

# THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

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**Devotion:** "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." [1 John 1:8-10]



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## THE COVENANT AND COVENANT BREAKERS-2

Pastor James Cromarty

### Covenant Breakers

We are ever surrounded by the tragedy of covenant people who turn their backs upon Christ and become 'covenant breakers'—apostate! This is a hard word, for it speaks of people who have departed from the living God, and so made shipwreck of their souls. God requires of covenant people, faith in Christ and obedience. If this is not the situation and sin abounds, the Lord declares, 'They shall bear their iniquity' (Ez.44:10). Israel was warned against disobeying God, for if they did, God promised, 'I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of my covenant' (Lev.26:25). To despise the word of Jehovah and so bring reproach upon God carried a great punishment; 'Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him' (Numbers 15:31).

Israel murdered [crucified] the messenger of the covenant, Jesus Christ. As they did, they cried out, 'His blood be upon us and our children!' (Matt.27:25). The curse of the covenant fell upon Israel. Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70 amidst the most horrible and cruel treatment of humans that we could ever imagine. Christ said of that day, 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be' (Matt.24:21). Hitler's horrific treatment of the Jewish people was nothing compared to the horror of AD70. This was the 'vengeance of the covenant,' for breaking the covenant. And those godless covenant breakers who crucified Christ, faced the judgement of an angry God, a judgement that had eternal consequences.

Covenant people, the blessings of God are yours if you abide in Christ and live the life of faith and obedience. You are children of the kingdom, but if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ, then beware, for what Christ said to covenant breaking Israel will apply to you, 'The sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt.8:12).

Covenant people, you are the ones who are first invited to the great supper spoken of in Luke 14:15ff. The invitation is clear, 'Come, the things are now ready' (v.17). In Christ's parable the ones invited made excuses why they could or would not come, 'I've just married. I cannot come'; 'I've bought some land and want to go and inspect it.' The excuses came thick and fast.

What are your excuses today? 'I enjoy the company of my godless friends.' 'Sunday is the day when we all enjoy ourselves'. We can't enjoy ourselves at Church.' 'I don't care what you say, I'm going to live with the one I love.' 'Sunday sport is more important than Christ and worship.' 'I just want to enjoy myself!' And on it goes. The world and its attractions are of more importance to you than the Christ of the covenant. When covenant folk turn their backs upon Christ, their invitation to the Great Supper is thrown

away, and the Lord fills his kingdom with the unbelievers of the world who are brought to repentance and then worship and serve Christ. When Israel rejected the preaching of the good news, Paul and Barnabas said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (Acts 13:46).

### **God's Judgement Upon Covenant Breakers.**

In John 15:1-8 we have Christ's parable of the 'Vine and the Branches.' This is a parable of the covenant, and we see the reality of this parable about us everywhere. Children of believers, and adults who once professed faith in Christ, all part of the covenant people, have been cut out of the vine for they have not produced the fruit of a living faith. They live like the worldling. Where is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control'?" (Gal.5:22-23) These covenant breakers are the withered branches of the vine. And the end of such branches is that they are gathered together and burned in the fire; cut out of the vine because they are spiritually useless. And this is the end of all unrepentant covenant breakers.

How we should pray for covenant people of all ages, especially our children. We weep over their precarious spiritual state, and pray that the God of the covenant may bless them spiritually. But not only should parents weep and pray before the Lord, but the church, as the body of Christ, should together weep and pray. The Parable of the Vine and Branches teaches the truth spoken of by Paul in Romans 9:6, 'They are not all Israel, who are of Israel ...' There was an elect within the covenant people, and we see the same today.

***“How we should pray for covenant people of all ages, especially our children. We weep over their precarious spiritual state, and pray that the God of the covenant may bless them spiritually. ..”***

Unsaved, rebellious covenant children and adults face an horrific judgement and eternal punishment. The kingdom of God was so close to them, but they rejected the entreaties of the Holy Spirit to come to Christ in repentance. Christ looked down over the covenant inhabitants of Jerusalem and wept because of their sin and hardness of heart. We read his words, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing' (Matt.23:37). Their doom was sealed! They were covenant breakers who were responsible for their rejection of Christ. And the Lord warns all unrepentant covenant people of the severity of their doom: 'Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement...' (Matt.10:15; 11:22,23).

### **The Severity of Judgement**

In Hebrews 10:26-31 we read a severe warning given to any who were covenant members through birth or confession of faith. These words are a warning to all who have 'trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace' (v.29). Those born into the covenant have tasted the good things of God, as have

those who have entered the covenant through their own profession of faith in Christ. They have felt the entreaties of the Holy Spirit (Heb.6:4) and know the way of truth. But they have rejected it all; they have broken covenant, and unless God is gracious to them their end is fearful. All that remains for unrepentant covenant breakers is 'a certain fearful expectation of judgement and fiery expectation ... Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and insulted the Spirit of grace' (Heb.10:27,29).

Indeed Peter declares (2 Peter 2:21), 'It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.' All of the ungodly will perish in the hell of God's abandonment; but for covenant breakers there is 'worse punishment.' As Christ declared, 'And the servant who knew his master's will and did not prepare himself, or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much more

will be required; and to whom much is committed, of him they will ask the more' (Luke 12:47,48). What a tragedy it is to hear covenant breakers crying on their deathbeds, 'God is departed from me and answers me no more' (1 Sam.28:15). Covenant breakers may run from God in this world, but they can never escape the judgement of that day. The eye of God is upon them all, and hell/eternal punishment, will be their end if they remain unrepentant to the end of life. Let no one fool themselves; this is your end if your profession of faith is not true. This is the end of all covenant breakers, the end of believers' children, if they do not abide in Christ. This is why believing parents weep. This is why the hearts of believing parents are broken.

### **What Can You Do?**

You may be thinking, 'Why should anyone write on such a sensitive matter and cause more sorrow of heart?' But I weep with all those who weep (Rom.12:15). Indeed all readers should weep over rebellious covenant children and adults. Together we must pray for unconverted children, young adults and adults. Together we should pray, 'Lord, be pleased to remember your covenant established with us and our children. Lord have mercy upon our straying children and in mercy, or wrath, bring them to faith in Christ.'

Parents must continue to bear witness to unconverted children in the way they live and the words they speak. May we never be ashamed to say to our children, no matter what their age, '... this is our God; our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even to death' (Ps.48:14). But too often believing parents discuss before their impressionable children the failures of the church; they openly criticize the minister. It is little wonder that children grow up and depart from the church? As parents let us present the good news of Christ in a way that is understandable,

# BLOGGING ABOUT...

## THE BURDEN OF SIN.

According to a report appearing on the Yahoo website, the world's largest confession was staged at the World Youth Day in Sydney in July. It reports: "With some 300,000 young Catholic pilgrims attending WYD from July 15-20 the Church is staging the world's largest confessional, with more than 1,000 priests at anyone time hearing sins and dispensing penance at 250 locations."

The logistics of the operation were amazing. Not only were there 250 locations. Confessions had to be organized in 170 different languages. And added to that, they had to try to ensure privacy. "Organizers have tried to be attentive to the sensitivity of confession and ensure pilgrims do not overhear each other's sins," the report said. "Whilst we don't have sound proof venues, they are padded dividers between stalls and they are in locations where there is so much going on and background noise," said Monsigneur Caron. "I've been to each of the locations and I think people's privacy is perfectly assured."

Confessions were heard for up to six hours a day, and to avoid overloading the priests hearing the confessions were given a break every 90 minutes. "At any one time there could easily be 1,000 priests hearing confession," Caron said. "We're not keeping track of the numbers (of sinners), but at the main venue in Darling Harbour Convention Centre it's very steady all the time."

