

Insight Into

March/ April 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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MEDITATION

“Follow Me”

*“And He saith unto them, Follow Me,
and I will make you fishers of men”*

(Matthew 4:19).

Rev. C. Vogelaar

The Lord Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee. This was not for His recreation or by accident, but on purpose, to look out for and call some whom He had chosen to be His disciples. *“Follow Me”* was His call. Follow, in unconditional obedience to Him, by leaving everything behind (Matthew 6:24), for to serve two masters is an impossibility. Follow, by seeking to be close to Him, seeking His fellowship. Follow, by faith in Him, to trust in Him. Follow, in ways that they had not walked before, in denying themselves, taking up their cross daily, and coming behind Him.

The Lord calls and sends His servants, also from among the youth, where He wants them to go and cast out their nets. The disciples as fishermen understood that language, for it had been their occupation. However, now they will not have to fish for food, but for souls who are lost in the waters of ignorance, blindness, superstition, unbelief, and enmity. Fishers of men is the oldest name by which the ministerial office is described in the New Testament. Fishers of men must be acquainted with the sea and know the locality in which they have to work. They must also know how to allure the fish, with bait on the hook, that they may be caught.

They must let down the gospel net with the weight of the preaching of the holiness and justice of God, of the holy law and its demands. They must bring the alluring message of the gospel and of His service of love. Who is sufficient for this sacred task? No one is, but there is help laid upon One that is Mighty. He said, I will make you this. His strength is made perfect in human weakness, and His wisdom is sufficient for foolish men. He will provide.

Have we already been caught in the gospel net? Have we been made willing at the day of His power? The harvest is plenteous,

and so many fishes (our children) are having their element in a life without God, on the way to eternal darkness. May the Lord call and make fishers of men, with love to souls of fellow travelers to eternity. His service is indeed a service of love. Blessed are those who may obey and follow Him!

Quotations by Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

“Souls that are torn in pieces with the cares of the world will be always vexed and tormented with vain thoughts in all their approaches to God. Vain thoughts will still be crowding in upon him who lives in a crowd of business.”

“Certainly no man’s calling is a calling away from God or godliness. It never entered into the heart of God that our particular callings should ever drive out our general calling of Christianity. Those men are very ignorant or very profane who think themselves so closely tied up to follow their particular callings six days in the week, that they must not intermeddle with any religious duties during those days. God, who is the Lord of time, has reserved some part of it to Himself every day. Though the Jews were commanded to labour six days of the week, yet they were instructed also to offer up the *morning and evening sacrifice daily.*”

“There is no tongue that can express, or heart that can conceive, the horrid sins and miseries that pride hath ushered in among the children of men.”

“Wicked men are the most needy men in the world, yea, they want those two things that should render their mercies sweet, the blessing of God, and content with their condition; and without which their heaven is but hell on this side of hell.”

Dead Fish Flow with the Current

*Are you “going with the flow”
or “fighting the good fight”?*

Rev. E. Maljaars

A fish lives in the water and therefore is thoroughly wet. We are like fish, as every day we are swimming in the turbulent waters of our culture. A fish cannot evade water, and so we cannot evade the culture that we are living in today. We are connected to culture by our language, and by the laws, customs, and institutions. Furthermore, we are engaged in our culture as consumers. Culture is a constant part of our lives.

We are born as children of wrath, content to flow with the current of today's culture--a world estranged from God. Since the time when sin entered the world, through the fall of man, the culture and worldview of this earth is contaminated with a desire to serve self rather than a desire to serve God. The sin that contaminates this world is not only in the world that we live in, but it lives in the hearts of each one of us. Therefore, we can be compared to dead fish flowing with the current of contaminated waters.

Are you content, flowing as a dead fish with the current of sin? Are you content to accept a culture whose key assumptions are against biblical teachings? Can you deny man's special place in God's creation? Can you accept the individualistic role of self-governing that allows you to do whatever feels best for yourself? Can you accept the idea that truth is relative and changeable? Or are you fighting the current of sin, desiring, by God's grace, to fight the “good fight”?

