



THE IDEA OF "SOTERIA" IN THE
SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

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OLAF K. STORAASLI

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P R E F A C E

One of the inherent drives of man is to find satisfaction and peace for his heart. He lives in a world seemingly concerned chiefly with the problems of daily bread, shelter, and livelihood. But there is in every man a yearning for a more lasting good, whether or not he acknowledges the fact of an after life.

The Christian faith speaks of this highest good in terms of the word "salvation." All non-Christian religions also have worked out their Ways of Salvation. With a brief survey of some of those man-made ways of salvation, we shall attempt to find from a study of the Synoptic Gospels what the true Biblical idea of Salvation is, and how this idea was central and indeed basic to the mission of Jesus, and in the early ministrations of the Christian Church.

While the word salvation was used very universally within early Christianity, it seems unfortunate that today certain "salvation cults" try to monopolize the term and appropriate it to their particular conception, so that the church has to redefine the term on a basis of New Testament teaching. But yet again any study forced back to the New Testament foundations is valuable, and the church needs constantly to return to the original concepts found in the Scripture and use them in the program of evangelization in the Twentieth Century.

The method of procedure will be to first examine the words used to convey the idea of salvation from the earliest Old Testament times, to the very teaching of Jesus Himself; on a basis of this study the idea itself will be dealt with in an attempt to get at the fundamental components of the idea of salvation in the teaching of Jesus, and the writers of the Synoptic Gospels.

O. K. S.

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INTRODUCTION

"For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." --John 3:17

There are many Biblical concepts which are difficult for the modern man to grasp and rightly understand. By the passing of centuries, the vivid picture of these ideas as held by the early Christians has been blurred partially by the historical process, and partly as a result of many and varied translations of the Holy Scriptures. Statements that were posited with the Hebrew background taken for granted may become empty and puzzling for us in our day.

The words of our various modern languages likewise have a shallowness and a vagueness which is readily discernable in our modern versions of the Bible. Furthermore, our very words change in their meanings as the time process moves relentlessly onward, and one is constantly confronted with the problem of discerning what a given writer meant to say as he wrote in his day. Language itself is a fluid and not a solid, and as it rushes forward words may become vague or definite, depending upon the usage to which they are put.

In religious terminology this is particularly true. The church has sanctified certain pagan words and has appropriated them for a definite purposeful usage within the confines of the church. But even this appropriation does not remain constant. We constantly have to interpret or read into a given word what the author in reality meant in his record, as far as we are able to do this many centuries after his writing. This is one of the perplexing problems of Biblical exegesis, and wide delineations have been made in one direction or the other, depending upon the presuppositions of the exegete.

This quality of fluidity which we acknowledge in language belongs to

its living form. A word may be revitalized or it may become fossilized and dead by constant usage. Thus a word may have the historically-developed thought of the past embalmed in it, but this may not at all be understood or implied in the actual thought of the present reader. Coleridge, in referring to the fluidity of language and the meanings of words uses this phrase, "they do not find us."

It is with this in mind that the subject in hand has been undertaken. "Salvation" is one of the oldest of Biblical ideas, and one of the tenets basic to mankind in general. But just as workmen may become careless in handling dynamite because it is their everyday job, so the church may lose a good deal of the richness and depth of the concept of salvation, because in all ages this idea has been taken for granted as obvious. Frequency of occurrence often causes abstractness. The fundamental thesis of this treatise is to show the richness of the Biblical idea of salvation, especially as we find the idea in the Synoptic Gospels, and to show the historical development of this cardinal tenet of the Christian faith. We realize, however, that a technical study of the words used for this idea in the Scriptures will not alone give the depth to the concept that is required, but a study of the idea in Scripture will. So we must pursue the study topically as well as etymologically.

The reader will immediately recognize the latitude of the subject at hand, and will realize that all materials which have helped in the preparation cannot be included in this dissertation. But it is hoped that the fundamentals can be so presented that anyone considering them will understand somewhat better perhaps the Biblical idea of salvation. Salvation, of course, includes all aspects of theology, and we cannot here include all subjects that are related and contribute to the idea of salvation, for volume after volume has been written without exhausting or completely considering the subject.

Neither is it possible in such a study in Biblical theology to discover

original material. The workable sources have been available for centuries, and many interpretations have been given. Rather it shall be our purpose to make a reinterpretation of the subject with no claim for originality.

Several problems of study must be guarded against. One cannot hew too closely to the line in forming conclusions from the study of terminology involved, for this alone cannot be authoritative. Each writer has his peculiarity of vocabulary and usage, but we cannot from that fact make too definite claims. However, such a study is tremendously helpful in giving a student the background of the Biblical usage of terms and the connotations involved. When the Bible appropriates a pagan term for its special use much of the pagan background of the word may have to be cast aside. God has also worked through his inspired writers in this process of elimination.

-PART ONE-

THE TRANSMITTERS OF THE IDEA

The Words Involved

Chapter I - THE BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY

- a. Old Testament
 - 1. Hebrew
 - 2. Septuagint
- b. Classical Greek
- c. New Testament

Chapter II- THE PREVAILING IDEA

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY

In order to fully understand the words used by the synoptists for the ideas of saving, saviour, and salvation it is necessary for us to find the antecedent ideas in the Old Testament in both its Jewish and the Septuagint versions.

A. OLD TESTAMENT

The development of the idea of salvation in the Old Testament centers largely about the revelation of God to his people through his saving acts.

1. The Hebrew Old Testament

The deliverance of Israel at the hand of God is expressed in the Hebrew language by four main words.

(a) יָשַׁע - to deliver, set free, give ease.

In its root meaning this word means to "be placed in freedom" so as to "live in abundance." Hence the meaning is really one of "enlargement", from which the idea of deliverance was a natural development. One is reminded of the New Testament idea of Christ freeing man and giving him the "abundant" life.

The verb occurs in the Niphal and Hiphal forms, and the noun forms used are יָשַׁע or יָשׁוּעַ, יְשׁוּעָה, יְשׁוּעִים, יְשׁוּעִי and some other proper names, of which the most important is יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, "Jehovah is Salvation." The verbal form of the root embraces the negative idea of saving, of deliverance from some evil; generally physical, without any implication of a favorable or a positive consequence. So in the majority of cases, יָשַׁע can be rendered "to deliver" or "to rescue," emphasizing the negative character of the early idea of salvation.

God is referred to as the "rock of salvation" (יְהוָה יִשְׁׁלָט) in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:15). He is mentioned as the worker of salvation in numerous passages such as Psalms 24:5; 25:5; 27:9 (יְהוָה יִשְׁׁלָט); 65:6; 85:4; 95:1; Isaiah 17:10. In Isaiah 45:15 God is called the "Saviour" (יְהוָה יִשְׁׁלָט).

But the usage of this word in the Old Testament is not confined to the divine Saviour, but is applied to human deliverers as well. The Book of Judges is a record of men's early ideas of salvation. Gideon is sent by God "to save Israel", and the salvation he works is one of success in battle (Ch. 6-8). Othniel is called a saviour (יְהוָה יִשְׁׁלָט) whom Jehovah raised up, who was God's instrument in overcoming Cushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, thus ushering in an era of forty years of peace (3:10-11). Jehovah also raises up another saviour, Ehud, who delivered Israel from Eglon, the king of Moab (3:15ff.) The word is used of the promised salvation (יְהוָה יִשְׁׁלָט) in Isaiah 62:11.

(b) קָדַם -- "redeemed," "delivered", "ransomed."

The original use of this word conveyed the idea of a slave or a prisoner being set free by a monetary transaction. Here also the cause of the action is God and in the majority of the occurrences of this word, it is God who ransoms or saves his people.

(c) כָּפַר -- "redeem by paying for", "retribute," "avenge."

This root occurs in the participial form as the "avenger," or "redeemer" (כָּפַר). The literal idea is the one expressed in Ruth 3:13, "to do the part of a kinsman." The idea is a Hebrew one, in which a kinsman was obliged to redeem the mortgaged property of his dead kin, and if the latter had died childless, to save the family from extinction by marriage with the widow. So also the idea of an avenger became well-known, for if a Hebrew were "to do the part of a kinsman" he must avenge the death of his kin. "To the Arab of today, a Highlander of yesterday, or a Hebrew in Old Testament times, it seemed

as natural for one kinsman to stand by another as it seems to us for one of our hands to help the other." (1)

The term is used of Jehovah frequently in the later Old Testament books, with an early instance in Exodus 15:13, where the people are redeemed, i.e. saved by the Exodus. Since God has covenanted with his people, he is thereby like a kin to Israel, and will do all that a kinsman should do, namely, "redeem" Israel. In Psalm 72:13-14 both יָשַׁוּ and לִפְדּוּ are used in regard to the souls of men, meaning, as is so characteristic in the Old Testament, the "life" of man.

(d) לָצַד -- "delivered," "plundered," "rescued," "escaped."

This root occurs in the Niphal and Hiphil forms of the verb, and as a noun is used only in Esther 4:14 (לְצַדִּיקִים) in the sense of deliverance. The idea of this root also is entirely negative, with little room for the deeper religious meaning.

2. The Septuagint.

The Septuagint version uses ῥῶσῆεν as a translation for יָשַׁוּ, לָצַד, and לִפְדּוּ most frequently, but also uses the same word occasionally in translating שָׁלַח, "to slip, set at liberty, escape;" for עָזַר, "help, assist;" for נָצַח, "to be in health, safety, restoring life;" for שָׁלַח, "bring forth safely;" for יָצַח - "one that escapes;" and for יָשַׁוּ - "delivered." But ῥῶσῆεν is also used in the Septuagint in translation of more specific terms such as נָתַן - "give food," אָמַן - "trust", יָדַע - "know", רָאָה - "see, chose, provided," יָצַח - "was exalted, was secure," שָׁבַח - "returned, restored," and שָׁלַח - "was at peace, was restored."

Hence we see that the general word ῥῶσῆεν was used to cover a latitude of meanings. So it may be said that in the Septuagint the fine

(1) C. Ryder Smith, "The Bible Doctrine of Salvation", (London: Epworth Press, 1941), page 35.

distinction of the Hebrew language between "salvation" specifically so-called and the more general terms is obscured by the use of the one word in so many varying meanings.

The nouns יְשׁוּעָה and פְּדוּתָהּ and יְשׁוּעָה are rendered σωτηρία by the seventy, as also in some cases are the less-related nouns, שָׁלוֹם - "peace, prosperity, safety," פְּדוּתָהּ - "freedom, safety, deliverance," בְּשׂוּבָה - "abundance, wealth, security," שָׁלוֹם - "at ease, prosperous" and פְּדוּתָהּ - "brought forth safely, escaped, delivered."

In summary we may say that in the Septuagint σώζειν and its derivatives are used chiefly in translation of words meaning to escape, deliver, or make safe. It is interesting to observe that σώζειν does not have the connotation of "healing", as is so common in the usage in the New Testament.

B. CLASSICAL GREEK

We find σώζειν and its derivatives used frequently by the classical Greek writers prior to the usage made of them by the New Testament. The pagans had their "saviours", and looked for coming "saviours". They attributed the title σωτήρ in ancient times to deities, as well as to eminent men, such as kings, princes, heroes, or anyone who had been influential in conferring signal benefits upon their country. They even gave the title in ancient times to inanimate things. So the Dioscuri were the σωτήρες of mariners, as the Nile was the σωτήρ of the Egyptians because of the blessings it brought.

J. N. Robertson points out (1) that the title σωτήρ was given by the Greeks to Zeus (2), Helios, Artemis, Dionysis, Herakles, the Dioscuri, Cybelle, and Aesculapius (d. 455 B.C.). This usage, of course, indicates

(1) J. N. Robertson, "Pagan Christs," (London: Watts & Co., 1928)
(2) From the habit of dedicating the third cup of wine at feasts to Zeus, proverbs concerning the feast had arisen, such as τὸ τρίτον τῷ σωτήρι, Διὸς τρίτον σωτήρος χάριν - of all good things there are three.
Cf. Cremer, "Lexicon of N.T. Greek" in loc. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1880)

that it was used in a mystico-naturalistic sort of way, being quite remote from any vital spiritual connection.

A study of the early papyri further corroborates this early usage of the words. Milligan shows that the title σωτήρ was regularly given to the Ptolemies and to Roman emperors. The various papyri assign the term to Euergetes I, Julius Caesar, Nero, and Vespasian, while leading officials were also so designated, because of their important position. (1)

The idea of salvation in the sense of "bodily health", "well-being", or "safety" is used by the Greeks much in the sense in which the Hebrew words were used, possibly suggesting that the Greeks borrowed their idea from the Jewish neighbors. Moulton-Milligan give many examples from early papyri (2nd to 7th centuries A.D.) showing how salvation had become a definite idea in connection with "bodily health" or safety". (2)

Cicero wrote that in his day there was no Latin equivalent for σωτήρ as applied to Verres, and in comment says: "Hoc quantum est? Ita Magnum, ut Latine uno verbo exprimi not possit. Is est nimirum 'soter' qui salutem dat". (3)

(1) Moulton-Milligan, "The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament", (London: "Hodder & Stoughton, 1928) Part VII by Milligan on σωτήρ.

The papyri referred to are very ancient, and their reference to a "saviour" is interesting. "The Flinders Petrie Papyri" refers to Euergetes I as a saviour. This is about 250 B.C. An Ephesian inscription of A.D. 48 is given in "Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecorum" (Leipzig) and gives the title to Julius Caesar. The same source mentions a first century Egyptian inscription which refers to Nero as Saviour. Likewise the title is so attributed to Vespasian. The Designation is given also to leading officials, as in the "Oxyrhynchus Papyri" (London), a papyri from A.D. 49-50, where a complainant petitions a praefect with the words, "I turn to you, my preserver, to obtain my just rights."

(2) Moulton-Milligan, *Ibid.*, on σωτηρία. The common idea of σωτηρία as expressed in the papyri is that of "bodily health", "well-being", or "safety". Quotations are given from 2nd and 3rd cent. A.D. showing that such an idea was still prevalent. "Write me concerning your health", "I asked about your health and the health of your children" are examples given by Milligan from the "Agyptische Urkunden" (Berlin). "The Oxyrhynchus Papyri" (London) gives examples from the 4th to 7th century of σωτηρία being used of the safety of kings and lords.

(3) "How great is this? So great, that Latin is not able to express it by one word. This is doubtless a Deliverer who gives prosperity (deliverance)." Cicero, "Verr.", II:2,63.

