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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
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2 JOHN v 9

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the
doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that
abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both
the Father and the Son"

It was a remarkable sweetness in the providence of God that, when heresies concerning Christ's Person began to spread, the Holy Spirit inspired His servants, the Apostles, to contend earnestly for the faith which was delivered once for all to the saints. And well were it for us if we had a spirit very narrowly, prayerfully, solemnly, and frequently to consider, not only the love of God, but our own frailty, our own weakness, and ignorance, and, in ourselves, exposedness to the terrible evils that are about us, and, for this reason, among others, and this above others, that all the heresies that are in the world, we have the seed of in our own hearts. I believe this of myself. I believe no-one taught of God will deny that it is true of himself.

We noticed this morning the doctrine of Christ, a wonderful doctrine, for God is in Christ. It is the doctrine of the Son of God, the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God; not of the birth of One who became the Son of God by that birth, but the coming of the very Son of God into the womb of the virgin, and taking into union with His divine Person that body formed there by the Holy Ghost. Brethren, God give to you, to me, such faith in this doctrine as shall keep us from diverging in the least, from transgressing, from stepping, passing over, this doctrine. Some of you may live to perceive, and feel, by circumstances, the necessity of holding fast, and making it known that you hold fast, this form of sound words. The doctrine of Christ is His substitutionary work; that He, the only begotten Son of God incarnate, did put Himself in the place of others, that they, in whose place He put Himself, might escape the danger, the evil, the curse and hell of sin, and punishment. Ah, if you prove, by prayer and faith,

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that Jesus Christ put Himself in your place, O sinner, you will be happy in that. More happiness in that you will find than there is misery in your sin. The doctrine of Christ is His burial, His resurrection. Never leave out the burial of Christ when you speak of His doctrine - "For I delivered unto you first of all" - says the Apostle to the Corinthians - "that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." If God showed that burial to Paul, we may surely conclude it is of vital importance. The doctrine of Christ is His resurrection. It is His ascension into heaven. It is His intercession there. It is the doctrine too of that justification that every self-condemned, and law-condemned, sinner seeks after. The doctrine of holiness in which we must stand if we are to appear with joy in the presence of God. I hope the Lord will teach us so His truth, as that we may value the doctrine of the Scripture. Vital religion is found within - if I may speak so - within the bounds of Scripture truth. Vital religion is the fruit of the doctrine of Christ. Vital religion comes from Him, who, without any measure, was given to dwell in Christ, even the Holy Spirit. To transgress this doctrine is to pass over it, pass away from it, leave it, turn your back on it. Many professors did this. Some, as I observed this morning, denied that He was a very Man, affirmed that His sufferings were only in appearance. Some said that He was but a Man, the son of Joseph and Mary. A variety of heresies arose in early days. Do not be surprised if the world is full of them today, for we have not grown better; we grow worse.

Now it is the last part of the text that I want, for a short time, as enabled, to draw your attention to. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son". If, not having God is poverty, and indeed it is - no poverty can be compared with this; this is terrible poverty; it is death - if, not having God, is poverty, possessing the Father and the Son, must be everlasting wealth. Let us look at this as enabled. What is it to abide in the doctrine of Christ? It is to enter, in your soul's experience, into that Scripture in John- "Abide in Me". "I am the Vine, ye are the branches". "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide

in Me." You must be like barren sticks stuck in the ground, without root, unless you have union with Jesus Christ. You may bear some sort of religious fruit, but you will bear no fruit that will glorify the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, unless you have union with Him. Can I know if the living sap, the life, and virtue of Christ, be in me? Yes, you can. You can realise it, feel it, bless God for it. How? By the operations of the Spirit; by the flowing in of peace; by a sense of nearness; by a feeling of forgiveness; by a realisation of the love of God in your soul. You will know what union means if you have this experience. Can I, a poor, ignorant creature, be fruitful? Yes, you can. How? By faith. Nothing in you will ever please God more than the motions of faith on Him. Nothing will ever bring you nearer to Him in your experience than a realisation, through faith, of the forgiveness of your sin, the receiving of Jesus Christ, and nothing will more honour God than when you can cast your soul, with all its necessities, and weaknesses, and exposedness to evil, upon the illimitable ocean of the merits of Jesus Christ; cast yourself, without reservation, on His intercession, His power, His wisdom, His fullness. We ought to be thankful that we are in such a case as to need Him; to be thankful that, in soul feeling, we cannot, and would not if we could, do without Him. I would not do without Him if I could. I believe the choice of some of you is just that.

