

October – December 2002

**T  
H  
E  
  
L  
I  
N  
K**

**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)  
BIDEFORD**

# *Lessons from John's Gospel*

## *chapter seventeen*

*"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"* (John 17:16).

These precise words are a repetition of the latter half of verse fourteen, and although they have been considered previously, yet they are in a slightly different context here in this verse and so this matter must be examined further. In verse fourteen, the Lord states **why** the world hates His people - it is because they are not of the world. In verse sixteen, Christ now advances a reason **why** He is asking the Father to keep them - it is because they are not of the world; both aspects are equally important. Christ emphasizes within the space of three verses, that His people *"are not of the world"*; this shows the importance of this **fact** - we, His redeemed people, are **not** of **this** world.

The believer is distinct from the worldling in a number of ways:-  
A Christian is **in Christ**, accepted by God in the Beloved; the man of the world is **in Adam**, under condemnation. The believer is of the Spirit, he has a new nature; the worldling is of the flesh, his nature is corrupt. The true Christian serves the Lord Jesus Christ; the unregenerate are of their father the Devil and the desires of their father they will do. The believer desires to glorify God; the unbeliever lives to please self, and to gratify his own desires. The born-again man is a citizen of heaven; the unregenerate man is of the earth. The believer is bound for the Father's house; the unbeliever is heading for the lake of fire.

The natural man is of this world, separate and apart from God, and is doomed to judgment; the Christian has been taken out and separated from that world. It is not that he **ought not** to be of the world, he **is not** of the world. These are the facts of his standing and therefore it

is a most grievous inconsistency for him to identify in any way, with the world; it is foreign to his relationship; it is living in falsehood. If a Christian walks hand in hand with the world, it is a triumph to the 'Evil One', for this is nothing less than a denial of his standing in Christ. It is for this reason that the Lord is now praying as He is; it is because of the standing and high calling of His people, because of their holy vocation as His ambassadors in the world, that He earnestly prays that His father would "*keep them*", that this chosen and called out people might live separated lives and keep themselves unspotted from the world.

When a matter is repeated in the Scriptures as this is, it is no idle duplication. Repetition is not uncommon in the Word of God and the apostle Paul states, "*To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe*" (Philippians 3:1); Paul did not apologize for repeating himself, it was for the safety and good of the flock of God that he did so. Likewise Peter recognised the necessity of this, "*This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of **remembrance**: that ye may be mindful of the words which were **spoken before** by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*" (2 Peter 3:1,2). This apostle knew that what he was saying had all been said before, but he knew that those words spoken by the holy prophets, and the commandments given by the Lord and Saviour which were communicated to the apostles, were of such importance that they must be oft repeated. So he writes of them again, to stir up their minds, to bring to their remembrance, lest they forget. Repetition can be tedious to our natural minds, but it is profitable and essential to our spiritual well-being.

There are many today who profess the name of Christ yet, like the Athenians, spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear of some new thing (cf Acts 17:21). Such professors are constantly running off to new movements or spectacular happenings and for a time they are infatuated; then their enthusiasm wanes and

they search for the next novelty. Christ warned His people and specifically forbade them to do this; *“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not”* (Matthew 24:23-26). God instructs us clearly how to walk, *“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls”* (Jeremiah 6:16). Oh, that we might be kept from the evil of itching for change!

It is the old paths which we are called to tread; there is only one narrow road to glory and that road has never been widened to take four-lane traffic; it is a single track, precisely the same as it was for Enoch, Elijah, Nehemiah, John, Paul, Bunyan, Whitefield and countless numbers of faithful pilgrims throughout history. It is the same doctrine and practice for all the people of God in all parts of the world, in all generations, so there **must** be repetition, for God’s Truth is unchanged and unchanging. Is it not highly necessary that we hear it frequently repeated? Does truth sink in the first time and remain with us permanently? *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little”* (Isaiah 28:10). Since the Fall, man’s mind has greatly deteriorated; he might well register matters pertaining to this life and material gain, but to spiritual matters, even the Christian needs constant reminders and God knew this. He warns us through His Word, *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip”* (Hebrews 2:1).

