

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



Christ is risen!

He is the living Lord!

Without the resurrection on the third day, the cross of Christ has neither power nor meaning. If Christ is not raised, all is still dark. Then there is no answer to Christ's question of amazement on the accursed tree: "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" Then there is no corroboration from heaven of the confident statement made by the dying Christ: "It is finished." If Christ is not raised, His death is no atoning sacrifice, He did not satisfy the justice of God with respect to our sins, nor did He merit for us eternal righteousness and life. If Christ is not raised on the third day, there is no living Lord that can quicken us, and make us partakers of the blessings of salvation.

But He is risen!

And by His resurrection we know that He Who died on the accursed tree of Calvary is the true Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, and that He is the resurrection and the life. By His resurrection we know that He represented us in all His suffering, took our place in the judgment of God voluntarily, and by His perfect obedience, even unto the death of the cross, blotted out the guilt of our sin, and obtained for us everlasting righteousness and life. By His resurrection we know that the cross is, indeed, a power of God unto salvation.

That is the significance of the resurrection of Christ.

— Rev. Herman Hoeksema,
The Power of the Cross, pp. 124-125

MEDITATION

Seeking The Things Above

Rev. M. Schipper

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Colossians 3:1

If then . . .!

O, indeed, not so must the apostle be understood, as if he held in question the fact that the church was risen with Christ. Such a question never entered his mind. The matter is not problematical, but absolutely sure. It is objective reality — the church has died with Christ, the church has been raised with Christ, the church has ascended with Christ, and is in principle with Christ as He now sits at the right hand of God.

The term "then" denotes conclusion!

Seeing it is true that you are risen with Christ and are with Christ in heaven, therefore it must follow that you must seek those things which are above where Christ is.

Seeking the things above!

But what are those things which are above? And what does it mean that we are to seek them?

The term "above" designates especially two things. In the first place, it has reference to locality. It stands in contrast to the earth. In the verse that follows our text the apostle continues: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." So that what is above must be heaven in distinction from the earth. It is the place to which Christ ascended forty days after His resurrection. With His resurrected and glorified body He could not abide on the earth, but He must ascend to that place where His glorified human nature could receive all the glory He merited, even at the right hand of God, where He is crowned with glory, honor, and power. But, in the second place, the term "above" suggests the nature of the things we are to seek. They are heavenly in character. They are the things which belong to a better country, a heavenly fatherland, to the new Jerusalem, the house with its many mansions.

If you would inquire more particularly concerning the things above, they relate undoubtedly to all the heavenly blessings which are in Christ Jesus. They are those things which He merited for His people through His mediatorial work. They are the spiritual blessings

of grace, which Christ gathers as a spoil after His battle with the powers of darkness, and which He freely distributes to us as the Captain of our salvation. Still more particularly, they are the victory over sin and death, life and peace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and plentious redemption. They are glory, honor, immortality, which come with eternal life.

To seek these things means to set your heart on them, to desire them above all else, to covet them because of their excellent worth. Moreover, to seek the things which are above means that you lend every faculty you possess to attain to the object of your desire. By implication it means that you cannot be satisfied until you are in possession of them. One who truly seeks the things above cannot be satisfied only to look for them, desire them, without ever obtaining them. On the contrary, one who seeks the things above in the truest sense of the word cannot rest until he comes into the enjoyment of them.

It is most imperative that we heed this exhortation!

Are we not still on the earth? Though it is true that in principle we are with Christ in heaven, nevertheless we very really still exist here below. Strikingly the standpoint of the apostle is also on the earth, and he points heavenward as he gives us the imperative to seek the things above. This standpoint we also must assume. We are still only strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

Besides, is it not also true that we are to a very large extent carnal? Indeed, we are still of the earth earthy. We dwell in a body of flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And in that body we are adapted only to things earthly. We still need earthly bread to eat, and earthly water to drink. We need earthly clothing, and earthly houses to shelter us from the cold of winter and the heat of summer. And to our shame, we still set our affection on these earthly things. We often find ourselves spending most

of our time and energy seeking this world's wealth. Like the children of this world, we catch ourselves digging our foundations deep. And like the fool who imagines his house shall stand for aye, we, too, lay up for ourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and destroy. Especially is this true in times of affluence, and material prosperity. We forget that we live in a tent, and as the builders of the tower of Babel, we refuse to move.

O, how we need to hear the exhortation, seek the things which are above!

But how is it possible to seek the things above?

The answer to this question resides in the fact that Christ is risen and we are raised with Him!

Glorious reality!

Christ is risen from the dead!

Though it appeared that He was swallowed up by the power of darkness, He was taken by wicked hands and nailed to the accursed tree. There after hours of agonizing suffering, He yielded up the ghost. And He was buried in a tomb that had been sealed by the powers of the world. Yet He is raised by the power of God. Death could not hold its prey. He broke the bands of death as slender threads, and emerged on the other side of Hades triumphant over all the powers of darkness.

Amazing truth!

He did not return in the likeness of sinful flesh, but He arose in His human nature the glorious Lord of heaven and earth. Clothed was He with new, celestial, eternal life and majesty! Presently, after He had given sufficient evidences that He was raised from the dead, He ascended into the highest heavens, to the very throne of God, and was clothed with power and glory at His right hand. This latter is certainly implied in the truth that Christ is risen, because the apostle informs us that He is sitting on the right hand of God.

What makes this fact so significant is the truth that Christ was not a mere man who was risen and so highly exalted. A mere man could avail us nothing. Enoch and Elijah, who also ascended to heaven, were mere men. You may indeed marvel at the wonder of their translation. Yet, after you have finished with the consideration of this wonder, you and I would still find ourselves in the midst of the earth; and as far as we are concerned, nothing is changed.

But that it is Christ that is raised, carries with it all the significance! For He is anointed Servant of God Who was appointed and qualified to deliver God's people from the power of sin and death, and by Whose power we are raised also to the highest heavens. He is the Head of all the elect of God Who is so highly exalted!

Because He is the Head of His people, we are inseparably united with Him. This the testimony of all Scripture. He is the vine, we are the branches. He is the Head, we are the members of His body. He is the Bridegroom, we are His bride. By a mystical and spiritual union we are inseparably one with Him: a union which was an eternal reality in the counsel and purpose of God when He chose us in Him, and a union which is reality also in time. So true is this that the Scriptures inform us that when Christ was crucified, we were crucified with Him; when Christ died, we died with Him; when Christ arose, we arose with Him; when Christ ascended into heaven, we ascended with Him.

Undoubtedly, it is to this the apostle refers when he says in the text: Seeing that you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. No more than it is possible for the body of our flesh to live when it is severed from the head, no more can the body of Christ live were it severed from the Head, Christ Jesus. But the latter can never happen. By the bond of election, and by the bond of living faith, we are connected to the Head in Whom is all our life and well-being. In Him are all the blessings of salvation, and with Him we must seek them.

Though it is true that as far as our physical being is concerned we are still on the earth and often overwhelmed with care and anxiety over the earthly things, in principle and spiritually this is no longer true. We are in heaven with the risen and exalted Christ. And only because of this, is it possible to seek the things above.

Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God!

The apostle adds this to the exhortation as motive for seeking the things above.

Not only does this mean that Christ is merely exalted to the pinnacle of glory and honor, though this is surely implied. He has been clothed with glory and majesty. Because He so deeply humbled Himself, God has glorified Him and given Him a name which is above every name. He is crowned with authority and power, and in God's Name reigns over all things. Such is surely the significance of sitting at God's right hand. That hand, as a figure of speech, holds the sceptre, symbol of dominion and power to rule. This glory we must understand, is given to Christ in His human nature. According to His divine nature He cannot be exalted. Accordingly He has all glory and power. But it is in His human nature, our human nature, which He assumed, that He is so highly honored.

But, understand well, the purpose of His exaltation is not only that He might ascend to heaven and God's right hand to have honors conferred upon Him. Also

in His exaltation He is the Mediator of His people, representing them, and receiving for them all power, not only to reign over all things, but to disperse to His people all the blessings of salvation which He merited for them. He must serve at God's right hand also in His office as Mediator, to intercede for them with the Father, and to apply unto them all His saving grace. There He received the Spirit without measure which He pours out upon His church in heaven and on earth. There, at Father's throne, He draws His saints to Him and dispenses to them all the graces of salvation. From God the Father, through the Spirit, He must receive these graces, which He in turn gives unto them.

Do you see then, beloved, that He is with the Father to obtain these graces for us, and that we must

seek these things above where He is? You can obtain them nowhere else.

Then also the exhortation which Christ Himself expressed while in the flesh upon the earth obtains: Seek and ye shall find!

You profess that He is your Saviour, and that in Him is all your salvation?

Well, then, seek those things which are above, where He is, and you shall surely find them!

Set no longer your affection on the things below, on the earth. There is nothing here that can satisfy your soul's need. All that you need is in Him. Therefore, set your heart on the things above!

And you shall never be brought to shame!

EDITORIAL

A Step Toward A New Confession In The GKN

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

It is rather ironic, we think, that in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* of the Netherlands, where our Three Forms of Unity have been ruthlessly trampled and emasculated and where there has been no inclination whatsoever to respect and to maintain the *old* confessions, there has been discussion and action toward producing a *new* confession. Yet such is the case.

In January of this year the Synod of the GKN took a decision with respect to a draft of a "Unanimous Testimony of Faith" prepared by Dr. G. C. Berkouwer and Dr. H. M. Ridderbos. The latter had been appointed by the previous synod to prepare such a "unanimous testimony of faith," and they submitted the fruits of their labors to this year's synod. The Synod of the GKN had given these men the mandate to prepare "a unanimous testimony of faith in clear language and in connection with the questions of these times as a possible way to a new confession in fellowship of faith with the confession of the fathers."

