

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

THE STANDARD BEARER

We hold that one makes a fundamental mistake if he attempts to enter into a scientific debate with an evolutionist, to meet him on his own ground and to employ human logic and ingenuity to gainsay him. The issue is undebatable; and it is below the true dignity of a Christian to enter into such debate. The reason for this is that there is no common ground between faith and unbelief. The Christian stands on the basis of the Word of God; the evolutionist (of whatever brand) stands on the basis of sinful human reason, not subject to the Word of God. And because there is no common ground, there can be no proper debate.

See: Editorial, p. 365

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Meditation

James D. Slopsema

Not Conformed . . . But Transformed

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:2

James D. Slopsema is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan.

The church today has a definite problem with world conformity. Who can debate the proposition that worldliness is creeping more and more into the church?

This is very serious. The more the church becomes the world, the less she is the church.

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

* * * * *

Be not conformed to this world!

The world in which we live is characterized by gross sin and wickedness.

It all began at the fall. At the fall man lost all his abilities to do good before God. He became spiritually twisted and deranged. All he can do in this fallen state is live in gross wickedness, trampling under foot the holy commandments of God.

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This depravity of fallen man reveals itself in all that the world does and produces. A corrupt tree can only bring forth corrupt fruit. And it is no different with the world. The spiritual corruption of the world shows itself very clearly in its singing, its dancing, its entertainment, its literature, its art, its education, its whole lifestyle. We hardly need to point out how all these things of the world have been corrupted with sin and are abominable to the living God.

To all this we are not to conform ourselves.

To conform yourself means to pattern yourself after another. It means to follow the example of another, to strive to be like another. A child, for example, spontaneously conforms himself to his parents. Without even realizing it, he copies what he sees in his parents.

To conform to this world means, therefore, to pattern yourself after this world. It means to sing as the world sings, to dance as the world dances, to dress and to speak as does the world. It means that you adopt the lifestyle of the world. Its attitudes, its values, its goals, its joys, its pleasures are yours.

We see much of this in the church today.

This is certainly true of the way we entertain ourselves. We tend to entertain ourselves with the entertainments of the world.

Perhaps the biggest entertainers of the world today are television and radio. And the world has corrupted both of them with its abominations. How evil television programing has become! How vile are the songs the world sings on radio! All that is evil, immoral, and abominable to God is glorified. And with this corruption many in the church entertain themselves!

This in turn leads to more world conformity. Through television and radio the goals, attitudes, morals and values of the world are loudly proclaimed. A certain lifestyle, which is completely contrary to the Scriptures, is portrayed. It ought to be obvious to all that it is impossible for the Christian to fill his soul with this spiritual filth hour after endless hour without being adversely affected. He can not help but be conformed to this world.

Sad to say, this is what is happening in the church today.

It is something of which both old and young are guilty.

Over against this, God's word proclaims: "Be not conformed to this world!"

It can also be translated: Stop being conformed to this world!

* * * * *

But be ye transformed.

To be transformed means to be changed into a different form.

Jesus was transformed on the Mount of Transfiguration. His whole appearance was changed so that His face shone as the sun and his garments became white as the light.

The word "transform" is really the word "metamorphosis". Metamorphosis describes the change a tadpole undergoes as it becomes a frog. It also describes the change which a caterpillar undergoes to become a beautiful butterfly.

In like manner we must undergo a metamorphosis. Rather than be conformed to this world, we must undergo a radical transformation. We must be so transformed that our singing, our speech, our dress, our customs, our goals, our attitudes, our entertainments, our whole lifestyles are radically different from that of the world. There must be a marked difference between us and the world. The difference must be as great as the

difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. We must be so different from the world that even the world acknowledges that we are different from them.

The thing that must set us apart from the world is that we are those who prove what is the will of God.

Notice the exhortation here, Be ye transformed . . . that ye may prove what is that . . . will of God.

God's will is, of course, the will of God for our lives. That will is set forth for us in the ten commandments, and more fully in the whole of Scripture.

The Word of God speaks here of proving what is this will of God.

To prove means first to submit something to a test to determine whether it is genuine. This is done, for example, with coins. To prove, however, also means to approve that which is genuine, while rejecting that which is counterfeit.

In like manner we are to prove what is the will of God. We are to put our life in all its parts to the test. We must submit our goals, our attitudes, our entertainments, our whole life to a test to determine what in our lives is the will of God. That which is according to God's will we are to retain. That which is contrary to God's will we are to cast out and leave behind.

Those who do this will certainly will live lives that are transformed. The world certainly does not prove what is the will of God. They have no concern for God's will. Without a thought, they trample it under their feet. Hence, those who carefully prove what is the will of God, and order their lives according to

God's law, will certainly live transformed lives. Their lives will be as different from the life of the world as day is from night.

And this is what we are called to do.

Be not conformed, but transformed.

* * * * *

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Often in Scripture the mind stands not just for the mind, but the will and the emotions as well. Such is also the case here.

The mind is all-important when it comes to being conformed to this world or to being transformed. Our thoughts, our desires, our feelings have everything to say about how we dress, what we say, how we entertain ourselves, how we use our time. Our mind determines our whole life style.

The trouble is that by nature our mind is no different from the mind of the world. We, too, fell to Adam and became depraved and corrupt, just like the world. This spiritual corruption of sin extends also to our mind so that we think, will, and feel the same as the world. This can only lead to world conformity.

To live lives that are transformed requires that our mind be renewed. This means that new qualities must be infused into our mind so that it is radically changed for the better. Our mind must be made new so that our thoughts, our desires, and our feelings conform to the holy will of God.

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

There is only one thing that can renew our mind. It is not education. It is not the wisdom of men. It is not persuasion. It is not

a role model. Nor is it a better environment. The only thing that can renew the mind of man is the new life of Jesus Christ, which becomes ours only through a spiritual rebirth. This new life is the power of God to enlighten that which has been darkened. It is the power to soften that which has been hardened, to make straight that which has become crooked.

However, God renews our mind with the new life of Christ only through means. There is the Word preached and faithfully studied. There are the sacraments faithfully administered. There is prayer earnestly and regularly uttered. There are the fellowship and communion of the saints.

Let us use these means diligently and faithfully that our mind be renewed daily with the new life of Jesus Christ.

Then we will not be conformed to this world, but transformed.

* * * * *

This is the thing good, acceptable and perfect.

The King James version reads: "Be ye transformed . . . that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

This is better rendered: Be ye transformed . . . that ye may prove what is the will of God, the thing good, acceptable, and perfect. In this case that which is good, acceptable, and perfect is proving what is the will of God, and thus living lives that are transformed.

The transformed life is good: good in the sight of God. The life that conforms to this world is not.

The transformed life is acceptable: acceptable to God. The life that conforms to this world is not.

The transformed life is perfect. It is complete, lacking nothing. Not so the life that is conformed to this world.

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind! □

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God The Creator Forthcoming Book On “Children’s Communion”

God The Creator

Whence is the world?

To this question there are, fundamentally, but two possible kinds of answers: the answer of faith and the answer of unbelief, the answer of revelation and the answer of human philosophy, the answer of the Creator Himself and the answer of the mere creature standing in rebellion against the Creator.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that unbelief invents its own theories of the beginning of the world, and that today the philosophy of evolutionism, the philosophy of a beginning without God, is more widely held and taught than ever before. True, this theory may have undergone various refinements through the years, and it may enjoy an apparently more scientific window-dressing than formerly. But it is a philosophy, not a science. It is a false religion, not the product of laboratory investigation. And as a philosophy which concerns not only the origin of things as such, but also the destiny of things, and also the way that lies between that origin and that destiny, evolutionism is a very current and very dangerous and wholly false philosophy, a prize lie of the devil.

But not less dangerous and more mild, but more dangerous because it is more deceitful and cunning, more insidiously Antichristian, is the philosophy of so-called theistic evolutionism in its various forms. Crass evolutionism itself can hardly be an option for a Christian. It is blatantly unbelieving and in flat contradiction of the Word of God. It is a brazen attempt to get God somehow out of the beginning, on the assumption that if God is out of the beginning, He is entirely out. But theistic evolutionism is somewhat different. It claims to be theism — faith in God. And it claims, at the same time, to be evolutionism, which is an unbelieving denial of God the Creator, the God of the Scriptures. It claims, therefore, to reconcile the irreconcilable. It claims to be a mixture of the immiscible, a synthesis of the antithetical. It claims to harmonize faith and unbelief, the truth of God and the denial of the Creator-God, the Word of the Creator and the lie of the creature. No more than fire and water can be mixed, no more than light and darkness can be reconciled, no more can theism (faith in God) and evolutionism (unbelief) be harmonized. But it is precisely in this pseudo-Christian, Antichristian form, according to which the lie of unbelief is

dressed up apparently in the garments of the truth, that evolutionism has obtained a foothold in the church, has, in the minds of some, become a debatable question, and has in various forms found its way into interpretations of Sacred History.

