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My Impressions of Covenant Christian High

Impressions of Our Seminary

Friendship
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Thou Shalt Love the Lord

The words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," are not new to any of us, yet I wonder how often we really understand what they imply. Thou shalt LOVE the Lord. What really is love?

Perhaps the question is somewhat obtuse, and the answer even more so, but there is an answer to be found.

For the purpose of legitimacy Webster was consulted, with dubious success. According to the dictionary Love is: "The benevolence attributed to God as being like a father's affection to his children; (or) men's adoration of God." This is all very nice, but actually tells us about love, rather than telling us what love is.

We can look around us for a definition of love also. Right now approximately ninety percent of the girls reading this are paying only half-attention to what I am saying. They're half-thinking/dreaming about the man in their lives. I think it hardly necessary to point out where the boys' thoughts are. The physical attraction of boy to girl, though very normal and wonderful, is hardly love in its truest sense. Nor is love the purple passion slobbered from every billboard and television set in the land. Love is much greater, much purer, much more exciting than that.

God Himself has given us an accurate definition of love: In the first epistle general of John, chapter four, verse sixteen we read: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love is the dwelling of God in man and man in God THROUGH God.

This means that love is not just a dormant feeling to keep us warm on a cold night, or secure in life's crises. Love is that, of course, but it is much more than that. Love, as the indwelling of God in man, manifests itself in overt acts. Christ says in Matthew twenty-two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, (and) . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love manifests itself in active obedience to God's law (with the mind); total, singular allegiance unto Him (with the soul); and in love to our fellow Christian. One aspect of God's love, or, rather, our love toward Him, cannot be completely separated from the other, nor can any aspect function as an independent unit; yet I cannot help but wonder if, in the concern about the aspects of our love already mentioned, we do not often ignore the love of the heart.

When questioned about your love for God, I am reasonably certain that each one of you would not deny that you love Him. You go to a Christian school, are faithful in attending church, catechism, et cetera. You have most of the overt manifestations of love of God.

But what is inside? Do you walk with God? As you grope for the strands of consciousness in the early hours of the dawn, do you feel Him near? When the wind brushes your face with the bristles of her brush as you walk down the street, do you feel Him near? When your heart fills with the almost-ache of gladness, do you feel Him near? Do you feel that ache of inexpressible joy when your thoughts turn to Him? Do you ever long for Heaven?

Is God with you as you pile high the books and head for class with a sigh? Do you feel Him near as you turn toward home at the end of day? Is He near you through each step of the way?

Do YOU walk with God?

Loving God with all your heart is as conscious an act as obeying His laws with your mind and strength, and as aware an act as believing His existence with our mind and soul. It is as vital an act as the loyalty of soul-love. Loving God with your heart means rejoicing in Him through each moment, through each day. It is a constant, conscious awareness of His love toward you, and a constant heart-aching for Him. It is a conscious yearning toward Him, yet a constant awareness of His presence in you. Loving God with all your heart is, simply, constantly walking with Him.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

Do YOU walk with God?

C.R.
Editor's note:
The column, "Current Events and Comments" will not appear in this issue due to the fact that copy was not received on time.

Features

The following three articles were requested to give you, our reader, a sampling of student thought on our new schools. This has been and is a milestone year in Protestant Reformed education. With our new high school and extended seminary we are verging on total Protestant Reformed education. The success or failure of our schools rests with each and every one of you. With God's help let us continue to strive for the instruction of our youth in the Truth and the preservation of God's Church here on earth through this Truth.

Ed.

MY IMPRESSIONS OF COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH
by CAROL DYKSTRA

Covenant Christian is not merely a "school," a place of higher education for Christian young people. To me, Covenant Christian means Christian fellowship, understanding, unity, friendship; all of which, and more, stem from the very basic element - love. Not the kind of "love" where a person is required to wear a certain style of clothes in order to be in the "in crowd." And not the kind of "Christian love" where when you happen to leave your purse lying in the girls' locker room for a few minutes, and return to find your wallet and six dollars missing. No, this is not the "love" to which I am referring. From a positive standpoint; Christian love is friendly hellos constantly interchanging throughout the day; understanding teachers, always willing and able to help out when the going gets rough, granting just a few extra days on that five page composition, already due yesterday. And Christian love means sharing your lunch with someone who forgot his. One could site many passages from Scripture which plainly reveal how necessary it is to show forth that love which God has so bountifully shed abroad in our hearts. One example could be found in I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God . . . He that loveth not knoweth not God . . .” And in Heb. 13:1 we read, "Let brotherly love continue."