With respect to this draft-testimony this year's Synod took a lengthy decision. We will not quote this decision, but will give some highlights of it:

1. The Synod expressed its great esteem and thanks for the manner in which Berkouwer and Ridderbos carried out their mandate.
2. The Synod expressed that this is a clear testimony of faith which is faithful to the central content of God's Word and enters into various questions of these times.
3. The Synod expressed that it is desirable that this testimony of faith, together with the section which reflects on the meaning of confessing our faith, should be spread abroad and that the churches should be encouraged to consider it extensively. This was apparently in view of the fact that Synod declared that it is not yet possible to determine whether this testimony is a way to a new confession in the church political sense of the word.
4. The Synod expressed the hope that this testimony may be of use for the confession of our Lord and Savior in our own times and in a manner which is understood by the man of today.
5. The Synod expressed its expectation that this document will serve to put the central content of the confessions of the time of the reformation in a clearer

light.

6. The Synod decided to send this testimony, along with the decisions of Synod, to: 1) other churches which have the same confessions as the GKN. 2) its sister churches in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. 3) the Council of Churches in the Netherlands and its member churches. 4) the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. 5) the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. 6) the Contact-organ of the *Gereformeerde Gezindte*.

7. Synod also decided to appoint a committee to receive and evaluate the various responses from the GKN and others, and to reflect on the question whether this testimony of faith can be a way toward the formulation and acceptance of a new ecclesiastical confession, as well as to reflect on the question of the relationship between such a new confession and the Three Forms of Unity. This committee is instructed to bring their report to the following synod.

That this is an important decision and that the draft of a "Unanimous Testimony of Faith" is an important preliminary step toward a possible new confession — these facts are rather evident. Not only is this an important matter for the GKN, but it is also a matter of great importance for every denomination which stands related to the GKN, as well as for every Reformed denomination which holds to the Three Forms of Unity with which the GKN is tampering. There are many questions to be faced in connection with this entire procedure. And there is, of course, also the question of an evaluation of this testimony itself. To some of these matters we hope to address ourselves in future editorials.

However, in order that our readers may know what we are discussing and may also have an opportunity to judge for themselves, we are reproducing in the April 15 and May 1 issues this "Unanimous Testimony of Faith." It consists of three main sections: 1. Our Christian Faith and Its Confession. 2. The Faith Which We Confess. 3. Conclusion. In this issue we furnish the first section, and in the May 1 issue we will furnish sections 2 and 3. We quote the translation prepared by the translation services of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

We will not give any evaluation at this time. We suggest that our readers evaluate this testimony for themselves as they read, keeping in mind the question whether this is actually an improvement upon our present confessions, as well as the fundamental question whether it is a *Reformed* testimony and in harmony with our Three Forms of Unity.

Section I of this draft of "A Unanimous Testimony of Faith" here follows.

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A UNANIMOUS TESTIMONY OF FAITH (a draft)

I. Our Christian Faith and Its Confession

1. Our Christian faith is *faith in God*. Unless we believe in God, we cannot believe in Christ nor be His disciples. For not only has Christ been sent to us by the Father, but He is also the way for us to the Father. However much this faith in its nature relates us to the world around us, there is no relationship which can replace or fully coincide with our attitude toward God. By this faith we know that we have been accepted by God as His children, we call on Him as our Father, we may place an unlimited trust in His power and love, and we understand ourselves as placed with our whole life in His service. Therefore the confession of our faith surpasses all the knowledge that we could possibly know or express regarding man and the world, and our confession is before all else a speaking before the face of God, such as is done in reverence, in obedience, and in deep dependence upon Him.

2. The confession of our faith is a response to that which God has revealed concerning ourselves. We do not know God from ourselves but only from His revelation. Moreover, we are not able in our confession of faith to comprehend Him in the fullness of who He is; but we believe that He is willing to enter into fellowship with us men and that for that purpose He has made us to know in a way that is sufficient and reliable. And although man by His sin and apostasy has deprived himself of the true knowledge of God, God does not leave him to himself, but continues to witness to him in many diverse ways. For not only does the reality which we observe and continue to discover display so much the traces of His power and wisdom which transcend all human understanding, that the question about God has always arisen and continues to arise in the hearts of men, but He is also not far from any man to illumine the spirit of man and to write the knowledge of His will into his heart.

God has revealed Himself supremely in the magnitude of His grace and goodness in that He, by means of the atonement, has brought back man who was estranged from Him into a saving fellowship, and in that He has made Himself known to him as a loving Father. We believe that for this purpose God made Israel to be a light of the nations by revealing to this people His saving deeds, by giving them the service of reconciliation and the prophetic Spirit and to cause Jesus Christ, Who by His coming into the world lightens every man, to be born from them.

All that we as a Christian church confess concerning the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is therefore grounded entirely in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the One Sent by the Father

and the Son of God. Therefore we speak of our universal and Christian faith and thereby signify that the things which we confess as the content of our faith are given to us in Him, and that we have received and desire to confess this in fellowship with all those who believe in Him.

3. We believe that God has revealed the will and the council of His redemption not only in various ways in the history of Israel, but that He has also given us, through the service of man, the witness of this revelation in *the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* in an undeceivable and unshakable foundation for the church, so that it can build and establish its faith upon it. For God has from ancient times called and endowed man by His Spirit in order that by their word he might communicate, interpret His word in a clear, reliable, and authoritative way and commit it to writing for the church of all ages.

We do not deny that these Scriptures, because they were written by men who lived in widely differing ages and were also equipped with greatly differing aptitudes, education, and knowledge, bear traces of their humanness in various ways, and that we can understand the Scriptures only by due consideration of them. We refer hereby not only to the foreign languages in which the Scriptures were written and the various forms of literature (history, psalmody, wisdom, prophecy, apocalypse) in which they have obtained shape and which must be explained according to their own nature, but also to the fact that the contents of the Scripture is determined in various ways by the circumstances and the age in which the writers of the Bible lived. For the fact that the writers were driven and guided by the Spirit of God does not mean that they were relieved of all their own natural limitations. In this connection it is also of particular importance to discern *the purpose* for which Scripture has been given to us and under which viewpoint we must search and understand it; namely, not in order to give infallible divine information concerning all kinds of arbitrary matters, but to make us understand how God wants us to know Him rightly and to fear Him. Therefore we welcome all research and study of the Scriptures which help us better understand their place and background in history and their nature and purpose.

But we reject every thought that the Scriptures, because they have thus been committed to writing by man, are no longer the Word of God for us. For the knowledge of the true God comes therein to us so clearly and powerfully in its enlightening and saving effect that the Scriptures need no other testimony than that they themselves contain to be the lamp which God has given for our feet and the light upon our path. We are the more convinced of this because Christ Himself has thus taught us to understand and

to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God. For in His entire earthly ministry He has recognized and fulfilled the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the prophetic Word of God that relates to Himself, and has made the testimony of His apostles to be the foundation of His church, and promised to build His church upon it.

Therefore we believe that the Church has rightly recognized the Scripture as the Word which God has given to it, and has with good discernment received the books of the Old and New Testament as holy and canonical and has distinguished them from all other human books. Also at the present time the church has no other ground and guideline for her faith than this Holy Scripture. We cannot truly confess our faith in any other way than in reverent subjection to this Word, and to this Word alone.

We hereby recognize that the discernment and understanding of the Scripture as the Word of God does not lie in our own power or freedom, as if men had the Word of God at their command. Much rather, we confess that we are dependent for this discernment and understanding upon the guidance and illumination of the Spirit Whom Christ has promised to the church and upon His testimony in our hearts. However this does not mean that the Scripture itself is unclear in its intention or that the key to its understanding and the ground of its authority does not lie in itself. But that which is of God can only be known from God, and it is by His Spirit that God makes us understand His Word, and that Christ will lead His Church into all truth by the light of the Scripture.

4. We believe that God has revealed Himself to us in Christ so that we may attain to the purpose for which He has created us and placed us in the world, namely to live as *true men* before His face and in fellowship with one another. For even as we cannot live without the light of the sun, so we know that we are lost in the darkness without the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Only in that knowledge do we learn the meaning and the purpose of our own lives, do we view our neighbor and the world in which we live in the proper light; and do we understand, when not attaining to this goal the nature and the seriousness of our failing not only as a lack in ourselves or as a shortcoming toward other people but as alienation from and sin against God our Creator. Only in this light are we able to find again the way back and learn to understand that only by the forgiving and liberating grace of God can we live in the freedom of the children of God.

Therefore we in confession of our faith do not put ourselves outside the common life of everyday nor do we separate ourselves from the world in which we

live, but we try in our confession to bear testimony of that which is necessary and even indispensable for every man, old or young, learned or unlettered, or whoever he may be. That which we have learned to understand in subjection to the Scriptures we also confess as the liberation and the joy of our life, as the

light in our darkness, as the power in our weakness, as our only comfort in life and in death. Thus we in the confession of our faith give praise to God; we give an account of the hope that is in us; we put ourselves in the fellowship with the entire church on earth and we also seek to win others to the faith.

All Around Us

Prof. H. Hanko

World Home Bible League and "Reach Out"

There was a time when the World Home Bible League was instrumental in placing Bibles in many places and distributing translations of the Bible throughout the world. Through their efforts the Bible was placed in the hands of countless people. This work was supported by many of our people and collections were taken for this work in many Reformed Churches. But this organization is no longer worthy of our support. I quote from a recent article in *Calvinist Contact*.

Churches in the United States and Canada are joining hands with the World Home Bible League in an effort to place a copy of *Reach Out*, the New Testament portion of *The Living Bible*, in every motel room on this continent, according to the Rev. John De Vries, international director of WHBL.

The project is about two years old at this point and has been set up in 32 states and three provinces. Of the 1,200,000 motel rooms in the United States, 200,000 have had *Reach Out* placed in them.

Paradoxically, the aim of the project is to have transients take the New Testament with them, and to encourage Bible reading in this way. One month this summer 100,000 copies of the modern English New Testaments were taken by tourists. Printed on most hotel Bibles are the words "Please Leave in Hotel Room."