The title, "Saviour Gods", was given to Demetrius Poliorcetes and his father, Antigonus, when the former restored the Athenian democracy in 307 B.C. The Athenians decreed these divine honors to them when they were yet alive, and altars were set up to these Saviours, a priest was appointed to attend the worship, and all people took part in the worship. They went out to meet their deliverer singing hymns and dancing, bearing garlands, incense and libations, and as they lined the streets they sang that he was the true god, for the other gods slept, or dwelt far away, or were not, but he was alive, and an active deliverer.⁽¹⁾ So the term was known and used even this much previously to the New Testament times.

Thus we see that these words were common ones by the time when the New Testament was written. They had very ordinary meanings in the classical usage, until the New Testament writers used them and intensified their meanings by applying the words to Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and as bringing salvation of a new and complete kind, a spiritual deliverance.

(1) So described by Frazer, "The Golden Bough", Vol. I, p.390, (London: Macmillan, 1911). Frazer also gives the song describing this, taken from Plutarch, "Demetrius", 10-13; Athenaeus, vi.62sq. pp. 253 sq.

C. NEW TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY

The preceding discussion has been set forth only that the historical development leading to the New Testament terminology might be better understood. In the New Testament σώβειν, σώτηρ, and σωτηρία are key words of Christian Theology. It is around them that the whole Christian message centers. These words, consequently, have in their New Testament usage taken on more complete and richer meanings.

(a) σώβειν and διασώβειν.

The verbal form occurs in the New Testament a total of 103 times, about 60% of the occurrences being in the passive form. This fact in itself indicates both the importance of this concept in the structure of the New Testament, and that God is the active agent in the saving process. In the New Testament the word is used in both the physical (negative) sense, as well as in the spiritual (positive) sense, in which sense, we are usually wont to think of the word in our usual terminology. The verb σώβειν is derived from σῶς, "safe and sound", and thus had the physical connotation in its original meaning. However, even in Greek paganism it soon assumed the metaphysical meaning of "safe, sure, certain". Gradually it took on the more specific idea of "deliverance" and "salvation", looked for in the coming age of bliss.

In the physical sense, the word is used of the saving of a person from suffering with disease, and thus takes the meaning of "heal", "make well", "restore to health". This the most common usage from Old Testament times, and is used by Jesus Himself in this sense very frequently, as well as by the Gospel writers. (1)

(1) In the Synoptic Gospels σώβειν is used in this sense in the following passages: Active sense, Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50 (though understood by some exegetes as spiritual healing); 8:48; 17:19; 18:42. Passive sense, Matthew 9:21; Mark 5:23; 5:28; 6:56; Luke 8:36, 50.

Other New Testament usage attributes to the word a meaning of rescuing one who is in danger of destruction, or of saving physically. This is almost analagous to the preceding usage, but it becomes more vivid because of the dramatic need of such deliverance. (1)

The chief sense, however, in which this word is used and must be taken in the New Testament usage is that of a spiritual or religious deliverance, such a specialization being appropriated to the word taken from the secular world. Thus we have a technical use made of the word which can be considered as having two aspects, a negative and a positive side. It has been noted previously that the Hebrew words, while employing the idea of deliverance almost universally, yet conveyed the negative idea chiefly, while salvation to something positive did not come until the later writers. The New Testament is concerned with both sides of the concept.

An interesting and a significant observation is that in Acts, the story of the beginnings and origin of the church, σώζειν is used only in the passive sense.

The use of the word in the negative sense was to relay the idea of a deliverance from the judgment forthcoming at the hand of Messiah, and a freedom from the evils which hinder the coming of this deliverance. This negative use is common in the Epistles and is used by Matthew once (1:21) where deliverance is from sins (ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν).

However, the most important use of the word is in the positive religious sense, where the act is not only a deliverance from something distasteful, but also a saving to all the consummate blessings of a kingdom established by Christ Himself. In this sense σώζεσθαι and εἰσερχέσθαι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ are used practically synonymously. When Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter in the kingdom of heaven," the disciples inquired, "Who then can be saved?"

(1) So used by Synoptists in Matthew 8:25; 14:30; 24:22; 27:40; 42 bis, 49; Mark 13:20; 15:30; 15:31; bis, and Luke 23:75 bis, 37,39. Of physical life: Matthew 16:25; Mark 3:4; 8:35; Luke 6:9; 9:24.

(Matt. 19:24-25 and parallels in Mk. 10:25-26 and Luke 18:25-26). In Johannine terminology the similarity is shown between σώζεσθαι and ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν in that familiar passage (3:16-17) where Jesus tells Nicodemus that "whose believeth on Him....should have everlasting life," and that God's son came not to condemn the world "but that the world through him might be saved". Thus entrance to the kingdom and salvation are coincident.

Another interesting approach to the study of σώζειν is in relation to the time of this salvation process. Salvation begins in this life, for one who believes in Christ is delivered from guilt of sin, error, and turmoil of soul and receives the grace of God giving peace, patience, approvedness, hope and fellowship with God through his empowering love. In Acts three tenses of "saved" are found: "have been saved", "are being saved", and "shall be saved". This indicates that salvation is not a completed act in this life, but is rather a process, by which God works out his purpose in man. (1) It begins in this life, but its eyes are directed towards the return of Christ with its attendant blessings. It is both present and eschatological. Various modern writers emphasize one aspect almost to the exclusion of the other. But certainly both aspects are included in the salvation as the Scriptures picture it for us. (2)

διασώζειν occurs but twice in the Synoptists, in Matthew 14:36 and in Luke 7:3, meaning to "preserve through", "to bring through safe" or "to keep from perishing". In both instances it is used in relation to physical illness. The preposition δια emphasizes the completeness of the act.

(b) σωτήρ

This title is a favorite of St. John's, and also frequently occurs in the Pauline Epistles. It is applied to God as the author of salvation, and to Jesus Christ,

(1) Salvation is spoken of as a present possession in Matthew 18:11; Luke 8:12; 19:10 in the synoptics Gospels.

(2) The saving is regarded as a thing still in the future in passages as Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:43; 8:35; 16:16; Luke 9:24; 9:56; 13:23.

through whom our salvation is effected. Of the Synoptists, only Luke uses the word, once in Mary's Magnificat, "my spirit has rejoiced in God my saviour" (1:47), and one in the angels' song, "there is born to you this day a saviour which is Christ the Lord", (2:11) the former referring to God and the latter to the newly born Christ child. Westcott points out that this "title is confined (with the exception of the writings of St. Luke) to the later writings of the New Testament, and is not found in the central group of St. Paul's Epistles".(1) This absence in the early writers may indicate that Christ was not commonly known by this title until the early church had had some time to develop the oral tradition. Since in previous usage the term σωτήρ had been in connection with various human deliverers and great men, the Biblical writers possibly wanted to avoid this connotation. In the Old Testament, the word Saviour is most frequently joined with the genitive of the object. Cremer in his lexicon suggests that the rare employment of σωτήρ with reference to God is owing to its employment in profane Greek as a name for Zeus, (2) while classical Greek used the title in a definite and comprehensive meaning. Paul uses it especially in the pastoral epistles to denote the Christian idea. It required some time for it to be appropriated as a definitely Christian term. We have previously noted that it had occurred frequently in earlier times in relation to kings and rulers in the Greek and Roman world.

(c) σωτηρία -- Used only four times by the synoptists. .

This term, also, was slow in being used as a Christian term. Of the synoptists, it is once again only Luke who uses it. It has been noted that in Classical Greek the word was well-known as relating to safety, welfare, or a life secure from evil. Luke uses it in this sense (1:71) as a deliverance from the danger of enemies (ἐξ ἐχθρῶν). There is some doubt as to how much is meant by Jesus in his word to Zachaeus (Luke 19:9), "This day is salvation come to this house". While

(1) Westcott, "The Epistles of John" (London: Macmillan Co., 1905) on I John 4:14

(2) Cremer, op.cit. in loc.

many would understand this only in an ethical sense, it seems most probably, as we remember the entire pericope, that it is much more. Wilhelm Wagner in a classic discussion of these derivatives of σωβειν adduces that this substantive must speak of deliverance from spiritual or eternal death to spiritual and eternal life, with particular emphasis upon the positive side of the matter. He concludes his discussion of the passage referred to above by saying that "surely σωσας in v. 10 means a leading from spiritual death to eternal and spiritual life, necessitating the conviction that σωτηρια is also from such death to such life. The salvation with which Jesus entered the house of Zachaeus will say: 'Today is life brought into this house, religio-moral life and eternal life'. (1)

Luke definitely uses the word in the technical Biblical sense of Messianic salvation as "the horn of salvation" (κερας σωτηριας- imagery taken from Isa.49:8) (2) and "knowledge of salvation . . . by the remission of their sins". (3)

We see that this σωτηρια, although appearing very rarely in the synoptists, does bear the Christian connotations of a life of secured happiness with all the blessings and benefits which will consummate with the visible return of Christ. The rest of the New Testament conclusively bears this out and greatly expands the idea.

σωτηριον, το, the neuter form of the substantive, is used twice by Luke, given once by Simeon in a religious sense of He whom embodies this salvation (2:30), and once by John the Baptizer, where it is a quotation from Isa.40:5, and where the meaning is the Old Testament eschatological sense, as that decreed by God (3:6).

(c) Related Words

There are several words used in the New Testament in a sense very close to σωβειν and its derivatives. Most commonly they are used in a narrower sense, but do give

(1) Wilhelm Wagner, "Über σωβειν Und Seine Derivitate in Neuen Testament", Zeitschrift Fur Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. VI, 1905, P.225.

(2) Luke 1:69

(3) Luke 1:77

a deeper insight to our root idea, and may perhaps give a wider breadth to the main concept. None of these analogous words is used by the synoptists, so we shall only briefly mention them.

ἀντί-λutron is used only in II Timothy 2:6, and means that which "is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption" (Thayer).

ἀπο-λύτρωσις occurs frequently in the sense of redemption or releasing on payment of a ransom. (1) ἀγοράζω is sometimes used in a figurative sense, wherein Christ is said to have purchased his disciples, so that they become his own property. (2) The more intensive form of the verb, ἐξ-αγοράζω, is used by Paul in Galatians 3:13 and 4:5 in the sense of redeem or buy from. ἐλευθέρω also shows a deliverance in the form of a setting free, or liberating and is so used by Paul. (3) περιποιέω occurs only in Acts 20:28 and has the sense of preserving, protecting, or keeping safe. καταλλάσσω and καταλλαγῆ are used by Paul with the idea of "reconciling these estranged". Thus it comes to mean a receiving into the favor of God. St. Paul argues that God has surely done this as seen in his non-imputation of man's sins, and that he has given this doctrine of reconciliation into the souls of the preachers of the Gospel (II Cor. 5:18sq.). (4)

All of these words lend their contributions to the larger concept of salvation. Each is but a segment of the larger and more inclusive idea. But they do help to emphasize the fact that the early Christian Church sincerely believed in the seriousness of sin, as well as in the escape made possible from this slavery of sin through their σωτήρ.

(1) Cf. Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12; and I Peter 1:18.

(2) So in I Corinthians 3:20; Romans 5:9; I Cor. 7:23; II Peter 2:1 and Rev. 5:9

(3) Romans 6:18; 22; 8:2; 21. Cf. John 8:36 etc.

(4) Also used in Romans 5:10, 11; 11:15.

CHAPTER II

THE PREVAILING IDEA

From a study of the etymological background of our words, we have been shown that the prevailing idea set forth by the words and their usage, is one of deliverance, restoration, reinstatement, or prosperity. Can we, therefore, conclude that the most prominent idea with reference to salvation as set forth in the Biblical records is one of deliverance?

Many attempts have been made to show how from earliest times one of the problems of man has been, How may I escape from this present evil world? This concern of man supports the Biblical description of man's fall, and the presence of evil in the world. In some manner man must be led through this maze and find some place where the evil will not molest him.

The purpose of God in creating man was that he might be blessed forever by fellowship with God. Sin has disrupted this fellowship, and has so affected man that even his mind and will are incompetent to lead him out of the dilemma. He needs help. He needs guidance. He needs enlightenment. He needs a saviour.

It was not strange, consequently, that man early surrendered his own plans and accepted such leading from the supernatural. As God gradually revealed himself to man in the Old Testament, a saving purpose for man became apparent. There was the possibility of being restored to this intended state of fellowship between God and man.

Now all this seems very apparent, and perhaps even unnecessary to state. But since use of the term "salvation" has seemingly degenerated its meaning, it is well for us to recall this to mind. Salvation today has come in many quarters to mean a state of adoption, whereby the wings of the church are raised in benediction over one who wants "to get" something he has been told about, and gets salvation as a reward for his obedience to the church

in one manner or another. The idea of reward for ethical awareness is very strong within many church circles. To be "saved" is to be "O.K.ed" with the stamp of approval of the church. Salvation is the opposite of condemnation, or being on God's side rather than on Satan's. Salvation is sometimes thought of as the function of Christ alone, and a tri-theistic view results.

These ideas are in part true. But the main and prevailing idea of salvation as we learn of it through the scripture is "deliverance from" and a "separation to". It is neither entirely negative nor entirely positive, but must be both. It is not entirely for the present, nor entirely for the future.

There are those who understand salvation in one way or the other. Different emphases are made. Bernard Weiss, for example, maintains that salvation has everywhere a purely negative meaning. ". . . The speeches of Jesus . . . presuppose the idea of σωτηρία as one well known, so that in the deliverance expected in Messianic times, only a deliverance from destruction or from death can be thought of." (1) Salvation is thus salvation from with little regard for salvation to. That it anywhere in the New Testament expresses the positive idea of eternal happiness in Messiah's kingdom, Weiss calls an "absolute unprovable assumption".

Another more modern writer would emphasize the "societary" nature of salvation. C. Ryder Smith approaches the whole idea of salvation from the psychological point of view, and contributes much to Biblical theology by tracing through the Bible the cardinal elements and truths of salvation, one of which he explains quite thoroughly is fellowship with God. This very fellowship makes it societary, by which term he means the character of human nature as both individual and corporate. This fellowship is possible only because of the new life which Christ brought into the world, for he was "like in all things as we are, yet without sin". By a thorough study of Biblical sources a valuable contribution has been made in interpreting the Biblical idea of

(1) Bernard Weiss, "Biblical Theology of the New Testament" (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1883). Vol. II, p. 358

salvation, although intentionally quite oblivious of the historical formulation and development of dogma. (1)

Other approaches have been made to the subject of salvation, such as the naturalistic. Man is made the searcher after some escape, and from the previous heathen developments finally stumbles upon a still higher development in the Christian idea of salvation. So Minear gives the origins of the Christian views of salvation, and bases the whole scheme on a groundwork of reward.(2) Reward certainly has a place in the Christian salvation, but cannot be interpreted as being alone causal. The universal goal of all religion is deliverance from evil and attainment of permanent good. In Christianity this enduring good is fellowship with God.(3)

We believe that there must be an interplay of these two ideas in a proper understanding of the Biblical concept of salvation. There must be a deliverance from evil, a spiritual deliverance, and thus a state of fellowship with the One who is able to save and deliver sinful man. Any attempt to make man the successful originator of the plan of deliverance, or the executor of it, must be found wanting when weighed in the scales of Biblical teaching. The only salvation which deserves the name in its truest sense, the salvation which was from the first associated with the name of Jesus, is salvation from sin to righteousness. It involves all the ideas represented by the various words used and the shades of meaning intended in both the Hebrew and in the Greek. It is a delivering--from bondage in sin to communion with God. It is a giving of health --changing a cancerous, distorted, sinful heart into a healthy, God-loving heart. It is a releasing--from a helpless victim to a sharing partner. It is the

(1) C. Ryder Smith, op.cit.

