

# 'He Descended into Hell': Creed, Article and Scripture Part I

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## 1. Introduction

The 'descent into hell' is an expression of Christian truth to which members of the Anglican Communion are immediately committed in three places: The Apostles' Creed, The Athanasian Creed and Article 3.<sup>1</sup> Despite this it is probably true that of all the credal statements (at least of those in The Apostles' Creed) it is the one which is the most poorly understood. One major aim of this article is to remedy this deficiency in a public forum, and to do so in a manner which self-consciously remains faithful to the classical Anglican emphasis on the essential interrelatedness of scripture, tradition and reason in all matters of theological endeavour. To adopt such an approach is to deny both that appeal to tradition alone can be determinative for doctrine (as in Roman Catholicism), or, that one must necessarily be able to point *directly* to passages of scripture to authenticate a theological position (as in the claims of various forms of modern Fundamentalism). Article 8 puts the matter at hand clearly. 'The Three Creeds, *Nicene Creed*, *Athanasius's Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture'. This Article does not claim that the form of a credal statement must be scriptural, but rather that because the content of the specifically named creeds are biblical they are to be accepted.<sup>2</sup> The authority of the creeds in matters of faith and conduct rests upon their background in the Bible, and never vice-versa.

Much of what has been said above may appear to be self-evident, but in the course of investigating what Evangelical Christians may reasonably take Christ's 'descent into hell' to mean, it will be found that the relationship between credal and scriptural interpretation is an extraordinarily complicated one. Because of the variety of prevalent interpretations I have thought it expedient to outline historical and dogmatic positions first, before examining the matter in relation to the teaching of the New Testament.

## 2. The 'Descent into Hell' in the Apostles' Creed against its Historical Background

(a) The meaning of 'hell'.

The English expression 'descended into hell' is a translation of the

Latin credal expression *descendit ad infera*.<sup>3</sup> This in turn can be traced back to earlier creeds, in Greek, where the equivalent for *infera* is *hades*.<sup>4</sup> The meaning of *hades* both in secular and biblical Greek is clear, it refers to the place of repose of departed spirits. Whilst in the Homeric period *hades* is very similar to *sheol* of the Old Testament,<sup>5</sup> being a dull inactive place devoid of moral differentiation, in the intertestamental period important developments took place in both Hellenistic and Hebrew culture.<sup>6</sup> In particular the apocalyptic writings are replete with references to *hades/sheol* as a place of genuine human activity and as an intermediate state wherein souls await the resurrection.<sup>7</sup> The morally neutral condition so marked in the older conception is replaced by a division of the dead along lines of righteousness, the just enter into a place of blessing and the wicked into one of torment.<sup>8</sup> These regions are thought of as spatial divisions or compartments of the one place.<sup>9</sup> In some sources the region of the righteous is called 'paradise',<sup>10</sup> whilst the wicked are said to be tortured in the 'accursed valley'. This presumably relates to the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, a smouldering rubbish heap and former site of idolatrous practices (2 Ki. 16:3; Jer. 7:31 etc.), in Hebrew this is *ge hinnom* and so, in Greek, *gehenna*. At times *gehenna* is identified with *hades* or a part of it.<sup>11</sup> As to location, *hades* is generally thought of as beneath the earth, the 'underworld',<sup>12</sup> though at times 'paradise' is situated in the third heaven.<sup>13</sup>

When we pass to the literature roughly contemporaneous with the New Testament the above lines of thought persist. Josephus reports that the Pharisees locate the souls of both the righteous and ungodly in *hades*,<sup>14</sup> but he himself indicates that only the wicked pass into the underworld whilst the righteous go immediately to heaven.<sup>15</sup> The latter opinion, though more heavily hellenized, is also that of Philo.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately the material available from Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls) does not permit definite conclusions about the community's belief in the fate of the deceased.<sup>17</sup> The Rabbinical literature on the future life is of a varied nature, and the matter is confused by dating problems. It is clear however that the Rabbis held the same mix of ideas as that represented in the range of works mentioned above.<sup>18</sup>

As expected, the New Testament shows strong lines of continuity with the above ideas. Most commonly the realm of the dead is designated by *hades*. That *hades* serves only an interim purpose may be seen by the sharp distinction between it and *gehenna*. Only the latter may strictly be translated as 'hell',<sup>19</sup> it alone is the place of the eternal fiery torment (Matt. 13:42, 59; Mark 9:43, 48) of the ensouled body (Matt. 10:28) of the wicked after the last judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). *Hades* receives souls at death (Luke 16:23) and delivers them up at the resurrection when it is replaced by *gehenna* (Rev. 20:13-14a).