It's certainly great to be a Protestant! What a privilege it is to go straight to the Lord, and confess our sins directly to him with the assurance that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And what a relief for Protestant clergy, relieved of the burden of hearing the confessions of their charges. Of course the Bible says we should confess our sins to one another. But this has nothing to do with the idea of the "Confessional" system instituted by the Roman Catholic Church. As someone has said, if this applies to confessing to a priest, he has a very strange name - "One Another." But while we're relieved of the burden of receiving confession, we're not relieved from confessing our sins. Nor should we forget for a moment the

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**[Cont'd from page 2]** in love, and not coldness. Let us encourage our children to come to Christ. Let us also not be afraid of unburdening our souls to Christian friends, seeking their support, encouragement and prayer, in our weeping and prayers. As Paul said of the church, 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.' (1 Cor. 12:26).

Your minister and elders have a great responsibility in this area. They are the shepherds of the flock. They must be there to give help and advice to parents in pain. They also are responsible to Christ in a very special way for the people of the covenant. What a judgement will fall upon ministers and elders if they fail in their duty in this area!

But, as believers weep over rebellious covenant offspring, let us rejoice with covenant offspring who are faithfully going on with Christ. Let us praise God that we see many of our folk who truly love the Lord and show fruits of faith. May we ever praise God for doing great things for

burden that our Great High Priest bore in assuming our sins, and bearing them away, and the rich provision he has made for the forgiveness of all our sins. We catch some idea of that burden in His cry from the Cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." And we see something of the riches he has secured when he said, "It is finished." And because he has borne the burden of sin, we may come with boldness into the presence of God and confess our sins to Him. And if we do, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He is the propitiation for our own sins; and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world.

It's a pity they didn't believe that in Sydney. It would have saved an awful lot of trouble, time, and money.

## UNBELIEVABLE!

According to a report appearing on the *Orlando Sentinel.com* website, a documentary will soon be released by the Public Broadcasting Service calling into question the existence of Abraham, the Exodus, and many other things. It claims that "the Bible was written in the sixth century BC and that hundreds of authors contributed.... At least the first five books of the Bible come together during the Babylonian exile," says the producer, Gary Glassman.

What is unbelievable is that these views are being reproduced and hailed as a new! Where have they been for the past 100 years! These theories have been around for years and have been thoroughly demolished by evangelical and reformed writers.

However, it does raise this point: The need to make the people in the pews aware of attacks made on the Bible. It's not easy, and we certainly don't want our agenda to be determined by critics. But we do need to make people aware of them. This is highlighted by the programme's producer, Paula Apsell. She writes: "I was always brought up to believe that the minute Abraham and the patriarchs came on the scene, the Israelites accepted one God and there was just always one God and that was it. I think people are going to really be stunned by that." [ie that monotheism took a long time to develop!]

If only she had been made aware of what the critics were already saying years ago [and the response] she may not have become so enthusiastic about this production!

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covenant children.

We cannot force Christ into the heart of covenant breakers. This is the work of our Sovereign God. He alone can change hearts and wash away sins. Thus it is to God we must turn in prayer, and seek that, for the sake of Christ, all of our covenant children might be saved. And as the hurt goes deeper, let us always remember the parable of the Prodigal Son. He turned his back upon his parents and the God of his parents, yet the Lord humbled him in a pigsty, and in true repentance he returned to his father and his father's God. Sometimes the Lord deals harshly with his wayward covenant children. He drives them to their knees in shame and hurt; all this that they might cry to him, and then God lifts them up.

We must ever let our covenant breaking offspring know that their way of life is unacceptable, but let us ever assure them that we shall be there to pick up the pieces, to forgive their hurt, and to welcome them home.

## A PASTORAL PRAYER

### The Rev. George Ball continues his study in “Ministry Matters” from 2 Corinthians 13:7-10

Ever wonder about the abbreviation A.S.A.P.? It means (of course) ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER! Jesus said, “men ought always to pray”. Paul exhorts, “pray without ceasing.” Paul’s letters are laced with prayers including here, “Now we pray to God that you do no wrong...but that you may do what is right... this we also pray, that you may be made complete.”

#### Paul’s Motivation

Before we look specifically at these requests let’s note his motivation. A good prayer can be spoiled by a bad motive. If the reason behind Paul’s prayer was that the Corinthians might get their act together so that he could boast about them and thus make him look good and enhance his reputation as a great fellow – then such a prayer would be rubbish. Paul was not concerned about personal reputation, a successful image or about looking good. He was concerned that they do good. He did not mind being despised or criticised for their sakes as long as they were obeying the Lord. Only a pastor who loved his people could say such a thing.

Richard Baxter instructs on this point, “The whole of our ministry must be carried on in tender love to our people. We must let them see that nothing pleaseth us but what profiteth them; and that what doeth them good doth us good; and that nothing troubleth us more than their hurt. We must feel toward our people, as a father toward his children; yea the tenderest love of a mother must not surpass ours. We must even travail in birth till Christ is formed in them. They should see that we care for no outward thing, neither wealth, nor liberty, nor honour, nor life, in comparison of their salvation; but even be content, with Moses, to have our names blotted out of the book of life. Thus should we as John, be ready to “lay down our lives for the brethren,” and with Paul, not count our lives dear to us. When the people see that you unfeignedly love them, they will hear anything and bear anything from you.” (The Reformed Pastor. Page 117). When pastoral prayer is guided by the twin rails of love for God, (“For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth”), and love for people, (“For we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong”), the result is true prayer which is pleasing and acceptable to God. Let’s now note his two prayer requests.

#### Being Fully Clothed

“We pray to God that you do no wrong-but that you may do that which is right.” (vs.7). There is both a negative and a positive aspect. Paul’s point is that the Christian life is far more than a set of don’ts. The Christian life is to be marked by do’s as well as don’ts. Writing to the Ephesians he says, “lay aside the old self which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit...and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Eph.4: 22-24). In other words what God requires of us is not merely that we take off our old dirty clothes (which we are to do in repentance) but we are also to put on new clean clothes (which we are to do in holiness). These two ac-

tions must not be separated. A life of don’ts puts off the old and leaves us naked! We must be clothed not merely with the righteousness of Christ but we must be Christlike in appearance. We must dress like a Christian. We must put on the right clothes. The clothes we wear are what people see. (See Colossians 3:8-14; Eph.4: 22-32). The Lord wants us washed AND pressed as well. Holiness is ironing out all our creases and wrinkles. God always washes before he irons! Too often we are happy to be the people who “don’t do” this or that, instead of the people of “do” this and that.

#### Repaired and Restored

“This we also pray – that you may be made complete.” (vs.9). The word “complete” (NASB) is an interesting word. It is variously translated as, “improvement” (RSV); “perfection” (KJV, NIV); “restoration” (ESV). Originally used for the setting of broken limbs, the verbal form appears in Mark 1:19 for mending nets. This helps to give us the picture. He’s not praying for sinless perfection. That’s not possible this side of eternity. Rather he’s praying that they as the body of Christ in Corinth – a body which had been damaged by factions and contentions and confusion – might experience the connection of disjointed bones and the growth of muscles so that they might become again a body of believers functioning as a body. Barnett comments, “Clearly the Corinthians were in need of restoration. Some were spiritually critical of the apostle, others habitually immoral, and still others flirting with a heterodox Jesus. Such divergences inevitably set them against one another.. against their apostle and, more importantly, against their God.”

