BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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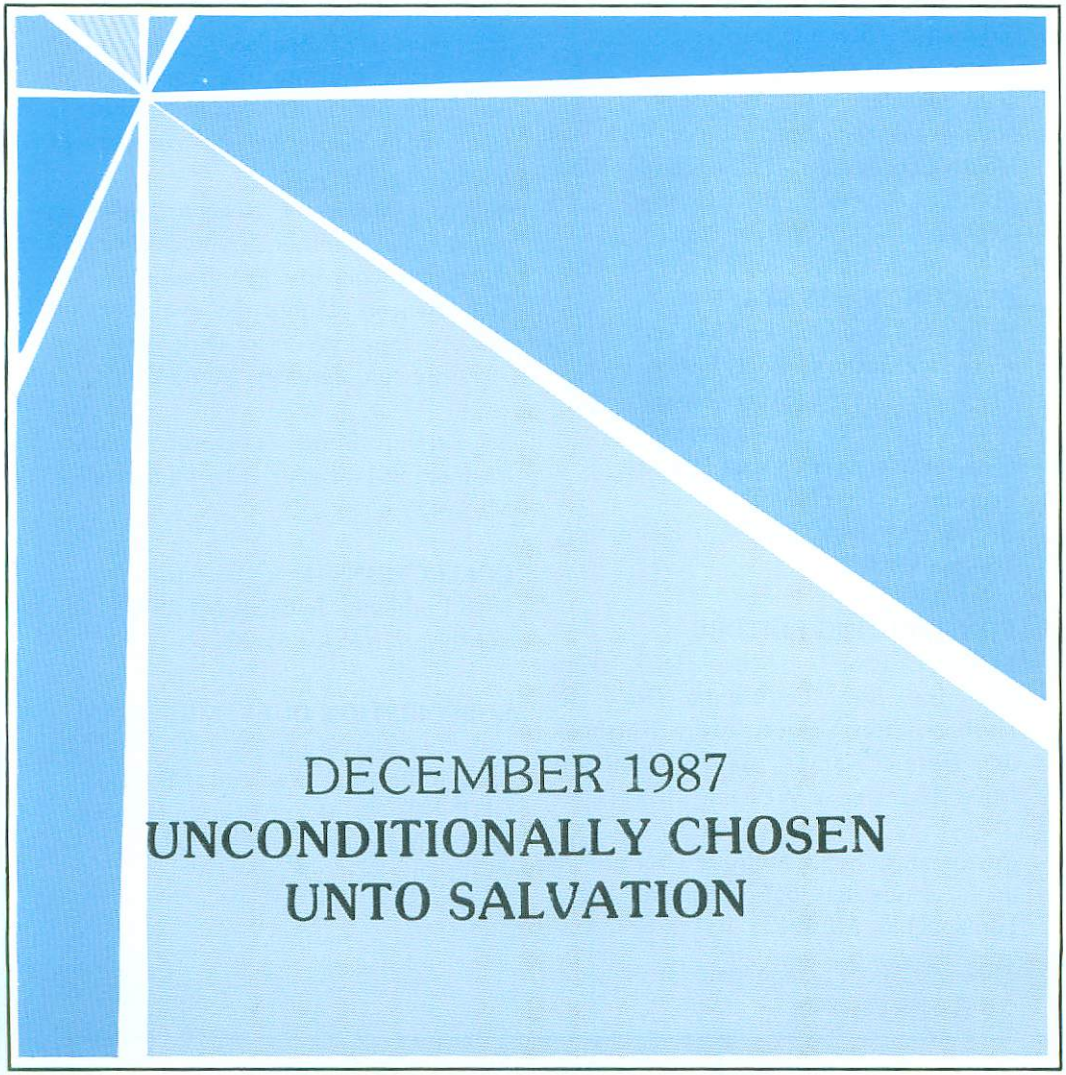

DECEMBER 1987

UNCONDITIONALLY CHOSEN UNTO SALVATION

BEACON LIGHTS

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EDITOR'S NOTES

by David Harbach

In this issue you will find two convention impressions that did not make it in time to be put in the October issue. We thank all of those writers who did contribute to the Convention issue. The Convention issue has always been a difficult one to get out by the month of October mainly because some writers are not able to get their articles to me on time, which results in delays. We have been working to solve this problem over the years and it now looks as though we will move the Convention issue to the month of November.

And in connection with the Beacon Lights coming out late we have now moved to a three month due date for all articles. That interprets into this fact, that a writer will submit an article to me, for instance in January to be published in April. We hope in this way to assure that the articles for the B.L. will be given ahead of time so that each issue will be mailed in its proper month. The staff hopes that our readers do not think adversely of our covenant youth. The truth of the matter is that those issues that have come out late are not the fault of our young people. My experience as editor shows me that the difficulty is with those of us who are older! Your prayers are needed for all of those who are involved with the Beacon Lights.

As of this writing, Joy Ophoff is no longer our secretary. She did a super job for a couple of months but her studies at Calvin College forced her to

reluctantly resign. We are sorry to see her leave the staff and do pray that our God will uphold her in her studies in college.

John Kalsbeek has also resigned as a writer for the Current Events rubric which has been renamed Issues In Our Lives. We thank him for his writing over the past few years. John is a colleague of mine at Adams Street School and I understand very well his busy life. You can be assured that he is busy in the cause of our churches. We pray God's blessing upon him in his many labors on behalf of the kingdom of God.

Editorial
A LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

Once upon a time (that's the way all stories begin) the town clerk went about the street calling out, "there is going to be a town meeting at the riverside at daybreak tomorrow". So, all the village menfolk and many inquisitive youngsters were out bright and early that morning. Each man was asking his neighbor of the purpose of that meeting. The questioning ceased as the clerk cupped his lips for everybody to hear. He said, "Mr. Abdul is buying a piece of property from Mr. Nerfet for a certain price, but he cannot pay it all today, so he will promise Mr. Abdul that he will pay it a year from today. Mr. Abdul is asking from Mr. Nerfet a pledge, or promise, to that effect. We are called here for that purpose of being witnesses."

