

Insight Into

July / August 2024

“He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:11).



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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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Insight Into is also available in PDF format and can be sent to you by e-mail. Please text 1-604-793-3848 or e-mail ajdenboer@shaw.ca if you are interested in receiving this publication electronically. For questions, suggestions, or ideas for future topics, text 1-604-316-0566.

MEDITATION

My Life is Christ

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg

Fish love the water and don't want to be caught. In the water they are in their element and out of the water they die. What is our lust and our life? In other words, what gives colour, what gives the most joy, and what gives the most meaning to our lives? Is it Christ? Don't get me wrong. Giving meaning to our lives is not the most important thing. If we seek God and Christ only to give meaning to our lives and to feel good, we are wrong. It is much more about reconciliation, about repairing the breach with God. We should definitely not skip that part. If we step beyond sin and talk only about meaning, we have denied the core of the Christian faith. On the other hand, those who have found the Way with their sin and taste forgiveness, experience it as the supreme meaning.

Some people love gardening, others love their children, and young people enjoy different things. A hundred more examples of idols could be mentioned. Sadly we automatically seek our happiness outside of God. That is exactly what sin is, preferring things outside of God and Christ! Oh, how low we have fallen! God wants to be the joy, the hope, and the salvation of sinners. This form of the heart is not only the most meaningful, but it is also the most for God's glory. The fuller we are of Christ, the more we know of Him, and the more He loves us, the more glory God receives. Real life is a life in union with Christ. All things were created by Him, but also for Him! Moreover, if Christ is our life, our dying is our gain, our undeserved reward. The weapon against sin is Christ. He wants our hearts, and we are enemies of Him by nature.

"All things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Colossians 1:16-17, 19).

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11:36).



A Disappointed Man Satisfied

“And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning”

(Acts 8:27-28).

Many, many things have been said about this most beautiful account. The point we wish to make is this: The wonderful way by which the Lord in love and mercy supplied the Ethiopian eunuch’s need. The Ethiopian eunuch *“was returning.”* He had travelled all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. It seems that he had a certain measure of divine light; he felt an aching void the world could not fill, and he was not satisfied. He had a measure of light, sufficient light to discern his need, so much so that he travelled that arduous journey all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem with a desire to worship God, to find Him, to know more about Him. Yet it seems that he was destitute of the real knowledge of the gospel. And he *“was returning.”*

Oh, there seems to be such a solemn emphasis here, as if there was a dark cloud over the poor eunuch. He was returning; he had gone all that long journey in vain. He had been to Jerusalem, the holy city. He had met there with the scribes and the Pharisees and had seen all the ceremonies, all the outward worship, and he was returning, and he had not received what he wanted; he had not found satisfaction for his soul. He was returning. There seems to be such a dark cloud over that eunuch, the disappointment of that poor man! We know he was still in the depths of ignorance. He read Isaiah 53. He was seeking after the truth, but he was a complete stranger to the meaning of what he read. When Philip had spoken with him, he asked the question, *“Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?”* (Acts 8:34).

Oh, this dark cloud over his soul, the bitter disappointment, all that journey to the holy city. He had heard and seen so much in Jerusalem where God had appointed worship, and was his journey to be completely in vain? He had been there and tarried, and had sought to worship, and now he was returning disappointed. The wonderful thing is this: That

while all this was going on, the Lord was working down in Samaria. He was working in the hearts of the people there, and He knew all about the eunuch; He saw his disappointment, his darkness. *“Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”* (Matthew 6:32). This eunuch had a heavenly Father although he did not know it. Oh, but his heavenly Father knew his disappointment, his darkness, his great need, and the appointed time was rolling on apace in which Christ was going to be revealed to his soul, the hope of glory.

Perhaps some of you find the Sabbath evening comes and you too are returning to your own home, and you have liked what you have heard – Oh, but really there is a dark cloud over you; there is a sense of disappointment; you have not really received what you wanted, and Satan says you will never get it. Oh, do some of you know this experience? He *“was returning.”* You have perhaps come up to the sanctuary with such longings, such prayer, as if your very heart was going to burst, and you felt surely the Lord would meet your case, whatever your case is, whether it is your body or your soul, and then you are returning and there seems this dark cloud, this deep disappointment. You have not obtained what you longed for; you have not received what you expected. Oh, but *“your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”* And whilst the poor eunuch was so dark and so disappointed, at that very time there was a stranger making his way across the desert. *“My God shall supply all your need”* (Philippians 4:19). Wherever was there a minister to preach to this eunuch, and how ever could he come to preach to one man? How ever could he come into contact with him? Well, the Lord was already working. He knew how to manage these things. The eunuch received what he wanted, everything he wanted, because he found a precious Christ, and he went on his way rejoicing.

