

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Because the perfection of Christ is imputed to us, and because He blotted out all our imperfections, God can and does reach down and bring us into the blessedness of His covenant. He fulfilled our part, and by His Spirit is making us able to walk before God. Some day that work will be finished, and we will be perfect. And then, exactly because of that perfection, we will not say to God, "We did it!" You cannot do that before His face. Instead we will confess that it is His covenant from beginning to end, that a part in it was given us in His grace, and that it is in His grace that we have attained to a perfect keeping of the works of the covenant.

See "The Works of the Covenant" — page 902

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Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. David J. Engelsma,
Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach,
Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Korterling, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, Rev.
George C. Lubbers, Rev. Meindert Joostens, Rev. Marinus Schipper,
Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Mr. Kenneth G. Vink.

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418

Church News Editor: Mr. Kenneth G. Vink
1422 Linwood, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Australian Business Office: Reformed Literature Centre,
P.O. Box 849,
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Queensland, Australia

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
c/o OPC Bookshop,
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MEDITATION

Patient Until the Lord Comes

Rev. M. Schipper

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain.

Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

James 5:7,8.

Be patient therefore, brethren!

That word “therefore” points back to the preceding context, and specifically to the condition wherein the ungodly rich were oppressing the poor.

James had been denouncing the ungodly rich, who were heaping up treasures at the expense of the poor.

And among these poor were the children of God.

No, it was not his intention to condemn the rich per se. James was not a socialist or a communist, fermenting a class struggle, and seeking for equal distribution of the wealth of the world. But he points his finger at ungodly rich men who acquired their wealth by defrauding the poor.

James denounces them for their evil practices. They kept back wages from their laborers. They condemned and killed the just, while they themselves lived in pleasure on the earth.

James warns them that their gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them would witness against them, and would eat up their flesh as it were fire. Says he, Ye have reaped treasure together for the last days. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.

And among these oppressed and defrauded laborers are the children of God who cry unto the Lord Sabaoth.

O, how wonderful are the cries of the harvesters when they are content! But how terrible is their cry when they have been wronged! Though the wicked rich, the fraudulent oppressors choose to ignore these cries, their cry comes into the ears of the Lord, Who will properly deal with the ungodly according to his works, while He will give deliverance to His saints.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord!

The Lord is coming!

And this time He comes, not as the lowly Babe in the manger of Bethlehem, but as the Lord of glory. He is coming as the righteous Judge, Who will set the crooked straight, and Who will reward every man according as his work shall be.

In respect to His coming two things must be borne in mind. In the first place, not at any time will He come, as so many in our day would have us believe; but at a set time which only He knows. Evidently this coming is at the end of the world, when all God's counsel shall have been realized, when all of the church which is to be gathered out of every nation shall have been saved, when all of the precursory signs of His coming shall have been fulfilled. And in the second place, it must also be remembered that He is coming throughout the ages. From the moment Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father He also begins to return. It is therefore for this reason that the apostles could write nearly two thousand years ago that His coming is near, that it is at hand. This is also the viewpoint of James when he says in the latter part of our text, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And this implies that He stands as it were at the door which is ajar, and is about to be opened allowing Him to appear.

Unto this coming of the Lord be patient, brethren!

Nearly all translations follow the King James and say: "Be patient therefore, brethren." Literally, however, according to the original text, the translation should be: "Be longsuffering therefore, brethren." This does not mean that James does not know the

word "patient." Fact of the matter is that in verse 11 James says: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." Here the word is literally "patience." But in our text the word is "longsuffering." It must be pointed out here that, though there is no doubt similarity between these two, there is nevertheless also a marked difference. Patience is a grace that is given unto the child of God according to which he is enabled to bear up under all oppressing circumstances and not succumb. Of the manifestation of this grace, Job is surely a worthy example. You remember how he lost all his children and all his possessions, and, if this were not enough, the Lord made him sick with boils, and so emaciated was he that his bones pricked through his flesh. Under this terrible oppression he bore up. Not once did he give up or succumb to his burdens. He maintained that the Lord gave, and it was His right to take away. He even blessed the Name of the Lord His God. Longsuffering, on the other hand, is that grace according to which the child of God is able to restrain himself over against evil doers who would afflict him, so that he does not seek to retaliate. Longsuffering always stands opposed to wrath and revenge. Remarkably, longsuffering is also an attribute of God, while you never read in Scripture that the Lord is patient. You do read that He is the God of patience, but this means, not that He Himself is patient, but rather that He gives this grace. Undoubtedly the reason why God is not patient is because He is never burdened or oppressed. He is never under adverse circumstances, so that He may or may not succumb under His burdens. But He is longsuffering, which means that He suffers long with respect to the sufferings of His people. Yea, He suffers with them until they are delivered, while He forebears the wicked until they are destroyed.

In respect to the wicked rich who oppress the brethren, they are to be longsuffering. And that means they are not to retaliate, to organize opposing forces to combat them. O, how difficult this is, when you consider that the brethren are to do this in an old nature that always rebels, that refuses to turn the cheek, that always proudly would maintain self. It takes abundant grace not to rebel against the enemies of God and His saints. It takes grace to love your enemies, and to do good to them that despitefully treat you. But that's what Jesus said, didn't He? Love your enemies, and do well to them that despitefully use you! That's what James also means when he exhorts: Be longsuffering therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord!

With a view to that coming of the Lord, be longsuffering, brethren!

If their view is simply toward their wicked persecutors, toward the loss of wages kept back by fraud, toward the hardships imposed upon them by the ungodly, they will not long endure. Their viewpoint

must be directed to the Lord and His coming, and to this end let the brethren be longsuffering.

James is writing to Christian Jews in the dispersion. Because of persecution they had to flee out of Jerusalem, and they scattered into every part of the Roman Empire. But so long as the Lord spared them they had to eat, and to eat they had to hire themselves out for wages. But they were subject to the tender mercies of the wicked which are always cruel. And they cried! No doubt, also to their cruel persecutors, who turned to them a deaf ear. And so their cry ascends to the Lord of heaven Who bought them with His own blood, and promised never to leave or forsake them, — to the Lord Whose alone is the prerogative of righteous vengeance, and Who in His longsuffering over His people forbears the wicked until they have filled the cup of their iniquity in order then to destroy them forever.

But James also writes to the church of all ages, and therefore to the people of God today. To God's people who in general today live in a time of material prosperity — the most dangerous time, from a spiritual point of view, in which to live. When one looks about him, also in respect to the brethren, there is very little suffering. They are not being persecuted for their faith. Fact is, in many respects the world honors them, respects them, allows them to have houses, lands, cars, boats, cottages, vacations with pay, social security, all kinds of insurance, etc. Today they are allowed to join the unions to gain the almighty dollar, to dictate the policies formerly stipulated only by management. Today they may strike, boycott, sit down and refuse to work if they are not happy with their wages or working conditions. Even the government is in cahoots with the whole setup. Fact is, presidential candidates crawl on their knees to gain the popular vote of powerful labor organizations, giving them promises of blessing if they can ride into office. If you are a member of the church, more power to you. That is the general attitude expressed today.

As we said, a most dangerous time is this for the church. When times are prosperous in the material sense, when the child of God is not persecuted, defrauded, and maligned, generally speaking his guard is down, and he is not looking for the coming of the Lord. His religious service is often a mere formality. His walk is often in the world, seeking the pleasures which the world has to offer. His prayer is not: Come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly; but his thought is more than likely, let the Lord tarry longer in His coming.

But, brethren, these times will not continue. Perhaps more quickly than we even like to think, they shall be changed. The experiences of those to whom James writes will be repeated, only with much greater

severity. So severe, says the Word of God, that if God had not shortened the days, even the very elect of God would be lost. We must expect that, and be prepared for that. Then, more than ever — Be longsuffering, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord!

James uses the example of the husbandman, the farmer. He prepares the soil, cultivating and fertilizing it. He plants the seed in season, row upon row, each according to the time of planting. He tenderly watches over that seed, destroying the tares that would choke out its life and growth. Then he waits for the early and the latter rain. In Biblical times the early rain was in October. It prepared the parched ground for plowing and planting. The latter rain came in March or April, just before the crop was ready for harvesting. The latter rain did more for the crop than all the other rains put together. Until he receives the precious fruit, the farmer is longsuffering.

The Lord is the husbandman, par excellence. The children of God are His planting, His precious seed, planted as they are in the world among tares. On that precious seed He sends the showers of His grace and mercy, and the sunshine of His Word and Spirit. And He is longsuffering over us, not willing that any of us should perish, but that all shall come to repentance, unto eternal life, and glory. He suffers long with us while we suffer, until we are ready for harvest.

As He is longsuffering, so must we be by His grace!

This is the exhortation that was necessary for the Hebrew Christians to whom James sends his epistle. They must remember that all the persecutions and sufferings imposed upon them by the ungodly are the Lord's ripening process. They must remember that they suffer the loss of all things, not only because of the wicked, but because they are righteous. Though their cries to those who hired them brought no cure, they must learn to endure. Yea, with longsuffering they must look for the coming of the longsuffering Lord.

And this word must speak to us today!

To us, upon whom the end of the ages has come!

To us, to whom God's Word assures us that our problems will be magnified, whose suffering will be most intense.

Brethren, have no part with the ungodly who would rebel, and who join forces to oppose the oppressor. Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers. But be united in this, namely, that with longsuffering you wait for the coming of the Lord. Stablish your hearts with the firm conviction that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

He will deliver you!

He will take vengeance on your adversaries!

He will preserve His precious fruit!

