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AN EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE PETRINE
PASSAGES WHICH RELATE TO THE "DESCENSUS AD INFEROS".

By

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A Thesis

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"Qui studuerit intelligere, cogitur et credere".
Tertullian.

"ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπέθανεν,
δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ, θανα-
τωθεῖς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι ἐν ᾧ καὶ
τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν κορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν, ἀπειθή-
σασίν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν
ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ, εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι,
τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ὀκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. ὃ καὶ
ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα, οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις
ρύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς Θεόν, δι'
ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ Θεοῦ, κορευ-
θεῖς εἰς οὐρανόν, ὑποταγέντων αὐτῷ ἀγγέλων καὶ
ἐξουσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων". Πέτρου α', 3: 18-22.

INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Title of Thesis
(INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARY SURVEY) *over*

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the Study:

The primary purpose of this study is to examine exegetically and critically the Petrine passages which relate to the "Descensus Ad Inferos" and to show their relation to the context in which they are found.

2. Value of the Study:

The value of this study will lie in the answer which it offers to the questions: What part does this section, I Peter 3:18-22, play in the whole epistle? What light on the dark and disputed article of faith, "He descended into Hell", does the First Epistle of Peter shed? What explication may we offer of the "Spirits in Prison" passage if called upon to interpret it?

3. The Method of Study:

The method pursued in this investigation has been to make: a Preliminary Survey of the field, noting its difficulty and its involved nature, and presenting as an aid to the clarification of our thinking and the focusing of our attention on the major points, a brief outline of the various views, both historical and current; an examination of the setting of I Peter 3:18-22; an exegetical study of the passage itself, involving: A. The Discussion of the all important, focal terms *πνεῦμα* and *σάρξ* ; B. The Emendation Hypothesis; C. The Phrase *ἐν ᾧ καί* ; D. A Special Study of the Focal Words of verse 19-20 *φυλακῇ* , *κορευθεῖς* *ἐκήρυξεν*

and ἀρετῆς ; E. And an Examination of I Peter 4:6. Following this a Critical Appraisal of the Leading Interpretations offered at the beginning of the study is presented, in which examination are applied the findings of the inductive investigation of the passages themselves. From this review is drawn a conclusion as to which theory offers the best answer to the primary questions: What part does this section, 3:18-22, play in the thought of the Epistle? What light does it shed on the "Descensus Ad Inferos"? What explanation may we offer of the "Spirits in Prison" passage?

B. PRELIMINARY SURVEY.

1. The Difficulty of the Problem:

The character of an individual is reflected in his writings. The difficulty of understanding the great Apostle Peter is only equalled by the difficulty of understanding and following his written thought. These passages in I Peter which comprise our study, in the words of Salmond,

"are among the dark oracles of the New Testament, the unsolved, if not insoluble problems of its interpretations. On the first of these (3:19) a little library has been written, only to leave it as much the subject of debate as before".¹

Its syntax is involved and complicated; its words difficult and uncertain and most of all its place in Peter's thought, vague and indefinite. The actual exegetical problems here presented are difficult enough in themselves, but the theological and eschatological elements involved add immeasurably to the difficulty of attaining an

.

1. Salmond: The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 458-459.

unbiased and accurate interpretation of this passage. It is true that Steiger maintains that the difficulty of the "Descensus" "is felt more by expositors than by the passage itself".¹ But again Salmond replies that,²

"the greatest exegetes and theologians have been precisely those who have felt those difficulties most acutely, and have been the least positive in their expositions. To Luther, for example, it was so dark a saying that he confessed himself baffled by it³ and inclined to different views of its meaning at different periods in his career.⁴ Those most versed in the history of its exegesis and most competent to grapple with grammatical problems, are the least certain about their conclusions, and the first to confess that it remains at best a question of the proportion of the difficulty that is left by competing interpretations".

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1. Steiger: Exposition of the 1st Epistle of Peter, Vol. II, p. 204ff.
2. Salmond: op. cit. p. 459.
3. Luther: Commentary on I Peter (1523), Lenker Edition, p. 162.
4. It might be well to note here that though Luther's view on this article of the Faith did vary at different periods of his life, and while he was never inclined to be dogmatic about the interpretations of these verses (Kostlin - Theology of Luther - Vol. II, p. 420) yet his final utterance upon the passage in Peter was to the effect that it portrayed an immediate ministry of Christ. Kostlin (cited above) gives a very fine summary of Luther's views on the "Descensus", see pp. 416-421. In his earlier commentary on 1st Peter, 1523, Luther is inclined to apply this text to the preaching of the Divine Word, thru mediators, i.e., the Apostles and other messengers from the ascended Saviour to the souls of men then living on the earth, thus interpreting the prison metaphorically and making it a mediating ministry. But in a manuscript without date (Lutherbriefe, Seidemann, p. 79, as cited by Kostlin, p. 419), he candidly confesses his inability to discover the meaning of the passage. Varying changes follow, until finally in 1545 in his commentary on Hosea he gives concluding utterance on this passage and this article. It is well worth noting here, "Et Petrus hunc descensum videtur explicare, cum dicit, I Pet. 3, Christum pro peccatis nostris mortuum, iustum pro iniustis, ut nos ad deum adduceret, mortificatum quidem carne, vivificatum autem spiritu. Quo et his, qui in carcere erant, spiritu veniens praedicavit, qui increduli fuerant aliquando, quando expectabatur dei patientia in diebus Noae, cum fabricantur arca. Hic Petrus clare dicit, non solum apparuisse Christum defunctis patribus et aliquos, cum resurgeret, secum ad vitam eternam excitavisti sed etiam aliquibus, qui tempore Noae non crediderunt, ac expectav-

Jowett, at the beginning of his study recognizes the difficulty and uncertainty which attends the interpretation of this passage, likening it to a "landscape in the uncertain light of early morning",¹ and suggesting to the student that "an openeyed wonder is more fruitful than an assurance begotten of broader light".² And Professor A. T. Robertson speaks of it as "the most disputed passage in the Epistle and almost in the New Testament".³

2. Historical and Current Interpretations.

In view of the acknowledged difficulty of the passage, we here present a preliminary survey of its various interpretations, both historical and current, in order that the attention might be focused on the major points and the inductive study approached with greater clarity. Necessarily in a brief survey of this nature, only those views having the greatest significance and the most permanent value are here presented. The interpretations hereafter outlined will be merely stated. Their validity or invalidity will not be discussed at this point.

The multitudinous interpretations of this passage under careful study will be seen to resolve themselves into three major

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erunt pacientiam dei, hoc est qui sperarunt deum non sic duriter grassaturum in universam carnem, praedicasse, ut agnoscerent sibi per Christi sacrificium peccata condonata esse. Complectitur igitur propheta hoc in loco ecclesiam omnium temporum, hoc est, non eam solum, quae sub lege et post legem, sed etiam quae ante diluvium extitit". In Hoseam Prophetam (1545), Caput Sextum, p. 330.

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1. Jowett: Epistles of Peter, p. 138.

2. Ibid.: p. 139.

3. A. T. Robertson: Epochs in the Life of Simon Peter, p. 283.

divisions, with various minor distinctions under each. A. The first group of commentators on this passage hold that it presents Christ as preaching mediately, that is through the person and form of another. And this group is divided into those (1) who hold that it was through Noah that Christ is presented as preaching to the "Spirits in Prison", and again into those (2) who contend that it was thru the media of the Apostles that the preaching was effected, as presented.¹ B. The second group retains the Catholic tradition that Christ is portrayed as preaching immediately in the realms of the dead - that is that Christ Himself, in His spiritual nature preached to the "Spirits in Prison". This group is divided according to its conceptions of the nature of Christ's preaching and to whom it was delivered. The one (1) maintaining that the ministry was only to departed spirits of the righteous; another (2) that the ministry was both to the good and the evil; and the third (3) that this Hades preaching was only to the wicked. C. There is the third group of exegetes and theologians which, while smaller, is of more recent origin, who offer the solution that this "Spirits in Prison" ministry, as indicated by the passage in Peter, was performed thru the person of Enoch, working in the power of the Holy Spirit.²

With these three major classifications and their subdivisions firmly fixed in mind, let us now turn to an exegetical and critical study of the passage itself.

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1. Steiger: op. cit. p. 210.

2. Moffatt: The General Epistles, p. 140ff.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING OF I PETER 3:18-22

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING OF I PETER 3:18-22

A. Propositions To Be Answered.

Certainly a large part of our difficulty will be removed if we can establish clearly the relationship of this section (3:10-22) to the context in which it is found. What is the author's purpose in this larger section of which these verses are a small part? What part do these verses have in the developing of this purpose? The answer to these questions will govern largely our interpretation of the passage itself.

B. The Nature of The Epistle.

An examination of the First Epistle of Peter shows that it is essentially a practical epistle. There are practical exhortations and commands to poise and "coolness of mind"¹ of 1:13; to the 'love of the brethren' of 1:22. These are followed by further exhortations relating to their daily living: - the "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings", (2:1); the "abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; conducting themselves 'properly before the pagans so they may come to glorify God when you are put on your trial, by what they see of your good deeds'" (2:11-12); submission to those

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1. Moffatt: The New Testament, A New Translation.

in authority, the citizen to the emperor, and to the governor (2:13-14), the servant to his master (2:18), the wives to their husbands (3:1), the younger in the church to the elder (5:5), the submission of all, one to the other (5:5); the bearing of suffering with a Christ-like mind (3:14-19); and many other sound warnings and par-
enetic summaries (see I Peter 3:8-9, 4:1, 7-11, 15-16; 5:1-2, 8-9, 12). Thus the epistle is seen to be written with a purpose, a definite goal in view. The author does not have in mind so much the desire to instruct his readers in new theological concepts or eschatological theories, as rather the burning necessity of giving to them practical advice and exhortations, to give them thru precept and example, something which will enable them to live the Christ-like life in the midst of difficult and discouraging situations.

C. Nature of the Particular Section, 2:11-4:6.

In the first part of his letter the Apostle has given them a series of exhortations to a diligent Christian walk, correspondent to the teachings its readers had already received when the gospel was first preached to them. In this section (2:11-4:6)¹ he has given a number of particular and specific directions for the special relationships of life, such as: a proper and exemplary conduct before the pagans among whom they lived that these, seeing their good works, might glorify their God (2:11-12); submission to those in authority, (2:13-14, 18, see above); the relationship of husband and wife

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1. Davis: Dictionary of the Bible, p. 598.

(3:1-2, 7); the relationship of the individuals one to another in the Christian community (3:8-9); and the relationship of the suffering Christian to those who were persecuting him (3:10-4:6). In the particular section dealt with in this study (3:10-4:6) the author deals with the age old problem of suffering. This entire section is devoted to the one purpose, to create in his readers a Christ-like endurance of wrongful suffering. Any other additional thought, any extraneous material that is here introduced, we must consider as subordinate to his main purpose, as introduced by way of illustration or parenthesis.

D. Relationship of 3:18 to Its Immediate Section.

In the first part of this section the Apostle has been making a strong appeal for Christ-like endurance of suffering and persecution; now, beginning with verse 18, introduced by the causal particle *ὅτι*, he presents "a further exhortation to readiness to suffer in consideration of a deeper motive",¹ in some such way as follows, "Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, and so you must bear your suffering. For out of Christ's suffering came this twofold reward; thru them He brought us to God, and even though put to death, yet thru His very persecution, He received the quickening of His spirit." And such, implied Peter, may be your case if you bear your suffering with His endurance. Frommuller writes of this motive as follows:²

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1. Frommuller: Epistles General of Peter, Lange Commentary, p. 62.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

"So we also suffer, and for sins, not indeed for the sins of others, but for our own, and by parity of reasoning it follows that the sufferings of Christians not only conform them to Christ but are the means of everlasting blessedness to themselves and of eternal glory to Christ. This applies not to all suffering, but only to suffering for well-doing καί (verse 18) indicates the analogy and shows that ὁ ἁγῶς belongs to Christ and His followers. Our suffering is only once, limited to a short space of time; it is only for a season, and our present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us. The way to glory lies thru the valley of humiliation. Christ suffered as a just person on behalf of the unjust; of course the comparison is only relative, for although we are called δίκαιοι in verse 12, and suffer as ἁδίκαιοι, yet is our δικαιοσύνη infinitely inferior to that of Christ, and our suffering not vicarious like His, for we suffer not ὑπὲρ ἁδίκων but περὶ ἁμαρτίων ἡμῶν. The end of our Lord's suffering is stated in the words ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ, 'that he might bring us near to God.' This is the fruit of our Lord's passion that he brings the wanderers back to the Father, and the lost to the homes of blessedness."

The latter portion of this 18th verse deals with the manner in which Christ "brought us to God", θανάτωσεῖς μὲν σαρκί ζωοποιήσεῖς δὲ πνεύματι. Treatment of this antithesis is given in the following discussion of πνεῦμα (see page 20.)

