

The Doctrine of Faith in Hebrews, James, and Clement of Rome.

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ONE of the most important and at the same time most perplexing questions of New Testament criticism is the date of James. Internal evidence has value, but partakes too largely of the subjective element to be conclusive. It cannot, for example, be considered more than an improbability that a brother of the Lord writing a score of years or less after the crucifixion would bid the brethren to "take for an example of suffering and of patience the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord," and Job, and say nothing of Jesus. Authorities will differ as to the weight of such considerations. Language gives perhaps more cogent evidence, for it is hard to reconcile a date early enough to admit the conservative interpretation of Jas. 1¹, with the mellifluous Greek of the epistle. At any date when James of Jerusalem was in a position to address an exhortation to the entire church of Christ ("the twelve tribes of the Israel that is scattered abroad"), one can hardly believe that it would have been written in anything but Aramaic. But this also is inconclusive to many minds. About all that the internal evidence is generally admitted to prove is that the epistle must either be very early, the earliest of New Testament writings, or else relatively late. It cannot have appeared during the time of the Pauline controversy over justification by faith or works, for it appears blandly unconscious of any important opposition.

Admittedly the literary relations of this epistle, if real dependence could be shown of other writers on James, or of James on other writers, would give far more satisfactory, if not conclusive evidence of date. Perhaps the dependence of James on 1 Peter is the most generally admitted, though here too there are many who declare the priority to be on the other side. Scarcely any deny the connection. But it is my belief that a careful scrutiny of the doctrine of faith as set forth in Heb. 11^{8-19, 31} Jas. 2²¹⁻²⁸ and Clem. Rom. 10-12, will show a probability of dependence in the order named, *i.e.* that James

presupposes Hebrews,¹ and that Clement presupposes both ;² so that the date of James may be fixed with tolerable confidence between Hebrews and Clement of Rome, or between 75 and 95 A.D.

No student of Hebrews will need to be convinced of the marked Alexandrian coloration with which the Pauline doctrine of faith is there tintured. Says the late Professor Bruce, in the article on "Hebrews" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. 1899, p. 334: "Faith is a great word in the Epistle to the Hebrews also, but its use there is not quite the same as in the Pauline letters. . . . The function of faith as a force making for personal righteousness or noble conduct is very prominently set forth in ch. 11, where in a series of well-chosen instances it is exhibited as a power helping men to make their lives sublime. But the secret of its power is peculiarly conceived in Hebrews. In St. Paul's system faith derives its power from its personal object, the Lord Jesus Christ. It unites us to Him, and from Him flows a transforming influence. In Hebrews the secret of faith's power is its psychological character as a faculty of the human mind, whereby it can make the future as present, and the unseen as if it were visible. So viewed, faith as a principle making for heroism is not confined to the Christian world. It is as wide as humanity, and can turn out heroes and heroines in every land. Hence even a Rahab finds a place in the roll of those who obtained a good report through faith."

The difference is wide indeed. In Paul faith was the opposite of

¹ So Hilgenfeld, Grimm, Hausrath, Schmiedel, Pfeiderer, W. Brückner, H. J. Holtzmann. The last named adduces Heb. 6¹ 9¹⁴ (κερά έργα, with which Jas. 2¹⁷. 20. 26 sets πίστις κέρα in analogy and contrast), and 12¹¹ (καρπὸς εὐφροσύνης = Jas. 3¹⁸, καρπὸς δικαιοσύνης ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ; cf. the singularly harsh representation, the fruit, instead of the seed, is sown τοῖς ποιοῦσιν, a *dativus commodi*, εὐφροσύνῃ); 11¹⁷⁻¹⁹ (the sacrifice of Abraham, antithesis in Jas. 2²¹, cf. 1 Macc. 2⁶²); vs.⁸¹ (Rahab, introduced in natural connection with the conquest of Jericho, but in Jas. 2²⁶ having only a polemic relation to the context); 6³ (= Jas. 4¹⁶); 12⁹ (= Jas. 1¹⁷); 13⁷ (= Jas. 5¹⁰).