By the end of 1974, DeVries says the league plans to have contacted all the U.S. motels. An annual turnover of more than three million New Testaments is anticipated.

Inserts in each copy of *Reach Out* invite tourists to take the New Testament with them and to enroll in an interdenominational Bible correspondence

course sent out from the local church which distributes the Bibles. Over 10,000 people enrolled in the Bible course in that month.

The World Home Bible League is an interdenominational Bible distribution agency with headquarters in South Holland, Ill. It was founded in 1928. Today its annual budget is more than three million dollars, and the league is working in 50 countries around the world.

The World Home Bible League, in cooperation with the New York Bible Society, is responsible for the publication of 95 per cent of the translations produced by Wycliffe Translators.

During the next five years the World Home Bible League is undertaking a campaign to bring a gospel portion to every literate person in India. The organization is a service agency which works through existing churches and mission points.

The trouble is that *Reach Out* is not the Scriptures. It is a bad paraphrase of the Word of God which distorts and corrupts the Scriptures and alters the meaning of the Scriptures at many key doctrinal points. It is nothing less than a work of Satan. And it is a very clever work at that. It leaves people with the impression that they have in *Reach Out* the very Word of God when, as a matter of fact, they have the words of men and a corruption of God's Word. It gives a sense of piety to those who use it when as a matter of fact they cannot learn from it what God has revealed. It destroys by a clever device of Satan.

The World Home Bible League ought not to distribute this book. But as long as they do, God's people cannot support their labors.

Trouble In The Armstrong Empire

The Armstrong Empire is in serious trouble. Herbert W. Armstrong and his son Garner Ted are the leaders of what has become known as the World Wide Church of God. They have built a large and wealthy empire which includes an international radio and television network over which their views are propagated, two colleges in California and England with a branch in Texas, the publication of slick magazines and pamphlets which have a world-wide subscription list, and countless enterprises of one sort or another.

They are a sect which denies many of the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures and maintains a salvation by works, a Saturday Sabbath, a British-Israeli view of history, and a post-millennial view of the kingdom.

The trouble started when Garner Ted was temporarily suspended from the work last year for

alleged adultery. Since then a large number of ministers and people have broken away from the sect. They charge the sect with many faults. They charge that Herbert Armstrong, the leader of the sect, is an autocrat in doctrine and will allow not even the slightest deviation from his personal position. They charge that huge amounts of money are squandered by the leaders who live sumptuous lives, fly all over the world in privately owned jets, use the money donated by tithing for their own personal fortunes.

It is not surprising that such troubles should beset the empire. The movement is, after all, a sect. And there is no other explanation for a sect than that some charismatic leader leads thousands down the trail of his own imaginary doctrines and bilks thousands of their money for purposes of personal gain. It is in the nature of a sect to be this way, for there can be no devotion to God and to His truth.

Troubles In Concordia Seminary

We have reported in these columns from time to time the troubles which have engulfed the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. These troubles center about a battle between liberals who deny the infallibility of Scripture and introduce higher critical methods of Scriptural interpretation into the Church and the conservatives who desire to remain faithful to the creeds of the Lutheran Church.

The controversy reached a climax of sorts last summer in New Orleans where the annual convention produced a major victory for the conservatives. Dr. Preus, the president of the Synod, has now made it his business first of all to settle the problems in Concordia Seminary in St. Louis which is, in a sense, the center of liberal theology. The president of the Seminary, Dr. John Tietjen, has been dismissed as a first step in "cleaning house".

It is this dismissal which has sparked the latest

conflagration and has brought the church to the brink of a split. Nearly all the faculty, some 48 professors, and nearly all the student body, some 500 students, support Tietjen and have boycotted the Seminary. The school has since been reopened with a sharply reduced faculty and student body, but the protesting professors and students have opened a Seminary in exile on the campuses of two near-by institutions: The Jesuits' University of St. Louis and the United Church of Christ's Eden Theological Seminary. Both schools will grant theological degrees to the Lutheran students. The professors and students call their seminary "Seminox" (Seminary-in-exile), while the conservatives call it "Seminox" (Seminary-in-opposition).

The burning question is now whether these students who graduate from the Seminary in exile will be eligible for pastorates in the Missouri Synod churches.

Berkhof On Christology

In the November 6 issue of the "R.E.S. Newsletter" an article appeared in which the views of Dr. H. Berkhof concerning the person and natures of Christ were discussed. We quote the article.

(Grand Rapids) Dr. H. Berkhof set the theme for the European Area Council of World Alliance of Reformed Churches by raising once again Christ's

challenge: "Who do you say that I am?" He emphasized the need to express the uniqueness of Jesus and His resurrection in contemporary terms. We create unnecessary offence by continuing to formulate our confession in terms drawn from Greek/Hellenistic thought. Dr. Berkhof especially focused his criticism on the Chalcedon Creed (451 A.D.). The terms used there were drawn from a

philosophical climate that was above all interested in the being of things. Nowadays we think in terms of 'function'. We do not ask what something IS, but what it DOES. What does Jesus as liberator do in our world?

To this end, Dr. Berkhof emphasized the modalities of service, powerlessness, and suffering as the way in which God is involved in this sinful world. Berkhof's personal answer to the question posed by Jesus was: "You are the true man, as God intended man to be from the beginning: the true obedient Son, the Man of Love, the one who was willing, taking the full consequences, not to maintain his life, but to lose it for others, and who by that exceptional life of love and obedience started in our world the counter movement of resurrection."

Dr. Berkhof's address aroused extensive comment, especially (in the) *Gereformeerde Weekblad*, a church periodical in the Netherlands. Both Klaas Runia and

J. Helderman took issue with the way Dr. Berkhof played off function overagainst being or essence. Nor did they think it fair to reduce the statements of Chalcedon regarding Christ's nature (true God and true man; two natures in one Person) to the terms in which they were framed. Conceding that the terms of Chalcedon are by no means sacred, Runia persists in asking whether Berkhof's "functional" answer preserves adequately the confession of Christ's deity. Runia detects an emphasis on the Jesus of the Gospels at the cost of the apostolic witness concerning Him. This results in losing sight of what theologians have called the pre-existence of Jesus. How does the view of Jesus as the eternal Son of God who became man for our sake fit into the new Christology?

Klaas Runia discusses this whole problem in an article which appeared in *Christianity Today*. We shall have to wait till our next issue to discuss this matter further.

The Standard Bearer in Retrospect

Rev. G. Van Baren

(A well-known writer in the Standard Bearer yet today is the Rev. J. A. Heys. In earlier issues of the magazine, and until recently, he wrote for the rubric, "In His Fear". The Rev. J. Heys has been known for the clever titles of his articles as well as for the striking turn of the phrase. With these, he drives home the point of the Word of God to which he would call our attention. In the Standard Bearer of April 1, 1953 appears another of such articles. We present it both as representative of many others, but also as one which teaches a lesson we need know especially today.)

THAT FIFTH SPARROW

Rev. J. A. Heys

Two plus two are five.

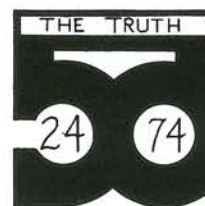
If your child came home from school with that kind of arithmetic, you would not be surprised to find a low mark on his report card. If he were actually taught that in school by his teacher, you would make a certain visit to her and if that did not avail, to the school board for allowing such things to be taught to your child.

Two plus two are four.

That is what we have always been taught and practical life will bear out the truth of that statement. Always when we add two things to the two we

already have, we find that we have four.

And, yet, in the Scriptures we find what appears to be such a mathematical juggling. Only, this time it is not expressed by one man, but by combining the statements of two of the writers of the gospel narrative there seems to be a mathematical error. Matthew in the tenth chapter of his gospel narrative quotes Jesus as saying in verse twenty-nine, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Luke, however, differs from Matthew and quotes Jesus in the sixth verse of the twelfth chapter of his gospel narrative as asking, "Are not five sparrows sold



for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"

Two sparrows for one farthing. Five sparrows for two farthings. It does not add up correctly. So it seems; but the faulty mathematics is only apparent; it is not real. It looks as though Luke must have misquoted Jesus, for we would not dare to ascribe such faulty arithmetic to Jesus, would we? Yet rather than to misquote Jesus, Luke brings to our attention by a faithful quoting of Jesus' words a wonderful and comforting truth which strengthens those who live "in His fear".

Two sparrows for one farthing. For two farthings we will then get four sparrows, except for the fact that he who buys two farthings' worth gets a *bargain*. Or does he? We are accustomed (or we were) to the 5¢ a bottle soft drink that you could buy also at the rate of 6 for a quarter. You get the sixth one free.

That is not quite the case here, however. A farthing was the smallest coin used in the land of Palestine in Jesus' day. And that poor soul, who had but a farthing and desired a little meat for his nourishment, could buy two sparrows for the little flesh that was upon them. Notice, however, that he would get two sparrows for that farthing. They were not sold for a farthing apiece. Nay, so little value was there attached to a sparrow that two had to be sold for the smallest piece of money known in that land. Even then, a man did not get his money's worth, and when he purchased two farthing's worth, that fifth one would be added, not as a special bargain price, not as an inducement to buy them in a larger number for the benefit of the man that sells them (that is our modern bargain sale motive) but to make the deal a little more just.

So little was the life of a sparrow valued in that day! Today you could not shoot them down for that price. The little pellet required to bring down such a little creature would well nigh cost that price, to say nothing of the middle-man's profit. We may make the observation that the word sparrow as used here may refer to a large variety of small birds and could easily be a creature somewhat larger than the English sparrow we have in our land. And we may observe, further, that these creatures were caught in a snare rather than shot at individually. Even then, the context of this saying of Jesus shows that the life of such little creatures was of little value in man's estimation.

