

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE ESCHATOLOGY OF JOHANNES COCCEIUS

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Calvin Theological Journal 34 (1999) 76-104

Introduction

Browsing through Johannes Cocceius's commentary on the prophet Ezekiel, which appeared one year before his death in 1668, one makes a surprising discovery. Following a meticulous philological exposition of Ezekiel's temple vision in chapters 40-48, one comes across a remarkable appendix. It consists of nineteen copperplates, finely executed in the baroque style, presenting a reconstruction of the temple complex. These pictures, together with all the measurements of the temple complex, appear in both the original Latin edition and the Dutch translation of the commentary.¹ In the accompanying commentary, Cocceius mentioned that the Leyden mathematician Samuel Karel Kechel of Hollestein had drawn these building designs for him.

In this commentary, he also criticized some other drawings of Ezekiel's temple that had come to his attention. He mentioned the sketches of Sebastian Castellio, of the Reformed theologian Ludwig Lavater, of the orthodox Lutheran Matthias Haffenreffer,² of the Jesuit Juan Battista Villalpando,³ as well //77// as a design by a Jew,⁴ which had

¹ Johannes Cocceius, *Prophetia Ezechielis: Commentario illustrata* (1668). I have used the 1673 edition, which was included in the *Opera Omnia*, tomus III (Amsterdam, 1673-1675). The Dutch translation, which I have had the opportunity to view, appeared in 1691 in Amsterdam. [The published article in *CTJ* has some of these illustrations.]

² Matthias Haffenreffer (1561-1619) became professor of OT, Dogmatics, and Patristics at Tübingen, following his ministry in Stuttgart. He represented Lutheran orthodoxy, and is known for his Dogmatics textbook *Loci Communes* (1600), which enjoyed great popularity. His commentary on Ezek 40-48, entitled *Templum Ezechielis* (Tübingen, 1613), of which a copy was kept in Cocceius's library, is less well-known. See *Catalogus instructissimae bibliothecae D. Johannis Coccei, dum viveret S.S. Theologiae in Academia Lugduno-Batava Professoris Ordinarii. In qua omne genus infrequentium selectissimorumque librorum, Publica Auctione distrahendorum ad diem 14. Aprilis 1671, In Aedibus Felicis Lopez de Haro, Bibliopolae e regione Academiae* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1671), 4. Haffenreffer's book is mentioned in the column *Libri Theologi[ci]* in *Folio*, no.61.

³ Joannes Baptista Villalpandus (1552-1608) was a Jesuit from Cordoba. He was a philosopher and mathematician, who won fame, however, as a building expert. He and another Jesuit, Hieronymus Prado,

been sent to him by his student Johannes van Dalen, the court preacher of the duchess of the Palatinate, Elisabeth Eleonora, in Kaiserslautern.⁵ He criticized these authors because, in their sketches of the temple, they had given the impression that Ezekiel's vision had been about the temple-building enterprises of Zerubbabel and Herod. Cocceius opined that this could not have been the case, since in the vision things are mentioned that could not apply to the historical situation at the time of either Zerubbabel or Herod. The mountain upon which Ezekiel's temple appeared could not have been mount Moriah, on which the old temple had stood, because Ezekiel referred to this mountain as a *very high mountain*. Furthermore, the city of Jerusalem could not possibly have been the "city of God" of Ezekiel because the city that Ezekiel described did not in the least resemble the old Jerusalem in terms of size, shape, and location. Briefly, the size, measurements, and location of the temple and the city in Ezekiel's vision suggested that a higher, spiritual reality was at stake.

The sketches were followed by a commentary comprising seventy pages in which Cocceius gave an exposition of the "spiritual" meaning of the temple vision. In this commentary, entitled *Significatio templi Ezechielis*, he admonished his readers on the proper use they were to make of these drawings. By directing meditation or spiritual contemplation at these drawings, one could discover how "the earthly things of the kingdom of heaven are indicated by the temple, and the heavenly things by the building

published the first part of a commentary on Ezekiel in Rome in 1602. After Prado's death, Villalpando published another two parts. In the second part, he gave a description of the temple complex, decorated with a large number of copper etches. See *De Postrema Ezechielis Prophetiae visione Ioannis Baptistae Villalpandi Cordubensis, Societate Iesu, Tomi secundi Explanationum pars secunda. In qua Templum, eiusque vasorum forma, tum commentariis tum aeneis quamplurimis descriptionibus exprimitur* (Rome, 1605).

⁴ Villalpando's reconstruction of Solomon's temple, with concave, diverging contrefortes at the base, was imitated in 1642 in the temple model of the Jewish scholar Jacob Judah Leon and influenced the style of Jewish synagogues and especially Protestant churches and towers in the Netherlands in the second half of the seventeenth century, for instance the "Nieuwe Kerk" in Haarlem, and the crown of the Aa-church tower in Groningen. The use of the concave supports for Reformed churches might have had symbolic significance. After the Peace of Westphalia, which had brought victory to the Reformed Church on Dutch soil, the prayer houses were given exteriors as of contemporary Solomonic temples. See on this T. H. von der Dunk, "Twee klassieke eenlingen in het Noorden: De toren van de Der Aa-Kerk in Groningen en de kerktoeren van Uithuizermeeden architectuurtheoretisch bezien," *Groninger Kerken* 12, no.4 (1995), 125-33.

⁵ See on this also Cocceius's letters to Johannes van Dalen, d.d. 13 and 26 May 1664 and 24 July 1665, in Johannes Cocceius, *Opera Omnia*, Tomus VI (Amsterdam, 1673), Epistolae no.105, 106, and 118. From the latter it appears that Cocceius also intended to have a wooden construction of Ezekiel's temple made.

situated some distance away" (the building next to the temple square, Ezek. 41:12).⁶ Cocceius explicitly added that this meditation was not to be an esoteric exercise, which could draw the attention away from the world and its history. In Ezekiel's temple vision, the reader could see the ground plan of (salvation) history and the eschata reflected, particularly the growth of God's church through the centuries, the /78/ completion of his reign in the eschaton, and the various dispensations of the economy of grace.⁷

In this *Typus Sanctuarii* Cocceius provided a short compendium of his eschatology by means of a collection of emblemata,⁸ which must be understood against the background of his so-called prophetic exegesis. He regarded Scripture as a kind of harmonious edifice that could be constructed with the aid of the *analogia scripturae* and the *analogia fidei*. According to this doctrine of analogy, prophetic texts in the Old and New Testaments could be associated with one another. The totality of biblical prophecy exhibited a ground plan, which he called the *harmonia prophetiarum*. With the aid of this schema, Cocceius surveyed the history of the church in search of fulfillments of these prophecies. Exegesis placed in such a framework thus acquires the character of prophecy. In Cocceius's view, a good theologian had to be a competent philologist and exegete, and at the same time a prophet as well — one who puts his exegesis in the service of the expansion of God's kingdom.⁹

In his *Typus Sanctuarii*, Cocceius also followed this approach. This enabled him to discern what he took to be the history of God's covenant, the seven periods of Christ's

⁶ *Significatio templi Ezechielis*, ch. 41, §14: "Per templum quidem significantur ta epigeia regni coelorum, per structuram autem ulterius positam ta epourania ejus, Joh. 3.12"

⁷ See on this Cocceius's comments in the *Significatio Ezek.* Ch. 40 §20 — "Duo Monstrator Prophetiae injungit. 1. Ut oculos & aures accomodet ad videndum & audiendum. Similiter nobis dictum est, ut & verba Dei non in vanum dicta esse sinamus, et opera ipsius, maxime constructionem domus suae at erectionem regni sui. diligenter observamus. 2. (...) Non sunt recitanda opera Dei, atque etiam, quae ex verbo Dei didicimus de mensuris operis Dei et canone missionis (...) sive de omni oeconomia gratiae atque irae."

⁸ For an extensive discussion of Cocceius's use of the literary genre of emblemata, see R. Faulenbach, *Weg und Ziel der Erkenntnis Christi. Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie des Johannes Coccejus*, (Neukirchen, 1973), 66-79. Faulenbach does, however, put a rather one-sided emphasis on the order of salvation (regeneration and faith in Christ) as "Verständnisschlüssel" for the interpretation of the Cocceian emblemata (p. 78).

⁹ For an extensive discussion of this prophetic exegesis of Cocceius, see W.J. van Asselt, "Pierre de Joncourt en zijn protest tegen de coccejaanse exegese in het begin van de achttiende eeuw," in: *Een richtingstrijd in de Gereformeerde Kerk: Voetianen en Coccejanen 1650-1750*, ed. F.G.M. Broeyer and E.G.E. van der Wall (Zoetermeer, 1994), 155-58; idem, *Amicitia Dei: Een onderzoek naar de structuur van de theologie van Johannes Coccejus (1603-1669)* (Ede, 1988), 54-55.

reign on earth, and the seven ages of the church. Thus the seven ages of the church are represented by the seven steps to the outer courtyard (Ezek. 40:22) and the seven-cubits-high altar (Ezek. 43:13). The eight steps to the inner courtyard (Ezek. 40:34, 37) represented the eight characteristics of the life of the believer in the covenant with God, realized through the imitation of Christ.¹⁰

/79/ Cocceius's exposition of Ezekiel's temple vision was certainly not uncontroversial. Remarkably, criticism came from none other than one of his pupils. In 1687, Campegius Vitringa Sr., who was regarded as a Cocceian, published a thesis entitled "Towards a Proper Understanding of the Temple, which the Prophet Ezekiel Had Seen and Described" ("Aanleidinge tot het rechte verstant van den Tempel, die den Propheet Ezechiël gesien en beschreven heeft"). In it, Vitringa declared, with an appeal to Villalpando's sketches, that Ezekiel's vision had a primarily "bodily" or literal meaning, and had been "truly directed and fashioned according to that which had earlier had a place among the Jews" (waerlijck gericht en geschikt ... na het geene eertijts plaets heeft gehad in het Jodendom).¹¹ According to Vitringa, the vision had the character of a law rather than a prophecy, although the eschatological element was of course not absent. The data contained in the vision, which could not be explained with reference to Jewish history, had to be understood as "a prophetic image of the whole state of the New Testament church, particularly as the latter would appear during the last days" (een Prophetisch Sinnebeeld van de geheele staet der Kercke des Nieuwen Testaments, ende wel bysonder soo als sigh soudent vertonen in 't laetste der dagen). He regarded this interpretation as richer and more nuanced than the one offered by Cocceius, which had viewed the vision exclusively in a spiritual-eschatological manner.

