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**THESIS ABSTRACT**

**NEW TESTAMENT FUNDAMENTS ATTESTING TO THE  
ACCURACY OF ORTHODOX FAITH COMPARED TO  
OTHER CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS**

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The approaches that theological such problems involve a number of landmarks and clarifications justifying arguments. However, adopting from the beginning the viewpoint authentic scriptural and Orthodox we believe that the 'method' used must not exacerbate the principles of logic and rational human mind, no matter how refined it may be, because human thought most brilliant is much lower than those coming from the grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the debate on behalf of one or scriptural basis of confessions means to appeal to the apostles' teaching and to the way in which they received revelation, namely keeping the commandments and acquiring grace. This assertion is emitted by one of the most current and authorized voices of orthodoxy, but also one of the most contested Eastern saints of Catholicism, as considered the father of D. Stăniloae, namely St. Gregory Palama. In the dispute with Calabrian Barlaam, representative of Catholicism, St. Gregory argues that: "It's not allowed, so that those who do not experience them (those of grace note) to submit to those who may judge all the spiritual meaning; for the spiritual man judges all things, as the Apostle said. It's missing to obey those that by their judgment to ascertain their true light even those that concern them themselves. But they (those who rely strictly on the power of their minds nn.) are just back, trying themselves to judge and correct those that cannot be judged by anyone, spiritual man being unable to judge anyone, as said the same apostle. By this they prepare them both, and those who follow them, ruin. They say: "No one can partake of perfection and holiness, if he learned the truth about existence; and is impossible to find out the truth without distinguishing it without using syllogism and analysis." Therefore, they conclude, those who want to reach perfection and holiness, must learn and acquire worldly science methods, the distinguished dealing syllogisms and analysis. These arguments compel perishable wisdom to make effective again. If instead it would come humbly to learn the truth from those who may judge all would have heard that this view is their Hellenic conscience, or the heresy of Stoics and Pythagoreans, declaring knowledge in experimental sciences last level of contemplation. But we do not count knowledge gained through judgments and syllogisms as true opinion about the world, but one that is proven by facts and life that is not

only true one, but also safe and unchanged; any reasoning, they say, is overturned by another judgment; But who overthrows life?"<sup>1</sup>

I used this quote from St. Gregory Palama more generous for several reasons. As shown in the parent Sophrony Sakharov "in our time is needed, more than anything, the teaching of three Fathers: Gregory Palama, Maximus the Confessor and Simeon the New Theologian"<sup>2</sup>. This is because "St. Gregory Palama lived at a time crucial where there were these seeds of psychology and psychoanalysis, and it's very important to study theology. Hesychia a cure Orthodox is misleading, safe for humans".<sup>3</sup>

Correlating quotations from and about St. Gregory, one can deduce that what he combats against the Catholic theologian is precisely the emphasis on "mental spirit" that dwells in the head and whose imagination product. Hence comes the deception, *id est* the different visions about the diversity on God. The imagination works together with the will of man; the last one is not infallible. The will and the word of man became dogma in the West on which Pius IX instrumented the basis of papal authority. But this does not lead to another form of Monophysitism not deny or cancel human nature or mind by this? No, because, says Maximus the Confessor, "the mind of Christ, received by the Holy Man, after the word:" But we have the mind of Christ "does not come to us to deprive us of our strength mental nor to complete our minds, but to shine by its quality and power of our minds and bring the same work with his. For the mind of Christ is possessed, I say, by the man who thinks like Christ, and meditates on Christ."<sup>4</sup>

We, like Orthodox, do not deny that spiritual or bodily powers were created by God, but in this case, a proud exaltation of reason in relation to man, a hollow *Aufklärung*, a negative mind enlightenment emancipated suspect in relation to man and reality. Loving the products of his mind, man is no longer looking to see if the construction of "false science" reminiscent of St. Paul, is untrue. It's an effort that seems to escalate into a delirious God rather narcissistic. It is a projection of the mind that It thrives Sisyphus to restore the primordial creative act of thinking and, without taking into account the real possibilities of this magnificent program. However, in order to quote from St. Symeon the New Theologian and

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<sup>1</sup> Sf. Grigorie Palama, *Tratatul al treilea din Triada întâi contra lui Varlaam*, apud. D. Stăniloae-*Viața și învățătura sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Edit. Scripta, București, 1993, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Hierotheos Vlachos, *Cunosc un om în Hristos – Părintele Sofronie de la Essex*, Edit. Sofia, București, 2011, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul în *Filocalia II, Capete gnostice*, trad. D. Stăniloae, Edit. Harisma, București, 1993, p. 208.

so fulfill triad father recommended Sophrony, "knowledge is not light, but the light is knowledge", the light of grace or a mind enlightened by grace and not the natural light of the mind. This is a second-degree light, so to speak, because they bear the image of God, who is the "Father of lights" (James 1:17). But with the light which He is, we are only darkness. Relying on the brightness of insights or discoveries novelty, without the assistance of grace and agreement is a path to failure. It is the cause of many religions, philosophies, heresies, sects, schisms. Talking about religions and philosophies do not want to put them all under the same accolade of total human errors statistics, but to say that there is a single truth, the truth that is the way truth and the life (Jn. 14.6). The other truths pathways associated with this and have something comes true here. It somehow applicable Clive S. Lewis's judgment which held that religion is such that the arithmetic - "there is only one correct answer to a meeting, and all other answers are wrong, but some of the wrong answers are closer the truth than others." <sup>5</sup>

No denying that inspiration exists also outside of Christianity and Orthodoxy, neither dispute the presence of grace outside the Church, as attested by the centurion whose servant was healed by Christ the Lord, or the centurion Cornelius (Acts chap. 10), for the Spirit "blows where it wills" (Jn. 3 8), He cannot be restricted by any institution (be it a church, in the highest degree, divine-human). But still this grace is the fullness of the Church, namely the Orthodox Church. This ambitious and (work) in the present paper to support early stage.

