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## Literature.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

WE welcome a new volume in the Moffatt New Testament Commentary in *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hodder & Stoughton; 8s. 6d. net), by Professor T. H. Robinson, D.D., of Cardiff University, who has already written the valuable work in the same series on 'Matthew.' It might be thought that Professor Robinson's special gifts as a distinguished Semitic scholar would hardly serve him to the same extent in treating a writing which bears so clearly the stamp of Alexandrian thought. In a measure this is true, but in the present work his rich knowledge of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament has proved to be an invaluable asset; and nowhere is this so manifest as in his exposition of He 9, which is perhaps the best section in the commentary. The ideas underlying sacrifice, the ritual of the Day of Atonement, and the deficiencies of the Old Testament system are explained in a remarkably full and interesting manner. 'Atonement, in Israel,' says Professor Robinson, 'meant not simply the propitiation of an angry Deity, but the renewal of the ideal relationship implied and involved in the Covenant.' He rightly urges that the main contention of the Epistle must be set against this background, and that it consists in the belief 'that in the Cross of Christ we have God's greatest work on earth.'

The thought of Hebrews is described as 'simple and usually obvious,' and Professor Robinson explains that, in consequence, for the most part he has not been able to do more than paraphrase its words. He comforts himself with the observation that what appeals to one man as platitude may be paradox to another. Doubtless this is the author's modesty. We question, however, if the thought of the Epistle is as simple as he maintains, and are inclined to regret that he has limited himself so much to paraphrasing, and has not discussed the views of other commentators, such as Moffatt, Peake, and Westcott. For the general reader, however, who does not want to be troubled with the minutiae of critical discussion, these deficiencies will count for righteousness, and it is mainly for such readers that the series is intended to be useful.

While rejecting the traditional theory of Pauline authorship, Professor Robinson resists the attempt to find the author in Barnabas, Apollos, and others, and holds that such attempts are simply 'guess-work.' He inclines to the view that the readers

were Jewish Christians, and calls attention to the small place which is given to the question of marriage and its obligations (cf. He 13<sup>4</sup>). 'This, in itself, suggests that the original readers of the Epistle belonged to a community of Jewish Christians, or, at least, that they had inherited the Jewish tradition.' Rather unconvincingly, the phrase *οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας* is interpreted as 'the Christians of Italy,' and preference is given to the view that the readers lived in Ephesus.

Professor Robinson's commentary is an interesting and stimulating piece of work which we are glad to commend to all who desire to make a renewed study of one of the greatest of the New Testament Epistles.

### KARL BARTH ON THE RESURRECTION.

Under the title of *The Resurrection of the Dead* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net), Karl Barth has written a profound and original commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, now translated by Mr. H. J. Stenning. Believing that the Resurrection, as proclaimed in the fifteenth chapter, is central in Paul's thought and in the Apostolic preaching, Barth takes chapters 1-14 as forming one whole leading up to it. 'The disparateness of the subjects with which the Apostle deals, the frequent obscurity of the personal and contemporary details, finally, the absolute limitation of the substance of his speech, thoughts, and ideas by the time—none of this, if we emphatically inquire: what is he really speaking of? can prevent us from hearing the *cantus firmus*, from seeing the "red thread" which runs through the whole.' In his analysis there will be found that vigorous criticism of the Christian Church, that bringing down of every lofty imagination of man, even Christian man, and that emphasis on the absolute initiate and sole glory of God which we are accustomed to in Barth's writings. In his more detailed exposition of chapter 15 he strongly maintains the difference between the Christian doctrine of Resurrection and the immortality of the soul. 'It goes without saying that bodily resurrection is meant. . . . To wish to be God's *without* the body is rebellion against God's will, is secret denial of God; it is, indeed, the body which suffers, sins, dies. We are waiting for our *body's* redemption; if the body is not redeemed to obedience, to health, to life, then there is no God; then what may be called God does not deserve this name.'

