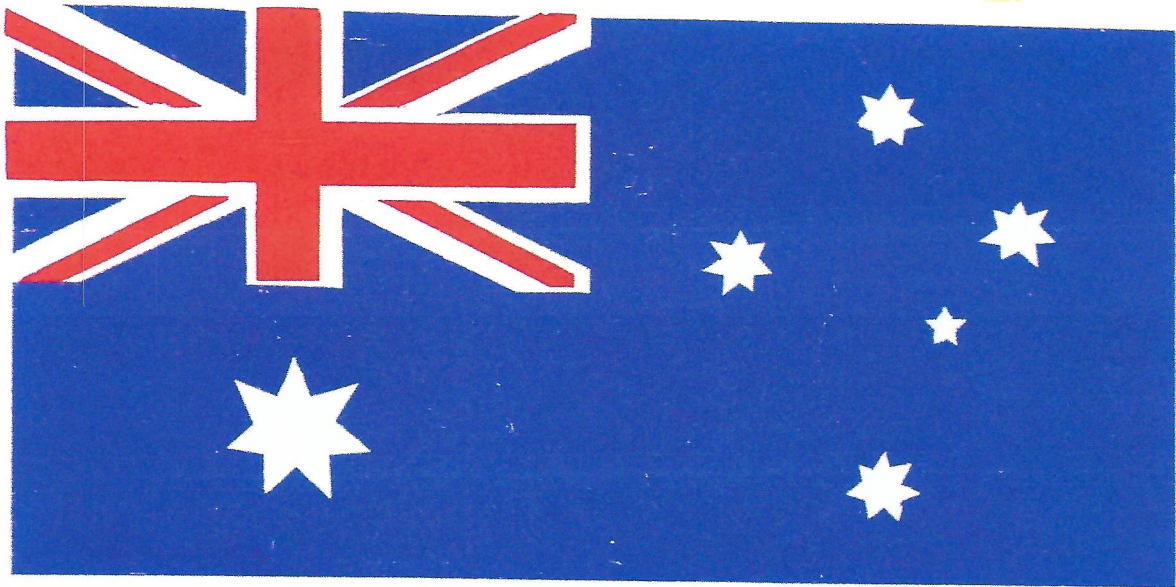


FABRIC OF FREEDOM

***A comprehensive study of the
Australian Flag***



by D.J. Pinwill

THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG

*I'm the fabric of freedom,
That waves overhead,
I'm woven with crosses and
liberty's threads,
I'm knitted with knowledge
From values held true
And fashioned with stars on a
cloth royal blue.
I'm a flag for the future
Though I come from the past
So unfurl me, and fly me, high on
the mast.*

D.J. Pinwill.

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CHAPTER 1.

HOW IMPORTANT IS A FLAG?

There are many things that exist that are beyond value. What is the value of courage? Who can put a price upon honesty or mateship? A nation's most priceless asset is probably the spirit of its people.

There is no doubting the depth and character of the Australian people. Aussies have been endowed with their own unique brand of national spirit – a spirit that pioneered this harsh but rewarding land, a spirit that called our young men to war in the defence of our freedom. This same spirit has welded our people together, and united us in times of joy and tragedy.

The spirit of a nation's people is, indeed, a priceless asset. It is this national spirit that has been the building blocks of this country.

The English language is not adequate to the task of describing the intenseness of emotion or the personal commitment and sacrifice out of which has been born our "national spirit". It is in the attempt to convey this abstract, but nevertheless very real, concept that the use of symbols comes into its own. One simple symbol can speak volumes. A symbol can portray a message in a very personal way, in a manner that could never be done by any other form of communication. A nation's flag is, therefore, the expression of the "national heart". A heart is a vital organ of the human body; a flag is the symbolic essence of that "national body".

The job of a flag is to give a nation's people a central rallying point. A flag keeps our national body healthy by reminding each individual of the sacrifices of those gone before. A flag's job is to instil pride – not a selfish pride – but a humble, thankful pride in our country and the blessings that it provides for us each day of our lives. A nation's heart is its flag.

