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SUMMARY (The Doctrine of the Descent into Hades...)

The Descent into Hades does not occupy a prominent place in the New Testament. Indeed, it is nowhere introduced for its own sake. Some passages, at times adduced as evidence for the New Testament doctrine of the Descent, are seen on close scrutiny to be quite irrelevant to the subject. Nevertheless, there is a variety of contexts which include the Descent either in plain statement or by implication. The doctrine of the Descent in the New Testament is meagre - if it can be said to exist at all. The New Testament, I submit, does not teach that souls were delivered from Hades by the descending Christ nor encourage its readers to believe that the Saviour preached the Gospel to the departed. The teaching may be reduced to three points: (1) The Descent in contrast to the Ascent emphasises the humanity and humility of Jesus. (2) The Descent is not, however, that of the vanquished; the lowest point of seeming defeat is the place of brilliant victory - Christus Patiens is Christus Victor. (3) The Descent serves to stress the reality of the Resurrection. In these ways the Descent-theme underscores the uniqueness of the Person of Christ.

(pp. 1-78)

Extra-biblical testimonies to the belief in the Descent are before the time of Irenaeus very diverse, as is only to be expected. Certain features, however, recur and begin to emerge as constant characteristics, viz., the conquest of Hades, the liberation of souls, and the preaching. (The beneficiaries are the righteous or some of the righteous.) These are taken up by Irenaeus and given definite, explicit mention as comprising the purpose and significance of the Descent. (p. 1)

By the third century the Descent holds an undisputed place in the Church's doctrine. In the West, in fact, the teaching is beginning to show a kind of fixity under the influence in particular of Tertullian and Hippolytus. The scope of its purpose and achievement is kept within traditionally prescribed limits. In the East, on the other hand, a more liberal spirit prevails and the doctrine is expanded to its widest extent, by Clement and Origen, who mentions the Descent more frequently than any of the Fathers. Speculative theology exploits the possibilities of the belief and finds in it a key to some acute soteriological and eschatological problems.

(p. 1)

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In Nicene and Post-Nicene writings the doctrine becomes quite stereotyped. The tendency of Easterns as well as of Westerns is to limit the benefit of the saving mission of the Descent to the righteous dead. The limited view wins the day in both fields. There is this difference: the West makes the more dogmatic, uncomprising pronouncements of this position all through. (p. 183)

A survey of the teaching of these early centuries of the Church's history goes to show that the doctrine of the Descent into Hades developed from a very simple belief to a more elaborate form. The pattern of development reveals three frequent intertwining strands, the defeat of Hades, the preaching in Hades, the liberation of souls from Hades. The first of these is to be found in every type of author and text and may be said to be the common orthodox doctrine of the Descent. It received an increasingly elaborate and dramatic representation. The second, in spite of the lack of biblical authority, arises early in the development of the doctrine and is taught by a wide variety of authors. The third is the earliest attempt to state the value of the Descent. It appears in every kind of writing and is at no period absent from Christian teaching. The scope of the deliverance is variously stated (p. 190)

It is probably because the Descent thus developed into a common doctrine of the Church, that it found its way into the Creed. This seems a more likely explanation of its introduction into the formulary than the supposition that the motive is purely anti-heretical - though it will have been used to combat heresies. It is possible that the clause came into the Western Creed through Syrian influence. There is also something to be said for the view that the Descensus was introduced into the Aquileian Creed in the second or third century. The clause is very far from being a constant element of credal confession, but appears with greater frequency until it is finally established in the Apostles' Creed. (p. 195)

The origin of the doctrine is often traced to pagan sources, some of which are more probable than others. The Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek deserve consideration. It is extremely difficult to support the Babylonian case with any plausibility. It is also true of the argument for Mandaean influence. The case for Gnosticism carries greater conviction, but it seems to me that the gnostic system probably represents a syncretism of Christian and pagan ideas. The strongest case for pagan influence points to Orphism. Yet even here there are such great differences in the two as

leave the argument unsatisfactory. Because of this it seems sensible to conclude that if the origin of the doctrine can be accounted for within Christianity itself then this is the view that should be adopted in preference to others. Now to explain the rise of the simplest form of Descent-belief is no difficult matter, for it is there in the very nature of things. Questions which were bound to arise sooner or later would lead to elaboration of the simple idea. This process would be advanced further by analogous use of the earthly ministry of Jesus. Again, the state of Old Testament saints would also inspire speculation which would find its satisfaction in the Hades-mission, for by this extension of the Gospel no pre-Christian believer would suffer any disadvantage. We cannot fix the origin of these ideas any more precisely than this. (p.202)

It is unfair to dismiss the Descent as a valueless relic of an outmoded world-view. If we disregard the legendary accretions and fasten upon the basic concept of the New Testament teaching, we find permanent significance in the Descent. It serves to emphasise the reality of the death of Christ, the humility and sympathy so markedly His. The other side of Descent-teaching draws attention to His victory and - how meaningful to Christians of a fearful age! - to our victory in Him.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DESCENT INTO HADES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to the abbreviations of names of books of Scripture and other ancient works the following are employed:

- ANCL... Ante-Nicene Christian Library
CSEL... Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DAC... A Dictionary of the Apostolic Church (ed. J. Hastings)
DCB... Dictionary of Christian Biography... (ed. Smith & Wace)
DCG... A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels (ed. J. Hastings)
ERE... Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (ed. J. Hastings)
Exp... The Expositor
GCS... Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller (Leipzig)
H.... W.W. Harvey ed. Sancti Irenaei Libros quinque adversus Haereses.
HDB... A Dictionary of the Bible (ed. J. Hastings)
ICC... International Critical Commentary
JTS... Journal of Theological Studies
L... C.H.E. Lommatzsch Origenis Opera Omnia.. (Delarue)
NEB... The New English Bible
NTS... New Testament Studies
O.... F. Oehler, ed. Tertulliani Opera Omnia.
PG... Migne, Patrologiae Graecae
SJTh... Scottish Journal of Theology
ZNTW... Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.

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Chapter I

THE NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

The first part of our study, limited as it is to the pages of the New Testament, is intended to be a humble, reverent search after what, if anything, its writings themselves reveal about the Descent of Christ into Hades. The difficulties besetting such an investigation lie not only in the object of enquiry, but in the person of the enquirer. To bring to such a subject fixed and settled presuppositions would appear quite disastrous: to avoid this very course, as it must be avoided, almost impossible. It is to be hoped not only that no relevant material will be ignored, but that the tendency- this the more likely snare in which to be trapped- of over-generous and extravagant deduction will be habitually checked along with the equally persistent inclination, aided by tinted spectacles, of reading into passages concepts which were never there. The spectacles, dogmatic and theological prejudices, need to be thrown to the winds and it must be repeatedly asked if this or that meaning is really the true one of the New Testament text itself. Later statements of individuals or councils are only of concern here in so far as they elucidate the primary sense of the apostolic words.

In this pursuit we are continually reminded of the fact that the New Testament is not a textbook of systematic theology (or systematic textbook of theology). There is no 'Doctrine of the Descent into Hades' in the New Testament in the form of axiomatic propositions. It is also debatable whether it exists in any other form. For that reason we are asking elementary questions, such as, Is there any evidence at all for a belief in the Descensus in the New Testament? If so, when did it take place and what was it that happened? Has it any doctrinal significance for the New Testament writers?

In the light of this the following procedure has been adopted. First, a preliminary survey considers the term 'Hades' and its relatives. Thereafter, the various passages of Descent-interest are

subjected to exegetical examination and an attempt is made to establish what each can legitimately be said to teach. This is done for the Petrine data, the Pauline letters and Hebrews, the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine literature respectively. Clearly, not every text requires the same length of treatment as, say, the famous crux in 1 Pet. 3, but justice, it is hoped, will have been done, and be seen to have been done, to each. Some of these passages, after being so considered, no longer concern us. Finally, an attempt is made to state what the New Testament does and does not teach about the Descent of Christ into Hades.

A. 'HADES' AND RELATED TERMS

HADES

The word 'Hades' occurs in various forms in Greek literature, the oldest evidently being 'Αἴδης. A genitive 'Αΐδος as if from 'Αΐς is found in Homer and the Tragedians. Homer also uses 'Αΐδωνεύς. The Attic form of the word is 'Αΐδης or Ἄϊδης. It is most commonly derived from α privative and the root ΠΙΑ (ἵδεν) and Hermann renders it by *Nelucus*.(1) Others derive the word from ἄδω, χάδω in the sense of πολυδέκτης, 'all-receiving', 'all-devouring'.

Homer uses the term almost invariably of the god of the nether world. Poseidon reveals the family history thus:

τρῆς γάρ τ' ἐν Κρόνου εἰμὲν ἀδελφοί, οὓς τέκετο 'Ρέα,
Ζεὺς καὶ ἐγώ, τρίτατος δ' 'Αΐδης, ἐνέροισιν ἀνάσσω. (2)

Hades is also called ἄναξ ἐνέρων 'Αΐδωνεύς (3) and Ζεὺς καταχθόνιος.(4)

Consequently, when Homer wishes to say 'in the underworld' or 'into the underworld', he writes, εἰν, εἰς 'Αΐδας with δόμοις or δόμους understood.(5) This practice so persisted that we find the phrase εἰς ἄδου in Acts 2. This, of course, is quoted from the Septuagint.(6) The phrase is simply conforming to idiomatic usage and does not imply anything about the god of the underworld and his palace. The term 'Hades' reminds us that it is never enough to study nothing but

(1) In the story of the assault of the three brothers upon their father Kronos, Hades received as his weapon the helmet of darkness which enable him to enter unseen into Kronos's presence and steal his armour. Doubtless legend and derivation are interrelated.

(2) Il.15.187f (3) Il.20.61 (4) Il.9.457 (5) cf. Soph παρ' "Αΐδης, "Αΐδης OT 972, OC 1552. (6) Rahfs prefers ἄδην, Ps. 15: 10.

the etymology of a word. Words sometimes lose pieces of luggage as they change trains. How calamitous it would be to suppose that the term 'Hades' as used in the New Testament retains its original character! Hades, it is true, is personified there (7), but this is genuine personification. (8) I do not know if its past history as a proper name made the personification easier, but I doubt it very much.

Indeed, the word was not long in being used to denote a place. Liddell and Scott find the first trace of this in Homer: εἰς ὃν οὐρανὸν αὐτὸς ἔγωγε "At δὲ κούρωμαι (9) Later Pindar could speak of receiving αἰδῆν (10) and Aeschylus of ἄδης πόντος 'death by sea'. (11)

It was the use of the word to denote the place of the departed, together with the fact that Hebrew and Greek conceptions of that region were in some respects similar, that commended the word 'Hades' to the Septuagint translators as the most suitable for the Hebrew 'She'ol' (12) The presence of the word in their Scriptures, I suppose, more than anything else, accounts for its employment by New Testament authors. They did not need to search for a term; they already had one. Accordingly, the antecedents of the word 'Hades' are to be sought in the Old Testament and other Jewish literature rather than in Greek. As F.F. Bruce puts it, "The general religious vocabulary of the Greek language was pagan in character, but several elements of that pagan vocabulary had been taken by the Alexandrian translators and used as equivalents of the great words of Old Testament revelation. Thus it came about that in Greek-speaking Jewish circles these words did not bear their original pagan significance but the new significance which they acquired from the Hebrew vocabulary which they represented." (13) This being the case, we must consider the ideas represented by the Hebrew 'She'ol' and discover, if possible, what significance it had for the people of the New Testament.

(7) Rev. 6: 8, 20: 13, 14. (8) As in OT, e.g., Job 18: 4, Ps. 49: 14, Isa. 14: 9.

(9) Il. 23. 244. (10) I. 6. 21. (11) Agam. 667.

(12) Only once in LXX is שִׁחַל rendered θάνατος, 2 Sam. 22: 6.

(13) The Books and the Parchments (London, 1950), p. 153.

She'ol remains a word of uncertain etymology (14), but it is used in all parts of the Old Testament to signify the place to which a person passed at death. The Old Testament does not teach the total extinction of human beings - this I maintain in spite of such passages as Job 7: 21, 14: 7ff., Ps. 39: 13, 146: 4, Eccles. 3: 19ff. These are all poetic expressions uttered in deep distress. The first, third, and fourth seem to me to be best understood as looking upon death from one angle. So far as life on earth is concerned, the dead are no more; no help can be expected from the departed. In the second case, Job goes on at once to speak of rest in Sheol. In the last of these passages, we may have nothing more than a moral comment. Even if the writers here did express a fear of annihilation, they would merely throw into relief the regular Old Testament ideas. It is also true that death is sometimes connected with the שְׁחַד (15) The phrase אֶל שְׁחַד in Lev. 21: 11 obviously refers to a corpse. But here שְׁחַד is being used after the Hebrew manner as an equivalent of the personal pronoun. (16) The Old Testament writers did not doubt the

(14) Two views appear to dominate the field. 1. The one connects the word with the Assyrian su'alu. It is pointed out that one of the Babylonian terms for priest is sailu (lit. 'enquirer'); that in the OT the verb שָׁאַל is frequently used of consulting an oracle, e.g., of enquiring of Yahweh (Judg. 1: 1), of a stock (Hos. 4: 12), of the teraphim (Ezek. 21: 26), of a familiar spirit (1 Chron. 10: 13). Thus Sheol would first denote the 'place of enquiry', i.e. where oracles can be obtained. However, it has been denied that the word su'alu exists in Assyrian (by Jensen, and Schwally). The error has been explained as a misreading of a cuneiform sign.

2. The other derives it from a weakened form of the root שָׁאַל. This appears in various forms in OT; handful (1 Kgs. 20: 10; Ezek. 13: 19), hollow hand (Isa. 40: 12), hollow way שִׁלְשִׁיל between vineyards (Num. 22: 24). Gesenius quotes as analogous the German Hölle, of same origin as Höhle, the Latin coelum from κοῖλος and defines שִׁלְשִׁיל as "locum cavum et subterraneum". It has, however, been asserted that the basic idea of is not 'to be hollow', but 'to let sink' (שָׁאַל). Thus שָׁאַל is a 'deepening of the hand'; שִׁלְשִׁיל 'a sinking to the ground'. A connection is also made with שָׁאַל (fox), the one who digs himself in, a deepener.

(15) e.g., in Num. 23: 10; Job 36: 14.

(16) cf. Amos 6: 8 יְהוָה שָׁבַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה 'Yahweh swore by Himself'.

existence of men after death; the problem which perplexed them was rather the condition of the departed.

No detailed topography of Sheol is offered in the Old Testament, but it is clearly and without variation spoken of as an underworld, just as among most peoples. This conception is "common to the hardy German tribes, the savages of North and South America, the Zulus of Africa, the Italmen of Kamchatka, the Samoan islander, the Asiatic Karen, the Egyptian, the Babylonians, the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans." (17) It was the obvious one for men to adopt as they lowered their dead into the earth. Consequently, the idea of Sheol in the Old Testament is in some way akin to the grave. I do not think, however, that they are ever really identified. The AV seems to have erred greatly here. Of the 65 occurrences of the word *שְׁאוֹל* which I have examined, no less than 31 are translated by 'grave' in that version. For some unaccountable reason the RV retains 'grave' on a number of occasions (14 in fact). The difference of ideas is discernible, for example, in the first passage in Genesis in which the word occurs (37: 35). There Jacob, supposing Joseph to have been killed, refuses to be comforted: "I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning." He did not know, and had no hope of finding out, where his son was buried. Yet RV retains AV 'grave'!! Perhaps Sheol was at times thought of as embracing all graves, as a vast burying-place (18) In these cases too attention should be paid to the literary nature of the context.

Sheol is beneath *הַתְּהוֹמוֹת שְׁאוֹל*. (19) In Isa. 44: 23

הַתְּהוֹמוֹת שְׁאוֹל if not necessarily, most probably refers to Sheol. This is clearly the reference in the phrase *הַתְּהוֹמוֹת שְׁאוֹל* (20) Sheol is deep (21); as deep, indeed, as heaven is high (22). Job puts it beneath the waters (23) Accordingly, people 'go down' or 'descend' into it.

(17) S.D.F. Salmond: The Christian Doctrine of Immortality (Edinburgh, 1901), p. 16.

(18) Isa. 14: 21; Ezek. 32: 43.

(19) Ps. 86: 13. cf. *הַתְּהוֹמוֹת שְׁאוֹל* Dt. 32: 22.

(20) Ezek. 26: 20 cf. 31: 14 *הַתְּהוֹמוֹת שְׁאוֹל* 32: 18, 24

(21) Prov. 9: 18; Isa. 77: 9.

(22) Job 11: 8; Amos 9: 2; Ps. 139: 8

(23) *בְּתוֹכָהּ* Job 26: 5.

Sheol has gates,(24) and these are secured with bars.(25) It is also said to be divided into rooms or compartments.(26)

When we enquire into the condition of things in Sheol, we discover that it is no more attractive a place than the Aralu of the Babylonians or the Hades of the Greeks. It is a land of darkness;(27) of disorder;(28) of dust.(29)

To Sheol all men must descend;(30) from it there is no return;(31) David can go to his child, but he cannot bring the child back.(32) The Old Testament does not actually say that the soul ($\psi\acute{o}\lambda$) goes down to Sheol, but it is brought up from Sheol;(33) delivered from Sheol beneath;(34) rescued from Dumah.(35) We may conclude, therefore, that the person, the $\psi\acute{o}\lambda$, goes down, but reduced to a mere shade. The departed are thus called $\text{אֲנִשֵּׁי עֶלְמָיִם}$ (a word which seemingly caused the Alexandrian translators some difficulty) in some passages.(36) It is as feeble, flaccid shadows that the departed drag out their gloomy existence. Personal identity continues, but a much weakened form of the self maintains the identity. The inhabitants of Sheol seem to show the same features as distinguished them at death.(37) Existence in the nether world appears to be a colourless image of life on earth. Kings are kings still and occupy thrones.(38) Warriors have their weapons of war with them.(39) What a wierd, haunting passage the thirty-second chapter of Ezekiel is! Yet how fitting a description of this underworld! Egypt descends thither to find congregated all the great armies of the past, Assyria, Elam, Meshech with Tubal, Edom too, and all the Zidonians.

By far the worst feature of Sheol is that its people are separated

(24) שַׁעַר שְׁאוֹל Isa. 38: 10; cf. שַׁעַר מְוֵת Job 38: 17, Ps. 9: 14, 107: 18. (25) שַׁעַר שְׁאוֹל Job 17: 16.

(26) בְּיָמֵי שְׁאוֹל Prov. 7: 27.

(27) Job 10: 21f., Ps. 88: 12, 143: 3; Lam. 3: 6. (28) Job 10: 22.

(29) Job 7: 21, 17: 31. Dust really becomes a synonym for Sheol: Job: 16: 15, 20: 11, 21: 26; Ps. 30: 9.

(30) Job 30: 23. (31) Job 7:9.

(32) 2 Sam. 12: 23. On occasions return in some form was possible, e.g., Samuel at Endor (1 Sam. 2: 6), but necromancy was strictly forbidden. (33) Ps. 30: 3. (34) Ps. 86: 13.

(35) Ps. 94: 17. (36) Job: 26: 5; Isa. 14: 9; Prov. 9: 18.

(37) 1 Kgs. 2: 6. (38) Isa. 14: 7. (39) Ezek. 32: 27.

from God and His worship. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." (40) How terrifying and miserable for the pious Israelite to contemplate his being forgotten by God!

"Cast off among the dead,

Like the slain that lie in the grave,

Whom thou rememberest no more;

And they are cut off from thy hand." (41)

How pathetic Hezekiah's simple words: "I shall not see Yah." (42)

Men do not remember the dwellers in Sheol (43) but that is not so disturbing as the intolerable thought of the loss of communion with God. (44)

All this, however, is not to say that Sheol is beyond God's control. The Babylonians and Greeks had their separate deities who ruled over the underworld; in the former case, Allat or Minkigal, in the latter, Pluto (Hades) and Persephone. The Old Testament, however, is sure of its monotheism and Sheol no less than the earth lies within the bounds of God's omnipotence. He it is who casts down and brings up. (45) Its domain cannot escape His presence nor men find a hiding-place from Him there. (46) The fire of His wrath burns to the lowest Sheol. (47)

It is this belief in the character of God, I think, which enables some of those rare Old Testament passages to be written, in which faith penetrates even the gloom of Sheol. (48) Ps. 49 contrasts the future of the wicked and the righteous. For the former there is no redemption from Sheol. They suppose that their houses will last for ever but Sheol will consume their beauty. The case of the righteous is different:

יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִבְרֹךְ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיוֹם הַמָּוֶת וְיִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִבְרֹךְ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיוֹם הַמָּוֶת

It has been suggested that this last word may recall Enoch's trans-

(40) Ps. 115: 17 (נִשְׁכַּח). "In death there is no remembrance of thee: In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6: 5). "Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in Abaddon? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?.... (Ps. 88: 11f.)

(41) Ps. 88: 5. (42) Isa. 38: 11. (43) Eccles. 9: 5.

(44) cf. Job 14: 21. (45) Prov. 15: 4, Job 26: 6; 1 Sam. 2: 6.

(46) Ps. 139: 8., Amos 9: 2. (47) Dt. 32: 22.

(48) Ps. 16: 9ff. v. below on Acts 2: 24-27, 31.

lation.(49) Certainly, it recurs in that other confident expression:

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterwards receive me to glory." (50)

Job hits upon the happy thought that his stay in Sheol may perhaps be only a temporary sojourn and makes a passionate appeal for such a blessing. Later he becomes certain; he knows.(51)

This, however, is rare in the Old Testament. On the whole, men look forward with dark foreboding to what lies beyond death, to what one of them calls the pit of nothingness.(52) The generally accepted view is that Sheol is an underworld, the negation of all that makes up a happy life, a colourless, joyless shadowland, a horror to anticipate. Nevertheless, at least three important points should be remembered:

1. There is a place of the departed. (Death does not mean total extinction.)
2. It is not beyond God's jurisdiction.
3. Some passages indicate a belief in the possibility of release from it. (53)

Of Old Testament synonyms for Sheol, those worthy of note are:

1. בֹּרַי possibly 22 times in this sense.(54) The word means 'pit' and signifies the location of Sheol. Along with it we frequently find the verb יָרַד 'go down', 'descend'. Again, it was employed in the sense of 'dungeon'.(55) This connotation made it a suitable name for the prison of the dead.(56)
2. שְׁחַל possibly 16 times. AV occasionally translates 'pit', but the uppermost idea is that of 'destruction'. Existence in Sheol is the negation of life. Sheol destroys the beauty, wealth and happiness that men once knew.

(49) כִּי-לִקְחָ אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים Gen. 5: 24.

(50) אַחֲרַי כְּבוֹד הַקְּדוֹשׁ Ps. 73: 24.

(51) Job 14: 13-15, cf. 16: 19-17: 9; 19: 23-27.

(52) שְׁחַל בְּלִי Isa. 38: 17.

(53) The germ of the idea of Sheol as an intermediate abode, which later became the prevailing doctrine. In OT there is no definite formulation of a distinction between the good and evil in Sheol, such as exists in intertestamental literature.

(54) Primary meaning 'grave' (Prov. 28: 17; Isa. 14: 19.).

(55) E.g., Gen. 40: 15, 41: 14; Jer. 38: 6.

(56) Parallel to Sheol in Ps. 30: 3; Prov. 1: 12; Ps. 88: 5.

3. שׂוֹמֵר 6 times, 'the Destroyer', the insatiable monster, which with its dread partner Death swallows men.(57) Some think Abaddon a place within Sheol, but it seems unlikely that there is any such distinction between the terms.

4. דְּמָיוּם twice, 'silence' and all that that meant to the pious Hebrew.(58)

SHEOL IN APOCRYPHAL AND APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Different conceptions occur here.

a. The normal Old Testament conception. "For what pleasure hath God in all that perish in Hades, In place of those who live and give Him praise? Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead as from one that is not, (But he that liveth and is in health praiseth the Lord."(59) This complete loss of communion with God is also clearly taught in Bar. 2: 17, "for the dead that are in the grave, whose breath is taken from their bodies, will give unto the Lord neither glory nor righteousness."

b. Intermediate abode for some. It is regarded as the intermediate abode (as in some Old Testament passages) of the righteous and of some of the wicked, while others stay there for ever. Enoch 22 divides the underworld into four parts, which are inhabited by four distinct classes. Of these, three are raised to receive their final award, whereas the fourth class, which consists of the wicked who have already been punished for their crimes in the upper world, is not raised at all from Sheol. "Instead of being a region where existence was at its lowest possible ebb, and the presence of moral distinctions was inconceivable, it has now become a place where there is a vigorous, conscious existence, where ethical considerations are paramount, and the soul's lot is determined on moral grounds, and on moral grounds alone."(60)

(57) Job 28: 22, 31: 12; Ps. 88: 11; Job 26: 6; Prov. 15: 11, 27: 20. Last three have it parallel to Sheol.

(58) Ps. 94: 17, 115: 17.

(59) Sir. 17: 27f.

(60) R.H. Charles, Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian, p. 187.

Sheol is also believed to signify the intermediate abode of all Israelites and the final abode of the rest of mankind. Charles concludes from 2 Macc. 7: 14 that "for the non-Israelite there was no resurrection." But surely as the fourth brother's remarks, σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἀνάστασις εἰς ζωὴν οὐκ ἔσται are addressed to Antiochus alone, it would be hazardous to generalise them. It is worth noting, however, that so far as Israelites are concerned, moral change in Sheol is regarded as possible(61) or perhaps it would be safer to say that the condition of the departed is thought to be in some way improved by sacrifice offered on earth.

c. Intermediate abode where foretaste of happiness or torment is experienced.(62) The wicked in Sheol "recline in anguish and rest in torment", although their pain is not nearly so intense as after the final judgment. The righteous, on the other hand, are preserved in Sheol's "chambers" or "treasuries"(63) where they enjoy rest and peace and are guarded "as the apple of an eye" by angels. The seventh chapter of 4 Ezra teaches that retribution sets in immediately at death for the wicked, who are tormented in seven ways, while the righteous enjoy a corresponding number of ways of blessedness.

Sheol or Hades, then, has come to be regarded as the intermediate abode of all the departed, awaiting the final sentence; thus conceived, it comprises two divisions, namely, a place of pain for the wicked and a place of rest for the righteous. Although in some places it has more of the nature of Gehennah about it, the picture that gradually emerges is that of a waiting-room for the final assize. The verdict is already known; the sentence is all that remains to be uttered and heard.

(61) 2 Macc. 12: 42-45, Charles, op. cit., p. 236.

(62) Apoc. Bar. 23: 5, 48: 16, 52: 2.

(63) 4 Ezra 4 : 41.

(64) Enoch 100: 5; 4 Ezra 7: 15; Apoc. Bar. 30: 2.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now seldom the word 'Hades' is found in the New Testament! Only ten times in all is it used within its pages (i.e. excluding the inferior reading in 1 Cor. 15: 55). Paul does not employ the term even once. Indeed, its occurrences are confined to the Synoptic Gospels, Acts and the Apocalypse. Of course, if the word appeared oftener, it would be considerably easier to determine its exact significance. The great problem is to decide how far the traditional conceptions of the underworld are carried over from Jewish literature. The great temptation is to go beyond the words of the New Testament. On the other hand, some writers arguing on the parabolic and metaphorical contexts in which 'Hades' occurs incline almost to the opinion that the New Testament has really nothing to say about the subject. If such argument were applied with strict prosaicism to the Old Testament material, how much of that would require to be discounted altogether? Again, the metaphorical and illustrative details must surely have some sort of basis, at least for the people to whom the teaching was first given.

'Hades' is found four times in the Synoptic Gospels, on each occasion on the lips of the Lord Himself. (65) In Mt. 11: 23, Lk. 10: 15, as is usually observed, the word has a figurative sense, intended to express by way of contrast to heaven the absolute overthrow of Capernaum. (66) It is but fair to add that the former passage goes on to speak of the day of judgment. It would seem that if the figure is to be effective, the sinister atmosphere of the word 'Sheol' must to some extent belong to 'Hades' here.

The phrase, πύλαι ᾧου οὐ κατισχύουσιν αὐτης, (67) has been variously interpreted.

1. Hades cannot hold the Church from resurrection.
2. Death will not prevail over the Church by keeping Christ captive.
3. The Church is eternal.

(65) Mt. 11: 23, 16: 18; Lk. 10: 15, 16: 23.

(66) cf. Isa. 14: 13-15.

(67) Mt. 16: 18.

4. Persecution cannot destroy the Church.

5. The powers of evil shall not defeat the Church.

It has been argued by Bernard that the word πύλαι is a mistranslation of an Aramaic term meaning 'floods' or one meaning 'storms'.⁽⁶⁸⁾

In view, however, of the not infrequent occurrence of the expression "gates of Hades" this seems far-fetched. The phrase appears in the Old Testament, as we have already observed (p. 6); in Homer with the meaning 'underworld';⁽⁶⁹⁾ in Tragedy.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Such is its use also in Wisdom 16: 13, οὐ γὰρ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις καὶ κατέχεις εἰς πύλας ᾗδου καὶ ἀνάγεις. At most, the phrase will in our passage signify the underworld and its power to retain the dead within its domain.

Lk. 16: 23 contains more than a mere mention of the word. Attention, however, must be paid to the parabolic nature of the passage. As Plummer puts it, "it is no purpose of the parable to give information about the unseen world." Obviously, the parable is told to point an important lesson, but that fact of itself will not discount the material for our purpose. It is not the primary purpose of the story to tell us about Hades, but it may do so in the passing. At the very least, it teaches us that there is a state of being into which men of all classes pass at death; that the justice of God pursues them thither; that moral decisions affect their condition and indeed may completely reverse their former comfort or misery. Is it possible to learn any

(68) J.H. Bernard, *Studia Sacra* (London, 1917), pp. 76-88. He points to a rare word זַיִן 'flowing water'; Dan. 8: 2 זַיִן זַיִן-זַיִן and LXX τῇ πύλῃ Αἰλάμ, Vulgate "super portam Ulai". The mistake would then be due to an ancient mistranslation. As to his other suggestion, he thinks that as זַיִן (Isa. 28: 2) is wrongly written זַיִן in some MSS, so the translator of Mt. mistook זַיִן for זַיִן, thus producing 'gates', instead of 'storms', of Hades. It seems to me that Bernard is being influenced too much by the close attention he pays to the idea of the Abyss-floods; cf. his reference to the floods beating upon the two houses in the ending of the Sermon on the Mount.

(69) Il. 5. 646; 9. 312; Od. 14. 156.

(70) Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1291; cf. σκότου πύλαι and νεπέρων πύλαι Euripides, *Hec.* 1; *Hipp.* 1447.

more than this? Does our Lord set His seal upon the Jewish idea of Sheol with its two compartments?

The dress of the story is unquestionably Jewish and the first audience and readers were doubtless familiar with the terms and the ideas which they represented. The expression ὁ κόλπος τοῦ Ἀβραάμ does not seem to be common in earlier Jewish writings, but Abraham is sometimes represented as welcoming the righteous into Paradise.⁽⁷¹⁾ In our parable Abraham's bosom is clearly a place of rest and happiness for righteous souls after death.

A more detailed account is given of the case of Dives. He is in Hades, a place of torment, pained by fire, desperately thirsty and uncomfortable. To him no respite is offered, not even at his passionate request for a simple favour. Now we have not dealt faithfully with the picture, if we simply dismiss it with the remark, 'Of course, Hades is not a place of literal fire!' That is beside the point. Surely it must be agreed that our Lord is elaborating the picture in order to impress upon us that the condition of Dives in Hades is anything but enviable. If his state were passed over in a single phrase, it might well be enough to say that the ethical point is made and nothing doctrinal intended. Our passage, however, seems to me to have a theological basis. It is therefore permissible to find in it teaching not only about moral choice but also about the after-life. Our Lord apparently endorses the view that death marks the point of separation for men, some of whom enjoy rest and happiness, while others endure torment in a 'place' called 'Hades'.

Nothing is said about Hades as such in Acts 2: 27, 31, a passage to be considered in detail later.

The remaining references take us to the Apocalypse, 1: 18, 6: 8, 20: 13, 14. In the last three verses Death and Hades are evidently personified (a genuine personification and not a reversion to the old Greek usage). If any distinction is to be drawn between them, then

(71) οὕτω γὰρ παθόντας (V/L. θανόντας) ἡμεῖς Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ὑποδέχονται.

Possibly the phrase has some connection with the OT 'to go to one's fathers', 'be gathered to one's fathers'?

Death will be the 'King of Terrors' who slays; Hades the Tyrant who keeps the souls of the departed within his prison-house. In these passages, therefore, Hades is to be thought of as the intermediate abode of the wicked alone. It is cast into the 'lake of fire'. It is a more difficult question whether 1: 18 is personifying Hades and Death or not. The genitive may be objective: the keys are those which lock and unlock the gates of Hades. On the other hand, we may have a possessive genitive: the keys belong to Hades. Further consideration is given to this verse later in this chapter.

In the light of these comparatively few occurrences of the term no one could possibly argue that the doctrine of Hades held a prominent place in the New Testament. Probably the immediate expectation of the Parousia diverted men's minds from the interval between death and resurrection. At this stage we can perhaps state that the evidence so far examined suggests that there is a 'place' for the departed, 'Hades'; that it is an intermediate abode; that it came to be regarded as the abode of the unrighteous.

PARADISE

Παράδεισος, it is generally agreed, comes from an old Persian word 'pairidaeza', though some think it to be of Babylonian origin or Babylo-Assyrian. It seems at first to have meant 'an enclosing wall', then an 'enclosed park' or 'garden'. Xenophon uses it of the parks beloved of Persian kings and nobles. Such is its connotation in some places in the Old Testament.(72) The Septuagint employs it for the garden of Eden.(73) Perhaps this accounts for its use in later Judaism for a place of future bliss. In the Second Century B.C. only two men, Enoch and Elijah, were accorded admittance to Paradise as soon as they left this world.(74) By the next century, however, it had come to be regarded as the intermediate dwelling-place of all the righteous.(75) It was sometimes described as the happy

(72) Neh. 2: 8; Eccles. 2: 5; Cant. 4: 13.

(73) Gen. 2: 8-10, 15, 16, 3: 1-3, 8-10.

(74) En. 87. 3,4; 89. 52.

(75) En. 61. 12; 70. 2-4.

compartment of Sheol; sometimes as being in the third heaven. (76)

It is not easy to come to a decision about the use of the word in its three occurrences in the New Testament, Lk. 23: 43; 2 Cor. 12: 4; Rev. 2: 7. In the Pauline passage is it to be identified with or distinguished from the third heaven? Probably the reference is best understood against its Jewish cosmological background and thus Paradise be taken as a place of blessedness, not further defined. In the Apocalypse does the word indicate the final abode of the righteous? The Lukan passage excites more interest. We have already observed that Lazarus in the story in Lk. 16 was carried into Abraham's bosom and that that phrase would at once be connected in Jewish thought with Paradise (p. 13). Certainly Abraham's bosom meant to later Judaism the highest place of honour in Paradise. Test. Levi 18: 10 affirms that the priestly Messiah shall open the gates of Paradise to the righteous. Now if we could be sure that our Lord uses the word in any one particular sense, then this would be one of the greatest pieces of evidence in the whole of the New Testament. But can we be sure?

Various senses were given to the term, distinguishable but related. It would seem to me that in our passage an exact sense is not to be determined. It is not a technical term; it does not give topographical details. It must always be taken into account that the words are spoken to a criminal on a cross, who in his own words was getting what he deserved. We cannot expect such a man to be a theologian! What would 'Paradise' mean to the dying thief? Would it not convey to him the idea that all was going to be well with him in the unseen realm beyond death, an idea of security and blessedness? To be sure, there may be more in the expression than this, but it hardly seems justifiable to define the term any more closely.

Perhaps the combination of "with me" and "in Paradise" solves some problems about the teaching of the New Testament on the period

(76) In the Rabbinical writings, it seems, much was made of this and different conceptions existed as to its location. Later Judaism had a detailed topography of it: its gates of rubies, its 60 myriads of angels, the 800,000 trees which flourished there, the custom according to which everyone who entered it was renewed during the night watches.

after death. As Jesus upon the cross finally uttered, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit", so Stephen's dying prayer is, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit".(77) Paul has a desire to depart this life and be "with Christ". Because death means that, it is gain to him. To be "absent from the body" is to be "at home with the Lord".(78) Now heaven is said to be a place to which Christ has gone, where He is enthroned, from which He will come.(79) Naturally, then, the Christian who has died may be said to be in heaven. What does heaven mean to the Christian if it does not mean the place where Christ is?

Now some difficulty may arise out of the word 'to-day' in our Lukan reference. How is this to be related to, e.g., Acts 2? (Of course, it might be argued that this question is quite irrelevant; that we were never intended to attempt to relate such passages to one another; that to do so is to adopt an over-logical, or illogical, approach to ideas which are not meant to be systematised.) If at death Jesus descended into Hades, and if the thief was going to be with him 'to-day' in Paradise, is Paradise in Hades? Or are we to infer from this that Christ is about to effect some significant change in the lot of the righteous? These questions have become anticipatory and must be left for later discussion.

It should be observed here that some writers deny to the New Testament any notion of an intermediate state. Thus Salmond concludes his examination of the subject by playing down the idea. "These two terms, therefore, Hades and Paradise, each of them occurring only in a single relevant instance, give us no ground for saying that Christ taught any doctrine of an Intermediate State." Doubtless, his words are salutary, putting a check on an over-elaboration of the conception. On the other side, J.H. Leckie writes, "We may take it for granted that the belief in the Intermediate State was a part of the ordinary, popular creed of the Apostolic Church, since it is a necessary element in the apocalyptic scheme of thought, and belongs to the expectation of Resurrection and Judgment. There is nothing in the

(77) Lk. 23: 46; Acts 7: 59.

(78) Phil. 1: 23; 2Cor. 5: 8.

(79) Acts 1: 11; 1Pet. 3: 22; Eph. 6: 9; Phil. 3: 20.

New Testament to discourage this view, but rather a good deal to support it. It is not in the least contradicted by those sayings of the Apostles which indicate the hope of entering into blessedness at the hour of death, and being immediately with the Lord. No intelligent Jewish believer thought of Hades as a state in which the righteous dead experienced anything else than pure happiness."(80)

GEHENNA

Although the word 'Gehenna' is never used in the Old Testament to denote a place of punishment, it is there that its origins are found. The Hebrew phrase is $\square\text{ג} \text{ה}$, which is an abbreviation of $\square\text{ג} \text{ה}$ $\square\text{ג} \text{ה}$ while the Aramaic is $\square\text{ג} \text{ה}$. It bears a simple geographical sense in some scriptures and refers to the Valley of Tophet, lying to the South and South West of Jerusalem.(81) This valley becomes a place of utter abhorrence as a result of its associations with the idolatrous worship and human sacrifice offered there to Moloch by Ahaz and Manasseh.(82)

It is thought that later on the valley became the city's rubbish-dump. "Gehinnam fuit locus spretus, in quem abjecerunt sordes et cadavera, et fuit ibi perpetuo ignis ad comburendum sordes illos et ossa; propterea parabolice vocatur iudicium impiorum Gehennam."(83) Whether this is entirely correct (and most writers would favour this) or not, Gehenna was regarded as an appropriate title for the place of punishment. It seems to be referred to, though not by name, as such in several places in the Old Testament.(84)

Charles observes that Gehenna was first believed to house apostate Jews, but it developed into the final abode of the nations generally.

(80) The World to Come, p. 88.

(81) Jos. 15: 8, 18: 16; Neh. 11: 30; Jer. 19: 2.

(82) 2 Chron. 28: 3, 33: 6; cf. Jer. 7: 31, 32: 35. It came within the scope of the Josianic reforms (2 Kgs. 23: 10ff.)

(83) Kimchi on Ps. 27, as quoted by Charles, Eschatology, p. 158, who also cites Robinson's denial of this: "there is no evidence of any other fires than those of Moloch having been kept up in this valley."

(84) Isa. 33: 14, 50: 11, 66: 24 (quoted and applied to Gehenna in Mk. 9: 43-47); Dan. 12: 2.

This appears in such a passage as the following:

"Woe to the nations that rise up against my kindred;

The Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment,

To put fire and worms in their flesh,

And they shall weep and feel their pain for ever." (85) or this:

"Thou wilt look from on high and wilt see thy enemies in Ge(henna),

And thou wilt recognise them and rejoice,

And thou wilt give thanks and confess thy Creator." (86)

Gehenna is clearly in this literature a place of unending retribution.

Various concepts of Gehenna flourished in the Rabbinical schools, some evidently regarding it as above, others as a sort of Purgatory for the imperfectly righteous, others as the penal side of Sheol.

This welter of confused ideas, however, need not blind us to the fact that at the time of Christ, the prevailing Jewish idea of Gehenna was that of the final place of punishment for the wicked.

The New Testament has twelve occurrences of the term, only one of which lies outside the Synoptic Gospels, namely, Jas. 3: 6. There James has been passing some severe strictures on the uncontrolled use of the tongue. Having likened it to a fire, he then says that it is itself set on fire by Gehenna, an obvious reference to the fiery nature of that place and to its evil associations. (87)

In the Synoptic Gospels it is clearly a region of fire: εἰς τὴν γέεναν τοῦ πυρός, εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός. The fire is unquenchable: τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἀσβεστον. (88) This last occurs in the passage which contains the quotation from Isa. 66: 24 and which is intended to underline the undying nature of the punishment. (89) The place is so terrible that to avoid landing there, it is better to pluck out an eye or hand or foot which causes to stumble. (90)

(85) Judith 16: 17.

(86) Assumption of Moses 10: 10.

(87) Cf. υἱὸς γέεννης, Mt. 23: 15.

(88) Mt. 5: 22, 18: 9, 13: 42; 50; Mk. 9: 43.

(89) Cf. the 'lake of fire', Rev. 19: 20, 20: 14, 15; and brimstone, Rev. 20: 10.

(90) Mt. 5: 22, 30, 18: 8, 9.

Fire was a common metaphor for the judgment of God. Although Lk. 16: 34 pictures Hades as a fiery abode, there can be no doubt that the distinction between Gehenna and Hades is maintained throughout the New Testament. While the latter is an intermediate detention-centre, Gehenna constantly bears the stamp of finality. It is into it in the end that the beast and the false prophet are cast, the devil and Death and Hades, and all those whose names are not found written in the book of life.(91)

The New Testament does not give us any clearly defined picture of Gehenna, of the nature of the punishment and state of the wicked. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid seeing that its warnings on the subject are solemnly severe; that the state which Gehenna represents is so unenviable as to be evaded at all costs; that when it speaks of temporal relations, it points to the eternity of the punishment.

This last point is hotly disputed, but I can see no justification for watering down the severe verba Christi about this or for ignoring the whole attitude of the New Testament. Much has been made of the possible meanings of *κόλασις* and *αἰώνιος*. For example, Mt. 25: 46 has been rendered: 'And these will depart into correction for a period of time, but the just into a period of life.' This stands in flat contradiction to the rendering of Arndt and Gingrich: 'go into eternal punishment'.(92) There is no doubt that *κόλασις* did have the sense of remedial chastisement in classical Greek. Aristotle, indeed, distinguishes it from *τιμωρία*. The former, as being disciplinary, has special reference to the sufferer, whereas the latter has reference to the satisfaction of him who inflicts it.(93) However, this remedial sense was largely superseded by the retributive by Hellenistic times. Again, when *αἰώνιος* is used in an eschatological setting, it bears the meaning 'pertaining to the coming age'. Eternal life is the life of the age to come, which endures for ever, as God does. It seems best, then, to accept that Jesus taught that Gehenna was the final and permanent lot of the impenitent.(94)

(91) Rev. 19: 20, 20:10, 14, 15.

(92) Sub *κόλασις*, 2.

(93) Rhet. 1.10, 17

(94) This raises the question of how this teaching is to be related to, e.g., 1Tim. 2: 4 or the 'restoration' passages of Ephesians.

TARTARUS

The verb ταρταρόω appears in only one place in the New Testament, namely, 2 Pet. 2: 4. Tartarus was a Greek conception. According to the earliest views, it was a dark abyss. Hesiod regarded it as a separate prison, at a greater distance from earth than earth from heaven. Homer speaks of it as the deepest pit:

ἦ μιν ἑλὼν ῥίψω εἰς Τάρταρον ἠερδεντα,
τῆλε μάλ', ἦχι βάθειστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
ἐνθα σιδηρεῖαί τε πύλαι καὶ χαλκίος οὐδός,
τόσσον ἔνερθ' Αἴδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης. (95)

It is interesting that Virgil doubles the measurement of depth:

"tum Tartarus ipse

his patet in praeceps tantum tenditque sub umbras,
quantus ad aetherium caeli suspectus Olympium" (96)

Milton goes one better:

"as far removed from God and light of heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole." (97)

Tartarus is not only deep, it is dreadfully dark, being surrounded by a trebly thick layer of night. Moreover, it served as a prison for Kronos, when he was deposed, and for the conquered Titans, who were guarded by the hecatoncheires, sons of Uranus.

Although later on it came to signify the lower regions of the damned, where those who had been condemned by the underworld judges suffered ceaseless torments, it is its earliest meaning that makes it such an appropriate term in 2 Pet. 2: 4. Because it was the dungeon into which the rebellious Titans were flung, it suitably describes the punishment of sinning angels. Again, as it was the lowest Hell and extremely dark, so in Peter the angels are confined in σιρσί or σεῖρσι ζόφου. (98) In these pits, inextricably bound, the fallen angels await the Day of Judgment.

ABYSS

The word ἄβυσσος was originally an adjective meaning 'bottomless', 'boundless' (ἀ + βυσσός = βυθός akin to βαθός). So Aeschylus has

(95) Il. 8. 16-19. (96) Aen. 6. 577-9.

(97) Paradise Lost, l. 73.

(98) Jude 6 has δεσμῶς ἀτέλεις ὑπὸ ζόφου.

it with *πέλαγος* and *πλοῦτος*. It is used in the Septuagint as a noun, sometimes without the article, of the 'sea', 'deep', 'depths of the sea'. Some 30 times it translates *אֵינָהָ*. For example, a description is given of perils at sea and of sailors it is said *ἀναβαίνουσιν ἕως τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ καταβαίνουσιν ἕως τῶν ἀβύσσων*,

תִּהְיֶה תְּהוֹם. (99) "The Tehom is the primeval deep of the Creation myth. There are passages in the Old Testament where the word seems at first sight to be used of any sea (Jonah 11. 5) or even of the Nile (Ezekiel XXXI. 4), but this is not the case. Such instances are due to the way in which the Hebrews made this Mesopotamian myth speak of the great fight of God against Evil, so that Rahab-Tiamat, the Sea-Monster or Tehom (a semi-depersonalized Tiamat) came to represent every enemy of God and Israel through the ages." (100) The whole circle of ideas is important for the use of 'abyss' in the New Testament.

We may perhaps be permitted to simplify them thus:

1. The depths of the earth, Dt. 8:7, probably refers, as Dt. 4: 18, to the primeval ocean, "the subterranean waters, on which the land was supposed to rest, the source of springs and rivers". (Driver)
2. This deep place was considered to be the abode of Yahweh's dragon-like enemy.

Now the question that arises naturally is, Does this have any reference to Hades? Plummer, commenting on the Old Testament use of the word says that it is used "perhaps nowhere of Hades". (101) I do not feel certain, however, about Ps. 71: 20. There the two clauses, "quicken again" and "bring up again from the depths of the earth" seem, in the manner of Hebrew, parallel. Is this one of the rare

(99) Ps. 107: 26; cf. "tollimur in caelum curvato gurgite, et idem subducta ad Manes imos desedimus unda." (Virgil, Aen. 3. 564f.)

(100) W.H. Snaith, *The Book of Amos* (London, 1946), Part II, p. 122. Cf. Job 9: 13; Isa. 51: 9: "Art thou it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?" (This suggests the drying up of the Red Sea, next referred to, the more easily as Egypt is spoken of (30: 7) as Rahab the Blusterer or whatever this difficult phrase means).

Cf. Ps. 74: 12ff.

(101) On Lk. 8: 31 (in I.C.C., Luke)

Old Testament references to a hope of resurrection, a deliverance from Sheol?

Charles lists the uses of the word in 1 Enoch as follows:

1. Intermediate place of punishment for the fallen angels (1 En. 18: 13-16, 19: 1-2, 21: 46).
2. Final place of punishment for fallen angels and demons (1 En. 21: 7-20, 10: 6, 13, 18: 11, 54: 6, 56: 4, 90: 24, 25).
3. Final place of punishment for Satan, angels, demons and wicked men (1 En. 108: 3-10).

In the New Testament the word refers to Hades in Rom. 10: 7, a "descent" passage. In Lk. 8: 31 it is the penal abode of demons who dread being sent thither. This is not necessarily a contradiction (as is sometimes argued) of the Pauline conception of the dwelling-place of demons, for our passage has definite references to imprisonment and punishment. In the Apocalypse, the only other book in which the term is found, the Abyss is the preliminary place of punishment for the fallen angels, demons, the beast, the false prophet, and for Satan for a thousand years. There is a key for it, as for Hades, which is in the charge of an angel.(102) When opened, its fiery depths belch forth a tremendous volume of smoke.(103)

The place to which the fallen angels are finally assigned is ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός, specially prepared for them,(104) but as we have seen (p. 18f.), it has become the final abode of wicked men also. Tartarus bears the same character as the Abyss. The two are to be identified.

Although all these terms are employed in a variety of literary contexts in the New Testament, appearing mostly in poetic, figurative, apocalyptic passages, often highly coloured; although there appears to be a certain flexibility in their usage (e.g., Abyss in Rom. 10:7 and

(102) Rev. 9: 1, 20: 1.

(103) καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἄρ̃ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρέατος.

Rev. 9:2

(104) Mt. 25: 41.

and in Revelation); nevertheless there appears on the whole a fairly harmonious pattern in their meanings.

1. There is an intermediate abode of the wicked, Hades, where souls await their final sentence of consignment to the 'Lake of fire', Gehenna, which is by contrast a permanent dwelling-place.
2. There is thought to be an intermediate abode of the righteous, Paradise, where souls await the consummation of glory.
3. There is an intermediate abode of the fallen angels, Tartarus, the Abyss, where they await their final doom.

The intermediate places resemble closely the corresponding final ones.

This note has considered these terms as they present themselves to us and no attempt has been made to go beyond the local, spatial ideas. At the moment that is all that is required. When, however, we recognise that we are employing words to describe concepts which must in the very nature of the case supersede, or be quite different from, our present ideas of time and space, let alone those of ancient times, when we remember that we use 'abode', 'place', for what we might describe as 'state', we have introduced the problem of the adequacy of human thought and language to grapple with the spiritual and eternal.

B. EXAMINATION OF NEW TESTAMENT MATERIAL

1. THE PETRINE DATA

The passages, Acts 2: 24-27, 31; 1 Pet. 3: 18ff., 4: 6, merit close attention in this study, whatever view be taken of their provenance. They are grouped together here as 'Petrine data', because I accept that the second chapter of Acts contains Luke's summary in outline of Peter's address on the day of Pentecost, so that we hear the authentic voice of the apostle therein (v. Appendix 1); that the traditional view of the authorship of First Peter is correct (v. Appendix 2). We are, then, looking into Peter's kerygma and didache.

The report of Peter's speech is divided into two main sections: vv. 14-21 offer an explanation of the phenomenon of the day of Pentecost ("This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel"); vv. 22-36 present an outline of apostolic kerygma. In giving his account of the ministry, death, and triumph of Jesus, the speaker declares, $\delta\upsilon\ \delta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\eta\varsigma\ \lambda\upsilon\sigma\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \omega\delta\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$, $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\tau\iota\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \eta\nu\ \delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \upsilon\pi'\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (v. 24) The sentence of the human court has been reversed by the divine. They put the Messiah to death; God raised Him up. The phrase $\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \omega\delta\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$ is interesting. It comes from the Book of Psalms (LXX). In Ps. 18: 5, 6 $\omega\delta\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\varsigma\ \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$, $\omega\delta\ \acute{\alpha}\beta\omicron\upsilon$ renders the MT $\text{לִי־כֶבֶד, לִי־כֶבֶד}$. Compare Ps. 116: 3, where MT reads $\text{לִי־כֶבֶד, לִי־כֶבֶד}$. As לִי־כֶבֶד is given as cstr. pl. of both כֶבֶד (cord) and כֶבֶד (birth-pangs), it is easy to account for the difference between MT and LXX. When we have regard to the principle of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, the MT seems preferable in Ps. 116. Rackam, observing that the LXX "is more picturesque than the MT", considers that Hades "is conceived as travelling with the millions of dead souls in her womb. When Jesus - the first-begotten of the dead - was brought forth from the tomb, the travail-pangs were loosed and now the way is open for others to follow." (105) Professor F.F. Bruce points out that the rabbis spoke of the 'birth-pangs of the Messiah' in reference to the sorrows which would precede the Messianic age, adding, "here the pangs are endured by the Messiah

(105) R.B. Rackam, The Acts of the Apostles (London, 1901), in loc.

himself in His death." (106) The latter interpretation seems the more reasonable.

God, then, loosed death's cords (or pangs), καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. This statement is at once supported by an Old Testament 'testimony', Ps. 16. Peter argues that the Psalm cannot possibly refer to David, because he "died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day". Consequently, the reference is to the Messiah: οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰς ᾗδου, οὐδὲ δώσεις τὸν ὄσιόν σου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν. (107) ἐγκαταλείπειν is a very strong word, 'forsake', 'abandon', but what precisely does the phrase ἐγκ. εἰς mean here? If we translate, 'abandon TO Hades' (as RSV, NEB), does it bear the sense of prevention of going there at all? The 'Beginnings' incline to the idea that this is one of the passages in which the original difference between ἐν and εἰς may be observed. If this is the case, the constructio pregnans can be fully exploited to rid the passage of any descent of Christ at all. It might be possible then to connect this with the cry of dereliction from the Cross, in which the same verb is used. (108) The agonising cry is not absolute and final, for the Christ knew where his confidence lay, believing that his God would raise him up and not abandon him to the extent of Sheol.

If, on the other hand, we translate, 'leave IN Hades' (as RV, AV 'in hell', et al.), an allusion to the Descent into Hades is at once obvious. The balance of evidence favours the latter. Εἰς is frequently used where ἐν would be expected, especially before names of places or such a word as 'house'. (109) Where the pregnant construction is used, it is more obvious than this one would be and the idea of 'motion towards' is demanded in the phrase. (110) Moreover, the whole drift of Peter's

(106) The Book of the Acts (London, 1954), p. 71, n. 56.

(107) MT:
 יִקְרָא אֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֶת־הַיָּדָיִם
 :אֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֶת־הַיָּדָיִם אֶת־הַיָּדָיִם

(108) Mt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34; Ps. 22: 8.

(109) Cf. elsewhere in Lukan writings, Lk. 4: 23, 9: 61; 11: 7; Acts 2: 39, 8: 40, 21: 13. The verb usually expresses 'state'. Cf. also ζῶσιν εἰς τὴν αβυσσόν, Acta Philippi, Lipsius and Bonnet, Acta, II. 136. For ἐγκατ. + τινα + εἰς cf. Ps. Sol. 2: 7.

(110) E.g., σφραῖν εἰς 'to bring safely to', 2 Tim. 4: 18 and ἐλευθερωσθαι εἰς, 'be freed and come to', Rom. 8: 21.

argument would indicate the meaning 'in Hades', insisting as it does upon the difference between David and his greater Son and the evidence of David's tomb. Moffatt, in fact, translates, 'leave my soul in the grave'. This points in the same direction, but Hades is preferable to grave. The present interpretation might also provide a contrast to the afore-mentioned cry of dereliction. There was the orphan-cry of the abandoned sufferer; He died: but He was not abandoned in Hades; He was raised.

Now it is to be observed that the whole emphasis of the address rests upon the resurrection, not the death, of Jesus. It is not the descent into Hades that concerns the preacher so much as the deliverance out of it.(111) The Book of Acts shows what a prominent role the resurrection of Christ played in apostolic kerygma. It was the resurrection that made all the difference to Peter. Furthermore, there was no need to stress the reality of the death of Jesus to a Jerusalem crowd. The resurrection, however, presupposes actual, real death. In the same way deliverance from Hades might presuppose descent into it. If we read a newspaper report of how a brave young hero dramatically rescues someone from a rushing torrent, our whole attention may be fixed upon the heroism of the act. The story, however, has no meaning at all, unless the rescued was in real danger in the river. Similarly, we might argue that our phrase necessarily contains the belief that Christ descended into Hades. To labour the point would be to sound like the village policeman who asked if the boy was on the lorry when he fell off!

It is most important to recognise the limitations of the evidence now before us. First, the whole emphasis of the immediate context falls upon the resurrection. Second, the Descent does not appear in any other example of the apostolic preaching. The second part of the pertinent verse of the Sixteenth Psalm, it is true, is quoted in a Pauline speech,(112) but again in the same manner. Third, it seems certain that the reference would not be found even in our context if the proof-text had not carried it in with it. As Salmond puts it,

(111) Cf. Acts 3: 15, 4: 10.

(112) Acts 13: 35.

"beyond the statement that at His death He passed into the world of the departed like other men, but passed thither only to rise again, nothing is said either about Hades itself, about Christ's abode in it, about any activity of His disembodied spirit, or about any ministry of grace there."(113) The allusion to the Descensus is there embedded in the apostolic kerygma and that is its importance for us. This may be, in the words of Monnier, "la racine première de la doctrine traditionnelle de la descente aux enfers: la victoire sur la mort,"(114)

We now turn to 1 Pet. 3 : 18ff., probably the most difficult crux of the New Testament. Each of its many interpretations has gathered under its flag more than one eminent and authoritative champion, not all of whom, let it be whispered, can be wholly exonerated of the charge of dogmatic prejudice. The difficulties are increased by the fact that so much can be destroyed by, or built upon, this or that exegesis. These words have become before now the basis of a whole doctrine of the Descensus and much more.

We shall consider first those interpretations which would remove from the passage any possible reference to the Descent of Christ.