Whatever judgment one may pass on the details of the exegesis, this exposition must be heartily welcomed as a piece of serious Christian writing. How wholesome a change from the modern type of commentary in which calm and critical scholars, in a spirit of complete detachment, canvass each others' opinions without passion or conviction. Here is a man who trembles at the Word of God, because he feels in his soul that it is *God's Word*, a Word that searches and judges him. 'All the time, the question in the *background* is concerning *this God, this Christ, this Holy Ghost, this last word.*'

### THE PSALMS.

The series of Hebrew texts with grammatical notes and vocabulary, to which Professor Robinson contributed Amos and Professor A. R. S. Kennedy Ruth, has been worthily continued by Dr. W. O. E. Oesterley, who deals with *The Psalms*, Book III (S.P.C.K. ; 5s. net). These psalms (73-89) contain their fair share of textual problems and more than their fair share of unusual words, and the tyro in Hebrew will gladly welcome the adequate treatment of them which he will find here. Though what is here offered makes no pretence to be a commentary—there are several good commentaries on the Psalter—there are occasionally interspersed illuminating exegetical comments, and there are brief and cautious introductions which suggest, so far as that is possible, the historical background, from which, we are glad to note, the pre-exilic period is not ruled out of consideration (Ps 84 and part of 89). The reference to the Ras Shamra inscriptions in the note on עליון (Ps 82<sup>6</sup>) shows, as we should expect, that the book is abreast of the latest discoveries. In such a book it was natural and wise to reduce the textual discussion to a minimum. This, however, has necessarily led to the exclusion of conjectures equally probable with those which have been incorporated: there is no mention, for example, of the ingenious suggestion to substitute אֲחִירָה בֵּינֵי for אֲחִירָה בְּכִיּוֹר in Ps 73<sup>24</sup> (though, if the text be retained, a note on the meaning and case of כִּיּוֹר would have been welcome). And in v.<sup>2</sup> of the same psalm it is by no means certain that ואני is a corruption of ארני and belongs to the first verse. We should be sorry to miss ואני at the beginning, which is so peculiarly appropriate to so personal a psalm (cf. vv.<sup>22f.</sup> 28); besides *Israel* of the traditional text (v.<sup>1</sup>) is hardly in the picture. It seems much better, even at the cost of having four beats in v.<sup>2a</sup>, to read with Gunkel אֵל לִי־יִצְרֵא treating אלהים as an ultimate

יהוה, giving this perfect balance, 'Surely good to the upright is God, Even Jahweh to the pure in heart.' But obviously it would have been unwise to encumber such a book with much textual discussion, and Dr. Oesterley's 'general rule has been to adopt the emendation which has the greatest weight of opinion behind it'—a rule with which there can be no quarrel. The book, if carefully studied, besides being a useful introduction to textual criticism, will prove an admirable guide to the principles and usages of Hebrew grammar; and a special word of praise is due to the vocabulary, which furnishes just the right amount of information, besides indicating in every case the passages where the words occur.

### A NEGLECTED CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LETTERS.

*Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge University Press; 3os. net), by Mr. G. R. Owst, M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D.(Theol.), is the work of a civil servant who made a name for himself in the English field of historical research by the publication, six years ago, of his 'Preaching in Medieval England.' In this further excursion into the same field the writer claims to be the first who has attempted to estimate comprehensively the debt of English literature to the message of her medieval Church.

In his Preface Dr. Owst complains of the arbitrary and artificial treatment which the story of English medieval literary development receives at the hands of the literary historian. No proper recognition is given of the influence of the hundreds of religious works in prose and verse by those whom current ages were wont to regard as the 'literati.' However, Professor R. W. Chambers has recently, even as Dr. Owst's work was going through the press, exploded the 'miracle' of a newly invented Tudor prose, setting the English works of More and the Authorized Version against a continuous background of English devotional prose, from the time of Ælfric and Alfred onwards.

It is not only in the sphere of literature that Dr. Owst considers the influence of medieval English tracts and sermons. Their contribution to social history is also appraised. They often enable us to get as close as ever we may to the life, thoughts, and feelings of the common man. They serve, too, to correct some of the conclusions of historians concerning matters of State, such as the administration of justice. And they reveal a Church of whose existence we are apt to forget, which was

striving to preach the Christian gospel to every creature.