/80/ Vitringa's publication provoked Cocceius's son Johannes Henricus, secretary for the estates of Holland, to a response. In an extensive but rather rambling work exceeding

¹⁰ These eight steps symbolize eight things in which believers ought to be trained "ut non infrugiferi videantur 2 Pet.1 : 5, 6, 7," He consecutively mentions: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, perseverance, godliness, brotherly love, and love or everyone. He then continues: "Et quod Petrus vocat epichoregian [schragen], id pulchre cum Emblemate graduum convenit. Nam, ut ex fide secundum & ex secundo tertium procedit, ita gradus gradui insisit & inhaeret & a primo in secundum ascensus promptus est. Et vero his & similibus modis emblema graduum explicare non inconueniens est."

¹¹ See the Voorreden (foreword) to this work, which was published in Franeker. Cf. J. van der Haar, *Schatkamer van de gereformeerde theologie in Nederland (c. 1600-1800). Bibliografisch onderzoek* (Veenendaal, 1987), 5:239.

nine hundred pages, he defended his father's exposition, and printed the sketches of Villalpando, Vitringa, and Cocceius Sr., as well as one by himself.¹² The discussion turned especially on the question of the precise length of the measuring rod in the hand of the messenger of God, who had measured the temple complex (Ezek.40:5). Cocceius Jr. agreed with his father that the temple, the city, and the land Canaan were six times the size suggested by Vitringa's calculations, since everything had been measured with a six-cubit long measuring rod; Vitringa, on the other hand, thought that the normal cubit had been used for the measurements.¹³

Vitringa in turn responded in an extensive letter of 391 pages, in which he accused Cocceius Jr. of partiality and inexperience (ongeoeftheyt) with regard to biblical geography.¹⁴ Once again he insisted that Ezekiel's vision "is composed of representations of both bodily and spiritual matters" (is t' saemgesteld ... uyt vertooningen van Lichamelicke en Geestelicke saecken).¹⁵

Partly against the background of this later discussion, Cocceius's exposition of Ezekiel's temple vision can serve us well in our effort to discern some basic structures of his eschatology. However, before we proceed, one comment about /81/ the secondary

¹² Johannes Henricus Cocceius, *Naeder Ondersoek van het rechte verstand van den tempel, die den propheet Ezechiël gesien en beschreven heeft in zijn laetste gesichte, en des Jesuits Villalpands bevattingen daer omtrent; voorgesteld aan . . . Campegius Vitringa. Vercierd met de nodige Afbeeldsels* (Amsterdam, 1691) [the year of publication was "improved" on the title page in 1692], See Van der Haar, *Schatkamer*, 100: 104.

¹³ See Johannes Henricus Cocceius, *Naeder Ondersoek*, 201: "alsoo nae Uwe en die bouwkundigers rekeninge, die UE aentrect, dan moet het meet-riet van Ezechiël niet van ses ellen, maar van seven ellen soude geweest zijn ... want, segt U, ses handbreeden maken ene elle uit; Wat gevolg is daerin? ... UE wil dan een andere uitlegginge van de woorden maken en segt dat *baama va ha tophach* betekend in de elle ende een handbreed. Ende dan meint UE het beter te konnen over een brengen met het gevoelen van Villalpandus" . . en UE wil dat dan de spreekwijze ses ellen in de elle hier betekend een volkomene groote elle, welck, segt ghy, de heilige elle was" (thus according to your own and the builders calculations, with which you agree, Ezekiel's measuring rod would have been seven cubits, rather than six...., for, as you argue, six hand-breadths make one cubit; What follows from that? ... You would then prefer to interpret the words differently so that *baama va ha tophach* means a cubit and a hand-breadth. Then you think you could reconcile it more easily with Villalpando's feelings on the matter ... and here you would have the expression six cubits in the cubit mean a cubit of perfect size, which you claim was the holy cubit). Cf. Vitringa, *'t Rechte Verstant*, 361: "Dewijle evenwel UE voor vaststelde, dat het Land hier gemeeten is by meet-rieten, en niet by ellen, gelijk ick stelle, het welcke de grootte sesmael verdubbelt (want op het meet-riet gingen ses ellen)" (Just as you are quite sure that the land is here measured by measuring-rods, and not by cubits, I submit that it was the size doubled six times [for the measuring-rod was six cubits long] ...).

¹⁴ Campegius Vitringa, *'t Rechte Verstant van den Tempel Ezechiels, Verdeedigt en Bevestigt, in een Brief, dienende voor antwoord, aen den Ed. en Wel-geleerden Heer, Johannes Henricus Coccejus; S.S.Th.D. Griffier van de Leenen van Holland &c.* (Harlingen, 1693). Vgl. van der Haar, *Schatkamer*, 5:257. "

¹⁵ Vitringa, *'t Rechte Verstant*, 272.

literature must be made. In it, Cocceius's eschatology has mainly been approached from the perspective of his views regarding the kingdom of God.¹⁶ Cocceius's exposition in his *Typus Sanctuarii* shows that a considerable broadening of perspective can be achieved by giving attention to his doctrine of the covenant and his ecclesiology. I shall therefore approach the theme of Cocceius's eschatology from three different angles: covenant, kingdom, and church. I shall also attempt to link these perspectives with one another by inquiring into the relationships Cocceius himself saw among them. In the conclusion, I shall attempt to delineate those features that give Cocceius's eschatology its own characteristic shape.

Eschatological Perspectives in the Doctrine of the Covenant

The Eschatological Aspect in the Doctrine of the Covenant of Works

The structure and shape of Cocceius's monograph on the covenant¹⁷ is decidedly determined by the doctrine of the annulment of the covenant of works, the so-called abrogation doctrine. In order to appreciate the place of this abrogation doctrine, we shall need to take a rather long detour. The background to it is, namely, Cocceius's distinction of a twofold covenant. After having given an analysis of the general concept of covenant in his *Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento Dei*, he subsequently speaks of a double covenant (*duplex foedus*) of God with humanity: the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. He bases this distinction on the fact that Scripture, in his opinion, juxtaposes

¹⁶ See G. Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund im älteren Protestantismus vornehmlich bei Johannes Coccejus* (1923; reprint, Darmstadt, 1967), 190-243; Faulenbach makes only occasional remarks on Cocceius' eschatology. See Faulenbach, *Weg und Ziel*, 41, 56, 78, 113, 177, 205. He concludes: "Here Cocceius' presentation remains quite colorless, for he presents, as Reformed orthodox teachers generally do, only those biblical texts dealing with eschatological events that state that there will be an end of the world, resurrection and judgment" (p. 144). Faulenbach's interpretation of Cocceius's theology in terms of Christology and the order of salvation, as a description of the way and purpose of the knowledge of Christ for the believer, blinds him to the salvation-historical structure of Cocceius's eschatology. C.S. McCoy, "The Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius," (Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1956), only gives attention to eschatology in his discussion of the fifth abrogation of the covenant of works (p. 210). For a critical discussion of these interpretations of Cocceius's theology, see Van Asselt, *Amicitia Dei*, 130-33.

¹⁷ Johannes Cocceius, *Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento Dei* (1648; reprint, Franeker, 1660). I have used the third printing, henceforward cited as *SD*.

two different ways of obtaining the love and friendship of God and thereby eternal life: the way of works as opposed to the way of faith.¹⁸

Of particular significance to our topic is Cocceius's remark that the good (*bonum*), which God offered to Adam in the covenant of works, consisted of life (*vita*). Cocceius subsequently qualifies this life as the possession of perfect righteousness, realized in obedience to the first commandment, which is to be /82/ understood as the matrix of all the commandments in the Decalogue.¹⁹ Through the fulfillment of this commandment, the right to the inheritance of heavenly life could be obtained.²⁰ Cocceius therefore objected to the view that residence in paradise implied a perfect situation. In his view, paradise was the symbol and pledge of a more excellent abode.²¹ The need for food and drink in paradise was moreover an indication of the still imperfect state of life in the paradisaical situation: God had something even better in store for humanity.

However, Cocceius's motivation of the eschatological dimension of the covenant of works is not only soteriological but also anthropological. In the creation before the Fall, Adam possessed the gift of a good conscience (*bona conscientia*), an awareness of communion with God. However, in the creaturely situation he did not yet possess the completed conscience (*conscientia consummata*) of enduring communion with God.²² Adam still had to achieve that communion. Cocceius therefore regarded the establishment of the covenant of works with Adam as the starting point of a development. Adam did not yet possess the ultimate. The covenant of works opened up the possibility of a history with an eschatological prospect.

The Eschatological Orientation of the Doctrine of the Abrogations

¹⁸ *SD*, §11.

¹⁹ *SD*, §19: "Nam, ut recte Tertullianus contra Judaeos c. 2, primordialis lex, data Adae & Evae in paradiso, est quasi matrix omnium praeceptorum Dei, quae postea pullulaverunt data per Moysen."

²⁰ *SD*, §23-24; 41-44.

²¹ See Johannes Cocceius, *Summa Theologiae ex Scripturis repetita*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 6 (Amsterdam, 1673); (cited henceforward as *STh*), ch. 22 §37: "Paradisus ei melioris mansionis symbolum ac pignus fuit (...). Facile autem fuit homini cognoscere, quod cibis poribusque indigere sit status vitae imperfectioris, quodque melius aliquid homini a Deo contingere in vita spirituali."

²² See *STh*, ch. 22 §5-15 and 35.

The eschatological aspect in the concept of the covenant of works returns in Cocceius's views regarding the so-called step-by-step abrogation of the consequences of the transgression of the covenant of works. Directly following his treatment of the doctrine of the covenant of works, he discusses the question of whether the Fall signified the end of the covenant of works. His answer to this question is partly affirmative and partly negative. Because of the Fall, the covenant of works as a way of salvation was indeed cut off, but the negative consequences of the transgression of the covenant of works were not immediately canceled. They continued to play their role in the history of the covenant of grace. As that history progressed, the evil effects of the broken covenant — divine condemnation, fear of death, the struggle against sin, and physical death — were gradually (*per gradus*) abrogated.

