

is the theme of the earliest works of all and represents the earliest traceable Christian belief, according to Bo Reicke, p.18f. Melito mentions very early, and the Gnostic Marcion echoes the doctrine of a general foregiveness of sins resulting from Christs Descensus. (l.c.). Justin shows that both the Jews and Christians of the 2nd century were very much taken by the doctrine of Salvation for the dead, particularly of those who had NOT fulfilled earthly requirements (Dial.80; 306B, 45ff). After "gathering His dispersed children from the ends of the earth into the sheepfold of the Father," says Irenaeus, "He was mindful of their dead, who had formerly fallen asleep, and descending to them taught them that he might save them. (IV,33, 1-12). Hippolytus is fond of repeating that the Lord went down and brought up the first man from the lowest depths of hades (PG 10: 860, 865) thus uniting the world above with the world below. (lc.); he brought up the righteous from below to join their voices to the heavenly Choir (10: 868), John the Baptist going ahead of him to be his herald as on the earth, "to deliver the souls of the saints from the hand of death," (Hypot. de Antichr. c. 45, cf. Dial of Adamantius I, 26 on JPB.). For Hippolytus delivery from below is strictly limited to those qualified for sainthood. Already we have left the early Church for the Patristic writers. ~~Whereas~~ On the other hand old-fashioned heretical sects continued to preach absolutely universal salvation, including that of Cain and all the wickedest of men, who came to Xt. in hades and were delivered, (Theodoret, Haer. fab. I, 24). In Origen we see as yet nothing of the conquering hero smashing the gates of Hell, but only the Christ who comes to provide the way and the door out of bondage, he himself being the way and the door (Schmidt, 544); when Celsus in 185^{d.} accused some Christians of teaching that the sinners did not see Christ when he went to the Underworld, Origen roundly refutes him: "They say that they were shut off away, so that they did not see Jesus when he came," but since his whole purpose in coming was to release prisoners, Origen includes all the Gentiles among those delivered. (Cels. II, 56). When Celsus makes merry over the prevailing Christian belief of the 2nd century and says: "Don't you people say (he is talking about the Christians, and not about the philosophical Origen, who had not yet been born) that after failing to convert his contemporaries he went on down to

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the people in Hades?" (Orig. Cels. II, 43: PG XI, 864). This, as Schmidt observes, "shows how closely the doctrine of the Journey to the Underworld was bound to the official belief of the Church" at that early date. (p.498). ~~xx~~ Origen's reply is not an indignant denial but an explanation. T^u Celsus' charge that the Cⁿristians worship the dead, Origen points out that there is no resemblance whatever between Cⁿristian practices and those of the Greeks and Romans, which had plainly not yet been adopted by the Christians. (PG XI, 964). Tertullian also describes how the pagans make fun of the Cⁿristian doctrine of Christ going down to the dead (Aⁿol. 23). That much the pagans knew but no more: all further details were withheld from them, as C^pprian PL IV, 716, explains? Only Cⁿrist could come and go freely to the underworld, Methodius explains, he went of his own free will as a free man, that he might deliver those who were not free (PG 18: 405).

Cⁿrists mission to the Under~~w~~orld was a basic tenet of Cⁿristian faith during the first three centuries (Huidekoper***Zeno). The Doctors of the 4th century made of it, as might be expected, a Rhetorical thing, allegorical and non-committal. (Hilary, R^ofins, ***). It ~~was~~ Rufinus who first ^{included} ~~attributed~~ the doctrine ⁱⁿ to the Creed, and the vast majority of texts of the early Creeds pass over it in silence. The doctrine was kicked around among the sects; Epiphanius and Irenaeus denounce the teaching of one of them that whereas Cain and "all the Gentiles who never knew the God of the Jews" were delivered from Hell on the plea of ignorance, Abel and the righteous were NOT delivered "because they HAD known the G^od of the Jews." (Epiph haer. 42,4) It is just the sort of doctrine sectarians love to play with, and they were all the more free since the Church had no official line to follow. From the days of the Ap. Fathers matters of authority and doctrine were in a state of complete chaos, and the doctors of the Church take refuge in philosophy and allegory. What are we to make of it when Gregory the T^eologian remarks: "If he goes ^{down} ~~to~~ to Sheol, go down with him. Know the mysteries there, what is the economy of the double descent (to earth and hell)." Commenting on this, Severus of Antioch is perplexed, ~~xx~~ "did he save all by appearing below, or, as Ignatius ~~said~~, only the righteous ancients? (PO 14: 282). The answer would have been easy if the principle had been

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covenant." (S.E. Johnson, JBL 79: 51). The de^{sc}ensus, as Schmidt discerned, was a true mission, having the three main characteristics of C^{ri}st's earthly mission: 1) the revealing of the things of the Kingdom of Heaven, 2) the warning that goes with the witness, and 3) the giving of Baptism. It is the baptism we must now consider.

