

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## WHAT IS SAVING FAITH?

Gordon H. Clark

### *Editor's Note:*

*The rejection of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in so-called Reformed churches takes many forms.*

*Some deny that Christ earned anything for his people, because, they say, contradicting Scripture, God never deals with his creatures in terms of merit or justice, but only in terms of grace, which is unearned.*

*Some deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, declaring imputation to be a legal fiction. One renowned New Perspective author, N. T. Wright, Bishop of Durham in the Anglican Church, is so opposed to the idea of imputed righteousness that he compares the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to passing gas.*

*Some say faith alone is not enough; that one must also work (obey, remain faithful) in order to be justified, or to stay justified. These claim James as their authority, twisting his words to contradict Paul and to fit their works-religion.*

*Some say faith is enough, but the only faith that justifies is an obedient faith, a faith-with-works, for faith-apart-from-works cannot justify, they say, contradicting Scripture.*

*Some deny that Christian faith is knowledge, asserting that it is a personal encounter, or a personal relationship, or membership in a covenant community. They say that those who think we are saved by knowledge, such as the Apostle Peter, are Gnostics.*

*One of these miscreants has published a book in which he maintains that "Christianity is Gnostic." To quote from an advertisement for (and endorsement of) his book in Douglas Wilson's magazine *Credenda/Agenda*, "The Bible never mentions Christianity. It does not preach Christianity, nor does it encourage us to preach Christianity. Paul did not preach Christianity, nor did any of the other apostles.... The Bible speaks of Christians and of the Church, but*

*Christianity is Gnostic.... we must stand against Christianity." The author of this book, Peter Leithart, is "Senior Fellow of Theology and Literature" at New Saint Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho. His boss is Douglas Wilson, author of many cunningly devised fables. Leithart is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of America.*

*Those attacking Christianity and the Gospel of Jesus Christ fail to consult Scripture to see what faith is and does. But one theologian has: Gordon H. Clark. More than 30 years ago Clark examined hundreds of passages of Scripture about faith and published his findings in two seminal books, *Faith and Saving Faith* and *The Johannine Logos*. More than three decades later the pseudo-scholars and theologians who now pass as Christian thinkers remain ignorant of Clark's work. Clark's exegesis exposes the theology they have fabricated in their books and schools as Romantic fables.*

*In this and the next issue of *The Trinity Review* we are publishing excerpts from our new edition of *The Johannine Logos* titled *What Is Saving Faith?* The new edition combines the complete texts of two of Dr. Clark's seminal works, *Faith and Saving Faith* and *The Johannine Logos*, in one volume. Please read these excerpts (and the whole book) carefully, for no other commentator has bothered either to examine or to exegete what Scripture says about the nature and object of faith.*

### **Persons and Propositions**

The obvious importance of the word *logos* in chapter 1 demands an examination of its other instances in the

remainder of the *Gospel*.<sup>1</sup> At the same time there is another term to be compared with it. *Rheema* (singular, though it does not occur in the singular in *John*) and *rheemata* (plural) mean *word* and *words*, ordinarily spoken words. One therefore asks, Are these two terms, *logos* and *rheema*, identical in meaning, contrasted in meaning, or in any way related?

To begin with the etymology previously mentioned, *rheema* has the same root as the Latin *verbum* and the English *word*; *eiroo*, to say, speak, or tell. It occurs sixty times in the New Testament. *Logos* has the root *legoo*: to say, speak, or tell. It occurs over twelve hundred times. Though the two roots are almost identical in meaning, some modern theologians wish to contrast *rheemata* and *logos*. Investigation of this matter best begins with a list of the instances of each word in *John*. The *logos* list comes first.<sup>2</sup>

One category of the instances of the term *logos* in *John*, a noticeable proportion of the total, defines it by giving examples. These make it indubitable that *logos* means a sentence, a proposition, a doctrine, an object of intellectual apprehension. They make it indubitable by quoting the proposition to which they refer. The first such instance is *John* 2:22. After cleansing the temple at the beginning of his ministry, and being confronted by the Jewish authorities, Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I shall raise it up." Naturally the Jews were nonplussed. But "when he was raised from the dead, the disciples remembered it, that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word [*logos*] that Jesus had said." The word (*logos*) was, of course, the sentence, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I shall raise it up." This sentence is the "it" that the disciples remembered; it is the "this" that Jesus had said. Accordingly the *logos* is this sentence.

