

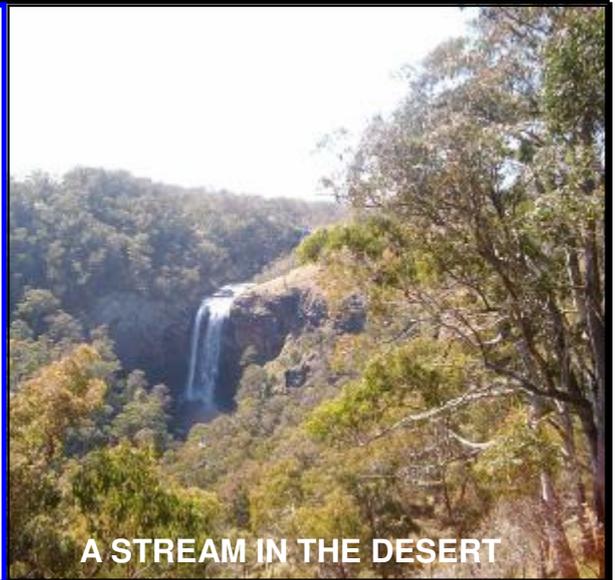
THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

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Devotion: "Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us. But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name." *Isaiah 63:15-16*



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DON'T FORGET

JOHN KNOX
[Died, 24th
November, 1572]

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

As we read through the fourth chapter of Ephesians, verse 30, it at first takes us by surprise! "Grieving the Holy Spirit" just seems to pop up from nowhere! Paul has been dealing with very practical things like Truthfulness, Anger, Honesty, and How we Talk. And then quite suddenly he puts in a command about our attitude towards the Holy Spirit!

And yet, when we think about it, it's not really surprising to find a reference to the God the Holy Spirit here. We can't say we love God, and obey God, if we don't care about practical things like telling the truth, controlling our anger, honesty, and watching our words. It grieves Him that those whom He has redeemed should be so insensitive. And the Holy Spirit is particularly brought into prominence here, because He's the Comforter and Sanctifier of His people. The New Creation is pre-eminently His work. When there's no corresponding New Life style then he's grieved when His people don't walk as the children of light. And in looking at this topic we'll think about three things: [1] Why we can Grieve the Holy Spirit; [2] How we can Grieve the Holy Spirit; and [3] What are some of the Consequences of Grieving the Holy Spirit, through whom we are "sealed for the day of redemption."

WHY WE CAN GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There's at least three reasons why we can grieve the Holy Spirit.

He's A Person

One reason is because He's a Person - the third person in the Blessed Trinity. Many deny the doctrine of the Trinity - and one way they do this is by denying that the Holy Spirit is a Person. They regard him as a force or power or influence, not a person, and not a divine person. But can you "grieve" something that's impersonal? We cannot. We can resist a force and we can try to destroy an impersonal object. But we can never "grieve" it. So this verse here must take its place along with many other verses in the New Testament [and the Old Testament] which indicates that the Holy Spirit is not just a force or power, but a person, and a divine person. In fact, to think of the Holy Spirit as a force or power would make nonsense of many passages in the New Testament like Luke 4:14 where we're told that Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee". If the Holy Spirit was just a force or a power, Luke would be saying that Jesus "returned in the power of the power into Galilee" which is nonsense. The Bible also speaks about the Love of the Spirit in Romans 15:30; the mind and intercession of the Spirit in Romans 8:27; and the communion of the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 13:14 - all personal terms and links him with the other divine persons of the Godhead - for example, in the Baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19. It's made quite clear that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. And all this is underlined and emphasised by this word, "grieve." It's a great proof text for the personality of the Holy Spirit.

He Loves Us

Another reason why we can grieve the Holy Spirit is *because the Holy Spirit loves us*. The only person we can really grieve is the person who loves us and cares about us. We don't "grieve" someone who doesn't know us! Nor do we grieve somebody who hates us. We can make them angry but we don't grieve them! The only one we can

really grieve is the one who cares for us. And we can grieve the Holy Spirit because he loves us, and He's hurt when he sees us doing things that are a complete contradiction of his work in us.

There are many ways the Holy Spirit shows his love towards His People! [1] He shows it *in striving with us before we came to Christ*. [2] He shows it *in bringing us to the Lord Jesus* - granting life to lifeless hands that we may grasp Christ. [3] And then he shows it *after we have been brought to the Lord Jesus* - in his persevering teaching; in blessing the means of grace; in comforting us in our distress and emptiness, and in praying for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. He also checks us and holds us back when we trifle with sin, and gives us victory over it. Indeed, He takes up residence in us. And it's here he must witness our senselessness and our sin, our self-will and blindness day after day.

He Accomplishes Salvation in Us.

But we can also grieve him because he accomplishes salvation in us. Nobody likes to be attacked in the main work he does! Even the person who does very imperfect work takes some degree of pride in it. He doesn't like someone coming along and saying, "That's a terrible job! You're hopeless and useless", and proceed to destroy it. It hurts. The Holy Spirit can be grieved because believers, in their self-will, attack his work in them, and contradict it. The Holy Spirit works to save sinners - to unite them to Christ, and to keep their eyes on Christ. Yet Christians are constantly going in other directions. One fans the flames of spiritual life; the other is often throwing water on it!

HOW WE CAN GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Looking Away From Jesus.

One way is by looking away from the Lord Jesus as our only and all sufficient Saviour. The great work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. Jesus says in John 16:12 that when the Holy Spirit is come. "*He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you*". He draws attention to Christ and exalts Him and his atoning work. When the Christian focuses on his own or the Spirit's work in him for acceptance with God, then he's grieved. The Galatian Christians turned away from Christ, to depend on their own work, instead of His, and there's every evidence in Paul's letter to the Galatians that this grieved the Holy Spirit. They were not walking in the Spirit. But there are even more subtle forms of substitution than this. Some people look at their conviction of sin as the ground of acceptance. They say, I'm not truly humbled. I don't feel my sin enough - therefore God will not accept me. Others are always looking at their Christian graces as the ground of acceptance. Have I got this or that? This is to substitute the Spirit's work for the work of Christ and against Him who seeks the glory Christ.

Rebellion Against God

Another way we grieve the Holy Spirit is by disobedience - by rebelling against God. In Isaiah 63:10 we read that the People of God "*rebelled and vexed, or grieved his Holy Spirit*". Instead of serving the Lord, they became like their pagan neighbours - materialistic, sensual and idolatrous. In times of distress they didn't look to God for help, nor did they commit their way to the Lord. Instead of getting as far away from sin as possible, they trifled with it, and ultimately indulged in it. They grieved the Holy Spirit, because they worked at cross purposes with Him as the author of their sanctification. The Holy Spirit delights to see God's

people listening to God's Word and seeking to put it into practice. But to witness rebellion, lukewarmness or materialism - or picking and choosing among his commands - can only grieve the author of their sanctification.

Neglect of the Means of Grace

Another way in which we can grieve the Holy Spirit is by *neglecting the "means of grace"* - reading the Bible, prayer, the sacraments, preaching and especially the Public Worship of God. The Holy Spirit is especially mentioned in connection with the means of grace. He's the author of Scripture. God reveals the gospel to us by his Spirit [1. Cor 2:10]. He assists us in our prayer, and He's also brought into prominence in the worship of God. Believers are described by Paul in Philippians 3:3 as those who "*worship God in [or by] the Spirit of God*". Their worship is appointed, ordained and inspired by the Spirit of God. And finally, it's only the Holy Spirit working in us that makes the sacraments meaningful to us and to others. Now just think what a grief it must be to the Holy Spirit to see His people neglecting the Word of God which He is the Author; Prayer, of which he is the Helper; and Public Worship which he's ordained. When people treat those things lightly or carelessly, or allow anything and everything to take precedence over those means - don't you think the Holy Spirit isn't grieved by such ingratitude and carelessness? How true it is here: We have not because we ask not, or worse, we have not because we do not use the means aright by which the Spirit of God conveys to us the blessings of Christ.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

What are *the Consequences of Grieving the Holy Spirit*? We quench the Spirit! We put out the fire! No true Christian can ever lose the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit can withdraw his ministry from the believer and leave him, as it were, on his own for a while - like David in Psalm 51. He realized that grieving the Holy Spirit meant a withdrawal of the gracious ministry of the Spirit of God. What does this mean in practical terms?

