

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine

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Meditatie

Jeruzalem's Roem

*Alzoo zegt de Heere: Ik ben wederge-
keerd tot Sion, en Ik zal in het midden
van Jeruzalem wonen; en Jeruzalem zal
geheeten worden eene stad der waarheid,
en de berg des Heeren der heirscharen,
een berg der heiligheid.*

Zach. 8:3.

Steeds rijker wordt het Woord des Heeren!

Rijk in beloften van heerlijkheid en zaligheid, omdat het zich altijd strekt naar het einde, de heerlijkheid, die God bereid heeft voor degenen, die Hem liefhebben.

Veel voller en rijker was dan ook het antwoord, dat de mannen, die van Bethel gekomen waren om naar den wil des Heeren te vragen, dan ze ooit hadden kunnen verwachten. Want tot dit antwoord behoort ook het achtste hoofdstuk dezer profetie.

Het betrof de kwestie van vasten en weenen, als een instelling, op bepaalde dagen. De ballingen in Babel waren er meer begonnen. Er was toen wel oorzaak tot vasten en geweene. De teruggekeerden uit de ballingschap hadden het voortgezet. Men bleef die bepaalde dagen, die in verband stonden met de ballingschap en de verwoesting van Jeruzalem, vieren als vastendagen. En 't was een instelling geworden. Edoch, in Bethel begon men zich af te vragen, of het misschien geen tijd werd, om die vastendagen te veranderen in feestdagen. Er was immers reden om zich te verheugen in het heil des Heeren, nu Gods volk teruggekeerd was in het land der vaders, Jeruzalem weer herbouwd werd, de grondslagen van den tempel weer gelegd waren. Doch heel gerust gevoelde men er in Bethel toch ook niet over. 't Zou kunnen zijn, dat vasten en weenen als zoodanig, als een instelling, toch een stuk der wet was. En zoo waren ze er toe ge-

komen om enkele broeders af te vaardigen naar Jeruzalem, waar de mannen te vinden waren, die thuis waren in zulke ernstige stukken, met de vraag: "Moet ik weenen in de vijfde maand, mij afzonderende, gelijk ik gedaan heb nu zoovele jaren?"

En het antwoord kwam tot hen door den profeet: Och, neen, vasten en weenen hebben op zichzelf voor den Heere geen waarde! God eischt gehoorzaamheid, het oefenen van gericht, het betrachten van goeder-tierenheid en barmhartigheden!

Dat was het woord, dat de Heere immers altijd tot de vaders had gesproken door den mond der profeten.

Doch ze hadden geweigerd om op te merken, ze togen kunnen schouder terug, ze verzwaarden hunne ooren, opdat ze niet hoorden, en ze verhardten hunne harten om aan het woord des Heeren ongehoorzaam te zijn. Ze vastten wel, en ze weenden soms wel, maar ze verachtten het woord des Heeren.

Daarom was de toorn des Heeren over hen losgebarsten. Daarom had de Heere hen weggestormd onder de Heidenen, en het land achter hen verwoest, dat er niemand doorging.

Gehoorzaamheid is beter dan offerande, ook beter dan vasten en geweene.

Dat moesten de mannen van Bethel wel verstaan.

Overigens hadden ze wel gelijk, dat er geen reden was tot rouwbedrijf. De tijd van vasten en weenen was voorbij. Men mocht feest vieren en zich in den Heere verblijden.

Immers had de Heere met een grooten toorn tegen de vijanden geijverd over Sion.

Hij was tot haar wedergekeerd! Hij zou in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen. En Jeruzalem zou geheeten worden de stad der waarheid, de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, de berg der heiligheid!

Bedrijf vreugde over Sion!

Jeruzalem's roem!

Daarvan is hier sprake. Niet van den roem, waarmee Jeruzalem zal roemen, maar van den roem, die

van haar uitgaan zal, als God Zijn werk aan haar zal hebben volbracht.

Immers: Jeruzalem zal *geheeten* worden!

En dat wil maar niet zeggen, dat ze een anderen naam zal ontvangen, maar dat er roem van haar uitgaan zal, dat ze heinde en ver bekend zal zijn als de stad der waarheid, de berg van den Heere der heirscharen, een berg der heiligheid.

De drie behoren bij elkaar, zijn onafscheidelijk aan elkander verbonden.

Immers, alleen de berg des Heeren der heirscharen is een berg der heiligheid. Alle andere "bergen", niet in dien gansch bijzonderen zin des woords den Heere toegewijd, zijn "bergen" der goddeloosheid. En alleen op dien berg des Heeren kan de stad der waarheid gegrondvest worden. Steden der leugen vindt men op de "bergen" der goddeloosheid. Op des Heeren berg alleen verrijst Jeruzalem, de stad der waarheid!

Der waarheid!

't Oorspronkelijke woord voor waarheid beteekent: wat vast staat, wat zeker is, het waarachtige, dat wezen heeft, waarop men aan kan, dat getrouw is, dat nooit beschaamt, het *Amen*. De leugen heeft geen grond, staat niet vast, is niet waarachtig, heeft geen wezen, is ijdel, ledig, bedriegt en beschaamt, voert tot verwoesting. Want de leugen is niet uit God, is de ontkenning van God en van alles, wat uit en van God is: licht en leven, liefde en vriendschap, gerechtigheid en heiligheid, zaligheid en heerlijkheid. Ze behoort en beweegt zich in de sfeer des doods. Maar de waarheid is alles, wat in overeenstemming is met den levenden God, met Zijn openbaring, met Zijn goddelijk, eeuwig blijvend Woord!

De stad der waarheid!

Het is de gemeenschap der burgers, wier leven door de waarheid, die uit God is, wordt beheerscht en gemotiveerd. Het licht schijnt daar, het licht van Gods Woord, het licht des levens. Het schijnt in verstand en hart der burgeren, zoodat men de waarheid kent en mint. Daar spreekt men de waarheid een iegelijk met zijnen naaste en voor het aangezichte Gods. Daar bedenkt men de waarheid, begeert men de waarheid, bemint men de waarheid, wil men de waarheid, wandelt men overeenkomstig de waarheid. En daar wordt men, terwijl men wandelt in het licht der waarheid, door den God der waarheid gezegend, en de blijdschap stijgt daar ten hoogsten toppunt door het licht, dat van Zijn aangezicht straalt. Want daar, in het licht der waarheid, smaken de burgers de gemeenschap der vriendschap van Gods Verbond eeuwiglijk. De tabernakel Gods is daar bij de menschen!

De berg van den Heere der heirscharen!

Jeruzalem was op een hoogte gebouwd, als een burcht, een sterke vesting, voor het oog der gansche aarde. Daar was Moria, de tempelberg; en daar was ook Sion, de koningsberg. En tezamen werden beide

bergen ook wel eenvoudig aangeduid door den naam: "de berg Sion". En Jeruzalem is Sion. En Sion is de berg van den Heere der heirscharen, de tempelberg, de koningsberg bij uitnemendheid. Van den Heere der heirscharen, de Schepper en Formeerder en Souverein van al de machten des hemels en der aarde, Die ook de God is van Zijn volk, de God der volkomene zaligheid, is deze berg, is Sion, is Jeruzalem, in den gansch bijzonderen zin des woords. Want alle bergen, ook Basan en Seir, zijn Zijne bergen. Hij heerscht over alles. Maar de berg Sion is Zijn berg in den gansch eenigen zin des woords. Het is Zijn koningsberg, waar hij door Zijn Woord en Geest in genade en gunst regeert over de daar wonende burgeren; en het Zijn tempelberg, dien Hij Zich verkoren heeft ter woning, om "aldaar geëerd Zijn heerlijkheid te toonen"!

Schoon Jeruzalem!

Het is dan ook de berg der heiligheid!

Heiligheid is die deugd Gods, waardoor Hij Zichzelf als het Eenig Goed eeuwiglijk is toegewijd en mint.

Daarom is dan ook heiligheid bij het schepsel die genade, waardoor hij zichzelf met alles, wat hij is en heeft, Gode in liefde toewijdt en opoffert.

En Jeruzalem zal een berg der heiligheid worden geheeten. Daar zal alle leven en beweeg, alle denken en willen en begeeren, alle sprake en elke handeling volmaaktelijk concentreeren om den Heere, Zijn Naam, Zijn eer, Zijn roem, Zijnen dienst.

Stad der waarheid, berg van den Heere der heirscharen, berg der heiligheid!

Zoo zal Jeruzalem geheeten worden!

Roemrijk Jeruzalem!

Wonder van genade!

Want Gods maaksel, en Zijn werk alleen, is Jeruzalem!

Waarom toch, zoo mag worden gevraagd, is *Jeruzalem* de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, de berg der heiligheid, de stad der waarheid? Waarom niet de veel machtiger en majestueuzer, hemelhooge Basan met al zijn heuvelen? Ook zoo zou men dezelfde vraag kunnen doen: hoe verhouden zich deze drie: de berg des Heeren, de berg der heiligheid, de stad der waarheid?

Is deze verhouding zoo, dat Jeruzalem eerst eene stad der waarheid was en een berg der heiligheid, dat Sions burgeren eerst de waarheid kenden, omhelsden, liefhadden en beleden en in haar licht wandelden; dat de inwoners van Jeruzalem eerst den dienst des Heeren zochten en zich den Allerhoogste toewijdden; en dat in onderscheiding van de bewoners van andere "bergen", die de duisternis en de ongerechtigheid en de afgoden verkoren; en dat in dien weg en daarom de Heere der heirscharen Zich dien berg verloor om aldaar te wonen? . . .

Dat zij verre!

Dan ware Jeruzalem's roem menschenroem. En alle roem is uitgesloten. God is God! En wie roemt, roeme in den Heere!

Al, wat ooit Jeruzalem geheeten wordt, en wat ooit gezegd zal worden van Jeruzalem's heerlijkheid, moet zijn tot roem van den Heere der heirscharen!

Souvereine verkiezing, eeuwige, ongehouden liefde, wonderlijke, aanbiddelijke, almachtige genade,—dat zijn de eeuwige werkelijkheden, die Jeruzalems heerlijkheid en roem verklaren en die alleen!

Duidelijk, zeer duidelijk is dit in den tekst.

Immers, alzoo zegt de Heere hier, en dat alleen verklaart, waarom Jeruzalem geheeten worden zal de stad der waarheid, de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, de berg der heiligheid, "Ik ben wedergekeerd tot Sion en Ik zal in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen"! De Heere was wedergekeerd! Hij had Zich weer in genade en ontferming tot Sion gewend! En waarom? Waar dan was Sion en wat was zijn toestand, toen de Heere wederkeerde? Ach, het was in ballingschap, ellendig, verstooten, in schuld en zonde. De Heere had Sions burgeren weggestormd, omdat ze niet hoorden als Hij sprak, omdat ze hun ooren toesloten en hun hart verhardden tegen Zijn Woord! Tot dat Sion was Hij wedergekeerd. Over dat ellendige, verstootene Sion had Hij Zich ontfermd. . . .

En zeg nu niet, dat Hij dit gedaan had, omdat Sion in ballingschap zich met vasten en gewezen eerst tot Hem gewend had in boete en berouw.

Want wel had dit ongetwijfeld plaats in het land der verstooting. Maar dit kon alleen, omdat daar in de ballingschap ook zuchtte het overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade, en omdat de Heere der heirscharen Zijn volk in beide handpalmen gegraveerd heeft en het nooit vergeet of ten finale verstoot.

Nee, wedergekeerd was Hij tot Sion, juist omdat Hij het van eeuwigheid heeft liefgehad, en omdat Hij in souverain welbehagen Sion verkoren heeft om aldaar eeuwiglijk te wonen, en omdat Hij Jehova is, die nooit veranderd wordt. Daarom is Sion de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, is Jeruzalem Zijn bijzonder eigendom, dat Hij tot in der eeuwigheid niet zal verlaten.

En daarom woont Hij in het midden van haar!

Eerst is Jeruzalem Zijn berg, eerst en eeuwiglijk, krachtens de souvereine verkiezing. Daarom gaat Hij in Jeruzalem wonen, door Zijn Geest en genade. En door die genadige inwoning en inwerking wordt en is en blijft dan Jeruzalem de stad der waarheid en de berg der heiligheid, waarin alles tintelt van licht en leven en blijdschap en vreugde, omdat alles in gemeenschap staat met en zich concentreert om den levenden God!

Jeruzalem is Zijn maaksel, geschapen in Christus Jezus!

Toonbeeld van Zijne wondere genade!

De roem des Allerhoogsten!

Blijde hope!

Hope, ja, nog altijd hope!

Met die hope in het hart, gewekt door het Woord des Heeren, mochten de afgevaardigden van Bethel terugkeeren tot hunne broederen, om te rapporteeren, dat er wel metterdaad reden was om op te houden met vasten en gewezen, en om den Heere vreugde te bedrijven!

En met diezelfde hope in het hart, gewekt door hetzelfde Woord des Heeren, intusschen nog rijker geworden, bewandelen ook wij onzen weg in het midden der wereld!

Nog altijd in hope!

Vervuld werd dit woord ook thans nog niet. Want wel wijst men soms op den aardchen roem, die van Jeruzalem voor een wijle uitging ten tijde der roemrijke Makkabeën. En wel was dit een zwakke flikkering van heerlijkheid, een tijdelijke schaduw van de eindelijke vervulling. Doch 't was alles zeer aardch en gebrekkig, en 't ging spoedig voorbij.