He did not find it in the way he expected, or the place he expected. A strange meeting place this for a gospel minister and a needy sinner in the middle of a desert! We have often thought of Philip. The Lord told him to leave these things in Samaria and go down to the desert of Gaza. *“And he arose and went”* (Acts 8:27). That is the obedience of faith. *“He arose and went.”* He had a clear leading and he obeyed and went into the desert. But the Lord did not tell him what was going to happen. Then he saw this chariot. *“Go near, and join thyself to this chariot”* (Acts 8:29). And when he arrived there, he heard the eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, and this was to be his text; his text was waiting for him, and he had to speak on it unexpectedly, and *“the place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before His*

shearer, so opened He not His mouth” (Acts 8:32). If the Lord should ever send us in some strange circumstance and gave us a word from which to speak to some stranger like the eunuch, we should love it to be a word like this: *“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.” “Then Philip ... began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus”* (Acts 8:35). And this was it. The Lord most wonderfully and lovingly supplied the eunuch’s need. He sent Philip all the way from Samaria to this desert that the eunuch might be brought to know Christ and be blessed with peace and gospel liberty.

Oh, the time of love did come--a strange place, a strange meeting. And it will come with you, those of you who so often have returned from the sanctuary disappointed, with the dark cloud hanging over your head. You have not received what you wanted, what you expected, but “the time of love will come,” in God’s time and in God’s way, not yours, even if a Philip has to come down from Samaria to preach Christ unto you. There was one thing that met the eunuch’s need, and that was the preaching of Jesus in His glorious Person and sin-atoning sufferings and death, and this did the deed. Perhaps some of you do not understand your case, but you say, “Something yet will do the deed, And that dear something much I need.” Well, you have that “dear something” here in the preaching of Christ. And the eunuch *“went on his way rejoicing”* (Acts 8:39). The dark cloud was gone; he was no more disappointed. He did not find what he wanted at Jerusalem, but he did find it in Christ.

- Submitted

“In sickness, sorrow, want, or care, May we each other’s burdens share; May we, where help is needed, there Give help as unto Thee!”

~ from a Lutheran hymn

“Luther confesses that before his conversion he met not with a more displeasing word, in all the study of divinity, than the word repent, but after the Lord had converted him and manifested Himself to him, he delighted in this word; then he could sorrow for his sins and rejoice in his sorrow.”

~ Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)



A Mother's Letter to her Children

My dear children, it seems that when we get together, we have so much to talk about: our work, business, school, friends, etc. And when we are serious, it is about the terrible things that are going on in the government and the sins of the people. I cannot explain to you how I long to talk to you about eternal things.

We are in the world for a very short time. This life is temporary; then comes eternity, world without end. We read in God's Word, "*Prepare to meet thy God*" (Amos 4:12), and instead of using this precious time as we should, we waste it on those things that cannot profit our souls.

We shall either go to heaven or to hell, and that is for all eternity. Oh, my dear children, our souls are the most precious thing we have, and yet we regard them the least! If one of us had to die today, what would be said about our soul? Would it be an eternity of misery? Do the things of this world mean so much to us that we would have misery in hell forever just to have sin and worldliness now? There is no goal of peace in this life. If there are a few things that we enjoy, we must leave them behind when death comes.

Oh, my dear children, there is nothing that can compare with having the Lord Jesus Christ as our Refuge; as our Lord and Saviour! That enemy of souls works hard to keep us from coming to Jesus, and we shall either be followers of the one or the other. By nature, we are slaves to Satan and at enmity with God. Oh, that He might yet have mercy upon us and draw us to His dear Son, Jesus Christ! He is all we need and all we care for once we have felt His love shed abroad in our hearts.

Dare to be different and separated from worldly friends, and not to seek after the things of this world. We know that some things are necessary in our time, but hear what God the Lord says: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33).

Closing now with love to you all,
from Mother

(Even though this letter was not written to us personally, may God grant us to listen to this mother's loving plea and lay our personal needs before the Lord.)

