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Meditation

A Light In Darkness

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts, knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

II Pet. 1:19-21

Blessed light!

Shining brightly, vividly, in a dark place!

Encouraging the weary traveler to continue his journey through the dark night, directing his course, showing him where there is a way out of the darkness into the light of day!

It is like the light that instills hope and assurance into the breast of the mariner, when his ship is storm-tossed in the dark night and is threatened with utter destruction by being crushed against the rock-bound shore in the distance; but when the clear light from the light-tower reaches out to him over the inky waves he knows whither to steer his vessel and feels assured that he will safely reach the harbor.

Or it is like the friendly light that beckons the lonely traveler on a dark and unknown road in the deep of night. The way is rough and almost impassable. The road is hardly distinguishable in the darkness. But the hand of love placed a bright light in the window of the home he desires to reach. Guided by that light, he advances on his way, assured that the way leads home.

Or again, it is like the light that gives hope to him that gropes his way through a deep and narrow cave, meandering through the bowels of a rocky mountain. Whether there is an exit at all, and whether he moves in the direction of that outlet he would not know, except for the spot of light that glimmers in the distance. Beholding it, he feels assured that yonder is the way out.

A light shining in a dark place!

Such is the more sure word of prophecy!

For, indeed, a dark place is this present world. And the darkness that prevails all about us is that of the gloomy and hopeless shadow of death. Death in all its horrible power, its fear and terror, its hopelessness and despair, its suffering and sorrow casts its deep shadow over us. It reaches out to the horizon of our earthly existence, it extends to the very boundaries of our earthly life; it surrounds us on all sides, it penetrates our inmost soul, it fills our hearts, our minds; it pursues us in all our way, it characterizes all our activity; it paralyzes all our efforts, it renders vain all our hope. We wander and labor and toil in the darkness of death. We ponder and grope to find a way out, but there is none!

Darker than the darkest night is this darkness of death!

Death that loudly speaks of condemnation, and therefore of darker death to come. For death is the power of God Who kills us. We do not merely die, somehow, accidentally, fatalistically, without understanding why and how: we are killed! Death is inflicted upon us! The darkness that engulfs us is the darkness of the death-cell in which we await the final execution of the sentence that was pronounced against us. And the Judge that rendered the verdict is God. And the reason for the sentence is our sin. The darkness that is upon us witnesses of the wrath of God, speaks to us of sin and judgment, and testifies that we can never find a way out, that the way out of this present death is none other than that which leads us into death eternal, outer darkness!

A dark place, indeed!

There is a debt we cannot pay, but only increase. There is a load of guilt we cannot remove. There is a power of corruption from which we cannot deliver ourselves. There is a death we can never overcome!

In that dark place, behold, a light!

Just as the darkness is the darkness of death, so this light is the light of life. Shining into the dark place in which we are, it is resurrection-life. No other light could pierce the darkness of death. It shines from without into our darkness. It is not of this world. It is the light that shines from the face of the Risen Lord into our night of death, clearly, brightly, hopefully. . .

It is the light of righteousness shining into our night of sin, the light of deliverance into our night of corruption, the light of eternal glory piercing the darkness of our shame and misery!

For, He came into our night; He descended into our deepest night of sin and death. And He overcame! He went on, through death and hell, through the darkness of Hades, to eternal life and glory, where death hath no more dominion.

He is no more in our dark place, but stands on the other side of death and the grave, and signals the message of light into our darkness: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me shall live though he were dead; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die!"

From His glorious face the light shineth in our dark place!

Looking through the darkness at this resurrection-light we know that there is a way out!

A lively hope is born through faith in Him within our hearts!

Keeping our eye fixed on Him we proceed on our way through the dark place, rejoicing. . . .

Blessed light that shineth in a dark place!

A light it is, that never deceives!

For we have a more sure word of prophecy, and on the wings of that very sure word the resurrection light reaches us in the darkness!

The apostles saw the light, for they saw Him, the Resurrected One, and they beheld His power and His coming!

No cunningly devised fables did they follow, when they testified of the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some, indeed, scoffers and mockers as they were, alleged that they concocted cunningly devised fables when they witnessed of the power of the Lord to save from the power of sin and death, and of His coming again in glory to realize that salvation. But these scoffers had no eye or ear or heart to see and hear and receive spiritual things. For, eyewitnesses the apostles had been of His glory and majesty when they were with Him in the holy mount of transfigura-

tion, and when they had heard the voice that came to Him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!

And thus they witnessed in the world, and their word caused the light of life, the light of His resurrection to pierce the darkness of our night of sin and death.

Yet, not for the first time through their word did that light shine in the dark place. Their word, indeed, caused that light to shine more directly, more clearly, more brightly than ever before, because they had seen Him face to face, seen Him in the power of His coming on the holy mount, seen Him, too, in the beauty of His resurrection before He was taken up from them; yet, the light had always been shining in the darkness of the world. For, there was of old the word of prophecy, always testifying of the suffering of Christ and of the "glories that should follow", principally always witnessing of the hope of the resurrection; and their own word, the word of the apostles merely united itself with the testimony of that more sure word of prophecy that had been heard of old to make one powerful testimony carrying into the world of darkness the light of resurrection-life!

Thus we must conceive of this "more sure word of prophecy".

It is one word!

Not only the prophecy of the old dispensation is implied in this word, nor merely the prophecy of the New Testament is meant. Still less does this "word of prophecy" refer to any particular prophecy in the Scriptures. Prophecy is one whole. It is conceived in the protevangel: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel". It continues and grows through the old dispensation, in the revelation given to patriarchs and prophets, in types and shadows, in temple and altar and sacrifice and priest; it reaches its central fulfilment in the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, His suffering and death, His resurrection and assumption into the highest glory of heaven; and it still continues through the word of the apostles, that were eyewitnesses of His glory, always pointing forward, and always throwing the light of the resurrection, the light of life, into the darkness of our night of sin and death. All this, though consisting of many individual prophecies, constitutes the one, very sure, "word of prophecy", that carries to us the light shining in a dark place.

That light is the chief content of this word.

Always that word speaks of His power and His coming, of His power to overcome death, and His ultimate coming to deliver us from its power. This is the central meaning of the promise that He would crush the heel of the serpent. This is the meaning of the prophecies of the old dispensation, when the

prophets searched "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the 'glories' that should follow". This was centrally fulfilled in the first coming of the Lord. And this is still the promise of the gospel. Still the word of prophecy testifies of His power and coming, holds out before us the final revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, coming on the clouds of heaven to finish the salvation He has wrought.

The light shining in a dark place!

And it is sure.

Never will it deceive those that heed it.

For, it shines from without into our world. It is not a light that is lit within our world, by men. Prophecy did not come by the will of man. Had it come through man, it would have no value, it could not show us the way out of the darkness, it could not be reliable. For all the light that is in the world, that is in man, is darkness. But this light is not the result of cunningly devised fables. It is not the light of philosophy. Nor could it ever be. For this light speaks of things that eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath ever arisen in the heart of man.

But it shines from without, from above.

It is of God, come in the flesh, died on the cross in that flesh, raised into glory, received in the highest heaven, testifying through the Spirit by the means of holy men, who thus became witnesses of the light.

Not a matter of private interpretation is prophecy. Interpretation, indeed, it is. The prophet interpreted things, gave an explanation of the things that are in the light of things that are to come. He spoke of the glories that should follow, and in the light of those glories he viewed all things. But this interpretation was not his own personal affair. He did not offer his own "world and life view". He did not express his private opinion of things. He did not peer into the darkness to discover a way out and offer it to men; he did not ponder the problems of existence and offer his solution to a world in darkness. He merely heard and saw and received, and reported what he had received.

For holy men of God were they. Saints they were themselves, that looked for the realization of the promise.

And moved they were by the Holy Ghost, by the Spirit of the Risen Lord.

Christ spoke in them, through them, causing the light directly to shine forth from Himself into the dark place. His Spirit controlled their mind and their will. His Spirit illuminated their minds so that they could discern the spiritual things of the kingdom of heaven, and they could receive the revelation of His power and coming. He gave them eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to receive the things of the Spirit,

He moved them, incited them, enlightened them, directed them in their thoughts and desires and in the very words they uttered. Prophecy, therefore, is not of man; nor is it partly of man and partly of God. It is the Word of God to us.

Hence, it is a "more sure word", a word that is very sure.

Looking at that light in a dark place, our hearts may well be filled with hope and joy.

The joy of righteousness in the midst of our present sin.

The joy of life in the midst of our present death!

The light of hope that never maketh ashamed!

Reliable light!

Guiding light!

Well we do to take heed unto it!

Be sure not to confuse it with other would-be lights, that can only lead you astray and seduce you to your own destruction. Many such false, deceiving lights are lit by men in the darkness of this world, lights of philosophy and science so-called, lights kindled by the wisdom of this world, seducing your hearts to seek the things that are upon the earth, the things of the present world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. . . .

Give heed to the one light that shineth in a dark place, in distinction from all lights kindled by mere men.

Just as the mariner on his storm-tossed ship may see many lights on the distant shore, but in the midst of them all must distinguish and heed the one flash of the beacon that indicates the entrance into the safe harbor, so God's people in the world must keep their eye steadfastly on the one reliable light that, through the word of prophecy, shines into the present darkness from the face of the crucified Lord that is raised from the dead. And in order to be able to distinguish that one light in the midst of many would-be lights, we must know it, study it, grow in the knowledge of it, discern ever more clearly its transcendent, heavenly beauty and glory.

Well ye do, if ye heed it!

That means, too, that ye contemplate that light, and keep your eye fixed on it by faith and in hope. Trust in that light, in life and in death, with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. Keep your feet in its path even though it leads you through suffering and death, though the reproach of the world be your lot, though you must forsake all in following after it.

Soon, then and then only, the daystar will arise in your hearts, the messenger of the morning of eternal day!

Then the darkness will be dissipated forever.

And you shall see face to face!

H. H.

Editorials

Home Again

Friday, May the ninth. 10 P. M.

About three hours ago undersigned arrived home again from a visit to all our churches in the West.

My speedometer indicates that I travelled seven thousand two hundred and nineteen miles.

About the trip and the work done I hope to write in the near future. Let it be sufficient at this time to state that we had a very pleasant and, I believe, a very blessed journey.

Just called up the printer of the Standard Bearer to find out how much copy was still wanted for the issue of May 15. Seventeen typewritten sheets, was the answer!

I confess my negligence in this case. For two issues I left sufficient copy before I left Grand Rapids. For the present number I wrote the meditation in sunny California. But I should have written much more. However, in four weeks I spoke twenty-five times, and for the rest, well, I did not feel very ambitious to sit down at the typewriter.

And so the reader will have to be satisfied with a few scribblings and my lecture on Nazism, as far as my part in the present issue of our paper is concerned.

From now on we hope to do better again.

H. H.

Uit Nederland

Van een broeder uit Nederland ontvingen we het volgende schrijven:

18 Febr. '41.

Den Weleerwaarden Heer
Ds. H. Hoeksema.
Red. v.d. Standard Bearer.
1139 Franklin St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. (U.S.A.))

Geachte Ds. Hoeksema,

Allereerst zal ik in gedachten een "handshake" met U wisselen, zoodat U tenminste een klein beetje van mij weet; U ken ik al wel door de S. B.

Mijn naam is , ik ben ruim 18 jaar. Sinds September van het vorige jaar zit ik in de 4e klas van de A.H.B.S. (litterair-economisch) in Groningen. Wij zijn op de S. B. geabonneerd, dank zij mijn oom,, die dit doet uit dank voor de Gron. Geref. Kerkbode, die vader hem in normale tijden deed toekomen.

Tot onze groote verrassing ontvingen wij voor

eenige dagen de S. B. van Jan., na lezing was de verrassing gepaard met verwondering, gezien de inhoud! Uit Uw artikel :Nazi progress in the Netherlands?, vernam ik dat men in de V. S. nog in het onzekere verkeert omtrent het al of niet toetreden van een professor van de V. U. tot een nat-soc. partij. Dit gerucht was maar al te waar! Tegen het einde van het afgelopen jaar verscheen in de couranten het bericht dat Professor Van Schelven zou zijn toegetreden tot Nationaal Front (vroeger Zwart Front; leider Arnold Meijer). Hoewel deze partij iets gematigder is dan de N. S. B., komt ze toch in principe met deze overeen. Zoowel Mussert als "Arnold" denken dat ze onmisbaar zijn, even onmisbaar als de nieuwe orde die zij propageeren.

De laatste tijd echter, gaat hier hardnekkig het gerucht rond, dat de heer Van Schelven weer uit Nationaal Front zou zijn getreden, onder sterke pressie van het college van Curatoren. In tegenstelling met zijn toetreding, heeft de professor dit gerucht nog niet bevestigd, maar ontkend is het ook niet.

Om de kans te vergrooten dat U dit ontvangt, onthoud ik mij nu van andere opmerkingen, alleen dit: Voor 80% zijn wij het hier *niet* eens met de briefschrijver die U in de S. B. behandelde.

