

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went down and slew
a lion in a pit in a snowy day” (1 Chron. 11. 22).

WINTER 2021

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Cover picture: Snow, Dome of the Rock, Temple Mount, Jerusalem

PERCEPTION

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EDITORIAL

“I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.”

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord.”

These two texts, the first written by Isaiah, the second by the Apostle John, speak of the eternity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In contrast to eternity, our lives are but a fleeting appearance on this earth. There is “a time to be born, and a time to die.” We come and we go – and are soon forgotten.

The doctrine that Christ has existed from all eternity, not just from the time He was born to the virgin Mary, is a vital one. Controversy over His eternal Godhead once split the churches down the middle, but the doctrine was ably defended by J. C. Philpot in the *Gospel Standard* magazine. Hebrews chapter 7, although difficult to understand, presents this doctrine to us in an unusual way. Here the priesthood of Jesus Christ is compared to the priesthood of Melchisedec (see Genesis 14. 18-20). Christ is said to be a high priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec. The point is that Melchisedec was a dying man, and one day his priesthood would come to an end. But by way of contrast, this Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, “continueth ever” (verse 24). The Bible clearly tells us that “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3.16).

We wish to give a strong word of warning here, particularly to any of our younger readers who may be tempted to use a more modern version of the Bible than our much loved KJV. In the text we have quoted above from the first Epistle of Timothy, the word ‘God’ is omitted from many modern-day versions of the Bible. The New International Version reads: “He appeared in a body,” whilst the Good News Bible says “He appeared in human form” – neither version bearing testimony to the Godhead of Christ. Be very wary of these modern versions which in many other cases downgrade the truth that Christ was God. Do not use the NIV – it is unreliable. No English Bible published after the New King James Version has the word ‘God.’ One

further example is in the Contemporary English Version which reads: “Christ came as a human.” We are reminded of the truth of Christ’s eternal Godhead at this time of year as we sing about it (we hope not unthinkingly) in some of the well-known Christmas hymns, such as *Hark! The herald-angels sing* and *O come, all ye faithful* (e.g. referring to Christ as ‘God of God’, and ‘Very God, Begotten, not created’).

The words *first* and *last*, *beginning* and *ending* are found in several places in God’s Word. As we approach the end of another year, our thoughts are very much on beginnings and endings. We look back to the beginning of the year that is now almost past. If we are in a right spirit, there are two things we need to acknowledge: first, our many sins, failings and backslidings; second, the abundance of the Lord’s mercies.

Thankfulness for God’s mercies, even in small things, is something we often lack. For some of our readers, the past year may have been a difficult one, or a sad year. It may be that the year began well, but the end has been difficult. For others, the past year may have had periods of great happiness – perhaps a marriage, or a baby born into the family, successes at exam time, or new friendships. Whatever it may be, have we remembered to return thanks for all these favours and mercies? “Be ye thankful,” says the word of God. It is good if we have the spirit of the Psalmist who said, “I will bless the Lord at *all* times.” How hard it is to be thankful when things have not gone well.

You may have come across the story of the poor African, a story well worth keeping in mind, particularly when things do not go how we would have wished. The story is this: whatever happened in the poor man’s life he would say, “Praise de Lord.” One day he was given a good piece of beef. He wrapped it carefully in an old newspaper to take back home. On his way he stopped to tie his shoelace, setting the parcel of beef on the ground. A dog saw an opportunity, seized the beef and ran off. The poor man said once more, “Praise de Lord.” A bystander said, “How can you praise the Lord for losing your beefsteak?” “Oh no, Sir,” said the man, “I do not praise de Lord for losing the beefsteak. I praise de Lord that I still have a good appetite.” We may smile at this simple story, but what a lot there is in it. Anne Steele’s prayer is good:

“Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free.”

Another story that comes to mind is concerning a man in mid-life. He was walking through a busy shopping centre whilst suffering from

a most painful back after lifting something too heavy for him. He felt decidedly weary and not altogether free from rebellion. Suddenly, he noticed a wheelchair coming towards him carrying a man who had lost both his legs. He thought, "What have I to complain about with just a painful back, when that poor man has no legs and will never walk again." Here was matter indeed to "Praise the Lord!"

Matthew Henry, the great Bible commentator, was another man who showed an excellent spirit of thankfulness. Once, while on a coach journey, the coach was waylaid by robbers, and his purse was stolen. What was his reaction? It was one of thankfulness. "First," he said, "I am thankful that it was I who was robbed and not I who was the robber. Second, I thank God that although they took my money, they did not take my life. Third, I am thankful that although they took my money, they did not take *all* my money."

Another text connected with beginnings and endings is found in Matthew chapter 20: "The last shall be first, and the first last."

When I was at junior school, a period of play preceded the time for 'school dinners.' At the end of playtime, we children had to queue up in the playground before proceeding to the dining room. It was discovered that, in order to be first in the dining room, some of the children (particularly the girls), had taken to queuing up far too early so that they had no opportunity to 'let off steam' and run around and play games. The headmaster did not like this at all – and being a resourceful man, he had a solution. When the queue had finally formed, he would say in a loud voice, "Everyone turn round." So the whole queue reversed, following which the headmaster (a sidesman at Ashwell Parish Church) would unfailingly quote Matthew 20. 16: "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

But what was the meaning of the Lord Jesus when he uttered these words, first to his disciples (see Matthew 19. 30), and then again perhaps more publicly, at the end of the parable of the vineyard and the labourers (see Matthew 20. 16)? I expect many interpretations have been put forward, but one thing we have noticed over the years is that many who once seemed promising in the things of God, in later years prove a disappointment. Others, perhaps to our great surprise, are the ones whom the Lord uses. This reminds me of a story often told concerning two boys at our own chapel at Bethel, Luton. In the early 1900s, a boy named Frank Bennett began to attend the Sunday School at Bethel. Until that time, he had attended another Sunday School at the church

where his family attended. It was a high church, and Frank was not happy there. A friend asked him, “Why don’t you come to our Sunday School?” He began to attend, and was much touched by the kindness of his teacher, whose name was Miss Geary. Eventually, Frank attended all the services, and was much blessed – he was baptized in 1905, though much persecuted at home. Sad to say, the boy who invited him drifted away from chapel and Sunday School altogether. Here was a case of the first last, and the last first.

Now is the time we look forward to the beginning of a new year. How will it end? We are making our plans and already penciling in our diaries dates of important events. But have we remembered to say (or at least think), “If the Lord will.” We know not what a day may bring forth, and in all probability some of those dates will be crossed out before the year ends. Perhaps there will be another lockdown. As we begin a new year, there can be no certainty of what will happen. Wisely, the future is hidden to us, and is known only to God.

When we look back at the January editorials of monthly magazines, how often we find words such as: “The year 1897 has now passed into eternity and will never be recalled.” It is, of course, true. The English proverb, written by Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest of our medieval poets, expresses it well: “Time and tide wait for no man.” (Chaucer died in the year 1400 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.)

All of us had a year which was our first, but for some of our readers next year may be their last year. As we sing in Sunday School:

“See, another year is gone;
Quickly have the seasons passed;
This we enter now upon
Will to many prove their last.”

This is a solemn thought, not just for those who are older, but for younger ones too. Are you, am I, concerned about eternity? I am sure there are many things that *do* concern us all at the moment – the uncertainties (many brought about by Covid), the unrest, the lack of honesty and morals displayed by our elected leaders, and many other things. But again I say, are we concerned about eternity? The concerns of this life are as nothing compared to eternity. What if we should gain the whole world and lose our own soul? The Lord Jesus said, “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The ways in which the Lord may bring a person into soul concern

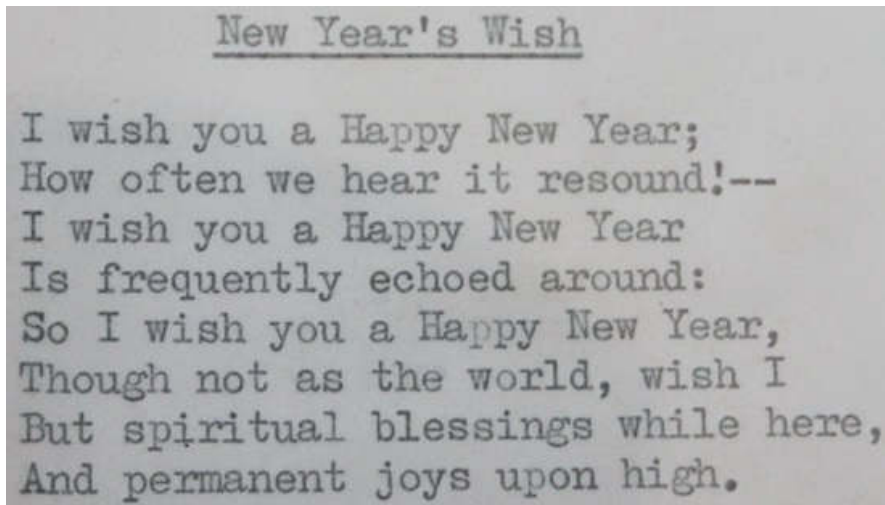
are many. We have heard of more than one young person who has stood by an open grave at a funeral, and the thought has come: "What if that was me? Where would I be? How do I stand for eternity?" One young man in relating his call by grace said: "I remember stepping into the road to cross the road, did not see a car coming; suddenly a loud screech and the car was right next to me, and I thought, if the driver had not seen me, where would I have been?" Others may be affected by the death of someone they love. One young lady said: "It was not until my Grandma passed away that I saw eternity. When we visited her, she seemed ready and prepared, and I thought, when I was in her position, would I be ready, because eternity seemed a tremendous sound?"

