

others that Christ descended into the place of torment to triumph there over Satan *in his own kingdom*—founding their opinion on these words of Scripture, *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them*—yet from certain expressions in the Book of Revelations, we are to believe that the devil and his angels are not to be confined to the pit of destruction until the day of judgment. And if they were, that *bottomless pit* is not their kingdom but their place of punishment.—The kingdom of the devil is even in this world and consists in the prevalency of sin amongst mankind—as the expression *kingdom of God* is often employed to denote the influence of his grace in the hearts of men. Here, then, it was that Christ triumphed over Satan; having, by his atonement on the Cross, removed the effects or wages of sin to those who have faith in that meritorious sacrifice, and by the power of the religion he taught and the influence of the example he afforded, having established the kingdom of God upon earth. *Through death*, says St. Paul, *he destroyed him that had the power of death*.

There is, therefore, no foundation either in reason or in Scripture for supposing that our Lord ever descended into the *place of torment*—the place appointed for the final punishment of the wicked; although it is evident, from the authority of Scripture, that he *did* descend into the state of the dead, the invisible place of departed souls, and the doctrine is not without consolation and instruction to his followers. It seems, indeed, expedient—to borrow the sentiments of Bishop Pearson—that our blessed Lord should satisfy the law of death as well as fulfil the law of life: that if he came into this world in the *likeness of sinful flesh*, he should go into the other world also in the similitude of a sinner: that whilst his body rested in the tomb, his soul should abide in the receptacle of departed spirits.

And as his soul was not left in hell, the followers of their Heavenly Redeemer may deduce the consolatory truth that as Satan had no dominion over him, so shall he never exercise any over the soul of those who truly belong to him. By this his descent, he hath freed us from our fears, as by his ascension he hath secured us in our hopes. “As members of Christ this same promise—*thou shalt not leave my soul in hell*—is so far ours, that although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy, but shall be raised again and reunited to its old companion the soul which exists, meanwhile, in secret and undiscerned regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption in his mystical, as he hath already done in his natural body.”*

* Bishop Horne on Psalm xvi