



# Insight Into

January/February 2020

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*“Lo, This Only Have I Found, that God Hath Made Man Upright;  
but They Have Sought Out Many Inventions”*

A Precious Book of Comfort

# 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

## Everything Revolves Around God

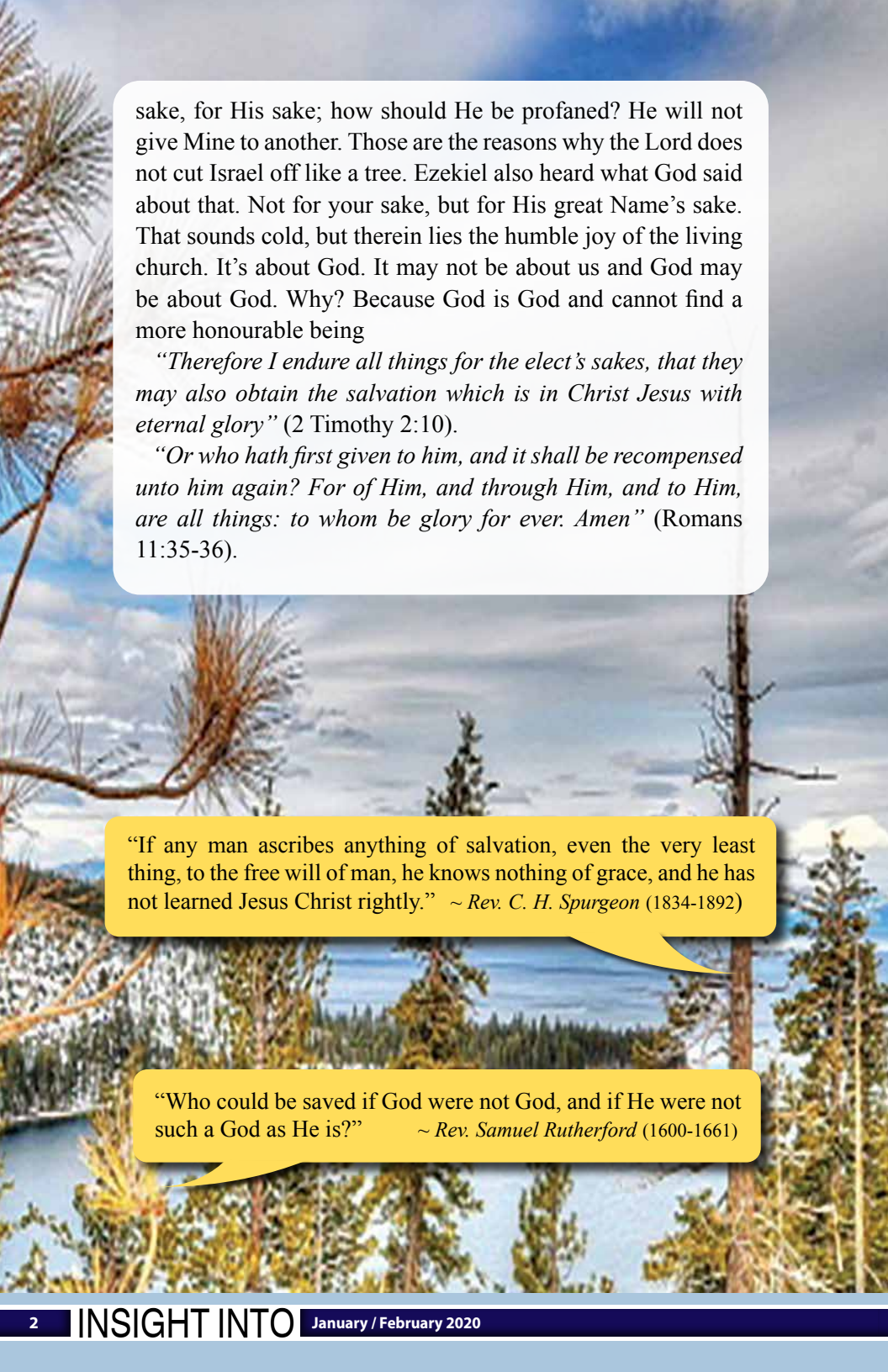
*“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy Name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went”* (Ezekiel 36:22).

Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg

God is love and He has sent His Son to save sinners, but that is not God’s ultimate goal. Contemporary Christianity often stops here and paints a picture of a dear God who sacrifices His Son, all for sinners. As if God had pure compassion for us and actually found what people have to go through regrettable. It seems that God is obliged to help poor people out of their misery. However, that teaching is not biblical. Of course, God is love, and certainly the Lord Jesus was moved and helped people in their illnesses, but the main motive for God and Christ is the glorification of His Name.

God is about God and His glory! I cannot imagine a better purpose. That everything revolves around God is not only good for God, but also for sinners, at least for two reasons. That God is about God means that any man can be saved simply because God desires this and receives the honour of it. Secondly, it is also good for sinners to give glory to God, for there is no better and happier work than to abandon yourself and glorify God for the miracle of unmerited grace.

One of the most impressive texts from the Bible is Isaiah 48, verses 9 and 11, *“For My Name’s sake will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off,”* and *“for Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My Name be polluted? and I will not give My glory unto another.”* Here God explains what moves Him to be merciful to the people. It is for His Name’s sake, for His glory’s



sake, for His sake; how should He be profaned? He will not give Mine to another. Those are the reasons why the Lord does not cut Israel off like a tree. Ezekiel also heard what God said about that. Not for your sake, but for His great Name's sake. That sounds cold, but therein lies the humble joy of the living church. It's about God. It may not be about us and God may be about God. Why? Because God is God and cannot find a more honourable being

*"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10).*

*"Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:35-36).*

*"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)*

*"Who could be saved if God were not God, and if He were not such a God as He is?" ~ Rev. Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)*



# TIME (3)

*“Redeeming the time,  
because the days  
are evil”* (Ephesians 5:16).

Rev. E. Hakvoort

In the second article we saw that the time is unsure, that the time is set, and that the time is an acceptable time. We do not know the day of our death and our life is uncertain. The one Sunday we can be healthy and in church, and the next Sunday we can be buried already. It can soon be eternity, because the time of our life is set. We so often think when we hear about this that it is for someone else. But how often did these people think the same, until it happened to them? Therefore, the time we have now is an acceptable time. It is the time of salvation. When that is applied, we have no rest until Christ appears in the soul to comfort us with His salvation. Then the fruit will be revealed.

## **Time is to be redeemed**

God’s children have a desire to redeem the time. Paul says in Colossians 4:5, *“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”* Here are two things which must occupy us. In the first place there is the question, “What does the Lord say of us? How are we known by Him?” Are we still running on the broad way, hastening ourselves to eternal destruction? Are we using the time wisely in His service or foolishly in Satan’s service? How awful and dangerous that is. Know that the Lord still *“commandeth all men every where to repent”* (Acts 17:30). Or has the Lord placed us on the narrow way that leads to eternal life? Then it will be revealed, and we will have a desire to redeem the time. There comes a love towards God’s Word and commandments in our hearts.

There is that second question, “What do others say of us?” which is not indifferent, for the world watches us closely. They notice how we live, what we do, and where we go! Can they see in our life not that we are better, but that we know better, and by grace desire to do better? Is our life in agreement with what we hear in church? Or is our conscience as

stretchable as a rubber band? Paul binds upon our heart that we must walk in wisdom towards them that are without. We may not walk and talk like the world. We may not dress and act like the world. We must be in the world, but we may not be of the world. Christ said that clearly, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16). Be ye the salt of the world, not only to preserve others, but more importantly to make others thirsty. Our life is like the salt when others, by seeing in us what they miss, become spiritually thirsty and jealous of us. Or does the world still see the opposite? Have we ever considered that we load a heavier guilt upon our soul by failing to be a salt and a light? No, this does not mean that we can be that in ourselves. But may that need be bound upon the heart so that we may daily ask, “Lord, teach me to be as the salt and the light of the world, and convert me as Thou convertest all Thy people.”