Man would hardly give his smallest coin for *two* of these creatures. And Jesus divides yet these two and says that *one* of them cannot fall without our heavenly Father's will. The man with a farthing in his pocket would refuse to buy one sparrow at such an inflated price of one farthing apiece. But the Lord

does not charge even that sparrow a farthing for all the life and food it has received and enjoyed. And its life cannot be taken from it, unless God brings it into that snare. Sparrows often die also outside the snare, the trap set by man. They die in such a way that man is not even benefited. They die so that man cannot even use its flesh for food. That fall to the ground also comes by God's appointment. And until the time that He brings about its fall to the ground as a dead creature, it will receive all its food, its feathery coat to keep it warm, its life and its song from God. A pest to man! Lightly esteemed by man! And yet it is the object of God's care through *all* its life.

What a lesson for us who so frequently waver in our calling to live "in His Fear"!

Compared with that little feathery friend, what a far more important creature on this earth is man! Man is a rational, moral creature. He was created so that he could live in God's fear. He could know God. The sparrow cannot know the God that feeds him. Put your bird-feeding station in your yard and fill it daily with bread. The sparrows will begin to pay you regular visits. They will even swoop down out of the trees and from off the roof tops to consume it the moment you have withdrawn a few feet from the feeding station you have erected. They will begin to look for you to come out and fill their "plates" with food. More than this they will never see. God, Who gave it to you to give to them, they cannot see. But man can, and even the unregenerated by the testimony of the Spirit in their hearts knows that there is a God.

Still more, how much more precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints! If He watches over the needs of the little sparrow that is so lightly esteemed — if not despised by man — surely, He watches constantly over those whom He has chosen in Christ whom He has formed for Himself to show forth His praises, for whom He sent His only begotten Son and who according to His word are the very salt of the earth.

That the unbeliever is filled with fear and terror; that despair grows in his breast; that the nervous tension in their lives is mounting is to be understood. They do not live in the fear of the Lord. For them this life is *everything*. And when a *few* things, or even one thing of the present seems to be slipping away, they are filled with worry and fear. Life becomes one extended struggle to hold on to that which can be enjoyed in this life and a losing battle to stave off the things which take the joy out of living here below.

But what about you, the reader of these lines? Do you appreciate this care of the Almighty for the minutest of things? You worry and are anxious. Your soul is heavy and troubled. Is it because you doubt

God's power or because you doubt His love? Indeed, the days in which we live are filled with uncertainties and there is no hope that they will get any better. The Scriptures tell us that we are yet in the *beginning* of sorrows. If we may borrow a colloquial expression, we haven't seen anything yet.

Surely you do not say of the things that we do see and experience that things must have slipped somewhat out of God's control. You do not doubt His power to control all things. But, then, your heart has not throbbed with the complaint that surely He does not care about you and His church, has it?

"Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell" is what Jesus said in connection with that quotation about the fifth sparrow. Fearful men are coming. Fearful men have it in their hearts to bring bloodshed and extreme persecution upon the Church of God. And well may the flesh tremble at the awful things that the future contains for the Church of God as far as the flesh is concerned. But live in His fear, not in the fear of men. Believe Him. Hold firmly in faith's hand the promises He has given you. Put *all* your trust in Him and not in how many atomic bombs we have above the number possessed by opposing nations.

Fear Him! And that means that no matter how fierce the pressure may become that men may bring to bear upon us, we still confess Him. He who fears man will in that fear of man disobey the living God and denounce Him either by word or deed. Fear men, and you will go the way man dictates; you will join with him in his godless activities, you will say "no" to God that you may say "yes" to godless men! Fear

God, Who after killing is able to cast into hell, and you will walk His way. You will dare to differ with godless men. You will say "no" to man and "yes" to God.

Fear Him, and you are not forgetting Him! And remembering Him you will remember that He does not even forget the little sparrow upon the housetop and that you, being more precious than many sparrows, will also be remembered by Him. And you will have peace. In His fear there is peace. He who lives in the fear of man knows nothing but terror, anxiety and a troubled soul. Men you cannot trust. Men depend upon the Living God for their strength and life, and outside of Him they are as helpless as they would make you believe that you are over against their power. One of their leaders once said during World War II that all we needed to fear was fear itself. How wrong! Fear God! The only ONE — we must never fear things!! — we must fear is God. We must fear to fear men. We must, indeed, be afraid to fear men.

Fear men, and you will still see sparrows fall and fear your own fall. Fear God; believe in Him; put all your trust in Him, and you will understand that He Who causes that sparrow to fall considers you to be more precious in His sight, that He loves you and that when it pleases Him to take your life from you, He does it *in love*. Live in His fear and you will live in the consciousness of His love. You will have peace of heart and mind in the midst of war and persecution.

Remember that fifth sparrow. God does. And let that assure you that He remembers you also in love.

Have YOU responded
to the "One Thousand" Drive?
If not, do so today!

IN HIS FEAR

Two By Two?

(conclusion)

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

In the last article on the above subject, a brief history of Synodical decisions (1946-1953) was presented. It was discovered that although one Synod decided it was Biblically correct to have two missionaries laboring together in the same field, a later Synod determined that this was not a principle and did not set forth an inflexible rule for mission work throughout the present dispensation. In this article several passages from the Book of the Acts will be examined and some practical remarks will be offered. It is hoped that these observations may be useful as our churches busy themselves with the preaching of the Gospel to all creatures.

The Synod of 1953 is correct when it decided that the Word of God does not set before us the principle that missionary work must always be conducted by the labors of two men working together. This conclusion is based on the following considerations:

1) It is simply a fact that in the early church men called of God worked among the Gentiles singly. Philip preached in Samaria and after having preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, returned to Samaria, preaching in all the cities until he came to Caesarea. Peter ministered to various quarters of the land. Barnabas was sent out by the churches as far as Antioch. Care must be taken in determining what is a principle: the above mentioned labors took place after the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and were true missionary labors.

2) The Book of the Acts certainly gives us principles which determine church organization, life, and work. There must be ministers, elders, and deacons. And the Church of Christ must engage in the proclamation of the Gospel to others. The oft-quoted passage, Acts 13:2: "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," makes it clear that the Spirit of the ascended Christ is active in missions. The Holy Spirit is active in these ways: He determines who shall serve on the mission field, He provides the Church which He indwells with open doors or opportunities, He

makes the preached Word a power unto life and unto condemnation, and thus He works to bring forth the two-fold fruit of faith and unbelief. But to draw from this text a *principle* that He wills to use *two men* for this work is not valid. One could as well conclude from Acts 6:3-5 that there must always be seven deacons, and unless there are seven there can be no congregation.

Nevertheless, there are several *practical* reasons which make the presence of more than one missionary almost mandatory. It is, perhaps, the pressing nature of these practical reasons that have led some to argue along the line of principle. Undoubtedly these are the reasons for which the majority of early missionary work was accomplished through the labors of several. We do well, as churches, to consider them seriously today.

1) That the truth is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses is taught in Scripture as an enduring fact. Jesus Christ is the faithful Witness (Rev. 1:7), the Holy Spirit witnesses (Acts 20:23), and therefore the "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations . . ." (Matt. 24:14). On the mission field the truth must be established. This can be viewed from two points of view. The more important aspect is that the truth as it is in Christ, the Gospel of salvation in His blood and all related doctrines, must be established; this is saying more than that it must be preached. When the doctrines of the Gospel are preached, taught, discussed, they are seldom readily received: questions are asked, objections are raised, one meets with a great deal of skepticism as well as unbelief. The word of a man is not readily accepted. True, with some, the word of Moses and the prophets wouldn't change that. We don't have in mind that unbelief. We have in mind the situation where a person does not believe that such and such is the teaching of the Word. And even the situation (which I met on the field last summer) where a person does not believe that what a man says is actually the

teaching of the church he represents. In both such cases the truth is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. When confronted by the combined testimony of two missionaries, testimony which not only agrees formally but which also enlightens and enriches, both saved and unsaved gainsayer are silenced.

There is also the aspect of establishing the truth concerning the field itself. What is the true picture, an accurate evaluation, of the area in which the work is being carried out? Is this type of thing not subject to various interpretation? Ought a mission committee make far-reaching decisions on the basis of one man's report? Would one man actually want to bear this great burden? Clearly a report back to the churches that is based on the experience and observation of two or three, that reflects their discussion and agreement, is a safer instrument on which to base decisions of continuation, expansion, or closing. This is not meant as criticism of any past actions: but all can recognize the necessity for the avoiding of error in judgement and the ascertaining of truth.

2) In close connection with this, there is the practical matter of the living and working context of the missionary himself. From the Jamaica experience to date, the extreme loneliness of the missionary there stands out. How far he was from the churches and its life, how difficult and discouraging were the labors, how he was mistrusted, misrepresented, and misused. And how often did the former missionary to Jamaica plead for a fellow-laborer! It must be remembered that the situation on the field is often such that there is no one with whom to share burdens and have fellowship. Yes, the missionary lives with Christ and prays. But that which is in Christ also becomes ours through fellow-laborers. Do we in the states not long for the meetings of Classis in order to see and speak with one another? A lone missionary is burdened with a wide range of labors, the necessity to make many important decisions, and much discouragement. It is well that these things be shared! It is even possible that with such an outlook, when there is a determination to place *laborers* in the field, the office of missionary will more readily be filled. Does not the character of the call change somewhat if the one considering it knows that he will be joined by a colleague, the Lord willing?