Returning to the first quote of St. Gregory Palama, as in that of St. Maximus the Confessor, to show fidelity to the New Testament teaching of the Fathers draw attention to the Pauline epistles where references are cited. But even so, as outlined arguments even in Palama, a word can find another word against. Such quotes abound in the mouths of many heretics accompanied by an insidious arithmetic that can induce those naive error. We know that the Savior in the wilderness and on the brow of the temple was tempted by Satan with Bible verses. What must be sought as evidence for this is the effect of these assertions, "because by their fruits ye shall know them." Therefore life resulting from them, capitalized life, namely the presence of grace in the heart is probably the highest of any argument and its derivatives.

Being in a state of grace, have an abundance of grace is the way you can see what the dogma is formulated relatively rational or adapted to human language. But this is the path of

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<sup>5</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Creștinismul redus la esențe*, Societatea Misionară Română, 1987, p. 27.



the chosen ones, few every century over which God pours out his abundance of grace that tradition to continue. Does this leave us, others? Banquet crumbs to a greater or lesser extent, as Providence wants. And then on the basis of this we can get in the way of before us, the big ones, because God's will "is not none of these little ones perish" (Lc17. 1.2), which are great if seen small true to themselves. The experience of the apostles, and ascetics of the great fathers of the Church, is constituted as a beacon for all who come after them. A look at what the great mysteries that man ought not yet to know, to want to have findings constitute evidence of foolishness and pride that goes unpunished. But, researching the lives and the Church help to "be ready always to answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope, with meekness" (I Peter 3, 15-16). Amendment final raises another problem for Christians today and always, some way must realize faith, without aggressiveness, without despising others, lest thereby be open sluice own passions.

Beside these, we have to remember that in the first centuries the Apostles and Fathers forbade people to read heretical sources. Some straightening confession sin argue today that such a reading. But that because there were no major opportunities and information primarily to weak faith of some. The latter makes today this fact a question of confession. It is therefore important that you read the books spirit and adherence or rejection.

In conclusion, these premises from which must leave any attempt to debate on the accuracy of their faith, id est Orthodox, departing from God's help and guidance of the Holy Spirit recourse through this prayer, first, and correct sources by we see "lest he run or had run in vain" (Gal.2.2).

In the Old Testament word "faith" is found 18 times.<sup>6</sup> 12 times is used in the sense of *breaking faith* or *commit sin* (eg. Leviticus 5:15; Deuteronomy 32.51) or to act in good faith Judges 9:15 et. seq.), and six passages about *trust*. However, the rare occurrence of the word should not lead us to conclude that faith is not important in the Old Testament, because the idea appears frequently, even if the term in itself is rarely met. Usually the idea is expressed by verbs such as "believe", "to trust" or "hope" ("the trust") - and these terms abound.<sup>7</sup>

We could start with a passage as Psalm 26.1, "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine, and I trust in the Lord without wavering." The Old Testament is often said that

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<sup>6</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint (Twelve Prophets)*, T. Muraoka (ed.), Peeters, Louvain, 1993, p. 148; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> *Dicționar Biblic*, J. D. Douglas (Ed.), traducere de Liviu Pop, John Tipei, Societatea Misionară Română Editura „Cartea Creștină”, Oradea, 1995, p. 203.

people claim them to be saved on the facts their passage but this question in proper perspective. It is true that the psalmist calls for integrity ("innocence") to, but this does not mean that trusts in himself or in his actions. His trust in God and "integrity" of is proof of that trust. The Old Testament is a long book and the truths of salvation are set in different ways. The writers do not always make the distinctions of the Testament. But a careful examination will show that in the Old Testament, like the New Testament, the fundamental desire is to have the right attitude towards God, ie, to have faith. Cf. Psalm 37.3 sq. "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you everything your heart desires, Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust yourself in Him and He will work ". There is no doubt that the psalmist seeks a righteous life. Also, there is no doubt that it promotes an attitude. He urges people to put their trust in the Lord, which is just another way to tell them to live by faith. Sometimes people are encouraged to put their trust in God's Word (Psalm 119.42), but usually sought work is faith in God. "Trust in the LORD with all heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3.5).

The last part of this verse warns about putting your confidence in your own powers - an idea frequently encountered. "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28.26). Man must trust in justification (righteousness) by (Ezekiel 33.13). Ephraim is scolded, "You trusted in your chariots Battle in the number of your men of valor "(Hosea 10:13). Confidence in idols is often condemned (Isaiah 42.17). Jeremiah warns against confidence in everything human. "Cursed is the man who trusts in man made of flesh and his heart departs from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17.5).