E. Relationship of 3:19-21 to Immediate Section.

1. Questions to be answered.

Closely following this, Peter introduces the further ministry of Christ to those spirits in prison, spirits who had been disobedient in the days of Noah, when of all men on earth, "only a few, that is, eight souls were saved." It may now be asked, Why should St. Peter have introduced the added thought about the "spirits in prison" at this point? What encouragement to the suffering Christians mentioned in 13-17 would this hitherto unmentioned incident

afford? That is, what point does the Apostle make by the introduction of this material here?

2. The Relationship According to Immediacy Hypothesis.

Two slightly similar yet largely contrasted theories present themselves as reasons for Peter's inclusion of this difficult passage. The first, based on the conception of the immediacy of the ministry of Christ, offers as its solution the suggestion that this passage, 19-20, is an additional proof of the necessity of suffering since it records a second and even higher revelation of the ministry of Christ, which resulted from this suffering. For if the glorious end of His suffering in verse 18, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, is one of the rewards of Christ's suffering, the just for the unjust; His additional ministry, then, to the "spirits in prison", sheds a further beam of light on the extent of the reward which became His thru His suffering. Thus it is suggested that Peter cites Christ's further ministry to these disobedient spirits "as the blessed consequences of the suffering of the innocent one."¹ As a partial result of His suffering this even greater opportunity was given of preaching the Gospel to those who were dead; this, too, is recompense for His sufferings, "a portion of what made it blessed to suffer for well doing."² The magnitude of this glory is even more clearly seen when the further suggestion is offered that Peter has

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1. Bennett: New Century Bible, p. 235.

2. Lumby: The Epistles of Peter - Expositor's Bible, p. 139.

cited this incident not in a restrictive sense, i.e. that this ministry is not limited to just those disobedient spirits of Noah's day, but that they are cited rather as types. The $\kappa\alpha\iota$ of verse 19 is considered as ascensive (see page 33) and thus Hart gives the paraphrase, "even to the typical rebels who had sinned past forgiveness, according to pre-Christian notions."¹ This conception of the disobedient spirits of Noah's day as being cited as the evidence of the qualitative type of Christ's ministry, rather than recording its quantitative extent is supported by the note of universality found in the "preaching" recorded in the parallel passage, I Peter 4:6, (see discussion, page 48.)

3. According to the Mediacy View.

Or if this view is not acceptable, the second solution presented, the concept of Christ preaching thru a mediator, offers an equally attractive answer to these questions by suggesting that in verse 18 the example of Christ in His earthly life is the motive offered, and in verses 19-20 the historical example of Christ, revealing the constancy in all ages of His purpose to bear with the most unworthy, to do good to the greatest wrong-doers is offered as an added incentive to stimulate the readers to a like attitude toward the evil and the persecuting.² The attractiveness of this view is enhanced by the similarity of the historical situation cited by the

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1. Hart: Epistle of Peter - Nicoll Greek Expositor's Testament, Vol. V., p. 68.
2. Salmond: op. cit., p. 460.

Apostle to the situation and circumstances of those to whom his epistle is addressed. Lumby offers the following comparison of the two periods,¹

"In the patriarch's sufferings St. Peter has found an apt parallel to the life of these Asian Christians; the same godless surroundings; the same opposition and mockery; the same need for steadfast faith. But if rightly pondered the Old Testament lesson is rich in teachings, Noah becomes a preacher of righteousness, not for his own generation, only, but for all time. He suffered in his well-doing. Nothing stings more keenly than scorn and contempt. These he experienced to the full. He came as God's herald to men who had put God out of all their thoughts. His message was full of terror: "Behold, I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die" (Genesis 6:17). Few heeded; fewer still believed. But when the work of the messenger was over; when the ark was prepared, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; when he and his were shut in by God, then appeared the blessedness. And if haply there had been any in whom he had beheld signs of repentance, how the thought that some souls were saved, though their bodies were drowned with the rest, would magnify the rejoicing of the rescued; and the overthrow of the ungodly would proclaim how little ultimate bliss there could be in evil-doing. All these things would come home to the hearts of the 'strangers of the dispersion'.

And were they few in number? Fewer still were those who stood with Noah in the world's corruption. But God was with him; he walked with God, and found grace in His eyes; and God blessed him when the flood was gone, and by the sign of the covenant, the faithful witness in heaven (Ps. LXXXIX:37) has placed a memorial of the happiness of his well-doing before the eyes of mankind forever. And it would comfort the believers if they kept in mind the object which St. Peter has so often set before them, and on which he would have them set their desire in their distress. There was hope, nay assurance that the heathen world around them would be won by their steadfast well-doing to the service of the Lord."

4. According to the Emendation Theory.

There is yet another theory which is proposed as an adequate explanation of the relationship of this passage to the entire

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1. Lumby: op. cit., pp. 140-142

section. This proposal suggests that the Apostle, led aside by the mention of the "Spirit" in verse 18, here breaks his stream of thought and incorporates in his appeal a mention of the, at that time, well known apocalyptic tradition of Enoch's descent into Hades and his preaching to the spirits imprisoned there.¹ Moffatt, as the outstanding modern exponent of this theory, gives the explanation of the relationship of this passage as follows:²

"From the turn of thought here, as at ii.21f, we might again expect that Peter would proceed to show how Christians can vicariously suffer for others, as Christ did, by patient endurance of an unjust death. But he never does. He goes on to indicate that their suffering has a beneficial result on themselves (iv. 1f.). Before passing to this, however, the mention of the Spirit and the resurrection leads him into an aside upon baptism as the manifestation of Christ's risen power in the Spirit (19-20). Only as baptized persons can Christians be nerved to lead a clean life in the flesh, with the suffering it may entail. What takes place in the flesh, in the present bodily sphere, is explained by what takes place in the sphere of the Spirit. You remember, says Peter, how it was in the Spirit (i.e. after his translation to heaven) that Enoch went down on his famous mission to the imprisoned spirits. One tradition placed this commission during Enoch's lifetime; 'Enoch, though a man, acted as God's envoy to the angels, and was translated', Irenaeus (iv. 16,2). Peter seems to follow the other tradition (so Enoch xii.1), which gave Enoch the honour of being commissioned by God to go down from heaven to announce a sentence of final doom to the rebellious angels who had (Gen.vi.1-7) demoralized mankind so deeply that the flood had to be sent. They were spirits who had defiled themselves with the flesh (Enoch xv.4), and were punished by being imprisoned at the flood (Enoch xii.2-xiii.3), telling them from God that they were to have 'no peace nor forgiveness of sin'. Enoch's activity in the Spirit was very different from Christ's: the one went down, on a mission of doom; the other went up (verse 22), triumphing over all that kept men from receiving the mercy of God.

But what interests Peter is baptism, not Enoch. The contrast of flesh and spirit, on which he is dwelling (iii.18-iv.6) suggests to him the supreme case of sin in the flesh being punished, and also the contrast between the two missions of Enoch and Christ in the Spirit. But his aim is to remind his readers that this activity of Christ in the Spirit has inaugurated the sacrament of

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1. Book of Enoch: Translated by Charles, Chs. 1-12
2. Moffatt: op.cit., The General Epistles, pp. 140-141

baptism, which saves the spirit from the defilement of the flesh. We moderns have to spend words on explaining the mission of Enoch, because the allusion is to a world of belief which is remote and misty for us; but the first readers of the epistle required no explanation. They were familiar with the story of Enoch. The legend was so intelligible that their minds easily passed on to the subject of baptism, the reference to the Flood being the bridge between it and the mission of Enoch." (Dr. Moffatt proceeds from this point to a discussion of baptism itself as revealed in the passage.)

F. Relationship of 3:22 to Its Immediate Section.

All of the varying interpretations agree in relating the exaltation of Christ in verse 22 as the culmination of the glorious reward of Christ's sufferings. They agree also in seeing in this verse not only the further glory of Christ received thru His sufferings, but also thru His exaltation a renewed and strengthened evidence of His power to succour and to save His suffering followers,¹ in that "all the more can He now save such, seeing that in His exalted life He has all the powers of heaven subject to Him."²

G. Unity of the Section Shown Thru Its Words.

Not only does the thought of this passage show its close relationship to the rest of the section, but even the words themselves show its interlocking thought and reason with that of the previous verses. For example, there are three repeated words or expressions wherein not only the word itself is repeated but also

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1. Moffatt: op. cit., p. 144

2. Salmond: op. cit., p. 475

the general thought is transferred and reiterated or enlarged. Peter's use of δίκαιος in verse 18 (the just or the righteous) obviously is closely related to the δικαιοσύνην of verse 16;¹ which is even more closely associated in thought and character with the δίκαιους of verse 12. Here the Apostle has given an Old Testament quotation (Psalm xxxix:12-15) both as supporting authoritative proof of his preceding practical exhortations and also as a transitional paragraph to enable him to turn from the minor practical admonitions, dealing with personal, social, civil, and domestic relationships,¹ to his one great absorbing theme, their right regard of and conduct under suffering. Having in the scriptural quotation given God's historical and customary attitude toward the righteous - that of watchfulness and solicitous care, he at once turns to their present situation in the light of this quotation. Since you suffer as righteous ones, he assures them, rest assured. God's eye is upon you and you need be fearful and anxious only to have a fit and proper answer to give those who question you concerning your hope. From this he rapidly passes to the δίκαιος one who suffered, not for His sins but for ours. Thus those suffering because of their righteousness are given encouragement from two viewpoints, from the historical and scriptural evidence of God's watchfulness over his δίκαιους and thru the present exemplary suffering of

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1. I Peter 2:11, 13, 18; 3:1, 7, 8.

Christ, who suffered, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων . Again,
 συνείδῃσιν ἀγαθὴν verse 16 (having a good conscience)
 and συνείδήσεως ἀγαθῆς verse 21 (answer of a good con-
 science) show the same close relationship of thought. Both are
 attributes of the true Christian. In the former (verse 16) it is
 the suffering Christian's characteristic and hope in that he knows
 he is suffering unjustly, his conscience neither condemning him be-
 fore God nor man. In the latter (verse 21), the source of this
 "good conscience" is revealed, namely thru Baptism. Frommuller's
 note throws light on this fact as follows, "Baptism is the inquiry
 for a good conscience before God, the desire and longing for it."¹
 He adds that in baptism is laid the solid foundation for a good
 conscience. The conscience is not only purified from its guilt,
 but it receives vital power by means of the resurrection of Jesus
 Christ."² Thus we see that in verse 21 the Apostle has given his
 reason for the Christians possession of a "good conscience."

The parallel use of κορευθεῖς in verse 19 and verse
 22 is indeed interesting in that it binds together more closely the
 two events recorded in those verses. Both usages have the same
 tense, number and case, and while being participles, both are ad-
 verbial, being circumstantial in usage. Christ is the same sub-
 ject for both, since the circumstantial participle is translated
 as if it were a finite verb.³ Thus is shown the close relationship

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1. Frommuller: op. cit., p. 65

2. Ibid.

3. Dana & Mantey: A Manual of the Greek New Testament , p. 228.

in time, thought, and order of these two verses. A further treatment of this word is found in the discussion of "the Focal Words" of verses 19-20 (see page 34).

The connectives καί bind the passages closely together: καί, verse 18, binding the new thought on the sufferings of Christ to the preceding verses, 13-17, which dealt with the sufferings of the Christians; καί verse 19, ascensive, which with the relative clause shows the direct line of thought proceeding from verse 18 to verse 19 (see page 33); and finally verse 21, which is continuative and introduces Peter's interpretation of baptism and its relation to the Old Testament illustration which he has just given in verse 20.

H. Conclusion

Thus we conclude with Salmond and Erdman that "there is nothing in this paragraph itself, obscure as it is, to suggest that it is only a digression. It has all the marks of being an integral portion of the larger statement,"¹ the purpose of the writer not being "to awaken vague speculations, but to give practical encouragement,"² in some such manner as follows: (3:10-22)

He who would love life
and enjoy good days,
Let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking guile;
Let him shun wrong and do right,

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1. Salmond: op. cit., p. 460
2. Erdman: The General Epistles, p. 75

let him seek peace and make peace his aim.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the upright,
and His ear open to their cry;
But the face of the Lord is set against wrongdoers."¹

Since this is so, according to the scriptures and since this is God's nature to watch over His righteous ones and to protect them, who will seek or be able to harm you if you are earnestly and eagerly seeking that which is good? But even if, perchance, you do have to suffer for that which is right, still you are a 'happy one.' Do not be afraid of their threats nor allow yourselves to be troubled by them, but rather reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, being always ready to give a sound account for the hope which you possess and which possesses you. But be sure to do this with the proper amount of gentleness and respect, and always keep a good clear conscience, so that the result will be that in these very matters of Christian conduct for which they are insulting and slandering you, they, your false accusers may be put to shame. For, rest assured, it is far better and far more advantageous to suffer for doing what is right (if that be God's will) than to suffer for doing what is wrong and evil. The reason for and result of such a suffering, that is, suffering for well doing, may be clearly seen in our Lord's glorious example. For even He suffered, once, for all, the just one for the unjust, and He did it that thru it He might bring us close to God. The method by which He brought us near to God, was by suffering even to being put to death in His fleshly nature, but being quickened in His spiritual nature. And not only did He thru His sufferings bring us to God, but as a partial result of His sufferings He was enabled in His spiritual nature to go and preach to those disobedient spirits in prison, who were there since the days of Noah, when God's mercy even then was so great and long suffering, even in those days when Noah was building the ark, in which a few souls, only eight in fact, were saved. Which is an analogy like unto our present sacrament of Baptism, which doth also now save us. But don't misunderstand me, this Baptism is more than just the superficial washing of dirt from the flesh, and more than just the negative laying aside of the fleshly lusts and desires. It is rather the attaining and maintaining that same clear conscience toward God and consequently toward man, and the power to attain unto this is not in the rite itself but in the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God; angels, authorities, and powers, all being subject to Him."

