

“He Descended into Hell” An Interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-20

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Every Sunday our congregations confess their Christian faith. Each time they use the Apostles' Creed they include in their statement of belief the words “He descended into hell.” In recent years this short sentence has come under considerable discussion within our own circles. There has been some question as to the significance of these words as they are used in the Creed. In view of this situation, it is most desirable to re-examine the *descensus* in the light of Holy Scripture.

Before we get into a study of the Biblical evidence for this doctrine, however, it is well to note that the Nicene Creed contains no statement on Christ's descent into hell. Nor does Luther's explanation of the Second Article make any reference to this part of the Creed. The sentence is found only in the Apostolic and Athanasian Creeds, with a slight difference in the Latin wording. While the medieval Apostolicum says that Jesus descended *ad inferna*, the Athanasian statement of faith uses the expression, *descendit ad inferos*. Both formulations say that our Lord went down into the nether regions, rendered into Greek as εἰς τὰ κατώτατα.

We must also be aware of the fact that this phrase was added to the Apostles' Creed at a rather late date. It was not in general use until the sixth century. Before that time there are only scattered references to the use of this article of faith. The earliest formal creedal confession of the *descensus ad inferos* is found in the so-called Fourth Formula of Sirmium, A.D. 359.¹ Furthermore, we are told by Rufinus that this article was found toward the end of the fourth century in the baptismal *homologia* as used by his church at Aquileia. It appears that only at the beginning of the seventh century was the item on the *descensus* accepted generally into the creeds of the Western Church. The Eastern churches never did accept either the Apostolic or the Athanasian Creeds, although the subject of the descent apparently became a subject of theological

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discussion and speculation first in the East. Just why the reference to the descent into hell was included at all and why this should have happened in the time from the fourth to the sixth centuries are both mysteries. There was a time when it was believed to have been inserted to counteract the influence of Apollinarianism. That supposition, however, has been completely disproved. We simply do not know the reason for the addition of these words to the Apostles' Creed.

The fact, however, that the statement on the *descensus* was incorporated in the Creeds at a rather late date does not mean to suggest that there was no doctrine of Christ's descent in the early church. On the contrary, it has become abundantly evident that the subject matter of Christ's *κατάβασις* came under discussion very early in the life of the church. In their original context the words that later became part of the Creed probably did little more than emphasize the reality of Christ's death.² This was only natural, since Christian theology was stated in terms of Greek categories rather than in terms of distinctions made by the New Testament.³ Before long, however, two streams of interpretation emerged.

In a general way it may be said that in the churches of the East the thought gained ascendancy that Christ's soul entered into the realm of the dead to lead the saints of the Old Testament into the bliss of heaven. This "harrowing of hell," as it is sometimes referred to, is described at some length by the spurious *Gospel of Nicodemus*. It includes a description of the descent itself, a deception of Satan, a bursting of the gates, a preaching to the spirits, their release, and the resurrection of the saints. In the Western tradition the descent into hell came to be interpreted in terms of the *limbus patrum*, where Jesus offered the departed souls of patriarchs and prophets the benefit of His sacrifice. In each instance the statement on the descent into hell was related to the question of the extent of Christ's redemptive work. Both in the theology of the Eastern churches and in Roman Catholic belief the doctrine is embellished with considerable detail. In the church of the Middle Ages the subject lent itself to frequent and often grotesque treatment both in preaching and in art.

Within modern times the doctrine of the descent is often described as a remnant of sub-Christian mythology. The most recent commentary in English on the First Epistle of Peter, in fact, dismisses the whole matter in the following paragraph: "This passing reference to the descent scarcely deserves the attention it has received. . . . The doctrine of the descent into Hades . . . is nothing else than the appropriation, and the application to Christ, of a fragment of the redemption-mythology of the Oriental religions. . . ."⁴

Where the doctrine is still taken seriously today, it is usually described as intending to suggest a "larger hope," a partial answer to the question as to what happened to such as died in the ages before Christ without hearing the Gospel. By some beautifully executed exegetical somersaults 1 Peter 4:6 is joined to 1 Peter 3:19, 20, and the conclusion is drawn that Christ descended into hell to proclaim the Gospel to those held in detention in order to release from "prison" such as might believe on Him.