EDITORIALS

“ An American Translation ”

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

A few months ago I received from Editor Herman Otten, of the conservative Missouri Lutheran paper *Christian News*, a copy of *The Holy Bible, An American Translation*, along with a request for comment. Accompanying this review copy was a special edition of Pastor Otten's paper, *Christian News*, which was entirely devoted to the story of this new translation of Scripture and the story of its translator, the late Dr. William Beck. Although, as most of our readers know, I am firmly committed to the regular use of the King James Version in our churches and in our homes, this does not mean that I have a closed mind with respect to other translations of Holy Scripture. Hence, I also gladly comply with the request for comment on this recent translation.

First of all, let me point out that this translation is the work of a very conservative Missouri Synod Lutheran scholar. He was chiefly a New Testament scholar, but there is no doubt in my mind that he also had to be an Old Testament scholar, in order to produce this work. There is a tremendous amount of careful and painstaking work, involving many years, evidenced in this translation. Permit me to quote a few paragraphs from the special edition of *Christian News*, in order to furnish some information about the translator:

“William F. Beck, Th.D., has spent the major portion of his professional life translating the Bible — meticulously working through original manuscripts and recently discovered papyri, to get the exact meaning from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and the Greek version of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament.

“The New Testament scholar William Arndt, Th.D., translator of Walter Bauer's monumental German classic titled in English, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* wrote of him: ‘Pastor

Beck is a skillful translator. He has studied the Greek language and especially Biblical Greek to such an extent that he can render well the New Testament into good English. His New Testament is a grand piece of work.’

“William Beck received his Th.D. in New Testament Greek from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. For several years he was a guest lecturer at Concordia Seminary in Biblical Interpretation.

“His *The Christ of the Gospels* (1959), a harmony and translation of the four Gospels, was well received by critics and public alike. He is also the author of *We Bring Christ* (1960), seven mission messages to inspire the reader to testify for Christ, and coauthor of a Lenten Sermon volume, *The Crowds Around Calvary* (1960). He has also served as technical advisor on Biblical films.

“Beck completed his translation of the entire Bible shortly before his death some nine years ago. Various editors and language authorities at Concordia and such evangelical Bible scholars as Dr. Elmer Schmick of Gordon Conwell and Dr. Erich Kiehl of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, have carefully gone through Beck's translation of the Old Testament in order to improve it.

“Dr. Beck told the editor of *Christian News* a few weeks before he died that his Old Testament was ready for publication but that he would allow for various improvements in vocabulary and grammar. He did not want anyone to tamper with his translation of the messianic passages in the Old Testament. He feared that some liberal scholars, who accepted a few of the ‘destructive’ theories of historical criticism, would remove the real meaning of the messianic prophecies and make it appear as if these passages did not predict the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. Dr.

Beck insisted that 'my translation or parts of it will be published essentially as found in my manuscripts with possibly only minor changes in vocabulary and grammar. It is of the utmost importance that my translation continue to give a clear testimony that Jesus Christ is God and Lord, the only Savior for men, and that nothing is done which in any way would detract from the basic truth that the Bible is the Word of God in its entirety.'

"The LCMS's Commission on Literature approved the publication of the entire Beck Bible. (The New Testament was published by Concordia Publishing House in 1963 under the title *The New Testament In The Language Of Today*. HCH) Various conventions of the LCMS urged Concordia to publish the Bible and Concordia repeatedly said that it would. However, Concordia has in recent months said it would not publish the translation. The LCMS's 1975 Anaheim Convention declined an overture from Trinity Lutheran Church of New Haven asking the LCMS to direct Concordia to publish the Beck translation.

"The editor of Christian News promised Dr. Beck a few weeks before Dr. Beck died that he would publish the entire Beck translation if Concordia should eventually refuse to publish it."

What may be said about this new translation?

In the first place, the translator certainly succeeded in furnishing a translation in contemporary language. He does not go to extremes, so that the language is crude. But the language is certainly the language of today, and is very understandable. I have one criticism in this regard: I do not believe that even in contemporary English it is proper literary style to employ the many contractions which are used in this translation. This, I believe, is allowable conversational style; but it is not good literary style.

In the second place, Dr. Beck succeeded in preserving the real meaning of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament in his translation, as was his purpose. Whatever else may be said concerning this translation, it is distinct from some of the recent translations and versions of Holy Scripture in this regard. For example, one does not find the truth of the virgin birth eliminated from the well-known messianic prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

However, if this American Translation is intended to be a suitable replacement for the King James Version, then I must object strenuously and for various reasons. I do not like to do so, especially not in view of the current conflict in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. I would prefer to give aid and comfort to the conservatives in that conflict, as over against the so-called moderates (actually liberals), especially in view of the fact that one of the

chief issues in that conflict is that concerning Holy Scripture. Hence, I would prefer to make only favorable remarks concerning this new translation of Scripture because it is being promoted by conservatives in the LCMS. Nevertheless, I would not be honest and straightforward if I withheld my negative comments. Moreover, my negative comments are such that I cannot recommend this new translation as a substitute for the King James Version. I can only recommend it as a study aid which one may add to his library of study aids and which he may consult for comparative purposes.

And what are my reasons?

In the first place, although I will not belabor this point, I want to be counted among those who mourn the introduction of a multiplicity of versions and translations. This is not only because I appreciate the beauty and majesty of our King James Version, although I do. It is not only because I fail to see the need of these new translations in contemporary language, although I do indeed fail to see this. And let me add: I speak from experience in my family and in the church, where I have never encountered any real difficulty with respect to the language of our King James Version. But it is also, and chiefly, because the introduction of a multiplicity of versions and translations destroys all uniformity and creates confusion as far as the Scriptures are concerned. I am thankful that this is not the case in our own churches, and I fervently hope that it never will be the case. But it is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon that one quotes from the King James Version, another quotes from the Revised Standard Version, another quotes from the New International Version, still another quotes from the Living Bible, and yet another from the New English Bible, or from some other contemporary translation. Now we can add another translation to the list. And in another couple of years I suppose another translation or paraphrase will put in an appearance. I have noticed, both in conversation and in reading, that one first must find out which version of the Bible is being used; and in some instances the divergence between versions is so great that one must first settle on the proper rendering of a given text. Theoretically I could conceive, perhaps, of a replacement of the King James Version if at least all those who call themselves conservatives could agree on a good and suitable replacement. But this, it is plain to see, will never be.

In the second place, I call attention to the fact that, even apart from the matter of contemporary language, this translation differs considerably and at many points from the King James Version. In fact, sometimes it differs to such an extent that it can hardly be called a translation, but rather must be classified as a paraphrase or a commentary. And, as

might be expected, such paraphrases, or commentaries, are not entirely accurate; sometimes, in fact, they are downright inaccurate. I could cite numerous examples of this. Let me quote just a few. Genesis 1:2 caught my attention as soon as I opened this new translation. In the King James Version this verse reads: "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 translation under review reads: "There was nothing living on the empty earth, and it was dark on the deep sea, but God's Spirit hovered over the waters." The differences are obvious, and the new translation is, to say the least, questionable. The King James Version renders the well-known words of Psalm 1:6 as follows: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." The Beck translation renders this verse: "You see, the LORD cares about what happens to the righteous, but the wicked go their way and perish." In this case, although the word "cares" expresses an element of the meaning of the text, it does not convey the same meaning as "knoweth," which is undoubtedly the verb that is used in the Hebrew. Again, "what happens to the righteous" is not the same as "the way of the righteous." But the latter is the expression found in the original. Even the well-known words of Psalm 23:1 are changed. The King James Version has, as you know: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." The Beck translation has: "The Lord is my Shepherd — I have everything I need." This change may seem innocent at first glance, but it is not as innocent as it appears. And the simple fact is that "I have everything I need" is not the same as "I shall not want." Examples of this kind could be multiplied. This only goes to show that all change is not improvement.

In the third place, I call special attention to something which I also criticized in the New International Version, namely the substitution of "only" for "only begotten." This is done repeatedly in the Gospel according to John, for example. To call Jesus "the only Son" instead of "the only begotten Son" is both unnecessary and inaccurate. It is unnecessary: for there is nothing difficult to understand about the words "only begotten." It is inaccurate: for the original very definitely has the words "only begotten." And this is an important change. For the simple fact is that our Lord Jesus Christ is not the only son of God, but He is indeed the *only begotten* Son of God.

Finally, I must call attention to a very serious and erroneous Lutheran bias which has crept into this translation. This is not an innocent error, but a deliberate change. It is, in fact, mentioned by the translator in an appendix entitled, "What Does The Text Say?" (pp. 341-344) In this appendix there is a comparison made between the Beck translation and

the RSV and the NEB with respect to various subjects. One of these subjects is "Salvation For All." Under this caption the translator claims that "God wants to save all people," and he takes exception to the fact that the RSV and the NEB speak of people destined to hell. He might also have included here the King James Version. My point is that this translation deliberately changes various passages of Scripture which speak of men as being destined for destruction and which refer to sovereign reprobation — quite in accord with current Lutheran theology, although not in accord with the theology of Martin Luther himself. Let me quote a few passages in which the difference is very plain to anyone who can read and in which the Beck translation makes a deliberate and totally unjustified change.

Romans 9:22, (KJV), "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." (Beck translation), "God wanted to show people His anger and let them know His power, but He waited very patiently before He would punish those who deserved it and had prepared themselves for destruction."

Romans 9:33, (KJV), "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Beck translation), "as the Bible says: I'm putting in Zion a Stone they will stumble over and a Rock they will fall over. But if you believe in Him, you will not be disappointed."

I Peter 2:8, (KJV), "And a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (Beck translation), "a Stone they stumble over and a Rock they fall over. When they disobey the Word, they stumble over it; that's the end appointed for them."

Jude 4 (KJV), "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation . . ." (Beck translation), "There have sneaked in among you some men — sometime ago it was written they must be condemned this way . . ."

It is my contention that the above examples are examples not of legitimate translation but of a deliberate changing of the text which cannot at all be justified in the light of the original.

More could be said and more unjustifiable changes could be mentioned. But the above are sufficient.

