

## *The Experience of Salvation in the Old and New Testaments* \*

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### INTRODUCTION

What are the elements of continuity and discontinuity between the two testaments? Why do we distinguish them and yet bind them together within the covers of one book? This issue, perennially of great importance for the Christian theologian, has been much to the fore in recent years because of the renewed interest in biblical hermeneutics.<sup>1</sup> Our concern in this lecture, however, is not with the general question of the relation of the testaments, nor the validity of the N.T. method of interpreting the O.T. It is rather with the continuity and discontinuity which obtained between the men of the two testaments in the realm of spiritual experience. To what extent was spiritual salvation as known by men under the new economy the experience of men of faith under the old? Most approaches to this issue emphasise either the continuity or the discontinuity and there is often a tendency to do less than justice to the other side of the matter. We may perhaps describe the two approaches as 'dogmatic' and 'historical' respectively, although these terms are not ideal designations.

The approach we have characterised as 'dogmatic' makes the New Testament its starting point. It treats the doctrines of the New Testament as a coherent system of truth, and then reads the Old Testament in the light of the New, seeing in it adumbrations and preliminary expressions of the same truths, albeit in rudimentary and provisional forms. Here it is the essential continuity between the two which is underlined. 'The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.'

On the other hand, the approach we have called 'historical' stresses the differences between and even within the testaments. God has not always dealt with men in the same way. There are important differences between the conditions of religious life at successive periods of the biblical history. The complete doctrinal system of the New Testament should not be imposed upon the pages of the Old. We must 'distinguish the dispensations'.

The 'dogmatic' approach seeks to bring out the eternity of divine truth, while the 'historical' emphasises the variety of its disclosure in time. The first underlines the 'theological' principles of biblical interpretation, the second the 'grammatico-historical'. The one stresses 'the analogy of faith', the other the necessity for faithful exegesis of each passage of Scripture considered in itself<sup>2</sup>; the one perhaps has more in common with the theological school of Alexandria and the other with Antioch.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide J. D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture*, London, 1961; C. Westermann (editor), *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation*, Richmond, 1963; B. W. Anderson (editor), *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*, New York, 1963; B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, London, 1961; A. T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, London, 1965; J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation*, London, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> The harmonising of these two interests is a leading theme in some of the contributions to *Essays...* (edit. C. Westermann) especially in the chapters by Stamm and Vriezen.

In the modern history of theology we note the cleavage between the older Liberalism, with its tendency to isolate Jesus from the O.T. which preceded Him and from Paul who followed Him,<sup>3</sup> and the more recent 'Biblical Theology movement', which emphasises more strongly the unity of biblical doctrine.<sup>4</sup> Even

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within the more recent theology, we may perhaps distinguish between the approach of the dogmatician, Karl Barth, and the approach of the 'Biblical theologian', Oscar Cullmann. Even when they are both occupied with Christology, in which each is extremely interested, Barth and those closely associated with him approach from the standpoint of the two natures doctrine, the hypostatic union,<sup>5</sup> while Cullmann from the *Heilsgeschichte*, the history of salvation.<sup>6</sup> Among Conservative Evangelicals, differences of approach emerge in the debate between the Federalists and the Dispensationalists. The former accuse the latter of doing violence to the unity of biblical truth and especially of the doctrine of grace,<sup>7</sup> while the latter accuse the former of 'flattening out' all biblical doctrine and making it subserve the thorough-going application of the covenant principle in such a way that the dispensations are confused.<sup>8</sup>

It is obvious that the issue before us has many repercussions. It affects such matters as the relation of Israel and the Church, of the Old Testament channels of grace and the one Mediator of the New Testament, the nature of the work of the Spirit in each testament, and the place of promise and fulfilment in spiritual experience. Moreover, it raises the whole question of the relation of soteriology to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Each of the two general viewpoints which we have distinguished would appear to have been maintained by so many thinkers and writers in the history of the Church that it would seem at least possible that each holds a measure of truth. It may be helpful to seek a combination of insights. Our aim is to secure a perspective from which to view the issue in a truly balanced way.

## I. THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL IN THE N.T.

One of the most heartening features of the revival of interest in biblical theology is the emphasis upon the kerygma as the main unifying factor in the N.T. The older Liberal approach which drove a wedge between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul<sup>9</sup> has largely given way to a recognition of one basic gospel, declared in a variety of ways and through a variety of terms and expressions but one in its great theme. This may be discerned in all the early preaching and as the foundation already laid in the minds and hearts of those to whom the N.T. literature was written.<sup>10</sup> This kerygma centred in God's great deed of grace in Christ

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. see O. Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, E.T., 1906-11.

<sup>4</sup> As is seen in such titles as H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, London, 1953; A. M. Hunter, *The Unity of the New Testament*, London, 1943.

<sup>5</sup> K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, E.T., Edinburgh, from 1936.

<sup>6</sup> O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, E.T., London, 1959<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> For an exposition of Federal theology on the grand scale see C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, London, 1883.

<sup>8</sup> The outstanding work on Systematic Theology from a Dispensationalist is L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Dallas, 1947.

<sup>9</sup> It also very often created a conflict between Paul and the primitive Jewish Church; for a critique of this cf. A. M. Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors*, London, 1961.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. especially C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, London, 1936.

crucified and risen;<sup>11</sup> it called for repentance and faith;<sup>12</sup> it promised the Holy Spirit as a result of Christ's work;<sup>13</sup> it declared that in the great gospel facts the promises of God in the O.T. had been fulfilled.<sup>14</sup>

Viewing salvation as a work effected by God in relation to men, we may view it legitimately either from the divine or the human standpoint. These contemplate the same work at different levels, each valid, but the divine level is the deeper one, divine grace undergirding and forming the ground of the human experience of salvation in repentance and faith. It is in the work of salvation that God discloses His triune nature and it is noticeable that many of the great trinitarian passages of the N.T. are at the same time soteriological.<sup>15</sup> Salvation originates in the grace of the Father, is effected through the work of the Son, and is applied by the work of the Holy Spirit.

On the human side, the N.T. doctrine of salvation emphasises the need for faith. Now faith cannot be properly understood unless considered in connection with its

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correlative—i.e. revelation. Faith cleaves to the Saviour-God as He comes to men in revelation, in self-disclosure. It cannot leap out upon a void, for it is response to revelation.<sup>16</sup> Although Christian faith is in its essence trust in Christ, or trust in God, or trust in God through Christ, it is not blind trust. In the N.T. faith always possesses intellectual content, makes doctrinal affirmations.<sup>17</sup>

It is just at this point that we find ourselves confronted with difficulties as far as the O.T. is concerned. The N.T. doctrine of salvation is bound to an objective work effected at Calvary by Jesus Christ and a subjective work effected in the heart by the Holy Spirit. The N.T. believer, with the great gospel facts lying behind him historically, has a very full revelational basis for his faith. What then of the O.T. believer? He lived his life with God long before the great events of the *Heilsgeschichte*, as seen in the N.T., had taken place. If faith rests upon the revelation of saving facts, how could saving faith exist under the O.T. dispensation?

Because of considerations of space, we shall need to confine ourselves very largely—although not exclusively—to a consideration of the experience of salvation in the O.T. as seen through the eyes of the writers of the N.T. The writer believes, however, that a detailed examination of the O.T. material itself would not overturn but rather corroborate the interpretation given here. When such an approach is made to the O.T. through the N.T. the differences between them

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<sup>11</sup> E.g. Acts ii. 23ff, x. 39ff, xiii. 27ff, Rom. iv. 25, 1 Cor. xv. 3ff, Heb. i. 3, Rev. i. 18; cf. also the space given to the last week of the life of Jesus in the four Gospels.

<sup>12</sup> Lk. xxiv. 47, Acts ii. 37ff, x. 43, xiii. 38f, Rom. i. 5, 16f, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Acts ii. 38f, v. 32, Gal. iii. 2f, 1 Jn. iii. 24, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Acts iii. 24f, xiii. 23, 32ff xvii. 2f, 1 Cor. xv. 3f, 1 Pet. i. 10-12, etc.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Eph. iii. 17-17, Heb. ii. 347, 1 Pet. i. 2, Jude 20f, Rev. i. 4ff.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation*, London, 1959, *Theories of Revelation*, London, 1963; C. Henry (editor), *Revelation and the Bible*, London, 1958; J. Barr, *op. cit.*, 77ff, *contra* W. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, London, 1935; E. Brunner, *Revelation and Reason*, London, 1947. A major cleavage of opinion in modern theology concerns the nature of revelation, and especially the existence or non-existence of a propositional element in it.

<sup>17</sup> Jn. viii. 24, xi. 27, 42, Rom. x. 9, 1 Thess. iv. 14, 2 Thess. ii. 11ff, Heb. xi. 6, 1 Jn. v. 5.

are sometimes played down, but we hope to bring out both the unity of the two and their points of difference.

