

Insight Into



November / December 2021

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).*

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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

Thanksgiving and Christmas: Important Related Events

Rev. G. M. de Leeuw

Dear young readers and elderly ones,

At the end of a year, it seems that things go faster and faster. Two church-related events occur every year again, namely, our annual Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. They are related to one another. Namely, the yearly Thanksgiving Day is to acknowledge the Lord for His manifold gifts bestowed upon us and upon our children. And the day of the commemoration of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to remember His coming in the flesh, which day we call Christmas. This is not a day for candles or trees, but a day for Him, who was God and remained God, co-equal to the Father and to the Holy Ghost. A day whereupon we remember, every year again, His remarkable and incomprehensible incarnation. So on our Thanksgiving Day we acknowledge the Lord for His manifold blessings, and on Christmas Day we remember the remarkable birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in a manger, whereas there was no room for them in the inn.

The main question, dear readers, is for all of us: What do we know of it? Of course, outwardly we are able to tell what took place at Bethlehem and later in Egypt. But, if it will be well with us for time and for eternity, then we need to know these things spiritual wise. It is very remarkable that plain shepherds were the first ones to know about this all-important event. With what spiritual gladness did they proclaim this wonderful event. And dear reader, until today, when this message is brought by God's Spirit into our heart, do we have the same gladness? Then my question to you is: Did it become Christmas already in your life? Please turn in with this question to yourself, begging the Lord to perform that wonder. And when there are among the readers who may answer this question in the affirmative,

acknowledge the Lord. Because it is only through Him and His dear Spirit when a person may receive these glad tidings. Then you have reason to join with the angels when they are singing: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14).

It says in 2 Corinthians 9:15, *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”* This gift is His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And in John 4:10 it says, *“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.”*

David Dickson on Psalm 68

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death” (Verses 19-20).

From the eighth reason of praise, learn:

Temporal things which men idolize, may serve a man in this life; but at death, in death, and after death, he can have no good by them. It is God only who can deliver from death, and give an issue out of it: *“Unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.”*

Let a man be once settled in the faith of his salvation, then he shall be comforted against all the troubles and dangers wherein he can fall, yea even against death itself; if he can say, *“He that is our God, is the God of salvation,”* he may also say with confidence, and application to himself, and comfort, *“Unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.”*



Connected **VIRTUALLY** or **Virtually DISCONNECTED**

Rev. E. Maljaars

You regularly type messages at lightning speed using only your thumbs in a language that the generation before you can hardly decipher. You check in on the lives of hundreds of “friends.” You daily, maybe hourly, scroll through endless images posted by those you admire, for one reason or another, leaving a trail of “likes.” E-mail and even Facebook are old-school, but you are proficient in many next-generation platforms that leave parents dizzy (and concerned). You are connected. Your life is full of virtual social contact, but at what expense?

Be still for a moment. Take a moment to jump off the gerbil wheel. I ask for one moment so together we can assess the situation. Do not let FOMO (the fear of missing out) keep you from taking a moment to unplug.

With the touch of a finger on our smartphone or a click of a mouse, we can be friends with or “follow” someone we have never met and may never meet in person. With a simple click, we can accept a stranger to “follow” us by letting them into our virtual life. It could be that your “friend and followers” lists surpass numbers of three digits, yet you could be so lonely, despite all those friends. The truth is that we are currently living in one of history’s great ironies: We live in a world that is more connected than ever before, but with its individualism, people are disconnected and lonely. How is it possible to be lonely in such a connected world?

The art of friendship

Recently, I arrived at the location for an appointment ten minutes early in a culture in which arriving late is more appropriate, so I found a park bench in a plaza nearby to wait. I knew I was procrastinating in writing an article for a young adult periodical, so I would use this time to try and think of a relevant topic. My mind drew yet another blank and I quickly became distracted by the bustling society around me.