Vervuld wordt dit woord ook niet, en kan het niet worden, in een aardch Jeruzalem. Want wel doen sommigen de heerlijkheid dezer hope opgaan in het beeld van een aardche, Joodsche stad, die in de toekomst weer herbouwd zal worden, en waarin de Heere eeuwiglijk zal wonen. Doch dit berust op misverstand in betrekking tot het eigenlijke Jeruzalem der Heilige Schrift en wordt ook in dit hoofdstuk duidelijk genoeg veroordeeld (vss. 20-23). Het wezen van Jeruzalem is niet de aardche stad, maar zijn Gods verbond en koninkrijk, de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen.

Vervuld werd dit woord, in schaduw ook onder de oude bedeeing, toen de Heere immers tot Zijn volk in de ballingschap wederkeerde, hen terug deed keeren naar het land der vaderen, stad en tempel deed herbouwd worden, en onder Zijn volk woonde. Vervuld werd het in de werkelijkheid, in centralen zin des woords, toen Hij van den hemel tot Zijn volk kwam in Christus Jezus den Heere, onder ons kwam tabernakelen, in onzen dood en benauwdheid inging, onze schuld voor eeuwig uitdelgde, uit de dooden opstond, inging in de heerlijkheid der hoogste hemelen, Zijn Geest uitstortte in de gemeente, om bij haar te blijven in der eeuwigheid, en uit alle land en volk en geslacht en taal en natie, door Geest en Woord, Zijne gemeente vergadert. . . .

En nog eenmaal keert Hij weder in heerlijkheid!

Dan zal ook dit woord zijn eindelijke vervulling ingaan, in het Nieuwe Jeruzalem, onder den nieuwen hemel, op de nieuwe aarde!

Dan zal Jeruzalem eeuwiglijk de berg des Heeren zijn, de stad der waarheid, een berg der heiligheid!

Daar zal 't nimmermeer nacht worden!

H. H.

Editorials

Our Lecture Tour

A fine morning it was, that of April 7, when we left Grand Rapids to begin our lecture tour through all our churches in the West, not only in Iowa and Minnesota, but also in Montana and California. The air was crisp and invigorating, the sky was clear and holding the promise of a beautiful day. And before we had been on the way long, the sun appeared above the horizon to flood the earth with its golden glory.

Our hearts were filled with the joyous hope of a pleasant trip.

When I say "we" I am not using the more or less obsolete editorial plural, but referring to a party of three. As last year so also this time my wife made the trip with me, and, besides, the younger of my two sons also accompanied us to take turns at the wheel. To drive about seven thousand miles in a few weeks and speak almost every day, as was done last year, is rather strenuous; and so the last mentioned of our party did most of the driving this time.

Our first stop was Oskaloosa, Iowa, where I was engaged to speak that same evening. From Grand Rapids to Oskaloosa is not a very long trip and with a good car it can easily be made in one day. If one takes route ninety two from Mendota, Ill. and follows it all the way across the Mississippi to Oskaloosa, the distance is just about four hundred and seventy miles. We arrived in Oskaloosa in the late afternoon. The season there was not very much ahead of that in Michigan. While in Grand Rapids the trees showed as yet little signs of life when we left, in southeastern Iowa they were just beginning to sprout.

In that part of Iowa we stayed three days and spoke as many times, first in Oskaloosa, on Tuesday evening in Pella, and on Wednesday evening I spoke for the young people of both congregations, who had arranged a banquet which was followed by a fine Christian program in the church auditorium in Oskaloosa. Our young people there proved that it is very well possible to have a banquet and enjoy an evening of festivities without introducing all the silly nonsense that often characterizes such gatherings. In the meantime, during the day, we enjoyed the fellowship and friendship of the brethren Petter and Lubbers and their families, at whose homes we lodged alternately. Our conversation usually centered around our cause and related subjects. The two brethren are heart and soul in the work, a statement that is, in fact, applicable to all our ministers.

The audiences were very satisfactory. In Pella an

old fashioned audience greeted us. The auditorium and annex were packed to the doors. This is encouraging, for to us it means that the Lord still prepares a field for us in which we may labor and testify of the truth.

On Thursday morning, April 10 we left for Sioux County. While we stayed in Oskaloosa and Pella the sky had gradually become overcast, and on the morning of our departure it was gray and misty and the day threatened to become a rather gloomy one as far as the weather was concerned. However, during the day it cleared up and we enjoyed some of Iowa's sunshine. About five o'clock we arrived in Orange City at the home of brother J. Blankespoor, who ministers to the flock there. And that same evening we lectured in his church on the subject "Zelfonderzoek", in the Holland language therefore. As, however, we were scheduled to preach in Edgerton the next evening (Good Friday) we left for that place immediately after the lecture in Orange City. The distance between the two places being about seventy five miles, and the last stretch of the road being somewhat muddy, particularly the very last few blocks in Edgerton, where they had been digging up the streets and enjoyed a good deal of rain, so that it seemed questionable whether or not we would be able to reach our destination by car or would have to walk the last part of it,—all these things being so, it was almost midnight when we arrived at the parsonage of the shepherd of Edgerton (that is of our church there), who was still awake and expecting us. We were welcomed by him, the Rev. Wm. Verhil, and his family, not only by a friendly handshake but also by a midnight lunch. Let me say right here, that one who makes his home with the Verhils in Edgerton for a few days, does not have to go hungry or thirsty. The good brethren of the church in Edgerton keep their pastor's bread-basket and larder abundantly supplied.

But, besides caring well for their pastor, the Edgerton brethren are very active and progressive in the work of God's kingdom. First they built a beautiful parsonage, now they are busy erecting a church edifice that certainly will not be a disgrace to Edgerton. And in the meantime we heard them talk about building a school of their own. Plenty of that virtue which the Dutch call "voortvarendheid".

In Edgerton, then, we preached as was said, on Good Friday evening, and also on Sunday morning, before very good audiences that filled the hall where our church still holds her services. But after the Sunday morning service we had to take our departure, after having eaten dinner, rather hurriedly, for in the afternoon we had to preach in Sioux Center, sixty five miles away, and the services there started at 1:30. We left Edgerton under a threatening sky, and travelled through a downpour so heavy that sometimes it was difficult to distinguish the road ahead of us. But

we reached our destination plenty in time, and had time yet to meet brother Gritters and his family before going to church. The brother is enjoying his work and doing well. The congregation there is gradually introducing more English into their services. We preached in the Holland language that afternoon and enjoyed seeing many old faces. In the evening of the same Sunday we spoke in the church of Rock Valley, of which brother P. Vis is pastor. There was a more than capacity audience, which was very attentive as we delivered a resurrection-message. It was Easter Sunday.

In Sioux County, besides speaking in Orange City and preaching in Sioux Center and Rock Valley, we lectured on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings in Hull, Rock Valley and Sioux Center respectively, every time before very good audiences. During our labors there we lodged one night at the home of brother J. Blankespoor, two nights with the Visses, and the last night with the Gritters; and we took tea and supper with the Cammengas and the Vander Breggens. We had the pleasure, therefore, to meet all the brethren, and a pleasure it was, indeed!

But on Thursday morning, April 17, the time had come to leave. We departed from the home of Rev. Gritters to make our way to Manhattan.

But here is a good place to break off my narrative for this time. About the trip to and work in Manhattan I will write a few things next time, the Lord willing.

H. H.

NOTICE

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches has declared that Candidate John Heys will be eligible for a call on June 11, three weeks from the date Synod convened.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

ATTENTION

This is a notice to all our people, that whereas the Field-Day Committee has procured a beautiful place at Gun Lake, that ALL, old and young are urged to come and enjoy the 4th of July in a day of Christian fellowship.

The Field-Day Com.

Some Synodical Correspondence

Our Synod is again past history.

At some future time we will perhaps make a few remarks regarding same, but at this time we thought it well to transcribe two missives which were sent by our Synod. Their contents are sufficiently interesting to our readers to warrant immediate publication.

The letters in question follow:

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

May 23, 1941.

The Consistory of the Kalamazoo Protesting First Christian Reformed Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Esteemed brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ:—

We received the two letters you sent us under date of July 30, 1940, and January 28, 1941.

The Synod decided to answer you as follows:

We are sorry that you retract your first letter on the basis that same was published and discussed in the Standard Bearer. Moreover, it is our conviction that such action is entirely wrong. The Synod cannot be held responsible for the fact that your first letter was published and discussed by the Rev. H. Hoeksema in the Standard Bearer. Whatever the Rev. Hoeksema writes in the Standard Bearer is his own concern and you will see that you cannot and may not hold our Synod responsible for it. If you disapprove of his action you must address your expression of such disapproval to him. The Standard Bearer is a free paper and not answerable for its contents to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. You may not attempt to punish or rebuke the Synod for acts committed by the Editor of a free paper.

Secondly, your first letter was not "intercepted" but placed into the hands of the proper person, namely, the president of the committee appointed by the Synod for this matter, the Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Thirdly, we cannot agree that the publishing of your answer was contrary to "Reformed Church Law and good order", because the contents were relative to matters that were inherently public. At any rate, we would have expected you to specify what article or articles of the Reformed Church Order were transgressed. The blanket expression you used is altogether too general and sweeping and consequently proves nothing.

Fourthly, whereas the contents of our address as well as your answer to same pertain to the welfare of your congregation at large; and whereas our half of these matters was known to your membership because of the publication of the Acts of our Synod; and they certainly have great need to know your half, namely, the answer to the above-mentioned matters, it appears to us that the censured publication of them was highly

beneficial to the constituency of your church, especially when we consider that due to your strange ecclesiastical isolation, your consistory also comprises the functions otherwise filled by Classis and Synod, which from their very nature should be public.

Finally, we once more would emphasize the matters referred to in the address of our Synod 1940 and earnestly and urgently plead with you to either deny the charges we made and disprove them or to repent and confess them.

Your brethren in the Lord,

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches;

(W.S.) H. Hoeksema, President;

(W.S.) Gerrit Vos, Secretary;

(W.S.) Geo. C. Lubbers, Asst. Secretary.

Stated Clerk of Synod:

Rev. D. Jonker, 924 Worden St., S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

May 23, 1941.

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches, assembled at Grand Rapids, Michigan, June, 1941.

Esteemed Brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ:—

We are sorry to note that you apparently misunderstood our address sent to you by the Synod of our Churches of 1940. You will kindly remember that it was composed of four parts. In points one and two we brought to your attention various decisions, declarations and acts of your Synods of 1924 and 1926; and being sincerely convinced that all of these decisions, declarations and acts are either contrary to the Word of God and the Reformed Confessions or a great and grievous injustice, we begged and pleaded with you in the name of the King of the Church to recant the errors and to repent of the sin, motivating this plea in the third point of our address. And in the fourth part we requested you for a colloquy on all these matters where we might attempt to restore harmony between your churches and ours under the blessing of our Covenant God.

But your answer was very disappointing to us. You do not answer points one to three at all. The only matter you touch on is the matter of the proposed colloquy, mentioned under point four. Hence, we have come to the conclusion that you apparently misunderstood the entire thrust of our missive. It seems to us that you labor under the misconception that an answer to point four treats the entire address.

Secondly, we would say that we are well aware that the matters our Synod brought to your attention were settled by your Synods of 1924 and 1926. Of course, and it was exactly because of the decisions of these Synods that the breach was struck which oc-

casioned much grief to us and much misery of sin and guilt to you. It was the very point of our address to work toward the removal of such grief and misery in our serious endeavour to move you to recant the errors and to repent of your evil way.

Thirdly, we cannot help but gain the impression that you consider your Synodical decisions and declarations infallible. Allow us to explain. We beg you to reconsider the decisions and your answer is: No! we cannot do so because our Synods have definitely spoken regarding them. The Synod of 1940 could not reconsider the Synod's work of 1924 and 1926 because the latter Synods spoke. If such is what you meant, brethren, then you have added to the list of errors committed in the past. It is horrible to contemplate that such a doctrine of infallible Synods precludes the attractive possibility of ever relieving you of the infamous Three Points.

Fourthly, we have noted that your strange silence with respect to points one to three really is cruel to us and very sinful before God. Let us take your view of the matter. Suppose that you think us wholly in the wrong, a view often expressed but very difficult to prove, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, a view, as we sincerely believe, which has no corresponding reality in your hearts and consciences. But, for the sake of proving your harsh treatment to usward, let us suppose that you harbor such conviction: would it then not have been your Christian duty to admonish us, especially when we gave you a golden opportunity in the sending of our address? But no. We said: Brethren in the Lord! you have sinned grievously and such you must repent for the sake of the love of God. And what was your answer? You did not say no; neither did you say yes: you said exactly nothing. Such action is expressive of contempt and therefore cruel to us and really also cruel to yourself.

Finally, we would bring the same address and request before your attention again and pray that our Covenant God give you grace to see your error, to confess the sin, to seek forgiveness, so that both your churches and ours may happily join hands and be forever united in confession and walk that tendeth to Godliness.

Your brethren in the Lord,

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches;

(W.S.) H. Hoeksema, President;

(W.S.) Gerrit Vos, Secretary;

(W.S.) Geo. C. Lubbers, Asst. Secretary.

