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## The Argument in Support of the Hades Gospel

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solve the question of the Lord's Supper in a different manner than it is solved in our Confessions." 20)

If we ask, at the end of this brief overview: What, then, is the Real Presence? our answer is this: It is neither transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, nor impanation, nor subpanation, inasmuch as each of these terms implies a physical, unscriptural conception of the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood; but it signifies that there is a fellowship, or communion, of the consecrated earthly elements, which do not change their substance, with the body and blood of the Savior, in a miraculous manner which has been termed the sacramental presence or union, so that in, with, and under the consecrated bread the very body of the Savior, and in, with, and under the consecrated wine His very blood are distributed, and thus received by all communicants, not qualitatively or quantitatively or locally, nevertheless truly, essentially, and substantially. As the Godhead permeated and possessed the body of the Son of Mary without being localized in it, so the true body and blood of Christ permeate and possess the consecrated elements in the Lord's Supper, in a real, substantial presence, without being localized in each morsel of bread or sip of wine. And this doctrine, like all other doctrines of Holy Scripture, is a matter of faith, as Samuel Kinner correctly sang:

Though reason cannot understand,  
 Yet faith this truth embraces;  
 Thy body, Lord, is everywhere  
 At once in many places.  
 How this can be I leave to Thee,  
 Thy word alone sufficeth me,  
 I trust its truth unailing.

(Lutheran Hymnal, 306:5)

P. E. KRETZMANN

## The Argument in Support of the Hades Gospel

The Hades theologians deny that man's death puts an end to the period of grace and offer a lot of proof for their thesis that God provides opportunities for hearing the Gospel in Hades. Let us examine 21 of these arguments.

1. Their *locus classicus* is 1 Pet. 3:18 f.<sup>1)</sup> This text states, they say, that Christ "preached the Gospel unto the spirits in prison."

20) Asmussen, Hans (and others), *Abendmahlsgemeinschaft*, p.140, note 16.

1) Plumptre: "The *locus classicus* of the inquiry is the memorable passage in 1 Pet. 3:18-20. . . . The suffering of Christ for sin availed to bring to God some, at least, of those who had thus disobeyed" (*The Spirits in Prison*, pp. 111, 114).

But the text does not say that. The word here used is κηρύσσειν, not εὐαγγελίζεσθαι. This latter word always means, and cannot mean anything else than, the preaching of the Gospel. If that word were in the text, it would be a good proof-text for the Hades gospel. But we have here κηρύσσειν, and this word does not necessarily mean the preaching of the Gospel. The only meaning that it has is that of a solemn proclamation or any public announcement. What the content and purpose of the proclamation is, this word does not indicate. In the New Testament the object of κηρύσσειν is, in the great majority of cases, the Gospel. We have, for instance, Matt. 4:23: "Jesus went about preaching (κηρύσσων) the Gospel." But only when the object is named do we know what is being preached. "In itself κηρύσσειν is *vox media*; its content can be known only when the object of the preaching is indicated" (Stoekhardt, on 1 Peter, p. 164). The exegetes agree with Stoekhardt on this point, even those who insist that in 1 Pet. 3:19 it means preaching of the Gospel. Meyer's Commentary (Huther), for instance: "The word itself does not disclose either the contents or the purpose of that preaching" (English edition, p. 296). And President Timothy Dwight (page 748): "This word has in itself an indefinite meaning, to proclaim as a herald, without specifying the sort of proclamation." And so the statement that "Christ preached (ἐκήρυξε) unto the spirits in prison" does not establish the Gospel of the Hereafter.

Ross H. Stover presents the matter thus: "Does an unbeliever have an opportunity after death to accept Christ and receive his salvation? It is that word 'preach' which leads many to believe in the second opportunity for salvation. Without a knowledge of the two Greek words translated 'preach' in the New Testament, one could never come to a correct conclusion. . . . The word εὐαγγελίζομαι means preaching the Gospel of Christ so that men might be brought to an acceptance of God's salvation. This word is not used in the above text. Rather the Greek word κηρύσσω is that which is translated 'preach' in this passage. The word κηρύσσω means preach in the sense of pronouncement. . . . My dear friends, I can find no Scripture in which there is given even a ray of hope that an opportunity will be given the dead to be saved" (*What Do We Know About Life After Death?* Pp. 45—80). The *locus classicus*, 1 Pet. 3:18 f., would be a good proof only if men had the right to substitute εὐαγγελίζεσθαι for κηρύσσειν.

But, say these men, just that right we claim; as used in the New Testament, κηρύσσειν is not a *vox media*, but always carries the meaning of Gospel preaching. Meyer's Commentary (Kuehl): "Κηρύσσειν ist hier, wie ueberall im Neuen Testament, der technische Ausdruck fuer die heilsanbietende Verkuendigung des

**Evangeliums von Christo und vom Reich Gottes.** Gerlach: "Das Wort (κηρύσσειν) bedeutet vielmehr stets die Verkuendigung des Evangeliums, die doch nur den Zweck haben konnte, die Tuer ihres Gefaengnisses aufzutun" (on 1 Peter, p. 564). Luckcock: "κηρύσσειν is never used in the New Testament for anything but good tidings" (*The Intermediate State*, p. 144). G. Kittel, *Theologisches Woerterbuch*: "Der Inhalt des Kerygmas ist nicht angegeben (1 Petr. 3, 19), aber er wird derselbe sein wie sonst im Neuen Testament. . . . Sein κηρύσσειν hatte das Evangelium zum Inhalt." — Wrong again. See, for instance, Rom. 3:21: "Thou that preachest a man should not steal." That is a preaching not of the Gospel, but of the Law. Gal. 5:11: "If I yet preach circumcision." Acts 15:21: "Moses hath in every city them that preach him." Note particularly Acts 10:42: "He commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." See also Matt. 12:41: "The κήρυγμα of Jonas." See also passages like Matt. 10:27: "That preach ye upon the house-tops." Did the Apostles proclaim only the Gospel? It is simply not true that κηρύσσειν is always used in the New Testament in the sense of Gospel preaching. It is simply not true that it cannot be employed in connection with the *praedicatio legalis* or the *concio damnatoria*.<sup>2)</sup>

And now we ask: Is there anything in 1 Pet. 3:19 f. which determines the contents and purpose of the κηρύσσειν? Is there anything there to indicate whether it was Gospel preaching or a *praedicatio damnatoria*? Study the description of the men to whom Christ preached. "They were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Here are not beings who, smitten by the sense of their guilt and God's wrath, are asking for forgiveness and salvation. Here are men who had rejected the preaching of Noah, had hardened themselves against the Law and against the Gospel, had flouted the long-suffering of God, and had exhausted His patience. For them the period of grace had come to an end. God had pronounced His final judg-