Als U deze Brief publiceert, heb ik liever niet dat U mijn naam noemt, het lijkt zoo "kakkerig" (sorry voor dit woord) als ik met mijn 18 jaar al met naam en toenaam in de krant sta.

Hoogachtend,

Ik meende, dat dit schrijven van genoeg belang is, om het te plaatsen. We verblijden ons vooral over de laatste opmerkingen van den schrijver. En ook zijn we blij, dat zoo nu en dan de S. B. nog in Nederland wordt ontvangen. We vernamen dit ook uit andere bronnen.

H. H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Friday, May 16, our dear parents

Mr. and Mrs. PETER KOOISTRA—Wiersma
hope to commemorate their 45th wedding anniversary, D. V.

With them we rejoice in the mercies of Jehovah, Who has been their support and guide. We heartily congratulate them and pray God to enlighten and prolong their days for each other and for us.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bosscher

Gertrude Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Menno Kooistra

Hilda Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kooistra

and 6 grandchildren.

Open House for relatives and friends Thursday, May 15, in the afternoon 2:00 to 4:00 and in the evening from 7:00 to 9:00. 1031 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Antichristian Implications Of Nazism*

A few preliminary warnings against a possible misunderstanding of the purpose and character of my lecture for tonight may not be superfluous. My subject might conceivably arouse the expectation in your hearts and minds that I am about to deliver a war-speech, or that my lecture aims at justifying our giving as much as possible aid to Great Britain. Surely, you might argue, it is Nazism that in this present war is seeking world-dominion and control of all things, and that as such is fighting the democracies of the world, has already ruthlessly trampled under its brutal feet many weaker nations, brought the proud republic of France into abject subjection, and is now making a desperate attempt to overcome and destroy the British Empire. If, therefore, it can be shown that Nazism is principally antichristian, that, perhaps, it manifests the nature of the Beast out of the sea as pictured in Rev. 13, it is proved to be an evil force which we do well to oppose with all the power and resources at our disposal. But if this should be your expectation, I must warn you from the outset that you will be disappointed. My lecture does not intend to be anything of the kind. It is not directed against our aiding Great Britain, nor does it mean to be a plea in favor of it. It does not mean to be a political speech, nor does it intend to solve economic problems. It has nothing to do with the question of armament and physical preparedness. It purposes to limit itself to spiritual truths and realities. It considers Nazism from a spiritual aspect. And, therefore, since spiritual powers of darkness cannot be overcome by the sword of the government, even though it can oppose their physical aggression, my lecture means to be an exhortation to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day.

Secondly, I must warn you not to expect that tonight I will don the mantle of a prophet in specific sense of the word. You might expect that it is my intention to convince you that Nazism is very definitely the final form of antichristendom, and that Hitler will be Antichrist. But I have no such intentions. It is true, that when tonight I use the term "antichristian" I like to have it understood in its final, ultimate sense. In general, of course, Antichrist is always in the world. In that sense I might speak of the antichristian implications of many other movements in the modern world, e.g. of "modernism", or even of "democracy". It is not in this general sense that I use the term tonight. No, I am thinking of the antichristian empire in its final sense, as it will appear in the end, when I use the word. The question I would like to present to you is: Does

Nazism in its nature and strife resemble the beast of Rev. 13? But lest you might expect that I would draw the definite conclusion that it is that Beast, I speak intentionally of antichristian *implications*. Without venturing to make any definite predictions as to the immediate future, I purpose to show you that Nazism manifests the fundamental features of the Beast, and that, if it should succeed in the full realization of its ambitions, it would be antichrist in its final form indeed. But at the same time I like to suggest by this qualifying term "implications" that personally I very seriously doubt that we must expect Nazism to develop into the ultimate form of the Beast. To do this I can best call your attention to:

- I. Its Conception of the State;
- II. Its Religious Views;
- III. Its Limitations.

I. That, in trying to point out the antichristian features of Nazism, I must call your attention to its conception of the State, is self-evident. For there can be no question about the fact, that according to Scripture, the final manifestation of Antichrist will assume the form of a political world-power. The dragon will make a final attempt to oppose the dominion of Christ and replace it by his own, to gain control over the kingdoms of this world. To realize this purpose he can find no better medium than the institution of the State with its mighty sword. And this institution he will use. His human representative on earth, the Antichrist, will have political world-power. That this is true is evident from all Scripture wherever it speaks of this subject. It is very evident from Rev. 13. The beast is symbol of a world-empire, as it arises out of the sea of peoples and nations and tongues. Its heads are representations of so many mighty empires of the past, the present and the future. Its ten horns symbolize so many kings or separate governments. Antichrist, therefore, will be the head of a State, together, of course, with its empire or kingdom. We have no time in this connection to enter into detail. But we must point out concerning this antichristian State two things that are of importance for the subject I am treating. First of all, we must remember that the antichristian State will have dominion over the world in the literal sense of the word. For "power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations; and all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". It will be a world-dominion. And, secondly, this antichristian State will have unlimited power over all things in its dominion. It will be the sole authority that exists. There will be no other spheres of authority and sovereignty within its dominion, next to it, excluding it,

such as that of the Church, of the Home, of the School, of Industry and Commerce. What the Dutch call "sovereiniteit in eigen kring" will be contrabande. There will be no freedom. What you shall eat and drink, and whether you shall eat and drink; what you shall teach in the schools, and whether you shall teach at all; how you shall conduct your business and industry, and whether you shall be permitted to conduct it at all; whom and how you shall worship, and whether you shall worship at all,—all these are absolutely determined by the State when Antichrist shall make its final appearance. Also this is very evident from what we read in the thirteenth chapter of the book of Revelation.

In both these respects I find that Nazism strikingly resembles the Beast.

I am not now thinking primarily of Hitler's dictatorship. It is true that it is an essential feature of Nazism that it vests all the power of State in one person. Dictatorship is inseparable from Nazism. Throughout his "Mein Kampf" (My Battle) Adolph Hitler emphasizes this. For this we could quote many passages from this "gospel of Nazism". Hitler has no patience with democracies. He raves against parliaments and parliamentary forms of government. Already when as a young man he sojourned in Vienna to study art, he came to the conclusion that parliament is an "assembly of babblers", without a sense of responsibility. He declares: "This institution can be pleasing and valuable only to the most mendacious sneaks who carefully shun the light of day, whereas it must be loathsome to every honest and straightforward fellow who is ready to assume personal responsibility. Therefore this kind of democracy has become the instrument of that race which shuns the sunlight because of its internal aims, now and for all times. Only the Jew can praise an institution that is as dirty and false as he is himself", p. 116. Instead Hitler proposes dictatorship as the only sound and responsible form of government. By this he understands that the people elect one leader, *der Führer*, who, after he is once elected, is not responsible to the people, nor, in fact, to anyone; in whom is vested all the power of the State, whose will is absolute and alone the law for all; and who, therefore, also is the sole responsible head for all that is done and occurs in the State. Writes he: "Indeed, what must distinguish the folkish view of life from that of Marxism in principle, is that it not only recognizes the value of the race, but by this also the importance of the person and therefore makes the individual the pillar of the entire edifice. . . . The folkish State, from the community up to the leadership of the Reich, has no representative body, which decides my majority, but only *bodies of council* who stand at the side of the respective elected leader, receiving their share of work from him, so that, as the circumstances

require, they in turn have to assume absolute responsibility in certain domains, exactly as on a large scale has the leader himself or the head of the respective corporation. . . . The folkish State, in principle, does not tolerate that in concerns of a special kind, for instance of economic nature, people are asked for advice or judgment who, by virtue of their education and activity, are unable to understand anything of the matter. . . . No voting ever takes place in any chamber or senate. They 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. This principle of unconditional connection of absolute responsibility with absolute authority will gradually breed up a choice of leaders as is inconceivable today, in the era of irresponsible parliamentarianism". pp. 670, 671. There can, therefore, be no doubt that dictatorship belongs to the very essence of Nazism from a political viewpoint. And, of course, it must be admitted that this may easily facilitate the formation of the "almighty" state. But in this dictatorship as such I do not recognize a necessary feature of antichristendom. This would be the case, if it could be proved that antichrist will be one individual vested with all political power rather than a government consisting of a plurality of persons who together are invested with the authority of State. But as this is by no means an established fact, dictatorship can at present not be considered as an essential characteristic of Antichrist in its ultimate manifestation, but must be viewed merely as a more concentrated form of government than that of democracy. A dictator in whom would be vested merely the authority of the State and no more could not possibly be the Antichrist in person.

Different, however, it is with respect to the Nazi conception of the State itself. For, there can be no doubt that its conception 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, education and religious. Dr. Schilder in his "Geen Duimbreed" warns against this Nazi conception of the State throughout his brochure against the N.S.B. in The Netherlands. He writes: "This ethical, mighty, organized community is called State; it is the State that causes men to maintain themselves as *persons*. One sees. . . . that all this is directly related to the Hegelian apotheosis of the State". p. 25. Again: "Hence, all this leads to practical deification of the State". And again: "In the meantime it must be expected that the concrete dictator of flesh and blood will claim for himself such a measure of authority to determine what is right, that at all events his State becomes absolutistic, and that he proclaims himself to

be the personification of human autonomy". p. 39. On p. 46 he writes: "For all these reasons it is implied in the connection of these ideas, that a *confessing, prophesying* church, and a free, reformed school *must* come into conflict with this idea of the State and its maintenance". He insists that the "leading principle" of the N.S.B. that of the "preference" of national interests above the interests of various groups (family, society, etc.) and of the latter above personal interests, is corrupt, and that the Nazi State-coercion is in conflict with the Reformed principle proclaimed by Dr. A. Kuyper, that of "sovereignty in one's own domain". pp. 54, 55. And Dr. H. Dooyeweerd writes: "What it (i.e. the totalitarian State of Nazism) intends, is indeed the subjection of all the internal social spheres of life to the 'total State'." *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, III, p. 349.

That this is, indeed, the intention is sufficiently evident already from "Mein Kampf". It is true that in this book, which was written in the early twenties, before Hitler came to power, he expresses himself rather cautiously, especially with regard to the Church. But even so the tendency toward State absolutism is sufficiently evident. "The State", according to Hitler, "is a means to an end. Its end is the preservation and the promotion of a community of physically and psychically equal living beings". *Mein Kampf*, p. 594. It aims at training of the spiritual and ideal abilities of its nationality, p. 595. 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. It must occupy a leading, a dominating position in the world. On its preservation depends the preservation of culture, the salvation of the human race. This task belongs to the State. It follows that the State must have strict supervision over the institution of marriage. It determines, not only who and who may not enter into marriage, but also controls what parties may conclude this sacred union. Especially the intermarriage of Aryans and Jews must be opposed. *idem* p. 603 ff. But this care of the State for the welfare of its nationality extends not only "to the time of birth of the young member of people and race", but it also "has to educate the young offspring towards becoming a valuable member in view of later propagation". Education, therefore, must be strictly under the control of the State. *idem* p. 613. To the State belongs the task of the formation of character as a part of its educational program. *idem* p. 621. "As some day the folkish state has to devote its highest attention to the education of will and determination, it is to implant joy in taking responsibility and courage for confession into the hearts of the young from their early years of life". *idem* p. 625. It will even have to take over the scientific school training.

idem p. 626. What this means in practical reality for the Christian School may be gathered from the following footnote by the American editor of "Mein Kampf" on p. 642: "Under the Republic, the great majority of German Schools had been confessional in character. Protestant groups soon began to feel the pressure of the new order. Their Youth Organizations were ordered to merge in the Hitler Youth. The right to give religious instruction was more and more infringed upon; and elections were held to determine whether parents preferred the old 'confessional' or the new 'community' schools, under auspices which virtually guaranteed the extinction of the first. During 1936 the Synod of Oeynhausen protested not only against the restrictions which had been placed upon the Church but asserted that two mutually exclusive views of life were fighting for the German school, and added that matters had gone so far that teachers who professed to be Christians were being discriminated against as being 'politically unreliable'. On May 1, 1937, Hitler replied to these and similar charges by saying: 'There are some old fools with whom it is too late to do anything. But we take the children away from them! We educate them to be new German people. When the little rascals are ten years old, we take them and form them into a community. When they are eighteen we still do not leave them alone'. *Mein Kampf*, 643, 644. "Religious" instruction as given at present in the schools follows the gospel of "Mein Kampf".

In this same way the Nazi State has absolute control of the written and spoken word, science and art, the press, the university, the theatre and movie, industry and labor. A "Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda" has been established, headed by Joseph Goebbels. The duties of this minister are determined by Hitler. Decree XXXI of the Third Reich transfers to Goebbels full power over the spoken and written word. Decree XXXIV and XXXV establish a Ministry for Science, Education and Public Instruction. This minister, responsible only to Hitler, has full legislative powers in all educational matters. In the article in *Foreign Affairs*, April, 1936, by Dorothy Thompson, from which I gleaned the above information, the author writes: "Who may and who may not write, compose, play, sing, act, produce, print, is defined in a set of decrees having the full force of law, and carrying penalties for their violation. What shall be written, sculptured, built, composed, played, acted, and printed is controlled by an army of bureaucrats and spies. Dr. Goebbels' bureau is a cultural inquisition, its word is final, its force unchallenged".