Stated Clerk of Synod:

Rev. D. Jonker, 924 Worden St., S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In due time, D.V., we hope to acquaint you with the answers to the above missives.
H. H.

Vuns

In mijn kinderjaren sliep ik in een "bedstede" of kast in den wand.

Om ons leger zoo zacht mogelijk te maken werd er op de harde beddeplanken van zulk een bedstede een laag stroo gespreid, dat er een paar malen in het jaar werd uitgehaald om door versch stroo te worden vervangen.

Als ik aan dat oude stroo denk, dat uit die bedden gehaald werd, en waarop we enkele maanden hadden geslapen, dan denk ik altijd aan het bijvoegelijk naamwoord *vuns*. Daar zat een zeer eigenaardig reukje aan dat oude stroo, een reukje, waarvoor er geen beter woord te vinden is dan het woordje vuns of vunzig.

Dat reukje kwam mij ook tegemoet, toen ik de artikelen van Ds. Zwier las in de Wachternommers van 29 April en 6 Mei.

Als jongens dachten wij er niet aan, om, als dat vunzige stroo uit onze bedsteden kwam, den vlegel ter hand te nemen en dat oude stroo nog eens over te dorschen.

Maar Ds. Zwier, die overigens altijd beweert, dat hij aan niets meer een hekel heeft dan aan het dorschen van oud stroo, staat bij zoo'n vuns bos te dorschen, zwaait er maar lustig op los met zijn vlegel, en vervult de heele atmosfeer in de omgeving met die mufte geur, die nooit beter kan worden aangeduid dan door het karakteristieke wordeke: "vuns".

De verzorger van de rubriek "Dogmatische Onderwerpen" in "De Wachter" heeft het in bovengenoemde artikelen natuurlijk over ons, of liever, over zijn eigenwillig gevormde beschouwing van ons, eene beschouwing, die hij ons aanwrijft in weerwil van het feit, dat hij beter kan weten, beter moest weten, en dat het schier niet te gelooven is, dat hij niet beter weet.

In "De Wachter" kan dat natuurlijk wel.

Op eene conferentie in "The Pantlind" in het bijzijn van Dr. Schilder, waar wij ook tegenwoordig zijn, gaat dat niet zoo goed. Daarom is spreken dan nog niet eens zilver, maar zwijgen zeker goud.

Maar het meerendeel van de lezers van "De Wachter", Ds. Zwier weet het maar al te wel, krijgen niets anders onder de oogen dan de Zwierige zijde der zaak. Hij past er wel voor op, dat hij zijn beweringen aangaande onze voorstelling der waarheid niet staft met bewijzen uit onze eigene geschriften, ofschoon deze anders wel voor het grijpen zijn. Noch ook waagt hij zich er ooit aan om eene poging te doen onze tegenargumenten voor zijne lezers te ontzenuwen.

Onderzijds hebben we de Schriftuurplaatsen, die Ds. Zwier vroeger meende te kunnen aanvoeren ter verdediging van de "Drie Punten", herhaaldelijk be-

sproken. Zijn "drievoudig snoer" hebben we verbroken.

Zijnerzijds heeft hij de vele teksten, die wij hem hebben voorgehouden om duidelijk te maken, dat de doorlopende leer der Shrift het standpunt der "Drie Punten" veroordeelt, met geen vinger aangeroerd. En ik geloof, dat hij het onmogelijke daarvan ook wel inziet.

Toch gaat hij maar voort ons allerlei voorstellingen in de schoenen te schuiven, en ons bij het "De Wachter" lezend publiek zoo zwart mogelijk te maken.

Hij is eigenlijk een model kerkblad-redakteur.

Hoe Ds. Zwier er thans toe komt om weer heele kolommen aan ons te wijden?

Een heel logischen weg bewandelt hij niet om ons op zijn pad te ontmoeten.

Of het aan zijn "gebrekkige menschenlijke logica" te wijten is of aan het feit, dat hij ons nu eens gaarne enkele hatelijkheden naar het hoofd wilde slingeren, laat ik in het midden, maar zeker is het, dat hij slechts langs een omweg aan ons toekomt.

Hij schrijft over het onderwerp: "De Bijbel Over Den Oorlog".

In verband daarmee weidt hij uit over de beschouwing van de oude Anabaptisten, waarvan hijzelf opmerkt, dat ze van den aardbodem verdwenen zijn.

En over die oude Anabaptisten heen, die er niet meer zijn, komt hij dan tot ons.

Want immers:

"Het spreekt wel vanzelf, dat de Anabaptisten in de dagen der hervorming voor de leer der algemeene genade, zooals die door Calvijn en op zijn voetspoor door de Gereformeerden aangenomen werd, gansch geen oog hadden. . . .

"Dat God in Zijn voorzienig bestuur ook in deze zondige wereld nog werkt met Zijn algemeene goedheid, Zijn gemeene gratie, Zijn algemeene lankmoedigheid en barmhartigheid, om de volle doorwerking der zonde te beteugelen, niet het minst door de instelling der overheid, en dat Hij mede daardoor voor Zijn uitverkorenen een plaats bereidt tot stichting en uitbreiding van Zijn Kerk en Zijn Koninkrijk—dat kan op Anabaptisch standpunt niet waar zijn". *De Wachter*, 29 April, 1941.

Begint ge 't niet te ruiken, lezer?

't Is vuns!

Dit stroo is reeds uit 't bed gehaald, toen Kuyper zijn "De Gemeene Gratie" schreef. Later hebben Van Baalen en anderen er lustig op los gedorscht. Als Ds. Zwier toch op stroo wil dorschen, kan hij dan voor een keer niet eens een versch bosje vinden?

Maar dit praatje over die oude Anabaptisten is slechts een aanloopje om ons te bespringen. Luister maar:

“Welnu, hetzelfde Anabaptistische beginsel brengt ook in onze dagen hen, die de gemeene gratie loochenen, in niet geringe verlegenheid, wanneer zij door Paulus vermaand worden, om smeekingen, gebeden, voorbiddingen en dankzeggingen op te zenden voor de overheidspersonen, opdat wij een gerust en stil leven leiden mogen in alle godzaligheid en eerbaarheid.

“Uit die verlegenheid kan men zich dan wel zoeken te redden met de bewering, dat wij voor de overheidspersonen niets anders hebben te bidden, dan dat God door hen Zijn raad moge uitvoeren, Zijn welbehagen doen, en Zijn Koninkrijk doen komen.

“Een bede, die natuurlijk volkomen Schriftuurlijk is.

“Waarmede alle Gereformeerden van ganscher harte kunnen instemmen.

“Maar wat Paulus hier beveelt, houdt toch heel wat meer in”. *De Wachter*, 29 April, 1941.

Wat mag die bede dan wel inhouden? Luister slechts naar Ds. Zwier:

“Hij wil, dat we zullen opzenden smeekingen, gebeden, voorbiddingen en dankzeggingen voor alle overheidspersonen, opdat wij een stil en gerust leven leiden mogen in alle godzaligheid en eerbaarheid. Dat houdt in, dat de vloek van het militarisme moge worde beteugeld, dat oorlog moge worden voorkomen, dat de burgerlijke gerechtigheid in het nationale en internationale samenleven moge worden bevorderd, opdat wij in den vrede van ons land vrede mogen hebben. (Jer. 29:7). “*De Wachter*, 6 Mei, 1941.

Dit alles kan Ds. Zwier vrij bidden, omdat hij gelooft in algemeene genade. Maar: “Zie, dat gaat niet al te best, als we aan geen algemeene genade, geen beteugeling der zonde, geen burgerlijke gerechtigheid willen gelooven”. *De Wachter*, 6 Mei, 1941.

Laat ons dit alles eens wat nauwkeuriger onderzoeken.

Ds. Zwier bidt, en leert zijn hoorders en lezers om te bidden, om stuiting van den vloek van het militarisme, om voorkoming van den oorlog, om bevordering van burgerlijke gerechtigheid in het nationale en internationale leven, om vrede in ons land.

Nu laten we eerst buiten bespreking de vraag of dit werkelijk de beteekenis van I Tim. 2: 1, 2 kan zijn. Hierop komen we straks wel.

Bezien we eerst eens deze beschouwing en deze bede in het licht van Ds. Zwier's eigen voorstelling.

Hij gelooft in algemeene genade, daarom kan hij aldus bidden.

Goed, maar wil hij ook, dat zijn gebed verhoord worde? Zegt hij ook *amen* op zijn gebed, d.w.z. “het zal waar en zeker zijn, want mijn gebed wordt veel zekerder van God verhoord dan ik in mijn hart gevoel, dat ik zulks van Hem bekeer”?

Dan zal de geschiedenis dat natuurlijk ook moeten aantoonen. Dan wordt het militarisme den kop in-

gedrukt. Dan werd den oorlog in het verleden en wordt hij nog voorkomen door de algemeene genade op het gebed der Neo-calvinisten en Zwierianen. Dan is er een gedurige wereldvrede. Dan wordt burgerlijke gerechtigheid hoe langer zoo meer bevorderd. Dan moet het militarisme en dan moet de oorlog wel hoe langer zoo meer van den aardbodem verdwijnen. Dan gaan we een schoone toekomst van wereldvrede tegemoet.

Zwier is in zijn gebed volbloed humanist. Hij bidt om wereldverbetering buiten Christus.

En nu kan hij wel in vrome termen spreken over onze vreeselijke beschouwing, waarin geen plaats is voor Gods genade over goddelooze Nero's en Hitlers en Mussolini's en andere Gods wet vertrappende overheidspersonen, maar ik vind zijn verleidende gebedjes, waardoor de menschen worden verleid om een humanistische wereldvrede te verwachten, veel vreeselijker, omdat zij de Kerk misleiden.

Maar, zal Ds. Zwier antwoorden (want dat is zijn beschouwing), zoo leer ik de menschen niet; die wereldvrede, dat schoone ideaal der humanisten, is niet het einde van mijn gebed, want ik geloof, dat God straks Zijn algemeene genade inhoudt, en dan barst alles los.

Er komt dus een tijd, dat de grond voor Ds. Zwier's gebed wegvalt, wanneer de algemeene genade niet meer werkt. En dan kan Ds. Zwier ook niet meer bidden voor beteugeling van den vloek van het militarisme, voor voorkoming van den oorlog, voor vrede in ons land, voor bevordering van burgerlijke gerechtigheid in het nationale en internationale leven, want, volgens hem, kunnen we daarvoor alleen bidden, zolang als we mogen gelooven in algemeene genade.

Goed.

Maar kan hij ons ook zeggen, dat dit thans reeds niet het geval is? Neen, dat kan hij niet. Hij zal zelfs moeten toestemmen, dat het er veel op begint te gelijken, dat Gods algemeene genade is ingetrokken. In hetzelfde nummer van *De Wachter* (6 Mei) heeft Ds. R. Veldman, die ook in algemeene genade gelooft, een meditatie, waarin hij juist leert, dat Gods algemeene genade reeds veelszins is ingetrokken, gelijk in de dagen van Noach. Maar als Ds. Zwier dit niet weet, hoe zal hij dan *amen* zeggen op zijn humanistisch gebed om voorkoming van den oorlog en bevordering van burgerlijke gerechtigheid? De lezer begrijpt, dat als Ds. Zwier alzoo bidt, zeg in het midden der gemeente, hij op zijn eigen (valschen) grond niet eens aan de gemeente kan zeggen: “Gemeente, het zal waar en zeker zijn; God verhoort ons gebed: we krijgen zeker vrede en welvaart in de wereld”.

De algemeene genade is dus geen *blijvende* grond voor het humanistisch gebed om wereldvrede, daar op een gegeven moment God Zijn algemeene genade intrekt. En waar Zwier niet weet, wanneer het Gode

belieft dit te doen, noch of het nu alreede zoo is, is het heelemaal geen grond voor het gebed, dat hij ons wil doen bidden.

Ook hij kan niet bidden: "Heere, voorkom den oorlog en geef ons wereldvrede, want wij gelooven in Uwe algemeene genade, amen".

Want een gebed, waarop wij niet van ganscher harte en op goede gronden *amen* kunnen zeggen, is geen gebed.

Maar het staat nog hachelijker met Zwier's gebed.

Het wordt ook veroordeeld, en dat wel door de geschiedenis en door de Schrift beide.

Door de geschiedenis, want zijn gebed is nog nimmer verhoord. Integendeel, God heeft op het *amen* van Ds. Zwier luide van den hemel getuigd, dat Hij zijn gebed niet wil verhooren, dat Hij den oorlog niet wil voorkomen, dat Hij de burgerlijke gerechtigheid niet wil bevorderen, dat Hij den vloek van het militarisme niet wil beteugelen.

Ach, ziet Zwier dit dan niet?

Jaren en jaren, ook reeds gedurende wereldoorlog nommer één ongetwijfeld, heeft hij nu gebeden: "Heere, beteugel den vloek van het militarisme, voorkom den oorlog, geef ons vrede, bevorder de burgerlijke gerechtigheid". En jaren vóór den tijd van Ds. Zwier hebben anderen hetzelfde gedaan, ook verblind door de misleidende filosofie der algemeene genade.

Wat is het gevolg?

Heeft onze God van den hemel dat gebed ooit verhoord? Is het werkelijk het getuigenis van de geschiedenis, dat het Gods wil is om door Zijne gemeene gratie den oorlog te voorkomen, het militarisme te stuiten, burgerlijke gerechtigheid te bevorderen?