Our prayer for the coming year is that the Lord's work may go on amongst the churches. For many, may it be the Lord's appointed time.

"The appointed time rolls on apace,
Not to propose but call by grace;
To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion's hill."

Wishing all our readers the Lord's richest blessing in the coming year.

The Editor



On a Christmas card sent by Queen Victoria. The card is on display at Dunrobin Castle, Northern Highlands, Scotland.

THEY THAT WERE READY

As the end of the year begins to draw near, how much time we spend preparing for the season when we all get together with our families! But here Mr. Timothy Kingham speaks to us of a much more important preparation – to be ready for eternity.

This is part of a sermon preached by Mr. Kingham at Bethel Chapel, Luton on Lord's day morning, 29th August 2021.

Text: "They that were ready" (Matt. 25.10).

Now then, let us get straight to the point. "They that were ready." Are *you* ready? Am *I* ready? Either we are ready or we are not. Here we have the ten virgins – five of them wise, five of them foolish. Five of them were ready, five of them were not. Five of them were saved, five of them were not. Five of them were sheep, five of them were goats. And so how is it with each of us this morning? Are *we* ready?

We have read so many solemn things in this chapter. Has it had any effect on us? By nature these warnings mean nothing to us. By nature we are not ready. Not only are we not ready by nature, but we have no desire to be ready. But has there come a change in your life and mine? Is there a difference to what there once was? Do you have a hope, perhaps a little hope, perhaps a feeble hope, that you are among those of whom it can be said, "They were ready." If this was the last Lord's day you and I were to spend on earth, what would be said of you when you were gone? Would it be said, "They were ready"? How solemn if it should not be so. I thought of it on Thursday, we had that word in Daniel where we read, "The God in whose hand thy breath is ... hast thou not glorified." Our every breath we take is in God's hand and there will come that time when we will breathe our last. And when that time comes, will it be said of us, "They were ready"?

How vital it is for us to be prepared. What a confirmation it was to me when we had that hymn just now, "Prepare me, gracious God." That is the only way in which we will be ready, if we are prepared. We cannot make ourselves ready, we cannot make ourselves right. It is the Lord's work. And so very distinctly we have those before us: those who

were ready, and those who were not. The sheep and the goats.

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus to His disciples on the mount of Olives, and they came and asked Him after He had spoken about the destruction of the temple: “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” And the Lord Jesus, in chapter 24 tells them a few signs of what shall come in the last times. We have to think of that reproof that the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples, that they could discern the signs of the weather but they could not discern the signs of the times. He was telling them they needed to be ready, whatever times they lived in, whether it was the last times, the day of judgment, or whether it was not. There is a vital need to be made ready, so this morning I want just to speak from this word in two ways.

Firstly, what are we to be ready for? What do we need to be prepared for? How vital that need is for us to be prepared.

Then secondly, the blessing of those who are made ready.

What do we need to be ready for? Well, in a word, it is *eternity*. Is eternity a tremendous sound to you and I? It may be that some, or all, of us will come to our end before the Lord comes the second time. It may be that the Lord will come the second time whilst each of us are still living here below. So we need to be ready.

I want to speak particularly of three things concerning the Lord’s coming again. I hope you children will listen and understand concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, it is *certain*. It is certain that day will come.

Secondly, it will be *unexpected*. It will come suddenly. So in many places we are told He will come as a thief in the night.

Thirdly, we are told it will be *final*. There will be that final separation between the righteous and the wicked, the saved and the lost. There will be no second chances, no purgatory or anything like that. As the tree falls, so shall it lie.

So we need to be made ready for that day. Just as we read, it is appointed, the day of our death: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” So there is that day of judgment, that is

appointed. Paul in Acts 17, speaking on Mars' hill, said, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" – the Man the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So we have the certainty. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There will be no escaping, there will be no putting it off. So here in this parable of the ten virgins the Lord Jesus was continuing what was spoken before, the solemnity of the last times, the coming of the Son of Man. So we have it sure and certain, the time appointed when the Lord will come.

And then we have this second point, that the coming of the Lord will come suddenly, and we have it described not just as a thief in the night, but as a snare for the fowler. If that animal had seen the trap, they would have avoided it, but it came suddenly upon them. So it is as a thief in the night. Peter said, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." How solemnly this day will come. Will you and I be ready when it does come? Well, of course, the vital point is for each of us to be prepared for eternity.

We each in our lives have things that we get ready for. And lots of things, even today, you have had to get ready for, but what a difference it would make if we knew *that* time was to come today. What a difference it would make today if we knew we were to breathe our last. It is right that we should prepare our lives, we should try to order our lives – we are not to live disordered lives at all – but what comes first in all our preparations? In the days of Noah, it was the eating, the drinking, the marrying and giving in marriage. Nothing wrong with any of that in and of itself. "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

And now, what is it in your life you are preparing for? Perhaps, particularly you children, you younger ones, it is the time you are preparing for a new year at school, a new year in your education. You are preparing for a new situation, preparing for university or work. Many things you are doing to try and get ready. Nothing wrong with any of that in itself, but what about eternity? Amos said, "Prepare to meet thy God." Well, what preparations are being made for that? You know it will come suddenly. "But know this, that if the goodman of the

house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

As I read these chapters a few weeks ago, there were three or four phrases of four words that seemed to stand out. One of these we read in chapter 24: “he would have watched.” If he had known what time the thief would come “he would have watched.” But the point is this, he *didn’t* watch and it was too late. When we come to our end – we want to speak carefully – will it be said of us, “they were ready,” or will it be said of us, “if he had known he would have watched”? That won’t do us any good. We need to be kept from false hopes. We need to be kept from merely good intentions.

I came across an illustration given by a minister many years ago. He said it is as though there were many people in a boat at sea and came into a storm, and they were facing certain death. The boat was being broken up and there were some of them had their life jacket and some who did not, and those who did not, they were being so confident, so sure, yet when this certain death faced them, one said, “It will be all right, I am a good swimmer. I can swim, I can save myself.” How need we to be kept from a religion like that, in what you and I can do. There are others who perhaps had a life jacket, but it was a counterfeit one, it didn’t work properly, it didn’t support them, it was a false hope. Beware of building on false hopes. It looked like they had a life jacket but they did not; it was a vain hope trusting on a sandy foundation. How we need to be kept from that, trusting in our own works, trusting in a outward form of religion, trusting in coming to chapel every week, trusting in all sorts of things that come short of the Lord Jesus. There were others who said I haven’t got a life jacket, but I will hold on to someone else who has. That didn’t do them any good either. Just as the illustration is, we can’t get to heaven on another man’s religion, we cannot be given the grace of others. So that is just a faint picture that we need to be kept from these false hopes.

As we come to a close we think of the apostle Paul. Not all the Lord’s people have such a striking experience as he had on the Damascus road, but Paul had been brought to see his need, he had been

brought to be prepared for eternity. He says in 2 Timothy 4, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” And so when that word is spoken, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh,” will we be able to say like Paul, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand”? Earlier he said he had a desire to depart. Why was there that desire to depart? It was to be with Christ, which is far better. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

OLIVE OIL

Olive oil was used in the services of the Sanctuary:

First, as oil for the light in the Holy Place of the tabernacle. “And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.”

Second, as oil for the burnt sacrifices and meat offerings. “And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil.”