The list of things that people do not put their trust can be extended and more impressive alongside the longer that calls for trust in the Lord. It is but the people of the Old Testament found that the Lord is the only one worthy of faith. They did not put their trust in what they were doing, as were other people or in what were gods. Their confidence was only in the Lord. This is expressed sometimes in picturesque language. Thus, he is "my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation my stronghold "(Psalm 18.2). Faith can be made with confidence in such a God.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For the meaning of the *faith* in Old Testament see *Dictionary of the Old Testament. Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings*, Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Eds.), Inter-Varsity, 2008, pp. 143-146; *Dictionnaire encyclopedique de la Bible*, ed. Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, Brepols, 1987, pp. 107-108; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Fred Skolnik (Ed.), vol. XVII, Macmillan, USA, 2007, p. 67; Geoffrey Wigoder coordonator, *Enciclopedia Iudaismului*, Editura Hasefer, Bucuresti, 2006, p. 72; H. F. W. Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar*, E. Kautzsch (ed.), Clarendon Press, London, 1910, pp. 122-123; James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*, Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, 1997; *Theological*

We should mention in particular the case of Abraham. His whole life demonstrates a spirit of trust, a deep faith. He "believed the Lord and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15.6). The text is quoted by the New Testament writers and the fundamental truth that it expresses is further developed.

New Testament Faith occupies a very prominent place. The greek terms *pisteuo* and *pistis* appear over 240 times, and the adjective *pistos* is found 67 times.<sup>9</sup> This emphasis on faith must be seen on the background of salvation done by God in Christ. The central idea of the New Testament is that God sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. Christ accomplished salvation of humanity through His atoning death on the cross of Calvary. Faith is an attitude in which man abandons confidence in his own efforts to obtain salvation - be they pious deeds, kindness ethics or whatever. Faith is an attitude of complete trust in Christ, a reliance solely on Him for salvation issues. When the Philippian jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas replied without hesitation, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30 sq.). "Whoever believes in Him" not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Faith is a way for people to receive salvation.

The verb *pisteuo* is followed often by the conjunction "that" showing that faith deals with facts, although it is more than that. James tells us that the demons believe that "God is one" but their "faith" is useless (James 2:19).<sup>10</sup> The *pisteuo* verb may be followed by a simple dative when meaning is „to give credence, to accept as true something someone said.” Thus, Jesus reminds the Jews that "John came walking in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe in him." (Matthew 21, 32). This is not faith in the sense of confidence. The Jews did not believe what John said. The same can be said about Jesus in John 8.45, "do not believe me," or in the next verse, "If I say the truth, why do not you believe me?" We must not forget that there is an intellectual content of faith. Consequently, this expression is sometimes used to refer to saving faith, as in John 5:24, "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent

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*Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry, vol. XI, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003; *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, vol. V, 1986; William Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Including the Biblical Chaldee)*, translated by Edward Robinson, D.D., Published by Crocker and Brewster, 1844, pp. 76.79; Warren Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, 2003, pp. 205-208.

<sup>9</sup> *Vocabulaire Biblique*, publie sous la direction de Jean-Jacques von Allmen, Delachaux & Niestle S.A., Neuchatel, Paris, 1956, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> G. Kittel și G. Friedrich (ed.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1974, p. 89.

me has eternal life." Of course the man who really believes God will act on that faith. In other words, the heartfelt conviction that what God has revealed is true will produce true faith.<sup>11</sup>

The grammatical construction characteristic of saving faith is the verb *pisteuo* followed by the preposition *eis*. The literal meaning is to believe "in." It denotes a faith that - we could say - pulls man out of himself and puts it in Christ (cf. New Testament expression commonly used to refer to Christians being "in Christ "). This experience can be described by the term "union with Christ by faith." It does not denote a simple creed that means assent intellectually but faith through believer clings Savior with all his heart. A man who believes in this sense is abiding in Christ and Christ in him (John 15.4). Faith is not just accept that certain things are true, but it means to trust in a person, and that person is Christ.<sup>12</sup>

Sometimes *pisteuo* is followed by *epi* - "on." Faith has a firm base. This grammatical construction we find in Acts 9.42 where, when was the resurrection of Tabitha, "many believed in the Lord." People saw what Christ can do this and put their faith "to" Him. Sometimes faith is based on the father, as when Paul speaks of believing "in him who raised Christ from the dead" (Romans 4.24 ).<sup>13</sup>

A very characteristic in the New Testament is the absolute sense of this verb. When Jesus left the Samaritans, many of them "believed in him because of his words" (John 4.41). No need to add what they believe or who believe. Faith is so central to Christianity that we speak "believe" without further clarification be necessary. Christians are simply "believers." This sense of the word is found everywhere in the New Testament and is not limited to a particular writer. We can conclude justified that faith is fundamental.<sup>14</sup>

The tenses of *pisteuo* are also instructive. Time aorist indicates a single act of the past and show the determinant nature of faith. When a man comes to believe he surrenders himself decisively to Christ. Time now communicate the idea of continuity. Faith is not a passing

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 90.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> For the New Testament meaning of *faith* see Pentru această semnificație nouetamentară a credinței, vezi: *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 78; *Dictionar Biblic*, traducere din limba franceza de Constantin Moisa, vol. 1, Editura Stephanus, Bucuresti 1996, pp. 78-79; *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, Ralph P. Martin and Peters H. Davids (Eds.), InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1997, pp. 114-115; *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, David Noel Freedman (Ed.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 350- 353; George Arthur Buttrick, *The interpreter's dictionary of the Bible. An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, p. 189; *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Revised Edition*, Paul J. Achtemeier (Ed.), Harper San Francisco, New York, 1996, pp. 233-234; *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume 2, D-G, David Noel Freedman (Ed.), Doubleday, 1992, pp. 237-239; *The Oxford Guide to Ideas and Issues of the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 177-179.

phase. This attitude continues. Time perfectly combines both ideas. We talk about a faith that continues an act of faith in the past. The man who believes in a permanent state. Maybe I should note here that the noun "faith" sometimes has the definite article, "the faith", ie, the totality of Christian teaching - this is used the word when Paul speaks to the Colossians about "being strong in faith" and adds, "as ye have been given" (Colossians 2,7).