V

As Abramowski has recently pointed out, there is more than abstract doctrine in the Descensus literature—running through it and behind it is the constant hinting of a ritual ~~element~~ ^{F rmeIn klingen kultisch...Geschehen aber real kultisch gemeint (ZNTW 35: 60)} element carefully guarded but for that reason all the more important. The Descensus is, says Schmidt, "ein Stueck lebendigen Gemeindeglaubens," ^{which} at the time of our sources was under determined attack from the G^ostics and intellectuals, who were violently anti-Jewish and anti-Temple. (482). One of the major discoveries of our time has been the importance of rites and ordinances in the teachings of the prophetic Judaism which has heretofore been thought to have opposed all rites and ordinances. Far from opposing the Temple and its rites, as has so long been supposed, the ancient prophets and Jesus were alike its ardent champions. The old elements are today seen as interconnected in unsuspected combination: "Central to the patriarchal theme," writes G.E. Wright, "are the kerygmatic themes of election and promise....The patriarchal stories are therefore cultic in the sense that their form and intent...is to glorify God and to expound His work in the creation of a 'new thing', a people of God." (E^p. Times 71: 293). The close and obvious connection between descensus and baptism has received considerable attention recently. The association is natural and ancient—the waters of life and death were fully treated by Ninck as a concept common to ancient peoples everywhere. Of pagan, especially Egyptian baptism we need not speak here. Osiris as "Lord of the Eternities" sits over the Gates of Eternity, usually represented as the Waters of Eternity. (Budge, Ani Pl. 4), wearing the special crown of the "triumph god of the resurrection." (Ib. I, 242). "Nothing is commoner," Festugiere recently reminds us, "both among the Jews and among the pagans than a ^{baptism} ~~bath~~ of purification, ~~xxx~~ preceding, in the heathen mysteries, the rites of initiation proper." (HTR 31: 2). "According to ^{the} rabbinical teaching, which dominated even during the existence of the Temple,

Baptism...was an absolutely ~~necessity~~ necessary condition to be fulfilled by a proselyte to Judaism." (J. Encl. II, 499). It was of course a baptism by immersion (Gjd. II, 768). Baptism like the Temple ordinances and the sacramental cup was only Rabbinical however because it was one of those things which the Rabbis could not completely efface. Such teachings, as Goodenough notes, common to Judaism and Christianity, but minimized by the Rabbis, cannot have been borrowings of either from the pagans: "It seems incredible that Christianity could ~~have~~ ever out of hand have borrowed the sacred cup from Dionysus, the Virgin Mother from (any pagan source) ...baptismal regeneration from, again, one of a number of sources, and a Savior (from pagan religions) while it continued its Jewish detestation of these religions." (JS I, 3). The orthodox and non-Rabbinical community of Qumran set great store by baptism. * Of those who enter their covenant without pure intent they say: "He shall not be purified among the redeemed nor cleansed in the water of purification, and he shall not sanctify himself in the waters and the rivers, and he shall not be purified in all the waters of washing." (Serek III,4); as for the righteous, "His sin is forgiven him...his flesh is cleansed shining bright, and for his sanctification in the waters of submersion he shall be given a new name when the time comes, to walk perfect in all the ways of God." (III,8). ~~It is not a weak rebirth by baptism~~
~~Davidson also writes, (Origen)~~ Recently J. Frey, laboring to derive the doctrine of purgatory from II Mac. 12:38ff, says that it is indeed "clearly the doctrine of Purgatory," since it is "the idea of divine purification in the beyond." (Biblica 13: 145). But how is purification carried out? By mere prayers or preaching? Frey gives the answer when he points to the old Jewish teaching that Adam himself was purified by washing three times ~~in~~ the Acherousian pool, after which he was admitted into the presence of God." (id. 145, Enoch 22: 13). This is the stream that flows completely around Paradise, so that no one can enter without passing through it: Gem. Alex. taught that Christ led all the dead through such a river in releasing them from the underworld (Schmidt 530). In the Ev. Petri ~~is~~ Christ says to Peter "I go to my elect and chosen ones...and I shall give to them a fair baptism in the salvation of the Acherusian lake, ~~so called~~, ^{the Elysian field} ~~the Latin version adds~~)

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that they receive a portion of righteousness with my saints" (PO 18:482, Biblica X, 77 Lat. version).

Recently Dom O. Rousseau has declared Christ's descent to the lower world to be nothing less than "the soteriological foundation of Christian baptism," (Rech. de Sci. Relig. xl, 273-297). Baptism itself is burial—a literal Descensus: commenting on I Cor. 15:29, Theodoret says, "Who is baptized, it says, is buried with the Lord, that he may share death with him and resurrection in common with him. And if the body is dead and does not arise, why do we baptize it?" (PG 82: 361). What is the point of preaching to the ancient prophets who already know the Gospel, Schmidt asks, and concludes from that that the MAIN business of the Descensus is not the preaching but the baptizing of the ancients. (317). Here "both as preacher and Baptist Christ's work is parallel to his earthly activity," where the two are inseparable (318). "We too go down into Hades when we imitate the burial of Christ in baptism," says Basil (PG 32: 128). And now Bo Reicke entitles his book "The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism"—he sees the obvious connection even though it is not mentioned in the "disobedient" passage of the N.T., and finds it basic. The earliest Christian baptism, according to Quispel, was so arranged "as to represent the moment of death," with arrangements to show that in that moment "the baptized has become Christ." He notes that the Acta Apocrypha describes how at the moment of nocturnal baptism a smiling youth appears bearing a torch to signify the Deliverer, (Archiv f. Kg. NS 37: 3-3) The parallel to Christ's appearance to them that sit in darkness is perfect. In Sirach 24: 32 (a great favorite with the early Christians) we read: "I will go through all the regions deep beneath the earth and I will visit all those who sleep and I will enlighten all those who hope in the Lord; and ~~with~~ ^{will} illuminate them with the true teaching and make these things appear from afar." Here the word for illuminate and enlighten are also the common words for baptize in the earliest times. "Baptism is thus an absorption of the baptized in the death and resurrection of the Christ raised from the dead," says a recent study of the Descensus, (O. Rousseau, Rech. de Sci. Relig. 40: 297). Harris has noted that in the Odes of Solomon Christ's victory over hell is specifically

