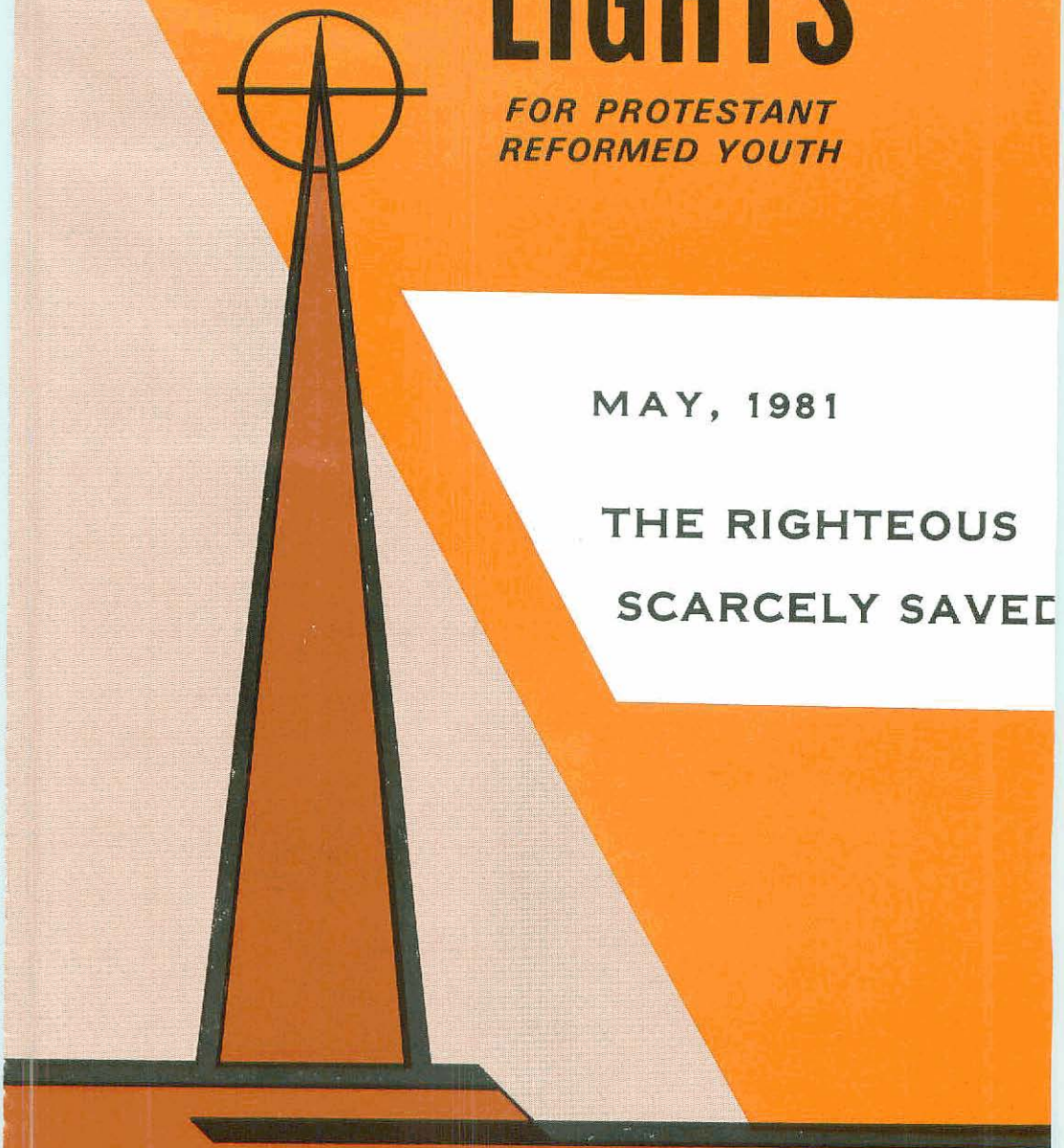
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



MAY, 1981

THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY SAVED

VOLUME XL MAY, 1981 NUMBER 5

Published monthly (except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Brian D. Dykstra - President; David Rau - Vice-President; Lois Hoekstra - Secretary; Norma Westra - Assistant Secretary; Doug Dykstra - Treasurer; Mike Lotterman - Assistant Treasurer; Mary Van Baren - Librarian; Hank Vander Wal - Youth Coordinator; Rev. W. Bruinsma - Spiritual Advisor

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF
Dave Moelker - editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, David Harbach, Ed Lotterman - Associate Editors; Ryan Feenstra - Finance Manager; Jan Dempsey, Carla DeVries, Linda Feenstra, Ellen Hanko, Mike Rau, Grace Faber

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Mrs. H. Brands, Rev. M. DeVries, Randy Groenendyk, Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. G. Lubbers, Ben Wigger

Collections should be sent to: Ryan Feenstra
7643 Cardinal Dr., Jenison, MI 49428

BEACON LIGHTS
c/o O. P. Bookshop
P. O. Box 2289
Christchurch, New Zealand

If any material of **Beacon Lights** is reprinted by another periodical, we will apreciate your giving the source.
The articles of **Beacon Lights** do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.
Contributions of general interest are very welcome

All material for publication should be addressed to:
Dave Moelker 4625 Juleon S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

News Editor: Mrs. Linda Zandstra
2322 Mc Kee, S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49509

Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Subscribers outside of Michigan please forward subscription dues to
Jan Dempsey
3519 Senora S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Forms 3579 should be returned to:
BEACON LIGHTS
4625 Juleon S.W., Grnad Rapids, MI 49504
Second Class Postage paid at
Jenison, Michigan (USPS 046-840)
Subscription Price $5.00

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial Comments - Dave Moelker 1
EDITORIAL - A Quer-y Pistle To My Grandchildren - John M. Faber 2
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROCK? - Term and Origin - Terri Garvelink 5
TRUTH VS. ERROR - The Christian in Sodom - Rev. R. C. Harbach 9
Focus on Christian Women - Mrs. Harold Brands 12
I Worked in the Garden Today - Miss H. J. Kuiper 14
The Righteous Scarcely Saved - Rev. Ron Hanko 15
Imperfect Mothers—Perfect Children - Mrs. Harold Brands 18
News From, For and About Our Churches - Linda Kaizer 20
Test Your Memory 21

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

by Dave Moelker

Mrs. Harold Brands is a member of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church, Edgerton, Minnesota. In this issue of *Beacon Lights* she has contributed an article entitled "Imperfect Mothers — Perfect Children". In addition to it, she will also begin to author a new rubric entitled, "Focus on Christian Women". She plans in this section to study the women of the Scriptures: not an exhaustive study of each one, but to focus our attention to areas of application or of guidance for our own perspective on the Christian woman. She plans also to do some studies of the passages in the Scriptures dealing with the woman. Her experience as a teacher, as a woman, and as a mother should make this an interesting section for especially young women, but also for all our readers.