Sometimes the Word of God is grievous to us and we would prefer to let it slip; we do not desire to pay earnest heed, for it comes to us sharper than any two-edged sword and yet the Holy Spirit keeps

bringing it before us through the public ministry, through an article we have read, or in the quietness of our own hearts. The Spirit of God brings to our **remembrance** the relevant Scripture again and again and our consciences are stirred. Simon Peter is a prime example of this; three times had he denied his Lord and because of this, he was a very miserable man, yet he never went to the Lord to put matters right; the Lord came to him. *“Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee .... He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea. Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee .... He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee”* (John 21:15,16&17). Here was repetition of a most searching nature, coming from the lips of the Lord Himself, to the ears of the one who had thrice denied Him. It greatly upset Peter; he would much have preferred not to have heard those words but by the constant repetition, Peter was broken and his stubborn heart was melted. *“Lord, Thou knowest all things”*, he knew what the Lord was getting at and why the same words were repeated three times. If the Word of God is constantly coming to us and the same application being repeated, we ought to give the more earnest heed. How averse we all are to counsel and rebuke. Peter learnt the lesson well and at the end of his life he was constantly reminding the saints, of truth which they no doubt had heard many times. From personal experience he knew how easy it was to let it slip and so fall into sin, so he says, *“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in **remembrance** of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to **stir you up** by putting you in **remembrance**”* (2 Peter 1:12,13).

Hot coals left, soon get cold. So with us, there must be the constant

refuelling of the Word of God, fanned into a flame by the blowing of the Holy Spirit. It is not sufficient just to have a knowledge of God's Word, its truth must be burnt into our very soul so that our life is radically ordered by it; truth which must ever be stamped by the Divine hallmark of **love**. *“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know”* (1 Corinthians 8:1,2). The crux of the matter is, **Do we practise what we know and is our life and conduct manifesting the grace and love of God?** *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing”.* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). How devastating are these words, but they are truths of which we all need reminding.

Is not repetition the very function of the Lord's Table? *“This do in remembrance of Me”* (Luke 22:19); *“As oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me”* (1 Corinthians 11:25); . We assemble on the first day of every week for this; there is nothing **new** in it; every time, we come to precisely the same point - the person and the work of Christ. Although this never varies in its conduct or focal point, yet it ever increases in its freshness. The more we know of the person of Christ and the deeper we are instructed in the magnitude of His atoning work, the more conscious we are of how little we know, and the greater becomes our desire to be led on further. This is all wrought by repetition, *“line upon line”*; such is the inexhaustible fulness of the Holy Scriptures. A certain passage of Scripture may be brought to our attention and from it we receive much illumination and blessing! We come back to these same verses later in time and from them comes fresh truth, never seen before.

It is a Divine principle that the age-old truths of Holy Writ be often spoken upon:

“Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;

The early dew of morning is passed away at noon”.

This is common to us all; we come into the house of God on the Sabbath and there the dew of His presence and Spirit is upon us and we go away so refreshed, but by noon on Monday, the heat and burden of the things of this world has dried us right out again.

In this principle of constant repetition, our blessed Lord reiterates, within the space of twenty one words, this fundamental sentence in the hearing of His disciples, *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (John 17:14,16). We can never be cautioned enough **against** the world, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”* (1 John 2:15). If a person professes the name of Christ yet does not realize his **heavenly** citizenship, which demands separation from the world as well as the things which are in the world, that person has never come to terms with the Biblical meaning of **conversion**. Separation from the world is a familiar truth to us, but *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this”* (Jude v.5).

W.H.Molland

## **The Laver**

A study of the Tabernacle, its construction, layout, furnishings and equipment is not only fascinating, its foreshadowing and portrayal of New Testament truth and doctrine is profound. The laver is no exception; indeed, this is a subject of tremendous importance.

The location of this piece of equipment was the outer court of the tabernacle, midway between the brazen altar and the golden altar, or altar of incense. The brazen altar was immediately inside the gate of the outer court, which was the **only** entrance. At the opposite end of the outer court was the tabernacle itself and within the holy place of

that elaborate tent, was the altar of incense. The brazen altar speaks of sacrifice and the altar of incense speaks of worship. The laver, however, was different in that it was not an altar, but a receptacle; its purpose was not for sacrifice, it was for washing. Full instructions were given to Moses concerning this vessel: “*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein*” (Exodus 30:17,18). Unlike many other articles in the tabernacle, no measurements were given, neither was its capacity stated; the only details concerning its manufacture was, it must be of brass with a foot (singular). The laver is mentioned eight times in Holy Writ, ‘with its foot’. This indicates that it would have been set upon a central column or stand, not a vessel on legs as some depict it, or a large flat pan as others suggest. It is very disturbing to read how some commentators describe and interpret the laver. The details given to us in the Pentateuch are of the utmost importance, for they have great spiritual significance, the import of which is destroyed if mishandled. The key to a right understanding of this subject is, cleansing by **blood** and washing by **water**. This is clearly distinguished in the Old Testament types, yet upon this crucial point, some appear to confuse the issue. The essential identification must be: the brazen altar - **blood** (cf Leviticus 8:14,15), the laver - **water** (cf Exodus 30:18,19).