In the same issue of *Foreign Affairs* Chas. A. Beard has an article entitled "Education Under the Nazis", in which he writes: "There is . . . documental proof for the proposition that the administrated supervision over education in Germany has been brought under

a single national office and that the scope of its authority embraces every form of intellectual activity even remotely related to education. It is equally evident from the mass of laws and decrees spread over hundreds of pages that German educational administration is not concerned merely, or even primarily with providing physical conditions for intellectual and moral life in institutions of learning. On the contrary, decree after decree shows that it is above all interested in imposing a rigid pattern of life and thought on teachers and pupils alike, and is openly hostile to every manifestation of free inquiry and discussion in the schools, from the bottom to the top. The subjects to be taught, the books admitted to the school rooms, the papers and magazines bought for school libraries, and the very spirit of instruction are prescribed in minute details. . . . The celebrated 'Lehrfreiheit' is now at an end". What all this would mean for such institutions as the Free University in the Netherlands, theological schools, and our own system of Christian instruction, can easily be surmised!

Some of the outstanding principles that control this education are the following: 1. The doctrine of sheer force; the State is power and Adolf Hitler is the State; the will of the State is his will; the supreme law is made by the Leader, master of force. This force is a good in itself. The man of force is to be glorified. In him is reflected the soul of the nation. 2. The doctrine of race. Germany owes its greatness to the pure Aryan blood. This race has made all history worth mentioning in Western Europe and will make still greater history. The breed must multiply and must be kept pure. Jewish elements must be expelled; inferior and democratic races must be barred. 3. Fear of the German God, not the Jehovah of the Jews, nor the God of Augustine or Martin Luther; and honor of Adolf Hitler. And the spirit in the classroom is best expressed in the words of Hans Schemm, leader in the National Socialist Teachers' Union: "We will, Adolf Hitler, so train the German youth, that they will grow up in your world of ideas, in your purposes, and in the direction set by your will. That is pledged to you by the whole German system of education from the common school to the university". Chas. A. Beard in *Foreign Affairs*, April, 1936.

Equally subjected to the power of the almighty State is Industry and Labor. For labor unions, Christian or otherwise, there is no room in the Nazi State. "Today the old voluntary labor unions are completely outlawed. Their elected leaders are dead, in exile, in concentration camps or prisons. The old constitutional guarantees of civil liberty, and the old legal rights of workers to collective bargaining and to their own Works Councils have been swept away. Labor union property to an estimated value of sixty million dollars has been confiscated." "Labor Under the Nazis" in

Foreign Affairs, April, 1935, by N. Thomas. Instead of free labor organizations there is created by the State what is called the 'German Labor Front'. It is an organization that includes all German brain and hand workers, employers and employees, "leaders" and "followers". This organization is an organ of the Nazi party. And no other organizations are tolerated.

It is evident, then, that the almighty, the totalitarian State is the ideal of Nazism, one of its essential features. It is the implication and consummation of all authority in human society. It lords it over all domains of life. No other spheres of authority are acknowledged or permitted. This idea itself is contrary to Scripture, which certainly acknowledges the home, the church as well as various other spheres in the life of society as domains that are sovereign within their own limits, not to speak now of personal liberty. And it is the necessary prerequisite for the exercise of the antichristian power in its ultimate realization. For only the power of a totalitarian State can lord it over the Church and use its mighty sword to exterminate the last vestige of Christian truth, confession and influence. It is the indispensable condition for the exercise of that power that can and will determine that no one shall either buy or sell unless he adopts the mark of the beast!

But, of course, this power can only hope for success if its sway is universal, if it becomes a world-power in the fullest sense of the word. The question, therefore, is whether Nazism has ambitions to become such a world-power and strives after this ideal. And also this question, I think, we may answer in the affirmative. National Socialism can never be satisfied to remain nationally limited. This may be deduced from its conception of State. According to its conception there is an "idea" State. In this Nazism is truly Hegelian. This idea State is embodied more or less perfectly in every State. But the Nazi form of the State is its most perfect realization. The conclusion is that Nazism cannot rest till this perfect embodiment of the idea State shall have become universal. This is also to be deduced from its philosophy about race. The Aryan race, the Nordic race, the German people are the highest, the purest and strongest race in the world. It is the bearer of all "culture". It, therefore, must be kept as pure as possible. But it must also occupy a leading, a dominating position in the world. It must rule. Its rule is the salvation of the world. This idea is reiterated again and again in "Mein Kampf". But I can quote literal statements by Adolf Hitler. In "Mein Kampf", p. 598 he writes: "If, in its historical development, the German people had possessed this group unity as it was enjoyed by other peoples, then the German Reich would today probably be the mistress of this globe. World history

would have taken a different course, and no one would be able to decide if in this way there would not have arrived what today so many blind pacifists hope to beg for by moaning and crying: A peace, supported not by the palm branches of tearful pacifist professional female mourners, but founded by the victorious sword of a people of overlords which puts the world into the service of a higher culture". And if we add to this what Nazism not only is doing at the present time in Europe, not only in subjugating the nations it already has overcome by its power and in trying to introduce the Nazi State in those countries, but also what it did for a number of years before the war in the form of propaganda through the notorious fifth column, it will be perfectly safe to say, that National Socialism must and actually does aim at world-dominion and that it cannot rest until the Nazi State has become universal.

(Points II and III cont. in next issue)

*Lecture delivered in several of our churches.

H. H.

The School Problem

The Men's League Annual membership meeting was held Tuesday, April 15, in the Fuller Ave. Prot. Ref. Church parlors.

The Board had planned an up to date program, which was well received by old and young; although the attendance was rather small, which was not to our credit, to be sure.

The topic of the program was: Should we have our own System of Christian Instruction?

The Revs. P. Boer, C. Hanko, R. Veldman and J. De Jong were asked to speak on this worthy subject, and they were each allowed 15 minutes time.

The first speaker spoke on: the present condition of instruction in existing educational institutions. The speaker pointed out that it is a sad situation that about 25 percent of our own Prot. Ref. parents send their children to the public schools. Can you conceive of it? so he asked, parents who are supposed to be one with us, and they must and do know that our children are the Lord's; for they have promised to bring them up in the fear of the Lord.

These parents usually claim that the public school is neutral. This, however, is a lie. You have modernism in that school; and modernism is antichristian. It is the destruction of everything that is dear to the people of God.

Our Christian schools of today differ radically from the public school, although we can not be satisfied with the institution of the christian schools of today, for they are colored by the teaching of the Christian Re-

formed common grace doctrine. This means that there is much good in this old world of ours. Plato and Socrates, so they say, were brave men, but they must not be the examples of our covenant children.

Sometimes the children sing songs like this: "Jesus loves all the little children". If you tell them not to sing these songs, you get the answer: "teacher said we may". They are also under the influence of the movies. It is educational: so they are taught, but to be sure, it leads them in the wrong direction.

The second speaker was the Rev. C. Hanko. He chose for his subject: The necessity of our own schools, and a necessity it is indeed. Our doctrine, so the speaker said, differs from the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Churches, and there are also practical dangers. We are positive in our doctrine. It is not the development of a truth, but it is the truth as it is taught us in Scripture.

As parents we have obligated ourselves to educate our children in the Prot. Ref. truth. We cannot afford to send our children to the Chr. Ref. schools, for then we must compromise; 'and this we may not'!

If it is true, and it is true, that the children are the future of the churches, then it is most necessary that we withhold our children from a doctrine which is wrong and not our own.

The Rev. R. Veldman spoke on the possibility to maintain our own schools. The reverend came to the conclusion that it is possible indeed. It is possible also from a financial point of view, if we as Prot. Ref. parents have a heart for this worthy cause. If we only feel the need, and our responsibility, and have not fallen away too far.

The Rev. J. De Jong asked himself the question: On what level should we start? It was his opinion: that we must not start with a school for higher instruction, for in the past it had become evident that our people do not want this, and therefore let us start with a grammar school. We must start from the bottom.

In this connection I can inform the S. B. readers that in this very same week we came together and have organized a society for christian education.

What shall we say now about this movement? It is noble, to be sure. But are we strong enough, also in number, and do we have enough of that true faith that removes mountains? We only need a little, but it must be genuine.

Our meetings of this kind, you always meet the few. Oh I know it: Our covenant God is not dependent upon us. With a Gideon's band He can do wonders also today.

As I see it: it would be a real blessing for us if we were thrown out once more; and now I refer to the schools in the which our youth are educated. However, our duty as Prot. Ref. parents is to step out and

build schools of our own; and I assure you the Chr. Ref. people will give us credit this time.

You may ask: but are there only a few in our midst which are in favor of having our own school? I am convinced there are many.

Some parents, however, do not see the danger of sending their children to a school other than our own. There are also some in our midst who say: this present school is good enough. Others say it costs too much. Others make the statement, a school is not a church and vice versa. Still others do not think through. They are for christian education and therefore they send their children to the christian schools; but for a school of our own they have not much feeling.

There are also who reason that the burden is too heavy. Sometimes I am inclined to think that we are too far from '24. In those days there was much zeal and enthusiasm.

Let us put on the full armor of God and never grow weary. And let us never forget, "united we stand, divided we fall."

S. De Vries.

De Zaligspreking Davids

(Psalm 32)

Ge moogt den tweeden naamval in den titel voorwerpelijik verklaren of onderwerpelijik, het doet er niet toe, want beide is waar. David spreekt hier menschen zalig, dat is onderwerpelijik. Doch David wordt hier óók zalig gesproken: en dat is voorwerpelijik.

Zoo spoedig we aan dezen psalm denken, zoo spoedig denken we ook aan de verklaring der eerste verzen door Paulus in Romeinen 4:6-9a.

Of ook aan II Cor. 5:21. In dien laatsten tekst zien we den Heere Jezus Christus zonde gemaakt voor ons, opdat wij zouden worden rechtvaardigheid Gods in Hem.

Dit is een onderwijzing Davids.

David heeft wat geleerd en het geleerde zal ter Uwer onderwijzing geboekstaafd worden, opdat het de eeuwen verdure en U en ontelbare scharen onderwijze. Door den Heiligen Geest. Ge kunt er op aan.

Paulus noemt het een zaligspreking.

Zalig beteekent vol te zijn. Geluk zegt waarvan ge vol werdt. En het voorvoegsel wel versterkt de idee. Welgelukzalig! De smaak en kwaliteit des hemels zit er in.

David heeft wat ervaren. Ook wil hij het U verkondigen.

De vrucht van zijn ervaring wordt ons geschetst in de eerste twee verzen. Dan volgt het beschrijven

der ervaring. En hij eindigt met een vermaning voor al Gods volk, een vermaning die hij neerpent in zangstijl.

Toen ik zweeg. Die woorden vertolken een zondige toestand bij David. Ja, een dubbel zondige toestand, want hij had gezondigd en zweeg van zijn zonde tot God. En dat is dubbel zondig. Het is erg om Gods geboden te verbreken. De hel zucht daarover van beneden. Doch het is erger om de zonde te verbloemen, te doen alsof ge niet gezondigd hadt. De hel schreewt rauwelings daarover uit hare diepten.

Wat de zonde geweest is weten we niet. Bathseba en Uria? 't Kan wel zijn. Dan is het die periode geweest tusschen het bedrijven van die dubbele vreeselijke zonde en de visitie die Nathan, de profeet Gods, bij David aflag.

't Kan wel zijn, want David heeft de rest van zijn leven die diepte niet vergeten. Beloofde hij God niet, als het Hem behagen mocht om hem te vergeven, hij de zondaren Gods weg zou leeren? En nu die onderwijzing? 't Zou wel passen dan; doch zekerheid hebben we niet.

Hoe het dan ook zij, David had gezondigd en de zonde is een zware zonde geweest. Dat kan men merken uit de beschrijving ervan. De eerste verzen geven U vier woorden voor de zonde: overtreding, zonde, ongerechtigheid en bedrog. In de tweede plaats, hebt ge de eigenaardige karakteriseering in vers 5. Daar spreekt David van de ongerechtigheid zijner zonde. Hij meet de dingen uit. Zijn zonde heeft een diepen indruk op hem gemaakt. Heeft een diepen wond geslagen.

Toen ik zweeg.