But by far the greater portion of Dr. Owst's work aims at showing the influence of the English medieval pulpit upon English letters, as represented, for example, by the works of Langland and Chaucer, not to speak of Shakespeare himself.

First are reviewed various types of sermon-illustration—brief illustrations drawn from men and things in the current everyday scene, examples of the allegoric figure of speech, lessons from the lives of Biblical heroes and saints, and moralized anecdotes, whether historically true or fictitious. Through preaching, and in especial the provision made for it in the way of collecting and preserving illustrative matter, much of the lighter thought and imagination passed over, affirms Dr. Owst, into the thinking and writing of the modern world.

The central and most elaborate section of the work treats of the Preaching of Satire and Complaint. Here, as throughout the work, Dr. Owst quotes freely from the medieval preachers, such as John Bromyard, Thomas Brunton, and Robert Rypon (to name but a few). He shows in particular how they exposed the vices and foibles of the clergy, the greater and the lesser nobility, the lawyers, the doctors, the merchants, the peasants, and women; and how the evidence of homiletic origin is stamped upon our early satirical and other literature. He pays a high tribute to one of Bromyard's sermons of Satire and Complaint, which he describes as a 'superb masterpiece of homiletic art.'

The relation of Sermon and Drama has an interesting chapter to itself, from which we may gather that the English Miracle-Plays and Moralities can no longer be studied in the semi-isolated fashion of earlier critics. So far from being bold and original essays of the dramatic genius, they are surrounded on every side by a mass of kindred homiletic material, itself bound up with a yet older pulpit tradition. In fact, our modern stage may rightly look to the English medieval pulpit as its foster-mother.

Dr. Owst is to be congratulated on having produced another work of real significance. His studies of our medieval homilists may even come to mark a turning-point in the history of English literary criticism. We hesitate to be critical of a work so truly scholarly and so massively learned, a work, moreover, which possesses the attraction of a clear and vigorous style, but we should have been better pleased if Dr. Owst had not been so scornful of scholars like the late W. P. Ker and others. He should be content to regard it as their misfortune

rather than their fault that they failed to appreciate the value of the sources which he himself has been so diligently investigating.

#### THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The second volume of *A History of the Church in Scotland, 1843-1929*, by the Rev. J. R. Fleming, D.D. (T. & T. Clark; 10s. 6d. net), has just appeared. The first volume was welcomed with much just praise, but the second far outshines it in interest. The second part carries the story from 1875 to 1929, and therefore embraces much of what has been vital in the Scottish Church's fortunes. At the outset we have the Robertson Smith case, and at the close the great event which brought the two chief Presbyterian Churches into a union that is already fruitful of much good to the cause of religion in Scotland.

Dr. Fleming has in his second volume varied his plan. He has divided the book into two parts. In the first we have a consecutive narrative of what may be called the ecclesiastical course of events. In the second the author has made a broad survey of different fields of the Church's activity, such as these—theological tendencies, literature, worship and order, education and youth movements, and evangelism and social service. This was a happy inspiration, for it combines the interest of a story with a review of what the Church in Scotland has done and is doing.

Taking into account the wide field covered and the importance of many of the matters dealt with in the narrow limits allowed to the writer, it must be said that his task has been admirably done. The style is plain and unpretentious, but clear and well suited to his subject. He is extremely well informed, and has left out hardly anything of real significance. The chapter on the Church's work for the young, for example, deals with the very latest development of an enterprise in which the Church of Scotland has been particularly adventurous and up to date.

Two reflections must occur to many who read this book. One is the amazing strength of Presbyterianism in Christendom. Dr. Fleming in an appendix gives the adult membership of all the Presbyterian Churches in the world, and one learns with amazement that it amounts to over twelve million souls. That is an astonishing fact. The other reflection is not so pleasing. It is the extraordinary theological barrenness of the Church of Scotland at the present day. Forty years ago much of the significant theological literature of

the English-speaking world was produced by the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. To-day few books of any note are appearing from its teachers. Dr. Fleming gives an impressive list of books written by Presbyterian ministers, but they are nearly all books that are already ancient history. Messrs. T. & T. Clark have made a very handsome volume at a comparatively cheap price.