The clerk then asked the two men if they were ready to sign a contract. They said, "We are ready." The wide-eyed youngsters gathered closer to the circle of men-witnesses to not miss a move. They say Mr. Nerfet reach into a gunny sack at his feet and lift out a very young calf, and with a sharp knife slit the calf in two pieces from head to tail. He placed the two pieces on each side of the beaten path and proceeded to walk the path between the calf halves. The kids on the edge of the crowd snickered, "a calf-half on one side and a calf-half on the other; what is this calfy business?"

The official then said in a loud clear voice, "As surely as Mr. Nerfet passes through this dead animal so surely does he promise to pass through death if he does not keep his promise to pay." The men all said, "We are all witnesses."

That kind of surety was made before there were fountain pens and printed contracts to sign. You see, it was in the early days in the time of Nahor, the father of Abraham. That was officially called, "cutting a covenant".

One day God called to Abraham and told him that He was going to make a covenant with him. His

friend-servant. Then God told him just what to prepare for that solemn occasion. He had to get a three-year old heifer; a three-year old she goat and a three-year old ram. These were familiar sacrificial animals Abraham normally used for his worship of his God. Besides the animals he was to get a turtle dove and a young pigeon. The next thing he was to do was cut the animals in half, placing a half on each side of a path; and place a whole bird on each side, not cutting them.

This Abraham did, and sat down to wait further developments. During this wait some vultures swooped down to snatch a bite from the dead beasts, but Abraham carefully guarded the lot, driving them away. About sunset God caused a deep sleep to overcome Abraham and a horror of great darkness got hold of him. In that trance God spoke the promises of inheriting that whole land of Canaan some time in the future. God then did a wonderful thing. He passed between those cloven animals and two birds by the likeness of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp to seal His covenant to His friend, Abraham. I don't know just what those things looked like, but Abraham was accustomed to God appearing as fire and smoke. The symbolism was quite plain to God-fearing Abraham.

Later on (found in Gen. 17) God established His covenant with him promising His blessing upon him and his future children to eternity. That promise was fulfilled in the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. And, as you know we are heirs to that same covenant as believers in that Son Who gave His life (suffering death) for our sakes.

So then you are covenant young people, and it can be seen if you walk in His commandments. You have become too accustomed to that term, covenant people, that you sometimes lose its deep significance. It is an awesome responsibility. Remember it was the Word of God, The Second Person, Who walked between the pieces. It is God with Whom we have to deal, the Son of God Who died for us!

Let's put it to a test. Do you act like covenant young people at break-time at your conventions? Do you behave as such in the coffee shop after catechism class? Do you purport to be such at beach parties and in parked cars? Do you "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Those are not my words, but that was Jesus' advice to His hearers in Galilee, and it still is!

With love,
Your concerned Gramps

God will not change. The restless years may bring
Sunlight and shadow, the glories of the spring,
And silent gloom of sunless winter hours;
Joy mixed with grief, sharp thorns with fragrant flowers.
Earth lights may shine awhile, and then grow dim.
But God is true—there is no change in Him.

Author Unknown

Critique
VEXING OUR RIGHTEOUS SOULS

by Bernie Kamps

Does your conscience speak? Are you troubled if you live as the world?

For one of God's elect to live as the world is for sure a person who is disturbed and troubled. His life is like a spiritual schizophrenic; he is living two lives. His life is very difficult as he tries to remain under the yoke of darkness and the burden of guilt. To live the lie is a troubled existence. In fact, the beating your soul will take as it is kicked and punished by the world, will leave your soul without any joy or spiritual contentment; as a slave is beaten down before a wicked master.

Have you afflicted your soul in this way? Have you found pleasure in iniquity and carnality? Does your soul feel empty after frequenting worldly entertainment?

II Peter 2:7-8 illustrates how Lot's soul was vexed by the evil in Sodom and Gommorah. "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. For the righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."

Lot grappled with the love of Sodom and Gommorah to the point where he didn't desire to leave its filth and had to be led out by the hand of angels.

We must take notice of how being active in sinful endeavors, no matter how small or carnally delicious, paves the way for the repeating of sin as the violation of God's holy word intensifies.

You see, we are a clever people. We rationalize that by attending church faithfully and being active in the church, automatically justifies our sinful walk of life. Another common justification of ours is when we are younger we think that we will eventually walk through the door of spiritual maturity and through time arrive as a good-standing, sin sensitive member of God's Church. How we love to deceive ourselves!

Let's get angry with ourselves! Let's have an holy anger at our sin and quit excusing ourselves by comparing our lives with that of others! Our walk is just between us and the Lord, so go and stand in His presence and in His light through prayer! Let God examine your soul and heart and live a sanctified life, hating sin for which we are so often clamoring. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." I Peter 2:1 This is not to say we must minimize our desire of fleshly things for it will always be a struggle, but the struggle will be made easier if we don't vex our souls and love the liberty with which Christ has set us free. Find that inner peace that can only come from living a

life of repentance and gratitude. We must worship God in all that we do and seek the peace, joy and contentment of Jerusalem rather than pleasures of sin of Sodom and Gommorah. God blesses those of His people who walk a sanctified life and He only can and will give true meaning to the joy in our souls.

Convention Discussion Groups

by Jim Daling

The discussion groups of the 1987 convention were held in a different manner from previous conventions. This new format turned out to be very beneficial for most, if not all of the young people. All of the conventioneers were divided into 20 groups, then each group discussed a topic for 20 minutes. Following this discussion, a reporter from each group told all the young people his or her group's decisions.

The topics of Tuesday, August 11 were: 1) When to be on your own; 2) Christian work ethics; 3) Communication in the Christian family; 4) Peer pressure. Although each young person did not get to discuss every topic, we all learned what was discussed and decided by way of the informative summaries given by the group reporters.

