

# Insight Into



January / February 2021

*“For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth  
... and by the breath of God frost is given.” JOB 37:6, 10*

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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

## To the Glory of God's Grace

Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg

The Fall in Paradise was not a surprise to God. The Lord was not overtaken by the sinning of Adam and Eve, and God's plan did not need to be revised. Not that God is the Author of sin, but from the beginning it was intended to show that God cannot only create something beautiful, but that a holy and just God can forgive even hellworthy sinners. God wanted to show something even more incredible than the creation of light, colour, gravity, and life. God had the perfect plan to give His only begotten Son, the most Beloved He had, to be condescendingly good while retaining justice. The Son would even suffer and die a cursed death on the cross. It is inconceivable that God wanted to do that without any obligation.

Paul writes in the first chapter of Ephesians that God has chosen His church for *"the praise of the glory of His grace"* (verse 6). We have to meditate on that. To let sing of what glory? Not for the praise of the glory of Creation, but for the praise of His grace! To show grace and receive all there is from grace. God's purpose with the earth and with people is to amaze sinners, to amaze them with what God does in Christ. That is why the gospel must also be preached and everyone should hear the good news. For that reason we may hear of sin and grace from hell and heaven. We are not just on earth to exist, but we are here to praise God for His favour. A few verses further, Paul writes about the wealth of God's grace with which God abounds. God's purpose was to show His grace. There is a book of life written with the names of all the elect. It is the book of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the earth. Do you see? The decision to slaughter the Lamb is eternal. Let us consider the glory of God's grace as the ultimate goal of life.

*“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15).*

*“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:6-7).*

*“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship Him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).*

*“The principal part of family religion is prayer, every morning and evening, and reading some portion of Scripture; and this is so necessary to keep alive a sense of God and religion in the minds of men, that, when it is neglected, I do not see how any family can, in reason, be esteemed a family of Christians, or, indeed, have any religion at all.”*

*~ Archbishop of Tillotson (1630-1694)*

*“It pleases the Father that all fullness should be in Christ; therefore, there is nothing but emptiness anywhere else.”*

*~ Rev. William Gadsby (1773-1844)*

*“God only knows what a church may arise from one godly family, what a harvest may spring up from a single seed; and, on the other hand, it is impossible to say how many souls may perish by the treacherous neglect of a single person, and, to speak plainly, by your own.”*

*~ Dr. Doddridge’s (1702-1771) Address to the Master of a Family*

# Thoughts for the Beginning of 2021

*“Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established” (Proverbs 16:3).*

Rev. E. C. Adams

Dear Young Friends,

We stand on the threshold of a new year, and, the Lord willing, you may hold this copy of *Insight Into* in your hands. The text we will meditate on speaks of our thoughts, and how they may be established. How manifold and diverse our thoughts are; our mind is an ever-rolling stream. We have joyful thoughts, anticipatory thoughts, troubling thoughts, fearful thoughts, anxious thoughts, humbling thoughts, overwhelming thoughts, proud thoughts, yea, sinful and vain thoughts. Friends, may I ask you how it is with your thoughts at the beginning of another year? May I ask you whether all the sinful thoughts of the past are still on your account? What are our hopes and expectations? Do we have any assurance that we shall still be on earth at the end of this year, or even at the end of this week (Proverbs 27:1)? The Scriptures have much to say about our thoughts.

## **Thoughts about sudden death**

First of all, our thoughts can be suddenly and unexpectedly cut off. Psalm 146:4 reminds us that *“his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.”* This has been experienced in a very special and extraordinary way during approximately a three-month span in the congregations of Southern Alberta. This past year on Friday, July 17, the message came to us before we went to God’s house to unite a young couple together in holy matrimony, that a young daughter of 19 years, with her thoughts and expectations, was suddenly ushered out of this life into eternity by means of a car accident. The same day in the afternoon, a young son of two years old was seriously injured in an accident with a skid steer, was in a critical condition, but was allowed to return home from the hospital after five weeks, needing further healing and recovery. More messengers have come among us with heavy tidings. In addition to older ones being taken away out of our midst, on August 15, in the evening, a father and mother found their firstborn infant daughter of three months unresponsive in bed, and we were called to bring her to the grave. Shortly thereafter, a 14-year-old son, crossing a road with a four-wheel utility vehicle, was hit by an automobile, received serious head injuries, was wonderfully spared, and was privileged after four days to return home from the hospital. A young son was also graciously spared when a large heavy toolbox fell upon him. He was providentially found by a family member who saw two feet sticking out. Another messenger with solemn tidings would soon come. On Monday morning, October 19, the solemn message went forth that an 18-year-old daughter, also on her way to work, was taken out of this life by means of a car accident. Her thoughts have come to an end in this life.