We were created with the purpose to live in this world with love to God above all, and with love to our neighbour as ourself (Matthew 22:37-40), but our natural hearts and the culture of this world go contrary to this command. Instead, we naturally seek to serve ourselves above God and our neighbour. If the Holy Spirit works a change in your heart, translating you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, there will be a fight against the sinful current of our present culture. You will no longer be content to go with the flow of sin. The Apostle Paul calls this fight against the current of sin “a good fight.” We can compare it to the salmon going

upstream--contrary to the current; determined to fight to reach the still waters.

And yet even when the Holy Spirit works in a person, and their desires and affections are changed, they must continue in the contaminated waters while on this earth. For this time on earth, the Lord Jesus commands His followers to be the salt and the light of the world. Therefore, we cannot evade today's culture, nor embrace it, but we must speak out by proclaiming the truths of the Word of God. These truths must be worked in us in the same way that Daniel's friends learned to know them, by the fruit of God's saving work in their heart.

In Daniel 3, we can learn from three young friends whose faith and Christian principles were severely tried. Daniel's friends were not content to go with the flow of the Babylonian culture. Even though their names were changed to magnify false gods, still they remained true to the God of heaven and earth. These young men were not drawn into the whirlpool of wickedness around them but, by upholding grace, remained true Christians. The friends of Daniel were called to bow to an image but refused to bow, even though they were threatened with death in a fiery furnace.

Dear friends, without the grace of God, you WILL bow to idols. Idols surround you and, in fact, the very seeds of idolatry are in your heart.

1. **The first idol is self.** Whatever you love more than God is an idol. You see, you are surrounded. Do I need to name some more idols for you?

2. **Will you bow to the idols of the music and entertainment world?** Dear friends, realize that those songs will be etched in your memory, coming back maybe years later, to haunt you. Don't bow to the music of this world.

3. **Will you bow to the fashion of this world?** Dear friends, God *does* care what you wear? Don't make your body the idol for yourself or another.

4. **Will you bow to the idol of the corporate ladder?** Dear friends, when is it enough? Do you really want to sacrifice so much for a title?

5. **Our culture embraces abortion, lying for convenience, fraud, pre-marital sex, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, Sunday shopping, etc.** Will you bow to these pressures of our culture?

6. **Will you bow to the pressures of denying the sexual orientation that God has given you?** (God created male and female.)

7. **Will you bow to the cultural idol of worshipping the creature higher than the Creator?** Not long ago in the United States, there was outrage over a gorilla being killed in order to protect a child.

8. **When you get an atheist-based assignment in college, will you bow?**

These are only a few of the cultural idols you may encounter. Wherever you turn, you will be faced with idols that call you to bow. Do you recognize them as idols? Dear friends, beg the Lord of lords to give that your eyes may be opened to see the danger of the current and where it leads--to eternal destruction--and give a renewed will to fight the good fight to God's honour and eternal life.

The accusation against Daniel's friends was, "*They serve not thy gods*" (Daniel 3:12). How were these three young men able to resist the call to bow so heroically?

We read that these men were "*skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science*" (Daniel 1:4). Was it their education that kept them from bowing? Did they refrain from bowing, because they were so courageous, brave, and fearless?

No, they stood because there was a principle planted in them by the work of the Holy Spirit that held them and kept them. Though these men were wise, courageous, and fearless, it was God's renewing grace alone that kept them from bowing. These men, in the Book of Daniel, were God-fearing. They had hearts that, by God's grace, were changed from worshipping self to worshipping the one true God. It is this renewing grace that each one of us needs in order to give us the desire and ability to go against the flow of a culture that pressures us to bow to idols that have been so culturally accepted that we don't even recognize them as idols.

Let us turn back to the chapter and listen to the answer they give the king. They aren't silent, but they don't answer angrily either. We hear their polite and firm answer to the great king Nebuchadnezzar. By their answer, we see their faith which seizes three things:

1) **The power of their God.** "*Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us*" (Daniel 3:17). We believe in the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. We read in Ephesians 3:20, "*He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.*"

2) **The character of God.** "*And He will deliver us out of thine hand*" (Daniel 3:17). God is merciful, full of compassion, and goodness. They may have read in the Scriptures, "*And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me*" (Psalm 50:15). This deliverance has been the experience of God's people. Or maybe they had read from Isaiah 43:2, "*When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*" Certainly, these men had an eye to God's power and goodness, believing He would deliver in His time and by His way.

