

same order, namely, the interrogative element, the sign of the comparative degree, and the sign of the personal nominative, and that to express the same logical idea ; as,

Sansk. *kataras* ; Zend, *kataras* ; Slav. *kotorŭi* ; Lithuan. *katras* ; Greek, *κόρεπος* ; Lat. *uter* for *quater* ; Meso-Goth. *hvathar* ; Eng. *whether*, whether ? The sign of the personal nominative, to wit, the final *s*, shows itself in four of the Indo-European families of languages.

Whence did this wonderful coincidence arise, but in the original unity of the languages concerned ?

ARTICLE IV.

ON THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL.

BY REV. JOSEPH MUENSCHER, D. D., MT. VERNON, OHIO.

“He descended into hell.”—*The Apostles' Creed.*

THAT formulary of Christian faith which has been handed down to our times under the name of the Apostles' Creed, has rightfully obtained, from its antiquity, scripturalness, simplicity, perspicuity, brevity, and comprehensiveness, the assent and veneration of the Universal Church. With respect to its author or the time of its composition, we possess no very satisfactory information. Its title and a general tradition of early date, would lead us to assign its authorship to the apostles themselves. Thus Ambrose in the fourth century declares, that “the twelve apostles as skilful artificers assembled together, and made a key by their common devices, i. e. the Creed.” Rufinus, in the same century, asserts, that the Christians of the period in which he lived, “had received by tradition from the Fathers that, after the ascension of our Saviour, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, but before the apostles separated from each

other to go into the habitable parts of the world to preach the Gospel, they settled among themselves the rule of their future preaching in order to prevent their teaching different doctrines during their separation, unto those whom they should unite to the Christian faith. Whereupon they assembled together, and being full of the Holy Spirit, they composed the Creed, each one inserting what he thought convenient, and ordered it to be a test of their future sermons, and a rule to be given to the faithful." Not content with attributing the authorship of the Creed in general to the apostles, some of the Fathers alleged that each member of the apostolic College inserted a particular article, and hence the name *symbolum* which it received.¹ Now it is historically certain, that several articles attributed by these writers to the apostles, e. g. "the descent into hell," ascribed to St. Thomas, and "the Communion of Saints," imputed to Simon Zelotes, formed no part of any creed during the first three centuries. It is manifest, therefore, that the Creed, as it stands in its present form, could not have been composed by the apostles in the manner alleged. The silence of Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, and the silence of ecclesiastical writers generally, for above three centuries, furnishes the strongest evidence that the Creed as such did not proceed in any form from the hands of the apostles themselves. But although no reliance can be placed on the tradition of the apostolic authorship of this Creed, it cannot be denied that the Creed itself, with the exception of a very few articles, originated in the earlier ages of Christianity, and that it contains the substance of all the primitive creeds, which have been transmitted to our times. It received its distinctive title probably from the circumstance that it was universally esteemed as comprising an admirable summary of those prominent facts and doctrines, which constituted the theme of apostolic preaching, and which were regarded from the first as requisite to be believed in order to an intelligent profession of the Gospel.

¹ This notion originated in a false inference from the word *apostoleo*, and from confounding *σύμβολον* (a test or token) with *συμβολή* (a collection).

Accordingly, although it never received the formal sanction of any ecclesiastical council, it early became and still continues to be the creed of Christendom. "This faith," says Irenaeus, "the Church guards carefully, *as if she dwelt in one house, believes, as if she had but one soul, and proclaims, teaches, and delivers, as if she possessed but one mouth.*"

In characterizing the Apostles' Creed as comprehensive, it is not intended to affirm that it embraces all the important doctrines of Christianity; but that it includes, either by direct affirmation or by obvious implication, all those leading truths which lie at the foundation of our religion; those truths which were classed among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, in which Catechumens were particularly instructed previous to their admission by baptism to membership in the church. Hence it was early adopted as the universal confession of the baptized, — a position which it still occupies either in form or substance, in every branch of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, whether Eastern or Western.

There are two articles in this venerable and scriptural symbol, however, which, as has been already intimated, cannot lay claim to the same antiquity or universality as the rest. They are the *descent of Christ into hell*, and the *communion of saints*. Neither of these originally formed a part of the creed of the Antenicene Church. Both of them differ in one important respect from the rest of the Creed; for while the meaning of the other articles is plain and perspicuous, as a creed should always be, of these it is equivocal, and liable to misapprehension. It is still an open question, whether "the Communion of Saints" is to be regarded as a distinct, independent article of faith, or as merely an explanatory appendage to the preceding article. Accordingly in some editions of the Book of Common Prayer it is separated from the antecedent clause only by a comma: while in others, by a semi-colon. Regarded simply as expegetical, the meaning of the whole article may be thus expressed: 'The holy catholic (universal) church, which is the communion, fellowship, or community of saints.' Thus

understood, the visible church is declared to be that society which embraces the community of pious persons, who acknowledge substantially the same faith, and hold fellowship with one another, and with Christ Jesus, their common spiritual head. But if the latter claim be viewed as a distinct and independent article of the Creed, then it dogmatically asserts that there exists within the body of the visible, universal church, a spiritual, as well as an outward union, communion and fellowship,—a communion of kindred minds, such as is found, and found only among real Christians.

In regard to the other article alluded to, viz.: "*the descent of Christ into hell,*" there is much more difficulty. The terms in which it is expressed are such as to render its meaning, especially to a mere English reader, very obscure and uncertain. And the learned are by no means agreed as to its true interpretation. In tracing the history of this article, we find that it had no existence in any creed or confession of faith, so far as we have any knowledge, which was drawn up prior to the council of Nice (A. D. 325); neither does it form any part of the creed set forth by that Council, nor of that more full and complete edition of it, which was adopted and set forth by the second general Council of Constantinople A. D. 381, and which was incorporated into the liturgy of the Church of England and of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, under the name of the *Nicene Creed*.¹ Rufinus, Presbyter of Aquileia (Italy), who died A. D. 410, affirms that in his time it was contained neither in the Roman nor in the Oriental Creeds. It appears to have been first introduced into the (Apostles') Creed of the Church of Aquileia, about the year A. D. 400. Afterwards it was inserted in the creed commonly, though erroneously called the Athanasian Creed, which is supposed by some to have been composed by Vigilius, Bishop of

¹ The Nicene Creed in the Book of Common Prayer differs from the Constantinopolitan Creed only in the addition of the phrase "and of the Son" after the words "who proceedeth from the Father," which was inserted by the Latin Church.

Thapsus in Africa, about A. D. 485; though others assign to it a somewhat earlier, and others still a later, date. It was not generally adopted by the church until the seventh century, when it was classed together with the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as an Oecumenical symbol. The Descent into Hell was not introduced into the Roman (Apostles') Creed, until the year A. D. 600: after which it was generally recognized as a part of that symbol. The church of England at the Reformation retained the three Oecumenical Creeds, and also made the Descent, the subject of one of the articles of religion drawn up A. D. 1552 in the reign of Edward VI., in which the doctrine was made to rest on the well-known language of Peter. It was reaffirmed in the Articles set forth A. D. 1562, during the reign of Elizabeth, with the omission, however, of the clause in which an authoritative interpretation is put upon it by an allusion to a particular text of scripture. This clause was left out in consequence of the animosity excited by the disputes which *this question* had engendered in some parts of England.¹

The Apostles' Creed was also received by the Lutheran and Reformed churches on the Continent, as a fundamental confession; and in the former it is used, as in the church of England and the Prot. Epis. church in the United States, not only as a confession at baptism, but as an integral part of the public liturgical worship. Among the acts of the general convocation of the Prot. Epis. church in the United States, held A. D. 1785, in which the initiative steps were taken towards the perfect and independent organization of that church, was one expunging the article relative to the Descent of Christ, from the Apostles' Creed,² and excluding from the Prayer Book the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. When the proposed service-book, containing the alterations and omissions agreed upon by the convocation, came before the bench of English Bishops for their action, it was determined by that body to require of the American

¹ See Hardwick's History of the Articles of Religion, pp. 101, 132.

² "In the creed commonly called the Apostles' Creed, one clause is omitted as being of uncertain meaning." — *Preface to the Proposed Book.*

church the restoration of the Nicene Creed, as a very important safe-guard against the Arian and Socinian heresies. The omission of the Article "he descended into hell," in the Apostles' Creed, was strongly objected to by the aged and venerable Dr. Moss, bishop of Bath and Wells, chiefly on the ground that it was originally inserted in order to counteract the Apollinarian heresy, which consisted in denying a perfect humanity to the incarnate Saviour, and affirming that his divinity supplied the place of a human soul. The other bishops appear not to have been agreed as to the meaning of the Article, nor were they impressed with a conviction of its importance in a formulary of faith; and hence they were not at first inclined to press its restoration. But at length, out of regard to the feelings and wishes of bishop Moss, more than from any preferences of their own, they passed an order requiring its restoration.

In their official letter, addressed to the general convention, the two archbishops say: "Even in that (confession of faith) which is called the Apostles' Creed, an Article is omitted which was thought necessary to be inserted with a view to a particular heresy, in a very early age of the church, and has ever since had the venerable sanction of universal reception. We therefore, most earnestly, exhort you to restore to its integrity the Apostles' Creed, in which you have omitted an Article merely, as it seems, from misapprehension of the sense in which it is understood by our Church." The archbishops do not say, in this communication, in what sense the Article was, at that time, understood in the church of England. It had long ceased to have any authoritative interpretation, and the standard writers of the church were by no means agreed as to its meaning. The question was then, as it is now, an open one in that church, and the particular views respecting it, which happened to prevail at that time among the English divines, could have no binding force on the American church. In the general convention, held in 1786, the grounds on which the archbishops insisted upon the restoration of the Article, were subjected to a searching criticism. The subject was finally referred to a committee,

who, on the following day, reported in favor of the proposition to restore the Article.

