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Faith and Works in the Pastoral Epistles¹

Although some of the major commentaries make an effort to summarise the theology of the Pastoral Epistles,² recent studies of NT theology devote comparatively little attention to them. R. Bultmann gave a useful characterisation of their outlook,³ but they are almost totally ignored by H. Conzelmann, and they are completely omitted by L. Goppelt, no doubt because of the unfinished character of his work. Scholars who accept their Pauline authorship make use of them in their discussions of Paul,⁴ but the result is that they are not discussed for their own sake, and tend to be treated as mere adjuncts to the major writings of Paul. We have to go back to P. Feine for a brief but helpful attempt to evaluate them in the context of a NT theology.⁵ All in all, it is no exaggeration to say that the contribution of the Pastorals to the study of NT theology is undervalued and even ignored.

To be sure, the main focus of the writings lies in matters of church organisation, the refutation of heresy, social ethics, personal godliness and pastoral counsel; they are eminently practical writings. This, however, need not mean that they are lacking in theological content or that they are not expressive of a distinct and formulated theological standpoint. They deserve to be explored from this point of view. When it is remembered that in bulk they exceed the corpus of the Johannine letters or the Petrine letters and are nearly two-thirds the length of Hebrews, it becomes apparent that on grounds of length alone they form a significant part of the NT and deserve better treatment from NT theologians.

Two factors may have contributed to their neglect. On the one hand, they lie in the shadow of the acknowledged writings of Paul. In the case of upholders of the

¹ A paper given at a meeting of the Tyndale Fellowship New Testament Study Group at Cambridge in July 1982 on the general theme of 'Justification by faith and judgment by works'.

² See especially C. Spicq, *Les Epîtres Pastorales*, Paris ⁴1969, I, 243–297; C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Oxford 1963, 19–34; also P. Trummer, *Die Paulustradition der Pastoralbriefe*, Frankfurt 1978, 161–240.

³ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, London 1955, II, 183–186.

⁴ G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, London - Guildford 1975; D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, Leicester 1981; see also H. Ridderbos, *Paul. An Outline of his Theology*, London 1977.

⁵ P. Feine, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Berlin ⁸1953, 302–308.

Pauline authorship of the entire corpus of thirteen letters, they are disregarded in the total group of Paul's writings and their theological content is easily ignored. If their Pauline authorship is denied, they are quickly dismissed as second-rate material, not worthy to stand beside the work of Paul. The problem is that they are inevitably compared with Paul's other letters, whether in order to stress the similarities and so to play down their theological distinctiveness over against the rest of Paul's writings, or in order to accentuate the differences and so to show up their inferior character beside that of Paul's genuine work.

On the other hand, there is a growing tendency to regard the epistles as reflecting the early catholic stratum in the NT church. While there is a new interest in this period and its characteristics, one cannot avoid the impression that it is seen as the 'silver age' of early Christian literature, a second-best, and 'early catholic' is still something of a negative value-judgment. Yet despite this tendency there is some attempt being made to give a more positive evaluation of the epistles, finely expressed in the words of C. K. Barrett, who describes these epistles as:

"part of the scriptural conversation between the Holy Spirit and the Church, in which the Spirit (using on this occasion the voice of an unknown author but speaking with his own divine authority) recalls and applies the things of Christ . . . Students have too often approached the Pastorals with the (perhaps unconscious) assumption that given the opportunity they could have written the Epistles very much better themselves. It is only a humble and more reverent approach that will find the sometimes hidden splendour of these letters".⁶

Not by Works

The angle from which we shall look at the theological character of the letters is defined by the problems relating to justification by faith and judgment by works. A strong negative statement of the position may be useful as an incentive to the investigation. In his powerful and succinct commentary B. S. Easton wrote: "We can scarcely speak of the 'theology' of the Pastoral Epistles",⁷ and in effect denied that the Pastor (as he calls the author) was a theologian. Insofar as he did express himself theologically the Pastor was inconsistent: "Like many another preacher the Pastor has one soteriology for the unconverted and another for his own flock — and the second soteriology is a frank and deliberate 'work righteousness' ". When the

⁶ C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, 34.

⁷ B. S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles*, London 1948, 22.

Pastor does link 'faith' with salvation, "'faith' is, along with 'love', a result of justification, not its antecedent".⁸ Here is the problem boldly stated.

We may begin by examining the two passages which express the theme most clearly. In 2 Tim 1,9 we are told that God "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our own works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago". A more elaborate formulation of similar sentiments is found in Tit 3,4-7: "When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life."