As to the location of *hades* there is general agreement that it lies at the heart of the earth. In contrast to heaven as the highest height it signifies the deepest depth (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15); it is the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40) and one goes down into it (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15); it is called *phulake* (prison) as the underground keeping place of the ungodly (Rev. 20:2, 3, 7; cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The image 'gates of *hades*' (Matt. 16:18. Cf. 'keys of *hades*' (Rev. 1:18) is to be understood in terms of the ancient oriental and biblical cosmology according to which the underworld, located in the hollow earth, is enclosed by sacred cliffs.<sup>20</sup>

The developments which took place in the intertestamental apocalyptic literature, whereby *hades* became internally divided into compartments, or the righteous dead were thought of as resident elsewhere, continues into the New Testament. In Luke 16:23, 26 all the dead are pictured as in the underworld, and Acts 2:27, 31, based on Psalm 16:8–11 (LXX), which understands *hades* in a classical Old Testament sense, treats *hades* as a place of assembly for all souls. Yet there are other passages in which only the souls of the ungodly are in the underworld (Rev. 20:13f.), whereas the righteous are in 'everlasting habitations' (Luke 16:9), in 'paradise' (Luke 23:43), 'with the Lord' (2 Cor. 5:8), united 'with Christ' (Phil. 1:23), in the 'heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb. 12:22), under the heavenly altar (Rev. 6:9), or before the throne of God (Rev. 7:9; 14:3).

At first glance it might seem that the entire range of literature in the period under review is ambiguous concerning whether *hades* is always underground with a compartment for the righteous. Closer examination reveals that this is not so, for all the relevant New Testament texts situated after Jesus' resurrection<sup>21</sup> locate the righteous outside of *hades*.<sup>22</sup> This observation will have important implications at a later stage of this article.

#### (b) 'The Descent into Hell' in the Patristic Writings

The belief that Jesus spent the interval between his death and resurrection in *hades* is a common feature of Christian teaching from the Apostolic Fathers onwards. This *hades* never means the place of the wicked but the dwelling of the righteous dead, although at times the region of the blessed is thought of as a spatial division of the netherworld.<sup>23</sup> It was common belief that the Old Testament saints were located at the time of the 'descent' in *hades*,<sup>24</sup> and it seems to have been almost universally accepted by orthodox Christians that Christ's descent in some way related to their redemption. At this point two broad streams of interpretation can be discerned.<sup>25</sup>

First, there is an emphasis on Christ's preaching salvation to the Old Testament worthies. Justin Martyr and Irenaeus both cite an apocryphal Old Testament passage as proof of this doctrine. 'The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the

graves; and descended to preach to them his own salvation'.<sup>26</sup> Irenaeus quotes a 'certain presbyter' 'who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles that Christ 'descended . . . below the ground, preaching His advent there also and declaring remission of sins received by those who believe in Him, . . . who foretold His advent . . . just men and prophets and patriarchs.'<sup>27</sup> The problem with this view was that it seemed that there was little that a dominical visit could achieve, for it was usually combined with a belief that, with the exception of martyrs, neither the Old Testament believers nor Christians pass into the immediate presence of God until after the general resurrection.<sup>28</sup> All that Christ did for the Fathers was to give them a better experience of *hades*.<sup>29</sup>

It is hardly surprising that another view of the 'descent' came to predominate; this dramatically pictured Christ as the liberator of the Old Testament saints from the powers of darkness. The *Odes of Solomon*<sup>30</sup> are explicit about this:

*sheol* saw me and was made miserable . . . and I made a congregation of living men among his dead men . . . and they cried, and said, Son of God have pity on us . . . and my name I sealed upon their heads: for they are free men and they are mine.<sup>31</sup>