(2) Paul S. Minear: "And Great Shall Be Your Reward"
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.) Pamphlet from Ph.D. Thesis.

(3) An interesting study is made by Charles S. Braden in "Man's Quest for Salvation," (Willetts, Clark & Co. 1941, New York) in which on the above basis the various salvation ideas are classified into types and compared as to worthiness of goal, extent of dependence upon divine power, etc. His disappointing conclusion is that Christianity has an ethical excellence among the world's religions, and rests its claim for supremacy on this fact.

bringing back of the separated soul into that union with God, in which it may recover all its lost joy and power and life. Thus we see how appropriate is the choice of words, one of which denotes restoration to bodily health. A saved soul is a healthy soul, restored to the exercise of its normal functions and rejoicing in this recovery.

We notice in incidence that there is here a great difference between Christianity and all the other world religions in respect to the origin of salvation. In all the non-Christian religions man tries by all his powers to reach God and thus find deliverance or salvation from the present world. But in Christianity, it is God who is reaching down to man and provides for his salvation. In Christianity all blessings are ascribed to God, and they came to man because God has purposed they should come. Thus God's purpose with man throughout the Biblical record is a saving purpose--a purpose of grace.

This then is the salvation motif that is the framework of the Bible. God loves man in spite of man's desertion of him and provides the means and the method whereby man may be delivered and brought into fellowship with God.

In the subsequent chapters we shall attempt to trace the development of this idea through the sacred scriptures and see how this fundamental idea was expanded, and particularized as God worked out his saving purpose with man.

-PART TWO-

HISTORY OF THE IDEA

CHAPTER III - THE OLD TESTAMENT

CHAPTER IV -- BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

CHAPTER V - IN PAGAN RELIGIONS

CHAPTER VI - THE NEW TESTAMENT

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT

"My soul waiteth, not for the salvation of Gideon the son of Joash, for that is but temporal; not for the salvation of Samson, for that is transitory: but for the salvation of the Messiah the son of David, the salvation which thou hast promised in thy Word to accomplish for Thy people the children of Israel: for this Thy salvation my soul waiteth; for Thy salvation O Lord, is an everlasting salvation."

(Targums' paraphrase on Gen. 49:8,
"Lord, I wait for thy salvation").
From Keil Commentary in loc.)

The record of God's relation with man begins with the Old Testament. In order to understand what the writers of the Synoptic Gospels meant as they wrote of salvation through Christ and deliverance from the evil, it is necessary for us to find the antecedent ideas in the Old Testament.

A. General Characteristics

It can be rightly said that the Old Testament is a composite history of the salvation of God's people. This deliverance had very crude beginnings, but the idea grew by leaps and bounds as God revealed to his people more of his saving purpose with man. With this unfolding of God's very nature there was a concomitant growth in the ethical and religious nature of the idea of deliverance, which reached the crux with the New Testament record of the birth, life, and death of the Deliverer.

God, however, worked through men, as well as through his saving miracles. So Israel's history is also a history of saviours, or instruments of the divine salvation, even though they were human. But behind these men

it is still God, who is the origin of salvation. For in every age, in every need, God provided saviours, or leaders. From the beginning of history as recorded in the Old Testament this deliverance came to be recognized as an act of God. It was God who acted and made the escape or deliverance possible. To choose a human to a divine Saviour was apostacy, for it was Jehovah "who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses." (Isaiah 10:19).

(1) It was material.

In the early history of Israel the idea of deliverance is traced back to the Exodus from Egypt. This great event for God's people did play a very important role, for the first time God openly manifested his saving purpose, and the place of the Chosen people in the history of the world. The event became symbolic of something greater to come. There might be afflictions, sufferings, temptations, and oppression but God had showed his saving purpose and would show it again. The Exodus was a physical and historical event, but it pointed to something greater. The deliverance was material, from oppressing physical conditions. Immediately following the Exodus salvation and deliverance became practically synonymous.

The hope for which Israel now hoped was for a good and a long life in a prosperous Palestine. The Promised Land held the eyes of Israel on the future. (Deuteronomy 28:11-14)

(2) It was temporal.

Another early idea of salvation in the Old Testament closely related was that the deliverance was temporal. This goes hand in hand with the preceding characteristic, for if the deliverance was from material dangers and evils, it would be also temporal. The "soul" when mentioned as the object of protection in the Old Testament generally means little more than physical "life". It was for this life, and had very little to say for the life to come. The later prophets and apocryphal writers developed this idea in due time.

Since the evils were considered to be temporal and physical evils, it was only logical that salvation should be concerned with this life. Usually salvation is the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of its enemies, from national plagues, from internal dissensions, or from subjugation of conquerors. Somewhat infrequently the deliverance is thought of as deliverance from individual or national death, as Psalm 68:19-20, "God is unto us a God of deliverance; and unto Jehovah the Lord belongeth escape from death." Death was thought of as terminating the relation with God and the blessings derived therefrom and thus was the chief evil of man. But death and its included evils was conceived of as being worked by God's wrath, and so salvation was also sought from this wrath (Joshua 7:26, etc.)

Knowledge of God also was a condition giving happiness. So in Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14; and Jer. 31:34 knowing God is emphasized. "Knowledge of God, in fact, is one of the biblical synonyms for salvation; and in this lies the uniqueness of the Bible among all the 'Sacred Books of the East.' It is not a disquisition; it is the record of an experience, gained in actual fellowship with God."⁽¹⁾

The "this-worldly" idea of the Hebrews may be seen from their idea of Sheol. No salvation could be expected in that vague and shadowy afterworld, the abode of the dead. It is conceived that the later writers, as in Job, give a hope that God will deliver after the present body is gone to dust, and that there is a greater One who is alive to vindicate the just. It will be subsequently noted that later in the Old Testament spiritual conditions became necessary for the fulfillment of these promises of deliverance, the most striking condition being moral obedience to the will of God.

We recognized that it is very difficult to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the temporal and the futuristic ideas of deliverance,

(1) Hastings's, "Cyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,"
Article by T.B. Kilpatrick on "Salvation", Vol. XI, p. 113.

as well as between the material and spiritual deliverance. In many passages which appear to have purely temporal intent, we must allow for an eschatological tenor as well.

It was recognized before long that Palestine could not be the only hope for Israel. It was found that Palestine was insufficient for the enjoyment of God's gifts, and for perfect fellowship with him. Outside forces gave too much molestation. But it was not until quite late that an "other-worldly" view was expressed, as in Isa. 65:17 and 66:22, where a new heaven and a new earth are promised for Israel.

(3) It was national.

"Salvation is of the Jews" as a nation because God has chosen them. This social salvation is the great contribution of the pre-exilic period. The individual belonged to a society, and it was this society that God has dealt with in his saving manner. The Jewish ideal for mankind was to be realized in a social organism. The secret of Israel's national salvation was in the fact that God had selected them in a very special way, and had given them special promises. The idea of national salvation was later shattered by the prophets and in the Psalter where individualism came to the fore. Salvation had been experienced by the nation, and the nation lived in this memory, and gained from it confidence and strength. The promises were given to the nation, the leaders were given to the nation, and all members of the nation included themselves in the promised deliverance.

Therefore it was that even though a man were righteous he could lose his salvation through the fault of others. A father could bring a curse upon his children or a king could bring trouble upon his subjects. (Cf. II Samuel 21:1-14 and II Samuel 24).

The idea of national deliverance was not able to survive the Exile. Then the nation lost its importance and this social salvation had to give way to a personalized salvation.

(4) The Exodus was a prefigurement of the greater salvation to come-- a redeemed humanity. Israel learned of God through his saving acts, and the Exodus guaranteed the Hebrew of future favor upon his nation. The nation was not particularly righteous, as far as we know, when God led them out of Egypt, and so this selection must have a great future purpose. Out of the oppression came victory. Out of the night came the light.

God's mighty miracles further showed his saving purpose, as well as his almighty power. It showed Israel's particular election. Especially is this saving purpose of God important, for it showed Israel that these acts were directed towards some specific goal, and that Israel could attain to that goal only by obeying Jehovah, who was Lord and Master of his chosen people.⁽¹⁾

(1) Cf. Class Notes on "The New Testament Interpretation of History", Lectures by Dr. Otto Piper, 1941-42, p. 9

B. Individualism -- the gift of the Exile.

It took great revelations by God, as well as many teaching miracles, to show the people of Israel that salvation was an individual matter. Reference has already been made to the social idea of salvation prevalent and general in the pre-exilic times. It is true that the Psalter reveals that there were exceptions wherein the individual's relation to God was felt, but the general pre-exilic idea was that God had chosen the nation, saved them out of Egypt, given them the moral and ceremonial law, and had chosen for them leaders and prophets. As a group they had been delivered from danger, and as an entity the nation longed for future deliverance and bliss in the Promised Land.

It took an act of God, difficult for Israel to understand, to reveal salvation as a personal and individual responsibility. In pre-exilic times, God's saving purpose had already been repeatedly seen and by some few understood. God had again and again showed deliverance, and Deutero-Isaiah and other prophets keep this in the fore. To the Israelites their history had been one of successive acts showing the saving power and purpose of God. The prophets pealed forth the message that divine help and future deliverance is conditioned by Israel's obedience to God and his will as revealed in the law.

But after the exile, when the nation had no longer any power, the futility of sacrifice and cultus were seen and even obedience to the law seemed to lose its value. This is when emphasis on personal faith became paramount. God himself must implant a heart of flesh to replace the hardened heart of stone. (Cf. Ezek. 36:25 and Zech. 5:5-7). Out of the intense anguish and suffering of the exile came the glorious truth that God was purposing something for Israel that was infinitely greater than material values--God's relation to the human soul. God was everywhere, and fellowship with him could be maintained under any conditions. The covenant had been given as a personal bond between God and his chosen nation. But now the covenant relationship

passed to the individual human soul, since the national life is broken. Where God dwells, there is salvation. And God dwells in individual hearts as well as in the nation.

Just as the contribution of pre-exilic days to the idea was the social or national salvation, so the post-exilic complement is the idea of individual and personal salvation and personal responsibility to God. Passages emphasizing personal responsibility are Deut. 24: 16; Ezek. 14:12-20; chapter 18; 33:1-20. Ezekiel said that twenty-five people could defile a whole nation (8:16).

Thus it was only to be expected that when personal salvation became proclaimed, that the deliverance referred to should be concerned not only with this life, but also to the blessings bestowed by God in the future life as well. We find in the prophets and the psalms this eschatological idea is set forth, and informs people of the great final deliverance, with consequent blessedness.⁽¹⁾ But this final deliverance was directly associated with judgment. Recompense for sin must be meted out, but the consequence of this impending judgment will be that Jehovah will show himself as a Saviour, but only then to the faithful remnant. Isaiah combines these two elements when he says (35:4), "Your God will come with vengeance . . . he will come and save you." The prophets and Psalms link this judgment and salvation directly with the promised Messiah, who shall carry out the deliverance and bestow the blessedness.⁽²⁾

It may be said that the prophets contributed mainly two things to the idea of salvation. First, they intensified the conception of a future salvation to come with its bestowal of blessings. Secondly, they increasingly stressed the necessity of the individual responsibility in relation to God. While the earlier Israelitic idea of salvation had been principally national deliverance, the prophets in post-exilic exhortations appealed to smaller units and particularly to individuals.

(1) Passages referring to this are Isa. 12:2ff; 45:17, 22; 49:8; 51:6; 52:7; 56:1; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Micah 7:7; Hab. 3:8; Ps. 14:7; 35:4; 74:12; 85:8; 98:2,3; 109:27; 32; 118:15,21.

(2) E.G. Psalms 53:6; 14:7; 69:29,35; 106:47; 132:16; Isa. 25:9; 45:8,17; 46:13; 49:6,25; 51:6; 56:1; 61:10; and 62:11.

C. Faith.

The outstanding contribution given by the Old Testament is that salvation in all its aspects is the work of Jehovah for his people. Man needs to be saved. Only Jehovah can effect this salvation, and his salvation is the only one the Old Testament has any interest in.

Consequently, God had to show by various means the uniqueness of His position with his people. More and more Israel learned and understood this saving purpose of God. Man's attitude to this work of God was one of faith and obedience. Individual faith became the essential attitude of man towards God in respect to salvation. In order to believe in God and the salvation he promised for the future, man had to know God through his previous revelations. So the duty of man then, as in our aeon, was to know God that he might the better trust in him.

Faith in anything but God thus became idolatry. Isaiah denounced seeking aid from other nations (30:1-5), while putting reliance in any human skill is also denounced (II Chron. 16:12). Jeremiah wrote against Israel's forsaking Palestine through fear (ch. 42), while Isaiah again demands obedience and confidence in God in complete passivity (26:20). Any doubt of God's saving power is sinful.

Other positive fruits of salvation are used as its synonyms elsewhere. For example, righteousness, "let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together," (Isa. 45:8; cf. 46:13, Deutero-Isaiah uses ΠΤΥ or ΠΡ ΤΥ as practically equivalent to σωτηρια, deliverance, salvation, as in 46:13, "I will bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off; and my deliverance (salvation) shall not tarry." Dodd says of this use: "Here ΠΡ ΤΥ is no longer the quality of a person, whether the subject or the object of the action, but it is the action itself." (1); 61:10 and 62:1) light, "I will also give thee for

(1) C. H. Dodd, "The Bible and the Greeks," (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 48.

a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation;" (Isa. 49:6) blessing in Psalm 24:5, "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Favor is so used in Ps. 106:4, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation."

All of these examples show how it was a personal relation and a personal faith that was required of man. He must know God to partake of these blessings. And he must know him as a saviour to be saved.

