SCRIBES OF THE NAZARENES.

II. The Gospel according to St. Luke and the Descent into Hades.

In the preceding articles of this series it has been suggested, that the earliest type of Gospel was simply a collection of passages, selected from the Old Testament. It was the work of the Evangelist to use them so as to substantiate in various ways the general proposition, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah described by all the prophets. So long as the various facts, which corresponded thereto, were within the recollection of preacher and hearers, this sufficed of itself. But the store of necessary facts soon became enriched by the additions of successive students of Scripture, until it passed the limits of this common knowledge. The Christian missionaries believed that all the Scriptures were but type and prophecy of their Christ, or, at least, the material out of which He had fashioned His own more perfect teaching. They were therefore eager to discover and apt to isolate—if not actually to invent —incidents insignificant enough in themselves, which fitted such prophecies as were not obviously and notoriously fulfilled by Him. These facts were necessarily appended to the corresponding Scriptures for the benefit of less learned and less inquisitive workers. It is such a collection as this which justifies, chronologically at any rate, the pride of place accorded to the Gospel according to St. Matthew.[1]

In its present form this Gospel contains much more than these Dominical Oracles, of which Papias spoke. Before it was completed, the common knowledge of *what was not*

[1] The ten fulfilments of Scripture. Matt. i. 22 f., ii. 15, 17, 23, iv. 14 ff., viii. 17, xii. 17 ff., xiii. 35, xxi. 4 f., xxviii. 9 f.

done in a corner could no longer be assumed, by reason of lapse of time or change of scene. With the prophecies, therefore, were combined not merely the pertinent facts, which but for their pertinency might have been (and generally were) forgotten; but also the historical sketch of our Lord's life based upon the sermons, which St. Peter delivered *in partibus infidelium*. The first form of the Gospel is thus combined with the second, which is best represented by the Gospel according to St. Mark: the other constituents of the extant Gospel according to St. Matthew call for separate and detailed examination.

By the nature, then, of the whole or of a distinctive part of them, the accepted order of the first two Gospels is justified. And the third follows as naturally. St. Luke in his preface speaks as one of the second generation of Christians, and contemplates the needs of catechumens. In fact, the four Gospels correspond exactly to the works of Clement of Alexandria. St. Matthew is the Protrepticus addressing the Jews, and St. Mark the Protrepticus addressing the Gentiles; St. Luke is the Pædagogus, and the Gospel according to St. John is meat for the true Gnostic, who is described and addressed in the Stromateis. The last is first and the first last—for St. John, the only *eyewitness and minister of the word*, presents completely the slowly perfected interpretation and combination of the *things*—prophecies and facts—*concerning Jesus*.

But already in the Third Gospel fact and prophecy are, so to say, chemically combined, and not merely mixed. The process is defined for all time by St. John: THEY BELIEVED THE SCRIPTURE AND THE WORD WHICH JESUS SPAKE. As befits the eye-witness, St. John describes minutely at the beginning of his record the way in which the disciples of Jesus came to know Him for what He was.

Jesus drove out the thieves, who had made a shop of God's temple; and the Jews demanded a sign from Him, a token of His authority to do this. The hawkers of sacrificial victims and the money-changers were licensed by the priests; only a prophet, commissioned directly by God, might thus interfere with the existing order of things. But the only sign offered was an enigmatic saying, which the disciples interpreted of the Resurrection, *when Jesus had risen from the dead.*[1] For them, as for the two disciples who walked to Emmaus, *the prophetic word was more sure.*[2] Thus did St. Luke find his certainty by following up all the traditions to their source and guarantee in prophecy.

Of all the modifications of the record of Jesus' teaching presented by St. Luke, one of the most striking is his version of the parable of *the strong man and the stronger.* In its original form the parable is of sufficient importance as being connected by Irenaeus with the primitive Christian belief in the *descensus ad inferos;* but St. Luke's version bears the marks of an elaborate exposition in the course of which, with the help of Old Testament Scriptures, this sense has been stamped upon it. *The word of Jesus* has been reinforced by *the word of prophecy* in the case of this pictorial representation of the consummation of God's sovereignty. The stress which the Christian missionaries and catechists laid upon this climax of "the last things" is as characteristic of Scribes, as the method by which they proved it. Ezra the great

[1] The view that the temple of which Jesus spoke was His body is perhaps the cause of the amplification of the parallel between the Son of Man and Jonah in Matt. xii. 39. The connexion of Psalm lxix. 10 with this incident supports the date assigned to the cleansing of the Temple by the Synoptists. The degradation of Old St. Paul's presents an exact parallel to that of the Temple.