Another aspect about Covenant Christian High which drew my attention was the fact that everyone knows everyone else. There is no one attending Covenant about whom I could say, "well, I can't remember ever meeting her" or "his name doesn't seem to ring a bell." We're all friends.

Now although Covenant Christian is not "insurmountable" with respect to its athletic attempts, and it may never reach the title "Class A" as far as the student body is concerned, we have something far richer and far more rewarding. Of all the many schools which I have attended in my lifetime, Covenant Christian, with its student and administrative body is one of the very few which I can say holds true Christian love. . . . A blessing for which we can and should be truly thankful. Then let us be reminded of its importance by the 13th verse of I Cor. 13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
It was a big jump from the crowded, bustling hallways and classrooms of the other Christian high schools to Covenant Christian. The landing gave one a jolt; things were so different. Now that there has been sufficient time for a recovery from that leap, I'll take a look at the new surroundings.

I found that, because many of the classes were small, there was almost a feeling of having a private tutor as a teacher. The teachers are often able to give an unusual amount of individual help to students, when this is needed. It seems to me that the teachers themselves are well qualified to teach at the high school level. It is my opinion that the teachers at Covenant are giving us a good education.

The educational tools that are at the students' and the teachers' disposal are excellent. Covenant has a modern language lab, which gives students (and any interested teachers) a chance to hear the language they are studying as it should be spoken. A science lab, which in my opinion is at least equal to that found in any other Christian high school, is also there for use. It is very well equipped for experiments and study helps in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and other sciences. Finally, Covenant has a library which, although presently lacking somewhat in the area of fiction, is stocked with a comprehensive supply of reference materials for those students who actually study.

Being entirely truthful about the matter, there aren't that many students at Covenant who don't study. Yet, studying isn't the only thing about which a school must be concerned. When Covenant was still in the planning stages, we, as its future occupants were greatly worried about the idea of not having sports. Sports have always been a part of high school life, and they would have been missed very much. We are glad that Covenant has been able to field a cross-country team and a basketball team this year. We hear that baseball is also planned for next spring. I know I speak with the backing of every student at Covenant when I thank those who have worked to make this possible, especially Mr. David Korborn.

We have not been able to come up with a name for our teams, but we hope to do so soon. I think we are developing a school spirit, and this is good. As our teams compete with other schools, both our athletes and our students are given one of the best opportunities they will ever encounter to witness as young Christians. This is possible through an exhibition of Christian sportsmanship and conduct, and a loyalty to Covenant Christian and to that for which it stands.

And for what does Covenant Christian High stand? The expressed purpose and reason for the existence of our high school is to provide covenant seed with a truly religious education. As a student I can appreciate the fact that teaching according to that principle and showing God's glory in all things, is not an easy task for a teacher. It is a task which requires much study and thought. I think the teachers at Covenant are doing an excellent job in this difficult area. Sometimes, as a teacher talks with a class, it strikes me that I wouldn't be getting a certain idea at another school. The ideas taught are distinctly Protestant Reformed in doctrine and principles of Christian living. As an aid in the latter, we are also having a chapel series entitled "Christian Youth in an Apostate Age." We have already had several inspiring messages, and more are planned.

I'm told that every piece of written material must have an appropriate ending. I think I satisfy this demand when I say that I believe Covenant Christian High School is fulfilling its goals admirably, and if it continues to do so, it will become a truly great school, in every sense of the word.
In my opinion there are three things which characterize our seminary—work, more work, and more work yet. Sounds rather sarcastic, doesn’t it? Perhaps, but at times this is all we seminary students can see. When the professors tell us that good grades are given only to those students who, because they are studying so much, are losing weight and have dark circles around their eyes, then we all start to feel this way. But if that is the only impression which is left with you, you will have a very narrow and mistaken view of our seminary. The fact is, there are many fascinating and rewarding aspects of the life of the seminarian.

Last summer a new program was launched providing for a pre-sem course to be taught alongside of the regular seminary course. The reason for such a program is that our churches have a shortage of ministers and that this shortage will soon become critical, due to the fact that five of our ministers are nearing retirement age. Adopting this program would reduce the training of our ministers from seven to six years, thereby making ministers available sooner. It was felt that although a four-year college pre-sem course is recommendable, it is not absolutely essential. Coinciding with this was the sentiment that our seminary professors were quite capable of teaching the courses needed to gain admission into the seminary. Under the new program, then, the four years of college will be cut to three years and be taught by the seminary professors. The three years of seminary training will remain the same.

