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## Faith and Faithfulness

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# FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

Daniel J. McKaughan and Daniel Howard-Snyder

Can faith be valuable and, if so, under what conditions? We know of no theory-neutral way to address this question. So, we offer a theory of relational faith, and we supplement it with a complementary theory of relational faithfulness. We then turn to relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness with an eye toward exhibiting some of the ways in which, on our theory, faith and faithfulness can be valuable and disvaluable. We then extend the theory to other manifestations of faith and faithfulness, we propose a way to unify them under a theory of faith and faithfulness *simpliciter*, and we explain how they can be neo-Aristotelian virtues and vices. We close with our solution to the value problem and avenues for further research.

Assessments of the value of faith differ markedly, while the value of faithfulness is more widely recognized. In this essay, we offer our own evaluation, which proceeds in six stages. First, we articulate *the value problem*, the problem of adjudicating between faith's commenders and faith's detractors, those who view faith as valuable and those who view faith as disvaluable. Second, since we do not know of a theory-neutral way to address it, we offer a theory of relational faith, faith as it is prominently displayed in relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness. After we explain the central terms of our theory, and offer a corresponding theory of relational faithfulness, we show how our joint theory sheds light on several pre-theoretically plausible features of faith and faithfulness. Third, we illustrate how it enables us to understand when faith and faithfulness are valuable and disvaluable, in both secular and religious contexts. Fourth, we extend it to other phenomena in the neighborhood—e.g., propositional faith and faithfulness, faith in and faithfulness to an ideal or cause, and being people of faith—and we unify our understanding of these phenomena under a theory of faith and faithfulness *simpliciter*, treating the phenomena as manifestations of a single underlying psychological reality. Fifth, we show how, on our theory, faith and faithfulness can be virtues and vices. We close with our solution to the value problem and avenues for further research.



### 1. The Value Problem

In ancient Greece and Rome, we find faith (*pistis*, Greek; *fides*, Latin) numbered among the virtues, a great human good, something associated with flourishing friendships, rewarding marriages, and healthy families, something to be inculcated, maintained, and cherished.<sup>1</sup> The ancient Greeks elevated *Pistis* into their pantheon and the Romans revered *Fides* as a goddess. To underscore the honor in which *Pistis* and *Fides* were held, consider ancient Greco-Roman coinage. As you might expect, on the obverse side of many coins, we find the images of a variety of dignitaries, human and divine. What you might not expect—unless you have an unusual numismatic interest—is that, on the reverse side, many coins bear images of shaking hands and cornucopia, among other things, attended by the vocabulary of *pistis* and *fides*. By way of illustration, consider one Greek coin.



Figure 1. Coin from Locri Epizephrii (circa 275 BCE).<sup>2</sup>

Zeus's visage is prominent on its obverse side (to the left). On the reverse side (to the right) we find *Roma* seated on a low throne with her short sword lowered, her battle shield resting; standing, placing a wreath on *Roma's* head, we see *Pistis*, honored among the gods to be chosen for such a solemn act. We might speculate about what is going on here, but whatever is going on, this much seems clear: *pistis* is put in a good light.

Flash forward closer to our own day. In the US, we saw Barack Obama, with eyes wide open to what lay ahead after the 2016 presidential election, commending faith to his fellow citizens: "faith in America and in Americans" and "faith . . . in the power of ordinary Americans to bring about change."<sup>3</sup> More recently, in his closing argument at Donald Trump's impeachment trial in February 2020, Representative Hakeem Jeffries, among others on both sides of the aisle, commended faith to his audience: "faith in the government of the people, by the people, and for the people."<sup>4</sup> As a

<sup>1</sup>E.g., Cicero: "*fides* is the basis of the stability and constancy for which we look in friendship," in *On Friendship*, quoted in Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 57.

<sup>2</sup>Image retrieved from de la Fe (2020).

<sup>3</sup>Obama, "Farewell Address."

<sup>4</sup>Jeffries, "Walk By Faith."

campaign slogan and in the immediate aftermath of the 2020 US Presidential election, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris repeatedly urged their supporters to “keep the faith,” including faith in those overseeing the electoral process, as the foundations of American democracy were shaken by an authoritarian incumbent and his cronies.<sup>5</sup> Clearly enough, these politicians, and presumably their audience, hold faith in high regard.

Or consider *The Aspen Weave Project*, founded by David Brooks, which documents how Americans are more united than divided, contrary to what we might suppose. Brooks and his researchers interviewed “weavers,” people who remain in urban neighborhoods, creating connections, bridging divides, and building relationships. In her PBS series, *Race Matters*, Charlayne Hunter-Gault asks him how the weaver-solution to fragmentation and polarization will continue. Having noted how neighbors showed up for each other in the first few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the collective outrage at the murder of George Floyd, Brooks replies: “When I look at the marches, when I look at the people I speak to through the Weave Project, when I look at the people I interview through my journalism, I just see such a desire for a new era. And such a sense that this is a portal to a different future. I have faith in that.”<sup>6</sup> In an NYT op-ed covering the same ground, Brooks writes: “We also need to have faith in each other. Right now, millions of people all over are responding to the crisis we all feel. We in the news media focus on Donald Trump and don’t cover them, but they are the most important social force in America right now. Renewal is building, relationship by relationship, community by community. It will spread and spread as the sparks fly upward.”<sup>7</sup> Brooks says he has faith in the marchers and weavers, faith in their desire for a new era, faith in their sense that we are at “a portal to a different future.” And, he says, “We also need to have faith in each other” to build that “different future,” “relationship by relationship, community by community.” Brooks and, presumably, his audience, value faith since it disposes us to rely on each other for “renewal” and other goods, in the face of forces that would fling us further apart.

Faith-commended also shows up in popular music. Consider just one example, from rhythm-and-blues icon, Mavis Staples of the Staples Singers (1948–1994), who was a constant of the anti-war and Civil Rights movements and whose solo career includes several albums, honors from the music industry, and a star-studded 2017 tribute-album. Her performance of *Have a Little Faith*, written by Jim Tullio and Jim Weider, is easily accessible online; it’s a must-listen.

Chorus: Have a little faith, I say/Have a little faith, my friend/We got to help each other/through thick and thin

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<sup>5</sup>Google “Biden keep the faith” to view multiple occasions; also see Biden, “Remarks.”

<sup>6</sup>Hunter-Gault, “Race Matters.”

<sup>7</sup>Brooks, “A Nation of Weavers.”

These are trying times/that we're living in/Have a little faith, I say/Have a little faith, my friend.