The oil used for the lamps is described as “pure oil olive beaten.” This oil was extracted from olives specially selected for their excellent quality, by crushing them into a pulpy substance in a stone mortar and then hanging the pulp in baskets so that the oil was strained through. The oil which drips from the basket is now quite clear and free of particles of pulp or pips and is what is referred to as “pure beaten oil.” It is colourless and burns without giving off smoke.

If now the process is continued by placing some weight on the pulp in the basket, in the form of stones or a wooden block, further oil is obtained of a slightly inferior, but still very good quality, “the beaten oil,” used for the meat offering.

In order to extract oil for everyday use, the pulp was compressed still further, and in this process the pips were crushed as well. Oil obtained in this way was far less pure, containing as it did particles of fruit and pips.

JOHN Warburton (Part 8)

A few of the Lord's providential dealings

Born in 1776, convicted of sin as a young man, delivered from a temptation to end his life by drowning, and Christ revealed to his soul under a sermon preached by William Roby at Cannon Street Chapel, Manchester. Baptised when 28 at Manchester by William Gadsby. While in the water, Gadsby prayed that he might be raised up as an instrument in God's hand for the cause of truth. After beginning to speak in the Lord's name, he was lifted up with pride with the thought that he would be a *great* preacher, but the Lord showed him that his sufficiency must in Him. He sets his heart on settling at Pool Moor Chapel, Yorkshire, but another minister is invited as Pastor. We continue with the life of this servant of the Lord.

Preaches in a room at Rochdale

About this time I was invited to go and preach to a few people that had been separated from Mr. Littlewood's church at Rochdale for going to hear Mr. Gadsby, who then came once a month to preach at Rochdale on a week evening. They had taken a room to meet in, and after a few times I engaged to go regularly every Lord's day, for which, if I remember aright, they engaged to give me six shillings a time.

I had nine miles to go, and I think I went regularly for about twelve months, when, as the place was increased, they gave me a call, which I accepted. This was either in the year 1809 or 1810. And here I met with many comforts and many sorrows, and some downright real friends, as well as some downright real enemies, the latter of whom appeared when I first went amongst them as though they would have pulled out their eyes and given them to me; but I found in the end their language was, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Truly it is "through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven."

O the miserable journeys I had sometimes for about two years from the place where I then lived to Rochdale. I have many times left home with neither money nor provisions in the house, over head and ears in debt, full of carnal reason and unbelief, and not able to see how ever I could escape bringing a reproach upon the cause of God and truth. O how my poor soul has roared out like a bear, and mourned sore like a

dove, when I have been passing through the lonely fields on my way on a Saturday night or sometimes on a Lord's day morning, many times without a text, all my debts staring me in the face, no appearance of getting through a single week, and all our clothes nearly worn out. O the many times I have roared out in the fields, "What a fool I must be to go on attempting to preach when everything is so completely against me!" How many times did I tell the people that I must give it all up, for I was confident I should never be able to get through with honour to the cause of God and truth. But they only laughed at me, and told me that if I knew nothing of these trials I should not do for them, and they were at a point that I was in the best school God could put me in for the pulpit. How often my soul exclaimed, "Miserable comforters are ye all" (Job 16. 2).

Rent day

One time we were completely set fast to make up the rent. We had somehow or other got it up except one guinea, and that we could not get from any source we could tell of. But a thought struck my mind that I would try the next Lord's day to borrow it from one of my friends at Rochdale, who I expected would lend it me, as the following Monday was the day to pay my rent.

O the journey I had to Rochdale praying to God that He would open the way. I told Him that I had nowhere else to go but unto Him, who had ever been my present help in all times of trouble. "O do, dear Lord, open the heart of someone to lend it me, and I will bless Thee as long as I live." I felt sweet access to Him, and readily believed that He heard my prayers, and that I should bring the money home. But how my poor soul was disappointed! For after I had done preaching on the Lord's day, I mentioned the affair to one who, I thought, could do it, but he had it not at that time in his power. O how I sank down in my feelings, and set off home miserable enough, and verily believed it was now all over, and in such darkness and unbelief and carnal reasoning, until I was almost distracted.

But when I came to a village called Heywood, through which I had to pass on my way home, it just struck my mind that I had to call to leave a message from Mr. Gadsby to an old lady who lived there, that he was coming over on such an evening. I rapped at the door, and told the servant my message, and the old lady being in the parlour heard me, and insisted that I should come in and have some refreshment. I wished

to be excused, as I had a long way to go home and it was getting late. Besides, I was so miserable that I thought ladies would be no company for me. But she would have no denial, and said I must come in. So in I went and sat down. And how it was I cannot tell, but so it was, that the moment I sat down I forgot my rent and all my misery, as if it had taken wings and flown away; and there being a young lady there who was keeping her company, I began to talk of the things of God with such freedom that I was astonished at my feelings.

The young lady burst into tears, and said, “These are the very things I have been exercised with in my mind. Are these the feelings of Christians?” At which my very soul was melted down in a moment, and my mouth was so opened that I began to speak of the way in which the Lord had led me, with such sweetness and pleasure, that I quite forgot my rent and every other calamity with it, and, to my feelings, could have sat all night. But I found by the clock that it was time for me to be going, for I had about seven miles to go, in a dark night and by a miserable road. The old lady desired me to spend a few minutes in prayer, and truly I felt it a time of prayer, and of praise too, in thanking God for the interview we had had together, so that I did not know how to conclude.

When I arose from my knees, and was taking leave of them, the old lady left a guinea in my hand, at which I burst aloud into a flood of tears in the room, and could not help it. They were both alarmed, and asked me what was the matter. As soon as ever my feelings would suffer me to speak, I told them that tomorrow was my rent day, and that I was a guinea short of making up my rent, and had tried all I could to get it, but could not; and to see the goodness and tender mercy of my covenant God in putting it into your heart to give it! O how the poor old lady wept for joy along with me, in seeing the goodness of God. I left them with ten thousand blessings from my heart, and on my road home I went with transports of joy, viewing the matchless wonders of my covenant God. O how my soul could sing with sweet melody in my heart:

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

A chapel built a Rochdale

Some little time after this we began to build a new chapel at

Rochdale, where I then laboured, and had done so for some time; and the Lord having blessed my labours, we were crowded in the room in which we then met. It was truly wonderful and amazing to see how the Lord opened a way for us, for we were a very poor people. But O how many times did we prove that portion of God's Word, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine." For He opened the hearts of the people far and near, to communicate towards the raising up of Hope Chapel, which we called it, for we said it was begun in hope, carried on in hope, and a hope, too, which will never make ashamed. Through many toils and difficulties, at length we got the chapel up, but with a considerable debt upon it, which was very heavy on our shoulders.

After preaching some time in the chapel, the friends wished me to come with my family to Rochdale; but I was stuck so fast with many little debts that I could not tell how I could possibly remove from the place I was in. It appeared to me to be utterly impossible; but I found, again, that what was impossible with me, was possible with God. And, blessed be His dear Name, He again made it manifest that He was able to deliver me. But, is anything too hard for the Lord?

Moves with family to Rochdale

So off we went with six children, we having seven in all, but the eldest did not then live at home. We arrived safe at Rochdale, with my heart full of the blessing of the Lord. And O what a sweet time I had in my new habitation, in raising up an altar to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who had fed me all my life long. His boundless goodness, both in providence and grace, so shined into my poor soul, that it was truly delightful and pleasant to see His goodness pass before me in the way.

Ever since the Lord had opened my poor mouth in His dear Name, there was one request I had made, that He would open a place for me where I might have my family with me on the Lord's day. Truly I had many sweet promises that this would be the case in His own time and way; but little did I think God would favour me with a habitation adjoining the chapel. But so it was! And I verily believe, on the Lord's day when my wife and children entered the chapel, I should have fainted away in the pulpit had not the dear Lord supported me.

For several weeks I went on very comfortably, and was favoured very much with the sweet presence of the Lord in giving me a sight of

the way He had led me, and I could say from my heart, “He hath done all things well” (Mark 7. 37).

But I soon found plenty of work for prayer, faith and patience. My salary was now twenty-five shillings (£1.25) per week. I had six children at home, and my wife was again in the family way, and provisions being dear, I soon got up to the neck in trouble. For the first thing we had to do as soon as we got into the town was to go on credit at the shop for everything we needed. When my wife drew near the time of her delivery, I began to fear how it would be possible to get her the comforts she required at the time of her confinement. I soon found that I had to plunge out of one trouble into another, that is, borrow from one to pay another, so that I soon found I could not tell how to move on. When my wife was taken in labour there was but little in the house, and I was obliged of necessity to go to Manchester and leave her very poorly.

