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"... In the days of the judges in ancient Israel the people demanded a king and God allowed them to have a king, but made it clear that it was not His way for government. . . ."

"... no one will be saved through politics. No one will be saved through having a government committed to godliness. Salvation comes to the individual through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through that alone. But we are called to seek, to have godliness in our homes, are we not? We are equally called to have godliness in the nation, are we not? . . ."

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"The New Finance and Y2K".

Y2K, even if it does not occur the way some people predict, is likely to create another problem — a run on the banks. But there isn't enough cash to satisfy everyone's demands.

REV DR DAVID MITCHELL ON THE CONSTITUTION

This is an address given by Rev Dr David Mitchell at Tatura, Victoria, in August 1998. The text of the speech is reprinted by permission of the author.

Thank you very much for the privilege of being with you, and may I say that I am amazed, astonished, and very encouraged that so many men have seen fit to come out early on a Saturday morning.

Well, what is the purpose of government? I've just listened with interest to what Calvin had to say about it. But what is it? What do you and I think that government should be doing? What do you and I think the government of Australia should be doing? What does the Word of God say about what government should be doing? I know we've already read from the Scriptures, but it doesn't hurt us to give attention to the Scriptures in every aspect of our lives, does it?

I think we would agree, that for the Christian, the Scriptures are the only rule for life, the only rule for worship, and the only rule of faith. Let me then read from Romans 13.

Every one must submit himself to the governing

authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted. And those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. The rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority. Then do what is right, and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good, but if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He's God's servant, an agent of wrath, to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it's necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience.

I've heard this passage preached on from time to time. I've heard preachers say, "Just look at it and you will see that the government has been appointed by

God." The preacher has said, "The government has been appointed by God, therefore you must do exactly what the government says."

I must say I've felt some sympathy for poor old Daniel. Poor old Daniel who *didn't* do what the government said. I've thought to myself, "If that preacher is right, what a pity Daniel didn't have the privilege of reading the New Testament."

Was God's way different in Daniel's time from God's way in the New Testament? Well, let us look at this passage a little more carefully.

Look at the first verse for example, "There is no authority except what God has established." That is to say, God's way and God's Word is the only authority. And the governing authorities — the government of the country — has a duty and a responsibility to implement and fulfill God's word.

The authorities that exist have been established by

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God. The measure of right and wrong has been established by God. The one who rebels against Godly authority, against Godly government, is rebelling against what God has instituted. And those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

"Rulers hold no terror for those who do right." Well, that is exactly God's pattern for government. The government should hold no terror for those who live up to God's measure of right and wrong. But for those who do not live up to God's measure, then the government, the rulers of the land, have a God-given responsibility to take action against the wrongdoer in order to maintain the right, just as Calvin said in his *Institutes*. So, do what is right, and proper government will commend you.

This passage I believe tells us quite clearly that not only is the Scripture God's rule for life, but it is also God's rule for government. Interestingly, this has been the historic view of the Constitutionalists in the United Kingdom. In the year 888, King Alfred – perhaps that's the year he burnt the scones, I don't know – established for England that the Scriptures would be the basis of the law. In other words, he established that the Scriptures would be the Constitution of England.

I don't know whether you were told at school – I know I was told at school and at university – that Britain has no written Constitution. That's just not true. Historically, the written con-

stitution of England was the Word of God. And it was for this reason that the monarchs of England were required on coronation to undertake that they would maintain the Law of God as the only rule for government in those lands over which they had dominion.

That was the basis of the law that came to Australia. I didn't really come here as a salesman this morning, but I did write a small booklet about it. I was at the Constitutional Convention seeking there to present an understanding of the Christian background of our legal structure in Australia. Many have said to me, "But David, how can you be there supporting a foreigner as Head of State?" Well let me say, first of all, that there are two issues: first of all, historically, the term "Head of State" is not appropriate for this country. The idea was that God and God's government are the Head of the State. "Head of State" was a term that was introduced in republics, where they needed to appoint somebody as being the actual "Head of State".