We got trouble/everywhere around the world/There's not a safe place to be/for any woman, man, boy, or girl

And everywhere you turn/there's destruction and pain/You get a mouthful of promises/and a hatful of rain. [Chorus]

There's evil all around us/we got to rise above/We've got to fight the good fight/win that war with love

Hold on, hold on/help is on the way/There's a better tomorrow/I can feel it today. [Chorus]

A little bit of faith/the size of a mustard seed/Little bit of faith/I tell you that's all we need

Everything is going to be all right/Everything is going to be all right. [Chorus]

Staples calls people to rely on each other in “these trying times,” despite the “destruction and pain,” despite “a mouthful of promises and a hatful of rain.” She assumes this is faith’s role, even if it’s just “a little bit of faith / the size of a mustard-seed.” That’s enough to get us “through thick and thin,” through “trouble everywhere,” enough to help us focus on “a better tomorrow.”<sup>8</sup>

Upshot: these politicians, journalists, and songwriters—among many, many others from other domains of human life—commend faith as something to hang onto in threatening circumstances, something to pull them through difficulty, and they expect their audiences to already understand the value of the faith they commend.

This positive estimation of faith contrasts starkly with that found among notable opinion-makers who vilify it. For example, *en route* to decrying religious faith, Steven Pinker writes that faith is “believing something without good reasons to do so.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Alex Rosenberg began a debate on the question of whether faith in God is reasonable by declaring that it is impossible since, “by definition, faith is belief in the absence of evidence.”<sup>10</sup> As Sam Harris has it, “Faith is simply the license [people of faith] give themselves to *keep believing when reasons fail*.”<sup>11</sup> Richard Dawkins goes one step further: “Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the

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<sup>8</sup>Other pop songs linking faith and resilient reliance: (1) John Hiatt’s *Have a Little Faith in Me*, released in 1987, written after “a trail of wreckage,” personal and professional, due to his drug and alcohol addiction; cf. Joe Cocker’s 1997 Berlin cover; (2) Curtis Mayfield’s *People Get Ready*, released in 1965, what MLK named “the unofficial anthem of the Civil Rights Movement.” (3) *Faithful*, released in 2018, performed by rapper Michael Ray Nguyen-Stevenson, aka Tyga.

<sup>9</sup>Pinker, “Less Faith.”

<sup>10</sup>Rosenberg and Craig, “Is Faith in God Reasonable?”

<sup>11</sup>Harris, *The End of Faith*, 232, his emphasis.

lack of evidence."<sup>12</sup> But no one goes as far as Mark Twain: faith is "believing what you know ain't so."<sup>13</sup> Assumptions about the nature of faith such as these dominate a cottage industry focused on religion and its cultured despisers. With rot like that at its root, it is little wonder that, for many people, faith, at best, begets dogmatism, arrogance, and close-mindedness or, at worst, poisons everything.

Perhaps faith's detractors have in view only religious faith and not what faith's commenders have in mind, although Prometheus-Press pundit Victor Stenger denies the difference: "Not only is faith in God unreasonable, faith in anything is unreasonable."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Dawkins takes it that "what is really pernicious is the practice of teaching children that faith itself is a virtue. Faith is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument." It sounds as though he regards faith *itself* as epistemically or morally problematic, in general, although in his view the survival value of the meme "faith is a virtue" depends on its environmental hosts, notably religion.<sup>15</sup>

However, even if we focus on religious faith, we face a puzzle. After all, according to the earliest churches, it was by *pístis* in Jesus, and through the *pístis* of Jesus, that Jesus-followers initiated and maintained what they regarded as the most important relationship of all, a new covenantal relationship with God. Why would faith understood as believing without good reasons serve the short- or long-term interests of such a relationship? And, if that's what faith is, why would the early Christians publicly provide what they regarded as good reasons for the resurrection of Jesus and his messianic claims and behavior? Moreover, long before the early Christians, it was by *pístis*, according to *The Letter to the Hebrews*, that Abraham obeyed God's call to leave Mesopotamia for "an unknown land," thereby initiating his status as "the father of faith."<sup>16</sup> Further, according to *Genesis*, when God promised Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars, Abraham "faithed (*he'émîn*) the LORD, and the LORD counted it to him as righteousness," that is, as being in a right relationship with the LORD.<sup>17</sup> Again: why would anyone take believing against the evidence to be the *sine qua non* of standing in right relationship to God, or even as paradigmatic of it? And why would God hold faith in high regard if that's what it was, especially when, according to the prophet Isaiah, God invited Israel to reason with him and, according to Jesus, loving God with all your

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<sup>12</sup>Dawkins, "A Scientist's Case."

<sup>13</sup>Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

<sup>14</sup>Stenger, "Faith."

<sup>15</sup>Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 307–308, 199; cf. 51.

<sup>16</sup>*Hebrews* 11.8.

<sup>17</sup>*Genesis* 15.6. Modern English lacks a verb form for the noun "faith." We propose verbing the English noun "faith" to translate *he'emin* here, rather than the usual translation "believed," which has cognitive connotations absent in the Hebrew *emunah* lexicon. For discussion, see McKaughan, "On the Value of Faith and Faithfulness," 12–14, and Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, "Faith and Resilience."

“mind” (*dianoia*) partly constitutes the first great commandment?<sup>18</sup> These questions might make us wonder whether what is being commended is the same phenomenon as that which is being decried.<sup>19</sup>

So: who’s right? Faith’s detractors or faith’s commenders? Is faith always disvaluable, or can it be valuable? Even if it can be valuable, perhaps faith in God is always disvaluable. Or might it too be valuable under some conditions? If so, when is it valuable and when is it disvaluable? To address these and similar questions is to address *the value problem*. Of course, without understanding what faith is, we can’t solve the value problem, or adjudicate the dispute between its detractors and commenders. We therefore offer what we regard as a plausible theory of faith and explain how it bears on the value problem, although we cannot defend the theory itself here at length.

## 2. A Theory of Relational Faith and Faithfulness

When we put our faith in someone for something, we are disposed to rely on them for it. Call this *relational faith*. Stated abstractly, our theory of relational faith is this:

*Resilient Reliance.* For you to have faith in someone for something is for you to be disposed to rely on them to come through with respect to it, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward their coming through.

So, for us to put our faith in a friend to lend us an ear during a difficult time is for us to be disposed to rely on them to do so, with resilience in the face of challenges to relying on them, because of our positive stance toward their lending us an ear. And for us to put our faith in the LORD as sovereign and loving creator is for us to rely on him in that capacity, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of our positive stance toward his role as sovereign and loving creator.

Several clarifications are in order.