² Holtzmann, *Eint.*⁸ p. 336, writes as follows regarding the relation between Jas. and Clem. Rom.: "The numerous coincidences with Clem. Rom. (especially 2²⁶ [Rahab] 3¹⁸ 4¹⁶ = Clem. 12¹ 38² 21⁶) and Hermas, are very remarkable. The dependence in the case of the former is certainly, in the case of the latter probably, on the side of James." He refers to Pfeiderer, *Urchr.*, p. 868, who admits, however, that the more remarkable coincidences (Clem. 30² = 1 Pet. 5⁶ = Jas. 4⁸, Clem. 49⁶ = 1 Pet. 4⁹ = Jas. 5²⁰) are as easily explicable from the dependence of both on 1 Peter. In the two passages, Clem. 38² 21⁶, I am unable to see the faintest evidence of priority over Jas. 3¹⁸ and 4¹⁶. The third instance of Holtzmann (Clem. 12¹ = Jas. 2²⁶) is that which we have now to consider.

the Pharisaic *καύχημα*. It was the self-surrender by which dying to sin, to the law, to the whole struggle for a righteousness of our own, we participate ethically in the death of Christ; but also, receiving from God forgiveness and the life-giving Spirit, participate further in Christ's resurrection. In Hebrews this most characteristic as well as most fundamental concept of Paul's Christianity has disappeared. Faith becomes the power of penetration to the ideal. It approximates dangerously to the Buddhistic-gnostic conception of "enlightenment" or gnosis.

Abel by it was enabled to perceive that the sacrifice of a lamb was "more excellent" than that of fruits of the ground, so that by the acceptance granted "his gifts" he presents an undying witness through the ages of the blood to be shed that should "speak better things" than that outpoured by him. Abraham, the great hero of faith, was such because he looked beyond the letter of the promise, expecting "the city which hath the foundations whose builder and maker is God." Our author takes pains to show that the patriarchs, one and all, desired not earthly dwelling-places, but "a better country, that is, a heavenly,"³ and because they clung to this loftier ideal God was not ashamed to be known by the exclusive title of "their God," *i.e.* "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." This loftier outlook of the patriarchs redeems Christianity from the reproach of having been at first, in the form of Judaism, a merely national religion. The same penetration to the future was evinced in Isaac's dying blessing, as well as those of Jacob and Joseph. Moses' rejection of "all the treasures of Egypt" was due to his spiritual vision of the Christ as "greater riches." It was simply that "he looked to the recompense of reward." He "endured the wrath of the king," because he saw behind and above Pharaoh the king who is invisible. Even "Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, endured the cross, despising shame, for the vista of joy that was spread out before him," for *his* faith, too, was insight into the divine ideal. Faith, in fact, is defined generally to be "the giving substance to things hoped for, the subjective experience of things not seen."

How closely this doctrine of faith as insight stands connected with the Philonic ideas and the Alexandrian allegorical interpretation of

³ Cf. Apoc. of Baruch 57², where the bright waters represent the fount of Abraham, in his son, and his son's son, "because at that time the unwritten law was named . . . and faith (belief) in the coming judgment was then generated, and hope of the world that was to be renewed was then built up, and the promise of the life that should come hereafter was implanted." Cf. Enoch 60⁶.



Scripture, needs hardly to be pointed out. It is equally obvious that there is no intentional disloyalty to Paul. The insight of faith is of worth only as it prompts to *ὑπομονή*, *i.e.* persistence in the race. And yet here is a step already taken toward that conception of faith *plus* works as the ground of justification which in James and the ecclesiastical writings presents such a strange though unconscious contrast to Paulinism. With all its splendid development of the Pauline Christology, Hebrews might well be regarded in conservative circles of the church, such as the Jewish circles in Palestine and Rome where special stress was laid on the ethical side, as open to a dangerous use in support of intellectualism unless more emphasis were laid upon ethical requirements. Rome and Palestine are, in fact, just the regions to which the epistle is assigned, with a constantly increasing preponderance of opinion in favor of some Roman Christian congregation as its original destination. Here, at least, we find it some twenty years later, employed so copiously, though namelessly, in Clement's letter to the church of Corinth that he often seems to be following its argument point by point. Especially is this the case with the great chapter on faith that we are now considering, the illustrations of which are taken up *seriatim* in Clem. Rom. 9-13. The early Alexandrian Pseudo-Barnabas also shows unmistakable acquaintance and sympathy with Hebrews among the very few New Testament writings he employs.

