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Grand Rapids, Mich. on or before the fifteenth of the month preceding date of issue.
Beacon Lights is published by the Prot. Ref. Young People's Federation.
Subscription Price $1.25 per year.
Our Doctrine: A Way of Life


Some years ago I wrote an oration in which I cited various things which I believed constituted dangers to our Christian schools. Alliance with the public school, dishonesty, and conformity were among the things listed. But now, I think, although these dangers have not been removed, we must face a greater threat. And that is a spirit of worldliness, which seems to have invaded not only the school but even the church.

When a Christian student, attending a public vocational school thinks it is better for him to be in the public school system because he does not face the temptations there that he would in the Christian school, I think it is time to investigate. And such an investigation would prove that the student is not wholly mistaken in his judgment. Because we would find, under a mask of piety much corruption. And the most tragic part of the situation is that the authorities are unaware of or unwilling to remedy the evil.

A short time ago while "loafing" in the boy's room during an open period at the College I attend, we overheard some of the lower classmen discussing various movies they had seen. And it has become evident that attendance is general among the students and frequent, although it is a Christian college and there is a rule prohibiting theater attendance. Profanity is common and the general spirituality is low. A person isn't quite "right", however, if he objects to these things.

This, however, seems to be a condition all too frequent among our so-called Christian students of high school and college age. One's heart bleeds when one sees the pitiful spiritual conditions among them. The only criterions seem to be: How can we enjoy ourselves? What shall we do? The sober, level headed Christian young man and woman is almost the exception.

Even the church has not escaped. Under the impetus of war a modernization process always takes
place and it is now proceeding rapidly. Knowledge of the truth, and interest in the church is slight. People have other interests, and apart from going to service on Sunday and perhaps attending a business meeting during the week, they are content to leave well enough alone. The church as a vital living factor in their lives seems to be gone.

What is the reason? Where can we put the blame? I think the church itself must assume a good share of it. For in the preaching, and otherwise, the emphasis has tended to be placed on a system of doctrine. Especially in our own church is this true. And under this systemization many of the deeper spiritual joys have been lost. I think the situation we face today is partly the result of doctrinal preaching having "gone to seed" in practical life. On the intellectual level it is fine, but in practical life it has not been supplied.

On the other hand the home has also degenerated. How many, even Protestant Reformed families have a time set aside for devotions? How often do we discuss spiritual things? On the contrary, in our world of hustle and hurry, our homes have become merely a place to hang our hats, grab a bite to eat, and a place to hurry away from again. No longer do we find a family life of the caliber when it was centered about the sitting room table or the old coal stove. And with the sitting room table and the coal stove has gone that spiritual life founded on an integrated and devoted family life.

Not that I am pleading for a return of those relics of a bygone age but I am interested in the return of a system of doctrine to become a way of life. If anyone has received the impression that I am opposed to doctrinal preaching, he is mistaken. On the contrary, the very opposite is the truth. But I maintain we must have practicable doctrinal preaching. As faith without works is dead, so also, is doctrine, become purely intellectual, dead. Our doctrine must become, must be a way of life. It must be and it should be for us a vital, living factor, a vibrant, vigorous, pulsing thing. A determining, reckoning factor in all our life. And if it becomes thus many of the above evils will disappear. Our lives will then become consciously dedicated to God, the church will become a living reality in our lives, and our homes will again be bulwarks of truth and bastions against the storm.

Often I have looked envyingly at the so-called fundamentalist churches and wished we could have meetings with the same crowds and enthusiasm they do. I have often wondered whether we couldn't in-

(Cont. on page 16)
Our Open Forum

By the Rev. C. Hanko — Oak Lawn, Illinois

It had almost seemed as if our Open Forum, where the readers air their views, had quietly passed out of existence. In fact, the few spurts of life that it showed in the past hardly merited the right to say that it had begun to live and breathe. But we kept courage just the same. Sometimes the thought pressed to the fore that we had chosen a name for this department that sounded too aristocratic. It probably scared the readers out instead of spurring them on to send in their contributions. Something popular might be more attractive, such as “What the reader says.” And that thought keeps coming up.

But what I started out to say is this, new hope in this department has been revived, under whatever heading it may appear. This issue carries a letter from one of our supporters, not only contributing to the Open Forum, but also offering the suggestion that this department serve as a means of correspondence with our men in service. That fits perfectly with our efforts to stand by the young men in the armed forces. Just how this suggestion is to be worked out is a matter for the Federation Board to consider. But the readers must back them up, for the success of such an undertaking depends entirely on you. You must contribute regularly if we are to have a lively, worth while correspondence between the servicemen and those at home.

Be sure to watch for further developments on this suggestion.

But the main reason for calling your attention to this letter is because it raises another very timely suggestion which is worthy of our serious consideration. Do we not owe it to our men in the service to continue Beacon Lights throughout the summer months? Is it possible to do this? And how must it be done?

That is a matter which the Board cannot possibly decide alone. Arrangements must be made for
gathering material for these summer issues. The financial angle must be considered. There can be no doubt that the Board will gladly take their share of the work upon them. But they need your cooperation.

Think it over. If the suggestion appeals to you present the matter for consideration in your society. Would you be willing to give your financial support to such an undertaking? Does your society feel about it as you do? If we all show our willingness the financial angle will take care of itself.

Let the Board know what you think of it, both personally and as societies. But we must act at once, for there is no time for delay. In four weeks the last issue of the season will appear, and if no steps are taken by that time the matter will have to be dropped for this year.

The Federation has always been able to depend on your cooperation. You cannot fail them now.

Watch And Pray

It was the darkest hour ever known in the history of this world when Jesus, Himself in utter agony of soul at the anticipation of the suffering that awaited Him on the cross, addressed His disciples with the admonition, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:41.

To fall into temptation is one thing, to enter into it is quite another.

We can fall into temptation by dint of unavoidable circumstances, but we walk into it by our own volition or by failing to be on guard against it when it comes. We may find ourselves surrounded by temptations because our path of duty lies directly through the midst of them, but when we enter into them we allow ourselves to fall into their snares. To merely fall into temptation, without falling into sin, may very well be a boon to us, since we are able by grace to fight off the assaults of the devil. But when we go into temptation we are lured by the attractions of sin and drawn away by the lusts of the flesh to commit that which is evil. James tells us in his epistle (1:2,3) to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of our faith worketh patience. and
when patience has completed her work we shall be found perfect. While Jesus warns us, on the other hand, against entering into temptation because thereby we become its victims.