Those people who wish to change or do away with our flag are, in fact, proposing a heart-transplant for our nation. These people are motivated by shallow reasons, by reasons of political doctrine, political fashion. They say our flag no longer represents us. These people conclude that our past should be forgotten or replaced. The new flag exponents ignore the obvious disunity that any new flag will cause. Our nation will be divided over the issue, and we shall be a country with two flags. Our present flag is a flag of tradition. Any other flag will be a flag of fashion.

Many opinion polls, both recent and in years gone by, have plainly expressed our national opinion. A clear majority of Australians support and wish to retain our present flag. We may take comfort and hope from these figures. However, as to why most of us support our flag is totally unclear.

We can safely say that some of us like the look of our flag – it is truly a beautiful emblem. Some of us are emotionally attached. Events such as service for our country during the crises of wartime may bind us to our flag. Perhaps we love our flag because we love our country. There are many and varied reasons, and all of them are noble and genuine. But the question remains – how many of us have a total understanding of our flag, its symbols, its crosses, its stars and colours? In the days ahead

it will require much more than an emotional, or instinctive, defence of the flag in order to keep it.

The attack upon our flag will be intense and unrelenting. Our present Prime Minister, Paul Keating, has declared war upon our flag. Many of the nation's academics are joining Keating's ranks and exerting their influence. The media will produce endless debates and endless articles that continue on and on until our ears are full and our senses deadened. The new flag exponents will tell us that a new flag is inevitable – that it is no use resisting – we may as well get it over with. Paul Keating is a master of this technique.

Bob Hawke is no longer prime minister as a result of this tactic. The issue of Keating being leader was presented again and again. Votes were taken which Hawke won. Still the issue did not go away. A.L.P. members were told that Keating as leader was inevitable. They were pestered and agitated to the point of desperation. Their defences weakened. For the sake of peace and party unity, Hawke support crumbled and Keating went in.

This is not a new tactic. Most two-year-olds are masters of it. How many mothers succumb to a spoilt child's tantrums, for the sake of peace and family unity? The only way a mother can continue to refuse a spoilt child's demands is to have a depth of conviction and understanding about the real situation that outweighs her child's emotions.

If we are to retain our flag, it will only happen because our determination to resist and our depth of understanding of the flag gives us enough courage and conviction to survive the onslaught. Our only true line of defence does not depend on an emotional or instinctive response, but on the conviction that

comes from knowing the traditions and meanings of each square inch of our flag, why every thread is as it is, and further, we must comprehend the significance of these meanings in our lives today.

The purpose of this writing is to give as complete an understanding as possible of the history, heritage and symbolism of our flag. Of its Christian story as directly related to the bible. How it signifies our government, our institutions, our democracy, our constitution and our freedom. Our best defence is to arm ourselves with this information. If we know exactly what we shall lose if we throw away our flag, then we shall be strengthened in our struggle to retain it.

CHAPTER 2.



Through the mists of time comes the legend of St. George. Do not be mistaken by thinking that St. George was a myth – a fairy tale. There is a large amount of evidence available about St. George, his life, his times and his dedicated Christian beliefs.

St. George was born around the second half of the third century at Lydda, in Palestine. His father was an officer of great wealth in the army of Diocletian, the Roman Emperor. His mother was a daughter of the Count of Lydda. This Lydda is the same area that St. Peter himself visited, which resulted in the conversion to Christianity of the whole town (*Acts 9:32–35*).

The details of the soldier-martyr's early life has come down to us in the form of ENCOMIUMS, especially ABBA THEODOTUS, as recorded in the Coptic texts and translated by Sir Wallis Budge. This early information tells us that St. George's father, the Governor of Lydda, died when St. George was ten years' old. The family was "exceedingly rich and well-known for the goodness of their deeds". At the

death of his father a new governor was appointed, Justus, who adopted St. George in order to educate him in the military. When older, he was sent to the Emperor, Diocletian, who soon had St. George as a General over 5000 men. The text reads:

"When St. George had completed his twentieth year he was exceeding strong and valiant in battle, and no one could be compared with him for strength and beauty, and God was with him in all his ways."

St. George enjoyed the favour of Diocletian, and was promoted to Tribune of the Imperial Guard. (*"Petits Bollandistes"* - a collection of biographies of the Saints.)

Constantine the Great, the Roman Emperor who put to an end the persecution of Christians, and brought Christ to his Empire, was roughly the same age as St. George. In fact they were comrades-in-arms under Galerius in the Egyptian and Persian campaigns (Page 50, *"George of Lydda"*).

