

April – June 1999

**T
H
E

L
I
N
K**

**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

Lessons from John's Gospel

chapter seventeen

"I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4)

God is glorified in many ways. In creation, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork"* (Psalm 19:1); the whole earth is full of His glory. His providence and governmental dealings with men and nations will ultimately be seen to glorify the Almighty; even the wrath of man shall praise Him (cf Psalm 76:10).

What is set forth in John chapter seventeen verse four is unique. Christ as the **Mediator**, God manifest in flesh, having a human nature, as truly human as any other man, could approach the most high God and in absolute honesty say, *"I have glorified Thee on the earth"*. The **Man**, Christ Jesus, lived a flawless life on earth. He did no sin, He knew no sin, in Him there was no sin. He was the perfect **anti-type** of all Old Testament typology; He was in very truth *"without blemish"* and *"without spot"*.

This wondrous Person had been sent into the world as the representative of a people, given to Him before creation but who had fallen in sin. On their behalf, He was to render complete obedience to the Law of God which they had violated. Having discharged His duty, He comes to His Father in holy perfection with these words, *"I have glorified Thee on the earth"*. This was unique for He did this upon this sin-defiled planet; the same world in which we live, He faced the same sore temptations, He was beset with the same evil influences and accosted by the same Devil, experiencing all his wiles, cunning,

deception and terror as he goes about as an angel of light or as a roaring lion. He remained holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (cf Hebrews 7:26), despite contact with sin from the manger to the cross. Unique indeed! A Man upon this degraded, sin-polluted earth who was tempted and tried in all points as all men are, "*yet without sin*" (Hebrews 4:15). A Man, who with every breath, thought and footstep glorified God.

It was little wonder that when men saw such moral excellence and unsullied holiness of life, they marvelled and were astonished. The like of this had never been seen before nor will it be seen again until this foul, benighted world is dissolved, to be resurrected a new heavens and a new earth.

Let none underestimate the force of this statement made by Christ to His Father. "*I have glorified Thee on the **earth***"; here in a fallen world, populated by teeming millions of men, women and children, each one alienated from God by sin and wicked works (cf Colossians 1:21), dead in trespasses and sins (cf Ephesians 2:1), corrupt and nauseating to their Creator. The incarnate Son of God was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and for thirty three years, dwelt among such fallen men yet He could say to His Father, "*I have glorified Thee*". If we can in some degree enter into the depth of meaning which lay behind these words, then we shall begin to appreciate the deep emotion of the Redeemer in this prayer.

The Lord continues in this verse, "*I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do*". He had been sent by the Father to accomplish the great work of redemption; to make atonement, both preceptive and penal, for every one whose name was in the Book of Life - the elect. At His entrance into the world He said, "*Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do Thy will, O God*" (Hebrews 10:7). At the age of twelve years, Christ explained to His earthly parents,

saying, "*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" (Luke 2:49). Later in His public ministry, similar words are found, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work*" (John 4:34).

In this prayer He says, "*I have **finished** the work which Thou gavest me to do*". How could Christ say His work was finished? The preceptive aspect was, for His life had only a few hours left, but this could not be said of the penal aspect of His work in His death. At a human level this was correct; nevertheless, so absolutely sure was the work of the Mediator and so positively certain the result, that constantly was His work spoken of in the past tense. This was so even in Old Testament times, centuries before He was born; for example, "*They pierced my hands and my feet*" (Psalm 22:16); "*He was wounded for our transgressions*" (Isaiah 53:5). It is not said, they **will** pierce my hands; He **will** be wounded for our transgressions. No! Although written over seven hundred years before Christ came, it was written in the past tense, the reason being, there was not a shadow of doubt that it would come to pass.

This was the manner in which the Lord prayed in the upper room; there was no uncertainty concerning this whole engagement. His death and the outpouring of God's wrath upon Him, with His consequent descent into the sinner's hell, was imminent. His victory over sin, death and hell was so sure and certain, that in absolute confidence He could lift His eyes to His Father and say, "*I have **finished** the work*". It was said in positive anticipation of **total victory**. He had finished transgression, made an end of sins and brought in everlasting righteousness (cf Daniel 9:24). He had "*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*" (Hebrews 9:26), having restored that which He took not away (cf Psalm 69:4). In all this we see the faithfulness and diligence of Christ to His charge. Nothing ever caused Him to hesitate, never did He vacillate. He was "*obedient unto death, even the death of the*

cross" (Philippians 2:8). He affirmed His unwavering resolve in the prophetic words of the Old Testament, *"I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting"* (Isaiah 50:5,6).