In Reformed theology the statement "He descended into hell (Hades)" is in some instances omitted entirely from the Apostles' Creed. Where the words are retained, they are usually interpreted in the sense of Calvin, who regarded them as a figurative expression of the truth that Christ suffered God's anger for us on the cross.⁵

Sometimes the words are thought of as meaning no more than the preceding *sepultus est*. In this view *Hades* is understood in its general sense of Sheol, the region of the dead, without a recognition of the fact that the New Testament at times uses the word *Hades* in its narrow sense of the place of the damned.⁶ As a matter of interest it should be noted in passing that this view was held by one of Bugenhagen's students, John Aepinus, who became the Lutheran superintendent of Hamburg from 1532 to 1553. He came to this conclusion in his interpretation of Psalm 16. When his position was attacked in 1549, the Wittenberg faculty was asked for a *Gutachten*. Melancthon replied to this request with the statement that no agreement had yet been reached among the dogmaticians.⁷ This interpretation of the descent as an emphatic expansion of "dead and buried" has been retained to this day in the Swedish version of the Apostles' Creed.⁸

Since the adoption of the Formula of Concord the Lutheran Church in general is more precise in its conception of the *descensus*. On the one hand, it takes the doctrine seriously; on the other it avoids the fanciful details added by tradition. The teaching on Christ's descent is set forth at two places in the Formula of Concord. In the Thorough Declaration we find the following statement: "We simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might." The Epitome says: "For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and the power of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell."

Here the Lutheran position limits itself to those facts which can be demonstrated from Scriptures. The immediate source, however, of these formulations was Luther's famous Easter sermon at Torgau, on April 13, 1533.⁹ This sermon is a crystallization of Luther's catechetical ex-

perience in handling the descent and especially the resurrection. The only Scripture passage he refers to is Psalm 16. Behind what he says, though, is particularly Eph. 4:8, 9.

In addition to this passage from Ephesians, Rom. 10:6-8 might have been used or referred to. However, the clearest passage in the New Testament on the descent of Christ is 1 Peter 3:18-20. A detailed discussion of these verses will reward us with an awareness of what our Bible does and does not say on this subject.

A translation of this passage might read as follows: "Because even Christ died once on behalf of sins, a just man taking the place of sinful people, that He might present you to God, having been done to death with respect to His body but brought to life with respect to the spirit. During the course of this He went and made proclamation even to the spirits in prison, to such as had refused to come to faith long ago, when the patience of God waited them out in the days of Noah, as the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were safely brought through by water."

Since this particular section is only part of a larger portion, running from verses 18 to 22, it is necessary to consider the context. Verse 18 follows immediately upon a statement which says that it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be the will of God, than to suffer for wrongdoing. Then the Apostle introduces the instance of Christ as the supreme Example of one who suffered wrongfully. The Apostle has a very practical point in mind. He was writing to people who were exposed to the danger of suffering for their Christian faith. He would have his readers remember that even Christ, whose whole life consisted of doing good (Acts 10:38), had to suffer and even die. His death, however, was followed by a great victory.

The whole context reminds one strongly of the order in which Christ's work is set forth in the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed: He died, descended, was made alive, ascended and sits at the right hand of God. All this is of significance not only because these statements surround a discussion of Baptism, which required a confession of faith, but also because it would suggest that everything following Jesus' "being done to death in the body" is part of Christ's triumph. It may be well, however, to examine the text very closely to determine whether there is adequate justification for this point of view.

The text begins with a statement that "even Christ died." There is considerable emphasis on the word *κατ*. The author stresses the fact that the most unexpected happened when even Christ was put to death, despite the fact that He was "just." His was more than dying, however. He died *once*. This term is used a number of times by the New Testament to describe the once-for-all significance of Christ's redemption. His death

was the conclusive and definitive embodiment in history of the principle of transforming suffering and death into glory and victory. There was never a death like this before; there has been none since. It has absolute value. Christ died "on behalf of sins." This phrase is used regularly for the sin offerings of the Old Testament. Christ was the great Sin Offering, who atoned not only for single transgression but for all sins. This is an inclusive plural. There is no sin of any kind, committed anywhere at any time, which was not included in His dying for us.

