

THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

October, 2009

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Devotion: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching." John 14:23-24

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DON'T FORGET

**HAPPY
163 BIRTHDAY,
PCEA!**

THE MEEKNESS OF CHRIST

In 2 Corinthians 10:1, Paul mentions two characteristics of Jesus - Meekness and Gentleness. We'll concentrate on the Meekness of Jesus.

There are other verses where reference is made to the Meekness of Jesus. For example, in Matthew 11:28 He calls all who labour and are heavy laden to come to him, for, he says, "he is meek and lowly in heart". But we look at this reference here because it shows us how much the Apostle has the Lord Jesus in his thoughts and controlling his life. Paul is not speaking directly about the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ! He simply mentions it in passing on to talk about the problems in the Corinthian Church. But the fact that he only refers to it in passing, shows us just how much the Lord Jesus is in his thoughts. So much is this the case, that when he comes to defend himself here in the face of unreasonable charges made against him by the Corinthians, he begins by appealing to the example of Christ.

We often find this in the writings of the Paul. When he wants to impress upon us some Christian virtue or conduct he appeals to the example of Christ. This is really how it should be in our lives. We should be constantly relating our lives to the Lord Jesus - remembering what He has done for us, and seeking to pattern our lives on him. And to help us do this very thing we'll look at [1] What Meekness Is; [2] Ways in which Jesus Showed His Meekness; and [3] Why His Meekness is Important to us.

WHAT MEEKNESS IS.

We need to define "meekness" because it has often been confused with "weakness" or "sissiness" - people who are always diffident, indecisive, giving way to others, and who never stands up for themselves. That may be the general view that people have today - and it may be the view conveyed by the Dictionary definition which says "meek" means: "piously humble and submissive; submitting tamely to injury". But when we look at how it's used in the Bible we get a different viewpoint. When it calls someone meek it doesn't suggest the person is weak. It suggests the exact opposite: The meek person is a strong person. It's a person who has right on his side but doesn't insist on exercising that right! It means a readiness to forgo our rights for the benefit of others. It's the opposite of self assertion, and especially the self assertion of our rights, and demanding our "pound of flesh." It presupposes we are right, and would be well in our rights to insist on them. But we forego them out of care and concern for others. It's very nice to be right. And when we're right we're very apt to make the most of it and make sure everybody knows it. But a "meek" person will be kind and generous and concessive.

A Biblical Example

Let me give you a Biblical Example of this quality of Meekness. It's said in Numbers 12:3 that Moses was very "meek" [our version has the word "humble" - which is another way of saying meek] - "more than anyone else on the face of earth". But notice the context where this is said of Moses. It's where Miriam and Aaron "began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife." Not only did they criticise him for this. They went further and claimed equality with Moses as the Lord's spokespersons. They said: ""Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?"" It's

then that we read about Moses' "meekness". In the face of this criticism, and presumption, he didn't seek to assert his rights. He took it. He left it in the hand of God. And in doing so he demonstrated his meekness.

The Context

And if you look closely at the chapter here, you will see that this is exactly what the Apostle Paul is seeking to do. The Corinthians have been saying some very nasty things about him - how weak and unspiritual he is, motivated by worldly interests. And he feels he must say something about it. But as he does so, he appeals to them by the "meekness" and gentleness of Christ. He wants to write about it in the same spirit of meekness as Jesus himself possessed.

THE WAY JESUS SHOWED MEEKNESS. So much then for the Definition of "meekness". Let's go on now to focus on the Meekness of Jesus and especially on some of the Ways He demonstrated his Meekness.

In His Incarnation.

And we can say immediately, that His Coming into the World to be our Saviour was the greatest display of Meekness the world will ever know. After all, he who was "face to face" with God, and was God, made himself of no reputation. He took our nature, became a servant, endured the contradictions of people, and in our nature became obedient to death - the cursed death of the Cross. He didn't stand on his Rights or assert his dignity but became poor for our sakes. Indeed, he was made sin for us. You cannot get a greater display of meekness than that displayed by our Lord in the totality of his life and work.

In His Life.

But we can go further than just this overall view and look at particular instances. Take, for example, that occasion at Nazareth, when they tried to throw him over the cliff. Did he respond with the assertion of that power and authority that was undoubtedly his? No, we're told that "he walked right through the crowd and went on his way." [Luke 4:30]. Or what about when He was anointed by a sinful woman and she wiped her feet with her hair. When it was pointed out to him who she was, he didn't push her away. He justified her actions. He didn't care what they thought of him - but he was concerned about her. And we could also mention how he washed the disciples feet at the Passover meal. What amazing meekness Jesus demonstrated there, taking the role of the servant rather than the Master.

In His Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion.

And then we see His Meekness in His Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion. The prophet Isaiah speaks of him being led like a lamb to the slaughter. As he faced the greatest injustice in the history of the world, He, the Lord of Glory, was indeed as "meek as a Lamb". Remember how, after His Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, when they came to arrest him - led, of course, by Judas - Peter drew his sword and cut off one of the servant's ears. And what did Jesus do? He healed the man's ear and said: "Put your sword back in its place.... for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" [Mat 26:52-53]. What a magnificent

display of Meekness. And the same applied right through his trial and crucifixion. In the face of accusations and false charges, blatant and deliberate perversions of the judicial process, and a totally unjust sentence, our Lord did not respond in kind. He accepted it, committing himself to his Father in Heaven. And even when he was taunted on the cross he made no reply and no defence. Peter sums it up like this. He says: "When they hurled insults at him he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." [1 Peter 2:23]

In Glory

And that meekness that Jesus demonstrated on earth he still has and shows today. Not only do we have the statement that he is the same "yesterday, today, and forever" [Hebrews 13:8]. We have an amazing demonstration of it in his dealing with the Church at Laodicea. To a Church which was full of pride and self righteousness, He stands at its door, and says, "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me." What amazing Meekness: The Lord of the Church, standing knocking at the Door of the Church seeking admittance, and promising rich blessing to anyone who does admit him!

Summing Up

Here then we have the "Meekness" of Jesus: Supreme Right; Supreme Authority; Supreme Power held in abeyance in the interests of doing good for others. He was prepared to put up with the shame of the Cross; and the temporary triumph of petty men with petty ideas for the greater good of sinners like ourselves. Tongues wagged in his day: "A friend of taxgatherers and sinners," they said; "in league with the devil," they said; "a blasphemer" they said; "a God-forsaken man," they said. But he put up with it all, he bore it all - for our sakes. How wonderful, and glorious is the Meekness of Christ. And he is still the same. He is no stern, cold, critical Saviour, always looking to assert his right,

power and authority. He is ready to forget himself and come down beside us, to enter our lives and walk heavenward with us. And in our weakness, we ought to come to him, and learn from him who is meek and lowly in heart.

WHY JESUS' MEEKNESS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Why its important for us to think about the Meekness of Christ?

Our Relationship to Christ.

It's important for our relationship with Christ. If we think of him as a stern, cold, uncaring person, always jealous for his own interests, we'll not come to him as we should, and rest in him as we ought. And yet how easy it is for wrong thoughts about Jesus to creep into our thoughts.

Our Witness for Christ.

