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MEDITATIE

Juda's Keuze

Dan zullen de leidslieden van Juda in hun hart zeggen: De inwoners van Jeruzalem zullen mij eene sterkte zijn in den Heere der heirscharen, hunnen God. Te dien dage zal ik de leidslieden van Juda stellen als een vurigen haard onder het hout, en als een vurige fakkel onder de schoven; en zij zullen ter rechter- en ter linkerzijde alle volken rondom verteren; en Jeruzalem zal nog blijven in hare plaats te Jeruzalem.

Zach. 12:5, 6.

Dan!

Op dat bepaalde moment en onder die bijzondere omstandigheden!

Dan zullen de leidslieden van Juda in hun hart een besliste keuze doen vóór Jeruzalem en tegen hare vijanden!

Och, onder andere omstandigheden ware deze keuze niet zoo merkwaardig. Als Jeruzalem óók eene sterke vesting is naar de maatstaf der wereld, als ge rondom de vesting kunt gaan en hare torens kunt tellen, en ge weet, dat binnen hare muren een sterke bezetting is van strijdbare helden; of als voor het oogenblik Jeruzalem vrede heeft en ze ook door de volkeren rondom met respect wordt behandeld; als de Kerke Gods een tijdperk van rust mag genieten en hare leden ook in de wereld eene plaats kunnen vinden,—och, dan valt het niet zoo op, wanneer “de leidslieden van Juda” zeggen, dat in de inwoners van Jeruzalem hunne sterkte wordt gevonden, wanneer ze in hun hart de keuze doen vóór Jeruzalem.

Velen sluiten zich dan bij Jeruzalem's inwoners aan!
Een groote kerk wordt gemakkelijk groter!

Maar dan!

Als er, naar menschelijke berekening, geen veilig-

heid te zoeken is binnen de muren der Godsstad, als hare positie hachelijk wordt te oordeelen naar de dingen, die gezien worden, als machtige vijanden haar omsingelen van alle zijden, en als zij, die zich onder hare burgeren tellen, de eenige bron voor hun moed en vertrouwen en kracht moeten zoeken in den Heere der heirscharen, den Onzienlijke. . . .

Dan trekken velen zich terug, vinden het veiliger in Babel. . . .

Maar dan is het ook des te schooner, wanneer de leidslieden van Juda in hun hart de keuze doen vóór Jeruzalem, en in hare inwoners hunne sterkte vinden!

Zoo was het toen, op het moment dezer profetie.

Al de volken der aarde hadden zich tegen Jeruzalem verzameld, toen de profeet haar zag in het zoeklicht zijner profetie.

Maar de Heere der heirscharen was met haar!

En ze had Zijne belofte, Zijn Woord, dat van geen wankelen weet!

Hij zou Jeruzalem stellen tot een zwijmeldrank allen volken, en tot een lastigen steen: wie zich daarmede beladen zouden gewisselijk doorsneden worden. Hij zou de paarden met schuwigheid slaan, en hunne ruiters met zinneloosheid. . . .

Maar Hij zou Zijne oogen openen over het huis van Juda!

En dan doen de leidslieden van Juda in hun hart de keuze vóór Jeruzalem!

Gewichtig moment!

Wonderlijke keuze!

De leiders van Juda zeggen in hun hart: De inwoners van Jeruzalem zullen mij eene sterkte zijn!

Van eene keuze, eene besliste keuze, is hier immers sprake. Ze zeggen hier iets *in hun hart*, van waaruit de uitgangen des levens zijn, van waaruit al ons denken en willen en begeeren, al ons spreken en handelen, uit een geestelijk-zedelijk oogpunt wordt bepaald. Ons hart kiest en beslist in den diepen grond der zaak tusschen licht en duisternis, doet eene keuze in betrekking tot God!

Hier geldt de keuze in haar concreten vorm, voor-

zoover het de dingen betreft, die gezien worden: Jeruzalem of Babel, de Kerk of de wereld, Christus of Belial. Want de leiders van Juda zeggen dit in hun hart op het oogenblik, dat Jeruzalem van alle zijden omsingeld is door de vijanden. En hetgeen ze zeggen wordt zeker niet bepaald door de dingen, die gezien worden. Bij de inwoners van het belegerde en door de vijanden bestookte Jeruzalem zoeken ze hunne sterkte! Eene wonderlijke keuze! Want die vijanden zijn machtig, en te oordeelen naar menschenlijke maatstaf is er voor Jeruzalem geen hoop op uitkomst of overwinning!

Tegenover de overweldigende macht der vijanden kiezen de prinsen van Juda hier voor het zwakke Jeruzalem!

Ze zeggen: Uw volk is mijn volk!

Let er op, dat er naar de voorstelling der profetie onderscheid gemaakt wordt tusschen Jeruzalem en Juda.

Jeruzalem was onder de oude bedeeeling de zichtbare stad Gods, het centrum van de zichtbare openbaring van Gods Koninkrijk in de wereld. Daar was de tempel, waar Jehova woonde tusschen de cherubim, achter het voorhangsel. En daar waren de berg Sion en de troon Davids, vanwaar de Heere Zelf regeerde door Zijnen gezalfde over Israel. Jeruzalem was het centrum van Israels leven. In de nieuwe bedeeeling is Jeruzalem principieel boven, want Christus is opgewekt en de Hoogepriester is ingegaan in het binnenste heiligdom, en de Gezalfde des Heeren regeert van den troon Davids in den hemel, verhoogd aan de rechterhand des Vaders. Maar dit Jeruzalem komt tot openbaring in de Kerk op aarde. En met oog op het onderscheid, dat hier gemaakt wordt tusschen Jeruzalem en Juda, mogen we zeggen, dat Jeruzalem in de nieuwe bedeeeling op aarde vertegenwoordigd wordt door de Kerk in haar centrum, met hare ambtsdragers. Als geïnstitueerde Kerk komt ze in de wereld tot openbaring als de woonstede Gods in Christus, als het koninkrijk Gods in Christus. Daar wordt Gods Woord gepredikt en beleden en gedaan. . . .

En het hooren en houden van Gods Woord is het kenmerk van de burgeren van Jeruzalem.

En Juda lag wel buiten en rondom Jeruzalem, maar zijn leidslieden en burgers behoorden toch bij de Godsstad. Ook hun leven concentreerde zich in Jeruzalem. Daar woonde ook hun God. Daar heerschte hij, die ook zij als hun koning erkenden. Daar aanbaden ook zij. Met de burgers van Jeruzalem vormden ze dus het ééne volk des Heeren. Alleen maar, hun woonplaats was buiten de vesting. En als de vijanden aanrukken tegen de stad Gods, komen zij dus eerst met hen in aanraking. En er is geen reden in den tekst voor de voorstelling, dat Juda en Zijn prinsen thans toevlucht hebben gezocht binnen Jeruzalems muren,

Jeruzalem en Juda!

De Kerk in haar centrum, zooals ge haar op den sabbat moogt zien vergaderd rondom Gods Woord; en Gods volk in de wereld, zooals het op allerlei wijze in aanraking komt met de wereld, die in het booze ligt. . .

En wat zal Juda nu doen?

Wat zullen hare prinsen nu zeggen?

De vijand rukt aan en is machtig! Zullen Juda's leidslieden zich nu overgeven aan, en gemeene zaak maken met de vijand tegen Jeruzalem? Zullen ze oordeelen, dat de zaak van Jeruzalem toch immers hopeeloos is, dat de stad Gods niets vermag tegen zoo overweldigende macht, en zullen ze zich om huns levens, huns aardschen levens wille maar bij den vijand voegen?

Ach, zoo oordeelen en spreken velen, die leidslieden van Juda heeten, en velen van de inwoners van Juda zijn maar al te bereid om de leiding van deze prinsen te volgen!

Doch Juda's ware leiders spreken toch anders.

Zij zeggen in hun hart: De inwoners van Jeruzalem zullen mij eene sterkte zijn.

De uitdrukking is eenigszins eigenaardig. We hadden het kunnen verstaan, indien de prinsen gezegd hadden, dat Jeruzalem's God hun eene sterkte zou zijn. Of ook, het ware begrijpelijk geweest, zoo ze gezegd hadden, dat ze hunne sterkte zouden zoeken in Jeruzalem, binnen hare vesting. Maar nu zeggen ze, dat de inwoners van het belegerde Jeruzalem hun eene sterkte zullen zijn!

En toch, de zaak is duidelijk.

Er ligt in dit zeggen van de leiders van Juda allereerst de erkenning, dat Jeruzalems burgeren sterk zijn. Oogenschijnlijk is dit anders. Naar den uiterlijken schijn der dingen is de macht bij de vijanden en is er voor Jeruzalem geen hoop. Doch in weerwil van dezen schijn der dingen zeggen de leiders van Juda, dat de sterkte is bij de inwoners van Jeruzalem. In de tweede plaats spreken Juda's prinsen hier uit, dat ze zich bij Jeruzalem's burgeren zullen voegen, dat ze Jeruzalem's zaak tot hun zaak zullen maken. Ze zullen spreken en belijden als Jeruzalem's inwoners, wat er ook gebeure, en hoe de vijand ook mag woeden. Ze zullen Gods Woord belijden en bewaren en Jeruzalem's zaak, de zaak van God's verbond, verdedigen tegenover den vijand. En in de derde plaats spreken de leidslieden van Juda hier als hun vaste overtuiging uit, dat ze dan alleen sterk zijn, als ze met de inwoners van Jeruzalem gemeene zaak maken!

De inwoners van Jeruzalem zullen mij eene sterkte zijn!

Hun zaak is onze zaak!

Hunne kracht is onze kracht!

Het is de keuze van Juda's prinsen als vertegenwoordigende Juda zelf en hare inwoners!

Vóór Jeruzalem, tegen Babel!
Wonderlijke keuze!

Wel gegronde keuze!

Oogenschijnlijk is de keuze dwaas, en moet ze wel door de uitkomst worden beschaamd.

Wie zegt nu van den zwakke, dat hij hem tot sterkte zal zijn? Wie zoekt nu bescherming en veiligheid, laat staan van overwinning, bij hem, bij wien vermogen noch middelen gevonden worden?

En toch, zoo is het hier. Nooit is Jeruzalem sterk. Nooit vindt ge de machtigen der wereld binnen hare vesting. Tevergeefs zoekt ge daar de paarden en de ruiters, waarop ge in den strijd kunt vertrouwen. Zoo was het gesteld met Jeruzalem van de oude bedeeling. Wat beteekende Sions berg bij Basan's hemel-hoogen? Zoo was het vooral ten tijde des profeten. Ach, verwoest had men de stad Gods. En het was eigenlijk slechts bij de gratie der heidensche vorsten, zoo het scheen, dat de oude Godsstad nog weer herbouwd mocht worden. En bovendien, in deze profetie wordt ze immers voorgesteld als door vijanden omsingeld!

En is het anders met de kerk der nieuwe bedeeling?

Klein in aantal, gering in kracht, arm aan middelen, wonend temidden van een machtige wereld, bij wier "gratie" ze nog "vrijheid van godsdienst" mag genieten, zoolang als ze die wereld niet teveel in den weg staat. . . .

Ach, wie zou nu zeggen: de leden van die Kerk zullen mij eene sterkte zijn?

Oogenschijnlijk eene dwaze keuze!

En zeker eene keuze, die door en naar het vleesch nimmer zal kunnen worden gedaan.

Vergeet het daarom niet, dat het in laatster instantie God is, Die hier spreekt. Hij zegt hier, wat zal gebeuren. Hij belooft hier iets aan Zijne Kerk. Hij zegt het, dat de leidlieden van Juda dan in hun hart zullen zeggen: De inwoners van Jeruzalem zullen mij eene sterkte zijn. En wat Hij zegt, dat doet Hij. Wat Hij belooft, dat vervult Hij. Hij is het dus ook, Die Zelf deze keuze in de harten van Jeruzalem's prinzen werkt. En als Hij ze werkt, dan kunnen, dan willen de prinzen van Juda niet anders dan zich bij het oogenschijnlijk zwakke Jeruzalem voegen.