Lack Of Joy

It means *the absence of joy in the Christian life*. When the Christian has his eyes on the Lord Jesus and seeks the grounds of acceptance outside himself in Christ, then he rejoices. But when he turns away from Christ to look within - when he becomes "*subjective*", then doubt and fear enter in. Because his feelings fluctuate, so does he. One day on top of the world, the next down in the depths. No longer is his eyes fixed on those things that are sure and certain, the atoning work of Christ, but upon his own works and feelings.

Lack Of Power

Another consequence is lack of power in the Christian Life. It's terrible to press the accelerator and nothing happens! Yet that's precisely what happens when the Holy Spirit is grieved. He withdraws his power. Temptations that caused no problems before now loom like overpowering demons. Like Samson after he'd lost his strength, the Christian goes out as usual but his life lacks power.

Lack Of Fruit

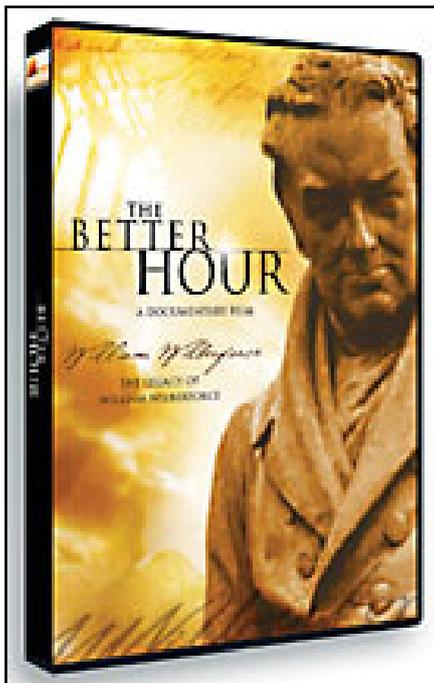
And then there's *lack of fruit in the Christian Profession*. Where the Holy Spirit is not grieved his fruits - love, joy and peace will bud and blossom and adorn the Christian Profession. Where he's grieved there'll be stunted growth.

Lack Of Life

And finally, where the Spirit is grieved, *the means of grace*

BLOGGING ABOUT...

THE BETTER HOUR



The Better Hour: The Legacy of William Wilberforce was produced to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the 1807 abolition of British and American slave trade in a 20-year heroic effort led by British Parliamentarian William Wilberforce.

Shot in high definition, **THE BETTER HOUR: The Legacy of William Wilberforce** is an engaging documentary, rich with content and commentary, that can inspire people with the remarkable

story of William Wilberforce. He used his position as a British parliamentarian to launch 69 organizations for the betterment of society and end the trans-Atlantic slave trade -- a business that was key to the country's economic strength.

The film focuses on a politician who, over time, developed strength of character in the service of high and seemingly unattainable goals.

This film highlights William Wilberforce's drive and love for humanity and reveals how he and his colleagues worked tirelessly to end the slave trade, even as it represented a large portion of the British economy. In Wilberforce, we see character and a sense of justice for all join together to bring into the world what the English poet William Cowper described as "the better hour."

"This film does an outstanding job of bringing into sharp focus how the passion, persistence and actions of one man changed the course of history and worked to rid the world of the great evil of trafficking in human life," says Marshall Mitchell, Vice Chancellor of Wilberforce University, the second oldest historic black college in the United States.

Wilberforce's compassion, self-discipline, and respect for others offer lessons for a contemporary audience on how to change the world for the better -- peacefully and definitively. In the world of politics William Wilberforce's political career is a case study that not only merits attention, but also can inspire others to see the potential for great good

in a political life that is built on strength of character rather than expediency.

"Wilberforce," says WTIU Public Television Executive Producer Steve Krahnke, "shows us that it is possible to join a religious faith with political will--not as a means to convert unbelievers, but as a means to help make the world a better place for everyone regardless of their beliefs."

Narrated by Avery Brooks, the film features interviews with leading authors, historians and public figures from both the U.K. and the United States, including the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams, Wilberforce expert Kevin Belmonte, historian James Walvin, Newton Scholar Marylyn Rouse, Wilberforce University president, former Congressman Floyd Flake, and author Eric Metaxas, among others.

Cullen Schippe, Executive Producer and writer of the film, has more than 35 years experience producing educational media for the classroom and for broadcast.

CALL AND RESPONSE

That the issue of Slavery is just a relevant today is being highlighted by another film titled "Call + Response, being promoted in selected Australian Cinemas from the 22nd October by Heritage HM. It is a film "that exposes the world's 27 million most terrifying secrets - that there are more slaves today than any other time in history." It has already received positive endorsement. Here are some comments:

"this year's most important film" - Paste Magazine

"harrowing... a documentary with its heart and outrage in the right place..." - Washington Post

"vivid and affecting...[a] call-to-action voice against a worsening global scourge." - Los Angeles Times

The distributors write: "Call+Response is having a limited release across Australia - this doesn't mean that it won't come to a cinema near you though - if you CALL then we will RESPOND by bringing the film to you."

OUR NEW EDITOR

The Administration Committee has now invited the Rev Sjirk Bajema from Narre warren to be the Editor of the Presbyterian Banner, effective from 1 January 2010 until Synod 2010 on a temporary basis, with the official confirmation of the position being made at Synod 2010. He has indicated his acceptance of the position. Also from the 1st January, 2010, he will take up the role of Convener of the Media Committee. Sjirk brings to this task a wide experience in editing magazines, and we are grateful that he has consented to do



this work. For now, the administrative side will remain the same.

will become cold and lifeless - empty forms with no reality, no communion with God, and no desire for fellowship with God's people.

CONCLUSION

To grieve the Holy Spirit is to turn the Lord against us, just

as he turned against Israel of old because they grieved his spirit. And who can estimate the gloom, fruitlessness and formalism that comes out of that. May we make every endeavour not to grieve our Blessed Comforter. And if we feel moved today to do so, we can be sure that the Spirit himself is the author of that desire we have.

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 concluded our last selection from Guthrie's Sermon on the consequences of drink with his plea not to be against the victims, but against the vice. "I will not stand by and see my fellow - creatures perish. .. To save them I will do anything. .. 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. He continues.

Brethren, such resolutions - such high, and holy, and sustained, and self-denying efforts - the height of this evil demands. Before God and man, before the church and the world, I impeach Intemperance. I charge it with the murder of innumerable souls. In this country, blessed with freedom and plenty, the Word of God and the liberties of true religion, I charge it as the cause - whatever be their source elsewhere of almost all the poverty, and almost all the crime, and almost all the misery, and almost all the ignorance, and almost all the irreligion, that disgrace and afflict the land.

"I am not mad, most noble Festus. I speak the words of truth and soberness." I do in my conscience believe that these intoxicating stimulants have sunk into perdition more men and women than found a grave in that deluge, which swept over the highest hill tops—engulphing a world, of which but eight were saved. As compared with other vices, it may be said of this, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands."

3. Consider what cure we should apply to this evil.

The grand and only sovereign remedy for the evils of this world is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that. There is no man more convinced of that than I am. But he rather hinders than helps the cause of religion who shuts his eyes to the fact, that, in curing souls, as in curing⁹ bodies, many things may be important as auxiliaries to the remedy, which cannot properly be considered as remedies. In the day of his resurrection, Lazarus owed his life to Christ; but they that day did good service, who rolled away the stone. They were allies and auxiliaries. And to such, in the battle which the gospel has to wage with this monster vice, allow me in closing this discourse to direct your attention. And I remark-

First, That the legislature may render essential service in this cause.

This is an alliance between church and state which no man could quarrel with. Happy for our country, if, by such help, the state would thus fulfil to the church—the woman of prophecy—this apocalyptic vision: "*And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*"

Many people feel no sympathy with the sufferings of the lowest class. They are not hard-hearted; but engrossed with their own affairs, or, raised far above them in social position, they are ignorant of their temptations and trials.

Therefore they talk ignorantly about them; and seldom more so than when they repudiate all attempts of the legislature by restrictive Acts of Parliament to abate, if not abolish, this evil. They have their remedies. Some plead for better lodgings and sanitary measures; which we also regard as highly valuable. Some put their faith in education - an agent, the importance of which, to the rising generation, it is impossible to over estimate. Some seem to have no confidence in anything but the preaching of the gospel. To one or other of these, or the combined influence of them all, they trust for the cure of drunkenness - repudiating and deprecating all legislative interference.