Both of these passages have been said to be 'kerygmatic' and to represent traditional material taken over by the author without too much relation to the immediate context. Certainly some traditional expressions are used, and we can detect a salvation-historical scheme which is present elsewhere in the NT, but the general formulation would appear to be the Pastor's, since the vocabulary is of a piece with his language elsewhere in the epistles. Although some scholars tend to play down the importance of traditional material for a writer's own viewpoint, it is much more likely that such material is positively assessed by an author unless there are clear signs to the contrary. In the present case, what we have before us does represent the author's own outlook and stresses what he considers important; this is what we would expect in view of the writer's emphasis on the 'deposit' which has been handed down and must be preserved. In fact various of his concerns come to concentrated expression in these texts.

1. The author is writing to church leaders whose task is to make known the gospel (2 Tim 1,8) and to act as evangelists (2 Tim 4,5). His description of his own calling is summed up in terms of the gospel entrusted to him (1 Tim 1,11; 2 Tim 1,10f). The gospel is a message to be proclaimed, and it can be summed up in christological and soteriological affirmations such as the ones we have here (cf. 2 Tim 2,8). Thus the gospel itself can be regarded as the means by which salvation is made known (2 Tim 1,10).

2. The gospel is concerned with salvation. Salvation is due to the action of God, and both God the Father (1 Tim 1,1; 2,3; 4,10; Tit 1,3; 2,10; 3,4) and Jesus (2 Tim 1,10; Tit 1,4; 2,13; 3,6) are given the title of 'Saviour'.

3. A contrast is drawn between the pre-mundane divine plan or action to bestow salvation through Jesus Christ and the actual manifestation of salvation 'now'

⁸ *Ibid.*, 26. 204.

through Jesus and the preaching of the gospel. This contrast is expressed in terms of "God promised, but now he has revealed" in Tit 1,2. It appears in a personal form with reference to Jesus who was foreknown before creation but was revealed in the last times in 1 Pet 1,20, and with reference to the mystery long veiled in silence but now revealed in the doxology at the end of Romans (Rom 16,25-7); similar ideas about the hidden plan of God once kept secret but now revealed appear in Col 1,26; Eph 3,5,9-11. This is evidently a common early Christian formulation, and the repetition in Titus shows that the Pastor had made it his own.

4. The author stresses that salvation is by grace in accordance with God's own purpose. Justification is by grace (Tit 3,7), and grace is almost personified in Tit 2,11 as a teacher in godliness. It is related to Christ and associated with strength for Christian living in 2 Tim 2,1, and it is associated with conversion in 1 Tim 1,14. Christ is said to save sinners (1 Tim 1,15) and to bring them to his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim 4,18). Moreover, he is described as the mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2,5) who gave himself as a ransom for us (1 Tim 2,6; Tit 2,14). Yet Easton draws attention to 1 Tim 2,15, where woman is saved by child-bearing, and to 1 Tim 4,16, where the faithful church leader who persists in teaching will save both himself and his hearers, and he comments: "in both instances the doctrine of winning salvation by performing specified duties is not only un-Pauline to the last degree but is also unique in the NT".⁹ This verdict is false. The thought in 1 Tim 4,16 is similar to that in 1 Cor 9,27 where Paul expresses his fear that having preached to others he himself may end up as a castaway. It is not that faithful preaching earns salvation, but rather that the person who grows lax in teaching not only ceases to evangelise and build up others but also demonstrates that he is in personal spiritual danger. As for 1 Tim 2,15, the exegesis of this verse is especially uncertain, and it can scarcely bear the weight of proof for any proposition. But it may well reflect the Pastor's view that the married woman's sphere in the particular situation which he was addressing lay not in teaching but in the rearing of her family, and that this would be the sign of her continuing faithfully on the Christian way.¹⁰

5. If salvation is by grace, then it is not by works. It is not clear whether the denial "not because of deeds done by us in righteousness" refers to the unacceptability of righteous deeds (in view of the existence of unrighteous deeds alongside them) or to the impossibility of performing righteous deeds; the former interpretation seems more likely in view of the way in which the language is phrased, but the latter might be argued as being more in conformity with the picture of fairly total

⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁰ *J. N. D. Kelly, A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, London 1963, 69f.