Who is not beset with temptations every day? Our young men in the armed forces find themselves in an environment where sin often goes rampant and the world exposes herself as she is, with her mask of outward decency torn off. Cast on their own, away from the influence of home and Church, they face their own peculiar problems and troubles alone. And unless they put forth a real effort they may even grow lax in their Scripture reading and private worship. But no less we who hold the “home front” are subject to a host of temptations in our contact with the world, with friends and associates, as well as in our own hearts. To imagine that any one of us is an exception to this rule simply means that we are deceiving ourselves and are not even on the alert for the “air raid” signal.

When temptation comes, fight it off. To enter into it means to fall into sin!

But even that warning is not altogether sufficient.

It may very well be that we know that temptation must come. We may even be determined not to be lured into its snares when it does come. By the grace of God in our hearts we may realize full well that we are sinful creatures, prone to evil and liable to be drawn into sin. We may have learned to abhor sin and to flee from it, finding our delight in the law of God according to the inward man. And our whole-hearted determination may be to never enter into temptation, so that it may be said also of us that our spirit is willing. But that does not mean that we are immune to sin.

That was also the case with the disciples. They had expressed their willingness to ward off temptations more than once before that dark night in Gethsemane. Their confession had been that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Who had the words of eternal life. Though all should forsake Him, they would never leave Him. Just a few hours before they had assured Him that they were determined to die with Him if that should prove necessary. And they meant every word of it, never more convinced of their sincerity than at that moment.

Yet the flesh is weak, far more than they themselves realized. And circumstances can so easily play upon the weakness of the flesh. As was the case in that night of horror. There was the unavoidable fact that it was late at night and they had grown weary by the many events that had al-
ready transpired. It is so very human to grow weary. And who knows but what their rest had been somewhat disturbed during the past week by the fact that the enemy was plotting to kill Him and might fall upon Him at any time unawares? There was the added fact that sorrow filled their hearts particularly after their Master plainly told them that He was to die. A deeply penetrating sorrow can have that effect that it shuts in the troubled mind in the oblivion of sleep. And a fact that they hardly realized was that Satan had chosen this very moment to sift them as the wheat, lulling them into a troubled slumber while they should have been watching with their Lord Who wrestled in agonizing prayer but a stone’s throw away.

Our flesh is not weak when it comes to committing sin. On the contrary, the lusts of the flesh are very strong, and drawn away by those lusts the flesh becomes a powerful instrument for wickedness. Just because of the sin that still wars in our members we become a ready prey to the temptations of the devil. Our flesh finds sin very appealing and has its excuses ready to soothe any prickings of conscience. In the hour of temptation our flesh is weak before the assault of the temptor, for it is prone to evil.

The spirit may be ever so willing, but the flesh is weak.

Watch, therefore, and pray.

Mere watching is not enough. Anyone who depends on nothing but his own will power does not realize the weakness of his flesh. Childhood training and fear of consequences cannot prove strong enough to keep our feet from the slippery paths of the transgressor. Only God can keep our souls. Only grace can make us strong. Therefore prayer is the necessary accompaniment to all true watching. Much prayer, daily prayer, constant prayer is necessary to be able to recognize the hidden snares and pitfalls of Satan. and to ward off his every attack.

But true prayer is always accompanied by watching. To pray that we may not be led into temptation and to run headlong into it with our eyes closed, is but a sham. Sheer mockery with all that is holy. Watching in prayer, always on the alert, walking in faith, we are sure to triumph. And that triumph is worth more than all the treasures of the world and all the pleasures of sin. These last but for a moment, our triumph lasts through all eternity.

By faith we are more than conquerors. For faith is the victory which overcometh the world. For him who overcometh awaits the crown of life.

Watch in prayer.
Popular Magazines

By Mrs. L. Doezema

Bellflower, California.

Tons and tons of paper are converted into magazines every week and every month of the year. Drug stores, cigar stores, and even some large grocery markets display hundreds of magazines of every sort. When the new issues of these periodicals appear, children, adolescents, and adults crowd the racks to obtain the latest numbers. Especially of some of the most popular magazines, enormous amounts of copies are sold each day. What a great attraction they have for the public! Is there any danger connected with it? Is there any value in the reading of such periodicals?

There are many kinds of magazines and several varieties of each kind. The discussion of religious magazines we will omit just now. We all know our own religious papers and are undoubtedly acquainted with the periodicals put out by some other churches, and also are able to read those papers critically. But religious papers are not found on the news racks and do not appear and appeal to the public eye as do the magazines which we have in mind in this article.

Home magazines seem to have special attraction for many people. *The American Home* and *Better Homes and Gardens* are examples of this kind. These periodicals devote themselves strictly to pictures and articles about furniture, flowers, trees, and how to improve the house and yard; one can learn much from reading and studying them and a gardener can glean many valuable ideas from them. There are also magazines which are a combination of home, garden, amusement, stories, and other things, and they are usually called women's magazines. *Delineator, Ladies Home Journal, Woman's Home Companion* and others, would fall into this group. Let us closely examine one of these papers. The cover is always attractive—some pretty scene or the face of a beautiful girl: the cover must be a good advertisement for the magazine. Behind the cover we will very likely have to page
through some full-page advertisements of tooth-paste warning about "pink tooth-brush," unpleasant breath or some other dire calamity. Then will appear a movie page or some beauty instructions, and then about ten pages or more of the beginning of stories or novels with parenthetical "continued on page so an so" on the bottom of each page and fitting illustrations of some dramatic scene in the story. Titles as "Too Young to Know," "Second Wife," "Child of Divorce," "Love Will Find a Way," "Midsummer Madness." and others appear in attractive print and boldly invite the reader to waste several hours. At the conclusion of some stories is printed "continued in the next issue," a clever way to sell out the next month's magazines, for after beginning a thrilling story, the reader will eagerly wait to finish it. The stories are surprisingly alike.—love, illicit love, divorce and other such topics occupying the greatest part of the stories. Let me interject here that the stories sell the magazines and that the sin and corruption and thrill are the attraction. After the stories we page through a few illustrations of homes and gardens. a few pages of style and beauty, some articles on how to bring up children. (something which the world should not and cannot ever be able to tell us), and then more advertise-

ments. Let us count the pages. Half of them are bought up by companies for advertising different products, more than a fourth of the pages are taken up by cheap stories, and the rest are devoted to the few other things we mentioned. Is the magazine worth fifteen or twenty-five cents? What is more, is the magazine worthy of a place in your home or in your room, or in your reading list? Doesn't the evil far outweigh the possible good found in them? Think! do you want to bring them in the house for your younger sisters and brothers to look at and begin to read?

True Love, Romance, True Confession. Redbook. Cosmopolitan, and others are magazines admittedly dealing with love stories almost entirely. Need we warn against them and screen and movie magazines?

