 14.9.

(28) Cf. 11.22–4; cf. 11.31.

(29) See e.g. pp. 358, 363–5.

(30) The view of e.g. Taylor (1952), Nineham (1963), ad loc. Cranfield (1959) *et al.* note the Semitism of *pisteuein en*, which may hint that an Aramaic teaching, ‘Put your trust in God’, underlies this phrase.

(31) Luke recasts Jesus’ earliest preaching by means of a quotation from Isaiah and Jesus’ interpretation of it in the synagogue at Nazareth (4.16–21), perhaps to distance Jesus’ message from that of John the Baptist, which he gives in the same form as Mark (Mk. 1.4 = Lk. 3.3).

(32) Cf. Bultmann (1968), 341; Meyer (1999) discusses the possible Aramaic form of the first part of Jesus’ proclamation. That 1.15 echoes the call of John the Baptist (Mk. 1.14 = Mt. 3.2 = Lk. 3.3) seems clear, even though, as Sanders (1985), 109–11, 117 points out (cf. Hahn (1982), 63–4), Jesus speaks of repentance rather rarely elsewhere. Since all the gospels are keen to make clear that Jesus is a greater figure than John, the synoptic gospels are unlikely to have represented Jesus’ early preaching as echoing John’s unless there was a strong tradition that it was in fact very similar. John, however, is not represented as using *pistis* language here or elsewhere, so this may be distinctive to Jesus.

(33) Ebeling (1960), 228–9; Nineham (1963), Evans (2001), ad loc. Cf. Q (Mt. 17.20 = Lk. 17.6 (where it is more ambivalent whether the faithful one wields divine power himself), 1 Cor. 13.2 (but Paul refers to being able to move mountains himself by *pistis*), Gos. Thom. 48, 106.

(34) Jesus’ own *pistis* towards God remains largely implicit, though Mark hints at it at 9.23 (and Matthew speaks of it explicitly at 27.43): see Bolt (2009). *Pistin theou* meaning ‘trust in God’ is grammatically unique in the NT but unproblematic, since (if we leave aside the interpretation of *pistis Christou*) *pistis* with an objective genitive is paralleled outside the New Testament (see e.g. Lührmann (1976), 19–20, Lindsay (1993), 103–7). Cranfield (1959), ad loc. dismisses the interpretation ‘have the sort of faith God has’ (without explaining what he thinks such faith would be), but this is not quite what is suggested above. Enabling the power of God to work through *pistis* is paralleled extensively elsewhere.

(35) On arguments for the historicity of this story, see the discussion of Evans (2001), ad loc.; cf. Hooker (1991), ad loc. Some (following Bultmann) see vv. 28–30 as historical and the rest as redactional; Evans argues for the historicity of the whole pericope (cf. Taylor (1952), 469); I am persuaded by Bultmann but the interpretation above fits either view.

(36) Cf. Lohse (1977), 161–2, Marshall (1989), 238–9, Wallis (1995), 60, who also notes that the Messiah is expected in the scriptures to have faith (1 Sam. 2.35, Isa. 11.5, 16.5, 42.3). That Jesus is trustworthy is implied in studies that see him as a model: e.g. Pobeie (1985), 91, 109, Meeks (1986a), 136–43, Howell (1990), 251–5, Matera (1996), 32, 62, 90–1, McDonald (1998), 31–3, 82; cf. Hays (1997b), 215–24.

(37) e.g. pp. 217–19, 278, 301. At 9.39, uniquely, the ‘cascade’ also flows through the non-disciple performing great deeds in Jesus’ name, so is independent of community membership. On Jesus as an exemplar of *pistis*, see the discussion of Marshall (1989), 238–40.

(38) Nothing in Mark (or the other synoptic gospels) suggests that *pistis* is manifested in different ways according to the gender or status of community members, though since we hear little of his followers apart from the disciples, this absence of evidence does not tell us much.

(39) Cf. 5.36, where Jesus tells Jairus not to be afraid but to have *pistis*.

(40) Well described by Donahue and Harrington (2002), 279 as ‘one of the most memorable and beloved statements in the NT because it captures the mixed character of faith within the experience of most people’; cf. Swete (1909), 200. This passage itself surely proves e.g. Bornkamm (1960), 132, Hahn (1982), 58–61 wrong in seeing *pistis* and *apistia* as incompatible in the New Testament as they are not elsewhere.

(41) Perhaps even more true of 16.13–14 in the long ending. After his resurrection Jesus appears to two disciples as they walk into the country. They return to Jerusalem to tell the others, but are not believed. Jesus appears to the Eleven and rebukes them for not believing the two. This failure, however, is far from the end of their relationship: immediately afterwards (16.15–16), Jesus tells all the disciples to go and proclaim the gospel to the whole world. This passage (together with 15.8, which refers to fear though not to *pistis*) acknowledges, perhaps helpfully for later community members, the challenge which the resurrection poses to the *pistis* even of established disciples.

(42) The ms. tradition is consistent, which suggests that the text is not at fault. It has been suggested that Mark wanted to soften a tradition that Jesus could not perform deeds of power at home, or alternatively that he added the idea that Jesus could not do deeds of power to an existing tradition without altering it sufficiently. Bultmann (1968), 30 regards 6.5 as artificial and incoherent. Some commentators accept that, for Mark, deeds of power cannot be done where *pistis* is absent (e.g. Hooker (1991), Marcus (2000), ad loc.); Cranfield (1959), ad loc. suggests not that Jesus could do no deed of power but that he could not act in accordance with his ministry in the absence of *pistis*, so chose to heal only a few who had *pistis*.

(43) Cf. pp. 28–9.

(44) Benoit (1973), 80–3 may overstate the presence of this theme, however, by seeing parables of the kingdom which speak of growth as referring also to faith.

(45) The response of those who witness the healing of the paralytic and of Jairus’ daughter, as to a number of other miracles, is amazement (2.12, 5.42). It has been argued that Mark disproves of amazement as a response to miracles, presenting it as a shallow response to Jesus, lacking in real understanding or *pistis*, but Marshall (1989), 70–1 argues convincingly that this is not the case. In this Mark follows the dominant cultural expectation that autopsy and experience are reliable precursors of *pistis/fides*. More problematic are those, such as some of the religious authorities, who witness Jesus’ ministry and are not moved to *pistis*.

(46) This offers some support to the idea that the *pistis* relationship allows Jesus, or his followers, to become a means by which God’s power acts in the world, rather than that those who have *pistis*, even Jesus, have power of their own.

(47) And/or God.

(48) Originally, no doubt, an independent saying, probably about community members (see e.g. Taylor (1952), ad loc.), now linked to children by 9.36. Later mss. add ‘in me’ after ‘trust’ to emphasize what is probably implied, that trust in Jesus as well as in God is at issue.

(49) On divine–human *pistis* as familial, cf. pp. 475–6.

(50) See e.g. pp. 65–74, 245. Though 13.21 acknowledges that before the end false Messiahs may arise in whom Jesus’ followers must not believe, so Mark can recognize the potential fragility of preaching as a basis for *pistis*.

(51) Cf. pp. 362–4. Demons recognize him as the ‘holy one of God’ (1.24; cf. 1.34) and ‘son of the most high God’ (5.7).

(52) A theme developed by other evangelists, notably John: pp. 403–12.

(53) pp. 39–42, 145–7.

(54) ‘Son of Man’ refers to Jesus’ humanity in (?) eight of fourteen instances (Hooker (1967); cf. Kingsbury (1981), 38–40). Bartimaeus calls Jesus both Son of David and rabbi (10.47–8). This story occurs just before Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, from which point he is associated with David much more strongly than he has been hitherto (11.10, 12.35, 12.37; cf. 2.25). Bartimaeus’ identification may therefore look forward to that development, or it may have been affected by a kind of conceptual

attraction. Occasions of *pistis* are also associated with people wondering who Jesus is (4.41, 6.1–6; cf. 11.28). At 15.32 the chief priests and scribes say, ‘Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe,’ but evidently neither think he is the Messiah nor the King of Israel, nor expect to come to believe. On the title ‘Son of David’, see further Burger (1970).

(55) Wrede (1901); cf. Tuckett (1983a), Räisänen (1990).

(56) Six of ten occurrences of *pisteuein* lack an object (and two of the others are followed by *hoti*); the same for four of five occurrences of *pistis*.

(57) Though see pp. 3–4.

(58) Here, as in Jesus’ relationship with his disciples, though Mark shows little interest in faithfulness as a mode of ongoing life as a follower of Christ, he does leave room for some development in the *pistis* of the faithful. In the case of the woman with the haemorrhage (5.34 = Mt. 9.22 = Lk. 8.48), this is signalled by the fact that while she aspires only to touch Jesus’ cloak, he calls her ‘daughter’, turning their relationship into something closer. This suggests a further interpretation of Bartimaeus’ identification of Jesus as ‘Son of David’ (above, p. 363). Originally a title for a human Messiah figure, its association with other, superhuman titles in Mark suggests that Bartimaeus is at the beginning of a journey of *pistis* which will take him to recognizing Christ as the Son of God. Cf. Mark’s ambiguous use of *kyrios* to refer to Jesus as either human or God at 1.3, 5.19, 11.3.

(59) On Q (for *Quelle*, ‘source’), see e.g. Tuckett (1996), Kloppenborg (2000). Scholars disagree as to whether, if it existed, it was essentially an ethical collection (so e.g. Schrage (1988), 122) or included significant eschatological elements (Tuckett (1996), 141–63); Kloppenborg’s account ((2000), 379–95) includes a helpful discussion of what ethics might include). Q’s putative interest in *pistis* may be part of its interest in the kingdom of God.

(60) Mt. 6.30 = Lk. 12.28, 8.10 = 7.9, 17.20 = 17.6, 24.45 = 12.42, 25.21 = 19.17.

(61) Ebeling (1960), 227.

(62) In the phrase *qētannê ’āmānâ*, on which, see Davies and Allison (1988), 656.

(63) Betz (1995), 479–80 notes the everyday context of this saying and suggests that, since clothing belongs to culture, not nature, in ancient Jewish or Graeco-Roman thinking, God is being seen here as fulfilling human needs through culture.

(64) Cf. pp. 20, 22.

(65) Cf. Mt. 15.28, where Matthew makes Jesus say: ‘Woman, great is your *pistis*.’ Luz (2001), ad loc. notes that people who come to be healed in general do not describe themselves as having *pistis*, marking the humility which is part of faith.

(66) See also e.g. pp. 387, 392.

(67) Matthew develops this theme further: see pp. 373–4.

(68) The themes connected in Mark with healing miracles are absent from Q, but little significance attaches to that since Q seems to have been largely a sayings collection (and we cannot know in conjunction with what other materials it circulated in churches).

(69) Strecker (1982), 32 notes that Matthew speaks of *pistis* towards Christ but not God, focusing attention on Christ’s divine identity.

(70) 17.20; Luke also omits Mk. 9.29 but does not add an equivalent to Mt. 17.20.

(71) Matthew does, however, cut Mk. 6.52 from his version of the story, softening Mark’s criticism of the disciples in line with his more positive picture of the disciples in general. Edwards (1985) captures well the ambiguities of Matthew’s picture of the disciples, showing how their *pistis* vacillates and exploring how his picture of discipleship might resonate with Matthew’s readers.

(72) 8.26. He does so before stilling the storm, where Mark and Luke’s Jesus criticizes the disciples after he has stilled the storm, which adds to the drama of the accusation: the disciples should have more *pistis* while the storm is going on.

(73) Cf. Mt. 9.2, 14.27, Mk 6.50, 10.49.

(74) Mt. 27.42 = Mk 15.31–2. Luke omits the last clause and emends the earlier part of the sentence to: ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One.’

(75) On *pepoitha* and trust, see pp. 7 n. 17, 204 n. 78, 214 n. 10. Luz (2001), ad loc. notes that the Jewish leaders echo the words of the godless in Ps. 21.9 LXX.

(76) e.g. pp. 354, 355.

(77) See esp. Ch. 7.

(78) pp. 272–3, 288–90.

(79) See e.g. Carroll and Green (1995), 39–59.

(80) Cf. 3.7–10 (though without *pistis* language).

(81) Commentators widely agree: so e.g. Davies and Allison (1988–91), Luz (2001), ad loc.

(82) Cf. 9.27–31 (the healing of two blind men).

(83) 9.27 (though there are two men, the story is closely related to Mark’s Bartimaeus story), 15.22.

(84) = Lk. 8.6, the only one of these uses of *kyrios* that derives from Q.

(85) Rowland (1985), 247–8 summarizes the early importance of *kyrios* as a title in Graeco-Roman and Jewish culture and to Christians (with *Christos*, it is the earliest used by Christians of Jesus; the two titles dominate Paul’s letters). I am doubtful, though, that, as he suggests, it is ever used in the gospels simply to mean ‘teacher’ (at Lk. 9.54, which he gives as an example, the disciples are asking Jesus whether they should call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, so Jesus is clearly rather more than a teacher here). On New Testament connections with Jewish traditions about Lordship, cf. Longenecker (1970), 120–47.

(86) 23.13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29.

(87) Cf. Lk. 12.46.

(88) In addition, the story of the Canaanite woman’s *pistis* is suggestively positioned immediately after a dispute between Jesus and scribes and Pharisees about what does and does not defile (15.1–20), which is closely linked with *dikaioσynē*.

(89) Giving greater prominence to a theme which is already present in Mark.

(90) I follow e.g. Kvalbein (2000), Luz (2000), Skarsaune (2000) in taking Matthew to be critical of, but not radically hostile to, the Jews.

(91) The debate over whether Luke knew Matthew seems to me inconclusive, but on the basis of this section, I would not rule it out.

(92) Marshall (1978), 821 notes that ‘in the interests of’ may be the better translation of *peri* here (cf. 6.25), and discusses Bultmann’s observation that since *epistrephein* is usually associated with conversion, it sits oddly in a passage which is essentially about Peter’s faithfulness; perhaps two different sayings underlie this.

(93) Evans (1990), ad loc. suggests that the type of Joseph as faithful steward may lie behind this parable.

(94) On 16.8b–13 as a loose series of interpretations of the parable, see Fitzmyer (1985), 1104–7, Ireland (1992).

(95) 16.8: alternatively, ‘the master’ here may be Jesus himself.

(96) Luke here and at v. 18 follows Mark in conflating the language of healing and salvation. Twelftree (1999), 183–8 notes that for Luke (especially in Acts), miracles can appropriately be a basis for *pistis*, as in Graeco-Roman literature more widely.

- (97) This need not imply a wholly negative view of the Jews: see e.g. Esler (1987), 128–30, 163. Recognition of the widely accepted relative weakness of verbal testimony as against visible signs may also be implicit here.
- (98) Fitzmyer (1985), 1181 looks back to 18.1 to make sense of v. 8: the coming of the Son of Man is the reason to have *pistis* and pray continually.
- (99) On the role of faithfulness here, see Wolter (2008), ad loc.; cf. Marshall (1978), ad loc.
- (100) Wolter (2008), 308 argues that the close connection between believing and being saved here reflects a very early stratum in Christian thinking. Evans (1990) is surely wrong to say that Luke is wholly dependent on Mark's interpretation here. Marshall (1978), ad loc. notes the change to the present tense in the interpretation of the parable, suggesting that Luke wants to make its application to his listeners unmistakable.
- (101) Though Jesus does say (18.8) that justice will be done for those, like the persistent widow, who practise *pistis*.
- (102) 7.6 (taken from Q; see p. 368).
- (103) Lk. 8.24 = Mk 4.38 = Mt. 8.25.
- (104) Lk. 9.38 = Mk 9.17 = Mt. 17.15.
- (105) It is tempting to try to make something of the fact that every time the disciples use it, they are expressing doubt or saying something inappropriate, demonstrating the inchoate nature of their *pistis*, but since that is true of other utterances by the disciples too, and 17.13 does not fit the pattern, this is probably overinterpretation.
- (106) e.g. Soph., *OC* 889, though it is used less commonly of gods than is *kyrios*. Oepke (1964), moreover, points out that unlike *kyrios*, *epistatēs* is not used at all in the Septuagint of God, and that Luke sometimes uses it to translate the Hebrew/Aramaic 'Rabbi', which suggests that to Luke's Jewish listeners, it might have (even) weaker divine resonances than it would for gentiles. The woman who kisses and anoints Jesus' feet (7.36–50), to whom he says, 'Your *pistis* has saved you, go in peace' (9.50), expresses Jesus' lordship without using *kyrios* or *epistatēs*, since only a person of very high status could expect such treatment.
- (107) On salvation history, see Lohse (1954), Conzelmann (1960), pts. 3–5, Cullmann (1962, 1967); on eschatology, see e.g. Maddox (1982), ch. 5.
- (108) On Luke's language and intention here, see Alexander (1993).
- (109) Marshall (1990), ad loc. surely protests too much in asserting that Zechariah does not show doubt here; Zechariah clearly does doubt, showing that his *pistis* is not (yet) perfect.
- (110) See pp. 65–74, 207–8.
- (111) For other instances, see pp. 41–2, 424.
- (112) On the language of Luke's preface, see Alexander (1993); on the trustworthiness of technical writings and untrustworthiness of report, see pp. 64–5, 164 n. 150, 379 n. 110.
- (113) e.g. 8.12; cf. 20.21 (Paul describes himself as testifying to Jews and Greeks about repentance towards God and *pistis* towards Christ). This may hint at the early creation of authority structures through *pistis*; cf. e.g. pp. 217–18, 256–8, 321, 329, 345. On authority in Luke as helping to shape communities, see Rowe (2005), 107–8.
- (114) Following the consensus that the same author wrote Acts and Luke's gospel.
- (115) Almost all occurrences of *pistis* language in Acts can be heard as making some reference to conversion, so counting those in which conversion dominates is not an exact science; I count conversion as the primary referent in at least 27 out of 52 occurrences.
- (116) Cf. 5.14, 6.7, 8.12, 10.43, 11.17, 11.21, 13.12, 14.1, 14.9, 14.22–3, 15.7, 15.9, 16.31, 16.34, 17.12, 7.34, 18.8, 19.2, 19.4, 21.25.

(117) *Pisteuein* without an object: e.g. 4.4, 6.7, 11.19–21, 13.12, 14.1, 15.7, 17.12, 18.8. *Pisteuein* ‘in’ some combination of the Lord, Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, or the Lord Jesus Christ: e.g. 5.14, 9.42, 10.43, 11.17. Cf. 20.21, 22.19, 24.24, 26.17–18 (trust in the Lord Jesus Christ but not in the context of conversion). *Eis, en, epi* are recognized as Semiticisms (e.g. Doudna (1961), 79, Lindsay (1993), 101–2). At 27.25 Paul expresses his *pistis* in God during a storm at sea. Analogous are *pistis* towards the law (24.14) and prophets (26.27) for Jews. There are two possible exceptions to this pattern. At 8.12 the people of Samaria, who have devoted themselves (*proseichon*) to the wonder-worker Simon Magus because he has amazed them by his magic, switch their *pistis* to Philip when they hear what he is preaching and see the healings and exorcisms (apparently even better than Simon’s miracles) he performs. After Paul’s preaching on the Athenian Areopagus, some people commit themselves to him and trust/believe (κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν). (Here and at 17.4, where the people of Thessalonica and Beroea ‘throw in their lot’ with Paul and Silas (προσεκλήρωθησαν), Luke uses two colourful words which express rather more than that the converts just ‘join’ the apostles. Johnson (1992), ad loc. notes them as references to the establishment of communities.) *Autō* here could be the object of both verbs, referring to trust invested in Paul, but it must go with *kollēthentes*, while *episteusan* is likely, as so often, to be objectless, so on balance *pistis* is probably not being invested explicitly in Paul here (though as an apostle he is always implicitly trusted).

(118) The apostles have also been preaching shortly before (4.33).

(119) Cf. e.g. 1 Chr. 28.19, Isa. 66.2. On wielding the power of God in Graeco-Roman, Jewish, early Christian and anthropological perspective, see Schwartzman (2012), 41–66. On the power of the name in Acts, see Dunn (1996a), 38–60.

(120) e.g. 3.16, 8.12–13, 9.19–22, 10.43–4, 13.42–3, 14.9, 17.32–4, 19.4–5, 19.20, 20.21, 21.19–20.

(121) Conzelmann (1987), ad loc., identifies 20.21 as a Lukan ‘summary of doctrine’ put in the mouth of Paul, but what Paul says is that he bore witness not to *fides quae* but to (the act of) ‘repentance before God and trust in our Lord Jesus’. This is not inconsistent with 9.20, where Paul also proclaims Jesus as the Son of God. NB at 18.25 the Jew Apollos, who ‘spoke and taught accurately about Jesus’, can also be understood by Priscilla and Aquila as needing further instruction in the way, which implies that the kind of knowledge on which accurate teaching can be based is insufficient for *pistis*.

(122) Cf. 2.41, 15.7.

(123) 14.22–3, 16.5.

(124) See also the comments of Alexander (2006), ad loc.

(125) Cf. 10.36–43.

(126) Echoing deutero-Paul or perhaps misunderstanding Paul (Dunn (1996a), ad loc.)?

(127) Marked also by Luke’s occasional use of the language of turning (*epistrephein*) instead of or in conjunction with *pisteuein*, e.g. 3.19, 9.35, 11.21, 14.15, 26.18, 26.20. Dunn (1996a), 237 notes that it is hard to imagine what a Greek audience would have made of the ‘man appointed to serve as judge’. On possible sources for the speech, and Pauline echoes in it, see Fitzmyer (1998), 602.

(128) Stephen’s vision of heaven opened before his martyrdom (7.54–60) is as vivid as those of Paul and Peter, but is not said to lead directly to conversions; by leading to a persecution which scatters preachers far and wide, however, it does contribute to conversions indirectly; cf. too Philip’s visitation by an angel, which leads him to encounter and convert the Ethiopian eunuch (8.26–39).

(129) e.g. pp. 145–50, 191 n. 41, 179–80, 242–5, 297.

(130) e.g. 2.41, 4.4, 13.43, 13.48, 14.1, 17.4, 17.12, 17.33, 18.27, 19.1 (though he typically expresses it by saying that many people did come to believe).

(131) The difference between Luke’s and Paul’s portrayal of many of the same communities could, as is often noted, hardly be more different. At 13.48, Luke says, ‘All who were destined for eternal life *episteusan*...’; cf. 2.39 (the promise of salvation is made to those whom the Lord will call); 13.41, where those who scoff at the gospel ‘will never believe’. This may be because Luke has a stronger sense than the other evangelists that those who come to *pistis* do so as part of a divine plan (see e.g. Bridge (2003)).

(132) 10.45, with perhaps 16.1, 16.15 (*pistos*); (?) 5.14, 22.19 (*hoi pisteuontes*), 2.44, 4.32 (*hoi pisteusantes*).

(133) pp. 234–41. Trebilco (2010), 104–7 sees Acts as using *hoi pisteuontes* to emphasize the importance of (propositional) belief for early communities, and to highlight agreement within communities (but since the term is used for Christians elsewhere, and community harmony is a persistent theme, it is not surprising to find them in conjunction). The relationality, rather than propositionality of *pistis* is emphasized in passages where *hoi pisteusantes*, etc. are described as ‘strengthened’ in *pistis* (*stereoun*, 3.16, 16.5), or as ‘devoting themselves’ to prayer, worship, ministry, the apostles, or their teaching (*proskarterein*, 1.14, 2.42, 2.46, 6.4, 8.13).

(134) p. 4.

(135) e.g. pp. 221, 224.

(136) On these terms, see pp. 6, 20–3.

(137) A Q logion, but Matthew’s language is different and the meaning of this phrase is so close to that of 8.25 that Luke is probably influenced by Mark’s language.

(138) Cf. e.g. 13.39, where Luke’s Paul says, in an obvious echo of Pauline language, that Jews cannot be made *dikaioi* under the law of Moses, but ‘in [Jesus Christ] everyone who trusts/believes is made *dikaïos* (πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται)’.

(139) Probably meaning ‘the obedience that is faith’ or ‘that faith involves’: see pp. 282–3.

(140) The *pista* given to David in a quotation from Isaiah (55.3) at 13.34 are ‘assurances’ or ‘pledges’.

(141) From the divine side, *pistis* comes through grace (14.3, 15.11, 18.27; cf. 7.10, 13.43, 20.24, 20.32), on which, see e.g. Räisänen (1982), 195.

(142) Borrowed from the vocabulary of ritual (Johnson (1992), *ad* 10.15).

(143) The gift of the spirit is here identified (metaphorically) as baptism, which emphasizes Luke’s view of the spirit as ‘the primary mark of divine acceptance and discipleship’ (Dunn (1996a), 151–2); cf. Fitzmyer’s useful summary of earlier views ((1997), *ad loc.*).

(144) Cf. 2.38. At 16.2–6 Paul knows that the Ephesians’ baptism by John is inadequate because they did not receive the spirit, so he rebaptizes them in the name of the Lord Jesus and the spirit comes upon them.

(145) Luke is less interested in the interiority of being ‘filled with the spirit’ than with the work (diaconal service and preaching) which it allows Stephen and Barnabas to do. Along with *pistis* itself as a means by which divine power works through the faithful, the name of Jesus is a ‘name of power’ wielded by the faithful (3.6, 3.16, 8.12; cf. 11.20).

(146) pp. 375–6.

(147) See esp. Fitzmyer (1970) and Nielsen (2000).

(148) He makes less appeal to the kingdom of God in Acts than in the gospel, though its importance is established programmatically at 1.3 and 1.6, and the apostles preach about it (8.12, 19.8, 20.25, 28.23, 28.31). At 14.22 it is still to come and community members must persevere in *pistis* and endure many hardships to enter it. Nielsen (2000), 280–1 notes that Luke’s eschatological language is more exhortative than informative about the *eschaton* (not particularly in connection with *pistis*, but his observation fits Luke’s use of *pistis* language well).

(149) Consonant with the contrast Luke draws in the gospel between *pistis* and obsession with worldly goods, and also with the gospel’s prophetic theme of socio-economic reversal (e.g. 1.52–3, 2.34, 6.20–21, 24–5, 27–35, 9.48, 12.32–4; cf. 2.8–14).

(150) Though, see further Ch. 12.

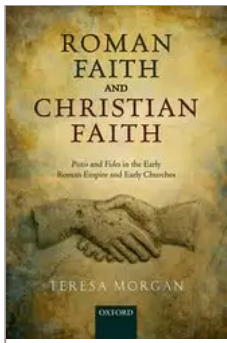
(151) 5.14, 9.42, 11.17, 13.12, 14.22–3, 15.11, 16.31, 20.21, 22.19 (Lord); 8.12–13, 11.17, 24.24 (Christ).

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Pisteuein and its Relations in the Johannine Corpus

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses the distinctive shape of trusting/believing in the Johannine corpus. John uses *pisteuein* to emphasize both the unity of Christ with God and his faithful subordination; God is revealed uniquely through Jesus and eternal life comes through trusting/believing in Jesus as one does in God. Like the synoptic gospels, John struggles with the failure of many to recognize Jesus as Son of God in his lifetime, and explains it by developing the idea of pre-election. The chapter also discusses John's understanding of the possibility of progression in trusting/believing and of the foundations of belief. John focuses on the role of *pistis* in the community's eschatology, arguing that Christians place increasing value on propositional belief in disputes between churches or believers and outsiders. It discusses the importance of faithfulness in the community members in Revelation, together with the role of *pistis Iēsou*.



Keywords: *pisteuein*, Johannine, unity, subordination, eternal life, pre-election, eschatology, propositional belief, *pistis Iēsou*

The gospel and epistles of John and the Book of Revelation probably originated in the same or closely related communities. One author may have been responsible for all three letters, but it is unlikely that the letters came from the same hand as either the gospel or Revelation. Revelation and the gospel have sometimes been attributed to the same author, but the consensus is now that they are distinguished by too many differences of language, style, and theology for this to be plausible.¹ Like the synoptic gospels and Acts (and at least some of the epistles), these books are products of layers of tradition; in the case of the gospel, which is especially complex, scholars disagree on how many strata of tradition, composition, and redaction can be recovered, but almost all would

identify at least two, and some five or more.² As in the Chapter 9, though one needs to be aware of these strata, our main concern will be the texts in the form in which they were handed down to churches of the second century and later. As in the Chapter 9, too, we will aim to identify both what these books have in common, and where they are distinctive. We begin with the Gospel of John, whose use of the *pistis* lexicon far outweighs that of the rest of the Johannine corpus, and is distinctive not only among New Testament texts but among Greek texts in general.

John's Lexicon

The Gospel of John is notorious for the fact that although it makes extensive use of *pisteuein*, which appears ninety-eight times in its twenty(-one) (p.395) chapters,³ *pistos* and *pistikos* appear just once each (at 20.27 and 12.3), and *pistis* never.⁴ Though such a dramatic imbalance is unlikely to be accidental, no single, fully satisfying explanation of it has been suggested. Revelation does not use *pisteuein* at all, but uses *pistis* four times and *pistos* eight.⁵ 1 John uses *pisteuein*, *pistis*, and *pistos*, while 3 John uses only *pistos* and 2 John, as already noted, no *pistis* language at all.⁶ Whatever the gospel writer's (or writers') objection to using *pistis*, therefore, it is not shared by their community or related communities. It seems to be, for whatever reason, an individual choice, most likely by the gospel's final redactor (whom for convenience we will call John or 'the author').⁷

It has often been observed that John's gospel has a strong preference for couching key concepts in verbs rather than nouns in general. As striking as its deployment of the trusting/believing lexicon is its language of knowing: it uses *eidenai* eighty-five times and *ginōskein* fifty-six, but *gnōsis* never. *Agapān* occurs thirty-six times in the gospel and *philein* thirteen, but *agapē* only seven and *philia* none. It uses five different verbs meaning 'to see', but no word for 'sight' or 'vision'.⁸ In this context, we should not overinterpret the absence of *pistis* from the gospel: in part, at least, it seems likely to be a stylistic rather than a conceptual choice.⁹

Another possible explanation lies in the semantic range of *pisteuein* compared with that of *pistis*. We have seen that *pistis* has a very

afeguard, and a trust—which, in the ed by other New Testament writers to ist' and arguably the 'covenant' in some narrower range of meaning, heavily

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dominated by trust and believe, though it can occasionally mean distrust or comply. John, as we will see, always uses *pisteuein* to mean 'trust', 'believe (that)', or a combination of the two. We may wonder whether he wanted to resist interpretations of the *pistis* lexicon which reified its deferred meanings, and to keep the listener's focus on trusting and believing.¹³ (Having said that, we saw in the last chapter that Acts also confines its use of *pisteuein* to its core meanings of trusting and believing, without feeling the need to exclude *pistis*, so this cannot be a complete explanation of John's usage.)

The author begins his gospel with an echo of the beginning of Genesis, and both the gospel and Revelation are continual dialogue with the scriptures, especially the Septuagint.¹⁴ As has been noted, the *'emunah* lexicon is translated in the Septuagint sometimes with *pistis* language, but more often with the *alētheia* lexicon, emphasizing the 'truth' aspect of God's reliability and constancy.¹⁵ John makes more use of the *alētheia* lexicon than any other New Testament writer, and, unusually for him, uses not the verb but the noun, two forms of the adjective, and the adverb.¹⁶ It is possible that, although John has plenty of uses for *pisteuein*, which in its 'believing' register can refer to believing in things or persons that are (in various possible senses¹⁷) 'true', he prefers to use *alētheia* rather than *pistis* as its associated noun.¹⁸ One passage towards the beginning of the gospel offers some (admittedly slender) support for this. At 3.33 John says that whoever accepted the testimony of the 'one who comes from heaven' certified (*esphragisen*) that God is *alēthēs*. As we noted in Chapters 5 and 7, God is called *alēthēs* a number of times in the Septuagint, but the only other New Testament verse in which God is so described is Romans 3.4 (quoting Septuagintal Ps. 50.6), immediately after Paul has referred to the *pistis* of God.¹⁹ *Alēthēs* at Romans 3.4 means something very close to *pistos*, but with special emphasis on the truthfulness and reality which make God reliable and trustworthy, and the same may be true at John 3.33.²⁰

(p.397) This preference to some degree reflects that of the Septuagint itself. Though the Septuagint uses *pistis*, most books make slightly more use of *pisteuein* and *pistos*, and much more use of *alētheia*.²¹ In the Septuagint, as in Acts, the verb is usually used of human beings' putting their trust in God (either for the first time or as an affirmation of ongoing trust). This tendency is especially marked in Genesis and Exodus, when Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites put their trust repeatedly in God.²² John's gospel uses *pisteuein* solely of putting one's trust in God or Christ, and in several passages John points up the contrast between those who put their trust in God through Jesus and those who think their relationship is secured by the fact that they are children of Abraham or because they keep the law of Moses.²³ Dialogue with Septuagintal uses of *pisteuein*, which would have been clearly audible in a (dominantly) Jewish-Christian community like John's, may therefore be another reason for John's extensive use of the verb, though again it does not explain why he does not use *pistis* at all.²⁴

Even if all the points above are contributing factors, the absence of *pistis* in John's gospel remains, ultimately, a puzzle—or just conceivably, a coincidence. Rather than pursuing it further, we turn now to the language John does use, and to the patterns of thought it reveals.

Pisteuein between God, Christ, and Humanity

Throughout the gospel, John uses *pisteuein* to mark two themes above all: first, and centrally, the importance of trusting/believing in Jesus; and secondly, less prominently, but recurrently, the evolution in trusting/believing which may take place after people have put their trust in Jesus.²⁵ The strength of John's understanding of *pisteuein* lies in the radical simplicity of its central claim, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Word made flesh, and that human beings can and must put their trust in him as they do in God. John draws even more heavily than the synoptic evangelists on the scriptural tradition that when God **(p.398)** reveals Godself, whether visibly or audibly, through words or signs, only the irredeemably foolish or wicked fail to recognize what they hear or see and to respond appropriately.²⁶ When Jesus appears, speaks, and performs signs, he reveals himself as God's Son and, in principle, only the foolish or wicked fail to recognize him. The difficulty, with which John grapples throughout the gospel, is that because Jesus is human, his self-revelation is not self-evident in the way that God's is understood to be.

These observations point to the fact that John's use of *pisteuein* is an integral part of his Christology, itself a focus of much debate in the last half-century (though, surprisingly, discussion of *pisteuein* has not featured strongly in it). A key question in this debate (one which goes back to the Church Fathers) has been the relative importance, in John's theology, of the theme of the unity and equality of the Father and the Son as against that of the obedience and subordination of the Son to the Father. Both themes run throughout the gospel, often intertwined. From the 1920s onwards, Bultmann influentially emphasized the 'unity and equality' theme, tracing John's presentation of Christ back to gnostic myths about pre-existent divine agents who are sent by God into the world.²⁷ Subsequently, many scholars have felt that 'obedience and subordination' deserve more emphasis; even that they dominate.²⁸ Some scholars still emphasize one theme over the other, but most now agree that both are central, and to do justice to John's theology we must try to do justice to both.²⁹ In this connection, Peder Borgen has explored Jewish ideas of legal and judicial agency in which themes of subordination and identity are also intertwined and cannot be separated: indeed, their logic depends equally on the identity of interest between an agent and his principal, the obedience of the agent, and the fact that the agent is empowered to act for his principal. These ideas of agency, Borgen shows, were already applied to heavenly figures before John wrote, by Philo and in early Merkabah mysticism, and he argues that they lie behind John's thinking too.³⁰ C. K. Barrett has taken a different but **(p.399)** equally productive approach, arguing that we should not try to iron out the tensions between the two themes; rather, their tension reflects the key paradox of the gospel, that the majesty of God is veiled, in Jesus Christ, in humility. Barrett further links this idea with the theme that only those who are Jesus' sheep will hear his voice.³¹ The paradox of 'majesty in humility', he suggests, may have been intended by the gospel's final redactor not only to capture something of what he wanted to say about Jesus Christ, but also to explain why some people did not recognize Jesus in life: those who are not destined for eternal life are those who are unable to see the majesty for the humility. In Barrett's argument, the connection between equality, subordination, and pre-election is brief and remains impressionistic, but I shall argue that John's use of *pisteuein* language is closely involved with this nexus of ideas, and that investigating *pisteuein* helps us illuminate the relationship between them.³²

First, though, we can make a few simpler points more briefly, noting some of the ways in which John's use of *pisteuein* is in line with uses explored in earlier chapters. As in every other New Testament writing we have encountered so far, *pisteuein* in the Johannine corpus takes place between human beings and God.³³ There is no indication that it occurs or should occur between human beings: here, as elsewhere, the quality above all which community members are exhorted to practise towards one another is *agapē*. For the Johannine authors, too, as for every other writer we have encountered, God can be assumed, following (strong) Jewish and (some) Graeco-Roman traditions, to be *pistos*. The gospel does not say so explicitly (though as we saw above, it may come close), but 1 John does: 'If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just (πιστὸς ἐστὶν καὶ δίκαιος) and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.' (1.9)³⁴

It is clear from the beginning of John's gospel that the initiative for the divine-human relationship to which Jesus calls people comes from God. 'There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John,' says the Prologue. 'He came for testimony...so that all might believe (*pisteusōsin*) through **(p.400)** him...' (1.6–7). John describes himself as a prophetic voice crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord' (1.23). When he sees Jesus for the first time in the gospel, he says: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (1.29). God plans and acts, sends Jesus into the world, sends John to testify to him, and through John and Jesus plans for people to come to *pisteuein*.³⁵

To Return to subordination and identity: in a number of passages John uses *pisteuein* language to mark either the closeness, even the

identity, of God and Jesus, or a combination of their identity and Jesus' obedient subordination to God. Jesus' followers are told, for example, to trust/believe in him as they would trust/believe in God, and assured that trusting/believing in him achieves everything for which they might hope in trusting/believing in God: 'The one trusting (*ho pisteuōn*) in the Son has eternal life...' (3.36). 'If you do not trust/believe (*pisteusēte*) that I AM, you will die in your sins' (8.24). 'I came into the world as light so that everyone trusting (*pās ho pisteuōn*) in me might not remain in darkness' (12.46).³⁶

Pisteuein is often linked with one or another of Jesus' titles, in passages where those titles are used to emphasize equally his divine origins and agency. In the synoptic gospels we saw that *pistis* language was linked with Jesus' Christological titles rarely, and only with the human titles 'Son of David' and 'Son of Man' or the ambiguous *kyrios* or *epistatēs*. The pattern in John is somewhat different.³⁷ At 1.12, the proclamation that those who received Jesus, '*tois pisteuousin* in his name', were enabled to become children of God is surrounded by references to Jesus as the Word which is both God and godlike, and as the light of the world (1.1–14). John's Jesus several times refers to himself as the Son of Man, but where in the synoptic gospels the phrase tends to highlight his suffering humanity, in John it is usually more closely connected with his divine descent, which puts trusting/believing in the Son of Man very close to trusting/believing in Godself.³⁸ When, for example, a blind man (**p.401**) whom Jesus has just healed is rejected by the Pharisees, Jesus seeks the man out and asks: 'Do you trust/believe (*pisteueis*) in the Son of Man?' The man asks who he is and Jesus tells him that he has seen him and is speaking to him. The man says, '*pisteuō, kyrie*', and prostrates himself (9.35–8). Jesus then says that he came into the world 'for judgement (*εἰς κριμν*), so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind' (9.39). The Son of Man here is indistinguishably the 'man from heaven' (in Wayne Meeks's phrase³⁹) and the agent who executes judgement on God's behalf.

Jesus also refers more freely to himself as the Son of God in John than he does in the synoptic gospels, connecting it repeatedly with *pisteuein*.⁴⁰ At 3.17–18 it is through the Son of God that the world is saved from sin and those who trust/believe in his name are not condemned. Others too recognize Jesus as the Son of God and trust/believe in him on that basis: Nathanael, when Jesus calls him (1.49); Martha, when Jesus challenges her to confirm that she believes that resurrection and life come through trusting/believing in him (11.25–7).⁴¹ The full title 'Son of God', with its Jewish and (even stronger) Graeco-Roman resonances, occurs only seven times in the gospel, but in addition Jesus refers repeatedly to God as Father and to himself as Son:⁴² during the 'bread of life' discourse, for example, '[I]t is the will of my Father, that everyone seeing the Son and *pisteuōn eis auton* may have eternal life...' (6.40).⁴³ At 10.37–8, in the course of telling 'the Jews' that if they do not trust/believe in the one whom God has sent into the world, they will not receive eternal life, Jesus says: 'If I do not perform my Father's works, do not trust/believe in me (*mē pisteuete moi*).' If he does, however, they should recognize that 'the Father is in me and I am in the Father'. It is worth noting that all the passages where Jesus calls himself or is called Son of Man or Son of God, and nearly all of those where 'Father' or 'Son' language is linked with *pisteuein*, concern judgement and eternal life. To bring the elect to life is the work of the Son of Man/Son of God, but for John, he achieves it less through his suffering humanity than through his divine sonship, and it is by trusting/believing in his descent from God that human beings gain eternal life.⁴⁴

(p.402) Last but not least, *pisteuein* is closely linked with three of Jesus' 'I am' sayings. In the course of the 'bread of life' discourse, Jesus says, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and the one *pisteuōn* in me will never thirst' (6.35). In dispute with a group of Jews in chapter 8, he says, 'If you do not believe that (*pisteusēte hoti*) I AM, you will die in your sins' (8.24). To Martha before the raising of Lazarus he says, 'I am the resurrection and the life; the one *pisteuōn* in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and *pisteuōn* in me will never die' (11.25–6). As in the 'Son of Man' sayings, Jesus' identity here is closely linked with his divinely judicial activity and trusting/believing with eternal life, while John's imagery seems to locate Jesus both as God's instrument (the bread of life) and as indistinguishable from God (resurrection and life itself).

In these passages *pisteuein* is a response both to Jesus' unity with God and his subordination as God's agent; it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the two, and perhaps, as Barrett argues, to try to do so misses the point.⁴⁵ One or two further passages may point, less explicitly, to the 'subordination' theme. In the epistles and the synoptic gospels we saw how Jesus can be characterized as obedient to God to the last extreme of self-sacrifice, that this obedience is sometimes linked with his *pistis* towards God, and that his followers can be encouraged to imitate both his obedience and his faithfulness.⁴⁶ John's Jesus is also obedient: 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work' (4.34).⁴⁷ 'I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgement is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me' (5.30). 'My teaching is not my own but from the one who sent me' (7.16).⁴⁸ Since obedience is often presented elsewhere as an aspect of faithfulness, these passages can be heard as implying that Jesus is *pistos* towards God.⁴⁹ (There is, however, little sign in this gospel that either Jesus' obedience or his faithfulness to God is a model to be imitated.⁵⁰)

(p.403) Salvation and eternal life are linked with trusting/believing in Jesus Christ throughout the New Testament. John's configuration, however, is distinctive. For John, though Jesus is depicted at some points as reconciling human beings with God by his sacrificial death (he is called 'lamb of God' by John the Baptist (1.29) and likened to the Passover sacrifice at 19.36), his self-sacrifice in death is not the focal point of his activity.⁵¹ The focal point is his call to people to put their trust/believe in him as in God, and it is by doing this that they gain eternal life.⁵² However ambiguous or deliberately paradoxical the nature and status of John's Jesus, therefore, his position in relation to God and humanity is relatively clear. Jesus brings humanity to the Father less by representing both God and humanity to one another than by representing God to humanity, and he is less an expiatory sacrifice or a true mediator, impartially trusted and trustworthy, than God's divine agent, in both senses of that phrase. By this token, John's understanding of the relationship between *pisteuein* and salvation or eternal life remains in some ways very close to that of Jewish scripture and tradition: one puts one's trust in God and lives. The difference is that God is uniquely and decisively revealed in Jesus Christ.