### ***“The time is at hand”***

A fifth aspect regarding *“redeeming the time”* is that *“the time is at hand.”* The Apostle John on Patmos writes in Revelation 1:3, *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”* That means the time is near; it is almost here! We know that the time can be at hand in many things regarding natural life. For the one, the time is coming closer that they hope to be married. For the other, the time comes that they are done with high school. But John points here to the time when the Lord will come back on the clouds to judge each of us regarding what we have done in this life, whether it be good or evil. The Bible teaches us that the time of our death can also be at hand.

Remember that death never takes a holiday and the grave never says, “It is enough.” Have you ever noticed the ages on gravestones? You can read all kinds of ages there. Not one age is skipped! *“The time is at hand.”* The Apostle John has seen that by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There were tribulations and things were not all that easy in his life. He was banished for the sake of the Word of God. The devil oppressed him. Yet John knew that the Lord would send salvation and provide His help. The day will come that He will deliver him from sin and from the devil. Then the Lord will turn his sadness into eternal gladness. That time is at hand!

Is that bound upon the heart? Do we realize the truth and feel it weigh upon us, “I must die but cannot die as I am born?” When eternity comes, we are not unwarned. We can never say that we haven’t known the way. We need to be prepared for that day during this life. For the Apostle John and God’s children, that means that they may fall at God’s feet. They bow before the Lord, humbly beseeching Him for mercy. Hear them cry, “O God, my Maker, think on me. Have mercy on me.” Why do they cry this?

It is because their hearts feel that the time is but short.

### **Time is short**

“The time is but short! You may say I have a whole life before me. I am still young!” My dear young friend, who tells you that you still have 70 or 80 years to live? Maybe it will be 70 or 80 months, or days or minutes or seconds. The same Apostle John wrote on the isle of Patmos in Revelation 12:12, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*”

This short time is the period between the first and the second coming of Christ. Elsewhere in the Bible that short time is called “*the last hour*” or “*the last day.*” And because the devil knows that he has but a short time left, he has great wrath. He does everything in his power to allure us away from God’s Word and service. He knows that his head is bruised and his realm is conquered by Christ. Therefore, he goes around as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Don’t we see that clearly in the world? The days are dark and sin is abounding. He comes with all kinds of devices to seduce us. Oh, let this bring us on our knees with the sigh that the Lord will draw us with cords of lovingkindness and grant us His salvation.

### **Time is no more**

Soon there will be no time anymore. The Apostle John writes in Revelation 10:6 that the angel which he saw swore by Him that lives for ever and ever, “*that there should be time no longer.*” It means that there will be no time anymore but only eternity which is without end. This is true, but it is more. Eternity is beyond time. It has no beginning and no end. It is like a round gold ring. Try to find the beginning and the end of it, but it cannot be done. Thus eternity is. This brings us back to the beginning of these articles. Time stands in the light of eternity. We often think that we can control the time and that we have lots of time, but in reality, it is the other way around. We often have “no time” to read and “no time” to pray. We have no time to die either. But those things are all lies of the devil. When is that convenient time Felix spoke about? That is today, if you will hear His voice! Tomorrow it can be forever too late. Then it will be eternal well or eternal woe. Then there will be no time for conversion anymore. It is still the time of grace. Redeem that time in seeking the Lord and searching the Scriptures, for they testify about the one Name given under heaven by whom we must and can be saved. And therefore, my dear young friends, “Redeem the time, because the days are evil!” And those that have a desire to do that, keep courage. One day the Lord will deliver them forever. Then such ones do not need to redeem the time anymore, but they may spend eternity in glorifying Him forever and ever more!



# CLIMATE CONFUSION

Mr. John Les

**W**e live in a time of much confusion. As man forsakes God and His Word, he is left to madness. But how about those who truly do love God as the writers of the Psalms did? Did they also at times feel perplexed and overwhelmed? Yes, we have such an example in Psalm 102 which is introduced with the words, “*A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed.*” What was the stability for the psalmist and what is the only stability for the times in which we live? God is the eternal unchangeable God, and He has made an eternal covenant in regards to His “Zion.” The world will be upheld from generation to generation until the last “spiritual prisoner” is brought into His kingdom, and then He will bring this world to a close. The heavens will perish, but the Lord will remain, and His children will be taken to be with Him. They “*shall be established before Thee*” (Psalm 102:28). So in the world of change and confusion, there remains the Unchangeable One, the only hope for all His children.