The park bench was empty when I selected it, but before long I found

myself sharing it with four others, each oblivious to the other as they stared into their phones. I resisted the urge to pull out my phone and instead made some more observations. From my vantage point, I could see into a popular restaurant where sought-after window seats were all occupied with couples preoccupied with their phones. Granted, the menu is on the phone via a QR code, and so is the necessary camera to record the “I was here with...” moment. Feeling a little like the bench was getting too small for my comfort zone, I decided to walk around the plaza. I tried to look for human interaction; it was hard to come by. The shoe shiners diligently polished shoes while the younger clients scrolled through their phones and the older ones hid behind newspapers; no interaction there. The street vendors were calling out their wares, but most pedestrians carried on by; very brief, impersonal interaction there. I glanced at my watch and saw that I was still on the early side; one more time around the plaza before I would head to my meeting. It was then that I witnessed something rare.

Halfway across the plaza, I noticed an elderly gentleman sitting on a bench. He was scanning the plaza for someone and when he spotted the one he was anticipating, he grabbed his cane, stood up tall, straightened his suit, and was ready for the encounter. By the time the friends met, I was near enough to hear their exchange and feel the meaning of their pats on one another’s back. The joy in the meeting was mutual and they kept interrupting one another with their questions. They used to meet weekly in the plaza to catch up, but with all the COVID-19 restrictions, it had been so long. Again they patted one another’s back to affirm their mutual joy at reuniting. These two men were long-time, loyal friends; there was no doubt. Their weathered faces told me that they had endured a few years, and it was my calculated guess that they had shared joys and sorrow over the years. My concluding assumption was that they did not have many “followers” or virtual “friends,” but what they did have was a genuine friendship. This friendship took time, loyalty, and trust to build and maintain. Is this art of friendship something that we are losing in our modern-day society?

Genuine friendship

A glance at my watch confirmed that it was time to head to my appointment – I certainly had some thoughts to ponder. I hope you will take time to think through and use some of these points as discussion starters with your family and friends:

- Creation was not complete without human interaction. (Genesis 2:18)
- Friendship is treasured by rich and poor, young and old, male and female. Though there are different levels of need, human beings were

created with a need for acceptance by and fellowship with fellow human beings. Do we search for this acceptance and fellowship wisely?

- The Bible speaks of the blessing of a faithful friend. You may desire a faithful friend, but what is it *to be* a faithful friend? Can you find Bible references?

- Genuine friendship (referring to individual relationships which go beyond the obedience of the command to be friendly, to love, and to serve our neighbour) requires choice, respect, trust, privacy and as a result, has costs. Does society recognize the value of genuine friendship?

- Does technology trivialize what friendships entail? Does it erode community?

- The Bible has many references to community, and past generations valued community; can virtual relationships take the place of community? What values and practices of the last century are we too easily giving up?

- Take a moment to think about what “communities” you are a part of. Do you value these communities? How do you show others that they are valued?

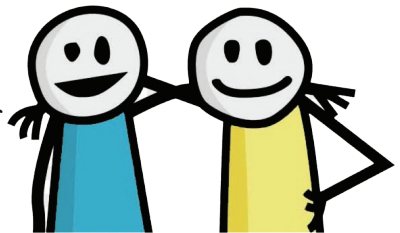
- When we do not make an effort to make eye contact and greet one another, what message are we giving?

- Virtual friendships are often surface deep, easy to enter, and easy to leave, and can be based on false perceptions of who a person is by what they choose to post. How are genuine friendships different? Is it humanly possible to maintain hundreds of (genuine) friendships?

- True friendship stands the test of time, but also wades through the best and the worst, joys and sorrows, give-and-take situations, and has healthy boundaries. What does the Bible teach us about encouraging one another, wise rebuke, and trust?

- Are you replacing face-to-face connections with virtual ones? True friendship involves being “present” and valuing another person; hours spent on social media take away from time to engage in thoughtful correspondence with genuine friends. What can you do differently today to reach out and be “present” in someone else’s life?

- Online connections and communication have their place and purpose, and keeping in contact with long-distance friends and family would be much more difficult without it. The question is, what is the balance – are you using the means to keep and strengthen real-life friendships, or are you using it to build your “stash” of virtual friendships? What place do social media/virtual friendships have for you? Do you need to set different boundaries?



- Should “friendships and followers” be a commodity – something to collect? Is business networking different than personal relationships?

- Communication is a big part of relationships. Sadly, text messages, e-mails, and other online encounters can be misunderstood and cause hurt feelings, because tone and facial expressions cannot be read. Is it a wonder that Matthew 18 commands reconciliation through direct, face-to-face engagement?