As High Priest, He carried the names of all God's chosen people with Him every step of His earthly life. During that sinless life, He wove the robe of spotless righteousness for each of His people in whose place He stood. This is exceedingly precious. As our representative and proxy, He dwelt as a Man amongst men, subject to the Divine Law which He had come *"to fulfil"* (Matthew 5:17), not for Himself, but for all those whose names He bore. This He did, and consequently His holy, spotless, righteous life is imputed to all whom He represented. Clothed in this manner, all His believing people are fitted for heaven. This is the preceptive aspect of the Mediator's work.

We now look at the penal aspect of the work of Christ. Not only did He carry our names in life, He carried them to the cross in death. As He was engaged in this prayer, the shadow of the cross was immediately before Him. The curse of the sins of all God's elect was to come upon Him with the great avalanche of human guilt falling upon His holy soul; yet the Saviour did not flinch. When He had cause to loathe sinners the most, He never turned back. In His bitter agony, as He faced the horror of Gabbatha and Golgotha, there was no indecision or reluctance. He said, *"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* (John 18:11). The cup of wrath which should have been ours for all eternity, He drank to its final dregs.

As priest He died, and as He died and descended into the abyss, He went there with our names upon His breast. In mortal conflict with the powers of darkness and hell, He was there on behalf of all that vast company whom He represented; the sentence of death was upon each

and every one of them. They were held captive by the Devil, but in that great engagement, the Mediator, the **Man** Christ Jesus, spoiled those principalities and powers of darkness, destroying him who had the power of death, rendering Satan's power over them null and void. Having "*triumphed gloriously*" in this tremendous conflict He rose from the dead, as it had been written of Him; that His soul would not be left in hell, neither would His body see corruption (cf Psalm 16:10 & Acts 2:27). Every one of God's elect people are delivered from the bondage and tyranny of Satan through Christ's victory over **sin, death, and hell**.

"He broke the bands of death and hell;
The bars from heaven's high portals fell,
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell,
Hallelujah!

The powers of death have done their worst,
But Christ their legions hath dispersed;
Let shouts of holy joy outburst,
Hallelujah!

Lord by the stripes which wounded Thee,
From death's dread sting Thy servants free,
That we may live and sing to Thee;
Hallelujah!

Christ the Mediator, our glorious Lord and Saviour, fulfilled the whole transaction. There was no hesitation; as stated in the Book of Psalms: "*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*" (Psalm 110:4). This explains the doctrinal aspect of Christ's statement which is the primary meaning. Nevertheless all doctrine has practical application and it is vital that

the lessons be drawn out. Reference must be made to the writings of Peter: *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps"* (1 Peter 2:21).

We revel in the glorious truth of Christ being our Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, High Priest and much more, but it is often conveniently overlooked that He is our **example**. When our Lord was upon earth it was His consuming desire to glorify God. How do we stand on this matter? It is so easy to shrug our shoulders, adopting the attitude that He was the Son of God incarnate, therefore it is a level to which we cannot aspire, but the Holy Spirit states through Peter, *"Hereunto were ye called"*. Christ has left us an example in this, that we *"should follow His steps"*.

We, His redeemed people, anticipate and expect God to glorify us in heaven; equally so does God expect us to glorify Him on earth. Hereunto were we called. This was the great object and purpose of the Mediator's work as the Scriptures make abundantly clear. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10); *"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:14). *"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation"* (1 Peter 2:12).

In the same manner in which the **work** of Christ was indissolubly linked with His bringing glory to God, so it is with us. The Lord made this clear to His own when upon earth. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father*

which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16); "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8).