In the Synoptic Gospels, faith is often associated with healing, as when Jesus told the woman that touched His garment lot, "Daughter, your faith has healed you" (Matthew 9:22). But these gospels deal of faith in a broader sense. Mark, for example, renders the words of Jesus, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). The Lord also speaks of a faith great results "as a grain of mustard seed" (Matthew 17:20; Lk 17,6). It is clear that our Lord has asked people to have faith in Him. Christian requirement feature having faith in Christ is based ultimately on Christ Himself requirement.<sup>15</sup>

In the Fourth Gospel faith play a prominent; the verb *pisteuo* is met 98 times. It is curious that the noun *pistis*, "faith" is never used. Maybe this is due to use of the term in the gnostic circles. There are indications that John had in mind also various opponents and perhaps wanted to avoid using such a controversial term. Or maybe he preferred the more dynamic meaning that we communicate verbally.<sup>16</sup>

Whatever his reason, he uses the verb *pisteuo* more than any other writer in the New Testament, in fact, three times more frequently than the first three evangelists combined. The grammatical construction feature is the preposition *eis*, "believe in". The important thing is the relationship between believers and Christ. Consequently, John speaks frequently about believing in Him and believe "in the name" of Christ (eg. John 3:18). For the ancients, the "name" was a way to summarize the whole personality. The name represent everything that man. Therefore, believing in the name of Christ means believing what He is in His essence. The verse from John 3:18 says, "Whoever believes in Him is not judged; but who does not believe in him has been judged". A characteristic aspect of the teaching of John is that problems eternal are decided here and now. Faith does not give people the assurance of eternal life to an undefined time in the future. It gives them eternal life here and now. Whoever believes in the Son "has" eternal life (3:36; cf. 5:24, etc.).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> J. G. Machen, *What is Faith?*, 1925, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> O. Becker, „Faith”, in O. Michel, C. Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, 1975, p. 588.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 600.

In Acts, showing vigorous missionary advance, it is not surprising that during aorist a characteristic expression used to indicate the act of decision. Luke describes numerous occasions where people have come to believe in Christ. And other grammatical constructions are encountered mentioning both continuous state of faith and permanent results. But what is characteristic is the „decision.”<sup>18</sup>

For Paul, faith is the typical Christian attitude. He does not have the same antipathy as John to the noun, but uses twice as often than the verb. The term appears in some of his ideas about dominant. Thus, in Romans 1:16 he speaks the gospel as "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." For Paul it is extremely important that Christianity is more than a system of good advices. Not only do they say people what to do, but gives them the power to do those things. Paul repeatedly show the contrast between words and power, always putting emphasis on the fact that the Holy Spirit of God is seen in the lives of Christians.

This power becomes available only when the man thinks. There is no substitute for faith.<sup>19</sup>

Much of Paul's controversial writings link to the dispute with the Judaizing people. These people insisted that it is not enough for Christians to be baptized. They must be circumcised and thus admitted in Judaism, they had the obligation to comply with all the law of Moses. They were in compliance with the law a necessary precondition of salvation, at least for salvation understood in the fullest sense of the word. Paul did not want to accept it. He insisted that people can not do nothing, absolutely nothing to gain salvation. All that is necessary has been done for Christ and no man can add anything to the perfection of Christ's finished work. So that Paul insists that men are justified "by faith" (Rom 5,1). The doctrine of justification by faith is the basis of Paul's message. Using this terminology or not using it, he always communicates this idea. He combat vigorously any idea about the power of justification good works. "The man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ," writes he Galatians, and continues, "we have believed in Christ Jesus, to be justified, justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. "Then add down," No one will be justified by works of the law "(Galatians 2:16). For Paul it is clear that faith means abandoning all faith in man's ability to earn salvation. Faith is a confident acceptance of the gift of God in Christ, a reliance on Christ and Christ alone for salvation means everything.

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<sup>18</sup> D. M. Baillie, *Faith in God*, 1964, p. 56.

<sup>19</sup> J. Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, 1966, p. 110.

Another remarkable feature of Paul's theology is very important place that it accords of the Holy Spirit. He believes that the Holy Spirit dwells in all Christians (Rom 8,9,14) and it links and this faith. Thus, he writes Ephesians about Christ, "And you ... you believed in Him, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1.13 to 14). The sealing signs of a property, a metaphor understandable at a time when many people could not read. The Holy Spirit who dwells in believers is a sign of ownership of God and this sign is placed on people only when they believe. He continues to talk about the Holy Spirit as "earnest (gr. *arrabon*) guarantee of our inheritance" Paul uses here a word that in the 1st century meant "earnest" or "advance", ie, an amount that constituted part of the total price and that, while there was a guarantee that it will be paid the rest. So when a man thinks, he receives the Holy Spirit as part of life in the world, and as an assurance that he would get the rest of the doubt.<sup>20</sup>