The groups in which I participated discussed the second and fourth topics. What follows are some of the answers which were given in our discussion of these two topics. We decided that it is the duty of any Christian to work to the best of his or her ability in a fitting way. In this, we receive the opportunity to set an example of the hope that is in us to our fellow workers. We also decided that there are several occupations that a Christian may not be allowed to work at. These included labor union jobs, dangerous jobs such as race car driving, and a job in acting. In our second discussion, someone stated that peer pressure is a strong force from other classmates forcing us to conform to their ways. We decided that this is a very real problem in our schools, for it causes strife and envy among classmates. Each young person learned that peer pressure is unavoidable, but that we must fight the bad and do only God's will.

These two topics, along with all the others were well chosen. This frank discussion was beneficial to our young people.

From the Pastor's Study
UNCONDITIONALLY CHOSEN UNTO SALVATION

by Rev. John A. Heys

Although it is today universally denied, young people, the truth of man's total depravity is a basic truth of Scripture. God told Adam that if he would eat of the forbidden fruit he would die that very day. Paul, in Ephesians 2:1 tells the Ephesians that before God quickened them, that is, made them alive, they were dead. And he, and God when He spoke to Adam, meant spiritual death. Man became totally dead spiritually. And even as a dead man cannot see, hear, talk, walk or do anything physical, so man became in Adam spiritually incapable even of wanting salvation, believing in God, "accepting" a kind "offer" of salvation from God. Total is complete, one hundred percent. It means that Adam became absolutely spiritually dead the day he sinned by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And because he became spiritually dead, not merely weak or sick spiritually, all the children he brought forth and are now brought forth, come from their parents spiritually dead. They cannot even want to be saved from this spiritual incapability of doing anything pleasing in God's sight. As we saw last time, except a man be born again, that is, be given spiritual life, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven or want anything to do with it and its King. And, by God's grace, our churches are among the few churches today that believe this truth and are truly Reformed in all our preaching and teaching.

We do well to bear in mind that not only do we read in Scripture that God chose all the members of the body of Christ, His Holy Catholic Church, but also that He, before the foundation of the world, determined to make these, and these only, "holy and without blame before Him". Look up Ephesians 1:4 once again.

Denying this basic truth, there is an universally widespread doctrine concerning our salvation that insists that God chooses sinners, or if you will, elects them, **after** they accept Christ, and thus after spiritually dead men do perform a spiritual deed. God invites people, who cannot hear, cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven, have hearts that hate God and enjoy only that which God hates, to come and get a wonderful spiritual gift. They want an election in time, determined not by the sovereign, almighty God, but by a spiritually dead man. As Billy Graham states it: "You can be a born again Christian, if you only ask for it." In salvation man comes first according to most churches today. God wants to save. He sent His Son to make it possible; but He cannot do it and will not do it until we let Him do so. That doctrine insults the living

God and does not render to Him the praise due to His name.

The truth we must maintain, and our prayer to God is that when you take our places as fathers and mothers, and some of you as elders and deacons in His church, you maintain the basic truth of Unconditional Election that Paul presents in Ephesians 1:4 in these words: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." That surely means that He chose us before we were born. We were not born before the foundation of the world, were we?

To defend themselves in this lie many churches say that this means that before the foundation of the world God foreknew who would accept, and therefore chose them. They will misinterpret Romans 8:29 where we read: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." But notice that Paul does not say that God foreknew their works. He foreknew certain people. He knew them in love in His eternal counsel. What is more, notice likewise that He predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son. That means that they come into this world as **not** conformed to the image of His Son. It means that in no way and to no degree do they, when they come into this life, conform to the image of Christ. Otherwise God would not have to conform them. It means that they teach that there is a spark of Christ's life in them that God did not put there, or did not decide to eternally give to them until they produced it themselves because of the "invitation" in the "free offer". Somehow, someway - and you can be sure the devil did not enable them — dead people manage to make themselves alive. It means, as we hear so much today, that spiritually dead men accept the offer and keep God from disappointments and from sending His Son for nothing to all that agony of hell that He suffered on His cross. It means that Christ did not die for certain, definite people but only to make it possible that dead men act, and earn salvation by that act, of accepting an invitation. They will deny that when you confront them with it. But a conditional theology, one that insists that there is a prerequisite that we have to fulfill before God will choose us and save and give us that which Christ earned, makes God dependent upon man. God is going to take a back seat. O, He loves everybody in the world and wants to save them all, and that love is so great that He is willing to step down and let man decide whether or not he is going to be saved. That is not praising God but degrading Him in our speech. This simply means that in a very, very important and significant matter man rules God and can keep Him from getting done what He wants to have take place.

Remember and never let it slip from you that believing in Christ is an holy act. Believing is an holy act which we were chosen to perform, not one we performed and therefore were chosen. And again, how can an unholy person who died spiritually in Adam perform an holy act? How can an unholy person fulfill an holy condition, supply an holy prerequisite?

Now you may safely take the last two words of Ephesians 1:4 and add them to verse 5 so that we read: ". . . that we should be holy and without blame before Him. In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Yes, it was in His love that God chose us. And it is very important that we be before Him holy and without blame. This being before Him in holiness means also that we love Him. But what Paul has in mind here is not our love to God, but God's love to us that predestinated us and chose us to be made holy and without blame in Christ. His love does not leave any possibility of those whom He loves not being saved, because they failed to do something. If He really loved us, and He did, He would not make our salvation a doubtful, risky and hopeless thing. The Arminian heresy does insult God and dishonors Him. Unconditional Election is the second of the Five Points of Calvinism. It is a truth we must hold to with all our strength.

There are conditions to our salvation; but they are conditions that God Himself fulfills. Christ did all the work. He paid for our sins. He performed the works of the law which we failed to begin to do. As far as man is concerned we must maintain that his salvation is unconditional. Deny that and we foolishly but also sinfully say that a dead man can do something. We deny total depravity. We say to God that He was mistaken when He told Adam that he would die THAT DAY that he sinned. We say to Paul that he was wrong, and we deny that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. For then Paul was wrong too, when he told the Ephesians that God quickened them, that is, gave them spiritual life. They really were not dead but only greatly incapacitated. Paul did not see things right and was not infallibly guided when he wrote that. Make total depravity mean every part of man but not every part completely; scoff at the idea that total means absolute; take the smallest part away from total to defend your conditional theology and maintain a sincere invitation of God in the hope that dead men will respond, and then you cannot maintain an unconditional election; but you must say that our salvation depends on what we do and not what God did and does and decided eternally. If election is unconditional, and it is, then believing is also unconditionally given to us. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4, we were chosen **unto** believing and not because we believed. Let us, young people, go back to that verse. God chose us so that we would become holy and without blame, not because we had a spark of holiness left and cannot be blamed for not "accepting" God's offer, and of turning down His "invitation".