3) **They had an eye to the future and to Him that is invisible.** "*But if*

not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods” (Daniel 3:18). Their faith looked not only at earthly and temporal aspects but to that which is eternal. There will be consequences if you refuse to bow and fight the norms of your culture. Satan does not easily let you go. These friends in our chapter experienced the rage of the king and were cast into the fiery furnace. You will also face anger and rage if you will not bow to man’s gods.

Dear friends, if your heart is made one with the Lord’s, then you may experience man’s wrath, but then you surely will also experience God’s deliverance. There may or may not be deliverance experienced in earthly trials; the Lord is free, but certainly there will be an eternal deliverance in the life to come. These men were wonderfully delivered by Jesus Christ and this was to the glory of God (Daniel 3:28).

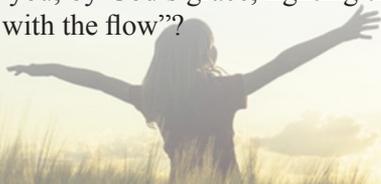
I pray, dear friends, that you by the power of Holy Spirit may be taught that you are a great sinner and that you also are taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is a great Saviour. If that is the case, you will no longer be content flowing with the current of sin.

Nebuchadnezzar made this great image representing himself. These three young friends did not bow to this image but rather bowed and worshipped God. May you also worship the only true God and His beloved Son who is the express image of God. May you daily bow at His feet, worshipping Him, confessing your sin and adoring Him, seeking Him, and depending on Him for all your needs for body and soul.

My dear young friends, how are you swimming in the poisonous waters of our culture? Are you content to float with the current as a dead fish? If we “go with the flow,” bowing to and worshipping man’s gods here in this life, we may escape the fires of men, but we will not escape the fire of God’s eternal wrath.

The friends of Daniel, by God’s grace, received the best gift to prepare them for the test of the king--a renewed heart that loves God and flees from all sin. Their renewed heart gave them the desire to fight the good fight.

Are you, by God’s grace, fighting the “good fight,” or are you content to “go with the flow”?



The Emperor Penguin

An Animal Demonstrating Remarkable Devotion

Elder S. Timmer

Introduction

Among the creatures that our Creator has made, there is great variety and wonderful design. Some examples are the feathers of a bird made of a network of interconnecting barbs and barbules, the ears of the elephant filled with blood vessels to radiate heat in a hot climate, and the special blood vessels in the giraffe's neck designed to absorb the shock of the blood rushing to the brain as it bends its long neck to drink water. Whatever aspect of creation we study, we should be filled with awe, for all things testify of the unique care God has taken for His creation.

We should learn lessons from created things. In the Book of Proverbs, we are directed to the ant which goes about its duty every moment preparing for winter. In the New Testament, we are sent to the sparrows of which each one individually is cared for by God. In the Psalms, we are told to consider the swallows which have been blessed to have a place near God's altar to nest and raise its young. Some birds like the Canada goose are so faithful to their mate that they remain with them for life until the death of one of the pair. Many animals, like the polar bears, will protect their young unto death.

General characteristics of penguins

Let us examine an extraordinary bird from which we can learn a lesson of remarkable devotion. Emperor penguins are a special group of birds which have black backs and white bellies to camouflage and protect them from predators above and below. Penguins are quite bulky and therefore do not fly. Like all birds, they lay eggs, are warm-blooded, and have feathers. Penguins are excellent swimmers with wings designed for swimming, and they can travel great distances and at great speeds in the water. The emperor penguin can swim about 7 miles per hour.

There are 17 species of penguins and all but one live south of the equator. The emperor penguin lives in Antarctica in the South Polar region. Penguins can be very small like the little penguin which is about 13 inches (33 cm) tall. The largest penguin is the emperor penguin at about 4 feet (1.1 meters) and weighs about 100



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a3/Aptenodytesforsteri-SnowHill_Island%2C_Antarctica_-_adults_and_juvenile-8.jpg

pounds (45 kg). They can live up to 20 years.

What are some unique ways the Creator has designed the emperor penguin?

1) He gave the emperor penguin very thick layers of fat. This acts as an insulating layer against the extreme cold of the Antarctic in which temperatures can dip to -76°F (-60°C) and where extreme winds up to 125 miles per hour (200 km/h) are experienced.

