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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *weisen*, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den Wölfen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verführen und Irrtum einführen.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14:8*

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## Theological Monthly

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### The Catholic-Protestant Limbus Patrum

By TH. ENGELDER

The Hades theology is concerned with still another class of men. It tells the story how Christ in His descent to Hades delivered the Old Testament saints from the *limbus patrum* and took them with Him to heaven.

As told by the Catholics the story of the *limbus patrum* runs thus: "In the limbo of the Fathers (*limbus patrum*) the souls of the just who died before Christ awaited their admission to heaven; for in the meantime heaven was closed against them in punishment for the sin of Adam." (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, s. v. *hell.*) The Catechismus Romanus: "Hell signifies those secret abodes in which are detained the souls that have not been admitted to the regions of bliss. . . . These abodes are not all of the same nature. . . . The third kind of abode is that into which the souls of the saints before the coming of Christ, the Lord, were taken, where they, without suffering any pain and sustained by the blessed hope of redemption, enjoyed a restful habitation. The souls of these pious men, who in the bosom of Abraham expected the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ liberated through His descent to hell. . . . This liberation was foretold long ago by Hosea (13:14): 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.' The prophet Zechariah, too, speaks of it (9:11): 'By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.' And the apostle (Col. 2:15) speaks of the same matter thus: 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'" (Pars I, Caput VI, Quest. III, VI.) W. Wilmers,

*Lehrbuch der Religion*, II, p. 319, quotes the Catechismus Romanus and furnishes additional proof texts: "Gen. 37:35. Jacob was certainly not expressing a desire to be united with his son in the grave. Therefore he believed that we would find his soul in a certain place." Page 321: "Though the just had through the possession of sanctifying grace regained the right of inheriting heaven, they could not enter upon their heritage as long as Christ, through whose merit they had gained this right, had not entered heaven. It is not fitting that the members should be in bliss while the *head* still remained on the weary pilgrimage or that the servants should take possession of heaven before the King of Glory." Page 334 f.: "Christ took the souls of the just, whom He had delivered out of the *Vorhoelle* (antechamber of hell), with Him to heaven. Ps. 68: 18; Eph. 4:8 f. These captives of the Savior are according to holy Justin, the Martyr, and many holy fathers, including holy Thomas, the just of the Old Testament, whom He tore out of the hands of Satan, delivered from the captivity of the *Vorhoelle*, and carried with Him as His own into heaven."<sup>1</sup>

That is the Catholic story of the *limbus patrum*. And there are many Protestants who love to tell the same story. *The Gospel of the Hereafter*, by J. Paterson-Smyth, says on page 60 ff.: "This was one of the gladdest notes in the whole Gospel harmony of the early Church for five hundred years, in the purest and most loving days, the days nearest our Lord and His apostles. It was a note of triumph. It told that Christ, who came to seek and save men's souls on earth, had continued that work in the world of the dead while His body lay in the grave. That the spirits of the old-world saints and prophets had welcomed Him with rejoicing. That even men of much lower place had yet found mercy. . . . In Jerusalem, Cyril the Bishop, teaches the people in his catechetical lectures this faith of the Church with a ring of gladness and

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<sup>1</sup> J. L. Neve summarizes the Catholic teaching thus: "*Limbus patrum* (*limbus*—rim), antechamber of hell, also called *sinus Abrahæ* or *paradisus inferior* (Cat. Rom. I, 6, 3), is the receptacle in which the pious souls of Israel and the Gentiles suffered the pain of loss but not the pain of sense before the time of Christ. . . . Christ, through His descent into hell, released them and opened unto them the gates of heaven. Since that time, the *limbus patrum* is completely empty. For Scripture proof Catholic theologians quote such passages as Gen. 37:35; 1 Sam. 28:15; Luke 16:22; 1 Pet. 3:19, etc." (*Churches and Sects of Christendom*, p.162. See also *Popular Symbolics*, p.200 f.; C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, III, p.744.)

triumph. He sees Christ not only amid the souls who had once been disobedient, but also in blessed intercourse with the strugglers after right, who had never seen His face on earth. He pictures how the holy prophets ran to our Lord, how Moses and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David and Samuel and John the Baptist ran to Him with the cry: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory, for the conqueror has redeemed us.'" H. M. Luckcock: "What is meant by 'in prison' here (1 Pet. 3:19)? . . . Etymologically it is simply watch or ward, either for security or custody; and it is a term that might be applied to all who were in the waiting state, whether good or bad. . . . To those who belonged to the Old Dispensation it is especially appropriate, for they were compelled to wait for the fulfillment of the promise, till Christ should Himself make known to them that His work was complete, and that henceforth their inheritance was placed on equal terms with that of those who should die within the pale of the Church. (Heb. 11:39-40.) The invisible mansion of departed spirits, though certainly not a place of penal confinement to the good, is nevertheless in some respects a prison. It is a place of seclusion from the outer world; a place of unfinished happiness, consisting in rest, security, and hope more than enjoyment. As a place of confinement, therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison." (*The Intermediate State*, p. 145 ff.) In the chapter "The Deliverance of Souls from the *Limbus Patrum*" we read, page 154: "One more Father will suffice, and his testimony is of importance. In his lectures which St. Cyril addressed to candidates for Baptism, he says: 'Jesus descended to the regions beneath the earth, that from them also He might redeem the just. For wouldest thou, I pray, that the living should enjoy His grace, and that being most of them unholy, and that those who from Adam had been imprisoned a long while should not now obtain deliverance? . . . The holy prophets ran unto Him, and Moses. . .'" (See above.) E. H. Plumptre on the *limbus*: "There had Jesus gathered around Him the souls of those righteous ones, from Abel onwards, who had had the faith which from the beginning of the world had justified, and had confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. These He had delivered from the passionate yearning of expectancy, and the pain of unsatisfied

desire, and had taken them to rest. . . ." "The testimony of Tertullian . . . is of greater value. He says: 'Christ satisfied the law in this point also, and in Hades (*apud inferos*) underwent the law of human death, nor did He ascend to the heights of heaven until He descended to the lower parts of the earth, that there He might make patriarchs and prophets sharers in His life (*compotes sui*).' Most readers will, I believe, thank me for bringing under their notice one of Bishop Jeremy Taylor's noblest utterances: "Those holy souls, whom the prophet Zechariah calls "prisoners of hope, lying in the lake where there is no water," that is, no constant stream of joy to refresh their present condition (yet supported with certain showers and gracious visitations from God and illuminations of their hope), now that they saw their Redeemer come to change their condition, and improve it into the neighborhood of glory and clearer revelations, must needs have the joy of intelligent and beatified understandings of redeemed captives. . . ." (*The Spirits in Prison*, pp. 5, 85, 97.)

