

Insight Into



July / August 2021

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Desiring to Become Rich • Nobody Likes a Rat
Influence • The Warning of Absalom
How Do You Deal with Conspiracy Theories? • And Then?**

Insight Into

General Information

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

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

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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MEDITATION

The Good Shepherd

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd” (John 10:16).

Rev. C. Vogelaar

Christ is the Good Shepherd. We read of Him in the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 40:11, *“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.”* He is not like the Pharisees who are unfaithful shepherds, for they cast out of the synagogue the poor sheep, such as the man that was born blind. Those shepherds are called strangers in verse 5, thieves and robbers in verse 8, and hirelings in verses 12 and 13; but Christ is the Door (verse 9). He is the Good Shepherd. We read of Him also in Ezekiel 34:12, *“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his flock that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.”* The poet sings of him in Psalm 23:1, *“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”*

This Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. That is a wonder of grace, for they had all turned to their own way and there was none that asked or sought for Him. The Shepherd says, *“And other sheep I have.”* How can that be? They are not of this fold and must be brought to it, yet it says He *has* those sheep. They in themselves are foolish, blind, stubborn, and rebellious; however, He came to seek and to save those who were lost. He *has* those sheep, because they were already given unto Him. *“I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word”* (John 17:6). Those sheep, though uncalled, belong to Christ as being given by His Father. He had them in His hands and upon His heart, though they were scattered abroad and He will bring them. It says *“them also I must bring.”* There was a necessity of this:

- a. On account of His Father’s will and pleasure, His purposes and decrees.
- b. On account of His own engagement, He had obliged Himself to do it.
- c. Because of the case and condition of these sheep, who otherwise must have eternally perished.

What is the means of His bringing them? *“And they shall hear My voice.”* Not only externally but in their heart. He gives ears to hear and

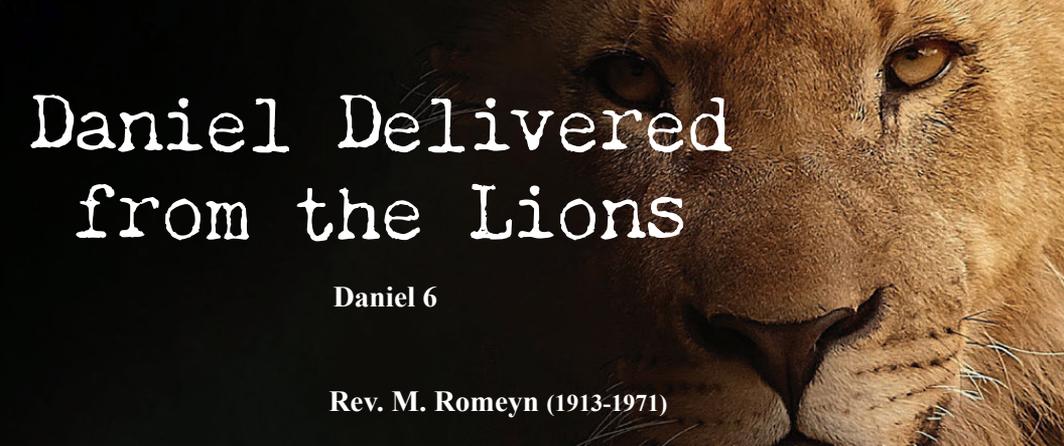
opens their heart to attend to His Word, and gives them understanding of it. The result will be: *“And there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.”* The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile will be broken down, and they will be members of the same body.

We live in times of much division and separations, even among them who confess and believe the same truth. That truth that exalts God to the highest and abases man to the lowest, not only in words but also in practice. All those sheep learn that it will be an eternal wonder of God’s sovereign grace if they may safely arrive and be with the Shepherd who loved and gave Himself for them.

What a comforting word this is that *“there shall be one fold.”* The Lord will bring together what truly belongs together, and they will all be gathered around the one only Good Shepherd. The question is, “Did you hear His voice already, my young friends?” I know there are many voices that are calling you, alluring and seemingly beautiful voices, attractive to our hearts by nature. And how will you find your way in this time in which everything seems to be subject to change? What was considered to be abnormal now seems to be “normal,” and what was normal now is called “abnormal.” However, all these voices come to allure you to paths of destruction. Our poor countries and their leaders seem to follow and obey those voices, and more and more, when you want to obey what the Lord Himself says in His Word, will you be pressured and forced to accept the so-called wisdom of the world? A wisdom that speaks a lot about loving each other, but in which there is no place anymore for those who want to obey God’s voice.