It is essential that every Christian realizes that it is not what we profess, but what we are in life and work which glorifies God; this is a most practical matter. We do not have to become engaged in some specific or specialized spiritual work as some imagine, as this applies to our manner of life in the sphere in which the providence of God has placed us, be it the shop, farm, factory, kitchen or whatever our calling. Thomas Manton said, "It is in work that we glorify God".

Work is a Divine institution; the world was never created to be a hive for drones. Man is the most noble being in God's creation, he has abilities unequalled by any other creature on earth, although these abilities vary. All are to labour, working that which is good (cf Ephesians 4:28), abiding in the calling wherein he was called (cf 1 Corinthians 7:20). This matter of daily occupation is of tremendous importance, far more so than many believe. There is widespread emphasis in the world today on eating, drinking, sport and leisure. Man was not created for sport, he was created for work, therefore our concern should be for honest employment, not leisure.

Abundance of idleness and fulness of bread was a major sin in Sodom (cf Ezekiel 16:49), this is a life that will never glorify God. Christ glorified God in the work assigned to Him and in it He sought no vacation. The Moral Law of God (the Decalogue) which the Mediator was subject to, has been and always will be the Divine standard. The first part of the fourth section of that Law rings with supreme authority, "*Six days shalt thou labour*" (Exodus 20:9), then does this commandment legislate for the seventh day (cf Exodus 20:10); but work is mentioned first.

Many Christians seem to think that it is on the Sabbath they glorify God when they assemble for corporate worship, and that the rest of the week is relatively unimportant. This is **not** so. Our manner of life and how we transact our work during the six days is as vital as rest and worship on the seventh. If the working days are contrary to God's Law, then emphasis on the Sabbath day is hypocrisy.

In fulfilling the Law, it is perfectly clear in Holy Writ that the Lord observed the Sabbath. Would any dare to suggest that He disregarded the first part of the fourth commandment? Whilst it is true, little is known of the first thirty years of our Lord's earthly life, we are informed that He was recognized as the son of Joseph the carpenter (cf Matthew 13:55), and that He Himself was a carpenter (cf Mark 6:3). This was the earthly calling of the incarnate Son of God and by thus engaging, He fulfilled the first section of the fourth commandment. Had this not been true, how could He have said concerning His Father, *"I do always those things that please Him"* (John 8:29)? Christ glorified God by His constant obedience from Bethlehem to Calvary. This is the **example** which He has left us to follow and it concerns our calling in every day life. This is plainly spelt out in the Word of God, *"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ"* (Colossians 3:22-24).

Many Christians of early New Testament days were slaves, who worked long hours for a pittance and were employed by heathen employers who had no regard for spiritual matters. These believers were forced to scrub the corridors and mosaics of the palaces of pagans, but even this employment was not to be despised. They were

to obey their masters and do it heartily, for by so doing they acted in accordance with God's Law; hence they were serving the Lord Christ.

This aspect of truth is practical and vitally important. As our blessed Lord approached Calvary, He could lift up His eyes to heaven and say, "*Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do*". Barnes, in his 'Notes on the New Testament' says, "How happy it would be if men would follow His example Christians should follow with diligence their calling, to the glory of God so that when the hour approaches, they have nothing to do but to die and go to their Father". Christ was sent to this earth with a mission which He fulfilled and by so doing, He glorified God. Each one of us, as intelligent men and women having ability, have been placed on this **same** earth to fulfil a task and calling which we must pursue, following the example left for us by Christ, the leader and commander of His people (cf Isaiah 55:4). Only as we do this shall **we** truly glorify God.

W.H.Molland

Uction

This word is found in one place only in the Authorized Version of the Bible, "*Ye have an unction from the Holy One*" (1 John 2:20), yet it is often used in prayer meetings by those leading in prayer, that the minister or preacher might be given unction. It is important therefore, that we have a right understanding of this word. Uction in its Greek form means 'special endowment' and the same word in the original text is often translated 'anointed', a term which is common to both the Old and New Testaments.

In the first place, it is essential that we know what unction is not. Uction is not an impressive manner in the pulpit; it is not eloquent

oratory; it is not something which issues from the halls of learning. It certainly cannot be conferred upon a person by the laying on of hands of some ecclesiastical prelate or an elder in a local church. Carefully prepared sermons, true to the Scriptures and doctrinally correct, are essential yet this does not constitute unction, nor is it necessarily signified by sincerity and earnestness. It has to be acknowledged that not all preaching is marked by unction.