The effects of this program are already visible. This fall seven eager new faces graced the seminary with their presence, instead of the customary one or two. These include six pre-sem students and one full-fledged seminary student. Compared to the enrollment of other seminaries across the country, ours is still very small. But in light of the number enrolled in recent years and the size of our denomination, seven is a large number.

What does this all mean? Perhaps God has planned in His counsel that our churches will once more grow numerically. Perhaps He will give us ministers enough so that we will be able to send out missionaries to proclaim the glorious Gospel to “all nations.” Perhaps this large enrollment in our seminary is the means by which God will start to realize this. Let that be our prayer!

As stated in the outset, our seminary is characterized by work. I’ll try not to be so facetious this time and give you a true picture of the nature of our studies. The work load which I myself have is about equal to that which every other student carries. This means seven subjects or nineteen credit hours. Nineteen credit hours involves nineteen hours per week of classes plus two to three hours of preparation for every hour of classtime. Add these all up and you might start to understand why I started the article the way I did.

One thing is a constant source of frustration to the students. Since no assignments are given out, the student is merely expected in his studies to keep ahead of the professor’s lectures. The student is at the same time expected to recite in class. Recitation is not from notes and textbooks which you have before you, but from what you have already learned. Here is the catch. Sometimes the professors cover twice as much material as you had anticipated and suddenly you find yourself unprepared. Then come the bombarding questions and there you sit with a silly grin on your face trying to decide whether to tell him the unforgiv-
able truth or bluff your way through. The trouble is, neither one works.

But seminary life is not all sweat and tears. It also has its light sides. Many humorous situations arise in class due to various reasons. These reasons in turn point to a certain few who know how to take advantage of certain situations. Then, of course, there is the coffee break. Fifteen minutes of student complaining clothed in witty remarks offers a welcome break in the day.

Reflecting briefly on the professors, we must not fail to recognize their ability. True, their formal education stopped with graduation from seminary, but their informal education has never stopped. At times, we students are amazed at the amount of knowledge these two men have obtained. But, more important, they also have the wisdom to use this knowledge effectively.

Student-professor relations are also incredible. Never have we students experienced such a concern on any professor’s part for the student body. They know just when and how to encourage a frustrated student. They also know how to put us in our proper places when the need arises. A warm, cordial feeling prevails between students and professors which greatly facilitates our studies.

As far as the academic level is concerned, our seminary rates with the best. We are often criticized for our small faculty. How, they reason, can only two men be qualified to thoroughly teach all the subjects which are necessary to prepare one for the ministry? The call today is for specialization, where one becomes an expert in a particular branch of theology. In a certain sense, this would be nice. But our seminary, because of its size, has advantages which no larger institution could possibly have. Nowhere can one receive virtually private tutoring in a larger specialized institution. Our smallness also has its assets.

Another aspect concerning the academic level is the stress laid on “self-education.” Education must not be confined to the classroom, nor must it stop after graduation. Education is a continual process which never is completed. The success of any minister rests upon his desire and capability of “self-
education.” This idea is drilled into our heads time and time again. Our studies are also set up with this fundamental principle in mind. Assignments in outside reading, papers, and reports, which the student must do on his own, are frequently given. The seminary merely gives one the tools with which the goal of “self-education” can be carried out.

Another aspect, closely related to this, is the attempt on the professors’ part to make the students think. A successful minister must be able to think. This involves a thorough analyzing of situations and insights into those situations. Class discussion is set up with this principle in mind. Many thought-provoking questions are thrown our way merely for this purpose.

One aspect of our seminary still needs to be emphasized, and, perhaps, is the most important aspect. We students are thoroughly trained in the Reformed heritage. This does not mean that we stand upon tradition alone. Rather, we stand only upon the Holy Scripture with which our Reformed tradition is in agreement. God’s Word is the very foundation of our training. That God’s Word alone must direct our life and teachings is the basic principle from which our seminary operates.

This is the impression of our Protestant Reformed Seminary through the eyes of one of its students. It is this student’s wish that God will provide more young men for seminary training and that He will, at the same time, continually guide them into all truth.
THE ANTIDOTE AGAINST YOUTHFUL LUSTS

Youthful lusts are a pernicious evil under the sun; they are such also in the church of Jesus Christ.

