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ARTICLE I.

CHRIST PREACHING TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.¹

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THIS passage translated in the English authorized version stands: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

Before entering upon a criticism on this text of scripture, we are constrained to remark that among obscure passages we think this may be set down as *locus vexativissimus*, or the place of all most difficult of satisfactory interpretation. In regard to it, pertinent are the remarks of Camerarius, a devout and learned man, and friend of Melancthon: "Est hic unus ex iis locis sacrarum literarum, de quibus pietas religiosa quaerere amplius et dubitare quid dicatur, sine reprehensione: et de quibus diversae etiam sententiae admitti posse videantur, dummodo non detorqueatur *κανὼν τοῦ τὸ*

¹ An Exposition of 1 Peter, iii. 18, 19.

αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, id est religiosa de fide consensio, neque aberretur ἀπὸ τῆς ἀναλογίας τῆς πίστεως." This is, indeed, one of those places of the sacred scriptures concerning which it is devout piety to prosecute investigation, and to be in doubt what to say without blame, and concerning which even different opinions seem to be admissible, provided the canon of being like minded, that is, religious agreement in the faith, is not wrested, and we do not deviate from the analogy of the faith. It is hardly to be thought strange that the fiery Luther, baffled by the difficulties of this text, breaks out: "By this penalty, so terrible, the apostle Peter seems also moved that, not otherwise than as a fanatic, he speaks such words as not even at this day are able to be understood by us." Of this passage the learned Dr. Brown of Edinburgh cogently says: "The observation of the apostle Peter respecting his beloved brother Paul is applicable to himself. In his Epistles there are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable wrest to their own destruction, and this is one of them. Few passages have received a greater variety of interpretation; and he would prove more satisfactorily his self-confidence than his wisdom, who should assert that *his* interpretation was undoubtedly the true one." But our task has not been simplified, but rendered tenfold more perplexing by this very variety of interpretation. The remark of that profound biblical scholar and holy man, Archbishop Leighton, seems to us quite just. "This place is somewhat obscure in itself, but as it usually happens, made more so by the various fancies and contests of interpreters, aiming or pretending to clear it. These I like never to make a noise of." (Leighton's Comment. First Epist. Pet.) We have not the presumption to expect, from our present investigation, to reach conclusions respecting the meaning of this vexed passage which will be entirely satisfactory to all. And yet, the fact that many eminent scholars have failed in their attempts at an explanation should not deter even the humblest from an additional endeavor to ascertain its meaning. For the same inspired apostle who has left us this obscure text assures us that "No prophecy

of the scripture is of any private interpretation." And we shall not soon forget a favorite expression of a beloved theological teacher, who now no longer sees "through a glass darkly," and who was himself a giant. He was wont to say: "A dwarf is not so tall as a giant. But then a dwarf standing upon a giant's shoulders can see farther than the giant himself." In harmony with this utterance is the memorable remark of Lord Bacon: "I have been laboring to render myself useless." The deep wisdom of these words time has proved. Truths which in Bacon's time must be defended by labored argumentation, in the march of intelligence have become axiomatic. In no department has progress been more marked than in that of sacred hermeneutics. What with the tomes that have been written in verification of the inspired text, in defence of the sacred canon, and in explanation of its words and phrases, the shelves of our theological libraries fairly groan. The battle in respect to the genuineness of the text *seems* to have been nearly fought through. Scholars, in all lands, and of all shades of religious belief, seem nearly agreed on this point. And interpreters, in successive centuries, availing themselves of the results attained by their predecessors, have been finding the key to the meaning of one and another obscure text, so that now few passages, comparatively, remain inexplicable; these few, let it be gratefully acknowledged, pertain not to the essential facts and doctrines of the gospel. Often has the Word of God been tried, and from each trial it has emerged with heightened lustre. All real advance in knowledge of the sacred languages, biblical criticism and antiquities, topography, oriental manners and customs, sheds light upon some dark places of scripture. We can have no doubt the day is coming in which the meaning of the passage we have under consideration, will become luminous. If our present effort shall direct to this scripture such attention and elicit such discussion as will in any degree remove its obscurity, our expectations will have been met.

Our first enquiry naturally is: What precisely are the inspired words that compose the passage whose meaning we

wish to ascertain? In the Greek texts most worthy of confidence, like those of Scholz, Lachmann, Griesbach, Tischendorf, and Alford, they are as follows: "Ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἀπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαυσε, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν. Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevir edition insert the article τῷ before πνεύματι, but the best critics pronounce this reading void of authority. Have, now, our translators, not in one jot or tittle, changed the sense expressed by the Greek? We ask this question with feelings bordering upon reverence, for we believe our version, with comparatively few exceptions, faithfully renders the original. But this passage is one of the exceptions. The last clause of the eighteenth verse in the Greek reads θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. It will be observed there are no prepositions in the original and that the two members of the clause are antithetical. This is clearly one of the cases denominated, by Bishop Lowth, *antithetical parallels*. ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι is set over against θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί; ζωοποιηθεὶς being contrasted with θανατωθεὶς, and πνεύματι with σαρκί. The conjunctive particles, μὲν in one member of the clause, and δέ in the other member, establish the antithesis. Now the laws of the Greek language, in such cases, require us to give the same construction to the two Datives πνεύματι and σαρκί. We violate no principle of grammar in using either *in* or *by*, or, in fact, any one of a large number of prepositions, with these Datives. For in Greek the Dative is very comprehensive, representing all that in Latin is denoted by the Dative and Ablative, and holding a relation to the tenor of the sentence not so close or essential as that of the Accusative or Genitive. (See Winer, Gram. of N. T., Vol. I. Sect. 31, where the subject of the Dative is treated exhaustively.) But wide as is the range of construction in respect to the Dative in the present instance, whatever preposition we use in one member of the clause, we must employ the same, or an equivalent preposition, in the other member. If we translate θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, "put to death *in* the