There is some question in the text as to whether the Apostle wrote that Christ died or whether he used the word for "suffer." The bulk of the textual evidence seems to favor the Greek ἀπέθανεν rather than ἔπαθεν, although the previous context has spoken only of suffering. "He died" is the more difficult reading to explain; and this in itself would suggest that it is probably the correct one. The reference to death might also point to the fact that the Christians to whom the Apostle was writing at times met their death as a result of persecution. It must be admitted that there is not much in the rest of the epistle to corroborate this particular point. Yet it is a possibility, particularly if, as Selwyn suggests, First Peter was written A.D. 62, shortly after the martyrdom of James, the first bishop of Jerusalem.¹⁰

We are told that Christ died as one who was righteous. This is a broad term describing our Lord as one who never failed to do what needed to be done and one who always carried out what was required by God's will. He was in every respect without fault; and yet He died "in the stead of people who are full of wrong." These words underline the vicarious nature of Christ's death and the once-for-all significance of this particular death, on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem. It was here that the Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep. He did so vicariously as our Mediator. He died "that He might present you to God." It has been suggested that this clause speaks of Christ offering us to God. Luther takes it in this sense in his commentaries on First Peter.¹¹ However, it seems best to take the verb here in the sense of its noun-form as we find it in Eph. 2:18, where we read that "through Him we have access to the Father."

It is only after the Apostle has delineated the vicarious and mediatorial significance of Christ's death that we reach the passage leading into the statement on the *descensus*. This section is truly, as Dr. Stoekhardt once called it, a *locus vexatissimus*. The author tells us that Christ was done to death σαρκί. This word confronts us with a great difficulty for interpretation. It may be made synonymous with another Greek word meaning "body." Then it would refer to that part of our Lord's person where the suffering was most evident to those who witnessed it and to those who conducted the trial. The word could also mean Jesus' human

nature, as in John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh. . . .” Then it would mean that only that part of Christ died which He assumed at the Incarnation. Such a construction, however, would be contrary to the teaching of the New Testament that Jesus died as God-Man, a truth which makes it possible for Christians to sing on Good Friday, *O grosze Not, Gott selbst ist tot!* There is, however, another use of this word found occasionally, not only in the New Testament but also in the secular Greek of that time. Σάρξ is at times used of a person’s earthly career. St. Paul uses it that way in Phil. 1:24, where he speaks of wanting to remain *in this life* for the sake of his Christians at Philippi. We find another significant use of the same word in Rom. 1:3: . . . “made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” Here the term is used of the historical appearance of Christ. He came as a son of David; that is, He came into our historical context as a descendant of that house. This is most probably the meaning of σάρξ in the Peter passage under discussion. The word is used, then, to say that in the natural and physical order of things, or with respect to His earthly career, Jesus was done to death. He was the victim of a judicial murder planned and executed here within the context of human life.

The verse then goes on to say: “But He was brought to life with respect to the spirit.” It has been suggested that the two phrases of this last part of verse 18 correspond with each other so as to mean: “Although He was done to death with respect to His earthly career, He was alive in spirit.” But this view leaves out of account the action described by the verb ζωοποιηθεῖς. This term points to something that was done to Jesus. It refers unmistakably to a specific act of God by which our Lord was brought to life.

Not all scholars agree that this action is to be understood with reference to the resurrection in its narrow sense. There are those who restrict the word at this point to the vivication, which is distinguished from the resurrection in the sense that the resurrection was the public display (*exhibitio*) of His having come to life. In many passages in the New Testament this distinction is not made. However, in Eph. 2:5, 6 the Apostle Paul does point to a difference between “quickenings” and “raising up.” Such a distinction would lead us to believe that we could quite properly, on the basis of the New Testament, separate the vivification and the resurrection for purposes of chronology and clarification of what happened early on Easter Sunday morning. At any rate, Christ was “brought to life with respect to the spirit,” we are told here. The last word of the phrase is a dative of reference. It can probably best be interpreted in the light of two other passages in which the term πνεῦμα bulks large. When our Lord died on the cross, we read that He committed His spirit into His Father’s hands (Luke 23:46). The dative of reference

in our text could, therefore, suggest that Jesus was brought to life in the sense that His spirit returned to His body. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the coming to life of the daughter of Jairus is described in terms of her spirit returning to her body (Luke 8:55). Our passage would then have reference to the risen Lord. His spirit joined His body to give Him that glorified body with which His disciples became familiar after His resurrection. Accordingly, Jesus as the God-Man, in body and spirit, carried on the activity described in the next verse.

Verse 19 confronts us at the outset with a few textual matters. There are those who suggest that the text suffers from an omission. It has been conjectured that the name Enoch was somehow dropped from the verse during the process of transmission. This supposition was first advanced by Bowyer, probably in his Greek Testament of 1763, and most certainly in his second edition of 1772. At present this conjecture is of significance because it was adopted by Moffatt in his translation. He found it as a conjecture made by Rendel Harris, who proposed that the reading should be ἐν ᾧ Ἐνώχ. This seems most unlikely. There is no textual evidence for it whatsoever. Moreover, it would be difficult to understand why Enoch should all at once be introduced, when there has been no reference to him in this letter so far. The conjecture did, however, receive enthusiastic support for a time, mostly because of the exciting fact that the Book of Enoch was discovered in an Ethiopic translation at about the time Bowyer submitted his guess.