Yes, we believed that there is a God. But the devil believes that too. But saving faith is that gift of God to us that causes us to put our trust in Him as our Saviour in Christ and His cross.

Denying Unconditional Election we deny that God saves us from unbelief, unholiness and guilt. Denying Unconditional Election we believe that we save ourselves. We by our own power save ourselves from not believing in Christ, and therefore God chooses to save us from our punishment. We save ourselves from unbelief and God saves us from what we deserve because of what we did before we changed our own hearts and we gave Him the green light to go ahead and save us. God then is not the Alpha, the beginning of our salvation, but only the Omega, the end of it. And then God lies to us when He says that He is the Alpha. Revelation 21:6. Faith is not His gift to us but our gift to Him. When Paul wrote the

Ephesians that God quickened them because they were dead, the denial of Unconditional Theology teaches that both God and Paul come to us with an untruth.

Any doctrine that teaches that total depravity does not mean one-hundred-percent lack of spiritual life, an absolute incapacity to even want salvation from the power of sin, reveals that very depravity. One who cannot and will not say that fallen man can do nothing good in God's sight, shows that he is depraved as far as this truth of God's word is concerned. It shows that one dares to say that God was mistaken and did not speak the truth to Adam, or move Paul to speak the truth when he wrote Ephesians 2:1. That doctrine of conditional theology dares to oppose God. It claims to proclaim more fully and wonderfully God's love to mankind than we as churches do. But actually it performs an act of hatred against God. It is not love to God to say that He has to wait, and is limited as to how many He can save, by the will of a creature that depends upon Him for every breath of life. It is not love of God to say that He misspoke Himself to Adam and let Paul put in His holy word a lie.

No, young people, hold on to the truth of Scripture that God chose us in Adam before the foundation of the world, and chose to make us holy and without blame before Him. That means that we did have blame. It means that we were not holy. If there was something in us before God saved us, that made it possible for us to want to be saved, we had a spark of holiness, a good, holy desire. And because of this good, holy desire which we were able to produce and show, God chose to save us in Christ. That means that fallen man could give God something, and that he had something that God had not given him. Then we raise men above God. Man gives God something. God needs something that man has and has not been given him by God.

Let us instead render all the glory to God that is His. The truth of Unconditional Election does that. We sing that so beautifully in our Psalter versification of Psalm 139 with these words: (Psalter number 383:1.)

All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom Lord has fashioned me;

I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.

Our election we owe to God, and all our salvation, including our desire for it, is His gift to us. He chose to make us desire salvation and did not choose us because we brought to Him the desire for it. He is the Alpha, the beginning of ALL of our salvation.

Little Children, little children, Who love their Redeemer
Are the jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own.
Like the stars of the morning, His bright crown adorning,
They shall shine in their beauty, Bright gems for His crown.
Let Youth Praise Him #115 vs. 2

Focus on Christian Women

Responsibilities of Conception V: Spiritual Training in Social Living

by Mrs. Brands

No man is an island." Every human being is created with an innate need for fellowship. God has created us as covenant creatures with a need for friendship first of all with Himself and then with other people. The contacts we have with others we call our social life, whether those contacts be few or many.

Our social life is a many-sided complex affair. It can be a source of joy or sorrow. It can be relaxing at times and terribly stressful at other times. A good friendship can strengthen us while other relationships can tear us in pieces.

Our social life doesn't develop without effort. It takes **work** to build good social relationships. It takes just as much work to counteract bad relationships. We must be very careful what friendships we develop.

As in every area of life, we must seek God's will always in regards to our friendships. God's normal pattern for the Christian life is that of Christians finding fellowship with other Christians, but He alone rules and there are also Christians for whom He severely limits opportunities for fellowship. When God in His providence limits the opportunities for socializing, yet when the Christian's attitude towards others is that of godly love, then God may overrule the situation so that social maturity can still exist. By contrast, when a family visits much but on a shallow, humanistic level (or with much slander, or other spiritual sins), then God's chastisement may send socially distorted youth, lacking in Christian social maturity. We must in our social life, also, be seeking Scriptural guidelines and be submissive to God's rule in our lives.

The importance of training in social living is obvious from the multitude of Biblical directives for this area of life. It is probably the main area of practical emphasis in Proverbs, the book of parental instruction.

For you as young people reading this magazine, an article such as this has three personal applications:

#1. Evaluate the training you are receiving at home. Is it basically in accord with Scripture's principles?

#2. Even if your home training is weak, strive to apply Scripture's teaching to your own life. Remember that while God uses home training, you are still responsible for your life and He calls you personally to total obedience.

#3. Always be preparing yourself for your own future responsibilities. Only too quickly, you will find yourself a parent. Will you be ready to train your children spiritually?

A. Scripture's Guidelines for Social Balance

The Scriptural pattern for the development of a balanced social life follows the view of concentric circles!

Our purpose here is not to give proof of this pattern - which would double the article's length - but to show how this pattern works itself out practically in our social lives.

1. God first. The hardest part is to put God first. Of ourselves, by our old nature, we all put self first. We must be taught by God's Word and Spirit that God is of more importance than ourselves (He is ALL-important and we are NOTHING unless found in Him!) and He must always be first in our lives.

This means that Bible study (hearing God speak to us) and prayer (speaking God's Word back to Him in application to our lives) are also at the root of our social lives. It means that if we neglect any of the means of grace we have no foundation for Christian life in society.

2. SELF second. In practice there are many times when proper Christian living must put self **last**, so that self-denial is a vital part of Christian instruction. Yet in the learning process, application of spiritual truths must come to oneself before it can extend to anyone else. The man who can apply Scripture to everyone except himself is a hypocrite.

