

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XX

FEBRUARY 15, 1944

NUMBER 10

## MEDITATION

### Remember, O Lord

*Remember the word unto thy servant,  
upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

*Psalms 119:49.*

From the depths!

Always from the depths the cry of the people of God in this present world ascends unto Jehovah their God.

It must needs be so.

For such is the good pleasure of Him, Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that He should reveal Himself as the Highest unto those that are in the depths, as the Blessed to them that are in misery, as the Light to them that are in darkness, as the Living to the dead, as the mighty Lord to them that have no hope of deliverance, as the Justifier of the ungodly, as the One that quickens the dead, the Life and the Resurrection, the glorious, ever blessed God!

Hence, He leads many children to glory through sin and death.

His way leads through the depths!

Real depths! Depths of darkness in which there is no ray of human hope, from which there is no way out, in which no possibilities of escape present themselves, from which no human power can deliver. Depths of sin and guilt, for the which there is no atonement among men, from the dominion and power of which no human might can liberate; and of death, irrevocable, implacable death, the shackles of which are unbreakable for ever. Depths of suffering and misery, of affliction and sorrow, from which there is no escape, and for which there is no comfort; of problems and questionings for the which there is no solution, and that never receive an answer from the wise

men of this world; of anger, and wrath, of desolation and trouble, in the midst of which and under the oppressing power of which we pine away. Depths in which all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and in which men labor and toil without ever being able to leave the track of the vicious circle in which they run: vanity of vanities. . . .

Depths in which all human power and wisdom are exposed as utter impotence and foolishness.

Through those depths it pleases God to lead His children to the blessed heights of eternal life and glory, of righteousness and the resurrection from the dead, of perfect fellowship in His heavenly tabernacle, in order that His glory may appear, and they may taste that the Lord is good!

Out of those depths He redeems them, when there is no human redeemer; He delivers them, when there is no deliverer; He calls them and shows them the way out, when all escape is cut off.

And while they are still in the depths, though they are already delivered; while they are still in sin, though they are already justified; while they are still in the midst of death, though they have already been raised from the dead; while they are still in this world, and the world hates them, and in this world they must still suffer tribulation, though they are already in heaven; while this strange and paradoxical situation exists, they cry to Him out of the depths. For as children of God in the body of this death they already taste that the Lord is good, and they long and hope and groan for the perfect deliverance, for the light of the perfect day, the beauty of which they see afar off, and in which they shall see face to face. . . .

And to those children, still in the depths, though in principle delivered from them, Jehovah gives His Word!

His blessed, precious Word!

Blessed, because in and through it the pilgrims of the night behold the glorious light of final salvation.

Precious, indeed, because it is all they have, while they are still in the depths. There is nothing else in

all the world to which they can cling. Everything else is against them, contradicts them, opposes them, would destroy their faith and hope. That Word is the sole ray of light in the darkness of the depths!

God's Word unto His servants!

The Word upon which He causes them to hope!

And hoping upon that Word, they cry out of the depths:

Remember, O Lord, that Word!

Come, Lord Jesus!

Remember the word!

That this is the meaning of the Word of God in this text from the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, is very plain from the context.

The Psalmist is in the depths, representing all the children of God that lie in the midst of death "outside of Christ."

Does he not, in this particular section of the psalm, speak of his comfort in his affliction, vs. 50; does he not complain that the proud have had him greatly in derision, vs. 51; and that horror hath taken hold upon him, because of the wicked that forsake the law of the Lord, vs. 53; is he not referring to his present position in the world as the house of his pilgrimage, and does he not speak of remembering the name of Jehovah in the night? vss. 54, 55.

O, indeed, he is in the depths!

And in those depths he had heard and does hear the Word of God! Of that Word he speaks in every single verse of the section. It is the Word on which he hopes, the Word that has quickened him and that is his comfort; it is the law of Jehovah, from which he does not decline, or it is the "judgments" of the Lord, through the remembrance of which he comforted himself. That Word, now conceived as the "statutes" of his God, has been the theme of his song in the house of his pilgrimage, and as he kept the precepts of the Lord, he found consolation and strength in the remembrance of His name.

In the depths he hears the Word of God!

And so he cries, representing all the children of God of all ages: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope!"

Evidently, the Word of God is here conceived as a word of promise. For it is as such that it is the ground of his hope, and that he desires the Lord to remember His word. And a promise, *the* promise is the Word of God unto His servants in the world throughout. For it is not to any particular promise or part of the Word of God that the psalmist refers in these words. It is *the* Word of God to His servant, of which he is speaking. That Word to him is one and always the same. It may be manifold in riches. It may have many aspects. It may come to God's servants in many forms. And accordingly, it may be

designated by different names, such as law, judgments, statutes, precepts, name of Jehovah, or simply Word of God. But always it is essentially *promise*, gospel, the Word of God concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the promise of final and complete deliverance from all sin and death, from all the oppression of the enemy, and from the fury of the forces of darkness; the promise of perfect and universal justification and victory, and of eternal life and glory in God's heavenly tabernacle, through the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord!

The Word unto thy servant!

It is the Word of promise of which God is the Author and Finisher, that is rooted in Him, grounded on Him, and that is as sure as the oath of Him that cannot lie!

It is the Word God spoke to His children in the depths, to His servants in the night of their pilgrimage, from the very beginning of the world, which He declared again and again, enlarging upon it, opening it up to exhibit always greater riches, through patriarchs and prophets, through types and shadows; which He fulfilled and fully declared through Jesus Christ, His Son in our flesh, crucified and slain as the Lamb without blemish, raised from the dead on the third day, and exalted at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; the Word that was preached by the apostles and evangelists, and that is still preached through the Holy Scriptures by the Church of Jesus Christ in the world until He come! . . .

The Word of promise unto God's servants in the depths!

And they hear it!

O, indeed, they hear the promise as the Word of God to them!

Thus the psalmist speaks of it: the word *unto thy servant*. There is a Word of God for him, and he knows it. The Word of promise is addressed to him personally, and he hears it. There is no doubt in his soul that the Most High has spoken to him.

But how?

How did the Word of God address the psalmist, and how did he hear it? Does he, perhaps, have reference to a very special and particular revelation, through which Jehovah delivered a personal promise of salvation to him? This would seem very improbable, for always he speaks of the Word of God in general terms, as the law, the precepts, the judgments and statutes of Jehovah. It is no doubt to that same Word of God, as it had come to the heirs of the promise in the world from the beginning, and as it had been preserved in the Old Testament Scriptures, that the poet refers also in this prayer.

Yet, he heard it as addressed to him, and believed!

For, first of all, this Word of God, as to its contents was not a vague and general offer to all men,

addressed to no one in particular, but very definitely a promise to the heirs of salvation, to those that seek and find, that pray and receive, to the hungry and thirsty after righteousness that shall be filled, to the poor in spirit, whose is the kingdom of heaven, and to the mourning that shall be comforted, to the weary and heavy laden that shall be given rest, to the called that believe, to the servants of Jehovah that cry unto Him from the depths. . . .

*Thy Word unto Thy servant!*

Secondly, that very Word, addressed to him through the Scriptures as he knew them at that time, had been applied to his own heart, was addressed to him by the Spirit. It had called him out of darkness into God's marvellous light, had transformed him from being a servant of sin into a servant of Jehovah, so that he found his place among the company of those to whom the Word of the Lord was addressed. And there, among the saints that were called, he heard the Word of promise as the Word of his God addressed to him personally: the Word unto thy servant!

And, thirdly, he walked in the way of God's precepts, and did not decline from the statutes of his God. God's servant he was indeed!

And so he heard, and so we do still hear the Word of God as His promise of salvation to us!

Through the Scriptures, by the Spirit, in the company of the saints, and walking in the way in which His servants walk, we hear His Word, and believe.

And believing we hope!

Wonderful Word!

Word of hope!

The word "upon which thou hast caused me to hope!"

The servant of the Lord in this world, as yet in the depths, hopes; and that, too, he ascribes to the work and grace of God: *thou* hast caused me to hope!

And, therefore, he has a sure ground for his prayer that the Lord may remember that word. He may not forget it! For this hope, which is grounded on His own Word, and which is wrought in the heart of His servant in the world by Himself, so that it is all His own work, may not be put to shame!

He hopes.

The original word emphasizes the idea of waiting for something. To hope is to wait. And this implies expectation. We wait for something, because we expect it. We know that the object for which we wait, in this case the final salvation and victory in glory, is coming, and that it is for us, that we shall participate in its blessedness when it comes. And so, we wait with patience. The vigil may seem long, but we wait. There may be many things all about us in the world that would induce us to cease from waiting any longer, but still we wait. Scoffers may mock that we are

waiting in vain, and that we forsake the good things of life and endure suffering and reproach as the most miserable of men, but still we wait. We may not be able to see that for which we hope, for the object belongs to those things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, but still we wait. And waiting we long. And counting all other things but dross, we set our hearts on the thing hoped for. . . .

All through the Word of God unto us!

For that Word reveals to us a glimpse of the glory of that for which we hope, but that glimpse is sufficient to cause us to forsake all things, that we may attain to the object of our hope.

And that Word assures us that our hope shall be realized, and that, too, *unto us!*

It is the ground, the sole ground of our hope!

And that we fix our hope upon that Word, is the work of God's marvellous grace!

By nature we cannot, we will not, we dare not hope on the Word of God: it is to us a word of condemnation!

But by the revelation of Jesus Christ our Lord, His cross and resurrection, that Word of God is become a word of salvation!

And by the wonder of grace in our hearts we hear that Word, are assured that it is addressed to us, trust in it, and wait for its realization!

The word upon which thou hast caused me to hope!  
Blessed word!

Remember, O Lord!

For the sake of the glory of Thine own name, remember Thine own word, upon which Thou Thyself hast caused me to hope!

But does He ever forget?

God forbid!

He is the eternal One! And as the eternal God He is the Immutable! He never changes. For He does not live in time, but inhabits eternity. His being and nature are ever the same. And so is His memory. He does not remember as we do. With us to remember means that we do not completely forget, that somewhere in our subconscious mind we store away that which we once experienced, learned, spoke, or performed, and that on occasion we are able to recall it into our consciousness. With God, however, to remember means to be constantly mindful of its object.

He is ever mindful of His Word!

Nor does His servant doubt this.

But knowing that God always remembers His Word, and will surely fulfill it, He prays for the revelation of this faithful remembrance of the Most High in the realization of the promise!

Remember constantly and finally, O Lord!

Come, Lord Jesus!

H. H.

## *The Standard Bearer*

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

The Reformed Free Publishing Association  
1101 Hazen Street, S. E.

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Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. R. SCHAAFSMA, 1101 Hazen St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. All Announcements and Obituaries must be sent to the above address and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

## EDITORIALS

### And Now: "A Narrow Bridge"

Recently, as our readers will recall, the editor of *The Banner* wrote about a hymn and a latch. In the issue of Jan. 14 he devotes an editorial to "a narrow bridge."

That narrow bridge is the truth. "He who would know the truth must walk on this narrow bridge. On either side is a deep abyss from which there is no return."

Although the editor informs us that this figure of speech is derived from an old Arab story, the phraseology reminds one rather strongly of Barth and his dialectic performances. We say this without even remotely intending to accuse the editor of *The Banner* of any form of Barthianism. Only the similarity is striking. Barth prefers to think dialectically. In fact, it is the only way one can think about God. And he loves to illustrate this dialectic method by referring to the figure of a man walking on a knife-edge mountain ridge, on which he must continue to walk, and cannot stand still, lest he fall into the abyss on the right or on the left. And not only is there a striking similarity in the figures employed by the editor of *The Banner* and Karl Barth, but also the actual method of thinking about God recommended by the former is similar to that of the latter. Barth thinks dialectically. He always moves on between the Yea and the Nay, and remembers that the truth lies beyond both in God, the only Yea and Amen. We can state the truth only in the form of question and answer, and always in such a way that the answer contains a question; or in the form of a dialogue, with the two sides opposing each other, a conflict. Somewhat similar to this is the method the editor of *The Banner* recommends to us in thinking about the matter of salvation. He speaks in the form of a conflict. The matter of salvation is Yea and Nay, and, therefore, it is neither absolutely Yea, nor absolutely Nay. And the editor would have us walk on the "narrow bridge" of these dialectics in order to abide in the truth. On the one hand, there are those that insist on saying only Nay, and they fall into the abyss on the one side of the bridge; on the other hand, some would say only Yea, with the result that they plunge into the abyss on the other side. We must be careful, however, to remain on the bridge, and balancing ourselves by constantly saying Yea and Nay, keep ourselves from dashing headlong into the abyss, "from which there is no return."