Depart from Thee, tis death, tis more
Tis endless ruin, deep despair

It is to abide at the throne of grace. You will, as I have said before, you will make best haste and speed on your knees. If you get through trouble on your knees, if you get along in your difficulties, if you contend with indwelling sin, if you resist the devil, if you look to God for supply of every kind, this is on your knees. The knees of your heart may be bent before God when your hands are very busy. A man may plough and kneel; all the time he is moving behind his plough, his heart may be bending itself before God. And a man may be building his house, and digging his garden, when he is on his knees in his room. It is the soul's attitude and breath. And this is abiding, for everyone who really comes to God abides in the doctrine of Christ the Mediator.

It is to abide in a sense of your necessity. A full soul loathes the gospel. A hungry soul values Him who is the Bread of Life.

To abide in Christ is to be following hard after Him. It is to be enabled, at times, to protest before Him that He is the only Object that is desired. To be enabled to say sometimes - "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". It is to hang about Christ, to love the cross. It is to look to the blood of Christ, to hope for His righteousness. It is to entreat Him to come to you; to tell Him there is a place in your heart if you may but venture to open it to Him; a place in your heart for Him; that you would be glad if He would come, though you are unworthy that He should come. To tell Him that though you are not worthy to think on Him, yet you cannot help thinking on Him, and wishing Him to come, and asking Him. It is great if you have faith to invite the King of kings into the dungeon of your heart. Will He come? Yes, He will. And more, when sometimes you are asleep He will knock and say - "Open to Me, My sister" We do not half know the humble love of Christ.

It is to abide by the love of the Father. It is to abide by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is, in a word, to cleave to the Trinity. The Trinity as revealed in the Scriptures; the Trinity as engaged to save the Church; the Trinity as promising never to leave a sinner, nor forsake him. The Trinity in providence, the Trinity in the Bible, the Trinity in the Church, the Trinity in the world; ruling, overruling, guiding, controlling, managing, and directing everything to the good of the Church. The world is loose today, and thinks it is loosed from God. That is but a vanity, for God, though men cast Him off, will never let men live as they like. They think they live as they like, but they are only doing that which He permits them to do, and He is turning it always for His Own glory, and the good of the Church, though we may not be able to perceive it. What is God to you? What is God to you? Who is He? Now if you abide here, you are rich to all the intents of bliss. No poverty, if one may so speak, of a temporal kind is worthy the name of poverty in a person who abides in the doctrine of Christ.

Let us look at what this person possesses. "He hath both the Father and the Son". We must not leave out the Holy Ghost; you cannot

separate them. He is not mentioned here, but He it is by whom the Apostle penned these great words. And He is with the Father, as the Spirit proceeding from Him. He is with the Son, as proceeding from Him, and as dwelling in Christ without measure. So let us, as enabled, keep these Three Persons before us. "He hath both the Father" "The Father". Why then, dear friends, He is your Father. You may not realise it. To realise that God is your Father is to be in the most happy state that you can be in, in the world. To say in your heart - "Abba, Father" - is one of the highest privileges given by the Holy Spirit to a child of God in this life. To say - "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name" - is one of the greatest words that a fallen son of Adam can utter. Is God your Father? Is He my Father? Did you ever say "Abba, Father"? The happiest contrition, the sweetest repentance, the most powerful humility, the purest love a child of God feels while on this earth, he feels when he can say, when he does say - "Abba, Father". Let faith survey your wondrous store, O child of God. Go to that chapter I read just now. Look at the chain of blessings there. Link after link, and each link welded to the other by the wisdom of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", and so on. Then if God is yours, you have all His gracious thoughts, all His mercies, all His intentions of love, all His outgoings of goodness, all His forth-goings in respect of the gift of His beloved Son. All His wisdom, greatness, and majesty, and love, and stoopings. You have all His if you be His. Can he be poor who has an interest in God the Father? The world belongs to a child of God. You say, some of you, you have not much of it, but it belongs to you. "All things", says the Holy Ghost, by Paul - "All things are your's; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world" - think of it - "or life, or death all are your's; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." What can you want more? All you need, all I need, is for the Holy Ghost to bring this wealth to our souls, to give us faith to look at it, and receive it, and live on it. "He hath both the Father". There is an ineffable relationship between the Son of God and His Father, an eternal relationship. The Father has a Son, the Son has a Father, and these, with the Eternal Spirit, held communion, each Person with the other, in Eternity. Eternal silence in heaven is one of the darkest imaginations that a man can entertain of God. The pattern of all the communion that the Church has with God is this, that the Trinity had communion. They said -