Thus a parent in his training errs when he tries to instruct his child by pointing out continually the faults of others (although good example may be good motivation). Rather, the parent must instruct the child repeatedly to apply God's Word to his own heart and life **first**, and only then can he apply it anywhere else.

3. FAMILY third. If a child is adept at making friends in school but creates enmity and strife at home, then that child is spiritually a social failure. If we do not first love those with whom God puts us in close daily contact, then a show of love for others is hypocrisy. Love is rooted in God, accepts oneself because God loves him, and then loves those closest in daily life because he must love his neighbor as himself.

4. CHURCH and CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. The love of the Church of Christ will not necessarily develop later in **time** but will grow along with proper love of family, only never in isolation from the family. A person who properly loves God first, self second and family third has the only proper foundation for loving also the church membership as a whole.

There must be love for the Church of Christ. Christ died to save not only me and my family but all His sheep in this world. Like myself, all these sheep are sinners and so the Church on earth has sin in it, but, nonetheless, the Church is the only place where the elect for whom Christ died can be found.

Love for the Church of Christ begins with love for the local congregation of which Christ has made us members. It must broaden from there to include our entire denomination. And further still, it must then broaden to include the universal body of Christ. For Christ's sake, we must love His children wherever they are found

This means, among many things, that racism has no place in a Christian's heart and words. Nationalism has no place either in a Christian's life. God is no respector of persons or nations but gathers His children from all nations and families of the earth. If

He loves the Jew, the Greek, the Mexican, the Negro, the Chinese, who are we to despise them?

Always we love God's children. We hurt when we see them persecuted, in our school or overseas. We sorrow when we see them sin, in our congregation or in the denomination down the street or in Australia. We desire their salvation and their comfort as we desire our own salvation. Paul's beautiful attitude towards Israel as expressed in Romans 9 - desiring their salvation so much he would gladly lose his salvation to save them - must also be our attitude towards all of Christ's body in this world.

5. THE WORLD at large. Only as we "begin at home" and spread outward in spiritual love can we also meet the world in proper love. Towards the entire world of unbelievers, we must have a proper attitude of humility and love. **We** are sinners, no better than the worst murderer. **We** are saved only by grace. And as we study and apply God's Word to ourselves, then to our family and church, so also we must apply spiritual principles in all our dealings with anyone, believer or unbeliever.

B. Scriptural Principles for Social Antithesis

We may not overlook in our training that the Scriptural concept of social life also develops in antithesis. Always Scripture pictures a spiritual warfare between godliness and ungodliness, between Christ and antichrist, between right and wrong. This warfare doesn't begin when we become adults but starts already in earliest youth. This we can see also in the pattern of concentric social circles.

1. Towards myself, I must have both love and hatred. I must hate all that is of the old man of sin, all that does not glorify God in my life, all that ends with this earthly life. I must love that which God through His Word and Spirit gives me: all Scripture and Scriptural instruction, all holiness in my life. I must **long** to be "perfectly sinless" like Christ.

2. Towards others in the Church - first family, then congregation, denomination and all God's people - I must have this same love and hatred. Because the church is the only place where I can hope to find God's called and sanctified people, my friendships must begin there. But in these friendships, I must apply the antithesis just as in my own life: loving and approving what glorifies God, hating and opposing what is displeasing to Him. Even within the church, this can mean cutting off any friendships which only lead to sin, not to love of God.

3. Towards the world at large we also exercise the antithesis. Proper love of the world means application of God's Word to everyone in every situation we meet. Where we do not receive godly love in return, there can be no uniting of hearts in fellowship and so the antithesis means there can be no friendship with the ungodly world: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Anytime there **is** a response of faith to godly speech, then **to that extent** also there may be friendship. . . but only to the point that the other person is drawn to Christ and His Church and His Word; such "friendship" must be severed immediately when the relationship would draw the child of God away from God and righteousness. Always God's people must be a light and a witness, never to be led into situations that cause blasphemy of God.

C. Scriptural Application to Social Training

These basic concepts underlie all the training in the social sphere within the home. The concepts themselves are easy enough; the application is often difficult. Application has no end but must be daily, in every contact we have. A few obvious applications in training children follow.

• Each child must be taught his own value. A parent may never despise his child or look down on him for any reason. Spiritually, his child is his fellow church member, one whom he must "esteem better than himself" just like everyone else in the church. Does the child sin? But how the parent also sins! Does the child have academic weakness? Apply God's Word and merely make sure he is doing his best for God's sake, encouraging and helping him. Is he unlikable? **Like** him and **love** him for he was so loved by God that Christ died for him! (Remember that although there will be reprobate in our generations, all our children are in the sphere of the covenant and are all to be trained as God's children.) If God so loved my child that Christ died for him, then that child is very special, very precious indeed.

• Each child must learn early to use God's Word in his evaluation of himself and his siblings and his peers. He must learn that he may not do anything his brother asks him to do if it is sinful. He may not, either, despise his brother or sister, for they, too, belong to God. He must love and help them. When they sin against him, he may not retaliate but must leave discipline up to father and mother. He must seek their repentance and must forgive. Difficult? Yes, almost impossible at times! But by grace **through training** he learns that this is what God's Word teaches and he learns to apply it.

• Friendships outside the family should be cultivated but must be wisely supervised and not overly stressed. If a parent sees a child falling into sin due to an unhealthy friendship, that friendship must be either changed or ended. Proverbs warns over and over against ungodly friendships. . .and Proverbs is God's Word, not to be ignored without disastrous results.

In this forming of friendships, the issue of dating must receive special emphasis. It is striking how frequently Proverbs warns in lengthy passages against the dangers of young men finding the company of the wrong young women to the destruction of their souls. The same principle will, of course, hold for young women. The key principle in dating is: **never date anyone who would not be an acceptable spouse** - and no one is an acceptable spouse who does not share a firm Scriptural foundation for life.