Unction in a preacher is readily recognized when present, yet difficult to define or explain. A sermon preached with unction is vastly different to a mere address, however sound or well thought out that address might be. Divine unction is that which makes preaching effectual.

The Word of God is said to be sharper than any two-edged sword (cf Hebrews 4:12). The Word can be preached in an orthodox and correct manner, but if there is no unction, the cutting edge of that Word will not be felt. The soothing balm of the Scriptures will not be experienced as it should be if there is no unction, even though those sections of Holy Writ containing comfort and consolation are preached sympathetically and tenderly. Thrilling addresses can be given on valiant exploits of great men of faith in Biblical times, causing the senses of the hearers to be stirred within them, but this of itself does not constitute preaching with unction.

Fervour, excitement, pathos or emotion in preaching may well appear to be evidences of Divine unction, yet it has no lasting effects upon the hearts of the hearers. Many sermons are preached which may temporarily impress the congregation but the warnings and woosings are as the morning dew which quickly vanishes away.

Sermons marked by Divine unction will in all probability cause great unease, they may create a stir, even provoke controversy; the same

truths could have been preached for years in the strictness of the letter without any hearer being stirred, but now because of unction attending the Word, these truths come home as an arrow. What then is the spiritual implication of this word 'unction' or 'anointed', as it is often translated?

In the Old Testament 'anointing' usually meant that a person or an article was smeared with oil. Aaron was to have the anointing oil poured upon him (cf Exodus 29:7). *"Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them that they may minister unto me in the priests' office"* (Exodus 30:30). *"Thou shalt anoint the tabernacle and the ark of the testimony"* (Exodus 30:26). *"Thou shalt take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy"* (Exodus 40:9). This anointing gave the evidence that these men and the various articles were especially chosen of God and consecrated for a specific purpose. Kings and prophets likewise were anointed; Samuel took a horn of oil and anointed David as king (cf 1 Samuel 16:13); Elisha was anointed to be prophet in the place of Elijah (cf 1 Kings 19:16). This meant that they were set apart by God for a specific purpose.

In consequence of men being 'anointed' in this manner, their words carried authority. This was evident in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, *"For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law"* (Nehemiah 8:9). These two men were called of God to a specific work, for which they had received definite commandment (cf Nehemiah 8:1); the Word of God came through their lips with great authority and convicting power, there was unction; they were specially endowed.

The supreme example of anointing or unction, is seen in the New Testament in the person of the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *"the Messiah"* of the Old Testament and *"the Christ"* of the New

Testament, both names meaning 'the Anointed'. It is both of interest and profit to learn how and from whom this anointing came.

The Messiah, Christ, was born of Mary, a virgin, conceived of the Holy Ghost and it was told her at the time that the child was the Son of God (cf Luke 1:35). At a human level, His upbringing and training was entrusted to Joseph and Mary in Nazareth, and even though they had been informed by an angel before His conception that He would be great, the Son of the Highest with an everlasting kingdom (cf Luke 1:32,33), yet they made no attempt to give Him a good education by the world's standards. He was not sent to one of the doctors of the Sanhedrin to study and so qualify as a Rabbi and master in Israel. He lived in Nazareth for thirty years, working as a carpenter (cf Mark 6:3). From this comparative seclusion and humble calling, He suddenly announced His identity. Standing up in His local synagogue one Sabbath, which He regularly attended (cf Luke 4:16,17), He read from Isaiah's prophecy, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath **anointed** me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"* (Luke 4:18,19).

From a carpenter's workshop, emerged this young man who had no formal training, yet who claimed to be **anointed** of God. From whence did this anointing come? The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (cf Luke 4:18). *"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power"* (Acts 10:38). The result of this anointing was self evident, even though men regarded Him as Joseph's son, they all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth (cf Luke 4:22). At Capernaum we are told, *"Straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue and taught, and they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes"* (Mark 1:21,22). The Jews had

previously heard the Scriptures read and expounded many times by the scribes, the recognized teachers of that day, yet those Scriptures meant nothing to them. However, from this Man the words were authoritative, "*they wondered*", all eyes were fastened on Him (cf Luke 4:20). His preaching was attended with **unction**. It was on account of the fact that the One who spoke was anointed by God; the Holy Spirit was upon Him; there was power. Unction and anointing are inseparable.