* * * * * * * * * * *

In this issue of *Beacon Lights*, we would like to have you take special note of the article, "What's Wrong With Rock?", by Terri Garvelink.

This series of articles, which began in the April issue, originated (as does all that we print) out of a deep concern for the young people of the church of Jesus Christ. But specifically, concern for the apparent spiritual plight of many who identify with the songs of this world.

It is sad, but often true, that scarcely have the echoes of praise stopped ringing within the walls of our churches but that the 20 watt power boosters are putting many in a moving state of release that they were taken from, briefly, to sing in worship to God.

Often, the defense is this: "But this is nothing new. Youth has these preferences. The young outgrow them as they reach adulthood."

Do they?

Or do the young grow to become *adults* with these preferences?

Do wild oats benefit the domestic by giving them a spicy, easier to eat taste?

Our actions speak louder than our words. But when those words, either spoken or listened to, are to the beat of and for the glorification of proud, lustful, natural man, any actions to the contrary are tempered if not cancelled out altogether in the eyes of the world.

Peter's preference "I know not the man", and his manner of speech betrayed him, too.

"I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people:" was David's speech to God in Psalm 57:9a.

Is it yours?

Is it the child of God's when he sings along with the world or "just" listens?

And this is what follows and is so striking in the last part of verse 9, "I will sing unto thee among the nations."

Let's not make the Psalm read this way, "I will sing unto thee and with the nations", by the music we prefer to listen to.

Do we dare do that?

Should we then?

Think about it.

Editorial

A Quer-y Pistle To My Grandchildren

by John M. Faber

Have you ever heard God speak? Have you ever seen God's speech? Would you like to recognize the speech of God when you hear or see it?

Let's start with mans speech. When God created man He gave him a marvelous gift, the gift of intelligent speech. Through that gift Adam was able to express what he saw in the speech of God in creation, and could declare the glory of God. Through his speech he revealed that he was a God-loving creature. We, too, also reveal what kind of person we are through our speech. Do you hear someone curse or swear? He reveals himself to be a profane person. Do you hear your school mates speak well of their parents? You immediately know that child to be an obedient boy or girl and loves his father and mother.

Well, in something like that, but infinitely more so, God also reveals much about Himself. Adam was the first to be able to read and understand that speech of God. He could see in the creation of each particular animal its own peculiar make-up. God tested Adam, his in-created knowledge, by bringing the animals, to him for the task of naming them. He recognized the kingly bearing of the lion; the meekness of the lamb, the wisdom of the ant, etc. I wonder if we can still read somewhat of that speech of God in creation even though we fell from that state of rectitude, and the creation which we try to understand has also fallen under the curse. Sure we can. God has not taken away all our natural reasoning powers. Besides, we are able to read that Speech of God because we have His Word which interprets much of it for us. As soon as we learn to read in school we can begin to read the Bible which is His Speech quite

plain to understand. Shall we begin then by trying to find some examples in nature which have been explained in the Scriptures?

Last week when the heavy thunderstorm went over you heard God's voice. Didn't you know that? Psalm 29 interprets that voice for us when we read verses 3 to 9. It says: "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of Jacob thundereth . . . the voice of the Lord is full of majesty . . . it breaketh the cedars of Lebanon . . . it divideth the flames of fire . . . it shaketh the wilderness . . . it maketh the hinds to calf . . ." Thunder, in Scripture, is often the speech of anger and condemnation. When Israel was fighting the battle of the Lord, their God would thunder upon their enemies so that Israel might win the battle. Do you remember the story? (Can you find it in your Bible?) The psalmist of Psalm 77 sang it: "The voice of thy thunder was in the heavens, the lightning enlightened the world, the earth trembled and shook." When we hear it thunder we are to remember that God is always angry with the wicked. But, we His beloved, hear that thunder as a revelation of His Majesty.

Our mouth is a Speech of God. Because we can speak God tells us that *He* speaks. Man was made in the image of God; man could fellowship with Him, as indeed, Adam did when he walked and talked with God. Moses and God talked together; Enoch and Abraham were close friends with God to whom God spoke. God talked directly to Adam, to Eve, and to the serpent who beguiled Eve. To Noah God gave instructions and verbal blueprints of the ark. You can think of many more such examples found in Holy Writ.

Our ears are a speech of God, telling us that God can hear. He hears when we pray to Him. He loves to hear us praise Him and confess our sins to Him. Oh yes, God hears alright! (He also hears when we badmouth our teachers and parents).

Our eyes are another such speech. They tell us that God can see. Psalm 94 puts it this way: "He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" When Israel was in Egypt God saw their affliction and God was moved with pity and decided to free them. And do you know that God even saw you *before* you were born? The psalmist of Psalm 39 sang of that wonder of God watching our formation before our birth: "Thine eyes did see my substance when as yet there were none of them". Oh yes, God can see! He sees us when we are in trouble and need help. (Remember He also sees us when we do evil).

Our hands (another speech) tell us that as we can grasp father's hands, and as we can hold a treasure safely in our hands, so God "holds our soul in life" and can be trusted to keep us safely in His hands.

Last Spring when the tulips sprang up in all their beauty they were a speech of God to tell us that Christ was raised from the realm of the dead, and that we, too, shall arise from our graves. Remember that homely green tomato worm which transformed into a lovely white butterfly? Such a transformation awaits us, too. That ugly horned tomato worm is a Speech of God.