O what a miserable journey I had to Manchester! All the former mercies of God were lost to my sight, and now the devil told me that it would be a thousand times worse in Rochdale than at the other place, which I had wanted so often to leave. “For here,” said he, “the whole town is all upon the watch, hoping that something or other will come to stop the mouth of such a presumptuous Antinomian, and now,” says he, “the time is come. Your wife will die; God will stop your mouth; and you and your children must go to the poor-house after all.”

“The angel of the Lord did wondrously”

When I had concluded my business in Manchester, I met a friend just as I was going off home, who asked me how we all were, and how my wife was, and how we were getting along. I told him how things were, and said that I was afraid that the Lord, after all the mercies He had favoured me with, had left me. After a little conversation, he told me that the Lord had not left me, nor ever would leave me; and when we parted he gave me what was needful for our present wants, and off I came home. How powerfully and sweetly did those words come into my soul: “And the angel of the Lord did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on.” It was a looking on indeed. I verily believed it was all well with my wife, and that the child was a boy, so I cried out in the way as I went, “His name is Manoah!” What a very different journey had I home! All the way to Manchester the devil roared, but all the way back the Lord smiled.

When I arrived at home all was well; my dear wife was safely put to bed, and the child was a boy. How sweetly did I take the dear child up in my arms, and bless it in the Name of the Lord, and said, “His name is Manoah, and may the angel of the Lord do wondrously for him, and his poor soul look on,” which God grant in His own time.

Behind at the shop

But it has ever been my lot to have changes, ins and outs, ups and downs. For after a while we got behind at the shop where we dealt for provisions. We owed, if I recollect rightly, about seven pounds, and had but two in the house, which we were keeping towards paying the debt; but there was no appearance of getting the rest. But all the rest came in God’s own time and way, and it was truly wonderful and astonishing to my soul.

There was one of our deacons, my right-hand man, who professed such love when I first went into the town that apparently he would have plucked out his eyes and given them to me. After a little time, however, he began to manifest his hatred and enmity against me by trying all he could to harass, perplex and distress me. He goes to the person we traded with, and asked him if I owed him any money. The answer was that I did. So he told him with his soft tongue, that out of kindness he let him know that, if he did not get it soon, he never would have it at all. This put my creditor into great fear, so that he sent me a very soft note that he should be glad if I would settle the account, as he was driven for money. O how this made me shake from head to foot! “Now,” said the enemy, “what will you do? There is five pounds to make up before you can pay the seven. You have drawn over your quarter’s money, and you cannot look there. But if you do not pay it immediately, it will be over the whole town, and it will be a matter of joy to the uncircumcised and sorrow and grief to your friends.”

O how all this sank me down, for though the Lord had done so much for me, I found that I had no faith at my command to trust Him one moment. This was on Saturday; no text, and Lord’s day coming, and I could not get one to strike me all the day. Then I tried to strike one myself, and I struck out many, but they all slipped through my fingers, and off they flew. What a day and night did I pass through. But through the tender mercy of a covenant God I had a good day in the courts of our Lord. The dear Lord led me into the very things that some of His dear children were exercised with, and they went home at night

rejoicing in the Lord, and putting no confidence in the flesh. The dear Lord favoured me with a sweet calm, and I felt a hope springing up that He would provide.

Only two shillings

Before we went to bed, my wife asked me how we were to get through the week. “I have only two shillings,” said she, “and we are to have no more at the shop till the old score is paid off, and the two pounds we must not touch; and you know there is but little in the house. How do you think we are to get through the week?” “Well,” said I, “come, never mind it tonight. I am tired; let us go to bed and see what tomorrow will bring forth.”

I had a very comfortable night’s rest, and, being tired, lay pretty long in the morning. Indeed, I was rather reluctant to go down, for fear of the subject of the two shillings coming up again. Whilst I was pondering about the two shillings, the postman came to the door with a letter, and called out, “One shilling and elevenpence, mistress.” “What,” cries out my wife, “what do you mean?” “One shilling and elevenpence, mistress.” I could not help laughing in my room to hear my wife and the postman. Well, thinks I, we don’t need much consultation about laying out the two shillings. We have now a whole penny left. Neither I nor my wife understood the one-and-elevenpence then.

When the postman had shut the door, she comes stamping up the stairs as if she would have stamped them down. Into the room she comes with the letter and the penny, and down she threw them both. “Now,” says she, “as you have such a stock of faith, you have a whole penny to go to market with,” and down she went, not in the best of tempers. I opened the letter, and there was a two pound note and a one pound note, making three pounds. I ran down stairs with astonishment, and showed my wife the three pounds. Poor thing! she was quite overcome with wonder, and she declared that she should never again be frightened at one-and-elevenpence, and hoped one-and-elevenpence would soon come again.

All debts paid

Just as we were talking it over, my old friend, Thomas Nivin, a Scotchman, whom I had ever found a faithful friend from first to last, came in to know how we were. I showed him the letter and told him of our situation, and that I owed seven pounds at the shop, and that my

creditor had sent for the money, and that we had only two pounds towards it until this letter came, and now we have five pounds. The old man rejoiced, and said that he was glad in his heart to see the lovingkindness of a covenant God in such a wonderful and unexpected way. The dear old man said, "I have two pounds laid up at home that I have no present use for." So off he went and brought the two pounds.

My old dame dressed herself up in her best gown, and off she goes with the seven pounds and discharges the debt with honour. Now, thinks I, I will go alone into the chapel, and there will I extol the mercy of my wonder-working God, who has wrought this wonderful deliverance for me, one so unworthy. But I am ashamed to write or speak what came into my mind as soon as ever I entered into the chapel. Instead of blessing and praising God for His wonderful deliverance, it darted into my mind that whoever sent it might have sent a five pound note instead of three, and then I should have had two pounds for other things, which would just have come in well. O how I hated myself for these thoughts, and how did my soul struggle, cry and pray to tread these cursed feelings under my feet. I walked to and fro, begging and crying for a thankful heart; but could no more thank God feelingly for the deliverance than I could make a world. And I began to find my heart as hard as the nether millstone, so that I found that thankfulness was a gift that cometh down from above. And I am confident that thankfulness is as much the gift of God as ever deliverance is.

More trials at Rochdale

Soon after this I had trouble upon trouble at Rochdale, and began to see that I never could stay there long; and I was firmly persuaded that God never intended it, for every way kept closing up, till at last my old friend, the Scotchman, said he could not promise to communicate so much to the cause, and, indeed, I wondered he did what he had done for years. Then the deacons told me that it was plain the Lord meant me for some other place, and, if Providence opened a way, they considered I should do right in embracing it.

O how my soul did sink down within me. I had eight children; I was over head and ears in debt, and nothing but clouds and darkness within and without.

Letters from Maidstone and Trowbridge

A few days after this I received a letter from Maidstone, in Kent,

saying that if I was at liberty, they wished me to come for four or six weeks upon trial. I looked upon this as a wonderful opening in providence, and sent them a letter, fixing the time at which I hoped to be there. I think it was the day after I had sent off my answer that I received another letter, from a few people who met in a room at Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, inviting me for a month upon trial, if I was at liberty. O how I wondered to know what all this could mean. I sent them an answer, saying that I would comply with their request as soon as I had fulfilled my engagement at Maidstone.

At the time appointed I went to Maidstone, and stayed as long as I had agreed to do. The people gave me a call to be their pastor, and everything was as pleasant to flesh and blood as I could desire; and fully was I determined to accept the call, only I must go to Trowbridge to fulfil my engagement there. But I was as confident in my own mind that I should come and settle at Maidstone as I was in existence; so to Trowbridge I came to spend my month. The room was crowded with people, and God blessed the word abundantly. But I felt determined I would go to Maidstone. The people at Trowbridge gave me a call, and, my time being nearly out, it was necessary to give them an answer. O the begging and crying I had that God would give me a command to go to Maidstone! for to pray to stay at Trowbridge I could not; for I could see nothing but difficulties, trials and miseries at Trowbridge; for I plainly saw the toils of a new chapel, and these I dreaded, as knowing what sorrows and miseries Hope Chapel had caused me. O what a night I had the night before I was to settle the business whether I was to go to Maidstone or stop at Trowbridge. I wrestled and prayed, and cried to God until about three in the morning, to let me go to Maidstone; and O how I sunk down when He spoke these words into my heart: "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." "O," cried I, "do, Lord, let me go to Maidstone; do, Lord. Do not be offended with my poor petition; do let me go to Maidstone." But the text sounded again and again, "Abide in this city, for I have much people here." But still I wanted Him to let me go to Maidstone. At last the dear Lord settled the matter at once by speaking these words to my soul: "If his children forsake My law and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes;" and I could see it as speaking all this to my soul: You may go to Maidstone; but here is the rod, and you shall have nothing else if you go. I fell down and cried out, "Not my will, but

Thine be done.” “But,” cried I, “How can I get on here? how can I live here, when I come with ten in family and my wife in the family way? How can I possibly live here and the people a poor people?” O how God condescended to settle the matter in my soul. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine.” “The earth is Mine, and all the gold and silver is Mine.” “Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy waters shall be sure.” “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” I cried out, “It’s enough, it’s enough: Amen to it.”