Oil in Holy Scripture is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, when a person was called of God, the oil was poured upon them, the oil giving evidence and proof that they had been set apart by "*the Almighty*" for a specific work, though they were ordinary men. In the New Testament, Christ the supreme example, was anointed of the Holy Ghost with accompanying unction, so it was with those whom He chose for specific tasks. However, one qualification must be made; God gave the Holy Spirit unto His Son, not by measure, but in all fulness (cf John 3:34). Only in the Mediator did "*all the fulness of the Godhead*" dwell "*bodily*" (Colossians 2:9), because of His unique Person, very God and truly Man. Mortal man being a fallible creature, can never experience the Holy Spirit in this way; nevertheless, the principle in anointing, setting apart and equipping for a specific work, is the same. This is the 'special endowment', the **unction**; it is from the Holy One.

Let no man think that by entering a Theological College and obtaining a diploma or degree, that this will mean that he is anointed by God, therefore possessing unction. This Divine enablement comes from above and is conferred upon those whom God Himself specifically chooses for a task; they are gifts to the Church.

Peter and John were fishermen, hard working, practical fellows; they certainly had no academic qualifications but they were **anointed** of

God. Standing before the Sanhedrin, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, addressed the rulers and elders of Israel (cf Acts 4:8). *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled: and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13). On the day of Pentecost, *"Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words"* (Acts 2:14). Then did this 'anointed' preacher deliver his sermon, at the close of which it is recorded, *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). Preaching attended with **unction**.

Paul had a different background and upbringing to Peter and John. At the appropriate age (usually thirteen years), he was sent by his parents to Jerusalem to engage in the study of Jewish history and religion. He became a student of Gamaliel, who was a distinguished teacher of the law of the fathers (cf Acts 22:3). Following his education, he lived in a most strict manner, a Pharisee (cf Acts 26:5), but this did not qualify him for the service of God in the New Testament Church. The Almighty appeared unto this man to make him a minister (cf Acts 26:16). The Lord said, *"He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15), so was he 'set apart' by God for a specific work. It was constantly said of him and others, they were *"sent forth"* by the Holy Ghost, or *"filled"* with the Holy Ghost (cf Acts 13:4 & 52).

The consequence of the setting apart by God and the anointing of Paul and many others by the Holy Spirit, was that unction was clearly manifested as the Word was preached with much power by them. Great numbers were saved and many churches established and

although much opposition and bitter persecution ensued, this was no reflection upon the preaching of those specially endowed men. It was said of them, "*God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place, for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and the other, the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?*" (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). The truth of God is to be preached to men's condemnation as well as to their salvation. By the same preaching, men are either saved through believing, or condemned to perish through rejection and unbelief. It is through men, truly anointed of God, with the accompanying unction that the Truth will thus be used in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Well might the Holy Scripture pose that question, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" No man of himself is able to preach with unction. He must first be consciously called of God, knowing that he is anointed of the Holy Spirit. Then like Isaiah, he must feel and know his personal insufficiency, humbly acknowledging his unworthiness and incompetence for the task; then will God give the grace and ability, for He never chooses and sets apart a man who is not able. When the chosen vessel is in this right attitude of heart, God will send His ministering Spirit to take a live coal from off the altar and lay it upon that man's mouth, causing him to say with a holy boldness and Godly earnestness, 'Here am I: send me' (cf Isaiah 6:5-8). Such men will preach with **unction**.

This should explain and help us to understand something of the meaning of this term.

W.H.Molland

Recollections of Spiritual Work in the County of Devon in Generations Past

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old" (Psalm 44:1).

Extracts taken from "**A Book of Remembrance**", a brief history of early Baptists in the towns and villages of North Devon.