According to Cocceius, the events that were decisive for these abrogations of the covenant of works and that initiated a new phase in the history of the /83/ covenant of grace at every stage were: (1) the fall; (2) God's decision to establish the covenant of grace and the promise of this new covenant, which runs through the whole O.T. and is fulfilled in the N.T.; (3) the detachment from, and renunciation of, the old humanity in the sanctification of life undergone by Christians; (4) physical death; and (5) the resurrection from death.

This abrogation doctrine therefore determines the whole covenant history from creation to eschaton. In each phase of this history, the covenant of works retains some function, even though its effect is increasingly weakened until, in the eschaton, all the evil effects of the transgression of the covenant of works will have been canceled.²³

It will be clear that, by means of these abrogations, Cocceius brought about a powerful dynamism in his view of the covenant, which simultaneously lent it a strong eschatological orientation. He regarded the history of the covenant of grace as a progressive history with room for development. The primary aspect of this development is positive, and the secondary aspect negative. The positive aspect is the furtherance of the covenant of grace, and the negative aspect the abrogation of (the effects of the

²³ See *SD*, §58. In the *STh* the abrogation doctrine is also discussed, but this doctrine does not determine the structure of that systematic work by Cocceius. Cf. *STh*, ch. 31 §1. For an extensive analysis and evaluation of Cocceius's abrogation doctrine, see W.J. van Asselt, "The Doctrine of the Abrogations in the Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994) 101-16.

transgression of) the covenant of works. Salvation history thus acquired the character of a "liberation history" in phases, culminating in the eschaton. In this connection one may speak of a history of a decrease in evil and an increase in salvation.²⁴

Eschatological Aspects of Cocceius's Doctrine of the Kingdom.

The Relation of Covenant and Kingdom

Before inquiring into the function of the notion of the kingdom in Cocceius's eschatology, we need to consider the question of the relationship between covenant and kingdom in Cocceius's theology. On this matter, basically two different views have emerged from the research on Cocceius.

/84/ According to Gottlob Schrenk, the two notions of covenant and kingdom form two poles of his theology that exhibit a certain parallelism with respect to their salvation-historical development. In Schrenk's view, the doctrine of the covenant is, however, subordinate to the idea of the kingdom in the theology of Cocceius. The covenant is the means of entry to the kingdom, which he calls "the triumphant final concept" (*der triumphierende Endbegriff*) of Cocceius's theology.²⁵

By contrast, Heiner Faulenbach feels constrained, on the basis of his christological interpretation of Cocceius's doctrine of God, to deny this parallelism of covenant and kingdom. He regards covenant and kingdom in the theology of Cocceius as a unity. They are simply distinct moments in the unitary salvific action of God in Jesus Christ, so that

²⁴ Cocceius sees this abrogation at the level of salvation history as running parallel to an abrogation at the level of the order of salvation. Just as in salvation history there is an abrogation procedure with positive and negative aspects: the furtherance of the covenant of grace and the abrogation of the covenant of works, so also at the level of the order of salvation, in the doctrine of sanctification, there is an abrogation procedure with positive and negative aspects, namely the *vivificatio* and the *mortificatio*. Elsewhere, I have formulated it as follows: By means of the abrogation process, Cocceius brings about a mutual relation between salvation history and sanctification and sees the salvation-historical development as running parallel to sanctification as a process in the order of salvation. This interpretation of the abrogation doctrine is an important argument in favor of a pneumatological interpretation of Cocceius's covenant theology. See Van Asselt, *Amicitia Dei*, 122-123.

²⁵ See Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 291.

they may be said to form a "material unity" (*Sacheinheit*). According to Faulenbach, the establishment of the covenant is at the same time the foundation of the kingdom.²⁶

In my view, these interpretations do not present a fruitful alternative. Initially, Cocceius's systematic preference lay with the covenant idea.²⁷ He wrote a 389-page monograph on the covenant. The only work in which he explicitly addressed the idea of the kingdom was an oration entitled "Panegyricus de regno Dei," which he delivered on February 8, 1660, on the occasion of the transfer of the rectorship of the academy of Leyden. This oration counted no more than seven pages.²⁸ Furthermore, it can be shown that the notion of the kingdom only began to play a role in Cocceius's thought after he had ventured /85/ an interpretation within the framework of his prophetic exegesis of the history of the church after the ascension of Christ. Therefore, it seems to me more justified to regard Cocceius's doctrine of the kingdom as a component of his prophetic exegesis.²⁹ By means of this prophetic exegesis, Cocceius made hermeneutic room in his eschatology for his views regarding the kingdom of God. In this effort, he made particularly good use of the doctrine of the epochs. The latter enabled him to relate his doctrine of the kingdom to the history of the church.³⁰

Schrenk's attempt to show that Cocceius used the doctrine of the kingdom parallel with the doctrine of covenant as a central idea of his theology is, therefore, incorrect. Like Faulenbach, he oversystematized Cocceius by forcing his pronouncements on the kingdom of God in a constructed parallelism with the covenant and draws a conclusion that Cocceius did not make.³¹

Cocceius's Doctrine of the Epochs

²⁶ See Faulenbach, *Weg und Ziel*, 160: "With the concepts of Covenant, Kingdom and Church, reference is thus made by Cocceius to the social relations within which the individual stands with respect to God's will. There is no priority among these relations, for they are simply aspects of the single will and act of God towards sinners, whom He justifies through Jesus Christ".

²⁷ See Van Asselt, *Amicitia Dei*, 164 n. 12.

²⁸ *Panegyricus de regno Dei* (1660), in: *Opera Omnia*, (Amstelodami, 1673-1675), 6:25-32. The notion of the kingdom does, however, play a major role in Cocceius's correspondence with *inter alia* Joh. Buxtorf Jr. and Pfalzgräfin Eleonore. See Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 190 (Anm. 2).

²⁹ For a defense of this view, see Van Asselt, *Een richtingensrijd*, 153-157.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 153-58.

³¹ For a critique on Schrenk's position, see Van Asselt, *Amicitia Dei*, 164.

Cocceius's doctrine of the epochs was certainly not a theological novelty. He probably took over the sevenfold division of church history directly from one of his teachers in Bremen, Ludwig Crocius.³² Jacobus Brocardus possibly also influenced it. The latter's enthusiasm for dividing the *aetates ecclesiae* into periods can be traced back, in the last resort, to Joachim of Fiore.³³ Already in his work, the idea is put forward that the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 symbolize the seven phases of church history from the coming of Christ until the end of time.³⁴

/86/ The seven epochs, with their divisions and summaries, are mainly to be found in Cocceius's commentaries.³⁵ The reader is struck time and again by Cocceius's great fascination with everything in the Bible that has something to do with the number seven. Wherever this number appeared, Cocceius thought he could discern the seven *aetates ecclesiae*.³⁶ Cocceius gave detailed expositions of this doctrine of the epochs in his

³² See Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 334. Crocius's division into seven epochs in his *Syntagma Theologiae* (1635) most closely resembles that of Cocceius who, however, places the great flourishing of the church in the seventh epoch, rather than in the sixth, like Crocius.

³³ See on this line of influence, J. Moltmann, "Jacob Brocard als Vorläufer der Reich-Gottes Theologie und der prophetischen Schriftauslegung des Johann Cocceius," *ZKG* 71 (1960); 110-29. Cf. also Majorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (New York, 1977), 136-65 (Joachim and Protestantism). She calls Brocardus (Giacopo Brocardo) "the most complete Joachite among these Protestants" (p. 144). He spent time in Heidelberg, England, Holland, Bremen (!) and Neurenberg. He exerted great influence through his commentary on the Apocalypse (p. 145). In Bremen a school developed that was especially occupied with the exegesis of the book of Revelation.

³⁴ See Joachim of Fiore, *Expositio in Apocalypsin* (1527; reprint Frankfurt, 1964), fol. 21d-22a, 28a-29d. Joachim distinguished seven world-times (*aetates*), which he, like Augustine, saw as corresponding to the seven days of creation, the seven times (*tempora*) of church history in Revelation, and the three states (*status*) of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The seventh *tempus* coincided with the third *status*. On these distinctions, and the identity of the seventh time with the third status, see Majorie Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figure of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford 1972), 12 and Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 8-10. The interpretation of the seven churches in Asia Minor as seven periods in the history of the church is also found in certain Franciscan movements of around the year 1300 that were influenced by Joachim. In this regard, Robert Lerner has pointed to Bonaventure, Pietro di Giovanni di Olivi, and Fra Dolcino. See Robert E. Lerner, "An 'Angel of Philadelphia' in the Reign of Philip the Fair: The Case of Guiard of Cressonessart", in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Joseph R. Strayer*; ed. W.C. Jordan et al. (Princeton, 1976), 352-64.

³⁵ In both the *SD* and the *STh*, and remarkably also in the *Panegyricus de regno Dei*, one searches in vain for a detailed periodization. Only in the *STh*, ch. 90 §16 (in the discussion of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer) does Cocceius mention it incidentally: "Quod est regnum libertatis et Christi. Quod regnum habet suos profectus, ut paulatim fiat latius et absolutius." He does however thank God "quod regnum suum hucusque processerit & ad nos venerit, quodque nos id cognoverimus" & in eo simus. Testamur autem, nos & expectare & desiderare, ut omne regnum adversarium profligetur, ut Deus regnet ubique & tandem adveniat regnum gloriae, ac nos quidem liberemur a corpore mortis, ut simus cum Christo, & acceleret ultimus dies, quo etiam corpora nostra ad se assumpturus est."

³⁶ E.g. Cocceius distinguished seven periods from Abel to the moment of Noah's leaving the ark, and saw in it a type of the seven N.T. times (Genesis commentary, ch. 5 §5). In Hannah's song of praise in 1 Sam. 2:1-10 and Psalm 107 he also saw a *breviarum profetiae de regno Christi*. The sevenfold refined silver in Ps.

Ezekiel commentary, in his commentary on the last six chapters of Deuteronomy, and in his exegesis of the Song of Songs and the Revelation of John.³⁷ Assuming the *harmonia prophetiarum*, he interprets these biblical passages as prophecies of the *curriculum regni* and of the seven *aetates ecclesiae*.