Het is de keuze, niet des vleesch, maar des Geestes, door Gods genade in 't hart gewerkt.

Dan *zullen*. . . .

Daarom is deze keuze, schoon dwaas naar het vleesch, dan ook eene beslissing der hoogste wijsheid. Ze is wel gegrond.

Immers is de sterkte van Jeruzalem's inwoners niet in henzelfen, maar in den Heere hunnen God. En dat de leiders van Juda dit goed beseffen, dat ze niet hun kracht in menschen zoeken, als ze de burgeren van

Jeruzalem hunne sterkte noemen, is wel duidelijk uit de woorden: "in den Heere der heirscharen hunnen God." Met de inwoners van Jeruzalem zoeken en vinden Juda's grooten sterkte in den God van Israel.

Hij is de HEERE, Jehova, de Onveranderlijke, de IK ZAL ZIJN, de eeuwig Getrouwe, de Verbonds-God, Die nooit laat varen de werken Zijner handen, Die Zelf Zijn verbond heeft opgericht met Zijn volk, Die dat verbond eeuwiglijk gedenkt, het realizeert in Zijn Gezalfde, het volmaken zal in eeuwige heerlijkheid in Zijn tabernakel bij de menschen. Hij is *hun* God, Die Israel heeft verkoren, Die Zijne Kerk heeft liefgehad met eene eeuwige liefde, verordineerd tot de zaligheid, Die Zijne liefde openbaart in het aangezicht van Jezus als de God hunner zaligheid, en Die alle dingen tot hunne eindelijke zaligheid zekerlijk zal doen gedijen. Hij is de Heere der heirscharen, Die de legermachten van hemel en aarde gebiedt, en ze in dienst stelt tot den strijd om Zijn verbond. . . .

Hij is dus de Almachtige, de Alwijze, de Getrouwe, de eeuwige God!

"Hij kan en wil en zal in nood,
Zelfs bij het naad'ren van den dood,
Volkomen uitkomst geven."

Op Hem is Juda's vertrouwen.

Wel gegronde keuze!

Keuze, die nooit beschaamt!

Want de vijanden zullen beschaamd en verteerd worden.

Maar als de strijd gestreden is, zal Jeruzalem nog zijn op hare plaats te Jeruzalem!

In beeldspraak wordt de overwinning van Juda hier geteekend. God zal zijn prinzen stellen tot een vurigen haard onder het hout, en als een vurigen fakkel onder de schoven. Dat hout en die schoven zijn de machten der duisternis, de vijanden, die Jeruzalem omsingelen om haar te verwoesten, die Gods volk haten en bestoken in de wereld alle eeuwen door. En dat vuur is Gods kracht in en door Juda, waardoor Juda sterk staat tegenover de vijanden en hen verteert. Niet buiten Zijn volk om, maar door hen heen, werkt God, om Zijn volk te bewaren en te beschermen, en de volkomene overwinning te geven.

Medestrijders Gods door Zijne kracht zijn zij!

En dit wil niet zeggen, dat Gods Kerk in de wereld uitwendige macht zal ontwikkelen, en in uitwendigen, aardschen zin de vijanden zal verteren. Ze zal moeten lijden naar het vleesch.

Maar geestelijk heeft ze de overwinning. En de uiteindelijke victorie is harer.

En eeuwiglijk zal Jeruzalem op haar plaats staan, aan de spitse der schepping!

Nimmer beschaamde keuze!

H. H.

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Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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 Nieuws Uit Onze Kerken S. D. V.

REMARKS

I did not consider it necessary to indicate the number of pages for each article. The brethren may consult the outlines of last year for this if they are in doubt. Rev. Ophoff preferred to select his own subjects rather than having subjects assigned to him. I wish to thank some of the brethren for their sug-

gestions regarding desirable topics for discussion in our paper. I made as much use of them as I could. To make room for others I had to omit the Rev. G. Vos's contribution on The Psalms a few times. Criticism of the above schedule will be very welcome and could be taken into consideration in connection with the schedule of a following year.

H. H.

Verlost Uit De Diepte

(Psalm 57)

Nog weer een gouden kleinood Davids. En't blijkt uit den inhoud, dat het de Messias is, die zijn lijden en verlossing en prijs van God, vooruit deed lijden en ervaren door den man naar Gods hart, David, de toekomstige Koning over het Israel des Heeren.

Een gouden kleinood. Een schat van ongekende waardij. Een kostelijke zang die vanuit de diepten des lijdens opklimt door de verlossing tot de lieflijkste zangen van de verheerlijking Gods.

Historisch mag dit lied verbonden aan het zwerven van David, toen Saul hem gieriglijk najoeg in de woestenij van Engedi, boven op de rotssteen der steenbokken, aan den weg waar een spelonk was. Voor Jona beschikte de Heere een groote visch die hem verzwoeg, voor David was er altijd de spelonk, waar hij mocht ontkomen aan de haat Sauls.

We merken op, dat Saul in de spelonk kwam om zijn voeten te dekken. Doch David met zijn hoopje mannen verborgen zich in de zijden der spelonk. Die spelonk is er nog.

Ge kunt het U levendig voorstellen hoe het David te moede was. Slechts ééne ongelukkige beweging of geluid en de drie duizend helden Sauls zouden zich op David met zijn hoopje ellendigen geworpen hebben.

In die spelonk dichtte David zijn psalm.

In die ellende, duizend maal tienduizend maal verdubbeld, zuchtte Jezus. In die ellende, toen duivel en mensch samenrotte om Jezus altijd maar weer te vangen, heeft Jezus de zangen Davids vervuld. Hoe menigmaal moet Jezus niet gezocht hebben: Wees mij genadig, O God! wees mij genadig! En we lezen, hoe Jezus des morgens vroeg, toen het nog donker was, alle zoogenaamde beschaafde plaatsen verliet om een heenkomen te zoeken in de woestijn, temidden van de rotsblokken, in de spelonken der aarde. Alles wat Hem omringde daar weerspiegelde de angst Zijner ziele. En Hij stortte heete tranen tot God, Zijn Vader. "Die in de dagen Zijns vleesch, gebeden en smeekingen tot Dengene die Hem uit den dood kon verlossen, met sterke roeping en tranen geofferd hebbende, en verhoord zijnde uit de vreeze . . ." Heb. 5:7.

David mocht die klager vooruit leven in den angst zijner ziele. Doch de gebeden Davids hadden hun einde. Davids nacht had een einde in den tijd. Jezus' klachten, echter, waren klachten die hun echo hadden in den eeuwigen nacht die in een korte spanne tijds doorstaan zijn. Onbegrijpelijke smart van Jezus. En toch een gouden kleinood! De hemelen zullen het U vertellen, wanneer geen maan meer schijnt.

Wees mij genadig, o God! wees mij genadig, want mijne ziel vertrouwt op U, en ik neem mijne toevlucht onder de schaduw Uwer vleugelen, totdat de verdervingen voorbij zijn gegaan.

Dat heeft David gedaan; en dat doet gij ook, die den Heere vreest en op Zijn Woord vertrouwt. Ook kunt ge er van op aan, dat Jezus zulks deed. Niemand heeft zoo op den Heere vertrouwd als Jezus. Zelfs de duivel heeft dat opgemerkt. Ge kunt het hooren temidden van het rumoer rondom Golgotha. "Hij heeft op God vertrouwd: dat Hij Hem nu verlosse!" Matth. 27:43.

Ja, de Heere Jezus Christus, de betere David heeft zeer op den Heere vertrouwd; het was Hem er om te doen om onder de schaduw van Gods vleugelen Zijne toevlucht te nemen. Maar, ach, dat kon op den duur niet. Langzaam aan trokken die vleugelen zich terug en werd Jezus blootgesteld aan de haat van Saul, o neen, van Satan, van Herodes en Pilatus, van de volken Israels en van een ieder die een zaak tegen Messias had. De vleugelen werden teruggetrokken en, o wee! voor die vleugelen kwam er in steeds versnelde tempo de golven en baren van Gods toorn. Doch Jezus bleef tot in de zwarte eeuwicheden toe op God betrouwen. Het was waar, wat de duivel zeide. In den zwarten nacht van Golgotha heeft Jezus op God vertrouwd, ook dan wanneer de vleugelen Gods veranderden in het laaien van vlammen vuurs des ijvers Gods. David zocht en vond de luwte van die vleugelen, doch Jezus, Zijn groote Zoon, stond alleen in den nacht en bij onweer.

Doch Hij heeft op Hem vertrouwd. Van uit de diepten die we nimmer zullen peilen, komt een gebroken stemme: Mijn God! Ik vertrouw toch op U! Ik moet verven om Uws grotten Naams wille! Doch Ik vertrouw op U! Mijn ziel en lichaam hijgen in een land, dat dor en mat van droogte brandt, waar niemand lavenis kan krijgen. Lavenis? Neen, dat kan niet, want Ik ben in de hel, in de buitenste duisternis, in den tweeden dood! En Ik betrouw op U! Waarom verliet Gij Mij?

Toch bleef die betere David roepen. En Hij heeft zoolang geroepen, tot dat God het aan Hem voleindigde. Leest het maar in den zeven-en-vijftiger. Ik zal roepen tot God den Allerhoogste, tot God die het aan Mij voleindigen zal. Past het gerust aan Jezus toe. Straks hooren we van die voleinding, als Jezus met groote stem roept: Het is volbracht.

En Davids lijden zag zijn einde. Saul sliep de slaap die God op hem deed vallen. David sneed den slip zijns mantels en verhief zijn stem. De Heere gaf hem zijn vijand in den hand. Doch aan het begin van zijn kleinood liet hij schrijven: Verderf niet! Dat is de vertaling van Al-ta-sheth. David kwam niet in den spelonk bij de schaapskooien om Saul te verderven. God zou dat doen in Zijn Eigen raad. Maar David ontkam: hij vlood. En de groote Zoon werd weggerukt van voor den muil der draak tot voor den troon van God.

De Heere heeft dan ook David verlost. Hij zond van den hemel. O vraagt mij niet hoe dat in zijn werk gegaan is. Ik zal moeten spreken in algemeenheden. Laat dit U en allen die God vreezen tot troost zijn: als gij uit de diepten tot God schreeuwt, dan zal Hij van den hemel zenden tot Uwe hulpe. Mozes heeft er al van gezongen zoovele jaren voor David: Niemand is er gelijk God, o Jeschurun, die op den hemel vaart tot Uwe hulp, en met Zijne hoogheid op de bovenste wolken! Deut. 33: 26. Als gij maar tot Jeschurun moogt behooren, dan komt alles terecht. Betrouwt op Hem, o Volk! Nooit is er een van die kleinen beschaamd geworden in dat vertrouwen.

In algemeenheden zal ik spreken. David gaat ons daarin voor. Soms is het een bode die hijgend vertelt van Filistijnen die in het land vallen; soms is het de slaap die Abner en de helden bevangt. Doch David is altijd veilig. Want God zend Zijn GOEDERTIERENHEID en WAARHEID.

Goedertierenheid is die deugt van God waarin alles in God zucht om Zijn volk te zegenen. En waarheid is die deugd waarin alle lijnen recht loopen. De leugen is de kromme lijn en het doen van slangen, adderengebroedsels. En tegenover de goedertierenheid Gods staat de hardigheid, de wreedheid en het geweld des duivels.

Algemeenheden, ja, doch daarom passen ze op alle wegen en werken Gods die door goedertierenheid en waarheid Zijn volk uit de klauwen van het dier verlost.

Stoute taal? Luistert naar David. Men zoekt David op te slokken, zijn ziel is in het midden der leeuwen, hij ligt onder stokebranden, menschenkinderen welker tanden spiesen en pijlen zijn en hunlieder tong een scherp zwaard. Zoo was het met David en zoo is het met U, als ge op den Heere vertrouwt.

