

THE HOLY ANOINTING, ITS ABIDING, AND ITS EFFECTS

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"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."
1 John 2:27

In the latter chapters of the book of Exodus God gave Moses very special and minute directions as to the anointing and consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood. Aaron, beyond all doubt, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest over the house of God, and his consecration and anointing to the priestly office was a figure of the consecration and anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ to His holy priesthood; but the conjunction of the sons of Aaron with him points further, and seems emblematical of the consecration of the saints of God, who are "a holy priesthood," and as such "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Now, among the directions which God gave to Moses in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, there were several things noteworthy.

1. He was to wash them, which is emblematical of the saints of God being washed in the blood of the Lamb.
2. He was to clothe them with garments of glory and beauty, which, as applied to Aaron's sons, is emblematical of the robe of righteousness which is cast round them, and in which they stand without spot before God.
3. He was to anoint them

with "a holy anointing oil," of which the ingredients are specially mentioned in the directions given, and the manufacture, composition, and use of which are well worthy of our notice; for I need hardly observe that this holy anointing oil was emblematical of the grace, gifts, operations, influences, teaching, and sanctification of the Holy Ghost.

But there are several things said about this holy anointing oil which are very noteworthy. I. First, it was to be exactly compounded according to certain special directions, which you will find Exod. 30:23-25. It would appear from the quantity manufactured—if I may use that expression without lowering the dignity and sacred nature of the subject—that it was to serve as long as the old covenant lasted. This points to the unity of the Spirit, that as successive priests were in all generations anointed by exactly the same holy anointing oil, so all the saints of God are anointed by one and the same Spirit, who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

2. The next thing noteworthy is, that it was "not to be poured upon man's flesh," which may imply either that it was not to be used for common purposes, or that the carnal mind is not sanctified by the grace of God.

3. An especial prohibition is given that "whosoever compounded any like it was to be cut off from his people." God set His face against any imitation of this holy anointing oil. O what a sentence against any imitation of the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost! for if a man presumed to counterfeit this holy anointing oil, he was to be cut off, by a judicial sentence of death, from the congregation of Israel.

4. And the fourth and last thing we shall notice of it is, that "whosoever put any of it upon a stranger was to be cut off

from the people," implying that it was reserved for the priests of God, and was not to be put upon anyone who was a stranger to the covenant of promise, not redeemed by the blood of Christ, nor justified by His righteousness.

Having dropped these few observations upon the holy anointing oil, I now pass on to consider, with God's blessing, the words of the text, in which we find mention of the anointing, or unction, of the Holy Ghost: "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."

With God's blessing, in attempting to open up the meaning of the Holy Ghost in these words, I shall direct your attention to five particulars.

I. First, the necessity and the nature of this holy anointing.

II. Secondly, that this anointing teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.

III. Thirdly, how this anointing, where once bestowed, abideth in the soul an incorruptible seed.

IV. Fourthly, that this divine anointing supersedes, to a certain extent—I shall show by and by why I limit the words—all other teaching, for he who is favoured with it needs not that any man should teach him.

V. Fifthly and lastly, the blessed effect of this anointing abiding in the soul, that as it hath taught us, so we shall abide in Christ.

I. A right knowledge and living experience of the Person, graces, and operations of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, is a very essential thing. Man is so deeply sunk, so utterly fallen, so unable to bring himself back, that he needs this holy Teacher to lead him into a saving, experimental knowledge of the truth of God; for we know nothing but by His teaching, have nothing but by His giving, and are nothing but by His making. The more clearly, then, that we are led to see, and the more deeply we are taught to feel what we are as fallen sons and daughters of Adam, the more shall we feel our need of, and the more shall we value when realized, His blessed operations upon the heart and conscience. Now, in the case of Aaron (viewed not only as a type of Christ, but as personally ministering at the altar of the tabernacle, and thus consecrated to the office of high priesthood), it was not sufficient that he was washed, nor that he was clothed; he must be also anointed by the holy anointing oil before he could stand in the sanctuary of God. So it is with a son of the Most High, one of the "kings and priests" that form "the royal priesthood;" it is not sufficient for him to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and clothed in His justifying righteousness; he must be consecrated to God's service by the holy anointing; in other words, be sanctified, regenerated, and renewed in the spirit of his mind, that, by being made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) he may enter into a spiritual experience of the truth of God here, and enjoy the eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand hereafter.

