

seem very different. Faith and faithfulness -- how utterly different. Do we live by faith or do we live by faithfulness? Well if you mean our faithfulness we certainly don't live by our faithfulness because none of us would get along very far if it was our faithfulness. But do we live by our faith? Do we live by the Lord's faithfulness? Just how do these two words fit together? Well you look back to the origin of the word pistis and you find that as far back as Homer it is used in ~~no~~ two senses: it is used in the sense of trust, and it is also used in the sense of being worthy of trust. And when we look at it that way we can see how closely related these two ideas are -- to trust and to be worthy of trust. It has become quite customary for us to speak of the faith as that body of doctrine which we hold. Now it is very important to hold true doctrine. It can affect many things in our lives and in our attitudes toward others, but I don't think that is what Paul was talking about here. "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." He did not mean, See if you have every little bit of doctrine exactly right, and whether somebody else has it wrong. He did not mean, Examine these points of doctrine and see whether you are right on them. That is important. That has a vital place in our lives. But he was referring to pistis in its original sense - whether you have what we call faith as an attitude.

Now the attitude of faith -- modernists sometimes at least athiests perhaps like to rather ridicule as if it is a rather unimportant thing in this workaday practical world, today, What is faith anyway? Actually faith is something that is one of the commonest things in our life. I'm glad Paul didn't say, Examine yourselves whether you be in faith, whether you have faith. He said, Whether you be in the faith. He is speaking about a specific kind of faith because faith is extremely common. If you did not know that this covering on the floor just how many places there were in which there big holes underneath and the minute you put your foot on it you would sink through and go down to the bottom, you would walk very very slowly and very carefully as you went from one end to the other of this room. You have faith that there is a solid foundation underneath this covering of the floor otherwise you would not dare walk across it. You drive on an express way and you come up a hill, and you come up and up and up you come and you get nearer the top