O neen, men slokt U niet op zooals de menscheneters hun vuil werk doen. Dat zijn zachte menschen, vergeleken bij dit gebroed. Neen, het was en is de duivel te doen om het edelste wat ge hebt, uw ziel! Davids ziel was temidden der leeuwen! En die spiesen en pijlen en zwaarden zijn meestal woorden. Er zijn van die wezens die er werkelijk behagen in hebben om zeer te doen. Men koos zijn woord en bedacht de juiste phrase: het moet zeer doen, schrijven en vlijmen van smart. Zocht en vond men dan zijn slachtoffer, zoo

wentelde en wrong de stakkerd zich in de pijn van spies en pijl en zwaard der lippen. Men lachte voorts en de hel weerkaatste zulk lachen. Doch engelen Gods bedekten hun reine oogen. En het kindeke Gods klaagde tot God.

Zoo moet ge David zien in de spelonk bij de rotssteenen der steenbokken.

En zoo moet ge Jezus zien, hangende aan het vervloekte hout.

Dan ziet ge ook God.

Luistert maar naar David: Verhef U boven de hemelen, o God! Uwe eer zij over de gansche aarde!

Dat lost het probleem op, hoe die arme lijdende stakkerds kunnen zingen in de spelonk. Ze hebben God gezien en ze hebben op God betrouwd en ze hebben gehongerd naar Zijn glorie en eer. Terwijl de leeuwen brullen, zingen zij de psalmen tot Gods eer. Weest even stil en luistert. Stapt niet te zwaar op 't wandelpad nabij de spelonk der kerker in Filippi. Als ge even stil wilt staan zult ge van onderen, van uit het sous-terrain, het zingen en bidden van twee Christenen hooren. De ruggen bloeden en het is vuil in de spelonk, doch hun hart is licht en de gevangenen hooren naar hen. Straks knielt de stokbewaarder. Het licht viel in zijn duistere ziel.

Na den nacht van Jezus komt het zonnelicht van den eersten Nieuw Testamentischen Sabbat: Ik zal Uw Naam Mijn broederen vertellen. Verhef U O Vader, boven de hoogste hemelen! Jezus zingt Zijn lied der verlossingen uit de diepten van den zwaren nacht. En voorts zijn de teekenen der nagelen, neen, der leeuwen, zijn ridderorden: Jezus wordt geordend tot Koning over Gods heelal.

Ja, David, we hebben U gehoord en we hebben het ervaren: daar was het net, de geeseling, de kuil; men spreide het net voor Uwe voeten, ge gingt gebukt onder de geeseling der kwaden, een kuil gaapte voor Uwe voeten. Doch de Heere deed U't gevaar ontkomen, verlossend U te goeder uur!

En als de nacht voorbij gegaan is, zien de verwonderde oogen, dat de beklagenswaardige goddeloozen zelf in het net verward werden, geslagen worden met dubbele slagen en de kuil van onuitblusschelijk vuur voor hen geopend wierd.

Als de nacht voorbij gegaan is, staat Saul, met de vloek tusschen de tanden sissend, voor God; Pilatus houdt het plankje vast in't gericht: hij blufte immers: wat ik geschreven heb, heb ik geschreven. Nu zal God hem er aan houden. Deze rechtvaardige was dan toch Koning der koningen en Heer der heeren. David in't volle licht staat te jubelen voor God; Saul staat te rillen voor God: Hij heeft David gevloekt en God heeft die vloek gehoord.

Doch Jezus staat in't volle licht en jubelt met de lieflijkste stemme in't koor der hemelen; en Satan heeft zijn smarten: het net, de geeseling, de kuil die brandt

van vuur en sulfur!

En dit is het wondere van al die smart: zij heeft het hart van David bereid. Zo diep treft hem die wijsheid Gods, dat hij het tot tweemaal zegt, neen, zingt: Mijn hart is bereid, o God, mijn hart is bereid! Ik zal zingen en psalmzingen!

Gods wet voor't Koninkrijk is wonderlijk. En onveranderlijk. Het gaat door strijd tot overwinning. Door smart tot ongekende vreugde; om een kroon te ontvangen moet ge gestreden hebben tegen't wild gediert'. Paulus zal er later van getuigen: "Want onze lichte verdrukking, die zeer haast voorbij gaat, werkt ons een gansch zeer uitnemend eeuwig gewicht der heerlijkheid. . . ." II Cor. 4:17.

Zoo verstaan we wel niet alles, doch het licht der wijsheid begint te gloren als Johannes ons leert, dat de schare die niemand tellen kan haar schoonste zangen zingt vanwege een Lam, dat staat als geslacht! En wordt het Kruis, de verbrijzeling des Heeren, stof tot een zang die wel beginnen zal, doch welks einden nooit gevonden worden.

Waak op dan, mijne eer! Waak op gij luit en harp! Waak op gij dageraad! Alles moet opgewekt, want David, neen, Jezus, werd opgewekt ten derden dage. En nadien Jezus opgewekt is uit de nevelen des eeuwigens doods, moet alles in het Koninkrijk opgewekt om bij het krieken van den dageraad der opstanding den Heere met luider stemme op't hoogst te prijzen.

Daarom moet er dan ook godsdienstoefening zijn. Daarom zullen er altijd menschenkinderen gevonden worden die's Zondagsmorgens zeggen: Waak op, mijne eer! Waak op, harp en luit! Waak op, o dageraad! Vandaag gaan we een voorsmaak hebben van den morgenstond die een dag zal inluiden waar de zonne der gerechtigheid nimmer zal ondergaan. Die dag zal nooit sterven in schaduwen van den nacht. De nacht heeft eeuwig uit. Aldaar zal geen nacht zijn.

Daarom moet er dan ook godsdienstoefening zijn. Onze eer, onze ziel zal ontwaken. Wy hebben de stem van God, van Jezus, van David gehoord: Waakt op gij die slaapt en staat op uit de dooden en Jezus zal over U lichten!

Zoo gaat men naar de kerk, naar Gods altaren.

Daar looft men God; daar ervaart men het slot van dezen psalm. Daar hoort men die schoone algemeenheden, die een reeks van schitterende bijzonderheden verhalen. Daar is het al de goedertierenheden en de waarheid Gods. Daar zegt men het duizendmalen: Verhef U, O God, boven de hemelen! G. V

ATTENTION, CONSISTORIES

Classis West, of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Meets Sept. 9, 1942, D. V. Nine o'clock, at Edgerton, Minnesota.

Stated Clerk M. Gritters

Abels Meerdere Offerande

Heb. 11:4.

Dat de Wet slechts een schaduw was der toekomstige dingen en niet het beeld zelf der zaken, die daarin afgeschaduwd waren, was de oorzaak, dat alle jaren en geduriglijk Israel terug moest naar Tempel en altaar. De dienst van het Oude Verbond was dan ook telkens het herhalen van wat eerder gebracht was. Hij gaf geen bevrediging, doch wees naar een beter offer, het offer Christi, Die met eene offerande in eeuwigheid volmaakt degenen, die geheiligd worden.

Daarom is het, dat de schrijver aan de Hebreëren, de gemeente waarschuwt tegen de neiging, die in hen midden openbaar werd, om toch niet weer terug te keeren tot den Oud Testamentischen eeredienst. Het begin van afwijking was er alreeds. Er waren sommigen die zich onttrokken en niet meer geregeld de samenkomst der geloovigen bijwoonde. Voor die reden nu schuift de schrijver het betere van de Nieuwe Testamentische Bedeeling op den voorgrond. Het Nieuwe is immers de vervulling van en daarom ook heerlijker dan het Oude. Schaduw is nooit zoo heerlijk als werkelijkheid, tenzij men in den vorm bleef hangen.

Toch is het niet alleen het betere, dat hij hier op den voorgrond wenscht te plaatsen. Hij wijst, ter hunner bemoediging, op de overeenkomst, die er bestaat tusschen hen die gelooven in Oude en Nieuwe Bedeeling. Dwars door de schaduw heen grepen ook de geloovigen van den ouden dag, door het geloof, naar de heerlijkheid der vervulling van den Nieuwen Dag. Daarom was het voor de getrouwen dan ook een weg van lijden en vormden zij de groote wolke van getuigen, die hun geloof, dat zich richtte op de belofte Gods, met hun bloed moesten bezegelen. Zeker, zij hadden de belofte aangaande den Christus, doch de vervulling bleef uit, het lag alles in de toekomst verborgen. En hoe zij ook tuurden en staarden op de beloften, de vervulling kwam maar niet. Het was een wandelen in het geloof, zonder aanschouwen.

Dat nu hebben Oud en Nieuw Testamentische met elkander gemeen, dat zij beiden, wandelende in het geloof, den bloeddoopt zullen ondergaan. De hitte der vervolging is gevoeld in de Oude en zal ook in de Nieuwe Bedeeling moeten doorstaan worden. In plaats van mindere vervolging zal het voor hen, die in Christus zijn, toenemen in steeds opklimmende mate.

Het is dan ook met het oog op de komende vervolgingen, dat de Hebreëren worden gewezen op het lijden der geloofshelden, zooals deze de revue passeeren in het elfde hoofdstuk. Maar niet alleen op het lijden, doch ook wijst hij hen op het geloof, de vaste grond der dingen die men hoopt, en een bewijs der zaken die men niet ziet. En het was door het geloof,

die wondere gave van Gods souvereine genade, mogelijk, om vast te houden en getrouw te blijven ten einde toe. Het was een zich vast houden als ziende den Onzienlijke, van Wien zij dan ook getuigenis ontvangen, dat Hij Zich niet schaamt, om hunlieder God genaamd te worden. Van Hem ontving ook Abel getuigenis, dat hij door zijn offerande betoonde rechtvaardig te zijn.

Van Abel wordt ons dan ook het volgende medegedeeld.

Allereerst, dat zijn offerande een offerande des geloofs was. Door het geloof bracht Abel zijn offer. Niet slechts, dat hij door het geloof Gods offerde, dat natuurlijk is ook waar, maar veel meer, dat hij door het brengen van dat bepaalde offer God op Zijn Woord geloofde en dat geloof in het offer uitgedrukt lag.

Vervolgens, dat dit offer door hem den Heere gebracht, van den God Zijner zaligheid, werd begeerd en de Heere Abel heeft gezegd, dat hij gerechtvaardigd was. Dat zijn verhouding tot God was, als die van een gerechtvaardigde.

Eindelijk, dat hij, Abel, door het brengen van dat geloofsoffer, ook nu nog spreekt. Er gaat ook vandaag nog een getuigenis uit van Abels meerdere offerande tot een ieder, die den Heere toebehoort en tot hen die zonder geloof God meenen te kunnen dienen.

Abel en Cain.

Ge noemt den eenen en denkt tegelijkertijd aan den andere.

Zij stonden ook zoo heel dicht bij elkander en toch zoo onmetelijk ver bij elkaar weg.

We noemen hen in een adem en we weten, dat deze beiden niets met elkander gemeen hebben. Ja maar, zij hebben toch beiden geofferd? Zij waren toch beiden zonen van den een en denzelfden vader en van dezelfde moeder? Ga maar door. Zij waren leden van de eene en dezelfde Kerk en zij ontvingen beiden onderwijs in de eene en dezelfde Waarheid en werden zij niet door den eenen en denzelfden God onderwezen? Abel, maar ook Cain, hebben zij niet beiden de allerbijzonderste Godsopenbaring ontvangen?

Abel diende den Heere, maar was ook Cain niet alleszins godsdienstig?

Als ge niet oppast dan komt ge dezelfde fout te maken, die moeder Eva gemaakt heeft en dan is Cain "een man van den Heere verkregen" en Abel, nu ja, die is Abel (naar de beteekenis van zijn naam ademtucht, ijdelheid of broosheid, zwakheid). Het ligt er dus maar aan uit wiens oogpunt ge die beiden beziet. Daar zit tenslotte alles ook werkelijk op vast.