identified with his own baptism, which is thus identical with the Descensus, when "the abysses cry out in pain at the time of the Baptism of the Lord." (Comm on Od.Sol. 31:1; 24). At the moment of the baptism, John the Baptist, hearing the voice of the Father recognizing his Beloved Son knew from that moment "that he would descend to the regions below." (O.Sal. ~~xxx~~ xx,2; xxi), Harris comments on these "curious references connecting the Baptism and the Descent into Hades." (p.123) He goes so far as to hint: "I mean that it is not out of the region of reasonable criticism to suggest that in the earliest times the Baptism of Christ was the occasion of His triumph over Hades," thus identifying the two completely (123) a position that has not ^{yet} been vindicated--a mere suggestion anyway--but one that shows at least a close and intimate tie between the Descensus and Baptism which in 1906 escaped Harris but has since become quite clear. The ancient 127 Canons of the A_rs. says, "they shall not work on the feast of the Immersion, because on that day was manifest the divinity of Christ: the Father bore witness at that moment of baptism, the H.G. descended in the form of a Dove, and John bore witness." (PO 8: 650). The other parallel occasion when Christ showed his divinity to all (as opposed to the mere three apostles on the Mt. of the Transfiguration) is when he descends to the spirits below.

If the tie between the Descensus and Baptism is an essential one, we can readily understand the prominence of John the Baptist in the descensus accounts where he is next to Christ himself the dominant figure. The surprising thing is that no one ~~was~~ ancient or modern has to our knowledge commented on the clearest and most significant reference of all to the relationship between the dead and the rite of baptism. In explaining the mission of John to his father Zechariah, the angel says: "...and he shall go forth before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the unconverted in the minds of the righteous, to prepare for the Lord a qualified people. (Lk. I, 17). Later Zacharias speaks of his son; praising God who has "done mercy to our FATHERS and remembered his holy covenant" "...and thou, child...shalt prepare the way before his face...to give the knowledge of salvation to his people to take away their

sins...in which there appears to us a dawning from the heights, to appear to those in darkness and sitting in the shadow of death (I, 72ff). One can understand the turning of the hearts of the children to their fathers, but here it is the other way around--it is the ancients who think of US! ^{John's v. 1 p} ~~He does this~~ that all might be qualified to be gathered as the Lord's people; John's work is a mercy to the FATHERS; there is a preaching and then a taking away of sins, which is John's particular calling, but the mission and preaching are specifically to those who sit in the darkness and shadow of DEATH, who see a great light. The reference to Descensus is unmistakable.

The Coptic version of the Epist. of the Aps. says: "Therefore I went down to the place of Lazarus, and preached to the righteous and the prophets, that they might come out of ~~there~~ that resting-place below and go to a place above. And I poured out (?) with my right hand over them...of life, even as I did for you who have believed on me." (Schmidt 87). The Aethiopian is more explicit: "For that reason I went down to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, your fathers the prophets, and spoke to them and instructed them, that they might bring their rest below up to heaven; and I gave them my right hand, the baptism of life and Remission and forgiveness of all evils, ~~as~~ as I did to you and as shall be done to all those who believe on me henceforward." (86). Later the Lord says to the Apostles: "You will be called fathers and masters and servants...righteous servants, because they (the people of the world) ~~receive~~ shall receive the baptism of life and forgiveness of sins from MY hand through YOU (the Aethiopian omits "through you", which it did not understand)...and they will have a share in the kingdom of heaven." (ib. 132f, (PC 9: 145) 135). Guerrier/comparates this passage with one in the Pastor (Sim. ix,16,5) where "it is the ^Apostles and disciples who baptize the righteous in ~~the~~ world below." The Descent of the ^Apostles to do this work was taken for granted, coming right out of the Gemeindeglauben of the early Church (Schmidt, 488). The Hermas makes clear (III,16,7) that if the Apostles are to preach to all the world that includes the dead of this world as well as the living. But the Kerygma" is not completed without "the SEAL of the kerygma", ~~which~~ i.e., the baptism, which the Aps. accordingly

give them (Sim. ix, 5f; IX, 4,4). In the Ev. of Nicodemus the Patriarch resting below see a light approaching—it is John the Baptist come to announce the "great opportunity" which has at last arrived for those who sit in darkness. (II,1-2); then a rite of baptism and anointing follows (xiv, 2). ^{Two} of those who were resurrected at the time of Christ's resurrection report how they were first of all ordered to go to the Jordan and be baptized, "where we were baptized with the other resurrected dead. ^{Then} we went to Jerus. and finished celebrating the Pascha of the resurrection..." (concl. xi (xxvii). Occasionally the opening of the gates for the dead is mentioned ^{as one with the resurrection and} with the Rock, as in the Pastor and in Ode Sol. 22: 8f: "Thou wast there and didst help me. Thou didst choose them from the graves and separatedst them from the dead. Take dead bones and cover them with bodies...that the foundation of everything might be thy rock." Here we have a strong indication of what Mt. 16: 18 is really about. Until the 4th century it never occurred to any church-writer that it was a promise of future success and invulnerability of the Church upon the earth: the gates of Hell are what they are so often said to be, the gates of death, the keys that open and shut the doors are those that free "those who belong to her," i.e., the Church, from bondage; and the binding and loosing has to do with the same subject. Peter is being given the keys to "work for the dead."