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Study God's Word in regards to your social life. It abounds in practical instruction! Apply God's Word to your forming of friends and in your friendships. Godly friendships are indeed valuable **but they must be truly godly**. Righteousness and love of God and use of God's Word must be their only foundation. Throw out any so-called friendship that hinders your love of God and cultivate every friendship built on the love of God. Such friendships will be a great aid and blessing in our earthly pilgrimage, strengthening and encouraging us in our lives as God's children.

Truth vs. Error

APOSTASY IN THE LAST DAYS
17. Apostates Convicted of Their Ungodliness

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." —Jude 15.

The text may be rendered, "to exercise judgment against all and to convict all their ungodly ones concerning all their works of ungodliness, which they performed in an ungodly manner, and concerning all the hard things which ungodly sinners said against Him."

Enoch had prophesied of the coming in glory of the divine Judge with His glorious attendants. Now he states the purpose of His judgment and describes both the work of the Judge and the persons haled before the final court of appeal. The Lord will proceed against all the ungodly, to refute, correct and convict them; and the grounds and reasons for this action taken against them are because of their ungodly practices and hard speeches against Christ.

"To exercise judgment": Not only is the Lord "a God of judgment" (Isa. 30:18), but "the Lord is known by the judgment He executeth" (Psm. 9:16). Notice the present tense: He exercises judgment in time as well as in eternity. Against all, that is, against all those referred to here, all the ungodly; for condemnatory judgment is not executed **against** the saints, but **for** them. "The Lord executeth judgment **for** the oppressed" (Psm. 103:6). "And to convince" (convict) the ungodly, so that they go down in judgment corrected, their mouths forever shut! The judgment will leave the wicked self-condemned and speechless. "Concerning all their works of ungodliness." The sin of ungodliness is that state of depravity in the sinner which leaves him devoid of the image of God. He has lost the likeness of God and so is not God-like. Ungodliness is also that lawless behavior in which the sinner not only denies God (v. 4), His honor, worship and service, but also opposes His servants, worship and truth. "Which they performed in an ungodly manner." Of course, works of ungodliness could be performed in no other way. But the idea is that they maliciously denied God in their every act, maligning and blaspheming His name with every breath. "And concerning all the hard **things**," which, as in the King James Version, are hard **speeches**, for they **said** them. Ungodly

practices are inseparable from an evil tongue and a vile mouth. The ungodly are profane, arrogant, cursing, swearing, blaspheming. "How long shall they utter and speak **hard things**, and the workers of iniquity boast themselves?" (Psm. 94:4).

". . .speeches which **ungodly sinners** have spoken. . ." They are not just sinners, but ungodly sinners. As in Psalm 1, sinners are by way of explication the ungodly, the scornful. "Ungodly sinners have spoken **against Him**." To be "against Him," to be anti-Christ, is to be against the person, the doctrine, the truth of Christ, to be against His messengers and ordinances. Thus there are already many antichrists which have come into the world.

"To convince all": the word **convince** is **exelegcho** and is a more intense form of the same word in John 8:46 where Jesus silenced His enemies with, "which of you **convinceth** Me of sin?". This cannot mean, Which of you can convince Me, that is, make Me realize I have sin. Rather the meaning is, Who can substantiate a charge of sin and furnish a proof of sin against Me? So this convincing is not that of a gracious conviction meant to lead to confession of guilt and wrong, but that of an objective, legal conviction with a view to condemnation and judgment, and not a subjective sensing and inner realizing of the pronouncement of judgment. It is, rather, like the scathing denunciations of the prosecuting attorney and the judge in unanswerable arguments and final verdict against the guilty. (Cp. the same word, **convicted**, in John 8:9). Christ, the Judge, convicts and convinces the wicked in judgment, then condemns and finally executes the sentence of judgment. God convicts and convinces elect, regenerated sinners for their conversion, but convinces the reprobate ungodly for their confusion and condemnation. God chastises the righteous that He may restore them; He punishes the ungodly by casting them into hell (v. 13).

"Of all their ungodly deeds." Observe that the final judgment process at the last day proceeds against the ungodly for all their ungodly deeds. The ungodliness of men provokes God's wrath against them (Rom. 1:18). They are ordained to wrath and condemnation (Jude 4; I Thess. 5:9) for their ungodliness. But exactly what are ungodly deeds? They are evil actions of apostatizing deviations from the knowledge, worship and service of God. The ungodly have departed from these virtues to become like the heathen who neither know nor worship the true God. All sin is distinguished as **ungodliness** and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18), the former especially being transgression of the first table of the law requiring duty to God, and the latter being transgression of the second table, requiring our duty to man.

Their ungodly practices are performed in an ungodly manner. Not only are their principles bad, but their methods are bad. It is not only the gross sins which they commit, but the offensive manner in which they commit them that is condemned. What they do in their conduct is sin, and their sin flows out of a sinful, ungodly mind. They will be judged for thinking and acting out of "a vicious nature." They will not only be judged for doing "ungodly deeds," but for doing them in the most ungodly manner they could devise. The believer sins too, for when he would do good, evil is present with him. But the wicked "do evil with both

hands earnestly" (Mic. 7:3). They follow the devil's pattern of wicked works with all their might. They are, in the judgment of God, "workers of iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). They are evil-doers. Their workers' union protects and supports them in their business and trade, which is iniquity. They pay their dues to the devil. The godly also sin, but they groan and grieve over it and repent of it. The ungodly swill and wallow in sin; they revel in it. They rage in it in hatred of God, of their neighbor and of themselves.

God convicts them "of all their hard speeches." Not only their transgressions and crimes, but their words will be brought into judgment. Where they dare not get caught in the commission of the act of evil they do dare to speak it. But the very utterance of sin is kept upon record and account must be given in the day of judgment for every idle word spoken. (Matt. 12:36). Just think of the idle, rotten words by "rock-n-roll" and "M-TV" stars! They multiply their "hard speeches" in recordings up into the millions, and they shall answer for every idle and wicked word in them! In the judgment they must listen to a re-play of their vile productions and must answer for every foul utterance!