Ge weet beter.

Gods getuigenis van den hemel gaat dwars tegen het gebed van Zwier in!

Hij zegt heel duidelijk tot Ds. Zwier: "Houd op! Uw gebed is mij niet aangenaam!"

Of wie ziet het niet, dat de "burgerlijke" ongerechtigheid hand over hand toeneemt, dat de wereld hoe langer hoe verder van God afwijkt, zichzelf verwoestend door de lust des vleesches, de lust der oogen, de grootheid des levens? Wie zal het niet moeten toestemmen, dat het militarisme steeds bruter macht is geworden, alle middelen der "kultuur" in zijn dienst heeft gesteld, zoodat het steeds vreeselijker verwoestingen aanricht en het hoe langer zoo banger wordt in de wereld? Wie, die de geschiedenis kent, kan niet zien, dat de oorlog niet alleen nog nimmer is voorkomen, maar dat hij ook steeds toeneemt, zoodat de oorlogen steeds sneller op elkander volgen, en steeds grooter afmetingen aannemen? De eerste wereldoorlog was vreeselijk. En thans, na een paar tientallen van

jaren, hebben we weer een wereldoorlog, nog veel vreeselijker. En waar is in onze dagen zelfs de schijn van internationale gerechtigheid? Vroeger was men in elk geval nog zoo fatsoenlijk om naar een rechtsgrond te zoeken voor den oorlog en elkander den oorlog te verklaren. Thans heeft ook dit opgehouden. Naar het recht om een natie te vertrappen vroegen de geallieerden niet in 1918, vraagt Hitler thans niet, vragen ook wij niet. Het is alleen maar de vraag, wat uit utiliteitsoogpunt het beste schijnt.

Dat is de stemme Gods in de geschiedenis, het antwoord op Zwier's gebed.

En wat doet hij?

Inplaats van zijne gemeente te leeren, om te zoeken den vrede, die alle verstand te boven gaat, om het hoofd op te heffen en te verwachten den vrede van het Koninkrijk der hemelen in de toekomst; inplaats van de wereld getuigenis te geven, dat zij buiten Christus en in haar vijandschap tegen God geen vrede kan verwachten, blijft hij maar voortgaan, dwars tegen Gods getuigenis in, in zijn gebed, dat God toch den oorlog wil voorkomen en het militarisme beteugelen!

Ik vind dat vreeselijk!

Maar ook de Schrift veroordeelt Zwier's gebed.

Als er één ding duidelijk is in de Schrift, dan is het wel, dat het Gode niet belieft om den oorlog te voorkomen. Denk maar aan het roode paard in de profetie van Zacharia en in Openbaring 6. Lees maar de profetie van Daniel, de voorzeggingen van den Heiland aangaande oorlogen en geruchten van oorlogen, en Openbaring 16-20.

En wat meer is, juist die oorlogen zijn noodig tot bewaring der Kerk en tot de komst van den dag van Christus.

Want wel zal er, ook dit is wel duidelijk uit de Schrift, een tijd komen, waarin de wereldvrede, waarom Zwier wil bidden, tijdelijk zal worden verwerkt, maar dat zal juist de tijd zijn, wanneer de getrouwen geen plaats zullen hebben in de wereld, niet zullen koopen en verkoopen, tenzij men het merkteken van het beest aanvaardt.

Kan Ds. Zwier dit alles niet verstaan?

Hoe kan hij dan toch maar doorgaan om het volk te leeren, dat ze maar zullen bidden om voorkoming van den oorlog, dwars tegen den geopenbaarden wil Gods in?

Intusschen is het wel duidelijk, en wordt het hoe langer hoe duidelijker, welk een vreeselijke tendenz er ligt in de "Drie Punten" van 1924.

Hun leer, de leer der gemeene gratie, ligt wel degelijk op de lijn van het modern humanisme!

Maar, zegt ge, hoe dan met I Tim. 2:1, 2?

Wordt ons daar niet geleerd, dat we zullen bidden

om voorkoming van den oorlog en wereldvrede en burgerlijke gerechtigheid?

't Zou wel een heel vreemd geluid wezen in de Schrift, als dit werkelijk waar was.

Doch dit is niet het geval. Ds. Zwier doet aan inlegkunde.

Om dit aan te toonen willen we echter een afzonderlijk artikel schrijven in een volgend nummer.

H. H.

The Antichristian Implications Of Nazism*

II. From a political point of view, then, Nazism would seem to be the implication of all the principles necessary for a perfect setup for the representative of the Dragon to wield his antichristian power, provided these principles can be realized to their full extent. I say: "for a perfect setup" for after all the political power, the totalitarian and universal State would supply only the means for the antichrist to realize himself in the world. It is, in the abstract, conceivable that this mighty world-power would put itself in the service of Christianity, that it would be the State which, according to Art. 36 of our Netherlands Confession, would further the cause of the gospel and destroy the power and dominion of Antichrist. Before, then, we can speak of the antichristian implications of Nazism we must answer the question, whether from a religious point of view the principles of Nazism are anti-christian. You will recall that in Rev. 13 a second beast, the beast that rises out of the earth, follows the first. It represents the final form of the Antichrist from philosophical, religious, spiritual aspect. It has two horns like a lamb, and it speaks like a Dragon. It speaks. That is its power. And by his speech as well as by its miracles this second beast, elsewhere called the false prophet, deceives them that dwell on the earth. It causes them that dwell on the earth to worship the first beast, the almighty State, to make an image for the first beast, to cause all men to receive the sign of the beast on their forehead or on their right hand, so that they may be distinguished as pro and con with respect to the antichristian power, and only the former may be able to buy or sell and have a place in society. Besides, we read of the first beast that it speaks great things and blasphemies against God, His name, His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven, and that it was given unto him to make war with the saints. The antichristian empire will be characterized by great prosperity, except for the saints. For the people of God it will be a time of

great tribulation. And therefore, we must still answer the question: what are the religious implications and principles as Nazism.

In the text of "Mein Kampf" 'one does not find an answer to this question, or, at least, not the proper answer. It must be remembered that it was written before Hitler came into power, and that it was expedient for him to be careful with respect to his attitude to the Church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. It is true, from the views he expresses on the State and its totalitarian power one might easily conclude that in such a State there will be no room for the Church of Christ, if she is faithful in and to her confession. But directly Hitler in that work of his makes no attack upon the Church. On the contrary, he tries to leave the impression that it is his purpose to keep his hands off religion and religious bodies, provided, of course, they have nothing to say against the realization of his political ideals. But since that time the situation has changed as we all know. Nazism is not only a political philosophy, it also claims to be a "Weltanschauung", a philosophy, a religion. This has become manifest especially since Rosenberg published his "Myth of the Twentieth Century" in which he reveals himself as the False Prophet of Nazism par excellence. And both from what has been written on the subject of religion by the Nazis and from their actual dealing with the Church and its preaching and ministry, it is very evident that National Socialism is, in principle, thoroughly antichristian. It is partly a deification of German blood and race, which takes the place of the blood of Christ, partly an Hegelian apotheosis of the State and the worship of it, partly a return to the ancient heathen gods before the introduction of Christianity.

Rosenberg has been called the Antichrist of Nazism. He does profess to believe in a Christ, but it is not the Christ of the Scriptures. He alleges that the image of the true Christ has been distorted by Jewish fanatics like Matthew and Paul, by African jurists like Tertullian and by "mongrel half breeds" like Augustine. The true Christ is the Nazi-Christ, born of Amorite-Nordic parents, who insisted that he did not come to bring peace to the world but a sword. In his "Myth of the Twentieth Century" Rosenberg insists that the religion of Wotan and Siegfried must replace that of Rome, Wittenberg and Geneva. The swastika, as the symbol of the sungod, must become the symbol of the new church, and replace the dreary and weak symbol of the cross. The living religion of Race and Blood must take the place of the demoralizing and denationalising religion of the Holy Spirit and the communion of saints. He exalts the religion of the superman to that of meekness and humility, the religion of the weakling, of the "underman". Not the enervating Christian virtues of pity, charity, repent-

ance and humility, which are a sinister menace to the soul of Nordic Europe, but the true virtues of honor and freedom, power and force of will must have the emphasis. To Rosenberg the creed of the historic churches is a creed of decay and slavery. The introduction of Christianity in Europe meant the debilitation of the strong and healthy German race, the standard bearer of all culture and civilization; it was the beginning of decay "disastrous for Germanity and Humanity" both. Cf. "Religion of the Blood" by Chas. Sarolia in *Contemporary Review*, JI. 1935.

Rosenberg demands the elimination of the Old Testament as a source of religion, of all the historic foundations of Christianity, Roman Catholic or Protestant, of the spurious values of the Sermon on the Mount. He insists upon the repudiation of the doctrine of original sin, of salvation through grace and of the symbol of the cross. And for them he would substitute Nordic myths and fairy tales to take the place of the Bible and confessions; and the worship of Odin, Wotan, Siegfried, Bismarck and Hitler as the Heroes of the new German Church. Only in the elimination of foreign elements from the German blood and race, especially the Jewish; by further purification of the German blood by eugenic measures and by a radical religious revolution, can salvation of the Fatherland be expected. (idem as above). He writes in his "Myth": "A German church must pledge all its ministers with the oath to guard the honor of the nation, and it will be our task to create a German national church in the service of the mythos of the German race. The God whom we worship would not exist if our souls and blood were not" (H. Smith Leiper in *Ann. Am. Acad.* JI. '35). And Jacob Wilhelm Hauer, under whose leadership the various German pagan movements became united in May 1934, presiding at a National Diet at Eisenbach, adopted a "Pagan Book of Faith" containing twenty five points such as the following: "The word heathen is for us no insult, but a title of honor. We believe no more in the Holy Spirit; we believe in the Holy Blood. . . . The German people need no Bible. We believe in God revealed to us through blood and conscience". Cf. C. L. Heymann, in *Cur. Hist.*, April '35. Wilhelm Teudt offered a revision of the Psalms. In Ps. 87 he would read the second verse as follows: "The Lord loveth the height of Germany more than all the dwellings abroad"; and the fourth verse: "I will make mention of the Euphrates and the Ganges where our forefathers lived". In the light of all this we wonder no more that, as was reported in some Dutch papers some time ago, the German children at home are taught to pray to and to thank Hitler for their daily bread! And Hitler has been hailed as the Messiah from whom the world may expect its salvation!

The German churches have protested against the

introduction of this new religion. From the "Manifesto" which was read in the opposition pulpits in June 1935, we quote the following:

"We see for our people a deadly danger. The danger consists in the new religion. The first commandment states: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'. The new religion is disobedient to this first commandment. First, through this religion a racial and nationalistic view of life has become a creed. Through its blood and race, faith in an eternal Germany which the new religion requires, has been put in place of faith in an external Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Third, this fool's faith induces man to make God in his own image. According to its creed man himself honors, saves and redeems himself. Such superstition has nothing to do with positive Christianity. This is the creed of an antichrist. The State's sovereignty and power are solely a gift from God, who alone founded and preserves human authority. Whoever placed blood, race and nationality in place of God destroys the State's foundations. . . . Therefore, the Church dares not now blindly bow to the totalitarian demands of the state, which the new religion has created. Bound to God's Word it is her duty to witness the omnipotence of Jesus Christ, who alone is empowered to bind and relieve the human conscience. To Him alone is given all power in heaven and on earth".

And from the "Bethel Confession" we quote:

"We denounce the idea that the coming of Christ represents the flaring up of the Nordic race in a world of decay. We denounce the assertion that the government of the state is entitled to rule over the church and especially that it should have the right to appoint and dismiss holders of ecclesiastical offices and to issue laws which affect the teachings of the church directly or indirectly". In "Religion Confronts Caesarism" by H. Smith Leiper, in *Ann. Am. Acad.* JI. '35.

What was the result? We all know it. Oppression and persecution of the faithful by the almighty sword of the totalitarian State. For Nazism can tolerate no opposition. On pp. 676,677 of "Mein Kampf" Hitler postulates that Nazism is a view of life, that views of life are never inclined to compromise, that they proclaim their infallibility; that it never shares with another view of life. And since this is the case, "it cannot be ready either to co-operate in an existing condition that it condemns, but it feels the obligation of fighting, by all available means, this condition, and the entire hostile world of ideas; that means of preparing their collapse". Well, when the church proclaimed a view of life different from and in opposition to the religion of Nazism, fight Hitler did, not by all means, not by spiritual combat, but by the power of the mighty totalitarian sword. From a footnote in "Mein

Kampf" by the American editor on p. 144, I quote the following: "Moreover (this was the Lutheran contention) the sacred ministry is open to all who have been baptized and are called. Therewith Lutheranism denies the priority of race. When Hitler came to power, he immediately tried to place the governance of the Lutheran Church in hands of men who were willing to alter the traditional teaching. A large group of "German Christians who subscribed to Hitler's views were recruited, and their representative—Pastor Ludwig Müller—was named Archbishop at the command of the government. The majority of German theologians refused, however, to accept so drastic a tampering with their creed. Gradually they formed the Confessional Synod, and this has until now—despite all pressure and suffering—clung resolutely to the orthodox point of view. The best known spokesman for this point of view is Pastor Martin Niemöller, who was imprisoned by command of Hitler and is still held in virtually solitary confinement; but there are hundreds of clergymen who have learned to know the meaning of opposition. More than twelve hundred of their number have gone to prison; some are dead. The crisis through which Lutheranism is passing is unquestionably the gravest in its history". And we know what happened to Dr. Schilder and to other ministers in the Netherlands already.

