

heaven Love is gazing on us with human eyes, whispering with a human voice, Come unto Me, and I will give you rest; and when He breathes on us, as He did at the first upon His chosen, His human breath is the quickening Spirit of God the Eternal.

G. A. DERRY.

THE ARTICLES OF THE APOSTLES' CREED.

IV. "SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE."

Passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried.

Rom.: τὸν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου σταυρωθέντα καὶ ταφέντα. *Aqu.*: Crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato et sepultus. *Afr.*: The same (only with "qui . . . est"). *Jerus.*: (only according to Cyril) σταυρωθέντα καὶ ταφέντα. *Antioch.*: Et crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato et sepultus.

The strangest portion of this Article, and one which has therefore become a proverb, "Pontius Pilate in the Creed," is also that which can be traced furthest back in exactly the same form, and which reappears in nearly all Creeds without alteration. It seems, therefore, highly probable that this ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου already belonged to the baptismal confession, which can be traced back to the early days of missions to the heathen (see pp. 40-44, Germ. ed.). It is also very remarkable that in the oldest account which we possess by a heathen author of the historical event of the Crucifixion of Christ, the name of the Roman official who allowed the sentence of death to be carried out is given with the same completeness—we might also say incompleteness—as it is given by Christians when they reproduce, or appear to reproduce, their Creed.¹ People are not in the habit of bringing forward Tacitus among the witnesses for the Creed. Probably he never heard of

¹ Tacitus, *Annal.* xv. 44: "Auctor nominis ejus Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat."

such a thing. But it is evident that the little he says of Christ is neither drawn from the New Testament, nor from Josephus, who is silent about the Crucifixion of Christ. The only other sources from which he could draw—and who knows through how many intermediaries?—were the verbal communications of Christians. The Roman Christians about the year 100 were in the habit of referring to Pontius Pilate when they spoke to the heathen of the Crucified. It was not long before they began to appeal in opposition to emperors and statesmen, in all good faith, to supposed Acts and Reports of Pontius Pilate, which they imagined to be in the Roman archives.¹ Whilst mentioning these facts, I may as well say that it does not seem probable to me that the name of Pilate was first introduced into the Creed in opposition to a Docetic Christology.² It is true an Ignatius was quite ready to remind the Docetists of the historical fact ascribed to this name. That was certainly less, much less, unsuitable than the remark of many old Church commentators on the Creed, that the name of Pilate served to fix the date of the Crucifixion and of the whole evangelical history. The names of the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, which are also to be found in the New Testament, would have been much more suitable, and the historic learning which must be presupposed if the name of Pilate was to serve this purpose could scarcely have been possessed by a single candidate for baptism in the second century. But the old commentators mostly unite with this absurd remark the very true thought that this secular name is an expression of the historic reality of the Gospel history.³ There was a reason also for accentuating this when dealing with the heathen,

¹ So first Justin, *Apol.* i. 35, 40, 48.

² In this I am unable to follow my honoured colleague, W. Caspari, in his treatise *Sub Pontio Pilato* ("Hold that which thou hast," xv. 454 f.).

³ Cf. Rufinus (c. 18: "Ne ex aliqua parte velut vaga et incerta gestorum traditio vacillaret"). W. Caspari adds more in another passage, p. 459.

who were inclined to regard as mythical that which was sacred history to the Christians. St. Luke has interwoven in both his books a number of little incidents, many of them of no intrinsic importance, by means of which this sacred history is connected with the historical events and circumstances of the same period. They prove nothing, but they strengthen the impression, which St. Luke (1. 4) intended to give, that here he was relating history which had come to pass in this world of daily realities, and which did not consist of pious thoughts in a mythical dress. Such an impression is produced by narratives which begin with words like these: "In the days of Herod, the King of Judæa," or "In the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius," or "During Manteuffel's ministry," in contrast to narratives which begin, "Once upon a time in olden days there was a king." From this point of view the name of Pontius Pilate is comprehensible to me in the Creed, and is much to the point. The Creed was not intended to teach chronology, neither was it to provide a sufficient proof of the reality of the story of the Passion for every one versed in history. But it was to avow and attest the belief that the death of Jesus on the Cross was a veritable historical fact.