We hold that one makes a fundamental mistake if he attempts to enter into a scientific debate with an evolutionist, to meet him on his own ground and to employ human logic and ingenuity to gainsay him. The issue is undebatable; and it is below the true dignity of a Christian to enter into such debate. The reason for this is that there is no common ground between faith and unbelief. The Christian stands on the basis of the Word of God; the evolutionist (of whatever brand) stands on the basis of sinful human reason, not subject to that Word of God. And because there is no common ground, there can be no proper debate.

The Christian, proceeding from faith and standing on the basis of the Word of God as his sole authority, simply says: “I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.”

His position is: "Give me God and His revelation, and I can explain the world." And the church proclaims, without debate: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

* * * * *

God is the Creator.

With the revelation of this truth the Scriptures open; and the very first verse of the Bible contains the amazing statement: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." By this declaration we are at once carried far beyond all that eye can see, or ear can hear, or that can arise in the heart of man. It transcends all merely human comprehension. It is not a child of time, nor a finite human intellect, but the eternal and infinite God Who speaks here. And we are carried in this very first verse of Scripture to the very edge of time, the beginning, and there called to lift up our eyes to the Eternal One, and say, "In the beginning God . . ." And faith — and emphatically faith alone — faith which is an evidence of things unseen and the substance of things hoped for, responds: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11:3)

This truth, that God is the Creator, is no isolated and insignificant item of truth, disconnected from the revelation of the gospel of our salvation and disconnected from the history of the realization of the wonder of grace. And it is not a matter of indifference whether or not the church confesses that God is the Creator. It is not true that the doctrine of creation is concerned only with the origin of things as such, and that for the rest it has no bearing upon the truth of our salvation and no significance for Sacred History.

On the contrary, Holy Scripture emphasizes throughout the truth that God is the Creator, and that, too, in such a way that this confession forms an integral part of the faith of the redeemed church. The church, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, the church as it is still in the midst of death and looking for full redemption, loves to sing of God the Creator. Thus in the 8th Psalm: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of Him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:1, 3, 4.) And in Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." (vss. 1, 2) And in Psalm 33 the righteous are called upon to rejoice in and to praise the Lord. For "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And again: "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (Ps. 33:6, 9)

Especially in times of great stress, when the cause of God's Son and of His covenant seem to suffer defeat in the world, the church appeals for deliverance to the God that made the heavens and the earth. For creation and redemption are inseparably connected. You cannot deny the one and hold to the other. The philosophy of evolution is not only a denial of God the Creator; it has no salvation. It is the philosophy of despair. But the church looks unto God the Creator for redemption and de-

liverance. And thus, in Psalm 74:16, 17 the church appeals to Him: "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter." And in the Psalm which celebrates the covenant mercies of Jehovah we read: "The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them." (Ps. 89:11) Psalm 95 declares of the rock of our salvation that He is a great God and a great King above all gods: "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." (Ps. 95:3-6) And Psalm 102:25 instructs us that of old He has "laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hand." The poet in Psalm 121 declares: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." And in Psalm 124 God's people celebrate their deliverance from their enemies, concluding with the well-known words: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." And once more, in Psalm 146:5, 6 we read: "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever."

In Isaiah 40, when Zion is called to lift up her voice and to say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God," the Lord Himself calls the attention of Zion to the greatness of His power as the Creator as follows: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of

the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (vss. 12, 13) And again, in vs. 26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." And again, in vs. 28: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." The Holy One of Israel, Who called His servant Cyrus to liberate His people, is the same Who "made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." (Isaiah 45:12)

He is the God Who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." (Rom. 4:17) He is the God Who created all things by and unto Jesus Christ, the first-born of every creature and the first begotten of the dead." (Col. 1:15) And He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. (Eph. 3:14, 15) And when the four and twenty elders in the vision of Revelation 4 fall down and worship Him that sitteth upon the throne, this is their adoration: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Concluding this aspect of our discussion, therefore, we may state that it is evident from the emphasis which the Scriptures place upon this truth, in the first

place, that it is paramount for the church of Christ in the midst of the world — a matter of life and death for her — to maintain the truth that God is the Creator. To this truth the church must bear witness. She must preach it. She must teach it to her generations. She may not tolerate that her children, her sons and her daughters, be taught anything else in schools and colleges and universities. And the church herself must not exchange this testimony of revelation for the language of the wisdom of man. In the second place, it should be evident that according to Scripture there exists a close relation between creation and redemption. God the Creator is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as the eternal Son, but also as the incarnated Christ, the Lord, Whom He hath appointed to be the Head over all things in the world to come. What is more, it is as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (and our Father for His sake) that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. For He, the Christ, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, and the first begotten of the dead. By Him and for Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. (Col. 1:14-17). The Creator is also the Redeemer; and He made all things with a view to redemption. Of God, and through God, and to God are all things. To Him be the glory forever!

* * * * *

Scripture begins the narrative of the coming into existence of our universe with the statement of Genesis 1:1, 2: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was

without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The question as to how this narrative of creation came into being can have but one answer. That answer is: by revelation. God Himself revealed that He created the world, and how He created the world.

It is a question of minor importance how God revealed this. Scripture does not tell us the details concerning the mode of this revelation. It is not impossible, but, in fact, very likely that the origin of the universe was first revealed to Adam. It may be regarded as a matter of course that God would reveal to the first man, who stood as friend of God in Paradise, not only the manner of his own creation but also the way in which the entire universe came into existence. For it is especially in the mighty act of creation, first of all, that God revealed Himself as God. Nor is it at all impossible, but, again, very likely that this revelation of the creation-narrative was preserved in the line of the generations of God's covenant in the old dispensation even before the Flood, and that after the Flood it was transmitted in the line of those same covenant generations to the time of Moses. Then Moses, under the influence of infallible inspiration, put the narrative into writing. All this, however, is of relatively minor importance in this connection.

What is of importance to remember is, first of all, that creation can only be an act of God. God only is able to create. And therefore the act of creation is a deep mystery — something that can be known by revelation.

Only God Himself can shed any light on the matter of creation and can reveal to us how He made the world. Secondly, this account or revelation Moses, under the influence of infallible inspiration, put into writing. God knew and spake with His friend Moses face to face (Deut. 34:10). That is sufficient for faith. Thus, we are assured that what we have in the account of Genesis 1 is not one of the many cosmogonies and mythological accounts that were in existence at the time when Moses wrote, and which, according to higher criticism, Moses must have known and used. Nor is Genesis 1 the product of human imagination. But it is the account of what actually took place in the creation of the universe.

Thus, in connection with this account, the Spirit witnesses in our hearts: "In the beginning God . . ." Whatever trouble the fool unbeliever may have with the problem of origins, and whatever difficulty he may have in hunting for "missing links," the people of God have no trouble. God reveals to us how He made the world. Apart from that revelation and apart from faith, the problem of origins is indeed a problem — an insoluble problem. Science can investigate the created world, the things that are made; it cannot investigate the creation of that world. The origin and formation of the world are strictly a matter of revelation.

If follows, therefore, that we take and must take the narrative of creation in the book of Genesis in the literal sense of the word. When we read of the beginning, we understand it to mean the very commencement of time and the beginning of all things. When we read of days, it can only refer to days as we know them. And when we read that God created, we understand that all things came into existence by His almighty Word. This does not mean that we can fathom the divine mystery of creation. It always remains a unique work of God Who is really GOD. But it does mean that God makes known to us this mystery on our level, so that we can understand a little of the marvelous work of God. And unless the creation-narrative is understood literally, we can only come to the conclusion that we have no account of creation whatsoever in any real sense. □ HCH

Forthcoming Book On "Children's Communion"

Our readers will recall that in the recent past there was a flurry of questions about the subject of paedocommunion. Besides, this has become an issue in more than one Reformed denomination recently.

Dr. Leonard J. Coppes, an Orthodox Presbyterian Minister (some of you may know him through his book, *Ten Points Of Calvinism*) is in the process of publishing a book on this subject. He has sent me the page proofs of his book, along with a request to review and to announce it. The title of this forthcoming book is *Daddy, May I Take Communion?*

The title may be somewhat misleading. The book is hardly an answer to a child's question. It is rather a thorough-going treatment of the question of children's

communion; and it comes down on the side of the traditional Reformed position, i.e., no children's communion.

The book deals with this subject both from the confessional and the Scriptural point of view. It is a book designed both for the man in the pew, who is without formal theological education, and for the more advanced student of theology.

The reader must not expect easy reading. Especially when Dr. Coppes makes his argument against simplistically identifying the Passover and the Lord's Supper, the going becomes a bit heavy. So if you are willing to put on your thinking-cap, you can benefit from this book. While I am in agreement with the main thesis of the book, there are points at which I am in disagreement (e.g. on the covenant).