I conclude, therefore, that whether you consider Nazism from its political aspect or from the viewpoint of its religious principles, as a power or as a Weltanschauung, it bears a strong resemblance to the Antichrist as pictured in Holy Writ, particularly to the Beast of Rev. 13. We may, therefore, indeed, speak of the antichristian implications of Nazism.

III. Can we go further? May we, instead of speaking of the antichristian implications of Nazism speak of the Nazi State as the Antichrist? I for one would refuse to thus commit myself. In fact, I would go one step further and maintain that the National Socialistic State in its present form and with its present ambitions and its present Führer, cannot be or become the Antichrist in the ultimate sense of the word.

I do not say this because I belong to those who always present the realization of the things that must come to pass before the coming of Christ as if they lie in the distant future. I am exactly of the contrary opinion. I believe that the things foretold us in the Bible are coming to pass, and are being realized with astounding rapidity. And I believe that Nazism, though in its present form it cannot be the ultimate antichrist, may very well be a forerunner of the Beast. All things seem to witness loudly and clearly of a coming change in the entire economic and political setup of the world. Still less do I make this statement, because I believe in a glorious future for this world,

either on humanistic or biblical grounds; or because I believe in the power of the democracies to stem the antichristian tide. Principally there is no difference between "modernism" in our own land, and Nazism in Germany from the viewpoint we are discussing of the latter. It is not only the fifth columnist that is inculcating the deepest principles of Nazism into the American people.

But I do believe that Nazism as it now manifests itself cannot be the final manifestation of the antichristian power, because, though in many respects it resembles the biblical picture of the antichrist, there are also serious points of difference.

The chief point of difference is that Nazism is emphatically national, while antichrist is international, universal. Nazism is German, the antichristian empire will be cosmopolitan. This is very evident from the picture in Rev. 13. The symbol of the beast with its seven heads informs us that this beast is the implication as well as the consummation of all similar beasts that have gone before. The fatal wound in one of its heads is healed, by which I understand the deadly wound all world-power received in the confusion of tongues and the subsequent separation of the race into nations, so that its healing means the uniting of the nations of the world, a voluntary federation of nations. The same idea is suggested by the ten horns, which represent ten kingdoms that voluntarily give their power to the beast. And do not forget that all the world wonders after the beast, that is, voluntarily admires him and hails him as the Messiah of the world. But Nazism is nationalistic, not only in the sense that its scope of influence and power at present is limited to the German people, but in its view of life. It is a system that is admittedly based on race, on the superiority of the Nordic race, of the German people. By purifying and developing the German blood the nation will become dominant. Now this is, of course, a myth. But that is not the point. The point is that as long as it adheres to this narrow nationalistic principle, it will not succeed in acquiring universal power and dominion.

In close connection with its nationalistic principle and view of life based upon the philosophy of blood, stands the fact, that Nazism is too narrow and exclusive in its philosophy, in its economic and political conceptions. Antichrist will stand opposed to God, to Christ, to the saints. It will hate them, persecute them, fight them to the death. But for the rest he must be very broad, for the false prophet persuades all others to adopt the mark of the Beast. The Beast presents a united front over against the cause and people of Christ only. But Nazism is intolerant with relation to many other views, that are themselves antichristian. It has too many enemies in the antichristian world itself. It hates Bolshevism, it fights

Marxian Socialism, it despises democracy, it fights and persecutes the Jew to the death, it cannot tolerate the bourgeois. I know that it has been forced by circumstances to show somewhat of a conciliatory attitude to some of its enemies. The pact with Russia is an example of this. It is, therefore, not impossible that in the future Nazism will reveal more of this adaptability to circumstances and will prepare the way for a broader conception. But as it is at present, Nazism is by no means worshipped and admired by all, either within Germany or outside of its own borders.

You say, perhaps, that Nazism may gain world-dominion by sheer force. It may win this war and then turn to new conquests. But in the first place, I consider this, for the present at least, not very probable. I am not in a position to predict the outcome of this war. But in my opinion Hitler has not yet shown that he is capable of conquering the world. It is true, that his mighty war-machine has had brilliant success, has trampled under foot many nations. But it is also true, that there is as yet no indication that he is able to subjugate the British empire aided by the supplies of the United States. And do not forget that the little nations he forced into subjection do not wonder after and worship the beast, but that they hate him with a deep-seated and bitter hatred, that may flare up as soon as the opportunity is favorable. And in the second place, I believe that the Scriptural picture of antichrist as well as all history teach us, that the antichristian empire cannot realize itself by sheer force and power of the sword, but will become universal by way of a voluntary union and federation. My conclusion, therefore, is that Nazism is, indeed, a mighty attempt to realize the antichristian world-power, but that in its present form it is too limited to be or become the ultimate manifestation of the Beast.

In the meantime, we are making history fast. Antichristian forces are busy round about us. And sometime they will surely unite. Perhaps, this will be realized before very long. It does not seem as if the ultimate realization of the antichristian power can be far off, in the still distant future. And let us remember, that the war against the Beast cannot be fought or won with the sword of any government. Here is the faith and the patience of the saints: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword! But we must even now put on and keep on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. We must hold fast that which we have. We must be strong in the truth. We must keep our garments clean. We must not seek the things that are on the earth, but the things that are above. We must not in any wise ally ourselves with Babylon and adopt the mark of the Beast, even now. And we must remember the word of the Lord Jesus, that he that shall seek to save his life shall lose it, but he that shall

lose it for His name's sake, shall keep it unto eternal life! Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life!

*Lecture delivered in several of our churches.

H. H.

Fruits Of Deliverance

(Psalm 34)

The superscription of this psalm tells us at what occasion it was composed. It was when David changed his behaviour before the face of Abimelech, the king of Gath. The record of this history you will find in I Sam. 21.

The events recorded there date from the period when David had to flee continually before the face of Saul. At one such occasion David hurried to the country of the Philistines, more particularly, to the people of the city of Gath. Its king was named Achish. Now you will note that in Psalm 34 the name of this king is given as Abimelech. That does not seem to agree. The solution is easy. Achish was the proper name of this king and Abimelech was his title. All the kings of the Philistines were called Abimelech, which means literally, My father is King, just as all the kings in Egypt were called Pharaoh's and of the Amalekites Agag. Later in Roman history you will remember that all the kings were called Caesar and even in our modern times we speak of the Shah of Persia, and not so long ago of the Czars of Russia. Therefore Achish in I Sam. 21 and Abimelech in Psalm 34 are the same person.

Well, when David found refuge in Gath, he could not remain there for any length of time before they recognized him as the dangerous warrior and enemy of the Philistines. The people said: Is not this the man of whom the maidens sang: Saul hath slain his thousands but David his ten thousands? And David became sore afraid. He lost sight of God and saw only Achish, the wicked king of Gath.

Psalm 34 reflects this misgiving on the part of David. He speaks of troubles and fears. We can well imagine that David was sore afraid.

But he found a way out. He acted as if he were insane. He began to scratch at the walls of the city and let his spittle drip into his beard. And he achieved the desired results. Achish asked grumblingly of his servants: Do we lack mad men in this city? Let him be gone at once. And David fled to the cave of Adullam. There his kinsfolk and a veritable host of stragglers came to him and he became their captain.

Such is the history. David was in trouble and cried unto the Lord who heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles.

The first part of the psalm, up to verse 10 is a song of praise and the remainder of the psalm is as it were a sermon. The experience at Gath he will use as a means to teach his companions the way of God's deliverance.

He begins his hymn by stating that the praises of Jehovah shall be forever in his mouth. Wherever he is, he will speak a good word about and to his God. Such is the literal meaning of *to bless*. To bless means that you speak good words, comfortable words about a person or to a person. It means that you utter beautiful words. Our English word Eulogy is derived from the Greek word for *to bless*.

Such endeavour is exactly what we need in order to answer to the purpose for which we were created. That's all we will do unto all eternity in heaven. That will make us happy too. That is the only occupation which makes for happiness. Bless God, praise His name and let your soul boast in the Lord and I assure you that you will be a happy person.

And that is not all.

You do that before the face of men and your song of praise will breed emulation. The humble will hear your song and be glad. I am reminded of a phrase in the New Testament which is used several times: And the people seeing this or hearing this gave praise to God. Indeed, when you do the right thing, and that is to praise Jehovah, you will cause gladness for others.

Henceforth we see David in the cave of Adullam. It is a motley throng that surrounds him. Some are in debt and are hunted as a partridge upon the mountains; some are discontented, in bitterness of soul, some were in distress. But David stands in their midst and calls them to the only endeavour that is worth while. Listen: O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.

From the beginning of time the people of God have liked to praise God in unison. In the time of Enos men began to call upon the name of the Lord. And in our time we still like to go to church so that we may praise His name together. The older I become the more I like to go to church. Slowly on I begin to understand that our church-life is a little bit of heaven.

Listen, David is going to tell the dwellers in the cave of his narrow escape in Gath. I was in terrible fear, I was sore troubled: death itself stared me in the face. But this poor man cried unto God and he was heard. David further describes that ascent unto the throne of God. He likens it to the rushing stream of water. (See the Dutch translation of verse 6). And God heard: He delivered, He heard his pitiful cry and

his burden was taken away. He was lightened and his face was not ashamed.

Ah, David knows the solution. The Angel of the Lord is round about those that fear the Lord. There was no real danger. It was not necessary for David to act as though he was insane. God was for him and therefore there could not be anything or anybody really against him. What wondrous safety. The literal meaning of the word that is translated by *deliver* really means to snatch away as from the brink of a precipice. That is what happened at Gath.

And the experience of such wonderful deliverance awakens the desire to share it with all God's people. Hence we find David full of exhortations. He says: O taste and see that the Lord is good; O fear Him! And by implication we may read in the following verse: O seek Him!

O what fools men are! Millions will seek the earth and sin, but they will never ask, seek for the living God.

And there is nothing that pays such wonderful dividends as the service of God. Taste God and you will see that He is God! Trust Him and you will be blessed! Fear Him and you will have no want! Seek Him and you will not want any good thing. God in His blessed revelation (and that is Jesus) is the only thing you really need, without which you will have nothing but hell.

But David knows. He has experienced all this and more. And love is not narrow. He will share it with the children of God. From verse 10 on he will preach to them; he will teach them the fear of the Lord.

In the first lesson he tells us the way to real and abiding happiness. If you desire life, if you love to live that life eternally, if you want to see God, you must pursue a definite course.

Negatively you must hate evil and positively you must love goodness.

You must hate evil to such an extent that you keep your lips and tongue from the works of the devil, which is the making of the lie.

Oh no, it does not mean that you always and ever speak the pure truth of God. It does not mean that you live a sinless existence. No, but it means that you are turned against the original root-sin of all sin: the lie of the devil. You know that lie: ye shall be as gods! It means that you hate the lie and fight against it every day. And that you cling to the truth of God and that is Jesus.

If you desire life and if you desire it for all eternity, you must do good. You must seek peace and pursue it. The very phraseology suggests that this course is not easy. It is the fight of faith which every Christian is privileged to fight in the power of God. Peace is not our natural sphere. Very rebellion is

our atmosphere by nature. Rebels against God and rebels against all authority. But through the regenerating influence of God's Spirit we are able to fight against the indwelling rebellion, killing it, mortifying it and thus growing in gracious obedience which is the atmosphere of real peace, of real tranquility and harmony with the heart of our God.

Such people are really happy and blessed.

Listen to David: he will describe such happiness.

God's eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. Remember here what the occasion was for this psalm and it speaks the more strongly. Righteous David was in real danger of his life. His cry arose, interpreting all his fears. But he found out that even in the city of Gath God is the only Sovereign. He heard the cry of David and hastened to his help.

How different is the experience of the wicked. God's face is against them. That is awful. Even if a man's face is against you, you feel embarrassed, ill at ease, miserable. Let a man frown at you, raise his voice, glare his contempt or anger at you and your cheeks are blanched, your breath is shortened, your heart is pounding within you.

But this is God!

His Face is against the wicked. And while we can do nothing more than afflict the bodies of men. God can cut off our remembrance from the earth.

And history bears witness. Where is Cain and Esau and Judas, the unholy triumvirate? Where is their remembrance? Even their names shall be annihilated.

How glorious is the comfort for the sorrowing saint on earth. They have the light of God's Spirit. By the light of that Spirit they see their sins and guilt. And slowly their hearts are breaking. They love God and they have sinned against Him. True remorse and sorrow is born of the love of God. They become contrite in spirit. And the night hears their oft-repeated cry: Oh my God, be merciful to me, the sinner!

Even though it seems as though the Lord could have no communion with such sinners as we are, the very fact that you are contrite in spirit and broken-hearted is proof that He is very near you. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such that be of a contrite spirit. Such nearness was experienced by many when Jesus walked upon the earth. He would say: Be of good courage, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee! Methinks there is no sweeter music!

Oh then we are able to bear the cross. Our afflictions may be many; they *are* many. But if I may know that my God is near me, that my sins are forgiven and my guilt removed: then I can sing my song

of praise and thanksgiving. Then it is heaven in my soul.