After a warm debate, the report of the committee was at length adopted, and the clause re-instated; not, however, by the affirmative vote of an actual majority of the dioceses represented.¹ In the general convention of 1789, after the consecration of bishops White and Provoost had taken place, the Book of Common Prayer was subjected to a final revision, when a discussion again arose respecting the Article on the Descent of Christ. The House of clerical and lay deputies finally passed a resolution, ordering it to be printed in italics and between brackets, with a rubric permitting, instead of it, the use of the words: "He went into the place of departed spirits." When this resolution came up in the House of Bishops for concurrence, that body, in order more satisfactorily to obviate objections to the Article, proposed to substitute a declaration that its meaning was: "the state of the dead generally."² In consequence, however, of an oversight on the part of the President of the Lower House, the amendment of the bishops was not carried. Accordingly when the committee, appointed to prepare the book

¹ Five Dioceses or States were represented in that Convention: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and South Carolina. On the Question, whether the words "He descended into Hell" should be restored to the Apostles' Creed, agreeably to the recommendation of the committee, the vote taken by Orders and Dioceses stood as follows: New York — clergy, *Aye*, laity, *No*; divided. New Jersey — clergy, *Aye*, laity, *Aye*; affirmative. Pennsylvania — clergy, *Aye*, laity, *No*; divided. Delaware — clergy, divided, laity, divided. South Carolina — clergy, *Aye*, laity, *Aye*; affirmative. Two Dioceses were in favor, and three divided; so that the proposition was carried by a minority of the Dioceses represented. The whole number of members composing the convention was twenty; eight clergymen and twelve laymen. Of the clergy, seven voted in favor, and one (Dr. Wharton) against the restoration of the clause; and of the laity, six voted in favor, and six against it. It is worthy of note, that the vote of the two largest and most important dioceses was divided, and that the opposition in the convention came chiefly from the side of the laity. — See *Journal of Convention*.

² The language of the Larger Westminster Catechism is similar to this, in the answer to Question 50: "Christ's humiliation after death consisted in being buried and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, until the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, 'He descended into Hell.'"

for the press, met for that purpose, they found to their surprise, that the two houses had entirely misunderstood each other. The committee decided, however, that it ought to stand as proposed by the Lower House, and it was, accordingly, so printed. But bishop White, who was a member of the committee, dissented from the views of the majority, and protested against their decision, on the ground that the Creed, as in the English church, ought to be regarded as the creed of the American church, until altered by consent of both Houses of convention, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, which in this case had inadvertently not been done. When the general convention again met in 1792, the subject came up the third time, and another effort was made to have the Article expunged altogether, but without success. It was ordered that the Creed should be printed in all future editions of the Prayer Book, with the Article inserted, not in italics and between brackets, as before, but with a rubric, leaving it discretionary with any churches to use or omit it, or to use, in place of it, the words, "He went into the place of departed spirits."¹ Of the two bishops who were present in the Upper House, viz. White and Seabury, the latter was strongly in favor of retaining the Article for the reasons assigned in the English Episcopal conclave by bishop Moss; while the former, though evidently disliking the Article, was disposed on the whole to retain it, on the ground that it would tend to promote peace, and be acting in good faith towards the English bishops, while at the same time a latitude would be left, by the proposed rubric, for understanding it as referring to the state of departed spirits generally, instead of the strict, literal sense. When the book came out, bishop Provoost, who was absent from the convention, expressed his disapproval of the form in which this part of it appeared, more than either of the Article itself, as it originally stood, or of its entire omission, on the ground that it exacted a be-

¹ From this rubric it is manifest that, whatever interpretation the Prot. Epis. church may authoritatively put upon the Article, she does not regard the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell as one of very grave importance.

lief in the conscious existence of departed spirits between death and the resurrection.¹ With these remarks on the history of the Article in the Creed, we proceed to the consideration of its interpretation.

“The intermediate state” is a form of expression used relatively of the human, rational soul, to denote its separate condition or state during the period intervening between the death of an individual and his resurrection from the dead. At death a separation is believed to take place between the immaterial and material part of man; at the general resurrection a reunion will take place between them. And the interval of time which elapses between these two events, be it shorter or longer, is the intermediate state of the soul. The idea of an intermediate state is obviously grounded on the doctrine of a future literal resurrection of the body. Those of course who reject that doctrine, or who adopt the notion of a figurative, spiritual resurrection only, which takes place at death (e. g. the Gnostics, in the first period of the church, the Bogomiles, Cathari, and other heretical sects, in the Middle Ages, and the Swedenborgians, Unitarians, and Pantheists in modern times), discard the idea of the state in question. The point when this state of temporary disunion between the soul and body begins, is the moment of the individual’s death: the point when it terminates, is that of his rising again at the general resurrection of the dead. As the doctrine of a literal resurrection is maintained by nearly all professed Christians, however they may differ in respect to the nature of the resurrection-body, so that of an intermediate state is generally admitted. According to this view, two changes are allotted to mankind, with the exception of such as shall be alive on the earth at the time of our Lord’s second advent: the first, the act of passing from the present life to the state, whatever it is, which immediately succeeds it; and another, from that state to the one which is to take place at the resurrection. What, then, is the *condition* of the soul during this intermediate period? Is

¹ See Bishop White’s *History of the Protestant Episcopal Church*.

it in a state of perfect insensibility? of unconscious repose? Are all its faculties suspended, so that it is utterly incapable of action, of enjoyment, or of suffering? Or does it exist thus separated from the body, in a state of consciousness and activity, and sensibility to pleasure and pain? It has been supposed by some professed Christians, that at death there is a suspension of *rational* as well as of *animal* life. This opinion appears to rise naturally out of the system which maintains, that the human being is entirely material, and that thought and feeling are only qualities of organized matter. Of course we might expect that such materialists as Dr. Priestley would advocate this opinion. Believing, as he did, that as the whole man died, so the whole man would be called again to life at the appointed period of the general resurrection, he regarded the intermediate portion of time as a state of utter insensibility; as a profound sleep, from which the man would awaken, when called on by the Almighty, with the same associations as he had when alive, without being conscious of the portion of time elapsed. But this sentiment is not confined to the materialist. It has been held by some who admit the immateriality of the soul, that it is distinct from the body, and that during the intermediate state it is separated from the body. These do not deny the possibility of the soul's separate existence in a *conscious* and *active state*, but they question or disbelieve the *fact* of such existence. This opinion has been lately advocated with much ingenuity and plausibility by Archbishop Whately, in his "View of the Scriptural Revelations concerning a future State." The principal reasons assigned for this opinion are the frequent application in scripture of the term "*asleep*" to the deceased, as characterizing their state, and the allusions to a particular day of judgment in which every man's condition will be finally fixed, and with which his happiness or misery is connected. The Greek verb *κοιμᾶσθαι*, *to sleep*, is frequently used in the New Testament as an elegant euphemism for *to die*. See Jno. 11: 11. Acts 7: 60. 13: 36. 1 Cor. 7: 39. 11: 30. 15: 6, 18, 20, 51. 1 Thes. 4: 13-15. 2 Pet. 3: 4. Comp. Matt. 27: 52.

The noun *κοιμησις* is used instead of *death* in Sir. 46 : 22. 48 : 14. The application of the term *sleep* to *death* in the New Testament, is evidently taken from the Old. See Job 14 : 12. Ps. 13 : 3. In Jere. 51 : 39, 57, the phrase *perpetual sleep* occurs in the same sense. Now, as a mere poetic euphemism, the word proves nothing in regard to the state or mode of the soul's existence after death. It sheds no light on the question of the sensibility or insensibility, the consciousness or unconsciousness of the soul. Indeed its use is quite compatible with an entire disbelief in the separate existence of the soul, and even of its immortality. Thus Dr. Priestly represents the dead soul as asleep. The image was also very common among the Greek poets. Homer, narrating the sudden death of a warrior in battle, calls it "the iron sleep of death." Moschus in the following passage on the death of Bion (Epitaph. v. 105) represents death as *an endless, hopeless sleep* — ἀτέρμονα, νήγητον ὕπνον.

"The meanest herb we trample in the field,
Or in the garden nurture, when its leaf
In Autumn dies, forebodes another Spring,
And from brief slumber wakes to life again;
Man wakes no more ! Man, peerless, valiant, wise,
Once chill'd by death, sleeps hopeless in the dust,
A long, unbroken, never-ending sleep."

So Horace :—

Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda —
"To us, when life's brief day has once declined,
One night, one sleep eternal, lurks behind."

Lucretius is full of the same simile. Thus, Lib. iii. 1100 :

"E'en could we life elongate, we should ne'er
Subtract one moment from the reign of death,
Nor the deep slumber of the grave curtail,
O'er ages could we triumph — death alike
Remains eternal — nor of shorter date
To him who yesterday the light forsook,
Than him who died full many a year before."