Under the ordering of the Mosaic economy, designed by God Himself, man could approach unto his Maker by one way only; that was the gate at the east end of the outer court where the brazen altar was situated. At this entrance, the worshipper was immediately confronted with an area which was soaked in the blood of sacrificial victims which were being offered. Here it was that sin was dealt with, for “*without shedding of blood is no remission*” (Hebrews 9:22). There was no further advance or approach to God apart from a substitutionary blood sacrifice for sin. An Israelite, having come this way and conscious of his sinnership, became aware of the



intrinsic value **to God** of the blood of the substitute, as it prefigured the blood of His own incarnate Son to be shed in due time. That Israelite, having by faith appropriated the **cleansing** efficacy of the **blood** of a sacrificial sin offering, now desires true fellowship and communion with God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. This is the consequence of His encounter at the brazen altar; it has implanted an inner urge for the conscious presence of God. He must move on to the altar of incense, which was within the holy place. To reach this golden altar meant coming by way of the laver, for this vessel was strategically positioned between the two altars. This brings us more objectively to our subject, its New Testament prefiguration and practical applications.

*“For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so shall they wash their hands and their feet”* (Exodus 30:19-21). The emphasis here is that the laver, as set between the two altars, was specifically for Aaron and his sons; it is the priests who are in view. They are those who have been to the brazen altar of sacrifice and are now going to the golden altar of worship, but on the way they must needs come to the laver; **not** for sacrifice but for washing. The guilt of sin had been settled at the altar of brass. There it was that cleansing was effected by the blood of sacrifice, thus typifying the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, which cleanseth us from all sin (cf 1 John 1:7).

In this matter of washing at the laver, it is the hands and feet which are specifically mentioned. This emphasis is most important for it signifies that in their regular work and daily walk, Christians are constantly dealing with men and women who are dead in trespasses and sins, and although they may not be aware of it, their very company can defile. Unconsciously, they have an influence which is **not Godward**. Unregenerate men and women are alien to God;

further to this, *“the whole world lieth in wickedness”* or ‘the wicked one’ (marg.) (1 John 5:19). The earth upon which we live and work is corrupted by sin and iniquity; it is awaiting the judgment of God, when the very planet will *“melt with fervent heat”* (2 Peter 3:12). We are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, a sanctified people, constituted priests unto the God of heaven, whose name is holy. But we cannot pass through this present evil scene without our hands and feet becoming stained and polluted. Our very presence in this world and our legitimate daily contact with the unregenerate inhabitants of the world make it unavoidable. This day to day contamination however, in no way affects our perfect standing before God. We have been to Calvary’s cross, as typified by the brazen altar. At that place there was made *“one sacrifice for sins for ever”* (Hebrews 10:12). *“By one offering He (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”* (Hebrews 10:14). This is the justification of a true believer, which can never be affected; such a person has everlasting life, that life is hid with Christ in God (cf Colossians 3:3). With regard to the **penal** consequences of our sins, the wrath of God has been poured out in its full and ultimate fury upon Christ, the sinner’s Surety and Substitute. Our sins are blotted out and remembered no more (cf Isaiah 44:22 & Jeremiah 31:34). This pertains to **sacrifice** and to **blood**.

In contrast the laver speaks of constant washing from daily contamination, which in no way affects our eternal security but it does affect our regular communion with God. Let no Christian think that he or she does not become defiled in the day to day walk and has no need of the laver, for such a thought is a deception of the Devil. What is more, apart from the washing of which the laver speaks, we cannot enter into our priestly privileges or discharge our priestly duties. It is our privilege and our duty to be at the golden altar, offering up spiritual sacrifices. *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 2:5). *“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,*