The text itself, not surprisingly, has invited attention and emendation. In 1891 the Dutch scholar Cramer suggested that an early scribe in commenting on 1 Pet. 3: 24 wrote in the margin that 'Enoch went and preached to the spirits in prison' and his comment, 'Εὐὼχ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν, became corrupted into ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἡτέ.... and absorbed into the text, where it was there misunderstood of a visit of Christ to the angels and of a preaching of doom. This asks too much. A much improved form, however, was proposed, independently of Cramer, by J. Rendel Harris in 1901. He supposed that the name of Enoch had dropped out in copying. The attractiveness of this suggestion can be seen by noticing how easily this might happen in the sentence: ΕΝΟΚΑΙ(ΕΝΟΧ)ΤΟΙCΕΝΘΥΑΑΚΗ... (115) This emendation had also suggested itself, again independently, to M.R. James. It was at

(113) The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 364.

(114) J. Monnier, La Descente aux Enfers (Paris, 1905), p. 47.

(115) Expositor 6. IV (1901). p. 348.

once pointed out by G. Farmer(116) that these scholars had been anticipated by some work done on the text in the 18th century. The emendation, whose author has not been identified, originally appeared in Bowyer's 'Conjectures to the New Testament', from which it made its way into the 'Sylloge Conjecturarum' at the end of Knapp's 1797 New Testament, and thence into both Griesbach's 2nd edition (ὡς s. ἐνὶ οὐρανῷ s. ἐν ᾧ ἐνὶ οὐρανῷ) and Stieler and Thiele's Polyglot New Testament of 1855 (19. Ap. Bow. /pro ἐν ᾧ /:ἐνὶ οὐρανῷ s. ὡς /Al: ἐν ᾧ n. ἐνὶ οὐρανῷ /oll. Ind. 14s. 2Pt. 2.5.).

Now the fact that the emendation has suggested itself to different scholars in different circumstances must lend some weight to its value. If Rendel Harris was greatly influenced by his ideas about the association of 1 Peter and the Book of Enoch, the same can hardly be said about the 18th century worthies, who were writing before the latter was fully known. Again, the emendation so commended itself to both Moffatt and Goodspeed that they included it in their respective translations. Apart from these considerations, what intrinsic worth does the alteration possess? First, there is the comparative ease of the change from ENOKAI ENOX to ENOKAI/ Second, the text when thus emended makes a reference to Enoch 12 explicit, in which Enoch went and preached doom to the rebellious angels. On this point, Wand seems to me to criticise Moffatt unjustly and to mistake the whole force of the latter's argument, when he maintains that the introduction of Enoch "actually contradicts Jewish tradition, which allows to Enoch no more than a proclamation of doom to imprisoned angels (12. 4ff.)".(117) Moffatt in his commentary asserts that Enoch's activity in the Spirit was very different from Christ's; the one went down (κερκυθεῖς), on a mission of doom; the other went up (κερκυθεῖς) triumphing over all that kept men from receiving the mercy of God. It is further argued in support of the emendation that the new text makes the use of Noah in illustration quite intelligible.

These arguments appear to be strong supports for Rendel Harris's case, but on closer scrutiny the grounds for emending the text vanish

(116) Expositor 6. VI (1902). pp. 377-390.

(117) J. W. O. Wand, The General Epistles of St. Peter and Jude (London, 1934), p. 110.

into thin air. The consensus of opinion of several scholars does not in itself establish a reading. If conjectural emenders work on the same principles, it cannot be altogether surprising if they achieve the same results, especially in this passage. Further, there is no MS evidence to support the alteration; the text, though fearfully difficult, does not appear to be corrupt. Again, 'spirit' is too intimately bound up with Christ to admit of Enoch's being 'in' it, as Selwyn remarks. (118) The greatest single factor which militates against the alteration is sufficient to put it out of court. The introduction of Enoch is quite abrupt and unprepared for, the sudden transition extremely harsh, producing "an unimaginable sequence".(119) Even Rendel Harris admits the lack of continuity.(120) We must agree with Clemen's verdict that the emendation is inadmissible.(121) Selwyn adds, "If any emendation were made, I should suggest ἐν ᾧ καὶ Νῶε."(122) He cites 2 Pet. 2: 5, where Noah is described as σὺν αὐτοῖς ὡς καὶ ὁ Νῶε. "But this would involve assuming still further corruption, e.g. the omission of a line; and the text does not appear to be corrupt." In other words, Selwyn rightly strangles the suggestion at birth. We must face the text as it stands.

The commonest interpretation which would make 1Pet. 3: 18ff. irrelevant to the Descent into Hades takes ἐν ᾧ πνεύματι to refer to preaching by Christ in the Spirit, or in a spiritual condition, by the lips of Noah to the wicked generation of men before the deluge. This was first suggested tentatively by Augustine, who thought that the spirits might be animae "quae tunc erant in carne atque ignorantiae tenebris velut carcere clauderetur".(123) This found the support of many, e.g. Aquinas, Leighton, Pearson, C.H.H.Wright, Salmond. The view is modified by W. Kelly, who insists that the figurative interpretation of ignorance and darkness is unnecessary; the spirits are in

(118) E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London, 1946).

(119) F.W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford, 1947), in loc.

(120) *Side-lights on New Testament Research* (London, 1908), pp. 208-10, esp. n. 1, p. 209.

(121) *Expositor* 6. VI (1902). p. 318.

(122) *Op. cit.* p. 198. This, of course, is but a slightly improved version of that noted above as belonging to the 18th century.

(123) *Ep. CLXIV. 15f.*, CSEL. 44. 534-36.

prison now because they disobeyed when the preaching was given.(124)

The figurative interpretation caught Luther's fancy in a sermon preached on 1 Peter in 1523. He deviated from the normal, however, by identifying the spirits with those of Jews and Gentiles still living on earth, to whom the apostles, inspired by the Spirit, preach in vain.(125) "Neben der Predigt kompt er selbs und ist geistlich auch dabei." The hearers are like those of Noah's day, disobedient. Luther himself later rejected this in a letter to Melancthon in 1531, but the idea was given currency chiefly among Socinians, and in particular by Grotius and Schöttchen.

A different modification is found in the view of Spitta, who held that 'preached' described an activity of the pre-existent Christ, the fallen angels composing the audience. The preaching was identical with the announcement of punishment with which Enoch was entrusted, as the representations of Enoch and the Messiah are frequently confused in pre-Christian Judaism.

Leaving aside the deviations, let us notice the merits of the normal view. It does lay stress upon πνεύματι over against σώματι, it is life 'in the sphere of the spirit' or 'in the Spirit' that really matters. Some go further and assert, as Johnstone does, that it "appears to accord perfectly with the whole structure of the paragraph."(126) The most attractive feature of the interpretation lies in the fact that it seems to lift the passage from the obscure, so that what was dark and mysterious becomes a simple straightforward allusion to an Old Testament story. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness." An allusion to Gen. 6: 3 may be seen, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." In this way, the passage is relieved of the embarrassment of being unique.

There can be no doubt that there is a great deal to commend this interpretation, but it seems to me to remove one set of obstacles,

(124) W. Kelly, The Preaching to the Spirits in Prison (London, 1900).

(125) "Die Wort mögen auch wohl einen solchen Verstand geben, dass der Herr Christus, nachdem er gen Himmel ist gefahren, im Geist kommen sei und predigt habe, doch also dass sein Predigen nich leiblich sei."

(126) R. Johnstone, The first Epistle of Peter (Edinburgh, 1888), p.274.

only to erect another in its place. The reference to preaching is said to be simple, but by whose lips did the pre-incarnate Logos speak? By Noah's, it will be said. Yes, but what of the phrase, ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε. ? It becomes rather clumsy and awkward, unless we adopt the previously discarded counsel of despair and emend the text. Would it not be necessary for the reader to know not only the story of disobedience, the flood, Noah and the ark, but also that it was a commonly accepted tradition that the pre-incarnate Word was operating through Noah?

It seems natural to expect that πορευθεῖς occurring twice within a few verses, should bear a similar meaning in both instances, though this argument should not be pressed too far, as πορεύομαι is a common word.

This explanation seems also to founder upon the phrase, 'spirits in prison'. We must, I think, grant that the spirits were in prison when the preaching was given. Aquinas introduces the alien Greek concept of σῶμα-σῆμα. The metaphorical notion of chains of ignorance and darkness is just as forced. Nor can the Isaianic quotation in Lk. 4: 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me....to preach.... to proclaim release to the captives", be adduced in support.

Would there not also be a definite need for a pluperfect tense in the verb? It is true that the Aorist is very often best translated by an English pluperfect, but that is a different matter. Here the Aorists suggest a sequence of acts.

The real difficulty in this interpretation is that it spoils the sequence. An abrupt interruption is made in the argument and a leap must be made from one series of experiences of Christ to a completely different circle of ideas. That such an interruption could occur is not denied, but it does not seem likely in our context.

Such an objection cannot be lodged against another interpretation which rules out the Descent into Hades. According to this view, ζωοποιηθεῖς of v. 18 refers to the Resurrection. The preaching of v. 19 follows the Resurrection and for that reason cannot be given in Hades.(127) Thus Baur maintained that Christ preached to the

(127) For a list of those who take this view v. K. Gschwind, Die Niederfahrt Christi in die Unterwelt (Münster, 1911), p. 91, n.1.

fallen angels after His ascension. Gschwind insists that there is no reference to the Descensus; that what we have to do with here is not a Höllenfahrt, but a Himmelfahrt: "hier wird wohl die Vorstellung von den verschiedenen übereinander liegenden Himmeln, die zum Teil auch von gottfeindlichen Mächten bewohnt waren, vorzuziehen sein." (128) He differs from others in regarding the act of ascension as itself the kerygma. As Christ ascends in victory through the heavens, there is before the disobedient angels and demons an object-lesson, a visible proof, a kerygma, of the value of suffering for righteousness. Gschwind himself remarks on the peculiarity of the fact that no-one else had so interpreted 1 Pet. 3. (129) It would be unwise to pretend that this exegesis has no merit. Its main failure, as I see it, is to deal properly with the 'spirits in prison'. Gschwind defines φυλακή as a place of custody where a future Judgment is being awaited, but how does this fit into his own argument? There is more strength in his insistence that πορευθεῖς should refer to 'ascent' just as it does in v.22. (130) It is perhaps too flimsy a foundation to build on, for while we may insist that πορευθεῖς a colourless enough word, should have a similar type of meaning in 3: 18 as in 3: 22, it is too much to demand exactly the same meaning.

Finally, mention should be made of yet another interpretation in this category. As the established Roman doctrine of the Preaching in Hades limits it to the Limbus Patrum, there is a preference among modern Roman Catholics to regard the clause in 1 Pet. 3 as meaning that the effect of Christ's preaching extended to the lost, without His having in actual fact descended to them. Obviously, this does no justice to πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν and is an attempt to fit the passage into a pre-cast mould.

We now turn to those interpretations which make 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. relevant to the Doctrine of the Descent into Hades. Before considering the minutiae of exegesis it is worth noticing the type of statement which is before us. Beare puts the point rather strongly, "This passing reference to the Descent scarcely deserves the attention it

(128) Gschwind, op. cit. p.121.

(129) Ibid. p.119.

(130) He urges also that this is its normal meaning in Lk. 16: 30, Acts 1: 10f., Jn. 14: 2,3,12,28; 16: 7,28.

has received, at least in a commentary on the epistle,"(131) but he is no doubt correct in drawing attention to the fact that the Descent is by no means the real point of Peter's argument. The writer is encouraging his readers to endure any sufferings that come their way in a manner worthy of the Christian name. It is better to suffer, should that in fact be God's will, for doing good than for doing evil. Indeed, to suffer thus is but to follow the steps of the Master. The passage is hortatory, as for example is Phil. 2: 5ff. Just as the latter, however, becomes one of the great Christological loci of the New Testament, so the former may throw light upon the experiences of Christ. Again, it is generally agreed that the passage before us may be basically some kind of formulary, such as is to be observed in other parts of the New Testament. This being the case, we must not look for a treatise on the Descent to Hades in 1 Pet. 3.

The basis of the argument is the sufferings of Christ. His $\mu\rho\epsilon\tau\tau\omicron\nu$ γὰρ (v.17) finds its explanation in v.18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς.. He makes some weighty statements about the death of Christ. It was ἀπὸ (132) περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν (133) δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἁδελφῶν ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ. (134) The author thus presents teaching about the sufferings of Christ which is consonant with other New Testament doctrine on the subject. He then goes on to show that Christus patiens is Christus victor. The tragedy of the Cross becomes the triumph of Christ. He rose again, was exalted to the right hand of God, after angels, authorities, and powers had been made subject to Him.

Now to examine the passage more closely: 18b θανάτωσεῖς μὲν ζωοποιησεῖς δὲ (135) πνεύματι. The first word doubtless refers to the reality of the physical death of Christ and considering that it is used especially of the death sentence and its execution,

(131) Beare, op. cit., p.145.

(132) Cf. Rom. 6; 10; Heb. 7: 27, 9: 28, 10: 10; Jn. 19: 30.

(133) Cf. Heb. 5: 3, 10: 6; ὑπὲρ in Gal. 1: 4, 1 Cor. 15: 3 (another 'formula').

(134) For noun προσαγωγή cf. Rom. 5: 2; Eph. 2: 18, 3: 12.

(135) There can be no doubt that the anarthrous form is the correct reading.

also to its violent nature, which is very apposite in the context. The datives we may call adverbial datives or datives of reference, a not uncommon usage in Greek. Their function is to limit the sphere of application of the verb or adjective or to express the sphere in which the verb or adjective is to be regarded as operating. "His death took place in the sphere of 'the flesh', the earthly temporal existence" (Beare). Alford expresses it thus, "quod ad carnem, quod ad spiritum". But are we to spell 'spirit' with or without a capital letter? What does ζωοποιηθεῖς really mean? Its basic meaning is obvious, "made alive; 'brought to life', "quickened". Alford's note has received commendation: "His flesh was the subject, recipient vehicle of inflicted death: His spirit was the subject, recipient vehicle of restored life.... He the God-man Christ Jesus, body and soul, ceased to live in the flesh, began to live in the spirit; ceased to live a fleshly, mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life." Is the reference, however, to the resurrection or not? Wand, confessedly following Windisch and Bengel, distinguishes between this quickening and the resurrection. "While Christ's body was dead, His spirit was quickened into a new form of activity by which He was enabled to 'preach to the spirits in prison' who were also disembodied. This, of course, does not refer to the resurrection which is not mentioned till v.21, and in that verse He evidently rises with His body." (136) The phrase, however, as Selwyn observes, embodies a familiar New Testament contrast between Christ dead and Christ living; thus εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανε καὶ ἔζησεν, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ, (137) καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῇ ἐκ δυνάμεως Θεοῦ. (137)

Bigg thinks we may explain ζωοποιηθεῖς perhaps by the χάρις ζωῆς of 3: 17. "The life of heaven is not unnaturally distinguished from that of earth as a new life, a second ἀναγέννησις a fresh grace of God, through the two are continuous and not disparate." He then makes a very good point: "all phrases which apply to the point of transition from the old life to the new are necessarily vague, and the speculations which may be built upon them are endless". (138)

(136) Wand, op. cit., p.100.

(137) Rom.14: 9; 2 Cor. 13: 4; cf. 1 Tim. 3: 16

(138) C.Biggs, The Epistles of St.Peter and St.Jude (ICC, 1901), p.161.

Nevertheless, if we insist upon the full meaning of the participle and especially if we take πνεύματι to refer to the Holy Spirit, we must conclude that the author means the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. This, however, becomes extremely difficult in the light of the μὲν...ὁὲ antithesis. In Huther's view, "Christ entered into the state of death, in so far as the σὰρξ pertained to Him, so that His life, in the flesh (sein sarkisches Leben) ceased; but from death He was brought again to life, - was raised up, - in so far as the πνεῦμα pertained to Him, so that the new life was purely spiritual (pneumatisch)." What of the verba Christi in Lk. 24: 39, φηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σὰρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει, καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα.

A strict identification with the ἀνάστασις of v.21 seems fraught with its own difficulties. Perhaps we may refer to the words from the cross, Πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. τοῦτο ὁ εἰπὼν ἐξέπνευσεν (139) Is it possible to say that this rather is the time referred to in our phrase? Of course, it does seem unlikely that a distinction between ζωοποιηθεὶς and ἀνάστασις was vividly present to the writer's mind, but if we must tie the words down to specific moments, then in the light of the immediate context and the whole run of the passage, we should have to distinguish between this 'quickenings' and the Resurrection of the third day.

Now the ἐν ᾧ (v.19), what is its antecedent? πνεύματι alone or the whole preceding phrase? Prof. C.F.D. Moule notes that it is a difficult problem (140). This is certainly not the only ἐν ᾧ (ἐφ' ᾧ) that causes difficulty in the New Testament. We might hope to find some help from the use of ἐν ᾧ in 1: 6, but that one sharply divides scholars. Selwyn states the three views:

- (1) The antecedent is ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v.3) there being abundant Old Testament precedent for the thought of exultation in God. (Hort)
- (2) Bigg connects ἐν ᾧ with the immediately preceding καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ urging that ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι ἐν followed by the ground of the joy is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. (so Windisch; Wand).
- (3) Bennet (century Bible) supports Bengel, taking ἐν ᾧ to mean "wherefore".

(139) Lk. 23: 46.

(140) An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge, 1953), p.131.

in view of the consideration just mentioned. (Kühl and Von Soden have "in which assurance").

Of these Selwyn at once rejects (2), but finds it hard to choose between (1) and (3), inclining to the latter. I should have thought the choice lay between (2) and (3). Selwyn fails to do justice to (2) on grammatical grounds. He argues that καὶρὸς ἐσχάτω is "scarcely a large enough element in the previous sentence to carry the weight of this rich significant relative clause." But surely antecedents do not carry the weight of relative clauses? He is asking for a compactness of expression which is just not there. Selwyn goes on to maintain that περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας (v.10) suggests that Peter would here have written ἐν ᾧ καὶρὸς had that been his meaning. It is worth noticing, I think, that the word ψυχῶν comes between σωτηρίαν (v.9) and περὶ ἧς (v.10); This may explain the repetition of the former word. Beare's verdict is sound at this point: "the relative may be taken as masculine, attaching directly to καὶρὸς ἐσχάτω ; or, probably better, as neuter, attaching to in a general way, the whole thought of the preceding sentence."

Accordingly, it is quite inadmissible to argue from the ἐν ᾧ of 1: 6 to the ἐν ᾧ of 3: 19. Indeed, it occurs to me that there are significant differences in the pertinent phrases in 1: 6, 1: 10, 3: 19. The first has ἐν καὶρὸς ἐσχάτω. ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε. the last πνεύματι ἐν ᾧ καὶ.. in 1: 10 σωτηρία, the antecedent is repeated for the reason suggested. Now in our phrase there is no need at all to repeat πνεύματι. The juxtaposition of πνεύματι and ᾧ and the presence of the καὶ would make it a natural assumption that ᾧ refers specifically to πνεύματι. This is emphatically rejected by Selwyn, who states that "there is no example in the New Testament of this dative of reference, or adverbial dative as I should prefer to call it, serving as an antecedent to a relative pronoun. The antecedent to ἐν ᾧ lies in the preceding context which here may be the phrase immediately before it (θανατωθεὶς..πνεύματι) or the whole process described in v.18." This, however, is no argument, for he merely states two points. A no less emphatic statement of the opposite can be quoted from Beare: "the antecedent is πνεύματι, taken by itself, without the participle; it is "in the spirit", but not as "made alive in the spirit" (risen from the dead), that He preaches to

the 'spirits in prison'. The latter is no doubt to be preferred. It is the state, the manner, or character of the 'going' which is before us, so that we may translate, 'It was in the spirit too that He went..'. This suits the context admirably and preserves the ἀρξ-πνεῦμα antithesis.

The word 'Descent' does not occur in our passage. The movement is expressed by the aorist participle πορευθεῖς which is usually translated 'went and..', i.e. by a finite verb. The word expresses ordinary travel. In fact, the aorist participle is often used pleonastically to enliven the narrative and the idea of going or travelling has no prominence, e.g. πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε.(141) The word, however, occurs twice in our passage (19 and 22). In the latter a definite 'going' is signified: πορευθεῖς εἰς οὐρανόν. The verb appears frequently with reference to the Ascension in the Upper Room Discourse(142) Perhaps then the word occurred naturally to Peter's mind. It is nevertheless improbable that ascent is meant in both 19 and 22, as some say. Possibly, the two are parallel: the latter refers to the Ascent, the former to the preceding Descent. This is not the only Ascent-Descent balance. Now πορεύομαι is certainly used of passing into the beyond.(143) The 'going' here may refer to the Descent.(144)

It now remains to examine the all-important, but baffling part of our text. It is astonishing how many different opinions claim to be the plain, obvious sense of the words. There is a preaching activity. What is its content, aim, and effect? Who form the audience? All the

(141) Mt. 9: 13.

(142) Jn. 14: 2,3,12,28; 16: 7,28; cf. Acts 1: 10f., Lk. 16: 30.

(143) 1 Clem. of Paul and Peter: εἰς τὸν αἰὼν τὸν αἰὼν. (5: 7), εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς... (5: 4). Also in a bad sense, of Judas Iscariot: παρέβη Ἰούδας πορευθῆναι εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἰδίον (Acts 1: 25)

(144) Cf. especially Eccles. 9: 10 (LXX) οὐκ ἔστι πρόημα καὶ λογισμὸς καὶ γνώσις καὶ σοφία ἐν ᾧδῃ, ὅπου σὺ πορεύῃ ἐκεῖ.

The aor. part. is used with κηρύσσειν in the commission: Πορευθέντες... κηρύξατε.. Mk. 15: 15.

departed, some of the departed or the fallen angels? We shall first study the words separately to find out what they can mean. This may avoid the tendency to follow one particular line of interpretation and to fit the individual words into a preconceived pattern.

First, ἐκήρυξεν. The basic meaning of κηρύσσειν is no more than 'to proclaim'. Α κήρυξ "may be a town crier, an auctioneer, a herald, or anyone who lifts up his voice and claims public attention to some definite thing he has to announce." (145) Epictetus uses the word of the philosopher who is the κήρυξ of God (146) In the New Testament Noah is spoken of as οἰκαιοσύνης κήρυξ (147) the word is also used of Paul, κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος... διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. (148) The noun κήρυγμα signifies the proclamation which the herald makes, the message which the preacher brings. It is used with both a Subjective and Objective Genitive: τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ (149) τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (150) is preaching about Jesus Christ. It also signifies the apostolic preaching in 1 Cor. 1:21, 2:4, 15:14; 1 Tim. 4:17; Titus 1:3 : hence the popular theological term of to-day. On examining the uses of the verb κηρύσσειν in the New Testament, I note that in nearly every case it is made clear what the content of the proclamation is, for the object is expressed, the message reported, or the actual words recorded. The verb is used in a general sense of making public mention of something; a healing work of Jesus is 'proclaimed' contrary to His own wishes (151) As with the nouns, the verb expresses religious proclamation, being used of the activity of prophets, false prophets, Judaizers, John the Baptist, and of the Christian preacher. It is variously constructed, with indirect command

(145) C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments (London, 1936, new ed. 1944), p.7.

(146) Epictetus 3,21,13; 3,22,69)

(147) 2 Pet. 2:5

(148) 1 Tim. 2:7. Arndt and Gingrich do not seem to notice that the same three words occur in 2 Tim. 1:11

(149) Mt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32.

(150) Rom. 16:25.

(151) Mk. 7:36 cf. Mk. 1:45, 5:20; Lk. 8:23.

μὴ κλέπτειν (152), with τὸ (153), with substantive object expressing the form of the message, (154) with ἀpersonal object. (155) The commonest use of the verb in the New Testament is with the Christian message, as is only to be expected. Jesus Himself preaches; (156) His disciples and apostles preach τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, τὸν λόγον τὸ ῥῆμα. (157) The same contents are found where the participle λέγων is used with ὅτι. (158)

Because of its variety of uses it is not so simple as is sometimes supposed to state the content of the message when the verb is employed absolutely. "The verb 'to preach'", writes C.H. Dodd, "frequently has for its object 'The Gospel'. Indeed, the connection of ideas is so close that keryssein by itself can be used as a virtual equivalent for evangelizesthai, 'to evangelise', or 'to preach the gospel'. It would not be too much to say that wherever 'preaching' is spoken of, it always carries with it the implication of 'good tidings' proclaimed." (159) Because of these considerations, Beare states quite emphatically that ἐκήρυξεν in our passage means the "preaching of the Gospel of Salvation". Christ's Descent into Hades, like His manifestation upon earth was a phase of His work as the universal Saviour. It is an extension of the thought of Eph. 4: 8-10..... 'the spirits in prison' were released." If we could be quite certain about the absolute use of κηρύσσειν then Beare is right; but we cannot be sure, in spite of Dodd's words just quoted. In Mk. 1: 38, where Jesus says to His disciples in the desert place, Ἀγωμεν ἀλλαχοῦ εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας κωμοπόλεις, ἵνα κήρῃ κηρύξω. εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξῆλθον.... and then we read (v.39) καὶ ἦλθε κηρύσσων, we can assume only one thing about the preaching. Why? Simply because we have already been given a detailed account in v.15, Mark's first mention of the public

(152) Rom. 2: 21.

(153) Mt. 10: 27; cf. Lk. 12: 3 for the passive.

(154) περὶ τοῦ μὴ Gal. 5: 11.

(155) 'Moses', i.e. the Law, Acts 15: 21; 'Christ', Acts 8: 5; 1 Cor. 1: 23; Phil. 1: 15; 'Jesus', Acts 19: 13; 2 Cor. 11: 4; 1 Tim. 3: 16 (pass.)

(156) Lk. 4: 19, 8: 1.

(157) Lk. 8: 1, 9: 2, Acts 20: 25, 28: 31. Mk. 16: 15, Gal. 2: 2; 2 Tim. 4: 7; Rom. 10: 8.

(158) E.g. Mt. 10: 7; Acts 9: 20.

(159) The Apostolic Preaching, p.8.

ministry of Jesus, ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ λέγων ὅτι πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς, καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε, καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγ. Similarly, the absolute use in Lk. 4: 44 need occasion no great difficulty because of the previous preaching in the same chapter.(160)

Paul's sequence of thought in Rom. 10: 4 makes the meaning of κηρύσσειν perfectly clear. 1 Cor. 9: 27 affords a close syntactical parallel to 1 Pet. 3: 19, in that no object is expressed and the dative is used of the persons addressed, μήπως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτοὺς ἀδοκιμὸς γένομαι, but here again the meaning has been made clear by the use of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι or εὐαγγέλιον no fewer than nine times in the context. We are not justified, therefore, in making the simple deduction that κηρύσσειν equals εὐαγγελίζεσθαι. Selwyn cites Rev. 5: 2 as a parallel to our passage. There, however, we know that the verb indicates simply the making of a proclamation from the context itself, for the actual words of the message are given. In the same way the content of the preaching is shown in the record of Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends.(161)

We conclude, therefore, that the verb does not enter our passage already equipped with a definite, quasi-technical force so as to control the meaning of the phrase. Its own meaning is determined by the context. "Es darf daher as Regel gelten, dass da, wo κηρύσσειν absolut steht, der Inhalt der Botschaft nicht schon a priori aus dem Wort selbst erschlossen werden kann, sondern dass hier vor allen Dingen der Kontext zu befragen ist."(162)

With regard to 'spirits in prison', we have already discarded certain interpretations. The possible meanings may be reduced to two. "This phrase can be interpreted only in two ways. The spirits in question are either those of men in Sheol, or they are the fallen angels mentioned in 2 Pet. 2: 4, Jude 6."(163)

(160) Cf. Mt. 11: 1; Mk. 3: 14, 16: 20.

(161) Acts 10: 42.

(162) Gschwind, op. cit., p.75. Cf. his quotation from Spitta: κηρύσσειν ist nur ein formeller Begriff, dessen Inhalt durch den Kontext bestimmt wird." (p.75, n.1) It should be observed here that it is fallacious to prejudge the case by reference to 1 Pet. 4: 6.

(163) R.H. Charles

The word φυλακή need not detain us long. Its primary meaning is that of guarding or watching. It then comes to be used in two ways, one temporal and the other local. It refers to one of the watches of the night, as being the period when some men are on guard while others sleep.(164) Clearly it cannot have a temporal significance here. It also refers to a prison, as being the place where people are kept under guard. It occurs frequently in the New Testament in this sense, over 30 times in fact, signifying a place of internment for men and also for Satan.(165) There can be no doubt that the meaning here is 'prison'(166)

We have observed that the spirits who are imprisoned have been identified with the spirits of departed men. It is not clear that πνεύματα can of itself bear that meaning. Some illustrations which are frequently quoted in support of this fall short of demonstration. For example, the sense of πνεύμασι in Heb. 12: 23 is fixed by the following genitive, δυνάτων τετελειωμένων. The genitive is also present in the passage of Josephus which deals with demons (driven out by rue) which are simply πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων πνεύματα which enter into living men and kill them.(167) Selwyn cites as illustrative of the use, "O ye spirits (πνεύματα) and souls (ψυχαί) of the righteous, bless ye the Lord".(168) On this sentence, however, W. H. Bennet comments, "The verse is one of a series appealing to various classes of living men, so that it also refers to the living, 'righteous souls', not souls of the departed."(169) The qualifying genitive also occurs in Enoch 9: 3,10, a passage interesting also because it may be alluded to in the παρακλήσις of 1 Pet. 1: 12. Selwyn's conclusion is that there is no trace of πνεύματα being used absolutely to connote departed spirits.

Little help is to be derived from Mk. 24: 37,39, referred to by Selwyn in possible modification of his conclusion, because there we

(164) For this meaning v. Mt. 14: 25; Mk. 6: 48.

(165) Rev. 20: 7.

(166) This would have gone without saying, had not Calvin given vogue to the inadmissible idea of 'watchtower', Institutes, II.XVI.9.

(167) Josephus, Bell. Jud., VII.VI.3.

(168) The Song of the Three Holy Children, 64.

(169) The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, I.636.

cannot tell whether πνεῦμα is meant to signify a spirit or the disembodied spirit of a man. Either presumably would inspire the disciples with fear. Much more to the point is Selwyn's other admission, that πνεύματα is not used quite absolutely in our context, being qualified by ἐν φυλακῇ.

In the famous description of Sheol in Enoch, the inhabitants, as R. H. Charles remarks, are called 'souls', but generally 'spirits'. (170) He also notes the peculiar phraseology of τὰ πνεύματα τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν ἀποθανόντων ἀνθρώπων. (171)

Raphael explains the hollow places of Sheol. They have been "created for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein, yea that all the souls of the children of men should assemble here. And these places have been made to receive them till the day of their judgment and till their appointed period, till the great judgment (comes) upon them." There are divisions for the righteous (5-9) and for the wicked (10-13). Of the sinners who have died without suffering due retribution, he says, "There shall He bind them for ever." (172)

The expressions, already quoted, which speak of Sheol's gates and bars would give currency to the conception of Sheol or Hades as the prison of departed spirits. Oesterley states that it was taught in Rabbinical literature that all those who are imprisoned in Sheol should be brought out by the Messiah, who himself would come and fetch them thence. (173) Two midrashes are quoted to support this: "And when they that were bound in Gehinnom saw the light of the Messiah, they rejoiced in receiving Him, and said, This is He who will lead us out of darkness"; and Bereshith Rabbah on Gen. 44: 8, We shall rejoice in Thee. When? When the prisoners will rise out of Gehinnom with the Shekinah at their head." (174) These, however, are reckoned to be of such late date that they do not help us to resolve the difficulties of our text. The same holds good for the evidence sometimes adduced from the Test. XII Patriarchs, the passages quoted being Christian interpolations (which will be discussed in their proper place).

(170) En. 22.3; cf. 9.3. 22.5,6,7,9,11,12,13; cf. Jub. 23.31.

(171) En. 9.10; 22.3.

(172) N.B. Hos. 13: 14, Zech. 9: 11-12 taken to refer to Sheol.

(173) W.O.E. Oesterley, The Doctrine of the Last Things (1908),

(174) From S. Jellinek, Beth Hamidrash, 2: 50.

If we have regard to the context, it seems to me that the identification of the 'spirits' with those of men is fraught with serious difficulties. The statement does not run, The spirits of men who disobeyed once.... It looks as if the spirits were not only spirits at the time of the preaching, but also when they disobeyed. Even if we concede that *πνεύματα* is employed somewhat loosely, and is influenced by the preceding *πνεύματι*, and that Peter is therefore saying that Christ descended into Hades and preached to the departed spirits of men detained therein, what are we to make of the meaning as a whole?

No interpretation is acceptable which ignores the limited nature of the reference to those of Noah's generation, a limitation which still holds good with the anarthrous participle. (The participle may be intended to indicate the reason for the imprisonment.) It is commonly asserted that the men of Noah's day are mentioned by way of example. Here attempts to anticipate objections to this: "If he mentions these only, out of all that died before Christ, it is because they were regarded as the most abandoned of all sinners. For then, Judaism entertained no hope of repentance and restoration, but the Christian teacher holds that none, not even these, are beyond the reach of the saving power of Christ." This view is to be rejected, because it makes an inference which we have no right to make without more tangible evidence. There is not the slightest suggestion in the passage that these are presented as an example. It avails nothing to appeal to our Lord's references to the men of Noah's day, for in every case He subscribes to the traditional beliefs about their destiny and uses their fate to sound a solemn warning. Can we suppose that Peter would dare to take the edge off all that His Master taught in this respect? If we do infer from these words in 1 Pet. 3 that Jesus descended to Hades to preach the saving message to this representative class, we make this passage quite unique in Scripture. Moreover, there is no hint in the words that the hearers listened to and welcomed the preaching, is there?

The interpretation, of course, is, to put it mildly, very attractive. It would seem to throw light upon the acute problem of what is to become of all these countless souls who have died in total or partial ignorance of the Gospel and might thus be used to 'justify the ways of

God to men.' It strikes a chord in the heart of charitable men, evoking emotions which can only be expressed in verse. The appeal of this interpretation may be felt in the well-known lines of Phillips:

"Slowly all the dead

The melancholy attraction of Jesus felt;

And millions like a sea, wave upon wave,

Heaved dreaming to that moonlight face, or ran

In wonderfullong ripples, sorrow-charmed." (Christ in Hades)

It can be seen how neatly such a view would fit into the doctrine of the 'larger hope' or, for that matter, a thoroughgoing 'universalism'. Those who would follow such a procedure with 1 Pet. 3 must recognise that they are building upon the flimsy foundation of a mere assumption.

The corroboration for this view of 1 Pet. 3: 19 is sometimes sought in 4: 6. Both, it is thought, point to the preaching of the Good News in Hades. J. A. MacGullogh thinks that an interesting parallelism runs through passages. "Both are antithetic and the antithesis in each passage preserves a certain identity of subject." (175) This he sets out as follows:

III. 18.

θανατωθεῖς μὲν	ζωοποιηθεῖς
σὰρξ	πνεύματι

IV. 6

κρίθῃσι μὲν	ζῶσι δὲ
κατὰ ἄνθρώπους	κατὰ θεόν
σὰρξ	πνεύματι

It will be observed at once that this is no more than an interesting parallelism. It only proves something if MacGullogh's understanding of both passages is correct. Even then it fails to illuminate the crucial phrases. (176)

No less objectionable is Monnier's view, which is but the logical expression of that held by all who belong to this tradition. He regards 1 Pet. 4: 6 as a principle and 1 Pet. 3: 19f. as an example. What is that principle? "C'est qu' avant le jugement il faut que l' Evangile ait été annoncé à tous, aux morts comme aux vivants." (177) This again is to make unwarrantable assumptions. In any case, 1 Pet. 4: 6 has nothing to say about preaching in Hades - but more of this later.

(175) The Harrowing of Hell (Edinburgh, 1930), p.61.

(176) For a different use of this parallelism, v. on 4: 6.

(177) Op. cit., p.53f.

(178) J.H. Bernard, *Studia Sacra* (London, 1917), Ch.1, pp.1-50.

Before leaving this interpretation, or group of interpretations, it is necessary to take into account a totally different approach to the passage which finds in it a preaching mission to the souls of men. J..H. Bernard sees a clue to the meaning in the baptismal reference. ^{h e} "The parallelism is between the Ministry of Christ in Hades (v19) and the Ministry of Christ in baptism (v21)." (178) This seems to me to knock the whole passage out of joint. The result can be seen when Bernard works out his thesis: "The idea, in short, underlying 1 Pet. III: 19-21 is that as Christ descended into the Abyss and preached the Gospel to captive souls, when 'quickened in the spirit' after His death, so we descend into the baptismal waters where Christ delivers our captive souls by the same power, viz. that of His Resurrection." To show how this fits into the wider context, Bernard makes the strange pronouncement, "The fact that Christ, after His Passion, ministered to the dead by His spirit would afford little consolation to living men, were it not that the apostle is able to add that we, too, have a kindred experience." Surely the consolatory fact is that Christ also suffered, but triumphed, leaving His followers a perfect example and encouragement in trial.

In working out this idea, Bernard rests heavily upon his conception of the structure of the passage, which in turn depends upon his explanation of v.21. He rejects the meaning 'antitype' for ἀντίτυπον as such a meaning is not found elsewhere in early Christian literature. As in Heb. 9: 24, the antitype here is an imperfect adumbration of the type. (179) "here is the clue, then, to the structure of 1 Pet. III.19f. The comparison which is indicated by the word ἀντίτυπον is not between baptism and the flood (the mention of which is only parenthetical and incidental), but between baptism and Christ's Descent into Hades, of which baptism is but the μίμησις or imitation." (180) This, however, is not the necessary conclusion of his own argument.

Rejecting the view that the antecedent of ὅ is ὑδατος he maintains

(178) Studia Sacra, Ch.1, pp.1-50.

(179) He refers to 2 Clem. 14, Iren. ad Haer. 1.5.6. for the Valentinian use, Epiphan. Haer. 31.5, Cyril Cat. 31.1, Apost. Const. 5.14, 6.30 etc.

(180) Ibid. p. 32f.

that it is not in v.20, but in v.19 (or even 18!). If we read $\tilde{\sigma}$, the sentence, though clumsy, is, he asserts, intelligible thus, Which (meaning the Descent of Christ into Hades) also saves you now antitypically, viz. baptism. This seems to me neither clear nor an improvement. Bernard thinks that all becomes clear if we read $\tilde{\phi}$ (conjectured by Erasmus and argued for by Hort). 'As an antitype to which (Descent) baptism now also saves you'. All that has really become clear is Bernard's interpretation, not Peter's words. He concedes the difficulty of having the relative at some distance from its antecedent. His concluding sentence is rather infelicitous: "And it is quite possible that the words 'saved through water' in v.20 lead the writer on to baptism in the next clause, but that is not to say that ὕδατος is the antecedent of $\tilde{\phi}$.v

Bernard's real mistake lies in his attempt to give a rigid, symmetrical parallelism to a passage which is a series of affirmations. We must allow the writer the latitude of choosing his own mode of expression.

(6nyvv.20-21.

In Heb. 9: 24 antitype undoubtedly means a copy, a representation; the earthly sanctuary is a copy, and no more than a copy of the true. This accords with the Platonic teaching that the world about us is a picture or a copy of the heavenly original. Now this is all very apposite in the context of Hebrews. To pin down the meaning in 1 Pet.3 is not so simple.

It is usual to take it as meaning simply antitype (in the technical sense). Thus the Flood incidents and people are the type; baptism is the antitype. This can be argued for. As Arndt and Gingrich put it, "The α . is usually regarded as secondary to the τύπος (cf. Ex. 25: 40), but since τύπος can mean both 'original' and 'copy', α . is also ambiguous.. baptism, which is a fulfilment (of the type), now saves you, i.e. the saving of Noah from the flood is a τύπος, a foreshadowing...and baptism corresponds to it." Perhaps, however, α . may be taken literally as 'a corresponding type'. The flood, the ark, and its occupants formed a type; baptism formed a corresponding type. The passage will run thus: By entering into the ark, a few, that is eight souls, were brought safely through the water. Water also now saves you, I mean the water of baptism which is also a figure.....

The flood declares the judgment of God and through it a few were saved. Baptism too speaks of judgment and death, but also of the salvation of those who are in Christ. It is then that Peter adds the qualifying statements to show that it is not the mere outward sign that saves, but that of which it is a sign. It is not a mere outward cleansing away of filth; there must be something more. It is the of a good conscience, possibly 'stipulatio'; the question and answer making the act binding (business and legal term in papyri). The heart gives its response, its oath of allegiance.

This view recognises the main drift and the excursive references and at the same time gives point to the mention of baptism. (v.Appendix 4)

We now consider the other possibility and ask if the 'spirits in prison' can be fallen angels.

The word πνεύματα is used absolutely of supernatural beings, of independent beings, in contrast to beings which can be perceived by the physical senses. Thus it is used of God Himself. (181) It can also be applied to spirits, or spirit-beings, good and evil. In the New Testament angels are so spoken of: οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶ λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα. (182) The word is used of evil spirits in records of healings in the Synoptic Gospels especially; for the absolute, witness καὶ ἐξέβαλε τὰ πνεύματα λόγῳ and καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα εὐθὺς συνεσπάραξεν αὐτόν. (183) In Acts 16: 16 the slave-girl is said to have πνεῦμα πύθωνα. The phrase πνεύματα δαιμονίων occurs in Rev. 16: 14 and Lk. 4: 33. It is, therefore, possible that the spirits of 1 Pet. 3: 19 are fallen angels. Is this the probable meaning?

Jewish traditions are well supplied with references to the angels that did not keep to their appointed state, but disobeyed God, wrought havoc and were punished. The origin of these references is to be found in Gen. 6: 1-5. (184) The story which is simply told there receives more elaborate treatment in the Book of Enoch (cf. Jubilees, 10). The rebellion was led by Simjaza or Azazel. The angels, the sons of the heavens, saw and lusted after, the daughters of men. They chose wives for themselves and had intercourse with them, producing a race of giants. This resulted in a period of flagrant sin and moral corruption. "And there arose great godlessness and much fornication, and they sinned, and all their ways became corrupt." (185) If ever there was an exhibition of disobedience (ἀπειθεία), this was it.

Men appealed to heaven. Michael, Gabriel and others interceded

(181) Jn. 4: 24.

(182) Heb. 1: 14; cf. τῶν ἐπὶ τὰ πνευμάτων (Rev. 1: 4, 3: 1).

(183) Mk. 8: 16, 9: 20; cf. Lk. 9: 39, 10: 20.

(184) For 'sons of God' meaning angels in OT, v. Job 1: 6, 2: 1, 38: 7 and probably Dt. 32: 8, more probably since the discovery of the tiny Qumran fragment. (v. F.F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, London, 1956, p. 67f.)

(185) Apoc. Bar. 61: 12, 13; Test. Reub. 5; Test. Naph. 3.

with the Most High. The sequel is interesting. "Bind Azazel hand and foot," said the Lord to Rafael, "and place him in the darkness : make an opening in the desert which is in Dudael, and place him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever and cover his face that he may not see the light. And on the great day of judgment he shall be cast into the fire." The angels are thereupon "bound fast under the hills of the earth for seventy generations" awaiting final judgment. Then they will be led off to the abyss of fire; in torment and in prison will they be confined for ever and ever.(186) Thus not only is their temporary state described in terms of prison, but their final doom. In the Valley of Hinnom "iron chains of immeasurable weight" are forged, prepared for the hosts of Azazel "so that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation and cover their jaws with rough-hewn stones."(187) All this has come upon them because they were unrighteous in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those that dwell on the earth."

A significant element in the tradition is the rôle played by Enoch himself, who carries to these spirits in prison a message of unrelieved doom: "they will have no place on earth, nor forgiveness of sins"; they will lament till eternity, but will not be shown mercy and peace. On hearing the messages the angels beg Enoch to pray for them. As he reads his petition, he falls asleep and sees visions. The answer to the petition is a strong negative: "judgment has been finally passed on you and no indulgence will be shown".(188)

The case for identifying the 'spirits in prison' with the fallen angels is further strengthened by the reference in the passage (v.20) to the days of Noah. The sin of the fallen angels was always represented as preceding the flood. There is the allusion in 2 Pet. 2 : 4, where three outstanding examples are given of sin and its punishment, the angels, the old world (the flood and Noah specifically mentioned), Sodom and Gomorrah respectively. (There

(186) En. 10: 4-6; 12; 13

(187) En. 54: 5

(188) En. 12: 4; 13: 1; 14: 4.

is no mention of the flood in the parallel passage in Jude 6). In Wisdom Noah is held up as an example of providential guidance in navigation and the giants are spoken of : "For in the old time also, when proud giants were perishing, the hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft, left to the race of men a seed of generations to come, Thy hand guiding the helm." (189)

The author of 2 Pet. 2: 4 evidently expected his readers to know the details of the story to which he alludes : εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ σειροῖς, στροῖς (σειραῖς) ζόφου ταρταρῶσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους.

The use of Tartarus, the lowest hell of Greek mythology into which the Titans had been cast, is probably just a case of the writer drawing upon the common stock of (poetic) imagery then available. It does not appear in the parallel in Jude, but the bonds and the darkness are there alright. We are justified in concluding that the story of the fallen angels, their disobedience and rebellion, their connection with the flood of Noah's day, their imprisonment and divinely-ordained fate, were well known in New Testament times. A passing reference to the fallen angels, such as we think we see in 1 Pet. 3: 19f., would be quite in order. If the allusion is obscure to us, that will be because the whole circle of ideas is foreign to us.

It may be objected that we can hardly expect the scattered Christians of Asia Minor, who, according to the traditional account, are addressed in the letter, to be acquainted with the Book of Enoch in spite of its undoubted popularity in some quarters. This objection (though considerable) does not seem to be altogether valid. It has been thought that 1 Peter shows allusions to the Book of Enoch elsewhere (e.g. ch.1), though the case for this has been perhaps overstated by, e.g. J. Rendel Harris. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that the recipients of the letter had studiously devoured that volume. All that we need assume is that they knew of the traditions embedded in Enoch. That is not too much to assume, for popular books are often evidence of even

(189) Wisdom 14: 5-6. For this flood-giants connection cf. also 3 Macc. 2: 4 (which also mentions Sodom), Bar. 3: 26-28.

more popular ideas. It is worth noticing at this point how much a knowledge of the Old Testament is taken for granted in 1 Peter (e.g. 2: 4-10 where every word refers to Scripture).

Given the possibility of an allusion of this kind to the fallen angels, it will be at once obvious that another advantage in the interpretation appears. We need make no rash guesses about the 'spirits' being examples and so on. We do justice to the plain sense of the passage. It is surely clear that Peter does not say the spirits of men who disobeyed once. He evidently intends the reader to suppose that the spirits in prison were no less 'spirits' when they disobeyed.

If the spirits are fallen angels, what of the preaching to them? Some, holding rigidly to the view that *ἐκῆρυξεν* must always be 'preached the Gospel' in the New Testament, argue that this must be its meaning here. Of these some go on to deduce the restoration of the fallen angels and link this with 'the restoration of all things'. Others, remarking that the result of the preaching is not stated and using the analogy of the earthly response to the Gospel, seem content to leave the matter as it stands, i.e. clothed in mystery. H.A. Blair puts forward a novel suggestion. He regards the spirits as the Guardian spirits of the nations, the 'rulers' of the nations, who are thus made subject to Christ and the way is thereby open for the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations. He thinks of the proclamation as being made to the departed of the nations and their Guardians together: "as a result God brings all their angels, authorities and powers into subjection to Christ. He makes much of the parallelism, pointed out by Selwyn, between 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. and 1 Tim. 3: 16.(190)

We have come to the conclusion that the content of *κρυπταὶ* must be decided by the context. Nowhere are we given the slightest glimmer of hope for the fallen angels, but everywhere quite the opposite. Accordingly, were Peter to be suggesting the salvation of these spirits, he would have to make his intended meaning much clearer. This is not to argue that Christianity should be bound by Judaistic outlook and tradition, but we are entitled to expect

a much more definitive statement of such a foreign idea as this would have seemed in apostolic times. The action of Christ in preaching to the fallen angels should be seen in the light of His conflict with hostile powers at the crucifixion. Jesus entered into combat with sinister world-forces(191) He submitted Himself to death and thereby broke the dominion of the principalities and powers' and triumphed over them.(192) It harmonises with this concept of Christ's death to see in the *ἐκήρυξεν* of 1 Pet.3: 19 a proclamation of His victory, which while it meanse light and salvation to believers, can only mean to fallen angels their doom.(193) Hence the view of orthodox Lutherans of the 16th and 17th centuries and many since. It should be observed, however, that the emphasis is wrongly placed if we speak only of the concio damnatoria. The passage is not really concerned with the doom of the spirits in prison so much as with the victory of Christ. It is in this way that such an interpretation fits the purpose of the whole passage. The writer is encouraging his readers to bear suffering patiently by pointing to Christ as the example, who also suffered but by suffering triumphed. Christus Patiens is Christus Victor. The rest of the affirmations in the passage about Christ all point in the same direction in His Resurrection, His ascension and Session at God's right hand, the subjection to Him of angels, authorities and powers.

This identification of the 'spirits in prison' with 'fallen angels', if correct, must exclude the departed spirits of men. An attempt, however, has been made (what has not been tried with this passage?) to combine these two opinions and have the phrase embracing both fallen angels and the wicked men of Noah's day (e.g. Wand, following Windisch), but examples have not been given of such a congeries of the dead and angelic beings under the one term *πνεύματα*. Selwyn quotes Apoc. Bar. 61: 13-15 but rightly

(191) Jn. 12: 31; 2 Cor. 2: 8

(192) Col. 2: 15. Astralism and the other mixed ingredients of the Colossian heresy cannot have been unknown to Peter's readers, if they lived in Asia Minor.

(193) Cf. The message of Enoch.

notes that both are not comprised together under one nomenclature. In the world judgment of Isa. 24: 21, however, the powers of evil have their part along with men: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of high ones on high (astral powers, pace G. Adam Smith) and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, כּוּר, and shall be shut up in prison

וְאַחֵר יָבִיאוּ וְיָבִיאוּ and after many days shall they be visited." This in itself would not support the idea that men and angels are both included in 1 Pet. 3: 19.

It seems to me that once you accept that the 'spirits in prison' can be fallen angels, the other interpretation must be jettisoned.

Now 1 Pet. 4: 6. Of the several explanations of this difficult verse that must certainly be rejected - though supported by Augustine, Bede and others - which supposes νεκροῖς to refer to the spiritually dead. There is no doubt that νεκροῖς may be, and is, so employed, e.g. as an adjective, in Lk. 15: 24, 32; Rom. 6: 11; Eph. 2: 1, 5; Col. 2: 13; Rev. 3: 1 : as a noun in Mt. 8: 22; Lk. 9: 60; Eph. 5: 14. In these instances the figurative sense is clear to everybody, but in our case one consideration rules out the figurative sense, namely the meaning of the word in the previous verse. It is beyond question that the word in v. 5 indicates the physically dead; the νεκροῖς in our verse must surely have the same meaning.

Gschwind would maintain this identity of meaning by equating 'living', 'life' with 'righteous', 'righteousness', and 'dead', 'death' with 'wicked', 'wickedness'. The νεκροῖς of v. 6 are like those of v. 5; the ζῶντες of v. 5 are the righteous. Those who were spiritually dead had the Gospel preached to them and now live according to God, i.e. spiritually, though men judge them wrongly (194) It is quite impossible, however, to make the 'quick and the dead' of v. 5 mean 'righteous and sinful'. The other two occurrences of the phrase (195) have the literal meaning.

When interpreted literally, νεκροῖς has been thought to refer variously to all the dead, those who died at the time of the flood,

(194) Op. cit., p. 29.

(195) Acts 10: 42; 2 Tim. 4: 1; cf. the similar phrase in Rom. 14: 9.

those who died in pre-Christian times and heard the Gospel under the Old Covenant, those who have died in martyrdom in Peter's day or earlier, or simply Christians who have died.

Peter is urging his readers to spend their lives for the glory of God. They should be finished with their old ways and pagan vices, such as he lists. Others are puzzled that Christians do not practise such things as they themselves do, and blaspheme, or hurl abuse, at them. But these same people will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead, εἰς τοῦτο.....

Bigg takes νεκροῖς to indicate all the dead. "The object of the preaching was the salvation of the dead but Peter does not say, and probably does not mean, that the object was in all cases attained. The idea seems to be that God will not judge any man till the whole truth is revealed to him." (196) So Beare with, as usual, more emphasis writes, "It must mean all the dead from the beginning of time, all that are to stand before the judgment-seat of God. It is quite inadmissible to take it as meaning only those who have lived and died since the coming of Christ, and have heard the Gospel preached in their own lifetime. The thought must therefore be associated with Christ's Descent into Hades and his preaching to the 'spirits' (3: 19). The γὰρ then appears to relate the universality of the Judgment to the universal proclamation of the Gospel; the dead as well as the living will stand before the Judge, because they too have had the Gospel preached to them." (197)

This view does justice to the particle γὰρ giving an explanation of what has just been stated. It also takes the correct reference of εἰς τοῦτο pointing forward to ἵνα (198) Those who see a preaching in Hades to departed souls in 3: 19 will harmonise this with that interpretation (as Monnier, quoted above, p.44), but this should not be used as an argument for the identification of these passages. Those who speak as if it may or should, seem to think that Peter's whole argument is dominated by the concept of the

(196) G. Bigg, Comm. in loc.

(197) F.W. Beare, Comm. in loc.

(198) Cf. 3: 9; Acts 9: 21; Rom. 14: 19; Jn. 18: 37.

Descensus. This is far from being the case.(199)

It is maintained that this interpretation meets the need that the universal proclamation of the Gospel should precede the universal judgment. The case is not wholly proven by 1 Pet. 4: 6. The tense of εὐηγγέλιον does not indicate a present, continuous activity, let alone a future one, but definitely points to a specific preaching at a time already past when the letter was written. What then of those who die in ignorance after the Descent.

Further, this understanding of Peter's argument assumes that the problem which he wishes to deal with is that of those who have died without having heard the Gospel. Is God being fair to such people? Peter briefly supplies the answer that provision has been made for them by the Preaching in Hades. Though they have died, under God's judgment, they have the chance to hear the message of salvation. Now there can be no doubt that the problem of the unevangelised peoples has taxed the minds and hearts of Christians repeatedly. Yet we have no reason for saying that this was the question which was perplexing Peter's readers. Their enigma was likely to have been less of a philosophical and speculative nature and more of a practical kind. On all of these grounds I find this exegesis of 1 Pet. 4: 6 difficult to accept. Is there, however, anything to favour its main rival?

That τῷ means Christ I have little doubt.(200) The New Testament also speaks of the Father as Judge. Is it possible to reconcile the two groups of statements by saying that just as the Son is spoken of as the agent of creation, so He is the agent of judgment, this being committed to Him by the Father? At any rate He is pictured here as the universal Judge, standing at the ready to judge the living and the dead. Peter means, I think, that the 'blasphemers' will not escape judgment, for Christ is ready to judge all men. As already observed, εἰς τοῦτο looks forward to ^{τοῦτο}. Now the main verb depending on the latter is ζῶσι. The ^{μεν} clause is parenthetic, "an instance of that Hellenic structure..... according to which thoughts are in form co-ordinated

(199) An attempt has been made to reconcile the 'fallen angels' interpretation of 3: 19 with the 'preaching in Hades' one of 4: 6, by supposing that the preaching to the dead was given on the occasion when Christ preached to the fallen angels.

(200) Cf. Acts 10: 42, in a record of a Petrine speech.

whilst really one is subordinated to the other." (201) This may recall the $\mu\epsilon\nu\ldots\delta\epsilon$ of 3: 18, the death-life antithesis being present with the $\sigma\alpha\rho\iota-\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ contrast which indeed seems to run through the whole passage. Our verse may then be translated, 'For it was to this end that the Gospel was preached to the dead too, that, though judged, as men are, in the flesh, they may live, as God does, in the spirit.'

Now this fits into the whole context, illuminating the problem of suffering. Christ suffered, but triumphed; the decision of the earthly court has been overruled by the heavenly one. So with His followers: they too suffer, but that does not mean their life is vain. On the human level they are judged; they have died (a reference possibly to the persecuting activity of their opponents). The Gospel, however, was not preached to them in vain, for the whole purpose of that preaching was not to absolve them from suffering on earth, but so that they might live in the spirit. God will vindicate His people. (202) Note in our passage $\mu\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\tau\alpha$ (v.5)... $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\iota$ (v.6). Those who have been judged are the $\nu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\iota$ to whom the Gospel was preached. These are not all the dead but some only, people who heard the Gospel in their lifetime and accepted it. Others may assert that this belief of theirs has gone for nothing, but Christians do not share this attitude, because they know that the Great Judge will soon demonstrate the true meaning and value of that belief and life and suffering.

It is easy to object that the $\nu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\iota$ of v.6 must mean all the dead, as in v.5. This strict identification has been shown to be practically impossible. It would be an easy matter for the readers to identify the 'dead' of v.6. Johnstone illustrates as follows: "Suppose that a naval officer of distinction happened to be mentioned in conversation, and that an old schoolmaster in the company said, "I taught the admiral navigation," - not a moment's doubt would be felt by any hearer that the old man spoke of the admiral long before he had become an admiral; nor would there be the least feeling that the mode of speaking was strained or odd.....When a newly-made widow says of a friend, 'I shall always be grateful to him, because he loved -

(201) Op. cit., p.322.