Reasons to Believe

We saw in previous chapters that Greek and Roman authors, the writers of the Septuagint, and other writers of the New Testament are all interested in the reasons why people put their trust in God, Christ, or a god. Since Bultmann, commentators on John's gospel have tended to emphasize the role of recognition in John's thinking, in the sense of a response to the self-evident which needs to appeal to no further reasons for trusting/believing. We will return to recognition, but first we turn to the many passages in which John offers reasons why characters in the gospel, and listeners to the gospel, do or should put their trust in Jesus.

No one in John's gospel trusts/believes in God or Jesus without reason, and no one is called to do so.⁵³ In both Jewish scripture and Graeco-Roman religiosity, as has been seen, nothing more powerfully engenders *pistis/fides* towards the divine than personal experience: seeing God in dreams or visions **(p.404)** or hearing God speak. John places himself squarely in this tradition. The reasons he offers for human trusting/believing are, above all, what people see of Jesus' activity and what they hear of his teaching. In addition, he occasionally invokes the persuasive power of scripture and consequentialism, both of which, as we have seen, are also widely regarded in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman tradition as reasons for trusting/believing in God.⁵⁴

The challenge to *pisteuein*, for Jesus' contemporaries and perhaps even for listeners to his gospel, is that when Jesus reveals his relationship with God through signs, or speaks of God or his relationship with God, his actions and words may be seen and heard, at best, as representations, claims, and second-hand reports. As such, they fall victim to the first century's ingrained scepticism about all forms of second-hand testimony—above all, verbal report. John's narrative captures vividly both the power of Jesus' self-revelation, and the fragility of a revelation that depends on human beings' recognizing the divine in another human being.

No basis for belief is invoked more often or more successfully in John's gospel, by Jesus, other characters, and the narrator himself than the signs Jesus performs.⁵⁵ It is worth making a brief excursus to emphasize that this is, in some ways, both unexpected and significant.

Throughout the ancient world, miracles or wonders, which are witnessed by a person who comes to *pisteuein* in something or someone though them, constitute a special form of autopsy or direct experience, which in principle bears a great deal of credence.⁵⁶ At the same time, not everyone accepts every miracle they experience: in the early principate it is well known that there are such things as faked wonders and fake wonder-workers. Outside Christian sources, miracles are normally presented as offering those who witness them two options: either they are genuine, in which case the person who performs them has genuine power, or they are fakes, and so is the wonder-worker. The gospels, especially John's, show some of those who witness Jesus' miracles or signs taking a third way: they acknowledge the genuineness of the miracle and the genuine power of the miracle-worker, but fail to recognize the source of his power, taking Jesus either as possessed by a devil or simply as an ordinary wonder-worker who is not the Messiah.⁵⁷

(p.405) This, in the first century, is an unusual response, and on the face of it a surprising one for the gospel writers to depict. We might think that a good way to emphasize the wrongheadedness of Jesus' enemies would have been to show them failing to recognize his miracles as such at all.⁵⁸ John and the other gospel writers, however, have a compelling reason to present Jesus' miracles as they do. If, in the text, they had shown that some people saw Jesus' miracles as fakes in his lifetime, they would have been presenting listeners with the option of accepting either the testimony of those who did believe in them or that of those who did not. Since, however, second-hand report of wonders is seen as a weak basis for trust/belief in the first century, this course could have weakened not only readers' confidence in those who believed in Jesus in his own lifetime, but also the testimony of the evangelists themselves, which rested substantially on the testimony of those who followed Jesus in his lifetime and soon after. By presenting everyone in the text as recognizing Jesus' signs or miracles and his power as genuine, the evangelists exclude this response. The only option they

leave open is that of deciding whether Jesus is empowered by God or by Satan or a devil. And to this question the evangelists, including John, make both Jesus himself and others respond in the gospel by appealing to the nature of the signs themselves. 'How can Satan drive out Satan?' (Mk. 3.23). 'Surely a demon cannot open the eyes of the blind?' (Jn. 10.21). Everyone, the evangelists tell their listeners, accepted in his lifetime that Jesus performed genuine miracles. By hearing of them, listeners to the gospel, just like Jesus' contemporaries, should be able to recognize that he performed them by the power of God.⁵⁹

John regularly presents Jesus' signs as leading people to *pisteuein*. Early in his ministry, for example, Jesus is travelling through Samaria when he meets a Samaritan woman by a well (4.4–26).⁶⁰ What he tells her about herself makes her wonder whether he is the Messiah (4.29), and when she reports her experience to her fellow-townspersons, Jesus' display of supernatural knowledge leads many of them to trust/believe (*episteusan*) in him too (4.39).⁶¹ **(p.406)** Twice, 'crowds' or 'many people' are said to trust/believe in Jesus (*episteusan*) because of multiple (unspecified) signs that he has performed (7.31, 10.42). After the raising of Lazarus, John says that the chief priests plot to kill both Jesus and Lazarus, because 'many of the Jews were turning away and putting their trust/believing in Jesus (*episteuon*) because of [Lazarus]' (12.10–11).

The only disciple of Jesus whose call is described at any length is initially attracted to him by what he understands as more than human insight. When Jesus meets Nathanael, he says: 'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no treachery' (1.47). Nathanael is amazed that Jesus already seems to know him, and Jesus says, 'Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree' (1.48).⁶² Greatly impressed, Nathanael says: 'Rabbi! You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.' Jesus replies: 'Do you trust/believe (*pisteueis*) because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this...' (1.50).

Signs and evidences of supernatural insight several times precede a discourse: the sign catches people's attention, and perhaps disposes them to *pisteuein*. When the Samaritans in chapter 4 have heard their neighbour testify about Jesus, they invite him to stay with them, and 'Many more believed (*episteusan*) because of his word' (4.42). In chapter 5 a healing on the Sabbath leads to Jesus' trying to explain his relationship with his Father and saying, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, the one hearing and *pisteuōn* in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to judgement...' (5.24). In the next chapter the feeding of the five thousand and the crowd's request for a sign (*sēmeion*) on the strength of it (6.30), 'so that we may trust/believe in you (*pisteusōmen soi*)', prompt Jesus to give his 'bread of life' discourse (6.22–58). Jesus' healing of blind man in chapter 9 leads to his parables of the good shepherd in chapter 10.

Commentators have occasionally seen John as presenting trusting/believing as capable of development in those who practise it. Developments in trusting/believing are not described explicitly in the gospel, but traces of the idea are detectable, particularly in some sign stories.⁶³ After Jesus turns water into wine at Cana the disciples are said to have believed (*episteusan*) in him (2.11), despite the fact that they presumptively put their trust in Jesus when they began to follow him. When Jesus plans to raise Lazarus from the dead, he tells the disciples, 'I am glad for you that I was not there [to prevent Lazarus' dying], so that you may *pisteuein*' (11.15; cf. 11.42). When Simon Peter and the other disciple see the empty tomb and its grave cloths, the latter is said to have believed (*episteusan*) (20.8). John never explains how or in what respects the disciples' trusting/believing develops—and to the end of the gospel they **(p.407)** continue to misunderstand and fail Jesus—but his repeated invocation of *pisteuein* in relation to those who are already following Jesus and have trusted/believed in the past suggests that he has some sense that trusting/believing may develop.⁶⁴

This capacity for development may not be confined to Jesus' inner circle. When Jesus returns to Cana in Galilee some time after performing his first sign there, he is approached by a royal official⁶⁵ who asks him (addressing him as *Kyrie* (4.53)) to heal his son. Jesus tells him that his son will live and the man *episteusen* his word (4.49–50). Returning home, he finds that his son recovered at the moment when Jesus spoke these words, 'and *episteusen*, together with his whole household' (4.53). The man apparently progresses, perhaps from hopeful trust in Jesus' power to trusting/believing his word to trusting/believing in him with full confidence.⁶⁶

A similar development may be detectable in Lazarus' sister Martha in chapter 11. The family are already friends and followers of Jesus (11.1–5). When Lazarus falls ill, his sisters send for Jesus, but before he can arrive Lazarus dies. Martha goes to meet Jesus and shows how strongly she already trusts/believes in him: '*Kyrie*, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you' (11.21–2.) She does not, however, it seems, believe that Jesus can raise Lazarus from the dead. Jesus tells her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; the one believing (*pisteuōn*) in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and *pisteuōn* in me will ever die. Do you believe (*pisteueis*) this?' (11.25). Martha says, 'Yes, *Kyrie*, I have come to believe (*pepisteuka*) that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world' (11.27).⁶⁷ Calling Jesus Messiah and Son of God implies that Martha's trusting/believing has progressed from the moment when she called him 'Lord', but she has

further to develop. When Jesus goes to move the stone from Lazarus' grave, she objects, and Jesus has to remind her, 'Did I not tell you that if you *pisteuein* you will see the glory of God?' Trusting/believing that Jesus can raise Lazarus is a further step again. *Pisteuein* is perhaps work in progress for all Jesus' followers.⁶⁸ If (p.408) this were the case, it would not be surprising. *Pistis*, as we have seen, can develop over the course of a divine–human relationship both in the Septuagint and in Graeco-Roman literature.⁶⁹ It is attested in Paul's letters, and there and in John's gospel may reflect something of the experience of early communities. It may even have been intended to console and encourage community members as they tried to stay faithful to Christ through time and sometimes under persecution.

So far, John's treatment of signs and their relationship with trusting/believing has been conventional enough; first-century Jews and gentiles alike would have found little in it to surprise them. But though signs can, for John, point to who Jesus is, what they communicate about him is limited and easily misunderstood, and John repeatedly represents trusting/believing based on signs as imperfect. When, for example, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman about herself, she is greatly impressed and wonders whether he could be the Messiah, but is not sure (4.29).⁷⁰ People are several times said to *pisteuein* as a result of seeing a sign, but it is rarely clear that they understand what it says about Jesus, and sometimes it is clear that they do not. Nicodemus comes to Jesus saying (3.2) that he knows that Jesus is a teacher from God, because no one else could do the signs he has been doing, but he shows, in the rest of the chapter, that he does not really understand Jesus at all. The Jerusalem crowd, much impressed by some of the things Jesus has done, ask themselves: 'When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man has done?' (7.31). They recognize what they have seen and heard about as signs, but not that they point to Jesus as Messiah. Both John and Jesus refer to the feeding of the five thousand as a sign (6.14, 6.26). The crowd initially thinks that Jesus must be Elijah: 'This truly is the prophet, the one who is to come into the world!' The next day, though, they ask for a sign that Jesus was sent from God, so that they may see and *pisteuein* in him (6.30).⁷¹

If those who trust/believe as a result of a sign can be criticized by Jesus for their lack of understanding (as, for instance, Nicodemus is at 3.10), they are never rejected or told that they are not among the elect.⁷² Those who recognize Jesus' signs as signs but do not trust/believe as a result are more harshly treated. The chief priests and Pharisees sometimes recognize what Jesus performs as signs, but cannot or will not take the further step of seeing what (p.409) they are signs of.⁷³ Their 'blindness' (9.39, 12.40), like that of the wider group of 'the Jews' who are hostile to Jesus, is an indication that they are not among the elect. In Jerusalem in chapter 10, for instance, 'the Jews' demand of Jesus, 'If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly' (10.24). Jesus replies, 'I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify to me. But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep' (10.25–6). During Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, John says, 'Even though [Jesus] had performed so many signs in [the Jews'] presence, they did not put their trust in him' (12.37), and explains that this happens to fulfil the prophecies of Isaiah: 'Lord, who has believed our preaching, to whom has the might of the Lord been revealed?' 'He blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and be converted...' (12.38–40).

Pisteuein as a result of signs, in John's gospel, is never wrong per se. Signs reliably testify to Jesus' identity. 'If I do not perform my Father's works,' says Jesus to a group of Jews in Jerusalem (10.37–8), 'do not believe (*pisteuete*) me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe (*pisteuēte*) me, believe (*pisteuete*) in the works.' On his last evening, he can still say to the disciples: 'Trust (*pisteuete*) me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or if you do not, trust (*pisteuete*) because of the works' (14.11). But John indicates that trusting/believing on the basis of signs and wonders is not the ideal: 'Unless you see signs and wonders,' he makes Jesus say scathingly to the Galileans, 'you will not believe (*ou mē pisteusēte*)' (4.48).⁷⁴ The limitation of signs is twofold: many people in Jesus' world are believed to perform them, so performing them indicates exceptionality but not uniqueness, and while they indicate superhuman power, they say little about the origin of that power and even less about the identity of the one who exercises it. Moreover, just as there are hints that signs may help people to progress in trusting/believing, so, it seems, they can foster a relationship which later degrades. When large numbers of Jerusalemites saw his signs and *episteusan* in Jesus early in his ministry (2.23–5), Jesus did not entrust (*episteuen*) himself to them, because he knew them. There is no indication that their trust/belief is not genuine, but we infer that it is weak.⁷⁵

Potentially much more revealing than signs—more precise and informative—are words. Words, though, for John, are riddled with their own fragilities.

John shares with Paul and Luke a high view of the power and authority of the word, both spoken and written—unsurprisingly, in a world in which (p.410) scripture is an acknowledged authority, in which the spoken and written word in general are seen as extremely powerful, and in which people are being called to *pisteuein* in God and Christ through post-resurrection preaching.⁷⁶ The importance of the word is proclaimed in the Prologue, when Jesus is introduced as the embodiment of *ho logos* (1.14),⁷⁷ while the

form of the book, punctuated as it is by long discourses, emphasizes the importance of the words he speaks. Periodically, too, John indicates that trusting/believing in Jesus on the basis of what he says is preferable to trusting/believing on the basis of signs and wonders.⁷⁸

We have seen that Jesus several times makes a crowd's response to a sign an occasion for teaching. In chapter 5, after his healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus says that although the Father 'will show [his Son] greater works than these, so that you may be amazed' (5.20), nevertheless, 'I say to you, the one *akouōn kai pisteuōn* in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation...' (5.24). However amazing works are, hearing and trusting/believing are what bring salvation.

Sometimes, seeing signs leads people—like Nicodemus (3.1–2) and the Samaritans (4.41–2)—to seek teaching for themselves. Words are several times said to lead to people putting their trust in Jesus. 'We no longer believe because of your talk (*lalia*),' say the Samaritans to the woman who introduced them to Jesus, 'for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is truly the saviour of the world.'⁷⁹ John concludes Jesus' 'light of the world' discourse (8.30) by saying, 'Because he spoke this way, many people *episteusan* in him', while at 17.20 Jesus prays not only for the disciples, but for 'those *pisteuontōn* in me through their *logos*'. 'Master, to whom shall we go?' asks Simon Peter, when Jesus asks whether the disciples want to leave him. 'You have the words (*rhēmata*) of eternal life' (6.68).

(p.411) At the same time, John is sharply aware of the unreliability of words and discourse as a means of bringing people to *pisteuein*. After healing the man at the pool of Bethesda and taking the opportunity to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son (5.19–30), Jesus concludes, paradoxically: 'If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true (*alēthēs*). But there is another testifying on my behalf, and I know that the testimony that he gives about me is true' (5.31).⁸⁰ Since John certainly does not think that Jesus' testimony to himself is untrue in general, *alēthēs* here must be close in meaning, as often in the Septuagint, to *pistos*, and Jesus must mean either that his testimony is unreliable insofar as he is a human being, or, more likely, that it is unreliable insofar as his listeners hear him as a human being and find it hard to trust him. God, Jesus continues, first sent John the Baptist to testify to him (Jesus) (5.33–5)—'but I have testimony greater than John's' (5.36). John's testimony, however truthful, is also, it seems, less than compelling. Next, Jesus says that God gave him works to accomplish which also testify on his behalf—but, as we have seen, only up to a point (5.36). Finally, at the climax of this series of thoroughly precarious foundations for trust, Jesus says, '[T]he Father who has sent me has testified himself on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and his *logos* does not stay in you, because *ou pisteuete*' (5.37–8). No one, as every reader of the scriptures knows and John reminds his audience in the Prologue (1.18), has ever seen God, so Jesus is not reproaching the people here for not having seen, or heard, God directly; he is reproaching them for not recognizing Jesus' words as God's. This passage tells the listener that there is nothing more truthful, more reliable, than the testimony of Godself to Jesus in Jesus' words, if one can hear it. It also concedes that since Jesus' words are, as human words, not unequivocally self-revelatory, they do not (even cannot) bring everyone to *pisteuein*.⁸¹

This passage highlights the central paradox of Jesus' self-revelation as a reason to *pisteuein*. On the one hand, he is the Word made flesh, testifying to himself. On the other, he is a human being, testifying to mysteries beyond human understanding. I shall argue below that the way John seeks to resolve this paradox is by appealing to the idea of pre-election.⁸²

Despite his conviction of the importance of the word, John does not consistently present it as preceding *pisteuein* (or *ginōskein*). In the passage we have just examined, for example, he makes Jesus say at 5.24, '*ho akouōn kai pisteuōn* in the one who sent me...will not come to judgement', while at 5.38 the sequence of verbs is reversed: 'You do not have his word...in you because *ou pisteuete* in the one whom he has sent.' At 5.24, hearing and believing may be parallel or hearing may come first. At 5.38, believing comes first. At 5.45–7, Jesus accuses a group of Jerusalemites of not believing Moses when he testified (**p.412**) about him, and 'if you do not believe (*ou pisteuete*) his writings, how will you believe (*pisteusete*) my words?' (5.47). He does not ask, but the way he frames his question makes it inevitable that John's audience will ask, how the Jews can recognize that Moses is referring to Jesus unless they already recognize or believe in who Jesus is. Testimony, it seems, cannot lead to trust/belief unless people already *pisteuein*. Jesus confirms this at 8.47 when he tells a group of interlocutors bluntly: 'Whoever belongs to God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not listen, because you do not belong to God.'

Hearing the word, for John, is key to *pisteuein*, but people cannot hear the word unless they *pisteuein*. The same pattern is visible where Jesus talks of knowing (*ginōskein*) rather than believing. Knowing and believing are well recognized as closely related for John; they appear twice in pairings in which it is hard to differentiate their meaning, and in several other passages in close conjunction.⁸³ At 7.17, for example, teaching the scriptures in the temple to the amazement of 'the Jews', Jesus says that: 'Whoever chooses to do [God's] will, will know whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.' This suggests that people can

choose to understand who and what Jesus is, but at 8.43 he tells another group of Jews that they do not know (that is, understand) what he is saying because ‘You belong to your father the devil’, and during his ‘Farewell’ discourse, he tells the disciples that the world not merely does not, but cannot accept the spirit of truth (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν), because it has not ‘seen or known’ it (14.17).⁸⁴

We have seen that responses to Jesus’ signs are varied, some people insisting that they come from the devil, others being attracted to Jesus by them without fully understanding them, and a few developing in *pisteuein* after experiencing them. The same spectrum is visible in responses to Jesus’ words. No one in the gospel seems to understand them fully, just as no one (after John the Baptist, who is himself sent by God to bear witness) recognizes Jesus unprompted for who he is (1.7, 1.29).⁸⁵ Jesus’ position is summed up by John in the last public utterance Jesus makes as a free man (12.44–50): ‘I came into the world as light, so that *ho pisteuōn* in me might not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears my words and does not observe them (μὴ φυλάξῃ), I do not condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world. Whoever rejects me and does not accept my words has something to judge him: the word that (p.413) I spoke, it will condemn him on the last day...’ (12.46–8). Only those, however, who actively reject Jesus or his teaching after hearing his words are told by Jesus that they are not saved.⁸⁶ Those who are shown by John as engaging with his words in any way can be criticized—like Nicodemus (3.10)—for their lack of understanding, but they are never rejected.

Towards the end of some of Jesus’ discourses, we hear that some of his listeners begin to argue among themselves, some rejecting what Jesus says while others have questions about it without apparently rejecting it. Towards the end of the ‘bread of life’ discourse, for instance, ‘the Jews’ begin to argue among themselves.⁸⁷ Some, without rejecting Jesus outright, ask: ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ (6.52). This group is answered not with criticism but with a further teaching: ‘[U]nless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you’ (6.53). At the end of Jesus’ ‘light of the world’ discourse, some of the Jews wonder (sarcastically?) whether Jesus is planning to kill himself. They are told that they ‘belong to what is below’ and will ‘die in your sins’ (8.23–4). Then, however, they or a different group ask: ‘Who are you?’ (8.25).⁸⁸ To this more engaged question Jesus gives a more constructive answer (though again a gnomic one). As a result, says John, ‘many came to *pisteuein* in him’ (8.30). They are then told: ‘If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples...’ (8.31).

During the gospel Jesus’ established followers also regularly fail to understand Jesus’ words, but each time they do so Jesus offers further teaching. After the ‘bread of life’ discourse, the larger group of his followers (not just the twelve) say: ‘This saying is hard; who can accept it?’ Jesus responds: ‘Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of who you who *ou pisteuousin*’ (6.61–4).

As we will see, even the twelve are sometimes described as not understanding Jesus’ teaching until after the resurrection, when in hindsight they are able to interpret it.⁸⁹ During his ‘Farewell’ discourses, Jesus twice tells them that ‘I am telling you [about his betrayal, death, and resurrection] before it happens, so that when it happens you may *pisteuein*’ (13.19, 14.29). John seems to indicate that as long as the disciples trust God and trust him, Jesus accepts the present limitations of their understanding. Even when Philip says, (p.414) ‘Master, show us the Father’ (14.8), Jesus responds not with condemnation but with a question: ‘Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip?’ (14.9). It is characteristic of John’s Jesus to respond to a failure of understanding by someone who is a follower with a rhetorical question which points up his failure. He does it to Nathanael (1.50), Nicodemus (3.10), Thomas (20.29), and various groups of disciples (6.61–2, 11.9, 16.31). These questions are rather different from the scornful but not truly rhetorical questions he directs at those who reject him. They indicate not rejection or even anger, but something closer to reproach; they are a way of getting a disciple to see his mistake.⁹⁰

At 16.25–31 Jesus acknowledges that hitherto he has spoken figuratively, but ‘The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father’ (16.25). Up to this point, it seems, John wants readers to understand Jesus as having deliberately spoken in veiled speech which he did not expect people fully to comprehend. It has been suggested that in this chapter the disciples achieve a greater depth of understanding than they have at any point hitherto: ‘Now you are talking plainly,’ they say, ‘...Now we realize that you know everything and that you do not need to have anyone question you. Because of this *pisteuomen* that you come from God’ (16.29–30).⁹¹ The presence of propositional *pisteuein hoti* indicates that the disciples indeed think that they have understood something more about Jesus than they have before.⁹² Jesus, however, replies with another of his challenging rhetorical questions: ‘Do you *pisteuete* now? Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone’ (16.31–2). Jesus’ switch from propositional *pisteuein* to relational here is striking and significant. The disciples are congratulating themselves on having come to understand Jesus better, but he tells them that this is not going to

transform their relationship with him: soon they will abandon him. John points here to the limitations, to which we will return, of propositional believing in the gospel as compared with relational trusting/believing.⁹³

Words and signs, for all their limitations and difficulties, are for John the most important routes by which the elect come to *pisteuein*. The full rhetorical power of the gospel, moreover, as itself a basis for *pistis* and a means of deepening *pistis*, is concentrated on presenting the listener or reader with an **(p.415)** evocation of those experiences which he or she will find it impossible not to engage with. Occasionally, however, John appeals to two other bases for trust/belief which are highly regarded in the world around him: the authority of scripture and consequentialism.

John's Jesus does not often appeal explicitly to scripture as a basis for trusting/believing. When he does, the appeal meets the same difficulty as his appeal to his own discourse and to the testimony of Moses.⁹⁴ The Jerusalemites search the scriptures for eternal life, he says (5.39–40), but the scriptures do them no good because they testify to Jesus as the source of life and the Jerusalemites do not want to hear that message.⁹⁵ Scripture is often the most important source of authority elsewhere in Judaism, but John is uncomfortably aware that its interpretation is always itself based on prior assumptions. Like Jesus' testimony to himself, the testimony of scripture depends ultimately on readers' or listeners' already being willing to accept that it testifies to him.

Even the disciples do not seem to find that scripture testifies helpfully to Jesus' identity. When Jesus turns the traders out of the Temple and obliquely foretells his death and resurrection (2.13–22), the disciples are put in mind of Psalm 69.9: 'Zeal for your house will consume me' (2.17). John says, however, that it was only when Jesus was raised from the dead that 'the disciples remembered that he had said this, and they *episteusan* the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken' (2.22). The scriptures can be understood with reference to Jesus' resurrection after the resurrection has been experienced and accepted, but not, it seems, before that experience.⁹⁶ Even when the disciples witnessed the empty tomb (20.8), though one of them *episteusen*, John says that they still did not yet understand the scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. In the absence of pre-existing trust/belief, the written word of scripture no more compels people to *pisteuein* than does Jesus' spoken word.⁹⁷

When, after Jesus is raised, the disciples remember his prophecy about his death and resurrection and come to *pisteuein* in the scripture and his words, they are not, of course, trusting/believing for the first time. Their remembering is itself a confirmation of their earlier trust, which has been justified after the resurrection. As such, this episode is also an example of consequentialism: the idea, which we have already explored in Greek, Roman, and Jewish contexts, **(p.416)** that *pistis/fides* in a particular manifestation of divine activity, or towards a particular divinity, is understood as justified by its consequences.⁹⁸

Consequentialism is important to John, as to all the New Testament writers, because for all of them trust/belief in God and Christ will finally, ungainsayably, be vindicated at some point in the future, at the second coming or on Judgement Day. All John's dicta which involve trusting/believing and look forward, therefore, have a consequentialist aspect. 'To as many as received him, he gave power to become children of God', says the Prologue (1.12). '[T]he one hearing my word and believing in me', says Jesus, after curing the man at the pool of Bethesda, 'has eternal life and will not come to condemnation' (5.24).⁹⁹ Conversely: 'The one not trusting/believing (*apeithōn*) in the Son will not see life' (3.36).¹⁰⁰ In all these passages *pisteuein* will be proven justified by its ultimate consequences.¹⁰¹

Although appeals to consequentialism are common in the world of the early principate, the consequentialism of New Testament writers is in some ways distinctive. When consequentialism is invoked in Graeco-Roman religiosity and in the Septuagint, the consequences concerned have usually already come about, and sources either celebrate the fact that someone rightly trusted/believed God, a god, or a manifestation of divine activity, with good results, or castigate someone for not having had *pistis*, with bad results.¹⁰² (We saw, for example, how Pliny the Younger thought himself justified in accepting his freedman's dream as a portent because subsequently he was not prosecuted by the emperor.¹⁰³) The texts of the New Testament, in contrast, belong to communities very close to their beginnings, many (though not all) of which looked forward to a coming judgement in which their *pistis* in God and Christ would prove to have been justified. They therefore, as we saw in earlier chapters, appeal regularly to the future vindication of their *pistis* without yet knowing when—or even, for certain, whether—it will prove justified. This, we may note in passing, is powerful testimony to the sincerity with which both Jews and gentiles viewed religious consequentialism. When we encounter it already fulfilled in Graeco-Roman sources, it is tempting to view appeals to consequentialism as convenient or even cynical ways of claiming that the gods are looking after their worshippers. The fact that early Christians could appeal **(p.417)** to the future to vindicate their *pistis* while it *was* still the future shows, by the riskiness of the assertion, its sincerity, and shows that such sincerity could appeal to those to whom they preached.¹⁰⁴

Appeals to future vindication, though, however convinced, inevitably degrade in rhetorical force over time, especially if the moment of vindication does not arrive as soon as is initially expected. It is no surprise, therefore, to find communities towards the end of the first century shifting their focus to some degree away from the end time and towards the senses in which *pistis* might be understood as already vindicated by the lives community members were living. John goes as far as any New Testament writer in this direction, without ceasing entirely to appeal to a future day of judgement on which trusting/believing will be vindicated.¹⁰⁵ When Jesus in his lifetime says that his words will be vindicated in the future, however, John usually seems to locate the ultimate consequences and justification of trusting/believing not at the Last Judgement but either in the immediate future in which people trust/believe, or at the latest at the resurrection.

In some passages, as we have seen, those who trust/believe are already in possession of eternal life; those who come to Jesus are by that act fulfilled and will never hunger or thirst again.¹⁰⁶ At 8.31–2 Jesus tells ‘those Jews who have believed (*pepisteukotas*) in him, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Though this saying is expressed in the future tense, it refers not to a specific future moment, but apparently to the continuous future: all the time from the moment when these followers trusted/believed.¹⁰⁷ Several times, Jesus speaks as though the crucifixion is the moment of ultimate revelation, when those who put their trust in him or recognize him will be vindicated: ‘Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that *pās ho pisteuōn* in him may have eternal life’ (3.14–15); ‘When you [the Jews] lift up the Son of Man, then you will know (*gnōsesthe*) that I AM...’ (8.28).¹⁰⁸ (p.418) Elsewhere, it is the resurrection or the coming of the Paraclete that shows to both community members and the world that trusting/believing in Jesus is justified. ‘When [the Paraclete] comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and *dikaïosynē* and condemnation: sin, because they do not trust/believe (*ou pisteuousin*) in me; *dikaïosynē*, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; condemnation, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.’¹⁰⁹

The complication inherent in these sayings as appeals to consequentialism is that although, when they are spoken, the crucifixion, resurrection, and coming of the Paraclete, which will vindicate trust/belief for both Jesus’ followers and the world, are all still in the future, by the time John is writing they are all in the past, and yet most of the world has not come to recognize that Jesus and his followers were right, and that those who crucified him, or did not believe in him, were wrong. This paradox is another of the foundations on which John builds his understanding of pre-election. Pre-election insists that all those who have come to *pisteuein*, in Jesus’ lifetime, at his death, or after the resurrection, were destined to be able to do so, while those who have not, were not. Even the revelation of the crucifixion and the transformational arrival of the Paraclete, in this view, were only ever destined to be experienced by the elect, and the fact that most of the world has not come to recognize and put its trust in Jesus is only to be expected.

Pisteuein and Pre-election

That God has chosen or pre-elected those who hear the good news to hear it, or that God has a plan for salvation, is an occasional theme in Paul’s letters and more than an occasional one in Luke-Acts. In neither is it closely connected with *pistis* language, which continues to be used, as it is used elsewhere in Greek, of voluntary trust and so on. In John’s gospel and Revelation, pre-election is central to the authors’ soteriology and *pisteuein* is integral to it.¹¹⁰ ‘You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...’, Jesus tells the inner circle of disciples on his last evening (15.16; cf. 13.18). ‘I revealed your name’, he says to God, ‘to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word...’¹¹¹ Those who are sceptical of his mission, he (p.419) identifies as ‘not among my sheep’ (10.26), as belonging to ‘your Father the devil’, and as working for the devil as he himself works for God (8.44; cf. 8.47, 5.38, 6.44). (It is probably no accident that most of these verses are drawn from passages and chapters which are thought by many to belong to the later stages of the composition of the gospel. Pre-election seems to have been a particular interest of later redactors or the final redactor.)

Essentially, those who *pisteuein* in John’s gospel are those who have been pre-elected. The connection, however, is not always quite as simple as that. In some, *pisteuein* does indeed seem to follow election. At the end of the ‘bread of life’ discourse, for example, after Jesus has told those following him that ‘no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father’, and many have left him as a result, he asks the disciples whether they too want to leave (6.67). Peter answers: ‘Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed (*pepisteukamen*) and known that you are the holy one of God’ (6.69). This could mean that the disciples choose freely to put their trust in Jesus, but Jesus’ response, ‘Did I not choose you twelve?’ (6.70), affirms that they were pre-elected.¹¹² Conversely, in attacking the Jews in chapter 8, Jesus tells them that they do not understand what he says because they belong to the devil (8.43–4). The devil is the ‘father of lies’; ‘there is no truth in him’ (8.44). ‘But *because* I speak the truth, *ou pisteuete moi*’ (8.45). Since his enemies belong to the devil in whom there is no truth, they have no choice but not to trust/believe Jesus when he speaks truth.¹¹³ When Jesus says shortly afterwards (10.35–6): ‘The words I do in my Father’s name testify to me. But *ou pisteuete*, *because* you are not among my sheep’, we infer, similarly, that his enemies do not (or cannot) trust/believe because they

are already not among his sheep. This view is fortified in chapter 12 by an appeal to scripture. John reports that although Jesus performed many signs during his final week in Jerusalem, ‘the Jews’ *ouk episteuon* in him (12.37). This occurred to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah that ‘[God] blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn to God, and I would heal them’ (12.40). God himself ensures that certain people will not trust/believe in Jesus and be healed.¹¹⁴

In a few passages, however, the connection between *pisteuein* and pre-election is more ambiguous. At 5.24 Jesus says that ‘the one listening to my (p.420) word and trusting (*pisteuōn*) the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to judgement, but has passed (*metabebēken*) from death to life’. The perfect tense, coming after the present and future, could indicate that *ho pisteuōn* passed from death to life before believing: that is, was chosen to believe. Alternatively (though less satisfactorily from a stylistic point of view), ‘has passed from death to life’ could duplicate ‘has eternal life’ and refer to a consequence of believing which is already in the past.¹¹⁵ Sayings like ‘*Ho pisteuōn* in the Son has eternal life’ (3.36¹¹⁶), and ‘This is the work of God, that you trust (*pisteuēte*) in the one whom he sent’ (6.29), leave open whether or not *pisteuein* is a free choice, while occasionally *pisteuein* seems definitely to be a choice: ‘You do not have his word remaining in you, because *ou pisteuete* in the one whom he has sent...you do not *want* to come to me to have life’ (5.38–9).

Nowhere is the relationship between *pisteuein* and pre-election more apparently ambiguous than in the Prologue. In such a prominent position, moreover, it is tempting to hear its ambiguity as having programmatic force.¹¹⁷ At 1.10 John begins describing the activity of the word/light that is God in the world by saying that the world did not know him (ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω) and his own people did not accept him (οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον):

ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεῦουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

[B]ut to as many as received him, he gave power to become children of God, to the ones trusting/believing in his name who were born not from blood nor from the will of flesh nor from the will of man but from God. (1.12–13)

If parts of the Prologue belong to a pre-Johannine devotional poem or hymn, this verse is probably commentary, part of its adaptation for the (or a) gospel writer’s own purposes.¹¹⁸ But what are his purposes in relation to *tois pisteuousin*?

We understand without difficulty that receiving the word/light comes before being given power to become children of God. *Tois pisteuousin* could (p.421) parallel *elabon* (making receiving Jesus and trusting/believing in his name effectively synonyms¹¹⁹), or it could follow *elabon* (though if ‘receiving’ and ‘trusting/believing’ are different things, occurring in sequence, it is not clear what ‘receiving’ involves¹²⁰). Equally, *tois pisteuousin* could parallel ‘who were born...from God’.¹²¹

The clause ‘who were born...from God’ could be a reference to baptism, the rebirth in water and the spirit that follows receiving God and Christ,¹²² or it could refer to a group who have been pre-elected to become children of God. It is certainly not impossible that verse 13 is an oblique reference to the baptism which leads to community membership, especially given the presence of John the Baptist in the passage. In the context of the Prologue as a whole, though, with its sweeping vision encompassing heaven and earth from the beginning of time to the incarnation, and its abstract portrayal of John and Jesus as word, light, and testifier, a reference to baptism seems too specific to be all the author intends. The characterization of community members as those who are pre-elected to believe by being born not of human will but of God fits better into the scale of the Prologue’s vision.

If ‘those born...from God’ are the elect, we still have to decide whether *tois pisteuousin* goes with *elabon* or with ‘those born...from God’. If the former, then the accent is on the choice which those who *pisteuein* make. If the latter, then believing comes from being among the elect, and so does receiving the word/light. (The fact that those born from God are subsequently given the power to become children of God need not worry us more here than in other passages where pre-election sits side by side with future judgement or the granting of eternal life.¹²³) Grammatically and stylistically, however, it is impossible to decide whether *tois pisteuousin* is more closely connected with the clause preceding or that following it. In this prominent position at the beginning of the gospel, moreover, it is impossible not to suspect that this is precisely the author’s intention. He is clear that *pisteuein* is at the heart of how those born of God become children of God, but he does not specify whether *pisteuein* is a free choice or a consequence of pre-election.¹²⁴

(p.422) Assuming that it is not simply a failure of style, why might such ambiguity be appropriate, here and occasionally later in the book? Three reasons suggest themselves: historical, theological, and pastoral. We have seen that in Paul’s letters and the synoptic gospels it is usually taken for granted that *pistis* is a free choice, based on various reasons for trusting/believing in God and Christ.

The Johannine community may have inherited traditions to this effect, which are not fully submerged in the later redactions of the gospel by one or more editors who understood community members as pre-elected.¹²⁵

If such traditions are not fully submerged, the reason may be in part because they are theologically and pastorally useful. John's Jesus calls people continually to *pistuein*. Even if those who will respond are pre-elected, it is evidently important to the author that they do respond; that they acknowledge and affirm their election by trusting/believing. The elect may be elect, but they must still recognize and embrace their election. We can therefore see the author as treating *pistuein*, at times, as if it were a free choice as a way of showing how, within the gospel, those who are elect acknowledge their election and respond to it. We can further see him, when he models *pistuein* as the appropriate response by the elect to encountering Jesus in his lifetime, as encouraging his audience to (re)affirm their commitment to Jesus Christ through their own trusting/believing.¹²⁶ In this connection we can make a further link, to the possibility of the development of *pistuein* which we explored in the last section. Both themes suggest that Christology, soteriology, and eschatology are not all that is on the author's mind as he develops his treatment of *pistuein*; he also wants to encourage members of his community to (re)affirm and develop their own trusting/believing, in his day and beyond.¹²⁷

Pistuein, in John's gospel, is not so much a risky act of trust/belief, a deliberate choice of the way to eternal life, as a recognition that one has been given life and a response to that recognition. In the Prologue, the elect receive the word/light and trust/believe in what they receive, acknowledging that by pre-election they are already, potentially, in a relationship with God and the incarnate Logos. The rest of the gospel will be informed by the same doubly distinctive understanding of *pistuein*: that the trust/belief one puts in **(p.423)** Jesus Christ cannot be distinguished from that which one puts in God, and that when they put their trust in God and Christ, the elect are not so much acting on their own initiative as acknowledging a relationship that already exists in potential. Conversely, when Jesus calls people to *pistuein*, he will not so much invite them to trust/believe *de novo* as call them to recognize whether or not they are among the elect. Those who put their trust/believe in Jesus will be those who come to recognize in response to that call that they are pre-elected.¹²⁸

Those who, within the gospel, do not respond at all prove by that fact that they are already excluded from the trusting/believing relationship with God and Christ. Those who respond, but imperfectly (which, in the gospel, is everyone), are among the elect but still have much to learn and are capable of making mistakes.¹²⁹ In the world in which John was writing, the idea that the way people respond to Jesus' call to *pistuein* indicates whether or not they belong to the elect must have been intended to be, and surely was, reassuring to community members, especially if they were enduring hostility from outsiders. To have put one's trust in Christ indicated that one belonged to the elect, while those who had not done so, evidently did not.

Since we noted on p. 412 in the section 'Reasons to Believe' that John's treatment of *ginōskein* is closely related to his treatment of *pistuein*, it is also worth noting that the interpretation of *pistuein* as the acknowledgement and affirmation that one is among the elect, together with the acceptance that one's relationship with Jesus may have room for development, applies equally well to John's treatment of *ginōskein*.¹³⁰ Knowing Jesus or things about Jesus is often described as a form of recognition: the instantaneous and ungainsayable certainty of direct experience. 'When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know (*gnōsesthe*) that I AM' (8.28). 'The world' (outside the community) cannot receive the spirit of truth, 'because it neither sees nor knows (*ginōskei*) it' (14.17). At 7.17, on the other hand, Jesus tells 'the Jews': 'Whoever chooses to do his will *shall* know (*gnōsetai*) whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own,' while at 17.6–7 he says to God, 'I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world...*Now* they know (*egnōkan*) that everything you gave me is from you...' Sometimes, it seems, knowing may develop within the follower's relationship with God and Christ.¹³¹

In connection with the possibility that trusting or knowing, even among the elect, may be capable of development, we may also note that from time to time **(p.424)** (though much less often than in the synoptic gospels¹³²) John shows fear, doubt, or scepticism as coexisting with *pistuein*. Immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, in a story which closely parallels Mark and Matthew, Jesus' disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee against a stiff wind when they see Jesus walking towards them over the water.¹³³ They are frightened (*ephobēthēsan*), but Jesus tells them: 'It is I; do not be afraid.'¹³⁴ At 14.1, looking ahead to his arrest and death, Jesus tells the disciples: 'Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me (μη̄ ταρασσέσθω ἡ καρδία· πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε).' At 20.24–5 Thomas refuses to believe (*pistuein*) in Jesus' resurrection until he has seen the marks of the nails in his hands and put his hand into Jesus' side. Jesus allays his doubts with no more disapproval than the comment: 'Have you come to believe (*pepisteukas*) because you have seen? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed (*pisteusantes*)' (20.29).

Here, fear/doubt/scepticism are not a good thing, but they are understandable and tolerable.¹³⁵ Elsewhere in the gospel they are excluded: there are only two positions—trusting/believing, and not trusting/believing—and only two conditions—having eternal life

and not having it.¹³⁶ One explanation for this probably lies in the gospel's multiple layers: fear, doubt, and scepticism may have played a larger role in earlier versions and their component traditions than they do in the gospel as it has come down to us. In the final redaction, it is striking that even where we seem to see followers of Jesus and others developing in *pisteuein*—whether the disciples after the wedding at Cana, the royal official whose son is ill, Martha after her brother has died, the disciples during the Farewell discourses or after the resurrection—what generates the development is not fear, doubt, or scepticism but less-than-full understanding of Jesus.¹³⁷ Sometimes, indeed, the author makes explicit that the person or people involved *pisteuein*, then marks that they *pisteuein* again as their understanding grows.¹³⁸ John's gospel avoids the idea, present in Greek and Roman *mentalité* and in modern sociological theory, that fear, doubt, and (p.425) scepticism are both inevitable parts of relationships of trust, belief, and so on, and often positive and productive parts of them.¹³⁹ For the author, overwhelmingly, the only right relationship with Jesus is *pisteuein*; those who trust/believe may not (indeed, virtually never fully do) understand Jesus, but *pisteuein* grows with understanding, rather than by interaction with fear, doubt, or scepticism.¹⁴⁰

Believing, Believing In, Believing That

Throughout this chapter so far I have translated *pisteuein* as 'trust/believe', often leaving open how far John understands *pisteuein* as an interpersonal relationship and how far as propositional (the believing 'that certain things are so', which may be based on evidence and reason, or may be, as it is often understood as being in modern religious discourse, non-evidence-based, unverifiable, and deliberately counter-rational).¹⁴¹ Propositional believing is sometimes seen as more important to John than to any other New Testament writer, partly because he makes so much use of the verb, and partly because he follows it with a *hoti* clause more often than does any other New Testament writer.¹⁴² The question, however, goes beyond the interpretation of the verb itself in one passage or another to the very nature and content of *pisteuein* for John. In this section and the next we accordingly turn to that larger question, approaching it first by looking more closely at the passages where John uses *pisteuein hoti*, especially in connection with the language of knowledge and truth, and then by reflecting on Bultmann's famous question, what it is that Jesus, the Revealer, reveals.