With regard to James there is quite as much uncertainty of location as of date until the question of the genuineness of its superscription (Jas. 1¹) be decided. Rome is at least as likely a place for its origin and preservation as any other, and Rome is certainly the place to which we are carried back by the external evidence. Aside from Clement of Rome, of whose use of James I am about to speak, we have no evidence of even the existence of James throughout the entire second century, with the one remarkable exception of Hermas, the Roman apocalypticist of about 140. Of his use of James, Westcott says (*History of the Canon*⁸, p. 199): "The *Shepherd* bears the same relation to the Epistle of St. James as the Epistle of Barnabas to that of the Hebrews," appending the note, "The coincidences of Hermas with St. James are too numerous to be enumerated at length. Whole sections of the *Shepherd* are framed with evident recollection of St. James's Epistle, — *e.g.* Vis. 3⁹; Mand. 2^{8, 11}; Sim. 5⁴." But although parts of the *Shepherd* are doubtless older than 140, the date and authorship of James are hardly affected, since in any event it would have to be dated as early as *ca.* 125. We note, however, as a sig-

nificant fact, the presence of this group of writings, Hebrews, James, Clem. Rom., and Hermas, very early in the second century at Rome, where the Alexandrian coloration of the Pauline doctrine of faith in the first-named writing would not be likely to pass altogether without protest. The question is, Does the passage Jas. 2¹⁴⁻²⁶ give any evidence of aiming to correct a type of ultra-Paulinism to which Hebrews, unless wisely interpreted, would be likely to give aid and comfort?

It is generally admitted that this author, while employing certain expressions of the Pauline theology in the reverse sense, as in 2⁴, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," is not consciously contradicting the great apostle to the Gentiles. He simply has no appreciation of what Paul means by faith. He has the theological formulæ of Paul, and is interested in the controversy as to justification by faith or works. But the controversy was agitated before Paul's day, and even the phraseology and proof texts need not *necessarily* be of Pauline origin. This author may or may not have got them from Paul. He certainly is not aiming at Paul, or he could not so misrepresent him. He simply does not know that Paul did not recognize the existence of such a thing as "faith without works," but made the alternative, "faith energizing through love" or nothing. This author is willing to bestow the sacred name of "faith" on such mere dry intellectual assent as the devils themselves are forced to give "and tremble." "Faith," therefore (meaning mere knowledge, belief, or insight), to be of value, must have added to it something more, — namely, works. To him, accordingly, the elements of salvation are two. First, there is knowledge of the ideal. This it is God's part to give in the law, now by the teaching of Jesus made "perfect" and "royal," a law of liberty, the mirror of ideal righteousness. But this knowledge must be accompanied by "wisdom" to understand and appreciate it, this too being given by God liberally to all that ask. In the second place, one must have obedience or patient continuance in well-doing, *ὑπομονή*, both in the positive sense of works of mercy, and negatively by keeping unspotted from the world. This is man's part, the sum and substance of what he owes to God, pure worship and undefiled before our God and Father. If this author had read the Pauline epistles, he seems to have had very little appreciation of their contents; for the conception of justification by a faith barren of good works, which he antagonizes, is not only not in them, but is repeatedly and most explicitly guarded against by the apostle, as *e.g.* in Gal. 6^f; "Be not deceived (by those who allege that my doctrine of justification by faith tends to immorality), God is not mocked (it does

not permit the sinner to defy God's law with impunity) ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ;" or "for we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5¹⁰). It is only in a post-Pauline form that the doctrine seems capable of such misunderstanding as has been put upon it, either by our author himself, or by those whom he antagonizes ; and the latter, at least, conceive of faith in the Alexandrian manner as essentially insight. In fact, they go further than Hebrews, and drop the *ὑπομονή* out of sight as a condition of justification. They retain the phraseology of Paul, but have lost its ethical import. He who answers them accordingly thinks himself the best of Paulinists when insisting on the reinstatement of the *ὑπομονή* without observing that he has only increased the un-Pauline divorce between faith and works. Both parties to this controversy appear to be agreed to a definition of faith which makes it substantially equivalent to "enlightenment." When now, in addition to this correspondence, the two instances selected by "James" to disprove the doctrine of his opponents are both of them found not in Paul, but in Heb. 11, the great chapter on faith of this epistle, we certainly advance a step nearer to demonstration of the relation we believe to exist.⁴

It is suggested in our quotation from Professor Bruce's article that Abraham and Rahab are selected in Hebrews as types respectively of believing Israel and the believing Gentile world, which enters into the inheritance of the covenant people by conversion and adoption. But there is no setting forth of this correspondence, as if the author had selected Rahab from a number of possible types of faith. On the contrary, he simply traces the sacred history from Genesis to Joshua, pausing at the conquest as a natural stopping-place, and passing more lightly over the subsequent periods. In the case of Abraham he goes a step beyond Paul in adding to the evidences of faith in his forsaking of home at God's command, and his rejoicing in the promise of a son, the instance of the sacrifice of Isaac, which, but for its following after Gen. 15³, might well have been appealed to by the legalist as proof