[2] 2 Pet. i. 19.

Scribe had become the Seer; and the Rabbi of Nazareth employed the current apocalyptic conceptions no less than the incidents of daily life, as vehicles of the spirit and the life which He proclaimed. St. Paul speaks for Christians generally: "The apostasy must come first with the revelation of the man of lawlessness . . . *do you not remember that I used to tell you this when I was still with you?*" [1] The Son of God had spoken in divers manners to His disciples, and each one interpreted the word as best he could.

It is possible to separate this doctrine from the general body of Revelations to which it belongs and to regard it as an erroneous interpretation which must be discarded. Its alleged proof texts have been analysed and explained in other senses. "Whether therefore we consider the authorities first introducing this opinion, which were apocryphal, or the testimonies of Scripture, forced and improbable, or the nature of this preaching, inconsistent with the Gospel . . . this preaching of *Christ* to the spirits in prison cannot be admitted as the end . . . of his descent into Hell." [2] On this view the fact remains—robbed of its significance.

The opposite view accepts with simple faith the belief as it is now known to be reflected in the Gospel of Peter: "As Jesus went up into heaven a voice was heard saying, 'Hast thou preached the Gospel to them that sleep?' and an answer came from the cross, 'Yea.'" Christ being dead, the Catechism of the Council of Trent says, His soul descended into Hades and remained there, so long as His body was in the tomb. *Ceteri . . . captivi descenderant: ipse vero inter mortuos liber et victor ad profligandos daemones, a quibus illi ob noxam inclusi et constricti tenebantur, ut*

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff.
[2] Pearson on the Creed.

sanctos et iustos homines ex misera illius custodiae molestia liberaret eis que passionis suae fructum impertiret.[1]

The former view is the reaction from the latter, in which the belief has become part of "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory [and] Pardons." But the primitive Christian church did not cherish doctrines which were repugnant to the Word of God; and so long as popular notions of the life after death are determined by a literal and local interpretation of Jewish and Pagan imagery, this Christian pendant thereof deserves some consideration.

These emblems of the eternal struggle between good and evil—in the heart of man, in the world, in the universe—were part of the elementary teaching which the Scribes of the Nazarenes had received and delivered to their converts. They were "vocal to the wise," and at the same time contained warnings and promises, which the most ignorant could appreciate. Various degrees of comprehension of their meaning are found in the books of the New Testament; and the doctrine of the *Descensus*, in particular, served various ends, as need arose.

Writing to sundry churches of Asia Minor of St. Paul's or unknown foundation, St. Peter makes casual reference to Christ's descent into Hell: *the gospel was preached to the dead.* The doctrine was perfectly familiar to the writer and his readers. He had no need to teach it or to remind them of it: he merely alludes to it because the object of the Descent is an essential part of his Theodicy. Only so could he justify the ways of God to men. Here was an intelligible solution of the inevitable problem *concerning them that have fallen asleep.*

In the church of Thessalonica this question presented itself in a special form. Absorbed in the hope of the

[1] *Catechismus Conc. Tridentini*, cap. vi. Quaestio i.–vi.: cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 6; Luke xxiii. 43; Hos. xiii. 14; Zech. ix. 11; Col. ii. 10; Phil. ii. 10.

immediate Parousia, those Christians were dismayed at the death of some of their number *that are fallen asleep in Jesus*.[1] But this was only one aspect of a larger difficulty: what of those who had never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and yet had paid the full penalty of their sin? Why was this generation singled out for God's supreme revelation of Himself in a Son? If the rest must rise only to be condemned at the great assize, was God's judgment just?