My dear young friends, the words of the Good Shepherd give comfort in days like these. Christ is still gathering sheep who are not of this fold. He is still calling lost sheep and there will be those who hear His voice. They will come from all countries, races, and languages, having heard His voice, seeking and taking refuge with this Shepherd. He is the only Good Shepherd. The word “good” means “fair, attractive, worthy.” Whatever may change in this world, remember that He only is worthy to be served. His beauty is beyond what human words can express! He is altogether lovely; He is fairer than the children of men! Oh, listen then to His voice when He calls you while you are still young. You will never be disappointed with Him and His blessed service, a service not just for older people, but also for the young and perhaps strong like you.

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee” (Isaiah 43:2).



Daniel Delivered from the Lions

Daniel 6

Rev. M. Romeyn (1913-1971)

Dear young friends,

In Chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel, we read that Daniel served the country under King Darius. Daniel had a very high office. *“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom”* (verse 1). Daniel held the highest office in the whole kingdom, under King Darius. For this reason, the rulers of the kingdom were very jealous of Daniel and they sought to find occasion against him. Daniel was blessed with wisdom and honesty. He was very faithful to perform his obligations towards the king. The rulers who were placed under him could not find anything wherewith they could accuse Daniel before King Darius. Daniel is an example to us, by his obedience to them who are placed above us by the Lord in His providence. But Daniel was also, and first of all, obedient to the Lord. The true Christianity of the rulers of a country is a blessing to the country. If the rulers might be faithful to the Lord, they shall also be very beneficial to the country. Again we see that the kingdom of the world can never be united to the kingdom of heaven. It is the Prince of Darkness against the Prince of Peace. The devil would not have so much against Daniel, who was the first in the kingdom, if he was not so obedient and faithful to God.

Daniel’s faith tried

Therefore, the rulers set a trap for Daniel. They said, *“We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God”* (verse 5). They could not tolerate Daniel. They wanted to make him fall and destroy him. They went in unity to the king and proposed something that was pleasing to him. It was to his honour and pleasing to his pride. Oh, what is man without self-knowledge? A firm decree was made *“that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions”* (verse 7). We understand this was a trial for Daniel’s faith. At that time, if such a decree was established and signed, it could not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians. Young friends,

is this not so today? The law of the country cannot be broken, even if it is against the law of God. The Christians who prefer to obey the law of God must suffer for it. And Daniel, what could he do? His only weapon against the evil devices was his prayer. But the true prayer of Daniel was stronger than all the evil devices against him. We read that it was made known to the king that Daniel continued his petitions three times a day to God. In this chapter, we see the true faith of Daniel, shining as an ornament to the honour of God, in the midst of a dark world. Is this not a great blessing, young friends, if we are granted in time of trouble and danger, not to forsake the true religion? The pureness and uprightness of faith is revealed if it is tried. This was a very great disappointment for King Darius. He needed the God-fearing Daniel very much; he was so honest and so beneficial to him and the country. By this we must observe that the fear of the Lord is not unprofitable to the country, but very beneficial.

Daniel in the lions' den

However, the law was made and the decree could not be changed. We can understand that the enemies of Daniel were very glad and they thought that now Daniel will be devoured by the lions. It was a great trial for Daniel; sometimes it seems like it is in vain if a person is more obedient to the Lord than to the laws of the world. At those times the world would ask the question, which is often in our own heart, *"Where is thy God?"* (Psalm 42:3). We must take into consideration that Daniel did not know the outcome of the matter. But by faith, he was granted that he would sooner die with his God than to live with the laws of the country of Babylon. Daniel was cast into the den of lions. This was, at that time, a hole dug in the ground and a wall built around it with an opening. A stone was placed before the opening. This stone was sealed by the king with his own signet. The king felt that Daniel, his faithful servant, was betrayed by his unfaithful fellow servants. The night that Daniel was in the den of lions was very grievous for the king. The king did not eat or sleep. He felt guilty in his conscience, and yet Daniel was in danger, but with a clear conscience. Even though it is not pleasing for the flesh, it is better to be with the Lord in the den of lions, than to be in the palace of the worldly kingdom with a guilty conscience.