Sometimes, indeed, the heathen poets speak of death as a *sacred sleep*, but in a manner which leaves it doubtful whether they alluded to a future state. Callimachus Epigr. 10. Τῆδε Σάων ὁ Δίκωνος, Ἀκάνθιος, ἱερὸν ὕπνον κοιμᾶται. *Δυήσκειν μὴ λέγε τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς.*

The external similarity between a corpse and the body of a person asleep, doubtless gave rise to this *usus loquendi*. And it is certainly a very natural and beautiful poetic analogon. Whether the term *sleep* imports anything more than this in the passages of scripture referred to above; whether it is designed to intimate the actual condition of the soul in the intermediate state, and if so, in what *sense* it is used, and what is it intended to import, are questions not easily answered. While on the one hand, some allege that it is designed to convey the idea that the deceased person is *spiritually* (i. e. as to his soul) in a condition resembling sleep, namely, in a state of insensibility; on the other hand, others, with far greater probability, imagine that the figure applied, as it is, to believers, is intended to convey the idea, that their souls are in a state of rest, — of repose and freedom from sin, temptation, toil, pain, and weariness. Applied to the departure and subsequent condition of a child of God, it is thus linked with peculiarly peaceful and tranquillizing associations. The idea of the total insensibility of the soul in its separate state can hardly be reconciled with the plain teachings of such passages as the following: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, — he is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for (they) all live unto God." "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration certainly affords strong support to the hypothesis of a state of activity and

consciousness after death and before the final resurrection.¹ But while the intermediate state is one of consciousness, as opposed to a state of profound insensibility, it is *not* one of trial, probation, or preparation, in which an opportunity is afforded to rectify the errors committed here, and to work out a salvation, which we neglected here to secure. It is a state of enjoyment and suffering, of reward and punishment, respectively to the pious and the ungodly. To this view Whately opposes the unquestioned doctrine of the general judgment at the last day. If every man immediately at death, and *before* the general resurrection enters upon a state of reward and punishment, what, it is asked, is the necessity of a day of judgment *after* the resurrection? It may not be possible to give an answer to this inquiry that shall be perfectly satisfactory; for the scriptures shed but little light upon the point, and it would therefore ill become us to speak confidently, in relation to it. But admitting that the condition, as well as the locality of the soul, is substantially the same in its general character, as it will be after the general resurrection and judgment, and differing from it only so far as it may be affected by the reunion of the soul and body, it does not follow that the

¹ The English reformers were so firmly persuaded of this truth, that they put forth the following declaration in the reign of Edward VI, as one of the Articles of the Church. It is the 40th of the *forty-two* Articles of 1552: "The souls of them that depart this life do neither die with the bodies, nor sleep idly." "They which say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling, or perceiving, until the day of judgment, or affirm that the souls die with the bodies, and at the last day shall be raised up with the same, do utterly dissent from the right belief declared to us in Holy Scripture." Now, although in the revision to which the Articles were subjected in 1562, this Article was omitted, there is no proof that the omission arose from any change of views which had taken place in regard to the subject-matter of the Article. When Archbishop Whately, therefore, appeals to the expression "*those who sleep in him,*" in the Burial Service of the Episcopal church, as, in its most obvious and natural sense, favoring the doctrine of an unconscious intermediate state, he certainly mistakes the import of the phrase as employed in that service. Otherwise it would be inconsistent with the introductory clause in the prayer which precedes it, quoted in a subsequent part of this Article. Indeed, the Archbishop admits that the authors of the Church-Services, at least of the Burial-Service, appear to have adopted the opinion, that the intermediate state is one of enjoyment and of suffering, respectively, to the faithful and the disobedient.

judgment, thus partially forestalled will be unnecessary or attended with no important effects. Ends and purposes under the divine government may be accomplished by it, of which we can form no adequate conception. So that if our imperfect and limited reason should entirely fail us on this point, and we were unable to suggest even a plausible conjecture in reference to it, it would not necessarily follow that departed souls are in a state of profound insensibility, and incapable either of enjoyment, or of suffering. Though the general judgment may not materially change the previous condition of *human beings* in the future world, it may have an important bearing on the character of the *divine Being*. It may indeed be thought that the ends of justice are answered, when individuals are treated according to their deserts; and as this is done, or supposed to be done, immediately after death, that no further procedure is necessary. It is true that justice, as it respects *private persons*, consists in regulating their conduct by its dictates, in their transactions with their fellow beings; and if they uniformly preserve inviolate the rights of others, all its demands are fulfilled. But the justice of a *Governor* belongs to the public, and it is expected of him, that he not only execute the laws with impartiality, but that his justice be exercised in such a manner as is most conducive to the general good. Now as Jehovah is the moral governor of the world, it is not enough that he *is* just; he must *appear* also to be just. The retribution which takes place immediately after death is unknown. The grounds on which the condition of each individual is determined, are not apparent to us, and it may be entirely beyond our power to discover them. The grounds on which the particular condition of each individual is determined, are not apparent to others, and it may be wholly beyond their power to discover them. Hence a general judgment, at which all the descendants of Adam shall be present, and everything pertaining to the moral character of each other shall be disclosed, appears to be necessary to the perfect display of the justice of God; to such a manifestation of it, as will vindicate his moral government from

all suspicion of injustice and partiality, and impress the conviction on the minds of all intelligent beings that he is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works. — Now in whatever state the disembodied souls of all men are, in the same state we may presume that the rational soul of our Saviour was during the interval between his death and resurrection. If theirs is a conscious state, then such was his also. But *where* was that conscious state passed? It is to this point that the article in the Creed relates. We proceed therefore, to inquire into its meaning. In order to a comprehensive view of the subject, it will be necessary to examine some of the most prominent interpretations which have been given of it.

I. There is the metaphorical interpretation, first proposed by Calvin. According to this, "the Descent into Hell" does not refer either to the body or the soul of Christ in the intermediate state, but to a period antecedent to his death. It is figuratively descriptive of his extreme mental sufferings and agony in the garden and on the cross.¹ This interpreta-

¹ The theory of Calvin has been frequently misunderstood and misrepresented. Bishops Horsley and Henshaw, and others, have charged the Reformer with holding that our blessed Lord actually went down to the place of torment, and there endured the pains of a reprobate soul. Thus Bishop Henshaw says: "the learned Genevan reformer, John Calvin, the celebrated father of a system of religious faith which goes under his name, — in conformity to the rigid features of his Creed, — believed that our Lord Jesus Christ, having died as a surety and substitute for sinners, went down to the place of punishment prepared for the wicked, and underwent for the benefit of the elect the actual pains and torments of the damned in hell." (*Henshaw's Theol. for the People*, p. 134. See also Horsley's *Ser.* vol. 2, p. 93.) A writer in the *Church Review* for July, 1857, gives a similar representation of Calvin's opinion. "Calvin, who supposed this passage (1 Pet 3: 18, 19) to refer to our Saviour's going into the state of the dead, while his body was buried, feeling the force and acknowledging the true meaning of this word "prison," is more consistent; and although the supposition was awful, yet he faced it honestly, and supposed that our Lord in his Spirit and soul, spent the three days while his body lay in the grave, in the Gehenna, or Hell of Torments, working out the full condemnation and literal torments of the lost in the prison of despair." Calvin's sentiments in regard to the descent are found in his *Institutes*. Lib. ii. ch. 16. sec. 10. His language is: "Si Christus ad inferos descendisse dicitur, nihil mirum est, cum eam mortem pertulerit, quae sceleribus ab irato Deo infligitur." — "If Christ is said to have descended into hell, it is no wonder, since he suffered that death which is

tion became quite prevalent, for a time, in the different branches of the Reformed church. It is found in the Confession of Faith, which was adopted by the English congregation at Geneva, and received the approval of the church of Scotland. That Confession consists of a Paraphrase on the Creed; and on the clauses, "dead and buried; he descended into hell," it says: "suffered his humanity to be punished with a most cruel death, feeling in himself the anger and severe judgment of God, even as if he had been in the extreme torments of hell; and therefore cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Heidelberg Catechism, which was published in 1563, and is the manual of instruction for the German and Dutch Reformed churches, expresses the same view. Question 44 asks: "Why is there added, "He descended into-hell?" Answer: "That I may be assured and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agencies, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell."

It cannot be denied that the language of the Article is, *per se*, fairly susceptible of such an interpretation. The expression, "to descend into hell," may very well be employed to describe, in a bold, figurative manner, the extremity either of bodily or mental anguish, or of both combined. As men who have attained the summit of their ambition and reached the highest pinnacle of earthly glory, are poetically described as boasting that "they have reached the stars," and that

inflicted on the wicked by an angry God." "Cum duros in anima cruciatus damnati ac periti hominis pertulerit." — "Since he suffered in spirit the direful torments of condemned and lost man." The language of Calvin is obscure and liable to misconstruction. But its import is fully established by contemporaneous history. Indeed the Reformer was so far from holding the opinion frequently imputed to him, that, according to Dr. Hey, it was the increasing popularity of his views, as we have represented them, which induced Archbishop Parker and the other Bishops in the reign of Elizabeth to omit that clause in the third article of religion, set forth in Edward's reign, in which the *locus veratissimus* in 1 Peter, is applied to the literal descent of Christ into hell, because it was not acceptable to those who embraced the opinion of the Genevan Reformer. See H. Browne's *Expos. of the xxxix Articles*, p. 93.

“they strike the stars with their lofty heads,” so it may be said, in reference to the indescribable anguish to which our Saviour’s soul was subjected in Gethsemane and on Calvary, that “he went down to hell,” or “to the lowest depths of hell.” We find a similar poetic hyperbole in Isa. 14 : 11—15, where the prophet depicts the elevated political condition of the proud and arrogant king of Babylon, and contrasts it with his subsequent fall. We give the passage as translated by Dr. Henderson :

11. Thy pomp is brought down to *sheol* (*ᾗδης*),
And the sounding of thy harps ;
Under thee is spread putridity ;
And the worms are thy covering.
12. How art thou fallen from heaven,
Illustrious son of the Morning !
How art thou felled to the ground,
That didst discomfit the nations.
13. Thou saidst in thine heart, *I will scale the heavens ;*
Above the stars of God I will raise my throne ;
I will sit on the mount of the assembly, in the recesses of the north ;
14. *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds !*
I will make myself like the Most High.
15. But thou art brought down to *Sheol* (*ᾗδης*),
To the recesses of the pit.

A similar hyperbole is employed by our Saviour when he says of Capernaum that, although at that time “exalted to heaven,” in respect to privileges, it should be “thrust down to hell.” Comp. also Ps. 88 : 3, 6. 18 : 4, 5. 116 : 3.

But although the words, taken by themselves, will bear the construction put upon them by Calvin, this cannot be their meaning in the Creed as it now stands. The connection obviously forbids it. The relative position which the clause occupies, after the burial and before the resurrection, compels us to understand it as referring to some event which transpired subsequent to the interment and not prior to the death of Christ. There are, moreover, insuperable objections to this interpretation. Such a bold, figurative mode of interpretation is wholly out of place in a document of this kind, and inconsistent with the general character of the Creed.

A confession of faith, designed to receive the assent and credence of all classes of people, should doubtless be couched in literal terms, and expressed in as plain, simple, and perspicuous a manner as possible. We do not look for figures of speech in such an instrument. They would be inappropriate and incongruous. Now the Apostles' Creed corresponds, in this respect, to what a creed should be. Nothing can be plainer and more easily comprehended, for the most part, than this ancient symbol.