Just as we take our car to the body shop if it has been in a smash to have it repaired and restored that it might be useful again, so the Corinthians needed some serious body repairs. It’s amazing what panel beaters can do to damaged cars and its amazing what God can do in damaged congregations to bring healing and restoration. Wiesbe helpfully notes, “Balanced Christian growth and ministry is impossible in isolation. Someone has said that you can no more raise one Christian than you can one bee. Christians belong to one another and need each other. A baby must grow up in a loving family if it is to be balanced and normal. The emphasis today on the “individual Christian” as apart from his place in the local assembly is wrong and very dangerous. We are sheep, and we must flock together. We are members of the same body, and we must minister to one another.”

His prayer therefore is a reminder to us as individuals and as members of a congregation that we are members of a body and each one essential for the body to function. What repairs need to be done in your congregation that we should be praying about?

#### Shepherding the Flock

The apostle longed and laboured that Christ might be formed in each member. His motive in writing in preparation for his third visit was to avoid a show down. He →

# THE NEBUCHADNEZZAR ULTIMATUM

In Daniel 2 we read about a dream King Nebuchadnezzar had. It disturbed him greatly. Apparently before he went to sleep he'd been thinking about the future – “about things to come” as verse 29 puts it. And then this dream came and he was so troubled by it that he couldn't sleep. So, he called in his wise men - magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans - and asked them to tell him the dream and its interpretation. This isn't because he's forgotten it [as the AV translation might suggest] but because he wants to test these men. This comes out in the latter part of verse 9: *"Tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."*

Nebuchadnezzar probably knew only too well that anyone could put an "interpretation" on a dream. Perhaps he'd encountered some of these so called "interpretations" before - and knew very well how arbitrary and unreliable they could be. So, he demands not just the interpretation but to be told the dream itself. If these so-called wise men can correctly relate the dream he'll be able to trust them when they come to the interpretation. Then he'll know that they're really in touch with supernatural powers; really in touch with the "gods" - and therefore reliable guides about the future. But if not - then they are just time-servers and impostors and not worth keeping around the place.

## Helplessness “Wise Men”

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar made this demand the so called wise men knew they were in trouble! They knew the request was an impossible one for them - so they try to get Nebuchadnezzar to give them a break! They stall for time - and concessions. Notice what they say, [Verses 10/11]: *"There is not a man on earth who can do what the King asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such things of any magician, or enchanter, or astrologer .... No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, who do not live among us."* They point out that it's a unique and extraordinary thing the King requires. And then they suggest that it's also an unreasonable thing to ask. It's humanly impossible; only the "gods" have such knowledge. But Nebuchadnezzar is unimpressed. If men set themselves up as possessors of divine and superhuman knowledge then they should have it – and if they don't then they're impostors - and a waste of time and money!

What a tragic position to be placed in! These men set themselves up as possessors of superhuman knowledge - and now, when faced with the challenge to prove it in a very practical way they're completely confused and confounded. And they have nowhere to go; nowhere to turn! The "gods" they know are "silent" gods - gods that only speak when men speak, and then with a voice no different from their own. In fact their "gods" are no gods at all

but simply projections of themselves - gods made in the image of man that cannot hear or speak or act. As we read these words - as we see their evasions and helplessness - we're reminded of the time the prophets of Baal and Elijah stood on Mount Carmel in Israel. The prophets of Baal cried out from morning until noon - *"O Baal hear us"* - and Elijah mocked them and said *"Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."* And although they cut themselves till the blood gushed out, *"there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention."* [1 Kings 18:27/29]

## Dealing with Future Tellers

As we think about this demand of Nebuchadnezzar, we can't help but marvel at the man's Shrewdness. He knew only too well the sort of people he dealt with - and something of their limitations and deceitfulness. And as we look at his shrewdness in testing these men's claims to be in touch with the Supernatural - and to know the future - it would be good if others, including ourselves, cultivated, the same sort of shrewdness, and the same healthy scepticism that Nebuchadnezzar shows.

The emphasis on astrology, magic, fortune telling and psychic power is everywhere today. People claim to be in touch with supernatural powers, and able to tell us what's going to happen. Or at least they claim to know enough about the future to tell us what isn't going to happen! Some tell us there's no After - Life; Some tell us there's no such place as Heaven; and nearly everyone tells us there is no such place as Hell. They're so sure that what the Bible tells us - what God tells us - cannot possibly be true.

In the face of these prophets of the future, we need to be shrewd - we need to ask these people about their source of information about these things. And if we find that all they have to go on is human opinion - human experience and observation - or the words of other spirits or "gods" - then we should reject them because they don't constitute a reliable guide to the future. Only God can give us reliable information - simply because the future belongs to Him - and this he does in His Word. And anyone who claims knowledge about the future without reference to Him should be treated with the same shrewdness and scepticism with which Nebuchadnezzar treated these men. What a tremendous difference it would make if we and others showed that attitude. It would make us consider the big question of life - the ultimate source of our knowledge and information - whether from God or man. It would also put those who write the stars every week out of job and save some people hundreds of dollars!

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[Continued from page 4] wanted his visit to be memorable for building up and not tearing down. He wanted to be the shepherd and doctor of souls not the demolition man. As the apostle Peter commends, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you....not as being lords over those

entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade.” (1 Peter 5:2-5). Much of pastoring is agonising and organising. Please remember to **A.S.A.P.**

# ARCHIVAL: Why a Free Presbyterian Church in Australia?

*The following address was delivered by the Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church, Rev. J. Campbell Robinson, at the opening of the Assembly on Thursday, March 30th, 1939*

Why a Free Presbyterian Church in Australia is a question that is often asked, especially by those who do not follow closely the current of ecclesiastical affairs. A Free Presbyterian Church seems to them a kind of superfluity or excrescence which for want of knowledge or acquaintance with Divine truth they conclude should be abolished.

We purpose addressing a few words to you on the Free Presbyterian Heritage, and why there is, and why there should be, a Free Presbyterian Church.

The title, Free Presbyterian Church, came into existence by force of circumstances. There was no desire on the part of those holding Free Presbyterian views to constitute or establish any new religious body. The position was forced upon them to maintain what they believed to be Scriptural teaching. It is well that the position of this Church should be clearly understood. Its principles are not in any sense new. They are the principles of early Presbyterianism in Australia, the best and purest of Scotland, and the principles of the Reformation, for which our forefathers bled and died. So the Free Presbyterian Church in electing to stand by these principles is only maintaining and handing on the charter of a heritage whose glory and challenge is that it is Scriptural.

Prior to the Disruption in Scotland, the religious condition of that land, from which Australia received its greatest supply of ministers, was the position of the young Australian Church. Australia seems to have been viewed more or less as a province of the Church of Scotland. The name the Church bore was a name having reference only to its supreme court, "The Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland." It was this latter phrase, "in connection with the Established Church of Scotland," that led to no end of trouble in the early Colonial Church.

The idea that a Church could undergo an unfavourable change never seems to have entered the minds of those whose counsels prevailed at this time. As one has said, they seem to have had a notion of a sort of central infallibility for that body. There was little or no trouble in the early Australian Church until such a change did take place in the Established Church of Scotland, and it became what it once was not. It fell from its high and lofty estate, and came under the power and domination of the State. That is what is known as Erastianism - the usurping of the Church's functions by the State. There were four different departments in which this encroachment took place.

1. The Court of Session repeatedly invaded the Church's spiritual independence by granting interdicts prohibiting Presbyteries from exercising discipline in cases of fraud,

swindling, drunkenness, profane swearing and theft. It even assumed a right to determine who should and who should not be members of Church courts, and went so far as to deny the Church power to admit certain ministers of certain parishes to be members of its courts, thus setting up a doctrine subversive to the spiritual independence of the Church, that it was the civil tribunals and not the Church herself that was to regulate and determine the constitution of Church courts.