From the very nature of the fall, it is impossible for a dead soul to believe in God, know God, or love God; it must be quickened into spiritual life, before it can savingly know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And thus there lies at the very threshold, in the very heart and core of the case, the absolute necessity of the regenerating

operations of God the Holy Ghost upon the soul. The very completeness and depth of the fall render the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost as necessary, as indispensable, as the redeeming work of the Son of God. The Apostle therefore puts them together. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." If, therefore, the soul is to enter into eternal glory, it must be prepared for glory by being made a partaker of grace. It must, in this present life, this time state, be made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, be capacitated whilst here below for the eternal fruition of the Triune God, by receiving a new and heavenly nature begotten of the Holy Ghost, which as a pure spirit (for that which is born of the Spirit is spirit) is capable of seeing, enjoying, and eternally delighting in the open vision of the Deity as manifested in the glorious Person of the God-Man.

Having, thus far, seen a little of the necessity, that lies at the very root of the case, of the regenerating, sanctifying operations of the blessed Spirit, let us now look at the nature of this holy anointing of which the beloved disciple speaks.

The ancients delighted much in having the head, hands, feet, and sometimes the whole body anointed with fragrant ointments. The drying nature of that hot climate made the hair and skin hard and rough, the joints and muscles rigid, and the fine sand and dust chafed and chapped the flesh, producing sores and cutaneous diseases unless the body were frequently anointed—oiled we might almost call it. And as the heat also made the bath and constant ablutions indispensable, and as this dried up the natural moisture of the skin, anointing became necessary to preserve it soft and flexible. These thoughts may help us to understand the reasons why the blessed Spirit has chosen the emblem of oil

and anointing therewith as a type of His gracious operations. The Holy Spirit, then, in selecting this emblem, seems to have had special reference to the effects of divine grace upon the heart and conscience.

Let us examine the figure thus.

1. How *penetrating* is oil! Water is soon evaporated. The rain we had this day soon dried off the pavement; but let fall one drop of oil upon a sheet of paper, or upon a new board, how it penetrates into the inmost pores and very substance of the material. So it is with this divine unction, this holy anointing; there is something penetrating in it. It does not float upon the surface as mere natural religion does; but it sinks into the inmost heart, and penetrates into every hidden corner, nook, and cranny of the sinner's conscience. The work of grace in the soul, in its very beginnings, penetrates deeply into its inmost substance. It wounds and lays open the conscience to the eye of infinite Purity and Holiness. "The entrance of Thy words (that is, the very first entrance) giveth light." "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." All conviction, to be true conviction, must be thorough. The field must be ploughed, broken up, and furrowed, before the seed can find a tilth, a seed-bed for the seed to fall in so as to germinate and grow. There is much to be done in a sinner's heart before Christ can dwell in him by faith, or be formed in him the hope of glory. The heart is naturally very hard; thorns, thistles, and briars overspread its surface; the rank weeds of pride and lust have taken deep root; much grubbing up of these bosom sins, as well as of our inbred self-righteousness and fleshly holiness, creature strength and sufficiency, is needed to prepare us to receive a free-grace

salvation, separate us from the world and false professors, embitter to us the loved things of time and sense, and lay us suing for mercy at the foot of the cross. The first work, therefore, of conviction must be deep, or at least thorough, in order to make room for Christ and His salvation. And so it is with any manifestation or discovery of the Lord Jesus Christ, any application of His blood, any visitation of His presence, or shedding abroad of His love; these divine realities do not float upon the surface, but sink deep, and penetrate into his heart of hearts, into a man's inmost and deepest soul. How soon is all lost and forgotten, but what the blessed Spirit writes Himself in the heart! People say, "How well we have heard!" but all is lost and dropped before they get home from the house of prayer. They read a chapter, close the Bible, and with it all they have read is closed too. Many have passing pangs of conviction, and passing desires, who give little proof of living under the Spirit's anointings. That divine Spirit does not let the saints of God off so easily. He holds them fast and firm to the work of conviction till He has slain them outright; and when He blesses He heals as deep as He wounds, and reveals the gospel as powerfully as He applies the law.