Dan blijft er maar een goed oogpunt over: Het oogpunt Gods.

Maar dan brengt God de Heere hier al direkt de door Hem gestelde antithese tot openbaring, zooals die vlak na den val was afgekondigd. De Heere verliest als het ware geen tijd, om het conflict, dat er is en

eeuwig zijn zal, tot openbaring te brengen. Licht en duisternis, komt in deze beiden tot openbaring. Ge hebt hier het begin van den grooten strijd, die er zijn zal tusschen God en Duivel, Christus en Satan, Kerk en wereld, verkorenen en verworpen menschen-kindren.

En het meest opvallende is, dat dit groote conflict zich toespitst in het offer, dat door die beiden gebracht wordt.

De vraag en het antwoord zijn eigenlijk overbodig, hoe het kwam, dat de beide broeders wisten dat er geofferd moest worden en dat zij als vanzelf het offer brachten?

Wisten hoe er een offer gebracht moest worden? Heel eenvoudig, zoo meenen we, omdat zij tot een gezin behoorden, dat den Heere vreesde. Dat gezin was de Kerke Gods en de gemeente van Christus. En in dat gezin hebben Vader en Moeder Verbondsmatig geleefd en hun kinderen opgevoed. Zij hebben gesproken van den staat der rechtheid en den val in zonde. Van de Verbondsbelofte en de door God gestelde antithese. En hun kinderen hebben beiden de les als het ware zoo geleerd, dat zij die van buiten konden opzeggen. Komen zij dan ook tot jaren van onderscheid, dan verwondere het ons niet, dat zij zelf het offer brengen aan den God van dat onderwijs.

Beiden immers offerde? Alleen maar, bij den een het offer, dat vrucht is van eigenwillige godsdienst, bij den ander het offer, dat door het geloof werd gebracht.

Cain bracht het offer, omdat hij meende iets aan God te kunnen geven en drukte daarmede uit, dat het hem niet zoo zeer om iets van God te ontvangen te doen was. Opvoeding in een Christelijk gezin brengt het zoo ontzettend ver.

Abel bracht het offer des geloofs. En dat geloof lag dan ook in zijn offer uitgedrukt. Het was het bloedig offer, dat der bedekking. Het was het offer van belijdenis van zonde en schuld, oordeel en doem, maar ook van vergiffenis door verzoening, het zich vastklemmen aan de beloften Gods, die in Christus ja, en Amen zijn.

Godsdienst was voor Cain een zaak, die betrekking had op het zedelijk leven, dat men fatsoenlijk moest zijn, dat de zonde niet mooi stond, dat gemaakte fouten moesten worden hersteld. Dat men toch vooral ook aan het opperwezen moest denken en wat voor de zaak van den godsdienst over moest hebben. Vader en moeder waren toch ook fatsoenlijke menschen, met wel wat bekrompen ideeën, schoon wel goed bedoeld.

Doch in dat onderwijs van Adam en Eva had Abel God hooren spreken tot hem. Over zijn zonde en Gods genade, den te komen strijd en de overwinning op dien strijd. Hij had God hooren spreken en wist dat God de Waarheid sprak. En als God tot Zijn kind spreekt dan 'hoort' dat kind en luistert nauwkeurig toe. En

de God, Die spreekt, spreekt de Waarheid; Hij kan niet liegen, waarom dan ook, dat kind zijn God op zijn Woord vertrouwt, schoon hij het met zijn natuurlijk oog niet kan zien en met zijn natuurlijk verstand niet kan narekenen.

Zoo nu werden de beide offers gebracht. De een kwam met zijn zonde uitziende naar genade, de andere met zijn werken, zijn vrije wil, vrucht van eigenwillige godsdienst, geen behoefte gevoelende aan het zoenbloed der verlossing.

Kon dan ook de strijd uitblijven? Neen, immers? Liefelijk vermanend, zachtken begint Abel getuigenis te geven tegen het offer van zijn broeder. Vastberaden gaat hij door en geeft het niet op, om zich te houden aan den Woorde Gods. En Cain moppert eerst wat, trekt de schouder op, gaat straks zijn tegenzin opkroppen.

Het wordt erger. De Heere spreekt tot Abel en geeft aangaande zijn offer getuigenis. Hij zegt het tot Zijn kind, dat Hij Hem liefheeft, dat Hij Zijn God en uit genade ook zijn Vader is. Abel heeft levensgemeenschap des Verbonds met God en is een vriend van God genaamd. God heeft hem aangenomen en zijn zonde bedekt, door het bloed dat zal gestort worden voor de verzoening. Gods uitspraak was, Ik, Ik delg uit al uw overtreding en heb u met Mij verzoend. Heeft de Heere dat zoo persoonlijk tot Abel gezegd? Ons antwoord is, ja, want zoo staat het in den tekst.

Maar dan moet toch ook Cain daarvan weten? Natuurlijk, zou Abel het voor zijn broeder, dien hij liefhad verzwijgen? We stellen het ons voor, dat met het zelfgetuigenis Gods in het hart, Abel niet zwijgen kon en met vurigheid van geest en een onvervaard gemoed tot zijn broeder ging, opdat deze zich zou bekeeren en zich tot den Heere keeren. Maar daar komt (Gen. 4) dan nog het Goddelijk getuigenis bij. Waarom, Cain, zijt gij ontstoken in toorn? Waarom luistert gij niet naar het getuigenis van uw broeder? Ik zal, zoo zegt de Heere, niet met twee maten meten. Als gij Mij dient, in den door Mij voorgeschreven weg, zoo zal ik u verhoogen, indien niet, de zonde ligt voor de deur.

Maar de zondaar kiest altijd voor de zonde tegen God en tegen Zijn volk.

En dan moet de uitkomst worden het vloeien van het bloed van den rechtvaardige, die door het geloof, als gave Gods, door God gerechtvaardigd werd.

En schoon Abel nu al zoovele duizenden van jaren gestorven is, daar spreekt hij nog. Ook vandaag.

Hoe hij spreekt? Wel heel eenvoudig, dat zijn offerande niet een verzinsel, doch naar waarheid was. God heeft immers terlaatster instantie deze offerande gerechtvaardigd toen Hij de offerande Zijns Zoons heeft aangenomen?

Hoe hij spreekt? Wel heel eenvoudig, dat de gemeente er op wordt gewezen, Abel staat mede in de rij

van hen, die den eenen onafgebroken wolk der getuigen vormen.

Hoe hij spreekt? Dat zijn bloed, vloeiend tot zegel des geloofs, ook van u zal vloeien, wanneer gij als de getrouwe getuige u schaart bij hen, die van de partij des levenden Gods zijn.

En eindelijk spreekt hij ook nu nog, doordat wat voor hem slechts belofte was, door u kan worden aanschouwd als vervulling. Hij werd in hope, op den te komen Christus, zalig. Gij wordt zalig door den gekomen, den gestorvene en opgestane Heiland.

En van u, zoowel als van Abel is het waar, dat daarom God Zich hunner niet schaamt, om hun God genaamd te worden. En ook, "Want dien de Heere liefheeft, kastijdt Hij, en Hij geeselt een iegelijken zoon dien Hij aanneemt. Indien gij de kastijding verdraagt, zoo gedraagt zich God jegens u als zonen".

W. V.

Nazism and Marxian Socialism

Marxian Socialism

Karl Marx was a well educated German, the son of Jewish parents who had become Christians. He was exiled from Germany for revolutionary opinions while a young man and lived almost all his later life in London. It is interesting that almost the only paying job he ever had was writing articles about European politics for the New York Tribune.

The socialistic philosophy of Karl Marx may be characterized as historical materialism. All history was viewed by him materialistically. And history to him is the class-struggle which will culminate in a class-less world, when communism will be supreme. In his earliest stage of development man was but a highly developed animal. Private property did not exist. And as long as private property did not exist, this man-animal was relatively happy and tame. But private property was introduced and this constitutes the fall of man. For, the private property owners became great beasts of prey, who desired nothing less than to gain control over all things, and the non-possessors became a mass of slaves groaning under the yoke of oppression. However, these non-possessors could not passively submit themselves to this state of affairs. They rose in rebellion. They struggled for freedom. They demanded equality. War broke out, a bitter war, a war which from earliest days may be traced through history. In the old Asiatic form of This progress to the socialistic state of things Marx trades through history. In the old Asiatic form of society, at the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

the husband was even the absolute owner of wife and children, and could dispense with them according to his sovereign good pleasure. In the Roman Empire we do not see this anymore, but the institution of slavery flourished. In the Middle Ages slavery was practically abolished, but only to be replaced by the feudalistic state of things, under which the tenant labored for his feudal lord. And, finally, in our own time the feudalistic state has vanished to make place for the capitalistic form of society. But this cannot be the last stage of historic evolution, for the highest and most perfect form of society has not yet been reached. And, therefore, as inevitably as the Old Asiatic form was replaced by the Roman, the Roman by the Feudal and the Feudal by the Capitalistic state of things, so inevitable will the present give birth to the socialistic age in which all private property will be abolished and men shall have all things in common.

The method by which capital exploits labor under capitalism as well as the law according to which the capitalistic state of things will inevitably give birth to the socialistic form of society is described by Marx in his theory of "surplus value." This theory implies the following. The eventual value of any commodity, he declares, is measured by the amount of labor necessary to produce it. The workers who actually produce the commodities, however, are paid not for their full share of the production but only a minimum wage determined roughly by their subsistence requirements. The capitalist sets the working day at a number of hours that will return in the market price of the goods not only the amount of wages paid but a surplus fund as well. This surplus is pocketed by the owners of capital in the form of profits, rent, or interest—the worker, in other words, produces more in market value than he is paid for. Now, if we subtract from the real value, the market-price of any commodity, that part which the laborer receives for his works, the remainder is what Marx calls the "surplus value." This remainder goes to the capitalist. Hence, this surplus which rightfully belongs to the laborer but is pocketed by the capitalist is therefore stolen from the working man. Capital, then, is simply an accumulation of money that rightfully belongs to the working man. Just because of this, however, the capitalist will in the end accomplish his own destruction. He becomes ever wealthier. Moreover, because of keen competition in the industrial and business world, the smaller capitalist will gradually be swallowed up by the larger and more powerful, so that they will gradually decrease in number. This state of affairs must continue awhile, must become still worse. The oppression of the proletariat must become more unbearable. All this will continue until but few capitalists will be left. Besides, these few capitalists, having grown rich in idleness, will have become

morally degenerate and physically weak. But this is the dawn of a new day. For this will be the moment when the toiling and suffering proletarians of all the world will rise as one man, snatch all power and wealth away from the hands of their oppressors, and take the control of the world into their own hands. Then private property shall be abolished forever, and peace and bliss shall reign in the world. It will be the socialistic, communistic millennium.

Therefore, also according to Marx, no great, bloody political revolution is necessary to accomplish the change. All that will be necessary is that the gospel of socialism be preached to all men. The hearts and minds of the people must be prepared for the new and surely coming order. Religion must be silenced (does it not teach men to be content and seek the things above?), and art must take its place to satisfy the desire of man's inmost heart. Meanwhile we must keep calm and abide the right moment. For the socialistic state of things will surely constitute the climax, the ultimate termination of all history and the consummation of all things. This is the Marxian theory of evolutionary socialism, socialistic state which will be realized evolutionistically—it will surely come according to the inevitable law of historical evolution.