2. The second invasion was the destruction of ordination to the public ministry by the civil courts. In the Auchterarder case the Presbytery had decided that a Mr. Young should not be ordained and inducted as minister of this parish. The civil courts reviewed the decision, pronounced it illegal, and found that it exposed the Presbytery liable to damages. In the Marnoch case it ordered seven suspended ministers to induct a Mr. Edwards. In the Lethendy case it granted an interdict prohibiting the Presbytery of Dunkeld from ordaining a Mr. Kisson, and when the Presbytery disregarded the interdict as illegal, it punished them from performing a purely spiritual act, and threatened them if they refused to obey the mandates of the court of Session.

3. The third invasion was in the matter of the exercise of discipline. The courts prohibited the exercise of discipline in the most flagrant cases that have been mentioned, and forbade the Presbytery of Arbroath from excluding from the Lord's Table a person who, in a state of drunkenness, had disturbed public worship, and presented no evidence of repentance. It cancelled the suspension of seven Strathbogie ministers, and restored them to their functions.

4. The fourth invasion was in the matter of preaching the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It prohibited all ministers of the Church of Scotland from preaching even in the open air in the parishes of the suspended ministers, thus interfering with them in the ordinary discharge of their ministerial duties.

The State thus assumed an authority in spiritual matters so extensive, absolute and universal, that if it were conceded, the Church would have been reduced to a state of total and miserable bondage. An appeal to the House of Lords brought no redress, and Parliament refused to consider the Church's claims. There was nothing else for the Church but either to submit to the usurped authority of the civil courts, transferring allegiance from Christ to the civil magistrate, or to stand steadfast and unmoveable for Christ as head of His Church, and renounce all temporal advantages of the State. The last course the Church took, to its everlasting glory. One on hearing the news exclaimed, "Thank God for my countrymen. There is not



another land in the world where it could take place." He little realised that there were several places where it could, and did, take place, and not least amongst them far off Australia.

The Synod of Australia, owing to its being in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, thus found herself in the unenviable position of being chargeable with Erastianism, and her testimony vitiated. Efforts were straightway put forth to save the Colonial body by a change of name, omitting the latter portion of the title, "in connection with the Established Church of Scotland."

This being defeated, it was evident that the majority were determined to hold by an Erastian church and come under submission to the State. As Rev. William McIntyre says: "By this designation the Colonial Presbyterian Church singled out the Established Church of Scotland, and intended to single it out, as the church with which it chose to associate itself most closely. It thus declared that it preferred that church to all other churches, and, of course, therefore, that it preferred it to them on the ground on which it could prefer it, on account of its peculiarities by which it was distinguished from them," which was its Erastianism. Its declared favour for that church was therefore a declaration in favour of Erastianism.

In order, therefore, to restore and preserve the purity of the Colonial Presbyterian Church, it was desirable that the obnoxious clause should be removed by a change of name. Every effort was put forth to save the Young Presbyterian Church from division, but without avail. When those holding Free Presbyterian principles saw that there was no hope, they determined that they would not allow the fair name of the Redeemer in His Kingship and Headship over His Church to be sullied. Thus to preserve the Crown Rights of the Redeemer in His Church upon earth is the first reason why there is a Free Presbyterian Church in Australia. Who will deny the worthiness of that aim" It is worth noting that, as Dr. James Begg says, there will be no Erastianism in heaven. There one and all cast their crowns before the Saviour's feet, saying, He alone is worthy.

The next important feature of the Free Presbyterian Heritage that has arisen in the course of its history is its clean cut policy for the maintenance of evangelical truth. From the moment of its inception there never has been any dubiety as to where it stood and what it believed. It has had no sympathy for those who shelter behind declaratory acts. The importance of its unequivocal position became evident when a craze swept over the Colonial Presbyterian Church in favour of union. Union was in the air. Union many wanted and were determined to have, even at the cost of another disruption, the main purpose being the creation of a large influential Presbyterian Church which would hold within its bounds the main Presbyterian families.

This was well designated by one who could sum up the situation as being no more than the creation of an arm of flesh.

Faithfulness to doctrine seems to have appeared only as a mere secondary consideration. Squatters and financial men were canvassed to throw their weight into the movement, and were in the most of cases won over, but the matter was the cause of one of the greatest ecclesiastical battles in the history of our country. All the dialectical skill of Australian Presbyterianism was called forth for the fight. The preponderance of opinion was in favour of union. For years the battle swayed to and fro, and even crossed the seas. In the Free Church Assembly, Edinburgh, it was really settled. The Free Presbyterians argued that if a Free Church was right in Scotland, why was it not right in Australia. This question was never answered. Union was the order of the day, and principles had to be subordinated to it. Notwithstanding that the position taken up by the Free Presbyterians was regarded as being logically unassailable, yet the decision was union. Union the majority got, yes, union, but it was union at the cost of their birthright.

These unions, both in Victoria and New South Wales, were unions based upon compromises. They were unions of heterogeneous elements, and having little in common. Free Churchmen, Erastians, and Voluntaries all agreed to come together, still holding their particular views. The real Free Presbyterians felt that they could not so lightly view their principles, so they retained an even course and kept the faith. Once again they stood with determined and unabated zeal for the Reformation position, and saw the day when some who were most enthusiastic for the unions had regretted their association with them.

These unions were soon followed by a weakening, as might be expected, of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, amongst those connected with them. The manoeuvring and tactics adopted to accomplish these unions were such that Free Presbyterians felt comfortable alone in being apart from. They stood again with unqualified approval to the purest and best of the Reformation position. To-day that position is still being maintained.

**[To be continued]**

*[Note: The title, "Free Presbyterian Church" is the name the present Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was known by prior to 1953. It should not be confused with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, nor the Free Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland. Below: Members and Friends at the St. Kilda Church, Melbourne, where J.C. Robinson ministered. He stands on the far left.]*



# Run For Glory

## THE KING WHO LOST HIS CROWN— JEHOAHAZ

Sorting through the Kings of Israel and Judah is difficult at the best of times. But when it comes to the last four Kings of Judah it's especially so. God's Judgement was falling on the land and the kings who didn't serve him. And although Josiah was a great and good King, those who followed were not so. There were three J's and a Zedekiah!

Now the first of the three J's was Jehoahaz. According to 1 Chronicles 3:15, Josiah had four sons. The eldest was Johanan. We don't have any information about him. He may have died before his father or perhaps with his father in the battle of Megiddo. The other three were Jehoikim [Eliakim – born 634]; Jehoahaz [Shallum – born 632]. Zedekiah [Mattaniah [2 Kings 24:28-20 -born in 618 – and only 9yrs old when his father died]

### A King by Popular Demand

At the death of Josiah we're told that "*the people of the land*" – the common people - made, not the eldest of the royal princes [Eliakim], but his younger brother Shallum, King, who, on his accession, [609 BC] assumed the name Jehoahaz, "*Jehovah holds up*". We're not told why this happened. But some have surmised that he, like his father, opposed Egypt, and its attempt to take over the whole of the Middle East. In fact, it's been suggested that Josiah cherished the hope of a reunited Israel – and there's evidence of this in the extent of the reforms he

carried out in what was once Israel. And Jeremiah, in his early preaching, called for "Israel" – that is, what was left of the 10 northern tribes – to return to the Lord. Perhaps Josiah hoped this would become a reality and didn't want any interference from Neco. Be that as it may, it seems fairly clear that Jehoahaz carried on his father's policy of opposing Egypt – and enjoyed the support of the people. He was made King rather than he brother, who was probably a pro -Egyptian supporter..