## II. SALVATION IN THE O.T.—PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

**a. *The God of the O.T. and of the N.T. is one God.*** Marcion's doctrine that the God of the O.T. is inferior to the supreme God Who is the Redeemer—God of the N.T. required him to adopt a much reduced N.T. canon. Indeed, his thesis could have been refuted even on the basis of his own canon, for the whole N.T. presupposes the teaching of the O.T. One God reveals Himself throughout Scripture, although more fully in the N.T. than in the O.T. In particular, of course, the N.T. shows that the Godhead, although one in essence, has an inner richness, a plenitude of life and internal fellowship in the triunity of the Divine Being.

**b. *God deals with His people in both testaments on a covenant basis.*** The Federal theology<sup>18</sup> certainly focussed attention upon one of the major themes of Scripture in giving a position of centrality to the covenant motif. 'I will be their God and they shall be My people' is an idea which occurs—in this and other verbal forms—in many passages of both testaments<sup>19</sup>, and the relationship between God and His people is always on a covenant basis.

**c. *In the O.T. the people of God is a nation, while in the N.T. it is a supra-national society.*** Here we encounter a major difference between the two testaments. Even here, however, there is a unifying principle in the concept of a covenant *community*. In the O.T., however, personal salvation becomes the experience of one who is already a member of a nation which is in special relationship to God, for in the O.T. presentation the filial relationship is first collective<sup>20</sup> and then distributive.<sup>21</sup> In the N.T., however, personal salvation meets a man through the gospel and joins him to the Church.<sup>22</sup> The order is different.

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**d. *In the O.T. salvation terminology is applied chiefly to physical while in the N.T. chiefly to spiritual deliverance.*** In the O.T. the great saving deeds of God are accomplished for the nation as such and with a view to a physical salvation.<sup>23</sup> The supreme historical deed of salvation is the exodus. Even when this terminology is employed of individuals it is usually to set forth a salvation of the same kind as that which was effected at national level—i.e. deliverance from enemies and from troublous circumstances.<sup>24</sup> However, there are passages where this language is applied to salvation from sin, and this sometimes in national<sup>25</sup> and sometimes in personal terms.<sup>26</sup> In the N.T. 'salvation' is predominantly deliverance from

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<sup>18</sup> This emerged in the 17th Century and is associated with the name of Cocceius, although it is probably inaccurate to describe him as its author; vide E. F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law*, London, 1964, 40, W. Adams Brown, 'Covenant Theology' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (edit. J. Hastings), IV, 216-224.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Exod. xx. 2, xxv. 8, xxix. 45, Lev. xxvi. 12, Jer. xxxi. 1, 31ff, Ezek. xxxvi. 28, xxxvii. 27, Am. iii. 1f, 2 Cor. vi. 16, Rev. xxi. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ex. iv. 23, Hos. xi. 1.

<sup>21</sup> N.B. the oscillation between the collective and the distributive in Hosea xi. 1ff.

<sup>22</sup> Acts ii. 47.

<sup>23</sup> Exod. iii. 8, xiv. 30, 2 Sam. iii. 18, 2 Kings xiv. 27, Ps. cvi. 21, Isa. liii. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. xxxvi. 11, Ps. vii. 1f, Ps. cxix. 94f.

<sup>25</sup> Ps. cxxx. 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Ps. xxxix. 8.

sin.<sup>27</sup> It is suggestive, however, that in the first two chapters of Luke, the language of physical and national salvation is applied to the saving work of Christ, as this is viewed in anticipation by the unsophisticated godly people amongst whom He was born.<sup>28</sup>

It is important to note that the O.T. and the N.T. necessarily view the sacrificial system somewhat differently. For the N.T. believer the sacrifices had their chief value as types of the great final sacrifice. For the O.T. believer, however, they were actual means of grace. Indeed, as we shall see, the present means of grace for the O.T. believer were very extensive, for the very land itself was a 'sacrament' to those who dwelt in it and viewed it as an expression of the divine covenant.

### III. SALVATION IN THE O.T.—BY GRACE

What was the basis of God's dealings with Israel, His people, in the O.T.? The O.T. itself makes it clear that this was all of grace. The book of Deuteronomy especially underlines the fact that God saved the people because of His love for them—which in the final analysis can have no explanation in human terms—and not because of their merit.<sup>29</sup> The only other reason given is God's own promise to their fathers,<sup>30</sup> who were themselves the objects of God's grace.<sup>31</sup>

What then of the position of the individual within the nation? Did he find his standing before God on the basis of grace or on some other? L. S. Chafer says, 'For want of specific revelation, the salvation of the individual under Judaism—with regard to terms, time and general character—is obscure to men'.<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere, after a reference to Mt. xix. 17, he says, 'True to the Jewish dispensation, He said with reference to the law of Moses: "This do and thou shalt live"; but when contemplating the cross and Himself as the bread come down from heaven to give His life for the world, He said: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John vi. 29). These opposing principles are not to be reconciled. They indicate the fundamental distinction which must exist between those principles that obtain in an age of law, on the one hand, and an age of grace, on the other hand'.<sup>33</sup> In the same passage, Chafer distinguishes the Synoptic presentation of life as a future blessing and the Johannine presentation of it as a present gift and says, 'One was offered, and is yet to be granted, on the basis of faithful, law-keeping works: the other is gained only through the grace which is in Jesus Christ our Lord'.<sup>34</sup>

It is very difficult to see how these statements can be reconciled with the teaching of the Pauline epistles. In Romans iv, Paul deals with the justification of Abraham and of his descendants—both physical and spiritual—and he shows very clearly that it is on the basis of grace and not of meritorious works of the law. In

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<sup>27</sup> Mt. i. 21, Acts v. 31, Eph. iv. 2-10, etc.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. especially Lk. i. 67ff.

<sup>29</sup> Deut. vii. 6ff, ix. 6ff.

<sup>30</sup> Deut. vii. 8, 12f, etc.

<sup>31</sup> The relationship of God with the patriarchs was on the basis of a covenant, in which He graciously took the initiative: Gen. xii. 1ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Op. cit.* Vol. III, 5.

<sup>33</sup> *Grace*, Chicago, 1947, 92.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 92 n.

Romans xi. 5 the wording strongly suggests that the saved Israelites in the O.T. as well as in N.T. days constituted 'a remnant, chosen by grace'. Galatians ii. 21, iii. 10--12 contain statements which have every appearance of general principles applicable at all times and not simply through the advent of a 'dispensation of grace' through the Cross of Christ. As Paul says in Galatians iii. 21, 'If a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.'

There are, however, N.T. passages which appear to teach the contrary. We will consider the more important of these:

### ***Luke x. 23-37***

The mental background to the lawyer's question is clearly the Pharisaic doctrine of self-justification by works. He asks what *one thing*<sup>35</sup> he needs to do to inherit eternal life. This idea that there may be one great act which can settle the question of his relationship with God for good and all betrays complacent satisfaction with his own righteousness in general. Jesus does not question his assumption, but answers him on his own ground. His reply in verse 28<sup>36</sup> is probably reminiscent of Lev. xviii. 5 (cf. Paul's interpretative comment in line with his theology of grace in Gal. iii. 12) 'The Saviour does not imply that this is possible. He meets the lawyer on his own platform, as it were, so as to make him realise his guilt and his impotence.'<sup>37</sup> The principle enshrined in the passage in Leviticus was presumably incorporated in the law not because it revealed a real possibility of salvation by works but in order to convict of sin. In the parable which follows, Jesus shows how searching are the true demands of the law. In the sermon on the mount He had shown that when pondered by the spiritual man, it searched out motive and attitude as well as bringing outward act under condemnation; now He declares that its command to love the neighbour embraced the hated Samaritan as well as the brother Jew.

### ***John i. 17***

This would seem at first sight to teach that grace first made its advent in Christ. However, such an interpretation demands, in the interests of consistency, that truth also should be viewed as coming first to men in Him. However, this is clearly not the position of the author of the Fourth Gospel. His use of quotations from the O.T. as witnesses to Christ indicates clearly that he believed it contained at least preliminary anticipations of the truth as it is in Christ; these anticipations, in so far as they partook of the reality which they foreshadowed, must have been 'true'. There is some evidence that in the Prologue he is deliberately contradicting the rabbinic exaltation of the law to the supreme place in God's dealings with men, for he uses many expressions employed by the rabbis in relation to the law and applies them instead to Jesus Christ.<sup>38</sup> His object is to show that grace and truth in their fulness have come to men, not through the law but through Jesus Christ. Indeed, had he wanted to express an absolute antithesis he would probably have given his thought a different grammatical form. Some of his interpreters have understood two statements which are simply placed

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<sup>35</sup> Lk. x. 25, ποιήσας;

<sup>36</sup> *N.B.* the use of the present imperative, probably implying criticism of the lawyer's idea that one act would settle the issue.