~ Taken from *The Friendly Companion*



Graduation

Rev. H. Hofman

By the time you read this, it will be after Pentecost, if the Lord spares us. Your graduation will have taken place, and a word of well-meant congratulations is in place! May the Lord crown all the labours bestowed upon you from your early childhood years until you became a teenager. I hope that the same God who spared and kept you all these years will be the first in your future plans, whatever they may be. Acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He has promised to direct your paths.

Reflecting for a moment upon Pentecost, I was thinking of what Peter quoted from the prophet Joel about the great day of the Lord: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions”* (Acts 2:17). Note that the Lord by the mouth of both Joel and Peter had a special message for young people, living in the latter days. Young people are mentioned separately! In the midst of an announcement of fear and dread, wonders in heaven, signs in the earth below, blood, fire and vapour of smoke, the sun being turned into darkness, etc., something so beautiful, powerful, and encouraging is to take place! The solemn day of the Lord is preceded by the opening of heaven, showers of blessings, gifts for men, whereby especially young people are mentioned. Scripture speaks of a pouring out. That points to abundance. Think of water or oil; it spreads, becomes wider, greater. Parents, sons and daughters, the offspring is mentioned. No, not you or they, but the Lord Himself shall take care of the promised blessing. The word *“flesh”* ought to be a sober reminder here for parents and grandparents alike: all flesh that is as grass ... How many times are we reminded of this? But here flesh also refers to *sinful* flesh, spiritually *dead* flesh, *dry*, *hard* flesh. *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?”* (Job 14:4). Not one. But they shall prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. This does not refer to a literal fulfilment but a spiritual one. There is no lack or want of dreamers and

prophets in today's world. You find them in the church as well as in the world. You will meet them in colleges and universities. Here is the Christ or there is the Christ is heard all over. But the salvation that is of the Lord will be revealed and made known in a saving way by the Lord Himself, also to young people. That is the message here. The Holy Spirit will take care of it. The Spirit of Pentecost will do its work – despite all opposition and apostasy. Isn't that encouraging? The Highest Himself shall establish them (Psalm 87). God's Spirit shall confirm upon and lead to the firm ground of the Lord's own work. This work nor this foundation the Lord ever gives out of hand. He will take care of it. And all this is done before that great and notable day of the LORD shall come.

Considering this and the time we live in – and you graduated in – I cannot but conclude that this time is an opportune moment to encourage you to continue in the things which you have heard and learned. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. It is the 'kairos' which is Greek for the *most opportune time*. High time, that is. It is the time to seek the Lord. The best time is now. Do not postpone. Let the last dispensation the world has entered in not go by unnoticed or unused. *"Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not"* (see Ecclesiastes 12:1). But can we still say that? The evil days are there already, my friends; we are living already in them. All the more reason to seek the Lord while He can be found, and to call upon Him while He is near.

We wish you well upon life's pathway and wherever your future studies and career choices will lead you.

The Book of Psalms

John Bunyan wrote that the Psalms are the lungs of the Bible, in other words, the breathings of the living family of God. These breathings in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving give expression to the deep desires, longings, and inward spiritual exercises of the Lord's living people, whether in the depths of trouble, anguish, and depression or in the heights of joy and adoration of Almighty God.