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1. Moffatt: New Testament, A Modern Translation

The Apostle's progress of thought in this passage may be detected more clearly in a slightly analytical form than in the detailed statement given above. Beginning with 3:8, this may be indicated as follows:

- I. Make it a practice to live righteously - to bless not to revile. (3:8)
 - A. The man who would be rewarded righteously must live righteously. (3:10)
 - B. The Lord is a judge of both, the righteous and the evil. (3:12)
- II. To suffer for well-doing is not a thing to be feared. (3:13-14)
 - A. The condition of such suffering - that it be for well-doing. (3:14)
 - B. The Results of such suffering: (3:15)
 - 1. To the individual:
 - a. A sanctified heart in Christ.
 - b. A good conscience towards others.
 - 2. To others:
 - a. A ready answer to all who ask concerning your hope.
 - b. A putting to shame those who revile you.
- III. Christ the perfect example of such suffering. (3:18-22)
 - A. The condition of His suffering: (3:18)
 - 1. The just for the unjust.
 - 2. Even unto death.
 - B. The blessed results of such suffering: (3:18-22)
 - 1. To Himself
 - a. Quickened in the spirit.
 - b. Resurrection and Exaltation.
 - (1) Right hand of God.
 - (2) Dominion over all - angels, authorities, and powers.
 - 2. To Others:
 - a. Thru His sufferings He brought us to God.
 - b. Thru His sufferings He was enabled to preach even to the spirits in prison.

CHAPTER II

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE PASSAGES,

I PETER 3:18-22 AND 4:6

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AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE PASSAGES, I PETER 3:18-22 AND 4:6

A. Discussion of πνεῦμα and σάρξ :

1. Use of πνεῦμα in the New Testament.

"πνεῦμα", says Luther, "is the highest and noblest part of man, which qualifies him to lay hold of the incomprehensible, invisible, eternal things; in short it is the house where Faith and God's Word are at home."¹ Thayer gives five general classes in which the majority of the New Testament usages of πνεῦμα are found.² (1.) A movement of air, or breath; (a.) John 3:8, τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ ποῦ θέλει πνεῖ ; (b.) II Thessalonians 2:8, ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος ; (2.) the spirit, the vital principle by which the body is animated; (a.) James 2:26, ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα χωρὶς πνεύματος νεκρὸν ἐστίν ; (b.) Acts 17:16, παρωξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ; (c.) Acts 7:59, ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα κύριε Ἰησοῦ δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμα μου ; (3.) a spirit, "simple essence devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting; (a.) Luke 24:37, πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν ; (b.) Hebrews 12:23, καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειμένων , "

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1. As quoted by Thayer: Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 520.

2. Ibid: pp. 520-523.

see also Acts 23:8, I Peter 3:19, et. al.; (4.) Spirit, God's Spirit, "power and agency, distinguishable in thought from God's essence in itself considered, manifest in the course of affairs, and by its influence upon souls productive in the theocratic body (i.e. the church) of all the higher spiritual gifts and blessings," more commonly known in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit, πνεῦμα ἅγιον ; (a.) Matthew 1:18, εὐρέθεν ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσι ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου (b.) Acts 2:4, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου , (c.) Hebrews 2:4, καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν ; (5.) and finally, "the disposition or influence which fills and governs the souls of anyone; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, or desire," (a.) I Peter 3:4 , τοῦ κράτους καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος ; (b.) II Timothy 1:7 , οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ; ; (c.) Galatians 6:1, καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι κραύτητος .

2. The Use of πνεῦμα in I Peter 3:18-22.

That the usage of πνεῦμα in I Peter 3:18-22 falls into the second of these classifications, the spirit, i.e. the vital principle by which the body is animated, is indicated by its similar usage in such parallel passages as: (a.) Luke 8:55, καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀνέστη κ. ; (b.) John 19:30 , καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα ; (c.) Romans 8:10 , εἰ δὲ χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῶν τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁματίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην ; (d.) I Corinthians 5:5, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ .

εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα ᾧ ἐστὶν ἡ.τ.κ..

This distinction is even more clearly brought out by the antithetical phrase of verse 18, Θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι, where the two distinct spheres σάρξ, πνεῦμα; or the two distinct forms of existence of Christ, i.e. "in the flesh", "in the spirit", are seen to be set over against each other. This antithesis also brings out the customary meaning of πνεῦμα when contrasted with σάρξ; σάρξ meaning flesh or body, signifying what can be stripped off or laid aside.¹ Thus we see, that having died in his fleshly nature, that is the human body, the perishable, the corporeal life, the earthly dependent condition of existence; Christ was quickened in the spirit, i.e. the incorporeal life, the spiritual side of his nature. Thus this antithetical phrase affords a clue to the use of πνεῦμα in the rest of the passage. Surely if Peter uses πνεῦμα, as he obviously does, in the first passage as meaning that spiritual nature which is separate from the body or physical nature, he would not without definitely noting it, change his use of this important word. Thus we find that τοῖς πνεύμασιν in verse 19 must mean in-corporeal spirits, spirits separated from the physical bodies they once possessed.

This same use of πνεῦμα is found in the antithetical

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1. Thayer: op. cit. p. 569;
 - a. II Corinthians 12:7 διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίωμαι ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί.
 - b. Philippians 1:24, τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν τῇ σαρκί ἀνασκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς.

phrase of the parallel passage (I Peter 4:6) , ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σάρκι , ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι for in this phrase not only are the two realms πνεῦμα and σάρξ set over against each other in direct antithesis, but the contrast is strengthened by the even greater antithesis of κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί and κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι . The whole thought of this verse supports this use of πνεῦμα , for it portrays the gospel as preached to the νεκροῖς in order that having been "judged in the flesh as men, they may live as God lives in the spirit."¹ Thus here, also, Peter's use of πνεῦμα is that which refers to the disembodied, incorporeal state of man, "the spirit."

Other peculiarly apt New Testament usages of this antithetical phrase, "the flesh and the spirit" are: II Corinthians 7:1 μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ; Colossians 2:5 , εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι ; and Mark 14:38 τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον ἢ δὲ σάρξ ἀσθενής .

The fact that Peter is definitely using πνεῦμα throughout this section in the sense of disembodied spirits is forcibly brought out by his use of ψυχαί in verse 20. Where speaking of souls in living persons he uses the term ψυχή to distinguish them from the souls or spirits of those who have laid aside the body. Demarest² and others have pointed out that Peter does use ψυχή

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1. Moffatt: New Testament, A New Translation.

2. Demarest: Translation and Exposition of First Peter, p. 178.

once to designate the soul or spirit of the departed (2:11), but here he is quoting the exact word of the Septuagint. The four other uses of ψυχῇ in the Petrine literature (1:22, 2:25, 4:19 and II Peter 2:8) all refer to souls in living persons. It is also true that Peter in his epistle uses πνεῦμα once to designate the spirit of a living person (3:4) but this does not negate the fact that customarily he uses πνεῦμα to denote the disembodied spirit, for the three other instances of his use of this word in this epistle (3:18, 3:19, 4:6) certainly refer to the soul in its separate state, and of more importance is the fact that all these are found in our special passage.

This use of πνεῦμα and ψυχῇ is borne out by Burton's statement in his classic treatment of the word, when he observes that "πνεῦμα in the New Testament assumes a position of definite superiority to ψυχῇ - πνεῦμα being used as the seat of moral and religious life of man; ψυχῇ the seat of life, feeling, thought and will. Πνεῦμα is now used as a generic term for incorporeal beings."¹ That this distinction of body, soul and spirit was common is evidenced by Paul's trichotomy (I Thessalonians 5:23) and later Christian usage as revealed in the papyrii. For instance there is an illuminating illustration of a fourth century A.D. Christian's prayer to "our gracious Saviour and His beloved Son that they may succour ἡμῶν τῷ σώματι, τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ πνεύματι.²

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1. Burton: Commentary on Galatians, p. 489.

2. Oxy: VIII, 1161.

The locative case, πνεύματι, sheds further light upon the passage. The locative is the "in" case. It denotes location within limits, the limits determined by the context, not by the case itself. The substantive, itself, is the main determining factor in the resultant sense and each example has its own atmosphere.¹ The locative may either refer to place, time, or sphere.² Here it refers to sphere of action, "quickened in the spiritual nature or spiritual sphere of Christ's life."

The πνεύμασιν of verse 19 is obviously dative, the dative of the indirect object, for it denotes the ones for whom or in whose interest an act was performed. Thus it carries the basal significance of the dative case³ - "He preached τοῖς πνεύμασιν - to the spirits," i.e. to those disembodied, incorporeal spirits, who having had at one time tangible, fleshly bodies, thru death had been stripped of these perishable, outer forms, but who lived on in the sphere of the spirit.

We conclude therefore, that the Apostle's use of πνεῦμα is consistently thruout these passages (I Peter 3:18-22, 4:6) that of "spirit", meaning the "vital principle by which the body is animated," the immaterial, incorporeal identity of man. πνεῦμα is not used here to denote "Holy Spirit" nor the divine nature of the preexistent Logos, but simply the "spirit" or spiritual sphere.

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1. Robertson: Grammar of Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research, p. 520.
2. Dana and Mantey: Grammar of Greek New Testament, p. 87.
3. Ibid: p. 84.

B. The Emendation Hypothesis:

1. The Emendation explained.

In Moffatt's translation of the New Testament we find for I Peter 3:19 the following reading, - "It was in the Spirit that Enoch also went and preached to the imprisoned spirits who had disobeyed at the time when God's patience held out during the construction of the ark in the days of Noah." Thus Moffatt and Goodspeed, following the example of Rendel Harris and Bowyer have supplied the word Enoch as the solution to this difficult problem. Harris writes that the theological difficulties of this passage have "all arisen out of a scribe's blunder in dropping some separated letters; he should have read EN Ω ENΩX ; he actually transcribed EN Ω KAI and left ENΩX out; and then the subsequent students, who did not realize that the Petrine formula ἐν Φ had nothing relative about it, referred the whole series of statements about Enoch's descent into Tartarus to Christ, and on this perverse text and interpretation there has been built up a mass of superstition."¹ Though this solution was tentatively suggested by Bowyer as early as 1782² it was largely ignored until adopted by Rendel Harris in his "Sidelights on New Testament Research", (1908), and popularized by Moffatt and Goodspeed in their new translations.

2. The Historical Background of the Emendation Theory.

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1. Rendel Harris: Sidelights on New Testament Research, pp. 208-209.
2. Bowyer, William: Critical Conjectures and Observations on the New Testament, p. 459.

The whole theory is based largely on the apocryphal Book of Enoch, which while current at the time of the writing of this epistle was for centuries lost and only recovered towards the close of the eighteenth century.¹ Chapters 6-11 of this "loose collection of treatises"² deals with the Fall of the Angels, having as its basis the account given in Genesis 5:1-4; while chapters 12-16 present an apocryphal account of Enoch's ministry in the realms of the dead to the spirits of these fallen angels and wicked Nephilim.

J. B. Mayor in the introduction to his commentary on the Epistle of Jude gives the following excellent summary of the account of the Fall of the Angels:³

"Two hundred of the angels, or watchers, ἐφρηγοροι as they are called in the Greek versions of Daniel iv. 13 by Aquila and Symmachus, conspired together under the leadership of Semjaza (elsewhere called Azazel, as in Enoch, chapters viii and ix.) and descended on Mount Hermon in the days of Jared, father of Enoch (vi.). There they took to themselves human wives whom they instructed in magic and various arts, and begot giants, who afterwards begot the Nephilim. ... Complaint having been made of the sin and misery thus introduced into the world, Raphael is sent down from heaven to bind Azazel hand and foot and shut him up in darkness till the judgment day, when he will be cast into eternal fire. Gabriel is at the same time sent to slay the giants (x. 9.); the watchers will be bound under the hills for seventy generations, and then be confined forever in the abyss of fire; the spirits of the slain become demons."

Hart presents the following summary of the ministry of Enoch to these spirits:⁴

"At last Enoch was sent to pronounce condemnation upon

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1. Smith: Dictionary of the Bible, p. 555
2. Mayor: Introduction, The General Epistle of Jude, Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 239.
3. Ibid: pp. 239-240.
4. Hart: The First Epistle General of Peter, The Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 68.

these watchers, who in terror besought him to present a petition to God on their behalf. God refused to grant them peace. They were spirits eternal and immortal who transgressed the line of demarcation between men and angels and disobeyed the law that spiritual beings do not marry and beget children like men. Accordingly they are bound and their children slay one another leaving their disembodied spirits to propagate sin in the world even after it has been purged by the Flood."