<sup>37</sup> N. Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, London, 1950, *ad. loc.*

<sup>38</sup> Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1955, 74-86.

consecutively as if they were adversative, but this is not required by the grammatical form of the verse.<sup>39</sup>

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### ***Romans vi. 14-15***

Do these words imply a contrast between the old covenant and the new? By no means. Paul has himself demonstrated in this very epistle that the men of the O.T. were not saved by the keeping of the law. The antithesis is not between two 'dispensations' but between two systems of salvation: the Pharisaic or Judaising on the one hand and the gospel system of grace on the other. His point is that it is not legalism alone which has its ethical demands, its imperatives (but for the danger of terminological contradiction we might even say 'its law'), but the way of grace also.

### ***2 Corinthians iii. 6-11***

Paul here expressly contrasts the new and the old covenants in terms of the 'glory' associated with them. In the course of his argument, he employs a number of expressions in an antithetical manner. Accordingly, the old covenant is described as 'the dispensation of death' (v. 7) or 'the dispensation of condemnation' (v. 9) while the new covenant is 'the dispensation of the Spirit' (v. 8) or 'the dispensation of righteousness' (v. 9). The matter is summed up in the expressions 'written code' and 'Spirit' (v. 6). Such expressions need not be interpreted as meaning that there is an *absolute* distinction between the old covenant and the new. Rather, Paul concentrates his attention here upon the elements of contrast between a covenant in which the external forms are most prominent and one in which the inner essence is underlined. The law, written on tables of stone, which was so much in the foreground in the old covenant and which was made even more so by the Jews of Paul's day, certainly did 'kill' and 'bring condemnation'. This does not mean that Paul did not recognise that there were men of faith who enjoyed a truly spiritual salvation under the old covenant, for we have seen above that he did. We cannot expect him to qualify every statement in order to give a complete presentation of an issue whenever he refers to it.

### ***Galatians iii. 23-25***

At first sight this passage presents considerable difficulty to the exegete. It is not simply that it appears to teach that the coming of the age of faith (and therefore of grace) awaited the coming of Christ. If this were Paul's teaching on the subject we should have to face it and seek to understand it. The real problem, however, is that to understand him this way is to view him as self-contradictory. As we have seen, he has shown with the utmost plainness earlier in the epistle that salvation—in the O.T. and in the N.T.—is always a matter of the sheer grace of God, and, of course, that it is received by faith. What then does the passage mean?

We must consider it as part of his whole argument here. He has shown (vv. 6-9) that Abraham was saved by faith and then (vv. 10-14) that there is no way of salvation by works of the law. Still confronting, let us remember, the legalistic conception of the law, he demonstrates that it is not against the Divine promises for these predated it and were based upon a solemn

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<sup>39</sup> The A.V. translation is not without fault here.

covenant. At length he asks, 'Why then the law?' (v. 19). If not for justification, what is its purpose? 'It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promises had been made'—i.e. until Christ came (v. 19, cf. v. 16). The law, then, which was given not to provide salvation but to reveal sin (Romans iii. 20). Also

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had a restraining or disciplinary function. Perhaps the apostle had his own experience in mind. As a Pharisee he had tried to justify himself by the law, had been brought to see his folly and had cast himself upon the grace of God in Christ. Looking back, however, he could see that even that barren period of his life was not all loss for, under the sovereign hand of God, his very attempts at self-justification had disclosed to him his own deep need, and so the law had served as a παιδαγωγός to lead him to Christ (vv. 24f). Faith for him—faith in its fulness—was trust in Christ, and he saw the Jewish nation as such with its outlook dominated by legal categories whenever it considered its relation to God, but now called by the gospel to faith in Christ. In fact, as in 2 Corinthians iii, the idea of grace under the old covenant is not in Paul's mind at all in this section of his epistle. It is rather the law in its present function in relation to the Israelites he knew which was in his mind.

### ***1 Peter i. 10-12***

Does this passage imply that the men of the O.T., including the prophets, were not themselves recipients of the grace of God? No, for Peter's thought centres in the content of the prophecies, their revelational significance. This content was Christological. In the New Testament grace is seen to be channelled through Christ and so to prophesy the sufferings and glory of the Christ was to prophesy of the grace which was to be the experience of the N.T. believer. The passage does not suggest, however, that there was no experience of grace in the Old Testament itself prior to the full revelation of the One in whom grace finds its full expression.

A significant fact emerging from the study of these passages is that all but one—the last—are related to contemporary attempts (Pharisaic or Judaizing) to find justification by the works of the law. It was the necessity for combating such a misinterpretation of the divine revelation which has produced passages which are themselves liable to be misunderstood by the modern reader. Doctrine is presented in an occasional rather than in a systematic form in the N.T. This means that sometimes, because of the necessities of controversy, statements are made in absolute form which, seen in the light of the whole body of revealed truth, must be understood as relative.

## **IV. SALVATION IN THE O.T.—THROUGH CHRIST**

'Characteristic of the N.T. in distinction from the Old, is the idea that man's relation to God is bound to the person of Jesus.'<sup>40</sup> Both testaments show a preoccupation with the relationship between God and man, but in the N.T. it is clear that this is due entirely to the new covenant in Christ. He is the place where God meets with sinful men; He is the great channel of the divine grace. The N.T. also represents Him as the only Saviour (John xiv. 6, Acts iv. 12). Such affirmations, although given in the context of the full revelation which is presented in

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<sup>40</sup> R. Bultmann, 'The Significance of the O.T. for the Christian Faith' in *Old Testament* (edit. B. W. Anderson), 11.



the N.T., give the impression of being of a general character. They at least open the question as to whether the mediatorial work of Christ has application to the men of the O.T. as well as to those of the N.T.

How then did O.T. believers experience the grace of God? What were the channels of grace under the old economy? Broadly, we may say that the O.T. presents both ceremonial and moral conditions of fellowship with God. These

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have been characterised as priestly and prophetic respectively,<sup>41</sup> although the tendency to regard them as mutually exclusive points of view has now been abandoned by a great many O.T. scholars.<sup>42</sup> The priestly emphasis on sacrifice and the prophetic on repentance are certainly not irreconcilable. In the Day of Atonement regulations (Leviticus xvi.) the objective offerings are to be accompanied by subjective affliction of soul, and the presentation of God's Servant in terms of sacrifice (Isaiah lli. 13-liiii. 12) is set in the midst of a prophetic book. Again, in a psalm which makes no reference to sacrifice in any explicit way, the language in which divine forgiveness is declared is suggestive of the Day of Atonement ritual of the banishment of the goat into the wilderness with the sins of the people upon him (Ps. ciii. 12, cf. Lev. xvi. 20-22).

If the way of sacrifice is set forth in the O.T. as divinely ordained, what then are we to make of the attitude of the Writer to the Hebrews to the cult? To him, the sacrifices of the O.T. could not perfect the conscience of the worshipper (ix. 9, x. 1f); they were only for the purification of the flesh (ix. 10, 13). In short, they could not take away sins (x. 4, 11). Indeed, the writer makes it clear that he believed such a function to be quite impossible because the sacrifices were animal in nature (x. 4).

An examination of these passages reveals that the writer considered the sacrifices ineffective in two ways. On the one hand, they were ineffective objectively, for they could not really achieve that atonement for sin which they symbolised. They dealt only with that which was external—the ceremonial approach of man to a material tabernacle which symbolised God's presence (ix. 1-14). Not even the dramatic ritual of the Day of Atonement—the very crown of the whole elaborate system—was able to do that. On the other hand, they were ineffective on the subjective side. Whatever they were able to effect there, they could not give lasting peace to the conscience. There were two main reasons for their ineffectiveness. First of all, they were repeated—the Day of Atonement, for example, being a yearly occasion—and so they did not deal with the fact of sin and the broken relationship between God and man once for all (x. 2f). Secondly, they were animal sacrifices and so, granted the principle of substitution, could only act as the symbol of the true sacrifice, not as the reality. In fact their objective and subjective inadequacies were related. R. W. Dale's principle that the more fully the objective character and efficacy of the cross is realised so much the greater will be its subjective effects,<sup>43</sup> holds true also for the O.T. sacrifices. The measure of the objective weakness of the system was the measure also of its failure to give true subjective satisfaction.

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<sup>41</sup> Because they find their most characteristic expression respectively in the priestly and sacrificial regulations of the Pentateuch and in the books of the prophets.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. H. H. Rowley, *The Rediscovery of the Old Testament*, London, 1945, 109-113.

<sup>43</sup> R. W. Dale, *The Atonement*, London, 1887, li.