That these lusts are not to be taken in a limited sense of sexual impurities is evident, we saw the former time, from the very wording itself. However, that these lusts take in the entire scope of the vanity which is peculiar to youth ought to be evident from what the great apostle enjoins Timothy further in this passage from his pen. Writes he,

"... and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

II Timothy 2:22b

It is evident that fleeing is not enough; Timothy must do something very positive. He must not only "flee," he must also pursue, "follow after." He must seek to obtain in his own personal life the positive Christian virtues. This is not a matter of mere morality, whether the new morality or the old morality. Neither of the two is Christian. This is a matter of putting off of the old man, and of putting on of the new man. It is a matter which only they can do who are in fellowship with Christ by a true faith, and are partakers of His anointing, making them prophets, priests and kings of God, so that they can place their whole life as a sacrifice acceptable to God, and with a free conscience may fight against sin in this life and afterwards reign with him over all creatures. This is not the lower and higher in man, but this is the old versus the new!

Thus we get things in perspective!

We must flee youthful lusts — and pursue righteousness.

How can pursuing righteousness be an effective solution against youthful lusts? What is this righteousness? How are we to pursue it?

It ought to be evident that Paul is placing the most general and comprehensive concept at the front here. If one does not pursue and follow after righteousness then there is also no pursuing peace with all who call upon God with a pure heart. Righteousness is either the righteousness prepared for us by God in Christ's death and resurrection so that we are justified by faith, without any merit of ours, or it refers to the grace of the Holy Spirit whereby we actually keep the commandments of God from a thankful heart. Fear God and keep His commandments. This is the whole duty of man. Jesus says, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

Righteousness is then that we stand right with God according to His law in every dimension of our existence. Righteousness is to stand right with God in relationship to our fellow man, and in relationship to all things in heaven and on earth.
If this is righteousness then it is also evident that one cannot pursue righteousness without also following after faith and love.

Faith is here subjective confidence and trust in God, and His mercy, as He has prepared for us the righteousness in the Cross of Calvary. It is that confidence that our sins are forgiven. Seek this forgiveness daily. It is walking in the confidence that God is propitious to us because of the expiation of guilt in the blood of the Lamb. Such faith we must follow after. We must walk in it. Only by walking in this faith will we follow after righteousness as a new creature.

On the other hand “love” is the motivation for walking in faith. Faith is energized by love. The Holy Spirit has shed this love abroad in your hearts. This love is the driving force of faith in the keeping of the commandments of God. For love is the fulfillment of the law.

He who does all this follows after peace!

He desires to walk at peace with his neighbor. His heart beats in unison with God and with the brethren. Such is the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God who is above all, in all and through all! Then all is under the aspect of heaven, and before the face of God. It is then a matter of prayer!

Yes, there will be a place of retreat. It will be a constant battle in the closet, while we work, toil, and struggle. It will be a matter of constant prayer also in our refreshing and invigorating outings as young people. But the overtones need not then be mere fun and frolicking. There is a difference between mere fun and preparation for the battlefield of life. For we are in the militant church. Basically the problems of youth are not youth-problems, but they are the problems of man, of the Christian, as he is prophet, priest and king under God in Christ, fighting the threefold enemy — the Devil, the world, and our own flesh.

It will require a very prayerful life not to be carried away by youthful lusts!

We will need to seek the fellowship not merely of fellow young people. We will need to seek peace with all who call upon the Lord with a pure heart. We will seek the fellowship of the pure in heart. The circle must not remain too limited. Basically the circle is very wide in the church services. In our societies we have our special little circles. It is limited by the consideration of age-limit, marital ties, and sex. This is not so in the divine worship service. Here is not the natural tie, but the spiritual: all who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

When a young preacher seeks only the fellowship of the young in the congregation, he is likely to meet the fiasco of a Rehoboam. He needs the pillars in the church. Young men can very well benefit by associating with older men, and profit from their accumulated wisdom and experience. Timothy must seek peace with all who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

Then he is in good company. Then we are in good company. It is a good antidote against youthful lusts.

The older men and women in the congregation are a good influence.

The adornment of the old man is his wisdom and godliness. The adornment of the young man is his strength. Both are needed.