It's important for our witness to Christ. Christians are supposed to be the disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be something ironic for us to dwell on the meekness of Christ, rejoice in it, and proclaim it, if we are not practicing it. How can we claim to be the followers of Him who is meek and Lowly in heart if we don't put it into practice in our lives? Many people have mixed up views about Jesus, but most people have some idea that Jesus was meek. Some even despise Him for it. It's a bad witness if we're not meek. We should always live, as Paul

"How wonderful, and glorious is the Meekness of Christ. And he is still the same. He is no stern, cold, critical Saviour, always looking to assert his right, power and authority. He is ready to forget himself and come down beside us, to enter our lives and walk heavenward with us"

BLOGGING ABOUT...

DEPRESSION

Opening a 'To the Householder' letter in the post recently, I found a Depression Checklist Card. First question: 'Have you felt sad, down or miserable' for more than two weeks. Follow up questions included one about loss or gain of weight, or an increase or decrease of appetite. And then there was the question about having 'recurrent thoughts of death'. Putting the card aside, I opened my Bible to the book of Job. I thought about Job taking a look at this checklist.

Job lost all his possessions and all his children in one day. He had reason to be sad and miserable. The next day he broke out in boils that itched terribly. He was most miserable as he sat on the rubbish heap scratching his sores. Job needed help because his life had become unbearable. His wife was there to help him. She advised him to end it all and die. There are those today who give this sort of advice. But Job did not take this advice.

Three of Job's friends showed up to help him. They sat with him, silently comforting him for seven days. But as they sought to counsel Job in his grief and misery, they were soon out of their depth. Not that they were uneducated men. They carefully diagnosed Job's problem and suggested how he could get back on his feet again. But with all the best intentions and all the wisdom of this world, they could not help Job.

Where would Job get help from? Like another man writing in Psalm 121, he looked to the Lord – From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Job looked for a rock on which to stand as waves of sorrow and sadness pounded him. Where did he find that rock? Not in human counsellors but in the divine counsellor. With a torn and broken heart, Job fell to the ground and worshipped God. He uttered some of the most profound words of human history:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Job was comforted by the realisation of this basic truth. He lost everything he had in this world. He lost his health. He became skin and bones. He understood, however, that all he had was God's gift, so God could take it away. Job kept on trusting in God because God does not change. No matter what happened, Job knew that God was in charge.

God allowed Job to be tested for his own reasons. Yet he did not let him be tested beyond what he could bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). Job kept looking to God and eventually God did answer him. He reminded Job that he is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things. Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge (Job 38:2)? How blessed you are if you have the God and Father of Jesus Christ as your counsellor. Life without God is life without an anchor for your soul, without a rock on which to

stand in the day of trouble.

- Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon

THE RAYMOND TERRACE CHURCH

The Raymond Terrace church and manse site at 155 Adelaide Street is the longest held of any PCEA property. Recently the Lands Department issued a Torrens system title for the property and the chain of documents that proved title under the Old System were lodged with the Archivist (Rev R.S.Ward) by the Hunter Deacons' Court. They tell an interesting story.

The half-acre in what was then called 'the village of Raymond Terrace' was purchased from the Crown in 1845 by William Ledgerwood for £5.6.8d (\$10.67). On 1/12/1848 he sold it to John Thompson of Raymond Terrace, baker.

About a year later Thompson sold it for £12 (\$24) to Charles Dee, a local storekeeper, and then on 1/12/1857 Dee purported to sell it back to Thompson for the same figure. However the sale was not legally registered and was invalid. On 24/11/1863 Thompson transferred it to trustees of "the Presbyterian congregation meeting at Ahalton and Raymond Terrace" paying Dee £12 (\$24) and receiving £25 (\$50) from the trustees. The trustees were James Cameron of Raymond Terrace, William Martin Snr of Miller's Forest, Donald Gillies of Miller's Forest, Robert Philip of Wallalong and Hugh Campbell of Eskdale.

James Cameron was a blacksmith, the others were farmers. In April 1887 the then minister, Rev John S.

Macpherson convened a meeting of the congregation at which three new trustees were elected to replace Messrs Philip and Campbell (deceased) and Gillies (removed).

The new trustees were Macpherson, Donald McQueen of Tomago, waterman, and William Dun of Raymond Terrace, farmer. As at the date of a declaration by Macpherson on 6 May 1905, the other two surviving trustees had died and Mr Dun had joined the Methodist Church and so ceased to be a trustee, so leaving Macpherson and McQueen as the remaining trustees. Other trustees were appointed, but in 1918 the church was incorporated for property holding purposes in New South Wales by the Synod of Eastern Australia Property Act. Since then the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of Synod have been the signing offices for the trust corporation, so providing a much more efficient and secure method of holding property.

The 1863 conveyance clearly states the first trustees and their signatures are perfectly legible. Some correction to the information I was furnished for the /Bush Still Burns/, page 121 is therefore necessary. The conveyance states the intention to erect a church and manse on the property. Rev James McCulloch became the minister of Ahalton and Raymond Terrace in 1861, but the manse at Ahalton (north of Mt Kanwary) was destroyed by fire some time later and McCulloch moved to Raymond Terrace. We know the first church at Raymond Terrace was opened on October 8, 1865 (replaced 1905), and perhaps a manse was provided about the same time. **RSW**

lived, "with regard to [by] the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ".

Our Future with Christ

And finally, its important for our future. Jesus says, "The meek shall inherit the earth." If we're not meek, we won't possess heaven on earth. But how can we become

meek? We can only become meek by basking in the Meekness of the Lord Jesus. Its only as the Holy Spirit shows us this wonderful meekness of Christ, and enables us to enjoy it in our relationship with him, that we will have this fruit of the Spirit which we'll carry with us into the new creation.

THE CITY: ITS SINS AND SORROWS

Rev. Thomas Guthrie, DD.

[Sermon 3 in a series of sermons preached on Luke 19:41 and published in book form in 1859]

We have turned our attention to the extent of intemperance, let us now, Secondly, Attend to the effects of this vice.

The Spartans, a brave and, although heathens, in many respects a virtuous people, held intemperance in the deepest abhorrence. When Christian parents initiate their children in drinking-habits, and - as we have seen and wondered at - teach them to carry their glass to infant lips, copy whom they may, the wise old Spartans are not their model. They were not more careful to train the youth of their country to athletic exercises, and from their boyhood and almost their mothers' breasts, to "endure hardships as good soldiers" of Sparta, than to rear them up in habits of strictest, sternest temperance. It formed a regular branch of their national education. Why should it not of ours? It would be an incalculable blessing to the community. It would do incalculably more to promote domestic comfort, to guard the welfare of families, and secure the public good, than other branches of learning that, while they go to improve the taste and polish the mind, put no real pith or power into the man.

Well, once a year these Greeks assembled their slaves, and, having compelled them to drink to intoxication, they turned them out - all reeling, staggering, besotted, brutalized - into a great arena, that the youths who filled its benches might go home from this spectacle of degradation to shun the wine-cup, and cultivate the virtues of sobriety. Happy country! thrice happy land where drunkenness was to be seen but once a year, and formed but an annual spectacle. Alas! we have no need to employ such unjustifiable means even for so good an end. We do not require to get up any annual show, from the pulpit to tell, or on the stage of a theatre to represent, its accursed, and direful, and disgusting effects. The lion is daily ravaging on our streets. He goes about "seeking whom he may devour."

Once a year, indeed, when church courts meet, our city may present a spectacle which fools regard with indifference, but wise men with compassion and fear. A pale and haggard man, bearing the title of "Reverend," stands at the bar of his church. Not daring to look up, he bends there with his head buried in his hands, blushes on his face, his lips quivering, and a hell raging, burning within him, as he thinks of home, a broken-hearted wife, and the little ones so soon to leave that dear, sweet home, to shelter their innocent heads where best, all beggared and disgraced, they may. "Ah, my brother" there! And ah, my brethren here, learn to "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." See there the issue of all a mother's hopes, and a father's self-denying and noble toil, to educate their promising, studious boy. In this deep darkness has set for ever a brilliant college career. Alas! what an end to the solemn day of ordination, and the bright day of marriage, and all those Sabbaths when an affectionate people hung on his eloquent lips! Oh! if this sacred office, if the constant handling of things divine, if hours of silent study spent over the Word of God, if frequent scenes of death, with their most awful and sobering solemnities, if the irremediable ruin into which degradation from the holy office plunges a man and

his house along with him, if the unspeakable heinousness of this sin in one who held the post of a sentinel, and was charged with the care of souls - if these do not fortify and fence us against excess, then, in the name of God, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." You are confident in your strength - so was he. You can use without abusing - so once could he.

I tell you I have seen ministers of the gospel charged by fame, dragged to the bar of their church, and degraded before the world as drunkards, whom once I would have as little expected to fall as I expect some of you - as you believe it possible that this vice shall yet degrade me from the pulpit, and cause my children to blush at the mention of their father's name. Such cases are trumpet-tongued. Their voice sounds the loudest warning. In every such fall we hear the crash of a stately tree. Leave an ungodly world - deaf, stone-deaf to the voice of Providence - to quaff their cups, and make the fall of ministers "the song of drunkards;" leave them to say that all religion is hypocrisy, and see, in such a case, but the dropping of a mask from falsehood's face. Let that which emboldens them in sin teach you to stand in awe. For, when a minister of religion falls, it seems to me as if the old prophet, disturbed in his grave by the shock of such an event, had wrapped himself, like Samuel, in his mantle-shroud, and left the dead to cry in your ears, "Howl, fir-trees, for the cedar is fallen."

On leaving a church court, where he has seen so strange and dreadful a spectacle as a man of cultivated mind, a man of literary habits, a man of honourable position, a man of sacred character, sacrifice all, - the cause of religion, the bread of his family, the interests of his children, the happiness of his wife, his character, his soul, - all to this base indulgence, - who, after such a terrible proof of the might and mastery of this tyrant vice, will be astonished at anything he may encounter in our streets? Yet, if the soul of Paul was "stirred within him," when he saw the idolatry of Athens - stirred to its deepest depths, - I think that he who can walk from this neighbouring castle to yonder palace, nor groan in spirit, must have a heart about as hard as the pavement that he walks on. The degradation of humanity, the ragged poverty, the squalid misery, the suffering childhood, the pining, dying infancy, oh, how do these obliterate all the romance of the scene, and make the most picturesque street in Christendom one of the most painful to travel! They call the street in Jerusalem, along which tradition says that a bleeding Saviour bore his cross, the *Via Dolorosa*; and I have thought that our own street was baptized in the sorrows of as mournful a name. With so many countenances that have misery stamped on them as plain as if it were burned in with a red hot iron - hunger staring at us out of these hollow eyes - drink-palsied men, drink-blotched and bloated women - sad and sallow infants who pine away into slow death, with their weary heads lying so pitifully on the shoulders of some half dehumanised woman - this poor little child, who never smiles, without shoe or stocking on his altered feet, shivering, creeping, limping along with the bottle in his emaciated hand, to buy a parent drink with the few pence that,

poor hungry creature, he would fain spend on a loaf of bread, but dare not - the whole scene is like the roll of the prophet, "written within and without, lamentations, mourning, and woe." How has it wrung our heart to see a ragged, famished boy looking greedily in at a window on the food he has no one to give him, and dare not touch, - to watch him, as he alternately lifted his naked feet, lest they should freeze to the icy pavement. He starves in the midst of abundance. Neglected among a people who would take more pity on an ill-used horse or a dying dog, he is a castaway upon the land. Of the throngs that pass heedlessly by him to homes of comfort, intent on business or pleasure, there is no one cares for him. Poor wretch! Oh, if he knew a Bible which none has taught him, how might he plant himself before us, and bar our way to church or prayer meeting, saying, as he fixed on us an imploring eye, "Pure religion and undefiled before God" is to feed me - is to clothe these naked limbs - is to fill up these hollow cheeks - is to pour the light of knowledge into this darkened soul - is to save me - is not to go to house of God or place of prayer, but first coming with me to our miserable home, "to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and keep thy garments unspotted from the world!"

You can test the truth of these statements. You have only to walk along the street to verify them. Yet, bad as it looks, and bad as it is, the street reveals not half the evil. I know that some look with suspicion upon our statements. They doubt whether matters below are so bad as we report. They insinuate that surely we are exaggerating existing evils. Well, there is nothing more easy, although there might be many things more noble, than to lie beneath bright skies, and amid gay company, and on a flowery sward, and dismiss with an incredulous smile the claims of suffering humanity. It were more like a man and a Christian to throw yourself into the bucket, seize the chain, go down into the pit, and put the matter to the proof. We invite you to do that which will rudely dissipate every doubt, and bring you up, a better and wiser man, to say, with Sheba's Queen, "The half was not told me." Meanwhile, come along with me, while I again travel over some bygone scenes.

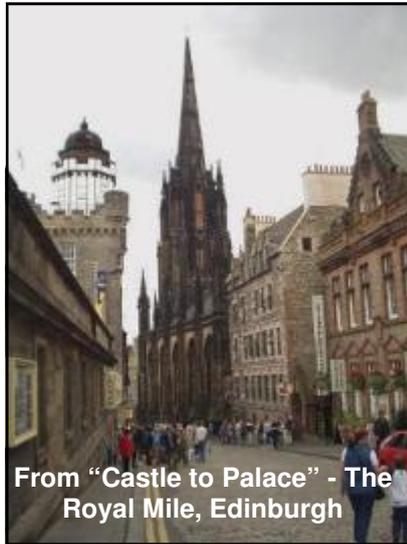
Look there! In that corpse, you see the cold dead body of one of the best and godliest mothers it was ever our privilege to know. She had a son. He was the stay of her widowhood, - so kind, so affectionate, so loving. Some are taken away from the "evil to come;" laid in the lap of mother earth, safe beneath the grave's green sod, they hear not and heed not the storm that rages above. Such was not her happy fortune. She lived to see that son a disgrace, and all the promises of his youth blighted and gone. He was drawn into habits of intemperance. On her knees, she pleaded with him. On her knees, she prayed for him. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! She did not live to see him changed; and with such thorns in her pillow, such daggers, planted by such a hand, in her heart, she could not live. She sank under these griefs, and died of a broken heart. We told him so. With bitter, burning tears he owned it; charging himself with his mother's

death, - confessing himself a mother's murderer. Crushed with sorrow, and all alone, he went to see the body. Alone, beside that cold, dead, unrepenting mother, he knelt down and wept out his terrible remorse. After a while, he rose. You have seen the iron approach the magnet. Call it spell, call it fascination, call it anything bad, demoniacal, but as the iron is drawn to the magnet, or as a fluttering bird, fascinated by the burning eye and glittering skin of the serpent, walks into its expanded, envenomed jaws, so was he drawn to the bottle. Unfortunately - how unfortunate that a spirit bottle should have been left there! - his eye fell on the old tempter. Wondering at his delay, they entered the room; and now the bed holds two bodies—a dead mother, and her dead-drunk son. What a sight! what a humbling, horrible spectacle! And what a change from those happy times, when night drew her peaceful curtains around the same son and mother, - he, a sweet babe, sleeping, angel-like, within her loving arms! How is the gold become dim, the most fine gold changed!"