Moreover, Cocceius viewed this progression of the kingdom in seven periods in the light of the opposition between freedom and servitude. Provisionally, Christ reigns in the midst of his enemies. The kingdom of peace and freedom, in which God alone is served, unfolds gradually and will only break through in /87/ glory when all the powers that subdue humanity have been dethroned. Within the framework of this perspective of freedom, one can see how Cocceius's view of the Sabbath was linked to his eschatology. In his view, the rest on the seventh day of creation pointed to the rest that was included in the salvific work of Christ and that spread from there across the whole of life until finding completion in the final period of God's kingdom.³⁸

The Seven Epochs of the Kingdom

The times and periods of the kingdom commence during "the days of the kingdom among the enemies." Certainly, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the first act of the exalted Lord in his kingdom, but this kingdom, as we have already seen, finds itself, during its

12, the seven pillars of the house of wisdom in Prov. 9, the seven temple steps in Ezek. 40, the seven eyes and lamps in Zech. 3 and 4, all pointed, according to Cocceius, to the seven *aetates ecclesiae*. Cf. also Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 334.

³⁷ See Johannes Cocceius, *De Ultimis Mosis Considerationes* (1650), §1497 and 1575-1713 (henceforward *DUMC*); the praefatio to *Observationes ad Danielelem* (1666); *Canticum canticorum* (1666); *Cogitationes de Apocalypsi Johannis* (1665). In *Ezechielis prophetiae* (1668), ch. 34 §35, Cocceius distinguishes in the *allegoria ovum* of Ezek. 34 "eight tempora of the cursus regni Christi: 1. tempus, quo oves Dei in uno grege collecti cum non-ovibus, arietibus et hiris (...) habent controversiam; 2. tempus, quo David, h.e. Christus, ovibus datur princeps, resuscitatus ex mortuis, exaltatus in coelum; 3. tempus, quo ferae malae oves Dei infestant, h.e. tempus persecutionis; 4. tempus, quo oves Dei manent securae in deserto, h.e. in mundo inter gentes; 5. tempus, quum ex benedictione temporali etiam arbores nascuntur, h.e. tanquam principes fiunt, qui sunt doctores & episcopi Ecclesiae; 6. tempus, quo Deus frangit iugum, & oves eripit e manu (...) eas in servitum redigentium, ut secure habitent; 7. tempus, quo Deus concedit oves suas direptioni, & vorari a bestis. Id est tempus belli post pacem Religionis excitati & novarum persecutionum; 8. tempus coërcitii illius belli & pacis denuo datae."

³⁸ See *SD*, §338: "Praeterea ultimi diei quies praeannunciabat quietem animae & pacem conscientiae per Christum ultimo tempore dandam. Quod Psalm. 95:7 & 11 innuit: interprete Apostolo Hebr. 3:7-11, 4:1-11. Qui exinde efficaciter probat, paratum esse populo Dei tertium sabbatismum praeter quietem septimae diei, & requiem populus Dei per fidem accepturus esset, absoluto opere redemptionis, a qua essent excludendi infideles. Igitur observatio Sabbati merito vocatur signum inter Deum & populum.

progression through history, in a situation of conflict. Until the very end of history, there will be opposing forces and enemies of Christ, that will resist this kingdom.³⁹

This dramatic progression of Christ's lordship in world history was worked out further by Cocceius in his doctrine of the seven periods in the time after Christ's ascension. In what follows, I briefly characterize these seven periods as Cocceius described them in his various commentaries.

The first period of the kingdom covered the time from Christ's ascension to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. This period marked the beginning of the apostolic witness to the pagans.⁴⁰ Cocceius thought that this period had been described in the letter to the Ephesians (Rev. 2: 1-7), a biblical passage that he saw as corresponding to the vision of the first seal (Rev. 6: 1-2) and the first trumpet (Rev. 8:7).

The second period covered the Jewish wars, interpreted by Cocceius as a judgment on the Jewish people. He saw the destruction of the temple as the announcement of the fact that the kingdom had been transferred from Israel to the nations. However, the persecutions had been intensified at the same time.⁴¹ The letter to Smyrna, the second seal (Rev. 6:4), and the second trumpet (Rev. 8:8) had announced the second period of the kingdom.

Cocceius's third period commenced at the time of the emperor Constantine. It lasted until the reign of Louis of Bavaria.⁴² The Roman Empire adopted the name of Christ, and God dispersed the enemies of the church. This period had been described, according to Cocceius, in the Revelation of John, namely in the letter to Pergamum, the third seal (Rev. 6:5-6), and the third trumpet (Rev. 8:10). Cocceius understood those verses according to which Satan had fallen from heaven like a burning torch as referring to the fact that pagan religion had now been abolished in many parts of the world. Here Christ's lordship is manifested especially in the subjugation of the pagan peoples.⁴³

³⁹ Cocceius includes among these enemies (as does Olevianus in *De Substantia foederis gratuiti inter Deum et electos* [Geneva, 1585], 140) external (Satan, the papists, Turks, heretics) as well as internal enemies (the world, the flesh). The papist yeast intrudes even into the Protestant camp.'

⁴⁰ *DUMC*, §1500; *Canticum*, §53, 54, 98, 103, and 106; *Apoc.*, 11 §12.

⁴¹ *DUMC*, § 1500; *Ezek.* 34 §35; *Canticum* §53, 106, 162; *Apoc.* 21 § 1.

⁴² In Cocceius's judgment, Louis of Bavaria (1282-1347) was the last ruler to resist the pope and his claim to worldly power (*potestas directa*).

⁴³ *Apoc.* 12 §22 and 24; 20 §13; Martin Bucer also speaks of the *felicitas* and *gloria* of the church under the emperor Constantine. Cf. *De regno Christi Jesu servatoris nostri libri II.* (Basel, 1557), 30.

In Cocceius's opinion, this third period was also the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the thousand year kingdom. For him, therefore, the millennium was past tense. During this period the faithful ruled the earth with Christ, and the nations maintained the church. Cocceius was fond of describing this entrance of the pagan peoples into the *civitas Dei* with the term from Psalm 66:3 (enemies who bow down before him in fear).⁴⁴ It was not the expression of an authentic faith. People were simply impressed by the successes of the gospel, while the fallen Satan was also still active. He hardened the hearts of the Jews and raised up heretics like Arius and Pelagius.⁴⁵ Islam came into being, establishing a counter-kingdom.⁴⁶ Above all, the power of the beast increased through the rise of the papal hierarchy, and the reign of the Antichrist was gradually being prepared.

The fourth *aetas* had been prophesied in the letter to Thyatira, and the fourth seal and the fourth trumpet in the Revelation of John (6:7-8 and 8:12-13, respectively). For the reign of Christ in history, this period denoted a dramatic /89/ relapse into bondage. The reign of the Antichrist, of the papacy, emerged with full force, and even seemed to disturb the dialectic of increase in salvation and decrease in evil in Cocceius's historical vision. However, Cocceius pointed out explicitly that, in spite of this relapse into slavery to the papacy, Christ continued to rule in this period also. This was the central tenet of his view of history: Christ is King throughout all the epochs of the kingdom.⁴⁷

In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Cocceius described the rise of the Antichrist extensively, and in great historical detail.⁴⁸ Together with his bishops, the new ruler — the pope — became head of a great power (*civitas magna*) that persecuted the faithful. The latter were, during that period, the Waldensians, the Moravian Brothers, and the Hussites. This fourth period was dominated by Christ's struggle against the Roman curia as the beast with seven horns that symbolized a revival of the Jewish enslavement but in

⁴⁴ See *STh* 82 §2.

⁴⁵ *Apoc.* 20 §5.

⁴⁶ *Praef. Dan.*, 317; *Canticum* §§271 and 329.

⁴⁷ Cf. Johannes Cocceius, *Sancta Scripturae Potentia Demonstrata (Opera Omnia, Tomus VII)* ch. 30 §48: "Ergo Christus etiam regnat, dum regnat Bestia; quia Bestia non potest regnare nisi sub obtentu nominis Christi (...) Nec tamen regnum Bestiae est regnum Christi, aut ad id pertinet."

⁴⁸ *Canticum*, §361-435.

Roman Catholic form. In the eyes of Cocceius, the papacy was the greatest obstacle to the progress of Christ's reign.⁴⁹

The fifth period of the kingdom coincided with the time of the Reformation. At that time, the Spirit of freedom reemerged. The yoke of bondage was broken, and the church was led out of its Babylonian captivity.⁵⁰ The reign of the Antichrist was now on the brink of collapse. Cocceius saw the religious Peace of Augsburg (1555) as the dawn of a new and hopeful stage in the *curriculum regni*.⁵¹ The Council of Trent sealed the schism between the *civitas magna* of the Roman Catholic Church, and the church of the true believers. The rise of the Jesuits constituted a last vengeful act on the side of the convulsive, floundering beast against the victory march of the message of justification.⁵²

Yet, Cocceius did not present the period of the Reformation as a complete unfolding of the reign of God. Much chaff remained among God's wheat, for not everyone who appealed to the Word of God understood that Word. Bickering *doctores ecclesiae* soiled the image of a truly reformed church.⁵³ Also /90/ within the *Ecclesia reformata*, therefore, the word of penitence that God alone is King would have to sound anew.⁵⁴ Cocceius thought that all this had been written in the letter to Sardis, and in the passages dealing with the fifth seal (Rev. 8:9-11) and the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1-12).

The sixth period of the *curriculum regni*, according to Cocceius, spanned the time of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), which struck terror across great parts of Europe.⁵⁵ It was Cocceius's own time, and it must have made a great impression on the German Cocceius. It strengthened his longing for the kingdom of God in its complete unfolding, as is evidenced by his discussion of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer. The letter to Philadelphia, the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17), and the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21) inspired him to interpret this war as a purifying judgment of God 's people.⁵⁶ The description of

⁴⁹ See on this line of thought, especially *Apoc.*, 21 §1.

⁵⁰ See *DUMC*, §1500 and 1683-1688; *Ezek.* 34 §35; *Praefatio Dan.*, 317. In *Canticum*, §419ff., Cocceius assigned the Reformation, the Thirty Years War, and the Council of Trent to the fourth period of the kingdom.