3) Finally, there are many cases in which the work itself demands more than one man. Perhaps two missionaries are not needed to work in the villages which dot the plains of the Dakotas. But what about the opportunities we have to work among the millions in Philadelphia and Houston? It was my experience that there was so much to do in Houston that the days were not long enough. Of course, this subject involves us with our conception of what the

work *is*! It is troubling to hear that the audiences at our worship services in Houston are about half of what they numbered last fall. It is troubling to discover that *no new families* are being added there. What is our conception of the work? Is it merely to go into an area and preach to those who have called for help, and perhaps visit a few relatives of them? How do we know that there are not many more in that vast city who are not destined to become Reformed believers with us? And the basic question, of course is: how do we know that there are not many there who must be saved from damnation through the Gospel? There is such a thing as setting our sights too low, of saying to ourselves that the church is always small, the truth is never popular, and we must not expect to be overly successful! And then with that negative attitude we go into an area, we labor, and sure enough . . . it happens that way! We have got to pound the sidewalks with our wonderful Protestant Reformed truth of the Scriptures. We have got to knock on apartment doors, which house forty per cent of the populace of Houston, with our literature and with a sincere invitation to come worship with us! God will do the winnowing so that those who ought to be saved are added to the church, and those for whom the Gospel is not will not come or will not remain. Jesus tells His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." It is with the above in mind that we believe the work needs two men.

This doesn't mean that they can never work apart, or that every visit must be made by both, as some seem to have thought. It does mean that they make big plans, divide the work, and set about doing it. And then they will have each other for advice and encouragement!

Let the designated Consistory continue to call men to be home missionary until the Lord separates one unto the work. And when that favorable response is received, let this Consistory (with mandate) continue to call until that lone man has a fellow-labourer. And the churches? Let them continue to pray the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.

The past five Synods have made commendable progress in the area of seminary instruction. We have a third professor of theology, the preseminary department has been instituted and is being expanded, and this work prospers in new facilities! Praise the Lord! Perhaps the next number of years can be emphatic of mission work. Let there be at Synod free, far-ranging discussion on every possible aspect of this work. Let us bend a bit to include those things not touched upon by agenda reports. And let us place ourselves, our churches, our wealth, at the disposal of the Lord Christ, willingly.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Divinely Decreed Distinction

Rev. John A. Heys

Noah sinned and did so in a way that publicly introduced into the new world the sins for which God had destroyed the old world. His three sons were aware of his sinfulness. One responded in delight, the other two with sorrow before God and profound respect for their father.

Waking up out of his drunken stupor Noah knew what his three sons had done. And this means that he also understood what he had himself done, and the wickedness of it. God revealed both of these items to Noah. Being dead-drunk he saw neither what Ham did nor how Shem and Japheth had covered him in his shame. God revealed that to him. And God also revealed to Noah the sinfulness of his own deed. The curse which he pronounced on Canaan makes it plain that Noah received grace from God to understand and to hate the sin he had himself so publicly committed. And then, he did not hate it simply because it was public sin, but because all things are open and naked to the eyes of the living God against Whom he had sinned.

Of Shem and Japheth Noah in the name of God declares, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem . . . God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Of Canaan he says, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." This is stated twice more when Noah says of Shem that, "Canaan shall be his servant." And, as pointed out, this same expression was used after the blessing was pronounced upon Japheth.

Now the point that stands out, in this whole prophetic pronouncement of Noah after his sin and that of Ham, is that not one word is mentioned about Ham. It is, "Cursed be Canaan," who was the youngest son of Ham. And this has led to various positions in regard to this curse. In the minds of some this is a far more severe curse than had the name of Ham been mentioned. For then it is, according to this view meant not only for Ham, who found such delight in that sin of his father, but from him down through all his sons to the very youngest of them. It was a total curse upon the whole race, or races, that would

be his descendants.

Then there is the other side that insists that Ham was an elect child of God, as well as Noah. And as Noah was forgiven and brought by God to repentance, so Ham himself was a believer who is not cursed by Noah who knew of the repentance that God had given to Ham. In his youngest son, however, Noah saw the moral weakness of Ham boldly and openly displayed, and it is for his own sins (not those of his father, Ham, for God never punishes the children for the sins of the father) that Noah pronounces the curse, as guided by the Spirit, upon Canaan alone.

We might interject here a little stress on what was just said. That Ham need not be considered a reprobate has for its basis the fact that his sin was no greater than Noah's, who certainly in Hebrews 11 is pictured and listed as one of the giants of faith. And the number seven need not exclude Ham. Eight souls were saved in the ark. We need not take one of them away in order to hold to the symbolism of the number seven, the number of God's covenant. Every time the number seven is used in Scripture it does not have that symbolism any more than every time we read of the number three, it refers to the Triune God. And according to Genesis 17:12 a covenant son had to be circumcised when he was *eight* days old and not seven. According to Exodus 26:25 there were to be in the tabernacle, the symbol of God's covenant with His people, "eight boards and their sockets of silver. . . ."

And as far as *all* the descendants of Ham coming under this curse to be *servants* to Shem and Japheth, history itself shows that this is not true. The second son of Ham was, according to Genesis 10:6, Mizraim, and his descendants are the Egyptians who have never served Shem and Japheth, while Shem's descendants were for four hundred years in the land of Egypt and under some of Egypt's very cruel, hopeless servitude.

By the same token, all of the descendants of Shem were by no means blessed by God; and some of them, in fact, crucified the very Christ!

Neither must the slavery imposed upon the African negroes be cited as a fulfillment of this prophecy. They are *not* descendants of Canaan, though they are of Ham. And white races have been in slavery as surely as part of the black races were. And our missionary to Jamaica, the Rev. Lubbers, used to tell these descendants of Ham whose skin is of various shades of darker color than ours — black is not the word for it; neither is colored, for we also are colored people with the color of pink shining through our skin — that it is not a skin problem, but a sin problem that is evidence of the curse and that must be changed.

But a little review of Bible history will show that Canaan moved after the confusion at the tower of Babel to what became known as the land of Canaan. All of Ham's descendants did not by any means or stretch of the imagination move there. God called Abraham some years later out of Ur of the Chaldees where Shem's descendants had settled; and before this the Canaanites had already begun to dig wells, plant vineyards and oliveyards, pave roads and build cities, cultivate land and prepare a land for Shem's descendants, who, in God's time would come up out of Egypt to enjoy what Canaan's children had prepared — be it unwillingly and unconsciously — for Shem and his descendants as they were now centered in Abraham and his seed. These descendants of Canaan served the Church of God in a very unique way. And the prophecy of Noah looks forward to this service they rendered by God's decree.

Shem and Japheth here do not simply stand as individuals, nor are all their descendants included in the blessing and in the service which Canaan individually or in his descendants shall give. The promise of God is always to His Church. And Canaan shall serve the Church, and that includes those of Japheth's descendants who belong to that Church.

The slavery of the negro never served in that capacity. They were made to be slaves of unbelievers, were cruelly torn from their land by unbelievers and sold for carnal reasons. That is not in the fulfillment of God's promise to His Church. And let no man sell the Holy Spirit short as though He cannot gather into the tents of Shem also those with Ham's blood in their veins, yea even with Canaan's blood in their veins.

What will you say of Rahab, a Canaanitess? What will you say of the Canaanitish woman of whom Jesus said that He had not found so great faith in Israel? What about the Ethiopian eunuch to whom Christ sent Philip? And what of Simeon called Niger (which means black and perhaps from it comes the shameful word "nigger," which surely ought NEVER to be used upon a child of God.) The curse is not,

according to the passage, a matter of color, and the curse is not removed by the change of the color of the skin. It is deliverance from the servitude of Satan, and slavery under the power of sin that is needed and that today God is pleased also to give to some of Ham's and Canaan's children.

But the slavery of the negro races surely is not the fulfillment of this prophecy also from the point of view that it was not Shem's descendants in the Old Testament dispensation who were served by them to such a special degree that God would here predict it through Noah. If any of Shem's descendants were guilty of selling the bodies and souls of the descendants of Ham in Africa for slaves, it was not the spiritual seed of Shem, and it was not the Church that had their servitude, but it was the fleshly seed, and the flesh of that seed that had this service from Ham's descendants.

But the striking element in the whole account is the sovereign decree of God that makes such a sharp distinction between four men involved in one incident, together with their descendants. Noah initiated the sin, and can be held guilty for Ham's sin. Had Noah walked as an upright example for his son, his son would not have committed the sin of calling his brothers to enjoy with him the evils of the first world. But no curse is pronounced upon Noah. Instead he may with joy pronounce a blessing upon his son Shem that signifies all the covenant blessings being upon him and his spiritual seed. Through Shem, and that means through Christ, Noah himself will be blessed with the forgiveness of sins. No wonder it is that he says, "Blessed be the God of Shem." God be blessed for His pardoning grace and sanctifying Spirit that bought him upon his own knees in sorrow and contrition for his evil deed and example before his children. And that Jehovah is Shem's God indicates that all the blessings of salvation are promised to Shem and to his spiritual seed after him. Here the covenant line will be found until that day when Japheth's children shall also be gathered into that same temple of God — here called the tents of Shem. And the word enlarge can mean persuade, that is, convert and bring to trust in this same God.

But were Noah and Shem and Japheth in themselves any different or better than Ham's youngest son would soon reveal himself to be? Why the distinction made? Noah sins. Ham has pleasure in them that do such things and is led by Noah into sin. Ham's youngest son progresses in evil beyond this and without any repentance or concern. That Shem and Japheth receive a reward of grace for their work is not hard to understand. But Noah goes scott free?

Divinely it was decreed that Noah should be set aside for salvation, now not by the waters of the

flood and in an ark, but by the blood of the cross of Christ and in the mercy and grace of a sovereign God. We are reminded of Paul's words to the Thessalonians in II Thessalonians 2:13, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God, for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." For there you have it. God made a distinction eternally, and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us according to that distinction.