- Letters left on record give us insight into past friendships; these letters took time, thought, and effort and showed the value of the friendships. Look up some of the books that have letters; they are often easy to read and give us much insight into the depth of the friendships, especially those who share spiritual struggles and joys. John Calvin, among many others, was known for his close friendships and letters.

- What is the relationship between “friendship” and the “communion of the saints”? Can you find biblical examples? What was special about David and Jonathan’s friendship? Ruth and Naomi’s, and Daniel and his three friends?

- There is a limit in comparing earthly friendships to the friendship the Lord Jesus speaks of having with His chosen ones. What is the significance of the Lord Jesus referring to the relationship of a “friend” rather than a “servant”? Is it a wonder to you that Jesus calls Himself a “friend” to sinners? What relationship is the most important? Do you miss this communion?

The value of friendship

With today’s fast pace and media influence, this article is likely not “binging” for your attention. However, since you have read this far, I would like to encourage you to take time away from your virtual connections to reconsider the value of genuine friendship and the art of being “present.” Ironically, I am asking you to disconnect from this connected world to connect to the disconnected world. Just like you learned to message at rapid speeds in an abbreviated language, I think you can learn to slow down and value the communities around you. Loneliness is debilitating, and there are likely many around you who are suffering from loneliness. You may make a difference in someone’s life by reaching out and being “present” today. We do not always know why certain people cross our paths at certain times, but we will certainly miss these God-given opportunities if we are self-absorbed in our virtual worlds. God, in His infinite wisdom, created us with the need for human interaction.

There are many biblical references to the value of friendship and wisdom pertaining to it; here are just a few to help you get started with your study: *Genesis 2:18, John 13:35, John 15:15, Proverbs 17:17, Job 6:14, 1 Samuel 18:1-6, 3 John 14, 1 Samuel 23:16, Ecclesiastes 4:9, Proverbs 27:9 and 17, Romans 12:15, Galatians 6:2, Exodus 33:11, Psalm 41:9.*

Christmas

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg

What is the meaning of Christmas? What is expected of us? We call December 25 and 26 the Christmas days, and on those days we commemorate the birth of the Lord Jesus. But how can that be, by sitting in church two or three times? Have we then fulfilled our duty, along with the many Christmas performances and Christmas concerts? We know what Christmas is not. It's not the sum of all the lights, greenery, Christmas feasts, candles, and wreaths. We know very well what Christmas is not and what it should not be. But again, what should it be?

Someone says when Christ is born in your heart, then it is Christmas. That is certainly true, but what happens when Christ is born in our hearts? Then it will indeed become a real Christmas. Then we will worship God's Son, and God will fill the heart with wonder of the soul, love, and esteem. How necessary, therefore, that the Son of God should be revealed to us, that we should see Him, the King in His beauty. When it really becomes Christmas, we can sing with Psalm 45: *"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips"* (verse 2). How dear then is the Son to us. We would like to keep this Christmas alive forever.

Sadly, God's children have to come out of those heavenly realms with both feet on the earth again, but those moments and times are not unknown to God's children. Christmas is to worship the Child, not only with one's mouth and one's thoughts, not with a tear of emotion over the Christmas atmosphere and the moving story, but with adoration of a Saviour who has come to save sinners. Yes, sinners, of which I am the greatest. How is it possible that God would be so gracious as to give His only begotten Son, that whoever--no matter who--believes in Him should not *"perish,"* but have eternal life. Dear reader, we probably know what Christmas isn't, but do we know what it is, or are we still missing the Child? Are we still despising the Child? What a heinous sin that is.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).



Nobody Likes a Rat

(Part 3)

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.

Required watchfulness and diligence

Rats are not only an example of sin as we have previously explained, but particularly of special, overwhelming evils (Hebrews 12:1), which have, or are more and more trying, to penetrate our minds, hearts, lives, homes, and churches. To that end our eyes must be open to realize the danger of the great evils which surround us.