Melito of Sardis's *Paschal Homily* 68; 102<sup>32</sup> has traces of this idea where it speaks of the descent in terms of the defeat of evil. The fourth century *Gospel of Nicodemus* couples in dramatic fashion Christ's descent into *hades* and transportation of the Old Testament saints to heaven with the defeat and casting of Satan into the torture of *Tartarus*.<sup>33</sup> The creed of Sirmium A.D.359, puts the picture thus: '(Christ) was crucified and died and descended into hell, and regulated things there, whom the gatekeepers of hell saw and shuddered.'<sup>34</sup> Examples could be multiplied,<sup>35</sup> but it is hardly disputable that by the time of the entry of our clause into the Apostles' Creed the Western Church understood by the 'descent into hell' Christ's triumph over Satan and the power of death on behalf of lost mankind.<sup>36</sup>

### **3. Confessional and Dogmatic Positions from the Middle Ages to the Present Day**

#### **(a) Roman Catholicism**

The early mediaeval period in the Western Church effectively knew of only one way of interpreting Christ's 'descent into hell', i.e. in terms of a violent overthrowing of the devil. This is the motif of the so-called 'harrowing of hell'.<sup>37</sup> The 'descent' was viewed, not as an addendum to Christ's work of salvation, but as pivotal and instrumental, for it became allied with the ransom theory of the atonement whereby Christ through his vicarious death paid guilty

man's dues to Satan.<sup>38</sup> In *hades*, Jesus turned the tables as it were, overpowering Satan who had been deceived into thinking that Christ too had become one of his vanquished. With the subsequent predominance of Anselm's satisfaction theory of the atonement,<sup>39</sup> for which all of man's debt for sin is owed to *God*, it was inevitable that the doctrine of the 'descent' should take on a more moderate form.

This is immediately apparent when one considers the writing of Aquinas, the main lines of whose interpretation have become standard for Roman Catholicism.<sup>40</sup> St. Thomas teaches that it was fitting for Christ to descend to hell for three reasons: in his identification with man as a sinner; to liberate the prisoners in hell, for by his passion he had overcome the devil; to manifest his power in hell by visiting it and enlightening it.<sup>41</sup> Aquinas is quite clear that the 'hell' of the credal statement is not that of the damned<sup>42</sup> but rather the *limbus patrum* or resting place of the Old Testament saints. The purpose of this descent, which is understood in spiritual terms (by effect) and not locally (that is, spatially),<sup>43</sup> was to deliver the holy fathers from the penalty of original sin<sup>44</sup> and to lead them into the presence of God in heaven.<sup>45</sup> It is explicitly denied that Christ liberated any persons from the hell of damnation.<sup>46</sup>

It is immediately apparent how the formal lines of the official theological position of the Church of Rome recapitulate the essential elements of the older patristic interpretation outlined above. When we come to examine the cogency of this understanding of the 'descent' the two shall therefore stand or fall together.

### (b) Lutheranism

If, in Roman Catholicism, one may discern an element of Christ's humiliation for man in an overall context of triumph, Lutheranism has altogether denied that the 'descent' has any references to Christ's suffering.<sup>47</sup> As to the views of Luther himself these naturally underwent a shift during his lifetime.<sup>48</sup> At first he adhered to the Roman Catholic tradition described above, but once he had concluded that the faith of the 'fathers' was one with our own he had to abandon it. All believers, he came to hold, 'sleep' in the sure protection of God until the last day when they shall be awakened at the resurrection.<sup>49</sup> It is not surprising therefore to find Luther turning, at least in his popular discourses, to a modified version of the 'harrowing of hell': 'the Lord Christ—the entire person, God and man, with body and soul, undivided—had journeyed to Hell, and had in person demolished Hell and bound the Devil.' He elsewhere speaks more carefully: 'I shall be quite content if people do not vex themselves greatly with high and subtle thoughts as to how (the descent) was carried out; for it did not take place in the body at all, as He remained in the grave for three days . . . Please God, the banner, doors, gate, and chains (of Hell) were of wood, or of iron, or did not exist at all.'<sup>50</sup>

Notwithstanding the highly metaphorical cast of Luther's language, confessional Lutheranism became committed to his position as summarized in the *Formula of Concord*:

For it ought to be enough for us to know that Christ descended into hell, that he destroyed hell for all believers, and that we through him have been snatched from the power of death and Satan, from eternal damnation, and even from the jaws of hell.<sup>51</sup>

Lutheran orthodoxy, following the lead of Melancthon,<sup>52</sup> self-consciously developed a doctrine of 'the descent' in opposition to Calvinism (see below). Christ's descent was the first stage in the *status exaltationis*, his triumph; this event was usually placed in time between the return to life in the grave and the resurrection.<sup>53</sup> One important development that took place in this context was that, in going beyond the simple lines of the *Formula of Concord*, it became usual for dogmaticians to appeal to a particular exegesis of 1 Peter 3:19ff.<sup>54</sup>