Although John uses *pisteuein hoti* more than any other New Testament writer, his use of it is not extensive: of ninety-eight occurrences of the verb in the gospel, only a dozen are followed by *hoti*.¹⁴³ All but one are statements about Jesus' identity, several of which we have already encountered.

(p.426) In conversation with a Samaritan woman at 4.21, Jesus says: 'Trust/believe me, woman, that (*pisteue moi, gunai, hoti*) the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.' At the end of the 'bread of life' discourse, when Jesus asks the disciples whether they want to leave him, Peter replies: 'We have come to believe and know that (*pepisteukamen...hoti*) you are the Holy One of God' (6.69). At 8.24 Jesus tells 'the Jews' that they will die in their sins unless they 'believe that (*pisteusete hoti*) I AM'. Before raising Lazarus, Jesus asks Martha whether she believes that the one who believes/trusts in him (*ho pisteuon eis eme*) will never die. She replies: 'Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that (*pepisteuka hoti*) you are the Messiah...' (11.27). Later in the same episode, Jesus prays to God, 'I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that (*pisteusosin hoti*) you sent me' (11.42). On his last evening Jesus prophesies his betrayal at the hands of Judas and tells the disciples, 'From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that (*pisteusete...hoti*) I AM' (13.19). Later in the same sequence of discourses he responds to Philip's plea, 'Show us the Father', with: 'Do you not believe that (*pisteueis hoti*) I am in the Father and the Father is in me?...Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...' (14.10–11). Later again, the disciples affirm that now Jesus is speaking plainly to them and showing that he knows everything: 'Because of this we believe that (*pisteuomen hoti*) you came from God' (16.30). Finally, that evening, Jesus prays for the disciples because they have accepted his words, understood that he came from God and 'believed that (*episteusan hoti*) you sent me' (17.8), and asks on behalf not only of his present disciples but of those who will come to *pisteuein* through them in the future, that they may all be one, 'so that the world may believe that (*pisteuei hoti*) you sent me' (17.21). In what is probably the original ending of the gospel, the author says that 'these [signs] are written that you may [come to] believe that (*pisteuein hoti*) Jesus is the Messiah...'.¹⁴⁴

(p.427) It comes as no surprise that all these passages concern Jesus.¹⁴⁵ As has been noted, the gospel reserves the *pisteuein* lexicon exclusively for divine–human trusting and believing. What is believed or is to be believed in these passages, moreover—that Jesus is of God, that he came from God and was sent by God, that he is in the Father and the Father in him, and that he is identified with God—closely matches what is said of Jesus in other passages where people are invited to trust/believe in him in relational terms. On one level this is not surprising either. It reminds us of what we have seen repeatedly in earlier chapters, that relational trust is always intertwined with propositional beliefs: when anyone—Greek, Roman, Jewish, or Christian—puts their trust in anyone, divine or human, they do so in part because of things they believe about them. We should bear in mind, though, that although relational trust is always intertwined with propositional beliefs, the reverse is not the case. John could have shown the disciples, for instance,

believing things about Jesus which were not germane to their relationship of trust with him as the Messiah, or he could have shown them believing things not revealed when Jesus calls people to put their trust in him. He does neither, but confines his use of *pistuein hoti* to making explicit beliefs which are implicit in passages where *pistuein* is more clearly relational.

'Believing that' always takes place within relationships, actual or potential, between Jesus and the elect. In eight passages those involved are already followers of Jesus (disciples or Martha). Jesus tells the Samaritan woman: 'The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him' (4.21, 23). We infer that the Samaritans are among the elect, 'true worshippers', since they are among those whom God seeks out to worship him in Spirit and truth.¹⁴⁶ At 8.23–4 'the Jews', in contrast to the Samaritans and to Jesus himself, 'belong to this world'. As we have already seen, though Jesus tells them that they will die in their sins *if* they do not believe, he also tells them—twice—that they *cannot* come where he is going and they *will* die in their sin(s) (vv. 21, 24); the force of *ean* here is closer to 'since' than 'if', and the unbelieving of 'the Jews' is symptomatic of their exclusion from eternal life. Even 17.21, at first sight an outlier, proves to be about 'believing that' within the potential relationship of pre-election. When Jesus prays that the whole world may 'believe that' God sent him, he does so on the basis of his hope that all people will ultimately be one and everyone among the elect.¹⁴⁷

(p.428) In various other ways, *pistuein hoti* in John is rather different from propositional belief as it is often understood in modern religious discourse: the deliberate, counter-rational acceptance of something which cannot be known for certain. In the gospel, what those who have eternal life believe is true of God or Christ is anything but unevidenced, unverifiable, or counter-rational. It is based on signs, words, scripture, and consequentialism, the accepted reality of God (a form of coherentism equally powerful for those of Jewish and Graeco-Roman background), and above all the ungainsayable immediacy of knowledge when those who are pre-elected are confronted by their Shepherd, the Son of God.¹⁴⁸

For John, then, 'believing that' occurs within relationships, potential or actual, between Jesus and the elect, and its content is no more nor less than the identity of Jesus which leads the elect to trust in him. The same is true of 'knowing' language (*ginōskein*), which, as we have already seen, is often used in close proximity to *pistuein* and is twice paired with *pistuein hoti* in such a way that their meanings are practically indistinguishable (6.69, 17.8). *Ginōskein*, as Bultmann noted, is also used interchangeably with the language of seeing and hearing to characterize the instant, ungainsayable recognition which the elect experience when they encounter Jesus.¹⁴⁹ This alerts us to the possibility that knowing (at least, soteriologically significant knowing) may also occur within potential or actual relationships between God, Jesus, and the elect, and that its content too may reflect the identity of Jesus.

This proves to be the case. *Ginōskein* occurs fifty-six times in the gospel, many of which occurrences concern ordinary human knowing and are not relevant here. Of some thirty-four passages where *ginōskein* occurs referring to Jesus knowing his own people or people knowing God or Jesus or something about Jesus, around twenty-one bear dominantly relational meanings and thirteen, propositional ones.¹⁵⁰ The following, for example, are (to judge by grammar and sense) dominantly relational: 'He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him (*auton ouk egnō*)...' (1.10); 'Jesus would not trust (*epistuein*) himself to them because he knew them all (*διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν γινώσκειν πάντας*)...' (2.24); 'You do not know (*ouk egnōkate*) [God], but I know (*oida*) [God]' (8.55); 'I know my own (*ginōskō ta ema*) and my own know (*ginōskousi*) me' (10.14); 'If you know me (*egnōkate me*), then you will also know (*gnōsese*) my Father. From now on you do know (*ginōskete*) him and have seen him' (14.7). Knowing a person, of course, involves knowing things about them, in much the same way as trusting (**p.429**) a person involves believing things about them, but that does not diminish its relationality: in all these, and other passages, the emphasis is on the divine–human relationship.¹⁵¹

In some passages John even seems to offer the reader what looks like propositional language in order to make the point that knowing Jesus is in fact a matter of relationship. The 'light of the world' discourse is worth looking at *in extenso* because it uses language both of knowing and of testimony, which we might also assume would relate particularly to the propositional content of knowing or believing:

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' So the Pharisees said to him, 'You are testifying about yourself, so your testimony is not valid (*σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής*).' Jesus answered, 'Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know (*oida*) where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge (*krinete*) by human standards; I do not judge anyone. And even if I do judge, my judgement is valid, because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father who sent me. Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I testify

on my own behalf and so does the Father who sent me.’ So they said to him, ‘Where is your father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know (*oidate*) neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’ He spoke these words while teaching in the treasury in the Temple area. But no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. (8.12–20)¹⁵²

The incarnate Word has already been identified with light, and light and life with one another, in the Prologue (1.9, 1.4), where accepting the light led those who *pisteuein* to become children of God. Here, Jesus does not challenge his listeners to believe his statement ‘I am the light of the world’ as a proposition, but rather to follow him and walk ‘in light’ rather than in darkness. ‘Following’ implies a relationship with the one followed (one involving cognition, relationality, and action): being in this relationship, Jesus indicates, is what walking in the light and having life mean.

The Pharisees, however, see Jesus primarily as making a propositional claim about himself—offering ‘testimony’ about himself—and they want a reason to believe it.¹⁵³ Jesus does not accept that this is what he is doing. ‘*Even if I testify (p.430)* about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I came from or where I am going.’ On one level Jesus says here that *if* he is making a propositional claim, they can believe it *because he knows who he is*. This basis for belief, conventional in form but preposterous in content, is clearly not going to persuade the Pharisees, and Jesus cannot be expecting that it will. The same words, however, offer the Pharisees an alternative: one closely related to what Jesus has told Nicodemus and others. The only possible testimony to the one who comes from God and returns to God is his own, so no one cannot believe him *until they recognize* that he is from God.¹⁵⁴

The Pharisees, at this point, are therefore offered the alternatives of believing Jesus on absurd grounds, or believing him simply because they ‘know’ that he is from God—if Jesus is testifying to himself at all. Immediately afterwards, however, Jesus shifts the argument even further from propositions and their grounds. ‘You judge *by human standards*, but I do not judge *anyone*.’ Leaving aside the surprising content of the second clause, given that elsewhere Jesus emphasizes his role as judge,¹⁵⁵ we note that judging ‘by human standards’ could imply judging claims by the reasons offered for accepting them, but that judging a person implies a relationship of authority and the power to determine the status of the one judged (Is he guilty or innocent? A community member in good standing, a foreigner, or an outcast?). Judgment, in John’s gospel as elsewhere, is closely connected with membership of the Christian community, because God’s and Christ’s judgement determine whether or not one belongs to the community of those who have eternal life.¹⁵⁶ When Jesus subsequently allows, therefore, that he may judge (8.16), he is claiming the authority to decide which group the Pharisees belong to: the living, or the rest. His judgement is true, moreover, Jesus says, because ‘I am not alone’; he is in communion with the Father.

The Pharisees are now being told that when they respond to Jesus’ saying ‘I am the light of the world,’ what they think is not really at issue; the point is that their response indicates whether or not they belong to the community of those who have eternal life.¹⁵⁷ They still do not hear it that way. They want to **(p.431)** know, if Jesus is going to invoke his father in support of his testimony, where his father is. Jesus’ reply again shifts them away from propositions: ‘You know *neither me nor my Father*. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’ Knowing, Jesus emphasizes, is a matter of relationships, not propositions, and people’s relationship with God and with himself is what matters.

In this discourse, with its intense interest in reason and explanation, Jesus constantly seeks to shift the Pharisees’ focus away from the language of proposition and verification to that of relationality and knowledge, in the sense of recognition of his identity. To know anything about him, and, more importantly, to belong to the group of those who have eternal life, Jesus says, the Pharisees need to know him and know his Father. When they continue to try to assess him and his claims propositionally, they have disastrously missed the point.

While Jesus is steering the Pharisees away from thinking in terms of whether his testimony about himself can be verified by human standards, the gospel writer is steering his audience away from it. Apart from the intrinsic appropriateness of this manoeuvre in the context of John’s understanding of Jesus, another explanation suggests itself in what are widely thought to be the conflicted circumstances of the Johannine communities.¹⁵⁸ Disputes between Christians and (other) Jews seem often to have focused on what were heard as propositional truth claims about Jesus—that he was the Messiah, the Lord, or the Son of God.¹⁵⁹ If so, then in passages like 8.12–20 John may be heard trying to shift the debate away from such competing truth claims, and relocating it in Jesus’ demand that people see, hear, know, or trust/believe in him. Those who do not, by that token are on the wrong side of the dispute.

If John’s aim in this passage is to convey that when the Pharisees argue about whether certain descriptions of Jesus are propositionally true they are missing the point, some aspects of his treatment of truth elsewhere in the gospel tend in the same

direction. At 3.21 *alētheia* is something that a person ‘does’ (*poiein*). This may shed light on 1.17–18, where the law is a gift from God, through Moses, which presumably establishes and keeps Jews in a right relationship with God, while grace and truth come (as a gift from God) through Jesus Christ. If grace and truth are analogous to the law, then one appropriately ‘does’ them by following the commands of Jesus as one follows the commands of the law. The command which dominates John’s gospel is *pisteuein* (together, in a few passages, with *agapān*), so trusting/believing is likely to be the most important thing that John is calling followers of Jesus to ‘do’. At 4.23 Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that the time is coming when worshippers will worship God ‘in spirit and truth’ rather than through the (p.432) traditional cults of Mount Gerizim and the Jerusalem Temple. Worshipping God ‘in truth’ can be identified here too with trusting/believing, since Jesus repeatedly proclaims that *pisteuein* is what people are called to do. At 8.32 (cf. 17.17), ‘the truth will set you free, if you remain in my word’. This too makes sense as a call to follow Jesus’ command to *pisteuein* and as the identification of ‘doing’ that command with truth. Being set free, as Jesus confirms immediately afterwards (8.34–6), is another way of describing eternal life: thus, trusting/believing constitutes ‘doing’ truth and leads to life. At 14.6 Jesus himself is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’. Coming to the Father ‘through’ him is identified in the same passage as knowing, believing, doing the works Jesus does, and keeping his commandments (14.7, 10, 12, 15).¹⁶⁰ Here again, trusting/believing and knowing constitute ‘doing’ the truth and following the way. Here they also constitute (rather than leading to) eternal life. At 17.19 truth is something ‘in’ which people are consecrated to God; immediately afterwards, Jesus refers to those who ‘believe in me’ (*pisteuontōn...eis eme*) (17.20), suggesting that the disciples are ‘in’ truth when they *pisteuein*.¹⁶¹

This is far from the only way in which John uses *alētheia* language: sometimes it is truth as opposed to falsehood, and it often refers to the foundational reality and reliability that are associated with God, especially in the Septuagint.¹⁶² But it seems possible that ‘doing’ truth and being ‘in’ truth are alternative ways of expressing the idea of divine participation which occurs in the ‘Farewell discourses’, when Jesus speaks of himself as in the Father, the Father in him, himself in his followers, and his followers in himself and in God (14.20, 17.21; cf. 17.22–3). As God is truth (reality, reliability) and enacts truth, so perhaps by trusting/believing in God and Jesus, Jesus’ followers themselves become part of the ultimate truth and reality of the divine.

(p.433) Pisteuein and the Revealer

Bultmann’s characterization of the central theme of John’s gospel as revelation has dominated Johannine scholarship for nearly a century:

[T]aking the Gospel as it sees itself, *what is its central intuition, its basic idea?* Doubtless it must lie in the constantly repeated proposition that Jesus is the emissary of God (e.g. 17.3, 17.23, 17.25), who through his words and deeds brings revelation. He performs the works given him by the Father, he speaks what he has heard from the Father or what he has seen in his presence. The man who believes is saved, he who does not is lost. But there lies the riddle. Precisely what does the Jesus of John’s Gospel reveal? One thing only, though put in different ways: *that he has been sent as Revealer.*¹⁶³

Writing later of ‘The Revelation as the Word’ in *Theology of the New Testament*, Bultmann returns to the question, what is the content of Jesus’ words and deeds? What do they reveal—and, by implication, what, or in what, do they ask his followers to *pisteuein*?

Bultmann argues that (in contrast to divine redeemer figures in gnostic cosmologies) Jesus does not communicate ‘matters of events to which he had been a witness by either eye or ear. Never is the heavenly world the theme of his words. Nor does he communicate cosmogonic or soteriological mysteries...it turns out in the end that Jesus as the Revealer of God *reveals nothing but that he is the Revealer.*’ Jesus reveals that he is the one for whom the world has been waiting, and who brings ‘that for which all the longing of man yearns: life and truth as the reality out of which man can exist, light as the complete transparence of existence in which questions and riddles are at an end’.¹⁶⁴ Bultmann goes on to connect John’s use of *pisteuein* with this theme, emphasizing that believing the word of Jesus (along with seeing, hearing, and knowing him) is indistinguishable from trusting/believing in him.¹⁶⁵

Taking a different approach, through *pisteuein* itself, we have come to similar conclusions. What, though, of the role of narrative (implicit, if not explicit) in *pisteuein*? In the background of Bultmann’s account of revelation and *pisteuein* is his view, which frames his approach to the whole gospel, that John drew extensively on gnostic myths of a divine redeemer (though he repudiated gnostic world views).¹⁶⁶ In the process, although he minimizes the propositional content of trusting/believing in Jesus in the gospel, Bultmann allows us to read John as inviting his audience to believe his own myth—his story of God, his Son, and the world. Does his use of *pisteuein* (p.434) imply such an invitation? Does Jesus ask the disciples, or John ask us, to trust/believe in his story, and if so, what kind of believing is involved?

Both the disciples and the gospel's audience undoubtedly are asked, implicitly, to believe a story—or rather, multiple, sometimes parallel, often intersecting stories.¹⁶⁷ The gospel begins, like mythologies all over the world: 'In the beginning...' The Word has a history which begins before creation. Jesus Christ has little purely human history, but a substantial divine–human one as the Word made flesh, the Son of God, who has a mission on earth and, when he has fulfilled it, expects to return to the Father and eventually to welcome his friends into his Father's house. The gospel itself has narrative form, tension, and trajectory. And when Jesus' followers, within or without the gospel, are asked to *pisteuein* in God and in him, their response must be framed by the ways, including the narrative substructures, in which God and Jesus are presented.

The nature and distinctiveness of the stories implicit in Greek, Roman, Jewish, or Christian presentations of *pistis/fides*, sacred or secular, would be a study (or several studies) in themselves.¹⁶⁸ Substantial fragments of them have in fact emerged from our exploration of the meaning and operation of *pistis*, *pisteuein*, and so on in different bodies of sources, but narrative has not been our focus, partly for reasons of space, and partly because the sources tend to leave it implicit, and my aim has been to map the relationships which are our sources' explicit and primary concern. That said, we should note the importance of narrative, and also, not unconnected with it, the relevance of D. Z. Phillips's model of religion as a language game, which we outlined in the Introduction and returned to in Chapter 4.¹⁶⁹

Though Phillips's theory is developed in relation to propositional beliefs, it is also relevant to relationships of divine–human trust and to religious narratives. A story of the divine and of divine–human interaction constitutes, among other things, a language or a dialect, within which those who trust/believe form thoughts and express them, articulate relationships, enact them, and interpret the world around them. Like any language, such a narrative both interprets experience and determines it. Just as languages move through space (p.435) and time, interact, and give rise to new languages, so do narratives of the divine and humanity; just as some languages are closer to each other and more mutually intelligible than others, so are some religious narratives; just as some speakers of different languages find it advantageous to be able to communicate with their neighbours, while others find reasons to distance or demonize them, so some adherents of different cults seek to communicate with non-members while others reject and revile them. The narrative substructure or language game of the Johannine community forms one of several interrelated branches of one dialect of Judaism, embroiled at the time in the complex and painful process of becoming its own multi-dialectal language. As such, perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is its developed internal structure and self-confidence. It offers speakers, or community members, a remarkably rich, complex, holistic, and sustaining interpretation of the world and of their situation. It demands that they learn its language properly or not at all. It ruthlessly consigns those who do not want to learn to death in their sins. And the lexicon it uses above all to express how God interacts with the world and what it means to become and live as a community member is *pisteuein*.

Pisteuein and the Divine–Human Community

Since, for John, Jesus is explicitly the divine Word made flesh, whoever has seen him has seen the Father (14.9), and whoever *pisteuein* in him has eternal life, we might expect his gospel to offer a fuller picture (or story) of the divine–human community formed by trusting/believing than do most books of the New Testament. In practice, in John as elsewhere, the structure and internal economy of the divine–human community, whether present or ultimate, is no more than hinted at. We will return to this theme in Chapter 12, but for now we may note that the elect can look forward to freedom (8.32)¹⁷⁰ and seeing the glory of God (11.40¹⁷¹). They are described with a range of household language: they belong in the Father's house (14.2); they are, like Jesus, slaves in their obedience to God (13.16), but no longer slaves insofar as they are friends of Jesus (15.15; cf. 8.32). The frequency with which God is called Father in this gospel and the relative paucity of language of political community (mainly visible in occasional uses of *kyrios* and 'Messiah') give the listener a stronger (p.436) sense that the divine–human community is ultimately a family, household, or abstract unity than that it is a quasi-political unity. Community members are also described through the language and imagery of identity: they will be 'in' Jesus and he in them as he is in the Father (14.20; cf. 15.7).¹⁷² They are to Jesus as the branches of a vine to the vine (15.1–7).¹⁷³ Above all, the nature of the divine–human relationship and community is life itself—eternal life—and trusting/believing in Jesus is the stuff of life as light, food, and drink, a path, and a place of safety are the stuff of life.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

John's treatment of *pisteuein* is integral to his Christology, soteriology, and concept of community. In some ways it remains close to its predominantly Jewish roots, focusing strongly on God's commitment to his chosen people, revealed through words and signs, and the importance for them of trusting/believing in God. From the perspective of most Jews, however, what makes him distinctive is that, for John, God is revealed uniquely and decisively through Jesus Christ, and people are called to trust/believe in Jesus as they do in God.

Compared with other followers of Christ whose writings we have discussed, John is distinctive in other ways. Compared with the

writers of the synoptic gospels, he uses *pisteuein* not so much to explore the complexity and ambiguity of Jesus' nature and location between God and humanity, especially as people encounter it during his lifetime, as to emphasize at once the unity of Christ with God and his faithful subordination to God. Like the synoptic gospels, John struggles with the fact that many people did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God in his lifetime (or subsequently), but he accounts for it somewhat differently by developing the theme of pre-election. Unlike the synoptic gospels, too, John makes little of Jesus as a model for imitation, but focuses on him above all as the object of trusting/believing. All four gospels, however, share some interest in the idea that the power of God works through those who are faithful to God: not only Jesus himself, but potentially his followers too. All four share the sense that, although no follower is perfect in *pistis*, there is room within the divine-human relationship for human progress. And all share the desire to recreate through their narratives something (p.437) of the experience of encountering Jesus in life, for those blessed but challenged generations which must come to *pisteuein* without having seen.

In contrast with Paul, John, if anything, downplays the connection between *pisteuein* and the salvific death of Jesus, preferring to concentrate on the role of direct trusting/believing in Jesus in bringing the elect to life. As a result, he does not develop anything like Paul's model of Jesus as doubly faithful to and trusted by God and humanity to explain how his death and resurrection save *hoi pisteuontes* from their sins. John shares, though, something of Paul's sense of his community as an embattled brotherhood, enduring the persecution of this world as they travel towards the house with many dwelling places which Jesus has prepared for them.¹⁷⁵

John's community may have been dominantly Jewish, but his gospel was read and heard soon after its composition by gentile Christians too, and to gentiles its most striking features will have been those it shares with other Christian texts. Its call to *pisteuein* in Christ together with the divine—its uncompromising message that trusting/believing in God and Christ is the only way to life—the all-encompassing nature of the relationship into which it called *hoi pisteuontes*—its rejection of doubt, fear, or scepticism as appropriate elements in a trusting relationship—all these are common to all the Christian groups we know of at this time and distinctive in the world of the first century. At the same time, *pisteuein* in John's gospel, as in the other writings we have discussed, has many features that would have been familiar to gentile Greeks and Romans, from its understanding of trusting/believing as integral to divine-human relationships and the special importance of *pisteuein* in the right quarter at a time of crisis, to its interest in words, signs, and consequences as foundations for trust/belief. If speaking to gentiles was not as high a priority for John as it was, for instance, for Paul, there is nothing in his gospel to exclude them from his community or his discourse.

1 and 3 John

The faithfulness of community members, which we discussed on p. 402 in the section 'Pisteuein between God, Christ, and Humanity' in John's gospel, is also a key concern of the surviving letters of the Johannine community. 'Beloved, you do faithfully (*piston*) all you do for the brothers, especially for strangers', the author of 3 John, who calls himself the presbyter (v. 1), tells his correspondent Gaius (v. 5).¹⁷⁶ *Piston* here could refer to *pistis* between community (p.438) members in general, the *pistis* of a particular community member as an office holder, or the *pistis* of community members towards God which inspires love (v. 6); given the dominance of divine-human *pistis* throughout the New Testament, the last is perhaps the most likely.

We will see in the next section that at Revelation 14.12, *tēn pistin Iēsou* can be interpreted, as in Paul's letters (though not in quite the same way), as referring to Jesus' faithfulness both to God and to human beings. The same twofold *pistis* may be in evidence at the beginning of 1 John (1.9). The author is claiming that the blood of God's Son Jesus 'cleanses us from all sin' (1.7). 'If we say we are without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος) and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing' (1.8–9). In this affirmation, Jesus is initially read naturally as faithful to 'us', since 'we' are the subject of the sentence. As 'the righteous one', here and shortly afterwards at 2.1, Jesus can equally be understood as faithful to God, since faithfulness, in Jewish scripture and in other early Christian writers, is often a sign and aspect of *dikaioynē*.¹⁷⁷

In general, however, we may note that 1 John follows the gospel more nearly than Revelation in identifying Christ closely with God. The letter begins with what seems to be a hymn, echoing the beginning of the gospel and celebrating Jesus Christ as the word of life made visible (1.2). God and Christ are repeatedly referred to as Father and Son;¹⁷⁸ God testifies to his Son, and whoever *pisteuei* in the Son 'has this testimony within himself' (5.9–10). Believing in Jesus Christ makes *pās ho pisteuōn* a child of God and brings victory over the world and eternal life.¹⁷⁹ In this context, as in the gospel, the faithfulness of Jesus is best seen not in quasi-Pauline terms as the double faithfulness by which Christ brings about salvation, but as an extension of the faithfulness of God.

1 John is striking for its proclamatory character. Unlike any other New Testament letter, it begins with a proclamation rather than a

greeting:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the word of life—and the life was made visible, and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you now, so that you too may have fellowship with us, for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (1.1–3)

The echo of John's Prologue is apparent, though here the emphasis is on the apostles' own experience of the 'word of life'.¹⁸⁰ There follows a series of (p.439) further affirmations, whose connections emerge piecemeal in the course of the letter. God is light (1.5). To walk in the light and be in fellowship with God, community members must be cleansed by the blood of Jesus from sin (1.6–7), and must keep Jesus' commandments by loving one another (2.5). Walking in the light and being in fellowship with God are identified with 'doing the truth' (1.6). Later in the letter, community members are given a further commandment from God: to trust/believe (*pisteusōmen*) in the name of Jesus Christ and love one another (3.23).¹⁸¹ Though the sequence of their connections is not identical, the author of the letter is close to the author of the gospel here in identifying 'doing' the truth and walking in the light with *pisteuein* and *agapān*, and seeing all of them as involved in the relationship between God, Jesus Christ, and human beings.

Through the love of God community members are called children of God; they are promised eternal life, and more, when they finally see God 'as he is' (3.2; cf. 2.25). Like John's gospel, 1 John speaks both as if community members choose to keep the commandments of Jesus and as if they are pre-elected: 'No one who is begotten by God commits sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot sin because he is begotten by God' (3.9; cf. 3.14–15). One of the marks of being begotten by God is that one trusts/believes in the Son of God and in God who testifies to him (5.10, 5.13).

The author holds a more strongly futurist eschatology than the gospel-writer, and may expect the end of the world imminently: 'Children, it is the last hour' (2.18).¹⁸² Many antichrists, as prophesied, have appeared, but community members can identify them by the fact that they deny that Jesus is the Christ (2.22). In this situation, community members are also advised to 'test the spirits' of those who prophesy, because there are many false prophets, inspired by the antichrist in circulation. 'This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God' (4.2; cf. 4.3). 'Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,' the writer reiterates a few verses later, 'God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe (*pepisteukamen*) in the love God has for us' (4.15–16).

The importance of acknowledging certain things about Jesus Christ is summed up twice at the beginning of chapter 5: 'Everyone who believes that (*pās ho pisteuōn hoti*) Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the one begotten by him' (5.1).¹⁸³ 'Who is the victor over the world but the one who believes that (*ho pisteuōn hoti*) Jesus is the Son of (p.440) God?' (5.5). It is significant that all the writer's statements of the importance of believing or affirming certain things about Jesus Christ come in the context of battling the antichrist and identifying those who are inspired by him. When the life and activities of community members are talked about in themselves, the author writes of love, fellowship, the divine-human family, relational trust/belief in God and Christ, and the mutual in-being of God, Christ, and God's children.¹⁸⁴ When he wants to draw boundaries around the community and identify who does and does not belong to it, he has recourse to propositional language.

In this, the writer both echoes John's gospel and goes beyond it. I suggested above that John's treatment of propositional believing, for instance in the 'light of the world' discourse, may indicate that disputes between his community and those who were hostile to it focused on propositional claims about Jesus, but that John's Jesus tries to shift the Pharisees from thinking propositionally to thinking relationally because John's understanding is that the heart of the gospel is trust in God and Christ as God's son. In Chapter 13 we will see that post-testamental letters of the early second century offer some support for this hypothesis: they use propositional language of Jesus Christ particularly in apologetic contexts, when they are attacking other individuals and groups as not true followers of Christ.¹⁸⁵ 1 John, together with the Epistle of James,¹⁸⁶ gives the earliest epistolary example of this tendency. As such, it may be valuable evidence of the origins of what later comes to be the independent importance of propositional claims about Jesus Christ to Christians. If the credal 'I/we believe in...' begins life, as it is often thought to do, as a baptismal confession of trust in God and Christ, we may, in John's gospel and more clearly in this letter, see one of the roots of propositional truth claims in Christian thinking in the perceived need of certain communities to distinguish themselves from others.

At 1 John 5.4–5 the writer says triumphantly that the commandments of God are not burdensome, 'for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our *pistis*.' The writer has used, or will use, *pisteuein* seven times to mean relational trust/belief in this letter, so the victory that conquers the world could well be our trust in God and Christ. But,

associated as it is with the language of dispute with non-community members, and located as it is between the letter's two uses of *pisteuein hoti*, it is tempting to hear the writer using *pistis* here, intentionally or accidentally, to mean something close to *fides quae*: the propositional content of what we (p.441) believe. If so, this is a significant evolution in the treatment of *pistis*, and the earliest surviving use of it in a sense which will become increasingly important to Christians of later centuries.

Revelation

If it is not a major reason for believing that the author of Revelation is not the author of John's gospel, the way the two books use *pistis* language is certainly suggestive.¹⁸⁷ Where the gospel makes heavy use of *pisteuein*, and almost none of the rest of the lexicon, Revelation uses *pisteuein* not at all, and uses *pistis* language of any kind only a dozen times.¹⁸⁸ Part, at least, of the explanation may be that while the gospel is deeply interested in human trusting/believing in Jesus, Revelation is mainly concerned with cosmic wars and visions of the end time. Most of its few examples of *pistis* language occur towards the beginning and end of the book, where the author addresses the faithfulness of communities living through difficult times, or the trustworthiness of his own discourse.¹⁸⁹

In his opening letters to the churches of Asia Minor, which he claims to write on the instructions of the risen Christ (1.18–19), the author exhorts the community in Smyrna, in the face of poverty, persecution, and other unnamed trials, to 'Remain faithful (*pistos*) to death' (2.10). He praises the church of Pergamum for not giving up its *pistis* in Christ, even when the faithful (*pistos*) witness Antipas was martyred (2.13). He praises the community at Thyatira, too, for their works, love, faithfulness (*pistis*), service to others, and endurance (2.19). Later in the book, reporting his vision of the persecution of Christians under the Roman empire, he commends the 'endurance and faithfulness of the holy ones [community members] (ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων)' (13.10; cf. 14.12). Rome, according to a later vision, will be fought and conquered by the Lamb (17.7–14), and those who fight with the Lamb are the 'called and elect and faithful' (κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοὶ) (17.14). *Pistis* in these passages is closely related to the faithfulness of communities which we have already encountered in passages of the Johannine epistles and other epistles and in the synoptic gospels, as *hoi pistoi* wait for the end time.

The faithfulness of the elect is a response to that of God and, especially, of Christ. Towards the end of the book, the victory of heaven over Satan and the inauguration of the new heaven and earth are signalled by the appearance of (p.442) Christ in triumph: 'Then I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and the one who sat on it was [called] faithful and true (πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός), and he judges and makes war in *dikaïosynē*' (19.11). Towards the beginning of the book, the author is interested in Christ's faithfulness in a more specific sense. He is the 'faithful witness' (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς) (1.5) who has revealed the future to 'his servant John' (1.1–3). Christ is called the 'faithful and true witness' (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός) again (3.14) when the author chastises the church of Laodicea for being lukewarm in its works (3.14–16). Faithfulness in these passages is a near-synonym for truthfulness, in a sense familiar from the Septuagint, perhaps with particular overtones of reliability.

These passages offer a context within which to interpret the one occurrence of the phrase *pistis Iēsou* in this book. The author sees a vision of three angels (14.6–12). One flies over the earth, exhorting all those who live on earth, 'Fear God and give him glory, for his time has come to sit in judgement' (14.7). The second announces the fall of 'Babylon the great' (which stands for Rome) (14.8). The third proclaims that anyone who worships 'the beast or its image' will receive the full force of God's fury. 'The smoke of the fire that torments them will rise forever and ever, and there will be no relief day or night for those who worship the beast...' (14.11). 'Here', says the author, 'is what sustains the holy ones keeping (*hoi tērountes*) God's commandments and τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ' (14.12). As in Paul's letters, the phrase is often translated 'faith in Jesus', but Sigve Tonstad has argued persuasively that what is referred to here, and throughout the book, is the faithfulness of Jesus in his unveiling of evil and his disclosure of God's character.¹⁹⁰ The elect follow the Lamb, Jesus Christ, wherever he goes (14.4); their resistance to evil and persecution in their own communities follows his cosmic wars with Satan, and their faithfulness follows his faithfulness. On this argument, *hē pistis Iēsou* is primarily to God, but we may also hear a hint of the faithfulness towards human beings which we detected in Paul. This possibility is made more plausible by the fact that at 1.5 and 3.14 Christ, as a witness, can be understood as faithful both to the human beings to whom he testifies, and to God about whom he testifies. In this book, though, the twofold faithfulness of Jesus is invoked not to explain how Jesus saves those who put their trust in him, but to confirm the strength of the divine-human relationship which enables human beings to endure persecution, endure faithfully until the coming of the New Jerusalem, and play their part in the battles which will bring in the new heaven and earth.

It is also the faithfulness of Christ to both God and human beings that makes his words 'trustworthy and true' (πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ) at 21.5, when he tells the author to write who Christ is, what he gives to his sons, and how he (p.443) punishes the *apistoi* (21.6–8), and again at 22.6, in the book's epilogue. Jesus is the one who sends his angel to call people to worship God (22.9). He is also the one who reassures the faithful, 'I am coming soon' (22.20). Christ's twofold trustworthiness gives the author's book such truth, in his own

understanding, that he prophesies that God will send every plague described in it on anyone who adds to it, and, from anyone who detracts from it, will take away his share in the tree of life and the new Jerusalem (22.18–19).

Notes:

- (1) The only book in the New Testament which includes no *pistis* language is 2 John, but since it is only 12 verses long and likely to come from the same pen as 3 John and possibly 1 John (see e.g. the discussion of von Wahlde (2010), 6–11), this is probably not significant (it is more significant that all the other short canonical letters do include *pistis* language). What follows assumes only that the books come from the same or closely related communities.
- (2) See e.g. discussions by Brown (1966), xxiv–xxxiv, Martyn (1979), Ashton (1991), 45–50, 76–88. I follow Ashton (1991) and others who identify broadly two editions within the gospel.
- (3) Ch. 21 is widely agreed to be a later addition, but in any case is of limited interest here, since it contains no *pistis* language.
- (4) He also uses *apeithein* once (3.36) in a sense close to *apistein* with strong connotations of disobedience, echoing Septuagintal usage (see p. 204 n. 78).
- (5) See p. 441.
- (6) See pp. 1, 437.
- (7) Apart from chs. 15, 18, and 21, where it does not occur, and chs. 13 and 19, in each of which it occurs once, *pisteuein* is spread fairly evenly through the book in material identified as belonging to different layers of tradition, which suggests that it was important to those who created and edited the material at every stage. That the passion narrative is almost bare of *pisteuein* language is not very surprising (and paralleled in all the synoptic gospels), since it does not involve teaching material, healings, or other encounters in which people put their trust in Jesus.
- (8) *blepein*, *theasthai*, *theōrein*, *idein*, *horan*. This preference for verbs is shared with the Septuagint, though it is exaggerated in the gospel.
- (9) Lindars (1972), ad 1.7 suggests that John uses the verb to emphasize the activity of believing, as opposed to faith as an abstraction, but Greek sources do not suggest that a contemporary audience would have heard *pistis* dominantly as inactive or abstract (see Chs. 2–4, and Ch. 11).
- (10) See pp. 6, 20–3.
- (11) e.g. pp. 266–7, 291–3, 329.
- (12) *LSJ*.
- (13) John's distance from Paul here is particularly striking, given that both probably worked in Asia Minor; John is not usually thought now to have known Paul's letters, but he could have known of Pauline usages in communities of Asia Minor.
- (14) John knows both a Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint and draws on both, but normally on the Septuagint (Barrett (1978), 28–30).
- (15) See pp. 209 n. 102, 300.
- (16) The absence of *alētheuein* is less surprising given its rarity in Greek in general. *Alētheia* appears twenty-five times in the gospel (compared with once in Matthew, thrice each in Mark and Luke, and twenty times in Paul's seven letters), nine times in 1 John, five in 2 John, and six in 3 John (compared with eight times each in the much longer Romans and 1 Corinthians and seven in Ephesians).
- (17) e.g. in the sense of 'factual', 'reliable', 'real', or 'foundational'.
- (18) On *alētheia*, see further p. 432 nn. 161, 162.

(19) p. 286 n. 90. Cf. e.g. Wis. Sol. 12.27, 15.1, Isa. 41.26, 43.9, Dan. 2.47 LXX, Job 17.10 (God as *alēthēs*).

(20) *Pisteuein* is sometimes used in conjunction with *ginōskein* or with a meaning close to knowing (the truth): see pp. 411–12, 423, 428.

(21) *Alētheia* is around three times as common as *pistis* in LXX overall, though the imbalance is less marked outside the psalms.

(22) See pp. 178–88.

(23) 8.33–58 *passim* (Abraham); 1.17, 5.45–6, 6.32, 7.19–24, 9.28–9 (Moses).

(24) On the Jewishness of the community, see esp. Martyn (1979, 1996), Rensberger (1989).

(25) It is difficult to discuss John's use of *pisteuein* in English without using nouns, but following his practice by sticking to verbal forms can become unwieldy, while in many passages neither 'trust' nor 'believe' on its own quite captures John's meaning. Wherever possible, I translate *pisteuein* with 'trust/believe'; in places I use *pisteuein* as a placeholder for various forms of the English verbs; occasionally, I use only 'trust' or 'believe' as sense seems to demand. NB the English 'believe' is, like *pisteuein*, often dominantly relational.

(26) Though an appropriate response does not always depend on understanding: e.g. Gen. 18.1–8, Tob. 5.4.

(27) Bultmann (1925), 254–62, (1971), 19–20, 45–83, 251–2.

(28) For the argument for a subordinationist position, with a discussion of past scholarship, see e.g. McGrath (2001).

(29) For a 'high' view, see e.g. Bornkamm (1968), Scholtissek (2005), Schwankl (2005). How close John comes to ditheism, and how his model of the relationship between God and Christ relates to those of gnosticism, or (other) strands of Jewish thought, are beyond the scope of this study, but see e.g. Segal (1977) and surveys of scholarship by Ashton (1991), 84–92, McGrath (2001), 71–9. Salier (2009) compares the obedience of Jesus to God in John with *pistis Christou* in Paul, arguing that both writers maintain a fine balance between seeing Jesus as exemplar and object of *pistis*.

(30) Borgen (1968). Ashton's discussion of Borgen and agency in general ((1991), 312–17) notes that the same model operates in relation to diplomacy and ambassadorship. In John, however, Jesus does not explicitly mediate between human beings and God through his *pistis*, as he does in some of Paul's letters and as an ambassador might in politics (and we saw Greek and Roman ambassadors doing in Ch. 3). (Jesus does, though, mediate through love (16.27), and see Hultgren (1987), 145–64. At pp. 47–67 Hultgren differentiates Jesus' mediating activity from redemption performed by God 'in Christ' in Paul, but this does not do justice to the role of Paul's *pistis* language in the critical passages.)

(31) Barrett (1982b). De Jonge's ((1998), 126–7, 140–1) connection of John's christology with his eschatology is compelling and not incompatible with Barrett's argument, though de Jonge emphasizes the 'unity' theme.

(32) I will use 'pre-election' (common in early modern English as an alternative for 'predestination', but less used by modern theologians) in preference to 'predestination' throughout, as having less strong associations with Augustinian or Calvinist theology.

(33) Where, in the synoptic gospels, *pisteuein* is always put in the mouth of Jesus, in John, as in the Septuagint, it also appears in the narrative. Lieu (forthcoming) notes that it is not always clear whether Jesus or the narrator is speaking: e.g. at 3.15–19 (cf. 31–6), where either may be speaking of trusting/believing 'in the Son'.

(34) Revelation several times calls Christ *pistos* (see pp. 441–3).

(35) Cf. pp. 411, 420–1.

(36) Cf. 3.16–18, 5.24, 6.29–30, 6.35–6, 6.40, 6.47, 7.38–9, 11.25–7, 11.40, 12.36–9, 20.31. Passages in which God and Jesus are closely identified without the use of *pisteuein* include the Prologue; also 5.23, 5.26, 10.30, 8.58 (if the last is intended to be read as a statement of identity: cf. 3.34–5, 8.18, 10.38, 12.45, 13.19, 14.7, 14.9–10, 18.5–6. LXX regularly translates the Hebrew Bible's 'I am YHWH' ('I am He/The One (who)') with *egō eimi*, 'I AM' (e.g. Isa. 43.25, 51.12, 52.6); in Rabbinic texts 'I AM' comes to be used as a

name for God in its own right; see e.g. Brown (1966), 533–8). Cox (2007) explores parallels between the Prologue, 1 Cor. 8.6, Col. 1.15–20, and Heb. 1.1–4 and Middle Platonist intermediaries between the divine and the universe, but the language of love and trust between God and his intermediary in the New Testament is distinctive. At 1.18 many would now accept the reading *monogenēs theos* rather than *huios*, identifying the Son with God (see the discussion of Barrett (1978), ad loc.).

(37) John's Jesus often uses *pisteuein* without an object or a dependent clause, leaving ambiguous, as in the synoptic gospels, what aspect of his identity, status, or activity people are to trust/believe in.

(38) Freed (1967), Martyn (1979), 134. Though at e.g. 3.14 the reference is equally to Jesus' suffering humanity.

(39) (1972/1997).

(40) Cf. Mk. 13.32 = Mt. 24.36, Mk. 14.36, Mt. 11.27 = Lk. 10.22 (nicknamed the 'Johannine thunderbolt' for its greater likeness to John's language than Matthew's and Luke's elsewhere), Mt. 16.17. Bauckham (1978) emphasizes that the Sonship of Christ in all four gospels is less a statement of his nature than of his power and eschatological mission from God.

(41) She also (11.27) calls him 'Messiah'; cf. 4.26, where Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah, and 12.37–41, where 'the Jews' fail to trust/believe in Jesus as the one foretold by Isaiah.

(42) 'Son of God': 1.34, 1.49, 3.18, 5.25, 10.36, 19.7, 20.31; on aspects of the background to the phrase, see e.g. Cooke (1961), Bühner (1977), Hengel (1977), Byrne (1979), Collins (1993), Fitzmyer (1993b), Chaniotis (2003), Gathercole (2006), Levin (2006), Peppard (2011).