The writer of the Epistle to Hebrews says that the faith has always been a characteristic of God's people. In the gallery of great men of faith in Hebrew 11 he outlines the most worthy men of the past, showing how each of them shows the next important issue "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrew 11 6). He is particularly interested in the opposition between faith and views. Faith is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (or "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen ") (Hebrew 11,1). He stresses that people who had no outward evidence to support them, however, were held fast to God's promises. In other words, they walked by faith not by sight.<sup>21</sup>

Of the other New Testament writers, we should notice him James, as has often been argued that in this respect it would be in opposition to Paul. While Paul insists that a man is justified by faith and not by works, James says that "a man is justified (justified) by works and not by faith only" (James 2:24).<sup>22</sup> Contradiction, however, is only apparent. "Faith" which opposes personal Jacob is not total confidence in a living Savior, which Paul speaks. It is faith that James describes himself, "You believe that God is one, do well; ... Even the demons believe and shudder "(James 2:19). He considers intellectual acceptance of certain truths, an acceptance that is not reinforced by a life according to those truths (James 2:15 et. seq.). Jacob did not in any way preclude faith in the full sense of the word, as he refers to it everywhere in his writing. Even at the beginning of his letter he speaks naturally about "your faith" (James 1, 3) and urges readers "have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> D. M. Baillie, *Faith in God*, 1964, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification*, 1954, p. 34.

respect of persons" (James 2.1). He criticizes a bad faith, but assumes that everyone will recognize the necessity of true faith. James does not understand the "deeds" the same thing that Paul understands it. Paul thinks of obedience to the law as a system by which one can earn salvation.<sup>23</sup> For James, the law is "the law of liberty (freedom) "(James 2:12)." works "James speaks very much like" fruit of the Spirit "which Paul speaks. I am not action, of love stemming from a proper attitude toward God. They are the fruits faith. James objected to the claims of faith only there are not facts that attest the faith.<sup>24</sup>

Faith is clearly one of the most important concepts in the New Testament. Everywhere it is required and stresses the importance of them. Faith means abandoning all trust in man's own resources. Faith means to obey God's mercy unreservedly. Faith is to claim the promises of God in Christ, to rely entirely on the finished work of redemption by Christ and receive daily power of the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in the believer. Faith involves total confidence in God and obedience to God.<sup>25</sup>

Orthodoxy in its essence is true Christianity. Christianity as the perfect religion, "religion of religions", (an expression used by Alexander Schmemman) is expressed in Orthodoxy, and Protestantism and Catholicism through the development and innovation of their doctrine that has grown over time separated the trunk of true faith. They alienated reality of the faith and isolated in personal opinions. In this way the Orthodox Church is unique true preserver of revealed truth.<sup>26</sup> In many points of doctrine Orthodoxy differs of Protestantism, for example in the case of the teaching of salvation.

The Protestant conception regarding human achievement counts only eschatological faith and good works are void, excluded and have no efficiency in the act of salvation; so the result is the absurdity and passivity of the Christian life.<sup>27</sup> Protestantism states that man is justified by faith alone (*sola fide*), the facts are excluded<sup>28</sup>, faith becomes the absolute center of gravity around which the life of every Christian. The man is justified by faith only, and this view as giving a review and severe criticism from Orthodox people.

Martin Luther and John Calvin are the principal reformers on which is underlying the Protestant theology. The decisive role in the formulation of Luther's theology was played by

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Ortodoxie si Occident*, EDITURA Bizantina, Bucuresti, 1995, p. 25.

<sup>27</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru Staniloae, *Doctrina luterana despre justificare si cuvant si cateva reflexii ortodoxe*, in *Ortodoxia*, nr. 4, anul XXXV, 1983, p. 497

<sup>28</sup> *ibidem*, p. 500



Paul and Augustinian theology. Realizing the exegesis of the passage Romans 1: 16-17, Luther concluded that justification is a gift of God that can be appropriated by faith: "Night and day I pondered until I could see the connection between God's justice and claim that The just shall live by faith. Then I understood that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which through grace and mercy God justifies (warrants) by faith. I felt that I was born again and I just passed through the open doors of paradise."<sup>29</sup> And still Luther says: "And this is the confidence that Christians have, and true joy to their conscience, that faith in which our sins no longer belongs to us but have been attributed to Christ, upon whom God has placed all our sins. Thus, He took upon Himself the sins ... Christ's righteousness becomes ours .. .with His righteousness cloak covering him and us ... "<sup>30</sup>

Before the Protestant Reformation, justification or legal justification that a sinner is declared righteous in terms of the law, it was at best an underground stream of Christian soteriology. The situation changed dramatically with Luther. However, as remarked Peter Toon, "Luther did not use any kind of legal terms in explaining that our sins are taken by Christ or about the assignment of righteousness declared by God. This novelty will appear later. It will be assigned to him by others. Philipp Melanchthon<sup>31</sup>, the great systematic theologian is actually the one who brought this legal terminology in describing justification of Christians. But undoubtedly the most important forms of Reformed theology is the one by Jean Calvin. Under the major influence of Augustine, Calvin argued that he merely reproduce "clear and uncompromising teachings of this holy man," as is known as the Western Church, unlike the Orthodox Church which calls Augustine only *Beatus*.