News magazines may probably be considered the best of any of the periodicals. We need to keep well-posted on what is happening so fast in the world today and it is well to read other opinions about the news, although even news must be read discreetly, and we know that especially now there are so many opinions and views of the news that it is difficult to determine the truth and to form any opinion ourselves. And when reading worldly interpretations of news especially war-news it is impara-
tive to keep in mind what God’s Word teaches us about the world and the end of all these things.

As I glanced over title after title of magazines on a large rack in a food store, I came upon such magazines as She, Sex Facts, Woman’s Life, and a few others like it. The titles of the articles were on the covers: “Men Won’t Like It”, “Cleopatra Was No Dope”, “How Do You Know It’s Love”. “Do All Men Philander” and other titles, which speak for themselves. These magazines sell.

Detective magazines decorate all the racks. And so many different kinds! “Daring Detective”, “Sensational Detective”, “Thrilling Detective”. “Intimate Detective”. “Crime Confessions”, and many others show by titles and by pictures their corruption and filth. If they merely depicted the wit of a detective in solving some great mystery, I could find no great harm in them. But sex, sin, dirt, must enter in to attract people to read them. Gruesome, thrilling stories of sin are necessary to cause so many people to buy them.

The comic magazines are not as innocent as they would appear. Not so long ago an article was quoted in one of our papers, showing the dangers of these little books upon the children who read them. This article pointed out that the comic magazines teach youth unheard of filth and sin.

Your reporter has by no means exhausted the kinds of magazines current nowadays. But this list will at least give an idea of what to expect and will help us to evaluate magazines in general.

Most magazine stories are written too much on a wholesale scale to be of any literary value and we have already warned against their moral and religious influence. We do not have to purchase magazines for good reading material in fiction. Moreover magazine fiction can and does have a very unhealthy effect on its readers. If you have read any at all you must testify to that yourself, for one cannot help being influenced by what he reads.

The danger for us and for those younger than we are lies in the fact that all these magazines are so easily obtainable. One need only spend a few cents at a magazine counter to procure any magazine he wants. The attraction is there and it is very real. How often one sees children sitting on the floor near a magazine display trying to read the comic magazines or giving their spending money to purchase a magazine to read secretly. How often teachers must take objectionable magazines away from grade school and high school students! We cannot be too careful ourselves and warn others too much to avoid those bad influences and obey the command to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world”.

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We as Christians know far too little about the physical sciences. We, who of all the peoples in the world are the only ones who can give a proper interpretation to the facts of science, often know next to nothing about science. In fact, there are even many sincere church members who are of the opinion that the physical sciences are anti-Christian by nature and serve to lead the children of God astray. In support of this claim they cite the fact that many young men who were brought up in the fear of the Lord by believing parents became infidels and atheists after turning to a career in medicine, chemistry, physics, or engineering. But they overlook the fact that there are many scientists who have, in spite of their scientific profession, remained loyal to God.

And since it is my sincere belief that there is no field of study in which the existence, the power, and the greatness of God are manifested so plainly as in the physical sciences, I shall attempt in this article to acquaint you with some of the fundamental facts of science.

If someone was to tell you that the floor upon which you are standing or the chair in which you are sitting has far more space than matter in it, you might not believe him, but it is nevertheless true. There is so little matter in your body that it could all be compressed into the space occupied by the head of a pin. It is very true that matter is a rare thing in the universe, and even the strongest, hardest steel is mostly space.

“But, how is this possible?” you may ask. “Is not steel solid? How can it be that it is mostly space?”

The answer lies in the way in which every particle of matter in the universe is built up. Perhaps most of you have heard that everything is made up of extremely small particles called molecules, but you may not realize how extremely small these molecules are, and you may not know that these tiny molecules are built up of still smaller particles.

As to the size of these molecules an illustration may serve best to convey to you the proper idea. Suppose that you were to take a
glass of water and were to pour that glass of water into the middle of the ocean. And then suppose that twenty years from today, after this glass of water had been thoroughly mixed with all the water of the ocean, after it had evaporated and fallen on other parts of the earth as rain, you were to take a glass of water out of the ocean; just how many molecules of water that were in that original glass of water that you twenty years previously had thrown into the ocean would you now expect to find in this glass of water? Without quite considering the vastness of the ocean and the countless number of glasses contained therein, some of you might venture what you consider a liberal guess of one. But even at that your guess is far too low. No, there is not only one molecule of water from that original glass in this one, there are not even only ten: there are no less than two hundred molecules of water out of that original glass in this one. In other words, there are two hundred times more molecules of water in one glass than there are glasses of water in the ocean, lakes, rivers, ponds, and clouds.

Did you say that this is unbelievable? Maybe it is, but still it is not all. Every molecule of water is made up of three smaller particles known as atoms. Two of these atoms are hydrogen atoms and one is an oxygen atom. And every atom is built up of still smaller particles known as protons and electrons. Each of the protons carries a small positive charge of electricity, and each electron carries a small negative charge. And the electron is so extremely small that it takes 1845 electrons to equal the weight of one proton.

Now each oxygen atom contains sixteen protons and sixteen electrons. All sixteen protons and eight of the electrons are in the center of the atom known as the nucleus. But the remaining eight electrons revolve around the nucleus at varying distances from it just as the planets of the solar system revolve around the sun. These electrons contribute very little to the mass of the atom but they increase its size millions of times just as the planets of the solar system, although adding little to the mass of the system, greatly increase its size. This is the reason why there is so little matter and so very much space even in the hardest steel, for every element is built on the same general structure as oxygen.

Now these electrons, revolving at tremendous speeds around the nucleus, always remain in the same relative positions with respect to each other. And every atom, outside of the atoms of the radioactive elements, always contains the same number of protons and electrons, never losing or gain-
BEACON LIGHTS

ing any. Now the importance of this last fact becomes evident as soon as one considers the destruction which such a radioactive element as radium is capable of doing. And the worldly scientist attributes this to mere chance. He says that this is so because of the laws which happened to come into this universe by chance. But we as Christians believe that these things did not come about by chance but are rather the work of the all-wise, omnipotent God. It is He who upholds every molecule. It is He who keeps every electron in its proper relation to the other electrons in the atom. And it is He who causes each atom to always keep the same number of electrons and protons, and not to allow them to lose electrons and protons with the resulting destructive effects as in the case of radium and the other radioactive elements. Just imagine for one moment what death and destruction would prevail in this world if suddenly every element were to become radioactive. Every living thing would soon be killed and only destruction would reign.

Harbingers Of Spring

By Mr. Clarence De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

“All the birds have come again,
Hear the happy chorus!
Robin, bluebird, on the wing.
Thrush and wren this message bring.
Spring will soon come marching in,
Come with joyous singing.”