In the animal kingdom we find the speech of God which is spelled out for us in the Bible. The lion is a speech that speaks of Christ as the Lion of Judah's tribe; as king of the beasts he speaks of the King of all creation, our exalted

Lord sitting at God's right hand of power. The lamb speaks of Christ as the Lamb of God, meek and lowly, who opened not his mouth when he was slain.

In the inanimate world of creation we find that Speech of God as we behold the meandering streams. They speak of God's providence in turning them back and forth: so he turns the hearts of kings and rulers to fulfill His will. The leaves of the trees next Fall also speak. Look closely at one of those leaves and you will see that they are dying. Each browning leaf alone is not beautiful, but when we see the whole forest or the individual tree we exclaim at its beauty. Psalm 116:15 explains that speech: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints". The sun speaks to us when its rays have healing power for man, the beast, and all plant life. So Christ, the Sun of righteousness, has healing in His wings. The swarms of fishes in the lakes and seas; the multitude of maple seeds on one tree (it only takes one to start a new tree); the innumerable stars in the night sky, all speak of the host of the redeemed which cannot be numbered for multitude.

God's richest Speech is Christ. He *is* the Word of God. And Christ speaks to us in His Word, our Bible. The more you read your Bible, the more you hear the word of Christ in the Book, the more easily you can hear the Spirit speak to your heart. That Word of the Gospel is the speech of the God of our salvation concerning Himself. And the Bible tells us that the Spirit speaks to our spirit that we are sons of God. Now place close attention. When you hear that Spirit testifying to your spirit you *have* the New Life in you; you *are* born again; your life is hid in Christ.

When you have reached that state of maturity you are ready to confess your faith in Christ; and you will *want* to tell the whole congregation what Christ has done in you and for you. You belong to Him and you want everyone to know it. Right?

Now let's attend to the opening questions in my letter again. Have you seen God's speech in nature? That speech of God is seen by all men, even the children of disobedience. The Bible tells us that they deserve eternal punishment for rejecting that speech, that revelation of God's invisible attributes. Romans 1:20 tells us that the wicked are without excuse; they should have recognized God's Power and Godhead in nature and should have worshipped Him as Lord and Creator. Next question: Have you heard God speak to you? You had better listen!

Love, Gramp

P.S. I bet that if you would push the "off" button on your parents' "Boob-tube" and keep it off long enough to sit down and really think of God's handiwork in creation you could come up with many more "speeches of God" than I have mentioned so far. Do you know what I would like? I would like you to try to find other "speeches of God" in creation which I have missed. Then write them down on a piece of paper; sign your name to it; mail it to, "Gramp", c/o *Beacon Lights*, 4625 Juleon S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.
No prizes will be awarded, but you just might receive an Honorable Mention!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROCK?
I. Term and Origin

by Terri Garvelink

In our introduction to the subject of rock music in the April issue of the *Beacon Lights*, we mentioned that rock 'n' roll was born out of the union of black and white popular music: rhythm and blues - the predominant influence - and country and pop. In this article, we hope to explore this aspect of rock - its origin - a bit further. If we are to understand what this music is all about, however, it is *essential* that we first establish the meaning of the *term* rock 'n' roll.

Bob Larson in his book **Rock** writes: "In 1954 a Cleveland disc jockey by the name of Alan Freed was searching for a term to describe the response of teenagers who had gone wild over a new musical fad. Concerts by Chuck Berry and Gene Vincent were accompanied by riots of violence and sexual hysteria. Millions of female eyes were glued to the groin of Elvis. A sexual as well as musical revolution was taking place. Finally, Freed found his phrase. From the ghetto community he borrowed a descriptive expression referring to fornication: rock and roll. The name stuck, and the music lived on." (Incidentally, Alan Freed died at the age of 43 of uremia, an alchoholic, broke and unemployed.)

In the book **It's Rock 'n' Roll** Gene Busnar tells us: "The term rock 'n' roll had been used in black music for many years to describe physical sex."

Nik Cohn in his book *"Rock From the Beginning"* nonchalantly explains the meaning of the term rock 'n' roll in terms not fit to use in this Christian publication.

And finally, Frank Tirro in **Jazz - A History** , writing about a blues singer "belting out the celebration of physical love in the best blues style of the 1920's" quotes a song of which, in the interest of decency, we will use only the first line:

"Now my baby rocks me with one steady roll"

Now that we know the meaning of the *term* let us see if we can determine where rock music came from: what are the elements that went into it; what are its roots?

In an article on rock music by Professor H. Hanko in the June 1, 1971, issue of the *Standard Bearer* we find this surprising statement: "This book (**Rhythm, Riots and Revolution** by David A Noebel) claims, and a

correspondent has confirmed this, that rock music really has its origin in the tribal music of Africa''. Sounds a bit far-fetched, doesn't it? Can this claim be supported by tracing the roots of rock?

Popular music has been around for centuries and lyrics have covered a wide range of subjects — politics, patriotism, war, work, oppression, nature — but the emphasis has usually been on love and romance. Prior to the 1950s, popular music to the average white American meant, more than anything else, the sentimental, romantic ballad; songs of the ''True Love'', ''People Will Say We're In Love'', ''No Other Love'', ''Love and Marriage'' variety. But the early fifties were the years which marked a musical revolution with truly far-reaching effects, culturally, socially, and spiritually: *rock* became the new popular music of America. In fact, rock became the international language of young people.

In tracing the beginnings of rock 'n' roll, we find that THE root and foundation of rock music is *rhythm and blues*. Rhythm and blues (R&B) grew out of country blues and big-band swing, both of which belong to the jazz-genre. Thus Prof. Charles Nanry, administrator of the Institute of Jazz Studies, makes this statement in his book **American Music** : ''Jazz has produced offspring, notably rock.'' And Irwin Stambler in his **Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock and Soul** : ''The roots of both (rock and soul) are in such earlier forms as blues and big-band swing and, even deeper, in jazz and ragtime.'' And Chuck Berry, the black rock 'n' roll singer: ''It's called rock now; it used to be called rhythm and blues; it used to be called boogie-woogie; it used to be called blues; . . . Call it rock, call it jazz, call it what you may.'' Also Lillian Roxon in her **Rock Encyclopedia** : ''Rhythm and blues was a nice way of saying 'race music' . . . . It grew up out of jazz. . . .''