A few more statements by Reformed theologians. In his book *From the Upper Room to the Empty Tomb* William Evans states that Jesus went down into the lower part of Hades (Hades proper) and proclaimed Himself victor . . . after which He went into the upper part and took all those Old Testament saints who until the time that He had by his death and resurrection conquered him who held the sovereignty of the realm of death, that is, the devil, had been held captive by Satan, with Him unto Paradise (now) above. (See the *Northwestern Lutheran*, Feb. 3, 1935.) H. W. Frost: "In the Old Testament times, from the Fall to the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the spirits of men — their bodies being committed to graves — went into Sheol, or Hades, which was in the center of the earth. This place of departed spirits was divided into three compartments: first, Tartarus, where many of the fallen angels were and are . . . second, the place of torment, to which the wicked went and to which they still go; and third, the place of comforting, named Paradise, to which the righteous went (Luke 16:25; 23:43). But in respect to the saints the ascension of Christ brought a mighty change to pass. They had waited in Sheol, or Hades, that is, in the lower earthly Paradise, till Christ should come, die, and be raised from the dead (Job 17:16; Is. 24:21-22; Ps. 31:17;

Eph. 4:8-10). When, however, He ascended, they were made Christ's captives—not in body but in spirit—and were taken to a place of greater comforting, namely, heaven (Eph. 4:8-9). This heaven was the third or topmost one, and to it God gave—as He had formerly done to the compartment in the earth which contained the righteous dead—the name Paradise (Eph. 1:20-21; 4:10; 2 Cor. 12:1-4). Here is the throne of God.” (*The Second Coming of Christ* [1934], p. 68 f.) R. A. Torrey: “Before the ascension of Christ, in Hades was Paradise, the place of the blessed dead, and Tartaros, the place of the wicked dead. At His ascension Christ emptied the Paradise of Hades and took it up to heaven with Him, as we read in Eph. 4:8. Before Christ ascended, Paradise was down, now it is up. Christ said to the repentant thief on the cross: ‘Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise,’ and Jesus Himself taught us that He went down into ‘the heart of the earth’ (Matt. 12:40), and the dying thief went down into this subterranean Paradise. . . . After the ascension of the Lord, when Paul went to Paradise, he was ‘caught up even to the third heaven, unto Paradise’ (2 Cor. 12:2-4). No blessed dead are now left in Hades.” (*The Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith*, p. 288.) The Evangelical Synod of N. A.: “They who died before Christ's death had no way of knowing what He had done.” (See *Popular Symbolics*, p. 315.)

There are also many Lutheran theologians who preach the fable of the *limbus patrum*. Here are a few typical statements: Luthardt: “Christ Himself went into this Hades at His death, but at the same time He is in Paradise, He and the penitent malefactor, Luke 23:43, and He takes the Old Testament saints with Him out of Hades, Matt. 27:52 f. Since then the believers no longer go into Hades, but enter heaven at once and, being made perfect, enjoy blissful rest.” (*Kompendium der Dogmatik*, 1886, p. 291. The 1933 Luthardt-Jelke edition, p. 431, has the same statement.) Otto von Gerlach's *Commentary on the New Testament*: “Matthew 27:52 f. The graves were opened, the bodies of some of the elect among the dead gradually came to life, and their souls were made partakers of the blessed effects of the reconciliation with God which Christ brought about.” W. Ziethe: “We know that the realm of the dead is divided into two compart-

ments, separated by a great gulf. One of these compartments is the kingdom of grace, into which the pious patriarchs and all the believers of the Old Covenant were gathered, called also Abraham's bosom and Paradise. The other compartment is 'the prison,' containing the unbelievers. . . . The Apostle says, 'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' . . . It was for the pious fathers, who had placed their hope on Him, a preaching of blissful joy. During their pilgrimage they had been sorely oppressed. They had no clear and distinct word and testimony concerning Him who was to come. Now they saw the glory of the Son of God, full of grace and truth. Now Adam and Eve saw Him who had bruised the serpent's head. Now Abraham saw the promised Seed . . . Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the Prophets now heard the glad news that the work of salvation was accomplished. Since these pious men of the Old Testament had been the first believers, the gospel of the finished liberation must be preached to them first. . . . The descent of Christ to hell was for the Prince of Darkness and his angels a *preaching of judgment*, for the believers of the Old Covenant a *preaching of blessed fulfillment and joy*, and for those who through no fault of their own had not believed, a *preaching of repentance and salvation.*" (*Das Lamm Gottes*, pp. 726 ff., 729 f.)

Here are a few typical statements by theologians of the Lutheran Church in America. R. F. Weidner on Eph. 4: 8-9: "That part of Hades known as Paradise before Christ's resurrection and descent in triumph (Luke 23: 43) has now yielded up its captives, the saints of the Old Testament, who had been held by the power of Satan and death, for the Lord Jesus 'hath led captivity captive'; He has snatched all believers from Hades and has conquered Satan and Hades; and the gifts which the exalted Christ gave to the saints of the Old Testament when He ascended on high and entered upon His kingly and heavenly throne, were freedom from the dominion of Satan and Hades and the blessedness and glory of being with Him in heaven. When Christ ascended on high, into the heaven of glory, to sit at the right hand of God, He led captivity captive; He took with Him into heaven — snatching them out of the power of Satan, out of the upper part of Hades — those souls who in Paradise had welcomed Him as