However, it is beyond every doubt that the teachings of Karl Marx also form the basis of what is known as revolutionary socialism, a socialistic state which is realized in the way of revolution. For, on the one hand, it seems to me, the very doctrine of this German philosopher lent itself to revolutionary reaction. Was it not his teaching that government is but an instrument in the hands of the rich to maintain themselves over against the poor working man? Would his description of the rich man's exploitation of the poor, as set forth in this theory of "surplus value", not be apt to stir up, arouse the emotions of the laboring classes, make their "blood boil"? And, on the other hand, Karl Marx himself was a revolutionary, banished from three countries because of revolutionary activity. Did he not proclaim unto the proletariat: Workers of the world, unite! And, although it is true that he taught evolutionary socialism, yet he also told the working classes that they must be alert and ready to make most of the opportunity when the moment would strike. Consequently, communism has been characteristically revolutionary thus far. This has surely been true of Russia. Communism is organized Marxism in action. Marx has been the apostle of Russian Communism.

Briefly, we would summarize Marxism as follows. As a political theory it is a description of the class structure of society, in which the political state appears as the ruling instrument of the dominant class. As an economic theory, it is a criticism of the capitalist mode of production, an explanation of how labor is ex-

exploited by the owners of capital, and of how this process must inevitably lead to industrial breakdown. Marx defines this exploitation by capital of labor as "surplus value". And as a revolutionary program, it outlines the tactics of class struggle, leading to the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of a socialist society. To all this we may also add that Marxism is international, addresses itself without distinction to all the workers of the world, preaches an era of universal prosperity in which classes will be abolished and wherein all men shall share.

Nazism

What is Nazism? To understand the opposition of Nazism to Marxian Socialism we must emphasize two features of Nazism. Inasmuch as both concepts are equally irreligious and anti-Christian, this opposition cannot be explained from a religious point of view. Besides, Marxian Russia is as violently opposed to the principles of Christianity as is Nazi Germany. Hence, the religious views of Nazism need not be discussed, it seems to me, in this essay.

Of importance is, in the first place, the Nazi conception of the state. Like Italy, the Nazi state is a totalitarian unit. Every phase of the individual and collective life is "co-ordinated" within a single scheme, animated by a single purpose, and subjected to a single will—that of the Fuehrer (leader). In Germany today authority is imposed from the top, with obedience acknowledged from below. Economic interests are subordinated to political ends. Public opinion is shaped in the official mode and even the findings of science must conform to approved doctrine. The state as an organic unity stands above all institutions within it and besides this carries the time-less destiny of the German people.

Dictatorship, we know is inseparable from Nazism. Hitler's aversion and disdain of Democracy and parliamentary forms of government is well-known. The German Fuehrer regards dictatorship as the only sound and workable form of government. By this he understands that the people elect one leader, who, after he is elected, is not responsible to anyone; in whom is vested all power of the state, whose will is absolute and alone the law for all; and who, therefore is also the sole responsible head for all that is done and occurs in the State. In his book "Mein Kampf" Hitler gives clear expression to these sentiments. In this work the German leader speaks of the importance of the person and makes the individual the pillar of the entire edifice. In fact, no voting ever takes place in any chamber or senate. These are "working institutions and not voting machines." The individual member has an advisory vote but never a deciding one. The latter is the exclusive privilege of the respective responsible chairman, the Fuehrer. And Hitler speaks

of the principle of unconditional connection of absolute responsibility with absolute authority.

Moreover, the Nazi conception of the State is that of the Almighty State, alongside of which there can be no room for other spheres of authority, that swallows up all other authority and responsibility, and thus becomes the sole power in all the various domains of life, social, economic, educational, and religious. Every form of life in Germany today is under the absolute control of the Nazi State. The written and spoken word, science and art, the press, the university, the theatre and movie, industry and labor are strictly under the control of the State. It is an essential feature of Nazism, therefore, that authority is imposed from the top, with obedience acknowledged unconditionally from below.

In the second place, we must bear in mind the natural character of Nazism. According to Hitler, the State is a means to an end. Its end is the preservation and promotion of a community of physically and psychically equal living beings. And Hitler emphasizes the importance of breeding and purifying and preserving the pure Aryan or Nordic race, for the Nordic or German race is the noblest and highest, always the bearer of culture in the world. On its preservation depends the preservation of culture, the salvation of the human race. And this task belongs to the State. There can be no doubt that the center of gravity of the Nazi conception lies in the doctrine of German racial supremacy. And it is in the German official program of anti-Semitism that this doctrine finds its most severe application. Jews are denounced as the most degenerate of races and the apostles of all that Nazism despises, such as pacifism, internationalism, Christianity, social equality, communism, personal freedom, the notion of human brotherhood, etc. Consequently, a policy of eradication of the Jews has been pursued by the government. Their personal and civil rights have been abolished, and segregation into ghettos has been decreed for those who remain in the country. The German race is *the* superior race, and to it all peoples must be subject.

Nazism v. s. Marxian Socialism.

It will now not be difficult to understand the disdain of Nazism for Marxian Socialism. Firstly, Karl Marx was a Jew. This would be probably reason enough in itself for Hitler to oppose the teachings of Karl Marx.

I see particularly two reasons why Nazism opposes Marxian Socialism. In the first place, German Nazism and Marxian Socialism certainly differ as to the conception of the State. Marxism champions the cause of the people, of the masses, urges the workers of the world to unite, views government merely as an instrument of the rich to further and maintain their own cause. Marxism and Communism instill into the hearts

and minds of men distrust of and opposition to those who are in authority. Marxism advocates a dictatorship of the proletariat, teaches that the will of the people must dominate, and consequently breeds and fosters revolution. Over against this Nazism advocates the absolute authority of the State, which authority, moreover, is vested in one man. Nazism proclaims an unconditional authority which is imposed from the top and obedience from below.

Secondly, the opposition of Nazism to Marxian Socialism must be explained from the Nazi concept relative to the dominance of the Nordic or German race. Karl Marx taught that human rights are universal, that all men are equal. He addresses the workers of the world. He does not claim superiority of the one race over another. Communism, as advocated by Karl Marx, is not national but international. Because of this Hitler violently opposed Marxian Socialism. Hitler in his book "Mein Kampf" repeatedly speaks of international Marxism, presents the issue as if Marx taught universal equality among men only as in the service of his own race. p. p. 578, 579. Nazism is national, is German, teaches the superiority of the German race, and the State as means to an end, to serve the development and preservation of the German race, which only can be the preservation of world culture, the salvation of mankind.

H. V.

Family Worship

The origin of family worship is very beautifully described in Genesis, the book of Beginnings. The Covenant People were a family and divine worship was family worship. Hence, as the Book of Beginnings describes the beginning of heaven and earth, it also depicts the beginning of that blessed relation of love between God and His people and that is a relation of worship. For worship is love in action. And therefore there is also such a thing as family worship, the love of God in the family induces the family to worship, where that love is lacking family worship is absent.

The origin of family worship we find in Gen 4:26, when it says: "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord." On the strength of the Hebrew preposition, men have contended that this verse should read "began men to call in (by, with) the Name of the Lord; or others said it must be translated "then men began to call themselves by the Name of the Lord," but we are of the opinion that the English translation is accurate and we shall let it there as is.

That statement now is significant.

First, it is clearly a family which is doing this.

Gen. 4 tells us about two families, the family of Cain, the murderer, is set before us in Gen. 4: 11-24, while immediately thereupon begins the register of the family of Seth. There you have the two families. The family, which under the leadership of Cain has erased the name of God and apostatized from His service and on the other side the family which under the leadership of Seth knows the Lord and loves Him. The one the family of sin, the other the family of grace. Step into the one family and God is absent from their family life while the home is cluttered with strange idols, step into the other home and you find family worship. And according to the one pattern or the other all families even until this day live.

Secondly, notice the striking contrast between these two families. The one family, under the leadership of Cain goes out and builds itself a city and called the name of that city after the name of a man (who hath wisdom let him read his number, it is six-six-six) the city which finally becomes the great Babylon. The other family, what does it do, what does it build, what does it perform? IT CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD. Do you see the contrast? The one centers his life and the life of his family around the building of the sin-and world-city, the other centers his life around the worship of the Lord. The one systematically denies the name of the Lord and lives as if there is no God, the other calls on the Name of the Lord. The one lives for the things which are below, the other worships the Name.

Thus, in the Book of Beginnings we find the origin of family worship and its antithesis.

That the godly race not only began but also continued to worship the Lord in the family is evident also from subsequent notices. The very name the fathers gave their sons was an expression of their worship of the true God and how highly they held that worship in reverence. I know there was a great apostacy in this family worship, an apostacy which culminated in the judgment of the flood, but within the very Ark we once again find the family in worship. And in Shem's line we once more find family worship. Until Abraham appears, who sets up an altar and around it he builds the worship of God for his family. And God says of Abraham that He knows him that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the ways of the Lord. And so on in the lives of the families of the patriarchs. How many commands Moses also gave anent the family worship, how fathers shall instruct their children in the fear of the Lord and shall bring offerings and sacrifices, each father as head of the family. How Job prays for his children and how he rises up betimes and makes burnt-offerings "according to the number of them all", and how Joshua exclaims "as for me and my house we shall serve the Lord".

That original family developed into Church. Yet within the church that sacred unit shown as the family holds a high and lofty position. The family unit may not and cannot live apart from the church, for then the family would be like a branch cut loose from the tree, no matter how many leaves it have on it, it is doomed to die because it is not attached to the church and Christ. But likewise a church must pay close attention to the family, for the church grows family-wise and deterioration of family life is as sure to effect the life of the church as the root-lice is bound to effect the plant. We might even dig up that old adage "a chain is as strong as its weakest link" and vary it a trifle to read "a church is as strong as its weakest family".

From these things we may see how important family worship really is and why the church is also vitally interested in fostering it. An added reason why we champion annual family visitation.

But now we ought to pause a moment and ask ourselves what family worship really is.

In answer to this let us consider three things.

First, family worship is worship of God in the presence of the family. This undoubtedly implies that the parent (parents) must conduct this worship publicly in the presence of the family. There is a time that the parents individually worship God, but there is a time that the parents must take the family with them and go worship God at Bethel. It is sad when families live as so many individuals. It is the duty of the parents to bring the family together in the worship of God. The family head is free to choose his methods of worship, but to the family worship there will have to belong public prayer at the table and otherwise, public reading of the Bible and public explanation thereof. To that could also be added family singing. What could be more appropriate then to sing a psalter number after the meal? But each is free, provided he accounts himself bound of God to worship Him family-wise.

Secondly, family worship is worship in which the family members also take part. I think sometimes that we are quite guilty on this score. We proceed with our family rituals without asking ourselves whether the family is worshiping with us. It is not enough to worship in public, the family has to be exhorted to join in the worship and take part in it. It is not enough for father or mother to pray aloud, the family must pray with them. It is not enough to read the Scriptures, the rest of the family must read it with them. It is not enough that the parents worship God in the presence of the family, but the family must take part in the worship also. This involves various things. It certainly involves that the parents pray in such a manner that the family can understand and can pray along. The parents must pray in a language which the

family can understand and follow and use words which the children also can grasp. The same thing applies in reading the Bible. The parent is not reading for himself, he reads for the family and he must so read that the family can get along with him. He must read and explain and give the sense of that which was read. In families with little children this brings up difficulties, if various of the family have to (have to) eat at different times it also brings difficulties, but with careful and well-planned regulations much can be done to foster family worship even then.

But, finally, I should not wish to confine family worship to the habitual three-times-a-day service at the table. This is a major part of it, no doubt, but this is not all of it and neither must we limit it to that. I would add finally therefore that family worship is this, that the worship of God become the very life of the family. Family worship must not be an addenda to an already full book, neither must it be a little diversion, variation or interruption to the family life. That is what it is in many a family. They really live earthly and carnal, they seek the things which are below, but at intervals the family life is INTERRUPTED a bit with some worship. The interruption is endured with varied expressions of impatience and disinterest and there seems to be a shout of relief when it is all over. This is not true family worship. For the family worship ought not to be an interruption or a variation of the course of the family life, but it should be the very essence of the whole of the family life. The family should always worship God. The worship of God should characterize the tenor of life in the home, the things which are done in the home, the papers which are read there, the radio that is heard there, the language that is used there and the friends who enter there. The entire world and life-view of the family should be that of worshipping God.