For those who reject God, the earth and its climate must be saved by man. For 50 years it has been fashionable for various scientists, politicians, and other forecasters to predict a variety of future awful climate outcomes for this earth. A coming ice age, global warming, climate chaos, climate catastrophe, climate emergency, rising sea levels, environmental breakdown, and environmental calamity have become the vocabulary of our times. In particular, it is strongly suggested that the more recent warming is due to the slight increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, and that our economy and lifestyles must be drastically altered to avoid global catastrophic outcomes.

Many governments around the world have begun to take “climate action,” usually by attempting to constrain CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, imposing “carbon” taxes, mandating electric car purchases, and shifting energy production from “fossil” fuel to “green” sources such as wind and solar



energy. These measures, while of extremely doubtful value, are being actively supported by the United Nations and its International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Numerous officials suggest that coordinated and concerted international action, supported by global governance structures, is necessary to combat this supposed “climate emergency.” The Paris Accord of 2015 is one of the more recent initiatives, “committing” the various signatories to drastically constraining CO2 emissions.

### **What are we to make of all this?**

As always, it is worthwhile to seek a biblical perspective. In the Book of Genesis, we read the account of the great flood of Noah’s time, arguably the most catastrophic climate event in the history of the Bible. After the flood had abated and Noah was commanded to leave the ark, we read in Genesis 8:21 and 22 the following remarkable divine promise: *“And the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”*

Matthew Henry, in his commentary on these verses, said thus: *“Here, it is plainly intimated that this earth is not to remain always ... but, as long as it does remain, God’s providence will carefully preserve the regular succession of times and seasons, and cause each to know its place. To this we owe it that the world stands and the wheel of nature keeps its track. See here how changeable the times are and yet how unchangeable. First, the course of nature is always changing. As it is with the times, so it is with the events of time; they are subject to vicissitudes—day and night, summer and winter; counterchanged. In heaven and hell it is not so, but on earth God has set the one over against the other. Secondly, yet never changed. It is constant in this inconstancy. These seasons have never ceased, nor shall cease, while the sun continues such a steady measurer of time and the moon such a faithful witness in heaven. This is God’s covenant of the day and of the night, the stability of which is mentioned for the confirming of our faith in the Covenant of Grace, which is no less inviolable.”* In summary then, Henry describes a climate that is stable but not static. As we have seen in post-flood biblical history and up to the present day, there has been climate variability, and yet “constancy in this inconstancy.”

A review of climate history clearly points to change. Over the past 2000 years, earth has experienced the Roman Warm Period, the cooling of the Dark Ages, the Medieval Warm Period (a time that saw dairy farms in

Greenland!), the Little Ice Age (the time during which Matthew Henry would have written his commentary), and the most recent warming trend that commenced in the mid-1800s. Note that while these are macro-climate trends, there are also cycles within these larger climate periods. The warming that began in the mid-1800s culminated in a very warm decade in the 1930s, but this was quickly followed by a cooling trend that culminated in the 1970s, after which a warming trend resumed for several decades.

A review of this history indicates that the warmer climate intervals led to human thriving such as during the period known as the Renaissance, while the colder intervals led to much more human suffering and misery. Even today, more people die annually as a result of extreme cold as opposed to extreme heat.

### **The past 50 years**

What we have seen during the past 50 years is a continually more extreme environmental movement which insists that climate change is directly due to human activity, such as “fossil” fuel burning, with the proportional release of CO<sub>2</sub>, and that only human intervention can reverse and stabilize these trends. Enormous pressure is being brought to bear by powerful and influential elites who wish humanity to conform to what resembles a new climate religion. As has been stated, “Western society, once Christian, is today mainly pagan, and environmentalism is its most prominent religious expression.” Or as stated by a university professor, “We are as gods, and we have to get good at it.”