In a work called the Descensus ad Inferos Seth prophesies that Adam will ~~reach~~ "in the last days" receive the oil of healing "and be baptized in the Jordan by John, and then your Father Adam will receive the oil of mercy with all who believe in him." (Desc. ad Inf. XX, 2), cit. Harris, Od. Sol. 123). In PO I, 18, it is not Christ or John the Baptist but Michael who "entered into Sheol and plunged...the first time he brought up on his wings 60,000 souls of the damned, and so the second and third time, as he searched carefully for souls, overthrew Gehennah and made this man (Adam?) come out, bringing up in all 540,000 including also the heathen, and the angels said, 'This is a wonderful thing!'" And they asked, How was it possible for pagans to be saved, or any unbaptized to be saved? The answer is forthcoming: "Michael brought up pagan souls from Sheol, "but they did not enter into Paradise before being baptized, for Michael baptized them and they shine like the sun." In the Clem. Recog., all the

righteous dead, no matter when or where they lived, are eligible to receive salvation, but only after they have "completely fulfilled the Law of righteousness," including of course baptism. (C₁. R c. I, 52); in the same source Batptism is closely tied to resurrection (PG I, 1238). When ^{after} ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~offer~~ ^{offer} her anxiety and prayers to help her young brother out of the darkness of the other world Perpetua finally sees him deliver^d, joyfully, properly clothed and in the light, she behold him standing in water up to his waste. (PL 3: 39).

The early Fathers preserve the tradition. C₁ement Alex. accepts both the Kerygma and the baptism of the dead completely stating flatly that "Christ visited, preached to, and baptized the just men of old." (Strom. II, 43,5), releasing those who were in bonds and in darkness. (lc). Irenaeus also believed that the Lord actually baptized the righteous of the O.T. times in order to admit them to the society of the saved. (Schmidt. 481). In this he opposed the Gnostics, who would deny salvation even to Abel, Enoch, and Noah! (Haer. I, 27,3) so Epiph^{an}. haer. 42,4). Origen's teaching that all who were freed from death, no matter when they lived, MUST have received baptism is primitive Christian doctrine, according to (Schmidt, 547, cit. refs.) cf. Danielou, Orig. p.59). But how can dead spirits be baptized? They cannot, only bodies can be baptized: "They batpize in the flesh because it is the flesh that rises." ^{Theodor^{us}, Tertull^{ian}.} We read in very early apocrypha that certain rites must be performed on the earth if one is to enjoy their eternal benefits hereafter: "The soul advances constantly from topos to topos," says the 2nd book of Jeu, ...and each station has its seal and its mysteries, because they received the mysteries before they left their mortal bodies." (TU VIII, 193f). The Gospel of Philip makes this very emphatic: the ordinances that make such eternal progression possible MUST be carried out here and now. How then could the dead being mere spirits as yet still awaiting the resurrection, be baptized? Only by proxy. This subject must be reserved for a special study. Suffice it to say that it led to great confusic and a variety of practices among various sects, and was given up by the main church as a bad job in the 6th century: "Why do we no longer baptize~~x~~ the dead..who actual-ly wished and intended to be baptized before they died but did not make it? F₁₁lgen-

tius asks (PL 65: 379), indicating an interesting and strange practice which the Church in his day had apparently recently given up. His explanation is that in spite of everything that urges one to continue the practice the fact remains that you can't really baptize a dead person "because from that body the soul has departed in which resided the will to faith and the capacity for devotion." (PL 65: 388)--without that one is baptizing no more than meat. Tertullian decides that the old practices designed to help out the dead by baptizing FOR them are "vane," (c. Marcion V, 10); he finds the perpetual questions about whether Abraham will have to be baptized, etc., positively vicious (PL I, 1214^f, 1323, Lib. de Bapt. c.13). He admits that if there is to be any baptism at all a spiritual baptism will not do, "since it looks forward to the resurrection, unless it is a corporal ~~vixit~~ baptism it is no baptism at all." (De Resurr. c. 48). And so he remains dogmatic but perplexed--in fact he says he does not know whether the Apostles were baptized or not! (de bapt. 12). ^{Wh. 4 will I, 2 - vital -} hence when the ancients talked about "baptism FOR the dead" they "thought that a VICARIUS baptism would assist the hope in the resurrection." (PL II, 864-5). That is the way the Ambrosiaster explains it: "Fearing that they would have a bad resurrection of none at all, a living person would be baptized in the name of a dead one." (PL 17: 1630), a practice which the writer seeks to prove met with Paul's disapproval. The actual baptizing of dead bodies continued down to the time of Augustine (the rite would be a necessary one in view of the general practice/mentioned by Augustine of postponing baptism to the last possible moment of life--which would often have been a bit too late); and the 3rd concil of Carthage formally forbade the practice. (Cabrol II, 1.381). Today the Roman Church rejects "the interpretation of several Catholic theologians, that in the time of Christ baptism and sacraments could, in apostolic times, be applied by way of indulgence to the spirits of people who had died before the promulgation of baptism. The Church now preaches "baptism is only operative on the person who actually receives it..." (l.c.)

Why should that be? Is not all the work of Christ a proxy for the Father? And that of the Apostles a proxy for the Master? Some Cath. theologians insist that the idea of baptizing for the dead was a ^{heretical} ~~later~~ addition tagged on to earlier practices

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by which "the living could offer their services for the dead," the prayers, songs and offerings "being completely free of any superstition," though commonly practiced throughout the pagan world! (Mangenot, Dict. de Theol. Cath. II, 364). The Catholic H. Steubing finds no call whatever for a literal Descensus of Millennium--if they were anything of a physical nature, "they would not be totaliter aliter." (Z.f.syst. Theol. VII, 465). Suffice it to say that since the early Middle Ages Christianity has rejected the teaching entirely and thereby lost its only chance to save the unbaptized dead.

The early apocrypha agree with other sources in giving a consistent picture of an anointing that immediately follows baptism. Typical is the procedure in the Early Egyptian church where the records are fuller than elsewhere. In some cases baptism was immediately preceded with an anointing with "the oil of exorcism," accompanied by the words "May every (evil) spirit be far from thee," after which the candidate was given over to the bishop or priest who sometimes accompanied him down into the water; and sometimes awaited him there, where he laid his hands on the head of the candidate, ~~and~~ immersed him three times, and then asked him the standard points of the creed including whether he believed that Christ "was resurrected on the third day, liberated those who were in bondage, and mounted up to heaven." (Achelis, TU VI, 96f) The Descensus, denied in the later creeds, is here basic doctrine.