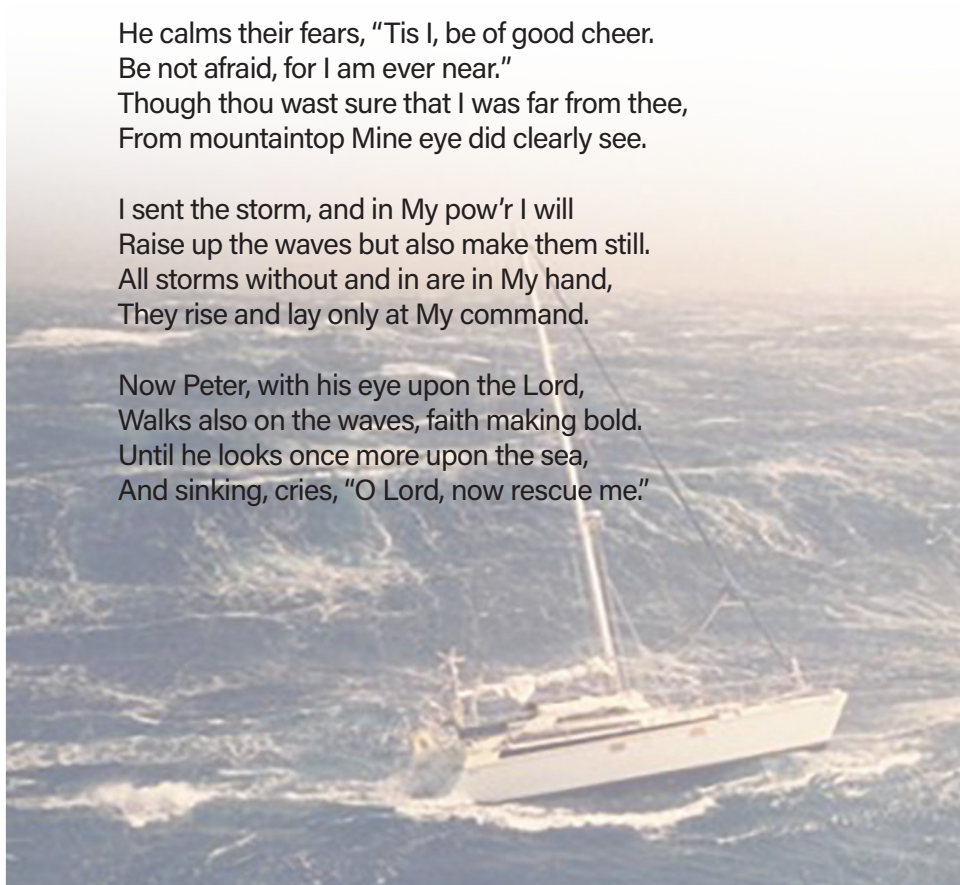
Behold, a little ship upon the sea,
Tossed by the waves, and twelve in agony;
Forsaken by their Master, so they dream,
Not knowing that His eye upon them beams.

For while He them in ship has sent away,
He on a mountaintop has gone to pray.
And while the storm winds fierce arouse their fright,
He comes to them in watches of the night.

He calms their fears, "Tis I, be of good cheer.
Be not afraid, for I am ever near."
Though thou wast sure that I was far from thee,
From mountaintop Mine eye did clearly see.

I sent the storm, and in My pow'r I will
Raise up the waves but also make them still.
All storms without and in are in My hand,
They rise and lay only at My command.

Now Peter, with his eye upon the Lord,
Walks also on the waves, faith making bold.
Until he looks once more upon the sea,
And sinking, cries, "O Lord, now rescue me!"



Still

14:22-32)

But with His hand the Master raises him,
Rebukes his doubt and bids him trust again.
Thine eye, when fixed on Me, shall never fail,
But looking down, doubt will again prevail.

And now, be still, O soul, cease from thy care.
Though storms may rage, the Master's always there.
And though thou think He's far away, or sleeps,
Yet still His eye upon His own He keeps.

He sees thy toil, He hears thy ev'ry cry;
When thou art ready to despair, He's nigh.
And when thy need has risen to its height,
Behold! He walks upon the waves at night.

Then to the raging storm He speaks, "Be still!"
At His command, all pow'rs obey His will.
Then storm winds cease, and waves lay down their head;
He calms thy fears, though thou wast filled with dread.

Look unto Him, O soul, and He will save;
With eye to Him, thou'lt walk upon the wave.
He'll be thy Refuge strong in ev'ry fear,
For when thou think He's far, then, then He's near.

- A. H.

This Happens Around Here?

The following stories are based on real facts, but pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of those involved.

Modern Media Committee

Lexi is a very popular young girl. She is talented in almost anything she is involved in. Lexi is a kind-hearted, easy-going young lady. She was raised in a home where family values of honesty, respect, and communication were upheld and where first-person communication was regarded as the best way to communicate with another person or group. Over the summer of 2023, Lexi was allowed to have a phone which could be used to communicate with her friends, since she was getting older and more independent. Many of the boys in Lexi's grade, and also older grades, would message Lexi back and forth on Snapchat. Suddenly, there came a change in the conversation. Many of the boys who had been messaging Lexi suddenly stopped sending messages. Some of the boys even said that they would never talk to Lexi again. This bothered Lexi because she didn't understand what was going on. Lexi is a very strong-willed young girl with a strong support system at home to help her through tough situations; but this situation was different than anything she had previously gone through. Lexi didn't understand why there was a sudden change, since she had not done anything mean or out of character to damage the relationships she had with those around her. Over time, Lexi realized what was happening. A female classmate of Lexi, Andrea, was jealous of the popularity Lexi had in and out of school and the amount of friends she had. Andrea went around and "dated" the different boys who were messaging Lexi, and had those boys give Andrea their Snapchat passwords. Andrea then would use their passwords and SnapChat accounts to send Lexi hurtful messages. Lexi, not knowing what was going on, did not realize that the boys were actually not the ones sending those messages, but rather it was Andrea. As time passed, Lexi began to realize what was going on. Lexi had never encountered rude or hurtful messages before, especially from people she was friends with at school. Lexi's parents also became aware of the situation with her. Thankfully, Lexi is okay today and is working through this situation. Other parents within the school community also became aware of what was happening, and all the parents communicated and are currently working on solving this cyberbullying issue.