Daniel delivered by God

Very early in the morning, the king went in haste unto the den of lions. It was a joyful surprise for King Darius that Daniel was delivered by the God whom Daniel served continually. The answer of Daniel to King Darius was not rude or sarcastic, but very polite. Daniel said, *"O king, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths"* (verses 21-22). Daniel revealed to the king that he had been with the lions,

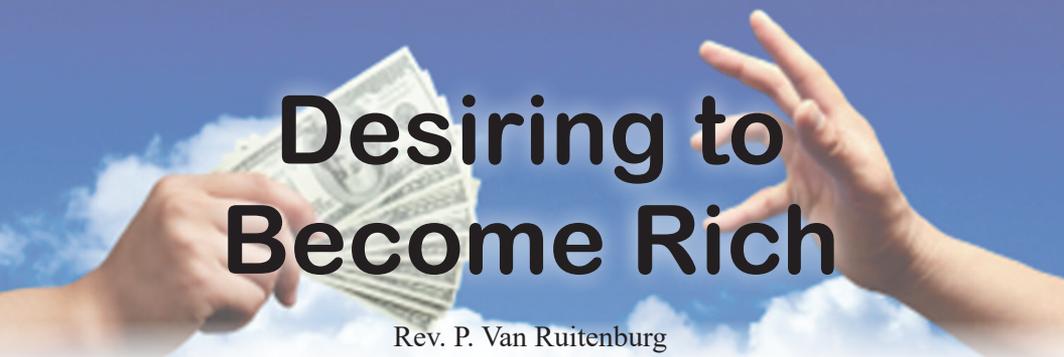
but not alone. *“My God hath sent His angel.”* The deliverance of Daniel was to the honour of his God, to the strengthening of his faith. Again we see the intention of Babylon is to destroy the church, but the church will be saved and delivered by Christ. Now we must also observe what happened to those who had been the accusers of Daniel. *“And they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives”* (verse 24). This is a lesson for all of us. If we seek the destruction of the church, we work out our own destruction. We also see that prayer is our strongest weapon and comfort at all times, but especially in the day of trials. True faith is to the honour of God and to the salvation of the Lord’s children, and the church shall be saved by Christ alone. May the Lord bless us that we may experience a little of the true saving faith of Daniel. What a blessing it would be if our windows are open toward the heavenly Jerusalem, and we may be found kneeled upon our knees, three times a day.

QUESTIONS

1. Why were the rulers jealous of Daniel?
2. What did Daniel do three times a day?
3. What was the purpose of the decree?
4. Why was the king so sad about the matter?
5. How did the king feel?
6. Why is it better to be with Daniel than with the rulers?
7. To whose honour was the deliverance of Daniel?
8. By whom was the mouths of the lions shut?
9. What happened to Daniel’s enemies?
10. What would be a blessing to us?

“It is some comfort to faithful ministers, when they see little success of their labours, that it is no new thing for the best preachers and the best preaching in the world to come short of the desired end. Who has believed our report? If from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of those great commanders, Christ and John, returned so often empty (2 Samuel 1:22), no marvel if ours do so, and we prophesy to so little purpose upon dry bones.”

~ Matthew Henry (1662-1714)



Desiring to Become Rich

Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg

What would we most like to become? As long as we make a lot of money? Is that why we choose a profession? Being rich makes many people feel good and if you earn a lot, you can not only spend and enjoy, but also your self-esteem increases, and you probably have more friends. Those who can save money will also feel safer. However, *“trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them”* (Psalm 62:10).

This is a mistake. Not only the rich sometimes want to become richer. There are many poorer people who want to be just as rich, and when they can't achieve this, they are frustrated, dissatisfied, and jealous about it. They start doing strange things, such as fraud, stealing, or spoiling the lives of others, because of their discontent, and stand in the way of their salvation with their lust. This desire is harmful.

Don't get me wrong; wealth is not a curse, but wanting to be rich is, as well as squandering and using up everything, for that matter. Being rich may happen, but it should not be a reason to live for. We are allowed to live to give, but not to receive, to hoard, or to waste.