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Immediately after baptism and the declaration of belief, "they would come up out of the water and the priest would anoint them with the oil of eucharistia--thanksgiving," and clothe them with a garment, after which they would enter the church where the bishop would lay his hands on them and pray: "O Lord, as you have forgiven their sins, so now make them worthy to be filled with thy Holy Ghost." (ib. 90). According to the Egyptian Constitution, "when the Bishop gives the H.G. immediately after baptism, he pours the oil of eucharistia on his hand and lays his hand on the head of each candidate saying; "I anoint you with this holy oil through the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Then he seals his brow and kisses him." (ib. 99). In the Nicodemus, the "standard work" on work for the dead, Adam ~~when he is sick~~ sends Seth to the gates of Paradise to ask God "that he would anoint my head when I was sick." Michael meets Seth and explains that baptism and anointing go together." 13

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Mat. 16:18

over bonds that I might loose them; He that overthrew by my hand the Seven-headed dragon (even this, Abramowski notes, does not go beyond the bounds of orthodox Christian expression) (22;5). "Thou wast there and did help me. Thou didst choose them from the graves and separate them from the dead. Take dead bones and cover them with bodies...That the foundation for everything might be thy rock." (22:6-12). "He brought me up out of the depths of Sheol: and from the mouth of death He drew me For I believed in the Lord's Messiah: and it appeared to me that he is the Lord; and He showed me his sign: and he lead me by his light, and gave me the rod of power." (29:4-7). The 42nd Ode "is an account of Christ's underworld triumph" (Harris, p. 64), which states: "I did not perish though they devised it against me. Sheol saw me and was made miserable. Death cast me up and many along with me...and I made a congregation of living men among his dead, and I spoke to them by living lips, and those who had died ran towards me crying, Son of God have pity on us!...Bring us out of the bonds of darkness and open to us the door by which we shall come out to thee...Thou art our Redeemer..." (42: 14-22).

Here, as Abramowski points out, is more than mere eschatology, the vivid and constant reference to concrete overt acts ^{Odes} indicates unmistakably to rites and ordinances as well as doctrines. When one thinks of the vast economy devoted to the interests of the dead by the Egyptians and of the saving role of Osiris one cannot ~~ask~~ but ask where the connection with Christian practices comes in. In the XII Dyn. the famous mortuary endowment of Hepzefi made "arrangements for burning candles or lamps before his effigy on New Years...and gives lands to the priests who were to carry his effigy on holy days." (Weigall II, XII,2). This is strongly reminiscent ^{understand Hell} of the LATER Christian practices as we shall see. "Osiris was the first being to suffer death: the cult of Osiris, accordingly, is the adoration of the first dead," (Moret, Gulte Divin, p.219). The purpose of the cult is "to reconstitute the body and return the soul to it, i.e., resurrection (id. 221), and the rite consisted of "the sacrifice of the God himself." (222) More later Christian analogies. Other Egyptian remembrances and pious gestures FOR the dead are amuletic scarabs, (which also have their Christian counterparts (R. c. de Trav. 30: 105-120), and letters to

the dead (Eg. Expl. Soc. 1928). Prayers for the dead carry right over in Coptic from pagan to Christian setting (E. Revillout, Rev. Egyptol. IV, 1-54). In Egyptian thought the dead live on legally after their earthly demise, and are considered as living in legal documents. (Arch. f. Or. Forsch. XVIII, 52-61). The offices of the dead at Abydos are much like those of the Medieval Church (Lefebure, Bibl. Arch. Soc. Proc. XV, 1893, 43ff). But the Egyptians were also very practical people, and as a rule "filial piety amounted ~~to~~ simply to setting up the statue and the embalming of the mummy..." (Gardiner, Aegyptus xvii, 290.). But Jewish filial piety need not be derived from any outer source, taking as it did the natural form which is had "since the dawn of history," (Levi, Rev. Et. Juives 29: 44): "The intervention of the living in favor of the dead is one of the acts of faith which are found from the very earliest times..." [We need not go into the Jewish works of the living for the dead, though some are worthy of mention.]

Just as there are two intellectual traditions within both Judaism (Godeneough's Vertical vs. Horizontal Judaism) and Christianity (called Exoteric and ~~Esoteric~~ Esoteric by Origen) so each has two separate concepts of the cult of the dead. And just as the two types of theology in Judaism and Christianity match each other closely, so the two types of "work for the dead". [The conventional theory that there are things the living can do to relieve the pangs of the dead Levi traces in both Jewish and Christian lines, back to a common source—one of our early apocrypha. It is the Apocryphon or Vision of Paul.]

The Rabbis have consistently opposed the idea that any living person could do anything whatever to improve the condition of the dead, whose eternal future is fixed once for all at the moment of death. (I. Levi, Rev. Et. Juives 47: 214-216). ~~The~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~earliest~~ ~~Christian~~ ~~writers~~ also insisted that repentance and good works were extremely urgent for this life, since "there there is no repentance," this is the time to prove oneself and the place to win one's eternal reward. But this does not necessarily argue, as it may seem to, a perfectly static condition of things in the next world. The Gosp. of Philip makes this clear when it insists that the knowledge of certain things, though given only in types and images, must be acquired

dentius both mention it in the 4th century. (R.Et.Juv. 25:7). Levi traces it back to one of our early Apocrypha, the A¹ocalypse or V¹ision of Paul, in which, following the now familiar pattern, Michael takes Paul on the Cosmic Tour: on their visit to the underworld Paul is touched by the suffering he sees and pleads for the tormented dead; in answer to his petition God grants a S¹unday rest period for all the dead. (ib. 8). This idea, Levi shows, was taken over originally from the Palestine Jews, who had long believed it--the V¹ision of Paul is already referred to by Augustine. (ib. 9-10).