If you are interested in this subject, get the book and read it. It is being privately published by the author; and he is offering it at a pre-publication price of \$10.00 plus postage, in order to finance publication. Write to: Dr. Leonard J. Coppes, 9161 Vine St., Thorton, CO 80229. □ HCH

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Correspondence and Reply

Thoughts From The Pew on 'Reverend'

Correspondence

1. I think Mr. Tuyl touches on an aspect of a much broader problem so prevalent in our day and age, namely lack of respect for and familiarity with those in a position of authority. Children address parents by their Christian names, broadcasters refer to parliamentarians and other high-ranking individuals without the courtesy of a 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.', and this trend of the world is becoming increasingly common-place in the Church.

Much of the blame for this, however, must be laid at the door of ministers who themselves have a low view of their calling and encourage familiarity. It is a sad reflection of the depths to which the office and work of the ministry has sunk, that in order to retain some modicum of respect, ministers have resorted to pleading for a retention of their titles, as if these are the last vestige of their once honourable status.

What is needed, though, is not some cosmetic exercise, but a fundamental return to faithful preaching and pastoring.

In reading your item I was reminded of an editorial written by our friend Tony Horne in his magazine 'The Presbyterian'. Writing on the necessity of ordination, he says:

"These are days when any 'Tom, Dick or Harry' can conduct services, preach the Word and administer the sacraments. The idea of a man being set apart for the sacred office has virtually disappeared from our thinking. The rush to topple the clergyman from his nineteenth century pedestal has resulted in a plethora of trendy parsons all wishing to be known as 'Bill Smith' or 'Dave Brown' rather than the Reverend William Smith and the Reverend David Brown. In the mad scramble to break down all barriers between the clergy and the laity clerical dress has been thrown out of the window and open-necked shirts and sports jackets are the order of the day. The sad thing is that this spirit has infected evangelical and reformed churches no less than others." (Issue 3; October 1984)

Both writers would agree, as I do, that those of us who occupy the pew should acknowledge "with reverence and respect the Almighty, in whose name the minister speaks from Sunday to Sunday." I do not agree, however, that the use of titles is the right way to go about it. Whether 'Bill Smith' or 'Reverend William Smith', both are wrong.

2. I must say I was surprised that anyone should attempt to

defend the use of ministerial titles. To my mind it is indefensible and I believe Mr. Tuyl's 'defense' bears that out.

3. We must always turn to Scripture as our authoritative guide on matters of church polity and practice, not to linguistics and grammatical purity. It is noticeable that Mr. Tuyl makes no reference to Scripture, or even to his church's subordinate standards, to support his thesis. That is hardly surprising, since he cannot do so. In the Word of God we find neither precept nor example to warrant the use of ministerial titles. Man-made titles have their place in a court of law, an embassy or Parliament, but they have no place in the Church of Jesus Christ.

i) *The apostles did not use titles nor bear them, neither did their fellow-workers. (Cf. Romans 16; 1 Cor. 16:10-24; 2 Cor. 12:18; Col. 4; 1 Thess. 1:1, 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:11-12; etc.)*

ii) *Titles are against the spirit of our Lord's teaching in Matthew 23:8-12. "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."*

A true servant of Jesus Christ can say with the apostle Paul, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given . . ." (Eph. 3:7-8), and in the same breath say, "I magnify mine office." (Rom. 11:13)

iii) The psalmist accords reverence to the name of Jehovah, "holy and reverend is his name." (Psalm 111:9) "The whole name or character of God is worthy of profoundest awe, for it is perfect and complete, whole or holy. It ought not to be spoken without solemn thought, and never heard without profound homage. His name is to be trembled at, it is something terrible; even those who know Him best rejoice with trembling before Him. How good men can endure to be called "reverend" we know not." (C.H. Spurgeon)

4. Since we would agree that all church officers, namely minister, elders and deacons, are of equal rank, what ground is there for giving the minister a special title? Is the young, newly-ordained minister to be revered more than a Godly elder or deacon of many years standing? Titles smack of Romish hierarchy. True, ministers hold authority, but they do not hold it in their own name, but in the Name of the great Head of the Church whom they represent.

5. It is not altogether surprising that many who hold the office of minister cling to their titles and clerical garb since these are the only things which distinguish them from the world. Strip them of their externals and you're left with empty vessels. How much better to be marked out by a faithful ministry and a Godly life.

6. In this country too the use of the word 'pastor' as a title has become common-place. No doubt there is much truth in what Mr. Tuyl says about this, but whether the title is 'Reverend', 'Right Reverend', 'Very Reverend', 'Holy Father' or 'Pastor', the principle is the same: Scripture rejects them.

7. I suggest it would be a most God-honouring step on the way of reformation in the Church to abandon ministerial titles and keep to plain Mr. William Smith and Mr. David Brown. No minister would have any reason to feel peeved by such a move. Rather he should feel relieved at having cast off from his name such an unscriptural burden. Neither should the flock feel they are being disrespectful to their pastor, for there is more to respect and reverence than use of titles — it stems from a heart which knows the saving power of the grace of God and which loves to be taught and shepherded by a faithful labourer in the Word of God. Thus it is that the 'Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word' closes with the prayer,

"Give Thy grace also to this people and Church, that they may becomingly deport themselves toward this their minister; that they may acknowledge him to be sent of Thee; that they may receive his doctrine with all reverence, and submit themselves to his exhortations. To the end that they may, by his word, believing in Christ, be made partakers of eternal life."

8. What do you think, Mr. Van Baren?

Mr. John Hooper
Saltash, Cornwall
England

Reply

Dear Saint John (Eph. 1:1),

We do greatly rejoice in receiving your letters — even if you might send two to my one. We do especially appreciate your serious and careful reflection on questions concerning which we might differ, but also on such upon which we agree. I do hesitate a bit to respond to your paper about the "Reverends". First, I would agree with a great deal of that which you write. I have no doubt but that you single out what is the great trouble in connection with the preaching of the gospel. Second-

ly, for me, the matter of "titles" is not of such great moment. It is true that the way one addresses another indicates also his spiritual attitudes and thoughts. Yet, contrary to what you indicate, I believe that addresses are to a large measure a matter not only of grammar, but also reflect local attitudes, practices, and traditions. Some of our people would be greatly offended if the term "Reverend" were dropped with respect to our ministers — but only because this is regarded as a term to indicate the high position of the office (not of the man). Others, as yourself, may truly view the term "reverend" as that which can only apply to God. Therefore, to have it applied to a man would understandably offend your conscience. We have formerly used other titles with which you might even be unfamiliar. Our Dutch forefathers formerly addressed the minister as "Dominie". That was the Dutch, taken from the Latin word which means "Lord". Some of our older people still use that term when addressing myself — though often these do apologize for using that old terminology. Others have asked me, "By what title would you want us to address you?" My usual response has been that as long as it is nothing derogatory, I really don't care what term they use.

So, without having a great feeling for the title "Reverend", I do have some comments on what you have written. First, I am surprised at your inconsistency. On what Scriptural basis do you approve of man-made titles in courts of law, an embassy or Parliament? Are not these titles also that which applies strictly to God alone? Is He not the Judge of heaven and earth? Is He not the only and true Magistrate? Is not His all the honor? How then can such be applied to worldly

men who happen to serve in special positions? How can one address the queen as "Majesty" (or whatever similar terms you use), when God alone is the Majestic One? Is it not *more* inappropriate to address a worldly man in a high office with what must be a form of divine title, or an attribute of the Almighty, than it would be thus to address one in the holy office of the ministry? Granted, these are the terms which the world uses. But does not the Christian consistently have to reject such titles when he addresses these earthly magistrates — and on the same basis you use to reject the title: "Reverend"? My dictionary defines this as a "title of respect" which is applied sometimes not only to ministers of the Word, but also to other officials of government.

But you also consistently use the title "Mr." and also appear to insist upon this as an indication of respect. You (with myself) do not want the minister addressed just by his first name. Still: on what Scriptural basis do you rest your claim that "Mr." ought to be used? Where is anyone in Scripture called, "Mr. So-and-so"? Is it not true that the first name (probably only name) is always used in Scripture? How does Paul identify himself? Is he "Mr. Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ?" And does he not address others simply by (first) name? Timothy was also a minister of the gospel. Did Paul address him as Mr. Timothy? If one is to be governed by Scriptural usage and address, then the modern day (and to us, offensive) usage of first names for ministers, teachers, or parents would be far more accurate. I don't advocate this — I only point out where your argument must lead you.

It is true also in our midst, that elders and deacons are not usually given a title other than "Mr." It is not uncommon, however, to use the title of "elder" or "deacon" preceding their names to indicate their office and our respect of that.