Calvin's theological system starts as it did and that of Augustin with the current state of complete decay (ruin) of man's moral. In his own words, "even we recognize that God's image was not destroyed totally, yet was so distorted (broken), that what's left is a horrible caricature."<sup>32</sup> This pessimistic Calvinist theology is the fundament of the doctrine of predestination. Calvin argued that "predestination is the eternal judgment of God that decided in himself as to what he wants to happen to every human individual." Moreover, "although the elect ones receive the faith the grace of adoption, their choice does not depend on faith, but is earlier in time and in order." For Calvin, justification "is to remove sin and receiving the

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<sup>29</sup> *ibidem*, p. 501

<sup>30</sup> *ibidem*, p. 502

<sup>31</sup> N. Chitescu, Isidor Teodoran, I. Petreuta, *Teologia Dogmatica si simbolica*, volumul II, Editura Renașterea , Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 131

<sup>32</sup> *ibidem*, p. 134

righteousness of Christ". From him the salvation is not an infusion of grace. Thus he says that "man is not justified by justification, but is accepted as righteous, not because of his own righteousness, but because of the righteousness of Christ which is outside."

Protestant theology is imprecise and estranged from the spirit and the sheer precision of Orthodox theology. This exclusivist theology reduced only to Scripture, without a patristic perspective is incorrect. Protestants question the necessity of good works for salvation invoking several places in the Epistles of St. Paul where he speaks about salvation by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3, 20, 28, 30, 2, 4-6, Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2.8). This contestation is connected - as said father Dumitru Stăniloae - with their doctrine of justification, as a juridical payment for those who believe, to blame for sins without dismantling sins and without planting in them a new life in Christ. Analyzing unilaterally these scriptural texts, the Protestants came to an unilateral view of salvation by faith alone.<sup>33</sup> But the Apostle Paul meant "justice" that man partakes in Christ that new life, manifested in deeds that can lead man to spiritual stature of Jesus Christ, the perfect man. In all the places in the Pauline epistles speak about the new life in Christ, in which the facts are involved.<sup>34</sup>

What is faith in the Protestant thought? It is not simple knowledge of God, neither the acceptance of confidently words, nor the Christian teachings of God revealed in the Hebrew 11.1. It is not that faith that Jesus Christ said could move mountains, or the faith possessed by Jairus and the woman with blood flow.<sup>35</sup> Saving faith is the unconditioned trust in the merits of Christ and his justification through them. After Luther, who has faith says: God is my God to me, speaks to me, forgive me my sins. Faith broadly extends to all dogmatic teachings; justifying faith, on the contrary has a narrow sense and means strong and firm conviction that God looks at the merits of Christ as a sacrifice sufficient to pardon their sins not only universally, but namely for my sins. With this faith, man believes that Christ died for him and therefore free chip justified by the grace of God.<sup>36</sup>

The conception of such a faith, is not a transforming power, but leaves the original sin indelible in the justified man; this idea should have the right conclusion that such person cannot do deeds pleasing to God. Luther says that any believer's act is in itself a mortal sin, but is forgiven for the sake of faith.<sup>37</sup> Calvin, however, is something more moderate,

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<sup>33</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa*, volumul II, EIBMBOR, București, 2003, p. 355

<sup>34</sup> idem, *Faptele bune în învățătura ortodoxă și catolică*, în „Ortodoxia”, an VI, 1954, nr. 4, p. 523

<sup>35</sup> idem, *Doctrina luterană...*, p. 498

<sup>36</sup> *ibidem*, p. 498

<sup>37</sup> *ibidem*, p. 499

challenging only the purity of good works. After Luther, the man justified is, on the one hand a slave of sin, on the other a servant of God. As a result, he is partly right and partly sinful; partly live after the flesh, at will, in part after the Spirit (the Holy Spirit). Thus, every good man is so holy and sinful. Man cannot rise above this dualism; the Spirit of Christ does not have much power to cleanse it fully, that they might have a pure love and pure facts.

Considering them as impurities, reformers have not acknowledged the facts that the condition for justification, for progress and persistence in it. The contradictions of such a vision prompted reformers to return to them, reviewing the value of facts, but without retracting the doctrine of justification only faith.<sup>38</sup> And this has resulted in a vague Christian doctrine, not unitary, neither concrete. This led to confusion in some places. Luther recognize the need for good deeds and elsewhere need to deny them.

The uncertainty and the lack of unity of Protestant teaching is explained by the initial startup of reformers against Catholicism, which exalted the merit of human works to an extent that decrease the value of Christ's sacrifice; on the other the need further to moderate initial startup against the facts in front of indifference and the anomism derived from such a doctrine. These effects were due to doctrinal polemic of Protestantism against the Catholicism. And thus we see a theology that lost the guarantee of truth, a theology reduced to opinions and trends of concrete indications, but without substance and stability, a theology who loses its theology, but rather an absurd philosophy, an amalgam of ideas trying to simplify, but basically completely wrong, the points of faith.

In Orthodoxy where it was kept the vertical line drawn from Scripture, theologically enriched the teachings are clear, precise and invite to the ecclesial experience.

The faith in Orthodoxy is seen that personal touch with Christ, which irradiates on the man power of Christ;<sup>39</sup> is a faith equivalent to a progressive union with Christ in His sacrifice and Resurrection, as says Father Stăniloae: the man receives new powers to die sins, that to die of selfishness and isolation and raise to a new life which is in intimate communication with Christ and that will lead us in the resurrection.<sup>40</sup> We are not saved by some deeds, committed on the basis of any law normative impersonal exterior of Christ, but by facts that spring from the power of Christ dwelling in us; these deeds are necessary to acquire the personal salvation because they increase in us the union with Christ.