Let me explain.

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In the article referred to above the editor first says Yea. And we like to hear him say that, even from the depth of the abyss into which we have plunged according to him. For when he says that, he is soundly Reformed, leaves the latch on the outside, and condemns the Arminians that are singing their hymns in the abyss opposite from us. Just listen to this:

"Our contention is that the latch is on the outside. No person who is Reformed in his creed and holds that the gospel of 'sovereign grace' believes otherwise. Our doctrinal standards stress that man is by nature an enemy of God, not subject to the law of God neither able to be (Rom. 8:7); that he is unwilling to believe and be saved unless Christ first makes him willing by sending the Holy Spirit into his heart to regenerate him; in other words that Christ must open the door to the sinner's heart, take possession of it, and awaken a true saving faith. He who puts the sinner's act of faith before God's act of *regeneration* — a doctrine clearly contradicted by what we read of in Acts about Lydia, namely, that God opened her heart in order that she might give heed to the message of Paul — makes the work of sinner rather than of God primary in salvation. Such a one can not consistently say that we love God because he first loved us; that we sought him because he first sought us."

And we, from the depth of our abyss, when we hear him thus pronounce his Yea, shout our Amen of agreement; and from the other side of the bridge, in the Arminian abyss, we hear loud exclamations of protest about this "deluded minister" on the bridge, that goes "haywire" about election.

But, alas! no sooner did we express our agreement, but we hear acclamations of great joy from the depth of the Arminian abyss, for now they hear the "walker-on-the-bridge" speak his Nay! For hear him: "Now, all this is but one side of the gospel. There is another side which the Scriptures stress not less strongly, namely, that the offer of salvation comes to all who hear the gospel, to the reprobate as well as to the elect. We must hold to both sides if we would preserve our balance on the narrow bridge of truth." And all this would not be so serious, if the editor merely meant that the gospel is preached promiscuously to all, and that the "call to faith and repentance comes to every person who hears the message of salvation," if the editor would only explain that according to the good-pleasure of God this preaching is a savor of death unto death to the reprobate, as well as a savor of life unto life for the elect. But this he does not mean, neither believe, still less teach. On the contrary, what he now means is the very opposite of what he first taught, viz., that God seriously wills the salvation of all men, and well-meaningly offers it to them, which is in full accord with what he wrote in a previous article, that although Christ does not plead with

sinners to do what they cannot, what He alone can do, He does plead with them to repent and believe, implying that they can do the latter. And that this is, indeed, his meaning, is sufficiently evident from his quotation of II Pet. 3:9 in this connection: "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And does the editor here purposely quote from the Revised Version, and prefer the weaker translation "wishing" to the better and stronger "willing?" No doubt, the Revised Version had the Arminian interpretation of this passage in mind when they so translated it, for the original (*boulomenos*) does not usually mean "wishing" but "willing deliberately."

And does not the author of *The Banner* know, that Reformed men never interpret that passage in this Arminian sense?

I might offer him my own exegesis of this passage, but, lest he refuse to listen to a voice out of the abyss into which he beholds us as hopelessly precipitated, I will quote from the very exponent of "common grace" who, in his earlier days wrote about this passage as follows. (I translate):

"And to demonstrate this, I will, in regard to II Pet. 3:9, leave it to the judgment of my opponents themselves, whether they will accept the inner contradiction one must face if one makes this Scriptural passage say what they put into it.

"For about the context and the way of argumentation in II Pet. 3:9 there can be no difference of opinion.

"In this passage, all admit this, the only subject is the long tarrying of the return of the Lord upon the clouds.

"The church of those days had long expected this return. . . .

"And when they were disappointed in this expectation, and one year after another passed by, without heaven being opened and the Lord descending, unstable souls in the church began to murmur and to ask, whether what the apostles had told them was the truth, and whether they had not published as a promise of Jesus' return what was after all only the product of their own imagination, and, therefore, *false prophecy*.

"Now, if in this connection and argumentation I insert the conception: "Ye yourselves, and not God, are the cause of this tarrying about which ye murmur. For why do ye not hasten your repentance? For this ye surely do know, *that first the last of the elect must come to repentance, before that day can come*,—then the whole argument runs perfectly smoothly, the chain of thought is unbroken, and everyone understands why and for what purpose the apostle employs exactly *these* terms.

"But note now, how all this is lost, and the sense becomes completely unintelligible, if I, for other reasons, try to carry the idea of common grace into this passage.



"Then I must come to the following unreasonable argumentation: 'Jesus cannot come as yet, for the will of God must be fulfilled, and according to this will *all men* must first come to repentance!'

"But. . . if Jesus cannot return before *all men* have come to repentance, *then He will never come!*

"For, in the first place, thousands upon thousands have already died without repentance, for whom this postponement of Jesus' return is of no avail.

"Secondly, there are millions upon millions that will die to-morrow, or the day after, or next year, without ever having heard of Jesus, for whom this postponement neither is any profit.

"And finally, if God without fixing a definite number, constantly causes new men to be born, and if the return of Jesus must wait until also these have come to repentance, the return of Jesus may be postponed indefinitely. And this is the more serious in view of the fact that the population of the world increases every day, and it becomes more probable all the time that not all men come to repentance.

"Hence, this does not jibe. This does not harmonize. That is the most unreasonable argumentation conceivable; it has neither sense nor solution.

"No, if I want to demonstrate why the Lord God, humanly speaking, fulfills the promise of Jesus' return somewhat later than we had imagined, then this can become intelligible only if I start to figure from a definite starting point.

"For if the number of men that must be born is determined, and if God knows for whom out of all men a place must be prepared in heaven,—then, indeed, I can understand perfectly well, that Jesus' cannot return until they all have been brought in; and and then the process of thought is perfectly pure, clear and lucid, if I say: 'God tarries, for there still are some unconverted of those that are elect, and God surely will not that any, be they ever so few, shall be missing from the number of His elect, but that they *all* shall have come to repentance before Jesus appears. . . .

"There is, therefore, nothing left of this objection, and the meaning of II Pet. 3:9 can be nothing else than this: 'Jesus cannot return until the number of the elect is complete, and while there are at present still many elect that have not come to repentance, He postpones His coming in longsuffering, not willing that through His early coming some should perish, but willing that all shall first be converted.'" Uit Het Woord IV, pp. 33-36.

Although we might, perhaps, follow another method of exegesis in some respects, the point Dr. Kuyper here makes is perfectly clear: *All* in II Pet. 3:9 does not denote all men head for head, but *all the elect*.

And the interpretation the editor of *The Banner* offers is the explanation of those whom Dr. Kuyper

in the above quotation opposes: *the Arminians*.

The editor makes his usual appeal to "mystery." And about this I hope to make a few closing remarks the next time, the Lord willing.

But in closing this time, I would like to point to a patent fact.

The editor of *The Banner* exhorts us to stay on the narrow bridge, and in his editorial he supposedly gives us a demonstration how to accomplish this.

Instead, however, he tries to show how a man may perform the wonderful stunt of jumping off the bridge (as he presents it) on both sides, frantically and crazily hopping from one side to the other, and still stay on it.

I like to see a man perform that stunt on an actual bridge.

But neither can it be done on the "narrow bridge" of truth!

H. H.

## Contributions

Dear editor:

I wish to show you where I feel your interpretation of Matt. 19:9 is hardly in harmony with that which the Lord seems to imply.

For the Lord states that there is an exception to prohibition to leave one's wife, and to marry another. The exception is fornication.

The text, therefore, it seems to me, could be read this way: "Whosoever shall put away his wife for fornication, and marry another, does not commit adultery." Now, your illustration does not include this exception as applied to the wife, whose husband has left her, and intends to remain permanently in this state of adultery. Therefore, the implication of the Lord's teaching in Matt. 19:9 methinks would apply the exception of fornication to the wife as well as to the husband, and she would be free to marry again.

A reader of the Standard Bearer,  
Anthony Langerak.

Geachte Redakteur:

Het is niet, omdat ik het met uwe verklaring niet eens ben, maar degenen, die het er niet mee eens zijn, komen met het volgende argument.

Ds. Hoeksema moet eerst duidelijk maken, dat onze verklaring niet opgaat, voordat wij de zijne aannemen. Hun verklaring is dan als volgt: De man verlaat zijne vrouw anders dan om hoererie, d.w.z., de man en vrouw hebben geen van beide hoererie be-

dreven. Nu gaat die man later wel weer trouwen, maar die vrouw, waar hij weer mee trouwt, was niet de oorzaak van het verlaten van zijne vrouw.

Nog eene vraag in verband hiermee.

Mogen wij I Cor. 7:10, 11 verklaren als volgt: Paulus heeft het hier over menschen, die hoererij bedreven, en gebiedt hen om ongetrouwd te blijven. Want als hij allerlei oorzaak bedoelde, behoefde hij niet te schrijven: ge moet ongetrouwd blijven, maar eenvoudig: ge moogt niet scheiden; en als ge het toch doet, en ge u niet bekeert, wordt ge van de kerk afgesneden.

U dankend,  
B. J. Meelker.

Reply next time, the Lord willing. Ed.

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## The Triple Knowledge

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

##### Lord's Day XI.

Q. 29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is a Saviour?

A. Because he saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other.

Q. 30. Do such then believe in Jesus the only Saviour, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?

A. They do not; for though they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Saviour; for one of these two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Saviour; or that they, who by a true faith receive this Saviour, must find all things in him necessary to their salvation.

##### Chapter 1.

##### The Only Name.

In this eleventh Lord's Day the Heidelberg Catechism begins the discussion of the second article of the *Apostolicum*, and thereby introduces the discussion of the second main part of that Confession of faith, the part containing the profession of what the Church of old believed concerning "God the Son", but not now as the second Person of the Holy Trinity, but as the

Mediator of God and men. This second main division covers articles two to seven inclusive. And although it is very brief, it is remarkable for its fulness of expression, mentioning as it does all the chief points of doctrine concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. It speaks of His person and work, of His divine and of His human nature, of His conception by the Holy Ghost and of His virgin birth, of His humiliation, His suffering, crucifixion, death, burial and descension into hell, and of His exaltation, resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, and return to judgment; and it mentions His names: Jesus, Christ, Lord, Son of God. In general, we may say that this part of the *Apostolicum* speaks of our Lord's names, His natures, and His states, while under the name Christ the Heidelberg Catechism naturally explains the offices of the Mediator. Three Lord's Days are devoted to a discussion of the names of our Lord, as contained in the second article of the *Credo*; three Lord's Days cover the state of humiliation as described in articles three and four; and, finally, three Lord's Days discuss the state of exaltation of the Saviour, mentioned in articles five to seven of the Apostles' Creed. In the present Lord's Day, the eleventh, of the Catechism a beginning is made with the explanation of the second article: "And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord."

"Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?" With this question the Catechism introduces its explanation of the names of Christ. The question, and that, too, exactly in this form, is significant, and may well demand a moment of our attention. Especially in modern times it is important to put the question concerning the Saviour precisely thus, and before any other question. One may also ask: "Why is Jesus called the Son of God?" And in the thirteenth Lord's Day we may find the answer to this question. But before we can properly discuss why Jesus, the historical Jesus of Nazareth, the man Jesus, is called the Son of God, we must ask this: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?" To ask this question first, and to put it in these words, is the method of faith. Philosophy, and modern theology, would strenuously object to this method. They would refuse to begin with this question. They would object that it is guilty of begging the question. They would have no objection to begin with the problem of Jesus' being called the Son of God. For then, thus they would argue, we take our startingpoint in a historical fact. Jesus was a historical person, as we may learn from the gospel narratives. And it is certain, too, that he was called the Son of God. Now, we must first of all investigate the meaning of this fact not that He is, but that He *was called* the Son of God, and determine just in how far this claim is true, and what is the exact meaning of this claim. And having thus investigated

the meaning of, and given definite content to the name Son of God, we may, perhaps, also ask why this Son of God is called Jesus. But to ask first of all "Why is the Son of God called Jesus?" is begging the main question and proceeds from the supposition that He really is the Son of God, and that, too, even before He is Jesus. However, the Catechism is not proposing a philosophical question, but discussing the *Credo* of the Church. It does not employ the language, neither follow the method of rationalism, but speaks from faith. And for the faith of the Church it is an indubitable truth that Jesus is the true, essential, only begotten Son of God. He is this first. He is not first Jesus, a man who somehow was called Son of God. On the contrary, He is first Son of God. In fact, unless He is first Son of God, the eternal God begotten of the Father, we are in no wise interested in His name Jesus. Son of God He is in eternity; the name Jesus brings Him to us in time, but still as Son of God. The question, therefore, is not at all how it came about that Jesus was called the Son of God, but is very really this: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus?"

Besides, we must understand that the Catechism in asking this question does not express a certain curiosity as to the reason why *men* called this Son of God Jesus, for then the question would have no significance whatever. We are dealing here with the contents of the Christian faith, with one of those matters that are "necessary for a Christian to believe." The Heidelberg would instruct us in the knowledge of the holy gospel, of the Mediator that can and does save us from our sin and deliver us from all our misery. That is the reason why this question is asked. It is based on the assumption that the answer to this question will inform us about the Saviour, that His name answers the question Who He is. Modern theology would probably smile somewhat sympathetically at this obsolete method of attempting to elicit knowledge about the Christ from a study of His name. It would consider this method altogether inadequate. How can you find out anything about a man by asking for his name? And what good does it do to make a study of the names of Christ? We must gather all the facts we can about this Jesus of Nazareth, compare them and study them critically, learn to know what He did, what was His teaching, how He reacted toward His contemporaries, and then write His biography, a "Life of Jesus," especially also in order that we may bring out His "character." Then we have something. The result of such a thorough study will be the knowledge of a real Christ, Whose teachings may be to our advantage, and Whose example may be followed! But to study His names is vain and fruitless.

However, faith is not at all interested in a "Life of Jesus." And what is more, the Scriptures do not

furnish us with the necessary material to construe a biography of our Lord, nor do they offer us a sketch of His character. In the Bible we have four gospel narratives, and they together record the gospel of Jesus Christ, but in all of them together we have no "life of Jesus," and as far as they are concerned our Lord may have had no "character" at all. If you read these gospel narratives with a view to finding out what sort of man Jesus of Nazareth was in regard to His physical stature and psychological inclinations, whether He was tall and powerful or weak and of a frail frame, whether he had blue eyes or brown, was strikingly beautiful or common in appearance, whether he was of a phlegmatic or sanguineous temperament, whether He was an accomplished student and profound thinker, or a man of average mentality; or even with the end in view to discover what He accomplished to make this world better, and to advance civilization,—you will not only search in vain, and find the gospel narratives very inadequate, but you will also be deeply disappointed at every step of your investigation. What they narrate about His birth is so strange, that you can deduce nothing from His descent with a view to His character. Of the first thirty years of His life they tell you next to nothing. What influence His early training had upon His life and career seems to be of no concern to these gospel writers. His birth, three years of activity and teaching, His death and His resurrection,—this appears to be all that matters. And any attempt to construe a "life of Jesus" from these gospel narratives, or to determine His character, must needs fail. He does not appear as a mere man among men, but as *the* Son of man. This does not mean that He was no specific individual, and that He had a sort of "general human nature," but it does mean that the Scriptures are not interested in His individual life and character, but give us the *revelation of Jesus Christ*, the Son of God in the flesh, the God of our salvation. And if this is understood, it will also be plain that we are not concerned with what *men* called Him, but with what *God* revealed to us of Him. God called Him Jesus. And if God called Him Jesus, there is significance in the name, and there is real sense in the question: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?"

Great significance is attached to a name in Scripture. In fact, the name of anything is its real essence, its sense, its meaning, the denotation of that which it is in itself and with relation to everything else. With us this is different. A name of a person or thing is hardly more than a sign by which we distinguish one person or thing from others. It is one of the effects of sin that we no longer discern the real nature and meaning of things, and are no longer able to express the true sense of anything in a name. We see some external phenomena, and from these we deduce some



characteristics of the objects to which these phenomena belong. We discern the difference between one object and another, between a bird and a tree, a lake and a river, between one star and another, between a sheep and a lion, an animal and a man. But we do not intuitively discern the essence and nature of anything, even though we bring it within the range of our telescope, or minutely examine and analyze it under the microscope. And so, our names at the very most express some external characteristics of the object named. But originally this was different. Adam in the state of rectitude intuitively looked in the essence of things, saw their real meaning, and was able to express this sense of all things in their proper names. This is very evident from the fact that God brought the animals to him, to see how he would name them, "and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." And the real Scriptural meaning of a name is exactly that it is the denotation of the true nature of the thing named.

The underlying reason for this is evident. For all things were called into existence by the Word of God. God, Who calls the things that are not as if they were, spoke creatively, and by that creative Word of God all things received being. And when God speaks, even when He speaks creatively, He always speaks concerning Himself, so that His Word is His self-revelation. It follows that the real essence of any creature is that Word of God by which it was called into being, and through which it continues to exist. Not its outward form, not its material substance, not its chemical composition, not its biological structure, but the Word of God in the creature is its real nature. Its sense, its meaning, is its essence. And that meaning it derives only from the Word of God, through which every creature is but an integral part of the speech of God concerning Himself in all the universe, and all creatures together unite in spelling the Name of God. That Word of God in every creature is its real name. And that name man in his original state of righteousness could read, in order that thus he might read the Name of the Lord his God in creation, and glorify Him in adoration. In this light we can understand what the Scriptures declare in such passages as Eph. 3:14, 15: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." All things are names, because God has put His Word in them. And originally all these names were interpreted intuitively by man, that he might behold and declare the glory of the Name of his God. But this power is lost through sin. Nor can it be regained even by means of telescope or microscope. However, though in the world of our very dim understanding the "name" has no longer its original significance, the Bible still speaks of the name in that sense. This is especially evident from the way

in which it speaks of the Name of God. God's Name is Himself as He is revealed to us. By His name He came down to us, is near us, surrounds us on all sides. His name is in all the works of His hands as the psalmist sings in Ps. 8:1-9. And that His name is near, His wondrous works declare. Ps. 75:1. To fear His name is to fear Him, to glorify His name is to glorify Him, to trust in His name is to trust in Him, to believe on His name is to believe on Him. The Name of God is revealed. Besides, that the Scriptures use "name" in its original sense, may also be gathered from the fact that names are sometimes changed intentionally so as to have proper meaning. Abram is changed to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Oshea to Jehoshua. The name denotes the essence. And it is on the ground of this truth that the Catechism asks the question concerning the Christ: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?"

The meaning of this question, therefore, is, that God called His Son Jesus, and that because God called Him thus, Jesus is His name. We may, and by grace do also call Him Jesus, when by the intuitive knowledge of faith we discern Him in His real significance. And when we do so that Name becomes to us the only name given under heaven whereby we may be and are saved. Then we believe in that Name, trust on that Name, find our only comfort in life and in death in that Name, have all our salvation in that Name, love, worship, and adore it. But all this is only true and has sense only if it be true that God called His name Jesus. If God did not call His only begotten Son Jesus, our faith and trust and adoration have no basis, no sense, are vain. And that God called His Son Jesus, signifies that from all eternity the triune God so called Him. It means that the name Jesus, revealed in time, has its roots in eternity, that it is eternal, that the Son of God is eternally called Jesus. It signifies that the Son of God is called Jesus by a free act of the sovereign God, and by the determination of the good pleasure of God "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Even as the act of creation is not the necessary effluence of God's being, but the free and determinate act of His sovereign will, rooted in His counsel, so also this naming of the Son of God as Jesus is the eternal act of God's good pleasure. And as all God's works are acts of the triune God, so also this naming of the Son of God. We may not so present the matter as if the first Person of the Holy Trinity called the second Person Jesus, for all God's works are of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. All the three Persons of the Godhead, each according to His own place and relation in the economy of the Holy Trinity, willed from eternity that the Son should be called Jesus! "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?" Because from all eternity He was so called according to a free and sovereign determina-

tion of God triune! And on the basis of the revelation of that eternal act of God, we, too, may call Him Jesus!

That this is true is evident not only from Scripture in general, and from the revelation of this Jesus in the old dispensation, but also very specifically from the testimony of Holy Writ concerning the way in which the Saviour received His name in time. Exactly because the child Jesus had a name before He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, the giving of His name to Him in time may not be left to the determination of Joseph and Mary: His eternal name must be revealed, and by that name He must be known to men. And so, when Joseph, naturally misinterpreting the condition of his espoused wife, contemplated putting her away privily, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." And mark you well, "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel which being interpreted is God with us." And so, Joseph "did as the angel had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus." Matt. 1:19-25. And also the gospel according to Luke refers to this revelation of the name in ch. 2:21: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." For not only to Joseph, but also to Mary, who preferred to keep things "pondering them in her heart," it was revealed by the angel Gabriel that the name of the Son, whom she should bring forth, must be called Jesus. Luke. 1:31. And so the apostles can preach that "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. The name Jesus is of divine origin, and is the revelation of an eternal purpose and act of God. The question is, therefore, a perfectly proper one: "Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is Saviour?" And the true answer to this question is indeed the gospel of God concerning His Son. He is called Jesus because He is Jesus, the God of our salvation reaching down to us in our misery, to redeem us, and to deliver us from death!

H. H.

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R. Schaafsma — Treas.

## Het Gebed Eens Bejaarden

(Psalm 71)

Men moet wel wat glimlachen als er van dezen psalmdichter gezegd wordt, dat hij zich achter 't schild der anonimiteit verborgen heeft.

Anoniem beteekent: geen naam, zonder naam.

Doch wij zien Christus, in smarten en angst zich wendende tot Zijn God. Indien ergens, dan zien we hier een profeet die naarstiglijk onderzoekt. . . .aan-gaande het lijden dat op Christus komen zoude. Ook ietwat van de heerlijkheid daarna volgende.

Let op de verzen 6 en 12 en vergelijk ze met de verzen 10 en 20 van den twee-en-twintiger! Ge hebt daar dezelfde zaak. Bijna dezelfde woorden.

Christus, de bejaarde? Jezus in den tijd des ouderdoms?

O zeker, David heeft dit alles vooruit geleden. En David zal dit gedicht wel in zijn ouderdom gezongen en geklaagd hebben. Doch als de Heilige Geest veel later dit lied op de lippen van Jezus legt, dan is die ouderdom geen moeite en de bejaardheid past bij den jammerlijken Zoon.

Hij rekt die bejaardheid en veelheid der dagen uit tot in der eeuwigheid.

Zoo begint Hij al: "Op U, o Heere! betrouw Ik, laat mij niet beschaamd worden *in eeuwigheid!*"

Het haar des hoofds van Hem die was als de gestalte des Zoons des menschen was wit gelijk sneeuw in 't gezicht op Patmos.

Laat Mij niet beschaamd worden in eeuwigheid.