Now, I should like as much as they to see the very lowest of our people so elevated in their tastes, with minds so cultivated, and hearts so sanctified, that they could resist the temptations which on every hand beset them. But thousands, tens of thousands, are unable to do so. They must be helped with crutches till they have acquired the power to walk. They must be propped up and fenced round with every possible protection until they are "rooted and grounded in the love of God." In the country, I have often seen a little child, with her sun-browned face, and long golden locks, sweet as any flower she pressed beneath her naked foot, merry as any bird that sung from bush or brake, driving the cattle home; and with fearless hand controlling the sulky leader of the herd, as with armed forehead and colossal strength he quailed before that slight image of God. Some days ago, I saw a different sight - such a child, with hanging head, no music in his voice, nor blush but that of shame upon his cheek, leading home a drunken father along the public street. That man required to be led, guided, guarded. And into a condition hardly less helpless large masses of our people have sunk. I don't wonder that they drink.

Look at their unhappy and most trying circumstances. Many of them are born with a propensity to this vice. They suck it in with a mother's milk, for it is a well ascertained fact that other things are hereditary besides cancer and consumption and insanity. This vice presents some of the characters of a physical disease, and the drunken parent transmits to his children a proneness to his fatal indulgence. Besides the foul atmosphere which many of them breathe, the hard labour by which many of them earn their bread, produce a prostration which seeks in stimulants something to rally the system, nor will be debarred from their use by any prospect of danger, or experience of a corresponding reaction. With our cultivated minds, our improved tastes, our books, our recreations, our domestic comforts, we have no adequate idea of the temptations to which the poor are exposed, and from which it is the truest kindness to protect them. They are cold, and the glass is warmth. They are hungry, and drink is food. They are miserable, and there is laughter in the flowing cup. They are sunk in their own esteem, and the bowl or bottle surrounds the drunkard with a bright - coloured halo of self-respect—so long as the fumes are in his brain, he feels himself a man. "They drink to forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more."

Such indeed has been the only training, such are the physical, economical, moral, and religious conditions of large masses of the people, that their safety lies, not in resisting temptations, but escaping it. None know that better than themselves. How would thousands hail and bless the day, which, shutting up the drinking shops, would preserve them from temptations which are their ruin, and to which they at length passively yield themselves; although, as one said, they know their doors to be the way to hell. Yet not passively, until this fatal pleasure has paralysed the mind more even than the body.

Many struggle hard to overcome this passion. Ah, there is often a long and terrible fight between the man and the serpent that has him fast in his coils; between the love of wife and children and the love of drink. Never more manfully than some of them, did swimmer struggle in his hour of agony - breasting the waves and straining every nerve to reach the distant shore. Would Parliament but leave this matter to these people themselves - would they for once delegate their powers of legislation to the inhabitants of our lowest districts - we are confident that, by their all but unanimous vote, every drinking-shop in their neighbourhoods would be shut up. The birds, which are now drawn into the mouth of the serpent, would soar aloft on free and joyous wing to sing the praises of the hand that closed its jaws, of the heel that crushed its head. And so long as Religion stands by - silent and unprotesting against the temptations with which men, greedy of gain, and Governments, greedy of revenue, surround the wretched victims of this basest vice - it appears to me an utter mockery for her to go with the Word of God in her hand, teaching them to say, "Lead us not into temptation."

As a man, as well as a minister of that blessed gospel, which recognises no distinction between rich and poor, I protest against the wrongs of a class that are to the full as unfortunate as they are guilty. They deserve succour rather than censure. They are more to be pitied than punished. And, assuming the office of their advocate, I wish to know why the upper classes of society should enjoy a protection which is denied to those who stand more in need of it?

Gambling houses were proved before Parliament to be ruining the youth of the aristocracy. Nobility complained. Coronets and broad acres were in danger. Parliament rose to the rescue. She put forth her strong hand, and by a sweeping, summary, most righteous measure, put the evil down. It was also proved in Parliament, that betting-houses were corrupting the morals of our merchants' clerks, our shopmen, our tradesmen, and others of the middle classes of society. Once more, Parliament rose up in its might, threw its broad shield over wealth and commerce, and closed every betting house in the metropolis. Who talked then about the freedom of trade? When the honour of noble families, or the wealth of our merchants, and the honesty of their servants, demanded protection, who talked about the liberty of the subject? Who pro-

posed to leave these evils to be met by education and such means as education? I don't complain of, but commend the measures which Parliament adopted. Only, I want to know, if the virtues of humble families and the happiness of the poor are less worthy of protection than the wealth of bankers, and the honours of an ancient nobility? I want to know if the bodies of the higher and wealthier classes are of better clay, or their souls of finer elements, than those of the very lowest of the people?

Yet I would undertake to prove that, year by year, thousands and tens of thousands of our poor suffer the loss of fortune, virtue, character, body and soul, in those drinking-shops that glare upon the public eye - which the law does not forbid, but licence. For every one the gambling or betting house ruined, they are ruining hundreds. I wish that those who govern this noble country should be able to say with Him who governs the universe, "Are not my ways equal?"

Nor let our legislators be scared from their duty in this case, any more than they were in the other, by the allegation, that to shut up the drinking shop will not cure but



rather aggravate the evil, by leading to illicit traffic and secret drinking. The removal of the temptation may not always cure the drunkard: I don't say it will. But it will certainly check the growth of his class, and prevent many others from learning his habits - until sanguine men might entertain the blessed hope that, like the monsters of a former epoch, which now lie entombed in the rocks, drunkards may be numbered among

the extinct races, classified with the winged serpents and gigantic sloths that were once inhabitants of our globe.

The subject before us is eminently calculated to illustrate the profound remark of one, who was well acquainted with the temptations and circumstances of the poor. He said: "It is justice, not charity, that the poor most need." And all we ask is, that you be as kind to them as to the rich. All we ask is, that you guard the one class as carefully as you guard the other from the temptations peculiar to their lot. I am sorry to say - but truth and the interests of those who, however sunk and degraded, are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, require that I should say - that this is not done. The "poor," says Amos, "are sold for a pair of shoes," and with us they are sold to save the wealth of the rich. In this I make no charge which I am not prepared to prove. For example, certain measures were proposed in Parliament with the view of promoting the comforts and improving the moral habits of "the common people". It was admitted that these, by introducing weak French and Rhenish wines in room of ardent spirits and strongly intoxicating liquors, would be attended with that most happy and desirable result. Yet they were rejected. And rejected because their adoption, although it saved the people, would damage the revenue. As if there was not money enough in the pockets of the wealthy, through means of other taxes, to meet the debts of the nation and sustain the honour of the Crown! How different the tone of morals even in China! The ministers of that country proved to

NAZARITES, SAMSON AND GOD'S PEOPLE

Patrick Fairbairn [1805-1874]

Abraham, David and Daniel exemplify God's dealings with his people - what they were as children of nature, what they become as partakers of grace, what they are called to strive after and may justly expect to reach as the heirs of blessing.... In the case also of some of the other prophets similar providences were not wanting.

Nor, among those prophetic elements and affinities interwoven with the history and institutions of the Old Testament, should we omit to notice a class of persons who made a near approach to the prophetic order, and might not unfitly be designated prophets in action. We refer to the Nazarites, who, in one passage, are named along with the prophets, as if there were no very marked distinction between them: "*And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites*" (Amos ii. 11).

The Nazarites were simply, as the name imports, the separated ones, persons who stood apart from the mass of the community, as under a special vow or act of consecration to the Lord. Individually, and for a set time or purpose, they were to give a living exhibition of that holy surrender and devotedness to God which should ever have been exemplified by the covenant-people as a whole. They were, therefore, a kind of election within the election. And the peculiar restraints and services imposed on them had this alone for their object: To present the Nazarites as pattern-men, withdrawn from everything, fitted, whether by undue exhilaration or by mournful sadness, to mar their communion with the pure and blessed life of God. According as they abounded in Israel, there were to be found among the people so many embodied lessons, or palpable manifestations of that covenant faithfulness, which it was always the first part of a prophet's calling, as well as the sum of Israel's duty, to illustrate and maintain.

But it was possible for the Nazarite to be brought into still closer resemblance to the prophet. There might be cir-

cumstances connected with his vow of separation to the Lord, which served to mark him out as a special gift of heaven, or, in some more peculiar sense, a witness of the truth of God. That such was occasionally, at least, the case, may naturally be inferred from the language of Amos, in which the Nazarites are mentioned as among the singular proofs furnished by God of His goodness to His people. They are also referred to by Jeremiah in a way that seems to betoken the high place they held among the peculiar lights and instruments of blessing in Israel. "Her Nazarites," he says (Lam. iv. 7), "were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire." And in two very remarkable cases, those of Samson and John the Baptist, cases in which instruction by action was to go hand in hand with that of direct teaching, the obligation of the Nazarite vow was by Divine ordination made coeval with birth, and associated also with the higher gifts and calling of a prophet.