2) De Wette's Commentary argues that these passages (Rom. 2:21; Gal. 5:11; Acts 15:21) do not disprove the canon that κηρύσσειν is the technical term for Gospel preaching, for this κηρύσσειν, too, has something to do with the Gospel. Hoenecke comments: "Dieses ist eine der Ungeheuerlichkeiten und Unklarheiten, von denen die neueren Theologen strotzen" (*Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik*, IV, p. 236). Th. Traub: "Wo 'predigen' im Neuen Testament ohne Zusatz steht, bedeutet es immer Heils-predigt" (*Von den letzten Dingen*, p. 84. Our italics). On the basis of this canon, Christ, of course, preached the Gospel to the spirits in prison. But it would be hard to prove that the Apostles, when they "preached everywhere" (Mark 16:20), and Paul, when he "preached to others" (1 Cor. 9:27), and the disciples, when they "preached upon the house-tops" (Matt. 10:27), and Jesus, when he "preached in their cities" (Matt. 11:1), preached only Gospel, no Law.

ment against them and cast them away forever. The judgment of the Flood is a type of the final Judgment. And when St. Peter in his Second Epistle, 2:4-10, speaks of these "ungodly" men, together with the angels whom God did not spare but cast down to hell, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which God condemned with an overthrow, as being "reserved unto the Day of Judgment to be punished," he presents these "spirits in prison" as doomed irrevocably. "Our entire passage," says Thomasius, as quoted by Stoeckhardt in this connection, "is fraught with the dread thoughts of judgment." Preaching unto the condemned spirits in prison, Jesus is not going to revoke the irrevocable judgment of God. He comes to them not as the κήρυξ of the Gospel, but as the κήρυξ of God's eternal wrath. St. Peter thus indicates clearly that the κήρυγμα of Christ was a *concio damnatoria*.<sup>3)</sup>

No, no, they say; St. Peter cannot have used κηρύσσειν in that sense; there are weighty considerations which make such an interpretation impossible. The *Pulpit Commentary*, for instance, says: "It cannot be that the most merciful Savior would have visited souls irretrievably lost merely to upbraid them and to enhance their misery." Dr. C. I. Schofield uses the same language: "The objection to the second interpretation [making Christ's preaching a *concio damnatoria*] is that it puts Christ in the position of, so to speak, taunting the irredeemably lost—which is inconceivable. He might have wept over them; He could never have exulted over them" (see *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1944, p. 195). The meaning of this objection is that because Jesus is the loving and merciful Savior He could not have proclaimed God's eternal wrath against these hardened sinners and confirmed the judgment of damnation. We ask: Does *the text* anywhere and in any way justify this appeal to the Savior's love and mercy? Does *the text* say that here was an occasion calling for the exercise of His grace?—We might let the matter rest here. But we shall add that the Savior not only wept over the sinner, but, when the occasion demanded it, He also declared: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees. . . . Your house is left unto you desolate," Matt. 23:13-38. The Savior loves all men, and this same Savior will declare: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," Matt. 25:41. Jesus is the Judge of the living and the dead, Acts 10:42. In addi-

3) Zahn's Commentary (Wohlenberg): "It would be very strange if our text would say that this adulterous antediluvian generation, which everywhere else in Scripture (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26 f.), together with the men of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28 f.; Matt. 11:23 f.; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7), is presented as the *ne plus ultra* of all wickedness and persistent defiance of God, had been granted another opportunity, before the final Judgment, for deciding for or against the Gospel."

tion, we will say that it is not for us poor sinners to regulate the relation of God's love and God's justice.<sup>4)</sup>

In determining the contents of the κηρύσσειν as used by Peter, one might also note this fact: "In our Epistle, St. Peter, in speaking of the Gospel, never employs the term κηρύσσειν, but uses other words, as εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, 1:12; 4:6 ἀναγγέλλειν, 1:12; ἐξαγγέλλειν, 2:9" (Stoekhardt, p.164). And we have already quoted Acts 10:42, where this same Peter calls the preaching of the coming Judgment a κηρύσσειν. Lenski: "When Peter wants to speak about εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, he uses this word, 1:12 and 4:6 (on 1 Peter, p.170).

Finally, when men make St. Peter teach a second probation for certain classes of men, they make him deny the clear teaching of Scripture that there is no probation after death for any class of men, Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10. That would make the inspired writers of Scripture contradict each other.

We conclude this section with a statement by Dr. R. F. Weidner in *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, I, p.188: "The word that Peter here uses does not in itself define the nature of the preaching nor the effect it may have on the hearer. It may refer to the announcement of pardon to penitents or of the destruction of rebels. It is but a begging of the question to maintain that we have here an example of a probation after death, that Christ here offered an opportunity to the spirits in prison to repent. *It does not say so*, and it cannot be inferred from this passage" (see M. O. Wee, *Shall I Live Forever?* p.43). — It might also be worth while to call attention to the findings of Herzog, *Realencyclopaedie*, third edition: "Those who assert that κηρύσσειν, as used in the New Testament, in itself means the proclamation of salvation fail to consider Gal. 5:11; Acts 10:42; 15:21; Rev. 5:2. This interpretation, so popular today, is in conflict with the context. . . . The Epistle emphasizes throughout the gravity of the Judgment (cp. 4:17 f.) and will not have it softened down in any way" (*s. v. Hoellenfahrt*). See also P. Koenig's article "Christ's Descent into Hell," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1932, p. 833 f.

2. Another *locus classicus* for the Hades gospel is 1 Pet. 4:6. In a way it is the real *locus classicus*. It is quoted as proof that the κηρύσσειν of 1 Pet. 3:19 is the preaching of the Gospel. Some are rather hesitant about offering this proof. One edition of Meyer's Commentary says: "Wenn man 1 Pet. 4:6 mit unserer Stelle (3:19) kombinieren darf." And Luckcock: "Peter speaks of the Gospel preached even to the dead with an *almost certain* reference to the 'spirits in prison'" (*op. cit.*, p.145). But most of them

4) We shall discuss this point more fully when we examine Argument No. 21. — We need not discuss the *ignoratio elenchi* lying in the use of the words "taunt," "exult," etc.

say that you *must* combine the two passages and let 4:6 interpret 3:19. The *Pulpit Commentary*: "κηρύσσειν is a word of evangelical sense and . . . is to be interpreted in accordance with the preaching of the Gospel in chapter 4:6." De Wette's *Commentary*: "1 Pet. 4:6 proves beyond doubt that the purpose of 'preaching' in 3:19 was to save men." Traub: "St. Peter himself extends the preaching of salvation taught in 3:19 to all the dead, 4:6" (*op. cit.*, p. 87). Lange-Schaff *Commentary*: "1 Peter 4:6 evidently (offenbar) goes back to 3:19. Εὐαγγελίεσθαι explains the κηρύσσειν."

But 1 Pet. 4:6 is not a good proof-text for the Gospel of the Hereafter. True, here εὐαγγελίεσθαι is used, and if you were permitted to combine 4:6 with 3:19 and on the strength of that make "preached" in 3:19 read "preached the Gospel," you would have won your case. But you are not permitted to do that. For the persons who are the object of the preaching of 4:6 are not the same as in 3:19. Our text does not say: "The Gospel is being preached unto the spirits in prison." But does it not say: "to them that are dead"? Yes indeed. And does that not mean that the Gospel is now preached to those who are in prison, to the inhabitants of the *Totenreich*? No indeed. Read the whole text. Study the meaning of "judged in the flesh." There is general agreement that this means the judgment of bodily death (Meyer's *Commentary*: "It is the judgment of death, as nearly all expositors have rightly acknowledged"). Note also that the text has: "*was* preached." And you will find this to be the meaning of our text: To certain people who are *now dead*, to the Christians, who accepted the Gospel and became partakers of its wonderful blessings, this Gospel had been preached while they were living, in order that they, although like all other men ("according to men") they were subject to the curse of bodily death, might live in the spirit, enjoy the spiritual, divine ("according to God") life, until the day when God would reunite their bodies with their souls. Death has not destroyed their glorious hope! (See Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*. Also Stoeckhardt, pp. 193—203. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 376.)