(43) Cf. 14.10–12, 16.27 (without references to salvation).

(44) As we have noted, Jesus is occasionally addressed as *kyrios* in contexts where more than human lordship is indicated. Most strikingly, on meeting him after the resurrection, Thomas calls him 'My Lord and my God' (20.28), and Jesus responds that those *pisteusantes* (in him as Lord and God) without having seen him are (even more) blessed. John does not, though, seem to use the language of lordship, as I argued that the synoptic writers sometimes do, to mark the complexity of Jesus' identity by showing how trust/belief in Jesus as a man of power and authority involves followers in a deeper and further-reaching relationship with God than they anticipated.

(45) If anything, perhaps the theme of unity and equality dominates; cf. 5.18, where the Jews are angry that Jesus' calls God Father because that is 'making himself equal to God'.

(46) On imitation more generally, see pp. 220 n. 42, 257 n. 162, 321, 325 n. 66, 341, Morgan (forthcoming).

(47) Cf. 12.44, 16.30, 17.8.

(48) Cf. 5.17, 5.19, 5.31–67, 6.37–8, 6.56, 8.28, 8.50, 12.27, 12.49, 16.28, 17.21, 17.25.

(49) At Rev. 1.5 and 3.14 Christ is called *pistos* as a witness to God and at 19.11 the exalted Christ is called πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός, 'faithful and true'; cf. 14.12; see p. 442. Allen (2009), chs. 2–3 argues that as faithfulness is appropriate to Jesus as a human being, it is also appropriate to see Christ exercising it on earth, though e.g. Barrett (1978), 82 is sceptical.

(50) *Contra* Burridge (2007), 346, though cf. 13.34–5, where the disciples are commanded to *love* one another as Jesus has loved them.

(51) Elsewhere, his death is characterized as the moment of his ultimate self-revelation (3.14, 11.52, 12.32, 17.1).

(52) See further pp. 433–5.

(53) Schnackenburg (1968), 572 rightly insists on the importance of 'foundations of the faith', though I do not follow his view that *pisteuein* means essentially giving 'rational assent to the message of Christ'; *contra*, see e.g. Lindars (1972), ad 1.7, emphasizing both that *pisteuein* is an active concept, and that it is more than assent to propositions about him.

(54) e.g. pp. 39–42 145–7, 152, 156, 165, 179–81, 191, 208, 226–30, 275–6, 318, 341.

(55) e.g. 1.50, 2.11, 4.48–50, 7.31, 10.37–8, 10.42, 11.15, 11.45, 11.48, 12.42; cf. 20.21.

(56) e.g. 41–2, 210, 359 n. 45, 376 n. 96, 382–3.

(57) Possessed by Satan or a devil: Mk. 3.22 = Mt. 12.24 = Lk. 11.15; cf. Jn. 7.20, 8.48, 8.52, 10.20. At 9.19, ‘the Jews’, resistant to believing in Jesus’ divine power, raise the question whether the blind man healed by him really was born blind, but are convinced by his parents that he was. An accusation of miracle-faking, suppressed by John, may well lie behind this story. Verse 12.29 is unique: a crowd hear a voice from heaven but many take it for thunder. In addition to marking their deafness to the gospel, this is a witty inversion of the Graeco-Roman topos that thunder is a sign of the activity of Zeus/Jupiter (e.g. Hor., *Carm.* 3.5.1).

(58) As magicians one does not believe or who do not belong to one’s group are regularly attacked as fakes in Graeco-Roman and later Christian literature.

(59) Direct personal experience which is not supernatural is also appealed to occasionally in the gospel. At 3.11, when Jesus tells Nicodemus that he is speaking to him of things that he has seen, he is testifying to his identity but not talking about a discrete sign; cf. 11.42, where Jesus says that he wants people to see him talking to God. Thomas says that he will believe his direct experience at 20.25, while the author says that he speaks of the crucifixion on the basis of eyewitness testimony (19.35), though he leaves it unclear whether he means us to think that the eyewitness was himself.

(60) See pp. 406, 408, 426–7.

(61) Von Wahlde (2010), 95 identifies believing in Jesus’ signs as originating in the ‘first edition’ of the gospel (in line with the view that they come from a ‘signs source’), but it is equally coherent with usage usually attributed to the final redactor; von Wahlde (2010), 77, 79–80 notes that signs often begin a ‘chain reaction’, bringing those who did not witness them to *pisteuein* too.

(62) On speculations about the significance of the fig tree, see e.g. Brown (1966), 83.

(63) On the relationship between developments in *pisteuein* and fear, doubt, and scepticism, cf. pp. 17, 20–2, and *passim*.

(64) Treating John’s narrative as a whole (as I shall throughout this chapter, after e.g. Culpepper (1983), de Jonge (1977), Thatcher and Moore (2008), while recognizing the caveats of de Boer (1997)). The disciples’ recognition and acceptance of signs also forms a periodic reaffirmation of their status among the elect and a reminder of what is required of other members of the elect.

(65) Probably an official of Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, whom Mark (6.14) and Matthew (14.9) call a king.

(66) So e.g. Schnackenburg, *ad loc.* Jesus’ initial reply to the man’s request (4.48), ‘Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not trust/believe (ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδητε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε)’, is evidently directed towards the Galileans in general, rather than the official, since it is in the plural (see p. 409).

(67) See further pp. 426–7.

(68) Cf. perhaps too Nicodemus’ appearances in ch. 3 and at 7.50 and 19.39; his interest in Jesus becomes more public and opens him to more risk.

(69) e.g. pp. 152–4, 179–80, 187; cf. 222–4, 298, 314–15, 357, 388.

(70) 1.50 is interestingly ambiguous: Jesus could be praising Nathanael for his trusting/believing on so little evidence, or he could be implying that Nathanael’s trusting/believing is misguided because it is based on seeing Jesus as a wonder-worker.

(71) 11.47–8; cf. 2.18.

(72) Brown (1966), 530–1 and Schnackenburg (1968), *ad* 4.48 overstate John’s case when they see believing based on signs as rejected as inauthentic by Jesus.

(73) e.g. 9.16. The disciples seem to recognize Jesus’ signs as such, whether or not they understand their full import: e.g. 2.11, 20.30.

(74) Cf. 7.3–5, where Jesus brothers (cf. 2.12) urge him to seek greater publicity for his works in Judaea.

(75) John may look forward here to the Jerusalemites' enthusiastic reception of Jesus (12.12–13, 18) and subsequent rejection of him (19.12, 15). We might also conclude that these believers are not among the elect, but John's point here is about human fickleness, not pre-election.

(76) Moloney's ((1993), 92) definition of 'faith/belief' (*sic*) in John as 'trusting acceptance of the word of Jesus', however, sidesteps too many aspects of the interpretation of *pisteuein* in general and in this text to be helpful. At 20.31 John describes his writing as a means by which people in his own day may be come to trusting/believing in God and Christ. So, no doubt, is his periodic marking of the reliability of his sources (e.g. 19.35).

(77) It is an acknowledged oddity of the book that the importance of Logos in the Prologue is not explicitly reflected throughout. The origins and purpose of the Prologue are beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss (though see further pp. 420–2), but I follow e.g. Käsemann (1969) in taking it to be theologically significant and connected to the rest of the gospel without being the key to it.

(78) John's summary comment at 20.30 that 'Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book' is ambiguous in this context: on the one hand, it indicates that he knew of other signs and thought them important; on the other, it points up that he did not think them important enough to include. Or it may simply be a formulaic conclusion, or be intended to emphasize that the evangelist knows of more traditions than he has included (though why this would be helpful to his audience is not clear): see the discussion of Barrett (1978), ad loc.

(79) *Lalia* and *lalein* do not carry the connotations of light or prattling speech in the New Testament that they often do elsewhere in Greek.

(80) The 'other' could be either John the Baptist or Godself.

(81) Cf. pp. 420–2.

(82) pp. 418–25.

(83) 'Believe and know' or 'know and believe': 6.69, 17.8; cf. (in close proximity) 3.10, 8.27–32, 8.43–6, 14.7–10. *Ginōskein* is sometimes used where *pisteuein* would make equally good sense, e.g. 8.28, 14.7, 17.3. *Ginōskein* is widely used in the synoptic gospels, but never paired with *pisteuein* as in John. The language of seeing and hearing is also closely related to knowing and believing: e.g. 1.50, 3.11, 6.40, 9.39, 11.40, 14.7–9, 16.16 (seeing); 5.24, 8.45–7, 10.26–7, 12.46 (hearing) (discussed by Bultmann (1971), 69 n. 4).

(84) Cf. 16.3.

(85) Though at 4.42, 6.69, 9.38 people recognize Jesus for who he is after prompting by Jesus himself and sometimes others.

(86) They are described by John as 'the Jews' (6.41, 6.52, 7.14, 7.35, 8.22, 8.48, 9.40, 10.19, 10.31) or 'the Pharisees' (8.13), but in some passages John indicates that they are only some members of these groups.

(87) Cf. 7.25–6, 7.40–1, 7.50–2 (divisions among his listeners after teachings).

(88) Either Jesus' interlocutors have an abrupt change of heart here (not impossible, since e.g. at 12.42, 'even many among the authorities began to trust/believe in him'), or this is the beginning of a new conversation with a different group or a subgroup of Jesus' previous audience.

(89) 2.22, 12.16 (see p. 415).

(90) He also sometimes ask questions in the course of an argument with those who are hostile to him.

(91) Dettwiler (1995), 213–92.

(92) Though from the point of view of a reader of the gospel, Jesus' words have not become markedly clearer.

(93) Cf. 6.69, where the disciples also indicate that they have made a choice to stay with Jesus based on understanding of his words, and Jesus contradicts them by saying that he chose them. See further pp. 418–25.

(94) See pp. 411–12.

(95) Cf. 7.38, 12.38–40. At 20.31 the author seems to want to present his own writing as having the authority of scripture.

(96) So also at 12.16.

(97) We may wonder why Jesus does not appeal to scripture more often, his status as the Son means that he himself is a higher authority than scripture. John as an author, however, like almost all New Testament writers, appeals extensively to scripture.

(98) Cf. p. 411. NB here the disciples also trust/believe as a result of the resurrection, which suggests that, for John, *pisteuein* is both the means by which people come to salvation and an end in itself.

(99) Cf. 6.40, 11.26.

(100) Cf. 5.22–9.

(101) The apologetic strain in the gospels is evident in passages like these. Since the consummation of the end time has not yet come, no one can yet be certain whether John's consequentialism, or that of any Christian writer, is justified.

(102) An exception is those prophecies in the Jewish scriptures which are understood as not yet having been fulfilled.

(103) pp. 147, 165.

(104) The appeal to consequentialism will have been easier if, as is usually assumed, the gospel is an intra-communal text: existing community members are likely to find appeals to their community's future vindication more persuasive than are outsiders.

(105) On the complex relationship between present and future eschatology in John, see e.g. discussions by Bultmann (1971), 572–94, Ashton's ((1991), 67–76) discussion of scholarship since Bultmann, Frey (2005). In some passages (e.g. 4.23, 5.25), John seems deliberately to conflate present and future.

(106) Cf. 17.3 (eternal life is knowing God and Christ).

(107) Or perhaps to an evolution in their trusting/believing which will bring greater knowledge in the future.

(108) Cf. 13.19, 13.31 ('Now is the Son of Man glorified'), 17.1 ('Father, the hour has come; give glory to your Son...'), pointing to the crucifixion. At Num. 21.9 Moses mounted a bronze snake on a pole in the desert, and anyone who had been bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake was healed. The I AM sayings directly challenge the Pharisees to recognize Jesus for who he is as they would hope to recognize God if God spoke or appeared to them. Isa. 43.3. Cf. Jn. 4.26, 8.58, 18.5–8; cf. 13.19.

(109) Cf. 2.22, 14.29, 20.29 (referring to the resurrection).

(110) Following e.g. Käsemann (1968), 65, Barrett (1978), 71. Surprisingly little is written on pre-election or predestination in John, though see Popkes (2005). Levering (2011) 22, 33–5 touches on it (and (p. 14) makes the point that most Jews and early Christians held some predestinarian views), but makes more of Paul's treatment of it in Romans.

(111) 17.6, 9; cf. 17.20, 18.37.

(112) Cf. the observation John has just made about Judas (6.64), that, 'Jesus knew from the beginning the ones *mē pisteuontes* and the one who would betray him' (though strictly this implies only divine foreknowledge).

(113) This not the place to tackle John's dualism, but see e.g. the helpful discussions of Ashton (1991), 205–37, Painter (2005).

(114) Ferocious attacks on 'the Jews' are, like pre-election, associated with later stages in the gospel's composition. *Ad* 2.11, Schnackenburg argues that the divine glory of Jesus is never displayed except to eyes of faith. The above, however, suggests that it is

displayed, but not everyone can see it.

(115) 3.17–18, however, which uses a similar verbal pattern, indicates more clearly that *pisteuein* is a choice. At 3.36, though, it is not clear whether believing or having eternal life comes first; cf. 16.27.

(116) Cf. 3.16–18, where Jesus tells Nicodemus that whoever *pisteuein* in the Son will not be condemned, but whoever does not *pisteuein* has already been condemned, leaving open whether they have been condemned because their unbelieving is foreknown, preordained, or simply pre-assigned a response.

(117) I take the presence of the Prologue in its current form and position to be significant, though not necessarily programmatic, for the rest of the gospel, whatever its origins and redaction history; on its structure and purpose, see e.g. Käsemann (1969), Barrett (1971c), Harris (1994), Phillips (2006), McHugh (2009), 5–113.

(118) Brown (1966), 10–12.

(119) This fits well with 2.23 and 3.18, where trusting/believing in the name of Jesus is indistinguishable from trusting/believing in Jesus himself.

(120) Elsewhere (e.g. 3.11, 3.32, 5.43, 12.48, 13.20, 17.8) ‘receiving’ is indistinguishable from ‘trusting/believing’. (At 7.39, 14.17, 20.22 receiving the spirit comes after *pisteuein*.)

(121) Many translations fudge the issue: e.g. the NRSV translates: ‘But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born...’

(122) Cf. 3.5.

(123) e.g. pp. 402, 406.

(124) It is a tempting hypothesis that pre-election offers people the chance of recognizing Christ which they have to take up voluntarily by trusting/believing, but since John does not describe a category of people who are elect but unbelieving, it lacks grounds. I am not convinced that Bultmann (e.g. (2007), 3.76–7) demonstrates that John distinguishes himself from gnosticism by making *pisteuein* the believer’s own decision.

(125) Cf. p. 419.

(126) We might go further still and speculate that the fact that *pisteuein* is sometimes expressed as if it is a free choice reflects the lived experience of those who trust/believe, that their will is engaged in their affirmation of trusting/believing, even if free will is not part of the author’s theology.

(127) Though the author has little to say about how *pisteuein* might be developed by community members in practice, unless through e.g. endurance under persecution (cf. 15.18–21, 16.20–2) and by being guided by the spirit of truth (16.13); at 17.23 Jesus envisages the disciples’ being ‘perfected’ (*teteleiōmenoi*) in unity. The importance of affirming one’s trusting/believing as a way of confirming that one has been chosen by God may be one of the origins of credal affirmations.

(128) The ambiguity whereby those who trust/believe are normally said to have eternal life (already, or by that token: 3.36, 5.24, 6.47, 6.54), but some passages suggest that eternal life may be in the future (following resurrection) for believers (4.14; cf. 3.16, 6.40, 17.2, 4.36, 6.27, 12.25), is either paradoxical or reflects the idea that pre-election does not rule out the need to recognize and respond to one’s election.

(129) Cf. pp. 414, 424–5.

(130) See also pp. 423–4, 428–9, 431.

(131) Cf. pp. 417 n. 107, 425 n. 40.

(132) John’s relatively limited development of this theme probably correlates with his interest in pre-election.

(133) 6.16–21=Mk. 6.45–52 = Mt. 14.22–33. In Mark and Matthew too this story occurs directly after the feeding of the five thousand (though no dependence of John on Mark or vice versa is likely), which suggests that it belongs to an early segment of shared tradition. On the possibility that John knew (some of) the synoptic gospels, see e.g. Brown (1966), xlv–xlvi (against), Barrett (1978), 42–54 (in favour). The purposes of this chapter do not compel us to take a view, but I doubt that John drew on any synoptic gospel in its present form.

(134) 6.20 = Mk. 6.50 = Mt. 14.26: μή φοβείσθε in all three.

(135) In this John travels further along the route taken by the synoptic gospels, away from the consensus in modern sociological theory (and to some extent in Graeco–Roman *mentalité*), which views some degree of fear and doubt as inescapable, positive, and often productive elements in relationships of trust and acts of belief (see pp. 15–20, 89–90).

(136) e.g. 4.48, 5.38, 5.46–7, 6.35–6, 6.64, 7.5, 8.45–6, 9.18, 10.25–6, 12.36–7, 16.9; cf. 1.10, where knowing and accepting the word is closely related to *pisteuein*.

(137) See e.g. pp. 412–14.

(138) 4.53, 11.15, 20.8; cf. 11.40.

(139) pp. 17–22.

(140) In general, fear, doubt, and scepticism play a relatively small part in books of the New Testament in which pre-election plays a relatively large part, and vice versa. It seems possible that even if the author of the gospel had reasons to allow that evolution in trusting/believing was possible, his interest in pre-election made fear, etc. relatively unimportant in his narrative.

(141) On another possibility, connecting *pisteuein* and story, see pp. 433–5. On modern views of belief, see e.g. pp. 19–26; cf. pp. 125–8.

(142) See e.g. the discussion of Trebilco (2010), 114–17. Although *pistis* can mean ‘(propositional) belief’, its use is heavily dominated by its ‘trust’ register, while *pisteuein hoti* meaning ‘to believe that’ is relatively common in Greek, so *pisteuein* is likely to have had a more propositional ring to Greek speakers than *pistis*.

(143) In this John is in line with usage in Greek of the period. John does not use *pisteuein epi*, and uses *pistuein en* very rarely, but uses *pisteuein eis* commonly. NB Greek does not distinguish between ‘believe me’, which in English can have relational or propositional resonance, and ‘believe in me’, which is strongly relational. *Pisteuein* with the dative can be translated ‘trust (in) me’ or ‘believe (in) me’; with *eis*, *epi*, or *en* it is usually translated ‘trust in me’ or ‘believe in me’, to capture the presence of the preposition, but it can usually be rendered equally well without the preposition in English. In English, ‘believe in me’ has stronger overtones of confidence than ‘trust me’, but *pisteuein* with a preposition does not have stronger overtones of confidence (or obedience) than *pisteuein* with the dative; all three prepositions are accepted to be Semitisms, and do not detectably alter the force of the Greek verb. (Bruner (2012), 203 makes too much of *eis* when he suggests that it conveys ‘trust’s direction, goal and resting place’.) Whether Jesus is telling a crowd, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe (*pistueūte eis*) in the one whom he has sent’ (6.29), telling Nicodemus that God gave his Son so that ‘everyone believing in (*pistueōn en*) him should have eternal life’ (3.16) or telling the Samaritan woman, ‘Trust/believe in me (*pistueu moi*)...’ (4.21), his meaning is not measurably different.

(144) 20.31.

(145) The exception is 4.21.

(146) Cf. 6.44 (no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws them).

(147) The universalism which may be detected running through this and the next few verses is highly anomalous in the gospel as a whole.

(148) Two sayings (4.21, 8.24) challenge people who are not currently followers of Jesus, while three are put in the mouths of followers or disciples: Peter (6.69), Martha (11.27), and ‘his disciples’ (16.30); the rest address followers or disciples. Two or three sayings concern beliefs about the future (4.21, 11.27; cf. 8.24), but these patterns seem too slight to be significant.

(149) See p. 403.

(150) This reckoning is a matter of judgement, rather than precise measurement.

(151) The following, for example, are dominantly propositional: 'I know (*egnōka*) that you do not have the love of God in you' (5.42); 'Whoever chooses to do his will shall know (*gnōsetai*) whether my teaching is from God...' (7.17); 'Do you know (*ginōskete*) what I have done for you?' (13.12); '[T]he world must know (*gnō*) that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded me...' (14.31). Cf. 1.48, 8.32, 10.15, 10.27, 10.38, 14.9, 14.17, 16.3, 17.3, 17.25 (relational), 3.10, 6.69, 8.28, 8.43, 10.6, 14.20, 17.7–8, 17.23 (propositional).

(152) On the composite structure of ch. 8, in which vv. 12–20 are both a self-contained unit and very likely a composite in itself, see Brown (1966), 342–3. See also Bühner (1997).

(153) See p. 145 on 'correspondence belief'. Schnackenburg (1968), 251–2, among others, notes John's interest in witness: *martyrein* occurs thirty-three times in the gospel, compared with thirty-two in the rest of the New Testament. It is linked with *pisteuein* from the Prologue (1.7) on.

(154) Cf. 3.12–13, 3.31–3. Lincoln (2000), 83–7 discusses this passage against its Jewish legal background and explores the paradoxical nature of Jesus' appeals to authority, noting that Jesus' argument depends on his twin dependence on God and oneness with God.

(155) Cf. 5.30, 12.47; his point here may be that he does not make judgements as a human being, highlighting the inadequacy of the basis on which the Pharisees do so and perhaps their arrogance in doing so. Even so, vv. 15–16 fit oddly into the passage and look like an independent logion.

(156) 3.17, 5.22–24, 12.46–7.

(157) This passage does not raise the question whether belonging is a matter of pre-election, though later in the chapter (8.47) Jesus suggests that it is.

(158) Martyn (1979), Rensberger (1989), Langer (2012).

(159) See e.g. pp. 439–40.

(160) Cf. Becker (1979), 206.

(161) De la Potterie (1997 (cf. 1977)) touches on a similar idea, arguing that truth, for John, is less something followers of Christ attain intellectually than a reality they submit to and live by. I agree with Matera (1996), 117–20 that John is not as different from the other gospels ethically as some (e.g. Furnish (1972), 196–7, Marxsen (1993), 186, Hays (1996a), 138, Meeks (1996)) argue. It calls for a radical change in the way Christ's followers view life, requiring *pisteuein*; points to love as correct interpretation of law; emphasizes importance of community; emphasizes that judgement is related to one's response to Jesus.

(162) Truth as opposed to falsehood: e.g. 5.32b, 8.40, perhaps 18.37. Truth as a quality of the divine following Septuagintal usage: e.g. 1.14. Jesus himself is truth (14.6), and what John calls the 'spirit of truth' is what other New Testament writers call the 'spirit of God' or 'Christ'. Jesus tells God at 17.17, 'your word is truth', but he himself is also the word. At 18.37 he tells Pilate, 'All who are of the truth listen to my voice', echoing 1.12, where those receiving him and believing in his name are 'born of God'. Jesus says in different passages that he came into the world to testify to himself, to God, to be testified to by God, and to testify to the truth (18.37). At 8.36 a son (evidently referring to Jesus himself) sets people free, while at 8.32 the truth sets people free. Truth is therefore not only a quality of, but is closely identified with, the persons of God and of Jesus, and knowing the truth (8.32) is less a matter of knowing that certain things are true than of knowing Jesus *as* the truth and hence as God.

(163) Bultmann (1925), 57, trans. Ashton (1991), 53, emphasizes original.

(164) (2007), 3.61–2, 67, emphasis original.

(165) (2007), 3.70–74; cf. (1925), 57–8.

(166) e.g. (2007), 1.166–71, 3.12–14. Meeks (1997) discusses and develops Bultmann, and illuminates the social as well as theological power of John's central myth of 'the man from heaven'.

(167) One might argue that all religions employ narratives which are in some sense 'believed', and doctrines which are expressed propositionally are also dependent on them: see e.g. Lindbeck (1984), 32–4, 80–4 (though the very variable extent to which religions employ myths, as Greek and Roman historians know well, suggests that the model should be used with caution).

(168) Hays (2002) on the narrative substructure of Galatians shows how revealing exploration of the implicit narrative of one epistle (including of the role of *pistis* in it) can be.

(169) pp. 25–6, 172–3. Sessions's 'Attitude' model of 'faith', in which, as he develops it, S has faith towards X if S's whole life is oriented to X and S interprets the world in light of his or her relationship with X, is also pertinent. It is plausible, if not demonstrable, that the Johannine community used their narrative of God, Jesus, and his followers to frame their view of the world and of their expectations within it, and that this too is a distinctive kind of believing.

(170) Also sanctification (17.17). 1.20, 10.16, 11.48, 17.20–1 may hint that the elect can include gentiles, though John's community is usually taken to be dominantly, if not entirely Jewish Christian, and e.g. Martyn (1996) argues that there is no sign of a gentile mission in the gospel.

(171) Cf. 1.14: people have already seen the glory of God as it is revealed in Jesus' life (e.g. 2.11, 11.4).

(172) I am doubtful that this is an instance of 'mystical participation' (Kee (1995), ch. 5; cf. Goodenough (1953), 3–58); see the discussion of Barrett (1978), 85–7.

(173) Appears to include Jews and gentiles (10.16, 11.48, 17.20–1).

(174) 1.4, 3.15–16, 3.36, 4.14, 5.24–6, 5.39–40, 6.27, 6.40, 6.47–8, 6.54, 6.68, 10.28, 12.25, 14.6, 17.2–3, 20.31.

(175) Glasson (1963), Brown (1966), lix–lxi.

(176) v. 7 indicates that those strangers (apostles?) who are visiting the community in the course of a journey need help especially because they accept nothing from the pagans—as in 1 Thess., an ideal of independence from the world which no doubt was impossible in practice.

(177) NB Jesus' faithfulness is here linked, as it is not in John's gospel but is, for instance, in Paul, with the way in which Jesus saves us from our sins.

(178) e.g. 1.3, 2.22, 2.24, 3.1, 3.23, 4.14–15, 5 *passim*.

(179) 5.1–2, 5.4, 5.11.

(180) Von Wahlde (2010), 28–35.

(181) Houlden (1994), ad loc. illustrates one of the difficulties with interpreting *pistis* as interior and affective by puzzling over how belief in that sense can be subject to command.

(182) Though this may be more a call to arms than a literal expression of conviction that the end is near.

(183) Commentators usually take *pisteuein* as straightforwardly propositional throughout this letter. Von Wahlde (2010), 179 argues that at 5.1–5, love of other community members is redefined as demonstrated by the act of loving God; if so, then love here creates a 'wigwam-shaped' community as *pistis* does throughout the New Testament.

(184) Relational *pisteuein* with the dative or *eis* occurs at 3.23, 4.1, 5.10 (three times), 5.13; cf. 4.16 (with the accusative).

(185) pp. 511–14.

(186) p. 342.

(187) See e.g. Brown (1997), 802–9, Boxall (2006), 5–11.

(188) *Pistis* appears at 2.13, 2.19, 13.10, 14.2, *pistos* at 1.5, 2.10, 2.13, 3.14, 17.14, 19.11, 21.5, 22.6, *apistos* at 21.8.

(189) Cf. Jn. 19.35, 20.30–1.

(190) Tonstad (2006). See esp. pp. 159–93 comparing the structure and content of 14.12 with thematically related passages; cf. 1 Jo. 1.9; cf. Boxall (2006), *ad loc.*, Harrington (1993), 152–3. DeSilva (2009) shows how Jesus' trustworthiness evokes faithfulness in his followers.

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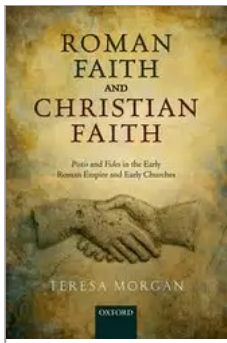
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Relationality and Interiority in Pistis and Fides

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Abstract and Keywords

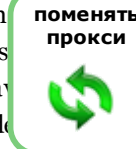
This chapter considers the extent to which *pistis/fides* is understood as a state of mind or an emotion in Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian sources of this period. Since direct evidence is scarce, it examines passages of Greek and Latin literature where *pistis/fides* language is located in the mind or heart, investigates how closely *pistis/fides* is connected with qualities such as love that are both relational and emotional, and considers whether *pistis/fides* can be called a virtue, with the interior dimension which virtues are regularly treated as having. It argues that in Greek and Latin literature *pistis/fides*, though not explicitly called an emotion or a virtue, is often treated as a virtue and as having at least emotional dimensions. It then examines whether Jewish and Christian literature configure *pistis/fides*, ethically and emotionally, in similar ways to Greek and Latin literature, and finds that they do.

Keywords: pistis, fides, mind, heart, emotion, virtue, Jewish, Christian, Graeco-Roman

Throughout this study so far we have focused on the relationality of *pistis* and *fides*, investigating the distinctive shapes of divine-human and intra-human *pistis/fides* in Graeco-Roman thinking, in the Septuagint, and in the texts of the New Testament. That relationality is central to concepts whose foundational and most common meanings are trust, trustworthiness, and faithfulness, and among whose more specialized meanings are good faith, assurance, pledge, and anything that is entrusted, needs no demonstration. In studies of *pistis/fides* by classicists, as we have noted, relationality has always been central and uncontroversial.¹ Among theologians and New Testament scholars, approaches to *pistis/fides* have been strongly influenced by Augustine's taxonomy of *fides* as *fides quae* and *fides qua*, and have tended to focus on either the propositional content of *pistis/fides* or the interiority of the 'faith by

which the believer believes'.² I have argued in earlier chapters that the propositional content of *pistis*, though always implicit in its relationality and not infrequently articulated or alluded to, is not usually its main focus in the New Testament.³ In this chapter we consider the importance of the interiority of *pistis/fides* in Graeco-Roman culture in general, in the Septuagint, and in the New Testament.⁴

The divergence between the approaches of classical and New Testament scholars in this area should not be underestimated. Relationships of *pistis/fides* (p.445) are more often than not expressed in action, and most historians of *pistis/fides* take the view (implicitly by what they do not discuss, if not explicitly) that not only need action that the interiority of actors is not historically significant.⁵ The *pistis/fides* of a slave, for example, is usually understood as consisting essentially in certain forms of obedient behaviour. Whether the slave's emotion of trust towards him may well be irrecoverable, and may not make any difference to his social situation or actions, so one can take the view that it is insignificant to the modern interpreter. Though classicists recognize, therefore, that *pistis/fides* has cognitive, if not emotional, content, and hence an interior dimension of some sort, they have taken little interest in it. To theologians and New Testament scholars, in contrast, what *ho pisteuōn* thinks and feels about God and Christ, alongside his acts or works of *pistis*, has traditionally been understood as highly significant—even (above all by Martin Luther) as more significant than action.



Classical and New Testament scholars have in common, however, that while acknowledging, with more or less interest, that *pistis/fides* has an interior dimension, they have done little to map its conceptual complexity.⁶ But interiority is not simple: in our sources it may have cognitive, moral, and/or emotional dimensions. In what follows, therefore, we will take the relationality (including the activity) of *pistis/fides* as read and focus on the extent to which *pistis/fides* is understood in the early principate as an emotion, a process of cognition, or a virtue. Most of the passages under discussion will be familiar from earlier chapters: an indication of how much complexity of meaning is bound up in almost every deployment of these lexica.

Intellectuals of the late Roman republic and the early principate occasionally express awareness of the difference, and potentially the gap, between the interiority and the relationality of qualities like *pistis/fides*. When they do, it is to emphasize the importance of holding the two together. Cicero, for example, in *On the Nature of the Gods* (1.3–4), insists that integrity of intention and action are essential in the expression of piety and all the virtues: 'Piety, like the rest of the virtues, cannot exist just as a pretence, and if piety goes, so do holiness (p.446) and observance, and after them, *fides*, *iustitia* and human society as a whole.' In his Discourse 2.22 (26–30), Epictetus says that we can only be truly *pistoi* towards other people when our actions and our interior moral purpose cohere.⁷ Unfortunately for modern readers, despite this awareness on the part of some ancient writers, distinguishing the moral, emotional, or cognitive content of a term like *pistis* or *fides* in any individual text remains extremely difficult. Take, for example, a letter from Cicero to his freedman Tiro, in which Cicero quotes Tiro as having written that he is 'faithfully attending to [or 'observing']' Cicero's health:

Tullius to Tiro, greetings. I see what you are doing: you want your letters too to be collected in rolls. But hold on, you self-appointed yardstick of my writings: where did you get that solecism 'faithfully observing my health' (*valetudini fideliter inserviendo*)? How do you come by 'faithfully' in this context? The proper territory of the word is in the context of duty, though it wanders into a good many foreign fields. One can, for instance, call a teaching, a house, an art, or even a piece of land *fidelis*, using the kind of appropriate metaphor that Theophrastus approves of. But this is a discussion for when we are together. (16.17.1)

We may sympathize with Cicero's uncertainty as to what Tiro means by *fideliter*. It is certainly relational, but does it imply loyalty of heart, mind, or action on Tiro's part? Is he taking a friendly interest in Cicero's health—procuring some doctor or medicine for him, perhaps—or expressing his devotion to his former master? There is no way of telling. At the end of this short letter Cicero expresses *sollicitat*.)' The verb *sollicitat* has Cicero's remark is evidently meant to Cicero hears *fideliter* as having

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This letter is unusual in that Cicero admits that he does not understand Tiro's use of *fideliter*, but its opacity to a modern reader is discouragingly typical. Close readings of passages in which *pistis/fides* language occurs, with a view to teasing out the nature of its interiority, all too often produce ambiguous results. What follows, therefore, takes a different approach, and aims to establish whether *pistis/fides* is described in the same terms as what are more clearly definable as emotions, virtues, or cognitive processes, or whether it is widely associated with (other) emotions, virtues, or cognitive processes. We begin by investigating where in a person ancient

authors locate *pistis/fides*, and whether it is described as operating in the same way as (other) emotions. We (p.447) then turn to passages where *pistis/fides* is linked to qualities which clearly are regarded as emotions, before examining its connections with the language of cognition and of virtue.

Pistis/fides as an Emotion

I began this study by emphasizing the importance of *pistis/fides* as a quality that helps to establish, maintain, and articulate societies. Emotions are also well recognized as helping to create, maintain, and articulate societies, so we can assume that having an emotional dimension is at least compatible with the social function of *pistis* and *fides*.⁸ Disappointingly, however, neither features in any of the famous lists and accounts of the emotions in Greek or Latin literature. Plato's *Philebus* and *Republic*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Cicero's *On Rhetoric* and *Tusculan Disputations*, Quintilian's *Education of an Orator*, Plutarch's *Progress in Virtue*, and surviving fragments of Stoics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, Academics, and Cynics are unanimous in ignoring *pistis/fides* in their discussions of emotion. Nor has it attracted the attention of modern scholars of emotions in Graeco-Roman history or philosophy, nor (in its primary meaning of 'trust'), as far as I can discover, that of any of the scientific disciplines which have studied emotions since the mid-nineteenth century. As far as modern scholarship in humanities, social sciences, and sciences alike is concerned, it seems neither trust nor *pistis/fides* rates as an emotion.

On the other hand, in passages of Greek and Latin literature in which *pistis* and *fides* are invoked, their description is often indistinguishable from that of emotions. They share with the emotions a range of psychosomatic locations, and they are closely associated with qualities which clearly are understood as emotions. This is the case both in texts that are influenced by philosophy and those which are not, or not obviously.

To discuss philosophical accounts of the emotions in detail is beyond our scope, but since so many Greek and Roman authors of the early principate are influenced by philosophy to a greater or lesser degree, it is worth summarizing a few key points. Plato's principal, brief discussion of emotions occurs in the *Philebus* (36c6–50a9), where he touches on the difference between various (p.448) kinds of pleasure and pain. Some involve only the body (like the pain of an itch and the pleasure of scratching it); some involve both body and soul (*psychē*) (such as feeling hungry and anticipating being fed); some involve only the soul (such as anger, fear, love, and grief). All these can be called *pathē*, but what we call emotions and later authors study as emotions are the ones located in the soul.⁹ Plato also mentions in the *Philebus* the doctrine of the soul which he develops more fully in the *Republic* (434a–441e, 580d–583a): the soul is tripartite, its rational (*logistikon*) part ideally ruling its 'spirited' (*thymoeides*) and 'appetitive' (*epithymētikon*) parts, in the last of which emotions are located, alongside other non-rational processes.¹⁰

Aristotle touches on emotions in a number of works, but principally at *Rhetoric* 2.1–2. Here, as elsewhere, Aristotle distinguishes between cognitive, physical, behavioural, and 'psychic' elements of emotions, the last of which are located in the heart or soul. Like Plato, he thinks that reason should rule the emotions but need not eradicate them.¹¹ Epicureans and, above all, Stoics, develop the most systematic interest among ancient philosophers in emotions and where in a person they are located.¹² They share an account of the soul (*psychē*) which divides it into *pneuma*, 'spirit', and *nous*, 'mind', the latter rendered in Latin as *animus* or *mens*. The mind is the seat of all mental states, including the emotions, and is located in the chest or the heart.¹³ To complicate this picture slightly, *animus* in standard literary Latin can be translated as either 'mind' or 'heart'.

Catullus may be drawing on philosophical ideas current among Roman *litterati*, or he may be reflecting ordinary Latin usage when, addressing Cornelius in Poem 102, he locates his *fides* in his *animus*: 'If any secret was ever entrusted by a faithful friend, the trustworthiness of whose heart/mind was deeply known (*cuius sit penitus nota fides animi*), you will find that I too am consecrated by their rite, Cornelius...' Tibullus (1.6.75–6) locates his lover Delia's fidelity in her *mens*: 'Don't be chaste through savage fear, but (p.449) through your faithful mind (*mente fidelī*); may mutual love keep you safe when I am away.'

Cicero, explaining in *Pro Marcello* (14) why he followed Pompey to Pharsalia, avers that he is always on the side of peace and maintaining civil society, but that sometimes a private obligation overrides political prudence: 'I followed an individual out of private, not public, obligation, and the faithful memory of a grateful mind/heart (*grati animi fidelis memoria*) was so strong in me that, not out of any greed or even hope, but in full knowledge and understanding of what I was doing, I rushed towards a voluntary doom.' Seneca the Younger, speaking as a Stoic, also locates *fides* at times in the *animus*. In *On Benefits* (3.15.1–2) he wishes that commercial agreements did not need to be hedged about with legal documents, but could be left to '*fides*...and a mind/heart (*animus*) that cultivates justice'.¹⁴ Elsewhere, Seneca associates *fides* with the breast (*pectus*)—location of the physical heart and seat of feelings, especially of love, across a wide range of literature. In his letter of consolation to Helvia (19.1), he tells Helvia that her greatest source of consolation is her sister, who has *fidelissimum tibi pectus*, 'a heart most faithful to you'. In Letter 88.29, reflecting

on various virtues, he asserts that ‘trust is the most holy good in the human heart’ (*fides sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum est*). *Fides*, he continues in emotional terms, cries: ‘Burn me, cut me, kill me—I shall not betray [my trust?]...’ The *Distichs* of Cato, which are derived substantially from Greek gnomic sayings and aimed probably at a popular early imperial audience, locate *fides* in the physical heart, *cor*. ‘When a man simulates friendship with words but is not a faithful friend in his heart (*nec corde est fidus amicus*), do the same to him: so art is cheated by art.’

‘Nothing’, says Plutarch in *Precepts of Statecraft* (821a–b), ‘makes a man easy to handle and willingly gentle towards another man but trust (*pistis*) in his goodwill and belief (*doxa*) in his nobility and justice. Which is why Demosthenes is right when he proclaims that mistrust (*apistia*) is the best defence cities have against tyrants, because the part of the soul (*psychē*) with which we trust is the easiest to capture.’ *Pistis* could be cognitive here and parallel to *doxa*, but when Plutarch talks about the part of the soul with which we trust being the easiest to capture, he sounds as though he is talking, as a Platonist, about the irrational, emotional part of the soul which needs to be ruled by reason. In *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, Plutarch connects *pistis* with the emotions and locates both clearly in *hē psychē*. The flatterer, he says, is always on the lookout for signs of emotion (*pathos*), which he feeds, morbidly inflaming the soul: ‘Are you angry? Punish. Do you desire something? Buy it. Are you frightened? Flee. Are you suspicious? Trust (*pisteuson*) your suspicions.’

(p.450) In all these passages, varied though they are in language and genre, *pistis/fides* is an interior process and the various parts of our interior that are described as hosting it are all also seats of emotion. This does not prove that *pistis/fides* is an emotion, not least since the same parts (at least according to philosophers) host thought. It may, however, be significant that we cannot always, and perhaps contemporary readers could not always, distinguish references to cognition and emotion in words like *animus*, *mens*, and *psychē*. In the thinking of late republican and early imperial authors, mental processes and emotions may not, or not always, have been segregated.

The context in which *pistis/fides* language occurs in most of these examples is also suggestive. In some passages it is linked with love or friendship, or with fear or grief: all qualities which are themselves well attested as emotions, or as qualities with significant emotional aspects.¹⁵ In other passages it is part of a flow of rhetoric which seems calculated to arouse emotion. This takes us to our next group of examples, in which *pistis/fides* language appears in association with language which is more clearly emotional.

Pistis/fides and Linked Emotions

The strong connection in both Greek and Latin between *pistis/fides* and the language of love and friendship (*philia* and *erōs* in Greek, *amicitia* and *amor* in Latin), has already been established in earlier chapters.¹⁶ Hundreds of passages in Greek and Latin literature link friendship, love, and trust, in public and private life, family life, and erotic relationships.

Trust is regularly described as a characteristic of established relationships of all kinds. In particular, Greek and Latin literature abounds with references to trust, good faith, and trustworthiness between friends, covering all the many meanings of friendship, from political alliance to patronage; from military comradeship to relations between equals in private life. *Pistos*, *fidelis*, *pistotatos*, and *fidelissimus* are such common adjectives qualifying ‘friend’ as to be a cliché.¹⁷ Men planning political coups share their plans with those of mutual *pistis/fides* and *philia/amicitia*.¹⁸

Fides, according to Cicero in *On Friendship* (65), is the basis of that stable constancy which we look for in friendship. In worrying times in 59 BCE, he tells Atticus in a letter how much he relies on Atticus’ love and faithfulness (**p.451**) (*credibile non est... quantum in amore et fide ponam*).¹⁹ In Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* (19.2, 4), when the suspicion is raised that Alexander’s doctor Philip is trying to poison him, Philip’s *pistis* in his *philia* with Alexander and Alexander’s *pistis* towards Philip ensure that Alexander lets Philip cure him. Mithridates, by contrast, in Appian’s *Roman History* (12.111), complains of the ‘deadly poison’ which is to be found in every king’s house: the untrustworthiness (*apistia*) of those who should be most attached to him, his children, friends, and army.

Sometimes trust is said to be the basis of love or friendship, especially in relations between states, where *pistis* or *fides* in the sense of an agreement to form an alliance is often said to lead to friendly relations.²⁰ In other contexts, love or friendship leads to trust. According to Plutarch (*Dialogue on Love* 769a), physical union is the beginning of *philia* and *pistis* between husbands and wives. King David’s friend Hunshai, making overtures to David’s son Absalom in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* (7.211–12), promises him that if Absalom regards him as his friend, he will show the same *pistis* and good-will towards him.

According to Aelian, trust can even exist in relationships between people and animals and between animals. In *On Animals* (2.8), he describes how the dolphins of Euboea cooperate with fishermen to catch fish. At the end of the day the fishermen give them their

portion *pistōs kai eugnōmonōs*, ‘with good faith and goodwill’. Crows, meanwhile (3.9), are most faithful (*pistotatoi*) to one another, and when they enter a partnership, love one another intensely (πάνυ σφόδρα ἀγάπῳσι).