The most singular example, however, of the whole class, and the one that, in its simply Nazaritish character, bore most distinctly the aspect of a prophecy, is that of Samson - in itself a kind of sacred enigma. Not, however, an inexplicable enigma, if viewed in relation to the circumstances of the time, and with due regard to its prophetic character. The time was one of backsliding and rebuke.

The marvellous story begins immediately after it has been said, that "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." Judges had been raised up for their deliverance before, with only a partial and temporary success; for the root of the evil was never properly reached. But the Lord now bethought Him of trying, as His chosen instrument of working, a Nazarite, wonderful in his very birth, and wonderful still more for the singular gift with which he was endowed, - yet trying him not solely, nor even chiefly, for the purpose of breaking the Philistine yoke, but for what was more urgently needed, the impart-

[From Page 5] their sovereign that he would avert all danger of war with Britain, and also add immensely to his revenue, if he would consent to legalise the trade in opium. He refused, firmly refused, nobly refused.

And it were a glorious day for Britain, a happy day for ten thousand miserable homes - a day for bonfires, and jubilant cannon, and merry bells, and bannered processions, and holy thanksgivings, which saw our beloved Queen rise from her throne, and in the name of this great nation address to her Lords and Commons the memorable speech of that pagan monarch: "I will never consent to raise my revenue out of the ruin and vices of my people." With such a spirit may God imbue our land!—"Even so come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly."

[To be Concluded]

DUMISANI UPDATE

uMfundisi (Rev) Victor Nkatha has been appointed to the post of Sunday School Project Worker/ Junior Lecturer at Dumisani. Victor holds a bachelor's degree in law from Wits University and a BTh from North-West University (which he gained studying at Dumisani). He is now completing his honours degree at Dumisani. He is a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

Victor has been appointed for two years on the basis of funds raised by the young people of the Free Church of Scotland, combined with a commitment from Dumisani.

Will you consider helping us to keep Victor as a long-term member of the Dumisani team? Could your congregation commit to providing a proportion of Victor's salary over a period of several years. In the short term, Victor will require a laptop computer. Can you help us to purchase one? If you wish to help in any of these ways, please contact the Dumisani Bible Institute.

ing of a proper insight into God's mind, and awakening a right spirit of devotedness to His fear. It was this which alone could re-establish the people in honour and blessing, as the oppression and miseries that lay upon them were the result merely of broken vows, and unfaithful dealing in the covenant of God.

And how could the requisite instruction be more touchingly and impressively conveyed to them, than by such a marvellous and mournful story as presents itself in the life of Samson? A child is supernaturally promised and given, expressly on account of the exigency of the times - the child of a mother laid, for the occasion, under the restrictions of the Nazarite vow, and himself appointed to be a Nazarite from his birth - one so emphatically called to separate himself to the Lord, that to every thoughtful mind he must have readily seemed a personified Israel, the peculiar representative of a people standing under covenant to Jehovah. "The child grew, and the Lord blessed him; and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times" (Judg. xiii. 24, 25); but only, it would seem, in the lower sphere of operations, in the display of supernatural bodily might, and the performance of astonishing feats of strength and prowess.

We can descry, through those fitful and terrific movements of his early life, a zeal glowing in the breast of this young Nazarite, capable of daring and accomplishing the greatest things. But we watch in vain to see it rising to the proper height; it looks more like the earth - sprung zeal of patriotism, than that of a holy and self-denying regard to the glory of God. Ready to seize on every opportunity to afflict the Philistines as enemies, it burns not against them as the servants of idolatry and corruption; and so, while at one moment he rushes on them in his fury, at another he takes them to his familiar embrace, and is even bent on having one of their daughters for his wife.

It was precisely the defect and failing of his people. To them, too, collectively belonged a noble superiority in outward standing and privilege above their idolatrous neighbours. They were a people of relatively high endowments, and were bound together by a strong international and patriotic spirit. But they lacked the true zeal of God, and hence were ever ready to lose sight of what was in itself their grand distinction, and the foundation of all that they possessed of good - their divine call to the knowledge and service of Jehovah. For such a people to lose this was, in a manner, to lose all, since, by losing it, they necessarily became false witnesses of God, and, in consequence, were surrendered by Him to the powers of evil, which they should have held in subjection.

The moral weakness, therefore, which appeared in Samson, was but a reflection of the hereditary and prevailing evil in Israel. And God did with it in the present case as He ever in effect does with evil of that description, when unrighteously clung to: He shut it up to a particular channel, allowed it to take only that course which might render the example of this externally strong, but internally feeble, Nazarite, a more exact and instructive image of the people whom he represented. Hence, as one carried away by a

resistless impulse, he must go to woo and wed among the uncircumcised Philistines, ally himself to the daughter of a strange god, nay, suffer himself to become the weak tool of this woman's treachery and caprice, so as to betray, at her solicitation, the secret of his strength, and part with the symbol of his consecration to God. How light did it show him to have made of his heaven-imposed vow of separation to the Lord! And how bitterly was his own measure meted back to him, when, after being caught in the toils of the deceiver, he was delivered over as a laughing - stock to his enemies and was trodden under foot of men!

There, in black night and abject humiliation, the riddle might have ended; it would have ended there, if the fall of Israel were like the fall of the world - a fall without the hope of recovery. But it is not so; through the loving-kindness and mercy of God, other things were still in reserve for them. Therefore, when the cold winter of desolation had passed over the son of Manoah, and amid the shame and wretchedness of his captivity, the Nazarite's heart returns to him, the freshness of another spring returns along with it; he again raises himself up in the might of a giant, and with one terrible blow brings confusion on the pride and

"...when the cold winter of desolation had passed over the son of Manoah, and amid the shame and wretchedness of his captivity, the Nazarite's heart returns to him, the freshness of another spring returns along with it; he again raises himself up in the might of a giant, and with one terrible blow brings confusion on the pride and glory of his adversaries..."

glory of his adversaries. An acted prophecy throughout!—only, in the earlier part, bearing more immediate respect to the chequered experiences which Israel had been made to undergo, and, in the later, to the expectation that might still be cherished of a happier future. With the certainty of a sign from heaven it proclaimed, that for the seed of Israel everything in evil or in good depended upon the part they acted in respect to the covenant of God; and it should have been heard by the men of that generation proclaiming this the more loudly, as their failure to recognise aright the divine mission of Samson, and to stand by him at the outset of his career, had manifestly contributed not a little to his failure in the work of

deliverance he ought to have achieved for them. There was hope, however, still, hope in his death; and if their repentings did but kindle together, and their faith revive after the manner of his, they might yet ride upon the high places of the earth, and do the more valiantly by reason of their temporary defeat.[1]

[1] When the history of Samson is understood in the light presented above, no difficulty need be felt about the statement in Judges 14: 4, that it was of the Lord he sought a wife from the Philistines. It was of the Lord, in the same sense, that the act of David in numbering Israel was so (2 Sam. xxiv. 1). In both cases alike, as in many others of a similar kind, there was a wrong bias or disposition already working in the soul, sure to take some outward direction in the way of evil; and God so ordered matters, as to make it take that direction which He saw to be the best fitted for discovering its own nature, or subserving the purposes He meant to accomplish in connection with it. For another quite parallel case, see 1 Kings xii. 15.

- Patrick Fairbairn, **The Interpretation of Prophecy, Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1964, pp 35-40.** This Book was first published in Edinburgh in 1856, with a second edition in 1865. Patrick Fairbairn was the Principal of the Free Church College, Glasgow, 1856 - 1874,

Run For Glory

EARTHQUAKES EVERYWHERE

Within just 24 hours earthquakes have rocked three regions across the world. Buildings have collapsed with the shaking, or from massive landslides. Giant waves or tsunamis have roared into coastal areas bringing destruction and death. Help is being rushed to these areas. Those suffering trauma and grief are being comforted. But will the fear go away? When will be the next time an earthquake strikes?

Scientists have been asked if these earthquakes are somehow related. What is going on in the earth beneath? When will it happen again? There have always been earthquakes but are they getting worse? The Creator of this world says that earthquakes will continue. There will be earthquakes in various places – these are the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:7).

Jesus spoke of these things in the context of the end of the world and his own second coming. There will be great suffering prior to his coming not only from earthquakes but from wars and from famines. As such disasters strike this world what is the focus of the nations and the leaders of the nations? What is your focus? What effect do these disasters have on your thinking, thinking about your life and your death?