Jazz, in turn, traces its origin to . . . African tribal music!

It might be interesting to briefly note some of the chief characteristics of the ancestors of rock 'n' roll, beginning with the earliest - African music - and see how many of these characteristics have carried through and are clearly evident in rock music. Note especially the terms which we took the liberty of italicizing.

We quote from the book **Jazz - A History** by Frank Tirro, chairman of the department of music at Duke University, where he teaches, among other subjects, jazz.

> ''The case for an Afro-American ancestry of jazz is clearly the strongest. . . .
>
> ''Perhaps the most highly developed feature of African music is **rhythm . . . repeated rhythmic patterns in a percussive accompaniment . . . .** Having thus established a beat the African musician, or musicians in ensemble, proceed inevitably to the creation of **syncopation.** Another feature of West African drumming also seems to be universal and to have been carried into the new world: **steady tempo for long periods of time. This monotonous, propulsive, metronomic effect** gives a cohesiveness to the music and **affects the listener with a force bordering on the physical.** The rigid, unchanging, steady beat is termed 'hot' not only in early jazz but also in West African terminology.

". . . the close association between rhythm and tone with language and body movement is an essential feature of this repertoire and this music was the heritage of the black Africans who were enslaved and brought to America."

Mr. Tirro tells us that some of the leisure time of the slaves was spent dancing, and continues,

"Songs were sung at the dances and these tunes were noted more for their **rhythmic** qualities than for their lyrics. When no instruments were available slaves accompanied themselves by 'patting juba' a **syncopated, polyrhythmic** method of clapping one's hands and tapping one's feet . . . . The most significant aspect of African music in America, as it might be applied to our consideration of jazz origins, is its **rhythms and syncopation** . . . . The variety of drums and percussion techniques, **the central importance of drumming** to African dance music and the metronomic time-keeping aspect of drumming in conjunction with overlapping layers of **syncopated rhythms** are all features that would seem to be **distinctly African in origin**, features which seem to have been brought to jazz by no other route than through the African musical heritage."

Tirro concludes his chapter on African music by pointing out that "enough essential, distinctive elements of the black slaves' African tribal patterns remained to help infuse new lifeblood into the old West-European music and to create a new child of the new society, *jazz.*"

Following African tribal music and slave songs — including work songs, field hollers and religious shouts — other elements which went into the making of jazz were: "coon" songs and the cakewalk. The syncopated "coon" song or shout with its "hot" rhythm became a popular feature of minstrel shows in the 1880's. The cakewalk, a forerunner of jazz, was also marked by syncopation and was a dance, really more of a strut, across the stage with the body bent backward, a cake being the prize for the most original and elaborate performance; it became the rage of minstrel shows by the early 1890's.

Parts of an editorial in an 1899 edition of *The Musical Courier of New York* might shed some additional light on this type of music: "A wave of vulgar, filthy and suggestive music has inundated the land. The pabulum of theater and summer hotel music is 'coon' music! . . . the cakewalk with its obscene posturing, its lewd gestures . . . . This vulgarizing music is artistically and morally depressing and should be suppressed by press and pulpit."[1]

One more influence on jazz might be mentioned: it appears that jazz derived some of its harmonies from West-European classical music.

The meaning of the term *jazz* cannot be definitely determined; but some writers suggest that it may possibly be associated with the sex act, for which the word is used in slang as a synonym.[2] Included in the jazz-genre are ragtime, blues, swing, boogie-woogie, be-bop and rhythm and blues.

In the book **All the Years of American Popular Music** David Ewen writes:

"If any single place can be pinpointed as the birthplace of jazz it is New Orleans . . . . The city was receptive to the rhythms and sounds of jazz music through contact with the African bamboula danced on Sundays in Place Congo to the accompaniment of throbbing drums. Besides this, the emotional climate in

New Orleans was most favorable to jazz's early growth. New Orleans was the only city in America in which prostitution was licensed. After 1897, prostitution was confined by city ordinance to a specific locality known as Storyville. Cradle of vice, Storyville also became the cradle in which jazz was born . . . . The kind of music the black man coaxed from his instruments was precisely the kind of music the habitues of the vice palaces of Storyville could respond to . . . . Jazz abounded with **marked syncopation, strong accentuations, unexpected intervallic procedures and intonations . . . .** It was **blatant** and **high-tensioned.** (bold mine) It had energy and explosive force. In those years this music would have shocked many other cities and would have been violently rejected. But it flourished in New Orleans, in honky-tonks, sporting houses and gambling joints."

In the next installment, DV, we hope to conclude this consideration of the origin of rock music, beginning with a brief description of the two basic elements of New Orleans jazz: ragtime and the blues.

1 David Ewen, **All the Years of American Popular Music.**
2 Frank Tirro, **Jazz, A History.**

FUTURE PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS AND MINISTERS

The Scholarship Fund Committee is offering scholarships for the 1981-1982 school year. An essay of 300 words written on the topic, "My responsibility and calling to redeem the time as a prospective teacher or minister", is required along with a record of high school and/or college grades, and a recommendation from your consistory. If you are interested in an application contact:

Deb Buiter
1551 Wilson S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: 453-8402

Applications due June 1, 1981

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

THE CHRISTIAN IN SODOM

" . . . and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom . . . " (Genesis 19:1). We, today, live in Sodom and Egypt. The world has become that. In one sense, the world always was that. So we all live in Sodom. We are in Sodom, but not of it. There Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Can't you just hear some Christians saying, How nice! Isn't that what we need, a Lot in the gate of Sodom? In fact, there ought to be lots of Lots (no pun intended) in Sodom, shouldn't there? Some Christians hold to the principle of penetration. This means that Christians ought to penetrate the world to Christianize it. Communists penetrate the UNO and everything else in our nation in order to bring about a communist "take over". Why, then, should not Christians penetrate the spheres of government, politics, public schools, etc.? This is also known as the principle of permeation. Christians ought to permeate these spheres. The more this is done, the more Christians permeate the world, the more likely Christians are apt to "turn the world around". The idea is somewhat intriguing, but doesn't it sound like putting a good apple in a barrel of bad apples to make the bad apples good?