2. But oil *softens, supples, and mellows* that to which it is applied. A hard tumour, a stiff joint, a contracted muscle, a sprained ankle—how ointment rubbed into them softens and supples them. So it is with the holy anointing of the blessed Spirit; it softens the hardest, supples the most stubborn, mellows the most obstinate heart. This softness and tenderness of heart were eminent in king Josiah: "Because thine heart was tender" (2 Chron. 34:27). How the mountain melts at His presence! how the stony heart flows down at a touch of His finger or smile of His face! The whole heart is softened, melted, dissolved into humility and praise. This tenderness of conscience, this melting of heart, is a sweet

evidence of the unction of the Holy Ghost resting in and upon the soul. All true contrition of heart, brokenness of spirit, humility of mind, godly sorrow, penitence and compunction, weeping over a sinful heart and a suffering Jesus; all looking to Him whom we have pierced, and mourning for Him; all self-loathing and self-abhorrence; all bitterness of soul and deep grief for continual backslidings in heart and affection; all holy indignation against self, and groaning desires to be kept from evil and to walk before God in daily, hourly, filial fear—all these precious marks of the grace of God proceed from the anointing of the blessed Spirit.

3. Again. Oil *spreads itself*; it is diffusive in its very nature. Water gets less and less; sun and wind soon dry up the heaviest shower. So natural convictions are soon exhaled by the burning sun of temptation, or dried up by the sirocco wind of pride and lust. They have not time, so to speak, to spread, but die as soon as born. But the unction of the Holy Ghost abides, diffuses itself, enters into every feeling of the heart, spreads through every affection of the soul. It draws forth faith, inspires hope, communicates love, gives patience, confers humility, spreads through the whole new man of grace, reaching every member, and diffuses itself in proportion to the depth to which it penetrates.

4. But the anointing oil was *fragrant*. The choicest spices, the most odoriferous flowers and fruits of the sweetest shrubs were used in its composition; myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia, all of them the most fragrant spices of the East, lent to the anointing oil their separate odours. It was not common oil, but "an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compounded after the art of the perfumer" (margin). So the anointing of the Holy Spirit gives forth a divine fragrance up into the very courts of heaven. As the house was filled with the odour of the ointment when Mary anointed the feet of

Jesus, so when the great High Priest entered the courts of heaven, He filled them with the fragrance of that holy human nature which was begotten of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and which the same blessed Spirit had also anointed with every divine gift and grace. And as the oil was poured upon the head of Aaron, and ran down upon his beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments (Ps. 133:2), so the members of the mystical body of Christ are anointed with the same Spirit as their glorious Head, and thus give forth a fragrance acceptable to God. It is the same fragrance that makes them acceptable to the saints, for it was Asher's dipping his foot in oil, the holy anointing oil, that made him acceptable to his brethren (Deut. 33:24). O to be favoured with this holy anointing! with a few drops of this sacred oil! There is more vital godliness, more real religion, and more felt blessedness in one drop of God's holy anointing, dropped into the soul from the fulness of Jesus, than there is in seas of creature religion, in oceans of what is called piety and goodness, in the widest lakes or broadest rivers of human wisdom, strength, and holiness; for "better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right." This every child of God who has felt, though but in small measure, the blessed effects of this holy anointing, can certainly and safely testify.

II. But I pass on to show, with God's help, *what this holy anointing teaches*. The Holy Ghost, speaking of it by the pen of John, has laid out a very wide field of what this teaching embraces; for he says, "The same anointing *teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.*" Of course, by the words "all things," he means all divine things, the heavenly realities, the blessed truths of God, which are made known to the soul, for it is to them that the Holy Spirit confines Himself. He does not make us mathematicians, philosophers, or linguists. His operations, like Himself, are spiritual, holy,

and divine, and "all things" that He teaches are connected with the glory of God and the good of the soul.

i. Now, if He is to teach us "all things," we may safely lay down these two points. 1. That really and truly we know nothing but by His teaching. 2. That just in proportion as we are favoured with His teachings, are we made wise unto salvation. Let us look at a few things that He teaches us.