Besides, it is fatal to this interpretation, that doctrinally it has no scriptural basis to rest upon. Where, within the Sacred Volume, is it said that Christ suffered the torments of the damned, either on the cross or in the abode of lost spirits? Indeed, it would seem to be inconceivable that he should have suffered them. For the worm that never dies could not possibly have gnawed his sinless soul; remorse of conscience, a capital ingredient in the misery of the lost, he could not have endured.

Nor would it seem to be at all necessary to the work of atonement, that he should thus suffer. The mediatorial sufferings of Christ were not strictly penal, but simply vicarious. They were an equivalent substitution for the penalty due to sinners, but not the penalty itself, either in kind or quantity. They answered the same purpose, and accomplished the same righteous ends, in the moral government of God; and that was all, in the way of equivalency and substitution, which the nature of the case required, or which the sinless Jesus could render. If, in order to render the substitution undertaken by our Saviour in behalf of sinners effective, it were necessary that he should endure the literal penalty of the law, the very punishment denounced upon transgressors, then we might be compelled to admit that he must have suffered the torments of the lost, either on the cross or in Gehenna.

II. The descent of Christ into hell is supposed, by some, to import nothing more than that *he went into the state of the dead*. This appears to have been the prevalent opinion among the Westminster divines; for in the Shorter Cate-

chism, appended to the Westminster Confession, there is inserted the Apostles' Creed, and to the clause "he descended into hell," is annexed the following explanatory note: "that is, continued in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, until the third day." This explanation appears also in the answer to question 50 of the Larger Catechism: "Christ's humiliation after death consisted in being buried and continuing in the state of the dead and under the power of death, until the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words: "He descended into hell." If this means simply that Christ was dead for the space of three days, or a part of three days, the fact will not be disputed; but can the Hebrew word *Sheol*, or the Greek *Hades*, or the English *Hell*, be made to signify a *state* or *condition* of being? We think not. The Hebrew word, when used in a literal sense, always imports a *place*, a local habitation, and never a *state*. So it has been generally understood, both in ancient and in modern times. Besides, the phrase *he descended into the state of the dead*, can properly signify only, *he died*; a fact which had been already declared in a previous Article of the Creed. This, then, cannot be the meaning of the clause; for it would be not only tautological, but out of place, to affirm the death of Christ here.

III. Beza and others maintain that this Article refers to the dead body of Christ, and is equivalent to *he descended into the grave*. This is the interpretation of Dr. Barrow and Wm. Perkins. It is a remarkable circumstance that in the early creeds in which this clause is found, the burial of Christ is not mentioned. Thus in the creed of the church of Aquileia, the words are: "crucified under Pontius Pilate, he descended *ad inferna*." The same remark applies also to the Athanasian Creed, which has the descent, but not the sepulture: "who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell (*εις ᾗδου*), rose again, on the third day, from the dead." The omission of the burial, in these creeds, could hardly have been undesigned, inasmuch as it is found in all, or nearly all, previous creeds and confessions. Hence there would seem to be force in the remark of Rufinus, that "though the Ro-

man and Oriental churches had not the words, yet they had the sense of them in the word *buried*." ¹ The Latin *infernum* or *inferna* properly signifies *the lower parts*, or what is beneath the surface of the earth; and is synonymous with the Greek *καταχθόνια*, SUBTERRANEAN, which is found in the creed of Ariminum, A. D. 359. So *inferi* and *ἰνοχθόνιοι* are applied to those who inhabit the abodes of the dead. In the Athanasian creed, the word *ἄδης* was first introduced in the place of *καταχθόνια*. The word *κατώτατα* is found in some creeds instead of *ἄδης* and *καταχθόνια*, with evident allusion to Eph. 4 : 9, where the phrase *τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς*, *the lower parts of the earth*, has been understood by many commentators to denote the grave. (Comp. the Heb. *קברות מתים*, Sept. *κατώτατα τῆς γῆς*, Ps. 63 : 10.) In further support of this interpretation, it has been alleged that the Heb. *Sheol* (*שְׁאוֹל*, LXX *ἄδης*), in Ps. 16 : 9, a passage on which the Article in the Creed is chiefly founded, signifies *the grave*. That the word *Sheol* (*שְׁאוֹל*), which commonly signifies *the region* or *abode of the dead*, is sometimes employed with specific reference to the *grave* or the receptacle of the dead body, cannot well be doubted. See Ps. 6 : 5. 141 : 7. Isa. 38 : 18, 19. Ezek. 32 : 27. Eccl. 9 : 10 (comp. Sirac. 17 : 27).

An account, however, of the origin of the clause in the creed of Aquileia has been given which, if correct, would militate against this interpretation. It is said that the Article was introduced for the purpose of counteracting the Apollinarian heresy. This heresy took its name from Apollinaris the Younger, bishop of Laodicea (Syria), who died between A. D. 380 and 392. The time when he first promulgated his heresy is not precisely known. He was not anathematized by name till the second general council of Constantinople, A. D. 381; but nineteen years before (A. D. 362) his heresy was condemned by a synod at Alexandria,

¹ In a note in the Preface to the proposed Episcopal Prayer Book we find the following remark : "In the first creeds that have this clause or article, that of Christ's burial not being mentioned in them, it follows that they understood the descent into hell only of his burial or descent into the grave, as the word is otherwise translated in the Bible."

without mentioning the name of the author; also by another at Rome, A. D. 373. This heresy consisted in denying to Christ the possession of a human rational soul, and maintaining that its place was supplied by his divine nature. To bear testimony against this heresy, and virtually to affirm that Christ Jesus was a perfect man, composed of body and soul, the Article, it is said, was inserted, declaring his descent, as to his rational soul, *ad inferna*, into the abode of departed souls. That the Article in question was subsequently appealed to by the orthodox, in refutation of this error, cannot be disputed; but if it were originally inserted for this purpose, it is quite extraordinary that Rufinus, in his exposition of the Creed, does not allude to it. But whatever may have been the occasion of its insertion, or whatever the sense in which it was originally understood, it is plain that ever since its introduction into the Roman Creed, where it was first appended to the *burial*, it must have a meaning distinct from the *sepulture* of Jesus.

IV. Another interpretation which has been given of this Article is, *that Christ descended into the place of future punishment (Gehenna)*. This view was adopted by some of the later Fathers, and prevailed quite extensively during the Middle Ages in connection with the doctrine of purgatory. By the Protestant Reformers the notion of purgatory was universally rejected; but their views with respect to the intermediate state, and the descent of Christ into hell were very diverse and unsettled. That our Lord went down to the abode of condemned spirits, however, was very generally entertained by them, though they differed considerably as to the object of his mission. Some thought it was to suffer the punishment inflicted on the lost in their own miserable abode. Others, that it was to display to those who were consigned to everlasting punishment, and even to the fallen angels themselves, the power of his kingdom and the victory which he had obtained over sin, and to triumph over Satan in his own peculiar dominion. Others, that it was for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to lost Spirits, and especially to the impenitent who were swept away by the Noah-

chian deluge, to whom he announced the atonement which he had made for men, offered them pardon through his merits, and invited them to share in the blessings of salvation. By the church of England the strict literal sense of the descent into the place of punishment was first adopted. In the Book of Common Prayer published in the fourth year of Edward, A. D. 1552, the third article of religion reads as follows: "As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed that he went down into hell; for his body lay in the grave till his resurrection, but his soul being separate from his body remained with the spirits which were detained in prison, that is to say in hell, and there preached unto them." In the short Catechism set forth by royal authority in the following year, the descent is thus explained: "That he truly died, and was truly buried, that by his most sure sacrifice he might pacify his Father's wrath against mankind, and subdue him by his death, who had the authority of death, which is the Devil; forasmuch as not only the living but the dead, were they in hell or elsewhere, they all felt the power and force of his death, to whom lying in prison (as Peter saith) Christ preached, though dead in body, yet relieved in spirit." In a synod which was held ten years after (A. D. 1562), in the reign of Elizabeth, the explanatory clause was stricken out of the article of religion. The precise import of Christ's descent was thus left indeterminate, and it has ever since remained an open question in the church of England. Archbishop Parker is supposed to have been induced to omit the explanatory clause in consequence of the representation of the Bishop of Exeter, who in a paper prepared for the synod declared, that there had been "great invectives in his diocese between preachers on this article; some holding that the going down of Christ to hell was nothing else but, that the virtue and strength of his death should be made known to them that were dead before; others maintaining that it only means, he sustained upon the cross the infernal pains of hell, when he cried out: *Why hast thou forsaken me?* Finally, there are persons who preach, that this Article is not contained in other symbols;

and all these sayings they ground upon Erasmus and the Germans, especially Calvin and Bullinger; the contrary side bringing forward to their support the universal consent of the Fathers of both Churches."¹ The effect of this omission of the reference to Peter's Epistle appears to have been to allay for some time the controversy which had arisen on this subject. The extreme view, however, continued to be held by some. It is strongly advocated by Dr. Fiddes, and by Bishop Beveridge, in his Exposition of the xxxix Articles. In support of this interpretation, appeal is made to the plain, literal meaning of the Article itself. And it must be confessed that, if the language be construed according to its customary use at the present day, the Article does obviously imply two things. 1. That Christ went as to his human soul to the place of punishment, and 2. that this place of punishment or hell, is situated beneath the earth. Such is the meaning which every English reader would naturally put upon it. No doubt the Saxon word *hell* was originally employed in the general, comprehensive sense of the Greek *Hades*, and was appropriately adopted to represent it. But such is not now the case. The word *hell* has ceased to be used in the wide, indefinite sense once attached to it, and is now employed specifically and exclusively to designate the place of future punishment. Thus far, then, the advocates of this opinion have *terra firma* to rest upon. But in further support of this view they appeal to 1 Peter 3: 19, 20. (Comp. ch. 4: 6.) Col. 2: 15. Eph. 4: 8, 9. (Comp. Ps. 68: 18.)—Rom. 10: 6. and Ps. 16: 10. (Comp. Acts. 2: 31.) That these passages of scripture do not prove the doctrine which they are here adduced to establish, will be shown under another head. Suffice it to say, that the Descent of Christ into Hell, as thus explained, is now universally abandoned. We know of no respectable writer who would now advocate this extreme opinion, notwithstanding its accordance with the literal and obvious construction of the Article.