If you were to look at Section 61 of the Constitution, you would see that the executive power, that is what the republicans would call Head of State power, is exercisable by the Governor-General alone. It is not exercisable by the Queen, even if she is in Australia. Section 61 places that power in the Governor-General. I do not necessarily support having someone resident overseas who is not an Australian citizen as the theoretical head of the executive government. The point is, that the Queen undertakes to maintain the Law of God. Whether she does so or not is a different question. But the theoretical position of the law is that the Queen gives that undertaking. And the Governor-General is her representative *for that purpose*. He does not represent her in any other way. He does not take orders from her. He does not report to her. He is not subject to the Queen's decisions. He is – I was going to say – a *free* agent.

But he's not totally free, because he is bound by the requirement of Godly government, just as the Queen is. He has over his shoulders the cloak of the Coronation Oath. In Section 58 of the Constitution, we find that when Parliament – the House of Representatives and the Senate – pass a proposed law, when they pass an Act of Parliament, the Act of Parliament goes to the

The New Finance and Y2K

by Ian Hodge, Ph.D.

The "New" Economics incapacitates the mind. The call to abandon traditional methods of saving by a bank official makes sense if you believe that debt is the way to wealth. This is, unfortunately, the way most Australians think about money at the moment.

The Courier-Mail of January 9, 1999 carried an article quoting the Queensland Credit Union, saying that "parents should teach their children to manage debt and credit rather than encourage them to save."

Quoting the general manager of the Credit Union, the article reported, "Teaching children to save in the 1990s is about as useful as teaching them to drive a horse and buggy."

This is the "new" economics, in spite of the fact that a week earlier the media were reporting increasing problems with credit in this country. Australians are more in debt than ever. The boom for retailers in Christmas shopping was financed by credit card debt. In other words, the "boom" was temporary, not a permanent increase of the economy, because credit card repayments should hinder buying in the future. One news report speaking to a counselling agency, told of a person who had 35 credit cards, \$65,000 worth of debt on the cards, and a part-time job. Naturally, the person could not pay the amount and had taken financial counselling to help solve the problem.

No doubt the Credit Union would not like this situation either, since it is calling for us to teach our children to manage debt, not getting into the situation where we cannot pay.

The problem with this view is that it is like a piece of endless string. Repayment schedules are based on time periods. Extend the time period and the amount of the regular payment comes down. So, why not extend the payment period just a little longer? But where is the limit. Five years? Fifty years? A hundred years? There is no morality suggested in these time periods, only expediency: what will make one group of people (sellers) more money at the expense of another group (buyers)?

Governor-General, who may do one of three things. And I now quote: "According to his discretion he may assent to the law, he may withhold assent, or he may reserve the proposed law for the Queen's pleasure." Let me deal with the last of those three possibilities first.

If he reserves a law for the Queen's pleasure, he does not send it off to England, he does not ask the Queen to do anything about it. He scratches his head and says, "Well, look, I really don't know what the responsibility under the Coronation Oath is for this law, and I'll put it aside for the moment and have a think about it." He reserves it not for the pleasure of the person of the Queen, but for the theory that government in this land must be Godly. In fact, no Bill of the federal Parliament has been reserved for the Queen's pleasure for many long years.

The other thing that he may do, in his discretion, is to assent to the Bill in the Queen's name; that is, recognising that it is within God's authority, or he may withhold his assent, recognising that it is not within God's authority. Does the Governor-General ever withhold assent? It is a long time since the Governor-General has withheld assent to any bill. It has happened. It has happened a number of times. While I was privileged to be working in the public service — and it came to my notice because of my position in the Commonwealth Public Service — one Governor-General *did* refuse assent to a particular Bill. He did that in order to demonstrate his power and authority to withhold assent, not because he had any particular objection.

"The Bill," he said, "was quite irrelevant, and this is my opportunity to remind the government of my responsibility under section 58 of the Constitution." So it has happened, it should happen, and that's what section 58 is here for. You will see it is in the Governor-General's discretion. That doesn't mean he can do just as he pleases. His discretion is governed or fettered by the Word of God. This is the *theory* of government. I'm not saying that it is the *practice* of government. The *theory* of government in Australia at present is that the Scriptures should be regarded as the only rule for government.