When the tower in Siloam fell on 18 people and killed them some thought the victims were being punished for their sins. Many do not like to think about sin today; especially their own sin – or maybe it is just that they do not want to talk about sin. If they were in the path of a tsunami they

might think about their sin. What do you think about these recent disasters?

Jesus said in relation to those asking about the disaster in Siloam – unless you repent you likewise will perish (Luke 13:5). When you hear about such disasters by all means rush to help those who need help, but also stop to think about your own situation. If you had been under the tower of Siloam where would you be now? Is your life any more secure than those who perished in the earthquakes – or the famine, or the war, or the bus crash, or the heart attack?

Do not brush these things off as bad luck or coincidence, or as something scientists and politicians will soon be able to stop. They will continue says Jesus. They will continue until the end. The question is whether you will continue in your sin and one day perish, or whether you will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believing in Jesus will not save you from the earthquake but it will save you when Jesus comes again in judgment upon this world. Remember that after death comes the judgment. Noah believed God and built the boat in which he and his family were saved. Will you believe God's word which says believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household (Acts 16:31).

- Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon.

FLEEING

If there had anywhere appeared in space
Another place of refuge where to flee,
Our hearts had taken refuge from that place,
And not with Thee.

For we against creation's bars had beat
Like prisoned eagles, through great worlds had sought
Though but a foot of ground to plant our feet,
Where Thou wert not.

And only when we found in earth and air,
In heaven or hell, that such might nowhere be
That we could not flee from Thee anywhere,
We fled to Thee.

- Richard Chevenix Trench

WATCHING

“Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

WORKING

Take panes, said the window.
Never be led, said the pencil.
Do a driving business, said the hammer.
Aspire to great things, said the nutmeg grater.
Make light of everything, said the fire.
Never do anything off-hand, said the glove.
Just reflect, said the mirror.
Be sharp, said the knife.
Find a good thing and stick to it, said the glue.

HANDS

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19. A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million. It depends whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6. A baseball in Roger Clemens' hands is worth \$4.75 million. It depends on whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket is useless in my hands. A tennis racket in Roger Federer's hands is worth millions. It depends whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands will keep away an angry dog. A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea. It depends whose hands it's in.

A slingshot in my hands is a kid's toy. A slingshot in David's hand is a mighty weapon. It depends whose hands it's in.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches. Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in Jesus hands will feed thousands. It depends whose hands it's in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse. Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world. It depends whose hands it's in.

As you see, it depends whose hands it's in. So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because...

It depends whose hands it's in.



THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL is now in YOUR hands.

What will YOU do with it?

SEARCH WORK - NOVEMBER - 2009

SENIOR 12+ yrs; INTERMEDIATE 10-11 yrs; JUNIOR 9 and under.
SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE [Intermediate omit questions 2 and 8]
2 KINGS 18:1 - 16

1. How is king Hezekiah's trust in the Lord described? (2 verses)

Chapter 18:28—37

2. (x) What fact concerning the gods of the other countries did Rab-shakeh use to argue that the Lord could not deliver Jerusalem? (2 verses)

Chapter 19

3. What was the Lord's answer through Isaiah to Hezekiah about the words of Rab-shakeh? (2 verses)

4. What did Hezekiah do when he received the letter from the Assyrian messengers?

5. What happened that night in the camp of the Assyrians?

Chapter 20

6. What was Hezekiah's prayer when told he would die?

7. What sign was given that Hezekiah would go up to the Lord's house on the third day?

8. (x) What was Hezekiah's answer when Isaiah told him he would be punished for showing the Babylonians his treasures?

JUNIOR

EXODUS 17

1. When the people thirsted for water, what was Moses told to do to the rock in Horeb?

2. How did Aaron and Hur help Moses to hold up his hands during the battle?

Chapter 18:1—12

3. What were the names of Moses' two sons? (2 verses)

4. What did Jethro say when Moses told him all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians? (2 verses)

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

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

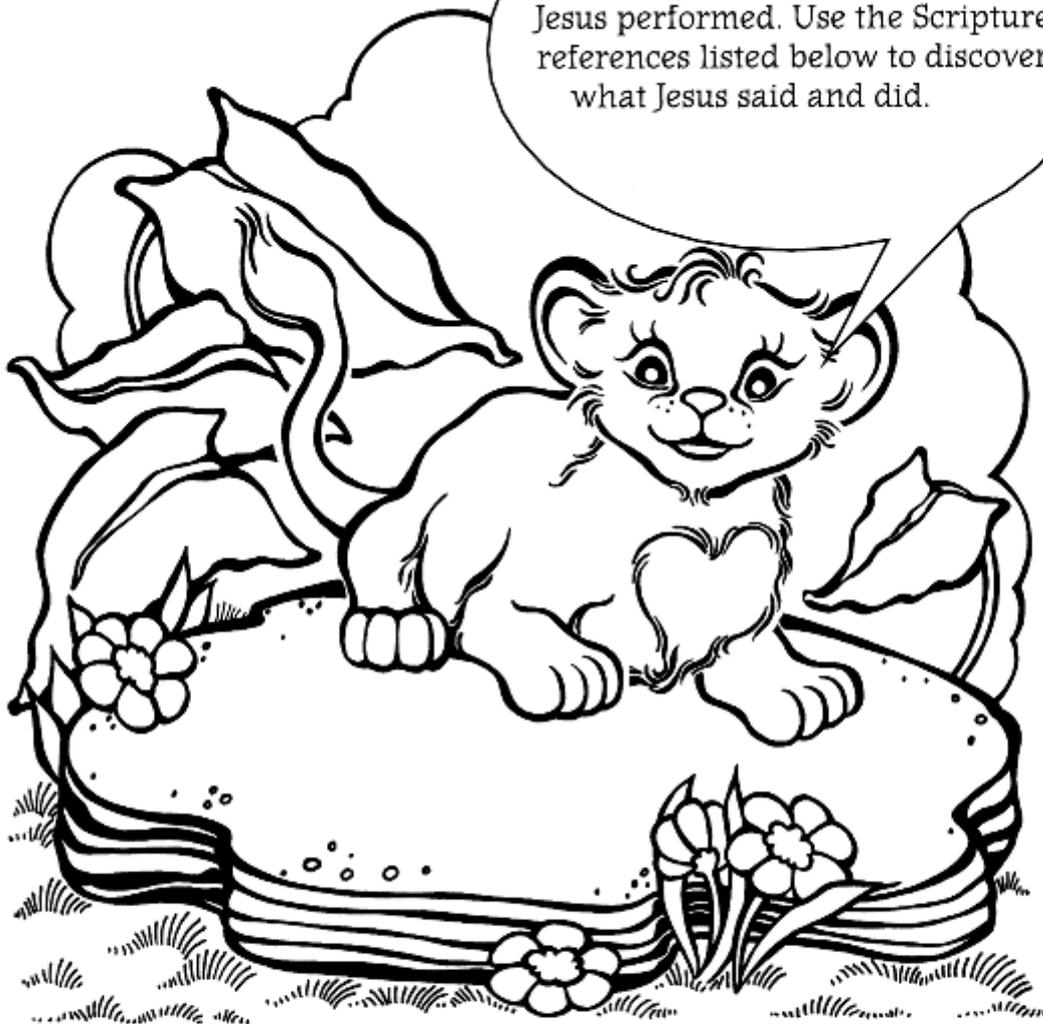
The Rev. George Ball at Tahlee



ACTIVITY PAGE.....

Miracles of Jesus

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote about many miracles Jesus performed. Use the Scripture references listed below to discover what Jesus said and did.



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

- John 4:50 "You may go. Your ___ will live."
- Luke 5:24 "Get up, take your ___ and go home."
- Mark 6:39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the _____ sit down in groups on the green _____.
- John 9:6 He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's _____.
- John 21:6 "Throw your ___ on the right side of the _____."
- Matthew 17:27 "Take the first ___ you catch; open its _____ and you will find a four-drachma _____."
- John 2:7 "Fill the ___ with water."

Free Software

In the last few weeks I have rebuilt/reinstalled 5 Windows machines for friends and family and for myself I have taken the first step into the world of Apple with a new iMac purchase.

I know previously we have looked at software, but seeing it is so fresh in my mind I thought it would be good to have another look at the subject. Whenever building machines I always look for free software to install. There are basically 2 types of free software; free as in price and free as in *libre*. And there is probably the combination as well for a third type. The comparison is often quoted as "Free as in beer vs Free as in speech". For more details check out en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gratis_versus_Libre.