V. Another interpretation which has been given of the

¹ Stripes' Annals, I. c. 31; and Life of Parker, I. 513. Hardwick, p. 132.

Descent of Christ into hell, and which is entitled to particular notice, is developed in the following theory. There is in addition to, and distinct from, heaven and hell, a *third place* or *locality* of departed souls in the invisible world. This particular locality is called in Hebrew *Sheol*, in Greek *Hades*, and in Latin *infernus*, *Orcus*, and is situated under the ground, somewhere beneath the surface, or as some suppose, in a cavity at the very centre of the earth. This is the peculiar abode of the disembodied souls of all those who have departed this life, whether good or bad, during the intermediate state, where they respectively enjoy comparative happiness or endure comparative misery. At the general resurrection, they will leave this temporary abode, become reunited to their former bodies, and either ascend to heaven or go to hell (*Gehenna*), according to the decision of the final judgment, when the felicity of the pious and the misery of the wicked will be complete. This subterranean abode is supposed to consist of two distinct compartments, having no connection with each other, but separated by an impassable gulf. One of these, called *Paradise* and Abraham's bosom, is the abode of the *pious* dead; the other, denominated *Tartarus*, *the Abyss*, *Gehenna*, or else without a specific name, is the abode of the ungodly. Now it is alleged that the rational soul of our Saviour descended to this general locality of souls, and remained during his intermediate state in that department of *Hades*, which is occupied by the pious dead. Hugh Broughton, a learned Oriental Scholar of England (A. D. 1597) appears to have been among the first to advocate this opinion in that country, which at first gave great offence to the older divines who had embraced the views of Calvin; among whom was Archbishop Whitgift. At length, however, the Archbishop abandoned his former opinions and adopted those of Broughton. Since that period the views of the distinguished Orientalist have been gaining ground in the Church of England. One of the most distinguished and ingenious advocates of this theory in recent times is Bishop Horsley,¹ whose views were

¹ In his Sermons, originally published in 1810.

embraced by Bishop Hobart, and reproduced by him in a "Dissertation on the State of the Departed" originally published in 1816. — "He, (i. e. Christ) descended to hell properly so called," says Bishop Horsley, "to the invisible mansion of departed spirits, and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful, when they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."

In regard to the *local situation* of *Hades*, the Bishop says, "it is evident that this must be some place below the surface of the earth; for it is said that He (Christ) 'descended,' i. e. went down to it. Our Lord's death took place upon the surface of the earth, where the human race inhabit; *that*, therefore, and none higher, is the place from which he descended; of consequence, the place to which he went by descent, was below it; and it is with relation to those parts below the surface, that his rising to life on the third day must be understood." In reference to the same point, Gresswell, a learned living divine of the church of England, in his elaborate work on the Parables, undertakes to show: 1. that *Hades* is under the ground; and 2. that it is the deepest point within the earth. With regard to the latter point, he comes to the sage conclusion that the locality of *Hades* is at, or about, the centre of the earth. "For since," says he, "it must be equally true of the relative position of *Hades* to all parts of the surface of the earth, that it is alike within the earth, alike beneath in reference to all parts of the surface, and alike at the same point of extreme depth beneath, in reference to the surface; it does not seem possible to explain this community of relation in the position of *Hades* to all parts of the earth's exterior surface, consistently with a well-ascertained physical fact, the spherical form of the earth, except by supposing its true position to be at or about the centre of the sphere itself." The same writer proceeds to show that *Hades* is divided into distinct regions, relatively situated with respect to each other, as a higher point in regard to a locality would be to a lower; and then, that though the souls of all men pass into *Hades* by death, as the common receptacle of the dead, they do not all pass into the

same *locality* of *Hades*, but the souls of the good are received into one locality, viz. the higher or upper region, and the souls of the bad into another, viz. the nether region. Thus we have the map of this imaginary country spread out before us, and the whole delineated with as much minuteness as if the learned author had himself been a visitant and eye-witness of it.

The *object* of Christ's descent into *Hades* is thus described by bishop Horsley: "That he should go to this place was a necessary branch of the general scheme and project of redemption, which required that the divine Word should take our nature upon him, and fulfil the entire condition of humanity, in every period and stage of man's existence, from the commencement of life in the mother's womb to the extinction and renovation of it. The same wonderful scheme of humiliation which required that the Son should be conceived, and born, and put to death, made it equally necessary that his soul, in its intermediate state, should be gathered to the souls of the departed saints." This theory, in regard to the intermediate place and the Descent of Christ into hell, is alleged to be the doctrine of scripture, of the early church, and of the Protestant Episcopal church.

1. The passages of Scripture which are chiefly relied upon to sustain this view are five, viz. Psalm 16: 9. Luke 23: 43. 16: 23, 24. Eph. 4: 9, 10 and 1 Peter 3: 18—20.

Ps. 16: 9, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." There can be no reasonable doubt among all those who hold to the inspiration of the apostles, that this passage is prophetic of the Messiah. For Peter and Paul both refer it to Jesus of Nazareth in proof of his Messiahship, and show that it was fulfilled in him and in him alone (Acts 2: 25—31. 13: 35—37). It is, moreover, generally regarded as the principal passage, if not the only one, on which the Article of Christ's Descent into hell was originally founded; and there can be little doubt that the word *ᾗδης* was inserted in the Athanasian creed, in the place of *καταχθόνα*, to make it

more nearly conform to this place. The only question, then, is with respect to its meaning. In its most comprehensive sense, it includes the entire domain of death: the locality of the body, and the locality of the soul. It occurs sixty-four times in the Old Testament, and in several instances it appears manifestly to be used with special reference to the locality of the body, i. e. the *grave*, the *sepulchre*; and so the learned translators of our Authorized Version understood it, for in thirty-one instances (viz. Gen. 37:35. 42:38. 44:29, 31. 1 Sam. 2:6. 1 Kg. 2:6, 9. Job 7:9. 14:13. 17:13. 21:13. 24:19. Ps. 6:5. 30:3. 31:17. 49:14 (twice), 15. 88:3. 89:48. 141:7. Prov. 1:12. 30:16. Eccl. 9:10. Cant. 8:9. Isa. 14:11. 38:10, 18. Ez. 31:11. Hos. 13:14 (twice), they have rendered it *grave*; and in three instances (Num. 16:30, 31. Job 17:16), *pit*.

That pious men among the ancient Hebrews entertained not only a hope, but an influential belief in a future conscious state of existence, seems clear from many passages of scripture, both in the Old and New Testament. They looked forward, at death, to another and a better country, even an heavenly. At the same time it is manifest that their views and conceptions, in regard to that future state of immortality, the condition of the soul in that state, its precise locality, etc., were exceedingly vague, indefinite, and obscure. The whole subject was involved in a dense cloud, which they were unable to penetrate. They knew not what became of the rational soul after its separation from the body; but as the body was deposited in the grave, so they imagined that the soul might descend with it, and occupy a place more or less remote from it. Hence the word *Sheol* was employed to denote, generically, the *entire region, the subterranean dwelling-place, of the dead*; not exclusively or chiefly, perhaps, the receptacle of the dead body, but also the abode of the disembodied souls of all those who had passed through the gates of death, irrespective of their previous character or their present condition as happy or unhappy. They had no idea of an *intermediate state* or an *intermediate place*, because they had no idea of a resurrection and trans-

ference to another abode, unless the celebrated passage in Job 19:25 be thought to intimate the contrary. They appear to have regarded *Sheol* as the *final* abode, both of the righteous and the wicked. To the one it was supposed to be a place of happiness; to the other, of misery. It covered all they knew about futurity. It was their heaven and their hell. It was not, then, such a place, according to the conceptions of the early Hebrews, as the advocates of this hypothesis represent it to have been.

Now the word *Sheol* (or *Hades*) occurs in the passage from the Psalmist under consideration; and the inference deduced from it is, that our Saviour, as to his rational soul, went down to the general receptacle of souls, situated somewhere under the earth, or as Gresswell says, in a hollow cavity at the centre of the earth, and there took up its abode during its separate state. On this passage we remark: 1. That the general and comprehensive term *Sheol* may be here employed with particular reference to the receptacle of the body, *the grave*, as one department of the invisible world, or world of the dead.