the Redeemer, and from this time forward Paradise is not regarded as a place or condition of joy *on* the earth, as it was before the Fall, nor *under* the earth, as the upper part of the place of the departed souls, as it was between the fall of man and the resurrection of Christ, but as *above* the earth, in heaven itself." (*Bible Theology of the New Testament*, II, p. 37 f. — See M. O. Wee, *Shall I Live Forever?* p. 44.) C. M. Jacobs: "Christ descended into Hades, the place of the departed, that He might be their Savior too. The manner of that salvation and the extent of it may remain an unsolved problem. But of this at least we can be sure — Jesus is Lord not only of those who lived when He was here and those who have come since but also of those who went before, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah, and of countless others whose names are unrecorded. And may we not also reverently hope, as Justin Martyr did, that His Lordship may have brought a blessing to those outside the line of Israel . . . to Socrates and Plato, and all who have lived pure lives and thought high thoughts and striven for great and distant goals?" (*The Faith of the Church*, p. 62.) A letter published in *The Lutheran*, Jan. 15, 1925, says: "1 Peter 4:5-6. The Gospel of the crucified, risen Redeemer from sin was preached unto them that were dead. These were a different class; they were not the disobedient named in 1 Peter 3:18-20. But they were dead, and they were in the place of departed spirits, awaiting the Judgment, too, the same as others. . . . If Christ preached the Gospel to the ones who died in faith, where did He have to go? He had to go where they were. The great gulf fixed might divide the two classes. But at all events, Christ had to go to the place of departed spirits to do His preaching! That's settled! And our old Creed calls that place 'hell.' Whether 'hell' or 'sheol' or 'the grave' or 'beyond the grave' or 'the place of departed spirits,' it is all one. . . . The Lutheran Church is the Church of a *full Gospel*, and that *descension* is a part of the whole Gospel. If people who do not believe that that is a part of the whole Gospel would or could change places with faithful Abraham, let us say, they would find out that the heralding of that Gospel victory would amount to a great deal! Stick to it, brethren. There are many people who do not have a complete or fully rounded Gospel. There are others who know more



than the Scriptures. But if we had died with faithful Abraham, we would discover that that *descensus* is worth something. . . .”

What says Scripture? It says not one word about a *limbus patrum*. On the contrary, it teaches that the saints of the Old Testament at their death at once entered into the bliss and glory of heaven. According to Scripture, the Old Testament believers had the same faith as the New Testament believers and obtained the same benefits and blessings that the death and resurrection of Christ has brought to us. “To Him give all the Prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:40; cp. Rom. 3:21 f.). The Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached in the Old Testament, and all that accepted it by faith were justified, were saved, saved to the full. Ziethe’s dogma that the believers of the Old Testament had no clear word concerning the coming Savior is not in accord with Acts 10:40. Abel had a clear word; he believed it and was declared righteous (Heb. 11:4), as righteous as the believers of the New Testament. Abraham believed it, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3), and by that he obtained all the blessings of the children of God. There was nothing lacking to mar his joy. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).<sup>2</sup> It mattered not that he did not live in the days of the fulfillment. Believing in “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8),<sup>3</sup> Abraham and all the children of Abraham received the full blessing of God’s children. At their death God received them into His heavenly home. Luther, on Gen. 3:15: “Mark the plain language of the Old Testament. Here it declares that Adam was a Christian, a long time before Christ was born, for he had the same faith in Christ that we have. Faith does not change with the time; it is the one faith from the beginning of the world to the end. Therefore he received through his faith the very same

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<sup>2</sup> Luther: “Where and when did Abraham see Him? Not with his bodily eyes, as the Jews understand it, but he saw Christ with the eyes of faith in the heart, when he received the promise: ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed’ (Gen. 22:18). . . . The day of Christ is the time of the Gospel [the day of the New Testament].” (XI:573.)

<sup>3</sup> Lenski, on Rev. 13:8 f.: “The efficacy of His Son’s death extending backward, as also it extends forward, from the day on Calvary. . . . The Lamb’s slaughter saved all the Old Testament saints.”

thing that I have received. He did not see Christ with his bodily eye; neither did I; but he had Christ in the Word, as we have Him in the Word. . . . Faith is indeed one; so then the fathers have been justified through the Word and faith, just as we are, and in this faith they died." (III:85.) We of the New Testament pray that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil . . . and finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven. The believers of the Old Testament prayed the same prayer. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24. See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1906, p. 507). ". . . unser christlicher Glaube, durch welchen, wie wir, so auch die lieben heiligen Vaeter sind selig worden" (Luther, III:17).

Add Matt. 22:31 f.: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." That means that when Abraham died, his soul went to live with God in heaven. Isaac consoled himself with this assurance, and "no doubt he said: God has revealed to me that my father Abraham is living, enjoying God's grace and mercy" (Luther, II:215). The *limbus patrum* men say here that they do not deny that the soul of Abraham lived on after his death. But we say that the words of Jesus will not bear the thought that the soul of Abraham was confined in a compartment of the *Totenreich*, under "the dominion of Satan" (Weidner). Add Luke 16:22 ff.: Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Remember, this happened *before* Christ's alleged descent into the *limbus patrum*. The place where Abraham and Lazarus dwelt is described by Abraham as a place where "Lazarus is comforted." Luther: "Es ist genug, dass wir wissen, Abraham und Lazarus sind im Frieden und in Ruhe." (VII:321.) Add Matt. 8:11. Those who heard these words of Jesus did not get the idea that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not yet in "the kingdom of heaven." Add Luke 9:28 ff. Remember, this happened *before* the alleged rescue of Moses and Elijah from the *limbus patrum*. Shall we say that they were permitted only for this occasion to share the heavenly glory of Jesus and then returned to the *Totenwelt* for another period? Stoeckhardt: "Moses and Elijah ap-

peared with the transfigured Christ in their heavenly glory. . . . These two inhabitants of heaven spoke to Jesus of what would be the end of His suffering and death — through suffering Jesus would enter into His glory. Moses and Elijah had themselves gone that way; after the sorrow and woe of this earthly life they had been made partakers of the heavenly splendor and glory.” (*Die Biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*, p. 147.) And we shall also add Heb. 9:27. God has graciously appointed that the believers, all believers, also those of the Old Testament, enter immediately at their death into the heavenly bliss and glory.