Maidstone from that moment was as completely taken away from my mind, and the feeling of any desire to go there to settle, as if I had never heard of such a place.

And here I am at Trowbridge, a poor worm, and have proved the Word of the Lord to be truth nearly twenty-two years.

NOTE: Having now inserted eight instalments of the life of Mr. Warburton, we intend now to leave the subject for a while, returning, if the Lord will, to it at a later date. There is still more to be told, particularly the building of Zion Chapel in 1816 to hold seven hundred people, the sad death of his youngest daughter Rhoda, and his triumphant death on Thursday, April 2nd, 1857. In his son’s words: At last he said, “Hal— , Hal—.” Then followed without a waver, “Hallelujah!” and he immediately breathed out his last at a quarter past seven p.m.

SAFETY ONLY IN THE LORD

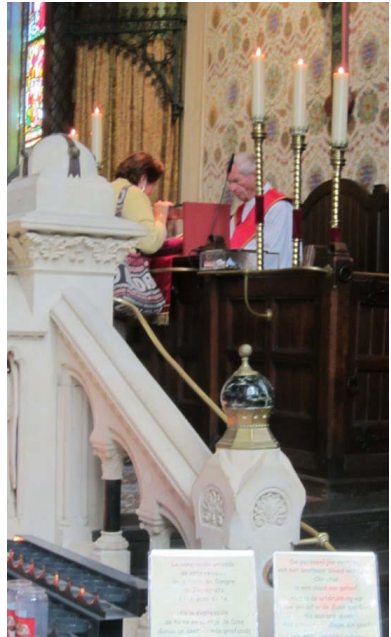
In Bible days, some thought their nation could be delivered by the strength of their horses. But the Psalmist tells us there was no safety there. “An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.” No – that was not the right place for their trust. Wonderful though horses might be in the service of man, Solomon also realised that without the Lord’s blessing they alone could not deliver them. In the book of Proverbs, he wrote: “The horse is prepared for the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.”

VENERATION OF RELICS

In our last edition we mentioned two relics on display, one in Paris (the crown of thorns) and one in Florence (the title over the cross).

Another much venerated relic is found in The Basilica of the Holy Blood (Dutch: *Heilig-Bloedbasiliek*) in Bruges, Belgium. This truly ancient church (built in 1134) houses a relic of the blood of Christ allegedly collected by Joseph of Arimathea and brought from Jerusalem by Thierry of Alsace, Count of Flanders in the 1100's. The blood is displayed in a phial said to contain a cloth stained with the blood of Jesus Christ. Although the Bible never mentions Christ's blood being preserved, The Acts of Pilate – one of the apocryphal gospels – relates that Joseph of Arimathea preserved the blood after he had washed the dead body of Christ.

Pope Clement V issued a papal bull in 1310 granting indulgences to pilgrims who visited the chapel to view the relic. Modern examination has shown that the phial, made of rock crystal and dating back to the 11th century, was a Byzantine bottle made in the area of Constantinople. Its neck is wound with gold thread and its stopper is sealed with red wax. The phial is encased in a glass-fronted gold cylinder closed at each end by coronets decorated with angels. The date 'MCCCLXXXVIII die III maii' (May 3, 1388) is engraved on the frame.



Viewing the relic

We sometimes sing, “Needful is Thy most precious blood” (hymn 1105), and to the true believer, it most certainly is so.

“Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its power,
 Till all the ransomed church of God
 Be saved, to sin no more.”

IMPORTANCE OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Laws of the Old Testament

We are all familiar with the “ten commandments,” but the Old Testament contains many other laws. To give just two examples: First, nothing was to be left in the way of the blind in case they should trip; second, the farmer was not to reap the *corners* of the fields as this was to be left for the poor. If we turn to Leviticus chapter 19 we find a quite a number of laws. What is striking that in verses 30-37 alone we read I AM THE LORD six times. They were not just men’s laws, but God’s.

Weights and Measures

Verse 35 refers to weights and measures. In the UK today, so important is this subject that it has its own law: the *Weights and Measures Act 1985*. As you know, we lift something to find its weight, and measure something to find its length. It is, of course, very important to understand weights and measures. If we go to a swimming pool, we need to understand that the deep end is 3m deep, and the law says this must be clearly displayed in a public pool. The Weights and Measures inspectors are not concerned only with trade. In the past they dealt with sub-standard weighing machines in NHS hospitals!

In England six hundred years ago, there was a great variety of measures like a pound, a foot, a gallon and a barleycorn – and different trades had their own measurements. But in the 1400's it was decided this was not good enough. King Henry IV decided to measure his waist, and decreed this was to be called a ‘yard.’ As we all know there are three feet in a yard, 12 inches in a foot, and (perhaps not so well known) three barleycorns in an inch.



King Henry IV

About 200 years later it was felt a new measurement, longer than a yard, was needed, and they decided to call it a ‘rod.’

This was determined by getting sixteen men to line up their left feet heel to toe – a very inexact method of proceeding. Our older readers may remember at school learning about chains, rods, poles and perches!

Going back to Leviticus 19, in verse 36 the Lord emphasises that we are to have just balances (scales), just weights, and a just ephah (a measure of capacity). We once read a story about a pedlar who went around selling cloth. His measuring rod was also his walking stick. As time went on his stick wore down and got shorter, much to the advantage of the pedlar. One day, the pedlar heard a village preacher, whose name was Mr. Dawson. This was his text: “Weighed in the balances, and found wanting.” The pedlar was convicted of his sin, and broke his stick in pieces.

The kilo redefined

For a long time scientists wanted to define the value of a kilogram by the laws of physics, rather than a physical weight. Other units had been successfully defined: for example, a metre is defined as “the length of the path travelled by light in a vacuum during a time interval of $1/299,792,458$ of a second.” You cannot get anything more exact than that! In 2019, it was decided that the kilogram



Pedlars measuring stick

would no longer be measured against an actual weight. Since 1889, a kilogram had been defined by a single lump of platinum which was housed inside three glass jars at the headquarters of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) outside Paris. But the master copy, known as *Le Grand K*, had been picking up micro-particles of dust, and had been losing weight in cleaning.

Representatives of sixty nations agreed to redefine the kilogram based on the unchanging value of the Planck constant. This is named after a scientist named Max Planck who solved various problems to do with the amount of energy a proton carries. We are told it is an important quantity in quantum physics. So instead of checking the kilo against an actual weight, scientists can find an exact kilogram by measuring the amount of electricity needed to lift it, using a special set of scales known as a Kibble balance.

Weights and measures in the Bible

The importance of exactness in our weights and measures is a principle emphasised in the Word of God. We have already referred to

Leviticus 19. 36 where we read: “Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” Later, in Proverbs 16.11, we read similar words: “A just weight and balance are the Lord’s: all the weights of the bag are His work.” The prophet Micah speaks of a “bag of deceitful weights,” and Amos complains of those who make “the ephah small, and the shekel great, falsifying the balances by deceit.”

The Shekel

Although today we think of a shekel as the Israeli currency, the shekel is derived from a Hebrew word meaning to weigh. In Exodus 30.13 we read of “the shekel of the sanctuary.” Every man over the age of twenty was required to give a half-shekel offering to the Lord as “a ransom for his soul.” “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall shall not give less than half a shekel” was the instruction given by the Lord to Moses. In Israel today a shekel is worth about 23p, and this 500 Shekel note would be worth £115.



“Weight of glory”

There is another reference to ‘weight’ we would like to mention, and that is the “weight of glory.” This phrase appears only once in the Word of God. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17). The trials and afflictions carried by Paul and his fellow-sufferers at Corinth, although heavy, were light compared to the far more exceeding “weight of glory.” Their trials here below would one day end. Then the exceeding weight of glory will be theirs for ever. Dr. Gill says: “It is the same glory Christ has entered into, and will give to His people.” What an unspeakable mercy it will be if one day that “weight of glory” is ours. As the old hymn says:

“Then the toils of the road will seem nothing,
When I get to the end of the way.”