It has been said that it is a cause for regret that no person should have written the life of the late Mr George Lovering, whose name is indelibly associated with baptistic work in parts of North Devon. Mr George Lovering was born in the year 1799. His birthplace was Chapelton, in the parish of Tawstock. His parents were members of the Church of England; the father was a well-to-do yeoman, much respected in the neighbourhood; the mother was pious, and later joined the Bible Christian Society. George, up to the time of his conversion, was worldly and pleasure loving, open in manner and intelligent; his friendship and company was much sought and enjoyed. He was what the world called 'a happy man'; but he himself felt a restless spirit within.

In the year 1831, George Lovering became deeply convinced of sin, but no particular means can be given as to why; it can only be explained by saying that God Himself was working on his heart. He continued in this state for many months. The late Mr Pugsley, a truly Godly man of high position, who had given up all for Christ, feeling a deep interest in Mr Lovering, had him on his list of names for special prayer, and had an assurance that God was not only going to save George Lovering, but that he would become an eminent Christian in the area.

The late Mr Hugh King, well known in the district as a Godly, much used servant of the Lord, was the human means of leading Mr

Lovering to the Saviour. Through his faithful preaching, George Lovering obtained clear views of the sacred Truth and by grace was brought to trust in the sacrificial work of Christ. The cross then became the magnet of his soul, and love to the Saviour impelled him to deep consecration. His standard of holiness was "The imitation of Jesus Christ". Mr Lovering was baptized on his profession of faith in 1833 by Mr R.C.Chapman of Barnstaple in the River Taw at Chapelton. It was a blessed time. The saints that gathered together were full of joy at this trophy of saving grace having burial and resurrection with Christ. It is said that at the riverside that day, the halting had inner questionings over the matter of obedience; the anxious looked on with serious gaze, whilst others were believed to have been wrought upon by the Holy Spirit in conviction. It is a fact worth mentioning that the daughter of Mr Bouchier Wrey, the rector of Tawstock, was baptized at this same time.

Being a great smoker, when converted, George Lovering cast away his pipe, never to smoke again. Previously he loved the joviality of the public house, but henceforth he never darkened the doors of a tavern. It was his constant practice every morning at seven o'clock to call together his servants and workmen, about twelve in number, for family worship, where the Scriptures were read and earnest prayer offered. This was again repeated in the evening at nine o'clock. He had an open house for all Christians of whatever name; all received a cordial welcome and had generous hospitality. He had a Bible reading once a month accompanied with conversation and prayer. He embraced every fitting opportunity of speaking a word for the Lord. The wayside, the field, the cottage, the farmhouse were all hallowed to him. Whenever he heard of a sick person, he would put his Bible in his pocket, leave his home and visit them. It is said that through his visitations, many sick and dying were brought to a knowledge of salvation.

In his early years as a Christian, he commenced to preach at a hamlet called Venn. An empty cottage was fitted up as a place for meeting and many were convicted of sin and fully brought to the Saviour. From Venn his labours extended to Swimbridge, about six miles from Chapelton. Here at first the meetings were held in a farmhouse; afterward he built the present chapel almost at his own expense; it was opened in 1837. This place, though six miles distant, he usually supplied himself. Many souls were saved, baptized and a church formed of which he was pastor.

Atherington, a village of some six hundred inhabitants, also had his concern and loving attention. Here he built a chapel at his own cost, the land being kindly given. This was an important meeting place of the saints, with the gospel faithfully preached and sinners soundly converted. A fourth place to which this indefatigable worker extended his labours was Little Hill. This hamlet was on the estate of Charles Chichester Esq. This gentleman had profound respect for Mr Lovering and his work, so much so that, although a staunch Anglican himself, he fitted up a meeting house for Lovering and had a stone put on the wall with the inscription 'Baptist Chapel'. Here too, a sound work of the gospel was carried on.

George Lovering was a man of only three books: the Bible, Ambrose's 'Looking unto Jesus' and 'Romaine's Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith'. With these three books which he constantly and deeply studied, he was most certainly spiritually intelligent, a man of sound doctrine and theology. He knew what it was to draw from deep wells. His mind was richly furnished with the fundamentals of the Faith. It is said of him that he was daily "*in the Spirit*"; his "*first love*" was his **continuous** love.