St. Paul is at pains to show that both Jews and Gentiles had enjoyed partial revelations of God's will; and the Parable of the talents contained a promise full of hope for those who had been true to their little light. But the ordinary Christian naturally thought with Dives, that what had convinced him would have convinced his dead friends or ancestors, who had neglected either Moses and the prophets or the dictates of conscience. The whole world lay in wickedness: God was omnipotent: therefore God had shut all men up to sin. If His purpose was to save all, what of the dead? Is God righteous in bringing upon them wrath?[2]

Few were able to contemplate the body or nation as a whole without thinking of its individual members—*mentem mortalia tangunt*. Few, again, could find any solid satisfaction in a nicely-graduated scheme of recompenses proportionate to opportunities. But for all mourners there was hope in the doctrine that the Gospel was preached to the dead; who, though they had been judged for the sins of their life, might yet live in spirit, if they heeded what they now heard. St. Paul's gospel was sadly incomplete if it did not include this provision, that the word of Christ had gone out to the dead also.

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13 ff.
[2] Rom. x. 14–21

Earlier in his Epistle St. Peter asserts that it was Christ Himself who so preached, and, more, that He preached even to those typical rebels who had sinned, humanly speaking, beyond forgiveness. *He went and preached unto the spirits in prison who disobeyed once on a time . . . in the days of Noah.*[1]

Once more he clearly refers to an accepted belief. The spirits are the sons of God who, in violation of the law of their being, descended to earth and took to themselves wives, according to the old legend preserved in Genesis and elaborated in Jewish tradition.[2] To them Christ preached and they repented; for St. Peter goes on to say that He has *gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers having subjected themselves unto Him.*[3] And if *they* repented, how much more readily the men of old who had sinned and died—like Adam in their death, if not also in transgression of a definite command?

The scribe is so confident that we may reasonably expect to find him following his Rabbi at this point—saying in effect, with St. Paul, "Not I, but the Lord, taught thus and thus, and so ye believed." This warrant—the word of Jesus combined with the prophecy of "Enoch"—is not far to seek. One of the outstanding features of the life of Jesus is His expulsion of demons from afflicted persons; and this kind of miracle, whether performed by Himself or His Apostles, is regarded as an acted parable, significant of the conflict with the powers of evil, which He and they carried on throughout their career. So when the seventy Apostles returned with joy, saying, "Even the devils are subjected—subject themselves—to us as Thy representatives," Jesus said, "While you were absent on your mission

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 19 f.
[2] Especially in the Books of Enoch.
[3] 1 Pet. iii. 22.

I was beholding Satan fallen out of heaven like lightning." [1] Already the triumph was complete to His view, when His followers so proved their faith.

At the outset of His public ministry He told His disciples that the devil had tempted Him and had not succeeded in turning Him aside from the path laid down for the Messiah in Scripture. From the first, then, His victory was complete: the temptation might be renewed, but only to fail again: all that was necessary was that His followers should realize the fact and act upon it.

These exorcisms exemplified His triumph in a way calculated to impress the dullest intelligence. And their significance is set forth in a parable.

Scribes came from Jerusalem and said, "He is casting out demons with the help of the ruler of the demons." Jesus replied that the theory was preposterous. "How can Satan so by deputy cast out Satan his agent? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand; and if a household be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand; and if Satan has risen against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but comes to an end. This *has* happened, but not *thus*. Satan's sovereignty is finished, but not through such domestic treachery. No one can enter the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless first of all he bind the strong man: then indeed will he plunder his house. I cast out devils, because I have first vanquished their lord Beezebul, *the Lord of the House.*"

Primitive Christians conceived of the earthly life of our Lord as a drama, in which His activities succeeded one another in order of time. In the flesh He preached to the Jews in Palestine—time and place the so-and-so; in the spirit He preached even to the disobedient spirits, whose

[1] Luke x. 17 f.

baneful presence He had banished seriatim from the upper world. But the parable admits no such distinction and emphasizes the logical to the exclusion of the accepted chronological order. If Jesus cast out one or many demons from one demoniac, it was only because He had already vanquished and bound their ruler, from whom they had their power. The disciples who had known Christ after the flesh were at a loss to explain this, except as a prophecy, so far as the complete achievement was concerned. On earth He delivered Satan's victims, and when He died He continued this work below; for Satan was emphatically *he that hath the power over death*. Even to St. Paul Christ's triumph over the lord of death was only to be achieved somewhen in the future.