SEPTEMBER - A MONTH OF ANNUAL MEETINGS

September 2021 was a time for the annual meetings of various societies in which we have an interest.

The Gospel Standard Trust held their 55th Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 11th September 2021, this year at Oakington Chapel in Cambridgeshire. After the business side of the meeting had been completed, a very interesting talk was given by Mr. Edmund Buss with the title “Spiritual Lessons from the Recent Restoration of Oakington Chapel.” The chapel was originally built in the year 1865, but the structure was found to be



Original chapel

suffering from severe wet rot and dry rot, and deterioration in other ways too. Virtually all the timber was removed and replaced, and a completely new floor laid. Mr Buss compared this work to the gracious work in a sinner’s heart, where a complete renewal is needed. The restored chapel is a splendid example of what can be done



All the timber removed



The restored chapel

to an old building. The layout has been completely changed and the pulpit is now at the opposite end to the original. Full width folding doors enable the schoolroom to be opened up when occasion requires, as it was at this AGM.

The Trinitarian Bible Society's 190th Annual General Meeting was held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London on Saturday, 18th September 2021. It was on 7 December 1831 (a Tuesday) that over two thousand people gathered at Exeter Hall, London for the inaugural meeting of a new Bible society. It was agreed that this society would be called the Trinitarian Bible Society. From that day, the objects of the Society remain unchanged:

The object of this Society is to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

More would have been made of this 190th anniversary had it not been for the difficulties surrounding Covid. It is amazing to think that during 2020 the Society distributed 7.6 million Scriptures and Scripture items in 40 languages to 111 countries. The morning business meeting concluded with an interesting report from Pastor H. Emiru on his work on a New Testament and Psalms for use in Ethiopia. This is in the Amharic language, the official language of Ethiopia, a Semitic language spoken by about nine million people. In the afternoon a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dafydd Morris, a deputation speaker for the Society, from 1 John 1-3. The 111 countries to which Scriptures have been sent by the TBS are listed on page 37.

Christian Values in Education (CviE) held their 2021 National Conference on Saturday, 25th September 2021 at The King's Centre in Chessington, Surrey. This turned out be an outstandingly suitable venue, with plenty of room for everyone and excellent facilities. It was thought that around 250 people attended the event, and no doubt in normal times it would have been more. Professor Andy McIntosh spoke on the subject of environmentalism, and Mr. Matthew Seymour, a pastor and parent, spoke on "RSE: Taking a Stand", drawing on his experiences confronting the curriculum at his local primary school. Pictures of this event are on the next page.

CViE 2021 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



UNUSUAL BIBLES (8)

The Authorised Version of the Bible was published in 1611. It did not take long for a mistake to be made, as an edition printed in 1612 became known as *The Printers' Bible*. Verse 161 of Psalm 119 read: "Printers have persecuted me without a cause." It should have been 'Princes.'

Another 17th-century English printer was fined £3,000 for substituting 'a' for 'no' in Psalm 14 so that it read: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is a God."

In 1716 a serious error occurred by simply reversing the letters in a two-letter word: John 8. 11 read: "Go, and sin on more." The correct reading was: "Go, and sin no more."

The following year, in 1717, an edition was printed by John Baskett. People referred to this Bible as a "Baskett-ful of errors" as there were so many printing mistakes. The page heading for Luke 20. 9 read, "The Parable of the Vinegar" instead of "The Parable of the Vineyard," hence its popular name of *The Vinegar Bible*. One of these Bibles is found in St. Andrew's Church, Farnham, Surrey, given to the church in 1739 by the speaker of the House of Commons.

PERSEVERANCE

Medical Missionary, Dr. Stanley Browne, was once journeying up the River Congo in the hospital motor-boat. Ahead of him, out of the blue, three storm centres suddenly converged. The wind reached hurricane force, the rain beat down in torrents, and all around the waves were black and angry. He knew they were in great danger, and asked the African boatman if they should stop till the storm abated.

Dr. Browne never forget his answer. His eyes looking straight ahead, his hands gripping the wheel, he said:

"To go back is impossible.
To stand still is too dangerous.
We *must* go forward."

“THY HEAVENS”

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8. 3.)

Some years ago a calculation was made by a team led by astronomer Dr. Simon Driver of the Australian National University in Canberra. The team concluded that the universe contains about 70 sextillion - or 70 thousand million million million - observable stars, according to the most accurate estimate yet made of the number. This was a figure that far exceeded all previous estimates. 70,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars! (70 followed by 21 noughts!) This is greater than the estimated number of grains of sand on all the world’s beaches and deserts - in fact about 10 times more.

Psalm 8 speaks of the greatness of God’s creating power. Verse 3 reminds us that it is “Thy heavens.” It is similar to Psalm 89 where in verse 11 we read: “The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine.” They were “founded” by God.

Today, it is not fashionable to believe in creation, but this is man’s blindness. There is lot of talk how we are going to save the planet, but our planet Earth, the sun, the moon and the stars all belong to God. He made them - they are the work of His finger.

When we look up at the sky on a starry night, it reminds us how great and glorious God is. Once, God told Abraham to look up, and to count the number of stars, if he was able - which, of course, he was *not*.

Going back to our figure of 70 sextillion stars, Dr. Driver himself said: “Even for a professional astronomer used to dealing in monster numbers, this is mind-boggling. This is not the total number of stars in the universe, but it’s the number within range of our telescopes. The real number could be much larger still - some people think it is infinite.”

Of course, the team did not physically count the stars, but using some of the world’s most powerful telescopes, they instead took a representative sample by counting all the galaxies in one small region of the universe. By measuring precisely how bright each galaxy was, they were able to estimate how many stars it contained and extrapolated this out to the whole universe visible through telescopes.

The Hubble Deep Field, a seemingly empty patch of the sky, turned out to be filled with distant galaxies (NASA). The vast majority of stars are too dim to see with the naked eye, which can pick out only around 5,000 stars from even the darkest places, and only 100 or so in the middle of a big city.

Another astronomer has calculated that our Milky Way galaxy contains about 300 billion stars, of which about 30 billion are like our Sun, and at least 1.5 billion theoretically have orbiting planets the size of Jupiter.

In 1999, observations by NASA astronomers, using the Hubble Space Telescope, suggested that there are 125 billion galaxies in the universe.



Hubble Space Telescope

One very beautiful day in June, two Jehovah's Witnesses called at my door (it was a Saturday morning). The conversation began by commenting on how lovely the blueness of the sky looked. They then asked me what I thought was going to happen to this beautiful world. I said, "One day, it will all be burned up."

"Oh no," they said, "You don't think that God would burn up His beautiful world, do you?"

I said, "It is not what I think that matters. It is what God's word tells us."

And indeed, Peter tells us (2 Peter 3. 7 and 10) that one day "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The Jehovah's Witnesses did not know how to reply to this clear evidence from God's word.

Psalms 8 ends as it began - the excellency of God's name - and that His name is greater even than all His works.

And one final thought this Christmas time: amongst those 70 sextillion stars, there was one special star created by God that went before the wise men "till it came and stood over where the young Child was" – it was ordained from all eternity that *this* star should lead directly to the Saviour.

THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE HEART

There was once a man who had got so far in his regular drinking that he was downing two pints (just over a litre) of brandy a day.

One day he went home and said to his wife, “My dear, come and sit by me.”

She sat there, looked at her husband, and then said, “If my husband did not drink, I would be the happiest woman in Canada.”

“What?” he said in surprise.

She repeated: “If my husband didn’t drink, I’d be the happiest woman in Canada.”

“Well, my dear,” he said, “I married you to make you happy, and I ought to make you happy. It is my duty to make you happy, and if *that* will make you happy, I will not drink another drop as long as I live.”

He was as good as his word. For eight years he kept it up without any belief in Christianity. He rejected the Bible and all its requirements.



The drinking saloon

Many years later, one day, walking down the street with a friend, the man said, “Do you see that red-fronted building, that drinking saloon?”

“Yes,” said the friend.”

“Well,” he continued, “I have been afraid of that building many years. It is right on my way as I go to business, but I always went down another street to avoid going past it. I have done it again and again. But, since I got the grace of God in my heart, I go right by that saloon. And if I have the slightest desire to enter it I offer a prayer: ‘Lord, keep me for Christ’s sake,’ and I go by safe.”

Ah! gentlemen, when a man abstains from drink in his own strength, he does it at a daily risk; but when Divine grace reigns in him, he is safe.

From an 1878 magazine

THE LIONS' MOUTHS SHUT

"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5. 29).