(202) Cf. Heb. 10: 30; Dt. 32: 36, Ps. 134: 14.

honoured - showed kindness to the dead," the statement is at once understood to point to kindness shown during life to him who is now dead." (203)

It will be observed, of course, that the deductions which are made in both of the illustrations are based on known facts. Can this be said of 1 Pet. 4: 6? This explanation rests upon an assumption about a difficulty facing Peter's readers. It has been suggested that the writer is dealing with a problem similar to that tackled by Paul in 1 Thess. 4: 13. There Paul's concern is to dispel from the minds of the Thessalonians any anxiety about those of their number who have died before the Second Advent. He assures them that their friends will suffer no disadvantage at all. That was a simple, practical question of the greatest moment to the readers. (204) The problem dealt with in 1 Pet. 4 is, I think, similar in some respects, but the emphasis is different. Here the practical question revolves round the opposition, slander, and persecution of the Christians. They endured all this (as the readers themselves were doing), but in the end they died, like men, in fact, who had never been evangelised. Peter does not deny the facts of their suffering, but demonstrates that their Faith had a value transcending the human level. They must remember the meaning of suffering as Christians. (205)

That this was the question to be answered, a practical and urgent one, is, I am sure, much more easily derived from the context than the more philosophical and speculative one necessary to justify the Descent-interpretation. Gschwind writes in a footnote: Ein *νομιμασμενος* oder *νομισμασμενος* würde in diesem Falle besser passen als *καταπολες*. (206) This is not so. There is the previous *καταπολες*; why change the word? Either of the words he suggests would be inappropriate upon the lips of the 'blasphemers' and would take the sting out of the problem itself.

1 Pet. 4: 6 does not refer to the Descent into Hades.

(203) Op. cit., p. 325

(204) Cf. 1 Cor. 15.

(205) For view of suffering, cf. Paul's statements in Rom. 5: 2, 8: 18; Phil. 1: 29.

(206) Op. cit., n. 2, p. 26.

2. THE PAULINE LETTERS AND HEBREWS

The passages in the Pauline writings which require consideration are Rom. 10: 6-8, Eph. 4: 8-10, Phil. 2: 10, 1 Tim. 3: 16.

In the first of these Paul adapts Dt. 30: 11-14, in which the point is made that Yahweh's demands are easy alike to ascertain and to understand, for the commandment is not too difficult nor far off. This last idea is illustrated:

כִּי רִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר
וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר
וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר
וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר וְרִחָק הָיָה לְךָ הַדָּבָר

LXX has οὐκ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω ἐστὶ λέγων Τίς ἀναβήσεται ἡμῖν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ λήμψεται αὐτήν ἡμῖν; καὶ ἀκούσαντες αὐτήν ποιήσομεν. οὐδὲ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης ἐστὶν λέγων Τίς διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης. Paul takes this passage and applies it to Christ, but alters Τίς διαπεράσει to Τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; "Paul's freedom with the OT text suggests that he is not using his quotation as a rigid proof of what he asserts, but as a rhetorical form." (207) He also adds a 'midrash' on each clause, introduced by τοῦτ' ἐστίν. By following this procedure with his text he introduces an ascent of Christ and a descent. Now his comment upon the latter is, Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν. (208) This, 'to bring up from the realm of the dead' (Arndt and Gingrich), makes clear the reference to the Descent of Christ into Hades.

The place referred to is the ἄβυσσος. (209) This chimes in with Acts 2 and 1 Pet. 3, as already considered. It should be observed that Paul goes out of his way to make this descent the parallel to the ascent, and thus clearly alludes to our subject. As Gschwind puts it, "Röm 10,7 gehört daher zu den ntl Belegstellen, welche für den biblischen Nachweis der Höllenfahrt in Betracht kommen; den letztere bzw. der Aufenthalt Jesu in der Totenwelt vor seiner Auferstehung ist eine unzweifelhafte Voraussetzung der paulinischen Argumentation." (210) How much does the passage tell us about the Descent? Absolutely

(207) C.K. Barrett, Romans (1957), in loc.

(208) Note the expression πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Col. 1: 18, 5. Rev. 1: 5.

(209) For the meaning of this, v. above, p.20ff.

(210) Op. cit., p.167.

nothing, beyond the mere fact itself. It is practically the equivalent of a strong and emphatic affirmation that He really and truly died.

Next, Eph. 4: 8-10. This passage must be discussed carefully, because there is doubt if it has anything at all to say about the Descensus. P. Gardner regards the phrase in v.9 as so vague that it hardly gives an opening for discussion.(211)

The basis of this section of Ch.4 is the quotation of Ps. 68: 19:

□ תִּקַּח מִיָּד הַמָּוֶלֶת מִיָּד הַמָּוֶלֶת מִיָּד הַמָּוֶלֶת

in LXX, ἀνέβης εἰς ὕψος, ἡχμαλώτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ. The psalmist describes the triumphal procession of a conqueror, who ascends the hill of Zion, leading his train of captives. He receives gifts and tribute from the conquered or presents from others. Paul's quotation does not agree verbally with his source: his verbs are in the third person, not the second; his second clause runs, ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. The citation in LXX form would not serve Paul's purpose. E. F. Scott thinks it unlikely that Paul would take any liberties with the sacred text.(212) The same construction, however, is placed upon the words in a Targum and in the Syriac version, the Peshitto having, "Thou didst ascend on high and lead captivity captive and didst give gifts to the sons of men." This may point to a textual variant in the Hebrew (פָּלַח), which itself, of course, might be explained as resulting from the influence of Eph. 4: 8. The Targum reads, "Thou ascendest up to the firmament, O prophet Moses, thou tookest captives captive, thou didst teach the words of the law, thou gavest them as gifts to the children of men." Hitzig's suggestion is referred to by Abbott, that the paraphrast, feeling that the receiving of gifts was not consonant with the majesty of God, mentally substituted for פָּלַח the verb פָּלַח. E. Earle Ellis says, "Whether this represents an interpretation of פָּלַח ('take', 'fetch') or a variant Hebrew textual tradition (e.g. פָּלַח 'apportion', 'distribute') is uncertain, but the former is more probable." This is also Driver's view, according to J. A. Robinson.

Some writers think that the deliverance of the righteous from Hades

(211) *Exploratio Evangelica* (London, 1907), p.264.

(212) B ut v. above on Rom. 10: 5-7.

(213) A Note on Pauline Hermeneutics, NTS, 2. 131.

is meant by the words 'took captivity captive'. MacCulloch, though admitting this interpretation to be problematical and not to be pressed, seems inclined to find a transference of souls from Hades to Paradise in these words. (214) But this leaves much to be desired from the linguistic point of view. We expect αἰχμαλώσσαν to be the result of the action of ἡχμαλώτευσεν. Arndt and Gingrich explain the word as abstract for concrete, 'took captive a body of captives'. Abbott suggests Judg. 5: 12 as the probable source of the expression: ἡχμαλώτη

□ υἱ' ἰσ' - ἡχ' ἡχ' (215) Probably Chrysostom's view is correct then, that the prisoners are Christ's enemies. As Masson puts it, "Si les mots ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλώσσαν = il a fait des prisonniers avaient aussi pour l' auteur un sens (il ne commente pas v9s), ils se rapportaient probablement à la victoire du Christ sur Les Puissances emmenées par lui dans son triomphe (Col 2: 15)." (216)

The most important phrase for our study is also the most controverted, κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς. Does this descent refer to the Incarnation (to the Virgin's womb, cf. Ps. 139: 15), the Burial, Death, or Descensus? Everything depends upon whether τῆς γῆς is a partitive or appositive genitive. Support for the latter is strong. Winer asserts that Christ's descent into Hell "as a single event cannot come into consideration here. (217) The translation would be 'this lower earth' and the reference be to the Incarnation. It is argued that the antithesis of the passage is earth-heaven ascent: heaven- earth descent. (218) The descent, of course, precedes the ascent chronologically.

Abbott lends support to the view that it suits the context better if the descent follows the ascent. In that case, the meaning is that the ascent would be without an object, unless it were followed by a descent. This is not the Incarnation but the descent of Christ to His Church,

(214) Op. cit., p.48; cf. Monnier, "Paul croit que le Seigneur a ramené de l' Hades les prisonniers de sa grâce victorieuse.....", op. cit., p.52

(215) G.F. Moore says that an equally admissible pronunciation of the Hebrew would give, lead captive thy captors. (Judges, ICC)

(216) Ephesiens, in loc. cit. (217) Grammar, p.66. He quotes urbs Romae, flumen Rheni as examples, but these are not parallel. They are special cases (for the normal urbs Roma, flumen Rhenum) and where they are found, possibly personification is the influence at work.

(218) Cf. Phil. 2.

alluded to in 2: 17, 3: 17; Jn. 14: 23, 16: 22.

Both of these deny any allusion to the Descent into Hades. But if the contrast is simply between a descent to earth and an ascent to heaven, why speak about 'this lower earth'? Would it not be self-evident to readers familiar with such spatial concepts that the earth is lower than heaven? In contrast to ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν something more than 'to this lower earth' seems necessary. In fact the partitive genitive is perfectly natural, 'the lower parts of the earth'.

This phrase, however, has been thought to signify no more than death itself. (219) This seems to be supported by τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς in Ps. 63: 9, 139: 15; Ezek. 32: 18, 24. It is argued that had Paul meant that Christ descended to a depth below which there was no deeper, he would have used a superlative. Surely, however, the picture is one of Christ descending lower than the earth and, in contrast, ascending higher than all the heavens. This gives the required antithesis.

It would be wrong to leave the following ἵνα clause out of the reckoning, for it may supply the motive of the parenthesis. Paul wants to stress the conception which pervades the whole letter and show its bearing on what he is now considering. As E. F. Scott has it, "By traversing the whole region from the depths to the heights Christ asserted his relation to all existence." Robinson shows that it makes little difference whether we take the disputed phrase to mean 'the lower parts of the earth' or 'the parts below the earth', for in either case the underworld is intended. "The descent is to the lowest as the ascent is to the highest, so that nothing may remain unvisited." Paul is directing attention to the completeness of the experience through which Christ passed.

It is pointless to object that all the Old Testament expressions usually cited in support of this are poetic figures and that Paul in a 'mere statement of fact' would hardly have given a material, local designation to the departed spirits. What other designation than one couched in spatial terms could he have given? After all there is the spatial in the words 'descend' and 'ascend' themselves. Just as futile is the objection that the New Testament never speaks of Christ's

(219) Chrys. on Gen. 44: 29, Ps. 142: 7: τὰ κατω μέρη τῆς γῆς τὸν θάνατον φησιν, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑποκόσμου.

ascension as from Hades or the dead, for the idea is not here either. It is possible, is it not, that some formula embracing an ascent-descent antithesis lies behind the introduction of the Descensus into our passage?

The position which is preferable has been summed up well by Masson, following Büchsel: "les mots eux-mêmes et l' intention de l' auteur font penser à la descente du Christ au séjour des morts. En effet, le génitif τῆς γῆς = de la terre, accompagnant le substantif μέρη = parties est très naturellement un génitif partitif = les parties plus basses de la terre. L' affirmation: il est monté au dessus de tous les cieux suppose l' affirmation correspondante: il est descendu dans les parties les plus basses de la terre. Il importait à Paul de rappeler les deux points extrêmes de la carrière rédemptrice parcourue par le Christ pour pouvoir dire qu' il avait rempli tout l' univers." (220)

This is the only passage in the New Testament in which it is said that Christ 'descended' into Hades. The word καταβαίνειν also occurs in Rom. 10: 7, but there the subject is not Christ. (Yet the word can mean nothing there unless we assume such a descent of Christ.) Both instances, which after all is said and done tell us very little about the Descensus, can obviously be harmonised with 1 Pet. 3: 19 and Acts 2.

Before leaving Ephesians, we note that the early hymn, quoted in 5: 14 according to MacCulloch may represent Christ's triumph-song on entering Hades. (221) That the words belong to an early hymn, probably a baptismal hymn, seems likely: that they have anything to do with the Descensus is most unlikely.

As to Phil. 2: 10, some have seen in καταχθονίων a reference to the Descent. This is one of the three words which are used to define further the 'every Knee' of Isa. 45: 23. (222) It is doubtful whether these are masculine or neuter. J. B. Lightfoot thinks the latter and quotes Ignatius, Trall. 9 (βλεπόντων τῶν ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ ὑποχθονίων) and Polycarp, Phil. 2 (ὃ ὑπετάγη τὰ πάντα ἐπουράνια καὶ ἐπίγεια) with the remark that any limitation to intelligent beings would detract from the universality of the homage

(220) Op. cit. in loc.

(221) Op. cit., p.28.

(222) This text is also quoted in Rom. 14: 10f.

and is not required by the expression. Jones agrees with this, seeing in the words an expression of the homage of all creation, animate and inanimate.(223) Vincent thinks Lightfoot is 'over-subtilising' here and he explains the phrase as embracing "the whole body of created intelligent beings in all departments of the universe."(224) If masculine, the words are assumed to be referring to three distinct classes of beings. Some interpretations become quite arbitrary at this juncture, e.g. that which speaks of Christians, Jews, Heathen. The commonest view regards the first two classes as meaning respectively angels, archangels and beings on earth. The third splits this group of interpretations. As the word does not occur elsewhere in the Bible and Apocrypha, help is sought in extra-biblical Greek. Noticing that from Homer on it refers to the infernal gods, some critics suppose that here it signifies demons. The objection to this, made e.g. by Vincent, that these are not regarded by Paul as in Hades (an argument based on Eph. 2: 2, 6: 12) may not be valid, because its demonology is too simple. The other group prefers to think of the departed in Hades (e.g. Ellicott). Thus Monnier explains the three parts, "parmi les anges, parmi les hommes, et parmi les morts," and introduces the idea of universal redemption.(224)

Our passage bears similarities to Rom. 8: 21, 1 Cor. 15: 24, Eph. 1: 20-22, Heb. 2: 8, Rev. 5: 13. It is a glorious vision of the exalted Christ holding universal sway and it matters little whether the adjectives are masculine or neuter. The picture is general. For that reason Vincent's judgment is sound: "Nothing definite as to Christ's Descent into Hades can be inferred from this." Mac Culloch holds the opinion that there is a possible reference to the conquest and submission of Hades.(226) That some such reference may be implicit in the passage is possibly supported by the commonly accepted theory that the whole passage is an early hymn (composed by Paul himself, so Stauffer, or by another, so Lohmeyer), and perhaps a credal hymn. The theme is the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, but the last rung in the ladder

(223) M. Jones, *Philippians* (London, 1918), in loc.

(224) M. Vincent (ICC), in loc.

(225) Op. cit., p.53.

(226) Op. cit., p.47.

is death on a cross. It may be thought that the doctrine of the Descent throws light upon the disputed word, but it is inadmissible to treat Phil. 2: 10 as evidence for that doctrine.

The last of the Pauline references is 1 Tim. 3: 16. Its six lines of rhythm are, it is generally agreed, part of an early Christian hymn, credal or eucharistic. It may be the same as is quoted in Eph. 5: 14, as some believe, or in 1 Pet. 3: 18f. Selwyn sets 1 Tim. 3: 16 and 1 Pet. 3: 18f. side by side to show the similarities. H. A. Blair thinks that these are the two places in the New Testament in which the 'mystery-creed' is to be found. He sets them down as follows:

1 Tim. 3: 16

- (1) Manifested in flesh,
- (2) Justified in spirit,
- (3) Seen of angels
- (4) Proclaimed among nations,
- (5) Believed on in creation,

(6) Received up in glory.

1 Pet. 3: 18-22

- Put to death in flesh,
- Quickened in spirit
- in right of which also
- He went and proclaimed
- to the spirits in prison;
- Baptism now saves you,
- the answer of a good conscience
- to God,
- (3) angels and authorities and powers
- being made subject unto him. (227)

Blair believes the fallen angels to be the spirits of the nations, their divinely-commissioned Guardians, and so is able to see 'proclaimed among nations' as parallel to the preaching to the 'spirits in prison'. The difference in order of words is not a chronological business, but a sequence of thought. "The homologia sees Jesus in the flesh conquering spirits of disobedience, and finally through death and conquest receiving the submission of the Guardians of the nations; He is thus proclaimed to the nations (i.e. the departed souls which make them up) in Hades. St. Peter sees the proclamation made as Christ enters the domain of death, 'quickened in spirit'; the proclamation is at once made to the departed of the nations and their Guardians together: as a result God brings all their angels, authorities and powers into subjection to Christ." Blair had already cited Gullmann, Earliest Christian Confessions, pp. 60-61, that "The continuation, 'preached unto the Gentiles', alludes probably to Christ's preaching to the dead. The preaching is thus mentioned before the Ascension. The descent into hell is brought into connection on the one hand with the preaching to the dead (1 Pet. 3

18f.), and on the other with the conquest of the powers of Hades." (228)

Those who deny any Descent-reference in 1 Pet. 3: 18f. are also able to see a parallel in 1 Tim. 3: 16. Of the latter, Gschwind writes, "Ich glaube dass sich dieser altherwürdige Hymnus auf auferstandenen Christus bezieht, und insofern hätten wir eine ganz ähnliche Situation, wie sie in 1 Petr 3,18,19 22 vorliegt." (229) The temptation which follows upon the noticing of a parallel between the passages is, as often in such cases, to see detailed parallels which are not really there. The interpretation of one, or even both, may be vitiated by such tendencies. This is especially the case here, for commentators cannot agree about such a phrase as ὡφθῆ ἀγγέλους. The first word is the Septuagint technical term for the manifestation of God (Falconer), but when does the manifestation take place and who are the angels? Many believe that we have to do with the Incarnation. Brown quotes Theodoret, "For even they (i.e. angels) used not to see the invisible nature of the godhead, but when He was made flesh, they beheld it." Lock writes that the angels watched the earthly life, and cites Lk. 2: 23, Mk. 1: 13, Jn. 1: 51, Lk. 24: 23; they still watch from heaven (Eph. 3: 10; 1 Pet. 1: 12). There are those, however, who think that the primary reference is to the Ascension. The hosts of heaven are pictured as welcoming back the triumphant Christ. This would make the third phrase parallel to the sixth, possibly taking the whole as composed of two triplets. The angels may be 'principalities and powers' and reference be made to a manifestation of the victorious Christ to His spiritual enemies. Whether the reference would then be the same as 1 Pet. 3: 19, as accepted above, is an open question. It seems to me probable that we have to do with the Ascension. But as to 'preached among the nations,' I feel quite sure that there is no reference whatsoever to the Descent into Hades.

The structure is probably three couplets, which may be in balance, as both verbs and nouns suggest. A further chiasmic arrangement may also be discerned. This might be shown thus:

((228) Op. cit., p.53.

(229) Op. cit., p.123.

1 manifested in flesh	:	2 justified in spirit
3 seen of angels	:	4 preached among the nations
5 believed on in the world:		6 received up in glory

Balancing the manifestation to angels is the proclamation to men. The results balance too: He is received up in glory (by angels), believed on in the world (by men). The chiastic progression, if the phrase is permissible, is flesh - nations - world, manifested - preached - believed and spirit - angels - glory, justified - seen - received up.

We cannot, therefore, feel free to use 1 Tim. 3: 16 as evidence for the doctrine of the Descent into Hades in the New Testament.

With regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews, some have thought that 13: 20 affords data on the Descensus. It is supposed that the writer shows evidence of his knowledge of that doctrine. The particular words are ὁ ἀναγὰγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν. The force of ἀνα here is 'up' (as Moffatt, NBB, against AV, RV, RSV, 'again'). 'ἐκ νεκρῶν' is 'from the dead', the realm of the dead, which is represented as subterranean. The same phrase, ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγὰγεῖν, is definitely connected with τὴν ἄβυσσον in Rom. 10: 7, as we have observed. An allusion to the Descent may therefore be inferred from our passage. The emphasis, however, rests upon the Resurrection, as in Acts 2.

I do not think that Heb. 11: 40 or 12: 23 can have any reference to the rescue of imprisoned souls and their transference from Hades to Heaven. The oft-quoted verse about Satan's defeat, 2: 14, shows that Christ's victory was won through death. There may well be some connection with the Descensus, but it is definitely not brought out in the letter itself.

3. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

No mention is made of Mark here, for no evidence of a belief in the Descent has been adduced from that Gospel. Five passages in the other two writings require consideration, three in the first Gospel and two in Luke.

Mt. 12: 40. This is commonly treated as a gloss, an addition to, or expansion of, a Q saying, the text of which is recorded in the parallel in Lk. 11: 29f. There the sign is the preaching of Jonah, and this receives explanation in v.41 of our chapter. The 'sign of Jonah' appears again in Mt. 16: 4 without explanation. It seems to me that if we

explain our verse as a later reflection of the Christian community on the Jonah-sign or Matthew's attempt to find a Resurrection-sign, we have not fully explained its intrusion here. The charge of awkwardness will hold good against the sentence in Matthew's narrative as much as in the sayings of Jesus. Are we actually to suppose that the writer himself was aware of this, but could not do any better?

Exception is taken to the phrase, 'three days and three nights' as being an inaccurate prediction.(230) The Resurrection took place on the third day, according to 1 Cor. 15: 4. Therefore Jesus was not in the tomb for three days and three nights. But surely this must have been as obvious to the author as to us? Perhaps we may find the explanation in Jewish idiom. As F. F. Bruce observes, "According to Jewish reckoning.....'a day and a night' make up a period of time called an 'onah, and any part of an 'onah can also be referred to as a 'day and a night.' The expression 'three days and three nights' may therefore quite properly be understood as indicating three 'onoth, consisting of part of one 'onah, the whole of the second 'onah, and part of the third 'onah (in other words, part of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and part of Sunday)."
This seems artificial to us, but a most interesting parallel is quoted by Prof. Bruce from the late Sir Robert Anderson, Chief of C.I.D., "A prison chaplain would find no difficulty in explaining this to his congregation. Our civil day begins at midnight, and the law reckons any part of a day as a day. Therefore while a sentence of three days means three days of twenty-four hours, equal to seventy-two hours, a prisoner under such a committal is seldom more than forty hours in gaol; and I have known cases where the period was in fact only thirty-three hours."(231)

Whatever be our view of the genuineness of the saying or the meaning of the 'three days and three nights,' it seems likely that something more than burial is intended, namely an allusion to the Descent into

(230) By reconstructing the passion-narrative, W. Graham Scroggie has the crucifixion taking place on the Wednesday and this way gives literal justice to 'three'. A Guide to the Gospels (London, 1948), pp.569ff.

(231) The Harvester, XXXIX.2, p.27.

Hades. "Denn Mt 12,40f für sich allein betrachtet, ist eine unzweifelhafte Aussage über den Aufenthalt Jesu im Hades." (232)

Mt. 16: 18. I do not think that the phrase in this verse can be held to signify the Descent of Christ into Hades. At most, it may be asserted that as a result of Christ's victory, the triumph of His Church cannot be thwarted by the power of Hades. The storming of the gates of Hades and the release of its prisoners can hardly be discovered in our text.

Mt. 27: 52f. These two verses are particularly puzzling. They occur among the portents mentioned by Mt. alone which marked the death of Jesus. The passage is thought to be based upon a popular legend and the phrase *μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν* (which must mean after the resurrection of Christ) to be a later corrective addition to preserve intact the doctrine that Christ was the first fruits of the dead. Thus the one problem was solved by creating another, namely what happened to the saints in the interval between the earthquake and their coming forth? Are we to suppose that they remained alive in their graves awaiting Christ's Resurrection?

Origen takes *τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν* to mean the heavenly Jerusalem (233), the truly holy city, that Jerusalem over which Jesus had not wept. A similar view had been held by Clement of Alexandria, and later by Jerome, Eusebius, Chrysostom et al. This will be connected with the Descent into Hades and the liberation of the righteous therefrom. It should, however, be noted that *σώματα* is specified and it does not mention all the righteous but many of them as rising.

But the natural interpretation is that upon the death of Christ, an earthquake took place, many saints arose or were raised bodily, came out and appeared to many people in the city, but only after His resurrection. There is no reason why the last phrase, *μετὰ ταῦτα*, should not be regarded as a correction by the author himself, put in, not elegantly to be sure, to clarify the sequence of events.

Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up His spirit. Thereupon the veil of the temple was split from top to bottom and the rocks were split. The splitting of the veil has some significance, a meaningful phenomenon on earth (v Hobrews). It is paralleled by a dramatic sign under the

earth, the splitting of rocks, opening of tombs, release of some of the dead. the death of Christ is shattering both to Judaism and to Hades. The incident may be regarded as a token resurrection, demonstrative of Messiah's power, and prophetic of that coming event. The victory of Christ affects Hades in such a way as to show that for 'the saints' death is defeated and cannot bar their way to sharing in His Kingdom. The descent is not mentioned in all this, but may well be implied. Geschwind says of the passage that "uns Aufschluss gibt über eine der Ältesten, wenn nicht die ursprüngliche Auffassung des Urchristentums von der Tätigkeit Christi in Hades bzw. des aus der Unterwelt zurückkehrenden, auferstehenden Erlösers." (234)

Lk. 11: 21f. It is not surprising that from patristic writers down to modern times, the parable of the strong man has been linked with the Descent into Hades. Is the connection justified? The most thorough-going argument for this known to me is that of J. H. A. Hart. His position is stated briefly as follows: "The parable has become unmistakably a description of the Harrowing of Hell through the influence of the Scripture upon the original Word." He finds his clues to the operative scriptures in the substitution of *οὐλα* for *σενύη* - Isa. 49: 24f. (LXX); in the idea of the distribution of spoils - Isa. 53: 12 (LXX) and Ps. 67 (8). These three prophecies are the factors in the development of the parable. "Hades was spoiled at the Passion of the Beloved; and its spoils were distributed among the apostles of Christ, who must take up His work and guard what He has won." Hart then lights upon the word *αὐλή* which he thinks to be significant. He links this with Jn. 10: 16, in which he sees the preaching in Hades, and goes on to say that if Luke knew Greek literature he would naturally choose this word, for Alcestis went to the hall of the dead, and "Heracles - type of Christ for pagan audiences - went down to deliver her from it." (235) I find all this quite unconvincing and see in the parable the conflict with Satan, but no Descensus. In controversy with His critics over a work of power, Jesus maintains that in Himself the kingdom of God has come; the signs are there to be seen; His miracles show Him to be stronger than the strong man, Satan, here and now. The reference is to His present

(234) Op. cit., p. 199.

(235) Expositor 7. III. (1907). 53-71.

ministry and not to a mission to Hades.

Lk. 23: 43. This verse has already been commented upon in part. Now if we insist upon the local meaning of Paradise, difficulties will arise. Does it mean the third heaven (2 Cor. 12: 2-4)? If so, how does this square with a Descent into Hades? Some have taken σήμερον as the last word in the previous clause - I tell you to-day, i.e. at this very moment and in these circumstances. This does not seem at all likely.

As already stated, it is preferable to regard 'Paradise' as being used to convey to the dying criminal in language which he would easily understand, that all would be well with him. The popular term is intended to assure him of the bliss of heaven and the presence of Christ.

Geschwind's remarks upon this are worth quoting in full: "Unter dem Bilde des Paradieses erklärt er ihm, dass er nicht auf das Kommen des Messias zu warten brauche, sondern dass die Paradieseszeit, die Heilzeit, jetzt schon angebrochen sei, und dass er noch am gleichen Tage die Wirklichkeit der messianischen Rettung schauen werde. Christus hat somit m.E. weniger den Ort im Auge als die Sache: er betont die sofortige Erfüllung des vom Schwächer Gewünschten, das baldige Eintreten der Rettung, das Eintreffen des messianischen Heiles. Der Ausdruck „im Paradiese sein“ ist also im eschatologischen Sinne aufzufassen und bedeutet soviel als „gerettet“, das Heil erlangen." (236) Our passage, then, will be in accord with the simple concept of the Descent to Hades.

4. THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

Rev. 1: 18. R. H. Charles asserts that in this verse we have "one of the earliest traces in Christian literature of the Descent of Christ into Hades and the conquest of its powers." He obviously oversteps the limit, for he goes on to explain what he means by a trace of the Descent in the following words: "It is not only that they (Death and Hades) cannot withhold from Him the faithful that have already died, but that Christ has already entered their realm as a conqueror and preached there the Gospel of Redemption." (237) This cannot be substantiated by the present passage. The possible deduction from the text is that by virtue of His death and victory, Christ has power over Hades: He holds the keys. According to the Targums, four keys were in the hands of God

(236) Op. cit., p.153.

(237) Revelation (ICC), in loc.

alone, those of life, the tombs, food and rain; some give three keys, of birth, rain and of raising the dead. Thus neither Death nor Hades can resist the triumphant Christ. It may be that the Descent can shed some light upon this. Perhaps we may say that the writer acknowledges the Descent. This is possible; anything more is not.

Rev. 5: 13. The phrase, *ὑπὸ τοῦ τῆς γῆς*, though omitted by some important MSS, has the balance of MS authority in its favour. The thought of the verse is of the whole creation from its heights to its depths responding, as it has been put, "in an epode to the strophes and antistrophes of the angels' choruses." The phrase, just mentioned, will in such a context refer to Hades or the inhabitants of Hades, but it tells us nothing at all about the Descent as such. The passage, of course, is somewhat similar to Phil. 2: 10.

Rev. 10: 7. MacCulloch is doubtless wrong in thinking that this contains a reference to the Descensus. (238)

Jn. 5: 19-29. One exegesis of this passage would present us with the most important statement about the Descent we have in the whole New Testament. If on the other hand most expositors are right, there is no allusion to the doctrine at all.

Our Lord is answering the Jews after the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath. The word of Jesus, 'making himself equal with God', infuriates them so much that they become determined to kill Him. He asserts His dependence upon, and harmonious relationship with, the Father. The Father will show Him greater works than those of healing. The Son has power of life-giving and judgment. He must be honoured as the Father is honoured. The twenty-first verse makes a general statement, in which the quickening of the dead may be taken in both a physical and spiritual sense.

It is from this point on that the address is variously divided and interpreted.

(1) In the first place, the whole passage down to v.29 has been given a purely spiritual meaning. R.A. Edwards, e.g., says, "Men so dead that they could only be described as 'buried' (Jn. 5: 28) would hear, and pass into life or into the inevitable judgment." (239)

(238) Op. cit., p.66.

(239) The Gospel according to St. John (1954), p.54.

This interpretation seems to me quite unacceptable. While I do feel that the spiritual sense will often be very probable in the Fourth Gospel, I can see no justification for rejecting the plain meaning of such a phrase as οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημαῖοις. Further, this view tacitly assumes that popular eschatology has no place in this gospel, a very gratuitous assumption indeed. Again, it fails to take sufficient account of significant differences between verses 25 and 28-9. Similar criticisms may be levelled against the rejection of vv. 28-9 as an interpretation. As we shall see, Bernard is quite right in maintaining that they form an integral part of the argument.

Now once we admit that there are both physical and spiritual meanings before us, everything depends upon where we draw the dividing line.

(2) The second main imposition draws that line at the end of v. 24, which itself is spiritual, while vv. 25-29 are physical. Arising out of this, as I see it, are three possibilities, one of which makes the discourse deal with the Descent into Hades.

a. Hengstenberg finds it impossible to separate v. 25 from vv. 28-9. The 'dead' are the righteous dead who have fallen asleep. The article before ἀνούσονται means that the whole class of those who have heard is intended and the 'voice' (not 'word') is decisive in support of a physical resurrection. Olshausen holds a similar view: "der Heiland, von der rein geistigen Erweckung der Menschen ausgehend, durch die Auferstehung der Gerechten hindurch, zur allgemeinen Todten-erweckung hinausteigt." Thus v. 25 refers to a selective resurrection and vv. 28-29 to a universal one.

Few people would care to be so dogmatic about the implications of φωνή and I doubt if any one could successfully argue for such a use of the article here.

b. Many, however, explain v. 25 as referring to particular instances of miraculous raisings. Bengel refers to Jairus's daughter, the widow's son in Nain, and Lazarus, "qui posteaquam haec dicta fuerant, resuscitati sunt," and compares Mt. 27: 52f.

If it is correct to restrict v. 25 to a purely physical resurrection, then this view has much to commend it. It may be agreed that the repetition of ἀπὸν ἀπὸν at the beginning of v. 25 indicates a new

stage in the discourse. The words $\kappa\alpha\iota \nu\upsilon\upsilon$ would make the reference to the immediate future probable. It may account for the use of $\phi\omega\nu\eta$ in v.25 as distinct from $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\nu$ (v.24). The article before $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ will have a limiting force.

Perhaps the strongest objection to this is that v.25 appears to have a wider significance than this would allow. Such an objection, however, would not apply to the third of the literal views.

c. J.A. Findlay maintains that v.25 refers to the gift of life to those who have already passed out of this world : "to speak with the voice that wakes the dead to those who have passed into the other world and are already being judged (see 1 Pet. 3: 18ff., 4: 6)." (240) J. Monnier is also sure that the Descent into Hades appears here. "Jesus dépasse les horizons de la terre, et après avoir parlé de ceux qui reçoivent ici-bas son message, il montre l'élargissement magnifique de son activité (les morts entendront la voix du Fils de Dieu.) Ces multitudes, entrées sans la connaissance de l'Évangile dans l'au delà du tombeau, recevront l'offre du salut." (241) Selwyn also argues strongly in favour of a reference to the Descent. Certainly, all the arguments cited above in support of (b) are equally relevant to this case. The discourse first speaks of a spiritual life-giving (v.24); a proclamation of life to the dead (v.25); a general resurrection (28-9). The last two events are (at the time of the discourse) 'moments' still future, v.25 referring to an imminent and vv.28-9 to a more distant one.

This is a very attractive suggestion. It preserves the gradation which marks the development of the discourse. Does it, however, follow the natural and obvious division of the passage? It is true that v.24 is introduced by the solemn $\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\upsilon$ and then v.25 has the same introduction. Perhaps, therefore, two distinct ideas are being brought forward. But the solemn formula does not introduce v.28 where there is no doubt that reference is being made to a different event.

With regard to $\omicron\iota \nu\epsilon\mu\pi\omicron\iota$, Selwyn thinks the spiritual sense is too readily accepted, on the ground that it is hard to find a parallel to the unqualified use of the phrase in this sense. Certainly, the

(240) The Fourth Gospel (London 1956), in loc.

(241) Op. cit., p.60.

word is qualified by τοῖς παρὰ τῶν ὁσίων in Eph. 2 : 1,5, but that is beside the point here, for, as is universally accepted, v.24 bears a spiritual meaning. There we read of those who have passed ἐν τοῦ θανάτου. Is this not sufficient preparation for the unqualified νεκροί in the sense of 'spiritually dead'? I do not agree with Selwyn's statement, that "the distinction between οἱ νεκροί in verse 25 and verse 28 is without significance in view of Isa. XXVI.19." (242) There we have Hebraic parallelism; but here the phrases occur in two sentences which are quite separate. Moreover, other differences between the verses underline this difference.

The question here is not whether this attractive interpretation gives good sense or not, but whether it is the best interpretation, the true sense of the words.

(3) I think the commonest interpretation is best.

For the sake of analysis, we may say that verses 24,25 have a moral and spiritual meaning, while verses 28,29 refer to a physical resurrection. v.24 states that the believer has eternal life as a present possession; he does not come to judgment, for he has already passed from the realm or sphere of death into life. v.25 is, "as it were a corollary or sequel to v.24" (Bernard). The phrase ἐρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν must be taken into account, for it manifestly distinguishes the present statement from v.28, ἐρχεται ὥρα. It is wrong to suppose that both phrases have the same meaning. Selwyn connects with the death of Christ, but I do not think we can tie the reference down temporally to the crucifixion. The phrase is only found here and in 4: 23. Does it not mean that the hour is coming in the future, in the sense that the fuller manifestation of Christ's power to quicken the spiritually dead will be seen in the events subsequent to Pentecost? It has already come in the Person of Christ and visible signs are even at the moment given; the new order has already invaded the old. So at 4: 23, the true worshippers are already worshipping the Father; but the full meaning will become evident with the birth of the Church.

οἱ ἀκούσαντες indicates not that all the dead will heed, but that those who do hear and believe will live. "all the dead hear, but not

all give ear." (243) Ad Godet puts it, "L'art oï... divise nettement les morts en deux classes : ceux qui entendent la voix sans l'entendre .. et ceux qui, en l'entendant, ont des oreilles pour l'entendre, l'entendent véritablement. Ces derniers seuls sont vivifiés par cette voix."

Now a glance at the passage as a whole will exhibit the reasonableness of making the division at the end of v.25. It can easily be seen that vv.21-23 state the wider context of judging and quickening; vv.26, 27 given a further comment on the relationship between the Father and Son in judging and quickening. Then follow vv.28,29 dealing with the future, physical resurrection. As C.H. Dodd puts it, "the work of ζωοποιήσις is presented in two stages, or upon two levels. First, to hear and believe the word of Christ is to possess eternal life; it is to have passed from death to life. In that sense the time is coming and now is (ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶ) when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and come to life (v.24-25). Secondly, the time is coming (ἔρχεται ὥρα) when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out (v.28-29)." (244)

Thus more than one idea of life is present in the passage; realised and futuristic eschatology combine and it is not true to say that such an argument is disjointed. Jesus states that the healing of the impotent man is typical of the life-giving power of His word; the spiritually dead will be quickened. Possibly too the raising of Lazarus etc. are before the mind, as being revelations of the power of His life-giving word: the same voice quickens both the spiritually and the physically dead. And so vv.28-29 are seen to be quite in keeping with the whole argument for the final resurrection is another illustration of the life-giving power of the voice of the Son. "This present and spiritual awakening is a presage and foretaste of that general and final assize when the dead will hear the voice that summons them to their ultimate fate." (245) As E.F. Scott puts it, "he regards the rising at the last day as only the fulfilment and confirmation of something already effected, not as the real beginning of a new state of being." (246) In discussing the great differences

(243) Weiss, quoted by Prof. Macgregor.

(244) The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge, 1953).

(245) W.F. Howard.

(246) The Fourth Gospel p.249.

between the Doctrine of the Logos in Philo and John, Sanday argues that there is no dualism in John. "there is no inconsistency between the spiritual and the material quickening, both of which are taught distinctly in the Gospel." He quotes 5: 21,26. "Both the Father and Son are a principle of life which takes possession at once of soul and body, which imparts alike ethical and spiritual vitality to the disciple of Christ on earth, and that eternal life which is not something distinct from this but really the continuation of it in the world to come." (247) There is no doctrine of the Descent of Christ into Hades in Jn. 5.

Jn. 8: 56. Some have seen in, 'Αβραάμ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ἡγαλλιάσατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμὴν, εἶδε καὶ ἐχάρη, a reference to the Descensus. But what are we to make of the sequence of tenses? Are the aorists to be thought of as Hebraic prophetic perfects? Was this also misunderstood by the hearers? If we regard the statement as anachronistic, then it is too clumsy for words.

The saying is somewhat cryptic. Abraham rejoiced to see, i.e. with prophetic insight? The Jews took Him literally in order to make His statement sound ridiculous, in the manner in which all figurative and cryptic statements can be ridiculed. There objection is used by Jesus to make an additional point (v.58). There can surely be no allusion to the Descent in this context; it would be out of place.

Jn. 10: 16. No mention of this chapter would have occurred in our study, had not J.H.A. Hart found therein a reference to our subject. Where Jesus speaks of other sheep which are not of this fold, Hart says, "To His hearers the inference must have been clear; He spoke of His preaching to the dead in Hades." (248) The only person to whom this inference can be clear is Hart, for we can reach such a conclusion only by some preposterous juggling with the word αὐλή. There is no Descensus here.

There is no doctrine of the Descent in the Johannine writings. Apart from a very slight hint in Rev. 1: 18, there is nothing in this whole section of New Testament literature which could legitimately be

(247) The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p. 196.
 (248) Expositor 7.III.66.

said to suggest or imply the doctrine of the Descent.

C. SUMMARY OF NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Every possible text seems to have been exploited at some time or another to produce the Descent into Hades. When the New Testament data are examined carefully, the most striking feature is their paucity. Moreover, the references which are made are characterised by reticence and restraint. They show no resemblance to later volubility, to the elaborately-detailed and extravagantly-coloured accounts of the Descent. The Descent holds no prominent place in New Testament teaching. Indeed, we can hardly speak of it as a doctrine, for it is quite undeveloped. Nowhere in the whole of the New Testament is the Descensus introduced for its own sake; in no passage does it stand, so to speak, in its own right. Hints and allusions there are, but no definitive statements.

The plainest statement of the fact of the Descent into Hades is given in Eph. 4: 8-10, namely that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth. This is the nearest approach to the formula, He descended into Hades. Mt. 12: 40 may be taken as a plain prediction of the same fact, while 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. can be similarly regarded.

A second group of passages consists of those in which the Descent into Hades seems to be necessarily implied. Rom. 10: 6-8 belongs to this category, for it hardly makes sense unless we suppose that Christ did descend. The same is no less true of Acts 2: 24-27, 31 and Heb. 13: 20.

The third group comprises those in which the Descent may be more or less implied or which would perhaps be enhanced by such a supposition. These include Mt. 27: 51-53, Rev. 1: 18, and, to a lesser degree, Rev. 5: 13, Phil. 2: 10.

The great variety among these scriptures is worth noticing. Acts 2, Rom. 10, Eph. 4 all have quotations from the Old Testament as their bases. There would be no thought of the Descent in the first of these apart from the citation from the Psalm. In the last of them, the Descent-reference simply grows out of the development of a comment upon a quotation from another Psalm. The interesting difference in the Romans lies in Paul's departure from his Deuteronomic text to achieve the desired antithesis and thus incidentally include the Descent by

implication. Both of the Pauline passages contain a Descent-Ascent antithesis; an antithesis, wider in scope, also appears in Phil. 2: 10. The last-mentioned may well be an early hymn, possibly credal; 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. has all the appearance of a liturgical formula, in which are rehearsed important facts of salvation; Heb. 13: 20 has a doxological form. The variety of the genres and the differences in the mode of reference demonstrate at one and the same time the fluidity of the form of the Descent-belief and its general acceptance as an element in apostolic teaching.

What significance, however, does the belief have in New Testament doctrine? It is at this point that there is need of the greatest restraint. It is improper to allow fanciful speculation to dictate the issue. We are warned against this by the fact that in most of the New Testament loci nothing at all is said or implied about the meaning of the Descent.

The New Testament doctrine does not embrace the deliverance of souls out of Hades. The concept has frequently been derived from Eph. 4, that Christ upon His Descent into Hades, rescued the captive righteous, leaving only the wicked therein. This we have seen cannot be substantiated. Nor can the idea be derived from any other scripture. It has, of course, been argued that Mt. 27 speaks of such a deliverance, but the argument is not well founded. The New Testament does not, so far as I can see, state, suggest, or imply that the souls of the righteous have been held in Satan's captivity; the idea is in itself incredible. As has been remarked, it is much more in harmony with the New Testament outlook to say, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them." (249) This is not to say that the Descent has no interest for the righteous, as we shall see presently. So much for the liberation from Hades.

Another aspect of Descent-teaching sometimes ascribed to the New Testament, focusses attention on the preaching motif. This has frequently caught the imagination of Christian thinkers and poets. But only one of our passages may refer to this, 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. We have concluded that the audience envisaged by Peter is composed of fallen angels. The limitations of the passage are obvious and we are not at

liberty to argue from it to a whole scheme of salvation for the departed. The Descent of Christ into Hades does not have the significance in New Testament doctrine which it is often supposed to have for the outward-development of the saving process. To press the allusions to the Descent into the service of 'universalism', in an attempt, as it were, to save God's face, seems quite wrong.

The effect of the previous two paragraphs is to reduce the doctrine of the Descent in the New Testament to something much slighter than it has often appeared. We note three things as follows:

(1) The very thought of 'descending' into Hades, as emphasised in the antithesis noted in Paul, the expressions 'heart of the earth', 'lower parts of the earth', 'abyss' serve to stress the humanity and humility of Jesus. "As man has known the stars, so God has known the dust." As others, Jesus died, descended, entered death's dark domain. The Descent is thus the lowest rung of the ladder, the point beyond which there is no going. This experience Christ did not shirk.

(2) The 'abyss' of Rom. 10 connects with the 'spirits in prison' of 1 Pet. Jesus enters the domain of death as others do, and yet not as others. The lowest point of their defeat is His place of victory. The proclamation to the fallen angels is the Conqueror's personal message of triumph. Christus Patiens is Christus Victor. In submitting to death He defeated the spirit forces of evil. This by way of Eph. 4 is linked with the Descent.

(3) Christ is undefeated in death. Neither Death nor Hades can hold Him. Thus the Descent in the New Testament appears to emphasise, not so much the reality of His death, as the reality of His resurrection. It is simply because they are stressing the Resurrection that Heb. 13: 20 and Acts 2 find any relevance in the Descensus. Of course, this has a Christological import. It serves to underscore the uniqueness of the Person of Christ. There was no permanence about the post-mortal sojourn of Christ in the grave.

Chapter II

THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES

Our division of the material of the first two centuries into two parts, namely, all that comes before Irenaeus and the testimony of the Bishop of Lyons himself, is not wholly arbitrary. Irenaeus seems to be the first to exhibit a self-conscious catholicity of doctrine. He believed himself to be the champion of the Church's teaching, which had been handed down from the apostles in purity and which had to be defended in toto against marauding heretics. No similar unifying influence seems to operate upon the preceding literature.

That literature we subdivide into three groups, The Apostolic Fathers, The Greek Apologists and Marcion, and The Apocryphal Writings. After surveying the evidence of these in turn, we should be able to determine where the doctrine of the Descent was in vogue; whether it was a respectable citizen in Christian communities or merely flitted about the fringe with no security of tenure; what significance was attaching itself to the Descent. As Monnier observes, "Les premiers écrits qui suivent le Nouveau Testament mentionnent rarement la descente aux enfers."⁽¹⁾ This need occasion no surprise whatsoever, if the conclusions of the previous chapter are reliable. The evidence from this period will in the nature of the case be fragmentary. It would be unrealistic to look for anything else.

A. BEFORE IRENAEUS

1. THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

A. BEFORE IRENAEUS

sense of anti-climax in turning from the New Testament to the so-called Apostolic Fathers. For our purposes, however, the witness among them to the belief in the Descent makes them not only interesting but vitally important. The witness is borne by three, Ignatius, Polycarp and Hermas.

IGNATIUS. It is just possible, as has been argued, that Ignatius has the Descent into Hades in mind when he writes of our Lord in

(1) La Descente aux enfers, p.69.

Ad Philad. IX, αὐτοὺς ὧν θύρα τοῦ πατρὸς, δι' ἧς εἰσέρχονται Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ οἱ προφῆται καὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία, but it is by no means certain. It is safer to assume no more than the implication of the supremacy of the Gospel and of Christ in whom Old and New alike find their approach to, and acceptance with, the Father.

There can be no doubt about what is implied in Ad Magn. IX.2: πῶς ἡμεῖς συνησόμεθα ζῆσαι χωρὶς αὐτοῦ οὗ καὶ οἱ προφῆται μαθηταὶ ὄντες τῷ πνεύματι ὡς διδάσκαλου αὐτὸν προσεδόκων; καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, ὅν δικαίως ἀνέμενον, παρὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ νεκρῶν. It has been suggested that we have here a proleptic reference to the final resurrection, but the changes in tenses, συνησόμεθα.. προσεδόκων.. ἤγειρεν, are, in my opinion, conclusive against this. He states that before the time of Christ the prophets were waiting expectantly for Christ; He came, and raised them. This can only refer to the Descent into Hades.

The prophets according to Ignatius were Christ's disciples in spirit and awaited Him as their teacher. He does not actually say that Christ preached in Hades, but perhaps the thought is not very far away. Their Teacher has arrived and they are not disappointed. Must we not assume that when He visited them, He taught them?

We are told that He liberated them. The idea of deliverance must be included in the phrase, 'raised them from the dead', for what else can it mean? It is certainly a strong phrase. Could it be derived from Mt. 27: 51-53 (ἡγρόθη)? Ignatius appears to mean that Christ has transferred the prophets from Hades to Paradise or Heaven. We must observe that the only beneficiaries of the liberating work of Christ in Descent are the prophets.

The main burden of the general context consists of warnings against Judaism. Into his argument he introduces the Descent without apology. Evidently Ignatius did not anticipate objections to this. It is this casual mention that becomes valuable in a study of this kind.

There is probably not a reference to the Descent in Ad Trall. IX: ἀληθῶς ἐδιώχθη ἐπὶ Πόντου Πιλάτου, ἀληθῶς ἐσταυρώθη καὶ ἀπέθανεν, βλέπόντων τῶν ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ ὑποχθονίων.....

Monnier, I am sure, goes astray in thinking here of a portrayal of Christ as Saviour of the angels, the living, and the dead.(2)

(2) Op. cit. p.69f.

It is just possible, in view of Ad Magn. IX, that Ignatius intends the last word to signify the prophets and their particular interest in the Crucifixion. The probability, however, is that a clue lies in the repetition of 'truly'. The death of Christ is a public act, of universal interest, and contrary to Docetic notions, its reality cannot be disputed.

POLYCARP. Ignatius's contemporary, Polycarp of Smyrna, does not actually mention the Descent as such. In Phil. 1, however, he quotes Acts 2: 24 thus, *ὅν ἤγειρεν ὁ Θεός, λύσας τὰς ῥυτίδας τοῦ ᾧδου*. Observe that he alters the *ἀνέστησε* of the original to *ἤγειρεν* and, significantly, *θανάτου* to *ᾧδου*. Both changes were easily made. Now this is no more than a citation or allusion to Acts, but the really important thing about it is that it occurs in a summary of the Faith. It will have been natural in summarising the beliefs of Christianity to be influenced by the concise kerygma of early Acts.

HERMAS. The Descensus in the Shepherd of Hermas(3) is not the Descent of Christ, but of His apostles and teachers. As they had preached on earth, so they carried their message in Hades to those who had fallen asleep in righteousness, but without having received baptism.

Διατί, φημί, κύριε, καὶ οἱ μὲν λίθοι μετ' αὐτῶν ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ, ἥδη ἐσχηκότες τὴν σφραγίδα; "Ὅτι, φησὶν, οὗτοι οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ διδασκαλοὶ οἱ κηρύξαντες τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, κοιμηθέντες ἐν δυνάμει καὶ πίστει τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκήρυξαν καὶ τοῖς προκεινημένοις καὶ αὐτοῖς ἔδωκαν αὐτοῖς τὴν σφραγίδα.(4)
 Hermas was firmly convinced that hearing the Gospel and being baptized were absolutely necessary for salvation. Now the role already played by Christ as Rock and Gate in the allegory of the tower precluded such activities as preaching and baptizing. Is it not possible that

(3) Date: Though Edmunson, Bampton Lectures VIII, put it well within the first century and Goodspeed assigned it to the closing years of the same century, 95-100 (So Salmon, Zahn et al.), it was most certainly written in the early second century (So Lighfoot et al.) by a Christian living in Rome - v. Muratorian Fragment, ll. 73ff.

(4) Sim. IX.16.

the author could have in mind the same observation as is made in the note in Jn. 4: 2, "although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples"? Baptized the souls in Hades must be and so the disciples must do it on their descent thither.

We observe in this the clear insistence upon the preaching in Hades. There can be no doubt that the apostles and teachers preached the same message as upon earth, the saving Gospel. It would seem that the preaching in Hades is an earlier theme of patristic literature than writers have at times suggested. There may well be an allusion here to 1 Pet. 3: 18ff., preaching and baptism, but it can only be of a superficial nature, because the preaching there is done by Christ Himself and the reference to baptism is of a totally different character.

The benefits of this underworld mission are received exclusively by the faithful dead. There is no extension of the audience to any other group (in spite of Clement of Alexandria's use of the passage in Strom. VI).

The Shepherd was widely read in the churches of the early centuries as a sort of "Pilgrim's Progress", much inferior, of course, to Bunyan. Indeed, the astonishing fact is that it hovered on the fringe of the New Testament Canon, probably because of the rather unwarranted popularity it had gained almost immediately on publication.⁽⁵⁾ Here then is a popular work which contains a peculiar conception of the Descent into Hades. This emphasises the fluidity which characterises this period of doctrinal development.

2. THE GREEK APOLOGISTS AND MARCION

JUSTIN MARTYR. Hermas felt the need of some kind of Descensus to preserve his soteriological scheme. Justin Martyr, however, can have felt no dogmatic compulsion to introduce the Descent into his writings.

(5) The Muratorian Canon not only recognised this - *legi eum quidem oportet, se publicare vero in ecclesia populo neque inter apostolos in fine temporum potest*, a suggestion that it might have been included among the prophetic writings, were they not complete? - but also most probably by its authoritative pronouncement caused the disappearance of the Shepherd from the Canon of Western Christianity.

It was no mere affectation that led this 'Christian philosopher' to continue to wear his philosopher's cloak, a habit which excited Trypho's curiosity at the beginning of the Dialogue, for Justin firmly believed that Greek philosophy could be brought to serve the Christian cause and thus he was a forerunner of Alexandrian theology. Indeed, in his view, the Logos which was incarnated in Christ had in times past governed the thought and work of men like Socrates, Heraclitus and the Stoics. Because such as these lived μετὰ λόγου, they might be regarded as Christians before the time of Christ, like the righteous of Israel.(6) To such a philosophy belief in the Descent may hardly seem necessary.

Yet Justin holds that belief. In a well-known passage, Trypho 72, he accuses the Jews of excising a sentence from Jeremiah: καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ αὐτοῦ 'Ιερεμίου ὁμοίως ταῦτα περιέκοψαν 'Ερμήσθη δὲ κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἅγιος (ἀπὸ) 'Ισραὴλ τῶν νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ, τῶν κεκοιμημένων εἰς γῆν κώματος, καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ.(7) G. Archambault is perfectly justified in remarking, "C' est le seul endroit ou Justin parle de celle-ci, et il est remarquable que tandis qu' il mentionne assez souvent l' ascension au Ciel (dans les formules de foi), il n' y joint jamais la descente aux enfers."(8) But surely it is most remarkable that Justin should mention it at all, albeit in quotation. Why did he do so? To score a point over his Jewish opponents to be sure, but he must have known the Descent to be a common belief among Christians, which seemingly caused some embarrassment to Judaism, and a belief to which he himself assented. The apocryphon, whatever its origin, bears witness to the Descensus in Justin's day and some time before it, including the preaching in Hades and the deliverance of the righteous of Israel.

When Justin refers(9) to the Jews' mistaken notion that when Christ was put to death He would remain in Hades like some ordinary individual, he further indicates his belief in the Descent of Christ into Hades, as shared by common Christian tradition.

MARCION. Justin's Dialogue was most probably written, not at Rome

(6) Apology I.5.46; II.8.

(7) The famous apocryphon will be discussed later.

(8) Textes et Documents, 8 (1909).

(9) Dial. 99.

buttat Ephesus, whither he retired after the publication of his Second Apology in about 159 A.D. Now some time before this, perhaps 140, Marcion came to Rome with his peculiar brand of teaching, which has great importance not only for the growth of the New Testament Canon but also for the development of Christian thought. Marcionism must have come under fire in Justin's treatise "Against All Heresies".(10) It has been suggested that the Dialogue itself may be a counterblast to Marcion's one written work, the "Antitheses", but this can hardly be substantiated from the scope of the Dialogue. However this may be, one thing is certain, that Marcionite doctrines gained no sympathy from Justin Martyr. Now from our point of view one of the most remarkable things about the heretic is his belief in the Descent, remarkable for more than one reason.

Gnosticism in general rejected belief in Hades, for the perfect went at once to the Father, while the others had to pass through several transmigrations till they became purified for pleroma. Of course, to generalise about Gnosticism, a very complex and chaotic medley of fantasies, is unsafe, but we are in a position to state that Gnostics "wholly rejected the doctrine of the Descensus, and explained the passage in Peter of Christ's appearance on earth."(11) Marcion holds a distinct position in other respects as well.

Our evidence for Marcion's view is second-hand,(12) which some have thought untrustworthy. Huidekoper thinks Irenaeus may have exaggerated Marcion's teaching, because for the "salvation of Cain and similar worthies there is no plausible ground discernible in Marcion's system."(13) This objection can be ignored. E. de Faye, however, thinks that the Descent-doctrine was not taught by Marcion himself, but may have been added to his teaching by Marcionites of Irenaeus's day, because Tertullian makes no mention of it in Adv. Marcionem.(14) This is a more reasonable position, but I do not think we have real cause to

(10) Mentioned in Apology XXVI.8 and possibly the Against Marcion of which Irenaeus speaks.

(11) K.R. Hagenbach, A History of Christian Doctrines I.264.

(12) Iren. A.H. I.27.3; Theodoret Haer. Fab. I.24.

(13) F. Huidekoper, Works (New York, 1887), II.6.

(14) Gnostique et Gnosticisme p.127, referred to by MacCulloch, Harrowing of Hell, p.87 n.1.

doubt Irenaeus's words here. He is usually meticulous in his study of heretical teaching and painstaking with all the detailed variations. It is wiser to accept his word than to argue from the silence of Tertullian.

Marcion then taught that on His Descent into Hades Christ delivered Cain, the people of Sodom, and all those who had been condemned by the Demiurge. The latter was thus hoodwinked by Jesus, for, believing that He suffered on the Cross, which according to the Docetic view He in fact did not, he wanted to consign Him to the Hades where the disobedient were, but Jesus turned the tables upon him by this deliverance of the captives. We need not see any reference to the Hades-preaching in this. The effect is gained by the sudden and powerful attraction which the Saviour without a word has for these souls; according to a favourite gnostic concept, the souls are drawn magnetically to the Logos.

This scrap of evidence deserves notice. Marcion, so far as we know, was never criticised for his belief in the Descent. It was his distortion of it to suit his own ends that evoked censure. We must suppose, therefore, that Marcion adopted what was regarded as an orthodox belief and gave it a characteristic twist to fit it into his system. Do not Justin Martyr and Marcion testify in very different ways to the firm foothold which the Descent had taken in Rome around the middle of the second century?

MELITO. The difficulty of tracing the development of the doctrine of the Descent into Hades in the second century is intensified by the fragmentary nature of the evidence. We do not possess the works of Miltiades or Apollinaris for example, but how tragic the loss in the case of Melito of Sardis! Apparently, we know only about five per cent of his writings. Yet he seems to have been one of the ablest and most productive authors of his time, having published some 18 or 20 books.(15) We cannot form a satisfactory estimate of his importance for the development of Christian thought.(16)

(15) On the evidence of Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, Anastasius.

