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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 12 April 1931

1 JOHN 2 v 27

"But the anointing which ye have received
of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that
any man teach you: but as the same
anointing teacheth you of all things,
and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it
hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him"

The grand object of the epistles of John is God, God in Christ. Another characteristic of the epistles is the inculcation of love, love of the brethren. And the third characteristic is severity, great severity against error and erroneous men. This last characteristic is not much observed or known today. False charity has come and abides and deceives many, but there is in the text a truth that insures all the people of God. "Ye have an unction". In an earlier verse John says "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things". The Holy One in this verse is Jesus Christ. He is in the Scriptures again and again and again called the Holy One. Thou wilt not leave Thine Holy One in hell neither wilt Thou suffer Him to see corruption. Stephen charges the Jews with having murdered that Holy One. This is Christ. To Him was given the Holy Ghost without measure and on the eve of His ascension into heaven Christ promised the Spirit to the Church, hence the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of promise and He is this unction, this divine teacher, whose teaching is so clear, so infallible, as that no man needs another man to teach him. This does not make unnecessary what God has ordained, namely the ministry, but there is a peculiar, a secret teaching that each child of God receives in his soul so as that his neighbour need not say to him "Know the Lord", for he does know Him. There is a secret touch, an enlightenment, an illumination, a quickening, a drawing, a revealing in secret that every child of God, in some measure, independently of all means, has a sweet experience of. What a mercy it is to have a secret religion, something between your own soul and God. What a mercy it is to hear the voice of God in your heart. He says "Behold, I

stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." This is a religion that is independent of the congregation, independent of the ministry and yet God has ordained the ministry for the good, the instruction and the help of the people and the gathering of them to Shiloh.

Now what is the first thing that this unction teaches all who receive it? It is this, that God is, that there is a God in heaven. That is the first thing. No fallen sinner can have any knowledge of God without this unction. Pharoah expressed the whole of the human race's ignorance when he said to Moses "I know not the Lord". That is the ignorance of the human race, as fallen, but God mercifully teaches people. If you take the case of Moses when he was in the backside of the desert; God gave him a knowledge of Himself. Indeed we may infer that Moses knew God when he was in Pharoah's house. Stephen tells us that he verily thought that the Israelites would know that God had sent him to be a deliverer. But the manifestation of teaching in his case was in the burning bush when the Lord spake to him and said "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Genesis 3 v 6) "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet". (Genesis 3 v 5). Did you ever have an impression on your hearts that made you believe that there was a creator, a God in heaven and that, in a sense, you took your shoes off your feet and felt the place to be holy. That is an important thing in religion, the very foundation of worship in the sinner, the foundation of real feeling, true feeling, that there is a God to whom you are accountable. No man can teach you this. By God's mercy I hope I can say I remember the day, I remember the place, the very spot where I was convinced that there was a God in heaven and I said "Where that God is I shall never be". I do not tell you that to say you must have exactly the same way of teaching, but you will have the same truth set on your heart. Saul of Tarsus knew God by Name, but he knew nothing of Him till Christ appeared to him. It is this internal evidence pervading the soul, resting with weight on the heart, teaching the sinner, entering, as a weighty truth, the conscience, gathering the sinner in his mind up to this great Being. The Holy Ghost is this teacher, this divine unction. Jesus said in the chapter which I read "All things that the Father hath are Mine". Eternal deity, which the

Father has, Christ has, the very essence of divinity. It is great to believe that. And then He says, the Spirit shall take of the things which are Mine and shall show them unto you. He shall reveal this great truth that there is a God.

Now the second thing in the teaching of this unction is that sinners are accountable to this God. We must give an account. We are His subjects. What is His commandment? This - to love God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength and our neighbour as ourselves. Now whether we have done it or not we must account to God, that is the point, that you, a creature, a subject of God, must give an account of your heart, of your life, of your thoughts, of your love to Him. And the Spirit lays this on the conscience with weight. He turns the eyes to sin. He turns the eyes to the heart and a man may say, though I have lived a straight, moral life among men, I have not been moral in the sight of God, that is to say, I have not loved Him, nor worshipped Him, nor thanked Him. Neither have I depended on Him. And this is a solemn teaching, this empties a man of his own goodness, teaches him that his righteousnesses are as filthy rags, that he is liable to punishment, that he deserves punishment. The anointing teaches this. A thousand men could not take the conviction lodged by the Spirit in the conscience out of it. Only the blood of Christ can do that.