2) He created the feathers in four layers which help insulate their warm bodies which are about 38°C (100°F). These birds have also been created with oil glands. Penguins spread this oil over their feathers so that the feathers are waterproof, and therefore the extremely cold water of the Southern Ocean cannot get to their skin.

3) The emperor penguin can dive deeper than any other penguin, reaching depths of 1850 feet, and can hold their breath for about 20 minutes! This allows the bird to find vast quantities of ocean food such as fish, squid, and krill.

4) Recent discoveries have shown that the Creator gave this bird a special design for allowing it to beach. When it is time to come to land, the penguins come to the surface and fill their feathers with air. They then dive again and compress their feathers which locks in the compressed air. As they move to the surface, the air is released which reduces frictional forces and allows them to swim twice as fast as normal! This increased speed permits the bird to leap out of the water and to land on rock ledges that may be many feet above the water surface.



5) A wonderful observation about the emperor penguin is how they keep each other warm. When the fierce winds blow, the penguins will huddle close together, animal against animal, to conserve heat. Their body temperature is about the same as ours, but the winter can be as cold as -60°C . These huddles last for about 50 minutes after which the birds simply get too warm and so separate again.



<https://gizmodo.com/the-social-dynamics-of-penguin-huddles-are-more-complex-1746695140>

6) The first day of winter in Antarctica is June 21. This is the month that the female will lay her single egg. After laying the egg, the female penguin will give the egg to her mate. She will then travel up to 50 miles to the ocean to feed and will be gone between 2 to 4 months while the male incubates the egg with a warm layer of feathered skin called a brood pouch, the warm fat above his feet. The male will balance the egg on his feet to keep it off the ice which would be certain death for the young. During the winter months, male emperor penguins will lose up to half their body weight as they patiently wait for the female to return with food for the chick. How is it possible

that this animal will go without food for months for the survival of its young? What a wonderful example of devotion!

7) After 2 to 4 months of fishing, the females return to the colony they left. These colonies can number into the thousands of penguins. The challenge is how to find her mate and her baby! The males holding the chicks line up and the females walk around listening as she calls her mate. Amazingly, the mother finds her mate and the baby is passed from the father to the mother. The mother feeds her hungry chick by regurgitating ocean food from her stomach directly into its mouth. At each feeding, the chick can eat one-third of its body weight. Fathers can now go to the ocean which can be over 50 miles or even up to 100 miles away to feed after months of having no food.

Conclusion



<http://www.antarctica.gov.au/aboutantarctica/wildlife/animals/penguins/emperor-penguins/breeding>

In conclusion, the Creator has carefully designed all things, and He is maintaining and fulfilling the needs of His creatures. He maintains the life of the emperor penguin in the most impossible of situations and gives this animal incredible devotion to its young to the point of not eating for months in frigid weather. What a blessing to have His Word which reveals to us the solution for our deepest needs, as we are fallen creatures in

need of rescue. God, who maintains our life, is the only hope for eternal life. God did not abandon this world when sin entered it, but in infinite devotion He entered this world to suffer for sin. He kept the law to perfection even to death, far beyond what any creature would do. Before this world began, He decreed a way for sinners to be reconciled to Him and throughout history He fulfilled His decrees. Because of His intervening work, even today sinners are being redeemed, thereby causing His kingdom to grow. May our hearts be directed to Him each day, that *“this shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD”* (Psalm 102:18).



Safe harbour for an emperor penguin chick!

(source: [Ignacio Nazal/Flickr](#)).

“A humble soul knows that little sins (if I may so call any) cost Christ His blood, and that they make way for greater; and that little sins multiplied become great, as a little sum multiplied is great.” ~ Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

Bible Study



From the *Self-Interpreting Bible* of Rev. John Brown (1722-1787)
of Haddington, Scotland

(Please read Psalm 90)

John Brown was raised in extreme poverty, but his herdsman father was a godly man who led the family in worship morning and evening. He died when John was eleven, and his dear mother followed soon after, leaving the youth to earn his living as a shepherd in the hills around Abernethy, Scotland. From an early age he gave evidence of the work of Christ in him, and also of prodigious academic abilities--to the disbelief of many, he taught himself New Testament Greek while in the fields with his flock. Having sought righteousness by the works of the law, he at length received and grew in the knowledge of God's grace, and as a good soldier of Jesus Christ was enabled to endure many early hardships and persecutions. He eventually became renowned as a pastor--though in a small Presbyterian denomination--and for his literary works such as the *Self-Interpreting Bible* and his devotional notes on the *Metrical Psalms*.