The solution to youthful lusts is seeking peace with all who walk in the ways of the Lord — righteousness, faith, and love in the Holy Spirit.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD and depart from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)
CRITIQUE

SHIRLEY GRITTERS

FRIENDSHIP

There was a time when friendship was a fairly simple relationship. A friend was someone you liked and who liked you, someone with whom you shared your feelings and experiences and spent a good deal of time.

Today it seems that friendship is much more complicated. People try to attach too many strings to it. Friendship is a means by which you acquire status and become one of the In-group. A friend is not someone you like, but someone who is convenient for you.

Because of the number of meaningless relationships these days, we should understand what true friendship actually implies. It can probably be best understood by saying first what friendship is not.

Friendship is not self-centered. A friend isn't demanding and selfish. A friend doesn't exaggerate his own qualities or boast about himself and his accomplishments. He doesn't rejoice over the problems of others or seek to run them down. A friend isn't envious.

Friendship is not lustful. Have you ever tried to make a friendship rooted in envy or greed? Maybe you didn't like Ann as much as her swimming pool, or George as much as his new Firebird. Maybe you thought Joe was dull and boring, but found him very useful to have around when you were stuck with a chemistry problem or needed a paper to copy answers from.

Friendship is not finding fault. A friend does not judge all your actions or declare you guilty because you dated an ugly or unpopular classmate. A friend is not a jury.

Friendship is not dishonest. What would you think of a girl who told her friend that she just loved her new haircut and then behind her back breathed a sigh of relief that she was out of competition for a while?

Friendship is not a status symbol. Some people try to achieve popularity by collecting friends: one cheerleader, one brain, one athlete, etc. To them a friend is a useful step toward social stature.

Based upon any of these elements, friendship will be an insincere, shallow relationship. It will be rooted not in the love of others, but in the love of self. What a beautiful way to break up a friendship!

Friendship is two-sided. It is a reciprocal relationship in which both persons must do a lot of sharing. A friend will sacrifice valuable time to help you understand a math problem. Not only will he listen to and help you with your problems, but will also tell you his troubles. Friendship is a give-and-take relationship.

Friendship overlooks outward appearances. A friend is not ashamed to go around with a person who looks different. So what if John is unco-ordinated or Donna is pigeon-toed! Friendship is based on inner qualities and feelings and goes deeper than a person's looks.

Friendship is honest and sincere. This does not mean that one bluntly tells a friend that he hates his new pink tie, but that he tactfully hints to him that the tie doesn't compliment his red hair. A friend is not motivated by a desire to hurt his companion but by a genuine desire to help him.

Friendship is personal and intimate. A friend is a friend because he is what he is,
not what others imagine him to be. Friends tell each other their needs and desires, their ideas and their secrets. Friends share each others private sorrows and heartaches as well as their joys.

I don't mean to imply that friendship is a perfect relationship. Obviously even the best friends will have quarrels and misunderstandings. That is because by nature we are not humble and loving, but greedy, dishonest, and self-centered. We are inclined to love ourselves and hate our neighbor.

True friendship, therefore, must be rooted in the love of God. Our earthly friendships are only pictures of God's eternal covenant. They are signs of the fellowship and friend-

ship between God and His people in Christ. Only if we cultivate our friendship in His love can we understand and experience true friendship.

When we face trials and temptations and our burdens seem more than we can bear, we shouldn't be discouraged but should take everything to God in prayer. When we are weak and heavy laden, burdened with a load of care, we should count it a privilege to take it to the Lord in prayer. Even when our friends despise and forsake us, we can always turn to the Lord. In His arms He'll take and shield us, and we will find a solace there.

WHAT A FRIEND!

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**TRUTH VS. ERROR**

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

"As for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him ..." (Genesis 17:20). L. Berkhof in his *Reformed Dogmatics* (I, 31, Eerdmans, 1938) appeals in support of common grace to this text. It is popularly claimed that here is proof that God blesses all men, generally, including the reprobate. While keeping this matter in the back of your mind, consider certain interesting questions Berkhof asks in that connection.