flesh," we must also render ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, quickened in the Spirit," and *vice versa*. The rendering "quickened by the Spirit" requires "put to death by the flesh." Utterly void of authority, and in violation of the laws of New Test. Greek is the translation which we have: "*put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*" Now the objections to the translation of θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί by the words "being put to death by the flesh," are, in the first place, the omission in the Greek of the article before σαρκί; and, in the second place, the phrase is unintelligible. For in this case we must understand by σαρκί, "flesh," either Christ's *material body*, or else, *man, mankind, the race*. Give to σαρκί the former sense, and the reading will be *Christ was put to death by his body*. But if this assertion has any meaning, it must assert a falsehood. Nor can σαρκί be taken to mean *mankind, the race*. For although the assertion then being "Christ was put to death by men" expresses an important fact, yet the *usus loquendi* forbids this translation of σαρκί. Except in the Hebraism πᾶσα σάρξ which is a literal translation of the Hebrew רֶגֶל־בָּשָׂר by two terms, which in the one language as well as the other, signify "all flesh" and mean "all mankind at large," σάρξ in the sense of *men* is not used by the Greek writers. Sometimes the Hebraism is strengthened by the addition of a negative particle. In Hebrew רֶגֶל־בָּשָׂר אֵין, *not all flesh* is equivalent to *no flesh*, and in the same sense οὐ πᾶσα σάρξ is used in the New Testament, Matt. xxiv. 22; 1 Cor. i. 29. (Winer Gram. N. T., Vol. I. Sect. 26; Fairbairn's Herm. Man. Sect. 2.) The correct translation, then, is as follows: "*For Christ, also, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death, indeed, in flesh, but quickened in spirit, in which he going preached even to the spirits in prison.*" In favor of the essential correctness of this translation we have the authority of many ancient versions. The Vulgate of Jerome, which among these holds the first place as an authority, reads: "Mortuus est autem corpore, et vixit spiritu," died in body, and lived in spirit. The Peschito Syriac, the oldest of all

versions, renders the passage, according to Dr. Murdock's translation: "He died in body and lived in spirit." Wiclif (1380): "Maad deede sotheli in flesch, forsothe maad quike in spirit. Tyndale (1534): "Was killed as pertaynyng to the flesshe, but was quyckened in the sprete." Coverdale (1535): "Was slayne after the flesh, but quyckened after the spirit." The Geneva version (1557) agrees with Tyndale's. Rheim's (1582) reads: "Mortified certes in flesh, but quickened in spirit." Luther: "Und ist getödtet nach dem fleische, aber lebendig gemacht nach dem geiste."

What now is the interpretation of this language? In answering this inquiry it may be of service to advert briefly to some of the important explanations which the passage has received, or to some of the important dogmas it has been supposed to support.

1. From this text that ancient and remarkable symbol, the Apostles' creed, has derived the article "He [Christ] descended into hell." There is no evidence, however, that this article formed a part of the original Apostles' creed. On the contrary, Bishop Pearson in his celebrated Exposition of the Creed says: "This article of the *descent into hell*, hath not been so anciently in the creed or so universally as the rest. The first place we find it used in, was the Church of Aquileia; and the time we are sure it was used in the creed of that church was less than 400 years after Christ. After that it came into the *Roman creed* and others, and hath been acknowledged as a part of the *Apostles' creed* ever since." That by many, at least, who accept the Apostles' creed as their formulary of doctrine, the article "he descended into hell" is thought to express the sense of the passage under consideration is evident from the following statement of Pearson: "The Church of England at the Reformation, as it received the *three creeds*, in *two* of which this article is contained, so did it also make this one of the articles of religion, to which all who are admitted to any benefice, or received into holy orders, are obliged to subscribe. And at the first reception it was propounded with a certain explication, and thus delivered in the fourth year of King

Edward the Sixth, with reference to an express place of scripture interpreted of this *descent*. That the body of Christ lay in the grave until his resurrection; but his spirit, which he gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison, or in hell (in carcere sive in inferno), and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter (1 Ep. iii. 19) testifieth." And again: "This text did our church first deliver as the proof and illustration of the descent, and the ancient Fathers did apply the same in the like manner to the proof of this article." "This place was also made use of in the exposition of the creed contained in the catechism set forth by the authority of King Edward, in the seventh year of his reign." Now we are aware the question may be asked with some pertinency: How does this statement of the creed exhibit what was thought to be the sense of this text; for has not this article of the creed received an almost endless diversity of exposition? Thus, is not the comment, as not seldom happens, more unintelligible than the text? The interpretations of the article are, indeed, well-nigh legion. But the most of them *explain away*, rather than *explain* it. A careful consideration of the circumstances that led to its introduction, and a critical examination of the language used in reference to it in subsequent times, prove that a vast majority of the adherents of the creed have understood this article, and hence also the scripture upon which the article is founded, to imply the dogma of an "Intermediate State;" in other words, that the souls of men at death do not enter immediately upon their reward or into their punishment, but descend to the lower regions, to some subterranean caverns, where the righteous experience, for a time, until the resurrection, comparative happiness, and the wicked comparative misery; and that Christ passed the three days between his death and resurrection in this nether world, preaching to the disembodied spirits there.

This dogma appears at different times and places variously modified, but in its fundamental idea essentially the same. Some maintain that Christ's mission to souls in the intermediate state was undertaken for the benefit of

the spirits of the righteous only; others, that it had exclusive reference to the spirits of the wicked; and others still, that it embraced both the righteous and the wicked. That we have given the prominent and prevailing interpretation of the article, "He descended into hell," appears evident, in the first place, from the fact that this exposition accords with the general belief of the times in which the article originated. By the word "hell," as used in the creed, we are not to understand the place of the future torments of the wicked, described in the New Testament, as is clear from the ancient manuscripts, which read *Descendit in inferna, or ad inferna, or ad inferas*, which Dr. Pearson explains as follows. "As *manes* is not only put for the souls below, but also for the place, as in the poet: "Manesque profundi," and "Haec manes veniat mihi fama sub imas;" so *infern* is most frequently used for the place under ground where the souls departed are, and the *inferna* must then be those regions in which they take up their habitations. The Greek equivalent for the Latin "infern" and "inferna" is "hades," and, like them, it denoted originally the common receptacle of the departed, which was divided into two distinct spheres or compartments, one for the good, termed elysium, the other for the wicked, called tartarus. "Now the word 'infernus,' in Latin, comprehends the receptacle of all the dead, and contains both *elysium*, the place of the blessed, and *tartarus*, the abode of the miserable. The term '*infern*,' comprehends all the inhabitants, good and bad, happy and wretched. The Latin words 'infernus' and 'infern' bear evident traces of the notion that the repository of the souls of the departed is under ground. This appears also to have been the opinion of both Greeks and Hebrews, and indeed of all antiquity" (Campbell Prelim. Diss. on the Gospels). That the Hebrew theory in respect to the destination of disembodied spirits was fundamentally the same with that contained in the poetry and mythology of Greece and Rome, can be conclusively shown by an examination of the Old Testament. "In regard to the situation of hades," says Dr. Campbell, "it seems always to have been conceived, by both Jews and