Or look there. The bed beside which you have, at other visits conversed and prayed with one who, in the very bloom and flower of youth, was withering away under a slow decline, is empty. The living need it; and so its long, and spent, and weary tenant lies now, stretched out in death, on the top of two rude chests beside the window. And as you stand by the body - contemplating it - in that pallid face lighted up by a passing sun-gleam you see, along with lingering traces of no common beauty, the calmness and peace which were her latter end. But in this hot, sultry summer weather, why lies she there uncoffined? Drink, has left us to do that last office for the dead. Her father - how unworthy the name of father! - when his daughter pled with him for his soul, pled with him for her mother, pled with him for her little sister, had stood by her dying pillow to damn her - fiercely damning her to her face. He has left his poor dead child to the care of others. With the wages he retains for drink, he refuses to buy that lifeless form a coffin and a gravel

Or look there. You have found a young man, the victim of an incurable malady, sinking into the tomb. Dying is hard enough work amid all the comforts which wealth, and kindness, and piety can command; but in that winter time, with the frosty wind blowing through the broken panes, he is shivering while he seeks in the Bible its precious comforts; and how much his body is emaciated is too plainly visible beneath that single threadbare coverlet. You could not have stood that; no more could we. And where, at our next visit, are the warm comforts charity had provided? They have gone for drink. Gone for drink! For such purpose, what incarnate demons have plucked the blankets from that wasted form, - steeling their iron hearts against his cries, his struggles, his unavailing tears? Accursed vice! that can sink man beneath the brutes that perish. The barbarous deed was done by a father's hand! That father, instigated and aided by her who had suckled him on her breast, a breast twice withered - by worse than age, deformed and dried up.

Did I say, sinks man beneath the brutes that perish? It is a



From "Castle to Palace" - The Royal Mile, Edinburgh

Presbyterian Free Churches, India



We have four established churches and several other house churches in different congregations. Their details are given as follows:

Free Church Lakhnadon

There 80 full members, 65 associate members, 40 new believers and seekers. There are three worship groups meeting in different places. Our church activities are as follows: Three Sunday worship services, Sunday school programs for both Christian and non-Christian children. We are regularly conducting cottage prayer meetings, youth meetings, women's meetings every week, besides visiting houses, families. We have one evangelist local convert Mr. Fakir Chand who is working with us. The Pastor is Rev Shyam BabU.

Free Church Chhapara

Total membership is 70 with ministry among 17 villages. There are 387 seekers and believers from all ages which

includes the Sunday School ministry, village outreach work and cottage prayer meetings and prayer meetings. Pastor is Rev. Samit Mishra.

Free Church Vijay Nagar Jabalpur

Total membership is 40. They have cottage prayer meetings, Sunday worship, Sunday school, as well as visiting family and houses. Their present pastor is Rev. Ekka Emmanuel.

Free Church Prem Nagar

Full membership is 72, associates 36, adherent members 40 and 8 seekers. There is evangelistic work in eight different places in Jabalpur. They have also children ministry and slum evangelism.

OUR VISITORS

Mr. Pradeep Kumar and the Rev Shyam Babu will be attending the ICRC meeting DV in Christchurch NZ in October. Pradeep has obtained an Australian visa and will spend two weeks in Australia after the ICRC visiting the Churches in NSW/QLD. Rev Shyam Babu, if successful in his visa application, will visit the Churches in Victoria and Tasmania.

PRADEEP KUMAR

Elder in the Chhapara Presbyterian Free Church, India
Pradeep is the youngest son of Rev Prakash Kumar, the first national pastor of the Free Church in Chhapara. Pradeep grew up in the church at Chhapara and after graduation joined the teaching staff at the Chhapara Mission School, where he still teaches.

He is married with three school age sons. The Lord wonderfully saved his eldest son in answer to prayer. Through

[From page 5] libel on creation to speak of a drunkard as a brute. The bear, when she refuses to desert her cub, when she makes the most daring, desperate efforts to protect her offspring, - when, rearing herself on her hind feet, she stands up growling to face the hunter, and offer her shaggy bosom to his spear, extorts our admiration; as does the little creature, which, when the spear is buried in a mother's heart, leaps on her dead body, and, giving battle to the dogs, attempts bravely, though vainly, to defend it. Look at this case, and that. How beautiful is nature - how base is sin!

But what emotions do the cases I have told you of awaken? To be matched by many, and surpassed by some that I could but to direct it - directing it, not against the victims, but against the vice. I pray you, do not hate the drunkard; he hates himself. Do not despise him; he cannot sink so low in your opinion as he is sunk in his own. Your hatred and contempt may rivet, but will never

rend his chains. Lend a kind hand to pluck him from the mire. With a strong hand shatter that bowl - remove the temptations which, while he hates, he cannot resist. Hate, abhor, tremble at his sin. And for pity's sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for humanity's sake, rouse yourselves to the question, What can be done? Without heeding others - whether they follow or whether they stay—rushing down to the beach, throw yourself into the boat, push away, and bend on the oar, like a man, to the wreck.

Say, I will not stand by and see my fellow - creatures perish. They are perishing. To save them I will do anything. What luxury will I not give up? What indulgence will I not abstain from? What customs, what shackles of old habits will I not break, that these hands may be freer to pluck the drowning from the deep? God my help, his Word my law, the love of his Son my ruling motive, I shall never balance a poor personal indulgence against the good of my country and the welfare of mankind. **[To be Continued]**



The Chhapara session: Pradeep is third from the left.

me and taught me about salvation. He quoted to me verses from the Bible that I am a sinner, and I need my sins forgiven by believing and confessing to Him.

When I was still studying in the school I decided that I will know about the Lord Jesus Christ and will follow him. When I finished my high school I was still praying for my future. This evangelist helped me to go to Bible College to become an evangelist. When I was in the Bible College there I realized that I have been called to serve Him and in order to do that I must be baptized. I was baptized while I was in the Bible seminary. I completed my theology training in 1986 and I joined full time worker as an evangelist and I started working with the Rajasthan Bible Institute at Balaghat.

About the ministry

I began my ministry in 1986 as an evangelist and I was posted at Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh. Later on the work progressed and I was able to establish 4 churches. In 1988 I was ordained as a pastor and in 1992 I was called to work as full time pastor in Free Church Lakhnadon; since then I have been continuing my ministry with the Presbyterian Free churches. In this area we have targeted to establish 3 churches. So far three groups have been established in different villages and every week all three places worship is conducted. We are planning to develop these worship services to meet on regular basis; so far 20 families have been attached to these groups. Around 40 people are worshipping with us from different villages.

this Pradeep committed his life to the Lord and became an active member of the church.

Pradeep has taken a special interest in evangelism, along with some other members in the church. They have been praying for the unsaved in villages around Chhapara and now have prayer groups of at least 10 -15 new believers and seekers in Gorakhpur, Danimeta, Devri, Anjanina, Tinsa, Payali, Lalmatiya, Bada Chhapara, Lakwah, Ghunai and Chamanpuri villages.

Pradeep has commenced theological studies by extension through UBS Pune, India, in order to be better equipped for ministry within this church in Central India. Present members of the PCEA, namely Dr Helen Ramsay, Miss Heather Beaton, Mrs Flora Neil, and Mrs Barbara Schmidt all served as missionaries in this church.