Trust, as we saw in Chapter 2, is often characterized as particularly strong (ideally, though not always with justification) between husbands and wives.²¹ Explaining the proverb, ‘Letters of Bellerophon’ (2.87), Zenobius says that when the wife of King Proteus of Tiryms tried and failed to seduce Bellerophon, she told Proteus that Bellerophon had tried to rape her. Proteus, who trusted (*pisteusas*) his wife, sent Bellerophon to his death. While waiting for Agamemnon to return from war, Seneca’s Clytemnestra says that once she might have guarded the marital bed *coniugis...fide*, ‘with a wife’s good faith’, but that the time is past for *fides*, along with *mores*, *ius*, *decus*, *pietas...pudor* (p.452) (Ag. 108–24). That she will be able to trick Agamemnon into going to his death is due, presumably to the fact that he still trusts her as his wife.

Other family relationships are also among those which are characterized by the greatest trust.²² In Seneca’s *Phoenician Women* (478–80), the despairing cry of Polynices, that if even a brother is prepared to break faith (*fides*) with a brother, one cannot trust the good faith of a mother either, shows how strong, normatively, both these bonds are understood to be.²³ Often, of course, it is when expected trust fails that we hear about it: so Plutarch’s Alcibiades uses the expected trust between a parent and child to emphasize, paradoxically, how little he trusts the Athenians to give him justice.²⁴

For Dio Chrysostom (31.32–3), the essence of wickedness is to care only about whether one’s actions are profitable. Such a person, who will betray even his *philoī*, is *apistos*, not to be trusted. In *On Distrust*, Dio claims (74.1) that one cannot trust anyone, because even *philoī* harm each other all the time. If Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Pirithous, and Achilles and Patroclus could trust each other, they are the only people in history who could.²⁵ Epictetus, in his Discourse 2.22 on friendship, is more optimistic: trust is part of good relations between *philoī*, and also sons and fathers (22.18–24). Elsewhere, Epictetus observes (4.13.13) that we feel we can safely trust (*pisteuein*) a man with whom we have at least the beginning of a relationship because he has entrusted knowledge of his affairs to us.

The relationship in which *pistis/fides* is often characterized as most problematic is, as we have seen, erotic love.²⁶ On the one hand, authors and their characters are widely agreed that trust is, ideally, part of a loving relationship. On the other, Eros himself is famously inconstant and untrustworthy, and lovers constantly accuse each other of betraying their trust. When a girl swears in love, says Tibullus (3.6.47–52), there is no *fides* in her oath. Jupiter laughs at lovers’ oaths and tells the winds to blow them away unfulfilled. Erotic love and the trust it engenders can even be used disingenuously for political purposes. According to Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 15.99), this was Cleopatra’s speciality.

Throughout Graeco-Roman literature, tyranny is the opposite of a relationship of love or friendship and trust,²⁷ and it is a topos of Greek and Latin literature that tyrants neither love nor trust anyone, nor does anyone love or trust them.²⁸ One of the indications that Numa is a good king, not a tyrant, in Plutarch’s *Life* is that he refuses (7.4) to reign over people who do not trust (p.453) him. The problems Mithridates has with trust stem in part from the fact that he regards himself as a good king while others see him as a tyrant.

We could multiply examples of the relationship between *pistis/fides*, *philia*, *agapē*, *amor*, and *amicitia* almost indefinitely. *Pistis/fides* also occurs, however, in conjunction with a number of other emotions. In his *Life of Cato the Younger* (44.7–8), Plutarch tells us that:

No virtue, by the fame and *pistis* it generates, creates more envy than justice, both power and trust follow from it, especially among the masses. They do not only honour them, as they do the courageous, nor admire them, as they do the wise, but they also love the just and have confidence in them and put their trust in them (θάρρουσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ πιστεύουσιν). As for the brave and wise, however, they fear the one and distrust the other; and besides, they think that these excel by a natural gift rather than their own volition...²⁹

Here, *pistis* is associated with feelings of love, confidence, and envy. Later in the same biography (56.2), the *pistis* of Cato’s soldiers creates in him feelings of shame and compassion (αἰδοῦμενος καὶ οἰκτεῖρων). *Pistis* is several times associated in our sources with *aidōs* or *timē*, shame or honour. In his essay *On Isis and Osiris* (359f–360b), Plutarch claims that human beings should not be thought of or treated as gods, because this dissipates the *timē* and *pistis* towards ‘real’ gods implanted in nearly all human beings at birth, and leads ultimately to religious scepticism and atheism. For Epictetus, too, there is a strong correlation between *pistis* and *aidōs*.³⁰

We have noted the connection between *pistis* and having confidence (*tharrein*) in a leader. In *On the Alexandrian War* (17), about Caesar's wars in Egypt, Caesar is described as having confidence in himself, believing (with justification) that he can attack the Pharos and the city of Alexandria at the same time.³¹ *Pistis/fides* is also often connected, explicitly or implicitly but clearly, with hope. In Plutarch's *Life of Lysander* (5.4), Lysander gives the people of the Ionian cities *pistis* in a future without the Delian League by a series of promises and practical benefits. In his *Life of Romulus* (7.4–5), Numitor inspires Remus with *pistis* and *elpis* by his gentle voice and kind expression. Dio Chrysostom, in his essay *On Trust* (73.4–5), notes that people have high hopes of those they trust and are regularly disappointed in those in whom they have trusted and hoped too much.

In other contexts, *pistis/fides* finds itself uncomfortably caught between hope and fear. In the *Tristia* (4.3.11–20), Ovid tries to reassure himself of the loyalty of his wife by believing what he hopes is true and stifling his fears, while during the Romans' war with the Gauls in 296–5 BCE, according to (p.454) Cassius Dio (8.28), when a number of portents are seen which the Roman general Manius interprets to mean that the Romans will be victorious in war, the multitude is unable either to trust him or not to trust him, but is torn between fear and hope.

Sometimes *pistis/fides* is described as the opposite of fear, or as driving out fear.³² For Seneca in *On Benefits* (7.26.4–5), it is a bad thing to be ruled by one's passions. Fear, for instance, makes one unable to give *fidele consilium*, 'faithful' or 'trustworthy' advice. Elsewhere, though, *pistis/fides* goes hand in hand with fear to positive effect. According to ps.-Quintilian in a minor declaration (245.4), good faith (*fides*) cannot be maintained between people in legal contexts unless it is held in check by fear. For Plutarch (*On Superstition* 165b), the final result of thinking that there are no gods is that we do not fear them; the corollary of believing or putting one's trust in gods is that one does fear them (though not too much, as that would constitute superstition).³³

In a few passages, *pistis/fides* is said to be the result of the arousal of emotion. Cicero, for instance, in *On the Division of Oratory* (53), tells his son that from time to time in a speech, and especially in the peroration, an orator may engage in *amplificatio*, an enlargement of something that has already been said which is designed to create trust in the speaker by moving the minds/hearts of the listeners (*est igitur amplificatio gravior quaedam affirmatio quae motu animorum conciliet in dicendo fidem*). That which is aroused by emotion is not necessarily an emotion itself, but, by analogy with the action of rational discourse, we may suspect that it has a strong emotional dimension. If rational speech appeals to reason and engenders rational thought, as rhetorical treatises regularly assume, then presumably emotional speech appeals to the emotions and creates an emotion, which in this case is identified as *fides*.³⁴

In a wide range of authors and genres, then, in both Greek and Latin, and in diverse contexts within texts, *pistis/fides* is linked with qualities which are identified as emotions or have strong emotional aspects. These relationships are configured in a number of ways, and different meanings of *pistis/fides* are in play in different passages. Cumulatively, however, the association of *pistis/fides* language with the language of emotions is so persistent as to suggest that if *pistis/fides* is not unequivocally an emotion, it has emotional aspects and/or can be treated as an emotion in some contexts.³⁵

(p.455) *Pistis/fides* and Cognition

When it is not being described in the same terms as emotions, or associated with emotions, *pistis/fides* is often described as an act of cognition which takes place in the mind or memory. We have encountered numerous examples of *pisteuein hoti*, 'to trust/believe that', which, being close in meaning to 'to think that', is always dominantly cognitive.³⁶ (The fact that an author uses *pisteuein* rather than, for instance, *nomizein* in such contexts, though, may hint that the listener or reader is intended to hear non-cognitive resonances in the phrase too.) *Credere* too is commonly used of believing that something is the case.³⁷ The cognitive content of other parts of the lexica can be harder to isolate. When, though, Plutarch, for example, claims that human memory has great *pistis* (*Dem.* 2.1), he is surely referring at least partly to its trustworthiness in a cognitive sense, since the virtue of a good memory is that it corresponds to what it remembers, while when he criticizes Euhemerus for drawing up an *apistos* mythology which reduced credence in those who were thought (*nomizomenous*) to be gods (*Mor.* 359f–60b), he seems to be claiming that Euhemerus' system does not foster propositional belief as well (probably) as trust.³⁸

An instance of *pistis* or *fides* being (dominantly) cognitive does not rule out its having emotional overtones. In recent years it has been increasingly recognized by scholars of the emotions that cognition is an integral part of emotion.³⁹ Whether or when emotion is part of cognition is less explored, but there are indications that it can be.

At the end of Lucian's *The Lover of Lies* (40), the sceptic Tychiades and his friend Philocles express the fear that *pistis* may sometimes bypass the senses which are designed to test it, and simply infect people like an illness, or that hearing stories may make

us believe them in spite of ourselves, in the way that drinking wine makes us drunk.⁴⁰ They do not describe *pistis* as an emotion, but the idea that it might bypass reason to affect us in spite of ourselves is reminiscent of the way orators describe the impact of the emotions on those who listen to speeches, so Lucian may conceive cognitive belief as having some **(p.456)** emotional content here.⁴¹ A cluster of stories told by Valerius Maximus and Frontinus about generals on the eve of battle suggests strongly that propositional belief can have emotional content.⁴² The Spartan king Archidamus, according to Frontinus, told his troops before a major battle that Castor and Pollux were watching over them. He was believed; the troops were inspired; the battle was won. The Theban general Epaminondas improved the confidence (*fiducia*) of his troops in general by fostering their *fides* towards the gods.⁴³ Cognitive belief, these passages indicate, may be easier to achieve when there is some emotional reason for holding it or emotional advantage in doing so.⁴⁴

In his account of the power struggles in Rome in the aftermath of the republican revolution, discussed at length in Chapter 3,⁴⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus (6.76.1-86.5) gives Lucius Junius Brutus a long speech about the difficulty for plebeians of trusting patricians, in which *pistis* language features largely:

What guarantee shall we put our trust/faith in (*pisteuontes*) when we lay down our weapons and put ourselves in the power of these men again? The decrees which the senate will establish on these matters?...Or the reputation of the envoys who provide their own pledges of good faith (*pisteis*)?...Or agreements made with oaths in the names of the gods, gaining our assurances (*pista*) from them? (6.78.3)

The repetition of *pistis* language which forms the keynote of this highly emotive passage suggests that the *pistis* language itself is meant to evoke emotion. Brutus continues (6.78.4) by demanding what kind of friendship (*philia*) and good faith (*pistis*) can thrive where agreements are made without trust. Relations are bound to break down into suspicion, mutual accusations, jealousy, hatred, and every other kind of evil. The association of *pistis* with *philia*, and their absence with suspicion, jealousy, and hatred, again suggests that effective political trust, which in part is a matter of judgement based on evidence and reason, also has an emotional dimension.

In *Jewish Antiquities* (2.168), Josephus tells how, when Jacob heard from his other sons about Joseph's career in Egypt, he did not find it incredible when he took into consideration the greatness of the works of God and God's kindness towards Jacob in the past. Jacob regards his existing trust in God and experience of God's goodness as providing as firm a foundation for belief as any **(p.457)** other evidence.⁴⁶ According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (2.68.1-3), the Romans' belief that Vesta manifests herself in defence of virgins who have been falsely accused of unchastity rests on a similar conviction that the gods favour the good and intervene in history to support them. In both these cases, attitudes to the divine, which are presented as a matter of cognitive belief, plausibly have an emotional aspect too, which we might identify as gratitude for or appreciation of a god's benignity.⁴⁷ Conversely, lack of trust or belief in the divine may be linked with the absence of an emotional response to them. Plutarch (*On Superstition* 165b) argues that the judgement (*krisis*) that nothing blessed or incorruptible exists (itself presumably based on a combination of experience and a priori reasoning) leads to *apistia tou theiou*, lack of trust or belief, and lack of fear of the gods.⁴⁸ That absence of belief leads to the absence of an emotional response to the gods does not prove that belief has an emotional dimension, but Plutarch's conclusion (171f), that a proper relationship with the gods sits halfway between atheism and superstition, with its excessive fear of the gods, suggests that a modicum of emotion is appropriate in human relations with the divine.

Cognitive *pistis/fides* based on evidence and/or reason occurs in a wide range of situations and relationships. Not all of them can be shown to involve emotion, but a not insignificant number plausibly can. As we saw in Chapters 2-4, however, reason and evidence are often presented as weak bases for rational cognitive processes, arguments, or conclusions.⁴⁹ All too frequently, evidence is doubtful, experience partial, and arguments and conclusions debatable. In these cases we may suspect that who or what people trust or believe ultimately depends not only on cognition but also on their need or desire to believe one person or thing rather than another, or on some non-rational advantage that believing confers.⁵⁰ Occasionally, our sources acknowledge this possibility explicitly. In his discussion of medicines (*HN* 28.10-19), Pliny the Elder considers whether words and incantations have an effect on the healing process. This important question, he says, has never satisfactorily **(p.458)** been settled. The wisest authorities reject *fides* in words and incantations, but the mass of people always believes (*credit*) them. The basis for the masses' belief might be many things, including experience or testimony, but the contrast Pliny draws between them and well-informed non-believers suggests that there is an element of sheer determination about their views: they believe, in spite of evidence, because they want to believe or because it serves them in some non-rational way to believe.⁵¹ Sextus Empiricus (*Outlines of Pyrronism* 1.147) thinks something similar about *mythikē pistis*, popular belief in myths. Stories such as the legends of Cronus, he says, are unhistorical and completely fictitious; nevertheless, they win *pistis* from many—apparently because people simply want to believe them or gain something non-rational

from believing them. When *pistis/fides* is cognitive, we can conclude, it may also have emotional aspects.

Pistis/fides as a Virtue

Finally, we turn to one further way in which the interiority of *pistis/fides* is described in our sources. Like philosophical lists of passions, lists of the canonical philosophical virtues do not include *pistis* or *fides*.⁵² *Pistis/fides* is, however, often described in literary sources as a virtue (*virtus* or *aretē*), including by authors with philosophical affiliations.⁵³

Diodorus Siculus describes Pittacus, tyrant of Mitylene, as perfect in virtue: statesmanlike, wise, and *kata tēn pistin dikaios*, ‘just in keeping faith’. Listing *virtutes* of Romans of past generations in *The War against Catiline* (9.1–2), Sallust includes his belief that they were loyal (*fideles*) to their friends. Silius Italicus tells us (14.79–84) that one of the virtues of Hiero of Syracuse was that he was slow *temerare fidem*, ‘to break faith’.

At the beginning of *The Republic* (1.2) Cicero offers a long list of virtues (which, he argues, we must not merely possess but use, ideally in the service of the state): *iustitia fides aequitas... pudor continentia, fuga turpitudinis, adpetentia laudis et honestatis... fortitudo*.⁵⁴ An even longer list of virtues makes its (p.459) way into his second Catilinarian oration (2.25), as Cicero compares the virtues of his own allies with the vices of Catiline and his. On the good side the list includes *pudor, pudicitia, fides, pietas, constantia, honestas, continentia, aequitas, temperantia, fortitudo, prudentia*.

Seneca, reviewing virtues in Letter 88.29, describes *fides* as *sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum*, ‘the most holy good in the human breast’. In *On Anger* (2.28.1–2) another list of goods includes *pietas, humanitas, liberalitas, iustitia, fides*.⁵⁵ In *On Rhetoric* (2.343), Cicero lists *fides*, along with mercy, justice, kindness, and courage, as a *virtus* which benefits not so much its possessor as the human race in general. Plutarch tells us (*Mor.* 749b) that it is absurd to regard women as not participating in virtue (*aretē*). They have prudence, *pistis*, and justice, and many women have been as courageous as men. According to Marcus Aurelius (3.11.2), nothing creates greatness of mind more than the ability to examine everything that happens to us in life and decide which virtue it requires of us—gentleness, courage, truth, *pistis*, guilelessness, self-sufficiency, or something else.

Sometimes, too, *pistis/fides* is associated with other qualities which are regularly defined as virtues, even if it is not itself explicitly described as one. Most obviously, justice (*dikaiosynē/iustitia*) is universally regarded as a virtue in the classical world, and *pistis* and (especially) *fides* are very commonly associated with it.⁵⁶

In a letter to Atticus (7.2.7), Cicero complains that Cato, despite giving him an unsought testimonial for *integritas, iustitia, clementia*, and *fides*, has refused a request. In *On Friendship* (19), criticizing the Stoics for calling only the wise man good, he insists that anyone should be considered good who demonstrates *fides integritas aequitas liberalitas... constantia* and who abstains from *cupiditas libido audacia*. Caesar (*BG* 1.19) praises Diviciacus, brother of Dumnorix, for his goodwill towards the Roman people, *fides, iustitia*, and *temperantia*. It seems clear that *pistis/fides* can at least sometimes be thought of as a virtue.⁵⁷

Virtues are strongly associated throughout antiquity, above all by philosophers of all schools, with reason. Wisdom and reason in all their forms—*sophia, sōphrosynē, phronēsis, ratio, sapientia, prudentia*—are themselves virtues, and virtue is an exercise of the intellect par excellence over such (p.460) inferior aspects of interiority as the emotions. That being so, we might assume that anything that can be characterized as a virtue is unlikely also to be seen as an emotion: and indeed, in theory, a convergence of virtues and emotions should cause problems for most of the major schools of philosophy. For Platonists, the rational part of a virtuous man’s soul rules the irrational, emotional part. For Peripatetics, the doctrine of the mean suggests that no strong emotion, at least, can be allowed to rule the good man’s thoughts and actions. The Stoic ideal of *apatheia* seems to rule emotion absolutely out of the life of the sage.

Recent scholarship on all these schools, however, suggests that such a view would be simplistic. Philosophers from Plato onwards were intensely interested in the emotions, and all schools found ways of accommodating at least some emotions, in some form or some degree, within the make-up of virtuous human beings.⁵⁸ Even for philosophers, it seems, emotion and virtue need not be incompatible, and if philosophers could countenance the convergence of virtue and emotion, at least in some contexts and configurations, other authors and audiences are likely to have worried about it even less.

Seneca’s *On Mercy* 1 is a good example of an essay in which a self-identified philosopher, addressing a non-specialist audience (primarily the emperor Nero, but implicitly a wider group of readers), entwines the language of virtue and emotion to powerful effect. Seneca begins (1.1) by describing the virtue *clementia* as ‘the greatest pleasure of them all’, and praises Nero (1.5) for desiring for himself (*concupisti*) *innocentia*, ‘innocence [of wrongdoing]’. He calls the public interest (4.3) *cara*, ‘dear’ to rational men, and tells

Nero (5.7) that an emperor should look with pleasure (*libens*) on good citizens and rejoice (*gaudeat*) to see them living. He even (11.2) characterizes *clementia* as ‘the truest temperance of mind/heart and an all-embracing love of the human race as of oneself’ (*verissima animi temperantia et humani generis comprehendens ut sui amor*). Among the qualities of a good ruler (13.4) are that he is inclined to gentleness, desires the approval of his people, is happy when the populace shares his good fortune, and bears a loveable countenance (*vultu...amabilis*). For Seneca, then, in this essay, there is a strong affective aspect to a good ruler’s engagement with his state and his subjects’ engagement with him. The emperor should desire virtue and enjoy it, and positive emotions between ruler and subjects are a good thing.

So far, we have seen *pistis* and *fides* and their cognates described as virtues, acts of cognition, and emotions, and we have seen that the virtuous, cognitive, and emotional aspects of the lexica are not always easy to distinguish in individual passages. We can conclude that, alongside their ubiquitous relationality, *pistis* and *fides* have a complex and significant interiority. The (p.461) relationship between different aspects of that interiority, regrettably, remains all but impossible to map for the great majority of passages. We can, though, say that there is no indication that it is typically dominated by emotion; in many passages little or no emotional resonance is detectable.⁵⁹

The Septuagint

If, as we have seen, *pistis* language in the Septuagint is well in line with that of Greek texts in general, and also of the New Testament, in being dominantly relational, it is also in line with Greek literature more widely in having an interior aspect.⁶⁰ It is located most often in the heart (*kardia*), but occasionally in the spirit (*pneuma*, *pnoē*). Psalm 77.37, for example, attacks Israelites who have not been *pistoi* to God’s covenant in their *kardia*. ‘Heed the counsel of your own *kardia*,’ says Sirach (37.13), ‘for no one is more *pistos* to you than it is.’⁶¹ Psalm 77 also refers (v. 8) to a generation whose spirit (*pneuma*) was not faithful towards God, while Proverbs (11.13) tells the reader, ‘The one who is *pistos* in spirit (*pnoē*) keeps a confidence’, using a poetic alternative to *pneuma*.

Pistis is no more described as an emotion in the Septuagint than elsewhere in Greek literature, but here, as elsewhere, it often appears in passages where more obviously emotional language is also in evidence.⁶² When Job is describing the status he held in his community before misfortune befell him, he says that his neighbours were ‘overjoyed’ (*perichareis*) whenever he spoke, so wise was his counsel (29.21). They welcomed his words like thirsty earth welcoming rain, and ‘If I smiled on them, they would not believe it (*ou mē pisteusōsin*).’ Presumably this is because his smile was such a boon (29.24). The tone of the whole passage is so emotional that ‘not believing’ surely bears an emotional meaning here: something like ‘they were overwhelmed’.

Sirach links putting one’s trust in the Lord with fearing him in a positive sense (2.8), and marks it as the opposite of fearing him in a negative sense (2.13). Both states have a clearly emotional aspect. The author asks (2.10): ‘Has anyone trusted (*enepisteusen*) in the Lord and been disappointed (*katēschynthē*)?’ *Aischynē*, the concept embedded in this verb, means both ‘shame’ or ‘dishonour’ in a relational sense, and the sense of shame in an interior sense. For Sirach, too, having *pistis* is closely related to love for a friend (p.462) (27.17). (Jeremiah, on the other hand, in more pessimistic mood (12.6), says that the fair speech even of one’s family and close associates cannot be trusted.) Psalm 88.29 links the faithfulness of God towards David with his love for David. *Pistis* is therefore regularly linked in the Septuagint with more obviously emotional language. Just once, it is explicitly distanced from it. 4 Maccabees (7.21) (which shows the influence of Stoicism throughout) claims that trusting God enables one to overcome one’s emotions, firmly distinguishing *pistis* from the emotions. Even here, however, given that emotions are not wholly excluded even from Stoic understandings of virtue, we may suspect that *pistis* has affective overtones.⁶³

Believing, in the Septuagint as elsewhere, is often propositional, and in a few places propositions also seem to have some emotional content. When, in Genesis (42.6–25), Joseph pretends not only not to recognize his suppliant brothers but to think they are spies, and demands that they prove their account of themselves is true by leaving one brother as a hostage while they return to Canaan to fetch Benjamin, telling them that if they do this their words will be believed (42.20), he is challenging them not only to establish their truthfulness but to take the first step towards re-establishing their relationship with him as their brother. When Job, from the depths of his indignation against God, says that even if he calls God to account and God answers, he does not believe (*ou pisteuō hoti*) that God will really listen to his complaint (9.16), his disbelief is more than cognitive and propositional: it is an emotional expression of his anger, grief, and passionate conviction of his own righteousness. Even believing has its emotional aspect.

Pistis is so widely treated as a virtue elsewhere in Greek that it is most unlikely that Greek speakers listening to the Septuagint did not hear *pistis* language as carrying at least ethical overtones. In the Hellenistic wisdom books, putting one’s trust in God is several times contrasted with being a sinner or doing wicked deeds, which suggests that in that period, and in that genre, *pistis* can be heard uncontroversially as a virtue.⁶⁴ Elsewhere, *pistis* is occasionally linked with other qualities which must also have been heard as

having ethical content. At Genesis 15.6, for example, Abraham's putting his trust in God is reckoned as *dikaiosynē*: one of the four cardinal virtues identified by Plato and canonized by Aristotle, and a quality recognized as a virtue everywhere in Greek texts.⁶⁵ At 3 Maccabees 2.11, the high priest Simon, petitioning God in the Temple, calls God 'faithful and true' (*pistos...kai alēthinos*). Truthfulness, too, is so widely treated as a virtue elsewhere in Greek that this phrase must have borne ethical, if not solely ethical, resonances for Greek-speaking Jewish audiences.

(p.463) As in Greek more widely, we can conclude that *pistis* language in the Septuagint has interior aspects, even if they are not described very often, and that they encompass virtue, emotion, and cognition. As elsewhere, however, the relationship between interior aspects of *pistis* is not made explicit enough to allow us to map it. Even more frustratingly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what interior aspects of the concept, if any, are in play in the great majority of passages where *pistis* is described essentially as a relationship which is expressed in action. Interiority remains, if not absent from Septuagintal understandings of *pistis*, normally unexplored or unexpressed, and so difficult to access.

The Interiority of Pistis in the New Testament

If *pistis* has an emotional dimension in the experience of Greeks and Romans of the early principate and in the writings of the Septuagint, it becomes more likely that early Christians also experienced and characterized *pistis*, at least in some contexts and to some degree, as an emotion. And, indeed, the deployment of the *pistis* lexicon in New Testament texts is in some ways very similar to that in Graeco-Roman texts in general and to the Septuagint.

Pistis and *pisteuein* are occasionally located in, or closely connected with, the heart (*kardia*) or soul (*psychē*). 'Do not let your *kardia* be troubled,' John's Jesus tells his disciples (Jn. 14.1). 'Believe (*pisteuete*) in God; believe also in me.' At Romans 10.10 Paul tells his readers that 'One believes with the heart (*kardia gar pisteuetai*) and so is justified', while at Acts 4.32 we hear that 'The whole group of those who believed (*tōn pisteusantōn*) were of one heart and soul (*kardia kai psychē*)'.⁶⁶

The *pistis* lexicon appears regularly in the New Testament in conjunction with the language of emotion. Faith and love (*agapē*), most famously connected in 1 Corinthians 13.2 and 13.13, are also linked by Paul at 1 Thessalonians 3.5–7, and several times by the authors of Ephesians and Colossians, as among the most desirable qualities of followers of Christ.⁶⁷ 'We have heard of your faith (*pistin*) in Christ Jesus and of the love (*agapēn*) you have for all the saints', says the author of Colossians encouragingly (1.4). Jesus assures his **(p.464)** disciples in John's gospel (16.27): 'The father himself loves you (*philei*), because you have loved me and believed that I came from God.' The author of Revelation praises the church of Thyatira (2.19): 'I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance.'

Pistis is connected with hope and confidence repeatedly by Paul, and also by the synoptic gospels.⁶⁸ 'Take heart (*tharsei*), daughter; your faith has made you well,' Jesus tells the woman with the haemorrhage (Mt. 9.22).⁶⁹ We should surely hear a challenge to hope or confidence, too, in Jesus' saying to the disciples: 'Truly, I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt...even if you say to this mountain, "Be lifted up and thrown into the sea", it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith you will receive.'⁷⁰ Matthew links *pistis* with pity, *eleos*, in his criticisms of the Pharisees (23.23), who he claims lack both qualities (along with *dikaiosynē*).

Pistis is contrasted in a handful of passages with fear. 'Why are you afraid, you of little faith (*oligopistoi*)?' Jesus demands of the disciples after he quells a storm at sea (Mt. 8.26).⁷¹ 'Do not fear. Only believe (*pisteue*),' Jesus tells the grieving father of a dead child (Mk. 5.36).⁷² The cognitive-affective ambiguity of *pistis* is matched by that of *apistia*, so when Mark tells us (6.5–6) that Jesus could do no deeds of power at Nazareth because of the *apistia* of the people, he may be referring to their cognitive scepticism or their lack of trust, or both.⁷³

In its cognitive meaning, *pistis* may also occasionally have emotional resonances. Paul tells us that doubts among followers of Christ about whether or not they should keep the Jewish food laws are a sign of weakness of faith (Rom. 14.22–3), while the author of the Epistle of James encourages his community to ask for wisdom, 'in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind' (1.5–6).⁷⁴ When Matthew's Jesus demands of the disciples, frightened by another storm on the Sea of Galilee: 'You of little faith (*oligopistoi*), why did you doubt?' he invokes both emotional and cognitive resonances of *pistos* (14.31; cf. 21.20).

Last but not least, *pistis* language is sometimes found in the New Testament in association with other language of goodness or virtue.⁷⁵ Putting one's trust in God and Christ is regularly contrasted with being sinful or linked with being saved from one's sins or

from evil in general.⁷⁶ Concluding 1 Corinthians, Paul exhorts the Corinthians: ‘Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, **(p.465)** be courageous (*andrizesthe*), be strong’ (1 Cor. 16.13). Perhaps no virtue in the ancient world is so firmly established as such as courage (*andreia*, *virtus*), the definitive quality of the men who dominantly rule, conceptualize, and describe that world. No Greek speaker could have heard him- or herself exhorted to ‘man up’ without hearing it, at least in part, as an exhortation to virtue. ‘Well done, good and trustworthy (*agathe kai piste*) servant’, says the master to each of two slaves who, left in charge of some of his talents, have added to them (Mt. 25.21, 23).⁷⁷ Linking trustworthiness with goodness heightens its ethical resonance. We have already seen that the Pharisees, according to Matthew’s Jesus (Mt. 23.23), lack justice, mercy, or faith (*krisin...eleos...pistin*). Justice, as noted above, like courage, is among the cardinal virtues and must everywhere have been heard as having ethical implications, while mercy is especially a virtue of the powerful.⁷⁸ Last but not least, *pistis* appears in Galatians 5.22 in Paul’s list of the gifts of the spirit, which also includes emotions such as love and joy, and virtues such as patience, generosity, kindness, and self-control.⁷⁹

These links between *pistis* language and the language of cognition, emotion, and virtue suggest that in the New Testament, as in its parent cultures, *pistis* does indeed have interior aspects, including an emotional aspect, though the latter is probably not as developed as some scholars of Christianity and modern Christians assume. Can we go further and, despite the caveats I offered at the beginning of this chapter, explore in more detail, even map, the presumptively complex interiority of *pistis* in the New Testament? Two test cases, from Paul and John, offer as good an opportunity to do so as we are likely to find.

At 1 Corinthians 13.13 Paul links *pistis* with the emotion of hope and with love, which is both an emotion and a virtue. How, in the light of this, do we assess the interiority of *pistis* in this chapter and this letter?

At 1 Corinthians 1.9 God is *pistos*, but his faithfulness seems to be relational and active rather than emotional: it is expressed in his calling human beings to fellowship with his son. At 10.13 God’s faithfulness means that he does not let those who are brought to trial be tested beyond their strength; we might hear in this a hint that God is compassionate (itself a quality with emotional, ethical, active, and relational aspects), but the focus is again on God’s activity and relationality. The trustworthiness of stewards (like Paul himself) at 4.2 and of Timothy at 4.17 is similarly a matter of action and relationship: they **(p.466)** preach and call people to *pistis* as an act of service to God.⁸⁰ The gifts of the spirit in chapter 12 (4–11) all seem to be active and relational too: they include the expression of wisdom and knowledge, the gifts of healing, mighty deeds, prophecy, discernment of spirits, and speech in tongues and its interpretation. Whatever *pistis* means in this list,⁸¹ it seems likely again to be a matter of activity and relationality. In most of these passages the interiority of *pistis*, whether cognitive, ethical, or emotional, is not, at least, Paul’s primary concern.

In the hymn to love in chapter 13, though love would undoubtedly be heard by Paul’s audiences as having emotional aspects, Paul’s focus is firmly on what love does:

ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται· ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ ζηλοῖ, οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται, οὐκ ἄσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογιζεται τὸ κακόν, οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.

Love suffers long, practises kindness; love does not compete, does not brag, does not puff itself up, does not behave unseemly, does not seek its own interests, does not provoke, does not brood over injury, does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth; it endures absolutely, trusts absolutely hopes absolutely, stands absolutely firm. (1 Cor. 13.4–7⁸²)

It is worth nothing that translations of these verses which begin ‘Love is...’ do not do justice to Paul’s sequence of active verbs, which emphasize what love *does*. Love may have an emotional dimension for Paul, but his focus, even in this most rhetorically emotive of passages, is strongly and consistently on its active and relational aspects. In this context, it is not surprising that Paul connects *pistis* at 13.2 with another action: moving mountains. If even love, in this passage, is primarily active and relational rather than an interior quality, then we can assume a fortiori that Paul is also likely to be focusing on the active, relational aspects of *pistis* and hope.

1 Corinthians 15 is another highly rhetorical chapter, which invokes a range of emotional and ethical language in addition to its *pistis* language.⁸³ ‘If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching; empty too your *pistis*...if Christ has not been raised, your *pistis* is vain; you are still in your sins’ (15.13–14, 17). Insofar as *pistis* is a response to true witness (v. 15) and preaching, it has evident cognitive content. It is also connected with the emotion of hope (v. 19), and it has an ethical aspect, because the condition **(p.467)** of having *pistis* is contrasted with ‘still [being] in your sins’ (v. 17). How these aspects of the interiority of *pistis* relate to one another, however, Paul does not give us enough material to investigate, and of *pistis*’ emotional dimension, in particular, only the faint resonances can be detected. The dominant

aspect of *pistis* in this passage, as we saw in Chapter 6, is relational trust in God which enables one to be brought to (eternal) life and to inherit the kingdom of God.⁸⁴ That *pistis* has interior dimensions is detectable in Paul's thinking, but they remain implicit and unexplored.

In this respect this passage is similar to 2.1–5, where Paul tells the Corinthians that he did not come to them with sublime (cognitive) words or wisdom; he came in weakness and (emotional) fear and trembling, with a demonstration of spirit and power, 'so that your *pistis* might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God' (2.5). The aim of this passage is to defend the *skandalon* of the 'message of the cross' (1.23, 18) by dissociating it from the world's wisdom and rhetoric. This does not mean that *pistis* here is not cognitive (since one may 'believe that' something is the case on a non-rational basis), but it does suggest that its cognitiveness is not being stressed. At the same time, Paul does not specify what kind of *pistis* is invoked by demonstrations of spirit and power (v. 4). Though we may speculate that his emotional state of fear and trembling might have been transmitted and inflected the Corinthians' *pistis* with emotion, we cannot be sure, and beyond the possibility that it is related to the fear of God, we cannot guess at what the affectivity of such *pistis* might involve. In 1 Corinthians, then, though Paul seems to allude to the interiority of *pistis* in a number of passages, he does not allow us to explore it in any detail, let alone to map its constituent elements. In particular, despite the proximity of *pistis* language to some of Paul's most powerful language of emotion, *pistis* itself remains at most arguably emotional by association in this letter; we can guess at little of the nature of its affectivity.

Pisteuein, as we have seen, is not infrequently cognitive in John's gospel, and it carries ethical implications wherever it is contrasted with sin or affiliation to the devil.⁸⁵ It also appears in a number of passages in connection with the language of love,⁸⁶ once with hope (5.44–7), and once with fear (14.1). Even these passages, however, reveal little more of the interiority of *pistis* in general, and the nature of its affectivity in particular. At the beginning of chapter 14, for example, John's Jesus says:

Do not let your heart be troubled (μη̄ ταρασῆσθω υ̅μων ἡ καρδία). *Pisteuete* in God; *pisteuete* also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where **(p.468)** I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way. Thomas said to him, 'Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' (14.1–7)

The dominant force of '(you) trust in God; (you) trust in me', of course, is relational. Insofar as trusting in God is the opposite of having a troubled heart, however, or simply renders being troubled impossible, it also has emotional content, which (remembering John's closeness in some respects to the Septuagint) we might hear as alluding to the Septuagintal idea of one's trust being firmly and securely founded on the reliability of God.⁸⁷ Since Jesus is speaking here of the future, we might stretch a point and hear hope as a faint overtone of *pisteuein* too. Later in the passage Jesus' reassurance or challenge (depending whether one interprets *pisteuete* as indicative or imperative) is linked with the disciples' cognitive knowing of the way and again with relational knowing of God. Thereafter, through the rest of the passage, cognitive and relational meanings alternate. The emotional aspect of *pisteuein* appears strikingly but fleetingly. Its ethical aspect appears equally strikingly but even more fleetingly, when Jesus describes himself as the truth (which is also likely to be linked with the Septuagint's interpretation of God's reality and reliability with the language of truth). Here, as in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, John evidently understands *pisteuein* as having multiple interior aspects, but as in 1 Corinthians, its interiority is rarely explicit, and when it is we do not learn enough about it to describe it in any detail or map its internal relations.

We may fittingly end this chapter with what is perhaps the *locus classicus* for debate about the interiority or otherwise of *pistis* in the New Testament: the Epistle of James' defence of (good) works, which may be a response to those passages in Paul's letters where *pistis* is preferred to (works of) the law.⁸⁸ In the course of urging his audience, the 'twelve tribes of the diaspora' (1.1), not to favour rich members of their community over the poor, the author asks:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has *pistis* but does not have works (*erga*)? Can that *pistis* save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also *pistis* of itself, if it does not have *erga*, is dead. Indeed, someone might say, 'You have *pistis* and I have *erga*.' Demonstrate your *pistis* to me without works, and I will demonstrate my *pistis* to you from my works. You *pisteueis* that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that, and tremble. Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that *pistis* without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father made *dikaios* (*edikaiōthē*) by **(p.469)** works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?⁸⁹ You see that *pistis* was active along with his

erga, and *pistis* was completed by the *erga*. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that ‘Abraham put his trust in God, and it was reckoned for him as *dikaïosynē*, and he was called ‘the friend of God’. See how a person is made *dikaïos* by *erga* and not by *pistis* alone. And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by *erga* when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so *pistis* without *erga* is dead. (2.14–26)

[James] does not at any point commend the practice of (good) works without *pistis*, though he could have done: as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, Greek and Roman philosophers acknowledge that it is possible to enact the active, relational aspects of virtues without having their interior aspects (though they condemn the practice as hypocritical).⁹⁰ Like Cicero and Epictetus, [James] thinks that it is hypocritical to have (or claim) certain aspects of what, in his case, we might call the virtue (in a non-technical sense) of being a good Christian, without having others.⁹¹ By driving a wedge between *pistis* and *erga*, [James] is usually seen as trying to separate interiority and exteriority, and to identify *pistis* as an interior quality without exterior aspects (since the active, relational manifestations that should go with it are *erga*). Is this a fair interpretation of the text, and if so, in what does the interiority of *pistis* consist?

At the beginning of this chapter [James] characterizes *hē pistis* as the relationship between community members and ‘our glorious Lord Jesus Christ’ (2.1). Shortly afterwards, having *pistis* means being ‘heirs of the kingdom that [God] promised to those who love him’. *Pistis* here is strongly relational, with affective overtones. God chose the poor of this world to be ‘rich in *pistis*’ (2.5), and told them to love one another as they were loved: this is the ‘royal law’ of God’s kingdom (2.8). *Pistis* is therefore a relationship which brings a certain status and membership of a community. As such, it cannot be a wholly interior quality: it must at least involve activity and interpersonal interaction. When, however, community members fail to love one another—for instance, by favouring the rich among them over the poor—they break God’s law and will be judged (2.10, 13).

When [James] follows this by saying, ‘What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has *pistis* but does not have works?’ he is referring directly back to the way he has just characterized *pistis*. If someone says he is in a relationship of trust with God, that he is a member of the community of those who love God, an heir of the kingdom, and one who keeps God’s law, but he does not keep God’s law in practice, then where, [James] demands, can he imagine he stands in the community? The question echoes the debate (p.470) mentioned by Philo, between those who claim to keep the law of Moses ‘spiritually’ without keeping it physically.⁹² But behind both [James] and Philo is a claim that anyone could make about any community and any legal system, that one cannot be a member of a community, in a good relationship with other community members (cf. 2.4), while violating that community’s laws: a principle which would have been as self-evident and uncontroversial to Greeks and Romans as to Jews (and as it is to us).

The contrast that [James] draws between good and bad community members is not a contrast between those who do good works and those who only have appropriate feelings, or even thoughts. It is between works and *words*, specifically words which are externalized in speech. ‘What good...is it if someone *says* he has *pistis* but does not have *erga*?’ ‘If a brother or sister has nothing to wear...and one of you *says to them*, “Go in peace, keep warm...,” but you do not *give them* the necessities of the body, what good is it?’ Spoken words are not interior things, but communicative and relational. The people [James] disapproves of are not people who confine themselves to thoughts or feelings of *pistis* (about whom, or even whose existence, he has nothing to say), but those who are hypocritical, in the classic sense that two aspects of their relationships and actions, their words and deeds, do not match one another.

[James], like all New Testament writers, and all the other writers we have surveyed, undoubtedly understands *pistis* as having active, interpersonal, and interior aspects. Its interiority is contrasted ethically with ‘evil designs’ (2.4) and linked positively with ‘good’ (2.14, 16). It is connected with the virtue and emotion of love (2.8). It can conceive of and articulate propositions such as ‘God is one’ (2.19).⁹³ But the interiority of *pistis* is not [James]’s main concern in this passage, and his contrast is not between *pistis* as a quality of the mind or heart and the practicality of action, but between *pistis* as one manifestation of a relationship as against other manifestations of that relationship. His concern is the idea that one can be in a trusting relationship with God and one’s fellow-community members, in a community with a law, without keeping that law in the terms in which the community as a whole and/or its leader(s) expects it to be kept—that is, in one’s actions as well as one’s words.⁹⁴ Those who claim to have *pistis* without doing as God commands are people who claim to have relationships with other community members appropriate to heirs of the kingdom, but who do not behave like community members. (p.471) As to the interiority of *pistis* itself: beyond that it has some complexity, in line with that of other Christian and other writers, James tells us little, if anything, about it.

When [James] praises Abraham for the fact that his *pistis* and *erga* were active together, the one being ‘completed’ (*eteleiōthē*) or complemented by the other (2.22), he is not far in spirit from Cicero, Epictetus, or their philosophical colleagues, who favour integrity of thought, feeling, communication, and action. He is also close to Paul when he says (Rom. 10.10): ‘One trusts/believes with the

heart and so is made *dikaïos*, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved,' although Paul's interest here is in the relationship between the interiority of the heart and the relationality of speech, rather than that between speech and action. When Luke says (Acts 4.32), 'The community of *hoi pisteusantes* was of one heart and soul, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common,' he too is making a similar contrast, but his focus is on the interiority of *pistis* as against the exteriority of action in the sharing of possessions.