Dat doet de geheele goddelooze wereld nu al voor 6000 jaren. Men stapelt zonde op zonde en nooit hoort men den kreet: O God, wees mij zondaar genadig! Men zwijgt. En God zwijgt ook. "Alle deze dingen doet gij en Ik zwijg!" Het is vreeselijk van beide zijden. Het is vreeselijk om zonde op zonde te stapelen en zich niet te haasten om den Zoon te ontmoeten, terwijl men nog op den weg wandelt. Want een zwijgend God is nog vreeselijker. Dat zwijgen is vanwege de almachtige kracht Gods die het kan staan om miljoenen van zonderen te zien zondigen en hen niet te verdelgen. Dat is de verdraagzaamheid Gods. Hij kan zwijgen voor duizende jaren, hoewel die Hem kennen zouden verwachten, dat Hij brulde van grooten toorn en grimmigheid: "Dat Gij zijn ongerechtigheid nog langer kunt verdragen!"

Doch laat een kind Gods eens probeeren om te zwijgen. Doet het niet, want God zwijgt niet. Niet tegenover U, want Hij mint U. Daarom bezoekt Hij U.

Luistert maar: Toen ik zweeg, werden mijne beenderen verouderd in mijn brullen den ganschen dag! Mijn beenderen verouderd is figuurlijke taal. Het beteekent, dat ge ouderdom ervoert in Uw wezen. En

dat is smart. Want David begon te brullen. Die taal gebruikt men niet dan om uit te drukken, dat het lijden erg is.

God bezocht de zonde in 't diepe hart. Daar was een stem God die onophoudelijk zeide: Gij zijt die man! Wat is daarop Uw antwoord?

David brulde, want Gods hand was dag en nacht zwaar op hem. God liet Zich niet onbetuigd. Hij verwekte smart. Het eertijds sappige, heerlijke, vroolijke en liefelijke van Davids leven werd door Gods zware hand veranderd in zomerdroogten. Niets was er meer, waarin hij zich kon verheugen. Gelijk de zomer wanneer alles verdroogt en schreeuwt om water. Wanneer alles dan kop laat hangen en men voortgesleept wordt in nare ervaring van ontstentenis van alle goed.

Toen sprak David.

Met voorbedachte rade sprak hij. Ik zeide: Ik zal belijdenis doen van mijne overtredingen voor den Heere!

Wie denkt dan niet aan den verloren zoon: Ik zal opstaan en tot mijn vader gaan en ik zal zeggen: Vader, ik heb gezondigd tegen den hemel en voor U. Ik ben niet meer waardig. . . .!

En engelen Gods begonnen te zingen. Daar zal blijdschap zijn in den hemel over eenen zondaar die zich bekeert, meer dan. . . .

Zoo ging het ook met David.

Hij ging tot God in den vindenstijd. Dat is hier en nu. Straks komt den overloop van groote wateren. O ja, dan zullen alle de goddeloozen zeggen, neen, brullen: Wij zijn zondaren! O God, wij zijn zondaren en Gij zijt God! Met verwilderde oogen en brekende harten zullen de goodeloozen dan staren naar de bergen en de heuvelen om te bidden tot 't stomme schepsel: Valt op ons; bedekt ons! Want daar, o dáár is 't Oog! De zwijgende God is het die nu ons veranderd is tot een bulderende orkaan, een overloop van groote wateren.

Doch een iegelijk heilige zal in vindenstijd met ootmoed smeekend komen. Vindenstijd! O God van onbegrijpelijke liefde, waarom hebt Gij mij dien vindens-tijd geschonken, terwijl millioenen zwijgen en nooit eens bidden?

En David maakte den Heere zijn zonde bekend. Hoe kinderlijk! Want God wist het alles. Zelfs beter dan David. Doch God wil hebben, dat gij het weet. En dat gij het daadwerkelijk uitroept. En dat ge den dood inroept over booze werken. Dat moet, want ge moet kunnen proeven de lieflijkheid van vergeving. In dezelfde mate, dat ge leert proeven de lieflijkheid van vergeving. In dezelfde mate, dat ge leert proeven hoe vreeselijk de zonde is, hoe God des zonde haat, in diezelfde mate zult ge zingen van geluk.

Zegt nu niet: Laat ons dan zondigen, opdat de genade te meer worde. Want die zoo spreken verstaan het leven Gods niet. En worden door Paulus gekeurd

der verdoemenis waardig. 't Ligt niet in het vele en zware van de zonde om de zonde te verafschuwen. 't Ligt in de diepte. Een zoogenaamde kleine zonde kan U leeren, dat God een afgrijzen heeft van alle ongerechtigheid.

Belijden we dan onze zonden. En zullen we ervaren wat David ervoer.

Dan zult we smaken, dat God een verberging gewrocht heeft in den Zoon der liefde. Die verberging is Zijn hart. Daar worden Gods armen Uwe behoeding en Uw omringing. Ge wordt dan bewaard voor de helsche benauwdheid en ge wordt omringt met vroolijke gezangen van bevrijding. Ervaart ge die armen, staat ge in de schaduw van Golgotha, zoo zult ge beginnen om vroolijk te zijn. In dezelfde dingen is de eeuwigheid van Gods trouwverbond. Zelfs als Uw oog dan breekt, zult ge Uw dierbaren verzoeken om nog éénmaal te zingen. En in 't sterf-vertrek zal men beginnen: 'k Zal eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheid. . . . De klanken werden matter, een floers trok voor Uw oog. Doch 't was maar voor even. De hemelen openen zich en gij zult de voortzetting van dat lied hooren daar, waar nooit dissonanten vielen. De omringing van vroolijkheid. Gods vriendelijk aangezicht heeft vroolijkheid en licht voor alle oprechte harten.

En al die blijdschap, al dat gezang en hemelsche vreugde is ter onderwijzing. Het zijn de leidingen Gods met Zijn kind. Door het geloof, want God geeft raad. Ge ontvangt dan een verstand met Goddelijk licht bestraald. En terwijl gij den goeden strijd des geloofs strijd, lonkt het Goddelijk oog van boven. Mijn oog zal op U zijn. O, wat ongekende zaligheid, als ik weten mag, dat God op mij neerblijkt in gena.

Dat alles heeft David ervaren. En nu zal hij het U gereedelijk verklaren. Hij zal het U ordentelijk voor oogen stellen. En als ge een heilige zijt zult ge het ook kennen. Zelfs de dwazen zullen op dien weg niet dwalen.

Welaan dan. Welgelukzalig is de mensch, die 't mag gebeuren. Daar zit verkiezing in die woorden. En het is wel zeker, dat de vaders die de berijming verzorgden niet wars waren van verkiezing. Want let wel, men kan die welgelukzaligheid niet verdienen. We denken weer aan Paulus die commentaar levert over dezen psalm. Hij zeide: Gelijk ook David, die den mensch zalig spreekt welken God de rechtvaardigheid toerekent zonder werken.

Daar hebt ge het eeuwig Evangelie!

Als ik het verdienen moet, ga ik voor eeuwig verloren.

Doch nu worden we zalig, broeder, want God doet een dubbele daad. Hij rekent Jezus mijn zonde toe en Hij rekent mij Zijn gerechtigheid toe. Denkt daaraan in Uw psalmen, bij de hoogste galmen. Het heil

is des Heeren. En Jesaja noemt Jezus met dien wonderen Naam: De Heere onze gerechtigheid!

Dat zal David bezingen. Luistert maar.

De overtreding vergeven; de zonde bedekt; de ongerechtigheid niet toegerekend. In negatieven hebt ge daar een proeve van 't Evangelie.

In het eerste lid der clausulen hebt ge een beschrijving van U, lezer. En in 't tweede lid hebt ge een beschrijving van Jezus!

Overtreding, naar 't oorspronkelijke, is: losrukken, losscheuren, losbreken. En naar de idee: rebellie, opstand. En: gij zijt die man!

Zonde, is afwending, het doel missen. En naar de idee: God missen, God verliezen. (Wat vreeselijk karakter heeft de zonde!)

Ongerechtigheid, is krom maken, scheef zetten, onrecht doen. En de idee: verkeerd zijn.

Dat is Uw en mijn beeld van nature.

En ziet, gij allen die God vreest, ziet het aanbidde-lijke van Gods Verbondswerk in Jezus:

Vergeven: de rebellie opgelicht en weggedragen;

Bedekt: de dwaaling bedekt door 't Bloed;

Niet toerekenen: de krommigheden niet geteld en daarom niet berekend.

God doet alsof er niets gebeurd is. Meer nog, Hij doet alsof ge steeds gehoorzaam, altijd God-zoekende, onophoudelijk lieflijk waart.

En dat doet hij door onzen Heere Jezus Christus. Tegenover de rebellie staat het Lam Gods; tegenover de dwaling, Hem die God zocht, zelfs in de hel; tegenover de krommigheden, de God-mensch, die steeds zeide: Het betaamt ons alle gerechtigheid te vervullen, ook dan wanneer het Hem wegdruckte in helse wildernissen.

Dat is de roem van Golgotha.

Nu rest mij nog één woord.

Er is een vraag gerezen in Uw hart en mijn hart. Hoe weet ik, dat ik daar deel aan heb!

En 't antwoord is, dat de Heere U een kenmerk in 't harte brandt.

Dit is het: In wiens geest geen bedrog is!

Menschen zonder zonde? Neen, maar mensen die met God wandelen; mensen die niet zwijgen. Doch mensen die door middel van Woord en Geest, in 't wedergeboren leven, wars zijn van 't bedrog des duivels, de leugen; en die de Waarheid (en dat is toch God in den Heere Jezus Christus) minnen.

En al hebben ze dan geschreid, bitterlijk geweend in donk'ren nacht, zoo zullen ze het toch tegen Jezus zeggen bij de zee van Tiberias: Ge weet alle dingen, Heere! Ge weet dat ik Uw liefheb!

Die in 't ongeveinsd gemoed, geen snood bedrog, maar blanke oprechtheid voedt!

Och lieve! Zulk leven op aarde is nu alreeds: "a little bit of heaven!"

G. V.

Betamelijke Lof

(Psalm 33)

Zooals vaak, zoo ook hier in dezen psalm, vindt men het hoofdthema uitgedrukt in het eerste vers. De rechtvaardigen wordt toegeroepen, dat zij vroolijk moeten zingen in den Heere. Verder wordt er dan een oordeel uitgesproken over al zulk vroolijk zingen. Eerstens is het lof en tweedens is het een lof die betamelijk is. Die lof is lof van den Heere.

In het verdere van den psalm worden de gronden en beweegredenen aangegeven van al zulk zingen en loven.

De menschen die aangesproken worden heeten rechtvaardig en oprecht.

Wat beteekenen die termen?

Eerst zullen we moeten zien, dat we hier te doen hebben met deugden Gods. De Heilige Schrift legt er vaak nadruk op, dat de Heere God rechtvaardig is en oprecht. Beide termen beteekenen ongeveer hetzelfde, reden waarom ze dan ook afwisselend gebruikt worden voor hetzelfde onderwerp.

Dat God de Rechtvaardige is en oprecht in al Zijn weg en werk wil zeggen, dat Hij in al Zijn willen en werken in volmaakte overeenstemming is met Zijn heerlijk Wezen. Zijn Wezen is goed, het inbegrip van alle goed en deugd. Welnu, in Zijn willen is Hij altijd en eeuwig in overeenstemming met dat goede en heerlijke Wezen.

Zoo kunnen we ook benaderen, wat het zeggen wil voor een mensch om rechtvaardig te zijn. Voor een mensch beteekent het om in al zijn doen en laten in overeenstemming te zijn met het goede wezen Gods. En kennis van dat Wezen hebben we in de wet. De wet is uitdrukking van den ethischen wil Gods. Die wet zegt ons wie en wat God is; en waar Hij welbehagen in heeft.

Is nu den mensch in overeenstemming met die wet, dan is hij rechtvaardig.

En dat is bedoeld, zooals vanzelf spreekt, van uit het diepe hart des menschen. Jezus spreekt van menschen die rechtvaardig schenen, d.w.z., dat zij rechtvaardig waren aan de buitenkant. Zij zetten een rechtvaardig gezicht en spraken rechtvaardige woorden, doch in hun hart waren ze zeer onrechtvaardig.

Dat moeten we niet hebben. Een rechtvaardig en oprecht mensch is een mensch die van harte Gods wet liefheeft, die wet bepeinst en ijverig betracht.

Van dat volk moogt ge zingen: Zingt vroolijk, heft den stem naar boven, Rechtvaardigen, verheft den Heer!

Zij mogen God loven.

Dat mag een goddeloos mensch niet doen.

Want: lof betaamt den oprechten.

De Heilige Schrift zegt: Een voortreffelijke lip past

eenen dwaas niet; en: de weelde staat een zot niet wel. Ook werd Paulus ontevreden toen Satan de zaak van de inwendige zending te Filippi ging aanprijzen. De woorden Satans klonken wel mooi: Deze menschen zijn dienstknechten des Allerhoogsten, die ons den weg der zaligheid verkondigen! Doch Satan, mitsgaders alle zijn trawanten, zijn zeer onrechtvaardig en daarom mochten zij niet loven. Een psalm in de hel is een onding. Om aan den feestdich in het nieuwe Koninkrijk aan te zitten moet men een bruiloftskleed aanhebben, welke zijn de rechtvaardigmakingen der heiligen.