⁵¹ *Canticum*, §443ff.; *Ezek.*, 34 §35.

⁵² See especially *STh*, ch. 86 §3. Cf. also *Apoc.* 16 §7.

⁵³ *Apoc.*, 14 §17 and 22 §1. In the *STh*, ch. 85 § 14, Cocceius regarded the *disputationes et rixae* in the church of the Reformation as a sign of God's coming judgement.

⁵⁴ See *Apoc.*, 11 §15.

⁵⁵ *DUMC*, §1689-92; *Canticum*, §471-85.

⁵⁶ *DUMC*, §1500; *Apoc.*, 14 §21 and *STh*, ch. 86 §3.

the church in Philadelphia in Revelation 3 had portrayed, therefore, the character of the true church directly before the dawn of the end times and everything that follows it.⁵⁷

The End Times

It is quite noticeable that Cocceius regarded the last four periods as much shorter than the first three. A plausible explanation might be that he expected the end times to arrive very soon. He was never explicit on this score, although we can deduce from his commentaries on Daniel and Revelation that he expected a great turn of events around 1667.⁵⁸ When he published his commentary on Revelation in 1665, he saw in contemporary events in England, /91/ Scotland, Spain, and in the Swedish-Polish war (1655-1660), the prophecy of the seventh bowl in Revelation 16:17.⁵⁹ In his eyes, these events prefigured the dawn of a new era, the last phase of the *processio regni*. Cocceius expected this period to be a time when the church of the Reformation would flourish and embark on a great mission. Here he was thinking not only of the Reformed Church, but also of the Lutheran and Anglican Churches.⁶⁰ All the heresies and false doctrines, all the persecutions and distress would cease to exist. A wonderful kingdom of peace would come into being for the believers. The last phase of the world would be the best there had ever been. The church

⁵⁷ *Apoc.*, 3 §11; "Sexta epistola est scripta ad Angelum Ecclesiae Philadelphensis. In vocabulis aenigmate continentur character verae Ecclesiae, qui est delictio fratrum. Ea ut facit, fratres in Christo sibi invicem esse suaves & Jucundos & inter se communionem habere bonorum & malorum, ita importat fugam non fratrum, ad evitacionem schismatis & falsae doctrinae." Cf. also ch. 19 §19 ff. It does not seem likely that Cocceius had been influenced by the so-called Philadelphians in London, a circle of English theosophists from the second half of the seventeenth century, under the leadership of Thomas Bromly (1629-1691) who in turn had been influenced by Jakob Böhme, since Cocceius had published on this subject before the Philadelphians did so. Yet, one is struck by "the fact that once more, in the case of the latter, we find a periodization of church history on the basis of the letters in Rev. 2 and 3. See on this, Hans Schneider, "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert", in *Geschichte des Pietismus I: Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten his zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. M. Brecht (Göttingen, 1993), 405.

⁵⁸ See Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 234.

⁵⁹ See *Apoc.*, ch. 16 §14, 15: "Terraе motus sine dubio magnus extitit in tribus regnis. Anglia, Scotia, Hibernia: per quem & stellae de coelo dejectae sunt, & regnum pro tempore abolitum. Et nihil simile factum est antea ... Quemadmodum novimus, esse alicubi Episcopales, Independentes & Presbyterianos; qui tamen sunt, ut videtur, una Ecclesia, si dogmata spectres: &, an satis sit, quod de ista divisione vidimus, ad implementum huius prophetiae: vel, an haec sint intelligenda de Imperio quodam politico in tres partes collabente. De istiusmodi praedictionibus, ante eventa, cogimur dicere, quod Daniel non semel dicit: *Non intelligo* ... Polonia miserrime afflicta fuit bello Suecico. Transylvania plus semel videtur cecidisse. Dania tantum non prostrata. Respublica Britannica corrui. Ungaria nutavit. Quis dicet, hanc telam jam absolutam esse?"

⁶⁰ See *DUMC*, §1500 and 1713.

would bloom like "a lily among the thorns" (Song 2: 1), it would be like a "hut for daily shelter from the heat" (Isa. 4:6), and the faithful would "shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43).

Cocceius offered no detailed description of exactly how these prophecies would come to be fulfilled. Furthermore, his account of the order of events in the end times is not always quite clear. From some of his son's comments in the *praefatio* to the *Opera Omnia* we can deduce that he expected, after the fall of the papacy, the conversion, first of the Jews, then of the Muslims, and thereafter the bringing together of all the heathen nations into the church.⁶¹ In Cocceius's view, the mission among the Muslims would play an important role in the end times. For this, he appealed to Revelation 16: 12. This verse refers to kings who would "come from the rising of the sun." Cocceius thought that he knew from Isaiah 19:23 who those kings were, for there it was predicted that, /92/ apart from Israel, Egypt and Assur would also serve the Lord God. From this he concluded that the gospel would also be preached to the Muslims — who he thought were called Assur in Isaiah's prophecy.⁶²

According to Cocceius, this sudden and spectacular turn of events during the great age of peace, which was soon to come, would be brought about through direct divine intervention. Of course, Christians were already expected to start clearing away, as far as possible, all obstacles to the realization of this vision. The proper way toward achieving this was for each individual believer to follow Christ. The call to action was thus not

⁶¹ In the *Praefatio* (p. 36), Johannes Henricus Cocceius responded to the charge (by Samuel Maresius among others) that his father had been a millennarian. He answered thus. "Hoc solum velim cogites, non posse quemquam nimis bene de Ecclesia sperare, quod si concesseris, nunquam te eo abripiet tui affectus, ut Chiliastam esse asserturus sis eum, qui cum Scriptura & Ecclesia Reformata expectat halcyonia quaedam Ecclesiae, sperat augmentum cognitionis, praestolatur casum Antichristi, conversionem Judaeorum & plenitudinis Gentium congregationem ad Ecclesiam, & talem autumnat ex Esa. 2:5" This is in agreement with Cocceius's remark, in *Panegyricus* (p. 17), where he said that he hoped for the fall of Babylon, the conversion of the Jews, and the proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. However, in his exposition of the meaning of Ezekiel's temple vision (ch. 47 §5), he presented a different order of events. The flowing of the stream running from the temple into the sea, where the water was purified, was interpreted by Cocceius as follows: "Intellige mare salis sive Sodomae. Id, ut fert noster captus, intelligimus de sanatione orientalium populorum; fortasse primo Turcarum, qui, caetera Judaei, Christum tamen agnoscunt (...); deinde & Judaeorum "

⁶² See especially *STh*, ch. 86 §3.

absent in Cocceius's work. Yet, he emphasized that this "wondrous period" for the church was to be awaited and could not be brought about through human acts of force.⁶³

Cocceius further saw this period of worldwide peace for the church as an overture to the Parousia, the resurrection of all the dead, and the Last Judgment.⁶⁴ This resurrection of the dead is, moreover, the last abrogation of the covenant of works. He regarded this resurrection not only as an individual, personal occurrence, but also interpreted it salvation-historically. Preceding the last bodily resurrection, Cocceius distinguished, namely, a twofold spiritual resurrection (*resurrectio spiritualis duplex*), related to certain events in salvation history. The first spiritual resurrection related to the conversion of the Jews through the proclamation of the gospel. The second was the restoration of the world, which is subject to error and decay. The bodily resurrection would involve more than the pious. In accordance with tradition, Cocceius also spoke of the resurrection of the godless for judgment. Their eternal punishment would be in accordance with the threats of the covenant of works and would be undergone consciously and bodily. A noticeable feature of Cocceius's account /93/ of both the eternal punishment and the eternal glory is that he spoke repeatedly in terms of steps and degrees.⁶⁵

The Handing Over of the Kingdom

It is finally worth mentioning in this regard how much attention Cocceius gave to the question of the meaning of the statement in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 about the Son's handing over of the kingdom to the Father.⁶⁶ Here he argued against the view of Socinians like Johannes Crellius that the handing over of the kingdom was to be understood as an abdication. By contrast, Cocceius held that by handing over the kingdom, Christ would not be relinquishing his office but fulfilling it. This handing over

⁶³ See *STh*, ch. 71 §17. "Interim Christus regnat inter hostes suos (...) Populus autem voluntarius, vel, qui est voluntaria oblatio, in die praelii & strenuitatis ipsius ipsi adest in ornamentis sanctitatis, cum verbo veritatis, cum bonis factis & patientia; accedentes ad Deum, ut sacerdotes (...) militum instar se abstinentes a seculi hujus servitute & retinaculis."

⁶⁴ See *DUMC*, §1578.

⁶⁵ See *SD*, §645-47. This gradation was fairly standard in the seventeenth century. Cocceius, however, stressed the fact that there will also be degrees in punishment. *SD*, §647: "Sunt & in poena gradus, Luc. 12.47. Vapulabit multis, paucis."

⁶⁶ See *SD*, §638-41.

would be the fulfillment of the covenant of peace (*pactum salutis*), and would also confirm Christ's suretyship in the eternal covenant. He argued as follows: If Christ were to retreat completely, that would imply the annulment of the eternal covenant between Father and Son.⁶⁷ After all, in that covenant the Father had, from all eternity, promised the Son a kingdom and subjects. It had been agreed that the Son would receive the world as his personal inheritance.⁶⁸ Therefore, the submission of the Son to the Father could not mean that there was to be a kingdom without a king. Moreover, we can infer from this last remark that Cocceius made no explicit distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ.

Eschatological Perspectives in Ecclesiology

The Glorious State of the Church

It is striking how important a place Cocceius assigned to the (reformed) church in his eschatology. He was convinced that, in the final phase of the history of God's reign in particular, the definitive triumph of the church would begin.⁶⁹ The prominence of the church in the Cocceian expectation of the /94/ future raises the question of how Cocceius understood the relationship between kingdom and church.⁷⁰

In his exposition of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, Cocceius defined the kingdom of God as "the state or condition of the New Testament church in which the church, or people of God, have no king other than God."⁷¹ This definition seems to betray

⁶⁷ See *SD*, §101. Cf. also *Commentarius ad I Cor.*, ch. 15 §135 and 136.