Luther is in full accord with Scripture when he writes: “Gen. 25:8: ‘Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.’ . . . Den vierten Ort nennen sie *limbus patrum*. . . . Die vor der Zukunft Christi gestorben sind, die sind erhalten und selig geworden in der Verheissung des Wortes, darinnen sie in diesem Leben gelebt haben, und da sie gestorben sind, sind sie auch in das Leben gegangen und recht lebendig gewesen. . . . Abraham lag in den letzten Zuegen und rang mit dem Tode; darnach ist er bald gestorben und in das ewige Leben gegangen.” (I:1765.) Scripture does not place the Old Testament saints into a lower class. “Dies Evangelium [Gen. 3:15] haben nun die Vaeter von Adam an gepredigt und getrieben, dadurch sie auch den zukuenftigen Weibessamen dieses Weibes erkannt und an ihn geglaubt haben, und also behalten sind durch den Glauben an Christum so wohl als wir, sind auch rechte Christen gewesen wie wir.” (Luther, XX:1797 f.)

It might be well to hear a few more statements presenting the teaching of Scripture. C. Hodge: “The Scriptures represent Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as being in heaven. The good, at death, are carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom. Moses and Elijah appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration, conversing with Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said: ‘Ye are come to Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect.’” (*Systematic Theology*, III, p. 730.) Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexicon*: “The older theology of the Lutheran Church knows nothing of a *limbus patrum*; some modern evangelical theologians, however, teach it. . . . The Lutheran

Church teaches, on the basis of Scripture, that in the future world but two places await man." (S. v. *Limbus*.) H. E. Jacobs: "Did this proclamation of Christ's victory extend also to the saints of the Old Testament who died in faith of the promises fulfilled by His death and resurrection? The Roman Catholic Church teaches that by this preaching they were released from the so-called *limbus patrum* and transferred to heaven. Of this, however, Scripture says nothing. . . . We dare not think of those who departed in faith as until then 'in prison.'" (*A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 152.) Lenski: "False modern learning . . . tells of a third place, neither heaven nor hell. This intermediate third place is *die Unterwelt*, 'the underworld,' but commonly it is termed the *Totenreich*. We are blandly told that the conception is pagan, and the pagan sources are offered. We are told that it became the ancient Jewish idea of the hereafter. . . . Others introduce Christ's descent into hell, *i. e.*, this descent into this realm of the dead—he released the Old Testament saints. Now the blessed dead go to heaven. . . ." "The moment we get 'beneath the earth' (Rev. 5:3) look out!" (*Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, pp. 77, 195.) "We dismiss the figment of a *Totenreich* into which also the soul of Christ passed at death, emerging at His resurrection. He placed His spirit into His Father's hands, entered Paradise (heaven), together with the malefactor's soul. The fiction of the death realm is often embellished by making Christ execute a ministry there, releasing the Old Testament saint from the *limbus patrum*, proclaiming grace to all the dead, or to a certain number of them." (*Interpretation of Ephesians*, p. 522.) E. Hove: "The Roman Catholics also speak of a *limbus patrum*, where the Old Testament patriarchs and saints sojourned until Christ's descent into hell, when they were delivered and received access to heaven. This place is therefore now empty. Of all this Scripture contains not a word." (*Christian Doctrine*, p. 415.)

Nay, say the Catholics and their Protestant allies, Scripture clearly teaches the *limbus patrum*.—Let us examine their Scripture proof.

In his Locus XXVII, De Morte, caput VIII, sectio III, Gerhard examines in 32 columns the prooftexts offered by the Catholics, most of which are also offered by the Protestants.

Bellarmino offers five. The first is Gen. 37:35: "I [Jacob] will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning" — "down to Sheol" (Am. Rev. V); "I will go down mourning to my son in death" (Moffatt). Bellarmine argues: The text states that pious Jacob did not *ascend* to heaven but *went down ad inferos*; therefore he went into the *limbus patrum*. Gerhard patiently lists the various meanings of *sheol*: (1) *infernus*, (2) *dolores inferni* (3) *extremus humilitatis gradus*, and (4) *mors et transitus hominum ex hac vita et conditio mortuorum in genere* (Gen. 44:29; Job 7:9; Ps. 88:3; Ps. 89:48), and *sepulchrum* (Gen. 42:38; 1 Kings 11:6, etc.), shows that Jacob is speaking of his approaching death, points out that in interpreting the parallel passages (Gen. 42:38 and Gen. 44:29, 31) the Catholics themselves will not say that "the gray hairs," the body of Jacob, went down to the *limbus patrum*, and stresses mainly that the text contains no reference to a *limbus patrum*, that such a reference is a mere assumption based on the *fiction* of a *limbus patrum*. (See also Gerhard's *Commentarius super Genesin*, on this text, p. 618.) — Apply this to Wilmers' argument, quoted above. Wilmers argues that since Jacob's soul could not be in the grave, it must at death pass into "a certain place." Surely! But it is a pure assumption, based on a pure fiction, that Jacob is speaking of his descent into the *limbus patrum*. Why, then, does he not say that his soul will rest with God? Because that is not the subject on which he is speaking.

Bellarmino's second proof-text is 1 Samuel 28. Gerhard demonstrates, pretty conclusively, that it was not Samuel that appeared from the dead to Saul (or rather to the witch) but an apparition of the evil spirit, *spectrum aliquod diabolicum*.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that God made an exception to His rule and permitted blessed Samuel to appear, that does not prove Bellarmine's case. For the text does not say or indicate that

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<sup>4</sup> Thus also Luther. "Asked whether the real Samuel appeared, Luther answered: Nein, sondern ist ein Gespenst und boeser Geist gewest. Es ist nur des Teufels Gespuecknis, in der Gestalt des Mannes Gottes." (XXII:759.) And many others. Pieper: "A devilish apparition." (*Christliche Dogmatik*, III, p. 578.) H. Ebeling: "Samuel erschien ja gar nicht dem Saul. . . . Es war ein plumper Betrug." Ebeling notes that this text is used not only by the Catholics to prove their *limbus patrum*, but also by many Protestants to prove their *Totenreich*. (*Der Menschheit Zukunft*, p. 24 f.)