The next such case is *John* 4:37: "For in this the saying [*logos*] is true, the one sows and another reaps." The adage or saying is the *logos*. It is stated to be true; and the only thing that can be true is a proposition or declarative sentence. Two verses below, there is the next *logos*: "Many of the Samaritans from that city believed on him through the word of the woman who said that he told me everything I have ever done." The *logos* is precisely the sentence, "He told me everything I have ever done." Another two verses down,

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, no commentator on *John's Gospel* before Clark seems to have bothered to conduct this examination. They treat the concept of *logos* in chapter 1 as though it were unrelated to the rest of *John's Gospel*, rather than recognizing it as the best introduction to the *Gospel*, in the judgment of both the Apostle John and the Holy Spirit. – Editor.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the book for the *rheemata* list. – Editor.

"Many more believed because of his preaching." Here in *John* 4:41 *preaching* or *argu-ment* is a good translation for *logos*. The actual words are not quoted, but the verse refers to two days of discussion and preaching that Jesus engaged in with the Samaritans. Still in the same chapter, but no longer concerning the Samaritans, *John* 4:50 tells us that the nobleman, who came to Jesus and requested him to heal his son, "believed the word Jesus said to him." The *logos* was, "Your son lives."

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### ***Logos* means a sentence, a proposition, a doctrine, an object of intellectual apprehension.**

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In the sixth chapter Jesus preaches about the bread from Heaven. He also refers to eating his flesh. Then in verse 60, "Many of his disciples, when they had heard, said, This doctrine [*logos*] is difficult; who can accept it?" *Lo-gos*, here, although in the singular, must not be translated by "a word." Nor even by "a sentence." The reference is to the whole sermon. And if anyone dislikes the translation, "This doctrine is difficult," he may translate it, "This sermon is difficult." But the meaning is the same, for it was the intellectual content that caused the displeasure of the audience.<sup>3</sup>

*John* 7:36, 40 are similar. In the first of these the *logos* is the assertion, "You will search for me, but you shall not find me." In the second, the plural occurs: "Some of the crowd, when they had heard these words, said, 'This man is indeed the prophet.'"

Restricting this section to instances where a definite sentence or sentences define the *logos*, we come next to *John* 10:19. Here Jesus had just said that he lays down his life voluntarily; no one can take it from him. "Then the Jews, because of these words [*logoi*], were again divided." The words referred to are roughly all of the first eighteen verses.

In several cases the *logos* is a verse in the Old Testament. *John* 12:38 quotes *Isaiah* 53:1. *John* 15:25 quotes a part of *Psalms* 35:19 and *Psalms* 69:4. *John* 18:9 refers to *John* 6:39 and 17:12. In this case the prophecy fulfilled was one that Jesus himself had made. The same essentially is true of *John* 18:32, where the words referred to are in *John* 3:14, 8:28, and 12:32-34. They are not actually quoted, but the *logos* is these assertions. The word is singular, and hence can be translated *thought*, *idea*, *doctrine*, or best, *the words*

<sup>3</sup> And it is the intellectual content of the *Gospel* that causes so much displeasure among churchmen today.

– Editor.

in the plural.

Finally, there is a prophecy, a misunderstood prophecy, that spread among the disciples. Jesus had said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" This was the *logos*, the *rumor*, the *idea*, the *thought*. A further instance where *logos* refers to a definite sentence is *John* 15:20, "Remember the proverb [*logos*] I told you: The servant is not greater than his lord."