pagans, as in the lower parts of the earth, near its centre, as we should term it, or its foundation (according to the notions of the Hebrews, who knew nothing of its spherical figure), and answering in depth to the visible heavens in height; both which are, on this account, oftener than once, contrasted in sacred writ." And again: "Of the coincidence of the Hebrew notions and the pagan, in regard to the situation of the place of departed spirits, if it were necessary to add anything to what has been observed above, those beautiful lines of Virgil might suffice" (Aen. 8 B). Dr. Fairbairn, the learned professor of Divinity in the College of Glasgow, remarks: "The sheol of the Hebrews bore so much of a common resemblance to the hades of the Greeks, that, in the Septuagint, hades is the word commonly employed as an equivalent, and in the latter periods of the Jewish commonwealth the two words were viewed as of substantially like import. According also to the Hebrew mode of contemplation, there was a common receptacle for the spirits of the departed; and a receptacle which was conceived of as occupying, in relations to this world, a lower sphere—under ground. Hence they spoke of *going down* to sheol, or of being *brought up* again from it. Josephus, when describing in this respect the belief of the Pharisees, which was undoubtedly the common belief of his countrymen, says: 'They believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; that the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again' (Ant. 18, 1. 3). The language of earlier times perfectly accords with these views, so far as it refers to points embraced in them. For example, Gen. xlii. 38; Ps. cxxxix. 8; Ps. xxx. Isa. xiv. Beyond doubt, therefore, sheol, like hades, was regarded as the abode, after death, alike of the good and the bad. And the conception of its low, deep, subterranean position is not only implied in the general style of thought and expression on the subject, but is sometimes very forcibly exhibited. For example, Deut. xxxii. 22; Job.

xi. 7-9; Amos ix. 2. The sheol of the Hebrews much more nearly coincides with the hades of the Greeks, than with either our hell (in its now universally received acceptation) or the grave." "Along, however, with these points of obvious agreement between the sheol of the Hebrews and the hades of the Greeks, there were points, two in particular, of actual diversity. One was that sheol was not, in the estimation of the Hebrews, a final, but only an intermediate state. It was the soul's place of rest, and it might be, for aught they knew, of absolute quiescence during its state of separation from the body, but from which it was again to emerge, when the time should come for the resurrection of the dead. Closely connected with this was the other, that sheol was not viewed as a separate realm, like hades, withdrawn from the primal fountain of life. With the heathen, the Lord of the lower regions was the rival of the King of the earth and heaven. But with the more enlightened Hebrew there was no real separation between the two." Such, then, were the views respecting the destination of the departed prevailing in the early ages of the church. "At the Christian Era, popular phraseology would have made little distinction between the fact of a man's death and the idea of his descent to the lower regions. The latter was regarded as implied in the former." (Huidekoper, *Christ's Mission to the Underworld.*) Says Tertullian: "To us the nether world (*infernus*) is not an exposed cavity, nor any open receptacle for the bilge water of the world; but a vast region extending upward and downward in the earth, a profundity hid away in its very bowels. For we read that Christ passed the three days of his death in the heart of the earth, that is, in an internal recess, hidden in the earth itself, and hollowed out within it, and based upon yet lower abysses" (*De Anima*, c. 55). The language of Irenaeus, as translated by Prof. Huidekoper, is: "Therefore the Lord descended to the regions under the earth, preaching to them also his advent, the sins of such as believed on him being remitted." In a controversy with Celsus, Origen uses this language: "With a soul divested of its body, Christ dis-

coursed to souls divested of their bodies." In short, scarcely any dogma stands out more conspicuously upon the pages of patristic theology than this. Our limits do not allow us to quote the passages of the Old Testament that were regarded as predictions of Christ's mission to souls in their intermediate state. Says Bishop Pearson: "Many have been the interpretations of the opinion of the Fathers made of late; and their differences are made to appear so great, as if they agreed in nothing which concerns this point; whereas there is nothing which they agree in more than this, which I have already affirmed, the real descent of the soul of Christ unto the habitation of the souls departed. The persons to whom, and end for which he descended, they differ in; but as to a local descent into the infernal parts, they all agree."

Such, then, was the interpretation given to this text by the church, regarded as a whole, at the time the fifth article was introduced into the creed. Indeed, we may say this interpretation, in all its essential features, has been generally maintained down to the present time. Dr. Bloomfield says: "the opinion that Christ went down and preached (i. e. proclaimed his Gospel) to the antediluvians in hades, is the *common* one, supported by the ancient and many of the ablest modern expositors." Bishop Horsley, in a sermon upon this text, maintains the same view, and asserts that "prison," as here used, is the "hell of the Apostles' creed." So, also, Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, in his very learned and discriminating commentary upon this passage, founds his exposition upon the same idea. His language is: "Christ after death went in his disembodied spirit to the nether world. Death opened to him a new sphere of missionary enterprise. He went and preached to the spirits in prison. He made *two journeys*, one downward, in his human spirit, to the nether world of disembodied spirits, and another upward, in his risen body reunited to his spirit, to the heavenly world, and to the right hand of God. Christ, who before had preached on earth to man in bodily presence, now, after his removal from them by death,

preached *also*, or *even*, to human spirits in the region under the earth." De Wette, also, finds in this text the same fundamental idea. According to him, the passage teaches that Christ, in his spiritual personality (*die geistige Persönlichkeit*), went not to the entire under-world, but to that department assigned to unbelievers. "Was den *Ort* betrifft, wohin Christus ging, so ist es nicht die ganze Unterwelt, sondern der verwahrungsort der im Unglauben abgeschiedenen Geister in derselben."

