

Gaebelein and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

This writer considers it amazing that anyone can read the voluminous writings of Arno Gaebelein, whether in book form or on the pages of *Our Hope*, and come away with the idea that this man was anti-Semitic. Yet Gaebelein left himself open for the charge with some unfortunate words, especially in *Conflict of the Ages*, which, if read without reference to Gaebelein's overall life and message, could be taken for anti-Semitism.

The catalyst for the controversy was a bizarre document entitled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.¹ This text purported to be a Russian writing by one Serge Nilus around the turn of the twentieth century.² Rausch described the significance of *The Protocols* in this way:

The *Protocols* are of Russian origin and are the alleged secret proceedings of a group of Jews plotting to destroy Christianity, challenge civil government and disrupt the international economy in an effort to control the world. This document added to the anti-Semitism prevalent in the world, and when Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent* published excerpts of the *Protocols*, it gave anti-Semites in America another torch in their parade of anti-Jewish propaganda.³

¹ This document was made popular in the early 1920s by Henry Ford who published a so-called investigation into the Jewish Question in "The Dearborn Independent," the official organ of the Ford Motor Company. It is doubtful that Ford did any of the actual writing himself. Weekly articles, which began on 22 May 1920 and ended on 14 January 1922, were quickly republished in four volumes with no byline. The first volume covered the articles from 22 May 1920 to 2 October, 1920. See *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem* (Dearborn, MI: Dearborn Independent, 1920). The second volume covered the articles from 9 October 1920 to 19 March 1921. See *Jewish Activities in the United States* (Dearborn, MI: Dearborn Independent, 1921). The third volume covered the articles from 4 June 1921 to 16 July 1921. See *Jewish Influences in American Life* (Dearborn, MI: Dearborn Independent, 1921). The final volume covered the articles from 17 December 1921 to 14 January 1922. See *Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States* (Dearborn, MI: Dearborn Independent, 1922). The titles of the last three volumes were actually considered subtitles with the title of the first volume considered the title of a four volume single work. The writings are difficult to reference. Gerald L. K. Smith later edited an abridged edition with a byline for Henry Ford as publisher or editor. See Henry Ford, Sr., ed. *The International Jew, the World's Foremost Problem*, abridged by Gerald L. K. Smith, (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., n.d.).

² The actual publishing date seems difficult to determine as sources conflict. Ariel said *The Protocols* was published in Russia in 1903, but probably originated in the 1890s (Yaakov S. Ariel, "American Premillennialism and its Attitudes Towards the Jewish People, Judaism and Zionism, 1875-1925," [Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1986], 262). Note that these details were left out of the publication of Ariel's dissertation in the book form (*On Behalf of Israel*, 111). Timothy Weber dated the document's Russian origin as 1901 (*Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875-1925* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1979], 185). Gaebelein himself dated *The Protocols of Zion* as 1905 ("Current Events and Signs of the Times," *Our Hope* 27 [November 1920]: 297).

³ Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 130-131.

Rausch added that Gaebelein did not immediately know how to take the document.⁴ It is clear that *The Protocols* had caught Gaebelein's attention. *Our Hope* made reference to this document a total of four times in 1920 and 1921.⁵ The first and longest reference emphasized that the goal advocated in *The Protocols* was world anarchy which was consistent with predictions made in the Bible and which had already begun to be carried out literally in the Soviet government.⁶ *Our Hope* considered the idea that *The Protocols* was a forged document in the second reference.⁷ The third article lamented the anti-Zionistic Jews who then controlled Russia.⁸ The fourth reference to *The Protocols* during this time showed the influence of Henry Ford's publishing of the document. Gaebelein remarked:

The new volume issued by the "Dearborn Independent" contains a great deal of truth concerning the Jew, especially that part of Jewry which rejects the law and the testimony of their fathers. There is nothing so vile on earth as an apostate Jew, who denies God and His Word. All true Jews will be grateful for an expose like the one published by the Independent. The evidence is unimpeachable. It shows how Jews gained control over the American Liquor trust; it gives a history of the Gigantic Jewish Liquor trust; it shows the prominence of the Jewish element in the Bootlegging evil. There is no question that many of the bandits, highway robbers and other lawbreakers have Jewish names; the court records bear witness to it. The volume concludes with two excellent addresses to the Jews and another address to the Gentiles. This Jewish apostasy and immorality of the worse type which strikes at the very foundations of our government is also a sign of the times. It is predicted in the Word of God that a large part of the Jews will become apostate, along with the Gentile masses.