And yet when we review the forecasts and predictions of these alarmists, we see that they have been almost entirely wrong, whether it was the predictions of a coming Ice Age of the 1970s (*The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *The Guardian*, etc.), “*The Population Bomb*” (Ehrlich), “No End in Sight to 30-Year Cooling Trend” (*The Associated Press*, 1978), “Maldives to be Completely Submerged in 30 Years” (*The Canberra Times*, 1988), “Rising seas could obliterate nations” (United Nations, 1988), “Children won’t know what snow is” (*The Independent*, 2000), and “Britain to have Siberian climate by 2020” (*The Guardian*, December 2002). Other examples of this are: “Pentagon tells Bush: Climate Change will destroy us” (2004), “We’re Toast” (NASA scientist, 2008), “North polar ice cap to disappear in five years” (Al Gore, 2008), “Only eight years to save the planet” (Prince Charles, 2009), “We have fewer than 50 days to save the planet from catastrophe” (PM Gordon Brown, U.K., 2009), “Ice-free Arctic by 2016” (US Navy, 2013), “500 days to avoid climate chaos”

(French Foreign Minister, 2014), and on and on.

Clearly, in great arrogance man seeks to manage even the very climate of this earth, although they have been proven so consistently wrong. They persist in attempting to enforce compliance with their pagan worldview, and their predicted scenarios are, if anything, becoming more extreme. One assumes they subscribe to the old saying that fear is the best motivator.

Given the dominance and universal cry of the climate alarmist narrative, it is good to be reminded that not all scientists subscribe to their theories. Tens of thousands have stated plainly in writing that “there is no convincing evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the earth’s atmosphere and disruption of the earth’s climate. Moreover, there is substantial scientific evidence that increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide produce many beneficial effects upon the natural plant and animal environments of the earth.”

### **God is in control**

All who profess adherence to the Christian gospel should be wary of the extreme climate or environmental agenda. Rather, we ought to focus on God’s commission in Genesis 1:28, also kindly and graciously reiterated in Genesis 9:1, “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*” Inherent in this commission is to do so responsibly, and to God’s honour and glory, although we must confess we constantly fall short of these obligations. Today’s environmental movement has little, if anything, to do with God’s honour and glory. Rather, it lacks any acknowledgement of God as the Creator and Upholder of this earth. Let us recognize these facts for what they are, and let us not be mistakenly drawn in to giving credibility to, or trusting in, this false worldview.

Even in this world of apparent chaos, God is in control. His decrees are unfolding and at such a time as this, our hearts must be lifted up above all we see with our eyes to seek Him. “*This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD*” (Psalm 102:18).

“Jesus Christ never died for our good works. They were not worth dying for. But He gave Himself for our sins, according to the Scriptures.”

~ Martin Luther (1483-1546)

# Lust AND Love

Rev. H. De Leeuw

**Y**es, you may find an answer in God's Word. Throughout all ages the church has received strength and direction from God's Word, especially when it was difficult to interpret what was happening in their own lives, and also in the world around them.

That Word is still the same today, because the Lord is still the same. "*I am the LORD, I change not*" (Malachi 3:6). That means that also in the days in which we live, no matter how confusing and how many opinions may be heard, there are answers to be found in God's Word of truth. I recently came across one of those answers. It was in the Confession of Faith class which I may teach here in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. We were talking about natural love. Why is natural love still present today? The ultimate answer is because the elect must still be gathered in, also in our time, and therefore the sun still rises and sets.

I asked this question to my Confession of Faith class, "Do you see also in the time in which we live the fulfillment that the love of many will wax cold?" We mentioned examples such as abortion, wars and rumours of war, all the protests, etc. Yet there was one more example, the entire LGBT movement.

In Romans 1:25-27, we read, "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto the vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*"

The love of many shall wax cold, and do we then not see what homosexuality is? It is not love, but we read they "*burned in their lust.*" We also learn from God's Word how fallen man comes to this depth: "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the*

*creature more than the Creator.*” Yes, God has to disappear and man has to be honoured! The lust is viewed as love; the movement is seen as equality; but Scripture so clearly points to it as a selfish, loveless, self-destructing sin.