And who shall say that God may not deal with two sinners in two different ways? Who will find fault

with the divine Potter? Well, you may not tell Him what He may or may not do. You may not tell Him whom He may elect and that He may not reject. The decree to distinguish between His creatures belongs to the Creator. However, it is not an unjust distinction that He makes. It is not measuring with two rods. He is righteous in all His ways. It is the distinguishing grace of God's sovereign predestination that has Noah chosen in Christ and that Canaan has rejected. It is a divine decree that makes distinction between sinners. And because according to this eternal distinction Noah is in Christ and Canaan is not, there is forgiveness for Noah and a curse upon Canaan in strict righteousness.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

If Ye Be Willing

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

Come you now, and argue together, saith Jehovah: if your sins were made as crimson, as snow they will be made white; if they were caused to be red as crimson, as wool they will be. If ye be willing, and hear, the goodness of the land ye shall eat. But if ye refuse and rebel, by the sword ye shall be eaten: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah opens with the old heavens and earth, and closes with the new heavens and the new earth. It treats of the whole intervening history of the church from the beginning of time to its end and to eternity. The book has a very sad and dark beginning, exposing the ingratitude, and incorrigibility and criminal immorality of the rulers and people. But Isaiah foretells a blessed end of glory and covenant fellowship in the New Creation.

The picture is so deplorable because Israel belonged to the Lord more than their cattle belonged to them. Yet Israel did not serve the Lord nearly so well as their cattle served them. Their sins had degraded them to a lower than animal level. The cup of iniquity had filled up to nation-wide extent: "Ah, sinful nation!" and had developed in the line of continued corrupt generations until the whole nation was a seed of evildoers. Now the point is reached where the Old Testament church, for the most part, is beyond the means of reformation. The work of reformation in the midst of the churches is always a good sign. However, in the case of many churches today, there has been no reformatory movement for generations, there is no sign of such at present, and

because of so much ingrained corruption in both leaders and people, there is no possibility that there will be!

But we can be thankful that true reformation proceeds in the line of the very small remnant, and that we have our portion in the remnant of the election of grace. God's people have ever been a very little flock. In the time of the Flood it was Noah and his family. In the destruction of Sodom, it was Lot and his. In the captivities, it was "Shear-Jashub," "a remnant shall return." It was always like this. Multitude was never a mark of the true church. The multitudes of Isaiah's day were members of Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, Jerusalem, which spiritually is Sodom. All is not Israel which is of Israel. There are two seeds in Israel: the seed of evildoers, and the holy seed (6:13). All through this prophecy these two are related as light is to darkness. Jehovah speaks to both. Read the prophecy without keeping that in mind, without seeing that there are two seeds, and confusion results. The confusion appears in Jehovah declaring that He will rescue and save His people, and in the very next breath saying that He will destroy them. Therefore, the book cannot be understood

except from the point of view of divine, absolute predestination, with its two parts, election and reprobation. This is precisely the case with the text before us. Verses 18-20. Keeping in mind the two seeds we may then easily answer the question: what part speaks He to His elect, and what part to the reprobate?

I. The Activity Explained. *"If ye be willing. . ."* First, in the light of humanistic views, this is not a request for man's consent. It is not God making an attractive offer of terms to which He would have all men accede. That would put God in the place where He would have to wait for man to act. What is it in man on which God is dependent? Is it man's sense of politeness? Does God wait for man's innate courtesy to be expressed, as in a sort of "gentlemen's agreement"? But Scripture does not picture man as a natural gentleman. Spiritually, he is enmity against God; he is dead to God. An offer to him would be useless. He has no ability to comply with an offer, nor does an offer have any enabling qualities about it. What man needs is a promise of that ability.

Nor is this a divine contrivance with conditions. According to the generalizing tendencies of Arminianism, in Scripture there are promises merely this-worldly, having nothing to do with salvation. For example, there is the promise that the disciples should find a colt tied and ready for their use (Mk. 11:2); and the promise that the men on board ship with Paul would be safe if they remained aboard (Acts 27). Beside these so called promises, so the claim is, God even promised life to the reprobate Ahab. The truth is that Jehovah merely predicted that judgment would not fall in his day; and not life, but death was predicted for him (I K. 22:28). Such error would not persist if distinction were maintained between predictions and promises. God makes predictions to the reprobate, but promises never. He makes exhortations to the reprobate, but never the promise which corresponds to the exhortation. For example, He says to the reprobate, "walk in My ways," but never promises the reprobate, "I will cause you to walk in My ways."

But, it is argued, the promise here, "ye shall eat the good of the land," is conditional, because the stipulation is there laid down, "If ye be willing and obedient," and the promise made here does not include the willingness and obedience. There is a "good" promised, and there is a condition demanded. The demand must be met before the promise can be enjoyed. The answer to this is that then the promise will never be realized, for who will or can perform the conditions? Conditional promises are of no value, and are no gospel, to dead sinners.

Also it is sometimes argued that where there is

failure to meet the conditions, that then the promise is forfeited, and so cancelled out. The demand, "be willing," and the threat, "but if ye refuse," suggest that it is in man's power to accept the proposition, or reject it. If this is true, then isn't it also true that there is the possibility (according to this Arminian thinking) that none might be willing, and that all might refuse? Then the promise of God would be frustrated. But this shall never be. The threatening, "if ye refuse and rebel," puts the situation on an "either-or" basis: it is either Christ or destruction! Either one bears the mark of the Christian, the white robe of Christ's righteousness, or the mark of anti-christ, the scarlet robe of Babylon. To refuse is the mark of the reprobate. God warns him, but makes no promise to him, no promise of cleansing under that shed blood. That promise goes to those who bear the marks of His elect, the marks of faith and obedience.

Nor is there a contradiction when the Lord says, "If ye be willing," and "it is not of him that willeth or runneth," not of man's fulfilling conditions, "but of God that showeth mercy." "So then, it," that is, electing mercy (Rom. 9:11, 15) is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God." Men have no power to run, except that "their feet run to evil" (Isa. 59:7).

Next, in the light of Scripture, consider the promise, which is not in verse 19, to be exact, but in verse 18, and it is absolutely unconditional. Following the promise is an enlargement on it, and that enlargement takes in the whole range of the promise, from the forgiveness of sins to *The Land* — the New Earth (18-19). The promise is enlarged upon with an exhortation to willingness and obedience. But the whole of Scripture, with its promise-content, sets over against its exhortations the heartening feature of corresponding promises. There is the exhortation, "walk in My statutes," and the corresponding promise, "I will cause you to walk in My statutes." (cp. Ezek. 20:19 with 36:27, and Dt. 10:6 with 30:19). There are three elements in the text, "willingness," "obedience" and "goodness;" really but two: good works and reward. Is the one a prerequisite to the other? Impossible; for both are gifts. (cp. Eph. 2:8-10). Man's willingness is the work of God. In proof of this, such texts as the following should immediately come to mind merely on reading their references. (Psm. 110:3; Jn. 1:12, 13; Phil. 2:13; Tit. 3:5; Jas. 1:18).

As for the obedience demanded, the promise makes it possible. Isaac was the child of promise. But there could be no obedient Isaac if there were no promise. Just so, no Abraham who believed God, if no promise of faith; and no willingness, nor obedience, if no promise of either! Why talk about

the activity of faith when it is only to divorce it or abstract it from that which produces it? Both the being of faith and the power of faith must remain unseparated from its source, the fountain of election. But why do some want the flowing stream, without the fountainhead? Why do they want the light of day without the sun? Why do they call the children of the promise beautiful and well-behaved, but have no praise for their mother? If men loved these virtues as much as they pretend they do, they would love the sovereign election which produces them.

II. The Ground of Its Performance. "*Come now!*" The performance of that willingness is on the ground of an efficacious summons, and not a mere suggestion left optional, for man to give his approval or disapproval of it. This is not a mere opportunity to come to the Lord to be regenerated or not to be regenerated. It is not an "invitation," followed by a "condition," a contingency dependent on a

contingency! There are no such humanistic boastings. But this summons is the plea of the shed blood of Christ. "Come now," enter into court and begin the trial, argue the case. Not that man, a gnat of a summer's day, may or can quarrel with God. There is no quarrel possible with the Almighty, nor does man have a legitimate case to sue out in God's court. There is no reasoning with God at the bar of justice. If He should mark iniquity in strict justice, none could stand before Him. There is no arguing (of *condemned* criminals!) with God on the basis of justice. Therefore, to reason together with Jehovah means to draw near to Him, mindful of the breach our sins have made between Him and us, but, nonetheless, to come, "Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me." This means that the sinner does the only reasonable thing; he throws himself on Christ's just mercy and on His merciful justice. There alone is discharge from God's court with pardon and acquittal!

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Eschatology--The First Period

(80-250 A.D.)

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Rev. H. Veldman

Discussing the history of the doctrine of the Intermediate State as confessed by the church during the early years of the New Dispensation, we were calling attention in our preceding article to the Jewish doctrine as being far in advance of heathen notions and conjectures, as set forth by Philip Schaff in his *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II. And we concluded our article with the remark that in this article we would call attention to the Talmud as it adds various fanciful embellishments, Vol. II, page 596. We now quote:

The Talmud adds various fanciful embellishments. It puts Paradise and Gehenna in close proximity, measures their extent, and distinguishes different departments in both corresponding to the degrees of merit and guilt. Paradise is sixty times as large as the world, and Hell sixty times as large as Paradise, for the bad preponderate here and hereafter. According to other rabbinical testimonies, both are well nigh boundless. The Talmudic descriptions of Paradise (as

those of the Koran) mix sensual and spiritual delights. The righteous enjoy the vision of the Shechina and feast with the patriarchs, and with Moses and David of the flesh of leviathan, and drink wine from the cup of salvation. Each inhabitant has a house according to his merit. Among the punishments of hell the chief place is assigned to fire, which is renewed every week after the Sabbath. The wicked are boiled like the flesh in the pot, but the bad Israelites are not touched by fire, and are otherwise tormented. The severest punishment is reserved for idolaters, hypocrites, traitors, and apostates. As to the duration of future punishment the school of Shammai held that it was everlasting; while the school of Hillel inclined to the milder view of a possible redemption after repentance and purification. Some Rabbis taught that hell will cease, and that the sun will burn up and annihilate the wicked.

