BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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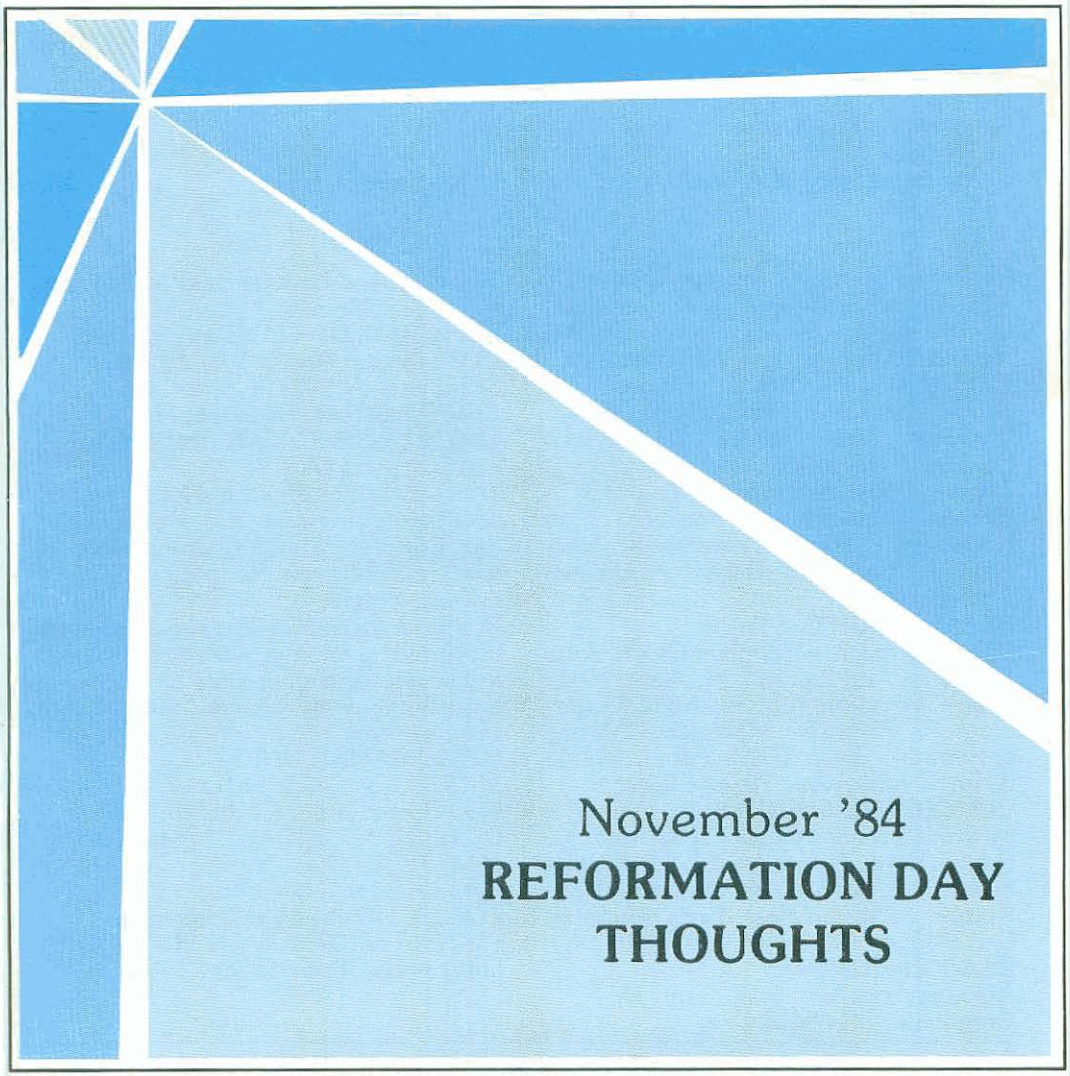

November '84

REFORMATION DAY THOUGHTS

BEACON LIGHTS

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BEACON LIGHTS
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EDITORIAL OFFICE: Dave Harbach
4930 Ivanrest Ave. S.W., Apt. B,
Grandville, MI 49418

NEWS EDITOR: Paula Faber
4190 Burton S.E., G. R., MI 49506

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SUBSCRIPTION DUES:

MICHIGAN: Grace Faber
4190 Burton S.E., G. R., MI 49506

OUTSIDE MICHIGAN: Vonda Klamer
10143 Wilson Ave. S.W.,
Byron Center, MI 49315

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

by David Harbach

The new cover was designed by artist Jeff Steenholt, of our Kalamazoo Church, who also was responsible for all the art work in **Come, Ye Children** by Gertrude Hoeksema. Thank you Jeff, the staff appreciates your design.

In this issue, you will find the new Federation Board Officers under the heading "Executive Board" on the inside of the cover page. We welcome these new board members to our staff meetings.

Rev. Haak's article is an introduction to a series of articles on the "Fruit of the Spirit." The next article on this topic will appear in the January issue and every other issue thereafter. We are combining the efforts of three authors, Mr. Don Doezema, Mary Beth Lubbers, and Rev. Ron Van Overloop; to give us three different aspects for each fruit. Mr. Don Doezema will focus on the fruit in the life of Christ, Mary Beth Lubbers will focus on the fruit in the life of a biblical or historical character, and Rev. Van Overloop will focus on the fruit in the life of young people today. The first fruit will be "Love," which will appear in January.

A letter, explaining how the Protestant Reformed Churches became involved with the sending of Dean Wassink to teach in Northern Ireland, is written by Jack Lenting, a member of South Holland Church and also Chairman of the Committee for Reformed Education in Ulster. I hope this letter will supply you with more information concerning this work. I suspect we may also have an article from Dean telling us about himself and his family's life in Northern Ireland amongst God's people there.

The answers to Bible Knowledge which appeared in the Aug/Sept. issue are given on page 15. A new series of questions titled "Is Your Heart in the Right Place?" appears in this issue.

The Beacon Lights is also conducting a subscription drive. For those of you who want to subscribe, fill out our form provided and send to Grace Faber, 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506 if you live in Michigan. For those who live outside of Michigan, send your subscription to Vonda Klamer, 10143 Wilson Ave. S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315. Cost is $5.00 a year.

We still have copies of **Reformed Education** by Rev. D. Engelsma and **Leaving Father and Mother** by Rev. C. Hanko. If you would like a copy of these books, send $1.50 for each book and the title(s) you want to Grace Faber.