But this interpretation, which, with all its modifications, retains the notion of the local descent of Christ's spirit to a common depository or receptacle of departed spirits, we cannot accept as the true one. For if we do receive it, it must be for one or the other of the two following reasons. (1.) In the first place, either that it accords with the general drift and scope of the teachings of Christianity on the subject; or (2.), in the second place, that the apostle Peter uses this language by *accommodation*, or "*ex vulgari opinione*." In other words, that the apostle conforms his language to the erroneous opinions and narrow prejudices of the people of his time. But this theory of an "intermediate state," and Christ's mission to souls in it, is not in harmony with the general tenor of the New Testament. It savors too much of paganism. That the notion of a common subterranean mansion for the spirits of the departed should have been entertained before the Sun of Righteousness arose upon the world, is not strange. Such a notion would seem to be the natural result of the practice of burying the body, and the soul's native presentiment of its own continued existence. It ought to excite no surprise to find this notion upon almost every page of the poetry and mythology of Greece and Rome. Nor, indeed, is it wonderful that the Hebrews, anterior to the advent of Christ, held the same opinion. For we must remember they had received no distinct revelation of the future state. The Law and the Prophets contained only "slight hints," "faint dawns," of a scheme which was to bring "life and immortality to light." "As for a future state of retribution in another

world, Moses said nothing to the Israelites about that. Whatever may at any time have been revealed to himself, and to some other highly-favored individuals, on that subject, it does not appear that he was commissioned to deliver to the people any revelation at all concerning a future state. This was reserved for a *greater* than Moses, and for a more glorious dispensation than his law. For, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "the law *made nothing perfect*; but the *bringing in of a better hope* did (Heb. 10); namely, the promises given through Jesus Christ, who brought life and immortality to light, *through the gospel.*" (See Whately, Encyc. Britan., Vol. I. Dis. 3.) This idea of an intermediate state holds one relation to an age in which the future state was a dim and uncertain prospect, but quite another to the time when the future state is a clear and shining revelation. One of the great and distinctive characteristics of the gospel is, that it brings life and immortality *to light*. Christ takes this momentous doctrine of the destination of the soul after death out of the sphere of uncertainty, conjecture, and shadow, and places it in the realm of *actual knowledge*. This is just what might be inferred from the relation of the Jewish religion to Christianity. On this point Dr. Barrow forcibly remarks: "As God did not by the Jewish religion speak his mind to all, so did he not therein speak out all his mind. As rivers run into the sea, as shadows flee before the sun, so these small and shallow, these dusky and faint revelations, would discharge themselves into, would vanish before, a complete and universal one." (Bar. Disc. Auth. of Chris.)

Does, then, the New Testament countenance the notion of a common receptacle of the spirits of the departed, — such as is denoted by the *hades* of the pagans and the *sheol* of the Hebrews? The word *hades* occurs only eleven times in the New Testament. It is found in only three of the recorded sayings of our Saviour. But are we to conclude *à priori* that *hades* in the New Testament has the same meaning as the same word in pagan literature, or as *sheol* as used by the Hebrews? Words are but repre-

sentatives of ideas, and in different eras the same words represent essentially different ideas. In the progress of knowledge the contents of words are increased, or diminished, or changed. This fact is strikingly illustrated in the passage from the old to the new dispensation. Christ did not coin new words so much as he, so to speak, recast old ones, refining them of the dross of human errors, and enhancing their richness by incorporating into them new conceptions. A striking example is the name of the Deity. From what misconceptions did Christ free it, and what volumes of new meaning did he crowd into it! The same may be said of the word *love*. How much broader and deeper the Christian than the Jewish sense of this word! So much so that Christ says: "A NEW commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." The word *freedom* receives a like expansion of meaning in the transition from the old to the new dispensation. On one occasion the Jews indignantly reply to Christ: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou then, Ye shall be made free?" To whom Christ responds: "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." As though he had said, Freedom has heights you have not yet scaled, and depths you have not yet sounded, and lengths and breadths you have not yet measured. There are more things in freedom than are dreamed of in your philosophy. Now the future state is in a very important sense a doctrine of Christianity. If Christ and his apostles in describing it use words employed by pagans or Jews, must we take it for granted they attach to those words essentially the pagan or Jewish sense? Because they employ the word *hades*, are we to assume they denote by it a common subterranean depository of the souls of the departed? By no means. We are to remember Christ came as *the light of the world*, as *the truth*; and in ascertaining the meaning of his language in respect to any doctrine we are to be guided by the connection in which the words stand, and by other words which he has uttered in regard to that same doctrine. Our Saviour's first use of the word *hades* is in the expression

“And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven shalt be brought down unto hades” (Matt. xi. 23). But hades here cannot mean the common receptacle of the departed, the place of the good as well as of the bad. Even Olshausen, who is himself inclined to the belief in an intermediate state, says: “The casting down into hades here signifies the dissolution of individual evil into its primeval element. The simple and true fundamental idea of heaven and hades is this, that good and evil, which are already separated internally, even on the earth, although they here appear externally to stand on an equality with one another, will be ultimately separated likewise externally.” Heaven and hades are contrasted. As one denotes the highest exaltation, the other signifies the deepest debasement. We next find our Lord using this word in his memorable address to Peter. “And on this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. xvi. 18). Does hades here necessarily mean the repository of the good and the bad spirits? Indeed, does not the connection absolutely forbid such a reference? By “gates of hades” does not Christ evidently mean the prison of devils and wicked spirits, those who might be supposed to be fired with the intensest desires to overturn his church? The remaining instance of our Saviour’s use of this word *hades* is in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Of the rich man he says: “In hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” Impossible is it to make the word in this connection denote the common receptacle of the departed. Dean Trench, although intimating that hades here does not mean strictly hell, inasmuch as this term, in his view, applies to the state of the wicked only after the general judgment, yet says, hades is a state which will issue in hell, and in depicting its sufferings uses the following terrific language: “It is the place of painful restraint, where the souls of the wicked are reserved to the judgment of the great day; it is ‘the deep’ whither the devils prayed that they might not be sent to be tormented before their time. Dives, being there, is ‘in torments,’ stripped of all wherein

his soul delighted and found its satisfaction; his purple robe has become a garment of fire; as he himself describes it, he is 'tormented in this flame.' ” If this state is not hell, has it not all the essential elements and horrors of hell? Is there not great force in the comment of Dr. Fairbairn: “It cannot but be regarded as a noticeable circumstance that in the solitary example wherein hades is mentioned by our Lord explicitly as a receptacle for the departed, it is in connection with the wicked, and as a place of torment”? Our Saviour's use of the word *hades*, then, is such as to show beyond a doubt that he did in no case denote by it a common underground depository of the departed, the place of the temporary sojourn of himself and his people between death and the resurrection. We next inquire: Do the apostles attach to this word a sense essentially different from that of Christ? We first find the word in Acts ii. 27–31. This is the passage in which Peter, arguing for the Messiahship of Christ, quotes a part of the sixteenth Psalm containing the expression, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,” and adds, David, being a prophet, “spake of the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in hades, neither his flesh did see corruption.” In respect to this passage Prof. Huidekoper remarks: “That Peter believed his Master to have been in the under-world would seem an unavoidable inference from his argument in Acts ii. 22–31. And when Peter quotes from the Psalms in evidence that God would not leave Christ in the under-world, he makes no effort to prove that Christ had ever gone there. This was an inference which his hearers would probably have regarded as necessarily involved in his death. It needed no proof.” In this text Peter is thought to teach decisively that Christ went to sheol at his death, and the passage which is the subject of our present criticism is regarded as the statement of the object of his mission to the departed. But we cannot unhesitatingly accept such conclusions. We are mindful that Peter quotes this passage from the Old Testament, and that it would be entirely inconsistent with