The Hebrew term employed by the Psalmist and here translated *hell*, is *sheol* (שְׁאוֹל) which the authors of the Septuagint Greek version have uniformly (with only one or two exceptions) represented by *Hades* (ᾍδης). The etymology of the word is uncertain. Some lexicographers derive it from שָׁאַל, in the sense of *to ask, crave, demand, require, seek for, etc.*, and they suppose that it is employed to designate the *grave*, or the *region of the dead*, as *rapacious, craving, never satisfied*, like the *orcus rapax* of Catulus, the *ἀπρωαρός* of Callimachus, and the English phrase *insatiable sepulchre* (see Hab. 2:5 and Prov. 30:15, 16, where there is thought to be an allusion to this derivation). Others derive the word from שָׂוַל in the sense of *to excavate, to hollow out*, like the obsolete root שָׂוַל, and put for שְׁאוֹל, *a cavity, a hollow, subterranean place*, just as the German *hölle, hell*, is originally the same with *Höhle, a hollow cavern*;— and the Latin *cælum* is from the Greek *κοῖλος, hollow*. The etymology is not of much importance, since use, and not derivation, is the true standard

by which the meaning of a word is most properly ascertained. At the same time the etymology of the word, whether we derive it from אָשׁ, taken in the sense of to *ask*, or in that of to *excavate*, would justify us in supposing that it might appropriately be employed to designate the *grave*, notwithstanding the existence of a less poetic, more limited and specific term (קֶבֶר) to denote the locality of the dead body. The term *sheol* is clearly of a generic character, and signifies *the world, or region of the dead*. It cannot be shown from the word itself merely, that it refers exclusively to the locality of the soul. 2. That such is the meaning here is rendered quite probable, if not certain, from the parallelism. Gesenius, De Wette, Hengstenberg, and others maintain that שְׁחָר in the following hemistich translated after the Septuagint (διαφθορά) *corruption*, signifies *the pit*, which is but another name for *the grave*. The noun occurs twenty-two times in the Old Testament; thirteen times it is rendered in our authorized version, *pit*; once, *grave*; twice, *ditch*; twice, *destruction*, and four times (Job 17 : 14; Ps. 16 : 10; 49 : 9; Jonah 2 : 6) *corruption*. By comparing the passages any one can see that in two of the places in which it is translated *corruption* (Psalm 49 : 9; and Jonah 2 : 6), it might more properly be rendered *grave* and *pit*. But whether we render it here by *pit* or *corruption*, is immaterial to our argument; for, in either case, it refers to the *body*. 3. If it could be shown that *sheol* must here denote specifically the *abode of the rational soul*, it would not follow that this is located under the earth. For the mere circumstance that such was the popular belief or conjecture of the ancient Hebrews, would not prove this to be the fact. There is no evidence that they obtained this information from direct revelation. On this point the Hebrews may have been, and doubtless were, mistaken. 4. There is no proper antithesis between נַפְשׁ (soul) in the first member of the verse and the corresponding word קֹדֶשׁ (holy one) in the second, which requires us to understand the former of the rational soul. The word נַפְשׁ may be here, as it often is elsewhere, an idiomatic periphrasis for the personal pronoun and equivalent to אֲנִי

me. If so, then the distich forms a synonymous parallelism, and may be rendered,

“Thou wilt not leave (abandon) me to the grave ;
Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see (experience) corruption.”

To this it has been objected that Peter, in quoting the passage as prophetic of the Messiah (Acts 2: 25—31), lays an emphasis on the word *ψυχή* (*soul*), and that consequently he designed to discriminate between the *soul* and the *body* of Jesus, as if the one were in the *receptacle of Spirits*, and the other in the *grave*. But it cannot be satisfactorily established that such emphasis exists. Indeed the reading *ψυχή αὐτοῦ* of the Textus Receptus in v. 31, is a very doubtful one. The words are not found in several of the oldest and best Mss. (A B C D), nor in the Vulg. Syr. Copt. Sahid, and Arab. (Erpenian) versions; and are either cancelled or bracketed in all critical editions of the New Testament. That no emphasis is to be sought in the word, is clearly manifest, we think, from the manner in which both Peter and Paul refer to the passage. Paul does not quote the first member of the verse at all (Acts 13: 35), but *does* lay an emphasis on the word *διαφθορά*, (ῥῥϞ), *corruption*, in the second clause: “For David, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep (i. e. died), and was laid unto his fathers, and *saw corruption*. But he, whom God raised again, *saw no corruption*” (vs. 36, 37). The sole purpose, moreover, for which both the apostles appeal to the passage, is simply to show that the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead was the subject of ancient prophecy, and that Jesus by rising from the dead without experiencing corruption or the destruction of his body, was consequently the Messiah. They direct particular attention to the death, burial, and resurrection of the uncorrupted body of Jesus, and pass over the intervening period and all that related to it, with the least possible notice. (See Acts 2: 29.) Paul also in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, makes distinct mention of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as topics upon which he had frequently dis-

coursed to them (15 : 3, 4), but passes over his intermediate existence in the world of spirits in silence. On the whole, then, we think that this *locus classicus* affords very little support to the theory which it is brought to sustain.

2. Another passage which is relied upon to establish the theory of a third subterranean place of the departed, is the declaration of our Saviour on the cross to the penitent robber: "This day shall thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23 : 43). It is alleged that the paradise here spoken of could not have been heaven, because our Saviour said to his disciples after his resurrection: "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father," *i. e.* to heaven. Hence it is inferred that paradise is the name given to the upper compartment in *Hades*, or the underworld. And in support of this view an appeal is made to the *usus loquendi* of the sacred, the Jewish, and the early Christian writers. It becomes necessary, therefore, to examine these sources of evidence. And, first, what is the Biblical use of the word *paradise*? The word is of Eastern origin. It was a name common to several of the Oriental languages (e. g. the Sanscrit, Armenian, Arabic, and Syriac), but especially current among the Persians. From these it passed into the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin, and subsequently into all the Western languages. Its proper signification in the East was a *beautiful garden*, a *park*, a *pleasure ground*. The earliest instance that we have of it in Greek (*παράδεισος*) is in the *Cyropædia* and other writings of Xenophon, about 400 years before Christ. The circumstance which has given to this term its extensive and popular use is its having been employed by the Greek translators of the LXX. and afterwards in the Syriac version, and by Jerome in the Latin Vulg. as a translation of *the garden* (גַּן) in which our first parents were placed. The word belongs to the Later Hebrew and occurs (פִּרְדֵּיִם, *pardees*) only in three places in the Old Testament (Neh. 2 : 8; Eccles. 2 : 5; Cant. 4 : 13). In the first of these it is rendered *forest*; in the other two, *orchard*. In the apocryphal book of Susanna, the word occurs constantly in the sense of *garden*. So Sirac, 24 : 30. Josephus calls the

gardens of Solomon in the plur. *paradises* (Ant. VIII. 7, 3). From a literal sense it came at length to be used metaphorically to denote the abstract idea of *exquisite delight* (Sirac 40 : 17, 27); and then it became a symbolical name for *heaven*, the *happy region of the blessed*, the *dwelling-place of God*, of Christ, of holy angels, and of the Spirits of the just make perfect,—the house of many mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare for his faithful followers. In the New Testament the word occurs *three times* (2 Cor. 12 : 4; Rev. 2 : 7; and Luke 23 : 43). In the first passage, Paul speaks of himself as having been caught up into paradise.¹ In verse 2, he says that he was caught up into the *third heaven*. The two, then, are identical. Some commentators, it is true, seek to prevent this inference by alleging that the Apostle refers to two separate visions occurring on different occasions, in one of which the scene is laid in *Heaven*, and in the other in *Hades*; and that consequently paradise and the third heaven are not the same. But this allegation is incapable of proof, and altogether improbable. There can be no reasonable doubt that verses 2 and 3 contain, not a fresh assumption, but merely a solemn repetition of what is affirmed in verse 2, with the additional particular of Paul's having had unspeakable revelations made to him. Even Olshausen, who makes a distinction between the upper and the lower paradise, and supposes the latter

¹ Our argument does not require that any stress should be laid on the particle *up* in our English version. The verb ἀρπάζω (v. 4) does not of itself indicate the direction of motion, but only the suddenness of the action, and the passiveness of the object. We may therefore translate *was snatched, caught or carried away* into paradise (see Matt. 13 : 19. Acts 8 : 30). The same word, however, occurs in v. 2, and undoubtedly in the same sense, where Paul is said to have been *caught up* (ἀρπαγέντα) *into or unto* (εἰς) *the third heaven*. Now if εἰς τρίτου οὐρανοῦ is identical in import with εἰς τὸν παράδεισον, or at least so far equivalent to it, as to be a general local description of a situation, in which δ παράδεισος is found, as seems to be quite certain, then *paradise* cannot be the happy region or side of the underworld, as is imagined; for no biblical writer with whom we are acquainted, has ever thought of placing the *third heaven under the earth*. Forasmuch, then, as the third or highest heaven has been always understood and represented to be far *above* the earth, and beyond the siderial heavens, so ἀρπάζω may here in both instances of its occurrence very properly from the adjunct acquire the meaning of *to catch or snatch up*, as it is rendered not only in our English Bible, but by most translators (see also 1 Thess. 4 : 17. Rev. 12 : 5).

to be situated in the happy portion of *Sheol*, maintains that, in this place, the two expressions used by the Apostle refer to the same thing, and denote the most exalted region of light, the immediate presence of God. The same remark applies to Alford.

In the second passage (Rev. 2: 7.) we find the following declaration. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in *the midst of the paradise of God.*" In this place the word *paradise* is universally admitted to signify without doubt *heaven*, considered as a place of exquisite delight. The usage of the term in the two passages which have been considered, warrants us in putting the same interpretation upon it in the only remaining passage in which it occurs, unless there be something special and peculiar in it which requires a different construction. But we can discover nothing of this sort. The objection that our Saviour did not ascend to heaven until some time after his crucifixion, is more specious than solid. It is true that, as to his human body, of which he was speaking, he did not immediately ascend; but he certainly did as to his divine nature, and so also, as we think, as to his human soul. Let us now inquire into the Rabbinical use of the word *paradise*. The language of Paul and of John, not to say of our Saviour, implies a prior belief among the Jews, or at least of some among them, that paradise was in heaven. Without this the apostles would hardly have been understood. This statement is corroborated by one of Witstein's quotations appended to Luke. 23: 43. Chagiga. fol. 14. 2. "Four have entered paradise by the hand of God."¹ The application of this term to denote the happiness of the righteous in the future state, originated according to J. Pye Smith (*Kitto's Cyc.*) with the Jews of the middle period between the Old and New Testament. "In the Chaldee Targums 'the garden of Eden' is put as the exposition of heavenly blessedness (Ps. 90: 17, and other places). The Talmudical writings, cited by the elder Bux-

¹ See Huidekoper. "The Belief of the First Three Centuries concerning Christ's Mission to the Underworld," p. 107.

torf (Lex. Chald. et Talm. p. 1802) and John James Witsstein (N. T. Gr. Vol. I. p. 819), contain frequent references to *paradise* as the immortal heaven, to which the spirits of the just are admitted immediately upon their liberation from the body. The book of Sohar speaks of an earthly and a heavenly paradise, of which the latter excels the former as much as darkness does light. (Schoettgen, Hor. Hebr. Vol. I. p. 1096).” There can be no doubt, therefore, that the word was used by the Jewish doctors in the time of our Saviour, in the sense in which it is used in the New Testament to designate the heavenly world. We now turn to the *Patristic use* of the word. The following passages will show how the Antenicene Fathers were in the habit of employing the term. Origen believes in a twofold paradise. The former he located in the *third heaven*; the other *on earth*. Of the former he affirms that Paul heard in the third heaven what, according to his own quotation immediately preceding he heard in paradise.¹ In this paradise Adam had originally been. “The Lord God,” says Origen, who was a believer in the pre-existence of souls, “cast him out of paradise and placed him over against the paradise of delights, and this was the punishment of his fault, which has certainly passed upon all men.”² Of the earthly paradise he says: “I think that whoever departs this life in holiness will remain in a certain place on earth which the scriptures call paradise, as in a place of instruction. If any one is clean in heart, and particularly pure in mind and quick in the use of his faculties, he will depart at an early day, and ascend without delay to the region of the air, and will finally arrive at the kingdom of the heavens.”³

Tertullian represents *opponents* as maintaining the soul's direct departure at death to *paradise*, which he meets by the question: “How will the soul be exhaled into *heaven*” prior to the judgment?⁴ It would seem then that these opponents, whoever they may have been, placed paradise

¹ *Fragmenta*, Vol. IV. p. 694. A. See Huidekoper, p. 108.