Two other instances where the *logos* is identified by an explicitly quoted sentence, though in these cases it is Pilate and the Pharisees who are involved, rather than Jesus, are *John* 19:6 and 13. In the first of these verses the *logos* that frightened Pilate was "He made himself the son of God." The second of these verses refers to several sentences. The *King James Version* is incorrect in using the singular. *Logos* here occurs in the plural: "When Pilate heard these words..." The words were the declaration by Jesus and the shoutings of the Jews.

Here then is a long list of cases where the meaning of the term *logos* is determined by quoting it. It is always an intelligible proposition. At this point, and before continuing with the list of instances of *logos*, the reader might want to know what the connection is between the sentences or propositions just given and the *Logos* of verse 1 who created the universe and enlightens every man who comes into the world. How did the argument get from Christ to sentences? The connection is this: The *Logos* of verse 1 is the Wisdom of God. To him his worshipers erected the architectural triumph Hagia Sophia, the church in Constantinople dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God. To purloin Heraclitus' phrase, this is the Wisdom that steers the universe. But this steering, the plan on which the universe is constructed, the providential governing of all creatures and all their actions, is based on wise counsel. God does not work haphazardly. He acts rationally. Some of this wisdom is expressed in the propositions of the previous list. They are the mind of Christ: They are the very mind of Christ. In them we grasp the holy Wisdom of God. Accordingly, there is no great gap between the propositions alluded to and Christ himself. The Platonic Ideas, as interpreted by Philo, and by him called *Logos*, are the mind of God. Some of these Ideas are given to us in the words of *John*, or in the words of Christ recorded by John. This is how Christ communicates himself to us. Is it completely ridiculous to suggest that this is why John uses the term *logos* for these two superficially different purposes? But now to continue the list of instances.

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Another category can be constructed of those instances where no definite sentence is quoted, but where the reference is clearly to previously spoken sentences. *John* 5:24 reports that Jesus said, "He who hears my word [*logos*] and believes him who sent me has eternal life." The phrase "He who hears my word," can equally well be translated, "He who hears my doctrine"; and it can be interpreted as, "He who accepts my doctrine or theology." Verse 38 of the same chapter says, "You do not have his word [*logos*] remaining in you because you do not believe the one he sent." This verse also refers generally to the doctrine or theology that Jesus had been preaching. *John* 8:31 and 37 are entirely similar. So is *John* 8:43, with the additional parallel between *logos* and *lalia*. This latter word means speech or talk. The translation can be, "Why do you not understand my talk? Because you cannot hear [accept or understand] my word." Verses 51 and 52 also use *logos* to refer generally to Jesus' preaching: "If anyone keeps my doctrine, he shall not see death ever." Three verses below Jesus contrasts himself with the Pharisees on the ground that he, Jesus, keeps God's *logos*.

Besides these verses in which the term *logos* refers generally to the preaching of Jesus, *John* 10:35 uses *logos* to designate the prophecies of the Old Testament. The prophets were men to whom the *Logos* of God came, and this *logos* as written in the Scripture cannot be broken. This is the first verse so far quoted that definitely links the *logos* to the *written* words of the Old Testament. The idea that the *logos* is something that can be written down on papyrus, parchment, or vellum is important, even if only because it is so distasteful to the dialectical theologians.

The paragraph before this last one compared *logos* with words, not as written, nor with words merely as such, but with spoken words. *John* 12:48 identifies the *logos* with *rheemata* or words as such. The passage reads, "He who ignores me [or, sets me aside] and does not accept my words [*rheemata*], has a judge: The *logos* that I have spoken, that *logos* will judge him in the last day." Note that the *logos* is something spoken and naturally therefore consists of words.

If the listing of these verses seems tedious, it is at least overwhelming and leaves no defense for those who deprecate words and doctrine. *John* 14:23-24 say, "If anyone love me, he will keep my *logos*.... He who does not love me, does not keep my *logous* [plural]; and the *logos* which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." The combination of singular and plural, of hearing and therefore of saying, enforces the point of the argument.