### A King Deposed

Espousing the Foreign Policy that he did, it doesn't come as a surprise to learn that his reign was short lived. Neco now controlled the whole area, and he didn't want a pro-Babylonian on the throne. So, Jehoahaz, who was crowned without any consultation with him, was summoned to Riblah on the Orontes, put in chains "so that he might not reign in Jerusalem" [2 Kings 23:33] – and taken back to Egypt, where he died [2 Kings 23:34]. He was only twenty three years old when he became king, so it's very probable that he spent a long time in captivity. There was some hope that he would get home, but God said very clearly he wouldn't [Jeremiah 22:11] He'd chosen the wrong party to support [!] and suffered the consequences. Judah was put under heavy tribute – a hundred talents of silver [c\$30m] and a talent of gold [c\$1m] – and basically became a vassal state of Egypt. —————> **To Page 9**



**“How many are your works, O LORD!  
In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.  
There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number— living things both large and small.**

**There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there..”**

**Psalm 104:24-26**

## A King Judged by God

What sort of person was Jehoahaz apart from his politics? In 2 Kings 23:32 we read those dreaded words: *"He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done."* He may have shared his father's politics – but he certainly didn't share his father's faith. Josephus, the Jewish historian, said he was *"impure in his course of life,"* and someone suggests this may refer to "the restoration of the lascivious rites of his grandfather's reign"- that is Ammon [Edersheim]. And this continued ungodliness in the hearts of Judah's rulers meant that God's judgement on the nation was inevitable. Josiah was told that, because he humbled himself before the Lord, he would not see that disaster. Not so those who came after him. They walked away from God and bore the consequences. We can say that the ultimate reason why Jehoahaz lost his crown was not his politics, but the God he rejected.

## Other Kings Who Have Lost Their Crowns

And this makes us think of other kings who have lost their crowns after only a brief reign. I refer, of course, to Adam and Eve – and ourselves in them – who, after a very short reign, lost their crowns. They were crowned Lord of Creation and appointed to rule. God said to them: *"Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* [Genesis 1:28] And Psalm 8 reflects on that rule. But they soon lost their crowns. They chose the wrong side to support. They got their politics wrong too! They gave their allegiance to the Devil instead of God.

And when they lost their royal status, and their dignity – so did we! And that's where we are by nature today. Instead of walking tall as the sons and daughters of God, and living on his bounty in his kingdom, we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow. But thanks be to God, another King has come who has not lost his crown – a relative indeed of Jehoahaz – but very different from Jehoahaz – who followed the Lord with all his heart, and is now crowned Lord of all. He came to undo the work of the devil and restore the glory that we've lost.

We do not yet see all things put under us. But we do see Jesus, *"who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."* [Hebrews 2:9]. And in a wonderful way, the very deposition of Jehoahaz by Necho contributed to the accomplishment of that great salvation that has been accomplished.

August, 2008

# SEARCH WORK - August

SENIOR 12+ yrs; INTERMEDIATE 10-11 yrs; JUNIOR 9 and under.

August, 2008

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8 [Marked with an x]

### 1 KINGS Chapter 1

1. What did Adonijah do to make himself king, and with whom did he confer? (2 separate verses)
2. What plan did Nathan the prophet make with Bathsheba to save her life and that of Solomon? (2 verses only)
3. What did David say to Bathsheba after she and Nathan had both spoken to him? (2 verses)
4. What was Benaiah's answer when told to anoint Solomon king? (2 verses)
5. What did Solomon say when he was told Adonijah had caught hold of the altar's horns?

### Chapter 2

6. What did David charge Solomon to do for the sons of Barzillai?
7. (x) Why did Solomon tell Abiathar the priest to go home to Anathoth?
8. (x) What did the king say to Shimei after Shimei had broken his oath not to leave Jerusalem? (4 verses)

### JUNIOR

### GENESIS 39:1—6

1. For whose sake was Potiphar's house blessed?

### Chapter 39:20—23

2. Whom did the keeper of the prison commit to Joseph's hand?

### Chapter 40

3. When Joseph asked Pharaoh's chief butler and baker why they looked so sad, what was their answer?
4. What did Pharaoh do to the chief butler and the chief baker? Did the butler remember Joseph? (3 verses)

SEARCH WORK TO: MRS I. STEEL, PO Box 942, EPPING 1710.

E-mail: [iesteel@gmail.com](mailto:iesteel@gmail.com)

**"Come, My Children,  
listen to me;  
I will teach  
you the fear  
of the  
Lord."**

**Psalm 34:11**



**"David was a famous musician, a statesman, a soldier; but he does not say to the children, "I will teach you to play on the harp, or to handle the sword or spear, or to draw the bow, or I will teach you the maxims of state policy;" but I will teach you the fear of the Lord, which is better than all arts and sciences, better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices." Matthew Henry.**

# ACTIVITY PAGE.....

## A Parting Blessing

Paul closed many of his letters in a special way, often called a benediction. One benediction has become so well known that it is called the Apostolic Benediction. It is found in 2 Corinthians 13:14.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*From: Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheets by Betty De Vries [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee] Baker Books, 1998.*

F	R	A	N	D	O	L	D	A	Y
A	E	C	A	R	G	O	D	B	R
T	H	L	L	O	K	J	A	M	U
F	T	O	L	L	P	E	F	A	P
G	V	A	L	O	F	S	Y	O	O
E	K	H	E	O	W	U	L	A	P
P	T	I	B	O	P	S	O	C	A
A	M	O	R	I	I	R	H	C	P
O	M	A	G	S	L	H	T	I	O
P	L	A	Y	A	K	E	H	O	P

Find all of the words of this blessing hidden in the word search puzzle. They may be hidden up, down, backward, forward, or diagonally. Words that are repeated in the blessing are found only once in the puzzle.

## GOD'S CAKE

Sometimes we wonder, 'What did I do to deserve this?' or 'Why did God have to do this to me?' Here is a wonderful explanation! A daughter is telling her mother how everything is going wrong: she's failing algebra; her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away. Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, 'Absolutely, Mum, I love your cakes.'

'Here, have some cooking oil,' her Mother offers. 'Yuck,' says her daughter. 'How about a couple raw eggs?' 'Gross, Mum!' 'Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?' 'Mum, those are all yucky!' To which the mother replies: 'Yes, all those things seem bad by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, "they always work for good"! (Romans 8: 28). We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!

## News Sites

Just a short one this month...running out of new places to visit or talk about. A note first, that the Internet Policy at my work allows limited personal web browsing during break times!

With that out of the way, during my morning tea or lunch break I usually head off to read the news. I normally start with the general news from sites like [www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au) After that I normally head over to read up on more nerdy news at another site (I mean who isn't interested in stories with titles like "Mandriva Joins the Netbook Market With the GDium" or "The Father of Multi-Core Chips Talks Shop"). I won't actually give a link to this site because if you go to much past the news pages there are pages which sometimes contain bad language as people discuss (sometimes heatedly) their take on the news items. I don't normally read these, but all the same wouldn't recommend the site for this reason. Anyway, recently got to wondering about reading Christian news or at least normal news with a Christian perspective.

It wasn't as easy to find as I would have expected, the top results were usually the "news" page for a church and as such only contained information for that particular church or congregation. Eventually found a few sites: [www.worldnetdaily.com](http://www.worldnetdaily.com) [www.christiantoday.com](http://www.christiantoday.com) [www.christiannewstoday.com](http://www.christiannewstoday.com) (illegible in Firefox), and [www.seekgod.org/news](http://www.seekgod.org/news) (probably the best as it has links to sites as "World News from the Christian's View" and "Christian News" amongst others and as it turns out includes links to the first two sites listed above)

If anyone knows of any more I would gladly include those next time. Finally, while searching did stumbled across what appears to be quite a good little site - <http://www.1way2god.net/index.html>

## iPOD - AND "IMPROVE"

Bob Thomas, Editor of the New Life magazine [July 10] tells the story from his youthful days as a Christian of a lady who was looking for an excuse to leave the Church because she didn't like the minister. One day she found it: Her minister was walking down the street eating an ice cream!