Yet another sad story.

Sam is going into eighth grade. He is a vibrant young boy who enjoys camping, fishing, biking, boating, and various sports. About a year ago, Sam encountered pornography from a friend who had an iPhone without restrictions. Sam fell into a porn addiction. Before long, Sam and his friend were viewing porn regularly. Soon Sam found a girl, Brittany, whom he was interested in. Much of the communication between Sam and Brittany happened over Snapchat. Sam, who was fueled by what he saw in pornography, soon turned the conversation with Brittany into a sexual nature. Before long, Sam offered to send an illicit picture to Brittany, who quickly screenshotted the picture and sent it to her friends. One of Brittany's friends quickly sent it over a group message involving approximately 300 people. In a matter of a couple hours, Sam's picture was circulating among several hundred people. Sam received many messages regarding this picture, as his name was attached to the picture. This situation is ongoing today.

These are just a few examples of the types of cyberbullying which are going on among our children, teenagers, and young adults today. By now, many parents are aware that cyberbullying is happening, and that their children are not exempt from cyberbullying. Children today are bombarded with distractions created by the overuse or misuse of technology. Cyberbullying is quickly taking over as the most common way children are bullied. The following are some statistics from various sources.

1. Nearly half of children between the ages of 13 and 17 have experienced cyberbullying. Physical appearance is the most common nature of cyberbullying. ([Enough Is Enough: Cyberbullying](#))

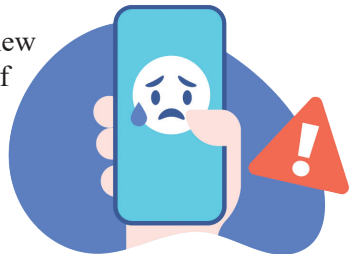
2. Teachers report that cyberbullying is the number one safety concern in their classroom.

3. One in five students report skipping school or faking sickness due to cyberbullying.

4. Children who experience cyberbullying are twice as likely to harm themselves or fall into an unhealthy addiction.

5. Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat are the top three places where children experience cyberbullying.

Technology has ushered in a whole new realm of bullying. Before the influence of social media and technology, a bully had to face their victim face to face. Today, bullying is happening remotely, without the bully facing their victim. With social media being



the primary way our young people are communicating, cyberbullying will continue to be the preferred method for bullying. Many states have enacted laws and have developed resources to help parents deal with cyberbullying. Here are some tips which may help to recognize and stop cyberbullying or help communicate with those that are being bullied online.

Talk about it - When talking to a victim, listen closely. Give the victim all the time that they need to tell their story. Do not interrupt their story. Long, awkward pauses between parts of the story are okay; just don't interrupt. When talking to a bully, never portray blame. Give the bully time to explain their side of the story. After the discussion, begin to formulate a plan on how to stop the bullying and help the victim. Most likely this will take many conversations spread out over a period of time.

Build a safe school/home environment - Be able to discuss any topic with your children. Let them know that there is nothing off limits. Encourage private conversation if the subject is too difficult for younger siblings to hear. As a parent, if you sense there is something bothering your child, have a private conversation with them. Let them know how much you love them and that you can sense a change in their behaviour and are interested in listening and discussing the situation with them.

Siblings can also be very helpful in these situations if they notice a brother or sister experiencing harm or harming others. Looking the other way and acting as though nothing is happening does not solve the problem, which can only get much worse as time goes on. Talk to your parents and seek the counsel of a pastor, elder, or wise adult about how to proceed to help the person directly involved.