It is absolutely impossible to make our text say that the Gospel is preached to those whose souls are in "Hades," the realm of death. For the objects of the preaching of our text are men who must undergo bodily death. And have the souls of the departed their bodies with them? If the Hades gospel men want to use this text, they will have to say that the dead still have bodies, in order that they might be, as the text demands, "judged in the flesh." Are they ready to maintain this absurdity?—Zahn's *Commentary* (Wohlenberg): "The clause 'that they might be judged in the flesh' proves that the Apostle does not place the preaching of the

Gospel in Hades, the realm of death; for this 'being judged in the flesh' implies a living in the flesh, a life in the body." Lenski: "This *σαρκί* alone answers the question about preaching to dead men in Hades (usually called *Totenreich*). No advocate of missionary work in hell has attempted to show that its purpose could be a judgment of the spirits in hell *σαρκί*. The departed leave the flesh, or body, in the grave. Let us suppose that they did believe the Gospel in hell, then the resultant judgment could not possibly be *σαρκί*." The Hades theologians are in a bad predicament. Stoeckhardt tells them: "There is no other alternative: you must either take the words of the text ('judged in the flesh') in their full sense and then go on with E. Gueder to ascribe to the disembodied dead *σάρξ*, 'flesh,' or you will have to give up 1 Pet. 4:6 as your proof-text" (*op. cit.*, p. 195). — In the article "Now or Never" (*The Lutheran*, July 26, 1939) Dr. C. H. Little calls attention to the phrase "to judge the quick and the dead" in the preceding verse and says: "If, then, God will judge the dead, not while they are dead, but after they have been made alive, it follows that when it is said in this same connection that the Gospel was preached to them that are dead, it was preached to them, not while they were dead, but before their death, while they were still living upon earth."

Summing up for his side, Timothy Dwight can do no better than this: "The *probability* as to the meaning of *κηρύσσειν* 3:19, as connected with usage, must therefore be regarded as overwhelmingly strong against any other signification than preaching the Gospel. This *probability* is strengthened by the use of the verb *εὐηγγελίσθη* in 4:6, *provided* that we are to consider that verse as having any close relation to 3:19" (*op. cit.*, p. 498. — Our italics). Dr. Dau sums up thus: "I do not think this view (that the Gospel is being preached to the spirits of departed men) is tenable, because the text does not speak of 'spirits of the departed.' Moreover, the verb in this text is in the aorist, not in the present tense. Lastly, the men to whom the Apostle here refers underwent a judgment in the flesh or as regards the flesh, as the Gospel was preached to them. This could not apply to disembodied spirits" (*THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1925, p. 197).

3. What is the meaning of *φυλακή*? According to the uniform usage of the New Testament it is a place of punishment. See, for instance, Matt. 5:25; Acts 5:18, 19; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 20:7. But Luckcock will not have the "prison" of 1 Pet. 3:19 bear this meaning. "What is meant by 'in prison' here? Does it lend any support to the idea that those detained there were undergoing penal confinement for sin and transgression? By no means necessarily. The word is used, it is true, in the New Testament for a place of penal



durance, but etymologically it is simply watch or ward, either for security or custody; and it is a term that might be applied to all who were in the waiting state, whether good or bad. . . . As a place of confinement, therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison" (*op. cit.*, pp. 145, 147). J. Paterson-Smyth also gives our word this meaning: "Christ descended into Hades — the life of the waiting souls. St. Peter tells us that Christ preached to the spirits in safekeeping who had been disobedient in the old world. For which cause he says, 'was the Gospel preached to them that are dead!'" (*The Gospel of the Hereafter*, p. 35.) So also Plumptre: "Christ preached 'to the spirits in prison,' to human spirits, who were in that Hades which for them was a prison house, in which they were in ward, awaiting a yet future judgment. . . . They were not shut out utterly from hope. . . . They were 'prisoners of hope'" (*op. cit.*, pp. 5 f., 114). *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*: "Die φυλακή ist ein Ort, der sich nicht naeher bestimmen laesst, in welchem die Seelen der Verstorbenen aufbewahrt werden, eine custodia, tutatio, oder conservatio (in gutem Sinne)." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1899, p. 239.) What is the purpose of giving "prison" this strange meaning? It is to remove the idea — the teaching of Scripture — that there is no hope for the unrepentant sinner after death. It is to establish the idea that some of the spirits in prison are, as Plumptre states, "prisoners of hope."

To be sure, the prison, as described in the New Testament, is a place for "safekeeping," but only in the sense in which it is used 2 Pet. 2:9: "to reserve (τηρεῖν, keep) the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished," and 2:4: "God delivered the angels that sinned into chains of darkness, to be reserved (τηρουμένους, kept) unto Judgment." The souls of the unrepentant sinners are kept in the prison in which the fallen angels are kept under watch and guard; and the final Judgment will not bring a pardon, but will be pronounced in the words of Matt. 25:41. (See Stoeckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 153.)

The Lange-Schaff Commentary believes in the Hades gospel, but rejects the new interpretation of "prison." "The word φυλακή cannot be rendered otherwise than prison. Das Wort bedeutet immer eine Haft, einen Gewahrsam, einen Kerker. Matt. 5:25; Acts 5:18, 19; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 20:7" (many other passages listed). Lenski: "The Scriptures know of only one φυλακή, 'prison,' that confines 'spirits,' namely, hell, 'hades,' 'the gehenna of the fire' (Matt. 5:22; 18:9). To call this the *Totenreich*, the realm of the dead, is to give a strange meaning to the word φυλακή. . . . Note 2 Pet. 2:9, 10, in fact all of vv. 4-10" (*op. cit.*, p. 165 f.). — The prison confining the unbelieving spirits is not a reform school, but a penitentiary for life.

4. We cannot understand why men would quote 1 Pet. 3:18, 19 as proving that those who did not hear the Gospel in this life would have it preached to them in Hades. The text does not speak of men who did not hear the Gospel, but of such as heard it, rejected it, and therefore were damned. E. Hove asks: "Why should this hardened set of mockers and scoffers be mentioned if the intention were to teach us that Christ offered an opportunity of salvation to those who had no such opportunity during their lifetime?" (*Christian Doctrine*, p. 200.) *Lehre und Wehre*, 1871, p. 353: "Note that the text does not say that those who heard Christ's proclamation were men who had not heard the preaching of the Father during their earthly life—and according to the modern teaching God owed it to these men to make up the deficiency through the preaching in the intermediate state—but the text states that the men with whom Christ was dealing were just *those* and only *those* who for a long lifetime had in stubborn wickedness rejected the saving word."