Nu moet die lof ten hemel rijzen in groote variatie. Men moet zingen zegt de dichter, en men moet zingen in groote vroolijkheid. De muziek moet er ook aan te pas komen. De oprechten moeten zich oefenen op de luit, de harp en het tiensnarig instrument. En dan begeleid met muziek moet een nieuw gezang den Heere ten hemel rijzen.

Al dat loven, prijzen, vroolijk zingen, geschal van muziekinstrumenten die wél bespeeld worden, heeft een machtig motief.

En het motief is de Godsopenbaring.

In het algemeen wordt daarvan gezegd, dat de aarde vol is van Gods goedertierenheid. Overal waar God wandelt vindt ge Zijn werken. In het bijzonder zijn het Zijn Woord, Zijn werk, Zijn gerechtigheid en gericht. Al die openbaring van God is in volstreckte overeenstemming met Zijn goede Wezen. Al wat God ooit zeide is enkel billikheden en schoonheden. Daarom is Zijn Woord recht. Sloeg God aan 't werken, zoo mocht ge het bezien. Er mankeert niets aan. Mocht ge het gadeslaan in de schepping of de herschepping, als ge klaar kwaamt met zien en opmerken, zoo moet ge het uitroepen als een echo van Gods eigen Woord: en ziet, het was zeer goed.

Dat werk is overweldigend groot.

Allereerst in de schepping.

Door het Woord des Heeren zijn de hemelen gemaakt, en door den Geest Zijns monds al hun heir.

Lange jaren geleden vertelde mij mijn leeraar, dat die tekst een bewijs was voor de leer der Drie-eenheid Gods. *Het Woord* is dan de tweede Persoon; *des Heeren* verwijst ons naar den Vader; en *de Geest Zijns monds* is de derde Persoon, de Heilige Geest.

Dat zal wel waar zijn. Het pronkjuweel der schepping vertoont het drievuldig beeld van God. Overal schitteren de Drie Personen van het Goddelijk Wezen in de schepping rondom en in ons.

En sindsdien God dien hemel en aarde geschapen heeft, heeft Hij ze ook bewaard. Als met Zijn armen omvangt Hij de oceanen, zoodat ze de grenzen door Hem gesteld niet overschrijden zullen. En wat de afgronden aangaat, die heeft Hij gesteld tot schatkamers. In die afgronden berusten de schatten der oceanen en zeeën.

Als de dichter daaraan denkt, zoo wordt zijn rechtvaardige ziel in hem overstelpt van de grootheid van dien Schepper. Dat alleen moest genoeg zijn voor den mensch om in aanbidding voor Hem ter neer te vallen. Laat de gansche aarde voor Hem vreezen, laat alle de inwoners van de wereld voor Hem schrikken. Denkt ge, dat ik het ooit vergeten zal hoe ik te moede was toen ik voor het eerst de zee zag? Ik viel van schrik terneer. Ook had dit niets uitstaande met de zonde. Ik was veel te klein om daar veel besef van te hebben. Ook herinner ik mij hoe ik schreeuwde van angst toen ik voor 't eerst de maan zag in donk're nacht.

God heeft een stempel van Zijn ggrootheid, heerlijkheid, eer en heerlijkheid afgedrukt op de werken Zijner handen.

Doch de goddeloozen, de beesten, denken daar niet aan. Wandelende temidden van die grootheden, lachen en spotten ze met God en Godsdienst.

Vreest en schrikt dan voor den grooten God, want Hij spreekt en het is er, Hij gebiedt en het staat er. In die paar woorden ligt de gansche vuile leer der evolutie omver.

Zeg nu maar niet, dat de mensch daar in 't geheel geen besef van heeft, want dat is niet waar. In booze brooddronkenheid tracht hij in uren van zoogenaamde ontspanning het God na te doen. Denk aan de gooche-laars. Ze willen uit niets iets te voorschijn roepen. Ze willen ook de dingen roepen die niet zijn alsof ze waren. Guichelaars zijn goddelooze menschen.

En nu is dit het verloop der vreeselijke geschiedenis, dat de heidenen en de volkeren der aarde een booze raad uitgedacht hebben tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde. Daarom staat er verder, dat God dien raad en die gedachten vernietigt en breekt. Hun gedachten kwamen hierop neer, dat zij trachtten om de idee van God die waarlijk God is te dooden in 't diepe hart. Daar in dat diepe hart zegt de mensch: Er is geen God. Doch God verbreekt hun raad.

Daartegenover staat dat God de radende God is. Hij heeft óók gedachten des harten. Doch Gods raad bestaat in eeuwigheid. En zijn gedachten van geslachte tot geslachte. En nu is de mensch zóó ongeëvenaard dwaas, dat terwijl hij het zien kan, hoe alle raad des menschen gedurig verbroken wordt en Gods raad bestaat tot in eeuwigheid, hij den strijd tegen God nooit opgeeft.

Er is echter een volk, dat wel let op God en op al Zijn werken.

En dat volk is welgelukzalig. Zalig moet men noemen, die hun Maker roemen als hun Heer en God. 't Volk, door Hem tevoren gunstig uitverkoren tot Zijn erv' en lot!

Dat volk zijn de rechtvaardigen en de oprechten van het eerste vers. O, neen, zij zijn dat niet van nature. Doch de Heere heeft in hunne harten geschenen. Dat wil zeggen, dat Hij hun de mededeelbare

eigenschappen van Zijn Eigen heerlijk leven gegeven heeft. Hij heeft hun gemaakt tot goede menschen. Jezus zeide van dat volk: Zalig zijn de reinen van hart. In de gelijkenis van den zaaier zegt Hij van dat volk, dat zij het zaad in een *goed* hart ontvangen. Hun hart en leven is in overeenstemming met de natuur Gods. Zij zijn oprecht en rechtvaardig.

Dat volk, die schaapjes, zijn temidden van de wolven voor tijd en wijle. Toch moet ge maar niet bang zijn, want Uw groote Herder waakt altijd over U. Hij heeft nooit toegelaten, dat hun eenig kwaad overkwam. Al wat hen overkwam was goed. O ja, ik stem toe dat sommige fasen van dat goede van Gods hand bitter was voor het vleesch, dat ze nog al eens vaak moesten weenen van droefheid en ellende. Doch het was alles goed. Voor die schaapjes van Jezus' kudde werkt alles mede ten goede. Op de wolken rijdt de Heere ter Uwer hulpe en van onderen zijn de eeuwige armen. Ook in dien nacht toen ge niet slapen kondet vanwege het snikken. Ook toen wanneer de goddeloozen rondom U Uw leven benauwdten. God was het die die vijanden op Uw pad gezet heeft.

Wees maar niet bang want Hij schouwt uit den hemel en ziet alle menschenkinderen. Hij ziet uit Zijn vaste woonplaats op alle inwoners der aarde. Zij kunnen U geen werkelijk kwaad doen want God heeft U lief. En luistert: Hij formeert hun aller hart. Daar kan niets in dat hart tegen U gesmeed worden, dat niet eerst den Heere bekend was. In Zijn vreese-lijke voorzienigheid was Hij het die het zwaard geslepen heeft om U te doden. En toch was dat goed. Hij formeert hun aller hart en Hij let op al hunne werken. Weest maar niet bang.

Ik weet het wel: er zijn groote Koningen met veel helden die groote kracht hebben. Er zijn strijdros-
sen die o zoo krachtig zijn. Ik denk aan de "panzer divisions" van Hitler's benden. Gij ook?

Toch moet ge niet vreezen, want dat is niet de reden van Hitler's overwinningen. Vreest veeleer die achter Hitler staat, die zijn hart formeert en zijn brein bestuurt. God is het die Hitler gebruikt, mitsgaders al zijn drommen van soldaten en werktuigen.

Terwijl die benden over de aarde rennen als bezetenen, is het God die U in het oog houdt.

Uw grootvader en grootmoeder, die nu in den hemel rusten bij God, hebben het U voor gezongen: "Hij, geducht in macht, slaat elk gunstig gade, die op Zijn genade in benauwdheid wacht!" Zijn oog is op U. "Mijn oog zal op U zijn".

En: het brieschend paard moet eind'lijk sneven! Hitler ook. Als hij straks den raad Gods uitgediend heeft laat God hem los en valt hij weg. Ook tot hem zal God eens zeggen: Keer weder, gij menschenkind!

Neen, weest maar niet bang, want God redt Uw zielen van den dood.

We zijn genaderd tot de slotakkoorden. Ze zijn hemelsch schoon.

In de grootste smarten blijven onze harten in den Heer gerust!

Van eeuwigheid beminde Hij ons. Van die liefde tot ons heeft God eeuwiglijk gezongen in Zijn Eigen heerlijk Wezen. En omdat Hij de rechtvaardige God is heeft Hij dien vrederaad gestand gedaan. Toen gij in den tijd Uw God verliet heeft Hij U niet verlaten. Neen, met eeuwige armen heeft Hij U omhelsd en dat is Golgotha.

Het hout van den kruispaal is allang vermolmd. De spijkers die de heilige handen van Jezus doorboorden werden niet gevonden. Maar Jezus heeft het bloed gebracht in het binnenste heiligdom. En de kracht van dat bloed zal U vinden en heeft U gevonden. Het heeft U van een goddelooze tot een rechtvaardige gemaakt.

En alle deze dingen zijn uit God.

Er blijft daarom één ding voor U te doen. En daar-
komt gij nooit mee klaar. Het is dit: Laat ons alom
Zijn lof ontvouwen!

De voorsmaak des hemels!

G. V.

De Vrouw In De Woestijn

XI. SLOT.

Openbaring 12.

Onwillekeurig dringt de vraag zich aan ons op, wanneer en hoe zullen de dingen zijn, die ons, dat is, de Kerk van Christus, zullen ervaren aan het einde der dagen. Die vraag laat zich nu eenmaal niet onderdrukken. Toch dient de Kerk hier zeer voorzichtig te zijn en zij trachte vooral niet, om zich in allerlei bijzonderheden te verdiepen. Trouwens, de Bijbel zegt ons van dit hoe en wanneer niets. De Schrift is geen Boek met plaatjes, noch geeft zij stof voor allerlei tijdkundige berekeningen—zelfs de Chiliasten doen in dit opzicht niet veel meer dan gissen en fantaseeren.

De vraag, of de Antichrist een persoon dan wel een groep van menschen zal zijn, doet aan het eigenlijke der zaak waarom het gaat weinig of niet af of toe. Dit geldt eveneens van de vraag of een enkele of sommige der geweldhebbers in den tegenwoordigen oorlog de Antichrist zijn of worden zullen. Alle berekening in dat opzicht zullen toch niet uitkomen. We zijn het er mee eens als er gezegd wordt, dat de Dictators van vandaag tenslotte nog niet de Dictators der zonde zijn. Wel is het waar, dat ook in de overwonnen landen, de Kerk aan banden wordt gelegd, maar daar-

mede is de volle dienst der zonde nog niet uitgeroepen.

Trouwens, gaat het er eigenlijk wel om, wie en wat en hoe deze dingen zijn zullen? Een nieuwsgierige discipel van Christus mag tenslotte de vraag stellen van het hoe en het wat, zijn Heiland zegt hem telkens weer, let op de teekenen der tijden, opdat u niemand verleide.

En die teekenen zijn nooit vaag.

Het wereldgebeuren vandaag heeft in dat opzicht ons veel te zeggen. Het bepaalt ons bij het feit, dat de saamtrekking van volkeren een voorbereiding is van en voor de groote eenheid, die er in de laatste dagen zijn zal. Wie werkelijk opmerkzaam is, ziet alreeds, hoe systematisch, land na land wordt verzwoegen en tot vazal-staat gemaakt van een enkele mogeheid. De strijd zelf wordt niet tot een enkel werelddeel beperkt, doch beslaat alreeds tweederde der wereld.

En denk daarbij dan, wat betreft ons eigen werelddeel, dat ook wij vroeger of later in dezen krijg zullen worden betrokken en wellicht zullen worden overwonnen en ge staat aldus voor allerlei mogelijkheden, die het rijk van den vorst der duisternis tot openbaring zullen brengen.

Die teekenen zijn ook niet vaag wat betreft de beginselen, die in het wereldgebeuren tot openbaring komen. O, neen, dat is niet een kwestie van het individu en de gemeenschap, want die beiden zijn toch niets meer, dan de een en dezelfde zaak en concentreren zich om den mensch. In het streven der steeds overwinnende landen komt als het groote beginsel te voorschijn, dat de Staat het een en het al is, die gehoorzaamd en gediend moet worden en waar alles aan moet worden geofferd. Maar is dat zooveel anders in ons eigen land? We kunnen soms zoo heel erg onnoozel doen, alsof het bij ons alles anders en dies beter is. Is dat eigenlijk wel waar? Gaat ook het leven in eigen land niet hoe langer hoe meer uit van hetzelfde beginsel? We zeggen, maar we hebben toch nog vrijheid van den godsdienst? We mogen onze kinderen nog laten onderwijzen in overeenstemming met den eisch des Verbonds?