It is true that many even in the later history of Israel never discovered what this salvation of Jehovah really meant. Some saw in Jehovah only the Deliverer from physical and temporal dangers and evils. Others saw God only as the saviour of Israel and not of the individuals composing Israel. "Some scholars maintain that the greater part of Israel never discovered a nobler salvation in Jehovah than Moab found in its god Chemosh. This applies, however, to the 'political' rather than the 'spiritual' Israel, for there was always a 'remnant' in which lay the true heart of religion. (1)

(1) E. S. Waterhouse, "What is Salvation?" (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932) p. 181

D. Moral Law

Jehovah gave his law for a purpose--to help his people know his will and to set a moral standard for them. However, even though God demanded strict observance of this law, the mere keeping of it was not all that was required. External legalism was a common error of Israel but the prophets denounced it as being no guarantee of salvation before Jehovah. Amos said, "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate." (5:15), while Micah said (6:8), "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Thus it is seen that it was not mere external legal observation of the law that was important but that the motive of conduct was determinative in the sight of God.

On the whole it can be said that repentance for sin committed would remove the guilt of that sin, if that sin was not repeated by a contrite heart (II Samuel 12) or if the sin be wholly abandoned (Ezekiel 18).⁽¹⁾

First after the law was given to Israel, it was thought that man could and should keep it in all respects (so in Deut. 30:11-14). But a great development had occurred by the time of the prophets. Jeremiah records the new covenant God made with Israel in respect to the law (31:31-34), "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This was a great advance and prepared the mind of Israel greatly for Jesus' interpretation of the law, although it must be remembered that certain groups of the Jewish rabbis insisted on maintaining the most rigid literal interpretation of the law.

(1) An interesting exception is found in Joshua 7, where violation of the law was immediately punished by death, despite repentance of the committer. But this is unique in the Old Testament.

E. Sacrifices.

The cultus of the Jews is given a great amount of space in the Old Testament. Did it play any definite part in the salvation of Israel or did God set forth the requirements of sacrifice so man could assist in his salvation? One finds great difficulty in analyzing theologically the place of sacrifice in the Old Testament. Suffice to say here that God only through mercy allowed a repentant sinner to be forgiven of his past sins. This mercy also allowed other means of expiation, chiefly of interest here, the sacrificial system. The sacrifices must be understood as being important in the Old Testament because God had commanded them, and they thus helped the Israelites in their relationship to God, even though to our twentieth-century eyes they seem inadequate and useless. The performance of the Old Testament rites is illustrative of a greater sacrifice to come, and prepared the Jewish mind for such an event. Here it is that the idea of the suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah becomes so important, for the mind was prepared by this realization for the supreme sacrifice of the Messiah himself.

The law required that for the majority of sins a sacrifice be made as part of the act of repentance. An antecedent necessity, however, was the reparation be first made to the injured neighbor.

The place of sacrifice in the plan of salvation was variously understood by the prophets. Ezekiel teaches that they are one of the essential means of salvation, and at the rebuilding of the temple the prophets Haggai and Zechariah also make the sacrificial system a "must" for the people. Malachi also keeps the sacrificial system in the foreground. Jeremiah, however, has little use for the sacrificial system, but rather emphasizes the obedience to the voice of God (7:22). The greatest danger of pre-exilic Israel was to regard the sacrificial system so highly that personal morals suffered as a result.⁽¹⁾

(1) E.g. the peace offering became a drunken revel, as similarly in the N.T. the Lord's Supper had become as Paul writes against in I Cor. 10. Cf. Amos 5:21-24; Isa. 22:13 and Proverbs 7:141.

There is no doubt that sacrifices helped many Jews to nourish their communion with God. In post-exilic times the Jews most probably did not think of sacrifice as availing "ex opere operato."⁽¹⁾ The prophets would not allow them to have such an external idea of religion. But the system did aid in spiritual development at the time, nevertheless, but only as an aid. Many psalms mention how sacrifice has aided the people during trying times, (Cf. esp. 66 and 118) in maintaining their faith and trust in Jehovah.

The danger involved which probably became a real hindrance was that by mere external observance some laid a claim to salvation, and went no farther.

F. Ritual Law

We need say but little concerning ritual law, for its influence upon the idea of salvation in the Old Testament is not so prominent, and has already been alluded to. The ritual law required that the Jews abstain from certain acts, and from eating certain foods in order to remain in a saving relationship with their God. Exceptions to this law became moral duties in specific cases, as for example, the burying of the dead, but then again certain definite ritual means were provided, purification granted, and the exception permitted.

However, the whole matter of defilement, while certainly greatly respected by Judaism, was not an integral part of their religion, but rather auxiliary to it. 7

How, then was it that God provided for the salvation of his people? Why did he covenant with them? Here we also see an interesting development in the Old Testament. In the early times God's saving power was revealed to Israel, because they were his particular, chosen people. They are covenanted one to another. It was not a matter of how righteous the people were, but of their peculiar relation to God, as his elect. This was the basis of Israel's

(1) Cf. discussion of this subject in Smith, op. cit., p. 85

deliverance from Egypt with Moses' leadership, and no merit on their part had any effect upon the deliverance.

However, in Judges the declaration is made that Israel fell into disaster because it sinned and when it repented, it was delivered. This moral basis of deliverance was not seen in the Exodus and earlier episodes.

Another moral basis of God's salvation of man is found in the story of Lot (Gen. 18:23-33), where sinfulness is the basis of the destruction of Sodom, and righteousness the basis of escape. The story of the flood and Noah is analagous (Genesis 7:1).

In the body of the Old Testament, however, and especially in the prophets and Deuteronomy, two ideas are interrelated. First, if Israel is suffering, it is because Jehovah is punishing her for her sins. Secondly, if she repents and turns from her sins, then Jehovah will save her. The relation of these two ideas is not clear, but the predominant melody that is lofted through the Old Testament pages is that Jehovah will eventually save his people. So it was with Daniel and his rescue from the lions.

Further, God will save righteous men from suffering for the very reason that they are righteous. This idea occurs only infrequently, but in many different periods of Israel's history.

Finally, and this is the highest development in the Old Testament, he will save a repentent sinner from his sinfulness. We find this in the deepest of the Old Testament thinkers. As long as sin was thought of only as an outward act, this idea was impossible. But when sin came in the later writers to be understood as the inward motive as well as the outward act, then God could save man from his sinful attitude, and this is the highest Old Testament development, a direct preparation for Jesus' teaching of sin and forgiveness.⁽¹⁾

(1) Cf. Smith, op. cit., p. 35-36.

In summary, let us compare the Old Testament experience of salvation with the relative New Testament conception of salvation. Oehler has epitomized the comparison as follows:

"The Old Testament experience of salvation differs from the New Testament concept because there is

- (a) no permanent state of reconciliation,
- (b) no indwelling of the Spirit,
- (c) Conquest of death and everlasting life were not affected."⁽¹⁾

A fuller discussion of these points will be found in the subsequent chapters.

(1) Oehler, "Old Testament Theology", page 461.
(New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883)

CHAPTER IV
BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

The usage of σωτηρία and σωβειν in the literature between the Testaments does not vary greatly from the latest Old Testament usage. However, the apocryphal and pseud/pigraphical writings contributed more definiteness to the ideas already prevalent. The idea of God had become more transcendent, but in this very fact lay a danger, for it became very tempting to intellectualize God. In a number of the apocryphal writings "salvation" is still used in the sense of present material deliverance. (1)

The general tendency is to regard the idea as eschatological and positive. This future deliverance is most frequently connected with the Messianic age, and in several instances the act of salvation is connected with the Messiah. It is true that the earlier conception of an earthly kingdom still survives in some writers, but it is most often in the form of a preliminary period of blessedness, which should precede the final triumph which shall take place in the other world. The final salvation, as understood in the apocalyptic literature, would follow the destruction of the present evil world.

As an expanded idea of God was held in the inter-testament period, so also the idea of salvation was deepened. Most writers were faithful to the Old Testament ideas, but every shade of view is represented.

The transition between the Old Testament and the New Testament usage of "salvation" is seen particularly in reference to the coming last Judgment. Along with this idea is the important corollary to it, that of

(1) E.g. Judith 8:17 and Ep. of Jer. 36

a growing individualism. By now the resurrection had become a common tenet of faith, and the idea of rewards and punishments is associated with the period subsequent to death. Sheol loses its previous dread monotony and is the scene of preliminary rewards and punishments. The wicked are thought of as separated from the righteous, and await the final judgment in great anguish (Enoch 22:9,11).

Since a national restoration has by now been pretty well abandoned, being replaced by individual salvation, the emphasis is on individual righteousness, and less on national obedience. The danger, as has been previously mentioned, was that an external legalism became the basis of salvation - - a reward offered by God for those who faithfully kept his law. In some respects it can be said that this inter-testament period was one of great advance in spiritual understanding, but in another sense it was one of retrogression, for the legalistic claim on salvation was dangerously threatening the essential element of a personal faith in Jehovah, and in his grace. Mountaintops of spiritual understanding were reached by individual writers in the period, but the ultimate salvation by God was yet far off, and legalism and materialism predominated over faith and grace, and Israel did not yet understand freedom. The way was greatly prepared, but it was not yet ready for the advent of the Messiah.

In summary, the development of the idea of salvation until the pre-New Testament period may be classified under four headings:

- (a) Salvation in this life, in the sense of deliverance from present danger or trouble, especially from defeat in battle. (Material)
- (b) The salvation of the Messianic Kingdom, which should be enjoyed by all the righteous who would be alive at that time, as well as by the risen saints.

(c) Salvation after death, in the sense of a preliminary foretaste by the righteous of the enjoyment of the age to come.

(d) The final salvation of the heavenly world, when the present earth has been destroyed, and the period of corruption has
(1)
come to an end.

It is striking that materialism is noticeably absent, while individualism is taken for granted, but a special privilege to Israel is also a very common idea. (2)

(1) Summary based on "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. IV, p. 360. Article in loco.

(2) References to "salvation" are by no means rare in the apocryphal and the pseudopigraphical writings. Sirach 51:12 speaks of salvation "from destruction" (ἐξ ἀπωλείας). Wisdom 16:7 mentions salvation of "the son of man;" Judith 9:11 and Enoch 48:7 say that "in his name are they being saved;" IV Esdras 45:6 links salvation with the Messiah. Other interesting references are Enoch 50:3; 63:8; IV Esdras 6:25; 7:131; 9:8; 12:39; 13:26; Ps. of Sol. 6:2; 10:8; 12:6; 18:6; Baruch 4:22, 24, 29; Test. Jud. 22; Test. Dan. 5; Test. Napht. 8; Jub. 23:29; I Mac. 4:30; 9:9; IV Mac. 11:7; 15:3 and 15:27.

Life's "summum bonum" is lowest in the Epicureanism of Sirach, and highest in II Esdras 7:91,98, "To behold the face of him who in their lifetime they served."

CHAPTER V
IN PAGAN RELIGIONS

In non-Christian religions the idea of salvation was also central, and "saviours" have played their part. Non-Christian expectations thus deserve a part of our attention. However, none of the other religions have understood salvation as being entirely God's work. In none of them has God chosen a way, a people, and men who act for him as "saviours." When "saviours" are known in pagan religions they are unusual men who have rendered humanity a great service in some manner.

In Zoroastrianism the world was conceived as the battleground of good and evil forces. Ahura Mazda, the creator of all things, is opposed by Angira Mainzu, the evil deity. In this dualism, man must fight against the evil, and by this means the Kingdom is brought about. The holy men of Zoroastrianism were called "saoshyant", who were the influential powers in aiding the triumph of good over evil. "Saoshyant" is the term used for the Saviour. But these saoshyant were not deities, but men who through their holiness affected this battle.

Rome had a sort of religion which acknowledged deities, too. Virgil tries to show in his writings that God was active in Rome's history. In his Fourth Ekloge he manifests a transcendental view of history, and proclaims the coming of a divine "saviour". No doubt this influence had come upon him from the East, perhaps from Persia or from the Hebrews. But it is interesting to know that Virgil did see in a coming one a deliverance from present evils. (1)

(1) Cf. Otto Piper, "New Testament Interpretation of History", lecture notes pp. 3 sq.

In Hinduism, Indian thought has its "marga", or way of salvation, in the way of "karma", or works, "jnana", or knowledge, and "bhakti" or devotion. With the endless round of rebirth in the background, salvation may be interpreted as involving the removal from time and circumstance, rather than as something done with or for the world. "When the religions of grace appear in India, in which the gods appear to save men, these avatars are not concrete incarnations but are theophanies of a type which the Christian would call decidedly docetic."⁽¹⁾ Despite Hinduism's penetration into the sinister depths of pain and suffering, in which lies the power of a religion, Söderblom rightly calls the message of salvation of the Indian religion pessimistic, for the true life is the stillness of death.⁽²⁾

While it is true that Hellenism could speak of a ἄνωγος and ἄνωγοςία it could not conceive of him as a God-man saviour. Hellenism could attempt to rise up to God and meet him on a spiritual level, but Christianity was unique in that God came down and met man on his own human level - the Way of Agape. Likewise, Plato conceived of salvation as the soul's Ascent - the Eros way. Plotinus speaks of a "way-down" as well as of a "way-up", a descent of the divine as well as the ascent of the human soul, but the descent of the Divine has nothing to do with salvation in Neoplatonism. Salvation is still the Ascent of the human soul, is still man's effort to reach God. Gnosticism, however, shows a higher development, for it has a Divine descent with its aim the salvation of man. Hence a divine action, a divine intrusion into human life, works with the soul's ascent for salvation. But even here salvation is not God's work, but rests primarily upon man. "Gnosticism is an egocentric religion of salvation. And it is

(1) Theophil Menzil, "The Religious Evaluation of History,"
Religion in Life, Winter, 1941, p. 97

(2) Nathan Söderblom, "The Nature of Revelation," p. 64 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933) Trans. by Pamp

absolutely different in kind from the Christian faith. Christianity is a theocentric religion of salvation." (1)

We reiterate that Christianity is unique from all the other world religions in that in it God reaches down to find and to save man, while in the others man reaches up to god to aid in salvation. Christianity is God's answer to the universal question, "What must I do to be saved?" Christianity tells what God has done, and places only responsibility upon man. The Old Testament sets forth this idea long before Christ actually came upon this earth. The prophets had sent their clarion cry that the ground of salvation was Jehovah's grace, that repentance, faith, and obedience were required on the part of man, that God gave such an one inward renewal, and centered the hope of such believers in the coming One who should suffer and effect reconciliation for man, and bring the final salvation.