But not all Jews are liquor fiends, apostates and immoral. There is another side to this question.⁹

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 131-34.

⁶ Gaebelein, "Current Events," 297-98.

⁷ Frederick C. Jennings, "Isaiah Chapter xix - - (Continued)," *Our Hope*, 27 (April 1921): 601. Jennings, a lay teacher among the Plymouth Brethren, wrote the article as part of an exposition of Isaiah which lasted for several months in *Our Hope*. Although in the April edition no author was cited, a comparison with the later published commentary by Jennings shows only minor editing. See Frederick C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah*, (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Bible Truth Depot, 1930[?]), 231-36. Still, Gaebelein, as editor, approved the article. It is interesting to note that Jennings, in his commentary, opted to take out any specific reference to *The Protocols*. Instead, a general statement about Jewish involvement in revolutionary movements was substituted (231). Gaebelein's editorial influence on the original article may be suggested.

⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 27 (June 1921): 734-35.

⁹ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Current Events" *Our Hope* 29 (August 1922): 103.

It appears clear that Gaebelein saw some truth to *The Protocols*, even if he was not in full agreement with what they were about. In his controversial work, *The Conflict of the Ages* (1933), Gaebelein outlined a world conspiracy against Christian civilization headed by Satanic forces. He traced several historical movements such as the Illuminati and Bolshevism which, in his thinking, promoted world revolution. In this analysis, Gaebelein was highly critical of atheistic and communistic Jews who appeared to play a leading role. It is in this context that Gaebelein asserted:

A painstaking and deeper study of the Protocols, compared with present day world conditions, must lead, and does lead, to the conviction, that the plan of the Protocols, whoever concocted it, is not a *crude forgery*. Behind it are hidden, unseen actors, powerful and cunning, who follow the plan still, bent on the overthrow of our civilization.¹⁰

Assessment of Gaebelein's true position has varied among historians. For example, a rather recent article by Mouly and Robertson, while generally well-balanced, leaves one with an overstatement about Gaebelein's relationship to *The Protocols*. While discussing the premillennial interest in current events surrounding the Middle East during World War I, they parenthetically add the statement, "It should be noted, however, that some premillennialists were taken with the fabricated *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Gaebelein later writing a book which spoke in clearly anti-Jewish terms."¹¹ This comment is disappointing for its lack of explanation while it gives the reader the impression that Gaebelein was anti-Semitic.

A book, *Apostles of Discord*, by Ralph Lord Roy was written within ten years of Gaebelein's death and associated the Bible teacher with the well-known, anti-Semitic Gerald Winrod.¹² Rausch in an interview with Frank Gaebelein documented how Arno's son was able to convince Roy to change his mind by showing him the evidence of the elder Gaebelein's love for the Jews throughout his ministry.¹³

George Marsden commented concerning what he considered to be extreme beliefs among the premillennialists of the 1930s:

¹⁰ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Conflict of the Ages, the Mystery of Lawlessness: Its Origin, Historic Development and Coming Defeat*, (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1933), 100.

¹¹ Ruth Mouly and Roland Robertson, "Zionism in American Premillenarian Fundamentalism," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 4 (September 1983): 102.

¹² Ralph Lord Roy, *The Apostles of Discord*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), 47. A chapter of the book also appeared as an article ("Religion and Race," *Christian Century* 70 [April 22, 1953]: 474-76).

¹³ Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 269-80.