1. He teaches us *the nature and evil of sin* as committed against the holy, just, and righteous law of God. He thus gives us spiritual and abiding views of the majesty, greatness, power, purity, and justice of the great God with whom we have to do. We cannot feel the spirituality of God's holy law, nor sensibly know the length, breadth, and awful depth of sin in the carnal mind, without this holy anointing. Men may have natural convictions of sin, but they cannot know and feel it as a violation of the purity and holiness of God; they cannot sensibly enter into the dreadful evil of sin as beyond all description hateful to His terrible majesty, and deserving His eternal wrath and fiery displeasure. They rather palliate it, because the anointing has not touched the conscience. By this anointing oil also the depths of iniquity in the heart are broken up. The very nature of oil, as I showed before, is to penetrate. So where this anointing penetrates it acts with power; it sinks into the conscience; it breaks it up; diffuses upon it the light of God's majesty; and thus sinking into the depths of the regenerated soul, discovers the filth and folly, the hideous wickedness and foul criminality of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. And not only so, but it brings sorrow and grief, with mental trouble upon the heart, for the sin which it discovers; lays guilt upon the conscience; causes distress, anxiety, remorse, and works a living repentance of, and hatred to all the transgression and iniquity that it lays open and brings to light. Bear this in

mind, that such is the darkness and hardness of the heart by nature, that we have no real sight or sense of sin, no groaning under it, no feeling of its dreadful power, no hating ourselves on account of it, except as this holy anointing drops into the soul and makes it sensible of the existence and working of sin, and fights against it; for "the spirit lusts against the flesh as well as the flesh against the spirit."

2. The same "anointing" teaches us also *how to pray and what to pray for*, intercedes for us and within us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Thus this holy anointing does not come merely to convince of sin, to bring the soul down, to lay it low, and then leave it there; but it comes as a Spirit of grace and supplication, with a whole flood of earnest breathings and longing desires to the God of all mercy, for mercy to be shewn. As the publican prayed in the temple, so does the convinced sinner cry, groan, and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

3. But, as the same anointing "teacheth of all things, and is truth and no lie," it teaches us in God's own time and way to *know and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*; for the special work of this holy Comforter is to take of the things of Christ, and reveal them to the soul. The special office—the office He sustains in the eternal covenant—is to glorify Christ; not to speak of Himself, but to testify of Jesus; to reveal Him; to bring His blood and obedience near; to shed abroad His love; to raise up faith in His Person and work; and to knit the believer into a vital union with the Son of God. We know nothing savingly of Christ; we have no vital, active, influential faith in Him, nor well grounded hope in His blood, until the anointing raises it up and draws it forth.

ii. But this anointing not only teacheth of all things, it "*is truth, and is no lie.*" As then the Holy Ghost leads *into all*

truth, so He leads away *from all error*. Those who are destitute of this holy anointing fall easily and greedily into error. Not so with the child of God. John says in the verse preceding our text, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." There were those even in those days, who went about—we might almost call them incarnate fiends—to seduce the simple into error. And how were any preserved from this erroneous spirit, and these doctrines of devils? By the holy anointing, that gave love to truth, and hatred to error. So now we are preserved from error only by that anointing, which leads the child of God into all truth; opens their eyes to see error; makes their hearts abhor it; guides their feet away from it; and makes them shun and flee not only erroneous doctrines but erroneous men, because they dread being left to fall into error, and hold a lie in their right hand. I believe, for my part, there is more error and heresy in the churches professing truth, such as the Strict Baptist churches, than we are well aware of. Crafty, deceitful men, whom Satan has secretly drawn into error, and drugged with his poisonous doctrines, often cover up their delusions and heresies under a show of experience; and thus deceiving the simple, creep into churches and pulpits of truth, where they soon begin to work, and try to drag the children of God into the same pit into which they have fallen themselves. But take this as a most certain truth, that though there may be sound doctrine where there is not sound experience, there is no sound experience where there is not sound doctrine—in the heart at least, if not in the head. When, then, these erroneous men are pointed out by the servants of God, and their errors shown by the Word of truth, then, like serpents coiled up in their holes, they begin to spit and hiss, and thus manifest themselves in their true colours, showing that they are serpents, and not sheep. The Holy Ghost, then, by His divine teaching, leads the soul away from all error, because He leads into all truth; and as truth

