

# Insight Into

January/ February 2019



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# Insight Into

## General Information

**Insight Into** is the official youth periodical of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the United States and Canada.

As a Reformed magazine, **Insight Into** seeks to promote the knowledge of the truth and to give biblical guidance to young people in their daily lives.

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### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscription Rates: Canada	\$8.00 CAD
United States	\$8.00 USD
International	\$25.00 CAD

Subscriptions for **Insight Into** run from January to December (six issues annually) and should be renewed at the end of each year.

No payment is necessary if your consistory is already providing you with a subscription. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Donation cheques should be made payable to **Insight Into** and mailed to the Subscription Manager.

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**Print and Design:** Sunrise Printing Inc.

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# MEDITATION

## Uttered Secrets

*“I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world”*

(Matthew 13:35).

Rev. H. D. den Hollander

When the Lord Jesus began His prophetic work here on earth, the multitudes were astonished and wondered, saying, *“From whence hath this Man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto Him?”* (Mark 6:2). They *“were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Matthew 7:28-29). The parables of Christ were especially mysterious, for they were spoken, as we read in Matthew 13, on the one hand as a judgment, in order that those who close their eyes may not see, and those who close their ears may not hear, nor understand. On the other hand, the things which were hid from the wise and prudent were by the same means revealed unto babes, when Christ, by speaking in parables *“uttered things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”*

Young people, the name of this periodical is *Insight Into*. What things do you have a desire to have insight into? Today we have access to the Internet, by which we can gain insight into so many interesting things in this world. If you have just the slightest desire, a few strokes and all kinds of information are available to give you insight into whatever subject you desire. How much time do you spend searching for this world’s wisdom? No, we cannot condemn its usefulness altogether, as we must also go through this world. However, do you ever have a desire to gain insight into those secrets which the Lord speaks about in this text? David wrote in Psalm 25, *“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant”* (verse 14). This means that those who fear the Lord are led into secrets which are hidden from others. Paul calls it *“the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew”* (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). The opening of these secrets is promised to those who *“seek for them as silver, and search for them as for hid treasures”* (see Proverbs 2:4.)

What kind of secrets does Christ speak of when He says they have been *kept secret from the foundation of the world*? These secrets have to do with the salvation of our souls. Our first parents did not remain long in the state of

rectitude but fell soon after their creation. The first revelation and promise of the Mediator to come was received before they were cast out of the Garden of Eden. However, it was a revelation which was extremely veiled, namely, *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel”* (Genesis 3:15). Thus it was indeed revealed already at the very foundation of the world, so necessary to give hope to our first parents, but there was so much that remained hidden in it. When the Lord opens up the fountain of sin, more and more, in the life of His people, they yet often have to experience that the way of deliverance remains so hidden, as a great secret that they have no, or so little, insight into. Job had to complain, *“Oh that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat!”* (Job 23:3). This is the experience of the true Church. It is a secret that they desire to enter into. Throughout the Old Testament years, the Lord revealed more and more of this secret unto His Church by way of His prophets. Just read the Messianic Psalms, and the prophecy of Isaiah, and Malachi, for example. However, even at that, it remained a great secret, because it was all still unfulfilled prophecy. However, all this changed when Christ came in the flesh. As the Fulfilment of all the prophecies Himself, He was the Revelation of the great secret which John the Baptist sent from the prison to ask Him, saying, *“Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?”* (Matthew 11:3). The Jewish people, however, did not believe in Him. As a judgment, He spoke to them in parables, that the secret of salvation might be hid from them. But there was also God’s true remnant among them, to whom He began to *utter those things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world*. He began to unravel the mysteries of the promises which were veiled for such a long time. He began to declare to them who He was. He began to instruct them in the way of salvation. He enlightened their eyes, and granted them faith to believe in Him as the true Messiah, though He appeared in form just like other men in this world.

Christ did not merely utter these secrets outwardly, with His mouth, but He uttered them in their hearts by His Spirit. Therefore we read of those who indeed were given to enter into those secrets by a true and living faith. In their great need, they came to Him, as unworthy ones, and received the confirmation of their entrance into the secret of those that fear Him. Jairus gave testimony of his entrance into that secret when he said, *“Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed”* (Matthew 8:8). The woman of Canaan did also, when she said, *“Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the masters’ table”* (Matthew 15:27). Did not also

blind Bartimaeus give this same testimony, as we read, *“But he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”* (Mark 10:48)?