depravity in Tit 3,3. However, it is possible that v. 3 represents the author's own words, while in v. 5 he is using language based on a traditional formula. In both statements the 'not by works' phrase is a traditional formulation, closely related to Pauline language (Rom 3,20,28; 9,12; Eph 2,9). The language derives ultimately from the church's debate with Judaism, and, despite the fact that this debate was no longer a burning issue (or at least it is not prominent elsewhere in the letters), it is retained in the Pastorals since it enshrines a continuing significant principle.¹¹ It has been suggested that there is significance in the fact that the phrase 'not by works' is not accompanied by a reference to faith as the means of salvation. Says Easton: "The full Pauline use of 'faith' as the justifying principle is absent from the Pastorals; conspicuously so in the three 'Pauline' verses 2 Tim 1,9; Tit 3,5-7; 1 Tim 1,14. Only in the last of these does the word appear, but 'faith' is, along with 'love', a *result* of justification, not its antecedent".¹² But this lack of emphasis must be seen in comparison with Paul's language. He makes no immediate reference to faith in Rom 3,20, and in Rom 9,11f the point is that God's election depends on his own purpose, not on human works. So while Paul does contrast faith and works, he does not do so every time. It is the same point as is made in Rom 9,11f which is emphasised in 2 Tim 1,9: God's call depends on his choice, not on anything that we do, and the same is true in Tit 3,4f. In 1 Tim 1,14 the point is that there was nothing faithful or believing about Paul; he sinned in his unbelief, and it was then that God saved him. If anything, the Pastor is in danger of ascribing salvation wholly to God's call and ignoring the human response. There is no question here of salvation by works.

6. Salvation is associated with the work of the Spirit in Tit 3,5f. a topic which will not be investigated here, except to observe that this again points to the primacy of divine action in salvation and it emphasises the moral change brought about by conversion.

7. Finally, in Tit 3,7 we are told that God poured out the Spirit upon us "so that we might be justified by grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life". The interpretation of *dikaiothentes* underlying the RSV translation is challenged by Dibelius and Easton, both of whom suggest that the reference is not to justification but rather to the possibility of a righteous life thanks to the power of grace. Such 'justification' is then seen as the 'fruit of baptism' and corresponds to the beginning of sanctification in Paul's thought.¹³ This view assumes that v. 7 describes the result or purpose of

¹¹ P. Trummer, op. cit., 185-193.

¹² B. S. Easton, op. cit., 203f.

¹³ M. Dibelius - H. Conzelmann, Die Pastoralbriefe, Tübingen 41966, 113; B. S. Easton, op. cit., 103.

baptism. This interpretation has been rightly rejected by subsequent commentators who point out that temporal distinctions are not to be drawn between vs. 5f and 7, and that the acts of baptism (or regeneration) and justification are not to be separated from one another. We may compare 1 Cor 6,11 where washing, sanctification and justification (in that order) are linked to the name of Jesus and to the Spirit. N. Brox in particular reacts against Dibelius and says that genuinely Pauline phraseology is here used in its genuinely Pauline sense, and that a temporal sequence of stages in salvation cannot be constructed from the text.¹⁴ The fact that faith is not mentioned in connection with justification may seem surprising, but Paul did not mention it every time he wrote of justification; we may compare the close parallel in Rom 3,24. In fact the way the Pastor goes on to speak of "those who have trusted in God" in the very next verse (Tit 3,8) shows that for him faith was the self-evident means of receiving the divine gift. For the Pastor the emphasis is on salvation as God's act from start to finish. This is admittedly the only reference to justification in the Pastorals (apart from the use of the verb in a different sense in 1 Tim 3,16), but it is fully Pauline in content.

The Theological Substructure of the Epistles

We have found two passages where the doctrine of salvation by grace is set forth quite clearly. However, this is insufficient to establish the nature of the Pastor's theology. E. F. Scott comments: "In these epistles the ideas of Paul lose their distinctive character, and are made elements in a religion which is mainly statutory and ethical. Paulinism, while still struggling to maintain itself, is giving place to the official theology of the later Catholic Church".¹⁵ It is possible, then, that the verses we have considered are mere erratics in an otherwise dull and flat landscape, and that they have not been properly assimilated into the author's theology or exercised an influence upon it. Is the theology of the Pastorals really one of justification by grace through faith, and does that theology affect the thought of the epistles as a whole?

Part of the answer to the question has already been suggested in the previous section, where we have argued that the language of the two passages under consideration is reflected throughout the epistles and represents in fact the Pastor's own theological vocabulary. The second part of an answer to the charge is to consider how theology is related to exhortation in the epistles.

¹⁴ N. Brox, *Die Paulusbriefe*, Regensburg 1969, 309.

¹⁵ E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles*, London 1936, 177.