must ever be the exact contrary to error, in proportion as we are led into every truth we are led away from every error. No man whatsoever, however sound his creed, is safe a single moment from falling into the most delusive errors, except as he is favoured with the "anointing." But if he be a partaker of this holy unction, it leads him so sweetly, draws him so blessedly into the truth of God, that he never can embrace any doctrine on which the power, grace, dew, and unction of God do not more or less sensibly rest. If, then, you are afraid of falling into any error that seems to wear an air of truth, that your reasoning mind appears to favour, that some friend or minister may bring forward, and back up with texts and arguments, beseech the Lord that he would favour you with the anointing "which teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie:" and receive no doctrine without it. But specially beware of error or heresy directed against any one of the Three Persons of the Godhead; any error directed against the Father, or against His Eternal Son, or against the Holy Ghost. Any approach to any erroneous view upon any one Person of the Trinity, or any work or office maintained by them, is to be shunned and abhorred by every one who desires to fear God and live to His glory. Satan introduces no trifling errors into the Church; they may appear trifling at first, but they always involve perilous consequences. It may seem of little consequence whether the human soul of Christ pre-existed in eternity, or was created in time; but the former doctrine is the high road to Arianism. It may seem of little moment whether Christ be the Son of God by nature or by office but the latter doctrine is a blow at each Person of the Trinity. The longer I live the more I love truth, and the more I abhor error and heresy, in whatever shape they may present themselves to my eyes. Therefore for yourselves, your ministers, and the saints of God, beseech the Lord more and more to favour you and them with the holy anointing of which John speaks; it will be your and their safeguard

against error; and will sweetly lead you and them into the truth as it is in Jesus. The promise is still valid, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And if we realise the sweetness of this promise then are we "disciples indeed."

III. But I pass on to our third point, which is, the *abiding of this anointing in the soul*. Now, all the powers of earth and hell are combined against this holy anointing, wherewith the children of God are so highly favoured. Sin, in all its movements, desires, and actions, aims its deadly shafts against this holy anointing; the world, with its charms, amusements, lusts, pleasures, and even occupations, is all against this holy anointing; Satan is infuriated with a most bitter hostility against not only the anointing, but against all who are partakers of it; our carnal mind, with all the dreadful evils that lurk therein, with everything that is sinful, devilish, and vile; all, all are combined against this holy anointing. But if God has locked up in the bosom of a saint one drop of this divine unction, that one drop is proof against all the assaults of sin, all the attacks of Satan, all the enmity of self, and all the charms, pleasures, and amusements of the world. Waves and billows of affliction may roll over the soul; but they cannot wash away this holy drop of anointing oil. Satan may shoot a thousand fiery darts to inflame all the combustible material of our carnal mind; but all his fiery darts cannot burn up that one drop of oil which God has laid up in the depths of a broken spirit. The world, with all its charms and pleasures, and its deadly opposition to the truth of God, may stir up waves of ungodliness against this holy anointing; but all the powers of earth combined can never extinguish that one drop which God has Himself lodged in the depths of a believer's heart. Jonah had it locked up in the depths of his soul when he was in the whale's belly; but all the waves and billows that went over his head, no, nor the very depths of

hell itself, in whose belly he felt he was, did not wash away that drop of anointing oil which God had lodged in his soul. David sank deep into sin and remorse; but all his sin and misery never drank up that drop of anointing oil that God the Spirit had dropped into his heart. The prodigal son goes into a far country; but he never loses that drop of anointing oil, though he wastes his substance in riotous living. Heman complains out of the depths of his affliction; but all his troubles never drank up that holy anointing oil that God had put into his soul. Hezekiah on his apparent death-bed, when he turned his face to the wall, was sorely tried, and almost in despair; yet all his affliction and despondency never drained the holy drop of anointing oil. And so it has been with thousands, and tens of thousands, of the dear saints of God. Not all their sorrows—I may say more—not all their sins, backslidings, slips, falls, miseries, and wretchedness, have ever, all combined, drunk up the anointing that God has bestowed upon them. If sin could have done it, we should have sinned ourselves into hell long ago; and if the world or Satan could have destroyed it or us, they would long ago have destroyed both. If our carnal mind could have done it, it would have swept us away into floods of destruction. But the anointing abideth sure, and cannot be destroyed; where once lodged in the soul, it is secure against all assaults of earth, sin, and hell. The saints of God feel that it abides; for it springs up at times in prayer and desires after the living God; and it breaks forth into faith, hope and love. Thus it not only abides as a divine reality, but as a living principle, springing up into eternal life. Were it not so, there would be no revivals, no fresh communications, no renewed testimonies, no breakings forth, no tender meltings, no breathings out of desire for the Lord's presence, no mourning over His absence. The minister would be dead in the pulpit, and the people dead in the pew. Barrenness and death would overspread the Church of God as a deep and dark cloud;

mildew and canker would eat up all the wheat in the field, and weevils and dust all the corn in the granary. But the anointing abideth, and this preserves the soul from death, and keeps it alive in famine.