St. George, in the course of his military duties, was sent by Diocletian on an expedition to Britain. The tradition which associates St. George with Britain suggests that he sailed through the Irish Sea, subsequently known as "St. George's Channel" to this day. While in Britain he visited his comrade-in-arms, Constantine, at York. Constantius Chlorus, Constantine's father, was at that time Emperor of York and his Empress was Helena, of which Melancon states (page 189, *"Epistola"*):

"Helena was unquestionably a British Princess."

This is the same "Helen of the Cross", so-called because it was she that tradition says discovered the true cross of Christ's crucifixion in 326 A.D. (Page 554, *Ency. Britt. Vol 4.*)

Sozomen writes (400 A.D.):

"The Great Constantine received his Christian education in Britain."

St. George's visit was given a lasting commemoration, because over the gates of York hangs a shield blazoned with a red cross on a silver background – St. George's sign.

The life of St. George changed dramatically when Diocletian issued an edict for the persecution of Christians. All Christian soldiers were required to take part in sacrificial rites. An edict was issued forbidding Christian assemblies; ordering the destruction of churches; burning of scriptures, and depriving Christians of offices that they held (Page 22–26, Kurtz: "Church History").

St. George was stripped of his armour, military rank and worldly possessions. Given that his relationship with Diocletian had always been cordial, St. George decided to confer with the Emperor on behalf of the Christians (Page 70, E.P.Baker "Constantine the Great"). Eusebius. Bishop of Caesarea (265–346 A.D.), states:

"The moment the decree against the churches was published a certain person, by no means obscure, but most highly honoured, moved by zeal towards God and carried away by his burning faith, seized and tore it to pieces in a public place, as an unholy and profane thing while two Emperors were present in the city, Diocletian, and he who held fourth place in the Government after him, Galerius. This man (St. George) was the first at that time who thus distinguished himself." St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (374–397 A.D.) expresses the same incident:

"George, the most faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, when religion by others was concealed, alone adventured to confess the name of God."

After this St. George suffered imprisonment and trials before pagan governors. Numerous forms of torture were employed to induce him to sacrifice to the Roman gods. (Sir Wallis Budge "George of Lydda", page 23.)

Bishop Theodotus of Ancyra, the ancient historian of around 450 A.D., has left us an account of these trials. St. George apparently declared before Galerius:

"I am a Christian. I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

At one point Galerius brought St. George to his palace as a guest, hoping a friendly gesture would win him over to the pagan side. Galerius's wife, Empress Alexandra, heard St. George reciting the 77th Psalm, and asked him what it was he was saying. St. George, in true missionary spirit, revealed the scriptures and the gospel to her, which led to her conversion. When Galerius heard this he ordered Empress Alexandra to be imprisoned and tortured. The Empress, it is known, remained true, and died in her new-found faith. (Brit. Mus. Orient M.S. No. 686, Fol. 177 C.1.)

It may have been this incident that gave rise to the legend of St. George slaying the dragon and rescuing the princess. The famous painting by Raphael depicts this scene. Galerius was referred to as a "*dragon*" in the written account by Pasicrates – St. George's servant. Pasicrates was a witness to St. George's martyrdom. A translation of his interesting documents are in the British Museum. In the Syriac versions, Galerius is referred to as "*the serpent*"

viper", and as *"O foul and evil dragon"*. In any case the dragon in scripture is always Satan, or the evil one.

The legend is a vivid picture of a saint defeating evil and defending the purity of the princess. It signifies the ultimate victory of virtue over vice, and the final triumph of Christ.

All attempts to compel St. George were unsuccessful. Finally, Galerius wrote his sentence of death, saying:

"I give George, who hath put the decrees of the Governors behind his back, over to the sword. Know, O ye peoples, that we are innocent of his blood this day!" (British Museum).

St. George was beheaded in the year 304 A.D. His body was returned to Lydda, where his relatives built a mausoleum over his remains. This building was consecrated by Theodotus, Bishop of Jerusalem.

Since that time, St. George's Day has been observed on April 23rd throughout the centuries.