The question has also been raised whether the antecedent of the relative pronoun in verse 19 is the word "spirit" of the previous verse or whether it has a broader scope. If the latter is the case ἐν ᾧ would mean, "in which circumstance," or "in the course of which." Since the Apostle has once before (1:6) used this same construction in a wider sense, there is a strong possibility that it is to be interpreted in that way at this point. This position is strengthened by the fact that in 4:4 the same phrase occurs again in its broader usage. What is more, there does not seem to be any evidence in Greek grammars for a relative pronoun following immediately upon a dative of reference. For that reason we are quite safe in suggesting that the two words here mean "in the course of which." That is to say, while all this was going on, particularly as Christ was being brought back to life, in the moment before He showed Himself as the risen Lord, He went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison. This interpretation distinguishes, therefore, between the bringing to life and the resurrection and suggests that the God-Man in His glorified state went and made proclamation in "prison" before He exhibited Himself at the open tomb.

We can be no more precise about the Greek word κηρῶσαι at this point than to say that it means "to make proclamation." Dogmaticians

have debated the subject whether this implies that Christ proclaimed the Gospel or whether He announced judgment to those to whom He went to speak. The verb does not say. We must, of course, note that it usually has reference to the proclamation of the Gospel. However, when it is so used, the object is normally stated. For instance, in Mark 1:14 the verb has the object "the Gospel of God." In Luke 9:2 it is used with the "kingdom of God"; in Acts 8:5 it is Christ Himself that is given as the content of the proclamation. We do find one other instance, however, where the verb is used in a neutral sense: in a vision the Seer of Patmos saw a great angel "trumpeting with a loud voice" (Rev. 5:2). It is probably best to take the word in that sense here (cf. also Mark 7:36). In other words, there does not seem to be too much point in getting involved in the question of what it was that Christ proclaimed. Nor does it make too much difference in an understanding of the *descensus*. If Christ made proclamation of Himself as the Messiah, that is the "good news." However, to those who had refused to come to faith it could only be very bad news, indeed!

It is said that Christ "went" and made proclamation. This is a very important verb to consider in this connection. It makes impossible a spiritual interpretation of this verse. Calvin gave it such a meaning, maintaining that it referred to the fact that, when Christ died on the cross, the effects of His death were felt throughout the realm of the dead. This is most unlikely in view of the fact that we read Christ "went"; for this is the same word that occurs in verse 22 with reference to the ascension. As we have no right to spiritualize the ascension, so there is little justification for taking the heart out of the verb here or ignoring it. Christ "went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison." That is what the text says.

Now, who were the spirits in prison? Does this phrase refer only to the fallen angels, identified by some commentators with the "sons of God" mentioned in Genesis 6?¹² Or does it include also the souls of departed men? Or, again, does it speak of people during their lifetime? It is this phrase which led Luther to say of this text: "Das ist ein wunderlicher Text und finsterer Spruch, als freilich einer im Neuen Testament ist, dass ich noch nicht gewiss weiss, was St. Peter meint."¹³

What made Luther talk this way was probably the fact that the exegetical materials available to him construed this phrase in a Platonic sense. Augustine, for example, emphatically denies that this passage has any bearing at all on the subject of the *descensus*. He interprets the particular phrase we have under discussion as follows: "Spiritus in carcere inclusi sunt increduli, qui vixerunt temporibus Noe, quorum spiritus, i.e., animae, erant in carne et ignorantiae tenebris velut in carcere con-

clusae. . .”¹⁴ He takes this whole verse and the following one to mean that Christ as the pre-incarnate Word preached the Gospel to the people who were living at the time of Noah. They were spirits in prison because they were still living on earth; their souls had not yet been released from their prison, the body. This view is most likely, in part at least, the source of Martin Luther’s strange suggestion that this verse is a reference to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day. The same Spirit (verse 18) that brought Jesus from the dead was poured out upon the Apostles, Luther says; and they proclaimed the Gospel to New Testament generations in the same way that Noah proclaimed it to his generation.¹⁵ That is certainly far-fetched. In fact, it is an utterly impossible rendering, depending entirely on a conception of the human body as a prison house for the soul. Such a thought is quite foreign to the anthropology of Scriptures, where the body, just to take an instance, is spoken of as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

In passing, it must be noted that Augustine’s basic tenet that “the spirits in prison” is an expression describing people still living in the darkness of ignorance lingered long in Lutheran theology. Johann Gerhard held it,¹⁶ as did von Hofmann, Dr. Stoeckhardt’s teacher.¹⁷ Both believed that this whole section referred to Noah’s activity among his contemporaries as “the preacher of righteousness.”