When purchasing the Mac, one thing I was concerned about was the availability of good software free or otherwise since by reputation Microsoft operating systems has more software on offer. In reality I found this to be only half true. I would probably say the amount of software maybe less but the actual range of software is pretty similar. I realise that not too many people may be interested in Mac software but hopefully someone will find the lists below useful.

So some useful software collections

Windows and Mac:

www.pcauthority.com.au/Feature/110139.webs-best-50-free-downloads.aspx/5

www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2260070,00.asp

www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2338803,00.asp

fossfor.us

downloadpedia.org

www.sofotex.com/freeware.html & mac.sofotex.com/freeware.html

www.versiontracker.com

Mac specific:

www.thriftmac.com/category/Top-apps

www.freewareosx.com

www.smashingapps.com/2009/05/19/11-free-mac-os-x-apps-that-you-probably-want-to-try.html

www.usingmac.com/2009/7/8/mac-free-system-tools

macapper.com/2008/01/10/mac-os-x-freeware-list/

To close this section I thought I would give a list of some free software I consider essential on any computer some of these are OS specific, as specified (w – windows, m – mac).

Media – VLC Media Player, MediaMonkey (w), MediaPortal (w), Audacity

Tools – 7Zip (w), Zipeg (m) SyncBack (w), TweakUI(w), Process Explorer (w), PDFCreator, Foxit Reader, Notepad++ (w), TeraCopy (w), Cabon Copy Cloner (m), SuperDuper (m), PortableApps (w)

Security – KeePass, WinPatrol (w), AVG Anti-virus (w), Comodo Firewall (w), TrueCrypt, RoboForm (Free)

Remote Computing – Teamviewer, UltraVNC

GUI Tools – ObjectDock (w), RocketDock (with Stack docklet) (w), Launchy (w), Google Search Bar (m)

With the imminent release of Windows 7, there is talk that it might be priced around \$30 for students

(www.crn.com.au/News/156335.microsoft-offers-massive-student-discounts-on-windows-7.aspx) Add to this the

"It's not cheating" Office Suite Ultimate price of \$75

(www.microsoft.com/student/discounts/itsnotcheating/default.aspx). Well that's pretty hard to beat, if you're

happy taking the Microsoft path. Like the Office Suite offer, it is likely you require a valid "student" email address to get Windows 7 at this discounted price. Though with the recent warning by NSW Police (www.itnews.com.au/News/157767.nsw-police-dont-use-windows-for-internet-banking.aspx) about using Windows-based PCs and the risks involved with Internet Banking, well you may choose to take another path.

ThinkUKnow

Others may have already seen this site, as it was launched earlier this year, however with a national roll out next year I only became aware of it recently.

www.thinkuknow.org.au looks to be an informative site for parents, teachers and kids on keeping – kids particularly – safe on the Internet. There's lots of information for everyone but I think it will be particularly helpful for parents who are perhaps less tech-savvy than their children. It explains very clearly the sorts of things kids may be doing on the Internet, such as Instant Messaging and Social Networking. There is also information on how to deal with cyber-bullying and how to report inappropriate content. There is also a kid's section for various age groups which teaches them how to be safe. It looks like a very valuable resource. You can read some more background information on wikipedia – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ThinkUKnow.

GPS

And for a final topic, one of the other things I was asked about recently was what's a good GPS. Truthfully I had no idea. And I still don't have much of an idea, but I did find some useful reading. From all my reading it seems TomTom and Garmin are two of the best GPS providers around and some models by Mio are the best budget models around. But as stressed by a number of people, you need to get into a shop and really play with the GPS unit to see which particular model is best for you.

Please note that some of the links below are forums and as such might include inappropriate content.

For a lot of GPS information check out

www.gpsaustralia.net and particularly the forum thread

"What GPS do you want?" (www.gpsaustralia.net/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=144).

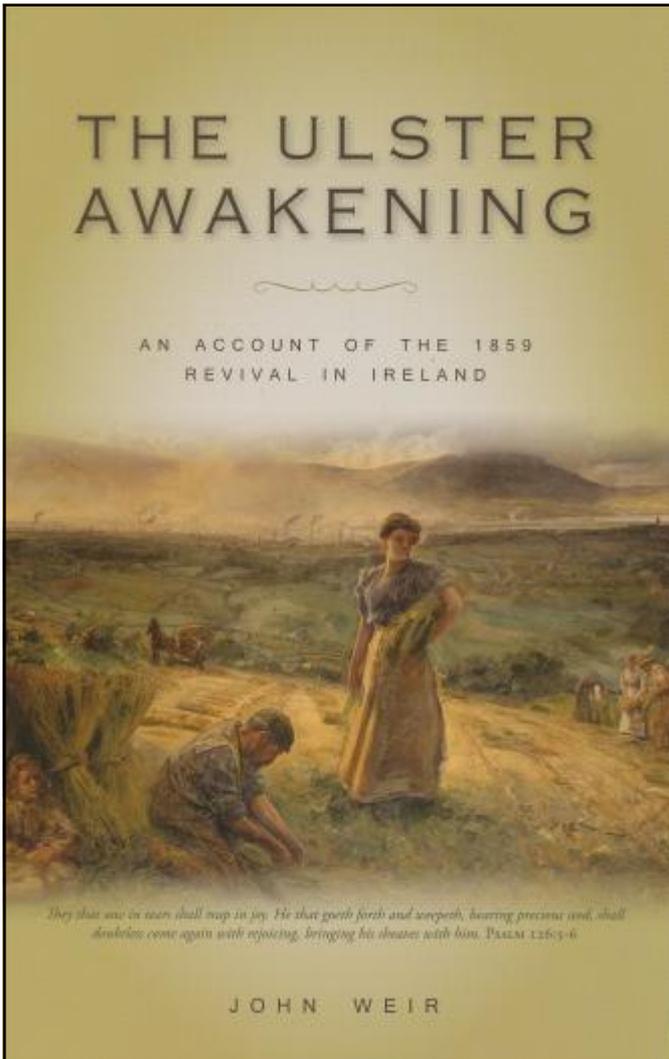
Over at the Whirlpool Forums check out the forum posting "Best GPS on the market" (forums.whirlpool.net.au/forum-replies-archive.cfm/1128274.html) and then head over to Cnet

www.cnet.com.au/cartech/ particularly

(www.cnet.com.au/cartech/gps/best-gps.htm).

Lastly, looking to buy a GPS, always check out shopbot (<http://www.shopbot.com.au/gps/portable-devices/australia/118>).

Actually for any tech purchase head over to shopbot.



**The Ulster Awakening
John Weir**

**[An Account of the 1859 Revival in Ireland]
Banner of Truth, 2009**

This is a reprint, by the Banner of Truth Trust, of a book which first appeared in 1860. It was written by the Rev. John Weir DD and was then entitled “The Ulster Awakening: Its Origin, Progress and Fruit. With Notes of a Tour of Personal Observation and Inquiry.” This original title gives us some extra information about the author’s intent. Dr. Weir had been a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland but, at the time of writing the book, he was serving in London as the minister of The Presbyterian Church, Islington. The original edition contained a preface by the Hon. and Rev. B.W. Noel, but, in this modern edition, this has been replaced by a chapter entitled “Why We May Expect Revivals” and which is an abridged version of a paper written by James Buchanan in 1843.

In 1859, a great revival started up in the northern part of Ireland. It has been estimated that it resulted in the conversion of around one hundred thousand people! It was mostly confined to the province of Ulster (which contains three counties more than the present political entity of Northern Ireland). Dr. Weir prefers to call it an

“awakening” because he, like many others, thinks of a “revival” as a movement to bring vitality back to people who already have life, i.e., to Christians who have become luke-warm in their service. The movement in Ulster was, however, far wider than that and involved the conversion of many people who had never known Christ. The movement was so widespread and spectacular in that region that it created a great deal of interest among both Christians and non-Christians in other places. A number of newspapers in England were publishing articles condemning it as spurious: one can imagine the sort of attack that the devil would launch against a large-scale work of the Holy Spirit. It was in this atmosphere that Dr. Weir returned to his home country to see for himself what had been happening. His book is an account of that visit and is divided into three parts.

The first part deals with a general history of the revival and of its spread throughout the province. Even at that early stage, there seems to have been some claims and counter claims about where the movement first started. The generally accepted one was that it had first appeared in the small village of Connor, in County Antrim, though there were those who said that the first signs had appeared in Ahoghill, another small town some ten kilometres away. (I would not recommend that your readers try to pronounce Ahoghill: it has, certainly, nothing to do with pigs). However, the most credible account is that there were four earnest young Christian men in the Presbyterian congregation of Connor who decided, in the September of 1857, to meet together regularly to pray for the furtherance of the Gospel in that place.