The root of all evil. Almost any sin, or perhaps all of us, can be associated with the desire to become rich. People will do almost anything for money. That is why the hunger for money is so dangerous. It can lead you astray in many ways. I'm not just thinking about prostitution and drug trafficking, but also about lotteries, arcades, lying and cheating, stealing, and of course much more.

The perfect prayer says in the fourth petition, *“Give us this day our daily bread”* (Matthew 6:11), but does the word *“us”* consider others?

Do we do good works, companions of faith? Are we willing to give people their daily bread?

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Timothy 6:9).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Timothy 6:17-18).

Nobody Likes a Rat

A black silhouette of a rat is positioned behind the title text. The rat is facing right, with its tail extending to the left. The text 'Part 1' is located to the right of the main title.

Part 1

Rev. E. C. Adams

These words were the heading of an article in a local newspaper that caught my attention. I hope they have also caught yours, and therefore you will continue reading. We hope to glean some important and profound lessons. Much instruction can be learned from the animal world and from happenings that take place in daily life. Job has said in Job 12:7, *“But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee.”* Jesus has also used many examples out of nature in His parables as He taught the people. We only have to think of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, and the unfruitful fig tree of Luke 13, to mention a few. Solomon has also given instruction in Proverbs 30:24-28 concerning the ants, the conies, the locusts, and the spider.

A few facts

NOBODY LIKES A RAT. To correctly learn lessons from the rat, we must know the life and the way of the rat. The animal we call a rat is not mentioned in the Bible. We do read of mice in Leviticus 11:29, 1 Samuel 6:5, and Isaiah 66:17. Most Bible dictionaries will tell us the word in the original Hebrew language is believed to have referred to a larger variety of rodents than mice alone. Therefore, when Leviticus 11:29 speaks of the mouse as being an unclean animal, prohibited to be eaten, it included a wider group of rodents, likely including the rat.

My encyclopedia tells me that there are about 120 kinds of rats, the most common being the black rat and the brown rat. These rodents breed and multiply quickly. They inflict huge and widespread economical destruction in agricultural countries, eating and spoiling grain. They inflict extensive damage to grain storage, barns, and houses. Besides grain, they eat fruits and vegetables. They will attack smaller animals, and sometimes even babies in the crib. From time to time, they are the cause of fires by gnawing on electrical wires. They are carriers of many diseases. In the middle centuries, it was rats that helped the plague to spread throughout the countries, causing millions of deaths.

An amazing and prosperous achievement

In this article, we shall not consider so much the life of a rat as such,

but consider how they have dealt with rats in Alberta, extracting profitable lessons for us and our children. The Alberta Rat Control program was initiated in 1950 to keep rats out of the province, because NOBODY LIKES A RAT. Alberta is one the few jurisdictions in the world that can claim they are rat-free. How is this possible? Rats are in the provinces surrounding and the state south of them, but no rats in the province itself. They have an abundance of mice, gophers, and other vermin, but no rats. Yet, they do have thousands of miles of borders with other provinces. Seventy years ago, they industriously established a Rat Control Zone (RCZ) including a 29-kilometre swath on their eastern border from Cold Lake in the north to the border of Montana. With the Lord's blessing, the appointed agents at the border have been enabled to catch and kill the rats that have attempted to sneak in. In Psalm 127:1, we read, *"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."* You would be inclined to think that's an impossible feat. What about the rats that hitchhike along on the trains and other vehicles? When a rat is sighted in a certain town or place, then the alarm is sounded. Then all the inhabitants do everything in their power to catch and destroy this one rat.

NOBODY LIKES A RAT. Is then only one rat or two rats so awful and so dangerous? Would even one baby rat be so bad, since they are no larger than a full grown mouse? Oh, to be sure, they have lots of mice and other vermin, but no rats. Thus far their efforts have been successful. The province of Alberta has been wise, visionary, prudent, and diligent. They realized that it is much easier to catch and kill one rat, than to try to rid a whole province of rats. This would be impossible. They realize that to allow a rat or two to live in Alberta would be disastrous, bearing devastating consequences. Now you very well understand that this article is not only to tell about rats, but as we have related, to glean some understandable lessons for us all.