Did they effect nothing then? Their true function was provisional, for they were 'imposed until the time of reformation' (ix. 9f). We might liken them to modern banknotes for they could be estimated either in terms of their real or of their symbolic value. Their real value as sacrifices for sin was absolutely nothing, but they symbolised and typified the sacrifice which was to come. It was this which gave them their symbolic value. They were, in a sense, means of grace through which the efficacy of the true and eternal sacrifice could be channelled to O.T. worshippers, for they, like the cross which they typified, spoke of the grace of the God who gave both them and It (cf. Lev. xvii. 11, Rom. iii. 25). They were provisional means of fellowship with God, the true ground of which was the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. ix. 15).

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The same thought of the eternal character of the cross and so of its retrospective effects is set forth in other passages. Christ is 'the propitiation for our sins' (Rom. iii. 25 A.V. and R.V.),<sup>44</sup> set forth by God. 'This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus'. (Rom. iii. 25f). The idea of the predestination of the cross (Acts ii. 23, 1 Pet. i. 20) suggests an eternal plan<sup>45</sup> and therefore an effectiveness of the atoning work at Calvary which could afford the basis for God's dealings with men in every age.

An interesting question now suggests itself. If all who experience salvation in every age do so on the basis of one great deed in history, what difference did the actual historical event of Calvary make to those who were born before it took place? The Writer to the Hebrews seems to suggest that it made a very real difference. Westcott, on Hebrews xi. 40, says, 'It was His purpose that the final consummation should be for all together, as indeed it is of all, in Christ; so that no one part of the Body can, if we realise the meaning of the figure, gain its fulfilment independently. The consummation of all the saints therefore followed upon the completion of Christ's work, the accomplishment by Him of the destiny of man, though fallen.'<sup>46</sup> The complete fulfilment for the Christian is not related to death per se but rather to resurrection at the return of Christ (2 Cor. v. 1ff), although death itself is viewed as entrance into blissful fellowship with Christ.<sup>47</sup> Likewise the O.T. saints, although blessed, could not enjoy the complete fulfilment of all for which they looked until the coming of Him who was the Substance of all that they knew in shadow. Perhaps an earnest of this appears in the mysterious event recorded in Matthew xxvii. 51-54. It is clear enough that although those referred to here did not emerge from their graves until after our Lord's resurrection, Matthew intends us to understand that their emergence was an effect of the rending of the veil, or rather an effect of that spiritual reality which this symbolised. The veil itself may be thought of as testifying to the imperfection of the O.T. system, and those who were raised from the dead were probably O.T. saints.

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<sup>44</sup> For the reasons for preferring the A.V. and R.V. rendering to the R.S.V. or N.E.B. vide J. C. Connell, 'The Propitiatory Element in the Atonement' in *Vox Evangelica*, 1965 [[http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol04/atonement\\_connell.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol04/atonement_connell.pdf)], and Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, London, 1955, chs. 4 and 5. *contra* C. H. Dodd, *Epistle to the Romans*, London, 1932.

<sup>45</sup> Perhaps also Rev. xiii. 8, although the interpretation of this verse is disputed; cf. A.V. and R.S.V. renderings.

<sup>46</sup> B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 3rd edn. 1903, *in loc.*

<sup>47</sup> Phil. i. 23, 2 Cor. v. 8.

We need not pursue this subject down all the lanes along which it has been pursued in the past (including the interpretation of Ephesians iv 8-10).<sup>48</sup> However, it is not surprising that at least some token of the retrospective effects of Christ's work should have appeared once that work had been completed.

## V. SALVATION IN THE O.T.—THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

This is one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most difficult aspects of our theme.<sup>49</sup>

In the N.T. the work of the Holy Spirit is intimately related to that of Christ. It is His concern to apply Christ's work and so to effect subjectively the salvation which Christ's work secured objectively.<sup>50</sup> Especially, He is seen to be at work in regeneration,<sup>51</sup> the creation of that new inward life which is the experience of the N.T. believer. Regeneration is the first and decisive stage in sanctification, which may itself be viewed as positional (and so as virtually equivalent to justification)<sup>52</sup> or as practical (and so progressive).<sup>53</sup> All this is the work of the Holy Spirit, working sovereignly in the hearts of men and women.

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Leaving aside passages which are distinctively predictive of the new order of things which was to come in the Messianic era, we notice that the teaching of the O.T. about the work of the Spirit does not normally relate to the experience of personal salvation. He is seen as the Spirit of prophetic inspiration,<sup>54</sup> and He equipped God's people for service for Him, by giving them wisdom and gifts of craftsmanship and using them as channels of His power.<sup>55</sup> Does this mean that the O.T. saints were unregenerate? By no means! If regeneration means a new life of godliness, in which true love for God and for man finds expression, then we cannot limit it to the N.T. As J. E. Cumming puts it, 'It cannot be maintained that, in respect of personal holiness, there is any radical difference between the saints of Old Testament and New Testament times. The best men of the older economy have no reason to fear comparison with the best of the later.'<sup>56</sup> If faith is a gift of God and evidence of the inner working of the Spirit,<sup>57</sup> and if the men of the O.T. were justified by faith, it is hard to resist the inference that they were regenerate.

So much we may infer, but is there explicit teaching on the subject? It may be that 'the same spirit of faith' in 2 Cor. iv. 13 is a reference to the divine Spirit,<sup>58</sup> in which case Paul is saying

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<sup>48</sup> Some of the Fathers understood this passage to teach that Christ led the O.T. saints from She'ol to Heaven in virtue of His descent into She'ol-Hades and His ascent into heaven, but the interpretation is dubious.

<sup>49</sup> For a fuller discussion of this aspect of the subject cf. J. C. J. Waite, *The Activity of the Holy Spirit within the Old Testament Period*, London Bible College Annual Lecture, 1961.

<sup>50</sup> John vii. 37-41, xvi. 7, Acts ii. 33, Gal. iii. 13f, iv. 4-6.

<sup>51</sup> Jn. iii. 5ff, Rom. viii. 9f, etc.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. 1 Cor. i. 2, 30, 2 Thess. ii. 13.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. 1 Thess. iv. 3, v. 23.

<sup>54</sup> Num. xxiv. 2, 1 Sam. x. 6ff, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, Mic. iii. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Exod. xxxi. 3, Jud. vi. 34.

<sup>56</sup> *Through the Eternal Spirit*, Stirling, 1937, 67.

<sup>57</sup> Acts xxiii. 27, Eph. ii. 8 (where probably the whole fact of salvation-by grace through faith is attributed to the Divine gift).

<sup>58</sup> But contrast P. E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, London, 1962, *ad. loc.*

that our faith is the product of the same Spirit Who was at work in the author of Psalm cxvi. 10. Psalm li. 11 is probably a reference to the events recorded in 1 Samuel xvi. 13f, and constitutes a plea that David should not be removed from the kingly office for which the Spirit had anointed him and so become another Saul. However, it is noteworthy that the divine Spirit is here called 'holy', that the Psalm concerns David's consciousness of sin and that this passage is itself immediately preceded by the words, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me',<sup>59</sup> words which call to mind Ezekiel xxxvi. 26f, with its promise of an inner sanctifying work of God. Isaiah ixiii. 10f is certainly concerned with God's dealings with the nation as such by His Spirit rather than with individuals, but it is noteworthy that it entitles Him 'His Holy Spirit', and the idea there of grieving the Holy Spirit through sin is probably reflected in the terminology of Ephesians iv. 30.

On the other hand, there are passages in the N.T. which might suggest that He had not been given to men in the O.T., in fact that He had not been given even during the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, but that His advent took place at Pentecost. These are quite considerable in number: Matthew iii. 11 (and parallels), John i. 33, vii. 37-39, xiv. 16f, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7-15, Acts i. 4-8, xi. 15f, xv. 8. This is an impressive array of passages and certainly suggests that at Pentecost something of distinctive importance occurred. However, Psalm li. is itself sufficient to cause us to query the apparent absoluteness of some of these passages. Moreover, there are a number of passages in the gospels which seem to imply a personal activity of the Spirit in the hearts of the disciples. John iii. 5-8 certainly suggests this, and perhaps Matthew x. 20, Luke xi. 13 and xii. 12, although it could perhaps be argued that the teaching given in this last group of passages is given in anticipation of Pentecost. John xiv 17. is of special importance. Here, speaking to the disciples about the Spirit, our Lord says ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῶν μένει, καὶ ἐν ὑμῶν ἔσται.<sup>60</sup> παρα here does not denote a merely fluctuating relationship, for the same preposition is employed in xiv. 23 of the abiding of the Father and the Son in them. It is doubtful if our Lord intended a contrast at this point. It is more likely that He desired to assure them that the

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One of whom He spoke was no stranger to them. He was going to indwell them in a new way, but this does not mean that He had not been present with them in a real sense already.