This conception reflects the common habit of mind, which prevailed in the early Church. The disciples did not all or all at once understand the lesson of the Transfiguration. For them the glory followed the sufferings [1]; but St. John had learned to find in his memories of the earthly life of Jesus manifestations of the glory, which is to be manifested at the end of this age, and read aright this parable. Already the Holy War, on which the Apocalyptic writers laid so much stress, was accomplished; Jesus said, *Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world: the prince of this world hath been judged, shall now be expelled.*" [2]

By right of conquest, and not by collusion, Jesus plundered the vessels of Satan, carried off the bodies of the demoniacs, which had been seized by the reputed lord of this world as his prize.

The change which St. Luke introduces into the saying, which precedes the parable in St. Matthew's narrative and his own, is a clear example of his method. For *the spirit*

[1] E.g. 1 Pet. i. 11.
[2] John xvi. 33, 11, xii. 31.

of God he writes *the finger of God.*[1] This small change at once points to the parallel scene in Old Testament history, which the scribe regards as a type or prophecy now fulfilled. Moses foretold that God would send a prophet like himself. Many still cherished that conception of the Messiah, and were ready to welcome Jesus as such. This incident is one of the pieces of evidence, which definitely support their view. Of old Moses performed marvels before Pharaoh and the magicians copied them by their art. So now Moses' successor demonstrated His almighty power in works of mercy, and the Jews attempted to expel demons just as he did—even stealing His name to be their formula. But the magicians failed at last to imitate the works of God's Apostles, and cried out, *This is the finger of God.*[2] Accordingly Jesus here says (or is made to say) that "*I in the* FINGER *of God cast out demons;* and proceeds to describe in a striking parable[3] the inadequacy of the healings performed by His rivals. The pupils of the Scribes have not first bound the strong man as He has done: in no sense have they conquered the evil one. Therefore their boasted healings are only temporary: they cannot replace the unclean spirit with the Spirit of God. So the last state of their patients is worse than the first.

St. Luke's version of the Parable of the Strong Man[4] suggests that here more than one prophecy or type is fulfilled. The *strong man* becomes an *hoplite* fully armed; his *house* a *court* or palace, which he guards; the *vessels* are described as his *property*, his *panoply*, and his *spoils*. A stronger comes upon him and overcomes him, strips him of his armour, and distributes his spoils.

The parable has become unmistakeably a description of

[1] Luke xi. 19.
[2] Exod. viii. 15.
[3] Luke xi. 24–26.
[4] Ibid.

the Harrowing of Hell through the influence of the Scripture upon the original Word.

In the first place, the substitution of σκῦλα (*spoils*) for σκεύη (*vessels*) points to the prophecy on which the parable is based. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty or the captives of the terrible be delivered? But thus saith the Lord: the captives of the mighty shall be taken away and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.*[1] The Septuagint version is nearer to the parable: "Shall one take from a giant spoils? and if one take captive unjustly, shall he be saved? Thus saith the LORD: If one take captive a giant, he shall take spoils; moreover, taking from a mighty man, he shall be saved . . ."; and the currency of this version is attested by the imitation in the Psalms of Solomon: "A man shall not take spoils from a man of might."[2] The *spoils*, then, are not merely the panoply, but also the prisoners whom Satan held captive in this world or in the world of the dead.

Next, God's champion *distributes* these spoils. This also in accordance with prophecy; for it is written: *He shall divide the spoil of (with) the strong because he poured out his soul unto death.*[3] And St. Paul makes the same point in a passage which seems to refer to the Descent into Hades: "Therefore it is said, *After going up on high, He led captivity captive: He gave gifts unto men.* Now, what does the word *he went up* mean except this: that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth?"[4] The Scripture which St. Paul quotes is taken from the 67th Psalm.[5]

[1] Isa. xlix. 24 f. μὴ λήψεται δέ τις παρὰ γίγαντος σκῦλα; . . . λαμβάνων παρὰ ἰσχύοντος σωθήσεται.

[2] Ps. Sol. v. 4: οὐ γὰρ λήψεται σκῦλα ἄνθρωπος παρὰ ἀνδρὸς δυνάτου.

[3] Is. liii. 12 (LXX.: καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα).

[4] Eph. iv. 8 f.