(c) Calvin and his successors

The view to be expounded here, that the clause in the Creed refers to Christ's experience on the cross, is most usually associated with the name of Calvin. It should be noted however that as early as the fourteenth century Durand of St. Pourcain interpreted *infera* in the Apostles' Creed as a punishment and not a place, it meant Christ's punishment for man's redemption. These views were essentially repeated in the next century by Pico della Mirandola and Nicholas of Cusa, but had no influence in the Roman Communion.<sup>55</sup> The Lutheran theologian Johann Agricola<sup>56</sup> expounded a view similar to that afterwards maintained by Calvin; and Zwingli at times identifies 'the descent' with Christ's inner experience of suffering punishment on the cross.<sup>57</sup>

For Calvin however 'the descent' is a major plank in his soteriological platform: 'a matter of no small moment in bringing about redemption'.<sup>58</sup> He sweeps aside the possibility that 'the descent' clause in the Creed is there to reinforce the statement about Christ's death, for repetition is alien to the summary nature of a creed. References to the limbus are deemed 'childish' and 1 Peter 3:19 has to do with a revelation to the dead of the significance of Jesus' work, and so is not relevant.<sup>59</sup> Rather: 'the "descent into hell" is an expression of the spiritual torment that Christ underwent for us . . . By these words (Is. 53:5) he means that Christ was put in the place of evildoers as surety and pledge—submitting himself even as the accused—to bear and suffer all the punishments that they ought to have sustained . . . No wonder, then, if he is said to have descended into hell, for he suffered the death that God in his wrath had inflicted upon the wicked.'<sup>60</sup> Appeal is made in defence of the

doctrine to scripture.<sup>61</sup> Acts 2:24f. speaks of Christ's release from the pangs of death, Hebrews 5:7f. tells us of his godly fear and Matt. 27:46 relates the effect on Christ (abandonment) of the bearing of the divine severity. Calvin's logic has pushed the notion of a substitutionary atonement to its upper limit.

Whilst those Reformed theologians who later followed Calvin in this interpretation of the Creed extended its meaning to the agonies of Gethsemane,<sup>62</sup> it was universally proclaimed by them (in opposition to Lutheranism) that 'the descent' was the final stage of the *status humiliationis*.<sup>63</sup> The most important formularies to adopt this position are the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (qu.49–50) and the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Question 44 of the latter, in asking 'Why is it added: "He descended into hades"?' answers: 'That in my greatest temptations I may be assured that Christ, my Lord, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, and terrors which he suffered in his soul on the cross and before, has redeemed me from the anguish and torment of hell'.<sup>64</sup> This interpretation of the Creed has remained a living force down to our own time, even for theologians outside the Reformed camp;<sup>65</sup> Karl Barth has been its most influential modern representative.<sup>66</sup>

#### (d) Other Reformed Positions

Other Reformed theologians were not persuaded by Calvin's interpretation of the Creed. They returned to an uncommon patristic view that the 'descent' clause was intended simply as a gloss on 'crucified, dead and buried': the human nature of Christ truly died and underwent the full experience of death.<sup>67</sup> The clause, it was argued, had originally been inserted to underline the reality of Christ's death.<sup>68</sup> This would seem to be the standard position of Zwingli, Leo Jud<sup>69</sup> and also of Bucer.<sup>70</sup>

Anglican Article 3 contains the bald statement: 'As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed, that he went down into hell.' This Article, of 1563, is considerably shorter than that of 1553, deleting the explicit interpretatory words: '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, and preached unto them, as the place of St. Peter testifieth.' The omission of these words was due to a considerable controversy, which raged in England well into the seventeenth century, between the Puritans, who tended to favour Calvin's view, and conformist Anglican theologians who looked either to the early Fathers or Lutheran interpretations.<sup>71</sup> As it stands the Article is open to a number of views. This is significant, for had the original Article been allowed to stand any interpretation of it would have had to conform to a form of exegesis of 1 Peter 3:18ff which was compatible with a descent of Christ into hades.<sup>72</sup> In other words the meaning of the credal clause would be

closed to further developments in exegesis so that it could not be truly 'proved' by Holy Scripture. That is, the Creed, via Article 3, would control its scriptural 'foundation', and not vice-versa.