What then is the meaning of the large group of passages which appear to suggest that Pentecost represented the Spirit's advent into the world? Three things need to be said in this connection:

**(i) *There was need for a singular exhibition of the dependence of the work of the Spirit upon Christ's work***

Just as men of all ages are saved on the basis of the objective work of Christ, so they are saved also by the subjective work of the Spirit. However, there is an important difference between the work of these two divine Persons. The work of Christ was effected in a great historical event—the cross—although we must remember the importance of His life as giving value to His death, and His resurrection as the divine seal upon it. The work of the Spirit,

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<sup>59</sup> Ps. li.10.

<sup>60</sup> N.B. the variant reading ἐστὶ for ἔσται and the comment in Westcott, *The Gospel of St. John*, London, 1908, *ad. loc.*

however, is a distributive one, being effected by Him in the hearts of all kinds of men at many different periods in history. The one was climactic and finished while the other is occasional and distributive. However, different in nature as they are, it is important to notice that the one depended upon the other—and Pentecost is the evidence of this. It is the fact that in the economy of God it was necessary to demonstrate the dependence of the Spirit's work upon that of the Son which gives Pentecost its special place of importance. It is difficult to see how it could be shown that Christ's work was the objective ground of the Spirit's work without some singular exhibition of the Spirit's activity after the finished work of Christ and yet close enough to it for men to read the lesson of it. In short, Pentecost has evidential value. Note the close link between the work of the two Persons in passages like John vii. 37-39, Acts ii. 33, Galatians iii. 13-14, iv. 4ff, Hebrews ii. 3f.

In the old economy, the feast of Pentecost had a special relationship to that of the Passover. The former was dated by counting seven weeks from the latter.<sup>61</sup> Why were the disciples told to tarry in Jerusalem? Whatever other reasons there may or may not have been for this, in the economy of God they were waiting for the coming of a certain day, the day of the feast of Pentecost, which was to be marked by a great event because of its symbolic significance.

Smeaton,<sup>62</sup> quotes Goodwin as saying, concerning the Holy Spirit, 'He must have a coming in state, in solemn and visible manner, accompanied with visible effects as well as Christ had, and whereof all the Jews should be, and were, witnesses.'<sup>63</sup> Smeaton himself declares, 'The Christian economy was inaugurated amid supernatural manifestations which could not be questioned. When the reality came, the shadow passed away. The Jewish economy gave place before that which was to comprehend all nations. Now the New Covenant founded on better promises began (Jer. xxxi. 31, Ezek. xxxvi. 25).'<sup>64</sup>

The close of this quotation from Smeaton leads us on to the next point:

**(ii) *The work of the Spirit was broader after Pentecost***

Peter pointed, to the Prophecy of Joel ii. 28-32 as fulfilled at Pentecost. The Spirit was being poured out upon 'all flesh'. This O.T. expression, when used, as here, of human life, usually refers to all mankind without racial distinction

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(Gen. vi. 13f, Num. xvi. 22, xxvii.16, Deut. v. 26, Isa. xlix. 26, lxvi. 16, 23f, Jer. xxv. 31, xxxii. 27, xlv. 5). It is not often that the context even allows the phrase to be restricted to all Israel, although this is possible in passages like Psalm lxv. 3, Isa. xl. 5, Ezek. xxi. 4f. It is true that all who were at Pentecost were either Jews or proselytes (who were Jews by religion) but they were mostly from the countries of the Dispersion and so may well have symbolised the extension of the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Spirit beyond Palestine. It is quite probable that Luke had in mind a contrast between the scattering of the peoples at Babel and their gathering together at Pentecost (cf. especially Acts ii. 6 and Gen. xi. 8f).

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<sup>61</sup> Deut. xvi. 9f.

<sup>62</sup> G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, London, 1958, 49.

<sup>63</sup> T. Goodwin, *Works*, Edinburgh, 1861, vi. 8.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.* 49; cf. R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, London, 1901, 152.

This experience was described by our Lord prior to its occurrence as baptism by the Holy Spirit (Acts i. 4, cf. Matt. iii. 11, Jn. i. 33). This expression occurs once only in the epistles, in 1 Corinthians xii. 11ff, and here it is referred to as an experience of all and as having special reference to incorporation in the body of Christ, the Church. Hence a new situation is now contemplated. In the O.T. the 'church' was purely national, and there was an 'Israel within Israel', while in the N.T. the whole body is regenerate and it is composed of men and women of every nation.

It is this work of the Spirit in bringing together, through Christ, men and women of every nation, which supplies the key to a number of passages in the Acts of the Apostles. In connection with these it is important to bear in mind the evidential character of the tongues and other manifestations on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 33). In these early days there were some very powerful prejudices to be broken down. Acts viii. records the conversion of the Samaritans. It appears that the Holy Spirit did not come upon them at once. This might suggest that their experience was not distinctively and fully Christian at the first.<sup>65</sup> Peter and John were sent down to Samaria, and the Spirit was given to them in connection with the laying on of their hands. How appropriate that this should be delayed until the official representatives of the Jewish church had expressed their identification with these Samaritan converts in such an intimate way! The natural antipathy which prevailed between Jew and Samaritan might well have led to the creation of a separate Samaritan church which could have grown increasingly far away from that in Judaea. In this way, however, both groups would have clear evidence from God that He intended them to belong to each other in the one body of Christ.

Acts x. tells of the first reception of the Gospel by Gentiles (apart from the proselytes of Acts ii who would be regarded as Jews from the religious standpoint). If there was a barrier between Jew and Samaritan, so there was also between Jew and Gentile. What Peter and the other Jewish Christians in their natural conservatism would need was some evidence that the Gentiles were going to be received by God on exactly the same basis as themselves. This was supplied by the repetition of the Pentecostal tongues. Acts x. 46 makes it clear that Peter and the other Jewish believers present read aright the evidential significance of the tongues which were the immediate sign of the Spirit's work at that time. In their case, incidentally, it is clear that the baptism of the Spirit coincided with conversion.<sup>66</sup> Here Peter was used, in accordance with the predictive words of Jesus,<sup>67</sup> to open the door of the kingdom and of faith to the Gentiles through his preaching of the gospel, and here too, a supernatural act of God prevented the setting up of a separate Gentile Church. Peter himself showed at the Council of Jerusalem that he had fully understood the significance of these events (Acts xv. 7-11).

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Acts xix. lff is a rather more difficult passage. It should be noted, however, that just as the Samaritans and the Gentiles were groups of special importance, who needed to be incorporated in the one body in association with supernatural evidence, so the followers of John the Baptist could be thought of in this way also. It has been suggested that the Mandaean religious group in Iraq had its remote origin in the work of John the Baptist and that its early

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. N. B. Stonehouse, 'Repentance, Baptism and the Gift of the Holy Spirit', in *Paul before the Areopagus*, London, 1957.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

<sup>67</sup> Mt. xvi. 19.

members had an antipathy to Jesus. The history of Mandaeism is very difficult to unravel and many scholars doubt whether it existed in the early Christian centuries at all.<sup>68</sup> However, the very suggestion illustrates the possibility that a group could have arisen, composed of John's followers who were not on good terms with those who gave him only a subordinate place of importance as the forerunner of the Christ. Such a group could perhaps have maintained itself as a distinct entity without ever coming into association with the main body of the Christian Church at all. As the forerunner of the Christ, his work was of intention an anticipatory and incomplete one, for it was to find its fulfilment in the work of the Christ. It was indeed he who had spoken of the Christ as the One who should baptise with the Holy Spirit. In Acts xix. then, a group of those who had welcomed the promise but had never known its realisation came into that realisation, and, in that very event, they too were joined to the same body. Thus the faithfulness of God was demonstrated.

In 1 Corinthians xii. 13, Paul refers to the breaking down of the barriers between different groups, and his language is suggestive of the very phenomena which the Acts presents to us. However, his language there with its implication that all to whom he wrote had been baptised by the Spirit into the body, suggests that this is now to be equated with entry into the body through regeneration. If the four groups of Acts ii., Acts viii., Acts x. and Acts xix. are representative groups, then there would seem to be no need for the repetition of the evidential phenomena. The truth of the one body, once demonstrated in each representative case, required no further demonstration, and the Spirit in His fulness was now to be the portion of every Christian believer from the beginning of his life in Christ.