Young people, these are secrets which the world knows nothing of. They are secrets which do not belong to the wisdom of this world. Do you desire insight into them also? Bunyan writes of his Pilgrim, in his dire need, that he could not see the Wicket Gate. That Gate is Christ. He is often a very hidden Person for His Church. What did Evangelist ask Christian? *“Do you see yonder shining light?”* In other words, do you see something shining in the Word of God? To this he replied, *“I think I do.”* Do you ever experience that, young people? Do you think you sometimes see something shining, something so beautiful, so precious, declared in the Word, which yet remains so hidden to you? Do you ever desire to enter into that secret, of the salvation of God’s Church, for the welfare of your own poor soul? Stay then much in the Word of God. Evangelist said, *“Keep your eye on that light, go directly unto it, and so shalt thou see the Gate.”* Read the life of Luther once again, how he struggled with the Word, as he wrestled with the Lord; and how the secret of salvation was revealed to him, to the great joy of his heart and the deliverance of his poor soul. May the Lord give you, in the days of your youth, a desire to enter into these most blessed and precious secrets, that they may not only be clearly uttered by Christ after being kept secret from the foundation of the world, but that they may also be uttered by His Spirit in your own heart personally. Seek for this, as for hid treasure, for then you shall find, according to the promise of the Lord, with whom these secrets are hid.

*“Were all sin now visited with open punishment, it might be thought that nothing was reserved for the final judgment; and, on the other hand, were no sin now openly punished, it might be supposed there was no divine providence.” ~ Augustine (354-430)*

*“True religion must be conformable to the will of God as its unerring standard.” ~ John Calvin (1509-1564)*

*“No religion is genuine that is not in accordance with truth.” ~ Lactantius (250-325)*

# Love Towards God

Taken from *The Christian's Reasonable Service*  
by Rev. Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711),  
with contributions by the *Insight Into* editors

## Introduction

Violence has enveloped our world. From week to week, the news is filled with atrocities taking place around the globe. This violence is a manifestation of the depravity of the human heart. Certainly we are approaching the last days when “*the love of many shall wax cold*” (Matthew 24:12). Respect for God and those in authority is more and more seen as a yoke that must be thrown off as the call for “resistance” fills the university campuses. Opposition to biblical norms is flaunted everywhere and acceptance of all other values is tolerated.

In such a world are there any who have love towards God? The answer is yes! When God regenerates a soul, He places true faith, hope, and love in it. Without this regenerating work, we do not love God. However, God continues His work today and will until the end of time. Rev. à Brakel examines this love towards God in his book, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*.

## What is love and what are its effects?

Love is the summary of the whole law. Love towards God is what Adam had before sin came into the world. Our fall in Adam has resulted in the absence of love towards our Creator and Provider, and now we are living in enmity towards Him. Our actions speak, “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him.”

By the gracious work of regeneration, God plants love in the heart. Such love occurs because of the mediation of the Lord Jesus, who as mediator removes enmity and restores His children into friendship with God. This friendship is exercised by faith and thereby one is given to enjoy the love of God. If we do not have saving faith, neither do we have true love towards God.

## Characteristics of love that God plants

Rev. 'A Brakel points out many characteristics of the love that God sheds abroad in the heart. By this Spirit-wrought love, God's children embrace God's will and fully surrender themselves to His service.

The love that God plants in the heart has God as its object. If we do not know God, then we will place our love upon physical things. The men of Gaderene were more worried about their livestock than their souls when Jesus healed the demonic (Luke 8:27-39). Grace changes the object of a soul's love. David wrote, *"I will love thee, O LORD, my strength"* in Psalm 18:1. God was the benefactor who had heard his cries, *"I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications"* (Psalm 116:1). David felt that God was worthy to be loved because He is God.

Man is not the author of this love, as love is the free gift of God. By the Holy Spirit, love is kindled in the heart of those whom God is working graciously in. When one receives a new heart, then they will begin to love God. The love of God in eternity towards a sinner is the cause of the sinner one day being implanted with love towards God. This love is worked by knowledge. When Jesus worked in the heart of the woman of Samaria, then her heart was filled with love and wonder towards Him. *"Come, see a man, that told me all things that ever I did"* (John 4:29) was the response of love from the knowledge of God. *"Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love"* (1 John 4:7-8).