We begin with a *positive stance*. Like fear, hope, anger and other complex psychological states, faith has built-in to it what’s needed to explain behavior. By way of illustration, all you need to know to understand why Mary behaves in certain ways—confessing her sins, offering thanksgiving, praise, and petitions to God, gathering with Christians, worshipping the Lord, receiving the sacraments, practicing the holy days, relying on the two Great Commandments to guide her behavior, and so on—is that

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<sup>18</sup>Isaiah 1.18, Matthew 22.37, Mark 12.30, Luke 10.27.

<sup>19</sup>We are well aware of the fact that faith’s detractors find impressive historical precedence for their view of faith. Notably, Aquinas thought that faith in God necessarily involves assenting to a proposition with the certainty appropriate to high-grade knowledge (*scientia*) while being based on evidence both causally and justificatorily sufficient only for mere opinion, suspicion, and doubt (*opinione, suspicione et dubitatione*), although unlike him, faith’s detractors do not think faith so understood is valuable. For critique of Aquinas, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, “Faith and Humility.”

she has faith in Jesus as her Lord. Naturally, we might wonder why she has faith in him in that capacity but, once we've learned that she does, we can understand why she performs actions that constitute relying on Jesus as her Lord.

But Mary's faith can explain her behavior only if it involves both conative and cognitive states. However, not any old states will do. We cannot explain her relying-on-Jesus behavior by saying that she wants to follow Jesus as Lord and she *believes* that he will *not* come through on that score, or by saying that she believes that Jesus will come through and she *wants* him *not* to do so. Disbelief and disdesire are too "negative" to explain her behavior; more "positive" states are required.

At a first approximation, for Mary to be in a *positive* cognitive state toward Jesus coming through as her Lord is for her to be in some cognitive state or other that represents him as coming through, with three features: (i) it has the propositional content that Jesus will come through, (ii) it disposes her to take a stand on behalf of the truth of that proposition, and (iii) it is responsive to her grounds for its truth. Belief that Jesus will come through has these features but—crucially—there are other candidates, e.g., a high-enough credence or confidence that he will come through or, depending on the details, accepting, trusting, hoping, or belieflessly assuming that he will; and propositional reliance and imaginative assent might also be candidates. Upshot: a wide variety of states are potential candidates for being a positive cognitive state.<sup>20</sup>

For Mary to be in a *positive* conative state toward Jesus coming through as her Lord is for her to be in some conative state or other that motivates her to rely on Jesus to come through in that capacity. Wanting him to come through counts but—crucially—there are other candidates. For example, even if, due to the demandingness of Jesus's Lordship, Mary lacks a first-order desire for Jesus to come through as her Lord, she might yet have a second-order desire, i.e., she might want *to want him to come through in that capacity*. That would suffice. Other options include looking with favor on Jesus coming through, being for it, a felt attraction to it, caring

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<sup>20</sup>Three notes in one. (1) See Alston, "Belief," Audi *Rationality*, Howard-Snyder, "Can Fictionalists Have Faith?," McKaughan, "Authentic Faith" and "Action-Centered Faith," Pojman, "Faith," Rath, "Christ's Faith," and Schellenberg *Evolutionary Religion* for these non-doxastic alternatives. (2) Three qualifications. First, just as you can put your hope in someone to pick you up at the Amtrak station even though you only believe the "thinner" proposition that it's more likely than not that they will do so, so Mary can have faith in Jesus as her Lord even though she only believes a "thinner" proposition. Second, a creature capable of faith might have non-propositional representations of the relied-upon coming through, e.g., imagistic representations (Beck, "Why we can't say"). Third, positive cognitive states might not be evidence-based but rather the output of a cognitive capacity whose exercise aims at forming true and/or veridical positive cognitive states. (3) The positivity involved in a positive cognitive state is a disposition to take a stand on behalf of its truth in contrast with taking a stand against its truth, or no stand at all. Nothing else. In particular, you can be in a positive cognitive state toward a proposition without regarding its truth as good or desirable, as when you believe your teenage son just died in an auto accident.

about it, it mattering to her, being emotionally invested in it, and affection for him in that capacity, among other possibilities. Upshot: a wide variety of states can be a positive conative state.<sup>21</sup>

So then: Mary's faith in Jesus as her Lord can explain her relying-on-Jesus behavior, and that's because her faith involves both positive conative and positive cognitive states toward doing so. We collect both states under the label of a *positive stance*, which appears in our theory.

Regarding a *disposition to rely*, we invite pistolologists to characterize it in their preferred way. Here's ours. "Rely" can be used as an active and a stative verb. We use it as an active verb denoting a certain sort of non-basic action, one you perform by doing other things, e.g., relying on Jesus as Lord by following his instruction. But notice: you can have faith in someone for something even while you are not performing the act of relying on them for it—as when you are fast asleep—provided you have a *disposition to perform the act of relying on them for it*.<sup>22</sup>

As for *resilience in the face of challenges to relying*, again, we invite pistolologists to characterize it in their preferred way. On the way we prefer, it is an unspecific general disposition to overcome—or to *try* to overcome—challenges to continuing to rely on those in whom we have placed our faith. It can be instantiated by many things to which English points and that psychologists study, e.g., unperturbedness, bouncing-back, grit, fortitude, hardiness, persistence, perseverance, etc. Importantly, faith's resilience does not need to dispose us to overcome all possible challenges. We can be more or less resilient depending on the range of possible challenges to which we would respond by overcoming them, and the degree of difficulty they each pose. This is one way we can have more or less faith.<sup>23</sup>

Now to relational faithfulness.

To be a faithful person is not to be full of faith or especially "faithish." Rather, as William Alston—the founder of the Society of Christian Philosophers—put it, "[a] faithful person is one who is worthy of faith being reposed in [them], trustworthy, reliable, loyal, steadfast, constant, and so on."<sup>24</sup> This is exactly right. Call it *Alston's Axiom*. We can use Alston's Axiom to reveal the nature of faithfulness given a theory of faith. On our

<sup>21</sup>All of which have been mentioned in the literature. Cf. Alston, "Belief"; Adams, *Finite*; Audi, *Rationality*; Buchak, "Steadfastness"; Howard-Snyder, "Propositional"; Jackson, "Belief"; Kvanvig, *Faith*; McKaughan, "Action-Centered Faith" and "On the Value." In addition to positive cognitive *states*, perhaps there are positive cognitive *acts*, e.g., the act of *accepting* a proposition. Similarly, in addition to positive conative *states*, perhaps there are positive conative *acts*, e.g., *committing* to rely on another person. If there are such acts, we can more easily see how coming to have faith can be under our direct voluntary control, since we won't have to make sense of how positive cognitive and conative *states* such as belief and desire can be under our direct voluntary control.