In A.D. 314, Constantine convened the Council of Arles. According to the Greek church, it was at this Council that the martyred George of Lydda was proposed by Constantine himself to be termed as *"The Champion Knight of Christendom"*.

The names of British signatories at this Council are Eborius (Bishop of York), Restitus (Bishop of London), and Adelphus (Bishop of Caerleon-on-Usk).

Constantine fought his battles in the name of the Christian God. He had his troops paint the Christian monogram on their shields. Constantine says he had a vision of a Christian sign that

appeared in the sky with the words "*In this sign - Conquer!*"(Ency.Brit.15th Edition, Vol 5, page 72).

Constantine had the sacred standard of Roman power - the Labarum - emblazoned with a figure of the cross. The *alpha* and *omega* letters in Greek were placed on either side of it. Constantine used the Christian cross as a sign of victory.

Within ten years of the accession of Constantine, Christianity became the prevailing religion, and with it came the prominence of the red cross (Elder, "George of Lydda" page 55). Constantine is known to have dedicated twenty-one churches to the honour of St. George.

As well as Constantine and St. George being connected with Britain and, therefore, the red cross, there are other documents that suggest further evidence. John Hardyng (1378-1405), who wrote "*Chronicles of England*" suggests that when Joseph of Arimathea visited England, he converted King Arviragus to Christianity, and gave him a shield of silver-white with a red cross, for a coat of arms. Joseph of Arimathea was the rich merchant in whose tomb Christ's body was laid. It was Joseph who collected Christ's body from the Romans. Joseph did visit England (Ency.Britt. 15th Edition, Vol.V, page 012), and he is still patron saint of Glastonbury in Somerset.

Further to this, William the Conqueror flew the standard of the red cross of St. George from the masthead as he approached the British Isles, and fought under it at the Battle of Hastings.

The Bayeux Tapestry shows a banner with a red cross being received by William from Bishop Odo.

St. George is no doubt a worthy Patron Saint of England. A true hero, with the virtues of courage,

determination and Christian commitment. His sign of the red cross on the white background has always stood for the soldiers of Christ and the victory of Christianity.

The cross itself is entwined with the history of England from the time of Joseph of Arimathea, before St. George, and then on to William the Conqueror. How can any other symbol say so much on our flag? The values it stood for almost 2000 years ago are still relevant today.

Richard I used the red cross during the crusades. He also built a church on the site of St. George's burial place in Lydda.

Edward III made St. George the Patron Saint of England, and established his **"Order of St. George and the Garter"** in 1348.

In recent times the St. George cross has been adopted by the Red Cross Society. In this case, it stands for Christian help and mercy.

The St. George Cross is a bravery award second only to the Victoria Cross.

Although this history pre-dates white settlement in Australia, it was these same values, beliefs and principles that gave us the spirit and courage to build this country.

CHAPTER 3.



The national religious emblem of Scotland is St. Andrew's cross. He is the Patron Saint of Scotland and, according to the gospel of St. John, was a brother to St. Peter, and is the first apostle named. The gospel further states that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist before Christ's call.

The section on St. Andrew in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol.1, page 360) records:

"A fourth century account reports his death by crucifixion, and late mediaeval literature describes the shape of his cross as diagonal. He is represented by an X-shaped cross (i.e. the Scottish flag). Since the fourth century his feast day has been November 30th".

The date of his death has been given as between 60-70 A.D., at Petros on the Gulf of Corinth, Greece. Tradition relates that St. Andrew considered himself unworthy to be crucified on a cross the same shape as that on which his Saviour suffered. Because of this, he was crucified on the X-shaped cross.

In the book *"These Are Ancient Things"* by Com. L.G.A. Roberts, it states:

Relics of St. Andrew were brought to Fifeshire, Scotland, in 370 A.D., where a church still called St. Andrews was erected in his memory."

There is one further historical document that is worthy of mention with regards to St. Andrew's connection with Scotland. That is *"The Scottish Declaration of Independence"*. This document lies in the Registry House in Edinburgh. It is dated the 26th April, 1320.