THE REV. SHYAM BABU

Pastor, Presbyterian Free Church, Lakhnadon.

I was born and brought up in an orthodox Hindu family. My mother died when I was six months old; according to the Hindu mythology I was considered an unlucky child. My father married again but didn't want to keep me at home because I was an unlucky child so my grand father took me. He was a Hindu hermit. I was nurtured in the Hindu ritual atmosphere assuming that I would also become a hermit after I had grown up.

When I was 17 years old I injured my right knee; it became infected and serious. I was taken to the government hospital at Mainpuri in U.P. by my grand parents. While I was in the hospital evangelists had visited me and prayed for my healing. In the course of time I got healed of my deep wound on the right knee and I was discharged from the hospital.

I began to think about the prayer of the evangelist for my recovery and healing. I became curious in my mind and I asked myself who is this Lord Jesus Christ that heard the prayers of this evangelist and healed me. I began to search the name and whereabouts this evangelist so that I could know more about the God who had healed me. Somehow I was able to contact him as there was a seal put on the tract at the back side giving his contact address; I went to see him.

In the year 1980 in the month of June I had become a seeker and wanted to know more. This evangelist helped



About the family

In 1989 I have got married. My wife Mrs. Amita Babu comes from a Christian background. I have two daughters and one son. My eldest daughter is 19 years old and recently got admitted for B.Sc Nursing 4 years' degree training at Christian Medical College, Damoh, and M.P. My second daughter is 13 years old and is studying in Jabalpur. My son is 4 years old and is with us. God is providing our daily needs in a wonderful way.

I thanked God that He has called me to serve Him here in this very needy area and has given me the responsibility to provide pastoral care, and the opportunity to minister with the Presbyterian Free church here in Lakhnadon.

Run For Glory

YOU SAY - GOD SAYS

You say: "It's impossible"
God says: All things are possible
(Luke 18:27)

You say: "I'm too tired"
God says: I will give you
rest.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

You say: "Nobody loves me"
God says: I love you.
(John 3:16 & John 3:34)

You say: "I can't go on"
God says: My grace is sufficient
(II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

You say: "I can't figure things out"
God says: I will direct your steps
(Proverbs 3:5-6)



You say: "I can't do it"
God says: You can do all things
(Philippians 4:13)

You say: "I'm not able"
God says: I am able
(II Corinthians 9:8)

You say: "It's not worth it"
God says: It will be worth it.
(Roman 8:28)

You say: "I can't forgive myself"
God says: I Forgive you
(I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

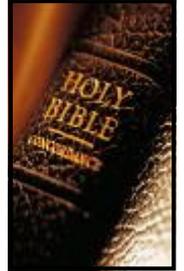
You say: "I can't manage"
God says: I will supply all your
needs
(Philippians 4:19)

You say: "I'm afraid"
God says: I have not
given you a spirit of
fear
(II Timothy 1:7)

You say: "I'm always
worried and frus-
trated"
God says: Cast all
your cares on ME (I Peter 5:7)

You say: "I'm not smart enough"
God says: I give you wisdom
(I Corinthians 1:30)

You say: "I feel all alone"
God says: I will never leave you or
forsake you.
(Hebrews 13:5)



CAMP DREWE

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Brisbane Congregation

Invites you to its annual ALL AGE CAMP

27-29 November - 2009

@ LENNOX HEAD

Speaker:

Rev. Sjirk Bajema,
Narre warren PCEA

Topic: "Love your Mother!"

For Further Details Contact: Mr. Stewart Carswell,
85 Barmore Street, TARRAGINDI, QLD, 4121. Telephone:07 3397 1138
E-mail: stewart_carswell@health.qld.gov.au

Several years ago, a preacher accepted a call to a church. Some weeks after he arrived, he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him twenty cents too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, 'You'd better give the twenty cents back. It would be wrong to keep it.' Then he thought, 'Oh, forget it, it's only twenty cents. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a 'gift from God' and keep quiet.'

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, and then he handed the twenty cents to the driver and said, 'Here, you gave me too much change.' The driver, with a smile, replied, "Aren't you the new preacher in town?" 'Yes' he replied.

'Well, I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday.'

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, 'Oh God, I almost sold your Son for twenty cents.'

Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read. This is a really scary example of how much people watch us as Christians, and will put us to the test! Always be on guard - and remember - You carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you call yourself 'Christian.'

One day a soldier, charged with fleeing from the enemy was brought before Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great asked him, 'What's your name?' Dropping his head, he replied, "Alexander." Alexander the Great grabbed him by the shoulders and said, "Soldier, change your conduct or change your name!" **You have been called to live a life worthy of the One whose name you carry."**

SENIOR 12+ yrs; INTERMEDIATE 10-11 yrs; JUNIOR 9 and under.
SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE [Intermediate omit questions 1 and 2]

2 KINGS 15:8 - 38 and 17:1-4

1. (x) Write down the names of the six kings who reigned in Israel from Jeroboam II to the end of the kingdom of Israel.
2. (x) How long did each of the above kings reign? In what way did each of them die?

Chapter 16

3. How is the reign of Ahab king of Judah described? (2 verses)
4. What did Ahab see at Damascus that he commanded Urijah the priest to copy? (2 verses)

Chapter 17

5. Where did the king of Assyria place Israel when he had carried them away?
6. What was Israel's response when the Lord testified against them by all the prophets? (2 verses only)
7. What did the king Assyria command when he was told that lions were killing the Samaritans?
8. What is the description given to the worship of the Samaritans 'to this day'?

JUNIOR

EXODUS 16

1. Why would God rain bread from heaven for the children of Israel?
2. What could the children of Israel know when they ate flesh at even [twilight] and bread in the morning?
3. What happened when the manna was left until the next morning?
4. On what day would there be no manna to gather?

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

ACTS 16:29-33

"The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized."

The Baptism of Mitchell, Callum and Thomas Buck, Narre Warren.



ACTIVITY PAGE.....

11. A Great God

$\overline{11}$ $\overline{8}$ $\overline{11}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{3}$ ' $\overline{11}$ $\overline{15}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{8}$ $\overline{11}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{3}$ '

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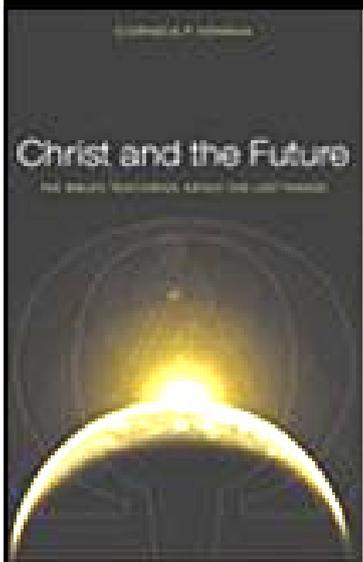
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David sang a song of praise to God in Psalm 8. The first part of the first verse is set in code. Use the key to unscramble it.

$\frac{A}{1}$	$\frac{C}{2}$	$\frac{D}{3}$	$\frac{E}{4}$	$\frac{H}{5}$	$\frac{I}{6}$
$\frac{J}{7}$	$\frac{L}{8}$	$\frac{M}{9}$	$\frac{N}{10}$	$\frac{O}{11}$	$\frac{R}{12}$
$\frac{S}{13}$	$\frac{T}{14}$	$\frac{U}{15}$	$\frac{W}{16}$	$\frac{Y}{17}$	

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



CHRIST AND THE FUTURE

Cornelis P. Venema,
[The Bible's Teaching
about Last Things]
Banner of Truth, 2008.
(Koorong's price is
\$23.95).