Arno C. Gaebelein in *The Conflict of the Ages* (1933) presented probably the most comprehensive catalog of interrelated conspiracies. Starting with the struggle between God and Satan in the Garden of Eden, Gaebelein compiled a classic list of conspiratorial threats that had faced America, including the Illuminati who promoted the infidelity of the French Revolution, secret societies, Roman Catholics, socialists, and the Jews. The Jews were condemned on the basis of the post-World-War-I publication of the factitious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. . . (W. B.) Riley, like Gaebelein and a few other fundamentalists of the 1930s, was convinced by the spurious *Protocols* of the Jewish aspect of the international threat. This anti-Jewish sentiment, while no means characteristic of fundamentalists generally, was remarkable in light of the strong pro-Zionist convictions of most premillennialists.¹⁴

Hence, Marsden spoke of Gaebelein's writings in this connection as anti-Jewish. The impression that remains is one of a tinge of anti-Semitism.

Reaction to Gaebelein's statements was not confined to later writers. The League of American Writers published a small booklet named *We Hold These Truths* in which Gaebelein was severely criticized.¹⁵ The Our Hope Publication Office was accused of being a "pseudo-religious organization whose main purpose is to promulgate 'Aryan,' 'Gentile' and white supremacy." Gaebelein was accused of attacking all Jews as communist antichrists and of being vicious in attacks on Negroes. He was also seen as a collaborator with Gerald Winrod and a host of other people associated with anti-Semitism.

Gaebelein's response was swift, emotional, and to the point. In a lengthy article in *Our Hope*, he accused the pamphlet of outright slander which could easily be proven in a court of law.¹⁶ Rausch considered this response significant enough to quote the entire reply.¹⁷ Gaebelein passionately pointed his slanderers to the pages of *Our Hope* (where he had consistently attacked Aryanism), to his early Jewish ministry, and to his ongoing ministry of preaching the future restoration of the land of Israel (i.e., his eschatological views). He also branded the accusations of association with known anti-Semites as exaggerations and downright fabrications. He closed on a note raising the question of the League's own association with communism. One notes a sense of

¹⁴ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 210.

¹⁵ *We Hold These Truths: Statements on Anti-Semitism by 54 Leading American Writers, Statesmen, Educators, Clergymen and Trade-Unionists* (New York: League of American Writers, 1939), 121. The criticism came in an annotated list of supposedly anti-Semitic publishers, organizations, and individuals in America (115-23).

¹⁶ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Misrepresenting 'Our Hope,'" *Our Hope* 46 (December 1939): 379-82.

¹⁷ Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 150-53.

surprise, as well as hurt, in Gaebelein's fiery words. Ariel correctly noted that Gaebelein simply did not look at himself as an anti-Semite.¹⁸

More sophisticated analyses of premillennial reaction to *The Protocols*, which included mention of Gaebelein, come from Ariel, Weber, Wilson, and Rausch.¹⁹ Of these, only Rausch defended Gaebelein strongly. Wilson, whose main concern was the misuse, as he saw it, of current events involving Russia and Israel by premillennialists, argued that "Arno C. Gaebelein in his book, *The Conflict of the Ages: The Mystery of Lawlessness: Its Origin, Historic Development and Coming Defeat*, seemed to provide legitimacy for the Nazi attitude."²⁰ In a rather nasty exchange Weber and Rausch debated Weber's thesis that there was an "ironic ambivalence in the premillennialist attitude toward Jews."²¹ Weber saw a tension between the pro-Zionist view consistently taught in premillennialism and the usual acceptance of *The Protocols* on the part of premillennialists. Such friction between the two poles was certainly evident on the surface. The theological Zionism of the premillennial fundamentalists seemed to conflict with the hostility toward perceived Jewish involvement in the rise of communism, a system whose goal was world domination and whose existence provided a basis for prophetic discussions.

The most recent analysis of Gaebelein in this matter has been written by Yaakov S. Ariel who took offense at Gaebelein's use of terms such as "apostate," "infidel," or "deformed" when

¹⁸ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 113.

¹⁹ Ibid., 111-17; Dwight Wilson, *Armageddon Now! The Premillennial Response to Russia and Israel Since 1917* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977): 86-106; Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 143-57; Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 128-53.