"Let us make man". And when the pride of man was building a tower whose top should reach heaven, the Trinity said - Let us go down and confound their language. And when the Covenant was made, it was made, not in silence, but in communication. "I have made a Covenant with My chosen". I have given Him a promise; I have promised to help Him; I have promised to be with Him, to hold His right hand. And if you have this Father, will He be silent to you? I have made these observations for this purpose; if this Father be your Father, then He will speak to you, really speak to you. How shall I know it? one says. How shall you know it? How do you know when the sun shines? How do you know when it is daylight? You just, in the same way, after the Spirit, know when God speaks to you. If He says - "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions" - you hear Him say it. If He says - "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" - you hear Him say it. If He says - "Fear not" - you hear Him. If He draws you after Him, then you feel that attraction. God is not silent. The heavenly Father of His children is not silent. I bless God, I know His voice, and so some of you can say. The Psalmist knew it; he said - "I bless the Lord who hath given me counsel". There is not to be an eternal silence on the part of God to His children. He speaks to them, He gives them counsel. He counsels them to flee from the wrath to come; to come to Him in their afflictions; to open their mouth wide in their necessities; to lean on Him in whom is everlasting strength when they are weak, and to follow Him in their times of perplexity, to follow Him who is wisdom. "He hath". This abiding sinner, this weak creature. this poor thing, this man, this woman, unable to stand, unable to believe, unable to walk; this poor creature, holding fast Jesus Christ, and pleading, as well as he can, the merits of Christ, this sinner has the Father. Nor will the Father disdain to own the kindred. You say you are too feeble, and little, and insignificant, for God to notice you. I have often thought of the case of Samuel, the child Samuel, and the infinite God went to him and told him about the faults of an old man, and revealed His secret to that child. Sinner, God can come to you, and if He be your Father, He will come, and He will speak to you, and you will hear Him, and when you hear Him you will say, as Samuel did - "Speak, for Thy servant heareth". And the more you hear Him, the more you will want to hear Him. The more He satisfies you, the keener will your appetite for Him, and for His voice, be. "He hath the Father". Then, if His Father is the

Everlasting Father, the child must live for ever, and ever, for the relationship would cease if the son ceased. If you ceased to be, then the relationship would cease. Therefore you must be where He is. And think of that beautiful passage in which the Lord Jesus sent to His disciples that consoling, that instructive word - "I go to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God". He went there to take possession of heaven for His people. He went to His Father and their Father. What a defence is God, in His purposes, to His people; who can overcome them? What enemy can reach them? What pestilence can destroy them? as they are defended, and protected, and, as it were, covered, by their heavenly Father. Wisdom, and mercy, and omnipotence, and love attend them, and are their convoy all their pilgrimage. Happy, O blessed sinner, who has God for his heavenly Father. Some of you young people may say, but what interest is this to us? If you are dead in sins at present, it is of no interest to you, but should you be born again, and I pray you may be, should you be born again, and you come to know your sinfulness, and be convinced of your sins, and there be put into your hearts a living cry, a strong cry, for mercy, then this would be an attraction, and have an interest for you, and you would say - O, that He who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, might be my Father in Him. May the Lord give you this mercy. Some of you who are born again may be saying inly, we cannot say all this. We have never heard Him speak to us as His children. We wish He would speak to us as His children. Well now, my advice to you is this, Go to Him and ask Him to do it. Will He? Did He ever deny the living petition of a poor, convinced sinner? Go and ask Him to do it, and He will. "Ask and ye shall receive", "Seek and ye shall find", "Knock and it shall be opened unto you". Ask the Lord to tell you that He is yours, and when He tells you, and when the Holy Spirit is in you as the Spirit of Adoption, you involuntarily, and yet with all your heart, and understanding, will say - "Abba, Father", and you will never forget it after. The blessed day, you will never forget it. It may slip from your memory for a time, but I mean it will be written there in your heart, and will come up, again and again. The sweet sense will again, and again, be revived. I have been remembering just lately the sweetness of that day when I said for the first time - "Abba, Father". I am living in the past very much now, and this is one thing I remembered lately, the wonder, the contrition, the amazement, the love, the confidence, my soul felt when I said - "Abba,