Wong Ming-Dao

Wong Ming-Dao was born in 1900 in Beijing (formerly Anglicised as Peking), the capital of the People's Republic of China, while it was under siege of the Boxers. At the beginning of August in 1939 (which was the third year of the Japanese occupation of North China) he returned to his home town after ministering in Hongkong. At this time in his life he was publishing a quarterly periodical known as the *Spiritual Food Quarterly*. This is his story.

On arriving home, I was shown a document sent out by the Japanese Ministry of Information.

It was a directive requiring all newspapers and periodicals published in the city to insert, in their next issue, four slogans drawn up by the Japanese Army Bureau. Anyone daring to disobey this directive would be severely punished.

The brother who handed it to me voiced his opinion. Obviously, he said, we cannot publish slogans like this; but not to publish them is plainly dangerous. Who would dare to disregard a direction from the Japanese military? At the time I weakened. While I was determined not to compromise truth by publishing God-dishonouring slogans, I did not possess the courage to publish the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* in the usual way without including the slogans.

I discussed the matter with several believers and with one voice they recommended that we let the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* cease publication voluntarily. In this way we would avoid compromising truth and yet at the same time avoid incurring danger. In view of my having weakened I naturally welcomed advice like this and accordingly began my preparations to halt publication.

That year we had published a combined issue for Spring and Summer, but the Autumn issue had not yet been published. Subscriptions covered the whole year, so if publication ceased half-way through the year I would have to return subscriptions for the second half of the year. So I prepared to print and distribute an announcement

informing subscribers that we would either refund the half-year subscription or send books to that value. While I was making these preparations my heart was full of anguish, because up to that time the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* had been published for twelve and a half years. In fact I regarded this publication as my child. Every quarter I myself wrote the manuscript; I corrected it; and sometimes I even sent it out. Many readers had told me of help that they had received through reading this periodical. But publication was now to be halted. The child was dying an early death. My heart was filled with great sorrow.

On August 14th, in the evening, I was praying in my room when suddenly my heart was rebuked by the Holy Spirit. I asked myself some questions: “When you began publishing the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* did you not do so because you were unmistakably guided by God? And during the twelve and a half years of its publication is it not true that many have been helped by it? Who is it that today is causing you to stop publication? It is not that God is causing you to stop publication, but that you yourself are voluntarily ceasing publication because of an order issued by the Information Ministry of the Japanese Army. Is not this a case of fleeing as you approach the scene of battle? If we publish those slogans we shall be raising the white flag of surrender to Satan; but if we decide voluntarily to cease publication would it not be a far bigger surrender than publishing the slogans?”

I felt that, come what may, we cannot halt publication. We need not enquire as to hypothetical dangers in the future, we will go ahead and publish the periodical as usual but we will not insert the slogans.

After prayer I felt strengthened and prepared to act. I pondered the fact that to publish the magazine without the slogans would almost inevitably bring trouble, for at that time we were required to hand over several copies of every issue to government officials. If the Ministry of Information of the Japanese Army discovered this omission it was absolutely certain that they would be extremely angry, for in their eyes this would amount to disobeying their orders. The outlook was distinctly sombre. If they reacted leniently we would at least expect instructions to cease publication; but if they reacted harshly they would probably arrest me and charge me with various crimes. But I determined not to be swayed by these considerations and resolved to stand firm to see the matter through. They might compel us to cease publication but we would not cease publication voluntarily. Whatever dangers might arise and whatever we might be called upon to suffer I would not

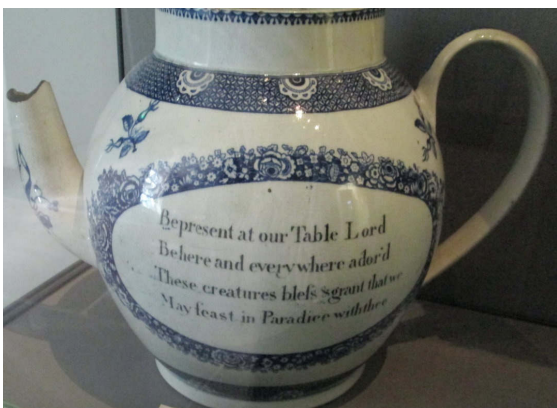
abandon the task that God had committed to me.

I knew that God had chosen me to use me and that in the grave situation in which we were placed He relied on me to be loyal. As the saying is, ‘A soldier is trained for a thousand days; he is used only briefly.’ This was the time that God wanted to use me and on no account must I flee as we approached the battle.

The next day I discussed my decisions with several fellow-believers. No one was willing to utter an opinion. On the one hand they did not wish to hinder me, yet on the other hand they hesitated to express approval. Afterwards I shared my thinking with my wife. She asked me, “Are you prepared to be arrested, to be examined, and to be jailed by them? If you are not fully prepared for these things I fear that when the time comes you won’t be able to endure it. But if you are prepared for these things you may screw up your courage and go.”

I replied right away, “I am prepared.” She said, “Then you may go and act according to what God has shown you.” Thank God, this is just what I did. The *Spiritual Food Quarterly* was published as usual. Not one word did we publish of the slogans that the Japanese military had ordered us to insert in this issue. After publication we sent a copy for them to scrutinize as usual. What happened? They did not arrest me. They did not instruct me to cease publication. They did not even communicate with me.

The Japanese Army occupied North China for eight years yet at no time was the *Spiritual Food Quarterly* adulterated (that is, with political matter). Like Daniel I can say, “My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.”

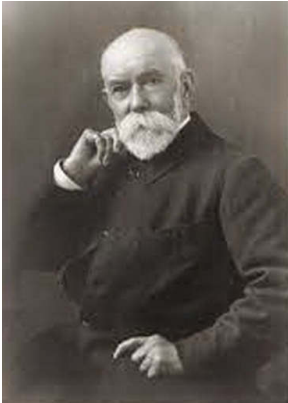


WESLEY'S TEAPOT

Wesley wrote in his Journals that Josiah Wedgwood, the English potter, had given him a teapot. This teapot was called a ‘Gallon Teapot.’ However, it does not look as though it would hold a gallon! Interestingly, Wedgwood was the grandfather of the evolutionist, Charles Darwin.

THOMAS BURBERRY

Inventor of 'Gabardine'



Thomas Burberry

Burberry is a well known, world-wide clothing brand with its roots in Basingstoke. Born in Betchworth, Surrey in 1835, Thomas Burberry and his wife Elizabeth came to Basingstoke in 1856. At the age of 21 he set up his very own drapers shop on the Winchester Road. At that time, Basingstoke was just a small village with a population of 4,500 people.

What is not so well known is that Thomas Burberry was a Strict and Particular Baptist. It seems that in 1867 he was instrumental in building a Strict Baptist chapel at Basingstoke, which was formally opened in early February, 1868. The following report appeared in the *Reading Mercury*:

OPENING A NEW CHAPEL. On Sunday last, February 2nd, special services were held in connection with the opening of a new chapel, called Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, for that section known as Particular Baptists. The chapel consists of an entirely new building, of a very neat and plain appearance, and is situated in Church-street. A prayer-meeting was held at seven-o'clock in the morning, which was well attended, and at the fore-noon service, a sermon suitable to the occasion was preached by Mr F. Marshall of London, from 1. Chron. 29th chap, and part of the 20th verse. In the afternoon the members partook of the Lord's Supper, and in the evening Mr Marshall again conducted the service and preached the sermon. The chapel was filled on both occasions.

Thomas Burberry was one of the five named trustees on the Chapel's trust deed dated 31st December 1868. The chapel seated 120 worshippers, and was known as 'Ebenezer, Strict and Particular.' A census taken in 1882 recorded a congregation of 90 in the morning and 65 in the evening. There was a thriving Sunday School, with a New Year Treat (as it was called) which included an address, recitations and the distribution of buns, oranges and sweets. Additionally, the Young

People's Bible Class held an annual meeting of supporters.

In 1895 a difference of opinion emerged over whether the chapel should have an organ, some members feeling "that an instrument of music was neither necessary nor desirable in a place of worship." Eventually a consensus was reached, and an American reed organ was purchased. The first marriage was solemnized in 1900. The building continued as a place of worship until the 1930's when by an order of the Charity Commission the building was sold.

But what of his most notable achievement? It came about in this way. Burberry had noticed that shepherds' linen smocks repelled water, and it seemed as though the reason for this was that they had become impregnated with oils from handling sheep. As a large proportion of his customers were farmers, fisherman and hunters, Burberry saw a need for a material that was adequate for the English weather - weatherproof, breathable (insisted on by his Doctor), and tear-proof. After some experimentation, he achieved his aim and called the material Gabardine, which he patented in 1888. The word 'gaberdine' was first used by Shakespeare to describe the cloak worn by Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Whether Burberry purposely altered the 'e' to an 'a', or whether it was a mistake, we shall never know.