That this apocalyptic tradition was widely known and universally accepted in the apostolic and post-apostolic periods is witnessed to by the reference in the canonical books; the Epistle of Jude, verse 6, "and the angels who neglected their responsibilities and abandoned their homes he has put in everlasting chains to be kept in darkness for the judgment of the great day,"¹ and in II Peter 2:4, "for if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved against the world" Numerous references to this tradition are found in the writings of the Fathers; Justin, Apologetics ii.5; Origen, Against Celsus, v. 55; Anatolius (Eusebius' H.E. vii. 32); Irenaeus, Heresies iv. 16:2; and scattered thruout the Jewish apocryphal books of Jubilees² and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.³ Irenaeus, in a homily against the legalistic views of circumcision and racial privilege, gives in a parenthetical phrase a brief summary of Enoch's mission, showing that such a view was currently accepted in the church as early as the beginning of the second century:⁴

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1. Goodspeed:-The New Testament, An American Translation.
2. Book of Jubilees: iv.15, v:1-20, vii.21-25.
3. Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: Reuben v:6-7; Dan v:5-6; Naphtali iii:5, iv:1.
4. Irenaeus: Anti-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, p. 481.

"Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God's legate to the angels, although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased (God) was translated for salvation."

Thus the historical basis for the proposed emendation may be clearly seen. Though it must be recognized that at the same time during which this tradition of Enoch's ministry to the angels in Hades was current, that there was the parallel tradition, even more widely accepted, of the descent of Christ into Hades. McGiffert in his discussion of the Apostles' Creed states that "the belief in such a descent into Hades is as old as the first century, and it has a large place in the literature of the second century (cf. for instance Acts 2:31; I Peter 3:19, 4:6; Romans 10:7; Ephesians 4:9; Gospel of Peter; Justin Martyr, Dialogues 72; Irenaeus 4:22, 4:27,2; Tertullian, De Anima, 55, 3:20,4²)."³ That the two ministries (i.e. Enoch's and Christ's) were both accepted as separate and distinct ministries, with no confusion or substitution of the one for the other is apparent from their use by the same writers with no evidence of conflict or redundancy (cf. Justin Martyr and Irenaeus as cited above.) The view that Christ preached in His spirit thru the person of Enoch was not advanced until the fifth

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1. Lauterburg's caution might well be quoted here: "It must be observed that in these passages (the canonical references with the exception of the Petrine References) a descent into Hell is not expressly taught, but is presupposed as something which naturally follows death." - Schaff-Herzog, Vol. III, p. 411.
2. It must be noted that both of Tertullian's references are based on a spurious quotation from Jeremiah. While destroying the authority of his quotation it does not detract from the light it throws on the currency of this belief.
3. McGiffert: The Apostles' Creed, p. 195.

century by Augustine.¹ And, as stated above (p. 22), the complete substitution of Enoch for Christ was not set forth until the eighteenth century and popularized in the twentieth.

Therefore it may be clearly seen that with the acceptance of this proposed emendation, based on the historical tradition current at the time of the writing of the epistle, and on the assumption that some scribe, due to the similarities of letters and sound, omitted ENOX, the subject of the ministry to these imprisoned spirits is no longer Christ but Enoch.

3. Exegetical Basis for the Emendation Theory.

Though such a conception, i.e. that Enoch preached to the imprisoned spirits, would "cut the Gordian knot"² and solve easily and finally all the debated theological questions of this passage, yet, in the light of our present limited knowledge, certain grave objections present themselves. Both Moffatt and Harris grant that it can be at best considered as only a reasonable conjecture³ or an expedient hypothesis. There is no extant manuscriptural evidence for this interpolation of Enoch; not one of the existing manuscripts containing any reference to Enoch in this relationship.⁴

The study of ἐν ᾧ καί, whether it be a relative phrase

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1. Schaff-Herzog, Vol. III, p. 411. Augustine: Letter CLXIV-A.D.414.
2. Robertson, A.T.: Epochs in the Life of Simon Peter, p. 283.
3. Moffatt: General Epistles, p. 144.
4. Stout: The Biblical Review - 1929, p. 291.

or not, will be taken up in the following section (p.31). From this study of the relative will also be drawn the answer to the question, Is the spirit in verse 19, the Holy Spirit as indicated by Moffatt and Goodspeed or is it simply the "spirit," the incorporeal sphere of life, as found in the revised version?

In the Book of Enoch the preaching is condemnatory¹ and if the reference in I Peter 3:19 is to that ministry, the preaching here recorded must be likewise condemnatory. In support of this, Dr. Moffatt notes, in his commentary on this passage, that "Peter never uses this word (ἐκῆρυξεν) in the Epistle for preaching the Gospel."² The discussion of the relative truth of this statement will be found in the following study of ἐκῆρυξεν (p.38).

Finally, the contextual relationships do not encourage this emendation, for we have seen that this section is closely related to the author's main purpose, and what stimulus to an added Christ-like endurance would the apocryphal account of Enoch's preaching be to those readers of Peter's epistle? It is obviously irrelevant and questionable to break the logical and chronological train of thought and place a hitherto unmentioned character and ministry between the death of Christ in verse 18 and the ascension and exaltation in verse 22.

C. The Phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ :

Even if the Enoch emendation be here injected, the ἐν ᾧ καὶ must continue to be considered a true relative, closely

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1. Book of Enoch: xii:5-6; xiii:1-3.
2. Moffatt: General Epistles, p. 141.

connecting the thought of the preceding sentence with the thought of its own. The statement of Harris, that the ἐν ᾧ has nothing relative about¹ it must be rejected as having neither grammatical or exegetical basis. Steiger writes, "The ἐν ᾧ clearly refers to the immediately preceding πνεύματι, rendered prominent by the affirmative δὲ."² Frommuller is in complete accord with this, stating that "ἐν ᾧ is evidently to be joined with πνεύματι not διὰ πνεύματι, but really in the condition of a spirit separated from the body."³ Bengel adds the weight of his testimony in the fine statement "ἐν ᾧ, in quo, spiritu. Christus cum viventibus egit in carne; cum spiritibus, in spiritu."⁴ Huther,⁵ Bigg,⁶ and Alford⁷ also unanimously agree that the phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ is a relative phrase introduced by the relative ἐν ᾧ whose antecedent is the πνεύματι of verse 18.

The root meaning of ἐν with the locative must here be stressed, "in which", "within which" not "by which",⁸ thus showing the sphere or nature within which the subject of ἐκλήρουξεν acted. Huther's statement on the use of this phrase is especially fine:

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1. Harris: op. cit., pp. 208-209.
2. Steiger: op. cit., p. 210.
3. Frommuller: op. cit., p. 63.
4. Bengel: Gnomon Novi Testamenti, p. 970.
5. Huther: The General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude, p. 295.
6. Bigg: Notes on the First Epistle of St. Peter, p. 162.
7. Alford: The Greek Testament, Vol. IV, p. 367.
8. Mombert: Excursus on The Descensus Ad Inferos, Lange, p. 68.

" ἐν ᾧ is not equivalent to διό ; but whilst ᾧ refers back to πνεύματι , ἐν ᾧ states in what condition Christ accomplished that which is mentioned in what follows, - He accomplished it not ἐν σαρκί (for after the σάρξ He was put to death), but ἐν πνεύματι (for after the πνεῦμα He was made alive). ἐν stands here in a position similar to that which it holds in Romans viii.8, where, however, σάρξ and πνεῦμα form an ethical antithesis, which here is not the case."¹

This fact of "in" and not "by" or "thru", with the additional fact that the antecedent of ἐν ᾧ is the πνεύματι of verse 18, which because of its antithetical relationship to σαρκί , as noted above (page 22), can only mean the disembodied spirit and not the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead; these facts shed additional light upon the problem of the emendation theory for they show exegetically that it cannot be in "the Holy Spirit" in which or thru which the preaching is done.

The καί may be adjunctive, connected with the whole period and rendered "in which he also went"² or used with the τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν and translated "in which he went and preached even to the spirits in prison."³ Mombert prefers the latter construction "for it not only avoids the awkwardness of subordinating the whole period to what precedes, but also gives prominence to the new idea that the activity of Christ reached even to the spirits in prison,"⁴ to those whom Hart regards as typical

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1. Huther: op. cit. 295.

Romans viii:8-9. οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκί ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστέ ἐν σαρκί ἀλλὰ ἐν σαρκί.

2. Alford: op. cit. 367.

3. Mombert's review of the Descensus Ad Inforos, in Frommüller's commentary on I Peter, p. 68 (Steiger's note).

4. Mombert: op. cit. p. 68.

rebels who had sinned past forgiveness according to pre-Christian notions."¹

We conclude, therefore, that the phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ is a relative phrase which closely relates the thought of verse 19 to the thought of verse 18, the antecedent of the relative ᾧ being the πνεῦμα of verse 18, thus making the subject of verse 19 the same as the subject of verse 18, namely Christ.

D. Special Study of the Focal Words of 19-20:

In a study of such a nature it is necessary to limit our attention to the focal words of the passage. This study therefore deals with only four words: φυλακῇ, κορευθεῖς, ἐκήρυξεν, ἀπειθήσασι .

1. ἐν φυλακῇ :

φυλακῇ in the New Testament signifies the act or office of keeping watch, the watchman himself, or the condition of being watched, imprisonment, prison. The signification of prison or guard house is the prevailing one. Thayer cites some thirty-eight instances in the New Testament where φυλακῇ is actually used to designate a place of confinement, a penal institution.² Some particularly fine examples cited are: Mark 6:17 , καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν ἐν φυλακῇ διὰ Ἡρώδιᾶδα ; Acts 16:40 , ἐσελθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσῆλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν ; and Acts 22:4 , δεμύων καὶ παραδιδούς εἰς φυλακάς ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας .

The papyri discoveries support this use of φυλακῇ

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1. Hart: op. cit. p. 68.

2. Thayer: op. cit. p. 569.

as guard, watch, or prison; In BGU IV, 1138:18 (B.C. 18-19) "a jailer reports what the offending party said to him asking him to leave the imprisoned debtor to him,"¹ ἀπολείψομαι τὸν κακίαν ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς ; P. Oxy II 259:4,8 (A.D. 23) presents a declaration "to the governor of the prison of Zeus," τῷ τεταγμένῳ πρὸς τῇ τοῦ Διὸς φυλακῇ ; by the surety for a man who had been arrested for debt that he will restore² ὃν ἐνγεγύημαι..... ἐκ τῆς πολιτικῆς φυλακῆς "the man whom I bailed out of the public prison;" P. Giss I 84:18 (A.D. 83) Ἀσπλᾶν εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν παραδοθῆναι , "to deliver Asklas into prison;" and P. S.I. VII, 832:7 (15 A.D.) εἰς τὴν δημοσίαν φυλακὴν "into the public prison."

Barnes adds the interesting note that;³

"It (φυλακῇ)" is used in the New Testament with reference to the future world, only in the following places: I Peter 3:19, 'preached unto the spirits in prison'; and Revelation 20:7, 'Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,' (φυλακῇ).

And adds further that,

"an interesting idea similar to the one here expressed may be found in II Peter 2:4, though the word prison does not there occur: 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell, and delivered them unto chains of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day! The allusion, in the passage before us (I Peter 3:19) is undoubtedly to confinement or imprisonment in the invisible world, and perhaps to those who are reserved there with reference to some future arrangement, - for this idea enters commonly into the use of the word prison."

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1. Moulton and Milligan: Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, p. 66.
2. Ibid: p. 677.
3. Barnes: General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude: p. 204.

Though practically all of the commentators agree that this is the use of φυλακή as found in verse 19, they vary widely in their interpretation of what being "in prison" signifies. Some view it metaphorically, as meaning "the prison of the body"¹ or "the prison of sin;"² while others consider it to be synonymous with the Greek Hades or the Hebrew Sheol;³ and yet others who preserve its literal meaning - prison or place of contention. The conception that φυλακή denotes the "prison of the body" is objected to on the point that the πνεύμασι ἐν φυλακῇ denotes disembodied spirits (page 21), hence negating the metaphorical interpretation, since a disembodied spirit cannot be in the "prison of the body." The second metaphorical interpretation, that the word signifies "the prison of sin," is advanced in support of the theory that Christ preached thru the apostles to men who were in the prison of sin, but this is invalidated by the fact that the spirit in which the apostles preached was the Holy Spirit, and our study of πνεῦμα (page 20) has shown us that it is in the spirit nature, not in the Holy Spirit that this preaching is effected. Again, the time order does not permit this interpretation since Christ preached thru the apostles not during his bodily death but after His exaltation, and this incident is definitely fixed between His death in verse 18 and His exaltation in verse 22.⁴ Even more conclusively, the fact that the spirits who

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1. Grotius: cited by Mombert, op. cit. p. 69.
2. Socinus: cited by Mombert, op. cit. p. 69.
3. Steiger: op. cit. p. 230.
4. Mombert: op. cit. p. 69.

are in this "prison of sin" are disembodied spirits, makes this view untenable.