*that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name*” (Hebrews 13:15). This is the very reason why God has brought us to the brazen altar and put away our sins through the blood of Christ, and made us kings and priests unto Himself, that we may worship Him in this wilderness scene. Because it is a wilderness, the laver is necessary, yea, vital. For this reason it was positioned in the outer court of the tabernacle, setting forth a fundamental principle for the people of God of all future ages. The profound teaching concerning this piece of equipment demands thorough investigation. It is recorded of Moses, *“He made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation”* (Exodus 38:8). Strange as the content of this verse may appear, it is one of the most vital pieces of information contained in Holy Writ for a correct understanding of the truth set forth by the laver. The ladies mirrors in those days, were not manufactured of glass backed by quicksilver; they were highly polished discs of brass or copper. The purpose of a mirror is to reflect and reveal the person looking into it. These brass looking glasses used by the Hebrew women had been brought out by them from Egypt, and as they looked into them, they saw their natural persons. Manufactured looking glasses never reveal the true person, what he or she is inside; man can only look upon the outward appearance but God looketh upon the heart (cf 1 Samuel 16:7).

Moses took these brass discs, which those women had probably used with vanity and pride, and made the laver. It most certainly was a very great quantity which he melted down, for the laver was no small article. When it was completed, it was filled with water and this gives the picture of a large, highly polished, brass vessel upon a central brass column, filled with pure, clear water. An ancient Jewish historian states that there were twelve taps or spouts around the container which enabled the priests to draw off water upon their hands and feet. This cannot be verified but it is more plausible than some other suggestions. The salient point however, is that as the

priests came to this shining brass reservoir and looked into its crystal clear water, what a reflection was given! Great stress must be laid as to its content; it was not **blood**, it was **water**. There is some confusion on this point; the matter in hand is **not** an altar or sacrifice, it is a mirror and water. The New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament laver in the tabernacle, is not difficult to identify. Some well known Scriptures should give the confirmation: *“Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed”* (James 1:22-25); *“Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you”* (John 15:3); *“Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word”* (Ephesians 5:25,26); *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water* (Hebrews 10:22); *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit”* (1 Peter 1:22). Mirrors and water speak of **the Word of God**; Christ, the living Word, revealed to us in the written Word by His Holy Spirit. The washing of regeneration and the cleansing from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ is a once-for-all operation, and that is done for us; in it we are passive; we are cleansed by another, our Substitute and Redeemer. *“Salvation is of the Lord”* (Jonah 2:9), wrought by God, the Holy Spirit through the Word.

With regard to the laver it is different in that we are active, we come **ourselves** to wash: *“Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat”* (Exodus 30:19). This is not a once-for-all exercise, it is regular and constant. The sinner who is cleansed from his sins needs to continually wash from the daily defilement which he

picks up from the world. Our Lord said to Peter, *“He that is washed (regenerated) needeth not save to wash his feet”* (John 13:10). Wherewith can this be done? *“By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word”* (Psalm 119:9). It is the coming to the mirror of the Word, not just to see and learn the truth, but to be changed by it; we are purified by obeying the truth (cf 1 Peter 1:22); *“Ye are clean through the Word”* (John 15:3). This is the washing which is typified by the laver. To remove the dust and defilement of the wilderness from off their hands and feet, the priests of Old Testament times came not to the altar to cleanse them with blood; they came to the laver to wash in water; in New Testament terms, it is Holy Scripture. This is God’s provision for regular washing for His people on their earthly pilgrimage in this age. We are to appropriate His Word to every detail of our lives; *“He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked”* (1 John 2:6).

There is a phrase which is sometimes used, particularly by those inclined to Pentecostal teaching, when any have gone astray or fallen into sin; it is, “I have put it under the blood”. Others who consider themselves more orthodox, speak of being “cleansed afresh in the blood of Calvary”. Expressions of this nature are not in keeping with the doctrine of Holy Scripture. The blood of Christ is eternally efficacious to the regenerate sinner; by that blood he is justified (cf Romans 5:9). Justification is a once and for all transaction, it is the sovereign act of an immutable God and can never be rescinded. To come again to the cross, appealing to the blood for fresh cleansing, is equivalent to asking for another justification. Once a child of Adam has experienced the grace of God in salvation, that person is **in Christ**, and as such, is clothed in His righteousness; that is the believer’s justification which can never be taken from, or added to. The life and death of the Surety has effected this to the eternal satisfaction and glory of Divine holiness and justice. That which must be the concern of every Christian in his earthly pilgrimage, with its many snares and defilements, is not justification wrought by blood; rather must he be concerned with his sanctification, meaning