In conclusion, therefore, I regret to say that I cannot recommend this new translation. The most I can say is that it might serve some purpose, with very careful use, as a reference work. By no means must it be used as any kind of substitute for our King James Version.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Parental Schools -- How Long Yet?

Rev. G. Van Baren

We have enjoyed our parental schools for the instruction of covenant seed for many years now. We tend to take the opportunity and privilege for granted. We are inclined to tell ourselves that in this "free" land, we need not be concerned about any danger of losing these schools. But are we being too complacent? Ought we not to see the "handwriting on the wall"? One of the signs of the times is that there will be a suppression of that which is spiritual. That suppression can quickly come in our land under the guise of maintaining the "rights" of the citizens. We ought to be aware of the dangers.

There are times when Christian parents become resentful of the fact that the government can tax them for the instruction of children in this land — while at the same time they have to pay well-nigh the full cost of instructing their own children in Christian schools. It seems so unfair. And often one is inclined to propose ways in which the government will be able to assist us in maintaining our own schools. There are those in some Christian school systems who are actively seeking to obtain additional governmental assistance. But all of these efforts, it seems to me, play into the hand of "big government," for it gives the government the opportunity to make restrictions and demands upon these schools which assuredly would be unacceptable to the Christian. It will not be so simple a thing as simply refusing additional governmental assistance — if unwelcome demands accompany assistance. One can not put his head into the mouth of a lion — and believe that he can freely extricate it whenever he feels that the teeth tighten too uncomfortably about the neck.

Several items called to my attention the real threat of governmental restrictions on parental schools. Our own schools have been required to place in their constitutions a non-discrimination clause. At first the requirement was that this non-discrimination must

include race *and* religion. In light of the nature of a Christian school, one could hardly promise non-discrimination in religion. Originally, in order to maintain a tax-exempt status, Covenant Christian High School was requested to include in its constitution that "admission will not be denied on the grounds of religion, creed, race, color or national origin." The society refused to adopt the words "religion and creed" in the statement, though there was not basic objection to the remaining portion of this clause. To the present date, the government has considered this to be acceptable — but the time may soon come when Christian schools are required to accept all, without regard to "creed or religion."

The *Grand Rapids Press* recently reported that the government soon will no longer allow schools, private schools, to exist where members of only one race attend. The idea was that schools which were formed to avoid "integration" would no longer be permitted. The article added that schools established for religious instruction would not be involved. Yet one can see the inevitable. The same government which insists that it is not "right" to separate races in the giving of instruction, can quickly and logically insist that it is not "right" to separate children of differing religions when giving instruction. Many have already suggested that it is the "right" of all children to choose and have the opportunity to choose any religion they wish. This would mean that they can not receive only the type of religious instruction that their parents would have them to receive, but rather they must receive a diverse instruction where the children themselves can choose as they wish.

An article I recently received of a reader from the *National Review* of Feb. 20, 1976, shows further attempts of government to regulate the schools.

The latest fell stroke in the campaign of our federal bureaucracy to de-privatize everything and

everybody is a ukase issued by a female functionary of HEW: a decree that, beginning this term, all universities and colleges that accept students who received grants, scholarships, or loans through the medium of HEW must comply with all sorts of federal regulations — particularly with “Affirmative Action” directives.

Mark you, the independent universities and colleges in question don’t themselves receive grants or loans from the Federal Government: rather, some of their students (perhaps only a handful) are the beneficiaries of HEW largesse. Even so, the “independent” college president is supposed to obey Big Brother, or Big Sister.

In the case of HEW’s latest ploy to control independent colleges, the authority cited is Title 9 of the federal Educational Amendments of 1972. An obscure provision therein is interpreted to mean that, for a beginning, private colleges which accept students with federal benefactions must comply fully with the notions of Affirmative Action — with other Washington controls to follow.

It was only when some colleges, including Hillsdale in Michigan, opposed this decision, that HEW decided to “further study” their directive. The point is that the government has already attempted to enforce regulations on private colleges even though these had not received federal subsidies. The basis of the action was that some students had received some kind of governmental assistance. This sort of thing one can expect to encounter increasingly. The government can use any sort of opening in order to enforce its own regulations on private and Christian schools.

The same article in *National Review* pointed out that in some of the states the control exercised by state government is even more restrictive than that of the national government. It points out the instance of New York State. There is a certain aid paid by the state to participating colleges. But the article points out that in accepting this aid, the “colleges must surrender their birthright. If church-related colleges, they must declare themselves secular colleges henceforth; if Catholic colleges, they must disavow hereafter the word and the belief ‘Catholic.’” The article points out that the following restrictions were laid down for “Catholic” colleges:

1. If religious studies and philosophy courses are included in the core curriculum, the number of credit hours required in these two disciplines cannot be disproportionate to those mandated in other fields.

2. No student may be forced to attend chapel or to enroll in any course in theology.

3. Catalogues, student and faculty handbooks, charters, and other publications by the college must be submitted for review to the state educational functionaries; such publications must not contain any suggestion that the college has religious purposes.

4. The college’s board of trustees must have lay members in the majority, and no fixed number of religious may be specified as members of the board; nor may bishops, superiors of orders, and the like be *ex officio* members of such boards.

5. A team of Protestant theologians is sent to every formerly “Catholic” college that takes Bundy Money, to interview all members of the college’s faculty who teach religion or philosophy. This Protestant team will demand full information about the background of the faculty, about the content of courses, and about all final examinations given. “The team also inspects the library to ascertain if there is a disproportionate number of Catholic books.”

The above does indicate increasing attempts of government to control private and religious schools. No doubt this attempt at control will be a developing sort of thing. We can expect this to be affecting also our schools. We need not think that we will escape. There will be given logical and “constitutional” reasons for making unreasonable and anti-scriptural demands or for closing schools. But the time is coming — and may be very near.

What are we to do? First, we are obviously to be aware of the dangers which threaten. One can not close his eyes to events of our day and pretend that all things continue as they always were. The signs of the times surely will affect the cause of Christian education too.

Secondly, we ought not to give government the occasion to insist that they have the “right” to make unlawful demands upon us because we have willingly received their financial assistance. Repeatedly, government has done this. We must never give the appearance of justification for their unreasonable demands. Of course, eventually government will make its unrighteous demands even without any semblance of justification.

Finally, let us continue faithfully and diligently in the instruction of our covenant seed. The time is short. The opportunities presently enjoyed may shortly be taken from us. Then we are to labor while it is day — knowing that the night is at hand. But we know in all of this, that shortly our Lord shall return on the clouds of glory. For that, we look and pray.



Guest Article

Are You Sure of Your Salvation?

Rev. J. Slopsema

Let us understand the question correctly from the start.

The question is not this: have you done enough to make sure that you are saved? Have you done enough to assure yourself a place in heaven?

Such would be the understanding of this question by all those who, first of all, cling to a work-righteousness. Work-righteousness maintains that a man is saved by his own good works. To those who maintain this position, the question before us would be understood to mean: are you sure that you have done enough good to merit your own salvation? Likewise, those who have synergistic tendencies would have a similar understanding of this question. Synergism, in one form or another, is a very popular doctrine in the church world today. It teaches a cooperation between God and man in the matter of salvation. Both God and man have a contributing part. God in Christ has done His part. If man will possess and enjoy salvation, he must now do his part. The most popular form of synergism today is the idea that God offers salvation to all men. Now it is up to man, on his part, to accept this salvation.

If this were our understanding of the question, then we would have to busy ourselves, first of all, with ascertaining exactly what we must do to attain salvation — what our contributing part in the matter of salvation is. Then we would have to examine ourselves in that light to see whether we have done what is necessary to attain that salvation. And finally, we would exhort one another to get busy and to press on in whatever it is that we must do, lest we fall short and be cast into the eternal torments of hell.

But if that were our understanding of the question and our basic approach, we would be making a serious mistake. For the Scriptures emphasize that salvation is all of God. It is His free gift. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8) Salvation is God’s

work from beginning to end and in no part is it a work of man. This is not to deny that man’s work is related to salvation. It is. But it is not a contributing factor in salvation. It is, rather, the fruit of salvation.

Thus the question — are you sure of your salvation? is rather to be understood: are you sure that God has saved you? That is the question before us.

We can best ask this question from the point of view of the admonition that the Apostle Peter sets forth in II Peter 1:10, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” The meaning here is not that we must do something to make sure that God will call and elect us — that we must do something to elicit the calling and election of God. Rather, the idea is that we must give diligence to obtain the assurance that God has called and elected us. For we read literally in the original, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure to yourselves.” The question, then — are you sure of your salvation? — is fundamentally the question: are you sure that God has called and elected you?

There are two questions here: are you sure of your calling, and are you sure of your election? The latter is the most basic and fundamental of the two. For election is the fount and source of all salvation. In the decree of election God eternally chose a people unto Himself in Christ, His Church, in distinction from others whom He reprobated. And according to this same decree of election, God also determined to save this chosen people through the person and work of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Reformed confessions emphasize throughout, this was not according to foreseen works but simply according to God’s sovereign good pleasure. He chose some and rejected others, He determined to save some and destroy others, not on the basis of what He foresaw they would do, but simply according to His eternal and sovereign good pleasure. Therefore, God’s elec-

tion is the source and fount of all salvation.

Consequently the best approach to the question of the assurance of salvation is to ask: are you sure that God has elected you?

There are some who would deny that this is the proper approach. The objection is raised that, although the Scriptures mention it, election is a deep mystery. It belongs to the hidden and secret things of God and, therefore, is a very impractical doctrine. It is all right for theologians to speculate about election and to write treatises on it. But it ought not overly much to concern the child of God who sits in the pew. Let us leave the deep and hidden things to God. Our concern is only with preaching and believing the gospel of Christ crucified. In fact, because election is none of our concern, it would be very injurious to ask ourselves whether we are one of God's elect. All we would do is become confused and raise all kinds of doubts in our minds about the matter of personal salvation.