(1)

This analysis of Hellenism and the quotation given will be immediately recognized as being from Nygren, "Agape and Eros," Part II, pp. 62, 81, 99. (London, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1932-39)

CHAPTER VI

THE SYNOPTIC TEACHING OF SALVATION

The Synoptic Gospels give us Christ's own words concerning salvation and eternal life. The aspects of salvation concerned with Christ's life, death, and resurrection are well-known to all Christians. There is a tendency in Christian thinking, however, to emphasize the redemptive work of Christ almost to the neglect of the necessary connection between God's creative and his saving work. In other words, very frequently Christians think of salvation only in terms of Christ, the Redeemer, and forget that Christ is one with the Father, and that behind the saving acts of Christ is the eternal purpose and plan of the everlasting God. It is this that gives the answer to Anselm's great question, "Cur Deus Homo?" Furthermore, even in thinking of Christ as the Redeemer, we can easily become so sentimental in thinking of that great sacrifice that we forget that the Risen Christ is now the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and that he is reigning in His Kingdom at this very moment.

It is necessary for us to understand that while in this discussion we are primarily concerned with the idea of salvation as revealed by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, it cannot be concluded that we believe that various types of salvation can be found in the New Testament. This we most emphatically deny, for the New Testament is a unit of revealed truth. The red thread which runs through the entire scriptures is God's saving purpose with fallen man, made possible through His Son, Jesus Christ. The various New Testament writers may emphasize or interpret various aspects of this salvation, but there is but one doctrine of salvation.

There is room for development of the doctrine as found in the New Testament, and this is the work of the systematic theologian or dogmatician. But the truth of salvation as revealed in the New Testament is enough for the salvation of any man. The essential framework is the same for the Synoptists as for John and St. Paul. The nature of salvation is fundamentally and basically the same for all. Various interpretations of this nature may be presented by the authors, and different emphases may be made as to the meaning of the atonement, whether of reconciliation, satisfaction, moral-influence, or the like, but underneath the conception of God and the very salvation itself is very much in agreement by the New Testament writers.

We have seen how for Israel the thought of salvation was early conceived of in national and materialistic terms, now after the exile the national emphasis was pretty much lost, and now individualism and eschatological deliverance came into the foreground, despite the legal system with its emphasis on ceremonial purification. In the later Old Testament days the idea of salvation as a right personal relation to God asserted and maintained itself, and this became basic in the New Testament teaching.

The key passage of the New Testament in regard to salvation is Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός. Here we see the purpose of the incarnation and the true destiny of man. We see also that Christ is the mediator or bringer of this salvation. We might add Matthew 1:21, which also reveals that Christ was the saviour, and his name should be called, "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." The famous "Little Bible" in John's Gospel (3:16-17) contains the essence of all theology, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

The source of salvation is God, and the Son brought this salvation into a world of sin. As Jesus went about in the activities of his ministry, men began to learn that he not only brought salvation, but that he was salvation in his very person, for he was God and man, the perfect union. Israel had longed for communion with God, for to them that was the very essence of salvation. Now in Jesus Christ this became possible.

Our problem now is to discover how Jesus Christ did save man, in what this salvation consisted, and what change this salvation wrought in man.

A. Salvation is of God

It was noted previously that one of the lessons learned by Israel through the various saving acts of Jehovah was that God was the source of salvation. To look to any other than the divine saviour was apostacy. Salvation was from God.

(1) John the Baptist

When John came baptizing and preaching "The Kingdom of God is at hand" he continued this basic idea. He had no power of salvation within himself and did not claim to have. He had no message of his own, but it was the announcement of God which he proclaimed, as had the prophets of old. This is seen in the very word used in describing his ministry. He came κηρύσσειν. He bore the message of someone greater than himself. He was merely the appointee.

However, this message would have been meaningless to his hearers had they not retained certain elements of the Old Testament expectation of the coming Kingdom, the Messiah, and the Last Day. John presupposes certain beliefs in his hearers, and Jesus also in later days did likewise. Certain

foundation truths from the Old Testament expectation of salvation or deliverance were essential to John's message.

(a) There was an understanding of the universality of sin. This had come more and more to the fore in the time of the prophets. Every man was sinful before God, and would be punished for his sin. This sin was not only thought of as the actual sins of commission, but involved the very heart of man. Hence there was an expectation of some future purification, cleansing the very heart of man. This was basic to the Jewish idea of deliverance, for to the Jew in John's time, sin was man's greatest evil. Thus when John came and said, "Repent!" the Jews knew what he was talking about. There are students who maintain that Jesus didn't have this deep ethical idea in his ministry and teaching, for in many cases he "saved" only from physical disease and affliction. But never could He be accused of performing miracles and mighty works merely to cause excitement for such a superficial idea avoids the underlying teachings of the New Testament. This was but a part of His ministry, and as we shall subsequently see, the main message he gave concerning salvation was deliverance from sin, and entrance into the Kingdom.

John said he was but preparing the way for one who should come after him. He didn't explain that he could offer the eschatological purification, which was so needed by the Jews. But he called attention to the sinful condition inherent in the very nature of man. He did not claim authority for himself by arguing from philosophy or psychology, but quoted from the Old Testament prophets, and this was final for his hearers, as, we might also add, it was also for the New Testament writers. John thus proclaimed that sin was serious for man, and man needed some help from God almighty himself.

However, not all his hearers understood sin in the deeper inherent sense of corruption, but admitted only that man sins by his actions. It was this group of self-justifying, legalizing Pharisees that John called a "generation of vipers." If they did not admit the need of the inner purification the message of repentance would be meaningless. We are reminded in this connection of Jesus' own words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

This message of repentance was very important in the preparation by John for Jesus' ministry. Repentance was the essential requirement for the reception of Baptism, and this repentance was not only for sinful acts, but of the very evil impulse of man. Hence when John said, "I baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit," the Jew thought of the eschatological cleansing which had been foretold by the prophets.

(b) Another important foundation fact, commonly held by John's hearers, was that of the wrath of God. The Old Testament had emphasized the coming "day of the Lord" and the "day of wrath" and a part of the Jewish idea of deliverance was concerned with this imminent judgment. God was just and righteous, and since man was by his very nature sinful, the wrath of God was the sequel to his justice. Thus John asked the hard-hearted Pharisees, "Who hath warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" (ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς). The wrath of God was expected and yet dreaded by the Jews. For those who repented there would be escape from the wrath, but John emphasized that a mere formal confession of sin was not what was required. He must repent in his heart and follow the repentance with amendment of life.

(c) The Jews also understood death as the state which followed this

life, not a mere momentary temporal event, but as the state of existence in Sheol or Hades. Reference has been made supra as to the changing Jewish idea of Sheol. The Jews understood that Sheol was not the permanent abode of the righteous souls. Heaven was the final destiny of the soul which was saved by God, and heaven meant complete fellowship with God. Thus one essential part of salvation was from death, as well as from sin and its terrors.

(d) There was also a notable apocalyptic element in John's preaching and also in the Jewish idea of salvation. It has already been mentioned that the Jewish expectation of salvation was concerned in part with deliverance from the wrath of God and the judgment. Both the prophets and Deuteronomy taught that God punished Israel, as well as the whole world at times, for its sin and unrighteousness, but that one day he would set up a kingdom of prosperity, peace and true righteousness. This period was commonly called the "Day of Jehovah," the day when he would vindicate his righteousness. Thus the Jews also spoke of the period as "the coming age" or the "Day of the Lord." Oppression taught Israel that this present world is evil, but a Golden Age was expected. In the New Testament the phrase translated "forever" means in the Greek "into the age." Eternity was connected with the age to come or "unto the age of the ages." John and Jesus expected the end of the present age and the coming of a new period, but Jesus would not set "the day nor the hour," but indicated that it would come in the near future, and gave certain signs of its coming. Consequently, the early church expected this age in their day. This age would be an age of perfect harmony, one different in quality from the present evil world. Hence they spoke of ζωήν αἰώνιον, "the life of the age," or as it is commonly translated, "eternal life." The phrase is not so much concerned with the time of this

life, but rather to the kind of life in store for believers. It is the life of that coming age, with its commensurate blessings.

(e) Another basic part of John's teaching was that another would come. John "confessed and denied not and confessed that I am not the Christ." His own work was but preparatory, and was incomplete in itself. The mere fact of repentance was not enough for the Jews, unless by some means the new life could be sustained. This was not possible until Jesus had sent the Spirit into the hearts of men. An inner cleansing was the prelude to the new life. The Jews awaited the coming of Messiah and John, too, knew that he was but the Forerunner, who should decrease, while the Messiah would increase.

(f) John realized with many Old Testament writers that man could not save himself, but that he needed something which God alone could give to him. John uses the striking phrase, "be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The Spirit in Biblical literature is always thought of as proceeding from God, and as working out his purpose with man. This Spirit was holy, as God is Holy, and also made men pure and holy. This is the great work of the Spirit in the Church, to sanctify, to "make holy" those who are God's own. Yet John associates this Baptism not with the Spirit, but rather with the "mighty One" who should come after him. John couldn't purify men, for he baptized only with water, but his successor will make men holy for he "baptizes with the Holy Spirit."

The message of John was, therefore, more than one of repentance. It also proclaimed that "the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Jews were eagerly awaiting the Kingdom of God. Now John announces that it is near. This was very important for them, for it meant that the awaited salvation was

opened to them. John was great because he was the instrument of God in preparing the way for Jesus. No wonder that he was called "great among them born of woman". While John announced the coming salvation, Jesus set forth the very doctrine of salvation, and Himself showed the way to its realization.

But one important fact to be remembered is that John's proclamation was that the salvation was from God because of grace. The Old Testament expectation was fulfilled. It was not a sudden change in plan on the part of God, but the only plan of salvation was being carried out. "Salvation is not a spasmodic exercise of divine grace. The picture of God in the Bible, though blurred of course by the imperfection of the human writers, is not that of a capricious despot but of a wise and beneficent ruler, omniscient and omnipotent indeed, but one who by his own power and wisdom has permitted to his subjects freedom to follow or deviate from the lines he has designed for them, with the result that, though some may reject or hamper, they cannot finally thwart the settled and benevolent purpose with which he acts." (1)

In the various parables of the "lost" (Cf. Luke 15 and others) one important phase to remember is that it was the loving father who suffered and rejoiced in the return of the son, it was the shepherd who searched for the lost sheep until he found it, and the woman who swept the house until she found the lost coin. The father's love is behind all the plan of salvation. SALVATION IS OF GOD. If it were not so, repentance and confession would be futile on the part of man. Unless God's hand is reaching down in love to the sinner, it is of no avail for the sinner to abandon himself in God. Luther emphasized these two aspects of the ordo salutis thus: "The true way of salvation is this. First, a person must realize that he is a

(1) A. C. Prince, "Biblical Studies,"
(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1939), p. 292

sinner, the kind of a sinner who is congenitally unable to do any good thing. 'Whatever is not of faith, is sin.' Those who seek to earn the grace of God by their own efforts are trying to please God with sins. They mock God, and provoke His anger. The first step on the way to salvation is to repent. The second part is this. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through His merit. He was crucified and killed for us. By sacrificing His Son for us God revealed Himself to us as a merciful Father who donates remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ's sake. God hands out His gifts freely unto all men". (1) God is reaching for man, and man must give up to God. But only what comes from God matters to man in regard to the fact of salvation.

(2.) The Atonement

This is further seen in the atonement. We think of the atonement usually as being the work or function of Christ alone. But unless there were some purpose behind the sending of Christ, the atonement itself would be meaningless. It was God, who saw man's need, and it was God who had mercy, and it was God who sent His son. We do not believe it is necessary here to enter into the various doctrines of the atonement. It is our contention that no human doctrine has yet been able to fully express or describe what the atonement is for man, and for God. There is a great mystery here which cannot be expressed by human thought systems, and all explanations will fall short. We would say with Archbishop Söderblom, "There is a Mystery of Salvation, pressing in upon our life, and breaking its way through. To weaken down and rationally to explain away the central mystery of Christianity and of Salvation simply will not do. The experience of the power of the Cross to reconcile and restore, which till lately seemed so old-fashioned and difficult, has now become the most palpable and necessary of the truths of religion--nay, the truth itself--however hard it be to find an expression for it." (2)

(1) Martin Luther, "Commentary on Galatians"

(Grand Rapids, Zondervan) Abr. Trans. by Græbner, p.72.

(2) Nathan Söderblom, "The Mystery of the Cross" (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1933) p.53-54 Trans. by Herbert

Yes, there must be a mystery about the atonement. As to the various theories of the atonement we believe that each makes emphasis of something which is essentially true, but which does not of itself fully give the explanation for which it is offered. Even within the New Testament itself the various writers give different and variant emphases. John certainly makes emphasis on propitiation on a basis of the divine love, which he sets forth so beautifully. The writer of the Hebrews, as would be expected, presents the sacrifice of Christ as a part of the eternal purpose of God and the sacrifice doing away with the old sacrificial system. Paul writing the earliest places his emphasis upon Christ's death in our behalf, a sort of penal substitute for the sin of man, manifesting the super-abundant grace of God in operation. But that various interpretations are made by the early church writers does not necessarily mean that they were set up in opposition to one another. Rather they elucidate the whole problem, and give us a more complete understanding of the mystery of the atonement.

So likewise it is with the great theories of the atonement which have been developed by the theologians in later times. Each theory rose out of a particular historical situation and perhaps met the need of the time best. But none is final for all time. It is necessary for each age to think of the atonement in its own language and thought forms. Anselm thought of the Atonement from a background of the feudal system, Duns Scotus from the background of the absolute monarchy, and the other writers had their theories conditioned by the age in which they lived. But the atonement itself is above time. There are certain timeless truths basic to any interpretation of the atonement, and these are basic to any interpretation of it. While Dale's classic work seems in parts to be confusing, as for instance considering man as standing in relation to the divine law, rather than in a personal relation to God himself, and by considering God as an austere and hard ruler rather than a kind and merciful father, yet he has made a helpful study and has helped us understand some of the mysteries of salvation. One section is helpful for our thinking

here: "Jesus' message to man is: You must be and may be true sons of God; I who alone know the Father am come to reveal him to you; in me you behold him disclosed and interpreted; receive and follow me, and you shall have the rights and privileges of sons of God. I do not see how anyone can doubt that this message is the burden of Jesus' doctrine of salvation. And yet we are told that his chief object in coming into the world was not to proclaim the Gospel of salvation but by dying as a sacrifice for sin, to found the possibility of a gospel which others might preach."(1)

An added thought may be introduced here. The very content of salvation is considered by many to be the atonement. But the atonement is but a part of the great saving purpose of God. It was the means whereby, but not the essential content. Often the two terms are used almost synonymously, but this is to remove the atonement from the purpose of God behind it. It was because God loved the world that he gave his Son, and this underlying grace must be again and again emphasized in our day, when positivistic thinking dominates so much of theology.