't Heeft ons lang genomen om de diepte van 't lijden van Jezus eenigzins na te denken; en er in te komen, dat Hij den eeuwigen dood in een korten tijd heeft geleden.

Hij was jong, slechts drie-en-dertig jaren toen Hij stierf. - Doch die Jeugdige was tot ontzetting toen we Hem aanzagen—alzo verdorven was Zijn gelaat, meer dan van iemand, en Zijne gedaante, meer dan van andere menschenkinderen. Jesaja 52:14.

Ge moet niet alleen jaren tellen om dan voorts te oordeelen. Ik heb jonge menschen gekend en hun in de oogen gestaard toen ze uit de operatiekamer kwamen. De vraag is: hoe zwaar zijn de jaren Uws levens geweest?

Hij heeft Zijn jaren vervuld gezien met gal en alsem. Zijn dagen waren lange dagen, zat van vloek en verdoemenis.

Dat liet zijn sporen achter.

Als we Hem dan voorts aanzagen, dan achtten wij Hem dat Hij geplaagd, van God geslagen en verdrukt was. Soms was die aanblik te erg. Dan waren wij verbergende het aangezicht voor Hem.

In het lijden en klagen van Jezus zat de eeuwigheid. Jesaja 64:5. Die tekst in Jesaja werpt een

wonderlijk licht over dezen psalm en alle psalmen. Daar staat: "Gij ontmoet den vroolijke en die gerechtigheid doet, degenen die Uwer gedenken op Uwe wegen; zie, Gij waart verbolgen omdat wij gezondigd hebben; *in dezelve is de eeuwigheid, opdat wij behouden wierden.*"

Let er op: In Gods verbolgenheid over onze zonden, in dezelve is Gods eeuwigheid, opdat wij behouden wierden.

Leg nu maar gerust al die zonden en al die verbolgenheid op dat kindeke Jezus in de kribbe, op Hem die knaapje was in Galilea, op den jongen man die timmerman was en op den Heiland die later het land doorging, goeddoende. Leg ze alle op Jezus. Doch weet voorts, dat de eeuwigheid Gods in die zonden en verbolgenheid vaart. Dan begint Jezus bevreesd en zeer beangst te worden, doch dan zegt de Vader: Ik doe dat, Mijn Zoon. opdat zij behouden wierden.

Daarom is Jezus als de bejaarde en die vol van dagen is. Zijn jaren zijn uitgerekte tot in der eeuwigheid toe. En in die lange jaren der eeuwigheid is Hij gaan klagen. Klagen tot God. Eenmaal hebben we het gehoord. Van uit den donker. Die eene bange vraag met het antwoord van Jesaja: Ik verlaat U opdat zij behouden wierden.

Op U, o Heere! betrouw Ik, laat mij niet beschaamd worden in eeuwigheid!

Ja, dat heeft David óók gezegd.

David had in den Heere geroemd. Hij had geroemd van God en zijdelings ook van zichzelf. David moet vaak gezegd hebben tot het volk: De Heere is mijn deel in eeuwigheid.

Doch, o wee! daar kwamen de plagen en benauwdheden!

De bevalligheid en de jeugd met zijn schoonheid verdwenen. David de bange lijder.

Kunt ge nu dat "beschaamd worden" begrijpen?

Men wordt beschaamd voor 't volk, als het roemen en de werkelijkheid niet met elkaar overeenkomen.

Zeg, dat ik roem in God en het overal vertellen ga: Ik ga naar mijn God om voor eeuwig in Zijn hemel Hem te loven. En zeg verder, dat ik straks voor eeuwig verloren ga. Zou ik dan niet tot in der eeuwigheid beschaamd worden?

Als dan Jezus het goddelooze volk hoort spotten bij Zijn kruis: Dit is de man die den Heere God tot Zijn vertrouwen stelde! Dan kan ik Zijn klacht in dezen en andere psalmen verstaan.

Want Jezus heeft vertrouwd op God.

Als Hij de dood, de hel en het verderf aan ziet komen in al de verschrikkingen van een eeuwige smart, dan komt het er bevend uit: Gij, o Mijn God, zult Mijn ziel in de hel niet verlaten! Gij zult in der eeuwigheid niet toelaten dat Uwe heilige de verderving zou zien.

Bevend, want Hij was omringd door droefenissen en riep den Heer dus aan in al Zijn nood.

En God heeft Hem dan ook niet beschaamd *in der eeuwigheid*. Hij is opgestaan van de dooden. We hebben het niet kunnen doen; we leefden toen nog niet: maar de aanblik der oogen van Jezus, toen Hij met een groote stem riep aan het einde van Zijn lijden, moet vreeselijk geweest zijn. Hij kwam uit 's Vaders operatiekamer. En, o neen! geen chloroform!

Red Mij door Uwe gerechtigheid en bevrijd Mij, neig Uw oor tot Mij en bevrijd Mij!

Dat is de volgende schreeuw.

Jesaja had te voren getuigd, dat Zion verlost zou worden door gerechtigheid en gerichte. Jesaja 1:27.

Dat is ook geschied.

Dat is geschied, eenerzijds, op de glooiing van Golgotha; en, anderzijds, in het eigen hart van God.

De gerechtigheid en het gericht van God eischt den eeuwigen dood.

Daar komt dit nog bij. Als er dan iemand gevonden wordt in het groote heelal of in Gods eeuwigheid die het volk verlossen zal van die straf, dan moet er dit bij: Zulk Eenem moet dien dood opslokken en uitlijden vanuit het motief der eeuwige liefde Gods. Terwijl God aan 't striemen gaat van zulk Eenem en aan 't striemen blijft, totdat alles wat gëeischt werd betaald werd, terwijl dat alles geschied moet die Een God lief hebben, zelfs liefhebben vanwege de stralen eens toornigen Gods.

Dat is de gerechtigheid in haar eischen.

En toen Messias dat deed, had Hij het recht op te roepen: Verlos Mij nu, Mijn Vader! Ik heb Uwe gerechtigheid geheel en al genoeg gedaan. Verbreek nu die angstige stilte! Neig Uw oor en verlos!

Er is veel meer geschied op Golgotha en in 't hart van God, dan de Evangelisten ons melden.

Er is meer geschied; en de psalmen onderwijzen ons van dat meerdere.

Gedenkt aan die geheel eenige predikatie van Jezus op den weg van Jeruzalem tot Emmaus.

Wees Mij tot een Rotssteen om daarin te wonen, om geduriglijk daarin te gaan; Gij hebt bevel gegeven om Mij te verlossen, want Gij zijt Mijn steenrots en Mijn Burg!

De hoofdletters vertellen U, dat dit ook toegepast moet op Jezus.

Het zal gevraagd worden: Hoe kunt ge Jezus doen bidden om in den rotssteen te mogen gaan, terwijl de Schrift Hem zelf de Rotssteen noemt?

Ik zou willen antwoorden: Zeer zeker is Jezus Christus de Rots die van geen wankelen weet. En het is ook waar, dat Hij moet vragen aan Zijn Vader om voor Hem de Rotssteen te wezen. Hier hebt ge dezelfde zaak als het feit, dat Jezus beide uit het graf opstond en door den Vader verwekt werd uit de dooden.

Jezus is God en mensch.

Nu dan, tot in der eeuwigheid blijft Jezus tot God

bidden, blijft Hij afhankelijk van God en moet al de hemelsche zaligheid voor Zichzelf en voor Zijn volk en het geheele Koninkrijk, uit God als de Bron hem toestroomen. Als mensch is Jezus geen Rotssteen. God alleen is de Rots, Wiens werk volkomen is. Jezus als mensch is geen Rots. Jezus heeft behoefte om door den Geest alle kracht en gave en schoonheid en heerlijkheid onophoudelijk uit den Driëenigen te trekken.

Zoo kan men de bede van Psalm 71 verstaan, waar Jezus tot God bidt.

Hoe zoudt ge anders die schreeuw aan het kruis kunnen verklaren? God is nooit van God verlaten.

En als er staat geschreven, dat God Zijn eer aan geen anderen zal geven noch Zijn lof den gesnedenen beelden, dan moet ge dat ook toepassen op de menscheijke natuur van Jezus.

We besluiten dan ook: Jezus als mensch is niet de Rots.

De Rots is God alleen en tot in eeuwigheid.

Daarom is Hij ook de Rots voor Jezus.

En daarom bidt Jezus om dien Rotssteen, allereerst voor Zichzelf.

En dan voor U. Want Hij leeft eeuwiglijk om voor ons allen te bidden.

En op het gedurig gebed van Jezus komen de stroommen van zegeningen aan. "Heer, ik hoor van rijken zegen!" Het is alles om Jezus wil.

Voorts hooren we de klacht vanwege het lijden dat Hem geschiedde van de goddeloozen.

Dat volk wordt hier omschreven. Zij zijn goddeloos; ze handelen verkeerdelijk; en ze zijn opgeblazen.

Ziedaar Uw beeld, zooals ge van nature zijt.

Goddeloos. God-loos. Zonder God.

En toch geschapen naar Zijn beeld en naar Zijn gelijkenis.

Als er niets aan veranderd wordt, dan vraagt dat om onnoemlijk lijden. Zal het schepsel dat naar Zijn beeld geschapen is gelukkig zijn, dan moet ge uiteindelijk in Zijn armen liggen. Luistert, ik zal het schetsen in woorden die de Heilige Geest geschreven heeft.

"Niemand is er gelijk God, o Jeschurun, die op den hemel vaart tot uwe hulpe, en met Zijne hoogheid op de bovenste wolken. De eeuwige God zij u tot eene woning, en van onderen eeuwige armen; en Hij verdrijve den vijand voor uw aangezicht en zegge: Verdelg! (Dat is de hel.) Israel dan zal zeker alleen wonen, en Jakob's oog zal zijn op een land van koren en most; ja, zijn hemel zal van dauw druipen. Welgelukzalig zijt gij, o Israel, wie is u gelijk? Gij zijt een volk verlost door den Heere, het schild uwer hulpe, en die een zwaard is uwer hoogheid; daarom zullen zich uwe vijanden geveinsdelyk aan u onderwerpen, en gij zult op hunne hoogten treden." Deut. 33:26-29.

Met minder kunt gij niet toe, o Mensch!

Die minder heeft dan dat is god-loos, zonder God,

zonder hoop in de wereld en onuitsprekelyk ongelukkig.

En dat zijn de vijanden van Jezus.

Ook zijn ze verkeerd.

Dat beteekent, dat zij al hetgeen van God in hun bereik komt, verdraaien, krom maken en verknoeien. Dat toont ons het slangachtige in den mensch.

God is recht. Doch wij verdraaien en verkeeren alles. Let er op: er staat de hand bij.

En eindelijk, de vijanden van Jezus zijn opgeblazen.

Vreeselyk ironie.

Ge hebt allen gehoord van het blazen des duivels in de eerste verzoeking.

Gij zult als God zijn.

Dat heeft zijn vieze vrucht gevonden in het blazen van den mensch.

Moet ik het aanwijzen voor u?

Luistert naar Uw eigen hart, en siddert.

Merkt op de woorden, en beeft.

Zie uw daden, en schaamt u voor God en menschen.

Dat hart, die woorden en zulke daden richtten zich op de geslagen Onschuld. O God, verlos Mij van dat slangengebod!

En wat zullen wij tot deze dingen zeggen?

O God, wees mij, den zondaar, genadig!

Toen hoorde God: Hij is mijn liefde waardig!

En onze God ontfermt Zich op 't gebed.

Op 't gebed van Jezus.

G. V.

## Adiaphora

It is very necessary to introduce the word before I write of the contents embodied in this word. The reading public will otherwise pass this essay by, thinking it is meant only for a group of students. At least I too thought it strange when this subject was assigned me by our editor-in-chief, who is appointed to assign us these subjects. Strange it was for me, because I never thought at first I could write more than three lines on it, until I got to study it further. So it must also at first appear to the reading public. And I may add that I would never have thought of writing on a subject as this, if it had not been assigned me. But please, Standard Bearer readers, do not be afraid of this word.