In 1 Tim 1,12–17 we have an apparent digression from the charge to Timothy in the shape of an account of Paul's conversion, the stress being on the grace and mercy shown to this outstanding sinner. The section is immediately linked to v. 11, and according to Brox¹⁶ it is meant to bind the gospel (v. 11) to Paul by expressing his unique authority as a teacher and also his exemplary character both for church leaders and for other members of the church. For Easton and Guthrie¹⁷ the point is that God can change anybody and give them power to serve him. Probably a combination of motifs should be seen. There is an immediate catchword connection with v. 11 in the concept of faithfulness, the point being that, if God could turn Paul into a faithful servant, he can also empower others. At the same time the section links up with the thoughts of faith and love in vs. 4 und 5 and expresses the contrast found in vs. 3–10 between the character of the heretics and the qualities associated with the gospel in terms of the before and after in Paul's life. The combination of motifs is not simple, but the important point is that the attack on the heretical teachers is closely linked to the nature of the gospel as experienced by Paul and other believers, and thus the attack on the heresy is given something of a theological foundation.

In 1 Tim 2,1–7 the duty of prayer for public leaders is inculcated, but the motive is that the gospel of salvation may be made known, since God desires the salvation of all, and the universal scope of his purpose is underlined by a reference, based on tradition ultimately stemming from the saying of Jesus recorded in Mk 10,45, to God's act of redemption and also to Paul's own calling to be an apostle to the peoples of the world. As for the directions about women not teaching, these are justified by a scriptural reference and by a general principle concerning their salvation.

The directions in 1 Tim 3 regarding the choice of church leaders are based on the assumption that their task is a 'good work', and they are set in a context of teaching about the character of the church as the bulwark of God's truth, *i. e.* the gospel, which is summarised in a brief creedal statement of a christological character (1 Tim 3,15f).

The more general exhortations to Timothy in ch. 4 are related again to theological considerations of an appropriate kind, and his own calling is linked both to the tradition which he has received and also to his hope in God as the saviour of all men (1 Tim 4,6.10).

The ecclesiastical instructions in ch. 5 have much less direct theological motivation, although they are related to the Pastor's conception of what is acceptable to God and fit in with both OT teaching and the sound words of the tradition.

¹⁶ N. Brox, *op. cit.*, 109.

¹⁷ B. S. Easton, *op. cit.*, 114; D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, London 1957, 63.

Finally, in the second part of ch. 6 Christian behaviour is again related to the call to eternal life; it is placed under the promise of the parousia and related to trusting in God.

One would not expect a direct relationship between the gospel and conduct to be expressed explicitly at every point, but there certainly appears to be sufficient evidence that throughout 1 Timothy the thinking of the Pastor is motivated by the gospel. The same can be said of 2 Timothy. Here Paul's apostleship is related to the promise of life given in Jesus (1,1), and Timothy's own ministry is determined by his faith and the gift of the Spirit. The gospel for which he must be ready to suffer is expressed in traditional terms that we have already investigated. Throughout the epistle there is reference to divine grace, to the need for identification with Christ in suffering, to divine election and the need for perseverance in the faith, and especially to the significance of the Scriptures as the divine revelation which leads to salvation; the early Christian hope of the parousia is also alive and active. Similar points can be made about Titus, where three passages (Tit 1,1–3; 2,11–14; 3,4–7) set the context for the rather detailed ecclesiastical directives in the grace of God which leads to salvation.¹⁸

From this rapid survey it can be seen that the references to the gospel and to salvation are not only fairly numerous but also do actually belong to the basic content of the letter. They form a doctrinal framework without which the practical sections would lose their point. The author's concern is with the gospel, with maintaining its true expression as enshrined in the traditions of the church, and with establishing a personal discipline which will enable church leaders to minister the gospel to their hearers. It is beyond our scope to examine how the Pastor's concept of office is related to the charismatic ministry of Paul's earlier writings, but there is no doubt that he saw office in terms of its relation to the gospel as the message of God's grace.

Faith in the Epistles

The third part of our answer to the question of the nature of the Pastor's theology is an examination of his understanding of faith.¹⁹ It may come as a surprise

¹⁸ U. Luz, *Rechtfertigung bei den Paulusschülern*, in: J. Friedrich et al., *Rechtfertigung* (= Fs. E. Käsemann), Tübingen - Göttingen 1976, 365–383, argues that the Pastor has not succeeded in grounding the imperative in the indicative. See, however, P. Towner, *The Structure of the Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Aberdeen 1984.