Do you see the clarity in God’s Word for our time? Lust and love is as opposite as light from darkness, because lust has selfish desires, while love desires to please, to serve, and to honour the other party. Oh, that in this time where the love of many has waxed cold, the Lord may yet work in the heart of many of our young people the knowledge of the Son of His love. What love He revealed when He did the will of His Father, to save His people from their sins! Oh yes, then even for the chief of sinners, even sinners who have stained themselves with the sins of going against the natural use of their bodies, there is forgiveness! That many in our day may yet hear of this gospel message, and that the Lord would be pleased to apply it to the hearts of sinners by the power of His Spirit. Only then will sinners turn from their evil ways.

“God does not deliberate or consult but has once for all decreed before the creation of the world what He will do.”

~ *John Calvin* (1509-1564)

“We read the Scriptures in vain if we fail to discover that the actions of men, evil men as well as good, are governed by the Lord God.”

~ *Rev. A. W. Pink* (1886-1952)

“God hath in Himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, and all happiness to crown you.”

~ *Rev. Thomas Brooks* (1608-1680)

“We must never promise ourselves any more than God has promised us.”

~ *Matthew Henry* (1662-1714)



**“Lo, This Only Have I Found, that God Hath  
Made Man Upright; but They Have Sought  
Out Many Inventions”** (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

Rev. John Witvoet

**F**riends, we live in an uncertain, fast-changing world, but what hasn't changed is what is found in God's Word as admonition and instruction. This is also true relating to our use of modern media and our devices. The Word of God is never outdated, not even in this postmodern era. *“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun”* (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

I think it can be safely said that much of the time when we are using our “devices,” we are treading on, or dangerously close to, enemy territory. The modern media has become the modern means the devil uses to subtly trap and ambush, or blatantly bombard both the wary and careless user alike. Although the means the devil uses are new, his devices are not, as we can see from God's eternal Word. Nearly 2,000 years ago the Apostle Paul admonished the church in the progressive city of Ephesus to *“put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:11-12). We read in Acts 19 that many of them from that congregation that used the media of the day (books) came together and burned those that were evil. Since then the devil has become all the more crafty and men all the more corrupt. In these modern times we can no longer simply destroy and be rid of all the means that the devil uses to infiltrate our eyes, ears, minds, and ultimately our hearts and souls.

We live in a world inundated by modern digital media! Infinite pieces

of data abound, all accessible to us by over three million apps and nearly two billion websites. This does not even include digital personal files or proprietary business systems. We have become so dependent on modern media and modern digital technology to operate our businesses, to keep us efficient in our work, and for record keeping. It is an integral part of all of our modern lives. We use it in our studying, buying, selling, communicating, and in nearly every aspect of our lives. It has become impossible to function in the modern world without the use of this “new media.”

### **Satan’s tactics**

Paul also writes of the devil’s tactics to the Corinthians, “*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices*” (2 Corinthians 2:11); in other words, his wide range of subtle and blatant attacks. And are these things not written in God’s Word for our “*admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are to come*” (1 Corinthians 10:11)?

First, what a brazen onslaught he wages against us! Every day, nearly at every moment, a barrage of attacks comes at us by way of the media that has become so much a part of all of our lives. It need not be proven that a vast majority of the content that comes to us every day by these means is blatantly wicked and contrary to God’s Word. It is feared that much soul-destroying content is being searched out or “stumbled across” by many of us on pornographic and lewd sites, but far more prevalent, and maybe equally as dangerous, is the endless searching and filling our minds with thousands of meaningless pieces of information. Even when it is not movies, videos, music videos, gaming and the like, surfing digital media has become a modern form of entertainment. With an endless supply, our precious time is not only wasted, but we have become addicted to consuming information.

Secondly, and more subtly, with the greater influx of modern media, printed and audible forms of media are being replaced. Reading and listening are becoming more and more difficult for the modern generation. We are constantly bombarded by texts, tweets, notifications, ads, Facebook posts, emails, and more. Our brains get hooked on all this stimulating content. We crave more and more new information, and it can be difficult to pay attention to any one thing for very long. On the other side, it also makes it difficult to hold anyone’s attention for very



long. A recent study found that the average human attention span has fallen from 12 seconds in 2000 (or around the time smartphones hit the scene) to eight seconds today. In comparison, scientists believe that the goldfish has an attention span of nine seconds.