⁴ It should be clearly understood that the phraseology of the argument in Jas. 2^d. 24, and the type of "justification" selected, go back to Paul, if not still earlier. "Justification" is foreign to the vocabulary if not to the thought of Hebrews. What is argued is that the type of ultra-Pauline intellectualism antagonized in James is one which seems, from its character, and from the Scripture instances it cited, to have built upon Hebrews, adding to Paul's example of Abraham's justification by faith apart from works that of "Rahab the harlot."

of justification by works. But to the author of Hebrews it is not an instance of simple, unquestioning obedience. Even this is viewed from the standpoint of his dominant conception. Abraham raised the sacrificial knife over his son, not because he preferred the destruction of his hopes to disobedience, but because *the insight of faith* enabled him to see that his hopes would not be destroyed. "He that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only-begotten son," because, by a kind of anticipation of the resurrection, "he accounted that God is able to raise up even from the dead"; so that the restoration of Isaac became in reality "a parable" of the resurrection. In the case of Rahab he has doubtless in mind, as the evidence of her "faith," the remarkable confession placed in her mouth in Jos. 2⁹⁻¹¹, beginning, "I know that Yahweh hath given you the land," where the insight is little different from shrewd and calculating foresight.

In James, where again the correspondence of Rahab to the prose-lyte, if present at all to the author's mind, is only tacit, we cannot account for the ranging side by side of Abraham *and Rahab*, unless the object be to counteract the wrong impression liable to be produced by Heb. 11. Such use of Pauline phraseology and proof texts as we have is quite compatible with a sincere though misdirected attempt to vindicate the doctrine of Paul, and to prevent a one-sided use of Hebrews, disregarding ch. 12; which, as Professor McGiffert kindly points out, gives an indispensable complement to the doctrine of ch. 11, by showing that perseverance in the race, ὑπομονή (*cf.* Jas. 1^{3,4}), is the end which "faith" subserves. But what evidence have we that Rahab had ever been brought forward elsewhere than in Hebrews as an instance of justification by faith without works?⁶ It demands indeed a very Alexandrianized point of view to see in the story a trace of anything but the boldest *quid pro quo* understanding. Rahab of all persons seems to be rewarded on the simple theory that one good turn deserves another. In James a check is placed upon the treatment in Hebrews of the Old Testament heroes and heroines who "received a good report," by pointing out that Abraham's belief had first to be supplemented by the good work of obedience, before "he was called the friend of God"; as in 1 Macc. 2³² Gen. 15⁶ is brought into connection with the same incident, perhaps because of the repetition with enhancements in 22^{17f.} of the promise of 15⁵. Similarly Rahab's belief had

⁶ The burden of proof lies upon those who reject an obvious possible source for the example adopted in James (from current use) without suggesting a substitute.

also to be supplemented by her deliverance of the spies, else it would have been valueless. To suppose that the author of James arrived at just these two illustrations, the sacrifice of Isaac and the deliverance of the spies by Rahab, quite independently of Heb. 11^{17-19, 31} calls for large drafts on the imagination. We must not only suppose that they had come into current use as the salient types of justification, but also that they had been made use of in support of a doctrine of faith tending dangerously (at least in the judgment of our author) toward intellectualism. It is a far more probable supposition that it is just the use made of them by the author of Heb. 11^{17-19, 31}, or by his readers, which called forth the protest.

This relation becomes still more probable when we observe the almost identical effect produced on the mind of Clement of Rome by reading this same chapter of Hebrews. In this case there is no question whatever of the employment. Clement has upwards of forty-seven echoes of Hebrews, and in chs. 9-18 of his epistle follows it seriatim. But, whether because of the previous protest of James, or simply because he was independently struck by the dangerous leaning of the epistle toward intellectualism, on this point of the doctrine of justification by faith, he does not feel able to endorse its teaching without serious qualification. In either case we have confirmation of the view that it is the doctrine of Hebrews, or perversions of it, not the doctrine of Paul, which calls forth the protest of James.