The word ADIAPHORA, as far as I know, does not appear in the Bible. However it has been used to express things indifferent, or neutral. For instance, when used by medical men, then adiaphora refers to medicines that are incapable of doing harm or good.

Or when this word is used in religious circles it pertains to matters of either doctrine or practice that may be regarded as non-essential or indifferent. Adiaphorism is therefore religious indifference. It refers to all matters that are regarded as non-essential; things that can do neither harm nor good, wherein men cannot judge us or condemn us; things that are of such a non-essential nature that it is for every man himself to decide whether they are good or evil. As for instance in a human body there are members that are absolutely essential to the life and existence of that body, so there are also members in the body that can very well be missed and that the body still functions and exists as well as before. One can have his or her tonsils removed, or lose a finger, without essentially impairing the body. So at least it is explained. Then these non-essential members of the body are called adiaphora, n.l., belonging to the non-essential and indifferent things of the body and consequently can also be viewed more or less indifferently. And so adiaphora refers to things non-essential and indifferent to our faith and salvation. During the days of the Lutheran Reformation, there were certain things and practices, yea, even dogmas, which Luther regarded as very sinful and heretical and which he therefore condemned in the strongest terms possible. But Melancthon and a few other German theologians held these things which were so thoroughly condemned by Luther, as non-essential and therefore viewed them more or less indifferently. Thus these German theologians were called Adiaphorists.

Now the question we see ourselves placed before is: Are we to be adiaphorists, yes or no? Is there anything pertaining to our faith or walk that can be viewed indifferently or of a non-essential nature? Are there things that cannot and may not be judged by others? Are there things neutral? Is there anything in our lives, practically or doctrinally, that can do neither good or evil, and wherein men cannot judge or condemn us? That is the question we must answer. In answering that question we believe that we must distinguish between divine and human authority. Not that there is really a difference between the two, for after all the authority that humans exercise over others may only be the authority derived from God. A human being may only exercise the authority that God gives him. So that there is essentially no difference between the authority of the Almighty God and that of the human over against other humans. But there is nevertheless a distinction. For is God not the Absolute One? Is He not Everlastingly Perfect and does He not Know all things? Can a mistake ever be attributed to the all-knowing God? God forbid. But with human beings this is different. The most perfect of the saints on earth, must confess that he knows in part only. Only when he shall have attained perfection

shall all that is in part be done away with and he shall know as he is known. But that is not yet his portion here below.

Bearing the aforementioned distinction in mind, we believe there are surely adiaphora for human beings in their relations with other human beings, even in the church world. The Scriptures also teach that in certain matters, such as eating and drinking, or regarding another man's servant, or esteeming one day above another, we cannot and may not judge one another. See in this connection the whole of chapter 14 of Romans. Surely we have obligations toward our neighbour, even in those things that can be reckoned adiaphora. As for instance Paul says in I Cor. 8:13: "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." But then Paul does not refrain from eating meat *because the meat is not good or because it is evil to eat meat in itself*, but simply because it would offend the brother, who is weak. "Let us not therefore judge one another anymore; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know and am persuaded by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Rom. 14:13, 14. We must remember that Paul is speaking in that passage of the relation of the one to the other and of the judgment of one brother over another in things that should not and cannot be judged. We could multiply the things mentioned by Paul and apply the same rule as Paul does to us. We would mention smoking, drinking, eating, etc. For any man, in his attitude and relations to other men, there are certain things pertaining to his walk and way of doing things that may be considered adiaphora. He cannot and may not judge his brother. This is due not only because of the fact we but know in part and therefore our judgment is imperfect, but it is also due to the fact of sin within us. Because of sin that dwells in even the most holy saint on earth, it is often difficult to bring a brother before the bar of our human judgment. For in our judgment over the other we are plagued with the sins of prejudice, or of jealousy, or of pride, or of favoritisms because of blood ties or of friendships or other likes and dislikes. And though it is true that in all our relations to one another and when we are judging one another, we should be motivated exclusively by the truth and love of God in Christ Jesus, yet the fact remains that there are many such inconsistencies in life that contradict that love of Jesus Christ. And even though it is true that only the Word of God may and must be the norm of all our everyday activities and practices, and even though that word of God is perfect and clear and draws a very sharp line through our whole life, yet the fact is that human beings do not



always measure up to that perfect word. They do not always expound *that word* perfectly and correctly. So we believe that there are adiaphora, things non-essential and indifferent, in the sphere of human relations, whether they be religious circles or non-religious circles and therefore of the world.

But we must not forget that even though often man must say: "I do not know and therefore cannot judge or say anything", yet this can never be attributed to the Almighty Lawgiver Himself. God knows of no adiaphora. There are no non-essential things in the whole of God's Word or law. Never can anyone assume an indifferent attitude toward things that are plainly revealed in God's Holy Word. Human reasoning may fail, and due to various infirmities, we must often put our hand to our mouth and keep silence, yet the unchangeable Word of God suffers no compromise or indifference. For every circumstance of our lives, for all situations, for all conditions and every conceivable sphere, the law of God has a definite, circumscribed demand to do this or do that in obedience to God. Nothing in life may be considered by the child of God as merely technical and thus non-essential. Every law of God, whether pertaining to our eating or drinking, or whether pertaining to our daily work or our obedience to father and mother, or magistrate, is essential. It is *God's demand*. That settles it.

O it is true that various forms of difference have been ascribed to the laws of God. There are some that are very important. There are some less important. There are some that are essential and others less essential. There are some that may be considered as Chief, as the main laws, in distinction from other laws, that we may consider more or less indifferently. Thus also the Pharisees sought to bind the consciences of the masses of the people. They taught that the law of Jehovah could be variously divided and subdivided, into great, greater and greatest laws. Therefore also they come to Jesus with the deceptive question: "What is the greatest commandment?" A question which Jesus does not even literally answer. Simply because Christ recognizes no great, greater and greatest commandment of His Father. With Christ there is no more or less. With the Christ no iota or tittle of the law shall pass away until it all be fulfilled.

But with Christ there is not merely a technical fulfillment of the precepts and laws of Jehovah. This was exactly the sin of the Pharisees. They tried to relegate the law of God to technicalities. They hindered the children from entering the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because they taught disobedience to the Laws of God? Of course not. They instead taught strict obedience. But they taught technical obedience to the letter of the law, and not spiritual and divinely prescribed obedience. For what was the divinely prescribed obedience to the Law of Jehovah, which pleased

Him? It was, as Jesus Himself teaches over against the Pharisees, that there is essentially but one principle of obedience, which is *love*, to God and the neighbour. Therefore the answer of our Lord to the Pharisees plainly taught that there is not a great and greater or greatest commandment, but that there is but *one great command*, and that is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. And the second commandment is like unto the first. There is no difference at all. And of that one commandment (n.l. to love) all the precepts of Jehovah are products. The entire Word of God is given to us in God's love, but also can be obeyed by us, only in that same love of God. If there is not that necessary love, then we disobey all the law of Jehovah. We may seemingly be obedient to many precepts, and break only a few of them, yet the word of Jesus tells us that anyone breaking any of the precepts of the law, is a transgressor of the whole law of God. Therefore only Christ fulfilled the law of God. All others are transgressors of the whole law and are therefore also worthy of eternal death and hell. But to those in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. Rom. 8:1. And that love of God in Christ Jesus knows of no adiaphora. Oh, it recognizes infirmities and much sin that remains in the saints on earth. As such it will restrain itself, also in judging the brethren, but it recognizes no adiaphora in God's law. Therefore it will not rest in a leave-it-alone attitude, or in an attitude of indifference toward anything in life, whether of self or of the neighbour. But it will seek the perfect law of Jehovah and strive after its attainment, in himself and in others.

Thus the child of God lives out of faith. His faith, which rests not until it rest in the God of our complete salvation, will strive after perfection, even in this life. Faith will not be complacent. But living out of the love of God which *is* the fulfillment of the law of Jehovah, the child of grace will seek in all the details of his life to be pleasing to Jehovah, and reject any so-called adiaphora in the perfect law of God. Psalm 1 and 19.

L. V.

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## The Problems of a Christian Soldier

My topic implies that this article is written mainly for our young men now serving in the armed forces of our country. Therefore I consider it quite appropriate to address this article directly to them. Perhaps you young men say: What does a spectator or one who stands on the sidelines know about our problems? After all there is no comparison between the views of one sitting in an easy chair and one who is con-

fronted by these things in actual warfare. My answer to this is twofold. In the first place I would readily admit to be at a complete loss if I were to write on the problems of an ordinary soldier. But the problems of a *christian* soldier are to a certain extent known to all of us, partly from your reports but above all from Scripture itself. Essentially every christian has the same problems to face and solve, even though their nature and degree may radically differ. In the second place this article does not come to you young men as from one superior in faith or experience, as if I'm going to tell you something new. I can come only with the Word of God, and in the light of that Word I can at least know some of your problems and difficulties.

If you therefore are not a christian soldier this article has nothing for you. But the question is: who and what is a christian soldier? In short he is a soldier (or sailor) who is a christian in the various spheres of life. It implies not merely that he was such merely at home, but that also now in the armed forces of our country he tries to be and live as a christian. And this he must do not only in respect to his walk, in his relations to his buddies, but also in respect to his God. A christian soldier is one who in his particular place, with the cross he has to bear, the battles he has to fight lives as a christian.

You understand then that when I now speak of his problems, I am not referring to all the difficulties of army and navy life from the natural viewpoint, the horribleness of battle, the monotony of army life, or the manifold adverse conditions with which you have to cope. But I am referring to your problems as a christian. Such problems you all undoubtedly have. They are legion in number. Every christian has problems throughout his entire life, but your problems undoubtedly far exceed ours both in number and difficulty. At this point however, you perhaps ask a question. Of what avail is it to have someone tell us our daily problems in the Standard Bearer? Don't we know them only too well? Which christian soldier does not experience problems in respect to the many, many temptations surrounding him, to pray not my will but Thine be done, to confess his Lord at all times even in the face of open mockery, to pray all alone at the table, to let his light shine, to bear up with all the cursing, gambling, drinking and immorality of many men perhaps in his own barracks? These things you have all undoubtedly experienced. Therefore I don't have to tell you about these problems. But the purpose of this article is to speak about some problems which you yourself perhaps do not see. Don't consider this strange because many people at home don't even see their own problems, nor feel themselves confronted by them. Perhaps the biggest problem of all is to make people see their own problems.

A problem now is an obstacle or hindrance placed

before us which we must overcome. For the christian it means that he must strive to overcome them, otherwise he's no christian. Now you young men undoubtedly have obstacles placed before you so big that it seems well nigh impossible to master and conquer them. One of these, to my mind, is to love your enemies in your particular work. Almost impossible, and yet a demand of God. Difficult that is for every christian in civilian life. But in times of war it is almost beyond our reach and apparently very improper. Moreover, you young men are trained to kill; all kinds of methods and devices are employed unto this end, and all kinds of propaganda is spread to make you hate the Jerry and the Jap. And the more you hate and despise and revengeful you become the better soldier you are supposed to make. Yet God says: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Matt. 5:44. You must love the German and the Jap. Love them who try to kill us? Be kind to those who are out to kill you, who commit the most ruthless and atrocious deeds with innocent men, women and children, and raise havoc and destruction? This stands diametrically opposed to our nature. What an obstacle! But try to overcome it you must. Indeed a problem of a *christian* soldier.

In close connection with this stands the problem of doing our work in obedience to our government. The command comes to us: Thou shalt not kill. Never may man kill, i.e. as man. God has given the power of the sword and punishment to the government. The government of each country wages war, hence the responsibility of waging a righteous or unrighteous war lies upon her shoulders. It is the American government that kills Germans and Japs. Or do you do so, or intend to do so? If you hate them and are filled with revenge then you certainly are committing murder. But right we stand with God as christians only when we do our duty out of obedience to our authorities. But again well nigh impossible for the flesh. So big are your problems. How hard it must be to do such when in the midst of bursting shells, whistling bullets, the roar of the cannon and the screeching dive-bomber?