NOBODY LIKES A RAT. No one in his right mind desires their homes and churches to be infested by rats. But alas, we cannot say NOBODY LIKES SIN. Through our deep fall in Adam, we have given our heart to the devil, and love what God hates, and hate what God loves. We need a new birth by the work of the Holy Spirit to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. With the Holy Spirit, we need to see our sins, as the instructors in our Heidelberg Catechism have stated in Lord’s Day 33, Answer 89, “more and more to hate and flee from them.” Reader, may I ask you, is sin still a delight, or has it become a burden? Let me also ask whether you truly realize how bitter sin is, both in character and consequences. Joseph was given by grace to say in Genesis 39:9, “*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*”

NOBODY LIKES A RAT. If only some in the province tried to keep them out, it would be a failure. If only one farmer in the whole province lets rats breed on his farm, it would have been a calamity. Therefore, a

structured and unified effort is necessary. Thus we all have a calling in this respect, and that is prayerfully with the Lord's help to keep out the worldly influences and evils of the time. In Romans 14:7, we read, "*For none of us liveth to himself.*" They are a plague and disease that will destroy and kill. Ah, when I reflect on the wisdom, foresight, diligence, and actions of the province of Alberta, then I think of the text in Luke 16:8, "*For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*"

Further, when it is now questionable whether a rodent is really a rat or some other animal, what must we do? In Alberta, when they see an animal that looks like or resembles a rat, but perhaps is a large mouse, what do you think they do? They kill it immediately. So it must be with us. If our conscience speaks, if we are not sure, we must abstain. How necessary to stand united shoulder to shoulder, in the home, school, and church among young and old. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the rats. We must teach our children what they look like, how they enter, and how they behave, but also how deadly dangerous they are. Then as parents we must give the example to impress upon our children the danger of a rat. And to that end, then even the older ones also need a deep realization how dangerous even one rat is. The devil has six thousand years' experience in camouflaging these rats. To that end, we need to have a deep, abiding impression of the danger, and of our weakness, and therefore to pray much (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The godly king Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12 has prayed, "*For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.*"

A called-for investigation and answer

We are all responsible creatures who shall have to give an account (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Now a little food for thought. I have not mentioned any specific kinds of rats. That I leave up to our readers. Then you have something to talk about. What are now the rats that are trying so hard in diverse ways to enter in the families, church, and school? This concerns the old truth and the old ways (Jeremiah 6:16). Or are many already living in our homes, bedrooms, and vehicles? Be assured then that they will multiply and breed. How difficult, if not even impossible, to get rid of a rat of a worldly song, a blasphemous saying, or an impure and unchaste pornographic image that has been imprinted upon our mind. Be assured that finally they will destroy, temporally and eternally. Be then certain that we shall and cannot prosper (Proverbs 28:13).

NOBODY LIKES A RAT. In conclusion, let me now simply and plainly ask you, parents and young people, do you have a Rat Control Program like in Alberta? Or do we even invite and give ready access to the rats of

sin and temptation? Or do we think that we are much stronger than Samson and David? Alas, reality proves that it seems that many certainly think they are. As families, do you together keep inventory control concerning your RAT CONTROL PROGRAM? Young married couples, how is it with you, when you have entered your dwelling as husband and wife on your special day? Remember what damage one rat can do. They can subtly and maliciously destroy marriages. Or are there families where the rats have freely been given access, causing much disease, even becoming so bold as to attack? Have you perhaps become so overwhelmed, and are at your wits' end? May you be given to prayerfully seek help for repentance. When a rat is spotted in Alberta, there is a number for the people to call for assistance. Likewise, we may call on the Lord for help. The Lord has given and uses means.

Or friends, do you think one rat is not so bad? In Alberta NOBODY LIKES A RAT. This has saved millions upon millions of dollars in addition to all the associated distress and anxiety. Of course, beautiful Alberta is not like our heart, where the evil heart entertains those rats. Even hearts that think they can control them actually deny our deep fall in Adam. Readers, I do not have to broaden out what I mean. Different clarifying articles have been written in *The Banner of Truth* by the Modern Media Committee. To that end, may you all, husbands and wives, and parents with their children, be given to compare your rat control program with that of Alberta. Christ has taught the church to pray, *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”* (Matthew 6:13). Christ has admonished in Mark 13:37, *“And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”*

Finally, the article, NOBODY LIKES A RAT, concludes in writing, “So far in 2020, the Rat Control Program has conducted 411 investigations, with 8 confirmed infestations, 3 in the RCZ and 5 in towns and cities. They’ve also found 16 hitchhikers.” Readers, what would be the statistics upon an investigation of our congregations and families? Let us conclude with Ecclesiastes 9:10, *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”*

“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. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”

~ Jeremiah 29:11-13

The Heavenly Race

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Corinthians 9:24b).