(16) Cf. the case of Theophilus whose work is said to have influenced Irenaeus, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Clement, Hippolytus, Julius Africanus, and Novatian, yet only one work of his survives, 'To Autolytus'.

The termini for Melito's written work will be 167 and 190; we know from the correspondence of Polycrates of Ephesus with Victor of Rome that he was dead in the latter year.(17)

We are concerned with his Homily on the Passion.(18) He dramatises and introduces words from the lips of the Saviour Himself:

ἐγώ,

φησίν, ὁ Χριστός, ἐγὼ ὁ καταλύσας τὸν θά-
νατον καὶ θριαμβεύσας τὸν ἔχθρὸν
καὶ καταπατήσας τὸν ἄδην καὶ θη-
σας τὸν ἰσχυρὸν καὶ..... (19)

Melito has obviously grouped together various phrases from the New Testament to describe the complete victory of Christ. For the destruction of death the New Testament verb is καταργέω (20), but in Acts 2: 24 we have a different phrase. Col. 2: 15 provided an obvious attraction to Melito with its picturesque description of Christ's victory. He has taken Mt. 12: 29 and, probably because it was already so applied, found it apposite to his vivid portrayal of the conquering Saviour. Between the destruction of death and the defeat of the enemy he puts the crushing of Hades. It is true that an actual Descent into Hades might not be required in such a case; we could easily maintain that Melito is merely thinking of the outstanding forces of opposition, death, Hades, and the devil, which are all met and overthrown at the Cross. On the other hand, perhaps Melito puts the same construction upon the Matthaean saying as did Irenaeus and Origen later.

(17) Euseb. H.E. V.24.5,6.

(18) This work had received notice in Anastasius of Sinai in the 7th century, but nothing more was known of it till 1940, when 17 fairly good pages of it dating from the 4th century turned up among the Chester Beatty papyri. Other three fragments have been uncovered, a 5th cent. Greek (Ox. Pap. XIII.1600, containing sections 57-63), a 4th cent. Coptic of sections 12-14, and a Syriac of sections 94-98, formerly ascribed to Alexander of Alexandria. Such discoveries whet the appetite.

(19) Hom. XVII. 13-17. Campbell Bonner, Studies and Documents XII, 1940, which so far I have been unable to see.

(20) I Cor. 15: 26; Heb. 2: 15; 2 Tim. 1: 10.

3. APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS

a. THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH. The earliest extra-biblical reference to the Descent into Hades may well belong here. Charles dates the Vision of Isaiah - the Christian section of the Ascension, comprising chapters VI-XI - from the close of the first century.(21) This work bears clear testimony to a belief in the Descensus.

The Descent into Hades is to form part of the divine plan for Jesus: "And I heard the voice of the Most High the Father of my Lord saying to my Lord Christ who will be called Jesus: 'Go forth and descend through all the heavens and thou wilt descend to the firmament and that world: to the angel in Sheol thou wilt descend' (X.7f.)..."And afterwards from the angels of death thou wilt ascend to thy place." (X.14) This has to be no mere passive descent: "when he hath plundered the angel of death, he will ascend on the third day." (IX.16) This plan was fully carried out, for it is stated in XI.19 that "they crucified Him and He descended to the angel (of Sheol)."

It is to be observed that the Vision of Isaiah records not the fact alone but the exact time, the period between the death and resurrection, in XI.19, IX.16. The place to which the Lord descended is most carefully identified in X.14 as Sheol: "to Hagucl (Abaddon or Gehenna) Thou wilt not go." Moreover, the purpose of the Descent receives explicit mention. It was to deliver righteous souls: "many of the righteous will ascend with Him." (IX. 16f.) Incidentally, a Latin version, which has the support of a rather corrupt Slavonic version, has for IX. 14-17, "And He will descend into Hades and make it and its phantoms desolate. And He will seize the Prince of Death and plunder him and destroy all his powers, and will rise the third day, and with him certain righteous ones, and He will send His preachers into all the world, and will ascend into the Heavens." We must observe in passing that the Christian who wrote the Vision of Isaiah shows a definitely docetic bias.(22)

b. ODES OF SOLOMON. Another early witness to the doctrine is the author of the 'Odes of Solomon'. Not long after he had discovered this collection of poems, Rendel Harris described them as 'redolent of

(21) Harnack, however, assigns it to the mid-third century.

(22) Cf. the Gospel of Peter.

antiquity and radiant with spiritual light', an opinion which has found favour with scholars ever since. In the defining of 'antiquity', however, much less agreement is observable. Unanimity can hardly be expected when there is little factual evidence to support precise dates. Harris himself concluded that, "if we are wrong in assigning them as written at Antioch in the first century, we are not far wrong either in place or time." (23) Mignana shows (in DAC) that they were written within the period 80-210. This leaves room for Harris's theory, but most scholars would incline to a later date within these limits. We cannot accept the view of some that the author might be the Syriac poet Bardaisan (24), for the poems were most probably written in Greek. That they are the work of one hand is very probable and Harnack's theory that they are really a Jewish work augmented by Christian interpolations has not found much support. If we assign them to some hitherto unknown Christian living in or near Ephesus or Antioch at some time around the middle of the second century, we have come as near to the date and origin as we can hope to be at present.

We shall refer to three of the Odes. (25) First, Ode XXIV; in 5ff.,
 "And the abysses were opened and closed;
 And they were seeking for the Lord, like (women) in travail:
 And He was not given to them for food
 Because He did not belong to them:
 And the abysses were submerged in the submersion of the Lord."

These Odes have at times been regarded as baptismal hymns. This view, an oversimplification when applied to the poems generally, is doubtless correct for some and reminds us of the author's high baptismal interest. In this Ode the baptism of Jesus seems to be connected in some mysterious way with the Descent (and an allusion to the Flood?). We know that our Lord did speak of His suffering and death as a baptism. (26) Perhaps therefore we are entitled to see a symbolic significance in His baptism in Jordan. Certainly some Old Testament scriptures would encourage us in this. (27) The Descent into the waters of Jordan catches

(23) J.R.Harris & A.Mignana, The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, II. p.69.

(24) Born just after the middle of the 2nd century.

(25) It is unlikely that we are to see a reference to the Descent in Ode XVII, which has similarities to Ignatius, Ad Philad. 8,9 and possibly influenced thereby. The same holds good for Ode XXII, in which it is said that he took dead bones and clad them with bodies; from Ez. 37.

(26) Lk. 12: 50; cf. Mk. 10: 39.

(27) See Appendix 4.

our poet's imagination and becomes the Descent into the watery abyss. As a result, the symbolic act is represented in v.7 as accomplishing the defeat of Sheol. This defeat becomes the theme of his confident song in XXXI.1,

"The abysses were dissolved before the Lord;
And darkness was destroyed by His appearance."

There follows the rescue of the imprisoned, as Christ is heard to say,

"Come forth, ye that have been afflicted,
And receive joy.
And possess your souls by grace;
And take to you immortal life." (vv.6,7)

Ode XLII.11-20 presents a more elaborate and dramatic version of the Descent-theme, again given in the first person:

"Sheol saw me and was in distress;
Death cast me up and many along with me;
I have been gall and bitterness to it,
And I went down with it to the extreme of its depths.
And the feet and head it let go,
For it was not able to endure my face."

In these lines the Descent is clearly stated, the terror of Hades and its defeat and mention is made of the liberation. The next lines introduce the preaching:

"And I made a congregation of living men among his dead men;
And I spake with them by living lips,
In order that my word may not be void."

The effect is immediate; faithful souls appeal for deliverance and their prayer is answered:

"And those who had died ran towards me;
And they cried and said, Son of God, have pity on us;
And do with us according to Thy kindness;
And bring us out from the bonds of darkness;
And open to us the door
By which we shall come out to Thee;
For we perceive that our death does not touch Thee.
Let us also be saved with Thee,
For Thou art our Saviour.
And I heard their voice,
And I laid up their faith in my heart;
And I set my name upon their heads;
For they are free men and they are mine.
Hallelujah."

These valuable poems bring to us in different form the various ideas found elsewhere in connection with the Descent, namely, the defeat of

Hades, the preaching in Hades, the deliverance of the righteous from their gloomy bondage. This is the first occasion on which we have found the terror of Hades specifically mentioned. (28)

c. THE GOSPEL OF PETER. It was most probably in Syria that the Gospel of Peter first saw the light of day. As to its date, H.B. Swete thinks it was written about 165 A.D. (29), whereas others, notably Goodspeed, would assign it to the period 120-140. The contention, however, that Justin Martyr used it has not been proved. The judgment of M.R. James commands respect: "I believe it is not safe to date the book much earlier than A.D. 150." (30) If we take it as providing evidence for the mid-second century, we cannot go far astray.

In the chapter which is relevant to our purpose (IX), a vividly dramatic picture is painted of what happened in the early hours of the Lord's Day. The soldiers observed the shining figures of two men descending from heaven and entering the sepulchre, as the stone rolled away of its own accord. They at once roused the centurion and the elders, who were also keeping watch. Now while they were explaining what had happened, they saw three men coming out of the sepulchre, two supporting the other. There followed a cross, as Swete puts it, "endowed with a quasi-personality." (31) They noticed that the heads of the two reached to heaven, but the head of the one who was escorted by them reached beyond the heavens. Then follow the important words: καὶ φωνῆς ἡμοῦον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λεγούσης Ἐμῆρουζας τοῖς κοιμωμένοις. καὶ ὑπακοὴ ἡμοῦετο ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ (ὅ)τι Ναί.

The words beginning with ἐμῆρουζας may be interrogative, and addressed to the Cross-Symbol. Swete, however, thinks they are best regarded

(28) It is assumed that the common interpretation is correct and the following unnecessarily subtle: "Die Höllenfahrt ist nach ihm (i.e. W. Frankenberg, Das Verständnis der Oden Salomos) ein psychologischer Vorgang in der Einzelseele. Der von Gott in Christus ungewandelte νοῦς befreit die Geisteskräfte des Menschen von den Banden der Sünde und der Sinnlichkeit." Gschwind, Die Niederfahrt, p. 244, addendum.

(29) The Akhmim Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St Peter, p. XLV.

(30) The Apocryphal New Testament, p. 90.

(31) MacCulloch writes, "As in Gnostic writings, the Cross is here a kind of Doppelgänger of Christ, perhaps symbolising His soul, not yet reunited to His body." Op. cit. p. 134.

as the revelation of a fact. He adds, "The whole sentence suggests that the preceding words ἐκήρυξας κτλ. belong to a hymn or other liturgical form." (32) If this is so, the crucial data belong to a period earlier than the work itself. Is it possible that there is some connection with the apocryphon quoted by Justin and Irenaeus? Is there an allusion to 1 Pet. 3: 19? Harnack emended the text on the belief that there was, while Swete thought any allusion improbable. It seems to me very difficult to avoid seeing an allusion to that passage, if we notice the word ἐκήρυξας used absolutely as it is, and in a book to which Peter's name has been affixed. The words τοῖς νομιζόμενοις point to Mt. 27: 52. (33) The writer's whole interest lies in the preaching mission to Hades.

Now this dramatic representation of the Descensus occurs in a work which, as Serapion of Antioch long ago observed (34), has docetic views. This indicates how widespread the belief was by the middle of the century. (35)

d. EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLES. At about the same time another apocryphal work appeared, the Epistle of the Apostles. (36) It is true that the author shows some blatant weaknesses in historical detail (He finds only eleven apostles in spite of the fact that he counts Peter and Cephas as two! Jesus is crucified by Pontius Pilate and Archelaus!), but his importance for our purposes far outweighs these strange lapses. He writes as an orthodox Christian (although his orthodoxy has not gone unchallenged) and he intends his letter to be read as a summary for all men of Christian beliefs and hopes emanating from the apostles.

His summary includes the Descent into Hades. Jesus, represented as giving after His resurrection an account of His experiences in Hades, says, "For to that end went I down unto the place of Lazarus, and preached unto the righteous and the prophets, that they might come out

(32) Op. cit., p. 20.

(33) Holtzmann thinks it a combination of these two passages.

(34) Euseb. H.E. VI. 12.

(35) If this book is a product of Gnosticism, τοῖς νομιζόμενοις as MacCulloch observes (op. cit., p. 134), might simply mean those on earth, in which case the normal Descent-tradition is being modified to suit the Gnostic outlook. (Cf. Marcion's use of it.)

(36) C. Schmidt assigns its origin to Asia Minor about 160 A.D.

of the rest which is below and come up into that which is above; and I poured out upon them with my right hand the water (baptism Eth) of life and forgiveness and salvation from all evil, as I have done unto you and unto them that believe on me."(37) We note the liberating and preaching motives attaching to the Descent. These, according to our writer, form part of the apostolic doctrine. The possible reference to baptism is worth noticing.(38)

This is the place at which to refer to two works which are supplied with Christian additions, valuable as evidence but difficult to tie down to a particular place or time.

e. TESTAMENT OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS. This is a Jewish work coming from the second century B.C. and sprinkled with interpolations from Christian sources. Charles has observed that the dominant characteristic of all these additions is their dogmatic nature, importing as all of them do statements of Christian ideas into Jewish texts to which they are alien. Among them are to be found suggestions of the Descent-doctrine, though not elaborated. In Test. Benjamin IX.5 we read, *Kaì áνελθὼν ἐκ τοῦ ᾗδου ἔσται μεταβαίνων ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς πρὸς οὐρανόν.* If in Test. Levi IV.1 *συλευομένου* is passive, then Hades is being despoiled by the suffering of the Most High & the familiar liberation-theme. Test. Dan VI.1ff. speaks of Messiah taking 'the captivity' from Beliar and there is added by the Christian hand, 'the souls of the saints.'(39) Beliar is here Lord of Hades, a conception "quite unique in Jewish apocalyptic and also in old Christian literature."(40) Is there a reference to the appearance of the saints in the Holy City, Mt. 27: 52f.?

f. THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES. The Sibylline Books, a chaotic medley of pagan, Jewish, and Christian material, present a formidable task for the disentangler. We can be sure, however, that the brief references to the Descent are Christian in origin. Opinions vary about their date. While some interpolations may be earlier than the third century, it may

(37) M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament.

(38) Cf. Shepherd of Hermas, Sim. IX.16.

(39) καὶ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν λάβη ἀπὸ τοῦ Βελίαρ ψυχὰς ἁγίων, καὶ ἐπιστρέφει καρδίας ἀπειθεῖς πρὸς κύριον, καὶ δώσει τοῖς ἐπιναλουμένοις αὐτὸν εἰρήνην αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν ἑδερᾷ ἅγιοι, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς νέας Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐφρανθήσονται δίκαιοι..

(40) G. Schmidt TU.XLIII.500 quoted by MacCulloch.

be unwise to declare that any are definitely from the second century.

In Book I.376 the three hours of darkness are mentioned; then follow

καὶ τότε δὴ ναὶς Σολομώνιος ἀνθρώποισιν
σημα μέγ' ἐνελέσει, ὅποταν Αἰδωνέος οἶκον
βῆσται ἀγγέλλων ἐπαναστασίην τεθνεῶσιν.
αὐτὰρ ἐπὶν ἔλθῃ τρισὶν ἡμέσιν ἐς φῶς αὐτίς
καὶ δείξῃ θνητοῖσι τύπον καὶ πάντα διδάξῃ. (41)

Preaching is linked with the Descent into Hades' house. A similar connection occurs later, only this time the dead are further defined as all His saints:

ἥξει δ' εἰς Αἶδην ἀγγέλλων ἐλπίδα πᾶσιν
τοῖς ἁγίοις, τέλος αἰώνων καὶ ἔσχατον ἡμᾶρ,
καὶ θανάτου μοῖραν τελέσει τρίτον ἡμᾶρ ὑπνώσας
καὶ τότε ἀπὸ φθιμένων ἀναλύσας εἰς φῶς ἥξει.. (42)

The existence of these two passages is their chief importance. It is unlikely that they brought any influence to bear upon the progress of Christian thought, but they provide another reminder of the place which the Descensus occupied particularly among popular works of the early centuries.

4. SUMMARY

Our examination of this literature of the first two centuries demonstrates that the doctrine of the Descent into Hades was not confined to one part of the world. It was known and taught in Asia Minor (Polycarp, Epistle of the Apostles, Melito, Odes of Solomon), in Rome (Hermas, Justin Martyr, Marcion), and in Syria (Ignatius, Gospel of Pseudo Peter). Furthermore, the nature of the evidence is as diverse theologically as geographically.

The Descensus, we have seen, belongs to the main stream of Christian tradition as represented by the Apostolic Fathers Ignatius and Polycarp, and the Apologists Justin and Melito. None of these argues for the acceptance of the belief, for they all make rather casual reference to it, clearly assuming it to be a well-known, inoffensive element of orthodox Christianity. They are all also reticent about details.

Ignatius displays a passionate antagonism to Docetism.(43) Writers

(41) GOS. 8.24.

(42) VIII.310ff. GOS.8.162. Quoted by Lactantius, Div. Inst. IV.19.8.

(43) E.g. Ad Trall. IX, X; Ad Smyrn. II, V; cf. Polycarp, Ad Phil. VII.

with docetic tendencies give expression to the Descent: from the same region as Ignatius himself comes the dramatic version in the Gospel of Peter, while the Vision of Isaiah states it with indubitable clarity on no fewer than four occasions. Further, the presuppositions of Justin Martyr and the vagaries of Marcion make strange bedfellows, but they unite to attest the widely-enjoyed acceptance of this doctrine. It will have been because he knew of its acceptance that the writer of the Epistle of the Apostles thought fit to include it in his presentation of apostolic teaching. The Descent, then, is not handed down in a single line of tradition. It was the common heritage of Docetic and anti-Docetic, Marcionite and anti-Marcionite. It is worthy of note that in those days the Descent provoked no doctrinal conflicts and while there are writers who do not mention it, there is not a single Christian author of the first two centuries who denies it.

In this period the Descent does not persist in a uniform, stereotyped formula. Where gropings after statements of the Faith have been discovered(44), only Polycarp gives it a nod of recognition. This does not mean, of course, that the Descent was at that time unacceptable as an article of dogma, but rather that it was not considered a cardinal proposition of fundamental gravity requiring definitive statement.

The diversity of the mode of expression of the Descensus, epistolary, dramatic, poetic, prosaic, is even further emphasised by its peculiar shape in the Shepherd of Hermas. But diversity of expression characterises the whole ante-Nicene period, a diversity which is not to be explained simply by reference to language, style and literary forms, miscellaneous as these are, but to a freedom of individual thought. While the cardinal points of doctrine remain fairly constant in the writings of the Church, there is nevertheless a complexity and indefiniteness on many questions. The need was not yet felt urgently to define and defend the Faith against unabashed heretical enterprise. We should not be surprised that the testimony of these two centuries is varied. It could not be otherwise.

Let us notice the significance which the Descent had for these times.

1. The Defeat of Hades. Jesus did not 'belong' to the shadowy caverns

(44) Polycarp, Ad Phil. 1; Ep. of Apost. III, V; Apology of Aristides, v. J. Armitage Robinson, p.24.

of death. The attempt made to consume Him failed; He descended to conquer (Odes of Solomon) and, as Melito puts it, He trampled on Hades and bound the strong man. This victory which is implied in the Vision and given rhetorical expression in the Homily on the Passion, bursts into poetical expression in the Odes.

2. Liberation. Most of these writers either state or imply that imprisoned souls were delivered from Hades. Marcion's version points to selective deliverance as the orthodox position. Now the 42nd Ode, it is true, speaks simply of 'those who had died' as appealing for, and receiving help, but perhaps the limitation is intended in v.19, "I laid up their faith in my heart" or the limitation of v.71, "Death cast me up and many along with me", covers the whole poem. In the other works examined above, the beneficiaries of the Descent are definitely identified, as 'many of the righteous' (Vision), the righteous dead of pre-Christian days (Hermas), the prophets (Ignatius), the righteous and the prophets (Ep. of Apost.), the righteous of Israel (Justin). The early Christians, conscious of their heritage, naturally thought first of the faithful dead of Israel's past, for they themselves were the children of Abraham. It was in terms of the Hebrew scriptures that they thought of the work of Christ. Are the prophets so prominent because they are being regarded as outstanding examples of Israel's faithful or are they being thought of as anticipating the great salvation (1 Pet. 1: 11f.) and so intimately linked with the new age?

These souls are delivered from Hades but whither? The most explicit statement of all is in the Epistle of the Apostles and that tells us very little.. Either the destination was easily assumed or it had not occurred to the writers to pursue the matter further, there being no scriptural encouragement in that direction.

3. Preaching. Selwyn's observation that "Christ's preaching in the course of His Descent does not seem to be as early an idea in the second century as His 'raising' or 'liberating' of the saints of the Old Covenant"(45) does less than justice to the facts. MacCulloch makes a contrary claim, "The announcement of the good news of salvation in Hades forms the earliest and most widely diffused conception of the

(45) The First Epistle of St. Peter, p.343.

purpose of the presence of Christ's soul in Hades."(46) It seems to me to be implied in Ignatius, in Hermas, which is not so irrelevant as Selwyn maintains. Nor can there be any doubt with regard to the Gospel of Peter, Justin Martyr, the Epistle of the Apostles, Odes of Solomon. To this list we must now add a reference in Irenaeus, who says that he had a statement from a presbyter who had it from personal companions of the apostles and their disciples, "Dominum in ea quae sunt sub terra descendisse, evangelisantem et illis adventum suum, remissione peccatorum existente his qui credunt in eum."(47) Lightfoot thinks that this anonymous elder might well be Pothinus, Irenaeus's predecessor at Lyons, who was martyred at the age of ninety in 177 A.D. and that Irenaeus's had frequently been in his company. "Indeed the elaborate character of these discourses suggests....that Irenaeus is here reproducing notes of lectures which he had heard from this person."(48) Although Selwyn concedes that this statement in Irenaeus points to a tradition of some standing, he does not think that the details are reliable enough to justify the conclusion that the idea of Christ preaching to the dead" was taught in the Church earlier than A.D. 150."(49) We must, however, with Lightfoot's words in mind, admit the possible validity of Irenaeus's claims and, what is more to the point, the probability that the elder's evidence corroborates what we already have reason to suppose, that the Hades-preaching belonged to the early tradition of the Descensus.

There is among these authors a strange silence with respect to the preaching in the passages of 1 Peter. None quotes either passage. I am inclined to think that 1 Pet. 3: 19 lies behind the explicit statements of preaching in Hades, especially in the Gospel of Peter. Whether the application of the text is accurate or not, is a different question. Could it be that no allusion to 1 Pet. 4: 6 is found here because it was known that the preaching there had nothing to do with Hades. In any case, at an early enough date to be significant the preaching to the departed is linked with the soteriological purpose of

(46) Op. cit., p.240.

(47) A.H. IV.XXVII.2.

(48) Essays on Supernatural Religion (London, 1889), p.266.

(49) Op. cit. p.344.

of the Descent into Hades.

It is to be observed that neither preaching nor deliverance is thought to benefit any but the righteous. The status or destiny of the unbelieving dead evidently remains unchanged. Possibly it never occurred to these writers as a problem, their minds being preoccupied with the question that first presented itself, that of the faithful of previous times. Possibly they assumed that in the very nature of the case there could be no change for the unrighteous; μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐξελεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκέτι δυνατόν ἐστι ἐξομολογήσασθαι ἢ μετανοεῖν ἔτι.(50)

B. IRENAEUS

As he provides valuable material for the history of the New Testament text and the growth of the Church, so Irenaeus occupies a place of the greatest importance for our subject. He knew Eastern Christianity (i.e. Asian) and Western (Gallie and Roman). He participated in the controversies that raged over Gnosticism, Montanism, and the Paschal question. He approaches a systematic presentation of Christian theology, even if it is worked out in opposition to Gnosticism. Altaner described him as "in a sense the Father of Catholic dogmatics." (51) It is his systematic approach and representative position that lend so much weight to his teaching on the Descent into Hades. "Irenaeus is eminently a representative type. He belongs to no mere section of the Church. He speaks for no extreme wing of opinion. The circumstances of his birth and residence and active work betoken his place in Christian tradition. He is a milestone alike of that which has become to be regarded as typically Eastern and Greek, and of that which is called Western and Latin." (52)

In referring to the Descent into Hades Irenaeus quotes on no fewer than six occasions the apocryphon already noted in Justin Martyr (p.83) Irenaeus's citations occur as follows:

1. A.H. III.XX.4 (H. 2.108): "Esaias ait: Et commemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum qui dormiebant in terra sepultionis: et descendit ad eos evangelizare salutem quae est ab eo, ut salvaret eos."

(50) 2 Clem. 8.3.

(51) Patrology, p.150.

(52) J. Lawson, The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus, p.293.

2. A.H. IV.XXII.1 (H. 2.228): "Hieremias ait: Recommemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum qui praedormierunt in terra defossionis et descendit ad eos, uti evangelisaret eis salutare eum, ad salvandum eos."

3. A.H. IV.XXXIII.1 (H. 2.256): "Duos adventus eius omnes annuntiaverunt prophetae: unum quidem, in quo homo in plaga fuit....et recommemoratus mortuorum suorum qui ante dormierant et descendens ad eos uti erueret eos et salvaret eos.(53) Secundum autem..."

4. A.H. IV.XXXIII.12 (H. 2.267): "Alii autem dicentes: Rememoratus est Dominus sanctus mortuorum suorum, qui praedormierunt in terra limi, et descendit ad eos uti erigeret, ad salvandum illos."

5. A.H. V. XXXI.1 (H. 2.411): "quem ad modum propheta ait de eo: Commemoratus est Dominus sanctorum suorum, eorum qui ante dormierunt in terra sepultionis, et descendit ad eos, extrahere eos, et salvare eos."

6. Epid. 78: "And in Jeremiah He thus declares His death and descent into hell, saying: And the Lord the Holy One of Israel, remembered His dead, which aforetime fell asleep in the dust of the earth; and He went down unto them, to bring the tidings of His salvation, to deliver them."

Irenaeus is not consistent in his references to the source of his quotation. He gives it twice to Jeremiah, as Justin had done; once to Isaiah (though Harvey may be right in thinking that this is just a slip for Jeremiah, to be explained by an immediately preceding reference to Isaiah); once to "the prophet", once to "others". The quotation cannot be found in any ancient version or Jewish Targum. It is possible, of course, that Irenaeus got it from Justin. He does borrow from Justin, sometimes following him with more confidence than discernment. If that were the case, it would narrow the field considerably, but would not help us to solve the problem of the first source. Could we solve that one, we should no doubt unearth some extremely valuable material for our study. If the two fathers quote independently, it is still safe to assume that they derive their citations from the same source. Now the quotation appears along with texts of Scripture and shares their authority. Justin is quite sure about it; the Jews excised the passage from the Book of Jeremiah. Selwyn thinks there may be some substance in the accusation and that "the oracle would come well, e.g., between Jer. XI.

(53) et salvaret eos - "a manifest gloss" (Harvey, in loc.).

19 and 20." This appears to be Selwyn's reaction to Harris's view of Justin's accusation. It is, however, only after a fairly cogent argument that Harris concludes, "In that case, Justin's reference to the Jews as destroying or removing texts is gratuitous." (54)

If Harris is right, and he seems to be, then there remains the possibility that Justin had a copy of Jeremiah or the prophets which contained the words. We might argue with Swete, that the words of the unknown author "possibly a fragment of a primitive homily, commended themselves so fully to the sub-apostolic age that before Justin's time they had acquired a place in some Christian copies of the Prophets." The difficulty of this position is that it depends so much upon the tacit assumption that either Justin had lying open on his desk a copy of the Prophets or his memory is unerringly accurate here. This may be to ask too much. The view is superior to the idea that the source is an early Christian apocryphal Book of Jeremiah in the form of an Old Testament prophecy. That its origin is Christian seems probable: "ce pourrait bien encore être l'oeuvre d'une main chrétienne." (55); although it might well be argued that it is derived from a Jewish apocalypse. Geschwind in fact attempted to reconstruct the text in Hebrew. (56)

Irenaeus is obviously quoting from memory and Justin may be doing the same. This may support the argument that both are depending upon a collection of proof-texts. Irenaeus elsewhere attributes citations wrongly, e.g. in Epid. 43 a composite quotation from the Psalms is given to Jeremiah. As Harris observes, even if its source were a book of Testimonies, the text may be very early. (57)

Swete notices that one of the sources of the apocryphon is betrayed by the words εἰς γῆν χώματος, an inversion of the phrase in Dan. XII.2 πολλοὶ τῶν παθευδόντων ἐν γῆς χώματι ἐξεγερθήσονται (Th.), the apocryphon following the original אֶתְּחַיֶּה בְּחַמֵּי אֶרֶץ. He thinks that the author had also in view not only the passage in 1 Pet. but Mt. 27: 52, for he has altered Theodotion's παθευδόντων into Mt's νεκροποιημένων (The same variant occurs in Const. Ap. V.7). (58)

(54) Testimonies I.13.

(56) Op. cit., p. 215

(57) Testimonies II.2.

(55) Archambault, Textes et Documents 8 (1909).

אֶתְּחַיֶּה בְּחַמֵּי אֶרֶץ אֶתְּחַיֶּה בְּחַמֵּי אֶרֶץ אֶתְּחַיֶּה בְּחַמֵּי אֶרֶץ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
(58) The Apostles' Creed, p.59.

C. 72	III. XX. 4	IV. XXII. 1	IV. XXXIII. 1	IV. XXXIII. 12	V. XXXI. 1	c. 78
ἐμνήσθη δὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ Ἰσραὴλ τῶν νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν κεκοιμημένων εἰς γῆν χώματος καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ	et commemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum qui dormierant in terra sepulchris et descendit ad eos evangelizare salutem quae est ab eo ut salvaret eos	recommemoratus est Dominus sanctus Israel mortuorum suorum qui praedormierunt in terra depositionis et descendit ad eos uti evangelizaret eis salutare suum ad salvandum eos	et commemoratus mortuorum suorum qui ante dormierant et descendens ad eos uti erueret eos et salvaret eos	rememoratus est Dominus sanctus mortuorum suorum qui praedormierunt in terra limi et descendit ad eos uti erigeret eos ad salvandum eos	commemoratus est Dominus sanctorum mortuorum suorum qui ante dormierunt in terra sepulchris et descendit ad eos extrahere eos et salvare eos	The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, remembered His dead ones who before slept in the earth and descended to them in order to announce His salvation in order to save them

The actual text of the quotation shows divergences which, even when allowance is made for the fact that in Irenaeus's case we are dealing with a translation, are considerable. These are best observed if we set out the occurrences in tabular form as MacCulloch(59) does (v. page opposite). The most significant of the changes is *sanctorum* in the second-last column. This may well be an assimilation of *sanctus* in the version itself to *sanctorum*. If it does represent an original genitive, then could it be that Irenaeus supplies 'saints' sub-consciously, because of dogmatic presuppositions? Not all the forms have 'preaching', but as it is present in Justin, two of the places in Adv. Haer., and the Epideixis, it obviously belonged to the apocryphon. How are we to account for the omission in the other three? Was it not important enough in the eyes of Irenaeus to keep its place constantly in the quotations? As for the idea of deliverance, it is clearly stated in all the places in Irenaeus, but only implied in Justin in the word 'salvation! As in three cases Irenaeus substitutes for preaching 'erueret', 'erigeret', 'extirparet', his mind seems to have been occupied with the liberation-theme. Further use will be made of the quotations in the rest of this section.

THE FACT. It is obvious that Irenaeus had no doubt in his mind that Christ descended into Hades. It may be argued that his use of the term 'descended' may at times indicate no more than 'death', as in A.H. IV. XX.8, a probable allusion to Ps. 22: 15, or 'burial', as in III.XVIII.3, but in the latter where he has "qui decubuit et resurrexit, qui descendit et ascendit" (H. 2.97), he has just quoted Rom. 10: 6,7 and added "usque ad mortem descendens." A reference to the Descent is thus more likely. In any case, he pronounces so clearly upon the subject elsewhere that there can be no question about his belief.

THE TIME. The Descensus is placed precisely between the Death and Resurrection. Irenaeus declares that the Lord did not ascend on high immediately at death; "nunc autem tribus diebus conversatus est ubi erant mortui." (60) Similarly in Fragment XXXI, Κριτῆς γὰρ τοῦ πάντος κόσμου ἐκηρύσσεται, οὗτος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς, ἐν χώματι κρυβεῖς καὶ τριημέρῳ μέγιστον δένδρον γεννηθεῖς....

(59) Op. cit., p.90.

(60) A.H. V.XXXI.1 (H. 2.411) where he refers to Mt. 12: 40, Eph. 4: 9, Ps. 86: 23, Jn. 20: 17.

THE PLACE. Irenaeus makes it abundantly clear that it was Hades into which Christ descended.(61) It is true that in Epid. 83 he interprets the 'captivity' of Eph. 4: 8 of the fallen angels but this does not disagree with his general teaching. Every version of the apocryphon has 'descendit ad eos', i.e. the dead, "qui in terra recumbabant"; of. "cum qui tunc in coelis, in limum mortis descendisse", and "Dominum in ea quae sunt sub terra descendisse", as the presbyter taught him.(62) These regions beneath the earth are to be identified with the lower parts of the earth in Eph. 4: 9(63) He rejects the view that the phrase may mean this world of ours; the truth is, "Dominus in medio umbrae mortis abierit, ubi animae mortuorum erant, post deinde corporaliter resurrexit."

THE SIGNIFICANCE. Unlike his predecessors, Irenaeus makes explicit statements about the purpose and meaning of the Descent.

1. Recapitulation. The Descent into Hades accords with this idea of his. The Word is universally extended: "He it is who illuminates the height, that is the heavens, and encompasses the deep which is beneath the earth."(64) Irenaeus is at pains to show that Christ passed successively through every part of human experience. "He passed through every stage of life, restoring communion with God to all."(65) And so "the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day."(66)

2. Preaching. In three of the occurrences of the quotation (Nos. 1, 2, 5 above) Christ is said to preach salvation in Hades. He also makes the same point elsewhere: "Dominum in ea quae sunt sub terra descendisse evangelisantem et illis adventum suum, remissione peccatorum existente his qui credunt in eum."(67) It should be noticed that Irenaeus does not appeal to Scripture for this preaching. He states his position on the authority of a presbyter. Surely if he had known 1 Pet. 3: 18f. to

(61) He distinguishes Hades from Paradise, the abode of those who have been translated, namely, Enoch and Elijah, till the consummation of all things, A.H. V.V.1.

(62) A.H. IV.XXII.1 (H. 2.228); IV.XX.8 (H. 2.220); IV.XXVII.2(H. 2.241).

(63) A.H. V.XXXI.1; of. Fragment III.

(64) Epid. 34.

(65) A.H. III.XVIII.7 (H. 1.343)

(66) A.H. V.XXXI.1 (H. 2.411)

(67) A.H. IV.XXVII.2 (H. 2.241)

mean that Christ preached in Hades, he would have used it here.

3. Deliverance. In *Epid.* 56 Irenaeus holds out "hope for those before Christ who feared God and were righteous." This chimes in with his view of the universal significance of the Work of Christ. The redeeming acts of Christ are not to be restricted to one period or age, for they embrace all. "Non enim propter eos solos, qui temporibus Tiberii Caesaris crediderunt ei, venit Christus; nec propter eos solos qui nunc sunt homines providentiam fecit Pater, sed propter omnes omnino homines, qui ab initio secundum virtutem suam in sua generatione et timuerunt et dilexerunt Deum, et iuste et pie conversati sunt erga proximos, et concupierunt videre Christum et audire vocem eius." (68) For this reason the Lord descends into Hades, preaches His salvation and delivers from its bondage. Definite language is employed to identify the recipients of this salvation. They are (a) Adam: he uses Mt. 12: 29 to underline this, though he does not elaborate on the 'strong man': "per secundum autem hominem alligavit fortem, et diripuit eius vasa, et evacuavit mortem vivificans eum hominem qui fuerat mortificatus... solutus est autem condemnationis vinculis, qui captivus ductus fuerat homo." (69) (b) Abraham and his posterity: through Jesus Christ God introduced Abraham into the kingdom of heaven: "Vindicabat enim semen eius Dominus, solvens e vinculis et advocans ad salutem... Manifestum est igitur (i.e. from Lk. 13: 15,16) quoniam eos qui similiter ut Abraham credebant ei, solvit et vivificavit." (70) and (c) Justi et prophetae et patriarchae: representative of all who believe (71). Now it is only the righteous who are delivered. Irenaeus sternly denounces as blasphemous the Marcionite perversion already noticed.

At various places Irenaeus produces what appear to be summaries of the Faith, e.g. in A.H. I.X.. There is no reference to the Descent. The same is true of that in A.H. III.IV.2. The Descent does, however, figure in the summary in Fragment LII.

Our observations show that Hagenbach's remark is fully justified, that more definite language is first used by Irenaeus. He makes his

(68) A.H. IV.XXII.2 (H. 2.229); cf. IV.XXVII.2; *Epid.* 39.

(69) A.H. III.XXXIII.1 (H. 2.125).

(70) A.H. IV.VIII.1,2 (H. 2.165).

(71) A.H. IV.XXVII.2 (2.241). Irenaeus seems to take 1 Thess. 4: 14 to indicate those who died before the time of Christ.

own and what he knows to be the Church's position clear, in respect of the Descent, the preaching in Hades and the deliverance from its domain. He finds his scriptural evidence (for he is a Biblical theologian) not only in the expected places but also in some strange contexts.

We may perhaps think of Irenaeus's teaching on the Descent as representing a crystallisation of the fluid material which we have seen to precede him. A significant point in the development of the doctrine has been reached. It is now almost safely embedded in the teaching of the Church, having something of its own to contribute which no other doctrine can supply. That the traditional Christianity of the first two centuries desired to give the Descent house-room has been demonstrated by the varied voices before our author's appearance; that that desire became an actuality and right of entry was secured for the Descent, is probably to be attributed to the influential work of Irenaeus.

Chapter III

THE THIRD CENTURY - WESTERN

It had become quite impossible to ignore any longer the clamant need for definitive statement and cogent interpretation of Christian beliefs. The fury of persecution battered the outer walls of the Church, while a certain tendency to moral laxity, with the pernicious influence of Gnosticism threatened its inner fabric. The age was transitional. The Church needed defenders of the Faith. She had already found a champion to lead the way in Greek. Now in the West appeared an advocate who was prepared to devote his brilliant qualities unreservedly to the case for Christianity. We are now to observe how the doctrine of the Descent fares under such circumstances, beginning with that advocate and his successors in the West.

1. TERTULLIAN

Apart from his apologetic writings, Tertullian would deserve the title, 'Father of Latin Christianity', for he is the great pioneer of Western tradition in both dogma and terminology. It is to him we owe, to take obvious examples, the first formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity (Adv. Praxean), the first 'Christian book on Psychology' (Harnack's description of *De Anima*), as well as clear teaching on the humanity of Jesus and other major doctrines, not to mention his fiercely puritanical, practical works. His influence on later authors is considerable. "Cyprian stood upon his shoulders, and Augustine stood upon those of Cyprian".(1) As for terminology, he was, as T.R. Glover puts it, "the first man of genius of the Latin race to follow Jesus Christ, and to reset his ideas in the language native to that race."(2) "It was in Tertullian's choice of words," writes Morgan, "that all succeeding Christian thought was so profoundly affected, at any rate so far as the Latin

(1) R.E. Roberts, *The Theology of Tertullian*, (London, 1924), p.241

(2) *Conflict of Religions*, p.307

language is concerned."(3) This is not to say that he is the sole originator of Christian Latinity; he had the Bible in Latin to help him.(4) Tertullian, however, is the creator of a technical Christian Latinity. It is with him moreover that Western Christianity becomes Latinized. Harnack said that in Tertullian the character and future of the Latin Church were already announced; or, as Benson put it, "The lamp which all runners in the sacred race have received is that which Tertullian lit and Cyprian trimmed."(5)

The *Regula Fidei*.

Tertullian adopted a similar attitude to that of Irenaeus towards traditional Christian doctrine. Thus he speaks of the *regula fidei* (cf. Irenaeus's 'canon'), which he describes as '*una, sola, immobilis et irreformabilis*.' While we cannot argue from this that Tertullian knew a single authoritative creed(6) some kind of formulary or formularies lie behind his statements of the rule of faith.(7) It is possible, as Morgan has done(8), to reconstruct a sort of creed. In the result, there is no mention of the Descent into Hades. What significance does this fact have for the development of this doctrine? It should be noted that a comparison of Tertullian's statements of the *regula fidei* will show that it was not so unalterable as he himself claims. I think, however, that in each case he was quite certain that his statements was basically the same and completely harmonious with apostolic doctrine; that he was not really altering it, but simply showing how it stood with regard to the subject in hand. (This may explain why in his Montanist writings the orthodox faith is not supplanted, but rather supplemented). Now it is essential to bear in mind that Tertullian is perpetually engaged in hot controversy. This will colour his statements of the *regula*. In these circumstances, the omission of the Descent is conclusive proof of nothing. It may suggest at most that the Descent was not of sufficient importance then, to support itself in these

(3) J. Morgan, *The Importance of Tertullian in the Development of Christian Dogma* (London, 1928), p. XIV. It has been calculated that Tertullian formed 509 new nouns, 284 adjectives, 28 adverbs, 161 verbs, i.e. altogether 982 new words, (figures quoted in Altaner, *Patrology*, p. 166)

(4) As Greenslade observes, *Library of Christian Classics*, V. 23. The first Latin version was produced in Africa, where Latin evidently was the leading language, especially in Carthage, Tertullian's birthplace.

(5) Cyprian, p. 531

(6) J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* p. 87.

(7) *De Praescr.* 13; *De Virg. Vel.* 2; *Adv. Prax.* 2 (8) *Op. cit.*, p. 50f.

summaries of the faith.

The Fact of the Descent.

There are two passages, De Anima 7 & 55, in which Tertullian states precisely that Christ descended into Hades. (Descendit appears in both). Now in neither of these places is Tertullian arguing for the Descensus; both, in fact, presume its acceptance on the part of his opponents. In the former, he is attempting to prove from the Gospels that the soul is corporeal and asks, "Quid est autem illud quod ad inferna transfertur post divortium corporis, quod detinetur illic, quod in diem iudicii reservatur, ad quod et Christus moriendo descendit? Puto, ad animas patriarcharum. Sed quam ob rem, si nihil anima sub terris?(9) In the latter, his concern is with the condition of the departed. His opponents believe that Christ descended into Hades; surely then, he argues, they must be prepared to accept that Christians likewise descend thither at death? This much is clear; but what place does the Descent hold in Tertullian's teaching? Does it have anything more than this argumentative value? To understand this, it seems best to consider first his fairly closely-built doctrine of the Intermediate State.

Rejecting the tripartite, and accepting the dichotomic, conception of man, Tertullian finds himself able to make clear statements about the nature of death. It is the separation of body and soul(10) The body is laid in the grave; what of the soul? All souls descend to Hades. In his book, unhappily still lost, on Paradise, he dealt with this. "Habet etiam de paradiso a nobis libellum, quo constituimus omnem animam apud inferos sequestrari in diem domini."(11) Our author naturally speaks of the place of the departed. In De Anima he states the various opinions of philosophers, that the place is ether, air, the moon, the earth, the bosom of the earth, but rejects them - "Nobis inferi non nuda cavositas nec subdivalis aliqua mundi sentina creduntur, sed in fossa terrae et in alto vastitas et in ipsis visceribus eius abstrusa profunditas, si quidem Christo in corde terrae triduum mortis legimus expunctum, id est in recessu intimo et interno et in ipsa terrae aperto et intra ipsam clauso et inferioribus adhuc abyssis superstructo."(12)

(9) O. II. 566

(10) De Anima, 51.

(11) Adv. Marc. V. 12; De Anima 55. O. II. 644.

(12) De Anima 55, O. II. 642.

Tertullian cannot agree with the idea held by some that the souls of the faithful soar at once to heaven, since that would anticipate the resurrection and day of the Lord. Because Christ descended thither, it is not unjust that the souls of the faithful should go there too. All souls live apud inferos awaiting resurrection and reunion with the body. Now although all souls go alike to Hades, they are not all detained together in the same place. There are two compartments. "Alterum ergo constituas compello, aut bonos inferos aut malos"(13) This is not merely a difference of place, but one of condition. Rejecting the theory of the sleep of the soul, he considers that it would be unjust if righteous and wicked were to fare alike. His own view, therefore, is reasonable: souls experience either punishment or consolation in their intermediate state. To bolster up his argument, he claims that the soul is capable of experiencing joy and sorrow even apart from the body and is itself responsible for sins of thought. In fact, we are entitled to say that the soul takes the first place in sin, because conception of the sin comes before the deed. Consequently, we can see how fitting it is that the soul should be the first to suffer. Thus the condition of souls in Hades is a foretaste of their eternal state.

The place of temporary bliss is identified with Abraham's bosom: "ab inferis discernit Abrahae sinum pauperi".(14) (We observe that he used inferi to signify two things, Hades and the place of the wicked in Hades.) "esse aliquam localem determinationem quae sinus dicta sit

Abrahae ad recipiendas animas filiorum eius, etiam ex nationibus; non caelestem, sublimiorem tamen inferis, interim refrigerium praebiturum animabus iustorum, donec consummatio rerum resurrectionem omnium plenitudine mercedis expungat." and "sinum Abrahae dici tem porale aliquod animarum fidelium receptaculum in quo iam delineetur futuri imago ac candida quaedam utriusque iudicii prospiciatur."(15)

(13) De Anima 56, O. II.645.

(14) Adv. Marc. IV.34, O. II.250; cf. "et post decursum vitae apud inferos in sinu Abrahae refrigerium." Ibid. III.24.

(15) Ibid. Cf. "Igitur si quid tormenti sive solatii anima praecerpit in carcere seu diversorio inferum, in igni vel in sinu Abrahae, probata erit corporalitas animae." Ch. 7, O. II.566

We now make mention of his important words on Purgatory. Care must be taken not to overemphasise the purgatorial elements in Tertullian's eschatology. The germ of the idea is undoubtedly present with some kind of purgatorial experience in the intermediate state, but neither the word itself nor a developed doctrine can be ascribed to him. The implication is clear in *De Anima* 35: "...iudex te tradat angelo executionis, et ille te in carcerem mandet infernum, unde non dimittaris, nisi modico quoque delicto mora resurrectionis expenso." (16) He puts the point even more clearly in ch. 58, bringing it into relationship with the general framework of his eschatology: *Mt. 5: 25ff.* is applied to the soul's experience in Hades: "In summa, cum carcerem illum, quem evangelium demonstrat, inferos intellegimus, et novissimum quadrantem modicum quoque delictum mora resurrectionis illic luendum interpretamur, nemo dubitabit animam aliquid pensare penes inferos salva resurrectionis plenitudine per carnem quoque." (17) This whole concept is connected with his idea of atonement for sin. 'Satisfactio' is another important theological term which is derived from our author, but it is essential to grasp that he himself does not apply the word to the Work of Christ; he applies it to repentance and good deeds on the part of the individual. Some have thought it strange that his legal bias did not lead him to import the thought of *satisfactio* into his doctrine of the Work of Christ, but I suppose it was his legalistic presuppositions which prevented him from doing so. For Tertullian, atonement must be made personally and has to be exactly equivalent to the wrong perpetrated. Probably his legal ideas joined hands with influences of Platonic origin here. (18)

The juridical ascendancy in his doctrine allows him to make one exception to the whole system governing the condition of souls in their intermediate state. The souls of martyrs pass immediately at death

(16) O. II.615.

(17) O. II.648f. Cf. *De Res. Car.* 27: "Nam et nunc animas torqueri feverique penes inferos, licet nudas, licet adhuc exules carnis, probabit Lazari exemplum." (O. II.488)

(18) It has been argued (v. Mason, *JTS* (1902) p.598) that Tertullian has nothing to say about purgatory in *De Anima*, for the sufferings there referred to are those of the lost. But the suggestion of the payment of restoration points in the purgatorial direction. Perhaps Tertullian's legalism is more happily consistent than his eschatology!

into Paradise, where they dwell in the presence of the Lord. "Nemo enim peregrinatus a corpore statim immoratur penes dominum, nisi ex martyris praerogativa, paradiso scilicet, non inferis, diversurus." (19) In De Anima 55 he rejects the view held by some that all the faithful go at once to Paradise. (20) "Nulli patet caelum terra adhuc salva; ne dixerim clausa." He has his opponents rejecting his suggestion that the faithful pass to the various places of the philosopher's theories and claiming that they in fact are "in paradiso, quo iam tunc et patriarchae et prophetae appendices dominicae resurrectionis ab inferis migraverint." In answer he appeals to John's vision of Paradise in the Apocalypse, where only the souls of martyrs are named. He also appeals to the vision of Perpetua. Then he presses home his argument in his usual style: "Agnosce itaque differentiam ethnici et fidelis in morte, si pro deo occumbas, ut paracletus monet, non in mollibus febribus et in lectulis, sed in martyriis, si crucem tuam tollas et sequaris dominum; ut ipse praecepit. Tota paradisi clavis tuus sanguis est." (21) The 'law' of the Descent.

According to Tertullian's fairly coherent view of the Intermediate State, all men descend to Hades. The implications of this for Jesus become obvious in the light of our author's Christology. The Incarnation is the conjunction of two natures in one Person: "Videmus duplicem statum non confusum sed coniunctum in una persona, Deum et Hominem Iesum," (22) Each nature retains its peculiar properties. Thus in opposition to Marcionites, Valentinians, and Gnostics generally, he insists upon the reality of that humanity and, consequently, upon the reality of the death of Christ. "Quodsi Christus Deus, quia et homo, mortuus secundum scripturas et sepultus secundum easdem, huic quoque legi satisfecit forma humanae mortis apud inferos functus, nec ante ascendit in sublimiora caelorum quam descendit in inferiora terrarum." (23) The reference to Eph. 4: 9 is clear. As with all men, so with Jesus. Now in saying this Tertullian was not suggesting anything with which any orthodox writer would have disagreed, but one wonders why his law

(19) De Res. Carn. 43 (O. II.522), discussing 2 Cor. 5: 8.

(20) Loofs, EKE IV.661, is, as Waszink observes, wrong here.

(21) The last sentence is completely legalistic. Cf. De Pud.22; Adv Mar.

(22) Adv. Prax. 27

(IV.21

(23) De Anima 55 (O. II.642ff.)

for martyrs does not apply to our Lord. Did His blood not avail as a key to open the door immediately to Paradise? Evidently Tertullian knew that the Descent into Hades was traditionally apostolic doctrine. The Achievements of the Descent

Because of his concept of individual satisfactio and his pronouncements on the Intermediate State, Tertullian breaks with the common 'liberation' view of the purpose of the Descent. He rejects the argument of those who claim, "in hoc Christus inferos adiit, ne nos adiremus." The Descent made no material difference to the location of the departed, but only gave the faithful an example to follow - a servant is not greater than his master.

Preaching

Nevertheless Tertullian cannot ignore traditional ideas about patriarchs and prophets. Furthermore, he states quite categorically that no one was a Christian before the time of Christ.(24) This accords with his uncompromising attitude to philosophy.(25) He conceives the purpose of the Descent to be "ut illic patriarchas et prophetas compotes sui faceret."(26) Cf, "Quid est illud....ad quod et Christus moriendo descendit? Puto, ad animas patriarcharum" or, as Waszink, "...descendit (puto, ad animas patriarcharum)" What does Tertullian mean by "compotes sui faceret"? Clearly not liberation, for had he meant this, surely he would have been more explicit. Waszink's interpretation is attractive:

(24) De Pudicitia, 11 (O. I.815)

(25) Justin Martyr could think of the great philosophers as Christians before Christ, an idea which was anathema to Tertullian. Our author does in fact reveal his debt to the Stoics in several places (e.g. De Anima 3,5,17,43; cf. Minucius Felix, who has leanings to Stoicism); in others, he thinks nothing of summoning the philosophers to his side, if they have anything to say in his support(De Anima 5; Apol. 17,21,22) and quotes them frequently. He shows, however, an utterly hostile front to the Platonists. In the manner of Tatian, he denounces all Greek philosophy. Any good the philosophers know is borrowed from the prophets (Apol. 47), but they are themselves mockers and corrupters of the truth (Apol. 46). It was a demon that inspired Socrates (De Anima 1). Indeed philosophy comes from false prophets and fallen angels (Ibid. 2) and philosophers are patriarchs of heretics (Ibid. 3). The teachings of Scripture and philosophy are incompatible. Montanism only served to accentuate his anti-philosophical bias. Such an attitude is ridiculed by Celsus (Origen, Contra Celsum 1, 9). Commenting on this, Chadwick quotes the similar attitude of Galen to this kind of Christian teaching, H. Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge, 1953).

(26) De Anima 55.

"acquainted with Himself, viz, with the fact of His appearance." This links up with the tradition of the preaching in Hades.(27)

Liberation of a kind

Tertullian emphasises the importance of Christ's death. "Totum Christiani nominis et fructus, mors Christi."(28) This death has a redemptive purpose.(29) On this he has something interesting to say in *De Fuga in Persec.* 12: "Sol cessit diem emptionis nostrae. Apud inferos remancipatio nostra est et stipulatio nostra in caelis. Sublevatae sunt portae sempiternae, ut introiret rex gloriae, dominus virtutum, hominem de terris, immo ab inferis mercato in caelos."(30) Our author is tapping his favourite source of metaphor, the law. 'Remancipare' means to transfer back again', and emancipatio is the legal term for the release of a son from the patria potestas and for the formal surrender of all right of possession in a thing.(31) Stipulatio may denote a promise given on demand, an agreement, bargain, or covenant. The death, and possibly the Descent, of Christ delivered men, not out of Hades, but from the ownership or dominion of the inferi. The inferi have a right over men, but by His death Christ has won back that right. He has ransomed men, the price being His blood. He does not work out the 'ransom' metaphor in detail, as later writers did. What he says here should be connected with another word in the same chapter: "Et dominus quidem illum redemit ab angelis munditinentibus potestatibus, a spiritualibus nequitiae, a tenebris huius aevi, a iudicio aeterno, a morte perpetua."(32)

Christus Victor

All this, of course, is related to the view of Christ's death which proved very attractive to one of Tertullian's fierce zeal(33), namely, the victory secured over the devil. He finds types of this in the Old Testament.(34) The victorious work of Christ defeats not only the Devil

(27) It is difficult to see what Tertullian means in *De Poen.* 12, where he seems to refer to Adam's restoration to Paradise.

(28) *Adv. Marc.* III.8.

(29) *De Carn. Christi* 5.

(30) *O.* I.483.

(31) *V. Bindley on Apol.* 9.

(32) *O.* I. 484.

(33) *S. Cave, The Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (London, 1937), p.81.

(34) *Adv. Iud.* 10 (*O.* II.728); *De Idol.* 5 (*O.* II.73); *Adv. Marc.* III. 19, 20 (*O.* II.147).

and Death, but Hades too. Speaking of the life of Christ being manifested (2 Cor. 4: 10), he says, "Adeo eam significat quae portas adamantinas mortis et aeneas seras inferorum infregit." (35) The power of Hades has been shattered. I wonder if there is any significance in the fact that Tertullian, although fond of military metaphors (yet decidedly anti-militarist), does not employ his ~~own~~ when he treats of Christ's victory. Could it be that he is using a body of material which is already equipped with its own somewhat stereotyped phraseology? (36) Tertullian sees the principle of Christus Victor worked out in the individual believer's life, at baptism and martyrdom.

2. HIPPOLYTUS

We come now to the contribution of Hippolytus, surely one of the strangest and most interesting figures in the history of Christianity. His followers had erected in his honour a marble portrait statue, the earliest of its kind known to us. (37) Yet Eusebius cannot even name him: ἑτέρας που καὶ αὐτὸς προσετὼς ἐκκλησίας. Jerome confesses to the same difficulty: "cuiusdam ecclesiae episcopus, nomen quippe urbis scire non potui." (38) This may be accounted for by his unique position. Honoured by the Roman Church as a saint and martyr, Hippolytus was a dissident bishop and anti-Pope at Rome. This may account also for the fact that Western writers usually describe him as a presbyter rather than bishop; for the fact too that just over a century ago a study such as ours would have passed over his name in wistful silence. But, thanks to the labours of such scholars as Duncker, Scheidewin, and the indefatigable Bunsen, Hippolytus has come into his own and is duly recognised

(35) De Res. Carn. 44 (O. II.523)

(36) There are references to a release from death, e.g. in Adv. Iud. 12 (O. II.733), Adv. Marc. III. 20, but what do they mean? It is not clear whether he means that the Work of Christ will be seen to be effective when the Gentiles are raised at the Resurrection or connects with the Descent into Hades or uses an entirely figurative expression.

(37) The seated figure was found in 1551 on the Via Tiburtina, headless but with the important list of his works carved on the back of the chair. Though its date has been the subject of controversy, it can safely be assigned (as by Döllinger, Funk, Lightfoot, Salmon) to the third century and probably to the year 236 or 237, that is shortly after Hippolytus's death.

(38) Eus. H.E. VI. 20; Jerome Vir. ill. 61.

as one of the most learned Christian writers of his time. This "vir disertissimus" (as Jerome describes him) earned Bunsen's admiration as "far the most gifted and most diligent enquirer in the Western Church of his time." (39)

His importance for our discussion does not end there. He spent his mature life in Rome and knew its doctrines and practices intimately. He was a man of the Western Church who had his finger on its very pulse. He was also in line with the Greek tradition. In this way he plays a role similar to that of Irenaeus, whose disciple he was (probably at Lyons). Indeed, Goodspeed describes him as Irenaeus's "great successor as the foremost figure of Greek Christianity in the West." (40) He knew Greek literature and philosophy, wrote in Greek, and was to some extent conscious of uniting in himself the East and West.

Now his importance for us assumes larger proportions when we recall that he was a traditionalist to the finger-tips. He did not regard speculative theology as part of his province, but endeavoured to solve philosophical and historical problems from the apologetic point of view. He is convinced that what he has to say is based solidly upon, and remains directly in line with, the authentic apostolic tradition. He "represents the doctrine of the Catholic Church, exactly one hundred years before the Council of Nice, in the very age of transition from the Apostolic consciousness to the Ecclesiastical system." (41) One further observation: Hippolytus's Commentary on Daniel is the oldest exegetical work of the Church that has been preserved (though not in its entirety). From it and other fragments we can judge, as H.B. Swete remarks, that "he held a middle position between the allegorical and the historical method afterwards represented by the schools of Alexandria and Antioch respectively." (42)

The FACT of the DESCENT.