That 'descended into hell' has essentially the same meaning as 'dead and buried' has been a popular view amongst many outstanding Anglican theologians. In the seventeenth century it was embraced by the renowned English scholars John Lightfoot and John Pearson, and is favoured in the important commentaries on the *Thirty-Nine Articles* by E.H. Browne,<sup>73</sup> W.H. Griffith Thomas,<sup>74</sup> E.C.S. Gibson,<sup>75</sup> and E.J. Bicknell.<sup>76</sup> Others to approve of it include E.A. Litton,<sup>77</sup> G.F. Maclear<sup>78</sup> and T.C. Hammond.<sup>79</sup> A common feature of these expositions is an emphasis not only on Jesus' death as real, but as real in solidarity with our death, that he took it upon himself to experience all that we could ever experience, and this for us. This being so, Christ having gone ahead as it were, there no longer remains any region of terror for those who believe in his work.<sup>80</sup> *Prima facie* this position has an important combination of features lacking in the other interpretations, that of both antiquity and simplicity.

#### (e) The 'Descent' as a Work of Universal Redemption

This undoubtedly is the most common contemporary interpretation of the credal clause amongst practising theologians.<sup>81</sup> It expands, perhaps to its logical conclusion, an ancient opinion that through his 'descent' Jesus not only brought liberty to the Old Testament worthies but also to notable men of classical culture.<sup>82</sup> Not infrequently this view is combined with some of the other interpretations of the descent, particularly (c) and (d).<sup>83</sup> Since in every case it seems to stand, at least symbolically, upon a particular exposition of 1 Peter 3:18ff., I shall leave an examination of this position until the next section of this paper.<sup>84</sup>

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#### NOTES

- 1 The expression does not appear as such in the Bible. Cf. the comments of L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974 p.341).
- 2 Cf. the priority given to Holy Scripture in Article 6.
- 3 The phrase *descendit ad infernos* is nowadays preferred to indicate the place of the departed, not the departed. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longmans, 1972, 3rd edition, p.378).
- 4 The first creed to give official recognition to the 'descent' is the so called 'dated' or semi-Arian creed of Sirmium A.D.359. The clause is unknown in the *Old Roman Symbol*, the progenitor of the present Apostles' Creed (see Kelly, *Early Creeds*, ch.3 and 4). The first reference in a Latin creed is to that in use at the church in Aquileia (A.D.390) mentioned by Rufinus, *A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* (tr. J.N.D. Kelly, London: Longmans Green, 1950, ch.16).