Both young daughters that were in an accident were taken away shortly before 7:00 a.m. Both had boyfriends for whom it has become reality what we read in Job 17:11, “*My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.*” Two weeks later on Monday evening, one of our young men hit a pedestrian, a young wife and mother of five children, who was walking with some of her family on a country road in the dark. For her it also became eternity. The Lord uphold, strengthen, and remember all the mourning ones. My young readers, what are your thoughts after these serious callings? Surely then the Lord is speaking to our youth, yea, to all of us in a very exceptional way. May these solemn and serious callings be used in the hand of the Lord, that many may be given to remember their Creator in the days of their youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

### **Wholesome thoughts**

“*And thy thoughts shall be established.*” This text speaks of lawful and right thoughts, because we never honestly and rightly commit our sinful thoughts for their establishment to the Lord, unless it is in the way of asking for deliverance, strength, and forgiveness. It is profitable to receive an impression of what the Psalmist has declared in Psalm 139:2, “*Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off.*” For surely, when we decide to visit a place of vanity and sin, whether physically or by means of technology, then we shall not have freedom to commit the same to the Lord and ask for His blessing. Is this not the way it is, young reader? This text speaks of lawful desires which can be so manifold and diverse. It is a great gift and blessing when the Lord grants these good and legitimate desires concerning our temporal life, where there are those that are so depressed that their desires fail. The Lord grant courage for the new year to those that are sick, handicapped, afflicted, those that are mourning, depressed, and burdened. Are there also unfulfilled thoughts in the lives of our young people? We think of those who earnestly and prayerfully desire to receive a future wife or husband with whom they may travel together under the truth and old ways (Jeremiah 6:16). Our text clearly tells us what we are called to do with our thoughts.

### **Thoughts committed to God**

“*Commit thy works unto the LORD.*” Concerning the establishing of our thoughts, we are called to use the means. Proverbs 13:4 says, “*The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*” This diligence must be accompanied with much prayer, asking the Lord for His blessing (Psalm 127:1-2). The word *commit* in the original has the meaning of “rolling” on to someone. Thus we may “roll” our thoughts into the Lord’s care and direction. This is a precious and needful instruction at the beginning of a new year concerning all our efforts and works. I hear one of our young friends say to himself that it seems to be of no purpose: I have committed my desires and thoughts oftentimes to the Lord, and yet have not received fulfillment. I would say, remain then at the His footstool and continue to tell the Lord all. Tell Him that you are not worthy, tell Him of your great longing, and if it may please Him to fulfill the desire (Psalm 145:19).

## Reflective thoughts

Readers, do we also have deep and profound thoughts of God concerning His essence, names, attributes, and Persons? Of the wicked we read in Psalm 10:4, “*God is not in all his thoughts.*” Are our thoughts troubled because we have sinned against this good-doing and just God, working a true, sincere, and upright repentance? Psalm 119:59 says, “*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.*” We read of the godly Psalmist in Psalm. 94:19, “*In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul.*” These are profound and sweet thoughts which the Holy Spirit grants unto His children. They are thoughts of the wonderful providence of the Lord, that the Lord has all things in His hand, yea, that even the hairs of our head are numbered (Matthew 10:30). They are the thoughts of the wonderful tokens of the Lord’s love they may experience which He gives to a sinful, undeserving, and unworthy people. These are thoughts that are given by His holy Word as expressed by the Psalmist in Psalm 119:24, “*Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.*” These are the thoughts which poor uncovered sinners receive when the gospel may be opened in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness also of their sinful thoughts.