You might say, and you would be absolutely right, that there is no such thing as an unbiased lecture, talk, book, sermon. Bias shows through, and you will already have seen a strong bias of mine this morning. I believe, however, that as one who seeks to honour the Lord Jesus Christ, I must be biased in favour of God's way. Not just biased, but committed. And gentlemen, I would say that that is the responsibility of each one of us.

In the days of the judges in ancient Israel the people demanded a king and God allowed them to have a king, but made it clear that it was not His way for government. Isn't it true that God told the people that they were in fact rejecting Him and they were placing a king in place of godliness? Well, that's absolutely true, and I hope that at that time when the people were trying to turn away from godlessness, I hope that if I had been living then that I would have been seeking to follow the Lord God rather than the wish, or whim, of the people.

What about Oliver Cromwell? Wasn't he a republican? Didn't he overthrow the monarch? Didn't he establish the commonwealth in England? The Commonwealth? Commonwealth of Australia? Interestingly, the word "republic" is drawn from two Latin words, *res publica* "things owned in common." Owned by the public. The "common wealth" of the people. The English word for republic is "commonwealth" and when Oliver Cromwell established the commonwealth in England he was establishing a republic, and that was the idea in Australia: that the people would be able to choose the government, that the people would be able to choose a government under God. And the word "commonwealth" was chosen as a result of Oliver Cromwell's activities.

I don't want to turn this talk into a history lesson, but over the years, the monarchs of England forgot their responsibility under God. You remember *Magna Carta*? I've often been told that the English constitution evolved, starting with *Magna Carta*. Do you know there was nothing new in *Magna Carta*? All that *Magna Carta* did was to put into writing some aspects of the pre-existing law. Do you know who drew up *Magna Carta*? *Magna Carta* was drawn up in the church. Why was it drawn up in the church? Well, there

It would be far better if we educated our children to two other propositions tied up in the debt age. The first of these is that sellers who want us to take longer debt periods are out to get rich at our expense. This is more than just normal commercial transactions, because sellers are asking buyers to take on more and more debt for only one purpose: so they can get more money. This not only displays the true nature of debt, but also indicates that sellers are by-and-large greedy and will do anything to get an extra dollar.

The second thing it indicates is the radical *impatience* of the current generation of both buyers and sellers, both of whom are not willing to wait until buyers have saved the money before they purchase. Debt is the opportunity for *some* buyers and sellers to bring forward transactions that might otherwise have to wait. But debt cannot service everyone, because at the end of the day there must be some savers in the community who lend to the borrowers unless the credit expansion is financed by fractional reserve practices. I have written on previous occasions how fractional reserve banking thoroughly perverts debt and makes the situation worse for the community as a whole.

Think about this. A recent report on the Y2K issue highlighted the fact that there is more than three *trillion* dollars in deposit accounts in the United States. In currency, there exists only about 44 *billion*, plus another 200 *billion* the Federal Reserve is promising to make available. Recent surveys have indicated a number of people plan to withdraw their savings from the banks prior to January 1, 2000, "just in case" the millennium bug issues become real. The problem is, that if the reported number (16%) *do* take out their money, *there is not enough cash to cover the withdrawals*.

A further 31% percent of people according to the USA Today poll plan to withdraw "significant" amounts of cash. This in itself could amount near the total amount of cash reserves. In short, if the numbers in the poll are to believe, there is going to be a severe banking crisis in the United States *before* the millennium bug hits.

This problem is not unique to America. Other countries, including Australia, are planning to print more currency this year to handle the anticipated extra cash withdrawals that will result from people are concerned about the Y2K issue.

was a pressure group who felt that their rights were being overridden by the king, particularly land rights, who went to the church and said, "What does the Constitution, or the Scripture, say about these particular issues that are worrying and concerning us?"

Archbishop Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, actually penned a *Magna Carta* setting down the church's understanding of the application of Scripture to those particular issues, and the landed gentry, the barons went to King John in 1215 and said to him, "Look, you know you're breaking the law."

And he said, "No, I am the law. I'm the king. I decide what's right and wrong about here."

And the barons replied, "Oh no, you don't. Here we've got it all written down. You are *subject* to the law. You are not above the law, you are not the law, but you are *subject* to the law. Just as Romans 13 says, that governments are subject to God's Law."