Father", and He owned the kindred. Go, and ask Him to tell you. It may be you will get into some sore affliction, and you may go of necessity, and you may be telling the Lord you feel lost, and cannot think how you can stand, and are afraid. But then, as you are thus before Him, He may say that you are His child, and the Spirit may drop this in.

"He hath the Father" in His power. No man, says Christ, of His flock, can pluck the sheep out of My Father's hand. A sense of danger is not danger, because you go to God in it, and with it. The people of God often find this, that they do not enter into the thing they fear. The things they enter into, and fall badly, ordinarily are the things which they are not afraid of. Are you afraid of your weakness? You wont fall by it. As long as you fear falling on account of your weakness, so long you will be safe.

Trust to Him, and by your weakness
Thou shalt prove that Christ is strong

He does well who, sensible of his weakness, calls upon the Name of the Lord. "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe".

And He has the faithfulness of God too. "He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." Having begun a good work in you He will carry it on until the day of Christ. Having called a man into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, He will confirm that testimony unto the end. And you have the river of pleasures which is at His right-hand for ever more. O think of this. What a river you have to swim in; a river of life, and a river of love. A river of goodness here and hereafter. O, what a God. I am glad I can preach a good God to you. Though I cannot preach a good sermon, I can preach a good God. I know Him to be good, and He is good to the worst. They go with their badness, and He gives them His goodness. Go to Him, poor sinner, and if you cannot say - "Abba, Father" - ask Him for the Spirit of Adoption. And think of this; no money can buy it, and no sin can forfeit it. What? says one, may I live in sin? If you have grace you wont speak so. Live in sin, when it is the bitterest thing in your life! Live in sin, when your whole soul is after deliverance from it! Live in sin, when you are more sorry that you are a sinner,

than you are that you have trouble! Live in sin, when you are on your knees, and asking the Lord to forgive you, and to sanctify you, and help you, and hold you up, and make you fruitful in the knowledge of Himself. The thing is impossible. He who cleaves to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a son of God, predestinated to that high honour, to that ineffable relationship, through Jesus Christ the Son of God.

I must not abide here all the time, but try now, by the help of God, to make a few remarks upon - "and the Son". He has the Son, he has Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. He has Him, first of all, in His Person. "My beloved is Mine", says the church.

The bride eyes not her garment
But her dear Bridegroom's face

"I am my beloved's". It is not a notion, but a real experience, and sooner or later, the child of God comes into it. There is a mutual possession, and property, between Christ, and His people. He is the Lord, and, says the soul, He is my Lord. O, how sweet is that moment, when faith, in a tried, afflicted, sinner enables him to lay hold of Christ. To Timothy, the Apostle says - "Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called". And what is that eternal life, but Jesus Christ; as John says in the first chapter of the first epistle - "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it" and declare it unto you. This is the life. If you lay hold on eternal life, then you lay hold of Christ. And when faith lays hold of Him, O what union is felt. "I held Him", she said, the church of old. "I held Him and would not let Him go". Love is jealous, and when your love, and your faith together, lay hold of Christ, you are afraid of losing Him. "I held Him". She had had an experience of His absence, and now she had got Him again, and said - "I held Him". If you are favoured thus, you will have the Son, you will possess Him. You say, When I do feel this, it lasts so short a time. Still you have Him. This is not measured by time, nor by transient experience. It is everlasting possession. "He hath the Son" Himself. "I am come", He said - "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" - and they believe it, they feel it at times. O, to possess the incarnate Son of God, to possess Him who rules in heaven, and in earth. To possess Him who gave Himself for us, as says Paul - "Who loved me, and