## Captive thoughts

My dear young readers, how have we begun the New Year? Which thoughts give us the most pleasure and delight? The Lord indeed gives many good things to enjoy here below (Ecclesiastes 3:13). These lawful thoughts are only for the time, and can so suddenly come to an end, or be disappointing. To that end, every thought needs to be brought in captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Christ has said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:33, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” Our committing of our way must be in the context of the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. How difficult and impossible from our side, and therefore, we must beg for the loving and mighty work of the Holy Spirit.

## Profound thoughts

We will close what we read about the profound thoughts of the Lord. Psalm 92:5 states, “*O LORD, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep.*” We read in Isaiah 55:8, “*So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*” We also read encouraging words in Psalm 33:11: “*The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.*” What wonderful words we read of the thoughts of the Lord towards His people of old in Jeremiah 29:11, “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*” This is only possible through Him who is called The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The God of all grace grant His richest blessings unto our young friends in the Year of the Lord 2021. May the words of our text be deeply imprinted upon our thoughts in the newly begun year for instruction, correction, encouragement, and comfort. “*Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*”

# Commit thy Way Unto the Lord

I know not what this year will bring  
That's granted unto me;  
But grant, O Lord, what 'ere transpires  
May drive me unto Thee.

O Lord, Thy way is in the sea,  
Thy footsteps are not known;  
But wilt Thou keep me near to Thee;  
May I not walk alone.

Thou knowest every path I've trod,  
For it was planned by Thee;  
Ordained before the world was made,  
From all eternity.

Be Thou a Husband unto me,  
A Father for my seed;  
And may my children also look  
To Thee in every need.

May we by grace in all our ways  
And circumstances yield  
Our wills to Thine, and wilt Thou be  
Our fortress, help, and shield.

— *Jack R. Swets*  
*Musings of the Heart*  
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# Great Faith

Rev. C. Vogelaar

It is not always easy for people to remain optimistic in times when there are many worries and fears among them. They may say then, “Well, just keep faith.” And it is true; there is One who reigns, also in our days and during frightening circumstances. I am sure that you also, young friends, have some moments when you feel that clouds are gathering above us, and that there are reasons to be concerned.

People may speak about faith as an act, done by the decision of a man, by his own free will. They may look down upon those who are not so quick to say that they believe and are trusting with all their heart in the Lord Jesus. “Be not so doubtful,” they say. “Jesus loves it when sinners believe in Him.” Is that not true? Sure, it is. We read in Scripture that one who comes to God must believe that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

But in Luke 7 we read what true faith is, yes, even a great faith. That is how the Lord Jesus calls it. The history is well known. The Lord Jesus has come to Capernaum, and a certain centurion also came to Him, although not in person, but by means of the elders of the Jews whom he had sent unto Him. The reason for this was that the centurion’s servant was close to death and his master cared for him, as he was “*dear unto him*” (Luke 7:2). The centurion had heard of Jesus, and he had heard of the miracles performed by Him. That which was impossible by man appeared to be possible by Him! Therefore, those elders were sent to beseech Jesus that He would come and heal his servant.

We can see true faith in the life of the centurion. First of all, in his love, as is evident:

- *In his kindness.* This is shown in his care for his servant and the efforts he makes to have him restored.

- *In his feeling towards the Jewish people.* In general, Romans didn't hold such high esteem for the stubborn and often obstinate Jewish people. But the centurion loves them, for the elders say, "*He loveth our nation*" (Luke 7:5).

- *In his generous support of the Jewish place of worship.* We read, "*He hath built us a synagogue*" (Luke 7:5).

Faith in Jesus is also evident in his humility. For although the elders said that "*he was worthy for whom he should do this*" (Luke 7:4), the centurion does not say this about himself. For when Jesus is coming near to his house, "*the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof*" (Luke 7:6).

Humility is one of the strongest evidences of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Grace humbles man and exalts God. The Lord has a delight in this for it is His own work. In Isaiah 57:15 we read, "*I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*" We read this also in Isaiah 66:2, "*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.*" There are many more places which indicate this delight of God in the humble. We read in Psalm 34:18, "*The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*" The centurion, although the promises have gladdened his soul, is small and unworthy before God. That is what we also find with Ruth when she says to Boaz, "*Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*" (Ruth 2:10).

Great is the faith of this centurion as is not only seen in his love and in his humility, but also in his belief of the almighty power of Christ the Saviour. He believes that Jesus' love and almighty power are even greater than his own unworthiness and misery. A word only would be sufficient. It is not necessary that the Lord Jesus comes into his house or that He observes the centurion's servant. No, a word spoken from a distance, just one word, would be enough. Then we read that Jesus marvelled at him and He says, "*I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*" (Luke 7:9).

My dear young friends, sometimes you might be impressed or at least confused by those who speak about faith in such a different way. They are so rich, so sure, and they appear so cheerful, and then how poor it sometimes seems to be among a remnant of God's dear children, true believers, that you might know among us. Now, I would not say that God's dear children are never to be blamed for false impressions that others may have of them.

They may speak about their trials and strife, but are often silent, or speak too little of the times that the Lord refreshed them, when their faith could really believe and maybe for a moment, embrace. Yet I would say be not so impressed with those who speak so lightly and so highly about their faith. If you listen closely, you may detect that they are pleased with themselves. The centurion was not so pleased; he was an undeserving person. But for him, it became a wonder that the Lord answered the request of such a one. Now, that is great faith, to believe in spite of your own experienced unworthiness, God's holiness, and His justice that you could never satisfy. Oh wonder of eternal love! Christ became poor, that poor sinners may become rich. We read in Zephaniah 3:12, "*I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*" May the Lord keep you with this man-abasing, but God exalting, truth in which poor sinners will be saved by grace alone. Jesus Himself has said, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:3). That is something to be jealous of. Seek it, my friends. May the Lord lead you in His way, unto Him.

"Anything that one imagines of God apart from Christ is only useless thinking and vain idolatry." ~ *Martin Luther* (1483-1546)

"The doctrines of grace humble man without degrading him and exalt him without inflating him."

~ *Rev. Charles Hodge* (1797-1878)

"God gives where He finds empty hands."

~ *Augustine* (354-430)

"To believers, a persuasion of God's fatherly love is more delightful than all earthly enjoyments."

~ *John Calvin* (1509-1564)



## Sown Seed and Fruits of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Taken from *I Seek my Brethren: From the Life of Joseph Zalman* (1860-1924)

M. H. Karels-Meeuse

**O**n a certain day, according to another memory in the *Elim Magazine*, the hall was filled with the poorest of Jews. There was a great assault on the Dorcas wardrobe, for she had all she could do to provide everyone with even a little of the most necessary clothing. The shoe shelves were also totally plundered. After the guests had enjoyed the tea, it was time for the Word. However, despite all the received and enjoyed goods, there was an atmosphere of resistance, of enmity, such as was seldom the case. Missionary Zalman particularly felt the enmity of a man who was standing near him with his family. The children had received shoes and were entertaining themselves with them, except one boy who looked jealously at the others. There were no shoes for him, and he was also almost without. Suddenly the door to the street opened and a boy, approximately the same age as the boy concerned, came storming inside swinging his school bag.

“John,” called Father Zalman, “come here a minute; I want to ask you something.”

John pushed through the crowd until he reached his father who was standing in the middle of the group.

“John, how many pairs of shoes do you have?”

“Two pairs,” was the answer. “These are my best pair, my Sunday shoes.”

“Look over there,” was Father Zalman’s reply as he pointed to the Jewish boy who was shod with what could hardly be called shoes.

“Do you still know, John, what the Lord Jesus once said about someone who had two.”



“Yes, Father, but those were skirts!”

The father was silent, and the child looked up, more or less ashamed. Their eyes met and in his father’s eyes the boy read not only his will, but also the Lord’s will.