He brings this into the present by telling how he saw recently a young minister walking down the street with as he puts it, "little white earphones in his ears, listening very intently to an iPod." A snap judgement might have linked him to "young people" who listen to "terrible music." However, it would have been quite wrong! He was listening to a lecture by R.C. Sproul which he had downloaded from iTunes!

An "iTunes U" site is now available which has material from a number of universities including 6 so far from Australia as well as lectures from the Reformed Theological Seminary. It's free to access and download. Go to [tinyurl.com/3xcpel](http://tinyurl.com/3xcpel) to see it.

## Farewell to the Christies

"Our country is a country of war, it is a country of illness, it is a country of poverty, it is a country of crime, it is a country of rape, and it is a country of sadness and shame. Please when you go back to Scotland, do not forget us – please pray for us, because we need your prayers."

These were the emotional words of one of our bible women, as she addressed Morag Christie at the last Bible Women meeting, before she is due to leave. It was a happy and joyful occasion. The ladies, recalled many of the things that Morag had taught them over the years, that they had found to be useful. They gave her some lovely candle holders, to show how they had seen her as God's shining light among them. What an accolade. Wouldn't it be great if all of us could be remembered in such a way?

Then a couple of Saturdays ago, was the Free Church in Southern Africa's chance to say their farewell to the Christies. It too was a super day of thanksgiving and praise. Before the service began, Ronnie was gifted with a traditional knitted hat and many strings of beads such as are worn by the respected elders in a village. Ronnie wore them with pride!

The mamas, dressed Morag in a beautiful traditional outfit made in white with black braiding. She looked truly beautiful and regal in it and it was hard to remember that we were gathered together to say goodbye. It really was such a happy occasion. The reality will hit home, once they are no longer there to lead meetings, advise and help." [The Wilson's Newsletter]

## Mrs Colville's Life Story on Video/CD.

Many years ago [1985] Media Mission recorded an interview of Mrs Lexie Colville by Dr. Campbell Andrews. It tells the story of her family history, her call to missionary service, and her work in South Africa. It's an inspiring story. The late Stewart Ramsay, after viewing it, said, "it would make anyone want to be a missionary!" If you would like to view it, contact the Editor.



# CALEB'S CLUB .....

## MY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

*We're grateful to Mr. Bruce Dunne [Hunter - Barrington Congregation] for sharing his early Christian Experience with us - beginning on the 28th January, 1951.*

One Sunday night, over half a century ago, I was unhurriedly walking down one of Sydney's main streets. My mind was in turmoil. I was wondering, again, what life was all about, and coming up with no answers. Should I have felt like that? I was 20 years of age, in prime health, had a good job, plenty of friends, and yet this dark mood was on me once again.

As I slowly headed towards Circular Quay I came adjacent to, what I later found out to be, Martin Place. The GPO was there with its spacious steps and surroundings. Then something \*interrupted my introspection. I could hear piano accordion music, and people singing – young people, my age! I immediately recognised what they were singing: hymns!

Long forgotten memories came flooding back to me; hymns that I used to repeat in church as I was growing up.. I had forsaken such practices several years earlier when I entered the ranks of know-it-all teenagers.

According to the church to which I belonged my *religious training had been* satisfactorily completed at the age of twelve when I was confirmed by the Bishop of Newcastle. Just prior to completing Primary School, a large group of pupils belonging to the same church as I, were summoned after school, to attend weekly Confirmation Classes at the local church adjacent to the school. We were given a little red book, told to memorize answers to 25 or so questions, following which we were eventually confirmed.

So, on the outside, I was a Christian; internally, not the slightest difference.

Fast forward now to my listening to singing taking place by a group of young people in Sydney. Something seemed to click in my mind. Answers to long asked questions seemed to satisfy my internal dissatisfaction. What I had been looking for, was God! God was the answer! And it seemed as though I resolved then and there, even before I drew any closer to that group, I had resolved that I was now going to live for God.

I walked down Martin Place to where the singing had taken place and several of the young people were taking it in turns to address the small number of passers-by. I stood up on the GPO steps a safe distance from the group and listened to what they were saying.

Time and time again they were saying how their life was empty and purposeless until they came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. They were saying how the things of the world failed to satisfy their longings. The more they spoke, the more they were describing my life and my feelings. I couldn't resist their words. I wanted what they had.

I later found out that what they were doing was testifying to

the saving power of the living Lord Jesus Christ. They were giving their public testimonies. And that's more or less what I am now doing in writing this paper.

As the meeting drew to a close, a little booklet was offered to anyone who would like to *learn* more of what they had been speaking about. They had the booklet held out towards me, but I wasn't particularly keen on making any show of religious display. I didn't want to appear foolish in the eyes of men. Apart from that, [was quivering like a leaf, truly! So I just stood there.

An older woman took a booklet, came over to me and placed it in my hand, and then walked away.

The meeting disbursed, but a male personal worker came and gently conversed with me, asking what I thought of what I had heard. I readily agreed that those young people had described my life, and that I liked what they had said, when they described how their life had changed. The personal worker pointed out that each of those young people had received the Lord Jesus Christ into their heart, and their life had changed. Would I like to do the same?

He had a small Bible in his hand and he turned to a page which showed the necessity of receiving Jesus - John 1.12 But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. He showed me also the necessity of openly admitting that I was now going to live for God - Matthew 10:32 *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

The personal worker, who by now had informed me that his name was Len, then explained that Jesus could be received in prayer, and would I now like to quietly offer a prayer of acceptance to the Lord Jesus Christ? I was willing to go along with what he suggested, and we both bowed our heads and I silently asked the Lord to come into my heart, that I was sorry that I had lived so long without Him, and that I now wanted to live for Him.

Len then asked me did I receive Jesus, and I said yes. He then asked had I felt anything? I couldn't agree that any physical transformation had taken place, but in my mind, as I was uttering that prayer to Jesus, I imagined that I felt what could be described as a little open window; a little open space, closing or being filled. I don't want to place too much emphasis on this feeling, because what had happened to me was a spiritual experience, not physical, and I don't want readers to think that similar experiences have to occur in their life. But that was my impression at the time.

What I do know, and what I believe others have experienced, is that from that moment, the moment of 'conversion,' Jesus entered my mind, or you could say my heart, and He has been there ever since. I am always conscious of His being present, sometimes at the back of my mind, but definitely there - the moment I wake of a morning - the last thought in my mind before going to sleep - ever immediately at any time I awake through the night. I have this ever present consciousness that I belong to the indwelling, living, Lord Jesus Christ.

## MEDIA WATCH .....

### EUTHANASIA

The Senate has before it a Bill on euthanasia - Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008. In Victoria the Legislative Council has before it Ms Colleen Hartland MLC's Medical Treatment (Physician-Assisted Dying) Bill 2008. But the situation in Holland where euthanasia has been openly practised since 1973 is a warning:

"Overall, in Holland in 2005, about 12,660 deaths, or 9 per cent of the total, were caused intentionally. A 2005 study showed that at least 50 per cent of patients killed under the Dutch euthanasia program were suffering from depression.

A 1991 study showed that an average of three people a day underwent euthanasia without their knowledge or consent. Studies in 1991 and 1995 showed that, despite Dutch law requiring physicians to report physician-assisted death, the majority of deaths went unreported.