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- 5 See O. Kaiser and R. Lohse, *Death and Life* (tr. J.E. Steeley, Nashville: Abingdon, 1981, p.43); A.Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922, p.19).
- 6 On the former see W. Fairweather, *The Background of the Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1935, pp.201–207); Pringle-Pattison, *op. cit.*, pp.23–37.
- 7 1 Enoch 9:10; 22:7; 2 Esdras 7:80ff.; Similitudes of Enoch 61:12; Testament of Asher 6:5–6 etc.
- 8 2 Enoch 40:12; 49:2; 58:4–6; 2 Baruch 21:23, 23:4; 30:2 etc.
- 9 1 Enoch 22:2–13; 2 Esdras 4:41.
- 10 1 Enoch 60:8; Apocalypse of Moses 37:5.
- 11 1 Enoch 51:1; 54:1; Psalms of Solomon 14:6; 15:11; 16:2; 2 Enoch 10:1ff.
- 12 1 Enoch 22; 2 Esdras 4:41; 2 Baruch 21:23; 23:4; 30:2 etc.
- 13 Apocalypse of Moses 37:5; Wisdom of Solomon 2:1; 17:14. This means of course that 'paradise' has become separated off from the older conception of *hades*.
- 14 *Antiquities* 18:14; *Jewish War* 2:163.
- 15 *Jewish War* 3:375.
- 16 *On the Migration of Abraham* 84; *On the Contemplative Life* 1:151.
- 17 See: G. Vermes, 'Dead Sea Scrolls', in *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, supp.vol. 1976, p.18).
- 18 See C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Meridian n.d. *passim*); C.V. Pilcher, *The Hereafter in Jewish and Christian Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1940, pp.84–87).
- 19 It is unfortunate that the Apostles' Creed, Article 3 and the Authorised Version create an unnecessary source of confusion by using 'hell' for *hades*.
- 20 See J. Jeremias, *hades*, in *T.D.N.T.* (1, p.148).
- 21 That is, not those written in the post-resurrection period, for this is the whole New Testament, but those who describe conditions for the righteous dead after the resurrection of Jesus.
- 22 I have discussed these matters in full in my unpublished M.A. thesis *The Intermediate State* (Deakin University, 1984), and with special reference to 2 Cor.5:1–10 in 'Immediate or Intermediate? The State of the Believer Upon Death' (*Churchman*, vol.101 no. 4, 1987).
- 23 Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4:34.
- 24 It was usual to infer this from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) which places the latter, after death, in 'Abraham's bosom' a region physically separated but in some way adjacent to the *hades* of suffering. See, e.g. Origen, *Commentary on the Psalms* 9:18; Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4:34; Chrysostom, *Homilies on Dives and Lazarus*; Augustine, *Exposition of Genesis*, 12:33–34.
- 25 This is picked up by F. Loofs, 'Descent to Hades', in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, J. Hastings (ed.), vol.4, 1911, pp.659–661); and Kelly, *Early Creeds*, pp.381–382.
- 26 Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 72; Irenaeus, *Against all Heresies* 3:22; 4:36. See, E.C.S. Gibson, *The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England* (London: Methuen, 1902, 3rd edition, p.175).
- 27 Irenaeus, *Against all Heresies*, 4:42. Cf. *Gospel of Peter*, vv.41f; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2:43.
- 28 Irenaeus, *Against all Heresies*, 5:31, 1f., Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, 43; *On the Soul*, 55.
- 29 It is worth noting that this would seem to approximate the position of the Orthodox Church on the subject. See: Loofs, *Descent*, p.654; P. Schaff (ed.), *The Creeds of Christendom 2: Greek and Latin Creeds* (N.Y.: Harper, 1919, pp.477–478).
- 30 The date is disputed for this collection, but perhaps c.100 A.D. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, F.L. Cross (ed.), 1974, 2nd edition, p.1288); J.W. Charlesworth, 'Odes of Solomon', in *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, Abingdon, supp. vol. 1976, pp.637–638).

- 31 *Odes of Solomon*, 42:15ff; cf. 17:9; 311:1.
- 32 c.180 A.D.
- 33 See Loofs, *Descent*, p.660 for details.
- 34 See Kelly, *Early Creeds*, p.289 for original text and translation.
- 35 E.g. Rufinus, *Commentary*, 14f; Augustine, *On Heresy*, 79; *Letters* 164; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermon* 119; Gregory the Great, *Sermons on the Gospel* 22; *Letters*, 15.
- 36 See W.R. Alger, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of the Future Life* (N.Y.: Greenwood, 1968, vol.2, p.400).
- 37 See M.M. Gatch, 'The Harrowing of Hell', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36, suppl. 1981, pp.75–88.
- 38 See J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: a History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol.3, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp.133–136).
- 39 St. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* in *Anselm of Canterbury* (tr. and ed. J. Hopkins and H. Richardson; Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1976, vol.3, pp.39–138).
- 40 See A.C. Custance, *Journey Out of Time* (Brockville: Doorway, 1981, pp.263–269). R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior* (tr. B. Rose, St. Louis: Herder, 1952, pp.658–662). Loofs, *Descent*, pp.654–656. R.T.A. Murphy, *Summa Theologiae*. Appendix 5: 'The Descent into Hell' (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1965, pp.208–215).
- 41 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a. 52, 1. (henceforth *S.Th.*).
- 42 Aquinas, *S.Th.* 3a, 52, 3.
- 43 'Christ's soul did not go down into hell in the way a body would, but by the sort of angelic movement which was discussed in the *Prima Pars*.' *S.Th.* 3a, 52, 1.
- 44 Aquinas *S.Th.* 3a, 49, 5; 52, 5. The penalty in mind here is an exclusion from the divine glory which could not be remedied until Christ's passion.
- 45 Aquinas *S.Th.* 3a, 52, 5.
- 46 Aquinas *S.Th.* 3a, 52, 6.
- 47 For example: 'The Scriptures teach that Christ, having been "made alive" in his grave, descended into hell, not to suffer, but to "proclaim his victory over his captives."' *Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis; Concordia, 1943, no. 150) The reference to scripture here is to 1 Peter 3:19ff., a matter to be dealt with below.
- 48 See Loofs, *Descent*, pp.656–657 for details.
- 49 See P. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (tr. R.C. Schultz, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966, pp.410–417) for a detailed discussion.
- 50 See Loofs, *Descent*, p.657 for both quotations.
- 51 *Formula of Concord*, Art. 9. cited in P. Schaff (ed.) *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3. *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds* (New York: Harper, 1919, p.160).
- 52 See D.D. Wallace, 'Puritan and Anglican: The Interpretation of Christ's Descent Into Hell in Elizabethan Theology', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte*, 69, 1978, p.253.
- 53 See: W. Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man* (tr. L.L. Wilckens and D.A. Priebe, London: S.C.M. 1968 p.278).
- 54 See Loofs, *Descent*, p.657.
- 55 For full details see Wallace, *Puritan and Anglican*, p.251.
- 56 See Loofs, *Descent*, p.658.
- 57 See Zwingli and Bullinger (tr. and ed. G.W. Bromiley, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953, p.252).
- 58 Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.16, 8. (tr. F.L. Battles, London: S.C.M., vol.1, 1960.)
- 59 Calvin, *Institutes* 2. 16, 9.
- 60 Calvin, *Institutes* 2. 16, 10.
- 61 Calvin, *Institutes* 1. 16, 11.
- 62 For example, Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.342.
- 63 See, for example, *Westminster Larger Catechism* qu. 46, 49, 50; G.C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ* (tr. C. Lambregtse, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, p.179).