This paperback book of 224 pages is a gem to all who delve into the Biblical revelation of Christ's return and the events that follow the Lord's final intervention into the affairs of this sin ridden world. This writing is an abridgement of Venema's

larger volume - 'The Promise of the Future.'

For all who have a genuine interest in the Biblical teaching of 'The Last Things' this book should be read. Venema has clearly presented the various teachings concerning Christ's return and fully supports the Amillennial position.

It was good to read the author's understanding of several issues over which Christians have differed for many years. He looks at the Biblical teaching of the role of the Jews in history. One of his conclusions is worth noting: '... the time will come when the people of Israel will be converted and God's purpose of redemption be accomplished in them. The main point of Romans 11:25 seems to be that the hardening of Israel will come to an end and Israel will be restored' (p. 64).

The first few verses of Romans 20 are carefully considered. Before I purchase a book on eschatology I always check what is said re the one thousand years during which Satan is bound. Again Venema compares the differing interpretations of this passage and comes down hard on the side of the amillennial understanding. The part played by Christians in the final judgement is carefully considered and the conclusion reached: 'The Scriptures teach that all will be judged, the just and the unjust' (p.176).

The section devoted to 'The doctrine of eternal punishment' should be read by all as it is very useful when confronted with J.W.s who deny this clearly taught Biblical doctrine.

'Christ and the Future' is a book that is easy reading and contains Christian doctrine that every saint should know

and be able to discuss with fellow believers. We live in an age of widespread pre-millennial teachings found both in theological books and novels written about end times.

It is a book that should be read by all Christians and is a suitable gift to Christian friends. When you purchase this book go a step further and buy 'The Study Guide for 'The Promise of the Future' (44 pages). Koorong had it for sale at \$8.95. Together they will make the basis for a group study of eschatology. - **Jim Cromarty, Wingham.**

THE VALUE OF THE PSALMS

The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation. John Eaton, Continuum, 2005.

[Reviewed by Rowland S. Ward]

I've been reading retired Old Testament scholar John Eaton's book /The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation/ published by Continuum in 2005 (ISBN 978-0-8264-8895-4). It cost me \$36.06 from DA Books in Melbourne (www.dadirect.com)

The first 58 of its 536 pages provide a introduction to the interpretation and use of the psalter which is a very helpful overview covering everything from music to context and psalm order. The bulk of the book consists of a fresh translation of each psalm with notes on clusters of verses. It is a good blend of academic and popular exposition (there are more technical notes in an appendix) and the comments on each psalm are closed with a brief prayer. Eaton comes from an Anglican tradition that values the Psalter.

The book is relatively conservative and respects the Hebrew text. I bought it for the introduction alone with the rest of the volume as a bonus. The last paragraph of the introduction with a great quote from Basil does not appear to be correct, but the second last paragraph to the introduction I'm sure will resonate with readers of The Presbyterian Banner. It reads:

"If Scripture itself has a unique role in feeding the faith of the church and forming the life of converse with the Lord, then so does that part of it which has been to the fore from earliest times, the Psalter. Here in plain words and strong images scripture teaches, prophesies, and lifts the veil of the good world to come; it puts into the worshippers' mouths robust words of praise and thanksgiving, along with passionate entreaty from the lowest pit of suffering. The hymns we write ourselves are pleasant and easy to the feelings. Much in the Psalms may be difficult for the modern imagination, seeming primitive or harsh. But if the challenge of them is met, they will be found to have a power and a fullness that modern compositions can hardly attain."

"The Book of Psalms contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of his Maker. In it are gathered together the lyrical burst of his tenderness, the moan of his penitence, the pathos of his sorrow, the triumph of his victory, the despair of his defeat, the firmness of his confidence, the rapture of his assured hope." - Prothero

CHURCH NEWS.....

NARRE WARREN NEWS

The last news about our congregation appeared back in the March issue of this year. Since then the Lord has continued to challenge and encourage us in many ways. One task that fell to me as soon as I began was the marriage preparations for John Holmes & Betty Simpson. Not your usual wedding I can assure you – the best man was John's eldest son, himself in his fifties, and the flower girl was one of Betty's granddaughters. It was a blessed occasion, with much work done in arranging and carrying out the ceremony by John & Betty and the folk from the church.

Soon after this we held the marriage in our church of two regular adherents – Eugenio & Mary Ann Rifareal. Mary Ann had arrived shortly before from the Philippines after a long period of engagement due to the paperwork involved in migration.

More recently we have had the baptism of the Buck boys – Mitchell, Callum and Thomas. Their parents, Terry and Kylie, have been part of the congregation since Trevor Leggott's days and have become convinced of the covenantal teaching regarding baptism.

More recently still we were thankful for the ordination of a new elder and deacon – Brs Terry Buck and Reg Mashado

respectively. They join myself and John Audet, our other deacon, who, together with an elder from the Knox congregation, presently makes up the Narre Warren Deacon's Court. We still need another elder before we can be self-sufficient as a Session.

As well as these particular events there has been the regular Sabbath Day worship services, the Sabbath (Sunday) School with two classes, the ongoing bi-monthly evening Adult Bible Study and Ladies morning Bible Study, and now for several months we have a much appreciated monthly Men's Study Breakfast, using the helpful booklet, *The Man Who Makes A Difference*, from Matthias Media.

I have been blessed to be able to visit the congregation once already this year and now am able to do that a second time. Together with this one of our young adults is preparing for her profession of faith, through a course I have written based on the *Confession of Faith*.

Please continue to pray for us that we would have another elder in the Lord's provision, increased giving to become self-supporting, and especially for being a witness to God's grace in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Sjirk Bajema



Top
The Narre Warren Congregation—AM [right]; PM [left].

Bottom
[From Left] Eugenio & Mary Ann's Wedding. Ordination of Elders. John and Betty's Wedding.

MANNING RIVER

The Manning River Deacons' Court has had work done to enclose the church property with fencing. A new fence has been erected across the front of the church block to provide security for young people attending their activities, and to prevent the local youngsters using the cemented areas for games etc. The kitchen area has been renewed much to the satisfaction of both ladies and men.

The Friendship group will, God willing, make a trip to Tahlee Bible College for a day out. This will happen (D.V.) in early October. It should be a pleasant day for all concerned. The staff and students provide morning tea and lunch for \$25.00 a head. Included is a tour of the College buildings and grounds. Hopefully we will have a look at the old cemetery which contains the burial spot of Captain William Cromarty. Unfortunately it is now on private property, but the college administration is approaching the landowner to obtain permission for a busload of tourists to trespass legally across their property.

BRISBANE

On Friday, 18th September, the Northern Presbytery met with the Brisbane congregation and sustained a Call to the Rev. James Klazinga of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. Mr. Klazinga is, at present, involved in a Church-planting work in Timaru, a town some 160 km to the south of Christchurch. He is Canadian by birth and is married with a family of seven children. He was a delegate from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to our Synod in 2005, when it was meeting outside Sydney, so he met a number of ministers and elders of the P.C.E.A. on that occasion.