5. Some make the astounding assertion that these "spirits in prison" had not been brought into contact with the saving word during their life on earth. De Wette's Commentary: "The antediluvians had had no Redeemer and no guide to the life of the Spirit. God therefore owed it (if we may use this expression) to them to supply the deficiency, and so at last the risen Savior brought salvation to them in Hades." This characterization of the men of Noah's time is certainly not in harmony with Scripture. It is not only the very opposite of the characterization given in 1 Pet. 3:20 (see under 4), but Scripture definitely states that God had sent to them "Noah, a preacher of righteousness," 2 Pet. 2:5. See also Gen. 6:3. "Man muss ueber solche Erklaerung staunen, da . . . der geduldige Gott ja ausdruecklich sagt, dass die Leute zu jener Zeit sich von seinem Geist, der ihnen ja Wegweiser sein sollte, nicht strafen liessen" (Hoenecke, *op. cit.*, p. 235).

6. Others admit that the antediluvians had had the Gospel preached in their midst, but that they had not rejected it definitely and so were entitled to a second opportunity. We heard Plumtre's assertion: "They had not hardened themselves in the one retrievable antagonism to good which has never forgiveness. . . . They had not hardened themselves against His righteousness and love and therefore were not shut out utterly from hope" (*op. cit.*, pp. 5, 18). And Plumtre finds such a thought expressed in 1 Pet. 3:20! "Disobedient," disobedient in the face of "the long-suffering of God"—and still men keep on saying with Gerlach: "Many were not irretrievably hardened," and with J. Paterson-Smyth: "These men that St. Peter thinks of had perished in God's great judgment, but it would seem in their terrible fate they had not hardened

themselves irrevocably against God" (*The Gospel of the Hereafter*, p. 66). If St. Peter had meant to express such a thought, he certainly used misleading language.

7. No, says *The Pulpit Commentary*, he did not use misleading language. He gives us a hint that these men had not utterly rejected the Gospel. "Is it not possible that in those words, 'which sometime [italics in original] were disobedient,' there may be a hint that that disobedience of theirs was not the 'eternal sin' which . . . is the awful lot of those who have never forgiveness?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 135.)<sup>5</sup>

8. Traub, on the other hand, does not attempt to tone down the enormous wickedness of the antediluvians in the least. He lets the words of 1 Pet. 3:20 stand in their full force. "They did not believe, although God was long-suffering. Their unbelief was therefore iniquitous in the highest degree. (See Rom. 2:4: 'Despising thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?') Jesus, too, stresses the wickedness of those unrepentant sinners (Matt. 24:38 f.; Luke 17:27)" (*op. cit.*, p. 85). But now he argues: "Since salvation was preached to the antediluvians, who in the days of Christ were considered the worst sinners, then it will certainly be offered also to all the others who are with them in the land of the dead" (p. 87). The Lange-Schaff Commentary uses the same argument. "We shall show that the antediluvian sinners" (italics in original), "not penitents, appear to be singled out because of the enormity of their wickedness, and that the fact

5) Some say that Christ's preaching in Hades was directed to men who had repented while on earth. Bishop Horsley finds it very difficult to believe that "of the millions who died in the Flood all died impenitent" and holds "that the beneficial proclamation of the Gospel was limited to those who repented before death." (See Plumtre, *op. cit.*, p. 98.) Luckcock: "There is certainly nothing to forbid us from supposing that the antediluvians here spoken of, though they had been long disobedient and had resisted the striving of God's Spirit under the preaching of Noah while the Ark was in preparation, yet when the Flood actually came in were brought to repentance and sought for mercy" (*op. cit.*, p. 143 f.). And W. Ziethe adds: "Besides those antediluvians (to whom Christ preached the Gospel) there were other countless hosts of spirits in prison, for whom that preaching of repentance and salvation was also meant. We are thinking of the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah" (*Das Lamm Gottes*, p. 729). We ask, first, what would Christ have to say to these repentant believers? They ask us to wait till they have told us all about the *limbus patrum*. We ask, second, how do you know that some repented during the Flood? There is no Scriptural evidence for it. It is pure speculation. Lange-Schaff: "We must conclude that the expedient which makes those antediluvians to have repented at the breaking in of the Flood, however ingenious, amounts to simple assumption, *eine aus der Luft gegriffene Annahme*."—We shall at some future time treat of this Protestant *limbus patrum*, but have brought up this particular point now in order to give a sample of the bald assumptions and wild guesses with which the Hades theology deals.

of their being made the objects of Christ's tender solicitude seems to shed the light of heaven on one of the most bewildering subjects in religion." There is nothing wrong with the argument that, if God is willing to save the greatest sinners, He is willing to save all sinners, including those with less guilt. But, as applied here, the argument loses all force because the premise is false. "Since salvation was preached to the antediluvians in Hades" etc. It was not so preached.

9. Moffatt likes this version of our passage: "It was in the Spirit that Enoch also went out and preached to the imprisoned spirits. . . ." ("Note: 'Ενώχ has been omitted by a scribe's blunder.") *The Expositor's Greek Testament* also likes this version and gives us this exposition: "The spirits who disobeyed in the days of Noah are the sons of God described in Gen. 6:1-4. St. Peter depends on the current tradition in which the original myth had been modified and amplified. . . . The tradition as given in the Book of Enoch is as follows: Angels lusted after the daughters of men. . . . The children of this unlawful union taught men all evil arts. . . . Enoch was sent to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon these watchers, who in terror besought him to present a petition to God on their behalf. God refused to grant them peace. . . . Accordingly, they are bound." Our expositor goes on to say: "Peter supplements the tradition which he accepts." How? "Ἐκήρυξεν = εὐηγγελίσσατο. Cf. Luke 4:18. Before Christ came, they had not heard the *Gospel of God's Reign*. Enoch's mediation failed, but at Christ's preaching they repented like the men of Nineveh; for it is said that *angels subjected themselves to Him*, v. 22." Now, what is the purpose of this weird exposition? That is indicated by the statements: "καὶ (v. 19), even to the typical rebels who had sinned past forgiveness according to pre-Christian notions." "But Christians believed that Christ came to seek and save the lost and the captives; all things are to be subjected to Him. So Peter supplements the tradition which he accepts. For him it was important as the greatest proof of the complete victory of Christ over the most obstinate and worst of sinners." If these most wicked sinners had the Gospel preached in the hereafter, there is a future probation for all. Wohlenberg mentions others who interpret our passage in the same way. Knopf, for instance, who accepts the Enoch version, says: "So kommt in der Geisterpredigt Christi der Gedanke der universalen Bestimmung des Christentums zum Ausdruck, und weiter, sofern die Predigt an besonders grosse Frevler ergeht, denen von der juedischen Apokalyptik das furchtbare endgueltige Strafgericht ohne Hoffnung auf Rettung in Ansicht gestellt war, spricht sich darin die Erwartung

der Apokatastasis aus" (*op. cit.*, p. 111). — On the force of the argument see under 8.