The battle was short. Then John flopped down on the ground and quickly began to loosen the shoelaces, threw off his shoes, jumped up, and gave the poor Jewish boy his shoes, stuttering, as he always did when he was nervous, “T-h-here boy, there you have my S-S-Sunday shoes!” As John fled upstairs on his socks, he uttered a joyful cry of victory so loudly that the father of the Jewish boy asked what he had cried and why he was so happy.

And Missionary Zalman told him that his boy was so happy because he had now literally obeyed the command of the Messiah, and he could not wait until he was upstairs to tell about it.

The people were quiet and touched. Opening had come and the way was made plain for the gospel word. The company departed, just as all other emigrants who passed through Elim on their way to America.

Several years later, a stranger came inside. His face shone with joy when in the distance he saw the missionary sitting in his office.

“Do you still know me?” was his first question.

“No, I do not recognize you.”

“But do you then possibly remember a morning when there were many Jews here in this hall, and you distributed clothing and shoes, but there were no shoes for one boy, and your son then took off his own shoes and gave them to that child?”

Yes, Missionary Zalman remembered that very well.

“Well,” said the man, “that child was my son and those shoes held a long sermon; even longer than from here to New York. I thank God that I have the privilege of meeting you again. I have found our Messiah, or better, He has found me, but He used the preaching of those shoes for this. That was more eloquent than many other sermons I heard after that. It not only spoke to us of the reality of the Christian love, but it also pointed to the Source from which it originated, and it forced us to investigate that Source. So we read in the New Testaments which we had taken along from here, until we saw that the testimony of Jesus of Nazareth is the truth. My wife and I, and even my father-in-law came to faith in Him and were baptized. And we still often speak about that remarkable day in Elim. Now I am travelling to Poland, but I longed to see you again, and to thank you, and to rejoice together in our Messiah.”

~ *An excerpt from Chapter 17, pages 82-83*



# Weighed in the Balance

Taken from  
*The Young People's Magazine*

Can you imagine a set of scales for weighing things? It has two pans hanging from a bar. In one pan you put what you want to weigh, perhaps a package; in the other you put metal weights. If the pan containing the package goes down and the one with the weights goes up, you have not put in enough weights. If the other pan goes down, you have put in too many weights or the package is too light. If the pans balance each other, you count up the weights and you know how heavy your package is.

Daniel, whose book we find in the Bible, served under a king in Babylon called Belshazzar. One day the king held a feast, and a thousand important men joined him. At least one thing was very seriously wrong: Belshazzar commanded his servants to bring in the golden and silver vessels which an earlier king, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from God's temple in Jerusalem. These vessels were holy; they had been set apart for God's worship. But Belshazzar, an ungodly man himself, gave them to the ungodly people who had gathered for the feast. And while they drank wine from the vessels, the king was praising his idols, his false gods.

As this was going on, something quite unexpected happened: The fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote some words on the wall. The king was very disturbed. His knees began to shake. He called for magicians to be brought, in the hope that they could interpret the words. But none of them could help him. Then the queen remembered Daniel, a godly man, who had told Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his dreams. He was able to do so, because God had revealed their meaning to him.

Daniel came in and spoke to Belshazzar about his ungodly behaviour. Then he explained the meaning of each of the words that had been written on the wall. One of these words was "TEKEL." What message did it bring? This is how Daniel explained what God was telling him: "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting*" (Daniel 5:27); the king was found lacking.

It was God who was weighing; so we can be sure that He did so properly. If we think of the balance--and we would have to think of a very large

balance--Belshazzar was placed in one pan and weights were put in the other. But no matter how small the weights in that pan, it was heavier than the pan which held Belshazzar. This is how the ungodly are described: "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity*" (Psalm 62:9).

If Adam and Eve were weighed just after they were created, everything would have been different--and remember we are talking about spiritual weight. Each of them, so to speak, would have some definite weight; they had a real righteousness, their original righteousness. God examined them and He was satisfied. In every way they were as He had made them.

But that did not last. Adam and Eve fell into sin, and at once they lost their original righteousness. When laid in the balance, they were now lighter than vanity. Because of Adam's fall into sin, none of us have an original righteousness. Unless God provides another righteousness for us, we will be altogether lighter than vanity when He places us in the balance--what He is doing all the time, for He always considers what we are spiritually.