Zoolang als we nadruk durven leggen op het *nog* is er reden, dat we ons zelve niet iets wijs maken. We hebben *nog* vrijheid van dit of van dat, zegt tenslotte, dat we lang niet zoo zeker zijn, dat het ook zoo zal blijven. En zóó blijven zal het voor zeker niet. Naar het isolement dringt u de regeering, wanneer ge werkman zijt. De werkman moet stemmen of hij al of niet tot de Union zal behooren. En de groote meerderheid gaat met den stroom, die niet neutral, doch 'rood' is van kleur. Ook hier mag men de oogen niet voor sluiten als Christen. Of we dan niet een eigen vereeniging of vereenigingen moeten beginnen? Misschien wel, mits we dat dan doen, niet om ons met een schijn te vreden te stellen, waar het wezen aan ontbreekt. Namaaksel helpt

tenslotte toch niet. Maar ook al kan men lokaal zich vereenigen en zijn invloed doen gelden, dat zal tenslotte toch ook weer niet helpen. De Vrouw blijft in de minderheid en haar aantal zal slinken naardat men beginsel scherper tegenover beginsel plaatsen zal. En niet slecht op het terrein van den arbeid, doch op alle terreinen des levens zullen de beginselen, boven genoemd, door werken, wanneer zij slechts zullen worden toegepast. We schrijven hier maar niet iets, dat uit de lucht werd gegrepen, doch door de geschiedenis steeds werd bevestigd. Denk slechts aan den eersten wereldoorlog van een twintig jaar geleden. Drukte de Staat toen alreeds niet haar stempel op de Kerk? Ge herinnert u nog wel, hoe zelfs de kerk toen met de vlag van binnen werd versierd als teeken, dat men den Staat als oppermachtige gehoorzaamde en in het gevele wilde komen? Ja zelfs, omdat men zoo spoedig bang is, eigener beweging daartoe overging, zonder dat dit geëischt werd? We moeten die dingen niet verdoezelen, noch ook verkleinen. Wie de oogen gaat sluiten voor de werkelijkheid is een dwaas, die straks geestelijk den weg niet meer zal weten.

Maar dan zal men straks hier niet meer kunnen zijn, zoo zegt iemand. Dat is best mogelijk. Ge kunt nu eenmaal de wereldgeschiedenis niet naar uw hand zetten. De Heere gaf ons Zijn Openbaring en laat ons door Zijn Woord de dingen verkondigen, die haast moeten geschieden. Zijn werk gaat door. Dwars door alles heen richt Hij de wereldgeschiedenis op het groote einde van alles. Die eindstreep moet worden bereikt en dat naar Zijn gemaakt bestek.

Daarom moeten we twee dingen doen.

Allereerst, we moeten ons geen voorstellingen maken van wat de Schrift ons niet leert. Daartoe is noodig, dat we niet meegaan met de wereld en ons niet tevreden stellen met enkele 'slogans'. Het deed lang opgeld, dat de wereld voor Christus moest worden opgeëischt. Zelfs ging men in de zoogenaamde Gereformeerde kringen zoover, dat het soms scheen alsof de Kerk er was om de wereld en de wereld en haar leven de groote zaak was waarom het eigenlijk ging. Daaronder kan ook gerangschikt "het waardeeren van het goede der wereld". Al dat goede loopt mede uit op de ontwikkeling en de komst van den Antichrist. De lijn zal scherp getrokken moeten worden en de wereld zullen we hoe langer hoe meer den rug toe moeten keeren. Wie dat *nu* niet wil, zal het straks niet meer kunnen doen. Men moge nu nog trachten zich in allerlei bochten te wringen, maar straks zal het openbaar worden aan welke zijde men zich bevindt. Want, gelijk we in onze artikelen meer dan eens hebben opgemerkt, de strijd, met het oog op het einde, is niet een kwestie van levensvorm, van natuurlijke verhoudingen, doch die van Israel tegen de wereld, van God en Christus tegenover den Satan en den Antichrist. Daar ligt de door God gestelde Antithese. Daarom kunnen we ook

in het wereldgebeuren nooit iets anders zien dan Gods eigen werk naar het einde aller dingen.

In de tweede plaats, daartoe is ook noodig, dat we *nu* tot dien strijd worden voorbereid. Tot de kerk van onzen Heere Jezus Christus komt de vermaning houdt wat gij hebt, opdat niemand uw kroon neme. Het eenige licht, dat wij hebben is het Woord Gods. De kennis van dat Woord en de liefde tot dat Woord zijn alleen waarborg, om bewaard te blijven voor afwijking en voor het meegaan met de wereld. Wie zich wapenen zal tot den strijd, zal dan ook zijn wapenrusting enkel en alleen uit dat Woord kunnen halen.

En eindelijk, daartoe is dan ook noodig het waken met en voor elkander. Waken, opdat de vijand ons niet overrompele. Daar waar geen kennis des Woords is, daar is ook geen geestelijke kracht, om zich tot den strijd aan te gorden. De geschiedenis der Kerk heeft het altijd weer bewezen, waar weinig of geen kennis is van het Woord Gods, daar glijdt men zoo gemakkelijk van het spoor af en lost zich straks geheel en al in de wereld op. God's volk moet alleen willen wonen, dan is zij veilig.

Met het oog op dat einde, zal het dan ook niet moeilijk zijn, om staande te blijven in den strijd, indien we aan de hierboven gestelde eischen voldoen. Dan is er ook troost en een schoon vooruitzicht, Want hoe het dan ook verder gaan moge, de overwinning is zeker. Eigenlijk is geheel die strijd der eeuwen nooit anders dan middel, om die overwinning, door den Heiland op Golgotha behaald, tot volle openbaring te brengen.

En daarom met opgeheven hoofde dien dag tegemoet in het volle vertrouwen, dat de Heere Zijne genade niet zal doen ontbreken aan hen, die in Zijne wegen wandelen.

W. V.

Tried And Found Wanting

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel." Numbers 13:1.

According to this notice, Moses acted in response to an express command of God, when he sent forth the spies, while according to a statement found in his first farewell address to the people, this action was taken by him because the people had so requested. "And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the

mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and posses it, as the Lord God of thy fathers has said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us; and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and unto what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe. . . ." (Deut. 19:23).

There is no discrepancy here. Both the Lord commanded and the people requested that the war with the Canaanites be preceded by an exploration of the land to be possessed. The two accounts are then not contrary. Together they form a complete narrative of what took place.

The place whence the spies were sent was the wilderness of Paran. As the people had encamped but twice, this place could be at no great distance from Sinai. Let us observe in this connection that the notice at Numbers 10:12 is to the effect that "the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai;" and that, "the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran", the next resting-place; but that at Numbers 12:16 the narrative reads, "And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran." So, according to the former notice, this wilderness was the first station beyond Sinai on the journey northward from Sinai to Kadesh, while according to the scripture last quoted this station was not reached until after the people had removed from Hazeroth, the fourth resting-place. The only solution is that when the people again came to rest after the departure from Sinai, they found themselves in the wilderness of Paran, and that when they again pitched after removing from Hazeroth, they still found themselves in this same wilderness, so that this wilderness must be imagined to have included all the stations at which the people rested on that stretch of the journey that lied between Sinai and the first encampment beyond Hazeroth northward, and that thus the expression wilderness of Paran", as occurring at Numbers 10:12, signifies the wilderness as a whole, while the same expression, as found at Numbers 12:16, is to be taken as the name of a specific spot in it.

There were in all twelve spies selected from all the tribes, so that each tribe was to be informed by evidence submitted by one of its own tribesmen. If the choice were restricted to some of the tribes only, those passed over might question the reliability of the spies and, as moved by jealousy and spite, refuse to give credence to their report. The persons selected were men of high rank, "heads of the children of Israel," whose word on this account had weight with the people. The names of the appointees and the

tribe to which each belonged are revealed, and this to the enduring shame of the ten.

Before sending the spies away, Moses instructs them as follows, "Get you up this way by the south-land and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land". (Num. 13:17-20).

It is to be observed that the Lord had commanded Moses in this language, "Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan" (Num. 13:1- 2a). It strikes us that the instruction of Moses to the spies is remarkably detailed as compared with the Lord's command to Moses. Now the stand that these *details* originated not with the Lord but with the people, so that in charging the spies, Moses was simply employing the language in which the people had couched their request, will not at all do. The only permissible stand is that now, too, Moses spake by divine inspiration as well as when he communicated to them the law and admonished them in his parting addresses, and that thus the Lord approved of his speech. These details then, though as to their substance at least they had also been voiced by the people, must be taken to have been put in Moses' mouth by the Lord. The point is that Moses did well in telling them to ascertain whether the land was good or bad, fat or lean; whether the people that dwelt there were strong or weak, few or many; and whether they dwelt in tents or in strongholds. But we naturally ask: how could Moses be doing well? What need was there of this information as far as the outcome of the war was concerned? The battle was not Israel's but the Lord's. Military skill and human prowess, such as they might have possessed, would tell, but only because the Lord was to fight for them. Moses understood this. Therefore his initial command to the people had been that they go up to possess the land. What need was there for their knowing beforehand whether the Canaanites dwelt in strongholds, if He who was to lead them in battle was the Lord? What need was there of their being given opportunity to ascertain for themselves what the virtue of Canaan's soil was? They had long ago been told by the Lord that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. Should this witness not have sufficed? Should they not have been ready to go forward solely by their faith in this word? Was Moses not suggesting, through his instructing the spies as he did, that the people place in the room of God's witness the testimony of sense? Assuredly not. That he charged the spies as he did was of the Lord. Moses did well. This must

be maintained. For two centuries or more the people had been living quietly and sumptuously in the land of Goshen. Now such living is all but conducive to the well-being of a people, to the strengthening and development of its manly vigor. Then, the spirit of this people had been cowed by many decades of hard oppression. It was as a crowd of slaves that the children of Israel had left Egypt. Yet they were now being called upon to extirpate, through a sustained military effort, the cursed tribes that infested Canaan. And the people in this land were many indeed. And they dwelt in strongholds impregnable, so that, from the point of view of nature, the undertaking was doomed to failure. Yet it had to succeed, as the battle was to be the Lord's. So, the venture had to be one of faith, of trust in the power and willingness of the Lord to give victory. Did they possess this faith? Were they capable of being willing to go forward as relying on His promise? The Lord was resolved to try them. So He ordered the spies to be sent. Let them explore the land and report their findings to the people. Having learned all the facts, let them say what they will do. This was the Lord's reason for sending the spies. Also in telling them to see whether the land was good or bad, Moses did well. Appearing to Moses in the burning bush some forty years previous, the Lord, speaking of this land, had said to him, "I am come down to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." The people were now standing on the edge of this land. Let them then, as believing what the Lord had said, now see for themselves just how wonderfully good that land was.

As was said, the people themselves, too, wanted the land explored before the commencement of the conflict. Did they because they had learned that the Lord wanted it too? The way they talked to Moses is against this view. Coming to Moses, they say, "*We* will send men before us that they may search out the land. . . ." They do not ask or request but reveal what they by themselves have resolves to do. In response to Moses' exhortation that they now go up and possess the land, they say, "Nay, not so, but *we* will first send men to search that land." Why should *they* have insisted on this? What need was there for *them* to know whether the inhabitants of Canaan dwelt in tents or in strongholds, if the battle was the Lord's? Not that the request that the land be searched was as such sinful. It could spring from believing prudence. But in their case, it sprang from fear and therefore anticipated their revolt. But even apart from their fear, they had no desire to war God's warfare because they loved not God. Their wish was that the spies would have to report that the land was bad and that its inhabitants were many. Such were their fears, which they hoped

would not turn out to be groundless. Then there would be to them some plausible excuses for their refusal to go up and possess the land that had been promised them. Not that they despised that land. Why should they? It was a good land indeed. However, if they had to choose between returning to Egypt or living out their lives in the wilderness on the one hand and possessing that good land in the way of a conflict from the point of nature doomed to failure but bound to be successful if waged by faith in God, on the other hand, they would choose the former. Herewith has been disclosed the reason that the people had for sending the spies. They were looking for excuses.

Moses, himself believing and therefore unafraid, little suspected that, in clamoring for men to search them out the land, the people were being driven by fear. So, when they came to him to tell him what they would have him do, he heard them out in good faith. Their saying even pleased him well and he concluded that it would be the part of wisdom to do as they suggested. They were careful to hide from him their real intention. They said nothing that as much as suggested even that they dreaded a conflict with the Canaanites. To the contrary, they took pains to couch their request in a language, designed to leave the impression that they were quite ready and that all that held them back was their lack of information respecting the lay of the cities of the land to be possessed. Of this information they had need, they said, in order that they might know what way they had to go up and in which cities they should come. As armed with this information, they would go up and possess the land without delay. It can be understood therefore that their saying pleased Moses and that, in compliance with their request, he sent the spies. However, as it is inconceivable that Moses would take this step on his own initiative or simply because the people so requested, it must be conjectured that the Lord made known His will respecting the matter prior to the people's voicing their request in Moses' audience, so that the principal reason why the people's saying pleased him is that what the Lord willed they also willed. The order of events we must therefore imagine to have been thus: 1. Moses commands the people to go up and possess the land; 2. The Lord reveals to Moses that it is His will that the land be first explored; 3. The request of the people that the land be first explored; 4. Moses, in compliance with God's command and the people's request, sends the spies.