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In both the Christian and Jewish traditions there are just TWO rites for the dead, prayers and alms. (R.Et.Juv. 29: 44), and the two go closely together. The prayer is a commemoration and the oldest forms are found in the Memorbuch of certain German communities; these date from the time of the great persecutions during the Crusades when popular insistence on commemorating the many new martyrs overrode all opposition. The books originally contained the names of martyrs and distinguished dead, but gradually others were included (id. 44f), people first praying for their own dead, and finally the whole congregation praying for all the dead (25:10). The original prayers were of course in Hebrew but quickly were put into the vernacular, The typical prayer-formula reads: "May God remember the again by popular demand. People would pay to have a prayer said for themselves after death soul of N. the son of N., with the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (here the merits and qualifications of the dead were given), and in recompence for his merits may his soul be bound in the Bundle of Life with the other righteous who are in Paradise. Amen." (R.Et.J. 29:44). When people would pay to have prayers said for themselves or others after death, the formula was: "May the Merciful, in recognition of the good which N., son of N. has done me, may his sins be forgiven blotted out and his spirit reside in the heritage of the righteous." (45). It will be noted that these prayers are designed to improve the condition of the dead. The alms for the dead are older than the prayers, says Levi, and of independent origin. (46), though the Talmud traces both back to the time of Judas Maccabbeus in the 2 Century B.C./ In II, Maccab. 12:39 ff we read that after a battle the hero found beneath the cloaks of his slain soldiers idols or "idols of Jamnia, a thing forbidde

the add sacry, was 2 L. tradu.

(32) the diptychs + etc.

etc.

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the Jews by their Law; from which it was clear that that had been the very reason why they had been slain." (vv.40) So Judas made a collection of 2000 drachmas and sent it to the Temple at Jerusalem to be used for sacrifices on behalf of those dead. A noble gesture, says our text, and a "clear and striking demonstration of the doctrine of resurrection. For if he did not believe that the slain would arise, it would be superfluous and ridiculous to pray for the dead." (v.43-44). Here we have an early association between a "work for the dead", entailing a contribution of cash, and the Temple. ^{Levi} Levi would minimize the connection, observing that the Alexandrian Jew who wrote the book could hardly be an authority on Temple practices. (Rev. Et. J. 29:49). But Palestine is NOT so far from Alexandria, and a book no matter where written could never have found [general] acceptance among the Jews had it taught things contrary to the actual practices of the Temple. Levi notes the interesting fact that it was the First Christians and NOT the Rabbis who accepted II Maccabes, which book, he says, first brought the idea of expiation of the living for the dead from Egypt into Palestine. (p.50). We need only recall that it was also the Christians and NOT the Rabbis who accepted the whole "apocalyptic or prophetic side of Judaism," which was rejected by "the one-sided legalistic Judaism that posed as the sole and orthodox Judaism," usurping the place of "the larger and more comprehensive Judaism that preceded it." (Chas. Enoch. ciii). We have seen that in both Jewish and Christian traditions the doctors opposed all dealings for the dead--we could hardly expect them to keep alive the really ancient traditions and practices which constantly peep through at us in the sadly degenerate forms of popular superstition. The Jewish Gaons strenuously opposed all prayers and offerings for the dead, saying that everyone should pay for his sins and any other arrangement was immoral. (53f). ~~Levi insists~~ It was the European Jews who adopted prayers for the dead most wholeheartedly, taking the custom in the Middle Ages from the Christians, who in turn got it from the pagans. (54-55). Certainly the practices described by Tertullian and Cyprian are those of the familiar Mediterranean cult of the dead: anniversary rites at the tombs of heroes and martyrs (source, id. 55) with sacrifices, hymns, prayers, processions, lights, etc. The transfer from popular pagan practice is very

obvious in Chrysostom's long and enthusiastic descriptions of the brilliant celebrations at the tombs of the martyrs (PG 50: 444, 571, 629, 645, 6, 649, 694, 699; 61: 582, etc.), but in the famous Letter of ~~Six~~ Gregory the Gr. to Augustine we have an actual declaration of policy to accept and adapt heathen rites for the dead; Augustines 22nd Epistle admits that the rites are of pagan origin: "

But since this drunkenness and these sumptuous celebrations in the cemeteries are viewed by the common people in their ignorance and carnal-mindedness not only as an honor shown to the martyrs, but also as a consolation for the dead, it will be easy, in my opinion, to adapt these shameful disorders by appealing, to justify them, to the authority of the Scriptures. As it is true, however, that the offerings made to the souls of the dead are a solace to them, let them continue at least in a modest way and without great display. And let all who will participate earnestly but not haughtily, and let the thing not become commercialized. If someone wishes to make a pious money offering, it must be immediately distributed to the poor. Thus the people will not think that we are trying to make them forget the real purpose of the rites, which is the memory of loved ones (for that would distress them greatly), and the Church will not appear to be celebrating in its bosom thing contrary to decency and piety. (Ep. xxii, 6)