The company was a huge success and soon had stores in London, Reading, Manchester, Liverpool and Winchester. There were even stores being opened overseas in Paris, New York and Buenos. In more recent times, the company retooled a trench coat factory to make non-surgical gowns and face masks for use in the Covid crisis, and donated substantial sums of money towards the search at Oxford University for a coronavirus vaccine.



As the material was known for its protective material qualities, Gabardine was used by many explorers, including Sir Ernest Shackleton on three of his Antarctic expeditions. However, it was not just explorers that wanted the material. In 1902 the British War Office wanted a new



Gabardine coat designed for its soldiers to help them with the weather conditions. The company gained approval at the highest level when no less than King Edward VII is recorded as saying: "Give me my Burberry." The Editor's school uniform list included a 'Navy Gabardine Raincoat' and it was standard school-wear in the 1950's and 60's. It is now a recognisable global brand known for its check pattern and beige trench coat.

But how many people know that it was invented by a Strict and Particular Baptist from a little town in Hampshire?

COUNTRIES WHERE THE TBS DISTRIBUTE SCRIPTURES

1. Albania	29. Dominican Republic	57. Kenya	86. Rwanda
2. Algeria		58. Liberia	87. Sao Tome & Principe
3. Angola*	30. Ecuador	59. Lithuania	88. Scotland
4. Antigua & Barbuda	31. El Salvador	60. Madagascar	89. Serbia
5. Argentina	32. England	61. Malawi	90. Sierra Leone
6. Armenia	33. Eritrea	62. Malta	91. Singapore
7. Australia	34. Estonia	63. Martinique	92. Slovak Republic
8. Belgium	35. eSwatini	64. Mauritius	93. South Africa
9. Benin	36. Ethiopia	65. Mexico	94. South Korea
10. Bolivia	37. Finland	66. Moldova	95. Spain
11. Brazil	38. France	67. Mozambique	96. Sri Lanka
12. Bulgaria	39. Gambia	68. Myanmar	97. St Kitts & Nevis
13. Burkina Faso	40. Germany	69. Namibia	98. St Lucia
14. Burundi	41. Ghana	70. Nepal	99. Sweden
15. Cameroon	42. Greece	71. New Zealand	100. Switzerland
16. Canada	43. Guatemala	72. Niger	101. The Netherlands
17. Cape Verde Island	44. Guernsey	73. Nigeria	102. Togo
18. Chile	45. Honduras	74. North Macedonia	103. Trinidad & Tobago
19. China	46. Hong Kong	75. Northern Ireland	104. Uganda
20. Colombia	47. Hungary	76. Norway	105. Ukraine
21. Cook Islands	48. India	77. Pakistan	106. Uruguay
22. Costa Rica	49. Iran	78. Panama	107. USA
23. Cote D'Ivoire	50. Iraq	79. Paraguay	108. Venezuela
24. Croatia	51. Ireland	80. Peru	109. Wales
25. Cuba	52. Isle of Man	81. Philippines	110. Zambia
26. Cyprus	53. Italy	82. Poland	111. Zimbabwe
27. Czech Republic	54. Jamaica	83. Portugal	*Scriptures distributed via Christian logistics organisations in the UK.
28. Denmark	55. Japan	84. Romania	
	56. Jersey	85. Russia	

JOHN BUNYAN APPOINTED TO THE PASTORATE



John Bunyan remained a prisoner in the Bedford County Gaol for twelve years from 1661 to 1672. In 1672 King Charles II issued a Declaration of Religious Indulgence. Bunyan was released from prison. He was immediately appointed pastor of the Independent Church in Bedford.

EXTRACT FROM THE CHURCH MINUTE BOOK:

“At a full assembly of the Church at Bedford the 21st of the 10th moneth of 1672: –

After much seeking God by prayer, and sober conference formerly had, the congregation did at this meeting with joynt consent (signifyd by solemne lifting up of their hands) call forth and appoint our brother John Bunyan to the pastorall office or eldership. And he accepting thereof gave up himself to serve Christ and his church in that charge, and received of the elders the right hand of fellowship.”



Old Bedford Gaol on the bridge

The king’s Indulgence lasted only a year as he was forced to withdraw it the following year. In 1677 Bunyan was returned to prison. The law on which Bunyan was put in prison came into being in Queen Elizabeth’s reign. It was entitled, ***“An act for the punishment of persons obstinately refusing to come to church.”***

This monstrous act made law “that if any person above the age of 16, should refuse attending the reading of common prayer in some church, or should be present at any conventicle under the pretence of religion, he should be committed to prison without

bail; and in case he refused to sign the declaration of conformity within three months he should abjure the realm, and go into perpetual banishment; in failure of which he was to suffer death, without benefit of clergy.” Under this dreadful act, Bunyan was sentenced. Justice Keeling told him, “Hear your judgment; you must be had back again to prison, and there live for three months following; and, at three months end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm; and, if after such a day as shall be appointed due to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, or be found to come over again (without a special licence from the King), you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly.” “But,” said the fearless Bunyan, “I told him, as to this matter, I was at a point with him; for, if I were out of prison today, I would preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God.”



Bunyan's wife interceding for the release of her husband

Three thousand people, it is said, would gather together in the borough of Southwark, before breakfast, to hear him preach, even at one day's notice. King Charles II once asked Dr. Owen, how he, who had so much learning, could hear a *tinker* preach. The doctor replied, “May it please your Majesty, had *I* the tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.”

A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

Total of over 100s rises

The number of centenarians soared by nearly a fifth last year to 15,120. The huge leap was caused by a baby boom after the First World War. The oldest man in the UK at the moment is aged 109 years.

Virus deaths hit 5m

In November the John Hopkins University reported that the number of deaths from Covid-19 around the world had reached five million. It makes Covid the third leading cause of death worldwide after heart disease and strokes.

Boys to wear a skirt

Castleview Primary school in Edinburgh requested boys as young as three to go into school wearing skirts to ‘promote equality.’ Teachers wrote to parents: ‘We want our school to be inclusive and promote equality. We’re keen to spread the message that clothes don’t have gender and that we should all be free to express ourselves as we choose.’ The Word of God makes it clear that clothes *do* have a gender and that it is a sin to wear clothes that pertain to the opposite sex. “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 22. 5).

More state control of schools in India

The Indian state of Gujarat has passed a law that the appointment of teachers and head teachers will now be undertaken by a Central Recruitment Committee rather than the schools themselves. It is feared that the law will be used against the appointment of Christian teachers in religious schools. Christian groups have launched a legal challenge.

“Did not know about Covid”

The remote village of Mangual in Peru’s dense Amazon rainforest first learned of the global pandemic in October this year when health workers arrived by boat with vaccines. Through a translator, a community leader said, “We didn’t know about Covid-19. This is the first we hear of it.” The village is a three-day boat ride along rivers starting from the Amazonian city of Iquitos, itself unreachable by road. The villagers hunt and fish for food, and live in wooden stilt houses with no electricity. Connection with the outside world is minimal and the local language is unique.

SNOW IN JERUSALEM

Does it snow in Jerusalem?

Yes, but rarely. Our cover picture shows the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem in February 2021 - its first snow for six years. Snow blanketed parts of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel which had not seen snow for many years.

When was the last heavy snowfall?

In January and February 1950, Jerusalem experienced the largest snowfall registered since the beginning of meteorological measurements in 1870.

What are the usual winter temperatures in Jerusalem?

This cover of Perception is being prepared on Monday, 29th November. Outside is a sprinkling of snow, and the temperature is -1 degrees. In Jerusalem it is 26 degrees, exceptionally hot for the time of year! The average daytime temperature ranges from 12 degrees in January to 29 degrees in July and August. Jerusalem is much cooler than many parts of Israel. We can understand how Peter sat and warmed himself by the fire: “And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.”

Today, Israel has no coal of its own, but imports almost 10m tons a year from countries such as Russia. Maybe in Bible times there were small deposits here and there. The many Old Testament references to “burning coals of fire from off the altar” show that coal was readily available. We read also of that wicked officer of the king, Jehudi, who cut the Word of God “with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.” The account does not refer to coal, but “on the hearth” leads us to think that it was so.

Did you realise that the Lord Jesus Himself once made a coal fire on the shore of the Sea of Galilee? “As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon” (John 21.9).