[5] Ps. lxvii. (lxviii.) 19. The Hebrew has . . . *received* gifts (LXX. ἔλαβες: the Targum refers the passage to Moses: "Thou didst ascend up to the

Already three prophecies present themselves as proof-texts of this doctrine, current in the early Church ; and therefore as factors in the development of the original parable. Hades was spoiled at the Passion of the Beloved ; and its spoils were distributed among the apostles of Christ, who must take up His work and guard what He has won.

Thirdly, the description of the scene of this victory falls to be considered. It is no longer a mere house, but an *aula*, a hall. This change is of itself sufficient to point to the interpretation put upon the parable by St. Luke and probably to the word used by Jesus *Zebul*.

In the Septuagint the word *aula* (*αὐλή*) is chiefly used of the Tabernacle and the Temple. In this usage, which is followed in the Apocalypse, there is a partial explanation, at any rate, of the choice of this word. The Tabernacle or Temple was God's House or Hall. The Jews had made it their house, and therefore it was left to them desolate. And the Jews were thieves, sons of the devil. So Jesus must enter the hall over which the enemy watched and purge it—as He did.

In the New Testament the word *aula* is appropriated for the most part to the hall of the High Priest's house, where Jesus was tried and denied by His trusted and confident disciple. Here also there is good reason for the choice of a word pregnant with such associations to every Christian. The High Priest was the ruler—not of devils perhaps, though some of his line desired to exhibit their authority over them[1]—but of the Jews whom Jesus pronounced to be children of the devil. In his hall, if anywhere on earth, Satan, the ruler of this world, held sway. There St. Peter, who had played agent

firmament, O prophet Moses, thou tookest captives captive . . . thou gavest the words of the law as gifts to the children of men."

[1] Acts xix. 14.

to Satan at Cæsarea Philippi, yielded to the noxious influence of the place, in order that his faith might be born again. There, alone and unfriended, Jesus confronted the *power of darkness* and submitted to be vanquished for the moment, that He might crush His conqueror for ever.[1]

But the other use of *aula* in the New Testament is specially significant, because it points to another passage where Jesus seemed to speak of the need that He should descend to Hades and preach there also the Kingdom of God. Arising out of the healing of the man born blind, there is a piece of teaching recorded only by St. John: *Jesus said: For judgment I came into this world, that they who see not might see, and that they who see might become blind.*" [2] There were certain Pharisees with Him, professed teachers and directors of the people, who had so far followed the Rabbi or the Prophet of Nazareth. These, perceiving the obvious double meaning of the saying, protested: other teachers of the blind-fool multitude might, as this new teacher suggested, have become blind to the import of His message and mission; but they themselves, who had followed the gleam at risk of excommunication,[3] surely they might say, "We see." Suddenly Jesus turns to another of their traditional titles: they were not only "the leaders of the blind," but also the shepherds of Israel.[4] As such they must enter the *aula* by the door which God appointed; else were they thieves and robbers like those, who would excommunicate them for their tentative allegiance to Jesus. They did not understand His words any more than the Pharisees who beset His brother with the question, "What is the door of Jesus?" [5]

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 8, "the lords of the world who crucified."
[2] John ix. 39 ff. [3] John ix. 22.
[4] Cf. Ezek. xxvi. [5] Eus. *H.E.* ii. 23; cf. Ps. cviii. 19 f.

The figures employed in the allegory shift quickly. Jesus first enters by the door, and then is Himself the door. But throughout these dissolving scenes one principle is clearly enforced, the true shepherd must lose his life in order to save others. To Him who died for the sins of the world and for none of His own the porter of the hall opens [1] and He leads the sheep out. The fold or hall is as yet the world; but later Jesus speaks of other sheep which are not of this fold or hall. To His hearers the inference must have been clear: He spoke of His preaching to the dead in Hades. And if St. Luke was acquainted at all with Greek literature, he would naturally incline to use the word, for Alcestis went to the hall of the dead, and Heracles—type of Christ for pagan audiences—went down to deliver her from it.