²⁰ Wilson, *Armageddon Now!*, 97.

²¹ The statement came from Weber's book (*Living in the Shadow*, 154). The nasty salvos took place in a series of articles: David A. Rausch, "Fundamentalism and the Jew: An Interpretive Essay," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (June 1980): 105-12; Timothy P. Weber, "A Reply to David Rausch's 'Fundamentalism and the Jew,'" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (March 1981): 67-71; David A. Rausch, "A Rejoinder to Timothy Weber's Reply," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (March 1981): 73-77; Timothy P. Weber, "A Surrejoinder to David Rausch's Rejoinder," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (March 1981): 79-82. Much of the discussion dealt with semantics. Weber defended the language of his presentation by noting that his negative statements about premillennialism in regards to anti-Semitism did not constitute a claim that they were in fact anti-Semitic. Rausch was irritated that the language left readers with the impression that men such as Gaebelein were anti-Semitic. Both writers wanted to deny any indictments of anti-Semitism, but disagreed about the significance of the negative language influenced by such things as *The Protocols*. Rausch wanted to minimize such statements on the part of premillennialists in light of the larger context of their lives and ministries. Weber was comfortable in allowing the tension to exist. With the overwhelming amount of pro-Jewish material, and some of it concurrent with *The Protocols*, Rausch's approach may deserve more attention.

speaking of unorthodox Jews.²² While acknowledging the many positive statements made by Gaebelein toward the Jews and against anti-Semitism, Ariel noted that “Gaebelein’s attitudes towards the Jewish people are, indeed complex and varied, and cannot be judged solely on the basis of statements he made concerning the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion.’”²³ In the final analysis, however, Ariel still misjudged Gaebelein’s thoughts and life.

First, he accused Gaebelein of inconsistency in his approach to the Jews:

The origin of Gaebelein’s suspicious attitude towards Jews, an attitude that might seem on the surface to deny his more positive words concerning that people, can be found in his differentiation between various groups of Jews. Gaebelein held a certain amount of appreciation for Orthodox Jews, who regarded the Bible as divinely inspired and without error, kept hoping for the arrival of the Messiah and prayed for the national restoration of Israel. . . Orthodox Judaism was, to a large degree, an exception for Gaebelein. It was the only religious manifestation aside from evangelical Protestantism for which he found any use and purpose. Although it was erroneous, it had a role in God’s plan for humanity. Gaebelein not only rejected all religions except Christianity but he also expressed harsh criticism of all Christian groups that did not conform to his understanding of what true Christianity was. He rejected Roman Catholicism, Orthodox and Eastern Christianity and dissenting Protestant groups such as the Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists and Christian Scientists.²⁴

Ariel went on to lament Gaebelein’s attitudes toward the secular and Reform Jew who was a vile apostate that would “neither convert to Christianity nor await the Messiah and participate in the Jewish national restoration.”²⁵ Ariel agreed with the overall assessment of Gaebelein as someone who cannot be labeled an anti-Semite.²⁶ Yet his condemnatory tone reveals that he reluctantly does so.

What Ariel missed, in what was an otherwise correct understanding of Gaebelein’s position, was that those points show that Gaebelein had no animosity towards the Jews simply because they were Jews. Several specifics can be noted. First, the basic motivation for Gaebelein

²² Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 114.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113-14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 146 n. 50.

was clearly theological, not racial.²⁷ It was one's attitude toward the Old Testament prophecies about the restoration of Israel that attracted his attention. Second, the fact that Gaebelein did not hesitate to criticize non-Jews along the same lines shows that he was not attacking any group of Jews because they were Jews. Third, he expressed positive appreciation for unorthodox Jews who were involved in the Zionist movement thereby showing that not all of his invectives were to be taken universally.²⁸ Finally, Gaebelein's stand against anti-Semitism in Europe during the Hitler era was not confined to a defense of orthodox Jews. In this, he viewed the Jews as a people without reference to their particular religious persuasion.²⁹