### LIVING RELIGIONS.

Professor Robert E. Hume of Union Theological Seminary, whose 'World's Living Religions' and 'Thirteen Principal Upanishads' are so well known, has published a *Treasure-House of the Living Religions* (Scribner's; 12s. 6d. net). It is an ambitious and daring scheme which, from a prolonged study of the sacred writings of the eleven great religions—Hinduism, Judaism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism—a study of seventeen years and one hundred and six thousand pages of documents and manuscripts—seeks, by grouping short selected passages under fifty headings, such as Worship and Prayer, Sin and Evil, Hope, Salvation, What is Man? Unselfishness, Forgiveness, Peace and War, and the like, to give us 'the quintessence of the religious wisdom of the world since the tenth century before Christ.' The one hundred and thirty-four documents from which passages are chosen were originally written in sixteen Oriental languages; and the number so selected is as high as three thousand and seventy-four. The bibliography appended is a worthy and impressive document. All this leads to immense expectations. And there is not a doubt that the book will be to some a revelation of how very far God has ever been from leaving Himself without a witness; and what heights the souls of men have scaled in every faith. Yet somehow, for all the scholarship, the book is not as big as one had hoped that it must be. The quotations are so short; nor does the choice seem always to light on the best possible; there is a lack of delicacy in the author's finger-tips; and sometimes a thing is wrenched out of its context somewhat arbitrarily. But there is much here to humble, and to admire; and the book is what it claims to be—a *Treasure-House of the Living Religions*. Test it by one's previous knowledge, and it does not fail one. For example, probably no religion outside the Christian Scriptures has strained Humility—rather a neglected virtue in most fields—as Taoism has done. And, sure enough, under that heading it stands next to the Christian teaching for

impressiveness and for reiteration. On the whole, one has the feeling that the uniqueness of Christianity is a little dimmed by reason of the passages chosen to stand for it being not always the deepest and most characteristic, and of the other faiths being represented only at their loftiest.

### FOREGLEAMS OF GOD.

In his *Foregleams of God* (Luzac; 10s. 6d. net), Mr. T. Isaac Tambyah, a devoted Indian Christian belonging to the Anglican Communion, usefully outlines the development of Hindu and Buddhist religion towards what he takes to be their final consummation in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Almost contemporaneously he has published the *Psalms of a Saiva Saint* (Luzac; 7s. 6d. net), in which he gives us graceful, though not distinguished, translations from the devotional poems of Tāyumānāvar, a representative of the religious thought of Southern India about the latter half of the seventeenth century. Mr. Tambyah's selections are appropriate to his title, and he successfully establishes the conviction that God 'has not left Himself without a witness' amongst the religious thinkers of India. The first-mentioned book is, in many ways, a companion volume to Dr. Farquhar's 'Crown of Hinduism.'

Perhaps the danger of the school of thought to which our author belongs is too facile comparison, but he warns us against this. 'A merely verbal parallelism,' he says, 'is a perilous foundation on which to build valid conclusions. It is well to remember, in every study of alleged parallels, the background of each set of sayings. The claims of Krishna are inseparable from the pantheistic associations of the *Gita*. Its very theism "looms forth from a mist of pantheism." Jesus Christ does not identify Himself with anything or anybody except God. Krishna, on the other hand, is fire and oblation, wind and tree, snake and Sama Veda, priest and petition, horse and thunderbolt. When Krishna says, "I am the Way," he says also, "I am dissolution. . . . I am Death." Christ's statement, "I am the Way," is part of the larger claim, "I am the Life."'

Yet the anticipations, or 'foregleams,' embodied in Mr. Tambyah's work, are many and striking, and link remote antiquity with the religious and social attitudes of to-day both in East and West. Untouchability, for example, is a modern problem in India, especially when the prickings of the social conscience are sharpened by the strategic fasts of Mr. Gandhi. But even in the ancient Epic of India

there are teachings more liberal than the social practices which are supposed to be the expression of doctrinal tradition. 'The gods know him for a Brahman who has cast off anger and passion; who always speaks the truth here; who though himself injured, never returns the injury; who has his senses under control; who is virtuous, pure, devoted to the study of the Vedas; who has subdued lust; who is endowed with mental vigour; who is catholic in religion, who looks upon all beings as himself. It is neither birth nor study nor learning that constitutes Brahmanhood, it is character.'