At the end of his life he suffered an extended illness of some two years. During this time he was much in prayer, experiencing a restful settlement in Christ. Constantly was he heard to say "*My Beloved is*

mine and I am His". Right to the end, he was speaking of the Saviour. It is said that during those last two years, "although still on earth, he was full of heaven". On 3 February 1866, the Lord called him home at the age of 66 years. A man who steadfastly laboured in his own locality, unknown outside of a very limited radius, yet a man who "served his generation by the will of God" and of whom it could be said, he finished his course, having "*kept the faith*". His body lies in the chapel yard at Eastacombe, awaiting the morning of resurrection.

"Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth and causest to approach unto Thee" (Psalm 65:4).

Annual Bible Convention

Saturday, 5 June 1999 D.V.

Afternoon 3.30 p.m. Tea 5.00 p.m. Evening 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: Mr J.Thackway (Holywell)

Visiting Preachers D.V.

Lord's Day	11 April 1999	Mr M.Wood (Bridgwater)
Lord's Day	16 May 1999	Mr G.Thrussell (Truro)
Lord's Day	6 June 1999	Mr J.Thackway (Holywell)
Thursday	6 May 1999	Mr F.Stanbury (Bow)
Thursday	13 May 1999	Mr F.Stanbury (Bow)

Editorial

There are two words in the Bible which are frequently quoted, and that categorically; they are "**Judge not**" (Matthew 7:1). However this terse statement needs to be qualified, for as is so often the case in Holy Writ, there are other aspects which must be taken into account, situations where a Christian is required to "**judge**".

Should a faithful servant of Christ speak out and denounce erroneous teaching or practice, that man will soon hear from those who boast of their gracious spirit and broad-mindedness, that he is **not to judge**. Let a church exercise Godly discipline upon an offending member within the fellowship and that church will almost immediately be branded as legalistic and judgmental. Love is the predominate note in by far the majority of churches today and peace must be maintained at all cost, though it be purchased at the high price of compromise.

There is a vast difference between carping criticism and sound spiritual judgment; the former should never be countenanced, the latter is incumbent upon all true believers; for how can any Christian keep to the paths of righteousness amidst all the beliefs and practices of Christendom unless he exercises judgment? The capacity to assess, estimate and come to a conclusion is one of the great faculties with which man is endowed and the right use of this faculty is one of our most important duties. Indeed, it is constantly in exercise in the every day of life. Is it then right that this God-given ability should be dormant concerning spiritual issues?

In this matter of discernment we must judge that which is right (cf Luke 12:57), "*righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). How can a Christian assess and judge righteously? Only by bringing all things to the touchstone of the Divine Statute Book; by this means his senses become "*exercised to discern both good and evil*" (Hebrews 5:14). Failure in this lays a person open to being taken in and deceived by

every oily-tongued impostor that comes on the stage of the religious arena.

The Christian who takes the words "*Judge not*" in a crass, literal manner and makes them absolute, is grossly perverting Divine Truth, for if we do not judge the many questions which face the Church today in the light of Holy Scripture, it will not be long before the truth will be conveniently set on one side and errors condoned. This has happened on many occasions where companies of the Lord's people, who had appeared true to the Scriptures, have become infiltrated by those who have departed from Biblical truth. The consequences of failing to deal with these issues and judge in a Biblical manner are now all too obvious.

Charismaticism, reckless Arminian preaching, fatalistic Hyper-Calvinism and Ecumenism are all areas which need to be carefully scrutinised and an attitude and action **determined**. Many Christians hold up their hands in horror at the mention of the word 'Ecumenism', giving an immediate judgment, yet the same people endeavour to promote a unity which also requires the disregard of much teaching contained in the Word of God.

There are certain matters held and practised by those of Reformed, paedo-baptist persuasion, which are at total variance with New Testament Christianity, yet by word and example, they influence baptistic believers to ignore parts of the Divine Mandate. This is done in the interest of quasi unity

A Christian who has his "*senses exercised*" obeying the authority of New Testament teaching and practice, cannot admit compromise; therefore a **judgment** has to be made. In refusing to concede on various issues, no individual believer or local church should be pronounced judgmental or legalistic, for their action is required by the Great Head of the Church.