But to this objection we say, in the first place, that if this be true, why does Scripture exhort us, as it does in II Peter 1:10, to make our election sure? If election were a mystery and a very impractical doctrine with which the child of God ought not to concern himself, why does this admonition come to us? Quite obviously the matter of election is our concern — a very important and practical concern. But in the second place, we can also add that when this objection is raised, it is usually raised by those who do not want the truth of election as set forth by the Word of God. Quite often you will find this objection on the lips of those who want nothing to do with a sovereign election, which implies necessarily a sovereign reprobation.

Therefore, we must not be afraid to approach the matter of the assurance of salvation by first asking: are you sure of your election? In fact, this is the best and preferable approach. For, in the first place, God always sovereignly executes His eternal counsel. Says Isaiah in 46:10, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." In His eternal counsel and good pleasure God has elected in Christ a people whom He determined to save. That counsel shall stand! He will do His good pleasure! If I know, therefore, that I am one of God's elect, then I also know most assuredly that God has sent His Son to die for me; that through that death He did not merely make salvation possible, but actually saved me, blotting out all my sins, on the basis of which I am a rightful heir to all the blessings of salvation.

Furthermore, if I know that I am elect, I also have the assurance that I will be saved to the very end; that

I will never fall away from salvation. For God not only sovereignly executes His counsel, but He never repents from it. His counsel, including His purpose of election, is unchangeable. God never changes His mind. Of this Jeremiah testifies in 4:27,28 when he says, "For this hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it."

This, therefore, is the most basic and fundamental question regarding the assurance of salvation: am I one of God's elect? If we know that, then we know most assuredly that God has saved us in Christ, and that He will preserve us in that salvation to the very end. With the assurance of personal election we have a sure, immovable foundation for the assurance of salvation.

In close connection with this is the question: are you sure of your calling? Peter not only exhorts us to make our election sure but also our calling. In fact, he lists calling first, before election: "Give diligence to make your *calling* and election sure." The calling mentioned by Peter is not, as is frequently the presentation today, a well-meant offer of salvation. That idea is completely foreign to Scripture, in the first place. Besides, if that were the calling here, the text would be relegated to the ridiculous and the absurd. For then we must strive and give diligence to attain the assurance that God has offered us salvation through the preaching of the gospel. Rather, calling, as it is mentioned by Peter, is the saving, efficacious call of God to His elect. It is that work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and soul whereby, in connection with the preaching of the gospel, He consciously changes the elect sinner from death into life by His irresistible grace. By His grace He smashes his hard heart of enmity and pride. He quickens him spiritually so that he believes on Christ, flees to the cross, and turns away from and fights against his sins, walking in a new and holy life. That is the calling of which Peter speaks.

This question of the assurance of one's calling is also very important in the matter of the personal assurance of salvation. This is easily seen if we understand, in the first place, that the saving call of God is rooted in His election. The call is the fruit of election so that all whom God has chosen to salvation He also calls to salvation. This is certainly implied by the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:30 when he writes, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, he also called." But in the second place, we must keep in mind that, by itself, election is not a matter of our experience. No man is able to look into the book of life to see if his name is written on its pages. Election is an *eternal* decree of God. We are merely temporal.

Therefore, it is only through our calling, which is God's work in us in time and the fruit of His election, that we are able to experience our election. And, therefore, by making our calling sure, we are able also to make our election sure.

Are you sure of your salvation? Are you sure of your calling and also of your election?

In the next installment we will discuss, D.V., the possibility and the way of attaining this assurance.

In His Fear

Patience

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

You have heard of the patience of Job.

And perhaps you thought, "Oh, that Job, he was quite a man! Imagine, when all those calamities fell upon him, he did not sin or charge God foolishly. Quite a man! But don't expect me to be like Job! Such patience is too high for me." Nowhere do the Scriptures ever leave the impression that the Christian virtues are true of some children of God but not of others. Rather the emphasis is that every child of God, no matter what his station, may and must demonstrate all the characteristics of the kingdom of heaven, all the virtues of faith. The reason being that "everyone who believes, being members of Christ, are in common partakers of Him, and of all His riches and gifts." (The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21) Christ is not divided; those who are grafted into Him by a true faith have all the riches that are in Him, without exception.

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Thus speaks James to *all* the brethren.

THE TERMS

Two words, never used interchangeably but quite closely related in meaning, are translated "patience" in our Bibles. The one has the idea of enduring under a heavy load, of staying under, of bearing with perseverance. This term is used without exception when

the agent of affliction is an event or circumstance: sickness, bereavement, poverty, loneliness, disappointments, trials. When James calls to our mind the patience of Job, he carefully uses this term, for Job needed a power that would allow him to bear up under the heavy loss of possessions and family. The other term has the literal meaning of being of a long mind, of holding on to one's temper. Patience then is the long holding in of fierceness, wrath, and vengeance. This word is found in Scripture when the agent of suffering is a person or persons. Hence, James uses this second word when he exhorts patience in James 5:7, speaking to the reapers whose wages have been withheld by the rich, greedy landowners. Richard Trench in his *Synonyms of the New Testament* sums up the distinction between the two terms translated patience this way: "The man *makrothumei*, who has to do with injurious persons, does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blaze up into anger. The man *hupomenei*, who under a great siege of trials, bears up, and does not lose heart or courage."

We can visualize a man without patience; perhaps our visualization is so accurate because this man is ourselves. When we must live with daily pain, experience one disappointment after another, or suffer grievous trials as workmen, parents, and saints, how attractive it would seem to throw everything over! Simply refuse to continue with that heavy load. Ask the question, "Why? Why *me*?" Or when men speak evil of us, take advantage of us, fail to recognize our true value, how natural to speak out, answering reviling with reviling. To take hold of things so we make

right the master of might and get what's coming to us.

Brethren . . . brethren . . . be patient! Look to the husbandman, the farmer, who plows and sows, then waits for the precious fruit of the earth. He doesn't receive a crop tomorrow or next week. With long patience he waits for the early and latter rain. So it is in the realm of the spiritual. There will be many experiences along the way that cause suffering and sorrow, but the way of patience must be followed to the end, if there is to be fruit. By patience we possess our souls; without it we lose them. Through patience and faith we inherit the promises; without it the rich, warm promises of God are dead, meaningless words.

THE IMPORTANCE

Although it may seem that we have every reason to throw up our hands in refusal to continue, yet the steady emphasis of the Word is that we stay where we are and *work!*

Luke 8:15, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Romans 2:7, "... To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life . . ."

Hebrews 12:1, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Rev. 2:19, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."

The question is, Why must we bring forth fruit, continue in well doing, run the race that is set before us? Generally, of course, the answer is that we have been placed on this earth to work as children of light that our Father in heaven may be glorified, and that others by our good works may be gained to Christ. Specifically, these works must be performed in patience because patience is the only atmosphere in which a child of God can ever bring them forth! Patience is the *spiritual resistance* of the soul!

There are many dangers that surround the physical body, dangers that would cause weakness and death. Through proper diet and sufficient rest the body develops a resistance to the bacteria that fill the air and cover our food. When these enemies of life and health seek to invade the body, they are met as by an army that refuses to let them get a foothold. And how we take care that our natural resistance is kept high! Well, the life of the soul, the inner man of Christ, is also constantly under attack by all the forces of sin. These powers of darkness would paralyze the life of faith and cause the man of Christ to

wither up and die, in order that the old man of sin might accomplish his deeds. The resistance that the child of God has, hard-won by Christ, is patience! This alone will enable him to continue in those things God has given him to do. But if this spiritual resistance is broken, then we easily cave in to all kinds of things. And if patience is gone, something else fills its place. If nature deplores a vacuum, so too does spiritual life. Then comes selfish concern, then rushes in covetousness, then are we filled with earthly affairs and materialism. Where patience is gone, there is no desire to battle against sin and walk in personal sanctification. There is no daily concern for the covenant welfare of our children; there is no manful desire to keep, at all costs, the preaching of the Holy Gospel pure.

Peter says, "Resist steadfast in the faith!" James says, "Be patient, brethren!" They are the same thing.

ITS POWER

It may seem to us that patience is hardly an answer at all. What we really need is a program of forceful action that will right some wrongs. Besides, patience seems to be such a weak, passive characteristic. How can it ever accomplish great things? Of course, we are not speaking of a natural characteristic of a man, according to which he allows himself to be mistreated and be the butt of unkind words. We are speaking of an amazing virtue that is ours in Christ! Patience's power may be seen, first of all, when we consider that this is one of God's own virtues. If we come back to the figure of the husbandman (James 5:7) we can note that the husbandman is really God, Who is gathering the harvest of the elect Church in Jesus Christ. And God waits for the early and latter rains. That is, God endures many things; He allows various tempests to come upon His people. He does not come prematurely in order to deliver His people out of them, but He is patient. Otherwise the harvest will not be full. The theological term for this attribute of God is His longsuffering. Our covenant God suffers long, even while His beloved sheep are afflicted in this world. He longs to come with a mighty deliverance that would put His people forever above the raging of evil men, but He waits! He Who knows the end from the beginning waits until the harvest is full! This is the meaning of the oft-misunderstood passage, II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The second reason why patience is strong to suffice is that patience understands that there is a better way out of the present affliction than following the way of sin and evil, or than caving in to every sinful whim.

What patience understands is that *the Lord comes!* The certainty of that fact allows the child of God to wait while abstaining from evil. Again, hear the Word:

Romans 8:25, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

II Thes. 3:5, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

James 5:8, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The Lord comes, and His reward is with Him. Paul

tells us what the Lord shall find. Those who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — they shall be given wrath, tribulation and anguish. But those who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality — they shall be given eternal life!