Many people, like Paul, before Jesus met him on his way to Damascus, think they are keeping God's commandments very well indeed. But they are looking to their own righteousness. And when God weighs this, it is altogether lighter than vanity. Because they have no desire to glorify God, they have no real righteousness. It cannot bring them to heaven.

What can God do for us so that we may have some real spiritual "weight"? But first, think of Christ. He was weighed in the balances. God the Father examined Him continuously, and we can see the result of that weighing in the words that came twice from heaven: "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). Christ's was a perfect righteousness; He kept all the commandments; He obeyed the will of God perfectly. And that obedience to God's will included His dying in the place of sinners, at Calvary, to bear their punishment.

Now think of Peter or Paul, Mary or Martha, or anyone else who has looked to Christ by faith. They now have no confidence in themselves; they are trusting in the righteousness of Christ, what He did in their place. When God weighs any of these believers in His balances, what does He find? They come up to the full weight. But not because of what they are in themselves. In other words, because Christ's righteousness is put to their account, it is treated as if it was their righteousness.

There will come a time when, so to speak, there will be a public weighing of every human being that has ever lived, on the Day of Judgment. How tremendously important not to be found lacking on that day! How necessary to look to Christ in time! He is calling to *you* to trust in Him as the One who has provided a righteousness which is exactly what you need. Do not delay.



# A Letter to Miss \* \* \* \* \*

Rev. John Newton (1715-1807)

Dear Madam,

October 3, 1778

You would have me tell you what are the best means to be used by a young person to prevent the world, with all its opening and ensnaring scenes, from drawing the heart aside from God. It is an important question; but I apprehend your own heart will tell you, that you are already possessed of all the information concerning it which you can well expect from me. I could only attempt to answer it from the Bible, which lies open to you likewise. If your heart is like mine, it must confess that when it turns aside from God, it is seldom through ignorance of the proper means or motives which should have kept us near Him, but rather from an evil principle within, which prevails against our better judgment, and renders us unfaithful to light already received.

I could offer you rules, cautions, and advices in abundance, for I find it comparatively easy to preach to others. But if you should further ask me how you shall effectually reduce them to practice, I feel that I am so deficient, and so much at a loss in this matter *myself*, that I know not well what to say to *you*. Yet something must be said.

In the first place, then, I would observe that though it be our bounden duty, and the highest privilege we can propose to ourselves, to have our hearts kept close to the Lord, yet we must not expect it absolutely or perfectly, much less all at once. We shall keep close to Him in proportion as we are solidly convinced of the infinite disparity between Him and the things which would presume to stand in competition with Him, and the folly, as well as ingratitude, of departing from Him. But these points are only to be learned by experience, and by smarting under a series of painful disappointments in our expectations from creatures. Our judgment may be quickly satisfied that His favour is better than life, while yet it is in the power of a mere trifle to turn us aside. The Lord permits us to feel our weakness, that we may be sensible for it; for though we are ready in words to confess that we are weak, we do not so properly know it, until that secret, though unallowed, dependence we have upon some strength in ourselves is brought to the trial and fails us. To be humble, and, like a little



child, afraid to taking a step alone, and is conscious of snares and dangers around us, as to cry to Him continually to hold us up that we may be safe, is the sure, the infallible, the only secret of walking closely within.

But how shall we attain this humble frame of spirit? It must be, as I said, from a real and sensible conviction of our weakness and vileness, which we cannot learn (at least I have not been able to learn it) merely from books or preachers. The providence of God concurs with His Holy Spirit in His merciful design of making us acquainted with ourselves. It is indeed a great mercy to be preserved from such declensions as might fall under the notice of our fellow creatures; but when *they* can observe nothing of consequences to object to us, things may be far from right with us in the sight of Him who judges not only actions, but the thoughts and first motions of the heart. And indeed could we for a season so cleave to God as to find little or nothing in ourselves to be ashamed of, we are such poor creatures, that we should presently grow vain and self-sufficient, and expose ourselves to the greatest danger of falling.