Oh, strive not for the world's vain smile,
Her laurels and her laud,
But strive instead to enter in
The kingdom that's of God.

This race, not to the strong or swift,
But to the poor and weak;
A lasting crown laid 'way for those
Who God's own kingdom seek.

The fame and honour of the world
Will never fill your heart;
Seek rather, then, the lasting prize
Whose value won't depart.

Oh, strive therefore to enter in,
To run this heav'nly race;
Run now with no uncertainty,
Turn not aside your face.

Though now you think you'll be the best,
Get honour, wealth, and fame,
The moth corrupts and rust destroys
It all, time and again.

So run, that you may once obtain
That everlasting crown;
And then to all eternity
At His feet, cast it down.

The world will pass with so-called joy;
Applause will fade away;
And what will you be left with then
To stand on Judgment Day?

For worthy is the Lamb of God,
Who's slain before the world;
He's only worthy of that crown
He purchased with His blood.

Oh, leave it all and seek instead
To run the heav'nly race;
Where more than one will surely win
The prize of sovereign grace.

- A. H.

How to Find Happiness



(Taken from *The Young People's Magazine*, July 2021)

A radio program explored the idea of happiness and what we can do to help make ourselves happy. The presenter quoted a professor who, possibly in the 1970s, had stressed that, while people were then wealthier and healthier than their forebears, they were not necessarily happier—which was perfectly true, at least for many in the Western world. People may earn more money but become more greedy and less happy because, as the years go by, they want more and more—but what they have cannot keep up with what they want to have.

Most of the program examined the ideas of an Egyptian whose first name is Mo. He has worked for Google in the United States and has made a great deal of money. He has given a lot of thought to the idea of happiness and has concluded that we are happy when the events we experience are better than what we expected.

He spoke about a time in his life when he had “a beautiful family, a wonderful wife,” and had made a lot of money, yet he was “horrendously unhappy.” He had obviously been expecting life to feel far better than it actually seemed. This is just one more example of what has so often happened over the centuries: possessions and other good things in this life will themselves never make us happy.

Mo had enough money to order not one, but two Rolls Royces. And he did so, but afterwards he realized that when you are sitting in the driver's seat, all you can see is the road in front of you. Yes, a Rolls Royce is a more comfortable car; it is perhaps smoother than every other make of car; it may have many wonderful gadgets; but it cannot bring happiness. Any car takes you from one place to another. A Rolls Royce takes you along the same road, more comfortably and perhaps more quickly, but you have to face the same traffic jams, the same delays, and the same irritations.

Mo believes that if we train our brain, it will help us to be happy, but he acknowledges that this brain-training is not going to help someone who

suffers from depression. The brain-training has a lot to do with managing our expectations. It is bound to help if we realize, as Mo put it, that life is sometimes amazing and sometimes tough. This way of thinking, he said, helped him to cope with a very sad event in his life: the death of a son, during a hospital operation, at the age of just 21.

It is all very well to be realistic about life, to realize that there will be times when the going may be very difficult. To be realistic may help, but how much better if we realize that God exists and is in control of everything that happens, even our most difficult experiences! How much better still if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners! Then we will more or less firmly trust in Him as One who has promised to help us as His children, whatever our situation. And we will know our way to the throne of grace and pour out our hearts before Him there in prayer, realizing that He is able and ready to help us.

We need various things in this world if we are to stay alive, such as food to eat and water to drink. Yet not everything we would like is necessary; we can be happy without all the things we might want to have. But Christ asked the vital question: *“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36).

There is something we very much need for our souls, or else we will continue as lost souls, not only in this life, but also in eternity. We need Christ; we need to believe on Him, who came into the world to save sinners. If we do not have Christ, then no matter how many Rolls Royces or other possessions we might have, even if one could be the owner of the whole world, death will take us to that place where there will never be any happiness whatever. How earnest we should be to seek salvation from sin and all its consequences—what only Christ can give us!

God makes demands that you may not like. Yet it is He who has created you; so He has a right to tell you to keep all His commandments, and these commands are good for us. Yet you may resent being told how you should live; you may even want to get as far as possible from religion and throw off all the restraints that God’s commands impose on you.