Our cries enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. The Judge standeth at the door. He catches our tears in the bottle of remembrance. He sees and knows! They that faint not, they shall reap.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Works of the Covenant

Rev. John A. Heys

Although the term "Covenant of Works" appears nowhere in Scripture, it is universally held that Adam was created in such a relationship to God. And by that terminology men mean that God so created man that he could by works of obedience attain to everlasting life. In that covenant of works, it is claimed, there are three elements, namely, a promise of everlasting life, a condition of perfect obedience, and a penalty of punishment with death. And although this everlasting life and a promise of that life are not mentioned anywhere in Genesis 1. and 2., it is claimed that such a promise and such everlasting life are implied when God threatens with death as the punishment for disobedience.

The implied promise of everlasting life, however, is not there, and the presentation of a penalty of death upon disobedience does not imply such a promise. The employer who informs his employee that if he does inferior workmanship, or if he does not do his work faithfully, he will lose his job is not by virtue of that fact promising that man that if he does it well he will receive an interest in the corporation and become one of its vice-presidents. Such an employee cannot even assume from a word of warning from his employer that he will even retain his job if he does his work faithfully — not unless the employer says it in so many words. His work may be ever so good and

above criticism, but because of a falling off of sales, or other economic problems, the employer may have to let go faithful employees; and not having promised a continued job as long as the work was good, he is under no obligation to keep that employee. And God did not tell Adam that by faithful toil he would advance in the corporation. It must not be lost sight of that the proponents of this theory of a "Covenant of Works" do not present it as though Adam by perfect obedience could remain in paradise and live there forever, but that he could by perfect obedience attain to the glory of heaven. He could have obtained for us that which now we get through the cross of Christ; and since he failed, Christ had to come to bring us there. We, so the theory goes, were indeed created a little lower than the angels, but we could have gotten above them — as we now do in Christ according to Hebrews 2:9 — by a perfect walk of Adam.

Now entirely apart from the fact that Scripture is very emphatic in its teaching that man cannot earn anything before God by his works (for he must receive from God every breath of life, every ounce of strength and power even to think and will, and is unceasingly and completely dependent upon God so that he is always and forever *in debt* to God) this theory displays a wholly erroneous view of God as a

covenant God. And it is not at all strange then that where this theory of a covenant of works is taught, this element of works is also carried into the view of the Covenant of Grace, strange as that may sound. But the idea that God in making a covenant enters into a partnership with man, bargains with man, lets man establish the covenant with Him, and stipulates conditions for the covenant that man must fulfill in order that the covenant may be established or may continue, results in a covenant conception which requires the works of man for its existence. That work may be the work of faith and not the works of the law, but then you still have a work of *man* that establishes and assures the continuation of that covenant.

When, then, we read in Genesis 17:1,2, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to him, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly," these defenders of the "Covenant of Works," in their thinking (for it is not there in the Scriptures) put the word "then" after the word "And" wherewith verse two begins. And they read the verse as though it said, "... walk before me and be thou perfect, and *then* I will make my covenant with thee."

This we may not do. Even the grammar forbids it. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" is a command. And when you place before it the words, "If you," you change it from a command to a proposition; and the testimony of God, the oath which He swore by Himself that He will establish that covenant (Hebrews 6:17,18), becomes a doubtful thing dependent upon the actions of sinful man. God does say, "You walk before me and be perfect, and I will establish my covenant with you." But He does not say, "If you walk before me and are perfect, I will establish my covenant with you." He does say, "You must walk before me and be perfect. And I will make a covenant with you." He does not say that such a walk of perfection is the prerequisite to the making of that covenant. If that were the case there would never be a covenant, and any covenant that might have been existing at that time would come to its end. For man cannot walk before God and be perfect. He cannot do this before God has already brought him into the covenant and given him its life. But he cannot do this even after he has been born again. At no point in this life will he reach perfection. The evil that he would not will still be with him, and the good that he would, he will not allow. And the times in each day when God would have to say to him, "Get thou behind me," would be legion.

What folly to ascribe such to the All-wise God! He, knowing perfectly the sinfulness of man and his utter

incapability of doing any spiritual good (including the good works of believing what God says and of desiring salvation), does not propose a covenant with prerequisites which man cannot fulfill. And to defend such a foolish position the Arminian and Pelagian will fall back on their other error that man is not totally depraved in the sense that he cannot believe and cannot will salvation before God has brought him into the covenant and its blessings. But his folly is more than that. It is a denial of Jesus' words that except we are born again we cannot even see the kingdom, and of the truth which we have received through the apostle Paul that faith is God's gift to us and not our gift to Him.

But why then does God say to Abram, "Walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make a covenant with thee"? Why preface that promise with the command to be perfect, if the idea is not exactly to tell man that this covenant depends on whether he walks perfectly? If it is all of God, why does He mention this perfect walk? — and that, mind you, *first!* The answer is that, although there is no covenant of works, *there are works of the covenant*. Our Baptism Form expresses that so beautifully when it says, "Whereas in all covenant there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism admonished of and obliged unto new obedience." There are two parts in the covenant of grace — a part we are called to perform and a part God promises to perform. And what God promises to perform is that He will give us the grace to perform our part. When, then, He tells Abram that He will make a covenant with him, after telling him that it is his inescapable calling to walk before God and be perfect, He promises Abram to bring him to such a state and condition of perfection that he can walk before God in the new Jerusalem, *the land of the covenant*. God's covenant promise is not simply to realize a relationship of friendship between God and His people in Christ, but it is also to do ALL that is necessary to make it possible for us to live in such a relationship of friendship before Him.

That which this covenant relationship requires — and God supplies — is that we must be made perfect so that we can not only walk before Him but live with Him. And by calling Abram's attention to this humanly impossible calling, God impresses upon his mind that it is in every sense a covenant of grace with not the smallest work of man himself entering into its establishment or continuance.

Now to walk before God means to walk in such a way that He will approve of that work from every possible point of view. Literally Moses quotes God as saying, "Walk before my face." And that means that we walk so that His searching eye finds no fault with our actions. It is for that reason that Jesus said to

Satan in the wilderness, "Get thee behind me." That which Satan proposed was loathsome in His holy sight because it was an abomination unto His heavenly Father. It is for that reason also that God drove man out of paradise when he broke God's covenant wherein he had been created as God's friend-servant. Adam's part in that covenant relationship also was one of walking before God's face in flawless obedience and love. When he walked in a way which God's searching eye could not enjoy, he was driven away from God's face. Therefore it is also that Jesus declares in Matthew 7:23 that God will say to many, "Depart from me ye that work iniquity."

It is for that reason that God says to Abram, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." Ethical perfection is that of which God approves; and only those performing it may stand before His face. Thus we read in II Kings 20:3 that Hezekiah prays, "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." That is right. In truth and with a perfect heart we must walk before God. Of that He will approve. That is the covenant life.

Friendship and fellowship with God are possible only when and while we walk before His face and are perfect. Listen to Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God." And is not that the blessedness of

God's covenant, to see Him? But to see Him we have to walk before Him. The blessedness is seeing His face. When we walk before Him we see His face. And to walk before Him we must follow after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Or turn to the closing chapters of Holy Writ where that covenant of God is pictured in its blessed perfection, and God's people are all together in the holy city and eat of the tree of life. In that connection we read in Revelation 22:15, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Only the perfect who walk before God's face will live in blessedness before him.

Because the perfection of Christ is imputed to us, and because He blotted out all our imperfections, God can and does reach down and bring us into the blessedness of His covenant. He fulfilled our part, and by His Spirit is making us able to walk before God. Some day that work will be finished, and we will be perfect. And then, exactly because of that perfection, we will not say to God, "We did it!" You cannot do that before His face. Instead we will confess that it is His covenant from beginning to end, that a part in it was given us in His grace, and that it is in His grace that we have attained to a perfect keeping of the works of the covenant.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

"Hyper-Calvinism" and the Call of the Gospel (18)

Rev. David Engelsma

It is widely assumed that the well-meant gospel-offer, or free offer, has strong backing in the Dutch Reformed theologian, Abraham Kuyper. Is not the crucial question in the controversy over the offer, whether grace is common or particular? And did not Kuyper write a massive, three-volume work, *De Gemeene Gratie* (*Common Grace*), in which he propounded the view that God has a favorable attitude towards all men and that a power of God works in all men, restraining sin in the unbelieving world and enabling them to do much that is good and beautiful? Certainly, then, those today who so vigorously propagate the offer stand in the line of the great Kuyper, whereas those who oppose the offer

thereby place themselves outside the stream of historic Reformed theology as it developed in the Netherlands in the late 1800's.

This assumption is false.

It is indeed true that Kuyper taught a certain grace of God to all men, especially in his *De Gemeene Gratie*. It is also undoubtedly true that this teaching has been influential, in the history of the Reformed faith from 1900 to the present day, in the development of the theory of the well-meant offer of the gospel. But it is not true that Kuyper held the doctrine of the well-meant offer — not even in *De Gemeene Gratie*; on the contrary, he was an avowed foe of the theology of the offer.

It is the express teaching of the doctrine of the offer that God is gracious to the reprobate with a grace that *sincerely desires their salvation* and that comes to them *in the gospel*. It is the implied teaching of the offer, where indeed this is not stated explicitly — as is happening more and more in Reformed circles today, that Christ died for all men and that salvation depends upon man's acceptance of the offer by his free will.