The Brisbane congregation contacted him in July and invited him to visit Brisbane to preach with a view to a call. He accepted this invitation and came with his wife, Julie, for the week-ends of 2nd and 9th August, preaching at all four services on those days, as well as being present at a Bible Study during the week. He and Julie were also entertained in the homes of as many of the congregation as could be fitted into one week. Obviously, they made a very favourable impression, as there was an immediate and universal desire to proceed to call Mr. Klazinga to be the minister of the congregation. This led to a request being made to the Northern Presbytery to meet with the congregation to moderate in a Call. This call, after having been sustained by the Presbytery, has been dispatched to Mr. Klazinga in Timaru and we trust that the Lord will lead him in his decision concerning it.

ALL NATIONS, MULGRAVE / KNOX

On 7 June 2009 the first English service began at All Nations following the cessation of services at Glen Huntly the previous week. Typical attendance has been between 20 and 30 persons, including 6 regulars from the local area with whom we had had no previous contact. The building is also used on Wednesday evenings for a Sudanese Ladies' group of about 20, on Thursday evenings for an English Bible Study, and on Friday evenings for a Young Adults meeting. The extension to the building is well underway and will provide 134m² of space in three rooms suited for Sunday school and small meetings. It is hoped to have the works completed in time for an official opening on 31 October, when the Nuer-speaking congregation can also use it for their afternoon service.

Meanwhile the Knox Deacons' Court is investigating the most appropriate use of the Glen Huntly building. As a long-term church operation the building is a bit limited because of the lack of on-site parking. It was originally bought as an investment and remains let as a child care centre, but other options are being considered to ensure this valuable asset is utilised in the best way to maximise extension of Gospel work.

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

The Northern Presbytery met for "ordinary" business in Brisbane on Friday, 18th September, prior to meeting with the Congregation to moderate in a Call to the Rev. James Klazinga. The main item on the agenda was the Armidale Congregation. The Presbytery heard a report from two of its representatives appointed to meet with the Armidale Deacons' Court. In the course of the Report, the Presbytery was told that the sum of \$7, 521 had been contributed from the Congregations in the Presbytery to assist Armidale. Mr. Smith expressed the thanks of the Congregation for this assistance. It was also reported that some \$2,900 had come to the Congregation from the Church Wide Appeal on its behalf.

The Presbytery also received a lengthy report from a Committee appointed to evaluate the work in Armidale. The Report covered four main areas: Outreach; Discouragements; Current Income and Rental Prospects and Support; and a Financial Analysis - including Budget forecasts. After discussion, the recommendation of the Report was adopted: "That the Presbytery conduct a Presbyterial Visitation of the Congregation on the 26th March, 2010, to examine all aspects of the work and in particular assess [a] The degree of commitment present in the Congregation; [b] The Continued Viability of the Congregation as a Church Extension Charge stage 3 beyond 2011. [c] The Possible Alternatives for maintaining a witness in Armidale in the future."

The Presbytery also noted that its Overture to Synod 2009 about the Alternative Questions and Formula was unsuccessful. It was agreed that the Presbytery, at its next meeting, consider an Overture to Synod 2010 to the effect that where a minister or student for the ministry is to be inducted to office or licensed using the 2008 Questions and Formula, such person shall also subscribe the Formula of 1952.

The Presbytery also considered the resignation of the Editor of "The Presbyterian Banner." It was agreed unanimously that the name of the Rev Sjirk Bajema be put forward as the new Editor of the magazine to the Administrative Committee/ Media Committee.



Extension work at Mulgrave

THE PRESBYTERIAN AGENDA

JOHN CALVIN: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

By Pieter van der Wel. [These meditations first appeared in the Hamilton RCNZ bulletin and has been forwarded to the Editor by the Rev. Sjirk Bajema, with the thought that it might be useful to our readers]

This year, AD 2009, many churches throughout the world remember and/or celebrate that 500 years ago on 10th July John Calvin was born in Noyon in what is now northern France. John Calvin himself more than likely would not care to be remembered so long after his death; he stipulated to be buried in an unmarked grave. In death, as in life, it was his aim to follow him who made himself of no reputation, but became a servant of all. His friend and successor in the pulpit of Geneva wrote of him: *It has pleased God to show us in the life of a single man of our time how to live and how to die.* Calvin himself wrote: *It is enough that I live and die for Christ, who is to all his followers a gain both in life and in death.* Calvin's greatest and all-consuming desire was that people would know and remember Christ.

So how is it that a man who made this impression on his contemporaries and spoke of himself in this way - a man who was literally consumed by the burden of the work the Lord called him to - how is it that today this man is widely seen at best merely as a theologian and at worst as a theologian without humanity, harsh in his dealings with other Christians and empty of feeling?

In a conversation I once heard another Christian dismiss both Calvin and Luther as men of no consequence who did more harm than good to the name and cause of Christ, implying that we would have been better off without them. Calvin never claimed the prominence now given him, but he did claim to stand on the Word of God and lay God's righteous demands before and upon the people he preached to.

In a number of ... meditations we'll try to get a clearer picture of this Calvin, a pastor with a deep love for people, a deep compassion for the many imprisoned Christians in his day, a consuming desire to see the gospel preached both near and far, a man who encouraged kings, queens and nobles to rule with compassion and justice in the name of the Lord. To see this man we'll listen in to some of the many letters he has written.

JOHN CALVIN'S LETTERS TO FRIENDS

In the 19th Century a Jules Bonnet undertook the enormous task of issuing a new edition of the letters of Calvin. His four volumes contain 700 letters and is out of print, but a collection of 70 of these are published by The Banner of Truth Trust as *Letters of John Calvin*. Today I want to show two brief examples of how Calvin wrote to friends.

First we see a man who was not afraid to apologise for giving offense, and trusted in the integrity of his (Christian) friend (and stated this in his letter) to be accepted again, because this matter had caused a problem.

This may seem a simple matter but then he wrote to a friend who had for years followed the Reformation but

could not handle the continuing pressure of controversy and persecution and went back to the church of Rome. He seeks to convince him of his continuing love yet at the same time states: *I can by no means approve your conduct; and would choose rather that I should be taken out of the world by a bitter death, than approve your deed, which I know to be damnable in itself and besides that, fraught with ruin, or at least great offence towards many.*" He then continues to encourage him and commends him to the protection of God and deliverance from this error. Their relationship continued despite this lifelong, sharp disagreement, yet their relationship remained free, sincere, and tempered by respect

As I reflected on these letters I saw a man who doesn't just love books and theological arguments. Here speaks a man who loves his friends deeply and is prepared to risk a friendship to save a man from error and direct him in the way of truth. Here speaks a man who learned from God's Word how to be a friend, and encouraged many with thoughtful and personal letters.

CALVIN: THE STUDENT

Calvin grew up in a different age. Bright pupils, who could, went to university at an early age, some as young as 12, which may have been the case with him. He studied Latin under the most gifted teacher of his age which formed a solid foundation for his later literary skills. He also studied philosophy.

After completing this elementary course, he moved to College de Montaigu, which was renowned for two things: the strictness of the discipline (the students were under an unrelenting schedule of worship and study from 4 am to 8pm!), and the taste of the school dinners!

Both affected his life but the discipline more so. It laid the foundation for the enormous output of work throughout his life, though he was often hindered by ill health, possibly the result of the bad diet he endured as a youth. With his biographer we can but note one thing: That Calvin's life was powerfully marked by what Paul calls *'[God's] energy, which so powerfully works in me.* (Col. 1.29).

At about the age of 17 Calvin graduated, but instead of becoming a priest he studied law for several years, again with marked success. But then he says: *"God, by the secret guidance of his providence, at length, gave a different direction to my course and by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame."* The teaching of the Reformation now replaced the teaching of Church of Rome and he began to enter into the work for which God had prepared him.