Though the term "reverend" is not applied as title to anyone in Scripture, consider several other "titles" or terms of respect and honor that Scripture does use. Paul calls himself a "minister of Jesus Christ" ("Minister Paul" if you will), Rom. 15:16; or "an apostle" II Cor. 1:1. Those who serve in office are definitely called "pastors" (Eph. 4:1; Jer. 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; etc.). If such are labelled by God's Word as "pastors", what would be improper in using that with their names? And though it is true that the term "reverend" is found only once in Scripture (Ps. 111:9 — with emphasis on "godly fear"), the form of "reverence" is found more often in Scripture. In the latter instance, this is applied not only to God, but also to man. (Cf. II Sam. 9:6; I Kings 1:3; etc.) Or there is Heb. 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them *reverence*: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" So: reverence is not only exclusively directed to God; there can be a proper "reverence" of men (there is also an *improper* reverence given to men when such are esteemed to be equal to God or are honored as God). If all this is true, is it *improper* and *wrong* to use the word as a title to indicate respect to a high calling? And: does not Scripture even call the minister an "angel" (Rev. 2:1, etc.)?

One notes, too, how often the Apostle (may I use that title for him?) Paul calls the church "saints" (Eph. 1:1). Hence, my address to you at the top of the let-

ter. That is probably more accurate than the man-made title of "Mr." It shows what we are in Jesus Christ. But "saint" is one who is "holy" and separate. Scripture makes very plain that God is Holy. It is His Name. Still, Paul can address people of God also as "saints". Does it indicate greater honor to be called "Reverend", or "Saint"? I would almost claim the latter. But even let the honor for such a label be ascribed alone to God Who has delivered us and separated us unto Himself through Jesus Christ and by His Spirit.

Just a few remarks about Matthew 23:8-12. Do you not unfairly interpret this passage in connection with your contentions? What did you call your male parent? Father? Was that a violation of Christ's Word? (And the term "Father" was not obviously used in Christ's day in connection with the Roman Catholic priest.) Does not Paul address Christians as "masters" (Eph. 6:9)? Was he violating Christ's instruction? Did not Christ Himself speak of Abraham as "Father Abraham" (Luke 16:24)? Did Christ violate His own instruction? The point obviously (to me) is not that one may not use these "titles" as address to creatures, but rather, what Christ emphasizes, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Any action, any address, which denies that important Scriptural principle, must be condemned. It is not the address itself which is condemned, but the *purpose* of the address.

Well, I have spent more space than I intended on a matter which to me is not all that significant. What do you think, saint John?

Yours in His blessed Name,
The angel of the church in
Hudsonville □

The Day of Shadows

John A. Heys

The First Shadow Of Christ's Cross

As he came forth from the hand of God, Adam could, the day he was created, praise God for His almighty power, inscrutable wisdom, undeniable sovereignty, boundless love and grace. All Adam was and had was God's gift to him. He had earned nothing; for he did not even exist before God called him into being. God owed him nothing, but he owed God everlasting praise for everything that he was and had. With us, before he fell into sin, he could sing as we do from Psalter number 383, which is based on Psalm 139:

All that I am I owe to Thee,
Thy wisdom, Lord, has
fashioned me;
I give my Maker thankful
praise,
Whose wondrous works my
soul amaze.

However, before he sinned, Adam could not praise God for His mercy. For as yet he knew no misery and certainly no punishment of any kind. Therefore he could not know God's pity and compassion. And though he could, and undoubtedly did, praise God for His grace by thanking Him for all that he had received from God, he did not yet know His saving grace that He bestows on those whom He eternally chose in Christ, and for whom He sent Christ to blot out their sin, and earn for them a more blessed life than Adam and Eve knew before they fell into sin. This grace God revealed after they fell into sin. Then He assured Adam and Eve that He would give them a complete victory in Christ, Whom He then called The Seed of The Woman, Genesis 3:15.

It was for this richer life and richer praise from man's lips and heart that God in His eternal, unchangeable and sovereign counsel decreed man's fall and Christ's coming to bring us salvation through His cross and Spirit. So that now we have a much richer praise unto God than the highest holy angels, who never fell into sin. These angels can and do praise God for His mercy and grace to His elect children; but they cannot do this because of their own personal enjoyment

of that mercy and grace. They know it only as God's work upon us, not upon themselves.

That Adam and Eve could praise God for His grace before they fell and were saved does not mean that today the unbelievers can praise God for a common grace that some say falls upon all men. It is true that God gives rain and sunshine, life and health, gold and silver, and experiences that their flesh enjoys. But this is not in His grace, as it was to Adam and Eve before they fell. God clearly told Adam and Eve that the day they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die. Punishment, suffering and pain, misery and woe were going to be their lot. God's wrath and hatred were going to fall upon the human race. Now what God gives to those not chosen in Christ and redeemed by His blood is not given in grace but in His providence. He provides these earthly things which man's flesh enjoys. The ungodly do not (even though they still must) sing: "All that I am, I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, has fashioned me." But they cannot and do not continue and sing: "I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze."

Instead the unbeliever only adds to his sins in the measure that God in His providence gives him these earthly gifts. The awe-

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some truth which we ought not to overlook is that the unbeliever — if the mere giving of an object one's flesh enjoys is a gracious act — would be dealt with much more graciously by keeping these things from him, so that he does not add to his sins and earn a greater misery and punishment in the lack of fire! Do not forget that the more sins the world commits, the greater its punishment is going to be. And the more earthly goods man gets, the more rain and sunshine, life and health his flesh enjoys, the more he sins by not using these in the fear of God's name and in walking in His law. And surely the child of the world that dies the day it is born, and does not enjoy that rain and sunshine and earthly goods, is not going to be put as deeply into hell as those who have sinned for fourscore years with an abundance of God's goods that they misused, rather than received in the consciousness that these are God's, and rather than serving Him therewith.

Then too, if health, possessions, pleasures for the flesh, and the like are gifts of a common grace, we must, to be consistent, say that God's grace rests upon the devil and fallen angels who are not yet in hell. Satan has been given a long life and never had to submit to surgery, or had a headache. If we call it common grace when God provides the things our flesh likes to men in common, even though they must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and have it revealed how they used these gifts, we must call it God's grace also when we speak of what He provided the devil with these 6,000 years. If it were a common grace, when God provides those for whom Christ did not die with what they enjoyed in this life, but also enjoyed for their flesh instead of God's glory and service,

then not only was it a temporary grace of an eternal God Who never changes; but it would be far more gracious to keep from them that which they are going to use sinfully and thereby reap for themselves greater punishment.

At this time, however, we will consider the work of Satan and of fallen man as a shadow of the greater evil which came after that temptation of Adam. Satan's tempting of Adam and Eve was a shadow of what he did to Christ when Satan got fallen men to nail Him to His cross. Likewise it is a shadow of what he will do when the climax of sin is here in the days of the antichrist. When flying in that tremendously huge B747, that carries more than 300 passengers, and a tremendous amount of luggage, you see from a certain altitude its shadow which may be only a few feet in length. The closer that jet gets to the ground, however, the larger that shadow becomes. Similarly the closer we come to the day of the antichrist the bigger the shadow of his coming will be seen. That shadow of the cross and of the antichrist did not look to be so big when Satan tempted Adam; but it surely was a shadow of the cross and of the antichrist. In II Thessalonians 2:3 Paul calls the antichrist the *man* of sin. In a sense we can say that Adam was the babe of sin. Later on the children of sin dwelt on this earth. And as the world today is developing in sin the *man* of sin is a short time ahead of us. The so-called common grace is not slowing down his coming or preventing it. Adam's sin, as we hope to point out next time, brought forth the cross. Man was not restrained from developing in sin by a common grace; but in God's appointed time he was

ready, and set forth his hand to kill the God that created him when He came in our flesh! And more devilishness is coming. For, as we read in II Thessalonians 2:4, man will exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Although Satan's tempting of man was a shadow of the cross of Christ that came about 4,000 years later, he at that time had no conscious intention of crucifying the Son of God in our flesh. He did not know that God would come in our flesh. He did not know God's counsel. He did not know that his evil intent and act of bringing man into sin was in that counsel. And for a short while he thought that he had the victory over God Who had created man holy and in His own image. That very day, however, God came and told him that his head was going to be crushed and that God was going to restore love toward Himself in man, so that there would be enmity between the elect and the devil and his seed. His success in getting Adam to fall was not a shadow of a victory that he ultimately would seem to get through the coming antichrist. No, as we have already seen and considered, God was on the way, and using this godless devil, to bring forth the new creation wherein man is like unto the Son of God in our flesh, and able to praise and glorify God much more highly and enthusiastically than Adam and Eve could the day that they were created.

It is true that Satan knew many things about God and about His Christ. He has listened very carefully to what God said to His people directly and through the prophets. He knows God's Word better than we do; and he is in many ways trying to

corrupt that Word by translations as well as by corrupt preaching. His lie to Eve was a shadow of the lie as it is universally taught and believed in the various idolatries and false religions today. And he is THE unbeliever who in his unbelief thinks that the Seed of the Woman is not going to crush his head, but that he can drag man even more deeply into hatred against God and destroy the whole church of Christ when he produces that man of sin.