Kuyper's common grace had nothing to do with this universal grace. The common grace of Kuyper was merely a favor of God that gives the world "the temporal blessings" of rain, sunshine, health, and riches and that restrains corruption in the world, so that the world can produce good culture. It was not a grace that aimed at the salvation of the reprobate; a grace that was expressed in a well-meaning offer of Christ; or a grace that was grounded in a universal atonement. "Here now lies the root of the doctrine of 'common grace,'" writes Kuyper. "There (is) in this sinful world, also outside the church, so much that is respectable, so much that arouses to jealousy . . . To the good and beautiful outside the church, among unbelievers, in the world, we may not shut our eyes." The explanation of all this goodness in the world? ". . . outside the church, among the heathen, in the midst of the world, grace is working, grace which is not eternal, nor to the end of salvation, but which is temporal and to the end of checking the destruction that inheres in sin."¹

Kuyper sharply distinguished this common grace from the saving grace of God. So concerned was he that "common grace" not be confused with "saving grace" (which is particular, according to Kuyper — for the elect only) that he deliberately gave "common grace" a name distinct from that of "particular grace." Common grace, he called *gratie*, whereas particular, saving grace was called *genade*. Kuyper feared — prophetically, as history shows! — that misuse would be made of the doctrine of common grace, "as if *saving* grace were meant by it," with the result that "the firm foundation that grace (*genade*) is particular would again be dislodged." It is, however, "absolutely *not* the case" that common grace is saving grace. This may not "once be said of common grace." We must "guard against this vigorously and sharply (*kras en scherp*)." Common grace "does not contain a single saving germ and is, therefore, of a completely different nature than particular grace or covenant grace."²

Kuyper's attempt to prevent common grace from

developing into universal saving grace by giving the two graces different names was futile. The precarious coexistence of particular, saving grace and common, non-saving grace was short-lived. Soon, common grace began nibbling on particular grace, until, by the present time, it almost completely devoured particular grace. The result is a "common grace" that sincerely desires the salvation of all and that expresses itself in offering Christ to all.

An outstanding and very clear instance of the fatal development of common grace into universal, saving grace is the first point of the doctrine of common grace adopted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. Beginning with Kuyper's distinction between two graces, "the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect" and a "favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect," the first point concludes by introducing common grace into the realm of salvation — the very error Kuyper warned against, declaring that God's grace towards all humanity is revealed in the "general offer of the Gospel." No longer is common grace a favor that fills barns, fattens bellies, and produces Beethoven's *5th Symphony*, but it has become a favor that desires the salvation of all men and that operates towards all in the blessed gospel, offering all men eternal life.

Nor is this, by any means, an isolated instance. One finds on every hand that men ground their teaching of a grace of God for all in the preaching, i.e., the well-meant offer, in God's common grace, thus transforming common (non-saving) grace into the universal (saving) grace of historic Romanism and Arminianism. In doing this, they are deaf to Kuyper's pleas not to make this mistake.

The Orthodox Presbyterian theologians, Murray and Stonehouse, are guilty of this. They are concerned to defend the free offer, the "real point" of which, according to their own analysis, is the teaching that "God desires the *salvation* of all men" (my emphasis — DE). This grace, of course, "is expressed in the universal call to repentance," i.e., the preaching of the gospel. But where do they begin, when they look for Biblical support for this doctrine? Matthew 5:44-48!, a passage which they themselves admit "does not indeed deal with the overtures of grace in the gospel. . . . The particular aspect of God's grace reflected upon here is the common gifts of providence, the making of the sun to rise upon evil and good. . . ." Nevertheless, this "common grace" in things temporal is made the foundation and source of the doctrine of a grace of God that desires salvation and that operates in the preaching: In the common grace of God "is disclosed to us a principle that applies to all manifestations of divine grace, namely, that the grace bestowed expresses the lovingkindness

¹*De Gemeene Gratie* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, second edition), Vol. 1, p. 11 (the translation from the Dutch in this and the following article is mine).

²*De Gemeene Gratie*, Vol. 1, pp. 8,9.

in the heart of God . . . ”³

Erroll Hulse, the Calvinistic Baptist, propounds the same confusion, without any of the carefulness of Murray and Stonehouse, who at least recognized that a grace that gives rain and a grace that offers salvation are two distinct things. That Hulse intends to press common grace into the service of a universal grace in the gospel is indicated already in the title of his booklet; “The Free Offer: an exposition of common grace and the free invitation of the Gospel.” The content all too plainly confirms our suspicion. Hulse tells us that “the subject of common grace is inescapably connected with the free offer. It is not possible to deal adequately with the question of the offer without getting to grips with the subject of common grace.” He is determined to arrive at the conclusion that God desires, or wishes, salvation for all and expresses this desire in the offer of salvation to all, i.e., that God is gracious to all in the preaching. The premise on which this conclusion is based, according to Hulse, is common grace, God’s favor to men in temporal things. Indeed, Hulse, nothing if not bold, goes so far as to identify common and special grace; there is no longer any qualitative difference between them. “. . . common grace finds its fullest expression in the provision of a Gospel to be addressed to all without exception.” “Common grace then, *finds its highest expression* in that desire and will of God not only for fallen man’s temporal well-being *but for his soul’s salvation and eternal happiness*” (my emphasis – DE). Apparently, it has never crossed Hulse’s mind that there might be a favor of God to men in earthly things without a grace that desires their salvation, as, on the view now of those who hold such a common grace, would have to be the case throughout the whole Old Testament time, when “the free invitation of the Gospel” to the heathen nations was not very conspicuous.⁴

³Cf. Murray and Stonehouse, “*The Free Offer of the Gospel*”

⁴Cf. Erroll Hulse, “*The Free Offer*”

The confounding of “common grace” and “saving grace,” particularly now by the appeal to common grace to prove the universal grace of the offer, has a profound, theological cause. Men simply cannot escape the overpowering testimony of Scripture that the grace of God is one, not two, and that this grace is the glorious favor of God towards damnable sinners that wills their deliverance from sin and death, provides redemption for them in the cross of the Beloved, and manifests itself in the gospel. If then God’s grace is for all, men *must* conclude that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is for all. From this viewpoint, the Christian Reformed Church, the Orthodox Presbyterians, Erroll Hulse, and all their numerous allies are disciples of Abraham Kuyper – in spite of themselves.

The only safeguard against universal, saving grace is the complete repudiation of Kuyperian common grace. Probably it is wishful thinking, but the startling appearance of outright universalism in Reformed churches today, universal atonement, universal redemptive love, universal election, and even universal salvation, ought to make those who profess to love Reformed particularism reexamine the doctrine of common grace, uncritically accepted for so long as an aspect, even a basic aspect, of Reformed doctrine.

But if Abraham Kuyper fathered the universal grace teaching of the well-meant offer, he did so as Lot fathered Moab and Ammon – unwittingly and unwillingly. Kuyper was an enemy of the teaching that is basic to the offer, namely, that God is gracious in the preaching to all men, the reprobate as well as the elect; and he was a champion of the truth of particular, sovereign grace. He made this plain in his book, *Dat De Genade Particulier Is (That Grace is Particular)*.⁵

⁵The first volume of a three-volume set entitled, *Uit Het Woord (Out of the Word)*. The book was published in Amsterdam in 1884. The series of articles in the magazine, *De Heraut*, in which form the work originally appeared, began in 1878. The series of articles in the same magazine on common grace was begun in 1895, some 17 years later.

Know the standard, and follow it.

Read the Standard Bearer

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Hebrews 13:20, 21

by Rev. G. Lubbers

The writer to the Hebrews now breaks forth into a very meaningful and exalted prayer for the Hebrew saints. He directs this prayer in the form of a very fervent hope and wish to the God of peace. He really confesses that it is all outside of his power to bring about the perfection of the Hebrews, and to impel them to any good work. Here all moral persuasion falls flat and proves to be a lie. Nothing short of a new creation itself will do. Here we have the teaching that is "denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive which God works in us without our aid" (Canons III, IV, 12). Here we stand on the high plateau of the well-known text, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Only when we are filled with the spiritual consciousness that God works in us "both to will and to do" will we work down to a finished touch our entire life in sanctification, being filled with the mind of Christ.

Such is the covenant life of the saints in the New Covenant which God made when He brought forth the church out of the Egypt of sin's guilt and bondage of corruption. He will write His law upon our hearts in tables of flesh and not of stone, and put His law in our minds and affections. And in this covenant He will be our God, and we shall be His people (Hebrews 8:8-12; II Cor. 3:1-3). This will be the work of the life-giving (working) Spirit, the Spirit of the living Christ. And to this God, Who works peace, the writer appeals at the end of this great letter. Also in this prayer all is "better." This prayer fits with the Christ, the Son, who is greater than all the angels (Heb. 1:1 ff.); greater than Moses, although he was faithful in all of God's house (Heb. 3:1-6; greater and better in his priesthood than Aaron (Heb. 7:1 ff.); a better covenant based upon better promises (Heb. 8:6); a better and greater tabernacle not made with hands (Heb. 9:9); a temple in which we may draw nigh to the throne of grace in the full assurance of faith. Here the pattern shown to Moses on the mount of Horeb comes to its full manifestation: He

that sitteth on the throne (Holy of holies, ark of the covenant); the seven Spirits before the throne (the golden candlestick in the holy place); and the Lamb that is slain, the firstbegotten out of the dead (the altar and sacrifices in the forecourt) (Rev. 1:4,5). Here we can sing our joyful and confident doxological prayers. Thus does the writer to the Hebrews in the passage under consideration.

THE GREAT GOD OF PEACE APPEALED TO
(Hebrews 13:20)

When we think here into the Scriptural concept of the "God of peace" the text suggests very strongly that we are to think of Jehovah God in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament Scriptures of this God as the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80:1). He leads his people like a flock. His dwelling place is in the heavens, between the heavenly cherubims. He dwells with Israel at the mercy-seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Here the blood of sprinkling was sprinkled by the High Priest atoning for our sins and making our peace. This was strongly portrayed in the Old Testament temple on each Day of Atonement, when all things were sprinkled with blood: temple, altar, priesthood, people. This was a picture of the cleansing of the heavenly temple with the blood of the Shepherd of Israel, Jesus whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel (Heb. 9:23).