the mode in which citations are made from the Old Testament by the New, to make Peter inculcate exactly the Jewish notions contained in the passage without modification. We are mindful that Peter was one of the favored three who enjoyed the most familiar intercourse with the Saviour, and hence had the best opportunities for clear and full instructions upon a subject which of all others must have engaged his interest. We can but ask: Is it at all probable Peter did not know Christ's doctrine in regard to the future state; that he carefully distinguished between hades and the realm which was to receive his own and his people's disembodied spirits? Besides, the original Hebrew of Ps. xvi. 10,—"Lo tayatsāv naphsā lo Sheōl,"—does not necessarily imply that Christ's soul DWELT in sheol. According to Gesenius, the verb "Yatsāv" in this place means, "to leave at the disposal of, or to give up to the pleasure of sheōl." Prof. Hengstenberg translates the passage, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell," and remarks: "The exposition of Luther and many others,—Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, has both usage and the parallelism against it, according to which the pious is not even to see the grave, and consequently his soul could not be in hell (sheol). Peter, for the sake of whom this exposition has been adopted, has not followed it. He renders, in Acts ii. 29, Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell, 'eis hadou,' as also the Septuagint." The meaning of which Dr. Robinson thus states: "To leave or abandon *to* the grave or sheol; not strictly to leave *in* it." The natural and obvious import of the language is that hades should not hold dominion over Christ's soul. Where is the proof that Peter believed his Master to have been in the under-world? In only five other instances is hades used in the New Testament. In one of these (1 Cor. xv. 55) the most critical editions of the Greek substitute *Σάραρε* for *ᾗδης*. The four remaining cases are found in the Revelation, and are translated *hell*, and do not require a specific notice, as none of them can be properly interpreted to favor the dogma of a common underground receptacle of the dead. But by more

positive and decisive evidence still is the notion of such an intermediate state refuted in the New Testament. We refer, in the first place, to our Saviour's explicit words to the penitent robber: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). We give that collocation of the words of this declaration which we believe to be fully substantiated. Christ emphasizes the word *to-day*, to fix attention upon the immediate destination of their spirits after the death of their bodies. That place he calls *paradise*. Does paradise mean a region of shadow and gloom, some nether world or subterranean cavern? Such an interpretation is entirely abhorrent to the *usus loquendi* of the Old and New Testaments, and of the early Christians. In reference to the origin of the word *paradise* Gesenius says: "It seems, however, to originate neither with the Greeks nor the Hebrews, but in the languages of eastern Asia," and denotes "*a region of surpassing beauty*," "pleasure-gardens and parks with wild animals around the residence of Persian monarchs." The distinctive etymological notion contained in the word is that of *consummate happiness, bliss*, and in the Septuagint the word is employed as the equivalent of the garden of Eden, which, in the Hebrew conception combined all the elements of felicity. That according to the New Testament usage it represents the highest conceivable blessedness is proved by the context of the three passages in which alone the word occurs in the New Testament. In 2 Cor. xii. 4, paradise is used interchangeably with the "third heaven," which means, "*the highest heaven, the abode of God and angels and glorified spirits*" (Rob. Lex.). In the Apocalypse (ii. 7) the word stands in this connection: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Can the paradise of God be other than heaven itself? What constitutes the very essence of heaven's bliss if not the presence of God? Where this is, must be the place of the very "fulness of joy." The same necessarily seems to be the meaning of the word in the expression of Christ to the dying thief. It is our Saviour's object to fill the soul of this

man with consolations and hopes that will cause him to triumph over death and the grave. Would the assurance, "To-day shalt thou be with me in the under-world" have produced this effect?

The early Christians also understood by paradise the region of perfect bliss. Tertullian held to the doctrine of an intermediate state, and yet he maintains that the martyrs, by reason of their preëminent piety, at death are taken at once to the *abode of the blessed*, which he calls *paradise*, and says that in this particular point they enjoyed an advantage over other Christians. (Hag. His. Doc. V. 1. S. 77.) Says Huidekoper: "That paradise was never located by the early Christians in the under-world, I should deem too obvious for argument, were not the contrary advanced in such a work as the doctrinal history of Cruçius and Hase." The Assembly's Catechism quotes this passage, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," in proof that the righteous shall at death "immediately pass into glory." Moreover, this dogma of an intermediate state, retaining the essential idea of a common receptacle for the souls of the departed, cannot be made to harmonize with numerous other declarations of the New Testament respecting the destination of the souls of the righteous and wicked at death. We refer especially to such passages as the following: "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 21, 23). "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*" (Rev. xiv. 13). From henceforth, *ἀρᾶρι*, *from now on*, from the *present instant*. Now we submit it: Is it not the natural and almost irresistible sense of this language, that the moment of death, with the righteous, is the moment of his introduction into heaven? Do not such declarations sustain the conclusion: "At death the souls of the righteous, being made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory,

waiting for the full redemption of their bodies." So, also, we believe the doctrine of the New Testament to be, that at death "the souls of unbelievers are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the last day." This seems to us the unavoidable inference from such scriptures as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.), and the passage in Jude v. 6, 7. Now, whatever may be our theory respecting the time when the soul is to be clothed with its resurrection body, although we may think that, in the case of a large majority of our race, it will not be until a period long after death, yet we have no reason to suppose the reception of the body will change the place of the departed, or essentially change their state. The scriptures, indeed, do not necessarily imply that the glorified body will not be the instrument of enhancing the bliss of the righteous. No more do we understand them to teach that the moment of the resurrection, whenever it may be, will mark the cessation of the saints' progress in knowledge and joy. The inspiring and, as we believe, the scriptural view is, that the saint, at death, enters upon an *endless* career of development and attainment; that his course is *from strength to strength, from glory to glory, forever*; that the child of God, in the circling ages of eternity, may, in knowledge and blessedness, pass the limit at which Gabriel has now arrived, ever approximating, but never reaching, the Infinite. We are prompted to ask, why call the interval between death and the resurrection, whatever that interval may be, an intermediate place or state, any more than the interval between the resurrection and the point at which Gabriel now stands? We might adduce still other arguments in favor of the belief that the place and state of the good and bad, immediately after death, will be essentially the same as their ultimate place and state. But we trust we have established our point, that to interpret this passage in favor of the dogma of an intermediate state, — a common repository of the dead, — is to oppose the general drift and scope of the teachings of the New Testament. Nor, again, can we