While Ms Hartland's bill limits euthanasia to adults 18 years and older, in Holland children up to the age of 12, including newborns, may now be killed by lethal injection with parental consent. Liberalisation of the law due to presenting cases is inevitable over time. This is precisely the Dutch experience." *Australian Presbyterian Life*

### CODEX SINAITICUS COMES TOGETHER

The following is a report from **Sermonaudio** [26/07/08]. "The oldest surviving copy of the New Testament, a 4th century version that had its Gospels and epistles spread across the world, is being made whole again – online.

The British Library says the full text of the Codex Sinaiticus will be available to Web users by next July, digitally reconnecting parts that are held in Britain, Russia, Germany and a monastery in Egypt's Sinai Desert.

A preview of the Codex, which also has some parts of the Old Testament, will hit the Web on Thursday — the Book of Psalms and the Gospel of Mark. "Only a few people have ever had the opportunity to see more than a couple of pages of the (Codex)," said Scot McKendrick, the British Library's head of Western manuscripts. The Web site will give everyone access to a "unique treasure," he said."

### BIBLE COURSES IN TEXAS SCHOOLS

According to a report by Jim Vertuno, "The path has been cleared for Bible courses in public high schools in Texas... The Texas State Board of Education gave final approval Friday and rejected calls to draw specific guidelines and warnings that it could lead to constitutional problems." The State passed a law in 2007 allowing Bible courses to be offered as an elective, focusing on the history and literature of the Bible without preaching or disparaging any faith. [*Associated Press*]

[Continued from page 15] what is permissible for young people on dates. It is a question which I usually refuse to answer in detail, having had an experience of someone who did – and whose answers opened up whole areas which we young people (I was young at the time) had never even considered! I also go back to my other profession of chemistry and tell them about pheromones. These are chemical compounds which are exuded in the sweat glands, principally, and are very powerful sex attractants. They cannot be smelt at the low concentrations in which they are found, but they are there and they are very powerful! Plenty of experimentation has been carried out to demonstrate this, and to show that people are influenced by them even when they are unaware of why they feel the attraction.

This is one of the ways in which God has provided for the propagation of human life, but it is also something that we need to control. If we put ourselves in close proximity to someone of the opposite sex, then we are likely to be influenced by these pheromones. They may influence us to the extent that our resolves may weaken and we will be much more susceptible to the temptation to break the seventh commandment. So my advice to all questioners is that they should make sure that they are in control of the situation and never to allow themselves to get into such a position where the unseen effect of these chemical compounds may tip the balance between right and pure behaviour and behaviour which is anything but right and pure.

#### Motivation

I would like to conclude with a few words about the motivation for the keeping of this commandment. We should need no motivation other than the fact that God has com-

manded us to keep it, but, to strengthen us in our resolve, it may be useful to look at some of the ancillary motivation that we have. We saw at the outset that this commandment was based on the sanctity of marriage. The very basis of a happy and successful marriage is mutual trust between husband and wife. How can that exist in a situation where either one regards this commandment lightly? How can it exist when even the slightest word or deed gives rise to the possibility that it is regarded lightly? Here, on a human plane, is a very potent reason why we should keep this commandment, not only in our actions but also in our words and thoughts.

Having said this, probably the highest motive for Christians to preserve moral and sexual purity is given by the words of Paul writing to the Church at Corinth – "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17) Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and so we must treat them as holy.

This does not mean that we keep apart from all sexual contact – the Bible never teaches that. The purity of which the Bible speaks is that found in a marriage between two Christians, using for the benefit of each other the gifts that God has given them. Marriage is used as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church. Just as to go astray after other gods is to defile that relationship and to break the first commandment, so to go astray after other human partners is to defile the marriage relationship and so our witness to the Gospel. May God give us the strength to resist such temptations and so to glorify Him!

## The Seventh Commandment

Dr. W.J.W. Hanna, Brisbane, continues a study on the Ten Commandments. He deals now with the Seventh Commandment: Exodus 20:14 - "You shall not commit adultery."

### Introduction

In this article we come to a commandment which I approach with great trepidation. There are matters to be mentioned of which we normally say as little as possible – and speaking more of them has often seemed to encourage the breaking of the commandment rather than the keeping of it! The Ten Commandments here proceed directly from the preservation of life to the means which God has provided for the propagation of life. Just as in the case of the previous commandment, this is a situation where its breaking and ungodliness seem to go hand in hand. In the past, the pagan nations were exactly the ones where sexual licence prevailed. Pagan, idolatrous worship has almost always encouraged immorality. Sexual practices of the vilest nature were associated with the pagan nations surrounding ancient Israel and this commandment was very necessary to warn the Israelites against following the same course. It has to be said that, very often, even in Israel, little heed was paid to it. Even the greatest of Israel's kings – David, the "man after God's own heart" – fell into the sin of adultery. Further, in New Testament times, we find that it was one of the sins which the converts from Greek and Roman paganism found difficult to leave behind.

The basis of this commandment is the sanctity of the marriage bond and, by extension, those other relationships which are modelled on it. We have already seen, when dealing with the Fifth Commandment, that most of the institutions of a society are based on the example of the family, and that the proper running of society, whether at the secular level or the society of God's people – the Church – depends on the God-given example being followed. At the basis of these is the family itself, and if this disintegrates, then the others will follow. God's law, therefore, proclaims as sacred those two main relationships which are necessary for the life of the family – the parent/children relationship and the husband/wife relationship.

### Is Sexual Desire Wrong?

I should probably start by discussing the place of sexual desire in God's scheme of things. So much evil can come from it that it has often been considered to be evil in and of itself, but this is wrong. This is the error which has led to monasticism and the idea that perpetual virginity – of both males and females – is especially meritorious in the eyes of God. Nothing could be further from the truth! What we find, with respect to the sexual side of our natures, is an example of the fact that the devil is able to pervert the finest gifts of God into the most degrading of

sins – if he is permitted to do so. The sexual relationship between man and woman is one of the creation gifts of God to mankind. When God created Adam, He said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." (Genesis 2: 18) Then, when God had formed Eve, He brought her to Adam. The inspired comment on the relationship between them is, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2: 24) So we can see that, even in the pre-Fall sinless state, there were sexual desires and relationships and that this desire had been created by God for the propagation of mankind on the earth. There was no element of evil in it then; the man and the woman were able to be naked in each other's presence without embarrassment. From this we can learn that the sexual urge is not wrong in itself – nor is it wrong to fulfil that desire if it be done in the way that God has ordained. The Bible teaches that that way is through the institution of marriage, and that the desire has been placed there so as to draw people into marriage.

### What is Wrong with Sex?

What this Commandment teaches is wrong with sex is any unlawful satisfaction of this God-given urge. This means any relationship or action which takes place outside the God-ordained state of marriage. As with the other commandments, this one singles out one aspect of such wrong relationships – that of having a relationship with a person who is married to someone else – but the scope of the commandment includes all other manifestations of a wrongfully directed sexual urge. Any sexual relation with any person except one to whom one is married is sin! It is unpleasant to speak of the various forms which such

sins have taken and which they still take, but it will be necessary to say something about them. One of the most common forms of breaking of the seventh commandment is that of *fornication* – sexual relations between unmarried men and women. This is something that is condoned in our present society and is, often, even encouraged as a normal part of life. The Bible is very clear that this is not part of God's plan for His people. The Old Testament contains strict laws concerning this. Any man who had such relations with an unmarried woman suffered a heavy fine, was obliged to marry the girl and such a marriage was not subject to the normal laws of divorce – she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days. (Deuteronomy 22: 29) In our own culture, young people are encouraged to think that if they have not had such a relationship – or many of them – that there is something strange about them! Let us hold fast to the Scriptural position that this is a breach of the seventh commandment.