Samuel came from the *limbus patrum*. That is again a pure assumption, based on pure fiction.—But the text says: “Bring up!” That is simply a synonym of “bringing back from the dead.”—Getting back to Gerhard, we note that Bellarmine, when confronted with the plaguing statement of Samuel to Saul “Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me” (in the *limbus patrum*?) asserts: “That does not mean ‘with me’ in the *limbus patrum*, but ‘with me under the earth; that is, you will be dead.’” Whereupon Gerhard says: “If ‘you will be with me’ is the same as ‘you will die,’ then also Jacob’s statement ‘I will go down to my son’ is the same as ‘I will die with my son,’ and thus the first argument adduced to support the *limbus patrum* loses its force.”

The next prooftext reads: “By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water” (Zech. 9:11). Some papistical theologians identify this pit with the *limbus patrum*, others say it cannot mean that, because the *limbus patrum* contained refreshing water of consolation and hope; it must therefore be *purgatory*, where this water is lacking. Gerhard closes his discussion with the statement: “This benefit of Christ (who through His blood redeemed the captives of *hell*) belongs not only to the New Testament, but also to the Old Testament, because ‘the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world’ (Rev. 13:8), and the pious fathers were at once, in their death, taken to Paradise and were not cast down into the place of the damned.”—Plumptre too uses this as a prooftext. See above. He quotes it on pages 6, 24, 97, 121, and 310 of his treatise. It is an outrage. Because these men imagine that there is a “pit,” which they call *limbus patrum*, they feel at liberty to quote any text which speaks of a “pit” as a prooftext! If you do not want to call this proceeding outrageous, call it “childish.” Calvin calls it that. “Others interpret [the statement of the Creed] differently, *viz.*, that Christ descended to the souls of the patriarchs, who died under the Law, to announce His accomplished redemption and bring them out of the prison in which they were confined. To this effect they wrest the passage in the Psalms ‘He hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder’ (Ps. 107:16) and also the passage in Zechariah: ‘I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water’ (Zech. 9:11). But since the Psalm

foretells the deliverance of those who were held captive in distant lands and Zechariah, comparing the Babylonish disaster into which the people had been plunged to a deep dry well or abyss, at the same time declares that the salvation of the whole Church was an escape from a profound pit, I know not how it comes to pass that posterity imagined it to be a subterranean cavern, to which they gave the name of *limbus*. Though this fable has the countenance of great authors and is now also seriously defended by many as truth, it is nothing but a fable. To conclude from it that the souls of the dead are in prison is childish. . . ." (*Institutes*, II, chap. 16, 9.)

Next: Luke 16:19-21. Gerhard answers, among other things: "If Lazarus was comforted and enjoyed happiness, peace and rest in Abraham's bosom, how could he have been *in limbo*, in a pit in which there is no water of refreshment and consolation? . . . Abraham's bosom (*sinus Abrahae*) must therefore be heaven, not a *limbus inferni sinus*. . . ." — The papists and their Protestant allies must prove, not simply *assume*, that Abraham was at this time not yet in heaven. — Lenski: "'Abraham's bosom' is a Jewish designation for heaven." "All speculation which claims the discovery of a third or intermediate abode, treads the outworn paths of Romanism, merely modifying the Catholic fables." (On Luke 16:19-31.) Zahn's Commentary: "'In Abrahams Schoss' gibt die Vorstellung . . . des Ausruhens von der Muehe und Not des Erdlebens in trauter Gemeinschaft mit dem im Tode noch lebenden und seligen Stammvater." — We do not get the point in W. E. Orchard's assertion: "Although the common interpretation is that Lazarus was in heaven and the rich man in hell, nevertheless the reference to Abraham's bosom rather than to Paradise fits in with the Church's doctrine that until Christ's ascension not even the souls of the patriarchs had entered Paradise." (*Foundations of Faith*, IV, p. 86.) The fact is that Abraham's bosom and Paradise and heaven are synonymous. See also *Davis' Dictionary of the Bible*: "*Abraham's Bosom*. The Jews fondly thought of being welcomed by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to Paradise (4 Macc. 13:17) and of having fellowship with Abraham, even resting, as it were, on his breast (Luke 16:22). In the rabbinical speech of the third century A. D., to say that a person was sitting in Abraham's bosom meant that he had entered Paradise."

Luckcock (*op. cit.*, p. 41) has the same definition of Abraham's bosom."

And now for 1 Peter 3:18 ff. Bellarmine's argument is: "It is stated here that the spirits were in prison. Therefore they were not in heaven, for it would be ridiculous to say of souls which are in heaven that they are in prison, for heaven is the seat of God." It is incredible. Is it possible that men could conceive of St. Peter describing the patriarchs and saints of the Old Testament as men who "*sometime were disobedient*"? One hesitates to quote much from Gerhard's answer. We shall transcribe just this much: "The papists make this text speak of the *limbus*, out of which the fathers were freed in Christ's descent *ad inferos* and taken to Paradise. In the *limbus* there were according to the papal teaching only pious men, believers, but Peter states in this passage that Christ preached to τοῖς ἀπειθήσασίν ποτε." Gerhard closes the discussion with the statement: "*Andradius, libr. II, p. 121, negat, limbum patrum ex hoc loco elici posse.*" — A. H. Strong: "Romanists teach that Christ entered the underworld to preach to Old Testament saints that they might be saved. But the passage [1 Pet. 3:18 f.] speaks only of the disobedient; it cannot be pressed into the support of a sacramental theory of the salvation of the Old Testament believers." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 385.) Stoekhardt: "Von einer Beziehung speciell der Hoellenfahrt Christi auf die Seligen im Paradies sagt Petrus und auch sonst die Schrift nichts." (*1 Petribrief*, p. 154.)