As soon as he learned that Mary was going to bring forth the Savior, he certainly wanted to cause a miscarriage to take place, but he could not. He tried to have Herod kill the Christ Child but failed. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness, still thinking that he could get the victory. And we can believe that he laughed when he succeeded in getting Judas Iscariot, the unbelieving Jews, and Pilate to nail Jesus to His cross. He is a creature limited by time and space and completely dependent upon God, even though he wants us to believe that there is no God, and has gotten a goodly portion of the human race to be evolutionists and unbelievers. Hating God, he fights against Him

with all his strength and will; and he still foolishly thinks that he can ruin the church of Christ and keep the kingdom of heaven from coming. His tempting of man was a shadow of all the devilry he is still performing to establish the kingdom of the antichrist, which is a kingdom against Christ. Hating God, he can do nothing but oppose Christ and His holy kingdom.

Remember that the psalmist says that the fool says in his heart that there is no God, Psalm 14:1. And Satan is the fool of all fools. He is the fool who succeeded in making other angels fools, and then brought man, who was made in God's image, to become a fool. And all the folly in this world, all the denying of God and opposing of His holy will comes out of that first attack of Satan upon righteous and holy Adam and Eve. He succeeded in getting them to say by their actions that God cannot tell them what to do, and that He must take a back seat and serve them, rather than that they look up to Him and serve Him.

Seeing that shadow there in the garden of Eden we can by God's grace see some dark and evil days ahead. As soon as a seed sprouts and sends forth a lit-

tle shoot, it produces a little shadow. As the tree grows its shadow becomes bigger and bigger. And we do today see a far greater shadow than that caused by man doing that simple act of taking a forbidden piece of fruit and eating it in rebellion against God. And we ought not close our eyes or look the other way. When today we see the sins which children commit, and when we see how the world enjoys watching sins committed on their TV programs and in theatres, not simply fornication and murder, but also dishonoring those in authority over us, thefts in abundance, and covetousness, we ought to see this shadow of the coming man of sin, but also of God's visitation, when the seed of the serpent is cast into everlasting punishment. Let the widespread AIDS remind us of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let these shadows warn us of that which casts them into hell. For God's dealing with the ungodly also casts the shadow of the coming judgment day. And we had better remember that and strive with all our body and soul to let Christ's walk of life be a shadow of what we will by God's grace do in the new Jerusalem. □

Bible Study Guide

Jason L. Kortering

Joshua — Receiving The Promised Land (2)

Jason L. Kortering is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan.

Since we expressed agreement with the idea that Joshua begins a new section in the Hebrew Bible which is entitled *The Former*

Prophets, we at the same time reject the idea that it belongs to the Pentateuch as part of that history. In the Pentateuch, God

instructed Israel, both by law and through the historical events, concerning His covenant promise to be their God. The focal point of this revelation was the land of Canaan. Now in the Book of Joshua we have the details given to us how God fulfilled this promise and how they actually took residence in the promised land.

AUTHOR AND DATE

The book is entitled *Joshua*, and is derived from the different Hebrew forms of that name, Deut. 3:21, Joshua 1:1, Deut. 32:44, Nehemiah 8:17. The Septuagint uses *Joshua the son of Nun*, and the Latin Vulgate designates it as the *Book of Joshua*. The meaning of the name Joshua is simply *Jehovah saves*, or *Jehovah is salvation*. It is then the Hebrew form of the Greek name, Jesus.

The title does not, however, verify authorship. There is much discussion as to who actually wrote this book. This applies not only to the liberal higher critics, but also to those who carry on the more traditional, conservative research into these matters. M.F. Unger, in his work, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*, expresses best the considerations that enter here. We will summarize them as follows:

1. Nowhere does the book itself say that Joshua wrote it. It is not that simple. There is a clue within the book that part of the book may have been composed by Joshua. This is in connection with the great event at Shechem where Joshua challenged Israel to "choose this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," (24:15). We then read, "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the

sanctuary of the Lord," Joshua 24:26. Another indication that a book was kept for reference is in chapter 18:9: "And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh." This refers to the survey that was made of the land of Canaan prior to its being divided into tribes.

2. The contents of the book indicate that large parts were written by an eye-witness to the events. Examples of this are the following: the events connected with the entrance into the land, fear of the Canaanites, circumcision at Gilgal (chapter 5), sending out of the spies (chapter 2), crossing the Jordan (chapter 3), capture of Jericho and Ai (chapters 6-8), league with the Gibeonites (chapter 9), victory at Gibeon (chapter 10), and so on. Because these are described in such detail, ancient and modern Jewish authorities ascribed the book to Joshua himself.

The issue of authorship is not critical. Our acceptance of the divine inspiration of the Bible precludes the necessity of knowing the author. We do not have to know the author in order to accept this writing as part of the infallible Bible. Investigative labors to seek to determine the author are interesting and informative, but not crucial. We simply cannot determine accurately whether Joshua wrote the book or not.

Another consideration enters into the picture, and that is the time factor. Can we gain any ideas as to when the book might have been written? Here, too, modern critics place its writing piece-meal, culminating at a very late date, after the exile in Babylon. However, careful examination of the book itself would lead one to conclude that it was written much earlier. The account of the salvation of the

harlot Rahab concludes: "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel, even unto this day," (6:25). We have a similar reference (in 15:63) to the Jebusites dwelling with Judah at Jerusalem, and they were not expelled until the 7th or 8th year of David's reign. In Joshua 18:16, 28, Jerusalem is not considered the capital of Israel (it is called by the old name, Jebus). Other Canaanite cities are mentioned by their archaic names, e.g. Baalah, later Kirjath-jearim (15:9), Kirjath-sannah, later Debir (15:49), Kirjath-arba, later Hebron (15:9). The Gibeonites were still "hewers of wood and drawers of water" around the tabernacle, while in the days of Saul they suffered massacre and this changed, II Sam. 21:1-9.

Besides this, there are also indications that the book goes beyond the immediate history of Joshua's lifetime. We have the account of his death (24:29, 30). Reference is made to the people serving Jehovah all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua (24:31). The book includes a few events that apparently occurred after the death of Joshua, but early in the period of the Judges, such as Caleb's conquest of Hebron, Othniel's capture of Kirjath-sepher (15:13-17 and Judges 1:9-13), the transmigration of the Danites to the north (19:47 and Judges 18:27-29). Reference to the book of Jasher (10:13) does not indicate that it was written during David's time (see II Sam. 1:18), since we do not know enough about this book to limit it to any specific period.

We conclude from this that the book was in all likelihood written in part by Joshua and by another, begun during the life of Joshua about 1300 B.C. and extending to the period of the Judges.

THE MESSAGE

The title of this book is named after the main character referred to throughout, viz. Joshua, the son of Nun. He accompanied Moses throughout the forty years of the wilderness sojourn. He was with Moses in the Holy Mount (Ex. 24:13), was one of the twelve spies sent to Canaan (Num. 13:8, 16), succeeded Moses at the border of Canaan (Deut. 34:9), spent about six years subduing the land, and the rest of his life governing the people who had settled in the promised land. He died at 110 years of age and was buried at Timnath-serah, in Ephraim (Joshua 24:29-33).

This is not to say that this book extols human effort in the history of Israel. R.K. Harrison makes this point in his book, *Introduction to the Old Testament*:

"Joshua is not so much a tribute to such matters as military skill or human enthusiasm as it is to the mighty acts of God Himself. The injunctions of Deuteronomy (1:17ff, 4:1ff, 7:1ff) set the alternatives of life and death before the Israelites, and furnished the moral energy for the initial conquests (Joshua 1:1ff.). While Joshua was rightly celebrated for his leadership and general powers of coordination, the narrative makes it clear that, in light of the Covenant provisions, the true glory must be given to God alone (cf. Josh. 3:10, 4:23ff; 6:16, et al).

*Give a gift of
the Standard
Bearer to a
friend or loved
one today.*

Though this covers a period of history from the entrance into the land of Canaan until the death of Joshua, we do well to remind ourselves that this is not only a record of historical events. It is a record of sacred events. This is revelational history. The events themselves contain God's message to His people. Even as God delivered His people out of the land of Egypt (the negative side of salvation — we are taken out of sin and death through the blood of Jesus Christ), so now we see that He takes them safely to Canaan and gives them rest (the positive side of salvation — conformity with the law of God and spiritual peace with God for time and eternity).

We must see a parallel here between the earthly Canaan and the heavenly. Did not Abraham already by faith seek the heavenly (Hebrews 11:9)? Here God realizes his promise in its typical form. Israel literally received the land as an inheritance. They did not purchase it, they did not fight for it. They received it as a gift from heaven, by free and sovereign grace. The crossing of the River Jordan demonstrated that they received it only through the washing of the blood of Jesus. The fall of Jericho and the conquest of the land demonstrated that God gave them the victory. It was a gift of grace, for time and again the people proved that they were terribly unworthy. Their portion was determined by the casting of the "lot". God determined their inheritance.