Resignation to God's will

Psalm 90 is one of the most remarkable and, in some respects, one of the most beautiful psalms in the whole Book of Psalms. It has been called the funeral hymn of the world. Human frailty is brought out in it with equal vividness and pathos, but it is brought out in such a way that it teaches man humble resignation rather than blank despair. It teaches the thoughtful man to utter in faith and hope the sublime prayer, "***Thy will be done***" (Matthew 6:10), for it show's him that God's will is the supreme good of the creature. The title above it is, "A Prayer of Moses," and Professor Alexander has well said: "The correctness of the title is confirmed by its unique simplicity and grandeur; its appropriateness to his times and circumstances; its resemblance to the law in urging the connection between sin and death; its simplicity of expression similar to the poetical parts of the Books of Moses, without the slightest trace of imitation or quotation; its marred unlikeness to the psalms of David, and still more to those of later date; and finally the proved impossibility of assigning it to any other age or author."

“In all generations”

“LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (verse 1). God was the dwelling place in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the slavery of Egypt, in the wandering of the desert, in the wards with Philistia, and even in the captivity of dispersion. Yea, still He is the refuge of this people, whenever their heart shall turn to the Lord.

“Return, ye children of men”

“Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men” (verse 3); That is, as some understand it, “return to the dust from whence ye were taken.” But is it not more natural to understand the word return as the “return of the spirit to God who gave it,” or of the resurrection, in which the body of His children, though “sown in dishonour, is raised in glory?”

“The power of Thine anger”

“Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath” (verse 11). None in this life can fully estimate the awful torment of “the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.” “Yet who regardeth the power of Thine anger, or Thy wrath with reverence fitting to Thee?”

“Thy work”

“Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children” (verse 16): Thy work of creation—Thy work of providence—Thy work of grace. Of the first, the natural man seeth but little; of the second, less; of the third, nothing; for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; and the “pure in heart,” those renewed by the Holy Spirit, they alone “shall see God.”

Reflections

Happy are they who, amidst a transitory and perishing world, have the eternal God for their ALL IN ALL. Sovereign is His dominion over mankind and unsearchable is His duration. But weak and short-lived are men. It is madness to seek satisfaction and happiness in things so fleeting and unsubstantial. With what armies of sorrows hath sin invaded and overspread our earth; and how exactly every crime is observed by God, in order to correct or punish on account of it! But it is unavailing to live, or live long, unless we live to and in Christ. Yea, intolerable is the wrath which God has reserved for those who die in their sins. Every day, therefore, ought to be so numbered as to flee from them to Jesus Christ our refuge. The great business of life is to make ready for death. To ponder aright what is to become of us in eternity is wisdom indeed and deserves the most serious application. Gracious souls cannot without sorrow abide the end of God’s displeasure. They who have truly tasted the bitterness of sin cannot rest until the Lord returns in pardoning mercy, speaks peace to their conscience, and enables them to rejoice in Himself. Such as are faithful to Christ will be greatly concerned that He may work all in them, do all for them, give all to them; and that He may herein be glorified, not only in them, but also in their posterity after them.

The Temptation of Atheism

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”

(Psalm 14:1a).

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

Introduction

Bill was sitting in his university astronomy class, and every topic being covered from stars, to planets, to the moon, and to the sun was presented as a mere product of random evolutionary processes. The knowledge of the professor overwhelmed him, as he appeared to have answers for everything. However, these answers contradicted Bill’s upbringing. Bill had been taught in church, at home, and in school about a universe God had created over a period of six days. The contradictions between what he was being taught in his secular university and his upbringing shook Bill to his core. Is there really a God who created all things and who controls all events when the world seems so out of control? Why are so many awful events occurring if God is ruling? Why does nearly everyone at his university seem to deny the God of the Bible? Why is this world full of atheism?

Rev. ‘A Brakel examines the temptation towards atheism in his book *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*. He stresses that this temptation is the result of unbelief which makes a person vulnerable to the attacks of the devil and is a cancer of the soul. “Since believers are at times in this condition, we shall therefore consider this disease in its harmful nature, so that everyone may be on guard against it and no one may yield to it. Furthermore, we shall endeavor to restore those who have become subject to this condition.” John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*, also wrote of his struggles with this villain who mocked all that was religious pertaining to God as mere delusion.