purity of heart and life. The Christian whilst upon earth, is still in a body of flesh which is prone to sin and failure. God's provision for the washing of our fleshly bodies of humiliation is pure water (cf Hebrews 10:22), which is His Word (cf John 15:3). By the Word, the mind and heart is purified, cleansed from secret thoughts, which in turn vitally affects the hands and feet. What need there is for this constant regular washing! Talking to a Christian who had divorced his wife and was about to marry another woman, this question was put to him, "Is all this right; is God being glorified by such violation of His mandate?". He replied, "I have put it all under the blood". It must be said, had that man been regularly washing at the laver of Holy Scripture, he would never have gone down that road, for the mirror of God's Word would have revealed his error; therein is contained perfect guidelines for any and every situation. After conversion and the blood cleansing of Calvary, we frequent the laver for the ongoing washing; the progressive sanctification through the truth, which is the Word of God. To violate that which is contained therein, and then to come back and say, "I have put it under the blood" is a complete reversal of truth. It is only by obedience and compliance with the Word of God, that the believer is kept pure from defilement and can thus come to the golden altar of worship. David said, "*By the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer*" (Psalm 17:4). If we are to worship the God of heaven, it must be in the beauty of holiness, but we cannot engage in such an exercise with any defilement of the flesh or the world upon us. What an unspeakable insult it would have been to Jehovah, had those priests of old by-passed the laver and gone into the holy place with defiled hands and feet! That laver was in the outer court in order that the washing could take place before they drew near to the golden altar for worship.

How sharp and pointed a lesson this is! What do we, as individual believers know of this? Do we come to the laver of the Word for regular washing? As we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see

‘this’ wrong with our conduct, the ‘other thing’ which should have no place in our lives and yet another ‘blemish’ which calls for purging. This is the washing, it is the rubbing out, the bleaching of all defiling stains, and it is to be done constantly for we shall always pick up further contamination. As those blotches and polluting stains are mirrored in the sparkling purity of the laver of Divine truth, we dare not approach our God in worship until they have been eradicated. This is the meaning of those words, “*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup*” (1 Corinthians 11:28). Whilst this refers directly to the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, it certainly is not exclusive to that sacrament. The principle applies to **all** aspects of life and communion with God.

The subject of the laver is a most sobering one; yet should we not magnify the grace of God for such a wonderful and full provision to counteract all the defilements of the way? God help us to use more and more the great revealing mirror of the laver of Holy Scripture which is ever full and overflowing with the crystal clear waters of Divine purity. By this **Word of Truth** does the believer know that ongoing, practical sanctification of which our Lord spoke in His High-Priestly prayer in John, chapter seventeen.

W.H.Molland

-----

## *Editorial*

In the religious world there is an increasing interest in what is termed ‘**multi-faith**’. By this is meant collaboration with other religions, avoiding conflicting issues, rather seeking points of agreement whereby a common moral and religious front can be presented. In England, ecclesiastical and national heads lend a sympathetic ear to this ‘multi-faith’ movement; indeed influence is often exerted by those in positions of high rank to bring it about. The reaction of many in society, who in the main have little concern for such issues, is that

it must be a good idea. To those who are more thoughtful, this prospect is disturbing as they see insurmountable difficulties involving great dangers, the consequences of which would be serious to the true Church of Jesus Christ.

The subject of '**multi-faith**' concerns Christendom in its broadest spectrum. There are however, prevalent matters affecting some believers who claim to be doctrinally correct, orthodox in practice and totally regulated by the Word of God. A cursory glance reveals there are grave inconsistencies in what they believe and practise, so that their position can be designated in no better term than '**multi-truth**'. This is an issue which most certainly needs to be addressed, although it is generally treated with impunity.

Numerous Christian societies exist today; some were founded to champion particular lines of truth, or produce literature, or solicit support for neglected causes. These organisations are run and controlled by committees, the members of whom are invariably of mixed spiritual persuasions. This is considered to be advantageous, because it brings a variety of thought, consequently creating wider interest and greater support. An examination of advertisements and reports in magazines and periodicals soon identifies those committee members as being a mixed company - politically minded protestants, ecclesiastically titled men, lay men, nationalistic church men, immersionists, infant sprinklers, men of vestments, men of ordinary attire - all claiming to be competent to sit together, deliberate and decide upon matters which pertain to the **God of Truth**. This is not confined to large nationwide societies; mixed bodies are found in many localities, set up to supposedly help promote evangelism or propagate truth in a local area. Regardless of the size of the committee or the area covered, the principle is the same and the reason for their existence must be examined in the light of the Word of God, for that Word is truth (cf John 17:17). The Bible is not a compilation of view points, neither is it a compendium of truths; it is **one truth**, the **faith** once delivered to the saints (cf Jude v.3), forever