And the third thing this blessed unction teaches is that there is a Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, that though a sinner, as such, may not draw near to God, yet a sinner, as such, may draw near to Christ and find God is in Him. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need". And this is one of the sacred teachings whereby sinners venture nigh, go with their sins. Each one knows that he could as easily get rid of his sins by his own hand and washing as the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, but he is taught that there is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness and to this fountain by precious faith he has recourse. He goes there. He plies to the throne of grace with petitions for this unction reaches his case in every particular. Guilt makes him dumb; the Spirit is in him a Spirit of grace and of supplications. The sinner knows not what to pray for; the Spirit teaches him to pray

according to the will of God. He has no power to pray; the Spirit breathes prayer into his soul. The sinner feels just a mass of guilt; the Spirit shows him the righteousness of Christ, and in that righteousness he can hope. He feels just a mass of pollution and the Spirit shows him the fountain that cleanseth from all sin. And this is the unction, it is a divine touch, an inshining, an operation. It is an illumination of the mind. It comes quietly, steals in so to speak when a sinner says, I am undone, and raises hope in Christ in his soul. It teaches him the love of God, the tender compassion of God, the sweetness of God in Christ, the loveliness of God in Christ, the suitability of God in Christ. He is taught by the Spirit these things. So it is true that the person who is under this unction needs not that any man teach him. Sometimes in hearing, as the minister describes God's blessed work in this unction, the people say, why, that is exactly what we got at such a time in such a place, such a field, such a room. Ye need not to be taught of man, but the blessed Spirit is the teacher who effectually teaches. Let us rest a little here, hang about this great truth that the Spirit, this unction, takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the sinner. As long as we live we shall need this teaching and as long as God is, and keeps a church in the world, His covenant secures this teaching. Heaven and earth must pass away before one jot or tittle of the gospel of the Word of God can pass unfulfilled.

Now in the first place, what I have said among you hundreds of times, I suppose, the Spirit takes of the Person of Jesus Christ. Every regenerated person realises his danger out of Christ. Whatever he is naturally, he is exposed to the wrath of God out of Christ, and the Spirit takes of this wondrous Person and shows the sinner that He is suited to him. "God is a refuge for us, a refuge in times of trouble". And this is a time of trouble but the sinner shall be saved out of it when the eternal Spirit takes of the Person of Jesus Christ and shows Him to faith and then it is that the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, spreading Himself as it were. As the wings spread out and cover the chicken, so the wings of Christ spread over the case of a sinner and there is a real, an abiding refuge. This makes the Person of Christ the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. His loveliness consists in His divine Person and in His perfect human nature united, making one

Person. The loveliness is seen in His love. He came to declare His Father's Name. Now the unction makes a man certain of this. He may gather knowledge of it by reading, by hearing, but he is not sure by that, but when, on a day, the Holy Spirit comes into the sinner's soul with an illumination, with a testimony, a demonstration and a power, the sinner says, I have seen Him, I have seen Him. Christ is the Friend of sinners. Nothing in the world, not all the atheism, not all the temptations and allurements and deceivings of the devil will ever take this out of the man's soul. It abides in him. He may lose sight of it, as to his experience, but it is in him. It is given. And as you have received it, says John, as it hath taught, ye shall abide in Him. There is union. Now take that as a test. Come to your own cases. Erskine asks the question

Dost mind the place, the spot of land
Where Jesus did thee meet

The Scripture gives cases of this. You take Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile. When Jesus taught him, he said "Thou art the King of Israel". Unless you have seen Christ by faith you cannot imagine what Nathaniel felt. Take the disciples who very gradually increased in knowledge. When Jesus asked them of the notions that were entertained of Him by men - "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" - He appealed to them - "But whom say ye that I am" - and Peter answered "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God". And the Lord tells Peter and the disciples how they got this knowledge. It was given by revelation. The teachings of Christ made them know, first, that He was the promised Messiah. Then He began to tell them of the Father who had sent Him. Then He told them of His coming sufferings. Then He told them that He was going to the Father from whom He had come. Then said, when sorrow filled their hearts, "I will send you another Comforter" and He shall lead you in the truth, guide you into all truth. He shall testify of Me, He shall receive of Mine, as My Spirit whom I will send, and show it unto you. This is how men know Christ's Person. His visits are by the Spirit's revealing of Him. See then, is this your religion? The religious world is full of talk about Christ, but the thing is this, whether He has come to you. You will never be certain till He does, never.