Probably also the adherents of the modern Group Movement would find much to attract them in the quietism of the religious poems of Tāyumānāvar, although, on the other hand, exclusive followers of the Barthian theology would be repelled by his emphasis upon immanence. The conception of the Great Silence is dominant in Tāyumānāvar. He speaks of 'the quest beyond all seeking found,' and 'the secret of the way of stillness.' The saint's desire is that

Crying until in ecstasy

I cross the troublous waves of time,

he may reach Him who is 'lord of the Silence,' and whose unlimited, unceasing activity is merged in 'the sweep of His Silence.'

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When we see a title *Christ or the Critics?* we know what to expect. This is the title of a large volume by the Rev. C. W. Hale Amos, D.D., and published by Messrs. Marshall, Morgan & Scott at 6s. net. The writer's view of Dr. Driver's great work, 'The Literature of the Old Testament,' is that it is 'one of the most cold-blooded assaults on each one of the books of the Bible which could be imagined.' In his opinion the conclusion of the critics that the Bible merely *contains* the Word of God is negatived by the Christian *experience* of the Bible. What is really wanting in the critics is spiritual life. One reads a book like this with some curiosity to see what kind of case can be made out for setting Christ and the critics on opposite sides, but one is reluctantly forced to confess that there is no enlightenment to be found here.

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*Six Collations of New Testament Manuscripts* (Milford; 14s. net), edited by Kirsopp Lake and Silva New, is issued as an extra number of the 'Harvard Theological Review.' The collations here published have been made by various members (Mary W. Winslow, Jacob Geerlings, Silva New,

Kirsopp Lake, J. de Zwaan, Morton S. Enslin) of a small group who have set themselves the task of examining the families into which the manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark may be divided. The collations are from (1) Codex Athous Dionysiou 10, (2) Codex Michigan 15, (3) Codex Saba 411, (4) Codex Sinai 260, (5) Codex Athous Laurae 184, (6) Codex Patmos 16. They are issued now, before definite conclusions have been reached, in the hope that they may be of interest to other students of the New Testament text.

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In *The Sealand of Ancient Arabia* (Milford; 18s. net), by Professor Raymond P. Dougherty, we have a well-informed monograph dealing with the geographical location and political influence of the ancient country known as the 'Sealand' (or 'Sealand,' cuneiform *Tāmtim*), which played such a prominent rôle in connexion with Babylonia. The author has employed Babylonian cuneiform texts for the purpose of elucidating the matter, and reaches the conclusion that the Sealand (whose main inhabitants were Chaldeans and Arameans) was predominantly the Arabian region stretching from Aqaba at the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf. The first Sealand dynasty (c. 2500-1500 B.C.), he holds, was brought to an end by the Kassites, but after an interval of about five hundred years the nation revived under new rulers, in occupation of its ancient territory. Hitherto scholars have been inclined to limit the Sealand to the marshy area north of the Persian Gulf, but the author's thesis would thus widen the area considerably and include the whole of the Arabian littoral to the west. This view will not be accepted by all scholars. The conclusion, as the author admits, is revolutionary and affects twenty centuries of ancient Oriental history; and the evidence which he adduces from excavations, cuneiform records, and other sources is meagre and may be differently construed. The name 'Sealand,' too, applied to such a wide stretch, seems inappropriate. The idea advanced that it may have arisen from the surface having been formed at one time by the sea, or having the appearance of a sea, or from its sandy and desert wastes, does not seem convincing. At the same time, the theory cannot be entirely dismissed from consideration. It explains certain Arabian influences upon the Tigris-Euphrates region and that of the Westland, as well as removes many historical difficulties. In an interesting concluding chapter, the author discusses the Sealand contribution to the formation of the Hebrew idea of deity, and in this connexion deals with the attempt to connect the Babylonian god Ea with Yah-

weh. The book throws new light on many ancient Oriental problems, and should be in the hands of all Old Testament and Semitic students. It is an outstanding contribution to Babylonian studies.