How did the Jews ever come to borrow such rites from the Christians, as they did from the pagans, Levi asks. The answer is that they didn't. There is no trace in Jewish rites of "sacrifice" [^] for the dead, and such rites for the dead as the Jews did have were never official. (R. Et. Juv. 29: 59). The answer is a poor one. If by "official" one means accepted by the Rabbis we must remember that the Rabbis have, as Goodenough has shown, nothing whatever to do with the really ancient or the genuinely "official" cult of the Jews, the rites of the Temple and the priesthood. They survive in the memory of Vertical, not Rabbinical, Judaism, and it is they which alone are concerned with rites for the dead. The Jewish practice was really much older than the Christian, but, Levi protests, was "vague, without clearly defined contours, without rites to express it," [^] as against the Christian which was "clear, self-conscious, and expressed in religious practices." The former "soft" tradition easily yielded to the "firmer" Christian line. (60). Actually they are not the same traditions at all, ~~what~~ the Jews really did, as Levi says, adopt the same customs that the Christians had taken over from the pagans. But it was only after they had forgotten or discarded the [^] older tradition. And the Christians too, did not take to borrowing the pagan rites until their own older tradition of work for the dead had

been abolished through the influence of the doctors of Alexandria, intellectual converts who frankly opposed the old Christian traditions and practices, which they found very unphilosophical and hopelessly crude and literal. One of their primary targets of early Christian belief was devotion to the Temple and belief in its restoration. Though the Temple was officially banned from all Christian cult and eschatology, it continued to be the center of important activities, based, interestingly enough, on work for the dead. St. Bernard, in composing the Constitution for the Knight Templars made it clear that they considered themselves knights of Solomon's Temple (PL 182: 928), and the sister order of the Hospitallers claimed the same origin in the Temple. ^{the latter trace} Now, ~~by~~ tracing their order and its work right back to Judas Maccabbeus, "who first founded a holy place at which great amounts of gold and silver were kept for the ^{expiation} /release of the souls of the dead." (PL 155: 1097). Having rescued the Temple from profane hands, "and settled affairs at Jerusalem," he established this "pious fund for the dead" which has been going ever since (1098). "When Judas Machabeus saw and understood well that it was a good thing to pray for the dead, he sent 12 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem, (1101), meanwhile the priest Melchior, ^{at Jerusalem} ~~at Jerusalem~~ opened David's tomb and took a vast treasure from it; an angel induced the governor to permit Melchior to build with the money a pious foundation on ~~Calvary~~ Calvary for the poor (1100), to this house Judas Maccabeus sent his money that there poor there "might importune for the dead." Then Christ appeared to Zecharius in the Temple and told him to go to that house, and there John the Baptist was born. (1101). This involved tale, which ~~does~~ doesn't miss a trick was told to put at rest once for all the many wild stories and speculation going around about the founding of the order of the Hospitalers. (1097). (They must have been some stories!) Still the ~~Knights~~ ^{Knights} themselves were not satisfied ~~with~~ simply to tell of their establishment by pious founders during the Crusades--both insist on taking their rites back to pious works for the dead in the Temple at Jerusalem. ^{to be abolished**} Here their traditions become strangely mixed--John the Baptist is the most important character, but always the rites revolve around the dead. This is the apocryphal, not the official Christian background of admittedly pagan origin. There is one all-important difference

between the two traditions. The prevailing theory and practice of prayers and offerings for the dead both among Jews and Christians always assumes that the dead in question were true believers, "Children of the Covenant in the one case and baptised Christians in the other. The Jews insist that only those can be helped after death who have done good works anyway and they are helped in proportion to those good works, and St. Augustine point out that it is of course vain to try to help any dead person who has not in life received the sacraments of the Church. (Serm. clxxii, 2). But this worries Augustine, for it means that the only people who can really be helped by our prayers and offerings are those who don't need help, while all the rest in proportion as they are in need are beyond help.

(l.c. & Rev. Et. Jus. 29: 57). & He softens it as much as he can in his writing "On doing Work for the Dead," : "We must say that these (works)...to not help all of those they seek to help, but only those who during their lives deserved to profit by them; but since we cannot tell which are which, we must act for all those who have been baptised so as not to overlook any one of those who can and should receive benefit." (ib. p.58) Still, it is only for the baptized.

And this is the great difference, that in the apocryphal writings, both Jewish and Christian, the "work for the dead" is especially in the interest of those who have NOT entered the Covenant or received baptism on the earth. At once it appears that we are here dealing with a wholly different economy. In fact the helplessness of any Christian action to assist the unbaptized no matter how righteous--including even innocent babes--has been a sore point with the Church which claims unlimited power to bind and loose. (HN, Era), and remains so today. (Notes on Doct. changes). Let us consider if this is really the main concern in the older apocryphal tradition. We read in the Const. Apostol. and the Canones Hippolyti that the Lord not only descended to Sheol and led up the dead whom he had delivered, but that he laid ^{related} down ORDINANCES looking forward to the R^esurrection." (Achelis, TU VI, 53). What could these ordinances have been? Not the gifts to the poor and the prayers for the dead prescribed in the Const. Apost. itself, for those are simply taken directly from the OT (VIII, 20ff, I, 1116ff); VIII, 42, PG I, 11 54ff). In the

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 says, worth for
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many early accounts of the liberation of the spirits from prison, it is the Patriarchs of old and the righteous of the ancient world whom the Lord leads up with him--all of them unbaptized ^{in life!} Even farther removed from the conventional Christian economy is the N.T. teaching that is was not even the righteous but the wicked unbaptized, the disobedient spirits of the time of Noah (I Pet. 3:12) who were the beneficiaries of Christ's visit to the underworld! This lets all our conventional Christian and Jewish prayers and alms for the dead fall to earth in utter helplessness--and yet in the early Christian teaching it was felt to be very significant. In IV Ezra it is the souls of the righteous waiting "in their chambers" who asks, "How long are we to remain here?" (IV Ez. 4:35), as for the wicked who perish, "Speak no more of the multitude that perish; for having received liberty they despised the Most High," (VIII, 56). But the point is that the prophet DOES speak of them, and they DO worry him, as they worry Paul in the Visio Pauli, and Paul, as we have seen, gets these wicked ones a kind of release--a thing entirely beyond the scope of conventional Christian understanding.