In Luke 1:47, 77 and 2:30 salvation is definitely mentioned as coming from God. The epistles, as we would expect, abound in describing this truth.

B. Salvation and the Kingdom of God.

In turning to Christ's own words about the salvation which he brought and offered to mankind we find many interesting thoughts. His very incarnation was to save man by becoming like man, and yet remain without sin. When Christ spoke of salvation we can discern a negative and a positive side to the concept. Negatively, salvation was to deliver sinful man from sin, death, and the coming judgment. Positively, it was entrance into the kingdom of heaven. There cannot be one without the other. We are "saved from" but equally important is the fact that we are "saved to" something.

(1) R. W. Dale, "The Atonement",
(London) Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1905) p.46

(1) Synonyms

Entrance into the kingdom is identified with salvation in its religious sense in Matthew 19:25--Mark 10:26--Luke 18:26. Eternal life is also an integral part of this pericope. The rich young ruler was very desirous of gaining ζωὴν αἰώνιον, eternal life. Jesus made the requirements so difficult for one who was selfish that the young man "went away sorrowful"- for he was one that had great possessions". Jesus teaches his disciples by telling them "it is very difficult for a rich man to enter εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, into the kingdom of God". As a matter of fact the improbability of such a denial of possessions was said to be such that it would be "easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye". In astonishment the disciples ask, τίς δύναται σωθῆναι, "who then can be saved?" The interesting observation here is that "eternal life", "entrance into the kingdom", and "be saved" are so closely identified as to be synonymous. The problem was a perplexing one for the disciples, for all of us have some love for earthly possessions, so who then can be saved? Paul also closely identified eternal life with salvation, making it the positive good, while the negative side is that God delivers the believer from "sin and death" so in Romans 6:23.

In John's Gospel we find another synonym for save. John emphasizes along with the common idea of σωτηρία rooted in the Old Testament, that the deliverance brought by Christ is from destruction (ἀπώλεια John 17:12) and uses μὴ ἀπολέσθαι and σωθῆναι as convertible terms (John 3:16-17). To "not perish" is "to be saved", for the soul is then saved from destruction (John 12:25). Destruction will come subsequent to the Messianic judgment. So in Matthew 25:46 the selfish and uncharitable are said to go into everlasting punishment (εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον), while the righteous shall go into life eternal (εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). Thus punishment is set in antithesis to eternal life, and consists in the absence of this life, which is essentially destruction. Elsewhere the narrow way leading to life (εἰς τὴν ζωὴν) is

contrasted with the broad way which inevitably ends in destruction (ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ
ΑΠΩΛΕΙΑΝ). Destruction is not only concerned with physical life and death,
but also is in relation to the divine judgment and its consequences for the
unrepentant sinner.

Jesus' very purpose in coming to the earth is to save the ἀπολωλός.
(Luke 19:10). This lost condition which plagues man in his natural state needs
deliverance, not only from spiritual death, or the dead relation to the light
of God, but also from the final ἀπώλεια awaiting the sinner. Deliverance
thus is a translation from death to life, ἔκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν,
with escape from κρίσις and giving ζωὴν αἰώνιον (Vide John 5:23-24). This
is σωτηρία as the Gospels picture it for us, and Jesus is the bringer of this
salvation.

Salvation is associated with light and remission of sins in Luke 1:77-79,
in the Song of Zacharias. Knowledge of salvation is primarily from sin, and
gives peace (Cf. 7:48-50, "go in peace"). John, the Forerunner will go on
ahead of Jehovah with the view of giving knowledge of salvation in the fore-
giveness of sins.

In the Epistles σωτηρία and "saving" is explained by contrasting them
with certain dreaded evils. It is

contrasted with θάνατος (or penalty of death) in II Cor. 7:10;

Luke 6:9; and James 5:20 and 4:12.

with ἀπώλεια in Phil. 1:28 and 1:9.

with ὀργή in I Thess. 5:9-10 and Romans 5:9.

In antithesis with ἀπόλλυται in Matt. 16:25; Mark 8:35;

Luke 9:24, 56.

Opposed to κρίνειν , κατακρίνειν in John 3:17; 12:47;

Mark 16:16; (Cf. I Cor. 5:5; 3:15; I Peter 4:18).

(2) Christ the King

Christ began his active ministry by proclaiming, as the Forerunner had done,

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15 puts it this way, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye and believe the Gospel".) It was a proclamation for men unto salvation. It is worthy of note that Jesus says that the kingdom is at hand, and that the later teachings identify "entrance into the kingdom" with "salvation". As Jesus continued his work it gradually became apparent to his hearers that this proclaimed salvation was unique from any human form of deliverance, for he set forth the conditions and the meaning of salvation more exactly and more clearly than any predecessor, and he himself showed the way to its realization. It is true that he uses the word "save" (σωζω) in various ways, but the salvation he was concerned with was not a mere physical salvation as his teachings clearly show. In Mark 3:4--Luke 6:9; Mark 13:20--Matt. 24:22; the words of Jesus must be construed as used in regard to temporal matters. In Mark 8:35--Matt. 16:25--Luke 9:24 Jesus used the word in a double sense. But the majority of his teaching ministry is concerned with the salvation which is eternal, the entrance into the Kingdom.

The Jewish expectation of the Kingdom was in the time of Jesus divided into two current views. Either the Kingdom was conceived as the present rule of God over a rebellious and confounded world, or it was thought of as the perfect rule of God in a realm that was yet to come. A combination of the two was also prevalent in the confused generation. While the term "kingdom" (βασιλεία) is used twenty-six times outside of the Synoptic Gospels (either with "of God" added or implied) yet little is said in explanation of it. Thus it is evident that the writers presupposed that the readers had the Synoptic teaching of it in their minds and knew the Christian teaching of that phrase. The phrase was fundamental in Judaism in either the temporal or spiritual sense. The Christian use made the significant change that Christ shared in the "rule" of God, for He was both "Lord and Messiah". He helped the Father rule in this rebellious world and was to share in ruling future kingdom of God. The Epistles go on to say that the saints of God should also rule and judge the world with

Christ. On the whole, however, it can be said that the Kingdom of God is the Synoptic designation of the "believers" in Christ, while the "church" is the term preferred or at least most generally selected by the non-synoptic writers. We have noticed that the Forerunner expected the coming age soon, and he informs people how to meet the coming crisis. Israel had been prepared by God for this astounding proclamation for it was seething with discontent, it had ready ears for the prevalent apocalyptic message and literature, and the Zealots were in their influence. John informed the people how to meet the crisis, and Jesus continues the revelation of God by providing the means for entrance into the kingdom.

Gradually Jesus unfolded to the people that he himself was the king of the realm. The expectation of a physical realm could see him in no other light than as a king in the material world, and the earnest, though non-understanding followers, sought to crown him as king. We are aware of how Jesus had to time after time withdraw from their desire to crown him king, and to tell them, "My kingdom is not of this world".

The salvation, the life in this kingdom was thus connected with an intimate fellowship with Christ, the king. By converting men from sin, Jesus would save them from the future punishment imminent to sinful men, and allow them to share in the blessings within this kingdom. The Jews did not commonly include this last element but thought of the salvation only in moral sense. Jesus deepened their understanding and created wonder among the people by saying "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it" (Mark 8:35--Matt.16:25--Luke 9:24). Save is not here only the rescue of life, but has as its counterpart that of saving it for the future. Thus the positive aspect of salvation is set forth. The Jews did not understand that suffering came to men even though they were obedient to Christ. They liked to think of suffering as being the punishment for sin. In a related passage in Matt. 10:39, a similar explanation is made. To live one must die to self, and

he must bear sufferings, death, and all sorts of unpleasant things, but this means life and salvation. It is a means of transfer from a lower to a higher life. Jesus was not understood, but the salvation which he must have included was that of saving a man by bringing him to realize that to live to oneself, to live in a material way, is really not to live at all. Instead of the material sense of living there must come a spiritual living, and this is the essence of life in the kingdom, and eternal life has then already begun. So in a general sense it can be said that Jesus' message was one of orientation, giving purpose to life, transferring life from a material realm to one of the spirit, where first things are put first.

This transfer to the new kingdom involves also the resulting fellowship in this kingdom. It is Jesus who makes the salvation possible, for he communicates it by his personal touch. When he was himself present on earth in bodily form, he "saved" the blind, the lame, the deaf, and those vexed with spirits by his personal touch, and today also his personal touch of man through his Spirit, for he is no longer present under material conditions, saves men. As members of his Kingdom are united with him, this fellowship is one of the very elements of salvation. "A yet deeper truth is expressed when we say that He is Himself salvation more, intellectual, spiritual, inasmuch as He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and that this full, complete salvation consists in our union with Him, by which we become sharers in His life, 'partakers of Christ'." (1)

The power of Christ's kingship lies in who he was and what he did. In short, we can say that love is characteristic of both his life and work. His way to the cross, his triumph over suffering, and his glorification give power and authority to what he had taught. His life was given as a ransom (λύτρον) for many in order that the many might become partakers of the joys of his kingdom. Oftentimes we think of Christ chiefly as the great high priest who offered up himself for our sins and who prays for us, or as the prophet who teaches us God's

(1) J. H. Babitz, "Jesus Salvator Mundi", p.34
(London) Edward Arnold, 1912.

will to our salvation. But his third office, that of kingship, is of signal importance to his followers. The fact that he governs, preserves, and defends His followers against their enemies gives triumph and victory to his kingdom. "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end". (Luke 1:23). Because He is the Risen Christ, he has "all authority" and can despatch His Gospel messengers to all the nations. His post-resurrection appearances only to His own followers show us that the King was still one with His own group. So often thoughts of salvation are concerned with the negative aspect of deliverance from sin and death to the neglect of the salvation to fellowship in the Kingdom. Deliverance without preservation would be very disastrous and futile. The Apostle's Creed doesn't end with the ascension of Christ to Heaven, but declares that He "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father". The Risen Christ is a reigning Christ. Acts 2:36 tells us that "God hath made Jesus both Lord and Messiah", and this explains to us that from the first the Christians understood by Ascension not mere retirement to Heaven, but that rather he was now Lord of the universe, and also understood that he was to be the "Judge of the living and the dead", as the term "Messiah" implied in Jewish understanding. For believers this means victory in this life and the coming life. "All this He has done that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns in all eternity." (1) The close union between Christ and believers, called the "mystical union", is a very real and strengthening union. It is the very basis of sanctification in the Christian life.

(3) The Person of Christ

While we have made great emphasis upon the work of Christ as the bringer of salvation, it must be remembered that this is an attempt in human language to explain and describe a divine action. Consequently, we assert that all of salvation is God's work for and In men, but we know God through Jesus Christ, who is the mediator. But since the Godhead is one, we cannot departmentalize the working

(1) Luther's Small Catechism, Explanation of Second Article.

of God in man. While we say that Christ is ever-present among us on earth through the indwelling Spirit, yet it is equally true to say that God is dwelling in us, "for the Lord is not far from any one of us."

Christ's mission is one of mediation and through Him only can we know the saving love of the Father, as Jesus Himself said, "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." (Luke 10:22). The saving power of the words and the deeds of Jesus is founded in who He is. He is God's son, yet He is also the Son of Mary, human and divine. The Incarnation is a deep mystery--and yet no mystery, when we think of God's saving purpose, and His love for man. Because of who Jesus is we find the Synoptists lay strong emphasis upon the importance of right relations to Him. He is the personal mediator of salvation. Thus He said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40; Vide Luke 12:8) There is the closest union between Christ's followers and Christ, and also between Christ and the Father who sent Him.

But He is not only the mediator, or the link between God the Father and man, but he is also the Messiah, and in the historic meaning of that word, he was the judge of the world. But this judging was never understood as being solely in the present, but was pointed towards a time of final accounting. Since Christ was both man and God, sent by the Father, and yet born of sinful human flesh, the judgment seat was transferred to a higher court, the supernatural tribunal. The passion and death and victory of Christ revealed this divine element of His nature, and proved to man that He was "truly the Son of God."

So as a mediator Christ saved us from alienation from God into the most intimate fellowship with Him. We became as He is--in sonship with God. The positive blessings of life in the Kingdom of God are variously expressed, most of the emphasis to this aspect coming from the epistolary literature. The life

in the Kingdom is associated with glory (II Thess. 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21; II Tim. 2:10), with life (II Tim. 1:10), as the object of hope (Thess. 5:8), as deliverance from the wrath of God (Thess. 5:9; Rom. 5:9); redemption from all iniquity (Titus 2:14) and the conquest of all sinful lusts (Titus 2:12). In Matthew's judgment scene (25:31-46), the King says to these on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But to the others the King shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." This picture of contrasts, whether taken literally or not, certainly does indicate the extent of future blessedness in store for the saints of God.

(4) Present and Future.

Salvation is represented by the Synoptists as being both for this life and the life to come. Due emphasis upon the one with lack of regard for the other leads to spiritual stagnation and indolence. "This-worldly" or "other-worldly" views have again and again been stressed, and whole systems of theology are based upon the position taken with respect to the Kingdom of God and Salvation. We find in the first three Gospels chief emphasis upon the coming Kingdom, but we also find that the Kingdom begins for Christ's followers in this life. Jesus told the Pharisees, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." (Matt. 12:28). God was already at work in the hearts of men. When Jesus in Matthew 4:17 proclaimed that the "Kingdom of heaven is at hand," it meant not only in respect to time, but also that a divine energy was present in Jesus in the realm of power. He is able to meet the forces of evil and establish a Kingdom of Righteousness. Jesus "came to seek and to save that which was lost," and this saving is not relegated only to the future. The saving begins here when a sinner is led to repentance and accepts the grace of God, and is delivered from sin. Forgiveness of past sins and purification of the sinful nature were concomitant parts of the repentance, being the God-ward part.