Further, it was an improvement on the older forms of the Creed to say, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate," and then first to add "crucified," which had been originally connected with this name. For Pilate was not the instigator of the Crucifixion. On the other hand, it was before this heathen judge that Jesus, as the innocent Defendant and faithful Witness to the truth, witnessed His "good confession."¹ It was at his bidding, or on his sufferance, that Jesus endured all the shame and mockery of the world before He was crucified. St. Paul reminds Timothy of the confession of Jesus before Pontius Pilate in order to bring

¹ Cf. 1 Tim. 6, 13; John 18, 33-38; Apoc. 1. 5 3. 14.

to his remembrance the inviolability of his own witness for Christ, which he delivered at his baptism. The external sufferings which he had borne were no true martyrdom without the faithful witness of his mouth. But, on the other hand, the reverse was not what the old Christians called a martyrdom, that is, a witness, unless it had been delivered under the painful pressure of the earthly power. The hearts of the faithful have clung, and still cling, firmly to the suffering of Christ before His Death, which is at the same time a most powerful witness. On the other hand, it is very essential for their faith that Jesus not only allowed the suffering and the shame of the Crucifixion to pass over Him, that He not only barely tasted the cup of death, but that He drank it to the very dregs, and that He really died.

The addition of "died" was also full of meaning, useful even for later centuries, in which men have dared to undermine the last consolation of dying Christians by the foolish invention of theories that the Death of Christ was apparent, that the Crucified was delivered before the last breath. But it was also well that the mention of the Burial of Jesus, which is contained in the oldest perfectly preserved form of the Creed, was permanently retained, for it secured the confession of the Resurrection of Jesus which followed, against misinterpretations which emptied it of all meaning, and which are as old as the preaching of the Resurrection of Jesus. St. Paul had already reckoned the Burial of Jesus as among the most elementary articles of Christian instruction, and thought it useful to bring it to remembrance in his great chapter on the resurrection from the dead. But by doing so he has not succeeded in hindering the learned theologians of the nineteenth century from asserting that St. Paul's faith in the Resurrection of Jesus has nothing to do with the grave of Joseph of Arimathæa, and with the body which was laid therein. But this one

little word of St. Paul and of the Apostles' Creed will also in the future remind every simple layman of the history of Jesus' Burial and of the witness of the other Apostles,¹ and it will enable him to cast aside this assertion as a senseless lie.

V.

Descendit ad inferna.

Descended into hell.

In the Book of Concord, p. 29, also in the Latin text of the little Catechism, p. 357. On the other hand, in the great Catechism, p. 452, as also in the Roman Catechism, p. 405, and elsewhere, "descendit ad inferos." *Aqu.*: "descendit in inferna." This article is missing in all the other creeds with which the preceding articles have regularly been compared.²

These words are among the most obscure in the Creed with reference to their origin and their introduction in this place. At all events they were not indigenous in the Church province of Arles, where otherwise we can furthest trace back the essential elements of our Creed. They are missing in a great number of documents which contain the rest, or at all events many, of the special marks of our Creed, as, for example, "the Communion of Saints."³ On the other hand, we find them in some baptismal creeds which have an absolutely ancient character and which bear little or no trace of the peculiarities of our Creed.⁴ They

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 4, 11; Acts 2. 24-32.

² Rufinus states this expressly with reference to the Roman Creed and to the creeds of the Oriental Church. He does not seem to know of any exceptions among the latter. Cf. p. 50, n. 1. P. Caspari has proved, I think, in the *Norwegischen Abhandlungen*, pp. 106-277, that the *Descensus* was also missing in the Creed of Jerusalem in the time of Cyril.

³ Thus, for example, in Faustus of Riez and in the *Missale Gallic. Vetus*; see above, p. 8, Germ. ed., in the Mozarabic Liturgy (Hahn, p. 36), and in Nicetas (Caspari, *Anecd.* p. 351).

⁴ Thus, not only in the Creed of Aquileia after 370, the time of the baptism of Rufinus, but also in Venantius Fortunatus (Hahn, p. 28, etc.), who was born in the neighbourhood of Treviso, and probably became a Christian in Aquileia. Moreover, he follows Rufinus very closely in his explanation of the Creed. Probably also in the otherwise quite ancient Creed, which is expounded in two Latin homilies falsely ascribed to Augustine. Caspari, II. 233; not p. 228, on which cf. p. 241. Further, in the equally ancient Creed of the Spanish

emerge suddenly and quite evanescently in three Greek synodal decrees of the years 359 and 360.¹ But the oldest of these three confessions, the so-called fourth Sirmian formula, was originally drawn up in Latin, and was probably translated rather freely into Greek for the benefit of the members of the synod who were ignorant of Latin.