A profound reflection and instruction

For many years we have been spared from numerous evils by not having a television in our homes, thereby separated from many influences of this evil and wicked world. At least I hope so. The Lord has promised to bless those that even outwardly walk according to His holy Word. In 1 Samuel 2:30 it promises, *"For them that honour Me, I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."*

Nevertheless, many things have changed in the last decades concerning temptations. Now if there are those that are still wondering concerning the scope of this article, I think most have figured it out, but for those who have not, we can compare rats to sin, temptations, and addictions.

Must we not confess that we as churches have not been diligent with

encroaching sins, like the province of Alberta has been concerning rats? Or perhaps we've been too overwhelmed, thinking it is of no use; or, thinking that a rat is not so bad. Rats becomes much bolder when allowed to freely roam about unhindered, and even more so when they are fed. They continue unrelentingly, in many diverse, secret, and subtle ways to invade our homes, schools, and churches. How those rats swarm about us trying to look for an entrance. Often the expression is heard, "What harm is in this or that?" where it seems to be only a little sin. Surely it is easier to keep them out with the Lord's help, than to try to get them out after they have entered. Let us make a few comparisons between rats and temptation and sins. *(To be continued, the Lord willing)*

"That commonly those persons who do not profit by the means of grace, are perverse, and reflect upon the ministers by whom they enjoy those means; and because they do not get good themselves, they do all the hurt they can to others, by raising and propagating prejudices against the Word, and the faithful preachers of it. Those who will not comply with God, and walk after Him, confront Him, and walk contrary to Him. So *this generation* did; because they were resolved not to believe Christ and John, and to own them, as they ought to have done, for the best of men, they set themselves to abuse them, and to represent them as the worst. (1.) As for John the Baptist, they say, *He has a devil*. They imputed his strictness and reservedness to melancholy, and some kind or degree of a possession of Satan. "Why should we heed him? He is a poor hypochondriacal man, full of fancies, and under the power of a crazed imagination." (2.) As for Jesus Christ, they imputed His free and obliging conversation to the more vicious habit of luxury and flesh-pleasing: *Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber*. No reflection could be more foul and invidious; it is the charge against the rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:20), *He is a glutton, and a drunkard*; yet none could be more false and unjust; for Christ *pleased not Himself* (Romans 15:3), nor did ever any man live such a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world, as Christ lived: He that was *undefiled, and separate from sinners*, is here represented as in league with them, and polluted by them. Note: The most unspotted innocency, and the most unparalleled excellency, will not always be a fence *against the reproach of tongues*: nay, a man's best gifts and best actions, which are both well intended and well calculated for edification, may be made the matter of his reproach. The best of our actions may become the worst of our accusations, as David's fasting (Psalm 69:10). It was true in some sense, that Christ was a *Friend to publicans and sinners*, the best Friend they ever had, for He *came into the world to save sinners*, great sinners, even the chief; so He said very feelingly, who had been Himself not a *publican and sinner*, but a Pharisee and sinner; but this is, and will be to eternity, Christ's praise, and they forfeited the benefit of it who thus turned it to his reproach."

Matthew Henry's Commentary on Matthew 11:19

iNfLUENCE

***“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise:
but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”*** (Proverbs 13:20).

Rev. H. D. den Hollander

The wisest man spoke of “training up a child.” This begins at a very early age. Did you ever try to teach a little child to do something? How did you go about that? Perhaps you have stacked some blocks before his eyes. And then? With pleasure you have watched him begin to stack blocks also. You built a tower and knocked it over. Soon the child also learned to build a tower and knock it over. Amazing! You have not told him to do as you do. You only showed him. And he imitates you. So it goes with all children in the world. Evidently, this tendency to imitate is not something we need to teach one another; rather, it is the way we have been created. We do not need to teach a child imitation any more than we need to teach him how to breathe or cry or laugh.

Actually, this tendency to imitate is not limited to infancy. As part of our very nature, it remains with us throughout our whole life. It is more natural to us than we perhaps realize. In fact, it stems from an aspect of our nature which we call *sympathy*. God has made us social creatures; that is, He has created us with feelings which are affected by one another. This is an amazing thing. Surely you have seen someone weeping once. What feelings did this stir within you? Did not a certain sorrow well up in your heart also? You felt along; you sympathized. In the Bible times we read of weeping women, who were sometimes hired for the purpose of affecting the feelings of other. But though we most often use the word sympathy to refer to sadness, it actually applies to all of our feelings. Did you ever see someone get hurt? How did you feel? Perhaps you could just about feel the pain yourself. Did you ever walk into a room where everyone was laughing? Then you have also probably begun to laugh with them; actually, you sympathized with them. Sympathy is an involuntary act. In other words, it is something we do not control ourselves, but it happens automatically. We do not even need to know *why* a person is weeping, or

fearful, or laughing. All we need to do is observe the emotion, and our emotion is also affected.