How different is the Christian and Scriptural doctrine of the future life from all these

presentations, to which we now need not call attention. Much of the above presentation of the Talmud is pure speculation and imagination. We can understand that the severest punishment in hell is reserved for hypocrites and apostates. But we also may note in the above presentation of the Talmud that the school of Hillel inclined to the milder view of a possible redemption after repentance and purification, and that some Rabbis taught that hell will cease. This denial of the everlasting character of hell is, we know, held today among universalists and others.

Writing on the doctrine of the Intermediate State as held during these early years of the church in the New Dispensation, Rev. H. Hoeksema, in his *History of Dogma*, writes as follows:

Since the end of all things and the perfection of salvation were waiting for that final judgment the question arose even in this period concerning the condition of the souls before the resurrection. The answer which the Apostolic Fathers gave to this question was rather vague. About the place of the souls between death and resurrection they speak very little. Justin Martyr speaks of a better place for believers and a worse place for the ungodly. As to their condition, they do not teach definitely that the souls of believers immediately after death go to Heaven. They do have indeed a certain presentiment of their eternal destination and wait for the resurrection of the body. Only the martyrs are received up into Paradise immediately after death but even this Paradise must be distinguished from Heaven. This was the conception of Irenaeus, and Tertullian approximately agrees with him. The place of the dead he conceives as being in the heart of the earth. It was divided into two apartments separated from each other by a deep ravine. On the one side of this ravine was the place for the believing souls. On the other side was the fire which cannot be quenched. Far above both these two parts of the Sheol is Paradise. Thither went Christ after His death. There are Enoch and Elijah and there also the martyrs find their place until the resurrection.

The Gnostics taught that the souls of the perfect elite who are even now risen with Christ and attained to the perfect knowledge (gnosis), after death enter immediately into the fulness of glory. Others who did not reach that height of perfection in this life must pass through various stages after death until they reach that same fulness of glory. This might seem to be the beginning of the Romish doctrine of Purgatory. In fact Clement of Alexandria and Origen do speak of a certain purifying fire through which the souls of believers enter into glory. However it would be an error to find with them the beginning of the doctrine of Purgatory. It is evident from their writings that, by this purifying fire, they mean something quite different, a mystical process whereby the souls are cleansed from the defilement of sin.

Origen even refers to this fire in connection with the final destruction of the world. Of the doctrine of Purgatory, however, there is no trace in this period.

These observations of the late Rev. H. Hoeksema are verified by what Philip Schaff writes in his *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, 599 f.f., and I believe that this quotation will be of interest to our readers:

Among the darkest points in eschatology is the middle state, or the condition of the soul between death and resurrection. It is difficult to conceive of a disembodied state of happiness or woe without physical organs for enjoyment and suffering. Justin Martyr held that the souls retain their sensibility after death, otherwise the bad would have the advantage over the good. Origen seems to have assumed some refined, spiritual corporeity which accompanies the soul on its lonely journey, and is the germ of the resurrection body; but the speculative opinions of that profound thinker were looked upon with suspicion, and some of them were ultimately condemned. The idea of the sleep of the soul (psychopannychia) had some advocates, but was expressly rejected by Tertullian. Others held that the soul died with the body, and was created anew at the resurrection. The prevailing view was that the soul continued in a conscious, though disembodied state, by virtue either of inherent or of communicated immortality. The nature of that state depends upon the moral character formed in this life either for weal or woe, without the possibility of a change except in the same direction.

The catholic doctrine of the *status intermedius* was chiefly derived from the Jewish tradition of the Sheol, from the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19 sqq.), and from the passages of Christ's descent into Hades. The utterances of the ante-Nicene fathers are somewhat vague and confused, but receive light from the more mature statements of the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers, and may be reduced to the following points:

1. The pious who died before Christ from Abel or Adam down to John the Baptist (with rare exceptions, as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah) were detained in a part of Sheol, waiting for the first Advent, and were released by Christ after the crucifixion and transferred to Paradise. This was the chief aim and result of the *descensus ad inferos*, as understood in the church long before it became an article of the Apostles' Creed, first in Aquileja (where, however, Rufinus explained it wrongly, as being equivalent to burial), and then in Rome. Hermas of Rome and Clement of Alexandria supposed that the patriarchs and Old Testament saints, before their translation, were baptized by Christ and the apostles. Irenaeus repeatedly refers to the descent of Christ to the spirit-world as the only means by which the benefits of the redemption could be made known and applied to the pious dead of former ages.

2. Christian martyrs and confessors, to whom were afterwards added other eminent saints, pass immediately after death into heaven to the blessed vision of God.

3. The majority of Christian believers, being imperfect, enter for an indefinite period into a preparatory state of rest and happiness, usually called Paradise (compare Luke 23:41) or Abraham's Bosom (Luke 16:23). There they are gradually purged of remaining infirmities until they are ripe for heaven, into which nothing is admitted but absolute purity. Origen assumed a constant progression to higher and higher regions of knowledge and bliss. (After the fifth or sixth century, certainly since Pope Gregory I, Purgatory was substituted for Paradise.)

4. The locality of Paradise is uncertain: some imagined it to be a higher region of Hades beneath the earth, yet "afar off" from Gehenna, and separated from it by a "great gulf" (comp. Luke 16:23, 26); others transferred it to the lower regions of heaven above the earth, yet clearly distinct from the final home of the blessed.

5. Impenitent Christians and unbelievers go down to the lower regions of Hades (Gehenna, Tartarus, Hell) into a preparatory state of misery and dreadful expectation of the final judgment. From the fourth century Hades came to be identified with Hell, and this confusion passed into many versions of the Bible, including that of King James.

6. The future fate of the heathen and of unbaptized children was left in hopeless darkness, except by Justin and the Alexandrian fathers, who extended the operations of divine grace beyond the limits of the visible church. Justin Martyr must have believed, from his premises, in the salvation of all those heathen who had in this life followed the light of the Divine Logos and died in a state of unconscious Christianity, or preparedness for Christianity. For, he says, "those who lived with the Logos were Christians, although they were esteemed atheists, as Socrates and Heraclitus, and others like them.

7. There are, in the other world, different degrees of happiness and misery according to the degrees of merit and guilt. This is reasonable in itself, and supported by scripture.

8. With the idea of the imperfection of the middle state and the possibility of progressive amelioration, is connected the commemoration of the departed, and prayer in their behalf. No trace of the custom is found in the New Testament nor in the canonical books of the Old, but an isolated example, which seems to imply habit, occurs in the age of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabaeus and his company offered prayer and sacrifice for those slain in battle, "that they might be delivered from sin." In old Jewish service-books there are prayers for the blessedness of the dead. The strong sense of the communion of saints unbroken by death easily accounts for the rise of a similar custom among the

early Christians. Tertullian bears clear testimony to its existence at his time. "We offer," he says, "oblations for the dead on the anniversary of their birth," i.e. their celestial birth-day. He gives it as a mark of a Christian widow, that she prays for the soul of her husband, and requests for him refreshment and fellowship in the first resurrection; and that she offers sacrifice on the anniversaries of his falling asleep. Eusebius narrates that at the tomb of Constantine a vast crowd of people, in company with the priests of God, with tears and great lamentation offered their prayers to God for the emperor's soul. Augustine calls prayer for the pious dead in the eucharistic sacrifice an observance of the universal church, handed down from the fathers. He himself remembered in prayer his godly mother at her dying request.

This is confirmed by the ancient liturgies, which express in substance the devotions of the ante-Nicene age, although they were not committed to writing before the fourth century. The commemoration of the pious dead is an important part in the eucharistic prayers. Take the following from the Liturgy of St. James: "Remember, O Lord God, the spirits of whom we have made mention, and of whom we have not made mention, who are of the true faith, from righteous Abel unto this day; do Thou Thyself give them rest there in the land of the living, in Thy kingdom, in the delight of Paradise, in the Bosom of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, our holy fathers; whence pain and grief and lamentation have fled away: there the light of Thy countenance looks upon them, and gives them light for evermore." The Clementine Liturgy in the eighth book of the "Apostolical Constitutions" has likewise a prayer "for those who rest in faith," in these words: "We make an offering to Thee for all Thy saints who have pleased Thee from the beginning of the world, patriarchs, prophets, just men, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, elders, deacons, subdeacons, singers, virgins, widows, laymen, and all whose names Thou Thyself knowest."

I am sure that the reader, reading these things, must ask himself the question whether there is any connection between these views as entertained during this early period of the Christian church and the Romish doctrine with respect to purgatory. Philip Schaff asks and answers this question as follows:

9. These views of the middle state in connection with prayers for the dead show a strong tendency to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, which afterwards came to prevail in the West through the great weight of St. Augustine and Pope Gregory I. But there is, after all, a considerable difference. The ante-Nicene idea of the middle state of the pious excludes, or at all events ignores, the idea of penal suffering, which is an essential part of the Catholic conception of purgatory. It represents the condition of the pious as one of comparative happiness, inferior only to the perfect happiness after the resurrection. Whatever and wherever Paradise may be, it belongs to

the heavenly world; while purgatory is supposed to be a middle region between heaven and hell, and to border rather on the latter. The sepulchral inscriptions in the catacombs have a prevailing cheerful tone, and represent the departed souls as being "in peace" and "living in Christ," or "in God." The same view is substantially preserved in the Oriental church, which holds that the souls of the departed believers may be aided by the prayers of the living, but are nevertheless "in light and rest, with a foretaste of eternal happiness."

Yet alongside with this prevailing belief, there are traces of the purgatorial idea of suffering the temporal consequences of sin, and a painful struggle after holiness. Origen, following in the path of Plato, used the term "purgatorial fire," by which the remaining stains of the soul shall be burned away; but he understood it figuratively, and connected it with the consuming fire at the final judgment, while Augustine and Gregory I transferred it to the middle state. The common people and most of the fathers understood it of a material life; but this is not a matter of faith, and there are Roman divines who confine the purgatorial sufferings to the mind and conscience. A material fire would be very harmless without a material body. A still nearer approach to the Roman purgatory was made by Tertullian and Cyprian, who taught that a special satisfaction and penance was required for sins committed after baptism, and that the last farthing must be paid (Matt. 5:20) before the soul can be released from prison and enter into heaven.