This God is very careful over His saints: He keepeth all the bones of the righteous, not one of them is broken. That is true of all the righteous, but it was fulfilled in Jesus. John tells us in his Gospel that this Scripture was fulfilled after Jesus' death when the soldiers came with hammers to crush the last spark of life out of our Lord; but finding Him already dead, they did not break His bones. Indeed, the fight was finished; Christ had paid all the debt of God's righteousness; therefore His bones might not be broken.

So the Lord has a special care for His own. No pain or suffering will He allow to come nigh unto them, unless it must be for their eternal and spiritual welfare. And in such case their suffering and tears are blessings in disguise.

How different with the wicked. Evil shall slay them. Do you not note that the punishment is already in the transgression? If you hate the righteous and their righteous Father in heaven; if you do evil all the day long, you will never be a happy man. The more you sin, the more miserable you become. Evil slays the wicked already here below. But in the revelation of the just judgment of God he will be declared guilty.

But when God's people arrive before the great white throne in the revelation of that same judgment, God will show within them the glory of His own work. Take courage, ye righteous! In that day the Lord will turn your hearts inside out and the whole universe will see that Jesus dwelled in you, that you trusted in your God, that you sought Him and found Him and that your deepest hunger and thirst was to see the glorious Face of God!

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

De Kerkeraad der Prot. Geref. Gemeente te Hull, Iowa, wenscht hierbij zijn hartelijke deelneming te betuigen met onze leeraar en gade, Ds. en Mrs. A. Cammenga, in het verlies van hun vader,

MR. S. VISSER

Moge onze Verbonds God hen rijkelijk troosten in dit hun verlies.

Namens de Kerkeraad voornoemd,
A. Brummel, Vice Pres.
Ed. Vander Werff, Secr.

Vertrapte Onschuld

(Psalm 35)

Het lijkt wel of David vlak voor het kruis stond en de heete klachten van Immanuel opving, dezelve weer-gevende in dezen psalm. Er is geen twijfel aan of we hebben hier in dezen psalm een voorbeeld van het onderzoeken des Heiligen Geestes in den profeet David aangaande het lijden van Christus dat te komen stond. Daarom kwam David in de benauwdheid. Hij moest aan den lijve ondervinden en vooruitlijden het lijden van zijn Heiland. In zeer geringe mate natuurlijk. Er is van geen vergelijking sprake. Bij Jezus is het zoo diep als de eeuwige dood; doch bij David is het maar voor een tijd en dan nog maar een zeer lichte druk.

Daar waren goddelooze mensen rondom David. Zij twistten met hem, bestreden en vervolgden hem, ze zochten zijne ziel, en bedachten kwaad tegen hem.

En let er nu op, dat er geen oorzaak was. We kunnen het nog begrijpen, dat men kwaad tegen iemand is als er een oorzaak is; doch hier is geen oorzaak. David had niets tegen zijn vervolgers gedaan. Was het Saul die de aanvoerder was van deze bende? 't Kan best zijn, want dat past precies. We weten het immers uit de geschiedenis van Gods Woord, dat Saul hem voor een langen tijd met hittigheid achtervolgd heeft, hoewel David hem nooit iets in den weg gelegd had. Het gebeurde immers tot tweemaal toe, dat David een gelegenheid ontving om Saul te dooden en toen hij het niet deed doch Saul afvraagde, waarom hij hem toch zoo kwaad gezind was, wist Saul geen raad met die vraag. Hij spilde een paar zoute tranen op David's schouder en pakte zich weg. Hij moest zich schamen voor den oprechten David.

Die goddelooze vijanden van David worden verder gekenmerkt hierdoor, dat zij als wrevelige getuigen tegen hem opstaan. Hetgeen David niet wist werd van hem geëischt. Het schijnt, dat men David dingen ten laste legde, waarvan hij part nog deel had. Hij wist er zelfs niets van.

't Wordt nog erger. David had die wrevelige mensen in het verleden goed gedaan. Die vervolgers van David waren eens ziek geweest, ze kromden zich in pijn en verdriet. Toen had David er van gehoord. Ijlings was hij op ziekenbezoek geweest. Hun smart was zijn smart geworden en hij bekleedde zich met een zak. Zijn stem verhief zich in 't klagen over hen en keer op keer had hij voor hen gebeden.

En als de zieke erger wierd, dan was David bedrukt van hunnentwege, dan was het alsof de zieke hem tot een broeder en een vriend was. Zoo liefderijk was David, dat hij over deze mensen in hun ellende treurde alsof zijn eigen moeder gestorven was.

Doch nu?

Als David slechts hinkt van een gestooten been of voet, dan hebben ze de grootste schik. Ach, wie kent die duivels niet?

Daar komen ze al aan. Wee mij! Geen wonder, dat David later als hij gezondigd heeft veel liever in de handen Gods valt dan in de handen der mensen. Als men zoo doet met zijn vriend, wat zal men doen met ons als we werkelijk struikelden en vielen? Dan worden we vermorzeld en is er geen ontfermer.

Daar komen ze aan. Ze hebben in de verte gehoord, dat David gestruikeld heeft. David ziet ze aankomen. Zullen ze zich herinneren, dat hij hen goed gedaan heeft? Te midden van hen loopt die man die immers niet lang geleden ziek was? Ja, ik heb hem opgezocht, zegt David bij zichzelf. Ik heb Jehova menigmaal voor hem gebeden. Hij zal nu met gelijken munt betalen. Ik zal mijn klacht voor hem uitstorten als water. Want, ach, we verlangen zoo naar sympathie.

Doch, o wee! Wat een misrekening! Ze verzamelden zich, zoo lezen we. Ze verblijden zich en omringden David's leger. Ze grinnikten van nauw ingehouden pret. David is ziek! Hoera! Wacht even! Ze zijn bij een ziekbed aangekomen. Welnu, bij een ziekbed behoort kranken-kamer-taal. En zoo begonnen ze te spreken. David merkte eerst niets. Doch het werd al duidelijker. Men begon te huichelen, te spotten, te knersen met de tanden. En als de een nog grappiger is dan den ander, wenkt met met de oogen. Ach, wie heeft het nooit ervaren?

Inplaats van over het goede te spreken met mij en den vrede na te jagen in mijn stormen en klagen, bedenken ze bedriegelijke zaken. Hun fleemen verandert straks in luid spreken. Nog iets later breidt het zich uit tot een rauw gekrijt in mijn zieken kamer: ze sperren de mond wijd open; straks lachen ze luidkeels in al mijn verdriet en zeggen: Haha! ons oog heeft het gezien! Wat hebben we een schik! Boontje komt om zijn loontje! Serve you right! Was herliches schaden-freude!

En zoo behandelde men David. Men verwoestte hem en verscheurde zijn ziel als jonge leeuwen hun buit verscheuren.

David ziet het aankomen, dat men straks het ziekbed zal verlaten en zeggen: Heah, onze ziel! Wij hebben hem verslonden!

Ach, wie kent dat volk niet? Echt duivelsch, hebben ze schik van het lijden eens mensen. Want dáár hebben ze het geleerd. De duivel is de menschenmoorder van den beginne. En omdat dat zijn natuur is, zijn zucht en zijn leven, daarom kan hij zijn trawanten niets anders leeren dan dat.

Daartegenover nu roept David Gods hulp in.

Hij kan dat doen, want hij weet, dat Gods gerech-

tigheid hem bedekt. Hij weet en is zich bewust dat hij den vrede bemint. God had een werk gewrocht in hem. Hij is er zich van bewust, dat al die vijanden hem haten om Gods wil. Om Gods wil wordt hij den ganschen dag gedood en geacht als een schaap der slachting. Het zijn god-loozen die het hem aangedaan hebben.

Daarom roept hij zijn God aan.

Twist gij, Heere, mijne twistzaak. Bestrijd Gij mijne bestrijders.

't Is of we Jezus hooren roepen aan het kruis.

Want David heeft er maar heel weinig van ervaren. Ja, hij was een rechtvaardige, doch die gerechtigheid was een gave Gods. Ze stoelde op de eeuwige gedachten des vredes die door en in Jezus verwerkelijk zouden worden zoovele eeuwen later.

Doch Jezus! Alle duivelen en de geheele goddelooze wereld en valsche kerk stonden bij Zijn ziekbed, neen, Zijn kruis! En vanwege het feit, dat hun tongen ontstoken waren van de hel, hooren we duivelsche taal daar op Hoofdschedelplaats. Ze staken de lip uit en spogen in Zijn gezegend aangezicht. Dat deden ze tegenover Hem die om Zijn volk te redden naar de hel ging. Op reis naar de hel overkwam Hem al die hoon en verguizing. En onze ziel huivert, want het is onze natuur die zoo handelt met het heilig kind Jezus.

Zoo heeft ook Jezus gebeden om de vergelding der goddeloozen. Ook zullen de verworpenen het vreeselijk ondervinden, dat Jezus bede verhoord werd.

Jezus heeft zekerlijk gebeden zooals David hier bidt: Laat ze beschaamd en te schande worden die mijn ziel zoeken. Laat de Engel des Heeren ze wegdrijven. Hun weg zij duister en gansch glibberig en de Engel des Heeren vervolge ze. Jezus heeft zekerlijk gebeden om Gods rechtvaardigen toorn over de verworpenen. Zulk bidden was bidden naar den raad Gods.

Tevoren waren die ongelukkige menschen opgeschreven om Gods volk te plagen en straks de mate vol te maken in de kruisiging van den Zoon Gods. Dan moet de straf volgen. En om de rechtvaardige straf Gods bidden David en Jezus. Denkt er aan hoe Jezus spraak tegen de Pharizeeërs. "Opdat op U kome al het onschuldige bloed van Abel tot. . . ."

Voor zichzelf bad David: Zeg tot mij, o Heere, Ik ben Uw heil! O zulk bidden wordt verhoord. Vraagt maar geduriglijk om het heil Gods en ik verzeker U dat gij gehoord en verhoord wordt. Het is muziek voor den hemel om zulke gebeden te hooren. Die vraag woonde in het harte van Jezus. Hij wilde het hooren uit den mond Zijns Vaders: Ik ben Uw heil!

Ook heeft David aan Gods volk gedacht. Gelukkig, alle menschen zijn niet zoo valsch als dat andere soort die we eerst beschreven. Er zijn stillen in den lande, er zijn er die zóó door David beschreven wor-

den: "Die lust hebben tot mijne gerechtigheid". Ja, dat zijn lieflijke menschen. Ja, er zijn dan toch menschen die werkelijk schik hebben aan hun naaste. Als zij de gerechtigheid als een diadeem zien schitteren in den broeder, worden ze niet jaloersch. Ze gaan zelfs verder dan dat. Ze gaan met den gerechtigen David naar den Heere en roepen het luide voor Hem uit: Groot gemaakt zij den Heere, die lust heeft tot den vrede Zijns knechts! Dat soort volk zag het met scherp blik, dat David's gerechtigheid van God is en dat de Heere David op 't vredepad zijn voeten richtte.

En zoo bidt Jezus.

Hij bidt voor 't verkoren volk.

Mijn Vader, laat al Uwe kinderen vroolijk zingen in den hemel en laat ze aan de rivier Gods veel blijdschap smaaken. Waant zij hebben lust aan Uwe eeuwige gerechtigheid, door Mij verdiend en door den Geest geschonken.

Zoo hadden de smarten van David hun einde en volgde het gouden zonnelicht in Jozef's hof na die bange duisternis der uren.

De smarten hadden een einde, want de hemel kwam in 't verschiet.

De god-loozen van David's dag krommen zich in aanvankelijke smarten. Doch David is daarboven bij God.

Pilatus en Herodes, mitsgaders het geboefte van vleeschelijk Israel, kunnen niet meer spotten en luidkeels lachen om dien grooten David. De arme menschen hebben zoo'n smart in deze vlam.

Doch het volk, dat in Uwe handpalmen stond van eeuwigheid, dat volk zal eeuwiglijk vermelden Uwe gerechtigheid en Uwen lof zullen zij zingen eeuwiglijk en altoos.

Geduriglijk zeggen ze: Groot gemaakt zij den Heere!

Geen wonder, bij het vooruitzicht van die glorie, dat Paulus zegt: onze *lichte* verdrukking die zeer haast voorbij gaat, werkt ons een gansch zeer uitnemend gewicht der heerlijkheid. . . .

En Job zeide: Mijne nieren verlangen zeer in mijnen schoot. . . .

G. V.

Zie ze groeien, zie ze bloeien,

Zie ze rijpen, God ter eer,

Voor de dienst van Neerlans koning

Voor de dienst van Hooger Heer!

Walking In Fear

I Peter 1:17-19.

To hope is the first admonition Peter writes in his letter to the church. Hope perfectly, let your hope be more and more complete. Have your eye fixed upon the complete salvation, which is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He adds another admonition when he writes, be ye holy, because the Lord your God is holy. Holiness and hope are closely related to each other. Unless one walks in holiness, he cannot hope and when walking in holiness, hope will always be active. Therefore, holiness is the requisite for the hope of the church.

Now he continues, let your walk be in fear.

Walk.

To walk means that we move in a certain direction. A man's walk is his conduct of life from beginning to end. We move in a certain direction, with a purpose in mind. We aim at something and try to reach the goal we have set before us. The whole of life reveals our aim or purpose and is determined by our innermost being from a spiritual point of view. We cannot separate our inner life from the external revelation. Our life is characterized, either by darkness and sin, or by light, righteousness and holiness. In the absolute sense of the word, as is our heart so also is our walk. There is simply no third possibility.

