

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Friday evening 14 September 1923

John 16 v 13

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

This promise of the Spirit made, so mercifully, by the Lord Jesus, is that which every child of God, in some measure, partakes of, and what everyone, partaking of it, desires. Everyone receiving the Holy Ghost addresses Him thus, in substance, - "Fill all my soul, and all my powers by Thine control." It is a great mercy to be brought into a gracious subjection to the Eternal Spirit; a great mercy to believe that He is as necessary to us as the Lord Jesus is, as the Father is. And He is here called the Spirit of Truth, because of His great office. He is God, one with the Father and the Son in the Godhead. In His office He is that Holy Spirit who teaches the truth, who makes sinners gaze on that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive of them. He is that Spirit who, coming from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the church and to every individual member of the church, brings good news from a far country, and His teaching it is in the heart that makes the difference between the form of godliness and the power. The form many have, but deny the power. The substance, the power of the truth, is known where the Holy Ghost is. "He will guide you into all truth". And this shows us our blindness, our ignorance, and our inability to enter into any divine truth without the Spirit. The difference is wonderful, important, vital, between learning, learning about the Scriptures and about the God of the Scriptures, about the Lord Jesus, and receiving God, receiving the Lord God in His blessed Word. The former leaves us cold and unimpressed; the latter affects us deeply; makes a mark, an indelible mark; brings the precious love of God

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into the soul; makes the subject of that sweet experience say "Why me, why me, while millions are passed by, why me."

He guides into all truth. He guides into the truth of our fall, so that we may come into that word - "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If we are not sinners, in the convicting light and power of the Spirit, we shall never be called to repentance by the Lord Jesus. It also brings us to that - the sick need the physician. And if we are led into the truth of our fall, we shall be sick souls, needing the Lord Jesus.

He will guide into the truth of the living, the new and living way to God, into the truth of that Scripture in the Ephesians "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". O to be guided to the throne of grace, to be guided to the cross, to be enabled to confess before the Lord our sins, and to wait for redemption. O to be guided to Him who says - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". This is the truth, for substance, into which the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, guides every disciple, every child of God.

"For He shall not speak of Himself". It does not mean that He shall never teach at all that He is the Holy Ghost, that He is a person in the Godhead. But it means, as I understand, that it is like the Lord Jesus said - "I came, not to speak Mine own words, and do My own works, but the words of Him that sent Me and the work which I have seen My Father do". So in the covenant, the Spirit receives the communications which He is to make to sinners, to the Lord's people. He receives, as Christ said, "the things which are Christ's" and that is the same as here - "Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." In the covenant, He heard of the love of Christ, for He was present, and He is love Himself, and He comes to speak of that love. The great plan of salvation was transacted in the Trinity in Eternity. So the Spirit was there, and what He heard there and was party to, He brings to the hearts and understanding and consciences of His

people. "He shall not speak of Himself". But He did speak of Himself sometimes as the Scriptures relate, when He said to the disciples with whom Paul and Barnabas were "Separate unto Me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." But here He shall not speak of Himself, without also the Father and the Son. All agree in what shall be said, in what shall be done. All agree in the work of Christ, and they are agreed in the work of the Spirit. What Christ should say, the Father and Son were agreed upon and the Spirit with them. So what the Spirit shall say is also in accordance with the will and love of the Father and the will and love of the Son. "That shall He speak". So when He comes to a poor sinner, who feels increasingly his ignorance, and brings a gracious testimony of the Lord Jesus, that is what He is sent to speak. He reveals Him; He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. He will show you these things. What a difference there is between the many thoughts that we have about religion and about God, about Christ and the cross, and those few communications which we occasionally receive from the Holy Ghost concerning these things. O it is different. You may often think of certain scriptures, think of God's perfections, think of Christ's atonement and yet your hearts are cold; there is no impression made when you thus and thus think. But when now and again you are in trouble, seeking the Lord, feeling empty and poor and destitute; fearing greatly some particular lust in your nature; fearing lest it should prevail; when, realising your own distance from God and your inability to get near to Him, the Spirit comes and brings some living testimony of God to you, the effect is wonderful. You get near; your eyes look upon Him whom you pierced; He is to you the chiefest among ten thousand; you would often embrace Him and walk with Him and be found in Him; you feel that you can turn from everything else, every object that you have had your mind set upon will die away from your view and Christ and Christ alone be made the living and ever blessed Lord God to you, and you want His presence.