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<sup>38</sup> idem, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxă*, p. 357

<sup>39</sup> Christos Yannaras, *op. cit.*, p. 74

<sup>40</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, Sibiu, 1943, p. 211

Between these facts and faith in Christ there is an organic link in both manifesting communion with Christ. In fact communion with Christ manifests itself as a rookie communion in faith development. Faith in Christ is faith in Christ in us, faith in His power, which is in us; It is irradiation of the new presence and power of Christ dwelling in us invisibly but real.<sup>41</sup>

This faith includes in it the love of one who has died and resurrected for us and dwelt in us, giving us also power to die and to sin and live a new life in Him with him.

Faith is communion, is personal and loving dialogue. Christ Himself fills our love for Him by His love toward us. And that living love empowers us and we feed our powers to do like him. Therefore it is stated that Christianity is love, is the great mystery of love, personal communion, which the West did not understand it.<sup>42</sup>

Love is the greatest force, says Father Stăniloae, but it is hard only when supported by communion with the Person of infinite childish love of Christ which is one of the true faith, and faith without love is frowning because it is effort individual, not communion<sup>43</sup>. Protestant concept of faith is explained in the doctrine of a Christ isolated in a transcendent plan, not present through the sacraments in the hearts of believers in spiritual intimacy. The true definition of faith is offered by N. Crainic: "Faith in Christ is love for Christ and assimilation of Christ's love to people. Otherwise it is not a true faith, genuine, experienced and expressed."<sup>44</sup>

From this love spring facts and that they increase it. As Diadoch of Photice teaches: "love is the source and criterion of facts" and Father Stăniloae offers equation: "Love is in the bosom of the true faith, or vice versa. And virtual good works are included in both."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, faith and works as an expression of love lived and applied are the two necessary conditions for salvation. Our faith is shown in deeds; faith without works is impersonal, cold, devoid of warmth and authenticity that impart the Holy Spirit. Facts are our responses to God's love, and hence the need to continue actions that better responses increased to divine love, the expression of our need to respond more fully to God's unbounded love. And this movement of man toward God by entrench and capitalizing on our response to the love and

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<sup>41</sup> *ibidem*, p. 234

<sup>42</sup> Christos Yannaras, *op. cit.*, p. 70

<sup>43</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 233

<sup>44</sup> Nichifor Crainic, *Sfințenia – împlinirea umanului*, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 1993, p. 17

<sup>45</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa*, p. 354

the call of God is achieved in time through a synergistic work of divine grace and human will freely put in agreement with the divine will.

Christian teaching is not an invention, a speculation, whose official forms can be called philosophical deconstruction spectrum. The Christian faith is an expression of what the Church has taught since its formation in the baptismal formula and hence the confession they had to do catechumens before baptism. Faith has a well-established criteria, structured Revelation. We do not believe in something that the human mind has developed over time, as the product of reason in the imaginative invention of knowledge, but we believe in the revelation whose fullness is realized in Jesus Christ, the Logos Creator and Savior. The content of genuine Christian faith has made constant appeal to *Regula fidei*: keep what we got through preaching the Church and we formed the basis of faith which he taught Jesus Christ to the Apostles, who in turn transmitted this content to bishops on the basis of apostolic succession.

The uniqueness of the Christian faith, axiological particularity of Christian teaching is not subject to a reconsideration exercise, reinterpretation or deconstruction because they hold the subject formulation Revelation. The content of Christian teaching - focused Nicene symbol - the dogmas is not about language that defines abstract and philosophical doctrine, but finds relevance in living the experience of communion with God; Therefore, when one speaks of *regula fidei*, in fact is speaking of the profession of faith made at baptism.

The rule of faith (lat. *Regula fidei*) defines continuity through succession hierarchical transmission of the apostolic tradition and normative judgment factor of true doctrinal beliefs facing personal development of some Christian writers of the first centuries and Gnosticism.<sup>46</sup> Finally, *regula fidei* is - as pointed out by Pr. Georges Florovsky - "the control element catalyst in biblical exegesis. Text Scripture must be interpreted "in accordance with the meaning of" as indicated by the *regula fidei*".<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See Paul M. Blowers, „The *Regula Fidei* in the Narrative Character of Early Christian Faith”, în *Pro Ecclesia* 6(1997), pp. 199-228; Paul L. Gavrilyuk, „Two Interlocking Components of the Canonical Heritage”, în William James Abraham, Jason E. Vickers, Natalie B. Van Kirk (Eds.) *Canonical Theism. A Proposal for Theology and the Church*, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008, pp. 27-43; Robert W. Wall, „Reading the Bible from within Our Traditions: The «Rule of Faith» in Theological Hermeneutics”, în *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Eds.), Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000, pp. 88-108; C. G. González, „The Rule of Faith: The Early Church's Source of Unity and Diversity”, în *Many Voices, One God*, W. Brueggemann and G. W. Stroup (Eds.), Westminster John Knox, Louisville, 1998, pp. 95-107;

<sup>47</sup> Pr. Georges Florovsky, *Biblie, Biserică, Tradiție. O viziune ortodoxă*, Traducere și prefață de Radu Teodorescu, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2006, p. 149.

This factor is framed in normative exhortation that St. Paul addresses to Christians in Romans 12.6: "But we have gifts differing according to the grace given to us. If we prophecy to prophesy according to the proportion of faith "(ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως).

This construction concerns, according to Joseph Fitzmyer<sup>48</sup>, one of three possible ideas: the body of Christian teachings, personal faith and response to the grace of God or the kind of faith that "could move mountains."