Tertullian taught that the martyrs went at once to paradise, the abode of the blessed, and taught that in

this they enjoyed an advantage over other Christians, as we may read in Vol. III, 646, of the Ante-Nicene Fathers:

For indeed the Spirit had sent the injunction to the angel of the church in Smyrna: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Also to the angel of the church in Pergamus (mention was made) of Antipas, the very faithful martyr, who was slain where Satan dwelleth. Also the angel of the church in Philadelphia (it was signified) that he who had not denied the name of the Lord was delivered from the last trial. Then to every conqueror the Spirit promises now the tree of life, and exemption from the second death; now the hidden manna, with the stone of glistening whiteness, and the name unknown (to every man save him that receiveth it); now power to rule with a rod of iron, and the brightness of the morning star; now the being clothed in white raiment, and not having the name blotted out of the book of life, and being made in the temple of God a pillar with the inscription on it of the name of God and of the Lord, and of the heavenly Jerusalem; now a sitting with the Lord on His throne, — which once was persistently refused to the sons of Zebedee. Who, pray, are these so blessed conquerors, but martyrs in the strict sense of the word? For indeed theirs are the victories whose also are the fights; theirs, however, are the fights whose also is the blood. But the souls of the martyrs both peacefully rest in the meantime under the altar, and support their patience by the assured hope of revenge; and, clothed in their robes, wear the dazzling

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Send in names and addresses
to our Business Office;
we will send sample copies
to potential readers.

halo of brightness, until others also may fully share in their glory. For yet again a countless throng are revealed, clothed in white and distinguished by palms of victory, celebrating their triumph doubtless over anti-christ, since one of the elders says "These are they who come out of that great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For the flesh is the clothing of the soul. The uncleanness, indeed, is washed away by baptism, but the stains are changed into dazzling whiteness by martyrdom. For Isaiah also promises, that out of red and scarlet there will come forth the whiteness of snow and wool.

Of course, this idea, that martyrdom prepares the soul for immediate entrance into heaven is not sustained by the Word of God. First of all, how can one's passing through the fire of martyrdom cleanse a soul from sin? One can easily understand how such a conception can lead to a conception such as the Romish Purgatory, which teaches that the fire of purgatory cleanses a soul from sin and prepares it for its place in the perfect glory of heaven. But, in the second place, this presentation is surely a denial of the Scriptural truth that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and that no fire is needed, either of persecution or of a purgatory, to prepare us for the everlasting glory of heaven.

The doctrine of the Intermediate State also includes the doctrine of "soul-sleep," the teaching that the soul sleeps between death and the resurrection. Eusebius of Caesarea, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, the father of church history, was born about 275 or 280, and died either in 340 or 339. In his "Church History," Eusebius attempted according

to his own declaration to present the history of the Church from the apostles to his own time. He mentions a small section of Christians in Arabia who held that the soul remained unconscious from death to the resurrection. At the time of the Reformation there was such a revival of that doctrine that Calvin deemed it expedient to write an essay devoted to its refutation. The fathers, writes Hodge, say but little about Hades. According to this writer (Vol. III, 739-740), we read the following:

The fathers say but little about Hades. Hippolytus, however, gives an account of it which is in substance as follows: Hades, in which the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained, was left at the creation in a state of chaos, to which the light of the sun never penetrates, but where perpetual darkness reigns. This place is the prison of souls, over which the angels keep watch. In Hades there is a furnace of unquenchable fire into which no one has yet been cast. It is reserved for the banishment of the wicked at the end of the world, when the righteous will be made citizens of an eternal kingdom. The good and the bad, although both in Hades, are not in the same part of it. They enter the under-world by the same gate. When this gate is passed, the guardian angels guide the souls of the departed different ways; the righteous are guided to the right to a region full of light; the wicked are constrained to take the left hand path, leading to a region near the unquenchable fire. The good are free from all discomfort, and rejoice in expectation of their admission into heaven. The wicked are miserable in constant anticipation of their coming doom. An impassable gulf separates the abode of the righteous from that of the wicked. Here they remain until the resurrection, which he goes on to explain and defend.

Know the standard and follow it.

Read the STANDARD BEARER!

News From Our Churches

Calls being considered at the time of this writing are the following: Rev. G. Lanting, from Loveland; Rev. G. Lubbers, from Prospect Park; and Rev. R. Harbach, to serve as home missionary in Houston.

* * * * *

At a request from the Mission Committee, the Council of our Southwest Church decided to release Rev. H. Veldman for the four Sundays of April, in order that he might labor in Maine. And from a bulletin of First Church we learn that the Mission Committee also decided to send Rev. G. Van Baren to visit several interested families in Cleveland, Ohio.

* * * * *

Rev. Van Overloop and his family have moved into a new home. In the March 17 bulletin of Hope Church, they thanked "all those who helped them in any way to move into the beautiful, new parsonage." The old parsonage, incidentally, has been taken over by the four pre-seminary students who had previously been renting near First Church. The move puts them considerably nearer to their new classrooms on Ivanrest. Even closer to our Seminary building is the new residence of the Rector. On March 25 Professor

Hoeksema and his family moved to within a stone's throw of his lecture room.

* * * * *

It's been quite some time since correspondence received by Mr. Vander Wal has appeared in this column. It isn't that he's no longer receiving interesting response to the literature he mails; it's rather that some letters that he kindly forwarded to me have been collecting in my box. I have three of them before me now, and I notice that one dates from April of 1973. They make, however, a kind of "news" which cannot be dated. So I pass them on now, confident that you'll find them as interesting in 1974 as you would have found them in 1973.

One of the three came from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and concerned a pamphlet written by Rev. H. Hoeksema and published by the First Protestant Reformed Sunday School Mission Publishing Society. I'll quote the entire short letter: "I received a few copies of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's *The Biblical Ground for the Baptism of Infants*. One of these was a great blessing to a friend of mine who had been troubled on this matter. From the booklet, he saw the Scriptural ground for infant baptism and his whole view of this matter was changed. Thank you

(continued on back page)

IN MEMORIAM

On February 20, 1974, the Lord called home our beloved husband, father and grandfather, DICK DYKSTRA, at the age of 84 years.

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor. 5:21).

Mrs. Dick Dykstra (Kate)	Mr. and Mrs. Ben Huizenga (Clara)
Mr. and Mrs. Arie Dykstra	Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Postema (Winnie)
Mr. and Mrs. Simon Dykstra	Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Klinge (Jackie)
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Cole (Sally)	39 grandchildren
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Nyenhuis (Jeanne)	44 great-grandchildren
Grand Rapids, Michigan	

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Theological School Committee extends its heartfelt sympathy to Rev. C. Hanco and Prof. H. C. Hanco in the death of their wife and mother, MRS. C. HANKO.

May the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation," comfort them with the hope of eternal salvation for all who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Theological School Committee; Richard H. Teitsma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Hull (Iowa) Protestant Reformed Young People's Society wishes to express its sincere sympathy to their vice-president and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hoksbergen, in the loss of their infant son.

"The mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:17).

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.; Carol Van Maanen, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hull (Iowa) Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to their fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hoksbergen, on the death of their infant. May our covenant God comfort the bereaved in their sorrow and grant them His peace.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22).

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.; Mrs. Joel Kooima, Vice-all.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, on behalf of the congregation, extends its sympathy to our former pastor, Rev. C. Hanco, and his family, in the loss of their wife, mother and grandmother, MRS. JENNIE HANKO.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which also sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." (I Thess. 4:14).

Rev. M. Kamps, Pres.; Edwin B. Gritters, Sec'y.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY

The School Board and teachers of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School extend their sympathy to two of its staff members. To Mr. Fred Hanco and family in the death of his mother, MRS. CORNELIUS HANKO and to Mrs. R. Petersen and family in the death of her father, MR. CHARLES REITSMA.

"How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings." (Ps. 36:7)

Dewey Engelsma, Pres.; Clare Kuiper, Sec'y.

very much for publishing it. If you can send me a few copies, I shall be grateful — ten copies would be enough."

Another request for the Sunday School pamphlets came from Glasgow, Scotland. At Mr. Vander Wal's suggestion, I wrote the man and asked how it happened that he came upon our literature. From his prompt reply, I learned that his church (in Glasgow) has a book shop in Edinburgh. He wrote that he "happened to be in Edinburgh and in the book shop buying some books. So the assistant," he wrote, "put your pamphlet along with the books I bought and said that they got your pamphlet free and that they were giving it away free."

The pamphlet he received happened to be "The Unbreakable Bond of Marriage," another of those written by Rev. Herman Hoeksema. Our friend from Glasgow enjoyed the pamphlet and sent to us for other titles listed on the back cover. How our pamphlets got to the bookshop in Edinburgh, though, we have no idea.

Another, rather lengthy, letter came from South Wales, Great Britain. We'll lift a few interesting excerpts from it.

"As a theological student, completing a 3-year course on 5th July this year at the South Wales Bible College, I was delighted to have been introduced to your publications via a fellow student.

"Particularly helpful was the study of 'The Means of Grace' by Rev. Herman Hoeksema, and his excellent treatment 'The Biblical Ground for the Baptism and Infants.' . . .

"I trust that God will continue to encourage you in your work of putting forth, in these days of confusion, sound publications which will aid those who seek the glory of God in preaching and the salvation of many precious souls through the faithful exposition of the Holy Scriptures.

"Two acquaintances of mine would also be pleased, as I myself, to receive any literature you may have available and thus in the days ahead be able, if God so desired, to increase the circulation of your publications here.

"Again may I say how much of a blessing it was to have been introduced to your publications . . ."

D.D.

THE STANDARD BEARER

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