believe the Apostle uses this language by *accommodation*, — that he panders to the mistaken notions of those whom he addresses ; for the moment we do this, we transfer the standard of truth and error from the pages of revelation to our own minds ; we bend the Bible to our own opinions and judgments, when we should conform our opinions to the Bible. Indeed, we become, to all intents and purposes, infidels, and open the door to an entirely unrestrained liberty with the Divine Word. Sad havoc are the abettors of this theory of accommodation making of the most important truths of scripture. “The doctrines of the Trinity, of the divine Sonship of the Messiah, of the Atonement, of the personality of the Holy Spirit, of a corporeal resurrection, and of a final judgment, have all been swept away by them, and even the idea of Christianity being, in any peculiar sense, a revelation from heaven, has been sometimes represented merely as a mode of speech suited to the time of its appearance.” (Fair. Her. Man.) We are to remember Peter was an *inspired* teacher. It was not his mission to *please* men, and fall in with and confirm their *false* opinions and beliefs, but rather to *instruct* them, and guide them into the *truth*. Can we believe, then, Peter would have contributed to uphold and confirm in the minds of men so great an error as the dogma of a common underground repository of the dead? The words of Dean Trench, although originally applied to another point, are of exact appropriateness here: “For this error, if it was an error, was so little an innocuous one, that might have been safely left to drop naturally away, was, on the contrary, one which reached so far in its consequences, entwined its roots so deeply among the very ground truths of religion, that it could never have been suffered to remain at the hazard of all the misgrowths which it must needs have occasioned.” We cannot, therefore, think this text favors the idea of the local descent of Christ’s spirit to a subterranean realm, the temporary abode of the departed. In addition to the scriptural objections to this theory, we might, did our limits allow, refer to the metaphysical one, arising from a consid-

eration of the relation of spirit to space. The fundamental idea of the theory looks like a relic of heathenism, which, through ignorance or sectarian bias, as is the case with many other heathenish notions, has been foisted into the scriptures.

The great prevalence of this dogma, and the fact that, at the present time, it seems to be gaining new adherents, especially from the advocates of a probationary state after death, have compelled us to go into such an extended discussion of it as leaves us little space for other interpretations. The gist only of one or two more prominent interpretations will we give.

(2.) One of these is that which regards "the spirits in prison" as sinful men righteously condemned, the slaves and captives of satan, shackled with the fetters of sin, and cites in justification Isa. xlii. 6, 7: "I the Lord have called thee to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Christ's being "quickenened in spirit" is taken to mean, that in consequence of his penal, vicarious, and expiatory sufferings denoted by "put to death in flesh," he became spiritually alive and powerful, in a sense and to a degree in which he was not previously, and in which but for these sufferings he never could have become, full of life to communicate to dead souls, "mighty to save." Or as others express the same idea, Christ was quickened in reference to his great work, the salvation of mankind; quickened as to that efficacious agency by which this work was to be carried forward; an agency by which Christ made himself to be felt among men in his power to save; an agency which diffused new and mighty life through his body, the church, and, by means of his church thus vitalized, throughout the world. In the spirit, thus understood, he was straitened before his death, according to his own complaint (Luke xii. 50). After his death he was quickened; life flowed from him, filling his church with vitality, agreeably to his own forcible illustration (Jno. xii. 24): "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth

forth much fruit"; agreeably also to his prediction (Jno. xii. 32): "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The going and preaching of Christ, according to this scheme, describe not what our Lord did *bodily* (*σαρκικῶς* or *σωματικῶς*), but what he did *spiritually* (*πνευματικῶς*), not what he did personally, but what he did by the instrumentality of others. The preaching of Paul and the Apostles and of all their successors, all preaching addressed to sinners is the preaching of Christ to spirits in prison. Whatever Christ's disciples do in the discharge of their great commission, it is not they, but Christ by them. This interpretation is, for substance, adopted by Bishop Leighton, and many other expositors, and is advocated by Professor Brown of Edinburgh, in an Article of the Bib. Sac. for Nov. 1847. Of this scheme we remark: It is in many respects plausible, and it displays much ingenuity. Indeed, it is ingenious to a fault. So far as it relates to the phrase, "*quicken'd in spirit*," we adopt it as the true explanation, fully sustained by other passages of Scripture. But to make *τοῖς πνεύμασι ἐν φυλακῇ* (*the spirits in prison*), mean *sinful men*, seems to us unnatural, and by no means justified by the texts cited in its support, or by any texts which can be cited. That "prison" and "prisoners" in the passage of Isaiah referred to have a metaphorical sense, meaning *spiritual captivity, and spiritually captive men*, we have no doubt. But this is rather the *usus loquendi* of the Old than the New Testament. Sinners in the New Testament are called with great force *servants, slaves, bondmen*, but not *prisoners*. Their condition is described as *servitude* rather than *imprisonment*. Besides, we are not aware that the word *πνεύμασι* (*spirits*) can be employed to designate men in the *body*. The result of our investigations is that this term invariably denotes disembodied spirits, or the spirit in distinction from the body. Nor, again, will the context allow us to understand by "spirits in prison," sinners of a time subsequent to the Christian Era. In the Greek a simple comma separates the 19th and 20th verses, and we should read: "In which spirit, he going, preached unto the

spirits in prison, which spirits in prison were disobedient *then, when* (*ποτε, οτε*) the long suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah." The correlative particles (*ποτε, οτε*) mark definitely the time when these disobedient spirits disobeyed. That time was in the days of Noah. The scheme under consideration attempts to escape from this difficulty by alleging that "spirits in prison" is a phrase characteristic of men in all ages, and then reading "Jesus Christ came and preached to spiritually captive men who in former times, and especially in the days of Noah, had been hard to convince." In justification of this reading the only expression given is "God sent the Gospel to the Britons, who in the days of Caesar were painted savages." But these expressions are very remotely analogous, if there is any analogy between them. And, again, this idiom is not found in the scriptures, to say the least of it. And, still again, "spirits in prison," instead of being a phrase characteristic of men in all ages, is, as we have already shown, characteristic of men *in the body* in no age.