Their meetings continued for a number of months without any observable answer. By the end of the year they knew of only one conversion. Then in the next year the Spirit’s power began to be shown more and more, with an increasing number of people becoming convinced of their sinful condition and turning to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness. Gradually the trickle of converts became a stream and then a flood. Converts from Connor told relatives in other places what had been happening. Some, also, were asked to come and speak in other congregations where people had heard of the great things that had been happening in Connor, and so the Good News spread across the land and the Spirit blessed the reading and preaching of the Word in a way that had not been seen for centuries. Dr. Weir quotes the following description of the minister of Connor and of his ministry at that time (I have shortened the description slightly to save space):

“Its present minister is no Whitfield ... whose oratory might be supposed to effect wondrous changes by its own power but he is plain, honest, direct – meaning somebody going right to the understanding and heart – in doctrinal, practical preaching of the truth which alone can save.

The means which he employs are:

Two discourses each Sabbath ...

A system of Sunday schools over the districts, the pupils of which he assembles and catechises in his church every Sabbath, and to enable their teachers to carry forward a successful course he has printed for them each week a

suitable exposition of Scripture or of doctrine.

Pastoral visitation from house to house so that he knows every one of his people and can meet every case. He has covered the whole district with a network of prayer meetings, at some five or six of which he officiates weekly (there are a hundred weekly) the people themselves keeping up the religious services.

Religious services in the open air. Two years since when there was no public talk of Revivals he usually had audiences of two or three thousand."

When we look at this weekly schedule, and when we remember that all his travelling had to be done on foot or by horse drawn transport, and that there were no computers or photo-copiers then, we are left in wonder at how he managed to fit so much in! We do not wonder, however, that some of the ministers who were serving like this during that time eventually broke down in health!

The second part of Dr. Weir's book consists of the account of his own visit, lasting some three months, to see with his own eyes what had been happening in his native land. He travelled over most of the province, and everywhere he saw the evidences of a work of the Holy Spirit in souls saved and in a general improvement in moral and social behaviour, together with a reduction in crime. In his journeys, Dr. Weir visited the district in which I grew up, but he devotes only about a line and a half to the town itself, saying, "... at Bessbrook, numbers had been brought to conviction and ... had been hopefully converted."

I have a book (Bessbrook Presbyterian Church : Rev. J.K.A. McIntyre) in which there is the then Bessbrook minister's account of what had happened in his congregation. The Rev. Thomas Cromie was the first minister of the congregation, which had been formed in 1854. He records that the first years were "years of travail." Then, in 1859, there was a gradual increase in attendance at services. He then writes that, "On the 3rd July, 1859, at the evening meeting, the Lord said to the minister [himself] as he sat on a chair before the pulpit ... "Before you pray, say that I, Jesus, am here, and that the Father will give the Spirit to them who ask Him." He obeyed and, instantly, the cry, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me" came from the whole house. It could not be described otherwise, for there was no part of the house where the cry was not made. Since then, there has been no year without some evidence of the Spirit's presence and power."

This was what happened in a staid, old-fashioned, Presbyterian Church! Mr. Cromie further wrote (and I think that his words are worth noting), "There was no placarding, no handbills, no star or stranger announced – just ourselves. There was no name prominently connected with the Ulster Revival but one – "the Name which is above every Name." This is a sentiment which also comes out again and again in Dr. Weir's book. This was nothing like a modern revival campaign. There was no great evangelist from overseas, no great public speaker. Jesus Christ alone was the name on everyone's lips!

The last part of the book, consisting of chapters 25 to 28, deals with a number of separate topics. In Chapters 25 and 26, he discusses the more spectacular phenomena associated with the revival, people crying out, fainting, being "struck down" and so on. He points out that, while those who opposed the movement made great play of these things, often labelling them as "satanic", the actual facts were that they were the exception rather than the rule and that they could easily be explained by the effect of the persons concerned being suddenly made aware, by the Spirit, of the enormity (the monstrous wickedness) of their sins. It was also notable that these things were never considered evidence of conversion. That evidence was seen in a changed life.

When one views the occurrences from a 2009 perspective, one also sees that these were entirely different from what we associate with modern charismatic movements. There was never any emphasis on them: they were, for the most part discouraged, rather than encouraged. The usual response to someone crying out or going into a faint was to take that person out to a private area where he or she could be calmed and then counselled. When people cried out, it was always in plain speech: there was no "speaking in tongues". Furthermore, these phenomena were never shown by people after conversion. Once they had found peace in the Lord, they were calm and self-possessed.

The remainder of the book deals with the fruits of the revival, the changes that had been brought about in the lives of the people. These included a greater sense of moral and spiritual values, much improved social behaviour and a reduction in crime in general. There was even a reduction in sectarian violence, something new for Northern Ireland!

All in all, I found this book compelling reading, not merely because it deals with events that occurred in an area that I knew, and places with which I was once familiar, but far more because it shows us, in this present age where we expect so little, what great things the Lord can do. May He be pleased to do such a work in our own land!

In conclusion, I would commend this book to any who would like to know what the Lord has done in times past, even in a place which was just as hard and stony as modern Australia. The reader will need to remember that it was written in 1860 and, therefore, that its language will seem very "flowery" to our modern ears. One small blemish, one which would, probably, only be apparent to another person from Ireland, is that the author refers, in a couple of places where he speaks of early Christianity in Ireland, to "Columba and Columbkil (sic)", as if these names referred to two different people. In fact, Columba and Columbcille are both names of the same man – the man who evangelised a large part of western Scotland from a base on the Island of Iona. However, this is a very small blemish in a very interesting and informative book.

"... the Lord sometimes so depresses and straitens for a time his people, that they can hardly breathe, and can hardly remember any source of consolation; but in a moment he brings to life those whom he had nearly sunk in the darkness of death." John Calvin - on Romans 5:3

THE PRESBYTERIAN AGENDA

JOHN CALVIN: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

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

Calvin and Missions

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19)
There are many in the Protestant church today who claim Calvin had no thought for or interest in missions. Rather than disprove this view at length we shall look at what happened in Geneva between 1536 and 1564, the years of Calvin's ministry in that city and show where his heart was.

As the Reformation became more and more established under Calvin's leadership, Geneva grew into a dynamic centre of missionary concern and activity, and from it the light of the Good News radiated forth through the testimony of those who went out from her.

Protestant refugees from all over Europe fled to that city; not merely for safety but also to learn from Calvin the doctrines of the Reformation so that after thorough preparation in this school, they could return home, sent forth in the service of Jesus Christ to spread the true gospel.

At least from 1550 onwards hundreds of men were sent out, reaching Italy, Germany, Scotland, England, and practically covering France. There the Reformed church grew from 100 congregations in 1555 to 2150 by 1562! Could a man who had no heart for missions guide and inspire such an endeavour?

Under Calvin's direction, Geneva served as the heart of the Reformation in Europe. The same zeal and conviction that drove those men is still driving many today. Often, in Vietnam, China, Laos, Bangladesh, Nigeria and many other places they face the same dangers, yet they go out and preach the gospel. Then and now these men and women live by Calvin's life motto. His slogan was: **"My heart I offer to you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely."**

Possibly the strongest evidence of Calvin's heart for missions, which is really evangelism, can be found in his own words. Sermons, commentaries, his Institutes, and personal correspondence overflow with clear references to Scriptural teaching that the gospel must be preached to all the nations.

Commenting on the Great Commission he said, "Without God we cannot; without us, He will not!" The sovereign God sends forth workers into the His harvest and we, man, women and children who are called by His name, are those workers.

Calvin on Marriage

He who finds a **wife** finds what is good and receives favour from the LORD. (Prov. 18:22)

Calvin did not write much about marriage, but his life's witness on his marriage spoke for itself. At the age of about 31 he married Idelette de Bure, a widow with two children. We know that he was a loving husband who loved his wife deeply. He was devastated by her death after only 9 years of marriage. He did not find it easy to find a wife, mainly

because he took this matter very seriously.

His seemingly matter of fact view on marriage would not be so well regarded today. He writes to a friend, "I whom you see so hostile to celibacy, have never taken a wife, and I know not if I shall ever marry. If I did so, it would be in order to devote my time to the Lord by being the more relieved from the worries of daily life". Another time he wrote "Always keep in mind what I seek to find in her; for I am not one of those insane lovers who embrace even the vices of those they are in love with, when they are smitten at first sight with a fine figure. The only beauty which allures me is this – that she be chaste, not too nice or fastidious, economical, patient, and likely to take care of my health".