In the Ascension of Isaiah the Son ^{of God} goes to the underworld of death (10:8), and takes the prize away from the angel of death ("O death where is THY victory!"), and arising on the 3rd day spends 545 days with the Disciples, after which he proceeds to heaven, accompanied by many of the righteous. (11:19, cf. 9: 16f); cf. Iren I, 3, 2; 30, 14; Pseucryphon of Jas. The thing to note here is the involvement of the Disciples, who are visited and taught by the Lord in mid-course between the worlds, along with a host that he is taking with him. The Oracula Sibyllina speak of the same thing: "...a great sign will be given in Solomon's Temple when He goes to the house of Hades to announce the liberation of the dead; and when he comes up again to the light after three days he will show (or teach) to mortals the TYPE, and teach them all about it, and then pass on to heaven..." (I, 375). Recent discoveries have given a new meaning and significance to the word "Type" here employed: it refers plainly to specific ordinances. *Interval, denied*

The natural concern for the unbaptized dead is the first thing that occurs to Clement when he is introduced to Peter. Right off he asks, what will happen to my

parents who have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel or to be baptized? The later Church had no answer--their St. Paul can only wring his hands in helpless despair at the tomb of Virgil and exclaim: "What a Saint I could have made of you if I had only found you still alive!" But in the Clementine Recognitions, Peter DOES have an answer, and it is a significant one: "You are asking me, Clement, to talk about things that may not be discussed; but I will not be embarrassed to tell you as much as I am allowed to." He then assures the investigator that due provision has been made that no righteous person shall go without his reward, including even the highest exaltation, though he lived before the mission of Christ. (PG I, 1236). Later on in a debate Peter pours withering scorn of the idea of good and righteous people of the past Simon Magus that God would punish ~~anyone~~ simply for the sin of not having been baptized--yet such is the standard Christian position to this day. That ^{Magus} Simon is here not misrepresented is plain from that fact that he was the great founder of Gnostic schools, and that the Gnostics firmly rejected ^{the Resurrection} the Descensus and any work for the dead. (Schmidt. 500). A very early Hymn declares that the very purpose of the Lord's descending "to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death" is to save ALL men, as he wishes to, (PO 18: 442).

The Apocalypse of Baruch expresses a common concern with number and measure in dealing with the dead: "When death was decreed against those who should be born, then the multitude of those who should be born was numbered, and for that number a place was prepared where the living might dwell and the dead might be guarded. Unless, therefore, the number is fulfilled, the creature will not live again...and Sheol will receive the dead." (XXIII, 4). ^U But the fullest apocryphal discussion of the subject is in the Gospel of Nicodemus, which contains that old Acta Pauli, already mentioned by Justin, and the 2nd Part of the Ev. Nicod. which also bears the ^{title} ~~title~~ Descensus ad Inferos. (E. Revillout, PO IX, ii, 62). The first Part was written by the Jew Aeneas ~~in Hebrew~~ who translated many Jewish records into Greek for the Church at a very early day, reporting specifically "EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION," as written down originally in Hebrew by Nicodemus. Schmidt ^{p-57} insists that the Ev. Nicodemi is taken entirely from the OT and the NT, which at

least vouches for their orthodoxy. In this work the dead do not suffer tortures: their punishment is that they are detained or held back, and this, says Schmidt, is simply "the original Hades-idea" (576). Until they are released "all the saints were in the depth of hell," (Nicod. xiii, 9) , including even the ancient Patriarchs, ^{Of these} ~~whom~~ Abraham and Isaac first notice the divine light approaching; (II, 1) it is the Lord coming to deliver them, but first he must be preceded, as on earth, by John the Baptist, "the last of the prophets," who announces the approach of the Savior: "...th^{at} you may worship all of you, when he presently appears; this is the on~~e~~ who brings you an opportunity to repent, you who have worshipped idols; this is your ONLY opportunity and your one hope!" (Ev. Nic., ed. Tisch. II, 2) Again it is the unbaptized and the idolaters who have the opportunity. Some early Apocrypha see in Jesus' post-Resurrection activity a wholesale redemption of the entire race: "While death was speaking with the body of Jesus in the tomb," says a Coptic Ev. Barth. (PO II, 185), reflecting its Egyptian tradition, "Jesus ~~went~~ ~~thence~~ freed the entire human race. He healed the children of Adam which the enemy had smitten...He re-established Adam in his former state and remitted all his sins ~~in~~ peace." "For Christ overcame death and Hades and freed the prisoners from the hand of the Devil and overcame the subversion of the Devil." (Didascalia Jacoi, PO I, 747). The theme is oft repeated (e.g. Acts of Jud. Thos. (Wright, p.155). "He who ~~went~~ down to Hades," says the famous Hymn from the Acts of Thomas, "with the Archons of great power, the sight of ~~him~~ ^{him}/Death could not bear. And truly with great glory thou didst gather together all who fled to thee, having prepared the way; and they all walked along the way of thy footprints, whom I shall deliver." This is the earliest instance, according to Schmidt, 558, in which Christ goes below in power and glory, the beginning of the long development which ends in the terrifying smash-bang victory of the Harrowing of Hell. The theme that runs through the whole Epistle of the Apostles is the same as that of the Odes of Solomon: "Like a red ^{there runs} thread/~~it goes~~ thru the entire Epistle the thought of the Deliverer's Task: Soter is one whose calling is to lead the faithful up into heaven, or into the place of rest. (309). Yet it is specifically the saving of the Disobedient spirits that