In the light of its common usage Salmond concludes that "the term 'prison' (φυλακῆ) must be taken in the definite sense which it has else where (cf. II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:7) and cannot be reduced to mean either 'safe-keeping' or 'the world of the dead generally!'"¹ but means literally a place of detention, a prison. But Frommuller wisely observes that "this prison must be in the realms of death", (citing the same passages as Salmond with the additional passage of Matthew 5:25, 26), and adds that "this evidently follows also from a comparison with I Peter 4:6."² This is further strengthened by the recollection of the fact that those in this prison are disembodied spirits (page 22), spirits who at one time possessed human, physical bodies but in death laid them aside.

The locative case of φυλακῆ may denote place or condition, but the additional use of the particle ἐν strengthens the concept of the locative of place, for ἐν with the locative case is used mostly with words of place.³ Alford substantiates this with the statement that "the τοῖς ἐν φυλακῆ πνεύμασιν must describe the local condition of the πνεύματα at the time when the preaching took place."⁴

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 464.
2. Frommuller: op. cit. p. 64.
3. Dana & Mantey: op. cit. pp. 86, 105.
4. Alford: op. cit. p. 366.

We conclude, therefore, that φυλακή in I Peter 3:19 denotes a definite locality or place of confinement, literally a prison; and that while not necessarily, denoting Hades or Sheol, since there is no definite reference to these places here in this passage, it does refer to some place, state, or realm that exists after death.

2. κορευθεῖς ἐκήρυσεν :

The words are so closely joined in thought and in grammatical construction that we will study them together. They both shed light on the preceding φυλακή ; κορευθεῖς , "having gone," literally expresses the root idea of passing from one place to another. κορεύομαι is the verb in the command given by the angel to Joseph in Egypt, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go (κορεύου) into the land of Israel," (Matthew 2:20); and again in Luke 2:41 where it is recorded of our Lord's parents that they "went (ἐκορεύοντο) to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." However the use of κορεύομαι is not confined to the ideas of place and definite locality only. It may be and often is used with accusatives denoting the idea of state or condition. Jesus in blessing the sinful woman who had washed his feet with her tears and anointed them with her ointment, said, κορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην . (Luke 5:20). And our own apostle in asserting his love for His Master declares that he is ready to go (κορεύεσθαι) with Him both into prison and to death, (Luke 22:33). Thus the use of κορεύομαι does not clearly de-

termine whether the preceding φυλακῇ be a definite locality or a condition, though the root meaning of the verb and the greater number of its usages are with actual localities.¹ There is the important fact to be noted that this verb demands a definite change whether it be from a locality or a condition. Whether the οὐρανόν of verse 22 is a definite locality or condition is not in the scope of this paper, but the parallel use of κορευθεῖς εἰς οὐρανόν shows the same idea of a definite passage or change from one locality or condition to another. Frommuller notes in connection with this thought that "the power of the death and life of Christ operates in two directions, downward to the realms of death and upward to the regions of heaven."²

The two participles, κορευθεῖς, of verse 19, and verse 22, have the same person as subject, namely Christ. The same Christ who suffered in verse 18, went and preached in verse 19, and ascended and was exalted in verse 22. This fulfills satisfactorily in both instances the common idea of local action expressed in κορευθεῖς and makes the preaching of verse 19, a personal ministry of Christ's. Some exegetes however maintain that the same idea of local action does not necessarily have to be confined to the second person of the Godhead, but may also be used with Jehovah and with the pre-incarnate Christ. Barnes notes,³

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1. Cf. Mt. 17:27; Mk. 16:12; Lk. 1:39, 22:39, 24:13; John 7:35; Acts 1:11,25; Romans 15:24f.; James 4:13; etc.
2. Frommuller: op. cit. p. 64.
3. Barnes: op. cit. 202.

"So God is often represented as coming, as descending, etc., when He brings a message to mankind. Thus Gen. 11:5, 'The Lord came down to see the city and the tower'. Exodus 19:20, 'The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai'. Numbers 11:25, 'The Lord came down in a cloud'. II Sam. 22:10, 'He bowed the heavens and came down.'"

And to check the obvious deduction¹ he further adds,

"The idea, however, would be conveyed by this language that He did this personally, or by himself, and not merely employing the agency of another. It would then be implied here that, though the instrumentality of Noah was employed, yet that it was done not by the Holy Spirit, but by Him who afterwards became incarnate."

This view however would consider $\kappa\omicron\pi\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ as a common example of redundancy and such is Barnes' conception of this verb.² But Demarest corrects this and gives an enlarged explanation of the relation of the idea of Christ preaching thru Noah to the inherent idea of local action as expressed in $\kappa\omicron\pi\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. He notes:³

"'He went', however is not a pleonasm, as McKnight and Barnes suppose, but is employed to denote a peculiar manifestation of Christ's presence. Christ's divine nature is everywhere in the same instant of time; but the form of speech 'he went', is derived from human custom and must be understood in a manner worthy of Him 'who is God over all'..... Now when Jehovah is said to go to a particular place or person, some special manifestation of his presence is meant. Thus, Gen. 11:5, 7. 'His coming down' refers to the fact that God was well acquainted with their projects and ready to discomfit them; he was there exercising his omniscience, power, and justice, or manifesting those perfections. There is no pleonasm or redundancy in the expression whatever. 'In which spirit he went', then means that, he in his divine nature manifested himself - to some one."

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1. Ibid

2. Ibid

3. Demarest: First Epistle of the Apostle Peter, p. 189.

Salmond cites as an analogous expression of Christ coming and preaching thru mediators, Ephesians 2:17, "and he (Christ) came and preached peace to you that were far off and to them that were nigh,"¹ and adds "besides if the term 'went' is in any way inappropriate to the preincarnate Christ, it is no less so to the disembodied Christ."²

That the use of this analogy and the acceptance of the reasonings of Barnes and Demarest is not possible may be seen in the facts, first that it is the disembodied Christ who is the subject of this ministry, as seen in the study of πνεῦμα (page 20); and again, from the same study it is seen that the sphere in which the ministry was performed was a sphere in which already dwelt disembodied spirits, thus making it appropriate for a disembodied Christ to go and preach to disembodied spirits.

The word ἐκήρυσεν has caused much discussion and many theological difficulties, but all these can be clarified if we continue to hold κηρύσσω to its general use as found in the New Testament, - namely, that of preaching the Gospel.³ Though Moffatt notes here, that "Peter never uses this word (ἐκήρυσεν) in the Epistle for preaching the Gospel,"⁴ we must recognize that this is the only instance of its use in First Peter. As to the validity of

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1. Beet in his commentary on Ephesians views this preaching as that of an actual person in a personal physical body. Beet: Commentary on Ephesians and Philippians, p. 309. But Eadie, Elliott, and others support Salmond, though it must be noted that the verb here is ἐλθὼν and not the κηρεύομαι of this particular passage.

2. Salmond: op. cit. p. 475.

3. Thayer: op. cit. p. 346.

4. Moffatt: op. cit. p. 141.

Moffatt's statement concerning the nature of the preaching, the majority of the commentators disagree, holding that ἐκήρυξεν connotes here its customary reading "to preach the gospel."

Plumptre notes that:¹

"the latter word ('preached') is used thruout the Gospels of the work of Christ as proclaiming 'the Gospel of the kingdom' (Matt. 4:23), preaching 'repentance' (Matt. 4:17), and the glad tidings of remission of sins as following upon repentance. It would do violence to all true methods of interpretation to assume that the Apostle who had been converted by that preaching and had afterwards been a fellow-worker in it, would use the word in any other meaning now. We cannot think of the work to which the Spirit of Christ went as that of proclaiming an irrevocable sentence of condemnation."

And adds:²

"This interpretation, resting adequately on its own grounds, is, it need hardly be said, confirmed almost beyond the shadow of a doubt by the words of ch. 4:6, that 'the Gospel was preached (εὐηγγελίσθη) also to the dead.'"

As to the common use of κηρύσσω in the New Testament, Thayer lists over forty instances in which this verb is used by others in matters pertaining to the proclamation of the "good news."³ Of these instances, Mombert cites four especially fine cases in which κηρύσσω is found in close connection with τὸ εὐαγγέλιον :

Matthew 4:23, καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μ. ε. τ. λ. ;

Luke 9:2, καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν τὴν β. τ. θεοῦ ;

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1. Plumptre: General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, p. 132.

2. Ibid.

3. Thayer: op. cit. p. 346.

Mark 1:14, κηρύσσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ; and

Mark 16:15 , κήρυξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει .

Mombert adds, "it (κηρύσσω) is never used in the sense of judicial announcement and New Testament usage clothes it with the meaning 'to preach the gospel.'"¹

While not substantiating the first of Mombert's assertions concerning κηρύσσω , Huther's remarks on this word do support his latter conclusion that "New Testament usage clothes it with the meaning 'to preach the gospel'",² for he writes:³

" ἐκήρυξε is the same verb as that so often used in the New Testament of the preaching (not the teaching) of Christ and His apostles. Usually it is accompanied by an object (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, Χρῆστον or the like); but it is frequently, as here, used absolutely, cf. Matt. 11:1, Mark 1:38, etc.- Nor does the word itself disclose either the contents or the purpose of that preaching; but since Christ is called the κήρυξ without the addition of any more precise qualification, it must be concluded that the contents and design of this κήρυγμα are in harmony with the κήρυγμα of Christ elsewhere. It is accordingly arbitrary, and in contradiction to Christ's significance for the work of redemption, to assume that this preaching consisted in the proclamation of the coming judgment and was a praedicatio damnatoria."

Salmond, even more emphatically, adding,⁴

"The 'preaching' which is affirmed being expressed by the verb (ἐκήρυξε), which is regularly used of preaching the gospel or the kingdom of God, can only mean the preaching of grace. It cannot be taken in the vague sense of a proclamation, a mere manifestation of Himself, or a bearing witness of Himself, much less in the sense of an announcement of judgment, a concio damnatoria."

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1. Mombert: op. cit. p. 69.

2. Ibid.

3. Huther: op. cit. pp. 296-297.

4. Salmond: op. cit. p. 464.

The use of εὐηγγελίσθη in the parallel passage (4:6) clinches this fact - that ἐκήρυξε is used here to signify the preaching of the gospel, for εὐαγγελίζω derived from εὐ-αγγέλλω¹ (εὐ -- meaning "well" or "good" as opposed to κακῶς, and αγγέλλω - to bear a message, to bring tidings) "always means to 'bring good news', to 'publish the gospel,' and can be understood here, therefore, only in the sense of an offer of grace."²

The aorist tense of both πορευθεῖς and ἐκήρυξε denotes that the action occurred at some definite time in the past, i.e., time past from the point of view of the one speaking. It simply states the fact of the action without regard to its duration.³ The same aorist tense is found in the series of verbs and verbals thru verses 18-22, ἀπέθανεν, θανατωθεῖς, ζωοποιηθεῖς, πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξε, and adds additional reason for the statement that not only are their subjects the same, Χριστός, but that the time order is the same and that order is a chronological development.⁴ Stevens noting here that,⁵

"It is natural to take the aorists θανατωθεῖς, ζωοποιηθεῖς, πορευθεῖς, and ἐκήρυξε, as denoting a series of successive actions. It is, in the highest degree, unnatural to suppose that at ζωοποιηθεῖς or πορευθεῖς the thought springs suddenly back into antediluvian times."

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1. Liddell and Scott: Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 560, 566.
2. Salmond: op. cit. p. 480.
3. Dana & Mantey: op. cit. p. 193.
4. Alford: op. cit. p. 366, the note being "Again, the same subject, Χριστός runs thru the whole, without a hint, that we are dealing with historical matter of fact in ἔκπεσεν, θανατωθεῖς, ζωοποιηθεῖς, and with recondite figure in πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξε". Mombert: op. cit. p. 69.
5. Stevens: The Theology of the New Testament, p. 307.

We conclude, therefore, that *κορευθεῖς* in I Peter 3:19 denotes the actual presence of the Spirit of Christ (i.e., Christ in His spiritual nature) in the place of departed spirits, and that *ἐκήρυξε* gives the purpose of his being there, namely, that of preaching the gospel to those spirits who were in prison.

3. ἀπειθήσασι :

. These spirits in prison are spoken of as having been "disobedient" or "rebellious". Salmond proffers two possible uses of this participle: (a.) a restrictive adjectival use which describes these particular spirits according to the conduct or character which made them "spirits in prison", or (b.) as a temporal adverbial participle, defining the date of the preaching as coincident with the date of the disobedience. He prefers the latter view, saying, "It was when they were disobedient that the preaching was addressed to them."¹ Stevens gives an excellent summary of Salmond's² and Bartlett's³ views, as follows:⁴

"The absence of the article before ἀπειθήσασι shows that the participle is not attributive or definitive, but predicative or circumstantial, and hence should be translated, not 'which aforetime were disobedient' (as if it were τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι), but 'when once they disobeyed'. Thus the whole sentence would mean: Christ preached to those who are now spirits in prison when once they disobeyed, that is, in Noah's time."