The rule of faith is the name given to final authority in faith or religious norms. The word "rule", "straightedge" appears in Galatians 6:16: "And how many will go after screed (κανόνι) it ..." and I Timothy 1:13: "Keep that form of sound words which you have received from me". St. Paul uses this word to suggest this fundamental criterion of true faith: the teaching of the Apostles taught by Jesus Christ and they in turn have taught Church.

In the early centuries, church writers - especially apologists - and Fathers made constant recourse to the criterion normative *regula fidei*, by basing the doctrine of faith on Sacred Scripture in the blurring of doctrinal distortions and Gnostic heretics advanced. In this vein, Tertullian authentication to exploit this rule and teaching of the Christian faith<sup>49</sup>, remembering her eight times occurrences in all his books and three times in *The prescription against heretics*. He offers a number of requirements vis-a-vis the teachings of Christianity in preserving and transmitting them according authenticity: "Even if you need to research, now and always, however, the question remains: where should we do research? Heretics, where all are foreign and hostile to our faith and that we are not allowed to approach? (...) Only here, among our and those are ours to investigate, and then only as something we can talk without being touched principles of faith".<sup>50</sup>

In Tertullian's thought, the word rule (slats) emphasize the normative authoritative faith that comes from Christ through the Apostles: "These principles were grounded, as I prove by Christ himself and among ours are not subject to dispute than those that produce heresies and evince some to be heretics"<sup>51</sup>; "If it is true that truth to be recognized by our side, because we go after those principles that the churches we have committed after they received their of Christ, and Christ from God, then it is the right rule that I decided it: you do not have meaning

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<sup>48</sup> Iosif Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. The Anchor Bible*, Vol. 33, Doubleday, New York, 1992, pp. 647-648.

<sup>49</sup> L. Wm. Countryman, „Tertullian and the Regula Fidei”, in *Second Century* 2 (1982), p. 214.

<sup>50</sup> Tertulian, *Despre prescripția contra ereticilor (De praescriptione haereticorum)*, XII, 1, Traducere de N. Chițescu, în *Apologeți de limbă latină*, PSB, vol. 3, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1981, p. 147.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, XIII,6, p. 148.

not allow heretics call us to struggle under the Scriptures, because they prove without Scriptures that have nothing to do Scriptures"<sup>52</sup>.

*Regula fidei* is identified with the baptismal creed of Church of Carthage in the time of Tertullian, which he sums up the six points of Chapter XIII in the *Prescription against heretics*: "There is one God, which is none other than the Creator of the world, he who made all out of nothing by His word was born first. Word was called Son; in God's name appeared patriarchs in various ways, spoke then an with the prophets and descended finally in the Virgin Mary by the Spirit of God the Father and by His power became flesh in her womb and was born of it and became Jesus Christ. He taught us a new law and a new promise, the kingdom of heaven; wrought miracles and rose again the third day; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. In his place he sent the Holy Spirit, who guided those who believed in him; and will come again in glory to take to Himself His saints, to eternal life, giving them the joy of the heavenly promises, and to condemn on eternal fire the wicked after the resurrection of all and after restoring the body everyone"<sup>53</sup>. In this context, Father Georges Florovsky highlights the apostolic rule of faith, rooted and derived from the apostolic preaching: "When Christians speak of the rule of faith as apostolic they did not intend actually to say that the apostles met and formulated; what they wanted them to express it was the depth of the Creed, which each catechumen who recite before his baptism, creed embodied in summary form the faith they had taught the apostles and left their disciples to the be taught by them."<sup>54</sup>

For Irenaeus, the reading of Scripture must be led by the rule of faith - whom the faithful believers ("and are initiated" as highlights Pr. Georges Florovsky) the spirituality of Baptism and the primary image or "truth" of Scripture can be identified and adequately stated. Favorite expression of St. Irenaeus is κανών τῆς ἀληθείας; *regula veritatis* (rule of truth)<sup>55</sup>. This "rule" was actually nothing more than "the testimony and preaching of the apostles," κήρυγμα "and" *predicatio* (or *praeconium*) "that was" stored "in the Church and entrusted to her Apostles and was kept faithfully and widespread in all the Churches in a full uniform, by the succession of accredited pastors"<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, XXXVII,1, p. 165.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, XIII, 2-6, pp. 147-148.

<sup>54</sup> Pr. Georges Florovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>55</sup> Vezi Thomas C. K. Ferguson, „The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus Rhetoric in Book 1 of *Against Heresies*”, în *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (2001), pp. 356-375.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Pr. Georges Florovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 146; See Joseph F. Mitros, „The Norm of Faith in the Patristic Age”, în

Finally we remember also St. Athanasius, which – in polemic with the Arian beliefs that Jesus Christ was a creature of the Father - invoked rule of faith: "We, however, following the order of faith [τόν σκοπόν τῆς πίστεως] to know what they think bad, as the ones we have the right understanding"<sup>57</sup>. The purpose of faith or Scripture is the very core of her faith, condensed rule of faith, as was claimed by the Church and sent "from fathers to fathers."

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*Orthodoxy, Heresy and Schism in Early Christianity*, Everett Ferguson (Ed.), Garland Publishing Company, New

York, 1993, pp. 445-446.

<sup>57</sup> Sfântul Atanasie cel Mare, *Cuvântul al treilea împotriva arienilor*, XXXV, în *Scrieri. Partea I*, Traducere, introducere și note de Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, PSB, vol. 15, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1987, p. 366.



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