10. There are some other points relative to the "Hades preaching" of Christ that need to be clarified. For instance, which class of the unrepentant sinners was the beneficiary of Christ's preaching? We have seen that the Hades theologians are not agreed on this point. Some say that all will hear it with the exception of those who have utterly hardened themselves; others say, all without any exception. We are not interested in the discussion, since we know that no unrepentant sinner will have the Gospel preached to him in "Hades." But we enter the discussion in so far as we warn them not to discuss the question in the spirit of Farrar's contention that Peter "unintentionally limited the fullness of the revelation" by speaking as if the only spirits in prison who received the preaching of the risen Lord were the antediluvians (see *Early Days of Christianity*, I, pp. 126, 140). "Unintentionally"? No Christian theologian has the right to say that the Apostle did not quite say what he wanted to say. He has no right to amend any saying of Scripture.<sup>6)</sup>

11. Next, is the Gospel being preached to the spirits in prison today? Here there is pretty general agreement among the Hades theologians. They say with Ziethe: "We believe that that great work of salvation, which the Son of God began in and with His descent to hell, is carried on continuously till the end of days. We believe that at the present time, too, the Gospel is preached to the spirits in prison in order that they may decide for or against Christ, for their salvation or for their damnation" (*op. cit.*, p. 734). The Apostles are carrying on this work of Christ. *The Expositor's Greek Testament*: "Not Christ only, but also the Apostles preached to the dead." "The Gospel of the Hereafter" appeals to Clement of Alexandria, "who asserts as the direct teaching of Scripture that our Lord preached the Gospel to the dead, but he thinks that the souls of the Apostles must have taken up the same task when they died" (p. 59). Luckcock approves of Clement's statement that "the Apostles, following the example of their Lord, preached the Gospel to those in Hades" (*op. cit.*, p. 101). So also *The Pulpit Commentary*, p. 136. The Irvingites, too, teach "that the departed Apostles continue the work of preaching which Christ began at His

6) R. F. Horton, who quotes Farrar's statement in *Revelation and the Bible*, p. 356, comments: "It is a far cry to conclude from this doubtful allusion (that those who were disobedient in the days of Noah received in Hades a visit from the risen Christ) that all who die unrepentant will be evangelized in another world." We might agree with this statement, but we certainly do not agree with the next statement: "The fact is that Peter, like the other Apostles, was left in complete darkness about the ultimate destiny of the lost." What about 2 Pet. 2:4-9?

descent into hell" (*Popular Symbolics*, p. 326). Likewise the Mormons teach missionary work is carried on in the spirit world by Christ and the departed Apostles, J. A. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, pp. 149, 150.

All this is pure romancing. Scripture does not say a word about it.<sup>7)</sup> Nitzsch offers this proof: "To confine this work to the three days of the descent into hell is monstrous" (*Christliche Lehre*, p. 377, quoted in Plumptre, *op. cit.*, p. 242). Dorner offers this proof: "The ceasing of the preaching is *neither recorded*, nor reasonably to be supposed—indeed the ancient Church supposed it carried on through the Apostles" (see Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 385). No, the *ceasing* of this preaching is not recorded (and that proves nothing). But neither is it recorded that this preaching took place *at any time*. And the Scripture proof offered by Lange-Schaff ("We may therefore suppose with Koenig that the preaching of Christ begun in the realms of the departed spirits is continued there. Cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9") is invalid. Look up the passages! So, when Ziethe protests: "Es ist keine Dichtung, meine Lieben, die ich mir etwa ersonnen und euch bisher vorgetragen habe," we shall insist that it is pure romance. We are certainly not going to tell our people that the souls of the Apostles are not in heaven but down in "Hades," waiting to be received into heaven later on.

12. Do you know what Paul meant when he said 2 Tim. 1:12 that God "is able to guard that which he hath committed unto me" (R. V. Margin), that deposit of mine, "meine Beilage"? Simply this: God has instituted a ministry in Hades, committed this ministry to Paul and the others, and Paul is anxious to take over this charge in Hades. (H. Ebeling, *Der Menschheit Zukunft*, p. 31, properly characterizes this vagary.)

13. The Hades gospel provides, further, that the departed Christians share in this work of the Apostles in Hades. *The Pulpit Commentary*, p. 145: "The departed saints spread the glad news of the Gospel among the kingdoms of the dead." Hofman speaks of "the possibility of the conversion of non-Christians in the *Totenreich* through the testimony of risen believers" (see W. Oelsner, *Die Entwicklung der Eschatologie von Schleiermacher bis zur Gegenwart*, p. 57). Luckcock: "We shall exercise hereafter in the world of spirits under spiritual conditions those special ministries and peculiar graces which marked our earthly life and work. . . .

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7) Traub is one of the few who rejects this part of the Hades theology. "Von einer fortgehenden Predigt Jesu in der Totenwelt ist nirgends im N. Testament die Rede, ebensowenig von einer fortgehenden Predigt der Apostel oder anderer in der Totenwelt. . . . Diese Lehre ist ohne Schriftgrund" (*op. cit.*, p. 93).

The spirits of righteous men are there, and we can well imagine their labors for others in bringing them to the knowledge of God" (*op. cit.*, pp. 101, 186). And Gore's *New Commentary*: "The teaching of 1 Pet. 3:18 and 4:6 suggests that for saints departed, as for the Lord after Good Friday, an evangelistic activity may be possible. There are more souls in the world unseen than here."

*The Gospel of the Hereafter* adds this thought: "Think how it helps in the perplexities about God's dealing when young and useful lives are taken from the earth. I told a man who asked, 'Why should God take away a noble life like that and leave all these stupid useless people in the world?' that perhaps God did not want *only* the stupid useless people. . . . God's elect in the hereafter life are still 'elect for the service of others.'" (Pp. 153, 155.) Ebeling: "Some tell the fable that Christ has instituted a ministry in Hades and often calls gifted men through a 'premature' death out of this world to serve in the Hades ministry" (*op. cit.*, p. 31).

It is pure fiction. Lenski: "Some elaborate this thought (that Christ preached the Gospel in hell). If Christ did this, *somehow* it must still be done: missionary work will be carried on in hell. . . . The Scriptures teach no probation after death, no missionary work in hell, and none in a *Totenreich*, for none exists" (p. 169 f.). But Ziethe insists: "What I have been preaching to you is not fiction, not a figment of my mind."

14. What is the result of the preaching of Christ and of the Apostles and of the departed Christians in Hades? "It availed," says Plumptre, "to bring to God some, at least, of those who had thus disobeyed" (*op. cit.*, p. 114). Most Hades theologians are not so positive about this matter as Plumptre, but they, too, insist on having it preached as a blessed truth. Lange-Schaff: "Christ preached to those spirits who in the days of Noah persisted in unbelief and disobedience. Why, what, and with what effect He preached, is not revealed. . . . We are not informed whether few or many (or any. — Mombert) did thereby attain unto spiritual life." *The Pulpit Commentary*: "There is one more question which forces itself upon us—what was the result of this preaching? Were the spirits in prison delivered? Here Scripture is almost silent; yet we read the words of hope in 4:6. May we not dare to hope that some at least listened to that gracious preaching?" (P. 135.) Again, by a different writer: "I cling to the hope that the preaching of the Savior on the other side of the grave will bring multitudes to heaven" (p. 158). Again: "We know not the result of the Savior's preaching; it is hidden from us; conjecture is vain, perhaps irreverent. But we have the fact—the Gospel was preached to them, and the object was that they might live according to God in the spirit" (p. 178). Ziethe: "We do not know what

effect and blessing the preaching of Christ in the prison had. Scripture has revealed nothing to us on that point. But we have the feeling that the imprisoned spirits must have heard and accepted the glad tidings of salvation with joy and rejoicing. We feel and hope that the promise of the Prophet was fulfilled in the *Totenreich*: 'By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many.' Is. 53:11" (*op. cit.*, p. 733).