## **Love is the effect of saving faith**

We cannot love what we have no union with. When a union is established between God and a sinner, then love will flow. Jesus is the mediator who accomplishes this union. Man can only love God when he ascertains that God is his God. This union comes about by saving faith. Love desires to maintain this union as evidenced by Abraham, the “friend of God.” Over and over again God continued to visit Abraham, and we also find Abraham building various altars to the living God.

To love God is the singular privilege of all the elect. Their souls at times go out to God. Time and again they are refreshed by His grace and their soul is lifted up above earthly things to the source of life and good. They are given to exclaim with Asaph, *“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides Thee”* (Psalm 73:25).

## **Rev. ‘A Brakel counsels us to examine ourselves in the following points**

If we love God, then He will be esteemed above all things. Esteeming God above all will affect the will. *“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty”* (1 Chronicles 29:11).

Love fills the heart with joy. David’s heart was filled with joy as he felt the nearness of God. *“In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul”* (Psalm 94:19).

Love to God begets reverence for God. When the soul is illuminated by God’s love, it will sink away in nothingness. Peter demonstrated this feeling of his nothingness when he exclaimed, *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man”* (Luke 5:8).

Love is demonstrated in activity. If one loves God, then they will seek places to draw near to God and they desire to be in His presence. Love for God’s house, His Word, prayer, and the communion of saints will be evident in one who loves God. The psalmist felt a strong yearning for God, *“O when wilt Thou come unto me?”* (Psalm 101:2).

Love is a satisfying grace. God fills the hungry soul and satisfies the thirsty heart. He is meat indeed and drink indeed. *“I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst”* (John 6:35).

Love causes pain when the loved one is absent even in natural life. A soul near or far from God has varying apprehensions. The psalmist cried out, *“How long wilt Thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?”* (Psalm 13:1). Conversely the psalmist cried, *“It is good for me to draw near to God”* (Psalm 73:28).

Those who love God love what God loves--holiness--and hate what God hates--iniquity. *“Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate Thee?”* (Psalm

139:21), and *“I am a companion of all them that fear Thee”* (Psalm 119:63) are the convictions of a soul that loves God.

### **Rev. ‘A Brakel also conversely points out that there are indicators that love to God is absent**

Do you esteem, joy, reverence, and yearn for God? Do you joy in His presence and grieve in His heartfelt absence? Do you love His commandments and hate sin as Jesus said? Are you forsaking all to be His follower, *“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 14:26-27)?

Do you love the world? Is all that is visible occupying your mind and heart? Do you cleave to clothing, money, honour, man’s praise, partying, etc.? Do your eyes focus on the here below? Are your hands only busy with what will pass away? Do your ears dwell upon the lusts of this world? One may say with the heart, *“All this is vanity,”* yet cleave to the world in the heart.

Are you filled with self-love above love to God? One loves himself most who always has himself in view. When such a self-worshipper is inhibited from achieving their desire, then hatred, envy, and wrath are aroused against those who stand in the way. *“He in whom the nature and deeds of love towards God are absent, and he who loves the world and lives in self-love, does not love God.”*

*“If we walk before the Lord in integrity, we shall do more to bless our descendants than if we bequeathed them large estates.”*

*~ Rev. C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)*

*“The real test of your Christianity is not how pious you look at the Lord’s Table on Sunday, but how you act at the breakfast table at home.”*

*~ Rev. Vance Havner (1901-1986)*

*“Many pray with their lips for that for which their hearts have no desire.”*

*~ Rev. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)*



# Christ or the World?

Rev. Robert M. M'Cheyne (1813-1843)

*Rev. M'Cheyne was a godly minister in Dundee, Scotland, who died when he was only 29. This is a letter to a boy named "G" (we only know the initial of his first name) in September 1842. "G" had been awakened to concern for his soul. The letter has been edited.*

I was glad indeed to see by the letter you sent me that though your mind is dark and troubled, you have not gone back to the world. It is a false, deceiving world! It smiles only to betray. I would be glad to lead you to taste the peace that passes understanding that is only to be found in Jesus.

You are quite wrong in thinking that I do not understand your misery. I know it well. It is true that Jesus does give me peace. He washes me from all sin in His own blood. I often feel Him standing by my side and looking down upon me, saying, "Thou art Mine." Yet still I have known more misery than you. I have sinned more deeply than you. I have sinned against more light and more love, and yet I have found mercy. Why may you not?