The second accusation which Ariel leveled at Gaebelein in this matter involved a perceived change on Gaebelein's part:

One should bear in mind that the tracts and articles that Gaebelein wrote in earlier periods of his life had been intended for distribution among Jews as part of the missionary efforts. These writings naturally emphasized the more favorable aspects of the dispensationalist attitudes towards the Jews. It might also be that when Gaebelein worked as an evangelist to the Jews, his attitude towards them was somewhat warmer and reflected a greater amount of good will and concern than when he wrote *The Conflict of the Ages*. By that time, he had no more contact with Jews.³⁰

Though couched in tentative terms, these statements by Ariel lead one to wrong conclusions.

First, the indication that missionary work among the Jews in Gaebelein's early ministry naturally caused an outward favorable response meets head on with some convictions held by Gaebelein even in those early years. For example, Gaebelein refused to follow the lead of disgraceful missionary efforts (which he believed existed) in which Jews were won over

²⁷ Ariel appears to be aware of this, but simply did not give it the weight that it deserves in the discussion.

²⁸ Ibid., 114-16. Ariel would not agree with this statement.

²⁹ Later sections will highlight Gaebelein's distaste for Nazism and the contrasting fondness he had for the Zionist movement. The spirit of Gaebelein's reception by Ariel is a good example of the mixed feelings displayed by the Jewish community toward evangelicals in general. In recent times, for example, the question concerning the relationship of Jerry Falwell, a prominent fundamentalist pastor and founder of the politically conservative Moral Majority (1979), with the Jews remarkably parallels that of Gaebelein. This is especially true when one notes how Falwell, like Gaebelein, has a deep concern for how the Jewish people fit into world events (including anti-Semitism) and the relationship Israel, as a nation, has to theological and evangelistic concerns for the Christian. See Merrill Simon, *Jerry Falwell and the Jews*, with a Forward by Emanuel Rackman (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1984), 15, 18-19, 25-47. Also helpful is David Rausch, *Building Bridges* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 199-200, 205, 215-16.

³⁰ Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 115.

presumably to false conversions with the promise of aid in education to become a doctor, dentist, or preacher.³¹ Gaebelein in 1930 angrily remembered that

The accusation from the side of intelligent Hebrews, that the Jewish Missions have encouraged such a miserable spirit and these mercenary motives in order to make converts, is not wholly unfounded. Many of the converts of certain Missions conducted by Jewish converts are nothing but hirelings and a disgrace to both Judaism and Christianity.³²

There is nothing in Gaebelein's attitude that would soft peddle the gospel or his views of the Bible. It is not unreasonable to assume that the same characteristic would be true of his entire theological system.

Second, Ariel contrasted this supposed friendliness toward Jews on the part of Gaebelein (with missionary motives) to a later harshness toward them as his life and ministry drifted farther away from contact with Jewish people. However, this also was a shallow suggestion. The same statement quoted above with respect to Gaebelein's outreach to the Jews in New York City was written in his autobiography in 1930 just three years before the controversial *The Conflict of the Ages* was written. Furthermore, Gaebelein's interest in combating anti-Semitism in Europe had not yet reached the heights it would attain just a few years later as Hitler consolidated his power and expanded his treachery. It is also clear that Gaebelein's interest in Zionism was consistent throughout his life.³³

In summary, Gaebelein's language in the 1920s and 1930s concerning *The Protocols* should not be taken as inherently anti-Semitic. Rausch was right when he urged consideration of his overall life and ministry, including the numerous words of love aimed at Jewish people written in *Our Hope* and elsewhere. The apparent harshness at times toward Jews was not aimed at them because they were Jews, but, in most cases, because the Jews in question were communists who rejected God and His Word. That Gaebelein's aggressiveness in *The Conflict of the Ages* should not be turned into accusations of anti-Semitism can be highlighted by the fact that in 1939 he

³¹ Gaebelein, *Autobiography*, 29-30.

³² *Ibid.*, 30. See also Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 7-8.