This wonderful trait of human nature lies at the foundation of education. Not only do we automatically sympathize with others, but the reaction to that sympathy is also created in us, which is precisely the motive which inspires us to *imitate* what other people do. In our creation, the blessed inclination to imitate would have tended only to good. But since our Fall, it is affected by our sinful disposition. Have you ever met a person who always seems to be angry? Certainly you say, “I have no desire to be like that person.” Yet the tendency of our human nature to imitate others is so strong that the Lord must admonish us in His Word, “*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*” (Proverbs 22:24-25). Thus, we do not realize how sinful our nature actually is, but are influenced to imitate even those characteristics which we ourselves think we despise and loathe.

It is so important to recognize that *this natural desire to imitate is involuntary*; it lives in every one of us; it is part of our very nature. It is for this reason that Solomon says, “*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*” As human beings, *we are influenced* by other people, whether we want to be or not. Do you believe this? Inconsideration of this most important fact has led to the fall of many, even God-fearing persons. Samson failed to consider this liability to influence, when he went continually down to Delilah. Solomon himself failed to consider this, when he loved many strange women, who turned away his heart from following the Lord. Through our deep Fall, especially sin has become extremely contagious, because of our sinful disposition. For that reason Solomon does not write, “Be cautious when you walk with the wicked,” no, but he writes, “*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away*” (Proverbs 4:14-15). This is in recognition of our nature. Our inclination to imitate is as involuntary as our inclination to sympathize. If we think we will not be influenced *at all* by others, we deny the very nature of our *created* being. If we believe that we will not be influenced by *evil*, we deny the very nature of our *fallen* being.

“*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*” In this verse, Solomon speaks directly about this involuntary aspect of our nature by which we are influenced by others. For this reason, he declares it to be our wisdom to *take great care about the environment we place ourselves in*. Since we are certain to be influenced,

who do we wish to be influenced by? What is the environment which you place yourself in, as a young person? Hear Solomon's instruction to the young man who would be a companion of a whorish woman. "*Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?*" (Proverbs 6:27). What happened to Lot when he pitched his tent toward Sodom? Even he could not escape influence. For this reason, it is the wisdom of a king to gather wise counselors around him. Rehoboam had to learn this lesson by bitter experience when "*he forsook the counsel of the old men ... and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him*" (1 Kings 12:8), whom he had chosen for his counselors. Godly Jehoshaphat was influenced by wicked Ahab, so that he had to cry out for fear of his life in the midst of the battle. Who do you choose for your friends, young people? Paul says, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Whom do you seek as a husband or wife? Do we not read, "*Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers*" (2 Corinthians 6:14)? What kind of books do you read? Are they filled with the instruction of wise men? Or do you curl up on the couch and make yourself the companion of fools? We read in God's Word that when Israel "*did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen,*" they "*learned their works,*" and "*served their idols: which were a snare unto them*" (Psalm 106:34-36). For what do you use the Internet? Do you believe you are being influenced by it? Initial horrors at sin are abated by habitual association. Remember, "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*" What great wisdom did Ruth receive by cleaving to her wise mother-in-law! To Elijah, Elisha said, "*As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee*" (2 Kings 2:4). Thereby he was blessed with a double portion of the Spirit of the Lord which rested upon him. Joash was wise as long as he walked with wise Jehoiada, but when he became a companion of fools he was destroyed. Therefore David writes, "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night*" (Psalm 1:1-2).

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly" (Psalm 65:9-10).

The Warning of Absalom

"O Absalom, my son, my son!"¹
Would God I had died for you!
Just hear now David's sad lament,
His heart is torn in two.

Oh Absalom, my darling son,
Had you from evil turned,
Oh if you had been penitent,
God surely had not spurned!

But you went on in wicked ways,
Heard words of evil men;
And now it has become your death,
Your life has reached its end.

"O Absalom, my son, my son!"
Had I died in your place,
Then still today would be for you
Accepted time of grace.