Reminder! Those who want a copy of the October Convention Issue, please send your request to Grace Faber. The October issue is free upon request for those who attended the Y.P. Convention.

Editorial

AN "I'M STILL WONDERING" LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

In my last letter we did some wondering about a part of God's creation which we found quite marvelous. That was the world of spirits. We thought of the differences between the Human World and the Spirit World. We wondered about Satan, the Prince of the fallen spirit world and all the devils who are his servants. We wondered if whenever we were tempted to sin if it were by one or more of these wicked spirits. They do not always come to us directly, but sometimes through our own sinful natures; sometimes by our companions; sometimes by what appears on the T.V. screen. But, either way we believe that Satan's demons tempt us to sin. That isn't so bad that we are tempted, but yielding to that temptation is very bad. Remember Eve's temptation? She yielded to it; she herself tempted Adam; and when he yielded to his wife's temptation he sinned and was punished for it by death. That spiritual death we inherited from him. Now you can see that yielding is very bad. It has awful consequences.

Now then are you ready to join me in some further wondering about that part of the Spirit World that did not fall from their original sinless state? The **un**-fallen spirits we call angels. So, let's go to the Bible to learn about them. Each one is a "being". A being is one who has a personality; can will, can think, can make decisions. A human being can do all these things too, but because an angel has no body we cannot see him operate. That is, we cannot unless he takes on a visible form, which countless of them have done on important occasions.

Scripture tells us that they are neither male nor female and do not marry and have children like our parents did. Millions of people came from the first pair, Adam and Eve, but all the millions of angels were created "in the beginning". Hebrews 8 and Psalm 2 say they were created in a higher order than ours. We are earth-bound; we must live off the produce of the earth; we must breathe the air of this earth. But the angels are free from all those restrictions; they can come and go as they please, not bound to earth's gravity. And even in their ranks there are lower and higher beings, Romans 8:38 and Ephesians 6:12 speak of principalities and powers in the spirit world. It makes us think of presidents, congressmen, judges, sheriffs and policemen of our human world. How I wonder about that angelic hierarchy! In the Book of Job and of the Psalms they are called, holy ones. That means they are sinless and set apart for service. In fact, the word, angel, means a messenger. That is the work God has for them. He sends them to give earthmen messages, and sometimes even uses them to send pestilences and earthquakes. Among their ranks there

are some called, arch (ark) angels. I Thes. 4:6 and Jude 9 reveals that to us. They are the very chiefest of them all. There are two special kinds of angels called, seraphim and cherubim. In the Prophecies and again in the Book of Revelation they are pictured as having wings. In Isaiah 6 he records a vision of angels which were seraphim and who had six wings. Two of the wings were used to cover his face, two were for covering the feet, and two were used for flying. We could wonder about that sight for a long while!

Remember we said that spirits could not be seen by us unless they would take on a form to reveal themselves to us. When three angels came to visit Abraham, they looked exactly like three men. And **were** so much like men that they could walk the dusty road in their sandals; could eat and drink the food prepared for them by Sarah. The two that went to Sodom to warn Lot even dragged Lot and his two daughters out of the city by force. Wondering wonderful, don't you think? In II Sam. 24:15 they brought pestilence to Israel. In II Kings 6:17 Elisha prayed that his servant could see the protection they had from the armies which threatened them. And God showed the young man that the mountains were full of angels in the form of horses and chariots. That servant needed not to be concerned when those angels encamped round about them for their protection.

Then think about the time when an angel come to Manoah, the father-to-be of Samson. The angel "did wondrously" by leaving Manoah in the flame that went up from the sacrifice on the altar. Oh, how I wonder about that!

And when Paul was aboard the ship on the way to Rome in a terrible storm at sea, the sailors wanted to toss Paul overboard to appease their gods to still the storm which threatened their very lives. Paul told them that an angel of God stood by that night to say that no life would be lost even though the ship would suffer shipwreck that day. We can clearly see that God saved Paul's life for the work that he was called to do.

And when Peter was in prison with his hands chained to the wall, an angel awakened him, removed his chains, opened the locked doors, and led him out of prison and through the streets of the city to go to a friend's house.

So Paul had a guardian angel; Peter had one; many people believe that everyone has one. Do we? I don't know, but I wonder, why not? We are sure that thousands of angels guard all of those for whom Christ died. So, even if it should be true that we do not have a certain angel who has been assigned to us, we know they are all concerned about our salvation. In Psalm 91:11, 12 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." That textual promise even bothered Satan, because he quoted it to Jesus, tempting Him to test that promise of safety.

We do know that the angels were especially interested in our Lord Jesus. They sang for joy when they announced His birth. They ministered unto Him after the temptation by Satan. They strengthened Him after He had prayed so earnestly in the Garden of Gethsemane before that awful crucifixion experience. The angels' concern did not end with His death, but were in the tomb to announce to His disciples and women that He was risen from the dead. Those

two angels appeared as men, and they wore shining garments to show that they had just come down from heaven to give them that important message. That wonderful ministration of angels began with the message to Mary that she would be the mother of Christ, and came to the climax when they told the disciples who were staring up into the clouds where their Lord had vanished, and told them that He would surely return in Judgment Day to judge the living and the dead.

I don't **know** if angels have appeared to men since that time, but I wonder! I don't think I have ever seen one, but how can one tell if they take on the appearance of a man? Of course one would know if he were an angel if he would give a direct message from heaven, or if he would show me in some wondrous way that he were a spiritual being. I also know that some men have claimed experiencing such a vision. But I wonder!

Love, Gramp.

IS YOUR HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE?

1. David said, "Create in me a _____ heart" (Psalm 51:10).
2. The Lord is nigh unto them who are of a _____heart (Psalm 34:18).
3. The heart is _____ above all things (Jeremiah 17:9).
4. God saves the _____ heart (Psalm 7:10).
5. David asked for a _____ heart for his son, Solomon (I Chron. 29:19).
6. The priest had a _____ heart (Judges 18:20).
7. Eli's heart _____ for the ark of the covenant (I Samuel 4:13).
8. Moses called those in whose hearts God had put _____ (Exodus 36:2).
9. God made Job's heart _____ (Job 23:16).
10. A _____ heart is like a potsherd covered with silver dross (Proverbs 26:23).
11. We give from a _____ heart (Exodus 35:5).
12. God _____ Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 7:3).
13. David said his heart was like _____ (Psalm 22:14).
14. Hannah's heart _____ (I Samuel 2:1).