Now the next thing that the Spirit, as the unction from the Holy One, teaches is this. The infinite worth of the death of Christ. You can never be informed properly of your sinfulness without the Spirit. He shall convince of sin. When He has convinced of sin, and He often does it, He often has to do it, so constantly sinning are we, when He has done this He takes of this blessed infinite atonement of Christ. That covers the case in the eye of faith. That tells the sinner, as faith receives it, that there is no sin that the blood of Christ cannot remove. It is very wonderful to those who receive it, what this unction does when one is looking at his sins. Omission - O the things he has omitted. Of commission - the innumerable sins he has committed. The constant wandering, running away from God, asserting his own will and seeking to have that, and all these things stand before him. I could tell you a tale of this as to my own experience, the sights of my sins, but then the Spirit comes and He takes of the precious atoning blood of the Saviour, sprinkles it on the conscience, and bears in on the conscience the peace of God. That blood cleanseth from all sin. In this beautiful epistle John says "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now I can imagine some here saying to me mentally, you convey no clear idea to us when you say these things. If, and when, you get this unction, you will say, though I believe the minister spoke the truth, God made me know it, the Holy Ghost made me know it for myself. I did not receive it from man, I got it in secret. I saw not only the loveliness of Christ but the infinite value of His death and by that death I, a rebel, am reconciled to God. By that blood I, a guilty, polluted creature, am cleansed from my guilt and from all my pollution, and it is this that brings the sinner to know, to sing with Hart,

I'm clean, just God, I'm clean

Would you see a man fit for heaven? Go to the cross on which hung the dying thief, suffering justly, and there is a man who is ready for heaven. Who made him so? The Lord of life and glory. What conveyed it to him? The Word of God. And though the Spirit was not given then as He was afterwards given, yet that does not mean that He was not in the Word of Christ. He conveyed it. And would you know another man fit for heaven? May it be yourself, may it be yourself, Jesus by

His Spirit saying: "I have redeemed thee", saying to you "I even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a thick cloud and as a cloud thy sins". Would you know a man full of happiness that the world could not give, that the world cannot take away? May that man be yourself. The vilest sinner out of hell comes to know this in the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

"But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you" which shows two things. First the goodness and love of God in giving the Spirit. He is good in giving the Spirit. And the second thing it shows is this, that we shall always need Him, always need His instruction, His leading, need Him to fulfil in us the promise of Jesus: "He shall take of Mine and show it unto you", not all at once, but by degrees. Here a little and there a little. He shall do it. "Abideth in you". Not always operating. Sometimes to teach us and bring us more and more into the dust, He leaves us, as to His operation, to fall into some sin, not outward perhaps at all during the whole of your profession, but again and again an inward fall that, so falling, you may have again the application of the atoning blood of Christ. This unction, the work of the blessed Spirit, is an abiding illumination. "After that ye were illuminated". The illumination is the light that shines into the understanding affecting it and making real in it the things of God. The Spirit takes of the love of God, the eternal love of God, sheds it abroad in the heart, as the Apostle teaches us in the Romans. "The love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us". One says, I wish I knew it. No man can teach it you. The minister can declare it, but the Spirit must bring it and shed it abroad and He does it. You can never explain it. You can say, it came, I do not know how. It came and I felt it. It took away every doubt, every fear. I had no fear of death, no fear of trouble, no fear of sin, no fear of anything evil while that precious love was in my soul. Ah it is a very wonderful thing to know in this way the love of God shed abroad. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love". O with what longing desires have many saints looked at that word when suddenly it has come into their hearts, the love of God, the eternal love of God.

And further the Spirit takes of Christ as the strength of Israel and shows that almighty arm to a sinner. Christ is the strength of

God and therefore, as one sings, with strong arm shall hold us up. It is an arm! It holds up the world. God is able to make the feeblest sinner stand. He shall be holden up with all his doubts and disputations. God is able to make him stand. Yea he shall be holden up. Thus, God the Holy Spirit makes known what Christ is as the strength of God.

Now in conclusion, for I must close soon, let me say this to you. This is such an inward thing that the nearest you have on earth may know nothing about it and you may keep it to yourself for a time, but it is such a certain thing, though the measure of it be small, you will say, now I know. Paul got this in a great measure. He said "I know whom I have believed". How came he to know that? Why, he heard Christ speak and that is what you will hear, the voice of Christ. "I know whom I have believed". Guessing won't do. Thinking about it won't do. Gathering notion concerning it won't do. Just this; this lovely, glorious, almighty Saviour must be made known in the heart so as that in some measure you may say: I have seen the Lord. I have seen Him by faith, and that will be a saving knowledge. Here I must leave it for the moment. May the Lord grant His blessed unction to be in us and abide with us.

AMEN.