Oh my dear daughter! My dear son!
Are you like Absalom?
And will you break your parents' hearts;
In ways of sin go on?

Oh hearken not to evil ones
Who help you go astray;
Leave all the wicked paths of sin,
Oh go not on this way!

Today is still the time of grace,
It is not yet too late;
Today, if you will hear God's voice,
Learn ways of sin to hate.

Oh listen to the warnings giv'n,
They're meant unto your well.
Oh trample not your parents' hearts
Like Absalom who fell.

Oh Absalom would never heed
The admonitions sent,
But carried on so recklessly,
Received his punishment.

For Absalom it is too late,
But not for you, young friend;
"My son, my daughter, give your heart
To Me!" is God's command.

You never will regret the choice
To leave the paths of sin;
All who, by grace, will follow Christ,
Shall find all joy in Him.

Oh do you see the contrast now,
'Tween ways of sin and grace?
One ends in mis'ry, one in joy;
Son, daughter, where's your place?

Oh Lord, wilt Thou yet turn us to
Seek Thee, while it's today;
Keep us from paths of wickedness,
Let us not go astray!

A. H.



¹ 2 Samuel 19:4

How do you Deal with Conspiracy Theories?

Translated from Daniel.online

The 5G antennas cause virus-like structures in human cells. Hospitals receive 20,000 euros per patient in the ICU. By means of the corona vaccine, the Illuminati, a secret society that strives for world domination, tries to take control of all humanity. These are just a few examples of conspiracy theories. Many such stories are currently being shared via social media. Maybe you have read a few, too. It seems quite realistic at times. It can make you restless. How can you deal with this as a Christian? Here are four ways to handle this.

Speak well about your neighbour

“The corona pandemic is a plot by Bill and Melinda Gates.” “Hillary Clinton is part of an international pedophilia organization.” The Bible teaches that we must spread a good report about our neighbour. Not only your neighbours, church members, and friends are your loved ones. People like Bill and Melinda Gates, who live on the other side of the world, are also your loved ones. Lord’s Day 40 of the Heidelberg Catechism states that we should not “dishonour (insult or harm), hate, wound, or kill my neighbour.” Conspiracy theories often damage the reputation of our fellow man. Try to be cautious about that.

Only speak the truth

We all know we must speak the truth. Lord’s Day 43 of the Heidelberg Catechism defines the ninth commandment as not lying, twisting words, and condemning anyone. Keep in mind that a lot of information on social media or conspiracy blogs is not substantiated with facts. Someone can call himself a scientist, but is he or she one? And if so, look at the bigger picture and context. Are multiple scientists saying this? Or is this about untruths? By relying on, sharing, and forwarding unsubstantiated news reports, you can--perhaps without realizing it--spread false information. For example, after a short search on Google, it quickly becomes clear that

there are no microchips in the corona vaccine. Yet this “false” message is quite often shared, even among Christians.

Conspiracy theories cause unrest

Due to the negative tone of blogs, posts, and videos of conspiracy thinkers, this information is likely to give you unrest. You get the feeling that there may be some truth in it, and this creates uncertainty about the future. It can begin to consume you. Consider the turmoil that gripped the United States for months by “fake news” about election fraud. Especially in times of uncertainty, people are susceptible to conspiracy thinking. If you look at the Bible, there is another big plot. That is Satan’s devilish plot against God’s kingdom. The devil is deceiving you. He takes you into his plot; he’s twisting the truth; he scares people. But know that God’s kingdom is coming. If you know the Lord and trust in Him in faith, then you may know that there is nothing that can separate you from God’s love and protection (Romans 8:39). Seek the Lord and ask if all your hopes may be placed in Him.

We can be critical

At the same time, we can and must certainly be critical. The devil goes about like a roaring lion. He is trying to devour this earth. You can certainly question developments in this world. Without our knowing, things will happen that we do not want to know about. Certain plots can be true. What about the surcharge affair, or a car brand that has incorrectly influenced the emission results of cars for years? We don’t know everything.

It is important that you are well informed by correct information. Don’t believe everything too quickly. Prove all things and keep what is good. Are you worried about the future of this world? That is understandable, but first focus on your spiritual future. For through Christ’s work of redemption, there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. There will be no conspiracies, no untruth, but only love and truth.