Of course, in principle, Lot was a good man. Peter calls him "just Lot", calls him godly, in II Peter 2:6-9, and righteous in I Peter 4:18. Then wouldn't it be a good thing if we had more godly and righteousness men "in the gate"? Wouldn't the community be better off for it? Wouldn't the nation be in better shape than it is? Doesn't Sodom need many more men like Lot? In other words, the implication seems to be, Lot is to be commended for going to Sodom. We need more men like him in key positions, don't we? Just think, if there had been nine more Lots there, God would not have destroyed the cities of the

plain. Then shouldn't the church be a means of getting people converted out of the world, to send them back into the world, so that then they will be a sort of preservative in the world to keep it from rotting all to pieces? That way, the world can become more and more converted. Like the man says, I have a dream. And that is some dream! Was it Lot's dream?

Did Lot go to Sodom because he felt it would be good for such a place to have a little Christian influence or moral atmosphere? Not at all; for first of all, "Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of the Jordan that it was well watered everywhere . . . as the Garden of the Lord." Genesis 13:10. This looking of Lot's was no more than the craving of the "lust of the eyes". "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." Genesis 13:11. As when Eve, "the woman *saw* . . . she *took* . . ," so did Lot. Then "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." 13:12. This was to flirt with fire. Then, later, he "dwelt in Sodom." 14:12. The next step in his downward trend was that he "sat in the gate of Sodom". He went, you see, from shepherd, to city official, to cave-dweller.

It may be said that his sitting in the gate was to his credit, showing him to be a great man willing to bear the responsibility of civil office devoted to judgment (19:9), where city councilmen met to try cases, settle differences and dispense justice (Deuteronomy 21:19, 20). Also it was creditable that just as Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent at noon, while others were enjoying a siesta, so Lot was sitting in the gate of the city while others were retiring from their day's labors. And though Abraham *ran* to meet the heavenly visitors, while Lot only *rose* to meet them, still he did well to urge them off the streets, lest they fall prey to the homosexual hoodlums who roved Sodom's streets like wolves.

But it was shame enough, just to be found in Sodom, let alone to be a prominent resident there. He let his light shine, but it was fast fading to a smoking flax. His motive for going to Sodom in the first place was not good, since it sprang out of covetousness. His continuance in such a place was not good, not justifiable. He not only accomplished no good there, but incurred much spiritual hurt to himself and infinitely worse damage to his family.

Sure! Lot was a just man. He had the gift of hospitality, and probably, with a little polishing up, could have been qualified to be an elder in the church. But the Lord's messengers at first refused Lot's offer of lodging. Doesn't it seem likely that if Lot had been living in a tent in the hills, these visitors would have entered his home immediately? His home was pleasant enough inside, but it was in a horrible neighborhood. Things today are becoming so bad everywhere that it is fast becoming impossible to find anywhere a better neighborhood to move to. But Lot's neighbors were vile, hell-deserving people soon to be evicted from city, home, mortal body and from this world. Judgment was lurking in and hanging over every wicked house there, including the house of their just neighbor, Lot.

Poor Lot! He went to live in Sodom, he thought, to enjoy the best the world had to offer. He had no intention to reform the city. But if that had been

his purpose, it would have been totally useless, for such an aim has never been attained and never will be. God's intention with respect to the wicked world of the ungodly is revealed in His will for Sodom, and that is, not to improve the world, but to judge it, and to raise up those who will be godly witnesses against it, all the while living for the world to come.

There are Christian movements calculated to "turn the world around" to a formerly much more moral life-style. But the world does not want to be stopped in its tracks or turned around. The world will not stand for it, will not have it, and will not have the Christian, either, who does not compromise himself and his Christian principles. There in the wicked world you observe its lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, banquetings and abominable idolatries, in connection with which they are shocked that you do not join them in the same flood of insalvability, blaspheming, as they do, despite the fact that they are the ones who shall give account to Him who is ready to judge living and dead. I Peter 4:3-5. For this reason, men of the world have nothing but contempt for a compromising or compromised Christian.

How do worldly union men regard a Christian in the labor union? Hardly with respect! Do you ever see a news headline and following article written as though it were some strange thing for labor union officials to be involved with the criminal element? Do the news reports, or any, show shock at reports of a lodge member having been exposed as a murderer, or an embezzler or a polygamist? Yet the news media will hound and attack a Christian, trying to dig up some scandal he may, or may not, have been guilty of twenty years back. Especially the minister, the Christian school teacher, the Sunday School teacher, to name but few, are most apt to suffer the world's "smear" tactic, at one time or another. But if we compromise with the world or compromise ourselves before the world, we can only expect the world's disdain and enmity. Lot undoubtedly thought that he was where it was good for him to be, even where he could do some good. But was there a man in Sodom who did not believe that Lot had no business being there?

You know that it is too dangerous going through this world unarmed with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. So keep that weapon handy at all times, trusting the Lord to teach you to use it spontaneously. Once a group of university professors were asked that if they were exiled on a lonely island, what books would they like to have with them? Some preferred *Huckleberry Finn*, *The White House Cook Book*, *The Arabian Nights* and some even *The Psychology of Insanity*. If such a question were put to all Protestant Reformed young people, the answers could very well include a list of some two hundred different books, yet with every response invariably including the Bible. Do you think so?

But what may we and should we do with respect to "the world of the ungodly" (II Peter 2:5), in the midst of which and over against which we of necessity must live? This: pray for the Lord's people in the world, testify against the world, warn it of judgment to come and call on all men everywhere to repent and turn to the Lord!