Haunting questions

According to Rev. ‘A Brakel, the temptations towards atheism are especially common in those believers with a keen intellect. “Is there indeed a God? Is there indeed a heaven or a hell? Is all this nothing more than an illusion and imagination?” Some are able to immediately reject such interjections, without causing them much harm. Others, however, begin

to reflect upon them, whereby this bent toward atheism increases, shoots forth deeper roots, and becomes detrimental to religious exercise. Others are more oppressed by this and it becomes a prevailing disposition.

Atheistic thoughts cause prayer to diminish or lose its power. Such thoughts impede faith residing in the heart and prevent benefit once derived from the hearing or reading of the Word. This is followed by great anxiety of heart, grievous sorrow, fear, and trembling. Such a person will wrestle against these thoughts, but the soul may become so worn out and despondent in this battle that it appears that they no longer resist such thoughts. This temptation can be of a long duration.

The various causes for atheistical thoughts

(1) Sometimes it pleases the Lord to try a person for a season by hiding Himself and leaving him over to himself.

(2) Sometimes it is the result of an infrequent reading of God's Word.

(3) Sometimes it is caused by a neglect of our scheduled devotions, a hasty observance of them, and a failure to acquaint ourselves with God.

(4) Sometimes it is caused by a yielding to sin, be it in our daily walk, or when we sin expressly against our conscience, and sin boldly.

(5) Sometimes it is caused by our prayers not being answered. We may either be subject to a great trial, or we may have a very strong desire for a given matter--"If there were a God, He would help me. I can see that it makes no difference whether I pray or not."

(6) Sometimes it can be caused by yielding to an intellectual desire to penetrate too deeply into the matter of God's essence, His timeless eternity, His dimensionless infinity, as well as other of His perfections. Man cannot comprehend the infinite God.

(7) Sometimes this can be caused by an excessive desire for extraordinary revelations of God and as a result, we are then not satisfied with the common way in which the Lord leads His children.

(8) Sometimes the devil instigates this by way of sudden interjections, subtle delusions, or external circumstances. He may also do so by way of secret whisperings when he asks: "Is it really true; should such and such be the case?"

(9) Sometimes we can come into this condition by reading atheistic books, hearing atheistic lectures, and argumentation against God as He is revealed in the Bible.

Helpful counsel given

Flee atheistical thoughts for they are injurious to spiritual life. Everyone

must therefore be very much on guard against such situations and resist such thoughts immediately upon their arising. If one reflects upon such thoughts, wishing to rebut them with reason and to respond to the counterarguments which present themselves, one will easily be captured and conquered.

Secondly, most of the godly encounter this strife, especially those who are naturally endowed with a keen intellect. Should it therefore be a surprise that this also befalls you? Therefore, do not lose courage, for the Lord has delivered all others from this strife in His time.

Thirdly, consider who desire that there be no God and who labour to deny His existence. This is the practice of ungodly men, who do so in order that they might practice their ungodliness all the more confidently.

Fourthly, consider your own heart for a moment. Is not your heart troubled when you are thus tried and when such unbelieving thoughts arise in you? Is it not your wholehearted desire to be delivered from this and to serve God in faith? This clearly proves that you believe God exists, for otherwise you would be satisfied, and you would deem yourself happy to have been delivered from such prejudices.

Further directions

Engage yourself in the task of seeking after and serving God. Presuppose the existence of God--even if you are not fully convinced within--and say, "I shall make the Word of God my foundation for doing so, obligate myself to believe all that this Word says, and do what this Word prescribes."

You are thus to start from the beginning. Read God's Word, and in reliance upon that Word, flee to the Lord Jesus as Surety and receive Him. Rely upon Him, because the Word enjoins you to do so, promising that those who put their trust in Him will not be ashamed. Likewise, humbly pray and hear the Word, refrain from that which is forbidden, and perform that which is commanded. I assure you that if you thus begin to engage yourself, the Lord will gradually restore you--even though unbelieving thoughts may initially assault you vehemently, and even though you may for some time engage yourself without finding delight and sweetness in doing so.