(3.) Still another prevalent interpretation of this text is that which, like the one last stated, makes "quicken in spirit" signify that our Saviour was filled with the spirit above measure as a consequence of his penal sufferings, which spirit he poured out from on high, baptizing his church with it and diffusing, through his church, a heavenly life among the nations. This theory, also, like the one last named, makes the preaching of Christ here spoken of instrumental. But instead of considering the Apostles and men of the present dispensation the instruments by whom our Lord preached, it regards Noah as the sole instrument. By "spirits in prison" it understands lost spirits now in hell,—the spirits of those antediluvians to whom Noah preached righteousness without effect. The sense of the passage, according to this theory is expressed by the following paraphrase. "Christ exerted himself by the spirit, through the ministrations of Noah, when the deluge was at hand. He then preached, by his faithful prophet, to the disobedient persons of that generation, whose disobedient spirits are now in the prison of

hell, bearing the just punishment of their incorrigible impenitence." This exposition is advocated in the *Biblical Repository* for April 1843, in an Article by Rev. T. H. Skinner, D.D., of New York. This theory, too, all must admit has whatever merit there is in ingenuity; and, while it is not open to some of the objections which the last-named theory encounters, it is encumbered by others from which that is free. But not to notice minor points, we find at least two insuperable objections to it. The first is, it unwarrantably changes the collocation of the words of the passage. From the Greek as it stands in any approved edition, and in fact from any natural translation, no unsophisticated, indeed no quite studious, reader, would gather the meaning indicated. The theory requires the transposition of two entire clauses, for which there is no apparent reason. The structure of the various sentences of this passage, in the original, is neither abrupt nor incoherent, but remarkably regular. Moreover, this interpretation is liable to the objection of being far-fetched and forced. It is *non congruens sermo*, not at all suggested by or in harmony with the context, in which there is not the remotest allusion to the pre-existence of Christ. The introduction of that important doctrine just in this place is exceedingly abrupt and unnatural.

Having noticed some of the prominent interpretations of this difficult passage with a brief statement of the reasons that compel us to reject them, we would be glad now, were we able, in a few words, to give the true sense of it. In this endeavor we are by no means confident of success. The best that we can do is to state that interpretation which at the present stage of our investigations most commends itself to us, holding the mind open to conviction by any additional light to be received in the future. In the discussion of this subject it is much easier to deny than to affirm, to demolish than to build. In our affirmations we propose to advance cautiously and step by step.

(1.) One thing is clear. The passage implies that the spirit of Christ at the moment of the death of his body passed into the spirit world. The construction of the Greek inevitably

makes πνεύματι (*spirit*) refer to the spiritual part of Christ, his soul, as σαρκί (*flesh*) refers to his body. Dr. Wordsworth says, "spirit" here is that higher and nobler part of human nature by which we are akin to God and recipients of his spirit; "flesh" represents that side of our nature by which we appertain to earth. This is the meaning assigned to the word *spirit* here by ancient expositors who cited this text in refutation of the Apollinarian heresy, which denied the reality of the Lord's human spirit. Thus, Athanasius says: "If the soul is only carnal why does it not die with the body, and why does Peter call the souls detained in prison *spirits*." De Wette, whose definition seems to us the most perfect, says: "πνεύματι (*spirit*) means Christ's *spiritual personality*." Now the apostle in plain terms says: Christ, in this soul or spiritual personality, going (πορευθεὶς) preached. We naturally enquire, whither did he go? And Christ's own words to the dying robber, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," compel us to answer: He went *immediately* to paradise. So much we deem to be certain. Our Saviour's real, personal spirit, or spiritual personality, quickened, invigorated, exalted, passed at once to the realm called the "paradise of God," the "third heaven," which we take to be equivalent to the *presence of God*, where there is *fulness of joy*, the place where the spirits of all the righteous that had died before his crucifixion were congregated. Dr. Fairbairn considers Christ's words to Mary (Jno. xx. 17), "Touch me not, for I am not ascended to my Father," conclusive proof that Christ's soul, at his crucifixion, did not ascend to the proper heaven of glory. Now, without attempting an exposition of this enigmatical passage, we cannot see that it militates at all against the idea that Christ's *soul* ascended to the proper heaven of glory at the moment of his crucifixion. Our Saviour's words seem to have prominent reference to his risen *body*, that part of himself which could be *touched*. He says: "Touch me not, for I have not ascended;" i. e. I, in the form in which you see me, clothed with this body, have not ascended. We do not see that this text opposes any objection to the belief that

Christ's *soul*, at the instant he expired on the cross, ascended to, or, more properly, *was in*, the proper heaven of glory.

(2.) We next enquire: What did our Saviour's newly energized and vitalized spirit do in this realm, paradise? Can we for a moment think it was inactive? This supposition seems to us contrary to the nature of spirit, especially of a spirit in which *dwelt the fulness of God*. More especially is this supposition forbidden by the antecedent statement that the spirit of Christ received a new influx of life and vigor at the instant of its departure to paradise. What, then, was Christ's spiritual personality doing in paradise during the three days that his earthly body was lying in Joseph's tomb? Although he was active, he was not engaged in consummating the work of atonement. That was completed on the cross. Christ's words, "It is finished," denote the *final act* of his atoning work. Then the battle was fought through and the victory won. Of this time, the Saviour teaches us explicitly, it is the hour "that the Son of man should be glorified" (Jno. xii. 23), when he is to be glorified with the Father's own self, with the glory which he had with him before the world was (Jno. xvii. 5). Does not this language imply that Christ's spirit, the instant after his crucifixion, was in the proper heaven of glory? We are, then, shut up to the conclusion that Christ, during the interval between his crucifixion and the resurrection of his body, was active in essentially the same mode in which he is now exerting himself, pouring forth from his own exhaustless fulness of life abundant streams of life and joy into the souls of saints already with him in glory, and, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, carrying forward this work of regenerating and sanctifying men on the earth. Now, in accordance with these facts, must be explained the words, "He preached to the spirits in prison." But the "spirits in prison" cannot mean the souls in paradise, for *φυλακῆ* (*prison*), both by derivation and usage, is proved to mean the place of confinement for the wicked. The Peshito Syriac translates it, according to Dr. Murdock, "hades," and hades, as we have already seen, in the New Testa-

ment, denotes the place of torment. Nor can "spirits in prison," as we have before proved, refer to any class of men on the earth, either of antediluvian or postdiluvian times. "Spirits in prison" must mean the spirits of wicked men who lived on the earth in the time of Noah, and who had been consigned to the world of despair,—to hell. De Wette renders *φυλακῆ* by *gefangnisse*, and explains, "Am Orte wo die Schuldigen für das Gericht aufbewahrt werden,"—*prison, the place where the guilty are reserved for judgment.*