No, Scripture does not say a single word on this important point. A. B. Svensson: "Of a mission to the dead or conversion after death Scripture says nothing! There is not a single text that teaches such a doctrine. . . . There is not one word in the text, 1 Pet. 3:19, that gives us the right to infer that the preaching . . . led to the conversion of anyone" (see *Theological Monthly*, 1925, p. 198 f.). And the text quoted by Ziethe applies as little as the text quoted by *The Expositor's Greek Testament* proves that the fallen angels were converted. Those who want to believe these things have no other basis for their faith than human speculations, and in the Church of God the dreams of men should not be presented as divine truth.

The fact that 1 Pet. 3:19 does not say a word about the conversion of the spirits is important for another reason. Stoeckhardt: "If the Apostle had wanted to show that the innocent suffering of Christ" (as preached by Him in the prison) "had power to save those who had been judged on account of their unbelief, he would have had to mention not only the preaching itself, but above all the effect of this preaching, the actual repentance, conversion, salvation of the spirits in prison, or, at least, of a great number of them" (*op. cit.*, p. 165).<sup>8)</sup>

15. Besides 1 Pet. 3:19 and 4:6 the Hades theology utilizes a number of other Scripture passages as prooftexts. Here are a few examples. S. Baring-Gould quotes 1 John 3:8 and declares: "Surely, if eight ninths of the men and the women born into this world were to perish everlastingly, then Satan will have triumphed; Christ will have failed to destroy his works" (*op. cit.*, p. 38).—Scriptures teaches both truths: Christ has destroyed the works of the devil, and the greater number of mankind rejects the salvation Christ procured for them. Besides, if Baring-Gould's reasoning were correct, he would have established universalism (*apokatastasis*), and he disavows universalism.

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8) Here is a peculiar kind of romancing. According to S. Baring-Gould the "intermediate class" (see above) "will get another opportunity after this life, and those who make the right use of their opportunity will be saved together with the first class, but will not be glorified." "Salvation will be widely extended to men, who, however, will be far from glorification among the saints" (*The Restitution of All Things*, pp. 46, 143, 146, 152).



Gen. 3:15: "It shall bruise thy head," gets the same treatment. Dr. Chauncey: "How could this be so, if Satan triumphed by gaining millions to be his slaves? In this case could it be said, as in Is. 53:13: "He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied, for He shall bear their iniquities?" (See F. W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, p. 220.)

Matt. 5:26 is another proof-text. F. W. Farrar: "If the fate of those sinners (1 Pet. 3:19; 4:6) was not irrevocably fixed by death, then it must be clear and obvious to the meanest understanding that neither of necessity is ours. . . . That the prisoners there may be 'prisoners of hope' appears from Matt. 5:26, where the same word, φυλακή, is used" (*op. cit.*, p. 87). — The text does not carry any cheering and hopeful implications. The stern justice of the Judge is emphasized. Again, while it may be possible for a common debtor to pay his debt to the last penny, "this possibility pertains only to the figurative language of Jesus. It pictures no actual possibility for a sinner after death and judgment, because the Scriptures know of no such possibility. "Εως ἄν may raise the question: 'But how will he pay at all in the φυλακή to which God will remand him, to say nothing about the last *quadrans*?' The only answer of the Scriptures is: 'Payment there is impossible'" (Lenski). But Farrar has an answer: "Even if the payment of the debt be not possible to man, it is possible to God (Matt. 19:26)."

Matt. 12:31, 32, Dörner: "When Christ says of a sin that it is forgiven neither in this nor in the next life (Matt. 12:32), whereas other sins are forgiven in this world without limitation, this contains a testimony that other sins, save the sin against the Holy Ghost, may be forgiven in the next world." Julius Mueller and E. R. Stier (quoted in Plumptre, *op. cit.*, pp. 253—260) operate with the same text in the same way. So also Plumptre, page 21. — The text says that all other sins are pardonable, but it does not say that the Holy Ghost will create faith, by which the pardon is accepted, both in this world and in the world to come. The phrase "neither in time nor in eternity" is used only in connection with the sin against the Holy Ghost, to emphasize that this sin will never be forgiven, absolutely never. Again, the phrase "in the world to come," "in eternity," takes in not only the alleged "intermediate state" but all eternity. Then the Hades theologians, if they stick to the text, will have to teach that pardon may be obtained also in hell, and Plumptre and the rest refuse to do that (see *Lehre und Wehre*, 1871, p. 357). It is interesting to note that *The Expositor's Greek Testament* refuses to operate with this text. "Dogmatic inferences, based on the double negation, to possible pardon after death are precarious."

Matt. 11:20-24, says Traub, "shows that among the heathen

population of Tyre and Sidon, and of Sodom, there were some who, if the salvation of Christ had been preached to them, would have accepted this salvation by faith. These words of Jesus can be applied generally. They prove that among those whom the Gospel did not reach in this life there are some who would have accepted salvation if it had been preached to them. It follows that the preaching which did not reach them in this life will, in some way, be supplied later on, in the life beyond" (*op. cit.*, p. 91). Plumptre (pp. 21, 60) and others also use this proof-text. — It is a poor proof-text. If Traub's argumentation is correct, then certainly the people of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom were entitled to the preaching of salvation in the future life. But the text does not even hint at such an eventuality. J. Paterson-Smyth, indeed, says: "Do you not think that Jesus has taken care since that the men of Tyre and Sidon should have their chance? Does Jesus not suggest that He would take thought for these men in the Unseen Land?" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 138, 151.) There is no such suggestion in the text. On the contrary, it mentions their "judgment." "Sodom is a type of extreme wickedness and at the same time a preliminary example of the final Judgment. . . . To say that the fate of the damned is yet to be definitely determined is to overlook that Jesus here has already determined it. In 'more tolerable' lies no probation after death; the implication is the very reverse" (Lenski, on the parallel passage, Luke 10:12-15). On the "more tolerable" Kretzmann's *Popular Commentary* says: "All those that have had an opportunity to learn about Christ and His work, but refuse repentance and faith, will receive a *severer judgment* on the Last Day and will be condemned to *greater damnation* than other sinners that were not so signally blessed with the revelation of truth."<sup>9)</sup>

John 12:2. *The Gospel of the Hereafter* interprets: "Even such men as those who perished in the Flood, but had not hardened themselves against God's righteousness and love were not shut out from hope. In the '*many mansions*' was a place even for such as they" (pp. 37, 62). Plumptre has the same idea (p. 5, 21). — Rom. 2:14. Plumptre finds that this passage sustains "the wider

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9) The phrase "they would have repented" presents, indeed, a real difficulty. If repentance means "outward desistance from gross sins and crimes" (thus Lenski), there is no difficulty. But if it means real conversion, accepting the Gospel by faith, our inquisitive flesh wonders why God did not send the Gospel to them. How shall we answer? We refuse our flesh the right to ask the question. This lies in the domain of the *Cur alii prae aliis?* Rom. 11:22 ff. forbids us to deal with the question why "God gives His Word at one place but not at another" (*Formula of Concord. Triglotta*, p. 1081). And Rom. 11:22 ff. would, we think, apply particularly when men ask the question and try to answer it: Since God knew that those people would have repented, why did He not bring the Gospel to them?

hope as to the condition of the heathen. We read that 'the Gentiles, which have not the Law and do by nature the things contained in the Law, are a law unto themselves,' and are therefore capable of 'glory and honor and immortality'" (Rom. 2:14) (p. 163 f.).—John 7:17. Plumptre: "The law that 'whosoever willeth to do the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God' (John 7:17) gives a basis for the hope which the wisest of our teachers have in these latter days led us to cherish as to those whom involuntary ignorance or invincible prejudice has kept during life from the full apprehension of revealed truth, or indeed from any knowledge of that truth at all. . . . 'In the Father's house there are many mansions'" (*op. cit.*, pp. 403, 406).