The term "God of peace" perhaps means that God is the One who *makes* our peace. It is He who reconciled us with Himself in Christ. God did not need to be reconciled to us. He had thoughts of peace concerning us, and they are written in the "Volume of the Book" (Heb. 10:7; Ps. 40:6). This plan to bring about our peace is God's alone. This never came up in the heart of man; these are the things which God has prepared for us. Now this God which *makes* our peace is the only God who can perfect us unto every good work and cause us to walk in his peace, love, joy, and all good works. The phrase "God of peace" is employed by Paul in Romans 15:33, where we

read, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." In Romans 16:20 we read that the God of peace fights for the church as the seed of the woman "to bruise (tread) Satan under your feet shortly." Here is a very evident allusion to Genesis 3:15. (*) The God of peace is here contrasted with all the conflict, discord, and division which Satan works in the world and in the church. He is the arch-foe with whom we have to contend in the battle of the ages (Eph. 6:10-12). And so here in the churches of the Hebrews Satan would seek to destroy the faith of these believers and have them return to the Old Testament shadows and types. Then there would be no pressing on to spiritual perfection either. Satan is the author of confusion, but God is not the author of confusion in the church, but of peace (I Cor. 14:33). And this "confusion" (*akatastasia*) is connected with envying and strife and every evil work. Where the God of peace has wrought His work, there whisperings, backbitings, debates, swellings and tumults disappear, and Satan is crushed under our feet. God is not the author of confusion but of peace. And the writer has brought to bear all the teachings of the Scripture to crush Satan under His mighty heel as he comes as an angel of light in these false teachers. Compare: II Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9.

When we look at this "peace" which God brings about we notice that this peace is realized in the blood of Christ (Col. 1:20). At Calvary our peace was brought about in the atoning sacrifice, and this peace is not merely touching things on earth, but also the things in heaven. It is the ushering in of the heavenly tabernacle with all that is implied in God's dwelling with man, as the God of peace from the mercy-seat. However, this peace is also such that God is the God of peace, making the Old Testament church and the New Testament church into one new manhood.

Now these verses under consideration are really a *benediction* in which God receives all the glory of the manifestation of His infinite virtues and praises. He will place all things under His feet in Christ and He will give peace to his people. God will be glorified in the Son. That is the reason for the Cross, death, burial, and resurrection and ascension of Christ at God's right hand in these last days. It is a benediction prayer and wish which ends in "Amen." And "Amen" means that God will more surely hear this prayer than what the writer feels in his heart that he desires this all of God, or that he will be heard (Question 129, Heid. Catechism). For the term Amen rests in the verity and power of God in Jesus, Who is called the "Amen of God." All God's promises are

yea in Christ, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us" (Rev. 3:14; II Cor. 1:20). That which the writer wishes with holy desire for the church is to be realized "through Christ Jesus." In this Christ all the promises of God for peace are Amen.

THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP LED FORTH FROM THE DEAD BY THE GOD OF PEACE (Hebrews 13:20)

There is something Old Testamental in the language here. Commonly the phraseology is "raised from the dead." But here is a separation (*ek*) out of the dead which implies that it affected the "great Shepherd of the sheep." This seems to indicate that it did not merely affect the person of the Son in our human nature by Himself, but rather in His relationship to the entire flock of God. His relationship to the flock is that of the good shepherd. He can only be the good shepherd whereas He is the *great* shepherd. The angel Gabriel told Mary that her Son would be "great." John too would be great, but his greatness is that he may run before the chariot of the Great King. But this One will be great. He is God Himself in the flesh, and thus He is identical with the great God, Jehovah, the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80:1). David sings "The LORD is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). This great Shepherd has power to lay down His life and power to take it again. He lays down His life for His sheep. He and the Father are one. Only, as Shepherd, He is the Son of God in the flesh, dwelling at the head of His people. Thus He can die for their sins on the cross. But God was in Christ, this Shepherd, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing our sins to us. The Old Testament overtone here is in the words "led forth again" and it suggests very strongly the entire course of the history of salvation (*heilsgeschiedenis*) in which Israel was led out of Egypt and brought to Canaan, passing through the Red Sea, and leaving Egypt under the blood, the blood of the passover. Thus God as the Shepherd of Israel led forth His people from the bondage of sin to the liberty of His covenant.

We must bear in mind that this was centrally realized in the death of Christ and was sealed in his resurrection, in which He was powerfully revealed to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4; Acts 13:32). He comes forth as the firstborn Son out of the dead, this great Shepherd of Israel. He had the right to come forth from the dead because He had been delivered for our offenses (Rom 4:25). And thus God, the Author of peace, our peace, brought forth the great Shepherd from out of the dead, never to return to the state of sin, death, confusion, enmity, strife, hatred and bloodshed. He has made the Old and New Testament saints one; He broke down the middle wall of partition, the enmity between those near and far, and

(*) "God is called the God of peace because He is the author of peace (cf. vss. 5, 3). In view of the emphasis upon peace with God (5:1; cf. 16:20; Eph. 2:14, 15, 17; I Thes. 5:20; Heb. 13:20) we should infer that peace with God is primary." Murray on Rom. 15:33, in part.

made us one. We gather in a better tabernacle. We have come to mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Legally, we have come to this new estate!

Thus the text affords in one grand statement a total backglance at all that he had taught in this letter – all in this grand doxological statement concerning the God of peace. The readers, and we with them, are thus summoned to attention, and awakened out of the stupor and illusion that we have already attained unto perfection. We are also alerted to the fact that He Who hath begun this good work for and in us, will needs have to finish it until the day of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:5-9; Phil. 1:6).

THE EFFICACIOUS SANCTIFYING WORK OF THE GOD OF PEACE (Hebrews 13:21)

It is quite evident from the form of the verb in the Greek, translated in the KJV “make perfect,” that it is a strong wish, a holy desire of ardent love on the part of the writer. The term “*katartisai*” is a first Aorist active optative. The term expressed a wish. The Aorist tense expresses point action. It indicates the once and for all of this perfecting of the saints, be it then over the entire period of their life, ending in their death, which is not a payment for sin, but a dying unto sin, and an entrance into glory (Heid. Cat., Question 2). The term itself indicates that the sanctification of the saints must be brought to a full-orbed life, so that no part is lacking.

ALL AROUND US

Reformed Churches in Netherlands Rev. Henry Vander Kam's Analysis of the Last Twenty-five Years Reviews Rebuked Calvin Sponsors “Arts in Worship” Confab Oct. 2-4

Rev. H. Veldman

REFORMED CHURCHES IN NETHERLANDS PRONOUNCE JUDICIUM ON WIERSINGA CASE

In the RES NEWS EXCHANGE NEWS LETTER of Vol. XIII, No. 4, April 6, 1976, page 1157 appeared the following news item:

(Grand Rapids) The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) issued a pointed resolution on the so-called “Wiersinga case,” which it has had before it for the last few years. It upheld and sharpened its earlier statement of 1974. Dr. H. Wiersinga's attempt to involve man in the ministry of reconciliation, it repeated, was commendable. But, it went on to utter its *judicium*, namely that Wiersinga's conception “not only does not do justice to the work of reconciliation . . . but thereby also denies the gospel's source for the ministry of reconciliation.” The synodical decision called the doctrine of Christ's suffering under the wrath of God in our stead so fundamental that it could not admit Wiersinga's denial of it. The synod also expressed its expectation that Wiersinga's consistory will see to it that such a denial of this doctrine will not occur and that it will oppose it.

In the discussion preceding the resolution Dr. H.M. Kuitert introduced a motion to forestall action and keep the discussions open with Dr. Wiersinga, but this was defeated. He compared the judicial proceedings of the church to those behind the iron curtain be-

cause the prosecutor and judge are one and the same. Citing a survey that claimed that only 66% of the members of the GKN still conceive of God as a person, Dr. J. Fietz lauded Dr. Wiersinga's emphasis upon a God who identifies and sympathizes with man. Dr. G. Th. Rothuizen, too, made an appeal for further consultation: at issue, he said, is not the substitutionary atonement itself but only the nature of the substitution.

Others, such as H. van Benthien and B. Rietveld saw in Wiersinga's view a clearly deviant conception whose existence challenges the Reformed character of the church. No one wished to start the process of discipline, in the sense of excommunicating Dr. Wiersinga, but it was pointed out that justicial doctrinal discipline (the application of sanctions) is the last resort by which the church attempts to keep someone within the communion. Dr. J. Veenhof said the intention was to build bridges and to make a Christian appeal to Wiersinga. Dr. Verkuyl spoke in the same vein and made an eloquent appeal to Wiersinga to reconsider his position; he pointed out that although various of Wiersinga's colleagues have spoken words in defense of him, none of them has tried to defend his theological position.

First of all, this report states that “Dr. Wiersinga's attempt to involve man in the ministry of reconciliation was commendable.” This we do not understand. Dr. Wiersinga is a heretic. Also, according to this

report, the Synod "went on to utter its judgment, namely that Wiersinga's conception 'not only does not do justice to the work of reconciliation . . . but thereby also denies the gospel's source for the ministry of reconciliation.'" How can a heretic's involving of man in the ministry of reconciliation be commendable?

Secondly, this report states that no one wished to start the process of discipline, in the sense of excommunicating Dr. Wiersinga. However, we read in Titus 3:10: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." We will not comment at this time on the resolution introduced by Dr. H.M. Kuitert.

Thirdly, what must one say of the results of the survey which was cited by a Dr. J. Fiet, that only 66% of the members of the GKN (Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands) still conceive of God as a person? Was the entire membership of these churches polled? To deny that God is a person means that they deny God. 34% of this membership deny God? If this be true, how terrible!