Prooftexts offered by other popish theologians: Gen. 15:5: "Thou [Abraham] shalt go to thy fathers in peace," — to thy fathers, who were idolaters, says Galatinus. We shall content ourselves with transcribing one sentence from Gerhard's reply: "That would be saying that Abraham, the father of all believers, was cast down into the place of the damned, to which idolaters go." — Deut. 32:22: "Unto the lowest hell." The argument is, "If there is an *infernus inferior*, there must also be a *superior, videlicet limbus.*" We shall refuse to transcribe Gerhard's answer. — Matt. 11:3. Costerus actually wrote this: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? That is, shalt thou descend into the *limbus* and deliver the fathers out of it?" Gerhard went to the trouble of answering. — Eccius, on John 8:56: "'Abraham saw My



day and was glad,' he heard in the *limbus patrum* of the birth of Christ; it was reported to him by Christ's forerunner John or by just and devout Simeon." — 1 Pet. 4:6. Gerhard: "The Apostle does not say that the Gospel was preached *apud inferos vel in limbo*." See CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY, 1945, ff: "It was preached to them not while they were dead but before their death, while they were still living upon earth." Meusel: "Von einer rettenden Taetigkeit Christi in der Unterwelt, etwa von einer Herausfuehrung der Glaebigen des alten Bundes aus der Sheol, redet Petrus nicht (1 Pet. 3:18), auch nicht 4:6, wo nicht Christus der Verkuendigende ist, und der Zwecksatz die Predigt an 'Tote' nur als eine Predigt an solche, die vor ihrem Tode das Evangelium gehoert haben, verstehen laest." (*Op. cit.*, s. v. Hoellenfahrt.) — Zwingli, too, finds the *limbus patrum* in 1 Pet. 4:6. "In his *Fidei Chr. Expos.* he says: 'It is believed that Christ departed from among men to be numbered with the *infern* and that the virtue of His redemption reached also to them, which St. Peter intimates when he says that to dead, *i. e.*, to those in the nether world who, after the example of Noah, from the commencement of the world believed upon God, the Gospel was preached. On doctrinal grounds he defends his view by the position that no one could come to heaven before Christ (John 3:13), because He must have in all things pre-eminence (Col. 1:18).' (See *Lange-Schaff Commentary*, on 1 Pet. 3:18 ff.) — Heb. 6:20: "Whither the forerunner is for us entered.' But Christ would not have been the forerunner of the rest, if the saints of the Old Testament had entered heaven before Him." Gerhard: "He is still rightly called *πρόδρομος ac praecursor*, because He ascended into heaven in His own power and might and procured the right of ascension for the others. John 3:13; 14:2. He occupied heaven not only on His account, but also on account of us, the members of His mystical body." Ebeling: "'Vorlaeuffer!' — also, meinen Irrlehrer, koennten die Glaebigen des Alten Testaments nicht vor ihm in den Himmel gekommen sein. Doch er heisst mit Recht unser Vorlaeuffer, weil er aus eigener Kraft und fuer uns in den Himmel gegangen, d. h., weil er uns den Eingang ermoeeglicht hat, John 3:13; 14:2." (*Op. cit.*, p. 26.) — "Heb. 9:8: The way into heaven was not yet made manifest in the time of the Old Testament. But if the prophets and patri-

archs had entered into heaven, the way would have been manifest in the Old Testament. Ergo." The meaning of the text is, as Gerhard points out, that the sacrifices of the Old Testament did not *per se ac ex se* open the way to heaven. Still, *passio Christi profuit antequam fuit, ac agnus Dei occisus est ab origine mundi* (Apoc. XIII:8)." — "Heb. 9:19. The blood of Jesus Christ opened heaven; therefore, etc." Gerhard: "That is absolutely true. But the benefits of Christ's blood extend *antrorsum ac retrorsum*. *Puerilis error est, vim et efficaciam meriti Christi ad illud momentum temporis restringere, quo Christus in ara crucis sanguinem suum effudit.*"

Heb. 11:39-40: "They received not the promise; God having provided better things for us" means, according to some Romanists, that "the fathers of the Old Testament did not entertain the hope of entering heaven at once; they had to remain in the *limbus* till Christ through His ascension had opened heaven to them." Gerhard asks them to read verses 10 and 16 in this very chapter — "he looked for a city which hath foundations," "now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly" — and quotes Bellarmine as rejecting their interpretation. — Certainly the believers in the Old Testament hoped to be "received to glory" (Ps. 73:24), and "afterward" cannot be made to mean "after our sojourn in the *limbus*." And they did not have to wait for the fulfillment of the promise to obtain the benefit thereof (see above). Luckock and others also use this text to establish the *limbus patrum*. He refers to it time and again. "It is expressly said that the fathers of the Old Dispensation who had died in faith did not at once receive the promise, but were compelled to wait in an incomplete state, 'that they without us should not be made perfect' (Heb. 11:40). . . . It was designed by God that the Old Testament saints be not made perfect without us (Heb. 11:40), that they should wait till in the fullness of time Christ by His one oblation should offer salvation alike to us and them. He descended to Hades to certify to them that their spiritual disabilities were canceled and to admit them into the Paradise of joy." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 21, 151, 161.) Three remarks. 1. If there had indeed been a *limbus patrum*, the text *might* be made to refer to it. In other words, if Luckock and the others had not imbibed the false notion of a *limbus*,

they would not dream of offering Heb. 11:39-40 as a proof-text. They are operating with a false premise. 2. They are operating with the false premise that God did not offer full salvation in the Old Testament and that the virtue of Christ's death cannot be retroactive. 3. They are operating with the basic error that the life beyond the grave contains more than two places, heaven and hell.<sup>5</sup>

A word on Zwingli's proof-text. Col. 1:18: "He is the First-born from the dead; that in all things He might have pre-eminence." You must first believe in the fiction of the *limbus* before you will be able to see any reference to it in this text. Lenski on our text: "The fiction that Christ's soul entered 'the realm of the dead,' *Sheol*, Hades, an intermediate place between heaven and hell, and remained there for three days is advocated in some books and deserves the condemnation which Paul here metes out to the Colossian Judaizers." This applies, of course, also to the fiction that one of the purposes of this sojourn in Hades was the deliverance of the Old Testament saints. — A word on Dr. Weidner's proof-text, Eph. 4:8 f. (See above.)<sup>6</sup> "He led captivity captive" simply can-

<sup>5</sup> What is the meaning of "they received not the promise," "God provided better things for us," "they should not be made perfect without us?" They did not see the fulfillment of the promise. We are living in the glorious time of fulfillment. See *Kretzmann's Commentary, Proceedings, Iowa District, 1900, p.58* etc. Or it may mean that if the fathers had seen the fulfillment, if the consummation had taken place in their time, if the end of things had come in the Old Testament days, we, unborn then and forever, would not have shared in the blessing. Thanks be to God that *we with them* share the perfection. Thus *Meyer's Commentary* (both Luenemann and Huther) and *Zahn's Commentary*. Lenski on our passage: "There would have been no New Testament era, no world-wide reach of the Gospel, no hosts of New Testament believers." — There may be doubt as to which of these two interpretations is the correct one. But there can be no doubt that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who declares that immediately after death the believers enter heaven (Heb. 9:27), cannot be saying in our text that some believers had to stay in the *limbus* for a while. — The *Pulpit Commentary* on our text: "There is, of course, no warrant in Scripture for the patristic and Romish doctrine of the *limbus patrum*. The souls of the Old Testament saints after they departed this life, did not experience a dreamy sort of existence in some dreary underworld until the time of Christ's ascension. Abel and Abraham, Moses and David, passed at once from earth to glory." (P. 316.)