There are, however, means to be observed on our part; and though you know them, I will repeat the principal, because you desire me. The first is prayer; and above all things, we should pray for humility. It may be called both the guard of all other graces, and the soil in which they grow. The second is attention to the Scripture. Your question is directly answered in Psalm 119:9. The precepts are our rule and delight, the promises our strength and encouragement; the good recorded of the saints is proposed for our encouragement; their miscarriages are as landmarks set up to warn us of the rocks and shoals which lie in the way of our passage. The study of the whole scheme of gospel salvation, respecting the person, life, doctrine, death, and glory of our Redeemer, is appointed to form our souls to a spiritual and divine taste; and so far as this prevails and grows in us, the trifles that would draw us from the Lord will lose their influence and appear divested of the glare with which they strike the senses, mere vanity and nothing. The third grand means is consideration of recollection; a careful regard to those temptations and snares to which, from our tempers, situations, or connections, we are more immediately exposed, and by which we have been formerly hindered. It may be well in the morning, when we leave our chambers, to forecast, as far as we are able, the probable circumstances of the day before us. Yet the observance of this, as well as of every rule that can be offered, may dwindle into a mere form. However, I trust the Lord, who has given you a desire to live to Him, will be your guard and teacher. There is none who teacheth like Him.

I am, &c.

# On Your Knees



A. Janse-Pieterman  
(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

*Do you bend your knees every day when you pray?  
God is so great and holy,  
and we are so small and unholy. It is good that you realize this  
over and over again.*

**I**n God's Word we read of many of God's children who have knelt before the Lord. Elijah thought he was the only one still bowing his knees to the God of Israel. In 1 Kings 19:14, we read, *"I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left."* But then the Lord says to him: *"Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal"* (1 Kings 19:18).

What do you bend your knees to? Maybe also for an idol. An idol is something that you spend a lot of time on and that keeps you from the Lord and His service. Take a look at your own life. For example, how long and how often per day do you use your smartphone or iPad or computer? Do you spend as much time on your knees? What is your heart set on? The best sports players? Or on your hobbies, your money, or your designer clothes? On ... (fill in the blanks)? Or is it your desire that you can also belong to one of those seven thousand?

Perhaps you sometimes feel alone, just like Elijah. But if you may bow to the Lord and serve Him, He will take care of you. *"The pious seed of those who trusted in God, by His power, shall serve Him, live to Him"* (Psalm 22:15, rhymed, *loosely translated*). Then you can find a place in the house where you bend your knees and pray that the Lord will give you strength to remain obedient to His Word, especially in this world full of temptations.



# THE ALTAR OF THE HOUSEHOLD



Edited by Rev. John Harris (1802-1856)

Read: Mark 15, verses 33-47

The unfeeling and profane taunts of those who crucified our Lord must have had a solemn rebuke in the darkness which, at the sixth hour, gathered over the scene. Many a heart then quailed. The general clamor seems to have been hushed, and every word from the cross to have been distinctly heard. The sympathy of nature with her expiring Lord was His vindication. The gloom was spread by God to conceal from the universe a crime too black for it to look upon. The ninth hour came, and then Christ had been suspended on the tree six hours. The last gleam of the Father's love was withdrawn; then burst His mighty heart. What a depth of unimaginable anguish does that cry reveal, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" (Mark 15:34).

The veil of the temple--which concealed the Holy of Holies, into which the priest entered but once in the year on the Day of Atonement--was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. No more was the sacrifice to be offered within that hitherto consecrated enclosure; the True Priest has now appeared, and the real sacrifice had now been offered. No longer would God's peculiar place be between the cherubims; the great Inhabitant was gone! Another era was come, and another and more spiritual worship had been introduced.

On the night of His apprehension, the Lord Jesus had prayed His Father to glorify Him. There is glory now in the greatness of His ignominy, but then His prayer was answered in the shaking earth, the rending rocks, the blackening heavens, and the parting veil. That last event spoke directly and emphatically to the Jews; and, had not their minds been blinded by bigotry, they must then have "*looked on Him whom they had pierced*" (see Zechariah 12:10), and each one in bitterness have "*mourned because of Him*" (see Zechariah 12:10).