But Stevens himself adds further:⁵

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 465.
2. Ibid.
3. Bartlett: "Dr. C. S. Bartlett in the New Englander, Oct. 1872.
4. Stevens: op. cit. p. 305.
5. Ibid: pp. 305-306.

The question respecting the force of the participle ἀπειθήσασιν requires special notice. Most commentators and New Testament grammarians do not support the contention just mentioned respecting the force of the anarthrous ἀπειθήσασιν, but hold that the participle may quite well have a definitive force."

Referring to the argument given above, (that of Salmond Bartlett, Hofmann and others, concerning ἀπειθήσασιν), Huther says, "this, however, is not the case, since the participle, added with adjectival force to a substantive, is often enough joined to the latter without an article."¹

In further objection to Salmond's view of the time of the disobedience as being synonymous with the time of the preaching, Mombert² and Alford³ introduce the particles ποτέ and ὅτε, saying that they interrupt the chronological order and plainly separate the time of Christ's preaching from the time of the disobedience.⁴ Alford's⁵ statement here is exceptionally clear and to the point:

"The participle ἀπειθήσασιν marked off by the ποτέ as not belonging to the same time as the ἐκήρυξε, shows as plainly as words can show, that we are reading of some act of Christ which He then, at the time described, went and did with reference to the spirits, who were at some other time (πότε) specified (ὅτε) in a certain state (ἀπειθήσασιν)."

Huther adds the further interesting comments on these opening words:⁶

"The words which begin this verse ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε characterize the spirits who are in prison according to their former conduct. The participle must not be resolved into 'although, notwithstanding the fact they had been disobedient', an adversative

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1. Huther: op. cit. p. 295.
2. Mombert: op. cit. p. 69.
3. Alford: op. cit. p. 366.
4. Mombert: ibid.
5. Alford: ibid.
6. Huther: op. cit. pp. 297-298.

relation of this kind must have been more plainly stressed. According to the uniform usage of the New Testament, the word ἀπειθεῖν has here also the meaning of unbelief involving resistance; cf. ch. ii. 7, 8, iii.1, iv.17. The translation 'to be disobedient' is too inexact, for the word forms the antithesis to πισθεῖν. -- ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο κ.τ.λ. serves not only to specify the time when these spirits were unbelieving, but also to mark the guilt of the ἀπειθεῖν."

With this in mind, then, we conclude that ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε introduces a secondary and dependent clause, descriptive of the πνεύμασιν of the preceding verse; that these spirits were those of men who were "formerly disobedient", that while ποτέ shows the time of their disobedience in general, i.e., "formerly" or "at one time"; ὅτε marks distinctively the time intended by the ποτέ, i.e., "when or while the longsuffering of God was waiting", and finally that ὅτε not only marks the distinctive time of their "disobedience" but also the distinctive nature of it, the very completeness of their "rebellion", their "disobedience", since it persisted one hundred and twenty years in which the long-suffering of God was patiently waiting, cf.¹ Genesis 6:3.

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1. Alford: op. cit. p. 365.

E. Examination of I Peter 4:6;

"εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη ἵνα κριθῶσι
μὲν κατὰ ἄνθρώπους σαρκί, ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι."

1. The Relation of the Two Passages, I Peter 3:19 and 4:6.

It is generally agreed that the thought of this passage is closely connected with the thought of the previous statement in I Peter 3:19. This connection is even more forcibly recognized when we recall that 4:1-6 is still a part of this section on suffering. We will recall that 3:8-18 is a strong appeal to a Christ-like endurance of sufferings and persecutions, and that 3:18-22 presents the motivation for this appeal, namely, the example of Christ. 4:1-6, therefore, is a resumptive conclusion wherein the Apostle once again renews his appeal for Christ-like living, and at the conclusion of this appeal, as at the opening of this section (3:12), he pictures Christ as a judge, a judge both of the living and of the dead. Salmond presents a very fine discussion of this contextual relationship:¹

"The passage (4:6) occurs in a paragraph which completes a series of counsels bearing on the attitude of the Christian to heathen associates and heathen persecutors. Christ's example in suffering is the keynote to all these counsels. It has been used to point the blessedness of suffering for righteousness' sake. It is now used to enforce the duty of absolute separation from pagan vices-- a separation as absolute as if one were dead to them. Christ has suffered as regards the flesh. He has done so with the mind or purpose of doing good even to the worst of wrongdoers. Christians, therefore, should arm themselves with the same mind, and they should do so because thus to suffer according to the flesh is

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1. Salmond: op. cit. pp. 478-479.

to cease from sin, to be brought to an end as regards sin (4:1-2). By suffering and dying Christ has done with sin. And those who suffer with Him should recognize that their old relation to sin is at an end, that they themselves are done with sin. The heathen among whom they live will think it strange, it is true, that they stand aloof from 'lasciviousness, lust, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries', in which they once walked. They will speak evil of them when they refuse to 'run with them into the same excess of riot' (4:3-4). But if they have to suffer at the hands of these pagan slanderers, they know there is a judgment for all, a judgment which is certain and near, the judgment of One who will give their rights to all, whether alive or dead, whether heathen persecutors or Christian sufferers.

It is in the train of this statement that the words in question are introduced: 'For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.' The object which the writer has in view in the paragraph as a whole is clear. It is to encourage those tried Christians to keep themselves absolutely apart from pagan vices, and unmoved by the blasphemous slanders of their heathen neighbors."

The question before us then, in the exegesis of this verse is to discover the exact relationship of this concluding verse to the preceding verse or verses. Why did the Apostle add here this additional statement regarding the preaching to the dead? We must also consider in this examination who "the dead" were, i.e., what group or groups does it designate, or how wide is the scope of the word νεκροῖς ? And finally we must seek to discover the purpose of this preaching. From the answers to these questions we may expect to find the answer to the inclusive question: What additional light does this verse (4:6) throw on the preceding focal passage (3:19-20)?

In our examination of this verse, therefore, we will confine ourselves to the study of ὡς , νεκροῖς , and the purpose clauses: ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί , ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι .

2. The Particle γάρ :

Here the common illative sense of γάρ prevails. In the immediately preceding verse the Apostle has just made the amazing statement that Christ is ready and prepared to judge both the living and the dead, and now he presents his grounds for such a statement, "for, γάρ, the living have heard the gospel preached unto them and so, too, have the dead." Thus St. Peter shows the moral possibility and the justice of Christ's universal judgment, both upon the living and the dead. Plumptre summarizes this point as follows:¹

"The thought that Christ was ready to judge the great company of the dead, as well as those who were living when the Gospel was preached by his messengers, leads the Apostle back to the truth which had been partially uttered when he had spoken of the work of Christ in preaching to 'the spirits in prison'. The question might be asked, How were the dead to be judged by their acceptance or rejection of the Gospel when they had passed away without any opportunity of hearing it? He finds the answer in the fact that to them also the Gospel-message had been brought. Those who were disobedient in the days of Noah are now seen by him as representatives of mankind at large."

With less interpretive material and more exegetical basis Alford² and Huther³ substantiate Plumptre's reasonings. Huther especially notes that,⁴

"this verse is meant, as the γάρ following upon εἰς τοῦτο shows, to give the ground or the explanation of a statement going before. The question is: Which statement is it? The sound of the words serves to suggest that in νενποῖς we have a resumption of the νενποῦς immediately preceding, and that

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1. Plumptre: General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, pp. 141-142.
2. Alford: op. cit. p. 373.
3. Huther: op. cit. pp. 313-314.
4. Ibid.

what is said in this verse is to be regarded as the ground of the thought that the judgment will be pronounced, not only upon the living, but upon the dead also. This assumption seems to be corroborated by the καί before νεκροῖς ."

And Steiger concludes:¹

"So the verse has in it a perfect arrangement, and a close connection with the preceding context, and serves, at the same time, if we connect it with 3:19, for an exact fulfillment of the declaration made there."

3. νεκροῖς :

We must now discover who the objects of this preaching were: Who is meant by the term νεκροῖς, and how large is the scope of "the dead"; to what group, or groups does it refer?

Obviously the νεκροῖς of verse 6 will have the same sense and range as the νεκρούς of verse 5, since the Apostle would scarcely have used the same word to convey two different ideas; especially since, as we have seen above, these two sentences are so closely connected in thought and grammatical expression. What then is the extent or range of the νεκρούς in verse 5? The antithetical phrase κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς of this verse shows clearly the use of νεκρούς, for ζῶντας thrown over in antithesis against νεκρούς shows that the "dead" here denotes the dead generally, the whole realm of those who are dead. Thus the νεκροῖς of verse 6 will be given the same general meaning as the preceding νεκρούς, i.e., "that of dead men

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1. Steiger: op. cit. p. 257.

generally, literally and simply so called; men who have died and are in their graves."¹ The anarthrous use of both nouns supports this universal view of the substantives, for the anarthrous use places the stress upon the qualitative aspect of the noun rather than its mere identity,² hence the statement in both cases is a general one, applying to classes. Huther supports this view with his note:³

"If all arbitrariness is to be avoided, then νεκροῖς must here be taken in the same wide sense as νεκρούς in verse 5. Any limitation of the general idea is without justification,-- indicated, as such is, neither by the want of the article before νεκροῖς, nor by the circumstance that the slanderers are the subject in verse 5."

And for his statement on the anarthrous use of νεκροῖς he adds the following footnote:⁴

"The phrases ἐγείριν, ἐγείρασθαι, ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν (see Winer, p. 117 - E.T. 153--), go to prove that the expression νεκροί when applied to all dead, has not necessarily the article prefixed to it. Elsewhere, too, νεκροί has no article: cf. Luke 16:30; Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9."

Of this we are assured, the time of the preaching was in the past (εὐηγγελίσθη being aorist), and those to whom it was preached are physically dead. But the question of the conditions and situation of the time of the preaching remains. Was this Gospel preached to the dead when they were dead, or was it preached to those who were once living and are now dead? The answer to this question is found in the universal interpretation of νεκροῖς. Since its application is as wide as the preceding

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1. Alford: op. cit. p. 373.
2. Dana and Mantey: op. cit. p. 149.
3. Huther: op. cit. p. 314.
4. Ibid.

νεκροῖς it cannot be confined to any smaller group of blasphemers and persecutors of the Christians who should have died before the judgment, nor merely to such blasphemed Christians as shall have then died.¹ Again, if the preached Gospel is limited to those who once heard it but since have died, both Christian and pagan, the reading would have to supply a νῦν - "preached to those now dead." This same objection is found in the interpretation of 3:19 which considers it a ministry to spirits who at the time of the ministry were living (i.e., in a human body) but are now dead; but the Apostle does not supply nor imply the νῦν.²

We conclude, therefore, that νεκροῖς represents the larger group of "spirits in prison", to whom the gospel was preached, thus paralleling and broadening 3:19, where the Gospel was preached to at least a limited group, who because of the thoroughness of their sin, may be interpreted as typical cases who perished in the "great typical judgment of the ancient world."³

It is well to recognize here, however, certain grave objections which present themselves to this view. Salmond lists them as:⁴

"It misses the definite statement of the time of the preaching. It treats the historical tense 'was preached' as if it meant 'is preached' or 'shall be preached'. It translates a gospel ministry which is distinctly declared to belong to the past into a present act or continuous process. It assumes that the dead who are named must here mean all the dead, and that what is given as the statement of a fact belonging to the past is the statement of a general principle."

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1. Alford: op. cit. p. 373.

2. Alford: op. cit. pp. 366, 377.

3. Chase: Peter, 1st Epistle of; Hastings Dictionary of Bible, p. 795ff.

4. Salmond: op. cit. pp. 486-487.

And Salmond further objects that Peter does not deal with remote general cases, as the universal idea of *ὑπερβολῶς* would imply, but centers his attention on a practical case where the Gospel was known and the Christian people were suffering for their faith. And finally, he asks, how does such a ministry, whether punctiliar or continuous, stimulate these suffering Christians to the Christ-mindedness to which they are exhorted in 4:1?

4. The Purpose Clauses:

These objections (as registered by Salmond above, (page 53) are met partially by the fact that the emphasis in 3:19 rests distinctly upon the person of the one who preaches rather than upon the detailed account of his ministry, and partially by the goal of his preaching, which is shown in the two purpose clauses of 4:6. The end of the preaching, though left unstated in 3:19, is clearly specified in 4:6, *ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἄνθρωπους σαρκί, ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ Θεὸν πνεύματι*. The purpose *ἵνα* states that for this reason was the Gospel preached to the dead, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Salmond,¹ Frommuller,² and Alford³ agree that the first clause, in the light of the differentiating *μὲν δέ* and the shift in tenses from the aorist *κριθῶσι* to the present *ζῶσι* shows clearly that the first clause is subordinate to the second. Thus the purpose of the preaching is revealed as not that the dead shall be judged, but that though judged they yet might live. Alford cites as a fine

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 482.
2. Frommuller: op. cit. p. 74.
3. Alford: op. cit. p. 374.

example of this subordination of one clause to another, Romans 8:10,

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν
διὰ ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην.