In all fairness to Luther we must add here the fact that Veit Dietrich in his 1545 edition of Luther’s commentary on Hosea makes him say: “Here [1 Peter 3:18 ff.] Peter says clearly that Christ appeared not only to the dead fathers and patriarchs, whom Christ in His resurrection no doubt raised with Himself to eternal life, but that He preached to some who at the time of Noah did not believe, but trusted in the patience of God, that is, who hoped God would not deal so severely with all flesh, in order that they might know that their sins were forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ. . . .”¹⁸

It would be difficult to agree with the latter half of this statement, but the first part indicates that in the last years of his life Luther saw the *descensus* in the light of First Peter. That Luther changed his point of view with respect to this passage is confirmed by Melancthon’s remark, from 1543, that Luther was disposed to think of Christ’s preaching in Hades, referred to in First Peter, as having possibly effected also the salvation of the nobler heathen, such as Scipio and Fabius.¹⁹

For the inclusion of the heathen there is no Scriptural evidence unless the verb κηρῶσαι is taken to mean preaching the Gospel with a view to the salvation of the hearers. Such a procedure is very dubious in view of the rest of the verse. For that reason Lutheran theology, especially after the adoption of the Formula of Concord, returned to the view held by fourth-century theologians that the descent was the occasion of Christ’s

vanquishing death and hell,²⁰ without, however, committing itself on the matter of liberating Old Testament saints.

Just what spirits are meant here can perhaps best be determined if we first of all decide what is meant by φυλακή. It has been suggested that this word is a synonym of Hades or Sheol, in their general significance of “the realm of the dead.” However, there is no evidence whatsoever that φυλακή is to be understood in this general sense of the region of the departed souls. On the contrary, its use in the New Testament makes it imperative to think of “the prison” as the place where both the fallen angels and the spirits of unbelievers are kept under guard (cf. Rev. 18:2; 20:7). This view is supported by the use of ἄβυσσος in Rev. 9:1, 2, 11; 11:17; 17:8; 20:1, 3 and Luke 8:31, where ἄβυσσος is clearly the abode of the devils.

In other words, φυλακή must be distinguished, in the cosmology of the New Testament, from Hades in its general sense. It stands in contrast to Paradise, or “Abraham’s bosom,” to which the souls of the saints go at the time of death.²¹

In the present passage the “spirits in prison” are specifically described as those people who, at the time of Noah, refused to come to faith. These are the most lost of all; for they heard from Noah the words of grace and were shown the long-suffering of God while the ark was in the course of preparation. In this connection it is necessary to point out that ἀπειθήσασιν is an aorist participle. Combined with the little word πότε, it gets the force of a pluperfect. That is to say, the action described by this participle precedes the time of ἐκήρυξεν. This is what makes Luther’s interpretation of this passage in his two commentaries on First Peter utterly impossible; namely, that the Spirit proclaimed the Gospel through the Apostles after Pentecost Day. For this section of First Peter clearly teaches that Christ descended to the region of the damned, to those who deliberately rejected God’s grace in the time of Noah, in order to make proclamation to them.

We cannot conclude this discussion without one quick look at First Peter 4:6, which is, in modern commentaries, often taken to be an expansion of 1 Peter 3:18, 19.²² In that case 4:6 is taken to mean that Christ preached the Gospel (εὐηγγελισθη) to the dead that they might live with God.²³

The relationship between these two portions of the epistle is sought mostly on the basis of the fact that in both the terms σαρκί and πνεύματι are used. However, one of the basic principles of interpretation is that of considering the context of a given word or verse; and on that score the use of 4:6 to describe “the large hope” becomes an exegetical monstrosity. For the Apostle had in the meantime gone on to quite a different subject. In the first verses of chapter 4 he has described the difference

in his readers between their old way of life and their new conduct after Baptism. At that point he states very frankly that pagan society is at a loss to explain their new behavior. Its reaction is that of malicious criticism (βλασφημοῦντες). Within this context the Apostle reminds his readers that their detractors do not have the last word; for they will have to give an account to the Great Judge.