It is because the Messiah forgives now, that the saved state ^gbelongs now. The Kingdom of God was at hand, and thus forgiveness was proclaimed to man. In fact, it is necessary for man to use the time before the judgment comes, for then there can be no escape (Cf. Luke 12:58,59). John the Baptist was to go forth " to give knowledge of salvation . . . by the remission of sins," as his father prophesied, being filled with Holy Ghost (Luke 1:77). Thus salvation was regarded as the present possession of all true Christians. Salvation, beginning in man with forgiveness is the ground of repentance, gives sonship with God, a return to the original but lost condition, so salvation in man is a power of God working within him, stirring him and making it increasingly more possible to live according to the standards and high requirements which Christ gave for His followers. (Luke 17:21 may be interpreted in various ways. The Pharisees no doubt understood that when Jesus said, " the Kingdom of God is within you". He meant the Kingdom consisted of His mighty works, devils cast out, blind made to see, the lame healed, and so on, But the passage must have a deeper meaning, and follow Jesus' idea of a spiritual Kingdom. That Kingdom is a present reality among men, although in a limited state. When Jesus told Zacheus, "To-day salvation is come to this house," it meant more than physical safety to Zacheus, as we have discussed previously. Life and fellowship were brought, and not physical life, but life pointing for its completion to eternity. Salvation means for this life a fellowship with God which guarantees security and peace, with its hope in the world to come. Paul specifically mentions " the earnest of our inheritance", (Eph. 1:14) and the Synoptists also presuppose the beginnings of the life eternal here on earth. Because of this fellowship with Christ, His followers are given powers to endure all sorts of tribulations, persecution and sufferings triumphantly (Luke 10:19 12-4). This God-sent power was essential for man's endurance, and faithfulness in this life in whatever man has to bear is required by Christ, and these who are unfaithful, even though claiming to be His followers in life,

shall not see the final salvation for Christ said, ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὕτως σωθήσεται. In this passage (Matt. 24:13--Mark 13:13--Luke 21:19; Cf. Matt.10:22) salvation seems to be set in the future at the end of the affliction, and yet we know that the process begins in life when the sinner repents of his sin and follows Christ, but is not complete until the end. This use of salvation is positive, and reminds us of Jesus' passage (1:2), "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him". But this power of God in man has also other functions. It helped him to witness for Christ, despite the temptation, but he has also power against sin in his own life. Part of the Gospel message was this, here is power to be rid of sin in you.

Elsewhere salvation is likened to the becoming like God in the life of love which must be a life of increasing perfection (Mark 5:48). This perfection is not reached in the present life, but by accepting the constant grace of God, the individual grows and develops in the Christian life, with the help of the Spirit.

Paul has emphasized in his Epistles that our salvation embraces not only a future hope, but is grounded in the past, and utilized in the present. He writes of salvation as complete and yet not complete, assured and yet dependent constantly upon his relation to Christ, a historical fact and yet the object of hope for the future. Much could be said on this point, but let it simply be noted here that Paul corroborates the Synoptic presentation of salvation as a process beginning when a sinner repents and accepts Christ as his only Lord. Passages of Paul referring to salvation as a present possession of Christians are II Cor. 1:7; 7:10; Phil. 1:19; and II Tim. 2:10. We do not believe that Jesus preferred the ethical to the eschatological emphasis of salvation, as some writers posit. (1) Jesus and Paul both knew that salvation is the work of God, and that it is not completed until Christ comes

(1) Cf. E. F. Waterhouse, op.cit. p.219 ff.

to claim His own.

While the blessings of salvation are attainable in this present life, yet very frequently the Synoptists describe them also as belonging to the future, and as fully unfolded and realized by the followers of Christ only at the consummation of all things, at the visible return of Christ from heaven in the eternal Kingdom of God. Reference to the coming salvation ~~seen~~ is inferred from Matthew 9-1, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power." In the scene of the Last Supper Jesus also refers to the future Kingdom, "I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. . . . I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22:16,18). Future judgment is connected with the Kingdom of Jesus in Luke 13:28, ". . . when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out."

However, God has selected some for deliverance in a time of general destruction. By shortening the tribulation, the elect are chosen out because of God's providence. "And except these days were shortened, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη ἡ πόλις" (Matt. 24:22-- Mark 13:20). Various other Synoptic references to salvation as a future hope are Matthew 10:22; 24:13-- Mark 13:13--Luke 21:19; Mark 16:16; 8:35; Luke 9:24 and 9:56.

Again in turning to the Epistles we find still greater emphasis upon the future or unseen part of salvation. (Cf. Rom. 13:11; I Thess. 5:9; Heb. 9:28; I Peter 1:5, 10; I Thess. 5:8 - "hope of salvation": I Pet. 1:19 - "receiving . . . the salvation of your soul"; Eph. 6:17; Rev. 7:10; 12:10; and 19:1).

(5) Individual Salvation

In the later Old Testament writings and in the apocalyptic writings we noted a rising importance was attached to the individual in his relation to the Lord. No longer was national salvation to be expected or hoped for. But rather in-

dividual salvation was proclaimed, for the message of repentance preached by John had to reach individual sinful hearts and prick individual guilty consciences in order to be effective. Jesus constantly attached importance to the individual's relation to the Gospel. It is true that He said He came to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel", but his ministry showed that the Gospel of salvation was for all men who would receive it. The Jewish nation stood in a peculiar and close relation to the economy of God's grace, but when that grace was rejected the Gentiles were offered the message of Life. Jesus commanded the twelve to "not go into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (Matt.10:5-6). The church was planted on Jewish soil and began to grow there, but it also took root among the Gentiles. In Christ's final commission to the Eleven he sent them "into all the world", and included "every creature" as the object of evangelization. So it cannot be said that the Jewish nation continued to have a primary claim upon the Gospel.

Jesus' requirements for discipleship were personal and direct. Groups could not claim entrance into the kingdom, but one by one would men be saved. "If any man", "except ye", "let him", "he that believeth", and "whosoever" are familiar phrases from Jesus' lips regarding salvation, and emphasize the personal response, as well as the universality of God's love.

And yet while entrance through the strait gate is by individuals, there is also a sense in which salvation is not only individual but also social. There is a horizontal as well as a vertical relation and responsibility.

Man is created as an individual with self-will and self-determination. But he was also created a "socius", and as such is an organic member of the society in which he lives. He lives alone and separate, and yet always is "one with others". This is also true in the spiritual kingdom. Men are saved individually, one by one, as they are led to repentance and accede to God's merciful pardon. And yet they can not more live alone spiritually than a

man born physically can live alone. There is in mortal man a gregarious instinct, so the sociologists tell us. But there is a gregarious necessity in spiritual man. It was for guidance and direction in this spiritual association that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. The Parable of the Vine and the Branches shows not only that man is organically connected with the vine, but that there is an interdependence among members of that organism. Paul emphasizes this relationship within the church so emphatically in I Cor. 12, Romans 12:6-8, Gal. 3:28 and Ephesians 2 and 4. There is and must be an interrelation of those who are believers in the same Lord, who have been baptized with the same baptism, and who hold the same hope. So the social element has a place also among saved persons, while salvation itself comes to individuals.

C. Salvation and Man

Heretofore we have been discussing salvation in its objective sense, or from the viewpoint as God as the sole-worker and instigator of it.

However, there is also the human relation to this offer of grace.

Since man was created as a moral being with self-will and the power of choice the responsibility for accepting or rejecting God's grace lies with him. However, we need to remember that even the power to "repent and believe" comes from God through the working of His Holy Spirit. But let us see what the Synoptists tell us about the part of man in relation to salvation. Only two conditions of salvation are given in the Scripture, repentance (ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ) and faith (ΠΙΣΤΙΣ). However, the elements of salvation, such as repentance, faith, loving service in love to God and man, cannot be regarded as separate and distinct from each other as far as chronological sequence is concerned. Salvation is a unified process so that we cannot separate its constituent elements from the whole process, any more than we can dissect a member of a living human organism and observe its normal operation under the laboratory microscope. It must be seen in operation as a part of the whole organism to be

seen in its true function. It is here that there are differences in the ordo salutis for different individuals and varying proportions of these elements may predominate in a particular individual, depending upon the characteristics and needs of that particular personality. This is not meant to indicate that we become Gestaltists in applying this psychological principle to the matters of the Christian faith. We merely say that faith is meaningless without repentance, loving service without faith, and repentance without faith in the One who can forgive and give power spiritually in human life. These factors are not entities in themselves, and cannot act in isolation from one another, but must function as a whole, as a part of the entire process. But in this study we merely make the separation arbitrarily in order to get at the component parts of salvation, as observed from the point of subjectivity.

(1) Repentance

ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ is stated by Jesus to be the primary condition of salvation. In his proclamation of the presence of the Kingdom he said, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel" (ΜΕΤΑΝΟΕΙΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΤΕ ΕΝ Τῷ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙῳ) (Mark 1:15). Also in Mark 6:12; Matthew 11:21 and Luke 24:47 repentance is made a primary condition in the salvation of man. Repentance involves a complete "change of mind", and this is related to the life of the past. It really is the "Great renunciation" in the Christian life, the renunciation of the sinful life. The Kingdom was not open to self-righteous, hard-hearted, unrelenting sinners. The message of John was basic to the Kingdom. Unless man realizes and accepts the fact that there is a king ruling over him, he cannot be a good member of that kingdom. No wonder the Old Testament emphasis and the particular New Testament emphasis on the kingdom is not placed so much upon the realm and the attendant conditions in that realm as it is upon the King himself and his regal power. Repentance means a willing submission to one greater, and loyalty to him and his way of life. So it seems that the reason why repentance is held as such a primary and essential condition of salvation is, as Dr. J. R. Illingworth points out, because it "places

our entire personality with its triple function of reason, feeling, and will in a right relation to God". (1) This right relation to God is not merely in a negative way as opposed to sin and sinful living, but it also has its positive element of turning to God, or as modern terminology puts it, conversion. So in Matthew 18:3, Jesus replies to the disciple's question of who is the greatest in the kingdom of God by saying, "EXcept ye be converted (στραφῆτε) and become as children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven". With this turning, He links humility in the subsequent verse, indicating that full surrender is a necessity for such entrance. The childish characteristics of trust and confidence are also an integral part of the change required. The divine grace of salvation may not be understood nor even appreciated fully, and yet humble and obedient submission to his will is man's part in salvation. This leads to the element of faith which shall be treated in the subsequent section.

Matthew 13:15 gives a passage from the prophet Isaiah where conversion or turning is directly linked also with spiritual healing and forgiveness. In neither of the two passages quoted does the word "convert" have the specialized religious connotation which we commonly assume in our talk today, but it means very simply and directly a turning, or to be more exact a turning back. This is indicative of God's original purpose in creating man to live in fellowship with him. When we enter into God's kingdom by repentance and trust in his saving purpose, we are merely returning by God's help to our intended state, to our natural place in life, to the truth of God.

True repentance means both penitence and helplessness. Jesus said that salvation was for those who were poor in spirit, who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, who were wretched prodigals realizing their helplessness to do good of themselves. Repentance involves both a sense of need, and faith and confidence that God will give just what that soul needs. The psychology behind such true repentance is deep-rooted into the whole being of the person. Kierkegaard

(1) J. R. Illingworth, "The Doctrine of the Atonement and Its Historical Evaluation" p.130.

masterfully describes the despair about the eternal and over oneself thus:
"Here is the scale of ascent. First, in consciousness of himself; for the despair about the eternal is impossible, without having a conception about the self, that there is something eternal in it, or that it has had something eternal in it. And if a man is to despair over himself, he must indeed be conscious also of having a self; that, however, is the thing over which he despairs--not over the earthly or over something earthly, but over himself. Moreover, there is in this case a greater consciousness of what despair is; for despair is precisely to have lost the eternal and oneself. As a matter of course there is greater consciousness of the fact that one's condition is that of despair. Furthermore, despair in this case is not merely passive suffering but action. For when the earthly is taken away from the self and a man despairs, it is as if despair came from without, though it comes nevertheless always from the self, indirectly--directly from the self, as counter-pressure (reaction), differing in this respect from defiance, which comes directly from the self. Finally, there is here again, though in another sense, a further advance. For just because the despair is more intense, salvation is in a certain sense nearer. Such despair will hardly forget, it is too deep; but despair is held open every instant and there is thus possibility of salvation."⁽¹⁾ The valley of darkness through which the soul passes through in being led to helplessness and resignation of self but adds brilliance to the great light that breaks upon that soul when Christ is become the object of faith, and the very ground of salvation and forgiveness. This discovery necessitates amendment of life as the confidence grows that God will give to the sinner just what grace he needs in his life. Without amendment of life there can be no true repentance.

(2) Faith

As already indicated, the positive side of repentance is trust or faith in God.

(1) Soren Kierkegaard, "The Sickness Unto Death"
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) Trans. by W. Lowrie
p.99

All men have some sort of a creed or belief. It may be faith in self, in intellect, in education, in political systems, in vague spiritism, or something else material and outside of self. But every man has some philosophy of life, and a corresponding faith.

To Jesus the faith essential to his followers was the humble and trustful acceptance of the divine mercy. It is expressed in various ways. His proclamation at the beginning of his public ministry was simple and yet the basis of all Christianity, "Repent . . . and believe in the Gospel". The Gospel was not fully understood then, and even today after Christ's ministry of reconciliation the Gospel is often limited too much. The glad tidings that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinful men is to be the object of man's faith and is to assure him of divine favor.

Elsewhere the object of faith is characteristically said to be in Christ Himself. So when Jesus warned against offending those little ones "who believe in me" he spoke of the very essence of Christian faith--trust and confidence in Christ, the Saviour of the world (Cf. Mark 9:42 and Matthew 18:6). Not faith in a system, nor in a theology, nor in an ideal, but a personal faith in Christ is the condition of salvation.

Faith is not to be considered as a definite act on the part of man but rather a process of growth in trust and reliance upon the Saviour. Jesus himself had to teach, and rebuke, and inspire his own disciples, for their faith in him was often very weak. Their early faith was in Jesus as a mighty worker sent by God. They accepted his teaching about the Kingdom and the fact that He was the Messiah, or the King, appointed by God. Already this was a kind of faith, for they trusted in this king. They not only assented to his teaching but they showed a personal confidence in Him, and a willingness and a desire to follow those teachings. When He called them to be "fishers of men" they must have realized that this implied that they were to lead others to a similar faith

in this King, sent of God. This primitive kind of a faith was to greatly grow and develop. As Jesus was more fully revealed to them, they realized that Christ was not only the expected king, but that he was the bringer of salvation to the world, yea, the light of the world. But there were many lessons to be learned before they were strong enough to bear temptations and persecutions and disappointments in a world hostile to the early church.