But whether idle words, or worse, hard speeches, they are calumnies and reproaches which directly reflect on the glory and honor of Christ, for ungodly sinners said them "against Him." Some of these apostates, even today, deny that He is God. (Jn. 5:18). Others make Him a docetic man (one only in appearance), denying His true humanity. Christian Science does this holding that the conception of Jesus was only an idea in the mind of Mary; that Jesus was merely the offspring of her spiritual, self-conscious communion with God; that Jesus, accomodating Himself to the immature thought of men, spoke of His body as "flesh and bone." But this was only a temporary concession of convenience to His disciples' ignorance and superstition. So the heresy of Docetism is still with us. Hence the Lord complains, "Your words have been stout **against Me**" (Mal. 3:13). Also modern libertines call our zeal "Fundamentalist fanaticism," our Christian discipline "strait-laced strictness" and our godly manner of life "Puritanism." A current novelist sweeps away the biblical concept of **godliness** with, "Cotton Mather has been out of the picture for some time!" Not true! "He being dead yet speaketh!" Jesus said, "My Word shall not pass away," whether spoken by Puritan or president. Matthew Henry tells us that "one of our good old Puritans says, If thou smite (what you think is a heretic or an apostate) and God find (in reality) a real saint bleeding, look out: you will answer for it!" So all these "hard speeches" must come to judgment. In that Day the Judge and His just sentence shall be approved and applauded by an assembled universe. (Rev. 19:1-6).

Ungodliness includes hard speeches said **against Him**, the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of these hard speeches were directed against the hard sayings of Christ in His Word. The Sanhedrin made hard speeches against Christ's hard sayings which He spoke through Stephen (Acts 6:12-7:1, 51-57). Many of our Lord's disciples apostatized, departing from His doctrine as intolerably offensive. (Jn. 6:60, 66). They murmured, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" But any making hard speeches against the Lord's hard

sayings need not profess to being His disciples. The doctrine of eternal punishment had been spoken against as "horrible doctrine!" What makes it really horrible is that it is literally true. But it is not for us to criticize the severity of God. The ungodly, in judgment and damnation, come to a horrible end. The Spirit of God in describing this end in His Word is incapable of exaggeration. When the Lord comes again at the last day it will not be with the golden sceptre stretched out in favor to the ungodly, but with the rod of iron raised up against them to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. "His rule extends over them, but its. . .display will be one of justice, not of mercy; He will exhibit His power in executing the righteous sentence of God upon the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and, seeing they have rejected Him, He will be the object of their deepest dread." (C. H. Spurgeon).

Convention Impressions

by Roxanne Maatman

The 1987 Convention was a lot different from previous conventions that I have attended. For the most part because of the beautiful scenery that Colorado has to offer.

The convention was a lot of fun - to see and remember your old friends that you have met during other conventions, and to meet new ones.

It was different because this year we had a lot of free time to do whatever we wanted - which was great, but after a while we didn't know what to do. I think that we all could have had more fun if there were some planned activities, where we would be able to see more of Colorado.

Overall, the convention was a lot of fun, sharing Christian fellowship based around God's Word.

When Israel had bread which they themselves prepared from their own meal and in their own ovens, they could say, "My strength and my hands have obtained this food."

But Manna took away all opportunity for such self-exaltation. They **found** Manna. found it lying on the ground, ready to eat, sent by God's creative word, and they found it according to individual needs, as Moses explicitly stated.

Paul calls it "spiritual food." Asaph in Psalm 78, sings of the "bread of angels." And our Lord taught us that Manna was a symbol of His redemptive work when He said, "Your fathers did eat Manna in the wilderness; I am the living bread come down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."

A. Kuyper

CONTRIBUTION

by Mrs. Ken [Eunice] Kuiper

Dear Dave,

On Sunday evening, Sept. 27, after church, we had a program of special numbers given by members of our congregation. What was unique about it was that each number was requested by another member. We had a delightful program with a good deal of variety - from solo to quartet, accordian to saxaphone, and much in between. I hope we can do it again.

One of the numbers given was a reading that Mrs. Ken (Eunice) Kuiper gave, which I thought worthy of publication.

Rev. Barry Gritters

The devil came to church tonight –
He came right in our car –
And when we stopped here in our parking space,
He whispered in our children's ears, "Get out and race."

Before the boys had gotten far
That serpent said to me, "Now snap at them."
And so I did with sharp words and unkind.
No longer was I in a frame of mind
To enter church and worship Him Whom
I profess to serve, and in dismay
I stopped right there to pray.

Alas my Savior Who has bled for me,
My Savior that I just denied,
I pray Thee take the devil far from me
And make me in the shadow of Thy cross to hide.

As soon as I gathered my boys and settled in my seat,
I felt the devil poke me, and willingly I listened.
"Look at Mrs. So-and-So – she isn't clean and neat."
I looked – a dirty smudge and buttons left unfastened –
What does she do all week? Why can't she come well-dressed?
Her husband needs a haircut, and they don't make their kids sit still.
And then amazed that all those vicious thoughts could spill
So quickly and unbidden, I looked around for that old devil pest
To shake and scold him and forbid him to disturb me.
But he was busy in the back with another family.

Things went smoothly until silent prayer.
Then he tapped my shoulder — "How soon will that piano play?
Will it be long enough to finish what you had to pray?"
"Let me alone," I whispered back, "How ever do you dare
Disturb me when I ask God's blessing on my soul?"
But the devil laughed. Obviously he had achieved his goal.

Then I had a brief reprieve while he was working elsewhere,
And I settled back to concentrate on Pastor Gritters' prayer.
This time the serpent came a far more subtle way.
He climbed inside my mind and wound up all my thoughts
And he and I sat back to watch the panorama play.
Deep in the daydreams of tomorrow I was caught —
A book I wanted to sit down and read, some music to prepare for choir,
A sewing project I had planned, a floral piece I wanted to arrange.
I shook myself back to reality: "Is this what you desire?"
I whispered to myself. "Why don't you try to change
Your attitude towards prayer?" But the self-delivered scolding
Came too late, for Pastor Gritters had concluded and the service moved along.
Struck with deep remorse, I felt within my soul God's love unfolding
And now again I prayed to be forgiven of my wrong.