Eagerly we listen for these spring carolers, who herald the approaching season. Spring is here! Certainly, all of us have been genuinely thrilled by the chirp or warble of the songsters who announce the dawning of another day. Their message is one of cheer and gladness as they pour out their happiness in an echoing chorus.

Perhaps, some of you have been amazed when watching these winged creatures in their attempt to get an adequate supply of food. If you have observed them for any length of time and noticed how many worms a robin devours or the number of seeds a sparrow consumes before they are satisfied, you will, undoubtedly wonder why such an amount is necessary for their small bodies. Experiments have been performed to determine the capacity of a bird’s stomach. Observations are
recorded of a cedar waxwing eating one hundred canker worms, a scarlet tanager devouring six hundred thirty gypsy moth caterpillars in eighteen minutes, a Maryland yellow-throat consuming plant lice at the tremendous rate of five thousand an hour. There is a very definite answer to the question. "Why do birds eat so much?" Birds are exceedingly active and very warm blooded, and, thus, need an extraordinary amount of food to maintain their high temperature and body activity. Accordingly, they have been created and provided with adequate digestive powers. Very helpful are these creatures to the farmer as their diet includes insects, plant lice, weed seeds, and field mice.

Another question that might be asked is, "How fast do the young birds grow?" The rate of development is astonishing. One naturalist tells of a cedar wax-wing that doubled its weight the first day, trebled it in the second, and at the end of twelve days had increased its weight thirteen-fold.

As birds cannot store food, they find it necessary to migrate if they depend on open ponds for their sustenance as ducks, geese, etc. Naturally, when freezing begins and ice results, these birds can no longer remain because plants are not available.

Migration provides a beautiful example of instinct, for by this means they are guided in their flight. Usually, the aquatic birds follow the main water courses until the desirable destination is reached. Sometimes the routes extend over fast stretches of water, for example the Caribbean Sea. However, the birds that thus desert the land are those which have powerful ability of flight. William Cullen Bryant has beautifully expressed a thought in his poem, "To A Water Fowl":

"He who, from zone to zone. Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight. In the long way that I must tread alone. Will lead my steps aright."

Very essential and useful are the birds' wings. For they not only need them for flying, but also to shelter and protect the young especially in the nest. Some birds use them for swimming as in the case of the penguin in the Arctic, whose wings are reduced to flippers and thus can be manipulated like oars. Chickens employ their
wings while fighting; and many birds tuck their heads under their wings for slumbering.

Probably some of you have noticed that some birds are brilliantly colored, while others have a dull coloration. Especially during mating season is the bird beautiful, and the male is usually the more attractive, so that he may more easily woo his partner. The tanagers and pheasants are common examples of the differences in sex coloration. The dull coloration of some species, however, is in most cases a protective measure, enabling the bird to conceal itself from the enemy by possessing feathers which are barely distinguishable from the environment. Examples of this "protective coloration" is noted in the case of the sandpiper, grouse, meadow-lark, and others.

"I see my way as birds their trackless way. 
I shall arrive: what time, what circuit first, 
I ask not; but unless God sends His hail 
Of blinding fire-balls, sleet or driving snow, 
In some time, His good time, 
I shall arrive, 
He guides me and the bird. 
In His good time."

ROBERT BROWNING.

OUR DOCTRINE: A WAY OF LIFE
(Cont. from page 4)

corporate some of their enthusiasm into the reformed system. Certainly we have more to be enthusiastic about than they. But we are always so staid, and it is always so difficult to get people to come to something special. I submit that we need more enthusiasm and energy in our churches. We need, in a reformed way, more of the fervor that is characteristic of many fundamentalist churches.

There are those, however, who feel this is impossible and unnecessary. Comments would be interesting.

ALONE

Alone in dark Gethsemane
Our Saviour knelt to pray.
Alone in deepest agony
He saw the cross-ward way.

It was alone He tarried there
None else His presence kept.
His own disciples could not bear
To tarry—and they slept!

Alone upon the cursed tree
He suffered, bled and died,
That we from bondage might be free
Our Lord was crucified.

O depraved, wretched, fallen man
Cannot his sins atone,
There's only one, our Saviour can.
'Tis He and He alone.

By Mrs. J. A. Pastoor.
Summary of War.

The last week of winter has seen allied positions definitely improved on one front and holding their own on others. The renewed activity in the North African region gives promise of some real hard fighting in the near future. We have been told that Russia was able to make its tremendous gains only through the sacrifice of many lives. Therefore we can expect that we must face the same thing. If we are to be victorious, we must take the offensive and drive the war in the face of all opposition. That can be done only in the way of suffering great losses of men and materials.

This is the first spring in World War II that the Allies are holding the initiative and choosing the battlefields instead of awaiting with fear and trembling the next blow of the enemy. In the Tunisian sector the Americans have regained the ground that was lost but are now hindered by heavy rains that make tank-warfare virtually impossible.

In respect to the war in the south and southwest Pacific, our daily paper summarizes as follows, “In the south and southwest Pacific the war was fought entirely in the air. with General MacArthur’s fliers striking as many as 15 enemy bases in a single day and night. The feature of these operations was the destruction of a Japanese submarine attempting to land supplies at Lae, indicating that the Japanese in northern New Guinea are in a serious plight since they lost the 22-ship convoy in the Bismarck Sea early this month”. This last statement is not to be taken to mean that the Japanese naval strength has been broken. If one can rely upon the reports that are given out, we have been made to understand that with the ships that she has captured and those that have been made, Japan has the same amount of tonnage that she had before the war. We should not forget that the Allies are doing but very little about stopping Japanese production of war material in this phase of the conflict. This is due to the fact that we are fighting a holding war in the Paci-
fic while concentrating on Germany.

Germany's greatest strength lies in her submarine warfare. German subs are taking their toll of victims and although much has been done to combat this menace, there is no doubt but what the wolf-pack will continue to strike hard blows at allied shipping.

Oddity of War.

Germany has protested to Japan because she allows Russian ships loaded with American lend-lease materials to pass unmolested thru the waters. Germany is indignant and rightfully so since Japan is her ally. On the other hand, Japan has no desire to become involved in a war with Russia. Consequently, Japan has shown no willingness to heed the German protest.

It just goes to show that in any war every ally thinks first about itself. That's just the way people are.

The Home Front.

The war is making itself felt on the home front by way of the rationing of more foodstuffs. In spite of the increase in rationed goods, the average American is still much better off than the average Briton. The following article informs us to that effect:

U. S. MENU STILL WORLD'S BEST

"Although the American housewife will get along on smaller supplies of canned foods this year than last, she will still be able to heap her market basket higher than shoppers in other countries. This is particularly true with respect to the processed foods.