Well, you may say, some view of marriage!!!! Think again though. On reflection Calvin probably holds a more balanced and Biblical view of marriage than many would give him credit for on the basis of these few lines. A marriage is not held together by outward beauty and a fine figure, though these too are certainly gifts from God to those who have them, but patience, love in sickness and in health, a godly spirit and at least some skill at keeping house are the greater contributions to a stable, God-honouring and mutually beneficial marriage.

May God grant us all, those yet to be married, recently married or married for a long time, to live up more and more to such standards for marriage – standards that honour God and show an ever growing dependence on Him, the Lord God who instituted it for our benefit and His greater glory.

Calvin on Grieving

Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief. Proverbs 14:13

In many of his letters Calvin writes about grief. His was an age when sickness took its toll on young and old, he also saw that in his own family. It was an age when martyrdom took many to their death. Pain and grief were a much more familiar and accepted part of life, than it is today. So how did Christians comfort each other?

When his friend Viret has lost his wife Calvin and others went out of their way to encourage and comfort him and he invites him to come to Geneva with these words: *Come on this condition, that you disengage your mind ... from grief.* Not to forget and ignore grief, but to lift his eyes and mind to God!

When his wife dies Calvin writes: *I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, who, had it been so ordained, would have willingly shared not only my poverty, but even my death.*

And despite his pain at her death he said, *yet I subdue my grief as well as I can.* Again, not to ignore it, but to remain focused on the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort and *to keep myself from being overwhelmed with grief.* He confesses that he found great comfort by her faith in God and her expression of it.

He prayed: *may He support me also under this heavy affliction, which would certainly have overcome me, had not He, who raises up the prostrate, strengthens the weak and*

CHURCH NEWS.....

MANNING RIVER

Several weeks ago it was with gratitude to God that four new members were added to the congregation - Mrs Carol Murray, Mr and Mrs Wilson - David and Heather (nee: Cromarty) and Lisa Cromarty. We thank God for these new members.

Our Pastor, Rev George Ball is currently attending the meeting of Reformed Churches in New Zealand. During his absence Rev Ray Murray, Mr Neil Robinson and Rev Jim Cromarty have led the worship services.

The Deacons Court having refurbished the church kitchen have had the hall floor stained and polished. Paul Dyson and some followers have repainted the kitchen and hall. Everything looks bright and clean.

The Fellowship group of seventeen made a visit to Tahlee Bible College. We enjoyed lovely meals and a tour of the old section of the buildings. The rain fell, but cleared for the one outside talk. We heard some of the history of the College and thoroughly enjoyed the gospel message. It is expected that the next Fellowship activity will consist of a talk by Heather Wilson who is an optometrist from Wingham. This talk should be of great value to all who attend the Fellowship meetings - age having created many sight problems. This gathering will - God willing -



move to a cafe for an end of year meal. The Congregation was encouraged by a visit by the Central Presbytery who met with our minister, Deacons and Elders and finally the Congregation. The Rev John McCallum, the moderator of the Presbytery preached a most heart warming sermon upon the text: 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Heb 13:8).

BRISBANE

The Congregation rejoices in the Lord that the Rev. Jim Klazinga has accepted the Call to the Congregation.

During the quarter, *Missions DA Anderson Bequest* received \$12,402 in gains from the sale of equities invested on their behalf.

There was also a shortfall \$26,269 in *Stipend Relief* funds as at 30/9/09. Since 31/12/08, \$6,557 has been received (\$2,557 from investments and \$4,000 in donations from two Deacons' Courts, one specifying \$1,000 specifically for Armidale Congregation) whilst calls for assistance from three congregations totalled \$36,000. There are still sufficient funds in *Synod General Funds* to cover the current shortfall in *Stipend Relief* funds, if necessary. However, the most pressing need is *Stipend Relief*, taking into account the above balances, *Stipend Relief* assistance granted by Synod 2009 and the anticipated amount yet to be drawn against that provision, plus givings from congregations on a similar basis as last year, and other income, it is estimated Synod General Funds will have a credit balance of approximately \$45,000 as at 30/4/10 (next Synod) after covering the projected shortfall in *Stipend Relief*. The total assistance sought at Synod 2009 was \$72,000.

***"Let all your acts of benevolence proceed from the heart, with a prayer that they may tend to the glory of God in the temporal and spiritual good of those who are the objects of it."* (Thomas Gouge)**

Filling Our Needs.....

As at 30th September the balances of the main *Working Funds* of the church Synod were:

<u>30/09/09</u>	<u>31/12/08</u>	
\$ 16,785	\$ Nil	Missions (General Funds)
\$ 63,734	\$ 49,117	Missions (DA Anderson Bequest)
\$351,980	\$348,838	Missions (Relief Fund – M McSwan Bequest)
(\$26,702)	\$ Nil	Missions (TI Leggott Stipend Support)
(\$29,443)	\$ Nil	Stipend Relief
\$112,610	\$104,424	Training of Ministry
\$ 10,606	\$ 12,394	Youth & Fellowship
\$ 94,474	\$ 86,226	Synod General Funds

Whilst *Missions General* had a balance of \$16,785 as at 30/9/09, budgeted expenditure of \$7,500 approved by Synod 2009, has still to be provided from the account. There was a shortfall of \$26,702 in *Missions - TI Leggott Stipend Support* as at 30/9/09. Funds received since 31/12/08 total \$4,187 and have come from three congregations. There are still sufficient funds in *Missions General* (after budgeted expenditure) and *Missions DA Anderson Bequest*, to cover the current shortfall, if necessary.

refreshes the weary, stretched forth His hand from heaven to me. God heard his prayer and the prayer of his friends and he was enabled to continue in his duties to the joy and comfort of many whom God had put under his care.

Do we see a staunch man, unbent by grief? No, we see a

man stricken by grief, but upheld and strengthened by his Father in heaven who encourages him through His word and the love of faithful friends in the same way he had encouraged them in their grief. May we be such a community. May God grant that we have such friends and be such friends, brothers and sisters who walk together in His Name. ■

BETWEEN YOU AND ME

At the back of our house we have an awning connecting the house with the garage. It's made of steel and color-bond, and open to the east and west. It's cool in summer, and cold in winter, especially when the westerlies are blowing. But the "u" sections provide a refuge for the birds, and an excellent place for nests!

Years ago, a family of swallows established a nest just under the roof out of the wind. It was an ideal spot—warm, safe, and protected. At first I was going to knock it down. But then I recalled the words of Psalm 84:3. "*Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.*" In the light of those words, I reckoned that if the Lord could permit a swallow to nest in his house and near his altar, then surely I could do the same with ours.

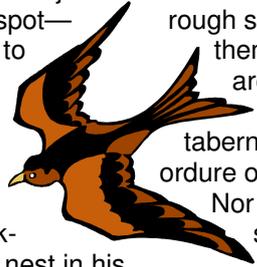
However, this year what I thought was a very theologically correct approach was severely tested! Three young swallows were born to Mr and Mrs Swallow and, as they grew, the nest soon became very crowded. It was interesting to watch their antics as the time came for them to leave the nest. The day they chose to venture out was a very windy day. Fortunately for them they were able to shelter in the U section - and eventually scramble back into the nest. But it wasn't their antics that challenged me so much. It was the mess they made - which made me think: Did God

really allow the swallows to build their nests near his altar - and be the envy of the Psalmist who wanted to be in God's House, and near His altar?

As I thought about it, and checked the Commentaries, I came across this statement by John Brown. He says: "To me it is inconceivable, how sparrows or swallows could fix their nests in the altars of God, which were of brass or rough stones, and had a fire perpetually burning upon them, and multitudes of priests and Levites crowding around them. God did not allow of any trees to be planted near them; and I cannot believe God's tabernacle or temple was polluted with the nests and ordure of birds, in the manner of our ruinous churches.

Nor can I see this idea answerable to the context, or scope of the psalm. Might not the verse be rather translated, "As the sparrow findeth the house, and the swallow the nest for herself, where she hath put her young ones, *my soul* findeth thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God."

That would provide a nice solution to my dilemma, wouldn't it! But it's not one that I'm prepared to accept yet. I think the Lord was prepared to put up with the swallows, just as he's prepared to put up with us. After all, that's what the altar was there for: It was the place of sacrifice and cleansing for imperfect, messy people - which finds its ultimate fulfillment in the work of Christ for us sinners. I think that's why the Psalmist envied the swallow so much and wanted always to live near God's Altar.



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!"

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