16. Some even use Luke 16:25-28 as a prooftext. L. Schneller: "Were not Moses and the Prophets set before the rich man after his death? Was not the peace and bliss of Lazarus shown to him from afar in order to awaken in him the desire for peace and bliss?" (See CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, 1936, pp. 440, 442.) Farrar: "Dives uplifts his eyes, not 'in hell,' but in the intermediate Hades, where he rests till the resurrection to a judgment, in which signs are not wanting that his soul may meanwhile have been ennobled and purified" (*op. cit.*, p. 196). Plumptre: "The text represents the sufferer as having at last learned to care, more than he had done in his lifetime, for the welfare of others, and the father of the faithful still recognizing the sufferer in Hades as his son" (*op. cit.*, p. 60).—The text does not represent Abraham as rejoicing over the alleged spiritual awakening of the rich man. It does emphasize the "great gulf fixed between us and you."

17. The Hades theologians never fail to quote the passages proclaiming the universality of redemption and the universality of God's gracious will. Farrar: "My belief is fixed upon 'that living God,' who, we are told, is 'the Savior of all men,' . . . who willeth not that *any* should perish, 2 Pet. 3:9; Ezek. 33:11; Rom. 2:4: 1 Tim. 2:4" (*op. cit.*, p. 87 f.). *The Gospel of the Hereafter*: "The whole Gospel harmony of the early Church told of the universality of His atonement. It told of victory, far beyond this life. . . . It was one of the most triumphant notes in their Gospel—the wideness of Christ's atonement" (p. 61 f.). *The Pulpit Commentary*: "We know that the Lord Jesus Christ 'tasted death for every man.' . . . We feel sure that, in some way, and at some time, the gracious offer of salvation comes to every man in life or in death, in ways known or unknown" (p. 178). Ziethe: "He is the God not only of the *Jews* and the *Christians*, but also of the *heathen*. Verily, He is the God also of the *Gentiles*, as Paul declares Rom. 3:29" (*op. cit.*, p. 733). And L. Schneller adds this passage: "Therefore Ps. 139:8 declares: 'If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.' But if

He is in hell, He is there, too, what He always and everywhere has been, the God who would have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of truth." Farrar, too, quotes Ps. 139:8 as a proof-text (*op. cit.*, p. 22).— Scripture teaches these two truths: (a) Christ has redeemed all men, and God would have all men to be saved; (b) not all men are saved, subjectively. The argument, therefore, that because of the universality of redemption and of grace all men, at least most men, must be saved, subjectively, is unscriptural. Furthermore, if the argument were valid, logically, we would have universalism (apokatastasis). But the Hades theologians repudiate the apokatastasis gospel. Their position is doubly illogical in that they refuse to draw the full conclusion from their own argumentation and say with us: Though redemption is universal, only some are saved.

18. Additional arguments. Dorner: "The absoluteness of Christianity demands that no one be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought home to him." Quoted and approved by Luckock, p. 184, by Plumptre, p. 252, by Traub, p. 92, and others. Traub: "Because Christianity is the absolute religion, it is necessary that those who were not called in this life should receive the offer of salvation after this life."— What does "absoluteness of Christianity" mean? If it means that "there is no salvation except in Christ, through the Gospel, Acts 4:12: 'Neither is there salvation in any other'" — that is Traub's definition, and we accept this definition (see Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 41; *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1945, p. 50), then the argument based on the "absoluteness of Christianity" contains the same flaws as the universality argument (No. 16). Scripture teaches the "absoluteness of Christianity" and teaches at the same time that after death there is no offer of salvation, no probation. If "absoluteness of the Christian religion" has some hidden meaning, according to which he to whom "Christianity has not been brought home" is entitled to have it "brought home to him" in the future life, we do not know what that hidden meaning is.<sup>10)</sup>

19. Plumptre, page 102: "There seems reason to believe, as concerning the belief which prevailed among the Jews whom the Apostles addressed and which, so far as they do not protest against it, it may fairly be supposed they shared it, that there was an anticipation, more or less distinct, of the work which the Messiah was to carry to completion in that world of the souls of the dead."

10) What about those, the heathen, to whom Christianity "had not been made accessible" in this life? There is nothing in "the absoluteness of Christianity" which would demand that the Gospel be made accessible to them in "Hades." We shall discuss this case of the heathen in a later article.

Plumptre then submits quotations from Jewish writings. "Thus we read that 'the Son of David would pass through hell, to redeem those who were more under condemnation.' 'We rejoice over Thee to that time when the prisoners that are in hell (gehenna) shall be freed and shall come forth.'"—We cannot accept the canon that "the Apostles may fairly be supposed to share the belief which prevailed among the Jews, so far as they do not protest against it," in this general form. Having affirmed the thesis that there is no probation after death, the Apostles did not deem it necessary to discuss the antithesis.

20. "F. Delitzsch, in his *Biblical Psychology*, p. 553, says: 'We dare not place the limit' (beyond which atonement and conversion are no longer possible) 'arbitrarily at any point within the range of time. . . . So long as there is time, conversion must be possible, for it is actually the Christian idea of the significance of time that it is a period of trial and of grace; and as long as the sinner finds himself within the range of time, he exists under the long-suffering of God.' It is only when what we call time ceases with the final advent of the Lord that the state of the blessed and the condemned becomes, from his point of view, fixed forever" (see Plumptre, *op. cit.*, p. 259).—What? When a man departs this earthly life, he is still living in time up to the day of the final Judgment?