I was interrupted while writing this by a very little girl coming to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Poor thing, she has been weeping till I thought her heart would break. She lives several miles away, but a companion was awakened and told her, and ever since she has been seeking Christ with all her heart. I was telling her that sweet verse, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*" (1 Timothy 1:15). It will answer you also, dear friend.

Christ Jesus is God's dear Son. He made all things, the sun, moon and stars, men and angels. He was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and yet He came into the world. He did not say, "I will keep My throne and My happiness and leave sinners to die and perish in their sins." No, "*He came into the world.*" He became a babe and was laid in a manger, for there was no room in the inn. The inn was like your heart; it was filled with other lodgers and had no room for Jesus. He became "*a man of sorrows, and acquainted*

with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He bore "our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Why did He do all this? It was to save sinners, not to save good people, not to save angels, but sinners.

Perhaps you will say, "But I am too bad a sinner." Yet Paul says, "*Of whom I am chief.*" Paul was the chief of sinners, and yet He was saved by Christ. So Christ is willing and able to save you, even if you are the chief sinner on the face of the earth. If Christ came into this world and died to save such as you, will it not be a fearful thing if you die without being saved by Him? Surely you have lived long enough without Christ. You have despised Jesus long enough. What has the world done for you that you love it so much? Did the world die for you? Will the world blot out your sins or change your heart? Will the world carry you to heaven?

No, no! You may go back to the world if you please, but it can only destroy your poor soul. "*She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth*" (1 Timothy 5:6). Read these words in your Bible and mark them; and if you go back, that mark will be a witness against you before the great white throne when the books are opened. Have you not lived long enough in pleasure? Come and try the pleasures of Christ, which are forgiveness and a new heart. I have not been at a dance or any worldly amusement for many years, and yet I believe I have had more pleasure in a single day than you have had all your life.

In what, you will say. In feeling that God loves me, that Christ has washed me, and in feeling that I shall be in heaven when the wicked are cast into hell. "*A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand*" (Psalm 84:10).

I do not know what is to be the result of your anxieties. I do not know whether you will be drawn to Christ, or driven back into the whirlpool of a perishing world, but I know that all will soon be settled for eternity.

I was with a family today where a child had died. I opened my Bible, and explained this verse to them over the coffin of their little one, "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). Solemn words! We have to die only once, and the day is fixed. If you die wrong the first time, you cannot come back to die better a second time. If you die without Christ, you cannot come back to be converted and die a believer. You have to die but once. Oh, pray that you may find Christ before death finds you!

"*After this the judgment.*" Not after this, purgatory. There is no further opportunity to be saved, but "*after this the judgment.*" As death leaves you, so judgment finds you. If you die unsaved, you will be unsaved in the judgment. May I never see you at the left hand! If I do, you will remember how I warned you, and prayed for you, and besought you to come to the Lord Jesus.

Come to Jesus. He will in no wise cast you out.

# Conviction *or* Convenience?

*Submitted*

*I*t would be interesting, though somewhat disturbing perhaps, if we could know what percentage of those who “profess” Christianity do so only for the sake of convenience. Not many, of course, would admit even to themselves that religion is no more than a vehicle of convenience. But history is replete with stories of those who have accepted some sort of religion for marital reasons, for political advantage, for social prestige, or for monetary purposes. From the days of Constantine until now, world rulers have espoused certain religious convictions, because it united their subjects and strengthened their hands.

Not infrequently, religious bodies have altered their creeds, changed their practices, and shaped their dogmas for the sake of expediency. They were not even concerned with what the Lord thought. Whether such religious ideals would have anything to do with their entrance into heaven or their eternal condemnation scarcely entered their minds.

We often wonder how many attend some religious services today--when it is convenient--primarily because it is “in good taste.” It carries with it a certain amount of “respectability” and acceptance in “good society.” We have heard from reliable sources of a number of people in prominent places who attend religious services with a reasonable degree of regularity--people who are in “good standing” religiously--yet they do not hesitate to use the Lord’s name in vain, to imbibe intoxicating liquors, to conceal the truth, or even to misrepresent the truth when it seems “expedient.” Apparently their religious convictions, if they have any, do not deter them from following whatever course of action that serves their purposes at the time.