### **(iii) *The work of the Spirit was also deeper after Pentecost***

A rather neglected aspect of the teaching of the N.T. about the Holy Spirit is the fact that, from Pentecost onwards, He was experienced by believers as the Spirit of Christ. In O.T. prophecy the coming king was to be a Spirit-anointed Figure. He was to have the Spirit in all His sevenfold fulness upon Him (Isa. xi. 1ff, cf. Rev. i. 4, iii. 1, iv. 5, v. 6 and perhaps Jn. iii. 34). The N.T. writers give the Spirit a number of titles which link him with Jesus Christ in some special way. He is 'the Spirit of Christ' (Rom. viii. 9), 'the Spirit of Jesus' (Acts xvi. 7), 'the Spirit of Jesus Christ' (Phil. i. 19) and 'the Spirit of (God's) Son' (Gal. iv. 6).

What is the special significance of this? The Spirit's indwelling of the disciples from the day of Pentecost differed from all previous experience of the Spirit. His activity was now related—in the minds of those who experienced Him thus—to the life and character of the Lord Jesus, with Whom they had companied in the days of His flesh. He was His Spirit, and He was seeking to bring them into conformity to His pattern (2 Cor. iii. 18). In His sanctifying work the Spirit calls for the co-operation of the renewed will of man, which He has Himself set free for co-operation in this way. Now the extent of this co-operation is at least partly dependent upon the extent to which a revelation of the holy standards which God

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has set for men has been given. Never have God's standards for man's life been made known in such a searching and challenging way as in the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Thus the possibilities of godliness of life and conduct are seen now more clearly than ever before, Moreover, the very revelation of the possibilities was at the same time a

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<sup>68</sup> E.g. C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*

revelation of the way to the actualisation of these possibilities, for the Christ was to give to His Church the very Spirit who had indwelt Him and in whose power He had lived such a life.<sup>69</sup> Hence, it was highly appropriate that such a deepening of the work of the Spirit in the disciples should have its commencement on the day of Pentecost.

Hence we may say that the full N.T. experience of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ from Pentecost onwards is at one with that of the true saints of the O.T. in that it was always a regenerating experience, bringing men to newness of life, but that there is an important difference. It is not simply that the Spirit now operates on the basis of the perfect character of Jesus. Presumably He had already done this in anticipation even in the O.T. Rather it is that He operates on the basis of that character as now *revealed historically* and so held before the minds of those who now experienced His activity in their hearts.<sup>70</sup> For example, men in O.T. days had the command of God to love Him and to love the neighbour. However, our Lord had said, 'a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.' (John xiii. 34). The standard of love in the O.T. was given in legal form. This was itself, of course, both valid and necessary. There was, too, a partial realisation of it in those who, in character, were partial and very imperfect anticipations of the Holy One to come.<sup>71</sup> Now, however, the standard has been perfectly revealed in the activity of a Person. Love (which is the primary fruit of the Spirit in Galatians v. 22) finds its perfect pattern in the love shown by Him, and all this through the Spirit who is the Spirit of love for the very reason that He is the Spirit of the Christ.

## VI. SALVATION IN THE O.T.—BY FAITH

Thus far we have considered salvation as a divine activity in the O.T. It is salvation by the grace of God, through the work of Christ, effected subjectively by the work of the Holy Spirit. We now consider it as a human experience, an apprehension of the grace of God by faith.

It is clearly stated in the N.T. that the godly men of the O.T. were saved by faith (Rom. iv., Gal. iii. 6ff, Heb. xi., Jas. ii. 22f.) It is evident, too, that not all those who experienced the outward salvation of the nation from enemies and especially from the bondage in Egypt had a personal experience of spiritual salvation (1 Cor. x. 1-5, Rom. ii. 28f, ix. 6ff, Heb. iii. 16ff). Moreover there are N.T. passages interpreting the O.T. in which repentance (which in the N.T. is so often conjoined with faith)<sup>72</sup> is seen in men of the O.T. (e.g. Matt. xii. 38ff).

In the N.T., faith is trust in Christ<sup>73</sup> or trust in God through Christ.<sup>74</sup> As we have seen, Christ is presented in the N.T. as the one way to God, and is proclaimed to men for faith (Jn. xiv. 6, Acts iv. 12). It is clear, moreover, that it is Christ who determines everything in the relations of God and men not only for men of the N.T. era but of every age.<sup>75</sup> What then was the function of faith for the men of the O.T. and how is it related to Christian faith in the strict sense? The writers of the N.T. clearly viewed the O.T. as a Christ-centred book,<sup>76</sup> and we shall need to ask

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<sup>69</sup> A comparison of the references to the Spirit in Luke's two volumes illustrates this.

<sup>70</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. David: Ps. xvi. 10, Acts ii. 25ff, xiii. 35.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Mk. i. 15, Acts xi. 17f, xx. 21.

<sup>73</sup> Jn. iii. 16, Rom. iii. 22, etc.

<sup>74</sup> Jn. v. 24, 1 Pet. i. 21.

<sup>75</sup> *Vide supra*, 15.

<sup>76</sup> Lk. xxiv. 25ff, 44ff, Jn. v. 46f, Acts xvii. 2f, Rom. iii. 21, 2 Cor. i. 20, etc.



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how they understood Christ to have been set forth in it. If there had been some anticipatory disclosure of Him in the O.T. itself it is clear that this may point us to an answer to our problem.

It has been customary for the anticipation of Christ in the O.T. to be viewed chiefly in terms of type and prophecy. It is true that typology was viewed with considerable suspicion a few decades ago, but it has now come back into its own in a more restrained form.<sup>77</sup> The usual approach has been recently challenged, however, by A. T. Hanson in his book 'Jesus Christ in the Old Testament'.<sup>78</sup> Hanson considers that the N.T. writers, although occasionally interpreting the O.T. in theological fashion and rather more frequently in terms of predictive prophecy, were dominated in their minds by another concept: the real presence of Jesus Christ already during the O.T. period. This feature of the N.T. understanding of the O.T. has long been accepted on the basis of passages such as John xii. 37-41 and 1 Cor. x. 1-13. Some have also seen the 'angel of Yahweh' in the O.T. as pre-incarnate manifestations of the Second Person of the Trinity.<sup>79</sup> However, Hanson would have us see the 'real presence' in the O.T. on a very much more extensive scale than this. He sees this to be the characteristic way in which the N.T. writers thought of the testimony of the O.T. to Christ, although he does not himself pronounce on the validity of such a hermeneutical principle. His book merits a detailed discussion, which it is beyond the scope of this lecture to undertake. The impression left on this reader, however, is that he has considerably overstated his case, and that there seems no adequate reason for abandoning the view that the N.T. writers usually saw Christ in the O.T. in types and prophecies and only occasionally as a real Presence. We shall assume this for the purposes of this lecture. In any case, even if Hanson's thesis were to be acceptable, we would still be faced by the question, Were such appearances in the O.T. known to the men who experienced them as pre-incarnate appearances of the Christ of prophecy, the Second Person of the Trinity? It seems very probable that the answer is 'No!' The men of the O.T. were probably conscious simply of contact with the living God Himself. It is the N.T. writer who perceives (because of his theological standpoint) that the One who manifested Himself in this way was the One Who has since become known to men as the Son of God.

The O.T. prophecies and types are both represented within the O.T. itself as of divine origin. T. C. Vriezen, writing of the relation of Christ to the Kingdom of God, says, 'The Kingdom of God is more than Christ, as the N.T. plainly testifies, as He Himself testifies first of all.... But the Kingdom of God never exists for us in a real sense without Him. That which was before Him was a shadow of the coming Kingdom of God, at best existing in hope, but not in real form (Matt. xi. 11ff, xiii. 17). What is revealed in the O.T. has a twofold form: the form of eschatological expectation and shadowy image of Israelite institutions.'<sup>80</sup>

First of all, we will examine the types and shadows, the 'Israelite institutions', to which Vriezen refers. The basic standpoint from which these must be approached is that of the

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe, *Essays in Typology*, London, 1957, and books listed under note 1. Cf. also the less restrained typology of L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ*, London, 1942, and *The Dominion of Christ*, London, 1952.

<sup>78</sup> *Vide* note 1.

<sup>79</sup> A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh, 1904, 296-300.

<sup>80</sup> 'Theocracy and Soteriology' in *Essays* (edit. C. Westermann), 221.

covenant. God's covenant with Israel was, in essence, a gracious relationship between Himself and the people. This means, therefore, that in its innermost essence it was spiritual. God was their God and they were His people. However, in the context of this covenant, God gave to His people certain outward blessings: a land, a law, a sacrificial system with a tabernacle (later a temple) and a priesthood associated with it. In the land itself there were many blessings

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in terms of safety from foes and the enjoyment of the fruit of the ground, etc. Within the land, they were to celebrate certain great feasts which had reference to great events in the history of God's dealings with them nationally in salvation. In the N.T. these external things are used very widely in order to describe the spiritual blessings of the gospel. Christ is the great sacrifice for sins,<sup>81</sup> the great High Priest,<sup>82</sup> the Tabernacle of God,<sup>83</sup> the Temple of God<sup>84</sup>; in Him we have a great inheritance,<sup>85</sup> a kind of spiritual Caanan in which we may dwell and find rest;<sup>86</sup> in Christ the law of God is written upon fleshy tables of the heart.<sup>87</sup> This means that all these are employed in the N.T. as terminological vehicles for setting forth spiritual realities.