Faith involves the whole man, and yet it is based neither on intellect comprehension nor on the play of the emotions. Jesus emphasized that to receive the kingdom was to enter the life of obedient sonship, and that one must enter humbly, simply, confidently as a little child. So Mark 10:15 and Matthew 18:3 show that utter trust and humility are characteristics of a saving faith. Familiar words from Jesus are "Thy faith hath saved thee", "thy faith hath made thee whole", etc. It is true that in these cases the salvation referred to is usually one of a physical kind, but the transposition to the full spiritual realm is indicated in many passages, and the parables of our Lord in particular show the conditional quality of faith. The wandering son was confident of his father's love, so that he could become at least a hired servant. The wandering sheep was not frightened by the approaching shepherd so that it jumped over the crag, but allowed the loving arms of the shepherd to rescue and save it.

So faith is an essential condition of salvation. Paul very thoroughly dwells on the importance of faith in his Epistles and in almost every one emphasizes faith as basic to the Christian life. However, faith must not be regarded as the ground of salvation, thus relegating God's love through Christ to another sphere. Because man believes God does not have to save man. By faith man simply appropriates for his life what God's love has already done and offered. "Another mistake to be guarded against is that of making faith the ground rather than the condition of salvation. The ground of salvation is Christ. Faith is the inward condition which men must supply before salvation becomes theirs. They are saved by faith, not for faith. When they unite themselves

to Christ by the exercise of living faith, His atonement becomes effectual to salvation in their experience. (1)

Baptism is also placed in a primary relation to salvation in the familiar passage from Mark 16:16 ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθὲς σωθήσεται. Baptism is closely connected with the remission of sins in John's preparatory work. Jesus himself demonstrated that He had power over sin and thus His words and deeds contain pardon, and thereby the Kingdom of God is brought in. But in the final commission to His disciples, evangelism and teaching were not only required, but Baptism was to be an integral part of the evangelization process, as we know it was in the story of the beginnings and spread of the Christian church, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

(3) Forgiveness

Repentance has already been mentioned as one of the conditions of salvation. Repentance is on the part of man in relation to his sinful condition. And yet repentance in itself calls for something on the part of God. Man needs the guilt of past sin removed, and the guilt of inherent sin--yea, his very sinful nature--blotted out. Every man must cry out with David, "I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me". Man needs forgiveness. In the Old Testament worship, means were provided for the forgiveness of actual sins by the sacrifices and the feasts. Ritualism had an elaborate system worked out for the removal of guilt. And yet the Jews in the Old Testament anticipated a deeper forgiveness in the coming Messianic time, and this was one of the leading features of the expectation.(2)

With Jesus forgiveness of sin was actually demonstrated. His mighty works and wonders taught men that he had power to forgive sin. He did not forgive only men who were morally excellent. The basis of forgiveness was pure unmerited grace. When the palsied man had been brought to Jesus, He showed

(1) James M. Cambell, "The Atonement, The Heart of the Gospel".
(London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1907) p.178

(2) This expectation of forgiveness in the coming Messianic Age may be seen in Isaiah 43:25; 44:22; Jeremiah 33:8; Zechariah 3:9;13:1; and Daniel 9:24.

this grace when He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5 and Matthew 9:6). The scribes saw this as blasphemous and they said, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They believed in the forgiveness of sins, but that anyone could have that power except God was not understandable. Jesus then proceeded to show them that He did have power to forgive sin on this earth, as God bestows forgiveness in Heaven. He healed the palsied man and "they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion". The forgiveness given by Jesus was final. It was offered to those who were repentant, and saw in Christ the grace that would answer their need.

That everyone needs divine forgiveness, as well as repentance, is shown by the parable of forgiveness (Matt. 18:23-27), where it is taken for granted that an infinite debt has been forgiven every member of the kingdom of God. Further, this forgiveness is needed continually, for sin does not disappear even from those who are followers of Christ. Hence when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, he not only teaches them to pray for daily bread, but also for forgiveness of debts (Matt. 6:12).

As the father in heaven has given the son power to forgive sin on earth, so the Son has given this power also to His church so that this blessing and essential element may be continually ensured for member of that church (Matt. 18:18). So forgiveness is a continual necessity and a continual blessing for those faithful and penitent followers of the Lord.

In His function as High Priest, Jesus faced the sufferings and death upon the Cross. He not only taught us, as a prophet, the will of God. He also did. He sacrificed His life that we might live, or in other words, come into salvation. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed". (I Peter 2:24). Our high priest surrendered His life in the fulfillment of his calling, to complete the purpose which brought Him to this earth-- to save man. This is the culmination of his saving purpose in coming to the earth,

whereby salvation is procured from man, as his proclamation of forgiveness of sins had led the Kingdom's members to expect. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

(4) Growth in Christ

Christ's intention in forgiving and saving man is that he may live in fellowship with Him and share the blessings of the kingdom. Therefore it is consequent that an attendant characteristic of the followers of Christ is growth. Since we are saved to something, that new life must show itself, for we "Being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness". Christ not only has carried out his saving purpose for us, but also completely restores us to spiritual health, working in us, making us sharers in His own life. "There is no salvation without forgiveness; but forgiveness without the following life of actual righteousness and holiness is no salvation at all . . . The cross, then, saves first by opening the eyes of the blind, showing us the true meaning and issues of sin, God's mind towards it, the way of victory over it; and, secondly, as the instrument and the assurance of our forgiveness, the message of pardon and peace". (1)

This growth in Christ is an essential part of salvation, and a part wherein God's spirit works with our spirit in the process of sanctification. Jesus set forth the challenge that there must be a persistent effort on the part of His followers to become perfect as His father in heaven was perfect (Matt.4:48). Any obstacle to such growth is to be cast aside and sacrificed lest the very life be lost (Matt.18:8-9). From a life lived in fellowship with God there must be natural fruits forthcoming, "for by their fruits ye shall know them". (Matt.7:20). The fruits of the Spirit are by Paul mentioned in detail in several epistles as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (Cf. Gal.5:22-23; Eph. 5:9; II Cor.6:9; I Tim.4:12; 6:11; II Tim. 2:22 as well as also II Peter 1:5). Such fruits should be the natural

(1) Seibitz, op.cit. pp.53-54

products of the life in fellowship with God. These fruits the Christian must seek with the aid of the Spirit to cultivate and intensify. The fruits are indicative of the true life within. So when Jesus was hungry and coming to a fig tree found no fruit upon it, he said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever" (Matt. 21:19--Mark 11:13). A healthy tree has not only leaves, but also fruits. A Christian life has not only activity, but also fruitfulness.

God progressively reveals himself to man, just as Jesus also gradually revealed Himself to his disciples. Consequently, there is a continual educational process among those of the Kingdom. God works through his Spirit in revealing to man his will and purpose. This development of the Christian man, is, however, towards Christlikeness, to "the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13). It is not fully realized in this sinful world. This growth and development in actual righteousness is a vital part of the soteriology of the writers of the Synoptic Gospels.

CONCLUSION

The idea underlying this thesis has been to show the background, development, and implications of the concept of "soteria", as revealed in the Synoptic Gospels. The idea of salvation is not unique with the Biblical revelation, for one eternal quest of man is salvation. The Greeks had their σωτηρ, the Hindus had their "avatars", the Persians had their "saoshyant" in Zoroastrianism, and the Buddhists had their Amitabha. These all performed similar functions to the Saviour in Christianity, and yet we believe that in the Biblical record we have a type of salvation described and revealed which differs from the other world religions.

On a basis of the terminology utilized to express the idea in the Old Testament, it was found that most of the words used had a decidedly negative emphasis. The earliest idea of salvation in Judaism was one predominantly this-worldly, temporal and material. While the power to save was recognized as coming from God, salvation was thought of as being attainable through the deliberate choice of the individual to obey the will of God as it was set clearly forth in the Hebrew scriptures and traditions. The important element of personal faith or devotion to the Lord was submerged very largely to the idea of national deliverance, for the Covenant had been made with the nation. From the time of the exile the idea of salvation becomes more and more interested in the other world, and the personal emphasis is also essential to the idea, for the nation no longer plays its important part. Many scholars attribute this new emphasis to contact of Israel with the Persians who took Babylon c. 538 B.C. After the exile there is a growing interest in the after-life, in resurrection, and in a day of judgment. Sheol becomes very real, and not vague and colorless as it had been. All of these things became a part of the whole idea of salvation held by the later Jews. God's grace in salvation is constantly regarded as important, but

man through his own effort may do the will of God, and thus be assured of salvation. The later Old Testament expectation was concerned with one who was to come and suffer in behalf of his people, and this Messianic hope became central in the religion of the Jews as the Old Testament closes.

The Septuagint does not draw out the idea of salvation as clearly as the Hebrew original, but rather confuses the concept by using the Greek word ῥύσις for a great variety of the Hebrew words meaning material deliverance, and really does not give the specific meanings as well as the Hebrew.

The Exodus became the great symbol to Israel of a coming greater deliverance which hope was in the days of the prophets projected into the future and was centered about this Messiah who was to come. The early prophets complicated the idea of deliverance by emphasizing the hope of a national deliverance. However, the exile had smashed most of the hope of a political restoration and a group salvation. Then it was that the idea and necessity of individual responsibility and personal salvation came to the fore, and individual faith took a very central role in the religious life, and was maintained and asserted by the later prophets. The expectation of the Coming One was still partly materialistic, but gradually deepened into essentially a spiritual idea, with the eschatological connotations.

In the period between the Testaments there was much writing which indicates the trend of thought during the times. A growing idea of the transcendence of God, the expectation of a future deliverance and with it a purification, and the deeper emphasis upon a right personal relation to the God who would deliver man are the characteristics and contributions of the period.

In the New Testament there are many variations in the use of ῥύσις, ῥωτηρία and their derivatives, which range from the materialistic idea of physical preservation and protection from evil and danger, passing through the idea of healing from sickness, through the idea of preservation from the temporal anger of the Almighty God, to the highest

spiritual idea of a future salvation in Heaven. It is not always easy to distinguish between these usages, and in many cases we cannot confine the true interpretation to the materialistic view to the exclusion of a spiritual idea. Jesus himself used the words in both connections, and very often in a double sense. While the term salvation is definitely a Christian term as used today, Jesus himself made very little use of it. Only once in the synoptic Gospels is the noun salvation used, and that in connection with Jesus' visit to the home of Zaccheus. Consequently from the use of the word itself we can learn little as to what Jesus' meaning was. But in the frequent use of the verb by Jesus we learn much more, and words used by Jesus in a similar sense also help us to discover his idea. We learn that he came to save "lost men," and while at first it is difficult to learn what he means by this term, we discover that he understood that all men must ultimately face the judgment of God, and one of his purposes on earth was to bring men into fellowship with the father so that they could face the last day without fear.

The only σωτηρία which is really salvation in the Synoptists is that from sin (with deliverance from penalty implied) to a life of growing holiness and of fellowship and sonship with God. The Baptist came preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins, declaring that One was at hand who would baptize with the cleansing spirit of God, in fulfillment of the Old Testament Jewish eschatological expectation. This was closely associated with the idea of the Kingdom of God, entrance into which in the Synoptists is identified with salvation itself. John announced its nearness, but did not profess to have any recourse which gave direct access to it.

Jesus continued this proclamation and further developed the idea of the true salvation, and himself showed the way to its realization in human lives. For him salvation, entrance into the Kingdom, and eternal life were coterminous terms. The negative side of salvation was deliverance from sin and the forthcoming judgment, while the positive side was entrance into this Kingdom of Heaven, announced by the Baptist, and now ready, giving

the commensurate blessings of fellowship with God and perfect love among members. Thus deliverance, as the negative sense, was conceived of both as in the present and in an eschatological sense; in the present, as deliverance from subjective spiritual death or the losing of the soul's intended spiritual capacities, and eschatologically, it points to the "Last Day", with deliverance from the eternal death in the final judgment as the punishment due the sinner.

All this is possible because of the love and saving purpose of God revealed throughout all time, and as historically recorded in his Holy Word. This saving purpose, manifested by definite saving acts in the life of early Israel, became efficacious for sinful men through the incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God, Jesus, the Messiah. He proclaimed the message of salvation to men, offered forgiveness of sins, gave guidance for the life of his followers, and Himself made salvation possible for man. He alone could offer the hoped-for cleansing that man needed. He alone could send the indwelling Spirit to develop the life of fellowship with God. "Christ alone can make us innocent of any transgression. How so? First, by forgiveness of our sins and the impartation of His righteousness. Secondly, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who engenders new life and activity in us." (1)

Salvation is all the work of God for and in man. Man is powerless to do anything which will provide for his own salvation. Jesus had to teach the self-righteous and self-dependent that all their pretended righteousness and sincere effort towards salvation was as nothing before God.

Yet the response to the message of Jesus, showing God's love and saving plan, had to be received by man to be of any avail in human life. The message compelled all men to repent, to confess their sin, and yet that very act of repentance implies a concomitant feature, that of faith in the One who could forgive that sin, and provide the means of the blessed life to follow. Forgiveness of sin is the very essence of the Gospel and yet was possible only through

(1) M. Luther, op.cit. p.124

the victory of Christ, the only Saviour.

Further those receiving this message of salvation, and confessing their sins and seeking refuge in God's mercy also have a great responsibility set before them. Christ expects them, as members of the kingdom over which He is the Lord, to live in fellowship with Him and grow in grace and holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit working within them.

Therefore, it can be said that salvation is present and future, for it begins with the forgiveness of sins in this life, but is not complete until the return of Christ when the fullest blessing of salvation will come to man. It is individual, for each soul must receive, the message of repentance and in faith accept God's blessings; but it is also social, in a sense, for the members of the Kingdom form an organic unit, well exemplified by Jesus' parables of the Kingdom. To this organic unit, this group of believers in the same Lord, has been entrusted certain gifts of God, and the church has the responsibility of rightly employing and guarding them. So Christ gave the power of the forgiveness of sins to the church, this power of the keys not being given to individuals but to the group as an entity, as the entire context shows (Matt. 18:18).

The church is to continue the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of Baptism, and the teaching of the truths of God's grace in offering salvation to mankind. The hearers of this message are responsible for a response to this message of Good News, and are given the power to trust in the Lord proclaimed, and to grow in likeness and fellowship with Him. The natural and expected result of the life of trust in God must be fruits springing from that faith.

The eternal purpose of God is to save mankind by bringing it into his kingdom. This purpose was not thwarted by the estrangement of man because of his sinful propensities after the Fall, but continued through his saving actions with Israel, through the proclamations of grace at the mouths of the prophets, and especially became realized in the world when God sent forth His own Son to

mediate this salvation to man through his life, death and resurrection, thus ushering in the awaited Messianic kingdom. As the Lord of this Kingdom, Christ rules in this Kingdom with the Father until the time when He shall return and bring the final salvation, concerned with the coming judgment, and the deliverance of the saints of God, and the fellowship in store in the consummated kingdom with all its blessings.

"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it."

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