Though it is serious as a breach of God's law, *fornication* is not quite so serious as that of *adultery* itself, the sin of



having sexual relationships with a married man or woman. In the Mosaic law, this sin was punishable by death – the death of both the participants. The only exception to this was in the case of a married woman who was raped. Now, while we would not advocate that this be the penalty still, it gives us some idea of the seriousness with which God views such a breach of His law! Yet this, again, is something that the modern world views as normal and commonplace. It is no longer even called adultery – it is being “sexually active!”

One could wish, however, that these were the only sexual sins of which one had to speak, but the perversions to which men and women can descend seem to be without limit. Really, I think that they are all covered by the account of the creation of the first man and woman. Consider the account given in Genesis 2 from verse 18 onwards. We first find that God states that it is not good for the man to be alone; he needs a partner – and we should see this as expressing his need of a sexual partner as well. One can assume that Adam was also aware of the same need, for God then proceeds to teach him about that need. He brought all the animals before Adam, who, in the knowledge of his pre-Fall state, was able to identify each one, and to “name” them, that is, he was able to describe and classify them. But this was not simply a lesson in taxonomy – it was a lesson to Adam about *his* relationships, for we read that there was not found among the animals a partner suitable for Adam. Here, immediately, such relationships are ruled out for mankind. God then proceeded to form a partner who was suitable – a woman, thereby decreeing that the only suitable partner for a man is a woman and that the only suitable partner for a woman is a man. All other relationships are totally excluded! Yet, again, many of these relationships are being condoned or encouraged today. Our Government sponsored television stations are continually showing programmes encouraging and praising this sort of behaviour. In some places it is even an offence to speak out against such relationships or those who practise them. May God grant to each one of us the courage to declare His views on such behaviour, even if our society makes it politically incorrect or actually illegal to do so!

Even in the Churches there are moves to legitimise behaviour of this sort, regardless of the plain teaching of the Bible concerning it. The first chapter of Romans tells us that such conduct is the natural progression toward wickedness of those who make an idol of humanity, instead of putting God first – those “who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.” (Romans 1: 25) The sin of homosexuality, both male and female, is a natural result of ungodly humanism – “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in them-

selves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.” (Romans 1: 26-28) Those people who advocate that open homosexuals be permitted to be church members and even ministers need to be challenged with the words of 1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10 – “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites ... will inherit the kingdom of God.”

### **Are only the Actions Sinful?**

When we dealt with the commandment forbidding murder, we saw that the interpretation, given by Christ, of that law was that it included those attitudes which could lead to murder. It included the unreasoning hate which is the germ from which murder grows. At the same time, Christ also gave us an interpretation of this commandment which takes it far beyond the end actions of sexual immorality – “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his

heart.” (Matthew 5: 27, 28) Of course, the same law holds for a woman who looks at a man in that way. We need, probably, at this point to re-iterate what was said earlier, that sexual desire in itself is not wrong, but when that desire gets to the point that we would give in to it in an unlawful manner if we had the opportunity, then that is, most definitely, sin. Furthermore, the fact that Christ has told us that the commandment applies to our thoughts as well as our actions must surely mean that it also includes our speech, so that provocative language concerning these things is also forbidden.

### **The Positive Aspect**

I have now spent a considerable time on the negative aspects of this commandment – on those practices that it forbids. It is time to move on to the positive aspects. What does the seventh commandment require us to *do*? The sixth Commandment not only forbade the taking of human life unnecessarily; it also required of us that we pursue safe patterns of behavior so that we prevent the loss of either our own lives or those of others. So also, this commandment requires that we take all suitable measures to preserve the moral and sexual purity of ourselves and others. We must accommodate our speech and our actions so that these do not put us into situations where our ability to resist temptation would be strained, and we should have the same concern for those with whom we are in contact. We have to remember that God made mankind – both male and female – with a desire for sexual relationships. We must ensure that we are able to control those desires according to his laws and that we do all in our power to help others to do so also. There have been times when I have been “volunteered” on to question-answering panels at youth camps. A question that is often asked by the campers is **[Continued page 13]**

***“One of the most common forms of breaking of the seventh commandment is that of fornication – sexual relations between unmarried men and women. This is something that is condoned in our present society and is, often, even encouraged as a normal part of life. The Bible is very clear that this is not part of God’s plan for His people.”***

# BETWEEN YOU AND ME .....

By the time this month's copy reaches some of our readers the Olympic Games will be upon us. It would be an understatement to say that a great deal of interest will be focused on them – and even if we're not interested much in sport, we won't be able to avoid the media attention given to them. Notwithstanding the fierce national and individual competition, the attempt to catch those taking performance enhancing drugs, and the jostling of nations to be the best, they will be heralded as the great instrument of peace, the focus of the unity, and the celebration of the achievement of Humankind. There will be a distinctive religious and triumphant note about them - the promise and hope of the realization of the Kingdom of Man on earth.

We cannot doubt the effort that the athletes have put into their preparation, and their desire to do the best they possibly can. For years they have had their eyes on that coveted goal - a Gold Medal. It will be the apex of years of work, discipline, and self – sacrifice. Through our Plasma or HD TVs [or the ordinary ones for the less affluent] we'll be able to share in their triumphs. We'll also be able to see the disappointments - and perhaps even the disqualification of those who didn't compete according to the rules.

The Apostle Paul was well acquainted with athletic contests, and the Greek Games from which the idea of the modern Olympics came. In his day, there were the Olymp-

pic Games and also the Isthmian Games – which were probably held very close to Corinth. It's doubtful whether he ever attended those Games. The pious Jew generally shunned them, because the athletes competed naked. But he had certainly heard about them. And when he writes his letter to the Corinthian Christians he alludes to the Games, not to be controversial, but to bring home to them some important facts about the Christian Life, and Christian Living.

Here is what he says: *"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."* [1 Corinthians 9:25-27]

In comparing the Christian Life with these athletic contests Paul makes three points. [1] The Christian Life is a Race that Demands Effort; [2] The Christian Life is a Race that Demands Discipline; [3] The Christian Life is a Race that Demands Purpose, and [4] The Christian Life is a Race that ends in Victory. Let's think about these things as we face the Olympic onslaught. Perhaps it will make us think about the Kingdom of God when all the attention is focused on the Kingdom of Man.

## Upcoming Event - 2009

### **FAMILY CAMP - Naamaroo Conference Centre, Lane Cove National Park, SYDNEY.**

5pm Monday, 5th January - 3pm Friday 9th January, 2009 [DV]

**Theme: Love and Obedience: Our Response to God's Grace**

**Main Speaker: Rev. George Ball, Manning River Congregation.**

### **"UNCO WORLDLY"**

After the Disruption, Dr. Chalmers spearheaded the programme for the financial support for the Free Church. The key point in this practical programme was *"the power of littles"* - the idea that the work of the Church could easily be supported if each person in the Free Church contributed regularly a small amount.

On one occasion, after he had carefully explained his system to a Highland Congregation, one of the Elders remarked: *"Doctor Chalmers is nae doubt a clever man; But oh, he's unco worldly."* Many thought that Chalmers - when he launched out into Politics and Economics - appeared *"unco worldly"*. But he didn't think so. Nor did a writer in the The Free Church Magazine of 1847. This is what he had say about Dr. Chalmers' view:

*"...when he thought of man's salvation, he thought of the whole meaning of that all comprehending term. He saw in it the feeding of the hungry, the clothing of the naked, the instructing of the ignorant, the training of the rude, the preventing of immorality, the elevating of the humble, the abasing of the haughty - in short the fitting of man for the right discharge of all his duties in time, and for the blessed enjoyment of heavenly happiness throughout eternity. All this was contained in his idea of God's glory and man's salvation."* [p. 181]

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