⁶⁸ See *SD*, §640: "Hoc non obstante, Christus in perpetuum erit Rex noster ... & Mediator noster. Nam virtute subjectionis eius, qua factus est sub legem, qua nos impetravit sibi subjiciendos (qua subjecto tum maxime manifestabitur effectus) nos ipsi subjecti in uno Corpore cum ipso beabimur, & gratia illius aeterna (quae pro diversa temporum sponsio vel intercessio nominatur) in aeternum conservabimur, & quidem ab ipso."

⁶⁹ See *STh*, ch. 78 §22. "Quando sic Ecclesia fovetur a regibus & civitatibus, tum populi & regna ei serviunt, & sunt haereditas ipsius. Quod regnum vocat Scriptura." Cf. also *STh*, ch. 83 § 14.

⁷⁰ A remarkable instance of this ecclesiocentric eschatology is found in Cocceius's commentary on Daniel. In his exegesis of Daniel 7:13 and 14, he applied the verses that speak of "someone like a son of man" not to Christ, but to the church. See Joh. Cocceius's *Observationes ad Danielelem*, ch. 7 §61.

⁷¹ See *STh*, ch. 90 §16. "Regnum igitur Dei, quod promissum erat, quodque Christus, post Johannem, prae foribus esse praedicabat, intelligitur. Nempe is status populi Dei, ut neminem praeter Deum habeat regem, dominum, ac principem. Quod est regnum libertatis & Christi. Quod regnum habet suos profectus, ut paulatim fiat latius & absolutius (. . .) Id nos, postquam manifestum est, oramus, ut magis magisque

an identification of church and kingdom. Thus, A. Ritschl, and following him R. Seeberg, concluded that Cocceius had completely lost sight of the empirical church — the church as institute — and had, from an idealistic point of view, regarded the church as the subject of God's kingdom.⁷² Schrenk has shown, however, that when Cocceius spoke of the kingdom as *status ecclesiae* under the New Testament, he certainly made a distinction between kingdom and church. The kingdom was seen as *operatio Dei circa ecclesiam*.⁷³ This interpretation is confirmed by Cocceius's exegesis of the temple vision in Ezekiel 40-48. Cocceius argued, namely, that in chapter 48 the prophet had made no distinction between the sanctuary and the city of God. Whereas the former was a prophecy of the "glorious state of the church," the latter related to God's kingdom in all its glory. Furthermore, the city contained no sanctuary, although it was not situated far from the sanctuary (Ezek. 48:15). Cocceius concluded from this that the church did not coincide with God's kingdom but that it remained the most important instrument in God's acts of /95/ establishing the kingdom, which was always being extended more widely over the earth.⁷⁴

Attending to some specific themes in connection with which the relation between church and kingdom arose may indicate the place of the church in Cocceius's eschatology even more precisely. Of particular significance in this respect is: (1) Cocceius's views on the millennium or thousand year kingdom; (2) his interpretation of the significance and role of the Antichrist; and (3) the place he assigned to Israel in the end times.

Was Cocceius a Millennialist?

proficiat, & ut prosternantur omnes hostes Dei." Cf. also Cocceius's statement in his *Scholia in Acta Apostolorum*, 14 §3 (printed in *Opera Omnia*, Tomus IV [Amsterdam, 1673]). "Hic regnum Dei non significat communionem cum Sanctis in justitia & foedere Dei; neque tantum significat adeptionem gloriae coelestis, sed etiam eum statum rerum, in quo Deus solus Rex sit Ecclesiae, abolitis iis qui Ecclesiae imponunt servitutem: & quidem regnet in pace, subactis, qui regno ipsius resistunt, & omnibus gentibus ei servientibus." See also *STh*, ch. 59 §4; ch. 63 §23 and *SD*, §641.

⁷² See A. Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus, vol. 1. Der Pietismus in der reformierten Kirche* (1879; reprint, Berlin, 1966), 141; R. Seeberg, *Studien zur Geschichte des Begriffes der Kirche* (Erlangen, 1885), cited in Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 255.

⁷³ Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 255, 256.

⁷⁴ See *Significatio Ezek.* ch. 48 S5: "Civitatem quod attinet, ea, ut & supra monuimus, non complectitur sanctuarium. & tamen non procul a sanctuario abest: ut intelligamus, sanctuarium & quod ad id pertinent, omnemque ejus rationem atque ordinem non pendere a civitate; sed tamen leges, jura, tribunalia, fora, judicia, curias, politica negotia & quicquid simile est. Sanctuario inservire, ut cuncti atque singuli tranquillum & quietam vitam agere possint in omni gravitate et pietate, 1 Tim. 2.2."

Cocceius has often been accused of millennialism. In the praefatio, which he wrote for the publication of his father's *Opera Omnia* (1673), Johannes Henricus Cocceius replied extensively to these accusations. Samuel Maresius, professor in Groningen, especially blamed Cocceius for "having laid millennialist eggs" (chiliastische eieren gelegd te hebben) that were hatched by De Labadie, Johannes Rothe, and the theology professor from Harderwijk, Alhart de Raedt.⁷⁵ Johannes Henricus tried to show how unjustified these accusations by Maresius were by citing several passages from his father's work.⁷⁶ He mentioned a number of points that he regarded as characteristic of contemporary millennialism that had been explicitly rejected by his father: the idea of a double resurrection, the expectation of the worldly rule of Christ during a period of a thousand years, and the building of a third temple in Jerusalem.⁷⁷ The idea /96/ that there would first be a bodily resurrection of the dead martyrs and other pious ones, after which they would establish a worldly kingdom together with Christ, to be followed by a general resurrection and the last judgment, was in Cocceius's view a Jewish heresy.⁷⁸ In his view, this heresy was based on the rabbinical idea that, in the days preceding the coming of the Messiah, a resurrection of the dead would take place in Israel!⁷⁹ Cocceius also rejected the idea that the Jews would return to the Promised Land to establish a new Jewish state and build a new temple in Jerusalem. That would, namely, entail a restoration of the legalistic religion of Israel, which had been characterized by bondage and enslavement.

⁷⁵ On the views of De Raedt and Rothe, see S.B.J. Zilverberg, *Dissidenten in de Gouden Eeuw. Geloof en geweten in de Republiek* (Weesp, 1985), 58-60 and 61-63. They were influenced by the ideas of Jacob Böhme and his follower, the Lutheran J.G. Gichtel. After having been accused of heresy, Gichtel fled to the Netherlands where he lived in Zwolle and Amsterdam.

⁷⁶ Johannes Henricus Coccejus, *Praefatio*, 39-40 "*An docuit Parens Regnum millenarium & resurrectionem martyrum ex Apoc. 20? Neutiquam, imo in commentario ad illum locum solidis argumentis demonstravit mille annos elapsos esse. Quando vel ubi ex Prophetiis asseruit tale Regnum Christi gloriosum in terra, cum corporali Christi praesentia in ea? quale D. de Raedt statuit unde tu [Maresius] illa elicere potuisti? nobis contrariam ab ipso sententiam assertam constat. Vide eum in *Ultimis Mosis* §1425 ... At ipsi Regnum Christi fuit regnum Nov. Testamenti, per gradus ulterius ulteriusque promovendum, secundum Periodes temporum, pro oeconomia a Deo constituta, in quo nulla est heterodoxia.*"

⁷⁷ It is worth noting that such a contemporary characterization of millennialism is of great importance in distinguishing between different forms of millennialism in the seventeenth century. Cf. also M. van Campen, "Voetius en Coccejus over de Joden," *Documentatie-blad Nadere Reformatie* 16 (1992): 2-16; C.J. Meeuse, *De toekomstverwachting van de Nadere Reformatie in het licht van haar tijd* (Kampen, 1990), 17-27.

⁷⁸ See Johannes Cocceius, *De Heydelbergse Catechismus der Christelijker Religie, uit de H. Schrifture verklaart en licht gegeven* (Amsterdam, 1679), §254.

⁷⁹ See *DUMC*, §1426.

Yet, we may ask ourselves whether Maresius's accusations were without any justification whatsoever. After all, Cocceius's description of the future glorious state of the church does make one think of those matters that were referred to by (some) millennialists in their description of the future millennium. The idea of a "double millennium" does appear in Cocceius's work — but then in a terminological rather than a material sense. The latter was impossible for any respectable theologian at the time, since the shadow of the drama at Munster hovered far too heavily over the word millennium, which was normally reserved for the "chiliasmus crassus." Even so, the "ultimum tempus" often had for Cocceius, as for other more moderate millennialists, like the Puritan theologian Thomas Brightman to whom Cocceius often referred in his commentaries on Daniel and Revelation,⁸⁰ the character of a millennium.⁸¹ Like Cocceius, Brightman expected a restoration of the church in the end times, after the triumph over the Antichrist, the papacy. Schrenk⁸² also discerns the influence of Johann Heinrich Alsted. Alsted saw the millennium as beginning in 1694.⁸³ According to Schrenk, Cocceius was especially influenced by De Labadie, who /97/ already, in Geneva, had developed certain notions regarding a time of blossoming for the church during the end times.

The idea that soon, before the second coming of Christ, a triumphal time would dawn for the church is also found in the work of a number of prominent Cocceians of a later generation, like Franciscus Burman, Salomon van Til, Henricus Groenewegen, and David Flud van Giffen. However, their ideas soon met with much criticism from the side of the Voetians. According to Henricus Brink and Jacobus Koelman, the Cocceians completely disregarded the distinction between the struggling church on earth and the triumphant church in heaven. One could not speak of an increase in salvation in history because "the

⁸⁰ In his work *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (Frankfurt, 1609), Brightman saw the millennium as beginning in 1300. Cocceius's library contained a copy of this book. See *Catalogus, Libri Theologi in Octavo*, 14 (no.62)

⁸¹ In Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 237, the question is raised, in response to the Cocceian idea of a time of blossoming of the church during the end times, whether Cocceius did not deviate so strongly from New Testament eschatology because of the fact that he "in the last instance, pictured the Church as something like a throne upon the earth" (doch schliesslich der Kirche etwas wie einen Thron auf Erden errichtet). Schrenk's question is, however, more that of the New Testament scholar than that of the historian. Here he measures Cocceius against his own views regarding New Testament eschatology.

⁸² Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 237-38.