We are fortunate in having a fragment of Hippolytus's "Against the Greeks", which is a "treasury of information" on his concept of Hades. (43)

(39) Hippolytus and his Age (London, 1852), 1.315.

(40) Early Christian Literature (Chicago, 1942), p.227.

(41) Bunsen, 1.Pref. V,VI.

(42) Patristic Study (London, 1904), p.45 (following Bardenhewer).

(43) L. Prestige, JTS 24.

He writes, οὗτος ὁ περὶ ἄδου λόγος, ἐν ᾧ αἱ ψυχαὶ πάντων κατέχονται ἀκριβέστερον ὅν ὁ Θεὸς ὤρτισεν ἀνάστασιν τότε πάντων ποιησόμενος.

Hades is underground and has only one gate, which is guarded by an archangel. All souls pass through, but are at once separated. On the right angels escort the righteous to Abraham's bosom, a place full of light and ever-increasing bliss and the expectancy of Heaven; on the left, the wicked are dragged by angels of punishment to a place on the confines of the burning lake of Gehenna, where the sight of the righteous in bliss intensifies their woe, for a deep gulf separates them. Hippolytus thus holds a local conception of Hades as the intermediate habitation of all the dead, divided into its two traditional compartments, in which souls have a foretaste of their future state.

In the light of this we suppose that Hippolytus has the Descent in mind when he takes the clause 'he couched as a lion' in Gen. 49: 9 to refer to τὴν τριήμερον κοίμησεν τοῦ Χριστοῦ(44). On Ps. 69, "I am sunk in the mire of the abyss" his comment runs, "that is to say, in the corruption of Hades, on account of the transgression in Paradise." A little later: "neither let the deep (that is, Hades) swallow me up: for thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades."(45)

CHRISTUS VICTOR

Christ's Descent into Hades differs from that of others, for He goes there as conqueror. To this aspect of the doctrine Hippolytus gives much emphasis and finds illustrations of it in strange corners of Scripture. For example, Gen. 49: 5 is made to refer to Christ: "as a bull-calf, so to speak, when houghed, sinks to the ground, such was Christ in submitting voluntarily to the death of the flesh; but He was not overcome by death. But though as man, He became as one of the dead, He remained alive in the nature of divinity."(46) He trampled upon death, and by death overcame death.(47) His purpose in dying was, "that He might bring to nought death, and break the bonds of the devil, and

(44) On Christ and Antichrist 8 (GCS I.9).

(45) Against the Jews, ANCL, 41. N.b. Altaner dismisses this work in a word, "proved to be spurious by Nautin." (Patrology, p.188).

(46) ANCL I.410; cf. Tert. Adv. Iud. X.

(47) On Gen. 49: 21-26, ANCL I.416; On Daniel I.473; cf. On Christ and Antichrist 26.

tread hell under foot..."(48) The essence of his teaching is found in a passage in which traditional but graphic imagery is blended with his own interpretation: πυλωροὶ ἄδου ἰδόντες σε ἐπτηζαν καὶ συνετρίβησαν πυλαὶ χαλκαὶ καὶ μοχλοὶ σιδηροὶ συνεκλάσθησαν, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ μονογενὴς εἰσῆλθεν ὡς ψυχὴ μετὰ ψυχῶν, Θεὸς ^{λόγος} ^{ἐμψυχος} (49) The terror of Hades is prefigured at the Baptism of Jesus, for Ps. 77: 16 refers to this, "The waters saw Him and were afraid." Similarly, Ps. 114: 5 shows that Jordan's waves were lashed with fear.

His explanation of Christ's unique success in Hades is twofold. First, while in Hades, He remained in essential being with His Father. He purposely dwelt in a human body so that He might go into Hades itself. This being so, He could not but conquer.(50) His second explanation involves something of the deception of Satan: "Having on Him the body of a man like a garment, and hiding the dignity of the Divinity, that He may elude the snares of the dragon."

LIBERATION

The victory of Christ's Descent issues in the deliverance of captive souls. Sometimes Hippolytus's language is rather vague on this. For instance, in commenting upon a passage in Daniel he refers to Lk. 13: 15f. and adds, "Whomsoever, therefore, Satan bound in chains, these did the Lord on His coming loose from the bonds of death, having bound our strong adversary and delivered humanity." It could be argued that he is here concerned only with deliverance from spiritual bondage and death. Elsewhere his language is unmistakably clear: ὁ τὸν ἀπολωλότα ἐκ γῆς πρωτόπλαστον ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἐν δεσμοῖς θανάτου κρατούμενον ἐξ ἄδου κατωτάτου ἐλκύσας· ὁ ἄνωθεν κατέλθων καὶ τὸν κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω ἀνεβέγκας· ὁ τῶν νεκρῶν εὐαγγελιστὴς καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν λυτρωτής, καὶ ἀνάστασις τῶν τεθαμμένων γινόμενος, οὗτος ἦν ὁ τοῦ νενικημένου ἀνθρώπου γεγεννημένος βοηθός...ὁ τὸν εἰς γῆν λυόμενον ἄνθρωπον καὶ βρῶμα ὄφως γεγεννημένον, εἰς ἀδάμαντα τρέψας, καὶ τοῦτον ἐπὶ ξύλου κρεμασθέντα, κύριον κατὰ τοῦ νενικημένου ἀποδείξας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διὰ ξύλου νικηφόρος εὕρεται. (51) In the famous passage, On Christ

(48) Apostolic Tradition 4 (Easton p. 35f.)

(49) Περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πάσχα, GCS I.2.269.

(50) ANCL I.485.

(51) Εἰς τὴν ὁδὴν μεγάλην, GCS I.2.83.

and Antichrist 45, John the Baptist, acting as Christ's forerunner, announces in Hades the Saviour's coming to ransom His saints: *λυτρούμενον τὰς τῶν ἁγίων ψυχὰς ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ θανάτου.* (52) Thus Hippolytus does not deviate from what had come to be the traditional view of the deliverance of the righteous at the Descent of Christ, PREACHING

The deliverance of the saints follows the preaching in Hades. In the passage just quoted from "On the Great Song" there occurs the phrase *ὁ τῶν νεκρῶν εὐαγγελιστής* (suggestive of 1 Pet. 4: 6?). In commenting on Daniel, Hippolytus speaks of Christ as King, whose sway includes all under the earth, where He preached to the souls of the saints. The same expressions are found in On Christ and Antichrist 26, where the Son is ordained Lord *καταχθονίων* δέ *ὅτι καὶ ἐν νεκροῖς κατελογίσθη εὐαγγελιζόμενος τὰς τῶν ἁγίων ψυχὰς, διὰ θανάτου τὸν θάνατον νικῶν.* (53) The preaching is probably presupposed in the passage about John the Baptist: *οὗτος προέφθασε καὶ τοῖς ἐν ᾧδῃ προεευαγγελίσασθαι.* (54) It is alluded to also, I think, in Apostolic Tradition 4, "that he might bring to nought death, and break the bonds of the devil, and tread hell under foot, and give light to the righteous.." (55) In the same work (36) directions are given for prayer and thanksgiving to be offered at the ninth hour to the Lord, "the God who does not lie, who was mindful of his saints and sent forth his Word to enlighten them." (55) This evidently refers to the Descent into Hades, immediately following death at the ninth hour, and the preaching in Hades. Does the phrase, "mindful of his saints", come from the apocryphon cited by Justin and Irenaeus? It cannot be without significance that Hippolytus links the belief in the Descent with a regular act of prayer.

In all of the places just quoted the audience in Hades is carefully distinguished as 'the saints', 'the righteous'. This precision accords with his eschatological views. A fragment of *Περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πάσχα*, however, after quoting from an apocryphon, "We have not seen His form, but we have heard His voice", goes on to speak of a seemingly wider

(52) GCS I.29

(53) GCS I.19

(54) GCS I. 29.

(55) Easton, p.35f., 55.

audience. "Denn es ziemte ihm, dass er, wenn er ginge auch denen in Scheol predigte, welche in der Zetlichkeit sich nicht hatten überzeugen lassen." (56) How far we can rely on this extension of the audience, is a difficult question, for it contradicts all else that we know of Hippolytus. Of course, we do not know all about his teaching, for it has been reckoned that some four-fifths of his total output are as yet lost to us. We are fortunate, however, in having a varied selection of his work which gives some balance to our ideas.

In none of his quasi-credal passages does the Descent have any place (cf. Irenaeus, Tertullian). It still does not have sufficient dogmatic significance for that, nor has its anti-heretical possibilities been exploited. But the work "On the End of the World" gives as subjects of preaching τὴν εἰς ᾧδου κατὰβασιν καὶ τῶν ἀπ' αἰώνων ψυχῶν ἀνάβασιν τε καὶ ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν τοῦ θανάτου φθοράν.... (57)

We can gather from Hippolytus that in Rome and beyond, the Descent, in its by now familiar dress, still enjoys widespread acceptance as an article of belief among Christians. The ideas of Christ's victory, His preaching to souls in Hades, and deliverance of them all figure in Hippolytus, the last-known representative of Greek Christianity in Rome.

CYPRIAN

Cyprian of Carthage may be regarded as the successor of Tertullian. This statement has a twofold significance. First, he was undoubtedly influenced greatly by Tertullian, as he himself acknowledged. (58) "Cyprian polished the language that Tertullian had made, sifted his thoughts, rounded them off, and turned them into current coin." (59) Second, he held a position of influence and authority. Indeed, during the period from 260 till after Ambrose's time, Cyprian was the Latin Christian author. As Altaner observes, "Until the time of Augustine and Gregory the Great, Cyprian was the theological authority of the Western Church." (60)

(56) GOS I.2.269, preserved in Syriac. (57) GOS I.2.289. (if it is his).
 (58) V. the famous story in Jerome, De vir. ill. 53. For an interesting comparison of the two men, v. Farrar, Lives of the Fathers, I.186.
 (59) Harnack, op. Farrar, op.cit. I.186 n.1.
 (60) Patrology, p.201.

It cannot be without significance for us, therefore, that in the numerous works that have come down to us from his pen, little attention is accorded to the Descent into Hades. What that means for us, can only be appreciated after we have examined any relevant material in his writings.

The only reference or allusion to the Descent I can find in Cyprian is Test. II, 24, 25. The former chapter bears the heading, "Quod a morte non vinceretur nec apud inferos remansurus esset." The latter, "Quod ab inferis tertio die resurgeret." (61) These in themselves must be taken as clear proof of his acceptance of the Descent into Hades as part of Christian doctrine. Their simple brevity in no way detracts from the value of their attestation to his teaching. To think otherwise is to mistake the nature and purpose of the book. While the three books of Testimonies are more theological than anything else he wrote, anyone can observe that they are no more than collections of doctrinal and practical points under each of which he has grouped various texts of Scripture. The result is a brief compendium of Christian doctrine in which, as he himself tells Quirinus in the introduction to the first book, his intention is to appear not so much to have treated the subject, as to have afforded material for others to treat it.

The material he offers in Ch.24 consists of four quotations, three from Psalms, one from New Testament, thus: Ps.30: 2, 16: 10, 3: 5, Jn.10: 18. In Ch.25 there appear three passages, two from Old Testament (Hos.6: 2, Exod.19: 10,11) one from New Testament (Mt.12: 39f)(62) Of these, the second is the familiar "descent" passage and the last figures frequently in the same context. We should note that Cyprian preserves a truly biblical emphasis by indicating that the subject is the fact that Christ was not conquered by death and did not remain apud inferos, but rose again. He is not concerned about underlining the fact of the Descent into Hades, so much as the difference of that descent from others.

Before leaving the Testimonies, mention must be made of De Test. 11.27 (Quod perveniri non possit ad Deum Patrem, nisi per Filium eius Iesum Christum")(63) There he quotes 1 Pet. 4: 6 thus, "In hoc enim et

(61) CSEL 3. 91; 92.

(62) Does the use of the Exodus passage mean that Moses, as Orig. taught, was a forerunner of Christ in Hades, foretelling His coming?

(63) CSEL 3. 94.

mortuis praedi catum est, ut suscitentur." This holds three interesting features. One, he evidently interprets Peter's *ἵνα...ζῶσιν* as equivalent to *ἵνα ἐγερθῶσιν*. (64) Two, this is "the earliest quotation of 1 Pet. IV: 6 we have been able to find." (65) Three, while Cyprian, it is true, makes no comment on the verse in accordance with his general practice in the Testimonies, his use of it here evidently implies that he found in it no reference whatsoever to the Descensus doctrine (but MacGullogh says, "This suggests that he believed that others than the Old Testament saints had heard and benefitted by the Preaching in Hades." The scriptures he quotes are respectively, Jn. 14: 6, 10: 9, Mt. 13: 17, Jn. 3: 36, Eph. 2: 17, 18, Rom. 3: 23, 24, 1 Pet. 3: 18 (66) 1 Pet 4: 6, 1 Jn. 2: 23.

Cyprian brings the theme of Christus Victor fairly frequently into his writings. Its particular attraction for him, however, was the example and encouragement it offered to the persecuted. Where he introduces the idea, he is usually concerned about the outcome of the immediate conflict in the experience of each Christian. For example, Christ is to be thought of as being still involved in the struggles of His followers: "et qui pro nobis mortem semel vicit semper vincit in nobis" and "ipse luctatur in nobis; ipse congregatur; ipse in certamine agonis nostri et coronat pariter et coronat." (67) Nevertheless, it is not to be supposed that Cyprian thinks lightly of the victory of Christ once for all accomplished. Thus Ad Demetrianum, 26 (68) he writes, "Hanc gratiam christus impertit; hoc minus misericordiae suae tribuit subigendo mortem trophaeo crucis; redimendo credentem pretio sui sanguinis." Compare also his words about the enemy's defeat, "ut Christi adventu detectus ac prostratus inimicus." (69) What more precise a

(64) Interprets rather than translates *ζῶσιν*. This recalls Ignatius's 'raised them from the dead' and Hermas, Sim. IX.

(65) H.B. Swete, Apostles' Creed, p. 58.

(66) N.b. he does not go on to v. 19.

(67) Ep. X. 3, 4; CSEL 3. 492.

(68) CSEL 3. 370.

(69) De Cath. eccles. unitate, 3; CSEL 3. 211.

statement of the theme could we find than that in *De orat. dominica*, 34(70) "et Dominus hora sexta crucifixus ad nonam peccata nostra sanguine suo abluit et ut redimere et vivificare nos posset, tunc victoriam sua passione perfecit"? It seems to me that Cyprian thinks of the battle as one fought by the Lord but renewed in each Christian life. For this continuity of conflict v. *Ep. X.* 4(71) "hunc igitur agonem per prophetas ante praedictum, per Dominum commissum, per apostolos gestum Mappalicus suo et collegarum suorum nomine proconsuli repromisit." The enemy has been defeated, he argues, (72) but renews the battle under a different guise, namely heresy and schism. But Christ too continues the battle, and the triumph: "si vero quis dominica praecepta custodiens et fortiter Christo adhaerens contra eum (i.e. diabolus) steterit, vincatur necesse est, quia Christus quem confitemur invictus est." (73) He makes Pharaoh and Egypt stand for the devil and the world (not uncommon in typology) and adds, "qui a diabolo et saeculo liberat populum suum protagit liberatum" (74)

The Doctrine of the Descent is often related to that of Salvation and to that of the Future Life. A glance at Cyprian's conception of these will at once show how little room he can have for it. He writes of individual Christians as "appeasing the Lord", "atoning for sins", "satisfying" God with prayers and works; (75) full penance must be made, especially by the lapsi. (76) "No book was ever written by a Western Churchman which represented the salvation of the sinful Christian as so much dependant on ascetic offering; no book, certainly, has emphasized so little the importance of the doctrine of Christ's grace as this treatise (i.e. *De opera et eleemosynis*) of Cyprian's." (77) The same emphasis dominates all his writings and finds its fulfilment in the Roman doctrine of penance. He does seem at times to realise where this emphasis is leading him; for example, to the quotation from *Tobit IV.10*,

(70) CSEL 3, 292

(71) CSEL 3, 493

(72) *De Cath. eccles. unitate* 3. CSEL 3, 211

(73) *Ad Fortun. de exh. mart.*, praef. 2, CSEL 3, 318

(74) *Ibid.* 7, CSEL 3, 328

(75) *Ep. XI.* CSEL 3, 495, 6, 7; *Ep. XVI.*

(76) *Ep. XVIII.* 2. CSEL 3, 524.

(77) J. Morgan, *op. cit.* p. 30

"*eleemosyna a morte liberat*", he adds the corrective "*et non utique ab illa morte quam semel Christi sanguis extinxit et a qua (or aqua) nos salutaris baptismi et redemptoris nostri gratis liberavit, sed ab ea quae per delicta postmodum serpit*".(78) However, I think his weakness is chronic and the imperfection of his doctrine of the Work of Christ so great as to invalidate any attempt to correct his outlook.

As for the Future Life, he teaches with unremitting dogmatism the fixity of the state of the soul at death in "*apud inferos confessio non est nec exomologesis illi fieri potest*."(79) The believer goes to the immediate presence of Christ;(80) as for the unbeliever (or non-churchman), the prospect of eternal punishments in Gehenna lies inevitably before him.(81) In *De Exh. mart.* 13 he compares the death of the Christian to the return of a conquering hero to his home: "*quanto potior et maior est gloria victo diabolo ad paradisum triumphantem redire et unde Adam peccator electus est illuc prostrato eo qui ante deceperat trophaea victoriosa reportare...*"(82) In this context, clearly, there is no room for any development of the Descensus teaching.

We have seen how little place Cyprian gives to the doctrine of the Descent. How are we to regard this? I think we cannot possibly appreciate its significance unless we keep in mind the nature of his work, his writings and his influence. His influence on the Church, great as it was, had mainly to do with organisation and questions of a definitely practical type. He combined the views of Ignatius and Irenaeus to make the bishop the "absolute viceregent of Christ in things spiritual." He was, as Farrar has it, "the coryphaeus of monarchical episcopate,"(83) He hardened the conception of the Church into a visible and closely-knit system and in the light of this made his famous pronouncement, "*quisque ille est et qualiscunque est, Christianus non est qui in Christi ecclesia non est*".(84) He had a great, if unfortunate,

(78) Ep. LV, 22. CSEL 3, 639), cf. *De opera et eleemosynis*, 2. CSEL 3, 374)

(79) Ep. LV, 29 CSEL 3, 647

(80) *De Mort.* 7. CSEL 3, 801

(81) Ep. LIV, 19, LV.10, *De cath. eccles. unitate* 26, *Ad Demet.* 23, 24, *De Mort.* 14. Cf. the contemporary *Treatise against Novatian*, 16.

(82) CSEL 3, 346

(83) Op. cit. I, 244.

(84) Ep. LV.24. CSEL. 3. 642.

influence upon the development of the ideas about priesthood, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, penance, and salvation by works. In other words, he was a great ecclesiastic rather than theologian. It was Hort who said, "Strictly speaking Cyprian was not a theologian, while he was a great ecclesiastical ruler." (85) This must surely put the paucity of his remarks on the doctrine of the Descent in its true perspective. There is also the important fact that his writing was done "almost always under the impulse of grave practical responsibilities." (86) It should not surprise us that only one clear reference to the Descent occurs in the works of this 'man of action'. Elsewhere it is relevant neither to his practical purpose nor to his doctrinal method.

4. NOVATIAN

Novatian is a famous writer who ignores the doctrine of the Descent into Hades. His works have had a somewhat unhappy history. None has come down to us in his name, evidently because later generations abhorred the name of a schismatic. Some of the writings have nevertheless survived, being rightly considered worthy of preservation. For Novatian was the first outstanding Christian author in Rome to use Latin. He has also been described as the ablest theologian in Rome in Cyprian's day. It should be remembered that the schism he made was inspired by reasons of discipline and not of doctrine. His *De Trinitate*, best and most famous of his books, is strongly anti-heretical. H.B. Swete notes the remarkable fact that this is the only book of its kind which was produced by the Roman Church before Constantine. (87) The early Roman bishops, he explains, were too preoccupied with ecclesiastical affairs. Doubtless, the same features as we have observed in Cyprian are to be seen in Novatian and the practical bias of his writings will account for the exclusion from them, so far as we know, of the doctrine of the Descent.

He employs the idea of *Christus Victor* in the same way as Cyprian. (88) It is interesting that in *De Trinitate* XXI he quotes Col. 2: 15 (accepting the view usually favoured by Latin Fathers, that the rendering

(85) *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p.109.

(86) *Ibid.*, p.110.

(87) *Patristic Study*, p.71.

(88) *De Spectaculis*, 10; *De laude martyrii*, 6. CSEL 3.3.12, 30.

should be 'having put off the flesh') to illustrate something different from the triumph of Christ. Incidentally, he refers also to Mt. 27: 51-53, simply as illustrating the events which occurred at the death of Christ.

Novatian, it may be noticed, believes in a subterranean place to which souls of just and unjust are conveyed for their temporary dwelling. He also teaches the eternity of punishment in Gehenna.

5. VICTORINUS

Victorinus of Pettau does not employ the words 'descended into Hades' but implies a definite belief in the idea which they represent. He comments as follows on Apoc. 12: 4, "Sed qui de semine natus non erat, nihil morti debebat, propter quod devorare eum non potuit, id est in morte detinere, nam tertia die resurrexit." (89) This bears a strong resemblance to much teaching on the Descensus. The same holds good for his remarks on Apoc. 1: 5: "passus nos suo sanguine soluit a peccato et debellato inferno primus resurrexit a mortuis, 'et mors ei ultra non dominabitur', sed ipso regnante mundi regnum destructum est." (90) Compare "propter salutem hominum homo factus est ad mortem devincendam et universos liberandos." (91)

The victorious note is sounded, but in such a way as to indicate that Victorinus believed that Christ descended into Hades, that that Descent differed from others, that its effect was beneficial to men.

6. ARNOBIUS

It need occasion no surprise that the Descent receives not even a nod of recognition from Arnobius. (92) The story goes (Jerome) that he wrote his seven books *Adversus Nationes* to convince the bishop of his recent conversion. This may not be accurate, but his apology is not the work of a mature Christianity. The distinguished teacher of rhetoric does not conceal his learning, but it is not the learning of Christian

(89) CSEL 49. 108f.

(90) CSEL 49. 18.

(91) Apoc. 4: 7, CSEL 49. 52; cf. 4: 9, 5: 5 (CSEL 49. 58, 62)

(92) Pace Huidekoper who (Works II.32f.) argues that the Descent is implied in Adv. Gentes 2: 63, believing this to be the only natural conclusion.

doctrine. Scripture he never quotes as such. While his purpose may in part account for this, the fact remains that throughout seven books heathen mythology is incisively criticised, but scriptural knowledge and Christian teaching are lacking. His book seems to have been little read and to have had no great influence at all. In a work which only refers to the death of Christ to state that a shameful death is no guarantee that the victim is shameful, which also offers a somewhat Docetic view of that death, the Descent has clearly no place at all.(93)

7. LACTANTIUS

Lactantius, a disciple of Arnobius,(94) was the last Western writer of his age. His prowess as a classical scholar is undisputed and his excellent latinity earned for him the admiration of the Renaissance, which referred to him as the 'Christian Cicero'. As his teacher, though to a lesser degree, he reveals a lack of Christian knowledge. He is not a great theologian nor does he appear to be very interested in speculative thought. Nevertheless, he has some interesting allusions to the Descent into Hades.

The Descensus was, he asserts, a subject of Old Testament prophecy, in which, however, the emphasis rests upon the transitory nature of Christ's sojourn there: "illum autem apud inferos non remansurum, sed die tertio resurrecturum prophetae cecinerant."(95) In support of this he quotes Ps. 16: 10, 3: 5, Hos. 13: 13f., 6: 2, and adds, "et ideo Sibylla impositurum esse morti terminum dixit post tridui somnum:

καὶ θανάτου μοῖραν τελέσει τρίτον ἡμᾶρ ὑπνώσας
καὶ τότε ἀπὸ φθιμένων ἀναλύσας εἰς φῶς ἤξει
πρῶτος ἀναστάσας κλητοῖς ἀρχὴν ὑποδείξας.

The Descent was not only visualised by prophets but realised in fact. He states this in a strange passage about demons and false worship: "nam si quis studet altius inquirere, congregat eos quibus peritiae est cedere ab inferis animas..." (He mentions here Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan, Mercury, Apollo, and Saturn).. "respondebunt ab inferis omnes et interrogati loquentur." Now Lactantius says, "post haec evocent Christum: non oderit, non adparebit, quia non amplius quam biduo apud inferos

(93) I. 36, 62.

(94) So Jerome, *vir. ill.* 80.

(95) *Div. Inst.* IV.19.8, CSEL 19. 362.

fuit."(96) We have here a clear enough testimony to the common belief in Christ's Descent into Hades. Lactantius, as is only to be expected, held a local, spatial view of Hades. In upbraiding heathen worshippers he writes, "ipsi vos ultro ad inferos mergitis ad mortemque damnatis, quia nihil est inferius et humilius terra nisi mors et inferi."(97)

Lactantius also gives an account of the purpose of the Descent. Within a summary of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and arising out of Daniel's "one like unto the Son of Man "(Dan. 7: 13f.), he states the purpose, "ut ostenderet quod carne indui haberet in terra, ut suscepta hominis figura et condicione mortali doceret homines iustitiam et cum mandatis dei functus veritatem gentibus revelasset, multaretur etiam morte, ut inferos quoque vinceret ac resignaret atque ita demum resurgens ad patrem proficisceretur in nube sublatus."(98) The purpose here given is twofold, viz., conquest of Hades and the 'opening' of it. This, of course, is related to the whole circle of ideas of the victorious work of Christ.

In the passages which refer to this triumph, it is death that is overcome, and men are blessed as a result. In showing that it belongs to the purpose of the Incarnation that the Son of Man should die, Lactantius writes, "ut ea (i.e. morte) quoque per virtutem domita resurgeret et homini, quem induerat, quem gerebat, et spem vincendae mortis offerret et ad praemia immortalitatis admitteret."(99) Cf. "itaque idcirco mediator advenit id est deus in carne, ut caro eum sequi posset, et eriperet hominem morti cuius est dominatio in carnem," and "postremo (i.e. after all His sufferings) etiam mortem suscipere non recusavit, ut homo illo duce subactam et catenatam mortem cum suis terroribus triumpharet."(100) The effects are known in the present life too. For demons have no power over those who have faith in, and worship, God.(101)

Lactantius, however, does not go on to teach the liberation of the captive righteous and their translation to Paradise. Indeed, he denies

(96) Div. Inst. IV.27.18, CSEL 19. 388.

(97) Div. Inst. II.2.22, CSEL 19. 102.

(98) Div. Inst. IV.12. 15, CSEL 19. 313.

(99) Div. Inst. IV.10, CSEL 19. 301.

(100) Div. Inst. IV.25,26, CSEL 19. 377,381.

(101) Div. Inst. II.15, CSEL 19. 166

any such possibility in Div. Inst. II.12.19(102), "tū deus sententia in peccatores data eiecit hominem de Paradiso, ut victum sibi labore conquireret, ipsumque Paradisum igni circumvallavit, ne homo posset accedere, donec summum iudicium faciat in terra et iustos viros cultores suos in eundem locum revocet morte sublata, sicut sacrae voces docent et Sibylla Brythrea, cum dicit:

οἱ δὲ θεὸν τιμῶντες ἀληθινὸν ἀέναόν τε
ζωὴν κληρονομοῦσι τὸν αἰῶνος χρόνον αὐτοὶ
οἰκοῦντες Παράδεισον ὁμοῖα, ἐριθηλέα κῆπον.

Of even greater interest to us are his strong words in Div. Inst. VII. 21.7, "nec tamen quisquam putet animas post mortem protinus iudicari: omnes in una communique custodia detinentur, donec tempus adveniat quo maximus iudex meritorum faciat examen."(103)

Although all men are thus grouped together, he holds to a rigid system of judgment. There are two ends in view which are eternal in their fixity. "duae sunt viae per quas humanam vitam progredi necesse est, una quae in caelum ferat, altera quae ad inferos deprimat."(104) He speaks as if only the wicked went ad inferos; cf. VI.4c6f the man who pursues earthly pleasures, "is vero ad inferos delectus in aeternam damnabitur poenam."(105) But Lactantius takes great pains to correct this view in a later passage, which is important for us, VII. 20.(106) There he begins by describing an event which looks very like the Great Judgment and in such terms as might indicate the fate of the wicked: "aperientur inferi et surgent mortui, de quibus iudicium magnum idem ipse rex ac deus faciet cui summus pater et iudicandi et regnandi debet maximam potestatem." thereupon he quotes the Sibyl,

ταρταρόεν δὲ χάος δειξεί τότε γαῖα χανοῦσα,
ἥξουσιν δ' ἐπὶ βῆμα θεοῦ βασιλῆος ἅπαντες

and again,

οὐρανὸν εἰλίξω, γαίης κευθμῶνας ἀνοίξω,
καὶ τότε ἀναστήσω νεκροῦς μούραν ἀναλύσας,
καὶ θανάτου κέντρον. καὶ ὕστερον εἰς κρῖνιν ἄξω
κρίνων εὐσεβέων καὶ δυσσεβέων βίον ἀνδρῶν.

(102) CSEL 19. 158

(103) CSEL 19. 652.

(104) Div. Inst. VI.3, CSEL 19.485

(105) CSEL 19. 490.

(106) CSEL 19. 647-9.

Presently he makes it clear that this is not a general judgment but a selective one: "nec tamen universi tunc a deo iudicabuntur, sed tantum qui sunt in dei religione versati." For the rest there is only condemnation: "iudicabuntur ergo qui deum scierunt et facinora eorum id est mala opera cum bonis conlata ponderabuntur, ut si plura et gravi(or)a fuerint bona iustaque, dentur ad vitam beatam, si autem mala superaverint, condemnentur ad poenam." The judgment is severe, writes Lactantius, even in the case of the just: etiam igni eos examinabit, tum quorum peccata vel pondere vel numero praevaluerint, perstringentur igni atque amburentur, quos autem plena iustitia et maturitas virtutis incoxerit, ignum illum non sentient: habent enim aliquid in se dei, quod vim flammae repellat ac respuat."(107) Purgatorial fires! The just find God's approval and receive their reward, "quorum autem peccata et scelera detecta, non resurgent, sed cum impiis in easdem tenebras recondentur ad certa supplicia destinati."

From Lactantius's somewhat inexact terminology we can extract the teaching that all are held in a common place of custody until a time comes when the worshippers of the true God are raised for judgment. This is not the final judgment, as he goes on to declare in VII.26.6, "fiet secunda illa et publica omnium resurrectio, in qua excitabuntur iniusti ad cruciatus sempiternos." These are the worshippers of false gods; "sed et dominus illorum cum ministris suis comprehendetur ad poenamque damnabitur, cum quo pariter omnis turba impiorum pro suis facinoribus in conspectu angelorum atque iustorum perpetuo igni cremabitur in aeternum."(108) There are many references to the eternity of punishment.(109)

For Lactantius, then, the importance of the Descent lies in the victory of Christ over Hades and death. This removes from the just the possibility of their being held in the grip of Hades eternally. It makes no difference, apparently, until the first resurrection and judgment. We are, however, asking for too much when we look for a closely-knit system or exact terminology in a writer like Lactantius.

(107) Div. Inst. VII.21.6, CSEL 19. 652.

(108) Div. Inst. VII.26.6, CSEL 19. 666.

(109) V. Div. Inst. II.13.17; III.13.19; IV.4; V.19,20; VI.3,4,6; VII.5.

The Descent into Hades holds an undisputed right of citizenship in the community of third century Western doctrine. No dissentient voice is heard. In every writer who can reasonably be expected to provide evidence, the simple belief of the preceding periods is found, that at death Christ descended into Hades. It is for them a historical fact that needs no argument. Indeed, where possible (e.g., Tert. De Anima 7, 55) the doctrine is used as a support in other arguments. The variety of the allusions to it again provides eloquent attestation. Two places deserve special attention, Hippolytus Apostolic Tradition 4, and Cyprian Test. II.24,25, because these will have helped to give to the Descent a place in liturgical material no less than in doctrinal treatises.

All of these writers exhibit the tendency to introduce the Descent simply to emphasise the Resurrection. This follows the New Testament. It is when we examine the details of the doctrine that we discover how reticent the whole period really is. The preaching in Hades finds a place in the teaching of Tertullian and Hippolytus, but not in later writers. This preaching is given to an audience made up exclusively of Old Testament saints and the subject receives no elaboration. References to the delivering work of Christ are very few indeed (there being none in Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus). This cautious treatment, in accordance with Scripture, harmonises with these writers' conception of the after-life.

Hippolytus's description of John the Baptist as Christ's forerunner in Hades is worthy of note.

The process of crystallisation, observed in Irenaeus, is carried on in Tertullian and Hippolytus. The doctrine of the Descent is beginning to show a kind of fixity or rigidity. The purpose and meaning are limited by these writers. This is probably due to their whole outlook, conditioned as it was by the rule of faith. It was alright to reason and explain within the traditionally prescribed limits, but to venture into speculative theology was not for the West. This is the fundamental difference between the development of the doctrine of the Descent in the West and that of the third century Alexandrians.

Chapter IV

THE THIRD CENTURY - EASTERN

ALEXANDRIA

No less significant than interesting is the place which the Descensus occupies in Alexandrian doctrine. For here we are to observe Christian theology in quite different surroundings with an atmosphere peculiar to themselves. Alexandria was undoubtedly the most cosmopolitan city of the ancient world. People not only, as in its earliest days, brought material goods to trade; ideas too were continually coming on to the common market. It was a scene of intense intellectual activity, the centre of learning and research. Its splendid library, its university, its tradition of scholarship, its public lectures and open debates, its voluminous literature, in short, its very way of life proved an irresistible attraction for scientists, mathematicians, rhetoricians, poets, and philosophers. It became the chief centre of the intellectual life of the Jews of the Diaspora, where indeed Judaism and Greek philosophy met at the highest level. To this ferment of learning came also Christianity.(1) Within a short time there sprang up a wealthy and flourishing Christian community. Its teaching attracted the critical attention of intellectual pagans, such as Celsus and Porphyry. It won over converts who had drunk deeply of Alexandrianism. It is not surprising that here a large-scale attempt was made to provide systematic instruction in the Christian faith.(2) Its instruction had to be of a certain quality, for its object was to fortify and satisfy enquiring minds who were in contact with the world-hub of intellectual

(1) The first preaching of the Gospel there is assigned by one tradition to Barnabas, by another to Mark. (That these two names should be linked with the one place is not surprising.) Lightfoot writes, "The Church of Alexandria....was probably founded in apostolic times. Nor is there any reason to doubt the tradition which connects it with the name of St. Mark, though the authorities for the statement are comparatively recent. (Dissertation on the Christian Ministry, Philipians, p.225)

(2) The Catechetical School was in existence by c.185 A.D. under Pantaenus, a converted Stoic, whose writings, except for a mere line or two, are lost.

endeavour. In other words, this systematic instruction must presuppose a sort of Christian philosophy. A systematic Christian theology there must be. And so it was that Alexandria, having produced the Septuagint and Philo, having provided a fertile breeding-ground for Gnosticism, challenged the Church to present its doctrines in the shape of a philosophy such as might win the respect, if not the allegiance, of learned intellectuals.

1. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

We may be sure that the atmosphere of Alexandria was congenial to the mind of Clement. He travelled widely and studied deeply. There is no Father who shows the same familiarity with Greek literature, especially its poetry. It is true that many of his quotations may be second-hand, but no one can fail to be impressed by his knowledge of all classes of authors.(3) Now it is no accident that he culls material from a wide range of literature. Clement believed that all worthy achievements of the mind of man are relevant to his purpose. In this respect he presents a sharp contrast to other Christian writers, notably Tertullian. Clement would never have subscribed to the latter's famous dictum, "after one has believed there is but one thing more to be believed, namely that there is nothing more to believe."(4) For the Alexandrian regarded faith as the foundation and knowledge as the superstructure. It was not such as he who provoked the sneering comment of Celsus, that most Christians say, 'Wisdom is an evil thing and foolishness good' or that of Galen, 'If I had in mind people who taught their pupils in the same way as the followers of Moses and Christ teach theirs - for they order them to accept everything on faith - I should not have given you a definition.'(5) In his view, the need was for more knowledge and the ideal Christian might be described as 'Gnostic'.

Fundamental to Clement's theology is his firm conviction that

(3) "Clement may be called the first Christian scholar. He was not only familiar with Holy Scripture and almost the whole Christian literature before him; his citations, taken from more than 360 profane authors, prove that he also had an extensive knowledge of the philosophical and classical literature based on independent study, though much of his material was taken from learned manuals and florilegia." (Altaner, p.215)

(4) Praescr. 9.

(5) R. Walzer, quoted by Chadwick on Origen, Contra Celsum I.9.

Christianity does not represent a new beginning so much as the convergence of various lines of human progress. The contribution of Greek philosophy is complementary to that of Judaism. He gives philosophy a divine origin and believes that all its sects contain some germ of truth. The man who cares to put together the broken fragments of truth gathered from philosophy will contemplate the perfect Word. Clement's Gnostic still reads Plato in his leisure moments. ("Christ is the light that broods over all history and lighteth every man that cometh into the world. All that there is upon earth of beauty, truth, goodness, all that distinguishes the civilised man from the savage, the savage from the beast, is His gift."(6)) This brings us to specific mention of his interpretation of the Incarnation, very pertinent to the study on hand. Here he contrasts with Irenaeus. He looks upon the Incarnation as "the crown and consummation of the whole history of the world."(7) It leads to a righteousness such as Adam never knew, and to heights of glory and power as yet unscaled and undreamed."(8)

The FACT of the DESCENT

In the extant writings of Clement only two passages, Strom. II.9 and VI.6, mention the Descent into Hades specifically, the former concerning itself with the work of the apostles and teachers. Nevertheless, so emphatically does he pronounce upon the subject that we are left in no doubt whatsoever that he both believed in, and taught, the doctrine. His discussion of it centres, not in the fact, which is accepted without question, but in its purpose and meaning. The Descent in fact becomes an absolute necessity to Clement. The Alexandrians subscribed to the maxim that nothing is to be believed that is unworthy of God.(10) The outworking of this principle may be observed in the famous argument of Strom. VI.6. If God is the Lord of all men and no respecter of persons, and if faith is necessary for salvation, as it is, then God must make some provision for those who died in pre-Christian times. Failure to do so would be unworthy of God, for He would then be unjust. That provision

(6) G. Bigg, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria (Oxford, 1886), 93, 72

(7) Westcott, DCB.

(8) Bigg, op. cit., p. 75.

(9) N.b. his use of *ὁμοῦς κατὰ φύσιν* in VI.6.

(10) One source of their predilection for allegorical interpretation.

is made by the Descent of Christ into Hades. Clement insists on this so strongly that he misinterprets Hermas and extends the range of the Shepherd's words beyond their original meaning and intention. For the Descensus has become in his eyes "necessary to clear the Divine economy from the imputation of injustice." (11)

HADES

Beyond this factual consideration, however, it is not at all easy to discover in detail what he really taught about the meaning of the Descent. On occasions one feels the justice of Bigg's remark, that Clement "passes many a sharp remark on the rhetoricians, but at bottom he is himself a member of their guild, cloudy, turgid, and verbose." (12) His statements about Hades are difficult, if not impossible, to harmonise. For example, he teaches a removal of just souls from Hades as a result of Christ's visit there, but also maintains that the apostles and teachers preached to the Gentiles in Hades after Christ - unless just souls are Jews only. Does Clement dissent from the view that all souls go to Hades? οἱ ἐν "Αἵου καταγαγόντες καὶ εἰς ἀπόλειαν ἑαυτοῦς ἐνδεσμονότες ... ἐπεὶ τίς ἂν εὖ φρονῶν ἐν μιᾷ καταδίκη καὶ τὰς τῶν δυνάεων καὶ τὰς τῶν ἁμαρταλῶν ὑπολάβοι εἶναι ψυχὰς; (13) Yet all his teaching presupposes that the souls of the just are in Hades when Christ and His apostles descend to preach. It is true that where most Fathers suggest a literal sense in descriptions of Hades as a place of darkness, bonds, and corruption, Clement interprets all metaphorically. He does, however, seem to adopt the view that Hades was the intermediate abode (though he would decry any literal or physical extension of the localised concept) of all souls before Christ's advent. The clue to these apparent anomalies may lie in the changing nature of Hades itself. For, so far as Clement is concerned, those who failed to repent at the preaching of Christ in Hades remained there. Hades then becomes practically synonymous with Gehenna.

CHRISTUS VICTOR and LIBERATION

Clement has very little to say about Christ's victory. He does refer to it: one of the grounds on which Christ claims allegiance is,

(11) Bp. Kaye, Some Account of the Writings and Opinions of Clement of Alexandria (London, 1835)

(12) Op. cit., p.47.

(13) Strom. VI.6.

ὑπὲρ σοῦ πρὸς τὸν θάνατον διηγωνισάμην καὶ τὸν σὸν ἐξέτισα θάνατον, ὃν ὥφειλες ἐπὶ τοῖς προημαρτημένοις καὶ τῇ πρὸς θεὸν ἀπιστίᾳ. (14) In *Protr.* I he lists among the desires of the Word one to put a stop to corruption, to conquer death. No prominence, however, is accorded to the concept, which perhaps did not make a strong appeal to one of his temperament.

While the emphasis in Clement's doctrine of the Descent rests elsewhere, he does find room for the idea of the deliverance of souls. As justice demands, both Jew and Gentile share alike in Christ's salvation. He quotes Mt. 27: 52, adding that the many saints were obviously translated to a better state. He goes on to say, γέγονεν ἄρα τις καθολικὴ κίνησις καὶ μετάθεσις κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος. As we have noticed, he has failed to work out the idea logically, for to whom would the apostles and teachers preach when they arrive in Hades? If Jews alone shared in this translation, then Clement is not at one with himself on another point. The restraint (or vagueness) of our author here earned Bernard's comment that he "does not countenance the legendary developments of the idea of liberation." (15)

PREACHING

Clement finds the real purpose of the Descent in the preaching; indeed in one place he makes this the sole aim; εἰ γοῦν ὁ κύριος δι' οὐδὲν ἕτερον εἰς Ἀίδου κατήλθεν ἢ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγελίσασθαι, ὥσπερ κατήλθεν. (16) Job 28: 22, regarded as a prediction of this evangelism, becomes the starting-point of his whole argument. And argument this is, for Clement seems to be only too well aware that his propositions will not readily be conceded by others. The passage would appear to be doubly important, indicating both what the Alexandrian himself believed and where he felt himself to be to some extent at variance with accepted traditions.

As we have already observed, the Hades-preaching is for Clement necessitated by the demands of justice. Judgment presupposes real opportunity and responsibility - a modern argument! - εἰ τοίνυν τοὺς ἐν σαρκὶ διὰ τοῦτο εὐαγγελίσαστο, ἵνα μὴ καταδικασθῶσιν ἀδίκως,

(14) *Quis dives salvetur?* ch. 23.

(15) DAC.

(16) *Strom.* VI.6.

πῶς οὐ καὶ τοὺς προσεληλυθότας τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν εὐηγγελίσατο;

As God is just to all men, the preaching must be directed to Gentiles as well as Jews, a thought germane to his whole outlook. It might be suggested that in a sense the preaching in Hades is the crown of his whole doctrine of the Incarnation.

In Strom. II.9 Clement appeals to Hermas for support: Ποιμὴν δὲ ἀπλῶς ἐπὶ τῶν κηρυγμένων θεὸς τὴν λέξιν δικαίους οἰδοῦντας ἐν ἔθνεσι καὶ ἐν Ἰουδαίοις οὐ μόνον πρὸ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ νόμου κατὰ τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν εὐαρέστησιν, ὡς Ἀβέλ, ὡς Νῶε, ὡς εἰ τις ἕτερος δίκαιος. φησὶ γοῦν τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ διδασκάλους τοὺς κηρύξαντας τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ κηρυθέντας τῇ δυνάμει καὶ τῇ πίστει κηρύξαι τοῖς προκηρυγμένοις. (17)
As Hermas did not in point of fact allude to the Gentiles nor give any hint of such an extension of the Hades-congregation, Clement is going beyond his source. Possibly he was aware of this, because in Strom. VI.6 he refers to his own earlier statement, but adds οἶμαι.

Our author accepts the Shepherd's statement of the mission of the apostles and teachers in Hades, for it suits his purpose well. Either the Lord Himself, he argues, preached to all or to Jesus only. If the latter, then the disciples completed task by evangelising the Gentiles who were ready for conversion. In this way, Clement upholds God's righteousness and keeps his own theological scheme intact. The noble souls of heathen antiquity are not denied the light of the Word or the message requisite for salvation. The pattern of things in Hades simply repeats that on earth.

It is extremely interesting that Clement uses 1 Pet. 3: 19ff. for the doctrine of the Descensus: οὐχὶ δηλοῦσι (i.e. the Scriptures) εὐηγγελίσθαι τὸν κύριον τοῖς τε ἀπολωκόσιν ἐν τῇ κατακλυσμῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ πεπεδημένοις, καὶ τοῖς ἐν θυλακῇ τε καὶ φρουρᾷ συνεχόμενοις; Before this there is no comparably clear evidence for the employment of the Petrine passage. Is it possible that earlier writers found the crux as difficult as all (or practically all!) later expositors have and so steered clear of it? Whatever be the reason for their silence, our author's method of using it has its interests. In casting his sentence in the οὐ -question form, does he expect others at (17) DCS 15. 136.

once to nod assent or is this an *oû* of wishful thinking? Is the *μᾶλλον δὲ*, as Huidekoper asserts, a definite self-correction?(18) Is he diverting our attention from Peter to some other place, such as Isa. 49: 8f ? Huidekoper may well be right in believing that it was Clement's original intention, not to refer to 1 Peter, but to the Isaianic verses, for he had already explained "the bound" and "those in darkness" (both Isaiah's phrases) as meaning the Jews and Gentiles respectively. "Perhaps, moreover, Clement thought the passage of Peter... too strong for his purpose, since according to it Christ preached to the WICKED, whereas Clement found his hands full in maintaining that the Saviour preached to RIGHTEOUS Gentiles."(19) There is something in this, for Clement labours his argument. The whole seems prolix and lacking in self-confidence. Doubtless the Alexandrian believes sincerely in what he is proposing, but knows only too well that it will not gain ready acceptance. Consequently, he is unwilling to have the case prejudiced by an injudicious widening of it into a universalist position.

The scope of the preaching embraces Gentiles as well as Jews, but what was the message, what the outcome, what the meaning in relation to his eschatology?

There can be no doubt that the message is the saving Gospel nor that its purpose is to bless, corresponding in fact with the preaching of the apostolic church: *ἐχρῆν γὰρ, οἶμαι, ὥσπερ πάνταυθα, οὕτως δὲ κάκεῖσε.* *Ἦν' ὁ μὲν τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων, οἱ δὲ τὰ ἔθνη εἰς ἐπιτροπὴν ἀγάγωσι...* This much is clear, but the difficulty lies in determining whether he holds out any hope for those whom he cannot call righteous.

"There can, I think, be no doubt (though it has been doubted) that Clement allowed the possibility of repentance and amendment till the Last Day".(20) Our author holds the Platonic theory of punishment: distinguishes between *κόλασις* and *τιμωρία* and, it is to be noted, when he ignores the distinction, the words have the purgatorial, not retributive, connotation. Punishment after death is intended to bring to repentance. Let the deaf serpents who will not hear the charmer's voice be chastised by God until they grow ashamed and repent.(21)

(18) Works II, 13, n.21. Cf. Clemen, *Niedergefahren zu den Toten*, p.179

(19) Op. cit. 13, n. 21 (20) Bigg, op. cit. 112.

(21) Strom VII. 16.

There is then repentance in the after-life.(22) But what is meant by repentance? He regards it as the end of the purgatorial process. Now there is no doubt that Clement teaches *καθαρσις* by punishment, of believers, in order to fitness for the Presence of God. The righteous are cleansed by the *πρόντιμον πῦρ*. (23) Does this extend to the unbelieving dead? He speaks of the faithless as suffering eternal punishment in Gehenna. Are these identical to all who are not included in the term 'righteous'? Clement does not declare with certainty on his division of souls in the Intermediate State. Yet where he deals with purgatorial fires, he always seems to have the righteous in mind. The real problem which confronts him is the fate of righteous Gentiles. We have noticed that he argued at length for the preaching to righteous Gentiles as part of the Descent-programme. Surely, if he had something more extensive in view, he would have put forward equally, or more, elaborate arguments in support? MacGullogh writes, "of all the many references to the Descent in early Christian literature, this of Clement's is surely the most beautiful and reasonable. For it is on reasonable grounds that he argues for the benefit of the Preaching in Hades to righteous Pagans. Logically he might have gone further and extended it to all..."(24) We are, I think, justified in concluding that it is the righteous only who benefit from the Descent. The rest, being unrepentant, are like Aridaeus left unaffected and indeed incurable(25) In this he differs from Origen.

Thus in Clement the traditional Descent continues to appear, but with a marked change of emphasis. Preaching is all, but need we be surprised at this in Alexandria, where knowledge is all?

2. ORIGEN

The importance of Origen for our subject could not easily be exaggerated. He absorbs into his great theological system what precedes his own day and profoundly influences all thinking after him in the East. If he caused no small stir in his own day, his name provoked considerable commotions thereafter. He has been praised and denounced with equal enthusiasm. H.B. Swete's sober estimation of his importance is worth quoting: "No name of equal lustre appears in the records of

(22) Cf. Strom VI.14.

(23) Strom VII.6. cf. Heraclitus & Stoics.

(24) Narrowing of Hell, p.101.

(25) Strom V.14.

the early Church. It may be granted that his genius was somewhat erratic, and his restless intellect prone to force its way into regions where thought can only be conjectural, and conjecture may be hazardous and even harmful. It may be granted also that his style is often cumbersome and difficult, though rather through the vain attempt to give expression to the crowd of thoughts which struggle for utterance than through want of literary skill or ignorance of Greek. Yet with all deductions, Origen remains the most distinguished of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and one of the most stimulating and suggestive of Christian writers in any age."(26) Unquestionably the greatest scholar of Christian antiquity, Origen is a true son of Alexandria: Encyclopaedic in erudition, broad in the expansion of thought, voluminous in literary output. His Hexapla is the first work in the field of biblical textual criticism; his commentaries mark an epoch in biblical exegesis. It is well known that his interpretation of Scripture lacks historical insight and is everywhere dominated by his fixed method, akin to the Rabbinical and typically Alexandrian. This in itself will have importance for us, because if he finds the Descent by the allegorical approach, it can be no accident that it occurs in his writings.

Origen is a great apologist. "The contra Celsum stands out as the culmination of the whole apologetic movement of the second and third centuries."(27) Hort writes, "The Books against Celsus contain at once the best and most comprehensive defence of the Christian faith which has come down to us from the days of the Fathers."(28) It would indeed be surprising if the Descent were to figure in such a work, if it were of no importance to Origen and his contemporaries, not to speak of the opponents of Christianity.(29)

Origen is a great theologian. He goes beyond his predecessor Clement in that he produces a complete theological system, rationally conceived and scientifically propounded. The books On First Principles, "the most complete and characteristic expression of Origen's opinions"

(26) Patristic Study, p.50.

(27) H. Chadwick, Contra Celsum, p. IX.

(28) Ante-Nicene Fathers, p.131.

(29) It may be worth noting that the Contra Celsum had no great influence on the Church subsequent to Origen's own time. (Chadwick p.XIII.)

is the earliest attempt to form a system of Christian doctrine, or rather a philosophy of the Christian faith and as such makes "an epoch in Christian speculation." (30) It is this that makes Bigg describe it as "the most remarkable production of Ante-Nicene times." (31) We find in him the culminating point in the attempt to blend Christian belief and Hellenic philosophy, particularly the Platonic and Stoic. As de Faye puts it, "To propound a philosophical interpretation of Christianity he regarded as his life work." (32) Clearly, if he finds a place in his system for the doctrine of the Descent into Hades, it cannot be regarded as merely driftwood carried along on the tide of tradition.

Of course, in a sense Origen is to be regarded as a traditionalist, for this is how he presents himself to us. "*Servetur vero ecclesiastica praedicatio per successionis ordinem ab apostolis tradita, et usque ad praesens in ecclesiis permanens: illa sola credenda est veritas quae in nullo ab ecclesiastica et apostolica discordat traditione.*" (33) To be sure, with Clement he thought of knowledge as more than faith and perfection as rising above tradition, but the scope he wishes to allow himself is intended to be confined by the received doctrines of the faith. He abhors the concepts of the heretics as lethally venomous. This fact in itself holds interest for us, because it is the development of the Descensus-doctrine we are attempting to trace. The more traditionalist an author supposes himself to be, the clearer probably will be the line of development to our investigation.

It goes without saying that we must endeavour at all costs not to make the mistake of Origen's detractors of later times. His works have been the happy hunting ground of orthodox and heterodox. He does present a system, but it is his own and belongs to his own times. He is "essentially the theologian of an age of transition", (34) a time in which we discover "a potent ferment of ideas, a bitter contest of opposing doctrines, a spiritual activity of the human soul that is both manifold and intense." (35) It would be a mistake to attempt to press his ideas

(30) Westcott, DCB IV. p.99

(31) Op. cit., p.154.

(32) Origen and his Work (London, 1926), p.26.

(33) De Princ. Pref. 4ff.

(34) Westcott, DCB IV. p.133

(35) De Faye, op. cit., p.13.

and, as he puts it, 'intelligent inferences' into the fixity of later confessional statements. Where he is groping, speculating, suggesting, it would be unfair to speak of him as marching, declaiming, dogmatizing. This will obviously apply to the Descent where he relates it to the future and final destiny of living creatures.

His position in the line of development is clear to us. He is the culminating point of Christian expansion in the Orient. It should also be remembered that the school of Alexandria was not the only centre from which his influence spread through Christian doctrine. He conducted an equally successful school in Caesarea in his later years and had a profound influence over such as Gregory Thaumaturgus and Firmilian. He was also a traveller, visiting, for example, various places in Greece, Arabia and Palestine. His influence, however, could not be confined to Eastern Christianity. The West was to benefit also. There his teaching was to have its effect in the translation of Rufinus (as far as the latter would allow him) and of Jerome. In fact, later writers might eulogise (e.g. Ambrosius, Pamphilus, Eusebius, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose to name a few) or might castigate (as Epiphanius, Nicephorus, Suidas), not to mention the condemnation of synods, but none could ignore. Therein lies his importance for us.

The FACT of the DESCENT

Origen makes direct mention of the Descent of Christ into Hades more frequently than any other writer of the Ante-Nicene Period. In well over 20 places he specifically refers to it as an accepted element of traditional Christian belief. These places are: In Ev. Joan. I.34, II.30, VI.18, XXXII.19, In Ev. Matt. XII.3, In Matt. Com. Ser. 132, In Luc. Hom. IV, Hom. VI, In Ep. ad Rom. I.5, V.1, V.10, VII.13, In Gen. Hom. II.5, In Exod. Hom. IV.6, In Lev. Hom. IX.5, In I Sam. Hom. II, Selecta in Psalm. 9: 17, 22: 15, 68: 18, 69, 69: 14, 77: 16, In Cant. Cantic. III, Contra Celsum II.43, 56, 62 and, probably, Sel. in Ezek. I. After its length, the most obvious feature of interest in this list is its variety. This variety does not stop at the superficial, the wide biblical field covered. More important for us is the variety in his mode of reference to the Descent. In some he uses the Descensus to elucidate his text (e.g. In Ev. Joan. I.34); in others, he simply alludes to it (e.g. In Ev. Joan. II.30); in others again, he allegorises or

spiritualises his text to find it (e.g. In Ev. Joan. VI.18). In none of these passages does Origen argue on behalf of the belief. From this we can conclude that he did not find it necessary to do so. It is remarkable that Celsus should say, οὐ δῆπου φήσετε περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι μὴ πείσας τοὺς ὡς ὄντας, ἐστελλετο εἰς ἄβου πείσων τοὺς ἐκεί.(36) Celsus knew - and he was doubtless a well-informed critic of Christianity at least in comparison with his contemporaries)- that the Descent was a recognised part of Christian teaching. Origen's method of replying to him is no less remarkable. He simply accepts the Descent and gives no hint that he or any other would dream of denying it. In dealing with the sign of Jonah, he refers to the time-sequence of the Crucifixion and Descent: καὶ μάλιστα, ἐπεὶ παρὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ πάθους γέγονε σημεῖον εὐεγετουμένῳ ληστῇ εἰς τὸν παράδεισον εἰσελθεῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ· μετὰ τοῦτο, οἶμαι, καταβαίνων εἰς ἄβου πρὸς τοὺς νεκρούς. (37) This simple μετὰ τοῦτο becomes more complicated on further inspection. In Ev. Joan. XXXII.19(38) he considers ἄρτι in Jn. 13: 33 to be fraught with significance. If the Jews were going to die, καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀποθανὼν καταβαίνειν εἰς ἄβου, πῶς, ὅπου ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὑπῆγεν, ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐδύναντο ἀπελθεῖν; Some one will assert that it was because Jesus was going to be in the paradise of God. He then quotes Mt. 12: 40 (with ποιήσει for ἔσται) as presenting a difficulty: Πῶς γὰρ τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας ποιήσει ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς, ὅς ἅμα τῇ ἐξόδῳ ἐν τῇ παραδείσῳ ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ, κατὰ τὸ- Lk. 23: 43, introducing the famous 'To-day' problem of the latter. It is at this point that Origen declares, πρὶν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν λεγομένην καρδίαν τῆς γῆς, ἀπεικονίστησεν εἰς τὸν παράδεισον τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν εἰπόντα (i.e. the thief). He seems here to assert two separate events, one, the translation of the thief to Paradise; two, the Descent to the heart of the earth - and in that order. This stands in flat contradiction to what he has to say elsewhere about Paradise and the Descent.(39)

(36) Contra Celsum, II.43.