Such a religion may have some utilitarian value in this life, but it serves no useful purpose, as far as preparing one to dwell with God and all the redeemed in the hereafter. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Those who enjoy it must be prepared in heart and life, and life on this earth is a testing time.

New Testament Christianity is more than a convenience. A philosophy or a principle by which one gains a certain amount of prestige and respectability is sheer mockery.

Christianity is a new life with Christ. It is the putting off of the old man of sin; it is being born anew, born from above “*of water and of the Spirit*” (John 3:5). When one becomes a Christian, he dies to the things of this

world and is recreated in Christ Jesus. He then becomes “*a new creature*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). After his conversion, the Apostle Paul could write, “*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live ... but Christ liveth in me*” (Galatians 2:20), and “*they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof*” (Galatians 5:24).

When one becomes a Christian, he ceases from the love and practice of the things of the world. Political preferment, social prestige, fleshly lust, earthly power, and worldly gain must all be put aside when we are raised up to a new life with Him (Romans 6:3-5). True Christianity does not seek its own but the accomplishment of God’s will. It does not grasp for power or any earthly reward. True Christianity is manifest in a life of humility, of service, of dedication, of love, of confidence in God, and in His power to save.

This is what Christianity meant to the Apostle Paul. Yet he never hesitated to express his convictions, to warn against sin, to expose false teachers, or to reprove governors and kings when he stood before them. With Paul, Christianity was everything but a matter of convenience. Truly he could say “*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*” (1 Corinthians 15:19).

It is our firm conviction that the form of Christianity professed by some is but a dead weight about their necks. It is not something enjoyed, but something endured. Someone has said, “They have too much religion to do the things they want to do, yet not enough to do what they really should do.” If Christianity does not fill our hearts with joy, give us the strength to carry our burdens without complaining, enable us to endure whatever afflictions may be ours, and fortify our souls against any temptation that may confront us, then it is of no value.

When an individual becomes a Christian, he becomes a “*partaker of the divine nature*” (2 Peter 1:4); he receives “*the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38); he no longer yields to the temptation to steal, lie, cheat, defraud, commit fornication, or murder; and he no longer imbibes intoxicating liquors, or engages in any fleshly desires. On the contrary, true Christianity fills one with the spirit of love, truth, holiness, meekness, yet firmness for the right, and the courage to stand against all the evil forces which may confront him from any source, whether of a religious, political, or social nature.

One cannot be a true child of God and at the same time be a “conformist” to the things of the world. Well could Paul say, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” (Romans 12:1-2).

True Christianity is not a profession of belief in certain dogmas and creeds. It is a life to be lived with Christ; it is union with the giver and preserver of life. Well could Jesus say, “*For without Me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Unity with Christ is man’s only hope.

# Some Thoughts on SOUL-MURDER<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Thomas Boston  
(1676-1732)

Thou shalt not kill thine own soul. Our kind God forbids us to be self-murderers and soul-murderers. We become guilty of the blood of our own souls in these ways:

1. By *neglecting the means of grace and salvation* (Proverbs 8:34,36). The life of our souls is a flame that must be kindled from above and fed by the means of grace. Those who then neglect them are guilty of their own blood. Consider this, prayerless people, you who are at no pains to get knowledge, who disregard public ordinances, private duties, reading, meditation, etc.

2. By *opposing and fighting against the Lord's quickening work* in the soul. They that murder convictions murder their own souls, as if they were resolved that convictions should never stir in them (Proverbs 29:1). Some, like Felix, put them off with fair promises; some, like Cain, put them off with the noise of axes and hammers--in effect, they will not let their souls recover.

3. By *continuing impenitent in sin*. God calls to man by His Word and providence, as Paul did to the jailor, "*Do thyself no harm*" (Acts 16:28). But, as if he were resolved on his own ruin, he will not leave his sinful courses. Willful impenitence is the grossest self-murder, because it is soul-murder (Ezekiel 18:30-31). His soul is standing under a decayed roof; tell him that it will fall on him and he will not stir a foot. Is his blood then not on his own head?

4. By *unbelief, not coming to Christ by faith* (John 5:40). Even when many means are used to preserve the soul, it is still ruined because the main cure is neglected. Even if a man uses ever so many remedies for his health, he is his own murderer if he will not use the main cure necessary. So resolutions, watching, and promises are tried, but if faith and employing Christ for sanctification are not tried, he is still a murderer.