Thus it is for us, who as pilgrims and strangers, set our hearts upon the heavenly Canaan. We too shall prevail over all our mortal enemies, the devil, this world, even our own flesh, by the wonder of the blood and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our inheritance in the new heavens and earth will be given to us as a gift of free grace alone. By faith we press on toward that day, while we yet redeem the time (for the days are evil) and take with us the entire creation, to yield ourselves servants unto righteousness in the everlasting kingdom.

A BRIEF OUTLINE

The book of Joshua falls quite naturally into three main parts. The first describes the entrance into the land and the conquest of all its parts (1:1-12:24). The second describes how the land was divided and includes the cities of refuge and Levitical towns (13:1-22:34). The final part deals with Joshua's farewell address and death (23:1-24:33).

The entrance into and conquest of the land of Canaan (1:1-12:24). The first thing recorded is how God spoke to Joshua and confirmed for him that He gave to Israel all the land promised to Moses, from Egypt even unto the river Euphrates. He assures him that He will be with him and that he is to be strong and courageous and observe the law which God gave to him. We are to keep it and in that way to be of good courage for, "the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest," (1:1-9). □

Taking Heed To The Doctrine

Ronald H. Hanko

The Two Natures of Christ: The Humanity of Christ

4. The significance of Christ's humanity.

In speaking of the two natures of Christ, it must be very clear that the confession that He is true man is not of lesser significance than the truth that He is God. The fact of the matter is not that the deity of Christ is of primary importance, and the humanity of Christ of secondary importance, but that both are essential to our confession and our salvation. So too, the Church has always recognized this and held that the humanity of Christ is as precious and necessary to her as the truth that He is God's Son. Already in the early history of the church we find the confession that "it is necessary to everlasting salvation that (we) also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the

right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man" (*Athanasian Creed*, 29, 30). The Belgic Confession also echoes this when it insists that "our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of His body" (Art. XIX).

This confession of the Church is even more remarkable in the face of the present tendency to emphasize the humanity of Christ at the expense of His deity. That the church has not abandoned her confession of the true humanity of Christ when faced with a constant denial of His divinity can only be ascribed to the fact that Scripture speaks so clearly of the humanity of Christ and its importance for our faith. Never does the confession that Jesus is God stand alone in Scripture, but it is always joined to the confession that He is also bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. This is especially striking in the Gospel and Epistles of John, where it is especially the divinity of Christ that is being defended. We would expect, for example, that in the statements John makes in I John about antichrist and the spirit of antichrist, he would say that the characteristic teaching of antichrist is a denial of Christ's divinity, but it is not

so. Rather, in I John 4:2, 3, he insists that the mark of antichrist is the denial that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Along the same lines Scripture insists in other passages that the essence of faith in Him is not so much the confession that He is the Son of God, but that He is the Christ, that is, the Son of God incarnate (cf. Matt. 16:16, Jn. 20:31, I Jn. 2:22, 5:1, etc.). For this reason also the great question according to which we are judged is always, "What think ye of the Christ?" not "Do you believe that Jesus is God?"

Because of the one-sided emphasis on the humanity of Christ that is so popular today, it is absolutely necessary that the church remember the importance and significance of this truth. She must never over-react to this one-sidedness by de-emphasizing or neglecting the truth that Christ is true and real man. That this can happen is evident in Roman Catholicism. For one reason and another, and in spite of the fact that Christ's humanity is still very much a part of her official confession, she has lost sight of this truth in her teaching to the extent that she has needed and substituted other mediators instead of Him.

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There is also another reason, however, why the current emphasis on the humanity of Christ may not lull the church into a sense of false security, that is, that much of the emphasis on Christ's humanity today is not really the teaching of this important truth. Berkhouwer points this out:

Does not everyone today accept — barring now a few radical exceptions — that there has been a real Jesus of Nazareth and must we not devote all our attention to those doctrines which deny that this man Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father? The question as it is thus formulated in the church tends to weaken the urgency of our warning against the Docetic danger (the denial of Christ's real humanity, R.H.). One must not think that the acknowledgment of the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth is identical with the confession of the church touching the human nature of Christ. The acknowledgment of his historicity is not half of the Christological dogma. The point of this dogma is not that there was a historical person, one of whom it is believed on historical grounds that he really lived, but the issue is the significance of the teaching that he was true God and true man in the unity of the person. For this reason, despite the practically general agreement on the historicity of Jesus, the confession of the church regarding the human nature of Christ remains of critical importance (The Person of Christ, p. 198).

Perhaps the clearest evidence of this danger is the fact that most Jews today do indeed accept the historical fact that there was a man Jesus, but this, of course, in no wise means that they believe in Him. No more than with the Jews, does all the current talk of Christ's humanity mean that the church actually believes in Him. It is very much possible to speak of a genuine human nature while detracting from or denying His humanity.

The significance and necessity of Christ's humanity is of such importance because it is inseparably connected with our salvation. The simple fact is, as the Belgic Confession points out, that our salvation depends on the reality of His humanity (Art.

XIX). If He is not man, there is no salvation for us. The Heidelberg Catechism explains why this is so by showing that He must be man to pay for man's sin. For any other creature to suffer in our place would be a travesty of justice on the part of God Himself. That, of course, is the reason too why the oceans of blood shed in the Old Testament sacrifices not only did not, but could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). The necessity of His humanity is to be found, then, in the fact of sin and the fall.

Now, as H. Hoeksema explains in his *Reformed Dogmatics*,

It is possible . . . to view this necessity from a different aspect, and to consider it from a higher, theological point of view. The ultimate reason for all the necessity, for every "must", is the eternal counsel and good pleasure of God. It was God's eternal purpose that in Christ as the incarnate, crucified, raised, and glorified Son of God all the fullness of God should dwell bodily. The incarnation, therefore, is not an afterthought of God, so that Christ is appointed only to repair what has been marred and destroyed by sin and by the devil; but it is God's first and final purpose to reveal His glory in Christ. He purposed to reveal Himself and to realize His everlasting covenant, and thus to glorify His holy name, in the highest possible degree. And this revelation is to be realized in Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, crucified and risen from the dead. Thus it is in God's good pleasure. And it is for this reason that Christ is called the firstborn of every creature, that is, the firstborn in and according to the counsel of God, for Whom and through and unto Whom all things are created. If we consider the necessity of the incarnation from this higher viewpoint, even sin and death, the devil and all the powers of darkness are but a means unto an end. They are subservient to God's purpose of bringing His Son into the world and of realizing in and through Him all His good pleasure.

This view of the relationship between Christ and sin in the counsel of God has been known as "supralapsarianism," and in light of such passages as Colossians 1:15-17 it is difficult, at best,

to deny that according to this supralapsarian conception, Christ is indeed first and foremost in the counsel of God, even in relation to sin. Nevertheless, there is always the danger in this supralapsarian position that the reality and horror of sin be under-emphasized by speaking of it only as a means to reveal Christ, and that danger is also, obviously, a very practical danger, a kind of implicit anti-nomianism. The fact is, that alongside the Biblical emphasis on the primacy of Christ in the counsel of God, Scripture teaches that historically, that is, from our viewpoint, there is but one reason for the incarnation, and that is the horrible reality of sin. All that Scripture teaches about the relation of the incarnation and sin can be summed up in the words of Hebrews 2:17, that "it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren . . . to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." We must at this point also, therefore, avoid idle speculation, that is, speculation beyond the teaching of Scripture, and find the necessity and significances of the incarnation first of all in the coming of sin into the world.

It should also be pointed out that not only our redemption from the guilt of sin depends on the humanity of Christ, but the whole of our salvation. He is man not only to die for man's sin, but also to be a capable intercessor for us, to be able to help us in our temptation (Heb. 2:18), to be sympathetic to our needs as High Priest that we might approach the throne of grace through Him (Heb. 4:14-16), and to give up hope in Him both now and for the judgment. The Heidelberg Catechism gives us a good example of this truth, when it points out that His presence in heaven means that we have *our flesh* in heaven as sure pledge that He will also take us there to be with

Him (XVIII, 49). Not only as our "sacrificing" High Priest, therefore, but also as our heavenly High Priest, as the one who has gone behind the veil, He must be one "taken from among men" (Heb. 5:1).

That a loss of this doctrine either by denial or by neglect is to the spiritual harm of the people of God is evident from Roman Catholicism, which has substituted the intercession of saints and angels for the inter-

cession of Christ, and so left the church without access to God. It is also evident from the early history of the church in its struggles with Gnosticism, and its denial of the reality of Christ's humanity. It also was forced into substituting other mediators for Christ and teaching a worship of angels, which teaching Paul excoriates in Colossians 2:18 as a denial of Christ's Headship.