Again, before the coming of the Stronger it is said that the *property of the strong was in peace* (ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἐστιν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ). The dead are Satan's property, if the word be taken in its ordinary sense; and it is written, *The souls of the righteous . . . are in peace.*[2] But a contrast is implied between their state before and their state after the coming of the Stronger; and this demands another interpretation, etymologically legitimate, of τὰ ὑπάρχοντα *as underlords* or *subordinates*. Before Jesus came to expel them, the demons, who acknowledged Beezebul or another as their ruler and lord, were in peaceful possession of the demoniacs. They had their interval of peace, and resented their expulsion by Jesus and His disciples. Apart from the bodies of their victims they could find no rest, and protested, *Art thou come to torment us before the appointed*

[1] John x. 11; cf. Job xxxviii. 17, associated with the Descent in the dated Creed of Sirmium.

[2] Sap. iii. 1 ff.: for linguistic parallel *v.* Sir. xli. 1, εἰρηνεύουσιν ἐν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν.

time? Either interpretation suits the context; the only difference is that the first insists upon the reference of the parable bodily to the Descent, while the second directs attention to its original purport.

But, lastly, it is not only prophecies which dictated St. Luke's modifications. The History, as the Greek Fathers called it, the type here fulfilled by Jesus, has made its influence felt just as in the substitution of *the finger* for *the Spirit of God* above.

If He was Messiah, He was the Son of David, and must therefore do the works of David.[1] Now, in the record of David's early life, the chief facts are that he was a shepherd who vanquished two enemies—Goliath and Saul. The Johannine saying, *I am the Good Shepherd,* shows that Jesus consciously fulfilled the type in one respect; and here by St. Luke the latent reference to the parallel of Saul and David, his armour-bearer (*αἴρων τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ*), has been elucidated: traits belonging to Goliath have been superimposed upon Saul to make a composite figure corresponding to the enemy and his myrmidons who confronted Jesus.[2] Thus the strong man is fully armed with the panoply of Goliath and that of Saul, which David declined; and the distribution of spoils fulfils David's boast, *I will this day give the dead of the army of the Philistines to the birds of the heavens,* and transcends its first achievement, *David took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the armour in his tent.* Saul was rejected because he kept back the spoils of Amalek, which David afterwards distributed. And the attack of the lion found its fulfilment in the onset of the roaring Devil, who found nothing in David's greater Son. There is a significant echo of David's answer to Goliath's challenge in the narrative of the Arrest of Jesus. David said: "You

[1] Cf. John viii. 39. [2] 1 Sam. xvi. 21 = Mark.

come to me with a sword and a spear and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Jehovah." Jesus said: "Did ye come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to arrest Me? There in the Garden the lists were set for the combat between the Son of David and His enemy, and He repudiated the arm of flesh and the hosts of the heavenly army, as David did in a figure. The end is victory; the binding of the Strong Man[1] is omitted as part of the Apocalyptic ideas connected with the combat, which had been fulfilled and understood as parable. St. Luke has outgrown the idea of an earthly millennium.

There is no lack of prophetic testimony in support of this doctrine. Some passages have already been indicated, and it is probable that the references to *those afar off* were interpreted of *the dead* and not of the Gentiles, except by St. Paul. Such interpretation would explain why the Apostles generally were so slow to recognize their duty towards the Gentile world at the first. One passage, for example, which St. Paul adapted to support his universalism, is more obviously appropriate to the ordinary view: *He came and preached peace to you the far-off and peace to the near.*[2] Passages, again, which spoke of *dead* and *darkness*, were not always glossed with the addition, *in trespasses and sins.*

But of all prophecies available, there is one which is free from ambiguity and specially important, as showing that this belief was no stranger to contemporary Judaism any more than to the Greeks who cherished the legends of Orpheus and Heracles. It is written: *Now the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered His dead who slept in the dust of the earth, and descended to them to proclaim to them His salvation.* Justin[3] affirms that the passage stood

[1] Apoc. xx. 2.

[2] Eph. ii. 17 = Is.