He asks, "Does the doctrine of common grace presuppose the doctrine of a universal atonement?" We answer, it does to the mind of Prof. H. Dekker and his supporters. It does to the minds of many conscious or unconscious followers of his, including many Christian school students using the Berkhof manuals. Many adherents of common grace believe that it does, since they use the Arminian arguments relative to universal atonement to "prove" their common grace. Texts which, back in Berkhof's day, were used to argue a limited atonement, as e.g., John
3:16, over against a universal atonement, are now used to prove common grace. Now where a text of Scripture does teach particular atonement, it does not and cannot teach general grace. If John 3:16 really supports the doctrine of particular atonement, which it surely does (and not the philosophy of universal atonement), then it simply cannot support the theory of general grace. One must not run to a text teaching particular atonement to prove “general grace”! But that is exactly what the adherents of common grace have done for years! So what has happened in the minds of many common grace adherents is that in connection with these texts actually teaching particular atonement, the latter doctrine is dropped and general grace is held.

So then, yes, the doctrine of common grace does presuppose the doctrine of a universal atonement according to the Arminian position, at least. In fact, as Prof. H. Dekker has been saying, “the atonement itself is inherently universal.” That is a thoroughly Arminian statement; not a bit of it Reformed. Dekker comes to that conclusion as the result of his long years of common grace thinking. He is the most consistent exponent of common grace thinking in Reformed circles. Our Confessions, however, give place to “common” grace only in the thinking of the Arminians (Canons, III, IV, R. V.) who say “that the corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (by which they understand the light of nature), or the gifts still left them after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, namely, the evangelical or saving grace and salvation itself.

And that in this way God on his part shows himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men, since he supplies to all sufficiently the means necessary to conversion” (ital., RCH). How could all this be possible unless the atonement be universal? But if it be contended that common grace does not necessarily imply Arminianism, then why is it that since the Berkhof-era so many common grace adherents now support their philosophy with Arminianism?

Another question Berkhof asks, is, Does the doctrine of common grace “imply a denial of the fact that man is by nature subject to the wrath of God?” (ibid.) It certainly does. It implies that the wicked experiences God’s general favor, while at the same time “the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). The question is then raised as to whether this general favor is well-meaning. Support for the answer in the affirmative is sought in some such illustration as George Washington sentencing Major Andre to death, the British army officer who was agent to receive traitorous information from Benedict Arnold. He was captured and Washington signed his death warrant. This the latter did not want to do, since he had love and compassion for Andre. But many more complex and higher considerations were involved in accord with which Washington acted. He wanted to forgive Andre and could have done so. But weightier reasons prevailed. There was love, but justice prevailed over love. The point the illustration would make is that God can be both loving and condemning at the same time. He can be loving while His eternal wrath abides on the sinner. But this view casts a terrible reflection on the eternal love of God. For here we have a non-saving love shown the reprobate. It is not true that that love was, objectively, a saving love because it could have saved but so happened that it did not. It was not a saving love, and could not have saved, because it was not rooted in the atonement where alone a way is found for love, a just love, to save. A love which is not an everlasting love, which is not a saving love — what kind of love is that?

In the light of the above, it should not be maintained that when God “sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” that the unjust does not receive that good with the wrath of God abiding on him. He does. At the same time, the receiving of that good is not as such a receiving of grace. The preaching of the Gospel is also a good, one of the greatest goods, but we also know that to the just and unjust it is, respectively, a savor of life and a savor of death (II Cor. 2:14-16). So with the preaching of the Lord by His so called “general revelation” in nature, in rain and sunshine — there you have a manifestation of good — there you also have a savor of life and a savor of death. Joshua, chapter 10 teaches this. ‘The sun, moon and stars, in their courses, yea, the whole creation, will fight for the Lord’s people against His enemies . . . for all things combine to promote the salvation of the
righteous and the destruction of the wicked” (Thos. Scott). God has created sunshine and rain to be received with thanksgiving, created them a good, which actually bestow grace when received with thanksgiving, for they are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer to them who believe and know the truth (I Tim. 4:3-5). But the unjust employ these creatures in the service of selfishness and sin, and so will receive the greater damnation.

It may be said that by the sunshine and the rain God exhibits favor to the unjust. No one denies that. That’s not the issue in the common grace debate. If God exhibits favor to the unjust, you might think that by that act the unjust would learn some justice, at least just a little common-grace justice. But no, “he will not learn righteousness,” but rather “in the land of uprightness (where the Gospel is preached) he will deal unjustly” (Isa. 26:10). Surely common grace adherents must give up their appeal to this text in support of common grace doctrine! Just as they must also give up (they practically have!) any appeal to the Reformed Confessions in support of common grace. One wonders whether some are not now ready to make both of these relinquishments in order to take up entirely with Arminianism.

