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THE USE OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ AND COGNATE WORDS

IN THE

APOSTOLIC FATHERS

by

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of

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations in this work follow those listed in Arndt and Gingrich, A Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (A.G.), except in the case of the periodicals, where the abbreviations listed in Altaner-Stuiber, Patrologie, have been followed.

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ AND COGNATES IN THE
APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The Apostolic Fathers is the name given to the body of literature, written in Greek, which dates from immediately after the New Testament period. The works cover the last decade of the 1st century A.D. and the first half of the second century. They give a varied picture of the moral and doctrinal state of the early Christian Church in a period characterised by constant threat of persecution and martyrdom on the one hand, and growth in theological and ethical understanding on the other.

The works considered in this thesis are the genuine letters of Ignatius; the Shepherd of Hermas; the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache; the letter to Diognetus; the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians; the Pseudo-Clementine Homily (commonly called II Clement); the letters of Polycarp to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp.

The study begins with an essay on the development of the language of faith. This traces the use of the $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ group from Homer to the New Testament, and shows how the Homeric and Classical Greek usages were taken by the Septuagint and applied in a religious context to God and salvation, and how this process was further developed in the New Testament into a full-blown technical vocabulary of faith. The Apostolic Fathers take this process a step further, and there is a broadening of the meanings of the cognates, together with resultant changes in the linguistic usage.

All the occurrences of $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ and its cognates in the Apostolic Fathers are examined in detail. In each case there is comment on the meaning of the words within the wider context in which they are set in each work.

The Greek is given, together with a translation, and obscure passages are elucidated.

In the course of the study it becomes apparent that the application of the cognates is broadened beyond the New Testament emphasis on trust and belief to the understanding of faith as a virtue. This ethical emphasis has a levelling effect on the linguistic usage and the meanings associated with the cognates. In particular, the New Testament distinction by which the noun πίστις tends to be emotive and signify primarily the trust aspect, and the verb πιστεύω signifies belief, no longer applies; noun and verb without distinction are used to convey all the aspects of faith - trust, commitment, confidence, assurance and belief.

In addition, the verb πέποιθα (to trust, have confidence) almost disappears from use. This completes a process noticed for the New Testament whereby the verb πιστεύω takes over the Septuagint meanings of πέποιθα as well as its own basic sense of 'to believe'.

The noun πίστις occurs both with and without the article, and the usage is studied in detail. Some translators have interpreted ἡ πίστις in the concrete sense of 'The Faith'. It is shown that this is not usually a proper sense in the Apostolic Fathers. The noun is also frequently constructed with an objective genitive, and the study suggests that the translators have not always acknowledged this in their work.

The situation of each author dictates the particular emphases of each, and influences the linguistic expression. The personal and ecclesiastical situation of each is taken into account in the discussion.

In addition there is an Excursus on δίδυχοις (double-minded) and its cognates which are set as opposites to faith, especially in Hermas. There is an Appendix containing comment on Ignatius' use of δίκαιος (righteous) and its cognates. A second Appendix contains a note on the translations available to the English reader.