Alas my Savior Who has bled for me
My Savior that I just denied,
I pray Thee take the devil far from me
And make me in the shadow of Thy cross to hide.

Strengthened now, I vowed to pay attention to the sermon,
To fight the devil, to resist his strong dominion.
Too soon he turned my pious sanctimony,
Despite my good intentions, into basest ignominy.
Again I cursed the devil and his work,
And with a firm rebuke to my old man of sin,
I turned my heart and mind once more to listen.
But then I saw a few rows up a startled jerk
And knew the sermon sounded like a lullaby
To Mr. X. Too late last night, too much to drink —
Oh yes, I knew just what to think.
And once again I knew the devil's wily ways
Had overpowered Mr. X and me, and we had not resisted.
And now with strong resolve to clear my thoughts and raise
My eyes to Pastor Gritters, I silently demanded
Of that friendly devil that I'd rather he desisted.
To my surprise I listened till the sermon ended.

Too soon again that evil serpent came to bother me,
For while we ended in our closing song,
I sang that lovely tenor part with glee.
The words? I couldn't tell you what I sang — How wrong,
How quickly had I slipped back to degeneration!
Could I really ask again so soon to be forgiven?
Or - should I start to doubt the power of regeneration?
No - to pray I was directed, by that very power driven.

Alas my Savior Who has bled for me,
My Savior that I just denied,
I pray Thee take the devil far from me
And make me in the shadow of Thy cross to hide.

Uplifted, I marched out of church
With melody and words upon my heart,
Singing softly with the pianist's "How Great Thou Art."

No sooner was I out the door than I began to search
For this friend and for that to execute
Some daily, mundane business, and to talk,
And compliment a lady on her new fall suit,
And to caution running children in the hall to walk.

No thought for things like sermons had stayed
Within my soul, and with remorse I trudged down the hall,
Despairing almost of the little progress I had made.

But listen now to hear the great conclusion of it all:
We echo the dilemna of the great Apostle Paul.
The evil that I would not, that I do
And when I would do good, into evil ways I fall.
O wretched man, who will save me from the body of this death,
Release me from the clutches of the devil and hell, too?
I thank God through Christ as long as I have life and breath!

Love Always

Love when days are glad and golden
Love when sorrows make them grey,
Love when health is ever splendid
Love if it should slip away.
Love when friends are fine and loyal,
Love if any prove untrue;
Whatsoever life may bring you
May the Lord give love to you.

Loreta Inman

WHAT'S HAPPENING

by Nancy Van Baren

THE LORD BLESSED:

-Rev. and Mrs. Dale Kuiper of Isabel with a daughter, Dana Wynn.

-Rev. and Mrs. Ron Van Overloop of Northwest Mission with a daughter, Michelle June.

-Rev. and Mrs. Tom Miersma of Edmonton with a son.

-Mr. and Mrs. Tim Bertsch of Loveland with a son, Brent Timothy.

-Mr. and Mrs. Dan Boone of Southwest with a daughter, Colleen Lenneae.

-Mr. and Mrs. Don Van Dyke of Faith with a son, Jonathan Todd.

-Mr. and Mrs. Mike Richards of Faith with a son, Joseph James.

-Mr. and Mrs. J. Koole of Hope, Walker with a daughter, Leah Renae.

-Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brummel of Southwest with a son, Andrew Allen.

-Mr. and Mrs. Jay H. Kuiper of Hudsonville with a daughter, Amanda Joy.

-Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wierenga of Hudsonville with a son, Blake Richard.

-Mr. and Mrs. James Westing of Hudsonville with a son, James Theodore.

-Mr. and Mrs. Richard Feenstra of Hudsonville with a duaghter, Lisa Anne.

-Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Oostra of Hull with a daughter, Heidi Sue.

-Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bleyenberg of Hull with a son, Jerry Dean.

-Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kooiker of Hull with a daughter, Crystal Dawn.

-Mr. and Mrs. Mike Rau of Hope, Walker with a son, Nathan Micheal.

-Mr. and Mrs. Tom Venhuizen of South Holland with a daughter, Mary Elizabeth.

-Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lenting of South Holland with a son, Todd Robert.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH:

-Arthur and Dudley Reichert of Isabel, S.D. made public confession of faith on July 26.

-Amy De Vries of Randolph made public confession of faith on Aug. 16.

-Brenda Langerak of Hope, Walker, made public confession of faith on Aug. 16.

-Allen J. Brummel of Edgerton, Mn. made public confession of faith on Aug. 23.

-Patricia Kamps and Kim Boone of Southwest, made public confession of faith on Aug. 30.

-Joel Engelsma, Micheal Holleman, Sheryl Holleman, Eric Lenting, Mark Lenting, Mary Lenting, Tim Lenting, Kelly Nymeyer, Debra Vander Noord, Betty Zandstra and Mark Zandstra, all of South Holland, made public confesstion of faith on September 20.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:

-The membership papers of Mrs. Jacque Van Maanen were received by Hull Prot. Ref. Church.

-The membership papers of Theresa De Zwaart were sent to Hope, Walker from

Pella, IA.

-The membership papers of Jeff Terpstra were sent to Grandville, from Hope, Walker.

-The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Owen Peterson were sent to Faith from Hope, Walker.

-The membership papers of Anita De Young were accepted by Doon from South Holland.

-The membership papers of Jill Jabaay were sent to Byron Center from Hope, Walker.

-The membership papers of Mrs. L. De Young were sent to Grandville, from Hope, Walker.

.The papers of Pat Schut were sent to Grandville from Hudsonville.

.The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Drnek and 3 baptized children were transferred from Holland to Hudsonville.

-The membership papers of Jason Vande Griend were received by Hull from 1st Chr. Ref. Church of Hull.

-The membership papers of Fred Hanko were transferred to Lynden from Hull.

-The membership papers of Philip Kooiker were transferred from Hull to Pella.

The three convention speeches are on cassette tapes. These tapes may be ordered at a cost of $4.00. Orders should be sent to the church:

Loveland Protestant Reformed Church
709 E. 57th Street
Loveland, CO 80537