ADORATION

I love, my God, but with no love of mine,
For I have none to give;
I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine,
For by Thy life I live.
I am nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied and lost and swalled up in Thee.

Thou, Lord alone art all Thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed;
In Thee the blest abide,
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,
Our source, our center, and our dwelling-place.

—Madame Guyon

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

by Rev. Haak

Galations 5:22, 23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

A beautiful person is described in these verses. It is the beauty of holiness. It is the beauty of a person in whom dwells the Holy Spirit. You can know where the Holy Spirit dwells, for he is HOLY and His home reflects the beauty of holiness. When He abides in your heart then shining out of you will be the virtues of "love, joy, peace, ..." This is what God's Spirit does within a child born of grace, He makes them beautiful!

This is the beauty of Jesus. Listen to II Cor. 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The work of the Holy Spirit is to conform us to the image of Jesus, so that His love, His joy, (etc.) shine out of us from glory to glory.

The Spirit makes us look like Jesus. (see Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10) To be given the Fruit of the Spirit is to be given the beauty of Jesus. Are you staggered by that?

All the more beautiful is this person when you compare him to the ugly, deformed, hell-bound wretch described in the context. "**But** the Fruit of the Spirit" indicates that this is a contrast with the person characterized by "the works of the flesh" set forth in vs. 19-21. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:" The deepest heart always reveals itself! And the person in whom sin and lust are the center reveals himself in the works of the flesh. He is dirty, filthy in God's sight. He leads an ugly life. But where the Holy Spirit dwells in the center, then that person is characterized not by the works of the flesh but by the fruit of the Spirit. In God's sight they are beautiful because the image of His Son shines out of them.

. . . . . .

Is this fruit seen in you? Do you desire this fruit? Are you characterized by it? What shines out of you in your daily life?

You and I may not simply think of this as some unattainable ideal. We may not imagine that this fruit will be ours when we are older, but for the present impossible and unnecessary. Nor is it true that the first time we taste this fruit will be when Jesus comes for us in our death and we are perfected. We do not read "the fruit of the Spirit will be love" or "the fruit should be", but we read "the fruit of the Spirit IS

love, joy, peace, ...'' This fruit is in everyone of God's redeemed, repentant children. The ''gifts'' of the Spirit (see I Cor. 12:28-31) are different from believer to believer. Some are endowed with the pastor's office. Others are teachers. The gifts which the Spirit bestows are not all the same. But the Fruit of the Spirit is one and in every child of God.

So the question is: Do you possess this fruit? Does the beauty of Jesus shine from you? In every heart where the Spirit resides, this fruit is seen to God's glory.

. . . . . .

''The Fruit of the Spirit''. Several truths are brought to light in the term ''**fruit**''.

The first thing we want to underline in our hearts and minds is that we read of **fruit** and not **fruits**. It is in the singular and not in the plural. Although nine virtues are listed, it does not say ''the fruits of the Spirit are'', but ''the fruit of the Spirit is''. There is one fruit of the Spirit, not many. That one fruit is composed of different virtues; love, joy, peace, etc., but they are a unity. You must not think of a beautiful bouquet of flowers from which you may pick one, but of a rainbow. In a rainbow there is one light composed of many colors, but one light. The colors of the spectrum are beautifully blended together to make up one ray of light. So is the Fruit of the Spirit.

This means that these virtues are inseparable. We may not think that we can have some of them (two or three, or even seven or eight) and lack others (maybe only one) and still have the fruit of the Spirit. It is not that some of God's people have more of these good things and others have less. But the Spirit works one fruit composed of nine virtues, just as one ray of light comes from the sun. Don't say ''Well, I can see some of these in me, I desire most of them, but that temperance (self-control, or should I say God-controlled?) is something that I don't want now. Besides I find it hard to be gentle and longsuffering around the home, I'm irritable.'' Without any exceptions they are the fruit of the Spirit, blended together and inseparable. One cannot possess ''love'' and not be ''meek''; one cannot have ''faith'' and lack ''goodness'' and ''temperance''; a person cannot have ''peace'' if he has not ''goodness and faith''. It is one fruit of the Spirit shining in a beautiful spectrum of graces.

Secondly, the word fruit teaches us that these virtues are the work of sovereign grace in us. A fruit is something that is **produced**. The origin of the fruit is in the tree which produces the fruit. So these virtues are produced in us only as we are connected to the vine, Jesus Christ. When you read of the fruit of the Spirit, then all the goodness in our lives is ascribed to the Holy Spirit! They do not originate in us, but in the Spirit of God who makes His gracious abode in us.

That is exactly why we read of the **fruit** and not the **work** of the Spirit. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness; these are the works of the flesh because they originate in man and are what man is capable of doing. Goodness, love, gentleness; these are fruit, produced by the sovereign grace of God in us. This is both humbling and comforting. Love, joy, peace, and all the rest are not found in us by nature. Nor are they the work of the Spirit and us. But all goodness in the child of God's life is the product of his or her

being joined to Jesus by grace. The Spirit powerfully washes us (I Cor. 6:11), renews us (John 3:3), and then produces in us the beauty of holiness. The glory then is to God! We honor and praise the Spirit. We adore God who by Jesus Christ and through the Spirit produces this sweet and wonderful fruit in our lives.

The Spirit works this within us, and that is important! These nine virtues are not simply external acts which may be mechanically performed. The Holy Spirit is not merely concerned with changing our behavior and deeds. He does not simply paint the outside of the house with a glossy enamel while leaving the inside timbers rotten and the foundation decayed and crumbled. But He works within us so that we are made to be persons of love, joy, peace, . . . and so on. He puts the principle of the new life of Christ in us, and flowing out of that new life is this beautiful fruit.

Finally, a fruit is the **goal** one has in mind for all his work. A farmer engages in all his backbreaking work for one reason, fruit. He buys expensive machinery, plants the seed, sprays for the weeds and bugs, cultivates, spends long hours in irrigating. Why? FRUIT, that is his goal! So the purpose of God in all His gracious work in us was fruit to His Glory!!

It is blasphemous to say that the things of love, joy, peace, goodness and meekness in the Christian's life are not so important. It is the lie of the devil to say we can live as we want, the only thing important is to have our doctrine correct. Such statements reveal that a person does not know the doctrine of sovereign grace at all. This fruit of the Spirit is not secondary, but the purpose of God's work. The purpose of all the saving work of Christ, and thus the purpose of God's counsel is to produce this fruit in us. Think of the wonderful passage on election in Eph. 1:4, 5. "According as He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world". Why? "that we **should be holy and without blame** before him". No, let no child of God minimize this fruit in their lives. Our Father's purpose in saving us is that He may bring forth fruit to His glory.