² *Comment. in Rom. Lib. V. 4. Opp. Vol. IV. p. 556.*

³ *De Principiis*, II. xi. 6. Vol. I. p. 106.

⁴ See Huidekoper, p. 111.

in heaven, not in the under world. Tertullian himself sometimes places paradise in heaven; into which, however, he contends that only martyrs are transferred immediately after this life. "No one," he says, "on leaving the body dwells immediately with the Lord, unless he who by the prerogative of martyrdom shall go to *paradise* instead of to the under world."¹ In other places Tertullian places paradise *on* the earth, but not *under* it.

Cyprian places paradise in heaven, or identifies it with heaven. "Let us embrace" he says, "the day which assigns to each his abode; which when we are taken thence (out of the world by death), restores us to *paradise* and *the celestial kingdom*."² These quotations are sufficient to show that the early Fathers placed paradise either in heaven or upon earth, or else held to a twofold paradise, the one celestial, the other terrestrial; but that they carefully avoided the location of it in the under world.³ No doubt paradise is a part of *Hades*, taken in the wide, etymological sense of *invisible world*, but not in the special sense of *under world*.

3. The next passage relied upon to prove the existence of an intermediate, temporary, and subterranean locality of souls, is the parable of Lazarus (Lu. 16: 19—31). It is undoubtedly the fact that, in the time of our Saviour, the popular notions of the Jews with respect to *Hades*, bore a near resemblance to those of the Greeks and Romans. And the costume of this parable is made to conform to the opinions which then prevailed. But it is difficult to perceive how it furnishes any support to the theory which it is adduced to support.

It is confidently affirmed that Lazarus and Dives went to different compartments of *Hades*. But the parable does not say that Lazarus went to *Hades*; but was *carried by angels into Abraham's bosom*. This is a figurative expression, denoting nearness to Abraham, and a participation in his felicity. True, the early Christian Fathers commonly placed

¹ De Resurrect. carnis, c. 43, p. 411.

² De Mortalitate, p. 166.

³ See Huidekoper, pp. 105—117. Also Hagenbach, History of Doctrines, Vol. I. pp. 235, 236.

the locality of Abraham's bosom in the under world. And this they were probably led to do from the use of the expression in this parable. But the respective abodes of Dives and Lazarus were far apart, and separated by an impassable gulf. "Nor is it likely," says bishop Pearson, "that the angels, which see the face of God, would be sent down from heaven to convey the souls of the just into that place, where the face of God cannot be seen. When God translated Enoch, and Elias was carried up in a chariot into heaven, they seem not to have been conveyed to a place where there was no vision of God; and yet it is most probable that Moses was with Elias as well before as upon the mount; nor is there any reason to conceive that Abraham should be in any worse place or condition than Enoch was, having as great a 'testimony that he pleased God' as Enoch had."¹ But even if we suppose, with some, that the story of this parable was a Rabbinical one, applied, according to our Saviour's custom, to his own instructive purposes; and that the phrase "Abraham's bosom" was employed by the Rabbins to denote the happy side or upper region of the under world, we are not compelled to admit the truth and reality of the representation. The object of parables is the inculcation of important doctrinal or moral truths, in the most pleasing and impressive manner. The story may be founded on fact, or be entirely fictitious; and, provided the doctrines designed to be inculcated be true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be adapted to the prevailing ideas of those to whom they are addressed, whether true or false. It may, indeed, be often difficult for us to separate the drapery from the truths which underlie it, and to discover the precise point or points which a parable is designed to illustrate. The context, which is our principal guide, may fail to give all the information required, and we may be left to gather the scope from a careful examination of the parable-itself. Still, nothing can be more evident than that, in compositions of this kind, a literal interpretation of the whole would often

¹ Pearson, Exposition of the Creed, Art. V.

lead to the greatest absurdities and contradictions, and that consequently we must discriminate between the truths designed to be inculcated and the costume and drapery in which they are clothed. The leading truths which appear to be enforced in this parable are these: that the soul is immortal, and exists in a separate and conscious state after the dissolution of the body; that the future condition of men will be according to their real character, and not according to their outward circumstances in this world; and that that condition, whatever it may be, whether happy or miserable, will be unchangeable and eternal. The parable furnishes no support to the theory of an intermediate state and temporary abode of the soul after death, which is to be exchanged, at the general resurrection, for another. It contains not the slightest allusion to anything of the kind.

4. Eph. 4 : 9, 10. " Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." This passage, in its application to Christ, is susceptible of three interpretations. " The lower parts of the earth," may be used for the *earth itself*, in opposition to heaven (Isa. 44 : 2), and would then refer to the incarnation of Jesus, including his entire mediatorial work on earth; or, it may denote *the grave*, and then it would refer to the burial of Jesus and his descent into the sepulchre (Ps. 63 : 9. Matt. 12 : 40); or, it may signify the same as *Hades*, and then it would have reference to the *descensus Christi ad inferos*, taking the word *Hades* either in its more general sense of the *under world*, including the local habitation both of the body and the soul, or in its more restricted sense, of the soul. Against the last interpretation, it may be urged that the idea of a descent into a subterranean region is entirely foreign to the meaning of the passage in the Psalm (lxviii) on which the apostle is commenting; that the only descent of which the context speaks is opposed to the ascending to heaven; and that this is the opposition so often expressed in other places and in other forms of expression (e. g. John 3 : 13. 6 : 38. 8 :

14. 16 : 28).¹ It is most probable that the genitive τῆς γῆς, as Winer thinks,² is the genitive of apposition, and exegetical of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη, and that the expression means "the lower parts," viz. "the earth" (see 2 Cor. 5 : 5. Rom. 8 : 23. 4 : 11, etc. Comp. Acts 2 : 19, where the heaven above is apposed to the earth beneath ; and John 8 : 23). If this be the meaning of the passage, then it lends no support to the theory we are controverting. Indeed, so doubtful is its meaning, that some of the advocates of the theory place very little reliance upon it. (See Browne's Exp. of the xxxix Articles, p. 88.)

(5) The last passage which we shall notice, as relied upon to prove the existence of an intermediate, subterranean receptacle of disembodied souls, is 1 Pet. 3 : 18—20. "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit ; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." This is confessedly a very obscure and difficult passage, and perhaps no interpretation which has been given of it is entirely satisfactory. The view generally adopted by Protestant divines at the present day is, that by "the Spirit" in this place is meant— not the human soul of Jesus, but either *the Holy Spirit*, the third person of the Trinity, or the *divine nature* of Christ, — the "Spirit of holiness," according to which he is "the Son of God," in contradistinction to his being "the Son of David according to the flesh ;" *i. e.*, as to his human nature. In or as to this divine Spirit he preached through the instrumentality of Noah to the antediluvians, none of whom, however, so far as we know, believed, except the small number who were saved in the ark. Another interpretation has been propounded by Doctors Skinner and Browne.³ According to these critics, the phrase, "quickened in the Spirit," signifies *spiritually quickened*, and refers

¹ See Hodge's Commentary on Ephesians.

² Grammar of N. T. § 48. 2.

³ See Biblical Repository for April 1843, p. 470, and Bibliotheca Sacra for Nov. 1847, p. 708.

to the moral power and results of Christ's mediatorial work, "the spiritual life and power conferred on the Saviour as the reward of his disinterested labors in the cause of God's honor and man's salvation," which "was illustriously manifested in that wonderful quickening of his apostles by the communication of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and in communicating, through the instrumentality of their ministry, spiritual life and all its concomitant and following blessings, to a multitude of souls dead in sin." By "the spirits in prison," we are to understand, sinful but living men, righteously condemned for their guilt and depravity; the slaves and captives of Satan, shackled with the fetters of sin. The coming and preaching describe, not what our Lord did *bodily* (*σαρκικῶς* or *σωματικῶς*), but what he did spiritually (*πνευματικῶς*); not what he did personally, but by the instrumentality of others. According to the first interpretation, the preaching of Christ refers to a period long anterior to his incarnation; according to the latter, it refers to a period subsequent to his resurrection and ascension into heaven. It is not necessary to our present inquiry to determine which of these is the true or more probable meaning of the passage. They are both equally opposed to the notion that Christ's mission and preaching were to disembodied spirits in Hades, which is the sense in which it is understood by those, whether in ancient or in modern times, who appeal to it in support of the Article in the Creed. These differ as to the particular compartment in *Hades* intended by *φυλακή*, *prison*. Some suppose it to denote the *unhappy side* — the *lower region* — the special locality and abode of the wicked and impenitent = *τάραχος, γέεννα, ἄβυσσος*. Others make it refer to the *happy side* — the *upper region* — *paradise* — *Abraham's bosom*, or the *Limbus patrum* of the Romanists. The latter view is ingeniously advocated by Bishop Horsley, and has been adopted by Hobart, Bloomfield, H. Browne, and many others, especially in the Episcopal church. The learned Bishop maintains that the Greek word *φυλακή*, translated *prison*, simply denotes a *place of safe-keeping*, and accordingly proposes to render the clause in Peter thus:

“He went and preached to the spirits in safe-keeping.” He thinks that the persons in safe-keeping, to whom the Apostle particularly refers, were the antediluvians, who had been disobedient, but who before their death, were brought to repentance and faith. And he supposes that Christ in his disembodied state went to this subterranean φυλακή, not for the purpose of preaching repentance or faith, because the preaching of either comes too late to the departed soul, and because these souls had believed and repented, or they would not have been in that part of the nether regions which the soul of the Redeemer visited; nor with a view to announce any liberation of them from we know not what purgatorial pains, of which the scriptures give not the slightest intimation; but he went to proclaim to them the glad tidings that he had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was about to appear before the Father as their intercessor.¹

This hypothesis of the Bishop is, we think, liable to serious objections, both philological and theological. We wait for the production of a single passage from the New Testament which sustains him in the interpretation which he has put upon the word φυλακή. This word, which properly signifies *watch, guard*, is applied to the act of keeping watch, *guarding* (Luke 2: 8); to the persons who are set to watch, a *watch, guard* (Acts 12: 10); to the place where a watch is kept, a *watch-post, station* (Rev. 18: 2); and to the place where any one is watched or guarded, *ward, custody, a prison*. The signification of *prison*, as denoting a place of penal confinement, is unquestionably the predominant one in the New Testament. It is the meaning in at least thirty-five instances out of forty-seven in which it occurs; whereas not a solitary instance does the Bishop appeal to in support of the signification which he assigns to the word. A slight analogy to the signification advocated by the Bishop, may be thought to exist in Luke 2: 8, where the shepherds at Bethlehem are said to have been “keeping watch over their flocks by night;” but it is one which will not hold on close

¹ See Bishop Horsley's Sermon. XX. Vol. II.

comparison, "safe *custody* or *keeping*," which is equivalent to *protection*, implies the presence or probability of *danger*; but what further danger is to be apprehended by those who have passed their present probation? What is the class of enemies from whom the spirits of departed saints or penitents need to be guarded? On what side is it that they are threatened with assault? Of what nature are those attempts on their happiness against which vigilance has to be exercised? *Saints are kept*, and need to be kept, by *the power of God only unto the salvation* (1 Peter 1: 5) which awaits them on their release from this world."¹

The reason also assigned by the Bishop for the mission of Christ to the under world, can scarcely be called anything but puerile. It had no important object, and was followed by no results. He went, it seems, to announce to the antediluvian penitents the great fact that he had completed his work of redemption. But why was his preaching or announcement confined to them? Were not the souls of the post-diluvian penitents equally interested in the joyful tidings? Why then are they passed by in silence?

An angelic choir was deputed to give information to the living inhabitants of earth, of Christ's incarnation to enter on his work of mercy. Could not the same angelic messengers have proclaimed to the antediluvians in paradise the completion of his work?

What scriptural authority is there moreover, for the assertion that the antediluvians or any considerable portion of them repented at the preaching of Noah? It is indeed possible that some of them might have repented at the last moment, when it was too late to escape the threatened destruction, but there is not a shadow of proof of it. Indeed, the contrary seems to be distinctly implied in such passages as Luke 17: 27; 2 Pet. 2: 5; Heb. 11: 7. The assumption, therefore, is entirely gratuitous, and the whole theory is consequently baseless. That the souls of the pious on leaving the body pass immediately to heaven, we think is perfectly clear from the declaration of Paul (2 Cor. 5: 6—8):

¹ Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature for Jan. 1853, p. 451.

“ We are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight) ; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present (lit. *to be at home*) with the Lord.” This passage manifestly teaches that, when the soul of the Christian departs from the body, it lives with Christ, dwells where he dwells, and enjoys intimate familiar intercourse with him there : it goes to its home, its everlasting home. But to be present or at home with Christ is certainly to be in heaven, for it is there in his glorified human nature, that Christ now is, and not in the under world. Comp. also 2 Cor. 5: 1, 2.

Philipp. 1: 23, 24. “ I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and *to be with Christ* ; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” It cannot admit of a doubt that *to be with Christ* in this passage is a phrase of the same import as *to be present* (or at home) *with the Lord* in 1 Cor. 5: 8. Paul then here reiterates the declaration which he had made in the Epistle to the Corinthians. From these passages it seems impossible to come to any other conclusion than that Paul expected immediately after death to enter upon the enjoyment of heavenly felicity with his Saviour. Comp. John 17: 24. Stephen, Acts 7: 55, 59.

That this is the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal church, will clearly appear, we think, from the following passages. The doctrines held by that church are to be learned from the Articles of religion, the Liturgy, and the Homilies. In reference to the subject under consideration, the Articles are silent. Not so the Liturgy and Homilies. There is the negative testimony arising from the fact that, in no part either of the one or the other, is there any allusion to a third or intermediate place of abode — a subterranean locality — for the soul after death. And it is somewhat remarkable that except in the Apostles' Creed and Art. III. of religion, there is a studied silence in regard to Christ's descent into hell. Thus in the Litany the following obsecrations are put into the mouths of her members. “ By thy

cross and passion ; by thy precious death and burial ; by the glorious resurrection and ascension." Here the descent into hell is passed over in silence. Again, in the consecration prayer in the Communion service, the following passage occurs : " having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension." But there is positive testimony to the belief of the Episcopal church in the immediate transition of the soul after death to heaven. Thus in the prayer for a sick child, in the office for the visitation of the sick, the worshippers are instructed to pray : " Or else receive him into those heavenly habitations where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity."¹ In the prayer for a sick person the following petition occurs : " Yet, forasmuch as in all appearance the time of his dissolution draweth nigh, so fit and prepare him, we beseech thee, against the hour of death, that after his departure hence in peace, and in thy favor, his soul may be received into thine everlasting kingdom." So in the Occasional prayer for a sick person : " Or else give him grace so to take thy visitation, that after this painful life ended, he may dwell with thee in life everlasting." In the Burial service we read : " Almighty God, *with whom* do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord ; and *with whom* the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, *are in joy and felicity.*" The language of the Homilies is very explicit on the subject. In the second part of the Homily against the fear of death the following passage occurs : " Let us be always of good comfort ; for we know that so long as we be in the body, we be as it were far from God in a strange country, subject to many perils, walking without perfect sight and knowledge of Almighty God, only seeing him by faith in the Holy Scriptures. But we have a courage and desire, rather to *be at home with God and our Saviour Christ, far from the body ; where we behold his Godhead, as he is, face to face, to our everlasting comfort.* These be Paul's

¹ The same language occurs in the Occasional prayer for a sick child.

words in effect; whereby we may perceive, that the life in this world is resembled and likened to a pilgrimage in a strange country, far from God; and that death, *delivering us from our bodies, doth send us straight home into our own country, and maketh us to dwell presently with God for ever, in everlasting rest and quietness.*"

Again, in the third part of the Homily on prayer, there occur the following passages: "The scripture *doth acknowledge but two places after this life*; the one proper to the elect and blessed of God, the other to the reprobate and damned souls, as may be well gathered by the parable of Lazarus and the rich man," etc. — "Where is then the *third place*, which they (the Romanists) call purgatory? Augustine doth only acknowledge *two places after this life, heaven and hell*. As for the *third place*, he doth plainly deny that there is any such to be found in all scripture." — "As the scripture teacheth us, let us think that *the soul of man passing out of the body, goeth straightways either to heaven or else to hell*; whereof the one needeth no prayer, and the other is without redemption."¹

Such being clearly the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal church in regard to the future state, it only remains to reconcile this with the Article of Christ's descent into hell. We cannot suppose that she designs to teach one doctrine in her Liturgy and Homilies and another in her Creed and Articles of religion. The two can be harmonized only by putting a liberal construction on the creeds. And this has been done by the American church herself, in the Rubric prefixed to the Creed, in which she substitutes the words: "He went into the place of departed spirits," as of equivalent import. The terms in which this substitute is couched are quite general and indefinite. By employing the verb *went* in the place of *descended*, she virtually repu-

¹ In the Articles of religion, probably drawn up by Usher, and agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops and the rest of the clergy of Ireland, A. 1615, we find the following declaration on this subject: § 101. "After this life is ended the souls of God's children will be presently received into heaven, there to enjoy unspeakable comforts; the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, there to endure endless torments."

diates the hypothesis of a subterranean cavity as the receptacle of disembodied souls. And the phrase "place of departed spirits," *determines nothing* as to an intermediate locality, separate and distinct from both heaven and hell. It merely affirms that the soul of Jesus at his death went to its appropriate place in the invisible, spiritual world. Thus understood the dogma of Christ's descent into hell, is freed from all difficulty and mystery, and made plain to the comprehension of every mind, as well as consonant with the general tenor of scripture. — The results to which we are brought by the preceding remarks are :

1. That the soul of man does not die or sleep with the body, but immediately after the dissolution of the latter, passes into a separate disembodied, conscious state, and into its appropriate place (so far as spirits may be supposed to occupy place), either of enjoyment or of suffering, — its heaven or its hell, — according to the moral character which it may possess.

2. That there is no third intermediate place of spiritual existence; no subterranean habitation of disembodied souls, either of probation or of purgation; no imaginary paradise in the under world where the souls of the pious are preserved in safe keeping; no *limbus patrum*, no *limbus infantum*, no purgatory.

3. That our Saviour, according to the Creed, was perfect man as well as perfect God, having a human soul no less than a human body.

4. That when crucified he died in reality and not merely in appearance (*syncope*), since there took place an actual separation of his soul and body.

5. That the idle and unprofitable question as to the object of Christ's descent into Hades is precluded; a question which greatly perplexed the fathers, the schoolmen, and the Reformers, and led to the invention of many absurd and unscriptural theories.