¹⁹ See especially H. von Lips, *Glaube – Gemeinde – Amt. Zum Verständnis der Ordination in den Pastoralbriefen*, Göttingen 1979, 25–93.

to discover just how central a position the word-group occupies in these writings. The figures are: *pisteuo*, 6x; *pistis*, 33x; *pistos*, 17x; and *pistoo*, 1x. This gives a total of 57 occurrences, a figure which is almost three times as high as one would have expected in comparison with the use of the word-group in the earlier epistles of Paul. This is a quite remarkable concentration of vocabulary, even when we make allowance for some specialised usages. An attempt to analyse the material must now be made.

1. First of all, there are the five 'faithful'-sayings, 1 Tim 1,15; 3,1; 4,9; 2 Tim 2,11; and Tit 3,8. The rubric appears to be the author's own formulation. We should translate it: "Here are words that you may trust" with the addition "words that merit full acceptance" (NEB) in 1 Tim 1,15; 4,9. The point is that the words are not only 'true' (GNB) in the abstract sense but are also sayings on which one may rely, and indeed words which the readers are encouraged to trust and accept.²⁰ The formula shows that one of the nuances in the author's understanding of *pistos* and allied words is the element of trust which R. Bultmann has correctly identified as one of the elements in the meaning of *pisteuo* in the Pastorals.²¹ Here we have revelatory statements which are to be believed and trusted. The same character of trustworthiness is attached to Christian doctrine in general in Tit 1,9; Christian teachers are to be well-instructed themselves so as to pass on trustworthy teaching to others. Thus the trustworthy material is in fact tradition handed down in the church and regarded as ultimately coming from the Lord, just as in the earlier letters of Paul where tradition derives ultimately from the Lord. It is the teaching committed to the apostles and continually guarded and preserved in the church through the activity of the spirit dwelling in the authorised teachers (2 Tim 1,13f).

2. *Pistos* is used once of Jesus (2 Tim 2,13), but here his faithfulness is the foil to the possible unfaithfulness of Christians, and it is not stressed merely for its own sake (cf. 1 Tim 6,13). The remaining uses of the term are all concerned with the character of Christians. (a) The gospel itself and Christian work are to be committed to faithful people who will not falsify the tradition and who will stand up to opposition and heresy (the author himself, 1 Tim 1,12, and church leaders, 2 Tim 2,2). (b) But the term is used more broadly for Christians as 'the believers' in 1 Tim 4,3.12. In 1 Tim 6,2a and 5,16 it is used more adjectivally but again simply means 'Christians'. (c) Yet even when used in this way the thought of active belief, expressed in an appropriate manner of life, is probably still present. This is clear in

²⁰ G. W. Knight, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters*, Kampen 1968, 4-22.

²¹ R. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, II, 183.

1 Tim 4,10 where salvation is promised to those who believe. The same sense is found in the descriptions of deaconesses or deacons' wives as 'faithful/believing in everything' (1 Tim 3,11), of the leaders' children as 'believing' in Tit 1,6, and in the description of Christian masters in 1 Tim 6,2b.

We see that *pistos* was becoming used as a name for Christians, like 'brothers' or 'disciples', and thus tending to become denotative of certain people rather than connotative of certain qualities. However, the connotation of believing is still strongly present. At the same time the nuance of 'trustworthy' is present, particularly with reference to church leaders, but also as a quality expected of all Christians (see 2 Tim 2,13, where *apisteo* has the sense of giving up one's faith, *i. e.* of being faithless or untrustworthy).

The familiar term 'brothers' for Christians is much less common (1 Tim 4,6; 2 Tim 4,21; *cf.* 1 Tim 6,2. 1 Tim 5,1 is metaphorical). Paul also uses *pistos* to refer to a quality of trustworthiness expected in Christian leaders and Christians generally, but he does not use the term absolutely as a name for Christians (although he does use *apistos* frequently in 1 and 2 Cor to refer to unbelievers; *cf.* 1 Tim 5,8). The usage in Acts is closer to the Pastorals (see Acts 10,45; 16,1 where *pistos* means 'believer', and 16,15 where it has an active sense). Paul used the participle of *pisteno* in this sense, a usage not found in the Pastorals. We appear, then, to have a development in usage, but the important point is that it is still recognised that the characteristic attribute of a Christian is his faith, and Paul's informal use of the participle has been replaced by a specific term, '*hoi pistoi*, the believers'.