“O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters” (Jeremiah 17:13).

And Then?

Adapted from a poem in *Rachel de Groenteverkoopster*

Just before the deep forest shade enveloped him, Charles turned back to look at the small village basking in the sunlight. Oh, it was a pretty village, but still only a village. He had lived here since his birth eighteen years ago. Charles had attended the small village school, played all kinds of games with his friends, and explored the woods and hills that wrapped the village in their arms. Unlike most of the young villagers, he had enjoyed school and diligently learned all he could from the hoary-headed village schoolmaster. Tomorrow, he would leave these narrow confines and these dull people and seek his fortune elsewhere. Tomorrow, he would move to the city and start a new, more exciting life.

He turned his back on the village and walked on toward his grandfather's cottage deep in the woods. He could not very well leave without saying good-bye to Grandfather, could he? The man was horribly old-fashioned and totally out-of-step with the times, but he was, after all, his grandfather.

Charles soon reached the small clearing surrounding his grandfather's home. For a few moments, he stared pensively at the whitewashed cottage with its thatched roof. Then he stepped up to the door, knocked, turned the knob, and went in.

Grandfather was on his knees, praying at his bedside. The old man looked up when he heard the boy's footsteps and rose from his place. "Charles, it's been a long time. Come, have a seat. Tell me, how are things at home?"

"We're all fine, Grandpa. I have come to say good-bye. Tomorrow I am leaving for the city. My classes at the university start next week."

"So, you're leaving home to go to the university?"

"Yes, Grandpa. The village master has taught me all he can. I want to learn more. I want to study all kinds of subjects that will help me get ahead."

"And what then, Charles?" asked Grandfather.

"I won't have any trouble getting a degree. Then I will find a job that interests me. With a degree, it will be much easier getting a job that pays well. I know that if I work hard, I'll get ahead."

"And what then, Charles?"

"Then I'll find myself a pretty and intelligent wife with a pleasing personality. If we have children, I will make sure they will be a credit to my name and don't disgrace me. I'll make sure they, too, get a good education, because knowledge is the most important treasure."

"And what then, Charles?"

"I'll make lots of money and be able to retire early. Then my wife and I will travel to see distant parts of the world. I would like to see the beauties

of nature such as the Grand Canyon. I want to cruise along the glaciers of British Columbia and stretch out under the palm trees in Hawaii. In school, I enjoyed learning about ancient civilizations, and I want to see the pyramids in Egypt and the marble Parthenon in Athens.”

“And what then, Charles?”

“Well, my wife and I will be getting on by then, and we’ll have to slow down. I’ll find a good rest home that offers all the amenities of old age, that has pleasant nurses, and good medical care.”

“And what then, Charles?”

“Then death, the common lot of all mankind will take me away. My children and grandchildren, my former employees and friends will gather round to pay their last respects and carry me to the grave. I’ll leave instructions for a marble monument commemorating my good deeds to be erected above my grave.”

“And what then, Charles?”

The young man remained silent. He did not know how to answer his grandfather. He had nothing more to say.

The old man straightened his weary back and looked into his grandson’s eyes. “And then, Charles, you will stand at the judgment seat of God with empty hands. He will say, “You fool, what have you done with the talents that I gave you? With your bright mind? With the money that you earned? Have you helped the poor, the widows, and the orphans? Tell me, you fool, what you have done for Me?”

“What have you done with the Bible lessons you learned at your mother’s knees? What did you do to save your immortal soul? Then He will command His angels to bind your hands and feet and cast you into outer darkness.”

Charles hung his head, unable to speak. Then he sank down on his knees before his grandfather. His body shook and tears pressed themselves between his fingers.

“Grandpa, pray for me! Pray that I will never forget the lesson you’ve just taught me.”

“Yes, I will pray for you. Come, let us kneel together and ask the Lord to make His Word a light upon our path.”

The two sank down on their knees and folded their hands as the old man prayed for the eternal welfare of his grandson. After the prayer, he dismissed him.

“Go, Charles. Go home now. Go to university tomorrow. Study hard. Work hard. Strive to obey the commandments. Above all, always remember this question, ‘And what then?’”

*He who would long and happy live, Let him My counsel hear.
~ Psalter 89:1*

~ Taken from *Story Treasures* by Mr. A. Stoutjesdyk