What does this mean for us? The devil cannot destroy God's Word, but it becomes evident that this subtle undermining by the devil is a tactic whereby he seeks to keep us from reading and concentrating on even a short portion of God's Word. Is it not to be feared that this is affecting our ability to sit in church and listen with concentration and participation for an hour-and-a-half worship service? Satan not only seeks to undermine the stronghold of God's Word itself, but also the means of grace by destroying our concentration in God's house, if by nothing else than keeping us up late on our devices the night before. Not to mention using it unceasingly on the Lord's Day.

### **Nothing new under the sun**

No, there is nothing new under the sun; the devil's modern device is to use our devices! Let me illustrate this further. Psalm 37:7 speaks of "*the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*" The original uses a word that means "a plan, or witty invention, usually evil, sometimes good, or a wicked or mischievous device or plot."

How about what the Lord says of mankind in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*" Again, let's consider the meaning of the original word, only found in two places in Scripture, which is "any contrivance, art, device, or invention; a warlike machine or engine, or mental plot to break down a stronghold."

Therefore, it makes sense that the other place we find this word used is to describe King Uzziah's invention in 2 Chronicles 26:15, "*And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.*" These were machines that could hurl many arrows or stones at once, or continuously in a thick barrage against a stronghold or enemy.

The application that can be made to our modern time is clear. Do these not coincide with the modern day invention of both computer hardware and software? What a barrage of deadly arrows and crushing stones can come at us with every click of a mouse or every swipe or tap of a screen! Not only has the devil gained such an advantage by this new technology to captivate and destroy our never-dying souls, but we have become victims



of our own inventions! We are destroying ourselves, and the devil gladly helps us along both boldly and subtly. For he, too, has become much wiser after 6,000 years! Is this not seen today? How the devil seeks to destroy the stronghold of the Lord's institution of marriage! Thousands of divorces are related directly to the misuse of the Internet, viewing lewd content, pursuing online relationships, social media connections, and so on. The misuse of modern media is destroying personal lives, marriages, families, and ultimately souls.

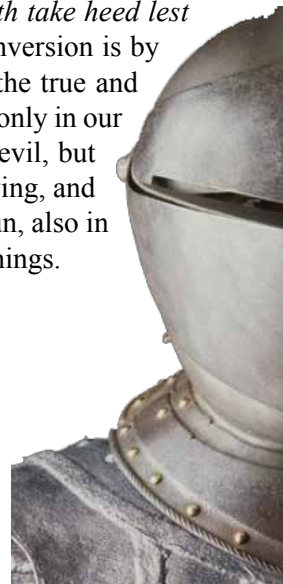
### ***“The whole armour of God”***

Friends, God's Word has not changed, neither has His admonition and instruction. We are commanded to *“put on the whole armour of God.”* In the first place, this must be spiritual armour, because we have no might against this powerful enemy and his spiritual wickedness. But also practically we must take up the shield to protect ourselves and our loved ones in this unceasing conflict. We cannot pray for keeping if we do not implement the available filters and means to protect ourselves while using all of our devices. Furthermore, let necessity alone dictate the use!

Finally, let us realize that the great danger lies in the sinful and susceptible nature that we all possess. The devil has a great advantage in this war since he has very willing accomplices in us! What we need above all is a hatred for sin and a love for the Lord and His law. Oh, that we may be granted the fear of the Lord in our heart and receive grace for our soul! Pray the Lord to supply this by His Word and Spirit! Even then, the Lord must keep it in exercise, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Corinthians 10:12). A true, Spirit-wrought conversion is by far the best filter; a true prayer is the best defense; and the true and mighty Saviour is the only Stronghold that will stand, not only in our modern times from the attacks of a defeated but angry devil, but ultimately from the eternal wrath of a righteous, all-knowing, and sin-punishing God. No, there is nothing new under the sun, also in the way the Lord teaches and gives His people all these things.

“There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what He says and will do all He has promised.”