It takes a craftsman to get nails in straight and true. God had formed for Himself such a craftsman whose sayings, whose clear explanations of Scripture, by God's grace are still firmly embedded now and continue to influence many theologians and pastors, as they did in his own day. And so he became *a workman approved by God* (2 Timothy 2:14-15). The life of this man shows that it takes discipline and hard work to bring forth fruit that lasts and as the preacher says *'it wearies the body'* and even wears it out. But hard work does that and should therefore not be avoided. **[To be Continued]**

A BIRTHDAY MEDITATION

AN ADDRESS BY H.C.NICOLSON, Delivered at the Centenary Celebrations, held in St. George's Church, Sydney, in October, 1946.

On the 10th October, 1846, our denomination began. The words that H.C.Nicolson spoke at the centenary are worth remembering on our 163rd Birthday.

It is my intention to say something in defence of our separate existence and its continuance. I am afraid that many people outside our Church feel that we are merely holding on to an outworn tradition which absorbs loyalties that could be well directed elsewhere. While I am in no way quoting this with approval, I do think that the statement constitutes a challenge which I shall attempt to take up.

There is perhaps no better tradition in our Church than that of basing everything on the Bible, and accordingly what I have to say to-night may well be based on the 4th verse of the 60th Psalm. *"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of truth."* In accordance, also, with another tradition, which is by no means so vital, we may consider this under three heads. We believe that we have ground for a separate existence in that there is enshrined in our standards three great truths: [a] The Sovereignty of God; [b] The Responsibility of our Rulers to God; [c] Simplicity of Worship.

The Sovereignty of God.

There is little that I can add to this subject above what is given to you Sabbath by Sabbath but it is important for us to remember that this is a doctrine which has fallen upon evil days. As you read the record of world events as it is given to us by statesmen, journalists and leaders of thought, it would never occur to the casual reader that there was a great Disposer of events and that the world was anything other than the product of their own God dishonouring theory of evolution. It may be objected that this evil is only in existence outside the church, but unfortunately it has infested the theology of a large proportion of the visible church and as one writer has said: "History is eloquent in declaring that on a people's religion depends their freedom or their bondage." Where I feel that the great tragedy really lies, is in the fact that men and women are being directed to the wrong sources for national betterment. Man's schemes, however much they may appear to be otherwise, are often monuments of self-interest. For instance, do you think there is any less of the acquisitive spirit in Soviet Russia than there is in Capitalist America?

This great doctrine of the Sovereignty of God embraces the work of the Holy Spirit and by our turning, in church and State, to broken cisterns, we are resisting the Holy Spirit's work. We find this dealt with in Zechariah, where we read "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The Responsibility of our Rulers to God.

This is actually linked up with the Sovereignty of God. God is the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and, as one writer has said, "Whatever sovereignty was found in man has been graciously granted to him." If one examines the political life of the nation there is very little recognition of this. Everyone of us here in this church detests the word "war," but as one looks out in the world there are signs of a gath-

ering storm, and before God makes havoc of our schemes and our towers of Babel it might be a good thing if we heard a bit more about our statesmen's responsibility to God rather than their responsibility to the electors. Personally I feel that this great truth of the responsibility of the rulers to God will have to make its appearance if the world is to have real and lasting peace. There is a God forgetfulness in the halls of state today which is not merely a superficial malady but a deep-rooted one. It is illegal in the Commonwealth of Australia to have the Protestant and Reformed faith established by law, but it is not illegal to have a national evil such as gambling administered by the Sovereign State of New South Wales in the form of a State lottery.

Simplicity of Worship.

I recognise that we may fall into the evil of glorying in the things we have not, just as some bodies may glory in the things they have. I realise also that simplicity of worship can be a mighty instrument in God's hands in that worship is unencumbered with things which distract. I believe that simple worship tends to a discipline which is very healthful and particularly when the hymn book is the work of the Holy Spirit, there is no danger of worshippers imbibing errors in a more or less palatable form. There is a tendency in every human heart to seek that which affords immediate pleasure rather than to seek what gives lasting satisfaction. Let us treasure our only hymn book; it is an unfathomable mine of comfort and inspiration and its suitability for Christian worship lies chiefly in the fact that our Lord quoted it often to emphasize His life, death and glorious resurrection.

Now, in conclusion, I would like to propound and answer the question. What is to be done about all this? I referred at the outset to those who consider us as merely a band of people clinging desperately to an outworn tradition. My answer is this that the tradition of which they speak has always been in the vanguard of true reform and enlightenment. There are many historical references I could give you in support of this but, perhaps it will suffice, if I refer again to the one I quoted at last Assembly. Professor John Fiske, who has been ranked as one of the two greatest American historians, says this: "It is not too much to say that in the 17th century the entire political future of mankind was staked upon the questions that were at issue in England. Had it not been for the Puritans, political liberty would probably have disappeared from the world. If ever there were men who laid down their lives in the cause of all mankind, it was those grim old Ironsides whose watchwords were texts of Holy Writ, whose battle cries were hymns of praise."

Yes, that is the tradition that some would despise. It is, we believe, a glorious tradition and although we are small in number we are part of that great heritage. However dark the way may be, let us go forward knowing that God will honour those who honour Him.

Let us seek God's richest blessing on our ministers and our congregations, and above all seek God's grace so that our witness outside and in private and in business will be such that we will commend that faith once for all delivered to the saints and that tradition as some would call it which God has so abundantly honoured in our nation's history.

- **The Australian Free Presbyterian, December 15, 1946.**
[Harald Nicolson was an Elder in the old St. Kilda Congregation and for many years our General Treasurer]

BETWEEN YOU AND ME

By this time many would have heard that I have submitted my resignation as Editor of The Presbyterian Banner, effective from the December issue of the magazine. My letter to the Clerk of Synod, in part, runs as follows:

"I'm writing to tender my resignation as the Editor of The Presbyterian Banner, as from the December issue, 2009. I would like 2010 to be free from the kind of commitment that the magazine demands. I think it only fair that some time be given for a new Editor to be appointed to take over for the first issue in 2010.

When I took over as Editor in 2006, I personally had a limited timeframe of 2-3 years in view, namely, to undertake the transition of the magazine from a hard copy magazine format only to a web production. This has now been achieved, costs have been cut, and a healthy surplus has been built up. Further, the localised production of the magazine seems to be working well. In the light of this, I think the time has come to hand on the task to another person to carry this work forward - or revert to the old system of production as the case may be.



I would like to thank the Church for the honour and the trust given to me in appointing me as Editor, and I especially thank the Lord our God for giving me the strength month by month to produce the magazine. The glory belongs only to Him for any good the magazine may have accomplished in his Kingdom. I also pay tribute to those who supported the magazine, and especially to that willing band of helpers in the Northern Rivers who looked after the administrative side – finance, proof reading, packing, and posting." I might also add that this resignation includes resigning from editing "Run for Glory" [the old Fellowship magazine] which it has been my lot to edit since 1998!

I have it on good authority that a new Editor *pro tem* will soon be appointed, and we'll be able to reveal that in our next issue. It won't be a scoop; the Church grapevine is too good for that! But whoever it is, we hope he'll be able to take part in the production of the magazine before the end of the year.

It has been a good [ie sanctifying] experience. In the first issue I edited [September, 2006] I was learning to swim. Now, I'm quite the "little man." But as you know, it's the little man with still a long way to go before he reaches maturity!

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