We say this is so in the absolute sense of the word. As a man is, he reveals himself before God. He *is* a man of the world or he *is* a child of God. Yes, it does not always look that way from our point of view. We consider and judge a man according to his outward manifestation, therefore, we call a hypocrite also a child of light, because we are not able in this case, nor in any case, to judge the heart. But we may safely say, hypocrites are the exception to the rule that what a man is, he will reveal in his walk. Hence, it is not difficult to know the difference between a child of God and a child of the devil. Both have their peculiar aspirations, their ideals, their aims and purposes. And will reveal their true spiritual character.

Peter adds, that the walk must be a walking in fear.

Fear often means that one is afraid. A man is afraid when he hurts someone. The criminal is afraid when the law pursues him. He is afraid because he knows the judge will pronounce sentence in harmony with the offence. Thus it is with man over against man. The weak fear the strong, the wicked fear the righteous. The devil fears God when he thinks of the judgment to come. He trembles, knowing there is no way of escape and also knowing that the judgment of God shall be right. In this sense of the word

there is torment in fear. Fear is never the result of love, but at the bottom of it lies the fact that man does not live the life of fellowship with the Lord.

There is, however, also a fear of love. This fear reveals itself in that its object is honored. In this sense the fear of the Lord is the fear for the Lord and thus a revelation of reverence. This implies that one is conscious of God's presence. And because a man knows himself to be in the presence of God, his life reveals his love for God in that he is obedient to God's Word. Such a man will not easily turn to the former life of sin, but to the contrary, he will walk carefully in the midst of the world. His thoughts are with the Lord and his life outwardly is a manifestation of the love for God and for His cause. Hence, the life of the Christian differs from the life of the natural man, just as light differs from darkness.

The question is, does Peter simply and exclusively mean that the Church must walk in that fear of love? Of course, he cannot very well admonish that they should not fear, because they are afraid of God. We may never be afraid of him. And we do well to emphasize this fact. Many a so-called evangelical preacher will use the fear of natural man as the theme for his religious talk. The torments of hell are presented in such a vivid picture, that man must be afraid of the consequences of sin. With the ultimate outcome, that it is best after all not to sin and be lost, but to be saved—heaven is so much nicer than hell. Throwing scares into people will make them turn from their evil, sinful ways one would expect? Why no, people are not that easily scared. They know and will get accustomed to that kind of preaching and continue in their sinful ways. Besides, Peter does not admonish at random, but sends this admonition to the Church of Christ Jesus. Pass the time of your sojourning in fear. This means that the pilgrim must be well aware of his own weaknesses. He must know also the many temptations and the possibilities of falling into sin. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling is repeated here, be it in a somewhat different way and presented in different words.

Yes, salvation is by sovereign grace only and not by our works. But that does not change the fact, that it will be ours through the way of sanctification. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. Hence, walk in fear does not refer to the fear which has torment in it, but it refers to that fear-knowing, self-knowing God's holiness, whereby we become afraid of self and of the world and the devil. This is not the fear of cowardice, but of being careful not to rely on himself and not to underestimate sin. With Peter these admonitions were a question of experience. To boast, as if one is not susceptible to the many pitfalls, means,

that such parties will fall by the wayside.

Secondly, as to the positive side of it, fear as a matter of reverence, shows the sincerity of the christian in the midst of the actual battle. Behind that Godly fear we find the desire to be like our God. We often say to be of His party in the midst of the world. Rightly so. If ye call on Him as Father, and Peter means to say 'you do', you acknowledge and confess thereby the most intimate relation between yourself and your God. For when we confess, that He is our Father, we are duty bound to reveal ourselves as His children.

The result of it will be, that in our walk, in our talk, yea, in the manifestation of our life we reveal that relation.

Notice, how this fact of the relation between God and His people finds its basis and its realization in another fact, always emphasized in Scripture, that we are bought. The general idea of being bought is, that the buyer claims ownership of his property. We must see this clearly. If anything or anyone is bought, it or he are at the disposal and under the command of the owner. The owner has a right to demand. In this case the owner is God, who bought us with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Christ's sacrifice was a perfect sacrifice, hence, a perfect price.

And this transaction of buying was not merely something outside of us, but also something in us. The ransom paid for the sins of God's people made them the rightful property of the Lord. But this buying was not only a judicial action, but also a setting free from the power of the devil, sin and corruption. Free from the *power* of the life of self, they were liberated from what they had learned by tradition of their fathers. In one word, they were freed from the things of the flesh and of sin and thus set free, because the power of it was broken.

Most emphatically the Apostle impresses this fact upon their minds, by calling this fact in a peculiar way to their attention: Ye know that you are bought by the precious blood of the perfect Lamb. This knowledge is not a knowledge of a fact as such, but at the same time a matter of subjective experience. You personally know of that new power of the life of Christ implanted in you. Through it you have become a new creature. There is a new relation between you and your God. You call Him Father and He calls you His children. And even as the sacrifice was perfect, so that nothing was wanting, so is the new life, which by means of the ransom you received a perfect life, liberating you from the power of sin and corruption. Christ Himself thus became your example. God's righteousness demanded a perfect payment and the Only Begotten gave it. He walked in perfect love and in perfect obedience to the bitter end, even the

death on the cross. Therefore, it became possible by means of fulfilling the perfect demand of God with a perfect sacrifice to set you free and to instill in your hearts the life of freedom, the life of perfection.

To heed this admonition is a case of necessity.

First of all, because you call upon God as your Father. You confess the most intimate relation wherein you stand to Him. It is the relation of love. And this confession is not only a question of words. For, if you call upon God as Father, this Father judges without respect of persons. Generally speaking, God simply does not consider a person as such. He never finds anything in you to be of consideration to make you worthy of His fellowship. He does not depend upon you. He is the Self-sufficient One.

Hence, you cannot bring Him anything that is not His own work.

Secondly, according to the meaning of "without respect of persons" carries in it the idea, that someone tries to present himself in such a way to make it appear as though he walks *seemingly* in harmony with the command of God. However, his virtues are a mask. He does not reveal his inner self. He hides behind the mask of his real self. He looks other than self. In other words, he is false in his appearance. He takes his own position, his place in society, his riches or name, that is, he takes all that impresses the world as the sufficient ground for a so-called christian walk. But he cannot maintain himself before God, who is not fooled by any appearance, how nice it may seem, of any man. God judges the heart and as is the heart so also is the walk of life and nothing is hidden before the face of God, not even when a mask is put on.

Finally, you call on the Father, but remember this Father is the Righteous One.

He deals righteously, according to every man's work. Now then, let your walk be characterized by that knowledge of his perfect righteousness and holiness.

Fear and in reverence serve Him.

You know how absolutely holy your Father is through righteousness revealing that He cannot and will not be satisfied through a walk in holiness.

And let your holiness and righteousness be that of your Saviour, the lamb without blemish and without spot.

And you may call Him Father.

W. V.

NOTICE

All the delegates of the Feld-Day Committee are urged to be present at the next meeting, June 2 at 7:45 P.M., at Fuller Ave., Prot. Ref. Church.

Moses' Intercession

"And the Lord said unto Moses, "How long will the people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they."

So the Lord spake. It shows that a great sin had again been committed by the people of Israel. The Lord had shewed signs among them. In the words of the psalmist, Moses and Aaron had "shewed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made it dark. . . . He turned their waters into blood and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake and their locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number. And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river."

These had been the Lord's signs. Their total signified that He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant and that, as so remembering, he would give them the lands of the heathen and cause them to inherit the labor of the people of these lands. But, having finally arrived at the borders of these lands—the promised lands of their abode—they refused to believe the Lord's signs. It was a hard speech that they uttered against Him at their hearing the report of the ten spies. They wanted to know why He had brought them to the border of Canaan that they, their wives and their children should be a prey. Through His continuing to drop His goodnesses before their feet on the way, He had lured them on and on until He finally had them on the edge of Canaan where the slaughter was to take place. 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. . . . and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land. . . ." So the Lord had spoken. But according to those wailing Israelites, God had not meant a word of it. He had

delivered them by His outstretched arm and had taken them to His bosom at Mount Sinai. All along He had provided in all their necessities. But they now saw the real motive behind His doing.

Verily, the people were committing a great sin. The sense and meaning of the Hebrew word translated by *provoke* is: to deride, despise, condemn, reject. The people were despising *the Lord*, faithful and true, long-suffering and of great mercy, the righteous and the holy God. They did so not in their ignorance but deliberately, knowingly. For these virtues of God were manifest in them and were clearly seen by them, being understood by His signs. But though they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, because they were wicked. In their spite they insisted that He was an evil deity, unfaithful, untrue, deceitful and thus worthy to be despised and rejected. And despise Him they did.

It was as if their perversity astonished even the Lord Himself. "How long will they despise me?" "How long will it be ere they believe me. . . ." The Lord answered His own questions, when He said, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them. . . ." The implication of these utterances is that they will not cease despising and disbelieving Him. There is indeed every indication that the vast majority of them were persons thoroughly profligate, men corrupt in the very heart of their disposition. Consider the following. Hearing their speech, Moses and Aaron, in their great amazement and consternation, fell on their faces before all the assembly. Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes. And they spake to all the company saying, "The land which we passed through to search is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel ye not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not."

"Their defence is departed from them." So spake the believing Joshua. What he meant is that the terror of God was fallen upon the inhabitants of Canaan and that their hearts were melted, so that there remained no more courage in them. How is it to be explained that Joshua was so confident of this? To Pharaoh the Lord had said, "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." This prediction of God went into immediate fulfillment. The report of His doings in Egypt was carried far and wide. "We have heard", said Rahab the harlot, to the spies whom she was concealing in her house, "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what he did unto the kings of

the Amorites, that were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed." "And as soon as we heard," Rahab went on to say, "our hearts did melt. . . . because of you: for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." This had by implication also been the testimony of Pharaoh. But there was a difference. In bringing this confession over his lips, Pharaoh was moved by carnal fear; Rahab by a true faith. But the point is that what Rahab's testimony shows is that the Lord had laid His plagues the wonders He had wrought, not only on the heart of Pharaoh but on the hearts of the inhabitants of all the neighboring lands as well, so that already then His name was being declared throughout the earth. And as to the Canaanites, having heard, their hearts did melt. This, that their hearts did melt, Joshua and all the other spies in all likelihood had also perceived from what they had heard the Canaanites say, while exploring their land. They had thus made the discovery that the morale of the Canaanites had been broken down. The despair of these people was to believing Joshua the sign that the Lord was with Israel and that Israel therefore should not fear the adversary. And he also tells the rebels this sign, "Neither fear ye the people of the land for they are bread for us. . . . their defence is departed from them. . . ." Hearing themselves thus admonished, they became furious and in their fury "bade stone them with stones". They could not endure being told that the Lord would bring them into the promised land, if He delight in them and that, if He would not bring them up, it would be solely on account of their rebellion.

The Lord's saying to Moses that He would smite them with pestilence and disinherit them and would make of Moses a greater nation and mightier than they, cannot be taken as expressive of the Lord's intention. For what the Lord said is that He would destroy not the nation in so far as it was reprobated but the entire people with the exception of one man—the man Moses—that thus he would make a sudden end of reprobate and elect alike. So Moses understood this language. For he said to the Lord, "Now if thou shalt kill this people as *one* man. . . ." This is equivalent to saying, "If thou shalt kill them all indiscriminately." It is plain that the Lord spake as He did with a view to arousing Moses to pray for the nation, to plead with God in behalf of His people. And so he does. If the Lord smite them—smite them all—then the Egyptians shall hear it, and, such is the implication, shall be glad; for the Lord brought up this people (of Israel) in His might from among the Egyptians. In their great glee, the Egyptians will tell it to the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. For the latter have heard that the Lord is among the people of Israel, that He is seen by them face to face, and that His cloud standeth over

them, and that He goes before them, by day time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night, that thus (such is here the implication) this people was the object of the Lord's endearment and that He originally meant to do them well by bringing them unto a good land. It follows therefore that if the Lord will now kill this people as one man, the nations that have heard the fame of the Lord will conclude in their malice that He was *not able* to bring them into the land which He swore to them and that therefore all there remained for Him to do is to slay them in the wilderness. Let the power of the Lord therefore be great, according as He has spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. So Moses beseeches the Lord to pardon the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of His mercy, and as He has forgiven this people; from Egypt even until now.

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word."

This is truly a remarkable prayer. It tells us that what prompted Moses to intercede for the people was his concern not first of all about the well-being of the people but about the reputation of God among the nations. The Lord's destroying His people will surely result in the nations slandering Him. They will say without fail that the Lord was not able. The thought is too painful for him; for he loves God. He therefore pleads with God to pardon the iniquity of this people. And he pleads on the grounds of the Lord's glories, of His power, longsuffering and great mercy. Such a prayer the Lord must hear. The nation is thus spared and enters Canaan.

G. M. O.

IN MEMORIAM

De Vrouwen Vereeniging der Prot. Geref. Kerk te Hull, Iowa, spreekt met dezen hare hartelijke sympathie uit aan onze juffrouw, Mrs. A. Cammenga, en hare familie, in het verlies van hun vader,

SIDNEY VISSER, Sr.