The spies set out. They searched the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob. Ascending by the south, they came unto Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak were. They next came to the brook of Eshcol, where they cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes, which two of them bare between them upon a staff. Also of the pome-

granates and the figs they brought with them and returned from their search. They had been gone forty days, during which time they must have travelled as much as six hundred miles. Rehob lay in the extreme north of Palestine, so that they had gone up and down the entire length of Canaan, a distance of approximately 175 miles. So, they had really marched hard and done their work well.

Coming to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation, the men brought in their report. There were two reports, one submitted by the ten and the other submitted by Caleb and Joshua. The ten address the audience thus, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of the Jordan."

Having said this, the spokesman of the ten keeps silence. Whether he would speak again depended upon whether the other two had anything to say in addition and if they had what it would be.

The people have now heard. And what they heard greatly agitated them, as is evident from the notice immediately following, "And Caleb stilled the people". But was the reporter to be blamed for the way his words had effected the people? The men had been instructed to find out all about the land and its people, so that the report that they have just brought in is precisely the kind of report that they were asked to prepare. And what they said about the cities and the inhabitants was undoubtedly true. And the tribes that they said dwelt in that land actually did dwell there. Yet in reporting as they just did these men commit a grievous sin. They went further than to set forth the untarnished facts. Attend to what they said, "surely it (the land) floweth with milk and honey. . . . *Nevertheless. . . . Moreover.....*" If they had completed their reasoning, they would have ended up with saying, "So, what difference does it make, as far as we are concerned, whether the land be good or bad. It can at no time become ours. For the people in it be strong and their cities walled and great, so that any attempt on our part to possess it, would be nothing short of suicidal for our people." Such assuredly was their finished argument which they purposely had refrained from finishing, as they in all likelihood wanted it said that they had remained strictly objective in their reporting. So all they did was to set forth the premise of their reasoning and trusted that the people would know how to complete the argument. Even if they had only told what they

had seen, and allowed the people to judge for themselves, they would have done wrong. For as rulers their duty was to encourage the people. But instead, they discourage them, through their conveying very decided opinions without really expressing any.

As to the people, they were quick to sense the import of that *nevertheless* and *moreover* and eager to follow the argument to the end. For the men had spoken according to their hearts. There was complete understanding between them and these heads. All were agreed that the tribes inhabiting the promised land could never be dispossessed. Yet this man Moses and a few others insisted that they could. They ought to know better. So, it is certain, the people had now begun to reason among themselves. The ten men had thus accomplished their purpose. Their words had taken effect. For they were heads among the people and their words had weight.

Two of the few in the camp who believed that God would give victory, were Caleb and Joshua, also of the number who had searched the land. The people had crowded around Moses and were letting him know how they felt and what they thought. The undertaking could never succeed. They were certain of it. And the longer Moses held out against them, maintaining the contrary, the more excited they became. Caleb now spoke up in the attempt to still "the people before Moses". The substance of what he said is recorded, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." The notice, "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses", may mean that the people were attending to what he was saying and that thus his words were taking effect. At least, so it must have seemed to the other spies. For interrupting Caleb, they say with considerable vehemence, it must be imagined, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." Had they, the first time they spoke, minced words, expressed themselves guardedly, in a kind of veiled speech, on account of their reluctance to being held responsible for the reactions of the people, they now cast off all restraint, and say just what they think. So determined are they to have their way with the people, that they now bring up "a slander upon the land," that is, say things about Canaan that are not true, "And they brought an evil report upon the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof." This is a strange expression. It is doubtful whether it had definite meaning for the people. But it is an evil-sounding statement and therefore suited the purpose of these men, which was to stir up resentment against the land of promise. What they declare must be equivalent to saying that the inhabitants wore themselves out wrestling a living from the soil of their land. The ten men went on to say,

"And all the people we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." They allow the people to imagine just how great the stature of these sons were. The question is asked whether the sons of Anak, of which, according to the sacred narrator, there were three (verse 22 of chapter 13), are to be thought of as persons or as clans. "The most natural understanding of the Bible statements is to the effect that they were personal leaders among the Anakim at Hebron." The statement about the grasshoppers was not, of course, meant to be taken literally. The comparison served to create the impression that the inhabitants of Canaan and in particular the giants were men of enormous stature and strength so that the Israelites were no match for them.

Having had their say, the ten spies are silent. The people may now publicly voice their opposition to making war on the Canaanites, without anyone in the camp being able to justly accuse them of cowardice. So they must have reasoned. For the venture has been exposed as foolhardy in the extreme. This will now have to be admitted by all. So, as emboldened by the report of the ten spies, the people burst out into loud crying. They weep all night and intersperse their sobs with the saying, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, would God that we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return unto Egypt?" So do they demonstrate their feelings in the hearing of Moses and Aaron. To one another they say, "Let us make a captain and return unto Egypt." What then would they do with Moses? In all likelihood there was born in their soul the resolve to kill him. That there is murder in their hearts is evident from this that presently they goad on those standing nearest to the faithful four to stone them with stones.

Why do the people react as they do? Because they are so afraid of the Canaanites? This is not the only reason. It need not be denied that the people are afraid. However, it is to be observed that when they are told that for punishment they will have to live out their lives in the wilderness, they say, "Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised." Moses warns them that the undertaking will not prosper. But they will not listen. So, rising up early in the morning they get them up to the top of the mountain with a view to joining battle with the Amalekites and the Canaanites, who dwell in the valley, with the result that they are discomfited "even unto Hormah". These are now the people who were so afraid! What are we to make of their fright? It

may have been great. But it was not great enough to deter them in their determination to render void, through warfare, mark you, the resolution of God to the effect that their carcasses fall in the desert. Such masters are they of their fright that they can break its hold on them at will and seemingly with little effort. Amazing! It shows that the vile fountain of their tears was not a natural dread of a proposed conflict. There is such a natural dread, fright, terror. Christ knew it, when His hour had come. But in His dread of His approaching suffering, He blasphemed not, as did those Jews, but glorified God through His prayer that God's will be done. Such natural dread, fright, by itself sinless, causes the man who has faith to press ever closer to the side of God. What caused those Jews to carry on as they did was *carnal fear*. Now the ingredients of this fear are: unbelief, hatred of God, malice, carnal anger, willing ignorance. Those Jews had no faith. They were devoid of love of God. To express this positively is to say that they hated Him. Hence their speech was hard. Through His continuing to drop His goodnesses before their feet on the way, God had lured them on and on until He finally had them in His trap, on the edge of Canaan, where the grand slaughter was to take place. This is their accusation. Such a speech can have but one fountain—carnal hatred, malice. They make God out for a lying deity. The Lord had said to them by the mouth of Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt. . . . and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . ." So had the Lord spoken. But according to those weeping Israelites, God had not meant a word of it. In His giving them this promise, He was simply baiting them, —He, Jehovah. He had delivered them by His outstretched arm, and taken them to His bosom at Mount Sinai. He was daily appeasing their hunger with manna from heaven and quenching their thirst with water from the rock. But they now saw His real motive behind all these doings. Did the people actually believe what they said about God? Assuredly not. What brought this hard speech upon their tongue was their carnal wrath. They were angry with God because He willed that they possess Canaan through conflict. What they had wanted the Lord to do is to extirpate by Himself the tribes dwelling in Canaan, and thus allow them to take possession of the land without any struggle on their part. And now they set their mouth against heaven and taunted God, because He wouldn't do as they wanted.

The people also deplored the fact that they had not died a natural death in Egypt or a like death in the wilderness in that such a death, so they said, was preferable to their falling—they and their wives and their

children—by the sword of the Canaanites. But how could they have been sincere in deploring this fact? They could not. For their lives in Egypt had been a living death, and, what is more, they did not actually believe in their hearts that the Lord was intending to slay them by the sword of the Canaanites. The proof of this is that, in defiance of the Lord's command and in spite of Moses' warning, they go forth to make war on the Canaanites that dwelt in the valley. All that they really wanted is to be freed from the necessity of this strife, not because they actually believed in their hearts that they were to perish in it, but because, being devoid of true faith and thus of love of God, they were unwilling to cooperate with God in cleansing the land of the depraved races of men by whom this land was being corrupted. These races had now to be dispossessed. The people preferred to have the Lord attend to that alone. Because the Lord willed otherwise, they were furious. All their unholy commotion was, in the final instance, representative of an attempt on their part to induce the Lord to give them their way. But they went too far. In their carnal rage they said, in the Lord's ears, what they really did not mean namely, that they preferred to die in the wilderness. The Lord took them at their word. Said he, "As truly as I live, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." By this word, they were brought to their senses. They now said, "We have sinned. If God insists that we fight our way into Canaan, well and good. Here we be". But they learn to their great sorrow that their finally resolving to do as God willed, was unavailing. Their carcasses shall and do fall in the wilderness.

Such then was the hard speech of the people. Such their ungratefulness, their hypocrisy, their unbelief, their anger and wrath. G. M. O.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1891 — 1941

May 28th, 1941, the Lord willing, our dear parents, JACOB H. HOEKSTRA and IDA HOEKSTRA—Jellema hope to commemorate their 50th year wedding anniversary.

We extend to them our sincere congratulations and pray that the Lord may continue to bless them and to spare them for each other and us yet a few more years, as the Lord may please.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Harry J. Hoekstra
Mr. and Mrs. William J. Hoekstra
Mr. and Mrs. John Vanderbilt
Mr. and Mrs. John Ten Hoor
Mr. and Mrs. Owen De Young
and 8 grandchildren.

Open House at 252 West 109th Place, Chicago, Illinois, from 3 to 5 and 7 to 10 P. M., the 28th of May.

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The Prophecy Of Isaiah

The purpose of this discourse is given in chap. 40: "Comfort ye my people, saith your God. The prophecy of Isaiah is a prophecy of comfort. Let this statement not be misunderstood. The meaning is not that the discourses of the other prophets have no comfort for the believers or that it was not the mission of these others to speak comfortable words; what is meant is that the prophecy of Isaiah is pre-eminently a prophecy of comfort and that he more than the others gave utterance to comforting speech.

That he did so is due to the immense scope of his prophetic discourse. He saw clearer than any of the others what constitutes the hearts of redemption. His horizon was wonderfully large and extended; his insight into the economy of redemption marvelously profound. To him the Spirit of God lay bare the very core of salvation. Of all the prophets he alone declared: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed (Is. 53)

Of all the prophets he had most clearly before his eye the blessed state of affairs on the new earth, the earth as cleansed from the godless race that now defiles it. Says he: The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. . . . (Is. 11)

Throughout this discourse the true remnant appears as a people approaching a time that was to become for it a most wretched present. The Lord is about to come with His judgments; He shall bring upon the house of David days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall hiss a fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. Where there were a thousand vines, there shall be briars and thorns. All the land shall become briars and thorns. (chap. 7). The women and the careless daughters shall be troubled and tremble. Burning shall be upon all the houses of the joyous city. The palaces shall be forsaken.

Forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks. (chap. 32). The country shall be desolate, cities burned with fire, strangers shall devour the land. It shall be desolate, overthrown by strangers. The Lord will carry His people away with a mighty captivity. He will surely violently turn and toss His people like a ball in a large country; He will drive it from its station, and from its state shall He pull it down. (chap. 22).

These are but examples of the many doleful descriptions with which the discourse is interspersed. The total of all these woes is regarded as Israel's death. Saith the Lord by the mouth of his prophet: "There, in

that large country thou shalt die." Such was the sentence the Lord pronounced upon the nation.

The reason for this impending catastrophe is the nation's covenant infidelity. It has forsaken the Lord, provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger by its revolt. It has gone astray. (chap. 1).

However, in this wicked nation is hidden a remnant.. It formed together with the reprobated shell the one nation upon which the Lord would empty the vials of His wrath. The remnant had also made itself guilty of death by its backslidings. The sins of the nation are also its sins.

However for this remnant the prophet has a good word of comfort, which when lying in the midst of death it will embrace and wait for the salvation of the Lord.

The nucleus of this comfort: Her (Jerusalem's) recompence is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, she hath received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The Lord will come with a strong hand and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. (Chap. 40).

Herewith we have given the keynote of this entire prophetic discourse. It may be expressed thus: Comfort my people about to descend into the pit of death. Comfort them by giving my word of pardon, deliverance, and eternal bliss. So then, what sets this prophetic discourse apart is that it is pre-eminently a word of comfort consisting in the promise of pardon and salvation for a people in the throes of death.