. . . . . .

What is this fruit? It is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Future articles will lead us into a study of these gems.

Right now I want you to take an over-view of all of them.

Display this fruit and you will be ridiculed by the world. Longsuffering? The world says "Let him have it!" Gentleness, Meekness? "It is the self-assertive age and you better grab for yourself." Faithfulness? "The more you cheat the more well-rounded you are." Temperance? A chaste person in Christ is laughed at as being inexperienced, and everybody does it! How the devil mocks this fruit. AND HOW OFTEN DO NOT WE? So that the person who is meek, gentle, temperate is called "holier than thou". And how often there is a lack of interest in cultivating these things, while there is plenty of time to engage in the works of the flesh.

But this is serious. Look once more at the man who is described in these virtues of the Spirit. The man who is gentle, meek, good, longsuffering, temperate; you know who he is, don't you? He is Jesus Christ. Now you know what the fruit of the Spirit really is, do you not? It is to conform us to His

image as brothers and sisters of Christ. And you also know that when this fruit is despised, it is Christ that is despised.

. . . . . .

"Against such there is no law" There is a law against the works of the flesh. It is the Law of God. That law states that he who performs such things is accursed. That law cannot be repealed or bypassed. But there is no law against the Fruit of the Spirit.

Of this fruit you may eat. It is delicious! There is great benefit in this fruit.

Why? It brings glory to God. "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." John 15:8. There is nothing which brings joy to a child of God as his Father's glory. True of you? By these fruits produced by the Spirit of Christ in us all the adoration returns to God.

Secondly, this fruit is useful for others. What do the works of the flesh do to your relationships with others? They destroy them. What does adultery do to a young man or woman? It leaves them cheap and with a burden of guilt. What does hatred do to a church or strife to a family? It levels them. But what a blessing for others when this fruit is seen in us. How wonderful it is when your loved one, your brother or sister, your friend, is "longsuffering, gentle, patient, . . ." Then others see Christ in us and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Finally, the Fruit of the Spirit is blessed for us. This fruit is a testimony that the Spirit dwells in us. Does the Holy Spirit abide in you? Do you possess the Fruit of the Spirit? The question is not, do you possess them perfectly or as you should? But, is it there? Do you desire it? Do you pray "Lord, work in me more and more to cast off the works of the flesh and clothe me in the beauty of Christ"? The Spirit is in you!

The tasting of the fruit is ours. To be prey to all your passions and lust, to live in hatred and envy, to be in the works of the flesh; how miserable! But to live in love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, longsuffering, faith, goodness, temperance; how sweet to the taste of the person in whom they are found.

It is the beginning of eternal life.

1985 SINGSPIRATION CALENDAR

February 17	First
April 21	Faith
May 19	Hope
August	Pre Convention
September 15	Southwest
November 17	Faith
December 15	Hudsonville

1984 - 85 MASS MEETINGS

Thanksgiving	Southeast
November 18	
Christmas	Hope
December 16	
Easter	Byron Center
April 7	

The Joys of Conception

Focus on Christian Women

THE JOY OF SUB-MISSION

by Mrs. H. Brands

Visit again the scene of a new birth.

"A young husband and his wife, after all the exhausting hours of labor are finished, forget the pangs of childbirth in the wonder of viewing their new baby . . . . A real, living, breathing human person is this baby! Bone of our bones and flesh or our flesh. Even if we have studied every book on birth available to understand what is happening, the mystery and wonder and uniqueness of a baby's birth is unsurpassed."

In relation to God, we have noticed last time that the central joy of the Christian husband and wife at this time is the humble drawing near to God in wonder that He has chosen to give to them such a gift of life, a gift by which He builds their home and builds His Church.

There is another form which joy takes for the Christian woman at this time. As she serves God her Creator and Redeemer and Lord and Friend, in submission to Him she also serves her husband in love and faithfulness. And this love and devotion to her husband also play on important role in her joy at the time of conception and birth.

The fact is that God has created the man in such a way that he is the originator and source of the physical life of a baby. Both parents contribute exactly half of the physical components, true, yet the husband is the **initiator** of the union of the two cells which, under God's Providence, become one to become a living person. It is also the husband whose cells determine whether the new person shall be male or female. (Note: if man succeeds in his biological wickedness and creates human babies from the eggs of two women only, the results can be only women, or baby girls. Can you envision a nation without any men??)

When you read worldly literature, the modern liberation movement for women has one theme over and over lately: why can't the man bear the babies? It isn't fair to the man that he may never know the experience and it isn't fair to the woman that she must always carry the child.

But oh, how beautifully this fact fits into God's ordinance, God's plan for the relationship of the man and woman! When we see the husband as head of the home, it is he who must labor in love to provide for the needs of the home, and such labor for physical provisions could not (usually) be accomplished while bearing a child. Again, the husband as a type of God in his relation to his wife must be, as we said above, the initiator of this life, and the determiner of the sex of the baby, but in such a manner that he is giving to his wife the gift of love and the opportunity to serve him in the home by carrying his child. And further, the wife as a type of the Church serving God delights to serve her husband and

therefore also delights in serving him by conceiving and carrying and bringing to birth his children, their children . . . God's children.

And this aspect of her life, her service to her husband, is also central in the Christian woman's joy at the time of childbirth. She delights to serve her husband, to be a blessing to him, to do things for him. And here she has given him a gift of infinite value in return for his gift of love to her. This feeling of service, of deep and loving service to her husband, is a fundamental, God-created part of her being which is also a source of her joy.

I have often recalled an anecdote about Martin Luther which I read when I was in high school. Luther at age 42 married a nun age 26 whom he had helped to escape from a convent and for whom he could find no acceptable husband . . . and she, Katherine von Bora, loved him. His own feelings toward her lacked deep emotion until after she bore him his first child. Then, with deep tenderness, he gave her a nickname which was also the title of the book I read, "Kitty, My Rib". This little anecdote illustrates, I believe, the emotions most Christian husbands experience as they see their wives bearing their children. They love their wives deeply for their willing childbearing.