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**If the listing of these verses seems tedious, it is at least overwhelming and leaves no defense for those who deprecate words and doctrine.**

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Since some fundamentalists also have accepted the anti-intellectualism of the liberals, we must patiently plod through the list. *John* 15:3 is, “You are already clean because of the theology I have spoken to you.” *John* 17:6 and 14 hardly need to be quoted. Verse 17 says that God’s word is truth. And in verse 20 of the same chapter the *logos* referred to is the future preaching of the disciples.

To make this a complete list of all the occurrences of the term *logos* in the *Gospel of John*, we have only to add *John* 1:1 and 14. In the beginning was the *Logos*, the logic, the doctrine, the mind, the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is God. This *Logos* became flesh and we saw the glory of his grace and truth.

Contemporary theology frequently distinguishes between the *Logos* and the *rheemata*: the Word and the words. The Word is in some sense divine. If it is contained in or somehow mediated by the Bible, the Bible is “authoritative,” though not infallible. Just how false statements can be “authoritative” the liberals do not explain. Reception of the Word for them is a sort of mystic experience without intellectual content. The words, on the other hand, are human, fallible, and mythological. The supernatural truth of God is so different from human truth that they do not coincide at a single point and not even omnipotence has the power to express it in human language; therefore the words, the concepts, are mere pointers to an unknowable object.

## **Faith Is Belief of Propositions**

In view of the clear and repeated assertions of the *Gospel* it is strange that anyone who considers himself conservative or even orthodox should minimize faith or belief and try to substitute for it some emotional or mystic experience. Two possible explanations may be suggested. The first is that these people are so impressed by the spectacular conversion of the Apostle Paul that they think all conversions should conform to this type. Such a view cannot be rationally justified. In the first place the persecutor on his way to Damascus was not merely converted: Christ appeared unto him (making him a witness of the Resurrection) “to appoint you a minister and a witness both of the things wherein you have seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto you; delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send you, to open their eyes...” (*Acts* 26:15-18). Such an appointment to apostleship should not be made

the required type for every conversion. Indeed, it is not the type even for every apostle. There were eleven others. Who appeals to their conversion experiences? Their conversion experiences are not recorded; and the various other conversions that are recorded differ from Paul’s and from each other. It is therefore wrong to elevate anyone’s experience to the level of a norm for everyone.

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**They conclude from the meagerness of their thinking that thinking and believing are inadequate.**

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The second possible explanation of the strange disparagement of faith or belief is the Romantic notion that sensory titillation is “experience.” Hence people who do not suffer ecstasies of joy or depths of despair are said to be devoid of Christian experience. But such a view has more in common with the pagan Goethe than with the Apostle John. It is likely that Romanticism thrives on inborn tendencies plus an inability to think clearly, especially to think clearly about one’s own (I shall not say experience) mental life. These people do indeed have beliefs. Many of them believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that Christ’s death was a substitutionary sacrifice. But because they have studied so little, because their theology is limited to a few fundamentals, and because they assume the detailed and onerous duties of pastors and evangelists where their limited theology is inadequate, they conclude from the meagerness of their thinking that thinking and believing are inadequate. Combined with this is their failure to notice the effect of their few beliefs on their own conduct.

As a man thinks, so is he. Out of the heart – and as we shall see some pages farther on, *heart* means mind or intellect – are the issues of life. If a man says he has faith, but does not have works, we tend to conclude that he has no faith. Conduct, particularly habitual conduct, is the best criterion fallible men have for judging hypocrisy. What a man believes, really believes, even if he says the contrary, will show in his living. Therefore, these popular evangelists show by their conduct that they believe in some things. Their intellectual capital controls their actions so far as their capital reaches. But because they are undercapitalized, and because they have too little intellectual endowment to recognize how intellectual beliefs control them, they minimize theology and take refuge in Romanticism.