<sup>6</sup> I. M. Haldeman offers the same proof-text. "When Christ rose from the dead, He liberated the souls of the righteous dead from Abraham's bosom and took them up into a 'place' now called 'Paradise' . . . when He ascended upon high, He led up a multitude of captives, Eph. 4:8." (*Chr. Science in the Light of H. Scripture*, p. 249.) Also H. W. Frost. (See above. We need not examine the other proof-texts there offered: Job 17:16; Is. 24:21 f.; Ps. 31:17.)

not mean that Hades "yielded up its captives," but can only mean that at Christ's descent to hell and ascension to heaven "captivity itself was taken captive (Col. 2:15); the captivity in which principalities and powers, the hellish kingdom, held and tried to keep men, thus was made captive, *i. e.*, abolished (1 Cor. 15:57)." Thus Lenski and Stoeckhardt on our passage. Not believers but *enemies* were made captives. And "He gave gifts unto men" cannot mean that He "gave to the saints of the Old Testament blessedness and glory," but can only mean, as the Apostle himself explains, gifts bestowed on the Church: "He gave some apostles, and some prophets," etc. *The Expositor's Greek Testament*: "Neither in the Psalm nor in Paul's use of it here is there anything to warrant the idea that the captives are the *redeemed* or men in the bonds of sin on earth or *souls detained in Hades*. The most that the words themselves or passages more or less analogous (1 Cor. 15:25 f.) warrant us to say is that the captives are the *enemies* of Christ; just as in the Psalm they are the enemies of Israel and Israel's God." — Must we say something on the prooftext offered by Luthardt and others: Matt. 27:52 f.? <sup>7</sup> "Many bodies of the saints which slept arose . . . and after the resurrection went into the holy city." That would not prove that Christ took *all* the saints of the Old Testament with Him to heaven nor that any of them had been in the *limbus*. — It might help a little if the text stated that these saints were taken into heaven. Well, there are those who say that the text states just that: they went into "the holy city," Jerusalem the city fair and high. This interpretation has actually been offered. *The Pulpit Commentary*: "Some would understand the heavenly Jerusalem, but the context is wholly against such an exposition." (P. 598.)

We need not examine the other prooftexts offered, such as Hosea 13:14; Col. 2:15; etc.

<sup>7</sup> *A New Commentary* by C. Gore, etc.: "The other portents rest upon Matthew's authority alone. We have here almost certainly the first appearance of 'the harrowing of hell,' a story more fully told in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. The Lord, the Firstfruits of them that slept, brought back with Him from death the Old Testament saints who had been waiting in the *limbus patrum* for the accomplishment of His redemption (cf. Heb. 12:23). Matthew believes that they had already their glorified bodies, and perhaps that the rending of their sepulchers by the earthquake enabled them to rise," etc. Plumptre quotes Cyril of Jerusalem: "He ascended into heaven with the souls that He had rescued. Some of these were they who appeared to many after His resurrection." (*Op. cit.*, p. 149.)

Are you ready to accept the *limbus patrum* exegesis? Prof. M. O. Wee puts it very mildly when he writes: "As to the view that Christ effected a radical and vital change in the state or condition of the Old Testament saints at the time of His descent into Hades, it must be said that it is based partly upon uncertain interpretations, partly upon subjective speculations." "To divide Hades into compartments, as it were, speaking of lower and upper—or fore-hell—as Dr. Weidner does, is fanciful. It may perhaps be called philosophy, but certainly lacks Scriptural grounds." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 40, 44.)

There is no Scripture proof for the *limbus patrum*. You can indeed "prove" it with the Fathers. The writings of the *limbus* theologians abound with quotations from the early Fathers. And they offer these quotations as proofs. Luckock, for instance, says: "That Hades was moved by His presence . . . rests on the almost continuous teaching of all the Christian centuries; further, that the souls of the faithful saints and patriarchs of the Old Dispensation were the first to benefit by it, occupies the chief place in that teaching. We accept it therefore with confidence." (*Op. cit.*, p. 161.) See similar statements listed in CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY, 1945, p. 596: "The belief of these early Fathers lends distinct countenance to the belief," etc. Now, it is true that most of these Fathers taught the *limbus patrum*.<sup>8</sup> But that does not mean anything to us. We of the Old Protestant School do not accept the Fathers as authorities. We know that, like the councils, they have often erred. And "it will not do to frame articles of faith from the works and words of the holy Fathers" (Smalc. Art., *Trigl.*, p. 467).<sup>9</sup> The teaching of Scripture does not sanction the teaching of these Fathers.

<sup>8</sup> Stoeckhardt on 1 Pet., p. 159: "Die meisten griechischen und alle lateinischen Kirchenväter beziehen die Heilspredigt und Heilswirksamkeit Jesu im Hades auf die Frommen des Alten Bundes, auf deren Erlösung aus dem Hades und Versetzung in den Himmel."—The next sentence is interesting in that it states that in the Catholic teaching the *limbus patrum* is the Old Testament *ignis purgatorius*. Stoeckhardt's final statement is: "Das sind ja freilich Dinge, von denen die Schrift nichts sagt."