Now, without doubt there are all sorts of disruptions today in this marital love, which disrupt also the birth scene. Husbands do not love wives as they should so that babies are not always conceived in true love. Wives do not love husbands as they ought so that often they serve them unwillingly, complaining about every ache and pain, telling them that "they should carry the baby once", and desiring not to serve but to be served by their husbands.

Yet the principles of mutual Godly love and Godly service in marriage remain. The Godly woman has before her always this goal: to serve her husband as the Church serves Christ. Always, loving service of her husband is a deep source of joy whereas rebellion always brings unhappiness.

So then, in principle the Christian woman loves serving her husband and finds deep joy in that service. At a *time* of conception and then of birth and later in child-training, she is keenly conscious that this is the highest possible way in which she can serve him and she joys in fulfilling her calling for his sake. She is serving God first of all but under God her joy is also found in serving her husband.

And so, we have a mission, a calling. Our calling is from God, to be mothers subject to our husbands, the fathers of our children. Our mission is (a) submission to (that of) our husbands. And always, as we in love to God fulfill our earthly missions, He blesses us with joy, His joy, the joy of the knowledge of His blessing and favor. In His love, He loves us. In His love, He gives us a husband to love and to serve. In His love, He gives to our husbands with us children as gifts. And in His love, He gives us as wives a key role of service to our husbands in conceiving and rearing our children.

God grant us as mothers and future mothers in Israel to be more and more faithful, serving Him and our husbands in love, delighting in our calling of submission. Then also will He bestow great blessing on our service, joy in intimate fellowship with Him.

RESPONSE . . .

by Mrs. Ronald Huizenga

The Critique article on "Loving Your Wife For Christ's Sake" was very nice for the most part. Except the paragraph where the wife is referred to as the weaker vessel. As for wives not being able to handle stress as their husbands do or "too large a mental burden", Hogwash! Time and again the Bible compares great pain to that of the travail of a woman. The dictionary defines travail as the pains of childbirth or intense pain, agony. The agony in turn is defined as great **mental** or physical pain. A woman suffers great stress and mental burden once she becomes pregnant (worrying if she will carry to term, or if her baby will be born normal and healthy), during childbirth (travail), and while she is raising the children of her husband. God cursed the woman for her part of the sin in the garden with sorrow and travail; but, I believe, He also gave her grace to be strong in spirit as well as physically to bear this curse. God created woman for man as a help meet both physically (which God limited; making her "fragile, delicate like a flower") and mentally (which God did not limit). Physically she can not lift as great a weight as a man can; but mentally she can lift the same weight stresses and burdens. If God limited her so she is not always the best help for her husband physically, then God must have made her especially mentally strong to be a help meet to her husband in times of stress and burden. A wife can only help her husband bear his stresses and large mental burdens.

. . . REPLY

by Bernie Kamps

In reply to a Wisconsin reader who thought my statement (June/July Issue, 1984) of husbands protecting their wives from too much of a mental burden was "Hogwash!":

I am sorry not to have made myself clear enough. In the article I wrote "She is the weaker vessel, not inferior, second rate, or in any way a lesser person." God has spoken in I Peter 3:7 that she is the weaker vessel, and I believe that applies both mentally and physically.

Can she carry a large mental burden? Absolutely! I cannot agree more. In all her labors, pregnancies - as you mentioned, rearing of children, caring for her husband and children whether healthy or sick, she has a heavy load. That was my point - she has enough stress, so don't put any more on her. The tone of my article was for the husband to love his wife by fulfilling his God-given task. This task involves helping with the children, teaching catechism, Sunday School, helping with school work. He must handle his money wisely so his wife need not worry, and generally live in such a way that he doesn't give her **too large** a mental burden. He must shoulder all of his own responsibility!

Thank you for your response.

Truth Vs. Error
GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

by Rev. R.C. Harbach

"God . . . is perfect in knowledge." (Job 37:15-16).

Probably it was Protagoras, one of the earliest heathen philosophers, who claimed what amounts to the very opposite of the above, namely, "**Man** is the measure of all things." This comes out of Agnosticism (a cowardly Atheism). But current, blatant, hard-core Atheism makes the same foolish contention. Pantheism also agrees with this since it denies the possibility of knowledge of God. Pantheism identifies God with the universe which has no intelligent consciousness. God acquires personality, thinking and knowledge in that part of the universe developed in "humanity," "humankind," "man." Hence, man's mind alone is the measure of all things. God has to borrow the knowledge of creatures, of the universe (himself!) from man. He must depend on men for the means of understanding. God has to look to something in Himself that is not God to get understanding. But will a solar system, a galaxy or a fly assist His knowledge? Such thinking destroys the perfection and the eternity of God's knowledge, and makes Him a mixture of pure Spirit and something else, so that also His simplicity is destroyed. To imagine such a god is to destroy the very idea of Godhood. But Scripture alone preserves us from falling into the strange, depressing loneliness of these philosophies. Scripture attributes omniscience to God. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13). This attribute is a personal comfort to believers. "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off." (Psm. 139:1, 2). It should also give us pause, lest we rashly plunge into any way of sin. "O house of Israel . . . I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." (Ezek. 11:5). But if **man** is the measure of all things, then he must know when God decreed that the clouds should have their being. Does man know this? Does he know when God stored them with rain, hail, snow and lightning? Does he know why or even that God disposes them, causing them to be here and there and not elsewhere in the heavens? Can man tell beforehand what will break out of the clouds — moisture, ice, light, the seven primary colors? Is man the measure of all there is to know, of all God knows, of meteorology? (Weather-men are often so notoriously wrong in their calculations and forecasts!) Does man know each cloud God has numbered by their number? (Cp. Job 38:37). Does man know the number of the steps taken in his whole life? God does! (Cp. Job 31:4). God knows every thought of every mind. (Heb. 4:13; Ps. 139:2).

Man's mind the measure of all these things! But go back to the clouds: O man, dost thou know the balancings of the clouds? Do you know how these ponderous objects, weighty, full of water, hang in the air without falling on the earth? Then there is the rainbow, reminder of God's covenant. Is man the measure of all there is to know of God's covenant? Does man know all the secret mysteries of God's own covenant life? "God is perfect in knowledge." Does man know God as He knows Himself and all His creatures and all things whatsoever? Does man, as God, have the attribute of omniscience? Why not, if he is the measure of all things? Shall man, then, measure God by his scantiness? (Cp. II Cor. 3:5). Proud man must make himself equal to God, or cut God down as short as his measuring line. Shall man's ignorance be the measure of God's infinite mind? Shall a whole universe of computers record all God's understanding! (Cp. Ps. 147:5). To maintain this silly claim, man claims to be God, the devil's lie. (Gen. 3:5). By this claim man is saying, What my net can't catch ain't fish! Or, if no fish are in my net, no fish exist!