That is family worship.

It were carelessness not even to ask ourselves in how far our own family life is patterned after it. It were recklessness to bring up a family which knows not the Lord nor His worship. Rather let us be diligent and say:

O come and let us worship now,
Before our Maker let us bow
We are His sheep and He our God
He feeds our souls in pastures broad.

M. G.

(I am sorry that the following article, which reached me in time for the July issue, escaped my attention, due to my being out of town for a while. Another small article on "Current Events," intended for the present issue will appear in the next, D. V.)

The Editor.

Current Events

Our Times

It will be conceded by almost everyone that the times in which we live are very significant. There are many things with a view to which one would rather speak of his "feeling" than of his logical and reasonable knowledge. One cannot always lay his finger on the exact spot and give a reasonable explanation; nevertheless, the general impression which prevails may serve to give one, what may be termed, "a certain feeling." Of course our feeling is not always to be trusted and impressions are not always true to the existing reality, but that does not take away the fact that our feelings are often times well-founded. So with a view to the times in which we live, one is perhaps justified in saying that he *feels* that these are very significant times. History has also proved that it is well nigh impossible for those, who live in a certain period of time, to interpret the true significance of that period as long as it is present. Its real significance can be reasonably and logically determined only when it has become a thing of the past.

To logically demonstrate that these times must be significant is not extremely difficult. As long as one confines himself to generalities he can point to numerous events and succeed in building up quite a case. But to define the true significance of the whole period, with a reasonable amount of certainty, is an entirely different matter. The reason for that is undoubtedly to be found in the fact that events in the light of the present are usually confusing. For example, how can one explain the alliance of the U. S. with Russia? The latter is nationally atheistic, the former is christian, nominally of course—christian at least to this extent that it allows freedom of worship. I know, the fact that there is a common enemy will explain that alliance as far as the present is concerned. But that is simply utilitarian. Is that the limit of this alliance? To definitely *prove* that it isn't would be rather difficult for me. But I have a "*feeling*." I have a feeling that that alliance is an "octopus" of which one arm is seen while the rest are slowly reaching into more vital regions. To illustrate what I have in mind, I seem to remember that it wasn't so many years ago that it was a question of some proportion whether we as a nation should recognize the new Soviet regime in Russia. And even more recently there was great agitation because of the un-American activities of the communistic party, especially in the field of labor. But who hears anything of such things now? Must we conclude that the communistic party, which is directed from Russia, has given up its aims and dismissed its

designs which it sought to realize in this country? Isn't there rather much more reason to believe that those in authority here in the U. S. have changed their attitude toward the communistic menace?

One may well wonder what will be the end of this alliance!

There seems to be much concern on the part of everyone, including the Christian, about the outcome of this present war. That is only natural. It is also only natural that we desire victory for the United Nations. But the question will not be denied: what then? What can the Church expect in the future? Are there not many signs which seem to indicate that the times which we face as Christian people will be very trying? No one can deny, for example, that the Labor party is gaining in strength and every Christian knows that Labor is not sympathetic but definitely hostile to religion. What, then, will be the result if and when it gains governmental control? Look what communism has done to the church in Russia! It may be very comforting for the moment when threatened by a tiger to have a bear come along and chase away the tiger. But what will "the bear" do when the tiger is gone?

There you have but a few questions which arise.

Are we perhaps facing a new era? Are we maybe nearer to the end, of which Scripture speaks, than we think? Its all very confusing but it adds up to this:

Our times are very significant!

Browder Released

From the May 25 issue of TIME, a weekly news-magazine, we have clipped the following item.

The U. S. Communist Party, which has had to drop almost all of its old war cries, had to drop another one last week. President Roosevelt freed Earl Browder, former General Secretary of the C. P., from Atlanta penitentiary, after he had served 14 months of his four-year sentence for passport fraud.

His release, explained the President, "would have a tendency to promote national unity and allay any feelings which may exist" about Browder's having been persecuted for his political views. His Hitler-style mustache shaved off, thinner and grayer than when he started his term, the Kansas born Communist leader hopped a train. Out of jail, out of a job, temporarily out of a cause, Browder went quietly home to Yonkers, N. Y.

We think the article is significant in the light of what we mentioned above. It seems to me that we have another indication here of the policy of appeasement which has been adopted toward communistic Russia. Especially significant is the phrase, "temporarily out of a cause." We naturally wonder, how long and then what?

Life Getting Harder In Germany

From "OUR TIMES" the following article, under the above heading.

Louis P. Lochner, an Associated Press correspondent who has just come from Germany, lists items from German newspapers which trace the story of German life since Pearl Harbor. Here are a few of citations:

Jan. 7—Merchants forbidden to display in windows goods not on hand for normal sales. It no longer was possible to put on a good show.

Jan. 7—*Feldkueche*, a one-dish field kitchen meal, made obligatory upon all restaurants Mondays and Thursdays.

Jan. 20—Merchants warned not to make barter deals in an attempt to curb the "black markets," where goods are bootlegged.

Jan. 22—Nightly blackouts lengthened to save electricity.

Jan. 29—Restaurants ordered to close at 10 p. m.

Jan. 30—Ration of eggs per month set at two per person.

Feb. 1—Hotels told they must not take guests for more than three weeks, to check the natives who moved into warm hotels in cold weather.

Feb. 11—All fairs canceled.

Feb. 14—Dancing forbidden even at private parties.

Feb. 19—Rationing of petroleum begun.

Feb. 19—In certain cities, seats were removed from streetcars to make room for more passengers.

Feb. 27—Butter rations reduced to about two ounces a week.

Feb. 28—The sale of women's hats banned.

March 6—A survey of all available truck gardening space ordered.

March 26—A new slogan: "Plant more vegetables."

April 15—Persons over 70 told they might have more than one-half pint of milk a day if they gave up their meat allowances.

April 29—Topcoats rationed.

I think most of us were aware, from all the news reports we read and hear, that times are difficult in Germany. And if that is the way it is in Germany, we may conclude that it is twice as bad in the conquered countries. We naturally wonder about our relatives and acquaintances in the Netherlands; especially since we hear so much about rebellion against Nazi domination there. Just today we read again of the harsh measures employed by the Germans in Holland. It seems as though Germany has more trouble with Holland than it has with any other conquered nation. And of course, the result is that many are being put to death in reprisal, many of which are undoubtedly innocent of any guilt.

Let our prayers for God's suffering people constantly ascend to the throne of grace.

MacArthur's Theology

In The Presbyterian Guardian a certain minister writes as follows:

Recently General MacArthur paid his tribute to the heroic defenders of Bataan, in the course of which he said, "To the weeping mothers of its dead I only say that the sacrifice and halo of Jesus of Nazareth has descended upon their sons and that God will take them 'unto Himself.'" This can only mean that the Allied soldiers who died on Bataan "fighting to the end" received the blessing of Jesus and God has now taken them to himself. Regardless of what these soldiers may have believed about the Bible and its Christ, whether they were unbelievers or infidels, because they died for the American cause their souls are thereby saved and God has taken them to heaven.

Obviously many of the noble dead were Christians, devout believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. How comforting to know they are with the Savior they loved and sought to serve! But let us never believe salvation is by works of righteousness which we have done. In the words of Spurgeon, that is a "criminal doctrine." To say a soldier will go to heaven as long as he dies fighting for his country is to preach a gospel which is not a gospel. Though we do praise the military genius of General MacArthur and pray for his success in leading aright the Allied Forces, we cannot commend his theology, regardless of how pious and comforting it may appear. Salvation is all grace, "otherwise grace is no more grace!" "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

The article calls for little comment. It is a good thing to be reminded of the fact that many great men are great only in the measure of the world. Our country seems to be strongly addicted to hero worship. And it isn't hard to drift along with the stream of human-glorification. Credit where credit is due and to the extent that it is deserved. But let us be on our guard. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.

Even in war, God rules!

Attitude and Reaction

The question often arises in the minds of thinking Christians: what attitude must we assume toward the present world conflict and the events related to it and also what must be our reaction? Our answer to this question can only be very general. We hope that sometime someone will develop a positive answer to this and related questions in the Standard Bearer. We are convinced that our people have need of that.

However, in general:

1. Let us remember that in all the events that occur, God is executing His counsel. He rules and the

things that take place do not have their deepest cause in the work of men but in the counsel of God.

2. Let us remember that our times are not something new. The pages of history record similar conditions in the past and Scripture informs us of similar conditions yet to come. God has preserved His people in the past and He will preserve them in the future.

3. Let us bear in mind that the events which are taking place and the results which they shall produce, definitely stand under the signs of the coming of Christ. In this light we should not be surprised if conditions become much worse for the Christian in the future.

4. Let us become more and more reconciled to the fact that we, as Christians, stand to lose this earth. But also, let us never forget that through that very loss we stand to gain a new earth and eternal joy.

5. Finally, let us watch and pray for grace to be faithful as children of light, to subject ourselves to God, to cast our cares upon Him, to trust in Him and expect all things from Him alone and to be assured, whatever the outcome, that we are in His hand; that so we may walk by faith in the confidence that ours is the victory now and ultimately in Jesus Christ our Lord.

H. De Wolf

Concerning the C. L. A.

Dear Mr. Editor,

May I express my appreciation to Mr. J. Gritter and the Rev. A. Petter for responding to my article which appeared in the Standard Bearer some time ago, especially since a discussion of this kind can prove beneficial to those interested in a separate labor organization. But to avoid misunderstanding, I would also appreciate the privilege of answering some of the criticism that is offered.

Mr. Gritter expresses surprise that the C. L. A. should be accused of not being as distinctive as a Christian labor organization should be, especially because they have always been told that their organization is too distinctive, and for that reason most workers, even among so-called Christians, are not interested in it. Although this very likely is the case, can he not conceive of the possibility that there are also Christian workers, (non-Christians would certainly not support an organization of a truly Christian character), who fail to see that there is sufficient difference in the aims and purposes of this organization and the worldly union, and therefore affiliate themselves with a more powerful body? Or even that there are others who have not rallied to its cause be-

cause it is not as distinctive as they are convinced it should be? At any rate an organization of this kind should invite every effort to make it as distinctive as possible and leave no effort untried to express itself as specifically as possible in its constitution and program of action.

My contention has not been, as Mr. Gritter will also concede, that the C. L. A. lacks every vestige of being a Christian organization, but that it is not distinctive enough to gain the full support and to be of real and lasting value to those who are interested in a definitely Christian labor movement. There are many things in the constitution against which no objection could be raised, but that does not alter the fact that other parts of the constitution are not as specific as they might and should be.

That was my contention. And that was based on the fact that "improvement of labor and industrial conditions" and the "material interests of its members" receive the emphasis in the article on "Basis and Aim." Even from the propaganda literature of this organization one cannot fail to receive the impression that the material interests of the workers are actually at stake. One leaflet sets out as follows: "Christian Laboring Men, Unite! If you are a laboring man and a Christian, this is for you. You surely feel like doing something to improve your condition and that of other working men as well. Do you know that the only way to bring about such improvements is by having likeminded persons of your type band together? Without organization nothing can be accomplished." And reading still further: "But there are many things you cannot do alone. If you wish to help improve labor terms and conditions; if you want to maintain a fair wage scale; if you want to protect Sunday as a day of rest for the worker; if you want to have some influence when a labor dispute arises; if you want to help your fellow-worker against old age and unemployment; if you want laws passed for the protection of your interests and that of your brother-laboringman—then you must organize." The same sentiments are expressed in another leaflet entitled: Militant Christianity. "The Christian Labor Association emphasizes that the laborer is worthy of his hire. It demands an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. It demands a reasonable working day and not more than six days per week. It refuses to work on the Lord's day if material gain is the sole necessity. The C. L. A. holds high the standing of the free workingman. It is opposed to, *and ready to fight oppression by employers or their agents*; it is opposed to any form of slavery or peonage. It demands for the workingman a full share in the discussion of matters concerning his relation to his work and to his employer and a full share in the agreements under which he is required to work. The C. L. A. insists upon co-operation between em-

ployers and employes, and in labor disputes it recommends mediation and arbitration. It believes that a better understanding of the interests of the workingman and of the interests of the employer will lead to better relations between both. In the exercise of love based upon justice to all concerned, it means to find the solution of many ills in the world of labor and industry."