(37) In Ev. Matt. XII.3 (L. III.132f.)

(38) L. III.479-84.

(39) He does state that the above is the ἀπλουτερον meaning. The βαθυτερον is to be taken here: πολλαχοῦ τὸ "σήμερον" ἐν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ ἐπὶ ὅλῳ παρατείνει τὸν ἐνεστηκότα αἰῶνα. He spiritualises and speaks of following Christ by taking up one's cross.

Origen's emphatic statements elsewhere declare that the strict time-sequence is first Descent, then translation to Paradise. It could not according to his own teaching be otherwise. In I Sam. Hom. II(40) he asserts that Paradise was not open before Christ descended: "Ἄλλως τε καὶ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου μου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίας ἀδύνατον ἦν τινα παρελθεῖν ὅπου τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς· ἀδύνατον ἦν παρελθεῖν τὰ τεταγμένα φυλάσσειν τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς. It was impossible for anyone to pass διὰ τῆς φλογίνης ῥομφαίας and that includes Samuel and Abraham. It is this that explains the vision which Dives had of Abraham's bosom. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Ἀβραὰμ βλέπεται ὑπὸ τοῦ κολαζομένου, καὶ ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις ὁ πλούσιος ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὅρα Ἀβραὰμ.... εἰ καὶ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ὁρα· ἀλλ' ὁρα καὶ τὸν Ἀδάρον ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτοῦ. The Old Testament saints, patriarchs, prophets and all, had to await Christ's coming to open up the way for them. According to this passage all descend to Hades without exception, Samuel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, for none of these is greater than Jesus Christ. It was the Descent of Christ that made the difference (as we shall notice later) and consequently the sequence must be Death, then Descent into Hades.(41)

Again complications arise on further inspection, for he modifies this view somewhat in In Jerem. XVIII.2, Σαρουήλ, ἥνικα διδάχθη τὰ καταχθόνια, καταβέβηκε καὶ γέγονεν ἐν ᾧδου, οὐ σιμαζόμενος ἵνα ἐν ᾧδου γένηται, ἀλλ' ἵνα γένηται κατὰ σκοπὸν καὶ θεωρητὴς τῶν μυστηρίων τῶν καταχθονίων.(42) This may be due to his inclination to regard Hades as always a place of punishment for sinners (although he would probably never have identified it with Gehenna).

He does describe Hades as being located under the earth: οἱ καταβαίνοντες εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς, εἰς ᾧδον; and sometimes identifies it with the Abyss. He refers to the mode of Christ's Descent in Contra Celsum II.43, καὶ γυμνῇ σώματος γενόμενος ψυχῇ, ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ὁμίλει ψυχαῖς,...(44)

(40) L. XI.319ff.

(41) Cf. IN Lev. Hom. IX.5 (L.IX.348f.)

(42) Eustathius of Antioch vehemently attacks Origen for this: ἐδεικνύει δὲ (δημαγωγῶν; ὅτι οὐ φάσκουσι (i.e., the orthodox) πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους, ὡς εἴη φρικτῶδες ὑπολαβεῖν ἐν ᾧδου γεγονέναι τὸν εὐκλεῆ Σαρουήλ. De Engastr. 17.

(43) In Joh. XIX.21.

(44) L. XVIII.196.

SIGNIFICANCE of the DESCENT

While Origen taught that Christ descended as others did into Hades, he was convinced that that Descent was quite unique. It caused panic and terror in the lower world: ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Χριστοῦ ἐταράχθησαν. (45) Unlike others, Christ even there was 'free'. He interprets ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος of Ps. 88: 4,5 in the good sense, rather than as 'cast away', 'forsaken'. (46) Consequently, he can emphasise that uniqueness when writing on Ps. 69, Ἀλλοῦ δὲ τὰ τοῦ ᾧδου ἥματα, ἔνθα μόνος αὐτός καταβὰς διεξήλθεν. (47) All this is, of course, related to the doctrine of Christus Victor, a doctrine dear to Origen's heart.

CHRISTUS VICTOR

Origen declares that it is the teaching of the Church that the soul has a struggle to maintain with the devil and his angels, but its teaching on the subject has not been explained fully enough. (48) He himself has much to say on the question especially as it is related to the victorious Death of Christ. In De Princ. II.XI he thinks that part of the knowledge of the perfected soul will concern the nature of apostate angels, the reason why they have power to flatter, and why they exist to deceive and lead men astray. He draws a careful distinction between two types of angels, God's and the devil's. This division does not hold good, however, with respect to demons, who are all bad. (49) The gods of the heathen are demons; Greek temples are habitations of deceitful demons. (50) Oracles are probably to be attributed to demonic activity. (51) Just as robbers appoint a leader, so demons have formed confederacies in various parts of the earth and have made one their chief. (52) They may be described as servants of the evil one, the prince of this world, who tries to persuade any he can win over to forsake God. (53) It is true that there was a time when the devil was

(45) On Ps. 77: 16 (L. XIII.19).

(46) Cf. In Ev. Matt. XII.3, XIX.4, X.22 (L. III.132f., IV.172, III.60).

(47) L.XII.409.

(48) De Princ. 5.

(49) Contra Celsum VIII.25 (L. XX.143).

(50) Contra Celsum VII.35, 64, 65, 68, 69 (L. XX.53ff.).

(51) Contra Celsum, VII.3 (L. XX.3f.).

(52) Contra Celsum VII.70 (L. XX.109).

(53) Contra Celsum VIII.13 (L. XX.126).

good and walked in the paradise of God between the cherubim,(54) but he fell, because he attributed to himself the priority which he possessed in a state of sinlessness.(55)

The demons have power given to them, like public executioners, to bring about catastrophes, and their work is ruinous to the human race.(56) It is they who are behind the persecution of Christians and wage war against God, joining forces with people like Celsus.(57) Men in their sinful state follow the devil's leadership: "Nos ergo, qui aliquando fuimus inimici Dei, sequentes hostem et tyrannum diabolum..."(58) Men, in fact, are Satan's prisoners: "Captivi nos fuimus, quos tantis annis vinxerat Satanas, habens captivos sibi subiectos."(59) The true habitations of demons is the abyss: he asks what the abyss is and says, "Illa nimirum in qua erit diabolus et angeli eius."(60) He interprets Ai allegorically as Chaos, adding, "Chaos autem locum vel habitaculum esse novimus contrariarum virtutum, quarum rex et princeps diabolus est."(61)

The power of the devil and his angels, though too great for men to resist, was crushed by Christ. The devil engineered the death of Christ. With regard to the betrayal, he maintains that Judas was simply the "minister traditionis", the devil being the real agent.(62) Christ entered the devil's realm and there defeated him. In the well-known 'ransom' passage reference is made to this.(63) Rashdall would have it that the paying of the ransom to the devil may "merely mean that the Devil did actually succeed in bringing about Christ's death", (64) but it is more probable that Origen means that the devil was overcome by

(54) De Princ. I.VIII.3. (55) Ibid. III.1.

(56) Contra Celsum VIII.31, 54 (L. XX. 152, 183).

(57) Ibid. VIII.11 (L. XX.120).

(58) In Ep. ad Rom. VI.8 (L. VI. 285).

(59) In Luc. Hom. XXXII (L. V.207).

(60) In Gen. Hom. I.1 (L. VIII.106)

(61) In Lib. Jes. Nave Hom. VIII.2. Cf. on Ps. 115: 16, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς τροπικῶς λεγομέναις θαλάσσαις οἰνοῦσιν οἱ ἀντικείμενοι ἡμῖν δαίμονες ἐν αἷς καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπλάσθη τοῦ ἐμπαίζειν αὐτῷ. οὕτω καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀλληγορικῶς λεγομέναις ἀβύσσοις οἱ καταχθόνιοι δαίμονες. As to the location of the abyss, τὴν ἀβυσσον ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς περιεχομένην ὡς ἐν ἁγγέῳ. (Sel. in Ps., L. XIII.133, 135).

(62) In Matt. Com. Ser. 83.

(63) In Ev. Matt. XVI.8 (L. IV.27).

(64) The Idea of the Atonement, p. 261.

deception. The devil took the life of Jesus as a ransom, because he did not know its inherent power.(65) The devil, therefore, ὑπὸ Ἰησοῦ συντρίβεται. (66) For Christ came to destroy his power.(67) The death of Christ was not merely an example, ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ εἰργάσθαι ἀρχὴν καὶ προκοπὴν τῆς καταλύσεως τοῦ πονηροῦ καὶ διαβόλου, πάσαν τὴν γῆν νενεμημένου.(68) Origen spiritualises the passage about faith that removes mountains to find in it a reference to the devil's defeat: αἴρεται γὰρ ἀφ' ἐκαστοῦ τῶν ὀφελουμένων ὑπὸ μαθητῶν Ἰησοῦ τὸ βαρὺ τῆς κακίας ὄρος, ὃ σατανᾶς, αἴρωντος αὐτὸν τοῦ νικῆσαντος αὐτὸν, καὶ βάλλεται εἰς τὸν ἄξιον αὐτοῦ τόπον τῆς κολάσεως. The sea is spoken of as the dragon's abode in Ps. 104: 25,36 and 74: 13,14(69) The victory was secured not only over the devil but also over all opposing powers. The death of Christ is preached, because it involved the defeat of principalities and powers.(70) He refers here to Col. 2: 15, a passage which he quotes very frequently, indeed at every opportunity(71) In Gen. Hom. XVII. 5 'recubuisse' and 'dormisse' mean the suffering of death.(72) The sleep of the cub suits Christ, "qui tribus diebus et tribus noctibus in corde terrae sepultus somnum mortis implevit"; that of the lion too: "mors Christi oppressio et triumphans daemonum fuit..." "hoc ergo modo et in somno suo leo fuit vincens omnia et debellans, et destruxit eum, qui habebat mortis imperium, et velut catulus leonis die

(65) So Cave, *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, p.97. This may help to explain In Matt. Com. Ser. 83, which appears to border on the Docetic: "Et Jesus quidem, secundum quod videbatur, ibat passus per crucem; secundum autem quod vere erat, et ibat et remanebat in mundo cum discipulis suis, custodiens eos in fide." This passage requires to be expanded and considered in the light of In Lib. Jesu Nave Hom. VIII.3 (L. XI.77), "Visibiliter quidem Filius Dei in carne crucifixus est, invisibiliter vero in ea cruce diabolus cum principatibus suis et potestatibus affixus est cruce." For clearly anti-docetic teaching v. De Princ. Pref. 4: "Et quoniam hic Jesus Christus natus et passus est in veritate, et non per phantasiam communem hanc mortem sustinuit, vere enim a mortuis resurrexit."

(66) In Ev. Johan. I.14 (L. I.30)

(67) In Ep. ad Rom. Com. Ser. V.3 (L.VI.360)

(68) Contra Celsum VII.17 (L. XX.28)

(69) In Ev. Matt. XVI.26 (L. IV.73)

(70) In Ev. Matt. XII. 18 (L. III.162f.)

(71) Cf. In Matt. Com. Ser. 75 (L. IV.390); In Lev. Hom. IX.5 (LIIX. 348f) In Lib. Jesu Nave Hom. VII.3 (L. XI. 3), In Ev. Johan. XX.29 (L. II.284)

(72) L. VIII.289f.

tertia suscitatus." (73) Similarly, Moses' rod speaks of the Cross of Christ and His victory; (74) The battle was decisive and the victory complete: ἕως πᾶς ἐχθρὸς αὐτοῦ καταργηθῇ, καὶ τελευταίως γε ὁ θάνατος, αἶρει τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. (75) To quotation from Col. 2: 15 he adds, τρόπατον κατὰ πάσης ἀντικειμένης δυνάμεως τὸν σταυρὸν στήσαντος (76)

The glorious victory of Christ has significance both for the Lord Himself and for His followers. First, its Christological implications: ἐβασίλευσε γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πεπονθέναι τὸν σταυρὸν. (77) Jesus undertook the struggle, entered Hades, so that He might be universal Lord. Origen goes out of his way to say this when spiritualising the Baptist's words about stooping down to untie the sandals (τὴν δ' εἰς ἧδου κατὰβασιν ὅστις ποτὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ἦδης, καὶ τὴν εἰς φυλακὴν μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος πορεῖαν τὸ λοιπὸν). He writes, ὁ δὲ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὑποδησάμενος καὶ τὸν νεκρὸν ὑπεδήσατο, (quotes Rom. 14: 9), εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανε καὶ ἀνέστη, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ζῶντα καὶ νεκρὸν ὑπεδήσατο, τούτεστι τὸν ἐν γῇ καὶ τὸν ἐν ἧδου, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ. (78) In Luc. Hom. VI Origen asks his hearers to consider the cosmic significance of Christ, "Ascende in coelos, et vide eum, quomodo celestia repleverit: apparuit siquidem angelis. Descende cogitatione in abyssos, et videbis eum etiam illuc descendisse." As proof he quotes Eph. 4: 10, Phil. 2: 10: He has filled the world. id est coelestia, terrestria, et infernalicia. The universal Lordship of Christ is thus connected with the ascent-descent antithesis. He refers again to Phil. 2: 10, ἐν τῷ καταχθονίῳ γεγένηται τόπῳ ἵνα πᾶν γόνυ κλῶται... (79)

Secondly, its significance for believers. Origen regards the Death of

(73) Cf. In Num. Hom. XVII.6 (L. X.216)

(74) In Exod. Hom. IV.6 (L. IX. 41); so also the conflict with Amalek, In Lib. Jesu Nave Hom. 13 (L. XI.12)

(75) In Ev. Johan. I.40 (L. I. 79)

(76) Ibid. XX.29 (L.II, 284)

(77) In Ev. Johan. I.42 (L. I.85)

(78) In Ev. Johan. VI.18 (L. I.229f.)

(79) In I Sam. Hom. II (L. XI.319ff) It is worth observing that Christ's conflict with Satan is, according to Origen, anticipated at His birth. The demons lost their strength not only because of the host of angels who visited the earth, but also by the strength (or soul) of Jesus and the divine power in Him. (Contra Celsum I.60, L. XVIII.108. It is perpetuated in His healing ministry. (Ibid. VIII.64, L. XX.205).

Christ as having universal benefits. He takes ὑπὲρ πάντων of Heb. 2: 9 in the wider sense, οὐ μόνον ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων..... ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν λοιπῶν λογικῶν, for example the stars.(80) The victory of Christ is to be shared by His Church.(81) For it is man in particular that he is concerned to relate to Christ's victory. The Lord champions man's cause against the Devil, who, we have seen, holds him captive. The triumph of Christ (Col. 2: 15) is repeated in the experience of His follower, who triumphs or rather in whom his Master triumphs.(82) The Cross of Christ is of such force that if it is kept before the mind, sin cannot enter and have dominion. The believer can enjoy the victory of Christ in personal experience.(83) The demons have lost their power over the real Christian, who renounces the devil and his pomp in baptism.(84)

All this holds interest for us because of what he says in Ev. Matt. XII: 12.(85) There he interprets "gates of Hades" allegorically, as built by men out of their sins. These gates (Πολλῶν δὲ καὶ δυσσπειθμητῶ οὐσῶν τῶν ἥδου πυλῶν) have, as city gates, their respective names, e.g. πορνεία, ἄρνησις (n.b. δι' ἧς ἀρνησείθῃς εἰς ἥδου καταβαίνουσιν) Gates too have been built by the heretics Marcion, Basilides, Valentinus. Some conquer the gates of Hades because they hold fast to Him who says, 'I am the door' (πύλας τὰς ἥδου πύλας καθελόντων ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῶν ψυχῆς). We must beware of every sin, ὥς εἰς πύλην ἥδου τινα καταβαίνοντες, εἰ ἁμαρτάνομεν. The man who has power against the gates of Hades has the power of the keys to open the kingdom of heaven.

We have already observed that Origen teaches the historic fact of

(80) In Ev. Joh. 1.40 (L. I.79f.), if, he says, he is not going too far!

(81) In Ev. Johan. X.20 (L. I.343-8)

(82) In Ev. Matt. XII.26 (L. III.173).

(83) In Ep. ad Rom. Com. Ser. VI.1 (L. VII.2f.), IX.39 (L. VII.351f.), In Num. Hom. VII.5 (L. X.64).

(84) Contra Celsum VIII.33,36 (L. XX.154,161). "Recoredetur unusquisque fidelium, cum primum venit ad aquas baptismi, cum signacula fidei prima suscepit, et ad fontem salutaris accessit, quibus ibi tunc usus sit verbis, et quid denuntiaverit diabolo: non se usurum pompis eius, neque operibus eius neque ullis omnino servitiis eius ac voluptatibus.." In Num. Hom. XII. 4 (L. X.140)

(85) L. III.150f.

Christ's Descent into Hades. This is not the descent of the defeated, but of the conqueror triumphant in victory. This victory, once and for all achieved in His death and cosmic in its implications, is reiterated in the present experience of true Christians. The victory of their Lord is worked out in them individually. (86)

Now as Christ's victory was secured not only upon earth, but also in Hades, so the benefits of that work have effect not only on earth but beyond. Indeed it is the Hades-victory that makes possible the other. Origen's teaching on the latter must always be viewed against the background supplied by the former. That brings us to his development of the theme of the Descent into Hades of the victorious Christ. This elaborates the doctrine with regard to the purpose and significance of the Descent as an event in the past having effect then, but also having repercussions throughout all time and reaching to the consummation of all things.

Christ's Descent into Hades was not unexpected there. As on earth, so in Hades forerunners had already proclaimed His coming. The parallel is fairly close, for there was first the teaching of the prophets preparing the souls held there to look ahead for the great event; there followed the ministry of John the Baptist declaring its imminence.

First, the Prophets. In arguing for the presence of Samuel in Hades, he shows how reasonable such a thing is. Why should not he be there, of all other Old Testament saints have gone to such a place?

Ἰησοῦς εἰς ᾧδου γέγονε, καὶ οἱ προφῆται πρὸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ προκηρύσσουσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν ἐπιδημίαν. (87)

The need for the prophetic ministry was no less in Hades than on earth.

Τῆς οὖν χάριτος τῆς προφητικῆς αἱ ψυχαὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, τολμήσω καὶ εἶπω, ἐδέοντο· ἀλλ' ἐνθάδε μὲν χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ προφήτου Ἰσαήλ· καὶ ὁ κοιμώμενος δὲ ὁ ἀπηλλαγμένος τοῦ βίου χρεῖαν εἶχε τῶν προφητῶν, ἵνα πάλιν οἱ προφῆται αὐτῷ κηρύξωσι τὴν Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν. (87)

(86) "Quid timent daemones? Quid tremunt? Sine dubio crucem Christi, in qua triumphati sunt, in qua exuti sunt principatus eorum et potestas. Timor ergo et tremor cadet super eos, cum signum in nobis viderint crucis fideliter fixum, et magnitudinem brachii illius, quod Dominus expandit in cruce." In Exod. Hom. VI.8 (L. IX.66f.)
(87) I Sam. Hom. II. (L. XI.319ff.)

Second, John the Baptist. The immediacy of Christ's arrival was heralded by him among the departed: *μὴ φοβοῦ λέγειν, "ὅτι εἰς ὁδοῦ καταβέβηκε προκηρύσσων τὸν κύριον, ἵνα προσέκη αὐτὸν κατελευσόμενον.* (88) To fulfil his mission as forerunner John died a short time before Jesus: *πρὸ ὀλίγου τοῦ θανάτου ἀποθυήσων τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα μὴ μόνον τοῖς ἐν γενέσει, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς προσδοκῶσι τὴν διὰ Χριστοῦ ἀπὸ θανάτου ἐλευθερίαν, πρὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημῶν, πανταχοῦ ἐτοιμάσῃ κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον.* (89)

All this preaching activity came to its fruition not only in the actual advent of Christ in Hades, but also in His preaching there. (Again, the parallel to the earthly pattern of events as recorded in the Scriptures is clear). The numerical strength of Origen's references to this preaching is not impressive, but his statements are clear enough and full of significance. Jesus showed Himself(90) to be the Son of God to those who believe on Him, "*postquam dispensavit quae oportebat eum dispensare in tribus illis diebus, postquam descendens ad inferos, 'mortificatus corpore, vivificatus autem in spiritu, spiritibus, qui erant in carcere, praedicavit quod non crediderant aliquando, quando exspectabatur patientia Dei in diebus Noe, cum fabricaretur arca, in qua pauci, id est, octo animae sunt salvati per aquam! Et non est derelictus illis, sicut ipse dicebat, 'quoniam non derelinques animam meam in inferno.'*" As Clement did before him, Origen makes 1 Pet.3: 19f. apply directly to the preaching mission of Christ in Hades. It is remarkable that he does so without making any attempt to defend the interpretation. Similarly, elsewhere he again quotes Ps.16: 10 and 1 Pet.3: 18ff, naming both, as witnessing to the Descent into Hades.(91) In neither of these passages, however, does Origen explain what Jesus preached, why He preached, what resulted from His preaching. We could supply the answers to such questions from his teaching on related subjects. He has, however, himself pronounced upon them to some extent at least

(88) I Sam. Hom. II. (L. XI.319ff.)

(89) In Ev. Johan. II.30 (L.I.158). Cf. In Luc. Hom. IV. (L. V.99), "*hic vero praecursor Domini fuit. Et mortuus est ante eum ut ad inferna descendens illius praedicaret adventum.*" For the Baptist as forerunner cf. Hipp. On Christ and Antichrist, 45.

(90) In Matt. Com. Ser. 132 (L. V.49).

(91) In Ev. Johan. VI.18 (L. I.229f.) In his allegorical interpretation of the encounter of John the Baptist with Jesus. This in itself is remarkable.

in the only other place that deals with the preaching purpose of the underworld mission. In *Contra Celsum* 11. 43(92) Celsus objects, οὐ δῆπου φήσετε περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι μὴ πείσας τοὺς ὧδε ὄντας ἐστέλλετο εἰς ᾧδου πείσων τοὺς ἐμεῖ. To this Origen replies, Κἂν μὴ βούληται οὖν τοῦτό φαμεν, ὅτι καὶ ἐν σώματι ὧν οὐκ ὀλίγους ἔπεισεν, ἀλλὰ τοσούτους, ὥς διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πειθομένων ἐπιβουλευθῆναι αὐτόν· καὶ γυμνῇ σώματος γενόμενος ψυχῇ, ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ὀμίλει ψυχῶν, ἐπιστρέφων καὶ κείνων τὰς βουλομένας πρὸς αὐτόν, ἢ ἅς ἐώρα, δι' οὓς ἦδει αὐτὸς λόγους, ἐπιτηδαιοτέρως.

In addition to the observation already made on this reply, we note that the whole concern of the passage is the preaching. It springs from Celsus's sneer about convincing the dead. It is difficult to determine exactly how much is to be deduced from this about the popularity of the preaching of Christ in Hades as an element of Christian teaching. In other words, is Celsus's sarcasm depending upon his knowledge that the Christians generally believed that Jesus descended into Hades, while he himself adds the sting, 'I suppose it was to convince the departed seeing he failed so miserably in this world'? Or are the Descent and Preaching both being ridiculed together, the sneer lying in the οὐ δῆπου φήσετε and the manifest stupidity of the very idea? We cannot answer dogmatically here (as in many similar instances in *Contra Celsum*, because of the very nature of the work), but the weight of probability, I think, lies with the former view. In any case, Origen asserts that Christ did preach.(93) There can be no doubt that he intends us to assume that it was the Gospel that Christ preached. The purpose of the preaching is unquestionably to benefit the hearers directly, to convert their souls to Him. But who, according to this passage, are the audience? Are they all the dead or some only? If we decide that ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων.... ψυχῶν refer to the former, then we must observe immediately that those converted by His preaching are limited. They are the willing souls

(92) L. XVIII.196

(93) The verb he uses is ὀμίλει. It may be worth observing that this is the first time I find the verb ὀμίλειν employed to describe the Hades-Preaching. Hitherto κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζομαι, διδάσκω have been found.

or those whom He Himself saw to be more ready to do so. The willing souls might well be those of patriarchs and prophets who were awaiting the Descent of Christ, a class that would include all the righteous. Now the problem is how to take the word η . Is Origen going on to define another class of souls altogether or is he giving wider scope to the first class? He apparently regards the closer definition to belong to mysteries not revealed to him. The reasons, he states, are known to the Lord Himself, with the implication that they are hidden from men. It would appear that there are some souls who are more liable to conversion under Christ's preaching than others. Origen seems to be drawing a parallel, in answer to Celsus, between the success of Christ in Hades with that on earth. Some believed there as here and turned to Him. Of these, however, were some actually unbelievers at death? His application of 1 Pet. 3: 18ff, as noted above, would suggest that, especially as it is read in the light of his eschatological teaching in general. At once we find ourselves involved in the deeper issues of the Descent as Origen conceived it. The problems arising from the passage under consideration are closely related to his teaching on the 'Deliverance' aspect of the Descent's purpose, which in turn merges into the ultimate goal of God's saving purpose and the final consummation.

Origen speaks of the Descent as a necessity: "Idcirco ergo necessarium fuit Dominum et Salvatorem meum, non solum inter homines hominem nasci, sed etiam ad inferna descendere, ut sortem apompaei tanquam homo paratus in eremum inferni deduceret, atque inde regressus, opere consummato adscenderet ad patrem...(94) The interest here lies not only in the idea that the Descent completes the work of Christ, but also is the implication that it had as the true day of atonement.

The real need for the Descent, as it is primarily before us, is the need of the souls in Hades. Just as a doctor goes to where the sick and wounded are, οὕτω τοῦτο ὑποβέβληκε τῇ Σωτηρί ὁ λόγος παρὰ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ἐνθάδε ἔλθεῖν, καὶ εἰς ᾧδου καταβῆναι.(95) Souls are held captive there by death, as the 'strong man's goods'.(96)

(94) In Lev. Hom. IX.5 (L. IX.349)

(95) In I Sam. Hom. II (L. XI.319f.)

(96) In Ep. ad Rom. V.1,2. (L. VI.344,352f.)

Closely related to Christ's victory is His liberation of His captive people: "intellegimus et sanctos quosque sub ista morte, etiam si non peccandi, at certe moriendi lege decidisse: Christum vero idcirco in infernum descendisse, non solum ut ipse non teneretur a morte, sed ut et eos, qui inibi non tam praevaricationis, ut diximus, crimine, quam moriendi conditione habebantur, abstraheret: sicut scriptum est..(here he quotes Mt. 27: 52f.). In quo et prophetae dicta complentur, quibus ait de Christo (quotes Ps. 68: 18). Et hoc modo per resurrectionem suam mortis quidem iam regna destruxit, unde et captivitatem scribitur liberasse.... Regnum vero iam mortis destructum est, et captivitas, quae sub ea tenebatur, abducta est."(97) On descending Christ has set free the prisoners who, though righteous, were held in the grip of Hades by the law of death. He has defeated death, the devil - it comes to the same thing in Origen.(98) He has bound the strong man, "porrexit etiam in domum eius, in domum mortis, in infernum, et inde vasa eius diripuit, id est, animas, quas tenebat, abstraxit... Prius ergo eum alligavit in cruce, et sic ingressus est domum eius, id est, infernum...(99) Origen finds a reference to this in a surprising place, namely, in Exod. 15: 12. There is a possibility that he who has been swallowed up, should he come to his senses, can be vomited out again, as happened in Jonah's case. "Sed et omnes nos puto, quod aliquando terra devoratos in inferni penetralibus retinebat: et propterea Dominus noster descendit non solum usque ad terras, sed usque ad inferiora terrae: et ibi nos invenit devoratos, et sedentes sub umbra mortis..."(100) The people in question are 'omnes nos'. What is the precise meaning of this? Hitherto he has mentioned prophets, patriarchs, the righteous of a past day. Is he using 'nos', as it were, sympathetically? Or has he in mind the wider significance of the Descent? The rescue of the saints of former times and the blessing of his contemporaries merge, it would seem, into one. This may be of more than passing interest. We must return to the wider application later.

In the passage quoted above from In Ep. ad Rom. V.1, it may be

(97) In Ep. ad Rom. V.1 (L. VI.344)

(98) In Ep. ad Rom. Com. VI.6 (L. VII.25) In Num. Hom. XII.3 (L. X.137)

(99) In Ep. ad Rom. Com. V.10 (L. VI.406f.)

(100) In Exod. Hom. IV.6 (L. IX.65)

observed that the deliverance of the righteous from Hades is regarded by Origen as fulfilling Ps. 68: 18. Compare the allusions in his *In Cant. Cantic*, Liber III(101), "Solus est enim, qui fuit inter mortuos liber. Et quia liber inter mortuos fuit, ideoque devicto eo, qui habuit mortis imperium, abstraxit captivitatem, quae tenebatur in mortem... captivam duxit captivitatem." We are fortunate in having his comments upon the very text in question: Οὕτω τὴν κατὰ βᾶσιν τοῦ σωτῆρος δειξάς καὶ τὴν τῶν δαιμονίων κατὰ λυσιν δεικνύσιν αὐτὸν ἀντίοντα καὶ τοὺς πρὶν αἰχμαλώτους ἐλευθερώσαντα. "Ἡ καὶ ὕψος τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ λέγει, ἐν ᾧ ἀναβὰς, καὶ τοὺς ἐν ἁέρι θαίμονας, τὰ πνεύματα τῆς πονηρίας, ἀφ' ἧς εἶχον ὑπερηφανίας κατασπάσας, τὰς ὑπ' αὐτῶν αἰχμάλωτισθείσας ψυχὰς διὰ τῶν πονηρῶν πράξεων, καὶ ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἀποσπάσας, καθάπερ τινὰ αἰχμαλώσιον ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ ἔδου κευθμώνων ἀνεληύσας ἐλευθέρωσεν. (102) Origen is, then, supporting (or introducing) a view for which we could not find any linguistic justification. The real value of these allusions and comments is their witness to his own conception of the deliverance of the righteous.

He links his quotation from Ps. 68 with another from Mt. 27: 52f.(103) Origen evidently did not think of the deliverance in a pictorial, symbolical way. For him it had much more substance in it. "Adscendens enim in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem, non solum animas educens, sed et corpora eorum ^{re}suscitans, sicut testatur evangelium, quod..(Mt.27: 52f.). This, of course, is due to his conception of the nature of the departed soul. He went further than Irenaeus, who in discussing the parable of Dives and Lazarus, came to the conclusion that departed souls possess 'figuram hominis'.(104) For Origen (105) holds that Dives and L. πρὸ τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἵδνος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πρὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως γινόμενοι, καὶ λεγόμενοι ὁ μὲν ἐν "Αἶδου κολάζεσθαι ὁ δὲ ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ ἀναπαύεσθαι, διδάσκουσιν ὅτι καὶ νῦν ἐν τῇ

(101) L. XV. 66.

(102) Sel. in Ps. (L. XII.405f.)

(103) *In Cant. Cantic*, Liber III, *In Ep. ad Rom.* V.1. For use of the latter quotation cf. *In Ep. ad Rom.* V.10 (L.VI.406f.)

(104) As is pointed out by L. Prestige, *JTS.* 24.476ff.

(105) *Ap. Methodius, De Res.* 3.17.5 (GCS.414), a passage recovered from Photius.

ἀπαλλάγῃ σώματι χρῆται ἡ ψυχὴ.(106)

Having seen that Origen taught a corporeal or quasi-corporeal liberation of the faithful departed, we naturally want to know to what place they have been transferred. He alludes to this in a general statement, In Exod. hom. IV.6, quoted above. After saying that our Lord descended to the lower parts of the earth and found us there, swallowed up and sitting under the shadow of death, he declares, "et inde educens non iam locum terrae, ut iterum devoraremur, sed locum praeparat nobis regni coelorum." A more precise account is given, In Ep. ad Rom. V.10, where Mt. 27: 52f. is turned to this purpose, "...captivitatem, eos scilicet qui cum ipso surrexerunt, et ingressi sunt sanctam civitatem, Jerusalem coelestem."(107) It is not the 'Jerusalem which Jesus wept over'. Christ has introduced these souls into a heavenly place, Paradise. Before the Descent this was impossible.(108) The Old Testament saints had to await His coming to lead them in. Περιέμενον οὖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου μου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν, καὶ πατριάρχαι, καὶ προφῆται καὶ πάντες, ἴν' οὕτως τὴν ὁδὸν ἀνοίξῃ. It was He who said, "I am the Way" and, "I am the Door." The Descent of Christ into Hades is of such moment that, as a result of it, we can say what no Old Testament worthy could, that to depart and be with Christ is better. Ἐὰν ἀπαλλαγῶμεν γενομένοι καλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ, μὴ ἐπαγόμενοι τὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας φορτία, διελευσόμεθα καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν, καὶ οὐ κατελευσόμεθα εἰς τὴν χώραν, ὅπου περιέμενον τὸν Χριστὸν οἱ πρὸ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ κοιμώμενοι. διελευσόμεθα δὲ μήδεν βλαπτόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς φλογίνης ῥομφαίας. (109)

(106) Methodius replies to this, De Res. 3.18.4,5: αἱ δὲ ψυχαὶ, σώματα νοερα ὑπάρχουσαι, εἰς λόγῳ θεωρητὰ μέλη διαμενέσθηνται... ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τῇ αἰῳ, καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Αἰζάρου καὶ τοῦ πλουσίου, καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ δάκτυλον καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μέλη ἱστοροῦνται ἔχειν, οὐχ ὡς σώματος ἑτέρου συνυπάρχοντος αὐταῖς ἀειδοῦς, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐταὶ φύσει αἱ ψυχαί, παντός ἀπογυμνωθεῖσαι περιβλήματος, τοιαῦται κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπάρχουσιν.

(107) Cf. "Introierunt in sanctam civitatem Dei viventis Hierusalem," In Cant. Cantio. Liber, III. (108) In I Sam. Hom. II, quoted above (109) For these ideas of, his remarks on Ps 9: 17, ὡς περὶ ὁ παράδεισος τῶν δικαίων ἐστὶν οἰκὴ τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν κολαστήριον. Ἀπομεισθήτωσαν, φησὶν, ὅπως μὴ ἰδῶσιν Ἰησοῦ ψυχὴν καταβαίνουσαν, καὶ ἀναβαίνουσαν, εὐδὸν ἀπεστραμμένοι. Οἱ γὰρ προσδοκῆσαντες αὐτὴν, ὡς περὶ ἐξω ἔβλεπον καθειργμένοι ἐν αἰῳ, πρῶτον μὲν οἱ προφῆται, ἔπειτα οἱ λοιποὶ πάντες δίκαιοι. ἡ πρῶτον μὲν οἱ ἐν ἡμῖν ἁμαρτωλοὶ εἶτα τὰ ἔθνη. (L. XII.22,23)

It is quite obvious that we can no longer ignore the fact that at every turn in our discussion we are facing larger issues. The former of the last two quotations appears to state simply what we have taken to be its meaning. That assumption would oversimplify a sentence which begins with *ἐάν* - clause and which is linked with 1 Cor. 3: 13,15. The significance of the Descensus in Origen cannot possibly have any validity, if divorced from the context of his impressive eschatological schema. When we do perceive the relationship of the Descent to his whole system, we may then be able to answer a totally different question, namely, if that system has validity without reference to the Descent.

E. de Faye discusses the question of whether Origen as theologian is an exegete or a dogmatist. He finds appearances deceiving and concludes that Origen "is essentially a Christian thinker or dogmatist." (110) When he searches the Scriptures, what is he looking for? "His own theology, his own religious thought." To this deFaye adds, "In effect, the Scriptures serve him admirably for illustrating his ~~theology~~ theology, while providing him with the divine authority which he cannot ignore. It must be recognised that Origen is a Christian philosopher who imagines he is explaining th Scriptures, whereas he is really exploiting them on behalf of his own dogmatic teaching." (111) I have a feeling that de Faye has perhaps reached an over-simplified solution and have an urge to say, Yes, but don't you see that Origen is just Origen?

Nevertheless, it is clear that Origen had by intelligent inference, as he puts it himself, developed what he believed to be a cogent theology or view of life. Perhaps in the end the key to his work as a Christian thinker, is his conception of God. Certainly, it is his doctrine of God that inspires his eschatological dreams.

We have observed that the Descent into Hades, according to Origen, makes a great difference to the state of the righteous souls. They are liberated and transferred. For Origen, however, this can never be the end. The goal is far from being reached at that stage. While it is possible for some to say now that to depart and be with Christ is far better, the condition is not easy of fulfilment - *ἐάν ἀπαλλαγῶμεν γενομένοι καλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοί, μὴ ἐπαγόμενοι τὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας φορτία.*

The future life is one of activity and continual development. Outside their earthly bodies souls work: Samuel prophesies (1 Sam. 28), Jeremiah prays (2 Macc. 15: 14), he says. (112) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets are alive. (113) This life beyond death is not shadowy, but substantial, the life of morally responsible beings. Consequently, the preaching of Christ in Hades has the effect of converting some to Himself. It follows too that the experiences of such a life influence and mould the character. Purgatorial fires are, therefore, an integral part of his scheme. This too is related to his whole conception of the nature and purpose of punishment, which in turn hangs upon his belief about the character of God.

There is a diversity of places and states, to match the various stages of maturity which souls have attained. The blessed place opened up by the Descent is Paradise. This may be described as Abraham's bosom. That phrase is undoubtedly figurative, for *δυνατόν ἐστι μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ ἅμα ἀναπαύεσθαι, κοινωνοῦντα τῶν ἀποκαλυφθέντων αὐτῷ.* (114) If people hear and understand what is written, "*possint auditores non ad illum locum tormenti deduci, quo dives ille, qui audire haec, quae in secreto sint scripta, contempsit, abductus est: sed in sinum erant Abraham, ubi Lazarus requiescit.*" (115) In the same homily, however, he later speaks thus about the place of the righteous, "*vel sinus Abrahami, ut in Lazaro, vel paradisos, ut in latrone, qui de cruce credidit, indicatur: vel etiam si qua novit Deus esse alia loca, vel alias mansiones, per quae transiens anima Deo credens, et perveniens usque ad flumen illud, quod laetificat civitatem Dei.*" (116) Can we now say that there are differences in Paradise? He asks, Can a man be in Paradise, "*sicut latro ille prima hora cum Iesu ingressus est paradisum*", and yet not be "*in paradiso deliciarum*"? He argues that we must say that if a man is in Paradise, then he is in *Paradiso deliciarum*. (117) But there are other places: "*Si quis sane mundus corde, et purior mente, et exercitator sensu fuerit, velocius proficiens cito ad aëris*

(112) In Ev. Matt. XV.31. (L. III.400)

(113) In Ev. Johan. XX.33 (L. II.296ff.)

(114) In Ev. Johan. XXXII.13 (L. II.446f.)

(115) In Num. Hom. XXVI.3 (L.X.324)

(116) L. X.325

(117) In Ezek. Hom. XIII (L. XIV.170)

locum adscendet, et ad coelorum regna perveniet per locorum singulorum, ut ita dixerim, mansiones, quas Graeci quidem sphaeras, id est globos, appellaverunt, Scriptura vero coelos nominat."(118)

Paradise, i.e. the earthly one, is the first step on the great stairway that leads to final blessedness. It is a place of learning and training. "Futo enim, quod sancti quique discedentes de hac vita, permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisum dicit Scriptura divina, velut in quodam eruditionis loco, et, ut ita dixerim, auditório vel schola animarum, in quo de omnibus his quae in terris viderant, doceantur."(118) The process of salvation not only extends into the life beyond the grave, but it also continues through long periods of time, in some cases being protracted by God over an immeasurable period in order to make the cure more effective. Θεός γὰρ οἰκονομεῖ τὰς ψυχὰς οὐχ ὥς πρὸς τὴν, φερ' εἶπεν, πεντηκονταετίαν τῆς ἐνθάδε ζωῆς, ἀλλ' ὥς πρὸς τὸν ἀπέραντον αἰῶνα· ἄφθαρτον γὰρ φύσιν πεποίηκε τὴν νοερὰν καὶ αὐτῇ συγγενῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἀποκλείεται ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα ζωῆς ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ τῆς θεραπείας. (119)

A distinction is made between Paradise and Heaven and various intervening stages are envisaged. Passage through these stages is intended to make the person perfect, conformed to the divine image. As there is correction in this life for the creatures' benefit, so in the next.(120) The righteous will shine after being cleansed from evil ideas etc.(121) This cleansing will be effected by fire. The fire of 1 Cor. 3: 12,13 consumes wood, which really stands for anger etc.(122) "Non tam uremur quam probemur."(123) As all punishment must be in strict proportion to the manner, frequency, and extent of the crime,(124) the last farthing must be paid for purgation, "designatur non inde exiri posse, nisi reddat unusquisque etiam novissimum quadrantem."(125) If Christians throw away the God-given weapons of their defence, mentioned in Eph. 6: 13-17,

(118) De Princ. II.XI (L. XXI.242)

(119) De Princ. III.1.13 (L.XXI.387). He takes no account of the first stage, e.g. In Matt. Com. Ser. 62(L. IV.352), "Dividit autem eum, quando spiritus quidem eius revertitur ad Deum, qui dedit eum, anima autem cum corpore suo vadit ad gehennam. Justus autem non dividitur, sed anima eius vadit cum spiritu ad regna coelestia."

(120) In Exod. Hom. IX.6.

(121) In Ev. Matt. X.3 (L. III.14f.); cf. De Princ. II.III.7 (L. XXI.164)

(122) Sel. in Ps. (L. XII.172) (123) In Ezek. Hom. I.13 (L. XIV.28)

(124) In Num. Hom. VIII.I (L. X.72f.) (125) In Ep. ad Rom V.2 (L.VI.356)

then they will have to suffer punishment hereafter also; "Si autem talia arma projicimus, statim locum diabolo vulnere damus, et captivos nos ducit omnis daemonum chorus; atque ob hoc ira Dei insurget super nos, et non solum in praesenti saeculo puniemur, verum etiam in futuro." (126) It would seem that Origen regards the method of atonement here as fire, hereafter as fire.

Outer darkness too is a place of discipline, corrective and restorative. The unfaithful servant who hid his talent "non solum quasi malus et piger arguitur, sed quasi inutilis mittitur in tenebras exteriores, ubi nulla illuminatio est, forsitan nec corporalis, nec est respectio Dei illius, sed quasi indigni speculatione Dei, qui talia peccaverunt, condemnantur in his, quae exteriores tenebrae appellantur: forsitan donec intellexerint, ut convertantur et digni efficiantur exire ab his." (127)

Now what of those who are altogether unbelievers? He replies to Celsus's declaration that the rest of mankind will be 'thoroughly roasted' by saying that the Bible teaches that people who are not pure in morals or doctrine κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν χρῆζοντας τῆς διὰ πυρὸς καθάρσεως οἰκονομίας ἐν τοῦτοις ἐπὶ τινὶ τέλει (φησὶν) ἔσεσθαι, ὃ τῷ θεῷ ἀρμόζει ἐπάγειν τοῖς κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ πεποιημένοις, καὶ παρὰ τὸ βούλημα τῆς κατ' εἰκόνα φύσεως βεβιωκόσι. (128) A more precise answer is supplied by his treatment of those who have actually rejected the Gospel on earth. "Qui vero verbi Dei et doctrinae evangelicae purgationem spreverit, tristibus et poenalibus purificationibus semet ipsum reservat, ut ignis gehennae in cruciatibus purget, quem nec apostolica doctrina, nec Evangelicus sermo purgavit, secundum illud, quod scriptum est, 'et purificabo te igni ad purum.' (Isa. I: 25) Verum in hac ipsa purgatione quae per poenam ignis adhibetur, quantis temporibus, quantisque saeculis de peccatoribus exigatur cruciatus, solus scire potest ille, cui 'Pater omne iudicium tradidit.'" (129) A very extensive period is clearly intended here. We should also note that it is the fire of Gehenna which is the cleansing agent.

(126) In Num. Hom. XX.1. (L. X.243)

(127) In Matt. Com. Ser. 69 (L. IV.373)

(128) Contra Celsum V.16 (L. XIX.190ff.)

(129) In Ep. ad Rom. VIII.11 (L. VII.271)

It has been noted above that, according to Origen, all the dead are confined in Hades till the Descent of Christ. Hades in his eyes is primarily a place of punishment. Indeed, he sees no objection to interchanging the names Hades and Gehenna.(130) It is probable, as L. Prestige suggests,(131) that Origen contemplates different grades of Gehenna. The important idea for our purpose is that the fires of Gehenna are also represented as being purgatorial. This does not make them any the less terrifying. To any person who receives the doctrines of the heretics, he says, "fomenta in te ignis, et gehennae incendia praeparabis."(132) These fires can be purgatorial for Origen, because he has no doubt that all punishment is medicinal within the purpose of the righteous and good God. He argues for this in *De Princ.* II.V(133), showing how the remedial process continues in the future life. He finds support for this in 1 Pet. 3: 18ff. He also cites Sodom and Gomorrah, which are to be restored to their former condition (Ezek. 16: 55,53). He appeals, further, to Ps. 78: 34. Thereupon he refers his argument to the very nature of God. (There is no doubt a connection also with his view that all beings were created good and are therefore capable of being restored to goodness.) Apparently all are to be restored.

Two questions at once arise here. What are we to make of his words about eternal punishment? What happens to evil spirits and the devil himself?

First, eternity of punishment. He distinguishes between eternal life in Christ Jesus Our Lord and that of those "in confusione et opprobrio aeterno."(134) Compare his warnings against the danger of temporal riches: "Saepe enim fit, ut ad damnum animae vel opprobrium eius sempiternum cedant praesentia haec luera et dignitas saecularis."(135) It is, he declares, apostolic teaching that after its departure from this world the soul "pro suis meritis dispensabitur, sive vitae aeternae ac beatitudinis haereditate potitura, si hoc ei sua gesta praestiterint, sive igni aeterno ac suppliciis mancipanda, si in hoc eam scelorum culpa detorserit."(136) Again, he states that punishments "aeternae sunt, et

(130) *Sel. in Ps.* (L. XII.164) (131) JTS 24.476ff.

(132) *In Num. Hom.* XII.2 (L. X.131) (133) L. XXI.180.

(134) *In Ep. ad Rom. Com.* VI.6 (L. VII.24) (135) *Ibid.* VII.6(L.VII.117)

(136) *De Princ. Pref.* 5 (L. XXI.21) - here, of course, the question of the translator's 'improvements' crops up.

cum saeculis extendentur."(137)

Now clearly everything in such passages depends upon the meaning assigned to the word 'eternal'. Origen does not think of it as necessarily implying 'endless'.(138) Bigg writes, "The word αἰών in the usage of the Platonists of the time, certainly included the idea of endless, changeless duration, v. Plutarch De Ei apud Delphos, 20; and it must be admitted that the arguments employed.... are not sufficient to prove Origen's point."(139) For us, however, the main thing is that Origen himself believed that αἰώνιος was not necessarily 'everlasting'. He did have his reservations, expressed significantly enough, in Contra Celsum. There (VI.26) he uses the following approach: eternal punishment is preached, but simply as a threat to move the hardened sinner for his own good. In spite of all this, perhaps it would be safe to say that universal restoration is Origen's hope or dream rather than his dogmatic teaching. In the case of the wedding guest, for example, who is cast out, he adds no word of modification, but confesses to a reluctance to say anything where Scripture is silent.(140) In some things, according to his own words, he is giving the results of intelligent inference rather than strict dogmatic definition.(141)

In the De Principiis the possibility of a fall from grace in the future life is posited, doubtless on the strength of his doctrine of the freedom of the will. Such a possibility is expressly denied, however, in Ep. ad Rom. V.10.(142) There is, he asserts, a point of fixity, of absolute security. This point may not be the same for all. There will be degrees in the Final State of things. It is this, I think, that enables Bigg to write, "Neither Clement nor Origen is properly speaking a Universalist." The soul that has sinned beyond a certain point can never again become what once it might have been. In this sense the poena damni is unending. The soul may be purified, refined, brought to acquiesce in its lot, "but may never be admitted within that holy circle where the pure in heart see face to face."(143)

(137) In Lev. Hom. XIV.4 (L. IX.420f.)

(138) In Exod. Hom. VI.13, In Lev. Hom. XI.6, De Princ. II.3.5.

(139) Op. cit., p.231, n.1.

(140) In Ev. Matt. XVII.6 (L. IV.122f.)

(141) De Princ. VII.1 (L. XXI.114)

(142) (L. VI.407ff.)

(143) Op. cit., p.292.

Perhaps this might explain such a passage as In Jer. Hom. XVIII.1, in which he discusses the work of the potter (ch. 18: 1f.): ὅσον ἔσμεν ἐν τῇ βίῳ τούτῳ, μορφούμεθα... Ἐπὶ δὲ μετὰ τὸν ἐνεστῶτα αἰῶνα ἡνωμεν, πρὸς τῇ τέλει γενόμενοι τῆς ζωῆς, ἔπειτα πυρωθέντες, ἥτοι ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς τῶν πεπυρωμένων τοῦ πονηροῦ βελῶν, γενέσθαι ὅ, τιποτ' ἂν γενόμεθα, ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πυρὸς, - εἰαν συντριβῶμεν, εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλὰ σκευῇ γεγονέναι εἰς σωτηρίαν, εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ μοχθηρὰ σκευῇ γεγονέναι εἰς ἀπώλειαν, οὐκ ἀναντιζόμεθα οὐδὲ ἐπιδέχεται ἡμῶν ἡ κατασκευὴ βελτίωσιν. (144) Because of God's nature and purpose we must never suppose that with the drowning of Pharaoh, God's superintendence of him ceased, he asserts in De Princ. III.1.14(145). But surely Origen would not have us believe that Pharaoh eventually reaches the same state as, for example, Moses.

This modification may be of some relevance to his treatment of the fate of evil spirits and the devil. Their destiny is to some extent an open question.(146) One class of them has sunk to such a depth "ut revocari nolit magis quam non possit."(146) Elsewhere he shows from Mt. 25: 41 that the devil and his angels have the same kind of punishment to bear as men: "quia eadem species poenarum peccatoribus hominibus, et diabolo, et angelis eius praeparatae sit, licet in eadem poena diversa sit quantitas poenae."(147) In the case of men there is a worse punishment than the fires of Gehenna, although he cannot conceive it; he refers to Heb. 10: 28,29 and invokes Paul, whom he believed to be the author, to name the worse punishment. The request is met by a refusal: μεῖζόν ἐστι τῶν λεγομένων τὸ τῆς κολάσεως τῶν ἐν εὐαγγελίῳ ἁμαρτανόντων, μεῖζον τῶν ἀκουομένων, μεῖζον νοούμενων. (148) He does not attempt to deal with the extent of the punishment of evil spirits.

As to the devil's salvability, Bigg observes(149) that in De Princ. III.65 it is maintained that the wicked will of the devil will at last be annihilated and he will cease to be an enemy, whereas this very suggestion is denied, In Ep. ad Rom. VIII.9, "Istius autem qui de coelo cecidisse dicitur nec in fine saeculi erit ulla conversio." Bigg then

(144) L. XV.313.

(145) L. XXI.389.

(146) De Princ. I.6.3; III.6.5.

(147) Fragm. ex lib. de Prov. Sol. (L. XIII.218)

(148) In Jer. Hom. XVIII.15 (L. XV.352f.)

(149) Op. cit., p.232, n.2.

adds, "In the *Epistula ad Amicos* (L. XVII.8) according to the version of Jerome certain of Origen's adversaries taught that the Devil 'posse salvari', according to that of Rufinus they affirmed that Origen taught 'diabolum esse salvandum'. Both translators agree in the sense of the following words, 'quod ne mente quidem captus dicere potest.'" Farrar suggests(150) that Origen means no more than that if Satan could change his nature he would not be beyond the pale of salvation; "that the Devil is a created being, and that therefore his sin resulted from his free-will, and that his nature (per se, and in the abstract, and apart from any assertion as to the present conditions of his free-will) was capable of repentance, and if so of forgiveness. All was hypothetical, and Origen had never dreamed of saying that the Devil, as such, could be saved."

Origen's great concept is the ἀνοτατάστασις πάντων. It is God, because of His very nature, that controls all things to their final consummation. The Logos is greater than all evil(151) and the ultimate triumph of good, the complete fruition of Christ's Victory, the goal in the mind of God will be realised. This will be achieved after aeons and aeons have rolled past. "In unum sane finem putamus quod bonitas Dei per Christum suum universam revocet creaturam, subactis et subditis etiam inimicis." What is meant by this 'subjection'? "Ego arbitror, quia haec ipsa, qua nos quoque optamus ei esse subjecti, qua subjecti ei sunt et apostoli et omnes sancti, qui secuti sunt Christum." And the powers? "Hi vero, qui de statu primae beatitudinis moti quidem sunt, non tamen irremediabiliter moti, illis, quos supra descripsimus, sanctis beatisque ordinibus dispensandi subjecti sunt et regendi: quorum adjutoris usi, et institutionibus ac disciplinis salutaribus reformati, redire ac restitui ad statum suae beatitudinis possint."(152)

Has the doctrine of the Descent a vital role to play in Origen? Or would it be justifiable to dismiss it as an irrelevant appendage? If each creature passes personally through the various stages of spiritual growth, stages which lie well into the coming ages and have for their goal a point which can be reached by certain beings only after aeons of aeons have rolled on, does it not look as if the Descent has little or no real significance? Would it make any material difference if we cut it

(150) *Lives of the Fathers*, I.311.

(151) *Contra Celsum* VIII.72 (L. XX.217f.) (152) *De Princ.* I.VI.1(L. XXI.

out of Origen's teaching? Now if we were to conclude that the Descensus is quite dispensable, that in itself would not destroy its significance in Origen for our study. In a sense it might even enhance its value as a piece of evidence.

His mode of referring to it is sufficient to demonstrate that he at least considered the Descent to be part of apostolic doctrine. There was to his mind nothing ^{in it} incongruous with the faith delivered to the saints. When we attempt, however, to pin down its particular relevance for him, we feel most keenly the loss of many of his writings.

It is reasonable to say that the Work of Christ does not hold in Origen the prominent place it occupies in others. Nevertheless, the Death of Christ is not without its importance and interest for him. This becomes clear when we pay attention to his emphatic presentations of it as a triumphant victory. Death, the Devil, and his forces are worsted; captive men have hope; they may now know freedom and development of character and expansion of knowledge. The Descent of Christ into Hades may be thought of as carrying that work on into the life beyond. There are people lying there, captives no less, who cannot rise to their destined glory. Even the righteous great ones find the way barred to them. Now Christ descends and becomes the Way to them. He opens up Paradise. There is no opening of it until He comes. In other words, the whole elaborate scheme of Origen's eschatology is quite unworkable without the Descent. Life here and hereafter (and heretofore) is one great continuum, he believes. For this the Death and Descent of Christ have vital relevance, for only as we recognise their redemptive meaning, do we preserve that continuum. Indeed, only as we maintain this teaching can we present the doctrine of the good and just God. There need be no greater argument for Origen than that. It is possibly for that reason that the Descent is woven into the fabric of his work. As exegete, preacher, apologist, philosopher, theologian he finds a place for the Descent of Christ into Hades.

3. GREGORY THAUMATURGOS

No one could have spent five years in Origen's school at Caesarea without being profoundly influenced by the great man's theology. There is little wonder that the doctrine of the Descent in Gregory bears the

clear impress of that influence. He takes up his teacher's conception of a victorious Descent and heightens its rhetorical representation, thus anticipating later descriptions of it. The way in which martyrs face death proves for him that Death has been destroyed and Hades trampled underfoot, its chains broken and the tyrant bound. Hades and Satan have been stripped of their armour.

This connection between Hades and Satan is not accidental, so far as Gregory's doctrine of the Descent is concerned. He represents the Devil as casting his hook at the Godhead, but being caught himself. Having said this, he at once turns to the release of souls from Hades. The second Adam has brought the first Adam from the depths of Hades and, to Satan's shame, has made him a citizen of Heaven. Since then the gates of Hades have been closed and those of Heaven opened to present free access to those who rise there in faith.

He also represents Christ as saying on the occasion of His baptism that it became Him 'to descend to the depths of Hades on behalf of those detained there, to destroy the power of death and to kindle the torch of His Body for those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.(154)

In the Alexandrians the doctrine of the Descent into Hades has reached its furthest stage of development. Hitherto there have been marked advances, but these have all been confined to prescribed limits. Clement however begins to speculate about the meaning of the Descent into Hades and the outworking of this speculative process carries the doctrine in Origen to a fuller, more important state than ever it had. The Descent becomes written into a theology which is based on the character of God. It is not without significance that 1 Pet. 3 now comes into its own and occupies an honourable place in the doctrine. In this way the Descensus has attributed to it a meaning conceived to be universally valid and intrinsically essential. Clement and Origen both insist upon the necessity of Christ's descending to souls and of the preaching of salvation to them. Much of the speculation about the Descent in more modern times has been anticipated in Origen. The whole doctrine of salvation is coloured by the operation of Hades-preaching, just as the doctrine of the Descent is itself transformed by the soteriology of Alexandria.

Chapter V

THE THIRD CENTURY - APOCRYPHAL

The great writers of the East and West in the third century fully exploited the possibilities of the doctrine of the Descent into Hades, the latter being more dogmatic, restrictive, and authoritarian in its approach as compared with eastern venturesome speculation. Both have borne their own fruit in later generations. Theology, however, is not made by theologians only and religious developments are certainly not restricted to the work of scholars. Popular productions are also at work. Their importance is not confined to the fact that they represent a valuable source of evidence for the prevalent mode of doctrine. They also play a not inconsiderable part in moulding, directly or indirectly, the thoughts of even the scholarly of succeeding years. Thus the apocryphal writings which we are about to examine are no less worthy of consideration than the contributions of Tertullian and Origen. Three works are examined here, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Teaching of Thaddaeus, and the Acts of Thomas. All that has just been said is particularly applicable to the first of these, for its influence on Descensus-doctrine has been enormous.