Moge de Heere hun troosten en ondersteunen door Zijnen Geest; en moge de zekerheid van een zalig wederzien hun smart leenigen.

Namens de Vereeniging,

Mrs. G. Blankespoor, Sec'y.

The Prophecy Of Jeremiah

The Jewish typical theocracy suffered many an assault, throughout its history. At regular intervals the heathen nations appear as scourges in the hand of the Lord for the chastisement of His people. Of all these assaults, however, only two were disastrous and final: the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and that by Titus. Each culminated in the demolition of the temple and the holy city, and the carrying away of the people. Each had its prophet: the former Jeremiah, and the latter, Christ. There is, of course, an important difference to be noticed between the two catastrophes.

The second was absolutely final, permanent, for the reason that the Lord then had done with the thing He destroyed and therefore caused it to disappear from the face of the earth forever.

The first destruction on the other hand was but an eclipse that lasted but seventy years. Hence the first brake-down was followed by a restoration of the thing destroyed in a greatly modified form.

The first thing that deserves our attention is that Jeremiah began his ministry after the abomination of apostacy reached its height. This was during the reign of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah (2 Kings 21:1-17).

This ruler surpassed his predecessors in wickedness. He did what none before him had done, namely: place idol-altars in the temple. His son Amon equaled his father in wickedness.

With Josiah, the son of Amon, there came a change for the good. He was a king of outstanding piety. The book of Kings declares (23-24) that neither before him or after him there was a king like him, who turned to the Lord with his whole heart, according to all the law of Moses. This king drove from the land all the abominations of idolatry, and restored the worship of Jehovah with a completeness which had not before existed (2 Kings 23:22-24). Apparently then the sick nation was healed. It was during the reign of this king, when it seemed that the nation lived closer to Jehovah than ever before, that Jeremiah, the prophet of doom and divine vengeance appeared.

[How strange and incongruous! The people had turned to the Lord, and He responded with a doleful prediction of judgment and doom. Jerusalem will be destroyed, is the undertone of the entire prophetic discourse of Jeremiah.

However, the appearance of this prophet at this time is not at all strange if it be considered that, as all the pious theocratic kings, Josiah had inaugurated his reformation at the point of the sword, and thus frightened the nations into obedience. Write God's laws on the tables of the nation's heart he could not. This

only He of whom the theocratic king was a type could and would do.

Hence Josiah had not really removed but merely repressed the corruptions. When he died the pressure was removed and the released corruptions broke out anew. The kings had cleansed the land but not the hearts of the people.

This historical position in which Jeremiah was placed and the geographical position of Israel at his time. Israel at this time lay between two great powers, that of Egypt on the south and that of Assyria on the north. The power of Assyria however was on the wane. It could therefore not ward off the heavy blows aimed at it by the Babylonians and Medes. Pharaoh Necho, fearing the rising power of Babylonia (Syria) resolved to deal this kingdom a blow that would permanently cripple it. Josiah knew that if he succeeded, he would overpower him next. So when the king of Egypt set out on his military expedition for the purpose of invading Syria, Josiah went forth with an army to impede his progress and beat him back. In this however he was unsuccessful. His army was defeated at Megiddo and the king himself was slain. The king of Egypt now pressed on and conquered Syria as far as the Euphrates. (2 Kings 24:7).

The reason the king of Egypt could overrun the Syrian territory as far as the aforesaid river was that the Syrian king, Nabopolassar, was laying siege to Nineveh. The siege was successful. Nineveh fell, B.C. 606. The Syrian army was now set free, and was now sent under Nebuchadnezzar, the youthful son of King Nabopolassar, against the Egyptians over whom he gained a decisive victory at Carchernish, B.C. 605. In the same year his father died and the youthful conqueror was now king of Babylon.

The king of Egypt, although defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, was still master of Judea. The Jews had chosen as king the second son of Josiah, namely, Jehoahaz, who did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. (2 Kings 23:32). His punishment soon came.

He went to Riblah, to treat with the Egyptian king, by whom he was taken prisoner and carried away captive to Egypt. (2 Kings 23:32-34; Jer. 22:10-12). The reason for this capture was Jehoahaz' policy. His policy was national, that is national independence, versus submission to Egypt.

The Egyptian king now made Jehoiakim, the eldest son of Josiah, king in the room of Jehoahaz. The new king was thus a creature of the king of Egypt and obliged to serve him. He was a cruel king. He oppressed the people in the attempt to extract from them money for his extensive building projects; he also shed much blood. But his hour was soon to strike. As was said, the Egyptian power had been overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar in a battle of Carchemesh. The reason

that the Egyptian king still held sway for some time after in Judah, is that the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father, called him back to Babylonia, so that he could not follow up his victory by a conquest of Egypt and Judea. However Nebuchadnezzar's supremacy over Egypt and Judea was soon secured. Four years later, in the 8th year of Jehoiakim he returned and took Judea and Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:1). This capture is recorded in the book of Kings but not in Jeremiah.

Three years afterwards Jehoiakim again revolted. Again the rebellious king is reduced by a Chaldean army with auxiliaries from Syria Moab and Ammon. At this juncture Jehoiakim lost his life.

According to the book of Kings the Chaldeans do not appear to have taken the city immediately after the death of Jehoiakim, for his son Jehoiachin, acceded by right of inheritance, and by the will of the Babylonian monarch. He, too, is made war upon. The Babylonian monarch now laid siege to Jerusalem. Three months after his accession to the throne, Jehoiachin had to surrender the city to the besieging forces of Nebuchadnezzar. He and his family, the princes, the soldiers and all who could bear arms or make them, were carried away captive to Babylon.

This was the first deportation, and did not attain its object of rendering the people incapable of resistance. Nebuchadnezzar seems not to have been aware of the amazing tenacity of the Jewish character. For he allowed at first the kingdom of Judah to remain and appointed a king of his own choice, Mattaniah, the youngest son of Josiah, who changed his name to Zedekiah. He was a weak, cruel and wicked king. From dread of his powerful nobles, he permitted every kind of transgression against the laws of Jehovah and injustice toward his people.

In Zedekiah's fourth year ambassadors came from Tyre, Sidon, Ammon, Moab and Edom (Jer. 27), to consult together concerning a united revolt against the Babylonian rule. Jeremiah stayed the revolt. The same year Zedekiah made a journey to Babylon to do homage (Jer. 51:59), on which occasion by a strange turn Jeremiah gave to the king's marshal his great prophecy against Babylon, that he might read it to his master on the banks of the Euphrates and then sink it into a stream.

Then Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, prepared to make a war on Babylon. The Jews taking advantage of the situation ventured another revolt. Before the Egyptians could come up, Nebuchadnezzar appeared with a large army before Jerusalem, in the ninth year of Zedekiah. The approach of the Egyptian army compelled him to raise the siege, but he soon succeeded in repulsing the Egyptians and Jerusalem was at once infested and sorely pressed after being devastated by famine and pestilence. The city was then taken in the 11th year of Zedekiah. The king

fled with a part of his army, but was overtaken in the plains of Jericho, brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in the land of Hamath and after the children and his captive princes of Judah were slain in his presence, his eyes were put out. He was then laden with chains and carried to Babylon, where he remained in prison till his death, (Jer. 52:11; 2 Kings 25:7), yet it appears that the end of his imprisonment was less rigorous and that he was honorably buried (Jer. 34:1).

After the capture of the city, in the 4th month of the 9th year, came Nebuzaradan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, to Jerusalem, and caused the city and the temple to be destroyed, and the people carried away. A few of the common people only remained in the country, over which Gedaliah, was appointed governor. He was the son of Ahikam. In his care Jeremiah was committed. Gedaliah however, was soon afterward murdered by a certain Ishmael, a descendant of the royal family, at the instigation of Baalis, king of Ammon. For this murder the remaining Jews feared the vengeance of the Chaldeans, and although Jeremiah promised them safety and exemption from punishment if they stayed in the country they removed with their wives and children and whole possessions to Egypt, whither the prophet Jeremiah was compelled to follow them. In Egypt they appear to have settled in different places (44:1) and to have worshipped the queen of heaven (the Moabitish goddess, Astarte).

At the festival of this deity for which all the Jews in Egypt assembled in Pathros (upper Egypt) Jeremiah raised his voice for the last time in warning and rebuke. From the prophecy of the approaching death of Pharaoh Hophra, which he gave to his countrymen, as a prophetic sign, and which we can only regard as shortly preceding the death of that monarch, we may infer that he continued his prophetic labors till towards the year B.C. 570.

Such was the historical position in which Jeremiah was placed. Let us now survey his prophetic discourse.

The prophet's ministry may be divided into three periods: (1) From the reign of Manasseh to the first deportation; (2) From the first deportation to the destruction of Jerusalem; (3) From the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the prophet's ministry 570 B.C.

I. The first period.

As was said, Jeremiah began his ministry after the abomination of apostacy had reached its height. This was during the reign of Manasseh, who surpassed his predecessors in wickedness.

Josiah, his successor, was a king of outstanding piety, who brought the nation back to the Lord. However Josiah did not remove but merely repressed the corruption. The nation remained wicked.

The following king Jehoahaz, who reigned but

three months was also wicked. Likewise Jehoiakim and his son and successor, Jehoiachin. It was during the reign of Jehoiachin that Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem, and, so it seems, entered the city with very little opposition on the part of the king of Judah. The king of Judah was bound in fetters with the intention of being carried to Babylon. This, however, was not done for some reason. Jehoiakim was allowed to remain for three years as a tributary to Babylon. At the end of three years he rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar, probably detained by domestic affairs, left his punishment to his Chaldean garrisons, enemies surrounding Judah (2 Kings 24:2). The land was now overrun by the enemies. In the midst of these troubles Jehoiakim died—perhaps slain. He was succeeded by Jehoiachin, who reigned only three months and ten days. He was occupying the throne when Nebuchadnezzar himself appeared a second time. Jerusalem refused to open its gates to Nebuchadnezzar. Then followed a siege and the city fell. Now followed the first deportation of 11,000 Jews.

It was during this period (from Manasseh to the deportation) that the first seven discourses were uttered, that is, *in all likelihood* these discourses were uttered during this period. Strange to say, no mention is made in these discourses of the aforesaid events. In fact, the prophet makes no mention of these events at all.

In agreement with the character of this first period, the seven discourses of the prophet were comprised of the following themes: (1) The apostacy of the nation; Its wickedness, spiritual degeneration and debauchery. (2) The impending judgments of God upon the nation for its perverseness—judgments to take definite shape in the captivity of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem, and that would end in the captivity. (3) The vanity of trusting in idols who cannot save. (4) Repentance. The prophet scorns false confidence and declares that the Lord dwells with those who do righteously. (5) The nation without excuse. The prophet challenged the people to declare what iniquity they found in Him that they went from Him the Lord. The treatment Jehovah afforded Israel from his youth was nothing but gracious. Hence, the cause of their calamity is their disobedience. (6) The success of the Babylonian monarch. He will subdue all the neighboring kings. The Lord will destroy the nations that will not serve this pagan monarch.

Though, as was said, the first seven discourses make no mention of the first siege and the subsequent deportation, the last three of the seven contain passages that clearly indicate that these discourses were uttered in a period when the aforesaid events transpired.

The prophet lamented the destruction of the heritage of God (4th discourse, chap. 12:7-13). The sinful

people are told that their abominations are the cause of their destruction (4th discourse, chap. 13:22-27).

The prophet bewails his lot. He is a man of contention to the whole earth. (5th discourse, chap. 15:10-14). This wailing of the prophet shows that when the siege was in progress he had admonished the king and the nobles to surrender, and thus according to their way of thinking, broke down the morale of the city. The prophet prays that he may not be deported. (Fifth discourse, chap. 10:15-21). This prayer may presuppose the presence of the enemy in the land assembling the captives for deportation.

II. The second period of the prophet's ministry. From the first deportation to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Discourses 8, 9, 10b. together with the discourse comprising the book of consolation were uttered during this period.

Events of this period of the ministry of the prophet. The elevation of Zedekiah, the youngest son of king Josiah, to the throne by the Babylonian monarch. The second siege during the 10th years of the reign of this rebellious king of Judah. The following year Jerusalem surrenders and then follows the second deportation, and in the next year the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

In agreement with the character of this period, discourses 8, 9 10b. are comprised chiefly of warnings to King Zedekiah and the people to surrender themselves to the Chaldeans and live.

In this period the prophet is much opposed by the false prophets, who, before the second siege insisted that no doom was in progress. These prophets cried peace, and declared the warnings of Jeremiah false and a lie. The prophet Jeremiah rebukes these false prophets to their faces and warns the king and the people not to listen to them. Jeremiah's words are not heeded by the King and his people.

During this period and in particular after the fall of Jerusalem the discourse comprising the book of comfort was uttered.

The prophet is called to announce for the benefit of the remnant that He, the Lord, will bring the captivity of His people, that Jacob shall be saved from afar off, that Jacob shall be restored to his former glory, that the Lord's love for His people is eternal. The Lord further will have mercy on Ephraim; He will watch over Israel to build and to plant. He will make a new covenant with Israel to consist in the putting of his laws in their hearts. Israel can no more cease to be a nation then the ordinance of heaven can depart from him. In those days the Lord shall cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David. He shall execute judgment in the land.

G. M. O.