English rationing officials report that the English people have a tendency to eat "off the ration" as much as possible. A similar tendency is expected here: that is, that American housewives will turn more and more to fresh fruits and vegetables, cereal dishes and other unrationed products to meet their dinner table needs. In fact, a trend toward more home cooking has already been indicated in the rush for cook books reported by book-sellers in many American cities. The British use dried milk and eggs (about 1 egg a week) and potatoes three times a day. They get only 14 ounces of meat and 2 ounces of butter a week."

Even at that, why should we complain about having to do with less? In the light of what many families are doing in sending their sons and husbands, to do with a little less food in order that they have the best, is little enough to ask of us. It is not at all impossible that we shall be called upon to endure things much worse than that before this war is over. Let us be thankful for the abundance which God still gives us and use it wisely in His service.
Dear Mr. Editor,

By means of the "Beacon Lights" I was greatly encouraged to "study to show thyself (myself) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth". My fellow comrades have also received much comfort, guidance, and true spiritual delight by studying it. Enclosed you will find a small sum of money, for you to use in the furtherance of this worthy cause. Now I would like to make three suggestions that I hope your editorial staff will seriously consider—for the well-being of all those who ardently read this "Reformed" magazine.

1) Continue to issue "Beacon Lights" thru the summer months. The boys in the Service, especially, wouldn't know how to thank you in a way that would equal their gratitude. Every bit of labor that goes into publishing this paper is as nothing, when viewed in the light of its immeasurable benefits. The added cost can easily be taken care of by the host who deems this a worthy cause, a good investment.

2) Encourage Christian friendships by devoting a page to Servicemen. There are many who would like distinctively Christian correspondence, and if such a project is carried on in "Beacon Lights", they would find more comfort, encouragement in trials, discussion on topics they would like to talk about to one they know is willing to listen, in Christian conversation, etc.

3) A picture-page—to acquaint us with each other and enliven the interest of all parents, friends, etc. This too would call for more money. But today, when all are earning high wages, great things can be tackled by a united effort.

Let's try, by the grace of God, to make "Beacon Lights" the most lively Young People's magazine there is—for those at home—and now, especially, for those in the Service.

Sincerely,
A Supporter of "Beacon Lights".

SERVICEMEN'S FUND

During the past month we received donations from the following:
South Holland Y. P. Society..............$ 5.00
2 Girls in Kalamazoo, Mich.............. 1.00
Talitha Girls Soc. (Fuller Ave.)...... 25.00
Oak Lawn Y. P. Society................. 5.00
Fuller Ave. Young Men's Soc........ 10.00
Pvt. Louis Kikstra.......................... 2.00
A Grand Rapids Donator................ 1.00
Mr. & Mrs. M. Zuidema. (G. R.).... 2.00
The Ladies' League...................... 25.00

(Mail all donations to Miss Alice Reit- sma, Servicemen's Fund. 706 Franklin St., Grand Rapids, Michigan).
Dear Fellows:

As you may notice by the date of this letter, officially it is almost springtime. But there is quite a difference, here in Grand Rapids at least, between the official time and the actual looks of things. It looks a good deal more like winter than like spring. A rather long and severe winter we had. I remember that we had our first snowstorm when I was working in Randolph, Wisconsin last fall. And that was on the 27th of September! And since that time, the Press stated the other day, the temperature hereabouts was never over fifty, and my thermometer registered below zero more than once. And still spring is slow in coming.

But everything seems to be late this year. Just think of it. Easter falls on the 25th of April this year! You know, of course, that the time of Easter differs every year, because it is calculated by the moon. It always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the equinox. And this year the last full moon before the equinox happens to be on March 21, and the next full moon is on April 20. And that puts Easter on April 25. I believe that it never was so late since the year in which I was born, 1886, and in my lifetime it will never be so late again.

And so, Lenten season is late, the weeks the Church is accustomed to devote to a special commemoration of the suffering and death of our Saviour. Do you hear of that suffering and atoning death of our Lord, too, in the camps, wherever you are? There seems to be an awful contrast and contradiction between that suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the war-torn world of today. He came to save from sin and death, but sin and death are rampant in our modern world more than ever. He came to save us from the wrath of God, but God appears to be pouring out the vials of His wrath and judgment over a world that will have none of Him. Remember, however, that Christ died for His own, and that, while His death and resurrection are the salvation of His world, they are also the judgment and condemnation of the world of sin over which the devil is prince. And so, even while you are living in the midst of a world that seems to say that His death had no effect whatever, you may cling to Jesus crucified and raised. Who was delivered for our transgressions, and raised for our justification, and have in your hearts the peace that passeth all understanding, and that not even the world can take away from you.

May the Lord give you that peace!

More and more of our boys are leaving. And always we remember them and you all in our prayers before the throne of grace! God bless you.

With love in the Lord,
Your friend,

Rev. H. Hoeksema.
Dear Friends:-

Thank you very much for sending me the "Beacon Lights". It is always welcomed and I enjoy reading it. There is a good deal of reading material in the army; but very little of it is religious or the kind that we are accustomed to read. Reading articles which have been written by our people is encouraging.

After having been in the army for a short time, there is not very much new to write. The army life soon becomes routine; the same as civilian life. The main difference is that we spend all of our time in the same atmosphere. Since being in the army I have not met many soldiers of our type. Then we realize more than ever that we are few in number and can stand by Grace alone.

Sincerely,

Pvt. John Veltman (G. R.)

* * * * *

The Hawaiian Islands

Dear Friends:—

I am in the Hawaiian Islands and have been here for over a year. I have been enjoying the best of health. In places here it rains most every day but in other places it hardly ever rains.

I have received two copies of Beacon Lights so far and sure was glad to get them. I read the last copy through as soon as I got it. A person doesn’t realize what he’s missing until he’s gone.

We get time off now every Sunday morning to go to church. I am under different officers at present: the officers I used to be under always seemed to have something for us to do so we could not go to church. We go to a small church in a little town near here. The people that live around here don’t seem to take much interest in going to church. It holds a little over a 100 people. The audience is made up of about 90% soldiers and 10% people living here. We usually have an Army Chaplain as speaker.

There is only one fellow that I met that lives in Grand Rapids while all the rest live in different states. It seems good to talk about different things of home.

May God bless us all and remember us in your prayers.

Pvt. Robert Klompaaens (Holland)
Btry. D, 249 F.A.B.N.
ASN 36160559
A.P.O. 27 c/o Postmaster,
San Francisco, California.

* * * * *

Camp Roberts, Calif.