settled in heaven (cf Psalm 119:89), absolute, unalterable, complete, unfragmentable. It was given as a unit, and as a unit it will forever remain (cf Matthew 24:35). In the Biblical sense there is no such thing as multi-faith; those who have coined this term mean multi-religions, and ‘multi-truth’ identifies multi-viewpoints. There are many viewpoints but there is only one truth, which has no variations, otherwise it would cease to be **Truth!**

If work for God is to be sanctified and rendered holy unto Him, it must be in total alignment with His inspired Word of **truth**. Organisations run by man-appointed committees find no place in Scripture. The only bodies set out in the New Testament are local independent churches which are governed and guided by elders and deacons; men raised up by the Great Head Himself, then recognised and set apart by each local body of believers. In such God-appointed companies, **all truth** is to be upheld, contended for and sounded forth. No latitude whatsoever for **multi-truth** (differing viewpoints). The New Testament directive is “*ye all speak the same thing .... no divisions .... perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Corinthians 1:10); all having come to “*the unity of the faith*” (Ephesians 4:13). Two cannot walk together except they be agreed (cf Amos 3:3), neither can they work together; such working partnerships may be set up by men, but where there is no unity of **the faith**, there will be no unity of **the spirit**. Paul was divinely inspired to deal uncompromisingly with this issue: “*We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us*” (2 Thessalonians 3:6). To engage in the propagation of truth by joining with men who, though they be brethren, are at variance with parts of that truth, will never obtain the favour of **the God of Truth**. How can it? Is not our God immutable? Are mortals to so degrade the character of Almighty God as to harbour the thought that He will tolerate their linking in Christian service with men who are walking

disorderly, in that they are disobedient to parts of the Divine Mandate? Has the God of heaven one line of truth for one believer and a different line for another? Does He make allowances, or give licence for the multi-viewpoints of differing denominations, or that which is laid down by the creeds and confessions compiled by men; men who certainly could not be categorized with Caleb who wholly followed the Lord? (cf Deuteronomy 1:36). The manner in which the subject of brotherly love and tolerance among Christians is bandied about today, is preposterous. The believer is to love in **the truth** (cf 2 John v.1 & 3 John v.1). The Psalmist said, *“I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me”* (Psalm 101:3).

In the light of all this, some very pertinent applications arise, for we are faced with a number of incongruous bodies, set up for the propagation of **truth**. Many thus engaged set aside, and in some cases totally deny parts of the truth they claim to be contending for and this is done with little if any qualms of conscience. The underlying cause for this is that the **Word of Truth** has ceased to be one unfragmented unit, parts of it being regarded as **multi-truth** (varying viewpoints). The fact that such men can sit together as they do, is a sure indication that there is no sharp line of demarcation between **truth** and viewpoints in the churches which they represent. One can only assume that there is a lack of real conviction in their profession. Instances of this abound. Attending a meeting some time ago, the preacher in his prayer was heard to be confessing ‘**our!**’ sins - violence, lawlessness, immorality, murder, homosexuality and so on, as in the days of Noah and Lot; he then added ‘**We!** are ripe for judgment’. That man, whatever he may profess, had no real conviction of the truth of heavenly citizenship, of having been called out of the world and separated unto God. Can these sins be attached to us, God’s sanctified people? What has happened to the truth of eternal justification if a sanctified believer is now ripe to suffer the judgment of the reprobate? Such language is not only grossly

improper, it is a denial of **the faith** once delivered. The child of God is **not of** the world (see opening article of this magazine).

When reading an excellent treatise on Holy Scripture and its Divine authority, the overall emphasis was the absolute submission to the mind of God in all things. Yet this article was written by a man whose name was prefixed by ‘**Rev.**’; this shows the incongruity of that which had been written. One is staggered at the naiveté. Human language is inadequate to convey the abhorrence of this title if applied to a mere man. When this issue has been raised with titled mortals, it has been dismissed with a wry smile and perhaps a trite remark; one of whom said, “This may bother you, but it does not worry me in the least”. What influence has the Word of Truth in the life of a person who can make such a statement?