Moreover another big problem for you men is to bear your cross submissively unto the end, whatever that may be. Many of you who have participated in actual warfare have undoubtedly catered to the desire to die rather than go and endure untold misery, toil and grief. The future seems dark. You would like to return home where your heart is, but there's no silver lining in the dark clouds to that effect. All you see before you is war, blood, misery and toil. How easy it is for us here at home to understand your words that you'd rather die than go on. And how we suffer with you! Besides, how blessed it is for men in the

youth of life to have the desire to be with their Lord, and be delivered from all the misery of this life. In those things we see how our God through His Word and Spirit has applied war with all its realities unto your hearts. But. . . is it right to cater to such desires? In the final instance we must give a negative answer. In reality those desires are resignations to the service of our God. Elijah too fled from his scene of labor. He was totally discouraged and wholly dissatisfied with the service of Jehovah, and therefore desired to hand in his resignation to the Lord. But such we cannot do with God. When our work is done He calls us home, not before. So too the christian soldier must bear his cross. The way of the Lord with him and for him is through war, fighting, and all kinds of difficulties. Through and by means of these things God is preparing you. May you then resign when you get tired of it? Of course not. But O how hard when physical and spiritual endurance seems almost impossible! I'm sure that we at home here have but an inkling of the difficulty of being willing to bear that cross submissively unto the end.

And finally you must find a tremendous problem in being able to view your life and cross as given in God's grace. You know Scripture tells us that all we have and receive is given in grace. The good things are given in that infinite love, but also those that we call adverse. The apostle Paul says that it is given us (in grace) not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him. Phil. 1:29. All things are given the child of God in His grace, be it a way of prosperity or of suffering, sickness, pain and sorrow. Even war with all its horrible implications is for the christian grace of God. It is the grace of God when He leads you through ways of combat and suffering and grief. But can you imagine that? Can you believe that and view your life in that light? Again almost impossible! What a problem!

The solution of all these problems is to be found in the Word of God. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith". I John 5:4b. Through Christ and faith in Him are we able to do these things. In Him we see God's love to us and what we have deserved, namely, eternal death and desolation. With this no war or battle is to be compared. Sometimes we hear say that war is a living or miniature hell. The truth is however, that the most terrible war is not even to be compared with hell. Such terrible punishment we have deserved. How great then is the grace of God given us in Christ Jesus. Through the means of faith it is possible in principle to love our enemies while we by nature hate, be obedient to those above us while we by nature are disobedient, be willing to serve our God who has redeemed us while we by nature live for self, and finally can view all things as given in His grace realizing that we have deserved

nothing but eternal death.

These obstacles can be overcome, christian soldier, by living close to your God, being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. For him who seek and serves sin it will forever be impossible to solve these problems. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." II Tim. 2:4. A good soldier has his mind fixed on the one thing he is called to do, not on the things of this life. Therefore, christian soldiers, you are and can be when you seek not the things below but are single-hearted, seeking the things above. And finally remember that the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. May you daily meet one another before the throne of God's grace to live, to fight and to die if necessary as christian soldiers.

J. B.

## Why Our Delay?

It is possible, as I address you tonight, that my subject is somewhat beside the point. I am now a stranger in Jerusalem, particularly since the untimely death of our Church News. It is possible that you are not delaying at all. If so, my subject for tonight's talk is wholly beside the point.

However, it is my opinion that my subject tonight is timely. This child, that of our own school movement, is now some four years old. It seems to me that its growth is painfully slow, that it has not advanced very far beyond the state of infancy. I have consequently resolved to ask you this question tonight: Why our delay? And I would view this question from a three-fold point of view:

- I. Is it because this school is not sufficiently important?
  - II. Is it because we have an abundance of time?
  - III. Is it because we lack the means to go ahead?
- I. Because it is not Sufficiently Important?

I fear that this is the heart of the matter. We may say, on the one hand, that our christian schools of today are good enough for our children. Or we may assert, on the other hand, that we are not interested in Protestant Reformed principles as we ought to be. Is it not a fact that, in either case, we have said the same thing? I say that I *fear* that this is the case. I *fear* this not in the sense that I am doubtful as to the present state of affairs. But I am very much afraid of this attitude. I fear because so little can

be done about it. To have lost our first love, to lack the fervor and enthusiasm to go on is a serious ailment, an almost incurable disease.

Permit me, nevertheless, to ask and also answer the question in our midst tonight: Is a school of our own sufficiently important? In general we may say that to instruct our children in the lie is worse than not to instruct them at all. With this statement as such, none, I am sure, will disagree. To be sure, the various doses of poison may differ as to their amount, and will therefore also differ as to their effectiveness. I am sure that we would rather have our children, for example, receive no Bible instruction at all in our schools than to have them receive a distorted interpretation of Holy Writ. However, the question which we must answer is this: Are conditions such that a school of our own is a necessity, sufficiently important?

At this moment I would remind you of the theory of Common Grace—what is Common Grace? I am not at this moment asking the question: What is Arminianism? Arminianism, in distinction from Common Grace, deals with salvation, with the things eternal, corrupts God's counsel, the cross, the efficacy of grace, the assurance of eternal glory. And, to be sure, Arminianism, too, is not found lacking in our schools today—we need but attend to the Bible instruction and the songs which our children learn to sing.

But what is Common Grace? Briefly, Common Grace is that theory which would teach us that concord, agreement, fellowship between the church and the world is possible in all things earthly and civil. It speaks of a restraining operation of the grace of God upon the hearts of men, checking evil and sin. It speaks of a positive operation of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, rendering them able to do in things civil that which is good before God. Common Grace lauds Athens and minimizes Jerusalem, speaks of the children of darkness as putting the children of God to shame, speaks of God's common covenant with the world as represented by Noah, wipes out all lines of distinction and demarcation between the Church and the world, nullifies the antithesis, destroys our distinctiveness, defends and nurtures a worldly-mindedness which is the death of the church of God in the midst of the world. Also on this point we are, of course, all in agreement. We have surely learned to hate and flee from and eschew this pernicious teaching.

But, if this be true, how pertinent is the question: Why the delay? It is on this issue of Common Grace, is it not, that we today constitute a group of Protestant Reformed Churches. I know that the error of Arminianism was also involved, that the famous "Three Points" are a mixture of Kuyperian Common Grace and Arminianism. But we are all aware of the fact that, practically, the issue of worldly-mindedness lay

at the root, the heart of the conflict. Years before 1924 this spirit of broadmindedness was already present and working in the churches in which we formerly had a name and a place. The Jansen-issue simply accelerated the controversy. Fact is, the spirit of worldly-mindedness is fundamentally always the reason why the lie creeps into the church, whatever may be the garb in which it appears. And it is because we held to the view that God's people are a distinctive people, with a distinctive calling, that we also today stand alone. It is this truth which constitutes the very heart and fiber of our churches—it alone is our only right and hope of existence.

But, is it not true that the school is exactly that sphere where the error of Common Grace is most prevalent and dangerous? Common grace and the Christian School are mutually exclusive. We all know the purpose of the school. In the church we prepare our seed to assume their place in the midst of the church, to be able to partake consciously of the means of grace, such as the preaching of the Word and the sacraments, and to walk consciously as members of the body of Christ. But in the school we prepare the same children to assume their place in the midst of the world. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we teach them in such a way that they, in that world, may be a distinctive people, an wholly other people, walking in the world but not as of the world. Feed my child the poison of Common Grace and I have utterly failed in my Christian calling, in my Protestant Reformed calling. Our beginning as a Protestant Reformed people urges us to hold fast that which we have, especially with regard to the Christian School. The principles of our churches and the antithetical instruction of our children are inseparably connected.

## II. Because we have an Abundance of Time?

First of all, time waits for no man. Time always marches on, never pauses or stops, never retraces its steps, moves irresistibly forward. Time is that steady, irresistible stream which, as soon as we are born, takes us up into its arms, carries us ever forward until we have reached our life's end. That time waits for no man, does not retrace its steps, leaves things undone which have not been done. Upon that stream of time you come into contact with things only once—for a moment they stand before you and then are forever past. Upon that stream of time children receive their parents and these parents receive their children—also only once. Quickly these children glide through their years. Each successive year is extremely important. And each successive year is also irrevocable, cannot be recalled.

Apply this, if you will, to the question whether, in the instruction of our children, we have an abundance of time and can therefore afford to wait. So often

we adopt the attitude: What is not done today can be done tomorrow. This is not true for the simple reason that today does not come tomorrow but tomorrow today will be gone forever. What we do not teach our children today cannot be taught tomorrow, is a duty sadly neglected, a task undone. Time is not at our service, does not accomodate us, does not adapt itself to our plans, but moves irresistibly forward. Already 4 years we have waited; during those years our children have received instruction, instruction in the very things we have learned to hate and flee; these years constitute half of a child's instruction preparatory for high school—these years are gone, and, as far as these children are concerned, can never be recalled or replaced. Therefore, I ask: Why do we delay? Why do we wait? Time does not wait for us.

Secondly, may I in this connection call your attention to the fact that the days are evil. They are evil now. Not only is this true from the viewpoint of natural, physical hardships. To be sure, this war leaves much pain and sorrow and heartache in its wake. But the days are evil especilly from a spiritual point of view. Also in these days it is becoming increasingly difficult for the church of God to assume her proper place and position in the midst of the world.

We must bear in mind, however, that the days shall become ever more evil. We must not, of course, listen to the siren songs of peace and good-will and thereby foolishly deceive ourselves. Let us rather hold fast to the Word of God which proclaims unto us that the end of all things is at hand, that, in the measure that that final moment approaches the driving force of that end of all things causes things to move forward ever more rapidly and irresistibly. Storms and breakers lie ahead, for us and for our children. How urgent therefore, how extremely timely comes to us the exhortation that we lose no time, that we delay not, but that we work while it is day and instruct our children in the fear of God, in the doctrine of the antithesis, so dear to us and our only comfort in the midst of a world which lieth in darkness. Let us therefore not wait, but go forward—there is no time to lose.

### III. Because we Lack the Means to go Ahead?

Do we delay because we lack the means to go ahead? Understand us correctly. We do not mean to suggest that perhaps we can or may wait because we lack the means to go on. The question is not whether we *can* go on. But the question is emphatically whether we *must* go on. And permit me to say in this connection that God does not demand of us the impossible—He does not command us to do something which, *by His grace*, cannot be done. And God surely commands us to proceed with this, does He not? He surely commands us to instruct our children in the truth of His Word and testimony, does He not? He surely commands us, does

He not, to have such schools which are Christian, wholly distinctive. He surely commands us, does He not, to come out from among them and be separate, to hate and flee all synthesis, worldlymindedness, all common grace obliteration of the boundary lines and of all marks of distinction. He surely commands us, does He not, to feed our children that nourishment which can be conducive to their healthy growth so that they will be able to conduct themselves as a distinctive people in the midst of this evil world which is rapidly developing in iniquity and darkness. And I repeat: The Lord does not demand of us the mpossible—it can be done, by His grace and Spirit, through prayer, and by putting our shoulder to the wheel.

Let us then proceed and go on. Do we lack the means here? I am sure that we in Grand Rapids are certainly in the position to make this project a reality and instruct our children in the way they should be instructed.

NOTE:—This article is a speech which the undersigned delivered at a school meeting of our Protestant Reformed School movement in Grand Rapids on Jan. 20, 1944.