These passages remind us not only that contrasts between various aspects of *pistis*, or *pistis* in relation to other qualities, can be drawn in different ways in the New Testament, depending on the immediate needs of the writer, but also that such contrasts are always to some extent rhetorical. Greek rhetoric loves above all things to create a binary polarity: it is a powerful heuristic device and an even more powerful psychological one. When Luke, Paul, [James], or anyone else draws a contrast, therefore, we should be wary of loading it with too much significance, even while we feel its force. The important part of any rhetorical polarity between good and bad is the thing the orator is telling his audience is good. No law of persuasion requires him to be fair to the negative term he is putting up to contrast with it, or even to represent accurately his own, let alone anyone else's, overall understanding of it. In the cause of commending one side of a polarity to one's audience, in any form of rhetoric, the other side all too often gets short shrift, and the orator relies on other passages of his speech or other speeches to compensate and present it in a fairer light. In this letter [James] has already demonstrated a high view of *pistis*, and he will do so again. It is the essence of the relationship between God and Christ and Christ's followers (1.2, 2.1) and the wealth of those whom God chooses (2.5). It has the power to heal the sick; the prayers of the faithful bring about the forgiveness of sins (5.15). When [James] says that *pistis* without *erga* is dead, we should not therefore hear him as claiming seriously that the power, the importance, or the scope of *pistis* is limited or partial; any such interpretation does less than justice to his depiction of *pistis* elsewhere. We need only hear him as emphasizing, for the purposes of this section of his argument, that the interior and relational aspects of *pistis* must be complemented by active, practical aspects, which for rhetorical effect he categorizes separately as *erga*.

(p.472) Conclusion

On the basis of the examples we have examined, there is no doubt that *pistis/fides*, in Greek and Roman thinking, in the Septuagint, and in the New Testament, has a substantial and at times complex interiority to match its relational and active aspects. This interiority, like that of other comparably complex qualities in Greek and Latin literature, takes its seat variously in the mind, heart, or soul, and encompasses thought, emotion, and ethical goodness or rightness. (The ethical aspect of *pistis* in the New Testament is often under-emphasized because the language of virtue by itself is inadequate to capture the complexity and richness of the divine-human relationship, but I shall argue in Chapter 12 that we should not forget it.) We may hypothesize that interiority has its own role to play in the contribution which *pistis/fides* makes to the creation and maintenance of relationships and communities, whether Greek, Roman, Jewish, or Christian. Since *pistis* is so central to divine-human relationships and community in Christianity, we might expect its interiority to play a particularly important role there. But Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian sources alike take frustratingly little interest in exploring the nature and internal relationships of *pistis/fides* as an emotion, an act of cognition, and a virtue, and virtually never distinguish between interiority, relationality, and action in portraying its role in society. The message seems clear: interiority, relationality, and action are inseparable wherever *pistis/fides* operates.⁹⁵ There are many emotions one can practise on a desert island, and at least a few virtues (wisdom, temperance, self-control). Cognition is by no means constrained by the absence of company. But *pistis/fides* (along with justice, mercy, and a few others) is one of those qualities that can only be practised socially: it is inherently relational and characteristically expressed in action towards other human beings (or, occasionally, animals). As such, though they acknowledge its interiority, neither Christian nor other writers of the early principate make it the focus of their interest.

If, however, the limited interest of our sources in the interiority of *pistis/fides* is one of the main findings of this chapter, one of its subsidiary conclusions will become important in the next. We have seen that *pistis/fides* is widely recognized as a virtue in Greek and Latin writing of all kinds. The role of its ethical dimension in the New Testament will be a principal subject of Chapter 12.

Notes:

(1) pp. 5–6, 14–15. The cognitive aspect of *pistis/fides* is discussed particularly in connection with rhetorical persuasion (Kennedy (1963, 1969, 1972); Winterbottom (1980); Russell (1983); Worthington (1994)) and religious belief (e.g. Nock (1925); Yunis (1988); Scheid (2003), 18–20; Versnel (2011), 544–5). This chapter does not discuss the much wider question of the effect, in particular, of rhetoric on interior qualities such as emotions, but confines itself to examining how the interiority of *pistis/fides* is described and treated.

(2) I do not know of a study of Septuagintal *pistis* that investigates the nature of its interiority. For many modern Christians faith is dominantly an emotion, but this assumption has not been much taken up by scholars of religious psychology (e.g. Corrigan (2008), Riis and Woodhead (2010); cf. Matthews (1980), Roberts (1992), Elliott (2005) on the New Testament).

(3) See e.g. pp. 224–34, 197–8, 341–2, 425–31.

(4) Cf. e.g. pp. 54, 224–7.

(5) So e.g. classic studies by Fraenkel (1916), Heinze (1929), Calderone (1964), Hellegouarc'h (1972), Nörr (1991), Freyburger (2009), other than in describing the semantic range or evolution of the lexica, do not discuss its interiority. Whitley and Hays-Gilpin (2008) complain of the lack of interest in the interiority of religious belief among archaeologists, arguing that the emotional dimension of group rituals should be explored and integrated into interpretations of their social function. The argument of e.g. Faulkner (2011), 24 that for analytical (sociological) purposes we should distinguish forms of belief with different emotional content (my belief that you are catching the 2.15 train, for instance, carries different emotional freight from my belief that you love me) goes further than any scholarship I know of on the ancient world.

(6) Exceptions are Aune (2008a, b), Voorwinde (2005), and Barton (2011), who advocates more study of emotions in early Christianity and offers a case study of grief in 1 Thessalonians.

(7) The idea goes back to Plato (e.g. *Rep.* 401e–402a) and Aristotle (e.g. *EN* 2.1–3); cf. Gill (2006), ch. 1 on Hellenistic developments.

(8) In defining 'emotion', I follow the lines laid down in a number of recent studies of ancient emotions, taking an emotion to be something which is often identified in Greek as *to pathos*, in Latin as *adfectus*, and in English as 'affection' or 'passion' as well as 'emotion'. It involves feeling, is closely associated with cognition and action, and we should not assume that it is identified or experienced in the same way in every culture: see e.g. Annas (1992), 103–20; Fitzgerald (2008), 1–5; Graver (2007), 1–13; Kaster (2005), 1–8; Konstan (2006), 3–40. On the social role of emotions in general, see the discussions of Kaster (2005), Chaniotis (2012, 2013).

(9) Fortenbaugh (2008), 30–1.

(10) Among Platonists of the early principate, Plutarch follows Plato, arguing that passions need to be domesticated by reason (Wright (2008)). Philo, however, seems to follow the Stoics more closely, arguing that the religious sage overcomes all (other) emotions through the strength of his (rational) love of God (Winston (2008); cf. Dillon (1977), esp. 151–3).

(11) Grimaldi (1988), ad loc.; Fortenbaugh (2002), 9–12, 23–44; Fortenbaugh (2008), 31–8; cf. Verbeke (1990), 157 on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. For a comparison of Plato and Aristotle, see Knuuttila (2004), 5–31.

(12) e.g. Wisse (1989); Donini (1995), Cooper (1999b), Brennan (2005), 82–113, Graver (2007) (on Stoics); Graver (2002) (on Cicero); Asmis (1990), Cooper (1999a), Sanders (2008) (on Epicureans); Hankinson (1971) (on Galen and the Stoics); Long (2002) (on Epictetus); cf. Dillon (1983) (on later Platonists). On Cynic and Neo-Pythagorean ideas about passions, see Aune (2008b), 48–66 and Thom (2008), 67–78.

(13) Long and Sedley (1987), 1.70–1, 2.319–22; Everson (2005); Long (2005).

(14) Liv. 35.31.13 places *perfidia* in the *animus*.

(15) I follow Konstan (1997) in taking friendship to have emotional content.

(16) See e.g. pp. 55–60, 117–20, 222 n. 54, 225–6, 253, 277, 352.

(17) e.g. (among many other examples) D.H. 4.85.1, 14.26.4, 16.46.3, 20.19.1; App., *Gall.* 6.74; Ath. 4.151d; Sall., *BC* 9.1; Cic., *Am.* 54; Sen., *Clem.* 1.9.11, *Tranq.* 4.3, 7.3; Jos., *BJ* 1.516; cf. Fronto, *Ad Ant. Pium* 8.1; SHA, *Hadrian* 11.

(18) Sall., *BC* 20.2–3, 22.2; Plu., *Pelop.* 8.2.

(19) *Ad Att.* 2.23.3; cf. *Sen.*, *Ep.* 3.2–3.

(20) *Sall.*, *Jug.* 31.23–5; *Caes.*, *BG* 1.3; *D.H.* 1.58.4, 14.29.5; *Liv.* 1.38.2, 7.30.6, 24.19.10, 26.14.2, 29.3.3, 32.17.1, 40.49.1, 42.63.10; *Sil.* 14.79–84; *App.*, *BC* 1.38. Cf. *D.Chr.* 73.4 (being regarded as trustworthy leads to an individual's being entrusted with the rule of a city); *Cic.*, *Off.* 2.21 and *Epict.* 2.22.18–20 (one can only fully trust in public life the man who is trustworthy in himself); *D.Chr.* 48.4 (failure of friendship between cities leads to loss of trust); 73.5 (loss of trust in an individual who has been trusted in public life brings heavy punishment, as people avenge their disappointment).

(21) pp. 47–9. Though *D.Chr.* 74.9 on distrust claims that one cannot trust any woman (or slave) because they lack judgement.

(22) Cf. pp. 45–9.

(23) Cf. *Sen.*, *Med.* 430–9, 1002–4.

(24) *Alc.* 22.2; cf. *Mor.* 186e–f; see p. 46.

(25) 74.28.

(26) Cf. pp. 49–51.

(27) See e.g. pp. 87–9.

(28) e.g. *Plu.*, *Dion.* 9.3, *D.Chr.* 9.15, 33.108; *Philostr.*, *VA* 1.38.1; *Cic.*, *Am.* 52; *Nep.* 8.6; *Sen.*, *Ag.* 284–7; cf. *Sen.*, *Med.* 221, 248.

(29) *Trans.* Loeb, modified; see p. 119.

(30) 2.8.23; cf. 2.4.1, 2.22.18–20, 3.17.1–3, 4.13.20.

(31) Cf. *Caes.*, *BG* 7.50, *BC* 3.24, 3.49, 3.109 (of the confidence of Caesar and others).

(32) e.g. *Ov.*, *Trist.* 4.3.1120; *Sen.*, *Oct.* 346–60; *Apul.*, *Met.* 4.21.

(33) On appropriate fear of the gods, cf. *Ov.*, *Met.* 3.650–91, 611–724; cf. *Plu.*, *Mor.* 424a.

(34) Cf. *Quint.* 6.1.9. Fear creates belief in portents among Romans under threat, according to *D.C.* 14.7.

(35) In principle, an emotion might lead to a purely cognitive condition of *pistis/fides* or vice versa; moreover, since emotions have cognitive aspects, in theory the cognitive aspect of an emotion could lead to a cognitive state of *pistis/fides* or vice versa. But given that it is so often impossible for us, and may have been no easier for contemporary readers, to distinguish cognitive from emotional aspects of either *pistis/fides* or (other) emotions in particular contexts, it is safer to assume that emotion is normally involved wherever *pistis/fides* and (other) emotions interact.

(36) e.g. pp. 124, 185, 334, 425–8.

(37) e.g. *Caes.*, *BG* 5.28, 6.31, *Cic.*, *Brut.* 100, *Lucr.* 2.1027, *Liv.* 1.78, *Hor.*, *Carm.* 3.5.1, *Ep.* 1.14, *Ov.*, *Met.* 5.49, *Val. Max.* 1.8.3, *Quint.* 6.2.5, 6.3.94, 12.1.36, *Tac.*, *Ann.* 3.14, 6.34.

(38) Cf. *Ov.*, *Fasti* 4.203–4, *Her.* 6.30, *Met.* 3.650–91.

(39) e.g. Sorabji (2000), 17–28; Nussbaum (2001), ch. 1; Konstan (2006), 20–3, tracing the development of scholarly thinking about emotion and cognition.

(40) Cf. pp. 149–50.

(41) e.g. *Cic.*, *De or.* 2.214.

(42) *Val. Max.* 1.2.

(43) Front., *Strat.* 1.11.9, 1.11.16; cf. 8, 10–11. Cf. Jos., *AJ* 5.52–3.

(44) The difficulty in evaluating the rational trustworthiness of dreams, etc. lies partly in the difficulty of categorizing forms of sensory perception (e.g. seeing a dog in the street vs. seeing Heracles in a dream vs. seeing a vision of Romulus while waking). How far one should judge such varied experiences by the same criteria when deciding whether or not to place *pistis/fides* in them is discussed by some philosophers but remains unresolved in most authors (see e.g. Harris (2009), 129–34, 164–84).

(45) pp. 90–2.

(46) Cf. Jos., *AJ* 2.60, 7.122.

(47) The same principle is invoked in Middle and Neo-Platonist philosophy and in Jewish and Christian theology indebted to it: see Edwards (forthcoming).

(48) Plutarch begins the essay (164e–f) by dividing ignorance and lack of understanding of the gods into atheism and superstition, and calls superstition an emotion; the implication seems to be that atheism is cognitive but not emotional. Strabo too (1.2.8) connects belief with emotion, observing that ordinary people are induced to have *pistis* towards the gods through *deisidaimonia*.

(49) e.g. pp. 39–45, 65–8, 145–51, 241–6.

(50) Rhetoricians distinguish between ‘natural proofs’, based on the kind of evidence and reason which everyone accepts, and ‘artificial proofs’, based on more dubitable indications, arguments, and examples (e.g. Quint. 5.8.1–9.37; cf. Lucr. 5.104–6). In modern terms, artificial proofs are based on the coherence of our experience of the world, to which we have an emotional as well as a rational commitment, as opposed to the cognitive correspondence of a claim to evidence (Mitchell (1994), 28–51; Helm (2000), 23–84).

(51) On irrational beliefs of (usually) the masses, women, or children, see e.g. Cic., *Top.* 78; Plin., *HN* 28.52; Plu., *Mor.* 503d, 589d, *Phoc.* 26.3; Strabo 1.2.8.

(52) Nor do early Christian lists of virtues, e.g. Barn. 18–20, Did. 1–3, 5.

(53) *Pistis/fides* may also simply be an attribute of a person without being specified as a virtue: e.g. Plu., *Rom.* 7.4–5, *Pomp.* 1.3, *Aem.* 2.6; Onos. 2.5; Quint. 5.7.8; D.Chr. 32.96; Lucian, *Cat.* 23, *Dem. Enc.* 18; D.C. 14.6b; Marc. 1.15.2, 9.42.4. On *pistis* as part of a man’s nature (*physis*), see also Epict. 1.3.7, 2.4.1, 2.8.23; Artemid. 2.69. Heinze (1929), 145–7 argues that *fides* in Roman law always carries some ethical implications, even if they were not always at the forefront of users’ minds.

(54) At 3.27 he again lists virtues of *aequitas*, *iustitia*, *fides*; cf. *Inv.* 164–5; *Part. Inv.* 78, 90.

(55) *Virtus* and *bonum* are not necessarily identical, but since other goods in this list are certainly virtues, they seem likely to mean the same here. *Perfidia* appears in lists of vices at Liv. 21.4.9; cf. Cic., *Att.* 2.22.2, Liv. 28.19.7.

(56) e.g. (of many possible examples) Cic., *Rep.* 2.2, *Off.* 2.32; Plu., *Mor.* 275a; Juv., *Sat.* 13.33–7, 91; Cic., *Off.* 1.23 (*fides* as foundation of *iustitia*); Plu., *Cato Min.* 44.7–8 (*dikaioσynē* as foundation of *pistis*). The cult of Fides in Rome is accepted as a hypostasis of the cult of Jupiter, the god most strongly associated with justice.

(57) Cf. Cic., *Rep.* 3.27, *Off.* 1.121, *De or.* 2.343, *De part. inv.* 90; Val. Max. 3.3 ext. 2; Plin., *Ep.* 2.9.4; D.Chr. 31.32.

(58) See e.g. pp. 141, 151–2, 167–8, 448–9.

(59) Though it would be possible to argue that even technical concepts such as legal good faith and security carry some emotional resonance.

(60) *Pistis* is also sometimes specified as an action or closely linked with works: e.g. 2 Chr. 34.12, Ps. 33.4 (of God), Prov. 12.22, Sir. 15.15.

(61) Cf. Neh. 9.8, Prov. 7.3.

(62) Among looser connections than those in this section, see e.g. Ps. 106.12, Wis. 3.9.

(63) See pp. 201–2.

(64) e.g. Wis. Sol. 12.2, Sir. 11.21; cf. 1 Macc. 10.27, 3 Macc. 2.11, 5.31, 6.25.

(65) Cf. Hab. 2.4; see pp. 178–82.

(66) Though they do not discuss the location of trust, see Johnson (2003) and Aune (1994), 298–305 on the role of *psychē* and *nous* respectively in Christian life, especially in relation to the role of the spirit (*pneuma*). Johnson argues that Paul, not unlike Aristotle, thinks one must be prudential and use reason to test one's experience, but that Christians do this with the mind of Christ as well as their own. Betz (2000) rightly argues that though Paul can separate body and soul conceptually, he understands salvation as pertaining to the whole person.

(67) Eph. 6.21, 23; Col. 1.4, 4.9, 1 Pet. 1.3–9.

(68) Rom. 4.18, 15.13; 1 Cor. 13.13; 2 Cor. 5.6–8.

(69) Cf. Mk. 5.34; Lk. 8.48.

(70) Mt. 21.21; cf. Mk. 11.24; Lk. 17.5.

(71) Cf. Mk. 5.34; Lk. 8.48.

(72) Cf. Lk. 8.50.

(73) Cf. Mt. 13.58.

(74) On Paul's treatment of passions see esp. Aune (2008a, b).

(75) Bultmann (2007), 316 is wrong to say that *pistis* is neither a state of soul nor a virtue; it is more than either but has elements of both.

(76) e.g. Mt. 9.2 = Mk. 2.5 = Lk. 5.20, Mt. 9.22 = Mk. 5.34 = Lk. 8.48, Mk. 10.52, Lk. 7.50, 17.19, Jn. 8.24, 10.25–6, 16.9, Acts 10.43, 15.9, Rom. 1.16–7, 3.24–6, 1 Cor. 3.22–6, 15.34, Eph. 2.8, 1 Pet. 1.9, 5.9, 1 Jo. 1.9.

(77) Cf. Lk. 19.17 (in a slightly different story). Even if *pistis* is thought to bear a distinctive meaning in the NT, *pistos* is usually assumed to bear its ordinary range of Greek meanings.

(78) See e.g. pp. 193, 197, 206, 217, 298, 308, 345, 371–3. On the dominance of these qualities in popular moral thinking as well as philosophy and philosophically influenced literature, see Morgan (2007b), 40–3, 63–8, 90–7, 135–8, 142, 154–7, 166–74, 253, 303, 306.

(79) On virtue lists in Hellenistic philosophy and their Jewish and Christian relatives, see Betz (1979), 281–3.

(80) Cf. 7.25. Paul's trustworthiness is linked with the qualities of the heart at 4.5, but these, as we have seen, are not necessarily emotions.

(81) See pp. 257–8.

(82) See p. 253.

(83) e.g. 15.19 (hope), 15.32–4 ('bad company corrupts good morals'), sobriety, stopping sinning.

(84) e.g. pp. 224–34.

(85) See esp. Ch. 10, *passim*.

(86) Notably 3.15–18, 14.1–7, 16.25–7.

(87) Cf. e.g. Exod. 14.13–14, Isa. 7.9, 30.15. It does not matter for this purpose whether *pisteuete* is indicative or imperative.

(88) See pp. 342, 469–70.

(89) Cf. pp. 179 n. 10, 202, 334.

(90) See pp. 445–6.

(91) By calling *pistis* without *erga* 'dead', James may be claiming not just that it is defective but that it does not really exist at all.

(92) *Mig.* 89–93; see p. 177 n. 6.

(93) Cf. 1.6 (*pistis* is the opposite of doubt, with cognitive and emotional elements).

(94) Articulating propositional statements such as that at 2.19 is involved in membership of this community, but does not by any means define it. Cf. Jos., *Ap.* 2.16, who says that right understanding of God is proved by one's practice of the law.

(95) Ian Forrest tells me that in the high middle ages in England one's own conscience can be spoken of (not only in philosophically educated circles) as a judge of one's *fides*; I have not found anything analogous to this complexity outside philosophical sources for the early principate.

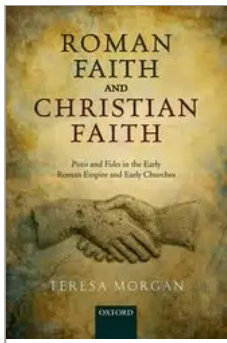
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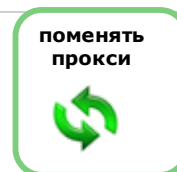
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Conclusion

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Abstract and Keywords

The Conclusion sums up the main themes of the previous chapters, drawing out the implications of what has been argued for the study of Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and ethics, and for future connections between the study of *pistis/fides* and these themes. It notes the scope for future studies of the connections between *pistis/fides*, understood as foundational and structural to the divine–human community, and justice, love, hope, persuasion, knowledge, truth, and the holy spirit. Finally, it looks briefly into the second century and some of the earliest surviving non-canonical letters by Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna, arguing that in most respects they understand *pistis* in terms very similar to New Testament writers, especially Paul, but that in one or two respects they develop Paul’s thinking further. This begins to show how we might find Christian understandings of *pistis/fides* evolving from the second century onwards.

Keywords: *pistis*, *fides*, divine–human community, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, ethics, second century

We began this study by asking why faith is so important to Christians, quickly modifying that vast question to the more specific, though still substantial one why *pistis* and its relatives are so important to early followers of Christ that they already play a key role in the New Testament. Answers to that question, it was argued, must be rooted in the *mentalités* and *praxeis* of the world(s) in which Christian communities develop. From the beginning, accordingly, this has been an interdisciplinary project:¹ indeed, in some ways it has been a study of the shape and operation of *pistis/fides* in the early Roman empire, taking one small but relatively well-attested cult as a case study in how distinctively *pistis/fides* could be treated by micro-societies within it.

In the multilingual, multicultural, densely networked, proudly regional, powerfully centripetal Mediterranean world of the first century CE some clear patterns emerge in the treatment of *pistis* and *fides* across literary, documentary, and visual sources.² Social agents, for example, both historical and fictional, commonly describe themselves, or are described by others, as having a good deal of confidence in themselves—in what they can see, touch, and test—and in those closest to them, their families and households. *Pistis/fides* between patrons and clients tends to be portrayed positively, but trust and related qualities and relationships between friends, together with those between lovers, are much more precarious.³ Experts and professionals attract high levels of *pistis/fides*, as do office holders of many kinds (including, notably for this study, mediators). Some powerful institutions of state—the law, magistracies, the army—are widely treated as worthy of trust or loyalty, but those, especially tyrants and monarchs, who hold power at the apex of the state are rarely described as giving or receiving *pistis/fides* at all.⁴ The gods, in (p.502) contrast, are so persistently characterized as trustworthy that people tend even to trust the notoriously *apistos* goddess Tyche, and, though the foundations of divine–human *pistis/fides* are under some scrutiny in this period, there remains a strong sense that the gods sponsor and guarantee

apters 2–4 reveal the distinctive shape

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never uncut with fear, doubt, or scepticism. A degree of fear (especially of the gods) can be deemed appropriate, and occasionally doubt and scepticism are presented as salutary, even productive of new and more trustworthy relationships and institutions, but on the whole, the negative correlates of *pistis/fides* are viewed much less favourably by Greeks and Romans than by modern sociologists.⁶ Almost always (except, perhaps, in a credulous lover), *pistis/fides* is characterized as a good thing and anything that modifies it as bad. Together with *dikaiosynē*, it is foundational to every society. It is, moreover, so powerful that in times of crisis it can transcend and even reverse other social structures, such as relationships between masters and slaves or patrons and clients.⁷

We began to investigate Christian understandings of *pistis* and its relatives with the assumption that they originated somewhere within the range of concepts and practices in use at the time. Community-specific concepts and praxeis of *pistis/fides* can evolve in any community (and, I argued, some emerge within the writings of the New Testament), but evolutions are likely to be gradual and incremental rather than sudden and comprehensive. We found that in some respects early churches replicate the shape of *pistis/fides* in the wider Graeco-Roman world; in some ways they subvert it, in some they negotiate with it, and in a few ways they extend it.

The ultimate origins of Christian *pistis*, like so many questions about the life of Jesus and the immediate aftermath of his death, remain mysterious. We canvassed the possibility that, in some form (a Hebrew or Aramaic equivalent of) *pistis* language goes back to the teaching of Jesus himself, or that it was first used in disputes (in Jesus' lifetime or soon after) between followers of Christ and other Jewish groups.⁸ Such possibilities remain hypothetical. What we can (p.503) say with confidence is that for the Greek-speaking communities within which and for which the texts of the New Testament were written, the idea of *pistis* proved to be so rich, and so adaptable to developing understandings of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity, together with understandings of human life and activity within that relationship, that *pistis* is everywhere involved with the early evolution of those understandings.

Pistis and *fides* are fundamentally relational concepts and practices, centring on trust, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and good faith before broadening out to the 'deferred' and 'reified' meanings mapped in the Introduction.⁹ Relational meanings also dominate uses of these lexica across the range of written sources from the first century BCE to the second century CE, describing social interactions of all kinds and the interactions of people with institutions. Following the weight of usage, we approached *pistis* in the New Testament first as a relationship (or nexus of relationships) which shapes a community (or communities) in various ways in different writings. By focusing on the relationality of *pistis* and its role in the shaping of communities, this study has taken a rather different approach from those strands of tradition which, following Augustine, divide *pistis/fides* into that which takes place in the heart and mind of the believer and that which the believer believes in. One consequence of this approach has been to downplay the interiority of *pistis/fides*, which becomes important to later Christians but which, as Chapter 11 showed, does not attract much interest in the first century.

Across the range of Greek and Latin sources it is obvious not only that *pistis*, *fides*, and their cognates tend to describe social relations, but that their semantic connections with one another are also well recognized and exploited.¹⁰ Some strands of New Testament interpretation have tended to segregate uses of *pistis* language, treating *pistis* itself, for example, theologically as the unique phenomenon 'Christian faith', while *pistos* is taken to mean 'faithful' or 'trustworthy' in an everyday sense. I have argued that we should be wary of positing such segregations unless the texts clearly attest them. Chapters 6–10 go further, taking seriously (though not taking for granted) the possibility, for instance, that when a writer calls God, a community member, a slave, or a co-

worker *pistos*, his usage is connected with his understanding of *pistis* and other parts of the lexicon. We found that the treatment of semantically and conceptually closely related parts of the lexicon can indeed be seen to be linked in ways which are significant for our understanding of the shape of the divine–human relationship and community.

In a few passages in New Testament writings *pistis* seems to be evolving new meanings, including the ‘bond’ created by trust in God, the ‘community’ (p.504) formed by that bond, and even the ‘new covenant’. I argued, however, that to interpret *hē pistis* as ‘the faith’ in anything like the modern sense in the New Testament is anachronistic. If anything, Christians’ use of the lexicon tends to be conservative, ignoring many of the reifications of deferred trust in common use in the early principate. This is testimony to the fact that, though they borrow from both parent cultures, early churches do so sparingly, and do not replicate concepts, practices, or institutions unless they perceive themselves to need them.¹¹

Since most, if not all, New Testament writers were Jews, Jewish concepts of divine–human relationship and community run strongly through their thinking. Since, however, most, if not all were addressing communities which already included gentiles and preached to gentiles, it is not surprising that much of what they say would not have sounded strange to gentiles either. Indeed, Chapters 2–5 and 12 show that, in many respects, gentile and Jewish expressions of the shape of divine–human relationships and communities, and particularly of the role of *pistis/fides* in them, have more in common than has usually been assumed. At the same time, the most cautious interpretation of *pistis* language in the New Testament reveals followers of Christ as reimagining their inherited relationship with the divine, and the shape of their communities, in some remarkable ways.

The divine, for both Jews and gentiles, is normatively trustworthy. For both groups, and also for followers of Christ, this is above all a foundationalist and coherentist claim: a world in which it does not hold is unimaginable or insupportable.¹² Jews and gentiles also share the view that God or the gods sponsor, and sometimes guarantee, *pistis/fides* between human beings, creating a triangular relationship in which the divine practises *pistis* towards human beings and vice versa, and human beings practise it towards one another. Here, however, followers of Christ depart from their inheritance. Community members are not, in the New Testament, exhorted to trust one another routinely as fellow-community members (as, for instance, they are regularly exhorted to love one another), but to *pisteuein* only in God, Christ, or those to whom God has entrusted the gospel or given *pistis* as a fruit of the spirit.

Christian *pistis* operates in a cascade: God places *pistis* in Christ, Paul, and other community leaders; they channel it to other community members, who *pisteuein* in God, in Christ, and in those entrusted with authority over them by God and Christ.¹³ This cascade has parallels in the field of gentile prophecy (p.505) and wonder-working, but its direct ancestor is the *pistis* invested, according to the Septuagint, in Moses during the Exodus, which enables him, and those whom he appoints to positions of authority under him, to be trusted by the Israelites as they escape Egypt, wander through the desert, and receive the law. The Exodus (which, more or less explicitly, is a point of reference for most New Testament writers) offers a clue as to why the divine–human *pistis* relationship is portrayed in this way. It is during the Exodus that the Israelites receive the law and the Mosaic covenant, which the new covenant in Christ’s blood supersedes.¹⁴ Reference to the Exodus also colours the image, developed in several writers, of Christian communities as an embattled brotherhood, making their way (through time, if not space) to a promised land. This type, we noted, would also have resonated powerfully with gentiles, many of whose cities’ or states’ foundation myths involve small, embattled bands of oikists following a leader at the command of a god to establish a new home in new territory.

In addition to the story of the Exodus, divine–human *pistis* for followers of Christ also owes something to Hellenistic Jewish representations of *pistis* between God and his people. In Chapter 5 we traced the evolution of divine–human *pistis* from the story of God and Abraham in Genesis, through the Books of Exodus and Job, to the Hellenistic wisdom books and first-century commentaries on Genesis. Where Genesis can portray the relationship between God and Abraham as developing gradually, through the fertile interaction of trust and doubt, later books insist that God is universally trustworthy towards his people (though he interacts less with individuals), that everyone must trust the Lord unconditionally, and that *pistis* is always vindicated (if, sometimes, only after the death of the faithful). It is not impossible that this development itself owes something to Hellenistic Jewish contacts with gentiles; at any rate, it has close parallels, as we saw in Chapter 4, with some philosophical representations of divine–human *pistis*, and echoes representations of divine–human *pistis/fides* in wider Greek and Latin literature.

New Testament writers inherit from both parent traditions a strong sense that doubt and scepticism are of little, if any, value compared with strong and consistent *pistis*. The possibility that those who come into contact with Jesus Christ in his lifetime, or follow him after his resurrection and ascension, may suffer from doubt is periodically acknowledged and negotiated, without ever being treated as desirable, or even, in some writings, acceptable; the ideal is to have firm, consistent, unflinching *pistis* till one attains eternal life.¹⁵ Having said (p.506) that, in several writings we identified a subsidiary theme that it is possible for community

members to develop in *pistis/pisteuein*. This may be intended to encourage community members who do suffer from fear, doubt, or scepticism, which in turn reminds us that these texts have a pastoral dimension which has largely been beyond the purview of this study.¹⁶

In most books of the New Testament the only differentiation between community members in respect of *pistis* is the one we have mentioned: that God entrusts certain functions to certain individuals who, by that token, become *pistos* to their communities as well as to God and Christ. In the pastoral epistles we find an evolution, in which some groups of community members—slaves, wives, the elderly, children of overseers—begin to be advised to be *pistos* in those roles, such that being a good slave to one's master, wife to one's husband, and so on becomes an expression of one's faithfulness to God and Christ. We saw in Chapters 2–3 and 12 how *pistis/fides* can be understood as holding all the members of a community together in a shared enterprise (as, for instance, legionaries are all loyal to their commander in defence of the state), or (more commonly) as fitting them together like pieces of a jigsaw, in which all have different but complementary roles (as, for instance, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters are loyal to one another in different but complementary ways for the survival of a family). In most books of the New Testament the *pistis* of most community members is more like that of legionaries than family members, but in these late writings it gravitates towards the dominant, 'jigsaw' model of community. It is tempting to see this as a movement away from the early, radical communitarianism of followers of Christ towards a model closer to first-century social norms.¹⁷

These findings about the shape of the divine–human community as it is expressed in *pistis* language speak to the development both of churches and of thinking about churches (the two often being difficult to distinguish in our sources). This points to one way in which the study of *pistis*, which in modern scholarship has been dominantly theological, might be linked more closely with the study of New Testament ecclesiology.¹⁸ It might also be linked more closely with the study of eschatology.

Chapter 12 argued that the community which *pistis* helps to create, shape, and sustain is both earthly and eschatological, inaugurated and hoped for. It also has relatives throughout contemporary Graeco-Roman and Jewish culture, from the golden ages of myth to the idealized societies of history, from messianic ages to visions of heaven, from the natural world described by (p.507) popular morality to the ideal states of philosophers.¹⁹ The community of the household or kingdom of God, moreover, can be characterized and structured by *pistis* itself and other key qualities of the divine–human relationship, including *dikaïosynē*, *agapē*, *charis*, *alētheia*, and *eirēnē*. Most of these would be understood by Greek speakers (and their equivalents by Latin speakers) as virtues. Arguing, therefore, that cults are widely seen in the first century as divine–human polities, that ethics has good claim to be regarded as one of the social structures of any state, and that ideal communities structured by ethics exist in many contemporary forms (and are closely linked with the concepts of natural law and natural goodness), the chapter concluded that we can understand the kingdom or household of God as a polity structured by virtues in accordance with (God's) natural law, in which human beings already live, to some extent, and will live eschatologically, in a restored state of natural goodness.²⁰ This interpretation reunites thinking about *pistis* in general with the understanding of *pistis* as a virtue, from which it has tended to become separated in New Testament scholarship, and indicates another possible direction of convergence, between the study of *pistis* and that of New Testament ethics.²¹

Our sources' treatment of *pistis*, *pisteuein*, and so on is equally bound up with their developing Christologies. In Chapter 7 we sought to cut the Gordian knot of debate about the phrase *pistis Christou* by showing how Paul uses *pistis* language to locate Christ in the middle of the relationship between God and humanity. Christ is simultaneously faithful to and trusted by both God and humanity (not unlike a Greek or Roman mediator), and that location enables him to restore humanity to a relationship of *dikaïosynē* with God. In Chapter 9 we saw how *pistis* language expresses the synoptic evangelists' sense of the mystery of Jesus Christ's identity between God and humanity, especially for those who encounter him in his lifetime. On the one hand, people are presented as wicked or foolish for not recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. On the other, his identity is veiled so that even those who put their trust in him, for instance as a wonder-worker, may not fully understand who he is, and sometimes get more than they hoped for when they receive not only healing but salvation. In Chapter 10 we saw how John uses *pisteuein* to express his conviction that one must trust/believe in Christ as in Godself. For John, *pisteuein* is intrinsically salvific: Christ is less the mediator of God's grace or (p.508) love than God's representative and revealer. John too, however, recognizes that Jesus self-revelation is not, in his lifetime, self-evident; many do not recognize him, and those who do do not fully understand him. John meets this difficulty by developing the idea of pre-election, in which *pisteuein* becomes less a free choice to put one's trust in Christ than the recognition and acceptance that one has been chosen. All these Christologies are slightly different from one another, but in all of them the conceptual breadth and flexibility of *pistis* enable it to play a central role.

We have seen that writers of the New Testament share with their contemporaries a lively interest not only in *pistis/fides* but in the grounds on which people *pisteuein/confidere/credere*. In the context of divine–human relations, direct experience of the divine rates

relatively highly as grounds for trust/belief, while tradition is more problematic, and hearsay and discourses of persuasion, spoken or written, are widely treated with deep suspicion. New Testament texts demonstrate awareness of these cultural sensitivities in various ways: when Paul, for example, asks the faithful to trust their own experience of the spirit, or when he denies that his speech is rhetorical; when Paul and other letter writers commend those who have been entrusted with authority as trustworthy; when the gospels seek to recreate for listeners or readers something of the experience of encountering Jesus in his lifetime, even as they affirm 'blessed are those who have not seen and have believed' (Jn. 20.29). In Chapters 2–4 we explored some of the ways in which the difficulty of interpersonal *pistis/fides*, divine–human and intra-human, is also addressed by *différance* and reification: by oaths, proofs, contracts, *fideicommissa*, and the rest. In the later books of the New Testament we find Christian *pistis* beginning to be fortified similarly by appeals to reifications of deferred trust: above all to teachings, oral and, increasingly, written.

Nowhere, in any culture, is trust deferred more often than to belief, such that trust and propositional belief are everywhere entwined.²² Among followers of Christ, we found propositional belief especially significant in bringing people into the divine–human relationship. In some later books of the New Testament we also found propositional belief increasingly invoked in disputes between Christians and outsiders or between different groups of Christians, and detected in this one of the roots of churches' increasing interest in propositional belief and confessions of faith in later centuries.

Despite the many ways in which early Christian *mentalités* and praxeis relate to the worlds in which the cult arose and remain engaged with it, the communities and ways of thinking which we have seen emerging from this study, in those aspects shaped by *pistis*, are already in some ways rather different from those around them. They are distinctive less because their **(p.509)** understanding of the concept and praxis of *pistis* and related concepts in itself is distinctive (though occasionally it is), than because they focus *pistis* on God, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the salvation offered to the faithful by God through Christ. They are distinctive also because the shape of the divine–human and intra-human relationship and community that are formed by *pistis* (in various slightly different shapes in different churches) is not quite like that of any other community of which we know in the first century. By the combination of ways in which they understand and practise *pistis*, Christian communities (in their various forms) are already, by the end of the first century or the beginning of the second, in many ways unique. At the same time, at this point they, and their understanding of *pistis/fides*, are still close to the beginning of a journey which continues to this day.

Looking Sideways, Looking Forward

This has inevitably been a very partial study of early Christian evolution, and an even more partial one of early imperial *mentalités* and social practices. Not all the themes explored in Chapters 1–5 had counterparts in Chapters 6–10, or vice versa, which leaves many tempting historiographical pathways only partly explored. We have hardly touched on the meaning and operation of most of the key concepts that intersect with *pistis/fides*: notably justice, love, hope, persuasion, knowledge, and truth. We have had little to say about the holy spirit.²³ We have pointed to the possibility of connecting the study of *pistis* more closely with that of New Testament ethics, ecclesiology, Christology, and eschatology, but have barely begun to explore what the connections might look like. Most obviously, perhaps, this study has confined itself, on the Christian side, almost entirely to the texts of the New Testament, giving apocryphal and/or later material only an occasional mention.

By way of acknowledging the inevitable incompleteness of academic projects on earth, we may, therefore, end by looking over the fence which imagination so readily creates around the canon of the New Testament to a few of the earliest surviving non-canonical Christian texts. They reveal individuals and communities by whom *pistis* is imagined in many of the ways we have encountered in the New Testament, while in a few ways its meanings continue to evolve.

At the end of his letter to the Corinthians, the author of 1 Clement refers to the fact that he has touched on 'every type' of *pistis* (62.2), showing that he well recognizes the complexity of the concept he has inherited. He understands **(p.510)** God as '*pistos* in every generation' (60.1; cf. 27.1), and describes *pistis* explicitly as a gift from God.²⁴ In addition, he understands certain people as having been entrusted with particular gifts and roles by God, in something very like the cascade of *pistis* which we first encountered in Chapter 6. 'Christ', he says, is 'from God and the apostles from Christ', and they and their words are therefore to be trusted and obeyed (42.1–3). Those who have been entrusted with a role, such as deacons, have a double *pistis* (42.5): they are trusted by God and Christ and faithful to them, faithful to and worthy of trust by their communities. Among the entrusted the writer evidently numbers himself, because at 63.3 he commends to the Corinthians men whom he has identified as *pistoi sōphrones*, faithful and prudent, to act as witnesses (*martyres*) between himself and them.

The majority of 1 Clement's references to *pistis/pistos* call people to faithfulness, which is closely linked with endurance and obedience, and exemplified by figures from scripture and history, from Abraham to Peter and Paul.²⁵ *Pistis* is ideally *bebaia*, 'secure'

(1.2).²⁶ That of the Corinthians, however, has become dulled (*ambluōpēsai*) (3.4). Evidently, as we saw in some New Testament texts, it is possible for *pistis* to develop—and regress—within one’s life in community.²⁷

The Corinthians’ regress in *pistis* might be taking many forms: throughout the letter the author is free with descriptions of the qualities that constitute the right kind of life in the community of the faithful, including piety, hospitality, humility, peacefulness, respect for other community members, purity, meekness, gentleness in speech, holiness, humility, love, righteousness, truthfulness, continence, understanding, wisdom, long-suffering, and obedience, in any of which, presumably, the Corinthians could be failing.²⁸ The author begins the main body of the letter, however, by criticizing them for ‘jealousy and envy, strife and discord, persecution and disorder, war and imprisonment’ (3.4). Internal discord is evidently the Corinthians’ primary fault, and the writer returns to the theme at 48.1, where he urges community members to be reconciled and return to love of their brothers, and at 62.2, when he reminds them that they are bound by God to live in harmony.

(p.511) It is perhaps in this context of community disharmony that the author is particularly interested (more than any New Testament writer) in the connection between *pistis* and ‘confidence’, for which he uses *pepoithēsis*, derived from *peithein*, ‘to persuade’.²⁹ He characterizes the Corinthians’ past relationship with God as ‘pious persuadedness’ (usually translated ‘confidence’) (*eusebēs pepoithēsis*). The *pistis* of those who serve God is described as *en pepoithēsei*, based on confidence, and *pistis en pepoithēsei*, ‘*pistis* based on confidence’, is called a gift from God (35.1). Connected with his interest in *pepoithēsis* is the author’s repeated connection of *pistis* with *logos* and the right understanding of arguments. He describes the apostles as ‘trusting/believing (*pisteuein*) in the word of God’ when they went out to preach the good news of the kingdom (42.3). He urges the Corinthians, in abandoning strife, to be ‘wise in the judgement of arguments’ (σοφὸς ἐν διακρίσει λόγων) (48.5), and he reminds them that they have a reputation as πιστοὶ καὶ ἔλλογιμωτάτοι, ‘faithful [or perhaps ‘reliable’] and held in high repute’ as students of the ‘oracles of the teaching of God’ (62.1–2). The understanding of arguments and teachings are strongly cognitive and propositional concepts, which suggests that the Corinthians’ *pistis* in this connection has a markedly propositional aspect, and more specifically that the discord in their community is based on differences in the interpretation of teachings they have received. We saw occasionally in the New Testament that right belief was particularly a theme where communities were in conflict (with other followers of Christ or with outsiders); this may be a further example of it, and we will meet another below.³⁰ It may also be an example of writers’ increasing tendency to invoke the authority of writings, which we also saw in the later books of the New Testament. In some cases, these may still be the Jewish scriptures, but it is not impossible that we can also see here early references to the authority of the writings, in particular, of Paul.

1 Clement’s treatment of *pistis* builds largely, though not exclusively, on Paul’s.³¹ His understanding of the economy of divine–human *pistis*, the shape of the community it creates, the nature of authority within that community, the faithfulness to which God calls community members, and the role of *pistis* in salvation are all closely connected with Paul’s, though what may be a greater emphasis on propositional belief is understandable in the context of community discord. He does not, however, use all of Paul’s letters equally. Apart from a handful of references to Romans, most of his references are to the Corinthian letters (not inappropriately, since he is writing to Corinthians), and the shape and economy of *pistis* outlined above is closest to that of the **(p.512)** Corinthian letters and 1 Thessalonians, as described in Chapter 6.³² Most strikingly, to modern readers, the author makes at most a glancing reference to Paul’s model of justification by *pistis* as it is developed in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians: ‘Therefore we, called by [God’s] will in Christ Jesus, are not made righteous by ourselves, or by our wisdom, understanding, piety, or the works which we have performed in the holiness of our heart, but by *pistis*, by which Almighty God has justified everyone from the beginning of the age’ (32.4). Though God’s will is understood as working through Christ here, it is not clear whether the *pistis* the writer invokes is the double *pistis* of Christ towards God and humanity or more simply, as in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, the *pistis* of those who are called by God through Christ.³³ (If the latter, then whether the writer himself thought in these terms, or whether he was addressing what he took to be the Corinthians’ Christology, of course, we cannot know.)