⁸³ Professor of theology in Herborn, and later in Karlweissenburg in Transsylvania. See his work *Diatriba de mille annis apocalypticis* (1627). The idea that the millennium of Rev. 20 had already begun with the ascension of Christ is already found in Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 20:7, 9.

older the world, the more evil it became," wrote Brink with an appeal to countless biblical passages.⁸⁴ Moreover, such an expectation was strengthened by worldly people who were not concerned about their soul or salvation and who neglected their vocation (arbeidsaam beroep). Anyway, was Christ's coming on earth not being made superfluous in this way?

Criticism was also forthcoming from the Cocceian side. In a letter to the Zürich theologian Johann Heinrich Heidegger, Cocceius had given a detailed reply to Heidegger's question whether this view regarding a glorious state of the church, already before Christ's second coming, was not contrary to Jesus' words in Luke 18:8 ("But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?"). Cocceius had replied that, for the unbelievers, Christ's second coming would in any case be a coming in judgment. However, in this text the word faith was not to be understood in the sense of "saving faith" (zaligmakend geloof) but as a "suspicion and expectation of the coming of the Lord" (vermoeden en verwachten van de komst des Heren). In the peaceful kingdom of the seventh epoch, the believers will be so entranced by prosperity that they will not be able to believe that Christ will soon return in order to judge. Brink thought that this was a horrific perversion of the text, which portrayed the believers of the seventh epoch as "the least wakeful and most stupid people imaginable" (de onachtsaamste en domste menschen, die bedacht konden worden).⁸⁵

/98/ The Antichrist

In many parts of his work, Cocceius gave extensive attention to the figure of the Antichrist, which is mentioned especially in the first and second letters of John. In the years after 1640, he debated with Hugo Grotius the question of who was indicated by this

⁸⁴ See Henricus Brink, *Toet-steen der Waarheid en der Dwalingen, ofte Klaare en beknopte Verhandeling van den Cocceaansche en Caresiaansche Verschillen ...* (Amsterdam, 1685), 715. In the chapter entitled: "LXXIX Verschilstuk: Of er noch te verwachten staat een heerlijk Koninkrijke der Gelovigen op aarden sonder Vervolgingen, Ergernissen en Ketteryen, soo dat de alderlaatste tyden van de Wereld de beste wesen sullen van die ooit geweest zijn?" (LXXIX Point of dispute: Whether we are still to expect a glorious kingdom of the faithful on earth without persecutions, trials or heresies, so that the very last time of the world will be the best that has ever been?), he extensively discussed the views of the abovementioned Cocceian authors.

⁸⁵ See for this exchange, Cocceius, *Epistolae* no. 353 (d.d. 15 May 1666), in *Opera Anekdotica, Tomus Alter* (Amsterdam, 1706) and Brink, *Toet-steen*, 710.

name. According to Grotius, the relevant texts were about the Roman emperor Caligula, Simon the magician (Acts 8), Barkochba, and the emperors Domitian and Trajan respectively.⁸⁶ In taking this view, Grotius was directly opposing the Protestant consensus since Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin — namely that the Antichrist did not refer to a person but to the papacy.⁸⁷ Like a number of English theologians, such as Joseph Mede,⁸⁸ Cocceius was convinced that the biblical description of the Antichrist could not refer to a single person. Rather, the term indicated a powerful factor, which "during the last phase of the world, will be in the world, and with great power and radiance; in whose company they who love the world will easily come to a fall" (in de laasten tijd des werelds in de wereld en wel met groote macht en glans zijn zal; in welkers gemeenschap licht staat te vallen, hij die de wereld liefheeft). He added that when the apostle John spoke of the appearance of many "antichrists" in his days, that had to be seen as a preparation for the coming of the "Head Antichrist" (Hoofd-Antichrist).⁸⁹ Moreover, the Antichrist was not to be seen as something opposing Christ. Rather, the Greek word *anti* indicated substitution more than anything else. Therefore, the Antichrist was something that put itself in the place of Christ, and arrogated to itself the honor that was due to Christ alone. Finally, because it also pointed to a powerful figure inside the church, rather than outside it, the Antichrist could be nothing but the papacy.⁹⁰ In his expositions regarding the Antichrist, /99/ Cocceius employed a kind of salvation-

⁸⁶ See on Grotius's views regarding the Antichrist, J. van den Berg, "Grotius' Views on Antichrist and Apocalyptic Thought in England," *Hugo Grotius Theologian. Essays in Honor of G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes*, ed. Henk J.M. Nellen and Edwin Rabbie (Leiden, 1994), 169-83.

⁸⁷ See H. Preuss, *Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik* (Leipzig, 1906), 203; G. Seebass, "Antichrist IV: Reformationszeit und Neuzeit," *TRE III*, 28-43. On Calvin's views regarding the Antichrist, see *Institutio religionis christianae* 4, 7.25.

⁸⁸ Cocceius knew the work of Mede. His library contained a copy of Mede's *Clavis Apocalyptica*. See Catalogus, *Libri Theologici in Quarto*, 11 (no. 241).

⁸⁹ See Johannes Cocceius, *Illustrium locorum de Anti-christo agentium repetitio* (1641), in *Opera Omnia Tomus VII* (Amsterdam, 1673), 3-52. The quotation given above is from the Dutch translation by Abraham van Poot, which appeared in Amsterdam in 1679, entitled *Van den Antichrist*, 122-23. Cocceius went on to criticize Grotius's exegesis of 2 Thess. 2 (§4-28), Matt. 24 (§29-37), Dan. 2 (§38-102), Isa. 14:13 and 14 (§103-104), Ezek. 28:2 and 3 (§105-9), Rev. 12, 13, and 14 (§110-204), Rev. 17 (§205-5), Dan. 1:7 (§236-81), and the relevant passages in the letters of John (§282-410).

⁹⁰ In his critique of Grotius, Cocceius made extensive use of a (unspecified) work by Maresius, which "relieved [him] of much labor" ([waardoor hem] een groot stuk van desen arbeid is afgenomen), See Cocceius, *Van den Antichrist*, 4. Cocceius was probably referring to Maresius's extensive critique of Grotius in his *Concordia discors et Antichristus revelatus: Id est ill. Viri Hugonis Grotii Apologia pro Papa et Papismo*, 2 vols., (1642) , In it Maresius accused Grotius of actually defending the pope and the papacy by advocating such views,

historical geography: Just as the Christian mission, in its proclamation of salvation, had initially worked from the east toward the west, so the Antichrist later worked from the west into other parts of the world.⁹¹

What was one then to say of the pre-Reformation church? Cocceius did not deny that there had also been sincere believers in the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation.⁹² In the first centuries, that church had certainly been instrumental in the expansion of Christ's kingdom. And later it had undoubtedly also been "preacher of the faith and servant of the conversion of the heathen."⁹³ Even the Roman Catholic missions in India, Africa, and America had done some good, although more peoples had been conquered than converted.⁹⁴ However, as *civitas magna*, that is to say as papal church with immense worldly power and an oppressive hierarchy, that organization, which wrongly called itself "church," would have no place in the kingdom of peace and liberty. That church was to be destroyed.

/100/ Israel's Role in the End Times

It is also worthwhile to give special attention to the place of Israel in Cocceius's eschatology. It is, moreover, with good reason that we do so at this point, within the framework of his ecclesiology. Cocceius thought, namely, that the definitive salvation of the church could only come about insofar as Israel was also restored. Both in his commentaries and in his systematic works, Cocceius had much to say about Israel's role in the end times. The fundamental tone of these writings was mostly one of respect for the Jews, although they were to be converted to Christ. However, in his reflections on the

⁹¹ See *Significatio Ezechielis*, ch. 40 §47; 57: "Et, dum regnum Dei progreditur ab Oriente versus Occidentem, ad id vocali imprimis septentrionales populos ... Nam & Dan. 11:44 dicitur, Antichristum turbatum ili ab Ortu & a Septentrione. Praedicatio Euangelii in Septentrione multum eum turbavit."

⁹² Cf. *STh*, ch. 83 §12: "Quare importuna admodum est interrogatio, ubi fuerit Ecclesia Reformata ante Lutherum? Quotquot enim fideles fuerunt, qui tenuerunt sermonem Dei et testimonium Jesu, & praecepta hominum non susceperunt, ii nostri sunt; licet forte in multis & illi fuerint lapsi."

⁹³ Johannes Cocceius, *De Ecclesia et Babylone Disquisitio* (1657), §99. "Ecclesia Catholica semper fuit & est & erit praedicatrix fidei, & sic ministra conversionis gentium. Sed hoc nihil facit Papistica. Illam enim desolari oportet; & per eam, qua talem, non est facta conversio ullius hominis." See for this text *Opera Omnia*, Tomus VII (Amsterdam, 1673).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, §105: "Lucra Papalis Ecclesiae in Indiis, in Africae extremis & in America sunt maximam partem *kaka kerdea*. Sed sint optima; sit justum imperium; constat tamen potius terras illorum populorum occupatas, esse, quam populos conversos. Occisi enim sunt plurimi. Sic non solebant Apostoli."

Jews, he took his point of departure in God's faithfulness to this people, who were his "holy seed." They remained part of God's salvific action. That, according to Cocceius, was also the reason why the Jews had never been assimilated into the other nations. Therefore, God would once again call them back in his own good time. He was preparing everything for that purpose. Cocceius's high regard for the Jews is also evident in his remark that, without the language and tradition of the Jews, the Christians would not have been able to understand Scripture. The Jews had been, and continued to be, the "book bearers of the church" (*capsarii ecclesiae*).⁹⁵

Cocceius mostly dealt with the restoration of Israel in his expositions regarding the last period of the kingdom in history. His interest in Israel thus clearly arose in a missionary context. Within the framework of the great period of mission, they would be converted en masse. Here Cocceius refers to Romans 11:26 and following. Israel as a whole, that is *tota ecclesia et populus Israel*, would be saved. He thought that this vision had been allegorically portrayed in the common celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem — preceding the return of Christ — by Christians, converted Jews, and Muslims. He based this idea on an extensive exegesis of Zechariah 14: 16 and following.⁹⁶ In his interpretation of Ezekiel's temple vision this idea was reiterated. The feast mentioned in Ezekiel 45:25 was the "eschatological" Feast of Tabernacles, which he therefore called the "feast of the final hour." It would be celebrated as a sign that people have indeed been prepared for Christ's return and are ready to detach themselves from all property: land, houses, cities, and earthly kingdoms.⁹⁷

/101/ *Personal Eschatology*

⁹⁵ See on Cocceius's view, on the Jews, W.J. van Asselt. "Missionaire motieven en perspectieven in de theologie van Johannes Coccejus," *Kerk en Theologie* 41 (1990), 227-36; Van Campen, "Voetius en Coccejus over de joden", *DNR* 16 (1992), 9-13.