5. Consider this: Murder, self-murder and soul-murder, is a notorious sin. What wonder if the man perishes who wills to perish? Will God spare the shedding of the blood of that soul of which the man himself is so liberal!

6. Hence see that people not only may seek the welfare of their souls, but this command of God obliges them to do so. Fear hell, hope for heaven, and let this stir you up to do your duty. But do not rest there; go forward and make the love of God your main motive. And that of itself would be sufficient to stir you up to all the duties of a holy life.

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<sup>1</sup>An edited extract from Boston's *Works*, Volume 2, where he is expounding the sins forbidden in the Sixth Commandment.



# The Great Concern

*This is one of a series of letters that Rev. James W. Alexander (1804-1859) wrote to a younger brother, which were published as "My Brother's Keeper."*

(with editing by the *Insight Into* editors)

My dear brother,

There are many things which it is right for you to attend, but there is one thing which is important above all others. It is the salvation of your soul. Learning is good, but if you should get all the learning possible, it would only make you miserable if you were cast into hell. And so it is with everything else. If, through the blessing of God, you finally get to heaven, it will be infinitely well with you, even if you have been poor and despised, and wretched and ignorant.

You know that I do not wish you to neglect your learning, but I am very much afraid you will neglect eternal things. This is the true learning; this is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. This is what the Bible calls wisdom. A man may be very learned in worldly things and yet be very foolish. What can be more foolish than to give away eternal joy to gain a few years of pleasure? This is what many worldly-wise men are doing. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"* (Proverbs 9:10). A child who is taught of God knows more about eternal truths than all the philosophers.

I am afraid, my dear brother, that you do not think of this as much as you should. I fear that you push away the thought, even when it comes into your mind. This is very dangerous. You may thus harden your heart until it becomes altogether unfeeling. When you turn away your thoughts from true religion, you are turning away from God and from Christ. If the Lord Jesus Christ were to come into the house where you live, and show Himself to you, just as He did to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and say to you, *"Follow Me"* (Matthew 4:19), what would you do?

Perhaps you would say, "I cannot follow Christ now, because I am too young." Many young people say so in their hearts. Christ says to them, *"Follow Me,"* just as certain as if He were to come into your schoolroom,

and take you by the hand, and utter these words. Perhaps you would say, "I cannot follow Christ now, because everyone would laugh at me." Ah, how wicked, how ungrateful is this! The wicked may indeed laugh at you if you follow Jesus. So they laughed at the disciples in old times. Do you think that the early Christians were free from ridicule? Not at all. They were mocked and scorned wherever they went, and not merely mocked and scorned; they were pursued, imprisoned, and put to death. You cannot follow Christ unless you are willing to suffer for His sake. Are you afraid of the laughter of wicked men?

Think of the blessed Redeemer. He was not afraid of this, but underwent it, and a thousand times more, to save sinners. People laughed at Him, and they ridiculed Him as the carpenter's son. They said He was a Samaritan, which was a name of reproach among the Jews. They said He was mad, and they charged Him with having a devil. Even when He was working miracles, they laughed Him to scorn. Yes, and when He was hanging on the cross in agony, at the point of death, they wagged their heads at Him, and made sport of His suffering and death. Think of this. This is what Jesus has done for us. And now He says, "*Follow Me.*" He seems to show you His pierced hands and feet, and to say, "My child, I have borne all this for sinners, and now all I ask is that you should follow Me."

It is your duty, my dear brother, to give your heart to God now, to believe now. There is no good reason for waiting. All the reasons which come into your mind to make you delay are wicked, selfish, and rebellious excuses. Now is the accepted time! Tomorrow it will be as hard to believe in Christ as it is today, perhaps much harder, because as I said, the heart becomes insensible when people continue to resist the Holy Spirit.

I pray that God would send His Holy Spirit down from heaven to create a clean heart in you and to renew you. Your carnal heart is enmity against God, and this is the reason why it is not subject to the law of God. Carnal hearts cannot be subject to God's law. And though Christ is inviting you every day, yet you will not come unto Him that you may have life. If you grow up in this state of blindness and impenitence, there is reason to fear that you will become so much the servant of sin that the evil one will lead you into some open crime. There is a blessed hope of everlasting life given to true believers, and this is what I wish you to enjoy. Perhaps you may not live to be a man. Death sometimes approaches very suddenly.