God is *pistos* in a number of other texts written around the same time or not much later, while for human beings *pistis* most often seems to refer to enduring faithfulness toward God and/or Christ.³⁴ In other texts, too, faithfulness allows of development: Ignatius, for instance, writing to the Ephesians, assures them that he, like them, is not yet perfect, but a fellow-pupil ‘in Jesus Christ’, whose *pistis*, along with other qualities, is still developing.³⁵ For Ignatius, in the same letter, *pistis* is also a quality which holds people together in shared and harmonious trust in God (13.1).³⁶

Like the author of 1 Clement, Ignatius is concerned in several of his letters with disputes within Christian communities, between community members and outsiders, and perhaps between communities too. Writing to the Ephesians (16.1–2), he says that anyone who corrupts by false teaching *tēn pistin theou*, for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Pistis theou here could be (community members' understanding of) God's *pistis* (p.513) or (community members') *pistis* towards God,³⁷ but shortly afterwards (20.1) Ignatius seems to refer clearly to the subjective *pistis* of Christ. He promises, in a 'second book', to explain to the Ephesians the new *oikonomia* of Jesus Christ, 'in his *pistis* and in his love, in his suffering and resurrection' (ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ πίστει καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πάθει αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναστάσει). Since the latter two phrases clearly refer to the suffering and resurrection of Christ himself, it is likely that the first two refer to Christ's own *pistis* and love. These might be towards God, humanity, or both.³⁸ If the reference is to Christ's *pistis* and love, however, the two terms in close association inevitably echo the many passages where *pistis* and love appear together as human practices. Cumulatively, therefore, in these passages Ignatius points towards, though he never describes squarely, a Pauline economy of salvation (even using the word *oikonomia*) in which God reaches out to humanity in *pistis*, the *pistis* (and love) of Christ towards both God and humanity brings the faithful to eternal life (20.2), and both together call for a response of *pistis* and love from human beings (20.2).

Condemning false teaching does not lead Ignatius in this letter to talk about *pistis* in strongly propositional terms, but in his letters to the Philadelphians and the Smyrnaeans it does. He urges the Philadelphians (8.1) to put their trust in Christ and stop saying, 'If I do not find [a particular teaching] in the records [*archeia*, a word usually used of public records in city archives] in the gospel I do not believe' (8.2). It is unclear syntactically whether someone who says this wants to find confirmation of the gospel in the scriptures before believing it, or whether the person is looking at written records of the gospel itself.³⁹ Either way, *pistis* based on a community's records is strongly suggestive of propositional belief in the truth of those records. In Ignatius' letter to the Smyrnaeans, the connection between *pistis*, dissension, and propositional belief is explicit. Ignatius begins by praising the Smyrnaeans' *pistis*, which is as firm as if it were nailed to the cross—and immediately characterizes that *pistis* as affirming that Jesus Christ is descended from David, God's Son, born of a Virgin, baptized by John, crucified by Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch, and resurrected as a sign for all ages (1.1–2). 'I myself know and believe (*pisteuō*)', says Ignatius, shortly afterwards (3.1), 'that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection.' In context, *pisteuein* must be propositional here, and it soon (p.514) emerges why Ignatius is making these claims in these terms. Certain *apistos* people (5.2–3) have been denying that Christ rose in the flesh. Ignatius asserts that such people have not put their trust (*pisteuein*) in the blood of Christ (6.1): that is, not to believe propositionally in the physical resurrection is not to have *pistis* at all. The directness of this assertion goes beyond anything we encountered in the New Testament, and suggests—especially, perhaps, in the context of disputes among Christians—that propositional belief can be treated increasingly as not only an intrinsic part of *pistis* but even in some sense as definitive of it.

Very occasionally, in these letters, *hē pistis* seems to borrow one of Paul's extended uses of the term: for instance, when Ignatius urges the Trallians (8.1), 'be renewed *en pistei*, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ'. The reference to the body and blood which seal the new covenant suggests that *pistis* here means more than 'trust'—perhaps the new covenant itself. But there is no sign of the term being reified beyond Paul's usage, and certainly not of *hē pistis* being used to mean 'the faith' in the modern sense. Much was to happen to *pistis* and *fides* later in the second century and in succeeding centuries.

These examples begin to show how one might trace the ongoing evolution of *pistis* in early churches. From the second century our sources increase dramatically in number and diversity, adopting new languages, forging new genres, interacting with new intellectual traditions, addressing new social groups, and adapting to new regions of the Roman empire and neighbouring cultures. Christian *pistis/fides* becomes increasingly distinctive: as a theological virtue, a body of doctrine, devotion seeking understanding, a personified foundation of the church, a mystery in the modern as well as the ancient sense, and a religion. Having drawn much of its early self-understanding from the Graeco-Roman culture around it, in the fourth century it returns the compliment, importing new meanings of *pistis/fides* into Roman politics, law, public life, and society. But all that is for another study.

Notes:

(1) Drawing not only on ancient history, New Testament studies, and theology, but on the study of religions, anthropology, sociology, economic theory, philosophy, and modern historiography.

(2) On the degree of clarity it is appropriate to look for in patterns of *mentalité*, see Morgan (2007b), 2–3.

(3) Friends and patrons/clients, of course, are overlapping categories (p. 61).

(4) This may reflect the dominantly elite nature of our sources: on law as trustworthy in principle but not in practice in popular moral genres, see Morgan (2007b), 169–71.

(5) Some of these patterns are common across more places and times than others, while some (such as attitudes to economic

activities) are more socially specific than others. Relationships and institutions in which most *pistis/fides* is placed in this period may include those less violently disrupted by the political upheavals of the first centuries BCE and CE. The placing of more *pistis/fides* in institutions which act as, among other things, reifications of deferred trust is common across Graeco-Roman societies, but the structures concerned, of course, are specific to the period.

(6) The difference is partly one of insider vs. outsider perspective, but, as the story of Abraham in Genesis and some examples in Chapter 4 show, not entirely.

(7) The call to *pistis/fides* is especially prominent in Graeco-Roman literature in times of crisis, a habit of thought which Christian preachers exploit.

(8) e.g. pp. 238–41, 352–3.

(9) pp. 20–1.

(10) Alongside their conceptual relationships with a handful of other terms which are not linguistically cognate.

(11) This, no doubt, is partly because complex institutions are not needed by early communities, but it also fits their strong focus on trust and reliance on God and the extent to which they are understood as structured by good qualities or virtues (see Ch. 12).

(12) See e.g. pp. 21–2.

(13) Additionally, in the synoptic gospels Jesus exhorts his followers to *pisteuein* so that God may give them directly the power to perform miracles: e.g. pp. 356, 369; cf. p. 232.

(14) Laws are widely treated as trustworthy in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman discourse, but this is one aspect of *mentalité* on which Christian writers draw very little, presumably because of communities' complex relationships with the law of Moses.

(15) Rather as Greeks and Romans can be cast as models of immutable *pistis/fides* on their tombstones, so a range of characters from scripture can be cast as models of immutable *pistis* towards God by the insertion of *pistis* into their scriptural stories.

(16) e.g. p. 422.

(17) Though note the argument of Johnson (2014) and Meeks (2014) (*contra* Bultmann) that this evolution should not automatically be seen as a decline in the quality of Christian community.

(18) Cf. pp. 11, 500.

(19) For the characterization of this community, which is described through multiple domestic and political images, it is useful that *pistis/fides* is one of the very few qualities which are treated as equally domestic and political in Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic Jewish thinking; cf. pp. 117–18.

(20) Christian preachers can take advantage of the widespread mistrust of emperors, tyrants, and rulers of all kinds in this period by proclaiming that God is trustworthy as no human ruler is (cf. pp. 86–9, 94).

(21) Cf. pp. 11, 110.

(22) Cf. e.g. pp. 4, 23, 30, and *passim*.

(23) Jung (2002).

(24) 35.1, 42.5, 64; cf. 58. Greek and Latin writings articulate this explicitly but it remains implicit in New Testament writings. For an argument for *pistis* as the faithfulness of God here, see Whittenton (2010), 90–1.

(25) 1.2, 5.4 (Peter and Paul), 9.4 (Enoch, Noah), 10.1 (Abraham, who is *pistos* primarily in obedience as in Hellenistic commentaries on Genesis; cf. 31.1), 11.1 (Lot), 12.1 (Rahab), 17.5 (Moses, linked with humility; cf. 43.1), 35.5, 55 (Esther), 58.

- (26) It is also *panaretos*, 'all-virtuous'; cf. 26.1, where *pistis* is called good (*agathos*) and 35.5, where it is contrasted with all kinds of evildoing (*ponēria*).
- (27) The Corinthians' positive fear of God has also become dulled.
- (28) e.g. 1.2, 10.1, 12.1, 17.5, 21, 31.1, 35.1, 35.5, 48.5, 62.1–2.
- (29) Building on the distinctive use of *pepoithēsis* in 2 Cor.; cf. pp. 251–2.
- (30) pp. 513–14.
- (31) His scriptural exempla, for instance, owe much to Hebrews, and he several times cites the synoptic gospels (or material on which they draw).
- (32) Though the overwhelming majority of references are to the scriptures, not to other Christian writers.
- (33) We cannot tell whether, if he is referring to Paul's model of justification, the author understands Paul, misunderstands him, or is deliberately imposing his own interpretation on him. Mitchell (2001), 355 rightly cautions us against assuming that the Church Fathers, though closer in time to Paul than we are, understood him better than we do or resisted adapting him to their own arguments.
- (34) e.g. 2 Clem. 11.5–6 (divine *pistis*); 2 Clem 8.5, 15.2–3, 20.1–2, Ign., *Eph.* 10.2, 14.1, *Eph.*, *Magn.* 1.1, Ign., *Smyr.* 1.1, *Pol.*, *Phil.* 2.2, 10.1 (where the letter survives only in Latin so the reference is to community members' being *firmi in fide et immutabiles*), 13.2, *Barn.* 2.2 (human). 2 Clem. 17.5 (following LXX) uses *hoi apistoi* of unfaithful community members rather than outsiders; Ign., *Eph.* 18.1 uses it of outsiders; cf. 21.2, Ign., *Magn.* 5.2, Ign., *Trall.* 10.1.
- (35) 3.1 (despite his imperfection, he sees himself as being in a position to rebuke the Ephesians). *Pistis*, however, he says shortly after (8.1), cannot commit *apistia*, so any development in *pistis* does not involve mistrust or disbelief.
- (36) Cf. Ign., *Magn.* 6.1–2.
- (37) Elliott (2009), 282 treats this as an instance of *fides quae*, but this is unlikely in context. Ignatius says first (16.1) that those who destroy families will not inherit the kingdom, then that those who destroy *pistin theou* will not do so either. In parallel with families (and surrounded by relational language in sections 15 and 17), *pistin theou* is likely to be relational too. It would, moreover, be odd to say (16.2) that Christ was crucified for the sake of the content of the faith, but there is no difficulty in saying that Christ was crucified for the sake of the relationship between God and humanity.
- (38) *Contra Yong* (2003), 108, Harrisville (1994), 241, who do not find references to Christ's faithfulness in the Fathers; cf. Wallis (1995), 188 on Ign., *Eph.* 1.1 and 190 on 16.1–2.
- (39) Cf. Ign., *Phil.* 5.2 (we love the prophets because they announced the gospel), Polycarp, *Phil.* 13.2 (where Polycarp says that the letters of Ignatius, which the Philippians are collecting, contain '*pistis*, patience, and all the edification which relates to our Lord').

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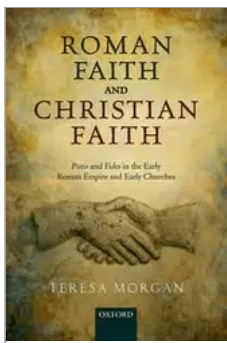
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Pistis, Fides, and the Structure of Divine–Human Communities

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter argues that *pistis* is central not only to the shape of the divine–human community on earth but also to the eschatological kingdom or household of God, and that *pistis* and other ethical qualities not only define but structure the kingdom. It examines other cults presented as divine–human polities and argues that ethics can also be understood as structural in these, and, indeed, in Graeco-Roman society as a whole. It draws parallels between Christian presentations of the kingdom of God, Jewish depictions of heaven, Greek and Roman myths of the golden age and the mythologized past, and the ideal societies of political theory, relating all of them to contemporary theories of natural goodness and natural law. It argues that the kingdom of God can be understood as a form of community of virtue and life in it a natural good, in accordance with divine and natural law.

Keywords: *pistis*, ethics, polity, eschatological, kingdom, golden age, community of virtue, natural law, natural goodness

Chapters 6–10 explored the shape and operation of *pistis* in different groups of New Testament writings, focusing on the distinctiveness of each writing or group of writings and on the complexity of *pistis* within individual texts. Chapter 11 considered the interiority of *pistis/fides* alongside its relationality and activity, and discussed how far it is understood in writings of the early principate as cognitive, emotional, or ethical. Despite its traditional identification as one of the three ‘theological virtues’, the ethical aspects of *pistis* tend to be overlooked both in studies of *pistis* and in studies of ethics in the New Testament, where *pistis* is usually treated as one of the foundations of Christian life rather than as a moral issue on a par, for instance, with chastity or the swearing of oaths.¹ I have argued throughout this study, however, for understanding *pistis* as an integrated concept and praxis, and its uses as

related to one another unless there is good reason to think they are not, so one of the aims of this chapter is to connect the ethical aspect of *pistis* with what New Testament writers say about its role in the relationship between humanity, God, and Christ. I shall argue that the two are closely interwoven and that their connection goes to the heart of the meaning of *pistis* for very early Christians.

Pistis, Ethics, and Earthly and Eschatological Communities

Chapters 5–10 focused mainly on the role of *pistis* and related concepts at the beginning of the relationship which people are called to make with God, or (p.474) God and Christ, and as an aspect of life in the community of the faithful in this world. As is widely recognized, however, it can be difficult to distinguish New Testament writers' accounts of the divine–human community on earth from their eschatological vision. With the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the divine–human relationship has already changed decisively. The kingdom of God which can be expected (more or less imminently) at the end time can also be understood as inaugurated in Jesus' lifetime, as perhaps by Matthew: '[I]f it is by the spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come (*ephthasen*) upon you.'² Those who *pisteuein* are made *dikaïos* by the sacrificial death of Christ and by their *pistis*; they may hope to be saved from death at the last trump, but since 'the sting of death is sin' (1 Cor. 15.56), they are also already saved.³ Since *pistis* is integral to the beginning and continuation of the new divine–human relationship on earth, we may therefore wonder whether it is also imagined as part of the eschatological divine–human community.

Surely it is. The difficulty of separating the earthly from the eschatological is indicative in itself.⁴ It is also suggestive, for instance, that the faithful slave of Matthew's parables of the end time is imagined as having been *pistos* not only up to the return of his master but afterwards, when he is rewarded and given further responsibilities.⁵ For Paul, and even more for John, as we have seen, *pisteuein* can be understood as a response to having already been chosen for eternal life, and life as one *pisteuōn* as already part of eternal life.⁶ In the Book of Revelation, meanwhile, the exalted Christ is still *pistos* (1.5, 19.11), and so are those who, after the final cosmic battle, are 'with' the Lamb (17.14). We may also take into account the strong tradition among both Jews and gentiles of the unchangingness of God (which enables Philo, for instance, writing a treatise *On the Unchangeableness of God*, to draw equally on scripture and Platonism). This theme runs throughout the Septuagint, and New Testament writers cite the scriptures to reaffirm it: 'At the beginning, O Lord, you established the earth,' says the author of Hebrews, quoting Psalm 97.7, 'and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you remain...you are the same, and your years will have no end' (Heb. 1.10–12). For 1 Peter, the inheritance promised by God to the faithful is 'imperishable, undefiled, and unfading'.⁷ God loves and does not cease to love. He is always *dikaïos*, consistently *pistos*, and fulfils his promises. He is never said to (p.475) abrogate his mercy or truth. 'God is love', proclaims the author of 1 John (4.16). For Paul, 'God *must be* true, though every human being is a liar' (Rom. 3.4; cf. 15.7–12). If God is unchanging, then the qualities God extends towards humanity, including *pistis*, to which human beings are invited to respond, are surely also unchanging, and the relationship of *pistis*, *dikaïosynē*, *agapē*, and so on into which human beings enter persists eschatologically.

The divine–human relationship of *pistis*, earthly or eschatological, is imagined in a number of different but overlapping ways. It is a new creation, new or eternal life. It creates a new family or polity, populates a new city, or enables the faithful to enter God's or Christ's kingdom.⁸ Within this relationship are peace, freedom, and security; it releases the faithful from all the attachments and burdens of life as they know it. It is a place of celebration, feasting, and worship.⁹ In addition to all these, it is a fertile place, a source of healing, sustenance, and new life. Its value is expressed in parables which speak of the kingdom of heaven as a jewel or treasure, pearls, and streets of gold.

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...ile Christ is also brother and friend. ... belong 'in Christ'; they are 'fellow-citizens of the holy ones' (Eph. 2.19) and subjects of God's kingdom. ... They love God and Christ and are loved by them. Almost all New Testament writers use multiple images of the new community created by this new relationship: domestic and political, individual and corporate; images of enslavement and release, of arrival and renewal.

It is worth noting that most of these are images of communities to which members contribute actively. Visions of God's kingdom as a place of rest, or a place to which the faithful are invited as guests to be feasted and entertained, (p.476) are (though powerful in later Christian consciousness) relatively rare.¹¹ Heaven, the New Jerusalem, God's kingdom, the Father's house—wherever writers and their communities hope ultimately to arrive—is usually imagined as a society of which God, Christ, and the faithful are permanent members with, implicitly, appropriate roles. Communities of the faithful who could envisage themselves as slaves, heirs, subjects, citizens, or friends of God and Christ far more often than as wedding guests or keepers of an eternal Sabbath did not conceptualize the divine–human relationship primarily as one of rest and relaxation. They spoke of it as a community and society which worked perfectly, but which by that token worked.¹²

Alongside this divine–human community, variously characterized, in most New Testament texts, exists another community, in some senses coextensive with it but also capable of being distinguished from it, into which people are also called through *pistis*: their church. The highly complex relationship between churches and the church, earthly or eschatological, and God’s family, kingdom, or new life, inaugurated or hoped for, need not detain us here.¹³ We need only observe that the events of Jesus’ last Passover and the following Pentecost lead within a few years to the formation of a number of societies with (often shared or mutually recognized) teachers, prophets, and healers, deacons, overseers, and elders, common times and forms of prayer and feasting, and practical methods of problem-solving. In these increasingly organized communities *hoi pisteuontes* experience new life, wait faithfully for the return of Jesus Christ, preach the kingdom, and prepare for it.

Both these aspects of the divine–human community formed by *pistis*, and their interconnectedness, are well recognized and explored. Little recognized, by comparison, is a third: an aspect described not in terms of institutions or social roles, physical, metaphysical, or metaphorical, but with the language of *pistis* itself and other qualities: *dikaioσynē*, *agapē*, *charis*, *alētheia*, *eirēnē*, *eleos*, *sophia*, *praütēs*, *eusebeia*, *hagiasmos*, *elpis*. These qualities, most of which are known to Greek speakers as virtues and all of which have active and relational (p.477) dimensions, do more than colour a divine–human relationship structured by other things.¹⁴ In many passages they constitute the structure and economy of the relationship in their own right. ‘God so loved (*ēgapēsen*) the world’, says John’s Jesus (Jn. 3.16), ‘that he gave his only Son, so that everyone trusting/believing (*pisteuōn*) in him might not perish...’ ‘The *dikaioσynē* of God has been manifested through the *pistis* of Jesus Christ’, says Paul, and the one who puts his *pistis* in Christ will be made *dikaioσ* (Rom. 3.21–6). ‘All those *pisteuontes* were together,’ says Acts (2.44), ‘and had everything in common.’ ‘Those who trusted/believed (*tōn pisteusantōn*) were of one heart and mind...’ (Acts 4.32).¹⁵ For Matthew, the kingdom is God’s righteousness.¹⁶ Paul’s vision of the kingdom of God at the end time, after the destruction of all Christ’s enemies, is characterized above all by its qualities: glory, power, incorruptibility, and immortality, while the vision of Revelation, in addition to its portrait of the New Jerusalem as a city, is characterized by the ending of grief and pain, of glory, beauty, wealth, purity, healing, light, and life itself.¹⁷

In multiple passages, God is faithful (*pistos*); he extends to human beings (or to the chosen) grace, mercy, and peace, love, wisdom, pity, or righteousness. Human beings respond with *pistis*, hope, and love, and are made *dikaioi* or *teleioi*. They are given gifts such as the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5.22–3) (all of which are qualities and almost all virtues elsewhere in Greek writing): love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, *pistis*, gentleness, self-control.¹⁸ Who has these qualities, who gives them, receives them, and uses them is carefully set out and (as preceding chapters have shown) the patterns recur. Using slightly different clusters of such qualities, according to which aspects of the divine–human relationship they want to emphasize, to whom they are talking, and sometimes against whom they are defining themselves,¹⁹ the writers of the New Testament can describe the structure and dynamics of the divine–human relationship in terms independent of (though often parallel to) their language of the divine–human relationship as a family, a polity, or a church.

(p.478) The significance of this use of qualities which are also known as virtues to characterize and structure the divine–human relationship and community will be the main focus of this chapter. First, though, we can make one or two more observations about the relationship they describe as a relationship. It closely fits the ‘Attitude’ model of faith, described by William Lad Sessions in *The Concept of Faith*, in which S has faith towards X if S’s whole life is oriented to X and S interprets the world in light of his or her relationship with X.²⁰ Between them, the images we have listed of the relationship between God, Christ, and humanity replicate and (at least in principle) replace human beings’ most important intra-human relationships, as well as previous divine–human relationship(s). The themes which run throughout the New Testament, that to follow Christ one must leave one’s home and reject family and friends,²¹ die to the world and be reborn,²² or live a new life in Christ,²³ underline that Christian life is symbolically new life in a new society, and within that society one is not encouraged to practise *pistis* to anyone other than God, Christ, and those who are entrusted with the gospel or the spiritual gift of *pistis*.²⁴ Followers of Christ identify themselves unconditionally with the perspective and interests of God, as loyal slaves, children, and citizens do with the perspective and interests of their master, father, or king. Whatever other connections or commitments they retain have, the texts imply, little or no claim on their *pistis*.

Even if the faithful do not cease to be spouses, parents, children, or office holders in the wider world alongside being followers of Christ, their existing relationships are rethought in the light of their new relationship with God. For some, everyday relationships become inescapable but uninteresting facts which the faithful should allow to interfere with their faithfulness as little as possible. For others, they become their own means of expressing *pistis*: so, for example, a woman may express her faithfulness to God by being a good wife to her husband.²⁵ Either way, the *pistis* between God, Christ, and the faithful becomes the lens through which all other relationships are viewed.

Is this relationship understood as more comprehensive than relationships of *pistis* or *fides* between other worshippers and the gods

whom they trust and find trustworthy? It is certainly configured rather differently from its nearest equivalents in mainstream Graeco-Roman religiosity. We saw in Chapters 2–4 that Greek and Roman divinities can be presented as *pistos/fidelis* towards human beings and as worthy of *pistis/fides*. Unlike Christians, though, there is no sign that most Greeks or Romans are encouraged to trust one god or some (p.479) gods at the expense of others. They can, moreover, and often do practise *pistis/fides* towards members of other communities who worship other gods, notably in war. And although the gods are sometimes represented as overseeing, even guaranteeing, *pistis/fides* between human beings, and it is possible that they are understood as overseeing all intra-human *pistis/fides*, the sources do not tell us so and we cannot be sure that some intra-human *pistis/fides* is not independent of divine oversight.²⁶ Among Jewish communities the evidence suggests a varied picture. There is, in principle, only one God in whom Jews can appropriately *pisteuein*.²⁷ God again oversees *pistis/fides* between human beings and may oversee all intra-human *pistis/fides*, though he is not explicitly said to do so.²⁸ Most Jews, in practice, were probably willing to extend some degree of *pistis/fides* to non-community members, whether by expressing their loyalty to the emperor (short of worship), joining a gymnasium, or holding office in a gentile city.²⁹ But some groups, such as the (likely Essene) communities of the Dead Sea Scrolls, for whom piety demanded withdrawal from the world, may have practised *pistis/fides* only towards fellow-community members.³⁰

With this last point we have shifted from comparing what is articulated in written evidence for different groups to speculating about what was done in practice. If we make the same move in relation to early Christian groups, we may be able to detect a little more variation in practices of *pistis* than New Testament texts explicitly condone. John's gospel is notoriously hostile towards any but members of the writer's own community, so it is hard to imagine him encouraging community members to *pisteuein* in outsiders.³¹ In 1 Thessalonians Paul is rather wary of outsiders (e.g. 4.12), and even 1 Corinthians, which acknowledges more than most letters the inevitable entanglement of community members' lives with those of non-members, does not recommend trust between them (even criticizing community members for taking each other to court before *apistoi* (6.1–6)).³² But the synoptic gospels (without using *pistis* language) remember Jesus as telling Jews to pay their Roman taxes, which implies at least the minimal loyalty of keeping the (p.480) law of the empire.³³ And in Romans Paul goes further, telling his audience to pay their taxes and in general to obey the secular authorities, because 'there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God' (Rom. 13.1, 6). This, he says frankly, is partly a counsel of prudence (13.3–5), but not entirely: the one God who oversees the whole world approves of people paying 'all their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, toll to whom toll is due, respect (*phobos*) to whom respect is due, honour (*timē*) to whom honour is due' (13.7).³⁴ *Pistis* does not occur in this passage either, but, as we have seen, it can be understood as close to positive kinds of *phobos* and to *timē*, so it may be implicit here that *pistis* between community members and outsiders is not always inappropriate.³⁵ We can probably conclude that on a spectrum of divine–human *pistis/fides* relationships Christian communities tend to be located at the more 'comprehensive' end (in Sessions's terms, that the divine–human *pistis* relationship constitutes a particularly strong 'horizon of significance' for Christians), but that, as almost certainly in Judaism and Graeco-Roman religiosity too, there are variations among worshippers and worshipping groups.³⁶

One of the most fertile approaches to New Testament ethics in recent decades has proposed that early Christian ethics do not so much identify distinctive behaviours or attitudes as right or wrong as call followers of Christ to reorient their lives to Christ, and this approach also bears on the question of the comprehensiveness of the divine–human *pistis* relationship. A number of scholars emphasize the importance in early Christian ethical thinking of imitating Christ (especially his faithfulness and obedience to God). Leander Keek expands this focus to characterize Christian ethics as orientated to the life, death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ.³⁷ For J. Louis Martyn, followers of Christ identify with the kingdom of God and see themselves as taking part in an eschatological battle between two worlds, while many argue some form of the view that the foundation of Christian ethics is not any (p.481) specific set of actions so much as one's relationship with God and Christ.³⁸ From this perspective, it is not hard to see why Christian *pistis* might function as a particularly comprehensive relationship or create a particularly powerful 'horizon of significance'. If followers of Christ orientate their whole life towards that of Christ and understand themselves as taking part on God's side in a cosmic battle, then it is likely that their *pistis* will be fully engaged on God's side too. The *pistis* between God, Christ, and community members, for early writers, is as comprehensive as the divine–human relationship itself: the two are inseparable.³⁹

This excursus serves as a useful reminder that this study is essentially a study of texts and the self-representation of writers in dialogue with their communities, which will not always capture the range of what happened in those communities in practice. If, moreover, this had been cast as a study of trust, for instance, using a modern English definition of 'trust', rather than as a study of *pistis/fides*, we might have explored some different material and sometimes found concepts and praxeis we have discussed emerging from the sources in slightly different configurations. This, of course, is the inevitable consequence of any set of historiographical choices: what one gains in interpretative clarity and incisiveness in one direction, one loses in another. In the early stages of this project I pondered at length what concept to make central to it, in what definition, before settling on *pistis/fides* in the range of early

imperial usage. As we have seen, the shape and operation of early imperial *pistis/fides* are not exactly the same as those of ‘trust’, ‘faith’, ‘loyalty’, or any other twenty-first-century concept, but—particularly because Christian ‘faith’ has such a long and complex afterlife—it was *pistis/fides* in contemporary terms which seemed to me to make the most effective point of entry for understanding how very early Christians understood their *pistis* relationship with God, Christ, the spirit, and one another.

Is the *pistis* relationship imagined essentially as individualistic, taking place between God and each *pistos* separately, or as communal and inseparable from (p.482) life in community?⁴⁰ One can imagine two individuals, human or divine, electing to establish a relationship of trust, say, which is specific to them. It might involve the commitment that the parties were going to trust and be trustworthy only towards one another, or it might stipulate that the parties would trust and be trustworthy towards one another in respect of some particular activity. (For example, I might undertake to trust only one person, divine or human, in all my daily doings, or I might undertake to engage in trade with only one partner with whom I have established a relationship of trust, or to engage honestly in trade only with that partner.) We might envisage the covenant between God and Abram as paradigmatic of such individualism—but Abram’s *pistis* involves his household as well as himself, and is established for the making of a great nation out of his descendants (Gen. 12.2, 15.1–6), so Abram is always the representative of his family and even, in a sense, of his descendants (and when it does not look as though he will have children, Abram questions the point of his relationship with God (15.2)). Even the relationship between God and Abram can therefore be seen as more than individual on Abram’s side. So, for instance, as we saw in Chapter 5, is that between God and Job. When Job complains that God has not treated him justly, God’s response is to affirm that he is trustworthy towards creation as a whole, and to Job in that context.⁴¹ Job can trust God not because of his individual relationship with God, but as part of the collective of created beings.

In the Graeco-Roman world, we might be tempted to characterize the special relationship between Alexander and Zeus, for example, or Augustus and Apollo, as relationships of individual *pistis/fides*, but, whether by chance or design, our sources do not characterize such relationships in that way. When we do hear of divine–human relationships of *pistis/fides*, the implication is usually that a god is *pistos/fidus* to those who elect to worship him or her, as a group. Roman Fides, for example, as a hypostasis of Capitoline Jupiter, has a special relationship with the Romans as a people, and may also be seen as overseeing relationships of *fides* between Romans and foreigners as groups (e.g. Val. Max. 6.6.1, 3).⁴² In stories in which Fides and other divine qualities oversee golden ages or flee from the earth in times of strife, it is whole communities, not good or bad individuals among them, which they bless or from which they withdraw their blessing.⁴³ Epictetus (2.8.23) understands the divine as putting its trust in each human being to preserve the virtues with (p.483) which he or she was born. In one sense, this means that every human being has an individual relationship with the divine, but in another the *pistis* of the divine towards individuals is part of its *pistis* relationship with human beings collectively. One or two of the examples discussed in Chapter 4 have a more individualistic slant. The tombstone of the trader buried at Brindisi, for example, celebrates ‘Nurturing Fides’ because, ‘Three times, when my fortunes were in ruins and I was despairing, you restored me.’ He continues, however, ‘You are worthy that *all mortals* should look to you...’,⁴⁴ leaving open whether he understands his relationship with Fides as truly individual or as a consequence of the goddess’s *fides* towards human beings collectively.

There is no obvious reason why individuals should not have individual relationships of *pistis/fides* with particular gods, but characteristically, it seems, divinities in this period are presented as offering *pistis/fides* to whole communities or to all people collectively. The same is true in the writings of the New Testament. Numerous stories, especially in the gospels and Acts, tell of people individually putting their trust in God and in Jesus Christ, in Jesus’ lifetime and afterwards. When Matthew’s Jesus invites people to bring him their burdens and assume his yoke (11.28–9), or John’s Jesus invites people to drink the water he will give and become a spring of water themselves (4.13–14), we might be tempted to imagine each relationship as individual, even unique. But what Jesus offers, he offers in the same way and on the same terms to all those who *pisteuein* in him, and, revealingly, when the relationship is described metaphorically, it is always in images of community: the people, kingdom, or household of God; the new covenant.⁴⁵

It does not follow that those who have a *pistis/fides* relationship with a divinity have a communal relationship in the sense that they are all in one relationship, though Paul, for instance, does occasionally talk of people being one ‘in’ that relationship (which is not quite the same thing).⁴⁶ But insofar as they all have equivalent relationships with the divine, and by that token belong to a particular community, and insofar as *pistis/fides* helps to form and define communities and those who worship in them, divine–human *pistis/fides* should probably be seen as more strongly communal (on the human side) than individualistic. This is true not least for followers of Christ, for whom the *pistis* of any individual towards God and Christ is only possible because of the actions of God and Christ on behalf of all.

(p.484) Pistis/fides and SocioPolitical Collectives

These discussions of the comprehensiveness of faith and of divine–human *pistis/fides* as communal may have had an excursive

flavour, but they are relevant to the next stage of the argument. In the world of the first century most divine–human relationships are connected with communities, above all sociopolitical communities.⁴⁷ Polities throughout the Mediterranean and the Near East remember themselves as having been founded by heroes they honour as gods (Romulus, Alexander), and major deities as having been involved at decisive points in their evolution (Athena, Juno). Emperors are increasingly offered cult as the supreme political power of the empire. The vast majority of cults are symbiotically engaged with the sociopolitical organizations in which they are physically located.⁴⁸ To judge from their material remains, epigraphic evidence of cult activities, and the density and variety of references to religious activity in literature, inhabitants of political communities, from villages to kingdoms, were profoundly interested in their corporate relationships with their shared gods. For Jews, God's covenants with Abraham and Moses created both a people and a state. How strongly Jews of the early Roman principate felt about the autonomy of Israel as a state probably varied widely, but at the end of the first century, when Israel had been under Roman rule for the better part of two hundred years and under foreign control for most of the past seven hundred, Josephus, in *Against Apion*, could still portray the law of Moses as not only a set of religious regulations but (in terms familiar to Greeks and Romans) the laws of a people and the constitution of a state. 'I want to speak briefly', he says, introducing his panegyric to the law at 2.145–6, '...both about our whole constitution of government (*politeuma*) and about its parts, from which I think it will be clear that we have laws ideally disposed to foster piety and community among ourselves, and love of the whole of humanity, and also justice and strength in times of trouble, and contempt for death.'⁴⁹

The worship of the gods, for Greeks, Romans, and Jews alike, is so deeply implicated with social and political structures and practices that new cults which arise, or arrive, in a region without political connections or protection are often treated with suspicion, if not outright hostility. They can even be characterized as polities in themselves, and as such as a threat to the region's existing polities. Livy provides a famous example in his account of the rise and (p.485) suppression of the Bacchanalia in Italy in the early second century BCE. In his narrative, a cult which, to modern eyes, seems to have little or nothing to do with politics is vilified and attacked in political terms as, by its very existence, a threat to the state of Rome.⁵⁰

In 186 BCE, according to Livy, the Roman consuls were instructed by the Senate to investigate an 'internal conspiracy' (*intestina coniuratio*) which had arrived from the Greek East (39.8). This 'conspiracy' allegedly involved the worship of Bacchus, 'secret nocturnal rituals', drinking and feasting, promiscuity, and (the element on which Livy dwells at greatest length) sexual corruption of both men and women (39.8, 10). So far there is, to a modern reader, nothing obviously political about the cult. The Romans, however, think otherwise. They claim that adherents subvert the law by doing violence and murder (39.8, 9, 13) and committing perjury, false testimony, fraud, forgery, and other, nameless crimes (39.8, 16, 18). They create their own communistic economy by pooling their resources (39.18). They assemble, not, like Romans, for legitimate political or military purposes, but to plot immorality and crime (39.14, 15). They destroy the virtue and reputation of those who take part in it (39.10). All in all, the consuls claim, the new cult constitutes a conspiracy (39.13, 17) whose ultimate aim is to destroy not only the cults of the gods which sustain Rome but ultimately Rome itself (39.16).⁵¹ *Ad summam rem publicam spectat*, says one consul (39.16): their ultimate object is to take over the state, and unless Roman citizens stand guard, they may succeed (39.15). The consuls call the citizenry, the gods, and the force of law (39.15, 18) to join forces to extirpate the conspiracy, and eventually they do so.⁵²

Forms of the worship of Dionysus or Bacchus which involve nocturnal rituals, drinking, excursions beyond city walls, and undomestic behaviour by women have a long history of being treated with suspicion in the Graeco-Roman world, if not with persecution on this scale. But the most remarkable aspect of Livy's account is how the cult, as a cult, is treated as a sociopolitical entity, with social, political, legal, economic, and ethical as well as (what we might think of as) religious aspects: an entity which, because it has no existing relationship with Rome, must be assumed to be in competition with it. The worship of gods, Livy suggests, does not merely help to form, contribute to, or support polities; groups of people, whether related in other ways or not, who are organized around the worship of a god can be understood, by that token, as *being* polities. It is a way of thinking in which the identity of the descendants of (p.486) Abraham with the people of Israel, and that of followers of Christ with a chosen people (1 Pet. 1.9) or subjects of a heavenly kingdom, fit comfortably.

Livy tells us little about the internal organization of the Bacchanalia, though he mentions that they have priests and rites of initiation. The aspect of them which he mentions most often and dwells on at greatest length is their ethics. Worshippers drink to 'inflammate the mind', and destroy all modesty by the indiscriminate social and sexual mingling of men and women (39.8). Their sexual immorality is dwelt on repeatedly.⁵³ Each initiate becomes 'like a victim' for the priests, who lead him or her away to a place where howling, choral singing, and the clash of cymbals and drums drown his or her screams as vice is imposed on them by force (39.10). Men couple with men as well as with women, which leads to effeminacy alongside every other shame (39.13, 16). This, together with the Bacchanals' other vicious behaviour, inverts a series of standard Roman (and Greek) virtues, including justice, continence, honesty, masculine dominance, and feminine submissiveness.

The Bacchanals' behaviour is more than subversive of Roman social order: it constitutes an alternative social order based on alternative moral principles. In this, Livy offers an unexpected parallel with the texts of the New Testament. Here, as there, ethical ideas and practices do more than colour or validate a divine–human community structured by other things. They constitute a structure in their own right, through which the nature and working of the divine–human community can be understood, as well as through their priestly offices, habits of assembly, or distribution of property.

Are Christians and Bacchanals abnormal in structuring their communities, or polities, in part by ethical qualities? I shall argue that the prominence these groups give to such qualities is unusual but not unparalleled, and that the parallels shed further light on why *pistis*, *agapē*, *dikaiosynē*, and other qualities play such a large role in New Testament writings. First, though, it is worth making a more general point: that although they are not equally prominent in all contemporary discourses about Greek or Roman societies (or other societies), moral qualities and practices always have a claim to be treated as a social structure in their own right.

I have argued elsewhere that ethics should be considered as a social structure which interacts with other social and political structures without being determined by them:

Like political, social and economic behaviour, moral behaviour is endemic in human societies. Like them, it helps groups to organize themselves, to negotiate their inevitable differences and to survive...There is still a tendency among historians (not to mention archaeologists and literary critics) to treat cultural phenomena as ancillary to political, social or economic phenomena. I doubt that this is often justified, but (p.487) in the case of ethics, it certainly is not. Ethics must, for the most practical reasons, be among the first systems to evolve in any developing human society. People cannot live together until they have agreed not to murder each other (and agreed what counts as murder); they cannot farm until they have agreed not to steal from one another; they cannot decide who belongs to an ongoing group without deciding who can legitimately breed with whom. There is as much justification for speculating that political and social structures come into being to encode, protect and enforce ethical structures as the other way around. We should therefore treat morality as an aspect of ancient society in its own right, to be assessed on its own terms....⁵⁴

In developed societies, behaviour that is labelled 'good' or 'bad' and understood as ethical is closely involved with other forms of social, political, economic, and cultural order. It does not follow, however, that other forms of order determine the ethical order. 'Justice', for example, throughout the Graeco–Roman world, is administered by heads of states and/or magistrates. We could (as many historians do) understand the definition of 'justice' as what, in the view of those who control the state, preserves its existing order and therefore their interests.⁵⁵ But order is, notoriously, impossible to enforce without some degree of cooperation from those who do not control the state, so what is 'just' is more than what sustains those in power; it is a matter of social negotiation and social contract (and not only between human beings: also between human beings and gods).⁵⁶ As such, the ethical concept of justice can be seen as preceding and perfusing any particular social or political order as well as supporting it. The idea of justice, which acknowledges that there is such a thing as a social group, that all members of the group have value (if not necessarily equal value), and that the group cannot hold together or pursue individual or collective interests unless all its members' interests are in some degree served, acknowledges, creates, and sustains a conceptual social entity which is integral to, but not dependent on, any other sociopolitical structures with which it is involved.

If ethics play a foundational rather than an ancillary role in human or divine–human societies in general, early churches, like the second-century Bacchanalia, are still distinctive in having relatively few political and social structures in place, and in being described in particularly strongly moral terms. The reasons why reveal much about Christian understandings of divine–human community.

(p.488) Moral Qualities, Ideal Societies, and Natural Goodness

The idea canvassed above, that *pistis*, together with other qualities originating with God and offered to human beings by divine grace, might structure the relationship between God and the faithful on earth, together with eternal life or the kingdom of heaven in its ultimate form, would not, in essence, have disconcerted either Jews or gentiles. The Jewish scriptures offer multiple visions of the Messianic age, sketchy in social and political detail but dense with ethical language and imagery, while non-scriptural Jewish writings of the early principate are increasingly interested in the perfection of the soul (in life or after death) and the reward of the righteous in heaven.⁵⁷ Gentiles, for their part, are familiar with the idea that *pistis*, together with *dikaiosynē* and other virtues, is characteristic of divine–human and intra-human relationships in aboriginal golden ages, in the age of Saturn, or in golden ages that are prophesied for the future.⁵⁸

When Saturn was king, for instance, according to Plutarch (*Mor.* 275a), ‘there was no greed or injustice among human beings, but *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*.’⁵⁹ Ovid recalls the golden age at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses*:

That first age was golden which, without compulsion, of its own accord, without law, kept faith and did what was right (*fidem rectumque colebat*). There was no fear nor punishment, nor were threatening words [inscribed] to be read on bronze, nor did the supplicating crowd fear the face of its judge, but they were safe without any protector...[M]ortals knew no shores except their own...without the need for soldiery, peoples spent their gentle leisure in security...[T]he earth bore fruit unploughed, and the fields turned white with heavy heads of wheat without needing to lie fallow.⁶⁰

According to Plutarch, one of the features of ancient Sparta, which was often imagined as having achieved more of the characteristics of an ideal society than most, was that men trusted each other so well that they treated each other’s children as their own (*Mor.* 237e). For Romans, the early or middle republic occupied a conceptual space similar to that occupied by ancient Sparta for the Greeks, and Sallust tells readers of *The War against Catiline* that ‘in those days’ there was social concord, minimal greed, justice, and good (p.489) behaviour; men were generous to the gods, sparing at home, and faithful (*fideles*) to their friends (9.1–2). In some cases, where golden ages are imagined as being in the extreme past or in the future, we hear little or nothing about the way they are organized except that they are characterized by virtues such as *pistis/fides* and *dikaiosynē/iustitia*. ‘Now Fides and Peace and Honour and ancient Modesty and neglected Virtue dare to return, and blessed Abundance appears with full horn,’ says Horace in his *Carmen Saeculare* (57–60) of the new age inaugurated by Augustus.⁶¹ New Testament writers do not draw explicitly on such depictions of golden ages, past or future, in envisioning eternal life or the kingdom of God, but such images may well have been known to them, and they are almost certain to have been familiar to gentile (and Hellenized Jewish) audiences.