This raises the fascinating question as to whether these outward institutions were viewed as pointing towards spiritual realities even within the O.T. economy itself? There are indications that the N.T. writers believed that they were. The patriarchs looked for a heavenly country (Heb. xi. 13-16) and not merely for an earthly fulfilment of their hopes. David, in Psalm xcvi, written so many years after the entry into Canaan, made known God's word to the people in which He called them to seek not simply the physical rest in Canaan but a spiritual rest in Himself (Heb. iii. 6—iv. 10). These passages suggest that some at least in the O.T. looked beyond the material realm to a place of abiding test with God, which was, let us remember, basic to the very covenant itself. The covenant was a relationship with God initiated by Himself, and the point of our argument is that this relationship was itself greater than any of the material gifts associated with it. The idea of a spiritual inheritance emerges within the O.T. and perhaps has its basis in the fact that one of the tribes—the Levites—did not have any earthly inheritance in the way that the other tribes did. God was their inheritance (Deut. xviii. 1f, Ezek. xliv. 28). This thought of an inheritance in God is taken up, too, in some of the psalms (Pss. xvi. 5f, lxxiii. 26, cxix. 57, cxlii. 5).

We might see, perhaps, the true inwardness and spirituality to which the whole O.T. economy pointed in certain significant facts. There seems to be a principle inherent in the O.T. system in which a spiritual 'part' throws light upon the truly spiritual significance of a 'whole' which, in form, has reference to the outward. The spiritual inheritance of the Levites as one of the twelve tribes is a case in point, illustrating the fact that the whole nation should find its inheritance not simply in fields and cattle and houses but in God. The law of the tithe points toward the consecration of all the fruit of the land to God. The tenth commandment does not concern simply outward deed but inner motive<sup>88</sup> and points in the direction of a revelation of

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<sup>81</sup> Jn. i. 29, Rom. viii. 3, Heb. i. 3, 1 Jn. ii. 2, etc.

<sup>82</sup> Especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews; cf. also Jn. xvii. 19, Rom viii. 34, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 1 Jn. ii. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Jn. i. 14.

<sup>84</sup> Jn. ii. 19ff, Rev. xxi. 22.

<sup>85</sup> Eph. i. 14, 1 Pet. i. 4.

<sup>86</sup> Eph. i. 3, Heb. iv. 9f.

<sup>87</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 3, Eph. vi. 6, Heb. viii. 8ff, x. 15ff.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Rom. vii. 7.

the spirituality of the whole law as suggested in our Lord's exposition of it in the sermon on the mount. The Sabbath was perhaps intended to point the discerning to the fact that all time was to be viewed as the gift of God, to be used for Him. In this way, God was seeking to lead His people from the merely outward to the inward and spiritual, and the N.T. emphasis upon the spiritual simply completes what was already indicated in this way in the O.T.<sup>89</sup>

Much of Israel's folly was due to the fact that she treated what was really 'sacramental' as an end in itself, and did not penetrate by faith to that which lay beyond it—the spiritual reality. So 'she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Baal.' (Hos. ii. 8). It is for this reason that the prophets inveigh against the attitude of so many of the people towards the sacrifices. It

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was for the same reason that our Lord took issue with the Pharisees who imagined that they could be justified in God's sight by outward conformity to the precepts of the law, when the attitude of the O.T. believer towards it was in perfect line with the N.T. principle that it is love which fulfils the law (Ps. exix. 97 and indeed the whole Psalm, cf. Deut. vi. 5, Lev. xix. 18, Lk. x. 25-28, Rom. xiii. 8-10, Gal. v. 14, Jas. ii. 8).

Faith, then, found its expression as it laid hold of these external forms and perceived in them spiritual realities. As in the case of our Lord's parables, it was very much a matter for the man of the O.T. of 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!' Perhaps what our Lord was saying to Nicodemus (Jn. iii. 10) was that he should have perceived the truth of regeneration in this way through the reading of the O.T. No doubt the form of the O.T. 'channel of grace' would affect the use of the language of the man of faith in his description of the spiritual reality he perceived in it. This may explain why the language forms of the O.T. in reference to salvation are still used in the inspired utterances of the godly as recorded in Luke i. and ii. It may be that this, far from being evidence of a deficiency of faith or a worldly conception of messiahship, was the expression of faith in spiritual salvation, but couched in the material and external terms of the O.T. economy. In Colossians ii. 16f, after making reference to O.T. forms and institutions of an outward kind, Paul says that these are 'a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.' We have seen good reason to believe that a substance which, even if not Christological, was at least spiritual was perceivable even in O.T. days in these outward forms of the O.T. dispensation, of the old covenant.

From the 'Israelite institutions' we pass now to the 'eschatological expectation', from the types to the prophecies. The main difference between the types and the prophecies lies in the fact that in the types faith lays hold on an invisible through visible realities ('the conviction of things not seen'), while in the prophecies it lays hold on a future through a present reality ('the assurance of things hoped for').<sup>90</sup> Not surprisingly, Hebrews xi. gives us examples of both. We have the witness of the N.T. to the fact that the final reality is both heavenly and

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<sup>89</sup> It should be noted as H. Wolff rightly reminds us that the N.T. nowhere gives us the impression that material things are outside the scope of true religion: 'The Hermeneutics of the O.T.', in *Essays* (edit. C. Westermann), 176f.

<sup>90</sup> Heb. xi. 1.

eschatological, both invisible and future.<sup>91</sup> Both aspects of this ultimate reality seem to have been revealed to O.T. faith at its best.

In the O.T. the eschatological expectation, being prophecy, is therefore promise. To receive promises and to rest upon them in confidence, is really to hope. Hope, in fact, may be viewed as a special form of faith, in which the believer appropriates things which belong to the future but which are promised by the God who is Lord both of the future and of the present. The N.T. itself gives us the impression that many of those who encountered the Christ when He came were themselves men of hope. They were looking for 'the consolation of Israel' (Lk. ii. 25), 'the redemption of Jerusalem' (Lk. ii. 38), 'the kingdom of God' (Lk. xxiii. 51). Here, too, incidentally, we find the form of these expectations couched in the language of the O.T. dispensation. This does not mean, however, that these men actually looked for a merely outward kingdom, although, as in the case of the disciples, their expectation may have been only imperfectly spiritual. Moreover, Jesus Himself said that many prophets and wise men longed to see the things which it had been granted to the disciples to see (Mt. xiii. 16f, cf. 1 Pet. i. 10-12, Heb. xi. 39f). They looked forward to the very realities which are now the possession of N.T. believers, to the realisation of righteousness, peace, salvation, redemption,

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in Christ. All these belong to the eschatological hope in the O.T.<sup>92</sup> and find realisation in Christ.<sup>93</sup>

This does not mean, of course, that the eschatological hope in the O.T. finds complete and unsurpassable fulfilment in Christ's first advent.<sup>94</sup> In his sermons, Peter declared that the promises of God related to the work of Christ (Acts iii. 24-26), the work of the Spirit (Acts ii. 33, 39) and the Second Advent (Acts iii. 19-21). The first two of these belong, of course, to the realm of realised eschatology, but not the third. It needs to be made clear, however, that the realised aspects are continuous with the unrealised, that the second advent will be the consummation of that which came to some realisation in the first.<sup>95</sup> If there is to be any fulfilment on an earthly level—which may, perhaps, be suggested by the idea of a 'new heaven and a new earth'<sup>96</sup>—this will not involve a reversal of the heavenly and spiritual realisation in Christ. It will rather be the transforming of the earthly by the heavenly, a union perhaps of the one with the other in some mysterious way, just as the resurrection results in a 'body' which is 'spiritual' and yet which is still rightly described as a 'body' (1 Cor. xv. 35ff, cf. Rom. viii. 15-25). This would mean then that the final fulfilment both of the invisible 'Substance' of the visible 'Shadows' (strange reversal of terminology!) and also of the eschatological consummation of the historical prophecies would be a spiritual one. Yet this fulfilment might well do justice to all that was best in the earthly and physical, so that, in this way also, the whole provisional dispensation would find 'fulfilment' in the end.

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<sup>91</sup> E.g. 2 Cor. iv. 16-18.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. Isa. xi. 1ff, xii. 1ff, xxxv. 1ff.

<sup>93</sup> E.g. Mt. i. 21, Acts x. 36, Rom. iii. 21-26.