Alford clarifies the use of these clauses in his discussion and summary as follows:¹

"For this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, - that they might - not indeed escape the universal judgment on human sin, which is physical death, - but that they might be judged (aorist: be in the state of the completed sentence on sin, which is death after the flesh) according to (as) man regards the flesh (this first clause following ἵνα being the subordinate one, of the state which the εὐηγγελίσθη left remaining) but not (withstanding) might live (present: of a state to continue) according to God (a life with God, and divine) as regards the spirit; so that the relation of these two clauses with μὲν and δέ is precisely as in Rom. viii:10, where the former clause in the apodosis is not the consequence of the protasis, but an abiding fact, seeming to militate against, but really not hindering that consequence. And this interpretation I adopt, believing it to be the only one which satisfies the philological conditions of the sentence: which justifies the γάρ as accounting for the κριναι νεκρούς; the καί as taking up, and bringing into prominence and climax the νεκροῖς; the νεκροῖς as used in precisely the same sense as in the last verse, and contemporary with the verb which governs it; the εὐηγγελίσθη as grounded on previously announced fact, ch. 3:19: the aim and end introduced by the ἵνα, which on this and on no other rendering receives meaning and perspicuity."

Thus we conclude that though the interpreters of this passage, in their theological systems, may have strained the force of the verb, the exegetical and grammatical construction continue to sustain the estimate that the Gospel was preached to those who were dead, the time of the preaching being after their death; the object of the preaching, being that though judged according to men in the flesh, they might be alive according to God in the spirit, thus more than justifying the statement that Christ was ready to judge both the living and the dead.

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1. Alford: op. cit. p. 374.

CHAPTER III

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A. Method of Procedure:

It now remains for us, in the light of the preceding exegetical examination of these passages, to present a critical appraisal of exegetical opinions offered at the beginning of this study. The plan of procedure of this critical investigation follows closely the order as given in the preliminary survey (page 4). One exception, however, is made; for the sake of clarity, the two leading interpretations of this passage, namely, the one that views the passage as presenting a ministry of Christ thru his mediator, Noah, and the other, that views it as presenting an authentic account of an immediate ministry of Christ Himself to the "spirits in prison", will be reserved for a more complete study at the end of the examination of the current and historical interpretations. Here, these two conflicting interpretations are thrown over against each other in a contrast. Both the factors which lend strength to these views and those elements of weakness which are in each will thus be clearly seen in antithesis. From this critical review we will then be prepared to offer a conclusion as to which interpretation of I Peter 3:18-22 and 4:6 is most in accord with the contextual relationships and with the best exegesis of the passages. From this conclusion we may then see what light is shed by the Petrine passages on the "Descensus Ad Inferos."

B. That Christ Preached Mediatly.

In the Preliminary Survey of the Current and Historical Interpretations of this passage (see page 4) the various views were classified under three major heads, suggested by the survey of Steiger¹ and Mombert.² In the first group in this survey were seen to be those commentators and theologians who hold that these passages present Christ as preaching mediatly, that is through the form and person of another. And this group was found to be divided into two smaller groups. The first composed of those who hold that the passages present Christ as preaching mediatly thru Noah, i.e., that "Christ preached in and thru Noah to the men of Noah's time. The 'spirits in prison', 'the dead', to whom he preached are now dead, but were living when he preached to them,"³ The other group viewed the passage as presenting the ministry of Christ thru the media of his apostles. The Noah interpretation, because of its importance and its wealth of material, is reserved for a fuller treatment, wherein it will be compared directly with the immediacy view of Christ's ministry (found on page 62). We now turn to an examination of the view that Christ preached thru the media of His apostles.

To the theory that Christ preached mediatly thru the apostles certain grave objections present themselves. This view requires that both φυλακῇ and πνεύμασιν be interpreted meta-

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1. Steiger: op. cit. pp. 203-260.
2. Mombert: op. cit. p. 69.
3. Stevens: op. cit. p. 304.

phorically, rendering it as those who are in "the prison of the body"¹ or in "the prison of sin".² But our exegetical study has shown clearly that the literal sense of both of these words is required (for φυλακῇ see page 34 and for πνεύμασιν , page 21). In this view ποτέ "is explained in the sense that those to whom Christ preached have now ceased to be unbelievers",³ but this obviously strains the sense and the position of the temporal particle, for we have seen from our study that the force of the ποτέ here is, with the participle ἀπειθήσασι , to introduce a secondary and dependent clause which modifies and describes the "spirits" of the preceding verse, and that while ποτέ shows the time of their disobedience in general, ὅτε marks distinctively the time intended by the ποτέ . Again, this view makes the vehicle of the preaching the Holy Spirit, since it must be in the power of the Holy Spirit if the preaching is done by the apostles (Acts 2, 4, 5, etc.), whereas grammatically and exegetically the preaching is performed only in His spiritual nature, see page 21. And finally there is the grave objection to this view, in that it disregards the natural sequence of time order in verses 18-22 and places such preaching before the ascension and exaltation, which neither exegesis nor apostolic history support. Christ preached by His apostles not during His bodily death, verse 18, but after His exaltation, verse 22.⁴

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1. Grotius: cited by Mombert, p. 69.
2. Socinus: cited by Mombert, p. 69.
3. Hensler: cited by Mombert, p. 69.
4. Steiger: op. cit., pp. 203-260.

C. That Christ Preached Immediately:

The second major group of commentators on these passages retains the tradition of the ancient church that Christ is portrayed as preaching immediately in the realms of the dead. They view these passages as presenting Christ Himself as preaching, personally, to "the spirits in prison." There are three variations in interpretation of this main group: there are those (see following discussion) who hold that Christ's ministry was confined to the righteous; those (Athanasius, Ambrose, Erasmus,¹ Calvin²) who consider the passages as presenting His ministry both to the righteous and to the evil; and finally those (see discussion, page 60) who hold that Christ's ministry was confined strictly to the evil.

For convenience and clarity the discussion as to the validity of the view of the immediateness of Christ's ministry will be reserved for a later examination, when it shall be contrasted directly with the view of Christ's ministry thru the mediacy of Noah, see page 62. For the present we will assume its validity and examine its minor divisions.

1. That Christ's ministry was confined to the righteous.

The view that Christ's ministry was confined to the righteous solely, was held by many of the early church Fathers and Reformed theologians. Mombert offers a particularly fine summary here, as follows:³

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1. Athanasius, Ambrose, Erasmus: cited by Mombert, p. 71.
2. Calvin: Institutes, Vol. II, pp. 57-60.
3. Mombert: op. cit. p. 70.

"Irenaeus (Iv.27,2; V.31,1), taught that Christ announced to the pious (the patriarchs and others) the redemption He had purchased, in order to bring them into the heavenly kingdom, (cf. Justin Martyr Dial. c. Tryph. p. 298). This is substantially the view of Tertullian (de Anima. 7,55), Hippolytus (de Antichr. c26), Isidorus (Sent. I. 16, 15), Gregory the Great and the Greek Church, Petr. Mogilae, Con. Eccl. Gr. Orth. I 49, etc.; John of Damascus, (de Orth. Fide III.26), the schoolmen (Anselm, Albertus, Thom. Aquinas.) Zwingli and Calvin, Zwingli (Fidei Chr. Expos. art. de Chr. VII) says: 'it is to be believed that He (Christ) departed from among men to be numbered with the inferi, and that the virtue of His redemption reached also to them, which St. Peter intimates, when he says that to the dead, i.e., to those in the nether world, who, after the example of Noah, from the commencement of the world have believed upon God, while the wicked despised His admonitions, the gospel was preached.'"

The main objections to the view that Christ preached only to the righteous the redemption He had purchased for them and so ushered them into the heavenly kingdom are: the text nowhere mentions the good, but rather refers explicitly to the disobedient; the language of the text says nothing of the repentance of the contemporaries of Noah and the text (in verse 19) demands that the men of this period be the object of the preaching; and finally the literal sense of φυλακή as a penal institution, a place of confinement for those who have offended, does not permit this view.

2. That Christ's ministry was both to the righteous and to the evil:

To the view that Christ preached both to the good and to the evil, the same objections as those noted above present themselves, since this double preaching would still require a mention of the good and a metaphorical or modified interpretation of φυλακή, neither of which, as we have seen, are warranted.

3. That Christ's ministry was to the evil:

We come now to the view that Christ preached in the realms of the dead to the wicked. This view has been given two interpretations, namely, on the one hand, that Christ preached condemnation to these imprisoned spirits; and on the other, that He preached the Gospel to the dead. To the former, that He preached condemnation, the following objections present themselves: the fact that ἐκήρυξεν in verse 19 was seen to be used uniformly to denote the preaching of the Gospel, and is paralleled by the εὐηγγελίσθη in 4:6; the clear reasoning that not only is such damnatory preaching unnecessary, but that it is incongruous with the character and ministry of Christ; that the purpose of the preaching as seen in 4:6 forbids any conception of condemnation, since it is "that they might live according to God in the spirit", and finally, that the context does not lend itself to such a view. If the purpose of this section is to urge a Christ-like spirit towards suffering, "it would", as Salmond penetratingly remarks, "surely be the strangest way of making it good, to refer the readers to Christ's own example in visiting the underworld in the character of Victor, with the express object of triumph or judgment."¹

There remains in this section, then, only that interpretation which considers the passages as proclaiming that Christ preached immediately to the wicked, disobedient spirits in prison. We reserve the discussion of this view that it may be more clearly seen in contrast with the view of His ministry of mediation thru Noah, see page 62.

D. The Emendation Hypothesis:

From our study of the Emendation Hypothesis, page 26, cer-

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1. Salmond: op. Cit. p. 468.

tain very definite objections present themselves. They are summed up as follows: there is no known manuscriptal evidence for this insertion of ENOX ; the word ἐκήρυξεν permits only the Gospel of grace to be preached, and the traditional ministry of Enoch demands a condemnatory preaching (see page 28); it cannot be in the Holy Spirit in which Enoch went, as this interpretation requires, but in the spiritual nature, for the antithetical use of πνεύματι in the preceding verse demands this interpretation; the logical time order of the passage argues strongly against the injection here of a new character, unmentioned elsewhere in the entire Epistle; the terms of the passage do not lend themselves to such a case as that of the fallen angels or that of the Nephilim or giants, which this interpretation involves;¹ and finally, the context demands that the subject of ἐκήρυξεν be the same as the subject of the attendant verbs and verbals, namely, Christ.

E. Comparison of Mediacy and the Immediacy Views of Christ's Ministry.

Thus we are left finally with the two contrasted views: the one, that Christ preached mediately thru Noah to Noah's contemporaries, who having once been disobedient are now in prison; the other, that Christ preached immediately in a spiritual form to spiritual beings who at the time of the preaching were in the realms of the dead. In the light of the foregoing exegetical study, the following contrast is largely a matter of listing the reasons for and against these sepa-

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1. Ibid: p. 477.

rate views. From this contrast and critical comparison we may expect to draw a conclusion, bearing in mind always, the fact recognized at the opening of the study, that any conclusion reached must be tentative and relative, in that it is based not so much on which view solves the problem best, as, rather, on which view leaves the least number of objections unanswered.

1. That Christ preached mediately thru Noah.

The conception that this passage presents Christ as preaching mediately thru Noah, "refers the scene of the preaching to the earth instead of Hades, and the time of the preaching to Noah's day instead of the period between Christ's death and resurrection. It takes the preacher to have been Christ Himself in His pre-incarnate activity, and the preaching to have been in the form of the Divine warnings of the time, the spectacle of the building of the ark, and the various tokens of God's longsuffering."¹ To this view the following recommendations lend themselves: It retains the natural sense of the leading terms: σάρξ, πνεῦμα, ζωοποιηθεῖς, ἐκήρυξεν, and φυλακῇ.² It gives the same subject thruout the whole passage, i.e., Christ as the subject put to death, Christ as the subject quickened, Christ as the subject preaching, and Christ as the subject exalted.³ It accounts for the definite statement of the time of the disobedience. It starts with a definite, recognized historical fact, that of Noah and the flood, and all the historical references in the

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 474.

2. Ibid: p. 475.

3. Salmond: op. cit. p. 475.

passage are adapted to carry the mind back to the "days of Noah" as the time which is in the Apostle's mind, e.g. "the longsuffering of God", the "building of the ark", the "saving of a few",¹ thus providing sufficient reason for the details given in the closing verses of the passage. It relates to Peter's own writing concerning the activity of the prophets (I Peter 1:11). "The phrases 'in the flesh' and 'in the spirit' (σαρκί, πνεύματι) most naturally designate the two aspects of Christ's being (cf. Romans 1:3,4), and thus the latter points, not to a post mortem activity of Christ, but simply to His activity in a spiritual form of existence (cf. 1:11)".² It is closely connected with the context showing the graciousness and longsuffering of Christ both in His own human life and in history, thru His servant and mediator, Noah." And concerning the relationship of this view to the second passage, 4:6, Stevens in his analysis of the considerations in favor of the mediacy interpretation summarizes their view as follows,³

"In the second passage Peter is speaking of the coming of Christ to judgment. He transports himself in thought to the time of his parousia, and speaks of 'living and dead' from the standpoint of that future time. The dead to whom Christ will have preached are now living, but will be dead at the second advent."