King John said, "No, I'm not. Look around Europe and you will see that the kings right across Europe are quite above the law — they make the laws themselves and they decide what is right and wrong."

So the barons drew their swords and said, "Listen here, unless you recognise that you're subject to the law, you just aren't going to be king for five minutes longer, and we're going to see to that!"

So King John signed the *Magna Carta*, recognising that he was subject to the law. Years went by, and the basis of the reasons for *Magna Carta* were quite forgotten. Samuel Rutherford started writing about the law being a king, that the king is subject to the law, and this book went right around England and was, I suppose, one of the catalysts for Cromwell's, may I call it, rebellion against the godlessness of the king. He sought to replace godlessness in government with godliness in government.

It seems to me that the very opposite is the situation in Australia now. As I read history, I would hope that I would have been a supporter of the principles for which Oliver Cromwell stood. Not the excesses that unfortunately took place at that time, but the principles. In supporting the present governmental system in Australia, I

believe that I'm taking the very stand that I would have been taking by supporting Oliver Cromwell. You might say to me then, "David, could you be a republican? Could you be supporting the idea of a republic?"

To that I would answer, "If the republic were to have its basis in godliness, I would see no reason — except for emotion and historical reasons — I would see no principia, or Christian reason for being opposed to a republic."

I was privileged to be an elected delegate at the Constitutional Convention. There they talked much about how a republican Constitution would be structured. You know that the Preamble to the present Constitution — at least the Preamble to the Act of which the present Constitution is a schedule in section 8 — they talk much about the Preamble, and the present Preamble says, "We the people of the States of Australia, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God . . ."

It was vigorously debated whether "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God" should remain in any new republican Constitution. The Constitutional Convention agreed that it should. However, it was also agreed — and this slipped past the notice of many folk — it was also agreed that the term "Almighty God" means what any person might wish it to mean, and does not necessarily refer to the God recognised and worshipped by Christians.

One particular delegate said, "Well, I'm a Christian, but I don't believe in God. Now before I support this, I want to know whether it is recognised that the God we're referring to is *anything*." And the response that was given by a certain ordained cleric — not myself — was, "Yes, it means absolutely anything you want it to mean." And it was on that basis that the Constitutional Convention agreed to retain the words "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God."

I proposed that the Preamble of any new Constitution should include a provision stating that the only measure for government in Australia is the historic measure of God's measure of right and wrong. That was supported, I think, by nine delegates. Interesting, isn't it? Maybe that was my fault. Maybe I didn't present it clearly or effectively or whatever it might be. But

A run for cash of this nature will elicit one of two responses from the government: either it must create more cash, thereby creating a new wave of monetary inflation, or else it will act to protect the banks by limiting withdrawals. If it does either one, it allows borrowers to survive at the expense of lenders (savers), so whatever the government does will penalise one group of citizens at the expense of another group. It could opt to do nothing, but then the true nature of banking would be revealed and those who have been benefiting from fractional reserve banking, primarily borrowers, will be the losers. Which group is the largest and most powerful voting block? Answer this question and you can guess with a high degree of accuracy which group will be protected in any Y2K economic fallout.

The run for cash can also elicit a response from the banks. It was recently reported to me that a bank in Australia is currently reviewing all loans, with an expectation that high-risk loans will be recalled by mid year. This is another way for the bank to protect itself if it is expecting a run on cash because of Y2K. And if there is to be an economic downturn because of the millennium bug, then recalling high risk loans before the disaster gets into full swing at the end of this year.

The recalling of high risk loans by the bank is *also* indication they *do* expect some difficulties in forthcoming months. Even if Y2k is not the sole problem, the so-called Asian meltdown may still have an impact in this country. Japan, for example, is still in the doldrums, and commentators believe many businesses in Japan, along with many others in Asia, have failed to correct Y2k issues in time.

No doubt our credit union and bank managers would like more debt. That is their business. They thrive on it. They need it to prop up their already shaky businesses. No bank has sufficient cash to repay on demand all those who deposit money with it.