It is to be noticed that in this 40th chapter Israel appears as atoning for its own sin. After it will have died and will thus have suffered the penalty of its sin, it will be pardoned and again be raised to a state of glory.

In the sequence of this discourse (chap. 42) Israel the servant of Jehovah who atones for its sins is narrowed down to a single individual—personal servant of Jehovah—who is bruised for our iniquities. (Chap. 43).

Herewith we have given the themes of this discourse. They are: sin, judgment, repentance, redemption, blessedness. Upon these themes Isaiah has more to say than the other prophets.

What according to the prophet is the character of this redemption? The answer is found in the very first chapter: Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness. The entire discourse is nothing else than an exposition of this declaration.

As was said, the book of Isaiah is pre-eminently a book of comfort. For this reason its outstanding theme as compared with the prophecy of Jeremiah, e.g. is salvation. Fact is, that by far the greater part of this discourse has to do with this theme. A scan-

ning of the contents of this discourse brings this out.

Israel's relation to Assyria, the representative of the world-power in general described: The prophetic perspective of the time of Ahaz; the prophecy of Immanuel, the son of a virgin. Isaiah gives the whole nation a sign by the birth of her son, Mahershalahashbaz. Additions: Despisers of Shiloh shall be punished by the waters of Euphrates. Threatening warning to those that conspire against Judah, and to those that fear the conspirators. The testament of the prophet to his disciples. Threatening of judgment to be accomplished by Assyria directed against the Israel of the ten tribes. Assyria's destruction; Israel's salvation: Woe against Assyria. Israel's redemption from Assyria. Israel's redemption in relation to the Messiah.

The prophecies against foreign nations. The discourse against individual nations: Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ephraim, Ethiopia, Egypt. The second prophecy against Babylon, then prophecies against Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem and the chamberlain Shebna. The final of the prophecies against the nations. Relation of Israel to Assyria in the time of king Hezekiah. The conclusion of the first part of the book. Historical pieces containing the conclusion of the Assyrians and the preparation for the Babylonian period.

The entire future salvation beginning with redemption from the Babylonian exile, concluding with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. These last 26 chapters deal almost exclusively with salvation. The objective and subjective basis of redemption. First appearance of the Redeemer from the east and of the servant of Jehovah. Also the first and second use of the prophecy relating to this in proof of the divinity of Jehovah. The third chief figure, the personal Servant of Jehovah, in the contrasted features of his appearance. Redemption in its entire compass. Prophecy as proof of divinity comes to the front and culminates in the name of Cyrus. (44:6-28). The fall of the Babylonian gods and the gain of Israel's knowledge of God that will be derived therefrom. The well-deserved and inevitable overthrow of Babylon.

The personal Servant of Jehovah. Parallel between the personal Servant of Jehovah and Zion. Both have a small beginning and a great end. The connection between the guilt of Israel and the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah, and the liberation from the former through the latter. The final redemption of Israel. A dialogue between the Servant of Jehovah who enters as if veiled, Israel, Jehovah and the prophet. The restoration of the city of Jerusalem. Golgotha. The new salvation. The new way of appropriating salvation. The moral, social and physical fruits of the new way of salvation. A look at the mournful present which will not hinder the coming of the glorious future.

The new creature: Bridge from the present to the

future, from preaching repentance to preaching glory. The rise of the heavenly sun of life upon Jerusalem and the new personal and natural life conditioned thereby. The personal center of the revelation of salvation. The prophet in spirit puts himself in the place of the exiled church and brings its cause in prayer before the Lord. The death and life-bringing period.

A glance at the above scheme is sufficient to convince one that the principal theme of this prophecy is salvation. It is this theme that constitutes the discourse as a whole as a message of comfort.

The above scheme also brings out the truth of the assertion that the divine announcement found in 40:2: "Cry out unto her that he recompence is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," is the foundation truth upon which the prophet continues to build until the entire truth-structure of salvation stands before us in all its grandeur completed.

Let us now attend to the character of this salvation. The assertion was made that rightly considered the entire discourse is an exposition of the divine announcement that Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness. Let us now show that this is true. The announcement implies that Zion is in bondage for her sin. In his discourse the prophet describes Zion's sin. The entire discourse is interspersed with woeful descriptions of her apostacies. Zion's captor is the godless world-power that takes on flesh and blood in the surrounding heathen nations, chief of which is Assyria. In the grip of this power Israel is considered dead. This power of course is the scourge of Jehovah. From the grip of this captor Zion will be redeemed. To redeem means to buy back with a price.

In chapter 40 Zion is set forth as herself paying this price. As was said, however, in the sequence Zion is narrowed down to the personal Servant of Jehovah who by His suffering atones for Zion's sins and by His blood buys her from the captor.

Israel's death consists in her being held captive and tormented by the ungodly world-power. It is to this ungodly world-power that the announcement, Zion will be redeemed by judgment, must first be made to apply. This worldly power, through the rod of God's anger for the chastisement and punishment of Zion, God will judge. In persecuting Zion the world fills its measure of iniquity and makes itself ripe for judgment. Its destruction is a matter of divine necessity. Being righteous God cannot condone the abuse heaped by the world on His people. What is done to Zion is done to Him. It is God's heritage that is being spoiled. Hence He will ease Himself upon the enemies of His people. Through the destruction of this power, Zion is saved.

For the above reason the prophet is bidden to speak

against the nations surrounding Israel and to predict their speedy overthrow. As we have seen, there are discourses against Babyon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom and Tyre. It should be borne in mind that these nations are the type and representative of the ungodly world-power of all ages.

However, if according to the promise made unto Abraham, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed in Him, what then is to become of this prediction if the nations are to be destroyed? The answer: In each nation is hidden an elect nucleus counted for the nation. It is to this nucleus that God calls, Come unto me all ye ends of the earth and be saved. This call is heeded. The Gentiles in this discourse appear as turning unto the Lord. For the two aforesaid reasons, the heathen nations assumed so prominent a place in Isaiah's prophecy.

G. M. O.

Why Not Tithe?

As I already remarked, so reads the caption of an editorial appearing in The Banner for April 11. The author of the writing is Rev. H. J. Kuiper, editor in chief of The Banner.

The Brother advances several reasons why Christians do well to practice tithing. He invites his readers to give special consideration to his arguments in favor "of this time-honored method of contributing to the needs of the kingdom of God". As I wrote, I have given special consideration to the reverend's arguments in favor of tithing. I trusted and still trust that the brother will bear with me in my saying that I have some difficulty with these arguments of his and that he will not object to my using our magazine to reveal these difficulties to him. There are in all six arguments to be examined. To some of them attention has already been directed in the article preceding. We saw that the reverend's argument to the effect that tithing, whereas it was practiced since earliest times, long before the coming of the law by Moses, is not to be regarded as a symbolical-typical institution that waxed old and vanished away with the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross—this argument, we saw, does not hold. For if this reasoning were true, we could, with equal propriety, conclude that the sacrifice by animal blood, whereas it was brought by the church since earliest times, long before the coming of the ceremonial law by Moses, was not a symbolical-typical institution, that vanished away with the death of Christ, and that therefore New Testament believers should still be bringing this sacrifice.

It was also made plain that tithing was indeed a ceremonial law and thus not simply a custom or usage

that had originated with the patriarchs, and that, being what it was, a symbolical-typical institution, it vanished away with the death of Christ upon the cross. The reverend maintained the contrary.

Let us now briefly examine some of the remaining arguments of the reverend in favor of tithing.

Argument 3 (in part), "An Old Testament principle or custom which the New Testament does not repeal, directly or indirectly, must be held to be still valid."

My difficulty. Tithing, being as it was, a symbolical-typical institution, was repealed. Let us consider in this connection also the following. In the Old Testament dispensation there were two kinds of sacred dues: 1) those the amount of which was fixed by law (such as the tithes); 2) those, the amount of which was not fixed by law. The latter were called voluntary or free-will offerings. The commandment reads, "And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, *according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee*" (Deut. 16:10). Now it is worthy of note that the apostle Paul places the New Testament church under the necessity of bringing only the free-will offering. His admonition to the church at Corinth reads, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store *as he may prosper*. . . ." (I Cor. 16:2). "As he may prosper" is equivalent in meaning to the expression, "According as the Lord hath blessed him." Now if the Lord, as the reverend maintains, were still expecting His people to bring, in addition to the voluntary offering, also the offering the exact amount of which was fixed by law, it would have to be considered strange that He did not, by the mouth of His apostles, tell them so. This would have to be considered strange in view of the fact that He did tell New Testament believers to bring the free-will offering. There is a reason why the Lord refrained from fixing for New Testament believers the exact amount that they must give. This reason is that, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the church attained to spiritual majority. So, to maintain, as does the reverend, that God still expects His believing people to give the tenths, is to lose sight of the fact that the church is no longer a spiritual minor.

Argument 4, "Though tithing is not taught in the New Testament the principle of proportionate giving which it emphasizes does not exclude it but rather requires it. Proportionate giving means giving in proportion to our financial ability. Paul enunciates this principle, for example, in I Cor. 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper."

"Now this principle of proportionate giving, if it is to be applied successfully, requires for its proper

realization the use of a certain method or system of proportionate giving. But this method should not be one of our own devising. In determining the proportion of our income which we feel we should set aside for the Lord, we need some sort of divine guidance; else how would a believer know whether to devote one-half or one-hundredth of his income to kingdom purposes. Here lies the significance for the New Testament believer of the system of tithing."

My difficulty. Let us get before us Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper. . . ." What now is the meaning of the clause, "as he may prosper". According to the reverend this means: giving in proportion to one's financial ability. It means, in other words, to give in proportion to what one is able to give, can give. Here is a brother who can very easily give \$500. for kingdom causes; this sum of money represents his financial ability. But what the Lord requires of him, according to the reverend, is that he give only *in proportion* to this sum, that is, the tenth part of it. Now I wonder whether this is what Paul meant by the clause, "as he may prosper"? It can't be. The plain meaning of this clause is not "*in proportion* to his financial ability", but it means, "*according to* his financial ability; so that if he can give \$500. that is exactly what he should give and not one tenth of this sum."

In The Banner for April 25 there appeared an excellent article on the subject "We have a Stewardship". From this article (written by Rev. J. J. Steigenga) I quote, "Can we conclude with 'Tithing and Prosperity' that all we owe to God is a tenth? God says so and He ought to know. Is it not a cheap conclusion in the light even of the Old Testament specifications? And is it not an arbitrary conclusion as applied to rich and poor alike? Understand us well. We are whole-heartedly dedicated to systematic giving. There is no substitute for it. A christian cannot realize his priestly privileges without it. Nevertheless the conviction has grown on me during more than twenty years of systematic giving, that for many the tithe is an easy, cheap and arbitrary way of serving God with their substance, and for many others it is unfair and difficult in the extreme."

I am in agreement with these thoughts. To illustrate, it is very difficult for the father of a large family and with an income really much too small to give the tenths. Like the poor widow who gave her mite, this man gives of his want. In giving tenths, he therefore, according to the reasoning of Christ, gives more than the rich or the well-to-do, as the latter, when they tithe give of their abundance. Of course, even if they do not tithe, the poor man, as he gives of his want, gives more than the rich, unless the rich man, too, gives till it hurts.

This raises the question whether in this dispensation, it may not be positively wrong to tithe. It is wrong for a man to give the tenths, if, through his doing so, he takes the bread out of his children's mouths. Such a (poor) man should not tithe.

It is wrong for a rich man to tithe, unless he supplements his tithing by the free-will offering. Doing so, he is not actually tithing, but is giving "as he prospered", "as the Lord blessed him". The error of Rev. H. J. Kuiper is that he places in the room of the free-will offering (giving as one has prospered) the giving of the tenths, thus an offering the exact size of which was fixed by the law.

The reverend (Kuiper) wrote that in determining the proportion of our income which we feel we should set aside for the Lord we need some sort of divine guidance, and that just here lies the significance for New Testament believers of the system of tithing. The system gives them the needed guidance. It tells them just how much they must give, namely, the tenths, not the fifteenths, nor the twentieths, but the tenths.

True it is that the believers need some sort of guidance. But the system of tithing does not give this guidance, nor did Moses introduce it for this purpose. The proof that he did not is that he added to the system of Tithing the free-will offerings.

True, the believers need some sort of guidance. And the Lord has also given His people this guidance. And I find this guidance expressed at I John 3:16-18, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

In a word, what must guide us in our giving is not the System of tithes but the actual need among the brethren in Christ. Take a man with an income of \$10,000 annually who is tithing. He gives \$2000, and he prides himself on doing what the Lord requires. But if, after giving this sum, he still sees brethren in need, but, shutteth up his bowels of compassion from them, because he insists that he has done enough, the love of God, according to John, dwelleth not in him.

Some one may ask: If it *can be* wrong for New Testament believers to tithe, how is it to be explained that the Lord by Moses placed the Old Testament church under the necessity of tithing?

We will provide this question with an answer in an article to follow.

G. M. O.