In these introductory remarks in this chapter the meaning of the Scriptural term *heart* has been anticipated. Faith and belief have been emphasized. Even apart from these introductory inducements the nature of saving faith is an

important division of theology. Therefore one should pay strict attention to what John's *Gospel* says on the subject.

Although John never uses the noun *faith* (*pistis*) in his *Gospel*, and only once in his epistles, he scatters its verb (*pisteuoo*) about in abundance – just about one hundred times. The main uses can be divided into two categories, depending on its object. The first object is a noun or pronoun governed by the preposition *in* (*eis* with the accusative or *en* with the dative). The second object is a clause. Sometimes also a noun occurs without a preposition, and there are instances when the object is unexpressed.

The usage with the noun-object seems to lend support to the liberal contention that Christians must believe in a person, not a doctrine. God, they say, never reveals any thing, information, or doctrine: He reveals himself. Of course, modern theologians care little for the words of Scripture, and why they should accept the use of *pisteuoo* with a noun while rejecting many other things in Scripture is what they cannot explain. Nevertheless, a conservative, an evangelical, one whose principle is *sola Scriptura*, must examine these words and this usage regardless of liberal oscillations.

From among the many instances of the noun-object the following are typical. *John* 1:12, 2:23, and 3:18 have the phrases “believed in his name” (*eis to onoma*). Comments on the usage will be postponed until the list is ended; but one may note how Hebraic and non-Hellenistic the reference to the name is. The phrase, “believed in him” is found in *John* 2:11; 3:15 (*en autooi*); 3:18, 4:39, 6:29 (*eis on*); 6:35 (*eis eme*); 6:40 on to 16:9 (*eis eme*). To “believe on the Son” occurs in *John* 3:36, 9:35, and 12:11 (on Jesus). There are also instances where the noun or pronoun is a simple dative without a preposition. The pronoun is *me* in *John* 4:21, 5:46, 8:45-46, and 10:37. The pronoun *him* is in *John* 5:38 and 8:31. These listings are not complete or exhaustive, but they are typical and will serve the present purpose.

The present purpose is to show that these noun or pronoun objects are linguistic forms that simplify the text by implying without expressing the propositions to be believed. One of the clearest is *John* 4:21: “Woman, believe me.” In this case the proposition to be believed follows explicitly: “Woman, believe me, that a time is coming when....” There is no antithesis between believing Jesus as a person and believing what he says. Similarly *John* 5:46 compares “believing Moses” (dative without a preposition) and “believing me.” In both cases the object of belief is not a person without words, but definitely the words of the person. The *me* of *John* 8:45-46 again refers to the truth I am saying. The “Do not believe me” of *John* 10:37 means, “Do not believe what I say.” The same explanation holds for 5:38 and 8:31. In both cases the reference is to an explicit *logos*.

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## There is no antithesis between believing Jesus as a person and believing what he says.

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The instances with the preposition *eis* are not always so obvious; but obviously they do not contradict what has just been said. For example, “to those who believe on his name”(1:12); “many believed on his name” (2:23); and “he has not believed on the name of the only Son of God” (3:18); all these with their Old Testament background imply that what is believed or not believed is the claim Jesus makes. If 2:23 can be closely connected with 2:22 (it is clearly the same place, the temple; and the time cannot be much later), the background is *Psalms* 69:9 and the words of Jesus himself. His act of cleansing the temple caused many to believe these propositions.

The second category of the uses of the verb *believe* has the propositional object explicit in the text. Without counting the cases where the object is clearly a proposition, although not explicitly given, a full 25 percent of the instances of *believe* have the proposition written out in full.

The first verse, already cited (2:22), does not itself contain the propositions believed: They are in the preceding context. The disciples believed *Psalms* 69:9 and the words Jesus had addressed to the Jews.

The second verse (3:12) also finds the explicit proposition in the context. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “If I have spoken to you on earthly matters [such as the new birth and the Spirit’s effect on men] and you do not believe, how will you believe [my propositions] if I speak of heavenly matters [such as the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son and the intertrinitarian relationships]?” The second set of propositions is of course not given; the first set constitutes the previous conversation explicitly reported.