FOCUS ON

CHRISTIAN WOMEN

by Mrs. Harold Brands

The woman today has typically become an ugly spectacle. Under the banners of "liberation" and "equality", she has bound herself with shackles of unfemininity and of Godless rebellion. She has lost all true perspective of God, of His order for the home and society, and of herself.

We Christian women are not immune to this ugliness. Too often our sourcebooks for femininity are the world's magazines on women or the world's ideas as we meet them in our conversations, on the radio, in our newspapers. Wherever the world formulates our thoughts and stimulates our actions, the result will not be beauty but ugliness.

There is only one antidote to such spiritual ugliness: a return to the Scriptures. Only as we women submit to the Scriptures, studying them and submitting ourselves to God's ordinances for us revealed in them, can we hope to live in spiritual beauty before Him.

And let's not deceive ourselves: we *are* too often unScriptural and ugly in our feminine roles. We hear catchy feminine slogans which exalt our female ego and we adopt these slogans for our own. We truly believe we have "come a long way" and that our modern independence makes us more attractive than were women of the past. Our hearts deceive us into thinking that our ugly traits are actually our beauty.

These facts are the convictions underlying the formation of this new rubric in the *Beacon Lights*. It is *not* true that no one ever writes anything on the Christian woman. No, there have been various articles, often excellent articles, on the Christian woman and on issues she faces. The *Beacon Lights* has often carried such articles. But the fact is that we as women need constantly to be facing our Godly calling and to be evaluating our thoughts and lives as women before Him. When we hear the world's convictions over against God's principles in a 100 to 1 ratio (or worse, even), then the world is going to have too great an influence on us. We need to hear *less* worldly propaganda, but also *more* Scriptural truth and encouragement.

I have for some years had an interest in making studies on the Christian woman. I have often thought I would like to do a study of the women of Scripture and of passages in the Scripture dealing with women. Whenever I have read other such articles, they have always been special to me.

The main reason for this interest is undoubtedly the fact that I am myself a woman. As a Christian woman, I share the needs and problems of other Christian women. Every time I read articles by other Christian women, or on issues relating to the woman, or on Scriptural passages about women, I relate these to myself. And I find myself to be often wrong, to need correction and humbling, to need the Sword of the Scriptures to show me my ugliness and the only route to spiritual beauty.

But my main reason for turning this personal interest into a regular rubric is the conviction that I am not alone. I know that all of us women need constant encouragement in our lives as Christian women. I hear this need in many of the conversations I have with other of God's women. I confront this need every time I read *Good Housekeeping* or *Parents' Magazine* or read "Dear Abby" in the newspaper. Most of us women read regularly some sources of feminine propaganda, all of us are surrounded by its subtle influences, and the less we realize its impact, the greater is our need to have this impact exposed and critiqued.

One measure of our need for plain guidance from the Bible is our measure of contentment with our role as women. Do we often wish we were men, able to earn the pocket money? Do we wish the authority to make family decisions rested not in the men but in us? Are we content as married women with our imperfect husbands, not wishing we could trade them in for better models? Or as single women, are we content with God's plan to let men be the leaders who ask us out for dates, who choose or overlook us at their option? Are we content to be women?

To the degree that we lack contentment, we lack beauty. To that degree also we need to hear God's Word and learn to submit to God's guidelines for feminine beauty. To that degree we need *repeated* encouragement. We can find such encouragement in the preaching on Sunday, in our own study of Scriptures, in our conversations with others, especially women, or in things which we read centering around the Scriptures.

In the two months since I have been asked to write for the *Beacon Lights* and since I have chosen the topic of this rubric, I have in my own life been blessed by the reading of articles and books on the Christian woman. Even though much of what I've read is not written by women of Reformed persuasion and is not 100% Biblical, yet the Scriptural guidelines have scolded me for my failings and have directed me to the path of femininity that I should be walking. And this has been to me a blessing.

I know that in my writing I will not be always 100% Biblical, either, despite my efforts to be that. But I pray that nonetheless this rubric and its following articles may be used of God to bless us, His believing women. If the study blesses only my own life, it will have been worth it for me to do the labor

of writing. But if it also blesses other of God's women, then it will have been worth the printing.

May God bless us, His women in this modern world, with His insights to oppose the world's ugly ideas of femininity and to be content with God's appointed ideals for beauty. May we learn and experience the truth of Proverbs 31:30: "a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

I Worked in the Garden Today. . . .

by Miss H. J. Kuiper

I worked in the garden today, raking and picking up leaves,
Digging out weeds, scraping up stones that shouldn't be there.
I found violet leaves, half curled, in cluster — lily-of-the-valley, too,
Bravely sticking up slender tongues through soil made newly bare.

Twigs and branches that a few weeks ago were brittle and scabby brown,
Were now tinged with green, their buds full and nearly bursting;
Promising the full leaf or flower each held within its tiny folds,
They welcomed soft breezes, drank in life-giving rain, no longer thirsting.

So, too, are we from our sin released, aroused by God, our Father,
The covering of willfulness and discontent removed from hearts, filled with grief and pain,
By the Sun of Righteousness; we bask in His eternal love and care.
And joyfully, the fruit of obedience, love and service is returned to Him again.

I prayed in the garden today.

THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY SAVED

by Rev. Ron Hanko

Young people, I know from experience that if there is one thing which you have learned during your years of Catechism instruction in the Protestant Reformed Churches, it is the truth that salvation is a work of God alone without any ability or effort on the part of those who are saved. Even those from other churches and denominations know that we stand for the truth of sovereign grace.

This truth of sovereign grace is so very important to us personally because it is such a comforting doctrine. This wonderful truth of sovereign grace means that there is nothing in our salvation which is left for us, weak and miserable sinners, to do. It is all in the hands of Him who created Heaven and Earth. We can be sure that the work which God has begun in us will by His grace be fully done!

To one who has been taught this since he was a child and who believes in the absolute certainty of salvation, the title of this article perhaps sounds a bit suspicious. How can anyone who claims to be Reformed say that "the righteous" are "scarcely saved?" What comfort can there possibly be in such a statement?