After the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Pope, John XXII, refused to acknowledge the Bruce as King of Scotland. The Pope sent emissaries to the Bruce to secure his submission to the English King. These papal messengers were not received by the Bruce. He would not even open their letters. Instead he summoned the Scottish nobles of the day. The following is a quote from this document:

"The King of Kings, and our Lord Jesus Christ, after his passion and resurrection, called these very men (the Scottish) dwelling at the limit of the world, almost the first to his most holy faith, nor would have them confirmed therein through any but the first of his apostles by calling, albeit in rank, second or third, to wit Andrew the Meek, brother of Blessed Peter, whom he chose to be ever more their leader and patron. The holy fathers, your predecessors, mindful and careful hereof, fortified the same kingdom and people, as the peculiar possession of St. Peter's brother."

This document from the past says quite distinctly that it was St. Andrew himself that converted the Scots to Christ, and bear in mind that

this is not the opinion of some individual historian, but of the King of Scotland, and his Parliament. One can only conclude that St. Andrew himself was a visitor to Scotland.

Once again, our Australian flag serves as a reminder of sacrifice and Christian traditions.

CHAPTER 4.



St, Patrick is the Patron Saint and national apostle of Ireland. There seems to be some confusion as to his exact date and place of birth. This is probably brought about by the fact that St. Patrick is often mistaken for other characters of the same name in the same era. The most common evidence is that he was born in Dumbarton, Scotland, sometime around the year 373 A.D.

Patrick's story is found in Enclopaedia Brittanica (Vol.13, Page 1076):

"Patrick's father was Calpurnius, who was a deacon and local official. At the age of 16 Patrick was torn from the villa of his father by Irish raiders, and carried into slavery in Ireland.

Here he spent six years as a herdsman, and it was during this time that he turned with fervour to the Lord. Hearing at last in a dream that the ship in which he was to escape was ready, he fled his master and found passage to Britain. There he came near to starvation, and

suffered a second brief captivity before he was reunited with his family.

A well-known passage of "*Confessio*", which is St. Patrick's own writings, he tells us of a dream after his return to Britain in which one, Victoricus, delivered him a letter, headed "*The Voice of the Irish*". As he read it, he seemed to hear a certain company of Irish beseeching him to walk once more among them:

"Deeply moved," he says, "I could read no more."

Nevertheless, because of the shortcomings of his education, he was reluctant for a long time to respond to the call. While recovering from his ordeals, he was ordained to the priesthood. Patrick's mission to Ireland began in 432 A.D. at Saul.

Even on the eve of re-embarkation for Ireland, he was beset by doubts about his fitness for the task. Once in the field, however, his hesitations vanished. Utterly confident in the Lord, he journeyed far and wide, baptising and confirming with untiring zeal. On at least one occasion he was cast into chains. He was a most humble-minded man, pouring forth a continuous hymn of thanks to his Maker for having chosen him as the instrument whereby multitudes had become the people of God." (end of Enc.Brit. quote.)

The phenomenal success of Patrick's mission is not, however, the full measure of his personality. His writings mirror a truth and simplicity of the rarest quality. No diarist has ever bared his soul to the same degree as did the Patron Saint of Ireland. The moral and spiritual greatness of the man shines through every stumbling sentence of his "rustic"

Latin. By the end of the 7th century, Patrick had become a legendary figure.

One of these legends has it that he drove the snakes out of Ireland – another example of a Christian saint doing battle with the serpent, or dragon. There is the story of the shamrock, which he used to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity – Three Persons in One, or three leaves on one stalk. Today the Irish wear shamrocks on their lapels on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th.

In County Tipperary are the remains of St. Patrick's cathedral, and Celtic crosses on top of the Rock of Cashel. St. Patrick visited Cashel in 450 A.D., and baptised King Aenghus and made Cashel into a Bishopric.

In his own writings, St. Patrick never claimed that he converted all of Ireland by himself. Irish traditions refer to early saints who preceded St. Patrick. One of these traditions is that the prophet Jeremiah (the Old Testament prophet) came to Ireland after Jerusalem fell, via Egypt. There is evidence of this on Loch Erne. Here, on Devenish Island, not far from Enniskillen, is a cairn of stone known as "*Jeremiah's tomb*". It has been called such for as long as can be remembered. The locals in this area believe the report to be true. Perhaps this explains why Jeremiah is such a popular Irish name.