<sup>22</sup>For more on the act of relying, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, "Relying."

<sup>23</sup>For more on faith's resilience, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan "Faith and Resilience."

<sup>24</sup>Alston, "Belief," 13. On Bill's role as the founder of the SCP, see Plantinga, "Twenty Years Worth" and "In Memoriam"; cf. Alston, "Reflections on the Early Days."

theory, in slogan form, faith is *resilient reliance*. In that case, given Alston's Axiom, a person is worthy of faith being reposed in them for something only because they are disposed to come through reliably with respect to it, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so. In slogan form, faithfulness is *resilient reliability*. Further, just as our faith in someone for something explains our relying-behavior only because faith involves a positive stance toward them coming through, so our faithfulness to someone for something explains our coming-through-behavior only because faithfulness involves a positive stance toward our coming through for them. These points together suggest

*Resilient Reliability.* For you to be faithful to someone for something is for you to be disposed to come through reliably with respect to it, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward your coming through.

So, for you to be faithful to an editor, to meet a deadline, is for you to be disposed to meet it reliably, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward doing so. And, for us to be faithful to the LORD as covenant-keepers is for us to be disposed to come through reliably for him in that capacity, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of our positive stance toward our coming through.

On our theory, both faith and faithfulness can be usefully understood as role-functional psychological states, not a mere combination of psychological items. Faith takes as input any of a wide variety of combinations of positive stances toward someone coming through and gives as output a disposition to rely on them to come through, while faithfulness takes as input any of a wide variety of combinations of positive stances toward our coming through reliably and gives as output a disposition to do so—all with some measure of resilience in the face of challenges to relying and coming through.

We can now sketch the relationship between faith and faithfulness.

Notice first that, although faith and faithfulness share certain general features, they differ in what it is to which those features are directed. For example, both faith in someone and faithfulness to them involve a disposition to act in a certain way and to overcome challenges to acting in that way. But, in the case of faith, the action is relying on them to come through and the challenge is to continue relying on them in the face of challenges to doing so while, in the case of faithfulness, the action is coming through reliably for them and the challenge is to continue to come through reliably in the face of challenges to doing so. Moreover, both faith in someone and faithfulness to them involve a positive stance toward a state of affairs. But, in the case of faith, the state of affairs is them coming through while, in the case of faithfulness, it is your own coming through.

In addition, before we even begin to theorize about faith and faithfulness, we can see that they complement each other, answer to each other, so

to speak, at least when all goes well—a qualification we will leave implicit in what follows. Our theory explains why. For, first of all, when you have faith in someone for something, you have a positive stance toward them coming through with respect to it, which their faithfulness answers with a positive stance toward the same, and it is (partly) because of your shared positive stances that your mutual faith and faithfulness answers each other. Second, when you have faith in someone for something, you are disposed to rely on them to come through with respect to it, which their faithfulness answers by them being disposed to come through reliably, and it is (partly) because of these dispositions that your mutual faith and faithfulness answer each other. Third, when you have faith in someone for something, you'll be resilient in the face of challenges to relying on them to come through with respect to it, which their faithfulness answers by their being resilient in the face of challenges to coming through reliably, and it is (partly) because of your mutual resilience that your mutual faith and faithfulness answer each other.

Of course, faith and faithfulness are not always reciprocated. You can put your faith in someone for something even though they are not the least bit disposed to come through reliably with respect to it. Similarly, you can be faithful to someone with respect to something even though they are not the least bit disposed to rely on you for it. But when they are reciprocated, as they frequently are in relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness, they bind people together in such a way that valuable things can arise from that bond, to which we now turn.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. *The Value of Faith and Faithfulness*

We begin with two caveats. First, we just said that mutual faith and faithfulness binds people together in such a way that valuable things *can* arise from that bond. The “can” is crucial. That’s because the valuable things that can arise from the bonds of mutual faith and faithfulness need not arise, or need not arise as much, when, for example, by mutual faith and faithfulness people form a suicide pact or defraud a homeless shelter. In what follows, we aim to stay alert to this point. Second, we will be much more concerned to display the valuable things that can arise than to analyze, qualify, and systematize them, a task for another time and place.

*Tennis Partnership.* Imagine you are a college tennis player. You partner with a friend and you together aim to pursue a conference doubles-championship next spring. You train together all summer, knowing that you’ll be apart in the fall and most of the winter, incommunicado. It will be crucial for each of you to continue to train in the absence of the other. Then, just before you part company, you have a falling-out that leaves both

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<sup>25</sup>As for the difference between trust and faith, we side with virtually every trust-theorist, according to whom trust need not involve resilience in the face of challenges. Moreover, according to some trust-theorists, trust does not involve a disposition to rely on the trusted. For details, see McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, “How Does Trust Relate to Faith?”

of you hurt, angry, discouraged, and in doubt about whether your partnership will survive. They leave; the conflict remains unresolved. Unable to communicate, you both wonder whether the other might seek another partner or give up the pursuit altogether. You each face some choices. Will you remain faithful to the other, continuing to put in the long and lonely hours of training? Will you retain faith in them to do the same?

Only if you both continue to train will you have a shot at your shared goal. Naturally, each of you may well prefer to remain faithful to and retain faith in the other only if the other reciprocates with their faith and faithfulness, but you are both in the dark about what the other is doing. How might the goods of faith and faithfulness show up in your partnership in such circumstances?

Let's imagine how things might go when you both meet up midwinter before the start of the season, and you've both retained faith in and faithfulness to each other, i.e., you've both relied on each other to train, and you've both come through for each other by training, despite the doubt and difficulty posed by the falling-out and incommunicado. What valuable things might your bond of mutual faith and faithfulness have given rise to?

First, it will have given rise to the good specific to the aim of your partnership, or at least a much greater chance that it will be realized. Indeed, we might happily imagine that, fit-and-firmed by mutual faith and faithfulness, you eventually achieve your shared goal: you win the conference championship! The experience of such *relationship-specific goods*, enabled by bonds of faith and faithfulness, is a good thing.

But, winning isn't everything. For, even if you don't win the championship, your faith in each other was vindicated. To be sure, you both coming through for each other—arriving midwinter in tip-top shape, with strokes and strategy perfected—may well have been more like good fortune rather than anything creditable to either of you. However, we can easily imagine that it was partly creditable to each of you; after all, suppose you were both partly motivated by the prospect of your faith in and faithfulness to the other. So then: at the outset of your partnership, you each took the other's measure, and you both took a risk in relying on each other—and, despite the falling-out and incommunicado, you both came through. Your faith in each other is vindicated. *Mutually vindicated faith* in the pursuit of a noble goal, especially through hardship: that's another good thing.