Come now, my dear brother, and join with me and your Christian friends in seeking the Lord and calling upon Him. "*Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*" (Isaiah 55:6). Make this the chief business of every day to please God. When you rise in the morning, let your first thought be that you have a soul to save. All day

long, let the salvation of your soul be your principal concern. Other things may wait without any danger. Your recreations may wait, for if you live, you can attend to them as well hereafter. Your studies may wait, for a few days lost may be regained by diligence. But the soul's concerns cannot wait. While you are waiting, death is coming. Death is nearer to you than when you began to read this letter. While you are putting off religion until another day, you are so much nearer to the Day of Judgment. You are loitering and lingering, but time does not linger, and before the day comes on which you mean to begin to seek the Lord's face, your soul may be tormented.

Oh, my dear brother, attend speedily to these warnings. All will be well with you as soon as you are persuaded to follow Christ. Make choice of Him, look to Him, come to Him, receive Him, believe on Him, and you will at once have the privilege of being one of the sons of God!

Go to some quiet private place and tell the Lord in prayer how great a sinner you have been, and mourn over your sin, and cry, "*God be merciful to me a sinner*" (Luke 18:13)! For "*if you should seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him; if thou seek Him with all your heart, and with all your soul*" (Deuteronomy 4:29). May God abundantly bless you!

Your affectionate brother,  
James





# Colour

Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg

**C**ompare life with a colouring page. Before it is coloured, it looks boring. Only black lines are visible and the intention is to make something beautiful by filling the spaces with different colours.

Do we also think that way about our lives? We get up in the morning and we want to give the day some colour, and make something beautiful and meaningful. However, it may also be that someone has the feeling that they are unable to fill in the colouring page. In that case the day stays gray and sombre. Others continue to do their best, but no matter how hard they keep pressing on the coloured pencils, the colours remain dull. Let us not forget that only the Lord can fill our hearts, no matter how colourful life may be. No matter how much we can go into colours, nothing can really fill our hearts and give our life true colour and meaning than God and Christ. Only when we begin to find death in ourselves and life in Another do other things also get a deeper colour. Marriage, children, work, and nature, actually everything is seen in a different light when a heavenly layer is laid over it.

Without God, our lives are dull. Even worse, we are guilty and hopefully see how black and hopeless our lives are without a Mediator, without the only comfort in life and death. Do we see how dark our picture is and how different it can be? Seek the comfort, seek reconciliation, and seek Christ. Blessed faith is not colourless, but vibrant, and it influences our whole life. Godliness is a great gain with contentment!

*“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).*

*“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).*

# The One Important Change

*Submitted*

Did you ever stop to think of all the things that change? For example, a puppy is born, then it grows bigger, and then it's a dog! Chickens lay eggs, but they soon hatch, and then there are baby chicks which keep growing, too, and soon grow up to be hens or roosters. A furry little caterpillar doesn't stay that way either. He soon hides in his cocoon and many days later emerges as a beautiful butterfly!

And what about you? Are you still the baby you once were? Of course not! You became a toddler, then a four-year-old, and then you were in school. And if the Lord keeps you, then you will keep growing and changing. If you are blessed with a healthy and long life, you will go to high school, maybe to college, and someday perhaps get married. But you will keep getting older, and you may become 70 or 80 if the Lord spares you.

But then what? Do we keep changing forever? Everything stops changing someday. That little puppy became a dog, the egg became a chicken, and the cocoon became a butterfly, but one day they will all die. What about you? You know the answer: You will die, too, but something will happen after you die that will not happen to the puppy, or the chicken, or the butterfly. Then you will meet the only One that does not change! *"I am the LORD, I change not,"* says our God in Malachi 3, verse 6. *"I am the same yesterday, and today, and forever"* (Hebrews 13:8).

We keep changing, but there is one thing that must change, and none of us want this, by nature. We must have our heart changed before we meet God. It must be changed so that it hates sin and loves the things of God and not the enjoyment of this world. Can we change our heart ourselves? No, we cannot. We must pray, and read the Bible and other good books, but only God can change us. Pray to Him always for this one important change!

"It must not content us to take our bodies to church if we leave our hearts at home." ~ Rev. J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

"If any man ascribes anything of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly."

~ Rev. C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)