³³ Ariel understated Gaebelein's interest in Zionism (*On Behalf of Israel*, 114-16). He recognized Gaebelein's contribution to the awakening of the Christian public to the Holocaust as it was in progress (116-17). Yet, Ariel downplayed these positive factors in Gaebelein's ministry and refused to let the whole scope of Gaebelein's communications speak for themselves.

joined a host of other fundamentalist leaders in signing a document repudiating *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.³⁴

Gaebelein's Opposition to Anti-Semitism

David Rausch has done an excellent service in documenting in detail Gaebelein's heroic stand against anti-Semitism given in *Our Hope* from the early 1930s until the latter days of World War II.³⁵ During this period of great unrest, he viewed the chaos developing in political and governmental institutions as alarming. In them he saw the potential world conditions leading up to the revealing of the personal Antichrist and the return of the Lord Jesus. However, the basic thrust of Gaebelein's ministry never changed while world conditions fomented. He still spoke at Bible conferences and continued as the editor of *Our Hope*.

The spirit of Gaebelein's global concerns was captured in *Our Hope* in January 1935:

The greatest sign of the times is the spirit of lawlessness, centering in the demon possessed Soviets, working strenuously for a world revolution. The leaven is working and will work till the great dictator appears. France, falling in line with Russian diplomacy, making an alliance with Sovietism, is opening the road for the triumph of Communism. Hitlerism still domineers in Germany! The Balkans are seething with the spirit of jealousy and revenge. The far East is coming to the front. The so-called "yellow peril" is not an idle dream. The giant Asia is fully awake! And here are Jewish conditions. Anti-Semitism is arising everywhere. The shadows of their great tribulation lengthen and threatening and well deserved judgments for that part of Jewry which has abandoned faith in God and lines up with world-revolution will surely come.³⁶

Gaebelein's perspective involved the whole world.³⁷ Yet he concentrated on two historical realities: communism and anti-Semitism.

Often the concerns about the two overlapped. In defending his book *The Conflict of the Ages*, Gaebelein alerted the readers of *Our Hope* in 1934 about a "ruthless Jew" named Kaganovich and another Jew named Litvinoff who held leadership positions in Soviet Russia:

³⁴ Roy, *Apostles of Discord*, 378-79. The document in question was the "Manifesto to the Jews."

³⁵ Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 161-89.

³⁶ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Editorial Notes," *Our Hope* 41 (January 1935): 390.

³⁷ Gaebelein did not limit his analysis of anti-Semitism to European practices. Quite often he criticized the Arab abuse of the Jews in Palestine. See Arno C. Gaebelein, "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 36 (October 1929): 230 and "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 37 (July 1930): 56.

This makes interesting reading in view of the fact that a well meaning teacher charged the Editor with having committed a big error in his *Conflict of the Ages* in identifying the Jews with Communism. It also answers over and over again a certain “Jewish Missionary” sheet which tried to discredit our book. It also should teach another Jewish “convert” that he is wrong when he claims that they have nothing to do with Communism.

We love true Jews. We never had, and never shall have any sympathy whatever with Anti-Semitism. Our sympathy is with them as a nation. We gave ten of our best years to them, but we can never sympathize with the atheistic, the communistic Jews. They are a menace to their own people as well as a disgrace, and why “Jewish Missionaries” should rise for their defense is difficult to understand.³⁸

Gaebelein sincerely believed that, in the days before the coming of Christ, unbelieving Jews would rise up against believing Jews, the apostates against the orthodox. Surprisingly, perhaps, Gaebelein expected this Jewish aspect of anti-Semitism and was not ashamed to mention it for his readers. As early as 1932, he quoted a Russian source establishing the large number of Jews in the Soviet bureaucracy. His analysis of the situation was enlightening:

All this is interesting and significant to the student of prophecy. Apostate Judaism plays an important part during the end of the age, and finally it will pass away through the judgment of the coming King. The same fate is in store for the Gentile Apostasy. But let us not forget that there are also Jews who are not atheists, who still hope in the promises of God, who continue to keep their feasts, though in unbelief. The day is not far away when God will call out of their number that remnant, which will oppose the apostate Jews and will suffer during the time of Jacob’s trouble.³⁹