Dear Friends:

I received the Beacon Lights and thought I should drop you a few lines.
The articles you print are very interesting and enjoyable. I liked especially the letter written by my pastor from Hull, Iowa, who wrote to the service men. An article like that makes a soldier feel that he hasn’t been forgotten. It also gives him great comfort.

We have a few good Chaplains in our Camp but very few of the boys attend services. A few weeks ago I met Harmon Slopsema who is in the Infantry in our Camp. It certainly is good to meet a boy of your own Church.

I think the Army is a good place for a Christian. It makes him see the seriousness of life. Thanks for the Beacon Lights.

A Friend,
Pvt. Peter Dykstra (Hull, la.)
Btry. B54FA
Bldg. 6113
Camp Roberts, Calif.

* * * * *

Camp Perry, Ohio.

Dear Friends:—

I'm still in the same camp although my address has changed again. I am now a little closer to the downtown section, nearer to the stores, the cleaners and also the headquarters (with which I do not have much to do) and also I am closer to the classrooms in which I teach.

I am now teaching Depot and Supply. To be frank, I don’t care for the subject, but teaching is new and quite an experience. I enjoy it . . . .

Last night the four of us in our hut had a little discussion on religion. The two Catholics just could say that the Catholic Church is the only church—look at its membership. The Methodist bemoaned the fact that there was not a universal church—do away with these trifling differences. I assured him that that would never come, only as Anti-Christ. But he couldn’t understand.

I have all my Beacon Lights up to date now and really do appreciate them. These words are quite formal, I know, but I do mean it. The religious spirit on the post is really sloppy. Forever hoping to establish a heaven on earth without a Christ except that of the wonderful example of His life.

I spent last week-end in Detroit, Mich. I came in church there Sunday morning and after the service you should have seen all the people come up to me and make themselves known. I stayed at my Aunt's house and it sure was nice to sleep on a soft innerspring mattress after sleeping on a folding bunk for so long. . . . Be sure I get my next Beacon Lights.

Yours very truly,
Pvt. Jim Dykstra (G. R.)
2nd Casual Training Co., OUTC
A recent editorial stated that "Beacon Lights has gone to war," and that it is serving a double purpose, one for those at home and the other for our boys in the armed forces. The Editor also wrote that we can not render a better service to our boys than to supply them with a paper that particularly fits their needs. How very true!

They were influential in causing the Board to make the above decision.

The article written by Ed. Knott and published in this issue is of a rather controversial nature and may invoke some comment. We invite you to give voice to your reactions after reading this material.

The Executive Board of the Federation wholeheartedly agrees with this. And so, at a recent meeting of this Board, which is in charge of publishing Beacon Lights, it was decided to publish two additional summer issues of our magazine. We want to keep in touch with our servicemen and we feel that Beacon Lights is our method of sharing our Church life and Spiritual privileges with them.

These summer issues will appear on June 20 and August 20, and will be mailed to all our readers without additional charge! This is possible only because we are receiving such liberal donations. We are very grateful to all those who have remembered us in this work.

We thank "A supporter of Beacon Lights" for his suggestions.
Outline XXVI
A PARTING GLANCE IN THE HALL
OF THE HEROES OF FAITH
2nd Week of April

Heb. 11:35b-39 — and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:
And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings. yea. moreover of bonds and imprisonment:
They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted. were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;
(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.
These verses still form part of the hasty resume of the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures which the writer began in vs. 32. The entire section (vss. 32-38) speaks of a common faith on the part of all the heroes referred to. a common experience in life (all had difficulties of one sort or another to contend with for the faith's sake), and a common goal (they all looked forward to the reward and the "better resurrection"). However, while the vss. 32-34 recall great feats which faith was enabled to accomplish, the present verses speak of persecutions which the saints were called upon by faith to endure.
Vs. 35 states that some "were tortured, not accepting deliverance." "Were tortured" means "were stretched on the rack." The allusion may be to the martyr death of Eleazer and of the seven Maccabean brothers, together with their mother, spoken of in the apocryphal book of 11 Maccabees. By faith they disdained the earthly deliverance they might have had by renouncing their faith. They were willing to undergo this gruesome death rather than deny their faith because they desire to be partakers of the better (heavenly) resurrection. The wicked shall arise to everlasting shame and contempt in the last day but the righteous shall shine as the light and be partakers of everlasting light. Dan. 12:2.
Vs. 36 speaks of others that endured mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover,
bonds and prison. Although these persecutions did not draw blood they were of longer duration than those suffered who were put on the racks. It takes faith, continual faith, to remain standing when persecutions continue. For instances of such persecutions, see 1 Kings 22:27; Jer. 37 and 38, etc.

Vs. 37—Some were stoned—think of Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, 11 Chron. 24:20-22. Were sawn asunder—by sawing asunder is spoken of in 11 Sam. 12:31 and 1 Chron. 20:3: tradition says that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh: when he took refuge in a hollow tree his persecutors under order of the king of Judah cut down the tree with Isaiah in it. Were tempted—this undoubtedly means they were tempted by their persecutors to deny their faith. Were slain with sword—compare 1 Kings 19:10. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins—they went hither and thither without a fixed habitation because the enemy was ever on their heels. Sheepskins and goatskins refers to rough clothing. Being destitute, afflicted, tormented—in want, and suffering from evil-treatment.

Vs. 38—Of whom the world was not worthy. Our translation puts this in parentheses. Quite properly, since the writer puts this in as an interruption. We must not think that these believers actually were worthy of the treatment that was measured out to them. Their persecution does not reflect on them for evil, but for good. It reflects evilly upon the world. They were indeed worthy to live, but the world that lies in sin is not worthy of them.


Why does the writer of Hebrews refer to all this persecution? No, not because he was sour on life. He just naturally came to this because the Christians to whom he addressed his letter were called upon to suffer for their faith's sake (compare Heb. 10:36 and 11:4). What the Jewish Christians of the writer's day were suffering for their faith's sake was nothing new. Always in history the seed of the serpent has attempted to destroy the seed of the woman, always the true believer has been called upon in one fashion or another to suffer for his faith. See also Matt. 5:10-12. Persecution does not always appear in its full form of persecution unto death. It may only be present therein that men speak evil of you. The Devil does not in every age always go about as a Roaring Lion. more frequently today he goes about as an Angel of Light—but his purpose is always the same. But over and over the Devil lays aside his deceitful garment and appears as he is. and then persecution breaks loose in its violence. It did that in the Old Testament. it did that in the days of the apostles, it did that more than once since then. and it will do that again. I would suggest that you all read Fox's Book of Martyrs, a book that has been a household book in England on this subject for centuries and is worth reading today.
Questions: ...Mention various forms of persecution. Can you mention any form of persecution that we as Christians experience today? May a Christian deliberately seek persecution? Why is the old saying true: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church?" In which countries of the world is persecution today most severe?