Especially the above statement which I have underscored expresses an entirely different sentiment than that of the Christian who is not interested, first of all, in his material welfare, but in the will of God, whom he seeks to serve with all his heart and soul and strength. Mr. Gritter states that material interests are only wrong when they become first in life and crowd out the spiritual things. But we should not fail to see that material interests do crowd out the spiritual things as soon as we begin to seek them as an end in themselves. Matthew 6:31-34. Therefore I agree with Rev. Petter when he states: "However, then I would also remind the C. L. A. that its bread is incidental. The bread question is only a means or a stage by which we seek the kingdom of heaven. God has willed to surround us with the bread question in order that we as moral, rational creatures should make an antithetical choice: Bread (meaning all the natural desires for body and soul) alone, or bread only if it is possible in the way of righteousness; and thus the bread though legitimate is at the same time valueless as an object in itself." Let a Christian labor organization express itself definitely on this point, and there can be no dispute, not even in the future.

My objection to the article on strikes, quoted from "An Abstract from the Constitution of the C. L. A.", is not based on the supposition, as both Mr. Gritter and Rev. Petter seem to think, that the C. L. A. "also justifies violence and other evils usually associated with the strike," such as "the sit-down strike and forceful picketing," but rather that the association justifies the strike itself as a last resort.

I cannot conceive of such a last resort, just because a Christian never resorts to force or coercion to gain his end. If his end is to witness for God's righteousness and justice in this world, it cannot be gained by force.

Nor do I believe that Mr. Gritter is justified in his mild interpretation of the term "strike." A strike is not, nor meant to be, the same as merely quitting a job and stepping out. Even regardless of the question whether a Christian has the moral right to quit a job at any time he sees fit, especially if it involves his employer in serious difficulty, a strike is not the same as quitting. It cannot even be considered an organized refusal to work under certain conditions. The strike as it is commonly known among us, and as defined in the dictionary is: "the quitting of work by a body of

workers to enforce compliance with some demand, as for an increase of wages." Those who strike do not mean to give up their job to others, but insist on holding claim to their job and deny that anyone has the moral right to take their places. The purpose of the strike is definitely to exert pressure upon the employer, place him in such a position that, right or wrong, he is compelled to yield to the demands of his employees. That is nothing less than the application of force to gain one's end, and therefore an act of violence and morally wrong, even though condoned by the law.

If the C. L. A. is actually opposed to any form of coercion or force, it should also specifically state this in its constitution or program of action. To maintain the word 'strike', with its common connotation, is dangerous, to say the least.

In conclusion, let me add that Rev. Petter is correct when he says that the ultimate question is not "whether we shall boost the C. L. A., for personally I believe that the questions which we as Christians face are of such magnitude that the boosting or not boosting of the C. L. A. becomes a very small problem. We may well realize that in so far as the C. L. A. would in any way be a competitor with or a brake upon the anti-christian unions, we must not put any trust in it. At very best it can be a means to put off for a few years and for a limited number of people the suffering that must inevitably come over the Christian for Christ's sake. For we cannot gain victories by numbers or by weight or physical pressure. The battle will surely be a spiritual one when the issue develops concretely, visibly, as it is, of course, in principle always a spiritual one. Although the present practical aspect of the problem revolves about the existing C. L. A., some of your readers might desire to express their views also on that aspect of the matter.

C. H.

Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

May I have a little space in your columns for the following,

In the S. B. of June 15 appears an article by Rev. C. Hanko on "Separate Chr. Labor Organizations" in which he ends by expressing a desire for frank discussion.

To this discussion I would like to contribute.

And since the discussion revolves around the merits and demerits of the present C. L. A., I shall also group my remarks around that organization.

To begin with, then, I would like to state that the

question is not whether we shall boost the C. L. A., for personally I believe that the questions which we as Christians face are of such magnitude that the boosting or not boosting of the C. L. A. becomes a very small problem. We may well realize that insofar as the C. L. A. would in any way be a competitor with or a brake upon the anti-Christian unions, we must not put any trust in it. At very best it can be a means to put off for a few years and for a limited number of people, the suffering that must inevitably come over the Christian for Christ's sake. For we cannot gain victories by numbers or by the weight of physical pressure. The battle will surely be a spiritual one when the issue develops concretely visibly, as it is, of course, in principle always a spiritual one.

Let this be understood as an introduction.

The question may now be asked, what kind of a labour union do we desire and is the C. L. A. such a union.

And then we must first of all be very objective in our judgment and also be charitable where we find a judgment difficult to form.

Then I believe I may see the present Christian labor movement as a gesture of spiritual sensitiveness and desire for distinctiveness.

If it is true that the Christian Ref. Church from which most of the members of the C. L. A. are drawn, officially condones the worldly union, then it is still more admirable to establish a C. L. A.

(Could we not have a clear-cut article in our S. B., out of the sources, on the stand of the Chr. Ref. Church, as to whether that stand is a compromise or weak, or indefinite, or out-dated?)

However that may be, the C. L. A., according to its constitution, desires to be a specifically Christian organization, free from all the wickedness of the worldly unions. This will appear from a free condensed rendering of part of its constitution.

ART. 2 expresses the recognition of God as sovereign and Christ as Lord in every phase of human life, and recognizes that the principles which must regulate this are found in the Bible the revealed will of God.

ART. 3. asserts the recognitions of duties and privileges for both employer and employee, corporation and mutual interests and mutual confidence. Violence against persons or properties must be condemned. In the case of a difference both parties must do all possible to settle in a peace-loving way or arbitration.

ART. 4. states as the purpose of the C. L. A. to establish justice, equity, and fraternity in industry, by the practical application of Christian principles and attitudes, and more specifically to advance the material and moral interests of the laborer,

ART. 5. gives a program of action, too long to transcribe, against which principally no objection can be made.

There is another Article which I do not have at hand, but is quoted by Rev. Hanko in which it rejects as unlawful and unchristian all violence, all intimidation, destruction of property, unlawful possession, and sanctions the strike as a last resort.

Here Rev. Hanko finds a glaring contradiction between the first and last part of the article, but Rev. Hanko has not interpreted correctly, and the reason is that he conceived of the strike as a means of force and violence, as he himself expresses it, and he evidently has in mind the sit-down strike and forceful picketing. I know that it is often argued that a mere leaving of work is wholly ineffective and is not worth while, but let us not forget that the mere abandoning of work of a technical craft can bring great distress upon the employer even though he is at liberty to employ new men.

But is this assumption valid? Has the word "strike" the fixed implication of violence and unlawful possession?

There are two articles in the Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde of 1927 and 1933, by two different authors where the legality and ethical justification of strikes is discussed, and while both maintain the illegality and the unethical of a breach of labor contract, both also allow the strike in an extreme instance, and while the one considers it strange that the definition which he finds in a doctor's thesis does not mention the point of the retention of a job during the strike, the other maintains that: "refusal to work without at the same time terminating (opzeggen) of the contract as it usually happens with strikes," is contrary to the law of the land.

This surely is sufficient to prove that a strike is not so well defined that it includes per se retention of a job after refusal to work. If, however, we would include that element and thus rigidly exegete the article of the C. L. A., we would have to do so in the face of the fact that it condemns all violence, destruction, unlawful possession, intimidation.

I do not believe such exegesis is valid, and I believe we can well conceive of the strike as a leaving of work, and perhaps peaceable picketing with the purpose of peaceably dissuading others from filling the vacancy.

But of course this does not settle the question, of the right of the Christian, for thus we still have the question and problem of force. A thing may be right in one sense and not right in another, or right and wrong by different valid standards. It may be legally right and spiritually wrong. A peaceable walkout may be permissible before the law but is the Christian justified in using it? Does the Christian expect true victory that way? In how far is force legitimate in any transaction? Is it force to walk towards the door in order to force the car salesman to drop twenty-five dollars from his price? We may well look into the question

"What is force?" and, when is it legitimate?

But the problem is still more intricate. Our Christian calling is indeed intricate in an intricate creation and world-life.

The problem remains whether I may peaceably bring pressure to bear upon a dispute that my employer has with someone else. Do I know the situation sufficiently to judge? Is that not the domain of the "boss" rather than mine? I believe that also here our interference can be of a very limited nature, being hardly more than a very general testimony. Our competency must surely be well considered before we bind ourselves to have a spokesman speaking in our name and meddling in a domain that belongs to the boss.

There is yet another main question upon which we lack clarity.

That is the bread question.

Rev. Hanko says: "The C. L. A. establishes as its sole aim and purpose of the society 'to promote the material and moral interests of its members'. There is nothing distinctively christian about this." But this presentation by Rev. Hanko is not correct. The aim of the society is precisely to gain its bread in the manner that becomes Christians. It plainly states that it wants to be pleasing to God in the search for bread. That is very specifically Christian.

However, then I would also remind the C. L. A. that its bread is incidental. The bread question is only a means or a stage by which we seek the kingdom of heaven. God has willed to surround us with the bread question in order that we as moral, rational creatures should make an antithetical choice: Bread (meaning all the natural desires for body and soul alone; or bread only if it is possible in the way of righteousness, and thus the bread, though legitimate, is at the same time valueless as an object in itself.

But thus also force, though it may be legitimate, is also valueless, and then the union as an organization to oppose by numbers or by bargaining rights the wordly union is, though legitimate, also valueless and thus the value of numbers falls away, and it remains a brotherhood of Christians who seek one another for spiritual encouragement, strenghtening and guidance in the way of suffering for righteousness, and in their calling to walk before the world as children of light, giving testimony everywhere.

That is a narrow way and it is a hard way, but it is the way of the heavenly kingdom. From that standpoint I am convinced we must approach the question of a separate Christian labor organization.

Rev. Petter

NOTE: The above article was written before Rev. Petter knew about Mr. Gritter's article on the same subject.

The Editor

Contribution

Esteemed Editor:

The undersigned would appreciate space in this paper for the purpose of asking several questions which have perplexed me.

The questions which I in all seriousness ask are these namely:

1. If an institution, be it company, corporation or organization, declares bankruptcy, it is not true that an institution must under the state law (by whose authority they also declare bankruptcy) dissolve or disband and discontinue to do business under their former name and must re-organize or re-incorporate before again commencing operations?

2. If such be the case, namely that the statements in question number one are true, may such a bankrupt institution lawfully delegate officers to a gathering composed of delegates of neighboring institutions who have a common interest and purpose?

3. Are not the delegates of the neighboring institutions duty bound to refuse a seat and voice to an institution which has been legally dissolved and which in the eyes of the law has ceased to exist?

4. Are the answers to the above questions also applicable if the bankrupt institution mentioned above is an incorporated church?

Respectfully submitted,
George E. Ten Elshof
160 W. 10th St.

NOTE:

I believe that Mr. Ten Elshof should bring these questions before the "institution" to which he refers. If he does not find satisfaction there, he could appeal to the gathering of neighboring "institutions." Of course, if the "institution" itself, which Mr. T. Elshof has in mind, would want to reply and answer some of these questions, we shall be glad to give them space.

The Editor

Tot mijn spijt moest een ander ingezonden stuk wegens gebrek aan plaatsruimte blijven liggen tot een volgende nummer.

Red.

WAITING UPON GOD

Hope in God, ye waiting people;
Mercies great with Him abound;
With the Lord a full redemption,
From the guilt of sin is found.