This title is taken from the Word of God as we find it in I Peter 4:18; "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Because it is found in the Bible, we know immediately that whatever this text says, it cannot contradict those passages which teach that salvation is sure, Isaiah 45:17 for example; "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

We certainly believe in the "preservation of the saints," and God forbid that we should ever teach anything else. It cannot be that our salvation is uncertain in any way. It cannot be because we are "kept by the power of God. . . unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5). It cannot be because we are "redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1:19). It cannot be because we are "born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1:23). We are "a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;'' that we ''should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light'' (2:9) and we know, then, that we are His for time and for eternity.

Nor does Peter say here in chapter 4:18 that any one of that ''chosen generation'' will ever be lost in the darkness of hell. Though ''scarcely'', the people of God *are* saved. They are ''the righteous'' after all! They are made righteous through the suffering and death of their Messiah who gave His precious blood as the payment for their sins and earned for them a place in God's righteous Kingdom.

What, then, does Peter mean when he says ''scarcely saved?''

You must understand that Scripture here is not looking at salvation from the viewpoint of God's power, but of our weakness and frailty. Looking at God, we see that ''Israel shall be saved'', but from our own viewpoint in the midst of wicked world, surrounded by enemies, troubled by temptations and weaknesses and sins we see that we are ''scarcely saved''.

You see, Peter is telling us once again what the Bible tells us so often (and which we so often forget), that, as Christians, we are ''under the cross''. Jesus said; ''If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily'' (Luke 9:23). The cross to which Jesus refers is the load of daily trials which the Christian, young or old, must bear as he staggers on to his eternal home.

These trials include all the troubles which belong to our life in this old world of sin and death. Peter talks, for the most part, in this first epistle about persecution, but we may certainly include sickness and sorrow, pain and fear, death and shame and all the host of troubles which we meet in the course of our life. Yes, we can even include our sins and temptations, with all the anguish of soul that they bring. Do you begin to see, then, that you and I are indeed scarcely saved?

Peter is telling us that these trials are a cross so heavy that we can scarcely drag it to glory. Under its weight we groan; it causes us to stagger and sometimes faint and fall. Indeed, if it were not for daily grace from the helping hand of our heavenly Father, we could not drag that cross along one step.

How often we expect the opposite! We look for an easy road to our heavenly home, but that is certainly not what we are promised. That way to heaven is not smooth and easy. It does not leave any leisure time to spend in the fun-palaces of the world. The Christian must enter upon that way through a very narrow gate and the way itself, he soon finds, is rough and rocky, dark and steep. Along that way, he pours out the bloody sweat of his soul in bitter repentance and confession of sin and in anguish, cries for help and strength. It is hard to be a Christian.

Yet, that hard way is the only way - only way to glory. We are still sinful and we must learn to be holy as He is holy. We must learn to crucify our sinful nature, and God helps us to do that with the heavy cross that He lays upon our back. God chastises us all along the way in order to save our souls from hell.

How could there be any other way for us? As it was with our Lord Jesus so

it must be with us. The servant is not greater than his Lord. Try to imagine once a suffering, cross-bearing Saviour surrounded by a crowd of servants who are dancing and drinking and playing. It doesn't fit, does it?

"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

"In the World ye shall have tribulation."

Do we dare look for anything else or for another way?

Because God's way is so hard, we are tempted many times to envy the easy, fun-filled way of the world or even to try to walk with one foot in that way and one in heaven's way. If God commands the one way then we look at the other with longing eyes. Even Asaph was envious at the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked (Psalm 73:3). That too Peter warns against.

But can we really be envious? Think about it once, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" If sin is so hateful to God that His own dear children must be grieviously chastised, then what will be the fate of those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"?

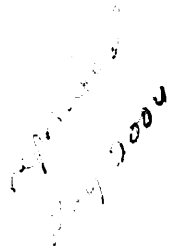
Where will they appear? What shall their end be? "Her house (the house of the pleasures of sin) is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (Proverbs 7:27). God sets them in slippery places and all the while singing and dancing they are rushing headlong into Hell's desolate places where they will be "reserved in chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day". Horrible, isn't it?

The treasures of the wicked are along the way, but their end is outer darkness and the worm that never dies. But the treasures of the Kingdom are at the end of the way, through darkness, sorrows and sin to the throne of Him at whose right hand are "pleasures forevermore". How wonderful those treasures of heaven must be, if God our Father does not hesitate to lead us through the very valley of the shadow of death to make those treasures ours. And there, too, is our comfort along the way, that He will guide us by His counsel and afterward receive us in glory.

Can we then be envious of the wicked and their prosperity, young people? Seeing where they shall appear, how can we desire to go along with them in their mad pursuit of pleasure? By the grace of God, comparing our end with theirs, we cannot and will not, but will take up our cross and follow Him - to glory.

Does that way seem too hard? Are we afraid of being scarcely saved and of suffering according to the will of God? Then we must "commit the keeping of our souls to Him, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator".

IMPERFECT MOTHERS—PERFECT CHILDREN



by Mrs. Harold Brands

When I was a child, I had the opinion that my mother had to be the mother with the most faults of any mother in the world. I could have made a long list of grievances against her:

> She didn't allow me to do this thing and that thing and twenty-four other things that my friends were all allowed to do. Was ever a mother so bigoted?
> She made me do these other two dozen and some things that I felt were not my responsibility. No more demanding mother could possibly exist!
> She had at least three dozen personal defects, all of them glaring and obnoxious, all of them declaring her an obviously unfit mother. Foremost of these was that she definitely did not love me, her child, in the least.

And I think I could have gone one for quite some time, enumerating all her defects.

The worst part was that we as brothers and sisters often had grievance gabs during which we sat and aired our annoyances about our mother. In our self-righteous estimate, *we* made no mistakes . . . and never deserved discipline . . . and worked harder . . . and generally in every way were superior to our mother. We broke the Fourth Commandment repeatedly while claiming to be little virtuosos. If we ever became parents, we would announce, we would not have this flaw nor that one. We would be perfect parents!

Now I am myself a mother. My children - ages 3½, 2½, and 1 years old - are too small to have anti-Mama gab sessions . . . but already are old enough to watch for Mama's weaknesses and are quick to label Mama "naughty". How quickly I see in them this same sin that characterized my childhood!