21. And now for the *sedes doctrinae* of the Hades gospel. The *sedes doctrinae* is man's notion that God's love and justice call for a second probation. The Hades theologians quote 1 Pet. 3:19 and 4:6 as their prooftexts, but take as their guide to the understanding of these texts their conception of how God should deal with men. Read the interpretation of *The Pulpit Commentary*, quoted under Argument 1. "It is impossible to believe that the Lord's preaching was a 'concio damnatoria.' The Lord spoke sternly sometimes in the days of His flesh, but it was the warning voice of love. It cannot be that the most merciful Savior, etc." Read again Dr. Scofield's interpretation. Read the interpretation of the Lange-Schaff Commentary: "Such damnatory preaching is derogatory to the character of the Redeemer; Christian consciousness revolts from the thought that the Holy Jesus, whose dying words were words of forgiveness and love, should have visited the realms of the dead and exulted over the misery of the damned. . . . The justice and love of God now appear to us in glorious light and withhold the definite sentence of condemnation until all men have decided with full consciousness concerning Christ and the Gospel."—And Farrar states frankly: "This my belief that He who is the Lord both of the dead and living, may save sinful souls even after the death of the body, is founded, not as has been

asserted, on two texts in St. Peter, but on what seems to me to be the *general tenor of the entire Scriptures, as a revelation of the love of God in Christ*" (italics in original). . . . "It is therefore a doctrine, not only in better accord with *man's instinctive belief in the justice and mercy of God*" (our italics), "but also far more Scriptural and far more catholic than the later views . . . these later and darker views" (*op. cit.*, pp. XIV, XVI).<sup>11</sup>

God's love and justice calls for salvation in Hades—that is the fundamental principle of the Gospel of the Hereafter. With one voice the Hades theologians proclaim it. Traub: "The love and righteousness of God demand—our faith and love, too, demand—that every man get the opportunity to decide for or against Christ, either in this life or after this life" (*op. cit.*, p. 91). Plumptre: "We thank God . . . that the natural instincts of men have risen up in revolt against conclusions so irreconcilably at variance with all belief in the love of Christ and the Fatherhood of God. . . . It is surely altogether monstrous to think that He who a short time before had breathed the prayer 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' should pass into the world of the unseen only to tell the souls of the lost of a kingdom from which they were excluded" (*op. cit.*, pp. 11, 19). John Schmidt: "The eternal fate of those who have never been confronted by an *effective choice*" (our italics) "for or against Christ is another matter entirely, concerning which we can conclude only that God, who judges all men in accordance with their opportunities, will judge them also in love" (*The Riches of His Grace*, p. 155).

Tholuck finds that the *justice* of God absolutely calls for an intermediate state, for it would not square with the justice of God to have a wicked man who in this life came only in slight contact with the Gospel and so did not come to faith consigned at once to damnation (see Hoenecke, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 232). S. Baring-Gould: "God is just, and would it be just that hundreds of millions should be lost because they never had the chance?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 40.) *The Pulpit Commentary*: "All must have the Gospel preached to them, or the judgment would be partial, unjust, unrighteous" (p. 196). Plumptre: "Reason rose in rebellion against . . . a dogma that clashed with men's sense of equity" (*op. cit.*, p. 167). Luckcock:

11) See also statements of the liberal theologian F. A. Loofs, quoted in G. O. Lillegard's article "The Idea of a Probation After Death" in the *Theological Quarterly*, 1919, p. 225. He rejects the Lutheran teaching on Christ's descent to hell, but admits that "it does justice to the text (1 Pet. 3:19) *more than others*" (*Third Congress for the History of Religions*, II, 291). In his article in Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, on "The Descent to Hades," he denies that 1 Pet. 3:19 gives support to the usual doctrine of a probation after death, although he believes that this doctrine must on *other grounds* be conceded to be correct.

"God is a being of absolute justice. 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne' (Ps. 89:14). 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' (Gen. 18:25.) It was not till the great divines of the seventeenth century shook off the incubus that the Church emancipated itself from views that were most difficult to reconcile with principles of justice and right" (*op. cit.*, pp. 179, 181).

This last argument, the chief argument of the Hades theologians, is not Scriptural. Nowhere does Scripture indicate any such line of thought. Men derive this dogma from their reason, *their* sense of justice, *their* conception of mercy. And men have not the right to use the argument under discussion. For what it amounts to is this: reason presumes to tell God what He must do in order to retain His character as a merciful and just God. And shall reason teach God ethics? Presumptuous reason is telling God that unless He conducts His judgment according to human standards, His conduct would be unfair, partial, unrighteous, unethical. — Professor Briggs declared, in so many words, that the ethics of God, Christian ethics, and the ethics of humankind must be brought into agreement. (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 165.) To be sure, man's ethics must be regulated by God's ethics. But that is not what Professor Briggs meant.

Will a man judge God? There are cases where we cannot understand God's ways. When "God gives His Word at one place but not at another," and when He gives one man less opportunities than another, blind reason agrees that God is disregarding the principles of justice and love, but the Christian faith is humble and knows how to keep silence. Christian faith declares: "How unsearchable are His judgments!" (Rom. 11:33.) "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20.)

One thing we know, and that is that "God is a Being of absolute justice. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?'" But while Luckcock would establish God's absolute justice by making it conform to his human ideas of justice, we tell our reason when it finds fault with God's ways: Whatever God does, is right, for He is a Being of absolute justice. In one thing we rejoice, and that is the declaration of our Lord and Savior that He loves the world and would have all men to be saved. And we shall not permit Satan to quote to us the Scriptural truth that there is no salvation after death in order to make God a liar.<sup>12)</sup>

12) We are glad to quote the following from Herzog, *Real-Encyclopædie*: "The assumption that the Gospel is preached in an intermediate state is based on the very questionable interpretation of a single Bible passage; it is hard to make it agree with various other passages (2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:8; Rom. 2:6; Matth. 25:41 ff.; Heb. 9:27; etc.); and the plea that this assumption is needed in order to vindicate the principle of divine justice and love is altogether unwarranted" (*loc. cit.*).

A final remark. Kliefoth tells us that not all will be converted in Hades (see P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge*, p.181). And that may be the case, because, as others tell us, conversion in Hades is more difficult than here. What, then, becomes of those who are not converted in Hades? According to the principles of love and justice, as applied by the Hades theologians, would God not be obliged to provide a second Hades with still more effective preaching and then a third<sup>13)</sup> and then finally employ the conditions in hell to bring about the eternal salvation of all? Universalism, using this same twenty-first argument, argues that God's love cannot permit any man to be lost eternally. And if the Hades theologians were true to the principle of "God's love and justice," they would have to exchange the Hades gospel for the apokatastasis gospel.

Are we willing to preach, on the basis of these twenty-one arguments, assertions, and guesses, the Hades gospel?

TH. ENGELDER

## The Lord's Prayer, the Pastor's Prayer

### The Second Petition

The Kingdom is the kingdom of the Father, for the Father is addressed. And since Jesus teaches us to pray for the coming of the Father's kingdom, the Father must have a kingdom. This argument is sustained by the conclusion of the prayer: Thine is the Kingdom. Since the Father has a kingdom, He is a King. Though He is the King, we are to approach Him as our Father. Jesus teaches us to believe with a rejoicing heart that we are children of a king and encourages us to seek better acquaintance with, and greater knowledge of, the King and the Kingdom.

For the past century theologians and philosophers have lectured and written extensively and with undiminished zeal on the subject of the Kingdom of God, and not without influence. A review of the material produced is beyond the purpose of today's program. Yet we would say that countless human notions have been attached to the Kingdom of God. The many concepts advanced do not confuse the Lutheran pastor who faithfully searches

13) We have lately read that in an article published in the *Christian Advocate*, "The World to Come," Edwin Lewis, after stating that Scripture does not teach "that every man's eternal destiny is fixed at the moment of his death," says: "What we surmise is that between this world and the next—and the next—and the next—is moral continuity" (see the *Christian Beacon*, Aug. 19, 1943). What was it that the Swedenborgians say about the spirits being led from one society to another?