3. The verb *pisteno* is used of the entrusting of the gospel to the writer (1 Tim 1,11; Tit 1,3) in a manner reminiscent of Paul (1 Cor 9,17; Gal. 2,7; 1 Thes 2,4; *cf.* Rom 3,2). In 1 Tim 1,16 Paul's conversion is a pattern for those who were to believe *e**pi* Christ and so attain eternal life. This construction is found in the LXX and some 10x in the NT (Mt 27,42; Acts 9,42; 11,17; 16,31; 22,19; Rom 4,5.24; 9,33; 10,11; 1 Pet 2,6; note the influence of Is 28,16). The question that arises is whether the nuance of trusting in or relying upon God is expressed by the construction. The rather varied usage in Acts speaks against any attempt to see significance in the use of *e**pi*. However, when the verses are considered in their contexts, an element of trust does seem to be present. In 1 Tim 1,16 to believe in Christ is not simply to believe certain things about him but to take up an attitude of trust and commitment. Similarly, in 2 Tim 1,12 the conviction that God will keep the deposit until the final day and that the believer will not be put to shame implies an element of trust, and the perfect tense suggests a settled attitude. The same is true in Tit 3,8. In the unusual passive form in 1 Tim 3,16 personal faith in Christ is meant.

A related factor is the writer's teaching about hope. Christians are people who have set their hope on (*epi*) God (1 Tim 4,10; *cf.* 5,5 of widows) in contrast with non-believers who set their hope on riches (1 Tim 6,17). While such hope is directed towards the future and the fulfilment of God's promises at the parousia (Tit 1,2; 3,7), it is a present attitude of confident trust in God. This attitude is very similar to faith in God, and we are justified in concluding that faith has a strong element of trust in God to keep his promises and hence of commitment to him.

Faith is thus by no means a formal attitude. It is a living, personal relationship of trust in God. The element of obedience is perhaps not so prominent, but in any case Bultmann's concept of faith in Paul 'primarily as obedience'²² does not get the emphasis quite right.

4. We come at last to the noun *pistis* with its varied and complicated usage.

(a) The phrase 'in faith' signifies the new situation brought about by the coming of faith. Timothy is the writer's 'true child in faith' (1 Tim 1,2; *cf.* Tit 3,15). Comparison with Tit 1,3, 'my true child in a common faith', shows that the new relationship of those who share the attitude of faith is in mind. Above all, the obvious parallel with Paul's use of 'in Christ' in similar statements (Rom 16,3,9f; Gal 1,22; Phm 16. 23; *et al.*) is significant. The phrase indicates the nature of being a Christian in active terms and forms a complement to the Pauline objective description 'in Christ', and its use confirms that for the writer faith is the key characteristic of the Christian.

(b) The same phrase describes the qualities promoted by Christian teaching. Christians are taught in faith and truth (1 Tim 2,7) and must continue in faith and love (1 Tim 2,15). See also 1 Tim 4,12; 2 Tim 1,13; Tit 1,13. The translation of 1 Tim 1,4 is not clear: does it refer to divine instruction in faith or to God's plan of salvation associated with faith?

(c) In various places 'the faith' has become tantamount to the objective content of faith, *e. g.* in 1 Tim 5,8 some have denied 'the faith' (not 'their vow'). See further 1 Tim 1,19b; 4,1; 6,10,21; 2 Tim 3,8. This understanding is confirmed by the parallel to 1 Tim 6,21 in 2 Tim 2,18 where we hear of those who have gone astray with respect to 'the truth'. It is interesting that in all of these cases the thought is of apostasy from 'the faith'. This indicates that the subjective attitude of accepting Christian truth is present, *i. e.* that the point of using *pistis* here is that it refers to that which is to be believed and which one is to continue to believe. Similarly, we have the words of faith (1 Tim 4,6) on which believers are nourished and the 'mystery of

²² R. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, I, 314—317; similarly, H. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, 237.

the faith' (1 Tim 3,9), *i. e.* the revealed secret of what is to be believed. It is obvious that this usage could lead to the risk of faith becoming merely assent to certain revealed truths, but a more active sense is apparent in 1 Tim 6,12 where 'the good fight of faith' is an active struggle, and in 2 Tim 2,18. In any case the objective sense of 'what is to be believed' is not absent from Paul (1 Cor 16,13; 2 Cor 13,5; Gal 1,23; Phil 1,27; ? Col 1,23; 2,7).

(d) Faith is associated with conversion in 1 Tim 1,14; 5,12; 2 Tim 1,5; 3,15, but in each case the emphasis lies on the continuance of an attitude which began at conversion. This may seem curious compared with the earlier writings of Paul, but in fact the same phenomenon can be seen in 1 Peter where faith is the continuing attitude of the Christian rather than the means of conversion. It is doubtful, therefore, whether any great significance is to be attached to this omission.