IV. I pass on to our fourth point, which is, that the anointing, to a certain extent, *supersedes all other teaching*. I say to a certain extent, for there are ordinances and institutions in the Church of God which it certainly does not supersede. For instance, it does not supersede the *ministry of the gospel*, because, in fact, the anointing is often communicated through the ministry of the Word. Nor does it supersede the *ordinances* of God's house, because they are themselves appointed of God. Nor does it supersede *mutual intercourse* with each other; for if it did, we might bid farewell to all converse with the saints; we might shut ourselves up, and never speak to a dear child of God again. But it supersedes everything which does not in some measure savour of it, and is not connected with it. The ministry of the gospel, for instance, is connected with it, for through the preached gospel the anointing often comes. The ordinances of God's house are connected with it, for the Lord often blesses the ordinances of His house. So with prayer, social, private, and public; so with the converse of saints; the Lord often blesses these means, and through them the anointing is communicated. Therefore it does not supersede the ordinances, nor the preaching of God's Word, nor the mutual help the children may be to each other; but it supersedes everything foreign to it. We want no carnal wisdom in the Church of God; no bright intellects, no learned philosophers, no great men of science, no poet, orator, or metaphysician, to teach us the truth of God, or make us recipients of this anointing oil. The poor and the uneducated receive this anointing, as well as those who, speaking after the manner of men, may have been more favoured with talents and

education. All the family of God are, in this respect, put upon the same level. It reduces all to this single point—what we know we know only by divine teaching. One may be educated, another not, it matters not; as the one or the other is anointed, he is made wise unto salvation, is made a believer, knows and feels the power of God's truth, and is led into the sweetness and blessedness of the gospel. In this way this holy anointing supersedes everything which is foreign to it, and not of the same nature.

V. But we now come to our last point, that this anointing, when received into the conscience of a child of God, maintains him in *an abiding union with the Son of God*. Without union with Christ there can be neither life nor love. To abide in Him is the source of all fruitfulness, of all happiness, and all holiness. His own words are, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). But without this anointing we can neither believe on Him nor abide in Him; but this anointing produces both faith and communion. Whenever this holy anointing comes, it produces a vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ; and it maintains that union which it has once given; for the Holy Ghost keeps taking of the things of Christ, and revealing them to the saints, to whom He first communicated them. The promise was that the Comforter whom Christ was to send should "abide with the disciples for ever." He was to dwell with them and to be in them; and therefore, as He ever abides, His anointing ever abides likewise; and as the anointing abides, it keeps up an abiding also in Christ. Others may leave and forsake Him; be weary of His way, truth, and people; but the anointing keeps the true saint of God in living union with the Son of His love. Profession may fail, false faith decay and perish, vain hope expire, feigned love turn to coldness or enmity, knowledge cease, zeal wax cold, the

truth be abandoned, the company of the saints forsaken, the servants of God despised; thousand may fall on the right hand and the left; but the anointing abideth still in the hearts of the family of God. This makes them abide in Christ. The Holy Ghost will never abandon His own work. He will maintain the faith He has bestowed, the hope which He has given, and the love which He has shed abroad. This abiding union with Christ is the blessed fruit and result of having received this holy anointing oil. Those who are not favoured with it, seem to believe for a time; but not being favoured partakers of this holy anointing, they soon fall into the way of sin or error; and being thus manifested as unfruitful branches, are taken away and cast into the fire. How highly-favoured, then, is that soul which has received but even one drop of this holy anointing, and by virtue of it obtains as well as maintains an union with Christ! He lives in Christ, for Christ is his life; and dies happy in the sweet confidence of being made a partaker of His glory. Thus it comes to this narrow point, to speak individually—is my soul, is your soul favoured with this holy anointing or not? If they be not, how do we stand before God? Dead in sin without any living faith; without any testimony that we are interested in the blood and obedience of God's dear Son. But, on the other hand, if we have ever been favoured with this holy anointing to soften our hearts, humble our souls, give us faith in Christ, and break us down into godly sorrow for sin—if thus favoured with this holy anointing, it will keep us from all error, maintain that union with Christ which it first gave, and eventually land us safely in the realms of eternal bliss.