Where it is maintained that sunshine and rain on just and unjust are evidences of common grace, the implication is that drought and flood would also be, on just and unjust, evidence of common wrath. Hold to the idea of common grace on the unjust, and you must also of necessity hold to the idea of common wrath on the just. But grace is always particular, and so is wrath. The latter abides (remains) on the unjust alone, no matter how much rain and sunshine he receives. “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but He blesseth the habitation of the just” (Prov. 3:33). Whatever else is in, and on, the house of the wicked, sunshine, rain, the riches of kings, the curse of the Lord is in it!

Does common grace “involve a denial of man’s total depravity, and of his ability to do spiritual good?” (ibid.) The question is naturally biased toward this extra-confessional theory. If it had been worded Heidelberg-Catechism fashion, it would have raised the question as to man’s incapability of doing any good (Q. 8. Ital., RCH). Common grace denies this. Thus it denies total depravity. Adherents to common grace in this part of the Lord’s vineyard have a very weak hold, if any, on the doctrine of total depravity. They want to say that fallen man still has about him the little spark of a smoking flax which furnishes him with natural light, so that he has a natural knowledge of natural things, a natural knowledge of divine things, knows the difference between good and evil, has some regard for virtue, has a concern for law and order in the world, for a decent society, and proper outward conduct. Let’s stop here for a moment. We agree with the literal expression about that little spark. That is, we agree with it as far as it goes, but cannot accept it if it is not allowed to go farther. You see, the statement is taken from the Canons of Dort, III, IV, 4, and is used as a proof of the so called Third Point of Common Grace, that fallen man can do “civil righteousness.” But this so called proof is no proof because the remainder of that article overthrows the idea of any good in man. For the rest of the article goes on to say that not only is this light of nature insufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God and to true conversion, which is the Arminian view of common grace (and so does not enter into the common grace debate), but fallen man is incapable of using whatever natural light he has aright, even in natural and civil things. He therefore uses it wrongly (“he will deal unjustly” — Isa. 26:10). So that man’s natural light, such as it is, he corrupts, in various ways he makes it wholly polluted, and holds it down, i.e., drowns it, in unrighteousness. “Light” that is wholly polluted(!) is rendered darkness! To that we can only recall the words of Jesus, “If the light in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” Civil righteousness that is rendered unrighteousness is certainly no righteousness and leaves fallen man incapable of any good. If the “rightness” in thee be unrighteousness how awful is that unrighteousness!

(To be continued, D.V.)
from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY HENSON

Miscellaneous

On November 27, Rev. Engelsma spoke at the Loveland school in connection with Thanksgiving. His subject was "Thankfully Obey Your Parents."

On Thanksgiving evening at 8:00 Rev. Heys narrated a film presentation at First church concerning the work being done on the island of Jamaica. An offering was taken for assistance to the poor on the island.

On November 24 a singspiration was held in the Edgerton Church.

The Christmas Singspiration sponsored by the Federation Board was held on December 15 at First Church.

In order to raise funds for the coming Young People's Convention, the Southeast Society held a hayride on November 29, and the Hudsonville Young People sponsored a roller skating party at Tarry Hall on December 23.

The children of Hope School again this year took up a Christmas collection, rather than exchanging gifts. This year the money was to be given to the children in Jamaica. The school also held Christmas Chapel on December 20 at 1:00 p.m. Special numbers were presented and Professor Hanco was the speaker.

Membership

On December 29 Marlow Van Ginkel, Judy VanDen Top, and Nona Miersma from Loveland made public confession of faith.

Hope church has received the papers of Mr. Donald Mensch from the Reformed Church of Minno, South Dakota.

Mr. James Lanting has transferred from Hope to Southeast.

Birth

Mr. and Mrs. E. Medema from South Holland, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Honholt from Hudsonville, a daughter.

Marriages

Mr. Thomas J. Henson and Miss Judy Lubbers from Hudsonville on December 18.

Mr. Andrew Brummel and Miss Mary Knott from Hope on November 24.

Mr. David Poortinga and Miss Linda Potts from South Holland on November 8.

Mr. Bob Miedema from Hope and Faith Nagelkerk on November 22.

Servicemen

The address of Will Haveman from Hudsonville is:

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US 54985935
B-Student Bde, SESS
Fort Gordon, Georgia 30905

The address of Tom Greaser from Hope is:

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Barracks 257-01 173
Coast Guard Training Center
Cape May, New Jersey 08204