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- 64 Cited in Schaff, *Evangelical Creeds*, p.321.
- 65 It is interesting to note the favourable reception it receives from both Helmut Thielicke, *I Believe* (tr. J.W. Doberstein and H.G. Anderson, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968, pp.130–131) and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Apostles' Creed* (tr. M. Kohl, London: S.C.M., 1972, p.91), *Jesus: God and Man*, pp.269–270.
- 66 K. Barth, *Credo* (tr. J.S. McNab, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935, pp.89–94).
- 67 So, Rufinus, *Commentary*, 16.
- 68 See Kelly, *Early Creeds*, pp.379, 380, 383 for evidence that this is what it would have meant for the Syriac speakers amongst whom it was perhaps first to receive confessional status.
- 69 See Loofs, *Descent*, p.657.
- 70 See G. Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962, pp.270, 841).
- 71 For full details see Wallace, *Puritan and Anglican*, pp.255ff.
- 72 Cf. W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Principles of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979, p.67).
- 73 E.H. Browne, *An Exposition of the Thirty Nine Articles* (London: John W. Parker, 1860, 5th edition, p.94).
- 74 Griffith-Thomas, *Principles*, p.69. Cf. his *The Catholic Faith* (London: Longmans Green, 1943, p.43).
- 75 E.C.S. Gibson, *The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England* (London: Methuen, 1902, 3rd edition, pp.169–170).
- 76 E.J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles* (London: Longmans Green, 1939, pp.122–123).
- 77 E.A. Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (London: James Clarke, 1960, p.193).
- 78 G.F. Maclear, *An Introduction to the Creeds* (London: Macmillan, 1904, pp.142–143).
- 79 T.C. Hammond, *In Understanding be Men* (London: I.V.P., 1968, 6th edition, p.107).
- 80 Cf. the treatment by W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889, vol.2, pp.602ff.). Also worth consulting as a Roman Catholic expression very much along these lines is R. Lachenschmid, 'Descent of Christ into Hell', in *Sacramentum Mundi* (London: Burns and Oates, K. Rahner (ed.), 1968, vol.3, pp.9–10).
- 81 See the comments by A.T. Hanson, 'The Descent into Hell', in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: S.C.M., A. Richardson and J. Macquarrie (edd.), 1983, pp.153–154).
- 82 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 6:6; Gregory of Nazianzen, *Orations* 45:23; Cyril of Alexandria, *Paschal Homily* 7, (Cyril is in fact of the opinion that only Satan was left in hell); Augustine, *Letters*, 164.
- 83 So, Bicknell, *Articles*, pp.123–125; M. Downey, 'Worship Between the Holocausts', *Theology Today*, 43, 1986, pp.75–87; Pannenberg, *Creed* pp.92–95; Thielicke, *I Believe*, pp.130ff.
- 84 See: Loofs, *Descent*, p.658 for the origins of this view in modern theology.