REV. HENRY VANDER KAM'S ANALYSIS OF THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

In *THE OUTLOOK* of April, 1976, Rev. Vander Kam writes on events and trends in the U.S. in the past twenty-five years. We need not quote the entire article. We quote the following:

Would someone who had been out of touch with the Christian Reformed Church since 1951 recognize that church today? Would he feel at home in this communion? I believe the answer would be "Yes" to both questions. Of course, things have changed, but that fact in itself is not cause for alarm. Time brings its own changes naturally.

Yes, I do believe that a person who had been out of contact with the Christian Reformed Church since 1951 would still recognize this church and feel at home in it. We still maintain our Confessions. We still bow to the same Lord and listen to His Word. In many ways we have made tremendous progress. But, let us not be blind to the dangers which threaten to take away everything we hold dear.

Articles of this nature are of no help to the Christian Reformed Church. Yes, it is true that the writer of this article speaks of reasons for concern. We need not quote these reasons. But, the undersigned considers it striking that this writer does not lay his finger upon many departures from the Word of God and the Confessions which plague that church today. Indeed, he mentions certain trends and conditions in that church. But, he is confident that a person who has been out of touch with the Christian Reformed Church since 1951 would still recognize that church today and feel at home in it. He is also confident that

that church still maintains its Confessions. And that church has also made tremendous progress during these last twenty-five years. How can he write this? That church has given a life appointment to Prof. H. Dekker who believes in Christ's universal atonement and has publicly declared that he is not in agreement with the Canons of Dordt. How about REPORT 44? How about the fact that the authority and full inspiration of the Scriptures is being denied? And the decision on Homosexuality? And also the possibility of women officebearers in the church? And a child of God, who loves the church, is able to feel at home in that church? Indeed, an article of this nature does not do the Christian Reformed Church any good.

REVIEWS REBUKED

Under *VOICES* in the *Banner* of April 16, 1976, page 21, appears a very brief article, entitled "Reviews Rebuked." We quote this article:

In regard to the movie review (9/12/75), we feel that this article was completely out of place in *The Banner*.

An article as this seems like an invitation to attend entertainment of this sort. *The Banner* should be used to promote God's kingdom, and to help guide us to live in a manner pleasing to God. At the very least, the articles should be character-building.

This brief article was submitted by a men's society of Platte, South Dakota. We agree. I did not read the movie review to which this article refers. I assume that this review spoke favorably of movies. If this society of Platte, South Dakota, condemns movies, we surely concur. I fear, however, that this society is engaged in a losing battle.

CALVIN SPONSORS "ARTS IN WORSHIP" CONFAB OCT. 2-4

The Association of Christian Reformed Laymen, in its *News Bulletin*, No. 68, April, 1976, has the following article, page 3, under the above heading:

How do dancing, drama, music, film, architecture, and visual art fit into a worship service? A three-day conference at Calvin College will attempt to answer that question through lectures, sectionals, and an innovative vesper service.

The conference, scheduled to begin the evening of October 2, is one of the many events celebrating Calvin's centennial.

Specificity will be one of the major characteristics of the conference, according to Tom Ozinga, professor of speech, and coordinator of the Planning Committee. "Suggestions will be practical and specific," he promised.

Three keynote addresses will be led by Donald J. Bruggink Nicholas Wolterstorff, and James Young, in an attempt to stimulate thought from a Biblical perspective.

Bruggink is Professor of Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary... Wolterstorff, professor of philosophy at Calvin, will also speak Thursday evening... Young, Professor of Speech and Director of Theatre at Wheaton College, will speak Friday evening on "Theatre and Worship: The Priestly and the Prophetic."

This conference, mind you, is one of the many events celebrating Calvin's centennial. This must set forth, I assume, what Calvin College stands for and why it came into being one hundred years ago. I suggest to the men's society of Platte, South Dakota, that they take notice. Perhaps this conference will show how wrong these things are. After all, these

three keynote addresses will attempt to stimulate thought from a Biblical perspective. Even so, why should such a conference be necessary? I call attention to what we read in our Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 35. Question 98 reads: "But may not images be tolerated in the churches, as books to the laity?" And Answer 98 reads: "No: for we must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will have his people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of his word. Understand, this conference will deal with the question how all these things fit into a worship service. Why hold this conference to discuss this subject? Lord's Day 35 gives us the proper guidelines.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 3, 1976, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. LORENZ BERTSCH, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their grateful children, express humble gratitude to our Father in heaven for the Christian home they have provided us and for the Christian education that has been given us through them. Together we have expressed Family Happiness as expressed by the psalmist in Psalm 128 (Psalter No. 360, vs. 5), "Thou shalt see God's kingdom prosper all thy days, till life shall cease, thou shalt see thy children's children; on Thy people, Lord, be peace."

Roger and Peggy Kamphuis

Larry and Darlene Bertsch

Tim Bertsch

Terri Bertsch

and 3 grandchildren.

Forbes, N.D.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 24, 1976, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. RALPH PASTOOR, hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary. We, their grateful children, thank and praise our Covenant God for them and for using them to instruct us to walk in the fear of His name. Our prayer is that He may continue to bless them in the coming years, both for each other and for us.

Their grateful children.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Noordyke

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Pastoor

Mr. & Mrs. James Gerritsen

and 10 grandchildren

and 1 great-grandchild

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 4, 1976, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. JOHN B. LUBBERS, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their children, are thankful to our covenant heavenly Father for them and for all He has provided us through them. It is our prayer that they may experience God's blessing in the years to come.

Bernard Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Lubbers

Marvin Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Visser

Genevieve Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Elders

Evelyn Lubbers

Lillian Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Lubbers

and 10 grandchildren.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, wishes to express its sympathy to Mrs. Roger Berends, one of its members, in the loss of her mother, MRS. HARM WUSTMAN. May our God comfort her and her family in this time of sorrow.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15).

The Ladies Society of the
First Protestant Reformed Church
of Holland, Michigan.

Mrs. G. Wassink, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Due to our decision to add a fourth teacher to our Staff, the SOUTH HOLLAND PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL is accepting applications for the position. Anyone interested should write or phone Mr. Menno Poortenga, 18425 Oakwood Ave., Lansing, Illinois 60438. Phone: (312) 474-0675.

News From Our Churches

A special event occurred recently — a piece of news was received from our church in Prospect Park, New Jersey. A special event took place there recently. Rev. den Hartog's family increased in size by one,

Jonathan Craig, on April 18. In all fairness to Classis West we should also note that family expansions took place this spring in the parsonages in South Holland, Illinois, and Randolph, Wisconsin.

And, speaking of news, none has been received since last August from our churches in Doon, Iowa; Forbes, North Dakota; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Lynden, Washington; and Prospect Park, New Jersey (the birth news came via a third party). Holland, Michigan, sent bulletins once, and Edmonton twice last fall. This editor would appreciate hearing from all the churches.

Our church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, has made the following trio: Rev. W. Bekkering, Rev. M. Kamps, and Rev. G. Van Baren.

The First Church (Grand Rapids) bulletin reported on a response to the cassette tape ministry carried on by First Church, received from a listener in Rhodesia who borrowed a sermon tape on "The Perseverance of the Saints" and desired to obtain more of these tapes. The listener obtained our address in a copy of "The Standard Bearer" loaned to him by another party. The Rhodesian listener would like to order more of our materials but is unable to send money out of the country as the banks there will not give foreign currency drafts. It is always amazing to see how our materials are found all over the world.

Rev. Kuiper has spent the last three Sundays of April in Edmonton. Rev. Kortering was scheduled to go for the first three Sundays in May. At last report Rev. Moore expected to take up his labors there about the end of May.

Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan, has a nice custom of presenting Psalters to those young people who have completed or "graduated" from Sunday School. Faith Church's building committee has caught the "spring cleaning fever" — they scheduled Saturday morning, May 22, as the day for clean-up of the church site grounds. Volunteers were sought to come out for this work to keep the grounds looking as neat as possible.

Spring seems to be one of the "busy seasons" in our churches. A great number of lectures, mass meetings, and fund-raising events are held across the land. Some examples of this annual burst of activity follow. The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School in Doon, Iowa, schedules several chapels each

year in Doon Church and invites parents and friends of the school to meet with the students and staff. Rev. Mark Hoeksema addressed one of these chapel meetings in early March. The Men's Society of South Holland Church sponsored a public lecture on March 25. Rev. David Engelsma spoke on the subject, "Marriage and Divorce." Rev. Engelsma lectured in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on April 1, on the topic "A Reformed Look at Pentecostalism." Covenant Christian High School Choir journeyed from Grand Rapids to South Holland on April 2nd to present a concert there. The Spring Mass Meeting of the Men's League was held on April 4. Rev. M. Joostens spoke on "How Do We See Ourselves in the Light of the Beatitudes?" The Classis East Office Bearers' Conference was held on April 6. Prof. H. Hanko spoke on "When Family Discipline Fails, When Should Church Discipline Be Applied?" The Redlands, California, Church Choral Society presented the cantata "Hallelujah! What A Saviour" on April 15th. Refreshments were served after the program. Hope Choral Society (Walker, Michigan) presented their Spring program on Easter Sunday evening. Two more League Meetings in the Grand Rapids area: Mr. & Mrs. League was addressed by Rev. J. Heys on April 20 on the subject, "Recognizing the Work of the Holy Spirit in our Lives." Ladies League met on April 27. Rev. H. Veldman spoke on "The Power of Unceasing Prayer." Rev. Veldman has been campaigning this year to combine some of these league meetings. So far he has not met with a great deal of success. All of these lectures and meetings do place quite a load on our ministers who are asked to speak for these events. Prof. H. Hanko mentioned that he gave his 225th speech this Spring. If my figures are correct, that means Prof. Hanko has averaged a speech a month over his 20 years in the ministry. These speeches are in addition to bringing the Word in regular worship services and in addition to all of the regular work of our ministers.

While I have not run out of lectures and meetings to report, I have used up the reporting space. Continued next month. . . .

K.G.V.