(e) Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Pastorals is the linking of faith with other Christian virtues. Implicit in this description is the possible suggestion that faith is just 'another Christian virtue', and it is this view of faith which needs careful examination. The problem can be seen immediately in 1 Tim 1,14 which tells how 'the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are (? or is) in Christ Jesus'. Here in a description of conversion faith is linked with love, and both are associated with grace in a manner that almost defies translation. We find the following combinations and listings:

faith and love	1 Tim 1,14; 2 Tim 1,13
faith and a good conscience	1 Tim 1,19; <i>cf.</i> 3,9
faith and truth	1 Tim 2,7 (<i>cf.</i> 2 Tim 3,8)
works of faith and good teaching	1 Tim 4,6
faith, love sanctification with sobriety	1 Tim 2,15 (of wives)
love from a pure heart, good conscience and unfeigned faith	1 Tim 1,5
word, conduct, love, faith, purity	1 Tim 4,12
righteousness, godliness, piety, faith, love, patience, meekness	1 Tim 6,11
righteousness, faith love, peace with a pure heart	2 Tim 2,22
teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings	2 Tim 3,10f
healthy in faith, love, patience	Tit 2,2

From this summary we see that faith is often paired with other virtues²³ and also appears in lists of between three and nine members. It is most frequently linked with love (9 x), then with purity and patience. Faith appears in all the listings, although it is absent from the sets of qualities of church leaders (*cf.* also 2 Tim 1,7; Tit 2,7.12; 3,1f). Faith generally comes first in pairs of qualities, but it is not emphasised in any way in the longer catalogues. There is no indication that a special charismatic faith (as in 1 Cor 12,9) is meant. The usage appears to be quite general. It has parallels in Paul; in Gal 5,22 faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit, but it appears in a subordinate position in the list. It is not even mentioned in the curious list in 2 Cor 6,4–10, where, we may also note, the Holy Spirit occupies an odd, subordinate position.

An intellectual element may be present in 1 Tim 2,7 where 'faith and truth' perhaps means 'the truth that is to be believed'. The same intellectual aspect is present in 1 Tim 4,6. Elsewhere a more practical nuance is present, especially when faith is linked closely with love, as we also find earlier in Gal 5,6 and in the familiar triad of faith, love and hope (which is not, however, present in the Pastorals). The abnormal order of love and faith in the list in 1 Tim 4,12 may be motivated by a shift from overt behaviour to its inner basis. It is interesting that faith is linked with purity and a good conscience. In 1 Tim 1,5 Christian instruction leads to a love that proceeds from a pure heart, a good conscience and unfeigned faith. A clean heart and a good conscience are virtually synonymous, and the thought is not so much of a conscience/heart which does not condemn because there is nothing to condemn but rather of one that operates in accordance with pure standards and is not defiled or corrupt (Tit 1,15c; *cf.* 1 Tim 3,9; 2 Tim 1,3; 2,22). A 'good conscience' is one in good working order (1 Tim 1,5.19), not one that is seared (1 Tim 4,2). We might suspect that 'unfeigned' is simply a rhetorical addition to get literary balance in 1 Tim 1,5, but the same combination appears in 2 Tim 1,5, and the adjective was current in early Christianity. The point of 1 Tim 1,5 is thus that genuine Christian love is possible only when the inner springs of action are free from selfish, sinful desires, and this happens when there is a well-principled conscience at work, and this in turn is linked to a genuine faith. In 1 Tim 2,15 the link of faith with sobriety is not surprising in view of the stress elsewhere on this virtue as one to be shown by all believers and especially by women.

²³ On the place of Hellenistic virtues in the Pastorals see S. C. Mott, *Greek Ethics and Christian Conversion. The Philonic Background of Titus II 10–14 and III 3–7*, in: *NT 20* (1978) 22–48. It is striking how the emphasis on faith and love stands out when seen in the context of the use of Hellenistic language.