H. V.

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## The Significance of the Book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs, as the name expresses, is a collection of proverbs written by Solomon, who was especially endowed with the Spirit of wisdom as the preacher-king of Israel. It is made up of three main parts plus two short appendices. The first section of the book includes the first nine chapters, and serves as an extensive introduction into the main theme of the book. Here Wisdom is presented as the one great good, which calls us away from the seductions of sin and urges us to enter her portals and feast on her bounties. (See, for example, chap. 9:1-6). The second section extends from chapter ten to twenty-five under the general heading, "the Proverbs of Solomon". Here Wisdom proceeds to instruct all those who enter her house in that true wisdom which is rooted in the fear of the Lord, overagainst the follies of sin. The third section consists of four chapters under the heading, "These are also proverbs of Solomon, which men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." The instruction is continued to give knowledge to the simple and to turn fools from the folly of their sin to the paths of life. The last two chapters containing the "Words of Agur" and the "Words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him", conclude the instruction



of Wisdom, always assuring that "blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors, for whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor from the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." (9:34-36).

The "proverb", or *Mashal*, of Scripture, has a much broader connotation than our word suggests. Although it is generally a short, pithy statement, forcefully expressing some definite truth, as is chiefly the case in Proverbs, it may also appear in the form of an extended allegory, or a didactic poem, or an instructive piece of prophecy. The prophecy of Balaam is called a proverb (Num. 22:7), as also Job's answer to his friends (Job 27:1), likewise the taunting satire of Isaiah against the king of Babylon (Is. 14:4), and some of the prophecies of Ezekiel (Ez. 17:2, 20:49). Because of this broader significance of the word, a *Mashal* is sometimes called a parable, as in Psalm 78:2, which is quoted in Matthew 13:55 to show that this word was fulfilled when Christ spoke to the people in parables. Thus even the parable is placed under the proverbs.

According to the root meaning of the word, the *Mashal* is a comparison or similitude, either expressed or implied. An example of the former, where the comparison is expressed, we find in the words: "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honor is not seemly for a fool." In the following passage the comparison is implied: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." A proverb may even appear in the form of a dark saying, or enigma, almost like a riddle, demanding of the hearer to pause and ponder on its interpretation. An example is found in the pithy statement, "the horse-leach has two daughters; give, give." Because of this peculiar character of the proverb it readily lends itself to become a saying, an adage, or a maxim.

The significance of the book of Proverbs can only be understood if we constantly bear in mind its place in the canon of Scripture. It can never be relegated to the level of the writings of worldly sages since it is a part of the inspired Word of God. It is a definite form of divine revelation to instruct the foolish and give subtilty to the simple. Its primary Author is the Holy Spirit, Who endued Solomon with spiritual wisdom so that he could discern the things of the Spirit as a teacher in Israel, as a father giving instruction to his son. In that sense Proverbs also belongs to prophecy, as the light which shines in the darkness of this present time to lead us into the perfect day. Its interpretation is only possible in the light of all the Scriptures.

For that reason Proverbs is not a mere collection of maxims teaching outward morality and promising a mere earthly, temporal reward for obedience. It is

estranged from all humanistic philosophy and worldly wisdom, for it deals only with spiritual-ethical values. The wise man is placed overagainst the fool, the subtle overagainst the simple, the prudent overagainst the slothful, the righteous over against the wicked. Wisdom, instruction and understanding, justice, judgment and equity, subtilty knowledge and discretion, mercy, truth and purity are mentioned in one breath with righteousness as altogether rooted in the fear of the Lord. While foolishness, simplicity, scorning, forwardness, mischief, hypocrisy, pride and fornication are all set forth as rooted in wickedness. Although seemingly the proverbs are loosely strung together, frequently without any discernable bond of connection, there is a definite unity of thought in the main theme, which teaches that the fear of the Lord is the underlying principle of wisdom, even as wickedness is the root of all folly.

"Wisdom" is the key-word throughout the entire book. But wisdom is presented as being, first of all, hypostatically divine. God is Wisdom, even as He is Truth, and Light, and Life. The Son of God, the Word, is the revelation of Wisdom even as the Son took an active part in the eternal thoughts, or counsel of God. Wisdom says: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (8:22, 23). And it was by Wisdom that God formed the earth, for: "When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth. When He established the clouds waters should not pass His commandment, when He deep. When He gave the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandmen, when He appointed the foundations of the earth. Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth. And My delights were with the sons of men." (8:27-31).

True Wisdom, the wisdom of Proverbs, is from above, a gift of God. Only God by the regenerating work of the Spirit can give knowledge to the simple and wisdom to fools. Mere natural wisdom is earthy, sensual, devilish. (James 3:15). For it is not rooted in the fear of the Lord. A man may be efficient and even prudent in his business, he may be a farmer who knows how to cause his fields to produce an abundance of grain and wisely builds storehouses to preserve it; but if that is the extent of his wisdom he is still the fool. He refuses to acknowledge God as God and lives in open rebellion against Him, exalting himself as god before the face of the Living One. He never realizes nor acknowledges his emptiness and depravity in the sight of God. He simply does not reckon with the true reality of things. Even though he is aware that storms and winds are sure to come, he builds his house upon

the sand. Not reckoning with God, nor with His Word, nor with eternity, he staggers in wickedness toward his destruction. "The way of the wicked is darkness, they know not at what they stumble." (4:19). But over-against the way of the wicked is the path of the righteous as a "shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." For the wisdom of the wise is founded in the fear of the Lord. The wise man has learned to build his house upon a rock. By grace he knows Him Whom to know is eternal life. He loves Him and acknowledges Him as God. He is aware of his own emptiness, guilt and corruption, confesses it before God, and seeks his salvation only in Him. "He seeks the pathway of life and binds the commandment upon his heart. For when he goes it leads him, when he sleeps it keeps him, when he awakens it talks with him. The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." (6:22, 23). Happy is the man that finds wisdom and gets understanding. She is life to his soul and grace to his neck. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things to be desired are not to be compared to her. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. For even as the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, so He blesses the habitation of the just. Shame is the promotion of fools, but the wise shall inherit glory. (2:13, 17, 22, 23, 34).

The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to instruct in the ways of wisdom. (1:2-6). By pithy statements, pointed comparisons, sharp contrasts and often by dark, enigmatic expressions it forcibly demands the attention of the reader. Even as the parable, the proverb serves to enlighten those to whom it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, but for those who are without these things are spoken, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them. The proverb serves as a savor of life unto life, but also as a savor of death unto death. It does not cast its pearls before swine, nor does it rebuke the scorner, lest it get itself shame. It does not answer the fool according to his folly, but speaks words of wisdom to confound him in his foolishness. Yet it does answer the fool according to his folly, exposing and condemning him, lest he be wise in his own conceits. (26:4, 5). Even the scorner is brought face to face with the Mashal. If he refuses to hear it and to ponder on its significance, it condemns him for despising the way of life; if he seeks to escape it by applying his own fancied interpretation to it, it also condemns him by leaving him in the folly of his sin. There is no escape for anyone, except for him who receives grace to hear it, so that he takes it into his heart with a godly sorrow unto repentance. The wise man, endued with wisdom from above, will hear and

increase in learning; a man of understanding will attain to wise counsels. He takes a firm hold on instruction and will not let her go; he keeps her for she is his life. The Mashal becomes engraven in his heart, is life to his soul, and an adornment about his neck. Happy is the man who finds wisdom and gets understanding.

C. H.

## Joshua's Parting With the People

As was said, some years have gone by since the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about. Joshua has waxed old and is stricken in age. If he is to address them before his passing, now is the time. So he calls for all the representatives of the people and exhorts them before his death. The place of convocation is Shechem. There are two addresses. The first discourse presents to the Israelites what Jehovah will do for them to bring them into full possession of the land. He will expel these nations before them and drive them out of their sight. But this He will do only in the way of their being very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses. The second discourse calls to mind, in powerful words, what Jehovah, since the time of the patriarchs, has already done for them. As was said, the point to the argument of the second discourse is plainly, that, should the people apostatize from Jehovah, they will be showing Him grossest ingratitude.

The two addresses form one whole and in this whole the climax is reached when Joshua declares: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye shall serve; whether the gods which your fathers have served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The whole people with one consent reply, that they will not forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods. Vss. 16-18.

But Joshua has his misgivings. Are they perhaps being carried away merely by the eloquence and the power of his argument as unaware of their natural and strong inclination towards idolatry and as unmindful of how holy, righteous and exacting God is?

Joshua has his doubts. So he says to them: "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God; He is an jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression nor your sins if ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." As was said, Joshua's reply is proper; it is calculated to chill zeal

only if it be false and to cause the religious enthusiast to reflect.

He is holy God, only, other, the absolute One, the inclusion of all perfection, wholly consecrated to Himself under the impulse of love of self, a jealous God, brooking, as the husband of His people, no division of affections on their part between Him and the idol and thus demanding that they love Him alone, love Him with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind. God can be satisfied with nothing less than perfect devotion. What hope is there then for the godless among this people—the godless, dead in their sins and thus without strength—if even the faithful must perish in their sins if they are to live in the things of the law through the doing of these things in perfect love. Yet, all insist that they will serve the Lord. And when Joshua tells them that they are witnesses against themselves that they have chosen the Lord, to serve Him (vs. 22), they as unafraid reply, “We are witnesses”, and thus agree that, in the event they should apostatize, they would be obliged to condemn themselves and justify God in destroying them and this on the ground of their having chosen God and rejected the idol and through this doing having declared that God alone is good. But if they are so bent on serving God, what meaneth those idols in their midst, which many a one, we must assume, in secret, worships. “Now therefore”, he says to them, “put away the strange gods that are among you, and incline your hearts unto the Lord God of Israel.” Idolatry, it seems, has not disappeared from them, with the dying out of the generation condemned at Kadesh. Thus he has reasons for exhorting them to choose this day whom they will serve. But for the third time the people aver that they will serve the Lord and obey His voice. It must be assumed that several or perhaps many in this vast audience are sincere. The others, who are not, keep silence, or if they do come out for Jehovah, it is because among the older generation the sentiment in favor of Him is still too strong to be publicly opposed. But after the passing of Joshua and the elders that outlived him, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, they will forsake God and serve idols and expect God to condone their sins and continue blessing them. But God will not forgive their transgressions and their sins, Joshua tells them, but He will turn and do them hurt and consume them, the reprobated, devoid of the fear of God. Still Joshua uses every possible means to bind their oath upon all their hearts. First he makes a covenant with them that day i.e., he vows with them and they with him to be God’s people and to serve Him only and this with respect to the covenant that God had concluded with them at Sinai.

This covenant is Jehovah’s, and is to be defined as the relation between Jehovah and Israel in which He is

their redeemer-God (typically) and they His redeemed people in duty bound to obey His voice and justly consumed by His wrath, if disobedient. Joshua’s making with them a covenant consists in his preaching to them Jehovah, His (typical) redemption, the obligation of His people to serve Him, further in his (Joshua’s) exhorting them to receive the covenant and to assume their obligation in it, which they also do through their vowing to serve the Lord, and finally in his writing his discourses in the book of the law of God. Through these acts Joshua makes with them a covenant, “and sets them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem,” what should be with them law and right, to wit, that they cleave unto their God and serve Him only.