In addition to ideas such as these which circulated in myth and literature, the philosophical school which had the widest impact on first-century society, including, surely, on at least some of the writers of the New Testament, also had much to say about the ideal society. Stoic visions of the ideal society are literally idealistic: neither mythical, historical, nor teleological. Stoics did not think such a society had existed in the past, nor that it would, necessarily, ever exist, but some developed a theory of what it would look like if it did exist. The first was Stoicism’s founder Zeno of Citium, whose *Republic* has been ingeniously reconstructed by Malcolm Schofield.⁶²

Nothing of Zeno’s *Republic* itself survives, but it is discussed extensively in later sources. Among the prescriptions which were most discussed later, Zeno seems to have declared that education in general, as he knew it in the late fourth or early third century, was useless; that true friendship pertains between the good (who have, above all, the cardinal virtues of courage, justice, practical wisdom, and self-control); that women should be ‘held in common’ in an ideal state; that public buildings such as temples, law courts, and gymnasia should be abolished; that coinage should also be abolished; and that dress should be simplified to the greatest possible extreme.⁶³ This list constitutes a broad attack, in a style which would have attracted Cynics as well as (some) later Stoics, on the public, political, legal, military, economic, social, and cultural institutions common to late classical and early Hellenistic Greek cities. Notably, the only things Zeno is remembered as commending are some of the key virtues of Greek civic life.

There are, Schofield argues, three possibilities as to the argument behind Zeno’s broadsides. He may be simply antinomian, criticizing cities as he knows them without proposing an alternative; he may be claiming that the ideal state is a ‘community of sages’ made up exclusively of the wise and the good; or he may be modifying the ordinary concept of a city state, re-visioning it as a *politeia* in (p.490) which everyone lives in harmony because they share political virtues which are fostered by communistic political institutions.⁶⁴ Schofield argues that the last most closely reflects what we can reconstruct of Zeno’s work, and his reconstruction is the main subject of the rest of his book. (Among other themes, Schofield argues that for Zeno, as for Plato, men and women are equally capable, in principle, of exercising leadership; even of holding office, if offices exist in his city. Where Plato, however, identified the bond that cements political relationships between men and women as a politicized version of familial mutual sympathy and commitment, Zeno identifies erotic love, homoerotic or heteroerotic, as what creates and sustains political relationships.⁶⁵ According to Athenaeus, for Zeno, it is also love that brings about friendship, freedom, and harmony between members of the state.⁶⁶)

Later Stoics shared Zeno’s institutional minimalism, but not his assumption that the ideal city would take something like the physical form (in size, shape, and locability) of the kind of Greek city Zeno knew and lived in.⁶⁷ Soon after Zeno’s lifetime Stoics borrowed a phrase not from their own founder but from the Cynic Diogenes, who called himself a *kosmopolitēs*, a citizen of the universe, to develop the idea that the ideal city could and should be not a physical place at all, but a community of the wise and virtuous whose home is the ‘city’ of the universe itself.⁶⁸ As Cicero puts it in his account of Stoic theology in Book 2 of *On the Nature of the Gods*: ‘For

the universe is, as it were, the shared household of gods and men, or a city belonging to both. For they alone [as opposed to animals, etc.] live according to justice and law' (2.154). Two points stand out here, in addition to the idea of the cosmos as 'home': first, that the cosmos is imagined equally as a household or a city, and secondly, that it is shared by gods and human beings. Cicero and Stoics (and, for that matter, other philosophers, and very likely Greeks and Romans in general) seem to have no difficulty imagining the cosmos as a divine–human community; they do not, for instance, normally imagine the divine as so far outside their reach or understanding as to belong to another realm.

(p.491) Schofield raises the question whether all rational beings who live in accordance with justice and law should on that account be reckoned a community, as opposed to simply a number of virtuous individuals.⁶⁹ He argues persuasively that the Stoics do indeed see all rational and virtuous beings as a community. An aggregation of good people, as Clement of Alexandria will later put it, is, in an ideal world, the definition of a proper (good and happy) household or city.⁷⁰

By the first century CE the Stoic idea of an ideal society is that of a 'community of virtue', a community structured by the shared virtues of its participants: courage, justice, temperance, wisdom, and the rest. Finally, Schofield traces the development of the idea of the cosmic city a step further, showing how it intersects with the developing Graeco–Roman concept of natural law. For Seneca, for example, as a Roman Stoic of the first century CE, the city to which human beings ideally belong is the cosmic one of human beings and gods, which is not only good, but natural.⁷¹ Schofield identifies the cosmic city as a theme of Book 3 of Chrysippus' *On Nature*, and of *On Law*, where Chrysippus explains law as regulating animals which are political by nature in what it is naturally just and unjust to do.⁷² 'What citizenship now consists in [in the doctrine of the cosmic city]', Schofield concludes, 'is nothing but obedience by a plurality of persons to the injunctions of right reason on the just treatment of other persons: i.e. to law as nature formulates it... the stage is set for *ius naturale* as it appears in Cicero's *De officiis* and the Digest—and in Grotius, Pufendorf and beyond.'⁷³

I have spent some time with Schofield's argument because it makes an important series of connections between nature and community, human and divine–human community, and community and virtue exceptionally clear. In recent years a good deal of work has been done on possible connections between Paul, in particular, and Stoicism.⁷⁴ I am doubtful that Paul can be **(p.492)** shown to have been decisively influenced by specific Stoic texts or doctrines (or those of any other school) but, given the diffusion of philosophical ideas of many kinds, above all those of Stoicism, through Greek- and Latin-speaking culture of the early principate, it is plausible, even likely, that Paul, and perhaps other writers of the New Testament, were acquainted with at least some Stoic ideas.⁷⁵ For present purposes it does not matter whether any New Testament writer was familiar with any specific Stoic idea of the city. The theories of Zeno and others were part of a widespread web of Greek and Roman thinking about the nature of society and the relationship between society, nature, and virtue, which early Christians could have encountered in a number of contexts.⁷⁶

Another of those contexts was popular morality, with which, as inhabitants of the first-century Roman empire, Jews and gentiles alike would have been deeply familiar. In some ways popular morality is very different from any elite political theory, not least in that it does not envisage anyone, let alone an entire community of people, being perfectly possessed of every virtue. In one respect, however, it overlaps with high philosophy: it idealizes the convergence of behaviour with social role, and treats as 'good' behaviour which is appropriate to the context of the moral agent.⁷⁷ In *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* I identified this as a form of what Philippa Foot calls 'natural goodness':

Foot says, 'I want to show moral evil as a kind of natural defect.' She criticizes in particular forms of subjectivism developed by Ayer, Stevenson, Hare, Mackie and Gibbard, which hold that the language of evaluation expresses the feelings and attitudes of the speaker: '*Meaning was thus to be explained in terms of a speaker's attitude, intentions, or state of mind.* And this opened up a gap between moral judgements and assertions, with the idea that truth conditions give, and may exhaust, the meaning of the latter but not the former. Thus it seemed that *fact*, complementary to assertion, had been distinguished from *value*, complementary to the expression of feeling, attitude, or commitment to action.'⁷⁸ Foot argues that acting morally, giving **(p.493)** value to a certain set of beliefs or behaviours, is better seen as part of practical rationality. This is not necessarily to say that action should be determined by pleasure or self-interest. Rather, there are certain forms of behaviour which are necessary for human society—human life as we know it—to be sustained. They may include, for example, not killing others at random, looking after your children, defending your group from attack, keeping promises, placating potentially dangerous gods. These are what Foot calls natural goods, natural because they are as necessary for human beings who want to survive in what we think of as our distinctive natural fashion—in society—as water is for plants or food for animals, and people who keep them are good people because they are good for the survival of human beings in society.⁷⁹

In that study I did not explore the possible connections between virtue and nature as such, but took popular morality's concept of

‘nature’ to mean ‘the social position in which agents find themselves’. There are, however, traces of more thoroughly naturalistic ethical thinking than that in popular moral material, especially in fables. Babrius’ brief Fable 41, for example, tells of the lizard which ‘burst apart from the middle, trying to equal the length of a snake. You too’, Babrius concludes, ‘will damage yourself and achieve nothing, if you imitate someone who is greatly superior to you.’ The moral could apply to an individual’s social position, but it could equally apply to his or her nature—or the two could be understood as indistinguishable. Fable collections abound with stories like this, from the jackdaw who dressed himself in the brighter feathers of all the other birds and was exposed as a sham (Babrius 72), to the turtle who wanted to fly and was dropped to his death from a great height by a hungry eagle (115), to the lion who, falling in love with a young girl, allowed himself to have his claws and teeth trimmed until he could no longer defend himself against his beloved’s murderous relatives (98). Any of them can be read as referring to social position, but they can also be read as referring to the ‘natural goodness’ which enables every human being or animal to survive and thrive in their unique ecological—or cosmological—niche.

In fables and other popular moral genres, practising the ‘natural goodness’ of being a lizard or a turtle does not necessarily lead to what a philosopher might regard as a particularly good or happy life. The world of popular morality is one of constant struggle and competition, in which the nature of being a wolf is that one preys on sheep, the nature of being a sheep is that one is preyed on by wolves but protected by dogs, and so on. Happiness and moral success, in this world, consist mainly in living to compete another day.⁸⁰ Philosophical accounts of natural goodness, like those, for instance, of Plato’s (p.494) *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*, are more optimistic: they imagine an ideal state in which everyone achieves both virtue and happiness by living peacefully in accordance with their natural gifts in an appropriate social niche. (In philosophical contexts, this can be described as a form of ‘pluralist perfectionism’, the idea that there is a multiplicity of human goods, to which human beings aspire as appropriate to their nature.)⁸¹

What Plato, Aristotle, and popular morality have in common with one another, and also with Stoicism, is that they all describe societies which are structured by ethics: they work because everyone in them practises what they define as virtues (and they may, or may not, be described as having any other structures). Plato, Aristotle, and popular morality also have something in common which differentiates them from Stoicism: the idea that members of a society do not all need to have the same virtues. Rather than sharing a polity on the basis of their shared qualities, people may fit together, like a political jigsaw puzzle, by having complementary qualities.

In one final connection between nature, virtue, and politics, among philosophers of the early principate it is not only a widely shared view that the ideal society is a community of virtue and that such a community (whether a household or a state) is in accordance with nature; it is also widely accepted that community itself is the natural way of life for the good. ‘The good of a rational being is community,’ says the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius (5.16), because ‘we are born with a view to community.’⁸²

Though the language is rather different, we can hear in these ideas a number of resonances with the New Testament. To live in the divine–human community of the faithful, imaginable as a household or a state, must be natural, for the writers of the New Testament, since they understand God and Jesus as calling people into it. It must be good, since people practise in it qualities which they believe are also practised by God or commanded by God.⁸³ Some of these qualities, like *pistis*, *agapē*, and *dikaïosynē*, are practised by everyone (very much as they are in a Stoic community of sages). Others, like wisdom or (p.495) the gift of healing in 1 Corinthians 12.8–9, are practised by some for the benefit of all (as in the ‘jigsaw’ configuration of popular morality or pluralist perfectionism). These qualities define the nature and working of the divine–human community as fundamentally as do the Fatherhood of God, the Lordship of Christ, or the citizenship of the faithful.

We have already touched on the concept of natural law and its close relationship with the Stoic doctrine that virtue consists in fulfilling one’s nature. The parallels and possible connections between natural law in Graeco-Roman thought, the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament have been well explored; to add to them is beyond the scope of this chapter, but they deserve a brief discussion. In its classical (Thomist) version, natural-law theory holds that natural law is given to human beings by the divine, by nature authoritative over all human beings, and by nature knowable by them. It holds that human beings are required to fulfil the good as defined by the divine, by right action.⁸⁴ Both Plato and Aristotle can be seen as holding (slightly different) theories of natural law, in which, for Plato, the good is defined (and embodied) by the divine, while, for Aristotle, the good constitutes the perfection of each human life in accordance with its own nature.⁸⁵

Natural law has been identified independently as a theme in the Jewish scriptures and in Paul’s letters. In *Ethics and the Old Testament*, John Barton argues that the Bible enshrines a double concept of natural law. The good of humanity is what God decrees it to be, and the natural goodness of human beings consists in following God’s commands.⁸⁶ At the same time, there are also moral goods, such as the prohibition against murder, which are recognized universally by human beings, and presumptively would be even if they had not been subjects of divine command. In his discussion of natural law in Judaism, David Novak argues that the only

explanation of the guilt and punishment of Cain or the generation of the Flood is that they have natural knowledge of good and evil.⁸⁷

Joseph Fuchs has argued persuasively that Paul, like the Jewish scriptures, does not so much make a case for natural law as take its existence for granted, identifying it with the commands of God. At Romans 1.18–32, for example, Paul says that gentiles, who lack the law, should nevertheless know God and **(p.496)** God's commands by looking at the natural world. Jews and gentiles, for Paul throughout Romans, all exist under the same universal law, though historically they have learned about it by different means. Jews learn about God's commands both from the law and from the world around them. Gentiles, at Romans 2.14 and 2.27, can do by nature what the law requires, because the law communicates God's commands.⁸⁸ At Romans 8.1 and elsewhere Christ sets Jews free from the law, but, Fuchs holds, this freedom does not exempt Jews or anyone else from God's natural law. In this argument he comes close to saying, though he does not say in so many words, that freedom is compatible with obedience towards God and Christ because obedience, which is identical to being 'in Christ', is human beings' 'natural', in the sense of naturally right, condition.⁸⁹

Paul may have derived his sense of natural law from the scriptures rather than from Greek philosophy, but the parallels between them mean that his views would not have surprised educated gentiles. Nor would they have sounded odd to the uneducated. A concept of natural law, at least in embryo, is strongly implicit in Greek and Roman religion: no one used to the idea, for instance, that the gods expect worship and abhor sacrilege, or that Zeus the Just punishes all wrongdoers eventually and everyone knows it,⁹⁰ would find Jewish formulations of natural law awkwardly foreign.

Before we sum up, religion offers one further parallel between Graeco-Roman and early Christian understandings of divine–human community and the role of ethical qualities in structuring it. The cult of Isis, like that of Dionysus/Bacchus, is a syncretizing immigrant to the Roman West, though in the early principate it attracts less persecution than did the Bacchanalia in the second century BCE. In its Graeco-Roman form the cult has often been compared with very early Christianity.⁹¹ Both are, in modern terms, elective (not state) cults, though both emerge from state cults (the Israelite cult of YHWH and the Egyptian cult of Isis) of states which were conquered first by the Macedonians, then by the Romans. Both practise rituals of initiation. Both offer salvation to their adherents, though almost certainly of very different kinds.⁹² While Christians see themselves as monotheists and the worship of **(p.497)** God and Christ as precluding that of any other God (granted that the God of Israel is understood as that same God), worshippers of Isis are not precluded from worshipping other gods, but the cult seems to have had strong henatheistic tendencies. A key aspect of the distinctive aretalogies, or hymns of praise for the virtues of Isis, which survive in Greek and Latin, is that they identify every other (female) deity with Isis, implying that worshipping Isis is all one needs in a divine–human relationship (at least with a female divinity).⁹³

Like the God of Israel, Isis is understood as the creator of the universe. In the best-preserved aretalogy on stone, the famous Greek inscription from Kyme dated to the late first century BCE or early first century CE, Isis says of herself:

I divided earth from heaven. I appointed the paths of the stars...I regulated the passage of sun and moon...I arranged that women should bring babies to light after nine months...I am mistress of rivers, winds and sea...I am mistress of the thunderbolt...I am in the rays of the sun...⁹⁴

When, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Lucius, after his many adventures in the form of an ass, receives a vision of Isis in which she promises to restore his human form, his praise of her includes the affirmation (11.26): 'You turn the globe, you light the sun, you rule the world, you suppress Tartarus. The stars obey you, the seasons return for you, the powers of heaven rejoice, the elements serve you...'

In the Kyme inscription Isis also defines what is good or right and enforces it:

I made justice strong...I inflicted punishment on those who are not affectionately disposed towards their parents. I, with my brother Osiris, ended cannibalism...I taught [human beings] to honour images of the gods...I ended the rule of tyrants. I ended murders. I forced women to be loved by men. I made justice stronger than gold or silver. I legislated that truth be considered a fine thing...I made good and evil be distinguished by nature...I legislated mercy for the suppliant. I honour those who avenge themselves with justice. By me justice is mighty...

This is as clear a description of divinely ordained natural law as any in antiquity.

Isis seems to legislate for all peoples—at least in the case of those laws which are shared by all people because they are widely, even universally perceived, from a human perspective, to encode what is naturally good or just. These **(p.498)** include marriage, the

honouring of oaths and contracts, and respect for suppliants. Isis also punishes tyranny and murder.⁹⁵ But when she says ‘I invented fishing and seafaring’ and ‘I built the walls of cities,’ she claims sovereignty over all human activities, whether or not they relate directly to the divine, in a way which would be familiar to Jews and Christians too. The world which Isis rules is also not very far here from the cosmos shared by the divine and Stoic sages: everything that is good and right to do originates with the divine, is sponsored by the divine, and forms part of the cosmic divine–human community. It seems clear, further, from the Kyme inscription that behaving as Isis wishes constitutes the ‘natural goodness’ of human beings. No one in the ancient world would argue that affection between parents and children, for example, or love between men and women is not a natural good.⁹⁶

I noted above that Isis seems to legislate for all peoples. In the Kyme inscription she also says that she gave Greeks and barbarians their different languages, making clear that she has no difficulty with human beings’ having different cultures, if not different moral codes. In the light of this, when Isis also describes herself as founding sanctuaries of the gods, building the walls of cities, and as being the ‘mistress of war’, we should probably imagine her as transcending individual human communities but as taking for granted that different communities exist and even come into conflict (even if they share worship of herself). This is rather different from the picture among Jews, Christians, or Stoic sages, where everyone who is in the right relationship with God or the divine belongs to the same community. The Kyme inscription, by its mention of images and shrines to gods in the plural, also makes clear that the worship of Isis does not aim to create the kind of all-encompassing ‘horizon of significance’ that worship of YHWH or God and Christ does.⁹⁷

In some ways, then, if not all, the worship of Isis makes an interesting comparison with the worship of God and Christ. In particular, she seems to be similarly closely identified with natural law and natural goodness, though the relationship between Isis and those who worship her is less like the idea of a cosmic community of the divine with the virtuous, or the idea of human pluralist perfectionism, than the relationship between God, Christ, and the faithful may be.

(p.499) Conclusion: The Natural Goodness of the Kingdom of God

Throughout this study we have explored the centrality of *pistis* to the *oikonomia* of divine–human relations, expressed in the faithfulness of God and *pistis Christou*, in the entrustedness of the apostles and the *pistis* of all followers of Christ, in the *pistis* which is a gift of the spirit and that which one practises as a wife or slave in a community of *pistoi*. In this chapter I have argued that *pistis* is not only part of, but is structural to, the kingdom or household of God, both earthly and eschatological. In imagining the divine–human relationship as creating a *politeia* structured by virtues, a new society through which, if it does not in practice replace all one’s existing social relationships, all one’s other relationships are reinterpreted, and in which *hoi pisteuontes* live in accordance with both divine and natural law, Christians had many precedents and parallels to draw on in the world around them, from popular morality to political theory, golden ages of myth to messianic prophecies, philosophical accounts of natural law to the structure of other, especially elective, cults. The writers of the New Testament will certainly have been familiar with some of these and, directly or indirectly, perhaps with most or all of them. Despite much careful and illuminating work on possible connections between the New Testament and, in particular, philosophical ideas about communities of virtue and natural law, specific links remain elusive. This need not surprise us, and for early Christians it may even have been a strength. Assuming, with most recent commentators, that early churches encompassed a broad spectrum of society, ideas which resonated with people of different cultural and educational backgrounds will have been maximally accessible and minimally divisive. For all the parallels between Christian ideas and others, however, Christians’ divine–human *politeia* remains unmistakably their own: a family and kingdom created by the grace of God which reached out through Jesus Christ and the holy spirit to bring all those who *pisteuein* to salvation and eternal life.⁹⁸

We noted that ideal states elsewhere in the Graeco-Roman world are imagined as ‘working’ states, not simply places of rest or entertainment, and there is no reason to suppose otherwise of the kingdom or household of God. As to what its work consisted of: Plato and Aristotle would have said that for a society to operate harmoniously in itself, it is enough that each member performs the tasks appropriate to their virtues. The author of Revelation specifies praise of God (19.5, 7) as an activity of the elect in heaven, and, equally significantly, the lighting and healing of the nations (21.24, 22.2). **(p.500)** Some of the New Testament writers, at least, surely understood one of the tasks of *hoi pistoi*, at least until the end time, as being to inspire others and bring them to *pisteuein*, by their example if not by active evangelism, as community members inspired those who encounter them in the Acts of the Apostles.⁹⁹ To investigate the extent to which early communities saw themselves as reaching out to the wider world, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

In the course of this chapter we have touched on New Testament ethics, ecclesiology, and eschatology: three disciplines which have tended to have little to say about the ‘theological virtue’ *pistis*. To integrate *pistis* into each of them would be a study in its own right, but this chapter has aimed, at least, to point to some possible directions of approach.¹⁰⁰ The relationship between *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*, in contrast, has been studied in detail by many scholars, especially in connection with Paul’s doctrine of justification. To

explore further how taking both equally seriously and together (as they are so often found together at the foundation of ideal Greek, Roman, or Israelite societies) as both qualities and praxeis that form community and ethics that structure it would be yet another study in its own right.¹⁰¹ It might, though, offer one way of uniting the studies of theology and ethics in the New Testament, whose tendency to part company is often recognized by New Testament scholars as problematic.¹⁰²

Notes:

(1) Except in a few passages such as Rom. 12.3, 1 Cor. 12.9, Gal. 5.22, or where people are described as *pistos*. Curiously, *agapē* does not suffer from the same compartmentalization, being regularly treated as part of New Testament ethics as well as a theological virtue. Throughout this chapter I shall use ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ to refer to the same concepts and practices, on which, see Morgan (2007b), 2 n. 2.

(2) Mt. 12.28 = Lk. 11.20.

(3) See e.g. discussions by Scroggs (1996), 29, Martyn (1997b) 252; on the relationship between ethics and eschatology, see e.g. Sanders (1975), Lohse (1991), 39–41, Schrage (1995).

(4) The two can, of course, also be contrasted: e.g. 2 Cor. 5.1–2 (the earthly tent contrasted with the heavenly dwelling), Mt. 7.24, 8.19–21 (storing up treasure in heaven, not on earth); cf. Philo., *Conf. ling.* 17 (though the patriarchs lived on earth, their real *politeia* is heaven).

(5) Mt. 24.45, 25.21, 23.

(6) See pp. 421–3.

(7) 1.4; cf. Mt. 28.20, Eph. 1.3–6, Rom. 8.38–9.

(8) On the range of images and relationships between them, see Minear (1960).

(9) Kvalbein (1997), 61–6 helpfully summarizes debate on the relationship between Jesus’ ethics and the kingdom of God. The kingdom is now usually thought of as God’s rule rather than a place, but Kvalbein rightly points out that *basileia* normally has a locative meaning in Greek and that much imagery of the kingdom (it is a place one enters and where one feasts; it has a door, keys, etc.) is locative, so we should assume that both meanings are in play.

(10) We need hear no tension between domestic and political imagery. New Testament writers inherit from scripture the idea that Abraham’s family becomes the people of Israel: God’s family, people, and state are not ultimately separable. In the Graeco-Roman world, where cities and states are often thought of as developing from aggregations of households or family groups, states can also be characterized as extensions of kinship groups and the household be described as a microcosm of the state. Schrage (1988), 20 points out that parables of kingdom avoid characterizing it either politically or transcendentally to the exclusion of the other. For the linking of language of community, present or ultimate, with *pistis* language see e.g. Rom. 8.33, 16.13, 1 Cor. 1.9, 1.19, 1.27–8, 7.21, Gal. 5.13, Phil. 1.27, 1 Thess. 1.4, Eph. 1.4, Ja. 2.5, 2 Pet. 1.10; cf. Col. 3.12, 1 Tim. 5.21, 2 Tim. 2.10, Tit. 1.1, 1 Pet. 1.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.9, 2 Jo. 1, 13, Rev. 17.14.

(11) e.g. Mt. 22.1–14; cf. Mt. 8.11, Lk. 14.15–24 (derived from e.g. Isa. 25.6). The mustard seed which grows up to shelter the birds of the sky (Mt. 13.31–2) invokes a similar idea; cf. too Mt. 11.28 (offering rest to those who come to Christ). Imagery of the eschatological Sabbath, though current in contemporary Judaism, is also rare, perhaps not only because imagery of rest in general is rare but because it might appeal less to gentiles. It may, though, lie behind e.g. Mt. 11.28 and Heb. 3.7–4.13, on which, see Johnston (1987); the theme of not worrying about one’s life may also be related (cf. e.g. Ov., *Met.* 1.109–10: in golden ages, the earth produces food of its own accord, without being worked).

(12) See pp. 492–4.

(13) *Ekklēsia* itself, of course, is a political term, and fundamentally churches are simply assemblies of those who are called into the kingdom *vel sim.*, but they can also be treated separately because, in our earliest sources, they are already differentiated from the kingdom, etc. in some ways by developing institutional identities. See Deidun (1981), 10, 36–8, 41 on Paul’s use of *ekklēsia* and the roots of the new covenant in the constitution of the people of God in LXX and on the relationship between the Church as body of

Christ and people of God.

(14) To assume that these do not act as ethical qualities in the New Testament as they do elsewhere it would need to be demonstrated, on the principle established in the Introduction that we cannot *assume* that terms in common use in the first century take on radical new meanings when first adopted by Christians. This study has argued throughout that there is no need to understand *pistis* as having undergone any such radical redefinition, and by analogy we should not assume that other qualities have either.

(15) Most scholars speak of the (other) institutions of churches as shaping their ethics rather than of ethics as an independent structure: e.g. Meeks (1986a), 110; cf. (1986b), (1993), 37–41, Horrell (1999, 2001). White (1990) discusses friendship in Philippians as grounded in Paul's soteriological drama but still sees it as ancillary, not a structure in its own right.

(16) Mt. 6.33; cf. Rom. 14.17; Davies and Allison (1988), ad loc., Betz (1995), ad loc.

(17) 1 Cor. 15. 24–8, 36–54; Rev. 21.4–22.6. On these as goods, see e.g. Morgan (2007b), 161–75.

(18) On *pistis* in this passage, see pp. 277–8. Joy is not usually treated as a virtue (cf. Stob. 2.58.5–15).

(19) e.g. Gupta (2012) commends mirror reading to understand Paul's ethics by what he criticizes.

(20) See pp. 25–6.

(21) e.g. Mk. 1.16–20 = Mt. 4.18–22, Mk. 3.31–5 = Mt. 12.46–50 = Lk. 8.19–21, Mt. 8.20 = Lk. 9.58.

(22) e.g. Mk. 8.34–8 = Mt. 10.37–9, 16.24–6 = Lk. 9.23–7, Jn. 3.3–8, 6.68–9, 11.25–6, Rom. 6.5–11, Gal. 2.19–21, Eph. 4.17–24, 1 Pet. 1.3, 1 Jo. 3.2, 14.

(23) e.g. Rom. 12.5, 1 Cor. 12.12–13.

(24) Chs. 6–10, *passim*.

(25) See p. 320.

(26) Cf. pp. 38, 123, 264–5.

(27) Leaving aside the many magical texts which invoke YHWH, the 'one god', angels, etc. (e.g. *PGM* 7.218–21, 7.619–27, 47.1–17, 90.1–13 (Betz (1992))); these may have been used by Jews and/or Christians or neither (to date I have found no *pistis* language in these).

(28) See pp. 204–9.

(29) Cf. Macc. 1.1–3 (loyalty of a Jew to Ptolemy Philopator); Philo, *Leg.* 132–3, *CIL* 972 (197 CE), *CIJ* 1(2).678a (195–209) (honours for emperors); Williams (1998), 109–17 (involvement in civic politics and culture).

(30) Though the Dead Sea Scrolls do not mark orientation to the sect and away from the outer world in trust/faithfulness language.

(31) e.g. Rensberger (1989).

(32) Implying that one cannot trust *apistoi* to settle community members' affairs justly, unlike the 'holy ones' who are entrusted by God with judging the world.

(33) Mk. 12.17 = Mt. 22.21 = Lk. 20.25.

(34) At 1 Cor. 7.12–15 community members married to *apistoi* are told not to reject their spouses, but not to detain them if they want to leave; Paul does not suggest here that there is any independent *pistis* between husband and wife to be negotiated. There is, though, no sign that it was acceptable to act *mala fide* towards non-community members.

(35) e.g. pp. 129, 132, 149, 166, 186, 194, 200, 216. The difference between Romans and 1 Corinthians, in practical terms, is no doubt

that not to pay one's taxes is to attract prosecution and heavy punishment, while no one is required to take someone else to court. Paul does not encourage community members actively to put themselves in danger, except insofar as acts of *pistis* towards God and Christ, such as preaching, bring them into danger.

(36) In all these traditions the *pistis/fides* of the divine is both a foundational and a coherentist claim; Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Christians all take for granted that they live in a world in which the divine is normatively trustworthy and human beings can trust the divine.

(37) Hooker (1996); cf. Meeks (1990), Marxsen (1993), 86, 140–1, Horrell (1998*b*), McDonald (1998), 28–35, Zimmermann (2010); Keck (1996*a*, 1996*b*); cf. Fowl (1990, 1998), Longenecker (1995), Duff (1989), 280–2; cf. Schrage (1988), 217–20.

(38) e.g. for Furnish (1990), belonging to Christ, for Vorster (1990), 49, the divine–human relationship is central. Cf. Bevere's related argument ((2003), 46–8) that the central question in Christian ethics is not what one should do but who one should be. Wolter (1997), 431–3 rightly notes that it does not matter whether the ethics of any community are unique in content; they contribute to identity formation by the fact that they are part of e.g. a particular covenant; that they are that community's ethics.

(39) This is perhaps what the author of 1 John (4.16) wants to capture by saying that 'God is love, and those that live in love live in God, and God lives in them.' The point is not that, within human beings' relationship with God, God asks them to practise love, nor even only that orientating themselves towards God will lead them to practise love, but that their relationship with God and Christ is one of love (among other things), and the practice of love constitutes (part of) the relationship: orientation and ethics are inseparable. (The relationship between community membership and sin, for different writers, would be relevant here in a study of New Testament ethics *tout court*, but is beyond our scope.)

(40) See e.g. discussions by Barclay (1988), 167, Hays (1996*a*), 215–24, Horrell (2005), ch. 4. In a more extended discussion of *pistis* and New Testament ethics more widely I would want to pursue the implications of Horrell's important analyses of Paul (e.g. Horrell 2002, 2005) in terms of liberal vs. communitarian ethics.

(41) pp. 190–1.

(42) Even if e.g. two Romans make a contract invoking Fides, their confidence derives from Fides' oversight of contracts, and Roman law, in general.

(43) p. 134.

(44) *CIL* 9.60; see p. 131.

(45) Though people may be entrusted with individual gifts, such as preaching; see e.g. pp. 257, 301. Deissmann–Merten (1965), 102 argues that Livy locates *fides* in Roman generals and the Senate rather than in all Romans equally; if so, this is an unusual restriction, but still pertains to a group rather than to individuals. Individuals and groups alike, of course, can accuse one another of repudiating *pistis/fides*.

(46) 1 Cor. 12.12–26; cf. Eph. 4.1–6.

(47) Though on 'personal religion' (which may have been more widespread than the sources allow us to see), see Festugière (1954), Instone (2009), Morgan (2013*c*).

(48) Though a few pan-Hellenic or universal cults, such as Olympia, Eleusis, or the major prophetic cults, transcend their location, and occasionally exist in some tension with it. Some of their prestige derives from their abnormality in this respect.

(49) At 2.160 Moses is a 'divine governor and counsellor'; at 2.170 the law is both 'constitution' and 'legislation'.

(50) Liv. 39.8–18.

(51) When the consuls imprison or execute Bacchanals, sexual immorality and 'all vice' stand alongside murder, perjury, and fraud as capital crimes (39.10), though in Roman law, with a few exceptions, they are not.

(52) Cults of Bacchus which already existed in Italy were allowed to continue, under strict regulation (39.18). Political imagery is also a rhetorical means by which to inflame Roman feeling against the Bacchanals, but it is significant that it can be used at all.

(53) 39.10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18.

(54) Morgan (2007b), 1, 3.

(55) e.g. Bryant (1996), Langlands (2006).

(56) Well recognized by Greek and Roman writers, who use e.g. the *dikē/iustitia* lexica equally and often interactively of what is legally sanctioned, divinely sanctioned, and customary or socially normative.

(57) Bockmuehl and Stroumsa (2010) (esp. essays by Niehoff, Bauckham, Goodman, Gathercole, Bockmuehl), Najman (2010), ch. 12.

(58) See pp. 106, 134.

(59) Cf. Juv. 13.34–40.

(60) 1.89–93, 96, 99–100, 109–10; cf. Cic., *Inv.* 2.67–8, where human beings, before the beginning of civilization, are ruled by the ‘laws of nature’ most of which are also virtues: *religio* (fear and worship of gods), *pietas* (to country, parents and other kin), *gratia* (by which we remember and return services, honour and acts of friendship), *vindicatio*, *observantia* (reverence towards superiors in age, wisdom, honour), *veritas*.

(61) Cf. Ov., *Met.* 1.128–50, Virg., *Aen.* 1.292–6, Babr. 102.

(62) Schofield (1991).

(63) e.g. D.L. 7.32–3, discussed by Schofield (1991), 3–21.

(64) Schofield (1991), 22. Schofield assumes, as I would not, that where sociopolitical virtues and structures coexist, the former depend on the latter.

(65) Schofield (1991), 43–8.

(66) Ath. 561c; Schofield (1991), 46–7 points out that political concord was an issue of urgent importance in the turbulent world of Greek city states and early Hellenistic kingdoms. At pp. 48–56 Schofield argues that by ‘freedom’ Zeno probably means (like Plato and Aristotle, in their political theory) internal political freedom, and that he did not discuss freedom from external control. His reconstruction reveals Zeno’s *Republic*, in some respects, as a descendant of Plato’s, though a shorter and simpler work: ‘[s]implicity is Zeno’s recipe for goodness and concord’ (Schofield (1991), 56).

(67) Plu., *Mor.* 329a–b attributes the beginning of this shift to Zeno himself, claiming that in his *Republic* all people of virtue are fellow-citizens and neighbours of one another, ‘nurtured by one common law’.

(68) e.g. Dio Chrys. 36.20–7; cf. Clem., *Strom.* 4.26, discussed by Schofield (1991), 57–63.

(69) Schofield (1991), 67–74.

(70) Clem., *Strom.* 4.26; cf. Dio Chrys., 36.23.

(71) *Ot. sap.* 4. On the concept of the good as rooted in nature throughout ancient virtue ethics, see Devettere (2002), 37–9. On virtue ethics as a model for New Testament ethics, see e.g. Harrington and Keenan (2002), 49–59.

(72) *SVF* 3.314; Schofield (1991), 70; cf. 102. On the Chrysippian form of the *politeuma* of Stoic sages as ‘a community of all those people who are morally good wherever they live on earth’, see also Engberg-Pedersen (1994b), 267.

(73) Schofield (1991), 103.

(74) Especially by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (e.g. 1994a, 2000, 2006); cf. e.g. Thorsteinsson (2006). Engberg-Pedersen (1994b), 264–9 discusses the likely content of Zeno’s *Republic*, emphasizing that his ideal state has no institutions and that its citizens coexist in *homonoiā, philia, eleutheria*. He observes, ‘in Greek philosophy...the substructure of political philosophy was ethics’ (1994), 269, though he does not take the next step of treating ethics as a social structure in its own right. At (1994), 278–9 he argues that in Philippians Paul characterizes the *telos* of human life as the heavenly *politeuma* which we are also called to realize here and now as far as possible. I find much of his analysis persuasive, while doubting that we can tie Paul’s thinking closely to specific doctrines of particular Stoic teachers, especially since many Stoic ideas have analogues elsewhere in philosophical and wider culture (on which, see also Engberg-Pedersen (2000), 48–53). I agree with Hollander (2009), who argues that language of *koinōnia* in Paul is better understood ecclesiologically than as participatory; cf. Ogereau (2012). For the argument that Paul interacts with Stoic ethics but develops a very different moral vision, see Esler (2004). On possible Epicurean influences on disputes at Corinth, in particular, see Tomlin (1998).

(75) For example through public speeches by philosophers, on which, see e.g. Moxnes (1994).

(76) On the relationship between popular morality and high philosophy, see Morgan (2007b), 274–99, arguing that there is more ‘trickle-up’ than ‘trickle-down’ between popular ethics and philosophical ideas in this period. On whether Jewish ethics are imposed on gentile converts, see e.g. Carras (1990).

(77) Though for Plato and Aristotle one’s social position ideally follows from one’s virtues, while in popular morality what constitutes good behaviour depends on one’s social context.

(78) Foot (2001), 6–8 (author’s italics). In that book and here I use ‘morality’ and ‘ethics’ interchangeably (see (2007b), 2 n. 2).

(79) Foot (2001), 24. Foot notes the Aristotelian derivation of this idea, and that Elizabeth Anscombe called things that each species needs to make them flourish ‘Aristotelian necessities’.

(80) See e.g. Morgan (2007b), 188–90. Sources of ethical ideas (such as gnomic sayings from the poets) which ‘trickle down’ from higher social levels to lower, though, tend to be more optimistic about the possibility of happiness than those (like proverbs and fables) which ‘trickle up’.

(81) Some forms of pluralist perfectionism, like Foot’s, are connected with nature, but not all: e.g. Rawls (1971), 325 and Parfit (1986), 162 connect perfectionism, respectively, with the achievement of excellence in human culture and with the achievement of objective goods.

(82) Trans. Long and Sedley (1987), 397; cf. Cic., *Off.* 1.107–17, D.L. 7.94, Stob. 2.77.16–17. Living in accordance with nature is also described by Stoics as practising one’s ‘proper functions’. For Cicero (*Fin.* 3.17–22), proper functions are actions that are in accordance with nature and a human being’s natural constitution, and when one fulfils one’s proper functions one is also doing good. (Long and Sedley (1987), 365–6 dispose of what they regard as a common misconception that ‘proper functions’ are a ‘second-best, practical morality’ for the imperfect, while wise men perform absolutely right actions; on the contrary, ‘everything a wise man does is a proper function.’) Proper functions, says Diogenes Laertius (7.108), are those which are dictated by reason (such as honouring one’s parents, brothers, and native land, and spending time with one’s friends); cf. D.L. 7.88, Stob. 2.93.14–18, 2.96.18–97.5, 5.906.18–907.5.

(83) Including, in addition to the above, e.g. goodness, holiness, truth, mercy.

(84) Devine (2000).

(85) Though some scholars dispute that Aristotle has a theory of natural law: see Keyt and Miller (1991), Miller (1995).

(86) Barton (2002), 58–76. Levering (2008), 60–7 argues, surely rightly, that the Bible does not countenance a distinction between God’s law and natural law; cf. Bockmuehl (2000), 110–1 (strictly speaking, there is no ‘natural law’ in Judaism, since all laws come from God), Harris (2003), and the overview of Levering (2008), esp. 28–36, 49–50.

(87) Novak (1998), 34–6. He also notes (p. 44) that any concept of natural law in Judaism must be made to fit with that of free will, since responding to God’s demands is understood as a free human choice.

(88) Fuchs (1965), 15–20, 30.

(89) Fuchs (1965), 24–6.

(90) e.g. Aesop 126 (Chambray); Lloyd-Jones (1971).

(91) The Graeco–Roman cult is in some ways very different from its Egyptian ancestor (Alvar Ezquerro (2008), Bricault (2013)); on possible links between Isis and New Testament writings, see McCabe (2008), though McCabe does not discuss *pistis*.

(92) Isis is above all the goddess who saves worshippers from the perils of childbirth, illness, and the sea (Versnel (1990), 44–8). The first Hymn of Isidorus (second–first century BCE) furnishes a good example (Vanderlip (1972); cf. Bernand (1969), 631–52). From the second century Isis begins to be described as having power over fate (which determines when people die) (Abt (1915), 257). Apul., *Met.* 11.6 describes how worshippers, when they die and reach the Elysian Fields, continue to worship Isis, but it is not clear that she engages to ensure that worshippers will reach the Elysian Fields: her powers of salvation do not reach so far (*contra* Alvar (2008), 28–9, who does not cite any evidence other than this passage). Isis, like God and Graeco–Roman gods, can call people to worship her, for instance, in a dream (Donaldson (2003), 29–30, Morgan (2013c)).

(93) e.g. Apul., *Met.* 11.5–6. Though initiation into the cult of Isis may go alongside initiation into that of Osiris, in particular (e.g. Apul., *Met.* 11.27), so Isis is never properly monotheistic or even as fully henatheistic as it might be.

(94) *IG* 12 Suppl. 14 = *Inscr. Kyme* 41, trans. Beard, North, and Price (1998), 2. 297–8.

(95) Saving people from tyranny is widely attributed to the gods, on which, see the discussion of Versnel (1990), 50–62. Versnel also notes (pp. 88–95) that the freedom granted by gods from human tyranny often goes, in the Greek world as in Judaism and Christianity, hand in hand with what is expressed as (willing and pious) ‘slavery’ to the liberating god (cf. Pleket (1981)).

(96) Alvar’s (2008), 154 view that ‘oriental cults developed their own ethical norms’ is right only if ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ are taken in the widest possible sense (see Morgan (2007b), 12–13) of everything that the god commands.

(97) Cf. pp. 173–4.

(98) Koester (2001), 222–4, noting the Christological foundations of Christian ethics, also emphasizes, rightly, the communitarian nature of Christian ethics, but overdraws the contrast with philosophical ethics, which have a more communitarian aspect than he allows.

(99) e.g. 2.12, 41, 5.13, 8.18–25, 9.32–5.

(100) Hays (1994) offers a different way of relating ecclesiology and ethics, through the role of the spirit. On ethics and eschatology, see n. 3.

(101) For various interpretations of *dikaïosynē* and discussions of the relationship between forensic and ethical interpretations, see e.g. (out of many possible studies) Styler (1973), 176–7, Campbell (1992b), 138–56, Seifrid (1992), 75–6, Tov (1999), 5–94, 109–28, Seifrid (2004a), 43–4, Watson (2004), 158–63, Campbell (2009), 55–61, 57–9 and *passim*, Wright (2013), 925–1042.

(102) On the relationship between theology and ethics, see e.g. Elliott (1994), Schnelle (1990), Rosner (1994), (1995a), 2–21, Bultmann (1995), (2007), 203, Parsons (1995), Hays (1987), (2002), 220–6, Engberg-Pedersen (2000), 47, Jeal (2000), Lewis (2005).

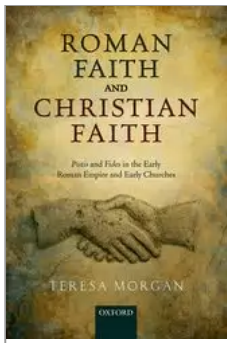
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