*The Lectures of St. Matthew* (Morehouse Publishing Co., Milwaukee; \$2.50), by the Rev. Thomas Lintill Aborn, B.A., B.Sc., B.D., is an exposition of the teaching of the First Gospel, conceived as a body of lecture notes to Church workers. Such a conception of the First Gospel is quite unconvincing in itself, and Mr. Aborn's mechanical and arbitrary outcarrying of it does nothing to commend it. As for his exposition of St. Matthew, it may be of help to some, but it is prosaic and uninspired, and largely vitiated by his fundamental misconception.

Happily few months pass without a new book appearing about the Lord Jesus Christ, and, even when a book is unsatisfactory, it still bears witness to the compelling personality of Jesus. *The Career and Significance of Jesus*, by Professor Walter B. Denny (Nelson, New York; \$1.60), has much to commend it as an independent study, but it is like many others in having at least the appearance of commending a preconceived theory. Jesus is a Son of God, but only as we may be sons of God; that is the main outcome of the book and that is the significance of Jesus. But, at any rate, it may be said with confidence that this is not New Testament Christianity, and that the New Testament knows nothing whatever of a naturalistic Christ. Why do writers like Professor Denny insist that in 1 Co 15 Paul said in effect, 'all these experiences of the Risen Christ were like mine, visions,' instead of (what Paul really meant) 'my experience of Christ on the Damascus road was as real as theirs'? Professor Denny says of all the New Testament interpretations of Christ that 'we have clearly outgrown' them. What interest in that case can any sensible person feel in Christianity at all?

A book that is interesting, and may possibly be very helpful, is *Making Life Better*, by the Rev. Dr. Elwood Worcester (Scribner's; 7s. 6d. net). The writer is apparently both a doctor and a minister, and has combined the two professions as a healer of souls. He has had a large practice, and in his book offers a prescription at the modest fee above mentioned. Many striking instances of soul-healing are given in the book, including an impressive personal witness concerning the author's own experience. He makes two startling statements in his book which at least display originality. He

thinks the Christianity of our day has lost its power to meet men's needs, and that a new 'Dark Age' has set in. He thinks also that the reason why western nations have not wholly accepted Christianity is that Jesus was a Jew and that their racial genius and whole background are totally different. All the same, it is in a rejuvenated Christianity that the writer finds the power for soul renewal.

A peculiar pathos attaches to the late Canon Sell's volume on *The Return from Exile* (S.P.C.K.; 1s.). It is the last of a series of popular commentaries on the Old Testament which he projected and carried through single-handed. He spent sixty-seven years in India in the service of the Indian Church, and never surely has that Church had a more devoted servant. He was a remarkable man, with gifts of many kinds. With a keen capacity for business, evidenced by his masterly organization and development of the Madras Diocesan Press, he combined a wide and accurate knowledge of Oriental languages and an almost incredibly rapid power of work, there being no less than twenty-eight books on Muhammadanism and thirty-one commentaries to his credit, of which notices have appeared in these columns from time to time in recent years. Though they were written primarily to help Indian pastors to understand the newer attitude to the Bible, they can be read with equal pleasure and profit by the clergy of our own country, as he had a singular power of dealing in an irenic and constructive way with controversial subjects and of presenting the results of his wide reading in a simple and popular way. It is evident from his last volume on 'The Return from Exile,' the manuscript of which was finished on his ninety-third birthday, that even at that great age the natural force of his mind was in no way abated. In this volume he carries the discussion from the founding of the Persian Empire down to the Greek period, and in its course he sketches the personality of Cyrus, the nature of Zoroastrianism, the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, the purpose of the Law, the outstanding books of the Apocrypha, and the Apocalypses. On the vexed question of the influence of Persia on Judaism he reaches the sound conclusion that the development of Jewish doctrine was stimulated by Zoroastrian influences in favour of religious ideas wherein thinkers could recognize what was latent in their own faith. The book is enriched with a brief account of Canon Sell's life from the pen of the Bishop of Madras. It is with regret that we bid farewell to a great Christian scholar and defender of the faith.