God has an infinite, incomprehensible knowledge. Ours compared to His is as a grain of dust, as nothing. (Cp. Isa. 40:15, 17). Who among the children of men knows all the things that possibly could be, but will never be, because though God could will and ordain their being, will never do so? Who knows all the things that actually shall be because God has decreed their being? God alone knows all these possibilities, realities and eventualities. If we suppose an order in God's decrees, we could say God knew things as possible before He decreed them, and knew them as future because He decreed them. For unless the will of God **decree** a thing to come to pass, He cannot know that it **will** come to pass! God cannot (fore)know without foreordaining. Apart from God's foreordination, there is nothing to know. God knows all things not from the existence and presence of the things themselves, but because He has ordained them to be. So the crucifixion of God's Son was foretold centuries before He came into this world because in the divine purpose He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." (Acts 2:23). Then since God's ordination, His sovereign will, is both immutable and certain, His (fore)knowledge is certain. This infinite, eternal, unchangeable knowledge is proper to God, but incommunicable to the creature. "God is perfect in knowledge . . . Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job 11:7). Man's power (puny finitude) is not the measure of God's (almighty) power. Man's knowledge (as compared to God's a form of ignorance) is not the judge of the knowledge of God. If "man the measure of all things" thinking can go beyond Agnosticism to give God a place in it, what place would God be given? One second to man. God is not allowed a greater measure of knowledge than man has. God then, in some respects, as man, can only guess, rather than to rely on His own infallible knowledge. Being a guesser, He may guess wrong; He may err. God's deity is thus destroyed. He is stripped of His perfect omniscience.

None of God's counsels (decrees) lie in uncertainty. None of them are left dependent upon the creature, or on secondary causes. Not one of them can be mere possibility, something which

may or may not come to pass. Whatever God has decreed is infallibly and immutably certain. The Westminster Confession puts it this way: God's knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature." As a notable Reformed theologian put it, God's knowledge comprehends absolutely all things (omniscience); He knows all reality, uncreated and created. He knows them all as they really are, being as being, the visible as visible, the invisible as invisible (Ps. 139:12; 44:9), the possible as possible, the actual as actual, the necessary as necessary, the free as free, the past as past, the present as present, the future as future.

God knows Himself to the very depths of His being. Man's knowledge of God cannot possibly penetrate that deeply. (Cp. I Tim. 6:16). If God did not know Himself He would suffer the greatest ignorance, since He would be ignorant of the best of all objects. If God did not know Himself He could not be happy, for God knows Himself as the ever blessed and eternally happy God. If God did not know Himself He could not have created anything, for He would not know His power and ability to do anything. If He does not know Himself, He does not know anything and cannot do anything.

How does God know? He knows all things by one simple act of thought. God knows all things all at once with one thought. There is no succession in God's thought. He knows all successions of thought at one glance without any succession of knowledge in Himself. He sees and reads the contents of all the libraries in the world with one glance without any motion. He sees all things, the terrestrial globe around, not one after the other, but all together and all at once.

In God there is knowledge of apprehension and knowledge of approbation. When the Lord says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2), and, "The Lord knoweth them that are His (II Tim. 2:19), the meaning is that He loves them. On the other hand, those He disapproves He is said not to know — I know you not; I never knew you! (Matt. 25:12; 7:23). He has an apprehension of them, but no approbation of them. They are objects of His omniscience (or prescience), but not of His fore-knowledge.

Central to the knowledge of God is the salvation of God. He had decreed, before any consideration of the foundation of the universe, to reveal His knowledge and wisdom in the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This decree was His "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11), a decree of election of some from eternity chosen in Christ and made accepted in Him, the Beloved, a decree to be realized according to His eternal good pleasure which He purposed in Himself (Eph. 1:9), to bring these chosen to redemption, the forgiveness of sins through His blood (1:7). So that atonement has for its purpose in its efficacy and extent to save only the elect.

It is to Christ we must go for knowledge. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col 1:19). So that in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3). All the fulness of God is in Him. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9). In Him are all the attributes of God, including that of omniscience. The whole thesaurus of knowledge is in

Him. Out of it, He, as our chief Prophet and Teacher, perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption. Not that these treasures are hidden from us, but for us. Christ is our safe deposit vault where all divine knowledge is stored for us. The sevenfold Spirit of God rests upon Him (Isa. 11:2; Rev. 1:4). He has the Spirit of knowledge. If we are wise we will lay up this knowledge (Prov. 10:14); we will prize it and trust it. "For some have not the knowledge of God" (I Cor. 15:34).

Book Review
COME, YE CHILDREN

by Amy Lotterman

Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema has very beautifully written the Bible Story book **Come, Ye Children**. This book is the third that she has written. The other two are: 1) **Therefore Have I Spoken**, a biography of her father-in-law Herman Hoeksema, and 2) **Peaceable Fruit**, a book about her experience as housewife, mother, and veteran Christian School teacher.

I enjoyed reading this book for a couple of reasons. First, Mrs. Hoeksema took the time and effort to explain things so that even very little children would be able to understand it. For example: In the creation stories she gave examples of things such as in the third chapter when she is talking about the sun being a light holder like our lamps. She also asked questions in the beginning of the chapters that were about the chapters. Secondly, Mrs. Hoeksema put a "Remember" after each story to remind little children of certain important things.

Mrs. Hoeksema uses the expression "this is a picture of" throughout the book. Little children do not understand that. The expressions "this is like" or "this reminds us of" such and such a thing, children understand better.

Mr. Jeff Steenholdt did a very fine job of illustrating Mrs. Hoeksema's book.

I recommend this book to young readers and listeners.

ANSWERS TO AUG./SEPT. BIBLE QUIZ

1. Genesis and John
2. 27
3. 2; Ruth and Esther
4. 5; Obadiah, Philemon, II John, III John, and Jude
5. Psalms; 150
6. Esther
7. 39
8. I Samuel
9. Exodus and Deuteronomy
10. Judges
11. John
12. Joshua
13. Matthew
14. Genesis

PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHER GOES TO ULSTER

by Jack Lenting, Chairman
Committee for Reformed Education
in Ulster

On August 14, 1984, Mr. and Mrs. Deane Wassink and their four small children left for Northern Ireland, where Mr. Wassink will teach the 1984-1985 school year in Covenant Christian School of Newtownabbey — about 15 miles from Belfast. The Wassinks arrived safely, by God's providence; and, at the time of this writing (September 29), Mr. Wassink has been teaching for almost a month.