As for my expectation of perfection in motherhood, what has happened there? Well, if I now already tried to make a list of my weaknesses as a mother, it would have to be a list far longer than I as a child would ever have made for my mother. And if I now had to make a list for my mother, its size would be dwindled to microscopic proportions. Even those weaknesses I still see in her I would not dare to list because I have every one of them also myself.

I used to wonder how it could be that motherhood is a means to salvation

for the woman. I now think that what I have been discussing is at least a part of the explanation. Through motherhood, God leads us as His children to see our own sins and weaknesses in a way we would never otherwise experience. And such sensitivity to our sin is the first requirement for salvation and comfort.

But motherhood, it seems to me, also leads to the woman's salvation in relation to the second point of the Catechism. As children teach the mother her own weakness and sinfulness, she sees this same sinfulness in them. As she sees the sin in them, she experiences how futile will be all her efforts to lead them to righteousness. She begins to realize ever so keenly how she depends on the Holy Spirit through the Word to save them. And vicariously, in the very nature of motherhood, this makes her lean more and more on the Spirit also for her own spiritual needs.

Let me try to say this in another way. The fact is that no mother is able to produce perfect and holy and righteous children. If she could in her own strength produce anything at all, the children she would produce would only exhibit and magnify her own sinful characteristics. Unrighteousness can only produce unrighteousness. And the realization of this leads the sanctified mother to pray, earnestly pleading with God to overcome her sins and failures and to bless her children for His sake only, pleading on the basis of His promises and His faithfulness. Children make a mother realize how wholly dependent she is on God, learning that her best efforts are not only weak and sinful but also completely useless apart from God's work of grace in the heart.

But as God leads the mother to lean on Him, He also leads her to find the blessedness in her calling. Although the struggle with sin in herself and her offspring will be continual, yet God's work of grace will also become increasingly evident to bring thanksgiving and joy. Right in the midst of disciplining and training her children, there will be marks of godliness also, and here she will know she sees God's blessing on her work. Is her work of training imperfect? Oh yes! so imperfect. But God's work is always perfect, and what God begins He always finishes . . . and that gives joy and hope.

I thank God that He has allowed me to become a mother. I thank Him that through my children He is leading me to see more fully my sin, unpleasant though this learning may often be. I thank God that He shows me my need of Christ also through my children. And I thank Him with great rejoicing that the story does not end with imperfect mothers and imperfect children but that it ends in perfection. Where His grace operates, I know that the end result will be His perfection, present in father, mother, and children. And this perfection - of God and unto God and in God - will last for all eternity.

May God's perfect work - in mother and in children - receive all the glory and praise. May He alone receive the praise also on this coming Mothers' Day.

YOUNG PEOPLE!! — Send your questions to Rev. Moore's Mailbox.

NEWS from, for and about our churches

by Linda Kaizer

BIRTHS

—Mr. & Mrs. Dan Heyboer of Faith: daughter, Leigh Anne on Dec. 10.
—Mr. & Mrs. Norb Alsum of Randolph: daughter, Sandra Lynn on Jan. 3.
—Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Bol of Faith: daughter, Audra Beth on Feb. 10.
—Mr. & Mrs. Bob Doezema of First: daughter, Brenda Lynn on March 5.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

—First received H. Craig Glupker from Seventh Reformed.
—Hope received Rev. & Mrs. Flikkema & 2 baptized daughters, Tammy Renee & Tricia Ann from Isabel; and Mr. Arlen Ter Avest from Hillcrest Christian Reformed.
—Loveland receivec Mr. Martin Straayer from Edmonton

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

—Hull Young People's Society went caroling & had a Christmas Party on Dec. 23.
—Hull Young People's Society had a Skating Party on Jan. 26 at Sioux Center Skating Rink.
—Loveland's Young People sponsored a singspiration on Feb. 15. Offering was for travel expenses to the 1981 Convention.
—Young People's Federation sponsored a Spaghetti Supper at Hope School gym on Feb. 26. Donations for the 1981 Convention.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

—Singspiration was held in Edgerton on Dec. 21. Special number by Hull's Young People.
—Singspiration in Doon on Feb. 1.
—Rev. Flikkema of Hope was installed on March 1. Prof. Hanko conducted the service & Rev. Harbach read the form.
—Singspiration in First on March 1.
—Hope held a welcome program for their new pastor & family on March 6. Refreshments followed.
—March 6 the new Kalamazoo building was dedicated. Prof. H.C. Hoeksema spoke.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. To what kind of seed did Jesus liken the Kingdom of God? Mark 4:31
2. Jesus once fed five thousand. How many thousand did He feed at another time? Mark 8:9
3. Why did Jesus say that the widow who put two mites in the collection box had put in more than all the others? Mark 12:44
4. What were the real names of Daniel's three friends? Daniel 1
5. For what girl was an annual memorial kept? Judges 11:40
6. What finally became of the brazen serpent? II Kings 18:4
7. What story shows the power of music? I Samuel 16:14-23
8. What king was killed while worshipping his god? II Kings 19:37
9. Who was hired to discourage Nehemiah? Nehemiah 6:10-14
10. What animal saw an angel? Numbers 22:23

The steps of those whom He approves
  Are ordered by the Lord;
And though they fall, held by His hand,
  They yet shall be restored.

I have not seen, tho' since my youth
  Full many years have fled,
The saint forsaken, nor beheld
  His children begging bread.

Wait on the Lord and keep His way,
  And then, by Him approved,
Thy heritage shall still remain
  When sinners are removed.

The Psalter No. 101 vs. 1, 2, 4

ATTENTION YOUNG PEOPLE

The 1981 convention will be held at
CALVIN COLLEGE
JULY 20-24

The theme of our convention this year will be:

MATTHEW 24

SIGNS OF THE TIMES
I. Signs in the World
II. Signs in the Church
III. Reasons for Signs
IV. Attitude

Our Speakers this year will be:

—Prof Decker
—Rev. Engelsma
—Rev. Koole
—Rev. Schipper

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!