Create a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Have a policy in place at home and school to create a united effort to stop bullying of any form, whether in person or online. ([What Is Cyberbullying | StopBullying.gov](#))

Technology is overwhelming. With the development of different apps and social media platforms, it's difficult for parents to keep up. Many parents can feel overwhelmed and unable to keep up with what is all happening in their children's lives. If you are a parent and feel this way, contact someone around you who can help. Cyberbullying, while fairly new with the development of many different social media platforms, is not unnoticed. There are many resources available regarding cyberbullying and how to detect and stop it.

The following are a few tips for parents to use.

Notice or intervene. If you notice your child has changed; ask. Always tell them how much you love them and are worried that something has happened to cause the change. Do not ask in anger. Turning your child

away from you is catastrophic for your relationship with them.

Monitor. Look at your child's phone from time to time. Remember, children's brains are not fully able to grasp the concept of actions/consequences until they are in their late teens. Children want guidance and correction even if it doesn't seem like it. Again, the emphasis



here is to monitor their phones with love. Tell them you are doing this to keep them safe and healthy, both physically and emotionally.

Talk to them about cyberbullying. Discuss with them the reason you are taking time to talk to them about this subject. Let them know how it can happen and the emotional influence it can have on them.

Spend time with them early in their lives. We live in a busy world where time is short. Play ball with your children. Ride bikes with them. Don't come home from work and get on your phone right away, but go outside and do something physical without screens. Have a family-centered breakfast/dinner/supper without screens. Let the conversation go wherever it leads and never say a subject is off limits. If your children are willing to discuss a certain subject, it's because they are concerned about it or are curious what your reaction will be.

Pray. Your children want to hear you pray with them and for them. This will convey a sense of love to them and also give them better coping skills. It will also develop their ability to turn to God in a difficult situation.

Read the Bible. The Bible has many examples of temptations and bullying. Read the stories with them and discuss them. Point your children to the root cause of all evil as well as the remedy. Give them a proper understanding of sin and forgiveness and let them know God never sleeps, is everywhere, and knows everything; even the smallest and most insignificant detail of our lives. Let your children know that in many cases of temptation, prayer and repentance were used to get out of it.

Biblical guidelines for those entering adulthood

1) We must have a heart change. Jesus Christ enumerated the sins that flow out of the heart in Matthew 15, verse 19, "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies.*" The work of God is to take away the heart just described under the dominion of sin. This evil heart is replaced in regeneration with

a new principle that honours God's law and loves God and what is truly good. We cannot go through life nor meet God without a new heart which God is still working in sinners even today. Seek Him for this; He is the God of wonders.

2) Choose your friends very carefully. Seek to be friends with those who do not go with the crowd to do evil. Every person seeks to have approval from their close friends, so therefore it is critical that your friends reverence God, His Word, His commandments, and their parents. If your friends do drugs, use profanity, misuse technology, etc., it is just a matter of time that you will go deeper and deeper into this destructive path (see Proverbs 1, verse 10). If you have bad friends, forsake them immediately and seek for real, true friends. Expect tribulation as you seek to do right and forsake evil!

3) Begin each day with Scripture and devotion. Pray throughout the day to be kept from sin. The enemy is much nearer than you think, namely, a heart that with sin easily falls (Hebrews 12, verse 1). No human being is safe from the entanglement of this world. Even Jesus' very disciples were taught to pray, *"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"* (Matthew 6, verse 13).

4) Avoid any place or any circumstance that has caused you to fall before. The first step down a wrong path is typically followed by precipice from which one cannot escape. David, having experienced many falls into sin, cried out to God, *"Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins"* (Psalm 19, verse 13) and *"turn away my eyes from beholding vanity"* (Psalm 119, verse 37).

5) The sins lurking today are so much more dangerous, because they are so available due to modern media. You must have an "accountability partner" if you have modern media. This could be your parent, a consistory member, or a good friend who can hold you accountable in terms of what media sites you are using. This person should be one who is seeking your true welfare. We may not despair of God's mercy even though we are great sinners. Remember the Baptism Form under which we were baptized: "If we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God."

One Size Too Big

“What is the use,” you may hear someone ask, “of teaching our children Bible verses, prayers, and catechism questions and answers when they are too young to understand them? Just memorizing something does not help them any. All they do is rattle them off, without knowing what they are saying. Wouldn’t it be better to wait for a while until they are older and can understand such things better?”