In addition, you both displayed *integrity*. At the outset, you both entered into a partnership aimed at winning the championship and, in doing so, you both committed yourselves to rely on and come through for each other, in that capacity. To be sure, the falling-out and incommunicado threatened to tear the bond. But by retaining your faith in and faithfulness to each other, you both displayed a resolve that glued together your earlier selves, who committed to relying on and coming through for the other, and your later selves, who kept that commitment. This stretch of your lives, therefore, displays coherence and unity around a noble goal,

when it easily might not have. In this respect, you both are admirable for your integrity.

Moreover, prior to meeting up midwinter, you both exhibited *active openness to the good* at which the partnership aimed. Indeed, you both clung to that prospective good during the doubt-and-difficulty-infused incommunicado, continuing to rely on, and to come through for, each other in your training. By so doing, you both shaped your lives under the prospect of winning the championship. It is good to be actively open to goods a relationship can bring.

Further, you both *honored and respected* each other, and in the knowledge of that honor and respect you both *encouraged* each other. For when you became tennis partners, you each committed yourselves both to rely on, and come through for, the other, in that capacity. In doing so, you each evaluated and affirmed the other's skill and character and found them worthy of such commitment. That positive evaluation and affirmation also expresses itself in the desire each of you has for the other, rather than someone else, to be the one with whom they pursue their dream. And, given the centrality of that dream to each of your identities, it expresses itself in each of you putting not only a dream but also your innermost selves into the hands of the other, thereby making both of you even more vulnerable to each other. When you each initially gave the other such a weighty and consequential positive evaluation and affirmation, you honored and respected each other, and in that honor and respect you were each encouraged—all of which is a good thing. But, like the loaves-and-fishes of old, the goodness of your mutual honor and respect multiplied when you both continued to honor and respect each other during your falling-out and incommunicado; and, although neither of you was encouraged during that period, you were both encouraged at the outset of the relationship and, when you met up midwinter, you were both even more encouraged when, upon seeing each other for the first time since the falling-out, there stood mutual faith and faithfulness embodied in the flesh, in all its athletic glory, primed for a season neither of you would ever forget.

We also find the good of *solidarity* arising from the bond created by the mutual faith and faithfulness of your tennis partnership. For by repeatedly relying on, and coming through for, each other, you each threw in your lot with the other, again and again, thereby creating, fashioning, and sustaining your own we're-in-this-together-ness, a solidarity all the more unyielding for your both having overcome the challenge posed by the difficulty of your separation.<sup>26</sup>

Further, by your both exercising resilience in the face of that challenge, you contributed to the *stability* of your partnership, creating something that would not only endure a grinding, scorching-hot regular season, but something out of which each of you could find the mutual *support* to

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Preston-Roedder, "Three Varieties."

cope with illness and injury, and the *security* to pursue together grander dreams, e.g., the regional championships, and perhaps even the nationals! Relatedly, even if you don't take the conference, the stability of your partnership, and the support and security it engendered, was worthwhile. For, the bond created by your mutual faith and faithfulness as tennis partners may well *overflow into other relations* with your partner, whether other athletic adventures or a deep and abiding off-court friendship that embraces much more of human life.

Further still, by repeatedly choosing to continue to rely on, and to come through for, your partner, despite the falling-out and incommunicado, you each *confirmed and strengthened* dispositions to overcome challenges, dispositions that partly constitute faith and faithfulness as virtues, about which more in a moment. For now, note that, given the goodness of your goal and motivations, and given that you exercised good judgment in overcoming those challenges, each of you edges toward faith and faithfulness as virtues.

The experience of relationship-specific goods; mutually vindicated faith; integrity; active openness to the good; mutual honor, respect, and encouragement; solidarity; stability, support, and security; overflowingness; confirming-and-strengthening virtue-building dispositions: these are some of the valuable things that can arise from the bond created by mutual faith and faithfulness.

Of course, there might be other goods as well; we make no claim to comprehensiveness. Moreover, some of them may arise, at some level of description, in ways other than the bonds of mutual faith and faithfulness you both created; we make no claim to uniqueness. Furthermore, some of them can arise even if only one of you continued to rely, and come through for, the other, e.g., integrity, active openness to the good, honor and respect through the falling-out and incommunicado, and confirming-and-strengthening virtue-building dispositions.

But what if your partnership had been a partnership in crime—say, aimed at lining your pockets by defrauding a homeless shelter—and you succeeded? Then it is questionable whether any relationship-specific good was realized since that aim hardly qualifies as something good. Moreover, since such an aim is evil, your mutually vindicated faith in each other was not good either; indeed, even if you had been unsuccessful, relying on each other in such an effort stands out among the better ways for faith to go awry. As for integrity, even though this stretch of your lives displayed coherence and unity around your shared goal, neither of you were admirable for it. Vicious integrity or no integrity at all resulted, not the good of integrity.<sup>27</sup> In addition, neither of you would have displayed active openness to the good at which your relationship aims; after all, your shared goal was evil. Further, while you both honor,

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<sup>27</sup>On some theories of integrity, integrity is necessarily valuable or virtuous while, on other theories, it is not. For discussion, see Cox *et al* "Integrity."

respect, and encourage each other in crime, those things are arguably disvaluable since what you honor, respect, and encourage in each other is, in fact, skill at fraud, and evildoing from an evil character. Further still, the solidarity of a partnership aimed at evil, especially when its partners overcome repeated challenges to its continuance, arguably has little or no value, and much disvalue. Similarly, it would be horrifying if the stability wrought by your mutual faith and faithfulness begat the support and security required for more endeavors aimed at greater and grander fraud. And the thought of your mutual faith and faithfulness in fraud overflowing into other partnerships together aimed at, e.g., sex trafficking, insider trading, or opioid smuggling, hardly recommends itself. Finally, given the badness of your goals or motivations, and given your poor judgment in selecting them, the dispositions you both confirm and strengthen do not partly constitute faith and faithfulness as virtues but as vices.