When challenged on a different occasion, another individual replied that the term ‘Reverend’ commanded respect. Respect from whom? The majority of society have little if any respect for those they describe as ‘men of the cloth’ or ‘religious professionals’. Christians who have a Biblical appreciation of Deity and of the position of a servant, detest the term and understandably cannot “*esteem highly*” those who eagerly seize upon it. Members of denominations, some claiming to be governed by the regulative principle, others liberal, even apostate, appear to think that in order to have a minister who will command respect, they must confer upon him or her that common ecclesiastical designation, ‘Reverend’, which is totally at variance with the Word of Truth. Let those who take such a title be assured that it does not gain the degree of respect on earth which they vainly imagine, and it certainly gains no respect whatsoever in heaven. There have been many uncompromising ministers of the truth who were also faithful pastors, greatly loved by their congregations, and highly esteemed by those in society around them who would never debase themselves by identifying with this profane protestant popery.

Reference has been made to committee-run societies which, however well intended, are extra-Biblical. Nevertheless, sanctified reasoning must admit to the validity of a Bible publishing house, where the Word of God can not only be published but also translated into other languages and sent to countries throughout the world. Quite obviously this is an undertaking which is beyond the scope or capabilities of a local church, albeit still essentially a spiritual work, therefore it becomes a spiritual cum business enterprise. Herein lie many dangers, not the least, the multi viewpoints of the elected committee. Who, why and how are these persons appointed? In the publishing of Bibles, it has to be borne in mind that these people are engaged in handling the lively oracles of God, the very words of the **God of Truth**.

The church which meets at North Road Chapel, Bideford, has been greatly saddened at the disruption which has recently taken place within the ranks of the Trinitarian Bible Society, an organisation which has had the prayerful concern of the membership of this fellowship for a long period of time. Forty years or more ago, this local church did much to stem the increasing popular trend toward modern versions of the Bible, laying stress on the authenticity of the Authorised Version, and promoting the T.B.S., which in those days was little known in the county of Devon. There has however always been matters of reservation. This society claims to stand for the purity of Holy Scripture and its Divine authority, seeking to operate to “the glory of God”, yet it has always been blighted by the contemptible title of ‘**Rev.**’ being attached to a number of their committee members. Deplorably this **continues**, indicating that there is no exercise concerning this inconsistency in the light of their declared aims. How can it be to the glory of God when the names of committee members are prefixed by an adjective which belongs to God alone? (cf Psalm 111:9). They are robbing Him of His essential glory by taking His name in vain and applying it to themselves (cf Exodus 20:7). Has not Almighty God declared, “*My glory will I not give to another*” (Isaiah 42:8)? Is the T.B.S. acting consistently by

sustaining this profanity. Another stated objective is “to uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity”. Biblical Christianity is the alone **faith** to uphold. This admits no **multi-viewpoints** such as is evidenced by men who sit on reformed ecumenical committees.

Where are the men in this most valued society, or in the churches who support them, who have the moral integrity and spiritual backbone to stand up, denounce and relinquish that which is so patently unbiblical and totally unworthy of such a vital, spiritual work? There are a few, but alas they appear to lack the courage to act. In this church at Bideford there is a prayerful concern that there might be **Biblical reformation** within the T.B.S.- in its ecclesiastical and its nationalistic protestant leanings, the cessation of publishing the Psalms in metre and binding them in with the inspired **Word of God**; forbidding the portrait of an earthly monarch to figure on the cover of the sacred volume of the King Eternal, whose name is holy. To do this is blasphemous, further is it not the height of folly, for it immediately marks the Bible as a national book, whereas it is **essentially** universal? How can a society, whose work is to send the Truth into **all** nations, do this?

Such phrases, for example, as ‘**our**’ land, ‘**our**’ sovereign, so frequently used by Christian ministers, are totally out of character and **wrong** for anyone who, by God’s grace, is now of that Holy Nation, whose one and only Sovereign is enthroned “*higher than the heavens*”. A firm grasp and ‘spirit wrought’ appreciation of the **Truth** will produce awe and genuine humility, resulting in any form of nationalism and ostentatious, impious titles being cast into the dust, never to be raised again. These are not trivial matters, they are issues of great spiritual import, a fact which will be revealed in a coming day.

May the Divine hand be upon the T.B.S., both in constraint and restraint; working in the hearts of those engaged, that it might be run to the honour and glory of **the God of Truth**. So will it prosper. God grant it. Amen.