On the other hand, to this view that Christ preached mediately through Noah the following objections present themselves: The subject of the whole passage, while admittedly Christ, is Christ as

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 463; as cited by Stevens op. cit., p. 305.
2. Stevens: op. cit. 305.
3. Ibid.

God-man not as the Logos, i.e., in His pre-incarnate state, and the means by which He preached is not the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, but the spirit of Christ or Christ in His spiritual nature. The object of the preaching, πνεύμασιν, designates not living men but departed spirits, spirits who at one time had possessed corporeal bodies, but who at death had laid them aside and entered into the incorporeal state. The introduction of Noah's ministry at this point would upset the logical and chronological order of the passage since it has been seen that ἐπέθανεν, θανατωθείς, ζωοποιηθείς, and πορευθείς ἐκήρυξεν, set forth historical events in chronological order. This view does not give the proper force and place to the temporal particles ποτέ and ὅτε. Πορευθείς is not a pleonasm, as this interpretation would consider it, but must be taken literally. The τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν describes the local conditions of the "spirits" at the time when the preaching took place and cannot be considered to mean the spirits "now" in prison, for the νῦν is not supplied nor implied in the context. No mention is made here to the fact that Noah preached to his contemporaries. The emphasis of the passage must always be considered to be upon Christ, upon the One who preached, not upon His objects or their attendant circumstances, nor upon the means of His preaching. And finally, it does not make full recognition of the meaning of 4:6, especially neglecting the purpose of this ministry, i.e., "that having been judged according to men in the flesh they might live according to God in the spirit".

2. That Christ preached immediately in the realms of the dead.

To the view of the immediacy of Christ's ministry to the wicked or disobedient spirits who were in prison these considerations lend themselves: The close connection of the relative clause of verse 19 with its antecedent $\kappaνεῦματι$, in verse 18. The one consistent interpretation of $\kappaνεῦμα$ thruout the passage. Stevens summarizes this point as follows:¹

"He was quickened and went 'in the spirit' and preached 'to the spirits'. The correlation of $\thetaανατωθεῖς$ ('put to death' - which can only refer to His crucifixion) and $\ζωοποιηθεῖς$ ('quickened') requires that the latter should refer to some experience which is the counterpart of His crucifixion. It was in connection with that experience in a spiritual state that He went and preached to spirits".

The literal sense of $κορευθεῖς$ is hereby retained thruout the passage, for it is natural to give the $κορευθεῖς$ before $ἐκήρυξεν$ in verse 19 (he went and preached) the same sense as in verse 22 (having gone into heaven). The use of the temporal particles $κορὲ$ and $ὅτε$; we again quote Stevens' summary here:²

"The advent $κορὲ$ ('aforetime') stands with $ἀπειθήσασι$ ('disobedient') and not with $ἐκήρυξεν$ ('preached'). The statement is made that Christ preached to those who were formerly disobeyed, not that he formerly or once preached to the disobedient. If the writer was thinking of a vicarious preaching through Noah, he might easily have made it apparent by writing $κορὲ$ with $ἐκήρυξεν$."

The same subject, Christ, is kept thruout the passage and the force of the passage is shown to rest upon Him. The natural chronological order of the passage is retained in this view. He

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1. Stevens: op. cit. p. 306.

2. Ibid.

suffered, died, was quickened, went and preached, was resurrected, ascended, and was exalted. The time of the preaching is thus kept in its given order, between the death and the resurrection. "It is natural to take the aorists θανατωθείς, ζωοποιηθείς, πορευθείς, and ἐκήρυξεν as denoting a series of successive acts. It is, in the highest degree, unnatural to suppose that at ζωοποιηθείς or πορευθείς the thought springs suddenly back into ante-diluvian times."¹ In this interpretation φυλακῇ is both its required literal sense - a prison, a place of confinement, and its acquired meaning Sheol or Hades (cf. II Peter 2:4 and Revelation 20:7, see Barnes' note, page 35). This interpretation also gives the customary New Testament usage to the verb ἐκήρυξεν, interpreting it to be a preaching of grace, a preaching of the gospel, and makes as its subject not the pre-incarnate Christ but the God-man. Again, the best exegetical and grammatical interpretation of the parallel passage (4:6) lends itself to the support of this view, that Christ preached immediately to the "spirits in prison", see page 48. And finally this interpretation agrees with the main thought of the section, in that it continues to show the blessedness of suffering and enhances the value of Christ-like endurance of wrongs, by its view that not only were we brought to God thru Christ's sufferings, but that also, the even greater blessedness of preaching to the "spirits in prison" and bringing them to that life which is "according to God in the spirit", is therein afforded. And further this view shows

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1. Stevens: op. cit. p. 307.

that not even death destroys the essential nature of Christ, but as His mission on earth was to bring men to God, so that same inherent nature continued on thru death, sounding even the lowest depths that all men might hear the "good news". Beyschlag notes in relation to this idea the following:¹

"From all the obscurities of this remarkable utterance the bright thought stands out that the mercy of God revealed in Christ and Christ's death is not limited to the world of the living, but reaches beyond it into the quiet of the other world of the departed, and is made manifest in it by Christ Himself."

And then as a final reward for His suffering and ministry Christ is portrayed as resurrected and exalted "at God's right hand, with angels, hierarchies, and powers made subject unto Him.

From a purely theological standpoint, yet another strong reason for the acceptance of the immediacy of Christ's ministry is advanced, namely, that in this view recognized "masters in constructive theology recognize the decisive witness to the universality of Christ's significance."² Dorner noting in this connection:³

"And a further consequence is, that the Descent into Hades expresses the universality of Christ's significance, even in respect to former generations and the entire kingdom of the dead. The distinction between earlier and later generations, between the time of ignorance and the time when He is known, is done away by Christ. No physical power is a limit to Him. The future world, like the present, is the scene of His activity. Combining these farthest extremes in His person, He constitutes Himself the center transcending all physical limits, 'in presence of which all distinctions of time and space vanish, one distinction alone having significance - that between faith and unbelief.'"

And in answer to men like Strauss,⁴ who, looking to the fact

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1. Beyschlag: New Testament Theology, Vol. I, p. 416.

2. Salmond: op. cit. p. 470.

3. Dorner: System of Christian Doctrine, Vol. IV., p. 131.

4. Strauss: Dogmatik, Vol. I, pp. 264-271, II, p. 148.
(cited by Dorner: 131 and Salmond: 470.)

that multitudes have passed away, and do still pass away, from the earth without having known or heard of Christ, have argued that, thus lacking the note of universality, the Christian revelation cannot be necessary to salvation,¹ Dorner again notes the value of this interpretation:²

"Modern theology has eagerly welcomed this article, and that because it removes both the difficulties mentioned (Strauss' objections); for it testifies, that even those not laid hold of by Christ's historic manifestation in their earthly life, still must and may be brought into relation to Him, in order to be able to accept or reject Him. And thus the universal reference of Christianity to humanity, and the absoluteness of the Christian religion, are ratified."

But again, to this view that Christ preached immediately in the realms of the dead, to those "spirits in prison", certain objections present themselves. It is objected that this view represents the subject as the disembodied Christ, whereas in Peter's statement that subject who preaches is Christ in a particular form of life and activity.³ It fails to explain why the details of the building of the ark, the Divine long suffering, and the salvation of eight souls are introduced as they are. This view gives no adequate account of the use of only the men of Noah's day. Again it is objected that the historical sense "was" preached is forced into "is" or "shall be" preached. It is further held to be difficult to relate this view to the rest of the passage. The question is asked, what encouragement to a life of godliness and patience under injury can

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1. Salmond: op. cit. p. 470.
2. Dorner: op. cit. p. 131.
3. Salmond: op. cit. pp. 471-472.

lie in the statement that the disobedient children of the deluge, or men of kindred perversity, have the gospel proclaimed to them in Hades?¹ And finally there is presented the very strong objection that this idea of a preaching in Hades is not elsewhere supported by any definite scriptural proof and that where this view has been adopted it has been largely dissipated into theological extremities, such as the doctrines of Purgatory and Second Probation. Hodge writes penetratingly on this point:²

"Another objection to the interpretation above mentioned is, that it makes the passage teach a doctrine contrary to the analogy of faith. Whenever Christ is spoken of preaching, in all cases in which the verb κηρύσσειν is used, it refers to making proclamation of the gospel. If, therefore, this passage teaches that Christ, after his death and before his resurrection, preached to spirits in prison, it teaches that he preached the gospel to them. But according to the faith of the whole Church, Latin, Lutheran, and Reformed, the offer of salvation through the gospel is confined to the present life. It is certainly a strong objection to an interpretation of any one passage that it makes it teach a doctrine nowhere else taught in the Word of God, and which is contrary to the teachings of that Word, as understood by the universal Church".

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1. Ibid: p. 487.

2. Hodge: Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 620.

CONCLUSION

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In the light of the preceding examination of the setting of I Peter 3:18-22, and in view of the foregoing exegetical study of the passages themselves, with the additional light shed by the critical comparison of the various interpretations offered concerning them, we therefore proceed to draw a tentative conclusion concerning these Petrine passages and their relationship to the "Descensus Ad Inferos". While recognizing that any such conclusion must be relative and open to amendment, and while acknowledging the possibility of the "Mediating Ministry of Christ", and while conceding the validity of some of the objections registered above, yet, in the light of the foregoing examination, we conclude that the view which is in accord with the best exegetical and grammatical study of the passage, and which is in the greatest sympathy with the passage as a whole, is that view which holds that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, in which spirit He - Christ, Himself, in His spiritual state - also went and preached to the spirits in prison". We are in full accord with and adopt as our own the conclusion of Sheldon regarding these disputed passages:¹

"The natural sense ... of the singular Petrine sentences is that which the early Church imputed to them. The collocation of the clauses in chapter iii points distinctly to the preaching of the crucified Christ and to His preaching among the dead. He was put to death in the flesh. He was quickened in the spirit. In the spirit, that is, His pneumatic nature, still living and active, He went and preached. He preached not to men in the flesh but to spirits, dis-

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1. Sheldon: New Testament Theology, pp. 298-299.

embodied souls in Hades. He preached, not to those still in the course of their sins upon earth, but to those who had transgressed aforetime. Moreover, according to the intimation of iv. 6, He preached to them not an Old Testament message, but the message introduced by His own ministry upon earth, the gospel message. Thus, there are too many items, coherent and pointing in one direction, to admit of any other conclusion than that the writer meant to teach that Christ preached to men in the region of the dead. As the description of this transaction falls between a reference to the death of Christ and the mention of His resurrection, it seems probable that the mission to the dead was located by the writer between the crucifixion and the resurrection".

John of Damascus offers a very beautiful interpretation of this passage, as follows:¹

"His glorified soul descends into Hades in order that like as the sun of righteousness did rise to men on earth, so in like manner He might shine on those who, under the earth, sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; in order that as He did publish peace to men on earth, gave deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, and became the cause of eternal salvation of believers, while He convicted the disobedient of unbelief; so in like manner He might deal with the inhabitants of Hades, so that every knee should bow of those who are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that having thus loosed the chains of those long confined prisoners, He might return again from the dead and prepare to us the Way of Resurrection".

In view of the various extremities of theological import to which these passages have been forced, it may be well to add, as a part of the conclusion to this study, the wise caution given by Erdman, who, having arrived at the same estimate of the passages, namely, that they reveal an immediate ministry of Christ in the realm of the dead, warns,²

"These words do not prove the existence of purgatory, or countenance the abuses connected with the belief in purgatorial sufferings, nor do they support the theory of a 'second chance' for all who die in impenitence. Nor yet do they give ground for be-

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1. John of Damascus: Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Ch. XXIX.
2. Erdman: op. cit. p. 75.

lieving that all men will be saved whatever their earthly lives have been. The teachings about purgatory, 'second probation', and universal salvation are not sanctioned by scripture; these are mere unwarranted inferences from statements which are full of mystery. Here it is not safe to go beyond what is written. The reference to the 'spirits in prison' is but a parenthesis, an illustration. The main teaching of the passage is perfectly simple and plain. The purpose of the writer was not to awaken vague speculation but to give practical encouragement".

We, therefore, finally, conclude that in relation to the Epistle as a whole, this passage, 3:18-22, shows the blessedness of suffering for well-doing thru the perfect, historical example of Jesus Christ Himself. We further conclude that the passage itself is an integral part of the epistle, the references to the flood and the baptism being a parenthesis or an illustration. We also conclude that it is definitely related to and illuminative of the "Descensus Ad Inferos", since it literally records an actual ministry of Christ Himself in His spiritual state to disobedient spiritual beings in the realms of death. And, finally, we conclude that 4:6 is closely related to 3:18-20 and bears the same relation to the Descensus, in that it is an enlargement of the truth stated in 3:18-20. For whereas the first passage limits Christ's ministry to a few typical spirits, the second passage, while restating the fact of the ministry among the dead, enlarges the field to universal proportions, including all the dead. Thus the Petrine passages are seen to support fully the article of the creed "He descended into Hades".

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