⁹⁶ On this, see Cocceius's expositions in *SD*, §636-37 and *STh*, ch. 87 §3; Cf. also the previously mentioned letter from Cocceius to Heidegger d.d. 15 May 1666.

⁹⁷ See *Significatio Ezechielii*, ch. 45 § 15. "Tandem praecipit etiam celebrari festum mense septimo, de decimo quinto mensis, quomodo ritu Mosaico celebretur festum Tabernaculorum. Lev. 23 vers. 34. De quo festo in veritate celebrando etiam vaticinatur Zacharias cap. 14:16 (...) Quae ut in Ecclesia universa debet esse (...) promptitudo sub ultimum tempus, quumque omnia, quae prophetae locuti sunt, impleta fuerint: ita & singulorum esse praeparatio, cum viderint, parum sibi temporis superesse. Atqui nunquam videt homo sibi multum superesse. (...) Festum tabernaculorum (...) appellatur hora ultima."

Cocceius was very sober in his approach to individual eschatology. His main emphasis was on the salvation-historical aspects of eschatology. Only in a few short paragraphs at the end of the *Summa Doctrinae* did he address the traditional topics, like the relation of soul and body in the resurrection,⁹⁸ purgatory,⁹⁹ and the doctrine of the soul-sleep (thanatism),¹⁰⁰ of which the last two were rejected because "the soul reaches its destiny immediately after death," and because once in hell, salvation is not possible anymore.

By contrast, he devoted much attention to the question of whether the Old Testament believers had been familiar with the hope of eternal life and answered it in the affirmative.¹⁰¹ Whether in eternal life the faithful would finally abide with Christ in heaven or live on a new earth is not clear from Cocceius's account. He only remarked that the expressions "new heaven" and "new earth" were to be understood as a "metaphorical mode of speaking of the destruction of the external state of the church."¹⁰²

In the *Summa Theologiae*, which Cocceius published seven years before his death, and in which he gave a systematic summary of his whole theology, the chapter on eternal life is the shortest chapter in the book.¹⁰³ There he describes the state of the blessed (*status beatorum*) as the vision and enjoyment of God. Cocceius qualified this by saying that one should not make the mistake of thinking that those who see God see the same things that God sees. God remains God, who abides in an incomprehensible and inaccessible light. It is an outpouring of God's splendor into our soul, and God pours this splendor into our soul in a manner even more intimate than the union of our soul with the new body. The splendors of God are something like "knee-splints" (*serperastra*) that are meant to straighten the crooked legs of children. People are thereby raised to the contemplation, worship, and enjoyment of God himself as the highest and only good.¹⁰⁴

Cocceius's notion of degrees of glory, already mentioned earlier, should not be understood in terms of the merit of good works but rather as pertaining to the fruits of righteousness that each has brought forth during his or her lifetime. Therefore, the light of those who have brought many to righteousness /102/ will shine most brightly at the

⁹⁸ *SD*, §612-16.

⁹⁹ *SD*, §617 and 620.

¹⁰⁰ *SD*, §616.

¹⁰¹ *SD*, §622-26.

¹⁰² *SD*, §650.

¹⁰³ See *STh*, ch. 97, entitled, *De vita aeterna*.

¹⁰⁴ See *STh*, ch. 97 §3.

resurrection. This gradation is at the same time the manifestation of God's many-shaded wisdom.¹⁰⁵

Characterization and Evaluation

In this concluding section, I shall attempt a brief characterization of eschatological motifs and perspectives in Cocceius by considering the question of the framework into which his ideas should be placed and especially by inquiring after that which can be regarded as uniquely characteristic of his eschatological thought. We may conclude from the way in which Cocceius connects the concept of the covenant with history, that historical dynamics are of central importance to him. Moreover, we have seen how his covenantal theology, through the introduction of the abrogation doctrine, is thoroughly saturated with a purposeful orientation to the future. From the perspective of his doctrine of the covenant, his eschatology can be characterized, first of all, as salvation-historical and teleological.

Another element is added by Cocceius's doctrine of the kingdom. Viewed systematically, the covenant and the kingdom do not coincide, but they are also not related as means and end. Rather, Cocceius's doctrine of the kingdom is a topical and historical application of his prophetic exegesis, which he combines with a traditional, church-historically oriented doctrine of the epochs. Compared to the idea of the kingdom as it functioned in the thought of his Reformed contemporaries in the seventeenth century, Cocceius's views on the kingdom of God clearly involved a new departure. Up to that point, the doctrine of the kingdom had been treated mainly within the framework of the *munus triplex* of Christ.¹⁰⁶ In combination with his prophetic theology and his doctrine of the epochs, Cocceius's doctrine of the kingdom acquired a topical and

¹⁰⁵ *STh.* ch. 97 §4.

¹⁰⁶ In seventeenth century Reformed theology, a distinction was made in the *regium munus* of Christ, between his *regnum essentiale, naturale, or universale* — his providential exercise of power as second Person of the Trinity — and the *regnum personale or oeconomicum*, which was due to Christ as God-man. The latter was the *regnum gratiae*, which remained limited to the regenerate and was therefore primarily spiritual in nature. Thus, e.g., Gomarus, Wollebius, Rijssen, and Maresius. See on this H. Hepp, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche: Dargestellt und aus dem Quellen belegt*. Neu durchgesehen und herausgegeben durch Ernst Bizer (Neukirchen, 1958), 361-62 and 383-86. Cf. also Schrenk, *Gottesreich*, 213

historical dimension. It served as the hermeneutic key with which Scripture and contemporary history were mutually related. While his doctrine of the covenant represents the teleological character of his eschatology, his doctrine of the kingdom articulates its topical component.

The point of orientation for both the topical and teleological components of Cocceius's eschatology is his ecclesiology. Here the two lines come together. Our presentation has made abundantly clear that in his description of the abrogations and the *curriculum regni*, Cocceius had in mind especially the development /103/ and completion of the church. In spite of opposition and struggle, the church is gradually led toward a glorious future.

Another important aspect with regard to the characterization of his eschatology is the fact that personal or individual eschatology is clearly overshadowed by the salvation-historical perspective. The personal-existential dimension, or the element of the order of salvation, is certainly not absent from his theology and eschatology, but it is always embedded in the salvation-historical component.¹⁰⁷ In our discussion of the doctrine of gradations in the eschaton, we saw that the process character of salvation history was extended even into the *regnum gloriae*. Just as the faithful on earth are involved in a salvation-historical process, that state of affairs is continued even in eternity.

We may summarize by saying that Cocceius's account of the last things exhibited a strong historicizing tendency. In that, he was not, however, unique compared to other forms of eschatological expectation in his time, which exhibit a similar historicizing tendency. Here we may think of the representatives of the Dutch "Second Reformation," or Nadere Reformatie, like Wilhelmus à Brakel, and of a number of English authors in whose work the ecclesiological component was by no means absent.¹⁰⁸ In our view, the uniqueness of his eschatology lies especially in his doctrine of the covenant. The abrogation doctrine in particular gave Cocceius's eschatology its own particular shape

¹⁰⁷ See Van Asselt, *Amicitia Dei*, 124-29. There I defend the claim that Cocceius related these two components of his theology by means of his pneumatology, which may therefore be regarded as the fundamental structure of his theology.

¹⁰⁸ See on the eschatological views prevalent in these circles, T. Brienens, "Eschatologie," in: *Theologische aspecten van de Nadere Reformatie*, ed. T. Brienens et al. (Zoetermeer, 1993), 288, 290; W.J. op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands, 1590-1622* (Rotterdam, 1987), 26. On the English authors, see especially J. van den Berg, "Continuity within a Changing Context. Henry More's Millenarianism, seen against the Background of the Millenarian Concepts of Joseph Mede," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 14 (1988): 185-202. I am grateful to Dr. A. de Groot and Prof. Dr. J. van den Berg, who have made valuable comments on my article in this regard.

and flavor. It gave his eschatology the character of a cumulative process of liberation that, from the moment of Christ's ascension, is gradually realized in history and will eventually culminate in a kingdom of peace on earth in spite of all opposition. The servitude and slavery suffered under other authorities and powers, such as the law of works in Judaism and the papacy, is increasingly diminished, despite periods of regress, and is eventually completely abolished. However, complete liberty will only be realized once the glorious manifestation of God's rule on earth and in history has become a reality. The road leading to that destination is the history of a liberation struggle that covers several centuries. In fact, one could very well characterize Cocceius's whole theology as a kind of intramundane (innerweltliche) eschatology, indelibly stamped by the struggle for liberation, characterized by the dialectic of an increase in salvation and a decrease in evil in history. The history of this liberation struggle constitutes the heart of his theology. His eschatological views are marked by an /104/ extremely optimistic view of the world 's future, which probably contributed to the tilling of the soil from which the Enlightenment's faith in progress would later spring.¹⁰⁹

Cocceius entertained a strong conviction that the conclusion of this struggle could be expected very soon. Toward the end of his life, he openly regarded all his philological, exegetical, and theological investigations as work in the service of this eschatological perspective. His followers therefore preferred for themselves the decorative title, "Royal Comrades of the Ruler Messiah" (Rijxstrawanten van Vorst Messias).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ E.G.E. van der Wall emphasized especially the apologetic dimension of the (later) Cocceian prophetic theology, which had been aimed against the rising unbelief of the Enlightenment. She also points to the continuing impact of Cocceian ideas in Pietism (Spener), and in the moderate Enlightenment in the Netherlands. See Ernestine van der Wall, "Between Grotius and Cocceius: The 'Theologia Prophetica' of Campegius Vitringa (1659-1722)," in *Hugo Grotius*, 195-215.

¹¹⁰ See on this title, R. B. Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam, 1971),134.