The Dream As A Medium Of Revelation

God is a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary Spirit, possessing and this without limitation and to an infinite degree all perfections. He therefore can and also does reveal Himself. This revelation is twofold: general and special. The former is that conscious and voluntary act of God whereby He makes Himself known to all men as their creator through the medium of creation and providence, in order that men may glorify Him and, failing in this, be without excuse. The latter is that conscious and voluntary act of God whereby He makes Himself known unto His people as their redeemer-God in Christ Jesus in the proclamation of the Scriptures. General and special revelation are both objective in the first instance. Objective, special revelation is effected through theophany, prophecy, and the miracle. It includes that revelation which occurs in the consciousness of the prophets and the apostles through external and internal address, through inspiration, and through the dream and the vision.

The subject of this essay is the prophetic dream. The qualification "prophetic" places this dream in a class with the mediums of revelation and thus sets it apart from the ordinary dream. In treating this subject, I arrange my remarks under the following points:

I The ordinary dream.

II The prophetic dream

- a. The prophetic dreams of Scripture tabulated.
- b. The prophetic dream and the ordinary dream compared. Their formal resemblances; their fundamental differences.
- c. The prevalence and use of the prophetic dream.

1. The ordinary dream. As dreaming occurs in sleep, the latter phenomenon first calls for a bit of attention. Sleep is a normal condition of the body. It occurs periodically. In this state there is a greater or less degree of unconsciousness due to inactivity of the nervous system and more particularly of the brain and the spinal cord. Sleep makes known its approach by a desire for sleep, or sleepiness, which embraces an obscure group of sensations that are referred chiefly to the region of the neck and the head. The eyelids are heavy. There is yawning and a drooping of the head. The intelligence is obscured, general sensibility and the special senses are depressed, and the muscular system relaxes. The half-closed eyelids tend more and more to close; the breathing becomes slower and deeper; the jawbone relaxes, so that the mouth

opens; the head also relaxes, and the chin droops on the breast. The limbs lose their firmness and become flacid. At the same time the incoherent utterances of the sleepy man betoken vagueness of thought and external objects and sounds cease to make an impression on his soul. When sleep is sufficiently profound all contact between the mind of the sleeper and his environment is lost and he is now ready to be led into a new world—the world of his dream. It is plain why God would reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to men—to the organs of revelation—also during their sleeping hours. Sleep isolates a man from the world of his waking hours. It closes his soul to the stream of impressions flowing in from his surroundings through the sense-organs, so that in this state he can be wholly occupied in his mind with the communication from above.

As to ordinary dreams, they have their constant features. First, the images that flit before the mind of the dreamer are not to be explained by the action of external objects upon the sensory organs of sight. They are not to be conceived of as being external impressions conveyed to the soul by the avenues of these organs. Yet these images are real in the sense that they form the replica of things objectively existent, as when, to illustrate, the dream image is that of a living friend. The friend exists objectively. Yet though he be at our very side when we dream of him, the image of his likeness that stands out in our mind is not an external physical impulse transmitted to the soul by the avenues of the sensory nerves, but a mere dream-image.

The reason we see at all is that there is thrown upon the retina of the eye a light-image of the object that lies in the line of our vision. This image, traversing the neurons as a nervous impulse, is transmitted to the soul and the soul perceives. What it perceives is the light-image that is thrown upon the eye and that corresponds perfectly to the likeness of the object by whose action the eye is stimulated. We don't see objects as such but what we see is only their images, brought to us by the light-waves. As to our hearing, here the external stimulus is the vibration in the air, the sound wave. Now the dream-experience is not the result of such external stimuli. Mark you, *such* stimuli. Fact is that external stimuli of some kind does seem to play a large part in many of our dreams.

The next characteristic of ordinary dreams is that to the dreamer at the moment the imagined surroundings are as real and vivid as the actual ones which he perceives with his physical eye when awake.

We can close our eyes and visualize any external object i. e., set the image of its likeness before our mind's eye at will. But there is a vast difference as to vividness and intensity between such mental images

of ours and the light images of physical sight. As compared with the latter they are devoid of substance and are characterized by the vagueness of thought. If we now consider that such mental images are not the result of external stimuli and that the same is true of dream-images and that yet the latter in distinction from the former are to the dreamer as vivid and substantial as the light-images of physical sight, we shall see that dreaming truly is a wonderful and mysterious phenomenon.

Another general characteristic of dreams is that, though resembling waking experiences in many respects, they never seem exactly to reproduce the order of these experiences. Most of our dreams differ from events known to us in waking life, and even those which most closely resemble certain segments of this life introduce changes in detail. First of all, there is a great interruption of the order of time and place, which rules real objects and events. Places separated by vast distances are brought together. Secondly, dream-fancy exaggerates and intensifies the various aspects of objects, makes what is large still larger and what is beautiful still more beautiful.

But dreams also have variable features. In some dreams we appear to be passive spectators of events which we do not think to control in any way. In other dreams again we seem to be lively actors in the scene. We talk and move as we are wont to do in our waking hours. Then there are dreams in which we appear as struggling to seize some good or to avert some threatening evil, yet to be unable to execute our wishes. Dreams also differ as to the degree of reasonableness.

At all times the human mind has sought to arrive at some explanation of dreaming. Several theories have been advanced. Certain it is that the ordinary dream is a subjective phenomenon dependent on ordinary causes. But our conclusions as to what these causes may be is largely determined by the psychological principles on the foundation of which we proceed in our investigation of the phenomenon in question. The right principles are: (1) The soul in distinction from the body is a spiritual substance and thus not a kind of refined material. (2) As joined to and penetrating the body, the soul is dependent on the body as its instrument. (3) Soul and body form the one organism man.

It follows then that dreams are not to be regarded as purely the functioning of some spiritual faculty not involving the body, not even that mass of nerve tissue including the skull and that forms the brain.

If dreaming were, in this sense, a purely spiritual phenomenon, on account of the bodily and the mental being two disconnected regions, it should have to be maintained that it indeed could be carried on even without the brain. But it can't. For dreaming is a

mental action; and the brain is the organ of consciousness or mind. Now it is true that in death the two are disconnected and that nevertheless the soul, in this state, is, according to Scripture, conscious. May this not show that also in the state of sleep the soul can do without the body, in particular without the brain, as far as consciousness is concerned? To this we can only reply that sleep, though resembling death, is not death and that thus in sleep the soul, being, as it is, joined to the body, must, in this state, remain dependent on the body as its instrument.

If dreaming is not purely the functioning of some spiritual faculty, neither can it be conceived of simply as given off by the various organs during sleep, thus as a purely physical phenomenon.

The correct doctrine is that dreaming involves both the body and the mind and further that the mental and the physical are perfectly dissimilar regions of phenomena, which are yet connected in such a way that the bodily events, the conditions and the states of the body, *can* and often do appear as the condition of mental events.

But herewith the question, *Just* what are the causes of dreams is still unanswered. A full explanation of dreaming includes several elements. There is first of all a negative condition to be taken into account, the suspension of the will. In waking consciousness the ego rules. In dreaming the ego becomes receptive and is the point about which life plays in perfect freedom. But there are also exciting causes of dream-images, which fall into two classes:—(1) external and (2) central stimulation. Among external stimulations are to be noticed those which arise from the action of external objects on the nerve sensations. Researches show that these may play an important part in dreams. It has been demonstrated that a man can be made to dream about a subject by whispering in his ear. By experiments bearing on this point important results have been reached. When, for example, the lips of the experimenter were tickled, he dreamt that he was subjected to horrible tortures, that pitch-plaster was applied to his face and then torn off. Sensation of hearing, smell, and taste were also followed by appropriate images. This does not militate against the proposition, expressed in the beginning of this writing, that one of the *general* characteristics of dreams is that the dream image is *not* the result of the action of external objects upon the sensory nerves. This remains true, despite what these experiments have demonstrated. External stimulation is at the most only one of several causes of dreams. Besides, what predominates in dreaming is *visual* imagery and it is to this imagery that the apparently contradictory statement has reference. My contention is that the visional imagery of the dream, our dream-images, are not the result of *normal* action of *corresponding* objects upon

the sensory nerves of the eye. These nerves can, of course, be artificially stimulated. When the eye is vigorously rubbed one is likely to see stars. But this is not normal sight. It certainly remains true that sleep under normal circumstances has the effect of cutting off from the the soul the voluntary motor-nerves through which it maintains relations to the outer world.

But to continue, among external stimulations are also to be noticed the condition of our muscles during sleep, which somehow convey expressions to the brain and so influence sleep.

Under internal excitations are included all dream-ideas which are occasioned by internal stimuli. It is likely that many dream images are occasioned by the excitation of the brain. Yet there are dreams—ordinary dreams—which cannot be accounted for in this way, are thus not occasioned either by such internal or external stimuli. So, after all has been said, and much has been said and written on this subject, the question still remains, Just why do we dream? And, Why do we dream *what* we dream? And finally, What is the source of our dream ideas? We may just as well ask, Why do we think, when awake? And, Why do we think *what* we think? And, What is the source of our ideas? To answer the second group of questions is largely to answer the first group. We think because we can't stop thinking. I now speak of thinking in the sense of imagining, which consists in forming mental pictures. Yet the difference between imagining, thinking and reasoning is not so wide. In the most abstract thinking, imagining plays a large part. Now the mind cannot wholly cease to be active either when we sleep or when we are awake. Vigorous and concentrated thinking, to be sure, is voluntary. Attention requires effort especially when the matter to which we must attend is unappealing. But there is much involuntary thinking in our waking hours. Then the mind wanders and thought is scattered. Dreaming is involuntary thinking. When we dream the mind wanders and thought is disorganized, though not always. Attention, instead of dominating the thought-images that present themselves, is itself dominated by them. The act of attention is no longer directed by the will. This is some kind of answer to the question, why we dream.

As to the question why we dream *what* we dream, consider that as a man is, so he thinks, wills, and desires when awake and so he dreams when asleep. The state of mind and the trend of thought during waking hours often condition the mental processes of the spirit in the hours of sleep. The Preacher has something to say about the cause and the character of dreams. "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business," and, "For in the multitude of dreams . . . there are also divers vanities." (5: 3, 7).

As to the source of our dream-images, here we are to consider that out of the heart are the issues of life. The elements of the dream—the dream-materials are present in our subconscious soul. And the dream-structures are the work of our fancy. When we are asleep these thought images for some reason or other rise before our consciousness and group themselves to form dream-structures characterized often by a total want of coherence. On the other hand, there is also a more or less coherent class of dreams. In some of our dreams a result is reached similar to the products of the waking imagination.

But how did that dream-material get there in our soul and where did it come from? It came from the world around about us and was conveyed to our soul by the avenues of the sense organs.

The apparent objective reality as also the intensity of dream imagination is explained in more than one way. The absence of any other reality to oppose the ideas which offer themselves, is one explanation. Others explain the reality of dreams through the supension of the ordinary action of volition.

Dreaming is a mystery as is all phenomenon of life—and of death. We can, in the attempt to understand dreaming, recall our dreams and subject them to a careful mental scrutiny, if the impression which they have made upon our soul endures long enough, so that there is opportunity for this. We can experiment with dreams, as has been done. But having tabulated our findings, we shall still have to confess that we really know so little about dreams. The only wise and undoubtedly true thing we can say about dreams is that God makes a man dream, that our dreams, too, come forth out of the store of His providence, and that over them is supended His all-embracing and sovereign counsel.

G. M. O.

(To be continued)

NOTICE

The annual meeting of the R. F. P. A. will be held Thursday, September 17, at 7:45 P. M. Two board members will be chosen from the following nomination: A. Wychers, Wm. Koster, A. Dekker, R. Newhouse. Please assist the agent who will be their at 7:15 by paying your membership or subscription fees at this meeting. Rev. H. Hoeksema will address us with a short speech. All member and subscribers are urgently requested to attend this annual meeting and show their interest by being present. Rev. Jonker and O. Faber were appointed Auditing Committee. The Board.