But to return to Clement. It is particularly the roll-call of the heroes of faith who "obtained a good report" in Heb. 11 which seems to him to call for restatement. If we "fix our eyes on them that ministered perfectly unto God's excellent glory," says he, we shall find in the case of Enoch that he was "found righteous in obedience"; in the case of Noah that "by his ministration (deliverance through water) he preached regeneration (in baptism) unto the world (*cf.* 1 Pet. 3^{20f.})," and so was "found faithful" (justified). "Abraham, who was called the 'friend,' was found faithful in that he rendered obedience unto the words of God," first in leaving his country for the land of promise, then when he was parted from Lot, then in his believing in the promise of Gen. 15⁵. But it was "for his faith *and hospitality*" (Gen. 18^{1ff.}) that "a son was given him in his old age, and *by obedience* he offered him a sacrifice unto God." Lot, again, was saved "for his *hospitality* and godliness." The entire twelfth chapter is next devoted to Rahab the harlot, who was "saved" (Jos. 6²⁵) "for her faith *and hospitality*." Clement finds, however,

in the woman's confession, and the scarlet thread hung from the window, whereby she "showed beforehand that through the blood of the Lord there shall be redemption unto all them that believe and hope on God," evidence that "not only faith but prophecy was found in the woman."

Further on he returns to the list of heroes of faith to inculcate another virtue, that of humility. "Let us be imitators also of them which 'went about in goatskins and sheepskins,' preaching the coming of Christ. We mean Elijah and Elisha, and likewise Ezekiel, the prophets, and besides them those men also that 'obtained a good report.' Abraham obtained an exceeding good report, and was called 'the friend of God.'" The humility of Abraham is then instanced, thereafter that of Job (*cf.* Jas. 5^{10f.}), Moses, and finally that of David (ch. 18), after which he sums up his exhortation "The humility, therefore, and the submissiveness of so many and so great men, who have thus obtained a good report, hath *through obedience* made better not only us, but also the generations that were before us."

Here is a mingling of the examples of Hebrews and James. Moses, "who was called faithful in all his house," and the elders who "obtained a good report" (Clem. Rom. 17¹⁻⁵) is from Hebrews, the prophets and Job (17¹⁻³) are from James. The "good report" (*μεμαρτυρημένος*) as an expression for Scripture assurances of acceptance with God is a phrase from Hebrews, the principal application of it, the "exceeding good report" applied to Abraham, who "was called the friend of God," alluded to once in 10¹ and again in 17², is from Jas. 2²³, where alone this witness of God to Abraham's acceptance is referred to. There is thus no small amount of evidence in the very phraseology of the passages to suggest an acquaintance on the part of Clement with James. The relation has indeed been inverted, but surely, if there be dependence, it must be on the side of the conflator, who develops at greater length and with added instances the more concise statement of another.

But much more conclusive is the doctrinal comparison. In James we find already the disposition to check the one-sidedness of the Alexandrian development of Paul's great doctrine. Faith must be supplemented by works, as is proved by the very instances of Abraham and Rahab brought forward in Hebrews in support of the doctrine of justification by faith only. If now another voice is raised with the plea: Yes, and the particular works by which these and the other elders "obtained their good report" were specifically

“obedience,” “hospitality,” and “humility,” we can but place the specific and particular after the general. The relation cannot be reversed.

But neither can one be easily convinced that the increasing relative significance of the special instances of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, and the deliverance of the spies by Rahab, in the order Hebrews, James, Clement of Rome, can be accounted for without literary dependence. Why should Clement devote such large space to Rahab, whose position in the list of Hebrews is quite inconspicuous, if he had not the example of James before him?

On the other hand, he might, indeed, be moved independently to qualify the ultra-Paulinism of the doctrine of faith of Hebrews, but his review of the list Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot and Rahab—specially dwelling on the cases of Abraham and Rahab—to show that their “good report” was not for faith only, but for faith *plus* obedience (in the case of Abraham “faith, obedience, and hospitality,” in the case of Rahab “faith and hospitality”), is far more naturally explained if we understand him to have been acquainted with the Epistle of James and to have sympathized with its conservatism as against the extreme view of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It goes without saying that he is even more manifestly unconscious of contradicting Paul than is James. But by this time the church already was conceiving the gospel as a *nova lex*. No one understood Paul but Marcion, and Marcion misunderstood him. While even more specifically unpauline than James, Clement is undeniably innocent of intentional disloyalty. But the stages of the process are Paul, Hebrews, James, Clement; and the date thereby obtained for James, whether Hebrews be placed shortly before or shortly after 70 A.D., is one which entirely precludes the authenticity of the superscription. The interpretation of Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith, in all sincerity as a doctrine of justification by faith *plus* works, suggests a date nearer to 90 A.D.