But take another look at the awfulness of a lost eternity and ask God to give you a new heart, so that you would want to obey Him in everything He sets before you in the Bible. Ask Him, in particular, to make you willing to listen to what He has to say to you, willing to seek Him earnestly, and willing to give up all dependence on your own ideas and what you think you could do to earn the salvation of your soul.

If you have found Christ, ask Him to keep you from going back to the world’s way of thinking, seeking lasting happiness in sinful activities, especially the entertainments from which so many people seek enjoyment.

Today these entertainments are so easy to access on television and the Internet, for instance. But does the enjoyment match what you expected? Certainly it cannot last. And if you indeed are one of God's children, He may chastise you severely to bring you back to a holier way of life.

Remember that this is a sinful world. It is a world where you can never expect to find perfect happiness. After all, not only are other people sinners; we are sinners ourselves. Our own foolishness will likely interfere with the happiness we might otherwise experience.

Christ warned His disciples: *"In the world ye shall have tribulation"* (John 16:33). They must expect to meet various difficulties and troubles. But the Saviour did not stop there. He went on to say, *"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Here is real, solid encouragement, what should cheer God's children in every age: that Christ is ruling over everything, and at last He will bring believers to heaven, the place of never-ending happiness and blessedness. He is more powerful than Satan; He is more powerful than anyone who may do us harm, and He will bring safely those who trust in Him through the temptations they meet. He will at last deliver them even from the imperfections and sin that they find in their own hearts.

Mo believes that "happiness is the number one priority of life." But there is something altogether more important than our happiness, and that is God's glory. He is the infinite, eternal Being who made all things. He is worthy of our worship, and we ought to worship Him with our whole heart. We are directed to give to Him the glory that is due to Him (Psalm 29:2). If we are to give Him that glory, we must obey Him in all things. And God directs His children to glorify Him by praising Him: *"Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness"* (Psalm 97:12).

Where can we get better advice than in the Bible? We are, for instance, told to *"be content with such things as ye have"* (Hebrews 13:5). We are not to be annoyed, rebellious, or sad if we do not get things that we want. But believers have a very good reason to keep them contented; the last quotation continues: *"For [God] hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5). God's promise is that He will always be with His children to lead them on, step by step, along the way that leads to eternal happiness. He is faithful; He will never let them down.

It is significant that in the whole radio program, there was only a passing reference to religion of any kind. It shows how much British society today has given up religion, and especially true Christianity. This is all the more serious when, unless we have true inward religion, unless we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot have a happy, blessed eternity. Even in this life, there is no one but God who can help us in every kind of situation, no matter how difficult. So flee to Christ now. Do not delay.

Never Alone

(Taken from *The Young People's Magazine*, July 2021)

The old man was sitting alone in his armchair. His eyesight was no longer good; he could not read anymore. His hearing also was very poor. When he tried to speak, he could only whisper. And hours might pass when he had no one to speak to. You are probably saying to yourself that it must have been a very boring way to live.

One day a young girl came into the silent room and put her arm around his neck. It was his granddaughter. She told him that she was afraid he would be lonely, so she came to sit with him. "Are you not very lonely here," she asked, "with no one to speak to or to love?"

The old man thought for a moment and then placed his hand on the girl's head. "I am never alone, my child," he told her. "How can I be lonely?" he asked, and he explained that God was with him, the Holy Spirit was coming from the Father to dwell in his soul, and Christ was always near to cheer and teach him. He went on: "I sit at His feet and learn of Him." Though, as he said, pain and sickness often came to warn him that he must soon die, he knew that there was a mansion in heaven prepared for him, one which was so glorious that no one could describe or imagine it.

"The love of God is like living water to my soul," her grandfather told her. He advised her to seek, while she was young, the fountain from which that living water came to satisfy his soul. By the living water, he meant the saving blessings that come from Christ. He told her to drink deeply of these living waters, and then, when she would be old and all sources of earthly enjoyment might be taken away, she too would be able to say, "I am never alone."

You should also seek the Lord while you are young. You may have plenty of friends now, but ask God to keep you from following them into sinful ways, even though you may find them very attractive. The Lord says that, if you seek, you will find (Matthew 7:7). Many people find it difficult to be alone, but how awful to leave this world alone—without Christ and without salvation, with nowhere to go but a lost eternity.