The formula was probably drawn up, as in other cases under similar circumstances, with reference to the Church use of the place where the synod was held. We may perhaps look upon Sirmium, on the Sau in the south-eastern corner of Pannonia, as well as Aquileia as one of the native places of this article of the Creed. But scarcely anything is known of the earlier history of these Churches and therefore of this addition to their creed. No great weight seems to have been attributed to it by the few who had long possessed it, or by those who adopted it later. The oldest commentator who notices it decides, though he expresses some uncertainty, that the thought was already contained in the word "buried."² Another says: "While the body of Christ rested in the grave, His soul, which was united to the Godhead, descended into the underworld."³ Many others pass it by in silence. When it is examined more closely a few passages of the Bible, more or less applicable, are quoted.⁴ The effect of the death of Christ and

Church of the 6th and 7th centuries (Caspari, II. 290, etc.; Hahn, p. 35, etc.; cf. p. 162), and also in the Sacramentary of Bobbio (Mabillon, *Mus. Ital.* I. 2. p. 312f.), which certainly originated in France, but not in the province of Arles, the Creed of which differs from ours only by the absence of *sanctorum communio*. The legendary form, also, in the appendix of this Sacramentary, p. 396, which otherwise has nothing in common with our Creed, gives *descendit ad inferna* as St. Philip's contribution.

¹ They are the fourth Sirmian formula of the 22nd of May, 359, the formula of Niké of the same year, and that of Constantinople of 360. (Hahn, p. 125, 126, 129. Cf. Hefele, *Conziliengeschichte*, 1², 699, 708, 733.)

² Rufinus, c. 18: "Vis tamen verbi eadem videtur esse in eo quod sepultus dicitur."

³ Ps. Aug., *sermo* 240 (ed. Bass, xvi. 1299).

⁴ Ps. Aug., *sermo* 241 (p. 1301), *sermo* 242 (p. 1304); also the commentator in the Sacramentary of Bobbio, I. 2. p. 313, although he reproduces the article.

of the dead Christ Himself on the world of the dead is a subject with which the poetic imagination of Christians has occupied itself at all events since the beginning of the second century. But the conjectures and imaginations which have linked themselves to it must be clearly distinguished from the fundamental thoughts which give rise to them and which are themselves directly derived from faith in the God-man and from the New Testament.¹

1. If Jesus was truly Man, then His soul, after it had left the body, must have entered into the fellowship of departed spirits, or, since we can only speak of this condition in vague terms, into the place of the dead, the kingdom of the dead, or Hades. Jesus Himself and His disciples spoke of this as self-evident.²

2. If Jesus is He who lives for evermore and even His dying was an act, an act indeed accomplished in the power of an indissoluble life,³ this tarrying in the realm of the dead cannot be thought of as a purely passive condition. If, as we cannot doubt, people yonder are conscious of their own existence and of that of others, there must have been some knowledge in the world of the dead that the Lord of the dead as of the living had appeared in their midst.

3. If Jesus is the Redeemer of mankind, the generations which had passed away before Christ came, and especially the members of the community which hoped in Him, must have been brought into personal relationship to Him, to His work, and to His kingdom. The Scriptures not only assure us of this,⁴ but they also give ground for the belief that this would not first happen at the last day, but had already in some measure taken place at the death of Jesus.⁵

¹ Thus by Rufinus, c. 28, and the supposed Chrysostom in Caspari, II. 233.

² Luke 23. 43; Matt. 12. 40; Eph. 4. 9; Rom. 10. 7; Acts 2. 27, 31.

³ John 10. 18; Heb. 2. 14; 7. 16; Rom. 14. 9.

⁴ Matt. 8. 11; 21. 31f.; Heb. 11. 40; Phil. 2. 10f.

⁵ Matt. 27. 50-53; Heb. 12. 23 compared with 11. 40. As is well-known, different views are held as to the meaning of 1 Pet. 3. 19.

The Creed does not go so far as to give utterance to the second and third of these thoughts, and it is far from exalting the phantasies of pious curiosity into a creed. It contents itself with bearing witness to the fact, as it does with reference to the Death on the cross and the Resurrection. Otherwise Jesus would not have truly died nor have suffered the death of the men whom He would and should redeem. The faith of Christians will not give up this confession. Every teacher can easily overcome the difficulty which the German translation "hell" causes to the young and ignorant, who, misled by the present use of the word, think of the place of perdition. He has to do much the same in many passages when he reads the Bible with the young and ignorant.

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DID JOHN PREACH BAPTISM FOR THE
REMISSION OF SINS?

THE burden of John the Baptist's preaching, as recorded in the Gospels of S. Mark and S. Luke, presents to us a problem almost as puzzling as the question regarding it which was put by our Lord to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders: "Was it from heaven or of men?" (Mark xi. 30; Luke xx. 4); and although we do not fear the same dire consequences to ourselves should we make a mistake in its solution, the result of such a mistake may be even more disastrous to the interests of struggling humanity. The problem to which we refer is this: John preached "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins," *βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*. Is the phrase *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, "unto remission of sins," logically and grammatically dependent on the word *βάπτισμα*, "baptism," or on the word *μετανοίας*, "of repentance"?