The third verse (4:21), also previously cited, itself contains the proposition. *John* 4:41, 50 both have the noun-object *words* or *word*; but the propositions are explicit in the context. Similar are the two instances in 5:47, *viz.*, Moses’ writings, not quoted, and Jesus’ words contained in the preceding verses.

*John* 6:69 says, “We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” *John* 8:24 says, “You do not believe that I am [Jehovah, or, the one I claim to be].” *John* 9:18, “the Jews did not believe that he had been blind.” *John* 10:25-26, “I told you [that I am the Christ] and you do not believe [that proposition]; the works I do...testify of me [that I am the Messiah], but you do not believe [the propositions they assert].” *John* 11:26-27, “Everyone who is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this [proposition]? Yes, Lord, she said, I have believed that you

are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.” In *John* 11:42 Jesus spoke out loud “so that the crowd would believe that you did send me.” But why tediously quote in addition 12:38, 47; 13:19; 14:10-11, 29; 16:27, 30; 17:8, 21; 19:35; and 20:31?

The conclusion is, not only that the verb *believe* (*pisteu-oo*) may have a clause or proposition for an object, but that this is the fundamental meaning of the verb *believe*. In literary usage one may say that one believes a person, but this means that one believes what the person says. The immediate and proper object of belief or faith is a truth (or falsehood), a meaning, the intellectual content of some words; and this intellectual content is in logic called a proposition.

It may possibly be the case that the *King James Version* has been a small factor contributing to anti-intellectualism. In German the Greek verb *pisteuoo* is translated *glauben*, and the noun is *der Glaube*, belief. Therefore, *Matthew* 9:22 in German is, “*Tochter, dein Glaube hat dir geholfen.*” And *Matthew* 6:30 is, “*O ihr Kleingläubigen.*” But in English the connection between the Greek verb *believe* and its Latin noun is obscured by translating the noun as *faith* instead of *belief*.

The Latin language has not been an unexceptionable advantage to theology. *Dikaioo* was translated *justus-facere*; and thus the New Testament word for *acquit* or *pronounce righteous* was taken to mean *make righteous*. The result was a theory of infused grace that obscured the method of salvation until the time of Luther and the Reformation. So too it would have been better if the *King James Version* had omitted the word *faith* and emphasized the root meaning of *belief*.

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**This Latin anti-intellectualism, permitted by the noun *fides*, undermines all good news and makes Gospel information useless.**

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Because *fides* or faith permits, though it does not necessitate, a non-intellectual interpretation, the liberals today want us to have “faith” in a god who is unknowable and silent because he is impotent to give us any information to believe. This Latin anti-intellectualism, permitted by the noun *fides*, undermines all good news and makes Gospel information useless. Although the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would have repudiated twentieth-century anti-intellectualism, their Latin heritage adversely affected some of their views. Before this earlier material is discussed, however, we must turn once again to the text in order to see precisely what is the effect of believing certain propositions.

This part of the study pays no attention to the grammatical object of the verb. Reliance is now placed on the conclusion already drawn that noun and pronoun objects are linguistic simplifications of the intended propositional object. To believe a person means precisely to believe what he says.

The first case, *John* 1:12, asserts that those who believe in his name have the right, graciously given by God, to be the children of God. The phrase “in his name,” I take it, means his character as Messiah and Lord. Those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament have the authority to be God’s children.

The same idea occurs in *John* 3:15, 36. Everyone who believes in Jesus, believes that he is the Messiah, has eternal life. The converse is stated in verse 18. That the noun-object, or phrase *in his name*, bears this meaning is a little clearer in 5:24, where the person who hears Jesus’ discourse (*logos*) and believes the Father who sent him with the message, has eternal life and has (already) crossed over from death to life.