In holding to a strict and careful confession of the humani-

ty of Christ, then, we find the hope of salvation, the assurance of pardon, and access to the Father in Him. "To what purpose," as the Belgic Confession says, "should we then seek another advocate" or be afraid to come to God and hope in God through Him, "since it hath pleased God to give us His own Son?" (Art. XXVI) Truly, "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II Jn. 9). □

Decency and Order

Ronald L. Cammenga

Calling Ministers Already In Office

"Ministers already in the ministry of the Word, who are called to another congregation, shall likewise be called in the aforesaid manner by the consistory and the deacons, with observance of the regulations made for the purpose by the consistory and of the general ecclesiastical ordinances for the eligibility of those who have served outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches and for the repeated calling of the same minister during the same vacancy; further, with the advice of the classis or the counselor, appointed by the classis, and with the approval of the classis or of the delegates appointed by the classis, to whom the ministers called show good ecclesiastical testimonials of doctrine and life, with the approval of the members of the calling congregation, as stated in Article 4; whereupon the minister called shall be installed with appropriate stipulations and prayers agreeably to the form for this purpose." Church Order, Article 5.

Article 5 of the *Church Order* deals with the calling of ministers who are already serving in office.

Although ordinarily the minister is called for life, Reformed church polity recognizes that it is possible for a man's labors to be terminated in a particular congregation. This may be done in several ways. This may be done by deposition from office, Articles 79, 80. This may be done by dismissal from service, Article 11. This may be done by release from office in order "to enter upon a secular vocation," Article 12. This may also be done by a minister's accepting a call to another congregation.

This fifth article has been revised because the original article allowed wrongful interference in the matter of the calling of ministers on the part of the civil magistrate. The original article called for the presentation of the

"Ministerial Certificate Of Dismissal And Testimonial" not only to the classis, but also required "... approval by the magistrate of the respective district." In connection with the installation of a minister who had accepted a call to a new congregation, it was stated at the end of the article, "... to which (installation) the civil authorities and the Synods of the respective districts are to give careful attention, and make proper regulations to the welfare of the churches." This wrongful interference by the civil authorities has been eliminated by revision of the article.

ISSUING OF CALLS

The article prescribes that "ministers already in the ministry of the Word, who are called to another congregation, shall like-

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wise be called in the aforesaid manner” The “aforesaid manner” is the method laid down in Article 4 in connection with the calling of candidates. This method of issuing a call includes:

1) The formation of a slate of nominees, usually a trio, which slate is approved by the moderator.

2) Approbation of the trio by way of public announcement on at least two successive Sundays.

3) A lawful election, the call being issued to the man receiving the majority of the votes cast.

Usually calls are extended only to those who are ministers in our Protestant Reformed denomination. This, however, has not always been the case in the past. Article 5 does allow for the calling of ministers outside of our denomination. The article states: “. . . with observance of the regulations made . . . for the eligibility of those who have served outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches” In actual practice this has been done twice in the history of our churches. The Protestant Reformed Church of Oskaloosa, Iowa, extended a call to the Rev. P. De Koekkoek, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Oskaloosa. The Roosevelt Park Protestant Reformed Church once issued a call to the Rev. J. De Haan, Jr., also a minister in the Christian Reformed Church. Both calls were declined.

Our churches have no clear-cut rules for calling ministers outside of our denomination. However, should such a call be accepted, the minister accepting the call would undoubtedly be required to submit to a “colloquium doctum.” “Colloquium doctum” is a Latin phrase which means “a doctrinal conference or conversation.” Such a “colloquium doc-

tum” would be conducted by the classis in which the congregation issuing the call resides, in the presence of the synodical delegates *ad examina*. The purpose of the “colloquium doctum” is to examine the brother involved as far as his doctrinal soundness and his spiritual qualifications for the ministry, as well as to discern his agreement with our denominational distinctives. Successful completion of the “colloquium doctum” would be necessary before he could be installed into office.

In my judgment, the calling of men outside the federation of our churches is unwise and dangerous. It seems to me that this ought only to be done under very compelling circumstances. A congregation which does this ought to give account of its reasons for doing so to the classis. Far better would it be for a minister from outside our denomination to become a member of our churches, be examined for candidacy by one of our classes, and be declared eligible for a call within the churches. It might also be advisable for those coming from outside the denomination to attend our seminary for a time.

ISSUING CALLS A SPIRITUAL MATTER

This whole matter of issuing a call must be a deeply spiritual matter. There are many evils connected with the calling of ministers in our day. Ministers may be guilty of wrongfully soliciting calls. Congregations and consistories may be guilty of extending calls for the wrong reasons. These sorts of practices will never carry away the blessing of God.

One practice that tends to threaten the serious, spiritual nature of calling a minister is the practice of vacant congregations soliciting applicants for the available position. Many religious

magazines today carry advertisements of this nature. This is a practice long condemned by Reformed churches. It is a practice that tends to threaten the spiritual nature of the calling of a minister and reduces the calling of a minister to the hiring of an employee by some large industrial firm.

A couple of practical points in connection with calling ministers are worth mentioning. The practice of informing men that they are on nomination, and phoning the one elected after the congregational meeting, are worthy practices. A minister to whom a call has been extended should acknowledge the receipt of the call to the congregation which has called him in writing, at the same time, if possible, informing them when they may expect an answer to their call. In the calling of a minister, a consistory is to make use of the adopted “Call Letter” in use in our churches. This “Call Letter” is to be signed by all the consistory members, as well as by the moderator.

CONSIDERATION OF CALLS

The question is often asked whether a minister must receive permission from his consistory to consider a call, to accept a call, or both. Undoubtedly the correct answer is both, although when a consistory grants permission to its pastor to consider a call, it is implicitly granting him the right to accept the call.

The important point is that the minister ought to receive permission from his consistory even to consider a call. The elders have supervision over the minister also, especially in matters that concern his official work in the congregation. There may be weighty reasons on account of which it is not even wise for a

consistory to allow its minister to consider a call. There may be problems in the congregation directly involving the minister, problems that must be cleared up before the minister can be permitted to leave the congregation. Or there may be difficulties within the congregation that simply demand the presence and guidance of the minister. If there would arise a difference between a minister and his consistory regarding the consideration of a call, this difference would have to be submitted for resolution to the classis.

Ordinarily the length of time for the consideration of calls is three weeks. The length of time is longer for candidates, because they are faced with the prospect of several calls in quick succession. They will need more time to evaluate the needs of each congregation calling them. Candidates are given six weeks to consider calls.

Although our churches have no specific rule about this, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church has adopted the regulation that ministers shall be given a period of three weeks for the consideration of a call, *CRC Acts Of Synod 1916*, p. 26.

There is always the question concerning the time when the three weeks begin. Some take the position that it begins when the minister is first informed that he has received the call. Others take the position that it begins after he has received the "Call Letter." Still others take the position that it begins after the minister has received permission from his consistory to consider the call.

Although the normal length of time for the consideration of a call is three weeks, a minister may ask for and receive an extension from the calling consistory. This should be a short

and definite (not open-ended) period of time. If after an extension the minister is unable to decide the call, the calling consistory may revoke the call and issue a new call.

CONSIDERATION OF CALLS A SPIRITUAL MATTER

Not only for the congregation issuing the call, but for the minister considering the call, the matter of deciding a call must be a deeply spiritual matter.

It is very easy for a minister to allow carnal considerations to enter into the matter of a call. A minister may simply feel "burned out" in his present charge and be hankering for a change. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. One may consider a call from the point of view of personal gain and honor. There is always the lure of a larger salary, a more prestigious congregation, a larger parsonage, a nicer geographic location. A minister may be lazy, and eagerly avail himself of the opportunity of a new charge, so that he can "turn the pile over."

The minister must exert himself to make his consideration of calls a spiritual matter. Through prayer and meditation, he must seek to know (and in this way he *will* know) the will of God with respect to each call. That will of God must be the only consideration in his treatment of a call. This is not to say that circumstances do not enter in. Often God makes His will known through existing circumstances. But circumstances ALONE must not be decisive.

As he considers a call, the minister ought to solicit the judgment of the consistory and the members of the congregation with respect to the call. The members of the congregation ought to feel free to express themselves to the pastor and ought to remember him in their prayers as he considers a call.

ACCEPTANCE OF CALLS

When a minister accepts a call to a new congregation, he informs this congregation in writing, usually by way of a letter that can be read to the congregation from the pulpit. He also informs his own congregation, either by way of a bulletin announcement, or more appropriately by way of an announcement from the pulpit. It is wise for the minister to keep his decision confidential until the time it is publicly announced in the respective congregations. It is also wise that consistories that have extended calls not open ministers' responses until in the consistory room immediately prior to the worship service at which the decision is to be announced. This will avoid the spreading of any rumors.

The minister who has accepted a call to another congregation is to be presented with a "Ministerial Certificate Of Dismissal And Testimonial" by the consistory he is leaving. Without this certificate, and if this certificate is not in order, the man cannot be installed in his new charge. The certificate of testimonial serves as evidence that the minister has faithfully served his previous congregation. And the certificate of testimonial serves as evidence that the consistory of his previous charge acquiesces in his decision to terminate his labors in that congregation.