As the above comment shows, Gaebelein did not single out Communist Jews as the only agents of anti-Semitism; he saw the involvement of Gentiles as well in a large overall attack upon the Jews engineered by Satan.⁴⁰

Such a picture which Gaebelein painted for the future and correlated with current events was grounded in his view of biblical prophecy.⁴¹ This writer is convinced that Gaebelein’s

³⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, “Current Events in the Light of the Bible,” *Our Hope* 40 (May 1934): 672-73.

³⁹ Arno C. Gaebelein, “Current Events in the Light of the Bible,” *Our Hope* 39 (December 1932): 376-77. See also “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 41 (January 1935): 393-94.

⁴⁰ See also Arno C. Gaebelein, “Current Events in the Light of the Bible,” *Our Hope* 40 (May 1934): 673.

⁴¹ Gaebelein’s *Conflict of the Ages* (1933) was his attempt to trace historically the current events leading up to the last days. Current events confirmed that existing conditions made it hopeful that the end was near. The next year (1934) Gaebelein published *World Prospects, How Is It All Going to End? A Study in Sacred Prophecy and Present Day World Conditions* (New York: Publication Office, “Our Hope”), 1934. Although touching upon current events occasionally, this second book actually concentrated on the scriptural or theological justification for Gaebelein’s world view. However, again world events were used to confirm scriptural conclusions. In fact, the overall message of *World Prospects* paralleled much of what was in Guers’ *La Future D’Israël*. Gaebelein noted that *World Prospects* was a

dependence upon biblical prophecy was the decisive factor in his willingness to believe the incoming evidence about the holocaust when others were dismissing the reports. He believed the holocaust was occurring because he expected it to happen. He anticipated it, because, for him, the Bible predicted it would come to pass.

At times during this period of his ministry Gaebelein maintained an optimism which in hindsight was not warranted. For example, his early impressions of Mussolini were favorable.⁴² In fairness to Gaebelein, even when events turned to show the imperial inclinations of the Italian dictator, such as the invasion of Ethiopia in the spring of 1936, it must be said that Gaebelein showed a balanced attitude in his application of prophecy to world events. In July of the same year Gaebelein combined excitement with caution:

Such startling events, in full line with Bible Prophecy, God's waiting true Church has never seen before. It seems as if this man has prominent marks of that final great European dictator, the little horn of Daniel's vision (Dan. 7). But we dare not prophesy. Should the Church be called hence to meet the Lord in the air we can be sure that Mussolini would be the man. But who can fathom the wisdom, the ways and purposes of our God! He alone knows what the immediate future is going to bring.⁴³

When one reads the pronouncements of Gaebelein about world events during this period, he must keep in mind this balanced thinking. At times Gaebelein showed his readers how current events could fit into the plan of biblical prophecy. He did not always categorically demonstrate how they would do so.

Concerning anti-Semitism in his childhood homeland of Germany, Gaebelein again showed signs of optimistic thinking. While fully deploring Hitler as another wicked Haman, he was glad that the dictator was strongly anti-communist.⁴⁴ In addition, his sources told him that there was a growing evangelical awakening in Germany along with the rise of anti-Semitism and

companion volume to *Conflict of the Ages* so they should be read together; see Arno C. Gaebelein, "Editorial Notes," *Our Hope* 41 (September 1934): 144-45.

⁴² Arno C. Gaebelein, "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 39 (March 1933): 548-49.

⁴³ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Editorial Notes," *Our Hope* 43 (July 1936): 9-10 and "Speculative Prophecy," *Our Hope* 51 (December 1944): 407-10. In addition, Gaebelein published a small book which made it clear that speculation would always be tempered by the fact that one can only come to some general conclusions concerning world events and that the identification of the Antichrist as either Hitler or Mussolini was another affair altogether. See *What Will Become of Europe?*, (New York: Our Hope Publications, 1940).