1. The GOSPEL of NICODEMUS

It is generally accepted that the account of the Descent into Hell, i.e. ch. 17-27, was originally a separate work, added (possibly by the fifth century editor) to the Acts of Pilate. The date of its composition remains a matter of dispute, but it seems probable that before its marriage to the Acts the flamboyantly dramatic embellishments already adorned its central narrative. The origin of this hard core is lost in obscurity, somewhere in the second or third century. There is now much less inclination to daub it with a Gnostic lineage. Tischendorf had thought that the author, a Christian of Jewish extraction, was imbued with Jewish theology and familiar with Gnostic ideas; Lipsius went further, supposing that the Descensus is a catholic edition of an earlier Gnostic work, but Harnack in tracing the work to an earlier

source denies that that source was Gnostic. Certainly, its theme is of such a kind as to seem alien to Gnostic teaching. "There is nothing unorthodox about it, save the choice of the names of the two men who are supposed to tell the story." (1)

There can be no doubt that the Descensus did a great deal to make the Descent a very popular theme. It not only influenced Byzantine Art, and later Western art, but it became enshrined in the 'Golden Legend', influenced Dante, and appeared in the guise of one of the most popular mystery plays, the Harrowing of Hell.

"The Descensus is the first attempt to present a complete and rounded account of the Descent into Hades." (2) Its main incidents, leaving aside the dramatic paraphernalia, are the descent of John the Baptist as forerunner, the deception of Satan, the breaking down of the gates of Hades, the trampling on Hades, the deliverance of the saints, Adam included. All of these are elements in the popular conception of the Descent in the first three centuries.

2. The TEACHING of THADDAEUS

Eusebius informs us that it was from Syriac records at Edessa that he derived his account of the preaching of Thaddaeus before Abgar, king of Edessa. These probably date from around the middle of the third century, when the apocryphal correspondence between Jesus and Abgar was composed. Eusebius includes a summary of what Thaddaeus is said to have taught about our Lord. Κατέβη εἰς τὸν ᾠδὴν καὶ διέσχισε φραγμὸν τὸν ἐξ αἰῶνος μὴ σχισθέντα, καὶ ἀνέστη καὶ συνήγειρε νεκροὺς τοὺς ἀπ' αἰῶνων κοιμημένους, καὶ πῶς κατέβη μόνος, ἀνέβη δὲ μετὰ πολλοῦ ὄχλου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ. (3) The Syriac 'Doctrine of Addai', which may be the version which was used by Eusebius, but is put later by some (i.e. c.400 A.D.) and so considered to be a fuller development of the legend, gives the reference after 'and was crucified' thus: "and descended to the place of the dead, and broke down the middle wall of partition which had never been broken through, and gave life to the dead by being slain himself, and descended alone, and ascended with many to his glorious

(1) M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament, p.95. For a careful examination of the work, v. MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell, Ch. IX.

(2) MacCulloch, op. cit., p.159.

(3) H.E. I.13 (Textes et Documents, 1905, 2)

Father."(4)

There is no suggestion in this reference that the Descent is some new doctrine. On the contrary, it is introduced as if it were a commonly accepted tradition.

3. The ACTS of THOMAS

The neighbourhood of Edessa also, it seems most probable, produced another work in Syriac which is of interest to us, the Acta Thomae. The book is distinctly flavoured with Gnostic ingredients, which in itself is not surprising in the region of Edessa, for Gnostic influences were in the air there. The references to the Descent, however, take more or less the normal shape. It was incidentally Thomas who(5) was credited with saying, "descended into hell", when each of the disciples made his contribution to the Apostles' Creed, as the old story had it.

In the Song of Praise sung by Thomas the Apostle, the Descent appears: "Thy angels glorify Thee on high through Thy Messiah who became in Sheol peace and hope to the dead, who came to life and were raised."(6) The emphasis here rests upon the saving, liberating mission to Hades, which seems to hold some particular interest for angelic beings. This interest may be accounted for by the other element in the representation of the Descent in these Acts, namely, the defeat of hostile powers. A description of Christ is given thus: οὗτος ὁ σφῆλας τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τὸν θάνατον βιασάμενος...οὕτινος ἰδὼν ὁ ἄρχων ἐφοβήθη καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἐταράχθησαν. (7) The first part of this is not found in the Syriac. In Ch.32 the dragon proclaims himself to have been robbed by the Son of Mary of what was His own. The passage in the Greek runs, ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ τὴν ἄβυσσον τοῦ τερτάρου οἰκῶν καὶ κατέχων, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἄκοντά με ἠδίκησεν καὶ τοὺς ἰδίους ἐξ ἐμοῦ ἐξελέξατο. (8)

Other two longer passages make the above clear by including the various elements together in an account of the Descent. Both occur in prayers put into the apostle's mouth. First, in Ch. 10, Thomas

(4) W. Cureton, Ancient Syrian Documents (London, 1864), p.7.

(5) Pseudo-Aug. de Symbolo, serm. 240, probably of the sixth century.

(6) W. Wright, Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles from Syriac MSS, II.250.

(7) Lipsius and Bonnet, Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, II. 2.250.

(8) Lipsius and Bonnet II.149; v. Wright, II.172.

addresses Christ, "Thou didst hurl the evil (one) from his power, and call with Thy Voice to the dead, and they became alive... Thou didst descend to Sheol, and go to its uttermost end; and didst open its gates, and bring out its prisoners, and didst tread for them the path (leading) above by the nature of Thy Godhead." (9) The Greek version is, *Χριστὲ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, ἡ δύναμις ἡ ἀπτόητος ἡ τὸν ἐχθρὸν καταστρέψασα, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ ἀκουσθεῖσα τοῖς ἄρχουσι, ἡ σαλεύσασα τὰς ἐξουσίας αὐτῶν ἀπάσας, ὁ πρεσβευτὴς ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕψους ἀποσταλεὶς καὶ ἕως τοῦ ᾄδου καταντήσας, ὅς καὶ τὰς θύρας ἀνοίξας ἀνήγαγες ἐκεῖθεν τοὺς ἐγενετισμένους πολλοὺς χρόνοις ἐν τῷ τοῦ σκότους ταμείῳ, καὶ τούτοις τὴν ἄνοδον ὑποδείξας τὴν εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἀνάγουσαν.* (10) That these ideas belonged to popular tradition seems to be attested by the similarity to the 'Thaddaeus' story. The 'Voice' is also heard in Ephrem Syrus.

The other prayer is found in Ch. 156: *ὁ ὑπὲρ πολλῶν παρὰ ἀνθρώποις σταυρώθεις· ὁ κατελθὼν εἰς ᾄδου μετὰ πολλῆς δυνάμεως· οὗ τὴν θέαν οὐκ ἤνεγκαν οἱ τοῦ θανάτου ἄρχοντες·* (11) *καὶ ἀνῆλθες μετὰ πολλῆς δόξης, καὶ συναγάγων πάντα τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφεύγοντες παρεσιεύσας ὁδόν, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἰχνῶν σου πάντες ὤδευσαν ὅς ἐλυτρώσω· καὶ εἰσαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ποιμνὴν τοῖς σοῖς ἐγκατέμειξας προβάτοις.* (12) The Syriac after πολλῆς δυνάμεως runs, "and the dead saw Thee and became alive, and the lord of Death was not able to bear it." (13)

The Descent is thus portrayed as a powerful event. The hostile, wicked powers are crushed, the Hades-prison is broken, the captives released to life. This is all due to the personal intervention of Christ on man's behalf. The only possible reference to preaching is in the 'Voice' which is heard, not by the dead but by the 'principalities'. (Is it possible that an allusion to 1 Pet. 3: 19 underlies this?)

(9) Wright II.154f.

(10) Lipsius and Bonnet, II.115.

(11) Bousset makes Death personal here and comments, "Der Tod erscheint hier als der gewaltige Fürst der Unterwelt, von seinem Archonten umgeben".

(12) Lipsius and Bonnet II.265.

(13) Wright II.288.

Chapter VI

NICENE AND POST-NICENE REPRESENTATIVES

We are now concerned with the progress of the doctrine of the Descent into Hades in Nicene and Post-Nicene times. We shall be content here to seek material from representatives of the Church's teaching and to attempt to observe the process by which the doctrine becomes fixed and stereotyped. There is no attempt made here to achieve fulness of treatment, but rather lengthier consideration is given to Eastern authors, because there is a greater variety among them, whereas the West follows a more fixed and uniform tradition.

A. THE EAST

ATHANASIUS

Athanasius was the great champion of the Nicene faith not only at the critical stage of its formulation, when he was his bishop Alexander's mainstay, but also in the even more critical years which followed the Council. He was evidently a man rock-like in his convictions and possessed of that perspicacity which fastens upon the main point at issue in a controversy and subordinates all others to it. He thus saw through all the machinations of Arians and Semi-Arians and throughout his troubled times of repeated exile and recall held tenaciously to his central doctrine of the Nature of the Son. Because of the very circumstances of his work, the continually-raging controversy, the life-and-death struggle he knew himself to be engaged in, Athanasius can have had little time to spare for anything else in his writings.

In his 'On the Incarnation of the Word of God' Athanasius describes how God met man's need by the Incarnation of the Word. He lays great stress on the Death of Christ, especially in its victorious and triumphant aspect. After giving a competent short analysis of the book, Cave writes, "It is not so much an apology for Christianity as a paean of victory."⁽¹⁾ The conquest of death figures prominently in his treatment of his subject, together with the restoration of men to life. In several passages he so states the purpose of the Incarnation.

(1) S. Cave, The Doctrine of the Person of Christ (London, 1925), pp.94ff

εἰκότως ἔλαβε σῶμα θνητόν, ἵνα καὶ ὁ θάνατος ἐν αὐτῷ λοιπὸν ἔξαφανισθῇ, καὶ οἱ κατ' εἰκόνα πάλιν ἀνακατασταθῶσιν ἄνθρωποι. (2) The Word deliberately yields to death to show Himself superior to it: τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ναὸν εἰς θάνατον παραδιδούς, ἵνα.... δείξῃ ἑαυτὸν καὶ θανάτου κρείττονα. (3) Death is done away with by the Saviour's power and Christians no longer fear it. He very seldom mentions the devil, (4) but does speak of the devil's defeat: ἦλθε δὲ ὁ Κύριος, ἵνα τὸν μὲν διάβολον καταβάλῃ, τὸν δὲ ἄέρα καθαρίσῃ, καὶ ὁδοποιήσῃ ἡμῖν τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἄνιοδον.. (5)

In none of these is the Descent mentioned. Indeed, in 25 he speaks of the devil as being defeated in his own region - he is the prince of the power of the air - when the Saviour was lifted up on the Cross. In two places, however, he makes specific mention of the Descent. In the first, In Illud Omnia 2, the Descent is seen to fit naturally into his scheme of things: ἡ γῆ ἀντὶ κατάρσεως εὐλόγηται, ὁ παράδεισος ἡνοίγηται τῷ ληστῇ, ὁ ᾄδης ἔπηξε, καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἡνοίγηται, ἐγειρομένων τῶν νεκρῶν, αἱ πύλαι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπήρθησαν, ἵν' ὁ ἐξ Ἑδῶν παραγένηται. Πάσχων γὰρ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνέπαυσε, καὶ πεινῶν αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ἔτρεφε καὶ εἰς τὸν ᾄδην καταβαίνων ἡμᾶς ἀνέφερε..... (6) The Descent is accepted as part of the Work of Christ. It is the descent of a Conqueror whose very coming causes Hades to quake and cower. The effect of the Descent is wholly beneficial to the Christian. (7)

In the other passage, Ep. ad Epictetum, he makes use of the Descent for a totally different purpose. He is anxious to demonstrate that the Body cannot be identical to the Word. Among other things he writes, Τοῦτο (i.e. σῶμα) ἦν τὸ ἐν μνημεῖῳ τεθέν, ὅτε αὐτὸς ἐπορεύθη, (μὴ χωρισθεὶς αὐτοῦ), κηρῦξαι καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν, ὡς

(2) De Incarn 13 (PG. 25.120); cf. Ibid. 8,9 (PG. 25.109, 112).

(3) Ibid. 20 (PG. 25.132)

(4) He "makes less mention of the devil than almost any of the Fathers", Aulen, Christus Victor, p.59.

(5) De Incarn. 25 (PG. 25.140); cf. Contra Arianos II.55, Διὰ τὸ μαρτυρῆσαι ὅρα καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀναδέξασθαι θάνατον, καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀναστῆσαι τοὺς ἄνθρωπους, καὶ λῦσαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου ἐλήλυθεν ὁ Σῶτηρ καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ χρίτις τῆς ἐνθάδε παρουσίας αὐτοῦ.. (PG. 26.261) (6) PG. 25.212.

(7) The phrase ὁ ᾄδης ἔπηξε is identical to the expression in the Creed of Constantinople which he quotes, De Sym. 30 (PG. 26.748). Where he has εἰς τὸν ᾄδ. κατ. it has καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατεληλυθότα. The Dated Creed which he quotes, Ibid. 8 (PG. 26.692f.) has εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα, ὃν πυλωροὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐφύλαξαν...

εἶπεν ὁ Πέτρος. "Ὁ μάλιστα δείκνυσιν τὴν ἄνοιαν τῶν λεγόντων, εἰς ὅστέα καὶ σάρκα τετράφθαι τὸν Λόγον. Εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο ἦν, οὐκ ἦν χρεῖα μνημεῖου· αὐτὸ γὰρ ἅμ' ἐπορεύθη δι' ἐαυτοῦ τὸ σῶμα, κηρῦξαι τοῖς ἐν τῇ ἄδῃ πνεύμασι. Νῦν δὲ αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπορεύθη κηρῦξαι τὸ δὲ σῶμα εἰλίζας ὁ Ἰωσήφ σινδόνη, ἀπέθετο ἐν τῇ Γολγοθᾷ· καὶ δέδεικται πᾶσιν, ὅτι μὴ τὸ σῶμα ἦν ὁ Λόγος, ἀλλὰ σῶμα ἦν τοῦ Λόγου.

Athanasius assumes that the 'Descent' interpretation of 1 Pet. 3: 18f. will meet with no objection, implying, of course, that the Descent- doctrine itself will pass unopposed. He is confident enough in the doctrine of the preaching in Hades to employ it in support of his present argument. This may be of more value to us than an argument for the Descent or such an interpretation of the Petrine passage would have been.

In De Salut. Advent. (authentic?) 9, Christ is said to have rescued not only the patriarchs and prophets. The soul of Adam, held in the condemnation of death, cried continually to God, and those who had pleased God and had been justified by the law of nature, and were detained with Adam, cried with him, until the mercy of God revealed to them the mystery of redemption.(9)

In a work of doubtful origin but attributed to Athanasius, De Pass. et Cruce Domini 25f.(10) reference is made to the terror of the door-keepers of Hades. Death was abolished and all were liberated who through fear of death were subject to bondage. Christ destroyed the pains of Hades and aroused those there, saying, 'Arise, let us go hence.' Then "the wretched one, cast out of Hades, and sitting at its gates, beheld all those that were bound led forth by the intrepidity of the Saviour, the dead raised, the captives freed, the saints who, with Abraham, were favoured, sounding the timbrels, as written in Ps. LXVIII.25." The angels sang and ran to meet the redeemed souls.

The defeat of Hades, Christ's preaching there, the deliverance of captive souls recur in Cyril of Alexandria, in a series of Paschal Homilies.

(8) Ep. ad Epictetum 5,6. (PG. 26.1060).

(9) V. MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell, p.109.

(10) PG. 28.230f.

THE CAPPADOCIANS

We could hardly find more important representatives of Christian teaching at this time than the three great Cappadocians. They were not only keen students of Origen, but proved themselves energetic champions of Nicene orthodoxy. Indeed, it is to them that the triumph of the Nicene cause was largely due. So far as the doctrine of the Descent is concerned, they seem to combine the common traditional elements with, in some places, the more individualist features of Origen.

They show a keen interest in the theme of *Christus Victor*. At the Cross the tyrant is overcome and Death overthrown.(11) Christ's assumption of the form of a slave (Phil. 2: 7) was deliberate, ἵνα ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ πάθεσιν ἀναλώσῃ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ ἀποκτείνῃ τῷ θανάτῳ τὸν θάνατον.(12) 'Ο Ἀμαλὴν καταπολεμηθῇ τῷ σταυρῷ as typified in Moses' outstretched hands.(13) The result of this victory is seen in that even now when Christ is invoked, the devils tremble.(14)

The defeat of Death is given the usual significance. Basil describes Death as the shepherd of souls who holds sway until the true Shepherd comes and calls souls from their Hades-prison.(15) This is treated more elaborately in a series of antithetical statements culled from Scripture by Gregory Nazianzus: Παραδίδωσι τὴν ψυχὴν ἄλλ' ἐξουσίαν ἔχει πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν, ἀλλὰ καταπετάσμα ῥήγνυται... ἀλλὰ πέτραι σχίζονται, ἀλλὰ νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται. Ἀποθνήσκει, ζωοποιεῖ δέ, καὶ καταλύει τῷ θανάτῳ τὸν θάνατον. Θάπτεται, ἀλλ' ἀνίσταται. Εἰς ᾧδου κἀτεισιν, ἀλλ' ἀνάγει ψυχάς, ἀλλ' εἰς οὐρανοὺς ᾄδουσιν, ἀλλ' ἤξει κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς...(16)

On the subject of deliverance, two additional points are to be noticed in Gregory of Nyssa. First, the deliverance is connected with his 'ransom' theory. Man is enslaved by the devil. A ransom must be found which is consonant with justice and agreeable to the slave's master. Of Christ he says, δοὺς ἀνταλλάγμα τῆς λυτρώσεως τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν, τὸ τίμιον αὐτοῦ αἵμα, ὃ ἐξέχεε διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ....(17) He does not

(11) Greg. Naz. Or. XLV.XXII (PG. 36.653).

(12) Greg. Naz. Or. XII.4 (PG. 35.845).

(13) Ibid. 3.

(14) Greg. Naz. Or. II.86. (PG. 35.489).

(15) Hom. in Ps. 48: 9.

(16) Greg. Naz. Or. III.XX (PG. 36.101)

(17) Against Eunomius, II.3 (PG. 45.474)

shrink from saying that the ransom was paid to the devil or from introducing the idea of the deception of the devil. This is worked out in the Great Catechism, the systematic work of the fourth century as De Principiis is of the third. The devil supposes he is to gain a great advantage: τοῦτου χάριν αὐτὸν αἰρεῖται λύτρον τῶν ἐν τῇ τοῦ θανάτου φρουρᾷ καθεργασμένων γενέσθαι. (18) The deity was covered with the flesh, so that the devil would be quite unafraid to approach it. (19) Then follows the famous sentence, ὥς ἂν εὐληπτον γένοιτο τῷ ἐπιζητοῦντι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα, τῷ προκαλύμματι τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἐνεκρύφθη τὸ Θεῖον, ἵνα κατὰ τοὺς λίχνους τῶν ἰχθύων τῷ δελέατι τῆς σαρκὸς συναποσπάσθῃ τὸ ἄγνιστρον τῆς Θεότητος καὶ οὕτω τῆς ζωῆς τῷ θανάτῳ εἰσκηισθείσῃ καὶ τῷ σκότει τοῦ φωτὸς ἐμφανέντος, ἐξαφανισθῇ τῷ φωτὶ καὶ τῇ ζωῇ τὸ κατὰ τὸ ἐναντίον νοούμενον.....(20)

Second, the deliverance is connected with his thoroughgoing universalism. As Plumptre puts it, "What Origen whispered, as it were, to the ear in the secret chamber, was proclaimed by Gregory of Nyssa as from the housetop." (21) He believes that the statement that God will be all in all indicates the annihilation of all evil and in the light of this he holds all punishment to be remedial, medicinal, surgical. (22) The Descent into Hades has its place in all this, because Christ's arrival there is the moment of illumination for souls in Hades and the beginning of redemption. The repentant thief becomes the representative man entering Paradise. (23)

The Cappadocians show also the relationship of the doctrine of the Descent to the present ethical demands of the Christian life. This is an interesting shift of emphasis, as in Gregory Nazianzus: Χριστὸς ἐκ τάφων, ἐλεθερώθητε τῶν δεσμῶν τῆς ἁμαρτίας. Πύλαι ᾗδου ἀνοίγονται καὶ θάνατος καταλύεται, καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς Ἀδὰμ ἀποτίθεται, καὶ ὁ νέος συμπληροῦνται. (24) The significance of the Descent for the present life is worked out at baptism: Πῶς οὖν κατορθοῦμεν τὴν εἰς ᾗδου πᾶσιν; μεμοῦμενοι τὴν τάφην τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος. (25) This is (18) Cat. XXIII. (PG. 45.62).

(18) For ransom paid to the devil, of. Origen, Ambrose, Augustine. The ransom is paid to the Father, according to Greg. Naz. and John of Damascus.

(19) Ibid. 63.

(20) Ibid. XXIV. (PG. 45.64f.)

(21) The Spirits in Prison, p.138.

(22) Cat. VIII. (PG. 45.36f.) - the healing process by fire. (Cat. XXXV).

(23) Letter XVII. (24) Or. XLV.1 (PG. 36.624).

(25) Basil, De Spiritu Sancto XV.35 (PG. 32.129)

also related to the baptism of Jesus. Thus Gregory Nazianzus writes, Χριστὸς βαπτίζεται, συγκατέλωμεν, ἵνα καὶ συνανέλωμεν. (26) When Jesus came up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened οὕς ὁ Ἀδάμ ἐκλείσεν. (27) The victory of Christ is shared by His followers at their baptism, for the evil spirit which attacks them 'fears the water'; ἐμπνέγεται τῇ καθάρσει καθάπερ ὁ Λεγεὼν τῇ θαλάσῃ... (28)

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

The early Church was a teaching Church and believed firmly in the careful instruction of those who entered into membership. This instruction had to do with cardinal matters of faith and practice. In the Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem we have the "earliest extant example of a full, systematic, and continuous course" of instruction for converts. We may take these lectures as evidence for what the Church in Jerusalem of the mid-fourth century wanted its new members to believe. They represent a popular, elementary course in Nicene Theology.

THE DESCENT. Belief in the Descent into Hades is very well attested in these lectures. His statements are straightforward and specific. Thus in Cat. IV. 12, he says, Ἀλλ' ὁ καταβάς εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια, πάλιν ἀνῆλθε καὶ ὁ ταφεὶς Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀνέστη τὸ τρίήμερον ὀληθῶς. (29) In Cat. IV. 14, Cyril takes up the ascent-descent antithesis, making the lowest point of the descent Hades, as one (probably the correct) interpretation of Eph. 4: 9f. does. After mentioning heaven, he goes on to say, Ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ εἰς ᾧδην καταβάς καὶ ἀνελθὼν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀνῆλθε πάλιν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. (30) This deep descent of Christ was typified in the experience of Jonah. In Cat. IV. 20(31) he tells us this about Jonah who prayed such words as in Jon. 2: 3. Although he was in the whale's belly, he said that he was in Hades; τύπος γὰρ ἦν Χριστοῦ, τοῦ μέλλοντος εἰς ᾧδην καταβαίνειν. When Jonah spoke of the σχισμαὶ ὀρέων, he did

(26) Or. XXXIX (PG. 36.49); cf. XL.IX (PG. 36.369).

(27) Ibid. (PG. 36.353).

(28) Or. XL. 35 (PG. 36.409)

(29) PG. 33.469; cf. IV.11, X.4, XIV.1,3,4,17,18,19,20.

(30) PG. 33.472.

(31) PG. 33.849.

so as a type τοῦ μέλλοντος ἐν τῷ λαξευτῷ μνήματι τῆς πέτρας τέσεσθαι. Similarly, though in the sea, Jonah said, I descended into the earth, ἐπειδὴ τύπον ἔφερε τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ καταβάνοντος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν τῆς γῆς. This passage, the last phrase indicates, is an elaboration of the verba Christi in Mt. 12: 40.

The Saviour descended to Hades as other men, but with a vast difference. His descent is unique. His death was real, His descent no less real. To underline this difference he quotes as prophetic Ps. 88: 4, 5 in the 'good' sense. (32) In Cat. X.4 Cyril has it, Νεκρὸς καλεῖται οὐκ ἀπομείνας ἐν νεκροῖς, ὡς πάντες ἐν ᾧ· ἀλλὰ μόνος ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλευθέρως. (33) This difference was registered in the very rocks which were split by fear: 'Ἐν μνήματι πέτρας ἐτέθη ἀληθῶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος· ἀλλὰ πέτραι διεβράβησαν τῷ φόβῳ δι' αὐτόν... (34) Death and Hades were terrified at seeing Him: 'Ἐξεπλήγη ὁ θάνατος θεωρήσας καινὸν τινα κατελθόντα εἰς ᾧδην, δεσμοῖς τοῖς αὐτόθι μὴ κατεχόμενον· τίνας ἔνεκεν, ᾧ πυλωροὶ ᾧδου, τοῦτον ἴδοντες ἐπτήξασθε; τίς ὁ κατέχων ὑμᾶς ἀσυνήθους φόβος; Ἐφυγεν ὁ θάνατος, καὶ φυγὴ τὴν δειλίαν ἠλέγετο... (35)

This theme is doubtless, as in other authors, connected with the victory of Christ, who overthrew Satan's might. (36) Now the very sign of the Cross makes devils tremble. (37) This victorious descent was anticipated in the Baptism of Jesus, according to Cyril. (38) There was, according to Job, a dragon in the waters which draws up Jordan into his mouth (Job 40: 23) 'Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔδει συντρίψαι τὰς κεφαλὰς τοῦ δράκοντος, καταβάς ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ἔδησε τὸν ἰσχυρόν. He quotes other two passages from Job (40: 26, 41: 13) from LXX version to emphasise the terrible destructive power of the dragon. However, προσέειπεν ἡ ψῆχ' ἵνα λοιπὸν ὁ θάνατος φερωθῇ. This, of course, is intimately connected with the baptism of the believer. After baptism the Christian can engage in battle with the adverse powers. (39)

(32) Cf. Origen, in Ev. Matt. X.22, XII.3, XIX.4.

(33) PG. 33.664; cf. XIII.34, XIV.1 (PG. 33.813, 825).

(34) Cat. IV.11 (PG. 33.469).

(35) Cat. IV.19 (PG. 33.848f.).

(36) Cat. XIX.4 (PG. 33.1070).

(37) Cat. I.3, IV.14, XII.3, 36 (PG. 33.373, 472, 773, 815).

(38) Cat. III.11 (PG. 33.441).

(39) Cat. III.13 (PG. 33.444).

He has renounced Satan. (40) For the connection of this with Hades, v.

"Οτε οὖν τῇ Σατανᾷ ἀποστάτη, πᾶσαν τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντως διαθήκην λύσας, τὰς παλαιὰς πρὸς τὸν ἄδην συνθήκας. . . . (41)

Cyril also introduces the idea of the deception of the devil, Δελέαρ τοίνυν τοῦ θανάτου γέγονε τὸ σῶμα, ἵνα ἐλπίσας καταπιεῖν ὁ ὀράκων, ἐξεμέσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἤδη καταποθέντας. . . . (42) This connects with the theme of the liberation of captives from Hades.

DELIVERANCE. As we have just seen, the monster disgorges those it has swallowed. In XIV.17(43) he compares Johah with Jesus and among other things says, κάκεῖνος μὲν ἐβλήθη εἰς κοιλίαν κήτους· οὗτος δὲ κατήλθεν ἐκουσίως, ὅπου τὸ νοητὸν τοῦ θανάτου κήτος· ἐκουσίως κατήλθεν, ἵνα ἐξεμέσῃ τοὺς καταποθέντας ὁ θάνατος, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον. . . (quotes Hos. 13: 14). This liberation of captives is clearly stated to be the purpose of Christ's Descent, Κατήλθεν εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια, ἵνα κάκεῖθεν λυτρώσῃται τοὺς δικαίους. (44) Nor did He fail in His purpose, οὐ μόνον ἀνέστη, ἀλλὰ καὶ νεκροὺς ἔχων ἀνέστη. (45) Indeed, he rescued a great company: τοῦ μόνου μὲν καταβάντος εἰς ἄδην, πολλοστοῦ δὲ ἀναβάντος (then quotes Mt. 27:52) (46)

He thinks it only reasonable to see in the Descent into Hades an extension of Christ's ministry in the land of the living. The whole section here is worth quoting: 'Εβούλου γὰρ, εἶπέ μοι, τοὺς μὲν ζῶντας ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς χάριτος, καὶ ταῦτα τῶν πλείστων οὐχ ὀσίων ὄντων· τοὺς δὲ ἀπὸ 'Αδὰμ πολυχρονίως ἀποκεκλεισμένους, μὴ τυχεῖν τῆς ἐλευθερίας λοιπόν; 'Ησαίας ὁ προφήτης τοσαῦτα περὶ αὐτοῦ μεγαλοφώνως ἐκήρυξεν· οὐκ ἤθελες ἵνα βασιλεὺς κατελθὼν λυτρώσῃται τὸν κήρυκα; Δαβὶδ ἦν ἐκεῖ καὶ Σαμουὴλ, καὶ πάντες οἱ προφῆται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ 'Ιωάννης ὁ λέγων διὰ τῶν ἀποσταλέντων· Ἐγὼ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; οὐκ ἤθελει ἵνα καταβᾷς

(40) Cat. XIX.2 (PG. 33.1068).

(41) Cat. XIX.9 (PG. 33.1073).

(42) Cat. XII.15 (PG. 33.741).

(43) Cat. XIV.17 (PG. 33.848).

(44) Cat. IV.11 (PG. 33.469).

(45) Cat. XIV.12 (PG. 33.840).

(46) Cat. XIV.18 (PG. 33.848); cf. XIII.34 (PG. 33.813); μνήματα ἠνεόχθη καὶ νεκροὶ ἀνέστησαν, διὰ τὸν ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλευθέρων· ἐξαπέστειλε δεσμίους αὐτοῦ ἐκ λάκκου οὐκ ἔχοντος ὕδωρ (Zech. 9: 11).

λυτρώσεται τοὺς τοιούτους. (47) In XIV. 19(48) he adds that, when Christ descended, the holy prophets ran to Him, Moses the lawgiver, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel, Isaiah, John the Baptist.

Ἐλυτροῦντο πάντες οἱ δίκαιοι, οὓς κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος· ἔδει γὰρ τὸν κηρυχθέντα βασιλέα τῶν καλῶν κηρύκων γενέσθαι λυτρωτὴν. Then the righteous said (1 Cor. 15: 55) ἐλύτρώσατο γὰρ ἡμεῖς ὁ νικηφόρος.

Now it should be observed that Cyril restricts this delivering mission to the holy prophets and righteous souls only. All the righteous are redeemed or ransomed, but no one else. This harmonises with his teaching about repentance, which is confirmed to this life. Just as the devil cannot possibly repent (ἀνήλατον τὴν καρδίαν κτησάμενος, ἀμετανοήτον λοιπὸν ἔχει τὴν προαίρεσιν, (49) so those who have died in sins have no further reason for confession.(50) He does speak of the efficacy of prayers for the dead in XXIII. 9.19, but these are the righteous: ἁγίων Πατέρων, καὶ ἐπισκόπων καὶ πάντων ἁπλῶς τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν προκηκοιμημένων. He also teaches the eternity of punishment.(51) Not only were the righteous delivered from Hades, but Paradise, hitherto locked, was now opened. The thief was the first to enter: ὁ τῷ ληστῇ τότε τὸν παράδεισον ἐν τῷ παναγίῳ τούτῳ Γολγοθᾷ διὰ τὴν πίστιν ἀνοίξας....(52) This is to Cyril the most amazing grace: "Ὁ μεγάλης καὶ ἀνεκδιηγήτου χάριτος. οὕπῃ Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πιστὸς εἰσῆλθε, καὶ ὁ ληστὴς εἰσέρχεται· οὕπῃ Μωσῆς καὶ οἱ προφῆται, καὶ ὁ ληστὴς παράνομος εἰσέρχεται. (53)

Two things seem to me to be worthy of note in Cyril's handling of the theme of Christ's liberating descent-mission. First, though he often quotes (sometimes misapplies) scripture to support his contentions, he quotes no scripture to justify his teaching on the purpose of the

(47) Cat. IV.11 (PG. 33.469)

(48) PG. 33. 848f.

(49) Cat. IV.1 (PG. 33.453); this contrary to Origen.

(50) Cat. XVIII.14

(51) Eg. II.1, IV.31, XIII.38.

(52) Cat. I.1 (PG. 33.372; cf. XIII.2,3, XIV.10.

(53) The idea of the opened Paradise is extended in XIX.9 (PG.33.1073), ἀνοίγεται σοι (i.e. the person being baptised) ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ Θεοῦ. cf. I.4 (PG.33.373), καταφυτεύη λοιπὸν εἰς τὸν νοητὸν παράδεισον.

Descent. Second, Cyril gives not even a hint of the idea that Christ preached in Hades.

Cyril bears witness to the following points: that it was orthodox to believe and teach that Christ descended into Hades; That His descent was a descent with a difference; that He deliberately descended to free the captive righteous; that He was completely successful and victorious; that Paradise was opened to the Christian.

EPIPHANIUS. The extent to which this circle of ideas was accepted in that part of the world is also attested by Epiphanius bishop of Salamis. He thus speaks of the uniqueness of the Descent of Christ into Hades : κατέρχεται εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια ἐν θεότητι καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ αἰχμαλωτεύει τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν (Eph. 4.870).(54) The deliverance is carefully restricted to Old Testament saints : ἐπὶ τὸ ἐργάσασθαι τὴν ἐκεί τῶν νεκρωμένων σωτηρίαν, φησὶ δὲ ἁγίων πατριαρχῶν....(55)

APHRAATES.

Syrian

The "Persian Sage" is the oldest Syrian Church Father. His homilies, written between 337 and 345, give a kind of survey of Christian teaching, incidentally supplying valuable evidence for the doctrine of the Descent into Hades. The value of these homilies is further enhanced by their credal significance.(56)

Hom. XII. 6,7 is devoted to proving that Christ was three days with the dead. This, of course, refers to the sojourn in Sheol. "Thou didst send Him down to Sheol when we constrained thee not."(57) In Hom. XXI Aphraates sees several parallels to the Descent in the experiences of Hebrew characters. Thus "Joseph's brethren cast him into a pit; and Jesus' brethren sent Him down to the place of the dead.(58) Though Christ did descend, it was not the descent of submission to death. He was not held in Sheol's grip; "He was delivered from destruction, and went up from the midst of Sheol, and lived (again), and rose on the third day.(59) This is illustrated in Daniel who was

(54) Adv. Haer. 20: 2.

(55) Adv. Haer. 69: 62.

(56) V. Ch.VIII.

(57) Hom. XXIII.

(58) Hom. XXI.9.

(59) Hom. XVII.10.

left unharmed by the lions. "The cast Daniel into the pit of lions, and he came up from the midst thereof acquitted: and Jesus they sent down to the pit of the place of the dead, and He came up, and death had no authority over Him." (60) Not only had Sheol no authority over Jesus, but it was defeated and in defeat forced to yield captive saints to the victorious Christ. Again an illustration is used: "Ananias and his brethren were cast into a furnace of fire, and it became cool as dew upon the righteous (men); and Jesus went down to the place of darkness, and broke the gates thereof and brought out the prisoners." (61) The deliverance itself finds expression in Hom. VI.13: "When our Saviour went down to the place of the dead He quickened and raised up many."

In Aphraates, the, we find the familiar themes of Descent into Hades, Christus Victor, liberation of saints. The only preaching in Hades, however, is proclamation to Death of the future Resurrection which will rob him of all his prisoners.

EPHREM SYRUS

The writings of the extremely productive poet, Ephrem Syrus, present popular Descent-concepts in highly coloured garb. No restraint is exercised in an attempt to heighten the drama of Christ's victorious Descent and to give vivid portrayal of the utter helplessness of Hades to cope with Him. Ephrem shows a preference for dialogue between Death and Hades (e.g. Hymn 35), which allows him to express the sheer terror of Sin, Death, and Satan on the approach of the descending Christ. (62) A most dramatic account of the Descent is given in Hymn 36. (63) The Voice of Christ sounds through Hades and bursts open the graves. Death makes a vain attempt to close the gates of Hades against Him. Nothing can prevent the Saviour from liberating the captive dead. (64) This Hymn reaches its triumphant climax in the words, "Our King, living, has gone forth and gone up out of Hades as a conqueror. Woe has He doubled to them of the left-hand; to evil spirits and to demons He is sorrow, and to Death He is

(60) Hom. XXI.18.

(61) Hom. XXI.19.

(62) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2.XIII.193-6.

(63) Ibid. 196-8.

(64) Adam is freed from the darkest dungeon, v. e.g. Hom. on Easter Eve.

pain, to Sin and Hades mourning." The lamentations of the defeated find expression in Hymns 37-41.(65)

This handling of the Descent closely resembles that of the Gospel of Nicodemus and shows the influence of oriental mythology. Basically, however, Ephrem's material is the doctrine as it appears elsewhere - the defeat of Hades, the liberation of souls from bondage, and (probably) the preaching in Hades.

It is clear from the above that the doctrine of the Descent into Hades was becoming stereotyped in the East. The ideas which are found in these representatives of the Church's teaching recur in others. For example, Eusebius of Caesarea holds essentially the same position: τὰς ἐξ αἰῶνος πύλας τῶν σκοτίων μυχῶν διαρρηγνύς καὶ τοῖς αὐτόθι νεκροῖς, σειραῖς θανάτου πεπεδημένοις, παλίντροπον τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν ζωὴν ἀνόδου τὴν πορείαν ποιούμενος. (66) Chrysostom also describes the same concepts, rhetorically, e.g. ἵνα ᾧδον σκυλεύσῃ τῇ ψυχῇ.. (67) that is, the deliverance-motif; for the preaching, v. De Trin. Dial. 4, μεθ' ἧς καὶ τοῖς ἐν ᾧδου εὐηγγελίσατο. It should be noted that Chrysostom expressly denies the possibility of repentance after death. The general tradition of the East restricts the benefits of Christ's deliverance to the righteous dead. Thus it is that John of Damascus, who sums up the doctrine of the East in 'Expositions of the Orthodox Faith' retains the preaching in Hades and limits the benefit of salvation to the just.(68)

B. THE WEST

Among the representatives of the Eastern Church we have noted several outstanding deviations from the common tradition, but that tradition becomes clear to us as it becomes stereotyped. The process is more advanced in the West, for there the Descent into Hades, as Monnier puts it, "a toute une histoire."(69) The change which is discernible in these authors consists of a further limiting of the activity of Christ in Hades.

(65) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2.XIII.198-205.

(66) Dem. Ev. IV.12.

(67) Dial. 7 adv. Apoll.

(68) III.29.

(69) La Descente aux enfers. p.127.

HILARY

Hilary of Poitiers, being at one and the same time the most learned bishop in Gaul and a stout champion of Nicene orthodoxy, may be considered representative of Western tradition. He teaches that Christ descended and thus subjected Himself to the law of death; the perfect Man descended, as all others do, ad inferos.(70)

He refers several times to 1 Pet. 3: 19 for the preaching in Hades, e.g., "scit exhortationem hanc sanctos quiescentes in inferno desiderare. scit testante apostolo Petro, descendente in inferna Domino etiam his, qui in carcere erant, et increduli quondam fuerant in diebus Noe, exhortationem praedicatam fuisse."(71)

He teaches the rescue of saints from Hades. Christ not only illuminated the darkness, but drew away the spoils of death, as Mt 27: 52 shows.(72) In Tractatus in Ps. 58: 10, he writes, "Cum moriente eo, obscurato sole, lux deperit, cum pendente eo in cruce tremit terra, cum descendente eo ad inferos, sanctos eius inferi non tenent."(73)

During his exile in Phrygia (356 A.D.) Hilary studied Greek theology, the influence of which is seen in his doctrine of the Descent. He takes a wider view than subsequent western orthodoxy. His teaching on the preaching in Hades is shared by AMBROSIASTER, in Ep. ad Rom. 10: 7 and in Ep. ad Eph. 4: 9, where he lays stress upon the victory of Christ and restricts its benefits to saints: "Triumphato ergo diabolo, descendit in cor terrae, ut ostensio eius praedicatio esset mortuorum, et quotquot cupidi eius essent liberarentur."

AMBROSE

"I have known no bishop but Ambrose," said the emperor Theodosius. Ambrose made his influence felt as preacher, theologian, ecclesiastic. Now so far as the Descent is concerned, he holds much the same view as Hilary. He proclaims the defeat of the Devil, Death, and Hades, for Christ triumphed over Satan and conquered the inferi."(74)

It is noticeable that in referring to the preaching, Ambrose speaks

(70) Cf. Tert. De Anima 55.

(71) On Ps. 118: 3, CSEL. XXII.452.

(72) In Matt. Canon. 33.

(73) CSEL. XXII.188.

(74) In Ep. ad Ephes. c.4; de myst. Pasch. II.ser.35 c.4, In Ep. ad Rom. c.10.

of the Presence of Christ in Hades as a preaching to the Dead.(75)

The main emphasis of his doctrine rests upon the deliverance of souls from Hades.(76) This salvation is for righteous souls only and those who hoped in Him and were desirous of Him.(77)

RUFINUS

We should doubtless do wrong to describe Rufinus as a great writer, but he is an important one, the more so in our subject. His *Commentarius in symbolum Apostolorum*, the most valuable of his works, provides us with definite statements on the Descensus, which are made for no other reason than themselves. His treatment of the subject may be taken to represent the normal position of the West.

His whole section opens with the Victory of Christ, the crushing of hostile powers.(78) Thereupon he introduces the deception of the devil, employing the notorious fish-hook metaphor, which he may have borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa.(79)

Consequent upon this is the deliverance of captive souls. "It was as if a king were to go to a dungeon and, entering it, were to fling open its doors, loosen the fetters, break the chains, bolts, and bars in pieces, conduct the captives forth to freedom, and restore 'such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death' to light and life. In a case like this the king is, of course, said to have been in the dungeon, but not under the same circumstances as the prisoners confined within it. They were there to discharge their penalties, but he to secure their discharge from punishment."(80) On His triumphant return from the realm of the dead Christ brought with Him the prisoners of Hades, the righteous souls. The holy city into which they were taken, Mt. 27: 52f., is that to which reference is made in Gal. 4: 26.(81)

Rufinus also quotes 1 Pet. 3: 18-20 (freely) with reference to the Descent into Hades and adds, "Incidentally, this passage makes plain the

(75) In Ep. ad Eph. c.4.

(76) De Fide IV.1; de myst. Pasch. II ser. 35 c.4.

(77) De Fide IV. 1; In Ep. ad Eph. c.4; In Ep ad Rom. 10.

(78) Comm. 14,15 (quoting Phil. 2: 10; Col. 2: 14).

(79) Comm. 16.

(80) Comm. 17.

(81) Comm. 29.

nature of the task He accomplished in the underworld." (82)

Rufinus appears to gather every scripture he can think of as having some bearing upon the subject. This has curious results. For example, to John Baptist's words, 'Art thou he that should come?' he adds the comment, 'Down to Hades, no doubt'.

JEROME

The same circle of ideas is to be found in Rufinus's contemporary and erstwhile friend Jerome. There is the defeat of the strong one, who is bound and held fast in Tartarus. Death is plundered, captives are freed, namely, the righteous. He finds, incidentally, a type of this in Daniel's fiery furnace and the miraculous deliverance therefrom. (83) It is ad coelos that these souls are led, the holy city being the heavenly Jerusalem. The dramatic representation of the Descent is retained, while its benefits are carefully restricted to the righteous of the Old Covenant. This restriction is the Western tradition. PHILASTERIUS of Brescia speaks for others too, when he condemns those, "qui dicunt dominum in infernum descendisse, et omnibus post mortem etiam ibidem renuntiassse, ut confitentes ibidem salvarentur." (84)

AUGUSTINE

The great Augustine emphasised the more restricted and rigorous view and his influence here as elsewhere is enormous. Being unquestionably a great Christian, a great Latin author, a great theologian, he has left his mark on all the main strands of Western Christianity. He was evidently somewhat unsure about the nature of Hades and hesitant about some aspects of the doctrine of Christ's Descent thither. With Augustine the idea of preaching in Hades comes under suspicion. The famous Petrine passage is shown of all reference to the Descent, as we have already observed, and Augustine's interpretation has its many followers, especially in medieval theology; it has never quite lost its grip.

Augustine teaches the liberation-purpose of the Descent, but qualifies it carefully. For in harmony with his own belief that there can be no

(82) Comm. 28.

(83) Cf. Aphraates, Hom. XXI.19.

(84) Haer. 125 (CSEL. 38.90).

salvation after death, he writes, "Alia est haeresis, descendente ad inferos Christo credidisse incredulos, et omnes inde existimant liberatos." (85) The rescued, accordingly, are the patriarchs, Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, but he does add a covering note in *De gen. ad lit.* 12, 33, 63, "Et Christi quidem animam venisse usque ad ea loca in quibus peccatores cruciantur, ut eos solveret a tormentis, quos esse solvendo occulte nobis sua iustitia indicabat, non immerito creditur." (86) But the fixity of the doctrine is there, and there to stay.

The main emphasis of orthodox teaching becomes, as Firmicus Maternus had placed it in c.346, the defeat of Death and triumph of Christ: "Clausit ianuas sedis infernae, et durae legis necessitatem caleata morte probavit....fregit claustra perpetua, et ferreae fores, Christo iubente, collapsae sunt." (87) All that is needed in the West is that the result of the development of the doctrine be made explicitly binding. This is done by Gregory the Great, when he imposes Augustine's doctrine as a necessary belief: there can be no conversion after death; consequently, the Descent into Hades can benefit the just only: nothing else is to be accepted. (88)

(85) *Haer.* 79.

(86) *CSEL.* 28.III.2.428.

(87) *De err. prof. rel.* 25.

(88) *Ep.* 7.

Chapter VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

The evidence for the doctrine of the Descent into Hades, as we have examined it, in the New Testament and Patristic literature, points to a development from a simple to a more complex form. Whether the process is to be explained entirely in terms of an expansion from within or as due in part to external influence and foreign accretions, is a question which is related to the problem of the origins of the doctrine and will receive fuller consideration later. For the moment it will suffice to observe that the pattern of development reveals three frequently intertwining strands, namely, the defeat of Hades, the preaching in Hades, the liberation of souls from Hades, by the descending-rising Christ.

1. THE DEFEAT OF HADES

The Descent into Hades, it is true, offers in the New Testament a sharp contrast to the Ascent into Heaven and in this sense expresses the depths of the Lord's self-humiliation: He became like men and descended even to Hades as men do. From its earliest representations, however, the Descensus-teaching also emphasises the uniqueness of the event. David died and was buried and his tomb remains, but Hades could not hold David's greater Son.⁽¹⁾ The prominent place which apostolic preaching and teaching gives to the Resurrection of Christ affects its presentation of the Descent. The doctrine is seen in relation to the theme of Christus Victor. Christ, though submitting to the law of death, is 'free among the dead', for neither Death nor Hades held any right over Him. And so by His very submission He achieved His triumph.

It would be impossible here to embark on a discussion of the conception of Christus Victor, but its relationship to our subject may be briefly acknowledged. At death Christ conquered 'principalities and powers', Death itself, Hades, and Satan. The earliest tradition does not regard Satan as the ruler of the underworld; the only ⁽²⁾ probable exception among earlier authors is Origen, who frequently, of course,

(1) Acts 2: 23-32.

(2) I.e. apart from Test. XII Patriarchs

uses the same descriptions of Satan as of Death. We may, therefore, pass over the ideas of a ransom paid to the devil and the deception of the devil, which have been given ample enough mention above. Of primary concern here is the defeat of Death and Hades. This is probably implied wherever the liberation of captives occurs, but is often accorded independent description. It appears in the Odes of Solomon, Ascension of Isaiah, Melito, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian (perhaps), Victorinus, Lactantius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gospel of Nicodemus, Acts of Thomas; in other words, in every type of author and context. Thereafter the defeat of Hades settles into the stereotyped tradition of both East and West - Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Cyril of Jerusalem, Aphraates, Ephrem; Hilary, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, Rufinus, Jerome, et al. The conquest of Hades becomes the orthodox doctrine of the Descent.

In process of development, this aspect of the Descensus receives vivid and dramatic embellishment. There is no suggestion of a conflict of Christ with Hades. This is stressed in the descriptions of the terror of Hades: the gatekeepers tremble with fear at the approach of Christ, as we find, for example, in Hippolytus, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Odes of Solomon, Hilary, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the creeds of Nice, Sirmium and Constantinople. Another element in the dramatic accounts is the breaking down of the gates of Hades, as in Tertullian, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Ambrose, Aphraates, Ephrem, Teaching of Thaddaeus. Hades and Satan appear together in some versions and dialogue serves to heighten the sense of terror and defeat.

The simple idea of the defeat of Death and Hades can be traced to the New Testament itself; (3) may be implied in Hos. 13: 14, Isa. 25: 8; is envisaged in 4 Esdras VIII.53. It may be regarded as implicit too in the doctrine of the Resurrection. The picture of the trembling doorkeepers is probably derived from Job 38: 17 (LXX). Similarly, the breaking of Hades' gates may go back to Old Testament phrases. (4) That the great struggles known to mythology have brought their influence to bear on the development of these rhetorical accounts is quite probable, for those who develop the theme do not live in a cultural vacuum, but more of this later.

(3) e.g. Heb. 2: 14f., Rev. 1: 18, 20: 14.

(4) e.g. Ps. 107: 16, Isa. 45: 2. The Gospel of Nicodemus uses Ps. 24: 7f. to introduce the incident. V. Mt. 16: 18 for gates of Hades in NT.

2. THE PREACHING IN HADES

The Descent, conceived as not simply a passive experience, but a deliberately soteriological mission, receives early and widespread expression in terms of evangelism or enlightenment. The tradition of Christ's preaching in Hades is found in Ignatius (i.e. by inference), Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria (who thinks this is the sole purpose of the Descent), Origen; the Elder of Irenaeus taught it; both Irenaeus and Justin quote the apocryphon which contains it; the heretic Marcion is known to have used it and the pagan Celsus to have heard of it. Early attestation is given also by the Odes of Solomon, Gospel of Peter, Epistle of the Apostles, Sibylline Oracles.

The authority of the New Testament is not invoked by any of the early writers to support this 'preaching' idea. There is no direct appeal to the famous Petrine loci. Cyprian is the first to use 1 Pet. 4: 6, but he cannot be thinking of the Descent at all. It is noticeable that while he quotes v.18 of 1 Pet. 3, he ignores v.19. The first writer to refer to 1 Pet. 3: 19 for Christ's preaching in Hades is Clement of Alexandria, who, incidentally, does not employ the passage as we might have expected. Allusions to 1 Pet. 3, however, may be seen in Ignatius, Odes of Solomon, Gospel of Peter, Epistle of the Apostles, and to 4: 6 in Hippolytus. Why should these writers, lacking any other New Testament support, display such reticence with regard to these passages? For one thing there is a definite limitation of the audience addressed. It speaks of the disobedient, whereas they intend to speak of the righteous as Christ's hearers. This would make Peter's words unsuitable for their purposes. Is it not possible that 1 Pet. 4: 6 was never in their reckoning, simply because it has nothing to do with the Descent? As for 3: 19ff., we may assume either that it did not seem to refer to the same kind of preaching as they intended or that the passage was as enigmatic to them as to most others. The early writers do not appeal to the Old Testament for this preaching.(5)

The theme of the preaching is consistently held to be the Gospel and with almost equal regularity the listeners are said to be patriarchs, prophets, the righteous, faithful, saints. There is an extension of the

(5) Clement thinks the preaching is foretold in Job 28: 22.

the mission to others, possibly in Hippolytus, definitely in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. In mentioning the preaching, Justin does not make any definite allusion to the deliverance, while Tertullian, who alludes to the preaching, denies any liberation. The connection between the preaching and the liberation is clearly affirmed by Origen.

There are also traditions which do not limit the preaching activity to Christ's Descent. There is the idea that He had forerunners in Hades who proclaimed His coming. Origen teaches that the prophets performed this function. The commoner view gives the privilege to John the Baptist as in Hippolytus, Origen (who gives this as the reason for John's dying before Jesus), Gregory Nazianzus, Gospel of Nicodemus.(6)

The other tradition makes the apostles the followers of Christ in Hades. The preaching-mission of the apostles and teachers is, in fact, the only one known to Hermas, who was, of course, already predisposed to the belief. The Shepherd becomes Clement's authority for maintaining that the apostles preached in Hades.

This preaching in Hades cannot be traced to pagan sources, for those myths which might have brought influence to bear on the early Christian writers, the Greek, Babylonian or Egyptian, know nothing of a pulpit in the underworld. Nor is the idea foreshadowed in the Old Testament, although it is possible that such a scripture as Isa. 26: 19 as well as others, might be construed freely to accommodate it.

There are possible sources in Judaism, e.g. Ecclesi. 24: 5, where Wisdom declares, "Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven, And walked in the depth of the abyss." An early Latin version(7) of Ecclesi. 24: 32 reads, "Penetrabo omnes inferiores partes terrae et inspiciam omnes dormientes, et illuminabo omnes sperantes in Domino." There may be a resemblance in this, as MacCulloch suggests, to the apocryphon quoted by Justin and Irenaeus. In addition to these, there is the activity of Enoch, who preached doom to the fallen angels.(8)

Once the Descent of Christ is conceived actively in soteriological terms, it would not be difficult to entertain the thought of His preaching. If the work of His Descent is parallel to, or an extension of,

(6) John's words in Lk. 7: 20 are sometimes referred to a meeting in Hades: Cyril Cat. XIV 219; Rufinus Symb. 28; Chrysostom In Matt. Hom. 36.3.

(7) Possibly a Christian interpolation.

(8) En. XII-XIV.

His earthly ministry, then it will be only natural to suppose that the Teacher preached in Hades. When this idea is accepted, the references to the prophets, John the Baptist, and the apostles follow easily.

3. THE LIBERATION OF SOULS FROM HADES

The earliest post-biblical traditions of the Descent which have come down to us believe that the event has a doctrinal significance. It has brought about some change in the condition of the righteous dead. This change is conceived in terms of a deliverance. Indeed, so firmly is this basic soteriological concept established that it is almost universally present in the doctrine of the Descent. It is a theme which has appealed not only to the theologian but also to the preacher and poet, "who could work up the incident to a rhetorical pitch or give it a realistic colouring." (9) It appears in every kind of writing and is at no period absent from Christian teaching, popular and otherwise. It is found in Ignatius, Hermas, Justin (implied), Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Lactantius (possibly), Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, the Cappadocians, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Aphraates, Ephrem, Hilary, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, Rufinus, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great; in Marcion; in Ascension of Isaiah, Odes of Solomon, Epistle of the Apostles, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Gospel of Nicodemus, Teaching of Thaddaeus, Acts of Thomas. The liberating purpose of the Descent is never in doubt. It is denied most definitely by Tertullian, with whose doctrine of the Intermediate State it could not agree. The vehemence of his arguments suggest that he knows he is contradicting a generally accepted tradition. Tertullian apart, any controversy which does arise concerns the details and scope of that deliverance, not the deliverance itself.

Different answers are given to the question of who benefited from the saving mission. The earliest tradition restricts its considerations to the righteous of Old Testament times. Ignatius speaks of the raising of the prophets, Hermas of the faithful and righteous. According to the Ascension of Isaiah, many of the righteous are rescued; in the Odes of Solomon it is the righteous and faithful, in the Epistle of the Apostles the righteous and prophets, in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs the saints. Irenaeus includes Adam, Abraham, and his posterity, the

righteous, the prophets, and the patriarchs. That this was the common tradition is also attested by Marcion's restriction of the benefices to Cain and the wicked of Old Testament times. The Alexandrians extend the scope of the deliverance, Clement regarding righteous pagans as sharing in the liberation. This view is maintained by Origen, who goes further and by including even the disobedient extends the mission to universal proportions. Evidently, such ideas were in vogue in Augustine's day, but he limits the deliverance, somewhat vaguely, to those sinners who were known by Christ to be worthy of it. Ambrose and Ambroseaster had spoken of the deliverance of those who desired or hoped in Christ. Cyril of Alexandria goes even further than Origen and empties all Hades and the insupportable recesses of Death, leaving the devil solitary and desolate. This development of the doctrine, however, is not allowed to gain ground. Both East and West in Nicene and Post-Nicene days put their seal of approval upon the opinion which restricts the benefits of the Descent to righteous souls.

Tertullian, we have seen, sways by the two-fold division of Hades and permits only martyrs by their blood to enter Paradise immediately. Others think of the termination of the use of part of Hades for righteous souls. Not all who teach the deliverance from Hades attempt to work out the view logically. Where were the righteous removed to?

Some writers leave the reference rather hazy. Ignatius merely says, 'raised from the dead', while Hippolytus speaks of a destination 'on high' and Clement mentions 'a better state'. The commonest view seems to transfer these souls from Hades to Heaven or Paradise. This higher state is enjoyed immediately at death by Christians, though this is denied by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

Some of those who make Paradise the place of transfer have an earthly conception of it. It is the place from which Adam was ejected and will become the future dwelling of God's saints. Origen put Paradise, a school for souls, on earth, but from it saints are to ascend through the spheres until they are eventually united with Christ. Others describe Paradise as being in Heaven or the Third Heaven. It was thither that Enoch and Elijah were translated. Whichever view is adopted, there remains a certain inconsistency, which is partly due to different uses of the terms 'Hades' and 'Abraham's Bosom'. It was Augustine who first

drew attention to this. If the Old Testament saints were in Abraham's Bosom in Hades and were delivered therefrom and taken to Paradise, then the righteous of Christian times will also go to Paradise; but as Abraham's Bosom is still spoken of as the abode of the righteous, it must be regarded as no longer, or as never before, part of Hades. If it never was, what difference did the Descent of Christ make? There is, however, no fixity in the patristic usage of these terms. As MacCulloch puts it, "The general view was that the Old Testament saints had been removed to a higher state, by whatever name that might be called, and that righteous Christians shared this state with them." (10)

We have already noted that the deliverance of souls from Hades, for all its popularity later, has no place in the doctrine in the New Testament. The story of its development begins in the second century. Yet when we examine these early passages, we discover that they are depending on certain phrases of Scripture. Thus the first of the Fathers to teach this, Ignatius, has Mt. 27: 51-53 in mind and his is but the first of a long line of patristic references to that passage. Again, it has frequently been supposed that Eph. 4: 8-10 warrants the doctrine of the deliverance of the righteous. The interpretations of those verses help on the development of this side of the doctrine.