To be sure, a random intellectual belief of an unregenerate man will not save him. The difficulty lies, not in belief as such, but in the fact that an unregenerate man is incapable of believing the necessary propositions. As *John* 12:30-40 say, “They could not believe because...he has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.” If God had opened their eyes and had exchanged their heart of stone for a heart of flesh, they would have believed the Gospel message and so would already have passed from death to life. It is regeneration to eternal life that causes the intellectual belief. Thus acceptance of the propositions is a mark of having been regenerated and of having eternal life.

Again, *John* 6:40,47, “Everyone who contemplates the Son and believes on him has life eternal... Most assuredly I tell you, the man who believes has eternal life.” Similar phrases are found in 7:38, 8:31, and 11:25.

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**The Apostle John never mentions a mystic experience. He repeatedly says, if you believe, you are saved. Belief is the whole thing.**

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More explicit verses are the following. *John* 8:24 puts the matter negatively: “if you do not believe that I am [Jehovah, or, the Messiah] you will die in your sins.” The force of this negative is important. The proposition “All believers have eternal life” does not imply that all non-believers lack eternal life. Such an implication would be invalid, as may be seen in an example from daily affairs: The proposition “All voters are residents” does not imply “all non-voters are non-residents.” Therefore, the simple statement “All

believers are saved” allows the possibility that some unbelievers are saved as well. Belief may well guarantee eternal life; but without further information to the contrary, something else may also guarantee eternal life. This elementary lesson in logic points up the importance of the explicit negative statement: If you do not believe, you will die in your sins. All believers are saved, and all the saved are believers.

*John* 10:25-28 say, “You do not believe because you do not belong to my flock. My sheep listen to my voice.... I give them eternal life.” This states what is essentially both the negative and the positive proposition; and the negative is clearly implied in 16:9: “He will convict the world of sin...because they do not believe on me.” Then if one supposes that God granted the petitions of the high-priestly prayer, the positive statement is implied in 17:8-10, 16-17, 20-22, and 26.

Be sure to note that the Apostle John never mentions a mystic experience. He never says that one must get behind the text to something other than the words or doctrine. He repeatedly says, if you believe, you are saved. Belief is the whole thing. Indeed *John* 20:31 asserts this very thing in stating the purpose for writing the *Gospel*: that you may believe the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah and that believing this proposition (and not in some other way) you may have life by his name.

The next question is, what does it mean to believe? This question is usually asked in Latin rather than in Greek, and so phrased the question becomes, What is faith? Various theologians have offered psychological analyses of faith. The most common Protestant analysis is that *fides* is a combination of *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*. If these last three Latin words can be explained, then one may compare *fides* and *pistis* or *pisteuoo* to see if they are synonymous. If these Latin terms cannot be clearly defined, then they do not constitute an analysis of faith....

What better conclusion can there be other than the express statements of the Bible? Permit just one outside of *John*. *Romans* 10:9-10 say, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your mind that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.” There is no mystical getting behind, under, or above the text; the only consent there is, is belief in the propositions. Believe these, with understanding, and you shall be saved. Anyone who says otherwise contradicts the repeated *rheemata* of Scripture.

*Editor’s Note:*

*Many professed conservatives hold views similar to those described in the preceding paragraph. They say that man, because he is finite and sinful, cannot know divine truth, but at best only an analogy of it.*

*But Christ contradicts them. In John 17 he says, “I have*

*manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you, for I have given to them the words which you have given me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from you, and they have believed that you have sent me.... I have given them your word.... Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.”*

*Jesus Christ, the divine-human mediator between God and men, has given to us the exact words that he received from the Father. Christ communicated the divine words to men perfectly. Not one word has been lost in the translation from God to man.*

*Those who say that men can know only an analogy of divine truth and not divine truth itself reject the words of Christ and the Scriptures. Their views are fundamentally Antichristian. They have been influenced by men such as Herman Dooyeweerd, Herman Bavinck, and Cornelius Van Til. That branch of Reformed theology, which is already apostate in other nations, is now apostatizing in the U.S.*

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- 17. The Object
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- Index
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