⁴⁴ Arno C. Gaebelein, "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 39 (July 1932): 27-28 and "Current Events in the Light of the Bible," *Our Hope* 39 (September 1932): 159.

atheism.⁴⁵ Gaebelein wrote to his friend Lewis Sperry Chafer in the fall of 1933 that “God willing in January, February, and March I hope to be on the coast. There is a movement on foot to have me go after that to Germany to participate in the wonderful spiritual come-back in that country.”⁴⁶ Gaebelein did not make that trip until 1937. However, his first-hand encounter with Hitler’s Germany tremendously dampened his optimism for any spiritual revival.⁴⁷

Consequently, the pages of *Our Hope* intensified in their warnings of the anti-Semitism of the horrible Nazi machine.⁴⁸ During World War II Gaebelein matter-of-factly accepted the reports of the Jewish magazine *Contemporary Jewish Record* which noted the details of atrocities against Jews in Europe.⁴⁹ Without reservation *Our Hope* recorded for its readers that at least two million Jews, and probably more, had been exterminated by Hitler.⁵⁰

In evaluating these revelations of current events to Gaebelein’s audience, one must remember the theological hope which stood behind his practical concerns. Gaebelein was genuinely horrified by what was going on. In a passionate moment in September 1943 he noted:

But what is all the destruction of material things in comparison with the wholesale destruction of human lives and human sufferings? We think of the sufferings of women and children. We think of the thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands who suffered an untimely death. We think of the terrible sufferings of the Jews throughout Europe. It is now a fact that more than two million Jews have been slaughtered in this four-year-old war. We say it again—all these sufferings and these terrible devastations it is our lot to hear about, move the Christian believer to deep sympathy, and millions of prayers are now made that our all-wise God, Whose oft mysterious ways are beyond our ken, may soon end it.⁵¹

But there was a theological hope that the events were harbingers of the coming of the Lord. In 1931 after mentioning Hitler as the “new political light” in Germany and predicting his failure

⁴⁵ Arno C. Gaebelein, “Current Events in the Light of the Bible,” *Our Hope* 38 (March 1932): 557.

⁴⁶ Letter, Arno C. Gaebelein to Lewis Sperry Chafer, 10 October 1933, Arno C. Gaebelein Papers, ADTS.

⁴⁷ One of the problems Gaebelein saw first-hand was the development of a new German religion which was not only anti-Jewish, but anti-Christian (“Observations and Experiences,” *Our Hope* 44 [January 1938]: 460-65).

⁴⁸ See Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 167-83.

⁴⁹ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The New Great World Crisis,” *Our Hope* 49 (June 1943): 815. See also Rausch, *Irenic Fundamentalist*, 176.

⁵⁰ Gaebelein, “The New Great World Crisis,” 815.

⁵¹ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The New Great World Crisis,” *Our Hope* 50 (October 1943): 237.

because of his anti-Semitic tendencies, Gaebelein described the theological convictions that gripped him throughout the period:

But as this age closes and the final end is almost upon us, new outbreaks of Antisemitism will be in order, till the great Anti-semite, the man of sin, the son of perdition appears. He will be Satan inspired. Satan knows that Israel will ultimately be triumphant; that their King, our Lord, will return. That His return will result in the salvation of the Jewish remnant, the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth, and will bring about Satan's complete defeat. All through history Satan has been trying to frustrate God's purposes, and his final attempt will be aimed once more at the nation of destiny. He will war against them, and like Haman in the days of Esther, will try to exterminate them. But as Haman failed, even greater will be the final attempt against Israel.⁵²

Perhaps Gaebelein's attitude of this time could be summed up from the title of a book he published in 1935. As he looked at world conditions and then at the Bible, he observed that things looked *Hopeless, Yet There is Hope*.⁵³

⁵² Arno C. Gaebelein, "Notes on Prophecy and the Jews," *Our Hope* 37 (January 1931): 427-28.

⁵³ Arno C. Gaebelein, *Hopeless, Yet There is Hope*, (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope"), 1935.