~ J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)



# A Precious Book of Comfort

Rev. C. Vogelaar

They were but young scholars whom the Lord used to write a precious book which is still food and drink for pilgrims today. Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus were respectively twenty-eight and twenty-six years old. They wrote this book upon the request of Elector Frederick III, or as many called him, Frederick the Pious. This ruler had a warm, loving heart for the people whom he governed. He saw the lack of knowledge and confusion. The Reformation had taken root in his province, but were the Calvinists or the Lutherans right? When Frederick III was convinced that the Calvinists were more scriptural, he felt the need for instruction. That is why we now, after 450 years, still have our Heidelberg Catechism, or “Method of Instruction in the Christian Religion.” The Synod of Dort made it mandatory that ministers should preach from it every Sunday afternoon.

## **The character of the book**

The character of the Catechism is personal, practical, and experiential. There is much instruction in the doctrine, but also the practice of the life of a true believer is explained. In the questions, the instructor often mentions what lives in the heart of a child of God in need of teaching. Sometimes it is as if there is house visitation and personal questions are asked. For instance, he asks, “What is thy only comfort?” and “Why art thou called a Christian?” It is clear that the answer is given by an established and exercised child of God, as certainly Ursinus and Olevianus appear to have been. The Catechism begins with a question about comfort. The instructor then expounds on the riches of a true child of God, but also in the same Lord’s Day, he describes how such a person has come to these riches.

## **The order of the book**

Lord’s Day 1 is, as it were, the entrance of a building in which you see a map or layout that gives an overview of the building. There appears to be an order in the layout of their teaching. It is the order of misery, deliverance, and gratitude. The way in which the Lord leads His Church is in giving a knowledge, first of all, of their misery, and then of their deliverance and gratitude. We may ask, “Is that now such an absolute order that there can be no other way to get to know this comfort?” The Lord has said in His Word, “*They that are whole do not need a Physician, but they that are sick*” (Luke 5:31). In other words, there must be a need in our lives before we will turn to the Deliverer. The knowledge of that need is not a condition, but it is certainly

the way in which the Lord makes room for this Deliverer, for the heavenly Physician. That making room is the work of the Holy Spirit who glorifies Christ by making Him necessary, and, when He is revealed, also very precious.

Sinners are welcome at the feet of Christ, whoever they are, but no one will come except he or she who has experienced that there is no other remedy. The woman with the issue of blood had given all her money to the doctors, who could not help her. Then, when Jesus was nearby, she took refuge to Him. Such ones will not be put to shame.

### **An important distinction in the book**

Often, people speak in general about believers and Christians, not realizing that there is such a crucial difference between historical, temporal, and true faith. Our catechism teachers, these two young men, realized that this may be an eternal difference if we are satisfied with a historical knowledge or temporary faith without a wonder of God in our life. Therefore, they often speak about true faith (Lord's Day 7, Questions 20 and 21). They knew there is also counterfeit faith in which the love to God is missing. It is also remarkable how Lord's Day 1, Question 2, shows that something other than head knowledge is meant. They describe the way to the only comfort in knowing HOW great my sins and miseries are, HOW I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries, and HOW I shall express my gratitude for such deliverance.

I may know THAT in northern Canada or Siberia and other northern places it is very cold, but one who has lived there and has felt the bitter bone-chilling cold knows HOW cold it is. He has experienced this. Thus it is with the knowledge of those three parts of misery, deliverance, and gratitude.

My young friends, be not deceived by a religion which appeals to the flesh, in which you may even skip the part of misery and go to Jesus, accept Him, boast of Him, and imagine you are certainly saved, while you never experienced that you are lost. The Lord leads in an orderly way, although there is variety in His leadings. As no leaves are the same on one oak tree, and there is variety, so there is variety in His leadings, but there is still an essential difference between the leaves of this oak tree and that of a maple tree.

Ask that the Lord will shed His love abroad in your heart; then you will first learn to weep about what it is to miss God. You will experience that you cannot restore that broken communion. You will become spiritually bankrupt, but there Christ will be shown to you as a willing and able Saviour. One who has experienced in Lord's Day 5 that he has deserved God's eternal judgment may experience that there is One who is able to save to the uttermost. He came *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). He still invites, *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). Did you come already? There is still a place for the greatest sinners with Him.