<sup>9</sup> Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 575: "The erroneous opinions of the Church Fathers concerning the Paradise of the souls of the believers, which they took to be a *paradisus terrestris*, are discussed by Gerhard, *L. de morte*, § 163 sq." C. Hodge: "It would, therefore, seem impossible that any who do not rest their faith on the Fathers rather than on the Bible should

And Scripture compels us to combat this teaching. It is not a harmless matter. Some may say: The Hades gospel (conversion after death) should not be tolerated in the Church. It tends to lull men into carnal security, and thus imperils their salvation. But the *limbus* dogma cannot have such an effect. It cannot affect the men living today. And it certainly cannot affect the believers of the Old Testament. Their eternal status is secure. It is more or less an academic question.

Not so. The *limbus* dogma is a harmful teaching. In the first place, it breaks down the Scripture principle. It is, in the words of Gerhard, an "*opinio ἄγγραφος* and an *opinio ἀντίγραφος*. . . . *Destituitur sacrarum literarum fundamento; iisdem adversatur.*" If we gave one group of men the right to preach their own notions and notions which Scripture condemns, a second and third group would claim the same right. We are not debating an academic question.

Consider too the kind of exegesis which the *limbus patrum* advocates employ, are forced to employ, in order to establish their dogma. We have seen what violence they must do to the texts in order to make them express their preconceived notions. The student who is taking notes on Bellarmine's and Luckock's and Luthardt's lectures on the *limbus patrum* is surprised at the strange things coming out of the texts. He may lose all respect for Scripture. Or he may employ the same method in all of his exegetical and theological work.

In the second place, the *limbus patrum* dogma militates against the all-sufficiency of the blood of Christ and the all-sufficiency of faith in the Gospel. Gerhard: "This papistical fable of the *limbus patrum* detracts from the merit of Christ, denying, contrary to Rev. 13:8, that the fathers of the Old Testament fully profited by it." (*L. cit.*, § 172.) And it is certainly not a harmless matter when the sinner is asked to look for his salvation to something beyond Christ's merit. Catholic theology asks him to do that, to put his chief trust, for instance, in the sacrifice of the Mass. And the *limbus* is made to serve this horrible teaching: lacking the Mass, the believers

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deny that the souls of believers do at death immediately pass into heaven. The Fathers made a distinction between Paradise and heaven which is not found in the Scriptures." (*Op. cit.*, III, p. 727 f.) Gerhard: "*Ex incertis patrum conjecturis praeter et extra Scripturam prolatis non potest formari aliquis fidei articulus. . . . Scriptura duos tantum novit post hanc vitam status, vitam scilicet et mortem aeternam, coelum et infernum.*" (*L. cit.*, § 180.)

in the Old Testament could not obtain full salvation at their death. Study the statement of Dr. Hoenecke: "It is clear what interest is served by maintaining the dogma of the *limbus patrum*. To say that the fathers of the Old Testament entered heaven at once would confirm the teaching of salvation by faith alone and would scrap the whole papistical salvation machinery, would eliminate particularly the need of the sacrifice of the Mass." (*Ev.-Lutherische Dogmatik*, IV, p. 228.)<sup>10</sup> We are not dealing with a mere academic question.

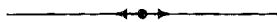
The Protestant advocates of the *limbus*, too, imperil the faith of the Christians. Denying, contrary to Acts 10:43, that God preached the very same Gospel to the believers of the Old Testament as to us, in consequence of which, of course, their faith was not quite the same as ours (contrary to Heb. 11), suffered with "spiritual disabilities," and did not obtain the full blessing, they infringe on the universality of the Gospel. But our faith rests on the universality of grace, exhibited also in the universality of the Gospel preaching. Every instance that proves the universality of grace serves to strengthen our faith. In the hour of doubt and affliction the Christian may find the needed comfort just in this fact that the fathers of the Old Testament had the full Gospel, illustrating and proving the great truth that the saving virtue of the death of Christ, the grace of God, extends over all time and embraces all mankind. Let not one of those things that were written for our learning and comfort (Rom. 15:4) be suppressed! Our faith needs all of them.

And, in the third place, the *limbus* dogma lends some support to the Hades gospel. We have shown what a dangerous teaching that is: it engenders carnal security. (See the article: "The Evil of the Hades Gospel," *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, 1945, p. 611 ff.) And we shall show in the concluding article of this series that it prepares the way for the *apokatastasis*. But the *limbus* dogma is somewhat related to the Hades gospel. Not all who believe in the *limbus* teach the possibility of conversion after death. But the great majority of the Hades theologians combine the two teachings.

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<sup>10</sup> Hoenecke calls attention to the Catholic teaching that even Mary, if she had died before Jesus, would have gone, in spite of her exalted position, into the *limbus*. "Hier kommt ein anders Interesse als Maria und Jesus in Frage, naemlich die Hoheit des Papsttums mit seiner Messe usw."

They find a certain relation between the two. Moreover, as *Lehre und Wehre*, 1874, p. 81, points out, the Hades gospel grew out of the *limbus* dogma. "Es ist darum die Hadeslehre der neueren Theologen eine muessige und ueberfluessige Spekulation, eine Ummodelung und Neugestaltung des roemischen, altmodish gewordenen *limbus patrum*, nur mit etwas erweiterten Grenzen." And, worst of all, it supports the fundamental thesis of the Hades gospel, that the eternal fate of man is not decided at death, by teaching that the believers of the Old Testament were not prepared to enter heaven at their death. Even if some *limbus patrum* advocates strictly adhere to Heb. 9:27, their teaching might cause men to look for exceptions to the rule laid down in Heb. 9:27.



## Some Famous Scottish Preachers of Post-Reformation Times

By F. R. WEBBER

It is hard to mention a country that has produced more famous preachers than Scotland. In proportion to the total population Wales may have done so, but the sermons of many of the eminent Welsh preachers have never been translated into English.

Scotland's area is about one half that of our State of Wisconsin, and less than one half that of our State of Iowa. Until about a century ago the total population of Scotland was a little over one million, and even today it is less than five million.

The history of the Scottish Kirk is extremely dramatic. John Knox convinced the people intellectually that the Roman Church was wrong, but it required the folding stool of an unlettered applewoman, hurled at the head of the Dean of Edinburgh, to cause a popular uprising, with people surging through the streets of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews, shouting in unison, "Down with the papal Antichrist! The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

Then, on a memorable day in 1638, 60,000 people crowded into Edinburgh, at that time a small town, and signed an enormous sheet of parchment which contained the half-for-