The story behind Mr. Wassink's going to Ulster begins in September, 1983, when a small group of concerned Presbyterians in Northern Ireland started the first parental, Protestant, Christian school in that country. Traditionally, the schools in Ulster have been the parochial schools of the Roman Catholics and the State schools used by the Protestants. Covenant Christian School, as this new school was named, is governed by an association called "Association for Christian Education in Ireland" (ACEI), operating through a Board. Members of several Presbyterian churches co-operate in the association. One of the association's newsletters speaks of the carefulness of the Board regarding applicants for membership, "in order to maintain the confessionally reformed character of the organization."

In its first year, the school had 14 students; this year; there are 21 students—there is growth.

Because Christian education is new in Ulster, teachers are not available; and the association has needed help from other quarters in the form of a competent, Reformed teacher for the upper "grades." There is a teacher for the lower "grades." Because the group is yet quite small, it needs financial help in the form of partial support of the teacher obtained from abroad. The association does provide some of the support of this teacher.

In late spring of this year, the association learned that the school would not be receiving a teacher it had counted on for the 1984-1985 school year. Because members of the Bible Presbyterian Church in Larne, Northern Ireland, including her pastor, The Rev. George Hutton, are members of the ACEI and because the Bible Presbyterian Church had recently come into close contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches, through our South Holland Church, the request for help came to the South Holland Church for a Protestant Reformed teacher. Already, in one of his earliest letters to the Evangelism Committee of South Holland, Rev. Hutton had written, "Some of us are very concerned about the schooling of our children and are determined to give them a reformed christian education. I know that the Protestant Reformed Church has years

of experience in this field and for this reason I am asking if there is possibly any material specially directed to parents dealing with this particular matter." (By this time, the Bible Presbyterian Church has asked our synodical Committee of Contact to pursue close church-relations with her; and our Synod has sent two ministers to her "in order to explore the possibility of establishing sister church relationships with (her).")

The request was urgent: the school needed a teacher by September.

Several men in different areas of our denomination then undertook to discover whether a teacher was available and whether there was the readiness of our people to support the work financially. The results were gratifying in the extreme. Mr. Deane Wassink of our Holland, Michigan Church became convinced that the Lord called him to this work of Christian education. However, he had already signed a contract to teach in the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, where he had taught the year before. But Hope very graciously agreed to release Mr. Wassink from his contract and, at that late date, to find another teacher, thus co-operating on behalf of the school in Ulster.

No less gratifying was the response to the newsletter distributed throughout the churches of our denomination, asking for financial support. Our committee had hoped for $5,000 by September. At the present time, $14,000 has been given, mostly by members of the Protestant Reformed Churches, from all across the United States and Canada, in large amounts and in small. Some from outside our churches have also contributed; and their gifts have been gratefully received. The liberality of our people and their zeal for the cause of God's covenant are nothing short of amazing. May God bless the gifts and the givers! The Diaconate of South Holland is administering this charity.

Several thousand dollars are still needed for the work. Anyone who is willing to give should make his check payable to "Fund for Reformed Education in Ulster" and send it to Jack Lenting, 17014 Wausau Ave., South Holland, IL 60473.

The address of Mr. and Mrs. Wassink is:

28 Hillmount Gardens
Larne, County Antrim
Northern Ireland BT40 1TF

The Wassinks will be encouraged by your letters. They need our prayers — remember them and the cause of Christian education in Ulster in your prayers.

There seems a voice in every gale,
A tongue in every flower,
Which tells, O Lord, the wondrous tale
Of Thy almighty power.
The birds that rise on quivering wing
Proclaim their Maker's praise,
And all the mingling sounds of spring
To Thee an anthem raise.

author unknown

REFORMATION DAY THOUGHTS

by Rev. G. Lubbers

A very rich young Israelite came running to Jesus. We read that Jesus loved this young man. Every word which he spoke to him was infinite love in the form of instruction and correction.

Strange as it may sound, this young man has a troubled soul, a troubled and accusing conscience. He did not yet find rest for his soul. And so he comes running to Jesus, and the question is a very necessary one.

Listen to it, will you my dear young reader?

He asks: "good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Matthew 19:16; Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18 all record these words. These words must be of extreme importance. Fact is, that that is the question which filled the heart of the great Martin Luther after he become a Monk in the cloister at Erfurt. He went here to find peace of soul in becoming thus, by his efforts, holy enough to be accepted of the holy and righteous and good God. He tried to do this in the way of works. He walked the road of "penance", "contrition", "confession", "absolution". But he found no forgiveness from God. He did not hear Jesus say "Thy sins have been forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). He met an angry God, whom He could not really love and adore.

And thus it was with this young man who come to Jesus. Yes, thus it is with every one of us until we rest in the blessed grace of the free gift of the forgiveness of our sins.

This rich young man must find rest for his soul. He must learn that he will not merit, but that he will **inherit** eternal life. Eternal life is for "heirs" of the promise. And so he must learn to look at all his good works as so much loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. To bring this young man to his spiritual senses, and to the old tried paths, Jesus recites to him the second table of the Law. He recites Commandments 5-9. Thou shalt not commit any sin. Be perfect!!

As this young man read this law he says: all these things have I observed from my youth! I have done all this, "Master"! O Jesus loved this young man. He reaches out to give him the inheritance of eternal life: faith in Jesus Christ! He shows him in a very pointed and pedagogical way that he does not understand what observing of the law is. He fails to understand that the law is spiritual, holy and good. So he says: one thing thou lackest. Go sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor in love, and come follow me, taking up thy cross for the Gospel's sake, for my sake.

This is a very disappointing answer for our sinful flesh!

The young man went away sorrowful. He had been rebuked by the law of God as to its spiritual nature. He had told in this answer to Jesus what it means that there is only one Who is good, that is, God. Let God be true and every man a liar! And this answer of Jesus to the rich young self-righteous

man had drawn blood from the disciples of Jesus. Who then can be saved? Who then can inherit eternal life?

No one! There is none that doeth good, no not one! There is none that seeketh after God! God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that understood. And there **was** none! There **is** none!

The camel must pass through the eye of the needle! That is easier than for a rich man to inherit eternal life and enter into the Kingdom of God.

