

found in speculative thought in the history of doctrine. The idea of Christ descending to hades appears in the writings of several Church Fathers.

Eusebius of Caesarea mentions it. Clement of Alexandria extended the purpose of the descent to include, not only the saints, martyrs, and prophets of the Old Testament, but all of the heathen as well. Clement held that all men would have opportunity to repent, right up to the day of Judgment. Origen wrote, "We say . . . that His (i.e., Christ's) soul, stripped of the body, did there hold converse with other souls . . . that He might there convert those who were capable of instruction, or were otherwise known to Him fit for it." Origen held that eventually there would be a restitution of all things, and that even Satan would be saved! The descent into hades view also appears in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Ambrose, and Jerome. Augustine, however, rejected the view and called it a heresy.

During the middle ages the view dominated the great scholastic writers, and was frequently used to support the dogma of purgatory. Generally speaking, the leaders of the Reformation rejected the view, and for three reasons: (1) it was regarded as a traditional, not a scriptural belief; (2) it appeared to give so support to the Roman Catholic view of purgatory; and (3) it appeared late in the creeds of the Church.

In fact, the phrase "He descended into hell" did not appear in the accepted version of the Apostles' Creed of A.D. 150, or in that of A.D. 350. Not until AD. 700 did the phrase appear in the accepted version.

As a result, most of the confessions and catechise of the Reformed churches ignored the descend into hades view. The Roman Catholic church maintained the article; and gradually a minority of Anglicans and Lutherans came to accept it.

In the twentieth century the view has again become widespread. However, among churches that have retained the clause "He descended into hell" in the Apostles' Creed, a number have understood this to mean, not that Christ went down into the prison of HADES to deliver the Old Testament saints, but rather that He continued for a time under the power of death.

Because of the tendency to adopt pagan Greek mythology as background to this view, and because of the tendency toward universal salvation which has at times accompanied this view, the "Descent into Hades" view would probably be better dropped from evangelical Christian doctrine.

2. The intermediate state of the righteous

In connection with the intermediate state of the righteous, there are two scriptural words that are relevant. They are παράδεισος and οὐρανός.

The word παράδεισος is used three times in the New Testament. The A.V. does not translate the word, but transliterates it each of the three items.

Luke 23:42-43 -- "And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in παράδεισος.' "

If we reject the pagan Greek mythological concept of ἔδης with its Elysium of bliss and its Tartarus of misery, and if we refuse to identify the Paradise of Scripture with the Elysium section of the pagan Greek c?7 5 , then we are free to understand παράδεισος, for what it really is -- a word that