What is emerging from this survey is that the writer's use of 'faith' is not as arbitrary as appears at first sight, and that faith is not simply one virtue among others. True faith is seen to be the attitude which determines the presence of other necessary virtues; it is the basis for intellectual truth and for practical Christian living. It cannot be denied that on occasion it is simply listed along with other qualities, but the point is that it is the most common virtue demanded of Christians. From first to last the Christian life is one of faith, and faith is continually renewed by sound teaching. It may be that in some of the lists faith has more of the sense of faithfulness or maintenance of faith despite temptations to give up (so especially in 2 Tim 3,10). But in view of the total evidence it does seem that faith is of central importance for the writer and that its apparently subordinate position in the catalogues must be seen in the context of its centrality elsewhere.²⁴

Good Works, Righteousness and Judgment

If 'faith' occurs remarkably often in the Pastorals, so too does the term 'work' (20x), especially in the phrase 'good works' (14x). (a) We have already noted that salvation is not bestowed on the basis of our works. (b) The judgment on evil-doers takes place according to their deeds (2 Tim 4,14) — which is characteristic Pauline teaching (Rom 2,6; 1 Cor 3,13–5; 2 Cor 11,15). (c) Believers are exhorted to do good works. The purpose of God is the creation of a people zealous for good works (Tit 2,14), and they must be taught accordingly (Tit 3,8.14). Christian leaders must be a pattern of good works (2 Tim 3,17; Tit 2,7), and all believers must be ready to do good works (2 Tim 2,21; Tit 3,1), including the rich (1 Tim 6,18) and women (1 Tim 2,10; 5,10 *bis*). Lack of good works shows up the emptiness of Christian profession (Tit 1,16), and it is implied that they are taken into account at the judgment (1 Tim 5,24f). Alongside good works the place of righteousness as a Christian virtue should be noted (1 Tim 6,11; 2 Tim 2,22; 3,16; Tit 1,8; 2,12).

There is nothing surprising in all this to readers of Paul who teaches that God does a good work in believers and they in turn are to do good works (2 Cor 9,8; Eph 1,10; Col 1,10; cf. 1 Thes 1,3; 2 Thes 1,11; 2,17).

The terms 'faith' and 'good works' are not brought together very much in the Pastorals, and it may be this that has led to the suggestion that the writer has two theories of the way to salvation. Paul by contrast is aware that faith engages in work

²⁴ See further *O. Merk*, Glaube und Tat in den Pastoralbriefen, in: ZNW 66 (1975) 91–102.

(1 Thes 1,3; 2 Thes 1,11; Gal 5,6), although he does not speak of 'good works' in this connection. The important point is that no actual tension is evident between Paul and the Pastor. Justification leads to a life which is characterised by faith and good works. The linkage is in fact to be seen in 1 Tim 6,17f where hope (which is equivalent to faith) and doing good deeds are related. The link is also made in Tit 3,8 where believers are to apply themselves to good deeds. Similarly, in Tit 1,15f it is the unbelieving who profess to know God and deny him by their deeds. This is common NT teaching, and the suggestion that we should bifurcate the author's teaching into two separate ways of salvation seems perverse.

As for future judgment there is remarkably little reference to this. When the writer speaks of God as the righteous judge in 2 Tim 4,8 the point is that he will vindicate all his faithful servants and bestow the crown of righteousness, *i. e.* the reward for righteousness. But the righteousness lies in having run the race and kept the faith (*cf.* 2 Tim 2,12f). The writer refers to judgment on the ungodly and apostates in 1 Tim 5,12.24, and he emphasises the solemn charge given to Christians leaders by a reference to the coming judgment in 2 Tim 4,1, but it can scarcely be said that the sanction of future judgment occupies a prominent place in his thinking. He emphasises rather the positive character of Christian hope in God and the assurance of future life with him. The problem of judgment by works for Christians is simply not dominant in his thinking although he accepted the general fact. Where Christians have become apostate and have turned against the faith, their judgment is already obvious. It would be false to deduce from 1 Tim 6,18f the idea that generosity earns a place in heaven; the thought is rather similar to that in the Gospels, where almsgiving ensures treasure in heaven.

Conclusion

The Pastoral Epistles thus reveal a pattern of thinking about salvation which is not different in essentials from that of Paul — and indeed from that of primitive Christianity more generally. We saw that statements reflecting traditional language but made his own by the author presented salvation in terms of the divine initiative in grace and in such a way as to rule out human merit. The doctrine expressed in these statements could be seen to have exercised a controlling influence on the writer's approach to ecclesiastical organisation and pastoral counsel. Although the concept of justification by faith is not found *expressis verbis*, we saw that the concept of faith was of quite central importance for the writer, and that this faith was a living, active, continuous attitude of trust in God which should give rise to a life of

godliness and good works. Although, therefore, we can see ways in which the thinking of the Pastoral Epistles goes beyond that of Paul, yet the signs of a direct continuity and development can be seen, and it has become clear that the epistles are not to be assessed as representing a disastrous falling away from Pauline insights into a so-called early catholic emphasis on church organisation and a conventional morality unrelated to the heart of the gospel of justification by grace.