<sup>94</sup> Even in the Gospel of John, where there is a strong emphasis upon the realised aspect of eschatology, there are passages which look to a future consummation: e.g. Jn. vi. 40, 44, 54.

<sup>95</sup> E.g. note the emphasis upon 'eternal life' as future in the Synoptic Gospels and as present in the Fourth Gospel, and yet the same phrase is used in each connection.

<sup>96</sup> Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22, 2 Pet. iii. 13, Rev. xxi. 1.

Now in the O.T. faith, whether focussed upon type or upon prophecy, is only true faith if it is faith in *God*. Moreover, implicitly this faith was faith in *Christ* and this for two reasons. It was faith in Christ, first of all, because it was faith in God, the God who was later to be revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although He is only revealed as triune in the N.T., this is a revelation of what God is eternally, and so wherever there is faith in the true God this is an implicit faith in Christ. This is not to say that it was a conscious faith in Christ. John viii. 56 may suggest that in Abraham's case it was even consciously so,<sup>97</sup> but we cannot be sure that this is the meaning of it. In any case, we cannot universalise a single statement such as this. Secondly, it was faith in Christ because it was faith in God through institutions and promises which are themselves viewed in the N.T. as pointing to Christ. It was faith in God through means of grace, which pointed to the great Means of Grace who was at once also the God of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Hence, whether we approach the matter from the standpoint of our Lord's deity or from His messiahship, we see that O.T. faith in God is implicitly faith in Christ.

In each case, too, we see faith as the correlative of revelation, and that revelation both personal and propositional. It was personal in that God disclosed Himself and not simply truths about Himself, and so faith could embrace Him in trust. It was also propositional, for it was response to God as He made Himself known in *His promises*. The institutions of Israel are set forth in the O.T. in the word of the Law, while the eschatological promises in the word of the prophets. The revelation of grace whether in Law or Prophets is therefore cast in verbal form and so the word is the means of grace in both cases.<sup>98</sup> In the N.T., too, of course, we find that the verbal interpretation given first by our Lord Himself and then in the apostolic tradition is an integral part of that full revelation in Christ.

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What then is the difference between O.T. and N.T. faith? Why does Paul characterise the N.T. dispensation as that in which 'faith' has come (Gal. iii. 25)? He seems to mean that it is the era in which the Object of faith—i.e. Jesus Christ—has come. In this indeed he perhaps discloses his conviction that what constitutes the real differentiating principle between one 'faith' and another is the object of the 'faith'.<sup>99</sup> Hence, O.T. faith was faith in the type or the prophecy, while N.T. faith is faith in the Fulfilment. Indeed, to phrase it even more carefully, in the O.T. faith was in the God of the type or the prophecy, while in the N.T. it is in the God who became incarnate as the fulfilment. Christ came in order to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs (Rom. xv. 7ff, cf. 2 Cor. i. 20). Hence the N.T. writers treat O.T. and N.T. faith as continuous with each other, despite their difference, and we ourselves are conscious of a sense of spiritual kinship with Abraham, David and others. It is in this connection that we notice a great difference between the religious leaders of Israel in our Lord's day and the simplehearted people among whom He was born and reared. The religious leaders would not come to Him to receive life for they had not really believed the witness of the former revelation (Jn. v. 45-47, cf. Lk. xvi. 29-31 and perhaps Lk. xxiv. 25). These simple godly people, on the other hand, had a simple faith in God, so that their hearts, already open in faith to the God of the promises, opened wider still so naturally and spontaneously, to embrace Him also as the God of the fulfilment (Lk. i. and ii.).

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<sup>97</sup> Possibly it alludes to the Jewish tradition that Abraham saw the whole history of his descendants in a dream, cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N. T. aus Talmud and Midrash*, in loc.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. C. Westermann, 'The Way of Promise through the O.T.', in *Old Testament* (edit. B. W. Anderson), 215.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. F. Hesse, 'The Evaluation and the Authority of O.T. Texts', in *Essays* (edit. C. Westermann), 305.

On the other hand, the new order of things is also sometimes contrasted with the old. Indeed the very word 'new' in such an expression as 'the new covenant' along with the constant reiteration of the word 'better' in the Epistle to the Hebrews suggests a disjunction between the two orders. What can this mean? The 'newness' of the new covenant can only be relative and yet it is to be seen as a wonderful consummation of all that has gone before, just as the newborn flower is the fulfilment' of the seed, which both negates and fulfils itself in bringing it into being. Perhaps the most helpful analogy is one which H. Wolff<sup>100</sup> borrows from W. Zimmerli. In the words of the latter, 'Jesus Christ comes as the one who fulfils the O.T. proclamations... in the way that the promises of an engagement are 'fulfilled' in marriage, so that in the fulfilment all that was meant before, the promise, is made full.'<sup>101</sup> This illustration is capable of amplification. A man gives a woman his promise of marriage. She believes him and awaits trustfully the fulfilment of his word. In addition to the promise she has also the engagement ring—something substantial and material, like the types of the O.T. institutions—at which she may look and remember her beloved and his promise. She already enjoys a real relationship with him, yet, beautiful and wonderful as this is, it is incomplete, and it cannot give her that full satisfaction of her whole being which marriage will bring. So to her the marriage, although continuous with the engagement, will be the fulfilment of all that she has ever longed for, and so she will see it as something which is, paradoxically, both old and new. When she at last receives the wedding ring she will not discard the ring of engagement, but will retain it, as she retains the memory of his promises, as a sweet reminder that what he declared at the first he fulfilled in the fulness of time. So the faithful few, for some of whom life itself had been prolonged (Lk. ii. 26, 36f) that they might receive not only the promise but the fulfilment, hailed with a joy which almost burst their hearts the advent of the promised and typified Saviour. So the early Church,

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taught by the Spirit, treasured not only the 'wedding ring' of the New Testament but the 'engagement ring' of the Old, and placed them next to each other because of their conviction that the God of the promise was also the God of the fulfilment.

We may have here the key to some of the problems which the New Testament presents to the Christian theologian. Some of its characters<sup>102</sup> lived in a transition period, for they were men of faith who passed through three successive stages in which faith was deepened—first of all before Jesus called them, then during the days of His ministry, and finally, after the accomplishment of all the great Christian facts, in the Christ of fulfilment. They rested now upon Him as fully revealed through death and exaltation. Hence their faith passed through three successive stages. Our faith finds its model, of course, in the final stage, although it can find much to stimulate and challenge it in pondering the first two. Our faith, too, we should remember, still has an element of hope in it, for it awaits the Saviour as One who has come and yet who is to come again, when the final consummation, in which every last fragment of the promises is to be gathered up in fulfilment, will take place at the 'revelation of Jesus Christ'.

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<sup>100</sup> *Op. cit.* 160f.

<sup>101</sup> *Das Alte Testament als Anrede*, München, 1956, 81.

<sup>102</sup> Nathanael might be taken as an example: Jn. i. 43ff.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The N.T. shows that the two testaments are both continuous and discontinuous in their teaching on the subject of Divine revelation and human experience of the grace of God. They are discontinuous in that in the O.T. grace was mediated objectively through provisional means, which were destined to pass away because consummated and perfected in Christ, for He effected all that they symbolised. However, the grace that was so mediated was real and led to a true apprehension of salvation. Men were saved by faith, which when true never rested merely in the outward provision as such but in the God whose gift it was. This salvation was effected inwardly by the Holy Spirit, but their experience of Him was less conscious than that of the N.T. believer. Just as they were less conscious (or not conscious at all) of being saved by Christ so they were less conscious also of being saved by the Holy Spirit. This means that their experience of salvation was conditioned by the fact that the trinitarian nature of the Godhead had not been fully revealed. It has now been revealed, and so we know not only that we have been saved by the grace of God, but by the grace of that God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It was not until Pentecost that there was a full revelation of this fact, and so even the disciples during the earthly ministry of our Lord did not have a fully trinitarian experience in the sense of a fully conscious experience of the triune God in salvation. Each successive stage would result in a deepening of experience. One who was already conscious that he was saved by God's grace through faith would come to realise first of all that that salvation was mediated objectively through Christ and so his experience would be conditioned and deepened by conscious reliance upon the objective Saviour. After Pentecost he would realise also that it was subjectively effected by the indwelling Spirit, who was at once the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. So, by grace, he would come to see that the God with whom he had to do in a saving manner was, and indeed had been throughout his experience of Him, a triune God. What depths of experience are made possible by such a full revelation are disclosed to us in an epistle like that to the Ephesians.

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Because their God is our God also, we can still learn much from their experience of Him. Moreover, because the God whom the O.T. saints knew has now made Himself known more fully we now have a much more complete objective basis for our faith. When we consider Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures the Spirit, at work silently within our hearts, conforms us more and more to His image, to the glory of God the Father.