The Refuge of Lies

“We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves” (Isaiah 28:15).

Rev. W. K. Tweedie (1803-1863)

Is it not a lie to think that we can resist Omnipotence and prosper? Is it not a lie to suppose that we can rush upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler and escape unscathed? Is it not a lie to act as if what the Holy One pronounces to be “filthy rags” could suffice for a protection in the day when He arises to judgment? Is it not a lie to think that anything created can satisfy the soul, though we feel that it melts away while we try to grasp it? Is it not a lie to suppose that sin can afford pleasure to the soul, while it draws down the wrath of God and ripens us for everlasting burnings?

Yet these, and such as these, are the delusions to which men cling. To these they flee, in the hope that they can find a refuge there from Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. A converted Chinese man once said that he might as well seek shelter from a thunderbolt behind his own shadow, as to seek shelter from the justice of God behind his own righteousness. And will that man not rise up in judgment against those who seek a refuge in lies?

But, *“bless the LORD, O my soul”* (Psalm 103:1). He who is the Truth has been here. He came to withdraw us from our refuges of lies, by showing how they crumble above us and threaten to bury us in their ruins. He answered the question, “What is truth?” by the announcement, “I am the Truth”—the truth concerning God, the truth concerning man, and the truth concerning the way to make them walk together like those who are agreed. Have you then, O my soul, learned this truth, and has it made you free? Are the devices of the evil heart and of the father of lies now an abomination to you? Then the Spirit of truth has led you to the God of truth. No refuge of lies will satisfy you. The Rock that is higher than we are will be your confidence, and *“a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land”* (Isaiah 32:2).

~ Taken, with editing, from Rev. Tweedie’s volume
Glad Tidings: Or, the Gospel of Peace.

NOTHING

Rev. H. Hofman

Recently I was called upon to give a brief topic for some young people. I came upon a theme consisting of just one word: nothing. It actually was derived from something I found somewhere: a chart about nothing. It can be profitable when just one word, a word found many times in the Bible, becomes the focus of serious meditation. Like the word “nothing.” So I hope you will meditate with me about such a word: nothing. Nothing, like this: God created the world and all that is therein from nothing. This is what makes creation so divine, so wondrous, and so special. God took nothing and made what He made. From one thought comes the next: How glorious and infinitely great is God. Man at best imitates. God is able to call “*those things which be not as though they were*” (Romans 4:17).

Regarding the theme of nothing, after the topic someone posted a riddle to me: What is greater than God and more evil than the devil? The poor in spirit have it, and the rich in self need it. And if you eat it, you will die. Answer: nothing!

From one thought about nothing came the next, related to what is learned by sinners in the even greater wonder of re-creation: “*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent*” (1 Corinthians 1:19). It is quite something when the Lord brings someone’s understanding to nothing. When it is learned, for instance, in light of the cross of Christ that my own righteousness is nothing in the sight of God. That the savourless salt of my tears, prayers, decent works, and good intentions merit nothing and is as salt that has lost its savour and is good for nothing. That if I have anything more than nothing in myself, it is certain that I will not carry it out of this world (1 Timothy 6:7). For I brought nothing into this world. It is upon this path throughout this world that the gospel of Jesus Christ crosses my path and proclaims to me: “*For without Me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

Nothing is also something to think about at the end of the year. What have we accomplished this year? Is it our work that is left before us? Nothing but the work of our hands? Are our accomplishments in the center? May we learn that something can be really nothing, while in another sense nothing can be truly something. Talk without a corresponding walk is nothing. But Paul points out in 2 Corinthians 6:10 that there is a people who have nothing, and yet possess all things. This is like knowing nothing about something, while that people know something about nothing. No, the purpose is not twisting your tongue when you read this. Nor using the gift of language to make funny twists or turns. It is to make you think. About nothing. When I was done with my short little topic, I read what years ago I found in a bulletin, as food for thought:

- Think **nothing** you would not like God to *know* (Psalm 19:14).
- Do **nothing** you would not like God to *see* (Genesis 16:13).
- Say **nothing** you would not like God to *hear* (Psalm 141:3).
- Write **nothing** you would not like God to *read* (2 Kings 19:14).