* * * * *

Outline XXVI
THE FINAL REALIZATION OF THE PROMISE
3rd Week of April

Heb. 11:39, 40—And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

At first sight, especially if you focus your attention upon that part of the text that says "they did not receive the promise," one is inclined to be disappointed and disturbed. There seems to be the very opposite of a climax in these words—these saints suffered and died. died in faith of the promise, and yet they did not receive the promise, neither while they lived nor when they died. They still have not attained it. But, if you take vs. 40 into consideration, then the text is encouraging for you and for me, for it implies that the saints that have gone before are waiting for us, and when we are ready then we shall together receive the promise.

The text we need to study.

The Failure of the Saints to Receive the Promise

To my mind these two verses of Heb. 11 are precious gold, but as with gold you must dig it from the hidden recesses of the earth, so also it is in a sense with this text—its precious truth does not lie on the surface. You must often labor with God's Word to enjoy its depth and glory—a perfunctory reading of Scripture only scratches the top and reveals little. Bible study also demands work. You can get nothing for nothing—that's true in Bible study too.

Notice the 39th vs. says "these all"—that means not only the last few saints but all the saints spoken of in this chapter, together with all the people of God who have died in the faith. They all died. vs. 13. But now follows the emphatic statement, "they did not receive the promise." Now whatever the promise is, the point is clear. none of them received it. They embraced it, they lived for it, they suffered for it, but they did not receive it. Even at their death, the promise still remained unfulfilled. Even now they are still waiting for it, as vs. 40 clearly implies.

Just what is meant here by "the promise?" This chapter sometimes speaks of promises in the plural, sometimes of the promise in the singular. Here it is singular. While the saints were on earth some of the promises were realized, realized in their very life-time, e. g., Abraham received the promise of a son,
Israel received the promised land, etc. One by one these promises were fulfilled. So too we have promises in the plural, e. g. that God will be the God of our children, that He will preserve us unto the end, that He will supply our daily needs, that He will grant us remission. All these promises we do obtain in their fulfillment here and now. After death, immediately, we shall be with the Lord in glory—also that promise is fulfilled at once when our earthly pilgrimage reaches its end. Yet all these promises are not the promise, although they are the precursors of it, the foretaste of it. They are the raindrops that forecast the sweet shower of blessings yet to come. The promise itself is something greater than these individual promises. The latter lead up to the promise, that one, great, final, all-comprehensive realization of the promise.

What is that promise to which the writer refers? Of course, it is the Christ. The Christ is always in the Scripture the promise of God, the center of all other promises. Only let me add at once, it is the Christ not in His first coming, but the Christ in His second and final coming. It is Christ with His bride, the Christ with all the children God has given Him, the Resurrected Lord with all His resurrected saints, the Christ not forsaken of all but standing with His redeemed host about Him. it is the Christ in all His glory in the day of His second coming. That latter point must be well understood.

Some have taken the text to refer to Christ in His first coming. These are some of the objections: a. In that case the text is strange, and means that they didn't receive the realization of the first coming because God intended that for us. Now that idea were possible, were it not that in that case you are at a loss to interpret “that they without us should not be made perfect.” b. Further, the entire previous context refers to the second coming of Christ. Heb. 10:37, and this very chapter speaks of the heavenly country, the better resurrection, all of which look forward to the second coming. c. Lastly, if the promise refers to the first coming of Christ, then the saints of the Old Testament now have received it, for Christ has come and is even with them in heaven. but then they are now perfect without us. The text, however, teaches that the Old Testament saints did not receive the promise, because God had provided something better, that they without us should not be made perfect.

In view of this all, the only possible conclusion is that the promise here refers to the ultimate realization of the promise in the second coming of Christ, to which also the entire New Testament so repeatedly calls our attention. Although the Old Testament saints are a long step ahead of us, they have not yet attained the final culmination of glory that shall come in the return of Christ. Their souls are made perfect, but their bodies are still in the grave. They still pray. How long Lord? They are still looking forward, hoping.
Why They Haven't Received the Promise

Negatively, we might emphasize that their failure to attain the promise is not due to any deficiency in their faith. So it is with some, who fail to enter because of unbelief. But that is not the case with them. They did obtain a good report, God approved of them and they knew it.

Positively, it was because “God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” God in His great grace had provided for something more glorious than they received in this life, or than mere salvation for the soul while the body remains in the dust. God had provided something still better. “Better” is the key word of the whole book of Hebrews. Just what this better thing provided is, is not stated, but it is implied in the final clause “that they without us should not be made perfect.” This means that God’s plans called for the salvation of the Hebrew Christians of the writer’s day, that it calls for the salvation of all believers in all ages. Had the Old Testament saints received the final realization of salvation in their time, then the end of the world would have come. and God would have missed some of the children of His election. “They,” i.e. the Old Testament saints, could not possibly be made perfect without us. A building is not complete and ready for occupancy until every last piece of material has been put in the structure. A husband is not complete without his wife. A family of ten is not complete until all the children are gathered about the table. The bud must become flower before it can be picked. The whole family of God’s children must be gathered, before any of the family can enjoy himself to the full. See II Pet. 3:9, 15. etc. When all the New Testament saints are gathered together, then the Lord will come. Then we shall all be made perfect together. That is the better thing that God has provided.

Its Certain Realization

This great, final glory shall also be attained. God has provided it. That means He has purposed it, and directs all things to that end. On the one hand, He gathers His church and preserves her. On the other, He directs all things to that day when Christ shall come and usher in the full and final salvation. Then we expect new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell forever. Then, the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Then the body of Christ shall be complete.

Yes, it is already essentially realized—Christ did come. He did merit it, and He now reigns in heaven. Therefore the full manifestation of the salvation is sure. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it is not yet revealed what we shall be, but when it is revealed we shall be like Him and see Him as He is. The saints in heaven are waiting for us, they need us and we need them.

Questions: Which promises are realized unto us here on earth? Which promise have the saints in heaven already attained? Which promise do they still
look forward to? Why cannot the promise of God fail? When will the promise be realized in all its glory?

Outline XXVIII
MANY SAINTS APPEARED
4th Week of April

Matt. 27:52, 53—And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

(Note: Our outlines on Heb. 11 are now complete, and we thought it would be well to treat a variety of passages in the remainder of the outlines. The present outline deals with the resurrection. If you are up to date in your use of the outlines, this outline will fall on Easter Sunday.)