Article 5 speaks of the "... approval of the classis or of the delegates appointed by the classis, to whom the ministers called show good ecclesiastical testimonials of doctrine and life" The "Ministerial Certificate Of Dismissal And Testimonial" is to be reviewed and approved by the classis from which the minister is departing

and the classis which he is entering. If the classis is not in session, the certificate must be approved by the classical committee. Each classis has its own classical committee. The duty of this committee is to discharge necessary classical business in the interim between the meetings of classis. This classical committee is usually made up of three ministers.

After accepting a call, the minister is to be "... installed with appropriate stipulations and prayers agreeably to the form for this purpose." There is a difference between "ordination" and "installation." Those entering the office for the first time are ordained into office. Ministers taking up labors in a new charge are installed into office. A minister is ordained only once because ordination to the office of the ministry is for life.

DECISIONS APPENDED TO ARTICLE 5

Consistories of vacant churches shall not place on nomination names of such ministers who have not yet served their present congregations two years, unless there be preponderant considerations; and a counselor who deems it his calling to approve in the name of classis such a nomination shall be required to give an account of his reasons to classis.

The above rule is not inviolable. There may be instances when for weighty reasons a consistory places a name on nomination of one who has served his present congregation for less than two years. This is a matter that concerns the autonomy of the local congregation. From a certain point of view, every minister in good standing in the denomination is always eligible for call.

There is, however, practical wisdom in the general rule. In the main, short pastorates are detrimental to the churches and to the ministers themselves. It takes time for a minister to become acquainted with his congregation. It is virtually impossible to do any constructive work in a congregation in less than two or three years.

A minister shall not be called more than once within a year by the same vacant church without advice of classis.

Once again, a general but not inviolable rule is laid down. Originally the practice was that a minister could not be called twice without an interim call being issued to another man. Two successive calls to the same man were forbidden.

The reason for this decision lies in the serious nature of a call. It is only after careful, prayerful consideration that a minister declines a call that has been extended to him. It is not likely that circumstances will be so altered within a year's time as to justify a change in his decision or in the will of God. Nor must a minister be wearied by incessant calls from the same congregation.

In case of difference of opinion between a counselor and a consistory regarding the legality of a call, the consistory shall not proceed without the consent of classis.

This decision is self-explanatory. It outlines the way in which differences between the moderator and the consistory with regard to a call are to be resolved.

When a minister shall accept a call to another congregation before he has served his present congregation two full years, the congregation to which he moves shall repay one-half of the moving expenses, incurred at the time of securing him by the congregation he is vacating.

Ordinarily the congregation whose call has been accepted is responsible for the moving expenses of their new pastor. If a minister accepts a call without having fulfilled the two year minimum, compensation must be made to the congregation he is departing. The rule in the Christian Reformed Church is as follows:

If a minister leaves a church within a year, the calling church shall refund the church he leaves expenses in full; if he leaves within two years, three-fourths; if within three years, one-half; if within four years, one-fourth of his moving expenses . . . (CRC Acts Of Synod 1966, p. 88).

The rule in our churches is that if the minister is called prior to the two year minimum, one-half of the original moving expenses are to be paid. □

Take the time to read and study the Standard Bearer. It is an excellent source of devotional reading material for your daily use.

News From Our Churches

Ben Wigger

May 15, 1988

The P.R.C. in Holland, Michigan has made a new trio consisting of the Reverends M. Joostens, M. Kamps and R. Van Overloop.

Rev. Houck, home missionary in Modesto, Calif., is being treated with medication for his heart condition. It is hoped that this will lower his cholesterol and open the arteries. He is also on a strict diet and exercise program. Their son, Jeremy, due to much pollen in the air, is again having problems with his kidneys. A high dosage of cortisone is necessary, which causes him to retain fat and raise the cholesterol level in his blood. He is on the same diet as his father, which they hope will bring his level down.

Our Northwest Chicago Mission has some very encouraging new

interest. Four new families are attending regularly. Pastor Van Overloop also writes that the group in the N.W. Chicago Mission invited local residents to a series of special worship services during the month of April. One of these "special" services was conducted by Rev. Key, pastor of the Southeast P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, Mich. Pastor Key was asked specifically to preach on a text which confronts the subject of Creation vs. Evolution.

There is also some news from Singapore. The second congregation of the E.R.C.S. has been able to purchase an old building which can be renovated and used for a church building. The most interesting part of this news is that they have received approval from the government to use this building for this purpose.

Saturday, April 23, the Evangelism Society, with the help of the Young People and Young Adult Societies of the Southeast P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, Michigan, went door-to-door distributing the pamphlet, "Is the Christian Faith Easy?"

Rev. G. Van Baren was the speaker at the annual Spring Lecture, April 20, sponsored by the area Protestant Reformed Churches. This year's lecture was held at the Hudsonville P.R.C. in Hudsonville, Michigan. Pastor Van Baren spoke on the topic, "Lawlessness: A Sign of the Times."

The Randolph P.R.C. in Randolph, Wis. sponsored a spring

lecture on April 19. Rev. R. Van Overloop was the speaker that evening. He spoke on the topic, "The Reformed Principles of Worship."

The Men's Society of the South Holland P.R.C. in South Holland, Ill. invited their friends and fellow church members to attend a lecture on the evening of April 22. South Holland's pastor, Rev. Engelsma, spoke on the topic, "The Free Offer of the Gospel — Is it Biblical?" This topic was chosen because it is relevant to our own history as churches. Special musical numbers were presented by the school children and by the Choral Society.

The Lynden P.R.C. in Lynden, Wash. sponsored a lecture on April 20 at the Lynden Christian High School. Prof. H. Hanko spoke on the subject "Historic and Reformed Liturgy: Is it Biblical?"

While in Lynden, Prof. Hanko also spoke to the Monday evening catechism classes on "The History of 1953." The consistory also asked him to preach for them on Sunday, April 24. Besides these speaking engagements, Prof. Hanko also spoke on Friday, April 22 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Covenant Christian School.

The consistory of Lynden, in dealing with their over-crowding problems, has appointed a committee to investigate what temporary changes could be made to help their immediate over-

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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crowding problems. This committee was to investigate the availability of other buildings or churches for rent, as well as any possible adjustments with their current building.

The Lord willing, this fall another book will be published which has been written by Rev. G. Lubbers, pastor emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches, under the title "*The Bible vs Millennial Teachings*." You might want to keep this in mind for giving to others, or for yourself. Look for further detailed announcements here or in your church.

The Spring Ladies' League meeting was held April 14 in the Edgerton P.R.C. in Edgerton, Mn. Rev. De Vries spoke on "Bearing one Another's Burdens."

On April 12 the Mr. and Mrs. League Meeting was held at First P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Kortering's speech on "The Office of All Believers" will be followed by a speech in the fall by Prof. Decker on "Ministering to our Ministers." In other words we have a two-part series.

The Ladies Society of Redlands P.R.C. in Redlands, Calif. sponsored a garage sale this spring.

At a meeting back in March, the Adams Street Christian School Society in Grand Rapids, Michigan, approved an extensive expansion and remodeling project for their school. Among the changes approved were the following:

An enlarged library, a larger teacher's lounge that will accommodate the entire staff. A

remedial room set up and used for remedial purposes entirely. An additional classroom in the Junior High area. A gymnasium that allows for proper physical education, band and choir use, and special school events. A long overdue roof to eliminate leaking, new dropped ceiling, lighting, and carpeting in the hallways. It was hoped that these additions and improvements would meet the immediate and short-term needs of the school and satisfy the many concerns of their supporters. □

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland expresses its heartfelt sympathy to our fellow office bearer, Elder Warren Bonzelaar in the passing of his father MR. HAROLD BONZELAAR on Monday, April 11, 1988. May the family find their comfort in the words of Hebrews 11:18 "But now they desire a better country, that is a Heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1988, the Lord willing, MR. & MRS. AL KARSEMEYER will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, are very grateful to our Heavenly Father for blessing them with these years together and for giving us our Christian parents and families.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God which keepeth Covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments." (Deut. 7:9)

Gerald and Pat Schipper

Becky, Jason, Jeremy, Emily

Ed and Jeanne Karsemeyer

Shaun, Renae, Todd

Greg and Elaine Engelsma

Chad, Shannon, Valerie

Al and Carol Karsemeyer

Clint, Ronda, Kirk, Jessica, Troy

Andrew

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1988, the Lord willing, our parents, PROF. & MRS. HERMAN HANKO, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We rejoice with them at this evidence of God's faithfulness and goodness and ask that God will continue to bless them in the years ahead.

Also, we wish to thank them publicly for the years of faithful Christian nurture we received from them and for their love.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them" (Ps. 103:17, 18).

Rev. Ron and Nancy Hanko

Neal and Jeanne Hanko

Rev. Ken and Mary Hanko

Steve and Beverly Hanko

Marcia and Carlyle Miersma

Tim

Sharon

Karen

16 grandchildren