Still Joshua is not satisfied that he has done all he can to make it most difficult for them to break their vow, and to deprive them of every excuse in the event they should deny God. So he takes a great stone and sets it up under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. This sanctuary was not the tabernacle, since this stood in Shiloh, but a sacred place that had been hallowed by the altar that Abraham and Jacob had formerly built there. Joshua finally explains the meaning of the stone. As the stone, so to say, has heard all the words which the Lord, through His servant Joshua, has just spoken to them, it is to witness against them in case they forsake God. And what a terrible witness that will be, how utterly condemnatory of their apostacy. For was not Jehovah the Lord their God, who had brought them out of Egypt in answer to their cry and who had given them a land for which they did not labor? Had it not been demonstrated to them over and over that to obey God is to live and prosper and achieve? On what conceivable grounds could it be evil to them to serve the Lord? Yet under the constraint of their carnal lusts they eventually will choose the idol. What an abominable thing depraved man is! How foolish, irrational, frightfully sinful, how unfair and dishonest! Joshua finally dismisses the people and every man returns to his inheritance. Not long thereafter Joshua died (vs. 29), one hundred and ten years old, and was buried in Mt. Ephraim. And now follows the notice, “And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.” However strong their inclination toward idolatry, the people of Israel, in particular the new generation, was held to an outward show of religion from sheer dread of the living presence of the God-fearing Joshua. In his two discourses, Joshua stands before us as a great man and a great saint. He loved God. His loyalty to God’s cause was deep and abiding, his insight into God’s dealing with His people profound as also his knowledge of the deceitfulness of the human heart. He is a truly humble man. The victory that

has overcome the world in Canaan, is the Lord's. He knows and acknowledges it. Loving God, he would not have it otherwise. Being so disposed, he gives God all the glory. God has fought for them, he tells them. It was He that has driven out from before them all the people, those great and strong nations. He makes no mention of his own merit, for he knows that he has none, being, as he is, but a sinful man, whose breath is in his nostrils, even now stricken in age, about to go the way of all the earth. It can be expected that Joshua, being the man that he is, has influence even with the younger generation, the new generation that will eventually apostatize. They admire his sterling qualities, his transparent honesty and dependability for fair dealing; are impressed by his moral courage and the power and the constancy of his faith and the genuineness of his zeal; and they suspect that he is capable of greatest indignation should they turn to their idols under his watchful eye. So, under the restraining influence of his presence among them, they follow the example that he sets them. They serve the Lord all the days of his life. They decilely walk beside their elders in the precepts of God

Thus we see just what the significance is of this transaction at Shechem. For Joshua it has this significance that it is now on record that the apostacy that will set in after his death with its resultant chaos and conflicts are not chargeable to him as he all the days of his life moved in the steps of Moses and abided in the spirit of the law in the presence of his people and before his passing inspired the congregated heads of the nation to consecrate themselves anew to the service of their God. And for the new and faithless generation the transaction has this significance that there now exists a document that records words that the Lord has spoken through Joshua directly to this generation, words that set forth all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel, his threats and promises and the covenant obligation and their vow to obey the Lord, thus words that will witness against them when they deny God and deprive them of excuse in the days of divine visitation. The great significance of this transaction is known precisely from this: that Joshua *wrote these things*, i.e., all which had happened there at Shechem, in the book of the law of God. With all that has taken place in Shechem now on record, no one in the future will be able to deny the fact of the transaction and thus destroy its usefulness and potency as a witness.

After Joshua, died Eleazar also, the son of Aaron. How long afterward cannot be determined. They buried him in Gibeah-phinehas, the city of his son, which had been given to the latter on Mt. Ephraim.

G. M. O.

## The Nations Remaining to Serve Israel

The book of Judges relates the earliest history of Israel in Canaan. The death of Joshua has deprived the people of their second and last national leader so that the administration of the affairs of the theocracy now rest solely on the judges which, according to the command of Moses (Deut. 6:18), the people were to make them in all their gates which the Lord their God should give them. This is indicated by the very name which our book bears: *Shophetim, Judges*, and further by its opening verse: "Now it came to pass after the death of Joshua, that *the children of Israel asked the Lord. . .*" Compare with this the first verse of the book of Joshua, "And after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass that the Lord *spake unto Joshua.*" These judges formed under Jehovah, Israel's invisible king, the highest civil authority, who watched over the observance of the law. The book of the Judges, accordingly, narrates the history of the times in which the governing authority in Israel was exercised by the judges.

But what is the design of our book? What is its lesson, its instruction? The book of Judges is the beginning of the fulfillment of a prophecy first uttered by Moses and repeated by Joshua in his parting discourses, the prophecy to the effect that denying and forsaking the Lord their God and serving the devil gods of the heathen, the people, by the curse of their God, will fall into discord, want, bondage and oppression. The first two chapters are an introduction to the history of the book as a whole. They explain why the events about to be related take place. It was in what the tribes did after the death of Joshua that the foundation of their troubles was laid.

The book has still another design. It teaches that, by reason of the inability of the government of the judges to cope with the evils just referred to, the hereditary kingship had to be set up. In the book of Deuteronomy provision is made for this immediately after the institution of the judges in all the gates of Israel: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me, then shalt thou set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose." The need of the kingship arose from the sinfulness of the people, from their inability to be one in a common faith in Jehovah their God. What was therefore needed is a visible and central authority to curb the liscentiousness of the people, constrain it to obey God's voice and to abide in the spirit of His law and thus to serve as a compelling center of unity

for the whole nation. Without a king, the people of Israel were like a flock without a shepherd. They went astray. They turned every one to his own way. The author of our book calls attention to this over and over in this language: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes." A family of which the word of each member is as authoritative as that of the other is a house divided against itself and cannot endure.

The institution of judges could not meet the necessity with which we here deal. For they were but local magistrates, whose authority was restricted to their respective gates. As to the heroes whom the Lord raised up to regain the lost liberty of the people, they bore no other title than that of judge. Their authority was the authority of a common judge. It extended throughout limited territories. It was not recognized throughout all Israel. Whatever unity may have resulted from the effort of these judges, was not permanent. Their accomplishments dissolved themselves at their death. What was needed to gather the stray sheep of Israel is the hereditary kingship. But the best of the kings that God eventually chose for His people were not equal to the task that had to be performed, if the people of Israel were to be truly one. For they, these kings, were but men, and sinful men at that. The unity which king David effected through his efforts had no substance to it. It could not have. For at the bottom of all the troubles of the nation lay sin, which had to be atoned and removed, if God's people were to be truly one. For true unity springs from a pure love of God. What was needed therefore is "one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is very God." Such a king is the Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ: who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. The condition of the people of Israel, in their kingless state, is certainly a vivid type of what the condition of God's people would be, if their were no Christ to gather His church. So, too, is the condition of the people of Israel under the rule of king Solomon a type of what the people of God actually are under the rule of Christ. With Christ in them and His Father in Him, they are made perfect in one. For through His atonement every evil to which His people are subject, has been dissolved.

Let us now take up the first deflection on the part of the people as narrated in the first chapter of the book of Judges. The Canaanites had been subdued, i.e., their military might had been so crippled by Joshua's victories over them on the battlefield, that they had neither the courage nor the man-power to initiate another war with Israel. They were a conquered people, who kept themselves to their strong-

holds, ready to do battle with the Israelites, if attacked, and prepared to defend their cities, within whose walls they had entrenched themselves. Thus the task that remained to the nine and a half tribes east of the Jordan was to prosecute the conquest by freeing their respective allotments from the remnants of these heathen tribes. The tribe of Judah did so. The other tribes (west of the Jordan) made the attempt. Something was also accomplished, but not nearly enough. The following statement tells the whole story: "And it came to pass when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute and (but) did not utterly drive them out." This applies to every one of the nine and a half tribes with the exception of Judah. That they put the Canaanites to tribute indicates that they gained the complete mastery over them, so that these heathen, to which the statement applies, were entirely at their mercy and could have been expelled or destroyed. But these recalcitrant tribes failed to do. In violation of the command of God (Deut. 7:1ff; 12:2ff) they concluded a covenant with these heathen and, according to the articles of this covenant, spared their lives, and allowed them to continue in the possession of their cities, on the condition that they pay them tribute. What is even much worse, they condoned their pagan religion, permitted them to continue in the public worship of their idols instead of destroying them. We learn all this from the complaint of the angel of the Lord contained in the second chapter. This complaint reads: "I made you go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?" Israel, at this juncture, has progressed far in the way of disobedience to the command of God; but it has not as yet gone all the way. The angel did not accuse them of joining the heathen in their pagan worship and of making marriages with them. This came later. It was not until after the passing of the old generation, which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for His people, that Israel falls into the gross sins last mentioned. It was that other generation, that knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He did, that denied God and served Baal, chap. 2:12. Doubtless, the men of the new generation were greatly in the majority when Joshua died, so that already then their word was law in Israel. This would account for those initial violations rebuked by the angel in chap. 2. That Israel, after concluding a covenant with the heathen, for a time refrained from adopting their pagan religion, may be ascribed to the restraining influence of the older generation, that had not yet wholly died out.



The angel added to his rebuke a sad message indeed. By reason of their disobedience, He will not drive the heathen out from before them; but they shall be as thorns in their sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto them. Israel has thus laid the foundation of all its later troubles.

It is to be observed that what the angel of the Lord holds against Israel is not that they failed to expel the Canaanites from their cities but that they made a league with the inhabitants and did not destroy their pagan worship. What God required of Israel is not that they consume the inhabitants *at once*. This was expressly forbidden them, as it was only "by little and little" that God would put out those nations, lest the beasts of the field increase upon them. Deut. 7:22. What was all important to the Lord is that Israel remain loyal to Him in conscious, deliberate and abiding opposition to the heathen in their midst and to their devil-gods, in a word, that they continually choose Jehovah in rejection of the idol. If they do so, the Lord through the agency of His people, will gradually expel the enemy from Canaan's borders. Fact is that He left these pagan remnants in Canaan "that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it or not. Therefore the Lord left these nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered them into the hand of Joshua." chap. 2:20, 23. The author continues: "Now these are the nations, which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at least such as before knew nothing thereof." chap. 3:1ff.

"That He might prove Israel. . . ." The trial of God is made possible by reason of the presence of pagan worship and its powerful appeal to sinful flesh. The trial becomes actual through God's demanding that Israel serve Him in denial of the Baal worship with its pleasures of sin. The spiritual seed chooses God in rejection of the idol. The carnal seed chooses the idol and the sinful pleasures connected with its worship in rejection of God. So is the purpose of the trial achieved which is to bring to manifestation both the carnal and the spiritual seed in the one nation; and to make it possible for each to serve the God of its choice antithetically. These pagan nations therefore had to be there in Canaan through the centuries—these nations: "the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hevites, that dwelt in Mt. Lebanon, from Mt. Baal-hermon unto the entering of Hamath" (Jud. 3:3). They were left there by reason of Israel's sins but also to prove Israel—the generations to come, and to teach these generations war, in

order that they might know it who had not yet experienced it. It was not for technical instruction in military science that He left the heathen nations in the land, but that the people of Israel—the spiritual seed—might become proficient in spiritual warfare. Israel's wars with the Canaanites were *at bottom* spiritual conflicts, a choosing between Jehovah and the idol, a being pitted against the flesh and the devil and the devil-god in loyalty to Jehovah under the impulse of a saving faith. Israel had to know what it is to wage this warfare and had also to wage it in Canaan through the ages. It means that Israel in Canaan was still the church militant and had thus not yet entered the true rest. The glorified church does not fight. Its warfare is accomplished.

As was said, the heathen nations were left in Canaan by reason of Israel's sins, in punishment of their sins but also to prove Israel and to teach them war. There is no conflict here. It simply goes to show how that God achieves His purpose through the sinfulness of men and not in spite of it and that thus also through sin He knows how to promote the ends of His kingdom.

G. M. O.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Na eene ongesteldheid van enkele weken behaagde het den Heere den 4den Februari tot Zich te nemen,

MR. SAMUEL SMEDING

in den ouderdom van 64 jaar.

De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging, "Dient den Heere," wenscht hiermede aan Mrs. S. Smeding en aan Mr. John Smeding en gezin hare hartelijke deelneming in dit hun smartelijk verlies te kennen te geven.

Wij mogen gelooven dat de broeder ingegaan is in de eeuwige ruste die er overblijft voor het volk van God.

Moge de Heere de bedroefde familie met zijne genade rijkelijks troosten.

Namens de Vereeniging,

P. De Boer, Pres.

Mrs. P. Kooiman, Secr.

#### NOTICE CONSISTORIES

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches meets in regular session March 1, 1944, at the Hull church, D. V. Anyone desiring lodging please contact the Rev. A. Cammenga at Hull, Iowa.

M. Gritters — S. C.