If morality is not an issue, then the way to act here is simple: more debt. The more you have, the more likely you will expect the government act to protect your interests. That you will be creating a bigger and bigger problem for your children will not deter you. You know for a fact that the debt amount spirals, while the length of time people are extending their repayments cannot increase *ad infinitum*. But you will not stop to consider where the stopping point might be.

the fact is, that the Constitutional Convention rejected the concept that the principle of government, the only rule for government in Australia should be God's Word. Just because the Constitutional Convention rejected that as the rule of government is not necessarily relevant to anything, for nothing falls unknown to God. Nothing, nothing.

As we look at Psalm 2, which is an exercise well worth doing — looking at any of God's Word is an exercise well worth doing — as we look at Psalm 2, we perceive that the nations, and the peoples of the nations are conspiring to break the chains of Christianity. They're seeking to break away from the truth of God, seeking to break away from God's Law as the measure, the only measure, the only rule, for life and government. What does the Lord God do? The Lord God laughs at them. He laughs at them because His plan will be fulfilled, His plan will be completed.

There can be no doubt that God's purposes cannot be hindered by the conspiracy or godlessness of mankind. However, mankind, each of us, is fully accountable to God. Our governments are accountable to God. Those who take positions of authority and responsibility will have to answer to Him, and they have an especially heavy burden. Those who teach will be judged more strictly, I believe. Those who lead will be judged more strictly. I'm not surprised therefore that God's Word tells us to pray for those in authority over us. I'm not surprised that God's Word tells us to pray for kings and princes and those in government.

I suppose that we have a special prayer responsibility in Australia for we have the privilege of selecting our own governments. We have the privilege of voting for them, so you and I have a part responsibility in putting them there. A responsibility for which we will be accountable at the seat of judgment one day.

But David, aren't you just talking politics? David, shouldn't you just be looking at the Gospel, and just preaching salvation through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

My friends, no one will be saved through politics. No one will be saved through having a government committed to godliness. Salvation comes to the individual through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through

that alone. But we are called to seek, to have godliness in our homes, are we not? We are equally called to have godliness in the nation, are we not?

I suspect everyone here knows the Great Commission off by heart. What does it say, there in Matthew's gospel — in the last chapter of Matthew's gospel? "Jesus said, 'Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.'"

Now there's more than one possible understanding of the message of the Lord Jesus Christ in that Great Commission. Who needs to be baptised or covered, or sprinkled? Is it the disciples or the nations? Those of you who are Greek scholars may be able to give some thought and attention to that, but I would like to say to you, that it is by no means certain that it is the individuals. As you look at the context, and the Greek, and even as you look at the English, it is distinctly possible that it is the *nations* that are being talked about.

And where in this passage does it say anything about water? I know that traditionally, the scholars and theologians have added the water in here, but the word "baptise" — the Greek word that we translate "baptise" — does not mean to cover or sprinkle in water. It means to cover or sprinkle. Does this passage, does this Great Commission, tell us what they are to be baptised in? If it doesn't specifically say water, does it tell us what they're to be baptised in?

Does it tell us that they're to be baptised in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Do you remember in the old novels and on the old movies, "Open up in the name of the law"? Open up because I have the authority of the law. Is this passage saying to us that we have a duty to cover the nations with the authority of the eternal God? Please, I am not seeking to detract from this passage in relation to the sacrament of baptism. What I am saying is that it may well have an even *wider* application than simply the sacrament of baptism.

We say the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread." Do we set about working for

You will hope that it will not be in your lifetime. You will hope it will not affect your family, but you need to ask is it family in this generation, the next or the one after that will pay the real cost of our inability to control your spending habits.

On the other hand, if ethics — especially God's ethics — are important to you, then the injunction "owe no man anything" will govern your actions. You will be concerned that further borrowing only exacerbates the problem for the next generation, and you will look at your children and think to yourself, "If I don't stop the debt game, who will? And if I'm not prepared to stop it, why should I expect my children to stop it."

It is surprising the number of well-intentioned people who have succumbed to the short-term pragmatic argument, "But if I borrow, then my repayments contribute to my wealth, specially if I buy the family home." Or the argument might be, "Rent money is dead money. Therefore borrow, and have your repayments go into the building of assets." This latter argument, however, is only true if prices keep rising to mask the effects of the interest.