Now comes verse 6, which may be translated as follows: "For to this end the Gospel was proclaimed also to the dead that they might live with respect to the spirit in accordance with God's (will), although, according to men's yardstick, they came under judgment." The reference here is to the first generation of Christians in Asia Minor, to whom the Gospel was brought right after Pentecost (1 Peter 1:12; cf. Acts 2:9). They came under man's judgment and condemnation at times during their lifetime; but they had the Gospel proclaimed to them so they might move beyond such treatment to a life with that God who is "even now ready to judge both the living and the dead" (v. 5). The "dead" of verse 6 are therefore to be distinguished from "the spirits in prison" of 3:19. They are the saints that have died in the Lord, having belonged to the first generation of believers under the new covenant.

For this reason it is impossible to look to 4:6 for purposes of interpreting 3:18-20. The latter passage appears, in fact, in a digression, while the former constitutes the concluding argument in a section devoted to the problem of persecution.

By way of summary it may be said therefore that 1 Peter 3:18-29 quite evidently tells us that Christ, according to His glorified body, descended into hell to make proclamation there of Himself as the Messiah. This was the first step in His exaltation, by which He "disarmed principalities and dominions and displayed them openly, triumphing over them" through the cross (Col. 2:15).

Notes

¹ August Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole* (Breslau, 1897), Par. 163, gives the reading as εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα καὶ τὰ ἐκεῖσε οἰκονομήσαντα. The Synod of Nice, in Thrace, in the same year adopted the following unusual version: εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατελθόντα, ὃν αὐτὸς ὁ ἄδης ἐτρόμασε (Hahn, Par. 164); The Synod of Constantinople, in 360, accepted the following statement: εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια κατεληλυθότα ὃν τινα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ἄδης ἔπιτηξεν (Hahn, Par. 167).

² *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 20: "Rufinus, A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed," trans. J. N. D. Kelly (London, Newman Press, 1955), Note 98, p. 121. Cf. also the readings given under note 1, above.

³ As illustrated, for instance, in Tertullian's *De anima*.

⁴ F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Blackwell, 1947), p. 145.

⁵ *Institutes of 1559*, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, XXX, 376. 10.

⁶ As in Luke 16:23.

⁷ Bertheau in Herzog and Plitt, *Realenzyklopaedie*, I, 190. Agricola propounded the same view in his "Christliche Ethik" (cf. Loofs in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, IV, 656).

⁸ There the phrase reads: "nederstigen til dödsriket"; the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* has the following rubric above the Apostles' Creed: "And any Churches may, instead of the words, 'He descended into hell', use the words, 'He went into the place of the departed spirits,' which are considered as words of the same meaning in the Creed."

⁹ This sermon is found in the St. Louis ed., X, 1125-1132.

¹⁰ E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (Macmillan, 1955), p. 59.

¹¹ St. Louis ed., IX, 1073, 1074. Two commentaries are ascribed to Luther, one from 1523, the other from 1539. They are given in the St. Louis ed., IX, 958-1110 and 1110-1297, respectively.

¹² For instance, by E. G. Selwyn, p. 198f.

¹³ This sentence occurs in both of his commentaries (cf. note 11, above).

¹⁴ In his *Letter to Euodius* (Migne, PL, xxxiii, 709-718).

¹⁵ St. Louis ed., IX, 1078.

¹⁶ In his commentary of 1641 (Jena), p. 496: "Christus in Spiritu temporibus antediluvianis per Noahum praedicavit."

¹⁷ Stoeckhardt, *Petribrief* (St. Louis, 1912), p. 149.

¹⁸ St. Louis ed., VI, 1224; the translation is that of Dr. John Th. Mueller in *CTM*, XVIII, p. 615.

¹⁹ *Corp. Ref.*, V, 58: "excitasse multos mortuos, et erudiisse fortassi praestantes omnium gentium viros, ut Scipionem, Fabium, et similes" (in a letter to Anthony Musa).

²⁰ For instance, St. Cyril, *Cat.*, iv, 11-19.

²¹ Luke 16:22 and 23:43.

²² As, for example, in Selwyn, p. 337 f.

²³ In his *Contra Apollinarium* (II, 15) Athanasius uses ἐναγγελλεσθαι of the proclamation in Hades (Migne, *PG*, xxxvi, 1156c).



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