The above text is a striking one, and worthy of discussion together. A few preliminary remarks are in order. One relates to the correct punctuation of the text. It seems to me that we must understand the text to mean that the graves were opened on Good Friday afternoon when Christ died and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent, and that the saints arose and came forth from their graves and appeared to many in the holy city—all after Christ’s resurrection. Secondly, the information the text gives is quite fragmentary. The main point is clear, but the text does not say which saints arose, to whom they appeared, what became of them, etc. However, the main point is clear—many saints arose and appeared to many.

Who Appeared

The text says: saints, many saints. We do not know who the saints were that arose. Legend mentions Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as some of them. Scripture does not say, here nor anywhere. We simply do not know. One thing evident is that they were saints, saints that had fallen asleep. They had lived and died in the faith. They had died in the blessed hope of the Christ. Note, further “many saints”. Not all the saints arose then—that could not be, for it was not yet the time of the general resurrection. Many, however, arose. Compared certainly to the number that did not arise they were only a few, but looked at as a group they were many. Finally notice that the text says that they appeared unto many in the holy city. They did not appear to all in Jerusalem, but to many. Perhaps one was seen here, another there by another, etc. But many appeared and unto many—there was no possibility of misconception therefore.

How did they appear? This question is quite natural. Some consider it a sort of apparition. This cannot be. It was an actual resurrection, a resurrection in glory. The text says: a. Bodies arose—it was not then a ghostlike apparition but a bodily resurrection. b. They appeared—this word is used also of the
resurrection body of Christ. c. They appeared "after Christ's resurrection". This points to the close connection between their resurrection and Christ's, and suggests a similar glorified body. We must bear in mind that Christ's resurrection was not a mere return to the condition prior to the cross, a return to this life as Jairus' daughter and Lazarus who had to die again. It was a complete victory, a resurrection in glory. Thus also of the saints.

When They Appeared

How we must conceive of the matter. Undoubtedly the saints arose as well as appeared after Christ's resurrection. According to some they arose already on Good Friday. But, it is hardly conceivable that the saints should have remained 36 hours or more in their graves after they were raised. It is more natural to think that their graves were opened on Good Friday, while they arose on Easter morning. Christ Himself is first, and then they that are His—I Cor. 15. Although they arose on Easter, it is evident that their graves were opened already on Good Friday. When the veil of the temple was rent at the time of Christ's death, the earth quaked and the rocks rent also. I believe God guided that earthquake to open the tombs of those saints. These graves did not need to be opened to let out the saints when they arose, but to show to the world that these tombs were empty. Just as in the case of Christ's tomb, God will not need to open graves in the resurrection to let out the glorified saints.

But why should the graves have already been opened on Good Friday? Remember God did this, and God does things with a reason. I don't think we need go far in seeking the reason. We must remember that the cross accomplished the victory. Apparently Christ's cross spells defeat, actually it accomplished the victory. The guilt of sin was borne away, and death had no more right to reign. Hence the graves were properly opened then. From that time on, i.e. from the time of Christ's death, the grave of every saint is really an opened grave. Not dirt, but sin closes it. And sin is gone, and death has no right to reign. Christ Himself entered a grave that could not hold Him. Since that day, the graves' power is broken. It is an open grave, a grave that opens on the side of the resurrection into which the saints go.

Why They Arose and Appeared

Briefly it was, of course, to show that what Christ does has meaning for His people, for the saints. When He dies their death is gone, and the grave has lost its right to reign. When the saints arose after Christ's resurrection, it shows that they actually became partakers of the life Christ merited. It was tremendously comforting appearance to the believers, showing that the believers had part in Christ's resurrection. The resurrection had meaning for Christ, but also for His church.

Questions—I think you'll find many here, without my suggesting any.
Outline XXIX
WARFARE—THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS
1st Week of May

Matt. 24:6-8—And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

In these days of international warfare it is quite imperative that the Christian, whether actually in the service or at home, keep his spiritual vision clear, that he see his God also in all this awful warfare.

Matt. 24 speaks of the fall of Jerusalem and of the end of the world, simply because the former is a forerunner and picture of the latter. Jesus in this chapter does not state the exact time of the end, but He does give us the signs. We must see this war as a sign of Christ’s coming, if we are to have spiritual understanding and comfort today.

The Meaning As Such

Of course, by wars and rumours of wars Christ very literally intended the conflicts between kingdoms and nations. That is plain from vs. 7. The Christian is in the world (though not of it), and as such involved and touched. Much as the Christian hates war, he knows it comes and must come. And war is terrible. Some of you who read this may have intimate, personal experience with its terror. And with war come famines, pestilence: and even earthquakes not infrequently. As terrible as this all is, Christ told us to expect that they would come, “Ye shall hear of” them. We have since the days those words were written, we do today, and will again in the future. As long as Christ does not return, corruption and sin remain, and war is inevitable.

Notice, that Jesus calls these wars “the beginnings of sorrows”. Beginnings means of course that there are worse things than war coming for the church. Wars come upon the world in general, but there are afflictions which Christ speaks of in the context which come upon Christians at the hand of the world, e.g. persecutions. There will be greater griefs for the church to bear than the war. Tribulation will come.

The Christian Attitude

“See that ye be not troubled”. This means spiritually. to be sure. Our hearts must not be troubled, so that we lose faith in God and His goodness, and His purposes of grace. We do not accuse God then of injustice when He brings these calamities, we do not doubt His wise purpose. Neither do we lose sight of the Christ. We trust in God, if we are not troubled.

Jesus did not mean to inculcate what the world calls bravery, fearlessness. He did not mean that we should not feel touched, and suffer. He meant that we must not be spiritually terrified. We must not lose our God. We must see
Him. We must find peace in Him. God makes no mistakes. He knows what is necessary.

A Well-Grounded Attitude

Note, first of all, the word "sorrows". It really means, according to the original Greek, the pangs of childbirth. The pangs of childbirth may be severe, but they end in the birth of a child. And when the child is born, the pain and trouble is forgotten in the joy of the child. Well, so today, the world is going through all these sorrows, but the end of it shall be that by God’s grace the new heavens and the new earth will be brought forth for the children of God. These judgments lead up to and culminate in the church’s final salvation.

Note, further, “these things must come to pass”. All these things must come—wars and rumors of war, persecutions—all of them. In God’s righteousness and wisdom. It must be revealed as far as the wicked world is concerned that there is no peace for the wicked. These same things must bring our salvation. God knows what He is doing for His church. Don’t be afraid. Be of good cheer—I have overcome the world!

QUESTIONS: Do we know when Christ will return? Why are there wars in the world? Will there ever be a world in which no more war occurs? Mention some of the signs of Christ’s coming? Why must the Christian not be afraid?