Some remarkable work has been done by one business group in this country that indicates it is cheaper, a whole lot cheaper, to rent than to pay interest on a mortgage when it comes to purchasing a home. But if this analysis is correct (and it has been undertaken by qualified accountants), then the real reason for debt is not money, it is something else. It could be an inability to save. It could be an inability to control compulsive buying. Or, it might be no more than the simple desire to have the appearance of wealth without the substance. For debt allows us to live like those who are wealthier than us — at least for a short time.

Thus, when we combine the bankers' desire for us to have more debt, our propensity to disobey God in financial matters, then add to that the ingredient of fear that is being generated by Y2K, we have a recipe for a financial and economic disaster beyond our comprehension and beyond our control. But we are faced with a choice: obey the injunction "owe no man anything, except love," or ignore it and accept debt as the new standard of financial morality. Remember, though, what the Psalmist said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psa. 127:1).

our daily bread, even though we are praying to the Lord God, because we know that it comes from Him alone? But do we realise that we have our part, that each of us has a responsibility to work to maintain ourselves and our families? Yes of course we do! When we pray "give us this day our daily bread" we don't sit back and do nothing. We set about fulfilling our part, our responsibility.

What about when we pray "thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven"? Do we set about our part in establishing godliness in our own nation? What about the leaders of the nation? Do they do their part? Look at Romans 13 that we started with this morning. In that chapter, I suggest to you that there can be no other proper interpretation other than that the government has the primary responsibility to cover the nation in Godliness. That is the basic and fundamental responsibility of government.

There's a little book – it's written in words of half a syllable – it's not a particularly clever book – but it's called *Where are Today's Daniels?*, which is in fact a commentary on Romans 13, and bringing in all the other parts of the Scripture. I do commend it to you. It's written by Lester Cooper, and it's published by True Books. I do commend it to you, it is very, very easy reading, and it just brings this perspective to light so clearly that no one could have any other view of it.

Are the foundations of godliness being destroyed in this land? Maybe, maybe. The Psalmist tells us when the foundations are being destroyed, what shall the righteous do? Is that a cry of despair by the Psalmist? If you were to look on to the next verse, you would see that the very next verse says "The Lord God reigns. God is in His holy temple, and the Lord God reigns." No, it is not a cry of despair. The Psalmist is saying to me and to each of us, "David, when you think the foundations of godliness are being destroyed, think again, because God is still in control."

I do not know what your view of history is. There are three possible views of history, I suppose, of how it comes about. One is that it all happens by chance, that one event leads on to another event, leads on to another event, it's all an evolution. That's the position taken, usually, in schools, that we learn history so that we will see the mistakes of the past, so that we will be able to condition them just a little so that we don't commit those same mistakes again.

There are others who would say, "No, history isn't a matter of evolution, it's a matter of conspiracy." There are a number of history books written from a conspiratorial point of view. You do not usually find them in the bookshops. Indeed, they're very hard to find, but there are some very good histories written from a conspiratorial point of view.

And there's yet a third possibility. And the third possibility is a little

mind-boggling. That is that the whole of history has been established by God. And that leaders are God's appointees, accountable to him, certainly, but that He appoints the leaders of the nations. If you hold this view, and this is why it's so mind-boggling, it would necessarily mean that Hitler was God's man. It would necessarily mean that Stalin was God's man. Can this be?

Well, I don't know, and I don't press any of these particular positions. If, however, you were to look at Paul's address on Mars' Hill in Acts 17:26, you might be as astonished as I was when I first came across this verse, or these verses. "From one man, God made every nation . . ." Does this not mean that God chose the people from the United Kingdom and elsewhere who came to settle in Australia, and that God had determined the exact time for it? The necessary corollary, I suppose, is that God determined where I am to live. I thought my wife and I chose our house; I thought we went to a lot of trouble choosing it; I thought we went to a lot of trouble finding the money to pay for it; I thought the choice was entirely ours. Could it have been God's choice? I simply ask the question.

But the next verse is so very important. "God did this so that men would seek him, and perhaps reach out for him, and find him, though he's not far from each one of us." This places on each of us a responsibility, doesn't it? A responsibility to ensure that those around us perceive God and Godliness. It places a responsibility on individuals, and it places a responsibility on government.