We have heard this kind of reasoning time and time again. We may also have been influenced by it. We may have heard that it is no longer a custom in the schools to teach children by rote. They are supposed to do what they have an interest in and what they can therefore understand. Is it perhaps old-fashioned and pedagogically unsound to keep the children learning by rote in the churches, while most educators have given up the practice entirely? The argument appears sound.

But think for a moment! Since children grow by leaps and bounds, parents are often careful to select clothes that are about one size too large, so that the children may grow into them. Is it too much to give our children some spiritual clothing that they can grow into? It is true that they will learn much that they cannot fully understand; but the Bible verses, prayers, and catechism questions and answers that they learn will form a “coat” of biblical truth into which they will gradually mature. As this “coat” is gradually formed, we see the child growing into it – much faster than we had expected! Very quickly the question comes. Since there is already some knowledge present, the answers are more readily understood.

Children are always seeing things and learning things that they cannot altogether understand. If *we* do not give them the “coat” of biblical truth, in any case they *will receive* a “coat” – one they will surely also have to grow into – one that is not of God but of the world.

Let us give our children the opportunity – the privilege – to say, “*Thy Word have I hid in mine heart*” (Psalm 119:11).

~ Taken from an *NRC School Journal*

A Scoffer Silenced

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”
(Psalm 53:1).



Practical Fruit of Faith

John Newton (1725-1807)

By the same principle of faith, a believer's conduct is regulated towards his fellow creatures; and in the discharge of the several duties and relations of life, his great aim is to please God, and to let his light shine in the world. He believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness of spirit. Humbled under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others, if he has aught against any. A due sense of what he is in the sight of the Lord, preserves him from giving way to anger, positiveness [self-confidence, presumption] and resentment: he is not easily provoked, but is "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"; and if offended, easy to be intreated, and disposed not only to yield to a reconciliation, but to seek it. As Jesus is his life, and righteousness, and strength, so He is his pattern. By faith he contemplates and studies this great Exemplar of philanthropy. With a holy ambition he treads in the footsteps of his Lord and Master, and learns of Him to be meek and lowly, to requite injuries with kindness, and to overcome evil with good. From the same views, by faith he derives a benevolent spirit, and, according to his sphere and ability, he endeavours to promote the welfare of all around him. The law of love being thus written in his heart, and his soul set at liberty from the low and narrow dictates of a selfish spirit, his language will be truth, and his dealings equity. His promise may be depended on, without the interposition of oath, bond or witness; and the feelings of his own heart under the direction of an enlightened conscience, and the precepts of Scripture, prompt him to do unto others as he would desire they, in the like circumstances, should do unto him.

If he is a master, he is gentle and compassionate; if a servant, he is faithful and obedient; for in either relation he acts by faith, under the eye of his Master in heaven. If he is a trader, he neither dares nor wishes to take advantage either of the ignorance or the necessities of those with whom he deals. And the same principle of love influences his whole conversation. A sense of his own infirmities makes him candid to those of others. He will not readily believe reports to their prejudice, without sufficient proof; and even then he will not repeat them, unless he is lawfully called to it. He believes that the precept, "Speak evil of no man," is founded upon the same authority with those which forbid committing adultery or murder; and therefore he keeps his tongue as with a bridle.

Lastly, faith is of daily use as a preservative from a compliance with the corrupt customs and maxims of the world. The believer, though in the world, is not of it. By faith he triumphs over its smiles and enticements; he sees that all that is in the world, suited to gratify the desires of the flesh or the eye, is not only to be avoided as sinful, but as incompatible with his best pleasures. He will mix with the world so far as is necessary, in the discharge of the duties of that station of life in which the providence of God has placed him, but no further. His leisure and inclinations are engaged in a different pursuit. They who fear the Lord are his chosen companions; and the blessings he derives from the Word, and throne, and ordinances of grace, make him look upon the poor pleasures and amusements of those who live without God in the world with a mixture of disdain and pity; and by faith he is proof against its frowns. He will obey God rather than man; he will "*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*" (Ephesians 5:11). And if, upon this account, he should be despised and injuriously treated, whatever loss he suffers in such a cause, he accounts his gain, and esteems such disgrace his glory. I am not aiming to draw a perfect character, but to show the proper effects of that faith which justifies, which purifies the heart, worketh by love, and overcomes the world.

"True repentance is a gift that is from above, and if the Lord does not give it, man will eternally perish for the want of it."

Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)