Certain Old Testament scriptures were also thought to suggest the idea. They were definitely used as prophetic accounts of the release from Sheol. (11) Once writers began to find scriptural authority for the liberation-motif, its establishment as orthodox doctrine was assured and the development of the theme inevitable.

That both the Old and New Testament scriptures were called upon to substantiate preconceived notions seems certain. These ideas in their turn sprang no doubt from the firm grasp which the early Christians had of the solidarity of the Old and New Covenants. Why should Christian believers enjoy Christ's salvation, if it be denied to the holy men of God who lived and spoke so faithfully in their day? Was a first or second century follower of Christ to be more highly privileged than Abraham, the father of the faithful? The Descent into Hades and the liberation of those souls seemed to solve the problem. This is attested by the everywhere-prevalent and avowedly-orthodox restriction of the liberated.

(10) Op. cit., p.272.

(11) V. Appendix 3.

Chapter VIII

THE DESCENT IN THE CREED

The first creed to accord official recognition to the Descent into Hades is the Fourth Formula of Sirmium, the 'Dated Creed' of 359 A.D. The article appears also in the contemporary Homoean creeds of Nice (359) and Constantinople (360), both of which are based upon the Dated Creed. Their relevant sections may be set down as follows in parallel columns to show their similarities and differences:

SIRMIMUM	NICE	CONSTANTINOPLE
καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα, καὶ τὰ ἐκείσε ἐκείσε, ὅπου ὁ πυλῶροι ἄδου ἔχοντες ἐφριξαν.	καὶ ταφέντα καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα. ὅν ὁ ἄδης ἐτρόμασε.	καὶ ταφέντα καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατεκληυθότα. ὄντινα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ἄδης ἐπτηξεν.

The only addition made by the two later formulae is καὶ ταφέντα. It is possible, therefore, that the idea of burial is implied in the first; that the others were unwilling to omit direct and explicit reference to the burial, because after all it is included in Paul's summary in 1 Cor. 15: 3,4 (credal), while they were willing to retain the Descent. The dramatic tone of all three derives from the last phrase in each, in which the terror of Hades is expressed. This itself goes back ultimately to Job 38: 17 (LXX), πυλῶροι ἄδου ἔχοντες σε ἐφριξαν. The Sirmian alters the main verb, which, however, is retained in the Constantinopolitan with a change of subject. The citation from Job is already found in Hippolytus, περὶ τοῦ ἀγίου πασχ., in Athanasius, In illud omnia 2 (in the constantinopolitan form) and in Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. IV.19 (all quoted above). Cyril, whose Catechetical Lectures were delivered at least a decade before the Synod of Sirmium, has influenced other parts of its formula.(1) It has also been

(1) A.E. Burn, Introduction to the Creeds, p.203; H.B. Swete, The Apostles' Creed, p.57.

suggested that the formula comes from the Aquileian (Kattenbusch): the force of this statement will be seen later. Yet another possibility, a strong one, remains.

The author of the Dated Creed is identified by Soerates(2) as Mark of Arethusa, who was a Syrian. Now there is some fairly sound evidence that the Descent had its place in early Syrian creed-forms. R.H. Connolly has reconstructed the creed of Aphraates and at the relevant place reads,

"And suffered, or, and was crucified,
went down to the place of the dead, or, to Sheol."

The Descent occurs, as we have noticed, in Ignatius, the Gospel of Peter, the Edessene document contained in the Teaching of Thaddaeus and quoted by Eusebius, is referred to seven or eight times by Aphraates, twice in the Acts of Thomas, and in Ephrem several times. It seems to have been a favourite theme in Syria and is not surprisingly figuring in Syrian credal material. The Syrian Didascalia includes in its doxology the sentence, "Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and departed into peace, in order to preach to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the saints concerning the ending of the world and the resurrection of the dead."

Connolly notes that the Syriac translation of the New Testament *ܥܢ ܝܡܝܬܐ* is not only 'from among the dead', but also 'from the place (house) of the dead', synonymous with Sheol. "Because of this the Syriac-speaking Christian was always being confronted in his New Testament with the Lord's ascent from Sheol, implying His descent." (3) The Peshitta has specific mention of Sheol in Rom. 10: 6,7. (4) The clause appears to have been used in Syriac formulae as a substitute for the statement of the burial. (5) From all this it seems likely that it was due to Syrian influence that the Descent found its way into the creeds of the West, though, strangely enough, it never secured a place in the official creeds of the East.

In the West the first baptismal creed known to us to include the Descent into Hades is the Creed of Aquileia. Our authority for this formula is Rufinus, who used it in writing his *Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum*. It contained the clause,

"crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato et sepultus,
descendit ad inferna....."

(2) Hist. eccl. 2.30. (3) Connolly ZNTW. 1906. p.213.

(4) In Peter, of course, is not in the Syriac canon.

(5) N.b. no burial in Dated Creed.

Rufinus remarks, "Sciendum sane est quod in ecclesiae Romanae symbolo non habetur additum, descendit ad inferna; sed neque in Orientis ecclesiis habetur hic sermo." (6) Nor does the Descent appear in other summaries of doctrine which are given by writers who confess their belief in it in other parts of their works. Rufinus, who had spent some time in Rome, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, has not much information about the introduction of the clause into the creed, remarking that it seems to have much the same implication as 'buried'. As he has lost the clue, we may assume that it was not a recent addition. H.B. Swete, indeed, is inclined to assign the clause in the Aquileian Creed to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third. It was towards the end of the second century that a preference for set forms was becoming prevalent. During the critical period of the third century, when the influx of large numbers of pagans into the Church was threatening the integrity of her teaching, a more careful and rigorous catechetical system became necessary. The main articles of belief had to be driven home. Each local church had its own creed, derived it is true from that of Rome, but with its own additions and probably differing from that of its neighbours. This situation prevailed for a long time. This, of course, does not prove Swete's view is correct, but it does suggest that it is reasonable.

We are no more certain about the purpose which lies behind the insertion of the clause into the creed. It is customary to take a hint from the history of other articles and think of an anti-heretical motive. One theory (King, History of the Apostles' Creed) would connect the introduction of the Descent into the creed with an attempt to combat Apollinarianism. This view, however, is vitiated by some serious difficulties. For one thing, no great importance is attached to any argument from the Descent in anti-Apollinarian writers (though the fourth century tract, Contra Apoll., does employ it, arguing that it was with His human soul that the Lord descended to the underworld). Further, the Descent into Hades appears in Syrian credal material long before Apollinarius began to write. A different anti-heretical motive is suggested by Swete, who thinks that the Docetic tendency of the latter part of the second century will have supplied the occasion for

the insertion. The intention would then be to underline the reality of the Lord's death. Difficulties present themselves here too. The frequent references to the Descent would not in themselves suggest any such intention, except perhaps Ignatius ad Trall. IX with his repetition of ἀληθῶς. Moreover, writings of definite Docetic flavour, the Gospel of Peter (of Syrian provenance) and the Ascension of Isaiah, teach the doctrine distinctly. Rufinus mentions the reasons for the inclusion of other clauses, e.g. invisibile et impassibile; why not for this one?

Harnack may come nearer to the truth when he suggests that the motive at work is the desire to make the article on Christ more complete. We have observed that the doctrine of the Descent was known and taught in some form or other by authors of all kinds in the early Church. Its place in the Catechetical Lectures of Cyril at Jerusalem favoured its inclusion in the Dated Creed. Might not the same influences have been at work in Aquileia. The phrase, as it appears in the creed of that Church and in others (ad inferna, infernum), would commend itself by its Scriptural authority, being the Old Latin and Vulgate renderings of

πῶς ἔψυχον τῷ τῷ and LXX εἰς ᾧδου κατέβη. (7) If we could be sure that it came in from Syrian sources, then probably it originally meant, or was seen to include, the idea of burial (in the Sirmian). Now the appearance of ταφέντα in the formulae of Nice and Constantinople indicates that their authors regarded the Burial and Descent as requiring separate affirmation; that they wished to underline the other ideas of the Descent into Hades.

The Descensus is doubtless welcomed or retained by creeds at different times for different reasons, a consideration which seems frequently to have been overlooked. The clause, if not originally employed to combat Docetism or Apollinarianism, could certainly be so used by interested parties. Again, the Descent into Hades together with the traditions which had adhered to it, must have seemed to Christians, once it was inserted, to be a not inappropriate element of confession. If H.A. Blair's ideas about a mystery-creed (which he thinks is to be found in 1 Tim. 3: 16, 1 Pet. 3: 18f.) were correct, they might hold the key to the problem of the when and wherefore of the Descent's presence in credal formulae.

The Faith of St. Jerome, which is of uncertain origin and is thought

(7) E.g. Ps. 54: 15, 113: 17, 138: 8; Isa. 14: 11; Ezek. 31: 15.

to have combined Nicene elements with others drawn from local creeds, possibly Pannonian, contains the phrase, "Descended into Hades, trod down the sting of death." The Descent has a place also in the Quicumque vult. It does not appear in the oldest extant Spanish creed, quoted by Priscillian; but the sixth century Spanish creed, constructed from the writings of Martin of Braga, Ildofonsus of Toledo, Etherius and Beatus, contains the clause, "descendit ad inferna."

It also appears in Gallic creeds from the time of Caesarius, the eloquent Bishop of Arles, who died in 542 and who had been granted power by Symmachus in 514 to settle questions of faith in Spain and Gaul alike. The Descent is found in the creed of Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, who in early life had stayed at Aquileia, a sojourn which may well account for his inclusion of this clause in his creed. In the seventh or eighth century Gallican Sacramentary, or Missal of Bobbio, it occurs with the spelling 'discondit ad inferna'. Irish churchmen had close relations with Gaul and Spain and this is reflected in the Antiphonary of Bangor, written c.680-91, which confesses, "discendit ad inferos." (We know that the Descent did not appear in the fifth century symbols of Rome, Africa, or Faustus of Riez.)

The Received Text of the Apostles' Creed is first found in the tract, *De singulis libris canonicis scrupulus*, written at some time between 710 and 724 by Priminus (or Firminius), founder of the monastery of Reichenau. It is now generally accepted that this (T) originated, not in Rome (as Hahn, Burn), but in Southern Gaul, somewhere north of the Alps, at some date in the late sixth or in the seventh century.(8) The Descent is thereafter established as an article of the Creed. A century later, the Church of Rome, which had in the fifth century replaced the Old Roman Creed by that of Constantinople, now that the latter had served its purpose, adopted the symbol of the protectors of the Church. Thus the Old Roman Creed of the second century, which made no reference to the Descent into Hades, eventually in one of its derived forms reached its final development in France, came to be adopted at Rome and receive universal acceptance as the Apostles' Creed, in which it is confessed, "descendit ad inferna."

(8) J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, p.420.

Chapter IX

THE ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE

Several possible explanations of the origin of the doctrine of the Descent into Hades are to be taken into consideration. Is its origin and development wholly indigenous to Christianity? In this case, the presence of details borrowed from elsewhere, e.g. the narrow and dangerous bridge of the underworld in Gregory the Great, is quite incidental. Or is its basis Christian, while its development is guided by pagan influence and accretions? Or again, is the doctrine to be accounted for entirely in terms of paganism?

Its origins are frequently sought in pagan mythology. This is not surprising, for numerous stories are told of descent into the underworld. These stories probably originated in dream or trance visits to the dead, which became factua^lised.⁽¹⁾ They are certainly widespread, appearing among American Indians, Polynesians, Melanesians, Japanese, Africans, Egyptians, Greeks, Babylonians, Scandinavians and others. Now clearly not all of these could have been directly influential in the formation of Christian doctrine. We cannot suppose that early Christians knew directly or indirectly of the descent-myths of Buddhism or Hinduism. The possible sources may be restricted to those which we might reasonably expect Christians to have known directly or indirectly. The field is thus narrowed to Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek sources.

The Lay of Istar's Descent to Hades tells of Istar's love for Duzi or Dumuzi (Tammuz) which impelled her upon his death to travel to the underworld; of how she came to the gates of Aralu and obtained admission; of how she had to strip herself of part of her garments at each of the seven gates, in accordance with the inexorable law; of how at last she reached the cheerless, dusty, dark abodes of the dead, where the grim queen afflicted her with dread disease; of how she lay imprisoned until she was sprinkled with the water of life and brought to the light again by a messenger of the gods. Two myths are believed to underlie the poem,

(1) Some, e.g. Tylor, think that the descent-legends were suggested by observation of the setting and rising sun; others, e.g. Harrison, connect them with the ritual of death and revival of a vegetation-deity.

that of Istar's deliverance of Tammuz, celebrated annually, and that of Istar's deliverance from Aralu. That such legends could have been influential on the Christian doctrine seems incredible. They are quite incompatible with primitive Christian ideas. Moreover, the supposed influence must have come via Jewish sources and this makes the argument even more flimsy. The stories of Gilgamesh and Nergal shed no more light upon our subject.

Mandaean myths, too, have been credited with formative influence over the Christian doctrine. There is the descent of the heavenly power Hibil Ziwa with the purpose of forestalling a rebellion in the lower world. It includes the account of the conflict with the giant Krun, the swallowing and regurgitation of the hero by the giant, the latter's surrender of the talisman and ring by which the power of the rebellious demons may be shattered, the sealing of the doors of each world, the triumph over Ur. The basis of this is evidently the Babylonian myth of Marduk and Tiamat. A similar descent legend speaks of Manda d' Hayye and the conquest of Ruha and Ur. There can be no doubt that the main incidents in these myths are incorporated in Gnosticism. The great difficulty, however, is to decide whether this is pre-Christian Gnosticism. It is at least theoretically possible. There is consequently the possibility that the Mandaean myths, ultimately derived from pagan sources, passed on through Gnosticism material which decisively affected the Christian orthodox teaching. In itself, the Mandaean myth cannot be regarded as a real parallel to the Christian belief in the Descent into Hades. Hades in Gnosticism usually signifies this present world of men and the Gnostic Descent is that of a divine Aeon through the successive spheres to our earth.(2) The element of the defeat of hostile powers and the aim of enlightenment and deliverance of souls are found, though in different senses, in both gnostic and orthodox doctrine. It may well be that the gnostic scheme represents a syncretism of Christian and pagan ideas, and as such is influenced by, rather than responsible for, the catholic tradition.

It seems certain that the classical Greek stories of descents into Hades are not in themselves the origins of the Christian ideas. I refer to those of Dionysos and Semelo, Herakles and Alceste, the rash ventures

(2) Marcion, we have seen, is exceptional.

of Theseus and Pirothous, which also brings Horakles into the picture, of Odysseus's visit to the shades to consult Teiresias, of the Latin version in Virgil's Aeneid in which Aeneas's purpose is to consult his father, and, most famous of all, of Orpheus and Eurydice. The strongest case for pagan origins is that which points to Orphism as the source. P. Gardner, for example, states that "the notion of the Descent into Hades arose under the influence of a particular school of Pagan mythology, that of the Orphists, and was, like many another Pagan belief, admitted into Christianity after baptism into the name of Christ." (3) The case for this seems strengthened by the fact that Orphism had its firmest foothold, not among pure Greeks, but among the hellenised peoples of Asia Minor, Syria, and Southern Italy. Gardner thinks that the Descensus stands out almost alone as an example of direct borrowing from Greek mystic lore in the early times of Christianity. (4) To prove the possibility of influence, however, is not to demonstrate the actuality of origin. Nor does similarity of ideas prove identity of doctrine. When a careful examination of the case for pagan origins is made, the theory almost collapses.

There are similarities, it is true, but all stories of a descent into the underworld are in the very nature of things likely to have similar features. As MacCulloch puts it, "The existence of such similar tales in all parts of the world is strongly suggestive not only of the possibility of similar ideas arising under similar conditions, but also of the universal desire and longing for continued communion with the dead." (5) The similarities should not be allowed to cloud over the clear differences.

Consider first the person who descends. In pagan traditions, the person is invariably a god, goddess or hero, or living mortal, who makes his way in and out alive; he does not die and return to life. This is graphically portrayed in Virgil's description of the effect of Aeneas's boarding Charon's ferry-boat:

"simul accipit alveo
ingentem Aenean. gemit sub pondere cumba
sutilis, et multam accipit rimosa paludem." (6)

(3) *Exploratio Evangelica*, p.265.

(4) *Ibid.* p.274.

(5) *Harrowing of Hell*, p.20. Witness also the persistent attraction of 'spiritualism'.

(6) *Aen.* VI.412-4.

Further, the preaching in Hades, as we noted above, cannot be traced to pagan myths early enough or near enough to influence the Christian tradition at its inception.

With regard to the deliverance of souls from Hades, immediate parallels are not forthcoming; the differences are marked. The descent in such myths and cults as have been considered has as its purpose the release of one person and his restoration to earthly life. This will hardly account for the common Christian tradition of the transference of Old Testament worthies to bliss.

There are evidently missing links in this theory of evolution. This being the case, it is reasonable to conclude that, if the rise of the doctrine of the Descent can be accounted for in Jewish-Christian terms, there remains no place for finding its source in pagan mythology.(7) It remains to ask whether a sufficient explanation appears within the Christian tradition itself.

There is a marked difference between apostolic and patristic - not to mention apocryphal - treatment of the doctrine. Our question really is whether there is a sound enough explanation from within for this difference. Is the growth from New Testament reticence to the doctrine of the second century a natural process?

The simplest form of the belief in the Descent, namely, the acceptance of the entrance of Christ into the realm or state of death in terms of a descent into Hades, requires no other explanation than a reference to the common beliefs of Judaism. As Geschwind says, "Die Hüllenfahrt Christi ist somit, im Lichte der zeitgenössischen jüdischen und urchristlichen Theologie betrachtet, nichts anderes als ein Postulat der Lehre vom Zwischenzustand der abgeschiedenen Seelen; sie ist ein Annex, eine Folge seines wirklich eingetreten Todes." (8) In primitive Christianity, attention was given to the glorious fact of the Resurrection and faith was focussed in the Risen Lord. This, I think, would deter early believers from any persistent enquiry about the Death-Resurrection interval and explain, too, why Harnack is able to say that in the first

(7) That that mythology, especially classical, should bring some influence to bear on the statement of the doctrine by later authors, whose education included the classics, need occasion no surprise.

(8) Die Niederfahrt Christi, p.157.

century the Descensus "still remained uncertain, lying on the borders of those productions of religious fancy which were not able at once to acquire a right of citizenship in the communities." (9)

Granted that the simple, unadorned belief in the Descent was there from the start, someone was bound to ask sooner or later what the state or activity of Christ was in Hades. The question once asked would provoke various suggestions formed by analogy with His earthly mission; the Old Testament was a source-book ready to hand. The Resurrection itself would account for the belief in the defeat of Death and Hades; descriptive details could easily be supplied from the source-book. This aspect of the Descent-tradition lent itself to the full play of rhetorical powers and poets and preachers were not lacking to exploit it with well-intentioned enthusiasm. There is no need to look further than this for a satisfactory explanation.

The preaching motif presents a slightly different story, but one no less easy to follow. We have already spoken of its uniqueness and its freedom from pagan influence, the possibility of its sources' being in Judaism, the silence of early writers so far as any New Testament authority for it is concerned. The argument by analogy seems fruitful. If Christ had any mission or activity to fulfil for the souls of the departed, then presumably it would resemble His earthly ministry. Now He entered upon that public ministry, preaching the good news. By conjecture, the Descent into Hades, continuing the mission of the Descent to this earth, would also appropriately include preaching. This, of course, is all the while to be connected with another motive, now to be considered.

The early Christians, conscious of their union with the saints of the Old Covenant, could not suppose that they themselves were to enjoy all the blessings of Christ's advent, while Abraham and the other patriarchs, the prophets such as Isaiah, were denied any share in His salvation. The Descent seemed to suggest an obvious answer to this: the knowledge which those saints lacked was supplied by His preaching to them in Hades. Their share in the promised salvation was described in terms of deliverance and transference to a happier state. "The mythical idea of the rescue of the dead by a Redeemer is one which was

(9) History of Dogma, I.202.

almost bound to arise quite independently wherever an ethical religion combined the ideas of punishment after death for sin and of salvation through a Divine or semi-Divine being. That it did so in Christianity cannot reasonably be doubted."(10) The special motives herein considered suggest that the probability of the development of these ideas from within is all the stronger. Given the basic concepts, the ingenuity of preachers and poets, the power of religious imagination, the 'testimonies' culled from Old Testament scriptures, these in themselves provide adequate material to produce the Gospel of Nicodemus, which is the most thorough-going attempt to give a coherent and graphic account of the Descent into Hades. The fact that the elaborations of the story as told in the first few centuries can all be traced to Jewish sources, the Old Testament in particular, indicates that we need not go beyond catholic Christianity to find the origin of the doctrine. In other words, a transference of the meaning of Christ for this world is made to the next; His teaching and His liberating power, His enlightenment of men's minds, His ability to raise from the dead reach into the beyond.

An attempt is sometimes made to give even more precise definition to this, by tracing the origin of the doctrine of the Descent to our Lord Himself. For example, a book which was once extremely popular has a chapter entitled, "A Lost Chapter in the Life of Christ", in which it is argued that there is only one possible source of the doctrine of the Descent, for only one Person could know and tell. "After the Resurrection He was with them forty days, teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God. In these unrecorded teachings He surely told them this."(11) This idea is basic to a much older book, The Gospel of Bartholomew, in which Jesus is represented as replying to Bartholomew's question about where He went from the cross by giving an account of His descent into Hades. MacCulloch himself asks, Did the belief owe anything to the Lord's teaching after the Resurrection? He goes on to point out that if Jesus did give such a hint, it would most probably be in terms of current thought and this would easily lend itself to a

(10) MacCulloch, op. cit., p.283.

(11) J. Paterson Smyth, A People's Life of Christ (London, 1921), p.398.

hardening process and elaboration. This suggestion, of course, is based on nothing more than a guess and one which I think may well be wrong. We cannot say that Jesus did give such a hint, only that He might have done. The probability of this grows less, the more we consider the comparative silence of the New Testament writers. It is in the very context of the forty days' teaching that the disciples are heard to put a question to their Teacher, only to receive an answer which directed their attention to a completely different view of the matter and a reminder that there were things which they could not know (Acts 1: 6ff).

This chapter has concerned itself only with the probable origin of the doctrine. Whether the Descent into Hades, albeit of Jewish-Christian provenance, is an entirely mythical concept, is a question that has not yet been before us, for it really belongs to our next chapter.

Chapter X

THE MEANING OF THE DESCENT

The 'Descent into Hades' is evidently possessed of a quite remarkable resilience. Whether its powers of survival will prove sufficient to cope with the prevalent tendency to ignore it, remains to be seen. Its persistence may partly be explained by its protean flexibility in the hands of different protagonists. It proved to be a useful anti-heretical weapon, a powerful poetic motif, a veritable keystone of some eschatological schemes, not all of them ancient. Obviously, for different people and in different ways the Descensus in times past meant something that mattered. Does the doctrine have any permanence, any meaning for to-day? It perhaps has no longer any dramatic, sensational significance, for times have changed greatly since Reginald Pecock, bishop of Chichester, who dared to deny the apostolic authority of the Creed and reject the Descent into Hell, was forced to resign his see (1458), since the Reformers found it a subject hot with controversy, since the troubles it created among preachers led to the revision of its form in the articles of the Church of England in Elizabethan days. Or have they changed all that much? Possibly all that is required nowadays is a determined attempt to delete the clause from the Apostles' Creed, to discover the latent powers of the doctrine - or of tradition!

Quite clearly it all depends on what we mean by the Descent into Hades, whether the doctrine has permanent value for us. Taken at its simplest, most primitive form, as in fact it is uttered in the Creed - He descended into Hades - has it anything meaningful to say to men of the present day?

Those who regard the origin of the Descensus as purely pagan will generally give a strong negative answer here. Gardner, for example, supposing that the notion of the Descent into Hades arose under Orphic influence, concludes that it has no historic basis and agrees with Goodwin that it is essentially transcendental, supernatural, hyper-historical.(1) Gardner had already said, "We may in fact venture to

(1) *Exploratio Evangelica*, p.265.

call the doctrine of the Descent into Hades a piece of dead wood from the tree of Christian doctrine." (2) It has already been shown that Gardner's supposition about the origin of the Descent is not acceptable. Some who reject his ideas about its origin will nevertheless support his statement about its deadness.

Thus it will be argued that the Descensus, though of Christian provenance, is no less mythological and bound inextricably to the outmoded concepts of the past. It is couched in terms of a world-view which is no longer relevant to men. The doctrine of the Descent, therefore, becomes a thing of the past. It can have no significance except its historical interest. It is usual to find in this type of argument the assumption that the Descent is more thoroughly mythological than many other early traditions, so that one cannot reject the outlook of the times without also discarding the Descensus.

The spatial terms are undoubtedly there, but can we make no distinction between the basic content and the terms? When we jettison the mode of expression, do we throw out everything? Or can we distinguish between the essence and the form? It seems to me unfair to impose upon the writers of the New Testament a literalness which is not necessarily their own. This occurs frequently with respect to the Ascension of Christ, an article of faith which wears a similar dress to that of the Descent. An examination of the New Testament references to the exalted Lord shows that the apostles were well aware that the language they were using was figurative. Why then should we literalise it? Objection is frequently voiced to the three-decker universe of these beliefs, an objection which on occasion founders upon its own prosaicism. It may be helpful to represent this view diagrammatically, but how erroneous to suppose that a diagram can express all that this outlook implies! Here we are dealing with a view of the universe which is vivid, poetic, and intensely spiritual, a more fruitful and healthy outlook than the one-dimensional, grossly materialistic affair of many moderns. Our question becomes one of communication and translation. It may well be that to understand these early concepts, the teaching of the New Testament, the doctrines so expressed, it is our thought-forms which

(2) Op. cit., p.263.

need to be demythologised, not theirs. How else could the Descent into Hades have been expressed in apostolic times?

The doctrine asserts simply that Christ descended into Hades. This brings before our minds word-pictures of a spatial kind: He went down to the underworld place of the dead. There is no difficulty in grasping the significance of this: He entered into the state of death. I think more is involved, namely, into the mode of existence after death, in harmony with the biblical view that men die, but that is not the end of them.

The Descent into Hades serves to emphasise the reality of Christ's death. He became truly man, submitting to the law not only of life, but of death. Just as He was born, so He died: as He had been in the womb, so He lay in the tomb. He did not shun the stages of human growth, nor avoid its implications in death. Perhaps then it would unreal to speak, according to the language we are using, of His death without a descent into Hades. In this way, the ~~anti~~-heretical value of the doctrine of the Descent can be permanent. The importance of this is well expressed by O.C. Quick: "To suggest that Christ's death was an appearance, and not a full or ultimate reality, would have removed the offence of the cross; but it would have removed all the essence of the gospel." (3)

This submission of Christ is in keeping with His humility. He was brought into the very dust of death, to the very lowest point of humiliation. This gives force to the Descent-Ascent antithesis, and a compelling urgency to His example of humility in action (Phil.2).

It is no less in keeping with His sympathy. He passed through the experiences common to men, including even this. His people know that He has gone the way before them and their sympathetic High Priest will not desert them in their hour of need or trial.

Does the Descent into Hades have any place in the doctrine of Redemption? Calvin exploits the figurative interpretation to the full. He sees the real significance of the credal affirmation in this. It points to Christ's endurance of the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God, so that He suffered not only in body, but in soul, bearing the tortures of condemned and ruined man. (4) It should be observed that

(3) The Doctrines of the Creed (London, 1938), p.269.

(4) Institutes, II.XVI.10.

Calvin insists that God was not angry with Christ, but simply that Christ bore the weight of divine anger.(5) In other words, Calvin is underlining the idea that Christ's descent is a voluntary substitution for man. Substitutionary notions have long been under suspicion among theologians, but unpopularity is no guide for discerning error any more than popularity a guarantee of truth. Barth's interpretation of the Descensus is basically the same as Calvin's. He maintains that being in hell is a state of exclusion from God and is the logical and inevitable result of sin. "God would not be God, the Creator would not be the Creator, the creature would not be the creature, and man would not be man, if this verdict and its execution could be stayed." But the execution of this verdict is carried out by God in Christ taking the place of condemned man.(6) To my mind, the difficulty in the way of this conception is not its substitutionary emphasis, for how can an adequate theory of atonement avoid such an element? Rather, the difficulty lies in making the word 'Hades' mean 'Hell'.

We have already noticed the New Testament connection of the Descent with the concept of Christus Victor. This, I think, belongs to the permanent meaning of His Descent into Hades. The betrayal of Christ, His arrest, trial, and crucifixion might all declare the complete triumph of injustice; this is intensified in the statement, He descended into Hades. But when Christ enters death's dark domain, it has no power to hold Him. The sinless Saviour is 'free among the dead'. In His death, Death is defeated, as Hades is in His Descent.

"By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.

He hell in hell laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death, by dying, slew." (7)

Christ submitted to death and thus defeated the one who held the power of death, that is, He sealed Satan's doom. This is, of course, all bound up with the defeat of hostile forces, principalities and powers.

(5) Ibid. 11.

(6) Dogmatics in Outline, p.118.

(7) Samuel W. Gandy.

Now whether we follow P.T. Forsyth's illustration of the 'bull in a net' or Cullman's of the binding rope(8) we can see how this has meaning for Christians to-day. As Prof. Stewart goes on to show, though men have still to die, yet in the death and resurrection of Jesus, death - this omnipotent of the powers - has been conquered finally; so that of those who are united with Christ and His victory it is true to say that they 'have passed out of death into life'. If then we see Christ as the Representative and preserve the idea of the solidarity of Christ and the believer, we see how we conquer in Him. The ethical outworking of this has surely a permanent value. Selwyn described it as the "victory of the dying life".

Beyond this it seems to me unwise to go. The deliverance of Old Testament saints, so common and so early in the tradition of the Descent, has a beauty of its own. Unless, however, we are prepared to regard it as a colourful statement of the relevance of the death of Christ for all the righteous, we cannot give it any permanent place in the doctrine. It is quite out of tune with the reserve and restraint of essential Christian teaching. Its picturesque details can so easily assume a grotesque coarseness and introduce some quaint notions. Far better to follow the simple, but profound assurance of Scripture, that to depart this life is to be with Christ.

Nor do I welcome the notion of Christ's preaching to the departed, however intriguingly beautiful it may appear. In more modern times, the Descent was thought to have a permanent importance as indicating the continuation of the gracious ministry of Jesus beyond the grave, not only then but even now. The way in which the help of the Descensus is enlisted may be illustrated from Monnier: "Cette activité semble décisive pour régler le sort des générations qui n'ont pas connu l'Évangile. L'univers était si restreint, l'histoire de l'humanité si brève, la fin des choses tellement proche! Le court intervalle qui sépare la mort et la résurrection de Jésus devait suffire à un œuvre dont on entrevoit d'ailleurs la continuation.

"Et cet enseignement, si particulier dans sa teneur antique, n'en exprime pas moins une des plus hautes pensées que l'Église primitive ait entrevues: l'œuvre rédemptrice étendue à l'univers des âmes."(9)

(8) Quoted by J.S. Stewart, SJTh.4 (1951), p.299.

(9) La descente aux enfers, p.41.

I do not think that this doctrine of universal restitution is found in Scripture. To link it with the Descent into Hades succeeds only in weakening the case for it.

It remains to ask whether the clause, descended into hell, should be retained in the Apostles' Creed. It certainly suffers from comparison with other articles. Harnack considers the clause too weak to maintain its ground beside the others, as equally independent and authoritative. What should be done then? It is worth noting that the alteration of 'Hell' to 'Hades' would fail to satisfy those who wish to eliminate it without further ado. Huidekoper thinks that Christian integrity demands its deletion. In the concluding remarks of his study of the subject, he calls upon Christians to admit candidly that that the idea represented in the clause is untenable, and "that, so far from being a necessary article of faith, it is a tenet which every intelligent Christian, who does not wish to make a mockery of Christianity or to trifle with his own candor, ought to recoil from subscribing or uttering." If the clause does represent something which is not believed by Christians, then clearly they ought not to confess they do believe it. (It is assumed here that the Creed is meant to be a confession or expression of faith, not a test of it.) The controversy will be between those who regard the Creed as in the first place a present confession and those who emphasize its historic and sacrosanct nature. The former will contend that many creeds have done quite well without the clause and its elimination will be no great loss, but rather a gain in clarity. The latter will maintain that, if altered or expurgated, the Creed ceases to be the 'Apostles' Creed'. In the circumstances, the question may be best posed in the form, Does the clause represent any part of apostolic doctrine? If the meaning which we above considered to be the permanent one is really so and commends itself, then there is no reason why the article should not be retained or Christians be afraid to utter it, provided that they are diligently taught what it is that they are supposed to be confessing. Perhaps it would be helpful to think of the Creed in the same way as we regard hymns. Is it not in any case poetic in nature? Who would wish to eliminate poetry from Christian confession? As Blair puts it, "Unless we, too, use poetry and its terms we shall

turn our Christianity to stone with the jargon of the scientist or the metaphysician." (10) Whether the statement of the Descent into Hades helps to combat this petrification depends upon a true interpretation of it and an acceptance of its reticence and restraint.

(10) A Creed before the Creeds, p.7.

Appendix 1

THE SPEECH IN ACTS 2

The crucial question for our subject is, Is this speech in any real sense Peter's? It has been argued that Luke is himself the author of the sermon.(1) According to this view, the speeches in Acts were composed by the author of the book in accordance with the accepted practice of classical historians. They are free 'inventions' or 'compositions' inserted at appropriate places in the narrative and represent what the author thought the speaker was likely to have said or would fittingly have said. They would then be a literary convention. H.J. Cadbury thinks they are like the choral odes of Greek drama, explaining to the reader the meaning of the events as they are recorded.(2) We have no doubt that this was the case with Thucydides: ὡς δ' αὖν ἐδόκουν ἔμοι ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστα εἰπεῖν, ἐχομένῳ ὅτι, ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάντης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται.(3) Josephus followed the example;(4) why not Luke? We know that the tendency (Thucydides excepted) was to invent quite freely to heighten the interest.(5) It is true that Polybius repudiated the practice, but it was so common that many have found it difficult to accept that it was otherwise with Luke. Their case seems to be strengthened by the factor of his literary ability.

Nevertheless, when we have regard to the actual material before us in the early chapters of Acts, we must, I think, rule out the opinion that the speeches are entirely literary inventions. They have some historical foundation. The evidence is such that the very least we can accept is that Luke had material before him, which, whatever its particular sources

(1) This, of course, would not detract from its value as evidence for our general purpose, but it clearly matters a great deal, when we consider the particular use we can make of it.

(2) The Beginnings, V. Note XXXII, 402ff. Cf. Cadbury, The Making of Luke-Acts, ch. XIV, pp.184ff.

(3) Thuc. I.22.

(4) Antiq. II.IV.5.

(5) V. Lucian's recommendations in On How History should be Written, 58.

came from the Jerusalem Church. On the four speeches in Acts 2-4, C.H.Dodd writes, "We may with some confidence take these speeches to represent, not indeed what Peter said upon this or that occasion, but the kerygma of the Church at Jerusalem at an early period." (6)

These early chapters appear to be greatly indebted to Aramaic sources. Torrey's theory that we have in Acts 1: 1b-15: 35 a Greek translation of an Aramaic original has never been popular, but he obviously has something. The Aramaisms, which are allegedly most numerous in the speeches, may point to material from an Aramaic source, namely, the Aramaic-speaking Church at Jerusalem.

We must give due weight to the more practised and reliable use of memory in ancient times, the opportunity for checking 'memories' which Luke must have had, the possible existence of notes of the addresses, the incidence of Jewish material which appears to be natural enough, too natural perhaps to be artificial. (7)

These various lines of evidence point in the same direction, that Luke had definite sources for what he recorded. I think we can go even further. It seems very difficult to believe that such a careful and painstaking historian would have been careless in the use of his sources. If the speeches in these early chapters represent, as Dodd says they do, the early kerygma, I can see no reason why we cannot believe they represent Peter's kerygma. In other words, these speeches give us a reliable account of what was said and are Luke's summaries of Peter's addresses, so that in this sermon in Acts 2 we can hear the authentic voice of Peter.

(6) The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, p.21.

(7) V. F.H.Chase, The Credibility of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, W. Barclay, Expository Times, LXX.196ff.

Appendix 2

THE AUTHORSHIP OF 1 PETER

The traditional view is that 1 Peter is a letter written by the apostle Peter from Rome just after the outbreak of persecution of Christians by Nero and was sent to Christians in Asia Minor.

In modern times this position has been assailed. Beare, for example, says there can be no possible doubt that Peter ~~is~~ a pseudonym. The anti-Petrine position is presented very clearly and persuasively by B.H.Streeter,(1) who confesses the pang it costs him to surrender the Petrine authorship. Consider Streeter's argument.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Though Bigg(2) says, "there is no book in the New Testament which has earlier, better or stronger attestation" Streeter opens his consideration thus: "The external evidence in favour of the epistle is not quite so strong as we should have expected." He refers to the statement of Eusebius(4) who includes the letter among the *ὁμολογούμενα*. The main point of Streeter's argument here is that Eusebius quotes from early writers to support his statement about 1 Peter, yet he does not do this with the four Gospels or the Pauline Epistles. Perhaps there was a doubt in his mind about it or perhaps he knew that there were people who were not sure about the authorship. Streeter then quotes Westcott(5) who noticed that the actual traces of the early use of 1 Peter in the Latin churches are scanty. Its authority does not seem to have been doubted, but it does not seem to have been much read. Tertullian, a great quoter of Scripture, cites it only twice - and in doubtful writings at that - out of his 7,258 quotations from the New Testament. Yet, says Streeter, "it is precisely in the Latin churches that we should expect to find it most quoted." But surely we should expect to find a letter quoted in the area to which it was sent rather than in that in which it was written. What of those who do quote it? Streeter's next point

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| (1) Primitive Church, ch. IV. | (2) ICC, p.7. |
| (3) p.118. | (4) H.E. III.25.2. |
| (5) Canon of the New Testament, p.263. | |

is that 1 Peter is not included in the Muratorianum, which gives the list of accepted NT books at Rome c.200 - we should say c.170. Now this would be surprising if Peter wrote it, and at Rome. However, the Muratorian Fragment is in a mutilated state, a fact which may account for the omission of 1 Peter (as for that of James and Hebrews?). There is some dispute, moreover, about the text just at the place under discussion, 11.71-3. "Apocalypsin etiam Iohannis et Petri tantum recipimus, quam quidem ex nostris legi in ecclesia nolunt." Zahn indeed conjectures that the Greek original had 1 Peter here, but we cannot put any reliance on that. Allied to this argument Streeter puts forward in corroboration the absence of 1 Peter from the Syriac NT as late as Aphraates and Ephrem. This, he thinks, shows that it was not included in the Roman canon c.170, because it was not among the books brought by Tatian from Rome when he founded the church at Edessa. Taken together these two lines of evidence seem to prove the point, but when sifted, the argument loses weight. The omission from the Muratorian, we have seen, is inconclusive. Tatian is not necessarily one to hold fast the sacred texts.

We have taken into account the gaps in the external evidence. What does the actual attestation amount to?

If 1 Peter is not used by James and Ephesians, its first appearance is in quotations made by Clement of Rome. Lightfoot gives a list of 12 parallelisms, Harnack 20, between the two letters. (e.g. the salutation, the blood of Christ in Clem. 7.4 dependent on 1 Pet. 1: 19, Noah in Clem. 9.4 and 1 Pet. 3: 20, marvellous light in Clem. 36.2 and 1 Pet. 2: 9). There are also similarities in Barnabas (e.g. 4.12 to 1 Pet. 1: 17); in Hermas (e.g. stones in the Tower, Vis. 3.5 to living stones in 1 Pet. 2: 5); in Justin Martyr (e.g. Trypho 110 to 1 Pet. 1: 19); Epistle to Dognetus (9 to 1 Pet. 3: 18). Now these works come from different places at comparatively early dates and it seems to me most unlikely that all the similarities are merely coincidental.

The first allusion to 1 Peter as a document is in Polycarp, who both alludes to it and quotes from it frequently. (e.g. Phil. 2.1 and 1 Pet. 1: 13, 21; 8.1 and 2: 22, 24; 10.2 and 2: 12). Polycarp does not name Peter as the author and Harnack thinks that though he knew the Letter, he did not know it as Peter's. It is not, however, Polycarp's

habit to name his authority. Is it not unlikely that these quotations would be made confidently from an anonymous or pseudonymous epistle?

Though Chase(6) gives grounds for believing that Papias referred to the letter explicitly as the Epistle of Peter, the earliest undoubted attribution of the document to the apostle is in Irenaeus(7). His unhesitating acceptance of the Petrine authorship is shared by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. It is well established by now.

The case for the Petrine authorship gathers additional force, as Selwyn maintains, from the dubiety which attended the authenticity of 2 Peter and the rest of the Petrine literature. Perhaps the very existence of a second letter may be used in support.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Of the various objections to the Petrine authorship on internal evidence Streeter considers three to be very weighty.

First, the thought and language of the letter are influenced by Paul, especially Ephesians and Romans. The mastery of Greek is greater than we should have expected of Peter. The similarities between 1 Peter and the Petrine speeches in Acts cannot be used as evidence here. Each of these points must be taken separately. I do not think Streeter is justified in lumping them together as he does. The whole tendency of his paragraph is to indicate the dependence of this letter upon Paul. Now there are undoubtedly many close parallels both of thought and of expression between 1 Peter and Ephesians, e.g. Eph. 1: 3, 1 Pet. 1: 3; Eph. 1: 4, 1 Pet. 1: 20; Eph. 6: 14, 1 Pet. 1: 13. These, it is argued, show that 1 Peter borrows from Ephesians. As the Pauline correspondence would be collected c.90, how could Peter know Ephesians? This introduces a very complex problem. If borrowing is taking place, Ephesians may be borrowing from 1 Peter, the simpler of the two. Both may be borrowing from common sources or may be following lines of thought and expression which were the common heritage of the Church. Again, as the old view which envisaged a perpetual conflict between the two apostles is now happily out of fashion, is it not possible that the two men had discussed the very matters which are raised in the letters. We do not suppose, as someone has said about Peter and Paul in another context, that they spent all their time together talking about the weather!

(6) HDB. III.780f. (7) A.H. IV.IX.2,XVI.5; V.VII.2.

As for 1 Peter and the speeches in Acts, the comparisons have been impressively set out by Selwyn. Dodd has something very important to say here, "In the First Epistle of Peter the reader is aware of an atmosphere which seems in some respects nearer to that of the primitive Church, as we divine it behind the early chapters of Acts, than anything else in the New Testament." (9) See also the comparison of the kerygma of Acts with the teaching of 1 Peter made, with numerous references by Dr. Barclay. (10) This comparison enables us to see that the theology of 1 Peter and the speeches in Acts is the same, as Selwyn argues in extenso. As he says, the parallels are "what might be expected if both alike are utterances of the same mind, given on different occasions. The connexion, that is to say is not literary but historical: the common ground lies in the mind of St. Peter who gave, and was known to have given, teaching along these lines and to a great extent in these terms." (11)

With regard to the language and style of the letter, a real difficulty presents itself. The Greek is excellent, as all NT scholars are agreed. Beare says, "The epistle is quite obviously the work of a man of letters, skilled in all the devices of rhetoric, and able to draw on an extensive, and even learned, vocabulary. He is a stylist of no ordinary capacity, and he writes some of the best Greek in the whole New Testament, far smoother and more literary than that of the highly-trained Paul." Selwyn's comment is, "Its style is not only natural and unforced, indicating that it belongs to one who not only wrote, but also thought, in Greek; but it exhibits a felicity of phrase, a suppleness of expression, and a wealth of vocabulary which betoken a mind nourished in the best Greek spirit and tradition." (12) The Greek style, in fact, is such that it seems unlikely, to say the least, that it should have been produced by a Galilean fisherman. Would not his speech betray him here as elsewhere? Too much has sometimes been made of Peter's lack of learning and too strong a meaning given to the adjective in Acts 4: 13. It seems to me to be quite impossible to suppose that the apostle was ignorant of the Greek tongue, or the Septuagint. These

(9) Apostolic Preaching, p.44.

(10) The Letters of Peter and Jude (Glasgow, 1958), pp.5,6.

(11) The First Epistle of St. Peter, p.36

(12) Ibid.p.25.

considerations, of course, do not solve the problem created by the quality of the Greek. The problem may be solved by the letter itself at 5: 12, $\Delta\iota\alpha\ \Sigma\iota\lambda\omicron\upsilon\alpha\nu\omicron\upsilon\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\upsilon\ ,\ \acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota\ ,\ \delta\epsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\gamma\omega\upsilon$ ^{εγγραφα.} Some maintain that Silvanus is no more than the postman who delivers the letter, but clearly $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ implies that he is more. If he had been simply the bearer, would the verb not have been $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\mu\phi\alpha$ rather than $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\alpha\phi\alpha$ Papias, according to Eusebius, said that Peter employed a $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\mu\eta\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$. From this Windisch infers that Silvanus played a real part in the Konzipierung und Stilisierung of the epistle. Silvanus was evidently an outstanding figure in the Church. He is probably to be identified with the Silas of Acts and the Silvanus of 1 and 2 Thess. He was one of the representatives who carried the decision of the Council of Antioch by letter and spoken word;(13) he travelled and preached along with Paul;(14) he joined with Paul and Timothy in the sending of the two letters to the Thessalonians.(15) Add to this the fact that an amanuensis in the ancient world might be anything from a mechanical scribe to a trusted secretary and note Peter's description of him as 'the faithful brother as I regard him'. Possibly, then, Silvanus polished up the apostle's Greek or expressed his message for him or helped even more in its composition.

Now the second of Streeter's objections refers to 1 Pet. 5: 1, where he argues that we should not have expected Peter himself to have written in this way. He quarrels with the word $\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\pi\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$ on the ground that 'Apostle' and 'Presbyter' were applied to persons who exercised functions of a totally different character. We must remember, however, the Jewish background of the word $\pi\pi\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$, it denoted an office universally respected among the Jews. Peter would surely not hesitate to use it. Would this not be one of the most beautiful touches of the epistle, the avoidance of his title of authority and use of term which expressed his sympathy for his readers? Streeter goes on to argue that Peter was not a 'witness of the sufferings of Christ'. This point, he says, may at first seem niggling, but in six different speeches in Acts Peter calls himself a 'witness of the resurrection'.

(13) Acts 15: 22, 32.

(14) Acts 15: 37-40; 16: 18: 5; cf. 2 Cor. 1: 19.

(15) 1 Thess. 1: 1; 2 Thess. 1: 1.

Now it seems to me that Peter had good reason in his speeches to point out that he was an eye-witness of the resurrection, for this was the event that made all the difference to him and to his message. In the epistle the setting is different. He is speaking directly to elders within the Church and he has doubtless their hardships in mind. In any case he does not actually mention the crucifixion. True, they all forsook Him and fled, so that none witnessed the sufferings of the Cross except the beloved disciple.(16) But it is niggling to restrict the word 'sufferings' to the Cross. Peter was after all in the Garden of Gethsemane. Moreover, would he ever forget that last look?(17)

Streeter's final argument is based on the references to persecution in the letter. It is urged that the state of affairs represented in these references belongs to the time of Trajan, when the mere profession of Christianity brought the death-sentence.(18) In his "Church in the Roman Empire" Ramsay maintains that not only is State persecution in view in 1 Peter, but that this persecution had already entered upon a later and more formidable stage.(19) Bigg finds this argument to be baseless and writes, "The reader who will consider the Rescript of Trajan, the way in which Tacitus speaks of the Neronian persecution (Annals XV. 44), the language of the Apocalypse and even of the Epistle to the Hebrews, will feel that 1 Peter must come in point of date before them all."(20)

Christianity, which had been tolerated under the aegis of Judaism, itself a *religio licita* in the eyes of Rome, came under imperial disfavour in Nero's day, as a result, no doubt, of Jewish influence. It was plainly a *religio illicita* and Nero found no difficulty in diverting to Christians the unenviable suspicion that rumour was attaching to him. Consequently, every Christian was liable to be persecuted, simply because he was a Christian. This need not mean that persecution was constant, only that any believer might be severely dealt with at any time. Outbursts of persecution would occur as officials were so inclined or the mob inflamed with violent feelings.

(16) Jn. 19: 26f.

(17) Lk. 22: 61.

(18) Correspondence between Trajan and Pliny, Pliny, Letters 96,97.

(19) P. 196ff.

(20) ICC., p.33.

The references to persecution in 1 Peter indicate some such situation. In 1: 6, 2: 12,15, 3: 16, 4: 4, the general troubles which may come the way of Christ's followers seem to be in view. In 4: 12-19 a more definite and urgent note is sounded. Some have thought that a quite different type of persecution is intended. This has led to the idea that two documents, whether by the same author or not, have been united to form our 1 Peter. Others think that, just as Peter was about to despatch his letter, he received news of an aggravation of the situation in Asia Minor. However, similar language is used here to that of the earlier passages. There is in fact nothing against interpreting $\pi\upsilon\pi\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in a general way. As the readers are told not to be surprised at it, for this is only to be expected, then surely their sufferings must be still of a general character and it is not necessary to see anything more in the directions than that. The persecutions of 1 Peter are in no way inconsistent with the period before the apostle's death.

Streeter adds that he finds it hard to believe that anyone living in the Rome of Nero's time could write that the government was sent by God "for vengeance on evil doers and for praise to those that do well... Fear God; honour the emperor." (21) The answer is simply that this is the Christian position. (22)

There is nothing in the anti-Petrine argument, so far as I can see, that is conclusive. Indeed, Streeter's own solution of the authorship leaves a great deal to be desired, for when he asks us to suppose that the epistle is made up of two writings, a sermon and a letter, probably composed by Aristion of Smyrna, he invites us to make too many leaps in the dark.

In addition to the reasons already adduced in support of the traditional view, we may perhaps mention that the theological outlook is that of the Church in the early chapters of Acts, the eager expectation of the Second Coming points to an early date, the organisation of the Church envisaged by the author is primitive.

I think we are justified in retaining the traditional position and in describing the date of the third and fourth chapters of 1 Peter as truly Petrine.

(21) 1 Pet. 2: 17.

(22) cf. Rom. 13: 1-7.

Appendix 3

SELECTION OF OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES WHICH ARE GIVEN A DESCENT-REFERENCE IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE

- Gen. 49: 5. Hipp. adv. Iudaeos.
- Gen. 49: 9. Hipp. On Christ and Antichrist 8; Hilary, Tact. in Ps. 131: 8; Cyril Jerus. Cat. XIV.3; Ambrose, De ben. patr. 4: 20; Rufinus, Com. in Symb. 27.
- Exod. 19: 10f. Cyprian, Test. II.25.
- Job 28: 22. Clem. Alex. Strom. VI.6.
- Job 38: 17 (LXX) Hipp. On the Holy Festival; Athen. In illud omnia 2; Cyril Jerus. Cat. IV.19. (Sirmian formula)
- Ps. 3: 5. Origen in loc.; Cyprian Test. II.25; Lact. Div. Inst. IV. 19.8.
- Ps. 6: 4,5,9. Origen in Ps.
- Ps. 16: 10. (Acts 2: 27,31). Hipp. adv. Iudaeos; Origen In Matt. Com. Ser. 132; In Ev. Joh. VI.18; Cyprian Test. II.24; Lact. Div. Inst. IV.19.8; Ruf. in Symb. 28,29.
- Ps. 18: 5. Origen in Ps.
- Ps. 22: 15,16. Iren. A.H. IV.XX.8; Origen in Ps.; Justin Trypho 99; Ruf. in Symb. 28; Cyril Jerus. Cat. XIV.3.
- Ps. 24. Epiph. in loc.
- Ps. 30: 2,3. Cyprian Test. II.24; Ruf. in Symb. 28,30.
- Ps. 30: 9. Ruf. in Symb. 28.
- Ps. 49: 14,15. Origen in Ps.
- Ps. 68: 18. Origen In Rom. 5: 1; Athan.(?) De pass. cruc. 25.
- Ps. 69. Hipp. adv. Iudaeos; Origen in Ps.; Ruf. in Symb. 28.
- Ps. 71: 20. Ruf. in Symb. 30.
- Ps. 77: 16. Origen in Ps.
- Ps. 86: 13. Iren. A.H. V.XXXI.1.
- Ps. 88: 4,5. Origen in Ps.; In Ev. Matt. XII.3, XIX.4, X.22; Cyril Jerus. Cat. X.4, XIII.34, XIV.1; Ruf. in Symb. 30.
- Isa. 42: 1-7. Asc. Isa. 4: 21 (?).
- Isa. 49: 8,9. Clem. Alex. Strom. VI.6

Dan. 3. Jerome In Dan. lib. 1 c.3; Aphraates Hom. XXI.19.

Hos. 6: 2. Origen Hom. in Exod. 5: 2; Cyprian Test. II.25; Lact. Div.
Inst. IV.19.6; Ruf. in Symb. 30.

Jonah 2: 3. Cyril Jerus. Cat. IV.20.

Zech. 9: 11. Cyril Jerus. Cat. XIII.34.

Appendix 4

THE DESCENT AND BAPTISM

It occasions no surprise that the Baptism of believers is related in patristic literature to the Descent of Christ into Hades. For the Pauline doctrine of Baptism speaks of being "baptised into His death.(1) It is an easy transition from death and burial to descent into Hades. Thus Basil writes, Ὡς οὖν κατορθοῦμεν τὴν εἰς ᾧδου κάθοδον; μετροῦμενοι τὴν τάφην τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος... (2). Chrysostom regards Baptism as a symbol τῆς εἰς ᾧδου καταβάσεως. (3) Cyril of Jerusalem in giving us a picture of Baptism as it was practised in that city in the middle of the fourth century, informs us that it took place on Easter Eve.(4) He also refers to the custom of triple immersion as affording a parallel to the sojourn of Christ in the tomb.(5)

With this we easily connect the Baptism of Jesus. As Gregory Nazianzus puts it, Χριστὸς βαπτίζεται, συγκατέλωμεν ἵνα καὶ συνανελθῶμεν. (6) We have already noticed the interrelation of the Baptism and the Descent in Odes of Solomon XXIV.5-7. Now Baptism is always symbolic. We know that our Lord did speak of His suffering and death as a baptism - "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished."(7) Perhaps we may be entitled to see a symbolic significance in His baptism in Jordan. This might receive encouragement from certain Old Testament scriptures.(8) His baptism may symbolise the numbering of the Servant with the transgressors, which was only too literally fulfilled.(9)

The waters of the Jordan are sometimes thought of as representing

- (1) Rom. 6: 3,4; cf. Col. 2: 12.
- (2) De Spiritu Sancto XV.35 (PG. 32.129).
- (3) Hom. XL in 1 Cor.
- (4) Cat. XIX, XX.
- (5) Cat. XX.
- (6) Orat. XXXIX. (PG. 36.49); cf. Orat. XL.IX (PG. 36.369).
- (7) Lk. 12: 50; cf. Mk. 10: 39.
- (8) E.g. Ps. 42: 7, 69: 1; Jonah 2.
- (9) Isa. 53: 12; Lk. 22: 37, 23: 32ff.

the abysses, the primeval waters.(10) This allows some writers to attribute to the baptismal descent ideas connected with the Hades-Descent. Gregory Thaumaturgos represents Christ as saying at His baptism that it became Him to descend to the depths of Hades on behalf of those detained there, to destroy the power of death, and to kindle the torch of His body for those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.(11) The terror of Hades is represented by the terror of the waters.(12) J.H. Bernard thinks that the idea that rivers and wells communicate with the dwelling-place of evil spirits has influenced baptismal rites,(13) but this is not necessarily correct. He suggests further that the conception of the mysterious origin of rivers and wells in the unseen 'deeps' probably lies behind the early practice of baptizing in running or flowing water. But could not this be derived from the ceremonial and sacrificial use of living water in the Old Testament? In any case, it is true that the victory of Christ is at times considered to be in some way anticipated at His baptism in Jordan.

Arising out of this is the belief that the defeat of hostile forces is re-enacted at the baptism of Christ's followers. The evil spirit which attacks believers is 'afraid of the water'.(14) There are many references to such a conception in patristic literature. Is there also a connection with the practice of renouncing the devil and his pomp? Tertullian says that before entering the water "contestamur nos renuntiare diabolo et pompas et angelis eius."(15) It has been suggested that in his treatment of the water of baptism in *De Baptismo*, Tertullian holds that a magical power is transferred to the material element of the water. Roberts, however, has shown that this is improbable. He is more likely to be saying that water is a suitable medium of sanctification because it was over water that the Holy Spirit brooded at first. What was possible (i.e. the sanctifying of the element) in the case of Primeval water is possible to every species of water, so that, whether a man is to be baptized in a sea, or pool, or stream, or lake, or trough,

(10) *Odes Sol.* XXIV.5-7.

(11) *Serm. in Theoph.*

(12) As illustrated in *Ps.* 77: 16, 114: 3.

(13) *Studia Sacra* Ch. 1.

(14) *Greg. Naz. Orat.* XL.35.

(15) *De Corona* 3; *De Idol.* 6 (O. I.421; I.74).

the water is sanctified by the Holy Spirit."(16) There may also, of course, be an allusion to the descent of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus.

There are, too, baptismal references in the Fathers to the opening of Paradise. Gregory Nazianzus says that when Jesus came up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened which Adam had closed.(17) In discussing this theme, Bernard, it seems to me, goes too far. For when Basil asks, How can you enter into Paradise unless you are sealed in baptism(18) there is no necessary allusion to the Descent into Hades. The same is true of other citations which Bernard makes under this heading.

(16) The Theology of Tertullian, p.191f.

(17) Orat. XL.9.

(18) Hom. XIII.2.

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