Luther learned this very profoundly. He saw this in himself and in all his fellowmen. His entering into the cloister-life at Erfurt afforded no help; it deepened his problem! Until . . . .

Yes, until he heard the gospel-call: come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt. 11:28) Then the heavy burden of his sins and guilt was taken from his back. He learned that it is tempting God to try to do what none of the fathers in the Old Testament were even able to do. (Acts 15) Christ took Luther's burden. He gave him a new yoke to bear, and a light burden. He gave Luther his prepared righteousness without works of law which he performed. Luther heard the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. He heard the message that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the lost, the guilty, the filthy sinners, yea godless sinners, who were enemies.

The just shall live by faith!

That is the miracle of grace. Yes, the camel passes through the eye of a needle. A man is born from **above**. With man this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible. This is the mystery which the believing saints of all ages experienced, and the angels, which hover over the mercy-seat, wonderingly adore, and seek to look into.

How shall these things be, since I know not a man?

This shall be the wonder of the Incarnation: the Holy Ghost shall come upon you . . . . Even Elisabeth, who was barren is made alive. For with God, all things are possible!

In the dead bones of the church which seemed to lie dead in Sacerdotal error, God stirred with His Spirit. He stirred up one man; no He stirred up the hearts of all the elect in the Sixteenth Century, and gave them to bewail their sins before God's face, but now to seek their all, not in an attempted life of good works of merit where they could say "all these things have I kept from my youth". Perish the thought! Now they come to the blessed "rest" of soul of the justified-sanctified believer, who confesses: I am righteous before God and heir of everlasting life! I am an heir-child of God! Yes, my conscience accuses me that I have kept none of God's commandments, I have transgressed them all, yea, even now I am still inclined to all evil, I have but a small beginning of the new obedience. But, the blessed rest! God deals with me as if I had never sinned, yea, as if I have kept all of His commandments, since I receive the benefit of His justifying grace with a believing heart!

The Reformation wonder of the Sixteenth Century was not something new. It was not something which Luther discovered and which was a novel Gospel for a Calvin and the Reformers. It was simply a return to the call of Jeremiah 6:16 "Thus saith the LORD, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye

shall find rest for your souls''!

And then there were ever those of whom it is said, that when they heard this message ''We will walk therein''. Luther joined the throng of believers before him. And multitudes have found this way of the Lord, coming to Jesus, our peace. And they sang of this ''rest'' from pulpits, it was heralded from the housetops, it was written in confessions of the believers, it became once more the clarion call of the Gospel preaching, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven opened the doors for every believer unto life, and shut the very doors for unbelievers.

Blessed rest for the weary! Streams of water for the thirsty, the balm of Gilead for all our wounds.

Yes, the camel goes through the eye of the needle. This is no challenge for a Houdini to master. It is the power and wisdom of God!

Such is the very heart of our blessed Gospel. It is the pearl of great price. This Gospel of grace is entrusted to us as churches. It is entrusted to the minister each Sunday, and to the teachers in our schools, and to the professors in our Seminary.

The Reformation is lived over each day and in every life of every believer. He comes from the dead-center of ''all these things have I done from my youth'', to the cry, Good master what must I do to inherit eternal life? And then, by grace he sees the cross, the merits of Christ, delivered from his sins and raised up again for her justification. And he believes with the heart and confesses with the mouth unto salvation. And so this word is not far from us, it is nigh in our hearts. And then we live Reformation life, life out of God!!

A doxology

Mary E. Ruch, Englewood, M.J.

Bless us, Lord, for by thy hand
Is bounty given to this land.
Fill our hearts with thy great love;
Grant us peace like that above;
Help us in our helplessness;
Ease our burdens, aid distress;
Keep our hearts from evil free.
Hallelujah! Praise to thee!
Hallelujah! Praise to thee!

Give us grace to do thy will,
That, with hearts united still,
Songs we'll raise with ringing voice,
And in gratitude rejoice.
May we all ourselves deny;
Hold the cross of Christ on high.
Fill us with thy Spirit's flame:
Hallelujah! Praise thy name!
Hallelujah! Praise thy name!

Critique

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDING SOCIETIES

by Bernie Kamps

As people of God, we know our calling is to serve the Lord with our hearts, souls, and minds. In order to serve God aright, we must know Him. How do we, as Christians, gain that knowledge? And what do we do with it?

Implanted in all men is the conscious knowledge of God. All reprobate men know this but they call Him a "supreme being", a "god", a "higher power". Creation speaks to them but they hold this witness in unbelief. We who confess to be faithful followers, know Him as the God of the Scriptures, a just and merciful God. Because we are the Lord's saints we want to know more of His attributes, and want a fuller understanding of His word, and we find our comfort in the doctrines of salvation.

How do we achieve these understandings of God and of Christ's works? We have the chief means of grace, the lively preaching of the word. Next, we have our own personal studies. The value of societies is the promoting of such study and the spiritual growth that results. We glorify God through such study and discussion. Our thoughts and conversations are directed toward our Redeemer from day to day. Spiritual excercise profiteth much! We become well founded in the doctrine of the Word. We live out of our convictions, whether they be right or wrong. In order to live properly, we must know the standard to follow.

You are a part of the militant church. In order to fight the battle of faith, in order to defend the precious truths of God's Word, you MUST be equipped. In Ephesians 6 we read of "having your loins girt about with truth", and taking "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."

Our worst enemy is our flesh, our depraved nature. In order to battle this enemy, which readily joins Satan, the father of the lie, we must know the TRUTH! In order to defend your doctrinal positions, your world and life views, you must know the TRUTH! When you are tempted to marry someone who attends a church, and readily embraces its teachings even though they are contrary to Scripture, you must know the truth! Are you able to defend against not only out and out lies, but clever half-truths, slight twisting of doctrines which rob God of His glory and majesty - or is it easier to say all of the debating, worrying, fussing over little details of Scripture, just lead to hard feelings and offenses anyway?

Let's be active in attending societies and in taking our part. Study beforehand, raise questions and readily answer others. Be firmly rooted in the doctrines of God's Word, so that when the storms of temptations or controversy lean hard against you and try to

hurl you into the garden of sin, you can and will resist.

God grants a richer measure of His grace through study and discussion. You will be drawn by the Holy Spirit ever closer to God. As your faith grows, so will your knowledge of your sin. God chastises His people for their sin, but God also comforts His own through blessed forgiveness.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast beer assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:14-17.