gave Himself for me". And if He gave Himself for you, there will be times when He will give Himself to you in a way of sweet experience. And when you get Him, what will you do? Will you look at your silver, and your gold? Will you regard your poverty? Will you look at an empty cupboard, and say, I shall starve? Will you look at burdens, and say, I shall sink under them? No. You will look at your Beloved, you will look at your Friend, at your Saviour, and you will say, Here is all a God can give; all I can need in providence, all I can need in affliction, all I can need when I meet death, and all that I can need to make death - death who will kill me, my body - my last enemy. I am often thinking of death in these days, and one petition is in my heart, that death may be my last enemy. If some of you were to die tonight, would death be your last enemy? If you die in your sins, death wont be your last enemy. God will be your last enemy, for death that will kill your body, will be killed, and you will live in your body, and in your soul, for ever, and then you will have an enemy, and God will be the enemy. And O, if God should fight against a man through eternity! The Lord save you from this. The Lord quicken your souls. And Jesus is the life that will destroy death. O death, where is thy victory? O sin, where is thy evil? "O grave, where is thy victory?" O time, O difficulties, and all afflictions, thou must soon cease, and then the possession will be without interruption, the enjoyment be undying. "He hath the Son". Mind the Person. Think then first of the Person. If you are wrong in respect of the Person, you are wrong everywhere; but if you are right respecting the Person, you are right everywhere in reality. "He hath the Son" in His merit, infinite merit, shore-less, bottom-less merit; O, sea of delight. Bless God for the death of Jesus Christ. This is the life of the church. Bless God for the blood of Christ. This is the purity; this brings union to pass between God and the soul. Have we this merit? Then with us the terrors of law and of God can have nothing to do. O, blessed man who cleaves to Jesus Christ by pure and living faith. It is a wonderful truth, that all the blackness, and the sin, that has a kind of intimateness in it, that does terrify all that feel it, that all this can have no effect here, because the merit of Christ is put to the account of the believer. So the Lord may say to you - "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions". All transgressions of the law, and other things; I have blotted all out.

"He hath the Son" in His promises. Yes, I am right in saying this, I know, for the Scripture says - the Spirit, by Paul, says - "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." They were all given to Him in the Covenant, and He had experience of the promise of help - "I will help Thee". And the Man Christ Jesus had that power given to Him by the Spirit by which He said - "I know that I shall not be condemned". Why? "He is near that justifieth Me". And if you have the promises flowing to you through this Person, then they will be fulfilled in you. All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ. And how? "To the glory of God by us". How can these promises be to the glory of God by us? In their fulfilment. Is it not to the glory of God in you that He fulfils the promise of His presence in you, that He fulfils the promise of His help in you, that He fulfils the promise of deliverances in you? This is to the glory of God, and this is how you bear fruit to the praise of the glory of God's grace. "He hath the Son". There were three men had Him in the fire, and the fire did not hurt them, nor was the smell of it upon them. He was with one man in the lions' den, and locked the jaws of the lions. He has promised to be with His people in flood, and flame. "He hath the Son". O, He is a great, and gracious companion; He condescends to walk with sinners, to eat with sinners, to converse with sinners. See if you know this. To talk about Him is one thing, and it may be good, but to feel Him in you, that is better. To feel Him in your troubles, in your family troubles, your business troubles, and your difficulties; to feel Him come to you when you are tempted of the devil, when you are drawn away of your own lusts and enticed; to feel Him come to you to save you from walking in evil things; O what a mercy. To hear Him speak to you about your soul, and about your path, and about the issue of all things; what a mercy. "He hath the Son". Do you think of heaven sometimes, and what it will be? Did you ever get a glimpse of the land which is very far off, and of the King in His beauty? You will have Him there. O, what a presence is the presence of Christ there. That word sometimes is with me in these days - "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". It is not bad to weep for sin. Then you may weep, and God will take the napkin of the blessed gospel, and wipe all your tears away. O sweet tears that God regards in that way and deals with

so.

"He hath the Father and the Son". May the Lord grant us this rich possession, this everlasting wealth, so that we may not fear poverty of any kind, nor death itself, which is the greatest poverty.

AMEN