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### Consequences for our children of the influence of the world's education programme

Text: Nehemiah 13:23-27.

*A synopsis of a sermon preached by Rev Ivan Foster at the morning session of the day of prayer for Christian Education held in Bethany Free Presbyterian Church, Portadown, on Saturday 1st February 2014.*

*A recording of the message is available [here](#).*

After 35 years of involvement in and observation of the Christian Education scene, I am more than ever convinced that it is the will of God that God's people support a Bible-based system of education. If anything, were I starting out again I would be more radical in my practices, for I have seen the consequences of failure and defiance of God in this matter.

I wish to look at Nehemiah 13:23-27.

"In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?"

Nehemiah's trials and difficulties as he sought to see Jerusalem's walls rebuilt and good order restored amongst God's people, remind us all how difficult it is to see a recovery of that which is lost to the devil and his agents.

The passage ends with a prayer, (verse 31) which to me highlights the loneliness of a man such as Nehemiah. It is not easy to campaign against all odds for a cause that generates little sympathy amongst the majority. It is to the Lord alone Nehemiah turns for comfort, help and support in his battle.

#### **I. SIN IN THE LIVES OF PARENTS WILL BE REAPED IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN**

Verses 23-24.

**1. Here are marriages and homes built upon negligence or even defiance of God.** The whole foundation and structure of these families are wrong. No heed had been taken of God's Word. "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son." Deuteronomy 7:1-3. Marriage outside of Israel was forbidden. It was considered unimportant.

**2. It was a reoccurring problem.** This was something they were aware was sinful and had agreed to put away. "They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons," Nehemiah 10:29-30. There was an earlier incident



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in which a similar stand had been taken some years before in the days of Ezra. "Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass," Ezra 9:1-2 "And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do," Ezra 10:10-12.

This makes the disobedience of those referred to in our text all the worse. They acted against light and against the previous professions of obedience.

**3. The price paid by the children for the parents' folly will be high.** "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people," verse 24. This is what happens when you make the ungodly the parents of your children. In all education systems, the teacher becomes a parent to the children in the classroom. There is a term which is employed to state this relationship. The term is "in loco parentis", that is - the teacher is "in the place of the parent."

There is therefore an application of this passage to the situation in which we find ourselves when considering the education of our children under the state system. It is contrary to God's will that we place our children under the care, direction and influence of a teacher who is not a believer living in obedience to God's Word and teaching only that which agrees with God's Word.

Think of the loss suffered by these children by their being deprived of the ability to speak and therefore understand the Jews' language! They could not read or understand God's Word nor understand the preaching of God's servants. No instruction could be imparted to them. This was a terrible and eternal handicap.

### II. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MATTER MAY BE SEEN IN NEHEMIAH'S RESPONSE

"And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves," verse 25.

**1. Here is a matter the man of God was greatly grieved over. His actions show his distress.** All too many treat this matter with indifference, but most certainly not Nehemiah, and neither should we. Christian Education is not a matter that you may take or leave. It is something essential for the rearing of the children of the believer.

**2. See how the man of God contended with the transgressors.** The word means "to plead with, debate, strive with". It was a strong response. It is the same word employed by the Holy Spirit in Genesis 26:20. "And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him," and again in Genesis 31:36. "And Jacob was wroth, and chode (the same word) with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?" And yet again in 1 Sam 2:10. "The adversaries (the same word) of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

**3. He pronounced and enacted the judgment of God upon such behaviour.** He reminded them of the "curse" of God that would attend such disobedience. "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall



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destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods," Exodus 34:12-16.

This was treachery on the part of those guilty of placing their children under ungodly tutelage. "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god," Malachi 2:11. It was a trespass against the Lord, a marrying of the daughter of a strange god. Every unconverted person is a child of "a strange god." So said the Saviour in John 8:44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." The devil has an influence in every classroom staffed by an unconverted person.

4. **Nehemiah had some beaten.** They were guilty of a great sin, child abuse! There is an abuse of children which is a crime only in God's eyes - believers placing them under the influence of ungodly teachers who being blind can only blindly lead them into danger.

### III. THIS IS A SIN WHICH WILL NOT BE OVERLOOKED IN ANY

So stressed Nehemiah. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin," verse 26. What privileges Solomon enjoyed, what heights he attained and yet this sin brought him down and made him to be a curse and a blight in Israel.

Nehemiah again shows that this is not a sin from which any are exempt. "And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me," verse 28.

Please let us note how serious is this matter!!

### IV. THE ONLY ANSWER IS TO BREAK ALL LINKS WHEREBY THE UNGODLY INFLUENCE OUR CHILDREN

"Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. "Thus cleansed I them from all strangers," verses 25, 30.

The teaching of this passage for us is clear.

A. **Children learn the ways of the ungodly very quickly, especially their language.** These children were able to speak the language of the heathen but not the language of the Jews. The heathen influence in the home dominated the child's mind.

B. **They must be taught the language and Law of God in separation from the world.** The world cannot teach these things to our children and if they are to be taught, then it must be done in separation from worldly influence.

C. **Children who cannot speak the language of God's people will not share eternity with them.** Is that not a most solemn and sobering truth which should bear down upon our souls as we join together now to pray for God's blessing upon our Christian schools?

Rev Ivan Foster.

1st February 2014.