*The Last Temptation of Paul.* Suppose that, after a conversion experience on the road to Damascus, the Apostle Paul takes himself to be living in a relationship with Jesus, and that Jesus has called him to travel the countryside, boldly proclaiming the gospel to the gentiles, while relying on him for his daily needs. Following Jesus is one way for Paul to rely on him as his Lord; and carrying out the mission Jesus has given him is one way of being faithful to him as his Lord. On his many journeys over the years, Paul encounters opposition and endures hardships. But he is resilient in the face of these challenges—even when at times he nears despair of life itself.<sup>28</sup>

Now imagine him in jail, where a jarring conversation with an intellectually-superior, naturalistic-atomist philosopher leaves him reeling. It seems to him now that there's a significant chance that he had misinterpreted his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, that there is no God, and that Jesus was not raised from the dead. He still believes that *if* God exists, God's faithfulness is not negated by human unfaithfulness—but, for the first time since his conversion, he is in serious doubt about whether God exists. It wouldn't be surprising if the atomist is right after all, he thinks to himself: there is no God who has raised Jesus from the dead and his own prayers call into the void, and so his faith in, and faithfulness to, Jesus are in vain.<sup>29</sup> Alive to this very real possibility, his questions remain unanswered, his intellectual problems unsolved. Much is at stake. It seems likely he will soon be condemned to death, which can be avoided if he renounces Jesus and declares allegiance to Caesar. He faces some choices. Will he continue to rely on Jesus as his Lord, even in the face of decapitation—or will he capitulate? Will he reliably come through for Jesus, as his Lord and as the appointed apostle to the gentiles, all the way to the end—or will he head off in another direction?

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<sup>28</sup>Cf. 2 Corinthians 1.8; 11.24–28.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. 1 Corinthians 15.14–19.

Imagine that Paul perseveres—and *there is no God*. Then the basic Christian story is false and Jesus is unworthy of being followed *as Lord*. If Paul learned of this, he would number himself among the greatest of fools and count for naught his efforts in following the Way. Some moral and practical goods might result from Paul's faith in a false religion, both in his own life and in its wake; and perhaps faith and faithfulness, even when misplaced and unvindicated, can have value beyond what we claim for it here. Nevertheless, we agree with Paul's more negative and truth-dependent assessment, which takes the value of faith to depend significantly on the goodness and worthiness of its object.

If Paul learned the basic Christian story is false, we suspect that, if he were to reflect on our list of valuable things that can arise from the bonds created by mutual faith and faithfulness, he would find precious little to comfort him. The relationship-specific good involved in relying on, and reliably coming through for, Jesus as his Lord requires Jesus to exist and to be Lord. Moreover, his faith in Jesus as his Lord is misplaced, not vindicated. Further, there is no one with whom, by mutual faith and faithfulness, to be in solidarity with, and there is no stable relationship with Jesus out of which Paul might find the support and security he needs to pursue his mission. Further still, although Paul's faith and faithfulness unified his post-conversion life into a cohesive whole, they centered it around a colossal mistake, which is bad enough, but which was made all the worse by his boldly misleading so many others, eventually resulting in billions of people centering their lives around the same massive mistake. Even if Paul meant no harm, rather than enabling *the good* of a life that displays integrity, his faith and faithfulness arguably enabled a life that displayed vicious integrity or no integrity at all. Also, although it is good for one's faith and faithfulness to make one actively open to goods a relationship can bring, Paul's faith in and faithfulness to Jesus as his Lord could do no such thing. After all, if there is no God, then God did not raise Jesus from the dead, in which case Paul is not in a relationship with Jesus as his Lord; consequently, there is no Lord-and-servant relationship for him to be actively open to. Likewise, by his faith and faithfulness, Paul affirmed Jesus's character, claims, and vision, and thereby showed him honor and respect. But it's not so clear that they were good. For, if the basic Christian story is false, Jesus's self-understanding and mission were flawed and misleading, about life-shaping matters, and so he was unworthy of the kind of honor and respect Paul bestowed on him as his Lord, in which case that honor and respect were not good, or not nearly as good as they might have been. In addition, while it is a good thing to confirm and strengthen dispositions that constitute the virtue of faith and faithfulness, it is not a good thing to do the same for the vice of faith and faithfulness. Arguably, if the object of one's faith and faithfulness is bad, and one has exercised poor judgment in choosing it, then, if one unifies one's life around it, repeatedly confirming and strengthening, in the face of difficulty, the dispositions involved in one's faith and faithfulness, it is not so clear that you edge closer to the

virtue of faith and faithfulness rather than the vice, about which more below. So, it is at least questionable whether Paul inched closer to the virtue, rather than the vice. Finally, something similar can be said for his faith in and faithfulness to Jesus as his Lord overflowing into other partnerships aimed at delusion. We expect Paul would agree with our assessment—if *there is no God*.

However: what if he perseveres to the end, as tradition affirms—and *the basic Christian story is true*? In that case, we can more easily see the goods we've mentioned arising in the most important of all of Paul's relationships, from the bond created by the mutual faith and faithfulness of Paul and Jesus and, through Jesus, also with God. For their mutual faith and faithfulness give rise to the relationship-specific Lord-and-servant good, with whatever more specific items that might involve, e.g., Paul's preaching the gospel to the gentiles and Jesus providing strength for Paul to endure his martyrdom faithfully. Likewise, their faith in each other is vindicated. Moreover, they both display integrity since this stretch of their lives displays coherence and unity around the aim of their mutual faith and faithfulness. Further, we can easily imagine that both remained actively open to achieving that aim, including when Paul faced the challenge posed by his jarring jail-conversation. Further still, his faith in and faithfulness to Jesus spills over into other relationships, notably his relationships with the fledgling communities of diverse peoples sprinkled across Eurasia. In addition, if the basic Christian story is true, this is not Paul's end; so, by exercising faith and faithfulness through his martyrdom, he contributes to the stability of his post-mortem relationship with Jesus. And something similar can be said for mutual honor, respect, and encouragement, solidarity, and confirming-and-strengthening of virtue-building dispositions.

*Tennis Partnership* portrays how the value of mutual faith and faithfulness can be accounted for when faith is resilient reliance and faithfulness is resilient reliability. *The Last Temptation of Paul* portrays the same in a religious context. Something similar holds for many other relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness: between lovers, between friends, and between family members; between caretakers and dependents, associates, colleagues, teammates, and fellow combatants; and between those in which one or more of the parties involved is a group, such as citizens and leaders, employers and employees, businesses and customers, one state and another, and so on. Extensive is the reach for valuable relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness.

#### 4. *Extending and Unifying the Theory*

So far, we have offered a theory of relational faith and faithfulness, and we have displayed how it explains their potential value, and potential disvalue, in relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness. We now extend it to other manifestations of faith and faithfulness.

Consider *propositional faith*. We can say, for example, that for you to have *faith that* your children will flourish as adults, despite the adolescent evidence, is for you to be disposed to rely on their flourishing—e.g., by making plans that presuppose it—with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward their flourishing. As for *propositional faithfulness*, we can say, for example, that for you to be faithful to the proposition that humans are created equal is for you to be disposed to come through reliably for their equality—e.g., by championing and defending it—with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward the envisaged realization of their equality. We can easily generalize from these examples.