[3] Justin, *Dial.* 72.

in the book of Jeremiah, and was excised by the unscrupulous guardians of God's Oracles in their zeal against Christianity. Irenaeus [1] cites it once as Isaiah's, once as Jeremiah's, and three times without any name. Justin's opponent, Trypho the Jew, pronounced it incredible that this prophecy should have been burked, as Justin alleged; and now few Christians, however devoted to the Fathers, would support the allegation. None the less, it is possible that Justin was right. It is not necessary to assume that the testimony was originally part of the prophecies either of Jeremiah or of Isaiah; but there is every reason to suppose that it may have been part of the traditional Jewish exposition of the prophets, which is crystallized in the written Targum and Midrash. Words and thought alike are the genuine utterance of some later prophet like "Daniel," who had seen the righteous cut off before their time and had been driven to take refuge in the hope of another life. It is a protest against the old orthodoxy, which held that this life is all and the dead forgotten. Men might and should forget after a decent mourning—as Ben Sira taught; but God remembers His own; and if they die before His salvation be made ready, then He will wake and raise them Himself.

The description of Jehovah as *the Holy One of Israel* betrays a Jewish hand, and the phrase, *asleep in the dust of the earth*, stamps the whole as a translation from a Hebrew or Aramaic original. Indeed, the difference between the Semitic and the Greek idioms has misled the

[1] iii. 22 (Harvey, ii. p. 108); iv. 36 (*ib.* p. 228); iv. 50 (*ib.* p. 256); 55 (*ib.* p. 267); v. 31 (*ib.* p. 411). In iv. 50 it is coupled with Isa. xi. 12 with an addition which seems to support the interpretation of John x. 16 suggested above: Congregans autem dispersos filios a terminis terra *in ovile Patris* et recommemoratus mortuorum suorum qui ante dormeran et descendens ad eos uti erueret eos—such is the climax of the first of the two advents of Christ which the prophets announced.

translator, as it misled many of the Seventy; and he wrote εἰς γῆν χώματος instead of ἐν γῆς χώματι, *the earth of dust* for *the dust* (or *mound*) *of earth*. Further, his version agrees with that adopted by Theodotion in rendering the great passage about the resurrection in the book of Daniel[1]: *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life.* If they awake, they must be roused by some one, and the function is clearly God's. For reverence, be it understood, the seer forbore to mention His name. Therefore this unknown son of the prophets expounded the text, as he understood it, in the light of other prophecies which were all too readily limited to the Dispersion. So, too, the author of 4 Esdras said in the name of Jehovah: *Et resuscitabo mortuos de locis suis et de monumentis educam illos quoniam cognovi nomen meum in illis*; and again, *Filios tuos dormientes memorabor, quoniam ego eos educam de latibulis terrae et misericordiam cum illis faciam, quoniam ego misericors dicit Deus Omnipotens.*[2] God must triumph over Satan. Wherever the usurper held sway—in the heart of man, on earth, in the Hall of the Dead—God sends His champion thither to overthrow his tyranny. Michael must fight with the Dragon: the Wisdom of God must *penetrate the depth of the abyss and all the lower parts of the earth, must visit all that sleep and illumine all that hope in Jehovah.*[3] So Christ descended into Hades *to contend with the contender*. There was no sword in His hand save that of the Spirit of Holiness: sinless, He proclaimed the sovereignty of God and at His word men were quickened as in the beginning. Even the spirits, to whom God had hitherto denied His peace, heard it and repented that they had sinned and made men to sin. And Adam the first transgressor among men awaked from his sleep to see the

[1] Dan. xii. 2. [2] 4 Esdras ii. 16, 31.
[3] Sir. xxiv. 45 (Old Latin).

light of Christ. *He went and preached peace to them that were afar off.*[1]

The Gnostics might deride the belief as mythological and explain the descent as the Incarnate life of Christ. But the prophecies are not exhausted by such interpretation; nor can they all be set aside as apocryphal. That which was spoken through Esaias the prophet was fulfilled: *Land of Zebulon and land of Nephthalim . . . to them that sit in Death's country and shadow, Light dawned for them.*[2] For *Zebulon* is *the dwelling-place of the Strong One* and *Naphtali* is *God's wrestlings*. And if any hold that Hades be not under the earth, that the Prince of Evil be in the air above, then must the light dawn there also and Christ's *wrestling* be *not with flesh and blood but with the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places as with the world rulers of this Darkness.*[3]

J. H. A. HART.

[1] Eph. ii. 17.
[2] Matt. iv. 14–16.
[3] Eph. vi. 12 (N.B. references to *panoply* in context).