Go to an experienced minister or another godly person who is strong in faith and reveal your condition to him. Do not contradict him, however, but listen attentively to what he has to say to you, and consider quietly whether it pleases the Lord to apply these words to your heart. If not, then upon your return, use the means by renewal which the Lord has instituted in His Word, doing so quietly and without much ado. Neither by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, you will be restored.

What is
our only

Comfort?



Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg

You have probably heard of the Heidelberg Catechism, apparently the fourth most printed writing in the world, and one of the most beautiful summaries of the Bible. This book in question-and-answer format (1563) is not a small dogma, but a book of comfort that I can regularly recommend to readers everywhere, even though we know this catechism almost by heart.

The writing begins with a personal question, namely, what is our only comfort in life and death? In other words, what can we rely on, which will help us if it does not go so well? But the question is also what gives our life true colour, what it is all about in our lives, and what our joy and our true happiness are. The comprehensive Bible answer is wonderful, and I invite the reader to slowly read through the answer below and ask for the Light of God's Spirit. I will now only explain the one essential part. The only comfort for a true believer may be that he or she is not of himself, but the property of my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ. He has paid, He has redeemed, He holds me, and without His will, no hair can fall from my head. Everything has to be subservient for my salvation. He assures eternal life and He makes me willing to live for Him. This catechism could not have begun in a more encouraging and comforting way, and I would like to follow that example. When asked about the meaning of our lives, this should be the first thing to think about and to keep in mind. Without this single unique and exceptional comfort, our life is and remains bleak. We must in the first place be delivered from our debt, be Christ's, and be made willing to live for Him. Everything else is subordinate here. Never be satisfied with a life without this comfort!

Question 1: What is thy only comfort in life and death? Answer: That I with body and soul, both in life and death,¹ am not my own,² but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ,³ who, with His precious blood,⁴ hath fully satisfied for all my sins,⁵ and delivered me from all the power of the devil;⁶ and so preserves me⁷ that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head,⁸ yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation,⁹ and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,¹⁰ and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto Him.¹¹

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*”

² Romans 14:7-9, “*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.*”

³ 1 Corinthians 3:23, “*And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.*”

⁴ 1 Peter 1:18-19, “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*”

⁵ John 1:7, “*The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe.*”

⁶ 1 John 3:8, “*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*”

Hebrews 2:14-15, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*”

⁷ John 6:39, “*And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*”

John 10:28-29, “*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.*”

⁸ Luke 21:18, “*But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*”

Matthew 10:30, “*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*”

⁹ Romans 8:28, “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.*”

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 1:22, “*Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*”

2 Corinthians 5:5, “*Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*”

¹¹ Romans 8:14, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*”

Romans 7:22, “*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*”

WHAT IS THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST?

Rev. H. Hofman

*Dear Insight Into readers,
Beginning with this article, we would like to start a new series in the Insight Into periodical. This series will focus on doctrinal statements, teachings, and words that need clarification and explanation. These doctrinal explanations will deal with various topics that pertain to questions that young people often raise. Our first one is, "What is the sin against the Holy Ghost?"*

The subject of the sin against the Holy Ghost has occupied many a serious minded person's mind throughout all the ages. Also young people often have questions regarding this so serious and solemn matter.

The Bible teaches that there is forgiveness of all sin, except the sin against the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus taught of this sin that there is no forgiveness (Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10). This is why it is called "*a sin unto death*" (1 John 5:16b).

What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is a conscious, deliberate, and premeditated rejection of the Person of the Holy Ghost. It particularly refers to impressions and convictions of the Person of the Holy Ghost. It is accompanied with bitter hatred, either in secret or in public. In essence, it involves deliberately, consciously, and purposely calling the work of God the work of the devil (Matthew 12:24, and 31-32). Anyone who in the least grieves, or is even remotely worried to have committed this sin, has not committed it, because the very mark of having committed this sin is to have no remorse whatsoever.

The question is why this sin is unforgivable. The answer is that it is a final giving over and surrender to Satan. Wherever this is the case, there is *no worry, no repentance, and no concern anymore*. Neither is there any grief, even outwardly, about it. Let this very fact be another encouragement for those who even in the least *fear* that they have committed this sin. Those who fear it give proof in themselves that they didn't commit this sin, because in the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no remorse, no fear, and no tears.