(3.) It only remains to enquire: *In what sense did Christ preach* to these wicked spirits in the prison of despair? The analogy of faith does not allow us to think he preached to them as he now preaches to sinners on the earth, through messengers, or that in any way he offered to them hope and life. Nor does the word here translated *preached* (*κηρύσσω*) denote any such mode of preaching; in fact, it has quite a different significance from that which we attach to the word *preach*. Says Dr. Campbell: "The verb *κηρύσσω* occurs in the New Testament about five-and-twenty times, always in nearly the same sense, *I proclaim, praedico, palam annuncio*; for so far is it from being necessary that the *κήρυγμα* should be a discourse, that it may be only a single sentence, and a very short sentence too. Nay, to such brief notifications we shall find the term most frequently applied. Besides, the words *κηρύσσω* and *κήρυγμα* were adopted, with equal propriety, whether the subject were sacred or civil. Again, though the verb *κηρύσσω* always implied public notice of some event, either accomplished or about to be accomplished, it never denoted either a comment on, or explanation of, any doctrine, critical observations on, or illustrations of, any subject, or a chain of reasoning, in proof of a particular sentiment; and, if so, to pronounce publicly such a discourse as with us is denominated sermon, homily, lecture, or preaching, would by no means come within the meaning of the word *κηρύσσω*, in its first and common acceptation" (Prel. Diss. Part 5). The only mode of preaching which the case admits of, and which the terms employed necessarily denote, is the natural effect which the completion of Christ's

atoning work and his entrance into glory would have upon the lost spirits shut up in the prison-house of doom. We have good reason to suppose "the spirits in prison" were cognizant of this stupendous event, the consummation of which even inanimate nature, by the most striking phenomena, acknowledged. And would not such an event *make proclamation* to the lost spirits? What tormenting memories it must have awakened in their minds; what bitter regrets; what painful anticipations. Is not Christ now *preaching* to the lost spirits, and will he not forever be preaching or proclaiming to the lost spirits, as imagination shall forever hold before their eyes that lowly, rejected Saviour, and faithful memory shall forever cause to sound in their ears his gracious, but forever rejected messages? Says not the psalmist: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I make my bed in sheol, thou art there." Even so may the sinner exclaim: Whither shall I go from the Saviour? If I take up my abode with the spirits in prison, behold thou art there, and thy presence and preaching there shall be the instruments of my keenest anguish. In arriving at this interpretation, we have been guided much by the remarks of Dr. Fairbairn.

In favor of this exposition we can say: (1.) It ascribes a legitimate and common sense to the verb *κηρύσσω*, "he preached;" a sense justified by the usage of all languages, and which in our language is denoted by the proverb "Actions speak louder than words," which is referred to by the poet when he says our life

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything;"

and by the orator, when pointing to the granite shaft that uprears its majestic form upon Bunker Hill, he declares to assembled thousands: "That plain shaft is the orator of this occasion;" and by Joshua of old, when, after setting up a great stone, he says to the people of Israel: "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us" (Josh. xxiv. 27).

(2.) This interpretation is in harmony with the context. Scarcely could the design of the apostle be better expressed than by the following comment: "He is endeavoring to fortify Christians against discouragement from the sufferings to which they were exposed for the sake of the gospel. Christians should seek to avoid suffering by maintaining a good conscience; but if they should still, and perhaps on this very account, be called to suffer, it was greatly better to do so for well-doing than for ill-doing. Then, in confirmation of this complex truth, he points to a twofold illustration. In the first instance, he fixes attention on *Christ* as having suffered, indeed, the just for the unjust; suffered as the Righteous One, but only *once* suffered, and on that "*ἅπαξ ἕνα*" the especial stress is to be laid. It was, so to speak, but a momentary infliction of evil, however awful in its nature while it lasted; still but once borne, and never to be repeated. Not only so, but it carried along with it infinite recompenses of good for sinful men, bringing them to God, and for Christ himself, limiting the reign of death to a short-lived dominion over the body, while the soul, lightened and relieved, inspired with the energy of immortal life, went into the invisible regions, and, with buoyant freedom, moved among the spirits of the departed. How widely different from that mighty class of sufferers; the most striking examples in the world's history of the reverse of what appeared in Christ, the last race of the antediluvians, who suffered not for *well-doing*, but for *ill-doing*; and suffered not *once* merely in the flood that swept them away from their earthly habitations, but even now, after so long a time, when the work on the cross was finished, still pent up as in a prison-house of doom, where they could be haunted by memories of past crimes, and with forebodings of eternal retribution. What a contrast! How should the thought of it persuade us to suffering for well-doing rather than for evil doing! And for those lost ones themselves Christ's spirit, now released from sufferings, fresh with the dew of its dawning immortality preached, — preached by its very entrance into the paradise of glory" (Fair. Her. Man.).

(3.) As a final argument in favor of this interpretation

we may say, while it gives to all the words and clauses of the passage their natural meaning and construction, it also perfectly accords with the analogy of faith. It is in harmony with the general tenor and scope of the teachings of the New Testament in respect to Christ and departed spirits. It is free from all taint of the pagan notions of a common underground depository of spirits. It gives no countenance to the Romish dogma of purgatory. Nor does it lend the slightest sanction to the opinion that probation will be extended for a longer or shorter time after death; that an opportunity for securing salvation will be granted to sinners beyond the grave. This opinion seems to be gaining new adherents at the present time. Of the "Essays and Reviews" by eminent English churchmen, that by Wilson upon the "National Church" concludes as follows: "The Roman Church has imagined a '*limbus infantium*,' we must rather entertain a hope that there shall be found after the great adjudication receptacles suitable for those who shall be infants, not as to years of terrestrial life, but as to spiritual development; nurseries, as it were, and seed-grounds, where the undeveloped may grow up under new conditions, the stunted may become strong, and *the perverted be restored*. And when the Christian church, in all its branches, shall have fulfilled its sublunary office, and its founder shall have surrendered his kingdom to the Great Father, all, both small and great, shall find a refuge in the bosom of the universal parent, to repose, or be quickened into higher life, in the ages to come, according to his will."

The fatal tendency of such a belief we can readily understand. Men in love with sin will continue in sin up to the very instant of death; will make no provision for eternity until they are plunged into it. Now, adopting the exposition we have given to this text, it can by no means be made to countenance the idea of a probation after death. And if such an opinion is not countenanced by this text, then it finds no support in the Bible. The great and obvious doctrine of the Bible is that *now*, in the present life, is the accepted time; that now is the day of salvation, and that this life is the *only* day of salvation.