The four law courts in Dublin, which were built in 1785–1800, contained a central hall with a dome 64 feet in diameter. Above the windows there were medallions of lawgivers, and around the portrait of one of the lawgivers was inscribed "*Ollamh Fodhla*", which means "*Holy Seer*", or "*Prophet*". This was the name given to Jeremiah the prophet. The name

1 "*Olamh Fodhla*" is well-known for "Jeremiah" in Irish history and records.

Just how St. Patrick came by the cross of St. Patrick is not clear. This cross was the heraldic device of a Norman Baron, Maurice Fitzgerald, who came to Ireland in 1169 on the invitation of Dermot McMurrough, King of Leinster. Perhaps it was because of the prestige of this historic Irish house that their cross became associated with all things Irish, including St. Patrick.

The exact date of St. Patrick's death is open to question, but sometime between 460 and 490 A.D. are the accepted times. His remains lie under a rock at the Cathedral of Downpatrick in County Down. His drinking well and bath house are also preserved, (Ency. Britt., Vol.3, page 647). He was not martyred.

The knighthood known as the "*Order of Saint Patrick*" was introduced by George III in 1783.

So many Australians have some of their family roots connected to Ireland that the cross of St. Patrick is by no means out of place. There is no doubt that Ireland, and therefore Australia, owe many of their blessings to the Christian work of St. Patrick.

CHAPTER 5.



"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" – Matthew 23:11.

These simple words of Christ contain the foundations upon which our freedom in Australia has been based. The idea of a king, president, dictator or prime minister being in a position of leadership in order to serve ordinary people instead of his own "will-to-power" was a revolutionary one at the time of Christ, and still is. Christ demonstrated exactly what He meant by this, when He performed the menial task of washing His disciples feet. The history and development of our monarchy, our parliaments and our constitution is the story of the struggle to implement these words of Christ.

These simple words not only state that our masters are to serve us, not us them, but it further implies that in order to bring about this situation there must be limits and laws, that place bounds upon our masters. Christ gave other indications that our

leaders must act within certain rules. His answer to the trick question put to Him by the Pharisees.— ***"Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and unto God the things that are Gods"*** (Mark 12:17) is further evidence. Christ was saying that our rulers do not have a monopoly over certain things and that individuals should have the God-given right to certain freedoms that are above even Caesar. Once again, we see a limit to the power of Caesar, or the State.

The first law of the ten commandments actually defines one of the limits:

"Love God with all your heart and mind" is clearly saying that an individual must have the freedom to do this in spite of any decrees proclaimed by some despot who orders him to worship otherwise. St. George died for this exact freedom. Christ further said:

"The truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).

Christ was the truth incarnate, so any attempt to acquire freedom must make that first step of accepting Christ and the truth that He spoke.

The human effort to freedom began with the acceptance of Christianity. If we know our history we can follow these events. The acceptance by the British nation of the gospel was a major event in the birth of democracy and individual rights. The ramifications of these events has flowed on to Australia to this present day.

Even before the time of Augustine's work in Britain, around 600 A.D., the groundwork had started. By the time of King Alfred the Great we have the record of his *"dooms"*, which are a direct translation of the ten commandments. These *"dooms"* or codes became the law of the land.

Then, in the year 1215, we had that gigantic step forward for civilisation when King John was forced to sign "*Magna Carta*".

The people of the day at last had a legal document that put legal restraints upon their monarch. This was a limiting of the king's power, and a transfer of that power to other authorities. Christ's words on getting our masters to serve us was beginning to set us free.

As the centuries passed by, we saw more restraints on the king, and further widening of authority of people power. These new freedoms led Britain to develop the world's first parliament in 1265. Kings were controlled by parliaments, parliaments by law, and by the freedom of an individual's right to vote.

Our present system of government is the result of 2000 years of effort and trial. Wherever Christianity flourished, so did freedom. One followed the other. There is no doubt that the British system that developed has been a light unto the world.

It is this history, these Christian truths, and this idea of limiting power with checks and balances, that has become our heritage in Australia. It all started with the adoption of the cross, the same crosses that make up the Union Jack. The Christian symbol of the Union Jack has captured the essence of our freedom.

Is it any wonder that those people and governments who despise Christianity, and still lust after their own will-to-power, wish to abandon our flag, with this symbol on it? We may rest assured that as Christianity has given us our freedom, so a rejection of Christianity will also surely bring about a loss of freedom.