"He will show you things to come" That you must have tribulation, He will show you. Yes, it is a part of His gracious

work; He will show you your need of it. Although tribulation may be so very painful to you and so long in continuance with you, in some particulars as that you can see no end, He will show you the blessed end to it; He will show you that it shall work well, that it shall be among the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God". He will show you how that you will gain by loss, by trading, by exercises. He will show you that "No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." And faith will see a blessed victory, an eternal victory in the light of the Holy Spirit's teaching. You will see the track of Christ and follow it; you will see the heaven into which He has entered, and have a blessed hope that you too will enter. The things to come are great things, not time things, but deliverance from them. Things to come are the things of God, hid in Christ from Eternity, to be revealed from time to time by the Holy Ghost.

"He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." Well, does He not glorify the love of Christ in the freeness of it, in the greatness of it, in the power of it, in the blessed efficacy of it to melt a hard heart. O, when the Spirit brings the love of Christ to a poor sinner's heart, it does overcome him. It is then that the sinner loves Christ with all his heart and all his soul and then it is that there is none but Christ. The sinner says - He is the one object of my soul's desire. The Spirit glorifies the love of Christ and makes that known that is written - "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is a great thing for the love of Christ to be made known in that way so as that you feel your very heart is brought into an honourable experience of it, not an imagination or guessing or thinking merely about it, but an experience of it.

Does He not glorify the atonement of Christ so that however great sin is in our view, however black and deep its stains may be, the sight given by the Spirit of the blood of Christ says in

the heart - This is more than your sins; this is more than your distance, than your enmity, than your wandering. This is above all, greater than all, and the soul's confidence in it is thereby fixed on Christ. The whole soul's confidence is fixed here in the blessed atonement that the Son of God made, and the one desire then is to have it, in the power of it, on the conscience to purify the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

He glorifies the righteousness of Christ so that the doctrine of justification is a living thing in the soul. Yes, it is not cold doctrine, it is not a distant doctrine, even though you may say "I have not the experience of it that I want." It is neither cold nor distant; it is like a live coal, a lamp that burns in your heart. God says He will send forth His righteousness and bring it near and His salvation to be as a lamp that burneth. O what a great thing it is for the Holy Ghost to show that the righteousness of Christ is everything. Why, you wont be frightened of your sins; you wont be afraid of ignorance; you will face everything, everybody, with this blessed righteousness brought to you by the Holy Ghost.

Does He not glorify the power of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, in the subduing of iniquity, in the reigning that now we see belonging to Him, that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, that the devils flee at His bidding and that providence has to obey Him. O the power of Christ is very great. And it is one thing to say you believe it, and another to have a sight of it by faith, whereby your things, religion, providences, and matters, will become particular things, and you will put them into His hand and under His management, and wont try to help yourself but rather commit yourself and all things to Him who is pleased to say by His Spirit in the heart "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Why, there is nothing beyond the reach of this power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing in our hearts; nothing in our circumstances. All things are under His control and this, as felt, this, as realised in some measure in the teaching of the Spirit, brings a person to a real settledness of mind, a real settledness. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace

whose mind is stayed on Thee, because He trusteth in Thee". You can understand that experimentally when the power of Christ is made manifest to your own heart and soul and believe with mind, body, soul, spirit, that your iniquities, your circumstances, your troubles, your thoughts, your mercies, are all in His hand and power. O what a Christ we see Him to be; what a Christ we see Him to be. It gives a quietness with regard to the things that exercise us; it stays us on Himself. I daresay you feel sometimes you must move, must do something. When the Spirit is pleased to reveal the power of the Lord Jesus to you, you can put your case, whatever it is, into His hand.

He glorifies also the grace and the wisdom and the mercy of Christ. That is, He shows Him to possess all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Likewise, the patience of Christ. Everything belonging to Him as He is Christ and as He is the Saviour of the Church, which is His body. The Spirit shows the things which belong to Christ so as that they become the object of faith; object of faith, not of sense. Blessed faith it is that receives what Christ is in the light of the Spirit.