Now consider *people of faith*, those who rely on a religious outlook to govern and unify their lives, and who, like Paul, devote themselves to a way of life associated with that outlook, as when Mother Teresa relies on Jesus and the Catholic religion, and serves Jesus among the poorest of the poor. We find this phenomenon in the irreligious as well. Madalyn Murray O’Hair and Richard Dawkins both display it when, having taken on board scientific naturalism early in their lives, they rely on that grand narrative to inform and shape their plans and projects; and their work on behalf of its practical, social, and political implications bestows on their lives unity and purpose. They are people of secular faith.

We propose that what distinctively characterizes a person of faith—the nature of their particularly impressive reliance and devotion—can be usefully regarded as an admixture of faith and faithfulness. No theist who failed completely to put their faith in God could be a person of faith; and none who utterly failed to be faithful to God could be a person of faith. Something similar goes for a secular person of faith.

Since faith is importantly distinct from faithfulness, we prefer to regard people of faith as *people of faith/fulness*, to convey the admixture of faith and faithfulness their lives exhibit.<sup>30</sup> We can extend our theory to them: for you to be a person of faith/fulness is for there to be something—e.g., a worldview, grand narrative, etc.—such that you are disposed both to rely on it—e.g., to orient and unify your life—and to come through for it—e.g., defending and championing it, or embodying it well—with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, all because of your positive stance toward its orienting your life. We might usefully label the faith of a person of faith/fulness *orientational faith* and the faithfulness *orientational faithfulness*.<sup>31</sup>

We can also extend our theory to faith in and faithfulness to *ideals and causes*.<sup>32</sup> For example, for you to have faith in democracy or Black Lives

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<sup>30</sup>Faith’s difference from faithfulness is the main theme of McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, “Theorizing . . . Kvanvig.”

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Pace and McKaughan, “Judaic-Christian Faith.”

<sup>32</sup>E.g., from Obama, “Farewell Address,” “faith in reason and enterprise, and the primacy of right over might,” and from Jeffries, “Walk by Faith,” “faith in the Constitution; faith in

Matter, as an ideal or cause, is for you to be disposed to rely on them to do things on your behalf—e.g., to shape your character or what you stand for, and to guide you in how you regard and treat others—with resilience in the face of challenges, because of your positive stance toward them coming through on this score. As for faithfulness to democracy or Black Lives Matter, it is for you to be disposed to come through on their behalf—e.g., advocating and championing them, defending them in face of aggression and assault—with resilience in the face of challenges, because of your positive stance toward your coming through on this score. Again, we can easily generalize from these illustrations.

We might wonder whether anything important unifies these manifestations of faith and faithfulness. That is, we might wonder whether they share something in common that is, rightly and strictly speaking, faith and faithfulness *simpliciter*, something of which relational, propositional, and orientational faith and faithfulness are its manifestations. Perhaps so. For consider

Faith *simpliciter*. For you to have faith (on some occasion) is for you to be disposed to rely on something in some way, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward it coming through in that way,

where, depending on plausible understandings of the particularities of the object and/or way, you manifest relational, propositional, or orientational faith. Similarly, consider

Faithfulness *simpliciter*. For you to be faithful (on some occasion) is for you to be disposed to come through reliably in some way, with resilience in the face of challenges to doing so, because of your positive stance toward reliably coming through in that way,

where, depending on plausible understandings of the particularities of the object and/or way, you manifest relational, propositional, or orientational faithfulness. This understanding of faith and faithfulness delivers a pleasing theoretical unity. Instead of several unrelated forms of faith and faithfulness—relational, propositional, and orientational faith and faithfulness—there are just faith and faithfulness *simpliciter*, manifested differently depending on the particularities of the object and/or way.

### 5. The Virtues of Faith and Faithfulness

On our view, faith is resilient reliance and faithfulness is resilient reliability, to put it in slogan form. We now turn to the question of whether and, if so, how, faith and faithfulness, so understood, can be virtues and vices. There are different theories of the nature of virtue and vice. We will assume without argument a broadly neo-Aristotelian theory.

We begin with faith. For you to have faith in Jonathan as a friend is (mainly) for you to be disposed to overcome challenges to relying on him as a friend. On a neo-Aristotelian theory, your faith in Jonathan as a friend is a virtue only if it is a character trait. But you can have faith in Jonathan as a friend without having it as a character trait. So: what would faith as a virtue look like if it were a character trait?

We can start to answer this question by abstracting away from Jonathan and friendship: faith as a virtue is a disposition to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom you repose faith. However, virtues are grounded in one's stable motivations and values, and so faith as a virtue is a disposition to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom you repose faith *because of your stable motivations and values*.<sup>33</sup> But we must go further.

That's because someone might be stably disposed to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom they repose faith but lack the virtue of faith because they lack good judgement about who to put faith in, or how, when, and for what. Some of us stay longer than we ought in abusive relationships, overcoming challenges to relying on those in whom we repose faith—when we shouldn't, contrary to good judgment. If this generally characterizes our faith in others, we lack the virtue of faith. We have too much faith, faith to a fault, faith in excess, faith that exhibits intransigence.

In this connection, notice that some of us are prone to the opposite extreme. We too readily give up our faith in others when we shouldn't. Our friend doesn't return our calls; an organization we identify with overturns a policy we favor—and so, contrary to good judgement, we withdraw and we are no longer disposed to rely on them for friendship and community. If this generally characterizes our faith in others, we too lack the virtue of faith. We have too little faith, a deficiency of faith, faith that exhibits irresolution. Faith is a virtue only when you are neither *over*disposed nor *under*disposed to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom you repose faith.

Moreover, someone might be stably disposed to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom they repose faith, and regularly exercise good judgment, but lack the virtue of faith because they are so disposed due to bad motivations and values. Imagine an ambitious young journalist who learns that editors-in-chief must have faith as a virtue, and so they aim to gain it. In due course, they become stably disposed to overcome challenges to relying on those in whom they repose faith, and regularly exercise good judgment, but they lack the virtue since they are so disposed only because of a hunger for executive power and its privileges.

We can gather these points together by saying that, on Resilient Reliance, for you to have faith as a virtue is for you to be disposed to *appropriately* overcome challenges to relying on those in whom you repose faith,

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<sup>33</sup>On why virtues are grounded in stable motivations and values, see Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind* and Battaly, *Virtue*.

where “appropriately” signals good judgment, grounding in good motivations and values, and whatever else might distinguish the possession of a virtue from possession of its constitutive trait. For similar reasons, we can say that, on Resilient Reliability, for you to have faithfulness as a virtue is for you to be disposed to *appropriately* overcome challenges to coming through reliably for someone.<sup>34</sup>

Our theory of faith and faithfulness as virtues fits well with Teresa Morgan’s observation that, in the Greco-Roman world, *pistis* and *fides* were a “social virtue” drawn on in times of crisis because it enabled people to overcome the “fear, doubt, and skepticism” that threatened their relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it explains why the early Greeks and Romans deified faith and faithfulness as *Pistis/Fides*, and why people from diverse outlooks regard them as virtues. It also explains why many irreligious often regard religious faith as bad, even vicious; after all, in light of their low estimation of religion, they regard the religious as prone to mulishness because of their faith. And it sheds light on why God might value entering into relationships of mutual faith and faithfulness with human beings, and why they too might value such a relationship with God.

#### 6. The Value Problem and Prospects for Further Research

In closing, let’s return to the value problem and the dispute between faith’s detractors and commenders, before enumerating some matters for further investigation.

Clearly enough, we side with faith’s commenders. On our theory, faith need not be bad; it can be good, even virtuous. But Resilient Reliance does not imply that faith is always good or virtuous. Indeed, it accounts for when and why it is good or bad, and when and why it is virtuous or vicious.

Notice that, for all we’ve said about the value and virtue of faith, our theory *itself* leaves open many questions, including whether God or anything else can be an object of valuable or virtuous faith. This is a good thing, we submit. In the case of God, while we side with the possibility of religious faith being good and virtuous as indicated in *The Last Temptation of Paul*, the theory did not deliver that verdict by itself. It was delivered by the theory plus auxiliary judgements. Thus, the detractors of religious faith might accept our theory and either (i) deny our judgements about the conditions under which faith is valuable and virtuous, or (ii) accept our judgement on that score but deny that religious faith can possibly satisfy those conditions, or (iii) accept our judgment on both those scores but deny that religious faith ever actually does satisfy those conditions.

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<sup>34</sup>Our reflection on faith as a virtue and vice has been influenced by King, “Perseverance,” and Battaly, “Perseverance.”

<sup>35</sup>Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 7, 45, 63–64, 75, 104, 117, 120–121, 124, 154, 170, 180–181, 209–210, 502.

Our descriptive theory of faith leaves these normative matters open for investigation—as it should. The devil is in the details.

However, while our theory is compatible with the claim that belief on insufficient evidence is disvaluable, vicious, and otherwise despicable, it is *incompatible* with the claim that faith, whether secular or religious, is or entails belief on insufficient evidence. So, we stand against those of faith's detractors who say otherwise. Of course, they may well be right that most or even all religious faith is epistemically irrational. But, if so, it is not due to the nature of faith itself.

Now to prospects for further research.

Our theory of faith and faithfulness arguably underwrites a potentially fruitful research program. It makes predictions that can, in principle, be confirmed or disconfirmed by historical, theological, and biblical studies, as well as empirical psychology. For example, on our theory, faith and faithfulness are central to flourishing human social relations, and so we should expect to find them—i.e., resilient reliance and resilient reliability—in cultures, past and present, associated with their vocabulary, symbols, stories, and practices.<sup>36</sup> We should also expect to find them in accounts of our evolutionary prehistory.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, we should expect to find them in the lives of ordinary people of faith/fulness, both in our own experience of them and in studies reported by sociologists and psychologists of religion.<sup>38</sup> Further, we should expect our theory to accommodate the faith and faithfulness of religious exemplars, e.g. Abraham, Jesus, and Mother Teresa, among many others.<sup>39</sup> And we should also expect it to make sense of biblical material, e.g., (i) the semantics, imagery, and practice of *pístis* and *'ēmûnāh*, (ii) the way in which the narratives and its characters display *pístis* and *'ēmûnāh*, and (iii) the way in which *pístis* and *'ēmûnāh* figure in the biblical themes of covenant and salvation.<sup>40</sup> In addition, we should expect it to accommodate the character of faith and faithfulness as they are often expressed in popular secular venues, e.g., politics, biography, journalism, sports, and the arts. We might also inquire whether faith and faithfulness understood as resilient reliance and resilient reliability provide fresh solutions to other problems in philosophy of religion, e.g., the problem of faith and reason or the problem of the

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<sup>36</sup>As indicated, some of this work has already been done, e.g., in Morgan, *Roman Faith*, on *pístis* and *fides* in the early Roman empire.

<sup>37</sup>See Pettit, *Birth*.

<sup>38</sup>See Pargament and Exline, *Working*, and Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, "Faith and Resilience."

<sup>39</sup>See McKaughan, "Faith Through the Dark of Night" on Mother Teresa, as well as Pace and McKaughan, "Judaean-Christian Faith," and Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, "Faith and Resilience," on Abraham and Jesus. See McKaughan and Howard-Snyder "Theorizing. . . Kvanvig" on Abraham's faith and faithfulness.

<sup>40</sup>See Howard-Snyder, "Markan Faith"; Lindsay, *Josephus and Faith*, and "The Roots"; McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, "Perseverance"; Morgan, *Roman Faith*; Schliesser "Faith in Early Christianity."

trajectory, or in ethics, e.g., the problem of partiality, or in epistemology, e.g., the problem of epistemic circularity—among other possibilities.<sup>41</sup> Of course, there also remains the task of responding to objections to our theory, as well as assessing how it fares in comparison with other comprehensive theories, whether classical or contemporary.<sup>42</sup> And questions about the conditions under which, and the ways in which, faith might be rational or irrational, and apt or inapt, must also be investigated. In short, there remains a lot of work to be done.

If the recent literature on faith is any indication, pistology is on the rise.<sup>43</sup> Given the newness of contemporary theorizing about faith and faithfulness, it would be premature to say that our theory is “the one true theory” on the subject. Still, we submit that it is worthy of consideration as pistologists work together toward a deeper understanding of the nature and value of faith and faithfulness.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>On the problem of faith and reason, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, “Faith and Reason.” On the problem of the trajectory, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, “Fellowship.”

<sup>42</sup>For our first pass at a comparison with Aquinas, see “Faith and Humility.” For a much more developed comparison with Buchak and Kvanvig, see Howard-Snyder and McKaughan, “Theorizing. . . Buchak,” and McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, “Theorizing. . . Kvanvig.”

<sup>43</sup>See, e.g., Rice *et al*, *Approaches to Faith*; McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, *The Nature and Value of Faith*, Malcolm, *Faith, Hope, and Trust*, and McKaughan and Howard-Snyder, *Faith: An Interdisciplinary Reader*.

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