"He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you". This showing it to us means, I believe, the demonstration of the Spirit and power. It is not a cold, distant view that He gives us of these things of Christ. It is a near, a clear, an endearing, heart moving view of Christ and His language which the Spirit gives us. That is a great point. I know in my judgment a little about the Scripture, a little concerning the doctrines of grace, but that knowledge just in my judgment and mind does not affect my heart, does not bring me near to God, does not endear Christ to me. But when, apart altogether from that it may be, or it may be a using of some particular point that one has been informed in, taking of Christ and bringing it with His own life and light into my heart, I am affected, I am attracted, I am helped, I am strengthened and Christ is dear and precious; His Person is everything. And that may just show you what I mean, the difference there is between our religious knowledge of things and the Spirit's gracious instruction in those things now and again

"He shall receive of Mine" In the eternal arrangement in salvation's plan, in the eternal engagements of each Person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost had this part, the third part of the matter of salvation. The Father's part was election; the Son's part was working out redemption on the cross, putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and the Spirit's part is to take of the things of the Lord Jesus, in whom all salvation is, in whom all goodness and mercy and grace and the love of God are, bringing them, sealing them, revealing them to the soul, so as that they become the soul's life and nourishment and strength and experience. It is very blessed to find how that every doctrine of God in salvation becomes a real experience in the soul, under the teaching of the Spirit. There is a great foundation of doctrine in the Word of God in the Person of Christ, and it is wonderful to be built on that in an experimental way by the truth being brought home to us by the power and love of the Spirit. So we do owe a great deal to the Holy Ghost, everything. Sometimes you may realise that you love the Spirit; I realised that a little on Wednesday, that I loved the Spirit; He was dear and precious to me. What could we do, what should we be, without Him. People talk about Christ, and if I may say so, they may boast about Him and of Him; they may say He is all and in all, so He is. If you try to set Him alone, if you regard Him as being by Himself, you are wrong. How can you know that He is all in all? Without His Spirit, you cannot know Him. You may speculate about it, but you cannot know Him as being all in all without His Spirit. You cannot separate really these Persons in the Trinity and if one should begin to boast about Christ and Christ and Christ and wont hear anything but that Name, hear nothing about either the Person of the Father or the Person of the Spirit or the doctrines of grace which meet all of them in Christ, why then he is wrong. No, we must, God helping us hold fast to this that the Holy Spirit is a party to the covenant of grace and that His work in the covenant of grace, in the hearts of the saints, is as essential to salvation as is the electing love of the Father and the redemption of the Son, and that these are one whole, one entire work, bringing salvation to the church and ultimately bringing her to glory.

"He shall receive of Mine" He shall show it unto you; you shall see it; you shall see it as the Galatians saw it, when the Holy Spirit revealed Christ as crucified in their midst. Their eyes saw Him and there was nothing else to them, but the Spirit brought Him. He wrought the righteousness for us; the Spirit reveals it. He opened the fountain; the Spirit applies it. He takes of the blood of sprinkling and sprinkles it on the guilty conscience. The covenant of grace is formed and all things in it are settled. The Spirit is a witness to it. Christ comes and He is seen in the light of the Spirit. John knew Him not; he said that. "I knew Him not but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me - Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He". Everything that we are to know savingly, that we may now know, that we have known in the past, we owe to the Spirit. Every heart moving view we have had of Christ; every testimony we have received of Christ and from Him and concerning our interest in Him, we owe to the Holy Spirit. Every moment of gracious tranquility of mind that we have felt in trouble, every sweet feeling that we could commit all to the care and keeping of the Saviour of our souls, we owe to the Eternal Spirit. So may this Spirit be dear to us, and may we cry to heaven with one loud accord that the Spirit would come and take up His abode in our hearts. Well may we sing "Unworthy dwelling"; also may we acclaim "Glorious guest, favour astonishing divine."

"When He is come". He came on the day of Pentecost and has never left the church since entirely. The Lord has never been without sinners and debtors since the day the blessed Spirit came, as He was not before, but it has not always been as manifest. One time it was dark indeed; then the light of the Reformation broke out and today it is a dark, dark state with us. But there is this I do hope God will grant to us, that this divine Spirit may be with us and in us, in every individual child of God and with us as a people, for without Him old nature will break loose somewhere, manifest itself somehow to our deep wounding and the dishonour of God; to our utter emptiness. It will barrenise us most woefully. So may the Spirit be with us,

fill our hearts with joy and peace in believing as Paul says to the Romans "That ye be filled with all joy in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost.